

South of Folders Lane

Action Group

15 Jan 2011

Firstly a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year to all supporters of SOFLAG (South of Folders Lane Action Group).

Update on 60a – 78 Folders Lane Development

We would like to thank you for supporting our group and its aims over the last twelve months either by simply signing our [online petition](#) or sending letters of objection against the proposed development behind the properties between 60a and 78 Folders Lane. **We are confident that your 200 or so letters played their part in the overwhelming rejection of this totally inappropriate development under delegated powers by the Mid Sussex Planning Department.**

The proposal to develop the land to the rear of 60a to 78 Folders Lane by Bellway Homes Limited was refused under delegated powers by MSDC on 23 November 2010. The reasons given included:

- Outside the Burgess Hill built-up boundary
- Within a Countryside Area of development Restraint and a local gap
- The design was unacceptable in terms of cramped garden areas, layout, dominance of hardstanding, elevations etc.
- It failed to satisfy the requirements of G3 of the Mid Sussex Local Plan and policy CC7 of the South East Plan in respect of infrastructure required to serve the development

Unfortunately we have recently learnt that Bellway have already had preliminary discussions with MSDC Planning about a new application for the land behind 60a to 78 Folders Lane. Bellway have until the 23rd February to appeal this decision.

There are indications that the developers have been given encouraging signals by the MSDC people concerned in respect of new plans' design aspect. Although developing outside of the Burgess Hill town line and encroaching on the Burgess Hill/Ditchling strategic gap were 2 of the main reasons the original planning application was rejected, Bellway may have been given an indication as to how this could be circumvented or downplayed.

In the event Bellway do make an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate our Group will once again oppose the appeal and endeavour to gather as much support for this as possible.

Other Planning News

Additionally we also feel it would be useful to give everyone an update on the current position regarding developments to the South of Folders Lane as well as on the North Side.

There have been two important and helpful developments during the last year which should make it much more difficult for developers to build on the land to the south of Folders Lane. These include:

- The re-designation of private gardens as Greenfield sites as opposed to brownfield sites. Planning departments are now encouraged to allow building on brownfield sites and resist development on Greenfield sites
- Until recently, developers had a strong argument in support of their proposals (using the requirements of PPS3, Paragraph 71) that Mid Sussex District Council could not demonstrate they were meeting the housing demands of imposed central government targets. Now as a result of proposed changes in their strategy, MSDC on 19 November 2010 have set a new target of 370 houses per year and they can demonstrate that they already have a land supply that meets this requirement for at least the next five years.

Coupled with the above there remain ongoing powerful arguments that development to the South of Folders Lane would be inappropriate and these include:

- The clearly identified need for a southern relief road before development could take place. The estimated high costs of such a road means it is unlikely that this would be considered in the near or medium term future.
- Any site would be outside the Burgess Hill built-up boundary and therefore under Policy C1 the land would be ***“classified as a Countryside Area of Development Restraint where the countryside will be protected for its own sake. Proposals for development in the countryside particularly that which would extend the built-up boundaries beyond those shown will be firmly resisted”***.
- The area falls within the Burgess Hill/Ditchling Local Gap as defined by policy C3 of the Local Plan.
- The area is in close proximity to the South Downs National Park.
- The local infrastructure cannot handle such development especially when other developments in the pipeline to the north of Folders Lane are taken into consideration.

Other than the Bellway application, there are currently no known applications to develop the Greenfield land to the South of Folders Lane. However, we will continue to monitor the situation closely and, in the event that any development is proposed, will take appropriate action.

Folders Meadow Development

As you are all now aware, the development of Folders Meadow on the North side of Folders Lane, has started with the destruction of the trees and hedging on Folders Lane.

The Folders Meadow Action Group had been successful in opposing this development for ten years and had gathered much support. However, because the system allows it, the developers were able to continually re-apply and eventually as a result of the previous Government’s housing policies they were eventually in a strong position once the site had been identified as being suitable for housing development.

However, the manner, in which this development was finally granted approval should be a lesson to us all. Effectively there was no real debate allowed on the final and new Planning Application, which was submitted as soon as the previous one had been rejected by MSDC.

Thank You!

Finally, we would ask that you continue to support the aims of our group. The stronger our group is, the more likely we will achieve our aims. **To this end, we would ask that you forward this email to anyone who you believe might support our aims and, as a result visit our Website and sign our group’s petition.**

Once again, many thanks for your continued support,

South of Folders Lane Action Group

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