

**GPAC Objection to Application 20/501773/FULL | Erection of 187 dwellings, together with associated works for Access, Parking, Infrastructure, Open Space, Earthworks, Surface Water Drainage Systems and Landscaping. | Land Off Oakapple Lane Barming Maidstone Kent**

**Visual appearance and design of development – 25/05/2020**

The applicant clearly states in their planning document<sup>1</sup>, that the application fulfils the MBC Local Plan. Policy H1(4)<sup>2</sup> states that number of dwellings must be, 35dpha. In the planning document<sup>3</sup>, the proposed dpha is 40. Therefore, this does not match the local plan and number of dwellings needs to be reduced dramatically if application is approved. There is indication that the density across the site varies<sup>4</sup>. We feel that an increase in density anywhere on the development will give the area an urban feel and be detrimental to residents living in those higher density areas. As this application is affectively joint, MBC planning committee must take into account the TMBC side of the application, including dpha which are not provided in the planning statement, and insist that they match to give the same concentrations across the one development.

We feel that the differences between MBC and TMBC parts of the development, will lead to a strange feel to the development as a whole and possibly a them and us situation. For example, in excess of 40 road parking bays, no LEAP and denser housing on the MBC side. Whilst on the TMBC side, no road parking bays, green pathway around, larger gardens, less density. We appreciate that both councils have different housing policies and requirements, but to ensure continuity both councils should insist that parking/density/green space should be equal across this development.

Within the Planning Statement<sup>5</sup>, it is stated that residential development is contained within the centre. However, one quick look at the development diagram contradicts this, with housing up to the edge of all sides except in two areas. This is well seen on the southern edge of the development where the path around it has to the join the existing PROW. This is also in contradiction to the local plan which states:

*‘the hedgerow along the southern boundary of this site will be enhanced in order to provide a suitable buffer between new housing and existing housing on Rede Wood rd and Broomshaw’*

In the photo you can see blue markings where we believe the applicant will actually be cutting the existing hedgerow back. We do not feel that this is an enhancement.



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<sup>1</sup> Planning\_Statement-4886564 1.9

<sup>2</sup> <https://services.maidstone.gov.uk/docs/October%202017%20Adopted%20Local%20Plan.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Planning\_Statement-4886564 4.5

<sup>4</sup> Planning\_Statement-4886564 6.77

<sup>5</sup> Planning\_Statement-4886564 6.69

GPAC do not feel that the allocated green spaces, whilst allegedly being above MBC and TMBC's request, are an adequate replacement for the area which is being taken away. We are also concerned with the way that animal life has been dealt with. As part of the NPPF<sup>6</sup>, there is a clear mention of that within plans for new developments they include wildlife corridors. In the plans for the Stable Field and surveys completed for the cemetery on Oakapple Lane, there are recorded animal populations. We do not agree that an adequate corridor has been created for animal wildlife to be able to move from the green areas surrounding the development and the cemetery. We do not agree that a 15m buffer zone, is sufficient, and on the south to south east section (primarily behind a property on Rede Wood road) of the development where the development's path joins the PROW the buffer zone does not exist. The green corridor through the development is not wide enough to protect animals and should cross in the opposite direction.

We note that the applicant states that there will be (circa) 1.73 ha of open space<sup>7</sup>. We also note that from the Biodiversity Mitigation<sup>8</sup> that approximately 0.4 ha will be fenced off in both the north eastern and southern edges. This will bring the amount of open space down to 1.3 ha useable to residents. We do note that there is no explanation in MBC local plan as to what Natural/semi-natural open space actually means, however Policy DM19<sup>9</sup> clearly states that open space should be of "high quality, publicly accessible open space" which "can bring about opportunities for promoting social interaction and inclusion in communities." We therefore object to this application as the amount of open space does not match what has been requested by MBC.

As local residents we do not consider anything above 2 storey properties<sup>10 11</sup> to be fitting with the local area. All properties above 2 stories, apart from conversions are on new developments. We, as local residents still consider Barming to be a village on the edge of Maidstone. 2.5 and 3 story buildings are making Barming to be part of the overall conurbation of Maidstone, and the connection with TMBC is making an extension of grey land even wider.

We are pleased that the application makes reference to the "Recent Developments"<sup>12</sup>. However, at all times residents' views have been overridden by the planning department at MBC and allowed poor quality and bland "factory" housing to occur. The appearance of more 2.5 and 3 storey developments are detracting from the countryside feel of this area of Maidstone.

We have studied the development map and draw the following objections to the visual design:

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/810197/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf) 174 a)

<sup>7</sup> Planning\_Statement-4886564 4.19

<sup>8</sup> Biodiversity\_Mitigation-4886542 4.0

<sup>9</sup> <https://services.maidstone.gov.uk/docs/October%202017%20Adopted%20Local%20Plan.pdf> 8.8.6

<sup>10</sup> Landscape\_and\_Visual\_Assessment-4886502 5.2

<sup>11</sup> Planning\_Statement-4886564 4.9

<sup>12</sup> DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT -4886567 2.32

- Apartment block A is three stories high, it looks straight down shared surface A and into the back of the homes on Rede Wood Road all of which have their bathrooms at the rear of their properties therefore we object to building three stories high due to the overlooking and privacy issues.
- We believe that the same will be for the town houses 2.5 stories high which overlook some of the Rede Wood Road Properties.
- The above will be made worse by the fact that the elevation of the Pea Field is higher than that of the Rede Wood/Broomshaw Roads.
- All of the plots which back onto Rede Wood Road, in particular plots 175, 168, 154,155,156 all have front doors in the plans which face onto the Rede Wood Road Properties, therefore loss of privacy and overlooking.
- The same also applies for plots 144/143/142 and 141 which back on to the Broomshaw Road Properties.

Whilst bungalows are mentioned in section 2.32 as being part of the surrounding area, there are none planned in the development. Less than 2% of new builds in 2018 were bungalows<sup>13</sup>, so not only detracting from the surrounding area, there is no provision for the elderly population, which is, as we all know, growing.

In the NPPF section 5<sup>14</sup>, there is mention that council planning policies for housing mix must make reference to not just affordable housing, but also for (not limited to) older people and people with disabilities. In MBCs local plan, policy SP19<sup>15</sup>, states that it will work with partners to support provision for these population groups. There seems to be a lack of properties of this type within MBC, highlighted by a quick internet search for examples<sup>16 17</sup>. The design of the development should include adequate housing for all.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.estateagenttoday.co.uk/breaking-news/2019/10/housing-crisis-call-for-bungalows-to-house-ageing-population?source=newsticker>

<sup>14</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/810197/NPPF\\_Feb\\_2019\\_revised.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> <https://services.maidstone.gov.uk/docs/October%202017%20Adopted%20Local%20Plan.pdf> page 74

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.kentonline.co.uk/maidstone/news/wheelchair-bound-mum-faces-homelessness-130013/>

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.downsmail.co.uk/news\\_sport/News/Maidstone\\_Borough\\_Council\\_pay-out\\_order\\_over\\_disabled\\_mans\\_housing\\_injustice/](https://www.downsmail.co.uk/news_sport/News/Maidstone_Borough_Council_pay-out_order_over_disabled_mans_housing_injustice/)