

From: Julia Gooding
Sent: 27 November 2017 23:59
To: Cheryl Poole
Subject: Development of Vicarage Land, Robertsbridge

Dear Ms Poole,

RE: Proposed development of Vicarage Land, Robertsbridge. (Article 12943.).

We wish to make you aware of a number of strong objections that we have with regard to the proposed development in Fair Lane, Robertsbridge. We live at the corner of the High St and Fair Lane and believe that any development in Fair Lane will have a detrimental impact not only on ourselves but on residents of Fair Lane and the High St.

1. Failure to safeguard the special character and appearance of Fair Lane and the surrounding concentration of listed buildings in the village.

Fair Lane is a narrow lane with several very old buildings. It retains something of its medieval character. It is already over-congested with parked cars and is effectively a single-track carriageway with little scope to be widened. An increase in traffic would further compromise its character and that of the medieval High St.

The proposal includes demolition of The Church Rooms, an Edwardian building with character and the potential to be restored to a valued resource to the village as a community hall accessed on foot. Vicarage Land is a field locked in by listed buildings - it can't be unlocked without impacting on their character.

2. Access.

Fair Lane is a narrow lane, congested with parked cars. Access is already hazardous with cars reversing into the High St rather than driving to the top of the lane to turn. (There is nowhere to turn in the lane - once you are facing up the hill it is necessary to drive to the top to turn.) Access to the Vicarage Field is currently difficult requiring a jack-knife turn. I believe drivers wishing to access it drive to the top of the lane, turn, and then approach the access slip road heading down the hill to the west rather than to try to enter directly from the west heading uphill eastwards. It would be impossible to improve access to serve a residential development without significantly changing this arrangement and therefore the character of Fair Lane.

3. Highway Safety.

One Stop is situated opposite the entrance to Fair Lane. This is a busy village shop with customers coming and going throughout the day and evening, 7 days a week. Because parking is such a difficult issue in the centre of the village, customers often park illegally for a few minutes at the corner of Fair Lane and the High St. This compounds the difficulty of accessing Fair Lane both on foot and in a vehicle. Several large delivery lorries come to serve One Stop every day. They park as close to the shop as they can, meaning that they are as close to the entrance of Fair Lane as they can be. They often double-park causing a hazard on the High St. More traffic in Fair Lane would increase this hazard.

The pavement is often blocked by parked cars causing pedestrians to walk into the road. Increased traffic serving a development in Fair Lane would only exacerbate this.

4. Parking.

Because the centre of Robertsbridge is built to a medieval plan there is little parking for residents here. There is no scope for further pressure on parking in the village. Apart from the inconvenience to residents this caused by not having enough designated parking, cars and delivery lorries are a blight on the character of this AONB.

5. Flooding.

Robertsbridge is sited on the floodplain of the river Rother. Although millions of pounds have been spent on flood defences in the village, it remains a wet place! The drainage in the village is under pressure to function as it is. Springs flow underground down the hill of Fair Lane. We believe that increased run off from a development in Vicarage Land would increase the risk of flooding in the High St - Flood Zone 1.

6. Loss of natural habitat in The Weald. AONB.

The field is a quiet, green space in the village, not used much by people but home to many, many species of wildlife. The encroachment of their habitats can only be to the detriment of the village and The Weald.

Yours sincerely,
Julia Gooding and Ron Bryans