

Planning and Building Control,
Barnsley MBC,
PO Box 634
Barnsley
S70 9GG

11th December 2023
Revision A – 17th February 2024

Re: Land south of Barugh Green Road, Barnsley (MU1)
Planning Application 2021/1090 (Residential) & 2021/1089 (Hybrid)
Planning Submission of [REDACTED]

As a local resident with property on the North Western border of Site MU1, I am responding to your email request for comments on the above planning application dated 24th October 2023

Preamble

Whilst I have every sympathy with the residents on Higham Common Road who have been blighted ever since BMBC opened the road up to HGV's with the construction of the Dodworth Bypass in 2007, the proposed "link road" and the layout of these latest proposals for Site MU1 will simply shift the traffic problems of Higham Common Road to the proposed congested housing and school development in very close proximity to the proposed link road.

The concept of mixing industrial development in close proximity to residential development is hugely irresponsible and tantamount to a return to Victorian times when housing was provided close to pits and factories for workers without transport.

It is questionable whether the proposed housing will be aimed at Barnsley residents as this will be attractive to commuters from surrounding cities due to the proximity of the M1 Motorway.

From the plans provided, it is clear that no consideration has been given to protecting existing residents from the hugely negative effects on their properties, health and welfare.

SIGNIFICANTLY - As my professional background covers 50 years involved in producing and vetting engineering drawings (civil, structural & mechanical) I am suspicious that the site layout drawings provided with the application have been produced by a C.A.D. technician who has been told to fill site MU1 with the link road, 1560 dwellings, a school, shops and industrial units. This appears to have been done as a "desk based exercise" with limited (if any) site visits and certainly absolutely no research or consideration for the dramatic negative impact on existing residents.

If this is the case, it amounts to a massive dereliction of duty and due care and a severe lack of professionalism.

My detailed comments are in the form of itemised paragraphs as indexed: -

INDEX

1. CONCLUSIONS	P2
2. EFFECT ON EXISTING RESIDENTS	P2
3. CONSULTATION & PLANNING PROCESS	P5
4. DUTY OF CARE	P5
5. THE GUNNING PRINCIPLES	P5
6. COMMENTS ON THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS & PLANS	P6
7. GROUND / SITE CONDITIONS	P6
8. HIGHWAYS & TRAFFIC	P7
9. MEDICAL & WELFARE FACILITIES	P7
10. URBAN SPRAWL & ENVIRONMENT	P8
11. COMERCIAL, FINANCIAL & POLITICAL RISKS TO DEVELOPMENT	P8
12. ADDENDUM – 17.02.2024	

1. CONCLUSIONS

Unlike BMBC and BWC decision makers, my wife and I have to live on the boundary of Site MU1 (we have lived here since 1969 when Barugh Green was a very pleasant and desirable place to reside). We are horrified by this proposed development and we would like to see the whole thing scrapped. **The proposals shown for the Phase 1 Residential Development are an absolute disgrace and have been prepared without any consideration for the health, welfare and wellbeing of existing residents adjacent to the site – despite the various so called “drop-in” and written “consultations” over the last ten years, from which comments/objections have clearly been ignored**

However, **IF** we are to believe that there is the need for housing development and a new school for the Barugh Green area, the proposals for the development of Site MU1 could be vastly improved into (*possibly*) a far more acceptable proposition.

We have already seen the disastrous community impact of the huge warehouse units adjacent to the motorway at Hoyland Common and the vast and speculative industrial development proposed for Site MU1 is undoubtedly going to replicate this disaster, also there is already overdevelopment of Capitol Park and other local industrial estates. If the industrial units proposed for Site MU1 were deleted, this would allow the same number of houses (1540) to be built in a much more sensible, less congested layout with more green spaces **and meaningful / effective buffer zones** to eliminate the disastrous effect on existing properties.

The proposed school, link road and adjacent housing could also be reconfigured to provide a much healthier and safer layout.

In this way, yet another ghetto (of which many are springing up around Barnsley) would be avoided.

PLEASE ALSO NOTE –

It is obvious that many existing elderly residents surrounding the site will be unable to see, or understand, the larger plans & documents for the site and will be unlikely to submit meaningful comments, if they comment at all.

Visits should be made to all individual existing properties surrounding the site in order to fully assess the damage this proposed development will cause.

1.2 There are several examples of local councils which have taken the decision to review their Master Plans in the light of changing circumstances in their boroughs.

Although Barnsley's new Glassworks seem to be a success (except for the spiralling costs), it is quite clear that the areas of the town adjacent to the Glassworks are a disgrace and are dying.

Essential services also are stretched to breaking point or are now not fit for purpose

Outlying areas of the borough have already been decimated by huge developments (both housing and commercial)

BMBC should consider its existing residents, reject Planning Applications 2021/1090 and 2021/1089 and be brave enough to review the Master Plan

2. EFFECT ON EXISTING RESIDENTS

2.1 PLEASE NOTE

Several bungalows on the North West boundary of Site MU1, including our own, are built in reverse layout with the lounges & dining rooms facing directly onto the open fields.

(This was approved in the 1960's by BMBC Planning).

In the case of our properties on St Johns Avenue, immediately beyond our garden boundary the field slopes markedly upwards with uninterrupted vista as far as Higham and Pogmoor. The drawings provided with the latest application 2021/1090 clearly shows that large, 5 bed roomed, detached, 2 story houses are proposed for construction immediately adjacent to our rear (front) boundary.

Although I am unable to find a suitable sectional drawing for this part of Site MU1, it is abundantly clear that these new builds will completely block our outlook, overshadow our Rear (Front) garden, overlook our lounge and dining rooms, and will completely block the outlook and natural light from our lounge & dining room windows, completely destroying our privacy. *Proposed Regrade Contour Sheet-1 QD2088-00-300 clearly shows the significantly rising ground levels immediately beyond our rear (front) boundary*



Existing Outlook from Lounge Window



Potential Outlook from Lounge Window
With effect of proposed development

NOTE: Effect of extensive construction works beyond the indicated houses is NOT SHOWN

2.2 BMBC's own **Supplementary Planning Document: Design of Housing Development** states: -

"Proposals for development will be approved if: -

There will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of EXISTING and future residents.

They are compatible with neighbouring land and will not significantly prejudice the current or future use of the neighbouring land."

Clearly, the documents provided with the planning application show that there will be a significant adverse effect on our living conditions and land from this development – from the proximity and type of housing and years of dust, noise and general construction mayhem over the proposed 13 year construction programme – *within a few metres of our lounge window.*

The value of our properties, on the boundary of Site MU1, have been under threat since the Barnsley Master Plan was adopted in 2019 and have already proved difficult to sell. If the current planning application 201021/1900 and 2021/1890 are approved as they are, our property values will fall dramatically and might even become unsaleable.

There is no mention of mitigation measures or financial compensation for existing resident whose properties & lives will be blighted forever by this ill conceived development. Our physical and mental health will be severely compromised (*NOTE we have already suffered years of anguish due to these proposals – since 2014*)

As my wife and I are now in our 80's with some mobility issues, we spend most of our time enjoying the quality of life, tranquillity and pleasant outlook from our property – if this planning application is adopted, we shall find ourselves living in a massive construction site for the rest of our lives (*together with our many neighbours*)

2.3 PLEASE BE AWARE that following a drop in consultation at Barugh Green Club in February 2015, a meeting was arranged at a bungalow on the North West boundary of Site MU1 attended by **John England (Strata) Katherine Clegg (Spawforths)** and 5 residents. The reverse layout of existing bungalows and rising land vista was shown to **Mr England who stated: -**

“We would never build houses overlooking bungalows” and -

“If the scheme is approved, every individual existing property will be evaluated (including individual site visits) and final planning applications will be designed to mitigate the impact of further residential development – including the construction of bungalows, and buffer space where appropriate” (we have agreed minutes of this meeting in our possession).

Other neighbours can testify that they were given similar assurances at the February 2015 drop in consultation at Barugh Green Club

PLEASE NOTE – to date we have never had anyone from the developers visiting our properties to evaluate our very serious predicament.

However, we did have a home visit from former Cllr Linda Burgess (in circa 2015) and home visits from Cllrs Sharon Howard and Alice Cave (in 2021) followed up by a meeting at the town hall with Cllrs Sharon Howard, Alice Cave and Trevor Cave – at all these meetings we received a negative or nil response to our serious predicament and concerns.

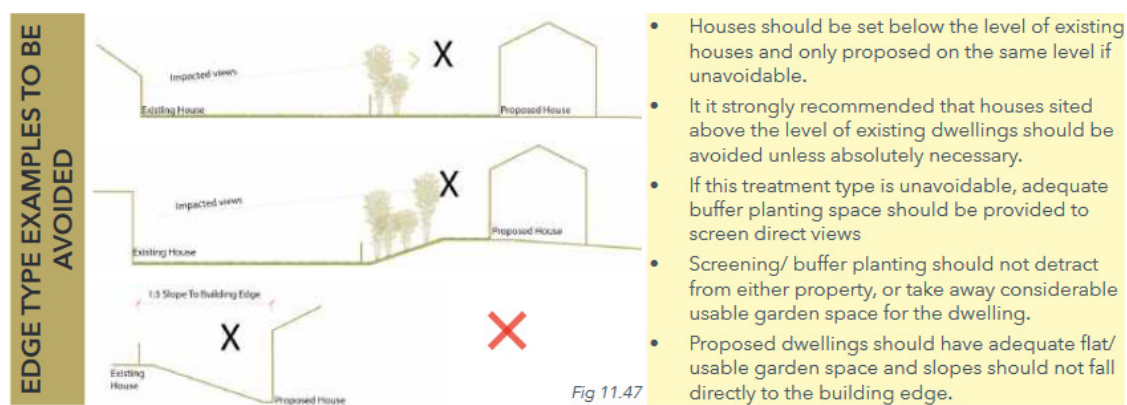
On 13th October 2021, we had a home visit from the former case officer (Stacey White) who was very polite and appeared to be somewhat sympathetic (although rather guarded)

Along with our neighbours and other residents in the vicinity of Site MU1 we have made repeated objections and suggestions both in person at various drop-in “consultations” at Barugh Green Club and Gawber church hall, as well as submitting them via various on-line consultations.

PLEASE NOTE: a dictionary definition of consultation is a “discussion with someone about something that you are planning, in order to get their opinion or advice:”

2.4 Barnsley West Masterplan Framework (Bond Bryan November 2019)

Page 167 of this document, on which adoption was approved, clearly shows the required policy of avoiding overlooking of existing residential properties



DESPITE ALL OF THE ABOVE - THE CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATION HAS MADE ABSOLUTELY NO ATTEMPT TO MITIGATE THE DISASTER WHICH WILL BE INFLICTED ON US AND OUR NEIGHBOURS IF APPROVAL IS GRANTED

3. CONSULTATION & PLANNING PROCESS

3.1 There have been several “consultations” since the first attack on the area now known as Site MU1 by Barnsley Metropolitan Council (BMBC) on 24th June 2003, when options for a proposed “link road” were publicised and consulted on (*no mention of any housing or industrial development at that time*).

The full horror of the proposed development surfaced with the BMBC proposals for including Site MU1 in the Barnsley Master Plan” consultations” in 2014.

Subsequent to this, and later “consultations”, BMBC and other “partners” within the Barnsley West Consortium (BWC) have conspicuously ignored the hundreds of valid detailed submissions and petitions objecting to the proposals.

3.2. The whole concept of the approved Site MU1 Master Plan has been based on a debatable interpretation of the NPPF by BMBC and the Developers. Notably: -

The site enjoyed the status of Green Belt for circa 50 years until BMBC’s flawed and inconsistent Green Belt Review in 2014, where scoring was clearly weighted (falsely) in order to withdraw the Site MU1 Green Belt status.

BMBC and the BWC ignored 3 of the 5 statutory NPPF principles defining Green Belt and the fact that the site is valuable agricultural land and a vital environmental asset to the health and welfare of Barnsley residents.

3.3 The doubtful practice of submitting piecemeal applications for different aspects of the Site MU1 development is very suspicious.

We have already seen, from the recent roundabout applications, that the full impact of the whole development on the surrounding infrastructure, environment and existing residents is not presented for proper evaluation by consultees and decision makers.

3.4 BMBC’s **Planning Regulatory Board** consists of 25 elected councillors – *none of which represent Barugh Green and Redbrook*. During the board meeting for the southern roundabout of the proposed link road, at least one councillor was heard to say “I have no knowledge of the area” but voted to approve the application.

Given the huge negative effect on Site MU1 (and possibly the rest of Barnsley), this begs the question of fair representation of residents surrounding the site (*See item 4 below*)

4. DUTY OF CARE

All organisations dealing with the public and the environment have **a moral or legal obligation to ensure the safety and well-being of others and the environment:**

In particular (a) As professionals BMBC and Developer planners have these same obligations (b) As elected members, BMBC councillors have the same obligations to protect their ward constituents and the local environment.

Regrettably, the proposals for Site MU1 clearly fail to take into account these mandatory obligations, despite the huge number of comments and objections submitted by residents (in writing and verbally) over the past 9 years.

5. THE GUNNING PRINCIPLES state: -

1. Proposals are still at a formative stage.
2. The final decision has not yet been made, or predetermined, by the decision makers.
3. There is sufficient information to give ‘intelligent consideration’.
4. There is adequate time for consideration and response.
5. The product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account by the decision maker(s): -

Clearly, the latest planning “consultation” for applications 2021/1090 & 2021/1089 contravene these legal requirements for consultations as: -

The plans provided are well advanced and detailed. Since many sound objections from previous “consultations” have been completely ignored – this suggests that decisions may have been pre-determined. Whilst there are copious amount of information provided with the planning applications – the vast majority of this is unfathomable for many of the local residents who should be responding.

The 30 days response time is totally inadequate for meaningful submissions

6. COMMENTS ON THE OVERALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS & PLANS

6.1 The concept of the proposed new school adjacent to a major and potentially very busy link road appears to be ill conceived, a potential health hazard and highly likely to replicate the current traffic and environmental (air pollution) problems at the existing Barugh Green School on Higham Common Road.

6.2. The huge industrial area shown on the plan is blatantly irresponsible. Much of this will be sited at the summit of rising ground and will be an ugly blot on the landscape from near & far viewpoints from the North and grossly overshadow existing properties in Pogmoor , Higham and Barugh Green, as well as any new housing built adjacent.

6.3. The massive earthworks as described in the supporting documents / drawings is tantamount to a rape of the countryside and, together with the massive development proposals, will completely change the character of the area and destroy the surrounding village integrity and history. **I have been unable to find any consultees’ submissions from Town & Country Planning, CPRE, The Town and Country Planning Association or The Environmental Law Foundation in the documents listed with the planning application.**

6.4. I believe that the revised stated closing date of 18th December is far too short a time scale, having received this on the 10th October. This does not provide sufficient time for “consultees” to research and prepare well considered and meaningful responses and advice.

There does not appear to be any strategy from BMBC or BWC to ensure that all local residents understand the magnitude of these proposals and ensure their inclusion in the “consultation”.

PLEASE NOTE - The magnitude and complexity of the documentation associated with Planning Applications 2021/1090 & 2021/2089 effectively exclude the vast majority of local residents, who will be seriously & adversely affected by these proposals, from responding effectively.

6.5 The proposed development of Site MU1 will completely destroy the characters of Higham, Barugh Green, Redbrook, Gawber and Pogmoor and completely destroying their proud history and the long standing environmental & cultural benefits provided for the west of Barnsley

7. GROUND / SITE CONDITIONS

7.1 The open casting history during the 1950’s and 60’s is well known and documented. There are still several residents adjacent to Site MU1 who lived close to the workings and employed on the open casting, many of them can testify to the extensive excavations, backfilling of the site, burying large amounts of heavy excavation plant and frequent use of explosives.

Recent Site Surveys have been inconclusive, *the Coal Authority report neither confirms nor denies that explosives were extensively used and brushed aside the risk of live explosive charges being buried on the site.*

Many existing residents with properties on the West and North boundaries of Site MU1 can testify that the site has settled considerably over the last 60 years or so, and is still settling.

Local knowledge is being ignored / dismissed e.g. Explosives Flood Risks & exacerbation

7.2 Flooding:

There is a long history of regular flooding in the north east corner of Site MU1 due to heavy rain falls, the latest clear example being during the recent Storm Ciaran. The whole of Site MU1 is still soaked from that storm and clearly acts as a sponge, without which would exacerbate the flooding at Redbrook.

There are many examples of housing developments throughout the U.K. which have caused increases in flooding due to extensive building of housing, roads etc. on Greenfield sites.

Although the latest planning application for Site MU1 includes SUDS facilities, it is extremely doubtful if they will have a real influence on this issue and will incur significant ongoing maintenance costs..

7.3 Former Mine Workings

The developers have notionally studied old data showing the large number of mine entrances on Site MU1, particularly at the eastern side of the site. It is also known that there are deep mine workings running across the site from the former Redbrook Pit to the mine workings in Higham. It is also well known that there is a serious underground fire active in old mine workings in the Beaver Lane area (close to Site MU1) -. *A further risk potential to developments proposed for Site MU1 – apparently ignored by the developers and BMBC.*

8. HIGHWAYS & TRAFFIC

The existing A635 (Barugh Green Road) and Higham Common Road / Higham Lane were constructed many years ago when HGV and private car usage was at much lower levels than they are today. Whilst the proposed link road will alleviate traffic movements through Higham village, it may well be circa 2036 before it is completed. It is obvious that (a) site construction traffic (b) the progressive increase in private cars from the proposed new housing (c) heavy and light goods vehicles from the proposed industrial and commercial units is bound to have a significant adverse effect on traffic volumes on the two roads mentioned – *the Planning Application supplementary documents indicate increases up to 300%.*

Furthermore the traffic increases, outlined above, are bound to adversely affect Barugh Green, The A635 and Junction 37 of the M1 motorway. There are no proposals in the planning application to upgrade the southern end of Higham Common Road / Higham Lane, Whinby Road or the Higham Lane Motorway Bridge over the M1 – none of which are designed for the envisaged traffic loadings.

The consultee's submissions from Highways England (Highway Development Control NHPR 22-09) states: - *"It is our view that the addition of the proposed development does have a significant impact on Junction 37 of the M1"*

9. MEDICAL & WELFARE FACILITIES

It is well documented that Barnsley & District General Hospital is virtually at maximum capacity and a well known fact that access to GP surgeries is very difficult for many existing residents – all due to the demands of the current Barnsley population and lack of sufficient facilities.

The development of Site MU1 is proposed to extend to 13 years and will result in 1500 dwellings, a school, commercial and industrial facilities – all adding intolerable pressure on vital medical services from the resulting increase in site workers, residents and industrial & commercial staff.

10. URBAN SPRAWL & ENVIRONMENT

The declared national guidelines for Green Belt status include: -

Preventing urban sprawl, protecting the environment and wildlife and helping to control the air quality for existing communities.

Prior to open casting, Site MU1 comprised high quality agricultural fields and a considerable amount of woodland. Following completion of the open casting, the site was restored to agricultural use (without the replacement of woodland – which should have occurred). .

Subsequently the land was granted green belt status – and fully met the declared aims of Green Belt, providing vital protection for the west of Barnsley from noise and air pollution arising from the M1 motorway, constructed in the 1970's. (It would have surpassed these aims if the former woodland had been restored).

It is noted that what is now known as Site MU1 was earmarked to be a significant part of the South Yorkshire Forest in the early 1990's – what happened to this and why wasn't it considered in the Barnsley Master Plan??

The removal of Green Belt status in order to provide a questionable site for development in the Barnsley Masterplan was ill-conceived and possibly flawed – when other more suitable and less destructive sites retained their Green Belt status – ***See Barnsley West Masterplan Framework-Revision B – Dated August 2013***

11. COMERCIAL & FINANCIAL & POLITICAL RISKS TO DEVELOPMENT

There are several examples where huge housing and infrastructure developments have floundered due to inadequate investigations and volatile national / international financial circumstances and conflicts.

Para 4.59 of the Revised Planning Statement (Amended Oct 2023) clearly states that the development **will be subject to market conditions**.

11.1 Given the strong the potential need for further site investigations and the potential requirement for expensive design and site costs involved in complex foundations – there is a distinct possibility of financial risk which could lead to abandonment

11.2 The proposed programme for Site MU1 currently stands at 13 years – given the risks involved, it is highly probable that it will not be completed, leaving the site as a black spot instead of the pleasant and vital green space currently providing significant environmental benefits for Barnsley and its residents.

11.3 In a speech on 14.12.2023 by the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP (Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) stated that the Government's 10 year policy for housing policy – the building of new homes includes: -

****Building beautiful – and making architecture great again.***

****Building great public services into the heart of every community.***

****Communities taking back control of their future.***

****Greener homes, greener landscapes and green belt protection.***

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Tel: [REDACTED]

12. ADDENDUM – 17.02.2024

Since my consultation submission against Planning Application 2021/1090 dated 11th December 2023 was submitted 18th December 2023, on behalf of my wife and myself, I have now been able to study some of the amended drawings / documents lodged by the applicant. I can clearly see that none of my concerns expressed in my original submission have been addressed in any shape or form.

In particular – the issue of 5 bedroomed detached two storey houses proposed, with the rear of the properties directly facing, and overshadowing the lounges & and dining rooms of our single storey bungalow (and those of several neighbours)

I can see, from the site plans provided that the rear gardens of the proposed houses are at least equal in length to the length of our own front garden which suggests that the separation distance between the properties meets current planning requirements.

However will you please note the following: -

I have lived in Barnsley for the past 60 years, circa 50 of these years spent preparing and submitting plans, specs, site & location plans for home extensions and new builds, on a part time basis (all of which have been approved) - in Barnsley, Sheffield, Rotherham, Wakefield, Kirklees & Bradford districts.

With all this experience, I cannot think of any existing housing developments in Barnsley Borough, or elsewhere, where properties (either two story, single story or mixed) are built with front / rear facing aspects with abutting gardens.

All of this leads me to conclude that the notional planning separation distances are clearly intended specifically for back to back facing housing developments, with adjoining gardens.

Further Relevant Comments:

The revised planning documents submitted by the developer fail to address the following issues (some of which are raised in my main submission (above))

The proposals for Site MU1 clearly contravene paras 2.2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 5.2, 3.3 & 6 of BMBC's S.P.D: Design of Housing Developments and possibly planning regulations - the certainly defy good practice.

The proposals also contravene the Barnsley West Masterplan Framework Para 11.21 (page 167) - which sets out clear edge protection requirements for the proposed development. There is no attempt to provide boundary measures to lessen the impact of the proposed as required by the Masterplan.

The construction of 2 story properties facing onto the front elevation of our existing bungalows will destroy the **outlook** we currently have the benefit of.

The construction of 2 story houses and further developments over several years will have a severe adverse effect on our health and well being – contrary to the requirements of BMBC's own S.P.D: Design of Housing Developments.

The proposals for 2 story properties abutting single story properties contravene the requirements of the Barnsley West Masterplan Framework (Bond Bryan November 2019)

There is no attempt to provide edge protection / boundary softening in order to integrate the proposed development in a sensitive manner with existing dwellings - as required by the adopted Masterplan Framework.

Revised Potential Outlook from Lounge Window following further examination Barnsley West revised Phase 1 Development - Drg. No. 20-CL4-SEGB-BWP1-02



Revised indicative outlook following further examination Barnsley West revised Phase 1 Development - Drg. No. 20-CL4-SEGB-BWP1-02

1. Effect of extensive construction works beyond the indicated houses is NOT SHOWN
2. Drg. No. 20-CL4-SEGB-BWP1-02 clearly shows the proposed houses extending beyond 4 bungalows to our right and 4 Bungalows to our left – resulting in an almost continuous block of housing approx. 121 meters long x 25 meters high.
This will leave my wife & I, together with our neighbours living under the shadow of a virtual Berlin Wall.

****This is totally unacceptable and Planning Application 2021/1090 should be rejected until a more acceptable layout is produced**.**