

Mrs Eleanor Phillips



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Dear Sir or Madam

I am writing to express my objections to the proposed plans identified below:

APPLICATION REFERENCE 0923/0024: Proposed residential development of 263 dwellings, associated landscaping, open space, infrastructure and enabling earthworks at land west of Dale Road, Spondon.

Firstly, this land is classified as Green Belt land and under the National Planning Policy Framework, these proposed plans do not meet the 'Special Circumstances' criteria where housing development would be permitted. I am aware that 'Special Circumstances' would include the following: Housing for agricultural/forestry workers; development that would enhance a heritage asset; or development where an existing building was being subdivided, reused after a period of disuse, or would achieve outstanding design criteria that remained

sensitive to that of the local area. **None of these special circumstances would be fulfilled within the proposed 'Woodside' development.** It is also clear from the plans that the 'open spaces' proposed in this development would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt and that instead, **this development creates an urban sprawl.** I ask again the same question I asked of Erewash Planning Officers in 2021: **Has Erewash Borough Council properly and objectively reviewed all its available urban and brownfield sites for potential development or redevelopment before it considers any plans for Green Belt land?**

Spondon Wood has appeared on maps of the local area as an established wood since the 1800s. Whilst not listed as a Priority Habitat, ancient woodland such as this has been flagged in the national planning policy as important. The recent State of Nature Report identified that one in six species of plant and animal life in the UK is at risk of extinction due to climate change and modern farming methods. Preserving our green corridors is more important than ever before. **Spondon Wood is already bordered by farmland on two sides and Dale Road on another; with this development on the remaining border, the woodland would be surrounded on all sides and the movement of wildlife, particularly the deer herd, would be impeded.** Ever since a wire fence was erected between the woodland and the adjacent field (where the development is proposed), there have been several incidents of deer becoming caught in the fence or being struck by traffic on the A6096. It seems cruel and unnecessary to be adding further threat to the safe movement of the wildlife that has existed in this beautiful area for centuries. I am aware that an application to develop land adjacent to Chaddesden Wood for housing was recently withdrawn, due to the fact that it would block the remaining free border of the woodland and the green corridor in a similar way.

In addition, **opening up easy access to Spondon Wood from Dale Road or the proposed footpaths would greatly increase the risk of irreparable damage to this ancient woodland from antisocial behaviour, vandalism and littering, not to mention the noise pollution and disturbance to wildlife from construction traffic and the building works.**

I notice that the plans do not appear to have full and detailed plans regarding water, drainage and sewerage on the site. The plans state *'foul effluent will be drained onsite via a gravity sewer network that will discharge into a pumping adoptable station. A rising main*

connection from the pumping station will look to pump foul flows offsite into the adopted foul sewer network in Dale Road. Severn Trent proposed an alternative connection to the foul network in Sancroft Road to the south; however, this route would be constrained by having to cross third party land and is not deemed to be the preferred option'. I would like to ask what then is the decided option for where the foul water flows? Spondon already has an old and strained sewer system; having already experienced drain covers lifting, frequent episodes of flooding on streets and damage to roads from the escape of water, particularly after periods of extreme storms or prolonged rain, both of which will increase in frequency as climate warming continues to alter our weather patterns. My neighbours on Huntley Avenue and Deer Park View often see the Spondon Wood field flood and hold standing water for a long time after heavy rainfall. If the proposed two drainage ponds and pumping system become overwhelmed due to extreme rainfall, what safeguards are in place to prevent the pollution of our natural water courses and the flooding of residents' homes and gardens? Furthermore, tree roots that run under the field from the woodland trees will not intercept rainwater if concrete is laid on top of the field, thus increasing the flood risk.

I also note that **this planning application has been submitted before the change in planning law that is due in January 2024. Submitting before this date will therefore avoid the legal requirement for the developer to demonstrate mitigating environmental work to create a biodiversity net gain of 10%.** Whilst the planning application identifies measures such as a wildflower planting, additional tree/hedgerow planting, log piles and bird/bat boxes on existing trees, I do not believe these quick eco-fixes go far enough. In addition, if building went ahead, who would maintain these features after its completion? The field adjacent to Spondon Wood supports lapwings and skylarks – birds named as Priority Species in the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework – and is also a hunting ground for tawny owls (I hear them regularly from my back garden). **A biodiversity net gain surely cannot be achieved if the open space of the field is lost forever and the air quality of Spondon is lowered by the increase in traffic that the development would inevitably create; there also appear to be no additional carbon-reducing features in the plans for the houses, such as electric car charging facilities, solar panels or energy saving heat pumps. Moreover, if the new houses are as close as 15 metres away from the woodland, as the plans indicate, the effects of noise and light pollution upon the nearby wildlife will be devastating.** The plans also seem

to assume that people can easily cycle or walk at least 2km to get to local amenities, despite acknowledging that *'there is limited cycle infrastructure in the immediate vicinity of the site'*. **There is no cycle path either down the hill into Spondon village or to Ockbrook or Ilkeston either; nor is there a pavement to walk all the way to Kirk Hallam or Ockbrook. This will not encourage people to leave their cars at home**, especially during the darker months of the year, or when residents need to get more than a few bags of shopping.

Spondon has an extremely close-knit community and its residents are very proud of their local history and village status. **The construction of an additional 263 homes** (23 more than were proposed for the same site in 2021) **would create an urban sprawl at this end of Spondon**, changing the identity of the village and blurring its borders forever, whilst creating a somewhat isolated community in the new 'Woodside' development. **In addition, the plans show that on the Spondon side of the development, the proposed footpaths and boundaries directly contact Derby City Council's boundary, or adjoin existing residents' gardens. Who would be responsible and financially liable for maintaining these footpaths and boundaries? Derby City, Erewash Borough or individual residents themselves?**

I am horrified to learn that the plans accommodate 2-3 cars per property at the proposed site, meaning that **there could be approximately 750 additional vehicles using the roads in and around Spondon if the development was undertaken**; not to mention an influx of construction traffic while the building work was carried out. **We already have huge issues with traffic jams in Spondon if there is an accident or closure on a nearby road** such as the A52. **With only one entry and exit point on Dale Road proposed for the 'Woodside' development, it is also likely that traffic congestion will increase on the A6096.** Another grave concern is that despite road markings to indicate the junction, **there is a gradual slope reducing its visibility from the Spondon side and the change in speed limit from 30–50 mph just before the junction, which means drivers will be accelerating as they are going towards it from the Spondon side and causing danger to slow-moving vehicles turning out of the junction.** Moreover, I frequently witness drivers speeding as they travel up the hill from Spondon village past Dale Park, being way over the 30 mph limit long before they have even passed Pheasant Field Drive; too fast to notice vehicles at an unexpected junction a little further up the road. **It is surely vital that there is also more than one access point**

available for emergency vehicles to get to the proposed development, particularly if the entire building project is spread over five years and there are construction vehicles still taking up space on the site as well as the residents' cars.

Adjustments proposed for Spondon's roads to mitigate this increase in traffic – a left turn lane at Willowcroft Road/Nottingham Road traffic lights and additional lights on the Asda Island – **will not be effective in reducing traffic jams when you have around 750 more vehicles in the area, most of which will be commuting through Spondon village each day.** At a meeting with Spondon's councillors on Wednesday 4th October, it was also noted that Derby City Council's Traffic and Transportation department had not yet been approached about these measures. **We will, of course, have no additional increase in the frequency of buses or the range of bus routes offered and already our local buses can get overcrowded at busy times.** This is a particular problem for Spondon's young people, who cannot access a post-16 provision or placement within Spondon and have to travel by public transport. It is a sad reality that crossing the road anywhere in Spondon, particularly at the entrance to Dale Park, is both difficult and dangerous at busy times – I have regularly had to wait for up to five minutes to cross the road here in the early evening and pick up my dog to take her across quickly and safely. **There appears to have only been one monitoring day for traffic to inform these plans, on Thursday March 16th 2022; how can that be a true representation of how busy our roads already are?**

It is also obvious that this development also allows Erewash Borough to collect council tax from 'Woodside' residents, even though these new Erewash residents will frequently be using Spondon and Derby's much closer services and amenities, for which Derby City Council will then suffer the extra cost. For example, Spondon's roads are already damaged and pot-holed in many places – which will only get worse with the increase in traffic – and will therefore need more funding to maintain.

Residents in Spondon are already really struggling to access their local GPs for appointments and very frequently have to travel to Chaddesden, the city centre or Ilkeston if they are lucky enough to get an appointment; again, very difficult if you cannot drive and have to use one or more buses to get there. There are also only two pharmacies in Spondon, no NHS dental

places and many residents already suffer the expense of private dental care or have no dentist at all. **Adding potentially around 1000 more people to Spondon's overstretched services could push our local health services to breaking point.**

As a member of staff at West Park school, I know that as Spondon's only secondary school, **it's already oversubscribed** – the Year 7 intake this year was 304 pupils, exceeding the planned capacity of 290 after successful appeals. I am also very concerned that **the roads near Spondon's schools already get very congested and dangerous at start/finish times**, when there are more parked cars and reduced visibility for drivers to see pedestrians trying to cross. I know of many incidences already where pupils have been hit or had near-misses with cars. My mother-in-law, who lives on West Road, was also nearly hit by a car last week, when a driver trying to get around a traffic jam drove onto the pavement. It is not acceptable to imagine that we could accommodate the additional volume of pupils this development could bring at West Park, when we have no more classroom space available.

Spondon cannot cope with another 263 houses right alongside its boundary when there will be little to no extra funding for the huge impact on all its services and infrastructure that this would create. On a map from 1826, Spondon Wood and its adjacent field appear the same as they do now, yet it would be permanently encroached upon and at huge risk of damage, with so much of its wildlife destroyed or forced away, if this development was allowed to go ahead. Spondon, a vibrant village with its own character and charm, would sprawl out into the countryside with this development, with residents becoming more isolated and local services and secondary school places stretched beyond breaking point, with traffic congestion and many more accidents on our local roads. It is imperative that the development of the Spondon Woods site DOES NOT GO AHEAD.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Eleanor Phillips.

Eleanor Phillips