

Send your objection to:

Rother District Council
Town Hall
London Road
Bexhill-on-Sea
East Sussex
TN39 3JX

If getting to the post box or post office is going to be a challenge, then Royal Mail also provides a post collection service to pick up the letter from your home. There is a small charge for the service, but very convenient.

~~Private~~ Objection

Rother Local Plan 2020-40

I would like to submit my response to Q.64 of The Draft Rother Local Plan 2020-40 P.145

Q64. What are your views on the potential sites identified in the draft HELAA that could accommodate more growth in Battle and surrounding settlements?

I am writing to make a record of my concerns after reviewing Rother District Council's draft Local Plan (2020 – 40) and draft housing and economic land availability assessments (HELAA). Specifically Chapter 3 of the HELAA document, Battle and surrounding settlements. P.31

I am writing to **strongly object** to the proposed development of land at Almonry Farm, North Trade Road. Site ID BAT0014.

I have examined the plans and I know the site well. I wish to object strongly to the development of houses in this location for the following reasons:

1.The area proposed for development lies within the High Weald AONB and any planned housing would cause significant damage to the immense biodiversity of the area which comprises of ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, meadows, ancient hedgerows/boundaries and habitats for endangered plants, fungi, birds, bats, reptiles and mammals. The infrastructure required to build 100 houses (sewers, piping systems, cables, foundations etc) would decimate the ecology of the site and endanger wildlife thus not fulfilling the National Policy of affording AONB sites 'highest status of protection.'

2. 3.63 *The NPPF specifically states that the scale and extent of development within an AONB should be limited and advises that planning applications for major development should be refused other*

The classification of a major development is 10 houses or more, this proposal is for 100 houses. Why? There are no 'exceptional circumstances' of housing need in Battle. Several houses at Lillybank (most recent development) are unsold and now reduced in price. There are many family-sized homes currently for sale in Battle that have been advertised for 6 months + Added to this is the current development of the Blackfriars site which is for 200 houses.

3. Urban Sprawl. A poor decision on a planning application on this site (100 houses) could set a precedent for a pattern of development that could lead to massive expansion and exploitation of the site as it is over 18 hectares leading to urban sprawl.

4. Battle is a hugely important market town, home to one of the UK's most important historical sites and brings thousands of visitors every year. Building over historic land would change the look and feel of Battle from a small town to a conurbation and a less attractive place to visit. This would have a direct impact on local businesses and the economy.

5. Viable farmland ruined. The site comprises of Grade A, viable farmland. It is currently used for livestock, haylage and hay. Building over this site would rob the opportunity of this area ever being farmed again thus demeaning food security.

6. Historic site decimated. The fields of Almonry farm were formerly part of Battle Abbey and are of historical importance. The fields, ancient woodland and hedgerows provide a green buffer between the town and Battle Abbey

7. Road. Battle High Street and North Trade Road are heavily congested and at times Battle High Street is gridlocked. North Trade Road and Battle Highstreet are ancient thoroughfares with many listed and Historically significant buildings. The traffic generated by 100 extra houses will put enormous pressure on the already strained road network and old buildings.

8. Infrastructure. What are the plans for extra school places? GP surgeries and dentists?

9. Access via Tollgates residential area is unworkable. The planned access road would put immense pressure on the small, residential road into Tollgates (an area which has just recovered from expansion). There is no junction capacity.

10. The proposed access road will bisect 2 buildings of historical importance via a residential garden. Almonry Farmhouse (a Grade 2 listed building) and Almonry Oast House. A substantial amount of

mature trees and shrubs would have to be removed in order to build an access road.

11. There is significant surface water flooding across several areas of the proposed site, underground springs and streams. Any removal of woodland/shrubs will have a negative impact on the water table and clay soil with the potential to upheave homes.

12. The planned road would bisect a public footpath which is currently heavily utilised by the public and most especially the pupils of Claverham School and Battle Langton School as a safe route to school. A road bisecting the footpath would compromise the safety and independence of children travelling to and from school.

13. After the reneged promises of the developers at the current Blackfriars site and the inability of RDC to compel the developers to make good their promise of affordable housing and social housing it is clear there is absolutely NO appetite for any further large-scale housing developments in Battle.

<https://www.rother.gov.uk/housing/housing-development/rother-dc-housing-company-makes-significant-progress-to-deliver-its-first-housing-scheme>

14. The people of Battle are not NIMBY's, moreover a concerned populace that believes their heritage and green future are at stake. The main tenet of the RDC draft development plan is 'Green to the core.'

'Green to the Core emphasises the need to consider the impact of our planning decisions on the climate emergency, biodiversity crisis and the High Weald National Landscape.' Rother District Council's draft Local Plan (2020 – 40).

RDC need to listen to the responses of this consultation and consider the implications for future generations, in a declining population, of the impact decisions today have on Battle's Green future. There are other sites to consider that don't choke the life out of Battle. Leave our precious AONB alone.

Name: MR ROBERT CEE

