

Dear Sirs,

I refer to your Notification of Planning Application letter Reference DM/25/3129 dated 27/1/2026, and comment as follows.

The original allocation of land for building was given under pressure to meet Government building targets under the previous government. This was for approximately 60 from memory, and local residents had reservations about this. So an application for 125 obviously raises even greater concerns.

The style of housing shown in the AI generated images contained within “the Fairfax “Community consultation brochure” is not the worst and does seem in reasonable sympathy with traditional local styles of Sussex building. However, the devil will be in the detail. Is this the style of housing they will actually end up building if a go ahead is given? None of these images seem to appear again within the supporting documents for this application. The consultation brochure includes pictures of some handsome looking half flint housing and a caption to the effect that “Fairfax has been involved with several high-quality schemes across the South East – this is St Aubyns in Rottingdean” This is not the same as saying this is the style we will adopt for this development.

My main concerns relate to drainage (flood risk), additional demands on already failing local infrastructure particularly clean water supply and Sewage disposal (Although it should go without saying that access to hospitals, GPs, Dentists, Education and just about every other service is also included in this - although I have not expanded on all these points per se). As well as the further loss of what was productive agricultural land, I am also more than a little concerned by the loss of yet more wild life habitat and potentially our Barn owls as well as many other local wild life. In addition, the development can be expected to bring months of additional road disruption as bulk materials are conveyed across our already crumbling local roads. The previous Red Row, Penland Farm development, saw high loaded double trailer articulated lorries carrying heavy brick loads (and other bulk materials) - thundering through Hayward Heath, Balcombe and Cuckfield often forcing local traffic to pull over or be forced off the road or into ditches. Not helped by the fact that “Highways” had recently withdrawn the lorry restrictions that used to exist on Balcombe Road and Borde Hill Lane. The latest proposal now also seems to include an absolutely ludicrous re-configuration of the already over- sized new roundabout at the junction of Balcombe Road, Hanlye Lane and Borde Hill Lane. The size and repositioning of this newly proposed roundabout structure seems beyond all reason. What more utility can it provide when the roads attaching to it remain the same? The creation of the last new roundabout closed a major route way for over 3 months, with diversions forcing traffic to divert to other routes through Cuckfield, Haywards Heath, Lindfield and Ardingly. This cut off Borde Hill residents from the shops and services they relied on in Haywards Heath whilst the developers suggested Copyhold Lane as a suitable and safe diversion route. Copyhold Lane is a narrow twisting country lane with a single lane railway bridge with weight restrictions. It’s is anything but safe now with its current level of local traffic and with drivers at least familiar with its peculiarities. This becomes something quite different when lots of non-locals are forced to use it. The alternative is miles of further diversion back through Balcombe and Cuckfield villages. The road edge is crumbling along most of its length and it only has a few passing points for larger vehicles.

Drainage

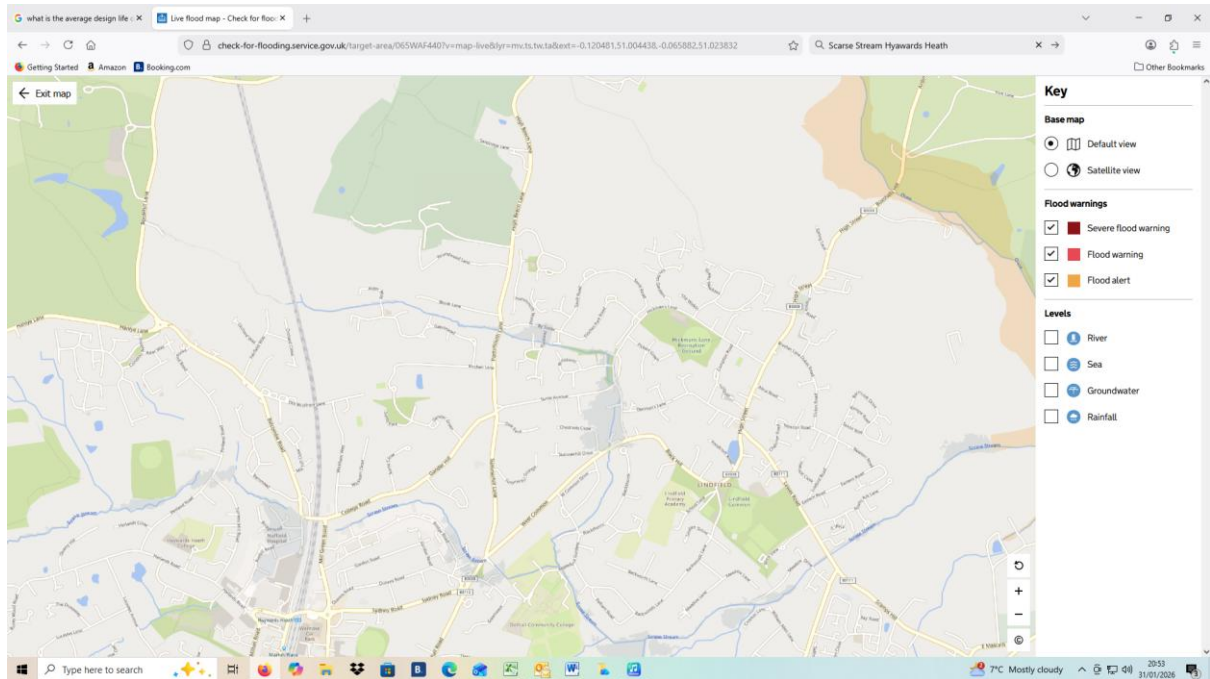
I have viewed the multiple documents associated with this application, and would suggest that the “fall of land document C:\ F650/2312 (attached)” could benefit from a good few more “**little blue arrows**” to the left of Borde Hill Lane itself, as well as the land to the north to give a more realistic

representation of the topography within which this development is proposed – taking due regard to land beyond the foot-print of the actual development land itself. This goes across much of the data presented in support of this application. The little blue arrows should be taken as a fair indication of the direction of water movement, but to the north of the site the land rises and water also flows southwards (and South Eastwards) into **Scrase Stream**. As it does to the West from the higher ground and significant lands across the road in Borde Hill Gardens estate itself and their series of lakes. **This document should show a convergence of little blue arrows.** I have seen this time and time again, where a planning committee insists that they can only take into consideration matters directly affecting the development in question - with little to no regard/ care/ or concerned on its impacts to settled communities beyond. In turn the developers supporting documentation takes full advantage of this attitude in the way they present their supporting documentation. I acknowledge that there are other documents that do accurately show topography and land levels more accurately, but most people I know just tend to be drawn to the pretty pictures and artistically coloured plan views and maps. This area of land is in a natural valley with a stream running through it, much of it being what used to be called a flood plain, before developers found other ways to broaden their vocabulary. And we all know how many promises have been made (and broken) by successive governments not to build on flood plans don't we?

We keep hearing of the benefits of “up-stream soakaways, and catchment areas on farm land.” But if people keep covering them in concrete and then what have you got? Given that the **Scrase Stream (across all of its meandering sections and tributaries)** flows like most water courses well beyond the direct area of development in question - then this needs to be properly considered. **This water course already contributes to flooding beyond the railway embankment into parts of Lindfield.** I must say the current Department of Environment response seems rather thin on this (even though their own web-site currently carries warnings on this for parts of Lindfield). I presume because what such reports nowadays always seemed to be based on is “remote desk-top studies” - themselves based upon data long out of date. Surely most downstream flooding results from upstream excesses. We are always hearing from climate specialists of the need to plan for the future, and that current climate models are increasingly out of date.

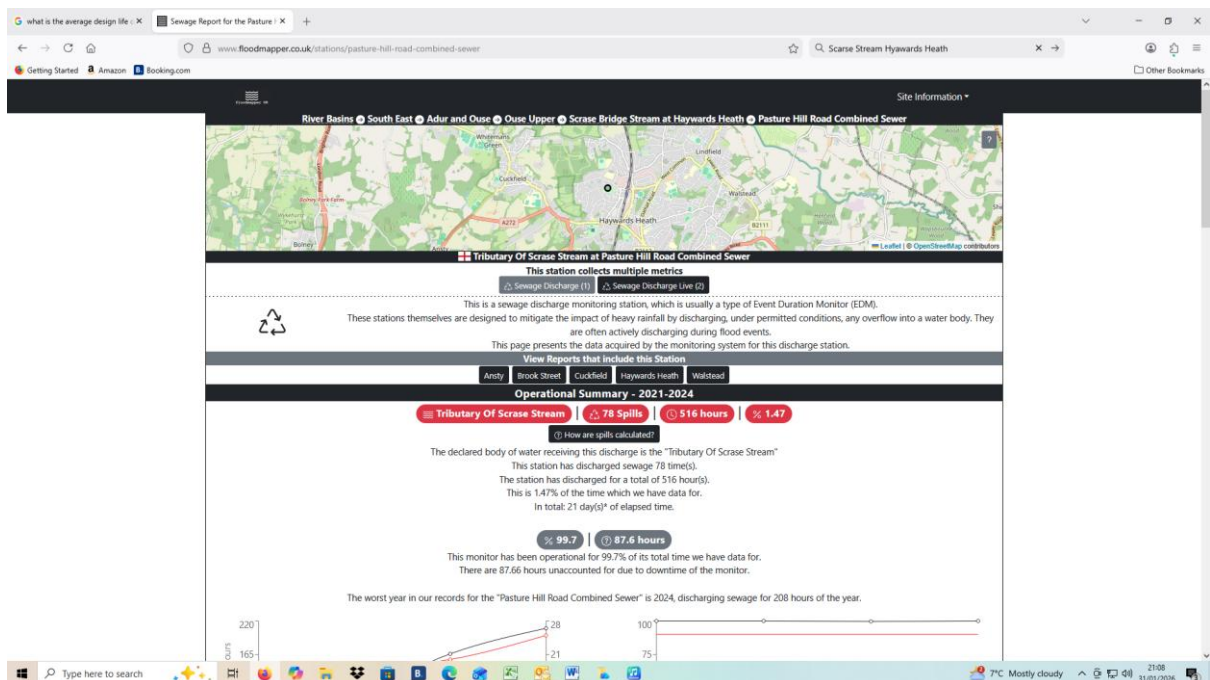
From the very outset the land concerned here was identified as having drainage concerns for any future development. Even as farmed land, careful consideration had to be given to when heavy machinery could access it - and crop and livestock pasturing had to work with the seasons. Filling this with more impermeable roofed dwellings and supporting road infrastructure is only going to add to the speed of run-off, and therefore quantity. I see some very impressive calculations mostly relying on holding water in a couple of temporary holding pits. The natural pond like features in these fields are now already full, so how are they going to deal with more? The answer might well be we will make them larger. I suggest probably not large enough as that would require surrendering land on which houses could be built and this proposal wants to build on! Who then cares if houses flood a few years later?

The current Government Live flood map is copied below. However, we all know that the data on which this is based is already long out of date due to on-going Department of Environment resource problems.

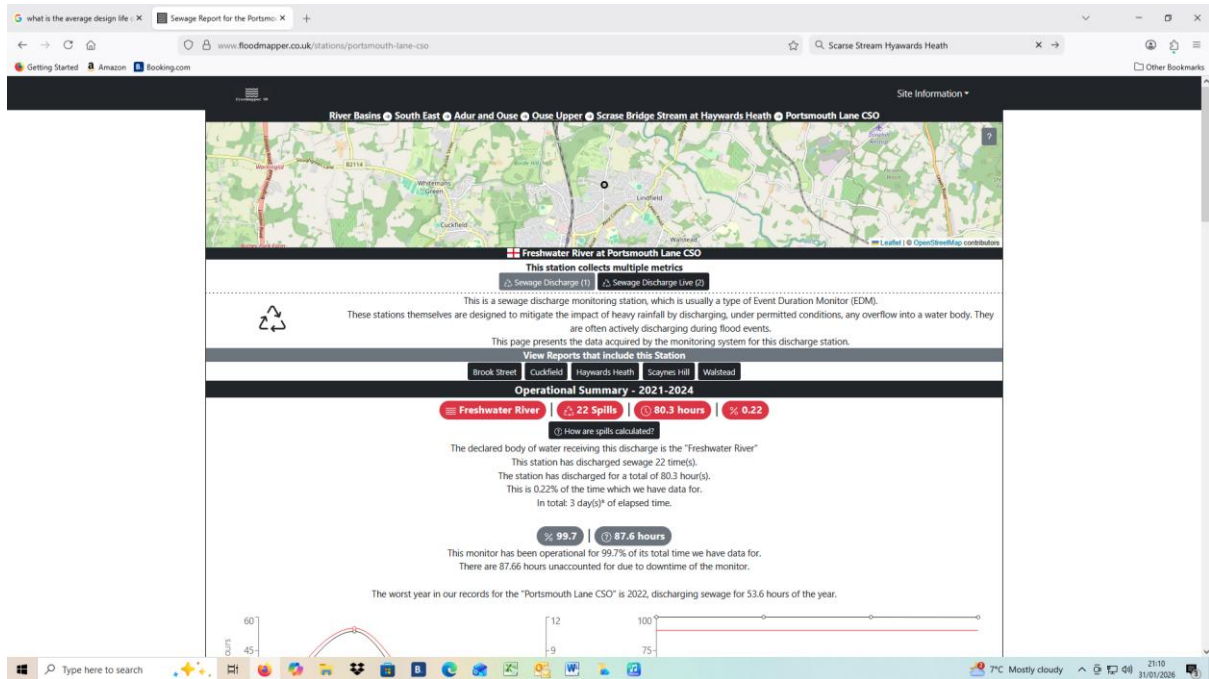


Another web site shows this;

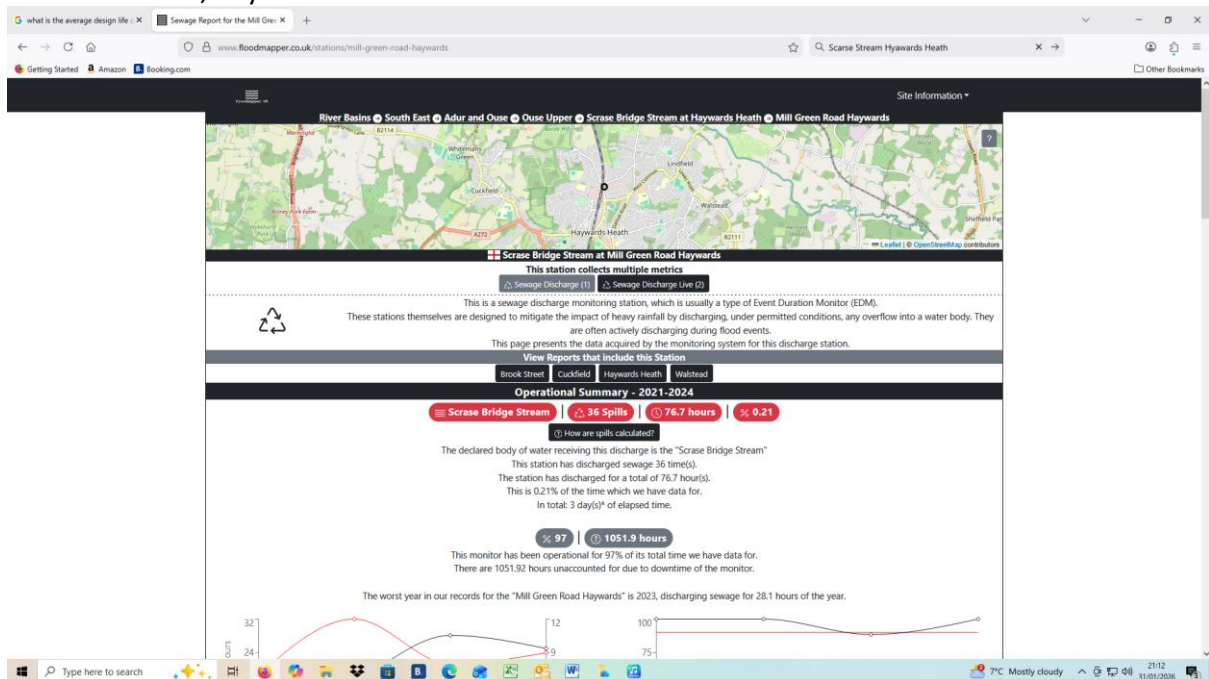
Penland Road, Haywards Heath.



Portsmouth Lane Lindfield.



Mill Green Road, Haywards Heath



The Flood Risk Assessment documents again primarily focus on flooding risk to properties within the “new development” with scant regard to land to the South East towards Lindfield and Haywards Heath or existing settlements. **Land already impacted by the higher ground run offs and drainage from the Penland Farm Red Row development. These effects are all cumulative. I am not sure that anyone is paying anything more than lip service to climate change.**

All these plans work on the naive assumption that all of the proposed 21st century engineered solutions are going to work in the first place and be properly maintained. As it stands Highways can’t even keep the road gullies running along Borde Hill Lane clear owing to financial constraints. A works programme that required 6 monthly inspection and maintenance now stands as bi-annual. That is just not good enough the gullies are almost constantly blocked. The flood alleviation

plans for **lower Penland Road, Turners Hill, Pasture Hill and Burrell road, Haywards Heath** (Mainly the flood balancing pond by the Sixth Form College Playing Fields) have already failed on multiple occasions because the Council can't clear a view twigs. These simple maintenance oversights were most recently made manifestly worse by virtue of additional water run-off from the Penland Farm development, which was forewarned by residents and me as it happens, but ignored. **At the time they were raised we were told that they could not be considered because they were outside of the development land directly being considered! Small comfort for the established residential and commercial properties that were then and are still impacted.** As it was, domestic properties were flooded and Harlands Primary School only saved by the prompt pumping actions of our local Fire Brigade.

The **sewage removal** from the proposed additional 125 properties currently seems to involve cutting into the revised pumped sewage disposal arrangements (currently still under construction) from Borde Hill Garden - which will then cut into existing sewers running down Balcombe road (southbound). **The same sewers that Southern Water previously said did not have the capacity to deal with the sewage demands of the Penland Farm Red Row development and which this developer now proposes to add yet further unsustainable load.** One pump failure, one blockage and where will all the sewage flow back to? For those currently unfamiliar with the "revised pumped sewage disposal arrangement from Borde Hill Gardens, as far as I can see this currently relies on a 9 inch flexible pipe with an expected design life of 50 to 100 years. Of course, such marketing claims, are just that, and how reliable these claims are for a product material that's barely been around since the lower of this range is hard to say, let alone the much thinner current types of pipework currently in common use today. I accept that some flexible plastic pipework is known to have first come into use in the late 1920's. I wonder just how many of those pipes would still have their original integrity if they were to be dug up and tested (Especially where they are not being used purely for gravity feed land drainage, as opposed to being part of a pressurised or pumped system as here. This relates not only to the pipework itself, but whatever jointing system is employed). The point I am making is please don't confuse that Borde Hill system with some form of more robust concrete sewer system. **Given all the effort that has obviously gone into the rest of this submission, this most important element seems particularly weakly defined.** Clearly additional expensive to maintain ground pumps will need to be added, but they will still be pumping into systems beyond originally designed capacity. Here in this respect alone I actually have some sympathy for our much maligned water industry that did push-back on earlier schemes for this very reason. You will already have seen the data on on-going problems presented above.

As it happens there is currently a pump failure on part of Southern Waters currently overloaded system. This has resulted in a temporary pump and generator solution having to be placed at the bottom of Fairfield Way, Haywards Heath. See picture below;



Another concern is increased **“clean water demand.”** Over recent months (December to January) **we have seen water supply problems in Cuckfield, and residents of Borde Hill have noticed a recent marked reduction in water pressure over this period.** The existing water main along this section of road is estimated to date from around the mid to late 1940's. It was to have been replaced as a priority by South East Water (SEW) back in 2014 owing to the higher than normal number of bursts and repairs all the way up to Balcombe. This was another landmark project identified within SEW's £300 million pound plus - rolling programme of improvements. The only problem being that seems to have been largely a non-spending / non-starting continuous roll forward programme. SEW problems further afield at Ardingly reservoir, and endless supply problems in East Grinstead, Royal Tunbridge Wells and a large number of villages and towns in between - along with continuing hose pipe bans can't just be glossed over. Even with the renewed pressure on this company to actually

start spending, they themselves admit that any noticeable improvements will be years in the making. Therefore it is fair to assume that the current pressures on endless building within the wider South East area is only going to make matters worse a long time before they get better.

Loss of Agricultural Land

This is most certainly not a brown field site. The fact the land has not been productively farmed on a regular basis for so many years has purely been down to the fact it has been speculatively “land banked” by the Borde Hill estate originally in association with Red Row, we suspect as a proposed follow-on to the controversial Penland Farm development. The plan originally refused by the Local and Mid Sussex councils and only approved on appeal to Central Government Departments **exploiting loop-holes in delayed District and Neighbourhood plan proposals (I am not sure we are much further forward even now)**, and of course more recently Fairfax developments. The on-going failure to formulate and agree local plans is leaving all of us in jeopardy. **The fact that consultations are still on-going for the “Mid Sussex District Plan 2014 to 2031” is a clear indication of this. For those that haven’t realised it is now 2026!**

The presentation of data and documents in part disguises the true nature of the area. Their seem to be lots of document covers showing the taller Flats of the recent Penland Farm Redrow development, and hardly any shots of the far more characterful Victorian Cottages and larger houses surrounding the site. All of which contribute to the overall setting for the protected and listed buildings in the area.

What about rights for natural light?

The proximity of the proposed new house immediately adjacent to the 1890s Hill Cottage threatens to over shadow it literally and drastically reduce light to the south side of that property. People looking at 2 dimensional plan views, need to understand how the land rises to the South here. It’s not called Hill Cottage without reason. Given lightly roof heights this is bound to have a direct impact. Surely there ought to be some limits on this due to rights such as ancient-lights or some such. In addition I would suggest that this will also add to drainage issues. Light also means heat, especially during the colder winter months. This is just straight forwardly unfair.

Loss of Wildlife habitats and further disruption to endangered species.

I see extensive tree and wild life studies have been conducted, and very impressive they are too, but I don’t expect any of them in themselves will stand in the way of the developers, and I deeply regret that. Since living here for the last 34 years I have seen wonderful glimpses of nature. Sadly far fewer hares than when I first moved in but increases in other species (Red kite, Buzzards, and Barn Owls. Even a White Tailed Eagle a few months ago). The studies attached list a number of legally protected species that will clearly suffer should this development proceed.

Major community disruption from proposed remodelling of current roundabout and movement of heavy bulk material to site

As already mention above, for some reason that I can’t begin to understand, this proposal includes plans to again drastically re-model the already oversized new roundabout at the junction of Balcombe Road, Hanlye Lane and Borde Hill Lane. The last time this occurred there were road closures and diversions that lasted for over 3 months. In addition to which there were several years of dramatically increased heavy lorry traffic delivering bulk material to site.

Diminishment of the setting of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB.)

This land sits adjacent to an “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” it helps frame it, as well as the listed buildings that are within it. If this development is allowed to proceed it will seriously diminish the whole character of this very special area, as viewed from both local roads, various viewing points and by passengers on the railway. It is just more urban sprawl, and I would argue contrary to a number of key objectives set-out within the district and neighbourhood plans precisely aimed at protecting such assets.

Hopefully some of my wider comments will at least be considered, and residents and Councillors in wider areas properly consulted, represented and heard. This Application has been given quite a short deadline for comment, especially given its complexity and scale. Yet having spoken to a number of residents on the mailing list quite a few have only just received their letters yesterday, some have still not received them at all.

Yours faithfully,

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