

Mrs Mary Godwin

8th December 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Ryedale Local Plan – Development proposals in West End, Ampleforth**Sites 111 and 616 – Knoll Hill Ampleforth**

I am writing to object in the strongest possible terms to the proposal for Sites 111 and 616 at Knoll Hill, Ampleforth as a possible development site for new housing. As you will see from my address, I am directly opposite site 111 and 616 is only a few yards up the hill.

Firstly, I do not understand why the council is considering the development of this land in the light of the fact that Abbey View is currently being built on the south side of Ampleforth and has provided many new homes (I believe around 40) for people in the village. I also know that there is planning for 6 new homes on the Old Petrol Station Site next to St Benedict's Church which have not yet been built. From my experience and those of my friends and family who live in the area, there is simply no need for this housing.

Further if it is to be in the style of Abbey View, the wonderful visual amenity of Knoll Hill will be irreparably damaged for the sake of not very many houses. This is agricultural land and is used for grazing cattle and sheep typical of the area. It really is a much loved and very prominent beautiful landmark in the area and visible from a long distance from various angles. I therefore do not understand why it is being considered for housing. I am also very worried about the increase in traffic which will inevitably make accidents more likely.

I would have thought that as a Service Village, planning for around 2-3 new houses per year should be passed for Ampleforth especially in view of the development of Abbey View and the Old Petrol Station Site. If you now give permission for the development of these sites, you will allow a change the character and appearance of the village for the worse forever. I do support development which is needed and done in a sympathetic way but what is being proposed here is just completely out of character. We really only need a limited amount of housing in Ampleforth and I believe that infill should be used for this purpose.

As I understand it, there have been several attempts to get similar plans passed around 25 years ago and just before I moved in around 2009. Each time the proposal has been turned down for very good reasons, namely that the by extending the development into the countryside it would harm the the rural character of Knoll Hill and its relationship to the wider important, attractive and valuable landscape.

As you know, these sites are in the Howardian Hills AONB and on land directly bordering the National Park. For this reason, the impact of their development should be treated as being in the National Park. Full weight should be given to its AONB status and location bordering the National Park when evaluating the proposed development which goes completely against the principles designed to protect these areas which are so important to our country and its heritage.

I also do not understand why such a development would be considered appropriate when it is outside the settlement area of Ampleforth on the Ryedale Plan. The Written Statement accompanying the Ampleforth section ("Insert 9") in the 2002 Local Plan says further development will only be permitted within the limits shown on that map, and the proposals fall outside those limits. If the development is allowed it would mean that this area would be substantially extended at the expense of established agricultural land

The Council has already ensured that this area is to be treasured and preserved by designating that the buildings adjoining these sites are in the Ampleforth Conservation Area. If an estate of new housing was permitted this would completely ruin the appearance of the conservation area and defeat its purpose. The proposals would look completely out of character and out of place, when compared to the existing housing and buildings in the immediate vicinity.

The impact of the proposed development of these sites would be felt not only by local residents but the many visitors we have to the area. There are footpaths and well loved walks in this area which enjoy the benefit of the view and appearance of the hill and its unspoilt character. This can be appreciated from the south (walking on footpaths which run north south across the farmland) and also walking up and down the hill on the newly created footpath not to mention motorists and cyclists. I often see people sitting on the bench enjoying the view and the character of the hill. It is this beauty which gives the area its attraction to tourists and visitors who bring vital money into the local economy.

In the end, I can see no exceptional need for housing which would mean that all the considerations that I have listed above should be sacrificed and the lovely landscape destroyed.

Finally, I would like to stress my worries about road safety. I am 75 and while I am a confident driver, the prospect of having a significant increase in traffic coming into and out of the site is worrying. There is bound to be an increase in the risk of accidents, particularly as speeding happens all the time usually by cars coming down the hill including those towing caravans.

I would very much urge you to reject the proposed development of these sites and would be grateful if you would acknowledge receipt of my letter.

Yours faithfully,

Mary Godwin

