

Charlotte Bogg

From: RICHARD HARRIS
Sent: 11 December 2015 01:12
To: Rachael Balmer; Charlotte Bogg
Subject: Development Proposals in West End, Ampleforth, Sites 616 and 111

Dear Madam or Sir,

It was with some surprise and great sadness that I heard about plans to possibly build on Knoll Hill on the edge of Ampleforth in the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

I would like to offer my perspective and explain my objection to any such plan.

I moved with my family to Ampleforth in 2014 when I decided to take a role in one of the larger plc companies headquartered in the north east of England. We were attracted by the rural and safe setting and quiet community lifestyle together with sensible transport options to the nearby cities and indeed by train to those further afield. The beautiful aspect of the village as you enter via West End is truly special and it was no surprise to us to learn that Ampleforth straddles both The North York Moors National Park and the Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It's natural beauty capped by the green and pleasant Knoll Hill is indeed outstanding.

Initially we rented a cottage and then after a year decided to buy one of the available empty houses. The house we bought had indeed not been lived in for some time. We were only too pleased to begin restoring the house to its former beauty; being in a prominent position along West End road we recognise our responsibility to look after a building which is not only our home but also an important part of the village landscape. Of course many of the West End's homes, including those bordering Knoll Hill rightly fall within the Ampleforth Conservation Area.

This sense of responsibility is I know shared by many villagers, as we have a duty to preserve this beautiful environment for future generations. Of course society progresses and Ampleforth, like every other village, town and city in the country, needs to accept its responsibility in providing more homes for our growing population. In conserving resources it is therefore important to use those homes that are already built and not lived in, and there are several of those in the village. There are also several in-fill locations that could cope reasonably well with additional new homes which, if sympathetically built, would not detract from the overall aesthetics nor ergonomics of the village and its growing number of inhabitants.

There is also the significant Abbey View development on Station Road, which though not particularly in keeping with the traditional nature of building in the village is at least within its existing settlement area. I note that quite a few of these new properties remain unsold and that not all the intended properties have yet been constructed.

So my objection to any planned development on Knoll Hill is that it is not actually needed because existing alternative options have not yet been exhausted. It would also destroy the natural beauty and detract in future from people wanting to live in or visit the village. I've come to understand that much of Ampleforth's business community is dependant on travellers wishing to pause a while in the village.

In addition to Abbey View, the village could cope with two or three new homes being sympathetically developed each year within the settlement area noted by the Ryedale Local Plan. Knoll Hill is clearly outside of this area and any development would intrude into open countryside.

There is also the matter of road safety. Access to the proposed site could only be via the steep 14% gradient road heading into Ampleforth, a road which is also the caravan route avoiding Sutton Bank, and the only main route when Sutton Bank is closed. It is obvious that any sort of junction here to a housing development

would lead to accidents. Anyone who has driven down the hill in wintery conditions will know how tricky it can be.

Finally I realise that many of your current policies and guidelines would prohibit building on Knoll Hill, including the inspector's 1987 report, the 2002 Local Plan, your site selection methodology, and of course the AONB and National Park designation. At a time when our government has just reiterated the national importance of these designations and the beautiful land within them, and highlighted the important tourist income and community spirit, I think that it is inconceivable that our elected council would support such developments proposed for Knoll Hill.

Nevertheless I feel that this is such an important matter that I wanted to add my own personal objection and ask that you take this into account in your planning considerations.

Kind regards,

Richard Harris

Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone