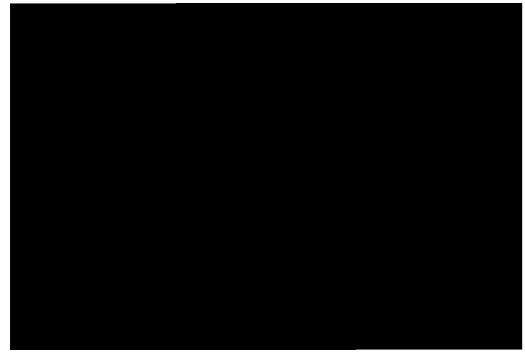


Sharon Lunney



Re: Planning application 0923/0024 for 263 homes at Spondon Wood.

This letter outlines my reasons for formally objecting to the planning application 0923/0024.

Protected Land

The land earmarked for development is designated as Greenbelt. As the planning officers are no doubt aware, the National Planning Policy Framework states housing developments should only be granted in special circumstances. There is no evidence of any special circumstances requiring this land be built upon. As far as possible these green lands must be protected for the maintenance of England's beauty and identity – for all its inhabitants!

I have seen statements from the applicant suggesting there is desperate demand for housing in Erewash which provisions special circumstances, I could only find data that counters this position. No such information surrounding special circumstances was evident in the application. At time of writing, Right Move shows 638 properties for sale with 3 bedrooms+ in Erewash, 296 of which are in the price range proposed for this development. Looking at within 5-mile radius of Dale Abbey (central area of Erewash) this increases to 1,369/ 485 within the price range. This is not suggestive of any shortage within Erewash or its immediately neighbouring areas.

Risk to natural habitats and its wildlife

The land immediately backs onto the ancient and semi-natural woodlands of Spondon Wood (Defra Object ID: 46639). Ancient woodland is an irreplaceable natural asset we are fortunate to be custodians of. It must be cared for in the interests of carbon capture, seed banks and genetic diversity, soil quality, wildlife, health & wellbeing. The woods are under a Tree Protection Order and there is known to be an abundance of wildlife including hedgehogs, deer, red kites, bats, foxes, squirrels, and badgers to name a few. I have a very personal link to the

red kites as they were a daily factor in my recent recovery from severe depression, wildlife is so important to the Health & Wellbeing of us all. I saw when a development was put in at Dove Meadow in Spondon, which was a former water pumping station, the garden birds declined, I haven't seen a hedgehog since (they were nightly visitors before) and I saw a fox for the first time last week. This was a small build in comparison, yet had a lasting effect on the wildlife. Whilst there is a chance the wildlife will eventually recover after the initial impact the building works will inevitably bring, the chances are vastly reduced due to the "boxing in" the development would cause owing to a road, farm buildings and fenced play farm (Bluebells) on the other sides.

The plans put the irreplaceable habitat and wildlife at risk of damage as not enough barrier space has been allowed. A minimum 15m from the canopy is outlined in planning guidance from the forestry commission, however these plans have fencing right at the edge of the treeline which is likely to damage root stock. The walkway which has been added as a buffer could also cause damage to roots and potentially impact the forest floor with adjustments to the water table and drainage caused by surface water run-off. Additionally, there is no provision in the plans to allow for co-habiting of the wildlife, any opportunity for migration is cut off with the introduction of fencing which will not allow anything to pass.

In any event, Paragraph 180(c) of the National Planning Policy Framework states that planning should be refused if the development will result in loss or potential damage to ancient woodland unless there are both wholly exceptional circumstances and a compensation strategy. I firmly believe there is significant risk of potential damage in this case with the increase in noise and air pollution and increased risk of disease spreading from planting introduced in home gardens. There are no wholly exceptional circumstances behind the housing development and no compensation strategy was included with the application. The process of construction poses a large risk to the soil, disturbing fungi networks, compacting soil, impacting the water table and drainage during earth works and pollution from noise, vibration, and lighting.

Our green spaces are vitally important for combating the Climate Change Emergency. This planning not only puts at risk existing areas that are vital to this cause, but it also completely avoids any responsibility in this regard. From January 1, 2024, new legislation comes into force mandating mitigation to the environmental impact on the site in the form of Bio-Diversity Net

Gain. Although this planning has been put through prior to this being mandatory, its proximity and evident rushing of the proposal owing to the lack of thorough investigations into the site, suggests it has been done so to avoid the legislation knowing the Net Gain on this site would be significant.

I also have grave concern over the potential anti-social behaviour that could develop in the open space next to the woods. Currently it is not accessible so isn't an area anyone can congregate, but this development would open it up as a new hang-out spot. This brings a risk of littering and worst-case fire, both of which would be damaging to the woods and wildlife.

Urban Sprawl

The proposed development would be its own community with no amenities without the use of private transport. The location, although adjoining Spondon village, is in a different council jurisdiction, and is on land stated as Dale Abbey village, bordering Ockbrook. It would be attached to these locations only by roads, without any public footpaths or lighting. Polling Stations would be in Dale Abbey, libraries, council supplemented leisure facilities and council offices in Ilkeston or Long Eaton. Only Ilkeston has existing public transport connections from North Spondon, however there is no provision in the plans for a bus stop, or a foot path to the existing bus stops further along Dale Road. There are on-going issues with bus provision on the Ilkeston – Derby route both with a lack of supply at key times and reliability.

I also believe it is an unlikely scenario that the potential residents will wish to walk to utilise local shops, schools and other amenities given the distance from this development would be 2km plus. This therefore introduces approximately 750 cars onto the roads based on the plans for parking for 2-3 cars per household. This is another factor failing to negate the Climate Change Emergency by adding additional carbon into the atmosphere – not only from the new vehicles, but the existing traffic idling longer due to the excess congestion. It is of grave concern the extra cars for the school drop off/ pick up, this is already a significant issue within Spondon and is downright dangerous at times, sadly seeing a year 5 pupil knocked down in March 2023.

Erosion of semi-rural community

Spondon has a specific identity as it is surrounded by fields clearly separating the village from the surrounding villages. There is a wonderful level of community engagement and village

centre amenities and events which bring the community together. Erosion of the borders and expansion put this way of life at risk. This development is particularly sensitive in this regard owing to its detachment from Spondon, not least owing to the lack of connecting pathways. Of higher significance, however, is the difference in council provision. Potential residents will have difficulty getting matters on their doorstep attended to as they will not have access to the neighbourhood teams and counsellors who can assist. For example, the footpath from the rear of the development end on a field within Bluebells farm. When you go over the stile toward Sancroft Road, it is often overgrown. Access will matter much more for the potential residents of Erewash, but it is not something their councillors could affect and their council tax will not go towards such maintenance needs. Several local events are arranged by community groups, specifically the community managed library where you need to be a resident within Derby City Council boundaries to register meaning potential residents would be unable to join in. All of this would cause consternation and bad feeling between the areas.

[Lacking Amenities](#)

A daily discussion amongst residents surrounds difficulties accessing necessary amenities, particularly in regard to healthcare. I have always utilised a private dentist since moving to Spondon in 2011 as there are no NHS spaces locally, in that time I have seen the practice expand from 2 dentists to 5 and still they have a waitlist of patients. The availability of GP appointments has eroded significantly in the last few years to the point I was regularly having to stay late at work following up to an hour trying to book appointments or being diverted to the walk-in centre on London Road due to no appointments. I have now opted to use a private GP through my work benefits and involves a charge if my conditions require an in-person examination, this is not an option for many families.

West Park school is oversubscribed with the volume of pupils increasing year on year. I am aware of families living in Spondon who were not offered a place until appeals were lodged. The site has already been developed to increase standard capacity and this year the Head, Scott McGregor wrote to parents advising the difficulty in ensuring a full staff contingent this year. There is more involved in taking additional pupils than money to expand building space. Whilst the current primary schools are not oversubscribed, there is a significant risk of them becoming so with such a high volume of additional family homes. There is no post 16 provision within Spondon, this adds additional demand on public transport and the road networks.

This brings me onto transport links which are fundamentally lacking. The Spondon Flyer was removed due to “not recovering post covid” despite it not being reinitiated after the second lockdown period. This leaves the Ilkeston Flyer which is often over-subscribed and late due to traffic and the i4 which is a 1.5km walk from our home (slightly longer from the proposed development). Whilst there is a train station at the lower end of Spondon, there are very few services that stop there.

Spondon has already seen significant development with no expansion of amenities, known additional development proposals including this one threaten to increase these existing pressures.

Low traffic safety, High traffic volumes

Dale Road (A6096) is a busy route. Often, I have a significant wait to pull out of Huntley Avenue when turning right toward the village or Derby, likewise, to cross from Sandringham to Huntley, often a tight gap has to be taken. It is far worse trying to cross the road there, as my 17-year-old daughter must do to get her college bus to Nottingham, unless you drop lucky you allowance of 5 minutes on the journey time is necessary (there is no crossing). I have concerns over how much worse this will become with the proposed 2-3 cars per household on this application. This is in addition to the traffic that will be filtered towards Spondon (and Ockbrook) from the other large-scale developments that form part of the Erewash Core Strategy in Kirk Hallam and Stanton, particularly the Kirk Hallam relief road. There are no reliable surveys or models relating to traffic volumes, speeds or HGV included in this proposal which is a distinct omission and suggested mitigations on Nottingham Road and ASDA island do not appear adequate.

I enjoy walking and most days go for a 30–60-minute walk around the village, this includes crossing to get to Dale Road Park between the park and the current 50mph area that starts just before the proposed development entrance. Despite this section of road being designated 30mph the speed is often exceeded and visibility for a pedestrian is not brilliant with the trees, bend in the road from Spondon and brow of the hill from Kirk Hallam. There is no crossing or traffic control in this area. Extending the 30mph covering the entrance to the proposed development doesn't mean vehicles will adhere. Additionally, I do not believe the exit from

the proposed development will have good visibility owing to being just past the brow in the hill.

[Precedence has been set](#)

The rejection of a football venue on run-down Hollies Farm off Morley Road by EBC in December 2022 gave reasons that apply here.

Firstly, "Residents are accustomed to a quiet rural environment and the proposals would lead to increased noise through comings and goings, and from shouting associated with the use of the outdoor pitch." Those with homes on the estate backing onto the proposed development, such as myself, are accustomed to a quiet semi-rural environment. Away from the traffic of Dale Road, it is quiet here, there is no trouble and rarely anything to be heard once the sun goes down (and even in the day, it is mainly birdsong or camaraderie between neighbours out and about). The addition of circa 1,000 residents alongside us will change this dynamic significantly at all hours, not just when an event is being run as was the case with the football venue.

Secondly, Derbyshire County Council's highways team said, "the scheme would introduce pedestrian movements on a road with a 60mph speed limit, with no footway and no street lighting "contrary to the best interests of highway safety". There are no plans for extending the footway from the proposed development onto Dale Road and no plans to add footpaths to Dale Abbey or Ockbrook meaning residents would need to walk along grass verges on the busy A6096 to access their local community centres if they wished to walk anywhere. No provision for lighting along these routes exists either.

[Closing Remarks](#)

I appreciate this is a lengthy objection letter, but I really cannot see good reasoning for the proposed development. We have felt really settled since our move to Spondon in 2011 and our children have been raised here since a very early age. For many years we have believed this to be our forever home with no desire to leave Spondon's engaged, happy community. Sadly, this future prospect has had us questioning this. I will end as I did my SGA26 objection as it is quite relevant; this planning application affects much more than a handful of residents getting a home built "in their back-garden". This impacts Derbyshire and the future availability of the irreplaceable "England's green and pleasant land".