

SOB 5 minute presentation to DCF 23 May

Thank you.

I have lived in Bedhampton for nearly 40 years.
I am a retired Past President of the Royal Town Planning Institute.

I speak on behalf of 'Save Old Bedhampton'.
We are **not** anti housing. We are **pro heritage** protection.

The overall context is that the **whole** Council has a legal overriding duty to protect and enhance its heritage assets. This is **not** optional. The Council's default position is therefore to say '**No**' to any development that damages its heritage.

In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework Inspectors have protected both conservation areas **and** individual buildings. For example, buildings like The Elms (Grade II* Listed), located on the blind bends of Lower Road and one of only a handful of such assets in the Borough and Nicholas Pevsner's 'Havant gem'.

Here are 8 **key** pieces of evidence of where we are today.

1. We have been here before. The Local Plan 2026 does **not** contain this site. The Inspector supported the Council and the residents to resist any allocation here. He specifically mentioned the detrimental impact upon the Conservation Area, arising from just 15 houses, as reason enough to say 'No'. This position has **not** changed.
2. The emerging new Draft Local Plan 2036 cannot be given much weight. It, and the supporting documents, have not yet been independently tested for **soundness** at an Examination in Public. There is therefore **no** sound basis of support, in principle, for the development.
3. The Landscape Capacity Study 2015, which, **without consultation**, suggested the site for possible development, is **flawed**. **Our** independent consultant has identified that it **fails** to recognise the historic nature of Lower Road. Also the intrusive nature of the shelterbelt and that this would be an over-powering neighbour to any housing. These non-native trees detract from the open setting of the Conservation Area. The study also **fails** to identify the impact of development upon the recognised tranquillity of the area.
4. The Housing Statement included the site but **it too** has **not** been tested for **soundness**. The Sustainability Appraisal was **flawed**. It identified that increased traffic **could** impact upon the Conservation Area but assumed **again, without evidence**, that it would not be detrimental. There was also **no** mention of the inevitable impact on safety.

5. The officers have the evidence, gathered by residents of traffic movements at the entry to Brookside Road and on the 3 blind bends of Lower Road. These show both the **existing** safety hazards on the lane and the capacity constraints on entry to Old Bedhampton.
6. The Borough's 'Summary of Screening Work', produced last December, recommends the following...(I quote)

*"Due to the very sensitive nature of the location, historic asset issues may prove to be an overriding constraint to development.
...development has the potential to cause significant harm to the intrinsic character of the conservation area."*
7. The heritage assets of the Conservation Area belong to the **whole** Borough **but** the council's current guidance is very outdated. A heritage consultant has been commissioned to update this. New guidance should be out for public consultation later this year. The consultant will review the evidence and significance of the historic setting and landscape surrounding Old Bedhampton and show how this contributes to its character and heritage. The experiences of arriving and departing from places help to make them unique.
8. The residents have submitted a petition calling upon the Council to **remove** the site from further consideration.

In conclusion,

I hope this provides an overview of reasons for all parties to avoid any precipitous decision.

Wait until the results of the petition,
Wait until the outcome of the conservation area review and
Wait until the Examination in Public.

We find it hard to see how the **irrevocable harm** to the Conservation Area and The Elms will be outweighed by **any** benefits from inappropriate development.