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Sent: 05 December 2025 14:27
To: Planning
Subject: Planning Application Comments - 3/2025/0801 FS-Case-771350394

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Planning Application Reference No.: 3/2025/0801

Address of Development: Salesbury view

Comments: I am writing to formally object to planning application 3/2025/0801 regarding the proposed development at Land East of Salesbury View, Wilpshire. I have reviewed the submitted plans and documentation, including the recent appeal decision for a similar proposal on this site. I wish to raise serious concerns on multiple grounds, with particular emphasis on traffic and access issues. For the reasons detailed below, I believe this application is unacceptable and should be refused.

Traffic, Access, and Highway Safety Concerns

Steep and Unsafe Access Road: The sole access to the site is via Salesbury View – a steep residential cul-de-sac with approximately a 12% incline

. In winter conditions this road becomes effectively impassable; it has been noted that the access road is “steep and unusable if there is ice,” with existing residents forced to abandon vehicles on the main road during icy weather

. There are documented instances of vehicles “getting stuck as the incline is too severe” at the junction, even in normal conditions

. Relying on a single, very steep access is inherently unsafe – posing risks to everyday traffic, emergency vehicles (which could be obstructed in snow/ice), and pedestrians. The gradient is also

problematic for those on foot, pram and wheelchair users would struggle greatly on a 12% slope

meaning the scheme fails to provide safe and suitable access for all. This falls short of the requirements of Ribble Valley Core Strategy Policy DMG3, which attaches weight to provision of access for pedestrians and those with reduced mobility and of national guidance that developments ensure “safe and suitable access for all users”.

Single Access and Capacity Constraints: Serving an entire new estate of around 80+ homes via this one cul-de-sac is not only impractical but dangerous. Salesbury View’s carriageway is only about 5.5m wide with cars often parked on-street, effectively narrowing it

. It currently serves just a handful of houses; adding potentially 150-200 additional vehicles would overwhelm its capacity. There is no secondary emergency access. Any blockage (a stalled vehicle on the hill, an accident, or roadworks) could trap residents. During construction, heavy lorries would have to negotiate this steep, narrow route, exacerbating congestion and safety issues for existing residents. The visibility at the junction with Whalley Road (A666) is also substandard – Salesbury View joins near a blind double bend known locally as “The Knolle,” which makes pulling in and out hazardous.

. Residents already report having to “dodge speeding cars to get onto Whalley Road” from Salesbury View

. Adding the traffic from this development will greatly increase collision risk at this difficult junction.

Impact on A666 Traffic and Inadequate Survey Data: The A666 through Wilpshire is a busy principal route between Blackburn and Clitheroe. Introducing the traffic from an additional ~84 houses (initial proposals were for up to 109) would significantly increase traffic volumes on this road

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. This not only worsens peak-time congestion (including at the nearby traffic lights such as Wilpshire Hotel and Bulls Head junctions) but also heightens the danger of accidents on a stretch already plagued by speeding issues

. Importantly, the submitted Traffic Assessment is based on a traffic survey conducted during the COVID lockdown, which is acknowledged to be unrepresentative and “not accurate”

. Basing conclusions on artificially low traffic data fails to reflect normal conditions – a flaw which undermines the credibility of the transport analysis. Local knowledge suggests the actual traffic load and speeds on the A666 are much higher; a police speed survey found vehicles exceeding 30mph routinely, multiple times per hour

. Highway safety for both drivers and pedestrians would be unacceptably compromised by this development, contrary to national policy which states development should only be permitted if there is no unacceptable impact on road safety. In summary, the proposal does not provide a safe, suitable access and would create severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network.

(It is noted that Lancashire County Council as Highway Authority raised no objection in the previous application, after the applicant offered various off-site works and conditions

. However, I urge the Council to reconsider whether these mitigations truly overcome the fundamental issues. Local residents' firsthand experience of the road conditions – steep gradient, poor winter usability, limited visibility, and existing congestion – indicates that significant dangers remain. The absence of an objection from highways does not guarantee that the access is actually safe in practice, especially in extreme weather or peak traffic. The duty of care to future residents and neighbors demands a cautious approach where genuine safety concerns exist.)

Drainage and Flood Risk

The site lies on a steep hillside composed of clay soils

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. This combination raises serious drainage concerns. There are already known flooding issues in the area: a recent nearby development uphill caused months of flooding across Whalley Road, damaging property and creating road safety hazards

. Introducing a large expanse of hard surfaces (roofs, roads, paving) on this slope will greatly increase surface runoff. The application's drainage strategy appears inadequate to manage the volume and velocity of water that will be generated on such a gradient. During heavy rain, water could overwhelm

local drains and exacerbate flooding downstream (including at Station Close/Whalley Road which has a history of problems). The site is adjacent to a stream (Showley Brook), raising the risk of polluted runoff entering the watercourse

. Without robust evidence that flood risk will not be increased elsewhere (a requirement of NPPF para 167) and that sustainable drainage systems will truly mitigate the worst-case storm events, this application should not be allowed to proceed. In its current form, the development could transfer an untenable flood risk to existing residents and infrastructure. It thus conflicts with Core Strategy policies that seek to ensure new development does not result in unacceptable flood or drainage impacts.

Ecological and Environmental Impact

Loss of Habitats: The proposal would destroy a significant amount of existing habitat, including the removal of approximately 165 metres of mature hedgerow and numerous trees

. The site is immediately adjacent to ancient woodland and currently comprises fields with boundary hedges that support a variety of wildlife. Local residents frequently observe roe deer, foxes, hedgehogs, bats, and a wide range of birds in and around the site

. These species rely on the hedgerows and woodland edges for foraging and movement. The large-scale removal of greenery and the disturbance from 84 houses will undoubtedly harm local biodiversity.

Inadequate Ecological Assessment: The ecological survey provided by the developer is notably cursory – it “falls short of any meaningful identification and protection of wildlife”

. Important features (like the hedgerows which may qualify as “important hedgerows” under the Hedgerow Regulations, or potential bat roost trees) have not been given proper consideration. There is no robust plan for protecting or compensating for the loss of these habitats. This is contrary to Policy DME3 (Site and Species Protection) and the NPPF’s requirement to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The application does not demonstrate a measurable net gain for biodiversity; on the contrary, it presents a net loss of habitat and ecological value.

Green Space and Mental Wellbeing: Beyond protected species, the green field and its trees/hedges provide visual relief and amenity value for the community. As one representation noted, “Green spaces are crucial for local wildlife and our own mental wellbeing.”

Replacing this natural green slope with a housing estate would diminish the environmental quality of the area for both wildlife and residents.

Landscape and Visual Impact

This development would have a significant adverse impact on the landscape character of Wilpshire. The site occupies an elevated, steeply sloping hillside (falling about 38m from north to south across the site

) that is currently open grassland. It is highly visible from various public viewpoints, including Whalley Road and farther afield. In fact, the proposed estate would be visible from miles around – a fact that the applicant’s own viewpoints gloss over (the submitted visual montages are selective and do not include key viewpoints, such as those directly opposite the site in Ramsgreave)

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. Introducing dozens of houses, roads, and in particular the large retaining walls and engineered slopes likely needed for this gradient, would fundamentally alter the scenic hillside. The urbanizing effect would harm the semi-rural character of the area and erode the attractive landscape setting of the village.

It should be noted that Wilpshire’s settlement boundary was only recently extended to include this site as an allocated housing site (Policy HAL2) – however, part of the eastern site area remains in the Green Belt

. The Parish Council and local community strongly wish to see the “green wedge” between Wilpshire and Blackburn maintained to prevent urban sprawl

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. This development would substantially reduce that crucial separation, effectively merging the edge of Wilpshire toward the built-up areas of Blackburn

. The proposal therefore conflicts with the core planning principle of safeguarding the countryside and avoiding coalescence of settlements. It would also be at odds with Core Strategy Policy DME2 (Landscape Protection), which seeks to ensure new development does not have an unacceptable impact on the appearance or character of the landscape. The recent Appeal Inspector likewise raised concerns about the landscape harm, noting that the scheme's benefits did not outweigh its adverse effects on the character and appearance of the area

Housing Need and Local Infrastructure

Excessive Scale Relative to Local Need: Wilpshire is identified as a Tier 1 village, but the housing requirements for this community are limited. According to the Council's housing figures, only 32 new dwellings were needed in Wilpshire for the plan period up to 2028

. This proposal (84 homes, following a prior scheme of 109) wildly exceeds that number – in fact, 109 units would be five times the identified need

. Even acknowledging that housing targets are not caps, this scale of development is clearly far beyond what is necessary for local growth. The Core Strategy's vision was for gradual, sustainable development; this project represents an overdevelopment of the site and the village. Furthermore, the mix of housing proposed does not align with local needs – Wilpshire has an identified need for starter homes and housing for older people (such as bungalows), whereas the development is largely 2, 3, 4, and 5-bedroom two-storey houses

. Building the “wrong type of properties” that do not meet local need undermines the justification for using this sensitive site.

Strain on Services and Amenities: Local infrastructure in Wilpshire and the surrounding area is limited. There are very few amenities in walking distance (essentially only a butcher, a pub, and a golf

club in the immediate vicinity

– residents must travel to nearby towns for most needs). Crucially, public services are already at capacity: there is limited access to NHS doctors and dentists for current residents, and local schools have very limited places available

. Yet the application does not convincingly show how an influx of potentially 200+ new residents would be accommodated. No new schools or medical facilities are planned as part of this development, and we have no evidence of substantive contribution agreements to expand such services. The Parish Council has questioned whether there is any need (or capacity) for these additional homes at all in Wilpshire under the adopted Core Strategy

. Without adequate planning for new infrastructure, this proposal would exacerbate pressures on doctors, dental practices, and schools – to the detriment of both new and existing residents. This is not sustainable development. The Core Strategy Policy DMG3 requires that “considerable weight” be given to the availability of public transport and other infrastructure when determining applications

. At present, apart from a bus route and nearby train station, Wilpshire’s facilities are scant. Future occupants would be highly car-dependent for work, education, shopping and healthcare, further undermining the sustainability claims of this proposal. The increase in private car usage also raises air quality concerns, as noted in the application documents (more traffic means higher emissions and a negative impact on local air quality).

Quality and Safety of Construction:

As a final note, the community is also concerned about the developer’s track record. Persimmon Homes (the applicant) has, in other contexts, gained a poor reputation for build quality and safety standards – for example, noted issues with fire safety in their constructions

. While this is not a direct planning policy issue, it does raise apprehension that the promised benefits of the scheme (quality new homes) may not materialise to the standard expected. It reinforces the need for caution and rigorous oversight if any development were to proceed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this planning application presents numerous serious conflicts with planning policy and material considerations that collectively render the proposal wholly inappropriate for approval. The traffic and access problems alone – a dangerously steep single access road with poor winter usability and substandard junction safety – are enough to justify refusal on grounds of highway safety and unsustainable access. When combined with the additional harms identified – increased flood risk, loss of important habitats, damage to landscape character, excessive scale beyond local need, and strain on infrastructure – the case against the development is overwhelming.

Crucially, these issues are not new. A virtually identical scheme for this site was recently examined at appeal, and it was dismissed by the Planning Inspector on 5 February 2025

(Appeal Ref APP/T2350/W/24/3352614, relating to previous application 3/2023/0614). In that decision, the Inspector concluded that the proposal was “in conflict with the development plan, when read as a whole,” and that there were no material considerations sufficient to outweigh that conflict

. The fundamental problems with developing this site – especially the unsafe access and the landscape/character impact remain unresolved in the current application. Approving this new application would fly in the face of the clear findings of the appeal and the Council’s own prior decision.

I respectfully urge the Council to refuse this planning application. In doing so, you would be upholding the Ribble Valley Core Strategy policies (notably DMG1, DMG3, DME2, DME3 and others) and the National Planning Policy Framework guidance which together seek to ensure development is safe, sustainable, and suitable for its context. This proposal fails on all those counts. For the safety of residents, the preservation of our local environment, and the integrity of the planning process, please reject the application 3/2025/0801.

Thank you for considering these objections. I trust the Council will make the right decision in line with both local and national planning policies.