

Ramsgreave Parish Council – Formal Objection to Planning Application by Persimmon Homes (Land at Salesbury View, Wilpshire)

Application 3/2025/0801

Ramsgreave Parish Council wishes to register its strong objection to this application for residential development on the hillside east of Salesbury View, Wilpshire. This is the third application submitted for this sensitive site. The previous two applications were refused, with the most recent dismissed at appeal. The current proposal, despite minor amendments, does not address the core reasons for refusal identified by either the Local Planning Authority or the Planning Inspectorate.

The development remains fundamentally unacceptable due to its impact on the landscape, highways and access constraints, drainage risks, ecological harm and its conflict with key policies in the Ribble Valley Core Strategy, including DMG1, DMG2, DME2, DME3 and DME6

1. Planning History and Principle

Persimmon Homes has already been refused permission twice on this site. The Planning Inspectorate dismissed the most recent appeal because the development would create an incongruous and visually intrusive form of development on a steep and highly visible hillside. The Inspector found that extensive earthworks, overbearing retaining structures and ineffective landscape buffers would cause significant harm to the landscape and visual amenity.

These concerns arise from the nature of the site itself. The current scheme contains only five fewer houses than the previously refused application and does not overcome the fundamental constraints identified by both the Council and the Inspector.

2. Landscape and Visual Impact

The site occupies a prominent and exposed hillside forming part of the rural setting of Wilpshire. Development here would be visible from miles around and would significantly erode the character of the area, including the important stretch of open land that prevents urban sprawl along the settlement edge.

The developer's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is selective in its viewpoints and does not present an accurate picture of the visibility of the scheme from surrounding areas, including Ramsgreave - see Figure 1.

Figure 1. View from Ramsgreave Parish



The revised landscape buffers do not mitigate the harm and cannot disguise a suburban estate on a steep open hillside. The Inspector previously concluded such buffers would be ineffective, and nothing in the current proposal contradicts this conclusion.

3. Housing Need and Scale

Wilshire requires only 24 new homes before 2028, focused on first-time buyers and older residents. The proposal for 80 dwellings significantly exceeds this requirement and does not reflect the type or mix of housing that local needs assessments indicate is required. The scale and density remain out of keeping with the character of the area.

4. Highways, Access and Road Safety

Access is solely via Salesbury View, a narrow, steep road that becomes hazardous in winter conditions and already suffers from parking pressures. Lancashire County Council Highways previously raised concerns about gradients steeper than 1:12; these remain unaddressed.

The A666 is one of the busiest routes in the borough, connecting Blackburn and Clitheroe. It already experiences significant congestion, frequent accidents, dangerous bends, no pavement, speeding, and rat-running via Knowsley Road and Ramsgreave Road. A recent police survey recorded vehicles travelling above 30mph three times per hour.

An additional 80 homes would significantly increase traffic volumes and collision risks. The developer's suggestion that the location is "highly sustainable" does not reflect local conditions or the realities of pedestrian and vehicle movement in this area.

5. Drainage and Flood Risk

The site consists of clay and peat on a steep slope. These conditions promote surface water run-off and nearby development has already contributed to long-term flooding problems in nearby areas, including perpetual flooding across Whalley Road.

The drainage assessment does not address the known behaviour of saturated clay slopes, the potential for winter ice formation, or the risk to Knotts Brook from polluted runoff. The site is also crossed by a United Utilities strategic water main which restricts where construction can safely occur.

Claims that the development will not increase flood risk are therefore not credible.

6. Ecology and Failure to Deliver Biodiversity Net Gain

The ecological value of this site has been significantly understated. The fields, hedgerows, tree belts and peat pockets provide habitat for a range of wildlife, including legally protected species.

The development requires the removal of approximately 165 metres of hedgerow, along with several trees and areas of semi-natural habitat. These cannot be replaced by new planting in any meaningful ecological timeframe. Newly planted hedgerows and trees typically take at least 15 years to reach functional value, whereas the habitat loss would be immediate and permanent.

The ecological assessment also fails to acknowledge the presence of otters in Knotts Brook, despite clear local evidence. For publicly available video please see: https://youtube.com/shorts/Yp_cjQ1Jtso?si=1Rqo5GQRxyvGK294

Otters are protected species, and this omission undermines the credibility of the ecological report.

The developer's own biodiversity calculations indicate a substantial loss of on-site habitat and no net gain for watercourses. Much of the claimed ecological enhancement is dependent on future planting and off-site compensation, rather than genuine on-site improvement. The proposal therefore fails to meet the statutory requirement to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain under the Environment Act and conflicts with Core Strategy Policies DME2 and DME3.

7. Construction Impacts

Three years of construction would expose residents to significant noise, dust, road damage and traffic disruption. Previous Persimmon developments in the area have

caused long-term deterioration to local roads. Given the constraints of the hillside and limited road network, the impacts would be severe.

8. Pressure on Local Facilities

Wilpshire already faces limited access to GP and dental services, and local schools have restricted capacity. Adding 80 new homes would place further pressure on already overstretched services.

9. Rebuttal of Developer Claims

The Planning Statement asserts that the revised design is “entirely acceptable,” that landscape buffers mitigate impacts, and that drainage, highways and ecology concerns have been addressed. These claims are not supported by evidence. The fundamental issues identified previously remain unchanged, and the amendments are superficial rather than substantive.

Conclusion

The proposed development fails to overcome the longstanding concerns identified by the Local Planning Authority and the Planning Inspectorate. It causes unacceptable and irreversible harm to the landscape, ecology, highways safety, drainage, and character of the area, and is inconsistent with key local planning policies.

Ramsgreave Parish Council therefore urges Ribble Valley Borough Council to refuse this application once again.

We request that this objection is fully considered by the Planning Committee and that the previously identified harms continue to be given the weight they are due.