

# Mr & Mrs S. Green

18 October 2023

Our Ref SSG/FPM/2023-10.01

## Farnham Parish Meeting

C/o Mr Michael Taylor

Farnham Hall

Farnham

HG5 9JE

By Post & Email to  
[pamataylor@btinternet.com](mailto:pamataylor@btinternet.com)

Dear Mr Taylor

### Planning Application ZC23/02895/FUL Consultation Response submitted by Farnham Parish Meeting

I write in response to the consultation response submitted by the Farnham Parish Meeting in objection to our above referenced planning application for the erection of a self-build dwelling (for the permanent occupation of my wife, Maya and I and our young family) landscaping and associated works.

Whilst you will no doubt be aware that our planning application was refused on Monday, 16 October (the Council's Internal Target Decision Date for the planning application) by the appointed Case Officer in accordance with delegated procedures, it has always been my intention, as applicant, to respond directly to members of the Farnham Parish Meeting regarding the consultation response which objects to our planning application - just as I have similarly been writing to other objectors. Despite the refusal, I feel that a response is still warranted, as a matter of principle, to point out a number of factual inaccuracies contained in the Parish Meeting objection, as we now progress to a Planning Appeal.

I wish to make clear that my wife and I greatly appreciate that we live in a democracy and accept it is the legal right of the Parish Meeting and other residents of the village to respond as they see fit to a public consultation on a planning application within the boundaries of the village of Farnham. However, My wife and I are very much people of principle who both seek to act fairly and expect fairness in return and in this case, where objections have been received against our planning application which are not based on facts and also blatant untruths about us have been perpetuated, then we feel we must (and are entirely within our rights) to call this out.

We have noted that there are a number of common themes running through the objections submitted in relation to our planning application which are not only **not based on fact, but are also patently untrue**, these include (but are not limited to) allegations the our proposed dwelling will have an overbearing effect on certain properties owned by objectors in the village (*including one gentleman residing as far away as Beech Close where it is evident from standing on the public footpath outside his home that the exact siting of our proposed dwelling is not even visible as a result of a significant number of intervening properties!*) and also that we (the applicants) are Directors of a development company named Yorkshire Land Limited. This latter point is patently untrue, as a search of Companies House demonstrates we are not and never have been Directors (or Shareholders for that matter) of the said company!

Moreover, where our professional representatives have already written and pointed out such blatant untruths to certain of the objectors perpetrating such allegations and also requested a

formal apology on our behalf, together with clarification/corrections of the relevant written objections and remarks with the Case Officer and no such apologies and clarification/corrections have been forthcoming, we believe this serves to demonstrate the mischievous and unjust attempts which certain individuals in the village have been and are prepared to go to in attempting to thwart our application from succeeding.

Considering the common themes across the various letters of objection and the connections (that are common knowledge to us) between the small group of objectors (whether they be neighbourly or as fellow members of the Parish Meeting) we can only arrive at the conclusion, unless we are presented firm evidence to the contrary, that such objections have been a co-ordinated attack on our well-intentioned planning application.

Indeed, as members of the Farnham Parish Meeting are the effective local-level authority for matters effecting the village and that certain of the members of the Parish Meeting are the perpetrators of such untruths against us, we believe it is the moral duty of the other members to ensure that the record is set straight as a matter of natural justice.

You may be aware that I took it upon myself, as a gesture of goodwill, to visit the Parish Meeting Chairman, Mr John Hooper, at his home, following the validation of our planning application. Mr Hooper welcomed me into his property, where we chatted for approximately ten minutes regarding various aspects of our planning proposal. During this time, I respectfully asked Mr Hooper that I be provided with the opportunity to address a meeting of the Parish Meeting members to allow the Parish Meeting the opportunity to understand, first hand from me, as the applicant, the background and reasoning for our planning application and to ask any questions etc. in relation to our proposal.

I also sent an email to Mrs Pam Taylor on 22 August 2023, to notify Parish Meeting Members of the submission of our planning application for one high-quality self-build home for the occupation of my family, stating that whilst at the time of sending my email, the planning application still remained to be validated, I would appreciate the opportunity to address members of the Parish Meeting in relation to our proposal and of course, answer any questions arising.

Suffice to say, the opportunity to address Members of the Parish Meeting has never been forthcoming and I have never even had the decency of a response to my email to Mrs Taylor, which to reiterate, was sent out of my goodwill in the spirit of cooperation - before the application was even validated. Therefore the objection from the Parish Meeting was formulated without any engagement with ourselves as applicants, and importantly a young family wishing to achieve their first owned home in the village and contribute to village life.

Turning to the formal consultation response from the Parish Meeting, it is evident that a great deal of weight has been placed in the objection on historical applications seeking the development of Areas of Important Open Space in the village. However, it is a fact that not only do the applications referred to not relate directly to proposals for construction of residential properties on our own application site specifically, but they also pre-date the adoption of the National Planning Policy Framework, Guidance and of course, the Harrogate Local Plan (04 March 2020).

You will be aware also that each and every planning application is judged on its own merits.

The first section of the objection from the Farnham Parish Meeting refers heavily to a planning application (again pre-dating the adoption of the Harrogate Local Plan) for the development

of several residential properties on the Area of Important Open Space which is situated between Farnham Hall and Farnham Grange in the village.

It is evident our site is identified as an Area of Important Open Space within the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal. However, this is where any similarities with any of the other areas of Important Open Space (and former Orchard Spaces) within the village end – to coin the saying, which is perhaps particularly apt in these circumstances; apples cannot be compared with pears!

As you will already appreciate, but is also demonstrated by the photograph enclosed at [Appendix 1](#) to emphasise the point, the Area of Important Open Space situated between Farnham Hall and Farnham Grange which is referred to heavily in the objection from the Parish Meeting, has a clear street frontage, with unambiguous views evident not only across the full extent of that site, but also through to the countryside beyond.

Likewise, the Area of Important Open Space adjoining the Old Crown on Stang Lane (another of the spaces identified as being a former Orchard) also provides an evident street frontage to anyone on foot, with views possible by an average sized adult human over the boundary wall with Stang Lane into and across that site. This is demonstrated by the photographs at [Appendix 2](#), taken by me last week from my eye line height.

Importantly, the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal identifies with regard to the Former Orchards within section 5.5 that:

*“Although bereft of fruit trees, the former orchard spaces, particularly those with a street frontage, are important open spaces which soften the street scene and provide important visual links between the village and its pastoral setting.”* *(Our Emphasis)*

To the contrary, the site which is the subject of our planning application has no apparent street frontage, due to the presence of a very tall (circa 8ft) boundary wall on Shaw Lane, which precludes views into and across the site and where as a result, there are also no views to any countryside beyond, but simply to the canopies of existing trees within the site. This is demonstrated by the Photographs attached at [Appendix 3A and 3B](#)

This is a critical and indisputable factual difference between our site and other Areas of Important Open Space, and perhaps more importantly, the other former orchard sites, within the Farnham Conservation Area.

The section of your letter about recent pre-application advice in relation to the area of Important Open Space adjoining the old crown also implies to us that this was based on a proposal for the development of **multiple** properties (*just as were the historical applications for the development of the Area of Important Open Space adjoining Farnham Hall quoted in the Parish Meeting objection*) whereas, you will appreciate that our planning application has been for the development of just **a single high-quality self-build home for the permanent occupation of myself and my young family.**

With regard to comments regarding the potential for our proposal to set a precedent leading to the development of other Areas of Important Open Space in the village. We believe the circumstances of our site are unique, for the reasons outlined above. Notwithstanding this, it appears you are unaware that there is already evidence publicly available on the Council’s planning files detailing several instances of residential development having been approved on land identified as ‘Areas of Important Open Space’ within various other conservation villages across the Harrogate Area. Taking this together with other of the unique

circumstances of our site and proposals, based on these facts, it is our position that the Council will not be able to sustain a defence of any 'in principle' objection to the loss of an 'Area of Important Open Space' (as has been advised is the case) as a result of such evidence. However, this will of course be a matter for determination by the Planning Inspector appointed to our Planning Appeal in due course.

In response to the common theme throughout the six objections received in relation to our planning application that our property will be dominating/overbearing. We respectfully assert that the evidence demonstrates this not to be the case, based on facts and evidence.

The design of our proposed dwelling has been carefully developed over a period of time following research of the local vernacular, massing and setting of adjacent properties and consideration of the application site.

The proposal provides a total dwelling floor area of 291.6 sq. m. (3139 sq. ft) over 2 floors. The total building footprint measures 208 sq. meters (inc. garage) and the site area measures 1533sq m, equating to a 'plot to site' build ratio of 13.5%. In comparison, No. 1 Manor Court, which is the property in closest proximity to the site of our proposed dwelling, has a total dwelling floor area of 374.9 sq. m, total footprint of 211 sq. m (inc. garage) and sits in a site measuring 830 sq. m, equating to a 'plot to site' build ratio of 25.4%, almost double the build density of our proposed dwelling.

The height of the property has been reduced to a minimum commensurate with the building design and floorplan. Designed floor to ceiling heights of 2.5m to both floor level are on the low side, resulting in a ground to eaves height dimension of 5.5m and ground to ridge height dimension of 9.1m. Again for comparison, No. 1 Manor Court has a ground to eaves height dimension of approx. 5.45m and ground to ridge height dimension of approx. 9.65m (over 500mm taller).

The building depth of the proposed dwelling measures 11.7m, whereas No. 1 Manor Court's building depth against the adjoining boundary measures 14.1m all at 2 storey.

The proposal site has a natural cross fall running north to south of approximately 2.0m. In order to keep the proposed dwellings profile as low as possible the ground level has been reduced by 1.3m at the worst case, 300mm below the mean cut and fill level.

The differential in levels between the proposal and 1 Manor court has been brought about due to the lack of regard for the natural levels when construction the Manor Court development was undertaken, resulting in no1 Manor Court being 'dug in' approximately 1.6m below the natural ground line. You will note the content of paragraphs 4.2 and 4.3 of the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal, where it is clearly identified that the village is set on the south facing side of a hill. Therefore, it is only natural that properties to the south of the village are set at a lower level than those to the north and resultingly, the ridge heights of properties must naturally rise gradually from South to North across the village.

Indeed, as demonstrated from the photograph attached at [Appendix 4](#), taken by me just last week, from a vantage point located just to the East of the junction of Farnham Lane with Main Street in the village and looking north towards the top of Shaw Lane, it is evident that the brick built terraced properties dominate the skyline in this part of the village, with ridge heights being considerably higher than any surrounding properties, and certainly far higher than that of our proposed dwelling.

I also wish to add that a thorough examination of this photograph will demonstrate that no views of the site of our proposed dwelling are visible whatsoever due to the existing built form of the village and tree canopies in this area. Notwithstanding, that even were filtered

views of the ridge of our proposed dwelling visible from this vantage point (which they are not) then it would still be entirely in keeping with the surrounding context of built form.

Within the objection from the Parish Meeting, it is stated that:

*“The roofline of the existing Manor Court properties are clearly observable from the higher part of the village at Folly Hill and in the lower part of the village from Beech Close and Farnham Hall. The proposed roofline will stand one story higher than the existing rooflines. The dwelling will be clearly observable from the village green the focal point of the village”*

Taking each point in turn, this is a clear acknowledgement that the roofline of existing properties (Manor Court) in proximity to the proposed site of our dwelling is the already established ‘*clearly observable*’ (in your words) view from Folly Hill, Beech Close and Farnham Hall and therefore the introduction of the roofline associated with our proposed property would not be out of keeping in this context. Secondly, with regard to the statement that the ‘*proposed roofline will stand one story higher*’ the roofline of our property stands comparable to that associated with Folly Hill House to the North of our proposed site, which was approved by Harrogate District Council (*and I note from the consultee response associated with that application which is publicly available on the planning access portal that the Parish Meeting opted neither to support nor object to that planning application*) on the basis that the proposal was deemed to respect the key view looking north to south along the driveway to what is now Folly Hill House. As is demonstrated by the photographs at [Appendix 5](#), taken by me last week, looking down the driveway in the location of that key view, it is a fact that our proposed dwelling would have no greater effect on this vantage point than the existing built form of 1 Manor Court, where the Ridge line and chimneys associated with that property are already established in the mid-range views from this vantage point.

With regard to the final point that proposed dwelling would be observable from the village green ‘*the focal point of the village*’ as indicated above, the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal identifies a number of ‘Key Views’ into and out of the village. However, you will appreciate it is a fact that there are no ‘Key Views’ existing within the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal either into or out of our site. We would respectfully suggest it would be entirely reasonable to believe that were there views possible into our application site (which there are not) from the village green and surrounding environs, then a Key View or Views would have been identified within the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal, for example, just as there is a Key View identified into the Area of Important open Space which is situated between Farnham Hall and Farnham Grange and does have an unambiguous street frontage!

As is clearly demonstrated by the Photographs at [Appendix 3A and 3B](#) (again taken by me from my eye level) to reiterate, our site does not have an apparent street frontage, as mentioned above, due to the presence of the tall boundary wall (approximately 8ft) on the Shaw Lane boundary, which prevents views into the site or any views beyond. What is apparent from this photograph, as you will note, is the view of canopies of existing trees within our site, which is a fact recognised in paragraph 5.4 of the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal where it is stated that:

*“The open green is bounded by a mixture of stone boundary walls and hedges, with trees on both sides of Shaw Lane towering over the space.”*

As you will appreciate from a review our proposed dwelling is set back in the far eastern (rear) part of our site, away from Shaw Lane and in line with the adjacent property at 1 Manor Court. Helpfully, the photograph attached at [Appendix 3A](#) together with the annotated Satellite Image attached at [Appendix 3C](#) also demonstrates filtered views of the roofline/built

form associated with 1 Manor Court which are visible through another Area of Important Open Space, separate from our own, adjacent Manor Farm House.

Considering the comparable siting of our proposed property to the rear of our site, in line with 1 Manor Court, then at worst, only long distance filtered views of our roofline would too be visible, which would be directly comparable to those mentioned above, which are visible through the adjoining area of Important Open Space adjacent Manor Farm House onto the built form associated with 1 Manor Court. It is on this factual and evidential basis that, we respectfully assert that our proposed dwelling would have no greater impact on the Conservation Area.

In light of these facts, we believe the evidence regarding the allegations of our proposed dwelling being overbearing speak for themselves.

The objection from the Parish Meeting also states that:

*“Prior to this application the applicants have removed a number of trees which is clearly demonstrated by the aerial photo of the site in their build statement. They now propose that new planting will assist in obscuring the dwelling from Shaw Lane. That is clearly nonsense as is the suggestion that as 80% of the site will still be open. The P.M. suggests that the only benefit to this application is to the applicants. We suggest that the proposal does nothing to preserve or enhance this important open site on the contrary it would destroy it.”*

We wish to clarify for the avoidance of any doubt that all works to trees within our site have been carried out following the advice of our professional tree surgeon with regard to the poor health of such trees and with the necessary permission of the Council’s Arboricultural Officer.

There are nonetheless a number of trees remaining within our site, not least the large lime tree which is situated within our curtilage on the Shaw Lane frontage and is identified as an ‘Important Tree’ within the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal. Again the photograph attached at [Appendix 3A](#) of this letter, taken by me in recent weeks, demonstrates the various tree canopies which continue to exist and already screen the site from the vantage point of Shaw Lane, Stang Lane and the Village Green.

Notwithstanding this, the Parish Meeting acknowledges in its objection letter that the application site is a former Orchard and having had regard to the ‘opportunities for enhancement’ particularly with regard to the sections regarding ‘Important Trees’ (Page 28) and ‘Tree Planting’ (Page 29) within the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal, we have proposed the reintroduction of orchard tree planting within the western part of the site. Indeed it is specifically stated with regard to Tree Planting within the Conservation Area Appraisal that:

*“In the longer term, the need to plant new trees to succeed existing new planting should be addressed in order that the eventual loss of individual mature trees does not create unwanted holes in the canopy or townscape”*

Therefore it is incorrect to state that our proposed orchard tree planting is solely to screen views of our proposed development. Whilst such planting would no doubt assist in due course as the trees matured, as evidenced by photographs, there are already a number of remaining trees within our site which effectively screen views of our proposed dwelling and therefore the overriding purpose of the proposed reintroduction of the orchard tree planting within our site is to address the statements contained in the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal emphasising the need to plant new trees, effectively protecting the character of the

Conservation Area and we would therefore suggest that this is also a valuable public benefit of our proposal.

In addition, our Landscape Planners have also proposed a Landscape scheme which includes the introduction of wildflower planting and other measures within our site, which I would respectfully suggest evidences that our proposal does not 'destroy' this area of Important Open Space, as stated by the objection from the Parish Meeting, but rather secures what is valuable about it and its long-term future in perpetuity. Likewise, the re-introduction of orchard tree planting complements the aims of the Farham Area Conservation Area in the context of maintaining what is important about the setting and character of the Conservation in relation to the setting of the Green and therefore the facts and evidence again serve to demonstrate it is not the case, as stated in the objection from the Farnham Parish meeting, that the only benefit of our application is to ourselves as applicants

In addition, we feel compelled to point out that the statement in the objection letter from the Farnham Parish Meeting that it is clearly nonsense that '80% of the site' will still be open is factually incorrect and that it is in fact that comment which is nonsense. We are correct in stating that our proposal will ensure that in excess of 86% of our site will remain open, free from built form. As identified above, The total building footprint of our proposed dwelling measures 208 sq. meters (inc. garage) and the site area measures 1533sq m, equating to a 'plot to site' build ratio of 13.5%, leaving in excess of 86% of the site open.

Bearing all of above in mind, we wish to respectfully point out that a number of the objections to our application submitted by the Farnham Parish Meeting are not based on facts or evidence and that such objections cannot therefore be reasonably sustained when our application is considered fairly against such facts and evidence, together with the unique circumstances of our site and individual high-quality, self-build proposal.

Yours sincerely

**Mr & Mrs S. Green**



**Image: Photograph of Important Open Space situated between Farnham Hall & Farnham Grange. Evidently, this Area of Important Open Space has an evident Street Frontage with views possible across the entirety of the site and onto open countryside beyond.**





**Image: View Looking South from Stang Lane into the Area of Important Open Space adjoining the Old Crown. Evidently, the site has an unambiguous street frontage with views possible across the site.**



**Image: Photograph Looking East from the edge of the Village Green towards our Planning Application site. Evidently, unlike other Areas of Important Open Space in the village, no views into our site or to any open land beyond are possible as a result of the tall boundary wall and existing tree canopies which frame the Village Green.**



**Photograph taken from eye level on the footpath at the boundary of the application site with Shaw Lane. Note that no views into the application site are possible from this vantage point.**





**Image: Vantage point to the East of the Junction of Farnham Lane with Main Street in the village, looking north towards the terraced properties at the top of Shaw Lane. Evidently, the site of our proposed dwelling is not visible from this vantage point as a result of existing built form and tops of existing tree canopies.**



**Image: Vantage Point taking in the Key View noted within the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal from what is now the driveway to Folly Hill House - a Key View which is now compromised by the erection of entrance gates to the property. In any event, evidently, the ridgeline and chimneys associated with 1 Manor Court are visible in the mid-range views and therefore any possible views of the ridgeline and chimneys of our proposed property from this Folly Hill vantage point could not be deemed to have a greater impact on the existing character of the Conservation Area in this location.**