

# Mr & Mrs S. Green

My ref SSG/JH/2023-10.01

23 October 2023

**By Hand**

**Mr & Mrs J. Hooper**

Manor Farm

Farnham

Knaresborough

HG5 9JE

Dear Mr Hooper,

**Planning Application Reference ZC23/02895/FUL**  
**Consultation Response submitted by Mr and Mrs J. Hooper**

I write in response to your objection to our planning application (copy enclosed) to point out a number of factual inaccuracies and false statements contained therein.

I wish to make clear at the outset 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.

You state that your objection relates to three matters. We address each in turn.

1. You state that Farnham is a conservation village and the proposal is to build on one of the three clearly identified ancient orchards that have historically been protected in prior planning applications and that these areas are critical to preventing the open nature of the village and you are therefore very concerned that allowing development on one such site will set a precedent which will quickly result in the other two being developed.

For clarity, whilst the former Orchards are referred to in the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal, these sites are not designated as such by the Appraisal, but rather as Areas of Important Open Space, where we note that there is also a large amount of other land (not comprising of former Orchards) designated as Area of Important Open Space within the Conservation Area Appraisal - as illustrated on Page 24 (Map 4: Landscape Analysis). For clarity, the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal does not therefore distinguish the former orchard sites differently from other Areas of Important Open Space in designation terms.

Notwithstanding this, with regard to the other two former Orchard Sites you refer to, you will appreciate that they are vastly different to our own in their characteristics in that they both possess a street frontage, where the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal identifies 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)***

This is entirely different from our site, which there is no discernible street frontage as our site

is screened by the presence of a tall boundary wall on the Shaw Lane frontage (circa 8ft high) and various trees, which prevent views into or across the site. Indeed, the only views are of the various canopies of the trees within our site, which are predominantly located near to the Shaw Lane frontage and no further away than the mid-point of the site, whereas we are seeking to locate out proposed dwelling to the rear of our site. 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.

This matter is addressed in much further detail within my formal response to the objection submitted by Mr Michael Taylor on behalf of the Farnham Parish Meeting (of which I am advised that you are Chairman) from whom you will no doubt be able to obtain a copy, if you are not already in receipt of such. Therefore, I refer you to that letter for our more comprehensive rebuttal of this particular point in your objection, suffice to say, to coin the saying which is perhaps particularly apt in these circumstances; apples cannot be compared with pears!

2. In your second point, you state that you are aware that the other two open orchard areas in the village have been the subject of recent planning applications or pre-planning advice from the Council, that both were rejected as inappropriate areas for development and it would seem to you to be only equitable that this third site be treated in the same manner, with, you state, it's sole distinction being that the development application is in this case supported by a development company being, Yorkshire Land.

In relation to this point, you will be aware that each and every planning application must be judged on its own merits by the decision maker and we again compel you to read our letter of response to the objection from the Farnham Parish Meeting, which addresses in great detail the points you have raised at this part of your objection.

However, at this juncture we do wish note that your second point of objection is a regurgitated point from the Parish Meeting objection, something which you are no doubt aware of, on the basis that you are Chairman of this Meeting and we do question therefore whether you (and certain other members of the Parish Meeting who have also objected in their personal capacity to our application) have also sought to submit objections in your own name (whilst admittedly within you right to do so) in addition to the Parish Meeting response, in an attempt to present a picture to the Case Officer that there is a higher amount of opposition to our planning application (in terms of number of objections submitted) than is actually the case. Indeed, if the personal representations of objections from individuals who are also members of the Parish Meeting are stripped out, then number of objections to our planning application would be reduced by some 40%, notwithstanding the fact that the majority of residents (and particularly those in immediate proximity to the site) have not objected to our proposal. Similarly, if the objections of those persons we are advised are well associated with members of the Parish Council were to be stripped out, this percentage would increase further.

With regard to your latter point that the sole distinction of this application is that it is supported by a development company being, Yorkshire Land. This is factually incorrect. The land is and always has been owned by me (Mr Sam Green) and the application has been submitted in the name of Mr and Mrs S. Green. That my parents own a company named

Yorkshire Land Limited, is no secret – in fact I willingly confirmed as much to you upon your enquiry when I came to see you, as a gesture of my goodwill, at your home following validation of our planning application, to notify you of such and inform you that I would be more than willing to discuss any concerns or may even be minded to consider any reasonable minor amendments to our proposal, should any such amendments be posed for my consideration by local residents. For the record, you will recall that you willingly invited me into your home, where we first discussed our planning proposals, prior to digressing into other subjects, including our various personal backgrounds (where I was nothing but upfront, honest and sincere) and your interest in motor cars etc. for approximately ten minutes. I have had no direct contact with you since this time.

So far as I am aware there are no rules preventing individuals whose parents' own development businesses from submitting a planning application seeking permission to construct their own self-build home! 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) as stated in our letter of response to the objection from the Farnham Parish Meeting, we can only arrive at the conclusion, unless we are presented firm evidence to the contrary, that such objections have been an unscrupulous, mischievous and co-ordinated attack on our well-intentioned planning application, where we have followed due process throughout.

3. In your third point, you state that the dwelling proposed will tower over neighbouring properties, one of which is your own, due to the elevation of the land on which it is to be built and the size of the dwelling itself and that it will also be very visible from common areas such as the village green and detrimental to the nature of the village.

Respectfully, these statements are patently untrue as demonstrated by facts and the evidence.

Firstly, as you are aware, the front primary elevation/façade of our proposed dwelling is to be situated in line with that of 1 Manor Court (I told you as much when we met and chatted in your home around the time our planning application was validated) and the proposed dwelling is situated well in excess of the minimum acceptable separation distances from your home, even taking into consideration the difference in ground levels between our land and that of your own home. We also note that your property is highly screened as a result of the positioning of the garage associated with 1 Manor court, situated on the Eastern boundary of your property and the attached photographs (see [Appendix 1](#)) also serve to demonstrate that your property (and its associated rear windows/outlook) is screened by a significant amount of established vegetation (notwithstanding also the presence of existing trees within our site located between your property and the exact site of our proposed dwelling) which would act to preclude any overbearing by our proposed property, if granted permission.

In terms of the size of our dwelling, we can confirm that it is approximately 22% smaller than the nearest dwelling (1 Manor Court) in floor area terms and therefore allegations that our proposal is overly large or out of proportion in terms of its setting and relationship with surrounding dwellings cannot also be sustained evidentially.

Notwithstanding this, we again compel you to read our letter of response to the objection from the Farnham Parish Meeting, which provides much detail in relation to the levels, design and

size of our home in relation to surrounding properties (provided by our professional architect) all of which serves to again evidence that your assertion is factually untrue.

In terms of your statement that our proposed dwelling will also be 'very visible' from the village green and detrimental to the nature of the village, we have again addressed such points at great length within our response to the objection from the Farnham Parish Meeting and so do not repeat all of them again here for brevity, suffice to say that our proposal will ensure that in excess of 86% of the site will remain open, free from built form, with much of this open land retained in the Western Part of the site in the location of the Shaw Lane frontage, with the village green situated beyond Shaw Lane this at a lower level.

The sections submitted with our planning application (prepared on the basis of detailed topographical survey levels) demonstrate that when stood on the footpath on the frontage of our site with Shaw Lane, views of our site and proposed dwelling are just simply not visible. This is something you will yourself be able to corroborate by visiting this location on foot.

The landscape proposals associated with our planning application also provide for the planting of several new fruit trees (and thereby the re-introduction of the orchard planting historically present on the site) together with significant areas of wildflower planting which will serve to support nature, which, I wish to add, contrasts significantly with another adjoining Area of Important Open Space (which we are advised is in your ownership) which is kept as a domestic garden (including domestic flowerbed and large areas of lawn which are mown etc.) and therefore as a result, cannot reasonably be claimed to support the same levels of natural habitat as will our site accordance with our landscape proposals. Your comment in regard to the impact of our proposal being detrimental to the nature of the village both in character and conservation terms, is therefore factually untrue

It is apparent from the relevant photographs submitted with our response to the objection from the Farnham Parish Meeting that in the worst case, only long range filtered views of our proposed dwelling would be visible from Stang Lane - which is no different to those views already existing through the Area of Important Open Space which we believe to be in your ownership (and adjoining our own) onto the built form associated with 1 Manor Court. As far as I am aware, nowhere in the Farnham Conservation Area Appraisal (although I will happily stand to be corrected) does it state that Areas of Important Open Space cannot be developed or that any views of built form across such are unacceptable. Indeed, a review of the Conservation Area Appraisal also demonstrates that there are already several existing residential dwellings within the village that are set within Area of Important Open Space. In furtherance to this point, we are aware that an Appeal Inspector allowed a planning application for a residential development consisting of multiple properties (whereas we remind you our application is for just one home) on an Area of Important Open Space in the conservation village of Ripley, despite acknowledging in his Appeal Decision that:

*"The site is fleetingly visible from the adjacent A61 Ripon Road bypass via gaps between mature boundary trees though visibility would increase on a seasonal basis with leaf fall"*

And

*"Whilst I acknowledge that protection of the village form and retention of gaps to maintain views are recognised as important objectives in the CA character appraisal, a buffer of open pasture between the proposed development and the bypass would be retained."*

We believe, as demonstrated by evidence, that these statements are equally applicable to the unique circumstances of our site and associated proposal, not least considering the significant buffer of land retained between the site of our proposed dwelling (to the rear of the site) and the Shaw Lane frontage and that, to reiterate, in excess of 86% of the site will remain open, free from built form. However, I accept that ultimately, such matters will now be for the determination of a Planning Inspector to be appointed via the Planning Appeal Process.

Finally, in relation to the various developments which you refer to, you will appreciate that this is an application for a self-build dwelling, where the Council are legally obliged to accommodate as a proportion of self-build plots as part of their mandated supply of new homes (suffice to say they are currently failing to meet this figure in respect of the provision of self-build plots as identified in the Case officers report in relation to our planning application) in order to meet the housing targets underpinning the soundness of the adopted Harrogate Local Plan (March 2020). Indeed, you will note that the Case Officer confirmed that the self-build element of our proposal carries 'significant weight' in the planning case.

Whether or not it is the case that you genuinely feel the need to object to our planning permission, which as I accept, is entirely your right to do so, clearly your objection does still contain factually incorrect statements about our planning application and we respectfully ask, as a matter of fairness, that you please withdraw those statements and that you will refrain from making any such untrue statements in future.

I do hope that you will not take the attitude that I am an arrogant upstart in writing this letter to you as I consider myself a very amiable, grounded, balanced and fair young man and I am just simply seeking to defend my livelihood and that of my young family and our opportunity of obtaining permission to build our first owned home - just as you have perhaps had to fight for your livelihood at times, throughout your life to achieve the success you have for yourself and your family.

I am advised that you currently act as the chairman of the Cumberland Building Society, a position of great responsibility, where I am certain if you were to make statements before corroborating the facts of the matter and such statements were then found to be patently false/untrue, you would be disciplined, made to apologise (if this wasn't willingly forthcoming) and potentially even sacked. However, I am concerned that in this situation, despite being (we are advised) the Chairman of the Farnham Parish Meeting (also a position of trust and responsibility locally on behalf of residents) false statements have been made by you about our planning application, but there is little recourse for such actions, other than on the basis that, like myself and my wife, you possess a strong affinity for fairness and justice, with an ability to accept where you are wrong and apologise accordingly.

We are very much people of the mindset of live and let live. At the end of the day, as far as we and our proposal are concerned - we are not looking to build a nuclear power station on our land, but a single high-quality self-build dwelling, which has been carefully designed to meet our needs as a growing family, whilst being of a design which respects the local vernacular and will assimilate into the conservation area. In all reality, just what is the problem with this?

I do hope you will understand our position and won't ignore our reasoned approach. We

simply want and deserve fairness from you and all objectors and residents of the village, rather than to have blatant untruths spread about our proposal (and us personally). I trust you will agree with me that it is therefore only now right for the record to be set straight.

Yours sincerely

Sam Green  
**Mr & Mrs S. Green**

*Encs*

## Appendix 1



**N.B.** These two photographs serve to demonstrate the enclosed and domestic nature of the garden to Manor Farm, which is also a designated Area of Important Open Space within the Farnham Conservation Area. That our proposed property would be overbearing is clearly not correct as such is not possible due to the distance of the proposed dwelling from Manor Farm and also the existing trees and established vegetation which prevent such.