

Dear Sir / Madam,

I would like to comment upon the sites currently under consideration as possible locations for the building of houses in the village of Silverton as part of the development of a plan for Mid Devon.

I feel that Silverton village will need some limited new building over the next 20 years, particularly of low cost housing, but that this should be proportionate to the size of the village, allowing it to grow slowly so that infrastructure and facilities are able to keep pace, and so that the character of the village is not destroyed. For example, the primary school is full, and there is no way for young children to reach a more distant school.

A number of houses within the village have been for some time unsold and unoccupied and so I feel there cannot be a need for major development. There is a building plot with planning permission for 5 houses within the centre of village which is undeveloped. What the village really needs is a small amount of affordable and especially of low cost housing, to enable younger people to afford to live in the village and allow older ones to downsize and free up larger houses for growing families. Profit orientated developers will, of course, want to build the kind of housing the village does not need.

Silverton has a very limited bus service, with narrow roads. Very many are only one car's width. There is hardly any employment within the village, and new residents are likely to have to work in either Exeter or Tiverton. Thus any large scale development would bring lots of extra cars. I do not feel that the roads would be able to support significant extra traffic. A huge recent development only 5 miles away at Cranbrook provides housing which has good public transport links to work places in Exeter.

1. Land at Old Butterleigh Road.

This site is outside the village settlement limit. Planning permission has previously been refused.

This site incorporates the village allotments, which are well used, and there is a waiting list. Allotments are an important village amenity. I cannot understand why destruction of this amenity would be considered by the planners, contrary to stated policy. We have few enough amenities here as it is.

This land would be accessed via a single vehicle width road, bordered by high Devon banks. A stream runs down this road from the top of the long steep hill, with spring and runoff water entering through the Devon banks at many points along the hill. It runs down one side of the road for its length, until it drains under the road in the Square. Building on this site would inevitably alter both the quantity and direction of water runoff. In recent years, heavy rain has resulted in flooding of some of the properties on Fore Street, and this problem could be increased. Alternatively, building here could cause water to drain towards a different part of the hill and cause flooding to properties in another part of the village which have not previously been affected.

The single track road is ill suited for significant extra traffic. Fore Street itself is very narrow, and in places large vehicles such as lorries and fire engines frequently struggle to get through.

2.Land at The Glebe

This land is inside the conservation area, and right under the historic church. Development at The Glebe would harm the character of the old village. Surely protection of areas such as this is what conservation areas are for. I do not support development of this area.

The access roads here are very narrow, twisting and at a difficult angle due to the slope of the hill going across the road. They are entirely unsuitable for construction traffic. They have very poor visibility. They are between existing properties, so could not be altered, and could not support any significant increase in traffic.

Pedestrians already have to walk in the road. I cannot see how construction traffic could access this site either easily or safely.

3. Land east of Hederman Close

Outside the settlement limit. Large scale development here would have a large impact on the visual appearance of the village.

4. Land at Livingshayes Road.

This land has atrocious access. Just go and look! And lots of water issues, very wet land with a stream in the bottom, and is on a steep slope....

5. Land at The Garage

Another site which is within the conservation area and outside the village settlement.

In summary, I would not support large scale development sites in the village.

In particular I feel that these sites, chosen by availability rather than suitability, are unsuitable for large scale house building. If large scale development were to be forced upon the village, I feel sites should be chosen by suitability.

I would support developments smaller than 5 dwellings, especially if these were of low cost or affordable housing to fulfil village need.

I would like to add that if the council/government is serious about consultation it would be as well to end the practice of everything cropping up during the summer holidays or Christmas holidays. It is disrespectful to the electorate at the very least.

On a more positive note , I would like to thank Peter Williams for coming to the village to talk things through recently. He was admirably clear and calm in doing what must currently be a no win job.

Yours sincerely,

C. Renninson

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