

Dear Madam,

We are writing to protest in the strongest possible terms against the latest proposed further development of the land associated with No. 28 Coutts Avenue, Lower Shorne, DA12 3HJ.

Over Development:

This proposal is over development of the site that will cause unwanted stress to the neighbors of Coutts Avenue and detriment to the style, context and living conditions on Coutts Avenue.

This development will do the opposite of the council's policy CS19 that states that new developments should safeguard the living conditions of neighboring occupants, but the developers are using this as a strategy to over develop the site for financial gain.

It is clear and obvious that this development will adversely affect the quality and character of the area and the general well-being of the residents of Coutts Avenue.

Cul-de-sac within a cul-de sac:

This is not just a one back yard property development, but a cul-de-sac within a cul-de-sac, this is not an inspiring development like what is set out within the local plan.

Local Plan:

Empower the community: Local Plan section: 1.3.5

We are not NIMBY's we are residents that are trying to safeguard the community in which we live and you must take notice of us as this is part of the local plan which you pledge "to put citizens in control - for power and influence to be in the hands of local people so they are able to take responsibility for themselves, their families and their communities".

Managing housing developments in the Borough: Local Plan item 1.3.7

"Managing housing developments in the Borough to ensure they meet the needs of the community;" no one in our community is in support of the last application to build two detached bungalows as a backyard development and certainly not this latest application to have two pairs of semi-detached bungalows, therefore you as the town planners need to meet the needs of the community which is to not over develop sites and only allow developments that benefit the local community which this does not and only benefits the developers pocket.

Local Plan section 1.3.8: see my answers below as the council will fail to meet the objectives of the local plan if they allow the recently proposed development:

“The Council now carries out its key activities against the following five strategic objectives”:

- **Community well-being:** This proposed development and its previous applications is causing stress, anxiety and unrest among the local community (with some of the closest residents to the development being elderly and suffering with ill health) and detracting from the standard of the current environment / living conditions on Coutts Avenue.
- **Housing:** this proposed backyard development is detracting from the current benefits of living on Coutts Avenue and lessening the living standards for the residents on Coutts Avenue for reasons set out in this letter of objection.
- **A clean and green environment:** this development reduces the green environment on Coutts Avenue as it will be an overdeveloped site, although the footprint might be the same as the previously agreed and unwanted development by local residents, further hard standing will be required for additional car parking and general hard standing.
- **Economic development and regeneration:** this proposed development goes against regeneration, the developer may have been able to claim this on the two properties already given the go-ahead fronting Coutts Avenue i.e. knocking down an old bungalow and building two new properties, however this latest proposal allows a low-quality back yard development to dominate which isn't in context to the current theme.

Coutts Avenue is a premium area over many others consisting of mainly 2 & 3 bedroom luxury bungalows / luxury chalet bungalows with gardens / driveways and garages all facing the street and this low-quality proposal will detract from the area, which the local plan confirms we should be safe guarded from. Just because the proposed properties have two bedrooms does not mean they reflect the needs and aspirations of this community.

Approval of low-quality back yard developments such as the current proposal will set a precedent and fuel a huge increase in future applications which will cause a general decline in the housing / development standards in the area and borough.

- **Managing the Council's business responsibly:** take responsibly and only allow developments that benefit the community rather than being bullied by developers lining their own pockets, it's the residents that make the community and pay the council tax, long after developers move on!

Giving these developers what they want will not send them away, they will keep coming back for another bite of the cherry with a further planning application and they will try it again and again on other sites.

2.8.4: As a result, new developments should be designed and laid out to minimise the risk of crime.

The recently proposed back yard development does not minimise the risk of crime and if anything would possibly increase the risk of crime as burglaries and anti-social behaviour can take place out of the view of the existing properties on Coutts Avenue.

2.9.3: of the Local Plan: “There is a need to ensure that all new development is of a high quality. It should improve the existing built environment by protecting and enhancing local character and amenity and by creating new sustainable neighbourhoods with their own sense of place and distinctiveness which enhance their surroundings”.

The recently proposed back yard development does not provide a development of high quality to start with being a “back yard development”, it does not improve the existing built environment and it does not enhance the local character of the neighbourhood of generally mixed driveway and garden frontages and not an alleyway (access road) leading to back yard developments. The new back yard development does not have a new sense of place and distinctiveness to enhance the surroundings.

2.9.3 of the Local Plan: “Change elsewhere is likely to be small scale, involving redevelopment proposals and infilling.” You could probably argue that the initial development of two houses replacing the single bungalow that was demolished was “redevelopment and infilling” but there is nothing in the local plan to suggest that mass back yard developments are an inspiration of the borough, it is bad enough that the council have given permission for two properties behind the properties that front Coutts Avenue, but four properties is just too far even if the foot print is the same or similar.

Design & Access Statement:

“DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT Site The application site is positioned on the south side of Coutts Avenue within the settlement of Lower Shorne, which lies to the north of the A226 Gravesend Road. Lower Shorne and the application site are inset from the Green Belt. The site is currently occupied by a detached dwelling. There are extant full planning permissions on the site for the construction of three additional dwellings within the site (one chalet bungalow at the front and two single-storey bungalows at the rear) along with a new access road located centrally within the site.”

The above statement is incorrect, the site isn't currently occupied by a detached dwelling, this was demolished, and two detached houses are now on the site fronting Coutts Avenue in a part complete state currently awaiting roof tiling. It mentions a new chalet bungalow at the front, there is no chalet bungalow, but in fact two full height houses.

The design and access statement says “The scale of the proposal is appropriate to its context. The development as now proposed will make a positive contribution to the area that should gain the support of and be approved by the Council.”

The scale of the proposal is not appropriate to its context as this is now a four-property back yard development on top of the additional property fronting Coutts Avenue, there is no positive contribution to the residents of Coutts Avenue and the local area what so ever, you will not find a positive comment about the four property back yard development from any Coutts Avenue resident.

Housing Density:

Housing density is a bit like the national speed limit of 60mph on a country lane, you are only allowed to do the speed limit if the road conditions allow it and it is safe to do so, as you wouldn't drive at 60 MPH round a bend in the wet, and the housing density calculations are similar it is there as a guidance if it can be achieved without causing detriment to the existing built environment which this proposal will cause detriment, therefore approval should not be awarded to the recently submitted proposal.

Management Arrangements:

Are there suitable management arrangements in place for the access road and drainage etc.?

Permitted development rights:

The more properties given planning permission to be built means those properties will also have permitted development rights, by giving permission also means giving permission for them to also be extended later.

Any property built behind the front facing properties on Coutts Avenue should have their permitted development rights extinguished, so that they cannot extend the properties in any way without going through the full planning process.

Covenants:

Any property given permission in the back of No. 28 Coutts Avenue should have a covenant to say that there is no 1st floor development permitted in the future even if applied for, as this will stop the next planning application that I am expecting, where the developer will want to go up with a first floor to the bungalows, but with high level sky lights rather than dormer windows and they will probably say that it doesn't over look anyone, because then the next application will be for two pairs of three bedroom semi-detached Chalet bungalows and the process will go on and on.

If the properties are designed for a resident with just one car, can the properties have a covenant that can be called upon by the council to say that only one car per dwelling can be registered / kept at each of the two pairs of semidetached bungalows?

Refuse collection:

Some weeks there are two wheelie bin collections plus the food caddy, the existing residents of Coutts Avenue do not want to see and put up with 12 wheelie bins and 6 food caddy's dumped out the front of what used to be just one property. This will look an absolute mess not to mention the bins being blown over and getting in the way of existing residents. There would have to be a plan for the council to pick the bins up from the bin stores of the 4 back yard bungalows and the council to put the bins back in the bin store rather than just at the end of the access road

junking up Coutts Avenue, if the council do not offer that service, this is another reason the plans should not be approved.

When detailed plans are submitted there should not be a bin store or wheelie bin visible on Coutts Avenue from the proposed development.

Where would the two pairs of semi-detached properties leave their rubbish for bulky item collection, for example sofas and fridge freezers?

Future maintenance and ultimate demolition of the two pairs of semi-detached bungalows:

CDM regulations have to be considered when building a new structure, and you need to think how it will be safely maintained in the future, therefore if these two pairs of semi – detached bungalows required substantial maintenance, where would the builders park their vans and lorries and how would they unload the materials and safely get it to the properties without blocking Coutts Avenue while the residents of the 4 No. semi-detached bungalows and two houses fronting Coutts Avenue live in the properties with all their additional cars, its is bad enough having builders parking their vans blocking the pavements on Coutts Avenue (which is actually a motoring offence) and that is without the additional residents as these properties haven't even been constructed yet.

If one of the residents of the proposed 4 No. semi-detached properties needed a skip for builders' rubble or general rubbish, where would it be positioned as it does not look like you would not get a skip lorry down that access road and be able maneuver and unload / load a skip on his lorry. The residents of Coutts Avenue do not want someone else's skip positioned on our road.

Ambulances:

Where would an ambulance park if one of the residents from the proposed development is ill? There is little or no on street parking, and they wouldn't be able to drive down the access road / alleyway to reach those four semi-detached bungalows.

Visitor Spaces:

Parking will be an issue as there are only 8 No. parking spaces on the plans for 4 No. back yard bungalows, one space per bungalow and one visitor space per bungalow, in the real world what will happen is the residents of each bungalow will have two cars or maybe even three cars and they will use the visitor spaces as well, then there will be nowhere for their visitors to park and they will clog up Coutts Avenue, if they can find somewhere to park that is because there is hardly any raised kerb left, and someone else who lives on Coutts Avenue has just a large dropped kerb outside their house, so there will be even less parking.

All the rubbish about people using public transport is a fallacy, there are only two properties on Coutts Avenue that don't own a car and both of them are very elderly. I think every other property apart from a further two properties owns two or more cars, therefore the proposed properties will not be any different, unless there is a covenant to say, each of the new properties

can only have one vehicle registered and kept at that address, then their visitor space may still be used as a visitor space.

The residents of Coutts Avenue have lost a lot of on-street parking, therefore will the residents of Coutts Avenue have access to use the new visitor spaces provided by the proposed backyard development?

If this application is agreed, in just two years there will be an additional 6No. properties on Coutts Avenue and greatly reduced on road parking. Parking is already a problem on Coutts Avenue, and I offer my drive to neighbors when I am on holiday to ease the issue, there is also a property owned by an elderly person who allows one of the neighbors to park their car on his drive.

Deliveries:

The planning documents and guidelines are getting somewhat out of date, an example of this is since covid there has been an enormous rise in household deliveries from companies like Amazon or Tesco's. If there are no or very little on street parking spaces with an additional six properties (including permission given to an additional property across the road) where will these delivery vans park when delivering / collecting goods at the proposed four backyard bungalows?

Is the proposed access road designed to allow delivery vans to reach the two pairs of semi-detached bungalows and turn around to exit out of the new cul-de-sac? What will happen in the real world is that delivery vans will block the drives of existing Coutts Avenue residents and walk down the access road for deliveries to the two pairs of semi-detached bungalows. This blocking of people's drives is illegal and there are people who live on Coutts Avenue who are emergency key workers on call and must leave their house at a moment's notice.

Ecology:

Will there be issues with drainage and heave for very close existing properties and new properties as most of the plot was free draining and soft landscaped, with lots of trees, bushes and shrubbery taking moisture out of the ground. The current proposed plans show the hard landscaping and the footprint of six properties dominating the site.

With gardens so small they appear considerably smaller than the footprint of the proposed properties therefore must have knock on effect with wildlife and habitats, given that the plot was left to wild for some years and still is to some extent at the rear.

I am not happy with the way that Gravesham Council have dealt with the previous planning application that has been given permission, therefore I have no choice but to request this planning application goes to committee.