
From: gill [REDACTED] >
Sent: 24 February 2015 12:33
To: Planning Policy
Subject: Objection to change Irvine Road Orchard and the Chase from wildlife site to residential on the LDP

Hello,

I am writing to register my objection to the application for the designated Wildlife site, Irvine Road Orchard, to be changed to residential land for the following reasons:

In the LDP this land was specifically designated as being private open space and is protected as a designated Local Wildlife Site; a full wildlife survey having been carried out which advised against development.

Any development, even just one house, would destroy the integrity of the site with its broad range of wildlife, insects and plants. The preservation of the ancient urban orchard, traceable for over 200 years, forms a vital part of a diminishing green corridor for wild and plant life.

In considering the balance of more residential land in Colchester against the potential huge and irreversible destruction of an ancient yet vibrant natural habitat, it is clear that the loss to plant/wild life and natural heritage far outweighs any possible gain:-

- The whole area is protected by a Tree Preservation Order, including the hedging surrounding it and is bound by the law, Part VIII of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- Traffic/Highways issue. Another road only metres away from a blind T junction, Capel and Irvine Roads, would cause a real hazard. Over 300 children make their way by bike or walking to and from school using the access opposite Capel Road on a daily basis. There have been minor accidents and close calls with bikes, pedestrians and cars there. We cannot afford to increase traffic arising from additional houses with yet another road to cross. It would only be a matter of time before a serious accident occurred.
- It will not meet any local housing need as this area is already overdeveloped. Hospitals, doctor's surgeries and schools are already unable to cope with the increase in population, not just this area but Colchester as a town.
- The application contradicts the Local Development Framework, the council's own designation of land use. The area is registered as a Natural Environment deserving protection. It is time to stop open spaces being removed piece by piece through development, pulling people into Colchester. We should be improving the infrastructure and providing additional facilities instead, and try to retain what little open space we have left.
- There will be no tangible benefit to the local community by way of long term financial or employment prospects to build a few executive homes in this protected area; only for the developer who has bought the site despite being marked as 'not for development', but who believes he can overrule the democratically elected council and their policies.
- The trees themselves are of interest due to their veteran status

but collectively they represent a Traditional Orchard and are defined as such within the National Inventory

(<http://magic.defra.gov.uk/website/magic/viewer.htm?startTopic=magghabitat&activelayer=pcodelist&query=POSTCODE%3d%22CO3%203TS%22>)

Such orchards are subject to a national biodiversity action plan and Traditional Orchards in an urban location are especially unusual. The national biodiversity action plan has a target of no net loss of such sites (<http://www.orchardnetwork.org.uk/content/traditional-orchard-hap>).

The current LDP, with regard to the ancient urban orchard off Irvine Road, is up to date, carefully and democratically agreed. The CBC planning committee are duty bound to observe the designations contained within it. Nothing has changed since it was set in place and the Orchard should continue to remain protected.

Yours sincerely,

Gillian Emrich

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