

**APPLICATION Ref: AWDM/1019/25 – Land West of 51/63 Southview Road,  
Southwick, West Sussex.**

This objection is made on the grounds of the clear surface / ground water risk to the locality especially to the properties adjacent and to the south in both Underdown Road and Southview Road.

I hereby highlight and stress to Adur and Worthing Planning that Southern Water formally confirmed in writing to residents that during the most recent floods in 2024 they were in pumping at a rate of 75 litres per second in order to keep this neighbourhood from flooding.

**75 litres per second is equivalent to 4,500 litres per minute, or  
270,000 litres per hour, or  
6,480,000 litres per day  
A 50 metre by 25 metre olympic swimming pool contains 2,500,000 litres**

**Meaning that on a daily basis and for weeks on end the local 2024 surface /  
ground water flow was in excess of two olympic swimming pools**

**THIS APPLICATION THEREFORE CLEARLY FAILS TO SATISFY THE REQUIREMENTS OF  
THE NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK (NPPF) AND MUST THEREFORE BE  
DECLINED.**

The Local Government Association website stresses the importance of the NPPF as being the Government's policy approach for the planning system to deliver sustainable development.

The NPPF stipulates that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk (whether existing or future). Wherever any development is necessary in such areas it should be made safe for its lifetime **WITHOUT INCREASING FLOOD RISK ELSEWHERE.**

## **BACKGROUND**

In the recent past SD Holdings Ltd have already submitted a number of planning applications upon the same site, all of which have been refused. When refusing the applications all the reasons for the decision were clearly explained by Planning.

**The local surface or groundwater flooding experienced in the locality is historic, regular and importantly is ongoing.** For those unfamiliar with Southwick, it is situated immediately beneath the South Downs and situated between the hills of the National Park and the sea.

At times of extreme rainfall, such as in 2001, 2014, 2020 and 2024 water falling on the Downs above Southwick reached an underground saturation point. Water then flows southwards to lower ground; no doubt following long established routes underground within the underlying chalk, clays, sands and gravel beds. The water then rises in the locality as flows of surface/ground water. Historically such water flowed down the end of

the back gardens to ponds which used to be on Southwick's two large greens to the south of the locality.

When both Underdown and Southview Roads were originally developed in the late Victorian / early Edwardian eras, to avoid property being flooded the back gardens were left unusually long at 100+ feet to accommodate the flows of water which then still regularly flowed in wet winters.

In a previous application, the consultants to SD Holdings Ltd, GTA Civils of Burgess Hill provided a formal report regarding the proposed development (the an extract of which has been submitted to support this response). This report formally confirmed that source of the water in the locality was by means of south flowing springs, as per this extract: -

1.6 Surface water flooding: This site is affected by 2 overland flow routes that enter the site from higher land to the north and northwest.

The same report by GTA Civils also confirmed the following information: -

1.10 Winter groundwater monitoring was undertaken between 09/11/19 and 03/04/20. The water table rose from 5.5m bgl to the surface on 24 January '20 and stayed there until the end of March. The data logger graph is in Appendix E. It is clear from this result that soakage is not a viable option, therefore.

It is clear GTA Civils monitored the site for six months, during which time the water table rose considerably. **Initially, the level of the water table at the site was identified as being eighteen feet below ground level. Three months later GTA Civils confirmed that the water table had risen by 18 feet and was by then at ground level. Which ironically coincided with the flooding in the locality in 2020!**

The same report by GTA Civils also confirms the following important points: -

1.13 The EA's Groundwater Source Protection Zones map show the site being removed from the nearest zone. The site overlies a Major Aquifer – High, according to Groundwater Vulnerability Zones map, however – as to be expected considering the Tarrant Chalk stratum (at depth).

1.12 A pre-application capacity check was sent in to Southern Water's. Agreement to discharge into the sewer at a maximum rate of 2.0l/s was sought and subsequently confirmed as acceptable.

## 2024 Flooding

In late December 2023 and January, February and March 2024 the locality flooded with groundwater again, this time with a vengeance following the extremely wet weather.

Initially, the local drains flooded though within a few days it became clear the sewers were involved too as the water was contaminated with toilet paper. The rear gardens south of the proposed development site down both Southview and Underdown Roads also started to run with accumulating water.

This flooding was extensively reported by regional, county and local sources. Copies of the news articles from the BBC, Sussex World and The Argus are provided to support this objection. Together with photographs of the 2014, 2020 and 2024 flooding.

I must also highlight here the damage the flooding has actually done so far and the time and cost involved. Clifton Lodge at the south eastern end of Underdown Road was partially flooded following the 2014 flood and then again more extensively in 2024.

Following the 2014 flooding one ground floor flat was flooded. The insurance company involved paid out over £200,000 for the claim. Following the 2024 flooding three of the dwellings were affected and the work has been going on for several months at a total cost of over £600,000. This time the residents have also had to financially contribute to the works, in one instance this was for over £10,000!

### **Objection Summary**

Should this development proceed, then as a result there is a very clear and substantial risk that any ground water flooding would be displaced to the properties to the South, the East and the West of the site. There are no Sustainable Drainage Systems arrangements for the site that could possibly constrain the enormous volumes of water that could be involved in a future flooding event.

It is important that everyone involved in considering this appeal fully understands the vulnerability of the forty odd Victorian houses in the vicinity of the site. Victorian houses do not have modern solid concrete foundations. Instead, there are typically just five courses of bricks and voids under suspended wooden floors.

Even relatively modest flows of several inches in depth would penetrate under these properties via door sills, air bricks, floor air vents or porous brickwork and go on to thoroughly ruin the ground floors of the properties affected.

Plus any sustained water flows under such buildings would also be likely to undercut or wash out the brick foundations quickly leading to severe subsidence too.

The proposed development would only provide an additional two homes, which is only a very modest gain against housing targets. Mindful of the requirements of the NPPF it is also surely too small in light of the risks the proposed development poses to the immediate community. As per the NPPF, Planning should ensure the future resilience of our neighbourhood against flooding, instead of compromising it by granting the application.