

APPENDIX D:
letter from land owner re Park Barn Farm
housing development proposal

PARK BARN COTTAGE
BEACON ROAD
DITCHLING
EAST SUSSEX
BN6 8XB

22 February 2016

Dear Tom

Proposed development Site – Park Barn Farm

I write to confirm our previous conversations and the site visit you made regarding potential housing development on the site shown on the attached map. I confirm that I am the owner of the land shown.

The site is currently outside the Ditchling settlement boundary. I acknowledge that its development will require an extension of the boundary and, in view of its location, sensitive landscaping to ensure the conservation of its setting in sight of the Downs.

I believe that the purpose for which I would like the development put justifies the extension and I believe the site can be appropriately screened to avoid any potential for adverse landscape impact.

The site is up to three acres and is big enough, in my opinion, for approximately thirteen small/medium sized houses.

My family's ownership of Park Barn Farm goes back generations. I took over ownership of the Farm from my late step-father Dennis Filkins, and he had farmed the land first as a tenant farmer from the 1950's and then from the early eighties as

owner. The family have, in fact, been farming in the area since before the 1820's. Similarly the extended Sinnatt/ Filkins family, of which there is a large number, has worked in the local area for generations and continues to do so.

I am keen that members of my family should not only be able to work in the area but also to live in it. The lack of a broad mix of housing and the predominance of large houses puts the purchase prices out of reach of most and particularly young family members.

It would therefore be my intention that three medium sized houses of the thirteen houses, at the southern end of the site, would be for, and owned by, members of my family.

This situation applies not just to my family but also to the area in general. Enabling more young people to live here, and the children of residents to remain living here, would bring lasting community benefits and help sustain local businesses wanting to employ them.

Given that the above is acceptable, I will therefore gift the remainder of the land in perpetuity to the parish of Ditchling, for the construction of up to ten small, one/two or three bedroom houses, for purchase and/or rent, including shared ownership, subject to reassurance that whatever public body takes ownership will safeguard it in future for this purpose. I do not have a personal preference as to how many, if any, of each size are erected but would like the mix of houses to match the diverse needs of the village. I am also keen that the houses are built to last in a style that is sympathetic to the village and traditional to Sussex, so long as that does not prevent them being affordable.

With regard to access to the site, there is an existing farm gate at the southern end of the site directly out onto the Beacon Road. Alternatively, if feasible, access via the Long Park Corner estate would give both pedestrian and car access to the village centre without a new road converging onto Beacon Road or the need to extend the pedestrian pavement up the west side of Beacon Road.

Finally, if the above is accepted, I will also gift the strip of land to the west of Long Park Corner shown on the attached map, which has no agricultural or development value, to the parish of Ditchling for an appropriate agreed rural purpose, such as an orchard or allotments or a Local Nature Reserve, subject as above to reassurance that whatever public body takes ownership will safeguard it in future for this purpose.

I am flexible in the approach to this project and would welcome the views of the SDNPA with whom my family have a good working relationship. Jointers Copse, which is on the eastern side of Beacon Road and owned by my mother Patricia Filkins, is the subject of a management agreement with the SDNPA, whereby the SDNPA manage the wood on our behalf in order to train South Downs Rangers. That has been in place successfully for a number of years, the latest agreement dated 2012 is set to run until 2017.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this matter further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Simon Sinnatt