

Surrey County Council opposes proposed development at Cuckoo Farm

In its official response to Guildford Borough Council's Draft Local Plan Surrey Council has some out firmly against the proposed development at Cuckoo Farm

"There are areas of ancient woodland close to the site, which used to belong to Clandon Park Grade II Registered Park and Garden and so may form part of a historic landscape. Given the size of the trees and hedgerows on the site itself there will be ecological issues that need to be considered at an early stage. The site should have a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (previously known as Phase 1 Habitat Survey.) There are also potential groundwater vulnerability issues and part of the site is within Zone 3 fluvial flood risk. There are listed buildings adjacent to the site including Cuckoo Cottage (Grade II Listed). This 16th century timber framed hall could be vulnerable to vibrations from excessive traffic if any access road were to be situated nearby. The site will require archaeological assessment and almost certainly evaluation in advance of any application for development being submitted.

The site is located in a village, with relatively low population and potential for future expansion and there would appear to be insufficient population within sustainable travel of the proposed site to warrant placing a major community facility here. A more preferable site for a new school in transport sustainability terms would be within the urban area that it is intended to serve, or within a new urban extension/ settlement that it could serve as populations increase around it. With the exception of the presence of a railway station, there would seem to be little justification in locating a school on this site. The fact that the proposed Guildford eastern urban extension at Gosden Hill Farm and the new community at Wisley might not in themselves be large enough to justify a whole new secondary school, should not be a reason to locate such a new facility away from them. There is also no obvious means of access onto a highway. There are no footways on the eastern (site) side of the A247, which is a very heavily trafficked A class road and carries a heavy proportion of HGVs, and these would need to be provided and cycle access is difficult. Were a secondary school built on this site, the majority of pupils would have to rely on access by trains which serve a limited corridor, or by a very limited bus route as alternatives to the car."

Surrey County Council officer visited the site in August as part of the delegation taking part of the site visit organised by the Parish Council