

Residents Comments received:**Breakdown of information provided includes:**

Totally against any future development in Marden for many well documented reasons and on that basis none of the sites to be most or least suitable for development.

Marden has already had its fair share of development

A considerable amount of countryside and farmland has been lost

Population has increased so much that all of the infrastructure and facilities are struggling to meet current demands.

Site 269 – previously rejected by MBC in the Site Assessment of January 2015 (Ref HO-115 – Copper Lane – copy attached, for information) and I am of the opinion that the reasons given then are still valid and relevant. The development of this stand-alone Greenfield site would result in an unacceptable loss of pastureland and countryside, the site is a considerable distance from the village centre and would encourage more car journeys with all the associated problems and pollution. The proposed access(es) to the site are along a very narrow lane with dangerous restricted view exits at both ends, with the junction at Thorn Road being the subject of a number of accidents over recent years. An (alternative access?) is very near to the bends in Thorn Road, these also have been subject to some serious accidents in the past. There would be an impact on the ecology and habitat as the area is known to accommodate many species of animals and insects including yellow hammers, lizards, barn owls, grass snakes, bats, etc. – bat and owl boxes are no substitute for natural habitats! The area is also subject to localised flooding caused by water run-off and the recent development at Russet Grove adds to this problem. Site does not link with the existing settlement, being outside of the village envelope and harm would be caused to existing properties and the wider countryside should development occur.

Site 314 – This is a Greenfield site; out of the village envelope that extends across the top of site 295 (North of Copper Lane). The site is on an elevated sloping position which is highly visible from many viewpoints across the open fields for miles around. The site being on a slope displayed in this way, with no mitigation potential it would have a significant adverse effect on the surrounding countryside (echoing MBC's comment on Site 269) as well as giving a ragged effect to the edge of the village. See site 269 for other comments regarding ecology, habitat and flooding. The indicated entrance next to existing junctions onto the already busy Albion Road is totally unsuitable for the size of development indicated

Site 295 – Again this stand-alone Greenfield site location, outside of the village envelope being on the same slope as site 314 is highly visible for miles around (with all of the problems detailed above in Site 314) Development of the site would result in the unacceptable loss of valuable farmland, orchard and countryside. Site lays virtually opposite site 269 and I would presume the reasons given by MBC to previously reject 269 equally apply to this site. This orchard site also contains a multitude of mature native trees, especially Oaks that are many years old and form a very important integral part of the scenery and landscape features of the Low Weald. Three very large historic ponds are on this site and along with trees, field and hedgerows are the habitat and provide protection to the vast amount of wildlife. Again, this site is unsuitable for the same reasons as sites 269 and 314.

Many of the submitted sites are situated in the remaining truly rural areas of Marden where people can relax and enjoy the countryside – these are important areas and should be preserved as such to do otherwise would result in an unacceptable sprawl and urbanisation, causing immense loss and damage to our village and surrounding countryside totally destroying our rural identity and all that is held special for by so many.

Site 269 East of Junction Copper Lane / Thorn Road (Copper Lane Pasture)

This Greenfield site situated outside of the village envelope has been rejected by the MBC on previous call for sites, nothing has changed since and I can see no reasons whatsoever for this being accepted.

For information, the previous reasons for rejection (HO-115 - Copper Lane Pasture Site Assessments January 2015) gave I assume good (planning) reasons for refusal. For reference, shown below is a summary of the information produced at the time relating to this site by the Maidstone Borough Council.

Landscape Character Sensitivity: HIGH

Hedgerows provide a strong network of semi-natural wildlife corridors.

Site forms integral part of wider field and landscape pattern

Strong pattern of enclosure provided by historic hedgerow boundaries.

Unified landscape

Pastoral land use, pattern and scale highly representative of wider Low Weald landscapes.

Visual Sensitivity

Documented regarding the views from residential properties and from the distant locations concluded with:

Limited scope for mitigating potential visual impacts because it is considered that the impacts would be significant.

Landscape Value

Pastoral land use and strong hedgerow boundaries provide attractive scenic quality.

Moderate sense of remoteness and tranquillity within this rural and sparsely developed landscape.

Opportunities and Constraints

Detached and rural site location relates poorly to the existing settlement pattern of Marden.

Scale and extent of site relates poorly to linear pattern of development to the North West along Thorn Road.

Poor connectivity with Marden centre and facilities.

And finally:

Development generally undesirable.

and in the final rejection notice stated that "Whilst the site is located adjacent to the settlement boundary, development would cause harm to the open character of the countryside"