

Objection to Development of Silk Mills Site.
West Somerset Council Reference No. 3/16/003.
Officer in charge; Elizabeth Peeks.

From; Stewart and Elaine Tavner

We wish to object to the proposed development of the Silk Mills site.
This site is a historically important spiritual and cultural hub for the village of Holford. It is within the AONB of the Quantock Hills and therefore the preservation of the natural beauty of the landscape should be given priority over other planning considerations.

It is also an SSSI site and thus careful consideration must be given to protecting the flora and fauna and wildlife.

Parts of the site also lie within the conservation area of the village plan.

Therefore why choose to build there? There is the ruin of an old industrial unit and some footings of other such buildings. Is that enough to merit full planning on this site and not on adjacent woodland?

Historically the picturesque glen with its tumbling waterfall and stream and ruined buildings has attracted visitors for 150 years or more. Bryan Adams filmed a famous video there in 1990. The land was given to the League Against Cruel Sports. Unfortunately the League chose to sell the site and it was purchased by the present owners who have always been keen to build a house there.

Many in the village fought the proposed development. In 2013 the site was declared a Community Asset at a full council meeting. This was subsequently overthrown on appeal. We think this proposal should not be passed. I refer to the Planning Policies in the Adopted Local Plan to support our views.

As stated above this is an AONB site . Policy NH14 thus applies as outlined above.

It is an SSSI site so Policy NC1 should apply. There is a well established rookery nesting in some magnificent mature trees on the site and bats are often spotted at dawn and dusk in that area.

It is an important site historically and in archaeological terms thus Policies NH1, NH2 and NH3 and NH4 should all be borne in mind.

As stated above part of the site is within the village conservation plan.

Therefore it seems to us that the site should not be developed and no building should take place. We are aware that the National Planning Policy Framework encourages a presumption in favour of development but surely not in areas like the Silk Mills Glen. The owners should content themselves with preserving the site as it now is for the future enjoyment of villagers, walkers and other visitors.