

Covering Covering letter from Parish Council to Stroud District Council

Dear,

Having consulted with residents, Stinchcombe Parish Council supports their strongly-felt preference for preserving the Swedish Houses which are a local landmark and part of the village's heritage. A development of the proposed density immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area would be out of keeping with the village as a whole and detrimental to its overall appearance.

The PC recognises the need for affordable housing in the District but does not believe that this would be a suitable site. Access to and exit from the site would be dangerous, the site being on a bend where visibility is very poor and on a road which has already identified speeding problems. Further, Stinchcombe lacks adequate infrastructure for such a substantial population increase.

It is important to note the conclusions of a Housing Needs Survey completed in 2019. The GRCC report followed an extensive survey of residents and concluded that there was no demand for affordable housing in Stinchcombe itself. As the Stroud District Plan states, Stinchcombe is rated in Tier 4b and

These small and very small rural settlements provide basic or minimal facilities for their communities, but lack the range of services to meet day to day requirements. These are generally inaccessible and unsustainable locations for growth, with significant environmental constraints. However, there could be scope for very limited development to meet specific local housing, employment or community needs, either within or (exceptionally) adjacent to the settlement development limit, subject to fulfilling the criteria set out in this Plan's Core and Delivery policies, to boost community vitality and social sustainability.

The PC supports the sensitive restoration of the Swedish Houses to modern standards whilst retaining their important historic status. In 2018 when SDC considered adding external cladding to the properties, the Twentieth Century Society, which campaigns for the preservation of architectural heritage, objected warning of the 'substantial harmful impact on the appearance of the houses'. Redevelopment of the site and complete demolition of the houses would be a tragedy.

While recognising the expense in such restoration, at least some of this expense is a consequence of the long period during which the two properties have remained unoccupied.

The PC shall be grateful if you will include these comments representing our position in response to the proposal in your report for submission to the Housing Committee. Attached is also the record of Stinchcombe residents' views expressed at an open meeting which we ask to be included as an appendix to your report.

Yours sincerely,