# Plans for five detached homes near River Wey advance despite local opposition



Plans for the construction of five large detached homes near the picturesque River Wey in Surrey have advanced following a planning committee meeting on March 26. Initially approved last year, the development was brought back into consideration after it was quashed at appeal, mainly due to objections from Send Parish Council, which contended that the homes would significantly compromise the scenic and landscape views from the riverside.

The proposed site for these homes, located approximately 130 metres from the River Wey Navigation Conservation Area, has faced opposition from local residents and officials who argue that the development would detract from the rural aesthetic and potentially harm the environment. "You should not feel that your hands are being tied or that you’re being pressured about [...] housing land supply," Cllr Julia Osbourne from Send Parish Council stated during the meeting. Cllr Osbourne highlighted that the approval of such large homes in this sensitive area is unjustifiable.

The luxury housing project, designed by Hawksmoor Homes, includes plans for two-storey family homes with a mix of two, three, and four bedrooms. Notably, the developers have made some adjustments to the original scheme, including the addition of off-street parking and the reconfiguration of housing plots to create more space between the homes and the boundary lines of the site. This was intended to maintain a green buffer zone, ensuring that the natural landscape remains somewhat protected.

Despite the changes, local councillors expressed concerns over the visual impact and the development's alignment with the area's character. “These are perfectly lovely buildings but in the wrong place,” said Cllr Patrick Oven, echoing thoughts shared by several other councillors during the discussion. Cllr Richard Mills remarked that while the new plans "vaguely conserves" some of the riverside views, enhancing the area's character remained impossible.

The discussions on the potential housing shortfall in Guildford, alongside the pressure to meet local housing needs, also played a central role in the deliberations. Cllr Howard Smith pointed out the implications of rejecting the scheme, cautioning that it might set a precedent that could hinder future housing developments in proximity to sensitive areas. He described the proposed homes as “attractive” and noted their spacious arrangement.

Around 40 members of the public had formally objected to the plans, citing concerns that the development would present a “blot on the landscape” and diminish the openness around the River Wey, in addition to potential increased traffic on local roads. However, following a debate, the committee ultimately approved the plans. The outcome was determined after a narrow vote, with seven councillors in favour, five against, and three abstentions, concluding that the housing benefits outweighed the negative impacts on the conservation area and the rural views.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/policies-plans-consultations/major-transport-projects/guildford/housing-development-in-guildford> - This URL corroborates discussions about housing needs and developments in Surrey, such as those in Guildford, which are relevant to broader housing pressures and considerations in the region.
* <https://designandbuilduk.net/plans-submitted-for-20million-sigma-homes-development-in-weybridge-surrey/> - This article provides context on housing developments near the River Wey, highlighting projects that emphasize environmental considerations and sensitivity to local aesthetics, similar to the concerns raised in the article about the proposed homes.
* <https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2025-02/Appendix%202%20-%20Realistic%20Candidates%20for%20Development.pdf> - This report from Surrey Heath Borough Council discusses development opportunities and challenges in a similar context, emphasizing the importance of balancing housing needs with environmental protection and local character preservation.
* <https://www.riverweytrust.org.uk/> - This website provides information about the River Wey Navigation Conservation Area, highlighting its significance and the importance of preserving its character, which is central to local concerns about new developments.
* <https://www.guildford.gov.uk/planning/developmentcontrol> - Guildford Borough Council's planning and development pages offer insight into how local councils assess and manage housing projects, balancing community needs with environmental concerns, similar to the debates around the proposed homes near the River Wey.