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Planning Committee
Braintree District Council
Causeway House
Bocking End
Braintree
Essex CM7 9HB

29th May 2020

Dear Members

Re: Planning Application 18/02007/FUL
Land off The Street, Gosfield
Statment to Planning Committee 2nd June 2020

Thank you for the opportunity to make a statement about this application. I am a local resident, with particular interest in trees, countryside issues and nature conservation. I hold the Professional Diploma in Arboriculture, and have worked as a self-employed arboricultural consultant for the last 15 years, following 24 years as a local government tree officer.

This application has improved greatly since it was first submitted, but still contains inconsistencies and omissions, which cause concern. Some of these were raised in my letter of 13th April last year, which I assume is available to you.

It should be possible to deal with most of these in suitable planning conditions, but I would like to draw your attention to my particular concerns. The items in bold are my suggestions for amendments to Conditions 9, 12, and 13. The remainder is detailed information.

1. Condition 9 - The Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) continues to contain several omissions, the key ones of which I repeat below. However, to summarise, at Section 7 the AIA recommends the preparation of an Arboricultural Method Statement. This should be a requirement of any permission granted, and specifically included in proposed Condition 9.

- It does not record several large Hawthorns growing close to the western boundary of the site, close to H41, and an important part of the screening of the site from the west. It suggests that this is an unmaintained field boundary. In fact, the field boundary is a low, regularly flailed hedge, and all the effective vegetation, in landscape terms, is within the site of the proposed development and yet has not been recorded in any way in this report and application. It is suggested most strongly that these hawthorn and the three oaks (T42, T43 and T44) are protected by a TPO served as soon as possible. Any TPO should also include all the Lime trees; although these are afforded some protection by being in the Conservation Area, a TPO would strengthen this.
- It does not include the large, single-stemmed Lime close to the allotments. Whilst this may be growing within the allotment land, work on the proposed development site could affect it, and its presence should be recorded and identified as a constraint, as required by BS 5837. This tree is part of the avenue, and is a single stemmed specimen unaffected by the gale of 1987; as such it is without doubt a category A3 tree.
- Appendix 6 of the Assessment recommends tree surgery work to 2 of the Lime trees (T5 and T6), but appendix 3 (the survey sheets) contain preliminary management recommendations to T 2, 4, 24 and 43. No reason is given for this work, which seems quite unnecessary.
- Para. 3.2 of the Arb. report states that no specialised construction methods are required to mitigate the impact of this development on trees. However, the main access road crosses the RPA of T2 and private drives enter the RPAs of T2, T3 and T8. Excavations for surfacing, kerbs and services, may all affect the root system, as may compaction caused by vehicles. Some mitigation is essential, for example suitable no-dig construction methods. These should be covered in an Arboricultural Method Statement, that should be specifically required by an amended condition 9.
- The Arb. report suggests the planting of a single standard Lime as a replacement for the two to be removed. Firstly, there is ample room for a second replacement in front of Plots 3/4. Secondly, there is no

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indication of what species of Lime should be considered. Neither *Tilia euchlora*, *T. Cordata*, *T. tomentosa*, nor any other exotic Lime would be appropriate. The species and cultivar chosen should respect the species and form of the existing Limes, and should be a *Tilia x europaea*, of a cultivar which is not golden foliated or fastigiata.

2. Proposed Condition 12 requires that a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy be submitted and approved by the planning authority, but does not state at what stage this should be done. I would suggest that this Plan should be submitted and agreed prior to the START of the development.

3. Condition 13 - Open Space Management.

The application proposes a significant area of open space, and the Section 106 agreement attached to the Outline Consent provides for a financial contribution towards upkeep. An earlier application for outline consent hinted at the formation of a management company, but there is still no indication of how this land is to be managed, or how the management is to be paid for. (Will it be a service charge on the new properties, or will Gosfield Parish Council be expected to pay?) This is covered in proposed Condition 13, but the submission and agreement of the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan is not required until "prior to the occupation of the development". Given the importance of the landscape and open space element of this scheme, I would suggest that this Plan should be submitted and approved prior to the START of the development.

Yours Sincerely

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