

**Statement to the Braintree District Council Planning Committee 18 August 2020 by Vanessa Dennis and David Belsham of Meriden, New Road, Terling**

**Application Number: 20/00462/FUL**

**Location: The Lincoln, New Road, Terling, Essex, CM3 2PN**

As neighbours who are adversely affected by the proposed development we were shocked to read the Planning Department's recommendation that this proposal should be approved.

We believe that the planning process followed has been procedurally unfair to objectors, and that the report currently before the Committee is an incomplete and one-sided assessment of the issues.

We are aware that the planning officer has held discussions with the developer in connection with various refinements that have been made to the developer's original proposal. However, at the same time, the officer has declined an invitation to visit the neighbouring properties to assess the development from their perspectives. We believe that this asymmetric approach has resulted in the Planning Department acting on incomplete information, and unintentionally closing its mind to alternative views before considering the objections.

The Planning Department dismisses the objection that there is cramming of the site, even though it is being split into two narrow plots, and the proposed buildings will go to within 1.3m of the boundary on either side, with similar spacing between the two new houses. The Planning Department justifies its conclusion on a misleading observation that properties in New Road are predominantly 4+ bedroom houses "in close proximity to their .... boundaries". In fact New Road contains a mix of housing types and sizes that have a proportionate appearance relative to their various plot sizes. Basing its conclusion on a misleading observation, and allowing an urban level of cramming in a village environment, is inconsistent with local planning rules and directly contrary to recent planning decisions on two other houses in New Road. We believe that this amounts to unbalanced decision-making by the Planning Department.

The Planning Department also dismisses the objection that there is a loss of amenity to Meriden, even though the proposal creates a large and over-bearing new building that extends 7 metres down the garden beyond the existing building line, that is close to the boundary, that shades Meriden's garden room and patio from the early morning sun, and that over-looks Meriden's garden from a Juliet balcony. The Planning Department bases its conclusion on various irrelevant measurements between Plot 1 windows and the boundary line, while ignoring the substance and detail of the objection including, for example, the more elevated position of Plot 1 and the low elevation of the early morning sun. We believe that a balanced assessment would conclude that there is a loss of amenity to Meriden, and we therefore believe that the Planning Department is behaving unreasonably in coming to its conclusion.

Terling Parish Council has recommended refusal of the application. We would urge the Committee to follow this recommendation, or at least to defer a decision until it has received a more complete and balanced assessment of the facts.

Thank you.

Vanessa Dennis and David Belsham