

DCC Meeting: 16th February 2021 - Braintree D C (virtual meeting)

Address to the Development Control Committee to be read out on behalf of Mr Dean J Pearce (Agent) for Mr & Mrs Pawsey. **SUPPORTING APPLICATION**

PART B Item 5f (20/01318/FUL) - Alterations to existing vehicular access and erection of a detached cartlodge to serve 4 no. dwellings.

11, 12, 13 & 14 Hickford Hill, Belchamp St Paul, CO10 7DW

1.1 This relatively minor application was validated on the 19th August 2020 *some 6 months ago*.

1.2 There has been no objection from any quarter.

1.3 The Parish Council, who best understand the issues with parking and traffic on this steeply banked and narrow lane support the proposal for its resulting highway benefits.

1.4 In its current form, the existing vehicular access (*serving just two dwellings*) if applied for today would not be supported by the LHA as it is dangerous and would not meet current standards on a large number of criteria. Accordingly it must be considered to be detrimental to highway safety. The Officer appears to suggest that the fact that an accident has yet to occur at this access means that it should not be improved.

We disagree with this assessment, it should not take an accident (of any severity) to demonstrate the danger, the LHA access standards readily illustrate what is considered 'safe', this is not.

1.5) The proposed '11m access' width referred to several times by the officer is the width at the carriageway edge originally considered the LHA would require recognising the narrowness of the lane and steepness of the banks.

When it became known that a lesser width (5.5m) would also be supported by the LHA we confirmed to the officer (*email 2nd November 2020*) that we would readily accept whichever the LHA were to stipulate. However this has not been reported to the Committee.

1.6) The proposed area shown for parking to the rear of the dwellings already exists, is expansive and used for such albeit in a rather more *ad-hoc* fashion. We consider it disingenuous of the Officer to suggest the site is a more pleasant and attractive part of the open landscape. Site photographs would no doubt clarify this to members. It is littered with paraphernalia and detritus which is unlikely to be cleared

without sound reason. This proposal offers such assurance and would give the LPA control on any future development by way of suitable condition.

1.7) We note that the AONB team have NOT objected to the proposal.

1.8) We note the Landscape team do NOT object to the proposal. We also understand the frontage hedges could be removed without further permission but the officer has never categorically confirmed this despite repeated requests for clarity. The applicant would of course accept reasonable conditions to prevent detriment to the verdant appeal and visual amenity of the area by loss of soft-landscape as is clearly stated within the proposal and has been from the outset.

1.9) Notwithstanding that we wholly disagree with the assessment of the outbuilding (which shall appear as a modest, single-storey, agricultural structure in the wider landscape and be most inconspicuous from Hickford Hill), it was confirmed to the Officer via email on the 2nd November 2020 that " *the applicant as stated previously is more concerned with the provision of parking and safe access and is prepared to forego the new structure entirely*". This offer has never been accepted by the Officer however and again neither has it been reported to the Committee in this instance?.

In summary, it has taken 6 months to consider the merits of tangible improvements to the highway network, improvement to an existing well documented local parking issue *with community support* and a modest building to serve the *existing* 4 dwellings replacing existing paraphernalia (and of which the applicant had readily agreed to remove from the proposal in any event).

We therefore respectfully request that members view and support this proposal on its merits either in part (i.e. access only) or in full (i.e. to also include the outbuilding).

On behalf of the applicant may we thank you for your time.