

Little Berkhamsted Parish Council

www.littleberkhamsted.org.uk

Chairman:
Christopher Nunn
Trewinnard House
Little Berkhamsted
Hertford
SG13 8LS
Tel: 01707 874299
Email: cnunn@btopenworld.com

Clerk:
Graham Irwin
26 Fanshaws Lane
Brickendon
Hertford
SG13 8PF
Tel: 01992 511697 Fax: 0870 116 3398
Email: graham@compassion-in-business.co.uk

27 May 2008

Ms Jill Stevens
East Herts Council
Wallfields
Pegs Lane
Hertford SG13 8EQ

Dear Ms Stevens

LPA ref 3/08/0756 – Erection of dwelling for occupation by farm manager (amended scheme); Bucks Farm, Bayford

Thank you for your letter of 7 May inviting comments on the above application.

The parish council objects to the application on the grounds that it is inappropriate development in the Green Belt contrary to Policy GBC1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007. The Council sees no justification for a dwelling to be built on the site which is larger than that for which permission has been granted under reference 3/07/1558. In paragraph 3.3.3 of the Design and Access Statement supporting the previous application, the applicant stated that the scale of the proposed dwelling 'is considered adequate to fulfil the functional needs of the enterprise'. The applicant has accordingly already accepted that there is no need for a larger dwelling in order to meet the agricultural needs on which the application to build a house in the Green Belt relied. It appears that the latest application is not based on agricultural need but rather is designed to increase the value of the dwelling as a residential property in its own right.

In its comment letter dated 17 August 2007 on application 3/07/1558, the Council pointed out several inaccuracies and inconsistencies in the information presented with the application which raised serious concerns about the justification and motivation for it. The Council has seen no evidence that these concerns were properly investigated before permission for application 3/07/1558 was granted on 20 September 2007. The subsequent elapse of time without the development starting and the submission now of a further application to 'improve' the permission only serve to increase the Council's concerns about the real purpose of the application.

It is particularly instructive that much emphasis was given in the previous application to the 'urgent need for improved accommodation for the manager' (para 2.2.1 of the Revised Design and Access Statement dated July 2007) and to a letter dated 22 January 2007 which the landowners obtained from the tenant, stressing the need for additional staff accommodation in order that the tenant could plan operations for the year ahead. Nearly eighteen months have now passed without the allegedly urgent need for additional accommodation being met and the objective of the applicant now seems to be to enhance the size and appearance of the new dwelling. This suggests that the applications, although nominally by the tenant, Jansen (UK) Animal Tracks, are in fact being directed by the landowners – an inference which is reinforced by the fact that para 6(a) of the latest application incorrectly states that the applicant is the owner of the site.

For the reasons stated above, the parish council is strongly of the view that the present application should be refused and that thorough enquiry should be made into the concerns it has expressed to provide assurance that the permission for application 3/07/1558 was not given on the basis of incomplete or inaccurate representations.

Yours sincerely

Graham Irwin
Clerk to the Parish Council

cc Cllr Linda Haysey