

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

TO THE PLANNING COMMITTEE ON 28th May 2024

Item 6 – 24/00114/FUL – Land East Of Mill Lane Great Leighs Chelmsford Essex

Statement from Mr B

As an architect I know a lot of hard work is required by all disciplines to achieve a functional and elegant design. In this case it comprised of myself, the ecologist, landscape architect and sustainable energy consultant. A public design survey last year resulted in ninety percent of 113 unknown respondents deciding the house was beautiful, inspiring and stunning in its setting, reflecting the remarks of encouragement by friends and building professionals alike. NPPF paragraph 131 states, 'creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve'. We all have opinion about what high quality architecture is, but many would agree it should be beautiful, inspiring and unique.

The planning report assesses the design against paragraph 84(e). It sees the tree inspired concept as seeking to mimic and be organic in nature, limiting its response to the context of trees. Architecture takes inspiration from various sources and in this case the trees manifest as an abstracted form to this energy efficient design that considers the impact on the environment and the diverse vernacular of the area.

The DAS, although not mentioned in the report, importantly refers to the design survey and an orchard landscape.

Orchards are considered important biodiversity by Natural England as they significantly encourage ecology. The combination of this house and its landscape will significantly enhance its immediate setting.

The report accepts the design is 'very good' and a high standard, but in places it appears to counter this view.

Item 6.7 ends with "In order to help raise the standard of design in rural areas, proposals must become an exemplar for outstanding and innovative rural architecture." The report, by accepting the appeal inspector's conclusion it would raise the standard of design, appears to recognise that the design is an example of outstanding architecture.

At 6.17 it agrees with the inspector it "would be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area", but oddly at 6.11 believes the design excludes the context of the wider local area. As previously mentioned, the wider local area has been considered.

Ultimately do committee members support 'the Lion's share' of public opinion and agree Leaf House is a paragraph 84(e) design.

Statement from Mrs B

I would like to respectfully draw the Committee's attention to Paragraph 84 of the NPPF and reiterate that if a house meets the criteria of this paragraph, then the design is also deemed as compliant with all other policies.

The Planning officer's report states that the design is an enhanced version of the one submitted by us two years ago. The design has been strengthened by the feedback and comments made by the Appeal Inspector and by the advice of the planning officer we met in June 2023.

It was important to us that the house exists harmoniously with the wildlife and natural environment of the area, which we have lived within for more than twenty years. We are proud to present truly the best possible version of Leaf House.

Key statements made by the appeal inspector include:

- (i) the design draws its main inspiration from the surrounding natural environment
- (ii) Whilst contemporary in design the proposal seeks to marry the dispersed residential character with the landscape by taking inspiration from trees.
- (iii) the sustainability features are commendable.
- (iv) the scheme would inspire many. The contemporary design of the proposed development would raise the standard of design in this rural area.

Arguably each of these positive comments imply that the scheme can be deemed as an outstanding design and therefore compliant to Paragraph 84. The appeal however was not upheld as the inspector was not convinced that the architectural or environmental qualities would be sufficient to significantly enhance its immediate setting.

Crucially, the inspector acknowledged that determining whether a proposed design is of exceptional quality is a matter of subjective judgement.

To assess the design, we launched an independent public survey to obtain views on the visual impact of Leaf House. 102 out of 113 people agree that the design suits its setting, is beautiful, inspiring, and stunning.

This overwhelming independent response addresses the subjectivity matter and the concerns raised by the planning officer's report. This demonstrates beyond doubt that the public opinion considers the design as outstanding. This view is also echoed by other professional architects.

We hope that the planning committee can see the beauty of the design of our dream home, how it will enhance its surroundings and vote in support of our application.

Statement from Mr K

Dear Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to present to you this evening.

If I may provide some brief background to assist the Committee. I am an Architect and founding director of a practice who has been fortunate to receive a number of regional and national awards from The Royal Institute of Architects, The Architect Journal, and Civic Trust. I have sat on a number of design review panels including co-chairing the regional panel for Inspire East. I have been a juror for RIBA awards and competitions, as well as providing design tuition and advice for a number of organisations, including as Director and Chief Planning Officer for a unitary authority.

I have been in the position of reviewing and assessing a great deal of architecture and planning submissions ranging from the poor to the very high quality. What I can be certain of is that exceptional and outstanding buildings only really come to being through time and a strong vision followed through to delivery.

The key issue for the application before you relates to paragraph 84 of the NPPF in particular with regards to outstanding and exceptional design. Throughout the UK there are many paragraph 55, 79, 80 and 84 houses that have been approved many of which are not responsive to their site, nor do they in my opinion represent outstanding architecture.

I do believe that the scheme before you, Leaf House, has the ability to be an outstanding piece of architecture to raise both the quality and aspiration of the built environment within a rural setting.

I have known the applicant for nearly 3 decades, professionally and personally and what I can be sure of is his level of creativity, intellectual understanding, and ability and sheer tenacity, together with an acute attention to detail which will ensure that the proposal is executed in an exceptional manor leading to an outstanding contribution to rural architecture in response to para 84 and a project that the city of Chelmsford can be proud of.

I hope the committee can support the applicant in their pursuit to deliver an exceptional quality piece of architecture and a benchmark for an outstanding home in a rural setting.

I trust this is in accordance with your procedures and protocol.

Item 7 – 24/00386/FUL – Land East Of Ragged Robins, Lower Stock Road, West Hanningfield, Chelmsford, Essex

Question from Mr L D

Planning Balance and Public Benefit

The PO report decision does not provide planning balance, focussing almost exclusively on the benefits to the applicant it seems to gloss over many of the real concerns raised by various bodies and residents.

There is little to no public benefit from this development. All of the key indicators and impacts are decidedly and significantly in the negative column – multiple health and safety risks, health and welfare risks (pertaining to livestock as well as humans),

increased traffic, increased pollution, as well as being detrimental to the local environment.

As stated in the application, there is no additional employment resulting from the development nor is there any evidence or indeed consideration of any benefit to the local economy.

Agricultural Need

The applications, neither individually nor collectively, demonstrate agricultural need for the development of a significant intensive farming operation in which vastly more cattle will be located on the site than the grazing land could sustain.

This intensive farming application, located on a disparate parcel of land, in a difficult to access, "narrow meandering" lane requires an acre, to be concreted over for the hard standing and the access roadway, amounting to more than 10% of the grazing land.

It seeks to demonstrate agricultural need by referencing the reduction of carbon emissions through reducing beef imports from Australia. This information is misleading.

For example, in January 2024, of 23,900 tonnes of imported beef, just 214 tonnes came from Australia (source ADHB - Beef market update, Friday 22 March 2024).

However, reducing carbon footprint is important and consideration should be given for a more immediate means of reducing carbon emissions by instead increasing the barn capacity at one of the applicant's existing, extensive estates to derive agricultural efficiencies and thereby eradicate the additional diesel carbon emissions generated by the inevitable farm traffic travelling to and from the Lower Stock Road site on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

Items 7 - 10 – 24/00386/FUL, 24/00387/FUL, 24/00388/FUL, 24/00389/FUL – Land East Of Ragged Robins, Lower Stock Road, West Hanningfield, Chelmsford, Essex

Question from Mr S D

Reference planning applications

24/00386/ful

24/00387/ful

24/00388/ful

24/00399/ful

1.The accumulative impact of all 4 applications have not be taken into account using the methodology set out in the R (Wingfield) V Canterbury City Council. The court set out 4 criteria to assess if the planning was one or more than one application. These criteria are:

Common Ownership - in this application the site is in single ownership.

Simultaneous determination All four planning applications are being determined today.

Functional Interdependence of all four applications are reliant on one another, ie screening to mitigate the visual impact to the north is detailed only in the hay barn application and shown in the red line boundary for that application. The application reference each other in terms of hay storage etc.

Standalone projects where a development is justified on its own merits. This is not the case, and the application makes reference to the requirement of all four.

From criteria shown above it can be seen that this should be viewed as one application. Therefore, it would exceed the 1000M2 and should be a major application. This would also mean that the ecology small site assessment was incorrect.

2.The Ecology assessment did not take into account the fact that it is was an established meadow and was ploughed just a number of weeks prior to the ecology assessment being undertaken.

3.The Planning officer statement detailed that the access did not require alteration. This is incorrect as the Highways officer requested that the access is widened and straightened.

The Heritage officer has referred that the existing access would be utilised and carried out their assessment on this basis. This is now incorrect as the highways have requested the access to be enlarged and will have a significant impact on the protected lane.

4.The planning application has no details on how noise and smell will be mitigated.

5.There is no flood risk assessment and no assessment of the possible pollution impact to the Sandon Brook catchment. We know how much of an issue water cause pollution is currently.

6.In my opinion this is not a simple agricultural application. Instead this is an industrial, intensive farming and the council should view this application as an industrial process.

7.This will have a significant impact on the surrounding residents and there are 18 residences within a 400m radius.

8.There has been no traffic management plan provided or an assessment of the impact of increased traffic on Lower Stock Road. If the statement within the application states that only two small vehicles per day would utilise the road, a planning condition should be placed to ensure this is upheld and the size of the vehicle is limited. Lower Stock Road is used by a significant amount of cyclist Horse riders and walker the increase in traffic will detriment impact to these amenity uses.

In summary we would request that the committee refuses these applications.

Question from Mr W

I live opposite the field, where the proposed Barns will be built at Bellcoins (previously Bellwyns), formerly two farming cottages built in the early 16th century on Lower Stock Road a Protected Lane.

In my statement I would like to bring to your attention to many things but as I only have a two minute slot I will restrict this to two items

Barn Location:

The positioning of the barns is very close to our property visually and in terms of odour and noise. I understand these types of uses need to take place in the countryside but 100% they need to be sensitive to 'existing housing', this is quite fundamental.

One of the reasons the first application was rejected was due to the location of the barns running parallel to Lower Stock Road a Protected Lane but in a less intrusive location to our house.

Under recommendation from Michael Hurst the Principal Heritage Officer the Barns were moved 90 degrees into the direct line of sight of our home. This satisfies the Heritage requirement but fails to consider the impact to myself and the local residents.

It has not taken into account

- Odour, noise and visual impact to our home and local residents
- Wind direction and prevailing weather patterns to lessen the impact to our home and local residents

The locations of the barns is purely based on a requirement to satisfy Heritage with no consideration to the impact to our home and the local residents. This is a 12.7 Acre field why put them in the most intrusive location.

If the Committee is at all minded not to refuse these applications then the applicant should be invited to reposition the proposed Barns elsewhere within the field to a location that is sensitive to local housing.

Vehicle Access:

Essex County Council Highways stated on the consultees comments that the proposal is acceptable subject to conditions. In summary this was to :-

- Increase the width access, it's currently 4.5 meters
- No unbound material shall be used for the vehicular access within 15 meters of the highway
- Prior to occupation of the development a vehicular turning facility, of a design to be approved in writing by the LPA shall be constructed.

In the Planning Officers report within the Executive Summary, it is stated that there are no highway safety issues and the site has acceptable access.

The applicant has a similar farming facility as Smallgains Lane and whilst the cows are onsite a tractor and Keenan MechFiber400 is used on a daily basis to feed the cows.

Based on the dimensions of the vehicles used, the tarmac road width (3.9m), field entrance width (4.5m) and lead up to the gates the vehicles would not be able to access the field without encroaching on verges and damaging hedgerow.

Exiting the field would also prove challenging and raises safety concerns for local users of the lane i.e.. Cyclist, Ramblers, Horse Riders etc.

Please see uploaded schematic



The current gated access to the field cannot support the farming vehicles that will be used.

If the Committee is at all minded not to refuse these applications the Highways recommendation must be followed to ensure unimpeded access to the field and road safety to local residents and the many users of Lower Stock Road.

Question from Mr S

Dear City Council Members,
My family has lived in Stock for over 60 years, and the majority of our work is for local authorities, including Essex Highways and Local parish councils. I am writing this letter in response to comments made by Stock and West Hanningfield Parish Council and the residents regarding Planning application numbers **24/00386/FUL**, **24/00387/FUL**, **24/00388/FUL**, and **24/00389/FUL**. Specifically, I address the

comments related to Smallgains Lane and the condition of the road, which they attribute to the applicant.

These comments are entirely untrue, unfounded, and misleading. The road has been damaged and flooded for over 6 years, long before the applicant began using this road. I have personally visited Smallgains Lane in Stock with the parish council to dig out the ditches and unblock the gullies. Additionally, you can verify the state of the road and the flooding damage by visiting the highway website and viewing Google Street view images from 2020, which clearly show the road's poor condition years before the applicant started using it.

Once again, the comments made by Stock and West Hanningfield Parish Council and the residents are false. I would like this letter to be read aloud at the city council meeting on the 28th of May, as unfortunately, I will be on holiday and unable to attend in person. I would have preferred to be there to support the applicant directly. Furthermore, I fully support the applicant and wish to highlight that Stock and West Hanningfield Parish Council and the residents have made no comments about the significant number of movements made by the Harnet's Horticultural business's artic lorries. These lorries make hundreds of movements weekly, yet no concerns have been raised regarding their impact on the road.

I strongly dispute the claims made by Stock and West Hanningfield Parish Council and the residents and request that this be taken into consideration during your deliberations.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Question from West Hanningfield Parish Council

Good evening my name is Councillor Paul Brand and I am one of the planning representatives on West Hanningfield Parish Council.

Prior to this meeting, West Hanningfield Parish Council submitted a document detailing our objections to all four applications via the planning portal, which you will have before you tonight.

West Hanningfield is a small, close knit, village community and here we have four more applications to disturb the beauty and tranquility of our parish.

These applications, somewhat strangely supported by planners and heritage officers will potentially decimate a protected and beautiful lane. This is a lane that is well used by horse riders, dog walkers and ramblers and these groups would face an impact on their safety as this lane is not suitable for any further increases in traffic.

As a business proposal, the applications are questionable at best and this raises the spectre of this being merely a vehicle to possible future planning permissions more aligned to profit than farming.

Let me be very clear. This is not a farmyard scene of cows wandering around in a field. These animals will be tethered and kept indoors as feeding beasts.

This is an enterprise that should surely be better placed as part of a large commercial farming establishment and indeed, this is where they are often located,

not in a tiny lane on a small parcel of land amongst residential homes. Just because the officers consider the application to be somehow suitable does not mean you are unable to use your vote in a more valuable and individual fashion.

A very similar application in another comparable lane in West Hanningfield was refused by your planning officers on the following grounds: And I quote:

'it would be detrimental to the amenities of the area, particularly by reason of the noise and disturbance created by the vehicular traffic generated, and the road hierarchy serving the site is not suitable for the type and frequency of traffic that the proposed use would be likely to generate, and
The traffic movements generated would have a detrimental effect on local amenities;

- The use would generate traffic movements which would create nuisance and cause danger to other users of the rural road network;
- The site does not have satisfactory linkages with the road hierarchy;
- The use would not conserve or enhance the appearance of the countryside'

This was quite rightly refused.

West Hanningfield Parish Council would wish to see consistency in planning decisions and so request that the same rules and consideration are given to these applications before you.

The applications are not in your backyards, not opposite your homes or in your village, but you have an elected responsibility to protect our whole area, retain our green belt and your wisdom may help us retain the beauty of the quiet lanes that we all so enjoy. This commercial enterprise is simply not suitable at this location, exactly as stated previously by your officers.

Question from Mr D

Are the councillors fully aware of the historical attributes of Lower stock road ? It is not for me to be the judge of the consequences and impact that the application would have to our protected lane however its really important that councillors are fully clear about the size of the of the overall operation that will be in place, if the 4 applications are approved.

We are not talking just a few young cows here were are talking up to 250 cows situated across four Industrial size warehouse type structures spanning the size of a football stadium. I do feel that as the application has been split into four separate applications, the applicant is trying to play down the overall size of the operation. This undoubtedly will be a full scale factory farm situated on just 10 acres of land. It will not be limited to just a couple of visits a day. There will be lots of comings and going of large tractors and trailers already experienced by the people living close to the applicants other operation in Smallgains Stock.

The application supporting statement indicates that there would be a low number of

vehicle movements, mainly with small vehicles and I would dispute this as I have personally witnessed a KEENAN MechFiber400+ feeder wagon used by the applicant to feed his cattle it measures 3,4M HIGH X 3M Wide X 7.6 M long that's without the tractor at the front that pulls it in total this piece of Kit will span at least 12 meters long. Most definitely not a small vehicle.

I would ask the councillors to please take on board the strength of objections from the local community we really do need you all at this time .

The applicant is not even a community member and having met him, he seems have a total disregard for the well being of the community and our heritage assets. The whole application makes no real sense and is certainly not needed, especially as the brief for a healthy planet should now be to eat less meat and not to increase production and the consumption of meat. As well as this why would the councillors even consider destroying part of our greenbelt and putting our heritage assets at risk

I thank you for listening to my concerns.

Question from Mrs H

My wife and I live directly next to the proposed application for the Hay & Cow Barns. In the reapplication the Barns have now been moved 90 degrees and are now closer to our home.

My wife has been diagnosed with Pulmonary fibrosis of the lungs, Bronchiectasis and an autoimmune disease, Sjogren's syndrome. She is currently under Papworth Hospital and Broomfield Hospital Rheumatology.

I am concerned about the close location of the barns and that the chemicals will worsen her symptoms and overall health. In people with pulmonary fibrosis, shortness of breath can suddenly be triggered and get worse over a few days. This is called an acute exacerbation. It can be life-threatening. I am very very concerned what impact these barns and the chemicals used will have on my wife's health. Not to mention the smell and noise we will have to tolerate.

Please consider the potential consequences of approving the proposed hay and cow barns and to please prioritise my wife's safety and quality of life.

Question from Mrs K

Dear Council

Land East of Ragged Robins, Lower Stock Road, West Hanningfield, Chelmsford.
Application for 3 cow barns and hay barn ref 24/00386; 24/00387; 24/00388;
24/00389.

Having read the Officer's Report ("OR") I wish to make the following statement in

opposition to the above applications.

Context. The capacity of the three large sheds is many times greater than the number of cattle that could be supported by grazing the pasture (which has in any event recently been ploughed up by the applicant). The reality is that the industrial scale sheds are intended for an intensive cattle rearing operation. Put simply why build such large sheds for such a small area of land? This is important context because of the impact on heritage assets and neighbour amenity and concerns about highway safety which have not been properly addressed by the application or in the OR.

Heritage Assets. The Committee will be aware of the planning history of the site and that 4 previous applications were recently refused. One of the grounds for the refusal was that the proposed buildings would have been harmful to the setting of heritage assets and the level of harm would not have been outweighed by the public benefits from the development. The downgrading of the level of harm is inconsistent with the previous assessment and flawed for the following reasons;

a) The buildings will remain highly visible from the lane and Bellcoins and the revised siting brings the buildings closer to Bellcoins. Turning the buildings as proposed will expose the hard standing yard and track (plus large scale buildings) to the lane and Bellcoins at the most open aspect of the site and the proposed tree planting will not adequately mitigate - the re-siting does not reduce the harm, if anything it increases the impact on the setting of both the lane and Bellcoins;

b) There is no mention in the OR of the permanent damage and harm that will be caused to the fabric of the lane (including historic verges) by heavy vehicles during construction and thereafter in the operation of the cattle rearing operation. In addition the OR does not deal with concerns raised about vehicle type and trip rate and consequently the impact of further damage on the character and significance of the lane;

c) The OR assessment of harm fails to take account of the damage and harm to the protected lane necessitated by the improvements required (not just recommended as stated in the OR) by the Local Highways Authority ("LHA") to the access to address highway safety concerns. The conservation officer and ECC Historic Environment Branch have both noted in relation to the refused applications that "Harm can be caused to Protected Lanes through creation or widening of access points, removal of elements of the lane or similar direct impacts".

3. Access and the Protected Lane. The LHA assessment of the need for access improvements should stand and the assessment of the level of harm to the protected assets should reflect the conditions. The OR reasoning on this is both factually incorrect and illogical. There is also an anomaly in the submitted drawings that requires clarification. The site location plans for the applications (eg drawing 23/30/17) extends beyond the boundary of the applicant's holding (edged blue) across the highway verge forming part of the protected lane. If the existing access is

adequate and no further hardening/widening is needed, why is the site drawn in this way? The implication from the drawing is that the track/yard which the applicant intends to construct up to and along the entire length of the barn and sheds would be continued beyond the field gate across the protected lane verge to the highway edge. This would clearly have an adverse impact on the protected lane and Bellcoins. This issue has simply not been addressed at all by the OR. Given the potential impact on the protected lane and Bellcoins it must be properly addressed and the impact assessed in the planning decision.

4. Inappropriate development in the Green Belt. If the proposal involves any development (whether voluntarily or as conditioned) beyond the boundary of the applicant's holding (ie on the access beyond the existing field gate) the changes to the protected lane would in themselves adversely affect the preservation of the openness of the Green Belt and consequently be inappropriate development.

In view of these issues the Council should not follow the OR recommendation but instead refuse each of the applications.

Questions from Mr W

Application Ref: 24/00386/FUL

Site Address: Land East of Ragged Robins, Lower Stock Road, West Hanningfield.

Committee Date: 28th May 2024

Notes:

- The site is an agricultural field within the rural area and forms part of the applicant' agricultural holding.
- The site is accessed through a historic and established field gate from Lower Stock Road.
- He and his wife and family have spent years investing in the farmland and have worked hard in maintaining infrastructure, hedges rows, ditches, and woodland.
- Agricultural activities comprise the management of a herd of single suckler beef cows.
- This land forms part of the deceased Spalding family estate which includes Brookside Dairy in West Huntingfield/great Baddow.
- Mr. Sharp is 'Farm Assured' and 'Red Tractor Assurance' approved. As with all farms, he is regularly audited to ensure the upkeep and High Health of the cattle stock on a regular basis.
- The applicant has every right to farm and manage his land efficiently. As this is an agricultural field, he can stock the field with cattle as and when it is efficient for him to do so. He can do this without planning consent in line with Red Tractor Policies and the Government guidance that ensure the welfare of animals.
- This application follows on from a previous proposal, working on the advice of the Councils own Heritage officer, Mr. M Hirst, this current scheme has been amended to relocate the barns away from the protected lane. Mr Hirst has been consulted on this application and has offered no objection to the proposals.

In addition; -

- We understand that there have been local objections and that some committee members have been approached by local objectors to voice their opinion.

- We have been approached by Cllr Sue Dobson, who was contacted by Mr. Wilkes, of Bellcoins, in relation to meeting the applicant on site to which our client agreed to this, unfortunately Mr. Wilkes cancelled the meeting a day or so beforehand to go on holiday despite having two weeks notice. His alternative date fell outside of the application time frame and so the meeting did not materialize.
- The West Hanningfield Parish Council Meeting agreed to defer their decision to allow for a site visit with the objectors and the applicant, which was agreed to. However, the very next day, the Parish' consultation response was uploaded to the council's website in objection to the scheme.
- We are aware of comments from locals relating to the running of a similar site in Smallgains Lane (north of Billericay) in which there is concern about the state of the road and verges. The unfounded and misleading opinions relate to the 'damage' to the road and verge because of the barns being erected. None of this is true, the road was damaged long before the applicant was on site at Smallgains. This can be seen on Google Street View which was taken from 2020 and clearly shows the damage to the road and verges before the barns were erected in October 2023.

- We note that the Harnets Nursery, adjacent to the barn site, generates many vehicular movements per week and includes a significant amount of HGV's and 40-ton arctic lorries. Unfortunately, the voiced opinion has failed to mention any of this. However, this was observed firsthand by the Planning Officer and Sarah Hill Saunders on a visit to the site.

- We note that the running of Smallgains barns falls outside of the determination of this application.

- Other concerns relate to the following: -

- Nuisance due to higher intensity of farming

As stated previously, this is an agricultural field and can be farmed in accordance with Farm Assurance and Red Tractor policies.

- Adverse impact of protected lane/Visual Impact

As previously stated, the application proposals have been considered by the Councils Heritage officer and no concerns have been raised.

- Site access not being wide enough.

The site access is long established. The applicant will/can only vehicles that are suitable to gain entrance. In this instance smaller vans or trucks. The barns provide for small feeder tractors to be stored on site without the need for using the highway.

- Vehicle movement

This will be twice daily with a utility vehicle or a car the daily feed. The hay and silage will be stored on site will be stocked circa two times annually. This will keep movement to an absolute minimum.

- Slurry

This is not a dairy farm and therefore no slurry will be produced. Cattle are bedded on straw only, and the manure / muck away will be sold to local arable farmers where muck every 6-8 weeks.

- Surface Water

There will be no excess surface water, new modern barns have the benefit of being equipped with underground rainwater harvesting that feed water back to the cattle.

- The field being already ploughed.

The applicant has every right to plough the field and has done so ready for appropriate grass seed to be sown to be a new lay. This is standard farming practice.

The application has the support of the Planning Department, ECC Highways and the Councils Heritage Officer and we trust that the proposals in acceptable to the planning committee.

Application Ref: 24/00387/FUL

Site Address: Land East of Ragged Robins, Lower Stock Road, West Hanningfield.

Committee Date: 28th May 2024

Notes:

- The site is an agricultural field within the rural area and forms part of the applicant' agricultural holding.

- The site is accessed through a historic and established field gate from Lower Stock Road.

- He and his wife and family have spent years investing in the farmland and have worked hard in maintaining infrastructure, hedges rows, ditches, and woodland.

- Agricultural activities comprise the management of a herd of single suckler beef cows.

- This land forms part of the deceased Spalding family estate which includes Brookside Dairy in West Huntingfield/great Baddow.

- Mr. Sharp is 'Farm Assured' and 'Red Tractor Assurance' approved. As with all farms, he is regularly audited to ensure the upkeep and High Health of the cattle stock on a regular basis.
- The applicant has every right to farm and manage his land efficiently. As this is an agricultural field, he can stock the field with cattle as and when it is efficient for him to do so. He can do this without planning consent in line with Red Tractor Policies and the Government guidance that ensure the welfare of animals.
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- The field being already ploughed.

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The application has the support of the Planning Department, ECC Highways and the Councils Heritage Officer and we trust that the proposals in acceptable to the planning committee.

Application Ref: 24/00388/FUL

Site Address: Land East of Ragged Robins, Lower Stock Road, West Hanningfield.

Committee Date: 28th May 2024

Notes:

- The site is an agricultural field within the rural area and forms part of the applicant' agricultural holding.

- The site is accessed through a historic and established field gate from Lower Stock Road.

- He and his wife and family have spent years investing in the farmland and have worked hard in maintaining infrastructure, hedges rows, ditches, and woodland.

- Agricultural activities comprise the management of a herd of single suckler beef cows.

- This land forms part of the deceased Spalding family estate which includes Brookside Dairy in West Huntingfield/great Baddow.
- Mr. Sharp is 'Farm Assured' and 'Red Tractor Assurance' approved. As with all farms, he is regularly audited to ensure the upkeep and High Health of the cattle stock on a regular basis.
- The applicant has every right to farm and manage his land efficiently. As this is an agricultural field, he can stock the field with cattle as and when it is efficient for him to do so. He can do this without planning consent in line with Red Tractor Policies and the Government guidance that ensure the welfare of animals.
- This application follows on from a previous proposal, working on the advice of the Councils own Heritage officer, Mr. M Hirst, this current scheme has been amended to relocate the barns away from the protected lane. Mr Hirst has been consulted on this application and has offered no objection to the proposals.

In addition; -

- We understand that there have been local objections and that some committee members have been approached by local objectors to voice their opinion.
- We have been approached by Cllr Sue Dobson, who was contacted by Mr. Wilkes, of Bellcoins, in relation to meeting the applicant on site to which our client agreed to this, unfortunately Mr. Wilkes cancelled the meeting a day or so beforehand to go on holiday despite having two weeks notice. His alternative date fell outside of the application time frame and so the meeting did not materialize.
- The West Hanningfield Parish Council Meeting agreed to defer their decision to allow for a site visit with the objectors and the applicant, which was agreed to. However, the very next day, the Parish' consultation response was uploaded to the council's website in objection to the scheme.
- We are aware of comments from locals relating to the running of a similar site in Smallgains Lane (north of Billericay) in which there is concern about the state of the road and verges. The unfounded and misleading opinions relate to the 'damage' to the road and verge because of the barns being erected. None of this is true, the road was damaged long before the applicant was on site at Smallgains. This can be seen on Google Street View which was taken from 2020 and clearly shows the damage to the road and verges before the barns were erected in October 2023.

- We note that the Harnets Nursery, adjacent to the barn site, generates many vehicular movements per week and includes a significant amount of HGV's and 40-ton arctic lorries. Unfortunately, the voiced opinion has failed to mention any of this. However, this was observed firsthand by the Planning Officer and Sarah Hill Saunders on a visit to the site.

- We note that the running of Smallgains barns falls outside of the determination of this application.

- Other concerns relate to the following: -

- Nuisance due to higher intensity of farming

As stated previously, this is an agricultural field and can be farmed in accordance with Farm Assurance and Red Tractor policies.

- Adverse impact of protected lane/Visual Impact

As previously stated, the application proposals have been considered by the Councils Heritage officer and no concerns have been raised.

- Site access not being wide enough.

The site access is long established. The applicant will/can only vehicles that are suitable to gain entrance. In this instance smaller vans or trucks. The barns provide for small feeder tractors to be stored on site without the need for using the highway.

- Vehicle movement

This will be twice daily with a utility vehicle or a car the daily feed. The hay and silage will be stored on site will be stocked circa two times annually. This will keep movement to an absolute minimum.

- Slurry

This is not a dairy farm and therefore no slurry will be produced. Cattle are bedded on straw only, and the manure / muck away will be sold to local arable farmers where muck every 6-8 weeks.

- Surface Water

There will be no excess surface water, new modern barns have the benefit of being equipped with underground rainwater harvesting that feed water back to the cattle.

- The field being already ploughed.

The applicant has every right to plough the field and has done so ready for appropriate grass seed to be sown to be a new lay. This is standard farming practice.

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