

Roger & Sharon Barton,
xx High Street
Colney Heath
St Albans
Hertfordshire
AL4 0NP

Ref APP/B1930/W/23/3333685

22nd April 2024

For the attention of the Planning Inspectorate

APPEAL BY: Tarmac Limited
LAND AT: Land to rear of 96 to 106 High Street Colney Heath

STATEMENT REGARDING PLANNING APPEAL

The proposed development would be corporate vandalism of the green belt. There are no extraordinary circumstances to justify the development and the destruction of openness, loss of privacy and traffic implications are enormous, both for ourselves as a neighbouring property and for the wider community of Colney Heath.

The details provided by Tarmac in support of the development are misleading and certainly do not convey the true extent or damage that would be caused by this housing development. The housing density, parking and biodiversity implications are all significantly understated and the impact more severe than they represent. This is particularly true given that this appears a clear indication of plans for significant additional development in the future.

As can be seen on a virtually daily basis, the parking currently provided by the parish Council and Tarmac for users of the school and football club is essential. Displacement of these cars will have a hugely significant impact on the High Street and lead to dangerous conditions for small children at the primary school, for residents, pedestrians, and cyclists alike. The proposed loss of 17 spaces indicated by Tarmac is not an accurate representation of busy days whereby in excess of 20 and sometimes even 25 vehicles are squeezed into the area that would be completely removed. With the parking that is already available we often see additional cars displaced onto the surrounding roads, parked across pavements, creating blind corners or blocking driveways. If the spaces currently provided are then removed this will increase the displacement and lead to even more dangerous parking in the area on a daily basis, especially at the crucial drop-off and pick up times from school. The highways proposal in no way assuages the potential dangers, both during the construction phase and thereafter. We urge the inspector to note the photographic images provided of the parking situation during the objection period to understand the full implications this would have to daily users and urge any site visit to take place at a time to see this in daily operation.

The site is currently rural greenbelt used for agricultural purposes. This is farmed year round and we are able to see the positive impacts of the openness of the fields and also to the wildlife of the area and the biodiversity. Localised populations of deer, foxes, birds including kites, and perhaps most significantly bats. The bats that we regularly see each year in the summer months flying above and across our gardens (and occasionally into our home by mistake) are extremely localised, not even seen further up the road. The short term and long-term effects on the hedgerows and the resultant impact on the migratory patterns of a number of animals, including voles and toads would be enormous.

Quite simply Colney Heath cannot support the development of more houses. The traffic is already at capacity at times. The infrastructure, including GP surgeries, dentists, secondary schools and other public support networks are not available in the village. The local population is dependent on

cars and, whilst the recent changes to the exit to the A414 have made accessing the main roads less dangerous, it has made the High Street a more significant rat run, particularly if there is disruption in other areas of the road network nearby.

We appreciate the need for affordable housing in the area, particularly as we have two daughters of an age where they are looking to buy their own properties but stand no chance in the St Albans area. However, what is clear is that these houses will not be affordable by any reasonable measure and will do nothing to assist the local housing sector, being more suited to new homeowners relocating from more expensive suburbs thereby increasing the population of the area with no local affordable benefit.

Personally, given that the proposed development would start at our rear boundary, and our back garden extends only 9 metres from the house, the loss of privacy and impact on our health and wellbeing would be huge. Many of the properties have direct access from gardens into the proposed development land. These rights of access having been well established for years, in the case of our property for decades.

This proposal is badly conceived, does nothing to prove extraordinary circumstances and was rightly rejected by the district council. We urge you to support their decision and also reject this appeal.

Yours faithfully

Roger & Sharon Barton
xx High Street
Colney Heath
St Albans

Supplementary update from Roger Barton, evening of Weds 24th

Related to the ongoing appeal enquiry I would be grateful if you would accept this email as extra detail to previous submissions made for consideration by the Inspector regarding the parking impact of the proposal.

I am aware that the enquiry site visit was made earlier this evening to the proposed development site including the access road/car park. I believe that the visit concluded before the start of the match being played at the Recreation Ground pitch of Colney Heath Football Club and so the full parking implications may not have been seen. The following is a summary of the car parking arrangements experienced.

The Football Club took great pains to organise and effectively utilise all their available off street parking opportunities before vehicles were displaced to surrounding roads. The match kicked off at 7:45pm and the update below was gathered between 7:50pm to 9pm. The vehicle totals were as follows:

Tennis courts car parking: 43 vehicles (slightly reduced capacity due to play park works)
Recreation ground grass area: 14 vehicles (not CHPC agreed parking spaces and unusable in wet conditions)
Parish Council / Tarmac owned car park: 54 vehicles (25 air raid shelter side / 29 Tarmac proposed access road area)
School car park: 16 cars (with permission from school headteacher)

After this there were excess cars parked in the surrounding roads - there were no remaining legal spaces on the High Street between the Crooked Billet to the church, Park Lane, Church Lane or St Marks Close. A number of the cars were parked across the pavement or close to road mouth corners.

The Tarmac figure of 17 car parking spaces being affected by this proposed access road is simply not correct in these circumstances. The reality is that, should the development be permitted, a further 29 cars will be displaced to the surrounding neighbourhood that, in this instance, were already traffic saturated.

I trust that this update is of assistance to your decision making process.



V2 – Updated 26 April 2024





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