



TAKELEY PARISH COUNCIL

S62A/2023/0027 Warish Hall Farm, Smiths Green Lane, Takeley, Essex

Hearing 13th February 2023 – Cllr Jackie Cheetham speech (5 mins)

My name is Cllr Jackie Cheetham, speaking on behalf of Takeley Parish Council. We strongly object to the application which would build on agricultural land, reducing the open aspect of the Countryside Protection Zone and changing the intrinsic character and appearance of the setting of the Conservation Area.

This is rural setting with dark skies, peace and tranquillity. Light pollution from homes and streetlights and clearance of verges for road access and visibility splays would make the development visible from the surrounding area and degrade the significance of one of the highest grade protected lanes in the district.

Harm to the setting of the Conservation Area has been recognised in comments from Historic England and Place Services as being considerable, less than substantial harm, where no benefits can outweigh the harm.

The decision notice for the August 2022 appeal dismissal of Land at Warish Hall Farm gave UDC policies S7 (the countryside) and S8 (countryside protection zone) moderate weight. The November 2023 appeal dismissal for 90 homes South of Stortford Road, Little Canfield has similarities with this application. The inspector gave significant weight to the conflict with Policies S8 (the CPZ) and ENV2 (development affecting listed buildings).



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The Village Green status of Smiths Green verges is important because there is no certainty over housing delivery for the 40 homes. The developer would need to make a separate application to the Secretary of State to remove Village Green for road access and visibility splays of 2.4m by 43m in length in each direction. If there is no permission from the Secretary of State, there can be no road access to the development.

The developer is required to provide two bus stops on the B1256 in the vicinity of the junction with Smiths Green Lane (one westbound, one eastbound). The reason is in the interests of reducing the need to travel by car and promoting sustainable development and transport. This raises concerns that pedestrians would need to walk in the road because foot and cycle paths cannot be provided between the development and the bus stops.

Jacks Lane was not altered for the Priors Green development, other than where it crosses roads in the estate. It is unlit and there was clearly no intention to extend Priors Green to the north or east, as there is a densely planted earth bund separating the two distinct areas.

New streetlighting from 6m high poles would light the byway from dusk to midnight and from 5am to dawn. The byway would be excavated, and a new 3m wide gravel path would be installed. Beyond the wooden edge of the path, holes would be dug 3m below ground for each lighting pole. There is no mention of the new bridleway surface being suitable for horses.

As we stated in our written submission, the landowner's drainage expert advised in January 2023 that large-scale tree and hedge removal would be



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necessary in Jacks Lane to resolve an existing surface drainage problem. We have noted that the consultee for ecology has questioned whether tree and hedge removal would be required along the byway and, if so, how that would impact on wildlife.

There can be no doubt that Smiths Green is one of the most sensitive and valued parts of our parish. The development would significantly change the character of the countryside, the open aspect of the CPZ and harm the rural setting of the Conservation area and a protected lane. For these reasons, we ask that the application is refused.