

# Representation from Mrs. D Bagnall

## **Section 62A Planning Application: S62A/2023/0019 Land to the north of Roseacres, between Parsonage Road and Smiths Green Lane, Takeley, Essex, CM22 6NZ (Land known as Bull Field, Warish Hall Farm, Takeley, Essex)**

Please find below my additional comments to my original representation.

This proposal would result in the entire southern boundary of the Ancient Woodland being compromised. As is already known the entire Western boundary has already suffered this fate with industrial units and further development along Parsonage Road. If this application were approved it would mean that the entire Western and Southern boundaries of the Ancient Woodland would be enclosed.

It would also have a significant detrimental impact on the surrounding wildlife corridors, including the hedgerows leading to and from the Ancient Woodland

Within the **'Keepers of Time – Ancient and Native Woodland and Trees Policy'** on the government website it clearly demonstrates that this proposal would cause significant damage to the Ancient Woodland and eco system.

### **Fragmentation**

Many ancient and native woodlands are very small and have become increasingly isolated from other semi-natural habitats. This fragmentation means that if a species disappears from a woodland, there is no nearby source from which it can recolonise. This can also affect ancient and veteran trees. The intensification of agriculture and increased pressure from development over recent decades has exacerbated the effects of isolation. Many of the species associated with our woody habitats are poor dispersers and the current lack of habitat connectivity will lead to them being threatened as their 'climate space' moves and changes.

### **Development and Boundary Incursions**

Development can threaten ancient and native woodlands. Woodland can suffer loss and deterioration if houses or roads are built too close to it through damage to soils, roots and vegetation, and changes to drainage.

Development can also cause indirect effects including:

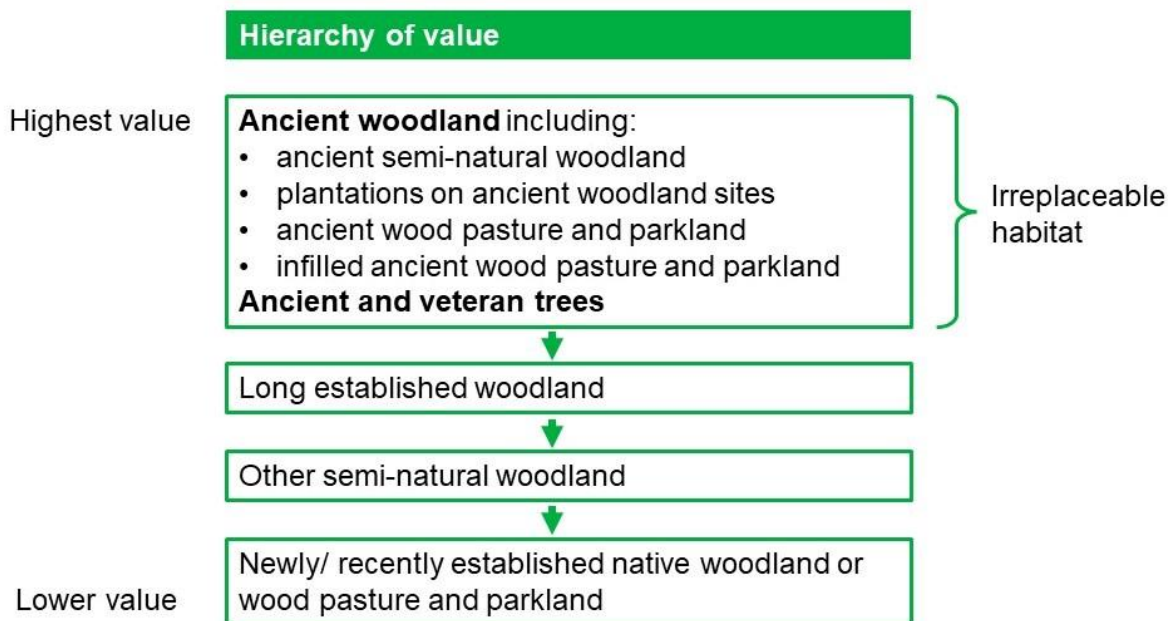
- increasing disturbance to wildlife from noise, light pollution and domestic pets
- cutting back of trees and shrubs along the woodland edge
- the expansion of adjoining gardens into the woodland margin

Development also increases the occurrence of other effects listed in this section such as fragmentation and overuse by people.

### **Hierarchy of Value**

It is important to understand the hierarchy of value for the types of distinct habitat classed as native trees and woodlands. It reflects their contributions to biodiversity richness, cultural heritage and wider ecosystem services.

You will see from the table below that Ancient Woodland is of the highest value.



Our most valuable trees and habitats should receive the greatest protection. Recently established native woodland which, while still important, requires less stringent protection. The position in the hierarchy may inform the appropriate management objectives for each habitat type.

It should be pointed out that the applicants supporting ecology assessment appears to describe Priors Wood as Ancient and semi natural woodland,

“The Site itself is approximately 19.6ha and is predominantly composed of a large arable field, known as Bull Field, intensively managed for arable agriculture, and Prior’s Wood, an area of ancient and semi-natural woodland designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS).”

This description could be seen as mis-leading as Priors Wood should be described as ‘Ancient and Ancient Semi Natural Woodland’, which means that the entire woodland would be categorised as irreplaceable habitat.(Please see para 6 on page 2of the ecology assessment)

### **Policy principles and strategic objectives**

The governments vision for our ancient and native woodlands by 2050 is that ancient and native woodlands, and ancient and veteran trees are:

- appropriately protected
- sustainably managed in a wider landscape context

The Government has created a set of policy principles and strategic objectives to guide policy development and delivery across government to achieve this vision.

They will work to embed these principles and strategic objectives across future policy in England to make sure the importance of ancient and native woodlands and ancient and veteran trees is recognised.

They will

- maintain and enhance the existing area of ancient woodland

- conserve and enhance the existing resource of ancient and veteran trees
- recognise the value of and protect long-established woodland

Their main priority is to protect ancient woodland, and ancient and veteran trees from the threats listed in this policy document. We must also recognise the value of long established woodland and consider options to provide greater protection to these habitats from development.

### **Ecology Assessment (9282.BN EcoAppraisal)**

Within the applicants ecology assessment there is mention of a 130m 'new' ditch to be introduced along the Southern boundary, however it is not clear how this would interact with the existing 'sunken lane' and for what purpose this new ditch would serve. It should also be pointed out that there has been no assessment of the biodiversity and ecology within the Sunken Lane within the assessment.

If the ditches are not required for the drainage strategy why has the applicant indicated a new ditch to be introduced along the southern boundary, as per paragraph 73 of the appraisal.

In paragraph 85 it states that any trees, suitable for roosting, that are to be removed as part of the development should be soft-felled, following a prior check by a suitable ecologist. It is of concern that any ancient tree would be felled to make way for development, which is contrary to the objectives of the Government, who are trying to preserve ancient trees not destroy them.

In paragraph 98 it clearly shows that the majority of bat movements utilise the northern boundary of the site adjacent to the ancient woodland, along with the surrounding hedgerows and any development on this site will have a detrimental impact on all the foraging corridors.

### **S106 agreement**

The applicant advises in the Ecology Appraisals (para176+177) of the proposed contributions for Hatfield Forest SAMMs, as mitigation for the impact on SSSI, however this does nothing to protect the Ancient Woodland of Priors Wood if development is allowed. We would, in effect, be sacrificing this Ancient Woodland to help mitigate the SSI of Hatfield Forest which would equate to a net loss of irreplaceable habitat, once again this would be contrary to the Governments objectives in trying to preserve and protect all Ancient woodland.

Allowing development in this location would be most harmful to the landscape and ecology and would have a detrimental visual impact as highlighted by the previous inspectors on numerous occasions.

Mrs D Bagnall

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