

Little Hadham Parish Council

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Mr Tim Hagyard
Planning Office
East Herts. District Council
Wallfields
Pegs Lane
Hertford
SG13 8EQ

Tuesday, 2nd November 2004

Dear Mr Hagyard

Re. Draft Development Brief for Bury Green Farm

The Parish Council has considered the brief. It held a public meeting with the residents of Bury Green and arranged for the current owners to lead councillors and residents on a guided tour of the site. The contents of this letter were agreed at the Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 2nd November 2004.

In summary, the majority of residents of Bury Green would prefer no development at Bury Green Farm. However, most would reluctantly accept the replacement of some buildings on the site by a small number of houses as proposed in the brief. There is also broad acceptance that the commercial part of the site should continue as an animal breeding facility since the alternatives would involve a change of use and could be highly detrimental to the rural character of the hamlet, namely other forms of light industrial use or perhaps large scale housing development at some time in the future.

We would like the following concerns clarified in the brief:

1. A clear statement about the maximum number of houses that would be allowed on the Bury Green Farm site and in The Grove.

The brief does not specify the number of houses to be built. It defines an area and implies that the housing density will be low. The Council would like the number of market price and affordable houses to be defined more exactly. It is understood that the District Council is likely to insist on a range of house sizes to be built on the site. The Parish Council would like this specified in the brief.

2. Reassurance about further housing and alternative usage

The Parish Council and residents are very concerned that new housing indicated in the brief could be followed by plans for further housing, especially if the owners are unable to find suitable tenants for the animal breeding and testing buildings.

The viability of the site could also be affected if potential purchasers of the proposed homes are deterred by their proximity to an animal breeding unit.

The Parish Council notes that EHDC will regard the development of the site in a long-term context. We would want the brief to make it clear that more houses than the limited number indicated in the brief would not be allowed. Clear statements from the District Council and the current owners could reinforce this assertion.

The brief should also anticipate the eventuality that the owners are unable to let the commercial site to an animal breeding company. The Parish Council and residents would want to be consulted at the earliest opportunity about any alternative use.

3. Development to be in keeping with the rural character of Bury Green.

New housing should be in keeping with Bury Green's Category 2 status and provision for limited infilling. It should complement existing houses and protect the listed status of Bury Green Farmhouse. Landscaping should preserve the Green as the focus of the hamlet.

4. Access from the site to Bury Green to be apportioned appropriately between commercial and residential traffic.

There is general support for commercial traffic using the main entrance in Millfield Lane (see other comments under 5.) and limited support for residents of new housing to access the Green via existing entrances.

5. Measures to manage traffic density and minimise risk of damage to property.

There is concern in Bury Green about the density of traffic that could arise from new housing and, in the short term, from construction vehicles. The extent to which lanes around the Green are used as a "rat run" has worsened recently following adjustments to the Little Hadham traffic lights on the A120. The Parish Council would like the brief to include strategies for controlling traffic around Bury Green both to address the current situation and to manage any additional traffic generated as a result of site development.

We would appreciate attention being paid specifically to Millfield Lane and Millfield Cottage. The cottage, a listed building located near the main entrance, has already been damaged by traffic visiting the site when owned by GlaxoSmithKline. GSK accepted responsibility for damage to the property and agreed to pay for rectification. The Parish Council would like the brief to address the general problem of the narrowness of Millfield Lane, traffic density and, particular, to examine the possibility of diverting traffic away from Millfield Cottage to avoid damage to a listed building.

6. Preservation of the Millennium Wood

Although strictly outside the brief, it would be helpful if the new owners would confirm that regardless of development on the site, they would be prepared to maintain the Millennium Wood at Bury Green.

7. The maintenance – and improvement – of water supply and sewage services

The residents of Bury Green are concerned that the water supply to the hamlet is inadequate. The water pressure is very low but has improved since GSK moved out. It is understood that any new houses will use the existing sewage treatment works at Bury Green Farm.

The Parish Council would like the brief to describe how water and sewerage services will be provided to the new houses and the rest of the site without detriment to the existing residents. Development at the site may provide an opportunity to improve water and sewage services for existing houses at Bury Green through collaboration between EHDC and the site owners.

The Parish Council and residents appreciate the helpfulness and openness of the owners and their willingness to take local opinion into account. We are also grateful that they have continued the informal agreement between the Parish Council and GSK to mow the Green and maintain the Millennium Wood.

We would appreciate your response to the above issues.

Yours sincerely

B M Evans – Parish Clerk