

Little Hadham Parish Council

Chairman

Mr Tony Skidmore
10 Capel Court
Hadham Hall
Little Hadham
Ware, Herts.
SG11 2AP
Tel. 01279 771688
e-mail tony.skidmore@hadham-hall.demon.co.uk

Parish Clerk

Mr Bev Evans
Pryersfield
New Road
Little Hadham
Ware, Herts.
SG11 2AW
Tel. 01279 842803
e-mail clerklittlehadham@homecall.co.uk

Mr Paul Cavill
Development Control
East Herts Council
Wallfields
Pegs Lane
Hertfordshire SG13 8EQ

June 5 2006

Dear Mr Cavill

Re. Redevelopment at Bury Green Farm – Amended scheme

Little Hadham Parish Council discussed the amended scheme for the redevelopment of Bury Green Farm at its meeting on June 5 2006. Our response is set out below. It takes into account discussions with residents of Bury Green over this latest application, written responses made by residents that we have seen, and comments made by the public at our meeting on June 5.

This letter should be read in conjunction with our letter to you of April 7, which referred to the previous application. This council is concerned that it did not receive a reply to that letter despite the fact that it raised serious concerns. Your response may be that our concerns have been addressed in the amended application. This not the case.

We have received no assurance about future development. Our concerns about the impact of housing development on the volume of traffic have not been addressed. The changes to the architectural style of the proposed homes are purely cosmetic.

Nor does the amended plan deal satisfactorily with the problem of rat-running through Bury Green. This has worsened since the first application because of holds-ups on the A120. The most likely cause is the knock-on effect of congestion on nearby arterial roads. If so, this confirms that the A120 is an integral part of the local road network and that a Little Hadham by-pass is urgently needed as part of the solution to traffic congestion in this part of East Hertfordshire.

We share the view of many residents of Bury Green that the developers have not sufficiently considered their concerns or those of the Parish Council. It is our opinion that unless these concerns are addressed, opposition to the scheme will replace a broad consensus that a limited re-development of Bury Green Farm is acceptable if certain conditions are met.

We note that in its letter of 15 May, Romehold refers to the fact that its revised application addresses 'a number of minor concerns' of EHC. The weighting it appears to give these issues is not shared by residents or this council.

We suggest that you refer to our letter of April 7, which summarises eight issues of concern. We comment now on matters outstanding and of continuing concern – in particular the number of homes proposed, the additional volume of traffic that would be generated by those homes, and access to and from the site.

- 1. Number of homes and future development:** There is continuing concern among residents that the number of homes proposed is excessive. The numbers proposed would almost double the size of Bury Green. We notice that in the revised planning statement (4.13) there is a reference to 20 houses rather than the 18 referred to in the amended application. This gives rise to concerns that without the reassurance sought in our last letter (that agreement of numbers at this stage precludes further housing development), the latest application is the thin end of the wedge if an acceptable commercial use cannot be found for the rest of the site.
- 2. Traffic volume:** Our concerns are dealt with in detail in our earlier letter. However, it would appear that the amended application does little to address the circumstances that, under Policy TR1, would rule out this development on traffic grounds.

It would be unrealistic to assume anything less than an average of two cars per new house given the remoteness of Bury Green and the lack of public transport. Since no new employment in Bury Green is proposed, the assumption has to be that at least one vehicle per household will leave the site at peak times, joining the growing number of vehicles who use Bury Green to circumvent the A120.

JMP refers to a ‘regular bus service’ but notes that it runs every two hours from Cradle End, which is just under one kilometre from the site. The offer of a Section 106 contribution to promote sustainable travel measures presumably acknowledges the public transport shortcomings.

If, in due course, the remainder of the site were to be given over to commercial use, the implications for more traffic would be obvious.

In the short term, contractors vehicles for the housing site would also add considerably to traffic volumes, especially at peak times.

In our previous letter, we dealt extensively with the safety implications of more traffic including the use of the green by children, the presence of horses including strings of polo ponies, and the likelihood that the Millfield Lane/A120 cut-through will start to be used as extensively as the Cradle End/A120 route. This will be particularly serious during the demolition and construction phase.

JMP’s figures for vehicle trip data for Bury Green shows little understanding of local circumstances. Equally, to imply that the site is within the ‘5km convenient cycle distance’ from Bishop’s Stortford or that it fits the definition of a ‘non-motorised network’ in HCC’s Rural Transport Plan, takes no account of the dangerous nature of the A120. It would be irresponsible in the extreme to encourage anyone to cycle on the A120, especially at peak times.

Nothing in the amended plan addresses the risk of damage to Millfield Cottage, especially during the construction phase or in the event that Millfield Lane is used more by rat-running traffic. One possibility would be to consider re-routing that part of Millfield Lane to the north of the cottage through land that we believe is owned by the developer.

It would be helpful to know if EHC has carried out a traffic census, but we understand that a survey carried out by residents shows that at peak times as many as 100 vehicles an hour pass through Bury Green.

3. Access: We note that a one-way system, as mentioned in our earlier letter, is now being considered. However, residents of Bury Green remain concerned that any traffic, other than pedestrians, should enter or leave the housing estate via the green and should use only the Millfield Lane gate.

4. Other matters: Observations on other matters:

4.1 Architecture: Changes to the design of proposed houses are cosmetic and do not address residents' concern that they remain more suited to an urban housing estate than a rural village.

4.2 Affordable homes: No evidence has been provided of the need for affordable homes or reassurance that affordable housing could not in due course be sold at market prices – two concerns raised in the Little Hadham Parish Plan.

4.3 Services: Residents continue to express concern about the ability of electricity, water and sewage services to cope with additional homes.

4.4 Roads and signage: We note from the JMP letter of 12 May that roads within the site will not be adopted by EHC and, presumably, neither will signage. Residents are concerned that any signage should be consistent with the rural village setting.

The extent of concern and the large number of outstanding issues suggests that a meeting should be held between EHC, the developers, representatives of the residents of Bury Green and the Parish Council. The proposed Bury Green development comes within the scope of the Parish Plan, shortly to be published, which reflects local people's views on development, affordable housing, and transport. We see the Parish Plan as the first step towards establishing criteria that, longer term, could be adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

We look forward to your response to the specific issues raised in this letter and the suggestion of a joint meeting.

Yours sincerely

B M Evans – Parish Clerk