

Field View
Highfield Road
Highfield
Wrexham
LL11 4YA

The Planning Inspectorate
Crown Buildings
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

19th April 2011



Dear Sirs,

Re: Planning appeal H6955/A/11/2149312
Construction of new access track / driveway to property at Rose Cottage,
Highfield Road, Highfield, Summerhill, Wrexham

I am writing to raise objections in connection with the above planning appeal.

These representations are in addition to those already raised in writing and at the Planning Committee meeting held at Wrexham Guildhall on 7th February 2011; I have enclosed copies of my original objection letter, together with a copy of the speech made at the meeting and the supporting photographs submitted at that time.

I have continued concerns regarding the visibility splay, and I note that, despite a request from the Committee for the area to be marked prior to the site visit on 18th February, this was not done. The Planning Control Manager stated at the site visit that the highway had been measured and the 2.4m from the centre line could be accommodated to a distance of 25 metres in the direction of my property without affecting my hedge, but I have to disagree on this point and do not believe this could be adequately demonstrated when the site had not been marked as requested.

In my speech at the Committee meeting, I noted that the Planning Officer's recommendation that this be approved was based on an allegedly similar development (ref P/2000/0906) and I did not believe the same issues were relevant in this case. I still maintain this view as the site in Coedpoeth was deemed to be "not widely viewed", and in fact only the applicant and their immediate neighbour could see the site and the neighbour was in support of the application. The applicant in this case wishes to destroy green barrier land that can be seen and therefore enjoyed by the general public and local residents, four of which raised objections to the proposal.

In addition to this site being visible to all users of Highfield Road, I understand that a reason for the application in Coedpoeth was partly due to the issue of child safety. This does not apply in this case, and in fact I believe the approval of this development would actually create a greater road safety risk than the applicant believes exists at the current access point.

The current access point is within a long row of houses, central to Highfield Road. Vehicles which travel down this road are aware of the houses and expect cars to be leaving or entering the various driveways on this part of the road, therefore travelling at a safe speed to enable them to stop should a car pull out. However, when vehicles travelling towards the main Summerhill Road are approaching the end of the row of houses, they often speed up and can be travelling considerably faster than the 30mph limit by the time they reach the proposed new access point. Due to the natural curvature of the road, and the location of my hedge, the new access point would be concealed from that traffic, now travelling at speed.

I have also noted that the appeal at the Coedpoeth site was allowed with a condition that the track should blend into the surroundings to "avoid a harsh urban surface" and that the track should not be fenced. The application for Rose Cottage states that it will be fenced on the southern side and that a surface of chippings will be used, which will bring an urban appearance to this rural setting.

The proposed surface material of chippings not only represents a harsh urban surface but, due to the prevailing winds in this area, would result in significant noise and dust being carried across the gardens of all the properties that border the field, therefore impacting the amenities of local residents. I would certainly have to think twice about allowing my small child to use the garden if he were to be subjected to this environmental hazard.

I have raised the issue of the sighting of Great Crested Newts (GCN) in my garden, both in writing and at the committee meeting on 7th February, and I do not believe that the appropriate consideration has been given to this point, despite the Planning Department's knowledge that there is a confirmed site for this endangered species less than 300 metres from my property, on the site of the nearby Gatewen Village development.

The proposed track would come between the confirmed GCN site and my garden, and I believe this would pose a risk to the local population of newts. I note from the planning applications for Gatewen Village that the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW) were consulted and made relevant recommendations for that site to mitigate the risks posed, and I am most concerned that CCW has not been made aware of this application.

I wholeheartedly believe that the Committee made the right decision in refusing this development due to the impact this would have on the open character of the green barrier in this area. And the fact remains that the track would serve just one property, with the problems experienced with the narrow access remaining for nine other properties.

Finally, I do not believe the applicant gives adequate justification for the impact to the local community in order to serve her personal interests, given that the situation with the access was known when she purchased the house some nine years ago.

Yours faithfully

A black rectangular box redacting the signature of the sender.

Mrs Melaine Goodall

Enc. Objection letter
 Transcript of speech given at Committee Meeting 7th February
 Aerial view of site
 Site view from entrance of Highfield Road

Objection Letter – sent by email 11th January 2011

Dear Mr Forster,

Re: Application Number P/2010/1068 – Construction Of New Access Track / Driveway To Property

Thank you for your email of 4th January 2011 confirming that the above proposal is being progressed through the planning process. I would like to make the following comments regarding the application, and hope that these can be taken into consideration during the decision making process.

Firstly, I have previously sought advice from an officer of the planning department (Charlotte Beattie) who advised me that the proposed location (field 5503, Highfield) falls within land designated as Green Barrier. Additionally, Ms Beattie advised that this land is not included in the current Unitary Development Plan, nor has it been put forward for consideration in the Local Development Plan for 2006 to 2021.

Based on this information alone, I am certain that the application should not be approved as it would breach council policy against Green Barrier development and this in turn could set a precedent. However, should the planning department be considering an exception to this policy, I would strongly object on the basis that the applicant's reasons for the proposal do not warrant such an exception. Furthermore, I do not believe that the applicant's reasons mitigate the detrimental impact the proposal would have on the environment and landscape of Highfield Road and the adjoining land and I would like to explain in detail why I believe this to be the case.

The applicant's reasons for requiring the new access relate to the current arrangements, being an existing route between Osborne Cottages and Oak Cottages, stated to be very narrow. The applicant has stated that the new access route would reduce traffic movement and congestion at this point, however, Rose Cottage is just one of several properties that use this access route and therefore the majority of traffic movement and congestion would remain.

The applicant next mentions specific access requirements, ie deliveries and workmen, and that these have no alternative but to block the road. Highfield Road is single track and deliveries to all the properties block the road, so a new access route to one property will not remove this problem. It is an accepted part of life when you live in a single track road, and one which the applicant has lived with for the nine years since purchasing the property.

With regard to emergency service vehicles, Fire Service vehicles carry sufficient hose to more than adequately cover the distance involved; similarly the Ambulance Service would utilise equipment such as a wheeled stretcher or chair. Indeed, this has been the case in the many years since the properties were built at the rear of Highfield Road.

The applicant has stated that there are no ponds in the area and therefore they do not feel there would be any harm to existing wildlife, however, there is a large pond in the field exactly opposite the proposed entrance to the access road, approximately 30 metres away, where herons can regularly be seen fishing. I also have a wildlife pond within my own

garden, just 20 metres from the existing boundary hedge, where Great Crested Newts have been sighted. As this is a protected species, I would be greatly concerned that the proposed access could destroy habitat essential to the newts, namely potential hibernation areas.

The applicant has also mentioned badgers in the proposal, and that none have been seen by them. Again, I must disagree as badgers have regularly been seen in the area, including several deceased badgers on the main Summerhill Road where they have unfortunately been hit by cars.

The applicant has also stated that the proposal would benefit the wider community by incorporating a passing bay into the access route; however, the access point is within approximately 30 metres of existing passing points in both directions, which provide adequate passing space.

I look forward to hearing the outcome of the application in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Melanie Goodall
Field View, Highfield Road, Highfield, LL11 4YA

Speech for the Committee Meeting 7th February 2011

Firstly, I've noticed two discrepancies in the planning report; there is no specific mention of the wildlife pond in my garden and the sighting of Great Crested Newts as raised in my written objection. And there are an additional 9 properties using the existing access, not approximately 4 as stated in the report.

The main reason for recommending approval appears to be an allegedly similar development which was deemed to be 'not widely viewed', however I do not believe the same applies here as, due to the elevation of the site, all vehicles and pedestrians entering Highfield Road will see the track and any vehicles parked in front of the applicants house. I've submitted a photo taken at the beginning of the road to show this, with the proposed site coloured yellow.

The loss of open character would be seen by vehicles and pedestrians using Highfield Road, and also several properties including Pendine Park nursing home, who share views of the field which would be altered by the development. The properties nearest to the site would no longer be able to appreciate the open character due to the requirement for new planting on the site where previously there were open views.

The report states the impact to dwellings is minimal, however, the track would come within 25 metres of my house. The report also states the traffic use would be minimal, so how does this justify the destruction of green barrier land when the removal of minimal traffic from the existing access route would make little difference to the problems experienced there.

The report quotes LPG14, however, I don't believe the recommendation to grant approval is in line with this guidance. The report suggests 'the addition to residential curtilage would be acceptable' due to improved access, which comes under section C of 'General Considerations'. However, as already mentioned, there is minimal traffic involved and therefore I do not believe that a 'significant road safety risk' will be removed, as required in section C.

I also believe sections A & D of 'Particular Circumstances' within LPG14 apply, where section A states that 'substantial garden extensions within green barriers would erode the open character and unless a proposal is of a very minor or insignificant nature, it is unlikely that permission would be granted'. Section D states that 'permission for garden extensions beyond settlement limits is only likely to be granted in exceptional circumstances where the new residential curtilage would be contained between existing gardens of neighbouring properties'.

In terms of the impact, I would comment that the aerial plan submitted by the applicant is of poor quality and doesn't adequately convey the impact of the track on the landscape and the neighbouring properties. I have submitted an aerial picture overlaid with the proposal, which I believe shows the situation in more detail. There is also a discrepancy with the site plan in the planning report, as this shows a smaller area of development than the applicants plan.

I've also noted that condition 7 of the recommendation would encroach on my property with one side of the visibility splay affecting around 16 metres of my hedge. The requirement of the splay is to maintain visibility for 2.4 metres back from the centre of the carriageway, and as the road here is an average of just 3 metres wide, this would mean the height of my hedge has to be significantly reduced for almost a metre back from the highway. If the track access

point was moved to allow condition 7 to be met without affecting my hedge then the impact on the field would be much greater.

Finally, I feel that approving this change from agricultural to residential use would contravene the UDP due to the gradual encroachment of development into the countryside, and it would also leave the site vulnerable to future development.



25 metres

