

Development Management
East Herts District Council
Wallfields
Pegs Lane
Hertford
SG13 8EQ

29 January 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Planning Application 3/21/3194/FUL – Land at Bockings, 12 Church End, Walkern

Proposal: Demolition of domestic stable block buildings. Erection of 3 dwellings together with access, car ports and landscaping plus the provision of 1 vehicular passing place along Bockings.

Walkern Parish Council wishes to make the following comments concerning the above application.

The stable block, suggested to be demolished, is on agricultural ground and not residential. The assumption that because there was housing in that vicinity that this application should be granted is not exactly accurate.

There were cottages on the other end of Mr Foks house at 12 Church End, called Cambridge Cottages. These cottages belonged to the church advowson which since 702 had been owned by King's college Cambridge. They were simple 2 up to 2 down with outside facilities and there would be no comparison to what is proposed, which are not cottages but houses.

The stable block whilst not in use were stables and were, therefore agricultural not residential buildings. Therefore, it would be a change of use.

Walkern Parish, as the Walkern Neighbourhood Plan covers, is a VILL 1 Category village, which had been allocated its required number of housings. This has been met and more until figures are to be reviewed in 2033.

The WNP clearly stated, via the village questionnaire, that it did not require further 4 bed dwellings or large properties. Those proposed are 3 and 4 bed despite it being described in Type 3 as an upstairs study. We have, therefore, met in the Guiding Principles of EHDC (No9) as stated 'to encourage development in and around the identified villages'.

We dispute the statement that states 'majority of the site can reasonably be considered as previously developed land'. The area proposed has not been previously developed. It is surrounded by a paddock and further fields. The only area developed is that of the late Mr. & Mrs. Foks' house, Bockings, which is a listed Grade 11 building and its gardens.

The applicant states that Policy GBR 2 'where it is compatible with the character and appearance of the area.' The proposed development is certainly not compatible with the character and appearance

of the area' or the existing dwelling 'Bockings'. Church End and Bockings are an iconic historical part of Walkern which has not changed in many years.

The River Beane is a rare chalk stream river. The Ford is an iconic area which many residents and visitors take pleasure in visiting throughout the year and walking round. This includes walking the lane of Bockings, which on a map of 1838 refers Bocking to the fields in that area rather than the lane.

The lane is extremely narrow and in some places near the proposed site is only 10ft wide. The applicant states that Bockings serves Winters Lane and Churchend. That is correct with additional traffic from Totts Lane, Bassus Green and Clay End as well as farm traffic and the ever-increasing delivery lorries/vans. Therefore, we state that this is a busy enough narrow lane without any footpaths and a high amount of footfall, including dog walking.

The proposed dwellings, as previously stated, do not sit in with any existing dwellings. Those being Riverton house directly next to the proposed site, Bockings to the other side, St. Mary's Church a Grade 1 listed building and 6 other listed buildings within this Historic and Heritage area.

It is proposed that the use of Article 4 Directions should be used in this proposal as we define it 'as necessary to protect a local amenity and for the well-being of the area' known as Church End and Bockings as suggested in the Conservation Appraisal for controlling minor development, which in this case we suspect will escalate should planning consent be given.

We also have concerns of the disposal of surface water with the proposed dwellings sitting in an elevated position from the river. The River Beane being a rare chalk stream and an important feature for the residents of the village. The Parish Council is keen to ensure that pollution from vehicles/machinery into the ford and river Beane is not increased, nor pollution from a variety of measures such as car washing and that any sulphates that may wash into the Beane are kept at a minimum, which allowing planning permission with provision of a further 6 or more cars would not be the case.

The passing bay on the Existing and Proposed Section may look wide but in fact Bockings, which is a narrow lane is particularly narrow in many places and does not at the far end exceed more than 12 ft. narrowing as it passes the proposed area.

From an environmental stance, this area has a great many species of wildlife in and around this site. So, without a second thought stating that most hedging is low quality, yet forgetting that the hedging and trees have stood for many years is not in line with government thinking that hedging and trees should be preserved. Therefore, the Parish Council does not agree that the conclusion reached by Sharon Hosegood Associates that the loss is acceptable.

Policy 3 WNP, this proposal does not conform with the statement 'proposals for development which affect non-designated heritage assets will be permitted provided that they conserve or enhance the quality of the asset or its setting.

Policy 9 WNP, does state that brownfield sites would be favourably thought of rather than taking green belt land, but it also states 'inappropriate development of garden land will be resisted; The is



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an asset to the Parish of Walkern. Consideration is required because this proposal is within the curtilage of several important, historic, and listed buildings.

We therefore respectfully ask that the Planning Committee of EHDC agree that this development be refused on the grounds we have stated.

Yours faithfully
on behalf of Walkern Parish Council

Mrs H Broady
Clerk to Walkern Parish Council