

Planning Application 12/00052/AS - Former Chilham Saw Mills, Ashford Road, Chilham, Kent

Chilham Parish Council (CPC) has conducted a rigorous assessment of this planning application (and the second application detailed below), both in its own formal meetings and in three meetings involving wide representation from the Parish. CPC has also requested answers to many questions from ABC (Carol Ridings) which have been most helpful in coming to a position.

As it currently stands, and in the light of parish views and answers to questions as noted above, CPC **objects** to this planning application. Comments on a variety of points are given below:

1. Traffic Volumes

The A28/A252 junction is a notorious accident spot, yet the opportunity to improve a dangerous road junction is not being taken. The proposed development can only make this situation worse.

Local people have carried out recent traffic surveys that indicate increased queuing at Bagham Junction since the last official survey in 2007, supporting the view that something needs to be done.

Increased queuing at the junction will also lead to more infringements of the illegal use of Bagham Lane by frustrated drivers coming from Ashford. In addition it is certain that there will also be an increase in drivers using Branch Lane as a rat run (see below) with consequent danger to pedestrians.

2. Road Safety and Rat Runs

No official survey has been conducted regarding the use of the Branch Road and Bagham Lane rat runs during peak hours. However recent local surveys indicate peaks of 88 vehicles per hour in Branch Road and 41 per hour (many illegal) in Bagham Lane. The Branch Road results are supported by a local PACT survey that reported counts of 96 and 184 per hour. Increased congestion at Bagham Junction caused by the new development will seriously exacerbate this problem.

Both Kent Police and the Doctors surgery (patients walk to attend appointments at the surgery in Branch Road where there is no pedestrian footpath) support the need for improvements to road safety on these roads. Young children also come from the village to the play area along Branch Road where there is no pathway. School children also walk down Branch road when going to the recreation ground.

3. Site Access

CPC understands that the pedestrian island on the A28 will be lit and will be sufficient to accommodate cycles and prams and that the pathway to the village will extend along Bagham Lane. CPC is adamant that these safety measures are essential and are the minimum that must be done. However it remains sceptical that the proposed island will be sufficiently safe and not restrict the carriageway of the A28.

The alignment of the pathway along Bagham Lane and its relation to the island needs to be made clear.

4. School Places

CPC understands that Chilham St. Mary's Primary School is in consultation with the responsible Area Education Officer at KCC with regards to the additional primary aged pupils that this proposed development might present.

CPC supports the School in its desire to provide education for the parish community. Whilst discussions between the School and KCC continue in order to explore increasing capacity at Chilham St. Mary's, CPC does not accept the statement proffered by 'Lee Evans Planning' in its letter addressed to Ashford B C on 26th July 2012, wherein it concludes that the only potential provision is at Chartham.

With regards to secondary education, CPC supports parental choice and wishes places to be available in both Ashford and Canterbury districts in future years, just as they have been in the past.

CPC understands that, with Chilham School being oversubscribed and on a restricted site, children of primary school age in Old Wives Lees and Shottenden that would otherwise have been accepted by Chilham School could have to go further afield because children from the new development will have priority over places. While it recognises that school allocations are not the responsibility of Ashford Borough Council, it feels strongly that this denial of a local school place to local children (often coming from long-established families in the parish) is completely unacceptable.

It also understands that KCC will not require any funding from the developer as it considers there is sufficient capacity in the Canterbury area.

5. Doctors Surgery

The Doctors surgery has expressed concern that the new development will create a capacity issue.

6. Speed Limit Signs

CPC understands that there will be a 40mph speed restriction approx 500m around the junction on the A28 and A252 and that there will be permanent interactive speed warning signs. Despite comments from Kent Highways on this issue, CPC is firmly of the opinion that a 30 mph limit is needed at this junction.

7. Design and Layout of the Site

CPC understands that the provision of 30 dwellings as outlined in Policy CS1 has been increased to 40, resulting in tighter packed houses and less open space available for a play area for smaller children that cannot safely walk to the recreation ground. CPC is of the opinion that 40 dwellings is simply too many for this site.

It supports the comments made by Mr J Smith that positive answers are required from the Environment Agency regarding the treatment of surface water and its drainage.

CPC understands that important comments regarding environmental matters including energy issues are being put forward by Councillor Marriott.

CPC also understands that the final choice of materials will be subject to a planning condition and that it will be included in the consultation on this.

8. Developer Contribution

CPC understands that this is open to negotiation and that a local consultation should be undertaken before any decision is made on how it should be used. Such a local consultation is essential and CPC will play a full part in this.

Planning Application 12/0051/AS - Land east of, Station Approach, Chilham, Kent

CPC **objects** to this planning application and makes the following comments:-

1. Parking Provision

CPC understands that a Section 106 agreement will ensure this planning application provides 15 parking spaces on the site. It believes that this is the minimum necessary provision in the light of current and probable future use of the station.

2. HGV Access

There is serious local concern regarding HGV access to the commercial site along Station Approach as this is currently used for car parking. CPC believes that parking on at least one side of the road as at present is essential and that this should be taken into consideration in any discussions regarding HGV use of the site. It is not aware of any dialogue between the developer and the owner of Station Approach to resolve these problems and believes that such a dialogue is imperative and that approval of this planning application is dependent upon a positive outcome resolving these issues.