

**Abel Bunu**

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**From:** Chris Watts [cjw\_mazeplanning@btinternet.com]

**Sent:** 04 April 2012 19:16

**To:** Abel Bunu

**Cc:** Rodgers

**Subject:** Re: Walkers Farm

Abel,

Further to the comments of the Parish Council I would reply as follows.

Firstly I have to say that we are very disappointed in their response, which seems to mix a lot of different issues and strays off the actual assessment of the proposals. I am also very concerned that although I asked their Planning Officer Mr Brewin at the outset if I could make a presentation to the Parish Council before we submitted the revised applications, in order to see if they would then support them, I was told that I could not do that and Mr Brewin would instead decide if this was possible. I have heard nothing back since then from him other than to inform me of missing appendices in our D & A Statement, (which have now been added), and am very disappointed in particular, to see their comment about an alleged lack of consultation with neighbours. I understand anyway that one of the neighbours may well have written in support of the proposals.

I turn now to the detailed comments made by the PC, and will try to deal with them in shorthand to assist you.

A1 - We have always acknowledged that the extension will increase the size of the main house, but have argued that the removal of a number of other buildings on the property would improve openness in the Green Belt overall, and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. In addition improvements to the listed building will also result from the works. The PC does not seem to understand these benefits and has distorted what is said in the D & A Statement.

A2 - The application for an agricultural determination for a new hay barn is completely irrelevant to these proposals, I fail to see why they mention it other than to try to muddy the water.

A3 - The removal of the long standing access would significantly improve highway safety, if the LPA wants that, and is being offered as one of the many benefits of this scheme. You yourself have experienced how difficult it is to leave the site from this access. Neither Mr Brewin nor the PC has used it, so they do not appreciate how bad it can be. The visibility to the right on exit is very poor.

A4 - The applicant is the owner not just of the main house and property but of farm land and agricultural buildings. He has rented the fields out to a farmer but that does not diminish the use of the land for farming even if it is only growing grass for grazing. Why should the PC be entitled to have more information about the long term intentions of the applicant. I am sure in any case Mr Rogers would be very happy to talk to the Parish Council, but up to now has not been invited to do so. That is a separate matter anyway and nothing to do with these revised applications.

B1 Form wording - no comment

B2 Not necessary

19/04/2012

See above as to response on consultation

3A - Para 2.2 of D & A Statement - They are being deliberately obtuse - they know what is meant here

The approval in 2009 of the second access is irrelevant to the assessment of these applications other than the applicant's offer to use that one only, and close the older, and less safe access.

Para 3.3 They do not understand what is said. The reference to the house as it was in 1926 was to show that there was a rear extension to the main house, and an extension or outbuilding further to the rear, on the siting of our proposed extension at that date. 1947 is the date when PPG2, and now the NPPF, require the floorspace 'original' house in a Green Belt context to be used as the baseline for assessments of impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Para 4.2 and 4.3 I don't understand what point they are making here

Para 5.1 The labelling of the plans has now been clarified as you know, no further comment

Para 5.3 Correct up to a point, the main access to the house has always been on the northern side, but we are removing the lobby porch structure on the southern side which serves the 'back' door.

Para 5.7 This is not a reasonable request and can be adequately covered by a soft and hard landscaping planning condition.

Para 6.1 I would have thought it obvious that the listed building makes a contribution to the townscape of the village

Para 6.2 PPG2 and now the NPPF refer to an assessment being required as to whether or not an extension to a house in the Green Belt would be disproportionate or not, by reference to floorspace increases

Para 6.3 The personal circumstances and family needs of the applicant are in fact not being used as a main argument for the extension but are minor issues. The main benefits relate to improvements to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, improvements to the listed building and improvements to the openness of the Green Belt. Highway safety benefits are also on offer if necessary. All these represent 'very special circumstances', but only if you consider that the extension is disproportionate in Green Belt terms. I consider that it could well be accepted as being proportionate, and at a level which your LPA accept as being an 'appropriate' extension in the Green Belt, and that therefore, very special circumstances do not actually need to be demonstrated.

Para 6.11 and 6.13 I am not aware of discussions you may have had with the PC but if each case is actually determined on its merits then there is no need in practice to set a guideline maximum % increase.

Para 6.15 As you know sometimes on appeal Inspectors do argue that hardstandings in large scale concrete form, can undermine the openness of the Green Belt. A soft landscape scheme with gravel replacing concrete would remove that issue and be beneficial to the Green Belt's openness in my view.

Para 6.20 All the removed buildings are relevant here. Especially the largest one which is ugly and asbestos sheet roofed.

Para 6.22 Walkers Farm is not separate from the village but an intergal part of it, hence its inclusion in the village's Conservation Area.

Para 6.29 - Addressed above and not relevant here

Para 6.29 PPS5 was until recently the govt's main guidance on how to deal with heritage assets, and now replaced by the NPPF. It was therefore very relevant to the applications as explained in the D & A Statement and expanded on in the associated Heritage Statement by Headland.

Para 6.31 = No comment

I have by now lost the will to live, suffice to say that we consider that there are very special circumstances in the many positive benefits that we are offering through the proposed side extension sufficient to allow your Council to grant planning permission and listed building consent.

It seems clear to me from the PC's comments in C1 that they are in practice, more concerned about other alleged long term intentions of my client which have nothing to do with these applications, and of which I know nothing, and which only exists in the PC's minds. Mr Rogers is only concerned with these applications and does not have some 'machiavellian' scheme in mind, I can assure you. He has too many other responsibilities running a major business in the area which employs quite a few local people to worry about that!!

I will of course be attending the Planning Committee on the 25th April and will be speaking if necessary to counter some of these views.

Thanks, Chris Watts

**From:** Abel Bunu <Abel.Bunu@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk>  
**To:** 'Chris Watts' <cjw\_mazeplanning@btinternet.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 3 April 2012, 17:13  
**Subject:** FW: Walkers Farm

Dear Chris

Herewith, full version of comments from the Parish Council.

I am putting together final touches to my committee report which I will submit to my manager tomorrow. If you need to make any particular observations at this stage, please e-mail me your comments.

Kind regards

Abel

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