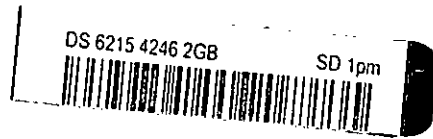


40 Gardners Lane
Ashwell
N^r Baldock
Herts

SG7 5LZ
5th March 2025



Mr A. Howard
Senior Planning Officer
North Herts District Council
Gernon Road
Letchworth

Your ref: 25/00581/0P

Outline Application: Erection of single dwelling
on unused land between Chair Cottage and
40 Gardners Lane Ashwell.

Dear Mr Howard,

We object most strongly to this application. We have lived in this cottage for 40 years and there have been innumerable applications made on this site, the last one less than 18 months ago. All the applications for the same thing and all rejected by the Parish Council, North Herts District Council and the Planning Inspectorate when appealed. Each time this causes us considerable anxiety and stress, because of the detrimental effect on our lives and the despoilation of this historic and important area of the village.

Our principle objections are as follows:

- 1) The siting of this building or any other will destroy the open aspect of the lane. This area of

The Village is characterised by isolated dwellings with open spaces between. The Planning Inspector's report in 2006 noted that keeping the site free of urban development is the only way of protecting the isolated nature of Chair Cottage and the interrupted views of the church. The building and associated urbanisation will do absolutely nothing to preserve or enhance the conservation area - in fact quite the opposite.

To preserve the historic landscape and conservation area, nothing should be built on this site.

2) The proposed building is a "bungalow" - totally out of context to the history of the area and other domestic buildings, as well as being of no architectural merit. This proposal is obviously a response to the many site constraints but this only emphasises the unsuitability of this site for any building.

3) Loss of green space. The site was originally part of Chair Cottage's garden and had been for centuries. It was then separated off in the mid 1980's by the then owner as a prospective building plot. The site was covered with substantial fruit trees, shrubs and other vegetation, that had been cultivated over

many years. This provided a rich habitat for a variety of wild life.

The applicant felled these trees, despite them being covered by conservation area policy. NHDC's Enforcement Officer attended but unfortunately too late to save the trees. Since then the applicant has regularly sprayed the site with toxic weedkiller and removed tons of the topsoil containing in particular snowdrops. The weedkiller has killed the planting on our side along our boundary fence.

The new proposal will necessitate removal of the existing mature trees and vegetation along the Eastern site boundary. This currently provides a rich habitat for a variety of bird species and other wildlife.

4) Trees. There are a number of mature trees in our garden along the site boundary. The proposed development particularly the location of the building will have a major impact on these trees in the conservation area both in terms of safety and stability as well as long term health.

The applicant has previously lowered the ground level exposing and damaging the roots. The proposed building shows concrete trench fill foundations that will

cut through the already damaged roots and the concrete will poison the ground around any live roots that remain. This together with the removal of any branches is likely to be fatal.

This type of foundation is wholly unsuitable, sheet piled or similar would be more appropriate.

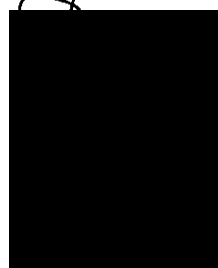
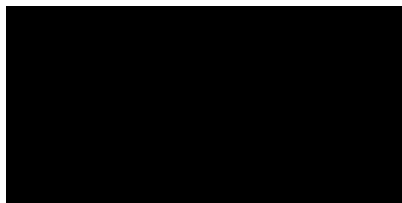
- 5) Vehicular access. Another access onto this narrow lane will present an additional traffic hazard. The lane is heavily trafficked at times with cars and delivery vehicles visiting the Surgery as well as use by very large agricultural vehicles. The present access was formed contrary to the requirements of the planners and Parish Council who objected to it at the time. The proposed entrance and highly restricted vision splays are not realistic or appropriate.
- 6) The reference to "unused" on the application is totally misleading. The site was formally a productive garden and orchard for over hundreds of years. The applicant chose to kill the trees, poison the land and remove the topsoil.
- 7) By lowering the ground levels the applicant has exposed the foundations to our barn. The wall

along the boundary now has some significant cracking. The lowered ground levels have also undermined our garden. The proposed development will have a further detrimental effect. Some form of retaining structure will be required.

8) Windows. The drawing of the proposed East elevation, that is very close to the boundary, shows four windows. Our understanding is that there is a limit on the size of openings in a "boundary" wall and that fire resistance is required. If our understanding is correct this proposal is unrealistic. It cannot be achieved and is therefore not acceptable.

For ~~conclusion~~ conclusion the application should be rejected, as all the others have been. This is the only way to ensure the character of the conservation area and the important landscape, so beloved by villagers and visitors, promoting a sense of wellbeing to all.

Yours Sincerely



W.A & B.A GRAY