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PLANNING DEPARTMENT
DACORUM DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Comments
Your reference

Our reference

T/APP/A1910/A/84/021048 and

Date 021049/P5

-8 MAR 85

A J Bates Esq ARIBA
The Studio
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Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971, SECTION 36 AND SCHEDULE 9
APPEALS BY F HARROWELL AND SONS LTD
APPLICATION NOS:- 4/0775/84 AND 4/0178/84

1. As you know I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment to determine the above mentioned appeals against the decisions of the Dacorum District Council to refuse planning permission for 1. 4 No. 3-storey town houses with integral garages and 2. single storey storage building for appellants' existing plant and materials for use with existing builders yard. Both appeals relate to the same area of land at the rear of the coal depot on Western Road, Tring. I have considered the written representations made by you and by the council and also those made by other interested persons. I inspected the site on 23 January 1985.
2. Although the applications are in outline they include plans showing the 'siting' of the proposed buildings and, as a consequence, I consider 'siting' forms part of the application before me.
3. The appeal site is a rectangular shaped area about 30 m by 20 m in extent. It is used as a compound for the storage of builders' plant and materials. To the south-west is a substantial building used as a milk distribution depot, to the south-east is a coal depot (part used in connection with furniture removals) and to the north-east beyond the rear access to the coal depot is a compound for the storage of cars. To the north-west beyond the access track which serves the appeal site are semi-detached houses in Goldfield Road. The appeal site is about 110 m to the east of the point where the access track joins Miswell Lane. For much of its length the access track is unmade.
4. Turning firstly to the residential proposal I take the view, on the basis of the representations and my inspection, that the decision primarily depends on whether the proposed development is acceptable given the character of the locality, the amenities likely to be available to the occupants of the town houses and the means of access.
5. The proposed dwellings would occupy an area of backland which has commercial/ industrial uses on 3 sides. To my mind it would be inappropriate for the site to be developed for residential purposes. The juxtaposition of the dwellings to the neighbouring non-residential uses would expose the occupants of the proposed dwellings to unwelcome commercial noise and disturbance and, possibly, even dust nuisance from the adjoining coal depot. These problems would be emphasised as the site is restricted in size which would leave the dwellings close to the site

boundaries. In my opinion the units would be cramped with only a limited area of amenity open space attached to each dwelling. In addition the site would be served by an access which is both long and below the standard which I regard as necessary for residential development nowadays. Additionally given the absence of a proper turning head and also that I consider the parking provision to be inadequate it seems to me that the proposed development would result in congestion and inconvenience for other users of the access. I appreciate that your clients would be prepared to upgrade the access but I note that it is not part of the application site and it is not within their control.

6. In respect of the proposed storage building I consider that the decision primarily turns on the likely impact on the amenities enjoyed by nearby residents and the suitability of the means of access and the parking/servicing arrangements, bearing in mind also the prevailing planning policies.

7. The site is not within any of the areas where the adopted Dacorum District Plan indicates planning permission for new industrial buildings would normally be granted. The proposal is, therefore, in conflict with the local plan though I do not regard this to be an overriding consideration given that the site has been used for the storage of plant and materials for a considerable period of time and, as far as I am aware, neither the site nor the nearby non-residential businesses are likely to be disturbed for the foreseeable future. Furthermore given the current use of the site I am not persuaded that the storage building would result in additional noise and disturbance for nearby residents. Moreover in terms of visual amenity the proposal would be beneficial for local residents. To my eye the site is untidy and an eyesore and I consider that the erection of a carefully designed building kept relatively low in height would tend to improve the appearance of the locality. Regarding the means of access I recognise that it is less than ideal for vehicular traffic but I do not consider that this disadvantage in itself warrants the refusal of planning permission bearing in mind the level of traffic which is already attracted to the site. However I note also that the parking provision is limited and the servicing/turning facilities are constrained in the submitted plan due to the size and siting of the proposed storage building. In my opinion the importance of adequate on-site parking/servicing facilities is emphasised in this instance due to the deficiencies of the access. To my mind it is important that development at the site does not aggravate the existing difficulties for traffic using the adjoining access route. As a consequence of the above I consider the submitted proposal to be unacceptable.

8. I have taken account of all of the other points raised but I am not persuaded that they outweigh the factors which led me to my decision. I would add that I note the layout put forward at a late date and I accept that it is a material improvement on the submitted scheme. However I do not consider that I could attach a condition relating to the layout to a grant of permission as it would make the development permitted substantially different to the submitted proposal.

9. For the reasons I have given and in exercise of the powers transferred to me I hereby dismiss both appeals.

I am Sir
Your obedient Servant

R N Parry

R N PARRY BA DipTP MRTPI
Inspector