

21/2004/017

LANGFORD BUDVILLE PC

ERECTION OF SINGLE STOREY VILLAGE HALL, ASSOCIATED PARKING AND ACCESS ROAD AND UPGRADING OF FOOTPATH, LAND AT RITHERDONS (OS REF ST 107227) LANGFORD BUDVILLE AS AMENDED BY LETTER DATED 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2004 WITH ACCOMPANYING PLAN

10721/2284

FULL

1.0 RECOMMENDATION

I recommend that permission be REFUSED for the following reason:-

- 01 The proposed development as submitted, which includes the formation of an access onto the Class III Butts lane, would not be in the interests of the safety and convenience of road users, by reason of the inadequate width, forward visibility and alignment of Butts Lane and the provision of insufficient visibility splays at the access point and the junction of Butts Lane and the Langford Budville to Wiveliscombe road at Two Ashes junction. (Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy 49).

2.0 APPLICANT

Langford Budville Parish Council (Acting for Village Hall Trustees).

3.0 PROPOSAL

A previous application, with the proposed hall positioned further up the slope to the south-east, was refused by the Committee in May, 2004. (See Section 5).

Erection of single storey village hall with associated car parking and access road. The walls for the proposed building are to be rendered and painted over a dark plinth with a blue/black tiles (Redland Cambrian or similar). The site area extends to approximately 0.973 ha.

The proposed accommodation provides for a main hall (18.5 m x 9 m), a smaller committee room (5.8 m x 4.6 m) and associated office, kitchen, wc and store rooms. The total internal floorspace area is 364 sq m. The overall height of the proposed building is approximately 7.1 m to the ridge. Parking for a minimum of 40 cars including 4 disabled spaces is proposed. Access to the proposed hall and its parking area is down a 3 m wide access road approximately 55 m in length with one passing bay. The first 30 m of the access road will be surfaced in tarmac. The remainder will be hardcore and gravel. The access is to be formed onto the existing lane leading from Two Ashes into the village at a point where there is an existing access gate. Sight

lines at the point of access is proposed to be improved by cutting back the hedging and banks.

The existing field hedging to the north of the proposed building is to be supplemented with additional trees and hedging. New post and wire fencing reinforced with hedging/planting of indigenous species is proposed alongside the proposed access road. The submitted plans also show indicatively the position of 'proposed future playing fields' adjacent to the proposed hall and 'potential affordable housing site' adjacent to the access road. The existing footpath to the village from the site is to be widened to 1200 mm and surfaced with hoggin or similar. This will link to the proposed hall building. The path will terminate in the centre of the village, adjacent to the village road as at present, with the benefit of overlap barriers for additional safety.

The Village Hall Trustees see the siting of the hall as proposed as having three primary functions. The first, and most important, is that it be as close as possible to the village centre and able to be accessed safely by children. The second is that the position is suitable to the future playing fields. The third function identified by the Trustees is that the placement has as minimal an impact as possible to the immediate area and the village landscape as a whole. The proposed position is close to an existing footpath which the Trustees see as providing a quick and easy link into the centre of the village. Vehicular access is separate and will be encouraged around the village (past the public house), thus seeking to reduce traffic approaching past the school. Traffic exiting the site will be encouraged to turn left towards the Wiveliscombe road and thus back around to the village.

The applicants have sought to address the County Highway Authority comments on the previous application, but with as little impact on the existing hedgerow as possible. They have also considered the additional local surface water run-off which will result from the proposals. It is intended to introduce measures to attenuate surface water run-off to an agreed allowable discharge, which would be no greater than at present.

4.0 **THE SITE**

The site is located on the western side of the village of Langford Budville, to the west and south of the area locally known as Ritherdons. The site forms part of a larger field and is currently in agricultural use. Access is in the position of an existing field gate onto the lane into the village from 'Two Ashes'. The site is beyond the settlement limits.

5.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

Planning permission has previously been granted for a village hall on land south of Heathfield on the road out of the village towards Holywell Lake.

21/2004/007 Erection of single storey village hall, associated car parking and access driveway, land at Ritherdons (O.S. Ref. ST 108228), Langford

Budville. Full planning application refused by Planning Committee in May 2004 for the following reasons:-

- 01 The site is beyond the settlement limits in open countryside in an elevated and prominent position not well related to the existing settlement pattern and buildings and its development as proposed would constitute an undesirable intrusion into an attractive area of open countryside to the detriment of the visual amenities of the locality. (Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy STR6 and Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy S8).
- 02 The development of the site as proposed would adversely affect the setting of St Peter's Church, which is a Grade I listed building, and the setting and character of the Langford Budville Conservation Area when viewed from the public footpath leading from Langford Common to the village by reason of its size and siting. (Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy 9 and Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy EN15).
- 03 The proposed development does not make adequate provision for a footpath link of an acceptable standard to the site from the village. (Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy 49 and Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policies S1(B) and M1).

This site was further up the slope to the south-east. The Committee also resolved to include an advisory note on the refusal certificate that a site further down the slope towards the road may be viewed favourably by the Local Planning Authority.

21/2004/011 erection of village hall, formation of access driveway and car parking for hall, church and school and improvement of access, land to north and east of St Peter's Church, Langford Budville. Outline planning permission refused by Planning Committee in May 2004 for the following reasons:-

- 01 The site is beyond the settlement limits in open countryside and the development as proposed would constitute an undesirable intrusion into an attractive area of open countryside to the detriment of the visual amenities of the locality. (Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy STR6 and Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy S8).
- 02 The development of the site as proposed would introduce alien features, including the access road, in the setting of the Church (which is a Grade I listed building) and Conservation Area and therefore be detrimental to these by reason of their siting and appearance. Furthermore the approach to the Conservation Area from the north-east is characterised by the narrow road and hedges and the proposed development by reason of the visibility splays, would devalue this approach. (Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy S9 and Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policy EN15).

- 03 The proposed access, with the loss of roadside bank and hedgerows and the provision of visibility splays, will have a detrimental impact on the rural character of the approach to the village and would therefore detract from the visual amenity of the area. (Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy STR6, West Deane Local Plan Policies WD/SP/2 and WD/C/7 and Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policies S1(D), EN5 and EN13).
- 04 The proposed development does not make adequate provision for a footpath link of an acceptable standard to the site from the village. (Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review Policy 49, and Taunton Deane Local Plan Revised Deposit Policies S1(B) and M1).

This site is to the east of Langford Budville and is now the subject of an Appeal.

6.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY**

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan Review

Policy STR1 sustainable development

Policy STR3 rural centres and villages

Policy STR5 development in rural centres and villages

Policy STR6 development outside towns, rural centres and villages

Policy 9 the built historic environment

Policy 37 facilities for sport and recreation within settlement

Policy 38 sport and recreation in the countryside

Policy 48 access and parking

Policy 49 transport requirements of new development

Taunton Deane Local Plan

Policy S1 general requirements

Policy S2 design

Policy S7 villages

Policy S8 outside settlements

Policy EN15 conservation areas

Policies M1, M2 and M3 transport, access and circulation requirements of new development

7.0 **RELEVANT CENTRAL GOVERNMENT POLICY GUIDANCE**

PPG1 General Policy and Principle

Paragraphs 4 - 7

Paragraph 28 A number of the previous themes come together in considering development in the countryside. Here, the planning system helps to integrate the development necessary to sustain economic activity in rural areas with protection of the countryside. Rural areas can accommodate many forms of development without detriment, if the location and design of development are handled with sensitivity. Building in the open countryside, away from existing settlements or from areas allocated for development in development plans, should be strictly controlled. In areas such as National Parks which are statutorily designated for their landscape, wildlife or historic qualities and in areas of best and most versatile agricultural land, policies give greater priority to restraint.

Paragraph 32 Just as well-designed, new development can enhance the existing environment, it is fundamental to the Government's policies for environmental stewardship that there should be effective protection for the historic environment. Those aspects of our past which have been identified as being of historic importance are to be valued and protected for their own sake, as a central part of our cultural heritage. Their presence adds to the quality of our lives, by enhancing the familiar and cherished local scene and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness which is so important an aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside. Their continued use is important if they are to contribute fully to the life of our communities.

Paragraph 40

Paragraph 50

Paragraph 54/55

PPS7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas

Paragraph 7 People who live or work in rural areas should have reasonable access to a range of services and facilities. Local planning authorities should:-

i. facilitate and provide for new services and facilities (e.g. through the use of planning obligations and the identification of sites in plans), particularly where;

- planning permission is granted for new developments in country towns or other service centres;

- settlements, or the population of their rural catchments, are expanding;

- there is an identified need for new or expanded services to strengthen the role of a particular rural service centre;

ii. seek opportunities (e.g. through planning obligations) to enhance public transport as a means of improving access to service centres;

iii. identify in development plans suitable buildings and development sites for community services and facilities to meet the needs of a range of users, including people with disabilities;

iv. support mixed and multi-purpose uses that maintain community vitality;

v. support the provision of small-scale, local service facilities (e.g. childcare facilities) to meet community needs in areas away from main service centres, particularly where they would benefit those rural residents who would find it difficult to use more distant service centres. These local facilities should be located within or adjacent to existing villages and settlements where access can be gained by walking, cycling and (where available) public transport.

Paragraph 8 Planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to planning proposals designed to improve the viability, accessibility or community value of existing services and facilities, such as village shops and post offices, rural petrol stations, village halls and rural public houses that play a vital role in sustaining village communities. Planning authorities should support the retention of these local facilities and should set out in development plans the criteria they will apply in considering applications that will result in the loss of vital village services (e.g., from conversion to residential use).

PPG13 'Transport'

Paragraph 6

Paragraph 20 Local authorities should seek to ensure that strategies in the development plan and the local transport plan are

complementary: consideration of development plan allocations and local transport priorities and investment should be closely linked. Local authorities should also ensure that their strategies on parking, traffic and demand management are consistent with their overall strategy on planning and transport. In developing the overall strategy, local authorities should:-

1. focus land uses which are major generators of travel demand in city, town and district centres and near to major public transport interchanges. City, town and district centres should generally be preferred over out of centre transport interchanges. Out-of-town interchanges should not be a focus for land uses which are major generators of travel demand;
2. actively manage the pattern of urban growth and the location of major travel generating development to make the fullest use of public transport. This may require the phasing of sites being released for development, in order to co-ordinate growth with public transport improvements, and ensure it is well related to the existing pattern of development;
3. take into account the potential for changing overall travel patterns, for instance by improving the sustainability of existing developments through a fully co-ordinated approach of development plan allocations and transport improvements; and
4. locate day to day facilities which need to be near their clients in local and rural service centres, and adopt measures to ensure safe and easy access, particularly by walking and cycling. Such facilities include primary schools, health centres, convenience shops, branch libraries and local offices of the local authority and other local service providers.

Local planning authorities should also encourage the provision of leisure and entertainment facilities serving local catchments and make provision for attractive local play areas, public open space and other recreational facilities in locations likely to be accessible without use of a car.

Paragraph 29

Paragraph 37

Paragraph 40

In rural areas, the potential for using public transport and for non-recreational walking and cycling is more limited than in urban areas. However, the need for the same

overall policy approach outlined in paragraphs 18 to 31 is as great in rural areas as it is in towns in order to help promote social inclusion, and reduce isolation for those without use of a car. The objective should be to ensure, subject to paragraph 43, that jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services are primarily sited at the most accessible locations in the local area, or where accessibility will be improved as a result of the local transport plan provision or other measures that the local authority intends to take. This will require an integrated approach to plan location decisions, service delivery and transport provision together. Local circumstances will need to be taken into account and what is appropriate in a remote rural area may be very different from rural areas near to larger towns.

PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment'

Paragraph 2.26 Conservation of the wider historic landscape greatly depends on active land management, but there is nevertheless a significant role for local planning authorities. In defining planning policies for the countryside, authorities should take account of the historical dimension of the landscape as a whole rather than concentrate on selected areas. Adequate understanding is an essential preliminary and authorities should assess the wider historic landscape at an early stage in development plan preparation. Plans should protect its most important components and encourage development that is consistent with maintaining its overall historic character. Indeed, policies to strengthen the rural economy through environmentally sensitive diversification may be among the most important for its conservation.

Paragraph 4.14 Section 72 of the Act requires that special attention shall be paid in the exercise of planning functions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This requirement extends to all powers under the Planning Acts, not only those which relate directly to historic buildings. The desirability of preserving or enhancing the area should also, in the Secretary of State's view, be a material consideration in the planning authority's handling of development proposals which are outside the conservation area but would affect its setting, or views into or out of the area. Local planning authorities are required by section 73 to publish a notice of planning applications for development which would in their opinion affect the character or appearance of a conservation area.

8.0 CONSULTATIONS

County Highway Authority

"I refer to the above-mentioned planning application received on 12th July, 2004 and my letter dated 9th September, 2004, and have the following further observations on the highway and transportation aspects of this proposal:-

The comments in my letter dated 7th April, 2004 in relation to planning application No. 21/2004/007 are still relevant, a copy of which is enclosed. I also wish to highlight the following points:-

- The County Road, Rison's Lane, giving access to the proposed site, is very narrow and the junction with the classified un-numbered road is inadequate to carry the additional traffic generated by the proposal and also the construction traffic during the building phase. The existing road is of inadequate strength to carry the proposed development's construction traffic. Therefore the existing road must be widened and strengthened before any works are commenced on site.
- Rison' s Lane needs to be widened to 5 m and visibility provided at the proposed access and for forward visibility along Rison's Lane. The Two Ash junction needs to be improved to cater for the increased traffic movements. The road widening and improvement of vertical and horizontal visibility may result in land being required for highway purposes and the existing banks being re-graded.
- The length of Rison' s Lane between the proposed access and the main road is derestricted and therefore subject to a speed limit of 60 mph. Therefore in the interest of highway safety a Traffic Regulation Order will need to be made to enable the 30 mph speed limit to be extended to the Two Ashes junction. Such an Order could take up to eight months to become law and cost the developer between £2000 to £3000.
- The land forming the triangle at Two Ashes junction and the grass verges on the classified un-numbered road are not dedicated as public highway. Therefore the landowner will need to be approached and the required land dedicated as public highway before any improvements can be carried out at the junction.
- With a speed limit of 30 mph the visibility at the proposed access will require splays of 4.5 m x 60 m. The forward visibility requirement is also 60 m. This distance will influence the horizontal and vertical alignment of the improvement to Rison's Lane.
- There are also issues relating to drainage, which need to be addressed. See the Audit Reports and my letter dated 7th April, 2004. The existing highway drainage is at full capacity and is unable to

accept any additional discharge. The surface water generated by the village hall or any future development on this site will need to be discharged via a separate system.

In the event of permission being granted I would recommend that the following conditions are imposed:-

No work shall commence on the development site until the widening and any necessary realignment of Rison's Lane and the modification of Two Ashes junction has been carried out in accordance with a design and specification to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and to be fully implemented to the satisfaction of the said Authority.

The area allocated for parking on the submitted plan shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be used other than for the parking of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

The proposed access shall have a minimum width of 5.0 m and incorporate radii not less than 4.5 m.

The proposed access over the first 10.0 m of its length, as measured from the edge of the adjoining carriageway, shall be properly consolidated and surfaced (not loose stone or gravel) in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

The gradient of the proposed access shall not be steeper than 1 in 10.

Provision shall be made within the site for the disposal of surface water so as to prevent its discharge onto the highway details of which shall have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

At the proposed access there shall be no obstruction to visibility greater than 300 mm above adjoining road level within splays based on minimum co-ordinates of 4.5 m x 60.0 m. Such visibility shall be fully provided before the access hereby permitted is first brought into use and shall thereafter be maintained at all times.

The above highway works will need to be the subject of a legal agreement in the form of a Section 106 Agreement of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and/or section 278 of The Highways Act 1980."

A copy of the County Highway Authority's Audit Report, forwarded with their earlier letter, is included as Appendix 1 to this Report.

The response from the applicant's agents is included as Appendix 2 to the Report.

County Archaeologist

As far as we are aware there are limited or no archaeological implications to this proposal and therefore have no objections on archaeological grounds.

Wessex Water

The development is located within a foul sewer area. It will be necessary for the developer to agree a point of connection onto the system for the satisfactory disposal of foul flows generated by the proposal. This can be agreed at the detailed design stage. It should be noted that the nearest public foul sewer is at least 100m away from the proposed site.

The developer has proposed to dispose of surface water to soakaways. It is advised that your Council should be satisfied with any arrangement for the satisfactory disposal of surface water from the proposal.

With respect to water supply, there are water mains within the vicinity of the proposal. Again, connection can be agreed at the design stage.

It is recommended that the developer should agree with Wessex Water, prior to the commencement of any works on site, a connection onto Wessex Water infrastructure.”

Somerset Wildlife Trust

“I am writing as I have heard from local people that the above application would involve the removal of the road island and creation of a large visibility splay at "Two Ashes".

I would like to make it clear that the Somerset Wildlife Trust owns this land as part of its Langford Heathfield Nature Reserve. The land is also part of a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Common Land covered by Byelaws administered by Taunton Deane Borough Council. I enclose a map showing the boundary of Trust owned land.

The Trust has not been approached by the applicant regarding any possible works on its land and would be extremely unlikely to agree to any request to sell or permit clearance work, as this would be to the detriment of the habitats and wildlife present on the reserve.”

English Nature

“The revised application for this development will not have any effect on the adjacent SSSI.”

Landscape Officer

“The layout of the building and car parking means that although the building is set down there is little opportunity to provide landscape mitigation without putting the building in shade, as seen from the public footpath. However, if the building was moved further north tree and hedge planting could be used.

This would also bring the building closer to the other settlement buildings which would help to relate the new building to the edge of this part of Langford.

Any replacement hedgerow required by visibility splay needs should be set on a low bank and planted with locally native species such as hazel, hawthorn holly, field maple, etc.”

Wildlife Species Co-ordinator

“Should await English Natures comment. Wildlife survey should be carried out because of proximity to SSSI – there are possible protected species issues especially linked to hedgerows. “

Conservation Officer

Improved location to that previously refused. Roof material proposed should be improved.

Rights of Way Officer

“The owners will have to obtain written permission to change the surface of the footpath to gravel etc from me or the highway authority. They will also need permission for the barriers.“

Drainage Officer

“I refer to my previous comments made on application 21/2004/007 and would again reiterate my concerns regarding localised flooding and the effect that the proposal would have in increasing this situation.

To date no contact has been made by the applicant or his agent to discuss disposal of surface water.

I therefore, once again, repeat that no approval should be given until a disposal system for surface water run-off has been agreed.”

Leisure Development Manager

“I would refer to my previous comments on this application, with regard to the proposed building.

Langford Budville does not currently have a children’s play area and this site although a little peripheral, would appear to have room for a future playground.”

Housing Officer

“There is a proven need for 6 affordable units including some shared ownership. it would be acceptable for 3 units of social housing to be provided.
“

Parish Council

“Further to the Parish Council meeting held on the 27th July, 2004 I am writing on behalf of the Parish Council to express their support for the above-mentioned application.

The Parish Council support was as follows: - supporting the application Mr Brewer, Mrs Houghton, Mr Hendy and Mrs Brown. Mr Cottrell, due to a declaration of interest, took no part in the discussion or decision.”

9.0 **REPRESENTATIONS**

58 objections have been received making the following points:-

1. The proposed ‘give way’ on the access at 2 Ashes many result in traffic backing up onto the unrestricted Wiveliscombe road, which could result in accidents.
2. The existing road is narrow and inappropriate and the proposed widening of the road from 2 Ashes to the site entrance will mean the road will butt right up to the hedge. This will leave no scope for pedestrians and horses to avoid traffic.
- 3, No reference to reconstructing and strengthening of road as required by the Highway Authority.
4. Query the sewerage connection point shown on the plans, which does not exist.
5. Entrance impinges on a reservoir.
6. Will result in the loss of a beautiful country bank and ancient hedge which is a real feature of the lane.
7. If road is widened – will be used as a short-cut from Wiveliscombe into the village, a road with blind bends and no room to pass further down.
8. Proposal will destroy the quiet country feel and ambience of the area.
9. Loss of wildflowers and impact on wildlife.
10. Improvement to the road will be extensive and expensive – the architects proposals are a cheap alternative, which will not serve the village well.
11. Visibility at the triangle is poor.

12. Query adequacy of parking provision, with the danger of overspill parking on the lane.
13. Insufficient land available to provide for necessary road improvements.
14. Plans inaccurate.
15. Ancient drovers road should not be eroded.
16. Entrance into the field has only recently been re-opened after being blocked for a number of years.
17. Access should be from the main field entrance on the top road, which is equidistant from the proposed hall.
18. Impact on springs coming out onto the road.
19. Taunton Deane Local Plan states that limitations of the highway network restrict the scope for development, which will be restricted to infilling.
20. The idea that drivers will be encouraged to take the long way around the village is unrealistic.
21. Siting of the access is inappropriate, entails unnecessary disturbance and is based on misdescription in the application.
22. Consideration of any allied housing development cannot be involved as it is not part of the application.
23. Access cannot be justified on the basis of need or cost to the development of a village hall in this location.
24. The 'redirected' footpath will be seriously affected by the proposed building.
25. Will be a blot on the landscape, on top of a rise, standing out like a beacon and completely out of character with the surroundings.
26. Question whether there is a need for a village hall – the previous one closed due to lack of use. More use could be made of the church and school.
27. Landowner has made it clear that following a successful hall application, further application for social and private housing would follow. Within the limitations of the area available, these would entail total breach of the restrictions and conservation strictures applicable to this prominent hill top site in the countryside overlooking the village.

28. Due to the lie of the land, the hall will be a source of noise and have security implications – quite unacceptable to many residents.
29. Increase in light pollution is almost a certainty.
30. Inadequate financial justification for the hall. Concern that any shortfall in income will be borne by an increase in Council tax.
31. To generate sufficient income there will be a need for bookings by groups of people from outside the village, which will increase traffic.
32. Proposed site is too near existing properties and too far from the school, which is likely to be the chief potential user.
33. Concern about drainage – both foul and surface water disposal.
34. Will not address the problems of parking next to the church. Alternative site near the church would achieve this and meet other requirements.
35. Will obliterate views.
36. Claim from the architect that the surface water run-off situation will be no more than now is absolutely unsatisfactory. Addressing this problem will be expensive and far beyond the entire funds available.
37. Building on arable land can only be permitted under extreme circumstances.
38. Hump and bend in road effects visibility.
39. No pavements and lighting along the road.
40. Possibility of flooding of houses.
41. Pedestrian access across the arable field is totally inadequate and could not be used in foul weather or in the dark.
42. Question the activities of the Parish Council.
43. Question whether application has been adequately publicised.
44. Little different to the previous application which appears to be specifically designed to encourage approval of housing on the remainder of the land.
45. Does not relate well to the existing settlement and to the church and school in particular.

46. Potential to development of land which forms a buffer to the nearby SSSI.
47. Due to the height of the site, it would have an overbearing visual influence on the village setting, the surrounding land and the SSSI.
48. Hall would not be easily accessible for pedestrians because of its distance from the heart of the village.
49. No consensus has been sought from the residents.
50. Should await the outcome of the appeal into the proposal near to the church before this application is considered.
51. Will be closer to dwellings than previously proposed site.
52. Any screening will be ineffective.
53. Design is very different to surrounding buildings.
54. Increase in proposed parking will mean more traffic nuisance in the surrounding roads.
55. Area should not be ruined for financial gain.
56. If allowed, there should be appropriate signage.
57. Site is well outside the village boundary.
58. Precedent for further development.
59. Setting of the Grade I listed church may be impaired.
60. There is a line of springs through the field.
61. Proposed materials for upgrading the footpath will not withstand any length of time.
62. Accessibility by public transport is virtually impossible.
63. Creeping urbanisation of a beautiful hilltop village.
64. PPG7 lends weight to objections. Proposal will not benefit economic activity or enhance the environment, loss of prime agricultural land, patter of new development should be determined through the development plan process and be well related in scale and location to existing development. Expansion of villages should avoid creating ribbon development or a fragmented pattern of development.
65. Contrary to policies in the Taunton Deane Local Plan.

66. The site is on the highest point in the village and will be seen from miles around, including the Quantocks and the Blackdowns.
67. Traffic will cause damage to properties.
68. The increased size of the car park in this application will exacerbate the huge surface water drainage problem.
69. Increased water flow from development will ruin grazing land and threaten future of a small holding.
70. Will make site and surrounding land unstable and result in erosion of land at adjoining property.
71. Overlooking into adjacent residential property with resultant effect on the health of the occupiers.
72. The village is of notable archaeological significance.
73. If allowed, should be no restrictions placed on the firm of Willis and Grabham, as the village would be very much the poorer if they were constricted or forced out of business.
74. Question how the land either side of the footpath link would be cultivated.
75. The footpath accessing the site is not within the jurisdiction of those submitting the proposal, so improvements may well not happen.
76. No more development and ensuing traffic should be encouraged in or through the village until the approach road from Langford Gate is sorted out.
77. Techniques are available for moving hedges intact and this should be done wherever the hall is built if the hedges are valuable.
78. Exterior lighting should not be used, other than knee high lighting. Any other lighting will pollute the natural darkness.
79. The proposed drive is still too narrow.
80. Parents in cars will almost certainly use the narrow route from the school if they have just dropped off older siblings.
81. The parking proposed will be of little use to the school or the church.
82. If the social housing gets built, further residential developments will take place.

83. Several new village halls recently built in Somerset have proven not to be maintainable through lack of funds and insufficient use. A village shop/post office would be far more beneficial to the village inhabitants.
84. Majority of residents affected have already made it clear that they oppose the development of the site.
85. Partiality of the Council in promoting a site to the west of the village carries with it shadows of disrepute in Council decision making.
86. Case officer should remove himself from involvement in the application.
87. Serious doubts whether anything other than housing will ever be built on the site.
88. The granting of permission to this unsuitable and unviable site would permanently debar the residents from a useful and advantageous option (refers to the alternative village hall site east of the church).
89. The manner of the proposal and their handling, has created deep and bitter divisions within the community.
90. It is evident that the planning office has so compromised its position that it has obliged the Council to grant the application regardless of its lack of merit and demonstrable manipulations
91. Land between field and the Wiveliscombe road is Common Land which would require extensive consultation and advertising if the land is to be used for highway improvements.

11 letters of support have been received making the following points:-

1. The design and style of the building would suit the village needs. The village does not currently have a suitable venue. This is the only site that can offer this due to the contours of the surrounding land.
2. The proposed playing fields next to the proposed site also offer the opportunity for future growth in the village and inter village activities.
3. This is a long awaited and very valuable amenity for the entire parish, which has been carefully and sympathetically arranged with full consideration for the environment and residents alike.
4. The best site that is available. The effect on the outstanding views within and the upset to a very few near neighbours will be very minimal.
5. The village both wants and needs the village hall.
6. Will help to keep the school, which is essential for continuity of a balanced community.

7. One of only a small number of villages in Somerset without a village hall.

A letter from an objector has also been received referring to a petition submitted in opposition to the proposal for a village hall to east of the church (now at Appeal). Concern that petition has been quoted as evidence to the Appeal Inspector by the Parish Council in official business, when it is painfully obvious that it has been created falsely. The writer of the letter contends that the 'signatures' appear to have been written by persons that have been signed for many others and include a great many minors.

I would advise that this petition refers to a different proposal on a different site.

10. **PRINCIPAL ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

- A. Is there a need for a village hall? NEED
- B. Is it appropriate for a village hall building to be provided on a site outside the settlement limits and in open countryside in policy terms? POLICY
- C. Will the proposed development have an adverse visual and landscape impact? VISUAL IMPACT
- D. Is the access to the site acceptable and is adequate parking provision made? ACCESS/PARKING
- E. Are the arrangements for the disposal of foul and surface water drainage adequate? DRAINAGE
- F. Will the proposal have an unacceptable impact on the wildlife of the area? WILDLIFE
- G. Is the design of the proposed building acceptable? DESIGN
- H. Will the proposal have an adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties? IMPACT ON NEARBY PROPERTIES
- I. Is the development sustainable? SUSTAINABILITY
- J. OTHER ISSUES

A. Need

A number of the letters of objection question the need for a hall for the village. There is at present no village hall in Langford Budville. The previous hall was demolished over 20 years ago. Since that time efforts have been made to find an alternative site and planning permission has been obtained for 2 sites

– both just outside the village to the south of the road towards Holywell Lake. A few years ago, negotiations for the purchase of a site for a hall to the rear of the primary school fell through. Since that time, the village hall trustees have had informal discussions with my officers to seek a suitable site.

The accountability of the Village Hall Trustees is not a planning issue. Nor is the role of the Parish Council and the landowner in the proposal. The fact that a planning application has been submitted by the Village Hall Trustees gives credence to the view that there is a need for a village Hall. The Taunton Deane Local Plan notes that although there is no village hall, the local community is actively pursuing provision of this facility. In terms of size of the building, the Trustees clearly see that the size proposed is what there is a demand for. Although it is likely that outside persons and organisations are likely to use the facilities, the main purpose is to provide a venue for village based activities.

A previous application for a hall in the same general area as the current proposal (21/2004/007) was refused earlier this year. Another application (21/2004/011) for a hall to the east of the village was also refused and that application is now the subject of an Appeal.

B. Policy

The application site is located beyond the settlement limits of the village. In such areas, Policy S8 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan applies. This states that outside defined settlement limits, new building will not be permitted unless it maintains or enhances the environmental quality and landscape character of the area and meets certain criteria. One of these is that the proposal should support the vitality and viability of the rural economy in a way which cannot be sited within the defined limits of a settlement.

The provision of a village hall with its associated car parking requires a relatively large area of land. I do not consider that there is an appropriate area of land within the settlement limits which would be suitable for the proposed development. I therefore consider that it is appropriate that, in view of the aspirations of the local community, a site on the edge of the village beyond the settlement limits is appropriate. This is consistent with the previous planning permission for a village hall at Langford Budville when a similar policy framework prevailed.

The indications on the submitted drawings of 'potential affordable housing with' and 'proposed future playing fields' is not part of the current planning application and should not influence Members' consideration.

C. Visual Impact

Policy S8 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan referred to above goes on to say that new building permitted in accordance with this policy should be designed and sited to minimise landscape impact, be compatible with a rural location and meet the following criterion where practicable:-

- (i) avoid breaking the skyline;
- (ii) make maximum use of existing screening;
- (iii) relate well to existing buildings; and
- (iv) use colours and materials which harmonise with the landscape.

The siting of the proposed building as previously submitted was on an elevated site to the west of the village. In that position the proposal would have an adverse impact on views from the village towards the Common and also have an adverse impact on views towards the village from the road leading past the Common and from the public footpath which leads from that point towards the village. The views along that footpath are towards the Quantock Hills in the background and the village, running down from the village church on its high point, in the foreground. The church is Grade I listed and the area around it is a designated conservation area. It was considered that a village hall building with its associated car parking and access road in that position would have a seriously detrimental impact on the setting of the listed church and the Conservation Area. Accordingly the previous application (21/2004.007) was refused. The refusal reasons are set out in Section 5 of this Report.

However an advisory note was included on the certificate that a site further down the slope towards the road may be viewed favourably by the Local Planning Authority.

The current proposal sets the proposed hall building further down the slope towards the lane. I consider that from a visual impact point of view, this position is acceptable.

D. Access/Parking

The site is proposed to be accessed from Ritherdons/Butts Lane with the applicants indicating that they would seek to encourage users of the hall to use the road past the Martlett Inn rather than the lane past the primary school leading to the site. Parking provision for 40 cars is proposed (this compares to 33 indicated on the previous application).

The County Highway Authority consider that the lane leading to the site is very narrow and that the junction with the Wiveliscombe road at Two Ashes is inadequate for an increase in traffic flow. They state that the access lane will need to be improved.

The Highway Authority require the lane widened to 5 m, improvement carried out to the Two Ashes junction, forward visibility of 60 m along the lane, extension of the 30 mph speed limit to the Two Ashes junction and visibility splays of 4.5 m x 60 m at the point of access. These requirements are based on speeds of 30 mph.

The applicants consider that the substantial improvements to the highway network are excessive and not in the spirit of a community project. They

contend that the lane currently has very effective traffic calming characteristics and that if significant highway improvements are carried out road safety will be compromised. They consider that the existing characteristics of this lane could justify a 20 mph zone in this area. Site measurements show that more than 45 m visibility is available in both directions from the proposed access without significant loss of bank and hedgerow. This would be within the requirements for a 20 mph design speed. The applicants consider that large scale road widening and visibility splays are inappropriate in this area and not in keeping with the village character. Certainly the provision of 60 m visibility splays would require substantial removal of substantial lengths of trees and hedgerow along the lane, which I agree would be detrimental to the rural character of the lane. In the absence of these improvements, the County Highway Authority's engineer has indicated verbally that they would recommend refusal. This view point forms the basis of my recommendation.

The proposal provides for 40 car parking spaces which I consider is acceptable for the development. The proposal also provides for a hoggin path along the line of the existing footpath to the village.

E. Drainage

Several of the letters of representation express concern at the possible increase in surface water run-off which may exacerbate an existing situation whereby properties in the village are flooded in times of excessive rainfall. The Council's Drainage Officer recognises that the surface water drainage systems in the area are of sensitive nature and that there have been instances of localised flooding. This is backed up by the response from the County Highway Authority. Consequently the Drainage Office indicates that a substantial drainage system, which is likely to incorporate some form of on-site attenuation, will have to be provided.

In the event of an approval being forthcoming for the development, I consider that this issue could be covered by condition.

F. Impact on Wildlife

Several of the letters of objection refer to the proximity of the site to the Langford Heathfield SSSI and the potential impact on the wildlife of the area. The consultation response from English Nature states that the proposed development will not have any effect on the adjacent SSSI. My conclusion is that there will not be a detrimental impact on the wildlife of the area.

However, Somerset Wildlife Trust, which owns land which may be required for road improvements, have indicated that such works would be likely to be to the detriment of the habitats and wildlife present on the Langford Heathfield Nature Reserve.

G. Design

A number of representations have included the view that the design of the proposed building does not reflect the local vernacular. Policy S2 of the Taunton Deane Local Plan states that development must be of a good design and that its scale, density, height, massing, layout, landscaping, colour materials and access arrangements will be assessed to ensure that the proposal will, where reasonably and feasible, meet certain criteria. One of these is that any development shall reinforce the local character and distinctiveness of the area, including the landscape setting of the site and any settlement, street scene and building involved.

The proposed building has been specifically designed to be simple and modest to meet the village's needs, activities and functions. The siting is very much a 'stand alone' one, where there are no buildings immediately adjacent to take a lead from in terms of design. The design proposal incorporates relatively low eaves lines with a greater expanse of roof area to wall area. The proposed materials are to be rendered walls with a slate type of roof material which I consider to be appropriate to this rural style of village locations. I see no specific reason to object to the proposed design and materials for the building.

H. Impact on nearby properties.

The distance of the boundary of the site to the closest residential dwelling is 75 m. This dwelling forms part of a smallholding. The actual hall building will be 135 m from the dwelling. Other residential properties in other directions are even further away and I do not consider that there will be any significantly adverse impact on the amenity of the occupiers to justify refusal of the application on these grounds.

I. Sustainability

The site is adjacent to the village, within appropriate reasonable walking distance for many of the potential users of the hall. It can be assumed that at present there will be an element of travelling out of the village, largely by car to access facilities that could be provided by a new hall.

As currently proposed, there is unlikely to be an adverse impact on the wildlife of the area. The proposed designs and materials respect the local character and distinctiveness of the area. The proposal will improve public amenity and improve accessibility to community and recreational facilities for all sections of present and future generations.

J. Other Issues

The public right of way, which crosses the site, will not be affected by the proposed development.

The application site occupies one side of the field. I do not consider that it will have a particularly adverse impact on the value or use of the remainder of the field for agricultural purposes.

11.0 **CONCLUSION**

It is not disputed that there are aspirations within the village for a new village hall. Furthermore, in the absence of a suitable site within the settlement limits, I consider that it is appropriate for a site on the edge of the village beyond the limits to be sought.

Informal pre-application discussions have taken place with the Village Hall Trustees and their agent and the general area to the west of the village at Ritherdons has been accepted as being appropriate for the proposed hall. However, the County Highway Authority consider that the proposed road improvements and visibility splays are below the standard required for a development of this nature in this location. There is some doubt whether the applicants could obtain control of the land necessary for these improvements anyway and furthermore they would have a significantly adverse impact on the rural character of the lane at this point. My recommendation is therefore one of refusal.

In preparing this report the Planning Officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

CONTACT OFFICER: Mr J Hamer Tel: 356461

APPENDIX 1

AUDIT REPORT

PROPOSED VILLAGE HALL LANGFORD BUDVILLE

Audit Report

*Somerset County Council
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*Tel: 01823 355455
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Reference: SA-4-0450-003-1

Date: 23 August 2004

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Proposed Village Hall Langford Budville

Somerset County Council

1 **INFRASTRUCTURE DESIGN LAYOUT**

1.1 HORIZONTAL ALIGNMENT

- 1.1.1 The visibility for the proposed entrance should be 4.5 x 160m if the existing speed limit remains. This will not be feasible for the alignment to the right of the proposed junction. I would suggest that consultation with the area traffic engineer would be advisable for the possible extension of the 30mph limit, so the visibility requirements can be reduced to 4.5x50m.
- 1.1.2 The proposed junction should accommodate a 6m radius for smooth vehicular movements. It should also be noted that road width within the bell mouth should not taper to less than 5m until 15m from edge of the existing carriageway.
- 1.1.3 Where the road is to be widened, provision will be required for soil stabilization and a suitable design to incorporate the new embankment batter in keeping with the surrounding area. Please provide further information.
- 1.1.4 The southern exit at the triangular island Two Ashes should be widened to 5.5m to allow two way traffic to pass at the right hand bend. It would also be an advantage to widen the exit on the southern end leading on to the main carriageway to allow for traffic to turn right. Vehicle swept path analyses will be required. The new road marking on the incoming approach from Wiveliscombe will give the impression that traffic should keep left. This is subject to the traffic engineer's comments. It should also be noted from road records that the area of land named as the Two Ashes is not highway.
- 1.1.5 The visibility to the southern exit on to the Langford to Wellington Road will need selective trimming to improve existing visibility..
- 1.1.6 Where the carriageway is to be widened the surfacing course should be extended from one side of the carriageway edge to other to eliminate longitudinal joints within the surface course.
- 1.1.7 The limit of the prospective highway limits will be required. It is also worth noting that the 30m tarmac road would be better suited to a minimum of 5m for two way passing traffic.
- 1.1.8 The suggested path should exit as close to the neighbouring boundary as possible to give as much protection to pedestrians and avoid exiting directly out on the carriageway bend

1.2 VERTICAL ALIGNMENT

More level information is required to provide suitable level comments. There are concerns at the crest approximately 40 – 50 m west of the proposed entrance.

1.3 SUMMARY

Please ensure an exception response is submitted with the next submission

Proposed Village Hall Langford Budville

Somerset County Council

detailing points which have been addressed and reasons of departure for those that have not.

2 HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This audit has been carried out following receipt of Barnes Cannon Architects drawing 03060.P.20G. The drawing is of insufficient detail for a Stage 2 Audit and as such has been treated as a Stage 1 feasibility audit. If the development is to proceed further detailed designs will be required for audit.

The works dealt with in this section of the report are those perceived to become public highway ie. the junction bellmouth up to the limit of the visibility splays, and the widening of the existing highway. The new private access road, car park and sports club are **not** included in the audit.

2.2 IDENTIFIED AREAS OF CONCERN

- 2.2.1 The shown position of existing boundary hedges is different to that found on site. The lane is currently bound by steep country banks and hedges which rise immediately from the channel line of the lane with no offset. To widen the lane as proposed the banks will have to be completely removed and reconstructed on a new alignment, not simply 'cut back' as annotated raising concerns over the feasibility of the proposals shown. The developer is recommended to carry out a detailed survey of the existing highway infrastructure to establish the extent of earthworks required to achieve the proposed 5m widening.
- 2.2.2 Visibility splays of 4.5m x 60m are proposed for the new bellmouth, compliant with the county's specification for roads within a 30mph speed restriction. The road serving the access is currently derestricted up to the new proposed bellmouth before a 30mph speed restriction commences further to the east. It is essential that the 30mph speed limit is extended westward up to and incorporating Two Ashes triangle as a part of the development.
- 2.2.3 Concerns arise regarding the lack of actual achievable junction visibility. The visibility to the west of the new bellmouth will be restricted due to the blind crest restricting the actual visibility to just 48m. The eastern visibility splay plotted on the submitted drawing gives an actual distance of 35m to the channel line. Both distances are substantially less than the ideal 60m. The developer must endeavour to provide as great a splay as possible with consideration being given to reducing the x distance from 4.5 to 2.4m and if possible, setting back the eastern hedge line to increase visibility.
- 2.2.4 A new formal junction bellmouth will be required for the southern arm of Two Ashes triangle at its junction with the main road with visibility splays compliant with the derestricted status of the road (DMRB).

2.3 SUMMARY

Please ensure an exception response is submitted with the next submission detailing points which have been addressed and reasons of departure for those that have not.

3 TRAFFIC ENGINEERING

3.1 SIGNS/LINES

I do not believe a give way sign or triangular road marking is needed at Two Ashes junction. This proposal will not significantly increase traffic to warrant this. Give way road markings should be provided at the junction of the new access road.

3.2 TRAFFIC ORDERS

The 30 mph speed limit should be extended to a point 50 metres southwest of the new access road to cover the potential new housing site/village hall.

3.3 LOCAL ISSUES/CONCERNS

There is already flooding issues in the lane and several properties have flooded in the past. The existing surface water system cannot take any more surface water as it is now over capacity. The Highway Authority was threatened with legal action last year when houses flooded again.

All the surface water from the public highway and adjacent land flow into a 150mm dia pipe at present. To upgrade this system would prove very difficult and costly as this pipe goes all the way to Chipley some 900m away. Therefore no extra surface water can be discharged into the present systems.

The lane is not constructed to take heavy vehicles and I am concerned that during the construction period traffic will cause the lane to break up. A condition survey of the lane will have to be carried out prior to any works commencing.

There is a private water supply (reservoir) next to the hedge in the field that is not show on the planning drawings. This forms part of the visibility into the site.

All site traffic/delivery vehicles etc would have to access the site from the Langford Common end of the Lane.

3.4 SUMMARY

Please ensure an exception response is submitted with the next submission detailing points which have been addressed and reasons of departure for those that have not.

4 DRAINAGE AND LOCAL ISSUES

4.1 DRAINAGE

- 4.1.1 The limit of the prospective area to be highway is to drain towards the carriageway to a point of positive outfall.
- 4.1.2 There are highway gullies situated at the eastern end of the scheme so it is recommended that any new proposed widening should fall to this side. Additional level information is required along the entire length of carriageway affected by the proposed works to ascertain further road gullies.

4.2 LOCAL ISSUES/CONCERNS

- 4.2.1 The developer will need a 171 licence to be issued before any of the highway works commences. It is the responsibility of the developer to apply for any licences in advance, as requests to start without the licences will be refused.
It will take approximately one month from application for the licence to be issued
Contact Roger Tyson for 171 licence application 01823 356011
Gerald Lush the Streetworks Co-ordinator for section 50 licence, for the placement of new private SW/FW apparatus within the highway. Tel 01823 483103
- 4.2.2 The developer shall erect information signs, within the site boundary, but clearly visible from the adopted highway, indicating the name and contact telephone number of a responsible person for the site. The named person and contact telephone number shall be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, should the Engineer or Engineer's Representative need to advise the developer and/or contractor of a serious or dangerous situation, Further advanced warning signs should be erected a minimum of 7 days in advance of any agreed temporary traffic control.
- 4.2.3 The developer shall submit a programme of works, stating the start date and duration of the works along with a traffic management layout required prior to approval being given for commencement of works on the highway.
- 4.2.4 All the necessary guarding, signing and safety requirements to ensure the safe passage of vehicular and pedestrian traffic whilst executing the works shall be in accordance with Section 65 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991. Using the Safety at Street Works and Road Works code of practice.

4.3 SUMMARY

Please ensure an exception response is submitted with the next submission detailing points which have been addressed and reasons of departure for those that have not.

APPENDIX 2

BARNES CANON RESPONSE TO THE SCC AUDIT REPORT

**Response to Somerset County Council Audit Report
No. SA-4-0450-003-1 dated 23 August 2004**

The Langford Budville Village Hall project is a community project. There is no profitable development associated with the project, therefore planning gain is not applicable. We request that the Highway Authority works with the Trustees and their Architects to bring this project to fruition.

The above Audit has clearly not been prepared with this in mind, and seems to be requiring substantial improvements to the highway network. The Village Hall Trustees consider the Audit requirements to be excessive and not in the spirit of a community project.

The proposed access to the village hall is at the same location as an existing field access on Ritherdons Lane. This lane has very effective traffic calming characteristics away from the proposed entrance. It is considered that if significant highway improvements are carried out in this location, then road safety will be compromised.

The outline design has been prepared with this in mind, using local knowledge of traffic behaviour. The existing characteristics of this lane could justify the provision of a 20 mph zone in this area.

To the north east of the proposed junction there is a bend which precludes traffic from proceeding at any significant speed. To the south west of the proposed junction, there is the triangular junction with the road linking Langford Budville to Wiveliscombe

This junction has natural traffic calming features which should be largely retained. These features act as speed control bends and limit the length of effective straight in the vicinity of the proposed access. The 85% ile speed of traffic in this lane is not more than 20 mph. Site measurements show that more than 45m visibility is available in both directions, from the proposed entrance. It is therefore proposed that a 20 mph design speed is used for this junction, giving a 2.4m x 33m visibility splay requirement (para 3.9.3 Estate Roads in Somerset).

Ritherdons Lane has low levels of traffic and it is not considered that the village hall project will increase this usage significantly. Large scale road widening is therefore inappropriate in this area, and not in keeping with the village character. See also the Traffic Engineers comments in para 3.1, who also considers that traffic will not increase significantly.

Responses to the Audit report are given using the same numbering as the report.

1.1.1 Traffic speeds are very low on this road due to physical features (see above).

A design speed of 20 mph is appropriate although 2.4 x 45m visibility is available (para 3.9.3 maximum visibility possible). It is therefore proposed to provide 2.4m x 45m visibility splays for the new access.

1.1.2 Accepted.

The detailed design will reflect this requirement.

1.1.3 The need to design a stable road construction is accepted.

The detailed design will show road stabilisation measures, if any are required.

1.1.4 This was considered in detail at a site meeting held with Messrs. Hamer and Argile. It was not considered necessary to widen the whole length of the southern and northern roads that run alongside Two Ashes. The landowner has given permission to use some of his land on each side of the triangle. It is proposed to widen the road to 5.5m on each arm of this junction over a distance of 12m from the main road junction. The widening will take place on the field side of each arm. This will provide passing space for two cars or one large vehicle. This was also viewed as acceptable on planning grounds.

1.1.5 Not accepted.

Trimming of existing visibility splays is an activity that is carried out by the Highway Authority exercising its maintenance function. It is not considered appropriate to use charity money to carry out public works. This matter will be raised with the Authority via the Parish Council.

1.1.6 Not accepted.

Longitudinal joints in the road surface are evident county wide.

The normal method is to trim each layer (if identifiable) back by 300mm more than the lower layer. New layers then form steps which key the new surface into the old. The wearing course is then sealed with liquid bitumen. This is the construction proposed for this project.

1.1.7 Highway limits will be agreed with the Highway Authority at detailed design stage. It is not clear which road the tarmac road refers to. Paragraph 1.1.2 requests 15 m of road which is accepted.

1.1.8 Accepted.

The detailed design will take account of this.

1.2 Visibility has been checked on site and at least 45m of vertical visibility is available in both directions from the proposed entrance.

2 HIGHWAY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

2.1 Comments noted.

However paragraph 2 makes reference to a sports club. The project is for a village hall.

2.2.1 Not accepted.

Topographical information shown on the site plan has been based on a local land survey, ordnance survey and physical measurement check on site. The position of the hedgerows is not the issue. It is the position of the banks that will impact on any road widening and these have been checked physically on site, with, at the same time, the existing variations in road width. The existing level survey will be extended at construction detail stage.

2.2.2 Not accepted.

See introductory paragraphs and paragraph 1.1.1.

2.2.3 The need to provide junction visibility is agreed, the distances are not agreed. Appropriate splays are set out in paragraph 1.1.1.

2.2.4 Not accepted.

The junction at Two Ashes has two 2 way roads. One serves traffic entering and exiting the lane from the south, the other for traffic to the north. A junction bellmouth is therefore unnecessary. Provision is made for traffic to pass at each junction, as detailed in para 1.1.4. The issue of the visibility splays is dealt with in para 1.1.5.

3 TRAFFIC ENGINEERING

3.1 Accepted.

It is noted that the Traffic Engineer also considers that the proposal will not significantly increase traffic.

3.2 Accepted.

Although it may be more appropriate to drop the requirement to a 20mph zone from Two Ashes to the School. The road has many speed control features that make it near impossible to exceed 20 mph.

3.3 Noted. See 4.1.2 below.

The Architects covering letter to the Application dated 28th June 2004 stated:

'Further, we have considered the additional local surface water run off which will result from the overall proposals shown on the drawings. Our Clients propose to introduce measures to attenuate surface water run off to an agreed allowable discharge, certainly no worse than at present and will involve Engineers to investigate and advise on the matter in due course.'

The issue of construction traffic breaking up the lane is not accepted.

The village hall project will not generate large numbers of heavy vehicles. The road is used daily by delivery lorries and agricultural traffic and no noticeable deterioration is evident. If the road is weak and not able to take reasonable construction traffic then the Highway Authority should increase its budget to maintain roads. A registered charities limited funds cannot be used to strengthen county highways. It is not clear what the reference to a private water supply refers to. Visibility splays will be within the highway not in the field.

It is accepted that site traffic/delivery vehicles will access the site from the Langford Common end of the lane.

4 DRAINAGE AND LOCAL ISSUES

4.1.1 Accepted

4.1.2 Accepted although this conflicts with comments in Audit para 3.3.

Detailed drainage design is likely to provide a surface water retention facility providing controlled discharge into existing drains and/or soakaways. These matters will be considered in more detail during the final design stage.

4.2.1 As long as Section 171 and Section 50 licences have no cost attached then this is accepted.

4.2.2 Accepted.

4.2.3 Accepted.

4.2.4 Accepted.

**Response to Somerset County Council Audit Report
No. SA-4-0450-003-2 dated 3 November 2004**

This second report rightly points out that no full response was received to the first audit dated 23 August 2004.

The first audit was received by the Architect direct from Mr Argile on 13th September but was incomplete. This was brought to the Planning Officer's attention under letter dated 14th September. A complete Report was not received until the site meeting with Messrs. Hamer and Argile on 17th November at which time Mr Argile apologised citing the fact that the report was two sided and the second pages were not sent.

The actual report is one sided typing.

The response to the first audit is now provided above and covers all outstanding matters.

Statement of the Trustees Position

The proposed Langford Budville Village Hall is a community project to provide a much needed social facility for the village. The funds raised are registered with the Charity Commission. The Trustees of the fund have to ensure that any expenditure is for the purpose of building a village hall and is justifiable to that end.

The Planning Officers required a detailed plan of the hall building to be submitted for planning approval, so the Trustees appointed an Architect to carry out this work. The detailed design request did not extend to highway matters at that stage. The Trustees considered that appointing a Highway Engineer at this early stage could be considered to be wasting public money.

Once planning permission is obtained to build a hall on the site, then detailed highway works will be designed.

Until planning permission for the hall is obtained, the Trustees are wary of spending further public money on detailed highway design.

