

## **20/02322/FUL Boames Farm, Applicant Written Statement**

I am the applicant, and I farm the land subject to discussion this evening.

Little Copse is not ancient woodland, by definition or by designation.

We have not removed any trees in order to facilitate the development.

The much quoted '16 indicator species' is taken from the 2004 TVERC survey of Little Copse. This is a single reference point, upon which so of the Committee Report is based. The same survey recommended that the site area be removed from the Wildlife Heritage site designation. An important consideration.

Plate 9 from the Ecological Appraisal is also important, but has been excluded from the CRP.

The Tree Officer is the only consultee to have ever visited the site. This short visit was conducted in December, making it impossible for the Officer to have verified the presence of, or distribution of any summer floral 'indicator species'. The Officer's views as to the status of Little Copse are based on the 'indicator species' sentence from 2004.

The Forestry Commission clearly states that they do not comment on applications. The FC also never state that Little Copse is ancient woodland, or refer to any 'indicator species' being present. The closest ancient woodland to which they may be referring to in their guidance is Redding's Copse.

In order to comply with WBCS 17 we had to ask if any potential site would be a 'reasonable location' for the barns to be built. A plan and concise breakdown of the impacts of all potential sites was submitted.

Our neighbours are not farmers. Having a working livestock unit (Feeding 7AM/4PM November to April) 30m from their bedroom window, would have a serious environmental health impact upon their lives. This fact alone would make the Council's preferred site an 'unreasonable' location.

With regard to WBCS 18, the Case Officer has recommended refusal on the basis that the loss of 0.08Ha of 'rank grassland' (as described in 2004) would be an unacceptable loss of green infrastructure. By the same logic, applied to the Council's preferred site, the loss of 0.35Ha of semi-improved grassland, in full view of the public domain would be even more unacceptable.

In order to prepare the application I have had to understand the planning policies. In writing the Planning section of my Design and Access Statement, I was able to literally copy the exact wording of the policies, such is the compliance with WBCS 14 & 19 of the proposed site.

Apply these policies to the 'preferred site' and ask any questions about whether or not it would protect the secluded nature of Boames Lane, whether it conserves heritage assets and their settings, would it conserve the existing form and pattern? The answer is always no, so it is not a 'reasonable' location.

In recommending refusal the Council are hoping that we as private landowners leave the proposed site to 're-wild' over the next 50 years, at the cost of our business, everything we have worked for and have dreamed of Boames Farm some day becoming.

Simon Tompkins

Applicant