

I would like to address the Parish Council on the integrity of the CONSERVATION AREA, particularly in regards to the Application No **2505/19/PIP** for Permission in Principle to develop an Important Open Space within it .

**The Conservation Area** should be of prime importance to the Parish Council. It comprises a large part of what gives the village its sense of place. The history of the village revolves around farming, and it is the penetration of the countryside into the village streets in the form of these small fields, paddocks or orchards that gives the village its character.

These intrusions include the areas of Important Open Space that are integral with the C.A.

- These have bio-diversity implications
- They are continuing evidence of Historical development of a farming village.
- There are archaeological considerations
- Open Space is an important and significant part of the SETTING of nearby buildings in the built environment.

These areas, previously specifically designated in Local Plans after consultation with the people of Exbourne, should not be confused with the term Local Green Space brought in as a legal definition by the National Planning Policy Framework. They might in some cases coincide but their purposes are entirely different. One is a national designation for public amenity; the other is an enhancement of the Conservation Area. Local authorities consider them separately in plan making.

The point is this....

The LPA is under a legal obligation regularly to review Conservation areas and their justification. Now that the JLP is finished they might just shortly have more time to attend to that duty. If the landscape and setting of a conservation area has lost its integrity then the C.A. itself must be at risk. There are after all other means of protection for buildings in the village that are listed.

So it might be asked by someone to whom biodiversity and heritage hold no importance: "What to me therefore is the point of the C.A.?"

Well, there is also a very sound material reason:

- A study by the London School of Economics shows that properties in well managed conservation areas sell for 23 per cent more on average than other houses. ...
- Even when location, the kind of properties involved and other factors affecting house prices are adjusted for a premium of around 9 per cent was still found. .
- Incidentally, this falls by 4 percentage points (or to 5 per cent) in conservation areas that are classified by Local Authorities as being "at risk" ., including new buildings which threaten the area's character.

So it is clear to see that, if development is supported that diminishes the value of the C.A. and thence ultimately property prices, this will be of major practical and financial concern to the many Exbourne home owners in or close to the C.A.

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National & Local Planning policy does allow for development in a conservation area, but only under very strictly controlled circumstances. In West Devon the development must be shown to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area. There is no explanation on the application as to how this might be done. More importantly, there is no convincing evidence as to whether it is possible at all.

The facilities that might be provided by this development can easily be provided on other sites that have been put forward in the village --- with better effect and where there will be less significant heritage, traffic and other considerations.

By singling out and approving one - in my opinion very inappropriate - possibility, the brakes will be put on the alternatives that might be more suitable.

These alternatives surely are what should be exercising the minds of the Exbourne P.C. through its Neighbourhood Planning Group (of which I believe the applicant is a member).

The principle that the Planning Authority has to decide is whether it would be right to develop outside the village settlement boundary and on an open space that has always been considered important to the Conservation area by both the LPA and the village.

**This principle** cannot be decided without far more detail and I would therefore respectfully suggest to the Councillors that the correct course would be to object to the application in the strongest possible terms.

Michael Brady, 27<sup>th</sup> August 2019.