

Wiveliscombe Town Council

Evidence on Highways, Traffic and Transportation and Landscape - 22 October 2018

Submitted to Appeal by Gladman Developments Ltd for site off North Street Wiveliscombe, Somerset TA4 2UE

Inquiry Reference: APP/D3315/W/18/3200773

Introduction

In the week before the appeal inquiry's first public session on 31 July 2018, a statement of common ground between Gladman Developments Ltd and Somerset County Council on highways, traffic and transportation was agreed (27 July 2018) and then made available on TDBC's planning applications portal. There has been no local consultation on this common ground statement and Wiveliscombe Town Council understands the inquiry may be treated as an opportunity for consultation, which, on its own, we would regard as unsatisfactory.

We wish to submit evidence, as below, on relevant highways and traffic issues, especially with regard to parking and the problems with access through the town to and from the north. We do not believe the objections we submitted to this planning application have been sufficiently addressed by the common ground statement agreed in July 2018 by Somerset County Council.

We also wish to draw attention to the prominence of the site proposed for development by Gladman Developments Ltd and the impact it would have on the landscape and setting of the town. Our evidence on this impact also follows below.

About Wiveliscombe

Wiveliscombe is a small town in the west of Taunton Deane. It has seen a population rise of about 600 (25%) in the past 18 years, which reflects its willingness to accept development as long as it is within agreed strategic plans.

The town is a net importer of workers, as well as acting as a dormitory for workers in Wellington and Taunton. Many people work in the shops and some offices in the centre, as well as in a large number of other business premises around the town and the two schools. Town car parks are heavily used both overnight by residents and during the day by employees, volunteers and users of the town's shops and facilities, as well as residents who are not using their cars for daily commuting.

Wiveliscombe is a centre for shops and services for a large rural area surrounding the town.

Too Much Housing in the Wrong Place

The Gladman Development application for North Street represents too much housing in the wrong place and outside of the Local Plan.

In recent years, Wiveliscombe has had a number of small in-fill housing developments. These have been in addition to the major allocations for 200 houses in the Taunton Deane Adopted Site Allocations and Development Management Plan 2016 at two sites in the town:

- Policy MAJ1: Style Road / Burges Lane, Wiveliscombe (120 dwellings)
- Policy MAJ2: South of Croft Way, Wiveliscombe (80 dwellings)

Phases 1 and 2 (52 dwellings) for the Style Road / Burges Lane allocations are completed and a second planning application for phase 3 (71 dwellings) has been submitted and is currently being determined by Taunton Deane Borough Council. Wiveliscombe Town Council has heard there has been developer interest in the Croft Way site but an application has not yet been submitted.

Further housing at North Street, as proposed by Gladman Developments, would greatly exceed the current 200 house allocation for Wiveliscombe and add to existing infrastructure issues in the town, particularly with regard to traffic access and parking.

Parking, Access and Transport Problems

Wiveliscombe Town Council believes that neither Gladman Developments or Somerset County Council, in agreeing common ground, have taken proper account of the true situation with regard to parking in the town and access through the town centre to and from the north.

Wiveliscombe is an old town with many dwellings built without any space for car parking. A recent survey by the Town Council identified at least 180 houses in the town which have no space for on-site parking and no road frontage that can be used directly outside.

There are 130 public car park spaces in Wiveliscombe provided by Taunton Deane District Council. These car parks are close to being full nearly all of the time throughout the day and night and every day. Parking problems are frequent, especially on Saturday mornings when many people wish to do their shopping, but at other times too.

One result is that there is nearly continuous parking throughout the day in locations which should not be used, causing problems for other road users, including blocking access on the roads and pavements.

Local people observe that buses can be blocked from going along West Street and the bus company has reported this problem. Recently, a bus was unable to continue its journey for 15 minutes. On one occasion, a poorly parked car displaying a disabled sticker blocked the road for over two hours, despite the police being contacted.

Delivery lorries can have problems supplying shops and, on occasions, have had to continue without being able to make their local deliveries. Local farmers need to drive large farm vehicles through the town centre and report difficulties, especially going through The Square and North Street. There can also be large lorries travelling to the water treatment works at Maundown, which is just up from Langley Marsh, and fire engines emerging from the fire station in North Street.

Photographs below show typical parking situations on central roads in the town, including very frequent parking in the wrong locations, including across dropped kerbs and on double yellow lines. There is a lack of enforcement to prevent this and a lack of alternative parking locations, so that it is nearly continuous throughout much of the day.

As a result, the Town Council believes it likely that Gladman Development measurements of parking in the town have not recorded the full extent of actual parking in the town and over-looked how current problems will be exacerbated by introducing further new housing and cars into the town. We therefore believe their assessments are flawed as are Somerset County Council's agreement with them. We also believe that insufficient consideration has been given to effects on traffic flows in West Street, Silver Street and the High Street, in addition to those along North Street and The Square.

Another problem with evidence submitted by Gladman Developments is that statements on the town's bus service are incorrect. The frequency of the bus service between Taunton and Wiveliscombe was cut by a third in February 2018, making it less usable and also less suitable for taking students to one of the colleges in Taunton. Previously, the bus service to Wellington has been entirely withdrawn.

Gladman Developments also only measured traffic flow on weekdays, whereas local people know the profile and peak are different on Saturdays.

Tuesday 9 October 2018, 9.25am: The Square and West Street



Tuesday 9 October 2018, 2.28pm: The Square and West Street



Thursday 11 October, 9.59am: West Street and The Square



Saturday 13 October 2018, 10.53am: West Street and The Square



Saturday 13 October 2018, 3.52pm: West Street and The Square



Monday 15 October 2018, 9.18: The Square and West Street



Monday 15 October 2018, 1.38pm: The Square and West Street



Monday 15 October 2018, 1.48pm: West Street



Monday 15 October 2018, 2.10pm: The Square and North Street



Tuesday 16 October 2018, 1.17pm: The Square



Thursday 18 October 2018, 12.25pm: West Street and The Square



Thursday 18 October 2018, 12.30pm: The Square and North Street



Friday 19 October 2018, 2.05pm: North Street

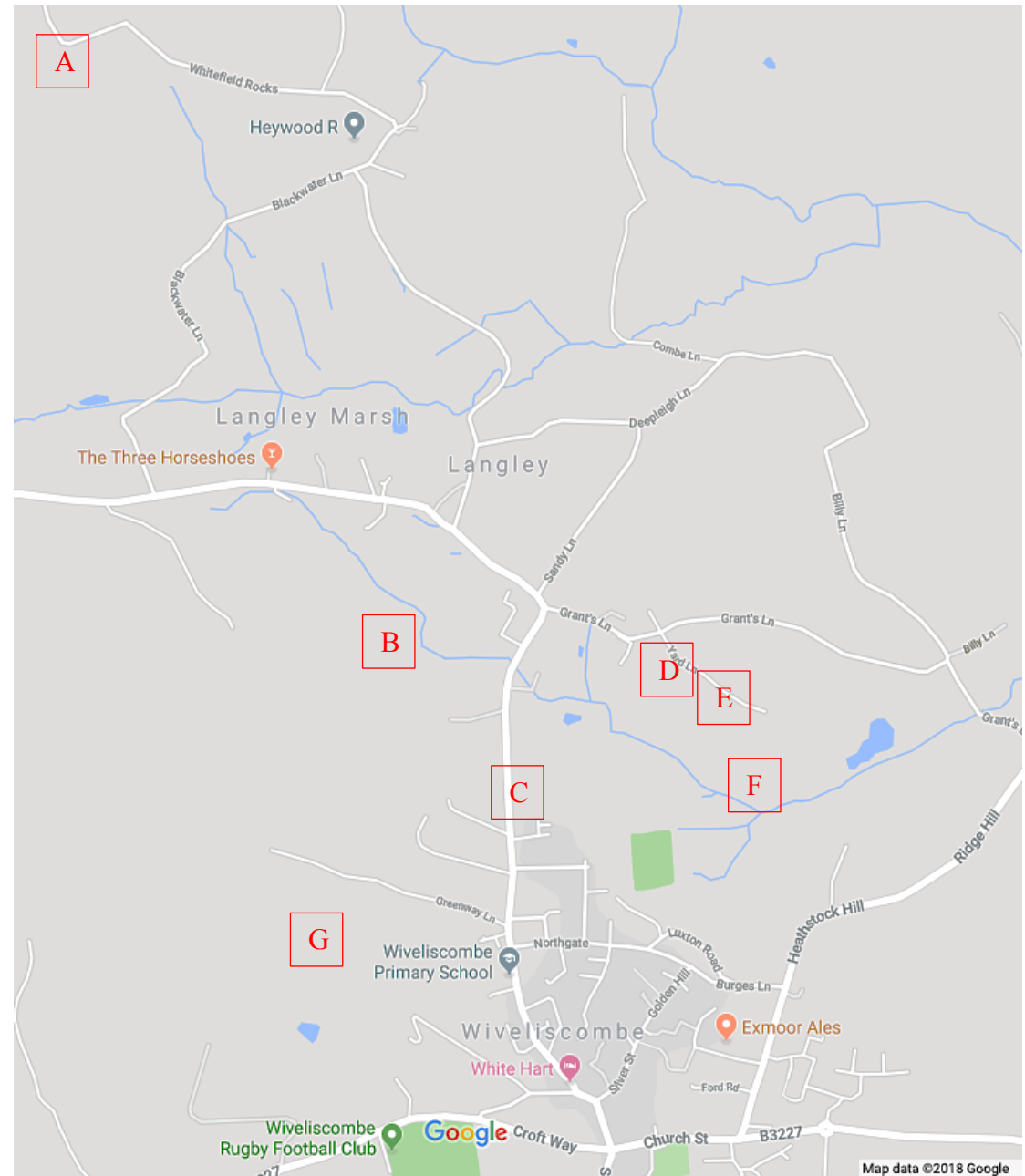


Landscape Evidence

As stated by Taunton Deane Borough Council on the Gladman planning application, “the development would be visually harmful and fail to protect, conserve and enhance landscape and townscape character, and would destroy an open break between the settlements” of Wiveliscombe to the south and Langley to the north¹.

The following photographs illustrate some of these impacts. They are taken from public footpaths or alongside the public highway. References for the locations by letter are indicated on the map on the right.

There is a copy of each photograph alongside the main photographs with a red line to show the location of the proposed development site.



¹ TDBC, Rule 6 Statement (1.2 – 1, para 2)

A) View from Whitefield Rocks – 2nd September 2018





B) View from footpath South of Langley – 20th October 2018



C) View from North Street alongside proposed development site – 19th October 2018





D) View from Yard Lane – 19th October 2018



E) View from Yard Lane – 19th October 2018



F) View from footpath off Yard Lane – 19th October 2018





G) View from footpath off top of Jews Lane – 17th October 2018



