

**Residents Association presentation to Strategic Planning Board
re Application 13/3210N, Land East of Heathfield Road, Audlem**

Stephen Amies, 9th October 2013

I speak on behalf of a Residents Association of 29 householders living adjacent to the site, on issues of which we have direct personal experience:

- 1) Landscape – anybody living in Audlem knows that there are two key areas giving the village its character; the Square plus Salford & its surroundings. The application, if approved, will irredeemably destroy the landscape value of the Salford Conservation Area and the open countryside immediately behind it. We support the stance of the Case Officer and the Inspector in his 2003 ruling.
- 2) Wildlife – in absence of a bat survey by the applicant, we have undertaken our own. We questioned 13 households immediately adjacent to the site. 12 reported seeing bats ‘regularly’ and none were aware of any roost sites on their property. This suggests roosting in adjacent trees and supports the Case Officer’s requirement for a comprehensive survey.
- 3) Highways – the application infers that a suitable access into Hillary Drive will resolve all highway issues. We have measured the exit routes from the site and recorded traffic flows. Our report provides well-supported argument that at least 75% of site traffic will use Heathfield Road. As such, the quality of the Hillary Drive access is irrelevant and Heathfield Road should be the sole focus for judging suitability of adjacent highways.

It is accepted by all that Heathfield Road is a narrow rural road, with no pavements. However, neither the applicant, nor, with respect, the Council’s Highways Manager, give recognition to the substantial traffic volumes generated by the primary school or the use of the road as a cut-through.

Our survey showed average hourly peak flows of 63 vehicles, some 4.5 times the volume existing residences would be expected to generate. The development would increase peak flow to 81 vehicles, almost 6 times residential flow.

The same story applies to pedestrians, with school children being a particular concern. Current peak hour numbers of 21 are projected to increase to 31. Pedestrians are not an issue in themselves, but risk to their safety, on unpaved road, clearly is. The increase in their numbers and traffic flows, when compounded, raises the risk level to pedestrians by 90%.

We argue that the above figures, in aggregate, constitute 'extreme harm'. Mitigation, by the widening and paving of Heathfield Road is neither physically possible nor desirable, given the importance of maintaining the rural character of the immediate area.

As to Mill Lane, we regard a bridleway as totally unsuitable for additional traffic and support the stance taken by the Case Officer, save only to add that access to plots 19 & 20, which also exit on to Mill Lane, should be deemed unacceptable.

In light of the above, coupled with the Housing Land Supply argument laid out by the Case Officer, we urge the Committee to reject the application.

Footnote: prepared on return from the planning meeting

On arrival at the meeting, I noted that the Council Case Officer's recommendation that Mill Lane was inadequate had been changed, and become based on plots 19 & 20, in place of 13-18 inclusive. I therefore changed my penultimate sentence to 'plots 13 -18 inclusive' as we deem all use of Mill Lane is unacceptable, as indeed does the Council's Highways Manager (see page 68 of the Public Document Pack).