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Sent: 28 October 2013 15:52
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Subject: The future of Birch Church

For the attention of Birch Parish Council.

Dear Madam Chair and Council,

I am writing on behalf of my Husband and I. We are both residents of Birch and we wish voice our disapproval and objections to The Colchester and North East Essex Building Preservation Trusts proposals on behalf of Mr and Mrs Cottee to convert our beautiful church along with the consecrated burial grounds into a family dwelling and car park.

We live in the Old Rectory and visited the village hall in October to learn more about the plans.

Our concerns are as follows:

That villagers (including ourselves) were intentionally misled as to the role of the host on that day - David Balcombe. He advised us that he was a completely impartial mediator between the trust and the village. This was obviously not the case.

The plans exhibited did not include the installation of a temporary road that would be positioned directly behind our home to enable heavy plant to be taken to and from the proposed site. Our concerns are:

That once a road was established it would not be taken up.

That a proper road and not 'a temporary mesh' would need to be laid to take the weight of heavy plant.

That after two years of such a road being in existence it would become a known access and therefore planning permission would be more easily granted for this access to become permanent. Permission would I believe certainly be sought by Mr and Mrs Cottee as an alternative access for funeral processions that surely would be inconvenient to daily life at the very least.

There will be an intrusion of privacy for both mourners, and Mr and Mrs Cottee if this development were to go ahead. In addition to turn the existing graves into a car park is surely an unthinkable misuse of authority.

Thought must also be given to the people who need to attend burials whilst the site is under construction. How awful to be burying a loved one in the middle of a building site.

One of the reasons we bought our home was the beautiful position and uninterrupted views of the countryside behind us. We would be strongly opposed to any road running behind our property whether this would be on a temporary or permanent basis.

We would welcome the council's plans to turn the site into a memorial garden, a place for quiet contemplation and prayer. Surely a more fitting future for such a beautiful site that I am sure holds memories for most Birch residents.

Lastly I am appalled that the trust would even consider applying to the church for a reverse premium somewhere in the region of thirty five to fifty thousand to cover demolition and associated costs to enable a consecrated site to be

developed into what will be potentially be an asset for one family. Surely this money could be used by the church to provide a solution that would benefit the whole community rather than finance the foundations of what will s)y only be a investment property.

Kind regards

Stephanie Windsor

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