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Development Services
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
Council Offices
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LE10 1BZ

Marcus & Michelle Cobley
11 Willow Tree Close
Barwell
Leicester
LE9 8LP

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
0 2 OCT 2007
RECEIVED

1 October 2007

Dear Peter

Re: 07/011/24/FUL
Retrospective Planning Permission – 11 Willow Tree Close, Barwell

Thank you for your letter dated 26 September 2007. We're replying with the information you have requested.

**In addition to what is stated below, I telephoned the Technicians Section today and spoke with Paul Grundy as I was struggling somewhat with some of your requests. Paul was extremely helpful indeed. I have an appointment with Paul on Tuesday 2 October at 9am.**
**Paul has kindly agreed to help me with some of your requests. As a result of our meeting, I also attach any drawings you have requested to scale.**

**1.Red edge**
Red edge now placed on site location plans around the whole property boundary as requested x 4.

**2.Block Plan**
We've completed this as best we can. We'd recommend referral to the A3 drawings we enclosed and the 30 photographs submitted.
The darker blue line in the block plan is the additional side fence panel. The box is the shed. The 2 blue dots represent the wooden pillars to support the slightly extended roof.

**3.Elevations**
The shed elevation dimensions are stated below. If you view the base wooden decking area onto which the shed rests, you can see that the elevation versus the house structure is actually zero. The blocked paved patio in our back garden runs onto the decking area totally level.
However, to create a secure base for the decking and shed, wooden beams were secured beneath the decking by our experienced carpentry team who also worked on our garage conversion. The same team who received praise for their quality workmanship from your Building Inspector. The elevation of these beams is 21cm.
We hope by providing exact measurements here in addition the previously submitted drawings this will help you.

**4. Section of fence**

We have drawn this as best we can on the block plan. However, we think a clearer way of seeing this is by referring to my A3 size sheets previously submitted. In addition, if you refer also to the photos we enclosed focusing on the front facing photos it will also help you. One additional fence panel has been placed alongside the boundary of the property to run in line with the existing panels. As explained in my previous letter, with no impact at all on the landscaping/amenity area.
With the installation of this additional fence panel, the front panel has been moved forward accordingly.

**5.Elevation of fence inc height measurements**

You will have to forgive us as we're not architects or developers only mere individual homeowners. This is what we have measured which we sincerely hope helps you. The height of the fence panel is 193cm. The total height of the shed with stylish roof is 250cm. The elevation of the shed base point is 21cm above that of ground level. To create a level sturdy base.

One thing we did not mention in our previous letter was that the original shed had been in place prior to our purchase of our family home back in August 2002.

**I very much hope that the above information in addition to what has been produced with the help of Paul Grundy on 2 October is sufficient.**

Yours sincerely

Marcus Cobley

Michelle Cobley

**Enc**
4 Site Location Plans
3 Block Plans (only 3 returned to me)
Scale drawings completed with Paul Grundy 2.10.2007

5 PAGES

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24 September 2007

Dear Tracy

**Retrospective Planning Permission Application for 11 Willow Tree Close, Barwell, Leicester LE9 8LP**

Further to your letter dated 17 September 2007, we're today enclosing our Planning Application. We also enclose the following documents:

*Planning Application Fees form duly signed& cheque for £135.00*
*4 copies of Site Location Plan*
*4 copies of Block plan*
*Planning Application 1 form x 4*
*4 copies of previous drawings – layout of garden pre recent changes*
*4 copies of current drawings – layout of garden post recent changes*
*4 copies of Land Registry boundary document included within title deeds*
*Photo wallet containing 28 photographs*

We appreciate you are about to embark on reading a long letter here but it's essential we fully explain the history, rationale and our application fully.

On 10 July 2007 Marcus spoke on the telephone to Richard Wright as documented in his subsequent letter to Richard dated 25 July 2007 which you have on file. On 21 August 2007 Richard replied in writing stating about the historic movement of the fence boundary which must have taken place many years ago prior to us buying our home in August 2002. His letter also stated that the extension/repositioning of the boundary fence to the kerbside would require planning permission because our proposal would then enclose an area originally conceived & identified for landscaping to contribute to the visible amenity of the estate. No problem with that at all. We subsequently decided not to pursue this matter. Richard then passed this matter onto the Planning Enforcement Team.
John Burch and Barry Smith subsequently visited our home in early September unannounced. Marcus was at home on this date so able to fully explain to them the history and current position. John has confirmed that the very historic issue of the fence line is not an issue now.
Marcus explained that having been very open and forthcoming in contacting Richard in July we were extremely careful that with the subsequent changes made we did not impact on the landscaping

area at all. Not one inch of the landscaping/amenity area has been affected. We were extremely careful on this.
We believe the correspondence you have on file already clearly confirms we've been open and transparent and proactive in contacting our local authority at every stage we believed was necessary to do so.

We recently decided as a family that we'd like to stay in our current home. We have 2 small children and it's an extremely quiet and pleasant place to live with excellent neighbourly relationships. We decided to convert our garage into a playroom for our children. A building notice has been submitted for this work which is now complete and has been signed off by your Building Control Department. They have been very pleased with the standard of workmanship carried out and we've worked well together on this project. Incidentally, the work on the garden and shed has been carried out by the same contractors at the same time as the garage conversion.

The impact of losing our garage saw a need for storage space. So we decided to replace the existing shed in the garden which had been there since before we bought our home with a new shed. Our new structure is essentially a shed that looks smart. A decking area also enables us to enjoy our garden more and be able to watch our children play safely. The pictures we've enclosed show the usage for this shed. In this day and age with a mass of children's toys amongst other things there is a huge need for storage. And we wanted to ensure the new shed did not look ugly hence the shed was individually designed and was built exclusively for us. All that is left for us to do is wood stain/paint it. We'd decided not to do this immediately to give the preserved wood a chance to weather. Naturally the intended colour scheme would be carefully selected. So both projects working in harmony with each other has been essential to us achieving our objectives here.

One other task to be carried out shortly is to tarmac paint/refresh our driveway that has been damaged by all the work carried out, predominantly from the garage conversion work. This will finish things off nicely.

Never in a million years did we envisage the need for planning permission for the work we have done. Previously our garden on this side of the property was somewhat run down and in need of renovation. All that was therefore before was a mass of stones and weeds growing through regularly. Neither ourselves, our builders/carpenters, friends, family or indeed your building inspectors who visited the garage conversion throughout ever contemplated or mentioned that we would require planning permission. It just wasn't on anyone's radar.

As many people have subsequently said to us "its just a shed, a shed to **replace** a shed so why?". Of course having now read the planning portal on the internet it all becomes a bit clearer.

That said, we currently feel many emotions having received your letter dated 17 September 2007. Immense frustration, concern, disappointment in our local authority & steely determination amongst them. We passionately believe that the work that we have carried out has added to our home and also to the local estate. We've been thrilled by many neighbours walking past and commenting on how nice everything looks.

The combined cost for the garage conversion and changes to our garden is around £13000. A very substantial sum of money has been spent, saved up over many years through hard work.
The photos we've enclosed hopefully show how much we have put into this project. Financially, physically and emotionally. We take great pride in our home and garden. We even regularly weed and maintain the amenity/landscaping area beyond our fence and purchase new pea gravel stones to ensure it looks smart for others. We regularly sweep stones off the road to ensure others cars are not damaged. Looking round our estate we think we're unique in doing these things. We're conscious of how things look not just for us but for our neighbours too.

Having subsequently driven around our estate, there are numerous properties and garden/amenity areas that have been sadly neglected. We would urge you to take a slow drive around our estate so that our home and garden can be compared with others. We understood from what they said that neither John nor Barry knew our estate very well. We'd all agree that how our home & garden looks and fits in with the local ambience is extremely important here hence why there is a need for a close look at other homes in the vicinity.

We can assure you that very careful consideration with given by ourselves on this work to ensure it looks eye catchingly pleasing for our neighbours and visitors to our estate. We've planted some new trees and plants which will grow at different height levels. Even the planting border has been carefully prepared in advance of planting. Very high quality & costly materials have been used by ourselves. 2 examples being an individually designed and manufactured shed and an individually designed planter in the centre of our front garden. Endless trips to Alexandra Stone in Ratby to get this pot made were undertaken. You simply cannot buy anywhere the planter that we have on our front garden.

So based on all of the above we hope you can appreciate and empathise with us. We found it very difficult to comprehend the sentence in your letter dated 17 September 2007 that we mention below.

We would welcome you to come and visit our home. All we would ask is that you contact us in advance on the telephone numbers provided on our planning application form so we can be here to arrange access. We would welcome you to canvass the views of our neighbours. We are not aware of any complaints that H&BBC have received at all since completion of the works some 4 weeks ago. Only positive comments received orally.

We're very eager for us to work together on this matter. What did disturb us was to read in your letter the following "I must advise you that my initial view is that the outcome of your application in unlikely to be favourable". This is extremely prejudicial and was not supported in your letter by any reasons why. And without investigating our request, the history or rationale fully. This is an extremely significant matter in our lives right now, causing great stress. We have put our hearts and souls into these changes. We ask you to review very carefully our application including the impact the changes we have made have had on the aesthetic look of our estate. This is a deeply personal issue to us and we ask that it be reviewed with care and attention. We firmly believe what we have done has been for the betterment of our small quiet cul-de-sac and compared very favourably to a number of shockingly bad views that can be seen within our estate.

At present, we're struggling to grasp what the potential problems could be with approving our request. The work we've done looks lovely. There are no safety/viewing issues with access into and out of the cul de sac at all. We've even created space to very neatly store our 2 refuge bins and recycling box out of site. Meaning they are not an eye sore to us or our neighbours. We've created a front gate to safely wheel the bins out weekly and the great thing is it doesn't even look like a gate. We've placed an extremely stylish and more expensive roof on the shed. Rather that ugly looking felt, we've placed on felt roof tiles which look very smart and again add to the local amenity/estate.

We've been somewhat concerned by the content of the letters we have received. Rather than what should be an application where we work positively together the vibe we get both from speaking with people and the letter contents that there hasn't been a desire thus far to explore all possibilities. The perception from many people we have spoken with is that our local authority is too quick to stick rigidly to "policy". We sincerely hope and ask for your support with our application.

We're both law abiding model citizens! A combined 27 years tax payers, 12 years council tax payers since becoming homeowners. We're your "normal" working/middle class family that takes great pride in whatever we do.

We really hope we've submitted everything you need today. We are planning application virgins and the apparent mass of information requested has been quite a challenge for us. We're responding to your recent letter at rapid pace which again is another example of how passionately we feel.

We've detailed below some further information you have asked for as per the Planning Application guidance notes:

**Materials used & costs incurred**
**(to show how much financially, physically, emotionally has gone into this project).**
2 Feather edge boards/fencing – direct match to existing panels.
Wooden posts and black chains & hooks. Cost £150.
Brick work in 2 colours. Cost £100.
Stonemarket - Weathered York radius slabs and edging strips. Cost £80.
Derbyshire White landscaping stones – 2 tonnes. Cost £260.
Decking base panels for solid flooring. Cost £700.
Tongue and Groove pre treated wood panels for shed/ log cabin/summer house. Individually designed and created made to our specific order. Cost £1250.
Special felt roof tiles. Cost included within £1250 above.
Planting of numerous growth height plants within designated triangular border area. Cost £50.
Individually designed & created concrete pot made to our specific order. Cost £120.
Lighting. Security/sensor light and low wattage light on front of shed. Cost £50.
**Landscaping -** Professionally landscaped front using above materials. Builder labour costs £240.
Contractor costs to construct shed, fit decking etc £300.
**Total costs approx £3300.00.**

**Access**

We have created with the front fence panel a concealed gate to deter/reduce the risk of burglary. The block paving immediately in front of the fence panel enables us to safely wheel our 2 HBBC refuse bins out to the front. Added benefit is they are concealed from view – not seen within the garden pleasingly nor seen by anyone else. And the brickwork looks smart.

**Floor plan**

Please refer to drawings/sketches enclosed.

**Elevations**

Wood panels secured beneath decking area. No further elevation beyond existing house elevation. Ground level difficult to determine as ground level slopes downwards. Raised elevation in front garden landscaping area with block paving to ensure safe passage of refuse bins.

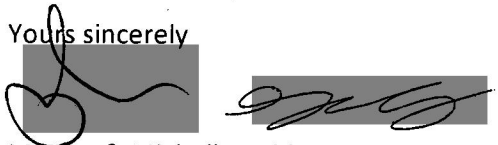
**Photographs**

We've enclosed 28 photographs for your perusal. We really hope these will help you fully view the works. We'd like to explain why we've enclosed some of them.
Bins storage area as mentioned above. Placing them behind the shed is a win/win. We don't have them as an unwelcome view in our garden yet nor are they marooned out front for all the see which we feel is terrible to view on any property. We appreciate some homeowners have no choice but for those that do it looks awful.
The concealed gate looks smart and ensures the aesthetic look of the cul de sac is not diminished.
Quality roof tiles picture. A nice touch.
Back garden views. We appreciate irrelevant in some respects but we wanted to show you how much we do care about our garden.
Corridor down other side of property. An example of us neatly finishing the work with Derbyshire White stones either side of the slabs.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank Jo Cooper who Marcus spoke with last week. Jo was extremely helpful & professional in giving Marcus guidance on completing the paperwork. She also very speedily sorted out the location and block plans for him to come and collect within one hour of my phone call. She's a great credit to your team.

We now thank you for taking the time to read our letter and we look forward to your favourable well considered response in due course. We've hand delivered our application today to ensure safe arrival.

Yours sincerely



Marcus & Michelle Cobley
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