

report regarding land at

**Barkers Hill
PL12 4QB**

Undertaken for and on behalf of:

Saltash Town Council

Prepared by:

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Saltash Town Council
The Guildhall
Lower Fore Street
Saltash
PL12 6JX

Dear Town Clerk & Town Councillors

RE: BARKERS HILL PL12 4QB

1.0 INSTRUCTIONS & SCOPE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following a site visit with the Town Clerk and the Services Superintendent I was asked to prepare a brief report looking at the viability of Saltash Town Council (STC) taking responsibility for a plot of land being gifted to STC by the current owners.
- 1.2 The report is based on the site visit and conversations whilst on site (including with one of the current owners). No soil samples were taken and information from the current owner is that there are no trees on the site that are the subject of a TPO (tree preservation order). This, however, has not been confirmed by the relevant authority and further enquiries should be made prior to accepting ownership of the land.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE

Barkers Hill is a narrow tree lined lane that links Forder with St Stephens, Burraton Combe and on to Latchbrook. The area proposed to be gifted to STC is approximately in the direction of north east to south west along its longest boundaries. To the north of the plot lies the current owners' residence. The garden serving this property is outside of that under discussion although the only current access to the plot is through the garden surrounding the house and garden. The plot is separated from the owners' retained land with a timber fence and I understand that the current owner would retain a small amount of additional land where the garden adjoins the plot being given away.

The South East boundary is Barker's Hill and this has at least 2 specimen trees in addition to a traditional hedgerow separating the highway from the plot. There is also a length of timber post and rail fence. Any changes or alterations to this boundary, such as an access to the plot off Barker's Hill, would require permission from the relevant authorities.

The North West boundary of the plot is the centre line of Latchbrook Leat and the plot slopes downwards from the SE boundary towards the NW boundary. The NW part of the plot falls within Flood Zone 3 of the Environment Agency '*likelihood of flooding in this area*' map although it is recognised that the SE boundary is probably at least 3.0m – 4.0m above the current level of the Leat and the upper parts of the plot would fall in to flood zone 1 – see appendix A at end of report. There is a mixed hedgerow along the bank of the leat.

The South West boundary has a fence and a wall - an outbuilding belonging to an adjoining owner - and a small length of hedgerow.

The central areas of the plot are laid mainly to grass although there are areas of undergrowth and wild flowers.

3.0 Background

Some while ago South West Water (SWW) laid sewage pipes across the plot that eventually discharge to the treatment works at Ernesettle. Whilst the sewer will be up to 5.0m below ground level there is a legal right of access by SWW to enter the site for maintenance of the sewer. Unlikely but something to be taken into account should any future owner wish to plant deep rooted trees or erect anything close to the route of the sewer.

I understand from the Cornwall Council planning website that there have been a number of planning applications for development on this plot of land. The majority refused, probably because of the likelihood of flooding. There is also the danger of any development causing further erosion of the river bank. The plot, therefore, has little value from a construction development viewpoint.

The area has been used in the past for keeping chickens but this use has ceased.

The current owners have suggested a 'community orchard' but my limited personal experience of growing fruit trees is that they do not appreciate being in excessively wet ground.

4.0 Conclusions

Whilst the plot can have a number of uses as an outdoors space for local residents and visitors access off such a narrow lane as Barker's Hill could be dangerous for young children or other vulnerable people and, in any case, accessible access could be difficult given the difference in levels between the lane and the plot. If STC is going to accept the 'gift' I suggest that approaches be made to the relevant authorities' regarding access. Should permission for access to the site be refused and STC has accepted the 'gift' the need for access across any other land could result in a 'ransom strip' being formed.

Barkers Hill

It is unusual for land to be given away. I am aware that should STC accept the 'gift' STC will, no doubt, engage lawyers / solicitors to check, among other items and in no particular order:

- Restrictions on land use
- Mining & mining waste
- Quarry works nearby
- Outstanding charges on the land
- Access by SWW
- Future plans for the development of the lane and surrounding areas and of the site
- Flood history
- Previous uses of the land – potential contamination
- Services in the lane.

I hope that the report will assist STC in making the correct decisions regarding accepting the 'gift' but if you have any further queries please let me know.

Geoff Peggs

Geoff Peggs AssocRICS

Building Surveyor

