

PLANNING REF : 242180
PROPERTY ADDRESS : The Old School
: School Road, Riseley, Berks
: RG7 1XN
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Celia Adams
DATE SUBMITTED : 05/09/2024

COMMENTS:

The Old School, School Road
Riseley RG7 1XN

5 September 2024

Wokingham Borough Council
Planning Department
Wokingham, Berks

Dear Sirs,

Re: Application 242180 - Glasspool Farm, Trowes Lane, Riseley

We are writing to strongly oppose the above application request for prior approval on the following basis.

1. Transport and road safety

They are not correct in their assertion that there would be no detrimental effect relating to traffic. The application location is rural in nature and as such is completely unsustainable - the only travel choices are car or by foot and it is unrealistic in the extreme to suggest that people will walk to the nearest bus stops - where there is a limited service at best. Indeed walking to catch a bus will not be safe in ANY DIRECTION people may care to walk as all the roads are single track and already well used by others needing to drive as well as farm vehicles. The many further vehicle movements that would result from this application would add dangerously to

se, already busy, rural roads. The recent approval on appeal of the 81 houses further up Trowes Lane will only add to this.

We note the applicant states that Part Lane is straight! It is not and in fact there are several places along it where one has to drive with great caution as you cannot see what is coming round the next corner. We have lived here for over 40 years and use the lane regularly so we should know. The applicant also asserts that walkers can rely on walking on the verges which again is not a realistic

option. The verge is very narrow in places and in others it is non-existent; there are also many obstacles in the way including ditches, drains, trees, etc.

We also consider the number of vehicle movements relating to a hotel of the size proposed would be much higher than stated, considering there would be staff coming and going as well as guests, potential visitors, deliveries and other supporting services.

2. Urbanisation of a rural area

This application, as it states, will require many parking spaces to be provided. This will further urbanise the site and goes against the very thoroughly researched Riseley Village Design Statement

which specifically states that residents have concerns about encroaching urbanisation and industrialisation of agricultural sites within the area. Indeed, residents feel that it is important that any change of use in buildings are in keeping with the area and with the character of the building itself. This application is neither in keeping nor will it retain its character. In addition, residents of Riseley and its environs, feel that the environment is of paramount importance, as well as all the plant and wildlife in the area. An hotel would do nothing to protect and encourage the wildlife and the wildlife corridors that exist in this rural part of the Borough, with a local Nature Reserve already close by and another, almost opposite, in the pipeline. We contest therefore that this application will provide 'an overall improvement to the site' as stated.

3. Farm building use

The barns and house have never, in the 40 years we've lived here, been used as 'a farm'. Instead the house was rented and the barns used for housing cattle, many many years ago, but in the more recent past have been redundant, apart from the odd wild peacock that took up residence there. Even application 152333 which states they were previously in use refers to them being (in 2015) 'only redundant poultry houses which have been modified and last used for cattle sheds and storage. They are now mainly redundant occasionally used for straw and machinery storage'.

The current application states that 'The holding to which Glasspool Farm relates formerly extended to 182 hectares (450 Acres) as set out in the report by across rural property services, page 3, and they

confirm that the then owners farmed the property for agriculture on or before 20th March 2013'. We would argue however that Glasspool farm was never in even close proximity to the rest of the farm, being an isolated property on its own. It could therefore be misleading when reading this statement.

We also note that barns to be converted should be 'capable of conversion' and in this instance we believe that the style of these barns do not lend themselves to be capable of conversion to a hotel.

4. Drainage and Flooding

There is no mains drainage on the site which, for a hotel, seems to be ridiculous. The junction of Trowes Lane and Part Lane, adjacent to the site regularly floods and for many years we have been asking for something to be done about the Thames Water drain cover at that location to be repaired since it has dropped so far down into the road it has become a hazard. With more hard standing on the site we fear water coming down from Trowes Lane will head in our direction (School Road) and could result in flooding for us. If this was to be the case we would look to the Borough Council for recompense if this application is allowed.

5. Need

Should WBC ask for a needs assessment in relation to this application? We would argue that there is very little, if any, need for a hotel in this location.

We understand that there is another application coming for the other buildings on this site and so this will only ADD to the concerns we have on all of the above issues.

Yours faithfully,

Celia and Nigel Adams