

PLANNING REF : 242180
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Glasspool House
: Part Lane, Riseley, Berkshire
: RG7 1RU
SUBMITTED BY : Mrs Nicola Clifton
DATE SUBMITTED : 17/09/2024

COMMENTS:

I would like to strongly object to this Prior Approval submission for the following reasons:

1. Impact on Nearby Listed Building

It is important to note that this prior approval application is inappropriate for a site in such close proximity to a listed building - I live in Glasspool House next door which is a listed building. The proposed development would undermine the historical and architectural significance of the listed building, as it introduces an incongruous and urbanised element into the rural landscape.

The presence of an Apart-Hotel adjacent to the listed building risks disrupting the visual harmony and setting that are integral to the heritage value of such a structure. National and local planning policies emphasise the need to preserve the character and appearance of listed buildings and their surroundings.

We urge Planning Officers to consider the potential harm to the listed building and to ensure that any development respects and maintains the integrity of the area's heritage assets. Approval of this application would set a dangerous precedent for development that could erode the special historic and rural character of the region.

2. Transport and Road Safety

The application contains several inaccuracies. The applicant claims that Part Lane is straight, which is not true. There are multiple points along the lane where drivers must proceed with extreme caution due to limited visibility around corners. The assertion that pedestrians can rely on walking along the verges is also unrealistic. In many places, the verges are extremely narrow or nonexistent, and in other areas, they are overgrown with brambles, making them inaccessible.

Point 3.13 in the Transport Statement incorrectly states that Part Lane has a "low speed limit." In fact, the speed limit on Part Lane is 60 mph, not the reduced limit suggested.

The applicant's claim that traffic from the development will have no adverse impact is unfounded. The site is located on a single-track rural lane, where transportation options are limited to travel by car, bicycle, or foot. It is unrealistic to suggest that residents will rely on public transportation, given the extremely limited bus services in Riseley and Swallowfield, and the considerable distance to the nearest bus stops. As a result, there will likely be a significant increase in car usage along Part Lane.

The additional vehicle movements resulting from this development would exacerbate the already congested rural roads. Furthermore, the recent approval of 81 houses on Trowes Lane will place additional

strain on the local road network, which currently lacks any planned improvements by WBC. Additionally, the traffic impact of a hotel of the proposed size has been underestimated, as it does not account for the movements of staff, guests, visitors, deliveries, and other services.

We urge Planning Officers to consider that Part Lane is heavily used by walkers, cyclists, and horse riders. Without substantial improvements to the infrastructure, the increased traffic is likely to result in accidents involving these more vulnerable road users.

3. Historic Use as Farm Buildings and Building Character

Page 5 of the Planning Statement inaccurately claims that the barn proposed for conversion to an Apart-Hotel has walls on all four sides. In fact, it does not. The barn lacks walls on either of its shorter ends, requiring new walls to be constructed, which could potentially breach the guidelines for Class Q development.

The applicant's characterization of the barns as "farm buildings" is misleading. Neither the barns nor the farmhouse (currently being rebuilt after demolition without planning permission) have been used for farming in the past 40 years. The farmhouse was rented out, and while the barns were used for cattle up to 15 years ago, they have since become redundant, apart from occasional storage and the presence of barn owls. Even the 2015 application (152333) described the barns as "redundant poultry houses," last used for cattle sheds and storage, with minimal agricultural activity.

The statement in the current application that Glasspool Farm "formerly extended to 182 hectares" and was farmed up until 2013 is misleading. Glasspool Farm has always been isolated from the main farm, making the claims about its agricultural use dubious.

Additionally, barns that are to be converted should be "capable of conversion." In this case, we believe the current state of the barns, including significant cracks in the breeze-block walls, makes them unsuitable for conversion. We encourage Planning Officers to visit the site to assess the structural integrity firsthand.

4. Drainage and Flooding

While the application correctly notes that the site is not within a flood zone, our property, located just 30 meters away, experienced significant flooding in 2006 due to surface water runoff from the Riseley direction. We have since taken measures to prevent future flooding, but properties in the immediate area have experienced flooding more recently.

There is no mains drainage along Part Lane, including the proposed site. This means the development will require a sewage treatment system, which will discharge into local ditches that are not equipped to handle the increased water volume. A failure of the sewage system would likely result in pollution entering local waterways, eventually reaching the Broadwater River.

The junction of Trowes Lane and Part Lane, adjacent to the site, experiences severe flooding during winter, with water pooling due to a collapsed culvert that WBC has not yet repaired. The current

drainage infrastructure in the area is inadequate, a concern repeatedly raised by local residents. Increased runoff and discharge from the proposed development would worsen these issues, increasing the risk of both flooding and traffic accidents on waterlogged roads unless WBC undertakes significant remedial work.

5. Urbanisation of a Rural Area

This application, along with 242193, will require the provision of numerous parking spaces, further contributing to the urbanisation of the site. This contradicts the Riseley Village Design Statement, which highlights residents' concerns about the creeping urbanisation and industrialisation of agricultural sites in the area. The proposal is neither in keeping with the local character nor the design of the existing buildings.

The residents of Riseley and the surrounding areas place great importance on preserving the natural environment, including the local flora and fauna. The proposed Apart-Hotel would do little to protect or encourage local wildlife and wildlife corridors, particularly with a nearby Nature Reserve and another reserve in the planning stages. We therefore contest the applicant's claim that the proposal would result in an "overall improvement to the site."

I would like it noted that we are in favour of development of the site with appropriate residential dwellings in keeping with the rural landscape of Part Lane.