

PLANNING REF : 242193
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 object to the Prior Approval submission on the following basis:

1. Impact on Nearby Listed Building

It is important to highlight that this prior approval application for 10 attached dwellings is inappropriate given the proximity to a listed building. The introduction of a high-density, urban-style development in the form of terraced housing would severely undermine the historical and architectural significance of the listed building, disrupting the rural character of the area.

The construction of 10 terraced properties next to a listed building would introduce a visually incongruent element that is out of character with the heritage asset's setting. National and local planning policies stress the need to preserve the character and setting of listed buildings, ensuring that any nearby development is sympathetic to its surroundings.

We urge Planning Officers to carefully consider the detrimental impact that this development would have on the listed building and its historical context. Approving this application would set a concerning precedent for inappropriate, high-density developments in close proximity to heritage assets, eroding the special historic and rural character of the area.

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

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, local properties experienced significant flooding in 2006 due to surface water runoff from the Riseley direction. 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 242180, 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 urbanization and industrialization 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 am in favour of development of the site with appropriate dwellings that are in keeping with the local landscape - large detached dwellings with large gardens.