

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

Planning Application comments have been made. A summary of the comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 25/04/2024 4:20 PM from [REDACTED]

Application Summary

Address:	Barn North Of Abbey Farm Barn Church Street Higham Rochester Kent ME3 7LS
Proposal:	Change of use of an agricultural building into Five Holiday Let Accommodation Units.
Case Officer:	Mrs Alison Webster

[Click for further information](#)

Customer Details

Name:	[REDACTED]
Email:	[REDACTED]
Address:	[REDACTED] Church Street Higham

Comments Details

Commenter Type:	Neighbour
Stance:	Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments: We would like to formally object again to planning application, 20240139, relating to the change of use of the barn in Church Street to five holiday lets.

We object for the following reasons:
The area of Church Street near to St. Mary's Church has five residential properties which are all in one of Gravesham's few conservation areas. Acceptance of this application would mean a 100% increase which is unjustifiable.
Church Street itself is a narrow country lane with no official passing places. An extra five holiday lets would produce a significant increase in traffic movement. We note from the planning statement that the developers are saying a further 40 movements in total per day. This does not include any extra delivery vehicles, vehicles bringing takeaway food, etc. They mention that they do not feel that this is significant. We, however, do. There are no pavements in Church Street, parking is already an issue and we have grave concerns that this amount of vehicle movement may result in an accident. The road is frequently used by groups, such as ramblers, horse riders, Scouts, dog walkers, etc. and is subject to a 60mph speed limit. We have sent a picture of parking issues by St. Mary's Church. The planning application allows for one vehicle per unit and no other parking spaces appear to have been allocated, presumably meaning extra vehicles will park off site, namely in Church Street.
We note from the developer's statement that on one hand they state that this is an unused agricultural barn and on the other hand, saying that the impact of the traffic would be lessened by the fact that there would be fewer agricultural traffic movements from the site!
In relation to the communal garden for all the properties, we would be extremely concerned that this area would become a communal meeting place for the holiday let residents with potential for BBQs, loud music and excessive noise. I would presume that the communal area would have to be equipped with sitting areas, play equipment and a cooking area as is commonplace with most holiday let properties. Presumably residential paraphernalia does not include this type of equipment?

The planning statement again mentions that this barn is not in a conservation area. This is clearly false and misleading.

The statement also says that there are no previous planning applications other than last year. This is again false, a previous application applied for the farm to be converted into a riding school with the barn in question being an indoor riding school. This application included the forming of 3 passing places along Church Street and was refused by Gravesham Council.

It also states that the applicant will only have short stay letting of the units or a restriction to 11 months of the year. Our concern is how long is a short stay? Is it a night, weekend, a week, two weeks, or 6 months or is it 11 months? Do the premises then become rental properties as opposed to Holiday lets.

It is our view that although the application is for Holiday Lets this is a way of getting planning permission, building them and then applying for a change of use to residential homes.

This area is not suitable for holiday lets. The nearest shop is 2 miles away as is the nearest pub and food outlets. We are not on a bus route and Church Street has no footpaths for the holiday makers to walk on. The area is also bordered by a commercial railway line which operates 24 hours a day. The area is also used as service road for Network Rail to gain access to the railway line, again causing more parking problems. There are also proposals to enhance this line for passenger services to Hoo which will involve electrifying the line.

The proposal will not provide jobs for local people as the properties will be managed by a letting company. This application will have a negative impact on the people that live in this enclave. The two nearest properties, Abbey Farm and Abbey Barn, are both listed and will be overlooked by these holiday lets.

We note that the ecological survey was done over 12 months ago. We also note that the area around the barn is used by Little Owls and there have been several sightings of Barn Owls. There has also been evidence of Slow worms on the hard standing areas near the barn.

I would respectfully request that this application be seen for what it is, an attempt to build 5 houses via the back door.

Kind regards