

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 6:02 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 Lower Higham

Comments Details

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

Reasons for comment:

Comments: I object to this planning application, which is a modest amendment of a previous proposal (20230399). The previous proposal was rejected on the following grounds:

1. The proposed change of use will result in an increase in on-site parking and associated works to a site that is currently underdeveloped resulting in harm to the Green Belt.
2. The proposed change of use and associated works will create a form of development that will increase traffic and activity to this small rural conservation area and will contribute to the cumulative harm on this sensitive environment by changing the appearance of the barn.
3. The proposed development, by virtue of the introduction of parking areas and other 'residential' paraphernalia conflicts with the overall aims of policies that seek to ensure all proposals for new development are visually attractive and locally distinctive, conserve and enhance the local natural environment and landscape character and integrate well with the surrounding local area.
4. The applicant has failed to submit an Ecological Impact Assessment that addresses all potential impacts within the zone of influence of the site and therefore the proposed development fails to fully assess the impact of the development on roosting bats and barn owls as well as other protected species that may occur.

These objections have been either inadequately addressed or simply ignored in the amended application.

Regarding previous objection 1: The revised proposal still envisages an increase in on-site parking, with five on-site parking spaces being proposed. Like its predecessor, the revised proposal will also result in an increase in associated works. This is because the developer will not be able to control the influx of

residential paraphernalia, including barbecues, umbrellas, toys and paddling pools in the communal grassed area to the rear of the units or, indeed, in front of them if occupants of the holiday lets choose to park their vehicles on the grass banks adjacent to St Mary's church. Nor will they be able to prohibit the playing of TV and music in these and other external areas.

Regarding previous objection 2: The increase in traffic created by the revised proposal is not limited by the number of on-site parking spaces. Holidaymakers may choose to park additional vehicles alongside St Mary's church. Moreover, there would be an inevitable increase in other traffic, especially supermarket delivery vans. Residential properties in the lower Church Street area, St Mary's church and the Thames marshes at Higham are accessed via a long, poorly maintained single-track lane that is barely adequate to accommodate existing traffic levels. Pedestrians, dog walkers, ramblers and bird watchers are already required to climb up onto steep verges that are frequently overgrown to avoid an overabundance of traffic, which consists of residents' cars, visitors' cars, delivery vans, sewage lorries (there is no mains drainage), farm vehicles, horse boxes and horses. The current situation for cyclists is equally precarious. The significant expansion of traffic that would result from the amended proposal (which envisages a ca. 25% increase in the number of residential dwellings in the area) would create additional inconvenience for drivers and add to the difficulties and dangers faced by walkers and cyclists. Like its predecessor, the amended proposal will therefore result in an undesirable increase in traffic and activity to and from this small rural community.

I would add that the proposed development may create considerable difficulties for visitors to St Mary's church and the Thames marshes at Higham if occupants of the holiday lets park alongside St Mary's, thereby occupying the only available public parking spaces in the area. It goes without saying that the revised proposal, like its predecessor, will change the appearance of the barn resulting in harm to the character of the conservation area, which was also cited as a reason why the previous application was rejected.

(Please note that section 1.4 in the Planning Statement associated with the revised proposal states that 'It has already been agreed, as part of the previous planning application that the proposed change of use and associated works will not create a form of development that will significantly increase traffic and activity on Church Street'. In view of previous objection 2 (above), this statement appears to be factually incorrect.)

Regarding previous objection 3: The revised proposal does nothing to address this objection.

Regarding previous objection 4: The revised proposal includes an Ecological Impact Assessment that makes recommendations concerning roosting bats that do not appear to have been implemented.

Yours faithfully

Kind regards