

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 10/07/2024 5:14 PM from [REDACTED]

Application Summary

Address:	Giles Farm Church Street Higham Rochester Kent ME3 7LP
Proposal:	Conversion of existing farm office building, store and stables to a residential dwelling, ancillary home office/games room, garden storage and re-purposed stable. Erection of boundary walls, repositioned vehicular access and erection of new entrance gates, and associated works.
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:	No details of this planning application have been displayed at Giles Farm (as of 7 July 2024). I did not receive notification of the planning application by post. I object to this proposed development. Giles Farm is one of two Green Belt sites that I am aware of in the Higham Church Street Conservation Area which developers are currently seeking to monetise, the other being at nearby Abbey Farm (see the recently rejected application 20240139). Approval of the current plan would set a dangerous precedent, which I believe would lead to further development proposals on both sites and, possibly, elsewhere in the Conservation Area. The proposed development is located in a traditional farmyard that lies directly opposite the historic (Grade II listed) Clerk's Cottage, a picturesque thatched cottage (built before 1485) that is the oldest dwelling in Higham. It is also just a few metres from the (Grade II listed) Old Vicarage, another beautiful thatched cottage that is one of the most striking properties in the area, and from the pretty pond at the end of Church Street. The proposed development envisions various new gates, walls, parking spaces and a sizable number of new windows. Many of these will be visible to passers-by, and there is certain to be additional paraphernalia. As such, it will substantially alter the rural character and general appearance of the Conservation Area by replacing much of the farmyard with a residential property, thereby detracting from the neighbourhood's special character. The proposed development is part of a sustained attempt to exploit a loophole in current planning laws. These allow the conversion of genuine farm buildings in certain circumstances, but Building 4 is a farm building only in name. Gravesham Borough Council approved its construction as recently as October 2017 (20170165), and it is now abundantly clear that there was never any real intent
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that it should serve its stated purpose as a farm office. Miraculously, this office is now surplus to requirements, and this is being used as a pretext for conversion to a residential property. I would respectfully suggest that this was the developer's intent from the outset.

A previous planning application for the development of the entire farmyard site at Giles Farm (20210858) was rejected on a number of grounds. If the current application is accepted, I believe that it will lead to further applications aimed at developing the remaining parts of the farmyard, possibly in stages. The proposed re-purposed stabling and games room suggests that the developer may have a leisure complex in mind, as does the newly created artificial lake to the SW of the farmyard.

Even after the construction phase is completed, the proposed development would lead to an uncomfortable increase in traffic levels in Church Street, which is a single-track road for much of its course.

Kind regards