

Comments summary

Dear Sir/Madam,

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

Comments were submitted at 01/05/2024 10:18 AM 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] Bull Lane Higham Rochester

Comments Details

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

Reasons for comment:

Comments:	I wish to object to this planning application for the following reasons: Green Belt The site is in an area within the Green Belt where no new residential development would normally be permitted. This proposal is more new development than conversion (see later comments). Location of existing building The site is within the Church Street, Higham Conservation Area as defined by Gravesham Borough Council. The proposal wrongly states that it is not in a conservation area. It is also wrongly stated that Church Street connects Lower Higham with Buckland Road. Church Street runs south from the hamlet surrounding St Mary's church to the junction with Chequers Street and Lower Rochester Road and goes nowhere near Buckland Road. Condition of existing building The building's main construction consists of 50+ year old concrete members with no indication of how long they might continue to be structurally safe. The structural survey states that the roof purlins already need replacing. It would suggest therefore that it is not suitable for conversion. Nature of existing building The existing building is not attractive, has no architectural, historical or landscape interest and is not of a type representative of the Kent countryside and it is claimed that the building can be converted. In fact the necessary removal of the existing asbestos roof and asbestos and wood walls would leave just the skeletal purlins and portal frames of the present barn. The proposed conversion would in fact be practically a completely new building and not a conversion. It is also possible that the existing framework might be found to be structurally less sound than assumed, necessitating its demolition. Wildlife and biodiversity
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The site immediately adjoins an area protected under the International RAMSAR Convention where any activity likely to impinge on wildlife should be avoided. Such development as is proposed in this rural area will always adversely affect biological and diversity conservation. The application incorrectly claims that there are no trees or hedges on adjacent land that are important as part of the landscape character. Aerial photographs show that there are substantial hedges on the west, north and east sides of the site.

Roads

The site is approached by a single track road from the south which connects to several well used public footpaths. It is consequently much used by pedestrians and cyclists gaining access to them. Any development of accommodation within the settlement of Church Street would inevitably increase traffic flows and is therefore undesirable on safety grounds.

The proposal claims that the increase in vehicle movements might amount to 40 extra movements a day on the assumption that occupants of each holiday let would bring only one car. It states that this is not a significant increase. I would argue that this is a considerable and unsustainable increase and is based on questionable data. The barn conversion cannot be considered to be in an appropriate location in relation to roads and services. The nature and intensity of the proposed use would be detrimental to amenity and traffic safety.

The proposal is for each dwelling to have two double bedrooms. It is therefore very likely that there would at times be more than one vehicle per dwelling requiring parking space. The plans indicate only one parking space per dwelling. There would therefore be further pressure on already limited parking space on the road leading to the new development. This would increase pressure on the already limited parking space for permanent residents. The gated track leading from the road to the barn would become the main access to the barn. There is an existing public right of way over the track - another safety concern if there were more vehicles coming and going.

Services

A package treatment plant is proposed for sewage treatment. The periodic emptying of such a plant would increase heavy traffic on a small country lane when vehicles require access to the holding tank.

Nature of proposed development

The application states that the development would create 5 one-bedroom dwellings. The submitted plans clearly indicate 5 two-bedroom dwellings.

General comments

The hamlet surrounding St Mary's church consists of some 20 dwellings all occupied on a permanent basis. The creation of 5 new dwellings within the area, whether for holiday or longer lets, would be an increase of 25% in the number of dwellings. Those occupying the new dwellings for whatever period would clearly not have the same relationship with the hamlet as permanent residents. It is highly likely that the character of the hamlet would be altered irrevocably by the introduction of this commercial venture which in no way adds to the interest or atmosphere of the place. Its value would be limited to the benefit of the owner of the barn who does not live in the hamlet.

[Redacted signature]

Kind regards