



10<sup>th</sup> July 2022

Dear Ms Jones,

**PL/2022/04332 Application for retrospective permission for change of use of buildings at Ham Cross, SP3 5RW**

I am grateful for the opportunity to comment on this application as I live beside the Chicks Grove Road, C24, just under 2 miles west of the site at Ham Cross, so I have an interest in developments such as this that may have an impact on the road that serves my house and on the neighbouring landscape. I also have an interest in the impact any approval may have on the environment locally.

In making my own comments I shall refer to the letter to you from Richard Burden of the Cranborne Chase AONB dated 6<sup>th</sup> July that makes a number of points I support.

Mr Burden draws attention (in his para. 14) to the location of Ham Cross in the Vale of Wardour. It is self-evident, perhaps, but worth adding nonetheless, that the landscape in the immediate vicinity and along this stretch of the C24 is particularly fine, with a most attractive stretch along the Nadder Valley through Lower Chicks Grove to the West and another to the North and East past the junction with the road to Teffont Evias and the Teffont Lake.

As Mr Burden also states (his para. 18) this is

*“an isolated location, relatively remote from dwellings for workers...accessed by unclassified roads that are unsuitable for additional traffic...[this is]...not a suitable location and fundamentally in conflict with NPPF guidance on sustainability. Additional traffic, noise and lighting could impact adversely on the tranquillity of the AONB”.*

I would go further. There is recent evidence that supports the view of local residents that traffic on the C24 is already too heavy. The survey carried out in May this year by Neo Traffic Data for Wiltshire Council at three locations along the C24, including one at Ley Farm, a hundred metres or so from the entrance to the Ham Cross location, showed a total of 6,400 vehicle movements per week, of which 5,000 were cars; roughly 500 movements per day in each direction on weekdays.

As local residents are well aware, averages taken over a week disguise the reality that the vast majority of movements are bunched together at peak hours, when most people and vehicles commute and/or carry out delivery trips via the B3089. At these times this is already a busy road by the standards of similar unclassified roads in the AONB. And the number of incidents on the C24, only some of them reported to the authorities, also supports the view that the current volume of traffic on a road that undulates, bends and turns, and varies in width as this does (with numerous pinch-points that are too narrow for saloon cars to pass) is a threat to safety.

**While we may all sympathise with the notion that the development of sustainable work places in the countryside is a desirable aim, this must surely be done in a manner that avoids over-stretching**

**the local road network. For that reason the number of employees and vehicles on the site need to be appropriately controlled.**

In one respect I would wish to qualify and strengthen what Mr Burden wrote. In his remarks in paragraph 23, he appears to be less than well informed about the local context. He refers to the AONB's concerns that

*“permission for ‘storage’ ... which, in our experience, has led to regular deliveries by very large HGVs of materials that are then repackaged...Not only does that create substantial traffic movements on unsuitable roads in the AONB but it also requires workers to commute into the countryside to work at a facility that should more appropriately be located at an edge of town business park”.*

Mr Burden may not be aware, but the context for this application is that local residents, not only those living along the Chicks Grove Road but also those in nearby Chilmark, have complained vociferously about development of a commercial warehouse in another section of the former RAF Chilmark facility. These complaints, voiced repeatedly at Chilmark Parish Council from immediately after the establishment of the warehouse in 2015, led to the supplying HGVs being re-routed via the C24, with neither adequate consultation with residents and neighbours nor proper consideration of this action's wider implications. HGVs journeying to and from that warehouse along the C24 must negotiate bends, pinch-points and a junction with the B3089 that are entirely inappropriate for vehicles of their size, causing considerable inconvenience, nuisance and hazard to themselves, local residents and all other road users.

The action of one persistent local resident in raising the matter with the local MP and the involvement of the Planning Department Enforcement Officer eventually led to the belated recognition that the commercial warehouse in question had not been the subject of a planning application or approval; which realisation prompted the Enforcement Officer to seek a retrospective application in the present instance.

**In this context then, it is reasonable, in my view, that this element of the application should be rejected. No further development for warehousing or storage should be permitted anywhere in the vicinity or further along the C24.**

In the closing section of his letter (para. 24) Mr Burden makes a number of points regarding the environmental impact of the development. I would support all of these, and in particular his bullet point b, in which he remarks:

*“There is no capture and utilisation of renewable energy and the roofs of two blocks of workshops could accommodate a significant number of PV panels”*

**I would encourage you to go further. In view of the present focus on energy cost inflation and the longer term issue of climate change, approval for any such development should carry the condition that solar or other renewable energy sources be installed throughout.**

I trust these comments are useful and that you will be able to incorporate them in your recommendation.

Yours sincerely