

Planning application comment was submitted on the **29 January 2024 16:27 PM**

The following is a comment on application **P233688/F** by **James Shotton**

Nature of feedback: Objecting to the application

Comment: We own Lyne Down Farm and have a shared border with the agricultural field that is the location for this proposed change of use.

We object to the planned change of use for a number of reasons, all outlined in the herewith Pdf document. They broadly fall into issues relating to Amenity, Access, Ecology and Foul Water Proposal.

Attachment:

Their contact details are as follows:

First name: James

Last name: Shotton

Email: [REDACTED]

Postcode: HR8 2NT

Address: Lyne Down Farm

Ledbury

Herefordshire

Infrastructure from section 106 to consider: I refer you to the attachment and detail therein.

Link ID: https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/info/200142/planning_services/planning_application_search/details?id=233688

Form reference: FS Case 581379355

Mr & Mrs James Shotton
Lyne Down Farm
Much Marcle
Ledbury
Herefordshire
HR8 2NT

29 January 2024

OBJECTIONS TO PLANNING APPLICATION P233688/F

For background, my wife and I have lived in our property, Lyne Down Farm, since [REDACTED]. We have a small historical orchard at the north west of our property that shares a border with the agricultural land noted in this planning application for the change of use and the siting of up to 4 shepherd huts. Next to our orchard is our house and garden.

We object to the planned change of use for a number of reasons, all outlined below. They broadly fall into issues relating to Amenity, Access, Ecology and Foul-Water Proposal.

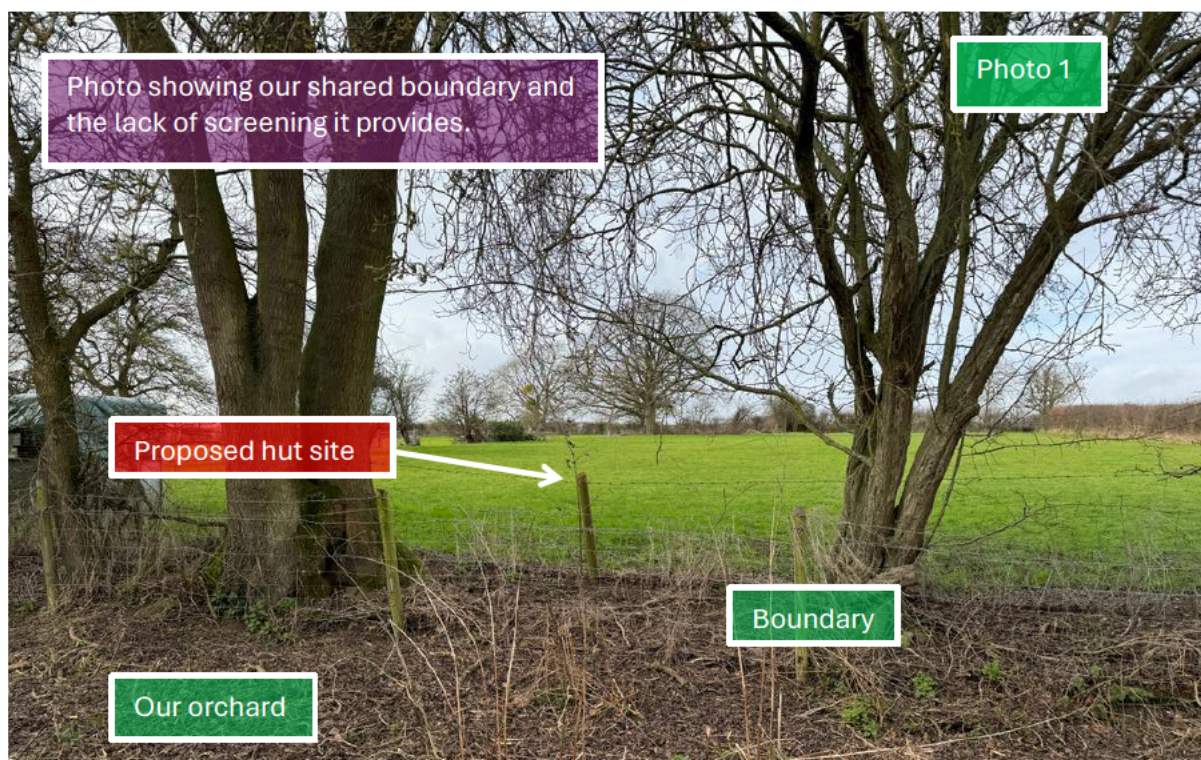
Amenity

We are concerned about two main areas in Amenity, firstly the choice of the proposed siting within the applicants parcel of land, and secondly, a broader concern about the suitability and sustainability of this site within the wider parish/county.

The proposed site is 7-10 metres from our shared boundary. This boundary is made up of stock fencing, with several mature trees, but no established hedgerow to provide screening.

We note that the architect Design & Access Statement outlines that the proposed location ensures that the huts are screened from the neighbouring properties. The proposed location is not screened from our property or garden.

The site and the proposed huts will allow all users to look into our orchard and garden, [REDACTED]



Each of the proposed shepherd huts has a window facing our joint boundary and thus into our garden. While the field was used for grazing, which it has been for the ■ years we have lived here, we have had no concerns for our privacy and security. However, to site up to 4 huts, each with a window looking into our property, is a significant concern. To have up to 8 unknown adults staying in that field, with new people arriving several times a week, gives us significant cause for concern over our privacy/safety.

These fields have historically been used for grazing animals as far back as anyone can recall. I do not feel that this application is an example of true agricultural diversification as the current owners had owned the land for less than ■ before starting this change of use process and have not used the land for any visible agricultural purpose during this time.

Policy RA6 – Rural Economy, states that applications will be permitted if they do not cause unacceptable adverse impacts on the amenity of nearby residents, by virtue of design and mass, noise and dust, lighting and smell.

We are concerned in the lack of design detail in the proposal, along with the density of the planned siting. As it is so close to our existing dwelling and those of our neighbours. Further, the light pollution from up to 4 cabins with internal and external lights along with pathway lights. There is the potential for up to 4 internal log stoves plus the inevitable external bbqs, campfires etc and the associated smells and smoke. All of these will have an adverse impact on all the neighbouring properties. The potential for late night noise/music from holiday makers cannot be underestimated.

We feel at the very least there should be restrictions and conditions placed to limit the light and noise pollution to neighbours along with the line of sight that all visitors will have into our property. There is no visible planting scheme to prevent users watching our garden and the occupants and there are other locations on the applicant's property that would be less invasive and more private than the current plan.

The proposal states the huts will have walls of stained timber. There is a hut already on site that appears to have walls of a corrugated metal/composite material. If this is the first hut to be used, it would appear contrary to the details noted in the application. There is also a visible chimney for an internal stove of some description which is also not mentioned on the applications, nor in the architects supporting drawings.

There is a wider topic relating to the suitability of the proposed location within the Much Marcle Parish.

Policy SS7 of the Hereford Core Strategy requires that proposals focus development to the most sustainable locations and reduce the need to travel by private car.

Policy SS4 of the HCS also requires that proposals should facilitate a genuine choice of travel modes.

The proposed site is a small rural hamlet, remote from services and facilities, where the users would have full dependency on a private vehicle. The surrounding lanes are single track, with no streetlights and no footpaths. There is no regular bus within 2 miles. All of these issues mean the potential users will understandably be forced to use their private cars.

I appreciate that the applicants state their desire to provide electric bikes for people staying but that appears a wish, not a commitment or formal requirement. Indeed, due to the nature of the surrounding lanes (single track, poor surface condition etc) I would suggest it is highly likely that bikes would not be used. There is no nearby cycling infrastructure to tap into nor is there a national cycle route close by, so I cannot see bike usage being a viable offset.

For the above reasons the proposal would conflict with policies SS4 and SS7 of the framework.

I suggest the business need for such a site remains unproven. The applicant's business plan lacks any detail on Market Appraisal, Risk Analysis or Competitor Analysis. Indeed, outside of the proposed income, the rest of the Business Plan is a list of topics that it is suggested needs completing. I venture that these topics, and the essential research they require, should have been completed prior to the decision of whether to proceed with an application to change the usage of any agricultural land on the hope of making a sustainable business venture.

There are 10+ short term holiday lets within 3 miles of the proposed site. On the outskirts of Much Marcle is the established and successful Cwyth Cabins and Camping, they have 7 existing cabins with permission already granted for a further 3 should they feel the need to expand their existing business.

There comes a saturation point in any market and without data to back up the Business Plan, I question if there is sufficient demand and a solid business case to make this business sustainable and thus make such a change of use of agricultural land worthwhile.

Our concern is that the repeated lack of detail in all areas of the application could lead to a slow deviation, [REDACTED] from the initial submission and a creeping urbanisation of agricultural land.

The density and location of the proposed huts will mean that it is of a more urban nature, and it would change the character of the area, eroding its extremely quiet and rural qualities. The 4 new dwellings would be a tightly grouped development compared to the typically scattered nature elsewhere in the vicinity. They would bear little relationship to the existing settlement plan and it cannot help but have an urban, manicured nature which would fundamentally change the character of the agricultural surroundings.

Access

We share the concerns raised by the other neighbours in relation to the narrow lane access.

For background information, for all of the [REDACTED] years we have lived here, the access lane has been on a private, shared usage basis between Kittles, White House and Upper House.

There are no passing places on the lane and thus, with such a significant increase in vehicle numbers, there will inevitably be vehicles meeting on the lane, unavoidably causing many to have the need to reverse out of the blind entrance, onto the main carriageway and into the path of cars/tractors/horses.

We strongly recommend that somebody from Highways visit the site to fully appreciate the narrowness of the lane and the poor visibility in both directions upon exiting.

The narrow lane and the distance from the top of the lane to the proposed cabins, raises questions over access for emergency services, should they need to attend the site users.

Related to emergency services is the fire risk of 4 cabins with potential for internal log stoves/open fires and exterior campfires/bbqs. Is a Fire Risk Assessment suitable to ensure that all users and neighbours remain safe?



Photo looking West from Lyne Down,
into Welsh Court Road

Photo 3



Ecological

There is a general lack of detail in the proposal surrounding the ecological impact of the submission and I would suggest a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal would be a starting point to understand the impact that it will have on the rural landscape.

I understand that as of April 2024 it will be a requirement for all new applications to demonstrate a Biodiversity Net Gain of 10%. This application predates that introduction but I suggest that the plan represents a significant nett loss of diversity and it would need substantial adjustment to reach that target, even if it is not yet a formal requirement.

Further, there is a lack of evidence of any investigation into the ecological and polluting impact on the surrounding area and the landscape character.

I would welcome the thoughts of the landscape officer on this topic.

Foul-Water Proposal

Over the past ■ years, Upper House was occupied by one person for the majority of the time. During this time, there were repeated issues with the existing septic tank, which is located close to our shared boundary. We have serious concerns that the increase from the previous one user up to a possible 10 (2 residents plus up to 8 hut users), will see the existing tank and pipework overwhelmed, leading to issues for all surrounding neighbours and the environment. There is lack of evidence in the proposal of any assessment or survey of the existing tank and pipework to ascertain if it is fit for purpose nor do the proposals appear to include any percolation testing.

Based on the historic failure of the tank/pipes it would be fair to assume that the long-term viability of the system is in doubt and I am extremely concerned of being downhill of any drainage field.

Conclusion

We feel that this application should be refused.

There is a widespread lack of detail in the application with no evidence of investigations into the ecological impact, the suitability of the foul-water proposal, the impact on the environment and landscape character and serious privacy and security concerns for us and near neighbours.

Further, the application conflicts with several Herefordshire Council policies relating to the siting of the proposed site and sustainability of a “business” in a remote and isolated location.

There is also a lack of evidence to confirm that there exists a business case for huts in this isolated location.

Finally, the proposal cannot be seen as “diversification” in the truest sense, on the basis that there is no business ongoing or certainly not on the scale that could ever warrant up to 4 huts. I would suggest that this is a “start-up” business in an unsustainable location that cannot be truly regarded as diversification.

