

CLARIDGE BARN – CHANGE OF USE APPLICATION P25/S3543/FUL
CONSULTATION RESPONSE BY TETSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Introduction

Tetsworth Parish Council (TPC) has consistently opposed development of Claridge Barn previously proposed by Planning Application P23/S4191/FUL, its withdrawn predecessor, P23/S3019/N4B, and Appeal APP/Q3115/W/253364807. It considers that the earlier grounds for objection remain valid for the proposed Change of Use of the building to Class E(g)iii for light industrial purposes.

This consultation response sets out the continuing grounds for objection and exposes the shortcomings of the applicants' supporting documentation.

Development Outside Tetsworth's Settlement Footprint

Claridge Barn is located outside the Tetsworth settlement footprint as defined in Tetsworth Neighbourhood Development Plan 2035 (TNDP2035). Policy TET1 and its supporting text in the plan states that: *Proposals for development outside the village settlement will only be supported if they are appropriate to a countryside location.* TPC does not consider unspecified light industrial use to be appropriate for this countryside site.

Although the barn currently has little architectural merit, it is characteristic of similar rural agricultural structures. Its conversion to a light industrial facility would be an incongruous intrusion into Key Views 5 and 6 as illustrated in TNDP2035's Policy TET4.

Access Land Ownership

The site plan submitted with P25/S3543/FUL includes land to the south of Claridge Barn and extends to the adopted carriageway of Chiltern View. Access across this parcel of land would be required for access to the proposed industrial building. Although TPC accepts that the land is unregistered, it is clear that it is not owned by the applicants. A number of earlier planning applications for redevelopment of the Claridge Barn and development of housing in the surrounding fields clearly established the extent and southern boundary of the land in the applicants' ownership. Site plans for P95/N0079/O show the boundary to be drawn at the southern wall of Claridge Barn and excludes the parcel of land leading to Chiltern View. The statutory declarations of ownership made at that time by the applicants are identical to the P95/N0079/O site plans and again exclude the access land.

Without legal access for business and employee traffic to the proposed light industrial building, the Change of Use should be refused.

Traffic and Highways Considerations

There are serious flaws in the applicant's supporting Highways and Transport Technical Note (H&TTN). Both it and the Design and Access Statement maintain that The Mount, Back Street, Parkers Hill and Chiltern View roads have adequate width, capacity and pavements to accept additional traffic including HGVs without introducing significant road safety risks to vehicle users and pedestrians. The documentation illustrates the once-a-week visit of a refuse collection lorry on the unregistered land at the adjacent domestic property to the east of the barn. This does not establish the acceptability of routine and regular access by HGVs to the proposed industrial premises. TPC

endorses the OCC Highways' recommendation for refusal of planning permission on the grounds of inadequate access via Tetsworth's network of narrow roadways and the increased threat to highways safety.

The H&TTN's selection of sites to generate TRICS data grossly misrepresents the rural status of Tetsworth. The overwhelming majority of its survey sites are Edge of Town Industrial Zones and exclude Servicing Vehicles. Just one out of the 19 survey sites has fewer than 1,000 residents living within a mile and just two with populations up to 25,000 within 5 miles. Car ownership is also severely biased towards car ownership of between 0.6 to 1.5 vehicles per household living within 5 miles. Tetsworth's population is around 850 residents and Thame, the nearest town, has barely half the 25,000 threshold. As a result of its inappropriate assumptions, the H&TTN suggests that there would only be about 20 vehicle trips to or from the site per day spread evenly across the working day. TPC considers this to be a severe underestimate and incorrect working day profile.

The proposed site plan includes 11 vehicle parking places. Up to 9 staff arrivals by car at the start of the working day and their departure at the end would not be spread across the day and would, under the H&TTN calculations, allow for just a single business trip per day to the site by suppliers or customers. This is totally unrealistic for an industrial business.

The document also suggests that traffic generated by the 'current' equestrian use of the barn is comparable to its light industrial replacement. This is nonsense. Claridge Barn and its surrounding fields have never been host to an equine business. The most recent tenant who rented use of the barn and grazing on the adjacent pastures for her privately owned horses was terminated over 18 months ago. Her and predecessor private tenants of the site generated minimal or even zero external traffic to and from the barn.

Commuting, Public Transport and Active Travel

The H&TTN states that 3 bus services pass through Tetsworth. However, it fails to state that the Henley to Thame bus route 625 is essentially a single 'school bus' round trip on schooldays only and fails to recognise that the schedules for routes 117 and 275 are totally useless for commuting to employment in Tetsworth. Moreover, it does not acknowledge that the major roads from Tetsworth to Thame and elsewhere are unsafe for commuting by bicycle. The proposed provision of storage for 7 cycles therefore seems unlikely to be used to any extent.

The 2021 census showed that almost half of Tetsworth households own 2 or more cars and just 4% have none. This underlines the overwhelming dependence of the Tetsworth community on private car travel into and out of the village. Therefore, establishing a business with as many as 14 employees in the barn would inevitably attract significantly greater private car use, contrary to national and local sustainability aims.

Community Amenity Harms

The application includes no proper assessment of the impact on PROW 382/21/10 which lies inside the application's location plan to the south of the barn. This public footpath provides peaceful and ready access to open countryside and is a much valued amenity for village residents. Its route across the unregistered land would be compromised by establishment of an industrial business in the barn.

Introduction of light industrial premises at the barn site implies the generation of additional noise and light pollution. Appeal APP/Q3115/W/253364807 was dismissed on the grounds of inadequate mitigation of nearby M40 traffic noise in the building. Adding to this burden would not only affect employees working in the premises, but also cause unacceptable harm to the amenity of

neighbouring properties. In terms of light pollution, Tetsworth has had a long-standing tradition of promoting a dark skies environment. Lighting of the barn for business or security purposes during the hours of darkness would have detrimental impact on adjacent domestic properties and the setting of St Giles Church and John Peers House both of which are Listed Buildings.

Conclusion

TPC objects in principle to the Change of Use of Claridge Barn to light industrial status as proposed by P25/S3543/FUL. The application fails to comply with TNDP2035 Policies TET1 and TET4 and the intention to facilitate business traffic access across unregistered land is not acceptable. The proposal seriously underestimates the calculation of increased traffic volumes and the road safety impact on the village's narrow residential road network. It also fails to acknowledge the detrimental environmental and amenity harms that an industrial development would cause to neighbouring properties and Listed Buildings.

TPC therefore urges refusal of this Change of Use application by the SODC Local Planning Authority.