**Variation of condition No.2 of Planning Permission ref: PL/2021/11405**

**Retention of Farm Attraction Barn**

I wish to raise an objection to this Variation. Some members of the local community supported the original application. A way forward was needed for this site and although I had some misgivings about whether it all would happen, as you can see from the statement I made at the time (attached), this seemed like a fair solution. There were going to landscaping improvements and more than 60% of the buildings on the site would be demolished.

Let us be clear that if the conditions had been honoured this building, the Farm Attraction Barn, would already have been demolished. It is the Farm Attraction Barn from the discontinued Farmer Giles Visitor attraction, and I remember it well with the bouncy castle, the go-kart track, café, display and the exhibition of Charlie Giles’s Land Rover.

Let us be clear that there has been an egregious breach of compliance and an astonishing failure in enforcement. The house was built over a period of about 18 months in clear and conscious breach of the conditions. It is a disgrace that this breach was not addressed by the Planning Department and that no sanction was applied. We must all be conscious of the precedent this sets and that one of the Applicants is a Parish Councillor.

If the Parish Council requests conditions on planning applications and they are granted, what credibility will such conditions have with Applicants in future? This needs to be addressed. There must be consequences.

I was here at the last meeting when Councillor Deane protested that the conditions were impractical and imposed by Wiltshire Council. The fact is however that these conditions were suggested by the Applicants. These are extracts from their planning application.

*The family would now like to live on site for Animal Welfare reasons as well as for HSE reasons for the Holiday Lodges. As The Farm Attraction business is no longer the lead element of the broader farmer Giles business it is proposed to remove the entrance buildings, the toilet block and the main Farm Attraction building with associated Restaurant, roadside entrance gates walling and railings. The large elements of hard landscaping and the lesser elements associated with that element of the business.*

*In addition, the removal of the key Farm Attraction barn with its Restaurant, 2nd toilet*

*block and associated facilities would mean that a total of 2287m2 of buildings would be removed*

*(please see site plan) and would equate to 61.3% of the total 3795m2 of existing buildings being*

*removed. In addition, this would mean that all the buildings that can be seen from the road on the*

*approach into the village of Teffont would be removed and replaced with a gateway into a paddock.*

Please look at the two plans I have provided. Plan 1 shows what was proposed and approved. The drive running through a meadow towards the house with a lot of screening. It has a rural “feel”.

Now I draw your attention to the second plan. The buildings in blue are the ones that were proposed for demolition by the Applicants (not by the Council). Whilst looking at this plan, could I please point out to you the retained horse barn and other outbuildings (in pink).

If this variation is allowed very few buildings will be demolished – breaking a key pledge in the planning application. Even my plan overstates the area to be demolished now. Instead of the promised 61.3% of the buildings being demolished, what would this be? 5% perhaps

I would like to quote directly from the reason given by Wiltshire Council for the planning permission. The Reason was specific and could not have been clearer. It was…

“To accord with the terms of the planning application and to ensure that the development results in enhancement of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is one of the exceptional reasons planning permission has been granted in this case.”

If planning permission is to mean anything at all this application must be dismissed by Wiltshire Council.

Let us also look at the case that is made for the retention of the farm attraction barn. This is approximately 2200 square metres and if the variation is disallowed, the Applicants claim they will have to demolish the existing building and replace it.

I have been trying to work out exactly why there is a need for such a building. I cannot get beyond paragraph 1.9 which states that structures are required for storage of animals/machinery/foodstuffs/etc.

Let us return to the original application which made the case for keeping what is known as the horse barn.

*The dressage business requires the retention of the Horse barn, and the farm business requires housing for red-diesel, tractors and other, valuable, farm equipment that the insurer, the NFU, requires to be in locked and secure environment which they inspect annually as part of the due diligence required by insurers.*

This barn has been retained and is where the animals, machinery and foodstuffs should be stored. It is about 1500 square metres itself and it used to house a very substantial winery. The only other use to which the 2200 square metres of the Farm Attraction barn is going to be put to is laundry and as a kitchen/utility to service holiday lets each of which by the way has its own kitchen So, a washing machine and a sink, 12 square metres perhaps.

I note also that in 2013, the Applicants received planning permission to build a cabin with toilets, showers a laundry and a kitchen. There is such a building shown on all the plans in the exact location at the top of the site.

So, what is the real reason? I suspect it is the cost of demolishing the Farm Attraction Barn which has a corrugated iron and asbestos roof. However, this is clearly what was promised in return for the planning permission.

Councillor Deane and his supporters want to make a case that the complaints being made are personal. I can understand why he wants to make that case. To allege bullying or harassment on the part of anyone raising questions or concerns is to distract from the substance.

I hope everybody can see that the complaints are not personal. Surely, any such outrageous breach of planning conditions should have received attention. The major concern I have here is that it has been necessary for me to raise it. The Enforcement Team at Wiltshire Council should have been on top of this and others too particularly because the Applicant is a Parish Councillor and formerly a District Councillor. Perhaps there was fear of being branded a bully or malicious.

Please be aware that unless there are better explanations than have currently been provided, I will be making further complaints about Wiltshire Council in connection with the lack of enforcement. This will not be personal to the Officers, but it seems that the Council does not have the resources to do the job properly.

When the planning permission was granted, I was pleased, and I congratulated Councillor Deane. I could see that there was a quid pro quo. Permission for a very large house in return for restoration exactly as quoted in the planning permission.

It feels to me now that promises have already been broken and if this variation is allowed, the Applicants will have got what they wanted but the AONB and community will not.

Richard McNamara

7 March 2022