

21st March 2024

Planning Application - 24/00375/F

Dear Sir / Madam,

The population of Hornton, Wroxton Heath and surrounding areas once again find themselves defending acres of land that abuts our communities. We are so sorry to have to write to you so soon after the last bought and as the land in question abuts the land that was the subject of **Planning Application Reference 21/00517/F** many of the arguments are going to sound rather similar but the council found that those reasons should be upheld for **Planning Application Reference 21/00517/F** so I am hoping that now that precedent has been set you will also find that the same arguments stand for **Planning Application No. 24/00375/F**.

The planning applicants' papers dated January 2024 state that :

“The site lies in a predominantly rural area characterised by agricultural, quarrying and leisure/amenity uses. The Wroxton Moto Cross Club utilise a track immediately to the north of the application site.”

Planning permission for the Wroxton Moto Cross Club mentioned was denied in 2023 and has since been denied further when planning regulations were again ignored by the owner in November 2023 so the inclusion of Wroxton Moto Cross as a precedent set for leisure / amenity use is rather misleading .

The document also states :

“In terms of the affect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, the current attractive appearance of the site would be supplemented by two fishing lakes, a number of accommodation lodges and pods, and a management building together with appropriately surfaced ancillary access roads and parking. Additional landscaping/planting would also be provided to soften the impact of any new hard surfacing”

Are the applicants really suggesting that a rural area a mile or so from an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be enhanced by a number of accommodation lodges and pods and a management building with roads and parking.

I am sure you have studied in depth the topography of the land in question, but I couldn't see any mention of the importance of Ridge and Furrow patterns across the area. Just a mile or so away this archaeological feature is extremely apparent, in Arlescote, Horley and Ratley. Given the historic value of Edgehill and the surrounding areas I would be

surprised if there were absolutely no evidence of medieval patterns which are protected agricultural features. Planning Permission in a village in Warwickshire was refused as recently as 2019 because of their existence which represented a non-designated heritage asset and also contributed to the agricultural setting of the village and its conservation area. The statement **“The overall site would be maintained and enhanced for visitors to enjoy and a net gain in biodiversity would be obtained.”** Has no evidence or description to back it up. Surely destroying large areas of land to build lodges and pods and create roadways and car parking will have the opposite effect.

With respect, the applicants clearly have little knowledge of the area. They write that **“The creation of a sustainable leisure development would benefit and sustain other businesses in the local area, for example, the pubs, restaurants, cafes and shops in Alkerton and the surrounding villages.”**

While there are several pubs in the area described, there are no shops or cafes that I can think of between Tysoe and Banbury, over to the east the nearest one is Kineton, west is Brailes and south west is Bloxham. It is highly unlikely that the businesses in these towns within an 8 mile radius of Wroxton Heath will benefit in the slightest from the proposed enterprise, and although the planning applicants state that the local area will benefit from increased job opportunities, they fail to state how many and their description is of less than five. Even if the full figure was ten jobs created, this is hardly going to have a positive impact on the employment rate in the area. This is not an area of high unemployment.

“The development would result in the employment of a number of people to administer bookings, take money and maintain the lakes and rounds together with companies who would carry out the development including suppliers and sub-contractors, the majority of which would likely be local to the area.”

The safety of those using the Stratford Road, the A422 which the planning documents seem to confusingly describe as the Alkerton Road is another huge concern. This is a road with several junctions with extremely poor lines of sight, even in the winter when the hedgerow is relatively short the main road is extremely fast and there are bends that do not give enough line of sight if a car on the main road is travelling at 60 miles an hour and the vehicle exiting the proposed Fishery Site is a large van or lorry or a camper van and unable to accelerate fast enough to avoid a collision with vehicles coming up behind them from the Stratford direction. Because the road is a relatively high point it is often foggier there than at other points at the bottom of the hill, visitors to the holiday camp will not have the necessary experience of rural, foggy roads and the propensity for unnecessary accidents will be heightened.

The Applicants' use of The National Planning Policy Framework is interesting, Paragraph 89 in regard to Supporting a Rural Economy states:-

“Planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in rural areas may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumstances it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings, does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any opportunities to make a location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are physically well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.”

Specifically mentioning that the businesses supported should be local, these applicants are not, and should be found adjacent to existing settlements. With the refusal of planning permission for the Wroxton Moto Cross site this is not the case.

Paragraph 11 of the NPPF specifically describes AONB as a reason to not allow planning applications such as this and the housing it relates to is a permanent place of residence, not a number of log cabins and pods around a pond.

I would really urge the members of the Planning Committee to please refuse planning for this unnecessary development applied for by a business that is not local to this area and does not fully understand the unique position this site holds in ancient history, in environmental importance and in modern infrastructure.

Yours faithfully,

Samantha Barnes