

OBJECTION TO GLEBE FARM MARINA CLAYDON

Revised Application Ref. No. 20/02446/F

OBJECTION BY ROBERT ADAMS B.Sc. *Landscape Architect (retired)*

1.0 OBJECTION

1.1 This proposed application for a marina off the Lower Boddington Road, north of the village of Claydon, is the third, the first and second applications having been withdrawn.

1.2 My objection is based on the following. One would have expected, with a new submission, there would be a considerable difference in the approach by the applicants in addressing many of the concerns expressed by resident and other objectors in the past. That this has not happened indicates the complete rejection by the applicants of any of the opinions of village residents to this totally out-of-scale over-development, the lack of understanding of the character of the local landscape and environment, the rejection of the value locals place on this landscape, and the massive obliteration of a section of an historic landscape, all within the curtilage and amenity of the historic Oxford Canal.

1.3 In addition, there has been no attempt to make the drawings more legible and therefore more understandable than previously. The clarity and legibility and the quality of the presentation of the proposals is no better than before, and all attempts to identify details on the drawings that are relevant to the construction and development of the project still have not been produced. These will be detailed below.

1.4 It is further surprising that Cherwell District Council has obviously not seen it appropriate to insist on further details previously identified as missing, and still remain absent, when they are the conservators of the environment and its historic character and value. They also have obviously not required amendments to mitigate the damage that the proposals will have on the character of the district and the massive change to the landscape. Where are there sensitive proposals to mitigate the visual and physical harm that will occur? The landscaping is shown in outline only. What guarantees have the public that the landscape proposals will be carried out properly, especially when the proposals for the Cropredy marina have still not been carried out properly, and this was approved many years ago? If these drawings and proposals were to be submitted to inspection at a public inquiry, they would be rejected out of hand by the inspectors because they are totally insufficient in providing the accurate information on what the proposals will entail. Why has Cherwell District Council not seen the need for such details and explanations? If there are so many questions that residents can identify, why have they not been requested by the local planning authority.

2.0 DRAWINGS, LAYOUT, PERSPECTIVES AND ELEVATIONS

2.1 I object to the standard of clarity of information on the drawings, with respect to levels, contours, accuracy of layout, accuracy of elevations/perspectives. I have previously objected to

the mounds created by the Lower Boddington Road and their obliteration of views over open countryside and their relation to the levels of the Lower Boddington Road and canal bridge. The levels on the road is 114.00 while on the detention basin drawing it is shown as 110.50, and its relationship with other site levels is not established. The relevant drawing is ADAMCM-1-4-003 dated 21/08/2019 where the adjacent earthworks to the south are not shown, which would help people's appreciation of the great height of the proposed earthworks.

2.2 The drawing of the Towpath Bridge – A05/601B 25/10/2018 – It does not show it in its context. There are no details of the landscape adjacent to the bridge, to enable an appreciation of its effect on its surroundings. It will rise to cross over the proposed marina entrance at a height of approximately 117.767 to which should be added the approximate height of pedestrians on the bridge, i.e. eye level will be at approximately 119.50m. This is 4 m above canal water level and will have no vegetation to screen it in views along the road, from both north and south. Mitigation from the north will not be possible as this land is not in the applicant's ownership, and from the south the planting on the proposed mound will have to reach at least 2 m. height before mitigation occurs. From the bridge over the canal the towpath bridge will be a major structure which in combination with the close by towpath bridge, will be a major intrusion into the landscape. Its colour is not specified. If white, which is so frequently used near water, this would make it appear even more visible from the Lower Boddington road.

3.0 SURVEYS AND LEVELS

3.1 Levels and contours are expressed in a different way on different maps and this leads to confusion when trying to assess how they work. Drawing ADAMCM-1-1-001 is incorrectly dates 2017 as title block includes survey date of Nov. 2019!

3.2 On the master site plan the contours are shown at 0.200m intervals whereas on other plans they are 2.50m apart. This makes the site plan very busy and full of unnecessary contours, giving an impression of very extensive attention to design works, which is not the case. These have been drawn by a computer with little understanding of the way contours work.

3.3 The density of contours causes difficulty in reading and understanding them, causing confusion and/or obfuscation of their purpose. There has been no attempt to correct this and again it is questionable why this has not been requested for clarity's sake by the local authority. In my previous objections, the contours are noted as inaccurate along the northern sector parallel to the stream and old railway line. For example, road levels between the roadway along the edge of the marina and the roadway at the foot of the northern embankment show a significant fall between the two roads and because the way the contours have been designed there will be a twist and sharp cross-fall on the road producing a poor camber. This has clearly not been designed by a highways engineer. Further, there still has been no redesign of levels and paths at the eastern end of the site where the cars are approximately 4 – 5 m. below the marina perimeter. No steps are indicated, only a steep ramp. Pedestrian ramps should be at a maximum slope of 1:15 for able-bodied people and these paths are approaching 1 : 5! The carrying of baggage/goods up and down these ramps would be almost impossible. It is insufficient too state that this is a matter for subsequent detailed drawings, when the drawings should show an understanding of what the scheme would look like. The current design is incorrect and gives an erroneous view to the public who may not recognise the inaccuracies.

4.0 SITE ACCESS DURING CONSTRUCTION, PUBLIC ACCESS and VILLAGE ACCESS

4.1 No drawings show the proposed site access through the farm to the site. The route from the farm would have to cross the stream and the old railway line. No location has been noted, no detailed survey of its location is available, no culverting is detailed, no mention of pollution control, including the deterioration that would occur to the stream were alien materials fall into it and no details showing required safety features, etc. This is a further example of the public being given totally inadequate information and would not be able to appreciate this project realistically.

4.2 I understand that access by residents of Claydon is to be discouraged.

4.3 The drawings indicate there is still a connection between towpath PROW 170/6/20 and the canal to the east of the site, when this is not available. The landowner has currently prevented this by shutting off this suggested connection still further. This should be on the drawing for clarity to the landowner and those likely to use the footpath. No opinion from the landowner through which PROW 170/6/20 passes has been sought or identified.

5.0 OVERSUPPLY

5.1 The Sequential Test site Plan (Adams-1-1-003 25/1/18) does not give the complete story about existing and potential marina location because it shows no sites to the north of the Claydon. It gives the wrong impression that the only alternative sites that are relevant are those to the south. Fenny Compton Marina is to the north and a significant marina, which together with this site and all the approved sites between Banbury and Fenny Compton would provide berths for 750 boats, over a short stretch of the Oxford Canal.

5.2 By promoting this further submission, it is clear that the applicants do not understand the density of boat traffic throughout the summer months over this section of canal. Waiting times at the Claydon Locks is already a problem in both directions, and the addition of a large number of additional berths disproportionate within this sensitive environment.

6.0 THE VALUE OF THE LANDSCAPE TO LOCAL PEOPLE

6.1 The proposed marina would cause the complete obliteration of an important area within this local landscape, the character of which relates to the historic canal and its adjacent countryside. The applicants seem to not understand at this area is much valued by residents. It is a rural area, not adjacent to any development – it is agricultural, typified by large open field sloping gradually towards a local stream, with woodlands and copses within the local topography, with nothing forced into the area. The former railway has been absorbed into the farmland and was never a major feature, altering the land in any significant way. The canal was strategic as it enabled goods to be transported between major centres in the past century. The proposed marina, with its vast embankments would not be natural in form and would be forced into a significant open agricultural space, completely negating the gently sloping topography and obliterating views.

6.2 The landform changes and planting have not been amended and the plans ignore the previous comments regarding the height of the central building, the lighting that would be

required for the building and the marina, the vast excavations of the lake for the soil for the embankments, the lack of calculations regarding permanence of the water source and the availability of sufficient volumes for the lake, the lack of appreciation of the effect of drought on the canal which occurs almost every year, causing the stranding of boats and addition of great areas of planting which are out of place in this open agricultural area.

7.0 ROAD CONDITION AND SAFETY

7.1 There is again no recognition of the very poor current quality of the Lower Boddinton Road. This road has deteriorated still further since second application, with wider cracks and increasing subsidence with increasing slopes falling towards the east. This sector caused a van about 10 years ago to skid off this road into the hedge during snow and it had to be rescued by a villager. Nowhere on the drawings are notes indicating the range of works required to be undertaken by the applicants.

7.2 As this road runs from Oxfordshire into Northamptonshire, it is assumed that both Highways departments have commented on this project. There is no reference to Northamptonshire being a consultee. Have they been approached? What conditions are either highway authority going to enforce? The public should be informed for an accurate view on the extent and appropriateness of the marina in this area. Also, are any services to run in future along this road and, if so, where? Are the public to be inconvenienced by any works to this road?

7.3 Further, there are no details of what road works associated with the development are required by Cherwell DC or Oxfordshire County Council. Are we to assume that no road works are required by them as well? That there will be no significant increase in traffic and no heavy good vehicles? This should be clarified too.

7.4 It has been suggested that access to the marina during construction will be through the applicant's farm. However, no details have been provided, no location has been noted on the farm and across the stream, and no conditions have been indicated by the local authority on the calibre of the stream crossing that would be required. Are no drainage structures required, no bridge crossing, nothing on potential pollution from spillage, no regulations regarding potential pollution or stream blockage, nothing still on the maintenance of the necessary drainage structures, and no levels have been provided. If the project should fail in the future, are the public liable to restore the landscape? What guarantees are in place for this?

7.5 If there is a failure of any associated structure within the adjacent property which presumably includes the stream, what guarantees are there that the developers will repair, restore, or correct them in perpetuity? It is anticipated that such regulations covering the above in 7.4 will be required Cherwell District Council, why have they not been dealt with by the applicants? Similarly, why are they not shown on the drawings?

8.0 CONDITIONS

8.1 Because there are so many gaps in the provision of accurate information in this third application for the proposed marina north of Claydon, it should be refused until all the usual details required by detailed planning are developed. A further application should be required covering all these deficiencies and they should be subject to normal planning law.

8.2 It is understood that the Government wishes to speed up the planning process, but it should not be at the cost to the local environment. The environment is increasingly of concern regarding climate change, pollution, etc., and yet this is not addressed by this application.

8.3 The liability of the public should be clarified with respect to road works, stream crossing works, water sources for the lake, pollution control and monitoring, accidental failure of embankments, etc., etc. The absence so far in this third application of accurate details dealing with road works, landscape levels, the relationship of structures within the landscape, the heights of buildings related to lighting levels, visual obstruction, the obliteration of local valued views, the severe change to the nature of the landscape and the required large scale embankments and mounds to satisfy the applicant's design, will lead to a massive change locally. It is hoped that the local authority will require the applicants to satisfy sufficient conditions to achieve a development which enhances the locality, because any development in open countryside must enhance the district in which it is located.

9.0 OBJECTION

9.1 This is the third application for the proposed Claydon Marina, north of the village, to be submitted for full approval, the two previous applications having been withdrawn.

9.2 I have attempted to reflect on the application by discussing the differences between the former applications and this third one, only to find that the applicants have basically not understood the need for adjustments to their design, etc. to accomplish an enhancement of the landscape, not just its alterations and obliterations. That it would appear that the proposed application for marina and its associated works has not addressed some serious limitations evident in previous applications, indicates the rejection of these damaging effects by the applicants as minor and of little consequence.

9.3 The scale of the vast earthworks, the damage to the local canal environment, the potential oversupply of berths within a restricted length of the historic Oxford Canal, the creation of an additional large lake (as the source for spoil required) with no guarantee of water supply, quite apart from the water supply needed from the Oxford Canal which suffers from water shortage almost every year, climate change or not, have been regarded as of no consequence.. Little benefit would accrue to the village of Claydon, especially as no free access to the area by the village residents will result in separation between the two, not harmony.

9.4 If I could be persuaded that this project will offer enhancement and benefit to others than the marina I might consider it appropriate but that it doesn't in any way forces me to object.

9.5 Therefore, resulting from the above, trusting that Cherwell District Council will do the same, I strongly object to the proposed marina development north of the village of Claydon.

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