

Hornton Grounds
Hornton
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX15 6HH

8 October 2020

Planning Application - 20/02453/F

Dear Mr Neville,

Ref: <https://planningregister.cherwell.gov.uk/Planning/Display/20/02453/F>
Hornton Grounds Quarry Hornton: A fuel depot including ancillary offices, the
installation of plant and hardstanding

Our objection to this application

We are the immediate neighbours of the proposed fuel depot. As owners of the proposed depot's shared access apron and driveway from the main road (A422), as well as the livestock farming land which abutts the perimeter of the proposed site, we are objecting, very strongly, to this application. We believe that the application and substantiation do not take into account - or, indeed, ignore or counter - some crucial facts, implications and risks and we set these out on the following pages.



Image 1: Hornton Grounds from the air, September 2020

Background

We moved here 11 years ago to set up a self-sustaining farming cycle which would enrich the soil, encourage biodiversity and produce food of superior quality for human consumption. Through dedicated hard work, colleague support and initiative, we have achieved these goals.

Our further aim was to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. This too has been achieved: we have installed a carbon-neutral biomass central heating boiler and set out a 50kW photo voltaic array on a new farm building roof, providing green power for the national grid.

Our award-winning B&B business

Hornton Grounds farmhouse (Image 1) is a Grade II listed building in the Queen Anne style. It was first built circa 1680, shortly after the Civil War. During our tenure we have also established an award-winning AA four star Bed and Breakfast business (see Images 2 and 3) and a Park and Ride holiday and livery yard. We are set in 200 acres of rolling Ironstone Down countryside, enjoying plenty of off-road riding routes. A bridleway leads from our farmyard to Hornton village, with other rides to Horley, Ratley, Edgehill, Alkerton, Shenington, Balscote and Upton.



Image 2



Image 3

During a typical weekend, at any one time there can be around 20 people in and around our farmhouse and farmyard - tending animals, serving and buying in the farm shop, in the livery yard with horses, riding out, in the house as guests and running the B&B, as well as three permanent homes for four people. Sometimes, people and animals are just 10-20 metres away from the proposed fuel depot. See Images 4-7:

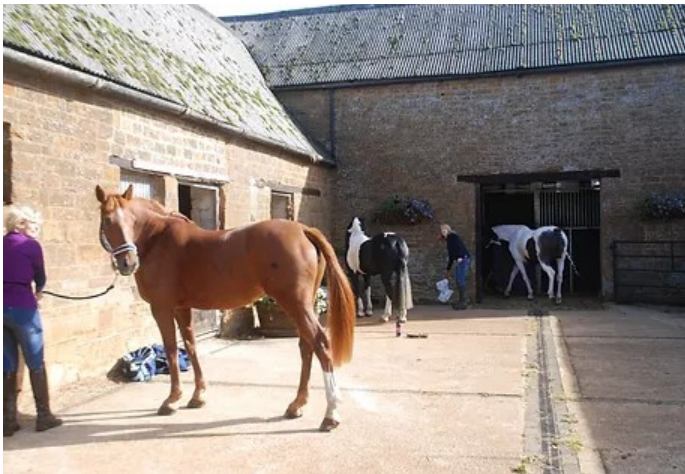


Image 4: in the livery yard



Image 5, above: cow and calf turn-out



Image 6:
the farm team move sheep at the shared entrance to the farm, Building Stone's yard and the proposed fuel depot

Image 7:
Pigs and arks in the area immediately adjoining the proposed fuel depot - six metres away



The proposed night-time deliveries inwards by supertanker and the subsequent 158 outward deliveries, starting very early in the mornings, would destroy the peace and quiet we offer and which are expected by our guests and livery customers. Tanker traffic, inward and outward, would pass only 275 metres from the guests' and our bedroom windows, seven days a week. (See Image 8 - fuel depot map distances)

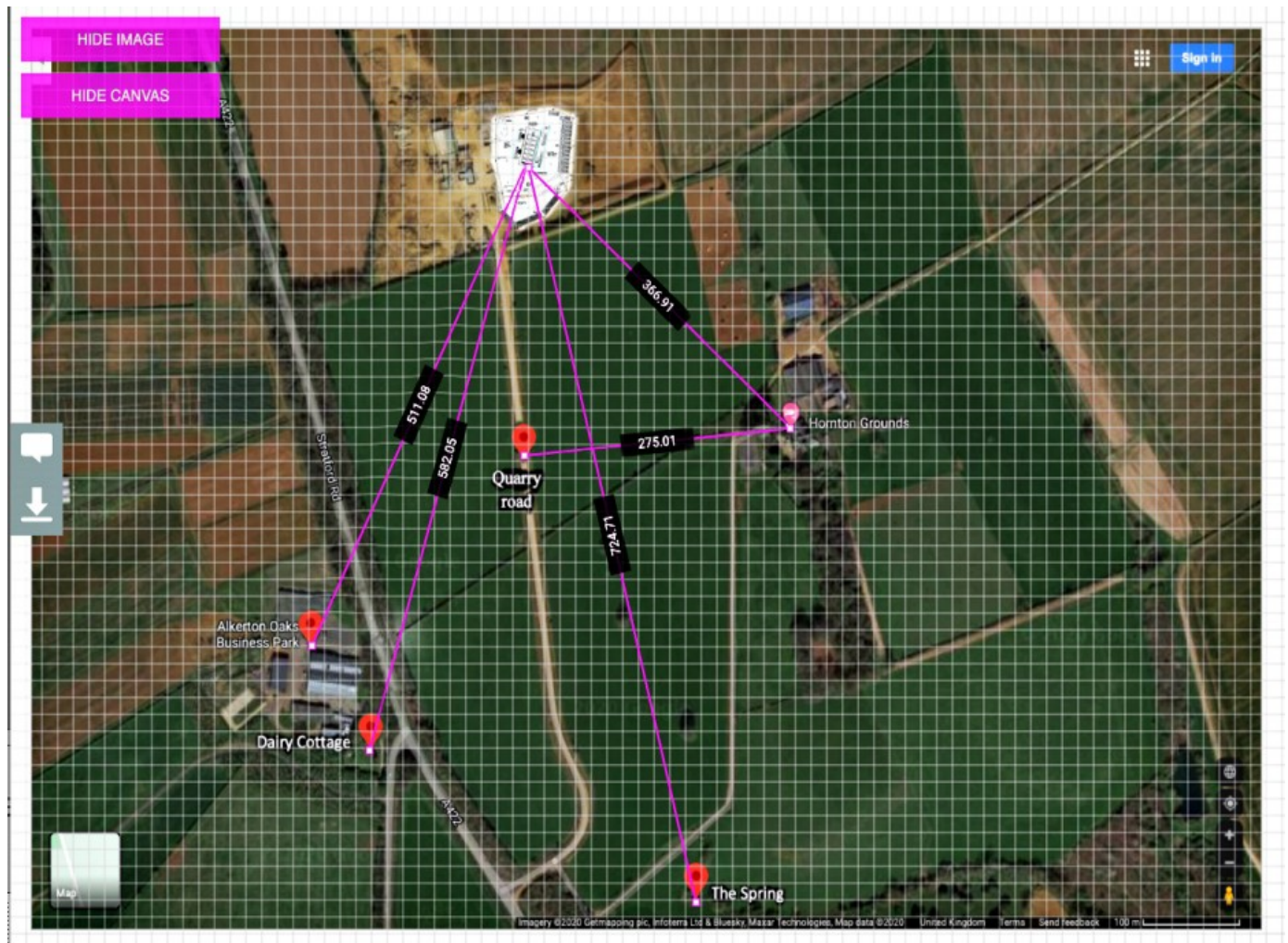


Image 8: distances, in metres, from the proposed fuel depot to Hornton Grounds and key homes, workplaces and the spring

How can we continue to market ourselves as a peaceful rural retreat with this on our doorstep? Vehicle movements may start as early as 5.30am. Almost constant vehicle noise and reversing beepers, which can already be heard occasionally across the Hornton valley and into the village due to the adjacent Building Stone quarry yard traffic, would destroy our tranquil rural life and ability to earn a living. Our B & B business would be decimated, badly affecting our income and that of our support team of cleaners and suppliers.

Dark skies

We have many visitors from cities and urban areas from all over the world. All of them comment on the dark skies here and their joy in being able to see the sky at night. The proposed 24/7 illuminations would destroy their star gazing. Regardless of how the lights are shaded or hooded, there will be reflection from the concrete apron and equipment, giving rise to a night-time glow.



Image 9 - rolling countryside at Hornton Grounds Farm

The special value of this land and its livestock

Hornton Grounds Farm is comprised of 87 hectares of undulating land in the tranquil landscape of the Ironstone Downs, lying just 290 metres from the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) - see Image 9. The farm produces cereals, 100% Pasture-Fed beef and lamb and free range Bronze turkeys. Some of this produce is sold through the on-site farm shop. The farm is tenanted to a young farmer who currently employs three staff. The farm boundary is only six metres from the edge of the proposed fuel depot, right next to our pig enclosure (see Image 7).

The current dis-used quarry site proposed for the fuel farm drains over onto our land and causes flooding and erosion. See Images 10 to 13 below:



Image 10



Image 11



Image 12: note the proximity of the drainage ditch to the boundary fence marking our farm boundary - the proposed site, to the left of this shot, would drain alongside the farm boundary down this channel



Image 13

NB. We have made the proposed site landowner aware of the ongoing flooding situation. These images totally refute the assertions made in the flood risk assessment by Wormald Burrows Partnership Ltd July 2020 - their ref E4040-FRA Report-Rev 0:

2.4.3 This drainage system is reported to work well and there have been no reports of any flooding since it was installed. Despite reports of a steady flow of water to the ditch, it is understood that water infiltrates along its length and even following prolonged heavy rainfall, there is no water evident in the ditch further south. It is therefore anticipated that this runoff infiltrates into the ground at relatively shallow depths

In our lower/southern meadow livestock graze and drink from the spring-fed stream. The source of this spring is at risk of being flooded by the outwash from the proposed fuel depot site. This image (14) of our stream shows water mint which is an indicator species for pure and clean water.

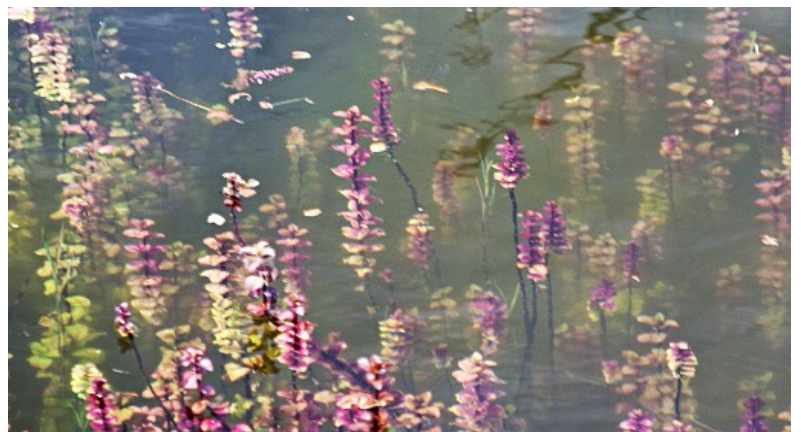


Image 14

Biodiversity and conservation

Our farm hosts a large and varied bat population. (See image 15 - opposite) We have identified Grey Long Eared, Daubentons, Pipistrelle and Barbastelle amongst others. We see at least four differing bats flying most evenings. One evening, with the assistance of a conservation officer with a detector, we identified seven flying bat species.

An RSPB survey in spring 2011 (see Appendix I) showed we had at least 53 resident bird species on the farm. An average farm will, perhaps, have only 35.

We have a host of butterflies and flying insects during the summer. The water courses and ponds are full of invertebrates and crustacea. We have smooth newts, grass snakes, smooth snakes, adders, hedgehogs, polecats, water vole, dormice, a huge healthy population of breeding badgers and foxes. We have muntjac, fallow and roe deer browsing over the whole farm and over the quarry and proposed fuel farm site. Brown hares are also seen, weekly, over the proposed site and surrounding fields.



Images 15 and 16: the deer is pictured on the proposed fuel depot site, April 2020



24/7 light pollution and vehicle and plant noise will have a serious detrimental effect on the wildlife that abounds here, particularly our glorious bats. Numerous respected governmental studies highlight the importance of the impact of noise on wildlife. DEFRA's own words are unequivocal: "Where noise adversely affects wildlife and ecosystems, particular consideration needs to be given to the potential effects of noisy development on international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity".

Highways dangers and other traffic considerations

The proposed site is accessed from the A422, Stratford Road, over our private property which lies alongside the A422, to the east and west.

The A422 is a major and popular motorcycle route for weekend 'bikers'. It is shown on one biker website (www.bestbikingroads.com) to have a high '4 Star' rating for its drive characteristics and what is deemed to be a negligible police presence. (See image 17) Hence, the stretch of road directly leading to the entrance to our farm and the proposed fuel depot is used frequently by weekend racing bike riders, causing a regular hazard - and that's before adding the huge danger of regular fuel tankers using, and turning off and onto, the same route at all times of the day and night. The motorcycles, racing or otherwise, are among other traffic that typically exceeds the national speed limit on this section of road.

Europe > United Kingdom Motorcycle Roads > South East England and London

Like 0 Tweet Share

A422 : Banbury - Stratford Upon Avon

Star Ratings

★★★★★

Corners : ★★★★★ 4.0
Straights : ★★★★★ 4.0
Scenery : ★★★★★ 4.0
Road Surface : ★★★★★ 3.0
Visibility : ★★★★★ 4.0
Police Presence : 1.0
Hazards : 3.0

Info

Route Added By : rmcas
Date : October 13, 2009
Length : 29 kms / 18 miles
Download GPX - ???
Road Type : Rural

Discover Nearby

- worcester tt ...
- a3400 b4035 stratford...
- banbury to wales...
- banbury to swindon...
- banbury to bournemouth...
- banbury wellesbourne easy...
- banbury to yarmouth...
- daventry tt ...
- banbury lane northampton...

Load Map Button

Press Button To Load Map

Discussion

On Our Motorcycle Travel Forum
Hello
Bear Camp Road along Rogue Riv...

Image 17: A four star rating for this stretch of the A422 for racing bikers - <https://www.bestbikingroads.com/motorcycle-roads/united-kingdom/south-east-england/ride/a422-banbury-stratford-upon-avon>

Worthy of particular note is a current Highways condition to limit the vehicle movements on and off this site to 10 per day (ref. OCC planning register number MW-0090/14). The proposed 158 tankers per week flies in the face of this restriction. What is the purpose of such conditions if they are to be so flagrantly tossed aside?

Ice

On the A422, from Alkerton Oaks Business Park to the Indian Queen Restaurant (formerly the New Inn) the road has been identified as an ice hazard and is accordingly signed with the highways authority red triangle with an ice crystal icon and the word 'ICE'. Many cars have slipped and crashed. Anecdotally, there have been eight cars slipped on the ice and crashed into the hedge on one day. This serious and dangerous ice hazard has not been stated in the traffic report submitted by Wormald Burrows Partnership Limited. See Image 18:



Image 18

Regarding the junction with the private road to the Building Stone stone cutting yard and our property, there have been several near misses, with our traffic and the quarry traffic leaving the quarry road to drive out towards the A422. See images 19 and 20:



Images 19 and 20: heavy stone-carrying vehicles vie with traffic at the turning to Hornton Grounds farm, Building Stone cutting yard and the proposed fuel depot

We already regard this junction as a high risk to our farm traffic, our B&B guests and customers to and from the farm shop. A private 'Give Way' sign with appropriate road markings needs to be installed on the private quarry road to instil caution before there is a crash of vehicles, persons or animals. The risk will rise exponentially with the addition of the heavy tankers.

Families with children and dogs walking on the D'Arcy Dalton Way often use the same main road access to follow the route. (See Images 21, 22 and 23) They will also find themselves at risk from the increased heavy traffic entering and leaving the proposed site.



Images 21 and 22

Fuel safety and danger of explosion.

We are most concerned with the not inconsiderable risk of a Buncefield-type gas cloud explosion. The Buncefield fuel store in Hertfordshire exploded in 2005. The explosion was heard in Banbury. There is more than sufficient petrol proposed to be stored by this CERTAS application to support such an explosion. Our dwelling house - home to three permanent households - is only 366 metres from the closest tank (see image 8). The potential gas cloud could extend up to 297 metres and still create a viable explosion. We do not find 69 metres to be an acceptable safety margin.

It does not affect us alone: the proximity of our farmhouse, Hornton Grounds, Dairy Cottage and Alkerton Oaks Business Park (with nine business tenants employing some 45 people) puts us all in the range of the gas cloud and risks fatal consequences for all of us.

Summary

This site is the subject of what we would refer to as 'planning permission creep'. After the quarrying and stone extraction on this site ended, there were conditions to return the area to agriculture. The field to the west of the adjacent existing stone cutting yard was farmed and then became a series of spoil heaps before planning permission was sought and granted for agricultural buildings. There was then an application to vary this to light industry, which was granted. Now we are faced with this application which is most certainly *not* light industry.

The presence of a fuel depot at this site will be grossly inappropriate and adversely impact upon the character of the surrounding environment. We fail to see any significant differences between this site and the nearby Sugarswell Business Park application which was turned down in 2019.

We strongly protest to this proposed fuel depot and urge you to refuse this application.

Yours sincerely,

Graham J.L. Vint and Catherine J.T. Vint, Hornton Grounds.



Image 23: the red dotted line to the lower right is the D'Arcy Dalton Way, running through Hornton Grounds, at the heart of this Ironstone Downs area of rural North Oxfordshire



VOLUNTEER & FARMER ALLIANCE



Species List: Hornton Grounds Farm

This list includes all birds seen during the RSPB Volunteer & Farmer Alliance Surveys carried out during the 2011 breeding season. *Note some birds may have been missed, and winter visitors are unlikely to be represented.*

Species	Status
Blackbird	Green
Blackcap	Green
Blue tit	Green
Buzzard	Green
Canada goose	Green
Carion crow	Green
Chaffinch	Green
Chiffchaff	Green
Coal tit	Green
Collared dove	Green
Coot	Green
Duncock	Amber
Feral pigeon	Green
* Goldfinch	Green
Great spotted woodpecker	Green
Great tit	Green
Green woodpecker	Amber
* Greenfinch	Green
Grey wagtail	Amber
Herring gull	Red
House martin	Amber
House sparrow	Red
* Jackdaw	Green
Jay	Green
* Kestrel	Amber
Lesser black-backed gull	Amber
* Linnet	Red
Little grebe	Amber

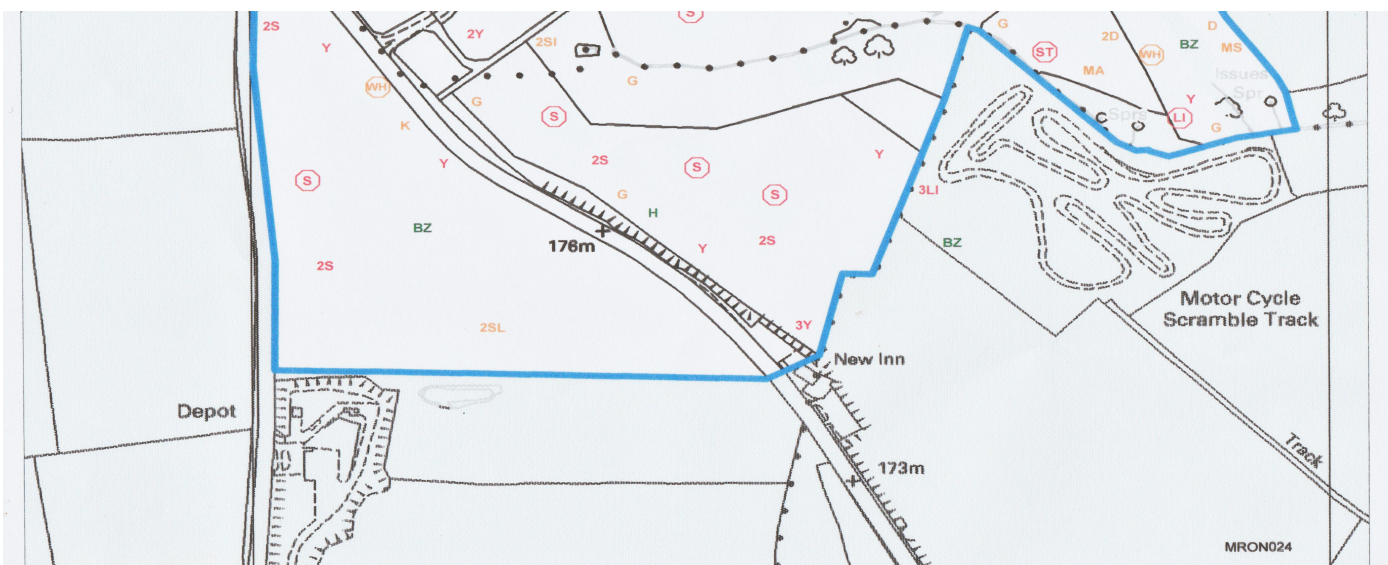
Species	Status
Long-tailed tit	Green
Magpie	Green
Mallard	Amber
Mistle thrush	Amber
Moorhen	Green
Mute swan	Green
Pheasant	Green
Pied wagtail	Green
Raven	Green
Red-legged partridge	Green
* Reed bunting	Amber
Robin	Green
Sedge warbler	Green
* Skylark	Red
Song thrush	Red
Spotted flycatcher	Red
* Starling	Red
* Stock dove	Amber
Swallow	Amber
Swift	Amber
* Tree sparrow	Red
* Whitethroat	Amber
* Woodpigeon	Green
Wren	Green
* Yellowhammer	Red
TOTAL SPECIES	53

* Farmland Bird Indicator Species

Red Status: Birds of high conservation concern. These Species have either undergone $\geq 50\%$ decline in UK breeding population or range over the last 25 years, a historical decline from 1800 – 1995, or are species of global conservation concern.

Amber status: Birds of medium conservation concern. These species have undergone a 25 – 49% decline in breeding population or range in the UK during the last 25 years or have unfavourable conservation status in Europe.

All other species hold **green status** and are of lower conservation concern.



RSPB Volunteer & Farmer Alliance Project 2011

Horton Grounds Farm Survey Results - Key Results

Species Key:

BZ	buzzard	LG	little grebe	SF	spotted flycatcher
D	duncock	LI	linnet	SG	starling
G	green woodpecker	M	mistle thrush	SI	swift
GL	grey wagtail	MA	mallard	SL	swallow
H	grey heron	MS	mute swan	ST	song thrush
HM	house martin	RB	reed bunting	TS	tree sparrow
HS	house sparrow	S	skylark	WH	whitethroat
K	kestrel	SD	stock dove	Y	yellowhammer

Symbols Key:

RED	species of high conservation concern
AMBER	species of medium conservation concern
GREEN	species of lower conservation concern

circles denote territories

Scale: 1:4,717 Central Grid Reference: SP384441

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