

Gage Farm Barn, Sibford Road, Epwell, Banbury OX15 6LH

TO: George Smith, Planning Officer, Cherwell D C

Re Cherwell District Council, North Oxfordshire.

Planning Application 21/01081/F Matthew Platt, comments due date 18/05/21

We have various objections and reservations about this proposal which impacts on Epwell Parish although in the Parish of Sibford Gower.

We understand that Sibford Parish Council has objected to this planning application whilst Epwell Parish Council, which we attended, has expressed concerns particularly in relation to the "off the peg" barn which seems of excessive size, area and height and admitted to be so by the applicant. What is there to stop this spare space being used now, or in the future, for processing substantially more lavender products from other growers or indeed other industrial product altogether? This would seriously impact upon the rural nature of this part of Epwell and has potentially extended the village envelope.

Epwell is a compact village that nestles in an undulating landscape of small scale surrounding hills with some distant views of Warwickshire. The impact of this out of scale barn, constructed at such an open high point overlooking the village, would be very harmful to the rural nature and ambience of the area.

Our objections are listed below:

1. Whilst we understand the necessity for a small barn for the protection and security of equipment associated with the scale of the lavender planting the proposed barn is of excessive size [375sqm] both in height and dimensions and would have a seriously detrimental impact on the open field with footpaths running close by and adjacent to the road dropping down to the village of Epwell.
2. The proposed site of the barn, at present adjacent to the neighbouring garden of The Bungalow, would be in line of sight from the sitting room of The Bungalow which overlooks the orchard and field beyond. A previous application, which was withdrawn, is understood to have placed the barn close to the entrance gate to the site of Spring Field, East of Sibford Road. There are, to date, two pallets in the gate area which have caused considerable uncertainty over plans.
3. The industrial process could be placed in a unit more suited to this manufacturing procedure in a business unit locally.
4. We understood this building proposal was to be used only for the equipment used for the maintenance of the lavender in THIS field, but as admitted by Matthew Platt, lavender could be brought from further afield to the distillery. Maybe the processing of other products related to lavender could also ensue in the passage of time?

5. Where would any run off or effluent from such building and processes be drained and could this have impact on the water drainage or overspill from the nearby pond which collects from the fields above and has an underground outlet onto other properties below?
6. Should any planning permission be granted by Cherwell DC, could the building be reduced in size and particularly in height so that it does not have such an impact on the visual beauty and grandeur of the wood and trees, many of which are splendid Scots Pine trees, and a visible landmark from miles around as well from the footpath walks that cross the field, especially on the descent towards the village of Epwell. [Footpaths Sibford Gower 348/16 and 348/17 both cross this field and 348/11 is a Bridleway above the adjoining field.] All these footpaths wholly or in part overlook Spring Field and are frequently used by many Epwellians and by longer distance walkers who value the unspoilt nature of this landscape.
7. Should planning permission by any chance be considered, could there be landscaping and planting to deflect the impact of any such building from a distance, which over time would create space for fauna and flora.
8. Where will the utilities enter the property and with what impact, it seems unlikely that they will not be required, and where for instance would water for the processes be obtained from?

In conclusion our comments are to formally **object**. If this application should be approved it needs to be with conditions to secure the future.

Yours sincerely, Allison Pollard, [Footpath Warden] & Charles Pollard