

Wickhams
Paines Hill
Steeple Aston
OX25 4SQ
19-5-2021

Subject Planning Application - 21/01123/F

Dear Mr Kirkham,

We are writing to object to the Planning Application - 21/01123/F, the redevelopment of Hatch End Chicken Sheds. The proposal seeks to replace existing storage, warehousing and office buildings to provide 25 business units comprising Class E(g) and B8 totalling 2,215 m2 (GIA), with 79 car parking spaces and 24 cycling spaces.

The Developer has listened to some of the objections raised to their previously, withdrawn, application. The reduction in the number of business units from 30 to 25 and the redesign of those units to become single story units is welcomed. However, this reduced sized cannot overcome the existing road infrastructure limitations, considering the many pinch points in Steeple Aston on Southside, Paines Hill and North Side as well as the very narrow Fir Lane road. It does not address the real concerns around the safety of children arriving to the pre-school and primary school every day on Fir Lane. Our daughter attended and now our two grandsons go to the schools on Fir Lane. We know at first hand the safety concerns parents have at drop and pick up times. The increased heavy construction traffic, with their poor sightlines, during the construction phase and the significantly increased office traffic once the development is complete do nothing to allay these safety concerns.

The new application comes under Class E(g) and B8 whereas the previous application was under classifications B1, B2 and B8 (light industrial, storage and distribution units). The new classification introduced by the Government in September 2020 combines Classes B1 and B2 with Class A developments. This new application, therefore, adds the possibility of shops, cafes, retail, gyms and healthcare facilities to the light industrial/offices in the application. If planning permission were to be granted the developer could then go down the Class A route, this would significantly alter the traffic profile throughout the day. We wonder if the OCC Traffic Department have considered this in their assessment.

The application states "OCC concluded that the increase in trip generation present in the TS as part of the application (LAP ref. 20/01127/F) was considered unlikely to cause significant adverse traffic or road safety on the surrounding transport network.". This is a reckless and very dangerous view of the road infrastructure in and around Steeple Aston. We would go so far as to say it could be construed as a reckless and negligent assessment. By the developers own estimates it can be calculated that the new buildings will have the capacity to accommodate a workforce of over 1,800 people (The developers estimate only 1.8% of the workforce will be cycling and have provided 34 cycling spaces, this equates to a total 1,888 people working at the development!).

The road infrastructure in and around Steeple Aston and the road leading to Middle Aston, Fir Lane, where the proposed development is to be located has not changed in size or condition since the last withdrawn application. Nor is there any possibility to widen the roads in Steeple Aston to accommodate construction traffic or the significant subsequent increase in vehicle movements through the village as a result of the proposed development.

We wonder if the OCC Traffic Department have visited Steeple Aston and looked at Fir Lane, South Side or North Side between 7:30am and 9:30 am, and 2:30pm and 3:30 pm. If they did, they would see the traffic chaos outside the pre-school and primary school. They would see the school bus dropping off and picking up pupils and the severe difficulty cars have passing parked cars waiting to pick up children or trying to pass one another or the bus.

If they OCC Traffic Department came to the village at any time during the day, they would have noticed that cars, vans and trucks travelling in the opposite directions on Paines Hill, i.e., approaching from the bottom of the hill and the from top of the hill from North Side, cannot see one another until they are significantly up or down the hill, where they meet. At which point they encounter a significant pinch point outside Paines Hill House. Substantial and regular damage can be seen to the kerbside wall of the house opposite Paines hill House as vehicles endeavour to pass. If they did visit the village, they would notice that two S4 busses travelling in opposite directions along South Side have significant difficulty passing one another and frequently must mount the kerb just to get by at any time of the day. That is the situation at present!

The way we now live today, post Covid, means that we are shopping much more online. A consequence of this has been a significant increase in delivery vans in the village. Has the OCC taken this into account? On the map used in the developers' applications (Figure 3.1 Site Location and Local Amenities) all roads appear straight, wide and flat. The houses appear tiny. This map gives a distorted view of the road infrastructure in Steeple Aston and

fails to properly indicate the steep gradients approaching Steeple Aston from Lower Heyford or those on Paines Hill.

The Transport Statement includes a projection that 18.6% of people coming to the development will arrive by sustainable transportation. If by this the applicant means public transport, then a quick review of bus and train timetables shows Steeple Aston is a very poorly served rural village at all times of the day. As to the assertion that 8.3% people coming to the development are expected to arrive on foot, we can only say this: from the north, Middle Aston, there is no footpath, no public lighting and roads are even narrower than in Steeple Aston. With the expected increase in traffic the development will undoubtedly bring, no one in their right mind would choose to walk from Middle Aston to Hatch End. When walking to the new development from Steeple Aston, the pavement ends at the primary school as does the public lighting.

The proposed development will also blur the boundaries between Steeple Aston and Middle Aston, something the Planners are seeking to avoid.

Finally we would add that truck and bus traffic on Paines Hill already causes vibration inside our house and our neighbours' houses. We have increasing concern that this will generate cracks and cause structural damage. In any case the road is not designed for its current volume of traffic let alone an increase.

We would urge you to reject this application.

Yours sincerely

Chris and Caroline Nevile