

# Comment for planning application 23/01085/F

<b>Application Number</b>	23/01085/F
<b>Location</b>	Bicester Heritage Buckingham Road Bicester
<b>Proposal</b>	RETROSPECTIVE - Change of Use of land to allow for aviation, vehicle exercising and other uses/events
<b>Case Officer</b>	Rebekah Morgan

<b>Organisation Name</b>	Claire Stalder
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<b>Address</b>	3 The Stables,Launton Road,Stratton Audley,Bicester,OX27 9AX
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<b>Type of Comment</b>	Objection
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<b>Type</b>	neighbour
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**Comments** Planning ref 23/01085/F - Retrospective change of use - Bicester Motion - Reasons for objection are outlined below.

We have been residents of Stratton Audley for nearly 20years. One of the reasons we moved to and enjoy the village of Stratton Audley so much is for its peaceful surroundings. As part of a conservation area, we are not alone in feeling the importance of this; A national report from historic England undertaken in 2012 found the most valued aspect of living in a conservation area to residents is the peaceful environment. "All of our case study areas, regardless of property premia or levels of deprivation expressed strong values attached to a green, peaceful residential environment." What is the point or benefit of a conservation area to our heritage and lives within these areas if this cannot be preserved through the application of the extra planning controls and considerations in place to protect this?

Much of what Bicester Heritage stated in their early occupation of the site was to develop the heritage of the site including aviation activities. Since the gliding club's contract was terminated in 2020 a significant part of genuine heritage linked to the site ended. Activities since, are more heavily (if not almost solely) focused on motor vehicles and events. This is not protecting and preserving the heritage of the site and historic buildings in line with conservation and more importantly puts these at risk of damage and harm and this application only seeks to further increase the negative impact.

We are concerned at the pace and scope of recent development plans and their impact both environmentally and to the health and wellbeing of many local residents. We note in it's statement Bicester Motion "merely seeks to normalise current activities" with retrospective planning, however this application clearly goes beyond this in pushing the number / frequency and type of events well beyond what is current.

It is of concern that this retrospective permission is being submitted after multiple plans for the site have already been approved and particularly, that at no point during scrutiny of these, has this lack of permissions been addressed. Most recently the Experience Quarter and Hotel (variation of conditions) were granted permission, 10 years after activities first began. We would not want to see this retrospective planning decision permit changes beyond those activities currently existing both in frequency, number of visitors and current permitted noise in order to protect and allow our continued enjoyment of the green and peaceful conservation area in which we live.

Most notably of concern is their planning statement seeking to unlimit days where noise increases of up to 6db on the track occur; Cat A offers the potential for 365 day racetrack use, alongside increases in all other categories at the same requesting a permitted limit of 108db. Totally unacceptable, greater than other tracks and with a significant, potentially daily, impact on residents' enjoyment of homes / gardens, their wellbeing as well as that on wildlife activity and presence in the area. The peaceful nature of the whole area along with our village and its status as a conservation area would be heavily impacted.

Launton Road properties (in the conservation area of Stratton Audley) back onto open fields that end at the boundary for BM, along which sound openly travels with no buffer. Noise from current events is loud and intrusive both inside and outside properties.

The current frequency of events limits the impact for residents across the year which

we are hopeful will remain, striking a balance between acceptable frequency of use for BM, whilst allowing some peaceful days to enjoy for residents.

These activities and events are currently carried out at a distance from Stratton Audley as the experience track sits away from the boundary of the site. This will change with the experience quarter development, bringing the perimeter track with any permitted noise closer to our properties.

Table 1 in Hydrocks report outlines typical existing uses on the current track, should this application be approved, sound tests should be repeated in differing conditions with further permissions sought for use of any track changes.

Hydrocks sound tests, carried out in 2019, were also conducted when activities were of a smaller scale and attendee numbers (including vehicles) were much lower. Current noise and traffic volumes have increased without its true impact being measured or assessed, again bringing into question what level of "normal" is to be approved here.

This retrospective application adds other activities/events (some motor vehicle related but not all!) It does not specifically define these. This seems vague and needs clarity of exact type & size to properly consider environment, resident and traffic impacts.

This application seeks to normalise current activities, currently motor with some aviation, NOT music events/festivals. However, seemingly without current permission, a vegan festival is planned for July with 12,000 visitors, camping overnight with music, food & events over 3 nights/4days. For all residents in Caversfield, North Bicester, Stratton Audley & Launton the traffic & noise impact from this will be huge, we have no information on what has been approved for this to go ahead. We strongly feel this retrospective application should not include or normalise this type of festival/music event as "other". An activity that has not explicitly been assessed/approved as appropriate on this heritage, former RAF site, should surely be reviewed?

Up to 25 events per year increases from 100+ to up to 12,000 attendees - if these are held on weekends that equates to the potential for one large scale event every other weekend!! Added to the rest of the listed events, visitors and activities will be constant. The small and already congested ring road around Bicester, including large numbers of visitors to Bicester Village cannot cope with this influx, struggles on the current scramble weekends a few times a year! This really must be measured in order that as locals we can access essential services, access sporting and leisure facilities without permanent gridlock.

The traffic report most significantly identifies 4 serious collisions and 1 fatal collisions during the 5 years to 2023, this is of huge concern. Whilst it points these to human error on "almost all counts", a marked increase in traffic will only come with an increased likelihood of more serious or tragic outcomes. Human error doesn't reduce the chance or likelihood of increased potentially tragic collisions, however, impatient drivers rushing to enter/exit events in huge volumes on congested roads with difficult junctions will.

We understand the need for local employment and tourism but hope your decision factors all significant negative impacts and risk factors. We strongly hope, in any recommendations and conditions (should this be approved) you consider the scale, frequency and restrict type of events to existing levels to maintain a sympathetic balance. Especially important for us all as BM develops the hotel and experience quarter, to ensure we protect and preserve the surrounding quiet conservation area for the benefits of our natural wildlife habitats, all local residents health, wellbeing and above all, road safety for all.

Claire and Joe Stalder

**Received Date**

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**Attachments**