

Proposal: Associated operational development to allow for conversion of stone barn to flexible use (cafe) as consented under prior approval 0189/19/PAU, including change of use of land to provide extended curtilage for associated access, parking, turning and landscaping.

THE PARISH COUNCIL'S SUBMISSION

The heritage benefit of retaining an agricultural building of character is recognised. Finding a compatible alternative use is also supported. Due, however, to strong community views and vital South Devon AONB policies enshrined in the Joint Local Plan, the Parish Council maintains its 23rd April 2019 OBJECTION to the application and sets out below a further commentary in response to the applicant's Appeal Statement as follows:

1. The Proposed Café Site Area

Statement 5.4.3 'The Parish Council appear to have estimated a quantity of covers they perceive as available within the proposed café...the Parish Council appear to have underestimated the amount of expected internal covers available and have not appreciated the quantity of expected external covers possible'.

Parish Council Assessment:

The scale and extent of the Appellant's infrastructure proposals are excessive and their need not substantiated.

The stone barn has an approximate 32 sq.m. (345 sq.ft.) footprint. The submitted drawings indicate a café internal floor area on ground and first floor of 57 sq. m. (612 sq.ft.). The proposed site area, includes a sweeping access road from the A379, service road and car parking, is recorded in the application as an area of 0.3 ha. (3,000 sq. m.), giving a proposed building floor space : site area ratio of less than 2%.

The café design provides a 16 cover / seating capacity, at first floor level, the area measuring approx. 22 sq. m. (see application drawings 3139.408). The ground floor (application drawing 3139.407) is given over to kitchen, counter servery and a toilet (with capacity for disabled use and baby change). The kitchen is domestic in scale, measuring 11 sq. m. plus counter service. The drawings show space for a staircase, toilet, store and entrance lobby. There is no space provision for disabled access to the first-floor seating area.

Externally, courtyard seating is shown for seasonal use, providing 4 tables accommodating up to 18 covers (application drawing 3139.407). Average annual weather statistics based on Plymouth's weather station (20 miles west) help quantify the likely use of outdoor café seating. Assuming that customers may choose to sit outside when effective daytime temperatures reach a minimum of 15 degrees Centigrade and leaving aside rain days, the data suggests that external café seating would be attractive to customers for perhaps up to 25% of the year.

As to car parking needs and capacity, a comparison may be made with the nearest hospitality premises. The Globe Inn is located on the A379 in the centre of Frogmore Village. It has inside capacity for 80 covers in an area estimated at 153 sq. m. plus bar and pool room. There are 8 guest

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double/ twin bed rooms. An attractive beer garden is located outside. The public house runs successfully with 30 car park spaces. On this evidence, at peak season, given all modes of access and transport, a provision of up to 10 café car park spaces is realistic.

As proposed the café car parking ratio is more than one space for each interior café cover and one space per 1.7 covers if planned external 'seasonal' seating is included. Café (Class A3) car parking standards are 'sui generis'.

As referenced in the applicant's planning statement, the café is '*within easy walking distance of the adjacent village and its bus stops*'. There is to be pedestrian access from Mill Lane and the adjacent amenity ground and the A379 is popular with cyclists and motor cyclists.

National and regional planning policy discourages the use of the car where there are more sustainable alternatives available, particularly public transport and promotes such measures as car-pooling or car sharing.

The Parish Council concludes that, as provided at the Springfield farm shop, half a mile west at East Charleton, all parking and service traffic should be accommodated and suitably screened along or near the A379 road frontage in order to minimise impact and intrusion into the AONB. Springfield incorporates a café similar in scale to the stone barn proposals. In this respect the applicant's proposal to move the A379 access to the site to the west of that approved in planning applications 2445/18/AGR (permitting a livestock corral) and 4105/18/AGR and 4104/18/AGR (permitting an agricultural transfer barn) appears counter-productive.

2. New Vehicle Access

Statement 4.2: "Given the establishment of the proposed café facility, a new access which is suitable in width and gradient for cars, delivery vans and a commercial refuse lorry is required, not just as an access which is suitable for large agricultural vehicles, which the consented agricultural access would only facilitate."

Statement 5.3: "The proposed new vehicular access to the A379 has been designed to ensure a safe and acceptable access is provided."

Parish Council Assessment:

The stone barn is a small building with limited capacity. To ensure safety heavy commercial vehicles and mixed private vehicles should be segregated at the point of entry and supervised. The new access which mixes volumes of HGV's to the transfer station with leisure vehicles to the café appears to go against HASA Regulations with no segregation of flow channels. The agricultural need has never been satisfactorily addressed and there are grave concerns over transshipments involving bulk handling to the main Winslade Farm complex.

The planned scale of infrastructure encroaches deeply and harmfully and into the AONB. The need for such extravagant and costly road, servicing and car parking is not proven. The costs cannot realistically be sustained or justified by the café operation and must be funded from resources outside the business new venture and for other eventual intended purposes.

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This planning applications and other recent applications for the owner's adjacent land point to a strategy to pursue development within the AONB:

- 1768/16/OPA, an application initially seeking the introduction of an access road from the A379, crossing Mill Lane to facilitate a 46-house development within the AONB. This was subsequently re-advertised, reduced to a 28-house development. (Refused).
- 2445/18/AGR, permitting a livestock corral field entrance from the A379 in a similar position to the above. (This application was approved but not implemented).
- 0013/18/AGR and 0014/18/AGR sought to utilise the livestock corral access for an agricultural transfer barn situated at the western end of the field (west of the existing stone barn application site) and sited adjacent to housing next to Frogmore's village settlement boundary. (Planning application required).
- 0429/18/FUL amended the agricultural transfer barn profile to the west of the present barn application site. (Withdrawn).
- 3066/18/AGR and 3067/18/AGR sought an agricultural transfer barn and access closer, but still west, of the present barn application site. (Refused).
- 4105/18/AGR and 4104/18/AGR relocated the agricultural transfer barn and access to the east of the present barn application site. (Ag determination details not required).

The Appellant's proposal is now to extend the permitted A379 highway access deeper into the AONB, constructed to Devon Highway 'estate road' standards, serving the café and a 20-space carpark and vehicle turning area.

There is here a pattern of 'opening up' AONB land with infrastructure for development. The consented agricultural applications have not been implemented there is concern that, if approved, the latest unsupported road and servicing proposals in this application would be destined to provision still further AONB development applications.

3. South Devon AONB

Statement 5.3: "The proposed works will not have a detrimental visual impact on the South Devon AONB."

Parish Council Assessment:

The proposed works WILL compromise the integrity of the South Devon AONB through the urbanisation of the southern slope to Mill Lane by excessive black tarmac encroachment. The Council is totally against the size of the operational infrastructure being imposed on to what is essentially a quiet, historic, Devon green lane. The car parking will be a noisy urban intrusion and an eyesore in the AONB, on the village's green lane recreational artery and to those properties within the settlement boundary adjacent to it.

Importantly, the proposed works is not in compliance with the Joint Local Plan TTV 26- Development in the Countryside and DEV25 Nationally Protected landscapes:

"The highest degree of protection will be given to protected landscapes of the South Devon AONB, Tamar valley AONB and Dartmoor National Park. The LPA's will protect the AONBs and National Park

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from potentially damaging or inappropriate development located within the protected landscapes or their settings.”

4. Applicant considerations

Statement 5.2.1/5.2.2 re summaries of objective v Supportive comments.

Parish Council Assessment:

There are presently thirty-one published letters of objection to the proposals from local residents /parishioners and one in support from an individual residing approximately 12 miles away. The Appellant’s statement does not reflect the strength of the public’s concerns. Further written comments received by the Parish Council at a meeting held on 12th November 2019 are appended. (Appendix A).

5. Public Interest

5.3: The Appeal argues that the proposals to preserve a heritage asset for future generations with job creation benefiting the local economy are within the public interest. “

5.3: “Comments have been made on whether there is a need for the proposed café.”

Parish Council Assessment:

The barn has been neglected for years, being allowed to fall into disrepair. The Council is concerned at the loss of viable agricultural land through the unnecessary plan to provide parking south of the café when the previous road layout contained in application 4105/18/AGR would facilitate servicing and car parking on the north side of the barn, adjacent to the main road.

The Parish Council has not seen any market surveys to substantiate the establishment of the business and the number of prospective users and excessive parking arrangements.

6. Sustainable tourism development

Statement 7.3: “The proposed conversion of the barn to a café would bring benefits to the local community, benefits and enhancement to the landscape character, provide employment opportunities and provide a new facility for local residents and tourists to enjoy.”

Parish Council Assessment:

The Council refers to the definition of sustainable tourism development by the World Tourism Organisation.

“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”.

Sustainable development is about getting the balance right between the needs of the environment, the host community and business. In this case, the balance is out of kilter with a real threat to the

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South Devon AONB landscape and character and with significant local opposition against the latest proposals versus a business development of a seasonal nature that will impact hugely on the environment.

7. CONCLUSION

The Parish Council objects to the planning application for the reasons set out above. The unwarranted encroachment of infrastructure into the protected AONB, the excessive parking provision and Associated Operational Development are not supportable. Nor, can it condone the lack of segregation of visitor and HGV vehicles in the proposed access.

Car parking and servicing should be contained on land between the stone barn and the A379 without harmful encroachment deeper into the South Devon AONB.

There are real concerns about ‘planning creep’ and that approval would lead the way to further applications for road extensions into the surrounding fields and south through the proposed car parking area to connect with Mill Lane. Neither the consented agricultural corral nor the transfer barn have been built. Design and construction costs associated with the extensive infrastructure proposed in the application are not considered sustainable within the café business.

The Parish Council wishes therefore to register its OBJECTION to the Appellant’s Appeal case.

Nigel Smith

Chair
Frogmore & Sherford Parish Council

15th November 2019

APPENDIX A

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Planning Application 0869/19/FUL APPEAL REFERENCE: APP/K1128/W/19/3235270

Parish Council 'drop-in' meeting held at Frogmore Village Hall, Tuesday 12th Nov. 2019

The meeting was attended by 17 parishioner and 4 parish councillors and South Hams District Council Ward Councillor for Allington and Strete and Vice Chairman of Council 2019-20.

Transcript of hand-written comments left by parishioners:

1. *Inappropriate in AONB and totally unacceptable.*
2. *Completely unnecessary. AONB should be protected. Flooding could be increased.*
3. *Unnecessary development, not required. Road access is not appropriate and is making a mockery of AONB.*
4. *Unneeded and unnecessary for the village. I would not support this.*
5. *Totally unnecessary development. I don't support it.*
6. *Absolutely inappropriate in the AONB and completely unnecessary. Cannot support it.*
7. *The application does not set out to meet any planning or perceived need but if granted would give support to an infilling application in future years, i.e. planning by attrition. The very large area of hard surface involved in this application can only add to the problems which already occur with the mill brook which floods on a regular basis.*
8. *Unnecessary development in an AONB. While I don't object to a café, who is going to use it to make it viable? Car park and access quite unnecessary and destroying land.*
9. *Too much infrastructure. A small car park by road to barn is all that is needed even if it has to be dug into the slope. The AONB will be swamped by road and car park – so big that it is totally unwarranted. Small café okay but emphasise on small and everything in keeping with the environment. It should not be built like a road to a major development with a car park to serve such a major development.*

The original comments are held, signed by the authors.

12th November 2019