

LITTLE ABINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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21/03039/FUL: Bancroft Farm, Church Lane, Little Abington

Demolition of existing dilapidated agricultural buildings and hardstandings. Erection of five dwellings and the conversion of two redundant barns to form a detached dwelling and an office.

Recommended refusal

Little Abington Parish Council (LAPC) met to discuss this application on Tuesday 3 August 2021. Four letters of objection were received, and one member of a household summarised his objections at the meeting. We understand from the applicant that more information to support the application was being prepared. The Parish Council based its decision on the information that was available.

We welcome the revised layout to avoid infringing the PVAA, but there was a unanimous objection to the proposal for many of the same reasons as we gave in December 2019 and April and October 2020.

We agree that the Bancroft Farm farmyard site, which has been left to fall into disrepair and neglect, should be used for housing that meets the village's needs. Following consultation with residents, the site was identified as a potential small development of up to six dwellings suitable for downsizing. We did not envisage that it would be a mixed development of housing and offices.

Our objections can be summarised as follows:

- **Rural character:** The proposed site remains an overly dominant and prominent form of development in the conservation area where the hardcore appearance of roads, dwellings, carports and pavement and the inevitable loss of trees will detract from the current tree-lined vista towards the church. This was one of the principal reasons that the Planning Committee voted to refuse permission for the previous plans, and the present submission does not address this fundamental objection. With the current increased emphasis on sustaining and indeed enhancing biodiversity and tree cover the grounds for objection are stronger. The rural character and sense of tranquility of this Little Abington lane are a priceless asset that should not be destroyed.
- **Offices:** Retaining one barn as an office is unnecessary in the current climate where there is a move towards working from home and where office accommodation on Granta Park and in other villages nearby is unoccupied. Should the offices be occupied, we foresee the parking spaces allocated to office workers not being sufficient, assuming they travel to work by car, resulting in dangerous additional parking along Church Lane and near the blind corner close to the church.

- **Drainage and flooding:** The corner of Church Lane regularly floods after heavy rain (and was almost impassable following the storm on Tuesday 20 July). Despite the promise to include drainage systems on the site, plus dredging and clearing of ditches, we foresee the creation of more hard standing reducing the amount of land available for soakaway and increasing the risk of flooding.

Conditions

When an acceptable proposal has been submitted and approved, the following conditions would need to be included in the approval:

- Working hours restricted, given the proximity to residential property.
- Restricting delivery times given proximity to residential property and concerns about road safety.
- Routes for vehicles to and from the building site to be defined, given the narrow roads into and out of the village and concerns about road and pedestrian safety.
- Arrangements for building site parking because of concerns about parking on footways, parking on narrow roads, access to the church, and road and pedestrian/cyclist safety.
- Keeping the area clean and tidy and any mud and mess on the roads to be dealt with at the end of each working day.
- Arrangements for storing building materials.
- Tree protection for the mature trees that are to be retained – when confirmed.
- Consideration must be given to protecting the PVAA during the building works.
- Making good any damage to road surfaces, kerbs, pavements and verges as a result of the building work and the associated heavy traffic.