

Cuxton Parish Council Response to:

MC/23/2706 - Land at Upper Bush Road Known As Tyre Field Near Cuxton Rochester Medway



Cuxton Parish Council object to / make observations on this planning procedure.

Cuxton Parish Council assert that a building of this size, in this proposed location, does NOT meet the criteria of *'reasonably necessary for the purposes of agriculture within that unit'* and therefore it should **not** be considered under Schedule 2, Part 6 Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

We assert that the test for reasonableness should consider the following factors :

Proposed location within AONB

The purpose of AONB designation is to enhance and protect the natural landscape and associated scenic beauty. Paragraphs 176-177 of the National Planning Framework require that significant consideration is given to developments on AONB land.

A building of this size must be considered a major development, particularly in the context of open fields with no natural screening, yet Paragraph 177 advises that when schemes for major development in an AONB are under consideration they should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest.

The Framework, advises that this consideration should include an assessment of three matters:

- **The need for the development including national considerations and the impact of permitting or refusing it on the local economy**

There is clearly no national or local need for an agricultural building of this size in this area – particularly when there is a fully-functioning service yard area, belonging to the owners, and connected to roads, very nearby. The fact that Keepers Barn, situated by that same service yard, which could have met at least some of this need has recently been approved a change of use from agricultural to residential (MC/23/1257) is relevant in the need for and scale of this building in this area.

- **the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need in some other way**

When appealing the refusal of planning for their winery and restaurant in AONB land, the applicant was asked by the inspectorate to consider other areas for development

that did not have the AONB classification, but no evidence of this was ever presented to the inspectorate. His has not been reasonably considered.

- **any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities and the extent to which that could be moderated.**

The size of the proposed building in the centre of an open field can do nothing BUT have a detrimental effect on the environment and landscape, particularly as there is no natural screening. This building will be significantly conspicuous from most directions, and from public rights of way.

Policy BNE32 of Medway Council Local Plan also reiterates this sentiment for AONB land within Medway.

The requirement of such a substantial development in AONB land should meet the criteria of being in the public interest. This proposal is not in the public interest.

Impact on local areas

There are several residential properties close to this proposed building, that currently benefit from uninterrupted views and a relatively quiet environment. The residents of these properties will have the outlook and amenity of their property significantly reduced by such an imposing structure, and by the considerable amount of additional noise and disruption created by the movements to and from the building. These impacts would be permanent and not adequately mitigated for.

Additionally, this building will affect the outlook from several public rights of way and local viewpoints. Indeed, the inspector for the appeal of the previous planning application clearly mentioned that the Brockles viewpoint, located on the edge of the Ranscombe Farm Plantlife Reserve, is promoted as one of the best views in the AONB and he attributed it considerable importance, recognising its high susceptibility to change. This new building proposal would still be clearly visible from this point, and many others, and would result in major adverse visual effects, which is unacceptable.

Findings of the Inspectorate – ‘The Fall-back position’

When appealing the refusal of planning for their winery and restaurant in AONB land, the applicant referred to a ‘fallback’ position, which the inspector stated **would require Prior Approval from the Council.**

Indicative plans submitted showed nine buildings, including a farm shop eventually, of basic design being located around a central service yard, directly accessed from Bush Road, just where this proposal is sited.

The inspector was keen to note that this would result in higher numbers of larger vehicles arising primarily from the additional tractors required to transport grapes along Bush Road during harvest times.

He went on to say that the requirement for Prior Approval would require an application to the Council involving **proper consideration** of matters such as siting, design and location. He noted however, that many of the same considerations would apply to a decision about the 'Fall-back position' as the scheme was still proposed within the AONB.

Again, the applicant was asked to investigate other locations but no evidence of this has ever been forthcoming. Cuxton Parish Council suggest that this proposal is simply the covert beginnings of the applicants 'Fall back' position.

Locations of the sewer

Tyre field has a sewer line running through it and we would like to draw attention to this not only from the perspective of construction, but also request that consideration is given to the amount of rainwater 'run-off' that a roof of this magnitude would have, and the associated effects on this sewer in particularly bad weather.

Design aspects

- **Materials**

The materials proposed for this building are clearly far-removed from the aesthetic considerations afforded to previous development attempts. They are industrial, unsympathetically functional and clearly not selected to offset the intrusive physical impact of this construction. Policy BNE32 considers the environmental standard of proposed construction, and its balance with the existing landscape character - yet this proposal has not considered these factors at all.

- **Access / Egress**

There is no proposed vehicular access in the plans, yet clearly there would need to be significant movements to and from this facility if it is to be used for the storage of equipment, machinery and fertiliser etc.

The activity of vehicles, including tractors and telehandlers, moving back and forth from this building to the existing main roads will require the provision of some sort of surface or else will have a significantly detrimental effect on the condition of the existing road structure at access / egress points, wherever they may be.,