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3rd August 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

Warland Farm Planning Application - 21/00495/LBC

I am writing on behalf of the Development Committee about the planning application which was presented at the meeting on 23 June 2021 for listed building consent to adapt a barn and other buildings at Warland Farm in order to provide an area suitable for public use.

Whilst we note the proposed plans are adventurous and the applicants and their supporters are very enthusiastic about them and indeed Todmorden Town Council welcomes innovative ideas for jobs and opportunities, this application was not supported by the Committee with doubts expressed about the suitability of the site for public use - poor access and lack of public amenities such as parking which would be needed.

Representative of the Committee visited Warland Farm on 30 June 2021, by invitation from the applicant, in order to consider this further.

The access to the area, a small hamlet of long-established residents, is by a private track/footpath opening onto Rochdale Road. It is at best a single track with a couple of inadequate passing places to serve the whole community as well as the farm. It also crosses the Rochdale Canal on a lightweight swing bridge, suitable for the residents, but not for the numbers likely to attend the activities listed.

There is strong potential for an increase in cars into the area if the proposal goes ahead, but the applicants strongly believe that visitors will arrive by public transport. They have stated that if cars do arrive, they will not be admitted to the site, instead they will be turned away. However, the possibility of cars backing down the access road to the farm and then down the road to the canal could be extremely dangerous and it would block further traffic.

On the issue of parking, the applicant explained how parking for sixteen cars could be provided. However, the parking near the farm is also used by other residents at Warland as well as visitors who come by car. The situation is exacerbated in the Winter when residents living in properties further up the hill have no option but to park near the canal. There is certainly not enough parking for more than a couple of visitors.

It has also been brought to the attention of members that one of the properties at Warland is also being let as an Airbnb which will generate additional traffic on the road and the need for more parking spaces.

Many comments have been raised on the Planning Portal about the proposals. Also, representation was made at the meeting and the following points were raised:

1. Unlike the previous planning approval for the creation of a dwelling, the current application does not reveal features (such as arched windows) of Mickle Barn. The width of the build would be considerably more than at present and that there would be an expanse of solar cells on the roof and plastic awnings. If approved, the character of the farm will be changed from that of an old Yorkshire farm to one in the USA.

2. A huge concern about the planning application is the potential impact of the proposals on the health and safety of residents and visitors.

2.1 The road is actually classified as a track/pathway, is single track and is privately maintained by some of the residents. It is steep, narrow, winding, very uneven and has blind bends with an inspector reporting in 2000, (about a different planning application), that the road is dangerous.

2.2 Residents have reported that a few years ago when a visitor collapsed on the road the ambulance became stuck and because of this the paramedics were delayed in giving him life-saving care. Unfortunately, the visitor did not survive.

2.3 On another occasion a fire engine became stuck on the road when attending a fire as it was blocked by parked cars and from these examples fair to surmise that I that emergency vehicles have difficulty in accessing the properties on this road.

2.4 Added to this, it is believed that drains run under the road and that heavy vehicles already using the road could already be causing damage to them.

In summary, apart from concerns about the alteration to the listed buildings at Warland Farm, the safety issues related to the narrow private track and parking are so serious that it is believed that the site is unsuitable for such an ambitious development.

It is also believed that should the proposal be approved; the applicants would find it unenforceable should they wish to stop visitors in cars from using the road.

Despite the potential economic benefits to the area and the substantial level of investment proposed, and with a more suitable and accessible site the plan would have enormous possibilities, nevertheless we feel the issues raised about road safety and accessibility outweigh these benefits and accordingly do not feel able to support this application.

Yours sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the Chair of Development Committee.

Cllr C Potter
Chair of Development Committee