

Objections to planning application 25/02012/FUL

This application was discussed at the meeting on 9 Sep 25 with a quorate council and member of the parish. In addition one of the councillors for Bruton and Wincanton was in attendance.

1. The council objects to this application.

2. The council is disappointed that retrospective permission for this development is being proposed. The building was erected in January 2023 and despite the council's efforts to bring this to the attention of the planning department, no enforcement action has been forthcoming.

The council has sought the views of parishioners and offers the following observations on the various documents associated with the application.

3. Environmental appraisal.

The council is disappointed to note that the EA considers the application to be outwith the scope of its interest. There has been recent flooding in the area and a section 19 report into the matter suggests that building and development, such as has taken place on the land West of Ridge Lane by the applicant, has contributed to the flooding.

Parishioners have already noted the increased down flow of rainwater from the area along Nettlecombe Lane, Pitcombe Hill, Lancombe Lane and Ridge Lane following the contrition, without permission, of concrete roads and other activities that prevent the natural absorption of rainwater.

4. Biodiversity statement.

Section 1 - the development of the building for which permission is sought has already adversely affected the fields and hedgerows in the area. The hedgerow along the northern end of Ridge Lane was destroyed by the applicant without permission prior to the building being erected.

Section 2 - This is not factually correct as the area was originally all unimproved grassland and the hedgerows have been affected by the development.

The conclusion of the council is that an ecology survey should be undertaken prior to permission being considered.

5. Covering letter and planning statement.

This suggests that some 200 acres of grazing land is available in addition to the 210 acres at the site in question. This is misleading as the 200 acres referred to is physically remote from the applicant's land at Ridge Lane.

Prior to 2018 the whole site was open grassland traversed by historic green lanes. There were no existing buildings (contrary to the suggestion in the planning statement). Much of the development has taken place at least initially without permission.

"existing farm structure" is disingenuous for the reasons above.

"unobtrusively" - this is factually incorrect. The new buildings can be seen from anywhere in the local area and significantly detract from the natural beauty of the landscape.

"Proposed block plan" - this is dated 19/8/25 yet the building has been in place for more than 30 months. The trees indicated on the plan have never been planted. The plan gives a false impression of the development.

6. Application form

The property appears to be named "Nettlecombe Hill Farm" suggesting such a title exists. NO such title exists at the Land Registry at the postcode given in the covering letter. The application form suggests that a farm has been present, yet the development has only taken place since 2018.

Tress and hedges - the statement is factually incorrect. Both trees and hedges have been affected by the development, which has adversely impacted on the natural beauty off the local landscape.

Flood risk - the council believes there is clear evidence that the development has lead to increased flood risk in other areas. This was noted in the section 19 report for the Pitt Valley, dated Jan 2025. The run-off from the land involved in the development has contributed to increased water along the ancient lanes (noted above).

Biodiversity net gain - the council believes this is unlikely to be met given the adverse effects on the natural habitat, which has been destroyed by the development.

The legislation is unclear why, as asserted by the applicant's agent, BNG does not apply to retrospective applications. This should be checked.

Sewage and waste - there is no reference to how either sewage or waste from activities on the site will be managed. This is a significant weakness and needs to be addressed.

Site visit - the statement is false. The site can be seen easily from bridleways, green lanes, footpaths and public land all around the area. This is the reason why it impacts so much on the natural landscape.