

TEMPLE GUITING PARISH COUNCIL

Serving the residents of Barton, Farmcote, Ford, Kineton and Temple Guiting
also Bemborough, Jackdaws Castle, Pinnock and Trafalgar.

Response to planning application 24/00066/FUL, New Barn Farm, Temple Guiting, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, GL54 5RW

This is an application for conversion of a traditional barn to residential use and the erection of five new-build residential dwellings, the provision of landscaping, demolition of six existing agricultural barns and associated works.

A public meeting of the TGPC Planning Committee held on 29th February was attended by 33 members of the public together with representatives of the developers and their consultants. Temple Guiting Parish Council appreciates that this application would achieve the main aim of restoring the traditional Cotswold stone barn which is the principal feature of the site. Building the other houses on the site will support this renovation and resolve the issue of the dilapidated and redundant farm buildings at this location.

The Council recognises that the applicant has taken steps to address concerns expressed by the Conservation Officer relating to the development of the site in such a way as to minimise the visual impact of the new houses on the surrounding countryside and the adjoining Diamond Way. It is also clear that the applicant has been at pains to formulate a scheme which is site sensitive and appropriate to the location within the Cotswolds AONB in terms of design, layout and construction materials.

However, at the meeting, members of the public and councillors expressed a number of significant concerns, focusing on the following:

1. Sustainable energy
2. Long term management of the site and biodiversity
3. Surface water
4. Foul drainage
5. Lighting
6. Absence of affordable housing
7. Potential for part-time and/or rental occupation
8. Access
9. Construction traffic
10. Safeguarding for the school
11. Overplanting
12. Waste management

Each of these is discussed in more detail below.

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1. Sustainable energy: Although the construction specification for the new houses should give rise to a high level EPC in terms of materials, fenestration and insulation, the Council is concerned that:
 - The noise created by the multiple individual air source heat pumps is likely to be noticeable not just to residents but to walkers and local residents.
 - Air source heat pumps may not provide adequate heating, especially for the renovated barn.
 - There are no measures to make a net contribution to energy creation
 - The new builds are not to Passivhaus standards
 - Solar panels have been dismissed at this stage, primarily it seems, for aesthetic reasons.

Councillors recommend that ground source heat pumps are considered, either individual or one central unit for all the houses. Regarding PV panels, technological advances mean that PV panels can be virtually invisible e.g. if installed in place of tiles. TGPC requests that the developers revisit their decision.

2. Long term management of the site and preservation of biodiversity gains: Although the applicant has sought to reassure the community with regard to the long-term management of the overall site and retention of the scheme as planned through a Management Company, several issues raised by the Council and participants in the public meeting have not been fully addressed. Clear covenants covering the owners' responsibilities and ensuring the requirement for the 30 year diversity net gains should be a condition of any planning permission and included in the terms of reference of the Management Company. A method of monitoring the Management Company and its compliance is also essential.
3. Surface water: While the scheme includes plans for the satisfactory mitigation of excess surface water, including an excess to allow for the effects of climate change, the corner of the access road and the main road between TG and Kineton floods regularly. The Council recommends that further drainage work is considered to reduce this flooding.
4. Foul sewage: The Parish Council questions the absence of a central foul sewage treatment plant as opposed to the individual units proposed for each house. A central treatment plant should offer higher standards of water being released into the nearby Windrush.
5. Lighting: There is no reference in the Application to compliance with Dark Skies strategies promoted by both the Parish and District Council and the Cotswold AONB. To prevent intrusive lighting in an otherwise relatively unspoilt, dark area and disturbing nocturnal wildlife, compliance should be included as a condition of the development.

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6. Absence of affordable housing: These houses, designed in a style which reflects the agricultural nature of the site, will be offered for sale on the open market. Councillors recognised that the introduction of 2 semi-detached 2 bed homes provides less expensive accommodation, but these are still not affordable for local agricultural workers. Councillors regret that no affordable homes are included in the application.
7. Potential for part-time/short term rental occupation: Villagers expressed concern that these houses might become rarely used 'second homes' or even short-term lets used by people with little commitment to the village or the local way of life. The parish has avoided this so far, unlike other villages. Councillors and the public would welcome any conditions or similar which could minimise this risk.
8. Access: The Parish Council has been assured that access to the site from Mill Lane complies with parameters set by Gloucestershire Highways. However, the junction of Mill Lane with the 'main' road has limited visibility and there will be two driveways joining Mill Lane close together. The road is also part of the Diamond Way and many walkers and riders use it. The developers should review access issues in more detail (especially as this area floods regularly) to ensure the safety of all users.
9. Construction traffic: The roads around the site are all single track and marked 'Unsuitable for HGVs'. Increased use of the roads has already led to degradation of the verges. The impact of HGVs during the demolition and construction phases will be significant if not managed. While the developers will produce a Construction Management Plan after permission has been granted, Councillors recommend (as for other sites developed by McKenzie-Miller) that a condition of granting permission is that only smaller vehicles are used during both phases.
10. Safeguarding for the school: The School is concerned that although there would be a gap of about 6 metres between Unit 3 and the school, this may not be adequate in terms of safeguarding. TGPC requests that developers review whether this gap could be increased.
11. Overplanting: Councillors and public were encouraged by the commitment to increasing biodiversity and delivering Net Biodiversity Gain. However, the high density tree-planting designed to reduce the visual impact of the development appears to be excessive given the wider location. TGPC requests that developers review the planting in the local context.
12. Waste management: Although provision has been made for two locations for waste and recycling containers, insufficient attention has been given to the CDC practice of only collecting from bins at the kerbside. The developer should review the location and number of these bin containers, although the details of the housings are valued.

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Note: Councillors were aware that several residents were deeply concerned that the development plans did not offer a contribution to the adjacent school and village hall infrastructure. However, residents were informed that the development was a separate issue unrelated to the freeholder of the village hall and the recreation field.

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