



BADMINTON ESTATE

Isobella Wise
Wiltshire Council
County Hall
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Wiltshire
BA14 8JN

Ref/PD058

17/07/2026

Dear Ms Wise

PL/2026/03506 - Prior approval, Part 3, Class R - Manor Farm, Sopworth

1. I write in relation to the consultation responses submitted regarding the above Class R Prior Approval application and to provide further information on the issues raised.
2. Firstly, we recognise that local residents have genuine concerns regarding the future use of the buildings and the potential implications of the proposal for the village and surrounding area. Whilst we do not agree with the conclusions reached, we recognise that those views are sincerely held. We hope that the following comments assist both the Council in its consideration of the proposal as well as going some way to alleviating local concerns.

Scope of the Prior Approval Process

3. The application is made under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class R of the GPDO. As such, the principle of reusing agricultural buildings for commercial purposes, including sustainability of location, has already been established by the legislation. Class R applies only to agricultural buildings, which are generally located in isolated rural settings.
4. Provided the legislative requirements are met, which we have shown to be the case, the matters that may be considered are limited to:
 - transport and highways impacts;
 - noise impacts;
 - contamination risks; and
 - flooding risks.
5. Many of the local objections relate to broader concerns regarding the desirability of commercial development in a rural location, the future of agriculture at Manor Farm, the character of the village, and whether alternative sites may exist elsewhere. Whilst we

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understand those concerns, they do not fall within the matters that may be considered under the Class R prior approval process.

6. That being said, a full planning application will be required for certain building operations, particularly in connection with the proposed office use. This will provide an opportunity for the detailed design of the scheme to be considered, including matters such as appearance, landscaping and integration with the wider locality. We are committed to bringing forward a high-quality proposal that respects the character of the area, and we welcome the opportunity for further engagement with the local community as those plans develop.

Nature of the Objections Received

7. The majority of representations, which are relevant to this application, raise transport and highway-related concerns. Those matters have been comprehensively addressed within the enclosed Technical Note prepared by Rappor Consultants, which responds directly to the Railton Technical Note submitted by local residents. Accordingly, this letter focuses principally on planning matters and provides some supplementary commentary where helpful.

Highway Safety and traffic Generation

8. The Highway Consultee has reviewed both the proposal and the supporting Transport Statement and has concluded that:

"The principle of the redevelopment of the site to provide Commercial Class E facilities, particularly office and light industry is not considered a significant impact on the surrounding highway network in terms of capacity..."

9. The Highway Authority's comments do, however, identify two matters requiring further consideration:
 - parking provision; and
 - securing visibility improvements at the site access.
10. Neither issue results in an objection to the principle of the development and we consider that both matters can be adequately addressed within this application.
11. The matters raised within the Railton Technical Note are addressed comprehensively within Rappor's accompanying Technical Note and are not repeated here.

Parking Provision & Visibility

12. Following the comments made by your Highway Consultee, a parking layout has been prepared demonstrating that 32 parking spaces can be accommodated within the existing farmyard and Class R application site area.
13. Parking is shown more tightly around Barn A, however this is intended to accommodate the office use. The parking layout is designed to ensure that there remains good access to Barns B and C, where the focus of light industrial is likely to take place.
14. In respect of visibility to the south, we have demonstrated how such improvements could be undertaken by either lowering of the boundary wall, or relocating it behind the site line. Such works could be undertaken through permitted development rights so do not need to form part of a full planning application. A condition attached to the Class R application would, in our view, be a suitable mechanism for ensuring that the access improvements, as shown on the plans, are carried out prior to first use.
15. Rappor's accompanying Technical Note has outlined why visibility to the north is acceptable in its current form.

Noise Impacts

16. Several representations suggest that commercial activity would inevitably generate greater noise than former agricultural activities. We have, however, addressed this within the Planning Statement. In any event, and for completeness, it is worth reiterating why the proposed uses are suitable in this location. In particular:
 - **Office Use** (Class E(g)(i)) – Office accommodation is generally a low-intensity use characterised principally by desk-based activities and staff movements, and does not typically generate significant external noise.
 - **Light Industrial Use** (Class E(g)(iii)) – By definition, light industrial uses are those which can be carried out within a residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area through noise, vibration, fumes, smoke or other emissions.
 - **Ancillary Storage** – Ancillary storage activities are typically limited to the storage of goods associated with the primary use and are generally characterised by low levels of activity, resulting in only occasional vehicle movements and loading operations.
17. Where any doubt remains, an hours of use condition, as proposed in the Planning Statement, is an effective and enforceable means of ensuring that commercial operations are limited to standard working hours.

Agricultural Fallback Position

18. In the context of both traffic and noise, it is important to recognise that the buildings form part of an established agricultural unit and benefit from an unrestricted lawful agricultural use.
19. While residents argue that activity has historically been low, the legal question is not what happened recently, but what could lawfully happen under the scope of the existing planning use. Agricultural operations may generate significant levels of activity including tractors, trailers, large delivery vehicles, livestock operations and other commercial movements associated with modern farming operations.
20. The lawful fallback position is therefore an important material consideration when assessing the relative impacts of the proposed Class E use.

Conclusion

21. In summary, we respect the interest shown by local residents and acknowledge the concerns that have been raised. However, having regard to the evidence submitted in support of the application, together with the additional information now provided, we consider that the proposal complies with the requirements of Class R and that the matters subject to prior approval can be satisfactorily addressed.
22. The Technical Note prepared by Rappor provides additional technical context and clarification in relation to the issues raised, and reinforces the conclusions of the submitted Transport Statement. Having regard to that assessment, we remain of the view that the proposal would not give rise to any unacceptable transport or highway impacts.
23. Importantly, the Local Highway Authority has confirmed that the principle of the redevelopment is not considered to result in a significant impact on the surrounding highway network, subject to parking provision and access improvements being secured. Both matters have been addressed in the Planning Statement and the additional information submitted.
24. Accordingly, the proposal complies with the requirements of Class R, and we look forward to working with the Council to reach a positive outcome on this application.

Yours sincerely



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