

**New House Barn
Preston Road
Ribchester
PR3 3XL**

Email: 

23rd July 2020

Dear Sir / Madam

Re: Planning Application 3/2020/0513

Thank you for inviting our views on the above planning application which lies close to our property.

We live at New House Barn, Preston Road, which is a semi-detached property with a party wall with New House Farm. New House Farm is immediately adjacent to the proposed development.

We have major concerns about this application, as it appears to pose significant health & safety, environmental and nuisance impact.

1. Access, Traffic and Safety

The proposed plan uses the existing entrance to the field in question. It is a concealed entrance on Preston Road, just as the speed limit drops from National Speed Limit to 30 (and then 20) mph. The road itself is the main Ribchester – Longridge / Preston thoroughfare B6245.

1.1 Emergency & service vehicle access

- The existing opening is narrow and involves a tight turn. Currently, should the properties in this area require the emergency services, access would be from the main road. Waste is also collected from the main road. But the proposed lodges / snail farm would be set back from the road, making it necessary for the emergency and waste collection services to gain access through this narrow entrance.
- The plans do not include modification of this narrow access point. Indeed, it would be difficult for modification to be organised, as the owner of this land was unaware of the plans. There is insufficient space for creating a swept path and no evidence of a swept path analysis for safe access and egress was included in the application.

- The site layout does not appear to include sufficient space for a turning head which is, we believe, a requirement for new developments.

1.2 Access safety: Speeding

- Preston Road is on a downwards slope from Longridge towards Ribchester. Traffic is supposed to decrease in speed from the National Speed Limit area into an urban 20mph at this access point, but frequently fails to do so. The location is used by Lancashire Police to site a mobile speed camera at this location on account of speeding traffic. Visitors staying at the proposed holiday lets may not be familiar with the hazardous nature of this stretch of road and the chances of a serious accident will be significantly increased. The area is popular with motorbikes and cyclists, who are at particular risk and tend to be making good speed down the hill. This stretch is a well frequented part of the Lancashire Cycle Route 90.
- Emerging from our driveway involves an external roadside mirror, patience, regular trimming of overhanging vegetation and the road to be clear both ways. It would be made much more difficult by the presence of increased traffic trying to do the same thing a few yards away. This problem is likely to be compounded given the fact that our next-door neighbours would lose their parking, thus forcing them to park on the road, should the development go ahead.
- The absence of any pavement on this side of the road also endangers the safety of holidaymakers walking on the road to get to the amenities in Ribchester. Mobility-impaired visitors to the development might find this particularly difficult.

1.3 Traffic generation and noise nuisance

- Six 3-bedroom lodges and a small business would significantly increase the amount of traffic in the area which will have a detrimental effect on noise and air quality.

1.4 Access to rest of field

- The proposed development uses half of the existing field. The plans give no access to the rest of the field.

2. Noise, Disturbance, Overlooking and Loss of Privacy

2.1 Traffic noise – *detailed above*

2.2 The Snail Farm

- We don't know very much about heliculture (although we do seem to be able to grow an impressive number of snails ourselves, as keen veggy gardeners!). However it works, though, there are areas of concern... A quick internet search implied that a heliculture

installation would involve heat & light – which would also generate a certain amount of noise.

- The application mentions that the snails would be for eating – in this case, presumably there would need to be some degree of processing done at the plant, which could add smells to the nuisance.
- We also have some concerns about escapee snails – never a very welcome visitor to our gardens!

2.3 The Holiday Lets

- The plans show how the six lodges would overlook our gardens and mean a loss of all privacy. This is the only private space we currently enjoy.



Figure 1: The site of the proposed development

- Under the proposed development, the visible part of the field would be full of the lodges, all facing directly towards us. The field is on quite a slope, so they would have a good view of not only the garden and house, but also clear sightlines into the upper floor (bedroom) windows too.

- The plan show there would be five beds in each lodge.
- When fully occupied, we could be overlooked by 30 people, in addition to workers at the snail farm.

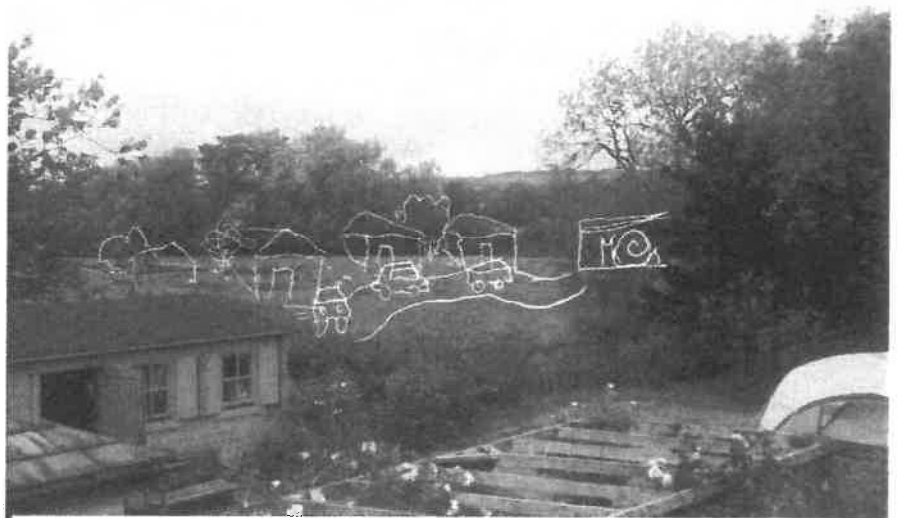


Figure 2: 'artist's impression' of the proposed development

3. Environmental, Water Management and Flooding Issues

3.1 Flooding

Ribchester was one of the worst-hit areas in the Boxing Day floods of 2015. Homes had to be evacuated and businesses closed. More recently, on 9th February 2020, Ribchester was again flooded causing another emergency that led to homes and businesses being seriously damaged. The addition of a substantial amount of hardstanding for the foundations of the lodges and proposed business will significantly increase the risk of flooding to our and neighbouring properties because they reduce the land drainage available to cope with water run-off.

- A former owner of Pendle Crest View (the adjacent property to the site, in a North West direction) is a retired River Bailiff. He tells me that he has watched herons picking fish out of the field on the site, when Boyce's Brook has flooded.

3.2 Siltification of Boyce's Brook and the River Ribble

- Boyce's Brook runs along the proposed site. This is an undeveloped waterway that is an important migratory corridor for amphibians, newts, salmon and trout that feeds into the River Ribble.
- The Ecology Report does not mention this as the surveyor claims he could not get access to it to check. However, the brook is accessible from the opposite side of the road and is a frequent test site for the Environment Agency to take measurements and assess risk of flooding in Ribchester.
- The Ecology Report was incorrect in stating there were no ponds within 250m of the development. There are two ponds. They are located on our neighbour's land (New House Farm) and are a breeding ground for newts, frogs, toads and fish as well as a wide range of aquatic insects. They attract birds and wildlife resident in the nearby trees. It is a natural habitat that enhances biodiversity but would be severely compromised in the event of the neighbouring field being developed. A previous owner of New House Farm (who is an environmental engineering consultant) put in these ponds precisely to help with flooding to the rear of his property.
- This is because the hardstanding created for the development and the disruption of natural drainage channels would increase runoff to the low-lying areas behind our houses, which lie below the water table and are already frequently waterlogged. The ponds were created to help alleviate this and have helped considerably; however, we are not confident they could cope with an increased load of water every winter.
- The ensuing increase in siltification will increase the risk of floods to our property as the land neighbouring Boyce's Brook is low lying and is regularly submerged during heavy rain as well as increasing the risk to the rest of the village and other sites around the Ribble.

- This land regularly floods with standing water during periods of heavy rain. As such, it is an important part of the water catchment management; more runoff from this area would exacerbate the flooding problems around the low-lying areas further downstream, especially the flood-prone area around the Ribchester Arms.
- Any runoff which was contaminated by waste from the snail farm would be even more damaging to the existing natural environment.



This Google map shows the proposed site (orange) and the access land owned by a third party (yellow - see sections 1.1 and 4.1).

The wildlife pond is indicated by the turquoise circle and the ornamental pond by the pink rectangle.

The scale is at the base of the image – as a guide, the building on the bottom left (New House Farm and New House Barn, conjoined) is about 25m x 7m.

A view of the wildlife pond and viewing bench.

Everything above the red line would be the new development, with lodges facing towards the camera.



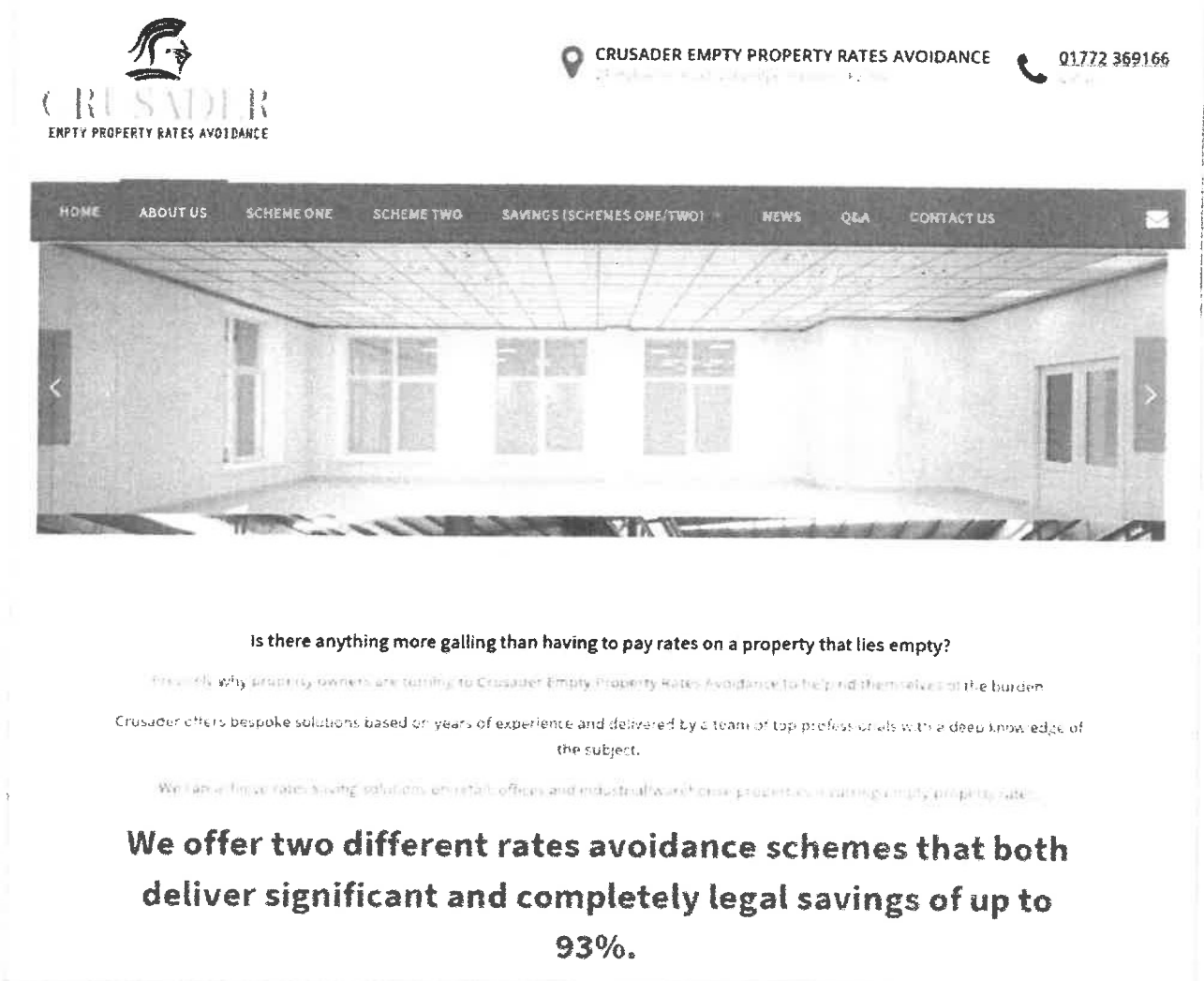
- We understand there is a deed of covenant between the owner of the land at the entrance (██████████) and the owners of New House Farm (██████████) giving them rights of access in this area. We don't know the full details – we were informed of this by a previous owner of New House Farm.

4.2 Need for the Development

- Several similar lodges exist within a short distance of Ribchester. Moss Farm, Dale Hey Farm, Singleton House, Hobbit Hill, Samlesbury Hall, Ribble Valley Holiday Homes and Beacon Fell View all offer very similar facilities to the proposed development within a 6 mile radius. It's hard to see what sort of additional need would be fulfilled by the development.

4.3 Transparency of the Application

- The lack of consultation (before the application) and the absence of an Archaeological Survey which is usually part of the normal planning procedure for Ribchester has caused us to be concerned.
- This is the front page of the company website:



- Nothing on the website suggests they have a track record in property development and so we fear this application might ultimately be a 'Trojan Horse' for something quite different, such as a change of use away from 'agriculture' towards 'housing'.

4.4 Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008 - 2028

The proposed development would seem to go against the Core strategy in several areas.

- **EN3 – Sustainable Development & Climate Change** detailed in sections 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4
- **EN4 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity** detailed in sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
- **EC1 – Business and Employment Development** the area is greenfield, not brownfield. There is a potential negative employment impact for the tenant farmer who currently uses the field (section 4.1), with little positive impact for the village (section 4.2)
- **DMG1 – General Considerations** Access points 1, 2 & 3 (detailed in section 1), Amenity points 1, 3 & 4 (detailed in section 2), Environment points 1, 2, 5 (detailed in section 3)
- **DME3 – Site and Species Protection & Conservation** detailed in sections 3.3, 3.4
- **DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets** there doesn't appear to be any evidence of an archeological survey (section 4.3)
- **DME6 – Water Management** sections 3.1, 3.2

Thank you for taking the time consider our concerns. It is much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



 BA, BDS, PGCert, FHEA

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