

[REDACTED]

Ms. Harriet McCartney ,
Planning Office ,
Ribble Valley Borough Council ,
Church Walk ,
Clitheroe , BB7 2RA

23rd September 2020

Dear Ms. McCartney ,

Re : Planning Application 3/2020/0602 Holden Clough
Planning Application 3/2020/0612 Holden Clough

We wish to state that we object to both of the above Planning Applications . Our reasons for objecting are as follows :-

Planning Application 3/2020/0602

The Submission Statement claims that the current restrictions on dining numbers of 100 inside the Garden Kitchen and a further 40 on the terrace will remain as is and the proposed development is not designed to increase the numbers . This is later reaffirmed in the submission “dining numbers will not change and **it is not expected** that these changes will increase numbers further than those accounted for in previously approved applications” . This does not fit with the reasons given for the Application of creating more dining space and creating extra terraces for outdoor food consumption. Even allowing for the current social distancing measures , this 80% expansion is vastly excessive given that there is no intention of increasing the numbers for dining .

The description of the development proposal as relatively small extension of previously approved development is highly misleading as in round figures the floor space would nearly double from 420 square metres to just short of 800 square metres . This would be a huge extension if allowed or approved .

It is suggested that this expansion is necessary to allow for “current issues” which we take to be Covid 19 . Given the constant rule changes to the hospitality businesses , it appears that the applicant has a useful crystal ball . It is worth pointing out that similar nearby businesses seem to have remained fully open with few if any staff redundancies and without needing to extend premises , so why has the applicant not been able to do this ? Even if approved , the expanded premises are unlikely to be available for use until mid 2021 , and who can predict what rules will be in place then ?

The Submission states that the proposal is for small scale tourism use and has been designed to ensure it does not impact negatively on the AONB and reduces impact on the local community . This

is a ridiculous claim and potentially misleading . The proposal is for a massive development on a small and unsuitable site . Of course it will negatively impact on the AONB and particularly upon those that live nearby . We would really suggest that the Planning Team make a point of each visiting the site to see how out of place the proposals are and to see for themselves how what was a lovely meadow only a year or so ago has been transformed into something at complete odds with the AONB and the hamlet of Holden itself .

Car parking would be reduced by this application , but post Covid any future increase in numbers dining will require further car parking spaces , and please note that when permission for the extension to the car park was granted early in the year the LCC said that “this should not be seen as an invitation or a pathway to further intensification of the site” .

To recap our objections can be summarised as follows:-

1. The proposals for additional dining space and additional terraces for outdoor food will enable the applicant to vastly increase total eating covers in the years to come .
2. The total floor area would almost double and this expansion will lead to future requests for additional car parking and cause further traffic congestion within this tiny hamlet .
3. It is only recently that the nursery was going to pursue a “back to roots” policy . Increases in dining covers is hardly that , and changes of use will inevitably follow as previously seen .
4. The claim that Covid is the driver for this seems opportunistic and false , particularly in the light of the way other similar local outfits have managed to cope within existing confines .
5. This huge increase in floor space masquerading as “relatively small extension” is the latest in a series of applications to expand the nursery out of all proportion to its AONB location.

Planning Application 3/2020/0612

We also wish to object to this application as it appears that Croft Complete Homes (Samuel Hill) are intending to sell structures to the general public . At present there is no public access to the field where the office is planned to be situated . Only the overspill car park when it is eventually built will have public access allowed . This application , if passed , potentially opens up the field to use by the general public . We believe this will be yet another breach of planning . The rest of the application is too sketchy in its present form to comment further on details .

We understand that the site of Holden Clough Nursery falls under a covenant that decrees that it should only be used as a nursery for growing plants . We are unsure how the selling of structures from Croft Complete Homes falls in line with that covenant .

We hope we have made our objections to these two Planning Applications clear , and also the reasoning behind them . We thank you in anticipation of your taking them into account , and hope that RVBC will see clear to reject both applications .

Yours Sincerely ,



Harriet McCartney
Planning Office
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Church Walk
Clitheroe BB7 2RA

September 23, 2020

Re: Planning Applications 3/2020/0602 & 3/2020/0612.

Dear Ms McCartney,

We write to formally object to the above planning applications.

To give you a little context, at the very start of John and Kate's efforts to develop the nursery we wrote in enthusiastic support and praised their hard work and determination.

Sadly, in the ensuing years we've had cause to question our opinions of them in terms of planning. For all that they claim to listen to the genuine concerns of their neighbours, the reality appears to be that they simply want to force through as much development as they can in the shortest possible time and often with retrospective applications to cope (as at 2.16) with a "change in design".

A pattern has developed in which they increase both the footprint and the impact of the nursery by a process of gradual, choreographed steps: an application for car parking spaces, for example, followed by a development of the café, followed by the "sudden" realisation that they need more parking spaces to cope with demand, then that they need to enlarge the café and the retail space etc etc, and so it goes on.

This time the main application is for more covers in the café and on the terrace. It uses the ongoing pandemic as at least a partial justification for expansion, on the grounds that it will help facilitate social distancing. Despite yesterday's announcement of a resumed lockdown, possibly for as long as six months, it seems inevitable that once the pandemic is finally over and social distancing ends the extra seating capacity will be retained. For us this makes the application appear more than a little cynical.

The secondary application (0602) to build an office/studio represents an incursion into a field that until recently formed a part of the local Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Now that field is reduced to being a nondescript corner plot inside a garden centre.

We are not Nimbys. We fully recognise the need for diversification in the countryside, and for the reasonable and proportionate development of such sites as this – but not at the expense of the scenic and environmental amenities that make this area so special in the first place. The enormous “Swiss chalet-style” building that your council somehow approved for retail use is a good example of disproportionate development in a single structure.

We’re not alone in thinking that, if approved, the main application will lead to yet another moment of “realisation” with regard to an overspill car park. All the time the garden centre is getting bigger and more invasive in terms of visual amenity and traffic – all in what is supposed to be an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

We implore you to find in favour of our objections, and those of others, and reject both applications.

Yours sincerely,

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