

GROUP for APPROPRIATE RURAL DEVELOPMENT (GARD)

This note is to draw your attention to the recent retrospective planning application filed with HBC by Abacus , Jubilee Court, Copgrove (ref no 20/05185/FUL). Jubilee Court is the light industrial unit on the hill top on the road to Copgrove.

Abacus have recently commenced further building at the site without first seeking planning consent. A preceding application (19/02749/FULMAJ), which was approved by HBC in October 2019, was to increase the footprint by 84%. This building has just been completed and is now under review by HBC as seemingly it is larger than permitted.

In the 2019 application Abacus stated that:

1. "The development is located on the remaining area of the site available to develop. As a result, any concern over further expansion thereafter should not be of concern."
2. "The extension is not in a case sensitive area of the site and is shrouded from multiple viewpoints by the building it adjoins."
3. "As far as we are aware there have not been complaints in the local area about increased traffic" and that at that time " there was one HGV per week and that this would increase by an additional single HGV load a week as an absolute maximum."

This latest 24th December 2020 application relates to a building that is currently being built without permission and overlaps the footprint of a storage shed which was moved (without permission) as its location caused health and safety issues. In this latest application Abacus states that:

1. "As the company continues to grow ...there is an urgent need to expand". " The development is located on the remaining area of the site available to develop. As a result, any concern over further expansion thereafter should not be of concern."
2. The new building has "no adverse impact on the site or open countryside" and they state in their conclusion that " the impact of the proposed extension on the open countryside can be adequately controlled by way of a carefully designed landscape scheme".
3. "Abacus Bathrooms have demonstrated over a sustained period of time that there is not a high frequency of Heavy Goods Vehicles to and from the site. As a result, the further expansion of the business will not escalate the frequency of Heavy Goods Vehicles to an inadequate level."

In both applications Abacus states that the expansion will provide benefits for the local community, that they offer local jobs and do not cause traffic issues. The evidence on the ground differs. The number of large freight lorries has increased. The company's very full carpark and their claim to promote a car share scheme is evidence that the employees are drawn from a wide area which is inevitable in a rural area with low density of population without a public transport hub. No evidence is provided to explain how traffic will 'not escalate'. Each of the road approaches to the site involve narrow bridges on country lanes and no amount of landscaping can 'control' the enormous buildings sitting on the hilltop. Abacus deserves to be seen as a success story however as the company continues to grow it would be better located on a brown field site in a location with a better infrastructure which can sustain it rather than in an area which derives no benefit and suffers harm from its continued expansion.

We are a group who are very concerned about this further industrial expansion in our rural area, the evident increase in heavy goods vehicles and its proceeding without proper and informed scrutiny according to due process.

We will be writing to HBC to object to this latest application and would encourage you to do the same. We will also send copies of our objections to our local councillors. Quote reference 20/05185/FUL

HBC planning (planningconsultation@harrogate.gov.uk)

Staveley and Copgrove Parish Council (enquiries@staveleyandcopgrovepc.org.uk)

CLlr Windass (CLlr.Robert.Windass@northyorks.gov.uk)

CLlr Metcalfe(zoe.metcalfe@harrogate.gov.uk)