

Weald Manor Farm Planning Application 14/0973/P/FP

WODC Planning Sub-Committee Review

15th September 2014

I am speaking on behalf of a group of Bampton residents who live in the attached hamlet of Weald, which dates back nearly 900 years. But today is not about historical sentiment, it is about hard facts – so I will start with four quotes – from which you can draw your own conclusions:

Firstly, from the Heritage Impact Study commissioned by Weald Manor itself:

Weald Street has a distinctly rural and informal character...[as] part of the Conservation Area derived from the loose knit nature of development interspersed by open land...hedgerows and wide verges without any defined footways.

Secondly, a quote from the independent civil engineer's report on the proposed footpath at the junction of Weald Street and Clanfield Road:

The proposal is to construct a footway to the east [of Weald Street] having a width of 1.2m. This would mean the resulting carriageway would be inadequate to accommodate the passage of two way traffic...and detrimental to the safe passage of road users.

Thirdly, a quote from Weald Manor's written justification of 17 houses, namely:

The deciding factor for the suggested number is financial – which would enable only the surplus after repayment to be used as income for the maintenance of the fabric of [Weald Manor] and...listed garden ornaments and gates.

And lastly, from this committee's formal decision on the previous identical Weald Manor application prior to its withdrawal in July 2008, namely:

Refused.

This is not a new application. We have been here before. Nothing has changed since the first refusal.

The rural nature of Weald has not changed.

The building footprint extending well into the adjoining field has not changed.

The location over 1 mile from Bampton's school and shops has not changed.

The width of Weald Street has not changed.

And, as highlighted in your planning officer's report, the flood risk has still not been fully addressed.

In actual fact only two things have changed since then:

Weald Manor's determination to benefit financially from the current planning regime.

And therefore their refusal to proceed with the single dwelling application for this site which you approved three years ago – which was not opposed by Bampton Parish Council or Weald as it was proportional, sustainable and in line with Conservation Area guidelines.

Let's be clear, this site is only accessible by car. It is not sustainable in any way. Weald Street has only 29 dwellings, so this project will increase traffic by 60% overnight. In proportion to its rural surroundings, this is a much bigger project than either New Road or Aston Road.

The wider impact on Bampton of these other developments will be considered in the next application review, so I'd like to end on the important subject of precedent. We all have to ask the question, what will you do when the next ten remote farm building applications land on your desk? There is a line to be drawn, and it is right here, and now. Your support for our 900 year old community and the planning officer's recommended refusal of this application for a second time would be appreciated.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today.

**Weald Manor,
Weald,
Bampton
Oxfordshire OX18 2HQ**

9th September 2014

14/0973/P/FP Weald Manor Farm Bampton

Comments to be made to the Lowlands Planning Committee on behalf of the owners, the John Colvile Will Trust by Mr Michael Pelham

- All of the land to the north of Weald Street up to Clanfield Road, including this site, is owned by Trusts set up by Mr Robert Colvile or his brother John, both of whom are deceased. My wife, the widow of Mr Robert Colvile, has a life interest in the income, capital and assets of these Trusts of which she is also one of the two Trustees, the other being the Colvile family's former solicitor. On her death this interest passes to her son and daughter.
- All of the proposed works, other than a short length of new public footpath on the eastern side of Weald Street running from a point in Weald Street opposite the entrance gates to Weald Manor to the Clanfield Road, lie within my wife's control. Thus all matters described in this application relating to the land surrounding this site fall under her control and I am authorised to confirm her agreement to carry them out.

SUMMARY

The proposal offers:

- High quality design using natural materials
 - Delivery of necessary houses without delay
 - Removal of unsightly derelict farm buildings
 - Provision of nine affordable houses to rent
 - Improved pedestrian safety along Weald Street
 - to place unsightly overhead power lines underground
 - Seventeen much needed houses less than a kilometer from the centre of Bampton.
- and
- secures funding for the maintenance of the Grade II* Weald Manor

OMISSION FROM THE REPORT

Impact on the rural character of the area and the Conservation Area

No mention is made in the report of the Heritage Statement prepared by Grant Audley-Miller MA Oxf, DipTP, MRTPI, IHBC which was submitted with the planning application and explains the benefits of the proposal to the Conservation Area.

The conclusion is extremely relevant:

"The proposals for the site with its traditional design that takes into account its context will, I consider, make a positive and sympathetic contribution to the appearance, character, quality and local distinctiveness of the Conservation Area.

Furthermore the development will bring a number of sound long term public benefits to the local community.

The proposal is therefore clearly consistent with the national advice and guidance in the NPPF, PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide and Building in Context. It is also consistent with the saved Policies BE5 (Conservation Areas) and BE6 (Demolition in conservation areas) of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan (2006), Core Policy 23 of the Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan (October 2012) and the West Oxfordshire Design Guide.

For all the reasons set out above, it is my considered professional opinion that the proposal for the demolition of the redundant farm buildings and the development of 17 affordable and Trust rented houses should be granted conservation area consent and planning permission."

The new houses are not situated "hard on the boundary" - they will be very well screened by existing trees and the mature roadside hedgerow on the north and south boundaries. Additional planting can be carried out on land to the west of the site if required which is also in the applicants' ownership. The development will be well assimilated into the landscape and not at all prominent in the Conservation Area.

The visual impact of the pedestrian improvement works along Weald Street has been minimised as far as possible. The limited impact of these works on the Conservation Area needs to be weighed against the substantial public benefit to pedestrian safety for everyone walking along Weald Street.

CORRECTIONS

- **para 3.1.5:** The flood relief pond was built to a larger capacity than that required by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) on land owned by the Colvile Farmland Trust to protect properties to the east of Weald Street. It is larger than originally designed by OCC engineers and has sufficient capacity to accommodate the proposed development. This was confirmed by OCC at the time and calculations will be provided to confirm this. It has worked successfully on two occasions in this last year.

- **para 3.1.6:** This application is made for the construction of rental and affordable housing controlled under a leasehold agreement, not for general 'housing developments'.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT:

Principle of the development:

There is an urgent need for additional housing on small and available sites to help meet the housing needs identified in the SHMA. This is not a speculative development - it will provide housing to rent for local people. A substantial need for such housing has been identified by the Council's Head of Housing.

- **para 7.2:** The phrasing of the third sentence (commencing at line three) is unfortunate as it might be read as implying the site is about one mile from the south west of Bampton. In fact it is less than one kilometer to the Town Hall in the centre of Bampton's shopping area and no further than either of the other two much larger development proposals.

- **para 7.8:** The site is called "... isolated ..." and "unsustainable". This is not so - it is part of Weald and on the edge of Bampton. We have already been informally approached by parties interested in both the affordable and the normal rental houses..

Furthermore, Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework says that in order to promote sustainable development within rural areas, housing should be located where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. However, it does not adopt a narrow definition of sustainability as it is recognised that some sites will need to be located outside existing settlements. That is why paragraph 6 says that regard must be had to the Framework "as a whole" in determining what "sustainable development" means in practice. The availability and deliverability of this site on the edge of Bampton needs to be given more weight rather than just saying the site is not sustainable because it lies a good walk from the centre of Bampton. There is no evidence of any other "more suitable" sites in or around Bampton or of any other sites which are as available and deliverable as this site to help meet the identified need for more housing in Bampton.

- **para 7.9:** A bus stop at the junction of Clanfield Road and Weald Street will be funded by a section 106 contribution - see para 3.2. We are not aware of any other site that will offer nine affordable houses within Bampton.

- **para 7.10:** This is not a speculative development - it is not for profit. Weald Manor has been owned by the Colville family since 1925. In the period since 1945 property in Bampton has been progressively sold in order to attempt to maintain Weald Manor. This has not been entirely successful as in the latter part of his life Major Robert Colville's health prevented him from carrying out essential work whilst at the same time incurring substantial medical costs. The situation was exacerbated by the floods of 2007 which caused over £400,000 of damage to the Manor and its grounds, only £350,000 of which was recoverable from Insurance policies.

In the last six years a substantial repair, conversion and building programme, which increases income, has cost about £1,062,000 of which £652,000 has been recovered from Insurance and by selling a newly built house. Net property expenditure over the six year period has averaged at £68,000 per year. The income from the farming part of the Estate around Bampton (approximately 350 acres) is clearly insufficient to cover this and the expenses of running Weald Manor, so the family embarked on a programme of increasing the income from its run down stock of property. The proposal to redevelop Weald Manor farmyard is a major part of this programme and, after serving and steadily repaying the debt incurred, it is expected to maintain a forward expenditure of about £40,000 per year that is necessary to restore Grade II* Weald Manor itself.

- **para 7.11:** The Upholsterer has been offered accommodation in a barn owned by one of the applicants fellow Trusts on the other side of Bampton.

Design

Nothing is said in the report about the high quality design of the development - i.e. the use of natural stone, the local vernacular design, and the impeccable attention to detailing. According to the Framework, high quality design is a fundamental principle of sustainable development.

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AUTHORITIES

- para 3.2 Oxfordshire County Council:

Traffic: Detailed Comments: "... *would have a negligible traffic impact.*"

Drainage: See comment on para 3.1.5 above. Condition requiring full SUDS is accepted

Archaeology: "*The application area does not contain any known archaeological features.*"
However subject to conditional approval we will contact the relevant department and carry out the appropriate field evaluation to confirm this.

Education: Agreed, we will enter into the Section 106 agreement

Property: "*No objection subject to conditions*": We agree to proposed sum of £11,140.

Oxford Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS): We agree to provide Fire Hydrants, Automatic Water Suppression Systems and in house sprinkler systems.

Libraries: We agree to the proposed sum of £3,832.

Strategic Waste Management: We agree to the proposed sum of £2,885.

Integrated Youth Support Service: We agree to the proposed sum of £832.

OCC Museum Service: We agree to the proposed sum of £225

Social & Health Care - Resource Centres: We agree to the proposed sum of £3,366

- para 3.3 Thames Water:

Waste: Imposition of "*Grampian Style*" Condition accepted.

Water: "*Thames Water .. would advise .. would not have any objection ..*"

- para 3.4 WODC Housing: *Supports Application.*

**Address to Planning Lowlands Committee re Planning Application 14/0993/P/OP Aston Road
Road**

**Sept 15 2014 on behalf of
Society for the Protection of Bampton
&
Save Bampton's Future**

We strongly feel this is a cynical attempt to gain consent by slightly changing an already refused application. It should be rejected on a number of grounds:

Flooding

Since the previous application, The Environment Agency has confirmed it erroneously removed two of its initial objections prior to the planning committee meeting, and that these objections are still to be satisfied.

We have submitted evidence which supports the E.A's existing flood maps and zones, and also gives a true picture of the events of 2007, and how they occurred - unlike the developer's Hydrology report, which failed to do so. Meanwhile Gladmans are aggressively lobbying the EA to redraw their maps in an attempt to address the flooding issue.

I am sure no-one on this committee wants to risk building on a site which could subject existing homeowners to even worse desolation than in 2007.

Sustainability

Our main arguments were:

no local jobs

detrimental to the local economy - with little parking in Bampton, when full residents will skip the village centre and shop elsewhere

poor public transport

no secondary school

a primary school that is already almost at capacity

a surgery at capacity

a sewage farm already suffering from overload (you can smell it)

no proven need for more houses and social housing in Bampton

In our view these points must carry even more weight in the light of the 160 houses which will be built at New Road.

Planning

The National Planning Policy in Paragraph 3.1 states:

The plan should “be genuinely plan-led, empowering local people to shape their surroundings” (page 5, paragraph 17, The National Planning Policy)

This development is not plan-led. It is a speculative application made in the face of almost 100% local opposition. It therefore contravenes the National Planning Policy.

Gladmans does not have the best interest of Bampton at heart. Or of West Oxfordshire or the county or even the country. What they are doing - as they have throughout the UK - is jumping on an alleged loophole in the planning law.

You just have to read their documents to see how much they really care:

Aston Road is referred to as Aston Lane in one place and Ashby Road in another

Where they mean WODC they write Cheshire East Council

They claim to have conferred with the Town Council - there is no Bampton Town Council

They refer to the Drs surgery at Landells as being at Landhills

They claim to have consulted the Parish Council - they have not

They spell Witney with an H - which unless they are referring to the deceased

American singer Whitney Houston, is clearly a lazy mistake

These are not just typos - they reveal the true nature of this application - a quick cut and paste job. It is insulting to us the community and you the committee that Gladmans can't even be bothered to check their own documents.

They characterise themselves as. "A formidable, skilled and highly professional Land Promoter, obsessed with winning consents." That says it all. They are not interested in working with communities, just obsessed with winning consents.

Once a village is ruined, it is ruined forever. Landowners and absentee developers may benefit in the short term but the losers are the people of Bampton for generations to come. The village has accepted 100 houses but feels that is enough. We do not need - nor can we cope with - another 110. Please do not go down in history as the council who allowed a unique, thriving village to become yet another dormitory town.

Appendix D

THE ORCHARD, CHURCH ROAD, NORTH LEIGH – 14/1061/P/FP

PROPOSED DETACHED DWELLING and FORMATION OF NEW VEHICULAR ACCESS AND CAR PORT TO SERVE EXISTING DWELLING

SUPPORTING STATEMENT by Applicant's Agent – Roy Wilkinson of Stanhope Wilkinson Associates

1. I will deal initially with the comments about the access proposals. The existing access at the lower end of the site has provided a garage and off-street parking for the existing house at the top of the site (known as The Orchard) for about 35 years. In our proposal this will serve the proposed new dwelling which is much smaller than The Orchard as it only has 2 bedrooms as opposed to 4 in The Orchard. Turning movements will not increase as claimed but are much more likely to decrease.
2. The proposed new access at the top end of the site for Orchard House itself has been designed to ensure that vehicles can turn round within the site and exit in a forward direction. It would never have been approved by Highways unless they were satisfied that this will be possible, and our drawings have clearly shown that this is possible
3. The proposed dwelling is much smaller than last year's application. It is 1.6 metres less in height and 35% less in floor area. In fact it is now a very modest 2 bedroom dwelling with only 1 bedroom on the first floor which partly within the roofspace.
4. The footprint of the proposed dwelling is only 76 sq metres. It settles neatly into the ground towards the back of the site and will barely be visible from Church Road due to the sightlines and levels. The rural aspect of the road will therefore be maintained. Also only parts of the roof will be visible from the properties in Bridewell Close.
5. It cannot be called overdevelopment when only 16% of the site area will be built on, the remaining 84% being open space around the dwelling.
6. We commissioned a very detailed levels survey in the early days of this project and this included heights of all the surrounding dwellings and I can confirm that the highest part of the proposed roof is 2.2m lower than the ridge of no. 14 and 3.5 metres lower than that on no. 12. So, the impact on the adjacent houses really is very minimal indeed.

7. The Orchard house sits on an unusual site with a lot of garden space, narrowing down towards the bottom end where there is an existing carport that will be retained and its forecourt increased in area. The proposal is most definitely not a development in a small domestic back garden as claimed.
8. The proposed dwelling, because of its design, orientation and the levels involved, will not overlook any other gardens or houses, and the two roof windows that are shown facing west towards Bridewell Close will both be above eye level so there is absolutely no possibility of any overlooking.
9. I hope you will follow your Officer's recommendations and approve this very modest and carefully considered proposal.

Lowlands Committee Meeting 15.09.14

In support of Planning Application No 14/1171/P/FP

Land to the rear of 24, Common Road, North Leigh, Oxon OX29 6RA

Erection of detached dwelling and garage with associated works

I am speaking today on behalf of Mrs Angela Knight in support of this planning application.

Although this may not be directly relevant, it may be helpful to clarify misunderstandings.

Although an appeal was dismissed in 2002, it did establish the principle to build and successful applications for outline and then detailed permission to develop to the rear of 26 and 28, but not 24, Common Road followed. 24 did apply for 1 dwelling but withdrew the application about 11 years ago and have never made any other applications until now.

The technical reasons why permission was sought in 2006 to move the position of the access road is not relevant.

This application is to seek approval to develop land to the rear of 24, Common Road. This sits to the right of the access road. The site is approx. 180ft long at mid-point. It is a private site, at the edge of North Leigh, with mature and extensive hedging. 1 new detached house and garage with ancillary accommodation is proposed. It is understood that "ancillary" means it will always be part of this new dwelling and cannot be separated. It is understood that this would be a planning condition. This development would respect the village character and form a logical complement to the existing scale and pattern of development and the character of the immediate area. There will be safe vehicular and pedestrian access to supporting services and facilities. There will be only 4 houses using this 4m wide tarmacked access. It would round off the existing, recently built development and help to maintain the vitality of North Leigh.

Formal pre- planning advice was sought to explore the planning merits. Negotiations with the Planning Office about the design etc followed.

The Design and Access statement clearly states that the proposed dwelling will be well screened by extensive mature hedging. There will be a need to open a 10ft wide

access into this hedge but the remaining hedging and boundary trees will still offer a high degree of privacy. A 1.8 m fence is also proposed to further protect privacy. Since the development of the 3 houses, significant wildlife and a stunning vista of trees remains. New landscaping will only add to the natural outlook. Fruit trees, where the dwelling will be built, will be removed but there is ample room for new planting. The landscaping scheme will follow should this be granted as per planning conditions laid down by your office.

The Environment Agency has confirmed that the site is not at risk of flooding or likely to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. A surface water drainage and sewerage scheme will be designed by a civil engineer to meet all regulations as per planning conditions.

The design, position, scale, heights, materials etc of the new dwelling were worked out in consultation with your planning office and the Council Architect. The house is positioned so there is no adverse overlooking or overbearing to any neighbouring properties. There is better than average amenity space and ample off road parking with turning space for cars on site, exceeding the recommendations. It respects the existing scale, pattern and character of the adjoining area. The 3 houses recently built are all individual in design and yet complement each other. This proposed dwelling will enhance this – individual yet complementary.

Thank you.

Karin Hyatt