

**Uplands Planning Sub-Committee Meeting- January 6th 2014
Woodstock Action Group (WAG)**

>>> Saturday there was a house fire in Woodstock. The fire brigades responded as quickly as possible but could not save a 70-year-old woman who was found dead, which brings me to my point.

The ever-increasing traffic along the Hensington, Shipton and Banbury Roads is causing commensurate congestion and a recent accident at the narrow, bottle neck, one way shuttle system at the junction of Hensington Road and the A44 and the entrance to Woodstock centre.

Vehicles queue here to wait their turn to enter the town or access the A44.

This restricted passageway is a few yards from the Fire Station and the entrance of the main parking lot, the library and the Police Station.

The Police Station is to be vacated shortly and sold for development of more housing and the transfer of the town surgery to this site.

The compounding of congestion at this sensitive site could impede the rapid response of the local and other fire brigades in the event of another emergency like the one Saturday. The plan contravenes Policies T1, Traffic Generation and T6(c) reduce traffic conflicts, the potential for accidents **and alleviate congestion.**

>>> The site is not allocated in Local Plan 2011.

>>> There is no documented evidence for the NEED of more expensive, luxury market homes in Woodstock.

>>> There are no affordable units planned for this site.

I therefore ask the committee to deny this application. Thank you for your attention.

Dr. Robert W. McGurrin
Chairman
Woodstock Action Group (WAG)

**Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee - 6 January 2014
Cottage Farm Taston 13/1542/P/FP
Taston Conservation Group Address**

Thank you Mr Chairman and thank you Councillors. I am sure you remember visiting Cottage Farm Taston last summer and unanimously rejecting their garage application for reasons that have been fully endorsed at Appeal.

This proposal covers exactly the same area of open countryside. So, once again, I am here to represent the residents of Taston who are strongly opposed this application.

On the face of it, this is a simple, retrospective application for a large, commercial-grade heat pump which measures 7ft high by nearly 6ft wide by 2.5ft deep.

It is clearly visible from the road to the north and the footpath to the south.

Any attempt to camouflage its appearance is simply an admission that it shouldn't be there in the first place.

Even on its own, the heat pump warrants refusal for the harm it causes to the character of the area.

But that's not all. The application also seeks to extend the previously approved parking to cover the entire area of the refused garage, including the removal of various mature trees.

The applicant seems to be under the impression that this area may fall within their domestic curtilage and that parking is not, therefore, subject to planning control. The residents of Taston disagree and there is widely held knowledge that, prior to the current development, this land has always been unspoilt rural countryside.

The application must therefore be refused on the grounds that the entire proposal will harm the character of the area.

Finally, let me be clear about one thing; we fully support the use of renewable energy and we are merely seeking to ensure that the heat pump is located appropriately.

The presumption in favour of renewable energy cannot be without regard for the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the AONB. In fact, your Local Plan Policy NE12 is very clear on this point and states that, within the AONB, renewable energy proposals will only be acceptable where no alternative sites exist.

So the question you must ask yourselves is this; could the equipment have reasonably been placed where it would cause less harm to the character and appearance of the area?

We all believe that it could - and it is untenable for the applicant to claim otherwise – so this application must be refused.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.

To the members of the WODC Uplands Area Planning Sub-Committee

Application 13/1542/P/FP: Corner Cottage - Installation of an Air Source Heat Pump

Having had the opportunity to read the representations in relation to the above application my wife and I wished to make a number of observations to Committee members to address some of the comments raised.

By way of background, Cottage Farm was purchased in early 2011 with existing planning permission to convert and extend the original property and replace the out of character flat roof buildings. Following submission and approval of revised plans to better suit the dynamics of our family and our teenage children, building work commenced in January 2012.

Prior to purchasing the house in Taston we lived for many years in Swerford, another local village of considerable natural beauty. The appeal of Cottage Farm was its rural nature, beautiful views and easy access to many footpaths. We support Councillor Owen's desire to ensure that the beauty of the village is not spoilt and do not believe that the air source heat pump will detract from this. Indeed, it's location by design has to be in front of our property and it is in our interests to ensure that its impact on our views is also minimised.

The redevelopment of the property always envisaged an air source heating system. As part of the project design we engaged an Oxford based mechanical and electrical engineering consultancy (CBG Consultants) that specialises in sustainability projects and due to the largely new build nature of the project and the advances in air source technology CBG recommended an air source heat pump system and selected a suitable unit to meet all the hot water and heating needs of the property. Had CBG, our architects (Acanthus Clews), our builders (JP Charles prior to their liquidation) or our plumbing or electrical contractors (Curtis and Carder and CT Walters respectively) – all local firms – informed us that the air source heat pump required planning permission then we would have included the matter within the 2011 planning application (11/0713/P/FP). That this did not happen, we apologise to the Committee. None the less, it is inaccurate for it to be suggested that the location of the air source was influenced by the subsequent 2013 application for a garage.

As the attached historic plan indicates, the location of Corner Cottage is close to its eastern boundary and to its immediate neighbours on the North and South side. To the front (westerly side) of the property, the garden perimeter soon meets the open agricultural field on the south west side, yet on the west side the garden extends much further and this domestic curtilage is surrounded by a stone wall, although along the boundary with Hillbrook it is in a considerable state of disrepair large due to historic damage caused by the large leylandii trees. Rather than seek to locate the air source heat pump at either the North or South side of the property (where it could be unseen from Corner Cottage but would be closer to our neighbours at Hillcrest or Middle Farm Cottage) or in the field (where it would be more visible from the footpath and Middle Farm Cottage), we took the decision that the most preferable location would be further down the garden where it was further from any property and could be easily screened from all properties and the footpath by a combination of the existing garden wall, additional fencing and hedging.

The air source heat pump is located approximately 30m in front of the sitting room of Corner Cottage and the plant room is located under this area of the house. The heat pump is connected to the plant room by an extremely well insulated "pipe within a pipe" system and, contrary to the representations being made, can run at near full efficiency at distances approaching 100m. I was informed that it is easy for two runs of the 50m standard coil lengths of piping to be joined together and extended as required. Regardless, the distance of the heat pump from the house in this instance has no impact on the efficiency. At full operating temperature the fall in temperature of the flow water from the heat pump to the house to the return back to the heat pump having circulated throughout the underfloor heating system within the house is only 1-2 degrees, a credit to the efficiency of the system.

Along the western boundary line with Hillbrook a small number of trees have recently been removed, namely three smaller leylandii, a diseased and damaged libernum and the trunk of a dead elm – the stumps still remain. In the last two weeks, 25 new trees have also been planted around the east and west boundaries to improve the general landscape. All these trees are native species (beech, hornbeam, maple, malus and hazel) and are good sized 15-20 feet trees that have not been affected by the recent storms. It is our intention to seek permission in future to remove the remaining very large leylandii along the western boundary and replace these with more native trees.

Currently the air source heat pump is visible for approximately 20 metres along the Spelsbury Road, around an area where the owners of Taston Barn are replacing a part of the hedge line and the current bare root saplings are only a few feet high. The heat pump has consciously been situated below the prevailing ground level by approximately 12-18 inches (a level which will not impede the air intake system). As part of the garden development (which was always intended to follow on from the house redevelopment work), it was always the intention to plant a low retaining wall around the heat pump such that only approximately six feet of the unit will be above ground and that this would be screened by a wattle hurdle with a suitable hedge on the outside. This will ensure screening from all adjoining properties and the footpath. Given the building machinery that has been on site, this work has not yet been possible.

At present the air source heat pump is already entirely screened from the inside of Hillcrest, either by its own three bay garage or by the existing garden sheds of Cottage Farm. The heat pump is currently visible from Taston Barn, approximately 150 metres away. Following suitable screening, it will be all but invisible from this property also. The heat pump will continue to be visible in part from the upstairs of Cottage Farm.

The purpose of the current application was to present the air source heat pump and detail the proposed screening around it. It does not contain any changes to ground levels or retaining walls that would be subject to planning approval. As regards where cars are parked within the existing domestic curtilage of the property, our advisers did not indicate that this was a planning matter and we have no intention of breaching any planning requirements.

Yours faithfully



Robert and Meribeth Parker

Briefing Note

TURLEYASSOCIATES

10 Queen Square
Bristol
BS1 4NT

Client ALDI Stores Limited

T: 0117 989 7000
F: 0117 925 1016

Project Banbury Road, Chipping Norton

www.turleyassociates.co.uk

Date 06 January 2014

File ref ALDA2178

Subject Statement to Committee

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Dan Templeton and I act as the planning consultant for this development. I am pleased to be able to address the Committee and if necessary to offer clarification or answer questions that Members may have.

This planning application remains under consideration by your officers and there are several matters that still require discussion. Specifically, matters relating to retail and employment planning policy and the proposed building's design have not been discussed in detail with Officers. We look forward to sitting down with them to consider these issues and welcome hearing Members' initial comments today.

As Members will be aware, the application itself only followed an extensive period of public consultation, including an exhibition of the draft scheme during September last year. The public consultation has been invaluable and has highlighted widespread support for the proposals. We are aware that the proposals raise some sensitive issues, but have also been pleased by the positive comments that have been provided and by the on-going support that we have received.

It should not be forgotten that the application site has been vacant for a long-time and does not currently provide any benefit to the town, either economically or visually. The site has had planning permission for employment use for more than fifteen years, but has never been developed. In the meantime, retail investment in the town centre has been limited and a very high proportion of residents continue to travel away from Chipping Norton to undertake their weekly shopping trip. This application represents an opportunity to retain that 'lost' expenditure in Chipping Norton, which will benefit the town as a whole.

Our application submission considers the relevant issues in some detail and these documents are in the process of being assessed by Officers and your consultants. We have noted the comments that have been made regarding the application and have received a copy of your consultant's report on retail policy matters. A full review will be undertaken and points of clarification offered, if that is considered necessary or appropriate.

I can also confirm that ALDI is willing to discuss in more detail with your Officers how best to secure a pedestrian link from the site to the Community Hospital and London Road to the south. ALDI will be willing to discuss the imposition of planning conditions on any subsequent permission that would allow the Council to control matters such as delivery vehicle routes, noise levels and opening hours.

At this stage, however, we are pleased with the significant support that the application has received and look forward to working with your Officers to enable a full report and recommendation to be made to you at a later meeting.

DT