

Uplands Planning Committee – Monday, 3rd August 2015

This is a planning application with major implications for Burford - the biggest application to affect the town WODC has ever considered. Put simply, if permitted, the population of the town would grow between a quarter and a third. The scheme has given rise to objections from hundreds of residents and some businesses in Burford and the surrounding areas - and just four letters of support.

Everyone understands why the two local charities want to sell off their farmland for residential use. People are objecting because what's proposed is far too big for this location. Financial betterment for the charities should not be at the long-term expense of Burford.

The location is unsustainable. It's remote from the centre and no amount of highways money will overcome that physical separation nor ease the difficulties accessing the High Street. No amount of landscaping would hide the estate and its tall monolithic buildings, located in wide-open countryside. Neither would it bring regular business to High Street retailers.

Officers and the ~~previous~~ local planning inspector have looked at this field on previous occasions and always concluded it's just not suitable.

No one argues with the need for more housing. That's exactly what the new Local Plan sets out to do surely, to put the right number and type of houses in the right places?

The new Local Plan places no demand on Burford to deliver a housing estate on this scale. And this is a key point. A vote in favour of this speculative scheme would declare an open season on our Local Plan. A vote in favour would signal to all

developers that West Oxfordshire members have no faith in their Plan. Frankly, the Local Plan is the only thing we've got to protect our towns and villages from ill thought out schemes like this one. Don't turn this vote into a vote of 'no confidence'.

Having spent seven months considering all the planning implications, your Officers have concluded there are compelling reasons to refuse planning permission. The recent letters from the applicants, and landowners, raise no new issues but make unwarranted criticisms of your Officers' professional judgment.

Please put sound planning policies ahead of what motivates the very few who support this proposal. **Please put faith in our Local Plan and our Officers and vote down this application.**

Thank you.

Appendix B

Burford Garden Company has just won the Oxfordshire Business Award for the best retailer in the county and is the largest employer in the local area. As a site we have over 1 million visitors a year which has a positive knock on effect for other local businesses and attractions.

We have given careful consideration to the proposals but feel we must object on the following grounds:

There will be a very significant increase in traffic along the Shilton Road. This will increase congestion and has safety implications. Independent research has shown us that our customers react badly to even low levels of traffic congestion and are likely to be put off coming

The proposed development could take a period of several years, this would be extremely disruptive to the business and its customers, the works being directly opposite the garden centre, through noise, dust and muck and increased congestion. It would have a significant detrimental effect on trade.

The nature of the area and setting of the garden centre will be changed dramatically from our current rural location to an urban one, a large part of our attraction is in the rural nature of the site.

We feel that the impact to us will be significant and long lasting in terms of lost trade and the changes to the nature of our site and its setting.

My name is David Cohen, town councillor, former Mayor and a resident of Burford for 35 years. I earned my living in Burford, first as an hotelier, then as a retailer. I am here to speak on behalf of the Town Council who are in unanimous support of this outline application. I intend to confine my comments to the revised document and its effect on Burford.

We are in desperate need of a residential care home, those in the immediate vicinity are full, forcing Burford residents as far away as Bicester. This application will provide 90 much needed residential care places including the all important respite care.

Burford also needs freehold extra care housing which, apart from the obvious safety of our senior residents, will preserve the important social circles that exist in our town.

The application also includes the essential affordable housing benefit for local people including key workers such as school teachers, firemen and police.

The high quality private housing is critical to this application and it's inclusion will enhance Burford and West Oxfordshire's commercial status.

The redesigned junction of Shilton Road to the A40 will increase safety for all, not just for this development. The application requires an A40 traffic light crossing as a bare minimum, which is wholly supported by the Town Council, especially in view of the frequency of incidents involving the small island crossing between the two bus shelters.

The Local Plan 2031 requires 800 houses to be built in the Burford/Charlbury segment, we cannot avoid development given Governmental pressures, and the Town Council feels it better to control the choice of site rather than having it imposed on us. This site will protect the medieval integrity of our town, and is already a residential area with a popular garden centre.

An approval of this outline application will generate contributions towards the cost of the much needed extension to the car park, and an expansion of the Primary School on it's existing site.

In conclusion, the Town Council is aware of its responsibility to Burford for future decades and we ask that members of the committee take into account that the decision made today will provide facilities for the long term, and not just for the immediate future.

Thank you.

Appendix D

Burford Committee Speech

My name is Nick Duckworth, I am a director of Hallam Land Management.

Hallam has 25 years' experience in promoting development, we were selected by The Burford School Foundation and The Burford Relief in Need Charity because they wanted their promoter to promote the right scheme for the town.

The charities wanted us to promote residential development, but also retirement care and a coach park, and although this has been removed increasing car parking is still an aspiration as you will hear.

There is no retirement care in Burford, just an isolated 36 bed care home further east, and one at Bradwell village. The lack of care is staggering given that 41% of residents are over 60 years of age, the highest by some way in the whole of Oxfordshire. We promise up to 90 care bedrooms, 48 assisted living apartments and 30 supported living dwellings.

The Town has long had an aspiration to increase Town centre parking spaces, the Charities are inclined to apply some of the revenue from the scheme to increasing car parking by 100 spaces, an unfunded scheme for which exists off Church Lane. An increase in car parking will clearly be a significant benefit to the town as a whole.

As regards to affordable housing, left to windfall there is likely to be no, or very limited affordable housing over the next decade in the town. We proposed 50% of the dwellings would be affordable, i.e. 46.

As regards residual design concerns, our approach is set out in our Vision Statement it describes a high quality development, taking on a range of influences across the town, ultimately leading to a development that will be a credit to the Town and District. Hannah will tell you we have listened to your officers design observations and amended the scheme such that we had thought a design objection would not be raised. However, residual matters could be dealt with at the reserve matters stage when a strong design approach, in accordance with the Council's Design Guidance, would be followed.

In terms of location the highway network improvements we propose negate any objection relating to crossing the A40, a key point of officers opposition in their report. The transport benefits are highlighted in my letter to you.

In summary, the scheme is about delivering a sympathetically designed development for the good of the town, including housing, affordable housing, retirement care, job creation and by extension, town centre car parking. We think the planning balance should tilt strongly in favour of granting permission the scheme delivering significant benefits to the town, that the town will not otherwise secure. The benefits are substantial; the negative impacts are limited and mitigated. I and the Charities hope you will support the scheme.

Appendix E

As residents, we take a pride in our estate, and we feel that it would be a great tragedy if it is spoiled, first by this house which is out of character (Policy guidance BE2) and secondly, as sure as night follows day, it will be followed by other applications to build on the corner houses as they change hands.

There are seven major corner houses on the estate besides this one, two are currently sale agreed and others may come to the market soon. Each has a narrow side garden like this one.

SITE VISIT

Our houses were deliberately built well back from the corners to give a spacious open plan design. There are open spaces, very few fences or divisions, and I would suggest that this gives the area, particularly the centre of the estate, a distinctive and special nature.

May I also suggest that 5A Westland Way is ~~not~~ a bad example ^{not} to be slavishly followed. It was refused planning consent by this committee – I was here when you did so – for exactly the same reasons as are before you now. Policy guidance H2(f) warns against setting a clear precedent where cumulatively the resultant scale of

development would erode the character and environment of the area. That is exactly what will happen if you grant this application. ^{FIELD DAY EST. AGENTS / PLP DEVELOPER} These open corners do make an

important contribution to the area (BE4). We know that houses are needed, but not all sites are suitable. This seems not to be rounding off where the new house would be a complement to others around it, but garden grabbing at its worst. If we lose today – you have had dozens of letters of objections and our Town Council and individual Councillors have objected also - our estate would be condemned to being changed substantially for the worse as time goes on. We ask you to refuse this application in accordance with the sound planning reasons for doing so. Thank you for your attention.

UPLANDS PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE PRESENTATION 3/8/15

I am sure your site visit will have confirmed that the dominating impression when entering the Barn Piece Estate is one of a pleasing architectural harmony, the integrity of which is only compromised by the extension which was eventually allowed on appeal to 5A Westland Way, diagonally across the central island from the plot in this case. 5A Westland Way was an aberration which should never have been allowed and Policy H2 (f) states that "extensions or alterations should not set an undesirable precedent for other sites where in equity development would be difficult to resist and where cumulatively the resultant scale of development would erode the character and environment of the area". Moreover, Policy BE2 (a) makes clear that planning permission should not be given unless "the proposal is well designed and respects the existing scale, pattern and character of the surrounding area".

You have received over 2 dozen objections to this application from local residents but the real crux of the matter is the original design of the estate which aimed to give an open aspect on the corners of the central island. To further compromise the integrity of the original design would not only be counter to Policies BE2 and BE4 (a) which states "proposals for development within or adjoining the built up area should not result in the loss or erosion of (a) an open area which makes an important contribution to (i) the distinctiveness of a settlement; and/or (ii) the visual amenity or character of the locality", but also Policies H2 and H7, which both guard against erosion of the existing character and pattern of development

I earnestly request you, councillors, to reject this application for the very good planning policy reasons stated. Thankyou.

Cllr. Brian Yoxall

Appendix G

Good Afternoon,

I am a resident of the Barn piece estate applying to build a 2-storey side extension to create a separate dwelling within the larger than average garden of No.8

The site is outside the Woodstock Conservation area and Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The West Oxfordshire Local Plan, Classifies Woodstock as a Group C settlement, where new dwelling will be permitted through infilling and rounding off.

In my opinion, the proposal is infilling and will provide a smaller affordable home ideal for young couples or residents wishing to downsize and stay within the local community. As such, it complies with Policy H7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan.

The precedent for infilling already exists; the planning inspectorate Nigel Payne permitted a similar 2-storey development on a corner site on the estate in 2011, and considered the impact on the character & appearance of the locality was minimal and quote "consistent with the present grain of development" of the estate.

You may have seen that over the past 50 years, there has been organic growth of the estate with over 50% of homes having built extensions in all shapes and sizes. Some 2-storey, some on corner plots, but most at the rear, all to suit the need and lifestyle of the present owner.

Other corner sites in the estate have been developed with single and double storey extensions, garages, high fencing, paved concrete areas, all of which have changed the appearance of the estate over time.

Most houses on the estate have turned their front gardens into car parking for 2 or more cars that modern families now require.

All these changes are organic changes, and mean that the estate looks a long way from the open plan green lawn garden concept of the original design. But were made to suit households current needs.

My application is to build on the existing concrete paved space to the side of No.8 within the curtilage of No.8.

In Conclusion,

I trust that my discussions with the Planning Officer and revised plans already submitted will reassure the committee that the design of the new dwelling will reflect the existing character and style of the estate and uses materials which are in keeping with the local area. (Brick and tiles).

I have taken efforts to ensure that the proposed parking complies with Planning Policy Statement 3 and the Highways Authority have no objections to the proposal.

Policy BE4 states proposals shouldn't results in a loss or erosion of open space or common land. My proposed driveway will be constructed from grass setts, ensuring the original grass verge will remains intact (purely a throughway). The garage will be large to accommodate one modern car, ensuring no car will be left on the common land, which will not form part of No. 8a.

In my opinion my application conforms with policies BE2 & BE4.

On a personal note, I would just like to say I appreciate the opinions of a few residents on the estate, and respect their points, however I believe I am not affecting the estate in a negative way, and I am complying with all planning regulations. I am also trying to give another family or couple the opportunity to live in this community.

From the site visit hopefully the committee will have seen how the estate has changed over time, and seen how well 5a Westland Way blends in to the current street scene, and I intend to replicate this.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity...

- Regarding the comments on the covenant, I would like to remind the committee that this point has no relevance to the application, and is not a planning matter.