

Talk by Peter C. Newell (Chairman, Freeland Parish Council)
at planning meeting for 16/01353/OUT,
Land between Wychwood House and Malvern Villas, Witney Road.

1. Today, on behalf of Freeland Parish Council I will dwell on what I believe is the most important aspect of the proposed development: that of the hazard for residents trying to gain access to the very busy A4095 main road onto which this development would open.
And, as this busy road would be the only way out (with no link to Wroslyn Road to the south), the proposed housing development would, in effect, be isolated from the rest of ~~the~~ Freeland.
2. Because of the steady increase in use of the A4095 by commuter traffic from such new developments, at peak flow times it is at a **critical point** with drivers experiencing real difficulty in gaining access to the road to join the tidal flow in the morning and evening. The hazard is that drivers get so frustrated they feel obliged to take huge risks in diving into the stream of oncoming (and equally frustrated) traffic.
A development of 41 homes will inevitably include a proportion occupied by families with school age children, and we have a real concern about the danger to children and young people due to the opening of the proposed site onto the busy main road. Due to the location of the site it is highly likely that most will need to drive to the local school and to do that they will have to fight their way into the oncoming stream of commuter traffic.
3. But the **Planning Assessment states that (5.13) No objection is raised by OCC in relation to vehicle movements and highway safety based on the assessment of the 41 unit scheme.** *Does that really mean that they think there is no problem?*
4. What we actually have is a serious **incremental** problem, getting worse year on year because Highways look at the **apparently acceptable small increase** of road usage in each application **on a separate basis while ignoring the cumulative effects these decisions are making.**
It's like your doctor noting a small increase in your blood pressure every time you visit the surgery but telling you (as you get progressively sicker) that according to the regulations nothing can be done because the increase each visit is less than 5%!
Would you be happy with your doctor if he said that and just accept the inevitable?
5. Every local housing development built over the past 20 years has made the commuter traffic situation progressively worse. The commuter roads reached their capacity years ago, but new developments that increase the usage are continually approved.

If the Highway Authority is going to ignore this **clearly accumulating hazard**, eventually someone - and I hope the sensible planning committee members that you are - will somehow find a way to step in and say *enough is enough - we cannot go on in this way.*

I put it to you that, in this case before us, a new development of 41 houses with all the hazards it entails is an increment too far and should be rejected !



**Land Between Wychwood House and Malvern Villas, Witney Road, Freeland
(Ref – 16/01353/OUT)
Planning Committee Speech – 01.08.2016**

Thank you Chair, and Good Afternoon Members.

I speak as a representative of the applicant, in support of this application on Land Between Wychwood House and Malvern Villas, Witney Road, Freeland.

Members will be aware that this committee resolved to approve an application for 29 dwellings on this site in October 2015. The s106 legal agreement has since been agreed by all parties and formal approval was granted around a month ago. The principle of residential development on this site is therefore firmly established.

This current application involves the provision of 12 additional dwellings, creating 41 units in total. These additional dwellings have been created following removal of the large detached 5 bedroom units and their replacement with a number of 2 & 3 bed semi-detached dwellings. This alteration has been made necessary following a review of the local market conditions in the months since the initial resolution to grant planning permission, and following the advice of local estate agents.

Notwithstanding the uplift in the number of dwellings, the applicant has demonstrated that the overall layout of the scheme will be identical to the approved scheme. A large amount of open space will again be retained on the site frontage.

These revised proposals now include a total of 20 affordable 2 & 3 bed dwellings, an increase of 6 units from the approved scheme. This represents a significant benefit.

Members will be aware that a recent appeal allowed in Long Hanborough would allow the Primary School in the village to expand. Oxfordshire County Council have previously confirmed that children from the proposed scheme would be expected to attend this school. The case officer notes that a suitably worded s106 can allow a phased approach, acknowledging that 29 dwellings have already been permitted.

Other consultation responses received confirm no objections in relation to trees, landscape, ecology, highways or drainage.

We consider that this site provides the opportunity to deliver much needed market and affordable homes, in a sustainable location, within the next 5 years. As a result, officers have recommended approval and their report provides a balanced, detailed and robust justification for the proposals. The case for allowing this scheme is compelling and I therefore respectfully ask Members to support the application in line with the officer recommendation.

Thank you.

With reference to Application 16/01870/FUL

St Hugh of Lincoln, Hensington Road, Woodstock

1. Thank you, Chairman, for the opportunity to speak briefly in support of this application. I am the volunteer co-ordinator for this Project.
2. As you will see from the papers, this application concerns a replacement for our existing Church hall, built in 1934, which is no longer safe to use. As a recent full professional survey revealed
3. In preparing this application we have been guided by and followed entirely both your planning rules and regulations including those relating to parking and those of the County Council.
4. We submitted to your officers an original plan as a result of which there were two objectors, both residents of neighbouring properties.
5. In the light of the objections, we withdrew the original proposal so as to meet the objectors and gain a better understanding of their concerns. We also discussed the proposal with the relevant planning officer, Ms Joanna Lishman.
6. As a result of meeting both objectors at our site and at their homes, we have made a number of significant changes to the original proposal to meet the concerns expressed; for example; reduced the height of the main section of the building and moved it further away from the boundary, reduced the height of that part of the building adjacent to the objectors to no higher than their boundary hedge, removed the window overlooking their properties, specified details of parking on the site and included limits to the hours of use and the extent of the external lighting as recommended to us by them.
7. In other words, Chairman, we have sought to act as good and responsible neighbours.

- 8. The proposed hall is intended to be not only for parish use but also for the use of local community organisations which have been using our existing, but dilapidated hall.**

- 9. We are fortunate in having secured funding for our proposal which we sincerely believe will be of benefit, not only to parishioners but also to the wider Woodstock community.**

- 10. I commend it to you for your approval in line with your officer's recommendations. Thank you for your time.**

Appendix D

There are, in fact, 13 local residents, plus members of Chipping Norton Town Council plus your own Environmental Health officer who are objecting to this application.

Additionally, it has to be said, when talking to people in general they have been astounded that the owners of a care home are actively encouraging their staff to smoke on these premises by constructing a smoke shelter.

Unfortunately, we can't ask you to object to this application purely on moral grounds. Additionally, there is no law banning smoking in an establishment such as this as I'm sure someone will tell you. However, as your Environmental Health officer has pointed out under the current Environmental Protection Act adjacent residential properties ARE protected from the smoke AND noise which will be generated from such a shelter and it's on this basis that we are asking you to object to this application.

There is no doubt that at that at various times of the day and night local residents, whose ages range from 3 to 83, will be affected by secondhand and unfiltered cigarette smoke plus noise from people talking, laughing, using mobile phones etc. Those of us who have given up smoking on health grounds or who have chosen never to smoke, are particularly concerned, not just for our own health but for the health of our younger children and grandchildren.

This is simply not a case of whether local residents will be affected or not by the smoke and noise from the shelter; it's a case of how many will be affected which will largely depend upon the prevailing weather conditions.

Now, having asked you to object to this application on the points already stated I now feel rather hypocritical in requesting that, in addition to objecting to this application, you recommend the applicant seriously considers re-applying again but to position the proposed smoke shelter in the area indicated on the plan which I believe Geoff Saul will have given you. If a future application is made to construct a smoke shelter in this revised position I can assure members of this committee that they will receive no objections from residents of Diston's Lane on the eastern boundary nor will you receive objections from the occupants of the adjacent graveyard on the northern boundary.

Re: Planning Application 16/01677/S3

A month ago, I was here speaking against this very application, since which time the developer has offered *no concession*, preferring to hide behind technical arguments about noise levels.

I may say that we in Diston's Lane, did look into conducting our own acoustic survey. However, aside from the £1300 price tag, the company approached (and against their own interest) advised there was little to be gained from it. Firstly, obtaining a realistic measure of daytime background noise would be difficult with building work in progress. (The survey for the developer, you may recall, was conducted over a bank holiday weekend with no site activity from Friday afternoon to Tuesday morning.)

Further, rather worryingly, the precise plant to be installed is not specified, nor even its power rating – we just have just an expected noise rating – so it's impossible to provide independent corroboration of that data.

I therefore return to the *underlying* issues:

1. Avoidable noise should be avoided. Nearby *residents* should not suffer just to save the *developer* cost or delay.
2. The developer concedes that there *will* be *some* noise, both night and day. Screening measures, we're told, will "help to contain" the noise. The noise is merely *predicted* to fall within acceptable limits. It seems certain to exceed those limits in our *gardens*, if not in our houses. We use our gardens rather a lot, actually; we don't just stare at them from our houses.
3. The required plant should have been designed-in from the start, over two years ago, not bolted on at the last minute. It's the *developer* who should suffer for this omission, not the nearby properties.
4. The location chosen for the aircon plant is the *worst possible* as regards proximity to other properties. It's just 4m from the boundary wall (whose height has been exaggerated in the plans, I might add.) The opportunity to propose an alternate location has not been taken, nor any justification so far offered for sticking with the original location. An obvious alternative *does* exist, namely, in the adjacent sunken courtyard behind the retaining wall, where it would be dropped down by over 2m.

I note in passing, there's no mention of equipment for filtering smells from the kitchen extract. This *needs* to be addressed as the prevailing wind will blow them towards Diston's Lane.

Finally, please remember that the developer is a commercial organisation, making a profit from this development. Is it right that adjoining residents should have to suffer for or indirectly subsidise this in *any* way?

Jonathan Souster
34 Diston's Lane