

WODC planning application 16/02306/FUL: Land Rear Of 15 And 16 Woodstock Road Charlbury Oxfordshire.

These comments reflect not just my views, but follow talks with many other local residents.

We are all very concerned over the loss of the current playground. It is the only public play area in this part of Charlbury. Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association's initial report, and revised comments, stresses how Charlbury already lacks enough public play space. Loss of this area will only worsen this. Replacing the existing 0.46 hectare area with just 100 square metres, as now proposed, only meets minimum size for toddlers, but gives no room for ball games, and is useless for older children. We draw attention to the OPFA's statement that approving the scheme would not conform in any respect to the National Planning Policy Framework. And to the petition, signed by 130 local residents who wish to retain the playground.

The Housing Enabling Manager supports the application as it would provide 'family homes for four person households'. If these are family homes, then is the estimate by OCC that they will generate only 3.9 school pupils realistic? Or are OCC minimising the likely number of children because Charlbury School has no surplus space for expansion and is already oversubscribed most years?

The new road will exit onto Woodstock Road near a sharp bend. This road already has heavy traffic, and cars frequently parked on it, making a new road here seem potentially dangerous. OCC propose that mature trees bordering the road will need to be removed to improve sight lines. However, this is a Conservation Area, and loss of these trees, plus those in and around the current play area, will impact on ecology, and urbanise the approach to our lovely town. The design of the house to be built facing Woodstock Road, out of keeping with existing houses, will further detract from the current streetscape.

The slope over the straight part of the new road is about 1 in 14, way steeper than the 1 in 20 recommended for permeable paving. No road gullies are shown for this length of the road, causing concerns that in extreme rainfall some nearby properties will be flooded.

Residents also feel that until Charlbury Neighbourhood Plan is approved and adopted, there should be a moratorium on all development proposals.

Lastly, we wonder how the development, all two-bed homes for social rent, ties in with your July 2016 'Housing Market Assessment'. Although this states a need for new affordable rented housing in West Oxfordshire it projects a surplus of two-bedroom social rented homes, and suggests a number could be re-let. If the council votes to remove our playground, and destroy our streetscape, we hope it at least ensures it builds the right size of housing.

Thank you.

Peter Bennett

Appendix B

Good afternoon.

My name is Anthony Pettorino and I am the project architect representing Wayne Lewis, the owner of the property. Wayne has asked me to speak on his behalf.

Wayne is a local resident and wishes to create a new home on this site in Woodstock. The existing building is of limited architectural quality and has a horizontal form, clearly at odds with the vertical nature of the development which prevails across the town centre.

In seeking to design a new structure we have engaged extensively over the past 18 months with your officers to agree the most appropriate design for this unique site. Their advice has been invaluable and has guided the proposal before you today.

Following a more traditional scheme put forward to your officers a few years back, it was agreed that trying to slavishly replicate traditional forms would miss the opportunity for something new and innovative which would make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

The proposal seeks to take the themes of the traditional and vernacular and re-visit these in a contemporary manner.

Therefore, the design seeks to replicate the vertical emphasis in the form of each building element. Natural stone and slate roofing are separated by light glazed divisions between the masonry blocks. The design seeks to replicate the scale and appropriate height to reflect the adjoining properties and the row of houses generally.

In this way the modern approach has resulted in a building which can respect the past architectural forms but present these as a modern building. This is compliant with both the Districts policies and those of the government.

It is disappointing that the Town Council do not agree with this approach or the design, but my client and I believe that once constructed the building will be seen as complimentary to the existing buildings in the street and will not be garish. It will, in our view, be an improvement to this part of the conservation area, adding positively to the architectural history of the town. This view is also endorsed by both the conservation and planning officers.

I am happy to deal with any matters of clarification and trust that you feel able to support the application and your officer's recommendations.

Thank you for your time.

Good afternoon all.

I speak as a neighbour to the development. I am at no.16 – as you all know – the application is titled no. 18.

I firstly wish to advise you all that I strongly support the principle of affordable housing on this site.

But I also object strongly to the plans; as do my neighbours.

And I speak for these neighbours who attended a meeting that I arranged in September after the plans were submitted. There has been a lack of consultation.

On a personal level, the applicant has never sought to involve myself and other neighbours who were also overlooked.

In March they spoke to my next door neighbour Bertie – at no. 18 – with whom my property is semi-detached but have never knocked on my door nor written to me with details of this application.

The two letters I wrote to the applicant asking for them to provide me with information were ignored.

I finally sent a recorded delivery letter and received an immediate response – in it the applicant claimed that the lack of contact was an oversight. That was on 06 October 2016.

The applicant contacted 5 residents at 4 properties – yet there were 10 residents who attended the meeting that I referred to earlier.

National Planning Policy Framework 7, comments that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, and expects applicants to *work closely to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community.*

The fact that we are here today evidences that this has not taken place prior to this planning application being submitted on Friday 12 August 2016.

Cottsway first contacted the Parish Council – an act of community consultation – on Tuesday 16 August 2016 - four days after their formal planning application was submitted.

The plans submitted were not made available for community consultation pre-application and the resultant design and layout is representative of this lack of engagement.

They fail to respect the privacy of the existing houses, and fail to maintain a satisfactory environment for them, and for the residents of the new units. The new block is un-neighbourly and overbearing.

And as such, I urge the applicant to make significant changes to the layout and configuration.

I have here visual renderings that illustrate a huge difference that a simple change in orientation would make.

I close by urging you to act in the best interests of the community by rejecting this application.

And insisting that a new application is prepared by the applicant with full community consultation in line with the National Planning Policy Framework.

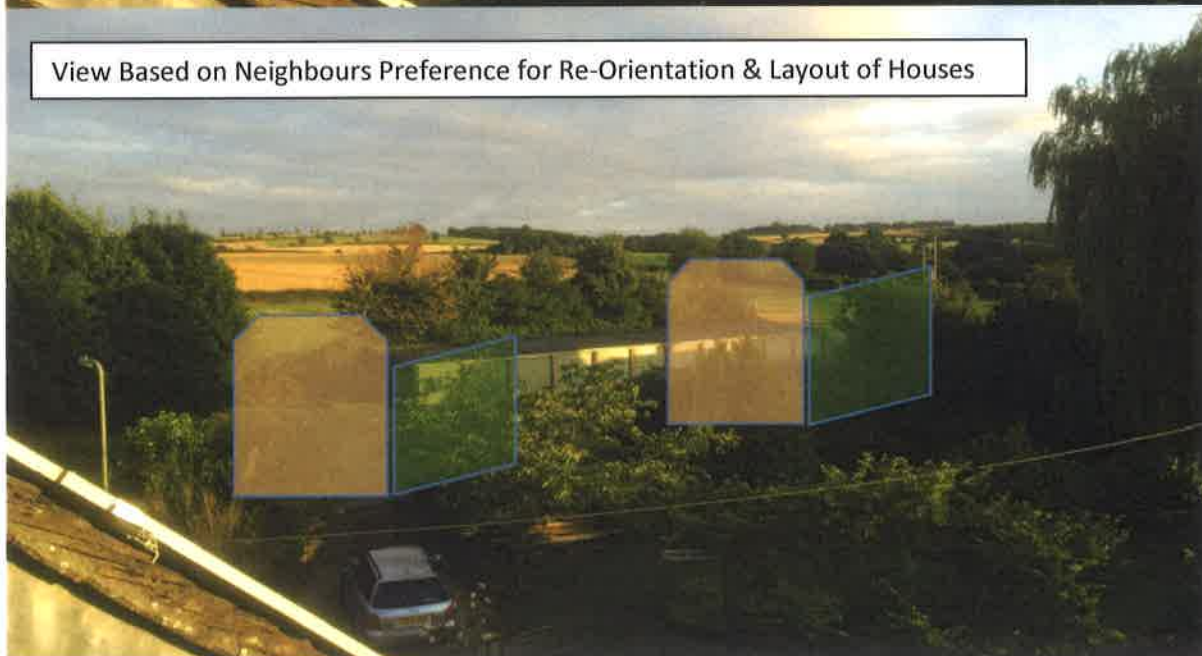
Current View



View Based on Plans Submitted by Cottsway



View Based on Neighbours Preference for Re-Orientation & Layout of Houses



Plan View Based on Plans Submitted by Cottsway



Plan View Based on Neighbours Preference for Re-Orientation & Layout of Houses



The community and Parish Council agree there is a need for affordable housing in Ascott; that this is the appropriate place; and that six units is not an over development of the site. However there is a huge problem with the layout design. The site extends to 1577 sq. m. and the application for six units is not a challenging density, alternative layouts are possible.

The Design and Access Statement refers to “rural vernacular typically found in and around village greens” but this is a different environment and comprises council houses from the 60s and 70s with long gardens, and open outlooks. This scheme includes an unbroken terraced block, 71’ long and 31’ high at right angles to the existing houses in Maple Way and set back only 19’ from the new boundary. This block overshadows the gardens of 18 in particular. Despite Officer comment it will exclude the sun in winter months for most of the day. The first floor windows of the new houses look directly in to the gardens of 18 and 16 Maple Way which will have no privacy. We question that bedrooms are not regarded as habitable rooms - but in any event they will eliminate any sense of privacy in the existing gardens, and those of the new houses. Other concerns including issues of drainage, traffic and the natural environment have been addressed in the draft conditions but parking arrangements especially those for 15 Dawls Close remain outstanding.

There was no consultation with the Parish Council, and minimal contact with others. Nobody had seen final design proposals before the application submission. S.66 of National Planning Policy Framework 7 provides that “Applicants will be expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community”. Sadly this protocol was ignored.

For the reasons considered the proposed layout is unsatisfactory.

Housing applications within The District currently carry a presumption in favour of development. Paragraph 14 of the Framework qualifies this, and where the principle of development is not at issue, there are strong arguments for refusing consent or deferring the application for further consideration. This would allow the consultation that should have occurred prior to submission, and should lead to a more sensitive design solution, acceptable to all parties.