

**REF: 23/01496/DISC****Location: Proposed Himley Village North West Bicester,  
Middleton Stoney Road, Bicester**

21 July 2023

Thank you for consulting me on the above application. I have reviewed the submitted design code for this development. I have some concerns with the proposals where details are incorrect or missing, and for that reason I am unable to support this application in its current form. This objection may be addressed by amendments and submission of further information which addresses my comments below.

**Landscape strategy and codes**

- Play strategy – 3.24 – Play spaces are highly attractive targets for crime and ASB, and elsewhere in Oxfordshire we have seen valuable play equipment damaged beyond repair preventing the community from using spaces and costing the local authority thousands of pounds to replace. I ask that crime and ASB risks are considered in this section. A requirement should be placed that all play spaces will be located close to residential development where they are well overlooked by high levels of surveillance from neighbouring dwellings, to provide ownership and guardianship of spaces. It should also be a requirement that landscaping surrounding areas of play is designed to maximise surveillance, utilising tree species with canopies kept clear above 2m and hedge planting maintained below 1m in height. Play spaces should also be provided with secure cycle parking facilities such as Sheffield stands, to enable visitors to use sustainable modes of travel to the facility and not have to leave cycles insecure and at risk of theft. I recommend all play spaces remain unlit. If any MUGA facilities are to be lit, there should be a curfew no later than 2100 on lighting to prevent the space becoming attractive to crime and ASB outside hours of legitimate usage.
- Design Principles - 3.100 – trees in public spaces such as parks, alongside footpaths and in parking courts should be of clear stemmed varieties with canopies maintained above 2m to facilitate clear lines of sight. Tree planting must be planned holistically with lighting to avoid areas of shadowing or pooling of light which are beneficial to crime and ASB. Trees and their support structures must be located a sufficient distance from residential garden boundaries to prevent them being used as climbing aids to gain unauthorised access to private areas.
- Edible & productive landscapes – 3.121 Allotments – I ask that security of allotments is specifically acknowledged here – allotments are high demand drivers in terms of crime and ASB where they are not sufficiently secure to prevent unauthorised entry. The allotment and its parking facilities should be located within a secure lockable perimeter. 1.8-2m high weldmesh fencing should be used to provide a secure boundary, which can be softened with hedge planting. Consideration should be given to providing secure communal storage for tools. The entrance to allotment sites should be located where it is well overlooked by surveillance from neighbouring residential development.
- Himley Sports Park – 3.132 onwards – A requirement for all green spaces to be provided with vehicle mitigation measures must be included. Unauthorised encampments are a significant risk, and green spaces and associated car parking facilities must have landscaping/planting features or formal boundaries that are sufficient to prevent unauthorised vehicular incursion onto green spaces.

**General Urban Design Principles**

- Key frontages – Add an additional requirement for active frontage to be maximised to provide surveillance over the public realm. Long stretches of inactive frontage or blank elevations must not overlook the public realm as they reduce surveillance, and are attractive to crime and ASB and vulnerable to graffiti.

- Legibility and wayfinding – Lighting should also be utilised to identify and highlight primary safe routes of travel.
- Development block principles – Formal building groups should be designed with rear garden access carefully designed to avoid convoluted or excessive use of rear access routes. Where unavoidable, rear access routes must be secured in line with the front of the building line, must serve a maximum of 4 dwellings and must not run in parallel with other rear access routes.
- Affordable Housing – 4.13 onwards – A requirement for a mixture of house types and sizes within affordable clusters should be included. Having dwellings of different sizes encourages a mix of different uses throughout the day reducing opportunities for crime and ASB.
- Crime Prevention - 4.17 – Update Secured by Design – Homes 2019 to Homes 2023.
- Apartments – 4.30 – Add a requirement that apartment blocks must comply with the security and access arrangements set out in Secured by Design – Homes 2023. All apartment blocks should be provided with secure access controlled lobbies to prevent tailgating and provide a secure location for postal services to be located. Bin and cycle stores MUST be separate and not co-located, and the entrances to them must be located where they are well overlooked by the building. It may not be necessary to mandate all bin and cycle storage being external – it can be beneficial for them to be integral to the building in some instances. Any apartments with patio doors must be provided secure enclosed private space for the doors to open out onto.
- Corner turner dwellings – 4.31 - Add an additional requirement for all corner plots to be dual aspect with windows at ground floor level in both elevations overlooking the public realm to maximise surveillance over the public realm.
- Corner turner dwellings – 4.32 - Where side or rear garden boundary exposure is unavoidable – such as corner plots – defensible space and planting to a depth of at least 1m must be provided.
- Fenestration – 4.36 – Recessed entrances should be avoided as they reduce surveillance over them and narrow the line of sight for people leaving the building. Recesses should be no deeper than 600mm with edges splayed to facilitate clear lines of sight.
- The main entrance to all residential dwellings should be lit with PIR dusk till dawn lighting to emphasise and protect the main entrance to the dwelling.

### **Character area guidance**

- CA3 - Core Housing – Courtyard parking is mentioned – this should be used as little as possible, rear courtyard parking should be completely avoided.
- Page 89 – illustration at the top indicates housing orientation backing onto courtyard parking which exposes a number of vulnerable rear garden boundaries whilst lacking surveillance, leaving dwellings vulnerable.
- Page 96 – Parking point 3 - Landscaping within parking areas must not inhibit surveillance – screening parking from view must not create isolated parking areas where people do not have view of parked vehicles as this will encourage crime and ASB within the parking area.
- Page 1.3 – Primary School point 5 – I note no drop off is provided, however it is vital that the surrounding street networks are able to cope with drop offs by vehicles. Whilst sustainable travel is desirable, it is inevitable that a number of pupils will be dropped off and picked up by vehicles every day. If residential use is adjacent to the school there is a high risk of disputes and community tension whereby parents may park inappropriately blocking residential access and parking to drop off/pick up children. It is worth considering providing other community uses with car parking close by, such as a community centre or similar whereby the car parking for these facilities could be used for easy drop off and pick up without blocking roads and creating a demand on policing.
- Page 119 – Street lighting – I object to tertiary streets being unlit. It is important for pedestrian safety and to reduce crime and ASB that all streets within the development are lit.
- Page 122 – 5.65 – Add a requirement that BCPs will be located away from residential garden boundaries to prevent bins being used as climbing aids.
- Page 122 – Apartment refuse – all bin stores should be brick rather than timber to provide robust secure and long lasting bin storage less vulnerable to arson attacks.
- Page 123 – 6.64 add requirement for front cycle parking to be secure.
- Page 123 – 6.69 – add requirement for visitor to be located where it is well overlooked by surveillance.

- Page 124 – 6.77 – Add point that rear parking courts should be the option of last resort, and must be used as little as possible. Rear parking courts must not undermine the security of perimeter blocks and expose vulnerable rear/side garden boundaries.
- Page 124 – Visitor car parking – Add a point requiring all unallocated visitor parking to be located where it is well overlooked, and on street not within private parking courts.
- Page 124 – 6.84 – Landscaping must not hinder surveillance and must still facilitate clear sightlines. Trees with canopies above 2m and hedges below 1m in height.
- Page 125 – 2, Parking Court – Landscaping requirements – minimum 1m deep defensible space and planting to protect any exposed adjoining garden boundaries. Should be gated to prevent unauthorised entry. No visitor parking should be provided within private parking courts.
- Page 125 – 5 Mews – Must ensure a mix of housing types to provide surveillance at ground floor level. Long rows of garages prevents surveillance of the street and must be avoided.
- Page 125 – 7, Drive-through – Landscaping requirements – minimum 1m deep defensible space and planting to protect any exposed adjoining garden boundaries. Must be gated to prevent unauthorised entry.
- Page 125 – 8 Hard Standing & 9 Detached garage – Add requirement for spaces to be overlooked by windows in the side elevation of the dwelling to provide surveillance.
- Page 130 – 7.13 – ASHP's must be located where they do not obstruct views and surveillance from dwellings over the public realm.
- 7.15 – EV Charging must be covered by surveillance from the dwelling it serves. We have seen a huge increase in EV charging equipment theft and as such this is very important.

The above comments are made on behalf of Thames Valley Police and relate to crime prevention design only. I hope that you find these comments of assistance. If you have any queries relating to crime prevention design, please do not hesitate to contact myself.

Kind regards  
Kevin Cox.