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Your ref:  
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4<sup>th</sup> April 2023

Dear Sirs

## LAND EAST OF CLAYDON ROAD, CROPREDY

Please find attached an outline planning application, submitted via the Planning Portal, for the development of up to 60 dwellings on land east of Claydon Road, Cropredy.

The application is made on behalf of Obsidian Strategic, in partnership with Brasenose College (Oxford), and is an outline planning application with all matters reserved apart from access. The formal description of development sought through this application is as follows:

*“Outline Planning Application (except for access) for residential development of up to 60 dwellings (Use Class C3) including a community facility, new vehicular and pedestrian access off Claydon Road, public open space and associated landscaping, earthworks, parking, engineering works and infrastructure”.*

The planning application comprises the following:

- Planning application fee of £14,914.20
- Completed Application Form and Certificates
- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Affordable Housing Statement
- Arboricultural Assessment
- Archaeological Desk Based Assessment
- Ecological Appraisal
- Energy Sustainability Assessment
- Geo tech Preliminary Risk Assessment
- Flood Risk Assessment (including Drainage Strategy)
- Landscape and Visual Assessment
- Transport Statement
- Statement of Community Involvement

The application also includes the following drawings:

- Drawing ref: J0050867\_005: Red Line Location Plan
- Drawing Ref: J0050867\_006: Concept Framework Plan
- Drawing Ref: J0050867\_007: Parameter Plan
- Drawing Ref: J0050867\_008: Illustrative Proving Layout

## Site Description

The application site is located at the north eastern edge of Cropredy, approximately 7.2 km north of Banbury and comprises 4.96 ha/12.25 acres of arable land to the east of Claydon Road. The site lies in Cropredy Parish and the Cropredy, Sibfords and Wroxton Ward of Cherwell District Council.

The site is broadly rectangular in shape, consisting of two field parcels divided by a single hedgerow. The gardens of residential properties abut the southern boundary and there is agricultural land to the north. The recently developed Cropredy Marina and car park is located further to the north of the site with the Oxford Canal running along the eastern site boundary.

The land east of Claydon Road is currently used for agricultural purposes and is predominantly flat falling in an easterly direction from a highpoint in the south-western corner of around 110.00 m AOD, to low points of around 100.00 m to the south-east of the site.

The land is classified as Grade 4 agricultural land, which is considered to be 'poor quality' by the Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales.

The current site access is from a field gate to the south west of the site from Claydon Road. There are currently no public rights of way within the site. The site is not subject to any statutory ecological, local planning policy, or landscape designations, nor is it located within the Green Belt or AONB.

The site does not lie within a Conservation Area and there are no listed buildings present on the site. Furthermore, there are no Scheduled Monuments within the site or wider area.

## Description of Proposed Development

The development concept is to create a high-quality residential development, of up to 60 dwellings, which is integrated with the village of Cropredy. A sensitive approach to existing landscape features will be taken along with carefully designed new landscape planting and green spaces, including wildflower meadow. Open spaces and community facilities for formal and informal recreation have been incorporated into the proposals including a LEAP, LAP and informal recreational routes.

The proposal comprises the following key elements:

- Erection of up to 60 dwellings (including a proportion of live/work dwellings) (use class C3);
- Affordable housing (35%);
- Access off Claydon Road;
- Community Facility area 0.28ha (Use class F2);
- Public open space;
- Biodiversity net gain;
- Recreational walking routes around the site;
- Additional landscaping;
- Sustainable urban drainage systems; and
- Other supporting infrastructure

This application is made in outline therefore appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are to be considered through reserved matters applications. Access is proposed for consideration in detail at this stage (see Drawing Ref: 8210439/6101 Rev. B – Site Access Visibility Splays). An illustrative masterplan has been produced to show, in conceptual terms, how the development could be satisfactorily developed.

## Planning Assessment

Having regard to the Development Plan for Cherwell, we consider that the proposal conforms with relevant planning policy and should be approved accordingly. Cherwell District Council has recently reviewed its strategic housing requirement and found that, due to the updated housing needs assessment, the local housing requirement is not relevant and the Standard Method should be used for the purposes of calculating a five year housing land supply. Whereas previously, against the adopted Local Plan, the Council could only demonstrate a 3.5 year supply of housing for the period 2022-2027, against the Standard Method calculation the supply has increased to 5.4 years.

Using the Standard Method, Cherwell District Council can demonstrate a five year housing land supply and the 'tilted balance' exercise contained within the NPPF (triggered by paragraph 11(d)) does not apply. However, whilst the housing need scenarios contained within the HENA still need to be tested through the Local Plan process, the HENA provides the most up to date evidence for assessing the district's housing need. The HENA also contains evidence which demonstrates the housing needs up to 2040, related to a strategy which continues to support economic growth.

Planning Policy Guidance makes it clear that *"the standard method for assessing local housing need provides a minimum starting point in determining the number of homes needed in an area"* and that *"there will be circumstances where it is appropriate to consider whether actual housing need is higher than the standard method indicates."* The PPG goes on to consider that there may be situations where previous assessments of need (such as a recently produced Strategic Housing Market Assessment) are significantly greater than the outcome from the standard method. (PPG Ref 2a-010-20201216).

The recently released HENA indicates that the assessment of actual housing need – whether that is adjusted to consider the latest census figures, or uplifted to follow the extant economic strategy of the Cherwell Local Plan - is significantly greater than the standard method.

Whilst it is accepted that planning policy guidance sets out that where Local Plan policies, providing a housing requirement, are more than 5 years old, and are assessed as being out-of-date, the Local Housing Need figure should be used, it is not accepted that the Council can simply consider this element alone in the context of its Local Plan strategy. If the Council wishes to maintain the economic growth strategies of its Local Plan (and has found them up-to-date through a Section 10A review) then it ought to maintain the appropriate housing requirement. The Council's own evidence in the HENA suggests that the appropriate annual requirement for housing need is 1,277 dwellings per year (a figure not that dissimilar to that which the Council was working with less than four months ago). Using this figure would suggest that the Council can only demonstrate a housing land supply sufficient for 3.17 years.

Set within this context the application proposals would provide several benefits, including providing up to 60 dwellings, of which 21 would be affordable, focused on a sustainable location. The provision of affordable housing is an important element of this planning application. As demonstrated in the Tetlow King Affordable Housing Report, there is a severe affordability crisis within Cherwell District which shows no sign of improving. The affordability crisis is highlighted in the supporting text to the Cherwell Local Plan Part1, Policy BSC3, in which the high level of need for affordable housing is noted.

The severity of the crisis is also reflected in the significant number of people in housing need. According to the Cherwell District Council profile of 2021, there were 1,680 active applications on the Housing Register as of July 2021. Unless this situation is resolved the level of need will continue to have negative impacts on people's lives increasing problems such as homelessness. The application proposal can therefore make a meaningful contribution to the affordable needs of the district and Cropredy specifically. As demonstrated in the Planning statement, the benefits of the proposed development, especially the provision of affordable housing, should be attributed nothing less than significant weight in the determination of this planning application.

In addition to the much needed affordable housing contribution, the proposed development will provide bungalows as part of the mix, to offer accessible homes, particularly for elderly residents who may wish to downsize. In all other respects a review has been undertaken which concludes the proposed development is in accordance with the pertinent policies identified in the adopted Development Plan.

As part of the community consultation process, the team were approached by Cropredy Surgery who explained that the local GP practice was too small to accommodate the existing and growing number of patients, particularly in terms of clinical/administration space and car parking. A meeting was held with the surgery, on a without prejudice basis, to discuss their requirements. This has resulted in the inclusion of a new community building, to accommodate a surgery, as part of the application proposals. Following the grant of outline planning permission, the reserved matters application will include the exact surgery requirements.

The application proposal contributes to the three overarching objectives of sustainable development by contributing positively to the economic, social and environmental dimensions. These benefits include the provision of market housing and affordable housing to meet the identified need.

Therefore, considering the above benefits and compliance with policy, we request that outline planning permission be granted without delay.

We look forward to hearing from you regarding the registration of the outline planning application.

Yours faithfully,



Jeremy Pyatt

Partner

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