

The Planning Inspectorate

COMMENTS ON CASE (Online Version)

Please note that comments about this case need to be made within the timetable. This can be found in the notification letter sent by the local planning authority or the start date letter. Comments submitted after the deadline may be considered invalid and returned to sender.

Appeal Reference: APP/C3105/W/22/3304021

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference APP/C3105/W/22/3304021

Appeal By ALBION LAND

Site Address
Land west of Howes Lane
Bicester
OX26 2GS
Grid Ref Easting: 456527
Grid Ref Northing: 223237

SENDER DETAILS

Name MR MARCUS HEATH

Address
51 Beckdale Close
Bicester
Oxfordshire
OX26 2GT

ABOUT YOUR COMMENTS

In what capacity do you wish to make representations on this case?

- Appellant
- Agent
- Interested Party / Person
- Land Owner
- Rule 6 (6)

What kind of representation are you making?

- Final Comments
- Proof of Evidence
- Statement
- Statement of Common Ground
- Interested Party/Person Correspondence
- Other

COMMENT DOCUMENTS

The documents listed below were uploaded with this form:

Relates to Section: REPRESENTATION
Document Description: Your comments on the appeal.
File name: Phase 3 appeal_Objection..docx

PLEASE ENSURE THAT A COPY OF THIS SHEET IS ENCLOSED WHEN POSTING THE ABOVE DOCUMENTS TO US

Case No: App/C3105/W/22/3304021
CDC Planning Appeal Reference: 22/00045/REF
CDC Original Planning Application Reference: 21/03177/F

To the appointed Planning Inspector,

I wish to raise my concerns to you, for consideration prior or inclusion at the planned hearing over the above planning application appeal and hopefully highlight to you the issues, as residents in proximity we have. I appreciate this has been referred to you dept under the reasoning of strategic and vital development, but I wanted you to understand what this means from a resident's point of view and the affect it will have.

Referring to the appellant statement of case (ASOC), it seems no new arguments have been presented or significant changes made from the previous application presented at the first planning meeting. At this meeting a committee of duly appointed, independently free-thinking councillors unanimously voted against it.

These councillors have the local knowledge of the area and the feeling of its residents and as such are far better paced to decide on the best way forward in Bicester's future development, far better and far more invested than a remote developer whose only concern is a bottom line, not the town or its residents.

Referring to the ASOC, Pg. 10, Para 4.19 It is stated that a target of 10Ha for employment development was set, with phase 1 and 2 hitting 9.6Ha, only falling short by 4%. The appeal for phase 3 seeks to develop a further 6.2Ha to achieve this target, which is a massive 59% increase. Yet the claim is put forward as 'modest'.

Could the intention all along have been to under develop on phase 1&2 to justify the requirement for Phase 3 later?

In a few months can we expect applications for Phase 4, then Phase 5, abutting right up to property boundaries, where does it end?

Yet another warehouse development also brings no further employment diversity to Bicester, to an area oversaturated with warehouse jobs.

The requirement is set out by CDC masterplan is to achieve 40% green space as part of the development, I fail to see how considering the very immodest 59% increase to the development this is to be achieved. They were asked not to include existing Howes Lane in this figure as, despite promises no re-alignment and new SLR is yet forthcoming.

ASOC Pg's 12/13, para 4.37, they refer to the already agreed residential application for approximately 150 homes and associated services, stating they can be easily relocated. This would mean cramming them into another development or yet further destruction of green space. Residential development and associated services are what the existing residents were promised, and many brought their homes on the expectation of this. To change what is delivered into towering walls of concrete and steel is morally reprehensible.

If there has been any upside to the pandemic it is that we have learnt the importance of mental health and well-being. People gardens were a source of much needed solace in these times and existing residents deserve to enjoy their homes and gardens now and in the future without noise, light & air pollution and steel as far as the eye can see.

There has been severe flooding to Beckdale Close and surrounding streets in recent years and this has all occurred since the warehouses broke ground. Large slabs of concrete remove the ability of surface water to drain sufficiently. The developer argue that the ditches and drainage are the issue and no causal factors from the developments but additional concrete slabs will only further reduce the ability of water to drain, leading to more flooding, forcing more misery on existing residents and financial implications.

I would invite the inspector to visit & speak directly to the residents of Beckdale Close and their surrounding neighbours to hear first-hand the major problems & financial impact caused by flooding.

ASOC page 15, para 4.63 they speak of refusal due to visual amenity through a Residential visual amenity assessment, and they argue the separation of the proposed build as sufficient (115-137m) as not to cause imposition to existing residents. However, within Appendix 1 to the ASOC I quote:

“Albion land still intends to deliver development on this part of the site in the longer term”

Referring to the ‘Eastern Parcel’ the intention, clearly stated renders this argument a falsehood as they blatantly state the plan is to develop this plot in time, removing the separation element to the existing residences they use as justification. This claim of sufficient separation is simply misdirection to get through the planning application one development at a time.

We ask for:

Full and binding assurance needs to be secured that were this development to be approved, this parcel of land will not be subject to further development but given over to planting for green space to provide a suitable buffer to residents from the development and its operations, with no danger of further encroachment to existing residents in the future. People have worked hard and invested well earned money into their properties and deserve to enjoy them as homes, unmolested by future close development.

Notwithstanding my above counter argument, the issue with additional warehousing, we the residents have is the increased traffic, especially the heavy vehicles that utilise Howes Lane. They add to congestion in peak times and speed unchecked along Howes Lane during in the quiet hours and though their sheer size & speed cause massive noise and vibrations that are physically damaging homes and affecting people’s well-being.

In previous documents submitted in support of the application it alludes that the development poses no significant increase in traffic. Yet they extoll the virtues of all the jobs this will supposedly bring. Workers will equal vehicles to get to their place of work and commercial and industrial development output equal more heavy goods vehicles.

I invite the inspector to visit my home to see first-hand the impact large goods vehicles have on the properties edging Howes Lane and they can see for themselves how significant even one extra HGV would be. No theoretical traffic modelling presented can convey the real-time misery caused by the traffic currently experienced, let alone any increase that this development will undoubtedly bring.

At the previous planning meeting, where the application was unanimously refused, the case officer referred to a routing agreement for traffic during construction. My question is, how would this be monitored and more importantly enforced? What happens once the developer has their build and moves on, there will be no check on traffic then.

My understanding is that the developers only commit to funding part of the realignment of Howes Lane via the new Strategic Link Rd (SLR), and this simply isn't good enough. The new SLR needs to be fully in place before any further development is allowed to break ground and I believe CDC have imposed a halt on approving further planning applications until the new Rd is constructed.

Suitable infrastructure first, not as empty promises for the future that will never be fulfilled. We have already seen the £15m, specifically secured through a Govt growth deal sidled away. Why are any future assurances to be different?

ASOC Pg. 12, Pare 4.35, ii states that a Grampian condition is in place for the SLR be built before the residential development proceed, the same should be enforced. Infrastructure before development.

We ask for:

New SLR built and operational and the closure of the existing stretch of Howes Lane before any further development is allowed to go ahead.

Summary

In summary there is no real vital or strategic reason for the additional development and there are no significant changes to any argument that wasn't heard and subsequently refused by a committee of independent-thinking Councillors who are familiar with Bicester and its surrounds.

It is purely an enhancement to the bottom line of a developer who has no thought to the impact to the existing residents once they've moved on through the town.

Whilst I wholly object to the planning application, I fear it is already a foregone conclusion under the guise of progress however this should not be to the detriment of existing residents. What I ask for before any development is approved is two-fold:

1. Binding & legal assurance that the Eastern parcel will be relinquished from any potential for further development and planted as a 'green buffer' to safeguard residents from any further intrusion as they have stated is the intention. This also helps to reach the percentage of green space mandated by CDC's plan. Additionally securing greenspace and trees will help alleviate some of the further flood risk through sufficient ground soakage.
2. The SLR is developed without delay and in full. The existing infrastructure cannot handle the current traffic levels and development without new infrastructure operational ahead of an approximately 50% increase to the developments overall size will compound the issue. The new SLR must be in place before future development is approved.

If the application is to be approved, the two above assurances would safeguard the existing resident's well-being and way of life, bring improvement to the town of Bicester as a whole, through assurance of green space and a better infra structure from the SLR.

In the case of the SLR it is proposed already, we just ask for integrity to deliver what was promised and the common sense that it is in place before any further development goes ahead.

With this agreed everybody is satisfied, Phase 3 goes ahead but only after Bicester's future infrastructure is assured and the existing residents are considered and protected.

Thankyou,

M Heath

Marcus Heath

Beckdale Close Resident