

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/23/3327213

DETAILS OF THE CASE

Appeal Reference	APP/C3105/W/23/3327213
Appeal By	ARCHSTONE AMBROSDEN LTD, BELLWAY HOMES LTD AND ROSEMARY MAY
Site Address	Land East of Ploughley Road Ambrosden OX25 2AD Grid Ref Easting: 460471 Grid Ref Northing: 220023

SENDER DETAILS

Name	MR ROY SEAWARD
Address	7 Chapel Drive Ambrosden BICESTER OX25 2RS

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

YOUR COMMENTS ON THE CASE

Noting that an Appeal to Cherwell District Council's decision to decline this application has been raised by the developer under reference APP/C3105/W/23/3327213, I would wish to add further to my original objection to this planning application.

I would firstly reiterate that the number and location of housing required is informed by Cherwell District Council and identified within the Local Plan. This is supported by local planning policy, both of which have legal status. The current Local Plan runs to 2031 and this proposed development is in an area that is not featured as part of it, nor indeed the draft Local Plan to 2041, in fact has never been zoned for development, it is and always has been agricultural land.

It is important to recognise that Cherwell District Council can demonstrate it already has in excess of the required 5 years' land supply to meet the projected need for housing locally, and the development that is the subject of this application is not therefore required as part of any identifiable local housing need. It is entirely speculative in its nature, driven solely by a profit motive and in the circumstances, there can be no justifiable basis for such a development to proceed.

Were it to go ahead it would result in the unnecessary development of greenfield land forming part of the open countryside, causing a highly detrimental visual impact to its intrinsic natural beauty and unacceptable visual intrusion. There is an area of land (paddock and pond) that abuts the development where a colony of Great Crested Newts (a species protected by law) currently thrive. The close proximity proposed development will significantly curtail their ability to roam and given their dependence on a very specific ecology for the nutrients they need to survive, development and leeching of construction materials into the land and surface water could also threaten their very existence, even in their current location. It should also be mentioned that National Guidelines emphasise prioritising brownfield rather than greenfield sites, and local policy a focus on smaller developments and infilling in villages rather than substantial ones such as is proposed in this application (which would also significantly extend the village boundary).

The current Local Plan provides for 750 houses to be spread across all of the Category A villages in Cherwell. I am informed that 703 houses have so far been completed, another 101 are under construction and planning permission has been granted for another 270 where construction is yet to be started. This represents a total of 1074 houses, already over 300 in excess of the provision. Even more significant is the extent to which Ambrosden has already been exploited for such development. Since 2014, there have been approvals across a number of developments for a total of 375 houses in the village, of which 85 are currently being built in Merton Road and another 75 have been approved recently but construction has not yet started. This represents HALF of the entire allocation of 750 for Category A villages in Cherwell being built in Ambrosden. This number is wholly disproportionate already without adding further to it and is at complete odds with the policy that the total allocation should be evenly distributed amongst all Category A villages.

Much appears to be made by the applicant of facilities in the village, and while notionally a Category A village, the reality is that Ambrosden has two small shops, a pub owned and run by an elderly couple that is only open a few nights a week that does not serve food and whose licence does not allow for children. Mention has also been made of there being a doctor's surgery, this represents a lack of research, the reality is that there has not been one in the village since 2015 and even then, opening hours were limited. The school is oversubscribed, there is little employment in the village and few other facilities, so aside from it being on a bus route (as are many non-Category A villages) Ambrosden is not even supported by facilities to adequately meet current levels of housing, never mind those yet to be built and another 120 houses as are proposed would be overwhelming and totally unsustainable.

It is also of great importance to mention that the Ploughley Road is already recognised as a traffic "hot spot" and this is the reason for the changes to its junction with the A41. The volume of traffic will only increase as development at Wretchwick Green progresses and Graven Hill's further phases are built. The design of the A41 junction makes no provision for a development at the location in the application, because (as has already been mentioned) it is not an area designated for development in the current

Local Plan. Traffic from 120 houses, regardless of the location of a junction with the Ploughley Road will conflict unacceptably with traffic going along it and significantly increase accident risk. In addition, since left hand turns from the A41 into the Ploughley Road are now banned as part of the junction's redesign, traffic for the proposed houses going to and coming from the Aylesbury direction will be routed via the B4011 and into Ambrosden along the Blackthorn Road, past the school (not desirable) with traffic from Aylesbury having to turn right across traffic on the Ploughley Road in the village. This will not only conflict with said traffic, it will increase accident risk too.

In summary, the decision by Cherwell District Council to decline this application was not a marginal one, almost all councillors were in favour of rejection and not one supported the application. Based on the following points alone (there are others): -

- The proven adequacy of land supply by Cherwell District Council.
- The area in question not being zoned in any Local Plan for development.
- The target for housing in Category A villages not only having been met but significantly exceeded with almost half of the planned provision of 750 already in Ambrosden.
- This proposed development not complying with local Planning Policy and having hugely detrimental visual impact on the area.
- The lack of sustainability of the proposed development given the limited and already stretched facilities in the Village.

There can be no basis upon which to find in favour of the application and I would urge HM Planning Inspectorate to support Cherwell District Council and uphold their decision to decline this application.

Roy Seaward
Ambrosden Resident