

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	MRS REBECCA CHATTERLEY
Address	8 The Village Close Upper Arncott BICESTER OX25 1QU
Company/Group/Organisation Name	Ambrosden Parish Council

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

Ambrosden Parish Council strongly objects to this development on the following grounds.

The area in question is not in the current local plan (up to 2031) or the plan which is currently under review for 2041, and has never been zoned for development. Furthermore Cherwell District now has its five year land supply.

Cumulatively, with other recently approved or delivered new housing developments, the proposed development would cause the level, scale and intensity of new housing growth in the village to be inappropriate and significantly prejudicial to the objectives of the Cherwell Local Plan to distribute limited housing growth across the rural areas.

The development would result in the unnecessary development of greenfield land forming part of the open countryside, and is therefore detrimental to its intrinsic natural beauty, causing undue visual intrusion. Central government advice states planners should be looking at infilling on brown field sites, rather than ripping up greenfield sites for development.

The development fails to adequately provide for on and off-site infrastructure necessary to mitigate its impact, including provision or maintenance of affordable housing, play and public amenity facilities, indoor and outdoor sports facilities, community facilities, access and transport mitigation, on-site drainage, primary and secondary education, NHS facilities (which already have enormous demand in the local area) and library book stock. It would lead to a significant adverse impact on wider public infrastructure to the detriment of the local community.

Since 2014 the village has grown significantly. As well as some minor infilling and the 75 houses on Blackthorn Road, this includes 45 houses in Ambrosden Court, 87 in Springfields, 83 in Blackthorn Meadows, and the 85 houses currently being built in Merton Road.

Policy Villages 2 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2015 states 'a total of 750 homes will be delivered at Category A villages'. Currently, 703 dwellings have now been completed in Category A villages, with 101 under construction, and 270 dwellings with planning permission on sites which are not yet started. Therefore, the total number of dwellings delivered under Policy Villages 2 will soon exceed the 750 set out in the policy and whilst we are aware this number was not a cap, we have already seen a significant amount of building in Ambrosden.

The policy designates Ambrosden as a 'service village' where minor development, infilling and conversions are permissible. Supporting text to the policy states that infilling refers to the development of a small gap in an otherwise continuous built-up frontage. Under such a definition the current proposal would not constitute infilling. The site is an undeveloped green field site that, given its physical and visual relationship to the existing built form, is outside of the existing built form of Ambrosden village and therefore within the countryside. The proposal to build on greenfield land would have an urbanising impact.

If this development is approved there will be one field and a road between Ambrosden and Blackthorn, and there is concern that the village will lose its identity. The space between the other side of the village and the development for Wretchwick Green is narrowing, with the sprawl eating into open fields and countryside.

The cumulative effect of continued development must be considered. Applicants referencing the amenities of the village grossly exaggerate what is actually available. The shops (two small shops which would not provide a week's shopping, sending people out of the village), the pub (only open three days a week, no food, no children allowed), the lack of recreational facilities, the inadequate cycle route into Bicester (the cycle path into Bicester is badly maintained, dangerously narrow in places and crosses the road at least three times between Rodney House Roundabout and Ploughley Road), the lack of employment in the village, the fact that people have to travel to get to most facilities.

This all points to more traffic on the already busy roads, more emissions in the atmosphere and further concerns about road safety.

The school is already full and, whilst funds can be paid to fund places at schools nearby, this again adds to the traffic on the roads and the additional road safety issues.

Whilst the flood risk assessment states this is not a high-risk flood area, increased flooding every year shows that there is a high risk, and increased development of the village will only increase that risk. We sit in the Ray Valley and neighbouring villages have also seen increased flooding in the past few years, which was confirmed at the Ray Valley Forum.

The impact on the environment and the protected great crested newts living in abundance in the small paddock next to Briar Furlong will be huge. Baby newts have been seen in West Hawthorn Road recently and this shows a healthy environment for them. The developers have suggested a small gap between the building site and the paddock, which will still have an impact on their roaming area, will damage their numbers and, in all likelihood, will kill off the remaining colony.

Ploughley Road was identified by Highways as an extremely busy road, which is why traffic lights were added at the A41 junction, at significant cost and time. Traffic will only increase with the additional houses being built at Graven Hill and Wretchwick Green, and the village is already a known cut through for traffic avoiding the A34/M40 junction.

A junction near the bend in Ploughley Road will put drivers at risk due to the inadequate visibility splays at the entrance to this proposed development.

The amount of houses still for sale at the last development that went to appeal would suggest that the demand for even more new houses is just not there. With the current housing market slowing dramatically, and many young people unable to take the first step on the housing market due to unsustainable house prices is there still a need for so many houses. It begs the question whether house buyers have been made aware of the lack of facilities in the village?

In two to three years' time, when these houses may potentially be built, will there be anything like the demand that Archstone expects?

From all of the subsequent documentation I've read, our original objection still stands.