

OJECTION TO VISTRY APPEAL - Case APP/C3105/W/24/3338211

I write in connection with the above planning appeal from Vistry. As you are aware, Cherwell Council unanimously rejected Vistry's original planning application on many grounds, including the area having already met its housing supply. The council was also respecting the wishes of the people who already live here in Hanwell village, Hanwell Chase, Banbury and on behalf of every Parish Council in the area.

As you will see from Vistry's plans, the proposed site will border Hanwell village with a gap of just 12 metres, corner to corner. Hanwell is a registered 'conservation area', and we are all extremely concerned about the coalescence of Banbury and Hanwell, which will be the inevitable result of such a blatantly obvious land grab.

Let me draw your attention to the landscape here and why Vistry is appealing – please see attached image. When you visit the area you will first note that the two plots in Vistry's application are bordered on three sides by countryside, making any future housing estate stick out like a sore thumb. It will be hugely incongruous, as is the current Bovis development on the other side of Warwick Road.

If you stand in the adjacent farm field and look downwards to the valley below you will see a huge Amazon warehouse and just to the left of it a new housing development by Sanctuary that is currently being built.

I now wish to draw your attention to Manor Oak Homes' housing proposal (in blue on the attached map). The inevitable consequences of both these proposals being accepted will leave several pockets of 'infill' land up for grab so, going forward over the years, the whole area in white on the map will become an extension of Banbury. It's glaringly obvious.

Why is this a bad thing? Let me explain...

1. Cherwell District has already met its housing target so there is no need for extra housing. In fact, there is simply no need for this kind of open market housing in the countryside. I even question the notion of a 'housing crisis' given the huge amount of properties permanently for sale in the area of Banbury on Rightmove at prices starting at reasonable £60K.
2. Hanwell Village is just 12 metres away from the proposed Vistry site. The village of Hanwell is in a 'conservation area' and has a long history. There are many historic buildings in the village, including St Peter Church, a 13th Century Grade 1-listed beauty and Hanwell Castle, a Grade II+ 17th Century property with a history of visiting kings – Charles and James. In other words, it's an old village. Very old.

3. Hanwell has an Observatory that is occasionally open to the public. It is south facing but already the light in Banbury has affected viewings and research. Further light pollution is not welcome.
4. The proposed plots are listed as prime Grade 2 and 3a agricultural land and, given the current war in Ukraine (a major crop producer along with Russia) and the prospect of future droughts in the Mediterranean region brought about by climate change, this country MUST be more self sufficient in this regard. Also, we can ill afford to continue importing foods when we can so easily increase our current 60% quota of food we produce for home consumption. Without large pockets of land like this, our farming industry will suffer further. We need our farmland more than ever!
5. Wildlife impact! How many thousands of species – deer, birds, insects, bats, rodents, foxes, badgers, hedgehogs, earthworms – have already been displaced – or even destroyed – to date by roughshod housing by predatory developers and their tons of concrete? Here we are in a grave state trying to rescue a dying planet and yet we continue to destroy the habitats of the very creatures that are actually keeping us alive. Every last one of them has a role to serve and they all deserve respect. I have seen many bats in the area when walking at dusk and dawn, and the area is alive with deer. Red Tailed Kites also glide majestically across the sky. It would be a crime against nature to see all this destroyed.
6. As for the plight of our bees. These two fields often grow rape which flowers en masse. Without this pollen source, our bees will suffer as will all pollinating birds and other insects. Enough is enough!
7. The area around Hanwell is used by many people in the area for recreation and dog walking. Building 170 new houses here would both diminish the striking view from the boundary hedge in Hanwell and be prominent from most angles within the area of the fields south of Hanwell and north of Hanwell Fields. Also, the northernmost edge of the planned development is nowhere near screened enough to hide the estate from the houses in the upper part of Hanwell. And even if Vistry planted extra trees, it would take years for them to grow into a sufficient buffer.
8. This development will also add more traffic on Warwick Road and cause even more traffic through Hanwell village as cars cut across from Warwick Road to Southam Road.
9. The town of Banbury simply does not have the infrastructure to support these extra houses. GP surgeries are near full to capacity, there isn't an NHS dentist for 20 miles, veterinary applications are all closed due to over subscriptions, schools are already hard to come by and Horton Hospital is ill equipped to deal hundreds more patients. The traffic, too, is noticeably worse since more housing was introduced and Hennef Way already has some of the highest emissions in the country.
10. Every new development requires massive infrastructure, including power, water and sewerage. This is both costly and extremely disruptive to traffic for weeks on end while they dig up roads to join existing infrastructure. It would be far cheaper, in my opinion, to repurpose existing commercial properties in Banbury town where there are plenty of empty shops and

buildings that could be refurbished. This would inject some much needed life into the town and be environment friendly in the process since residents wouldn't require cars to go shopping. They can walk and cycle – what's not to like?

Do we really want to be compared to the appalling policies of Brazil and other countries where they clear rain forests for palm oil? That's what it looks like all around Banbury. Field upon field bulldozed to create a another concrete jungle of, it must be said, mostly hideous looking houses that actually look cheaply built from the outside. The current slew of new builds in no way compliment the natural areas they've punched holes in and very few are as energy efficient as they should be in this day and age. Moreover, they are an odious eyesore as you drive northwards out of Banbury – hideous rows of cheaply-built red Lego-brick disasters that have mostly not been constructed to the high standards that buyers expect.

I implore the Planning Inspectorate to object to this planning appeal. It's just another land grab and, to make matters worse, this land is not even in the Cherwell Local Plan.

In reality, I don't believe this or any other development has much to do about housing and everything to do about 'money'. If this horrid blight on our beautiful countryside and its indispensable wildlife goes ahead, there will be many more Porsches on the road with occupants rubbing their grubby, greedy little hands with glee. Many millions will be passed between a few beneficiaries. It's just so obvious.

This land is not ours to ruin! Please think of the future generations who will want to enjoy this lovely countryside as we have.

We need to concentrate on revitalising the town of Banbury by using brownfield sites, shop conversions and low-rise flats to meet the so-called demands on housing. We want a vibrant centre with cafes, artisan shops and other social meeting places. A market town that people will want to visit and be proud to live in.

Build Banbury and other towns, not the countryside!

Kind Regards

Derek Adams

