

24/02664/PIP

The Pheasant Pluckers Inn, Burdrop, Permission in Principle for the provision of 3-7 dwellings.

We wish to object to this application for Permission in Principle (PIP) to construct between 3 - 7 dwellings at the above location. Our objections are contained within the criteria of Location, Land Use and Amount of Development, the factors reviewed in the consideration of a Stage 1 PIP application. In preparing these objections, we have consulted the current Local Plan, the revised Local Plan currently in preparation and the Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop Conservation Appraisal.

LOCATION

- The site lies in the heart of Burdrop and within the Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop Conservation Area. This is a significant matter though no reference is made to it within the short Planning Statement. The Conservation Area Appraisal lists the site as a non-designated heritage asset. Section 72 (General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions) of the 1990 Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act notes that “...special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.
- The area has a long history and according to the OCC Planning Archaeologist report, 22 October 2024, the site has been identified as being within an area of archaeological interest close to the historic core of the hamlet of Burdrop, and “...it is therefore possible that this development will encounter evidence of the early medieval development of the hamlet and could encounter further evidence of the post-medieval settlement”.
- The proposed development will have a significant visual impact on both the immediate and wider area (all within the Conservation Area Boundary). The proposed development is therefore contrary to Section C33 of the Cherwell Local Plan, which states that: ‘The Council will seek to retain any undeveloped gap of land which is important in preserving the character of a loose-knit settlement structure or in maintaining the proper setting for a listed building or in preserving a view or feature of recognised amenity or historic value’.

Of note, in the recent appeal decision, ref APP / C3105 / W / 16 / 316564 for the erection of a single storey building at this location, the Planning Inspector makes reference to the sensitivity of spaces between buildings and potential reduction in views. (see para 8 and 9 of this letter)

- The proposed development is contrary to Sections 9.76, 9.77 and 9.78 of the Cherwell Local Plan which specify that:

9.76 Not all undeveloped land within the structure of settlements can be built on without damage to their appearance and rural character. Where the existing pattern of development is loose knit there will often be a compelling case for it to remain so for aesthetic, environmental or historical reasons.

9.77 The Council will also have regard to the importance of maintaining the setting of a listed building and will resist infill development that would diminish its relative importance or reduce its immediate open environs to the extent that an appreciation of its architectural or historical importance is impaired.

9.78 Proposals that would close or interrupt an important vista across open countryside will also be discouraged, as will the loss of trees of amenity value or the loss of features such as boundary walls where they constitute an important element of an attractive or enclosed streetscape.

- Furthermore, in relation to the valley between Burdrop and Sibford Gower, Section 8.3 of the Conservation Area Appraisal states that: The openness of the valley has not as yet been compromised and in the interest of maintaining the character and appearance of the valley, housing infill and ‘settlement boundary creep’ should be resisted.
- Sections 9.10.1, 9.10.2, 9.10.3 of the Conservation Area Appraisal state that:
 - 9.10.1 Burdrop exhibits a sense of tranquil village life as it is not located on a main route and enjoys unrivalled south facing views.
 - 9.10.2 The buildings and associated gardens form a key component to this, especially the following buildings:
 - Former Bishop Blaize, Public House (now referred to as the Pheasant Pluckers Inn) – as this building shows typical vernacular construction of the period
 - Nicholas Corner
 - 9.10.3 The above buildings are undesignated heritage assets which contribute significantly to the conservation area.
- The settlement pattern of Burdrop is seen as comprising separate clusters of buildings within the hamlet. The Conservation Area Appraisal considers the views to ‘be unrivalled’. The spaces in between these clusters then afford long views south across the Sib Valley (Sibford Gap) and beyond. Infill would destroy these views and the character of the valley.
- The Conservation Area Appraisal also states that ‘Works to buildings and curtilages including any means of enclosure that are visible in long distance views across the valley and disrupt the traditional, organic relationship of buildings with the land are a threat’. Any development in the environs of this location constitutes such a threat.
- The site for proposed development is both directly adjacent, and in close proximity, to several Grade II listed buildings, including Barn Close, Carriers Cottage, Burdrop Green, Burdrop House, Shepherds Knoll, West Side Cottage, Goodmayes, and The Cottage. It is also directly overlooks Burdrop Green, originally the site of village wool

auctions. Development at the application site will have a negative impact on all of these.

LAND USE & AMOUNT OF DEVELOPMENT

- A number of questions arise relating to the amount of land thought to be available for development. On the site plan accompanying the application, the red line boundary includes the existing public house and ancillary buildings. Given the extent of development being sought it is unclear if demolition of this important asset is being considered? Secondly, it is unclear from the application if building works associated with the recently granted application for a single storey structure adjacent to the public house (application number 24/00613/F) would progress should this later application be successful. This structure would further reduce the amount of land available. Whatever the scenario, the amount of development being sought appears disproportionate to the area of land available. An indicative site planning sketch would quickly illustrate such.
- The red line also includes the frontage to the north west, facing the village green, and garden to the south, as well as the property's old stone retaining wall, all of which are part of the existing streetscape and visually and historically sensitive. Development would also impact views across the Sibford Gap from both sides of the valley (Sibford Gower, Burdrop and Sibford Ferris).
- In a statement by the Local Planning Authority, dated 8 December 2022, relating to the same site, Section 1.3.1 asserts that development in this location would "... close the feature gap between the public house and Barn Close disrupting views through to the surrounding valued countryside. The public benefits of this proposal do not outweigh this harm. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Policy ESD15 of the adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1, saved policies C28, C30 and C33 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996, and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework."
- Section 2.8 of the same statement by the Local Planning Authority, dated 8 December 2022, comments: "The proposal to close the gap between the public house and the neighbouring property would result in a change in the appearance and character of this section of the Conservation Area. Views from the village green over the stone wall towards the valley would be lost as a feature within the Conservation Area to the detriment of the area".
- It is unclear how development traffic could safely and reasonably access the proposed development site without significant disruption and/or road closures.
- The villages of Sibford Gower, Burdrop and Sibford Ferris are currently undergoing reclassification as Category B villages. This change is in response to the desire of the local community and whilst the formal change has yet to occur, all parties, including the District Council are in agreement. Development of this nature is both

unsustainable and inappropriate, with for example, no easy access to local retail and a local bus service that cannot be depended upon for commutes to work or regular food shopping. This requires the majority of residents of the village to travel by car for all their work, retail and leisure needs.

Conclusion

Taking into consideration all of the above a case cannot be made for development in this location and as such we recommend that the application be refused.