

**COMMENTS ON 19/01601/OUT: UP TO 8 DWELLINGS AT THE BEECHES,
HEYFORD ROAD, STEEPLE ASTON**

We wish to comment as follows:

1. Previously-developed land

The site is a former paddock attached to the garden of a small country house. The application documents refer to a planning permission granted in 2003 for a narrow-gauge railway and its associated structures on the paddock, which was stated to be part of the domestic curtilage; in other words it was regarded as an extension of the garden.

The applicants now argue that the land is classed as "previously developed" (which is one of the criteria under CDC's policy Villages 2). They quote from Annex 2 to the revised NPPF (February 2019) in support of this argument. However, the NPPF definition states clearly that the definition of previously developed land does not include "*land in built-up areas such as residential gardens....*". The applicants can not have it both ways. An email from Framptons to CDC dated 2nd May 2019 states "*the former paddock is residential curtilage and is previously developed land. This is not a matter for debate.*" We beg to differ.

MCNP considers that CDC Policy Villages 2 criteria are therefore not met. The argument that this is previously-developed land cannot in our view be used to justify a substantial development in a residential garden.

2. Settlement area

MCNP policy PD1 on new market housing in Steeple Aston allows for the possibility of housing development outside the settlement area (as this would be) if various criteria can be met. One of these is that the development should be "immediately adjacent to the settlement area". The house and its paddock were deliberately excluded from the village settlement area map for Steeple Aston (Fig.18), as approved by CDC and the independent examiner, on the grounds that the site does not form part of the continuous frontage of dwellings along the south side of Heyford Road.

It can be reasonably argued that the house and its surrounding grounds are immediately adjacent to the settlement area. However, it is stretching a point to say that the paddock behind the house and garden is also adjacent. Large gardens were excluded from settlement areas in the MCNP to discourage this type of backland development. New housing on the paddock land would significantly change the shape of the settlement area, allowing it to encroach on open countryside behind the Heyford Road housing. MCNP therefore considers that the proposed development does not succeed in complying with the required criteria for approval under its policy PD1.

3. Housing Mix

MCNP Policy PH1 sets out an optimal mix for new housing, which in this case should be: two 4- or 5-bedroom houses, four 3-bedroom houses, and two 1- or 2- bedroom dwellings. We are pleased

to note that the current application improves on the mix in the earlier application (19/00457/OUT), proposing that there should now be three 5-bed, three 3-bed, and two 2-bed dwellings. We would prefer to see full compliance with Policy PH1, which would require one of the 5-bed dwellings to become a 3-bed dwelling.

We also wish to state that if CDC do decide to grant outline permission as requested for “up to eight dwellings”, that later exclusion of the smaller dwellings be not permitted by a condition.

4. CDC’s Residential Design Guide

One of the criteria that CDC uses in considering the suitability of sites for housing development is "the ability to build communities". CDC's Residential Design Guide published in 2018 (in the section titled "Settlement Pattern") states: *" New development should follow the historic pattern of settlement growth in the local area and read as a natural continuation of the settlement’s evolution. For example: historic growth along movement routes is evident in linear settlements, with homes fronting the street. This arrangement should be replicated in new development with new homes fronting the street. The development of individual sites as discrete housing estates, off a single main access with little lateral connectivity into the surrounding street network is to be avoided. It fails to reflect historic patterns of settlement growth, reduces the potential for community interaction and creates disconnected places with increased reliance on the car."*

As currently proposed, the application would create an exclusive residential enclave on the edge of Steeple Aston, up a wooded lane that would most likely feel like private property and not a part of the village. In MCNP Forum’s view, this would not meet the CDC Design Guide’s intention to encourage integration with the rest of the village and its community.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

MCNP Forum’s view is as follows:

The proposed development of up to 8 new dwellings

- a) does not meet the criteria of CDC Policy Villages 2 in respect of previously-developed land;
- b) could be regarded as not immediately adjacent to the Steeple Aston settlement area, which deliberately excluded the application site to discourage garden development, and therefore does not meet the criteria of MCNP policy PD1;
- c) should be further amended to meet MCNP policy PH1 by altering one of the 5-bed dwellings to a 3-bed dwelling;
- d) does not respect the historic pattern of settlement growth or have a street frontage, and might not encourage integration of its residents with the existing local community (as per CDC Residential Design Guide).

AS A RESULT, IN THE OPINION OF MCNP FORUM, THE SCHEME SHOULD BE REFUSED.

MCNP Forum
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