

Rachel Tibbetts

From: Helen Robins [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 August 2020 20:26
To: Planning
Subject: Planning Application No. 20/01891/F

David Peckford
Assistant Director
Planning and Development
Cherwell District Council

Dear Mr Peckford,

I am writing to oppose the planning application to build a 4 bedroom house on Rectory Lane in Fringford (20/01891/F).

I have lived in Fringford for over 25 years, and have seen many changes around the village and in Rectory Lane in that time. Most successful applications have been sympathetic to the village structure and rural setting, and the Planning Department and Council have ensured that the essential rural nature of development has been honoured.

In 1999, when the application to develop a 3 bedroom house on the copse at the front of Farriers Close in Rectory Lane was dismissed on appeal, the reasons given were that the copse formed an important visual amenity. The substance of the amenity value was:

- 1) to form a softening landscape barrier between the urban look of Farriers Close with the loose rural settlement along Rectory Lane
- 2) to preserve the old drovers lane, now Rectory Lane, in its rural character
- 3) to protect the neighbouring School House and Study Centre (now the Old School House dwelling) from being overlooked and overshadowed, thereby preserving the character of that corner of the village green

The 1999 dismissal on appeal stated that the Copse 'represents an important and locally-valued feature of the area.' It went on to say that the building of a dwelling on the Copse would 'remove a significant element of mature landscaping and screening which at present softens the edges of the Farriers Close development and which was **an integral part of that scheme**' (my bold) and that 'the condition on the reserved matters already **requires further planting to be carried out to reinforce the copse.**' (my bold).

A second application for a 3 bedroom house was lodged in 2010. This application was dismissed on appeal on the grounds:

- 1) that Rectory Lane is a loose-knit rural settlement in direct contrast to the appearance of Farriers Close as a modern planned cul-de-sac. The removal of the Copse would exacerbate this difference to the detriment of Rectory Lane and the visual amenity the Copse provides
- 2) the proposal would mean the chopping down of several trees with Tree Preservation Orders protecting them
- 3) 'the loss of the trees and the combination of a dwelling on this elevated site would alter its character and appearance and that of the street scene to a significantly harmful degree'
- 4) the absence of an adequate assessment of the archaeological potential.

This third application to develop the site is now for a 4 bedroom house. None of the reasons given for refusal above have changed, and I cannot see why an even bigger house would be acceptable on any basis. It would tower over Rectory Lane and provide direct sight into the neighbouring houses, destroying the quiet enjoyment of their properties.

As someone who walks along Rectory Lane almost daily for exercise (and even more so in COVID-19 lockdown) I would find the loss of the Copse to an elevated 4 bedroom house a huge loss to the environment and the pleasure of walking around the village. We have no municipal parks of course, but those of us who cannot walk easily on uneven and rough countryside rely on the enjoyment that the village landscaping provides for us. The Council has no need of extra houses in this village, which has no transport links and no shop or other services - you would be encouraging further commuting by car for no good reason.

Please uphold the sensible and valuable decisions of your predecessors by rejecting this further application to erode our village.

Best wishes

Helen Robins
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