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Sent: 09 September 2020 16:23
To: DC Support <DC.Support@cherwell-dc.gov.uk>
Subject: Comments on Planning Application 20/01933/F

Planning reference: 20/01933/F

Location: Barn in OS parcel 0545 West of Withycombe Farm, Wigginton.

Erection of one residential building for multi-generational living and landscape enhancements and associated works.

Objection:

The NPPF (2019) states that the development of isolated houses in the countryside should be avoided, unless three conditions are fulfilled.

The current proposal fails on all three.

- 1) Design is required to be of 'exceptional quality'. Allowing for differing tastes, it is nonetheless difficult to see how this proposed building fulfils this criterion. Indeed, the design lacks sensitivity to local tradition and to the exceptional landscape (see also 2 and 3, below).
- 2) Any new building should 'significantly enhance its immediate setting'. The setting is an exceptionally beautiful landscape in which well-maintained grazing land sits within the context of hedges, copses and woodland, intersected by streams, and with low hills as background. The landscape is much loved by local people and by visiting walkers who use the well-frequented footpath from Wigginton to Hook Norton that passes close to the proposed development. I am one of those who frequently use this footpath and my experience of it will certainly be damaged by the development. While there are some areas of countryside that may be enhanced in the way envisaged by Section 79, this is emphatically not one of them. Far from enhancing the landscape the proposed development would create an intrusive element that would have a detrimental and irreversible effect on the environment.
- 3) The proposed building and development also fails on the third criterion, which demands sensitivity to 'the defining characteristic of the local area'. Wigginton and its surrounding area are rural in character, and have been so designated in a recent Report by Cherwell District Council. The design and also the scale of the proposed development are entirely out of keeping with the traditions and modest scale of local architecture, and with the rural character of the locality. Indeed, this looks like a thoroughly 'urban' intrusion on the countryside. A further deleterious effect on the landscape will be the vehicular access to the development, an access driveway running for up to a third of a mile that will cut a visually intrusive swathe through the fields.

There are also serious objections on other matters:

1) The building is described as ‘one residential building’. In reality the development appears to envisage three households: there are three kitchens, and three front doors. The scale of the project is huge, with some 80 metres from the lake to the rear of the second house. This is particularly relevant as paragraph 79 envisages that, exceptionally, a single house may be permitted in an unsustainable location on account of its outstandingly good design. In this case it is effectively three houses that are proposed in an unsustainable rural location. The design, therefore, must be sufficiently exceptional to justify not one house but three. It clearly cannot do that. Moreover, this is not a suitable location to conduct an experiment in multi-generational living, lacking as it is in access to any of the facilities (e.g. childcare facilities, secondary education, sports and leisure facilities, doctor’s surgery, etc) that would be needed to support that form of living, other than through the extensive use of the private car.

2) Provision for public services (water, power, drainage) are brief and inadequate.

The decision on this planning proposal is of great importance, affecting as it does the natural environment of a singularly beautiful part of North Oxfordshire. In my view the proposed development serves no public interest, and fails to meet the criteria laid down in Section 79.

Yours sincerely

Peter Hill

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