

Comment for planning application 20/01933/F

Application Number	20/01933/F
Location	Barn In OS Parcel 0545 West Of Withycombe Farm Wigginton
Proposal	Erection of one residential dwelling for multi-generational living (para 79 house) and landscape enhancements and associated works
Case Officer	Matthew Chadwick

Organisation Name	Kevin Rowland
Address	Pretty Bush Barn, Street From Wigginton To Hook Norton, Wigginton, Banbury, OX15 4LD
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour

Comments

I would like to raise my objections in 4 main areas: 1. The immediate site. The main site of the development, a wet and wooded area within which there is a sump, referred to by the applicant as an existing lake, excavated many years ago in an attempt to hold back the natural run off water flowing directly from the catchment areas rising from the East - North - West mudstone hills, which is significant, and thereby maximise the period of the year during which these fields are viable for livestock and silage production. In addition the sump shares some of the load with this natural flood plain in holding and slowing the flow down into the River Swere and onwards to South Newington. Whilst a man made sump, this small area has, by virtue of being left un-farmed and largely, as some would refer to it, neglected, become a haven of biodiversity. The planned development, no matter how much mitigation is promised, will largely destroy this. This destruction has already started as the Barn Owls that used to frequent the barn have been absent since the initial demolition and clearance works were undertaken. Bats are still resident thankfully as it provides a vital roosting and feeding site, as are the deer and no doubt many more invertebrates and insects that generally don't find a home in our beautiful but cultivated landscape. In addition as there is no existing access or existing services, the vehicular access road alone will asphalt over the equivalent of just over 3/4 acre of land immediately adjacent to hedgerows. The proposals claims to improve the site are subjective at best and based purely on the basis that urbanising a small area of woodland will improve it. I would suggest that most naturalists would disagree. 2. The wider Landscape The documentation presented in the application regarding the overall impact on the landscape is both lacking in detail and misleading. It implies the site is barely visible from a handful of vantage points, demonstrated by some wide angle photography that takes the site into the far distance behind trees in full leaf. The reality is the site is right in the centre of surrounding hills and can be seen clearly from both near and far from dozens of public vantage points, even more so on the winter landscape. In my view the plans directly go against Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Policy ESD 13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement which "...seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the local landscape character of Cherwell District by considering the type, scale and design of development.. ... It expects development proposals to have regards to the Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)". This proposal does not meet these aims. The Wigginton Conservation Area Appraisal 2017 specifically refers to the landscape panorama. Under the Key Views section it states "Wigginton is set within open countryside. Views are a key component in the character of the conservation area. The topology enables expansive views to be enjoyed out of the settlement to the east and west and into the Swere Valley travelling south". It goes further in section 12.5 - Protection of important open spaces and views "It is important to protect the open and aesthetic quality of the countryside adjacent to the village because it is integral to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Open space sometimes has its own historic significance. The inclusion of peripheral open spaces around the settlement in the designation of the conservation area is specifically to ensure that the character of these spaces is preserved." the proposed development will have a significant and detrimental impact on the conservation area. 3. The proposed Architecture Horton Stone buildings are the dominant architectural feature within this small area of Cherwell. I refer once again to Policy ESD 15 "The Character of the Built and Historic Environment seeks to ensure the conservation of the built and historic environment, requiring development proposals to protect, conserve and enhance the historic environment and the setting of heritage assets; and to "contribute positively to character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes" The proposed development

does do not meet any of these aims. The design is of a completely inappropriate character for the wider setting. 4. Light Pollution If you were to look over this beautiful part of Oxfordshire as dusk falls you will see birds returning to roost, you will see bats skirting the hedgerows, and on clear nights after the sun has fallen behind the hills a magnificent night sky from horizon to horizon. What this beautiful part of Oxfordshire does not need it a massive and intrusive light pool right on its centre. Wigginton remains a special place where light pollution has been largely avoided and with encouragement from many residents the village has recently applied for Dark Sky Status. To summarise, this development is the wrong architecture, on the wrong piece of land, in the wrong place and within the wrong landscape. It will have a significant detrimental impact on biodiversity and the natural environment, damage the unique nature of the Wigginton Conservation Area, the historic and unique landscape and its special night skies.

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Attachments