

19 Blackwood Place
Bodicote
Oxfordshire
OX15 4BD

Dear Mr Neville,

Re: Planning application – 20/02152/F - 13 Blackwood Place

I wish to register my objection to this application on a number of grounds.

Having moved to Blackwood Place only this year I can proffer a clear opinion as to the appeal of the road in its current state. We were attracted to the village charm of Blackwood Place as a mature residential location with settled houses utilised as family homes. One we felt would not be tarnished by overdevelopment as this would be dramatically out of context with the established character.

Furthermore, since moving to our property, and undoubtedly assisted by the national lockdown, we have been very fortunate to witness much wildlife in our and other gardens. Wildlife no doubt attracted by the contiguous undergrowth and foliage as they travel between properties. Regular sightings include Foxes, Badgers, Shrews, Bats, Hedgehogs, many garden birds and Sparrowhawks. Imagery of all of these in the location can be provided upon request. Disruption of the local natural balance, as requested by this application, will no doubt affect the aforementioned fauna, some of which are protected by law. My specific concern is the creation of access via the Oxford Road, the erection of much new fencing and the removal of many trees, bushes and undergrowth that currently provide habitat.

To continue on the subject of the treeline removal, as previously outlined this currently forms a significant barrier to the Oxford Road, which is a busy thoroughfare. Whilst we have always been aware of the existence of the main road the foliage absorbs a considerable amount of noise and light as part of the highway's green infrastructure. The proposed removal would open the main road to the rear aspect of several properties, undermining residents' protection against traffic disturbance through open doors and windows and enjoyment of gardens.

The opening up and construction of an access directly on to the main road raises further concerns. Currently users of the Oxford Road have to be cognisant of vehicles turning in both directions from the Rugby Club and Gym car park. Due to the volume and speed of traffic some drivers make ill-advised movements as they grow impatient. The proposed development would locate a further potential hazard directly opposite this, demanding drivers' attention in two directions concurrently. Whilst it can obviously be argued that competent drivers should be attentive to the road and aware of such dangers, this road sees its heaviest usage during rush hours when it is generally accepted that people can be either not fully alert or focused on returning home.

I appreciate a layby has been proposed to reduce the impact of vehicles entering and leaving the carriageway, however this does not remove the danger described above. In addition, even though double yellow lines are proposed, it is not unrealistic to expect overflow from the rugby club and gym to use this space, especially on evenings and weekends when parking enforcement is much reduced. Such a situation would actually increase the potential for accident with the dramatic reduction in sight lines caused by parked vehicles. The consequences should this occur range from the additional volume for residents of brakes, horns and tyres to unfortunate impacts and injuries. It should also be noted that the road is a main artery for emergency service vehicles, regularly travelling in excess of the speed limits.

The application has introduced supporting traffic flow information based on previous surveys. I am aware that this has already been contended as not contemporary, however regardless of its age any previous survey fails to account for additional traffic anticipated from scheduled developments. The completion of the bypass from Bloxham Road to the Bodicote flyover will funnel traffic along the Oxford Road, although I accept some may already use the route. There has however been no consideration of increase in traffic from the planned constructions surrounding the rugby grounds and with no enhancements or capacity improvements for the Oxford Road the flow will certainly increase.

I would also like to register my concern over the size and location of the proposed house within the plan. From the submitted documents it would severely affect adjacent properties, especially number 11, being constructed directly next to their garden and overlooking the rear of their home. This factor does not directly affect my property, but I would be appalled to think my local representatives could approve such an imposition on right to light and privacy. Indirectly, the application has attempted to mitigate this issue with mention of high level windows, however glazing and the possibility of overlooking detracts from the comfort of privacy by its very existence. In that vein the South Eastern aspect will have first floor openings to some extent overlooking rear gardens in the opposite direction, properties such as numbers 15, 17 and my property.

To be balanced, my objection is in no way a simple resistance to change or development I would have made no objection to the current expansion of number 13, it is in keeping with the size of the property and improvements to other residences in the road. Number 13 now appears to be an attractive, respectful dwelling with a beautifully mature garden.

This application however is over-development of the plot; creating two large residences with gardens of inadequate size for the number of bedrooms and corresponding family size. It is without precedent in the road and clearly a design for profit, not the construction of an empathetic family home. Further inference of this can be taken from the previously rejected application for multiple residences on the site.

I also feel that the applicant is aware of the controversial nature of this application; hence the obligatory notice was not posted outside number 13, but further around the bend of the road, away from the current development and close neighbours. I could make further implications about the timing and condition of the posted notice but suffice to say the applicant is not propagating the neighbourly spirit which has welcomed us since our move in to Blackwood Place.

I would be extremely disappointed to see this application approved and subsequently have to contend with the negative effects. I ask that you comprehensively consider what are genuine and unemotional arguments for its refusal.

Yours faithfully

Steven Hearn