

Dear Mr Campbell,

PLANNING APPLICATION – 21/04271/F.

Erection of 6 one storey age restricted dwellings (55 years) - Blue Cedar Homes Limited

I write as a resident of Sibford Ferris, to strongly object to the above planning application.

GENERAL PLANNING PROCESS

On a general point, I ask you the question, why are developers allowed to put land forward for development in rural areas on good agricultural land where targets have already been exceeded and the homes have already been built? I am incredulous of the suggestion of planning permission in areas such as the Sibfords, as the targets have already been exceeded. I understand this application is contrary to Cherwell Local Plan 2011 – 2031, as since 2014 a total of 1062 dwellings have been identified to meet the Policy Villages 2 requirement of 750 dwellings, and any further permissions are more than this target.

Additionally, I understand there are 8293 permissions granted for homes, not yet built in Bicester, Banbury and Upper Heyford.

HOOK NORTON ROAD DEVELOPMENT

As you will be aware the village is under threat from creeping development following the granting of planning permission on appeal for 25 houses at Hook Norton Road in November 2019. Shockingly the Inspector overturned the Council's refusal of this application, and the appeal decision overlooked the relative isolation, aged infrastructure, limited capacity, lack of facilities and poor accessibility of Sibford Ferris.

I am concerned the appeal at Hook Norton Road is perceived by developers as an opportunity to seek further development, thereby damaging the rural nature, character and attractive qualities of our historic village and its beautiful surroundings on the edge of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The planning application by Blue Cedar Homes is clearly a phase 2 style extension of the Hook Norton Rd site, with a phase 3 development site also put forward as part of the Local Plan review.

It is very surprising to me the village was not informed of this fact at the outset. The Gade Homes development started with an approval for 8 homes and is now 25 homes with 9 affordable /rental properties. I am worried Blue Cedar homes, as they apparently have access approved, will also seek to return with an application for a larger number of homes.

CLASSIFICATION

Sibford Ferris, Sibford Gower and Burdrop have been wrongly categorised as a Category A Village. This leaves them vulnerable to speculative and unsustainable development. I understand this classification is already under review with both communities and our local MP seeking a review on this as soon as possible.

The Parish Council is trying to remedy this through the review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2040 but this would be too late if further unsympathetic and inappropriate development is approved.

THE SPECIFIC PLANNING APPLICATION

More specifically, the proposed development fails to respond to local character, landscape and surrounding context and should be refused as harming the visual and rural amenities of the area. The design, incorporating large bungalows with a variety of roof pitches, timber boarding and other uncharacteristic features is contrived and takes no design cues from the established and historic character of its surroundings. This would harm the rural character and appearance of this attractive landscape to the west of the village which is designated as a Conservation Area. Paragraph 134 of the NPPF states:

‘Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes.

The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy C28 of the Cherwell Local Plan 1996, Policy Villages 2 and Policies ESD13 and ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011- 2031 Part 1 and Government guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Design Guide.

INFRASTRUCTURE

I feel strongly about the impact of further development within the village, for which the existing infrastructure is unsustainable. I understand the current sewerage system is at full capacity, and as yet has not been taken into consideration. Similarly, the water pressure within the village is limited. Many houses along the village are without off road parking, and there are frequent traffic bottlenecks, during term time, as there are two schools within the villages. Further village facilities are limited, for example; public transport and the doctors surgery. As stated in CRAITLUS Report August 2009 “Of 33 Villages only 4 show little capability to sustainably support additional housing. Shennington, Sibford Ferris/Sibford Gower and Charlton-on-Otmoor perform poorly due to their location on minor roads with long travel times and distances to access key facilities.

The increased usage of facilities in the villages, will have an impact on the local pollution, and therefore climate change, harming the environment. The District Council has declared a Climate Change Emergency, but none of these environmental objectives can be achieved by approving further development.

In conclusion this is a poorly conceived scheme on an unsuitable site in an unsustainable location that should be refused. For all these reasons I urge the Council to refuse this application.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Meyler
Sibford Ferris