

OBJECTION LETTER TO PLANNING APPLICATION – 21/04271/F
Erection of 6 one storey age restricted dwellings (55 years) for older people with access,
landscaping and associated infrastructure - Land South of Faraday House Woodway Road
Sibford Ferris – Blue Cedar Homes Limited

Dear Mr Campbell,

I write as a local resident to strongly object to the above planning application.

Summary of Objection

The proposal is 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. It is unnecessary, inappropriate and unsustainable, and extends beyond the built up limits of the village. Its layout, form, design and location is unsuitable for older people and would produce an incongruous and cramped development. The proposed development does not respond to local character, landscape and surrounding context. It should be refused as harming the visual and rural amenities of the area.

The development is contrary to Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031

Since 2014 1,062 dwellings have been identified, exceeding the 750 required by the Local Plan, Policy Villages 2 by 312 dwellings. Of these 749 have been built or are under construction and there is an appeal for 43 homes at Station Road, Hook Norton, which could lead to substantially more. The plan has therefore been comfortably exceeded with 9 years left of the Plan period. Clearly this proposal would add to a material exceedance of the policy figures.

This and other proposals that are threatened to follow would further undermine the Local Plan housing strategy of directing most growth to Banbury and Bicester, where there is access to shops, services, jobs and other facilities and opportunities to travel other than by car. The District Council has declared a Climate Change Emergency, but none of these environmental objectives will be achieved by repeating the same mistakes and approving more and more homes in attractive but inherently unsustainable villages like Sibford Ferris.

This is a poorly conceived scheme on a unsuitable site in an unsustainable location and should be refused.

The development is unsustainable

Sibford Gower and Sibford Ferris are treated together in the Local Plan as a single Category A village. This does not reflect the reality of the two villages' geography, topography and the location of sparse facilities. The two villages are separated by a deep valley (Sib Brook) and have poor accessibility without a car. Sibford Ferris has one small shop and the few public amenities in Sibford Gower and Burdrop, can only be accessed by narrow roads with poor, incomplete footpaths. Lighting is limited and parked cars cause congestion.

The bus service is reliant on subsidy from Warwickshire County Council, is very limited and has been reduced significantly in recent years. There is a very limited service to Stratford and Banbury at inconvenient times and no direct services to Hook Norton or Chipping Norton.

The proposed development fails to satisfy the following factors set out in government advice on the location of housing for older people: proximity to good public transport, local amenities, health services and town centres.

The development would increase traffic on unsuitable roads

Occupants of the proposed dwellings, being older, less mobile and less likely to walk or cycle, will be very reliant on the use of private cars. This was accepted by the Inspector on the Hook Norton Road appeal. Reliance on private car use has been designed into the development in that each bungalow has two parking spaces and a double garage.

Car usage on this scale would lead to considerable problems. There would be a significant increase in traffic using an access opposite the main entrance to Sibford Friends School which is already busy at peak times. This is made more difficult by the lack of pavements and narrow roads, where in places it is difficult for two vehicles to safely pass each other.

In summary, this site is an inappropriate location for the proposed development, which would give rise to increased use of private cars, lead to extra traffic and considerable environmental harm.

The development would have a significant detrimental impact on the landscape

The development would extend compact build on greenfield, agricultural land beyond the physical extents of Faraday House and the building line of the Hook Norton Road development to the south. In doing so it would extend into the attractive countryside surrounding the village resulting in adverse visual impact on the landscape by building all the way up to Woodway Road, which has an unspoilt, rural character. The development would be clearly visible at short and more distant range from highways and public rights of way extending out into the countryside and the Cotswolds AONB. This would have a very adverse impact on the rural character and appearance of this attractive landscape to the west of the village.

For all of these reasons I urge the Council to refuse this application.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Walker