

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 am writing to you as a resident of Sibford Ferris to strongly object to the above planning application.

Summary of Objection

I firmly believe that this proposal is unnecessary, inappropriate and unsustainable. The development extends beyond the built-up limits of the village into the attractive open countryside surrounding Sibford Ferris. The layout and design of this development is unsuitable and would produce a cramped development which fails to respond to local character and landscape. This development should be refused as it harms the visual and rural amenities of the area. 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.

Background

The village is under threat from development following the regrettable decision of the Inspector to overturn the Council's refusal of 25 houses at Hook Norton Road in November 2019 on appeal. This appeal decision overlooked the relative isolation, aged infrastructure, limited capacity, lack of facilities and poor accessibility of Sibford Ferris. The Parish Council is trying to reduce the threat of further development through the review of the Cherwell Local Plan 2040. But this would be too late if further inappropriate development is approved.

The reasons for my objection are because the proposal will be:

1. Contrary to the Local Plan
2. Unsustainable
3. Generate extra traffic on unsuitable roads

1. Contrary to Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031

Importantly, the Local Plan housing quotas for rural villages in Cherwell have already been met so this proposal is not necessary. Since 2014 a total of 1,062 dwellings have been identified for meeting the Local Plan, Policy Villages 2 requirement of 750 dwellings. The Policy Villages 2 requirement has therefore already been exceeded. This proposal – 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 the car. Furthermore, in the Sibford's Community Plan (2012), 64% of people said they would be willing to envisage up to 10 new houses, 31% up to 20 and only 3% over 20 houses. All of these needs have been exceeded by the Hook Norton Rd site and there is no further local requirement. Thus, this is a poorly conceived scheme on an unsuitable site in an unsustainable location and should be refused.

2. Unsustainable development

Sibford Gower and Sibford Ferris are treated as one Category A village in the Local Plan. This is **not** a true reflection of the community, geography, topography and location of its sparse facilities. Upon reviewing the village of Sibford Ferris where all of the development would be seen, there is only one small shop. The few public amenities lie in Sibford Gower and Burdrop, only accessed by narrow roads with poor, incomplete footpaths, limited lighting and congestion caused by parked cars. Thus, the two villages which are separated by a deep valley (Sib Brook) have poor accessibility for anyone, let alone older persons, without a car.

Furthermore, the bus service has more than halved in recent years. It has a very limited service to Stratford and Banbury at inconvenient times and has no direct services to Hook Norton or Chipping Norton. Thus, the proposed development is unsustainable for older persons. Indeed, the government advice for the location of housing for older people states that factors to consider include the proximity to good public transport, local amenities, health services and town centres. None of these apply in this instance.

3. Extra Traffic on Unsuitable Roads

This development application is for age restricted dwellings (55 years) for older people. It is expected that the occupants of the proposed dwellings, being older, would be less mobile and thus highly reliant on the use of private care. This is further compounded by the restricted bus timetable. This reliance of private cars was noted by the Inspector on the Hook Norton Road appeal, shown by the double garages and two parking spaces for each bungalow. Resultingly, it is expected to see extra traffic using an access opposite the main entrance to Sibford Friends School which is already busy at peak times, due to a lack of pavements and narrow roads. In places it is difficult for two vehicles to safely pass each other, sadly an all too common experience for local residents already. Therefore, the site is not an appropriate location for the development as the proposal would see an increase in private vehicle usage resulting in harmful traffic.

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

Yours sincerely,

Zara Roussel