

Blue Cedar Rec

Planning ref: 21/04271/F

Proposal: Erection of 6 one storey age restricted dwellings (55 years) for older people with access, landscaping and associated infrastructure

Location: Land South of Faraday house, Woodway Road, Sibford Ferris

Sibford Gower Parish Council **OBJECTS** to this application.

This application is located in the parish of Sibford Ferris, currently part of the designated Category A village identified as The Sibfords, which includes Sibford Gower and Burdrop.

There are a number of significant issues, namely:

Particular Village Location:

When reviewing the Appeal for the current Hook Norton Road development, the Planning Inspector noted: *“Given the spread of services across each settlement, it is unlikely that the Development of any any site around the Sibfords would readily enable access by sustainable Transport modes”*. This further reinforced in the findings of the CRAITLUS Report 2009 which noted that Sibford Ferris/Sibford Gower was identified as showing little capability to sustainably support additional housing.

While the Category A classification in the existing Local Plan is currently being reviewed with the assistance of our local MP, its very existence continues to leave us vulnerable to speculative and unsustainable development.

Sustainability and Infrastructure:

While the Category A identification may be deemed appropriate in planning terms, this fails to reflect the actual nature of the community, geography, topography and location.

Sibford Ferris only has a small shop, with the limited other public amenities available in Sibford Gower/Burdrop. The two villages are connected across a steep valley (Sib Brook) by a steep and narrow road with dangerous bends, poor and incomplete footpaths. Ease of access along the narrow roads for all vehicles is frequently blocked by numerous parked cars.

The Hook Norton Road development has already identified significant pressures on the existing water, drainage and waste disposal provision, such that any further pressures created through this application will inevitably generate potential failure of these essential services.

The bus service has more than halved in recent years. It offers a very limited service to Stratford and Banbury, with no direct services to Hook Norton or Chipping Norton. It is entirely reliant on financial subsidy from Warwickshire County Council.

On-going development:

The Sibfords Community Plan 2012 identifies that 64% of residents found 10 new houses

acceptable with only 3% favouring more than 20, yet the current Hook Norton Road development will be delivering 25 new dwellings.

It should be noted that these 25 new dwellings in Sibford Ferris represent a 17% increase in households, while the additional 6 units identified in this application will realise a 21% increase.

There is considerable concern that the Sibfords were not made aware of the potential “developer creep” into this site which has become apparent in a Land registry document associated with the adjacent Hook Norton Road development.

It is entirely unreasonable for the small settlement of Sibford Ferris to be required to absorb further speculative development whilst experiencing the present and future challenges associated with the current Hook Norton Road development.

Additional traffic:

Recognising that the proposed development is specifically identified for age restricted occupants, it would logically follow that such occupants are likely to become increasingly less mobile, less inclined to walk or cycle, and highly reliant on the use of private cars. Indeed, this was accepted by the Inspector on the Hook Norton Road Appeal, and is further emphasised by the double garages and two parking spaces for each bungalow. Inevitably, extra traffic would be generated for the access opposite the main entrance to Sibford School. This location already experiences high traffic volumes at peak times. Coupled with the absence of pavements and existing narrow roads, any additional traffic volume can only increase the known hazards to both pedestrians and road users.

Age Profile:

Little evidence has been offered to indicate that this development would particularly and specifically benefit Sibfords residents, thereby suggesting that it is likely to attract more older people to a location which already has a higher proportion of older people than the national average.

Although identified in the application as for older people, the 55 years age restriction would appear to afford open market housing for potential residents who meet this qualification requirement.

Design:

The design appears generally unsympathetic to the established historic character of the village, much of which is designated as a Conservation Area.

Landscape impact:

This development would have an adverse impact on the landscape, extending the village built-up footprint to Woodway Road, thereby eroding the existing unspoilt, rural character.