

The village

We moved in at the end of 1978. Since then the number of dwellings has increased by 32 by means of infill and conversion as per planning at the time and the size of the village has increased accordingly, by over 20%, and with a couple of notable exceptions is now up to capacity in these categories, fulfilling the requirement for limited housing growth considered appropriate to it.

Add to this the new school with a roll of over 100 children, a surgery which also serves several surrounding villages, plus 4 new agricultural dwellings, second homes now occupied all year round as Air B & Bs, and the pressure on the unchanged and original infrastructure, sewerage, roads and other utilities becomes great, and potential problems become unavoidable if threatened with large increases such as this development would bring. Access to the village has always been poor, narrow carriageway and lack of footpaths make it dangerous to use the road as a pedestrian, especially during school run periods, blind bends with high walls on either side or banks adjacent making escape from danger impossible, with through traffic from Tysoe and other villages taking a short cut into Banbury increasing traffic volume. Sewerage already regularly overflows in a paddock adjoining a village property, creating hazards for wildlife as well as unpleasant conditions for the resident, and the nearest pumping station at Shutford is already working at capacity.

The site

May be “gently sloping” but the reality is that the whole area is elevated above the surrounding countryside, with the highest area nearest the centre of the village being some 5-6 feet above the road, which means the impact of any development would be hugely increased, making it more visible to residents especially from the western approaches, from the Cotswold AONB towards Upton Estate, and for miles around.

The site may be “contained”, but two of the proposed boundaries share that of the Conservation Area, and the others abut open countryside and agricultural land, which is something of an irony.

The proposal

The number of dwellings proposed has been reduced to 49, with a mixture of types of dwelling, which presumably will please the council and planners with the amount of Council Tax this number of homes will raise and boxes they can tick) but please no one else and ruin the character of the village in the process. The core of miniscule dwellings at the centre still remains however. The landscaping proposed around the perimeter is merely window dressing, and is not environmentally sound. Landscaping requires maintenance and who will carry this out has not been stated, while the environmental damage caused by developing the site far outweighs any possible gain. You cannot “replace” an ancient hedgerow!

To state that the introduction of a “sensitively designed residential development will not introduce new or alien features that do not already exist within the local context” is immediately disproven by the proposed use of red brick as building material of the housing, incongruous and completely insensitive in an area where most houses are built of materials that blend with the predominant golden brown stone of the rest of the village.

Traffic

The planners present a plan to show services surrounding the site – most of these except the surgery, school and pub require a car to access, there are no shops within walking distance and the nearest town is 6 miles away. Buses are infrequent. They have allocated over 100 parking spaces within the development, which means over 100 additional cars on the village roads.

Village roads are woefully inadequate as already itemised, and when considering the large volumes of fast-moving traffic also using them twice a day on the school runs become even more dangerous. The planners should maybe visit the village when this is in progress to assess for themselves - in 3 dimensions - the problems that it already faces.

In addition the surgery generates a constant flow of traffic into the village from not only patients visiting but vehicles servicing it, collecting and delivering. To possibly add another 100 vehicles as a minimum to this is sheer folly, and it will be only a matter of time before there is a serious accident.

“This application will fail if it the Council can demonstrate that any adverse effects of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.”

In addition to all the other issues making the village unsuitable for this scale of development, the effects on the environment and lack of facilities, plus the fact that Shenington has demonstrated sufficient gradual growth over the past 42 years and is now almost at capacity should be considered. When growth is organic and gradual like this has been the character of a community can be sustained and retained, but this development, both in scale and position, would ruin the village for ever and should not be permitted.