

Comment for planning application 22/01715/OUT

Application Number	22/01715/OUT
Location	Land South Of Perdiswell Farm Shipton Road Shipton On Cherwell
Proposal	Erection of up to 500 dwellings with associated access, open space and infrastructure
Case Officer	Samantha Taylor

Organisation Name	Woodstock Town Council
Address	The Town Hall, Market Place, Woodstock, Oxon, OX20 1SL

Type of Comment

Type

Comments

Woodstock Town Council
Response of WTC to Planning application to Cherwell District Council: 22/01715/OUT
Land East of Park View

Woodstock Town Council objects very strongly to this proposal for the reasons outlined below.

1. Overdevelopment
This proposal is for another 500 houses for Woodstock when the town is already struggling with the possibility of up to 720 new homes from those now being built at Park View and those proposed on land behind Hill Rise and along the Banbury Road. When reviewing the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, the Inspector recommended that the number of homes between the last two of these sites should be reduced to no more than 300 altogether as he felt Woodstock could only cope with 600 new homes in all. Before the Park View development began, Woodstock was around 1550 dwellings so all these developments will totally change the nature of the town. If this development for land East of Park View goes ahead, the total number of new homes could become 1250 - around 3000 new residents.

2. Lack of supportive infrastructure.
(NPPF 2021 item 73, a,b; 79)
Traffic levels. The A44 and A4095 are already crammed particularly at the beginning and end of the working day. The A4095 is likely to get even busier as sites in Long Hanborough are completed and add traffic, often going along the A4095/A44 in preference to going via A40 towards Oxford. Further, traffic from the Salt Cross Garden Village may well choose Lower Road and the A44 rather than the A40. All this traffic, even turning on to the A44 at the Bladon roundabout, will further clog up the roundabout which residents from this particular proposal are also likely to be using.
Medical facilities. Woodstock has the same surgery building it had thirty and more years ago when the town was much smaller and there were also fewer residents to come from neighbouring villages. Whilst the staff are excellent, the accommodation which serves as the Woodstock Surgery is widely recognised as totally inadequate and unsuitable for purpose. Until there is better accommodation for the Woodstock practice, it is difficult to see how this development can be acceptable in terms of provision of medical services locally.
Schooling. It is already suggested, in the other proposals for developments in Woodstock, that some of the primary school children could have places at Wootton Primary School. Primary Schools are places where children learn about and contribute to their community. Apart from the negative aspects of children having to be taken by car or bus to school when they might have walked to a school in Woodstock, the fact that they will feel part of another community than their home seems a situation which should be avoided. Further developments in Woodstock are going to put unresolvable pressures on Woodstock Primary School and it seems likely such development will lead to some of Woodstock's children being accommodated in Primary Schools outside Woodstock.
Sewage etc.. The sewage system has been close to capacity for a long time. A clear account of drainage and sewage disposal from this and other proposed developments is needed.

3. Green Field Site
(NPPF 2021 chapter 16 particularly 189, 190, 197 and 206)
Threat to setting of World Heritage Site (WHS). This is yet another large development on green fields around the World Heritage Site. ICOMOS on behalf of UNESCO objected to the Park View area being developed initially but reluctantly accepted that if there were the Park View development, it should not be followed by salami slicing of the land in subsequent developments. That salami slicing is now happening.
The Inspector of the Cherwell Local Plan commented that the development of site PR10 -

effectively this site - 'would represent an incongruous extension into the countryside that would cause significant harm to the setting of Woodstock and the character and appearance of the area'. Further, he commented that 'the travel distance to Oxford is likely to tempt residents away from more sustainable travel choices notwithstanding the proximity of the site to a proposed Park & Ride facility' and 'the impact of the site would cause harm to both the setting and significance of the nearby Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site'.

The stately Blenheim Palace, set in its Park and originally surrounded by farmed and natural landscape, is rapidly being reduced to a (somewhat exotic) suburban villa.

Loss of agricultural land. It is tragic to see yet more agricultural land being developed for housing when, as a nation, we have come to recognise the importance of becoming much more self-sufficient in food. The excuse for much of this local development on these green fields is to provide funds to protect the WHS. How many more acres of agricultural land are to be allowed to disappear into housing estates to build up funds to support the WHS?

4. Woodstock??

(item 79, 86 e,f, 88 in 2021 NPPF).

The site is put forward as part of Woodstock although it is in Cherwell District. It is more or less as close (or closer) to Bladon centre as it is to Woodstock centre. As the Inspector of the Cherwell Local Plan commented (see 3 above) it is too far from the main part of Woodstock to be realistically part of the community.

The connection - other than the A44 - with the rest of Woodstock seems to be by a road which runs through the development into the Park View estate. This seems a potential 'rat run' from the A44 and parts of Woodstock to the A4095 and the Bladon roundabout, with the intention of avoiding some A44 traffic (hold-ups?).

It is difficult to see how residents will use the facilities of Woodstock. There are suggestions of a Park & Ride by the Bladon roundabout but the residents on this development will have to get to and from that which could be significant walk from some parts of the development. As the Inspector's report on the PR10 site suggests, the practical solution for residents would be to get in their cars and use the more significant retail opportunities of Kidlington or Witney. Woodstock as a community and also as a retail centre will not benefit. More residents' cars on the road seem inevitable.

As planned the development is a small village (without amenities) of 500 homes set in a green field, surrounded by green areas except where it reaches the A4095. Its only connection with other dwellings is with the five or so houses at Upper Campsfield, the other side of the A4095. This would seem very much against NPPF policies for developments to be edge of centre or out of centre locations which are well connected to town centres. It is in effect developing a new community without real connections to a significant centre.

5. Settings for historic sites.

We have already commented on the adverse effect of yet more buildings immediately adjacent to the WHS of Blenheim Park. Even closer to the development site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument in the form of a Roman villa which has never been fully excavated.

Oxford County Archaeological Services comment on the effect of the development not only on the setting of the WHS and on that of this villa, but also on trenched evaluations which indicate Late Iron Age and Early Roman settlement activity at the site. Any development will result in loss to at least some of this historic cultural background even if avoiding the known Ancient Monument - and there may be much still unknown, but still to be discovered, about the wider use of land by residents of the villa.

6. Conclusion.

This proposed development creates an isolated development which has little connection with any other significant group of dwellings. It will not benefit the community - neither residents nor retail - of Woodstock. It will create yet further stress on already strained infrastructure and it will damage the setting of very significant cultural assets.

Woodstock Town Council repeat that they object very strongly to the proposal.

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Attachments