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Planning Department
Cherwell District Council
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14 June 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

**Permission in Principle for Proposed residential development of 2-3 dwellings at Land rear of Bridge House & 1 and 2 The Villas, Wendlebury
For SGJ Limited**

This letter accompanies an application for permission in principle for a proposed residential development of a minimum of 2 and maximum of 3 dwellings on the site shown on the submitted plan.

The application is accompanied by:

1. Application Form
2. A plan which identifies the land to which the application relates, drawn to an identified scale and showing the direction of North
3. The applicant will be paying the application fee direct to the Council
4. Heritage Impact Assessment, June 2022, Richard K Morriss & Associates
5. This covering letter

The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) sets out what matters are within the scope of a decision on whether to grant permission in principle as follows:

“The scope of permission in principle is limited to location, land use and amount of development. Issues relevant to these ‘in principle’ matters should be considered at the permission in principle stage. Other matters should be considered at the technical details consent stage. In addition, local authorities

cannot list the information they require for applications for permission in principle in the same way they can for applications for planning permission.

Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 58-012-20180615"

The PPG also sets out that a decision on whether to grant permission in principle to a site following a valid application must be made in accordance with relevant policies in the development plan unless there are material considerations, such as those in the National Planning Policy Framework and national guidance, which indicate otherwise (Paragraph: 011 Reference ID: 58-011-20180615).

Consideration of the location, land use and amount of development

The site is located fairly centrally in Wendlebury, a village to the south-west of Bicester. The site comprises an existing vehicular access serving several dwellings and an open area of grassland. There are two TPO trees on the site and part of the access is understood to lie in Flood Zones 2 and 3. A stable block and manege lie to the east of the site. Access to this would be retained/relocated as part of any technical details consent stage. The Red Lion public house lies to the north of the access and is a Grade II listed building. The more recently built pub accommodation block lies to the west/south-west of the main public house building.

It is noted that the site has some previous planning history (none were permission in principles) and most recently the erection of 2 No detached dwellings with garages was refused on 7.10.2016 under 16/01645/F.

16/01645/F was refused for three reasons including reason 1 which related to the principle of development. Whilst this is noted, it is important to point out that when 16/01645/F was determined, the Council could demonstrate a 5 year land supply for housing. Therefore at that time the policies in the development plan guiding the provision of new housing were considered up to date and given full weight in determining the planning application. However, currently, the Council does not have a 5 year housing land supply and this is fundamental to the principle of development. Refusal reason 2 has also been addressed in this submission and refusal reason three would be dealt with at technical details consent stage.

The Council's 2021 Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) current monitoring report shows just a 3.5-year housing land supply (Apr.'22- Mar.'27).

Policy PSD1 of the CLP 2015 embeds a proactive approach to considering development proposals to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Policy Villages 1 identifies Wendlebury as a Category C village suitable for infilling and conversions. The development is not a conversion and CLP para C.264 defines infilling which is also not applicable as it is not a frontage site. There is therefore a conflict with CLP 2015 Policy Villages 1 and conflict with saved Local Plan Policy H18.

However in the absence of a 5 year housing land supply, although this in principle conflict still exists, it is considered this conflict should be given limited weight. Consideration needs to go on to NPPF para 11d and whether:

- (i) the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed⁷; or
- (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.

It is noted that no objection was raised in respect of flood risk in consideration of 16/01645/F, which was for two dwellings. With regards heritage, a Heritage Impact Assessment accompanies this submission, and should be referred to in full. This concludes that *'there would be no harm caused to any adjacent heritage assets, designated or non-designated, by any low key development of the study area. The proposal for housing would not result in any harm to the character, setting or significance of any heritage asset...*

In terms of the general grain of the village, it is not considered that this now has any great significance due to the major redevelopments from the later-20th century which have completely altered its overall character and extended it into the surrounding fields.

In this context, the proposed development of the study area to the rear of new housing on Main Road, to the south of the redevelopment of the rear yards of the Red Lion, and to the north of the modern Farriers Mead development seems perfectly appropriate in heritage terms'.

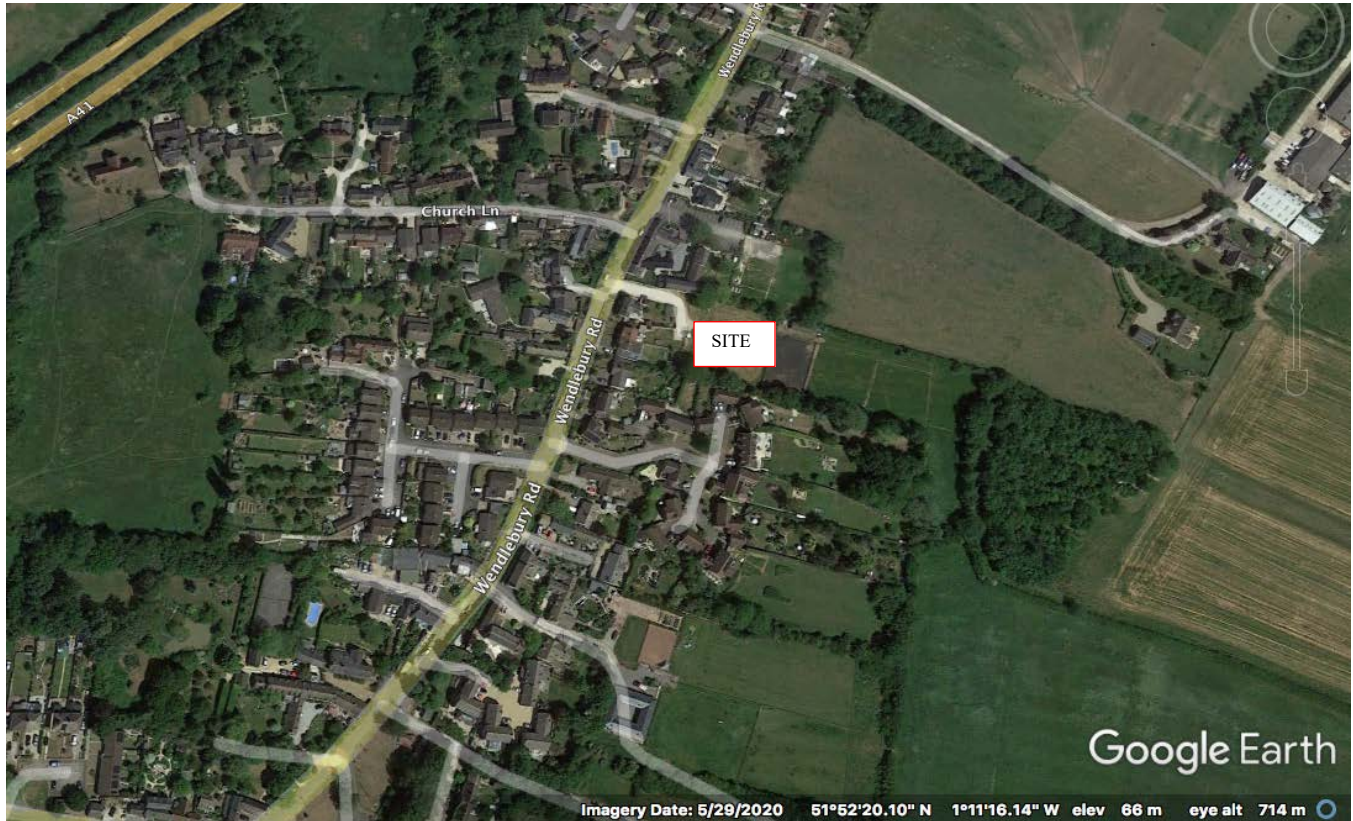
Turning to consider the sustainability of the location, Wendlebury has been identified as a settlement suitable for modest new housing growth. It is therefore not an inherently unsustainable location. The village has village hall, playground and the site lies next to The Red Lion pub.

The site is located fairly centrally within the village within easy walking distance of the local amenities. Para 79 of the NPPF sets out that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should

identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby. The Government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of homes (para 60 NPPF). Furthermore as para 69 of the NPPF sets out small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement of an area, and are often built-out relatively quickly. This site is a small site. The village of Wendlebury is also located close to the expanding town of Bicester, and approx only 2.5km from the park and ride (see below google earth images).



Proximity of Wendlebury to large settlement of Bicester. Source: Google Earth



Approx location of site in Wendlebury. Source: Google Earth

Bicester is one of the District's largest towns, has numerous shops, services, employment and is where there has been substantial housing growth. The site is located in a relatively accessible location (and it is noted the Council were of this view in the officer report approving a 13 room accommodation block at The Red Lion to the north under 15/00185/F). The proposed dwellings would be able to benefit from electric vehicle charge points and space for cycle storage. The NPPF acknowledges at para 105 that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.

It is noted there is no defined village boundary and the site is well related to the village having residential development to the west, south, equestrian uses to the east and the public house use and accommodation block to the north/north-west. The accompanying heritage assessment describes the evolution of the village. The pattern of development in the village is mixed, including built form (including dwellings) projecting back from the road as shown in the above google earth image. The development of this site with 2-3 dwellings would not be out of keeping with the pattern of

development for example there are a number of small cul de sac developments of various layouts and designs leading off them. This includes Farrier's Mead to the immediate south.

The proposed amount of development is considered to be of a scale suitable for the size of the village and proximity to nearby (much larger) settlement. The existing land use is grassland and the site also includes the existing vehicular access. The proposed residential use is not considered to be inappropriate in the context of neighbouring uses.

Based on presently available information, the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance do not provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. The proposed dwellings would positively contribute to the Council's housing supply bringing social benefits with new housing, economic benefits during construction and through spend in local facilities e.g. the pub and the potential for environmental benefits such as incorporation of renewables and ecological gain (subject to technical details consent stage). The location, land use and amount of development is considered acceptable. For all these reasons, it is considered that significant and demonstrable harm would not arise to outweigh the benefits and that permission in principle should be forthcoming.

If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me. For any queries between 20 June and 1 July please contact the applicant – email address on form.

Yours Sincerely

Jayne Cashmore BSc, MA, MRTPI
Oakwood Planning Limited.