

Comment for planning application 24/00295/PIP

Application Number	24/00295/PIP
Location	Islip Railway Station Bletchingdon Road Islip OX5 2TQ
Proposal	Permission in Principle - redevelopment to provide 9 no dwellings (use Class C3) and 190 sqm of commercial floorspace (use Class E)
Case Officer	Seva Lobov

Organisation Name	Mike Streule
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Address	28 Bletchingdon Road, Islip, Kidlington, OX5 2TQ
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Type of Comment	Objection
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Type	neighbour
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Comments

I would like to object to the application for Permission in Principle to provide 9 dwellings at Islip Oil depot.

The application cites the client as NCM Real Returns GP Limited. It should be made clear that this company is a subsidiary of Newcore Capital, which hold the entirety of Islip Oil Depot in their investment portfolio. Newcore Capital make it clear on their website the intention to build 96 homes on the site. (<https://newcorecapital.com/portfolios/islip-fuel-depot-oxford/>). It is difficult not to see this application as an attempt to use the Permission in Principle process as a first step to achieve this aim, and to create a precedent of large scale residential development on the site. The application should therefore be refused. Once the precedent is set for using the PIP process for housebuilding on this parcel of greenbelt land, then an argument could be made to use the process for development of the entirety of this site and indeed any other greenbelt parcel of land surrounding Islip and beyond.

Newcore Capital, through NCM Real Returns submitted the site in 2020 for consideration in the District's local plan. The Kidlington area, in the most recent consultation document for the 2040 local plan, does not feature this site as being designated for development, so this application should be seen as an alternative attempt for Newcore Capital to achieve their aims through whatever planning process they can.

Unfortunately, the application letter makes some factual errors. They state that the land is a 'brownfield' site; this is incorrect and the land, as they acknowledge later is in fact a greenbelt site and therefore should not be suitable for development. Since disuse the site has become increasingly biodiverse, and provides increased habitats for multiple species, significantly more so than any mono-culture arable farmland currently does. The application also frequently refers to the positive aspects of the illustrative layout, but also reminds the reader that this is purely for illustrative purposes. Therefore, given the intention for 96 homes on the site, there can be no credence given to this, and it is simply a matter of trying to divert the attention of the reader as to the what the application of for; i.e. the first 9 of a total of 96 homes, of unspecified design.

The proposal suggests that this development will 'significantly improve the character of the village'. Given the application, if taken at face value, proposes to develop a tiny proportion of the site, and not remediate any of the other land, there is no material benefit here. If, the whole site is developed with 96 homes, the character of the village will be significantly altered, with an approx. 30% increase in number of dwellings to the village and skewing of village centre. Piecemeal development of this land could also be used to reduce any Section 106 payments that should be made by any developers, to improve the village amenities.

The proposal also proposes that the proximity to Islip station is an asset. Unfortunately given the frequency of services at the station, the potential usage of the station is minimal and there would undoubtedly be an increase in traffic on an already busy and congested commuter route. The lack of footpaths proposed to connect the proposed development with the village would result in no safe foot access to the development, again encouraging the use of cars within the village. The proposal also states there are 'various opportunities to encourage walking and cycling within the site'. This statement makes no sense if only 9 homes are planned, again suggesting a larger intention for developing the site with 96 homes.

As noted, Islip is a Policy Villages 3, and this proposal proposes to create a self-contained

collection of homes with no pedestrian access to the rest of village along the highway, which will be otherwise disconnected from the village. I am concerned that the PIP process is being misused as an initial step to securing permission towards the total of 96 homes on this greenbelt site, ultimately for the aim of generating wealth and returns for Newcore Capital's investors. The Council should therefore reject this application on the grounds of inappropriate development of the green belt surrounding Policy Villages 3, in line with the new Local plan.

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Attachments