

45 Plane Tree Way  
Woodstock  
Oxfordshire  
OX20 1PE  
28 September 2015

Dear Sir

**Objection to proposed development on land east of Woodstock bounded by the A44, A4095 and Shipton Road, Woodstock.**

I live adjacent to the proposed development site and I am writing to ask that Cherwell District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council refuse the planning application from Vanbrugh Unit Trust and Pye Homes for the proposed development on land east of Woodstock bounded by the A44, A4095 and Shipton Road, Woodstock.

The reasons for my objections are set out below.

1. Introduction

As I was thinking about writing this objection, the wail of a siren from an emergency vehicle seeking to make progress along the A44 through Woodstock gave thought to the concerns of the hazards faced by emergency responders racing to rescue or save a life being hampered by even more traffic when minutes or even seconds are vital.

As a recipient of an emergency response from a paramedic crew in 2014 in around 5 minutes, I was fortunate for two reasons, firstly due to being located not far from the Ambulance Station in Kidlington and secondly there being light evening traffic. I wonder how those living further away north of Woodstock will feel when they hear of the proposed development of 1200 homes on the edge of the town which will increase traffic potentially increasing delays for emergency responders reaching them and disrupt an already very busy cross county route?

Herein are my comments and objections relating to this planning application:

2. Historic town

Woodstock is a historic town of national and international, renown. The old part of Woodstock is a fine example of medieval buildings and Blenheim Palace the jewel in the crown. The area surrounding Woodstock encompasses a conservation area and the leafy tree lined approaches provide scenic beauty. The town has a very good range of services and facilities given its population of circa 3,000 people but will be impacted upon by the addition of so many additional homes which could bring potentially another 3,000 people to the town.

In 1987 the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site was designated as a 'World Heritage Site - a place of outstanding universal value to the whole of humanity. The Palace is set in a Park designated by 'Capability' Brown, regarded as a masterpiece of the highest order and widely considered to be a 'naturalistic Versailles'. Together, the Palace and the Park are unique in the world.

The extensive development at Woodstock east will in my opinion detract from the existing tree lined approach to the Town and Blenheim Place which is well known to Overseas and UK visitors. To be faced with an enviable landscape on one side of the road in the historic park and grounds, whilst the other side what can only be expected will be a modern housing estate will detract from the beauty of the area and the town will be deplorable. The view in July from my house was like this:



Photo 1 view from Plane Tree Way, 17 July 2015

On 15 September vehicles can be seen clearly in the following picture surveying heights and the impact on the landscape, views and clear space will be an overbearing presence and the destruction of the approach to Woodstock



Photo 2 view from Plane Tree Way, 15 September 2015

### 3. Traffic

The A44 passes through Woodstock and has high level of through traffic (particularly lorries) and commuter traffic from Chipping Norton and beyond.

Events at the Blenheim Place are regularly held and volumes of traffic increase substantially in the area and impact on major and local roads bringing traffic to the town. This will be exacerbated by the provision of 1200 homes with a potential increase of circa 1500 vehicles.

Traffic travelling through of Woodstock has significantly increased following the construction of new homes which have been built over recent years in Chipping Norton. At peak times continuous commuter traffic passes through Woodstock and with the redevelopment of large parts of the Upper Heyford air base this will also add to traffic on the A4095 too.

As outlined above, traffic is a key issue for this area. Although the A40 runs from Witney to Oxford there is always serious congestion between Eynsham and Oxford at peak times which has a knock-on effect as drivers choose to avoid the A40 by using the A4095 through Long Hanborough and Bladon before joining the A44 just south of Woodstock. This leads to large volumes of through traffic in those villages and congestion on the A44 and approaches to Oxford.

Witney has been growing over the last 20 years and further development expected. Also, there has been a recent announcement for a development of 150 houses plus 75 extra car parking at the station in Long Hanborough which will also add to the commuter traffic.

Parking is another problem in the town. The availability of car parking has been consistently highlighted as a key issue throughout consultation on the Local Plan. In addition, school times are very busy around both the Marlborough School and the Primary School with upwards of twenty coaches and dozens of cars parked in the area or arriving to collect/drop off children, many of whom I am sure should be capable of walking between a quarter and half a mile!

Increasing the housing stock by 1200 has the potential to increase the peak school travel flows by at least 50% impacting on safety and causing further congestion, inconsiderate parking and pollution.

A survey in 2104 showed that 22,475 vehicles used the A4095 Bladon roundabout travel to Oxford, an increase of housing in the immediate area will add to traffic flows, congestion at peak times and bring further parking issues in and around the town.

The A44 is already a busy and congested road. This additional concentration of houses, industrial units and care premises will only increase traffic, increase roadside parking and create a safety hazard for other motorists.

#### 4. Environmental impact and Protection of the country side

The West Oxfordshire Local plan identifies that whilst there is some scope for limited development within and on the fringe of the Woodstock potential impact on the historic fabric of the town in particular the Blenheim World Heritage Site is a key consideration.

As stated above, the effect of the development on the character of the town will have a huge impact on the visual approach to the town and overdevelopment of the site as well as the adverse impact on traffic which the proposed development will bring will totally alter the character of the neighbourhood and the current residential amenities.

The development will block the existing pleasant views and will certainly impact on the peaceful enjoyment of my home and garden and the surrounding area.

The buildings will be visually overbearing, extensively inappropriate in design for this part of the village and such a large range of buildings will be totally out of keeping with the neighbouring properties, which are mainly 60's and 70's style houses within a mature tree and hedgerow environment. In addition, it will bring a change to the open fields where there is a significant level of wild life in the fields, hedgerows and the woodland along the eastern edge.

The provision of a shopping area and football playing area will attract cars and lorries for deliveries potentially at unsociable hours plus noise from the players and visitors to the shops will detract from the please peaceful environment.

During development and building of the properties there will need to be many thousands of tons of materials removed from and delivered to site entailing significant lorry journeys and transportation over existing routes which will bring congestion, delays and pollution and impact on residents.

The enjoyment of the view from my property will be diminished from looking at beautiful countryside (one of the reasons for choosing to purchase my property) to a view of the residential amenities, neighbouring properties and a school. Furthermore the loss of the right of way will have an adverse impact on the residential amenity of my property as it provides a pleasant walk across a pleasing and relaxing landscape. Loss of this from a public viewpoint also has a wider impact on a neighbourhood and this ought to be taken into account when such extensive development will ruin this amenity.

#### 5. Planning – Local Plan

It has been noted that neither the Cherwell District Council and West Oxfordshire Local Plans include any reference to this development. This leads me to believe that this is an opportunist development prompted by a landowner and a builder which cannot be in the interests of the town, neighbourhood or the local area.

If there was a serious intention to develop an area of the town then one would expect a serious commitment to providing and promoting affordable/eco housing and provide improvements to the infrastructure including and not limited to:

- Road improvements (perhaps by construction a bypass);
- Medical facilities;
- Protecting the environment;
- Improvement to the town centre layout and parking;
- Improved bus links not only to Oxford but to Kidlington and Witney.

I therefore ask that Cherwell District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council refuse this Planning Application and encourage Vanbrugh Unit Trust and Pye Homes to resubmit a building application that is considerably smaller, less intrusive on neighbouring properties and more sensitive to the character of this town.

Should you require any additional information, clarification of any comments made, or would like to arrange a visit to my home to assess the impact this development will have, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,,

Peter Owen-Smith