**W OODSTOCK *ACTION* GROUP (WAG)**

 5 The Covert

 Woodstock, Oxford

 OX20 1UU

 February 19, 2015

Tracey Morrissey

Principal Planning Officer (Major Developments)

Cherwell District Council

Bodicote, Banbury OX15 4AA

**RE: Planning Application 14/02004/HYBRID Pye-Blenheim – Land South of Perdiswell Farm, Shipton Road, Woodstock, Shipton on Cherwell**

**Part I**

The Woodstock Action Group (WAG) is a local community group organized in 1998. Our remit is to help conserve the local environment against unnecessary development and to preserve, maintain and enhance the historic character of Woodstock and to reject large scale market housing developments on inappropriate sites as on the fringes or approaches to Woodstock or Old Woodstock. As such, we object to the above referenced planning application

based upon the following planning grounds and historic precedents:

**1. Precedents and History: 1973**

On October 23rd 1973 the Trustees of the Blenheim Estate submitted a planning application (C568/73) for a residential development of 8 acres on the

the same piece of farmland encompassed in the above planning application adjacent to the Hensington Gate Estate at Hedge End.

 The West Oxfordshire District Council rejected the proposal on these grounds:

**1.** The proposal would extend the existing limits of development to a degree which would not be compatible with its size, character and setting and would give rise to problems of infrastructure, particularly education facilities.

**2.**  The proposal is of such a nature as to logically lead to pressure for the development of other adjoining land and such a precedent for further substantial development would be totally incompatible with the size, character and setting of Woodstock, not only ruining the charm and unique environment and character of its setting, but also causing severe problems of infrastructure.

**3**. The roads in the area are inadequate for the additional vehicular and pedestrian traffic, which would be generated by the proposed development.

 The reasons for refusal are still valid today as they were in 1973 and even more so.

**March 2003**

 In March 2003, the Blenheim Estate explored the feasibility of an “exception” site at Woodstock East but for some reason it did not progress beyond the exploratory stage.

**p. 2**

**1998-2005**

 In 1998 Persimmons Homes and the Blenheim Estate put forward a planning application for 180 houses and a hotel at Woodstock East as part of an allocation in West Oxfordshire’s Local Plan 2011. A Public Inquiry was held in 2005. The

Public Inspector rejected the planning application on the following grounds

**1.** He did not “consider that the need for affordable housing alone justifies the release of such a large greenfield site …”

**2.** The Inspector expressed his concern for the scale of the development (180 houses).

**3.** His recommendation was to delete Housing Proposal 3 Woodstock East arguing “the proposal would constitute a significant incursion into the open countryside to the east of the town. I also consider that the size of the proposed development is excessive when measured against the scale of this small, attractive market town.”

 By reason that WODC’s Local Plan 2011 is still in effect until Local Plan 2012-2031 becomes functional, I submit that the Inspector’s decision in 2005 to delete housing from Woodstock East is still legally valid, relative and still operative to planning application 14/02004/HYBRID as it pertains to that site.

 Since not much has changed, I base this on the rule of legal ***precedence*** inthat once a principle, the Inspector’s decision, has been established as in this case, it should be binding or persuasive in deciding similar instances as in the case of planning application 14/02004/HYBRID as it pertains to WODC Local Plan 2011.

**2. West Oxfordshire’s Adopted Local Plan 2011-Policies Still in Effect**

**H2:** The development will erode the character and appearance of the surrounding area including public and private open space and farmland.

 It will adversely affect the settings of local features of historical and archeological importance e.g. Blenheim Villa, Green Belt.

**H3:** The scale of developmentfar exceeds the housing needs of the areas in question.

 **H7**: Residential development is only allowed by infilling and rounding off

within the existing built-up area or the conversion of appropriate buildings and specifically allocated for residential development in the plan. The proposed development does neither.

**H11:** The Authority will seek up to 50% affordable housing on unallocated land.

**Policy H2:** The development will set a precedent for additional undesirable development and erode the character and environment of the proposed sites.

**Policy BE4:** The development is within or adjoining a built up area of a settlement which will result in the loss or erosion of an open area which makes an important contribution to the distinctiveness of a settlement, visual amenity, and facilities which benefit local residents, nature conservation and common land .

**BE3:** The development will compromise the safe movement of vehicular traffic

within the site and on the surrounding highway network, ex. buses and children

playing on site, Shipton, Upper Campsfield Roads and the A44.

**p. 3**

**BE11:** The development will adversely affects the character, setting, amenities, historical context or views within, into, or from a Park and Garden of Historic Interest. (Ex. World Heritage Site of Blenheim Palace)

**BE12:** The development will adversely affect the site of a nationally and locally important archeological monument ex. Roman ruins on site (Blenheim Villa).

**BE21:** Proposed floodlighting on football pitches will have a detrimental impact on the amenity of surrounding occupants, ex. Plane Tree Way, Hedge End. It will also have a significant adverse impact on the character and setting of Woodstock and the wider countryside.

**NE1:** The development will detract from the value of the countryside, its beauty, its local character, its distinctiveness and its ecological and agricultural values.

**NE3:**  The development will harm the local landscape character of the District. The proposals will not respect nor enhance the intrinsic character, quality and distinctive features of the individual landscape sites in CDC and WODC.

**NE5:** The development will be clearly visible from the nearby Oxford Green Belt and will adversely challenge the openness, rural character and visual amenity of the Green Belt.

**NE6:** The development would result in the loss of trees, woodlands or hedgerows, or their settings, which are important for their visual, historic or biodiversity value. Their removal will not enhance the landscape quality nor the nature conservation value of the proposed development.

**NE13:**  The development will not safeguard, maintain and enhance priority habitats and species within the District. Development proposals will affect features of nature conservation value, e.g., habitats, trees and hedgerows.

**NE15:** Thedevelopment will have an adverse effect to any specially protected species on both the proposed sites..

**SH1:** The developmentwill acceleratethe loss of existing town services, which have for years served the basic needs of the local community of Woodstock.

There is no proven, verifiable need for the establishment of an ‘out of town” shopping centre on the fringes of Woodstock.

**SH4** The development willharm the vitality andviability of the existing town centre of Woodstock for shopping.

**T1** The development will generate significant levels of traffic and daily congestion on the A44 to and from Woodstock to the proposed supermarket and retail units, the park and ride, to employment sites and from buses and service vehicles and on commutes into Oxford, Bladon, Long Hanborough to Witney.

**T6:** The development will jeopardize the safe movement of pedestrians and cyclists particularly on roads with significant daily traffic flows ex., the A44

and in particular the **developer’s questionable proposal to create a “hamburger” cycle path through the Bladon Roundabout at the confluence of the busy A44 and A4095 !**

Furthermore, the development will increase highway hazards and choke the daily free flow of buses enroute to Oxford and to surrounding towns and

villages. The proposal will also treble traffic chaos and conflicts thus increasing the potential for accidents on an already congested A44 and on feeder routes. The proposed traffic scheme will cause considerable cumulative environmental damage and cause or exacerbate asthmatic conditions as a result of CO emissions from the exhausts of a few thousand additional vehicles on the local roads.

**p. 4**

**4. Cherwell District Council Adopted Local Plan 1996-Policies Still in Effect**

**C1:** The development will result in the loss or damage of Sites of Special Scientific Interest and sites of designated wildlife or scientific importance. as well as sites of local nature conservation value.

**C7:** The development will cause demonstrable harm to the topography and character of the landscape in question.

**C10**: The development will have a detrimental and substantial effect upon the character and appearance of historic landscapes, and parks and gardens. Ex. The Roman site- Blenheim Villa and Blenheim Palace Park.

**ESD14 (CDCELP)** The development will intrude and adversely affect the land-scape setting of the Oxford Green Belt. It will propagate the growth of Oxford, (Northern Gateway-Yarnton) result in ribbon development and bring about urban sprawl along the A44 coalescing settlements to Woodstock.

 The development will also encroach upon present open countryside from Oxford to Woodstock and in-between.

**S29:** The developmentwill result in the loss of existing village services, which have served the basic needs of the local communities e.g., Yarnton & Begbroke.

It will also harm either directly or cumulatively the vitality and viability of nearby town centres in Cherwell.

**ENV1:** The development will causematerially detrimental levels of noise, vibration, smell, smoke, fumes or other types of environmental pollution.

**ENV6:** The developmentat Oxford Airport will directly or indirectly increase noise nuisance for residents.

**AG1:** The development will damage the countryside and valuable agricultural land.

**5. Oxford London Airport**

Oxford Airport is owned and operated Oxford Aviation Services, Ltd. under the ownership of the Rueben Brothers Holdings.

 The Airport considers the following items to be important and relevant to

the Pye- Blenheim planning application in question:

 Airport operations on both runways 01/19 and 11/29, helicopter circuits, impact of noise on dwellings within the proposed development, impact assessment in terms of building heights, lighting, etc.-to protect the the radar installation and radar results which are critical to flight, street lighting, Bird/wildlife activity control for development during building stages and once completed, Tree and water design, solar panel and impact, and increased security risk by introducing a densely populated area close to the airport boundary. A safe guarding study will be required.

 I cite several of these concerns in relation to WODC Local Plan 2011:

**BE18:** The nearness of the development will give rise to unacceptable levels of pollution and will cause cumulative harm to the health of residents and the natural environment.

**BE19:** The nearness of the development to the airport will give rise to significant noise disturbances for the occupants of the proposed development.

**p.5**

 The minutes of the Airport Consultative Meeting, 1 October, 2014 read, “*It was noted that the helicopters may well fly over the area (of the proposed housing area) which give the airport concerns in relation to a potential increase in noise complaints from* new residents.” It was also noted that *CAE OAA are likely in the future to extend flying activity in the evenings and weekends …”*

**BE20:** The nearness of the airport flight paths will compromise the safety of the occupants because of the potential risks associated with documented air accidents at the airfield.

 As evidence, on December 6th **2003**, three people were killed at Oxford Airport when the plane went into an uncontrolled roll and crashed upon landing.

 On July 13, **2006** an RAF Harrier crashed on a farm in nearby **Tackley** narrowly missing the Sturdy’ Castle pub and a nearby garage. The plane clipped a car on the A4260. The pilot parachuted into a nearby field and was unhurt.

 In August **2006**, a training aircraft breached the airport’s perimeter fence and came to a stop upside down on the adjoining public road. The pilot was uninjured. On January 15, **2010**, a light airplane crashed in a field in **Bladon** close to the A4095 and the airport killing two people.

 On June 7th **2013**, A light aircraft from Oxford Airport was forced to make an emergency landing after having a problem with its landing gear. No one was hurt. Helicopters have also been reported to have gone down on the airport site.

 That last thing that any council or developer should be doing is planning to build 1, 500 houses in close proximity to the flight paths of a busy (up to 160,000 movements per year) and expanding airport. This will surely have a major adverse impact on the residents of this proposed development.

 The residents of homes would be under constant stress from jets, helicopters and light aircraft noise which is an unsustainable condition.

 Aviation fuels, especially from jet fuel, contaminate not only the upper atmosphere but also the surrounding environment. Residents would be subjected to daily does of these cumulatively harmful fumes. The proposed development would be a health hazard and a recipe for increased respiratory diseases such as asthma and emphysema.

 In summary, this Pye-Blenheim proposal for 1,500 houses plus “ancillary” units

should never be allowed to get off the ground.

**End of Part I**

**Part II To Follow**

**Dr. Robert W. McGurrin**

**Chairman**

**Woodstock Action Group (WAG)**

**Tel**