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For the attention of:

Planning case officer Baljinder Singh / Matthew Parry
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House, Bodicote
Banbury
OX15 4AA

Reference: PLANNING APPLICATION No. 16/01594/F

Proposed erection of 34 houses on land adjacent to Fewcott Road, Fritwell, by Cala Management Ltd.

Dear Mr Singh and Mr Parry

I write with regards to the above planning application.

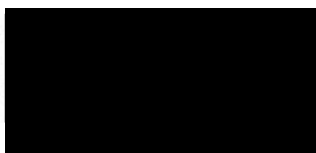
I have reviewed the application and the connected process and would like to record my concerns.

Herewith my key objections:

1. I believe that the process connected to this plan and application has been inadequate – the process for consultation has been poor and one could easily come to the conclusion that there was deliberate method in this approach
2. Fundamentally the proposal does not adhere to the requirements of the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood plan
3. The level of amenities and public transport arrangements for Fritwell do not justify its current village categorisation – there has been a deterioration on both fronts over the last few years that surprisingly is not currently reflected – and an additional development of this size cannot be supported by the existing infrastructure and would lead to a significant negative impact for the existing village residents
4. This needs to be taken in the context of two planned housing developments in the village that have already been approved and can satisfactorily meet the current needs and ‘obligations’ of the village

A group residents letter has been developed which articulates these issues in more detail and I include this as part of my letter of objection, which I trust will be given due consideration.

Yours sincerely

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Paul Walder.

Paul Walder
9th September 2016

Fritwell is a dispersed settlement where development proposals need to be considered very carefully: infilling could ruin the character of the village while estate development would overwhelm it. The protection of Fritwell's visual, historic and archaeological qualities is also supported by the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan which states that *"the type of development for category A villages within the built up limits of villages will be considered to be suitable for minor development in addition to infilling."*

I consider that this development breaches the current built-up limits of Fritwell. Paragraph 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework states that permission should be refused for *"development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions"*. I believe that this proposed development falls into this category - for example it includes buildings that are much higher than others in the locality and of a type that does not fit within a rural, village location.

The design on the plans submitted by Cala Management Ltd are not in keeping with existing properties in Fritwell - the village has a very limited number of existing properties that are three storeys high and none of this type of property in the immediate locality of the proposed development site.

There is no indication from Cala about the construction materials to be used for this development. I would strongly object to the use of construction materials that are not in keeping with the fabric, visual and historic nature of the village.

Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood plan

Within the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan, policy H4 states that beyond market housing provision made in the district's site allocations development plan document, only proposals for affordable housing for local people are supported.

The Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood plan expressly states: *"Development should be on Brownfield sites not on Greenfield sites. The loss of rurality is a major concern especially where the space between villages is concerned."* This proposed development is on a Greenfield site and will erode the space between Fritwell and Ardley-with-Fewcott. The plan goes on to say: *"The amount and type of development should be carefully controlled to respect the largely rural character of villages and their natural environment."* In my opinion, this development contravenes both these points.

Historic Planning Applications in Fritwell

Permission to develop in the village has historically been rejected for many reasons, not least of these is the inadequacy of the village's road and pavement network to accommodate even small increases in traffic and the lack of public transport.

There has been no improvement in the capacity of the road network within or surrounding the village at all. All vehicles travelling to and from the proposed development site must pass either through the centre of Fritwell or via the narrow road passing through Ardley-with-Fewcott.

As of July 2016 the bus service to Fritwell has been heavily curtailed - the 81 service only runs once a week not daily as claimed in the Transport report filed against this application.

Transport Statement to 16/01594/F

Both of the above reasons are referenced in the transport statement for this planning application dated 30/08/2016 which states in the Oxfordshire County Councils pre application advice: *"Very unsustainable location for this amount of homes. Travel will be car-dominated and public transport provision is very poor. Visibility northwards needs to be carefully considered; delivery of a footway is essential but will be difficult and expensive to deliver. This is due to the width of the verge in this area and the placement of the highway boundary being the ditch."*

I have considerable concerns that the resolve here would be to infill the ditch and that this would bring implications for drainage not only on the site, but the road, and the existing houses on Fewcott Road.

The Transport report is also factually incorrect - it makes references to both public transport and amenities that no longer run or have been closed for several years.

Lack of Fritwell Amenities / Employment and the impact on Transport

In addition to the much-reduced bus service to Fritwell, The Kings Head public house has actually been closed for in excess of three years and Fritwell residents must leave the village to access social amenities.

The Transport report asserts that only 18 additional journeys would be made in peak periods and appears to assume that only one car per household would be used - something which I consider very unlikely. Even so this suggests that only 52 % of the new households would need to leave the village to commute to work, travel to schools or for other needs.

This contradicts the fact that there are very limited existing and no new employment opportunities within Fritwell and only one small village shop. And whilst the village does have a school it only caters for Primary Education - so again car travel will be needed for pupils in Secondary Education. In addition to the reduced public village bus service, Oxfordshire County Council has recently cut the bus services to Schools from the village.

I therefore believe that the current assessment of car use by residents of the proposed development is very much understated.

Historic Sewage Capacity Challenges in Fritwell & connection to existing mains

The inadequacy of the sewage system in Fritwell is a known issue. Parish Council Meeting notes continually reference the inability of the sewage treatment works in Fritwell to cope with the existing demands. Residents have experienced drainage problems for some time and Anglian Water has often had to deploy tankers on a daily basis to empty an over-flowing system.

I note that Anglian water have yet to comment on its ability or desire to upgrade the works in Fritwell to meet the additional capacity required by this proposed development.

The plans submitted by Cala Management Ltd indicate that they intend to connect to existing sewers in Hodgson Close. This would cause major disruption to existing households and compound a problem where residents of Hodgson Close have historically had to have sewer pipes unblocked.

Utilities

Previous planning applications have been declined on the basis that the village cannot support the extension of some utilities. An assertion made by the transport report is that more individuals work from home however this requires the necessary infrastructure, particularly with respect to Telecoms and internet / broadband capacity.

At the time of writing I understand that British Telecom is unable to provide any further SuperFast Broadband connections within Fritwell, despite recently upgrading the exchange and junction box. The telephone exchange is shared with Ardley-with-Fewcott.

Visual Impact Statement:

Of particular concern is the effect of this proposed development on the visual impact for the village and its residents.

The visual impact statement undertaken for this development states: *"the proposed development will have a significant adverse effect on the residents and dwellings in Hodgson Close, and impact upon a number of local Public Rights of Way, and this should be balanced against the relative merits of the development."* The Cherwell adopted plan states: *"Proposals will not be permitted if they would cause undue visual intrusion into open countryside."*

The development is proposed on open countryside, extends the boundary of the village and is located directly next to Hodgson Close. The visual impact and change of character of the village will be significant. A loss of privacy for many residents of Hodgson Close will also be an unacceptable result. Cala's plans are for a very high density of housing backing directly onto existing properties.

Inaccurate Plans submitted by Cala

I find that the plans that have been submitted for this application are inaccurate and misleading, as referred to by the Oxfordshire County Council Transport report.

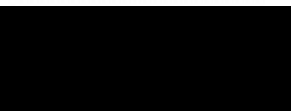
I do not believe these plans allow anyone to accurately determine the full impact of the development on Fritwell. The plans include details of land that is not included in Cala's options and the plans contradict details on the retention of existing trees and hedges. The plans do not clearly show the proximity of the proposed new properties to existing houses.

Furthermore, there is no demonstrable need for this type of open market housing in the village. Cherwell District Council has more than five years' supply of housing land to meet the requirements of its emerging Local Plan policy. With significantly large developments already underway in Banbury, Bicester, and Upper Heyford, developers are offering substantial incentives to sell the new houses in the district - this in itself indicates that the need for housing of the type proposed by Cala in this application does not exist.

I believe that Fritwell already has enough large houses: and with planning permission already in place to build 20 houses in other parts of the village, this will satisfy local demand – of which some will be affordable homes.

The only identified need is for affordable housing for residents who work locally, as recently confirmed by your Housing Department's Housing Needs Survey. The planning permission granted for the George and Dragon site more than adequately covers this requirement.

Paul Walder



9th September 2016