

**From:** Claire Hall [mailto:  
**Sent:** 08 August 2019 20:12  
**To:** DC Support  
**Subject:** Planning objection 19/01177/F

Dear Cherwell Planning,

**Comments on Planning application 19/01177/F**

We wish to **object** to the above referenced planning application and make the following comments:

- Steeple Aston is a Category A village, which is expected to accommodate around 20 new houses over the Cherwell Local Plan Period 2011-31. The plan recommends that new development should be small-scale development, typically less than 10 dwellings. The proposed development is therefore right at the upper end of the acceptable size. Given the amount of time left remaining to accommodate 20 houses we think it unnecessary to build 10 in one plot.
- Policy PH1 (Open Market Housing Schemes) of Cherwell Local Plan concerns housing mix and states that any new market housing should favour homes with a smaller number of rooms. The proposed development does comply with the desirable mix, and would provide some more affordable homes for local people. However, Policy BSC3 (Affordable Housing) states that sites of 11 dwellings or more will be required to provide affordable housing. As the proposed density of this site is lower than required by Policy BSC2 of Cherwell Local Plan (i.e. the site would accommodate more than 11 dwellings at an appropriate density), this site should trigger affordable housing provision at 35%. The development therefore does not comply with policy.
- Policy ESD 15 of Cherwell Local Plan 2011-31 Part 1: New development should “Contribute positively to an area’s character and identity by creating or reinforcing local distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within conservation areas and their setting”

Policy PD1 of the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan:

- c) The development should conserve and, where possible, enhance the landscape
- d) The Development should conserve and, where possible, enhance the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation areas and the significance of other heritage assets.

The conservation area in Steeple Aston extends westwards along South Side as far as the Telephone Exchange, to the west of the development site. The development site is therefore in a sensitive location at the entrance to the village and will affect the setting of the Conservation Area. The proposed development does not enhance the local distinctiveness of Steeple Aston. In order to provide the required visibility splays at the access point to the proposed development at least one mature existing tree needs to be removed. This will adversely affect the character of this area. The proposal of a "1.5m 'virtual footway' in buff colour with reflective studs" inset into the road is grossly out of character with the village.

- Road safety. Policy PD5 (Building and Site Design) of the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan states:
  - c) Proposals for minor development schemes (excluding infill and conversions) of new housing will be required to provide new or improve existing footpaths and cycle ways to ensure that new residents of all ages and mobility have safe access to village amenities such as the school, bus stops, shop and green spaces. Where new routes are proposed to meet this requirement, the development proposals shall contain full details of all associated materials and infrastructure.

The proposed new footway and virtual footway and associated priority/give-way arrangements do not provide a safe pedestrian access to the village facilities. This is unacceptable. The virtual footway means that from the give-way sign to the junction of South Side and Water Lane is effectively single carriageway. However, there is insufficient visibility to make this safe. As the attached photograph shows, a driver at the give-way point cannot see the Water Lane junction (and vice-versa) and therefore cannot see if the road is clear in order to proceed. This is because the road bends slightly, and there is a change in gradient, and the roadside hedge at the Red Lion obscures visibility. Therefore there could be two vehicles trying to pass one another at the same point as a pedestrian is walking along the virtual footway. In addition, it is proposed that there is a "priority give-way build out" on the brow of the hill, creating a single lane. This raises the potential danger further as if two vehicles did meet on this section, with a pedestrian using the footway, there would be absolutely no way they could safely get past one another. Furthermore, this road is also used regularly by wide farm vehicles and the vital village bus service, both of which currently just fit along this section of road. Any narrowing of the road would cause safety/usability issues with these road users. We would also like to note that the access to Hill House also feeds traffic into this area which will be in conflict with traffic from the development site.. T

I have written separately to our county councillor Arash Fatemian, urging him to ensure that the Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department complete a thorough assessment of this proposal, including a site visit to properly understand the visibility difficulties with the bend, topography of the road and overgrown foliage which all affect the safety of the suggested road layout.

Thank you for considering our concerns in your assessment of this proposal

Claire Hall and Peter Coysh  
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