

Mr Andrew & Mrs Rachel Bowles  
26 Heyford Road  
Steeple Aston  
Bicester  
Oxfordshire  
OX25 4ST

  
17 April 2019

Mr Bob Neville  
Cherwell District Council  
Bodicote House  
Bodicote  
Banbury  
Oxfordshire  
OX15 4AA

Dear Mr Neville

**Planning Application Number: 19/00457/OUT**

We are writing in response to the Neighbour Notification of 28 March 2019, which relates to the above planning application. This application proposes erection of up to eight dwellings at The Beeches, Heyford Road, Steeple Aston, Bicester OX25 4SN, with all matters reserved except the means of access onto Heyford Road.

We wish to object to the application, as it is entirely out of keeping with the area, for a number of reasons, including these:

- The application does not follow the existing pattern of housing in the village, and so is contrary to the Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (which was recently approved by more than 90% of voters in the referendum). In fact, these plans would create a separate housing area attached to Steeple Aston, rather than adding to the existing community – quite the opposite of what has been supported by people here.
- The application would allow development of what is essentially garden or pasture land that is immediately adjacent to open countryside, so that the settled area of the village is markedly changed and becomes more intrusive on (and visible from) the surroundings. We understand that permission was given some years ago for the addition of the narrow-gauge railway in much of the area under consideration, but this is very different to allowing wholesale development of the land, with permission to build substantial (and tall) houses there.
- The erection of eight houses in this space would require them to be crowded onto the land, especially as so many of the proposed houses are seemingly to be very large (6 x five-bedroom houses and 2 x three-bedroom properties, in addition to the existing house already in place, and adequate space for a proper public road which would have to replace the current driveway). The production of large houses that are packed together, with little room for gardens, is surely a plan created to maximise the saleable value of the property, rather

than a considered and appropriate plan for living in the countryside. In addition, five-bedroom houses are certainly not what the area requires, they will not help with housing pressures in the locality, and absolutely they do not constitute '*a range of types and sizes*' as promised in point 7.02 of the Design & Access Statement supplied by the Malcolm Payne Group.

- This area is in established use by a variety of wildlife – for instance, deer and foxes routinely use clear trails that cross the property in question and continue across the adjacent open fields, to the woods and ponds towards Rousham, and to the River Cherwell. Badgers certainly live close by, and both they and their setts are protected in law – even from disturbance.
- We are concerned about the current driveway being redeveloped as a road to serve so many properties, both in terms of the safety of increasing the traffic so substantially in that location (at the top of a steep hill with blind corners), and because we expect that the character of the area would necessarily change – a number of large trees would surely be felled in order to clear this entrance, and so that part of Heyford Road would be changed in order to facilitate the development further away from the road.

This plan offers advantages only to the current land owner (who, if this application is granted, would presumably sell up and move away), and would leave the village poorer. We do not support the idea that home owners can decide to redevelop their gardens into small housing estates, and we ask that this application is refused.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours

(Mr) Andrew Bowles and  
(Mrs) Rachael Bowles