

KIRTLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

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Ms Shona King
Senior Planning Officer
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House, Bodicote
Banbury
Oxfordshire OX15 4AA

Dear Ms King

17/00539/OUT – Land to rear / adjacent to Jersey Cottages, Heyford Road, Kirtlington
Proposed residential development for up to 20 new dwellings and associated works with all matters reserved except access – OS Parcel 1424 Adjoining and Rear of Jersey Cottages, Heyford Road, Kirtlington.

1. Summary statement:

Kirtlington Parish Council supports in principle this proposal for a development of up to 20 dwellings on this site, which is in line with the feedback received from the wider village both in individual discussions with villagers and in written feedback following the public consultation event for the proposal. Some recommended conditions and reserved matters are presented below.

2. Background Notes:

- 2.1 Kirtlington has been classified as a Category A village (Local Plan 1) by Cherwell District Council (CDC), officers of which referred on several occasions to Kirtlington's arithmetic share of Category A housing as 17 dwellings.
- 2.2 In 2014 Kirtlington Parish Council carried out a survey by questionnaire through every door in the village about views on development in the village. 81% of the electorate responded, of these 43% wanted no more houses and 44% wanted some but only a small number.
- 2.3 In Kirtlington village 38% of dwellings built since 1938 were built as council houses. The majority have been sold and not replaced. Kirtlington needs a small number of social/affordable houses to keep those with close family connections in the community.

2.4 The existing housing mix is unbalanced in Kirtlington today with a higher than usual proportion of larger market 4 or more bedroom dwellings, and the village now needs smaller homes, both market and social, in particular for elderly down-sizers and for first-timers.

3. Kirtlington has several constraints on development

3.1 Kirtlington is a traditional linear village (oriented north-south). In Parish Council meeting of 14/6/16 boundaries beyond which development should be opposed were agreed unanimously – *“that the western boundary be the route of the old Woodstock Way, to the east the original historic sections of the Park, to the north Akeman Street and to the south the 30 mph sign on the Bletchington Road.”* In the dismissal of recent appeals re. site to the west of the old Woodstock Way, mention was made of the landscape views and the rural setting of the village to the west of the village, which is also relevant to the Oxfordshire Way down to the Cherwell Valley.

3.2 The primary school in the village over recent years has been at or around capacity, with small variations each year allowing a couple extra one year if space the year before. This year there are a few spaces. The school playground is already at minimum size for the number of pupils and there is no physical space to expand the school buildings. Yet, in discussion, parents like the school and its current central location.

3.3 There are infrastructure problems with sewerage and water pressure in various parts of the village, which are being discussed with Thames Water and investigated by the applicants’ agent in an attempt to achieve a remedy for the whole village.

With these constraints, Kirtlington Parish Council knows of no other available and accessible site than the one in this proposal for any development, which would provide a few social/affordable houses, approximate our Cat.A village contribution, and yet hopefully not cause any primary school children to be bussed out of the village. Any more than 20 houses would be a problem for the village. We respect that in this application (after withdrawing their previous application), the applicants have reduced the number of houses. Yet, any fewer would not deliver the social housing required.

4. Notwithstanding that consultation of sites in Local Plan 2 has not taken place the Parish Council supports this proposal -

4.1 – as, both in written responses to the public consultation event for the proposal and in individual discussions throughout the village, this is overwhelmingly the villagers’ preferred site offered for development;

4.2 - as it provides social/affordable housing at the nationally required proportion of proposed dwellings, and villagers are especially keen that these are available as a

priority to those with local family connections in the village (see 2.3 above), while also just sustainable.

- 4.3 - as it is commensurate with Kirtlington's arithmetic share of new housing required of Cat. A. villages in Cherwell's Local Plan 1 (see 2.1 above);
- 4.4 - as its location is within the boundaries defined in June 2016 (see 3.1 above) and fits well into the traditional linear pattern of the village, as is no other available, accessible site;
- 4.5 - as it offers small dwellings, needed in this village (see 8.2 below).

5. Conservation matters:

- 5.1 The location is within the Conservation Area, but the Parish Council considers that any perceived harm arising from the development upon this designation will be overcome with due consideration of the important arboreal and 'estate' wall issues as set out below (in sections 6 and 7).
- 5.2 A clear distinction needs to be made between some land outside of the historic park and the historic park designed by Capability Brown. Although within the boundary of the Registered Park, this site is not within the historic park, nor part of any of the vistas in the historic park, but adjacent to it and is well screened from the historic park. On old maps this site is shown as part of Town Green (now crossed by the busy A4095, Heyford Road) with cottages on its western side and Home Farm on its eastern side, once stretching south to include the village pond. As mentioned above, the site is already screened from the historic park so as not to affect the setting of Kirtlington Park House nor the vistas in or from the historic park.
- 5.3 The Parish Council does not believe that this proposal will be unsympathetic to the surrounding area or set any precedent for further development within the Registered Park.
- 5.4 The provision of the proposed new green space, taking the area's historic name, 'Town Green', is considered to be sufficient to reduce the harm to the setting of the listed building of Home Farm house, but as this only occurs in the illustrative drawing of outline planning, perhaps a condition should be imposed restricting any proposed dwellings within 35m of Home Farm house. Furthermore, the Parish Council has agreed, should this application be accepted, to nominate this green area formally as a 'Local Green Space'; this has been agreed with the applicant.
- 5.5 That the houses be designed in an appropriate vernacular for the village should be a reserved matter.

- 5.6 It is important that the access into this proposed development is safe but is also visually secondary to, and does not compete with, the existing entrance to the historic park, further south on Heyford Road.
- 5.7 The archaeological field investigations have not unearthed anything of interest on the site.
- 6 Arboreal considerations: The application is accompanied by a two-page tree schedule (which it states is to BS5837:2012) and a Tree Location Plan (dwg no. 5620 FE TL 01) prepared by First Environment Ltd. (dated 17th January 2017).
- 6.1 The important screening (referred to in 5.2 above and in 8 below) is primarily due to trees in areas G1 and G2 on the Tree Location Plan, which are important features that contribute to the site's landscape character. However, as both G1 and G2 are outside the red line boundary (RLB) a condition is recommended that the applicants, who retain ownership of these trees provide a management plan for the trees in areas G1 and G2, such that the trees are retained including any additional tree planting for sufficient screening to be maintained for at least 30 years, because the screening both from the historic park and from Heyford Road is viewed as an important part of village acceptance of this proposal.
- 6.2 Even where some trees are outside of the RLB, their roots should be protected, as a reserved matter, from harm caused by any form of development built within the RLB.
- 6.3 A reserved matter is recommended that includes that all trees over 75mm stem diameter (at 1m height) in the eastern half of G1 and in the northern half of G2 should be surveyed to plot their RPAs. No development should then be permitted within RPAs, unless a 'no-dig' construction method can be adopted.
- 6.4 A Landscape and Visual Appraisal will be required as a reserved matter with regard to occasional views from the north (Akeman Street or north end of Heyford Road) by motorists entering the village. In view of this, robust planting of a belt of trees (10-15cm width) is requested at the reserved matters stage, whether within the RLB or in the field to the north within the Blue Line Boundary (BLB), as hedgerow or 'new' (Addendum to Heritage Impact Assessment 2.5) planting is considered inadequate mitigation of the visual effect of the proposed development from the north.
- 6.5 A reserved matter is requested to ensure that no dwellings are within 11 m of the extent of the canopy of the southern belt of trees to reduce pressures caused by shading, such that future house owners might request tree thinning/removal by the woodland's owner(s).
- 6.6 There is more about trees below in relation to the access (section 9 below).

7 Frontage wall: Trees and the stone wall are important features of the frontage and screening along Heyford Road.

7.1 The existing estate wall that runs from Akeman Street to the entrance to Kirtlington Park is in a poor state in certain areas. The Design and Access Statement (section 4.2 of that statement) states that “*works will include repair of the wall along the full length of the application site*”. However, the wall, like the frontage trees are outside the RLB but still within the BLB and so a condition is requested that it is made clear when and who will be responsible for ensuring that the wall be repaired and maintained.

7.2 Any works done on the walls should be carried out in a sympathetic manner and with materials that are consistent with the existing stone walls.

7.3 There is more about the stone wall below in relation to the access (section 9 below).

8 Illustrative layout:

8.1 The revised illustrative layout for 20 dwellings is much improved from the previous application for a development of 34 houses on this site.

8.2 At the public consultation event for the proposal on 19th January, villagers’ aspirations were predominantly for 2 and 3 bed dwellings and it is of importance to the village that these wishes are upheld as a reserved matter. The OCC report comments on the usual mix required, but owing to the existing imbalance in housing mix in this village (see 2.4 above) a preference for a housing mix with more small homes should be noted.

8.3 The provision of sufficient parking is requested as a reserved matter. On the illustrative layout the existing cottages are only allocated 2 spaces each and the new dwellings allocated “*at least 2 spaces per dwelling*”. However, a reserved matter is requested that the number of spaces be dictated by number of bedrooms in each dwelling, with care that if a garage is one of those spaces for parking then it should be required to be used for that purpose.

8.4 Later extensions should not be allowed to decrease space for off-road parking space.

8.5 As a reserved matter, more information is requested about materials to be used, heights of any buildings, boundaries of gardens, etc.

8.6 The proposed development includes areas of communal green space. As a reserved matter, information is required detailing the ownership and the associated ongoing maintenance and upkeep of these green spaces.

9 The Access:

9.1 The access proposals do not show the effects on existing trees nor the extent of wall that needs to be removed nor the location of the realigned walling or trees to replace what must be lost to accommodate the new sightlines and footways. Therefore, a condition is

requested that the applicants provide a plan showing details of realignment of the wall and replacement of any trees lost or their roots harmed by work to create the access.

9.2 In the Oxfordshire County Council's response to the proposed development, a number of key 'transport' issues are listed, including access point full details, drainage, visibility splays, construction work to the Heyford Road at the access point and the pedestrian crossing. The conditions requested by OCC should be respected.

9.3 However, it might be presumed that the detailed plans for the format of the pedestrian crossing, the choice of materials for footway surface and kerbing would be OCC matters. The Parish Council would wish to be able to give a view on such plans and format when available because of the visual impact on the conservation area and parishioner sentiment opposing further street lighting in the village (72% against street lighting in the survey undertaken for the 2011 Parish Plan).

Yours sincerely



Ruth Powles

Copies by email to:

Ward Councillors: Ian Corkin, James Macnamara, Barry Wood
The Planning Department, Cherwell District Council