

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	<a href="#">P12/V0854</a>
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	FULL
<b>REGISTERED</b>	11.4.2012
<b>PARISH</b>	MARCHAM
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Jane Hanna
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Taylor Wimpey Oxon
<b>SITE</b>	Anson Field, Morland Road and Hyde Copse, Howard Cornish Road Marcham Abingdon Oxfordshire
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Demolition of the existing 'Marcham Sports, Scouts and Social Club' and 'Little Angels Nursery' and the redevelopment of half of the Anson Field to provide for 51 residential units with associated means of access from Morland Road, car parking, landscape, amenity space and service infrastructure and application for the erection of a new community hub comprising: a replacement cricket and football pitch, a multi use games area (including floodlights) a childrens day nursery, community halls, youth facilities, a bar area, a kitchen, sports changing rooms and other associated accommodation along with two garage structures to provide storage on land north of Hyde Copse, with associated means of access from Howard Cornish Road, car parking, landscape, amenity space and service infrastructure.'
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	(As amended by plans received 19 July 2012)
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	445755/197021
<b>OFFICER</b>	Mr S.Walker

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application seeks permission to redevelop part of the Anson Field in the heart of the village with 51 dwellings and associated infrastructure together with the replacement of existing community facilities on a new site to the north of Hyde Copse, Howard Cornish Road, on the north east edge of the village.
- 1.2 The Anson Field site is a key part of the recreational facilities that exist for the whole of the village. It is well used by existing residents and is held in high regard as an asset to village life. The Anson Trust, a charitable organisation set up in 1913, is responsible for the upkeep of these facilities. Its key objective is to provide amenities for the welfare, recreation and leisure of parishioners in Marcham. The trust considers its existing facilities are now in need of replacement and to secure the long term future of facilities for the village it is proposed to relocate the facilities to a site on the edge of the village.
- 1.3 The proposed residential site, owned by the Anson Trust, measures 3.01 hectares and is currently an area of open space within the built up area of the village. It is bounded by residential properties to the east (Morland Road and Howard Cornish Road), south (Packhorse Lane) and north west (Tower Close). Marcham C of E primary school is located adjacent to the site on its north east corner. The existing site comprises of a football pitch, cricket pitch, a children's day nursery (in a

portakabin) and the Marcham Sport, Scouts and Social club building, along with two garages used for storage. A public footpath (ref: 293/10) runs along the south boundary.

- 1.4 The proposed community hub site, on the northern edge of the village, measures 4.21 hectares and is currently undeveloped agricultural land owned by a local farmer. It is proposed to be accessed via Hyde Copse to the south, with access onto Howard Cornish Road, across a small piece of land in the Vale's ownership. The site is surrounded by further agricultural land to the west, north and east. To the south west lies the residential development of Longfields.
- 1.5 The replacement community hub and playing pitches is reliant on the residential scheme gaining permission as the residential element of the application will fund the delivery of the community hub.
- 1.6 The application comes to committee because the application is a departure from the development plan and a high number of objections as well as a number of letters in support have been received.

## 2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 There are two elements to the proposal. The first is to build 51 dwellings, associated infrastructure and landscaping on approximately half of the land at Anson Field (removing the existing community building and portakabin) whilst retaining the west half (with the existing children's play area) as public open space. The layout provides an entry road into the site at the north east corner off Morland Road with a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings accessed off this road and a number of cul-de-sacs / courtyard spaces. The proposal has a relatively dense mix at its centre around a 'village square' with lower density housing fronting the public open space to the west. 20 affordable dwellings are proposed across the site.
  - 2.2 The second element is to provide a replacement community hub on land to the north of Hyde Copse, comprising a community building, a cricket pitch, a football pitch and a flood lit MUGA, associated landscaping and parking, maintenance sheds and a new road with access onto Howard Cornish Road.
  - 2.3 A planning supporting statement, design and access statement, a statement of community involvement, a sustainability statement, transport statements, ecology, tree reports and landscape statements, flood risk assessments, archaeological reports and draft S106 Heads of Terms have all been submitted in support of the application and are available to view on the council's website.
  - 2.4 The proposal has been amended to take account of comments made by officers, statutory consultees and local residents. A copy of the respective site layout plans for the residential scheme and the community building and visual representations of the proposal are **attached** at appendix 1.
- ## 3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS
- 3.1 Marcham Parish Council: no strong views. A copy of their comments is **attached** at appendix 2.
  - 3.2 Councillor Hanna: objection. Her full comments are **attached** at appendix 3.
  - 3.3 County Engineer: no objection, subject to conditions and financial contributions for public transport enhancements. Final comments awaited on amended plans. An update will be given at the meeting.

- 3.4 Drainage Engineer: no objection.
- 3.5 Thames Water: “Following an initial investigation, TW has identified an inability of the existing waste water infrastructure to accommodate the needs of the application. Should the authority look to approve the application a Grampian style condition should be imposed stating “development shall not commence until a drainage strategy detailing any on / off site drainage works has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in consultation with the sewerage undertaker. No discharge of foul or surface water from the site shall be accepted into the public system until the drainage works referred to in the strategy have been completed.”
- 3.6 Environment Agency: no objection.
- 3.7 English Sports Council: objection to original scheme. No objection to amended plans subject to conditions.
- 3.8 County Archaeologist: no objection, subject to conditions. His detailed comments are **attached** at appendix 4.
- 3.9 County Funding Officer: contributions for education, libraries, waste management, county museum resource centre, social and health care are required.
- 3.10 Crime Prevention Design Advisor: no objection “I would encourage the developer to apply for and achieve the secured by design award.”
- 3.11 Architects Panel: original plans “This appears to be a well crafted scheme. Considerable effort has been expended on the detailing of the housing. The layout is generally well thought out and the panel are satisfied that in design terms the scheme is acceptable. The sports pavillion design is appropriate for its setting; layout is well thought out. Materials appropriate.” Amended plans: “More recent changes seem to be an improvement generally, all other previous comments are supported.”
- 3.12 Conservation Officer: “There are no significant changes to the scheme as far as listed building and conservation matters are concerned. The layout and design will mean that the scheme will fit comfortably in this village setting - so long as care is taken with the design of the detailed elements, the materials and the hard landscaping.”
- 3.13 Countryside Officer: no objection to residential site on ecological grounds. Final comments awaited for community hub site. An update will be given at the meeting.
- 3.14 Arboricultural Officer: no objection to residential site. “I reluctantly accept the concept of the road through the woodland. It is important to limit its effects as much as possible. It should be able to create the opening by only removing one of the trees in the line of roadside limes. More detail is needed about how many trees are to be removed to open up space for the road and how the woodland could be managed in the future.”
- 3.15 Landscape Officer: holding objection to original plans. No objection to amended plans, subject to conditions. “There are a number of items that need addressing, but these can be covered by condition. These include details of the proposed construction of the access road to the community hub and the extent of vegetation to be removed; the incorporation of the ecological recommendations into the landscape strategy plan, such as the creation of a woodland edge on the north side of Hyde Copse and more variety in the proposed species.”

- 3.16 Housing Services: holding objection to original plans. No objection to amended plans.
- 3.17 Environmental Health: no objection.
- 3.18 Waste Management Team: no objection.
- 3.19 37 letters of support have been received.
- 3.20 34 letters of objection have been received to the original plans raising the following issues:
- Loss of open space and well used facilities in centre of village.
  - Facilities should be rebuilt in the current location that is central to Marcham residents, not at one side of the village.
  - The proposal should be swapped around with housing on the outskirts and the new hall on the existing Anson field.
  - If more housing is required in Marcham, it should be a smaller development on the periphery of the village.
  - Marcham is not a sustainable location for a development of this size.
  - Traffic generation, congestion and highway safety issues.
  - Inadequate vehicle access point, close to primary school.
  - Insufficient on site parking will lead to on street parking within the site and on surrounding roads.
  - Inadequate road network in locality.
  - Inadequate capacity at primary school to meet needs of new development.
  - Overdevelopment.
  - Scheme is too high density and number of houses is excessive in relation to the village.
  - Design out of keeping with surrounding dwellings.
  - Affordable housing is not visually indistinguishable from private housing or evenly scattered through the site as required by policy.
  - Impacts on residential amenity (overlooking, overshadowing, noise and general disturbance during construction and after, and light pollution).
  - Lack of capacity in existing public sewer.
  - Proposed drainage scheme appears impractical.
  - Loss of woodland to create access to community hub.
  - The community hub site has poor surface water drainage.
  - The community hub site will make it easier for additional development to be permitted to the north of the village.
- 3.21 Four letters of comment have been received.
- 3.22 A further 12 letters of objection have been received in response to the amended plans raising additional concerns on the proposed surface finish of the community hub access road, residential amenity issues, design and density, traffic generation and requesting designation of the Anson Field as a Local Green Space.
- 3.23 Marcham Community Group: support. Their comments are **attached** at appendix 5.
- 3.24 Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association: support. “OPFA is a charity that works with town and parish councils and voluntary groups across Oxfordshire to protect and improve community outdoor recreation and play facilities. OPFA understands that this development will include much needed sporting facilities such as cricket and football pitches and a multi-use games area. We therefore endorse this application.”

3.25 Abingdon Area Archaeological and Historical Society: holding objection. Their comments are **attached** at appendix 6.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P11/V2912/SCO](#) – EIS not required (22/12/2011)

Screening Opinion in respect of Environmental Impact Assessment for Land at Anson Field, Morland road, Marcham.

[P08/V7029](#) - Approved (18/12/2008)

Continued siting of a portable building for use as a childrens nursery (formerly used as a youth and out-of-school childrens club) and an oil tank for heating

[P02/V1779](#) - Approved (17/03/2003)

Variation of condition 2 on Planning Permission MAR/3036/7 to allow for extended hours of use. Siting of oil tank.

[P02/V0308](#) - Approved (13/05/2002)

Siting of a portable building for use as a Youth Club.

[P99/V0548](#) - Other Outcome (20/02/2002)

Siting of a Portable Building for use as a Youth Club.

[P97/V0158](#) - Approved (22/09/1997)

Erection of 4 poles along southern boundary to take flood lights.

[P94/V0582](#) - Approved (24/10/1994)

Extension of Sports, Scouts and Social club to enlarge existing facilities.

[P86/V0470](#) - Approved (02/06/1986)

Extension to existing pavilion to form head quarters for village cub pack.

[P85/V0397](#) - Approved (19/09/1985)

Erection of a building for storage of sports equipment and tools and garaging of mini-tractor and gang mowers.

[P77/V0333](#) - Approved (26/09/1977)

Erection of a sports pavilion and changing rooms. (Site area approx 1.2 hectares).

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 *Vale of White Horse Local Plan*

Policy GS2 states that outside the built up areas of existing settlements, new building will not be permitted unless it is on land identified for development in the local plan or is in accordance with other specific policies in the local plan.

5.2 Policy H11 enables new housing development (up to fifteen dwellings) within the built-up area of Marcham, provided the scale, layout, mass and design of the dwellings would not harm the character of the area and it does not involve the loss of facilities important to the local community. In addition, policy H17 seeks affordable housing at a 40% requirement on sites which are capable of accommodating five or more dwellings.

5.3 Policy CF2 confirms that new community facilities will be permitted provided the proposal conforms with the general policies of the plan, maximises as far as possible access for all, is within the built up area of a settlement, and will not have an adverse effect on the character or setting of the existing building or its surroundings or significantly alter the character and scale of the existing activity so as to cause harm to

the local environment.

- 5.4 Policy NE9 states that development in the lowland vale will not be permitted if it would have an adverse effect on the landscape.
- 5.5 Policy HE10 states that development will not be permitted if it would cause damage to the site or setting or nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not. Policy HE11, confirms development should be designed to achieve preservation in situ and where this is not possible a programme of archaeological investigation is agreed and implemented.
- 5.6 Policy L1 states that development on outdoor playing space will only be permitted if a deficiency in such space will not be created. Similarly policy L7 confirms development which would result in the loss of existing local leisure facilities will not be permitted unless alternative provision in terms of size, quality and accessibility will be made available prior to the commencement of the proposed development. Policy L8 enables small scale developments on the edge of settlements provided they meet an identified need, do not require buildings of a type or scale which would be harmful to the character of the surrounding area and do not have a detrimental effect on the ecology of the area.
- 5.7 Policies DC1, DC3, DC4, DC5, DC6, DC7, DC8, DC9, DC13, DC14 and DC20 (quality of new development) are relevant and seek to ensure that all new development is of a high standard of design / landscaping; deters crime, does not cause harm to the amenity of neighbours; suitable social and physical infrastructure exists for the development or can be provided; the development is acceptable in terms of highway safety; and it will not result in adverse surface water run off or be at risk of flooding.
- 5.8 *National Planning Policy Framework*  
The National Planning Policy Framework confirms there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play are a set of 12 core planning principles, the following of which are directly relevant to this application: i. Be genuinely plan led, ii. Not simply be about scrutiny, but be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives, iii. Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, iv. Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, and iv. Take account of and support local strategies to improve health, wealth, and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.
- 5.9 In delivering sustainable development, the framework sets out a variety of detailed guidance and the following sections are directly relevant to this application: i. Supporting a prosperous rural economy – promoting the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, ii. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes – considering housing applications in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, iii. Requiring good design – achieving high quality and inclusive design to contribute positively to making places better for people, iv. Promoting healthy communities – planning positively for the provision and use of community facilities and ensuring established facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community, v. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment – minimising impacts on biodiversity and v. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment – recognising heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance with great weight being given to their conservation and

the positive contribution they make to sustainable communities.

- 5.10 The council's adopted residential design guide, sustainable design and construction guide, affordable housing guidance and its open space, sport and recreation strategy is also relevant.

## 6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### *Principle of development*

- 6.1 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Within this context housing applications should be granted where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, unless any adverse impacts would so significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development when assessed against the policies in the NPPF as a whole.
- 6.2 It is clear the application is contrary to local plan policies GS2, H11 and CF2. However, whilst the council does not have a five year housing land supply, policies GS2 and H11 are inconsistent with the framework. The proposed development, therefore, needs to be considered on its site specific merits and whether it constitutes a 'sustainable' form of development as defined in the NPPF.
- 6.3 Marcham is one of the larger villages within the district and scores within the top 20 in the village hierarchy. The location of the residential site is sustainable as it is central to the main village core and is within close proximity to the range of services and facilities available within the village. In addition, the NPPF puts strong emphasis on housing being used to further enhance rural vitality. For these reasons, the principle of the proposal is considered to be acceptable. The main issue, therefore, is whether the loss of leisure facilities at the Anson Field and their replacement at Hyde Copse is acceptable or not.
- 6.4 The NPPF states that existing open space, sports and recreational buildings and land, including playing fields, should not be built on unless: an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown the open space, buildings or land to be surplus to requirements; or the loss resulting from the proposed development would be replaced by equivalent or better provision in terms of quantity and quality in a suitable location; or the development is for alternative sports and recreational provision, the needs for which clearly outweigh the loss. Policy L1 of the local plan is considered to be consistent in this regard.
- 6.5 The application proposes the full replacement of the pitches / facilities to be lost at Anson Field, along with a multi-use games area (MUGA). In your officers' opinion the proposal complies with the framework in that new facilities would be of a better quality. Whilst the site at Hyde Copse is clearly further away from the core of the village, overall there is an increase in the gross area of leisure/amenity provision and community facilities. Furthermore, in terms of accessibility, the council's adopted 'open space, sport and recreation strategy' suggests a walking distance threshold for outdoor sports facilities of 15 minutes or about 900 metres. The majority of the village is considered to be within these parameters for the new facilities proposed at Hyde Copse. The location of the new facilities, therefore, is considered to be acceptable.
- ### *Design and Appearance*
- 6.6 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and the framework is explicit in seeking a high quality outcome. The design and layout of the proposed development are considered acceptable in their context. The density of the residential element is approximately 34 dwellings per hectare. Adequate private and public outdoor space is

provided along with sufficient levels of parking. As such it is not considered to be an overdevelopment of the site. The architects panel commented that “the layout is generally well thought out and the panel are satisfied that in design terms the scheme is acceptable and that “considerable effort has been expended on the detailing of the housing”. Overall officers are content the proposal would result in a high quality scheme as sought by national policy.

*Highways, access and parking*

- 6.7 The residential site will be accessed via the existing access point off Morland Road. The community hub will be accessed directly off Howard Cornish Road (with a tarmac surface rather than a gravel finish as stated on the drawings). The county highways team has assessed both locations and raises no objections on highway safety grounds. They also raise no objection to traffic generation arising from each site and consider the respective levels of on site parking to be satisfactory. Pedestrian access to the community hub site and routes to the retained public open space within the residential site are also satisfactory. Issues of traffic generation, access and parking are, therefore, considered to be acceptable.

*Affordable housing*

- 6.8 The application proposes 40% affordable housing in the form of 20 units. The council's housing officer has assessed the mix and tenure and the location of the units within the site and considers the proposal to be acceptable. The parish council has requested the affordable housing is treated as an exception site with restrictions to people with local connections only. In response, the site does not meet the criteria for an exception site under policy H18 and therefore will be available to meet the district wide needs of the Vale.

*Impact on neighbours / residential amenity*

- 6.9 The layout of the proposed residential development would not have any harmful impact on residential amenity of adjacent houses in terms of overshadowing, light pollution, over-dominance or loss of privacy. Amenity standards within the council's residential design guide have been observed, and the plans have been amended to reduce the impact on existing adjoining properties. The proposed layout is considered to deter crime and provide adequate levels of surveillance over public areas and recycle bin storage and collection points throughout the site are acceptable. Landscape conditions will also ensure public areas and the footpath are protected from vehicle traffic through the use of suitable boundary treatments. Officers consider the proposal is thus acceptable in amenity terms.

*Social Infrastructure*

- 6.10 Concern has been expressed that current social and physical infrastructure within the village could not cope with the increase in residents from this proposal. The county funding officer has requested contributions to offset the impact from the development and the applicant has agreed to pay these. The applicant has also confirmed their intention to provide two new classrooms at the village primary school to offset the impact of the development on local social infrastructure, should permission be granted. Officers consider the specific provision of two classrooms to increase the capacity of the primary school is welcome and goes some way to address current capacity issues.

*Heritage Assets*

- 6.11 The framework states that account should be taken of the desirability to sustain and enhance heritage assets. Whilst the proposal has no impact on the village conservation area or listed buildings, archaeological remains have been found within the Anson Field site. These have been interpreted as Bronze Age barrows that appear to form part of a larger barrow cemetery. English Heritage has received an application



to schedule these remains in the national interest. They are aiming to respond with their initial conclusions shortly and an update will be provided at the meeting. The county archaeologist has indicated that if English Heritage decides that the site does not justify designation that permission should be granted subject to conditions (see appendix 4) to address the significance of the heritage assets. Consequently the proposal would be recommended for refusal should English Heritage schedule the site.

*Drainage and flooding issues*

- 6.12 The site is considered large enough to deal with surface water without causing surface water runoff to the highway or onto neighbouring properties and can be controlled through a planning condition. In respect of foul drainage, the new dwellings and community hub will be connected to the main sewer, which is acceptable in principle and the drainage engineer has raised no objection. Thames Water has identified a capacity issue with the existing system and the applicants are in continuing discussions with them on the appropriate drainage strategy to overcome the technical / engineering issues with the existing system.

*Local Green Space*

- 6.13 Objectors have raised the prospect of designating the Anson Field site as a Local Green Space in accordance with paragraphs 76 and 77 of the Framework. The only way to designate the site under the provisions of the framework would be through a local or neighbourhood plan. No plan currently exists for Marcham, and thus very little weight can be given to this issue.

**7.0 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 It is clear the proposal does not accord with the development plan and is a departure application. However, the proposal needs to be considered in the light of the current shortfall in the council's five year housing land supply which should be afforded significant weight. The proposal would result in the significant provision of new community facilities and the Anson Field site is considered to be suitable for residential development as an exception to policy which can be delivered quickly to address the current housing shortfall. The proposal will not be harmful to heritage assets, the character of the area, residential amenity or highway safety and, therefore, complies with the national planning policy framework.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 **It is recommended that authority to grant planning permission is delegated to the Head of Planning in consultation with the committee chairman, vice-chairman and local member subject to:-**

**1: confirmation from English Heritage that the site is not to be scheduled as an ancient monument.**

**2: confirmation from county highways officer and countryside officer that revised access drive and ecological impacts at Hyde Copse are acceptable.**

**3: the completion of S106 obligations to secure affordable housing, the new school classrooms, the new community centre and financial contributions for local services with a deadline of 6 months in which to complete the S106 agreements.**

**4: conditions to include implementation within 12 months, external materials, boundary treatments, landscaping, tree protection measures, ecology, construction details, slab levels, drainage, lighting, access and parking.**

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