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**EAST CHALLOW PARISH COUNCIL**

Clerk to East Challow Parish Council  
27 Hedge Hill Road  
East Challow  
Wantage OX12 9SD

2nd July 2012

Planning  
Vale of White Horse District Council  
Abbey House  
Abbey Close  
Abingdon OX14 3JE

For the attention of Mr David Rothery

Dear Sirs,

Planning Application Ref. P12/V1261/FUL and P12/V1273/LB: Nalder Estate

The above planning applications were considered by East Challow Parish Council at a special meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2012. The Parish Council objects to the proposals in view of the following principle concerns:

- **Density of housing:** the proposed number of new dwellings is considered too high for a village of the size of East Challow and greatly exceeds the maximum of 15 specified in the Local Plan 2006, Policy H11 for a 'large village' such as East Challow.
- **Traffic and parking considerations:** although the proposed site entrance has been slightly re-aligned there remains major concern over highway safety in view of the difficult sightlines when joining the A417. It was noted that even with the site's existing usage road accidents have occurred on a number of occasions on this somewhat difficult bend. If the applications are approved it is hoped that the Highways department will ensure that the most rigorous traffic calming measures are applied and the opportunity taken where possible to create off-road parking areas to ease the current problems on the A417. A pedestrian crossing at a suitable location is also seen as a requirement.
- **Housing allocation:** the Council considers that preference should be given to local people on the social housing register when allocating dwellings.
- **Loss of employment opportunities:** Council regrets the loss of employment opportunity by the closure of the site and considers that measures should be taken to

guarantee that the Wharf building is refurbished to provide employment accommodation.

Yours faithfully,

Kathy Warden (Ms)  
Clerk to East Challow Parish Council

**Councillor Andrew Crawford**

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District Councillor for Greendown Ward

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Vale of White Horse District Council  
Attn David Rothery  
Planning Department  
Abbey House,  
Abingdon,  
Oxon

8th July 2012

Dear Sirs,

**Development of Nalder Estate at East Challow**

In response to the above mentioned planning application I should like to comment as follows.

**Change of Use**

It is regrettable that we may be losing yet another employment site in the local area. As part of the assessment of the planning application I would ask that Officers ascertain not only that all has been reasonably done by the current owners to secure commercial tenants for the site but also that the site as a whole has been marketed on the basis of its extant use class.

On the issue of current use officers should be aware that the majority of the Northern part of the site is former agricultural land which I believe was only informally absorbed into the site and used for leisure purposes. It is not clear to me that it can be validly described as part of the developable part of the site.

Given the above I also wonder if an argument can be made for only a partial change of use so that a number of smaller commercial units are retained but with some housing.

**Overall View of Housing Development**

Subject to the above and to those specific issues raised below the proposed development is to my mind acceptable. Doubtless there has been pre-application advice and negotiation with the developers by Planning Officers and I am therefore working on the assumption that Officers are minded to approve the scheme of the development of what is a brownfield industrial site in a difficult location and therefore in terms of national planning policy a likely candidate for redevelopment.

**Design, Layout and Facilities**

Overall I find the design and layout to be attractive. It does not suffer from overly dense or in general overly tall dwellings and, subject to materials being a reserved matter for specific approval prior to construction, is architecturally attractive and suited to its location. However:-

- I do not approve of the siting of all the affordable housing in one corner of the development. During consultation, residents had been led to believe that affordable housing would be spread throughout the site which is, I believe, the preferred method.
- The plans show a children's play area on the green area towards the north of the site. This is essential, should be a condition of the approval and should be available to all residents of East Challow (especially as those residents close to the site with children currently have difficulty accessing the village's current play area.)

- It is regrettable that the private sector houses do not include any dwellings of less than 3 bedrooms. In the current market the number of smaller dwellings being built in the area is very limited which makes difficult for those wishing to get a home of their own.
- We need to ensure that adequate screening is provided to ensure neighboring properties are not impacted. These are in particular Canal Farm House, Canal Bridge Farm, The Old Appleyard, Labbet House and Pine Lodge. In respect of the latter the Officers need to take into account extant planning permissions even though construction may have not yet taken place. In this respect also it may be beneficial to retain the bund or part of it which runs to the East of the footpath at the rear of the latter 3 properties.
- It is not clear to me what treatment is to be effected of the trees which run along the north side of Canal Lane. Whilst they provide good screening of the site and would not wish to see them removed I understand can create problems for larger vehicles accessing the properties further along this road especially waste collection vehicles. I would appreciate it if Officers could consult with their colleagues in Environmental Services in this regard. Reducing the crowns of some of them might resolve these problems.

### **Affordable Housing**

If feasible I would request that local residents be given priority for these units and also consideration be given to existing local Housing Association residents who may wish to remain in the village but down size to a smaller home.

### **Traffic**

The major concern of residents is traffic issues and I would urge that full consultations be held with OCC Highways Department covering all aspects of speed, road and pedestrian safety I imagine the developers will argue that this new development will not generate more vehicle movements than the site could with its existing permitted usage. Notwithstanding this we have an opportunity to radically improve the problematical traffic issues in the village which I understand the developers are happy to meet even though it may not be wholly required under Planning gain rules.

Clearly site access has been improved slightly by moving the access road but I remain very concerned that this stretch of road where there have been very many (non-life threatening) accidents will continue to be a threat to road safety.

The site will generate significant additional pedestrian movement especially parents taking their children to the primary school which is located at the other side of the village as well as accessing all the other facilities of the village – pubs, allotments, football field, tennis courts etc. Pedestrian safety will be very significantly improved by a crossing over the A417. Whilst this may not be achievable close to the site I understand the developers have agreed after urging to fund a crossing further up the village and this needs to be a fundamental prerequisite of the application. Without it I should like to formally object to this application.

Other road safety measures should also be adopted which have been under discussion for many years but not implemented. These may include traffic calming/slowing at both ends of the built up area, the installation of mirrors for some properties along the A417.

### **The Wharf Building**

I welcome the retention for employment use and the improvements which are envisaged. However I am concerned that it is possible that the building will not be renovated for use and given the loss of other employment on this site there should be a condition which unconditionally ensures that the Wharf Building is brought back in to employment use rather than to be allowed to remain in its current state.

The current 3 storey affordable block is very close to this listed building and I am concerned that it does not reflect the design and materials present in the wharf building either in terms of design or materials.

### **Planning Gain**

Clearly this development will add significant burdens upon the facilities of the village and as a minimum I would expect the Vale to execute Section 106 agreements covering the following.

- Children's play area as above but if the area is to be passed to local authority control a commuted sum to pay for its ongoing upkeep.
- A significant sum for the village hall to account for the growth in the population of the village.
- Traffic measures as described above
- The school should receive additional funding to acknowledge the likely growth in its student roll. In particular there is a requirement for investment in early years/nursery provision in East Challow and I should like it to be earmarked for this rather than going into the County pot and not being spent locally which is often the concern in developments of this type.
- The site abuts directly the historic and safeguarded route of the Wilts & Berks Canal. In this regard there should be a financial contribution to the Trust.
- Leisure facilities. There is likely to be increased demand upon the village's leisure facilities, green space, football pitch and tennis/netball court etc. A sum towards these should also be required.
- The development is likely to lead to additional pedestrian movement along Canal Lane the access to which off the A417 is not wholly safe. Consideration should be given to improving that part of Canal Lane or perhaps that area of the Village Hall overflow car park to improve access and safety at this point.

### **Further Development**

Under the Interim Housing Supply Policy/Statement East Challow was deemed to be short of housing by approximately 25 dwellings. If this application is passed there needs to be an amendment to the IHSP/S to the effect that this shortfall has been met and that no further development is warranted on those 2 local sites put forward for screening.

### **Development Phase**

If this application is approved careful consideration and appropriate conditions should be laid down to ensure safe access to the site for works traffic which causes a minimum of disruption to local residents and which limits the hours of work to ensure residents are not significantly disturbed.

### **Reserved Matters**

In the event that this application is approved under delegated authority I would ask that I be a consultee on all matters to be finalised.

yours sincerely,

Cllr Andrew Crawford

Dear Resident,

The attached is a DRAFT response from me to the Planning Department at the Vale in respect of the Nalder Estate proposals. I am circulating it in draft to those most affected by the development so that any additional observations etc can be fed back to me prior to it being sent off in final version. This should not be in place of any responses you may wish to make directly yourselves but in addition to them. I would urge you to comment on the Vale Planning website or in writing by the published deadline.

Please let me have your views and comments as soon as possible preferably by e-mail to my address at the head of the letter overleaf.

With best regards

Andrew Crawford