

APPLICATION NO.	P13/V0692/FUL
APPLICATION TYPE	FULL APPLICATION
REGISTERED	11.4.2013
PARISH	STEVENTON
WARD MEMBER(S)	Bill Jones Michael Murray
APPLICANT	Mr G J Gregory
SITE	Land at Causeway Farm The Causeway Steventon Abingdon, OX13 6SQ
PROPOSAL	Proposed Residential Development. 31 Houses (19 Open Market Houses & 12 Affordable) & Public Open Space
AMENDMENTS	31 May 2013
GRID REFERENCE	446603/191848
OFFICER	Stuart Walker

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application seeks full planning permission for a residential development of 31 dwellings.
- 1.2 The 1.83 ha site lies on the western edge of the village to the rear of properties on the Causeway and Stonebridge Road. It is relatively flat and comprises a grassed field enclosed by hedgerows with trees along the northwest and southeast boundaries and a farm yard, currently used for agricultural machinery and farm feed storage. Access is proposed from two points, via School Close to the north east and the Causeway to the southeast, alongside the primary school. The whole of the site lies within the lowland vale landscape.
- 1.3 The application comes to committee because the application is a departure from the development plan and a number of objections have been received along with an objection from Steventon Parish Council.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The proposal is a major development submitted to help address the council's current five year housing land deficit.
- 2.2 The scheme comprises 31 dwellings with a mix of two, three, four and five bedroom units, 40% of which will be affordable. The scheme has been developed with reference to the principles of the council's residential design guide and the proposed housing has been designed in a traditional style to reflect local vernacular found in the village. The dwellings are predominantly two storeys arranged around two cul-de-sacs with a pedestrian link at a density of 21 dwellings per hectare. 11 houses will be accessed off the Causeway and 20 will be accessed via School Close. Public open space is provided on site in two areas, one large area to the north and a smaller area to the south.

- 2.3 Steventon village has a range of facilities, including a school, village hall and shops and is classified as a large village in the local plan. The parish has approximately 648 households and an estimated population of 1485 residents. This proposal would result in an estimated additional 75 residents (based upon the district-wide average household figure of 2.409), which represents approximately a 5.05% increase in the parish population. When added to the planning application for up to 50 dwellings on land off Barnett Road (ref P13/V0094/O), this would result in a total increase in population of approximately 13.1%.
- 2.4 The following documents have been submitted in support of the application and are available to view on the council's website:
- Planning statement
 - Design and access statement
 - Transport statement
 - Statement of community involvement
 - Flood risk assessment and drainage strategy
 - Tree survey
 - Ecology assessment
 - Utilities report
 - Archaeological investigation report
 - Code for sustainable homes strategy
- 2.5 The applicants have been in discussion with council officers and others to secure on-site facilities such as public open space and affordable housing and to agree levels of financial contribution towards off-site services to mitigate the impact this proposal will have on those services through the increase in population. The following contributions have been requested:

Vale

- Waste bin provision – £5,270
- Art – £9,300
- Street naming – £670
- Recreation – £59,934

County

- Transport (Science Vale UK) – £84,847
- Transport (new bus stops on Hanney Road) – £10,000
- Transport (new bus shelter on the Green) – £5,000
- Education (towards expansion of the village primary school) – £115,820
- Education (Special Educational Needs Schools) – £6,131
- Property (Libraries, waste management, museum resource centre, social / health care) – £18,744

Other contributions

- Police (bicycles) – £1,600
- Police (remote IT facilities) – £8,500
- Primary Care Trust – £5,216

2.6 A site location plan and extracts from the application plans are **attached** at appendix 1. The plans have been amended to take account of officer comments in relation to retention of a tree on plot 6, omitting the proposed footway works on the historic causeway and on site parking.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Steventon Parish Council** – objection. A copy of the parish council's comments is **attached** at appendix 2.

3.2 **Local residents** – A total of 27 representations of objection have been received from local residents. The objections are made on the following grounds:

- Increased traffic leading to safety issues and additional road congestion, particularly around school drop off / pick up times.
- Inadequate access and local highway network
- Inadequate on site parking
- Site subject to flooding / inadequate drainage
- Increased pressure on local infrastructure
- Blighting future school development onto the application site
- Impact on village character and historic causeway
- Design
- Cumulative impact on the village
- Amenity impacts – overlooking, loss of views, loss of parking in school close, noise and disturbance from traffic generation and risk of surface water runoff.
- Wildlife
- Contaminated land risk
- Precedent

3.3 **Councillor Mike Murray** – objection. His response is **attached** at appendix 3.

3.4 **County Highways** – no objection, subject to conditions and financial contributions.

3.5 **Landscape Architect** – no objection in respect of impact on the lowland vale, concern over management of boundary planting and potential conflict of drainage runs with planting on the open space areas.

3.6 **Arboriculturalist** – no objection, subject to condition on future management of hedgerows.

3.7 **Countryside Officer** – no objection.

3.8 **Environment Agency** – no objection.

3.9 **Drainage Engineer** – no objections to the drainage proposals subject to conditions.

3.1 **Thames Water** – no objection.

3.1 **Environmental Health** – comments awaited. An update will be given at the
1 meeting.

3.1 **Design and Conservation Officer** – no objection.
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3.1 **County Archaeologist** – no objection, subject to conditions to ensure
3 archaeological recording is undertaken prior to development.

3.1 **Housing Services** – no objection, the affordable housing is being provided in
4 accordance with the council's policies.

3.1 **Waste Management Team** – Requires storage areas for wheeled bins per plot
5 to be provided and financial contribution for supply of bins.

3.1 **Lesiure Services** – Maintenance of open space areas should be clarified and
6 secured either by adoption by the parish council or through a management
company. Financial contributions required for off site sports provision.

3.1 **Thames Valley Police** – No objection subject to proposal achieving 'secured by
7 design' accreditation. Financial contributions required towards the provision of
infrastructure.

3.1 **County Funding Officer** – Financial contributions required.
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3.1 **Young People's Co-ordinator** – no objection.
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4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P12/V2076/FUL](#) - Withdrawn (09/01/2013)

Proposed residential development, comprising 32 houses (16 open market
houses & 16 affordable) and public open space.

[P96/V0270](#) - Refused (07/05/1996)

Demolition of farm buildings. Extension to school playing fields. Construction of
a shared access way to serve existing dwellings and 15 new three and four
bedroom houses with garages.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 **Vale of White Horse Local Plan** policies:

GS1 - Developments in Existing Settlements

GS2 - Development in the Countryside

DC1 - Design

DC4 - Public Art

DC5 - Access

DC6 - Landscaping

DC7 - Waste Collection and Recycling

DC8 - The Provision of Infrastructure and Services

DC9 - The Impact of Development on Neighbouring Uses

DC10 - The Effect of Neighbouring or Previous Uses on New Development

H11 - Development in the Larger Villages

- H13 - Development Elsewhere
- H16 - Size of Dwelling and Lifetime Homes
- H17 - Affordable Housing
- H23 - Open Space in New Housing Development
- HE1 - Preservation and Enhancement: Implications for Development
- HE4 - Development within setting of listed building
- NE9 - The Lowland Vale

5.2 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

- Residential Design Guide – December 2009
- Sustainable Design and Construction – December 2009
- Open space, Sport and Recreation Future Provision – July 2008
- Affordable Housing – July 2006
- Planning and Public Art – July 2006

5.3 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – March 2012

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. Take full account of flood risk.
- v. Conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- vi. 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.

5.4 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 – housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered to be up to date if a five year supply of deliverable sites cannot be demonstrated.
- 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 along with access to high quality open spaces.
- v. Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding – managing risks through suitable adaptation measures to ensure flood risk is not

- increased elsewhere.
- vi. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment – minimising impacts on biodiversity through adequate mitigation.
 - vii. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment – recognising heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.

6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

National advice

- 6.1 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The NPPF is clear that councils should grant planning permission where the development plan is absent, silent or the relevant policies are out of date. This is unless any adverse impacts would so significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed development when assessed against the policies of the NPPF as a whole (Para 14 refers).
- 6.2 The current lack of a five-year supply of housing sites in the district is due to the lack of delivery of new housing by developers, rather than an under-supply of allocated housing land. This lack of delivery is primarily due to delays in the progress of some major allocations due to the economic downturn and bringing forward the council's new local plan. This lack of a five-year housing land supply requires some flexibility in line with the NPPF when assessing applications that do not accord with local plan policy.
- 6.3 This approach is necessary for a limited time, and is aimed at identifying sites suitable to address the housing shortfall whilst meeting the relevant sustainability and design criteria of the NPPF.
- 6.4 It is clear this application is contrary to local plan policies GS2 and H11. However, whilst the council does not have a five-year housing land supply, these two policies are inconsistent with the NPPF. Therefore, the council must assess the proposed application on its site-specific merits and whether, under the NPPF, it is a sustainable form of development.
- 6.5 This assessment needs to balance the desire of the council to assess the scheme through a strategic sites allocation process against the NPPF tests, which primarily relate to location, design, landscape impact, drainage, and highway safety.

Use of land

- 6.6 Paragraph 111 of the NPPF states, "*planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.*" The site is presently in agricultural use, so it is not brown field land. This green field site lies in the open countryside, albeit on the edge of Steventon. Thus, the development of the site for housing is contrary to Policy H11. However, as indicated above, this is not a restricting factor given the shortfall in housing land.

Sustainability credentials

- 6.7 Steventon 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 considered

to be reasonably close 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 and the proposal would help to ensure the long term provision of existing facilities. Officers consider the proposed site is a sustainable location for housing development.

Cumulative impact considerations

- 6.8 Local concern over the amount of new housing within the village is acknowledged. However, officers consider this addition to the population of the village is not large enough to warrant refusal on such grounds when weighed against the need to address the housing land supply shortfall and the sustainability credentials of the village.
- 6.9 Using the latest population figures available to the council, this development will increase the population of Steventon by approximately 75 people. This represents a 5.05% increase in the population of the village, given the latest census data. The number of dwellings would result in an increase of 4.7% in the existing parish housing stock. Provided suitable contributions are secured for on-site and off-site services and infrastructure to offset the impact of the development, the proposal is considered capable of being accommodated in the locality without detriment.

Access / Highways

- 6.1 The site would be accessed from two locations, the existing access off the Causeway and a new access off School Close. Both access points are considered to be acceptable, together with the amended off-site highway improvements proposed in the locality. There is sufficient off street parking to meet the needs of each dwelling within the site along with turning areas.
- 6.1 Local concern has been expressed that the proposal would cause a highway safety risk to pedestrians and traffic congestion especially due to the level of traffic using the local network around school drop off and pick up times of the day. However, adequate visibility can be achieved to ensure pedestrian and highway safety at both access points. Similarly the loss of on street parking spaces within School Close is acceptable given there are no objections from the County Engineer on traffic generation or highway safety grounds to the overall scheme.

Visual impact / Design

- 6.1 Paragraph 109 of the NPPF says that “*the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment*”. From the wider landscape, the proposed development would be set against the backdrop of the existing built-up area and would not appear prominent in the landscape or out of keeping. Whilst the proposed development would certainly be visible from existing housing adjoining the site, the impact of a proposal on a private view is not a material planning consideration. In terms of treatment of the north west boundary, this can be dealt with by condition to ensure it is retained and managed by one entity.
- 6.1 The NPPF is explicit in seeking a high quality outcome for good design in terms

3 of layout and building form as a key aspect of sustainable development. The proposed layout is considered to be acceptable observing many principles of the council's residential design guide, with active street frontages and good visual linkages. Each dwelling is considered to sit comfortably within its plot and sufficient outdoor amenity space and on-site parking is provided for each. Their design is considered to be high quality, with the use of sympathetic materials, pitched roofs and traditional gables. Overall, the scheme is considered to be visually acceptable and is not an overdevelopment of the site. However, to ensure the quality of the development, conditions relating to materials, boundary treatments, landscaping and tree protection are considered to be necessary.

Impact on the residential amenity of neighbours

6.1 The proposed residential development would not have any harmful impact on
4 residential amenity of adjacent houses in terms of noise and disturbance, overshadowing, over-dominance or loss of privacy. Amenity standards within the council's residential design guide have been observed. Officers consider the proposal is thus acceptable in amenity terms.

Heritage Assets

6.1 The framework states that account should be taken of the desirability to sustain
5 and enhance heritage assets. The proposal has been amended to omit the off site footway works to the Causeway. As a result the scheme now has no adverse impact on the village conservation area or listed buildings. In terms of archaeology, the county archaeologist raises no objection, subject to conditions to ensure archaeological recording is undertaken prior to development.

Drainage and flooding issues

6.1 The site is considered large enough to deal with surface water without causing
6 surface water runoff to the highway or onto neighbouring properties and can be controlled through planning conditions. In respect of foul drainage, the new dwellings will be connected to the main sewer, which is acceptable. The proposal will also have no adverse impact on local services to warrant refusal. The drainage engineer has raised no objection to the proposal, subject to the detailed design being approved (by condition) and is aware of the comments made by the Parish Council, a local resident and Councillor Murray. In response he confirms "that the information submitted with the planning application is sufficient in demonstrating that the proposed SUDS system, subject to detailed design being approved, will be effective and does not increase flood risk to adjacent properties. Infiltration tests were conducted and the results are included in the revised version of the flood risk assessment." Officers therefore see no reason to withhold permission on drainage grounds.

Affordable housing

6.1 The affordable housing requirement has been confirmed by the applicant to be
7 workable as part of the scheme and the council's housing officer has no objection to the proposal. Affordable housing is located in both cul-de-sacs and affordable unit locations within the development are acceptable. This provision will be secured through a legal agreement should the recommendation of approval be agreed.

Social infrastructure

6.1 Concerns have been raised that existing social and physical infrastructure within
8 the village could not cope with the proposed increase in population resulting
from this proposal. However, contributions (as detailed in section 2) can be
secured to offset the impacts arising from the development. The applicant has
agreed to the principle of addressing these needs through contributions which
can be secured through a section 106 legal agreement. In respect of the
school's potential future plans for expansion and their desire to use the
applicant's site, officers consider little weight can be given to this issue when
balanced against other material considerations detailed in this report. The
school has not secured the site for such purposes and a refusal on such a basis
would not be defensible on appeal.

6.1 *Precedent*

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6.2 With regard to precedent, whilst this can be material where other sites suitable
0 for similar development can be identified in the locality, members will be aware
that each proposal must be considered on its own merits. Officers consider,
therefore, that the issue of precedent is not such as to warrant refusal of this
application.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

7.1 This proposal does not accord with the development plan and has been
publicised as a departure. However, in the light of the current shortfall in the
council's five year housing land supply, the proposal's location adjoining an
existing larger village with close availability of services and facilities should be
afforded appropriate weight. As the proposal would result in a sustainable
development in terms of its relationship and proximity to local facilities and
services, the principle of the proposal is considered to accord with the NPPF.

7.2 In site specific terms, the proposal is not considered to be harmful to the
landscape character of the area, the residential amenity of nearby properties,
any local heritage assets, highway safety or flood risk and, therefore, given the
current housing land shortfall, it complies with the NPPF.

7.3 In addition, the scheme can be delivered within one year, making a measurable
contribution to help address the current housing land shortfall. A condition
requiring the commencement of development within one year of the date of the
grant of planning permission is recommended and is acceptable to the
applicant.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **It is recommended that the decision to grant planning permission be
delegated to head of planning in consultation with the chairman and vice-
chairman subject to:**

1. Completion within the agreed PPA period of section 106 agreements for on-
site affordable housing provision, on site open space provision, contributions
towards off-site facilities and services including highways works, education
improvements, waste management and collection, street names signs, public

art, library and museum service, social and health care, police equipment, local and area hub recreational and community facility improvements.

2. The following conditions, including the requirement for the commencement of development within 12 months from the date of the issue of planning permission to help address the immediate housing land shortfall:

- 1 : Time limit
- 2 : Approved plans
- 3 : MC2 - Materials (samples)
- 4 : Access, parking / turning & off site works in accordance with plans.
- 5 : Landscaping scheme
- 6 : Tree protection
- 7 : Retention of existing hedgerows
- 8 : Open space management plan
- 9 : Plot curtilages
- 10 : Removal of buildings
- 11 : Contamination
- 12 : Drainage details (Surface and Foul)
- 13 : Sustainable drainage scheme
- 14 : Works in accordance with flood risk assessment
- 15 : Archaeology
- 16: Boundary details
- 17 : Ecology

8.2 If the required section 106 agreements are not completed in a timely manner and so planning permission cannot be granted by the determination deadline of 10 July 2013, in accordance with the agreed PPA, it is recommended that authority to refuse planning permission is delegated to the head of planning in consultation with the chairman and vice-chairman.

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