

<b>APPLICATION NO.</b>	P13/V0446/O
<b>APPLICATION TYPE</b>	OUTLINE
<b>REGISTERED</b>	28.02.2013
<b>PARISH</b>	CUMNOR
<b>WARD MEMBER(S)</b>	Dudley Hoddinott Judy Roberts John Woodford
<b>APPLICANT</b>	Hartwell
<b>SITE</b>	Land west of Faringdon Road, Cumnor
<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Erection of up to 22 dwellings with associated car parking and landscaping following demolition of existing buildings
<b>AMENDMENTS</b>	None
<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	
<b>OFFICER</b>	Martin Deans

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This is an outline planning application with all matters reserved. The application site is comprised of the Hartwell Land Rover car dealership and the residential property known as Woodlands, on the A420 (Faringdon Road) one mile south-west of Cumnor village. The site is 2.75 hectares in area, and lies in the Oxford Green Belt. A site location plan is **attached** at appendix 1. The immediate surroundings of the site contain 13 dwellings on both sides of the A420, and this small collection of dwellings is known as Rockley.

## 2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 The proposal is to demolish all of the existing buildings and construct up to 22 dwellings. An illustrative layout plan has been submitted which shows the dwellings to be a mixture of detached and semi-detached houses at two-storeys in height. None of the proposed dwellings would be higher than the height of the existing dealership buildings. The existing vehicular access with a right-turn lane will be retained for access to the housing. This illustrative plan is **attached** at appendix 2.

## 3.0 SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

3.1 **Cumnor Parish Council** – Object for the reasons **attached** at appendix 3

3.2 **Neighbours** – Two letters of objection and two letters of observation have been submitted. The grounds for objection are as follows:-

- Harm to the character and appearance of the area
- Inappropriate development in the green belt
- An unsustainable site for housing
- Dangerous access onto A420
- Overlooking from the proposed housing
- The impact on local wildlife
- The impact of potential street lighting
- Risk from underground contamination
- There is no local sewer and local utilities will be strained

3.3 **County Highways Liaison Officer** initially raised concerns over the sustainability of the proposal. Additional information has been submitted.

- 3.4 **Environmental Protection** – a noise assessment has been submitted. Concerns remain with regard to the impact of traffic noise from the A420 which need to be addressed through amendments to the design of dwellings and boundary treatments nearest to the road.
- 3.5 **Drainage Engineer (Vale of White Horse District Council)** – no objection subject to conditions
- 3.6 **Countryside Officer (South Oxfordshire & Vale of White Horse)** - No objections subject to conditions
- 3.7 **Landscape Architect - Vale of White Horse DC** - No strong views
- 3.8 **Forestry Team** - No objections subject to conditions
- 3.9 **Housing Services** - No objections subject to securing a financial contribution towards the provision of off-site affordable housing
- 3.10 **Waste Management Officer (District Council)** - No objections subject to a financial contribution towards the provision of recycling bins
- 3.11 **Environment Agency** – no objections
- 3.12 **Thames Water** - No objections
- 4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**
- 4.1 None
- 5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**
- 5.1 Policy GS3 of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 deals with development in the green belt. Generally, the construction of new housing in the green belt is inappropriate development that is harmful in principle to the greenbelt. In order for inappropriate development to be acceptable very special circumstances need to be identified that clearly outweigh the harm to the green belt. However, there is a possible exception to this, where new housing is proposed as a redevelopment of an existing brownfield site and the redevelopment would not have a greater impact on the openness of the green belt, or on the purpose of including land within the green belt, than the existing buildings.
- 5.2 Policies DC1, DC5 and DC9 of the adopted local plan require all new development to be acceptable in terms of design, impact on neighbours, and highway safety. Policy DC8 ensures that measures are put in place to mitigate the impact of any new development on local services and infrastructure.
- 5.3 Published in March 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework replaced all previous PPG's and PPS's, and is a material consideration in the determination of all planning applications. The core principle of the Framework is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, comprised of three mutually dependent dimensions – economic, social and environmental. Where relevant policies of the development plan are out-of-date, the Framework states (paragraph 14) that planning permission should be granted "... unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.."

- 5.4 Paragraph 49 of the Framework states that “Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.” Currently the council does not have a five year supply of housing sites. Paragraph 50 supports the delivery of sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities.
- 5.5 Paragraphs 79 – 92 contain guidance on green belts. With respect to the application, this guidance is broadly similar to that contained in the previous guidance, PPG2, which was extant when policy GS3 of the adopted local plan was formulated.

## 6.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The normal starting point for the consideration of an application for new housing is that, due to the lack of a five year supply of housing sites, the housing supply policies of the development plan (the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011) have little weight and are replaced by the Framework and the presumption in favour of sustainable development. However, the application site is in a rural location that is less sustainable than many of the settlements in the Vale. Although sustainability is material to the application, this proposal falls to be assessed principally under green belt policy. The main issues for consideration are –

- The implications for the green belt
- The sustainability of the proposal
- The impact on the character and appearance of the area
- The living standards of future residents
- The provision of affordable housing
- The impact on local services
- The impact on neighbours
- Traffic, access and parking
- Section 106 contributions

6.2 With regard to the green belt, the applicants argue that the proposal is primarily the redevelopment of an existing brownfield site with a built form that has a significantly reduced impact on the openness of the green belt. The illustrative plans show that 21 of the 22 dwellings can be built within the confines of the curtilage of the existing car dealership. The remaining house will be a one-for-one replacement of Woodlands. The volume of the existing buildings on the entire site, including Woodlands, is approximately 24,270 cu. metres, and the footprint is 4,775 sq. metres. The proposed development has a volume of approximately 15,400 cu. metres and a footprint of 2,621 sq. metres. Therefore the proposal represents a reduction in volume of approximately 8,870 cu. metres (or 36%) and a reduction in footprint of 2,154 sq. metres (or 45%). It is also confirmed in the application that none of the proposed houses would be higher than the existing buildings (8.5 metres).

6.3 It is clear the proposed redevelopment of the brownfield area involves a significant reduction in the volume of buildings on the site. Consequently the proposal will not have a greater impact on the openness of the green belt, and will not run counter to the purposes of including land in the green belt. Therefore it is an appropriate form of development and, in green belt terms, the proposal is acceptable. The proposed one-for-one replacement of Woodlands is also in accordance with green belt policy.

6.4 In terms of sustainability the applicants acknowledge that the site is in a rural location. However they argue that the proposal improves overall sustainability through a significant reduction in traffic generation to and from the site. A traffic survey has been

submitted. This shows the existing traffic generation to be approximately 500 vehicle movements per day. Assuming that 90% of all trips to and from the proposed housing are by car (which is reasonable given its location), the proposal would still only generate approximately 150 movements per day, a reduction of 350 movements per day, or 70%. The applicants have also agreed to fund the provision of two bus stops outside the site, with a pedestrian refuge on the A420, to improve the potential for future residents to take use the existing bus service into and out of Oxford, and so to reduce reliance to some degree on the private car. In light of this the proposal does represent a more sustainable option than the existing commercial use.

- 6.5 The third issue is the impact on the character and appearance of the area. The site is surrounded by housing which varies in type from the terraces opposite to detached houses in large plots, and forms a small collection of development in an otherwise rural area, known as Rockley. In this context the existing large, modern commercial buildings and associated hard standing areas associated with the car dealership appear incongruous. Replacing them with two storey houses set in gardens would improve the character and appearance of the site and bring about a more coherent appearance to the area as a whole. The submitted illustrative layout shows that the housing can be arranged on the site with a general spacing that is sympathetic to the rural location. A concern has been raised with respect to the impact of potential street lighting. Inappropriate lighting would harm the general character of the area, and a condition is suggested to control this.
- 6.6 In terms of local wildlife an ecological appraisal has been submitted as part of the application. This has principally focussed on the part of the site contained within the curtilage of Woodlands, as much of the car dealership site is of low ecological value. The appraisal has been carefully assessed and is considered to be acceptable subject to a further assessment for great crested newts, which can be the subject of a pre-commencement condition. Therefore the impact on local wildlife will be acceptable.
- 6.7 The issue of future living standards relates principally to the impact of traffic on the A420 on the amenities of future residents in terms of noise. A noise assessment has been submitted by the applicants and a mitigation strategy has been proposed using acoustic stone walls as boundary treatments for the dwellings nearest the A420 which will help to achieve a noise level of 55 decibels maximum in gardens. The council's environmental protection officer requires this maximum noise level to be 50 decibels, which will require slightly taller acoustic walls on boundaries and the possible re-design of the proposed houses nearest to the A420 so they act as screens for garden areas themselves. The internal noise level within the houses needs to be 35 decibels during the day in living rooms and 30 decibels at night in bedrooms. It is likely that this can be achieved through the specific internal design of the houses (for example the location of principle rooms on the rear elevation) and the use of mechanical ventilation.
- 6.8 The application is in outline with neither the detail of the housing layout nor the internal room layout of the proposed houses under consideration. Consequently the detailed design of the orientation of housing, and the location of internal rooms within housing, and of boundary treatments such as walling, are all details that will be considered at the reserved matters stage. If any of the matters cannot be resolved satisfactorily then the scheme would not be able to proceed.
- 6.9 An area of public open space will be provided on the site. This will equate to 15% of the area of the new housing. This will provide recreation space for future residents. It is likely that this public open space will be maintained by a management company.
- 6.10 With regard to affordable housing, it is acknowledged that the site is in a largely rural

location and is approximately one mile from the nearest settlements, Cumnor and Wootton. There are no services or facilities within walking distance. For these reasons, the council's Housing Services team has accepted that, unusually, the provision of affordable housing on the site would not be suitable. The applicants have offered an off-site contribution, which has been independently assessed on behalf of the council. This sum can be secured via a section 106 agreement.

6.11 The next issue is the impact on local services. Section 106 agreements are being prepared at the Vale and at Oxfordshire County Council to secure financial contributions. The application is in outline for up to 22 dwellings, and some of the contributions will be calculated on a per unit basis, with the final figure depending on the number of dwellings that are finally approved through reserved matters. The suggested levels of contributions are as follows:-

• Primary school	£11,582, per pupil
• Secondary school	£17,455 per pupil
• Special education	£3,066
• Library services	£4,675
• Waste management	£3,520
• Museum/resource centre	£ 275
• Social and health care	£6,600
• Off-site affordable housing	£461,663
• Waste/recycling bins	£170 per dwelling
• Street naming	£331.60
• Public art	£300 per dwelling
• Public open space (if necessary)	£108,804

6.12 The nearest settlement is Cumnor village. Cumnor Parish Council has considered what requests it can make for contributions, but has accepted that, due to the distance between the site and the village, it is unlikely that future residents will have an impact on village facilities of such a magnitude to reasonably justify a request for financial contributions. Cumnor Parish Council has therefore requested the provision of a litter bin at each of the new bus stops and two benches on the public open space. This can be secured through conditions.

6.13 Contributions requested for local recreation and leisure have been discussed with the applicant in light of the appeal decision at Barnett Road Steventon (P12/V1980/O). As in that case the nearest leisure facilities are in Abingdon, which are operating under capacity. Consequently, as was agreed by the appeal inspector, no financial contributions can be sought.

6.14 Turning to the impact on neighbours, the submitted illustrative layout shows that up to 22 dwellings can be arranged on the site and respect the council's adopted standards on minimum distances to protect privacy. Therefore there will be no harm from either overlooking or overshadowing.

6.15 Regarding highway safety the county engineer has carefully assessed the proposal. Given the significant reduction in traffic generation, there is no objection to the use of the existing access to serve up to 22 dwellings. The applicants have agreed to provide two bus stops and a pedestrian refuge outside the site to improve the ability of residents to make use of the bus service to Oxford. The bus stops and the refuge have been subject to an initial safety check by the county highways authority and are acceptable.

**7.0 CONCLUSION**

7.1 The proposed redevelopment of the car dealership buildings will result in a considerable reduction in built volume on the site. It will have no greater impact on the openness of the green belt, or the purposes of including land in the green belt, and is therefore not inappropriate development, and is acceptable in green belt terms. There will be a significant reduction in trips to and from the site, which results in an improved level of sustainability. The impact on the character and appearance of the area, and the impact on neighbours, are acceptable. The impact of traffic noise on future residents is a matter that can be resolved at the reserved matters stage. The highway safety implications are acceptable. Consequently the proposal accords with the relevant policies of the adopted Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011, particularly policies GS3, DC1, DC5 and DC9.

**8.0 RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **To grant planning permission subject to:-**

**The completion of section 106 agreements to secure financial contributions**

**Conditions to include the following:-**

- 1. TL2 – Time Limit – Outline Permission**
- 2. OL1 – Standard Outline Condition**
- 3. HY2 – Access in accordance with specified plan**
- 4. No dwelling shall be occupied until two bus stops, a pedestrian refuge, two litter bins, and associated lighting, is provided in accordance with details which shall have been first submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.**
- 5. Prior to the commencement of development, full details of all street lighting to be provided shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.**
- 6. An area of public open space equivalent to no less than 15% of the site area of the area of the site excluding curtilage of Woodlands shall be provided. The public open space shall include the provision of two park benches.**
- 7. No development shall take place until surveys for great crested newts have been completed and a report containing the results and the details of any mitigation measures have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The mitigation measures shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.**
- 8. The development hereby permitted shall be implemented in accordance with chapter 5 of the Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report dated February 2013, unless otherwise first agreed in writing by the local planning authority.**
- 9. Prior to the commencement of development a mitigation strategy for the impact of noise from the A420 shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The strategy shall include a timetable for implementation. The approved strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved timetable and shall be permanently retained and maintained thereafter.**
- 10. MC24 – Drainage Details (Surface and Foul Water)**

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