



1:2500 = 150m 1:1250 = 75m 1:500 = 30m 1:200 = 12m 1:20 = 1.2m1:100 = 6m 1:50 = 3m

J. J. J.

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Views along track

Drawing Number 1019: ARC-01

HAR2/20598

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North view

South view





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1:100 = 6m 1:200 = 12m 1:500 = 30m 1:1250 = 75m

1:2500 = 150m

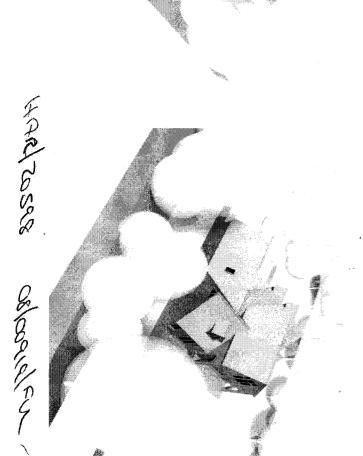
1:20 = 1.2m1:50 = 3m

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Perspectives

Drawing Number 1019: ARC-02

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The Planning Inspectorate

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Mr J S Hartley James Styles & Whitlock 16 King Edward Street OXFORD OX1 4JB YOU ME JSH/JS/4821 OU Ref: T/APP/V3120/A/98/1014129/P7

Dam: N- MAR 1989

Dear Sir

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990, SECTION 78 & SCHEDULE 6 APPEAL BY DR JOHN DELFOSSE APPLICATION NO: HAR/725/3-X

- 1. The Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions has appointed me to determine your client's appeal against the decision of the Vale of White Horse District Council to refuse outline planning permission for a single dwelling house on a plot of land adjacent to Holloway Thatch, The Holloway, Harwell, Didcot. I have considered the written representations together with all other material submitted to me. I inspected the site on 9 February 1999.
- 2. The application is in outline form with all matters reserved for future consideration except for the means of access. The proposal is more accurately described as being for a single dwelling house, including the demolition of an existing garage. I shall therefore determine the appeal on this basis.
- 3. The appeal site, which is rectangular and relatively narrow, is on the southern edge of the village of Harwell within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It lies between The Holloway, a narrow lane serving about ten dwellings leading south from the main A417 road, and Holloway Thatch, a large detached house set in extensive grounds on higher land to the east. The proposed plot contains some mixed vegetation, including both evergreen and deciduous trees, particularly along the southern boundary and on its eastern edge on a high bank, about 3-4m high, which separates the site from the garden and paddock of Holloway Thatch. The new dwelling would share the existing access onto The Holloway following demolition of a dilapidated garage in the north west corner of the site.
- 4. The development plan for the area includes the Oxfordshire Structure Plan 2011 adopted in August 1998 wherein policy G5 says that sporadic and ribbon development in the open countryside will not be permitted. The Vale of White Horse Local Plan is at an advanced stage with proposed modifications having been published in October 1998 (VWIILP). I have therefore attached the appropriate weight to its policies according to their progress towards adoption based on the advice set out in paragraph 48 of Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 General Policy and Principles.

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An Executive Agency in the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, and the Weish Office

- 6. From the above, the written representations and my inspection of the site and its surroundings, I consider that the main issues in this case are firstly, the impact of the proposal on the form and setting of the village and the surrounding rural area and secondly, the effect of the scheme on highway safety in The Holloway.
- 7. On the first issue, there is no settlement or built up area boundary for Harwell defined in the VWHLP. Nevertheless, I acknowledge your argument that a new house on this plot need not be sited any further to the south than Downs Croft, a large detached dwelling on the western side of the lane. Nor would the southern extremity of the curtilage project beyond the southernmost point of the garden/paddock of Holloway Thatch to the east. However, whatever the merits of the proposal when considered in two dimensional form, it seems to me that a judgement as to whether any such scheme would be acceptable must also take into account the overall impact on the character and appearance of the edge of the village, as well as the physical extent of residential curtilages.
- 8. In this case, I saw that, passing along The Holloway, the southernmost extent of development in visual terms appears to be at the junction between the lane and the accesses to Downs Croft and Holloway Thatch opposite. Co-incidentally, this is also the end of the adopted highway. Beyond this point the sunken lane, a by-way open to all traffic, rises towards the open countryside to the south and has a largely rural character and appearance, with the houses either side and their domestic curtilages effectively screened from public view by the high wooded banks on either side. Similarly, when moving along the track from the south towards the houses, the overriding impression is that of being within the countryside until reaching the first accesses on either side of the lane, partly due to the setback and screening by vegetation of the majority of the dwellings further north, as well as the high wooded banks.
- 9. Consequently, I take the view that, irrespective of the detailed design, size or materials, a new dwelling in this location would inevitably appear as an extension of the existing built up area of the village along The Holloway. Taking into account the need to remove some, if not all, of the existing scrub vegetation within the site, I also consider that, whether or not the trees on the bank to the east are retained as a backdrop, the development would have an urbanising influence on the locality, in conflict with policy C4 of the VWHLP. In particular it would, in my opinion, extend the built form of the settlement outside its natural confines, as defined by the banks on either side of the lane, rather than constituting the logical completion of the development pattern within such physical features as required to meet the criteria set out in policy H5 of the VWHLP. Accordingly, I have concluded c 'he first issue that the proposal would be detrimental to the form and setting of the village and the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area.

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- 10. Turning to the second issue, I saw on my visit that, at the junction with the A417, the width of The Holloway is sufficient for vehicles to pass when entering and leaving the lane and that the visibility splays along the main road are adequate in both directions. Although it has a gentle slope and narrows at some points below the average width of about 5m, the lane is straight and has a hard surface up to the junction with the accesses to Downs Croft and Holloway Thatch on either side. Most, if not all, of the existing houses appear to have adequate parking facilities within their curtilages and, despite the absence of formal passing placos, vehicles seem able to safely negotiate the lane as gateways are used for manoeuvring. In these circumstances and bearing in mind that the proposed house would share an existing access, together with the number of dwellings served by the lane at present, I am satisfied that the limited additional traffic generated by one new dwelling would not be so significant or detrimental in highway terms to justify withholding permission for that reason. I have therefore concluded on the second issue that the scheme would not be contrary to policy D3 or materially harm the interests of highway safety.
- 11. Having considered all the evidence, I have concluded that, although the proposal would not have a harmful effect on highway safety in The Holloway, it would nevertheless have a detrimental impact on the form and setting of the village and the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area, contrary to the objectives of the relevant extant and emerging development plan policies, and is therefore unacceptable.
- 12. I have taken into account all the other matters raised in the representations, including the recently built dwelling to the north at Bonny Cross to which my attention was drawn. However, it seems to me that this represents an infill plot within an otherwise built up frontage and is therefore not directly comparable with this scheme which I have determined on its own merits. Neither this nor any other matter is sufficient to outweigh the conclusions on the main issues which have led to my decision.
- 13. For the above reasons, and in exercise of the powers transferred to me, I hereby dismiss this appeal.

Yours faithfully

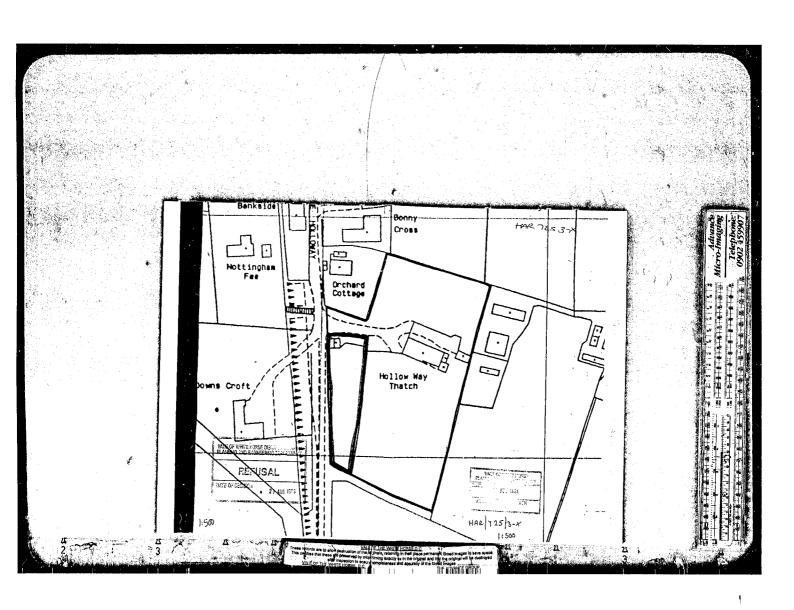
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N A PAYNE BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI MIMgt Inspector

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APPENDIX 2