

PLANNING REF : 241900
PROPERTY ADDRESS : Council Office
: Pearson Road, Sonning, Reading
: RG4 6UL
SUBMITTED BY : Sonning Parish Council
DATE SUBMITTED : 15/08/2024

COMMENTS:

Sonning Parish Council has carefully considered this variation and has the following comments.

The application states that it is to vary condition 2, of planning consent 220663 and continues to state that condition 2 refers to approved plans and details and the variation is to change the site layout. which refers to approved plans and details.

This completely fails to mention one vitally important and major change from 'suitable for older persons' to 'non-age restricted C3 flats'. This is a major change which would have a far-reaching impact on material matters, such as onsite parking, traffic flows to and from the development and longer hours due to younger age group. With the potential for family units the traffic movements are likely to increase with the demand for school trips and after school activities. Most families are likely to be 2 car households and increase traffic flows.

The Parish Council has previously objected to this proposal for the following reasons:

- Impact on the area.
- Access to Shopping facilities, concerns remain the same but multiplied due in increased number of residents. Larger amounts of shopping require the use of a vehicle. A bicycle simply will not do, and would represent a safety risk if any attempt to do so was made and is likely to be illegal. Carrying large amounts of shopping from the existing locations is unrealistic and unachievable.
- Impact on Infrastructure.
- Environmental impact.
- Loss of privacy. The number of trees to be removed will reduce the screening to properties in Pound Lane and the uncharacteristic 3-storey blocks will present a more urban aspect.
(Full test of the above bullet points can be found under 220663).

These concerns remain and to the following must be added, due to the potential increase in numbers:

- Loss of Amenity space due to increased parking requirements (possibly more than already provided.) This space is more important if there are children in residence and the added need for play areas.
- Need to reassess contribution to affordable housing.
- Alternatively need to include affordable housing on site.
- Increased number of residents including children, students etc. potential multiple occupancy.
- The Sonning Neighbourhood Plan needs assessment shows a clear demand for homes for older people in Sonning. The 50 dwellings approved on the Golf Club adequately cater for family groups.

- The open countryside views over the Golf Club are to be replaced by the development of 50 dwellings.
- Increased pressure on local school places (Sonning children cannot be accommodated in local schools already, many of secondary age being offered places in far afield as Wokingham.
- Likelihood of flats being purchased as student lets, resulting multiple in occupancy.
- Potential overflow parking onto adjoining streets due to inadequate on-site provision.
- Access to train services for businesspeople restricted to Reading station due to the limitations of parking at Twyford station. The car park is full of vehicles from 7.30am.

Recent events in Sonning have proven that the mains drains are substandard with the drains erupting in Charvil Lane creating a large spout of untreated sewage and continued to flood the area until Thames Water came to reinstall the main drain cover. This main sewer runs from the A4 Bath Road down Charvil Lane to the pumping station located on Sonning Wharf, next to the Great House Hotel and Copa Club to be pumped to the Wargrave facility.

The Parish Council quoted the following from the previous application which stated:

The applicant has agreed to enter into a s106 legal agreement to secure policy compliant financial contributions in lieu of 40% Affordable

Housing provision and an Employment Skills Plan (ESP) that would be required to support this development. In addition, the applicant has advised that they would be amenable to a restrictive clause in the s106 legal agreement that would limit residential occupancy of the proposed units to the over 60s only."

Therefore, this needs to be reassessed. If the 'variation' is approved and the condition is removed, then the reason for allowing the lower financial contribution is no longer valid. The full payment of £1.5m should be reinstated.

For the above reasons Sonning Parish Council urges refusal of this application.

L. A. Bates (Clerk to the Council).