



MINUTES OF WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE TOWN COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD ON 13th NOVEMBER 2017 AT 7pm, CIVIC CENTRE

PRESENT: Councillors C Young (Chairman), R Hale, N Pinnegar, R Claydon, J Turner, T Luker, P Barton, A Wilkinson, P Smith, L Farmer, N Clement

In Attendance: Clerk Ms S Bailey **PUBLIC:** 45

Also attended by Mr M Evans from Colburn Homes

P.5747 **Apologies for Absence** accepted from Cllrs John Cordwell, June Cordwell

P.5748 **Declaration of Interest** Cllr R Hale (personal - geographical), J Turner (personal - Chamber of Trade & employment)

P.5749 **Public Forum** Mr Evans gave a summary of changes since the last application was proposed in January of this year. Many members of the public then spoke, both in favour of, and objecting to, this application over a 1 & half hour period. The developer answered various points throughout the meeting. Comments can be generally summarised as:

In Favour

- Town in danger of becoming a dormitory town for commuters as many shops closing, due to lack of parking for customers.
- For many years car parking has been discussed and solutions never found – this is a golden opportunity no/low cost option for Wotton taxpayers to secure a large car park. Tabernacle auction rooms parking has only been offered to traders and not as a public car park.
- Views into Wotton are already damaged by ugly fire station and from Wotton by various wind turbines -so no longer unspoilt green field views.
- Doctors' surgery stressed need for more parking for expanding population in the vicinity (1200 extra houses proposed for Charfield).
- Survey by traders in shops showed 93% support (1187 comments in favour and 90 objectors).
- Updated Wotton Community Plan completed 2015 (270 replies) showed support for more parking via resident survey as long as little cost to local taxpayers.
- MP Geoffrey Clifton Brown supports the application.
- Coach parking needed by visitors to support local businesses and tourism - many coaches which visit state they would not return due to lack of parking rather than the town's excellent facilities.
- Chipping car park area now becoming dangerous mix of young schoolchildren and pedestrians all navigating a busy car park.
- Due to planning laws, no time for a referendum. WTC does not make this decision; it is SDC as planning authority and a referendum would be costly to Wotton taxpayer.
- Maintenance costs of a future car park would be very low, compared to the nearly £1m cost to the town of acquiring land and paying for a completely new one.
- 40/50 years ago many housing estates in Wotton were green fields and were built on, but people in those houses now arguing to keep green fields – but progress is needed/must move with the times.
- Market St in centre of Wotton has 52 dwellings yet only 7 parking spaces. Unsustainable. New car park would only be 350 metres away – not very far.
- Need for parking has been demonstrated with 2005 Community Plan, updated in in 2015, and by SDC 2011 report. NPPF 116 states development in AONB acceptable only if in the public interest. SDC Local Plans (Policies CP1 & CP15) state development acceptable if benefits outweigh the adverse impacts & if essential community facilities are provided.

Against

- Green field views need preserving, don't spoil/destroy countryside. Green approach into Wotton is important to visitors.

- Disagreement over insufficiency of parking spaces – some spaces available. Possibility of Tabernacle auction rooms parking when not in use. Suggested building car parks at Parklands entrance or paving top of Chipping Green, or former builder's yard.
- Traders also need to find other ways of increasing business, eg internet.
- The recent town council election was won by a person stating they were against this application; Council should take note of this public support.
- Symn Lane is already very busy with fire service, doctor's surgery, primary school and main access to the Chipping – this local lane cannot cope with a few hundred extra vehicles a day.
- Cost of future car park maintenance to fall to Wotton taxpayer.
- 2015 SDC Local Plan stated no strategic development for Wotton (s3.85), also priority to enhance natural setting & landscape. Appendix 4 rejected site as unsuitable for development due to impact on linear edge.
- Inaccuracies in submitted transportation document by developer.
- Plots 11 & 12 only have 1 parking space per house and not 2 as specified in Local Plan.
- AONB – should protect the countryside – the MP used this argument for protecting Holywell Farm area yet ignores it here. Building in AONB would set a precedent for other places if allowed here.
- Request for Referendum or Poll to ascertain local people's views on a car park.
- In danger of spoiling the very thing which makes Wotton attractive –its green fields/countryside and rural aspects.
- New application has very little changed from previous application apart from a few less parking spaces and two more, smaller houses. Therefore all previous arguments still stand when this council voted against the application.
- No affordable housing provided on site.

Cllrs R Hale & J Turner left the room

P.5750 S.17/2307/FUL Land South Of The Chipping Surgery, Symn Lane, Wotton-Under-Edge. Construction of 12 houses with access road and car park for 80 cars and 2 coaches

Councillors discussed various aspects of the application and gave views.

Following a motion in support of this planning application which was defeated by 5 votes to 4, it was proposed by Cllr T Luker and seconded by Cllr P Barton, and agreed with 5 in favour, 4 against to object to this planning application due to the same reasons as previously submitted in January 2017, with the addition of increased pollution from the extra vehicular traffic.

- Increased pollution effects on local children walking to KLB School and adjacent primary school from extra vehicular movements of 100 plus cars daily.
- Site is not identified for development in the Stroud District 2015 Local Plan. This plan has already demonstrated a 5 year land supply in the district.
- Site is outside the boundary of permitted development in Wotton
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) only permits development in such greenfield sites if there would be no adverse effect on the landscape – this is not the case here as this is a highly visible site on the approach into the town.
- Site is in the Cotswold AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) thus of national significance
- Access would be off Symn Lane, which is already congested with traffic from the main Chipping car park, Co-op car park, doctor's surgery, school, Fire Station, plus residential. The junction with New Road and Symn Lane is very congested at peak periods; visibility for pedestrians crossing New Road near the junction is very poor and additional traffic at this junction is a major safety concern for drivers and pedestrians. Children walk to KLB School and Blue Coat School along Symn Lane/New Road and their safety will be at increased risk. The congestion is also likely to cause delayed response times at the Fire Station - the retained firefighters will not be readily identifiable as such when they are driving to the station in their private vehicles. Therefore they will not be given priority access by other motorists using the new access road, which will serve not only the Fire Station, but also the new car park, doctor's surgery and housing development.
- Regarding the proposed houses, the roof terraces with views to the south seem to be at odds with landscaping intended to obscure the houses from view.
- Previous applications on this site have been refused by Stroud

District Council Planning Authority.

- If permission were granted for such a development on a green field in an AONB, this would set a precedent for the ravaging of the Cotswold landscape and render as useless Government planning policies designed to protect rural England.
- The Developer’s transport assessment has numerous flaws and the survey was carried out on a Wednesday afternoon, when the town is quiet due to half-day shop closing. It is therefore not representative.

The Town Council’s response in terms of its relevance to Planning Legislation in the context of the 2015 Stroud District Local Plan is as follows:

CP1 - This development is not in accordance with the Local Plan as it is judged that the adverse impacts will not outweigh the benefits. The additional car parking proposed is not worth the loss of this prominent, greenfield site on the approach to the town in the AONB.

CP3 - 2nd tier settlements have “...the potential to provide for modest levels ...of homes...”. Recent developments in Wotton (Potters Pond 46 homes, Water Lane, 24 homes and Stokes Bakery, 20 units, plus around 20 fill-ins) have already provided a modest level of development. Further developments are also planned for Dryleaze and Fountain Crescent. In addition, the significant developments in Kingswood and Charfield mean that the local area has had more than its fair share of modest development. Given that modest recent development has already taken place, this proposal is non-compliant with CP3.

CP4 - The proposal does not improve transport choice; the car park is not close enough to the services to be a viable option; it does not create safe streets and homes. A car park in this location is likely to attract anti-social behaviour and the additional traffic will pose a danger to pedestrians, motorists and impact Fire Station response times.

CP7 - The housing does not contribute to meeting the long term needs of the community. As evidenced in the recent Community Plan, residents are strongly against the provision of more private housing developments.

CP8 and CP9 - This development does not satisfy local housing needs – it does not include any affordable housing as outlined in the Community Plan.

HC1 - This proposed development is outside defined settlement limits. It would be an intrusion into the countryside and it would cause loss of an open space which is of importance to the character of the settlement. The proposed agricultural access could potentially lead to further development applications intruding further into the countryside. It would damage one of the gateways into the town. It will adversely affect the Horse Chestnut tree which is TPO protected. It would create a precedent for further development outside of the defined settlement limits and in the AONB.

This completed the business of the Planning Committee meeting at 8.40pm

Signed:

Dated:

Chairman of the Planning Committee