

Formal Objection to planning application 20/00934/FUL for 7 houses on land to the rear of The George Inn, Sandford Road, Littlemore (amended plans)

Having viewed the application documents and plans for the above development, the following are my objections to the scheme.

Principle of development – Whilst the development of previously developed land is a key aspect of sustainable development, account must be taken of existing factors that go against the development of some sites. This is a backland plot with various existing residential properties that overlook the parking and pub garden. It is not an infill plot. The tenuous link to brownfield land to justify the development falls short of the impact the development would have. The site lies within the heart of the Littlemore Conservation Area and whilst developments have occurred over time within the Conservation Area, they appear to respect the more spacious characteristics that this scheme fails to do. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports sustainable development and states that such developments should be allowed: -

unless *“any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against policies in this Framework taken as a whole.”*



Overdevelopment and privacy issues

The proposed development represents overdevelopment, resulting in a development proposal that is squashed into the space, simply because it is there, and the size of the site allows for 7 dwellings.

Parking and Access issues

The proposal will deprive the public house of a large car park and garden area and limit its ability to host events in the future, both for its own business but also for local community events, denying local clubs and organisations of a suitable space to hold their events.

Furthermore, the application documents (Forms, D&A and Transport Statement) indicate that 6 spaces would be created for use by the retained public house, including the demolition of a wooden structure behind the pub to make way for the parking spaces. However, there is a significant issue with the way the plans have been drawn. The application boundary shows 3 spaces to fall outside of the application boundary and therefore cannot be delivered by this application. There are no parking spaces in this location apart from some parallel spaces running in line with the access road. Which means the proposed parking spaces would have to be physically constructed and therefore should fall inside the application boundary. It is understood that the applicant does not own or control the land outside the redline which calls into question the ability of the applicant to construct these parking spaces, regardless of whether they are within the red line or not and furthermore, whether they have permission to demolish the wooden structure as this is part of the public house.

Ultimately this means the application can only provide 3 parking spaces for the public house, as the remaining 3 spaces are not included within the application boundary. This is not acceptable and 3 spaces does not meet that Councils required parking standard. It would severely affect the ability of the public house to trade effectively.

Irrespective of this, the location and arrangement of "6" parking spaces, is contrived and feels like an after thought. And simply reinforces the sense this is a development that is being squeezed on to a site and is not appropriate. In addition, placing the spaces in this location further reduces the size of the pubs beer garden further affecting the pubs appeal to customers and will have an adverse impact on the business. Which is not acceptable.

The spaces are proposed to be accessed directly off the narrow, shared access road. The narrowness of this road, results in very awkward and difficult spaces to access. It will lead to conflict between pub customer traffic and residents. The Council should ask the applicant to provide evidence to show that vehicles can safely and easily access these parking spaces. It seems that vehicles would have to mount the proposed footpath to be able to turn in and out of these spaces.

The entrance to the site is narrow, at only 4.95m, this effectively restricts traffic to one way, this could lead to problems on Sandford Road if a car or delivery lorry has to wait on the highway until a vehicle leaves the site. Furthermore, whilst the access road widens there is a gateway with stone pillars intruding into the access road which creates a pinch point. The proposed site layout does not include these gateway pillars on the plan, but there is no mention of the need to demolish this gateway into order to create a wide enough access. Once past the proposed pub parking area, the proposed access road, becomes even narrower. The road along this section appears to be less than 4m. Although the Transport Statement submitted with the application refers to Manual for Streets and the fact that access roads can be reduced in width for short sections. It is not overly clear whether a section of road some 20m long is considered short, especially when the overall access road is generally narrow along its length. Furthermore, the turning area and distance between

parking spaces in the main part of the site, appear to be tight. There appears to be no vehicle tracking drawings to demonstrate that cars can access and leave the spaces easily and safely.

I would also be concerned about the ability of emergency vehicles being able to safely access the rear of the site for the above reasons. Especially, if more than one emergency vehicle (Fire Engine, ambulance and police) needed to attend a property on the site. With the limited space to turn and a narrow route in and out of the site, as well as conflict with pub customer vehicles, this could be a major problem. This again simply demonstrates how the proposal is trying to fit too many houses on the site.

Taken together, the negative impacts that this proposal will have, in terms of the poor design, cramped and incongruous layout, the loss of privacy and loss of a community facility, poor access, limited parking for the public house, it is argued that these negatives outweigh the positive of developing 7 houses on a brownfield site and in line with NPPF, the application should be **refused**.

Bin Storage area – The area set aside for the bin collection is between the end of the new pub garden and Plot 1, behind two of the new pub parking spaces and close to the rear of the Old Coach House, the location has clearly been chosen for the least impact on the new development and being close to Sandford Road. But it is not exactly a pleasant place for The Old Coach House which potentially will be affected by smells and noise when people are moving their bins on collection day or the night before. Furthermore, although there is a path around the pub parking spaces, there is potential for conflict and damage being caused to any vehicles parked in these spaces, whilst bins are being moved to and from the bin collection area.

Impact on trees – Given the potential impact on trees and the presence of root protection zones on the layout plan, there should be a Tree Survey and plan that should have been submitted. However, it does not appear on the Council's website of documents submitted with the application.

According to the Council's website the trees running along the rear of the site (possibly outside of the site) are subject of a group TPO. This reinforces the need for a tree survey and mitigation plan to be submitted to ensure that the existing trees are protected and not harmed by this development.

Although not covered by a TPO there is a single Yew tree in the centre of the car park. This tree is protected by the fact it is located within the Conservation Area yet, no real mention is made of its loss or any justification for its removal given. Again, this is something the Council should take seriously and at the very least request additional information from the applicant.

Overall, it is my opinion that it is not an appropriate development on this site. Irrespective of its brownfield nature, the negative impacts the development would have outweigh any benefit in terms of housing numbers. And in accordance with NPPF and the Council's Local Plan it should be **refused**.