

HERMITAGE PARISH COUNCIL
Meeting of Hermitage Parish Council
Tuesday 1 February 2022 at 7.30pm
OBJECTION – New Planning Application
Ref: 21/02923/RESMAJ

West Berkshire Council
Planning
Council Offices,
Market St,
Newbury
RG14 5LD

Dear PlanApps,

Hermitage Parish Council (HPC) wishes to record an objection to this planning application, **21/02923/RESMAJ** and ask that WBC note the comments/observations of HPC regarding further applications a) and b) below awaiting HPC review at its meeting on Thursday 17 February 2022.

- a) Ref No: 21/03264/COND1 | Validated: Wed 29 Dec 2021 | Status: Awaiting decision;
- b) Ref No: 22/00129/COND2 | Validated: Mon 24 Jan 2022 | Status: Awaiting decision should be read and taken into account alongside this current Plan App 21/02923/RESMAJ;
- c) the expected revision of Ref 21/00043/FULD development at the rear of the White Horse.

Reference **21/02923/RESMAJ**:

Address	Land at The Old Farmhouse Newbury Road Hermitage Thatcham
Proposal	Approval of reserved matters following Outline Permission 19/02993/OUTMAJ allowed on appeal reference APP/W0340/W/20/3258901: Matters to be considered Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale.
Status	Awaiting decision

HPC has examined the proposals in the context of Hermitage Village Design Statement (VDS) and referenced in particular the D and A Statement.

For reference, key points of the VDS are included below:

Hermitage VDS Reference Design Pointers:

1. As the village has no obvious centre or village green residents particularly value the existing open spaces and would welcome new ones large enough for organised recreational purposes.
2. Access and connecting roads to new developments should reflect the rural character of existing roads with the appropriate planting of native hedges, shrubs and trees. Native trees and shrubs are also desirable where new developments meet the wider landscape in order to soften new "hard edges" of the village by integrating them into the surrounding countryside.
3. Two-storey developments, with informal layouts are encouraged. Three-storey designs and any uniform estate layout should be avoided.
4. Red clay tiled roofs generally parallel to the road, with gable ends and 45-degree pitch are preferred. Decorative ridge tiles and bargeboards may be appropriate but not to excess. Multi-coloured tiles, interlocking concrete tiles and lower roof pitches should be avoided. Gable fronted and half-hipped houses are also discouraged.
5. Plain red brick walls, with blue brick detailing are encouraged. String courses between ground and first floor should be accentuated by projecting forward of the main plane of the wall. Multi-coloured bricks (and colours other than dark red) painted or rendered brickwork and tile hanging should generally be avoided.
6. Vertically oriented windows with, preferably, small panes or sliding sashes are encouraged. Paintwork should be in white. Window frames with a square orientation should be avoided.
7. Porches that are small in scale with a simple roof are encouraged. Open porches are preferred. Detached garages should be sited in discreet locations to the side or rear of the house. Garages should have pitched roofs and be finished in materials which match the house. Garage doors should have a vertical emphasis and be painted rather than stained. Garages which project forward of the house should be avoided. Flat roofed garages and those in contrasting materials are discouraged.
8. Hedgerows and brick walls, which provide enclosure between the road and individual houses, are encouraged. Where timber fencing is to be used it should be low level and picket-type construction. Gravel, or bound natural materials, are preferred for driveways. Open plan front gardens and close-boarded or panelled timber fences in highly visible locations are discouraged.
9. Any additional traffic calming in the village would be welcomed but should be in sympathy with the character of the village.
10. Within new developments, the incorporation of cycle paths that could link with the wider cycle path network in the area is encouraged.
11. The general introduction of street lighting in the village would be unwelcome. However, if limited street lighting has to be introduced into Hermitage for safety reasons, then it should be aesthetically designed and should ensure that upward light pollution is kept to an absolute minimum.

Comments

Appearance

HPC notes open layout frontages proposed across the development and would request provision of a mixture of low brick walls and hedgerows to front gardens.

HPC notes that the design proposals for dwellings on this development do not in conform with the VDS Reference Design Pointers. However, HPC is content that the design treatment proposed will give welcome variety to the new street scene and consequently, on this occasion, raises no objection to this part of the proposal.

Landscaping, with particular reference to site layout:

HPC is concerned by, and objects to, the site layout with respect to the principles of natural surveillance for site security and in particular to the treatment of the active travel route (ATR) where it passes to the rear of plots 17 to 21 inclusive. It is considered this should not be sandwiched between the landscape buffer and a 2m high close boarded fence. The ATR should be completely visible at all sections to discourage anti-social behaviour and HPC suggests instead of being behind it should be in front of plots 17 – 21.

HPC completely supports the commentary submitted by Thames Valley Police dated 19 January 2022 - in summary:

"There are numerous side and rear elevations which lack surveillance, either due to blank elevations or windows located in bathrooms that will be fitted with obscured/privacy glass. Many of these side

and rear elevations are exposed to the public realm and easily accessible due to the layout, leaving some plots vulnerable to crime and anti-social behaviour and in particular burglary offences". Consequently, HPC requests a reappraisal of the proposed application, layout and design to introduce improvements to natural surveillance to assist with potential crime reduction.

The drawings show the link with Lipscomb Close and the neighbouring development to the south as a footpath rather than the pedestrian and cycle way prescribed in policy HAS 25 of the current DPD. To avoid future confusion it should be renamed.

Layout

The Design & Access Statement points out that the existing access to the OFH will require widening to form the access road into the development and to improve splay sight lines from the B4009 Newbury Road. This will entail demolishing the distinctive existing brick pillars on either side of current gateway and part of the OFH garden wall with subsequent 'remodelling'. The wall and pillars are a significant element of the current street scene. The council wishes to see the remodelling accurately reflect the existing size and scale of OFH garden wall and brick pillars on both sides of the entrance, with suitable position adjustments to achieve improved site lines for access to and from Newbury Road. Bulb planting is not an adequate replacement for either pillar. HPC is concerned that this development could constitute a significant potential for the south end of Hermitage to now take on a more highly overdeveloped nature and seeks as much of the current B4009 road scene to be preserved as closely as possible.

HPC notes the proposal now includes an additional road entrance running from this development into the approved development of four houses behind the White Horse pub on Newbury Road, Ref 21/00043/FULD (White Horse Newbury Road Hermitage Thatcham RG18 9TB (Ref. No: 21/02605/COND2 and associated planning applications. Although in principle HPC welcomes this new proposal it wishes to see this road section considered as part of the current application, 21/02923/RESMAJ, and to be considered alongside the revision of Ref 21/00043/FULD to ensure traffic flows and safety are fully considered.

Proposed new dwellings at Plots 1, 2, 3 &4 appear to lack appropriate outdoor amenity space (garden, washing line provision, outdoor seating areas). HPC wishes to see this remedied before approval.

Scale

HPC's principal concerns here are with the number of parking spaces indicated in the scheme.

There are only just enough spaces proposed to comply with WBC parking standards for Zone 3 (a service village) on new developments.

The proposed provision appears to be one visitor space for four flats and just one for the other 17 dwellings. Also several homes have tandem parking proposed even three cars in a row which is completely unreasonable and unworkable. On pavement parking will be the inevitable result. As a service village, Hermitage has a high proportion of commuters and poor public transport provisions, HPC requests an additional minimum of six visitor parking spaces be added to the scheme in addition to the two currently proposed.

Finally, in addition to all the foregoing comments, the council wishes to ensure that every new dwelling proposed has access to an electric vehicle charging point installation and that appropriate solar panels and green energy supply provisions are considered and added as conditions to granting planning approval for this development.

Consequently the Parish Council objections to the scheme presented in its current form.