

## **Planning Application 12/02623/CT3 Proposal for Erection of 5 x 3-bed, 3 x 2-bed and 2 x 1-bed flats on the site of the Council depot in Bury Knowle Park**

### Comment submitted on behalf of The Friends of Old Headington

The Friends recognize that social housing is in short supply, that the proposed development would add to the housing stock, and that – on paper – it is sustainable in terms of transport and local facilities. However, we have serious concerns regarding the proposal as it currently stands:

#### 1. Open space provision

We are concerned about the scale of development in North East Oxford and the lack of green space available to its residents. The *Oxford City Green Space Study* of August 2005, which forms part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy, clearly identifies Headington as an area with a provision of open space well below the City standard. The document concludes that “the potential to create new open space, especially in the centre of the Urban Village, should be identified”. **Referring specifically to Bury Knowle Park, it recommends that the City should “maintain quality, add required features and protect through the planning system”**. It is hard to see how the current application achieves those aims.

We see no evidence, for instance, that there is a strategy in place to ensure that no private motor vehicles will use the park to access the development. The existing road to the site runs through a particularly sensitive part of the park, passing as it does just a few metres from the Sensory Garden. It will be essential that only emergency vehicles, council or delivery vehicles and transport for the disabled are allowed access here, with a drop-off point for all other vehicles sited at the North Place end of the service road.

#### 2. Impact on local community

We are concerned that despite the development itself being designated car-free, some residents are likely to be car-owners, and will put pressure on uncontrolled local parking areas such as the small parking-place just within the gates into Bury Knowle, currently free and intended for library and park users only.

It would be particularly disappointing if the availability of parking for library users were reduced at exactly the time when local councillors’ efforts to obtain disabled access to the library seem likely to succeed in due course.

Measures planned to resolve this need to be clarified, but in any case local traffic, and danger to children and dogs (currently playing freely and unsupervised other than from a distance) will all increase, despite the extraordinary statement by the County Council that the reverse is predicted. We would question the rationale for this argument.

There is no mention in the current application of the fact that Emden House (which is very close to the proposed development) sits well below the ground level of that site. The impact of the new buildings on residents’ light and views is therefore disproportionately large. The proposal includes no elevations showing the relative heights of the proposed and existing buildings, but it is clear that a significant loss of sunshine, combined with a solid line of building screened with even taller trees would result in a loss of amenity for the residents of

Emden House.

In order to minimize this negative effect, we feel that a more satisfactory plan would move the proposed buildings away from the Emden House boundary, and reduce the roof-line by limiting development on the Emden House side to a single storey.

In our view the application as it stands contravenes the Core Strategy policies relating to green space, and the Sites and Housing DPD policies HP13 (f) and HP14(a) and (b), and lacks some information essential to the decision-making process.

Thank you for your attention.

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