

Little Tew Parish Meeting objection to 24/O186/FUL

Following an extremely well-attended EGM on 02/09/24 (draft minutes attached below), a unanimous resolution was passed objecting to 24/O186/FUL.

Therefore, The Little Tew Parish Meeting calls upon West Oxfordshire District Council to reject Planning Application 24/O1861/FUL on the grounds that it remains an unwarranted, unsustainable and unsuitable greenfield development that runs counter to the policies of the West Oxfordshire 2031 Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework 2023.

Unanimous Democratic opposition from villagers

The Meeting was unanimously opposed to this proposal for the “Erection of a country house and gardens, stables courtyard, new highway accesses, solar array, drainage works and landscape proposals, including a new lake” on a number of grounds, again, particularly those relating to its non-compliance with national and local planning policies. All of the original objection by my predecessor still applies, the main points of which I am including.

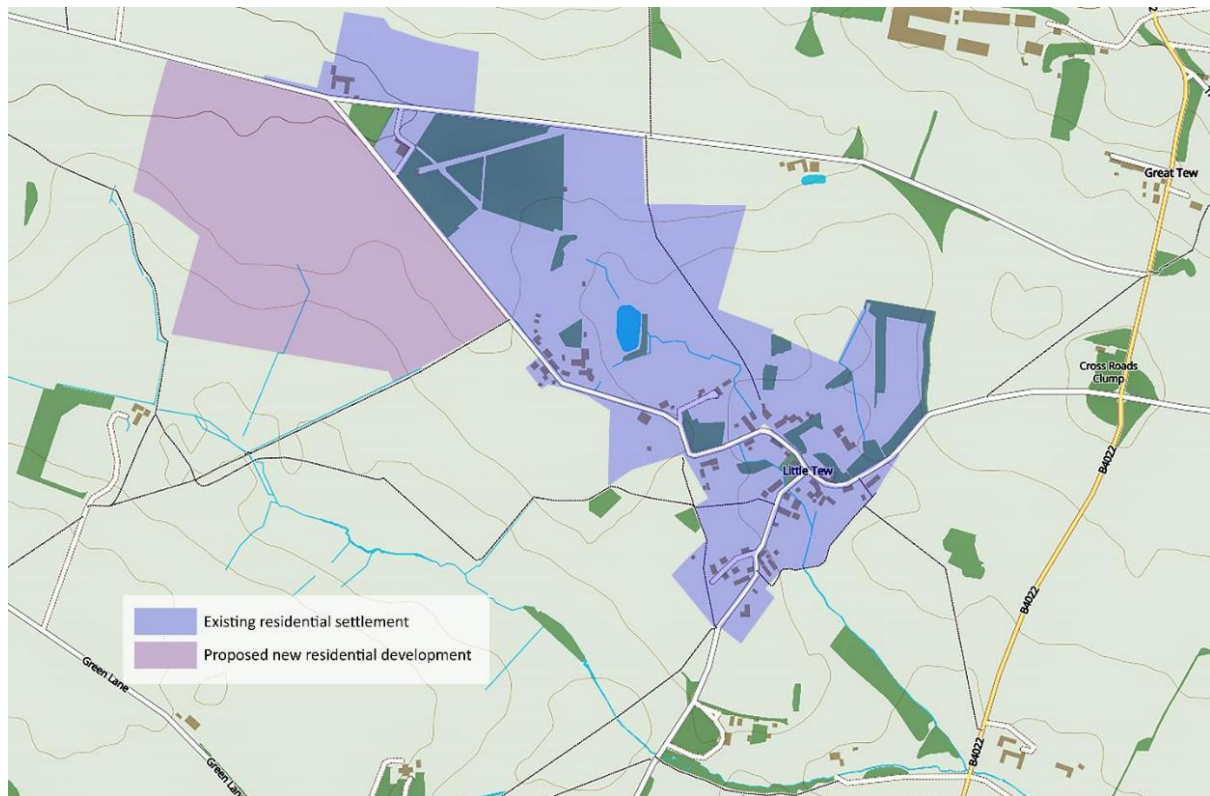
NPPF Para 84e/Proximity to village

The Parish Meeting agreed that their objections to the development of this site were generally the same as those voiced in response to the earlier application in 2022. It noted that the design of the building had changed, but it was still a large country house development on a green field site abutting the settlement area of the village. The design of the Mansion bears no relation to buildings in Little Tew, and attendees at the meeting felt it more suited to Weybridge or some such other suburb of London. It was noted that the previous application was rejected by planning officers because a development of this size and type “would be adversely urbanising and transformative in the landscape, failing to significantly enhance its immediate setting, or be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.” The planning officers said that the development “would also result in a medium level of less than substantial harm to the setting of the Little Tew Conservation Area”. In that the development would cause harm to the setting of the village conservation area, the development could not therefore be considered an ‘isolated home in the countryside’ – and the planning exceptions allowed in NPPF para 84e would not apply. This development would increase the footprint of Little Tew by 40%.

The planned development is in an open field on a plateau above the Dorn Valley with rights of way and lightly trafficked lanes, which are regularly used by local residents and visitors to the Cotswolds on foot and cycle. It is totally out of character with its surroundings. The site is so open that the landscape proposals

seek to screen the development and not use natural features other than hedgerows which have been allowed recently to grow up above their previous regularly maintained height and that which is normal for agricultural boundary hedgerows in the area.

Map showing proposed increase of footprint of Little Tew by 40%:



Request for physical inspection of site by Uplands

The Parish Meeting requests that the Planning Committee attend the site to see for themselves how concerning the location of proposal is, particularly (but not exclusively) in relation to the proximity to the valley where the SSSI begins. This would, according to professionals, be adversely affected not only by the runoff from construction but in regard to the delicate ecological balance of the SSSI, which WODC is statutorily bound to protect.

Veracity of BIO Net Gain/Request for BNG Audit/Impact on wildlife

We noted at the meeting that a Biodiversity Net Gain was claimed to be achieved by the proposal. Knowing the location as they do, the overriding view of villagers was to question whether this was any more than the conclusion of a computer programme i.e. does it really bear any relation to the situation on the ground. We

would request a BNG Audit, which we feel would result in a different conclusion. Many villagers have already written to express their dismay at the potential destruction of wildlife habitats. If the SSSI is affected in any way, this will be a foregone conclusion.

Attempts to present land in question as unproductive

We have noted for some time that the fields in question have been left fallow but over-fertilised; a cynical attempt to claim that there is no nature in these fields. However, we have access to photographic evidence that this is not indeed the case, and we have also sought testimony from villagers who remember the fields being unimproved grassland.

Archaeological Survey

The meeting noted the requirement by the County Council Archaeological Service for a survey of the site, and trusts that this request will be adhered to.

Continuing absence of site notice

We noted at our recent meeting that no site notice seemed to be displayed anywhere pertaining to the location, and as of the week commencing Monday 9/9/24 I for one can still see no such notice.

For the record – Finchatton approach to the village

At the meeting organised by Finchatton on behalf of the applicant on 26/2/24, the village was rather alarmingly told by Martin Leay, who presented, that the conditions for a planning approval had now been met with the revised plans, and that approval of the plans was effectively a foregone conclusion. We have been subsequently reassured by Councillors at our recent meeting that this is not the case, but at the time I remember being concerned by the cavalier attitude displayed at the Finchatton presentation. Finchatton promised to provide the village with a summary of the meeting, as well as welcome any supplementary questions to come through myself as Chair. However, no summary was ever received, despite us chasing, and we never received a response to a supplementary question about “what constitutes the term Dower House” put forward by villager Keith Reeve. I was left to conclude that the presentation was nothing more than a “tick-box exercise” without genuine consultation occurring.

Benefiting the local area

In summary, this development does nothing for the local area or its inhabitants, but has the potential to cause irreversible destruction to extensive flora and fauna, and the conservation area in which it thrives.

**Anthony Cripps
Chair, Little Tew Parish Meeting
11th September 2024**

DRAFT Little Tew Parish EGM Minutes 2nd September 2024

1 The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

In attendance

A Cripps (Chair), R Paget (Vice Chair) Chris Hollander (Parish Clerk), A Wilson, V Bennett, M Bennett, M Tomlinson, K Reeve, A Cowley, O Langdale, M Norris, A Dunstan, M Richter, J Bradley, D Holland, M Holland, A Mauro, P Buckman, L Mollington, C Wigmore, E Wigmore, H Tyce, A Abbotts, G Abbotts, R Sword, Cllr A Wilson, Cllr A Beaney, Cllr G Saul.

Apologies

B Bradley, E Bradley, T Bradley, P Bradley, F Paget, K Cripps, D Howarth, R Howarth, J & J Andrews, D Loehnis, E Benfield, F Loehnis, S Loehnis.

2 Meeting called to discuss planning application 24/O1861/FUL.

The Chair confirmed that proxy votes were not allowed to be counted towards any vote counts.

It was also confirmed that the Little Tew Conservation Group (LTCG) is not related to the Parish Meeting. A Cowley set up the LTCG. Support for the village when considering large building projects. There is a symbolic £1 joining fee. It is a group of like-minded people with one voice. There are a number of people being consulted about the proposed planning application, for example a Planning Barrister, Landscape architect, and Ecologists.

The same planning clauses still exists from the previous planning rejection.

Proposed site is located approximately 250 yards from a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Heather & the River Dorn may be at risk in the SSSI.

Signing up to Natural England to help protect the land.

There is an Oxford County Council archaeological report due.

After the closing date, the process is to go to the Uplands (Uplands Area planning Sub-Committee) if the application is objected to. It has been observed that there aren't any letters of objection on the planning website. This would be useful if items are missed at discussion during planning meeting.

Committee can visit the site to see it in person. Original objections have to be overcome. Professional input & letters will help with an informed opinion. Delegated Officers may deal with the planning application if it doesn't go to Uplands. Emails 7 days in advance or possibly the Friday before the Uplands meeting to register to speak, allows for a 3-minute presentation, either for or against.

New & different objections need to be taken into account & not only those previously submitted. There requires a quantity, quality & breadth of comment or points in reference to the objection.

Factual points for objectivity. There should be precise reasons for objection.

Judicial review is possibly the only option open should the planning application is successful.

One can refer back to original reasons in an objection.

Character of the village, the proposal will cause a dislocation from Little Tew which the design panel

agrees with. EH10 policy fits in with the village. Objections could refer to points in the policy.

Cllrs will provide the Chair with links to the documents.

Little Tew conservation area has not moved.

Are discussions to be in accordance with the local plan? Will need backing to support it if it does not.

Ownership of the land was raised. R Burkle has possibly been sold an option to purchase the land.

Each planning proposal is treated individually. Is there a possibility of this application setting a precedent for other applications?

It has been observed that the fields have been left fallow. This appears to be a cynical move to make the land look unproductive.

Applicants have the right to appeal if planning is rejected.

Suggested that the letter & motion previously submitted, approximately 2 years ago, be used as reference.

It was noted that the statutory planning notice has not been displayed. This is the applicant's responsibility.

Current planning application looks to be retrograde to the original.

The quarry at Great Tew has an application to expand. This may be linked with the planning application in Little Tew with the possibility of the project using stone from the quarry.

At the previous presentation of the planning proposal at the Tew Centre, the impression given was that the project had been rubber stamped. There was also surprise at some of the other statements made.

Councillors in planning will not be wooed.

It is not believed that this building is suitable for this location. It does not enhance or add to the amenities of the village.

There appears to be the possibility of a helipad. This may be used for 28 days without planning. It is not clear if this is consecutive days. This facility can have an environmental impact.

Objections are read on receipt by planning.

Applicant's claim of biodiversity gain versus the destruction of a large footprint, how can this be replaced?

No one in the meeting was in favour of the planning proposal. There was a unanimous vote in favour of objection. The meeting was well represented by village members.

The village may look at putting together a neighbourhood plan, This cannot be more restrictive than the West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) plan. A 2041 plan is being put together by WODC.

The Chair thanked councillors for attending the meeting.