



The countryside charity
Northamptonshire

Planning Application 2023/5878/EIA – Manor Oak Homes

1. Introduction

1.1

Outline application for up to 900 dwellings including 35% affordable, a new local centre, land for a new 2FE primary school, open space including an extension to the adjacent country park and community allotments, enhanced off-site pedestrian and cycle links, and associated off-site highways works, with all matters reserved other than site access. Land south and east of Grange Park, Northampton.

1.2 Part of the land within the above application has been the subject of a previous planning application for housing on a smaller site, initially for 600 homes on three fields in 2019, which was subsequently scaled back, upon the recommendation of SNC Planning, to 300 homes on one field south of Grange Park. The application was rejected by SNC Planning, as well as by the Planning Inspector on appeal in December 2020, stating that the site was “isolated, unsustainable, totally dependent on vehicular access, with unacceptable off-site walking distances and inadequate public transport.”

1.3 In consideration of the mitigation put forward by the applicant that the development proposal is 'sustainable', CPRE can find no evidence that this is the case. In fact, the conditions are the same, or in some cases worse than those contained in the previous application which was rejected. In the opinion of CPRE Northamptonshire, those failings still exist.

1.4 CPRE Northamptonshire is primarily concerned with the coalescence of this extension to Grange Park and the village of Quinton, which would result in the loss of open countryside between the two settlements. This is contrary to NPPF 174 relating to the protection of valued landscapes and is also contrary to SS2 of the adopted Core Strategy, which is set out to maintain the individual identities of towns and villages. If the development goes ahead Quinton will effectively be an adjunct of a large housing area.

2. Highways and Transport

2.1 An inadequate traffic impact solution is provided by the applicant in an attempt to mitigate increased traffic to and from the site, which when combined with existing HGV and private car commuter traffic will effectively cause serious traffic congestion around Wootton, Quinton, Grange Park and Preston Deanery. Manor Oak Homes have allocated 2,741 household parking spaces on the proposed site (Transport & Access Statement 8.8.21) and admit to at least 1,700 vehicle movements in peak hours (Planning Statement 7.38). These are optimistically low and do not take into consideration overspill traffic as a result of congestion in peak hours on the neighbouring A45 dual carriageway and M1 motorway. National Highways have recommended that planning permission should not be granted for a period of a further three months, to allow more up-to-date and relevant data to be provided. Thorough, comprehensive and realistic cumulative traffic impact analysis should be made in order that a Planning Committee can make an informed decision on the development. A further unacceptable impact is the fact that Washbrook Lane from Quinton to the A508, would require upgrading resulting in the loss of established hedgerows.

2.2 Additional bus route facilities are alluded to, but no tangible service forms any part of the application. This will exacerbate the traffic issues further.

3. Landscape and Visual Impact

3.1 The Character Assessment (which is mentioned in the applicant's submission) for this part of Northamptonshire, i.e around Quinton, Piddington and Preston Deanery calls for "new development or changes in land management patterns to conserve the simplicity of the elements that define this quiet agricultural landscape." The building of houses, providing country parks and other mitigating offerings are contrary to the Character Assessment for the area, which also states that the "physical separation between Quinton, Preston Deanery and Northampton must be maintained."

3.2 The proposed development is contrary to a number of policies contained within the NPPF and the Core Strategy to protect open countryside. The site is still in open countryside, and still only a consultation site in the revised Spatial Strategy, therefore it is not an allocated part of any current plan.

3.3 The landowners, Courtenhall Estate, in May 1998, entered into a covenant with South Northamptonshire Council, which effectively protected the area between Quinton and Grange Park. Part of the agreement, in clause 5.2.1 states that “The Protected Area is not to be used for any purpose other than agricultural forestry or woodland purposes or purposes ancillary thereto without the express consent of the District Council so to do.” The agreement should be binding on SNC’s successor unitary authority, and is therefore the responsibility of West Northamptonshire Council to uphold this agreement.

4. Biodiversity and Sustainability

4.1 As mentioned in 1.3, the plan bears no tangible sustainable merits. The development is anything but sustainable. In the planning statement 1.9, the applicant states that “everything will be on the resident’s doorstep” and that “a full range of shops and services will sustain residents day-to-day living”, just because there are proposals for a school, local centre, convenience store and retail area are not based on any realistic premise, and therefore do not meet the necessary planning criteria. The number, range and size of the proposed buildings are inadequate to support upward of 2,000 residents.

4.2 Biodiversity claims are equally fanciful. Rather than enhance wildlife, the provision of 900 houses and associated infrastructure would destroy wildlife habitats and decimate farmland birds. The area is partly flood plain and development would create immense potential for increased flooding at Wootton Brook.

Conclusion

5.1 In the opinion of CPRE Northamptonshire, there is no evidence contained within the application which makes the development ‘sustainable’ and the reasons for the previous applications being turned down still exist. Therefore, the application should not be given planning permission.



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Mr D Callis
Principal Planner
West Northamptonshire Council
Planning Department
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5th August 2024

Dear Mr Callis,

2023/5978/EIA Outline application for up to 850 dwellings including 35% affordable, a new local centre, land for a new 2FE primary school, open space including an extension to the adjacent country park and community allotments, enhanced off-site pedestrian and cycle links, and associated off-site highways works, with all matters reserved other than site access. Land south and east of Grange Park, Northampton.

CPRE Northamptonshire has been asked to provide a submission to the revised application for the above development. This submission is in addition to our original objection dated September 2023.

1. Introduction

1.1 The principle changes to the application are a reduction in the number of houses to be built, from 900 to 850, some additional landscape buffers and minor technical changes.

1.2 I reiterate the information from our 2023 submission, that part of the land contained within the application has been the subject of a previous planning application for housing on a smaller site, initially for 600 homes on three fields in 2019, which was subsequently scaled back, upon the recommendation of SNC Planning, to 300 homes on one field south of Grange Park. The application was rejected by SNC Planning, as well as by the Planning Inspector on appeal in December 2020, stating that the site was “isolated, unsustainable, totally dependent on vehicular access, with unacceptable off-site walking distances and inadequate public transport.”

1.3 The steps taken by the applicant to ameliorate the conditions for approval do not address the circumstances that led to rejection by the LPA and the Inspector of 300 homes, let alone 850; they are cursory, inadequate and missing the point that regardless of technical ‘tinkering’ of the site, the development is in a totally inappropriate location for such a large number of houses.

2. Site location

2.1 The reduction of the number of houses from 900 to 850, which will result in an additional 25-30 metres of space between the development and the highway boundary. Additional buffers around the site make little difference to the original site size and proximity to Quinton. Despite the proposed screening and open space, the site will still form a coalescence to Grange Park; 130 metres is not a

sufficient gap between Quinton and the site boundary. The village of Quinton will effectively become an adjunct of Northampton.

2.2 As stated in our previous submission, the development is in conflict with Policy SS2 of the adopted South Northamptonshire Local Plan 2, and the 2014 West Northamptonshire Core Strategy, which is set out to maintain the individual identities of towns and villages. The site is also contrary to Policies LH1, SS1 (and SS2) of the Local Plan Part 2 and Policies SA, S1 and S4 of the Joint Core Strategy. The significant loss of open countryside between Grange Park and Quinton is also contrary, specifically, to National Planning Policy Framework 174 relating to valued landscapes, and contrary to the vision, objectives and strategy in the Joint Core Strategy.

2.3 The site is outside the Northampton Related Development Area (NRDA) boundary and as there is no housing shortfall for the area, the application does not meet current housing needs. The limited connectivity and poor access to the site, for these reasons alone, make the development, and its location, inappropriate and unsustainable.

3. Affordable Housing

3.1 An important consideration in housing development is not only the proportion of affordable housing that is allocated to a site, but also the specification, including type, size and number of dwellings and whether they are to be rented, or for sale by a housing trust, etc should be included. Only a vague percentage (35%) has been stated, but no tangible proposals, which indicates a lack of thought, priority and consideration to providing affordable housing.

4. Landscape & Visual Impact

4.1 The minimal addition of 'linear screening and open space' around the site does nothing to change the fact that this is a proportionately massive suburban housing estate in relation to the surrounding countryside, villages of Quinton, Preston Deanery, Great Houghton and the Grange Park area. All of these areas will be affected, but Quinton and its village environment, will be irreversibly ruined.

4.2 I reiterate my comments from our previous objection, which are still relevant, in that the Character Assessment (which is mentioned in the applicant's submission) for this part of Northamptonshire, i.e around Quinton, Piddington and Preston Deanery calls for "new development or changes in land management patterns to conserve the simplicity of the elements that define this quiet agricultural landscape." The building of houses, providing country parks and other mitigating offerings are contrary to the Character Assessment for the area, which also states that the "physical separation between Quinton, Preston Deanery and Northampton must be maintained."

4.3 The landowners, Courtenhall Estate, in May 1998, entered into a covenant with South Northamptonshire Council, which effectively protected the area between Quinton and Grange Park. Part of the agreement, in clause 5.2.1 states that "The Protected Area is not to be used for any purpose other than agricultural forestry or woodland purposes or purposes ancillary thereto without the express consent of the District Council so to do." CPRE would ask that the contents of the covenant be upheld.

5. Biodiversity & Sustainability

5.1 The applicant's plan, despite some technical changes, still bears no tangible sustainable merits. In the planning statement 1.9, the applicant states that "everything will be on the resident's doorstep" and that "a full range of shops and services will sustain residents day-to-day living". Plans for a

school, local centre, convenience store and small retail area are wholly inadequate services to support upward of 1,800 residents.

5.2 As stated in our original objection, biodiversity claims are equally fanciful. Rather than enhance wildlife, the provision of 850 houses and associated infrastructure would destroy wildlife habitats and decimate farmland birds.

5.3 The area is partly flood plain and development would create immense potential for increased flooding from Wootton Brook. Although a comprehensive Flood Risk Analysis has been carried out by MAC consultants, which acknowledges the area as being flood plain (Flood Zone 1), and has made clear locations for appropriate Outfall Detention Basins, it is unclear as to exactly what calculations MAC has worked on in relation to the frequency and intensity of storms, and therefore the ability of the site to deal with storm flow retention. Due to intensifying climate change conditions, this information would be useful in determining if the capacity of Outfall Detention Basins are adequate.

6. Highways & Transport

6.1 The applicant- Manor Oak Homes / Courteenhall Estate) should be aware that the intensity of traffic created by their own commercial interests (i.e Junction 15, M1 Rail Freight terminal – Segro Logistics Park, Grange Park Industrial Area and the proposed intensification of industrial and commercial development at East Lodge, Courteenhall, has already created an untenable traffic scenario. An inadequate traffic impact solution was provided by the applicant in the previous application in an attempt to mitigate increased traffic to and from the site, which when combined with existing HGV and private car commuter traffic will effectively cause serious traffic congestion around Wootton, Quinton, Grange Park and Preston Deanery. The reduction in the number of houses in the plan will make no difference to the traffic outcome.

6.2 Traffic movements are still optimistically low and do not take into consideration overspill traffic as a result of congestion in peak hours on the neighbouring A45 dual carriageway and M1 motorway. Thorough, comprehensive and realistic cumulative traffic impact analysis should be made in order that a Planning Committee can make an informed decision on the development. A further unacceptable impact is the fact that Washbrook Lane from Quinton to the A508, would require upgrading, resulting in the loss of established hedgerows.

6.3 The site is still car dependant with no safe routes to allow for cycle access.

6.4 Additional bus stops are proposed on Quinton Road, but no tangible additional bus service forms any part of the application. This will exacerbate the traffic issues further.

7. Summary

7.1 In the opinion of CPRE Northamptonshire, there is no evidence contained within the previous application, or this revised application, which makes the development 'sustainable' and the reasons for the previous applications being turned down still exist. The application conflicts with the 2014 West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, the adopted South Northamptonshire Local Plan 2 and the current National Planning Policy Framework. Therefore, the application should not be given planning permission.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Carverhill

Chairman & Trustee

CPRE Northamptonshire

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17th February 2025

by email to daniel.callis@westnorthants.gov.uk

Dear Daniel,

2023/5978/EIA Outline application for up to 850 dwellings including 35% affordable, a new local centre, land for a new 2FE primary school, open space including an extension to the adjacent country park and community allotments, enhanced off-site pedestrian and cycle links, and associated off-site highways works, with all matters reserved other than site access. Land south and east of Grange Park, Northampton.

1. CPRE Northamptonshire has been asked to provide comments to the revised application for the above development. This is in addition to our original submissions dated September 2023 and 5th August 2024. This letter should be read in conjunction with our 5th August 2024 submission, which is attached.
2. The principal changes to the application are with regard to the potential coalescence of the village of Quinton with that of Grange Park, and ultimately Northampton, but are of such a token nature that they still do not address the fact that the development would be so close to the village of Quinton, that the outside observer would assume that Quinton is part of Grange Park.
3. I reiterate the information from our 2023 submission, that part of the land contained within the application has been the subject of a previous planning application for housing on a smaller site, initially for 600 homes on three fields in 2019, which was subsequently scaled back, upon the recommendation of SNC Planning, to 300 homes on one field south of Grange Park. The application was rejected by SNC Planning, as well as by the Planning Inspector on appeal in December 2020, stating that the site was “isolated, unsustainable, totally dependent on vehicular access, with unacceptable off-site walking distances and inadequate public transport.”
4. The application makes only scant reference to affordable housing making up 35% of the development, but still no exact number, location or specification of those affordable dwellings. Also, the Sunshine Bill currently going through parliament will mandate PV solar

panels on all new domestic dwellings and will assist the government policy of securing a net zero carbon emission status by 2030.

5. Taking all of these points into consideration, there is one important aspect to this application that we feel must be dealt with before any further discussions, or decisions are reached. It is the fact that the total site in question is the subject of a Section 106 order, part of which prevents any development between Grange Park and Quinton. The S106, reference S19970219PO, clearly states in 5.2.1 of the 'Protected Area' section *"not to use or permit to be used the Protected Area for any purposes other than agricultural, forestry or woodland purposes or purposes ancillary thereto without the express consent of the District Council."*
6. Therefore, as WNC has inherited this S106 from the previous South Northants Council, it is incumbent on them to revoke the S106 before any meaningful discussions, or applications, can take place regarding this land.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Carverhill
Chairman
CPRE Northamptonshire