

4th June 2020

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Dear Councillors,

**Planning application: P 19/S2380/RM – Steven Orton Antiques Shirburn Road Watlington OX49 5BZ
Written Statement of Support**

This statement of support has been prepared by Ridge and Partners who are the agents dealing with the above application on behalf of Beechcroft Developments Ltd. Thank you for taking the time to read this submission and trust you'll support the strong recommendation by your officers to approve this application.

The officer report is very thorough and covers all key issues pertinent to this application. We have worked well with your officers to achieve a well-conceived development that we believe can be successfully integrated into its surroundings from both a design and landscape perspective, and will finally ensure this brownfield site is redeveloped in an appropriate manner clearing all the current detritus from the site. The successful negotiation of this application has resulted in no objections being raised by any of the key professional consultees and there have been no third-party objections, which is very positive. This is summarised in the officer's report, so I won't repeat in this statement.

We would however like to supplement the officer report to address objections that have been raised by Pyrton Parish Council that have been made during the course of this application. We have addressed these previously in a letter to the case officer dated 9th November 2019, but given the Parish's most recent comments, we feel it is prudent to address these again.

The key issues for the Pyrton PC relate to the number of units and density of development, building mass and height; landscape impact; impact on Shirburn Conservation Area and Historic Park and Garden; and potential light pollution that will arise from the development. These issues will be dealt with in turn.

1. Number of units, density of development, building mass and height.

The outline planning consent (planning reference P18/S0002/O) was granted 23rd July 2019 for up to 37 Retirement Units for people aged 55 and over, provision of a Care Home and four staff accommodation units (all matters reserved for future consideration with the exception of access).

Pyrton Parish have stated the number of units proposed remains an issue and is a matter that should be considered as part of the current Reserved Matters (RM) submission. The outline consent has established the permissible number of units in this case and the density that can be achieved on site. Therefore, these matters are not up for further consideration as the principle of development and the number of units proposed has been established. This RM application mirrors the outline approval in that the same number of units proposed at outline are sought. The key considerations in this case, having established the principle at outline and agreed access, will be the external appearance of the proposed buildings, their scale, layout and associated landscaping.

In terms of scale, the Parish have retained concerns over the height of the development. The development including the Care Home comprises a mix of 1.5 and 2 storeys that mirrors the height of the properties within the wider locality and do not exceed 2 storeys that was agreed as part of the outline consent. The tallest of the proposed buildings on the site would be around 9.3m in height and accords with the parameters set at outline stage and the remaining 85% of the buildings on site are substantially lower than this having been reduced in height from the outline planning permission and during the course of negotiating this submission.

The introduction of a variety of roof heights across the site helps to break up any perceived bulk and adds variety to the scale of buildings proposed. This variation is evident within the design and scale of domestic buildings in the adjoining villages, which has helped form the approach taken in this case through the contextual analysis that is explained in detail within the submitted Design and Access Statement that accompanies the current application and is referenced in the officer report. This method is advocated in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide to ensure the scale of buildings proposed are sensitive to their context.

In essence, careful consideration has been given to the local vernacular of both Pyrton and Watlington to gain a full understanding of building heights, key design features that are common within both Pyrton and Watlington, and the materials that would be appropriate for the construction of the proposed retirement and care scheme.

2. Landscape Impact

The Parish Council consider that the scheme as proposed will contravene the SODCs Landscape Capacity Assessment 2015, recent Landscape Character Assessment 2017 and that appropriate account has not been taken of the need to minimise the adverse effects of development on the surrounding protected landscape that lies to the east of the site.

Efforts to minimise landscape impact have been undertaken as part of the current submission, these include:

- The Roadways have been redesigned and their width has been reduced to allow for more planting to help assimilate the proposed development into its surroundings.
- A revised plan has been submitted that includes additional hedgerows to increase legibility. The landscape plan has been updated to pick up trees along southern boundary and this is agreed with Council's Tree Officer.
- The housing facing onto the road have active frontages and are appropriately softened with a native hedgerow and hedgerow trees. In addition, three large Holm Oaks (which were selected to respond to trees in the immediate vicinity) have been actively positioned to allow unrestricted growth and for maximum visibility from the approach to Watlington, helping to integrate the proposals into their surroundings.

In terms of impact on the AONB, there is some intervisibility between the site and the Chiltern AONB, but the views of the site only form very small aspects of the wider panoramas of the area when viewed from the Chilterns overall. The majority of the vegetation on site would be retained and reinforced, helping to integrate the proposals into their surroundings. Consequently, it is considered the development can successfully be integrated into the site without giving significant landscape and visual impact. Moreover, the current use of the site that has a more substantive impact on the wider landscape will be removed.

It should also be noted, as summarised within the officer's report, that the wider landscape impact of the scheme was considered at outline stage and found to be acceptable. The landscape considerations associated with this application relate to the landscaping within the site that are considered to be acceptable by your officers.

3. Heritage Impact

This matter was considered at outline stage and officers were content that the proposed development would not have a negative impact on the Grade II Listed Shirburn Castle Registered Park and Garden and Shirburn Conservation area. Furthermore, no comments have been offered by either Historic England or Garden History Society and the Conservation Officer raises no objections.

4. Light Pollution

It is appreciated that concern has been raised over potential light pollution associated with the development from both Pyrton and Watlington Parish Councils. On this and as noted in the officer report, a condition is attached to the outline consent that requires details of the lighting to be submitted and agreed by the Council. In this regard, the lighting associated with the development can be agreed and controlled. Again, as highlighted within the officer report, an initial lighting report has been undertaken that will need to be updated in due course, but demonstrates that any lighting on site will be strictly controlled and would consist of low level bollard and wall mounted lighting that would be sensor activated to minimise intrusion.

I trust this written statement of support is of assistance and suitably addresses, where appropriate, the concerns of Pyrton Parish Council and demonstrates, following the approval of outline consent, that the layout, scale, appearance and landscaping associated with this RM submission are entirely appropriate for the site and accord with all tiers of planning policy. In this regard, it is respectfully requested that Members support the officer recommendation of approval.

Yours sincerely,



Giles Brockbank MRTPI
Partner
For Ridge and Partners LLP

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