

Committee meeting statement on Hartgrove planning application.

Having reviewed the planning officers report in detail, I would like to emphasise the following 3 areas of concern for the Planning Committee to consider:

1. Inadequate spacing between properties and cramped development

Policy H4 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 (SOLP). Criteria:

(ii) The design, height, scale and materials of the proposed development are in keeping with its surroundings.

Outline planning has been granted for the principle of two dwellings. The detail of how the two dwellings would appear, their size, design, scale and whether they were to be detached or a pair of semi-detached is for consideration in this reserved matter application.

We disagree with the Planning Officers view and opinion that the size, scale and spacing of the proposed dwellings are appropriate.

The Planning Officer is correct to state that “there is no uniform distance between properties along this extent of Oxford Road”, although fails to note that the gaps proposed are significantly less than those present along the entire length of the road. This is the reason that concerns over cramped development, not in keeping with the street scene, has been raised.

It should also be noted that the width of the plots on the west side of Ambleside are very similar to the Hartgrove plot and 3 bed semi-detached properties are sited here. This serves as a simple and appropriate measure of what should be deemed in keeping with the existing spacing of properties.

In terms of a benchmark of scale and spacing, the last two developments Ambleside and Foxgate are both smaller in scale than the proposed dwellings. These are 4 bedrooms and 3 bedrooms respectfully. It can also be seen that the spacing is considerably wider than proposed.

When I attended the outline planning committee meeting and raised this issue, members of the committee expressed support that the proposal appeared overly cramped, but it was stated that this would be reviewed at the reserved matters stage.

2. Highway safety.

We are concerned that the highway safety concerns we highlighted during the consultation process have not been responded to or addressed.

1. The proposed access to the property is directly alongside Ambleside, this is a safety issue and will cause potential collisions during manoeuvring in and out of driveways. Every property down the road has a separation space between access points for safety reasons.
2. The existing plot has one access point from Oxford Road but there is no provision for a new access point for the second property. Instead it is proposed that Ambleside’s access point is utilised. With increased volume of traffic and cars blocking the service road, this will cause access restrictions and further potential risk of collision.

3. Impact on neighbour amenity - Policies H4 and D4 of the SOLP

The existing boundary fence between Ambleside and Hartgrove has been in place for many years, is very low height and has trellis on top with thick vegetation present in Hartgrove. With a two-story property in place this existing boundary will be insufficient in height and will impact on privacy etc.

It is also likely that the vegetation present in Hartgrove will be removed to allow space, which would further amplify the issue.

We therefore respectfully request that a replacement fence is provided to an appropriate height, in order to ensure a suitable boundary to Ambleside with privacy and overlooking addressed.

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