

Grange Park Parish Council (GPPC)
Objection to Planning Appeal – Land South of Grange Park, Quinton Road,
Northampton – Manor Oak Homes Development
Appeal Reference: APP/Z2830/W/20/3251622
Date: June 2020

Grange Park Parish Council (GPPC) recommend refusal of the Planning Appeal by Manor Oak – Land South of Grange Park, Quinton Road, Northampton - Appeal Reference: APP/Z2830/W/20/3251622.

Notwithstanding our objections to the original planning application GPPC would like to focus our objections to the appeal submitted by Manor Oak Homes on the wellbeing and risks to the potential residents of the proposed development. As a Parish Council, we are concerned about the proposed development and the issues of isolation for the future residents. The proposed development has limited access to local amenities, poor transport links and is located close to the M1 motorway. All of these aspects will affect the quality of life for the residents who live or are housed in the proposed development. It is the wrong site and the wrong type of development and as a Parish Council, **GPPC believe that the proposed appeal should be refused at the appeal hearing.**

It appears by the design of Grange Park that when the decisions were made 20 years ago to expand Northampton South into open countryside, it was intended that the new development would be the southernmost limit of urban expansion of Northampton. The development was given a village feel by extending Alamein Wood around it by way of the west and east structural belts of woodland. Wootton Brook provides another natural boundary. The residences fan out from the twin hubs of the Community Centre and the Commercial Centre. It works, Grange Park is a self-contained sustainable village. What would not work is the idea that a further 300 houses built on the other side of Alamein Wood will somehow become part of that village. The residents who come to live there will find themselves an isolated community served by a country lane miles away from the nearest amenities.

1. It is the Wrong Site

The site for the proposed development is separated from the existing development of Grange Park by a wooded area and it is in extremely close proximity to the M1 motorway. The site is not suitable for development due to the isolated nature and the access to the land. The site is isolated from all local amenities and from Grange Park. Vehicle access to the site is down a small country lane (Quinton Road) with no footpath. Building a housing development on an already isolated site will create an isolated and disconnected community, it is the wrong site.

Manor Oak Homes have by their own admission identified that the site for the proposed development is in the wrong location with insufficient transport links for the residents. Following the proposed development's refusal due to non-provision of accessible and sustainable travel, Manor Oak Homes have added a travel plan for the appeal process.

However, the travel plan has a number of flaws and only papers over the huge cracks in the whole development. It does not provide a sustainable and accessible access for all transport links for this rural development. The plan is only funded for five years. How is this to be funded after the five years?

For five years the initial residents will have a limited transport link. (see point 2.1.1 Proposed Transport Plan, for further problems GPPC have identified with the travel plan) Then after this date, the residents will have nothing. New housing developments should be creating and providing healthy communities, not penalising the residents with a negative effect on their long-term quality of life. It is paramount that HOMES should be built not just HOUSES.

GPPC believes this travel plan does not satisfy the transport needs for the proposed development and the only walking and cycling routes to Grange Park and beyond do not provide adequate safe, accessible and sustainable travel options for all the residents.

Manor Oak Homes are proposing a financial contribution towards provision of a footpath connection through Alamein Woods. GPPC do not agree with such a connection being built and therefore do not want anything to do with it as we are objecting to the houses being built and we value the woodlands as a wildlife sanctuary. This footpath requires planning permission, no one has applied for planning permission and there is no certainty that planning permission would be granted as it could be refused. The entire development is dependant on the provision of this connection.

GPPC confirm that they have no common ground with Manor Oak Home as outlined in our letter dated 11th May 2020 (attached).

2. Wrong type of Development

GPPC are concerned about the feeling of isolation and loneliness of the new residents created by a drive to this cul-de-sac type of development.

The Government has outlined how to achieve healthy and inclusive communities, defining a healthy place as “one which supports and promotes healthy behaviours and environments and a reduction in health inequalities for people of all ages. It will provide the community with opportunities to improve their physical and mental health, and support community engagement and wellbeing”¹.

It is important that we all have a duty to ensure our society and communities are healthy. Does this proposed development provide a healthy and inclusive community for its residents?

2.1 Accessibility and Sustainable Travel

2.1.1 Proposed Travel Plan

As part of the proposed application, Manor Oak Homes has developed the provision of a transport service for the development of 300 homes on land near Grange Park, Northampton in partnership with Ability (Northants). However, GPPC has concerns regarding the proposed travel plan.

The initial proposed Hours of Operations provides a rather limited service to the new residents. The service will only benefit those residents who are in employment which is suited to the traditional Monday to Friday - 9am-5pm and based in Northampton Town. It will not benefit those working in other towns within Northamptonshire and it won't help shift workers and part time workers to get to work.

The Hours of Operation schedule does not accommodate those young people who want to take part in extracurricular activities provided by the school before and after lessons. What about young people who attend different secondary schools? They will have to rely on private car usage.

Scenario 1: Imagine you are a new resident in the proposed development, you have a daughter who has recently started secondary school at Caroline Chisholm School. You are a single parent and have younger children who

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing#achieving-health-and-inclusivecommunities> Paragraph: 003 Reference ID:53-003-20191101 Revision date: 01 11 2019

attend a different primary school. You do not drive a vehicle. Your daughter uses the transport provided to Caroline Chisolm School every day. Your daughter wants to take part in the extra circular activities provided after school (“Extra-curricular activities boost young people’s confidence to interact socially with others; extend their social networks; and provide them with new skills and abilities”²). Unfortunately, the proposed Hours of Operation of the travel provision is only available to collect your daughter from school at 3.30pm daily. You could argue that your daughter could walk or cycle home from the school after the extracurricular activities, however does the proposed development provide safe walking and cycling routes accessible for all? To be explored in 2.1.2. Walking and Cycling Routes.

Your daughter will be unable to attend the extracurricular activities which are provided by the school to enrich their pupil’s development. A healthy place “meets the needs of children and young people to grow and develop”³.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has also brought to our attention the limitations of the proposed travel plan. Ability (Northants) have suspended current services due to the COVID-19 pandemic (see screen prints from Ability (Northants) website in the Enclosures). How would key workers with no access to vehicles living in the proposed

development be able to get to work? Can the buses safely run the service to the proposed development during the winter months (icy roads, snow) via the country lane access?

GPPC feel that the development does not meet the need of a healthy and inclusive community due to inadequate public transport links.

2.1.2 Walking and Cycling Routes

Grange Park has a country park and wood (Alamein Wood) which border on the land for the proposed development by Manor Oak Homes. Both the Country Park and Woodland are areas of sanctuary for wildlife. These areas are not designed to be used as the main access routes for both walking and cycling into Grange Park and beyond.

Scenario 2 – Using the family details as explained in Scenario 1, the mum needs to use the local shops at the amenities within Grange Park. It is dark wintery early evening. The mum does not have a vehicle and needs to purchase some food provisions for her family. The mum will need to take her young children with her to complete the shopping. It would be both unsafe and a daunting task for the mum and young children to visit the shops in Grange Park and returning on foot carrying heavy bags of shopping and in the winter months the challenge would be even more daunting

“Prioritising pedestrians and cyclists mean creating routes that are safe direct, convenient and accessible for people of all abilities”⁴.

GPPC feels that the development does not meet the requirements of providing a safe and accessible for all walking and cycling route for the residents of the proposed development.

2.1.3 Increase in Vehicle Movement

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818679/An_Unequal_Playing_Field_report.pdf Page 3

³ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing#achieving-health-and-inclusivecommunities> Paragraph: 003 Reference ID:53-003-20191101 Revision date: 01 11 2019

⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843468/National_Design_Guide.pdf Page 23 Point 78 ⁵
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843468/National_Design_Guide.pdf Page 23 Point 79

The problems with the lack of adequate transport provisions including no access to public transport on the development, limited, costly and unsuitable transport plan and the unsafe (not accessible for all) walking and cycling routes is that it has a knock on effect on the increased volume of the movement of vehicles on the proposed development.

Scenario 3 - We have all experienced it at 7pm in the evening you have just noticed that there is no bread available for making the children's packed lunch for school the next day. You have a work deadline to be completed that evening as well as ensuring the children have school uniforms ready for the next day along with maintaining a bedtime routine. You are a resident on the new development and time is of the essence. Due to the lack of accessibility to the local shops on Grange Park on foot or by bicycle, your only option is to drive to a local shop, this being either in Roade or Wootton Fields. "In well-designed places, people should not need to rely on the car for everyday journeys, including getting to workplaces, shops, schools"⁵.

Also, consideration of the way society and our lifestyle choices are changing due to COVID-19 which will need to be investigated. An increase in online shopping resulting in an increase in home deliveries, leading to increase vehicle movement. It is too early to provide evidence to suggest this is a continuing trend but the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact it is having to society as a whole needs to be considered. Due to the isolation of the proposed development site, a result in an increase in vehicle use from both residents and an increase in home deliveries to the proposed development could be a factor to consider.

The proposed development does not provide a well-designed movement network for the residents, it has an unsustainable transport plan, it is not accessible for all residents, it is not accessible all year round and will not limit the impact of car use by residents.

2.2. Isolation should not be part of a Health Community?

The issues raised in point, 2.1 have outlined the problems with the travel and transport links for the proposed development. The development will cut off the residents from work, healthcare and accessing social and cultural activities. With the lack of alternative transport methods and an increase in vehicle use (fuel cost, cost of ownership of a vehicle) from within this isolated development, could result in a rise of transport poverty.

"One in four households in England is already without a car (more than five million homes in total)(6) – a figure that is likely to rise as the costs of running a car continue to grow - and many more find public transport unaffordable, inaccessible and inappropriate to their needs."⁵

3. Conclusion

As a Parish Council, we have expressed our concerns about the proposed development and the issues of isolation for the future residents. The development creates an **unsustainable** community. The houses alone will require most residents to leave the development to go to a place of employment. Children beyond primary school age will have to do the same with an entirely inadequate transport infrastructure. It is the wrong site and the wrong type of development and as a Parish Council, **GPPC believe that the proposed appeal should be refused at the appeal hearing.**

GPPC would ask the Planning Inspector to consider an accompanied site visit, including a representation from Grange Park Parish Council. We would suggest that the visit would include a walk from the site to the Grange Park

⁵ <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/3706/transport-poverty-england-2012.pdf>

local centre and separately for the Planning Inspector to drive the route along Quinton Road to and back from Wootton Fields, Grange Park and Road.

The production of this submission has been completed in conjunction with Quinton Parish Council, who approve its content.

List of Enclosures:

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing#achieving-health-and-inclusive-communities> Paragraph: 003 Reference ID:53-003-20191101 Revision date: 01 11 2019

What is a healthy place?

A healthy place is one which supports and promotes healthy behaviours and environments and a reduction in health inequalities for people of all ages. It will provide the community with opportunities to improve their physical and mental health, and support community engagement and wellbeing.

It is a place which is inclusive and promotes social interaction. The [National Design Guide](#) sets out further detail on promoting social interaction through inclusive design including guidance on tenure neutral design and spaces that can be shared by all residents.

It meets the needs of children and young people to grow and develop, as well as being adaptable to the needs of an increasingly elderly population and those with dementia and other sensory or mobility impairments.

Paragraph: 003 Reference ID:53-003-20191101

Revision date: 01 11 2019 See [previous version](#)

- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818679/An Unequal Playing Field report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818679/An_Unequal_Playing_Field_report.pdf) Page 3

Extra-curricular activities are important to young people and result in a range of positive outcomes



Findings from previous research suggest extra-curricular activities are important in developing soft (especially social) skills as well as being associated with a range of other positive outcomes (e.g. achievement, attendance at school). We found from our analysis that extra-curricular activities - specifically music classes and playing a wide range of sports – are important in predicting intentions to remain in education after compulsory schooling. Regardless of these instrumental outcomes, extra-curricular activities were hugely valuable to young people themselves in ways that are not quantifiable. Extra-curricular activities boost young people's confidence to interact socially with others; extend their social networks; and provide them with new skills and abilities. Above all, they offer an important space to have fun and relax away from the pressures of school work. These more qualitative benefits must not be discounted, especially in the context of contemporary challenges around young people's mental health and wellbeing.

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843468/National_Design_Guide.pdf Page 23 Point 78

78 Prioritising pedestrians and cyclists mean creating routes that are safe, direct, convenient and accessible for people of all abilities. These are designed as part of attractive spaces with good sightlines, so that people want to use them. Public rights of way are protected, enhanced and well-linked into the wider network of pedestrian and cycle routes.

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/843468/National_Design_Guide.pdf Page 23 Point 79

79 In well-designed places, people should not need to rely on the car for everyday journeys, including getting to workplaces, shops, schools and other facilities, open spaces or the natural environment. Higher densities are dependent upon accessibility to public transport and essential facilities. To optimise density, it may be necessary to provide public transport infrastructure or to improve existing local transport services. A transport hub may represent an opportunity for a local increase in density, where appropriate to local context and character.

- <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/3706/transport-poverty-england-2012.pdf>

One in four households in England is already without a car (more than five million homes in total)¹ – a figure that is likely to rise as the costs of running a car continue to grow – and many more find public transport unaffordable, inaccessible and inappropriate to their needs. Yet, unlike fuel poverty, there is no officially accepted measure of transport poverty and no strategies in place to address the issue.

- <https://abilitycic.org.uk/> - 5th June 2020

Source: <https://abilitycic.org.uk/> - 5th June 2020

FACTS

We cannot continue to operate the existing services because:

- Demand has dropped on our regular bus trips because travelling together is seen as a risk
- We need to protect ourselves, family/friends and other customers and you from the virus
- Most of our customers (Over 70's) will be in isolation for up to 12 weeks (end of June)
- We are paid on "Passengers on seats" of which 99% is concessionary fares – No Travel no Payment.
- We support the government guidance on social distancing