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Comments on Planning Application 23/00416/OUT

This is an Outline application (seeking approval of access, appearance, layout, landscaping and scale) for the demolition of the existing garage and the erection of a 1 x 1-bed dwelling (Use Class C3) to the rear garden of 21 Meadow Prospect, Wolvercote.

The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum (WNF) seeks to represent the views (in relation to planning matters) of residents in the Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan area, that includes Meadow Prospect, which has some houses which directly overlook Wolvercote Common and Port Meadow. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan (WNP) was approved overwhelmingly by our residents in a referendum in May 2021 and was subsequently 'made' by Oxford City Council.

The WNF Steering Committee has considered the application for Outline Planning Permission for the erection of a single storey house in the garden of 21 Meadow Prospect, and considers that in a number of respects the application is unacceptable. **WNF therefore objects to planning permission being granted.**

Reasons for objecting

1. There have been several previous applications for approval for planning permission to build in this garden: in particular, 22/00872/CPU in June 2022, when what was described as an 'outhouse' was approved as lawful. **But this new application is for a building on a much larger scale.** It is for a much wider and taller building, and it is to be used as a dwelling. It takes up 61sq metres of the garden, and the top of the pitched roof is 4.3 metres high. It is not appropriate for such a large building to be built so close to neighbouring properties. The Oxford Local Plan 2036 Policy H14 expects new buildings to afford "reasonable daylight and sunlight to occupants of existing homes". Policy BEC2 of the Neighbourhood Plan also states that "the design (of new developments) should ...maximise natural light for the benefit of both new and existing residents". This garden home would take both away from No19 Meadow Prospect the immediate neighbour.
2. This house would be only metres away from the edge of Wolvercote Common, which is registered as a SSSI, and a Scheduled Ancient Monument, as well as a European SAC.

3. Policy G2 of the Oxford Local Plan is about the protection of biological diversity – new development should have no “adverse impact” on green spaces, and yet the visual impact of this building on the Common will certainly be considerable, and will disadvantage the many people who choose to take advantage of the open space available to them. The applicant should be required to provide a Visual Impact Assessment from the Common, as Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common form a historic conservation area, and under Policy DH3 are regarded as a heritage asset, which should be protected.
4. The Wolvercote Neighbourhood Plan Policy GBS1 states that “Development will not be supported where it results in the loss of publicly accessible green space **or harms its setting unless it can be demonstrated that there is an overriding need for development on that green space**”. The WNF SC can see no overriding need for this building.
5. The new building seems very likely to adversely affect drainage in the garden, and may also affect the drainage from neighbouring gardens. The Neighbourhood Plan Policy BES4 on Drainage and Flooding requires that “new development should ensure that there is no increased risk of flooding to existing property as a result of development.” Also, that “all proposed developments should demonstrate that they do not decrease rain water infiltration.” By building on green space, and by paving other adjacent areas of the garden, it is surely very likely that this proposed new building will decrease rainwater infiltration. Has the applicant carried out a study of likely effects on drainage? If not, he should be asked to do so.
6. The applicant refers to how the new building will fit in with the other homes on Meadow Prospect like this: “*The revised design fits seamlessly into the existing setting of rear extensions to Meadow Prospect homes.*” **We strongly disagree.** No other house in Meadow Prospect has an extra building so close to the Common (about 3 or 4 metres), and the setting in which it is intended would be spoiled by such prominent development of this kind.

From Wolvercote Neighbourhood Forum Steering Committee, 4 April 2023

Paul Buckley (Acting Chair), John Bleach, Mary Brown, Tony Dale, Suzy Donald, Katherine Kaye, Richard Lawrence-Wilson, Andrew Siontonas, Tamsin Smith, David Stone