

## RESPONSE TO APPEAL APP/Q3115/W/17/3190495

**District:** South Oxfordshire

**Application No:** P16/S3438/O

**Proposal:** Outline application for the development of a retirement village.

**Location:** Land to the east of Reading Road Lower Shiplake RG9 4BG

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### LOCAL MEMBER VIEWS

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**Cllr:** David Bartholomew

**Division:** Sonning Common

**Date:** 30 January 2018

#### **APPEAL SHOULD BE DISMISSED**

The principal grounds for objection are that such a high-density development is totally inappropriate for the location and it would have a severely harmful effect on the rural character of the area.

The second key grounds for objection are lack of sustainability – there is no direct connection to the village. The applicant has sought to overcome this aspect by showing that a footpath could be created linking the site to the village. This does not bear close scrutiny for the following reasons:

1. There is insufficient width between the highway and the site to create a 2m pathway to OCC standards.
2. The land drops away at the side of the highway, meaning a level path would require extensive engineering works, probably a combination of buttressing and piling.
3. The creation of the pathway would necessitate the felling of many of the trees the applicant states would shield the site.
4. All the land required for the footway is not in the applicant's control – even though some of the land is Highways', the path would have to cross land owned by others.
5. The distance from the site entrance along the proposed path to the village centre is approximately one mile uphill – too far for the elderly residents the site is intended to serve.

Note that the Landscape Visual Impact Assessment provided by the applicant is misleading as it fails to show the path at all, including the urbanizing visual impact of the path itself and the consequences of the necessary tree removal. Clearly the creation of the path is not something that should have been proposed to be left as a reserved matter.

Others grounds for objection include:

- References to cycle storage and mobility scooter storage in the application are misleading – the A4155 is the main road from Henley to Reading. It is most certainly not suitable for cyclists or mobility scooters.
- The access point is at a dangerous location near a bend and bottom of a hill.
- The development would be on a greenfield site outside the village boundary.
- The site is totally unsuited for the declared purpose, as elderly residents would find the sloping ground very difficult to move around in.
- There are already sufficient new retirement/care homes planned for the area.
- It does not comply with the SODC Local Plan – Shiplake is NOT a larger village and development is restricted to appropriate infill.