

Dr Radcliffe's Primary School

Fir Lane, Steeple Aston

Bicester.

OX25 4SF

29th January , 2023

Cherwell District Council

Bodicote House

Bodicote. Banbury

OX15 4AA

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Application No:22/03877/f /Middle Aston Limited - Proposed Hatch End development.

I write on behalf of the Governing Body of Dr Radcliffe's C of E Primary School in Steeple Aston in response to the above planning application.

The Governing Body **objects to the planning application and our reasons for this has remained unchanged since the last application.**

Our primary objection is to the direct impact on the **safety of our pupils** and the school community that the increase in traffic of the 'erection of three industrial buildings' and 'replacement of the current Scout hut ' will create, and the type of traffic which will be going past the front of school. This is during construction and after. The amount of traffic passing school is currently a problem and an increase in traffic is a cause of great concern now and in the future. As a Governing Body, and as a school at the heart of the community, our responsibility is the **safety and safeguarding of our pupils.**

There is no consideration to the proximity of Dr Radcliffe's school to the proposed development. Our objection also relates to the size of the development which although much smaller than previous applications by allowing industrial warehousing and Class E use of the development, traffic will be increased during construction, at the opening of the site and in future years. Class E allows for a flexible mixed use development and in the future the buildings could be used for businesses which create increased traffic.

We urge Cherwell District Council to consider highway safety with the type of traffic passing the school on this small rural lane and the increased traffic.

- 1. No reference has been made** to the proximity of Dr Radcliffe's School to the proposed development or consideration for the safety of our 200 pupils or school community. The school is not at full capacity, capacity is 210. We are rated as a Good school with an excellent reputation and we will continue to attract families from a wide catchment area. This generates a high volume of traffic – both cars and pedestrians. We forecast this will increase over the next few years .There has been no consideration to the increased amount of traffic at school peak times or throughout the day and as important the types of traffic that will be going past school. The area outside school will become more congested. Our pupils come from a wide catchment, and thus come to school in cars or use the school bus. As a Governing Body, and as a school at the heart of the community, **our responsibility is the safety and safeguarding of our pupils.**
- 2. Fir Lane is a rural narrow road**, some sections narrowing to single lane without pavement which is unsafe. Parents and children walk along the road as there is inadequate pathway provision. The school bus drops off and picks up outside school and parents park along the road as there is insufficient parking space at these times. The Governing Body have contacted Highways on several occasions, since our Crossing Patrol Person left, to visit school due to children having near- misses on the road. The Community Police have also been involved and when visiting been, most helpful. Neither parties have been able to come up with a solution.

3. **There is no pathway** at all along the section to the north of school, and along the road connecting Steeple Aston to Middle Aston. This ½ mile stretch has sharp bends and one blind summit, and between the village boundaries is subject to the national speed limit (60mph). The added increase in traffic from this proposal renders the route far too unsafe for any families considering walking or cycling to school, despite local and national government campaigns encouraging this on environmental and health benefits.
4. **Pre – School is also on this road**, across from school, as is the Village Hall, Sports and Recreation building, play area and playing fields, which all create traffic. These facilities are used throughout the day by families and children. It is the centre of the village in terms of community use and is therefore a busy place.
5. **Construction concerns:** The proposed route for construction and delivery vehicles is through Steeple Aston past school. These will be heavy goods vehicles, including articulated lorries. The consequences at school start and finish times, adding construction traffic into the mix, are extremely dangerous presenting a major threat to safety. To ensure safety of our school users the developers must consider an embargo during these times, although there is no reference to if and how this can be enforced. There will be disruption to the school day with noise levels and air pollution a major concern with the close proximity of the development to the main school building and outside areas which school use for a high percentage of the day. The Woods are used each day for Forest School and this might not be possible during construction.
6. Our school does all they can to be environmentally friendly and do a great deal of work on this. The wellbeing of pupils is a major priority and the development is next to our playing fields, with the increased pollution of the increased traffic we fear this will have a detrimental effect on our pupils.

If this development takes place we urge Cherwell District Council to consider how they can protect the pupils, families and staff of Dr Radcliffe's, how they will ensure that Fir Lane is safe during construction, once the development is built and into the future. Our request is that CDC work with OCC/Highways and our community to come up with traffic calming solutions on the road outside school. As a publicly funded school we are simply not able to find additional resource for ensuring the road safety of children when external factors arise. In order to provide adequate protection, additional funds would be required. This development represents a significant external, commercial factor which will impede the school's ability to respond to its care for children.

We understand that Steeple Aston Parish Council, Middle Aston Parish Group and Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum share our concerns, as do many local residents and we wish to support them in their objections.

Yours Faithfully,

Lisa Boote – Chair of Governors Dr Radcliffe's C of E Primary School

On behalf of the Governing Body.