

Binfield Village Protection Society  
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By email to: martin.bourne@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

25<sup>th</sup> August 2014

Dear Sir,

**Re: BFC Planning Application 13/00966/FUL and 13/00967/LB**

On behalf of the Committee of BVPS I wish to comment on the applications listed above.

Before doing so I wish to remind the Council of its own guidance to potential developers of the site, provided at the time the tender (if indeed that is what it was) was issued

**Planning Background and Points To Consider**

*The site...is now considered suitable for residential development, subject to planning permission, including in part the provision of older peoples accommodation.*

*When considering their offer developers should give consideration to: -*

- *Minimise the impact of any development on the setting of Binfield House, as Grade II Listed building.*
- *The impact on the walled garden on the site.*
- *Vehicular access to the site.*
- *Impact on neighbouring properties.*
- *Impact on mature trees.*

BVPS is not opposed to development on this site per se, but is concerned that the above mentioned applications **fail to address the majority of the Council's requirements** and the wishes of local residents as follows:

## Provision of older people's accommodation

The proposals are inadequate for older people's accommodation – two-storey dwellings, stairway, remote parking are some of the issues. The proposals are not aligned with the BFC guidance issued at tender stage and with the policies laid out by BFC its own Older Person Accommodation Strategy

## Impact on Binfield House and walled garden

As mentioned in previous correspondence

- The Walled Kitchen Garden is within the curtilage of the Grade II Listed Binfield House and should be protected under this listing. The building of modern houses within and around the walled garden is in conflict with NNPF policy 132 & 130:-

*“Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional”*

- The application is in conflict with the South East Plan, PPS5 Practise Guide (still relevant), English Heritage, Bracknell Forest Council Core Strategy and the BFC Local Plan.
- The Walled Kitchen Garden has been assessed in the “ Statement of Significance” report dated January 2012; and was given a “High Significance “ rating along with Binfield House.
- The Walled Garden has been added to the **English Historic Environment Records (HERs)** register. Ref: Berkshire Archaeology Monument Full Report - *MRM16721 - 30/10/2012*. The Rose Garden/Sunken Garden within the grounds of Binfield House have also been included in the HER record.
- The red herringbone paths around the well and fountain in this area are still present underneath the grass and would be detrimentally affected by the proposed development of seven bungalows. The Rose Garden falls present since at least 1948 is within the curtilage of Binfield House and should therefore be protected under the Grade II Listing. This area was not fully inspected and reported in the “Statement of Significance” – this failure has previously been brought to the attention of the Conservation Officer, Anna-Marie Pagano at Bracknell Forest Council.
- The planning policy documents state that Councils have a responsibility to conserve heritage assets and their settings. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990, Section 1 makes clear that, for the purposes of this Act, any object or structure fixed to the building and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July 1948, shall be treated as part of the building.
- Section 66 of the Act intends that special regard should be given to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The walled garden forms an important and integral part of the curtilage of Binfield House. It has significant original features associated with it, including a north wall shed and apple store. This application proposes demolition of parts of said garden wall and demolition of the north wall shed and apple store. This appears contrary to Section 66 of the Act.

- One of the Council's declared key spatial objectives is to maintain and improve the built and natural environment, and to avoid or mitigate the effects of new development upon the natural and historic environment (as stated on your own website). The Council cites a number of Key Delivery Policies in support of this objective. In particular, this application 13/00966/FUL and 13/00967/LB (and the associated proposed development) would appear to fail to meet the stated requirements of CS1 (viii and ix), and CS7 (i and iii).
- We wish to draw your attention to the letter from Mr Richard Peats - The Historic Buildings and Areas Advisor for English Heritage South East Region - addressed to Max Baker on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2012 (your ref. 25148). Mr Peats does not think it is justified to build houses within the walled garden at Broadmoor and states "We therefore do not consider this aspect of the SADPD to be properly justified." This raises the question whether building within the Walled Garden at Binfield House is justified at all?

### **Vehicular access**

The proposed development will cause traffic problems for the residents of Knox Green. It is already difficult and dangerous to leave and enter Knox Green due to cars parked on the left hand side of the road as you enter into Knox Green from Terrace Road North. The cars on the road into Knox Green make it only passable by one car at a time. The Close/Cul de sac on the right hand side as you enter Knox Green is a quiet Close comprising only 4 houses. The current parking and congestion issues in this area today mean Knox Green is not suitable as a new entrance into the proposed nursery site. Any further development access/egress would exacerbate the following issues:

- Restricted vision when trying to turn right on to Terrace Road North due to poor sight lines caused by cars parked along Terrace Road North on both sides of the road towards the Standard Roundabout.
- Cars parking at the terrace opposite the T junction at Knox Green and Terrace Road North and the allure of the grass play area in Knox Green make this area particularly dangerous as children run out between the parked cars to get to the play area. Increased traffic in this area raises the likelihood of a serious accident.
- We note that while the existing entrance into Binfield House from Terrace Road North near the Doctor's Surgery is also very narrow, a previous plan suggested that this entrance could be widened. Residents of one of the Lodge houses have also proposed this plan.

### **Impact on trees and wider environmental issues**

The development will adversely affect the wildlife within the Nursery Site and the grounds of Binfield House. The environmental report found the existence of Great Crested Newts within this site – these are a very important protected species and their habitat should be protected and not disturbed.

- The land to the South of Binfield House is also home to bats which are seen on a regular basis around the hedges and trees near the Rose/Sunken Garden by the owners of 54, 55, 56, 57 and 58 Knox Green most evenings. The bats were not

mentioned in the survey presumably as the survey was conducted during the day, when the bats are not active.

- We would like to see all trees and hedges in and around the grounds of Binfield House protected; we understand that all TPOs have been removed from this area allowing the developer to remove any mature trees as he think necessary. Some of the trees and hedges to the south of the grounds of Binfield House have not been included on the proposed plan. These hedges and trees form a natural boundary to Binfield House and provide privacy and security for the residents of Knox Green whose properties back onto the grounds of the house.
- The proposed bungalows encroach on the root protection area of tree T58 on the plan. This is a substantial tree and should be fully protected both during construction and thereafter.
- The area of the Rose/Sunken garden is also prone to flooding in heavy rain due to the old well being filled in by earth approximately 20 years ago. The ground in this area is very boggy as it is a lot lower than the other part of the grounds within Binfield House. We are concerned that the proposed development within and around the walled garden and also near to the Rose/Sunken Garden will cause flooding to this area and the gardens of residents of Knox Green.

Finally, BVPS is particularly concerned about the undue haste with which this latest application appears to be being pursued, without adequate time for consultation of local residents and statutory bodies. We wish to place our concerns on record and ask why it appears BFC is making every effort to push these applications through the planning process as fast as possible

Yours faithfully,

Simon Butcher (Chair)

On behalf of BVPS