



**C-POW**

Campaign to Protect Old Woodstock

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## Blenheim ONLINE Public Consultation

### Plans to build 180 homes on Land North of Hill Rise and 240 homes on Banbury Road

Blenheim circulated a brief 'Residents Newsletter' in May. Click here for [the complete newsletter](#) with architect drawings

#### [Comments by Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June](#)

##### **We need to act fast to protect our community**

During these turbulent times it may seem trivial to some to be concerned with the plan to build 180 homes (not 120 as previously suggested on the Local Plan) on Land North of Hill Rise but in many ways it is even more important, with many of us now using the beautiful fields even more than we did before. Those of us who live close to the field have noticed a significant increase in the number of people using the field for recreation and the number of times people are using it. I am sure residents of Banbury Road are also using the footpaths and fields more than they did before. These troubled times also remind us how limited our infrastructure is in Woodstock and how badly it could be affected by the town doubling in size in less than two years' time.

So we at the Campaign to Protect Old Woodstock continue to fight the plans to build new homes on Land of North Hill Rise (and the overdevelopment of Woodstock as a whole) and our resolve has been strengthened by the Covid-19 pandemic and by the decision of Blenheim to push for a 50% increase in homes on the site (and 60 more homes at Banbury Road) with no mention of the promised infrastructure improvements or plans on how to address the concerns we all share over the safety of the A44. We also have a recession, even a depression looming, and feel that now is not the time to build more homes when there is so much uncertainty regarding the future. Imagine unsold empty houses on the field or worse - half built houses!

We are therefore asking all residents of Woodstock, and their friends and family if they are regular visitors, to take part in Blenheim's most recent consultation which is now 'virtual' due to the lockdown. We are suggesting that there are several areas you may want to focus on

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when writing to Blenheim, and there may be some that we have missed (please let us know if you think we have). Our first suggestion is to visit <https://www.blenheimestate.com/property/banbury-road-and-hill-rise/> and check the plans for yourselves.

## Concerns noted by C-POW

We at C-POW have many concerns regarding the plans recently published. They are:

1. The lack of detail regarding the **safety concerns** we all have around the A44. There are some vague details regarding paths and mention of a bus stop, and a loose commitment to contribute to making the road safe. We feel this issue needs addressing before these plans are considered by West Oxfordshire District Council. The original consultation pressed home the importance of sustainable transport links but in this document all we see is a parking barn!
2. **No mention of wider infrastructure** concerns such as the pressure that will be placed on school places in Woodstock Primary School; the improvements to the Doctor's Surgery and the parking situation in Woodstock. As part of the consultation with Community First there were 6 new infrastructure projects identified (Doctor's Surgery; New library; better sports facilities at Marlborough School; Indoor Swimming pool; Electric Car scheme and a community development worker). In addition, 6 existing infrastructure projects were identified (A44 Safety; new drop-off parking for the schools; parking inside Blenheim grounds; wider road improvement; environmental improvements and better pavements) yet there is no mention of these infrastructure projects in the latest consultation.
3. We need much more detail on the paths. There is a vague map but it does not give any details such as whether it will be a wheelchair/buggy friendly path, with lighting and safety features, or if it will be a basic track. The existing footpath through the fields (which leads on to Wootton) has now become a road, not a path, which will sadden many of us. This is a crucial aspect of the entire plan as it links to the issues around road safety, parking in Woodstock and the potential impact on the security and privacy of existing homes of a path passing the back of these houses.
4. We have been promised that the existing play area will be kept but in these plans the existing park and grass pitch has gone and instead there is mention of play gardens and play spaces.
5. There is now a plan to provide a Pavilion, which is potentially a welcome development. But again, we are left with very few details about what the pavilion will look like, who will maintain it, who can use it and what it is for. There is also the inclusion of allotments, with very little information on who will be able to use them. If someone were cynical they might think these extras are inducements to make local residents feel they are being listened to, while bigger (and more expensive) infrastructure requirements are largely ignored.

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Blenheim Palace have suggested that they will **apply for planning this summer 2020**, and they could potentially start building next spring, which could mean we only have 9 months left to enjoy our field before this new housing estate is created. So please, ensure you respond to the consultation. **You can email Blenheim using [consultation@blenheimstate.com](mailto:consultation@blenheimstate.com) or write to them at:**

Public Consultation  
The Estate Office  
Blenheim Palace  
Woodstock  
OX20 1PP

We have until **Friday 19 June** to make our voices heard. We believe that the pressure already applied by C-POW and the community has had an impact on Blenheim Palace and we are pleased that they seemed to have listened to many of our concerns. However, they have not listened to our main concern which is that they need to slow down, build Park View first and then measure the impact of that on the town before building any more homes, let alone the fact that we believe it is not a suitable site for development in the first place.

The Campaign to Protect Old Woodstock will do everything it can to prevent the build taking place, and at the very least try to slow it down and if it does happen make sure we protect the community as much as we can. However, we need the support of the people of Woodstock as we can only win if the whole community object and then our elected representatives at West Oxfordshire District Council would have to listen to us. The main way to support us is to get involved. The second way is to help us by donating a small sum to the cause. So far, we have spent quite significant sums on communication. We plan to employ a local planning consultant to advise us on how best to object to these plans when they are submitted, which will cost at least £300. If anyone can make a small donation using these BACS details you will be doing your bit to protect our community.

Account name: Campaign to Protect Old Woodstock

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We welcome feedback and will stay in touch throughout the process, and of course, stay safe.

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