

CUMNOR PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee
held on Monday 16 June 2025 at 7.30pm
in Fogwell Road Pavilion, Fogwell Road, Dean Court.

In attendance.

Committee members. Laurence Waters, Chair (Council Vice-Chair), Dona Foster, Gary Mason, Judy Roberts, Chris Westcott and Tina Brock, Clerk.

District Councillor. DC Judy Roberts.

Visitors. None.

46/25 Apologies for Absence.

Tom Christophers (Council Chair) (unwell). This apology was received.

47/25 Variation of Business. None.

48/25 Declarations of Interest. None.

49/25 Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning Committee held on Monday 19 May 2025.

The Committee resolved to approve the minutes which were signed by the Chair.

50/25 Public Participation. None.

51/25 Submitted planning application.

The Committee would submit the following observations:

Table 1 List of planning application(s).

Ref	Planning application number	Address and proposal.
i	P25/V0921/O	16 Cumnor Hill, Cumnor, Oxford OX2 9HA <i>Demolition of existing dwelling house and proposed erection of building comprised of 7 flats and associated landscaping and access works.</i> Object.

Description of Proposal:

- Demolition of existing 1.5 storey 3 bed detached house and
- proposed erection of building comprised of 7 flats (5x 2 bed + 2x 1 bed) over 3 floors
- Associated landscaping and access works.
- Proposed 7x on-site parking spaces allocated to 1 per flat + 2 visitor spaces. No motorcycle spaces provided
- On site cycle storage and single bin collection point in front of proposed building

Council Comments

- This application is seeking ‘outline planning permission’.
- However, it includes detailed floor layouts for each flat, construction materials to be used, an Ecology Report and an Arboricultural Report.
- It does not include, for example, floor and slab heights, swept path analysis and visibility splay calculations for vehicles entering/leaving the site, nor the claimed Flood Risk assessment.
- As of 15/06/25 the application has received a number of objections from residents on grounds relating to [Cumnor’s made Neighbourhood Plan](#) (CNP), noise and overlooking. At least one objection notified to CPC has not yet been published on the VWHDC website.
- Planning history for this site is complex:
 - [P23/V2115/O](#) sought outline planning permission for 9 flats over three floors which, according to the applicant’s Planning Statement (para 2.7 on pp3)

‘was withdrawn by the applicant following negative feedback relating to the scale of the buildings from the LPA’

Planning Statement para 2.15 further states

'In correspondence with the Council's planning officer, it was opined that the apartment proposal could not be supported due to its scale and massing and that there also remained outstanding matters relating to drainage. The Council's officer considered the extent of changes she saw to make the development acceptable as being necessary to require a fresh planning application.'

CPC objected on the grounds of it being contrary to CNP policies DBC3 (design in the low density area), DBC5 (Lower Cumnor Hill/Third Acre Rise Area of Special Local Character) and RNE2 (flood risk)

- [P24/V0571/FUL](#) (as amended 3 times) sought full planning permission for 2x 6 bed dwellings, each with accommodation over 3 floors.

CPC objected on the grounds of it being contrary to CNP policies DBC1 (Design across the parish), DBC3 (design in the low density area), DBC5 (Lower Cumnor Hill/Third Acre Rise Area of Special Local Character) and RNE2 (flood risk)

The VWHDC Planning Officer recommended approval, but, after 2 meetings and a site visit, the VWHDC Planning Cttee voted to refuse planning permission because:

'This is contrary to policies CP37 of Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and policies DBC1, DBC3 and DBC5 of the Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan.'

The applicant then appealed, but the Inspector upheld the refusal, stating in para 20

'I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the character of its surroundings. Accordingly, a material conflict would arise with those provisions of LP policy CP37 and NP policies DBC1 & DBC 5 in that the development fails to respond positively to the site and its surroundings; fails to integrate appropriately to its surroundings and fails to properly reflect local characteristics which led to the area's protective designation.'

- This applicant makes extensive reference to other *'flatted developments'* in their Planning Statement. These developments were all granted permission before the Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan became made.
- The applicant's Planning Statement para 2.23 claims that the proposal responds to both the withdrawn application for 9 flats and the refused appeal by *'reducing the scale of the building in respect of its height and overall form (and, as a result, the number of flats by two as well).'*
- Unfortunately, this assertion is not backed up by the dimensions shown on the proposed submitted plans (see table below); Elevations Proposed drwgn PA104 A.pdf for the [P23/V2115/O](#) withdrawn application, and Elevations Proposed drwgn PA105A.pdf for this application.

Comparison of withdrawn 9 flat application and this 7 flat one			
	Width (m)	Ridge height @ front (m)	Depth (m)
P23/V2115/O	16.8	8.7	23.4
P25/V0921/O	13.5	9.7	25.6

These show that this proposal is taller and deeper than the [P23/V2115/O](#) withdrawn proposal, that withdrawal being prompted, according to the applicant, by adverse VWHDC Planning Officer opinions on 'scale and massing'

- The applicant's Planning Statement para 3.26 states that CNP Policy DBC5 'is also of relevance' but then asserts in para 3.27 'the site is not one of special character deserved of special designation'
- This assertion (and others) is read as an attempt to refute or ignore Policy DBC5 which applies to an area (see map from CNP below) that includes the proposed site,



Map 11 Proposed Lower Cumnor Hill and Third Acre Rise Area of Special Local Character

where the area so designated sits within a [hierarchy of local designations administered by Historic England](#), sitting just below the 'conservation area' designation.

- The Planning Statement para 4.16 states the proposed development 'is 2 storeys'.

It is not. At a minimum it is a 2.5 storey building as floor plans (Floor Plans Proposed drwgn PA104A.pdf) for 3 storeys accompanying the application demonstrates.

- The Planning Statement 4.44 states that 'a detailed Flood Risk Assessment is also included'.

It isn't, the included SUDS Report.pdf not addressing CNP Flood Risk Policy RNE2 as required, the site sitting within Cumnor Hill (see CNP map 15 pp 44) – Policy RNE2 section A.

CNP notes that the refused [P24/V0571/FUL](#) application proposed a large 'bund' in the rear of the property to cope with expected volumes of water should the 2x pumps required by the VWHDC Planning Officer fail.

No such provision is apparent in this application, nor possible given the location of the proposed rear parking and amenity spaces.

- With the entrance for 6 of the 7 flats on the east side of the proposed block this would mean people entering/exiting being exposed to passing traffic entering/leaving the proposed rear car park.
- No swept path analysis or visibility splay calculation is included to demonstrate how cars, delivery vans etc could enter and leave the site safely in a forward direction, necessary given that the site is on a bend on a steeply sloping road that's a bus route.

- CPC notes the adverse comment of the VWHDC Waste Management Officer and would add the issue of having to transport refuse from the building to the bin store by means of the access road to the rear parking.
- CPC notes the adverse comments of the South and Vale Ecology Team who record that the applicant is *'undervaluing the biodiversity value of the rear garden'*.

Reasons for objecting to this application.

- This site has a complex recent planning history.

To simplify it, Cumnor Parish Council assesses that the applicant has (to use their phraseology from their Planning Statement) *'to all intents and purposes'* chosen to essentially repeat their previous [P23/V2115/O](#) application, withdrawn, according to the applicant, following advice from VWHDC that it *'could not be supported due to its scale and massing'*.

This choice has been made in the knowledge that the Planning Inspector, in refusing the appeal for [P24/V0571/FUL](#), noted that (in para 13) in respect of replacing the existing dwelling with a single new dwelling (rather than the 'tandem' backland 2 dwelling permission sought and refused)

Having regard to the NP's policies referred to, and to the provisions of LP policy CP37, I do not consider that the proposal to erect a dwelling as a replacement for the existing could reasonably be regarded as objectionable. Although larger than that to be replaced, it is of an acceptable design and scale and would fit acceptably into its visual context.

CPC notes that the applicant has chosen not to pursue this option, but instead to essentially repeat its previous withdrawn application, and in doing so has sought to refute or ignore the relevant planning policies, rather than engaging with them.

Thus, CPC has decided that, as in the previous instances:

- This application is contrary to policies CP37 of Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 1 and policies DBC1, DBC3, DBC5 and RNE2 of the Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan by virtue of:
 - Its scale and massing
 - the development failing to respond positively to the site and its surroundings;
 - failing to integrate appropriately to its surroundings
 - failing to properly reflect the local characteristics which led to the area's protective designation.
 - Non-compliant/absent flood risk assessment
- Contrary to the applicant's un evidenced claim of *'a blanket to prevent development and the evolution of the area'* made in para 3.27 of the Planning Statement, CPC would welcome a revised application that was compliant with the above policies and which additionally addressed the other issues raised above (such as overlooking, pedestrian safety, biodiversity etc, foul and storm water handling etc.)

As examples of relevant planning applications recently approved in the Parish where it was demonstrated that VWHDC and Cumnor Neighbourhood Plan policies had been adhered to when proposing to demolish a property and replace it with a new build, CPC would point the applicant to [P24/V1378/FUL](#) and [P25/V0601/FUL](#).

Neighbourhood Plan

If you have an emerging or adopted Neighbourhood Plan does it support your view on this application?

Yes	X
No	

Policies DBC1, DBC3, DBC5 and Flood Risk Policy RNE2

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

52/25 Next meeting.

Monday 21 July 2025 (provisionally) at 7.30pm in Fogwell Road Pavilion, Fogwell Road, Dean Court.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.

SignedDated2025.