

DC/19/05624 | OUTLINE PLANNING APPLICATION

**ERCTION OF NEW COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS PROVIDING UP TO
10,625SQM B1/B2 FLOORSPACE AND UP TO 625 SQM OF A1/A3
FLOORSPACE, WITH ASSOCIATED ACCESS, CONNECTING THE
SITE WITH THE A137, PARKING, LANDSCAPING, SUDS AND
AMENITY AREA**

**LAND WEST OF VICARAGE LANE, VICARAGE LANE, WHERSTEAD
IP9 2AE**

OBJECTION ON BEHALF OF THE STOUR & ORWELL SOCIETY

1. The Stour & Orwell Society takes the great possible exception to this proposed development.

2. It has the appearance of being an entirely speculative substantial commercial, retail and A3 development on agricultural land in an isolated rural location, bordering the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Area of Outstanding Beauty and within the setting of numerous important listed buildings. It is in a completely unsustainable location, inaccessible on foot from other than from a handful of properties, inaccessible by bicycle by any other than the most fearless cyclists, served by the most limited and intermittent public transport .

3. Notwithstanding the proximity of the A14 and A137, the site sits firmly within a rural area. It lies immediately adjacent to the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and within the AONB Additional Project Area.
4. The Council has recently commissioned Alison Farmer Associates, highly regarded landscape professionals, to consider the Landscape Fringes of Ipswich (July 2018) in connection with its emerging local plan. This application lies within - and indeed forms a substantial part of - the area designated as WS1 in the Report.
5. The opening passage¹ reads:

“The sensitivity of this area lies in its rural location and historical association with Wherstead Park and as a setting to the Suffolk coast and Heaths [AONB] which lies adjacent. This area is also valued as a rural approach to Ipswich.”

The Report also records that the “landscape performs an important function² as a setting and approach to Ipswich and as the context to a collection of listed buildings associated with the hamlet and former Wherstead Park.”
6. SOS agrees entirely with these sentiments, as expressed in their very recent Report by the Council’s advisers.
7. Extensive built commercial development, parking, signage and lighting would fundamentally disrupt the function of the site in this landscape and introduce a harshly urban element at this key location on the fringe of the AONB, visible to

¹ Page 74

² Emphasis added

thousands daily as they pass along the A137 or use the village road through Wherstead.

8. Vicarage Lane and Wherstead Street are full of listed buildings (at least 6) still retaining their original Estate village setting. That setting would also be fundamentally disrupted by developing the field which lies to the south of the village.
9. As with its recent comments on the Aqua Park proposal at Wherstead, SOS takes this opportunity to note that there has been a rash of development proposals in Wherstead submitted over the past few months – either in or in very close proximity to the AONB. Although Wherstead village is passed by many tens of thousands of people daily (many of whom appreciate its rural and unspoilt appearance), it is a very small village and community. Cumulatively, these various proposals would deliver a very substantial quantum of development in or adjacent to the AONB. None of these proposals is supported by development plan allocations. Moreover, it is apparent from the submitted documentation, that there is an inadequate appreciation of the importance of Wherstead's landscape, its history and, for example, the role played in its present form and appearance by one of the UK's foremost landscape gardeners, Humphrey Repton. Wherstead is also awash with listed buildings and Babergh DC has, in the recent past, indicated the potential for the designation of a conservation area at the village. Accordingly, SOS strongly requests that Babergh DC commissions a full review of the landscape and heritage significance of Wherstead village and Estate before approving

any of the current series of planning applications. Without doing so, SOS considers that there is a real risk that serious errors will be made and Babergh DC will fail to discharge its statutory obligations in relation to Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

THE STOUR & ORWELL SOCIETY

17.01.20