

July 2017

1. The OBU site is 22 ha and according to SODC LP2033 the "existing development footprint is 12 ha". However GVA has chosen to propose housing on approximately 16 ha with an area to the NW reserved for sports facilities.
2. The proposal accommodates 600 houses. The layout is unimaginative, it resembles housing wallpaper, unresponsive to orientation, constraints and vistas. There is little or no attempt at "place making". This is because there are too many houses. Creative layouts could be designed with 300 houses allowing passive solar solutions and interesting spaces between the buildings as opposed to spaces left over after planning (SIOPs).
3. The proposal has many shortcomings and inconsistencies. The gross floor area, and/or the cubic volume of the existing buildings are not really relevant in determining if a proposal is appropriate for a site, particularly as the use is changing. The same sort of argument however is not used for the number of parking spaces or tennis courts retained in the proposal.
4. It is desirable to have development which does not impact the surrounding countryside. The W end of the site, where housing is proposed is 17m higher than the round level at the base of the tower. This is more than the height of 6 domestic storeys. So, up to five storeys plus roof would still be lower than the floor level of the houses proposed at the W end of the site.
5. The two entrances and the road linking them are to be welcomed but, disappointingly, there is no attempt to provide pedestrian/cycle links to the communities of Wheatley (via a bridge over the A40) or Holton. The proposal creates a new community that for all practical purposes is only accessible by car.
6. The proposal acknowledges and preserves the ancient monument and is sensitive to the existing TPOs. Retention of the ancient tree avenue running down to the SE of the site is to be welcomed.
7. The proposal does not include any facilities, not even a convenience store, social space or nursery, so cars will be used inevitably to access the facilities that exist in Wheatley and Holton. An estimated 1,200 vehicles with possibly 2 or 3 times this many trip generations are likely to stress the Park Hill roundabout and Old London Road, particularly at peak times. This is hardly an enlightened or sustainable approach.
8. The area in the NW corner has yet to be specified in terms of numbers of sports fields, changing room facilities and, glaringly, the provision of parking for players and spectators.