

**08 September 2016**

**16/03435/FUL. Construction of a single dwelling and detached garage. Blockley Water Works Bell Bank Blockley Gloucestershire.**

The Cotswolds Conservation Board have objected in the past to the “major” greenfield housing sites outside the settlement boundary of Blockley due to the impact of these developments on the character and special qualities of the AONB. This has included the recent application at Land off Park Road, Blockley (38 dwellings) which was indeed refused planning permission by the Council and which included a reason for refusal making reference to the impact on the Cotswolds AONB.

This site, although only for a single dwelling, is still outside the settlement boundary. It does appear in the past that the settlement boundary was drawn in such a way to specifically exclude this area of land from development, whilst also provide an additional level of protection through the Conservation Area designation. The emerging Local Plan policy is still subject to the Hearings process and the eventual publication of an Inspectors Report before Adoption. However, it still excludes this site from the settlement boundary and also excludes development of this form where it would harm open spaces or gaps that make a positive contribution to the character of the village, including views and vistas. The applicant has quoted Paragraph 14 of the NPPF whilst not making reference to the related Footnote.9. that confirms that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not automatically apply due to the AONB and Conservation Area designations and that there are specific policies in the NPPF that “indicate development should be restricted.”

The exclusion of this site from the settlement boundary therefore remains relevant. There is a large gap along this section of Chapel Lane where there are no dwellings. This area of land is where the countryside comes into the village and this has been recognised in the location of the settlement boundary. Development on this site would harm the character of this immediate part of the village as visible both from Chapel Lane and from the public footpath to the west by introducing new development into a gap where no development exists. The proposed development of this site would result in a negative impact on the character and special qualities of an area of land that currently positively contributes to the AONB and Conservation Area. The Board therefore wishes to raise an objection and notes Paragraph 115 of the NPPF that states “great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty” in AONBs.