



**C-POW**

Campaign to Protect Old Woodstock

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# Are Blenheim moving the goalposts as well as the signposts?

## Blenheim Palace admit there is no limit to how many homes they would build if given the chance

All Woodstock residents must have been surprised to find that Blenheim Palace moved the signposts that welcome visitors to Woodstock outside the new Parkview development. What may surprise residents even more is that Blenheim Palace are trying to increase the number of homes being built on the Banbury Road and Land North of Hill Rise sites without informing the residents of Woodstock.

According to a Scoping Document submitted by Terence O'Rourke to West Oxfordshire District Council (the September 2019 document was [here](#) but has recently been removed), Blenheim have increased the number of homes they are trying to build on Banbury Road from 180 homes to 240 and on Hill Rise from 120 to 180. The document clearly stated that "the proposed Land North of Hill Rise development will comprise up to 180 dwellings, comprising a mix of house types and tenures and including a proportion of affordable housing" (pg 3). The wording on the Local Plan clearly states that there is the potential to build up to 120 homes, therefore Blenheim are asking for 50% more which has not been communicated at all during the many Community First events.

In a recent meeting with Roger File (Chief Executive, Blenheim Palace) and Dominic Hare (Chief Operating Officer, Blenheim Palace) members of C-POW put it to them that they are covertly trying to build more homes. They did not confirm or deny the claim but instead responded in vague terms that they need to build as many homes as possible in Woodstock for the good of the town and Blenheim Palace. We sought clarification on how many homes could be built in Woodstock in the coming years:

- 600 homes are already agreed in the Local Plan and they are determined to build them regardless of the impact on the town
- 500 more on land south-east of Woodstock if they win the appeal against the Local Planning Officers decision
- 120 more that allocated on the Local Plan at Banbury Road and Land North of Hill Rise
- **Therefore, potentially building 1220 new houses in Woodstock, which would increase the number of homes in Woodstock by 76%**

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Given that currently there are no clear plans for how they plan to mitigate the impact of the developments on the town (road safety; traffic; parking; school places; doctor's surgery; safe walkways) there is clear potential for harm to the residents of Woodstock.

Not only that, but when C-POW spoke to Blenheim Palace we asked them if they could slow down the developments, as in the original plans presented by Community First there was talk of the Hill Rise development not going ahead until 2026, but they were not interested. The Oxfordshire Local Plan is titled 2031 suggesting that there is some time to consider the impact of each development and to offset potential harm through building infrastructure first but Blenheim Palace were indifferent to our concerns.

Please do not think that it is inevitable that Blenheim Palace can get their way. **When they apply for planning, we need every resident of Woodstock to write to West Oxfordshire District Council to outline our objections.** C-POW are hoping to employ a planning consultant to draft an effective template which will make WODC sit up and take notice.

We will publish more newsletters on a regular basis. We are currently researching who stands to profit financially from the building of so many homes in our beautiful town as selling 5-bedroom homes for £1.2 million ([Park View homes](#)) will make someone very rich!

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