

Address to Council from Mark Pitt

Development issues in Oxford

We are currently seeing a wave of the most divisive, dangerous and desperate development either permitted by, or directly undertaken by Oxford City Council.

Divisive as the city is already divided into a rich, spacious north with vast expanses of green space and an increasingly cramped south.

Sounds Bad? It gets worse, the Council it stated to the Inspector as Core Strategy policy C.S.21 "*The City Council will seek to maintain an overall average of 5.75 ha of publicly accessible green space per 1,000 population*" - but population increases meant that already, by 2010, without allowing for any removal of green space at all this no longer existed.

Bad? It gets worse – in the green spaces survey, supporting evidence for both Core Strategy and the Barton AAP, the Council told the Inspector that Oxford's population would rise by 2.75% – no, it had risen 11% up to 2012 – a 400% miscalculation – if it took me an hour to ascertain this why did the Council not check the evidence it submitted?

Put simply, the Inspectors accepted in good faith evidence from the Council that was simply wrong, the DPD sites were therefore assessed incorrectly.

Bad, It gets worse – Barton green space was decided as 10% of the total *area*, but per 1000 residents, using reasonable assumptions, the development will have less unrestricted green space than Tower Hamlets.

Bad, It gets worse – the nearby Barton Cricket Ground, protected green space, was cheerfully given up for development leaving only 16% as the green space down from the 25% the Inspector agreed on with already incorrect data.

Bad, it gets worse – you ran with the pack leading the Headington green space asset stripping, hacking of chunks of the last green space left, Bury Knowle Depot and the precious stables – you pour concrete into the heart of Headington, turning communities into dormitories - you should not inflict such losses on those least able to afford them.

Why do I say dangerous development?

The Thames is mighty, bringing us food and water, but a deity she is not, and when millions of cubic litres of water fall on her vast catchments we get the repeated flooding of previous centuries, for example, the great Wellington Flood of 1852 when Oxford was described as "*floating on the surface of some boundless river for as far as the can reach nothing is to be seen but water.*", and 1894 when all of St Ebbes, Botley, St Frideswides, Osney and Hinksey were underwater - should teach us caution, but we are ignorant of historical reality, and rely on computer models.

The 1850s saw the end a 500 year "The Little Ice Age" and the onset of a global warming, and one can speculate these events may be related as may be again.

We can either decide that as the Environmental Agency's floodlines have been surpassed so many times it will be millennia before this happens again, or the modelling is wrong, or that something has changed and it has.

Drainage has been much improved, but as I walk up the Thames valley seeing stile after stile over long gone hedges, the vast swathes of arable replacing the pocket sized fields Lord North's Elsfield map of 1703, the sprawl of Headington where Antony A Wood gloried in the fields of rye in the 17th century, fields where vast Wychwood used to be, I know that if water comes, there will be little to slow it.

The risks have changed, global warming may mean heavier and more intense rainfall, leading to an increase in groundwater and surface water runoff, and whereas a bunch of blokes in hi viz manning flood defences at Osney may be a comforting visual metaphor for a caring patriarchal state, that is river defences - when the water goes by, but there is little defence for groundwater which comes up from under, and surface water, that flows over, which is precisely the risk at Barton – you advance to the water, when you should retreat.

In November 1894, in this very chamber in a dramatic scene, an exhausted mayor stood up to report on his flood relief– with 3 miles of planking in St Thomas's and St Ebbes, four schools had been closed, food came by boat, collections held to relieve the sufferings of the poor and he said:

“They might have had the waters as high as it was on the present occasion, but they now had hundreds of houses built on the low-lying districts to contend with which they had not had previously.

Up jumped Mr Underhill, he wasn't having a bar of this - *“a strong feeling of indignation was passing through his breast with those who permitted buildings and put up buildings in such a miserable situation. “*

to which Mr Kingerlee retorted he *“had voted that these houses should be built in these very districts, and then he wished to pass a censure upon himself and others who has passed those very plans..” He thought they ought not to blame the people who built, but the authority that passed the plans”*

Should we be building on low lying districts like Barton and Oxpens due to the flood risk? I don't know, but what bothers me, is neither do you.

Thank You

NPFF no need

our policies intensify this deeply

Social housing for welcome development

Grand

New Victorians ref planning

1:4000 so OK

Population

The Flood Of 1894

Jackson, Nov 24th or Nov 17th 1894 *"The Mayor said they were all aware that the city had been visited by one of the most disastrous floods ever remembered in Oxford. They might have had the waters as high as it was on the present occasion, but they now had hundreds of houses built on the low-lying districts to contend with which they had not had previously. He had seen women wheeled in barrows and children running through the floods to get bread for breakfast.... Mr C. Underhill was quoted as **"At the same time, a strong feeling of indignation was passing through his breast with those who permitted buildings and put up buildings in such a miserable situation."** to which Mr Kingerlee retorted he "had voted that these houses should be built in these very districts, and then he wished to pass a censure upon himself and others who has passed those very plans.." **He thought they ought not to blame the people who built, but the authority that passed the plans"***

Nov 24th 1894, *"- the volume of it, however, was so unusually large that in all the low-lying meadows, especially those adjacent to the rives, and in the basements and cellars of many houses it has by no means disappeared. In the streets in Osney, Friars, St Thomas's and Hincksey [sic], the water made its way into hundreds of dwellings, .. four schools were closed by order of the managers during the height of the flood .. about midday on Friday the water was at its highest, and the discomfort and inconvenience it produced in the low-lying portions will not easily be effaced from the memory of the sufferers. In some cases children were taken to school in a boat.. and various articles being handed up to the bedroom windows in baskets it is estimated the planks would extend a distance of about three miles..*

Up jumped mr underhill, in this very chamber

Even if you had insisted on housing instead of car parks this is beyond you, and each development is more desperate, diversive and dangerous than the last, these are terrible losses to inflict on poorer communities – it is the poor that suffer , irreplaceable green space is signed away

Stile after stile over non existent hedges, in place the small fields of Elsfield on Lord Norths map are vast arable lands, the woods of wychwood are all but gone, and the fields of rye revelled in by Antony Wood on Headington Hill, natures natural SUDS are removed.

Pop review

That bad, it gets worse

Equality of slaves

, turning communities into dormitories.

Private space

Show urban village

It will never happen again cant

Objection by Natural England

Building in deprived area

Green space lost conv to

1:1000 year flood happened 4 timesa

Add Old Road, Barton loss, BCG, Barn and Depot

16% not 25%

Heritage

Pour concrete in the heart of Headington

Where will the children play?

Whiff of smoke Tony Benn, arrogance last colony

Where will the children play, play pip play!

Selfishness and exclusivity

Is that bad? It get worse

Communities not dormitories

Dog eating chunks bites off park

It will never happen again

Conclusion

- can only deepen social inequalities and exacerbate social inequality in one of the most segregated cities in Britain?

Garden cities

The full force of problems on poorest – alternatives

“Ensuring a Strong, Healthy and Just Society”

Quote CS on green space

Show island effect and green city NPPF and arable green for Northway, Barton

Understanding green the little old lady , cut up bury knowle park, prime cuts

Hacked and like the man with the horse trained it not to eat

10% for housing/space

;Green deprivation

Every blade must be fought for

OFFCUTS

We live in a very socially divided city segregated into north and south, rich and poor yet it is the latter who will bear the brunt of Council’s development plan.

This reviews the current and future very low green space provision in the Headington and Barton “Urban Villages” concentrating on the importance of the imminently threatened community and green field sites the former Barton Cricket Ground, Bury Knowle Stables and Depot all of which .

The social and amenity cost of housing provision in Oxford is falling disproportionately on the poorest parts of the city as a direct result of Oxford City Council’s policies.

Green Space And Social Equality – A City Divided

OUT? – Headington had only 60% of the 5.75 H.A. per 1000 promised to maintain as a city wide average under C.S.21 of the Core Strategy.

Link flood 1852 with end of little ice age.

??, as the developments at Barton, Bury Knowle Depot, and Barton Cricket Ground and others take green space and increase population

Bad, It gets worse – the pressing need for housing ..

– the Core Strategy was passed on incorrect evidence presented to the Inspector.

He had seen women wheeled in barrows and children running through the floods to get bread for breakfast.... “