

Isis House Planning Application – Residents’ Comments

Traffic generation, parking, highway safety and public transport

Parking

- Historically, previous residents of Isis House have used the rear parking area for more than two cars. The area has been entirely gravelled for this purpose, and we fear that many more than two cars will end up using this area if the House is granted change of use. This will make a big impact on the traffic flow in and out of Isis Court. Our children (and our neighbours’ children and grandchildren) use this area as a play area (riding bikes, scooters and tricycles) and we are concerned for their safety.
- Current parking along St Lawrence Road is crowded and treacherous as the road is narrow and many South Hinksey residents and visitors already use this road for parking as they lack their own private parking area. Inadvertently blocking the entrance to Isis Court (by parking in St Lawrence Road) is perilous if emergency vehicles need to get to the houses inside the Court.
- There is not sufficient parking space for service users and visitors to this property. Parking in the village is not possible.
- The application states there is space for five cars. As the front entrance of Isis House is landscaped, it is not clear where the additional cars will park. It is unacceptable for more than two cars to park at the rear of the house for pedestrian and child safety concerns. It is also not acceptable that this number of extra cars use the private road of Isis Court for access, creating extra noise and air pollution.
- Our private parking spaces within Isis Court have been inconsiderately used by visitors to Isis House in the past and we fear this problem will only get worse. Although the application states there are two car spaces at the back of Isis House (and has plans drawn to that effect), in fact the whole area at the rear of the property is shingle, with no individual spaces reserved for cars. In practice, more than two cars are often parked in that area. Our concern is that if the application is granted, more than two cars will be parked at the rear of the property.
- St Lawrence Road is narrow and there is limited space for on-road parking – barely enough for the residents of South Hinksey who do not have private parking spaces. Access for large vehicles – including emergency vehicles – is already tricky at busy times, and any increase in numbers of cars parked along this road would exacerbate

this issue. “This is something particularly close to my heart, having recently needed an ambulance to urgently take my new-born son to hospital.”

- There is already a problem with on street parking within Isis Court and Church Close, with cars spilling out to the limited spaces on St Lawrence Road. As the courtyard space in the front entrance will be set aside for garden use, what will be the parking provision for staff and visitors? As described within the design and access statement, it is predicted that at peak times there could be up to 5-10 staff / visitors present during the day, where will they park?
- Employment site – Number of staff is not included on the planning application form. It appears the applicant does not wish to address this part of the application as it will highlight the impact on parking, public transport and trip generation within the village.
- The village dates back to Saxon times and was not constructed with roads and vehicles in mind. Blind corners, narrow unsurfaced roads, reduced pedestrian footpaths all mean that children, walkers and pets use the roads as access. The residents have suffered from damage to property from delivery vehicles squeezing by parked cars. The proposed plans do not sufficiently address the level of parking or delivery and service vehicles which will have an impact on the current problems the village already faces.

Access Traffic generation

- In order to meet the needs of the increased service users and staff it is anticipated that food delivery, and general delivery/courier services will be intensified. South Hinksey is a very quiet village. Large HGV vehicles are prohibited from entering due to its narrow roads. The applicant states their intention to use Barleycott Lane for vehicle access. This is a narrow unsurfaced lane with gated access for the horses which are frequently ridden along the lane. Larger vehicles frequently using this lane will have no turn around space. All vehicles travelling along this lane will create considerable noise to the residents adjacent to it and increase damage to the already unstable surface. It will not be acceptable for these vehicles to enter Isis Court for unloading as due to the small area there is no space for turning. Lorries and vans will block access for residents and increase noise disturbance.
- Currently there is some access given to Isis court for the property. This has been disruptive in the past. With increased traffic flow and the general unsuitability of Barleycott Lane for some vehicles it is

feared that traffic in and out of Isis Court will be increased. The residents' association as owners of the land will not accept this and will seek to block all access to Isis House via their private land

Night-time Traffic

- Given the unpredictable nature of mental health disorders and medical detoxification, it is anticipated that on-call employees will be accessing the house during the night. Indeed, this 24/7 care is a crucial draw of the proposed facility. This night-time traffic will disturb the residential peace within the small court.
- The front of Isis House is accessed through Barleycott Lane, a single track, unsealed road. It is not suitable for an increase in vehicular traffic. The rear of the property is accessed through Isis Court. This is private land, owned by Isis Court Residents Association Ltd. The cost of maintenance of this road therefore does not fall on the council, and instead is shared between residents of Isis Court.
- Fire tender access. In this unfortunate situation, will the current road network be able to cope with fire tender access?

Public Transport

- The planning application refers to access to South Hinksey via bus 35B. This is incorrect. There is no current direct public transport access to South Hinksey village. The fact that the application includes this bus route reflects the lack of diligence in preparation of the application. The second bus route mentioned refers to a bus stop on Lake Street. This is over a kilometre away and involves a walk across The Devil's Backbone (narrow, single track path, unlit at night) and crossing the stairs-only railway bridge. It is therefore unsuitable for wheelchair users or anyone with additional mobility needs.
- All other bus routes and stops mentioned will incur walking across fields and alongside the Southern Bypass dual carriageway and the busy A34.

Cycling/walking access

- The application mentions cycle routes and walking routes to access facilities such as shops. However, it does not mention the fact that this requires crossing the railway bridge which has no cycle ramp or wheelchair access.

Amenity considerations Waste Storage and Collection

- Waste removal and food deliveries – the current front entrance to Isis House is via an unmade road. How will deliveries be managed? Is the

intention to deliver via the shared residential accommodation of Isis Court and what will be the timing of deliveries? It is antisocial to allow large vehicles to deliver at 7am. With the signage at the entrance to village restricting large HGV vehicles, this will lead to increase trip generation for food deliveries and commercial waste removal.

- The application states that no change is needed to the waste disposal for the house, but if they are actually running “a 24-hour medical facility” don’t they actually need medical waste disposal?
- Hazardous Substances The application states no hazardous substances will be stored. Does this extend to medical substances and materials? The nature of the service provided must have medication for treatment and managing a patient’s recovery. Where will this be stored and how will it be disposed of?
- Waste. The property has been built and always used as a family home. It has never had the proposed number of adults residing in it nor significant numbers of frequent daily visitors. The application states that the property incorporates ‘areas to store and collect waste’ and that the collection of this waste is to remain the same as it is now. This is not possible. The increase in waste i.e. food composting from the onsite mentioned ‘restaurant’, recycling and land waste will be significant given the number of adults both living in and visiting the property. This intensified commercial waste production would be in line with the commercial services of the ‘Boutique’ style facility, the application describes.
- Storage The existing collection service for one small compost bin is a once weekly collection with green and black bins emptied on alternate weeks. The current bin size is unsuitable for the commercial amounts of waste that will be generated. Larger volumes of waste storage will have an impact on the surrounding area and neighbours in terms of its allocation, hygiene and smell.
- There will need to be increased collection services for this amount of waste resulting in considerable noise for the residents of this quiet and densely packed residential area.

Consultation – Engaging and discussing proposed plans with neighbours

- The majority of immediate residents in close proximity to Isis House were not consulted and only became aware when the planning application was circulated.

- In the applicant's proposal they state that they sought to engage and discuss their proposed plans with neighbours. We received a letter in June 2020 which stated that they were planning to 'operate a luxury well-being and life coaching centre.' At no point did they mention an addiction detoxification facility. In our opinion, this is deceitful and misleading, and does not foster a trustworthy relationship with these potential new neighbours. Furthermore, some of our immediate neighbours (within Isis Court) did not receive a letter nor any contact from the applicants prior to the submission of this planning application.
- Given the applicant intends to use Barleycott Lane for the increased vehicle access (which will significantly affect the houses and barns adjacent to the road) the residents were not notified or consulted.
- Very few residents were notified of this application. It has now come to light that a full company website has been launched with images of the house and village. Lists of services are displayed with contact details and prices. It appears the company is already operating and its arrogance in pre-empting planning approval is astonishing. The company has shown no willingness to engage with the residents most impacted by this and certainly not to the wider village. This demonstrates a lack of concern for the size, infrastructure and general character of the village and a blatant disregard for this small village community.

Change of purpose

- South Hinksey is a quiet residential village with a large cohort of young families residing within its boundaries. The rear of Isis House is accessed from Isis Court, which is also accessed by at least three young families with children ranging from 0-15 years old. We are very concerned about the potential distress and negative impact that witnessing medical detoxification may have on these families and their dependents. "As a GP I have witnessed medical detoxification on many occasions. Withdrawal symptoms include insomnia, nightmares, hallucinations, shaking, sweating, agitation, confusion, paranoia, cravings, delirium and seizures. There will, no doubt, be disturbed nights at Isis House and with a staff to resident ratio of 1:5, I do not see how this disturbance can be contained." We anticipate increased night-time noise and (with the advertised 24/7 care), increased traffic flow both during the day and at night. The houses within Isis Court are very close together and noise travels easily at night. We consider the proposed change of use of Isis House to be incompatible with the quiet residential neighbourhood surrounding it.

- The authors of the planning application suggest that the change in purpose is relatively minor, by stating that it will be changing from a *residential* dwelling to a *residential* treatment centre. This is using the dual meanings of 'residential' in a misleading manner. The fact that those undergoing treatment will be 'residential' (that is, inpatients at the clinic 24/7) does not make this any less of a clinical treatment centre – that is, very far in nature from a standard family home.
- It is a change of use to C2, but this could lead to opening up the door for C2a. We understand that we can only comment on the application being presented, however we have to ask what is their 5 or 10 year plan? Will they be planning any extensions in the future or further alterations to the current access? If permission is granted then the property should lose its permitted development right as the property is already over developed for the current site.
- The Applicant states that Oxfordshire is in need of mental health services. This is true, however linking their own private luxury facility will in no way address or benefit the wider mental health concerns of the area. This is a 'for profit' business, unsuitable for the area, which will not contribute any positive additions to the community it has imposed itself on.
- This sort of business is very out of character with the village. This is a small village and this will significantly change the flow of traffic and people into and out of the village. It seems very out of scale.

Employment

- None listed on the application form. How many people will the facility employ either on a permanent or temporary visiting basis?

Crime and community safety

- Pedestrian Access – As service users will be resident overnight, will there be any restriction on their access and movement within the village during the day and at night?
- We are concerned about the building being used as an inpatient unit for people suffering from mental health disorders including addictions to alcohol, drugs, gambling and sex. South Hinksey is a quiet village with many young families; in particular Isis Court is home to at least three families with children. "As a consultant paediatrician I can testify to the often distressing nature of medical detoxication and the negative impact on child development. I am alarmed about the effect that witnessing this could have on my two young children growing up directly opposite Isis House. Similarly, mental health crises can be

extremely troubling to observe, detrimental to child development, and sadly can often not be easily contained within a single premises.”

Noise disturbance and loss of privacy

- The application specifically mentions plans for the patients/clients to use the balcony of Isis House. This balcony is immediately adjacent to our garden (sharing a common wall) and from that vantage point it is possible to look directly into our garden and also into our main indoor living area. The loss of our family’s privacy to transient patients/clients is unacceptable. There is also the potential for significant noise disturbance if – as proposed – groups of adults use the balcony adjacent to our home.
- All our bedrooms back on to their site as does our garden and noise and disruption is very worrying.
- Service users will be looking into neighbouring gardens. A high percentage of the bedrooms are located on the first and second floor. To counter this, Velux windows would need to be fixed shut which is a fire risk.
- Noise. The residents will reside within the home for up to 3 months and will have differing levels of anxiety whilst having their treatment; this will be a challenging time for them. What levels of noise reduction will be put in place? The screening mentioned within the planning statement does not stop anti-social noise escaping into neighbouring properties.
- Many of our homes have bedrooms that face onto Isis Court. When there is activity at the back of Isis House it often floods the courtyard with light and noise. Having a 24-hour facility and a business occupying that house means that many of us may no longer have a quiet or dark courtyard outside our bedrooms.
- Increased traffic flow including deliveries where vehicles are fitted with reversing alarms will significantly impact on the noise levels around the area.
- All overnight or early traffic into the village will cause a disturbance.

Location within a residential area

- The planning application names a number of other facilities managed or founded by the proposed Clinical Unit Manager. Each one of these are isolated properties, set within several acres of land. None of them are set within residential areas. One can only assume that this is at least partly because of the disruptive impact of such clinics on their

surroundings, and their overall unsuitability for location within residential areas.

- The property is already over developed for the current site.
- When comparing the location of Isis House within South Hinksey Village to other facilities managed by the Personnel at Chapter One Recovery, this proposed development is effectively in the wrong location. Isis House is not in open countryside and does not tie in with the many values expressed within the website publications for Promis Hay Farm, Promis Withersdane Hall and Withersdane French Unit.
- The proposed residential scheme is described as being a discrete residential detox unit, notably sex addicts, people with drug addictions, gambling problems and people who are dependent on alcohol to reside for up to three months at a time. We all know that 1 in 4 people experience mental health issues of some kind each year in the England, and a facility like this is essential within Oxfordshire. However, the location of this development will be located within the heart of a tight residential development which will no doubt lead to conflict. The proposed development is in no way set back from its neighbours.
- Isis House does not have any access to private garden space. It has a small open courtyard at the front and a gravelled area at the back. The only outdoor space is around the village thus bringing the activities of the facility constantly within the public's day-to-day village life.

Other

- The chain of accountability is unclear. Who actually owns the property and who is ultimately accountable for what happens on the property? The person who made this application is mentioned as the clinical director, but is not a director of the company: <https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/11512699/officers>
- The property has been a rental property since its development. Is this the case now or is the company now the registered owner?