Peachcroft Field Action Group's response to planning application, Ref: P13/V1268/0, by Radley College (the applicant) to build up to 55 homes on the green belt field/open space bordering Twelve Acre Drive and Radley Road.

OVERVIEW

Background information about Peachcroft Field Action Group.

Our aim is to protect the above-mentioned green belt/open space, which was provided by the landowner and the council in 1972 through a legal agreement.

Peachcroft Field Action Group is composed of residents who are opposed to Radley College's application. They first became aware of Radley College's intention to develop the site in March 2012 when the college submitted a speculative proposal under the IHSP screening process.

At a public meeting it was decided that all those present together with people who were interested but unable to attend would remain as a group and make their comments known when and if a firm proposal were forthcoming.

Volunteers formed a committee in March 2013 when it was clear that Radley College intended to go ahead with a planning application and the group has had regular meetings since then. They have tried to keep others informed of the situation and have researched the background to the field.

OUR OBJECTIONS TO THE PROPOSED APPLICATION

1. Loss of Green belt/open space status of the proposed site

Radley College signed a Section 16, Berkshire County Council Act 1953, legal undertaking on 6 March 1972 with Berkshire County Council not to develop the five acres (approximately), which the planning application 13/V1268/0 covers (see Appendix A).

The terms of the above agreement are binding not only to the College but also to the Council. The purpose of this agreement was to create an open space, as part of the conditions for planning approval for the Peachcroft Estate land, while preserving the view of Radley College to the south.

As can be seen from the documents in Appendix B this land was required in order to meet requirements for an open space due to the excessive density of housing on the proposed Peachcroft Estate and also in Abingdon. Radley College benefited from having the open space in this position, as it provided them with an open vista from the College and made a wider belt of land between Radley and Abingdon.

The negotiations preceding the signing of the legal agreement are shown in Appendix B. They were an integral part of the overall negotiations and approvals, which created the Peachcroft estate and established the urban/rural boundary for this part of Abingdon over 41 years ago.

In the application Radley College state in their introduction to the scheme that there is no planning history. As can be seen from Appendices A and B in this
document planning negotiations were taking place in 1971 and 1972 resulting in a legal document being signed by Radley College's representatives in 1972.

The clear purpose shown by the District and County Councils to secure an area of “open space” in perpetuity on behalf of the local community is clearly described in the records in Appendix B.

**Radley College was compensated for not being allowed to build on this land.**

Radley College was **compensated** for losing this ‘open space provision’ by being given permission to develop **extra** land that they owned at the opposite end of Twelve Acre Drive. The proposed position of the roundabout at the bottom of Lodge Hill was moved further north to accommodate this extra land. Details are in Appendix B 10.

**The land has been actively used for agricultural purposes (it is Grade 2 “good” quality land according to the national assessment) in recent years.**

At the beginning it was available for local community access on a permissive basis, although a crop of hay was harvested in most years. During one year cows were kept in the field. Now it has similar characteristics to land on the other side of Twelve Acre Drive, which is used primarily for arable crop growing. In 1972 Radley College agreed to keep this land as agricultural or lease it as an open space for a nominal rent. They chose to use it for agricultural purposes and the Peachcroft Farm tenants farm it.

The local community continues to value this open land and wishes to see it preserved for future generations.

**We believe the Vale of White Horse District Council should continue to honour the intent and purpose of the legal agreement reached by its predecessors for this parcel of open land.**

**The above-mentioned legal agreement was considered by the Planning Inspector for the Vale of White Horse’s 2011 Local Plan to:**

*Place a question mark at best over its genuine availability for development.*

The Inspector continued:

*Accordingly, I see no justification for the GB boundary to be altered here, nor for the site to be identified as safeguarded land.***

2. Loss of Green Belt Permanence and Openness

**The application does not accord with Green Belt policy as outlined in the:**

a) National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

b) Vale of White Horse Adopted Local Plan 2011 (2011 Plan)

c) Vale of White Horse Consultation Local Plan 2029 Pt.1 (2029 Plan)

The application should not be approved because it is against the NPPF which states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land **permanently open**; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their: **openness and their permanence**” (NPPF - para.7“9).

The Oxford Green belt boundary in the vicinity of Twelve Acre Drive and Radley Road, Abingdon was essentially set through the agreements reached by Radley College with local planning authorities in the early 1970s.
In 1975 the Oxford Green Belt was approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment as an amendment to the County Development Plan. There were areas of land to the north of Abingdon where the Green Belt policy operated on an interim basis to allow a detailed review of the boundaries to accommodate a limited amount of development to meet some of Oxford’s housing and employment needs. The boundaries of the Green Belt were confirmed by the adoption of local plans to the north of Abingdon in 1983. Successive structure and local plans have confirmed the commitment to the Green Belt.

The Vale of White Horse District Council has sustained its commitment to the “openness and permanence” of the Oxford Green Belt, including the 5 acres at the corner of Radley Road and Twelve Acre Drive, through the adopted policies of the 1983, 1999 and 2011 Local Plans. The policies for consultation in the emerging 2029 Local Plan continue to support the “openness and permanence” of the whole of the Oxford Green Belt around Abingdon, including the 5 acres at the corner of Radley Road and Twelve Acre Drive.

The Green Belt designation for the 5 acres was explicitly upheld by the Planning Inspector in the 2006 report into the 2005 Public Inquiry into the 2011 Local Plan (see Appendix B).

Approval of this application would reduce the already small distance between Radley and Abingdon by up to 140 metres (a reduction of a quarter).

We agree with the view expressed in 2006 by the Planning Inspector into the 2011 Local Plan that:

The gap is already fairly narrow and largely open so that the loss of this site to built development might well contribute to an increased perception of coalescence from some viewpoints, due to the intervisibility between settlement edges.

A statement in the application indicates that the plans will provide open spaces that meet the needs of the new and existing communities.

This site is the open space for the existing community (the Peachcroft Estate) and Radley College are seeking to remove it.

When the Peachcroft Estate was built, Radley College stipulated that no rear gardens could be seen from the College. That is the reason houses by the fence or hedge to the west of the field have their frontages facing Radley College. Any rear gardens, which have the potential to be seen, are hidden by houses facing the College.

In summary the site:

- has defined the urban/rural boundary for over 41 years – it has the permanence expected of Green Belt land, which should be preserved for future generations.
- it is part of the open land between Radley and Abingdon that local authorities in the 1970s secured through legal and land use planning means – its loss would contribute to both an increased perception of coalescence and a substantial narrowing thus closing viewpoints for the local communities
- the development is inconsistent with the fundamental purposes of Green Belt – openness and permanence – which have been established for over 41 years
- preserves the views from the south to the College – this purpose is identified in the legal agreement protecting the land from development and is valued by the local community walking east from the sharp bend on Radley Road a short distance away from the Twelve Acre Drive/Audlett Drive roundabout.
- is an open space that is part of the Peachcroft Estate.
3. Alteration to the Green Belt

The application should not be approved because it is against the NPPF which states that Green Belt boundaries should:

Only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the preparation or review of the Local Plan. (NPPF - para. 83).

Radley College failed to make the case in 2005, at the Planning Inquiry into the 2011 Local Plan, to convince the local community, local planning authority and Planning Inspectorate that this Oxford Green Belt site should be developed (see Appendix C).

In addition to the NPPF, the 2029 Local Plan makes clear that the:

Vale council has found that there is sufficient land to meet its housing needs at this stage without releasing land from the Green Belt. If the boundary needs to be redrawn in the future this could be considered through a Local Plan Review (para.5.26 – 2029 Local Plan).

In summary this application seeks to alter the Green Belt but:

- it does not accord with the NPPF
- it does not accord with the approved Local Plan 2011 nor the emerging 2029 Local Plan
- it is opportunistic.

4. Inappropriate use of the Green Belt and Applicant's failure to demonstrate very special circumstances

The application should not be approved because the application is harmful, as defined in the NPPF, to the Green Belt and this harm is NOT clearly outweighed by other considerations (para 88 – NPPF).

A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in Green Belt (NPPF - para 89.).

Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. ‘Very special circumstances’ will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations (para. 88).

The arguments presented by Radley College to justify the very special circumstances necessary to overcome the harm caused to the Green Belt by this inappropriate development fall substantially short of this test.

The application should not be approved because the application is for inappropriate development that is harmful to the Green Belt and does not provide exceptional community benefits that cannot reasonably be provided elsewhere (2029 Local Plan - Core Policy 9).
The application **should not be approved** because the application is not for any of the approved uses of Green Belt as defined in policy GS3 from the 2011 Local Plan.

The applicant presents the necessity to contribute to the 5 year housing supply as a “Very Special Circumstance” for the development on the Green Belt Land but **fails to provide any evidence that there are no other available sites, which are not on Green Belt land.**

The applicant belittles the best available analysis and evidence that there is sufficient housing supply, and therefore no need to release Green Belt Land.

The applicant argues that since the emerging Local Plan has not yet been adopted (Sec 6.41 of the Planning Statement): “the approach is entirely hypothetical and can be afforded little weight.” Any future planning is by definition hypothetical, but a comprehensive analysis, such as the 5YHLSS (5 Year Housing and Land Supply Statement) 2012, is based on a detailed analysis, which must be accepted as best available.

**We submit that the Local Plan 2029** is at more advanced stage than represented by the applicant, and should be given due consideration, as well as the 5YHLSS 2012. For example:

(i) **The Local Plan 2029 Part 1** (consultation completed in May 2013) Section 5.26, states clearly “…The Vale council has found that there is sufficient land to meet its housing needs at this stage without releasing land from the Green Belt.”

(ii) The applicant (Planning Application Section 6.18) acknowledges that the most recent 5YHLSS (The Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement) advises that the Vale has a **total housing supply representing 7.3 years** supply, although then argues that these may not all be delivered within 5 years.

(iii) There is also strong evidence presented in the 5YHLSS, which demonstrates clearly that there would be a **housing supply of 5.1 years if the strategic housing sites from the emerging local plan were included**, and therefore no need to release Green Belt land. (Annex D, Vale of White Horse District 2012/13 Five year housing land supply statement)

In summary the applicant:
**Has failed to demonstrate both the “very special circumstances” and the “exceptional community benefits that cannot reasonably be provided elsewhere”**.

5. Misleading visual appraisal

Statements made in the application refer to the loss of views due to filtering by vegetation. This only applies during summer. The views return in winter.

6. The site is not sustainable

**REASON FOR OBJECTIONS**

There is a lack of primary school places in the whole of North East Abingdon, which
will be made worse if another site is developed.

As seen in the attached data in Appendix E many children are not getting into their catchment area school or even one of the next two nearest schools to their home. This results in families driving their children miles away to a school that has been allocated to them or in the County Council having to pay for taxis.

Given the type of housing that is planned on this site, even a donation from the developer might not provide an easy solution to the problem, which exists before any other houses are built. Rush Common School would have to be treated separately, as it is an Academy and outside the remit of the County Council.

Families in the surrounding area already have the problem of having siblings of primary school age at different schools through lack of places, which is a logistical nightmare for parents.

At the Berkshire County Council planning meeting of July 1971 the clerk recorded that there was a need for a five-acre primary school site to be considered on the Peachcroft Estate. This was not built and the children were absorbed into the local primary schools. This is one of the reasons they are so overcrowded now.

To quote from the Vale of White Horse's 2029 local-plan mission statement:

There is no point building new houses without the jobs, infrastructure and services to support new families.

We need more schools in the correct area before we look at building any more houses. North Abingdon has grown very considerably in the last 30 years and now has a very high density of housing, but in this time few new schools have been built. This is an important issue.

From research it has been found that the Vale of White Horse as a whole can claim to have enough school places. This is based on all the schools in the area. It is unacceptable to expect children who live in an area where there is a shortage of spaces to have to be driven to a school much further away. This has a knock on effect, causing problems of parking outside schools, increased congestion on the roads during the rush hours and most importantly it is against the 'green travel to school' issue.

Section 5.6 of the application planning statement refers to the fact that two primary schools (Thomas Reade and Rush Common Schools) are within 15 to 18 minutes walking distance but if there are no spare places there then this statement is useless.

The catchment area for Thomas Reade School extended to 0.599 miles (964 metres) in 2012, which puts the proposed site very close to its outer edges. In 2011 the catchment area extended to 0.437 miles (703 metres), which could have put some of the proposed site outside of this. The catchment area for the oversubscribed Rush Common School does not at present include the proposed site. It stops just east of St Peter's Road, off the Radley Road, and just east of Norris Close on the Peachcroft Estate.

North Abingdon cannot cope with the schooling demand with the current number of properties / families living in the area.

There is likely to be insufficient capacity in the foul water drainage sewer.
No firm details have been given about foul water drainage. Residents in Radley Road have concerns that the sewer will not be sufficient for the extra load being produced by the proposed site. Problems do exist on this sewer already. The application only states that the manhole should have sufficient capacity and they only envisage connecting to the sewer located in Radley Road. More details should have been given to reassure existing residents.

7. The site has the potential to create traffic and transport problems

**REASONS FOR OBJECTING:**

The site will cause increased traffic movements in the area and the site access is in the opinion of many people too close to a very sharp bend in Radley Road.

The consultation exercise affirmed this concern.

The site access is very close to an extremely sharp bend in Radley Road. Existing residents opposite the proposed site know the difficulties of entering and exiting their drives and this will happen in reverse if the entrance is built as shown on the plan.

There is no guarantee in the application that a developer will not want to gain access to the Peachcroft estate via Barrow Hill Close, which is a quiet cul-de-sac.

Provision of a bus lay-by at 'The Chestnuts' bus stop would have little effect on the access road to the proposed site, as it is far enough away not to impinge on the entrance to the proposed site. It would certainly be beneficial to cars, etc. having to wait behind the bus when it stops but this is the only consideration. A half lay-by would have even less effect. A considerable amount of money has recently been spent on a pathway to the shelter to provide easier access. The problem of buses stopping opposite each other is a matter for the bus company.

The applicant states that developers (should) promote sustainable travel for all journeys associated with the new development, especially those to work and education. How can they justify this when many more car journeys are having to take place because parents are taking their children to schools further away, as a result of there not being vacancies in local schools. There are no suitable bus routes available to some of these schools.

Section 2.8 of the planning statement quotes the Abingdon Integrated Transport Strategy. While this has possibly made some improvement to the town the situation is still dire during rush hours and anyone who has to commute through Abingdon will know of the time they have to wait in traffic jams.

Photograph 3.1 on the application shows how it is not possible to see anything round the bend at the rear of the photograph.

The accident data is irrelevant as it is the **potential** danger we are concerned about when the proposed access road is so close to the very sharp bend and visibility is reduced.

The application suggests that there may be fewer accidents due to the development causing drivers to reduce their speeds in expectation of the access roads. Unfortunately human nature doesn't always fit into this criteria and the access road will not be seen until a vehicle is actually on the bend when coming from Abingdon.
A potential 'problem' identified in Section 4.17 related to the available forward visibility for a refuse vehicle driver whilst waiting to turn right into the development (as the refuse vehicle driver has to wait further east on Radley Road than a car driver). Cole Easdon Consultants, as 'Designer', produced a Designer's Response document, where they demonstrated that more than sufficient forward visibility is available for refuse vehicle drivers. They did not mention the fact that a car driver coming round the bend from Abingdon might not see the refuse vehicle until it was too late. We question whether this is within the stopping distance and reaction time for someone travelling at 30 mph from Abingdon.

How can Radley College know that the developers will give out bus vouchers when they do not know yet who the developer will be? Surely the project would have to go to tender as the College is a charity. Many young families have to use cars to take their children to school and then for the parent to go on to work. Often neither the school nor the workplace is on a convenient bus route so cars will still be used.

8. Potential damage to an archaeological site

The site is of known archaeological potential. More detailed surveys need to be done and possibly some excavation work also. It is very close to the ancient barrows across the road. This problem could lead to the developers not being able to build within the suggested time frame.

Summary of the reasons why we object to the outline planning permission being granted.

- The proposed site is in the Oxfordshire Green Belt.
- The applicant has misled local residents over their application by suggesting this field is an anomaly. There are good reasons why the field was kept as an open space.
- The applicant is trying to undo a legal undertaking made between the County and District Councils and themselves, which was designed to keep the proposed site as an open space for the benefit of the community.
- The applicant has previously been compensated for the loss of this land for development.
- The statement by an inspector following the public enquiry into the 2011 local plan supports the retention of this field as green belt land.
- The application conflicts with the adopted local plan 2011.
- The application conflicts with the intent of the draft local plan 2029 Part 1.
- The application conflicts with clauses within the NPPF.
- There is a lack of school places in local schools, making the site unsustainable.
- The access to the site gives rise to a considerable amount of concern, as it is very close to a sharp bend on Radley Road and increased traffic will add to an already busy road at peak times.
• The latest figures suggest that remaining housing targets in the Vale are lower and not so many new homes are needed.

• The land is of archaeological interest.

The following appendices can be seen below.
Appendix A – 1972 Agreement
Appendix B – Negotiations and Background to the field becoming Green Belt
Appendix C - Planning Inspector’s Report on 2011 Local Plan (p.39 February 2006))
Appendix D – Support for the emerging 2029 Local Plan Part 1
Appendix E – Data for North Abingdon Primary School places.
This undertaking is given this 25th day of March, One thousand nine hundred and seventy two by the Council of Saint Peter's College Radley (hereinafter called "the Applicants") of Radley College Radley near Abingdon in the County of Berkshire to the County Council of the Administrative County of Berkshire at Shire Hall Reading (hereinafter called "the County Council") under and pursuant to the provisions of Section 16 of the Berkshire County Council Act 1953 and all other powers then enabling.

Thereas:

(i) the Applicants are the owners in fee simple of land at Radley near Abingdon in the aforesaid County of Berkshire which land is more particularly delineated on the plan annexed hereto and shown thereon coloured green (hereinafter called "the green land") comprising an area of five acres or thereabouts.

(ii) on the twenty fifth day of March, One thousand nine hundred and seventy two the Applicants made application (Application No. P/126/70) to the Abingdon Rural District Council and (Application No. 62/70) to the Abingdon Borough Council (hereinafter called "the District Council") acting as agents for the County Council for planning permission to develop twenty two acres of land at Beechcroft Farm by the erection of some 240 houses and service roads.

(iii) the District Councils acting as agents for the County Council are prepared to grant outline planning permission in respect of the said Application No. P/126/70 and Application No. 62/70 subject to appropriate planning conditions and the Applicants have agreed to give the undertaking hereinafter contained in order to preserve the view of Radley College from the South.

2. Now therefore the Applicants hereby undertake with the County Council as follows:

Not without the consent of the Local Planning Authority to allow any development to take place on the green land PROVIDED

(i) this undertaking shall become void and of no effect if any substantial development other than that permitted by the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1963 takes place on the land lying to the north or east of the green land.
(ii) This undertaking shall become void and of no effect in the event of any department body or authority which has power to acquire land compulsorily seeking to acquire the green land or a substantial part thereof for the purposes of development as defined by section 12 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1962.

1. If any dispute or difference shall arise between the Applicants and the County Council touching any clause matter or thing whatsoever herein contained or the operation or construction thereof or any matter or thing in any way connected with this Agreement or the rights duties or liabilities of either party under or in connection with this Agreement then and in every such case the dispute or difference shall be determined by a single arbitrator to be appointed by the President or other proper officer for the time being of the Law Society and in accordance with the Arbitration Act 1950 or any statutory modification or re-enactment thereof for the time being in force.

In Witness whereof the Applicants have caused their Corporate Seal to be affixed the day and year first before written.

THE CORPORATE SEAL of THE COUNCIL of

\[ Signature \]

\[ Signature \]

\[ Signature \]

\[ Signature \]
Appendix B

Transcripts of documents held at the Berkshire Record Office in Reading

B1 Abingdon Rural District Council. 14 July 1970

P/128/70 Residential development – Stage 1 (area of approx. 22 acres). 240 dwellings including an area in Abingdon Borough. Peachcroft Farm, Radley, for Radley College.

It was reported that the County Planning Committee had considered the Council's observations in connection with this proposal but were of the opinion that the density of seven houses per acre on the periphery of the Estate was not excessive when compared with an overall density of eleven houses per acre. The Council's comments concerning a landscaping scheme for the estate would be covered by the normal estate conditions to be attached to the planning consent. With regard to the open space your Committee

RECOMMEND:-

"That the County Council be advised that this Council are prepared to accept by way of gift and maintain the land to the east of the site as a public open space".

B2 Abingdon Rural District Council. 13 October 1970

P/128/70 Residential development – Stage 1 (area of approx. 22 acres). 240 dwellings including an area in Abingdon Borough. Peachcroft Farm, Radley, for Radley College.

Your committee have noted that Radley College are prepared to enter into Section 16 agreement with the County Council undertaking to maintain the land to the east of the above mentioned site clear of buildings and to use the area for agricultural purposes only. They feel, however, that without provision for an open space the proposed density of development would be excessive. It is accordingly recommended that Radley College be asked to reconsider the matter with a view to reverting to their original proposal that the area in question be made available as an open space.

B3 County Planning committee – July 1971

PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AT PEACHCROFT FARM, RADLEY

(Cf. I/691)i)/71) (Clerk) Following consideration of this matter at the last meeting the request for a member level meeting is renewed by the Abingdon Borough Council and the Abingdon Rural District Council.

An officer level meeting was held on 14th July and a verbal report was made to the Committee, who were reminded of their decision in April 1970 to grant planning permission in respect of 22 acres of the Peachcroft Farm land subject to certain provisos, one of which related to the prior completion of a Section 16 Undertaking in respect of the safeguarding of approximately six acres of open space at the entrance to the estate (I/382(ii)/70). Following the officer level meeting, referred to above, there was further contact between the Town Clerk of Abingdon (acting for both Councils) and the Bursar of Radley College. The request for a member level meeting was subsequently withdrawn, but it was requested that the Town Clerk should be allowed to address the committee. This was agreed.

As a result of the meeting between the Town Clerk and the Bursar it was suggested that a member level meeting with representatives of the College Council should be held towards the end of September, at which it is hoped that the question of the provision of an open space and on what terms, might be finalised. There is also now the need for a five-acre primary school site to be considered.
There was some consideration as to whether these negotiations should be left to the two District Councils concerned and their recommendations brought to the County Planning Committee for decision, or whether the County Council should be represented at the proposed meeting. It was eventually decided that the latter course of action should be adopted.

**Resolved:** That the Chairman, accompanied by the Clerk and County Planning Officer, or their representatives, be authorised to attend the meeting referred to in the above report.

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**B4 Abingdon Rural District Council. 18 May 1971**

P/128/70 Residential development – Stage 1 (area of approx. 22 acres). 240 dwellings including an area in Abingdon Borough, Peachcroft Farm, Radley, for Radley College.

A letter was submitted from the Berkshire County Council in connection with the above-mentioned proposed development, together with a copy of a Report, which had been made by the County Planning Officer to the County Planning Committee at their meeting on 28 April 1971. The Report made reference to a new proposal of Radley College to the effect that they were prepared to make available the 6 acres of land required as an open space for a period of 21 years at a 'peppercorn' rent. If this offer were accepted, the proposed Section 16 undertaking in connection with the retention of this area as an open space, would be to the effect that the land would be retained as such for a period of 21 years and not in perpetuity as previously envisaged.

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**B5 County Planning committee – September 1971**

1/755 DEVELOPMENT AT PEACHCROFT FARM ABINGDON.

(Cf. Min. I/720/71) (CPO) At the last meeting when this matter was discussed at length, it was agreed that the Chairman should attend a meeting to be held between representatives of the College and the local authorities to follow up the opportunities for agreement on the open space that had been discussed between the Town Clerk of Abingdon and the Bursar. In the event the College Council were advised by their Agents, Messrs Drivers Jonas, that they should not change their attitude in relation to the provision of an open space and the projected meeting did not, therefore, take place.

The Town Clerk has, however, met the Bursar and Mr. Clemens of Messrs Drivers Jonas and it is understood they have all agreed that the previous decision on the 22 acre site should be confirmed, but that the College in the particulars of the Sale for the remaining land, should indicate that 4 acres of public open space would be required in the layout.

It was understood that Abingdon Borough Council would be considering the situation at their meeting on the 14th September and it was hoped that the way would now be clear for the Committee's previous resolution to be acted upon.

(Clerk). Shortly before the meeting of this Committee a telephone message was received from the Town Clerk of Abingdon to the effect that, in the light of recent developments, the Borough Council would now be recommended, at their meeting on 22nd October 1971 to make compulsory purchase orders in respect of 7.15 acres of land zoned for public open space in the Abingdon Town map, 5 acres of which are in the area of the present application. The Town Clerk asked that the present application should now be refused in the light of the action contemplated by the Borough Council, and as being contrary to the provisions of the Town Map.

**Resolved:** That:

(i) The previous decisions of the Committee be now implemented and the applicants informed that, provided a satisfactory Section 16 Undertaking is furnished in respect of the 6 acres of land required to maintain the open view of the College, planning permission will be issued.

(ii) The Abingdon Borough Council be informed accordingly.
B6 County Planning committee – October 1971

1/792 DEVELOPMENT AT PEACHCROFT FARM ABINGDON.

(CF. Min. I/755/71). (Clerk). It was resolved at the last meeting that (i) the previous decisions of the Committee be now implemented and the applicants informed that, provided a satisfactory Section 16 Undertaking is furnished in respect of the 6 acres of land required to maintain the open view of the college, planning permission will be issued and (ii) the Abingdon Borough Council be informed accordingly.

Correspondence with Messrs. Drivers Jonas, the Agents acting for Radley College, now makes it clear that the College would wish the Section 16 Undertaking to be made voidable in either or both of two circumstances:-

1. If the land to the north and east, i.e. on the other side of the peripheral road on the south (?) See below) side of Radley Road should be the subject of further alternatives for development if planning permission should be granted for development.
2. If any authority seeks to acquire the 'agreement land' land for any purpose.

These points have not previously been the subject of report to the Committee and further instructions are requested.

It is now understood that there have been further negotiations between the Abingdon Borough Council and the Governors of Radley College, as a result of which it seems likely that agreement will be reached on the provision of adequate open spaces in future stage of the development.

The two sets of circumstances in which the proposed Section 16 Undertaking would become avoidable are thought basically reasonable but it is suggested that the first might be reworded as follows for the sake of complete clarity:-

If development is permitted on the land lying between the proposed 6 acres of land, the subject of the Undertaking, and the College, the effect of which would be to obscure the open view of the College which the Undertaking seeks to preserve.

Resolved: That, subject to the satisfactory completion of an Undertaking under the provisions of Section 16 of the Berkshire County Council Act 1953, as indicated in the above report, a formal Notice of Consent in respect of the erection of 240 houses and garages, with provision of estate road, at Peachcroft farm, Radley Road, Abingdon, for the Governors of Radley College is now issued.

B7 Abingdon Rural District Council. 16 November 1971

DEVELOPMENT AT PEACHCROFT FARM, RADLEY.

The Clerk of the County Council has advised that the County Planning committee at their meeting on 27th October 1971 decided to approve the above mentioned development subject to the Governors of Radley College entering into an agreement under Section 16 of the Berkshire County Council Act, 1953. This agreement would relate to the six acres of land at the entrance to the estate and would provide for this to remain free from development permanently, provided that land between the proposed open space and the College remains undeveloped and provided no local authority sought to acquire the land for any purpose. In any of these eventualities the agreement would lapse and the College would be free to make an application to develop it residentially.

The College have indicated their willingness to enter into such an agreement and are prepared either to keep the land in agricultural use or to lease it at a nominal rent as an open space.
Section 16 of the Berkshire County Council Act 1953.

Undertakings and agreements binding successive owners.

(1) Every undertaking given by or to the Council to or by the owner of any legal estate in land and every agreement made between the Council and any such owner being an undertaking or agreement –

a. given or made under seal on the passing of plans or otherwise in connection with the land; and

b. expressed to be given or made in pursuance of this section;

shall be binding not only upon the Council and any owner joining in the undertaking or agreement but also upon the successors in title of any owner so joining and any person claiming though or under them.

(2) Any such undertaking or agreement shall be treated as a local land charge for the purposes of the Land Charges Act 1925.

(3) Any person upon whom any such undertaking or agreement is binding shall be entitled to require from the Council a copy thereof.

County Planning committee – December 1971

1.848 DEVELOPMENT AT PEACHCROFT FARM ABINGDON.

(Cf. I/792/71) (CPO) A meeting will be held shortly between the County Planning Officer, the County Surveyor and the Town Clerk of Abingdon to discuss the way in which this matter is to proceed. It is hoped that the open space difficulties, which have been experienced will now be overcome satisfactorily.

Noted.

County Planning committee – March 1972

1/56 DEVELOPMENT AT PEACHCROFT FARM ABINGDON

(Cf. I/848/71) The County Planning Officer reported verbally on the second phase of the Peachcroft proposals.

To compensate for the open space provision, which has been negotiated between the District Councils and the Governors of Radley College, it is proposed to realign the north-western end of the perimeter road to include a similar area of land for residential development. No objection is raised to this proposal.

Resolved: That the proposed realignment of the perimeter road is agreed.


Clerk’s report to the meeting of the plans and town planning committee to be held on 11th April 1972.

P/128/70 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT – STAGE 1. AREA OF SITE 22 ACRES – 240 DWELLINGS. PEACHCROFT FARM DEVELOPMENT. OFF RADLEY ROAD, ABINGDON FOR THE GOVERNORS OF RADLEY COLLEGE.

The Clerk of the County Council has advised that the Governors of Radley College have now entered into a Section 16 agreement in connection with the above-mentioned proposal undertaking not to develop approximately five acres to the east of the site which will be retained as an open space.

Following this there are conditions such as development must be done within five years and what trees and shrubs etc should be planted. We have the details if wanted.
Application was made for 72.5 acres for 780 dwellings and garages with ancillary roads and shopping centre, Peachcroft Farm.

The Council had no objection subject to the peripheral road being built concurrently or in advance.

Appendix C

Refusal of Radley College's proposal to make the proposed site safeguarded land.

Verbatim extract from the Planning Inspector's reasoning and conclusions for the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 Inspector's report 2006. (p.29 )

3.10.3 Land at Radley Road, Abingdon (issue f). This objection seeks the removal of a triangular flat field of around 1.6ha. to the east of the Peachcroft estate on the north east side of Abingdon from the OGB and its identification as safeguarded land i.e. as suitable for future development. I have concluded elsewhere that sites previously shown as safeguarded land at Botley should now be released for new housing in this plan period. However, this does not involve a change to the GB boundary, on either its inner or outer edges, as these sites were deemed suitable in principle for development some time ago now in a much earlier adopted LP. 

3.10.4 In relation to this site, PPG 2 confirms that once established, GB boundaries are intended to endure beyond the lifetime of a single plan and to have a degree of permanence. Regarding Oxford, neither the OSP to 2011 nor the OSPR to 2016 proposes any change to, nor the need for any review of, these boundaries to accommodate more housing, despite the acknowledged imbalance between employment and housing opportunities in the city. As a result, there is no requirement to identify any additional safeguarded land in this plan. Even if there were, as the previous IR said at para G4.15 (CD1/3), it is not usual to identify land on the outer edge of the GB boundary in this respect. For example, this site is peripheral to Abingdon and thus unlikely to prove the most sustainable location to help meet the housing needs of Oxford, in comparison to equivalent areas on the inner edge, should a need arise. 

3.10.5 I note that the objection site is enclosed by existing housing on two sides and a road on the third and that therefore its development would not materially reduce the physical gap between Abingdon and Radley to the east. However, the gap is already fairly narrow and largely open so that the loss of this site to built development might well contribute to an increased perception of coalescence from some viewpoints, due to the intervisibility between settlement edges. 

3.10.6 Although on the edge of Abingdon with reasonable access to local services and facilities, as well as public transport, this site is not so well located in sustainability terms in comparison to others outside the GB as to provide the very special circumstances necessary to justify its removal from the GB, in my opinion. Moreover, the 1972 legal agreement affecting the site would appear to place a question mark at best over its genuine availability for development, despite the apparent absence of significant technical or infrastructure constraints. Accordingly, I see no justification for the GB boundary to be altered here, nor for the site to be identified as safeguarded land.
Appendix D

The emerging Local Plan is the 2029 Local Plan Consultation Draft Pt.1.

Decision-takers may also give weight to (NPPF - para. 216):

- relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation of the emerging plan
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the policies in this Framework (the closer the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the Framework, the greater the weight that may be given).

Relevant extracts from the 2029 Local Plan are:

**Core Policy 9:** “The Oxford Green Belt will continue to be protected to maintain its openness and open character. Inappropriate development that is harmful to the Green Belt will not be approved except where the scheme provides exceptional community benefits that cannot reasonably be provided elsewhere and outweigh the harm from the loss of Green Belt land in very special circumstances.”

5.8 The over-arching priority for the area is to maintain the service and employment centre roles for Abingdon-on-Thames and Botley, whilst ensuring future growth is managed with regard to pressure on the highway network and continues to respect the Oxford Green Belt.

5.26: The National Planning Policy Framework states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances (NPPF Section 9). The Vale council has found that there is sufficient land to meet its housing needs at this stage without releasing land from the Green Belt. If the boundary needs to be redrawn in the future this could be considered through a Local Plan Review.

5.27: The existing Local Plan 2011 Policy GS3 will be saved. This policy complements the National Planning Policy Framework by providing local advice and by defining where any exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt may be acceptable.

**POLICY GS3**

Development (including the change of use of land and engineering and other operations) will only be permitted if it does not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt and if it preserves its openness and the special character of Oxford and its landscape setting.

Subject to the above criteria new building will only be allowed for the following purposes:

i) Agriculture or forestry;

ii) Small-scale facilities essential for outdoor sport, recreation, cemeteries and other uses of land which preserve the openness of the green belt;

iii) Limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings. An extension to or the replacement of a dwelling will not be permitted if it exceeds the following limits:

a. Existing dwellings with a floorspace of less than 80 square metres – up to 50% of the original volume of the dwelling (excluding outbuildings);

b. Existing dwellings with a floorspace of 81–120 square metres – up to 40% of the original volume of the dwelling (excluding outbuildings);
c. Existing dwellings with a floorspace greater than 121 square metres – up to 30% of the original volume of the dwelling (excluding outbuildings); and

iv) Limited infilling between existing built development in the villages of Farmoor, Shippon, South Hinksey, Sunningwell, Wootton old village and Wytham, as defined on the proposals map. Residential infilling will be limited to schemes of 1 or 2 dwellings unless it is for social housing for the local community in accordance with policy H18.

5.8 The over-arching priority for the area is to maintain the service and employment centre roles for Abingdon-on-Thames and Botley, whilst ensuring future growth is managed with regard to pressure on the highway network and continues to respect the Oxford Green Belt.

5.26: The National Planning Policy Framework states that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances (NPPF Section 9). The Vale council has found that there is sufficient land to meet its housing needs at this stage without releasing land from the Green Belt. If the boundary needs to be redrawn in the future this could be considered through a Local Plan Review.

5.27: The existing Local Plan 2011 Policy GS3 will be saved. This policy complements the National Planning Policy Framework by providing local advice and by defining where any exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt may be acceptable.

Appendix E

North Abingdon Primary School places allocated for the start of the school year September 2012.

North Abingdon Primary Schools

Thomas Reade Primary - 212 pupils
30 places allocated, 26 refused

Rush Common School 403 pupils
Takes 60 pupils a year, 32 refusals

Radley Church of Radley - 125 pupils
15 places allocated, 11 refusals

Long Furlong School - 258 pupils
30 places allocated, 24 refusals

Dunmore Primary School - 434 pupils
60 places allocated, 41 refused

St Nicolas’ C E School - 429 pupils
60 places allocated 21 refusals.