

Little Min House,
Little Minster,
Witney
OX29 0RS.

19th October, 2023.

For the attention of Jeanette Davey.
jeanette.davey@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Dear Ms Davey,

Ref:

23/02471/F OS Parcel 0622 South Of Jersey Cottages And East Of Heyford Road
Kirtlington

I wish to **OBJECT** strongly to the above proposal for a modern housing estate lying within the designated boundary of the Grade II registered Kirtlington Park and also within the Kirtlington Conservation Area.

The proposed development is within the curtilage of Kirtlington Park, a Grade I building known and admired throughout the UK, and very probably beyond, and also within the curtilage of, and close proximity to, a beautiful 18th century agricultural workers cottage, listed Grade II.

In the past few years there have been a number of applications for building on the site designated in this application, with proposals for varying numbers of modern houses. Those proposals underwent various amendments, in attempts to meet Cherwell DC's objections to them, but the amendments in each case proposed did not address the fundamental flaws in the proposals: that is the position of the site itself, which I suggest is wholly unsuitable for development, for whatever numbers of houses; previous applications have varied from thirty-seven, twenty-eight and twenty houses.

The land subject to the application for development adjoins the landscape designed by Capability Brown, one of the greatest landscape gardeners in history; it is one of the finest of Oxfordshire's country houses and parklands, which give the area such distinction and which are much admired and cherished

by the public not only at Kirtlington but from all over the country, and which are a great draw to valuable visitor numbers.

The proposed site is firmly within the overall scheme of the park designed by Capability Brown, which remains a beautiful, famous and nationally valuable contribution to the area.

Development on this site will not enhance or conserve the character and appearance of the registered park and its setting, instead it would affect it detrimentally. As proposed, destruction of part of the border of this park, which is created as a shelter for the landscape, would greatly damage the design as a whole, and grievously alter its appearance from its outside.

The council's own previous position, that it has 'significant concerns in principle with the development of a key area of (previously undeveloped) green space in the Registered Parkland and at the entrance to the conservation area', was welcomed by the public, which takes comfort from believing that it can rely on what the council states. That is particularly relevant to Kirtlington Park, and not least its north and west parts which are adjacent to the site of the application. They are still much as intended by the original eighteenth century design, and building over the site would mar that valuable landmark, besides setting a precedent for developments along or within the registered park.

It is accepted by environmental bodies, and supported by the public who much appreciate the beauty and associated values of fine parks, that there should be maintained an area of protection adjoining such parks, to prevent inappropriate damage.

Cherwell Council's own plan for 2011-2031 recognised Kirtlington as a Category A village deserving the council's support and protection, and it is reasonable to suppose that there are other and less sensitive areas for development within the overall area, which would not, as this one would, affect a designated heritage asset.

Permitting the proposed development would allow for creeping urbanization of the village, permanently altering its valuable character by the import of street lights, pavements, signage and associated destruction of green space.

The proposal, for building within a conservation area, would blight the approach to Kirtlington from the north, which consists of green fields, an ancient wall and fine trees, and, as stated, the proposal would also closely and directly impact the environment of the listed eighteenth century cottage immediately adjacent to the area requested for development with houses.

The 2015 application to build on this site was widely objected to and subsequently withdrawn by the applicants; other applications have since then been submitted, by the same underlying applicants, the most recent being dismissed at the hearing at Cherwell DC.

In Kirtlington village itself there remains a significant lack of consensus about the application, with much strong objection apparent; alongside there is some support driven by the hope that development of this site will lead the council to reject applications for development in other parts of the village; valid reasons for support for an application should not include guesses about the council's consequent attitude to other development applications.

An Environmental Impact Assessment, giving to significant environmental impacts its full and proper broad stages of process, is essential before further consideration is given to this site.

Yours faithfully,

Adrian Fort