

Planning Application: 23/02523/F

Location: Kirtlington Village Hall, South Green, Kirtlington

Description: Erection of a single storey community shop and cafe

Comments from Kirtlington Parish Council

Thank you for granting the Parish Council extra time to enable a meeting with the Steering Group for the Community Shop and Café project to take place. Kirtlington Parish Council would like to comment and makes the following observations about this application:

KPC is concerned that the design and building materials do not have synergy with the existing Village Hall and are not integrated with it and that the proposed plan does not respect the form and scale of the village hall. We appreciate however that the applicant has now aimed to address the issues raised in CDC's pre application response, the contents of which have been shared with the Parish Council. We have noted, in particular, the revised conclusions of the Conservation Officer.

KPC is of the view that the new building is in the Conservation Area, in the Park Grade II listed Registered Park and Garden and therefore should seek to enhance its setting which the proposed design does not. However, we note that the Conservation Officer has accepted the applicant's further justifications since the pre application report and has now concluded that the issues raised in this respect in the pre application report have been satisfactorily addressed by the applicant. We note that the revised report concludes that there would be 'no harm'.

It does not comply with the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Policies PD4 which aims to protect important views and vistas and PD5 which controls building and site design. However, we note that the proposed plan now locates the building nearer to the Village Hall. Although it is still not integrated with the Hall and a wooden structure seems unlikely to enhance the view, it does appear to be located in a less exposed position than on the former plan.

The pre application suggested considering amending the design and the proposed construction material. This has not noticeably changed on the architect's drawing and therefore would not be in sympathy with the village hall. However, we note the applicant's intention to reference the wooden boarding on the Village Hall for the proposed building. We further note that similar wooden buildings have been approved elsewhere recently within the Registered Park and Garden.

The Parish Council have previously informed the applicant that there are concerns that the proposed shop and café would negatively impact the quality of life of nearby residents and add additional costs to the upkeep of South Green. These concerns remain and the Council is very much aware that a shop in this location could impact negatively on the parishioners who live near the proposed location.

Nevertheless, many people in the village could stand to benefit from the amenity of a community shop and cafe, and, if the shop were to prove successful, there could also be financial dividends to improve other amenities in the village. In this respect, the question remains as to whether the potential public amenity would outweigh the negative impact on the quality of life of the neighbouring parishioners. Also, the effect of any additional traffic and wear and tear on the parts of South Green that are not part of the adopted public highway needs to be borne in mind.