

11 BUILT HERITAGE

Introduction

- 11.1 This chapter of the ES assesses the likely significant effects of the Development on the environment in respect of built heritage. 'Built heritage' in this case comprises above ground assets of cultural heritage significance, including nationally and locally designated structures and other structures of intrinsic historic interest.
- 11.2 In summary, the Development is not expected to result in significant effects on the built heritage resource. However, this chapter summarises the key built heritage matters that informed the design and assessment of the Development.
- 11.3 The chapter has been prepared by Cotswold Archaeology (see Appendix 1.2 Statement of Expertise).

Policy Context

National Planning Policy Frameworkⁱ

- 11.4 The principal national guidance on the importance, management and safeguarding of the historic environment recourse within the planning process in the NPPF, Section 16: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment. The aim of this section is to ensure that Local Planning Authorities (LPA), developers and owners of heritage assets adopt a holistic and consistent approach to conserving the historic environment.
- 11.5 Heritage assets include designated and non-designated sites, and policies within the NPPF relate to both the treatment of heritage assets themselves, and of their settings, both of which are a material consideration in development decision making.
- 11.6 Local planning authorities are urged to request applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposed development, including any contribution made to significance by their setting. The level of detail required in the assessment should be proportionate to the importance of the assets, and no more than sufficient to understand the potential effects of the proposal on their significance.
- 11.7 The key tenets of the NPPF are that:

- when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be (Paragraph 193);
- significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Any harm or loss to the significance of designated assets should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to, or loss of, a Grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to, or loss of, designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, Grade I and II* listed buildings, Grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional (Paragraph 194);
- local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development ... within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably (Paragraph 200);
- where proposed development will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use (Paragraph 196); and
- with regard to non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having due regard to the scale of any harm or loss, and to the significance of the heritage asset affected (Paragraph 197).

Planning Practice Guidanceⁱⁱ

- 11.8 Additional advice on enhancing and conserving the historic environment during development is provided by the Planning Practice Guidance. This guidance rests on the key tenets of the National Planning Policy Framework, providing further guidance on the relevant legislative framework relating to the historic environment, and plan and decision making.
- 11.9 The definition and importance of 'significance' as a factor in decision making is outlined in the Planning Practice Guidance, along with key sources for information relating to the historic environment. Descriptions of the types of designated and non-designated heritage assets are also given.
- 11.10 The Planning Practice Guidance is to be used as a supporting tool to the National Planning Policy Framework, offering advice to specific questions when working with the historic environment in terms of design and planning.

Local Planning Policyⁱⁱⁱ

- 11.11 Local planning policy is set out in the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031, adopted July 2015. Several policies which are of relevance to the historic environment, and to the Development, are listed within Appendix 11.1.

Legislative Context^{iv}

- 11.12 Listed buildings are buildings of 'special architectural or historic interest' and are subject to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'). Under Section 66 of the Act "*In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses*".

Assessment Methodology

- 11.13 This Chapter has been prepared in accordance with appropriate standards and guidance, including the relevant component parts within the 'Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment' published by CIfA in 2014 and updated in 2017 and 2020^v. This states that, insofar as they relate to the determination of planning applications, heritage desk-based assessments should:

'...enable reasoned proposals and decisions to be made [as to] whether to mitigate, offset or accept without further intervention [any identified heritage] impact'.

- 11.14 The 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment'^{vi}, further clarifies that a desk-based assessment should:

'...determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area, and the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment, or will identify the need for further evaluation'.

Determination of Baseline

- 11.15 The baseline has been informed by the results of several previous assessments, undertaken in association with both the Site and the adjacent Exemplar Site pertaining to the historic

environment:

- Air Photo Services Interpretation of Aerial Photographs, October 2010^{vii};
- Hyder Consulting Desk Study – Masterplan Site, November 2010^{viii};
- Oxford Archaeology evaluation trenching, January 2014^{ix}, incorporating the results of two earlier phases of evaluation (Oxford Archaeology 2010 & Northamptonshire Archaeology 2013) and two phases of geophysical survey (Northamptonshire Archaeology 2011 & 2012);
- Hyder Consulting Cultural Heritage Desk-Based Assessment, July 2014^x, feeding into the subsequent Environmental Statement, August 2014^{xi}; for application 14/01384/OUT;
- Quod Environmental Statement, March 2018, including CgMs Heritage Built Heritage Statement, February 2018^{xii}; CgMs Heritage Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, March 2018^{xiii} (updated September 2018 to include the results of Magnitude Surveys geophysical survey, May 2018; Air Photo Services Assessment of Aerial Imagery, June 2018; and Museum of London Archaeology evaluation, August 2018); and Environmental Statement Addendum, October 2018^{xiv}; for application 18/00484/OUT; and
- Cotswold Archaeology Archaeological Assessment, March 2021 (Appendix 11.2).

11.16 The results of these investigations, where they relate to built heritage, have been incorporated into the 'Baseline Conditions' section.

11.17 Appendix 11.2 provides a summary of the key issues associated with buried archaeological remains within the Site. However, buried archaeological remains have been scoped out of this Chapter (Appendix 2.1).

11.18 In addition, the below listed sources of publicly available historical information were consulted:

- National Heritage List for England for designated heritage assets, including Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments; and
- Cherwell District Council website, for designated heritage assets (linked to the Historic England database), Conservation Areas and appraisal documents, Local Heritage Assets and local plan policies (consulted in February 2021).

11.19 A site visit was undertaken on 30th January 2018, as part of an archaeological desk-based assessment which fed into a previous Environmental Statement including part of the Site (CgMs 2018). The Site was revisited more recently, in February 2021 to examine the change in setting of the Grade II* Listed Church of St Laurence following the commencement of construction within the Exemplar Site, adjacent to the Site.

Prediction Methodology

Assessment of the Significance of Heritage Assets

11.20 A heritage asset is defined by the NPPF (2019) as *'a building, monument site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)'.*

11.21 Heritage significance is defined as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of their heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic in nature. The assessment of significance within this Chapter has been guided primarily by the key industry-standard policies and guidance contained in Conservation Principles, where it is described with reference to the following four key forms of value:

- Evidential value is derived from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity. It is primarily associated with the physical remains or the historic fabric of the heritage asset. This value is proportionate to the potential of the asset to contribute to the understanding of the past. When there are no written records, such physical remains, including archaeological deposits, may provide the only source of information about the past;
- Historical value derives from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a site to the present. It can be illustrative or associative in attribution. The illustrative aspect relates to the ability of the asset to provide links and insights into past communities and their activities. The associative aspect derives from the association of the asset with a notable historic family, person, event or movement;
- Aesthetic value is derived from the ways in which people draw intellectual and sensory stimulation from a place. This value may have developed through conscious design or be the result of the fortuitous evolution of the place over time. This aspect may include the physical form of the asset as well as its location within the setting; and
- Communal value, which derives from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it. The commemorative and symbolic aspects of this value reflect the meanings of a heritage asset for the people who draw part of their identity from it or have emotional links to it (such as memorials raised by community effort). The social aspect of this value is associated with places perceived as source of identity or distinctiveness and spiritual value is attached to places of worship.

11.22 Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical fabric, but also from its setting. The setting of a heritage asset is defined as the surroundings within which it is experienced; its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. However,

setting is not a heritage asset in its own right, nor is it a heritage designation in its own right. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset. This contribution may be positive, negative or neutral (i.e. does not contribute to the asset's significance). The assessment of setting follows the guidance offered in 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition): The Setting of Heritage Assets'.

- 11.23 Paragraph 189 of the NPPF is clear in its recognition of the need for local planning authorities to require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. It is also unequivocal on the matter of scope, as it mentions that the level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the asset, and no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of a development on that significance.
- 11.24 The way in which heritage significance is expressed within this ES Chapter has been specifically developed, based on good practice, to ensure that it is fully aligned with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990, the NPPF and Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2: Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment.
- 11.25 The statements of significance for each of the assets reflect the language of the Planning Act 1990, utilising terms such as 'architectural and historic interest' (of Listed Buildings). Further frames of reference, found within Conservation Principles, allow for terms such as 'evidential', 'historical', 'aesthetic' and 'communal' to be used to convey the many heritage values that combine to make up the heritage significance of an asset.
- 11.26 The statements of significance describe 'what matters and why', i.e. which aspects of an asset and its setting contribute to the heritage significance of the asset and how. Although the statements rightly acknowledge the fabric of heritage assets as representing the principal embodiment and physical manifestation of their heritage significance, the surroundings of the assets, and the ways in which they can be experienced, often contribute to their overall significance.
- 11.27 Although terms such as High, Medium or Low value, and National, Regional or Local importance are often adopted in EIA to express a summary description of the 'relative significance' heritage assets, they are not universally recognised or accepted terms within heritage sector guidance and amongst heritage professionals.
- 11.28 The criteria adopted for this ES Chapter are laid out in Table 11.1, with terminology used derived directly from the NPPF. The language used in this ES Chapter is entirely consistent

with the NPPF and the Planning Act 1990 and provides the decision-maker with sufficient information to understand how change could bring benefit or harm to the heritage significance of an asset(s), thus enabling an informed judgement to be reached.

Table 11.1: Criteria for Assessing the Significance of Heritage Assets

Heritage significance	Description of criteria
Designated heritage assets of the highest significance	As defined in the NPPF, these include: Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Battlefields, Grade I and II* Listed Buildings, Grade I and II* Registered Parks and Gardens, and World Heritage Sites. Heritage assets displaying considerable evidential, historic, aesthetic or communal value, as identified by Conservation Principles, which are of comparable significance to designated heritage assets of the highest significance (including assets of archaeological interest which are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments), would also fall within this category.
Designated heritage assets of less than the highest significance	In accordance with the NPPF, these include: Grade II Listed Buildings and Grade II Registered Parks and Gardens. Although not mentioned specifically, Conservation Areas are considered to fall within this category as they are not listed as of highest significance.
Non-designated heritage assets	This includes archaeological remains, built heritage or historic landscape features which are not designated, but which display evidential, historic, aesthetic or communal values, as identified by Conservation Principles, and thus have a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions on the basis of their heritage interest. The July 2019 revision of the Planning Practice Guidance defines non-designated heritage assets as those identified as such in publicly accessible lists or documents provided by the plan-making body. Where these sources do not specifically define assets as non-designated heritage assets, they will be referred to as heritage assets for the purpose of this ES. The assessment of non-designated heritage assets and heritage assets will be equivalent in this ES, in line with industry standards and guidance on assessing significance and impact. They may not, however, carry equivalent weight in planning as set out within the provisions of the NPPF.
Uncertain	Heritage assets, the significance of which has not yet been ascertained.
Negligible	Structures that do not have sufficient significance to warrant consideration in planning decisions, and which are therefore not considered to constitute heritage assets.

Assessment of Proposed Development Effects

11.29 The methodology presented here moves away from the more traditional quantitative, matrix-led approach, instead adopting a descriptive, qualitative presentation of the findings of the assessment. This is because the descriptions of anticipated Development impacts upon heritage assets are qualitative rather than quantitative and the adopted approach allows for greater accuracy in understanding the potential harm the Development may cause to the significance of heritage assets. As with the approach adopted in assessing heritage significance of heritage assets, this approach directly reflects key concepts in planning policy and heritage guidance with regard to the assessment of development effects upon heritage assets. It therefore offers an appropriate way to define such effects. Clear statements of significance (the 'what matters and why' approach), and a sound understanding of the

character of the Development, as presented in this assessment methodology and Chapter 2, allow for a transparent articulation of the nature/degree of any identified impacts.

11.30 The effects of the Development arise as a result of change (impact) to the heritage assets. The significance of a heritage asset can be harmed or lost through alteration, destruction or development within its setting. In terms of harm through changes to setting, as clearly illustrated within the NPPF, any attempt to convey the impact or harm of a development must be framed within the tightly defined parameters of harm to the significance of the heritage asset itself. This is a fundamental principle. In summary, a project could bring about change within the setting of a heritage asset, resulting in harm to its significance, or the way in which that significance is experienced. References such as 'harm to setting' are therefore avoided.

11.31 The assessment of the effect of the Development upon cultural heritage resource considers numerous factors, including the scale of development, the type and extent of physical disturbance and the visual effects. Development impacts may be:

- Direct or indirect. Direct impacts arise from physical change to the resource, which affects its physical remains or fabric (i.e. excavations which may affect the archaeological remains or alterations to historic buildings). Indirect impacts relate to changes within the setting of heritage assets;
- Permanent or temporary. Due to their character, direct impacts upon the physical remains of heritage assets are permanent, and not reversible. However, impacts on the settings of heritage assets may be temporary if the Development has a limited lifespan. These temporary effects can be short, medium or long-term; and
- Beneficial, when the Development leads to the enhancement of the heritage resource, or adverse, when it results in harm to, or loss of, the significance of a heritage asset. If the resource will not be affected by the Development, there will be no impact.

11.32 To further assist in the decision-making process, the following approach to the assessment of effects upon heritage assets (Table 11.2) is adopted. This has been done to improve the intelligibility of the assessment results for purposes of quick reference and ready comprehension. The language used here is entirely consistent with the NPPF and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and provides sufficient information to reach informed judgement.

Table 11.2: Magnitude of effect categories in relation to heritage assets

Magnitude of effect	Description	Applicable policies
Heritage benefit	The proposals would enhance or better reveal the heritage significance of a heritage asset.	Enhancing the significance of a heritage asset is a desirable outcome in respect of heritage. It is consistent with key policy and guidance, including the NPPF paragraphs 185, 192 and 200.
No harm	The proposals would preserve the significance of a heritage asset.	Preserving a Listed Building and its setting is consistent with Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area is consistent with Section 72 of the Act. Sustaining the significance of a heritage asset is consistent with paragraph 185 of the NPPF and should be at the core of any material local planning policies in respect of heritage.
Harm to non-designated assets	The proposals would affect the heritage significance of a non-designated heritage assets	The key applicable policy is paragraph 197 of the NPPF which states that the in determining planning application, the effects of the Application Scheme on the significance of non-designated heritage assets needs to be considered. A balanced judgement is required to weigh direct or indirect impacts on non-designated assets, having regard for the scale of harm and the significance of the asset.
Less than substantial harm to designated heritage assets	The proposals would be anticipated to result in a restricted level of harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, such that the asset's contributing heritage values would be largely preserved (lower end). The proposals would lead to a notable level of harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset. A reduced, but appreciable, degree of its heritage significance would remain (upper end).	This level of harm is defined within the NPPF specifically regarding designated heritage assets. In determining an application, this level of harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, as per paragraph 196 of the NPPF. Proposals involving change to a Listed Building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, or change to the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, must also be considered within the context of the Planning Act 1990. The provisions of the Act do not apply to the setting of Conservation Areas.
Substantial harm to designated heritage assets	The proposals would very much reduce the designated heritage asset's significance or vitiate that significance altogether	This level of harm is defined specifically regarding the NPPF. Paragraphs 194 and 195 of the NPPF would apply and state that substantial harm or loss to designated heritage assets of the highest significance should be wholly exceptional and to assets of less than highest significance – exceptional. Proposed development leading to such harm should be refused unless it is demonstrated that this substantial harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits. The Planning Act 1990 may also apply.

11.33 The extent of the effects identified is defined through appropriate description of the anticipated degree/extent of harm upon any sensitive heritage receptors. Such descriptions will define whether the effects will affect the assets or their settings and assess, if assets

are affected directly, whether the assets are to be wholly or partly removed. Professional judgement is then used to ascertain the significance of effect on the sensitive heritage assets, considering the heritage significance of the assets as well as the identified effects and their extent.

11.34 The approach to the assessment of the significance of effect regarding archaeological and heritage assets is defined as follows:

- In line with EIA best practice, it is considered that 'substantial harm' to designated heritage asset would equate to a Major Adverse (significant) Effect;
- 'Less than substantial harm' to designated heritage assets could also trigger the same significant effect, resulting in Moderate Adverse (significant) Effect, but no prescriptive criteria are proposed to prejudge this threshold, leaving it to professional judgement as this will be dependent on the extent of harm and its effect on the significance of the asset. Where effects on heritage assets are limited, this harm would result in Minor Adverse Effect (not significant);
- With regard to the harm to non-designated assets, professional judgment will be used to ascertain whether the significant effect (i.e. Major Adverse (significant) Effect) is triggered, taking into account the relative significance of such assets as well as the level of harm upon them; and
- No harm to designated or non-designated heritage assets would result in not significant effect.

11.35 Where heritage benefits are identified (to designated or non-designated heritage assets), professional judgement will be used to ascertain the significance of the effect. Further to this, the Court of Appeal judgment [2021] EWCA Civ 320 'Bramshill' provides direction on the approach taken to understanding and presenting on matters associated with a proposal which causes both adverse (harmful) and beneficial effects to a single or multiple heritage assets. The judgment sets out that there may be "benefits to the heritage asset itself exceeding any adverse effects to it, so that there would be no "harm"..." This same approach can be adopted with EIA.

Mitigation measures and residual effects

11.36 When impacts upon the built heritage resource have been identified, mitigation measures are proposed, where possible, to prevent, reduce or offset any significant effects. Mitigation measures, including embedded and further mitigation, are discussed below. It may also be possible to enhance heritage assets as part of the Development. In such circumstances, the weight given to the heritage values of the asset should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and the Development effect upon it. To assess residual effects following the

implementation of the mitigation measures upon the significance of heritage assets, professional judgement is used.

Limitations and Assumptions

- 11.37 This assessment in part relies on desk-based study and has utilised secondary information derived from a variety of sources. The assumption is made that these data, as well as that derived from secondary sources, is reasonably accurate.

Baseline Conditions

Introduction

- 11.38 This section of the Chapter presents a summary of the historical and archaeological background of the Site. This data have been compiled from the results of previous desk-based assessments and the results of intrusive and non-intrusive archaeological investigation. A brief overview of the archaeological background of the Site is presented for information purposes and the focus of this section will be on the key built heritage receptors.

Archaeological background

- 11.39 The Site and surroundings have previously been subjected to several phases of intrusive and non-intrusive archaeological investigation, including aerial photograph examination (Air Photo Services 2010 & 2018), geophysical survey Northamptonshire Archaeology 2011 & 2012; Magnitude Surveys 2018) and evaluation trenching (Oxford Archaeology 2014; MoLA 2018).
- 11.40 Within the western portion of the Site, a rectilinear enclosure was sample excavated in two trenches and found to contain Middle Iron Age pottery sherds. Within the eastern portion, ditches within several trenches were found to contain pottery sherds ranging in date from the Early Saxon (early medieval) period to the 13th century, along with a holloway dating to the 11th-12th century. These features were interpreted as associated with the former medieval settlement of Caversfield, situated slightly further to the east.
- 11.41 Previous studies of HER data illustrate further historic activity within the wider environs of the Site, including evidence of Mesolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Late Saxon and medieval activity.
- 11.42 In consideration of the identified archaeological presence within the western part of the Site, the Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council has requested a programme

of further archaeological mitigation within this area. This will take the form of an archaeological excavation in advance of construction, followed by post-excavation assessment, analysis and publication of the discoveries to a scope proportionate to their significance. This work will be defined as a condition of a consented scheme. No further mitigation is required for the eastern part of the Site, as confirmed by the Planning Archaeologist on 12 March 2020.

- 11.43 No further archaeological assessment work is required to support the current application. No significant effects are anticipated regarding the buried archaeological resource and this topic has thus been scoped out of the EIA.

Built Heritage

Designated heritage assets - National

- 11.44 A total of 14 Listed Buildings lie within a 1km radius of the Site, comprising a single Grade II* Listed Building and 13 of Grade II status.
- 11.45 Five of the Grade II Listed Buildings lie within or on the periphery of the village of Bucknell, centred c. 1km to the north-west of the Site. A further seven Grade II Listed Buildings lie within the RAF Bicester Conservation Area, which extends from c. 530m to 2.6km to the south-east of the Site. Previous assessment has scoped out these designated heritage assets as they are not considered susceptible to experience harm as a result of the previous applications of the same Site. In accordance with guidance the same conclusions can be applied for this Development. The RAF Bicester Conservation Area itself has not previously been assessed to examine its susceptibility to experience harm resulting from development associated with the Bicester Eco Town. As such, assessment is included within this ES chapter to examine its potential susceptibility to the Development.
- 11.46 Two Listed Buildings lie within proximity of the Site and have been examined in detail by previous assessments (Figure 11.1). The results of these assessments and of discussions between relevant planning bodies are outlined below.

Church of St Laurence

- 11.47 The Church of St Laurence was granted Grade II* status in 1966 and is situated c. 45m to the east of the Site, within the small, rural settlement of Caversfield, to the east of the B4100 and adjacent to Caversfield House (Figure 11.1). This is a *designated heritage of the highest significance*.
- 11.48 The earliest elements are believed to date to the 10th or 11th centuries, with further

additions dating to the late 12th and 13 centuries. The Church was restored and partially rebuilt in 1874. It is constructed of coursed and random limestone rubble with ashlar dressings and the roof is of Stonesfield-slate and concrete plain tiles.

- 11.49 The Church has a simple plan form, with a chancel, aisled nave and west tower. The tower exhibits three construction phases, with the base pre-dating the Norman Conquest. The base has small windows to the north and south with external splays. All other windows in the tower and the stone quoins have been renewed and the east and west facing gables have been rebuilt. The chancel dates to the 13th century, with a pair of lancets in the east wall and a further lancet and two-light decorated window and square-headed 15th century window in the south. There is also a small door within the northern façade of the chancel. The chancel was subject to large-scale restoration in the 19th century. The 19th century vestry is located to the north of the chancel and includes a three-light decorated-style window below a gable. The aisles, which were rebuilt in coursed rubble in the 19th century, principally have small lancets, and on the north side there is a short-gabled porch projection with a re-used 12th century doorway of two orders with engaged shafts, an inner roll and an outer band of undercut chevrons. The interior of the Church has several important features, all of which contribute to the overall significance of the Listed Building.
- 11.50 The significance of the Church of St Laurence is principally derived from its preserved 10th -15th century fabric, which provides the building with special architectural and historic interest. The 19th century alterations and additions also provide some degree of historic interest. The development of the building over time demonstrates changing architectural styles and provides the building with a high level of evidential value. There is also the potential for further medieval architectural elements, which may have been obscured by later alterations. The building also has a high degree of illustrative value, showing the value of the Church within society throughout its history, with continued investment and alteration. The high level of aesthetic value of the Church, derived from its architecture, is appreciated more from the immediate surrounds. This is not apparent at greater distance due to the relatively small tower and the level surrounding topography preventing views of the Church from afar. There is also an extensive element of screening, provided by tall, mature vegetation, which limits views of the Church and its more immediate setting. Furthermore, the Church holds a high level of communal value, serving as a community place of worship since the 10th century. Further communal value is derived from the 25 Commonwealth War Graves situated within the churchyard, associated with personnel serving at RAF Bicester before and during the Second World War.
- 11.51 The immediate setting of the Church comprises the small, surrounding churchyard, enclosed by tall trees and other vegetation. The churchyard contains several Commonwealth Graves, as mentioned above, which contribute to the building's significance through demonstration

of its relationship to nearby RAF Bicester. The dense boundary vegetation creates an enclosed, tranquil and verdant character, contributing to the isolated, rural character of the Church.

- 11.52 The wider setting extends to Caversfield House and associated buildings, to the north and north-east; gardens, woodland and fishpond to the east; the buried remains of suspected deserted medieval settlement further to the east and north-east (see Appendix 11.2 for further discussion); and agricultural land to the south and west. Although the 19th century Caversfield House is not contemporary to the Church of St Laurence, it is situated upon the site of an earlier manor house, illustrating the historic association between the two key local structures. The wider setting also extends to include the wider agricultural landscape, including the Site. Views of the Church tower are afforded from within the eastern part of the Site, however, the overall experience and ability to appreciate the structure and its setting is reduced by the high degree of intervening vegetation. Whilst the Site forms part of the wider agricultural landscape, any contribution to the Church has been reduced by the development of the Exemplar Site to the north and south of the Site and the B4100 which separates the Church from the Site.
- 11.53 The significance of the Church of St Laurence is principally derived from its aesthetic, evidential and historic (illustrative) values, which are embodied within its fabric and form. The immediate setting of the Listed Building makes a positive contribution to this significance. The current character of the Site, set within the wider setting, makes a minor contribution to the overall setting, through preservation of an element of the rural surrounds.

Home Farmhouse

- 11.54 Home Farmhouse comprises an early-mid 17th century farmhouse, with 18th and 19th century extensions, granted Grade II status in 1987 and situated c. 65m to the east of the Site (Figure 11.1). This is a *designated heritage of less than highest significance*.
- 11.55 The building is two storeys in height and a three-unit plan, in addition to the added rear extensions. Its construction is of coursed, squared limestone, with ashlar dressings. The gabled roof is covered with old plain tiles, with a large chimney projection of red brick stacks at each gable end. The front elevation of the building has two-light ovolo moulded, stone-mullioned windows at each end bay. The central bay has a door opening and a casement window. On the first floor there are three two-light ovolo moulded, stone-mullioned windows. To the rear of the building there are some catslide outshoots, with timber casements in the gables of these projections. There is also a first-floor weather boarded dormer.
- 11.56 The significance of the building is principally derived from its preserved architectural fabric

and historic form. This fabric holds a degree of evidential value, with the potential to yield evidence about historic farming practices and associated dwellings in the post-medieval period. There is also a degree of illustrative value, derived from the historical development of the building. The aesthetic value of the building has been maintained through limitation of alterations to the exterior of the building, particularly the front elevation.

11.57 The immediate setting of Home Farmhouse includes enclosed gardens, to the immediate west, and a series of historic and modern farm buildings of various sizes and design, in all other directions. These farm buildings vary between stone-built historic farm buildings and 20th century buildings of no architectural and limited historic value. The stone-built farm buildings possess some architectural and historic value, making a positive contribution to the setting and aesthetic of the farmhouse through demonstration of its historic setting and contemporary style. Some of these buildings have been converted to office use, whilst others still appear to hold an agricultural function. The 20th century farm buildings also contribute to the farmhouse's historic interest, through demonstration of the continued agricultural use and associations. Architecturally, however, they do not contribute to the significance of the asset. The gardens to the west of the farmhouse appear as domestic gardens, possibly with some formal elements, which contribute to the aesthetic value of the building, rather than to the understanding as a historic farmhouse. The gardens are illustrated by the 1854 Caversfield Tithe Map and therefore show the continued use of this space as gardens since at least the mid-19th century.

11.58 The wider setting of the asset is made up of the surrounding agricultural fields, to the south, east and west, including the Site; Caversfield, to the north, including the Church of St Laurence; RAF Bicester, further to the south-east; and new development within the Exemplar Site, slightly further to the north-west, south and south-west. The farmhouse has lost a degree of its connection to the surrounding agricultural land due to recent residential development, however, those parts immediately surrounding it do still allow for some understanding of the building within its original, historic rural and agricultural context. These fields include the Site, which was historically associated to Home Farmhouse. There is very limited experience of this historic association from the asset, with the Site being physically and visually removed from the Farmhouse by a dense tree belt. The considerable height of vegetation surrounding the Farmhouse and its gardens affords a very limited experience of the agricultural land to the north-west, west and south-west, and views from these aspects, including form within the Site, afford only glimpses of the roofline of the farmhouse. Elements of this intervening vegetation are illustrated by the 1854 tithe map and later 19th century Ordnance Survey maps, suggesting historic planting intending to separate the domestic building from its agricultural surrounds.

11.59 Whilst historically there was a functional connection between the Farmhouse and the

adjacent agricultural land, the perception of this is now relatively limited, reducing the overall contribution made by this element of the wider setting to the significance of Home Farmhouse. The development of the nearby Exemplar Site has further reduced the contribution that the wider setting makes to the significance of Home Farmhouse, through visual removal of the asset from wider agricultural fields, to the west and south-west, and giving the appearance of the farmhouse as part of a larger settlement. Therefore, whilst the understanding of the functional link between the Site and the Farmhouse has been eroded by the surrounding modern development, the Farmhouse and its associated buildings do still retain a small remnant of a functional connection to the Site. This lacks legibility due to the clear visual separation. It is therefore considered that present agricultural character of the Site makes a limited contribution to the setting of Home Farmhouse, translating to an overall minor contribution to significance.

- 11.60 Home Farmhouse derives its principal significance from its architectural and historic interest, embodied within the fabric of the building itself; and to a far lesser extent its evidential value. It also derives value from its immediate setting, comprising domestic gardens and a complex of historic and modern farm buildings. The wider agricultural setting is considered to make a limited contribution to the overall setting. Due to the general reduction of this rural setting, however, it is considered that the existing character of the Site makes at most a minor contribution to the significance of the Farmhouse, in part due to the loss of clear functional relationship between the Site and the asset, with the legibility of this diminished by the intervening planting, limiting any visual relationship.

Other heritage assets

- 11.61 In addition to assets included on the National Heritage List for England, possible non-designated assets of local heritage significance have been examined. Although Cherwell District Council has not produced a definitive catalogue of locally listed buildings, a list of criteria for consideration of inclusion on a future register was approved by the Executive Committee in July 2013^{xv}. Caversfield House and its associated structures have been identified as meeting several of the criteria for inclusion and have previously been assessed alongside the Grade II* Church of St Laurence and Grade II Home Farmhouse.
- 11.62 Furthermore, the former RAF Bicester has been defined as a Conservation Area by Cherwell District Council.

Caversfield House & associated structures

- 11.63 Caversfield House is situated c. 120m to the north-east of the Site, slightly to the north-east of the Church of St Laurence (Figure 11.1). The house was constructed in 1842-5, replacing

an earlier manor house in the same location. The house itself shares no visual or apparent functional connection to the Site; however, the buildings situated to the south-west of the house, some of which pre-date the house itself, do share some intervisibility with the Site.

- 11.64 No views of Caversfield House are afforded from within the Site or nearby public rights of way. A description of the asset was made by Sherwood & Pevsner in 1974^{xvi}, however, more recent aerial photographs suggest that the plan form of the building has changed dramatically since, and it is likely that this description is outdated. Due to sharing no functional, historic or visible association with the Site, no description is attempted here, with this assessment focussing on those buildings associated with Caversfield House which do hold such associations.
- 11.65 A series of buildings, arranged around a central courtyard, is situated to the south-west of Caversfield House, c. 35m to the north-east of the Site, the rooflines of these glimpsed from within the eastern part of the Site. The north-east range of the yard is the oldest element of the complex, illustrated by the 1854 Caversfield Tithe Map and therefore pre-dating this. At this time, this structure formed the south-west range of an earlier complex of structures surrounding a more north-easterly courtyard. The building comprises a stone-built outbuilding with a large central double height carriage way and a red-tiled, gabled roof.
- 11.66 The other buildings of the courtyard were constructed between 1881 and 1899, as illustrated by Ordnance Survey maps. They appear to be constructed from a combination of stone and red brick, having tiled roofs. Glimpses of the north-west range suggest a residential use, with sash windows, large chimney stacks and a hipped roof. It is likely that this was built as some form of accommodation, either to supplement the main house or as a rectory for the Church. The south-western range appears to be a single storey outbuilding, converted for residential use. This is stone built, with a gabled, red-tile roof and timber window casements and lead-capped roof pinnacles.
- 11.67 The significance of the building is derived from its architectural and historic interest. The development of the complex over time shows changing architectural and social practices. There is also aesthetic value derived from the architectural quality of the buildings. Any significance of the building is considered to be of local value and this is reflected in its lack of statutory designation.
- 11.68 The complex of buildings has a large immediate setting, formed by the grounds that surround it. These grounds are made up of a variety of different areas, all used as gardens. The dense vegetation boundaries create an isolated and secluded character, contributing to the significance of the assets as a self-contained complex. The wider setting includes the Church of St Laurence, in addition to the wider agricultural surroundings, including the Site. From

the Site there are some glimpses available of parts of the complex, which allows for some understanding of the history of the buildings. These fields also place the complex within its rural surrounds and illustrate its relative isolation. It is considered, however, that the Site itself makes only a limited positive contribution to this setting, with visual and functional connection between the Site and the assets being limited overall.

- 11.69 The complex of non-designated heritage assets at Caversfield House possesses a low level of value, principally derived from the historical development of the complex over time, and the architectural value of the buildings. Whilst the immediate setting contributes to this, the wider setting makes only a very limited contribution, placing them within their isolated, rural setting.

RAF Bicester Conservation Area

- 11.70 The RAF Bicester Conservation Area reaches from c. 530m to 2.6km to the south-east of the Site, to the north of Bicester. The following information is largely derived from the Conservation Area Appraisal document, produced by Cherwell District Council in 2008^{xvii}.
- 11.71 The airfield at Bicester was planned as a training station for the Royal Flying Corps in 1918, opening in October 1918 as the home of 44 Training Depot Station, preparing pilots for frontline service in France. Following the cessation of hostilities, 44 Training Depot Station and its associated flying squadrons were disbanded by March 1920. The airfield at Bicester was also closed and all structures demolished. A defence review in 1925 resulted in the expansion of the RAF and the establishment of two new, permanent bomber squadrons at Bicester. Reconstruction of the airfield was underway when a further review in 1931 decelerated the process and only two of the proposed six hangars were constructed. As part of the reconstruction, the facility expanded beyond the limits of the earlier airfield and land was acquired for the construction of married-quarters, recreational facilities and other facilities for servicemen and women. At the outbreak of the Second World War, a large number of defensive installations were constructed to protect the airfield, including pillboxes and trenches, and the flying field was expanded to handle larger volumes of aircraft. Beginning the war as a bomber base, this quickly changed to training and by the end of the war had effectively become a storage facility. During the second half of the 20th century, activity at RAF Bicester diminished, eventually being leased to the United States Airforce in Europe until 1994.
- 11.72 The Conservation Area was defined to encompass all elements of the airfield and military structures that were developed by the start of the Second World War, i.e. 1939. Much of the airfield expansion after this time has previously been lost to redevelopment. The Conservation Area includes: the technical site; the domestic site, consisting of the pre-war

married-quarters and mess halls; and the remaining flying field and adjacent defensive structures.

11.73 The key elements contributing to the significance of the Conservation Area are:

- Layout and development from an early military airfield, reflecting military design and activity throughout the 20th century;
- Large number of military buildings, many of which hold Listed status; and
- The facility's historic associations with early aviation, innovation and wartime activity.

11.74 The flying field enables an understanding of the activity and scale of aviation operations, while the buildings of the technical and domestic sites, both Listed and non-designated, present an architectural cohesiveness, sometimes known as 'British Military'. The experience of the Conservation Area is created by these aspects which afford understanding of RAF Bicester as an historic military aviation facility. The original, historic setting of RAF Bicester comprised the agricultural fields of the immediate and wider surrounds of the landscape, as illustrated by aerial photographs dating to the 1940s. This setting has been gradually eroded by urban expansion of Bicester, which, at the time of the establishment of the Conservation Area, bounded the airfield with dense residential development to the immediate south, south-west and north-east.

11.75 The use and character of the landscape surrounding the Conservation Area does not contribute to its significance. Those key elements comprising the layout and architectural character of associated structures and historical associations are not affected by wider development and enable the continued comprehension of the historic purpose of the airfield.

11.76 The Site lies c. 530m to the north-west of the RAF Bicester Conservation Area at its closest. Given the level topography of the intervening landscape and the resultant screening effect provided by intervening vegetation and built form, it is unlikely that the Site would be visible from the Conservation Area. In summary the Site does not contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area.

Future Baseline

11.77 The 'no development' scenario has been determined by considering how the built heritage resource would remain within the context of the Site should it continue in its current use, i.e. agricultural land.

11.78 In a 'no development' scenario, the built heritage baseline would remain unchanged and the

relevant assets would not experience any impact or alteration to their respective settings.

Likely Significant Effects

11.79 The effects report here, in so far as they relate to changes to the setting of heritage assets are solely concerned with the 'Complete Development'. The temporary nature of the construction impacts, in this specific context, are not deemed to be of a scale or a duration, to manifest in a material or significant effect.

Church of St Laurence

11.80 The principal elements of significance, i.e. the asset's historic fabric and form and its more contributory, immediate setting would be preserved. However, the completed Development would result in a permanent direct impact to the Church of St Laurence through a change within its wider setting of agricultural fields to modern, residential development. Considered in isolation, this effect is not significant (less than substantial harm); however, the scale of this harm is considered further below alongside the benefits.

11.81 Views of the Church tower from within the Site (and across the Site from the south) has been identified as a key contributor to the experience of the asset from its wider environs and a minor contributor to its overall significance. Retention of these views has been incorporated into the Development Parameters with a road corridor proposed within the eastern part of the Site, aligned with the Church, to draw views to the prominent feature of the tower. This roadway, framed on either side by built-form and potentially tree-lined, will seek to reinforce and improve the existing view. The scale of this benefit is considered further below.

11.82 The harm occasioned by the loss of the agricultural setting of the Church is assessed alongside the benefits that will be delivered by the enhancement of the view. The net combination of these effects would result in the Development causing **no overall harm** to the significance (the architectural and historic interest) of the Church.

Home Farmhouse

11.83 The visual separation of Home Farmhouse from principal elements of the agricultural landscape has been caused by the planting of a dense vegetation barrier, in place to some degree since the mid-19th century and possibly earlier. The associative element between the agricultural land and the function of the farmhouse has been diminished by the introduction of new built residential form within the Exemplar Site and the conversion of several former agricultural buildings within the farm complex to office use.

- 11.84 However, the completed Development would result in **less than substantial harm** to the significance of Home Farmhouse, through change of the agricultural character of the Site to a more urban character. The principal elements of significance, i.e. the asset's architectural and historic interest and its more contributory, immediate setting would be preserved. However, this would be very much at lower end of this scale and the harm would not affect the 'special architectural and historic interest' of the Listed Building. This will be a non-significant effect.
- 11.85 Careful selection of materials, typology and layout has been drawn from Home Farmhouse and its associated buildings to inform the design of elements of the Development closest to the asset to create a more coherent landscape. The 'Character area' of the eastern part of the Site would be designed in such a way as to visually incorporate elements of the surrounding built heritage.

Caversfield House & associated buildings

- 11.86 The Development will represent erosion of the rural surrounds of Caversfield House and its associated buildings; however, this would result in a very limited change to the setting of the asset, translating to a negligible harm to its significance; a non-significant effect

RAF Bicester Conservation Area

- 11.87 No element of the Development is likely to be visible from the RAF Bicester Conservation Area. The wider landscape, including the Site, does not contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area. No effects would be experienced by the Conservation Area resulting from the completed Development.

Mitigation Measures

- 11.88 Specific measures have been integrated into the Development Parameters to mitigate against impacts to the setting of nearby Listed Buildings, as outlined above at 11.81 and 11.85.
- 11.89 No further practical mitigation measures are required for either the construction or completed phases in relation to the built heritage.

Residual Effects

- 11.90 The Development would have an impact on the setting of the Church of St Laurence by changing the nature of its wider setting through the introduction of an increased urban aspect into the established agricultural landscape. The Development would not, however, prevent an understanding of the relationship between the Church and the wider area. Furthermore, key views of the Church from across the Site would be enhanced by the Development, enabling a greater appreciation and visibility of the asset from this aspect of its wider setting than is presently afforded. There would be a less than substantial harm (a non-significant effect) to this designated heritage asset, resulting from the changes to its setting. However, the 'heritage benefits' that would come from the improved and framed views of the Church tower need to be acknowledged; thus the net result would be **no harm**.
- 11.91 The Development would change the agricultural character of the Site, resulting in a change to the wider setting of Home Farmhouse. Therefore, the Development would result in **less than substantial harm to this designated heritage asset** (a non-significant effect). However, this would be very much at lower end of this scale and the harm would not affect the 'special architectural and historic interest' of the Listed Building.
- 11.92 The Development would result in a very minor degree of harm to the setting of Caversfield House and associated buildings. This should be weighed against the limited local significance of the building. In line with Paragraph 196 of the NPPF, the resultant overall harm to the significance is considered to be **negligible**.

Cumulative Effects

- 11.93 The following nearby developments would represent a change to the wider setting of the Listed Church of St Laurence and Home Farmhouse, and non-designated Caversfield House & associated buildings, through change from rural agricultural to an increasingly suburban and urban landscape:
- 14/01384/OUT – Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site, Banbury Road B4100, Caversfield (under consultation);
 - 10/01780/HYBRID – Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site, Caversfield, Oxfordshire (permission granted July 2012);
 - 18/00484/OUT – Land North and Adjoining Home Farm, Banbury Road B4100, Caversfield (application not determined);
 - 15/00760/F – North and South Arcade at Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site, Charlotte Avenue, Bicester (permission granted);

- 19/01036/HYBRID – Bicester Eco Town Exemplar Site Phase 2, Charlotte Avenue, Bicester (under consultation);
- 14/01968/F – Proposal for new highway aligned with Howes Lane, Bicester (permission granted August 2019).

11.94 These developments would result in a greater cumulative change to the wider setting of the identified heritage assets; however, the change brought about by the Development (and the easterly component of it specifically) makes up for vast majority of this change. This is due to the proximity of the Development to the identified heritage assets. Therefore, the cumulative effect to the significances of the Listed Church of St Laurence and Listed Home Farmhouse is negligible. The non-designated Caversfield House and associated buildings are not anticipated to experience any further degree of harm.

Summary

11.95 This assessment has considered impacts on built heritage assets within the environs of the Site. In addition, a brief outline of the archaeological background and further mitigation strategy has been provided, summarising the results of several previously prepared desk-based assessments and phases of intrusive and non-intrusive archaeological investigation.

11.96 An assessment of built heritage impacts has been carried out using the methodology laid out in relevant national and local planning policy in association with guidance provided by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. Appropriate amendments have been made to factor in the considerable body of existing evidence pertaining to cultural heritage and for certain limitations.

11.97 The results of archaeological investigations within the Site have identified a potential for further Iron Age remains within the western part of the Site and early-later medieval remains within the eastern part. On this basis, the Planning Archaeologist to Oxfordshire County Council has requested a further programme of archaeological mitigation within the western part. No further mitigation is requested for the eastern part.

11.98 Design mitigation measures have been included in the Development to reduce the potential effects on the setting and experience of the Church of St Laurence and Home Farmhouse. Most notably these include the retention and enhancement of framed views of the Church tower.

11.99 The change of agricultural character to part of the setting of the Grade II* Listed Church of St Laurence will result in an adverse effect. The enhancement of the view of the tower of the Church will be a beneficial effect. Balancing the adverse and beneficial effects of the

Development on (the experience of / views of) the Grade II* Listed Church of St Laurence will result in **no overall harm**. The changes to the historically associated agricultural hinterland of the Grade II Listed Home Farmhouse will result in a **very limited / less than substantial harm** to this designated heritage asset; this is a non-significant effect

11.100 The cumulative effects of other known developments will not result in any material harm to the identified heritage assets.

11.101 Table 11.3 contains a summary of the likely significant effects of the Development.

Table 11.3: Table of Significance – Built Heritage

Potential Effect	Nature of Effect (Permanent/ Temporary)	Significance	Mitigation / Enhancement Measures	Geographical Importance*							Residual Effects (Major/Moderate/Minor) (Beneficial/Adverse/ Negligible)
				I	UK	E	R	C	B	L	
Construction											
N/A											
Completed Development											
Setting / experience of St Laurence Grade II* Listed Building	Permanent	Not significant	No additional mitigation required over and above the measures included in the Development Parameters. The beneficial effect compensates the adverse effect.		*						No effect
Setting of Home Farmhouse Grade II Listed Building	Permanent	Not significant	No additional mitigation required over and above the measures included in the Development Parameters.		*						No significant effect

*** Geographical Level of Importance**

I = International; UK = United Kingdom; E = England; R = Regional; C = County; B = Borough; L = Local

REFERENCES

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- ⁱⁱ Department for Communities & Local Government, Planning Practice Guidance, <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Cherwell District Council. 2015. *The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031: Part 1 Adopted 20 July 2015*
- ^{iv} *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.*
- ^v Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (October 2020) *Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment*
- ^{vi} Historic England (March 2015) *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment – Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning 2*
- ^{vii} Air Photo Services. 2010. *Bicester Eco Town, Oxfordshire. Part 1: The Entire Site. Interpretation of Aerial Photographs for Archaeology.*
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