

20/03467/F

Development in a conservation area and within the setting of a Scheduled Monument

Application Site

Land Adjoining and West of Stonecroft House, Clifton Road, Deddington.

Understanding the heritage assets affected

The site is on the edge of the village of Deddington, within the conservation area. Adjacent to the site is the scheduled monument of Deddington Castle. The village of Deddington was laid out to the west of the castle in the 12th century and was a market town that benefitted from passing trade on the Oxford to Banbury Road. The location of the castle was probably dictated by the presence of water and was on a defensible site with wide ranging views across the open landscape. The site is therefore also within the setting of the scheduled monument.

Significance

The significance of the site is its position and its contribution to the setting of the scheduled monument and to the character of the conservation area in this location.

Proposals

Erection of 7 one and two storey age restricted dwellings for older people (60 years) with access, landscaping and associated infrastructure.

Appraisal of issues

The proposal for 7 dwellings located to the western part of the field is considered to better maintain the openness on the approach to the conservation area than the previous proposal in this location. It is acknowledged that clustering the buildings around a courtyard to mimic small agricultural buildings has a reduced impact and the design of the proposals is not considered to be unattractive. However as previously stated the prominent issue in terms of heritage with regards to the development of this site and development along Clifton Road is firstly the impact on the setting of the Scheduled Monument and secondly the impact to the character of this part of the conservation area within which the Scheduled monument plays an important part.

In terms of the Scheduled Monument it is for Historic England to advise on this matter particularly but the Scheduled Monument also lies within the Deddington conservation area and specifically the 'Setting' character area which is described as 'areas of predominantly open space which are considered to contribute to the setting of the historic core of the village'. Therefore these open spaces provide some separation between the built form of the village and the Scheduled Monument (Castle) hence the setting character area label. The impact on the views both into and out of the scheduled monument site and the conservation area are important and there are concerns that any development in this location will disrupt these views. The conservation area appraisal considers these views as important. 'included is a scheduled Ancient Monument and an archaeological site, consisting of extensive earthworks which are remnants of a former motte and bailey castle. Earth banks and significant trees are found on the perimeter of the space. These banks create raised platforms towards open countryside'. One of the key elements of significance of the castle is that it was a defensive structure which was intended to dominate the landscape around it. Historic England Advice – The Setting of Heritage Assets, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning note 3, highlights the importance of the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced and how this contributes to its significance. This is not just views; however, they do contribute. In this case this part of the conservation area is dominated by the Scheduled Monument and this contributes to the character. The historic association between the conservation area and the surrounding countryside in this locality is therefore considered to also be important and contributes to the significance of the heritage assets.

There are two rights of way from the north that converge at the edge of the site in addition to Clifton road which enters the conservation area here. Therefore the site not only forms part of the green edge of the conservation area it is also important to maintaining the character of the rural approach into the village.

The comments contained in the correspondence from Historic England dated 28th January 2021 are agreed with. The development site is considered to be one of the 'rough grassland areas' which are part of the open spaces that are identified as a characteristic of the 'Setting' character area of the conservation area. This field in particular is the last field before entering the village and this rural approach contributes to the significance of the conservation area. Any reduction in these open spaces will alter how the conservation area is experienced and therefore impact on the character of this part of the conservation area.

Paragraph 194 of the NPPF requires that harm to a heritage asset including from development within its setting should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 196 states that this harm should be weighed against the public benefit. Therefore it is considered that the justification and any potential wider public benefits of development in this location should be weighed against the heritage harm.

Level of harm

The development is considered to result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the conservation area including through development within the setting of the scheduled monument. The comments received from Historic England are agreed with in that this less than substantial harm is on balance considered to be minor and NPPF paragraph 196 states that this harm should be weighed against the public benefit.

Policies and Guidance

The relevant local and national policies are as follows:

Cherwell District Council Local Plan Policy ESD15

This policy states that new development proposals should: Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated 'heritage assets' including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated, furthermore development should respect the traditional pattern of the form, scale and massing of buildings. The development is not considered to conserve, sustain or enhance the Conservation area and therefore does not comply with policy ESD15.

NPPF – Chapter 16

Paragraph 193 requires 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.

Paragraph 194 outlines that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 196 requires that where development proposal 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.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 72 of the Act requires that 'with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.

Historic England Advice – The Setting of Heritage Assets

Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning note 3,

Recommendation

There are concerns regarding the impact to the setting of the scheduled monument and the resulting harm to the character of this part of the Deddington conservation area. This harm should be weighed against any potential public benefits.

Officer / Date

Emma Harrison

23/03/2021