

CAVERSFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Mrs Jane Olds, Parish Clerk

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Response to Planning Application 21/01630/OUT

Caversfield Parish Council met on 3 August to discuss the planning application reference 21/01630/OUT at Land at North West Bicester, Home Farm, Lower Farm and SGR2, Caversfield for “Outline planning application for residential development (within Use Class C3), open space provision, access, drainage and all associated works and operations including but not limited to demolition, earthworks, and engineering operations, with the details of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for later determination”.

The Council wished to make the following comments on the above application.

While the larger western ‘block’ of units did not have a visual impact on the village, the use of the field nearest the B4100 and therefore nearest Caversfield has caused concern.

This is primarily because of the erosion of the “green buffer zone” between Bicester / the EcoTown and the Category C village of Caversfield and the detriment it would have on the village.

Secondly, the setting of the Grade II* listed church and Grade II Listed farm house (Home Farm) would be greatly affected by the development. There is a historic link between Home Farm, the Church (including the WWII Commonwealth War Graves), Caversfield House and grounds, the land of South Lodge Riding Stables which had already been recognised by Planning Inspector David Nicholson on 27 May 2014 to be of significant import as part of the wider setting, together with the RAF Conservation Area within Caversfield.

As the Planning Inspector said in his report regarding the proposed development on land at South Lodge Riding Stables located just over the road from the current proposal, (reference APP/C3105/A/13/2208385) the main issues on which he rejected the proposal were that:

- (a) the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the built up limits of Bicester and Caversfield, the proposed green buffer gap [which included the area of land of this current proposal] between the planned expansion of Bicester and Caversfield, and housing land supply;

- (b) the surrounding landscape;
- (c) the setting of the RAF Bicester Conservation area;
- (d) the setting of adjacent listed buildings / heritage assets;
- (e) the quality of design.

The majority of the points above are as relevant to this current proposal as they were to the South Lodge proposal.

The Council believes that development is likely to:

- harm the historic value of the landscape;
- cause undue harm to important natural landscape features and topography;
- have an impact on an area which currently has a high level of tranquillity and
- harm the setting of settlements, buildings, structures and other landmark features of historical importance.

No mention has been made in the plans of promoting access to the Church or ways to assist the Church in embracing the new development.

The more general impact of the traffic on the area was also of great concern. Parents of children who live in Caversfield and attend the catchment school – Gagle Brook – already have great difficulties delivering and collecting their children from school – some of whom have no option but to do so by car as it is simply too far to walk.

It does not appear that the traffic model is the most up-to-date and is missing major developments. It also does not appear to take into account the ‘pinch points’ on the current development – the two by the park on Phase 2 and one by the larger park on Phase 3. The impact of these points together with the parking issues by the school are likely to greatly affect the surrounding roads including the B4100.

The cycle routes proposed on the existing road structure are also not adequate.

If the Council were minded to approve the development, S106 / CIL funds should be allocated to:

- the E1 bus service in order that it can be fit for purpose (it should run on Sundays and beyond 7pm in the evenings) and should be maintained through Caversfield
- the Church in order that improvements to the access along the B4100 and within the Church curtilage can be made.

I trust that this is of help to you and the Committee.