

Application number(s):	21/01630/OUT
Application site:	Land at North West Bicester, Home Farm, Lower Farm and SGR2 Caversfield
Proposal:	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

<input type="checkbox"/>	Listed Building	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conservation Area	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Setting of a Listed Building
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grade I	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grade II*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Grade II

### Policies

#### **Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (2015)**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Policy ESD15</b> 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
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#### **Cherwell Local Plan 1996 Saved Policies**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>C18</b> Works to a listed building should preserve the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest. Alterations or extensions to a listed building should be minor and sympathetic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>C23</b> Presumption in favour of retaining positive features within a Conservation Area.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>C28</b> The layout, design and materials proposed within a new development should respect the existing local character. 'control will be exercised over all new development to ensure that standards of layout, design and external appearance are sympathetic to the character of the urban or rural context of that development.

#### **NPPF – Chapter 16**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Paragraph 193.</b> 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 (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Paragraph 194.</b> 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. Substantial harm to or loss of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;</li> <li>b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and</li> </ul>

II\* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly Exceptional.

**Paragraph 195.** Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:  
a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and  
b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and  
c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and  
d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

**Paragraph 196.** Where a 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.

**Paragraph 197.** The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

#### Other Relevant Policies and guidance

#### Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

**Section 16.** In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

**Section 72.** 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.

#### Significance (50 words)

There are two heritage assets which lie within close proximity to the proposed development, which will impact on their setting.

Home Farmhouse is a grade II listed building and the site forms part of the original agricultural landholding associated with the farmhouse.

St Laurence's Church is an isolated rural church and a grade II\* listed building. The church is separated from the site by the main road (B4100).

#### Appraisal (250 words)

In relation to the impact of the development on the setting of the heritage assets North West Bicester Supplementary Planning Document states 'The setting of St Lawrence's Church, Himley Farm Barns and Home Farm are key considerations for any development in this area. This setting is currently defined by underdeveloped agricultural land with associated rural qualities, in turn allowing views from these areas to the Church tower such that built development without adequate buffers would be incongruous. Careful thought about the way the farms related to the agricultural land around them may point towards ways in which the retained buildings can be integrated into the new surroundings in a way that retains a degree of historical sense. Public open space could be used to retain the setting of the farm complexes.'

Earlier versions of the masterplan for the site show a larger indicative 'buffer' area to mitigate the impact on the setting of the grade II\* listed building of St Laurence Church and grade II Home Farmhouse. The buffer area shown as part of the outline permission is reduced. The precise dimensions of the buffer zone are considered to be less significant than the role it plays in mitigating the impact on the heritage assets.

The majority of open space between the listed building of Home Farm and the development is provided by land outside the site boundary. The buffer zone associated with the development is provided to the frontage of the site and creates a sense of openness between Home Farm and St Lawrence's church, retaining a small element of the historic landscape which once existed. The treatment of this area will be crucial in retaining this element of the significance of the site. It will be important that this area remains as natural and open as possible. There are concerns about locating the play area in this location and if there are no alternative locations this will need to be carefully designed to minimise impact to the setting of the heritage assets.

The Heritage Enhancement Zone, which provides a view corridor to St Lawrence's church is noted. This is considered to be positive, but further details will be required in a reserved matters application about how this will be achieved in practice.

#### Level of harm

No Harm

Less than Substantial Harm

Substantial Harm

#### Public Benefit (NPPG)

Yes

No

#### Comments

Residential development in the rural setting of heritage assets (in this case a farmhouse and isolated rural church) will inevitably have a harmful impact. In this case the harm is considered to be less than substantial and it is considered that sufficient mitigation has been put in place to minimise the harm.

There is considered to be a public benefit to outweigh this harm as the site has been formally allocated for part of the housing allocation for the district.

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**Recommendation**

No objections

Objections

Engage in preapp

**Suggested Conditions**

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**Conservation Officer:** Jenny Ballinger

**Date:** 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021