



Historic England

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Our ref: P01557464

3 April 2023

Dear Madam or Sir,

**T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015  
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**LAND ADJOINING AND WEST OF STONECROFT HOUSE CLIFTON ROAD  
DEDDINGTON  
Application No. 23/00376/F**

Thank you for your letter of 14 March 2023 regarding the above application for planning permission. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

**Summary**

The proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the scheduled monument Deddington Castle and to the Deddington Conservation Area. There is no formal scale for less than substantial harm, but on a simple scale of minor, moderate and major I assess the harm in this case as being minor.

There will be no harm to the Grade II\* listed Castle End (former farmhouse) or the curtilage listed barns (these all lie west of the development site).

In determining this planning application your local authority should balance the harm against any public benefit from the development, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, paragraph 202. Paragraphs 199 and 200 of the NPPF require that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated asset, irrespective of the level of harm, and that any harm should be fully justified.

I support the advice of the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service that a phased programme of archaeological mitigation should be secured through appropriate planning conditions. Paragraph 205 of the NPPF requires this mitigation.

The applicant should submit the heritage statement and other heritage documents prepared for the previous proposal (20/03467/F, amended 21/02417/F) as this



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application relies on the information within them.

## Historic England Advice

I understand this is an application for housing. Although submitted as a new application it is effectively a revision, from 7 to five dwellings, of 20/03467/F (amended 21/02417/F). The proposed development site is immediately north of Deddington Castle, a scheduled monument, and is within the Deddington Conservation Area. The Grade II\* listed former farmhouse, Castle End, with two curtilage listed barns, is immediately west of the site.

## Significance of heritage assets

Significance of a heritage asset is normally considered as being the sum of its heritage values - evidential, historic (illustrative and associative), aesthetic and communal (See *Conservation Principles*, Historic England, 2008). Consideration of significance concerns not just the heritage asset itself, but also any contribution made to significance by the setting of the asset, where setting means the environs in which the asset is experienced. (Historic England, *The Setting of Heritage Assets*, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3, 2015).

The earthworks of Deddington Castle, and the results from excavations, indicate that it is an 11th-century Norman motte and bailey castle, and that a 12th-century enclosure castle was constructed within the earlier fortification. The western bailey survives as an extensive raised area surrounded by high outer banks and an external ditch. The high mound of the motte is in the north-east corner of the western bailey and survives partially, having been cut through for the creation of the enclosure castle. A second bailey to the east of the motte is mainly known from aerial photographs but some earthworks survive. The castle is one of the best-preserved earthwork monuments relating to the period in Oxfordshire. Unlike other similar castles, it appears to have been located away from the original village of Deddington and this separation has been perpetuated over time. The isolation may be connected with its status as the location of the 'caput' (principal site) of an 'honour' or estate, possibly of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux and the brother of William I.

The scheduled castle has very high evidential value - archaeological remains relating to construction and use of the castle, including waterlogged remains within the ditches. The development will not impact on these.

The castle also has high historic (illustrative) value in demonstrating how the Normans deliberately dominated the surrounding landscape militarily and physically by choosing an elevated site, and how the castle stands separate from the village - the existing mainly open setting contributes to that significance. The development site is part of



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that setting and therefore contributes to the significance. Although there is tree cover around the edges of the castle, there are still places where its dominant position can be appreciated, and the views are improved during the winter when the trees are not in leaf.

The communal value of the castle is clear: as a valued asset, the site is much used for walking and is well-visited. Views out from the castle across the open countryside are clearly part of what is valued and enjoyed by visitors. The central motte area is in the care of the Secretary of State and is managed by English Heritage.

As regards the conservation area, the site is within the character area named as 'Setting' (Para. 8.3.8. Deddington Conservation Area Appraisal, Cherwell District Council, April 2012). (The Setting character area includes the scheduled monument.) The setting character area is defined thus: *These are areas of predominantly open space which are considered to contribute to the setting of the historic core of the village. They are tranquil areas and comprise rough grassland areas which are often bounded by ironstone walls like along Earl's Land and Castle Street which contribute to the rural character of the area. Also included is the main recreational area located to the east - which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and an archaeological site, consisting of extensive earthworks which are remnants of a former motte and bailey castle.*

The development site is clearly one of the 'rough grassland areas' described here. Approaching along the Clifton Road the site is the last field which is experienced, before entering the historic village. It clearly contributes to the significance of the conservation area as a historic asset.

Castle End Monks Court (the property is now divided into two residences) is a Grade II\* listed former farmhouse for what was once known as Blount's Farm. It stands approximately 45 m west the development site. Between the residences and the site are two former barns which for previous planning applications have been treated as curtilage listed. The background to this was helpfully set out in the submitted Heritage Statement for application 20/03467/F (HS). I agree with the conclusion of the HS that there are complex legal arguments that could be advanced either for or against these structures being curtilage listed. However, I advise that it is not necessary to resolve that question to determine the current planning application. Whether the group of buildings is treated as a Grade II\* house with curtilage listed former barns, or as a Grade II\* house with two former barns that are undesignated heritage assets, the question to be resolved is whether the development site does or does not contribute to their significance, and therefore whether the significance can be harmed. I advise that it does not make a contribution because the barn structures and house are some distance from the site and there is an intervening later structure. This is the structure visible from the development site - the roof and roof lights are visible and it does not read as part of a historic farm group. This structure is not shown on the Ordnance Survey Epoch A5 First Edition map (published 1955) and the situation is clear on





drawing CB27C3 (block plan) submitted in 2004 for listed building application 04/01254/LB. The latter plan shows the two possibly curtilage-listed barns west of the more recent building. The current situation also includes screening (hedges and trees), car parking areas and other buildings, all of which mean that on its south side the historic house and barns group is experienced from within in an enclosed manner rather than drawing on the open development site as part of its setting. Although at one time the development site would have been one of the fields farmed from Blount's Farm, this cannot now be appreciated, so there is negligible illustrative value..

## Impact

There will be no impact on the evidential value of the scheduled monument, Deddington Castle.

I advise that there will be some negative impact on the historic (illustrative) value of the monument caused by the construction of the development in what is currently an open field, causing a change to the setting.

There are views of the currently open site from the edge (bailey ditch) of the scheduled monument. The choice of viewpoint is important, as it is possible to approach the stone wall at the edge of the monument and obtain unobstructed views (available winter or summer) into the open field.

There are also glimpsed views into the open site from the top of the castle rampart. Views from here are important as the visitor is experiencing some sense of the view a medieval defender within the castle would have experienced. These views are clearer in winter (the trees are mainly deciduous) and Historic England guidance on setting (referenced above) is that seasonality and impermanence of screening should be taken into account. The current management of the monument has led to quite dense tree growth, but future good management would require some shrub clearance and thinning of trees (tree roots, and possible windthrow, are damaging to archaeological deposits and earthworks) including some of the many trees currently being choked by ivy growth. It is therefore likely that more open views will be available in the future.

Tree screening is proposed for the new development as mitigation. While this will provide some screening, I advise that this is a long-term measure, and that existing buildings show it is only partly effective as the upper parts of buildings are still visible, particularly when seen from the raised viewpoints on the motte and west bailey. The new development would still read as housing when viewed, and not as rural space. This would be true whether the development is being viewed from the castle, or from Clifton Road. The visibility will be lessened slightly as this 2023 planning application has only single storey buildings - the previous scheme had some more visible two-storey structures.



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Taken overall, the impact of the new development on visitors to the castle will be that the open agricultural setting of the castle will be reduced by a small amount, and the available view from Clifton Road reduced by a small amount. Also, the effect as experienced will be that the built-up area of the village is extended in an area close to the castle. This is important, as the separation of the castle from the village is a key element of its significance (see discussion above). The site in its current state serves to illustrate this - its contribution to the castle's significance will therefore be lessened by the development, albeit by a small amount. At a previous planning appeal for another development between the village and the castle, the Inspector dismissed the appeal, emphasising the importance of the castle's separation. (Appeal Ref: APP/C3105/A/14/2228558 Land to the rear of Valley View and Orchard View, St Thomas Street, Deddington, Oxfordshire OX15 0SY, Application reference 13/01941/OUT).

The impact on the scheduled monument will cause less than substantial harm for the reasons given above. The concept of less than substantial harm is covered in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021, paragraphs 199, 202). There is no formal scale for less than substantial harm. On a simple scale of minor, moderate and major (severe) I consider the harm to the significance of the scheduled monument would be minor.

With regard to the conservation area the definition of the significance of the Setting character area is quite clear in the Conservation Area Assessment. Construction of buildings here, and reduction of the open space will cause some harm to the conservation area. The harm will be less than substantial. There is no formal scale for less than substantial harm but on a simple scale of minor, moderate and major (severe) I advise that it would be minor.

There will be no impact on and therefore no harm to the Grade II\* listed Castle End (former farmhouse) or the curtilage listed barns (these all lie west of the development site).

In considering the levels of harm I have taken into account the courtyard design of the development and its use of appropriate materials (ironstone, wood and slate). I have also considered the proposed enhancements discussed above. Without these the level of harm would be higher. I would note that the applicant engaged with Historic England before the previous application and has worked to reduce the harm in comparison with earlier versions of the scheme.

With regard to undesignated archaeological remains within the development site, I concur with and support the advice given by the Oxfordshire County Archaeology Service. This is that a phased programme of archaeological mitigation works should be secured by the use of appropriate planning conditions.





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In determining this planning application your local authority should balance this harm against any public benefit from the development, as required by the NPPF, paragraph 202. Paragraphs 199 and 200 of the NPPF require that great weight should be given to the conservation of a designated asset, irrespective of the level of harm, and that any harm should be fully justified. Justification of the harm requires your local authority to consider whether any public benefit can be delivered without causing the harm.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

### **Recommendation**

Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us. Please advise us of the decision in due course.

Yours sincerely,

*David Wilkinson*

### **David Wilkinson**

Inspector of Ancient Monuments

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