

Comment for planning application 23/01233/OUT

Application Number	23/01233/OUT
Location	OS Parcel 4347 East Of Pipal Cottage Oxford Road Kidlington
Proposal	Outline application (with all matters except access reserved for future consideration) for the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of up to 800 dwellings (Class C3); a two form entry primary school; a local centre (comprising convenience retailing (not less than 350sqm and up to 500sqm (Class E(a))), business uses (Class E(g)(i)) and/or financial and professional uses (Class E(c)) up to 500sqm, café or restaurant use (Class E(b)) up to 200sqm; community building (Class E and F2); car and cycle parking); associated play areas, allotments, public open green space and landscaping; new vehicular, pedestrian and cycle access points; internal roads, paths and communal parking infrastructure; associated works, infrastructure (including Sustainable Urban Drainage, services and utilities) and ancillary development. Works to the Oxford Road in the vicinity of the site to include, pedestrian and cycle infrastructure, drainage, bus stops, landscaping and ancillary development
Case Officer	Linda Griffiths
Organisation Name	Jayne Todd
Address	11 Hull Lane,Ambrosden,Bicester,OX25 2BN
Type of Comment	Objection
Type	neighbour
Comments	<p>The continued conservation of a heritage asset is a public benefit, even if its historic interest is contested in some way.</p> <p>St Frideswide's Farmhouse Historical background - The building St Frideswide's Farmhouse is a Grade II* Listed farmhouse (NHLE: 1286525). The List Entry Summary notes many internal original and historic features, including panelling and fireplaces and is therefore of high heritage significance for its architectural and historic interest (aesthetic and historical values). The Farmhouse is understood to have been constructed with a three-unit, through-passage plan with a rear wing and also has a hipped roof of Stonesfield slates with tall, redbrick chimney stacks. The Farmhouse is two-storeys in height and is built of limestone rubble with ashlar dressings. The principal elevation faces south-east and contains a right-of-centre timber door with moulded stone doorway with a four-centred arch within a rectangular surround and a small window with label at first floor level. To the right of the door is a five-light mullioned and transomed window, while to the left are mullioned windows of three, four and five lights at ground and first floor levels and a blocked doorway with a heavy timber lintel.</p> <p>The building was potentially altered during the 17th or 18th centuries when a rear lean-to extension was added. A further extension was added in the 20th century. Despite these changes at the rear, the Farmhouse is a good example of a fairly large and grand, 16th century Oxfordshire farmhouse.</p> <p>The Farmhouse may have replaced an earlier manor house associated with the nearby Cutteslowe Deserted Medieval Village. The Farmhouse appears to take its name from its early ownership by St Frideswide's minster in Oxford from around the early 11th century (1004), which through a series of transactions from the late 13th century onwards, came to be owned by Christ Church, Oxford from the 16th century after the dissolution of the monasteries.</p> <p>The Farmhouse sits within a private garden, with a former orchard and moat to the north, and garden to the south and west, which is in lawn with some trees, shrubs, and other planting. In the south-west corner of the garden is a pond and a small outbuilding, which appears relatively modern. Part of the garden is enclosed by the separately listed stone wall (NHLE: 1370050) located to the north-east and east of the Farmhouse, which is of limestone rubble with tiled coping and thought to be of 17th or 18th century date, which is of group value with the Farmhouse. A lower stone wall encloses the western side of the garden with an opening for access into the property. Beyond this lies a gravelled parking area, which is accessed from the track leading from Banbury Road, which splits with one branch leading</p>

north-east through woodland to the Farmhouse and the other leading east to a group of farm buildings.

The principal elevation of the Farmhouse faces south-east looking out to farmland, which rises up to form the horizon. There is minimal separation from the domestic garden and the farmland by what appears to be an infilled ditch, which may be a reverse ha-ha. With the exception of part of the garden to the south-east of the principal elevation, the property is almost entirely enclosed by trees and appears to be set in a secluded, wooded hollow. The Farmhouse is not visible from the surrounding area unless in close proximity and is not a local landmark.

St Frideswide's Farmhouse

Historical background - Occupancy

The Farmhouse provides a robust connection with the history of this area, in particular the Lenthall family, who had significant involvement in the English civil war. It is known to have been occupied by the Lenthall family who had moved to Oxfordshire in the 15th century and occupied the farm in the late 16th century. The family were recusant Roman Catholics until the death of William Lenthall in 1596. After becoming Protestant, several members of the family rose to eminence, but the Lenthall family are remembered internationally and nationally for William Lenthall (1591-1662), who upheld the privileges of Parliament against the Monarch as Speaker of the House of Commons for a period of almost twenty years, both before and after the execution of King Charles I. He is famous for his defiance of the Charles 1st when, in January 1642, supported by 400 armed men, Charles entered the chamber of the House of Commons to attempt to seize five members whom he accused of treason. When Charles asked Lenthall where the five were, Lenthall famously replied "I have neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak in this place but as this House is pleased to direct me". It was the first time in English history that a speaker of the House of Commons had declared his allegiance to the liberty of parliament rather than the will of the monarch.

As well as the Lenthall connection, St Frideswide's Farmhouse is, of significant local historic interest in its own right as part of an historic farm and hamlet on the outskirts of Oxford City that came to be part of Christ Church's land holdings.

Harm

The NPPF also uses the term 'harm', and the policy encourages solutions which minimise harm or avoid it altogether. Where the proposal is to make changes to the setting of a contested heritage asset, it is quite likely that some 'harm' will be done to the heritage asset.

The approach taken to justifying harm is in principle the same, regardless of how much harm is caused. Legislation (Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990) requires that, when dealing with planning applications affecting listed buildings, 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'.

The setting of the Farmhouse, in its garden and the field to its south-east, offer the best space to appreciate the listed building's architecture. Some of its history will inevitably be harmed if this setting is altered. In addition, the risk of damage (by vandalism) will increase by virtue of its prominence in its new situation. Is the justification for the proposed changes and potential future level of damage caused sufficient?

Conservation of Heritage

The NPPF requires that 'great weight' be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.

Significance

The NPPF defines significance as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The NPPF requires local planning authorities to have regard to the importance of their retention in situ and, where appropriate, of explaining their historic and social context rather than removal. The most important factor in this decision is that if this farm loses its historical setting, it loses much of the justification for its listed building status. It no longer marks a historic building and a part of local and national history - instead it becomes 'just another' old building.

Conclusion

It is vital that planning officers examine the harm, significance, and public benefits very clearly and analyse those considerations to be able to come to an informed decision. Bearing in mind that heritage assets are irreplaceable and in this case the setting of the farmhouse will be irreplaceably changed - any harm needs clear and convincing justification.

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Attachments