

Comment for planning application 23/01233/OUT

Application Number	<input type="text" value="23/01233/OUT"/>
Location	<input type="text" value="OS Parcel 4347 East Of Pipal Cottage Oxford Road Kidlington"/>
Proposal	<input type="text" value="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	<input type="text" value="Linda Griffiths"/>
Organisation Name	<input type="text" value="Adrian Tanovic"/>
Address	<input type="text" value="St Frideswide Farm,Oxford Road,Gosford And Water Eaton,Oxford,OX2 8HF"/>
Type of Comment	<input type="text" value="Objection"/>
Type	<input type="text" value="neighbour"/>
Comments	<p>These are our concerns about the amended proposal:</p> <p>Although Appendix 11.1 Archaeological And Heritage Assessment R006g Part1 states that</p> <p>"It is considered that the primary setting of St Frideswide's Farm House and its associated wall as listed buildings, is restricted to the immediate surrounding gardens in which they are experienced, including the pond to the south-west, as well as the small orchard to the north and the garden extending into the open pasture field to the south.."</p> <p>we would take issue with this, and in fact ES Addendum Appendix 11.1 Archaeology and Heritage Assessment Report Conclusions 6.3 itself says more correctly that:</p> <p>"There is an historical association between the farmhouse and wider farmland across the site, which makes a positive contribution to the listed building, and forms part of its setting. In this regard, the masterplan should seek to retain an appropriate offset to the aforementioned features (garden setting and DMV site), and the listed complex, in order to respect its currently isolated and enclosed setting"</p> <p>Consultation Response Tables point 7.1 made the case that farmhouse is inadequately protected from the harm of the surrounding development in its current form:</p> <p>"I consider the development will be visible within the landscape and public rights of way around the Farmhouse [...] It is unlikely the green infrastructure corridor in this location will afford much protection to this Grade II* Listed Building in terms of its setting."</p> <p>Bellway and Christ Church's response to this was that:</p> <p>"Following further assessment, no changes to building heights are proposed on the eastern side of the proposed development (i.e. relating to St. Frideswide farmhouse). This is considered in ES Addendum Appendix 11.1 Archaeology and Heritage Assessment Report (WE/HER1/P02) and in Appendix 11.5 Heritage Photomontages."</p> <p>However, the photomontages included in Appendix 11.5 Heritage Photomontages D077, in particular Heritage Photoviewpoint Images EDP 2, EDP 4, EDP 5, and EDP 6 clearly show a very great visual encroachment of the development into the setting of St Frideswide's Farm House, which is unmitigated by the proposed planting of vegetation.</p> <p>We believe further remedial measures --- either reducing building heights in the vicinity of the Farmhouse or increasing the height and density of screening vegetation - are called for.</p>

This is acknowledged by both the statutory consultees and the developers own Suggested Mitigations:

The CDC Conservation Officer specifically asked for heights of no greater than 2 storeys near St Frideswide's farmhouse (not 2-3 storeys).

In addition, Section 5.33 of ES Addendum Appendix 11.1 Archaeology and Heritage Assessment Report (Summary and Suggested Mitigation) states that:

"Retention and strengthening of existing well-vegetated boundaries around the farmhouse curtilage to screen/filter development within the site and retain the sense of enclosure and isolation to the listed building's setting"

So we expect that further measures will be taken, rather than the response that "no changes to building heights are proposed" nor are their any proposed strengthening of vegetated boundaries.

Of particular importance is the east-to-west hedge along the northern boundary of the Cutteslowe Park extension - there is a section of hedge missing at the western end which will permit unimpeded sightlines from the farmhouse to the houses in the development.

We also take exception to the assessment in 5.26 of ES Addendum Appendix 11.1 Archaeology and Heritage Assessment Report, which states that

"The farmhouse, as a functional building, would not typically have designed views outwards over the landscape. Rather as a residential building at the heart of the working farm, the modestly proportioned windows were principally designed for ingress of light, instead of for opportunities for outward views. [...] The enclosing vegetation and low-lying position of the farmhouse further militates against any views of the land within the overwhelming majority of the site from the farmhouse."

This is very much not the case - the house is in fact designed for excellent outward views from windows consistent with its historical period - and the new buildings of the development will be visible from the first floor of the farmhouse both from the north and south.

In general, we feel the CDC Conservation Officer's concerns in their Consultation Response about the level of harm to the Grade II* listed St Frideswide's Farm House have been adequately addressed, in particular when they write:

"We do not feel this statement of 'at the low end of the scale of less than substantial harm' has been fully qualified in the submission. There are concerns about the proposed 'up to 11m' height of the school from 'finished ground level' to the north-west of St Frideswide and the proposed heights of building to the south and south west of St Frideswide - up to 10m, and up to 11.5m where the ground also rises."

and

"A change in artificial light levels can also affect sensory perceptions and the setting of St Frideswide, who are already affected by the floodlighting at Oxford Hawkes to the south of the farm. If any floodlighting of the playground is proposed, this should take into account of the setting and views of St Frideswide, as should the general lighting in the development."

and

"The nearby development, and in particular the noise from the nearby school playground could have a harmful effect on the current peacefulness at St Frideswide. It may be possible to address sound attenuation with potential issues of unwanted surveillance of the school yard from the pathway. It is assumed the school will be made secure by a barrier. A 'living willow wall' could provide a green physical barrier which would block views from the pathway westward into the school playground. This 'living willow wall' could be sinusoidal rather than linear. To the school side of the 'living willow wall' there could then be a small strip of trees within the playground to allow safe woodland experience (Steeple Aston School uses an adjacent wood as part of their learning experience to give physical exercise and help with science lessons), there are allotments shown on the illustrative masterplan but this does not include an area within the school. The design of a 'living willow wall' incorporates an acoustic core which could soften noise levels at the Grade II* listed St Frideswide Farmhouse."

In conclusion we agree with the Officer's findings that:

"The tranquillity of St Frideswide is a sensory part of the heritage value." "We need to avoid overlooking St Frideswide, whilst also protecting views of and from St Frideswide."

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Attachments