



Historic England

Ms Linda Griffiths  
Cherwell District Council - Planning  
Bodicote House  
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Oxfordshire  
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Direct Dial: 0207 973 3749

Our ref: P01564307

3 April 2024

Dear Ms Griffiths

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

**OS PARCEL 4347 EAST OF PIPAL COTTAGE, OXFORD ROAD, KIDLINGTON  
Application No. 23/01233/OUT**

Thank you for your letter of 8 August 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.

**Historic England Advice**

Historic England wrote to you previously with our substantive advice on the above application in our letter dated 6 October, which should be read in conjunction with this letter.

We welcome the further assessment of the impacts of the proposed development on the significance of nearby heritage assets and production of additional views to assess the potential impact of the proposed development on the setting of the Grade II\* listed St Frideswide Farm.

In our letter of 6 October, Historic England advised the Council that it was likely St Frideswide would be adversely affected by the proposed development.

The additional verified views submitted from within the gardens of St Frideswide and the Public Rights of Way around it indicate that the proposed development has the potential to be highly visible and/or appreciable from this Grade II\* building. Views along the Public Right of Way (views 4, 5 and 7) to the south offer open views back and to St Frideswide. As the visuals demonstrate the development is likely to have a close relationship with St Frideswide, removing the rural feel to the west of the house, and replacing it with a more suburban character even once the proposed screening has established.



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Of particular concern is the proposed school, which may rise to 3 storeys/11 meters and is sited particularly close to the farmhouse. Views 4 and 5 shows the school would rise up directly behind the historic farmstead in the more open views from the south, whilst views 1 and 2 show the development may appear in glimpse views through and above the tree screening. Even if the development doesn't have a visual impact, its proximity means its highly likely it would still be appreciable, such as through noise and lighting. This changes the character of the place from an enclosed rural to one that is more suburban in nature. For these reasons and those set out within our letter of 6 October, we remain of the opinion that the proposed development would affect the setting of St Frideswide, causing harm to its significance.

In our view the level of harm caused by the impacts described above would be less than substantial in the language of the NPPF. This would be towards the middle of that range. As noted above, the NPPF gives great weight to the conservation of heritage assets, irrespective of the level of harm (NPPF Para 205).

We appreciate there are ways this harm can be mitigated (to a degree) under reserved matters through screening and the final design and mass of the development, however at this stage we are not persuaded that enough has been done to minimise or avoid the harm caused by the proposed scheme. NPPF paragraph 201 requires you to seek such opportunities, and we encourage you to do this before weighing any remaining harm against any public benefits of the application. In the first instance it would be advisable to seek a reduction in height of the buildings closest to the farmhouse.

The location and orientation of the school particularly encroaches on the listed building and would dominant it in the surrounding landscape. We appreciate there are difficulties in reducing the mass and height of the school building, which by their nature are large functional buildings. We would therefore question if this could be relocated elsewhere. I note the Development Brief (August 2022) suggested the school be located further to the north and a greater green buffer to the west of St Frideswide established through a mix of open green space and allotments and two storey dwellings further west. In our view this has the potential to provide a more gradual transition between the suburban nature of the development and rural character of this historic farmstead, which would be preferable. Whilst we appreciate this option may impact the amount of houses the site could deliver, we note the application seeks to deliver 800 homes which is more than the 690 the allocation requires. A lower density could be adopted to allow more open rural space around the farmhouse of St Frideswide.

Once your Council is satisfied that the harm has been minimised, and that any residual harm is justified under the terms of the NPPF (Para 206) it is for your Council to carry out the weighing exercise between harm and public benefit (including heritage benefit) as required by paragraph 208 of the NPPF. Whilst we welcome some of the



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landscaping including Barrow Park and the extension to Cutteslowe Park that have been submitted with the application, we encourage you to seek more.

Specifically, we would like to see some more tangible benefits for extant historic remains/structures within the application boundary and the group of historic farmstead buildings within St Frideswide's curtilage. The condition of these assets is mixed, and so there is scope to make improvements to their physical condition to help alleviate some of the harm by the development within their setting.

## **Recommendation**

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 205, 206 and 208 of the NPPF.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

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.

Yours sincerely

### **Andrew Scott**

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

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