



Oxford United New Stadium Development Oxford Oxfordshire

Heritage Settings Assessment



Report prepared for: Ridge and Partners LLP

CA Project: CR1442

CA Report: CR1442_2

February 2024



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SUMMARY

Project Name: Oxford United New Stadium Development

Location: Land south of Kidlington, Oxfordshire

NGR: 449860, 212020

In June 2023 Cotswold Archaeology was commissioned by Ridge and Partners LLP to undertake a Heritage Settings Assessment in respect of Land to the east of Stratfield Brake and west of Oxford Parkway Station, known as The Triangle. Presently in use as scrubland and woodland, the Site is bounded to the west by Frieze Way and to the east by Oxford Road, located *c.* 5.5km north of Oxford. The proposed development comprises the construction of a new Stadium and associated facilities for Oxford United FC.

This assessment has considered the setting and significance of nearby designated heritage assets, comprising the Grade II Listed Buildings of Stratfield Farmhouse and Frieze Farmhouse and the Oxford Canal Conservation Area. The proposed development will alter part of the setting of the designated heritage assets, by introducing further development into their surroundings. However, the important elements of their setting will remain unchanged and the proposed development will not detract from the contribution that setting makes to their significance. As such, this assessment has identified no instances of harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets, or any other designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the Site. The proposed development therefore meets the requirements of legislation and local and national policy relating to the setting and significance of heritage assets.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. In June 2023 Cotswold Archaeology was commissioned by Ridge and Partners LLP to undertake a Heritage Settings Assessment in respect of Land to the east of Stratfield Brake and west of Oxford Parkway Station, known as The Triangle (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). Presently in use as a willow plantation and woodland (see Photo 1), the Site is bounded to the west by Frieze Way and to the east by Oxford Road, located c. 5.5km north of Oxford (NGR: 449860, 212020; Fig. 1). The Site includes stretches of Freize Way and Oxford Road (see Appendix 3).

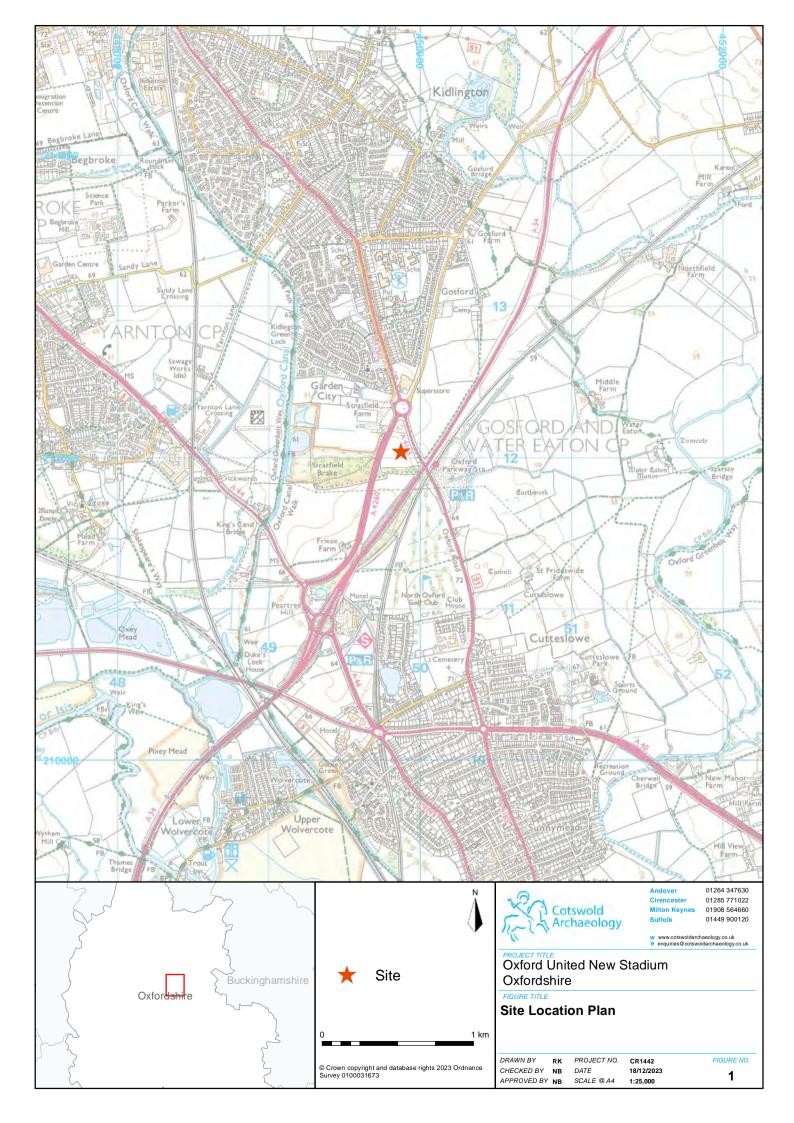


Photo 1: View of vegetation within the Site

1.2. The proposed development comprises the construction of a new Stadium and associated facilities for Oxford United. This will involve the erection of a 16,000 capacity stadium, incorporating a hotel, gym, community and business facilities, external fan zone, and associated parking, landscaping and other supporting infrastructure.

Objectives and professional standards

1.3. The objective of this assessment is to consider the significance and setting of nearby designated heritage assets, and the potential effects of the proposed development. A determination of the significance of designated heritage assets that may potentially be affected by the proposed development is presented. Any potential development effects upon the significance of these heritage assets (both adverse and/or beneficial) are then described. Potential impacts upon the archaeological resource are discussed within a separate archaeological desk-based assessment (Cotswold Archaeology 2023).



1.4. Cotswold Archaeology is a Registered Organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). This report has been prepared in accordance with appropriate standards and guidance, including Historic England's guidance relating to the setting of heritage assets, presented within *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Second Edition)* (Historic England 2017).

Statute, policy and guidance context

- 1.5. The Site is located in the local authority of Cherwell District Council. The Local Plan, 'The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031', was adopted in September 2020. Policy ESD 15 relates to the character of the built and historic environment.
- 1.6. This assessment has been undertaken within the key statute, policy and guidance context presented within Table 1.1. The applicable provisions contained within these statute, policy and guidance documents are referred to, and discussed, as relevant, throughout the text. Fuller detail is provided in Appendix 1.

| Statute | Description |
|---|---|
| Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990) | Act of Parliament placing a duty upon the Local Planning Authority (or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State) to afford due consideration to the preservation of Listed Buildings and their settings (under Section 66(1)), and Conservation Areas (under Section 72(2)), in determining planning applications. |
| National Heritage Act 1983 (amended 2002) | One of four Acts of Parliament providing for the protection and management of the historic environment, including the establishment of the Historic Monuments & Buildings Commission, now Historic England. |
| Conservation Principles (Historic England 2008) | Guidance for assessing heritage significance, with reference to contributing heritage values, in particular: evidential (archaeological), historical (illustrative and associative), aesthetic, and communal. |
| National Planning Policy Framework (2023) | Provides the English government's national planning policies and describes how these are expected to be applied within the planning system. Heritage is subject of Chapter 16 (page 55). |
| National Planning Practice Guidance (updated July 2019) | Guidance supporting the National Planning Policy Framework. |
| Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 2 (GPA2): Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2015) | Provides useful information on assessing the significance of heritage assets, using appropriate expertise, historic environment records, recording and furthering understanding, neglect and unauthorised works, marketing and design and distinctiveness. |

| Statute | Description |
|--|--|
| Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3 (GPA3): The Setting of Heritage Assets, Second Edition (Historic England, 2017) | Provides guidance on managing change within the settings of heritage assets, including archaeological remains and historic buildings, sites, areas, and landscapes. |
| Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 (2020) | Comprises the local development plan (local plan), as required to be compiled, published and maintained by the local authority, consistent with the requirements of the NPPF (2023). Intended to be the primary planning policy document against which planning proposals within that local authority jurisdiction are assessed. Where the development plan is found to be inadequate, primacy reverts to the NPPF (2023). Policy ESD 15 relates to archaeology. |

 Table 1.1
 Key statute, policy and guidance

2. METHODOLOGY

Settings Assessment

- 2.1. The primary aim of this assessment was to assess if, how and to what extent the proposed development may affect the significance of nearby designated heritage assets, specifically the Grade II Listed Stratfield Farm (NHLE: 1220260), Grade II Listed Frieze Farm (NHLE: 1045789) and the Oxford Canal Conservation Area.
- 2.2. The 'setting' of a heritage asset comprises 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral (NPPF (2023), Annex 2). Thus, it is important to note that 'setting' is not itself a heritage asset but it may contribute to the significance of a heritage asset.
- 2.3. Guidance on assessing the effects of change upon the setting and significance of heritage assets is provided in Historic England's 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets' (GPA3, Historic England 2017). This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the five-step methodology for assessing the contribution of setting to a heritage asset's significance, as outlined within GPA3. Further detail is provided in Appendix 1.

Data collection, analysis and presentation

2.4. This assessment has been informed by a proportionate level of information sufficient to understand the significance of identified heritage assets, and any potential development effects. This approach is in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF (2023) and the guidance issued by CIfA (2020). The data has been collected from a wide variety of sources, summarised in Table 2.1.

| Source | Data | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| National Heritage List for England (NHLE) | Current information relating to designated heritage assets, and heritage assets considered to be 'at risk'. | | |
| Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) | Heritage sites and events records, Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) data, and other spatial data supplied in digital format (shapefiles) and hardcopy. | | |

| Source | Data |
|--|--|
| Historic England's Aerial Photograph Research Unit | Vertical and oblique aerial photography ranging in date from the 1940s to present. |
| Genealogist, Envirocheck, National Library of Scotland & other cartographic websites | Historic (Ordnance Survey and Tithe) mapping in digital format. |
| Site visit and settings survey | Undertaken on 28th June 2023. |

Table 2.1 Key data sources

- 2.5. Prior to obtaining data from these sources, an initial analysis was undertaken in order to identify a relevant and proportionate study area. This analysis utilised industrystandard GIS software, and primarily entailed a review of recorded heritage assets in the immediate and wider landscape, using available datasets.
- On this basis a 1km study area, measured from the boundaries of the Site, was considered sufficient to capture the relevant HER data, and provide the necessary context for understanding the heritage significance in respect of the Site. All of the spatial data held by the HER the primary historic data repository for the land within the study area, was requested. The records were analysed and further refined in order to narrow the research focus onto those of relevance to the present assessment. Not all HER records are therefore referred to, discussed or illustrated further within the body of this report, only those that are relevant.

Assessment of heritage significance

2.7. The significance of heritage assets which may be affected by the proposed development, has been assessed and described, in accordance with paragraph 200 of the NPPF (2023), the guidance issued by ClfA (2020), *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2* (HE 2015) and *Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets* (Historic England 2019). Determination of significance has been undertaken according to the industry-standard guidance on assessing heritage value provided within *Conservation Principles* (English Heritage 2008). This approach considers heritage significance to derive from a combination of discrete heritage values, principal amongst which are: i) evidential (archaeological) value, ii) historic (illustrative and associative) value, iii) aesthetic value, iv) communal value, amongst others. Further detail of this approach,

including the detailed definition of those aforementioned values, as set out, and advocated, by Historic England, is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

Assessment of potential development effects (benefit and harm)

- 2.8. The present report sets out, in detail, the ways in which identified susceptible heritage assets might be affected by the proposals, as well as the anticipated extent of any such effects. Non-physical effects, i.e. resulting from changes to the setting of heritage assets, have been assessed. With regard to non-physical effects or 'settings assessment', the five-step assessment methodology advocated by Historic England, and set out in the Second Edition of GPA3 (Historic England, 2017), has been adhered to (presented in greater detail in Appendix 1).
- 2.9. Identified effects upon heritage assets have been defined within broad 'level of effect' categories (Table 2.2 below). These are consistent with key national heritage policy and guidance terminology, particularly that of the NPPF (2023). This has been done in order to improve the intelligibility of the assessment results for purposes of quick reference and ready comprehension. These broad determinations of level of effect should be viewed within the context of the qualifying discussions of significance and impact presented in this report.
- 2.10. It should be noted that the overall effect of development proposals upon designated heritage assets are judged, bearing in mind both any specific harms or benefits (an approach consistent with the Court of Appeal judgement *Palmer v. Herefordshire Council & ANR* Neutral Citation Number [2016] EWCA Civ 1061).

| Level of effect | Description | Applicable statute & policy | |
|---------------------|---|---|--|
| Heritage benefit | The proposals would better enhance or reveal the heritage significance of the heritage asset. | Enhancing or better revealing the significance of a heritage asset is a desirable development outcome in respect of heritage. It is consistent with key policy and guidance, including the NPPF paragraphs 196 and 212. | |
| No harm | The proposals would preserve the significance of the heritage asset. | Preserving a Listed building and its setting is consistent with s66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990). | |
| | | Preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area is consistent with s72 of the Act. | |
| | | Sustaining the significance of a heritage asset is consistent with paragraph 196 of the NPPF, and should be at the core of any material local planning policies in respect of heritage. | |

| Level of effect | Description | Applicable statute & policy |
|---|--|--|
| Less than substantial harm (lower end) | The proposals would be anticipated to result in a restricted level of harm to the significance of the heritage asset, such that the asset's contributing heritage values would be largely preserved. | In determining an application, this level of harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, as per paragraph 208 of the NPPF. Proposals involving change to a Listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it passesses or change |
| Less than substantial harm (upper end) | The proposals would lead to a notable level of harm to the significance of the heritage asset. A reduced, but appreciable, degree of its heritage significance would remain. | or historic interest which it possesses, or change to the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, must also be considered within the context of Sections 7, 66(1) and 72(2) of the 1990 Action The provisions of the Act do not apply to the setting of Conservation Areas. |
| Substantial harm | The proposals would very much reduce the heritage asset's significance or vitiate that significance altogether. | Paragraphs 199 - 202 of the NPPF would apply. Sections 7, 66(1) and 72(2) of the Planning Act (1990), and the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), may also apply. |

Table 2.2 Summary of level of effect categories (benefit and harm) referred to in this report in relation to heritage assets, and the applicable statute and policy.

Limitations of the assessment

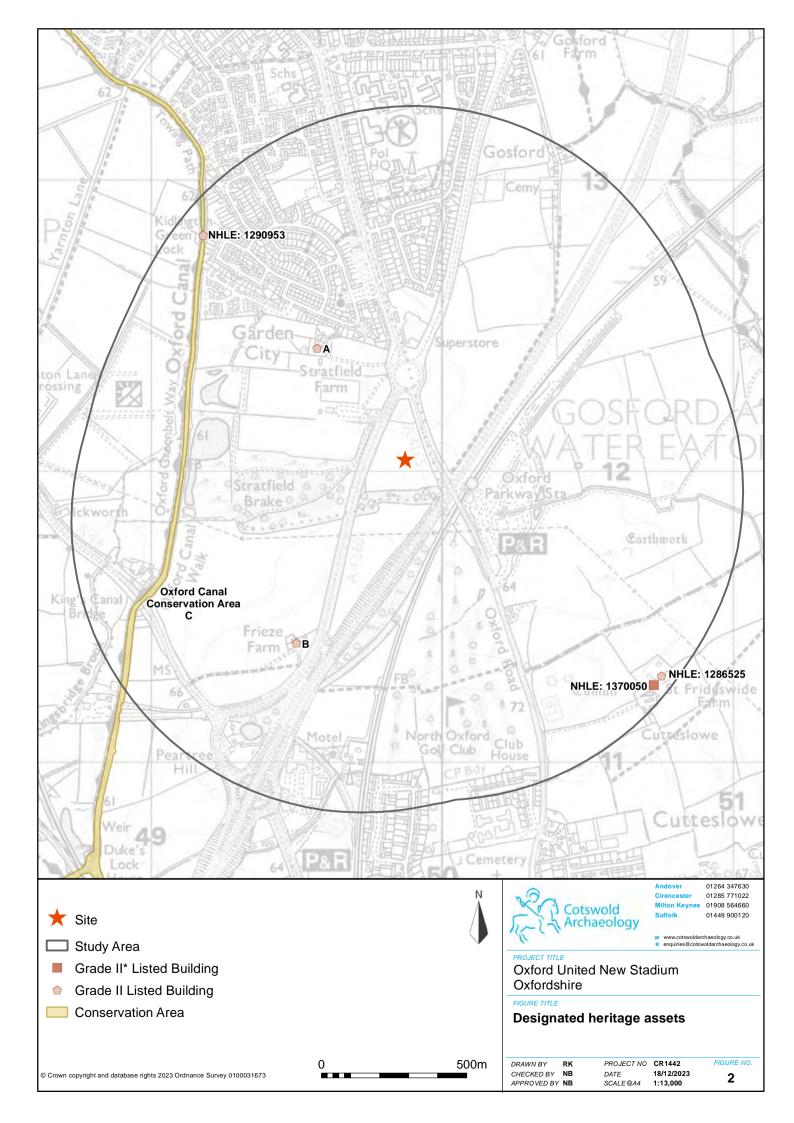
- 2.11. This assessment has utilised secondary information derived from a variety of sources, only some of which have been directly examined for the purpose of this assessment. The assumption is made that this data, as well as that derived from secondary sources, is reasonably accurate. The records held by HER are not a record of all surviving heritage assets, but a record of the discovery of a wide range of archaeological and historical components of the historic environment. The information held within these repositories is not complete, and does not preclude the subsequent discovery of further elements of the historic environment that are, at present, unknown.
- 2.12. A walkover survey was conducted within the Site, which was undertaken in dry and clear weather conditions. There was also sufficient access to heritage assets to assess likely impacts upon the significance of the assets due to changes to their setting.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIALLY SENSITIVE ASSETS

3.1. Non-physical effects are those that derive from changes to the setting of heritage assets as a result of new development. All heritage assets included within the settings assessment are summarised in the gazetteer in Appendix 2 and shown on Fig. 2. Those assets identified as potentially susceptible to non-physical impacts, and thus subject to more detailed assessment, are discussed in greater detail in Sections 4-6.

Step 1: Identification of heritage assets potentially affected

- 3.2. Step 1 of the Second Edition of Historic England's 2017 'Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3' (GPA3) is to 'identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected' (see Appendix 1). GPA3 notes that Step 1 should identify the heritage assets which are likely to be affected as a result of any change to their experience, as a result of the development proposal (GPA3, page 9).
- 3.3. A number of heritage assets were identified as part of Step 1, as potentially susceptible to impact as a result of changes to their setting. These include the Grade II Listed Stratfield Farmhouse (Fig. 2, **A**) located *c*. 340m north-west of the Site, the Grade II Listed Frieze Farm located *c*. 485m south-west of the Site (Fig. 2, **B**) and the Oxford Canal Conservation area which follows the canal and is located *c*. 620m west of the Site (Fig. 2, **C**). These assets have been identified using a combination of GIS analysis and field examination, which has considered, amongst other factors, the surrounding topographic and environmental conditions, built form, vegetation cover, and lines of sight, within the context of the assets' heritage significance.
- 3.4. The Site visit and walkover identified that the Site does not form a meaningful part of the setting of the Grade II* Listed St Frideswides Farmhouse (NHLE: 1286525) located *c*. 975m south-east of the Site (Fig. 2). This was likely constructed in the 16th century, with alterations in the 17th and 20th century. The two storey limestone rubble farmhouse is associated with the Grade II Listed Wall *c*. 10m to its north-east (NHLE: 1370050). This garden wall was constructed in the 17th/18th century, and was Listed due to its group value with St Frideswides Farmhouse. The Listed Buildings principally derived their significance from their historic fabric and the wall has been listed due to its historic association with the farmhouse and the group value these features. As the significance of these designated heritage asset would not be harmed by the proposed development, no further assessment has been undertaken.



- 3.5. The Grade II Listed Oxford Canal Kidlington Green Lock (NHLE: 1290953) is located c. 870m north-west of the Site and it was also considered that there would be no impact upon the significance to this asset. This is due to the fact that it derives its significance through its functional relationship with the canal and its historic fabric. Neither of these will be altered by the proposed changes within the Site.
- 3.6. The setting of these assets would not be altered, and would be preserved, as would the assets' key contributing values and views. As such, the proposals will not result in any harm to the significance of these assets, and they have not been assessed in any further detail. All heritage assets assessed as part of Step 1, but which were *not* progressed to Steps 2 3, are included in the gazetteer in Appendix 2 of this report.

Steps 2 – 3: Assessment of setting and potential effects of the development

3.7. Steps 2 to 3 of the settings assessment have been undertaken with regard to those potentially susceptible heritage assets identified in Step 1. Step 2 considers the contribution that setting makes to the significance of potentially susceptible heritage assets. Step 3 then considers how, if at all, and to what extent any anticipated changes to the setting of those assets, as a result of development within the Site, might affect their significance.

4. GRADE II LISTED STRATFIELD FARMHOUSE

Description

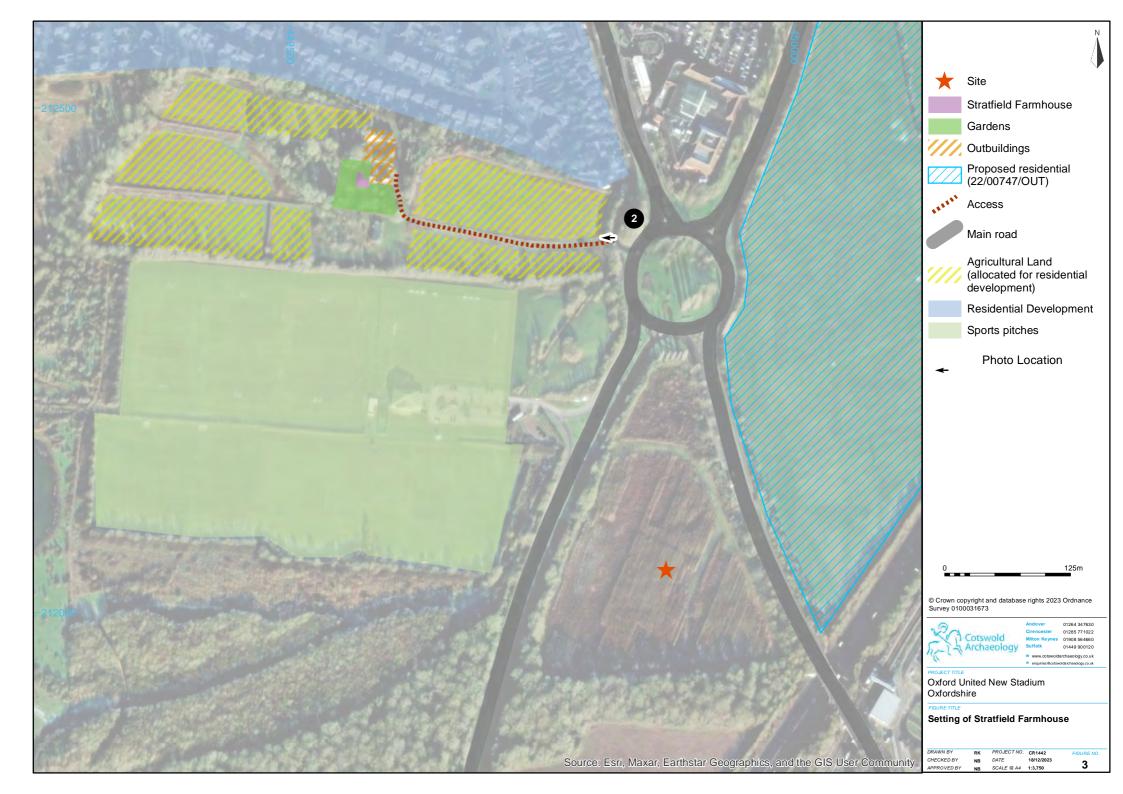
- 4.1. Stratfield Farmhouse is located *c.* 340m north-west of the Site (Fig. 3). This is a former farmhouse which was constructed in the early 19th century of coursed-limestone rubble, with a hipped concrete tile roof with brick end stacks. The L-plan house has a rear wing (to the west) and is two storeys high. It has a symmetrical three-window range (facing south) with a semi-circular arch over the four panelled front door with fanlight. It is the focus of a recent planning application for alterations and repair, to bring it back into residential use (Cherwell District Council ref: 22/01757/LB).
- 4.2. The significance of this former farmhouse is principally derived from its historic character, fabric and architectural style¹ (Asset Heritage Consulting 2018, 26). The contribution of setting to its significance is considered below. The Heritage Assessment undertaken as part of the recent application states the following in relation to the Listed Building's setting:

The immediate setting of the listed building is well-defined by the enclosure around its front garden, the old orchard to the west, the outbuildings and walled farmyards to the north, and the garden wall and continuation of the access drive to the east. This enclosure is further reinforced by tree belts to the south (along the garden boundary wall) and east (between the drive and field to the east).

These elements of the building's setting are those which contribute the most to its significance as a listed building. They define the historic extent of the gardens and farmyards and illustrate how the farmhouse functioned in relationship to the spaces around it. The farmhouse faced south, away from the farmyards, with its important reception rooms to the front, overlooking the front and west lawns, and service rooms to the rear, overlooking the yards.

The farmyard enclosures to the rear appear to have been established at the same time as the farmhouse, originally built in a single phase as a planned farm, all enclosed by walls. The enclosed courtyard forms therefore make a contribution to the significance of the listed building. The farm buildings themselves, as individual structures, have varying degrees of survival and significance (Asset Heritage Consulting 2018, 27-28)

¹ https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1220260?section=comments-and-photos



Physical Surrounds – 'What Matters and Why'

- 4.3. The building is set within a semi-rural landscape to the south of Kidlington, with the land immediately surrounding the farmhouse currently in use as agricultural land (see Fig. 3). However, this land is allocated for residential development and is the subject of a live application (Ref: 22/01611/OUT). The current land use has resulted in a retention of the original surrounds of the farmhouse, although the character of the farmland has been altered by modern agricultural practices. The farmhouse itself is bounded by mature dense vegetation which has resulted in the building being screened from the surrounding area. There is a small garden associated with the property and a number of outbuildings which reflect the former agricultural function of the farmstead. The building is accessed via a private trackway (Photo 2) from the east which adds to its sense of rural isolation.
- 4.4. The wider landscape beyond the private grounds and the agricultural land is defined by residential development to the north, sports pitches to the south and road infrastructure including the A4260 and A34 dual carriageways, as well as the Kidlington Roundabout which provides access to the building. Whilst this has resulted in the loss of the wider agricultural landscape surrounding the farmstead, the change of land use from agricultural to recreational/residential has not negatively impacted upon the setting of the Listed Building. This is in part because the land immediately surrounding the farmhouse has retained its rural character and it is from this land only that the building derives its significance. However, it should be noted that the surrounding agricultural land is allocated for residential development and is subject to an application for residential development currently. This will change the character of the Listed Building's immediate surroundings. At present, the important elements of the Listed Building's physical surrounds comprise its sense of rural isolation, its relationship to the outbuildings and farmyard, and its association with the nearby agricultural landscape.



Photo 2 View towards Stratfield Farmhouse from its access track

Experience – 'What Matters and Why'

4.5. The farmhouse is best experienced from within its grounds where the architectural style and structural elements of the building can be appreciated. The character of the surrounding area is largely enclosed and domestic, and there is a limited link surviving between the farmhouse and the agricultural use of the wider landscape through the surviving agricultural fields. The asset is well screened from the wider surrounding landscape due to the presence of mature trees which provide a sense of seclusion and privacy to the Listed Building.

Potential development effects

- 4.6. The proposed development is for the erection of a 16,000 capacity stadium, incorporating a hotel, gym, community and business facilities, external fan zone, and associated parking, landscaping and other supporting infrastructure within the Site (Appendix 3). The proposed maximum height of the stadium is 24.6m, and at its nearest the proposed development will be located c. 340m south-east of the Listed Building, beyond the sports pitches and Frieze Way road (the A4260), a dual carriageway with tree belts either side. The introduction of the proposed development will result in a change to part of the setting of the Listed Building.
- 4.7. It is likely that the proposed development will be largely screened in views from the Listed Building by surrounding tree cover (see ES Chapter 7, Viewpoint 17 and 29), although it may be partially visible in the distance beyond intervening vegetation in views south-east from the farm (especially above ground level). Any potential visibility of the proposed development in such views will not alter the important attributes of the setting of the Listed Building, as identified above. The important views towards

the Listed Building, which are primarily orientated north towards its primary façade from the associated gardens, will not be altered in any way by the proposed development. Furthermore, the relationship the Listed Building has with the farmyard and outbuildings, and the surrounding agricultural land, will not be altered by the proposed development. Indeed, it is likely that the allocated residential development surrounding the Listed Building, once implemented, will completely screen the proposed development from the Listed Building.

- 4.8. In addition to the visual considerations discussed above, the proposed development is not anticipated to result in any appreciable adverse noise (see ES Chapter 11) effects within the setting of the Listed Building. In terms of lighting, minor adverse sky glow effects at night have been identified at the Listed Building in relation to the proposed development (see ES Chapter 13, Receptor LR06 / H01), but are not considered to detract from its setting due to the existing levels of sky glow present at and visible from the Listed Building.
- 4.9. The proposed development will alter the character of an area of scrub and woodland beyond Frieze Way. It will be notable on the approach towards the Kidlington Roundabout along Frieze Way, and likely whilst leaving the Listed Building along its access route, but this will not detract from the significance of the Listed Building or an appreciation of its significance. Therefore, the contribution that setting makes to the significance of the Listed Building will not be altered. There will be **no harm** to the significance of the Grade II Listed Stratfield Farmhouse.



5. GRADE II LISTED FRIEZE FARMHOUSE

Description

5.1. Frieze Farmhouse is located *c.* 485m south-west of the Site (Fig. 4). It is a typical example of a modest Oxfordshire vernacular building of the late 17th century, which was successively enlarged between the 18th and 19th centuries until it became what may be characterized as a typical farmhouse (Photo 3). It has been minimally altered and retains a good range of original fixtures and fittings. It is currently used as offices. The significance of the farmhouse is principally derived from its historic character, fabric and architectural style. The contribution of setting to its significance is considered below.



Photo 3: View of Frieze Farmhouse

Physical Surrounds – 'What Matters and Why'

- 5.2. The farmhouse is set within a rural landscape and is isolated from other built form. It is surrounded by working farmland and bounded by mature trees and outbuildings (Photo 4). The immediate surrounds of the Listed Building are characterised by commercial use, with carparking for the business located to its north. There is a limited sense that this Listed Building may also be in use for domestic occupation also, and although the building was converted for office use, the previous domestic character of the asset is somewhat reflected by the garden space maintained to the south.
- 5.3. The farmhouse is accessed via a single lane track from the west (the A44 Woodstock Road), this approach provides a sense of seclusion and isolation, despite the fact that it is located in close proximity to main roads including dual carriageways of Frieze

Way and the A34 (see Fig. 4). Whilst these roads are audible, they are completely screened by woodland belts. The land surrounding the farmhouse is broadly in use for agricultural purposes which provides a sense of rural isolation within the local agricultural landscape.



Photo 4 View of outbuildings associated with Frieze Farmhouse view north-east

Experience – 'What Matters and Why'

- 5.4. The primary elevation of this building faces to the south-west and overlooks the private garden. Secondary elevations face to the north-east (Photo 3). Views towards the Listed Building from its associated garden, and the yard to the east, allow for the best appreciation of its significance.
- Views from the Listed Building are likely to extend across its associated grounds to the agricultural landscape beyond. This agricultural use reflects the historic use of the farmland and allows for an appreciation of the farmhouse's historic association with the working landscape. However, the farmstead no longer serves an agricultural function, and is instead now used as offices. Furthermore, it should be noted that the roadway to the east of the farmhouse (Fig. 4) is a modern introduction into the landscape. This has increased noise and activity in the wider area but does not actively detract from the significance of the Listed Building, largely due to the extensive woodland screening, and is considered to be a neutral element of its setting.

The Listed Building is well screened and is not a particularly visible feature within the landscape. The farmhouse therefore holds no prominence locally and its experience is primarily one of seclusion and privacy.

Potential development effects

- 5.6. The proposed development is for the erection of a 16,000 capacity stadium, incorporating a hotel, gym, community and business facilities, external fan zone, and associated parking, landscaping and other supporting infrastructure within the Site (see Appendix 3). The proposed maximum height of the stadium is 24.6m, and at its nearest the proposed development will be located c. 485m north-east of the Listed Building. The introduction of this development will result in a change to part wider surroundings of the Listed Building.
- 5.7. It is possible that in views from the Listed Building to the north-east (see ES Chapter 7, Viewpoint 34) the proposed development will be visible in the distance, beyond the intervening agricultural landscape, Frieze Way road, and areas of woodland. Any such partial visibility of the proposed development would not alter the important elements of the Listed Building's setting. In addition to the visual considerations discussed above, the proposed development is not anticipated to result in any appreciable adverse noise (see ES Chapter 11) effects within the setting of the Listed Building. In terms of lighting, minor adverse sky glow effects at night have been identified at the Listed Building in relation to the proposed development (see ES Chapter 13, Receptor LR07 / H02), but are not considered to detract from its setting due to the existing levels of sky glow present at and visible from the Listed Building.
- 5.8. Furthermore, the proposed development is unlikely to be visible in the important views towards the Listed Building from its associated garden and the former farmyard to its east. Therefore, any potential visibility of the proposed development within the setting of the Listed Building will not alter the important attributes that contribute to its significance, as identified above. The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the Listed Building will not be altered. There will be **no harm** to the significance of the Grade II Listed Frieze Farmhouse.

6. OXFORD CANAL CONSERVATION AREA

- 6.1. The Oxford Canal Conservation Area runs *c.* 620m west of the Site on a broadly north-south alignment (see Fig. 5). An Appraisal of the Conservation Area was undertaken in 2012 (South Northamptonshire Council and Cherwell District Council North Oxfordshire 2012, hereafter referred to as 'CAA 2012'). This is a large rural Conservation Area, which passes through only two sizeable towns Rugby and Banbury on its circuitous route to the outskirts of Oxford, and even tends to avoid most of the villages as well (CAA 2012, 6).
- 6.2. The construction of the canal, which was purpose built to transport coal from the Coventry coalfields to Banbury, Oxford and the River Thames, was completed in 1790. It is significant due to its early date and the drastic change that it created in the landscape. Principally, the Conservation Area derives its significance through its functional design, and its relationship with the landscape and surviving local industrial heritage. The contribution of its setting is considered further below.



Photo 5 View along tow path adjacent to the Oxford Canal Conservation Area, view south

Physical Surrounds – 'What Matters and Why'

6.3. The topography of the landscape in the vicinity of the Canal was key to its form. As CAA 2012 notes, the Canal 'follows the valley of the River Cherwell, which drains the land as it flows southwards to join the broad, low-lying vale landscapes of the upper Thames north of Oxford' (CAA 2012, 9). The landscape into which the canal was constructed is summarised by CAA 2012 as follows:



...the canal follows the contours of the land: as level a route as possible, at least half of which lies below 80m. The valley is generally fairly wide and flat between the low undulating hills of the valley sides, with occasional raised terraces on which the settlements mainly lie. The scenery is pleasant, stretching back from the canal in rural areas with wide agricultural and pastoral fields, dotted with occasional wharf sites and associated canal buildings adjacent the canal. Immature woodland clusters in areas on the banks provide sporadic visual barriers which hide the canal from wider view. (CAA 2012, 9)

6.4. The relationship between the canal and its associated infrastructure is a further important element of its physical surrounds. This includes the relationship with the tow paths which run adjacent to the waterway and the bridges and lock structures, such as the Grade II Listed Oxford Canal Kidlington Green Lock (NHLE: 1290953; Fig. 2). Whilst these relationships are important, they have the capacity to accommodate change without any harm to the significance of the Conservation Area, as evidenced by the presence of the solar farm to the west and residential development along its route (see Fig. 5).

Experience - 'What Matters and Why'

- 6.5. In the vicinity of the Site, the surroundings of the Canal are relatively flat, allowing for views across the landscape when vegetation does not create a visual barrier. Key views from the canal in the vicinity of the Site have been identified (CAA 2012), and these are located to the north-west (over what is now a solar farm), to the south across the agricultural land, identified as a key open space, and to the south-east across scrubland towards mature woodland (see Fig. 5). These views are significant as they allow for views across the flat landscape into which the canal was created.
- 6.6. Typically, however, the canal is best experienced from directly adjacent along the tow path (Photo 5) or whilst travelling along its route. The CAA notes in relation to key views that:

In the rural sections, the natural view points along the canal itself are up and down the canal. Such views, usually framed by a hedge on one side and open country on the other, can be very rewarding, and there is usually a good focal point to the view. This can often be one of the main bridges, or even a simple bend in the line of the cut, and there is always the hope of seeing a moving narrowboat. (CAA 2012, 30)

6.7. Specifically in the vicinity of the Site, the CAA identifies the land to the west of the Site as an 'important open space' with a 'positive vista' extending across it (CAA

2012, 98). However, the woodland that terminates such views prevents any appreciation of the land within the Site.

Potential development effects

- 6.8. The proposed development is for the erection of a 16,000 capacity stadium, incorporating a hotel, gym, community and business facilities, external fan zone, and associated parking, landscaping and other supporting infrastructure within the Site (Appendix 3). The introduction of this development will result in a change to the wider surroundings of the Conservation Area with the stadium, with a maximum height of the stadium is 24.6m, potentially visible in the distance in views to the east. It is also likely that in addition to the height of the built structure there will be floodlights which will be apparent in the landscape.
- 6.9. Whilst the Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA 2012) identified a key view from the canal towards the Site (see Fig. 5), the extensive intervening woodland is likely to largely prevent any appreciation of the proposed development from the Canal (see ES Chapter 7, Viewpoint 27 and 32). Even if the proposals were of a sufficient height to be visible from the canal, its presence in distant views to the east of the Canal (see ES Chapter 7, Viewpoint 24 and 25) would not negatively impact the important elements of the setting of the Conservation Area. In addition to the visual considerations discussed above, the proposed development is not anticipated to result in any appreciable adverse noise (see ES Chapter 11) or lighting effects (see ES Chapter 11) within the setting of the Conservation Area.
- 6.10. As such, the significance the Conservation Area derives from its setting would be unaltered, and the proposed development would result in **no harm** to the significance of the Oxford Canal Conservation Area.

Policy context

6.11. This report has been undertaken in accordance with the NPPF and the Cherwell Local Plan. As the proposed development will not harm the significance of the designated heritage assets, the requirements of the national and local policy relating to the setting and significance of heritage assets will be met.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1. This assessment has considered the potential effects of the new proposed stadium and associated facilities upon the significance of nearby designated heritage assets, in particular the Grade II Listed Buildings of Stratfield Farmhouse and Frieze Farmhouse and the Oxford Canal Conservation Area.
- 7.2. The significance of these heritage assets has been determined, as far as possible, on the basis of available evidence, and the potential non-physical effects resulting from the anticipated changes to the settings of heritage assets, have been assessed.
- 7.3. Whilst the proposed development will alter part of the wider surroundings of the designated heritage assets, it has been established that the important elements of their setting will remain unchanged and the proposed development will not detract from the contribution that setting makes to their significance. As such, this assessment has identified no instances of harm to the significance of any designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the Site. The proposed development therefore meets the requirements of legislation and local and national policy relating to the setting and significance of heritage assets.

8. REFERENCES

- Asset Heritage Consulting 2018 Statement Of Significance in respect of Stratfield Farmhouse, Kidlington, Oxfordshire
- British Geological Survey 2023 *Geology of Britain Viewer, 1:50,000 geological mapping, bedrock and superficial* http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html
- Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2020 Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment

 Desk-Based Assessment
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities 2023 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); published December 2023
- Historic England 2008 Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment
- Historic England 2015 Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2:

 Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment
- Historic England 2016 Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management
- Historic England 2017 Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (Second Edition)
- Historic England 2019 *Historic England Advice Note 12: Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets*
- South Northamptonshire Council, Cherwell District Council, North Oxfordshire 2012 Oxford Canal Conservation Area Appraisal October 2012
- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Act of UK Parliament

APPENDIX 1: HERITAGE STATUTE POLICY & GUIDANCE

Heritage Statute: Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are buildings of 'special architectural or historic interest' and are subject to the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'). Under Section 7 of the Act 'no person shall execute or cause to be executed any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, unless the works are authorised.' Such works are authorised under Listed Building Consent. Under Section 66 of the Act 'In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses'.

Heritage Statue: Conservation Areas

Conservation Areas are designated by the local planning authority under Section 69(1)(a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'), which requires that 'Every local planning authority shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Section 72 of the Act requires that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area'.

The requirements of the Act only apply to land within a Conservation Area; not to land outside it. This has been clarified in various Appeal Decisions (for example APP/F1610/A/14/2213318 Land south of Cirencester Road, Fairford, Paragraph 65: 'The Section 72 duty only applies to buildings or land in a Conservation Area, and so does not apply in this case as the site lies outside the Conservation Area.').

The NPPF (2023) also clarifies in <u>Paragraph 213</u> that 'Not all elements of a World Heritage Site or Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance'. Thus land or buildings may be a part of a Conservation Area, but may not necessarily be of architectural or historical significance. Similarly, not all elements of the setting of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance, or to an equal degree.

National heritage policy: the National Planning Policy Framework

Heritage assets and heritage significance

Heritage assets comprise 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest' (the NPPF (2023), Annex 2). Designated heritage assets include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Protected Wreck Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields and Conservation Areas (designated under the relevant legislation; NPPF (2023), Annex 2). The NPPF (2023), Annex 2, states that the significance of a heritage asset may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' looks at significance as a series of 'values' which include 'evidential'. 'historical', 'aesthetic' and 'communal'.

The setting of heritage assets

The 'setting' of a heritage asset comprises 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral' (NPPF (2023), Annex 2). Thus it is important to note that 'setting' is not a heritage asset: it may contribute to the value of a heritage asset.

Guidance on assessing the effects of change upon the setting and significance of heritage assets is provided in 'Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets', which has been utilised for the present assessment (see below).

Levels of information to support planning applications

<u>Paragraph 200</u> of the NPPF (2023) identifies that 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'.

Designated heritage assets

<u>Paragraph 195</u> of the NPPF (2023) explains that heritage assets 'are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance'. <u>Paragraph 199</u> notes that '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'. <u>Paragraph 200</u> goes on to note that 'substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building...should be exceptional and substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance (notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites)...should be wholly exceptional'.

<u>Paragraph 202</u> clarifies that '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'.

Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031

Policy ESD 15: The Character of the Built and Historic Environment

Successful design is founded upon an understanding and respect for an area's unique built, natural and cultural context. New development will be expected to complement and enhance the character of its context through sensitive siting, layout and high-quality design. All new development will be required to meet high design standards. Where development is in the vicinity of any of the District's distinctive natural or historic assets, delivering high quality design that complements the asset will be essential.

New development proposals should:

- Be designed to deliver high quality safe, attractive, durable and healthy places to live and work in. Development of all scales should be designed to improve the quality and appearance of an area and the way it functions
- Deliver buildings, places and spaces that can adapt to changing social, technological, economic and environmental conditions
- Support the efficient use of land and infrastructure, through appropriate land uses, mix and density/development intensity
- Contribute positively to an area's character and identity by creating or reinforcing local
 distinctiveness and respecting local topography and landscape features, including
 skylines, valley floors, significant trees, historic boundaries, landmarks, features or
 views, in particular within designated landscapes, within the Cherwell Valley and within
 conservation areas and their setting
- Conserve, sustain and enhance designated and non-designated 'heritage assets' (as defined in the NPPF) including buildings, features, archaeology, conservation areas and their settings, and ensure new development is sensitively sited and integrated in accordance with advice in the NPPF and NPPG. Proposals for development that affect non-designated heritage assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the NPPF and NPPG. Regeneration proposals that make sensitive use of heritage assets, particularly where these bring redundant or under used buildings or areas, especially any on English Heritage's At Risk Register, into appropriate use will be encouraged
- Include information on heritage assets sufficient to assess the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Where archaeological potential is identified this should include an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
- Respect the traditional pattern of routes, spaces, blocks, plots, enclosures and the form, scale and massing of buildings. Development should be designed to integrate with existing streets and public spaces, and buildings configured to create clearly defined active public frontages
- Reflect or, in a contemporary design response, re-interpret local distinctiveness, including elements of construction, elevational detailing, windows and doors, building and surfacing materials, mass, scale and colour palette
- Promote permeable, accessible and easily understandable places by creating spaces that connect with each other, are easy to move through and have recognisable landmark features
- Demonstrate a holistic approach to the design of the public realm to create high quality and multi-functional streets and places that promotes pedestrian movement and integrates different modes of transport, parking and servicing. The principles set out in The Manual for Streets should be followed

- Consider the amenity of both existing and future development, including matters of privacy, outlook, natural lighting, ventilation, and indoor and outdoor space Limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation
- Be compatible with up to date urban design principles, including Building for Life, and achieve Secured by Design accreditation
- Consider sustainable design and layout at the masterplanning stage of design, where building orientation and the impact of microclimate can be considered within the layout
- Incorporate energy efficient design and sustainable construction techniques, whilst ensuring that the aesthetic implications of green technology are appropriate to the context (also see Policies ESD 1 - 5 on climate change and renewable energy)
- Integrate and enhance green infrastructure and incorporate biodiversity enhancement features where possible (see Policy ESD 10: Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity and the Natural Environment and Policy ESD 17 Green Infrastructure).
 Well designed landscape schemes should be an integral part of development proposals to support improvements to biodiversity, the micro climate, and air pollution and provide attractive places that improve people's health and sense of vitality
- Use locally sourced sustainable materials where possible.

The Council will provide more detailed design and historic environment policies in the Local Plan Part 2.

The design of all new development will need to be informed by an analysis of the context, together with an explanation and justification of the principles that have informed the design rationale. This should be demonstrated in the Design and Access Statement that accompanies the planning application. The Council expects all the issues within this policy to be positively addressed through the explanation and justification in the Design & Access Statement. Further guidance can be found on the Council's website.

The Council will require design to be addressed in the pre-application process on major developments and in connection with all heritage sites. For major sites/strategic sites and complex developments, Design Codes will need to be prepared in conjunction with the Council and local stakeholders to ensure appropriate character and high quality design is delivered throughout. Design Codes will usually be prepared between outline and reserved matters stage to set out design principles for the development of the site. The level of prescription will vary according to the nature of the site.

Good Practice Advice 1-3

Historic England has issued three Good Practice Advice notes ('GPA1-3') which support the NPPF. The GPAs note that they do not constitute a statement of Government policy, nor do they seek to prescribe a single methodology: their purpose is to assist local authorities, planners, heritage consultants, and other stakeholders in the implementation of policy set out in the NPPF. This report has been produced in the context of this advice, particularly 'GPA2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment' and 'GPA3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets'.

GPA2 - Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment

GPA2 sets out the requirement for assessing 'heritage significance' as part of the application process. Paragraph 8 notes 'understanding the nature of the significance is important to understanding the need for and best means of conservation.' This includes assessing the extent and level of significance, including the contribution made by its 'setting' (see GPA3 below). GPA2 notes that 'a desk-based assessment will determine, as far as is reasonably possible from existing records, the nature, extent and significance of the historic environment within a specified area, and the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the historic environment, or will identify the need for further evaluation to do so' (Page 3).

GPA3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets

The NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary) defines the setting of a heritage asset as 'the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced...'. Step 1 of the settings assessment requires heritage assets which may be affected by development to be identified. Historic England notes that for the purposes of Step 1 this process will comprise heritage assets 'where that experience is capable of being affected by a proposed development (in any way)...'.

Step 2 of the settings process 'assess[es] the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated', with regard to its physical surrounds; relationship with its surroundings and patterns of use; experiential effects such as noises or smells; and the way views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated. Step 3 requires 'assessing the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the asset(s)' – specifically to 'assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it', with regard to the location and siting of the development, its form and appearance, its permanence, and wider effects.

Step 4 of GPA3 provides commentary on 'ways to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm'. It notes (Paragraph 37) that 'Maximum advantage can be secured if any effects on the significance of a heritage asset arising from development liable to affect its setting are considered from the project's inception.' It goes on to note (Paragraph 39) that 'good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement'.

Heritage significance

Discussion of heritage significance within this assessment report makes reference to several key documents. With regard to Listed buildings and Conservation Areas it primarily discusses 'architectural and historic interest', which comprises the special interest for which they are designated.

The NPPF provides a definition of 'significance' for heritage policy (Annex 2). This states that heritage significance comprises 'The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be <u>archaeological</u>, <u>architectural</u>, <u>artistic</u> or <u>historic'</u>. This also clarifies that for World Heritage Sites 'the cultural value described within each site's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value forms part of its significance'.

Regarding 'levels' of significance the NPPF (2023) provides a distinction between: designated heritage assets of the highest significance; designated heritage assets not of the highest significance; and non-designated heritage assets.

Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' expresses 'heritage significance' as comprising a combination of one or more of: evidential value; historical value; aesthetic value; and communal value:

Evidential value – the elements of a historic asset that can provide evidence about past human activity, including physical remains, historic fabric, documentary/pictorial records. This evidence can provide information on the origin of the asset, what it was used for, and how it changed over time.

Historical value (illustrative) – how a historic asset may illustrate its past life, including changing uses of the asset over time.

Historical value (associative) – how a historic asset may be associated with a notable family, person, event, or moment, including changing uses of the asset over time.

Aesthetic value – the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a historic asset. This may include its form, external appearance, and its setting, and may change over time.

Communal value – the meaning of a historic asset to the people who relate to it. This may be a collective experience, or a memory, and can be commemorative or symbolic to individuals or groups, such as memorable events, attitudes, and periods of history. This includes social values, which relates to the role of the historic asset as a place of social interactive, distinctiveness, coherence, economic, or spiritual / religious value.

Effects upon heritage assets

Heritage benefit

The NPPF clarifies that change in the setting of heritage assets may lead to heritage benefit. Paragraph 212 of the NPPF (2023) notes that 'Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably'.

GPA3 notes that 'good design may reduce or remove the harm, or provide enhancement' (Paragraph 28). Historic England's 'Conservation Principles' states that 'Change to a significant place is inevitable, if only as a result of the passage of time, but can be neutral or beneficial in its effects on heritage values. It is only harmful if (and to the extent that) significance is reduced' (Paragraph 84).

Specific heritage benefits may be presented through activities such as repair or restoration, as set out in Conservation Principles.

Heritage harm to designated heritage assets

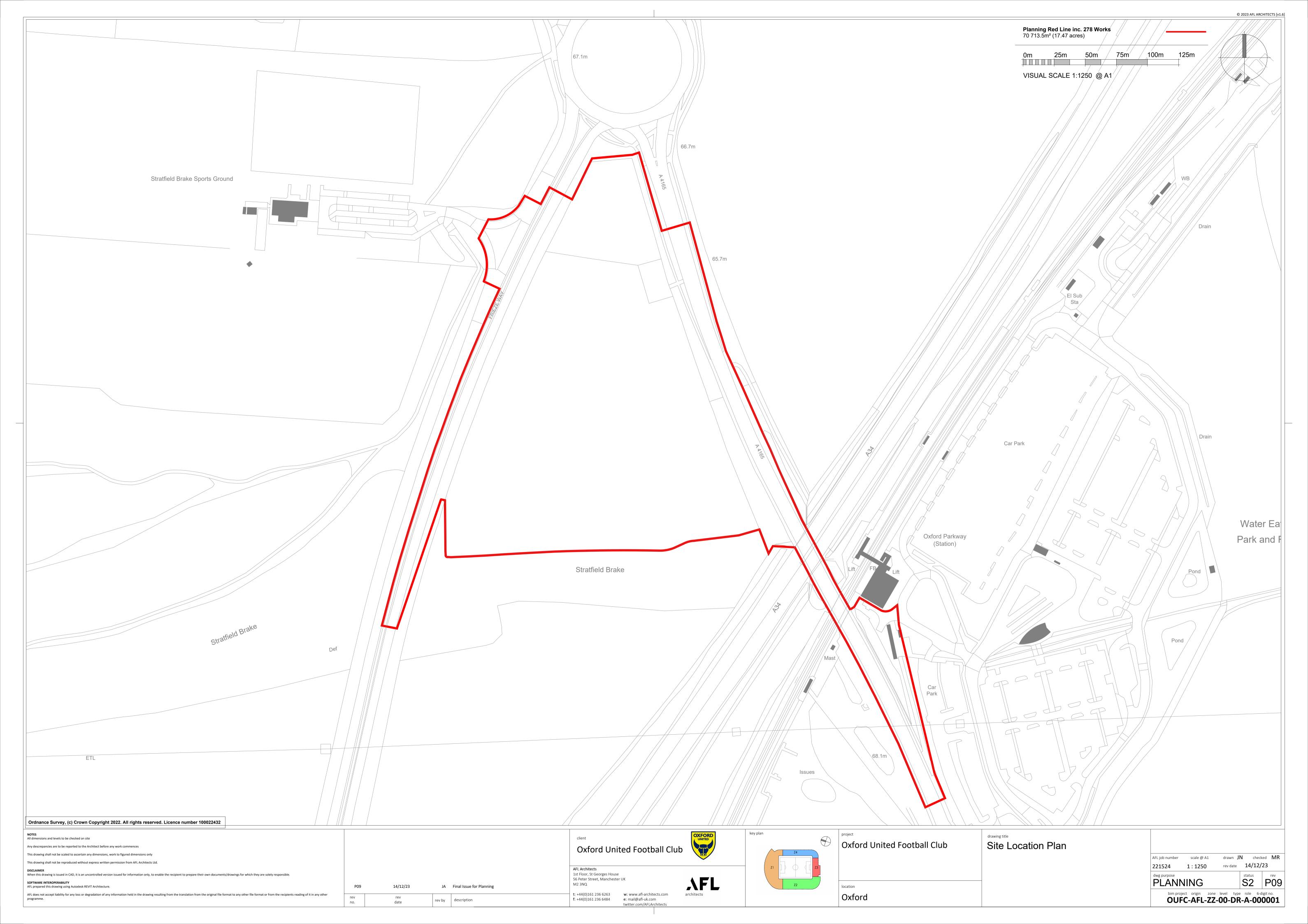
The NPPF (2023) does not define what constitutes 'substantial harm'. The High Court of Justice does provide a definition of this level of harm, as set out by Mr Justice Jay in *Bedford*

Borough Council v SoS for CLG and Nuon UK Ltd. Paragraph 25 clarifies that, with regard to 'substantial harm': 'Plainly in the context of physical harm, this would apply in the case of demolition or destruction, being a case of total loss. It would also apply to a case of serious damage to the structure of the building. In the context of non-physical or indirect harm, the yardstick was effectively the same. One was looking for an impact which would have such a serious impact on the significance of the asset that its significance was either vitiated altogether or very much reduced'.

APPENDIX 2: DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

| CA Ref. | Designation Description | Grade | NHLE Ref |
|---------|--|---------------------------|-------------|
| Α | Stratfield Farmhouse | Grade II Listed Building | 1220260 |
| В | Frieze Farmhouse | Grade II Listed Building | 1045789 |
| С | Oxford Canal | Conservation Area | - |
| - | Oxford Canal Kidlington Green Lock | Grade II Listed Building | 1290953 |
| - | Wall approximately 10 metres to northeast of St. Frideswides Farmhouse | Grade II Listed Building | 1370050 |
| - | St Frideswides Farmhouse | Grade II* Listed Building | 1286525 |

APPENDIX 3: APPLICATION BOUNDARY





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