



Historic England

Mr Carlos Chikwamba
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Direct Dial: 0207 973 3749

Our ref: P01593264

16 June 2025

Dear Mr Chikwamba

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

**PART OS PARCEL 0006 NORTH OF THE MOORS, KIDLINGTON, OXFORDSHIRE
Application No. 25/01346/OUT**

Thank you for your letter of 29 May 2025 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

Significance of the Church and Conservation Area

Historic England's primary concern with the application is the impact the scheme would have on the setting of Church Street Conservation Area and the Grade I listed St Mary the Virgin Church. The Church Street Conservation Area covers the historic medieval core of Kidlington, which St Mary the Virgin Church is the focal point of.

Whilst modern housing has sprung up to the southern half, the northern half of the conservation area remains largely, as it has been historically, rural in nature. As set out in the Church Street Conservation Area Appraisal, "routes converge from all directions at the Parish Church... The slender spire of St Mary's Church is a magnificent focal point from all directions".

Kidlington was a distinctively rural agricultural settlement, and the close connection of core of the village with the surrounding landscape farmed from it is essential to understanding the history of the Conservation Area. Furthermore, the rural context also greatly enhances the aesthetic appeal of what is a very attractive group of buildings, which the church spire being the landmark feature from within the village and the rural hinterland alike.



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For this large application there are a wide range of factors for the Council to consider and our comments focus only on impacts on the Church Street Conservation Area and St Mary's Church and those local views where the character of these assets is appreciated from. In their assessment of the scheme Cherwell District Council will need to consider the full extent of the historic environment including archaeology, non-designated heritage assets, listed buildings and conservation area, and our lack of comment on these matters does not imply lack of impact or harm (it is for the Council to make their assessment).

Assessment of harm illustrated in the outline scheme

This outline application illustrates that the amount of development proposed on the site would result in a development that could have a degree of harm through change to the rural character the church and conservation area is experienced within.

The LVIA exercises that have taken into account views from outside the conservation area (as set out in Appendix 4 Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment) indicate that the development of this site could have a limited negative impact on appreciation of the historic church in the long-range views from the west along the Public Rights of Way on the approach to the church. The modulation of the buildings can, and have been shown in this Outline application, to be designed to avoid obscuring historic landmark buildings. However, the development of this site would introduce a suburban built form within the current agricultural and rural landscape, reducing the sense of rurality around these designated heritage assets. There are no Design Codes submitted sets out in the application; however, we note the Design and Access Statement includes a commitment to ensure that the massing, character, materials and roof details of buildings should be designed to contribute positively to the historic character of Kidlington, which is welcomed.

We recognise the proposed green buffer between the proposed residential development and the western boundary of the conservation area. This has the potential to preserve the conservation's sense of rurality looking out to the west. However, the landscaping, providing it establishes, would take many years to mature and therefore its likely to be some, albeit temporary, harm would arise. As the planting develops, this intervisibility would significantly reduce. Should your council be minded to approve the scheme, we would encourage that a more mature and 'ready to go' landscape planting is secured along this boundary to ensure the impacts on the rural feel of the conservation area are minimised.

In conclusion, we consider the level of harm to the Church and Church Street Conservation Area to be less than substantial at the lower end of the scale.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out at paragraph 208 that Council's should understand the significance of heritage assets and take this into



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account when consideration proposals, to avoid or minimise harm to what makes them special and valued.

If your council is minded to approve the scheme, it may be possible to avoid or minimise some of the harm through negotiations over the detailed site layout and landscaping strategy. However, at this stage, in order to achieve the commitments to avoid and minimise harm made within the application we recommend your council secures the commitments within the Design Principles.

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 paragraph 208 of the NPPF.

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

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Emma Harrison, Cherwell District Council



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