Grooms Cottage

 Home Farm

 Banbury Road

 Caversfield

 OX27 8TG

12 April 2018

Mr Paul Feehily

Interim Director for Planning & Regeneration

Cherwell District Council

Bodicote House

Bodicote

Banbury

OX15 4AA

*By email*

Dear Sir,

**Planning Application 18/00484/OUT**

I wish to object to the above planning application. The site is adjacent to one Grade II listed building, Home Farm and directly opposite one Grade II\* listed building, the Church of St Laurence.; it is close to Caversfield House, it is also close to a site where there is evidence of a shrunken medieval village (an important local archaeological site) and is adjacent to the B4100.

The site is currently an attractive green space with plenty of habitats for wildlife and as part of the planning approval for the Eco-Town (circa 2010-2014), it was understood this area, adjoining Home Farm and opposite St Laurence’s Church and Caversfield House, was to be deliberately left without housing in order to retain a large open green space which would complement the environment in the neighbourhood of these listed buildings and important heritage sites. Now it appears that understanding is to be changed and it will be developed regardless.

The proposed plans provide for a carpark for use by allotment holders and worshippers & visitors to the Church, yet the provision for any pedestrian access from this carpark to the church and for safe crossing of the very busy and fast-moving B4100 is only shown in the illustrative master plan and does not appear in any of the Parameter Plans. If this development is to go ahead, then provision must be made for safe pedestrian access including a crossing from the proposed development site to the church and the developers must be accountable for this. Otherwise the church, which I am sure will feature heavily in any future marketing materials, will gain nothing from this development, it will simply swop parking access in Home Farm drive with parking access on an unsightly hardstanding.

The proposed site of the children’s play area on the current plans is in direct line of sight to and from the Grade II\* listed Church of St Laurence. There is no provision for screening this playground and its current position will have a negative visual impact. It is also very close to the existing drive of Home Farm which is in frequent use as the only vehicle access to the Farm, the business units in the Courtyard and to Grooms Cottage and will require street lightning, which will inevitably cause light pollution across what had been proposed as a margin of open, green space.

The proposed community orchard, whilst a hypothetical ideal is, in reality, an impractical addition to the site. There are no plans for the maintenance and upkeep of this orchard and if unmanaged, this will quickly become an eyesore and with fallen, rotting fruit, a magnet for rats and other vermin. Surely a better use for this area of the site would be as a habitat, with naturalised planting for the creatures which will be displaced by this development. Currently recorded on this site are deer, hares, badgers and bats as well as nineteen bird species including red kites, buzzards, woodpeckers and owls. This proposed development makes no concession for habitats for any of these, which is rather concerning given this is to be an extension of the Eco-Town.

Finally, this proposed development will have a significant visual impact on this area. The development would be dominant in the landscape and will cause a high degree of obstruction to the view from St Laurence’s Church, Home Farm and Grooms Cottage. There is little to suggest the visual harm caused by this development would lessen over time and that it will ever have a positive impact on the area, its neighbours and the wildlife.

With the Eco-Town set to deliver many thousands of houses during the next few years, I personally do not understand the need to build on this remaining green, open space with the inevitable negative impact it will have to the key heritage and listed buildings which are amongst its nearest neighbours.

Yours faithfully,

Tina Shaw