

From: Paul Butler [REDACTED]
Sent: 05 January 2024 11:06
To: Planning Policy
Subject: Comments on Draft Oxford Plan

Hello,

I give below some comments on the draft Oxford Plan 2034. Firstly though I would like to say that despite knowing that the actual wording of the Draft Plan, rather than the easily accessible summary pages, was online, it took me ages to find it. Secondly I found the online response system so difficult to follow that I have to resort to a simple email.

SPS13: Horsefield/Land at Meadow Lane Iffley.

The plot of land that is the subject of this item is completely contained within the Iffley Conservation Area. The Conservation Area was created by Oxford City Council in 1969, and slightly enlarged in 1985. In 2009 the Council issued its Appraisal of the Area. The Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act of 1990 specifies that in determining any application for development within a Conservation Area, due regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The Appraisal outlines what the Council considered to be the character and appearance that it was obliged to conserve.

In the Summary of Significance the second point is "Its history as a rural community is still evident in the character of many of the buildings and **surviving green spaces** grazed by sheep, horses and cattle". At point vii it stated "The garden, trees, hedges, walls and **remaining open spaces are as important as the built elements** in creating the unique character of the Conservation Area." More particularly, when covering the Northern Section, it states of Meadow Lane "To the south-western side of the lane is **one of last remaining important open spaces** within the village. It is a field that was once the village cricket and football field and now grazed by animals, again reinforcing the rural nature of the settlement."

Under the Central Section the Appraisal states "Immediately opposite the junction of Tree Lane with Church Way is the first of the two opportunities for long views. The **gaps are important in terms of long views** out of the Conservation Area, extending across the fields beyond the River Thames and onwards to Bagley Wood and Boars Hill. The **public enjoyment of the views is an important** aspect of the overall character of the Conservation Area."

The Council's Appraisal of the Iffley Conservation Area thus laid great stress on the significance of the few remaining open spaces and of their important contribution to the character of the Area.

Para 8.144 of the Draft Plan states that the site "comprises land used for horse grazing. Any development would be expected to conserve and enhance the unique character of the Conservation Area. "

In view of its observations in the Appraisal about the green spaces it is difficult to comprehend how the Council can be considering doing away with the most important of them. It is a contradiction in terms to suggest that building 29 houses on a much loved green field within the Iffley Conservation Area could possibly conserve or enhance the ICA. For this reason alone the SPS13 should be removed from the draft Plan.

Building on the Meadow Lane site will also remove one of the few long views that the Appraisal treasured.

It is futile to suggest that the site will be car free. If no parking is provided on the site then the residents will simply park elsewhere in Iffley, thereby increasing the already existing problems of motorists parking on pavements and posing safety issues to pedestrians.

Para 8.146 states that the stone wall boundary along Church Way should be retained. However, the recent plans for this site include a large gap being made in this historic wall which is not only against the requirements of the Conservation Area Appraisal which places great stress on the historic and characteristic stone walls, but is entirely unnecessary as the cycle path could be rerouted so that it joins Church Way through the existing gate.

Para 8.146 further states "The impact on views through the riverside edge landscape of the Cherwell meadows to the west should be considered." Being "considered" is easy and entirely unacceptable. The view needs to be preserved and it cannot be if it overlooks a field full of houses.

The quality of life and the enjoyment of many people for years to come will be reduced for ever by providing a token contribution of 29 houses to the Council's stated need of 9,612. That's less a third of one per cent, but the damage that the development would do to the Conservation Area and the environment is immense.

SPS14 Iffley Mead School Playing Field.

Para 8.155 mentions that Neolithic remains have been found on the neighbouring Donnington Recreation Ground and that there may be further remains on the proposed site. There is no mention of a Romano-British and medieval farms being also identified on the same Donnington Recreation Ground as discovered by the East Oxford Archaeology Project - yet it is equally likely that these will also extend into the proposed site. The project reported their finding in 2000 in a publication titled "The Archaeology of East Oxford - Archeox: the development of a community."

It is also stated that pedestrian access to the site may be gained from **Cavill** Road. This is another howler and again shows that the local planners have no knowledge or understanding of the locality for which they are planning. In this instance they seem to have no knowledge of twentieth century history either.

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5th January 2024

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