



specialist independent advisers in the historic built environment

conservation & listed buildings | heritage planning matters | expert witness | audits | research  
listed buildings | conservation management and advice | archaeology | historic interiors

## **Addendum Note re amended parameters plan:**

### **Land at Salph End, Bedford**

#### **(Application Ref: 19/01974/MAO)**

- 1.1 Following the receipt of the consultation response from the Council's Conservation and Historic Buildings Officer on 16.10.19, the outline Parameters Plan has been revised to indicate how it is intended to mitigate concerns expressed about the potential impact on the settings of the Grade II listed Abbey Farmhouse and Nos.27-35 Ravensden Road.
- 1.2 As the Glossary in Annex 2 of the NPPF states, 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*'.
- 1.3 The Heritage Statement set out the changes that have taken place to the curtilage and environs of Abbey Farmhouse since it ceased operations as a working farm, which have to a large degree cut it off from its relationship with its former farmland within the application site. Today, this building is best appreciated from Ravensden Road (and the public footpath running along its southern garden boundary) from where glimpses across its generous garden plot reveal the scale and status of the building.

---

[www.assetheritage.co.uk](http://www.assetheritage.co.uk)

Wolfson College, Linton Road, Oxford, OX2 6UD T: 01865 310563

Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd. Registration No: 07502061

- 1.4 The retention of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century barn and courtyard outbuildings to the rear continues to provide evidence of the historic function of the building as a farmhouse, but other former farm buildings have been lost, replaced by a new domestic property (Carlton House) in the 1990s, and the agricultural association of the building has ceased: the use of Abbey Farm changed from agricultural to domestic c.25 years ago, with a new domestic curtilage established for the former farmhouse.
- 1.5 In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the farm was more closely connected to the land – specifically, the main group of farm buildings to the north of the farmhouse stood directly on the farmland, while the farmhouse was surrounded by enclosed gardens and an orchard. By 1969, the garden and other enclosures to the rear of the house had been opened up and the boundaries between them, and between them and the fields beyond, had been removed. In the 1990s, with the change of use, gardens and boundaries to the rear of the farmhouse were reinstated anew, but entirely redrawn to create the present-day domestic curtilages – the configuration today bears little relation to the historical layout.
- 1.6 The setting of the listed building has therefore changed as the heritage asset itself has evolved and changed. The orchard plot to the front of the farmhouse has remained in its historic proportions, and the courtyard of buildings behind (though extended with new buildings) has been retained – these elements contribute the most to our understanding of the origins of the building as a farmhouse and to an appreciation of its status in the village.
- 1.7 The land to the rear, now comprising domestic gardens formed in the 1990s, is indicative of the change in use of the farmhouse, replacing a degraded mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century landscape which itself had replaced what were probably paddocks and orchards in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. While not in a historic configuration or use, the gardens contribute to the listed building's significance by continuing to allow an appreciation of the status of the building through their generous size and by providing it with a visually attractive setting.
- 1.8 The fields beyond (within the application site) make far less of a contribution to the significance of the building as it is experienced today. It is acknowledged that this land still forms part of the physical setting, but the changed use and resulting disconnection of the functional relationship between former farm

buildings and land has changed the way that they are perceived in relation to one another – these changes did not happen ‘overnight’ but are part of the narrative of the building’s changing use and role.

- 1.9 It is also acknowledged that the development of the application site as proposed will transform the character of the land within it and thus inevitably the character of this element of the wider physical setting of the farmhouse. While it is not possible to make a detailed assessment of impact based on an outline application, steps have now been taken to mitigate perceived potential harm by reducing the proximity of new development to the listed building and its gardens in order to retain elements of an open setting that extends beyond the already generous domestic curtilage of the building.
- 1.10 To this end, a ‘heritage buffer’ zone has been shown on the revised parameters plan. This provides for a generous buffer of land within the site proposed for the new school, which will be retained as an undeveloped landscaped zone where built development is restricted. Establishing distance between the end of the generous gardens to Abbey Farmhouse and the footprint of the proposed school building will maintain some continuing sense of openness to the rear of the building.
- 1.11 The buffer is continued along the Ravensden Road frontage so that a generous set-back of new built development from this frontage is ensured. This is in order to minimise the visibility of new development as it appears in the sightline from south-east along Ravensden Road towards the Grade II listed Nos.27-35 (which can be seen in conjunction with Abbey Farmhouse in this viewpoint). The kink in the road just past these buildings and the screen of conifers along the northern edge of Carlton House, together with the presence of the ‘buffer’ zone, will serve to reduce the visibility of new development in this view.
- 1.12 In the context of an outline planning application of this nature, it is my opinion that these mitigatory measures represent an appropriate and proportionate response to the issues raised with regard to these aspects of the settings of the listed buildings, taking into account that the setting of Abbey Farmhouse has undergone a considerable degree of change since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and has been established in its current form, in an entirely residential context, for the last 25 years.

- 1.13 If, despite these mitigatory measures, Council Officers still identify less than substantial harm arising from the outline proposals in this respect, thereby engaging paragraph 196 of the NPPF, then this must be considered very much at the lower end of the scale of less than substantial harm.

Sarah Watt  
Director, Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd  
11<sup>th</sup> November 2019