

Comments on Planning Application PL/24/0586/FA: Court Farm Common Road Dorney Buckinghamshire SL4 6QA

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Summary:

- Bucks Council Assessment (2019): Dorney Parish is not suitable for major new development.
- The proposal is inappropriate and causes substantial harm to the Green Belt. There are no "very special circumstances".
- The proposal seriously harms the setting of a designated heritage asset – Dell's Cottage.
- The proposal is in conflict with Bucks Council's Landscape Character Assessment of Dorney (2014).
- The proposal is also in conflict with the Dorney Conservation Area Appraisal (1996).
- The proposed density of housing on the site is excessive, related to the current Dorney Common settlement. The proposed housing density for this housing estate is 13 houses/ha compared to the current 3 houses/hectare.
- The bulk and massing of the proposed buildings (Footprint +94%, Volume/Mass +120%) is also excessive, substantially harming the openness of the Green Belt.
- The proposed savage destruction of one third (38 trees) of the 117 trees on the site will also cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt.
- The proposal to have the large number of vehicles associated with 15 houses (instead of the current four houses) using the two single-track access lanes from, and onto, a busy 2,000,000 vehicle movements p.a. road, with a 60mph speed limit, appears to be extremely dangerous. No professional risk assessment appears to have been undertaken.

Bucks Council: Dorney Parish is not suitable for a Major Development (2019)

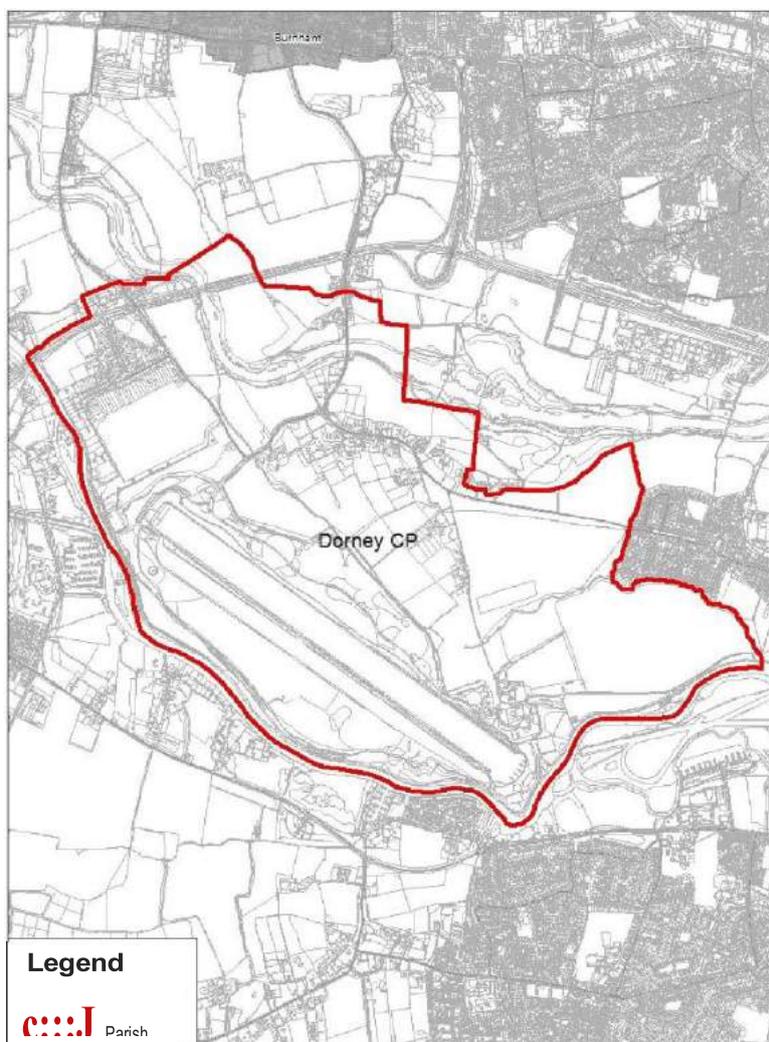
Definition of a Major Development (10+ houses)

Major housing development is defined in [the National Planning Policy Framework](#) as “development *where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more*”.

Facts from 2019 Bucks Council Assessment of Dorney Parish (Page 79)

It concludes that **Dorney Parish** “has very few services and facilities and **is not considered suitable for major new development**”:

Dorney CP



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Population at mid 2017 (est.)	704
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Designated neighbourhood area	No
Position within retail hierarchy	None
Green Belt Site Allocations	None
Major site allocations or developments and their status	None
Other notes	

Details of services and facilities, plus any significant infrastructure issues or comments, are shown below.

Services and facilities

Services and facilities	Presence	Notes
Library	No	
Primary school	Yes	Dorney School (infant and junior)
Secondary school	No	
Hospital	No	
Public transport	Limited	
Supermarket	No	
Convenience store	No	
Post Office	No	

Infrastructure constraints and enhancements

No constraints or enhancements have been identified.

Dwelling Completions

The following tables show dwelling completions (use class C3) in the monitoring years since 2014, and outstanding dwelling commitments (use class C3) as at 31 March 2018.

Year	Completions under permitted development	Other completions	Total completions
2014/15	0	1	1
2015/16	0	0	0
2016/17	0	0	0
2017/18	0	1	1
Annual mean	0	0.5	0.5

Commitments at 31/3/18	Commitments under permitted development	Other commitments	Total commitments
Dwellings not started	0	1	1
Dwellings not started discounted by 10% (rounded to nearest whole number)	0	1	1
Dwellings under construction	0	0	0
Sum of dwellings not started (discounted) and under construction	0	1	1

HELAA Data

The latest (February 2019) update to the Councils' HELAA includes no sites in the parish.

Commentary

This parish has very few services and facilities and is not considered suitable for major new development. This is borne out by data for housing completions which show that approximately one dwelling every two years has been delivered in recent years.

Clarifying Green Belt land and Previously Developed Land on the Site.

The Applicant's [Planning Statement](#) contains a serious and misleading error on Page 8



Figure 4: Map showing the application site with the extent of PDL shaded in yellow (Source: H.J Stribling Partners)



Corrected Map showing, within black outline, approx. the land that is not PDL

The land within the black outline is not, and never has been, within the Court Farm curtilage. This land is part of the historic curtilage of Dell's Cottage and has been for hundreds of years. It is Green Belt land, not PDL. The land also, as recognised by Bucks Council Heritage Officer in Pre Application Advice in 2019, protects the open rural character and the tree coverage between the sites will need to be retained *“The proximity of development to the eastern boundary, adjacent to the listed building, is highly unlikely to be supported. There would be significant concerns in relation to the impact of the development on the setting of the adjacent Listed Buildings particularly Dells cottage. As existing, the setting retains its open rural character and there is significant tree coverage between the sites allowing for natural and soft boundary treatments. The dense development would inevitably result in the loss of well-established vegetation which would dramatically alter and harm the setting of the heritage assets.”*

The National Planning Policy Framework defines Previously Developed Land as follows:

Land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed) and any associated fixed surface infrastructure.

The Applicant's [Proposed Block Plan](#) provides accurate details of the proposed location of the new buildings on the eastern side of Court Farm:



Superimposing the Dell's Cottage historic curtilage on the proposed plan shows that Buildings 7, 8, 9 and 10 are planned to be built on this Green Belt land, not previously developed land (PDL), well within the historic curtilage of a listed building.

Applicant's Planning Statement

6.4.12. The proposed development is located partly on previously developed land, with new buildings mostly confined to areas already containing existing built form or hardstanding.

Comment: All of the site land is in the Green Belt. Only the land for seven of the eleven new buildings is Previously Developed Land (PDL), or brownfield land. The land required for Buildings 7, 8, 9 & 10 is not brownfield land and directly harms the setting of a designated heritage asset – Dell's Cottage.

The Impact on the Green Belt and Openness

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

NPPF Sections and Paragraphs relevant to this Planning Application

Relevant Content in bold

13. Protecting Green Belt land

142. The government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence.

Comment: In my opinion, the Applicant's proposal fails to prevent urban sprawl, in fact this proposal exacerbates it through the addition of 11 dwellings. It is also contrary to keeping land permanently open. **It fails this policy.**

143. Green Belt serves 5 purposes:

- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;*
- b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;*
- c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;***
- d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and***
- e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.*

Comment: Demonstrably, the proposal fails to safeguard the countryside from encroachment or to preserve the setting and special character of Dorney, as eloquently and independently described by Bucks Council's Planning Department in the Dorney Conservation Area Appraisal document. **It fails this policy.**

Proposals affecting the Green Belt

152. Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

153. When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

154. A local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are:

(g) limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land, whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would:

- not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development; or*
- not cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt, where the development would re-use previously developed land and contribute to meeting an identified affordable housing need within the area of the local planning authority.*

This planning application is not compliant with several NPPF policies in significant ways:

Built Form, Massing, and Height: The proposals result in a **notable increase in built form.**

- The **footprint** of buildings would rise from 1,124 sqm to 2,148 sqm, **representing a 94% increase.**
- Additionally, the proposed **volume (mass)** of buildings would surge from 4,427 cubic metres to 9,717 cubic metres, marking a **substantial 120% increase** over existing structures on-site.

Openness:

- Openness is further compromised by spreading built form across the site, introducing eight new large properties both to the east and west of the existing buildings. Contrary to the architect's claim, the land allocated to the four houses on the east side is not Previously Developed Land but rather Green Belt land within the historic curtilage of Dell's Cottage. **These new buildings would exhibit considerable height, bulk, and massing, consequently reducing the openness of the Green Belt throughout the site.**
- Consequently, the proposal **significantly amplifies the built form on-site**, evident in increased footprint, floorspace, volume of buildings, and total number of structures, **diminishing the Green Belt's openness spatially.**
- Moreover, from a visual standpoint, despite natural vegetation providing some screening during the summer months, the proposals would **notably decrease the visual openness of the Green Belt.**

Compliance and Policy Considerations:

- **The proposed development fails to align** with the appropriate forms of development outlined in policy GB1 of the Local Plan and the NPPF.
- **Inappropriate development, as defined by the NPPF, poses harm to the Green Belt** and should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances where the benefits clearly outweigh the harm.
- **Considering the substantial harm on the Green Belt's openness, the proposals fail to meet the exceptions outlined in para. 154 'g'.**
- This development appears **incompatible with the policies outlined in the Local Plan and the NPPF, as it constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt.**
- Per NPPF guidelines, inappropriate development should only proceed if very special circumstances demonstrate that the benefits significantly outweigh the harm inflicted on the Green Belt.

- The proposed development **significantly increases the average housing density of the existing Dorney Common settlement from four to 13 dwellings/ha, introducing an urbanising effect.** This escalation of 11 houses, from 4 to 15, leading to a

substantial increase in the overall density of development within the settlement, would also escalate associated activities, including vehicular movements.

- The proposed two-storey buildings, including one (Number 10) reaching nearly 10 metres in height, deviate from the current predominantly single-storey structures, altering the site's existing characteristics. **Such changes are incongruous with the rural, low-density nature of the settlement, failing to preserve or enhance its character.**
- Moreover, **the proposal poses substantial harm to the designated heritage asset, Dell's Cottage. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) underscores the importance of conserving such assets**, warranting careful consideration against any public benefits, including the proposal's potential for securing its optimal viable use.

Potential Public Benefits:

- In this context, the proposal offers a contribution towards addressing the general housing need, amounting to 11 residential units, and fulfilling the Council's housing targets. It's acknowledged that the Council currently falls short of a five-year housing supply. However, when considering the broader context of the Council's housing objectives, **an increase of only 11 dwellings represents a modest addition** and should therefore, in my opinion, be deemed to carry only **moderate weight**. It is also contrary to Bucks Council's statement that **Dorney Parish "is not suitable for a major development"**.
- Furthermore, the proposal aims to contribute to the provision of **affordable housing**. Nevertheless, since this contribution is not provided on-site and equates to only an 18% provision, falling short of the Council's target of 40%, its impact is limited and should therefore be attributed **limited weight**.
- **Overall**, when assessing the identified public benefits against the perceived drawbacks posed by the proposed development to the character and appearance of the Green Belt and the designated heritage asset, namely Dell's Cottage, **it appears that the benefits are not substantial enough to outweigh the potential harms. Consequently, the proposal contradicts policy C1 and EP3 of the South Bucks District Local Plan (adopted March 1999), CP8 of the South Bucks Core Strategy (adopted February 2011), and the requirements outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).**

Very Special Circumstances:

- **The proposal constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt, which inherently poses harm and should typically not be sanctioned unless there are exceptional circumstances.** The governing Framework mandates giving **substantial consideration to any detrimental impact on the Green Belt**. Such circumstances necessitate **demonstrating that the potential harm** caused by the inappropriateness, alongside any other adverse effects, **is significantly outweighed by other factors**.
- The adverse effects stemming from the proposal, such as inappropriateness and reduced openness, carry considerable weight against its approval, particularly in terms of the harm inflicted upon the Green Belt. The applicant has argued for special

circumstances, citing the council's shortage of five-year housing supply as a reason to permit housing within the Green Belt. Additionally, they assert that the proposal would contribute to the council's affordable housing provision.

- While housing provision merits consideration, its significance should be tempered by the scale of the proposed development. In this case, I suggest that the contribution of 11 dwellings should be deemed to carry only moderate weight. Moreover, the contribution toward affordable housing, though beneficial, should be ascribed limited weight due to not being provided on-site and falling short of the council's prescribed target.

Comment: Upon weighing the benefits against the identified harms, it becomes apparent that the advantages are insufficient to outweigh the drawbacks. Therefore, the exceptional circumstances necessary to justify the development seem to be lacking.

Regardless of whether affordable housing provision is acknowledged as a benefit, it does not alter the fact that the proposal fails to sufficiently outweigh the identified harms.

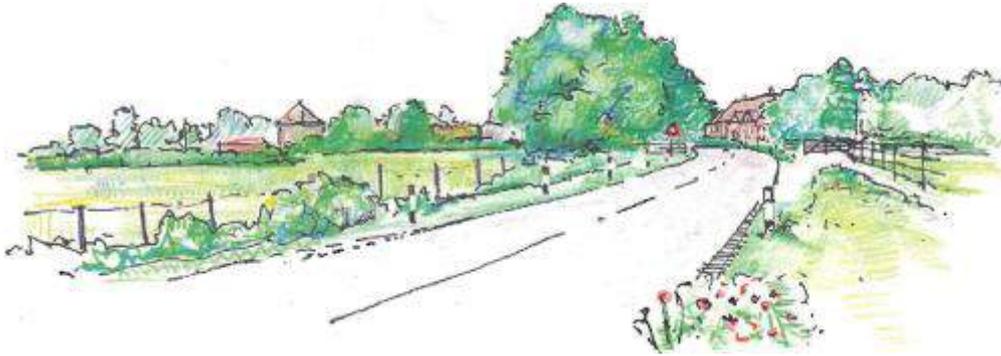
Acknowledging the Council's inability to demonstrate a five-year housing supply, it's imperative to note that the Framework permits permission unless specific policies that safeguard crucial areas or assets provide clear grounds for refusal. Notably, Green Belt land and designated heritage assets fall within these protected policies, providing clear rationale for rejecting the proposed development.

Given the apparent unsuitability of the proposal within the Green Belt, coupled with its adverse effects on a designated heritage asset, the identified harms don't seem to be offset by the proposed benefits. Consequently, the exceptional circumstances necessary for justification appear to be lacking.

Therefore, Para. 11 in the Framework serves as a decisive factor in refusing the development, rendering the presumption in favour of sustainable development inapplicable in this instance.

The consideration of the Dorney Conservation Area Appraisal

Heritage Officer - Pre Application Advice 28 March 2019: *“As you are aware, whilst not within a Conservation Area, it lies in very close proximity to the Dorney Village Conservation Area [50m.]. The Council’s Heritage Officer has advised that consideration needs to be given to the adjacent Conservation Area, as this site acts as a gateway to it, and therefore the Council would be seeking visual improvements to the site over and above that which currently exists.”*



Comment: The professional, independent Appraisal by Bucks Council’s Planning Department in 1996 was not available to the Heritage Officer in 2019 when the above Pre Application Advice was documented. This was due to the failure of Bucks Council to curate or search for a legal document which is a “material consideration” in this matter.

The Courts (including the Supreme Court) have determined that **the 1996 Appraisal is valid and up-to-date as Bucks Council have not determined otherwise. It should be given great weight as a “material consideration”.**

The site's proximity to the Dorney Conservation Area, situated within 50m, is relevant. The Dorney Conservation Area Appraisal highlights Dorney's **rural ambiance, surrounded by open pasture land**, and characterised by tranquillity.

There is no doubt that Court Farm, along with the other farms around Dorney Common, has had an influence upon the character of the settlement by **reinforcing the rural nature of the area for hundreds of years.**

Regarding the Hierarchy of Space, the Appraisal observes **Dorney's low density residential layout**, lacking defined squares or enclosed spaces, **contrasting with the open expanse of Dorney Common**. The relationship between the Built Environment and Landscape emphasises scenic views from various points within the settlement, **particularly appealing from the eastern edge overlooking Dorney Common** and Windsor Castle.

The Appraisal underscores the architectural significance within the Dorney Conservation Area, predominantly featuring listed buildings dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries, **characterised by timber frames, brick nogging, and old tile roofs. This rural, low-density character is deemed worthy of preservation.**

Listed Buildings and their Setting: Dell's Cottage

As seen previously, proposed buildings 7, 8, 9 & 10 are to be built on Green Belt land, within the historic curtilage and setting of a designated heritage asset – Dell's Cottage, an historic building with strong local associations. The impact of this part of the proposal requires careful examination.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

NPPF Sections and Paragraphs relevant to this Planning Application

Relevant Content in bold

Section 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

195. *Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource, and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations.*

201. *Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.*

203. *In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

205. *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.*

206. *Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.*

207. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and**
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and**
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and**
- d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.**

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)

14. PPG reiterates that conservation of heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance is a core planning principle. It states that conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change that requires a flexible and thoughtful approach. The PPG notes that where changes are proposed to heritage assets, the Framework sets out a clear basis for decision-taking to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance and thereby achieving sustainable development.

15. PPG confirms that setting is the surroundings in which an asset is experienced and may therefore be more extensive than its curtilage. All heritage assets have a setting, irrespective of the form in which they survive and whether they are designated or not. **The extent and importance of setting is often expressed by reference to visual considerations. Although views of or from an asset will play an important part, the way in which we experience an asset in its setting is also influenced by other environmental factors such as noise, dust and vibration from other land uses in the vicinity, and by understanding of the historic relationship between places. **The contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting**. This will vary over time and according to circumstance.**

16. Harm may arise from works to the heritage asset or from development within its setting. A thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it. When assessing any application for development which may affect the significance of a heritage asset through change in its setting, local planning authorities may need to consider the implications of cumulative change.

17. Public benefits are defined as anything that delivers economic, social or environmental progress as described in the Framework (paragraph 7). **The Guidance confirms that public benefits should flow from the proposed development. They should be of a nature or scale to be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit. It is noted that public benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be genuine public benefits**

South Bucks Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011

20. Core Policy 8 (Built and Historic Environment) states:

*“The protection and, where appropriate, enhancement of the District’s historic environment is of paramount importance. **In particular, nationally designated historic assets and their settings, for example Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Grade I, II*, and II listed buildings, will have the highest level of protection.***

***Locally important heritage features and their settings also make an important contribution to the creation of distinctive and sustainable places and will also be protected, conserved and enhanced where appropriate.** The protection and where appropriate enhancement of historic landscapes (including archaeological sites, Historic Parks and Gardens and Ancient Woodlands) and townscapes, **especially those that make a particular contribution to local character and distinctiveness**, will be informed by evidence, for example, characterisation studies such as the Bucks Historic Landscape Characterisation Study.*

Comment: Having carefully considered the above National and Local Policies that address the protection and preservation of designated heritage assets, such as Dell’s Cottage, I find it very difficult, due to the paucity of factual, objective evidence provided by the Applicant, to see that the proposed development is compliant with any of them. Consequently, in my opinion, the proposal totally fails Paragraphs 195, 201, 203, 205, 206, 207 & 208 of the NPPF (2023), NPPG guidelines and policy CP8 in the South Bucks Core Strategy.

Heritage Officer Pre Application Advice Statement, 3 April 2019:

*“**The proximity of development to the eastern boundary, adjacent to the listed building, is highly unlikely to be supported.** There would be **significant concerns in relation to the impact of the development on the setting of the adjacent Listed Buildings particularly Dells cottage.** As existing the setting retains its open rural character and there is significant tree coverage between the sites allowing for natural and soft boundary treatments. **The dense development would inevitably result in the loss of well-established vegetation which would dramatically alter and harm the setting of the heritage assets.**”*

Comment: It appears that no significant changes have taken place over the last five years since the Heritage Officer pointed out the obvious. These four large buildings (7, 8, 9 &10), to quote King Charles III, are a *“monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved and elegant friend”*.

They are built within the setting of Dell’s Cottage and their bulk, mass and excessive height would dwarf the tranquil setting of a listed building. Their suburban cheek-by-jowl gardens would inflict a great deal of noise and loss of amenity to the residents of Dell’s Cottage. The Heritage Officer was correct in 2019 and, five years later, is still correct. This planning application must be refused.

Applicant's Planning Statement (Savills)

3.3.4. *With regards to heritage assets, to the southeast of the site is the Grade II listed Dell Cottage (List Entry Number: 1332693) and the Grade II listed Vine Cottage (List Entry Number: 1162791).*

6.8.8. *The Heritage Statement assesses the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the heritage assets. The proposed development at Court Farm is designed to preserve the settings of the listed Dells Cottage and Vine Cottage, as well as the setting of the Dorney Conservation Area, alongside adapting the potential non-designated heritage assets within the site. In terms of Dells Cottage and Vine Cottage, the development scheme includes the introduction of a new detached single-family dwelling (Unit 10), positioned and designed to harmonise with the traditional architectural characteristics of these historic cottages. This new building, featuring timber framing with brick nogging and a pitched roof, mirrors the traditional local materials and forms, ensuring visual compatibility with the listed buildings. The strategic placement of this dwelling, set back from the common and maintaining a respectful distance from the cottages, along with the introduction of sensitive landscape elements like planted garden curtilages, ensures that the new development integrates seamlessly into the rural setting without overshadowing or intruding upon the historical context of these listed buildings.*

Comment: No evidence has been presented by the Applicant that the proposed development “*preserves the settings of the listed Dell’s Cottage and Vine Cottage, as well as the setting of the Dorney Conservation Area.*” Unit 10 appears to be a suburban faux Tudor style house, Berkeley Homes style, which has no role being placed alongside Dell’s Cottage and Vine Cottage overlooking Dorney Common. The visual perspective (height x width) from Dorney Common shows it to be over twice the size of Dell’s Cottage. Furthermore, it does not reflect the design of the two listed buildings in any way. It is a monstrosity and causes substantial harm both to the openness of the Green Belt and the setting of Dell’s Cottage.

6.8.11. *For the reasons stated above, the proposed development would preserve the significance of the setting of the Grade II listed Dells Cottage and Vine Cottage, and the setting of the Dorney Conservation Area, as well as preserving and enhancing the character of the non-designated heritage assets at Court Farm. The proposal is therefore in accordance with paragraphs 205, 206, 208, 212 and 213 of the NPPF (2023) and policy CP8 in the South Bucks Core Strategy.*

Comment: For the reasons stated above, the proposed development would do none of those things. No factual, objective evidence has been provided by the Applicant. Therefore, the proposal totally fails Paragraphs 205, 206, 208, 212 and 213 of the NPPF (2023) and policy CP8 in the South Bucks Core Strategy.

The Significance of Dell's Cottage in its Setting

Applicant's Built Heritage Statement (Turley)

Architectural Interest

4.13 Dells Cottage is of special architectural and historic interest as a representative example of a timber-framed house, which dates from the 17th century (Figure 4.1). The house, with its exposed timber-framing, red-brick nogging, casement windows and brick chimneys is a good example of historic, vernacular construction, as part of the rural settlement of Dorney. The exposed timber-framing with brick infill panels displays the original construction methods and materials, and also gives a good indication of the original construction date of the building.

Comment: Agreed

Historic Interest

4.15 The listed building is also of historic interest where its function as a rural domestic building within a wider agricultural landscape, indicates its role as part of the predominantly agricultural society and economy of this area. The 1844 Tithe Map indicates that the building may have been formed two cottages, which is also evidenced in the construction of the building with a chimney to either end of the building. The 1881 Ordnance Survey map also suggests that an orchard had been planted to the west of the listed building, with a long range of buildings (possibly indicative of agricultural buildings) to the south east. This may suggest the building was historically two, more modest cottages, which may have housed agricultural tenants of the Manor of Dorney.

Comment: When built in the 17th century, it was certainly two agricultural workers' cottages. Together with Vine Cottage (next door) and Wakehams (Boveney Road) they are the remaining workers' cottages on Dorney Common. The orchard on the left of Dell's Cottage was, presumably, part of the smallholding to provide food for the cottagers. This land, where the four buildings are proposed to be built has always been within the curtilage of the house until around 1995, when the Applicant parcelled it off for future development.

Contribution of Setting to Significance

4.16 Dells Cottage is located to the eastern edge of the rural settlement at Dorney, set back from Common Road by Common lands. The immediate setting of the listed building is closely confined to its domestic curtilage. The historic extent of this plot, as seen in the 1844 Tithe Map, has been curtailed by a later purchase / sale of land by Eton College.

However, the parcel of land as seen in the 1844 Tithe Map is still legible, and suggests this is a historic element of the setting of this building. As such, the significance of the listed building is best appreciated from within its domestic curtilage and larger surrounding parcel, from where the vernacular architecture of the listed building can also be most readily appreciated.

Comment: This land is certainly a historic element of the setting of Dell's Cottage.

4.17 The surrounding Common lands are also an important element of the historic landscape setting of the listed building, as part of a rural settlement focused around these Common lands. From Common Road, there are also some shared views with the listed building to the east, which is a contemporaneous element of the setting of Dells Cottage. This contemporaneous development amplifies an understanding of the listed building's significance as a vernacular, rural dwelling as part of the early phase of development of the loose-grained settlement of Dorney.

Comment: Agreed.

4.18 The Site itself is located to the north west of the listed building, and comprises part of the historic parcel of development associated with the listed building in the 1844 Tithe Map. The Site is largely screened in any public views by a large tree bank to the south west and west of the listed building, which also corresponds with the historic field patterns. Shared views from within the domestic curtilage of the listed building are likely to be more greatly appreciated. Within the Site, the principal farmhouse and small barn to the rear make some, albeit limited, contribution to setting as representing part of the historic, rural agricultural / domestic development of this area.

Comment: I'm not sure I understand the point above: "Shared views from within the domestic curtilage of the listed building are likely to be more greatly appreciated". If it is referring to after the four large buildings are built on top of Dell's Cottage, I have to strongly disagree.

Comment: The above assessment by Turley appears to totally support the Heritage Officer's position: "The proximity of development to the eastern boundary, adjacent to the listed building, is highly unlikely to be supported. There would be significant concerns in relation to the impact of the development on the setting of the adjacent Listed Buildings particularly Dells cottage. As existing the setting retains its open rural character and there is significant tree coverage between the sites allowing for natural and soft boundary treatments. The dense development would inevitably result in the loss of well-established vegetation which would dramatically alter and harm the setting of the heritage assets."

I have to concur. Buildings 7, 8, 9 & 10 should not be permitted – and thus the whole planning application, based on not being compliant with NPPF Para. 207, should be refused.

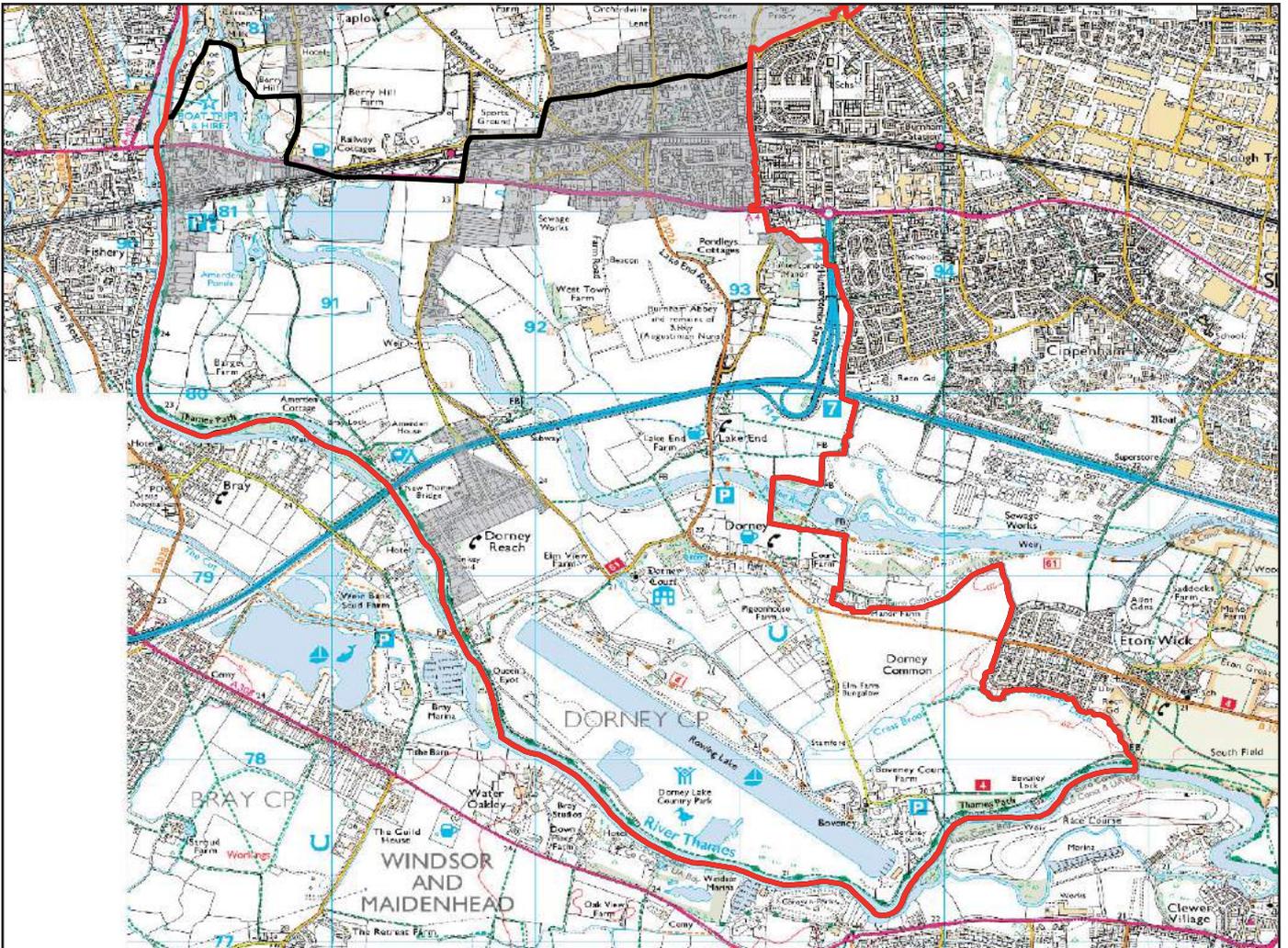
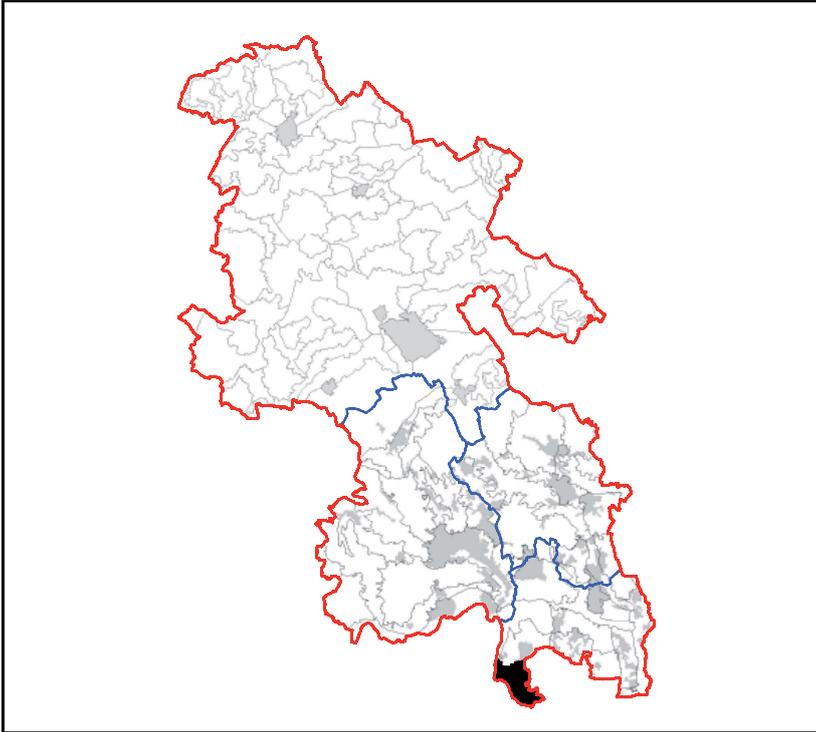
Landscape Openness and Character Assessments

The reality of the substantial harm that this proposed development could have on the character and openness of the Green Belt, is confirmed by the content of the professional, **independent** view of the Landscape Character of Dorney, conducted for Bucks Council around 2014 (relevant points shown by yellow highlighting in following extract). The key points from this excellent report relating to this planning application are:

- Bucks Council: *“Landscape Character Assessment (LCAs) describe and record what makes parts of Buckinghamshire different, distinctive or special. LCAs encourage sensitive siting and the design of development that **minimises harm to the character and the valued qualities of Buckinghamshire’s landscapes.**”*
- Dorney: *“Settlement is dispersed and spread linearly along roads or as common edge settlement, with a strong historic character (e.g. Dorney and Dorney Common). **Isolated properties and farmsteads are also scattered through the landscape.**”*
- Landscape Guidelines:
 - **Conserve open views, particularly across Dorney Common towards Windsor Castle and towards higher ground in the north.**
 - **Monitor vertical development [e.g. houses] along the floodplain, which will impact greatly on the low lying, open character.**
 - **Maintain the historic openness of Dorney Common and conserve the loose linear settlement character preventing infilling and nucleation.”**

Comment: The last point above, *“Maintain the historic openness of Dorney Common and conserve the loose linear settlement character preventing infilling and nucleation”*, summarises the argument for refusing this planning application. The NPPF Para. 154e does refer to *“limited infilling”* in villages as being a possible exception, but the operative word is *“limited”*. Also, Policy GB3 of the South Bucks Local Plan limits such *“limited infilling”* to Dorney Reach and not Dorney Village/Dorney Common. In order to prevent any infilling and nucleation this planning application should be refused.

LCA 26.2 DORNEY FLOODPLAIN



LCA 26.2 DORNEY FLOODPLAIN

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- A flat, low lying floodplain, with very slight local topographic variation, underlain predominately with alluvium, and supporting free draining, loamy soils.
- Large open arable cultivation, with smaller field enclosures of rough grazing and some pasture in the north and south.
- A network of rivers, ponds and streams, with the River Thames running along the western and southern boundary and the Jubilee River meandering through the centre of the character area. Scattered ponds are located along the course of these two rivers.
- Low hedgerows commonly define fields, with scattered or clumped trees along these boundaries. Trees are often associated with watercourses. Isolated trees and small pockets of woodland are widely dispersed, and overall woodland cover is sparse.
- Settlement is dispersed and spread linearly along roads or as common edge settlement, with a strong historic character (e.g. Dorney and Dorney Common). Isolated properties and farmsteads are also scattered through the landscape. With the exception of Dorney Reach, a denser, more nucleated settlement.
- Dorney Rowing Lake, a large purpose built rowing lake and designed landscape, occupies the south west portion of the area. A long, expansive water body surrounded by grassland and enclosed by woodland.
- A mixture of 19th century enclosure and parliamentary enclosure (18th -19th century), with some interspersed 18th century fields.
- Numerous historic and archaeological features, including Burnham Abbey, a Medieval Tudor manor and fishponds, several Bronze Age, Iron Age, Mesolithic, and Neolithic cropmarks, and Grade II listed medieval historic parkland at Berry Hill, Taplow and Huntercombe Park.
- The area is cut by the M4, which forms a prominent feature in the landscape, and has a strong visual and audible impact on the area. Elsewhere roads are small and winding.
- The low lying, flat and open landscape allows for long views and panoramic vistas particularly towards Slough, and also to higher ground in the north and south. The open character of Dorney Common allows for long views towards Windsor Castle. Views are occasionally interrupted and enclosed by wooded field boundaries.
- Varying levels of movement within this landscape, with pockets of tranquillity and calm, away from busy roads and settlement.

LCA 26.2 DORNEY FLOODPLAIN

DESCRIPTION

Location and Boundaries: *Dorney Floodplain* lies entirely within the South Bucks District. The character area boundaries are largely dictated by the district boundary itself, and it extends into Windsor and Maidenhead borough, in the south and west, and Slough borough in the east. The north boundary is dictated by the rising topography and the distinctly wooded nature of the landscape.

Landscape Character: A distinctive low lying, flat floodplain landform, with an open character. Medium sized arable fields predominate, with smaller field enclosures of rough grazing and pasture in the north and south, defined by low hedgerows and scattered tree boundaries. Long views towards Slough and to higher ground in the north and south, are occasionally fragmented and enclosed by wooded field boundaries. An important vista exists across Dorney Common to Windsor Castle. The area has varying levels of tranquillity, with the busy M4 cutting the landscape and creating a significant visual and audible impact. Away from the transport corridor, the floodplain retains pockets of tranquillity and calm. Numerous water bodies occupy the landscape, with the Jubilee River meandering through the area, plus associated scattered ponds. These provide a valuable wildlife corridor and important recreational opportunities. Settlement is relatively low density, with a strong historic element, and dispersed linearly along roads, or as loose common edge settlement. Isolated farmsteads and clusters are scattered throughout the landscape. Dorney Rowing Lake, a designed purpose built lake in the south west of the character area, provides a contrast to surrounding farmland.

Geology: Alluvium largely underlies this character area, with a small section of Shepperton Gravel in the east. Freely draining, loamy soils are dominant throughout.

Topography/Landform: A typically flat, low lying floodplain landform, with very slight local topographic variation.

Hydrology: The character area is classed as the Environment Agency Flood Zone 2 and 3. The River Thames runs along the western and southern boundary and the Jubilee River meanders through the centre of the character area, forming a significant feature in the landscape. There are also several ponds scattered along the course of these two rivers. A distinctive feature of this character area is Dorney Rowing Lake, and the surrounding landscape. This large, designed water body occupies the south west corner of the character area and is an expansive and distinctive hydrological feature.

Land Use and Settlement: Land use is dominated by farmland, mainly medium sized, arable fields, with smaller field enclosures of rough grazing and some pasture in the north and south. Rough, low hedgerows define field boundaries, with occasional wooden post and wire fence sub divisions.

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A unique feature within the character area is Dorney Rowing Lake, a designed landscape owned by Eton College, with a large open expansive, artificial lake surrounded by amenity grassland, and enclosed by an arboretum. This recreational land use occupies a large proportion of the south western area.

The M4 dissects the character area centrally, and provides a major transport corridor through the landscape. Elsewhere, there are a limited number of smaller winding roads. The Great Western railway line cuts through the north of the character area.

Settlement is relatively low to medium, and dispersed. It is spread linearly along roads, or around the edge of Dorney Common, generously spaced, with a loose, open character. Isolated properties and farmsteads are sparsely scattered across the landscape. The small village of Dorney Reach is located on the western boundary, and the edge of Slough in the north, present denser and more urbanised modern settlement edge character.

A small network of footpaths provides public rights of way across this landscape. Excellent access along the Jubilee River and Thames path, the latter running along the edge of the character area. Two official cycle routes also pass through the area.

Tree Cover: Hedgerow trees are scattered or clumped along field boundaries and road side edges, with tree cover mainly associated with watercourses. Isolated trees and small pockets of trees are dispersed around the area, but overall woodland cover is sparse. A mix of coniferous and deciduous trees have been recently planted around Dorney Rowing Lake, and provide significant tree coverage in this area. .

Perceptual/ Experiential Landscape: A low lying, flat landscape, with a strong horizontal form. An open landscape, which contrasts with the surrounding wooded character areas to the north. Repetition of geometric field enclosures and hedgerow boundaries, contribute to an organised and rhythmic landscape pattern. This is however, occasionally fragmented and interrupted, by elements such as the M4, and the Jubilee River. Occasional long views and panoramic vistas are provided across open landscape, towards Slough in the north east, and to higher ground in the north and south. There are important views across Dorney Common towards Windsor Castle. Intermittently, field boundaries fragment and limit views within this area. Varying degrees of tranquillity exist within the landscape. The motorway, provides a noticeable visual and audible impact on the area, however, away from this areas of calm and peacefulness exist, particularly close to areas of water. The town edge of Slough, with tall industrial towers occasionally provides a backdrop to the character area, which reduces the sense of rural character. In the south of the character area, the designed landscape of Dorney Rowing Lake, is enclosed and contained by woodland, however extensive views are still possible across the lake and towards Slough. Well maintained amenity grassland and woodland boundaries within this recreational space, provides a contrast to surrounding farmland, which often demonstrates a rough and scrubby texture, with unmanaged field boundaries.

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Biodiversity: This area is dominated by farmland, frequently arable cultivation, with limited biodiversity value. Hedgerows, scattered hedgerow trees and scrubby field boundaries, provide key ecological features, although hedgerows are often gappy and unmanaged. The River Jubilee, River Thames and associated ponds do however provide valuable corridors for wildlife and important habitats, especially for birds. Dorney Common and Cress Brook Local Wildlife Site comprise a large area of neutral grassland and streams. Biological Notification sites in this area are, Amerden Gravel Pit, a small lake in the north and a small area of neutral grassland at St James churchyard.

Historic Environment: There is evidence of occupation dating back to Prehistoric times. The area's proximity to the Thames and its position upon the gravel of the former Thames terraces makes it rich area for archaeological sites, many dating to Palaeolithic, and Mesolithic periods. Aerial surveys have revealed a number of cropmarks which indicate the presence of later sites dating to the Bronze Age and Iron Age.

There are a number of historic sites and monuments of note, including Burnham Abbey, a medieval abbey, previously a house for Augustinian nuns; the medieval/Tudor manor and fishponds at Dorney Court, historic buildings and parkland at Berry Hill, Taplow and Huntercombe Park. Historic building materials in this area are frequently handmade brick and red clay roof tiles.

The historic landscape of the area mostly comprises 19th century enclosure and Parliamentary Enclosure (18th -19th century), interspersed with some earlier, 18th century irregular enclosure fields. Of historical importance are the surviving areas of common land at Berry Hill, Taplow and Dorney Common. However a considerable proportion of the landscape has been altered in the 20th century, with the creation of new fields and pony paddocks, the impact of mineral extraction at Dorney and the creation of the Jubilee River for flood attenuation.

Designations:

- Registered Parks/Gardens: Berry Hill, Taplow; Huntercombe.
- Archaeological Notification Areas: 26 No.
- Conservation Areas: Taplow Riverside, Boveney, Dorney and Huntercombe
- Biological Notification Sites: 2 No.
- Local Wildlife Sites: 2 No.

EVALUATION

Landscape and Visual Sensitivities

Potential landscape and visual sensitivities are:

- River courses, ponds and lakes, and the associated habitat and wildlife value.
- Occasional long views and panoramic vistas. Particularly across Dorney Common towards Windsor Castle and towards higher ground in the north.
- Hedgerow field boundaries and scattered trees.
- The public rights of way access, particularly along the Thames path and Jubilee River.
- The flat landscape and the limited woodland, accentuates the visual sensitivity of the landscape.
- This distinctive loose common edge settlement pattern at Dorney Common and the historic character of settlements.
- Historic elements, such as Archaeological Burnham Abbey, Medieval Tudor manor and fishponds at Dorney Court, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Mesolithic, and Neolithic cropmarks, and large areas of Palaeolithic deposits, which are visible reminder of the historic use of land.
- Historic parkland located at Berry Hill, Taplow and Huntercombe Park.
- The open grassland Dorney Common.

Strength of Character/Intactness: The strength of character and intactness of the *Dorney Floodplain* is **moderate**. Evidence of human impact, such as the M4 fragments the landscape and reduces the distinctiveness of character. Field boundaries are often, unmanaged, and with gappy hedgerows.

Strategy/ Vision: To conserve and enhance the character of Dorney floodplain, with its important water bodies of important ecological and recreational value and proving a valuable green infrastructure resource. To conserve elements of historic interest and maintain pockets of tranquillity away from overt human influence.

Landscape Guidelines:

- Monitor water quality in the rivers, lakes and ponds, seeking to reduce run off and water pollution from surrounding farmland and roads.
- Encourage management and protection of water bodies, and seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity interest.
- Encourage management and restoration of hedgerows, filling in gaps where necessary and seek opportunities to recreate and extend these habitats.
- Conserve open views, particularly across Dorney Common towards Windsor Castle and towards higher ground in the north.

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- Monitor vertical development along the floodplain, which will impact greatly on the low lying, open character.
- Consider opportunities to reduce traffic noise, and consider further screening/buffering of motorways through sensitive tree planting.
- Protect and ensure good management of public rights of way.
- Maintain the historic openness of Dorney Common and conserve the loose linear settlement character preventing infilling and nucleation.
- Conserve historic elements, such as archaeological features and parkland, which provide evidence of past use of the land.

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Jubilee River, meanders through the landscape. Scattered trees associated with waters's edge.



A flat, low lying floodplain, with large open arable cultivation,



Expansive views towards Slough.



Historic character of settlement. Typical old red brick buildings.



Dorney Lake, a purpose built rowing lake. Open expansive water and wooded periphery.

The DNA of Dorney: An Analysis of Housing Density in Dorney and its Settlements, including the Court Farm buildings proposed development

[Extracts from a recent article in Dorney Parish News]

One of the major contributors to Dorney's unique DNA sitting, as we do, in between Maidenhead, Burnham and Slough, is the low density of our housing.

This is cited in a number of planning documents produced by Bucks Council – the purpose of which is to provide planning guardrails:

1. Dorney's Landscape Character Assessment 2011 (LCA):

- a. Bucks Council: *"Landscape Character Assessment (LCAs) describe and record what makes parts of Buckinghamshire different, distinctive or special. LCAs encourage sensitive siting and the design of development that **minimises harm to the character and the valued qualities of Buckinghamshire's landscapes.**"*
- b. Dorney: *"Settlement is dispersed and spread linearly along roads or as common edge settlement, with a strong historic character (e.g. Dorney and Dorney Common). **Isolated properties and farmsteads are also scattered through the landscape.**"*
- c. Landscape Guidelines:
 - i. ***Conserve open views, particularly across Dorney Common towards Windsor Castle and towards higher ground in the north.***
 - ii. ***Monitor vertical development [e.g. houses] along the floodplain, which will impact greatly on the low lying, open character.***
 - iii. ***Maintain the historic openness of Dorney Common and conserve the loose linear settlement character preventing infilling and nucleation.**"*

2. Dorney's Conservation Area Appraisal (1996)

- a. *"Surrounded by open pasture land, the area is characterised by its tranquil, rural nature."*
- b. *"Because of **Dorney's low density** residential layout, there is very little hierarchy of space within the village (for example, there are no squares or spaces enclosed by buildings)."*
- c. *"This contrasts strongly with the open expanse of Dorney Common"*

The following analysis of Dorney's net site area housing density (dwellings and gardens/hectare) indicates, by Settlement, the current housing density. The right hand column of the first chart assesses the housing density of the proposed Court Farm buildings site – **an excessive 13 houses/ha compared to the current density of the Dorney Common settlement at 3 houses/ha and the reasonable suggestion of 4 houses/ha.**



Current and Proposed Houses

Dorney Parish Housing Density						
Approximate Numbers	Current Houses			Proposed Planning Application		
	Net Site Area		Density	Net Site Area	Total	Density
Settlements	Hectares	Houses	Houses/ha	Hectares	Houses	Houses/acre
Lake End	1.9	12	6			
Dorney Reach	29.5	177	6			
Dorney Village	14.2	73	5			
Dorney Common (inc Court Farm site)	10.2	29	3			
Boveney (South of Cress Brook)	8.5	9	1			
Totals	64.3	300	5			
			Settlement			Site
Court Farm Site (build/garden area only)	1.19	4	3	1.19	15	13
<i>Net Site Area: dwellings and gardens only</i>						

Houses based on specific Settlement Density and on highest Density (Lake End)

Dorney Parish Housing Density				
Approximate Numbers	Proposed Allocation		Proposed Allocation	
	based on Settlement Density		based on Lake End Density (highest)	
Settlements				
Lake End			6	
Dorney Reach				
Dorney Village				
Dorney Common (inc Court Farm site)	3			
Boveney (South of Cress Brook)				
Totals				
Court Farm Site (build/garden area only)	3	4 existing	8	4 existing/4 new
<i>Net Site Area: dwellings and gardens only</i>				

Bill Dax

Substantial harm to the Openness of the Green Belt: “Bulk and Massing” of New Buildings

The application site is located within the Green Belt wherein there is a general presumption against inappropriate development except in very special circumstances.

The proposed development, by virtue of the increase in built form on the site, the increase in the number of buildings, and the bulk and massing of the new buildings, would cause substantial harm to the openness of the Green Belt spatially and visually, including when viewed from North Field and Dorney Common.

The proposed development therefore fails to meet any of the exceptions for development allowed in the Green Belt, and as such constitutes inappropriate development within the Green Belt, which by definition is harmful. Harm is therefore caused to the Green Belt by virtue of its inappropriateness, and substantial reduction in its openness. The NPPF sets out that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt.

No “very special circumstances” with any weight have been advanced by the Applicant that clearly outweigh the harm that would be caused to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness and a reduction in openness. As such the proposal is contrary to policy GB1 of the South Bucks District Local Plan (adopted March 1999) and section 13 (Protecting Green Belt Land) of the NPPF.

The “bulk and massing” of the new buildings can be considered using three metrics: Footprint, Volume (Mass/Bulk) and Height:

Footprint In Court Farm Development			
Building	Area	Area	% Change
	Existing	Existing & New	
	sq.m.		
Totals	1124.00	2184.00	94.3%
Conclusion: New Footprint is 94% more than the existing buildings			
Building Volume (Mass) In Court Farm Development			
Building	Volume	Volume	% Change
	Existing	Existing & New	
	cu m		
Totals	4427.00	9717.00	119.5%
Conclusion: New Volume (Mass) is 120% more than the existing buildings			
Building Heights In Court Farm Development - Building 10 compared to neighbour Dell's Cottage			
Building	Height Metres	v. Dell's Cottage	
Faux Tudor House	9.40	145%	
Dell's Cottage	6.50	100%	
Conclusions: New Dwellings are considerably higher than the buildings they are replacing (2 storey v 1 storey) Building 10 is 45% higher than its planned neighbour, Dell's Cottage			

Comment: This proposed, excessive, additional bulk/mass is totally unsuitable for this location as it will cause substantial harm to the Green Belt. Bucks Council are correct in their statement that Dorney Parish “is not suitable for a major development” This planning application should be dismissed.

Chain Saw Massacre?

It is interesting to note that all of the Applicant's photographs/graphics of the site are during the period of the year when the trees are in full leaf – and all of the new trees have matured to full height:



Below are actual photographs of how the site looks for the other six months or so, taken on 6 April 2024 (with many of the trees starting to come into leaf):



As can be seen, the current trees, during some of the autumn, winter and spring seasons, far from shield the view of the site from Dorney Common.

It is stated in the Tree Survey that there are 117 trees on the Site. It states that one in every three trees (38) are to be removed. This will denude the current, limited shielding of the site. The proposed tree planting will not change this fact.

Currently, none of these trees are covered by a Tree Preservation Order.

The first step for the new owners of many of the houses will be to remove a considerable number of the trees fronting Dorney Common in order to have a view of the Common and the cattle on it. If this application is accepted, then all the trees on the site and those on Dorney Common fronting the site should be protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

Comment: This is nothing but a savage and unnecessary Chain Saw Massacre in order to build an unsuitable major development in Dorney Parish. It will cause substantial harm to the Green Belt. This application should be rejected.

Inaccurate Stantec Transport Statement and failure to consider significant Traffic Safety issues.

5.3 Access Arrangements: Vehicular Access (Stantec)

5.3.2 *The accesses will continue to be lightly trafficked discussed further in Section 6. The northern access road will provide access to five dwellings and the southern access road will provide access to a total of ten dwellings (the existing four dwellings plus the six new dwellings).*

Neither single track access “will continue to be lightly trafficked”. The “survey” in Stantec’s Section 6 does not appear to be fit for purpose for the following reasons:

- The three survey sites selected are simply not comparable in any way with these single track accesses which are directly onto a 2 million vehicles per year, 60mph road with no footpath or cycleway.
- The survey dates were in 2012 and 2017 – well before the Covid pandemic and the significant changes to commuter traffic and the major increase in online retail, groceries and prepared food deliveries.

I suggest that a recent assessment of site traffic made by the Senior Transport Officer, Bucks Council for a site 1km away down the single track Boveney Road (Boveney Court Farm buildings planning application) which estimated a “worst case” scenario of 74 vehicle movements per day from and to the site by residents, and which was recently checked by a 6 day residents’ survey, would be more accurate than the Stantec Section 6 survey.

The combination of these numbers, combining the new site resident traffic plus deliveries, utility vans and visitors, provided an estimate of 124 vehicle movements/day from and to the proposed site. The site was comprised of 12 houses with 38 bedrooms.

The Court Farm site is proposed to have 15 properties with 54 bedrooms. Ten of these houses (33 bedrooms) will use the southern access road and five houses (21 bedrooms) will use the northern access road.

As the number of bedrooms is a primary number used for calculating the number of parking spaces (and therefore cars), we have applied the “Boveney Road” estimates, based on bedrooms, to Court Farm.

- **Southern (or Eastern) Access Single Track:**
 - Current Vehicle Movements/Day = 36
 - Proposed Vehicle Movements/Day = 108 a 200% increase
- **Northern (or Western) Access Single Track**
 - Current Vehicle Movements/Day = c. 10 (used primarily by horse owners)
 - Proposed Vehicle Movements/Day = 65 a 553% increase

Recognising that these are only estimates, it appears that the single track accesses will not “continue to be lightly trafficked”. Relatively, there will be a significant increase in vehicle movements up and down these tracks. Which will increase the risk of collisions between vehicle accessing both tracks from Common Road.

Common Road is a 2 million vehicle movements a year road, incorporating a “rush hour” commuter “rat run”. The busiest vehicle movement day in 2023 was Friday 30 June with 7,630 vehicles (3,751 westwards from Eton Wick to Dorney and 3,879 eastwards from Dorney to Eton Wick).

These numbers are provided by Bucks Council Transport Department, using their Boundary Counter situated 68m north of the Court Farm Westward Access Track, next to the cattle grid at the junction of Common Road and Village Road.

This concerning assessment takes us on to the second inaccurate statement in the Stantec Report under Access Arrangements: Vehicular Access.

5.3.3 As noted in Section 3, Common Road has a very good highway safety record with only two accidents recorded in the last five-year period.

The development is not going to result in a significant intensification of the road and therefore there will be very little if any impact on the safety of the local highway network.

Let us examine these two statements with the facts.

Firstly, Five years is a short period to assess the safety record of a road, especially given that this period included the two-year disruption of the Covid pandemic.

Let us consider a longer period. Over the last 15 years when such deaths have been measured (excluding 2020 and 2021) there have been 31 deaths, the vast majority on Common Road, all of which involved a vehicle.

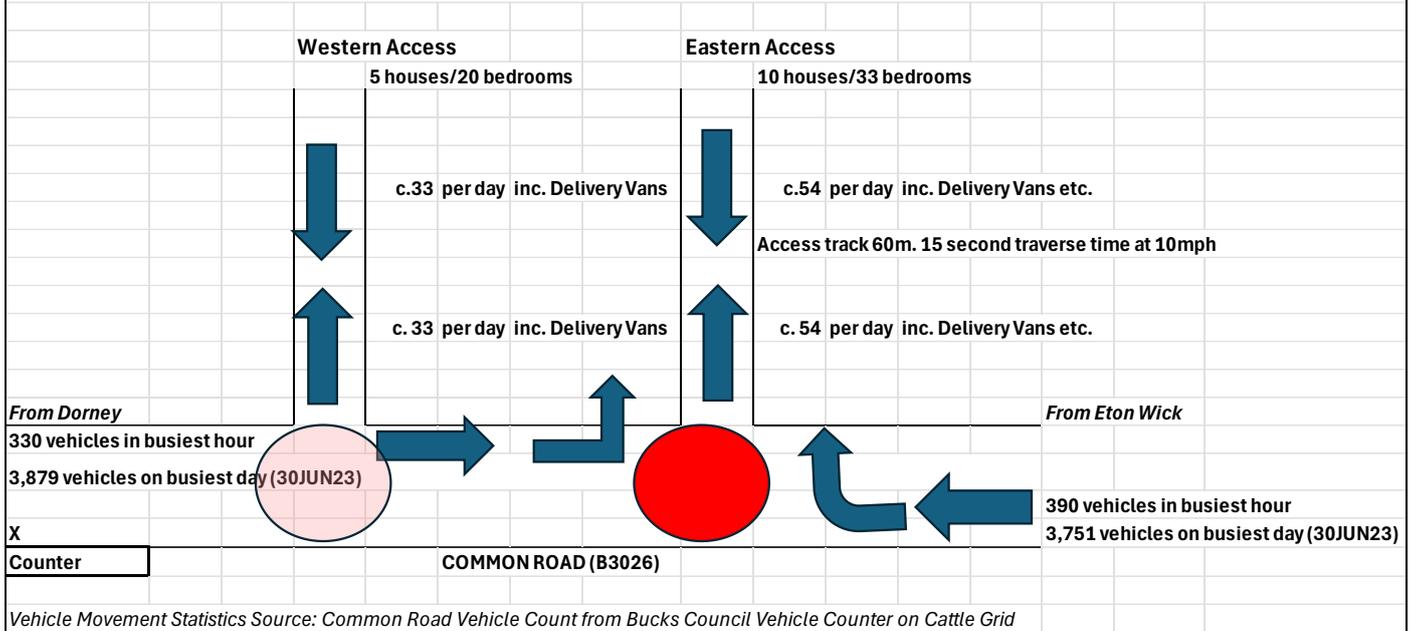
These were cattle and calves who were killed during the months of April to October when they freely graze Dorney Common and have right of way on roads crossing the Common.

<p>Comment: Common Road does <u>not</u> have a good highway record when all the facts are considered.</p>
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Secondly, the development is going to result in a significant intensification of risk at the two junctions analysed above – a 550% increase in site traffic in one case and a 200% increase in the other.

This could have a significant increase in collisions between vehicles accessing the site, needing to reverse out onto Common Road to allow a vehicle leaving the site (e.g. a large Amazon delivery van with a driver on a tight schedule) to come down the single track access road and join the traffic on Common Road. Such accidents have been witnessed in recent years with the current four houses on the site.

Court Farm: Eastern Access/Common Road Junction - Collisions - Major Safety Issue



Comment: The planned development would, therefore, appear to significantly increase the risk of such collisions at these two junctions, thus having a significant impact on the safety of the local highway network. A professional risk assessment is required.