


OXFORDSHIRE ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Registered Charity No. 259055_

From the Secretary:


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Dear Sirs,

Further to our submission of 2nd February 2024, and the subsequent representations made at public hearings, we should like to summarise our remaining concerns, and our overall objection to the proposed scheme and its impact on the historic environment, both visible and buried.

We are the leading heritage body for Oxfordshire founded in 1839 and with concerns for the archaeology, history, buildings and historic landscape of the county. We have 480 members actively supporting the Society, and a learned journal *Oxoniensia* with a worldwide distribution.

With regard to ***Below-ground Archaeology:***

We remain concerned at the scope of research informing the proposals, the quality and extent of the geophysical survey, and the availability of results to inform the decision-making process. Above all we do not accept the applicant's assessment that the *impacts on buried archaeological remains are deemed insignificant*, or are fully mitigable by further fieldwork. This is especially important with regard to remains of less than National significance, where the scope of the proposals greatly increases the cumulative impact of many 'minor' sites that contribute to an understanding of the ancient landscape character.

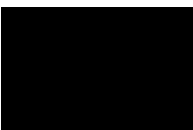
For ***Historic Buildings (both listed and historic non-listed):***


We remain concerned about the scope of the baseline survey and field investigation of potential impacts on both listed and undesignated historic domestic and farm buildings, many of which either belong to the Blenheim estate or lie within the wider cultural and landscape setting of the World Heritage site. Further investigation is needed of the character and significance of such buildings within the development area or whose setting (and potential sustainability) will be impacted by the proximity to the installations, in order fully to assess the impact of the proposals. Above all we do not accept the applicant's assessment that *Effects on heritage assets are considered reversible*.

And with regard to ***Historic Landscape:***

We remain concerned about the approach and scope of the baseline survey, as also the blind eye turned to the World Heritage Site, where the widely influential historic estate is deemed to end at the park walls, when the whole character of the surrounding landscape - as owned or influenced by the Blenheim estate is related to that central significance, and needs to be considered much more widely than just the visual impacts, and take into account physical features as well as perceived and associated factors. A more thoughtful consideration of the impacts on the character of adjacent Conservation Areas (and the Oxford Green Belt) is required properly to inform the assessment of impacts of the proposals in the wider context of the World Heritage Site, and the provision of a more imaginative approach to mitigation measures.

Yours sincerely




Hon. Secreta