

# Internal Memorandum



**Development Management Case Officer:** Andrew Stevenson

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**Application:** Outline application for the erection of up to 62no. dwellings (30% affordable housing) with accesses off Church Lane and Front Street, landscaping and other associated works; access for approval with matters of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for subsequent approval

**Reference Number:** 21/P/2049/OUT

**Location:** Land To The East Of Church Lane And North Of Front Street Churchill

**Date:** 31/08/21

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## **Comments from the Conservation & Heritage Officer regarding the above application:**

The proposed outline application is within Churchill Conservation Area, which acquires its character from the village being small and rural. The areas of green open space around the village are mentioned within the Churchill Conservation Area Appraisal as helping to provide the rural character to the village and contributing to views of the village.

There are also a number of listed buildings adjacent to the site, Grade I Listed Building St. John the Baptist Church, Grade II Listed Churchill Court, Grade II Listed 'The Cottage', and Grade II Listed Gatepiers and Gates south-east of Churchill Court.

The historic landscape character within this area is described as 'Late medieval enclosed open fields created by local arrangement and exchange'; this area of land has remained open green space since its first depiction on the 1840 tithe map.

The proposed application to create 62 dwellings in this area will harm the character of the conservation area. This proposal development at the end of the rural village will result in the change of this area from open green space to a dense urban development.

The land within this area is also elevated in some locations which will make the new dwellings more visible from certain viewpoints along the approach into the historic village. The proposed buildings will also overshadow and detract from the rural character of the village, particularly from the public right of way which runs along the eastern edge of the site and over Windmill Hill.

The proposals will result in an area of dense urban sprawl into the conservation area; the proposed pattern of development does not reflect the fortuitous design within the conservation area which has developed over time as a form of ribbon development along Front Street.

The illustrative designs of the proposed dwellings show a standard design choice which does not reflect the rural character of Churchill Conservation Area. However, the material palette chosen for the

### **Relevant Legislation / Planning Guidance:**

*Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*

*National Planning Policy Framework, principally chapter 16 (2021)*

*North Somerset Core Strategy (CS5: Landscape and the historic environment)*

*North Somerset Sites and Policies Plan (DM3: Conservation Area, DM4: Listed Buildings)*

*Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 -The Setting of Heritage Assets (2015)*

housing does reflect materials seen within the wider conservation area and the design is currently only illustrative. This should be improved to offer a more diverse style which could complement features of the buildings, and the ranges of height and scale of the buildings, within the conservation area. Other elements from the conservation area could be incorporated into the overall design, such as the characteristic use of stone walling which could help to tie the new area in to the character of the conservation area and also the wider area adjacent to the listed buildings.

Other elements of the scheme could cause some harm to the conservation area but are not submitted with the outline application; information such as boundary treatments and materials for hard-landscaping options. As mentioned above, within the village and surrounding area, boundary treatments consist of stone walls and hedging, and prolific spread of high timber fencing could further harm the character of the area.

Some effort has been made within the proposed layout to provide a linking path between Front Street and the church (this historic pathway through the site to St Johns Church from Front Street is mentioned in the Conservation Area Appraisal). There is also a level of screening around the site which will help mitigate some of the visual changes in character to this area.

There will be an element of change to the setting of the listed buildings to the north-west through the loss of views and change of character from agricultural fields to residential development. The way in which these heritage assets are currently experienced through views from the village will be impacted, and reassessment of the key views of these assets should be taken into consideration. By retaining some of these views it will go some way to preserving their character and heritage significance.

Other elements from the proposed development such as added noise and traffic would also bring changes to the wider setting of the nearby listed buildings, however this is not expected to harm the significance of the setting in which the listed assets are largely experienced due to their position in the landscape and distance from Church Lane.

Overall, the application does not preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area and is contra to part II section 72 (1) of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and policy DM3 and DM4 and the adopted appraisal and management plan for Churchill Conservation Area. It will cause less than substantial harm to the conservation area and less than substantial harm at the lower end to the wider setting of St John the Baptist Church. Therefore paragraph 202 of the NPPF and part I section 66 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 will need to be applied to the planning balance.

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