

Planning Application 2026/62/90211/E

Application for 9 dwellings (on two sites) in the grounds of West House, Oxford Rd. BD19 4AU

I am writing to object to the above referenced planning application, on the following grounds:

1. The development is inappropriate and disproportionate within the setting of an historic, locally significant and listed property. The little public benefit afforded by the development does not outweigh the harm to the listed building.
2. There will be a net loss of bio-diversity on the site, impacting both the local area and the setting of a listed building.
3. Latham Lane is unsuitable as an entry/exit point for the southern site of this development

Development in the grounds of a listed building

The Built Heritage Statement states that 'The proposed dwellings will be constructed in 2-storeys in a stone walling with grey slate or tile roof covering'. This is incorrect. The proposed plans clearly refer to Ground floor, 1st floor and 2nd floor (as well as a basement), which means the properties will be 3-storey. This calls into question the validity of the remainder of this assessment, as it is presumably assessing the potential harm of the development of 2-storey dwellings in relation to the main West House.

The report also states 'The majority of trees falling within and to the boundaries of the site will be retained along with garden land and open space to the south and east of the site'. This is misleading - there has been a sustained programme of tree felling on the site already, so although the majority of the trees *remaining* will be retained, many have already been removed, impacting the visual amenity of the site and surrounding area.

Notwithstanding these issues, the report still concludes that there will be some level of harm from this development. It suggests two potential mitigating factors. First, that this development increases delivery of housing to the area, and second, the potential to fund the upkeep and maintenance of the site.

In relation to delivery of housing, the plans are all for substantial 5+ bedroom properties which offer little benefit to the majority of residents in the local area. A large property recently developed on West Lane has remained on the market unsold for over 12 months, and there are several other large properties unsold in the area. This would indicate there is not a shortage of this style of property in the area.

In terms of the potential to support improvements to the site, the report suggests that these improvements could be secured by a planning condition or a Conservation plan. I am concerned that this will have little material impact, and this mitigation would therefore not deliver any value. Specifically, it is noted that the re-planting of trees under conditions of existing planning applications (notably 2022/90401) do not appear to have been met. Below are images from Google Maps from 2015 and 2025, showing the Latham Lane side of the proposed site. As far as I can ascertain, planning permission was granted to fell 2 trees in this area (Group

G, trees G16c and G16d on the plans related to this application). As can be seen, more than two trees have been removed - few of the Group G trees remain, and no replacements are visible. (There is now one tree growing next to the wall, which would probably need to be removed if this development goes ahead). In the Tree Survey accompanying application 2022/90401, this group was described as “A group of beech, ash and sycamore. Mostly mature single stem trees with no apparent major defects. The trees contain normal amounts of deadwood etc. Individual trees of medium value, **the group as a whole is of high value**”.

May 2015 (used for clarity – July 2021 image shows a similar landscape):



April 2025:



Planning Case Report

Section 3 of the Planning Case report refers to the planning history of the site and the area. The report identifies that 3 previous applications for development of this site have been either withdrawn or rejected, due to the impact on the historic building and trees impacts.

It then goes on to note that planning has been approved for the site of Gomersal Hall, on West Lane. This is spurious in relation to this application. Despite the name, Gomersal Hall was a building of little historic value, having been built around 60 years ago on the site of a previous property. There is no parallel between this and West House. Similarly, reference is made to the refurbishment of Red House Museum. The application for Red House Museum is for the re-development of a historic listed building and outbuildings which were otherwise falling into disrepair. No new buildings are being constructed as part of this scheme, and the setting is remaining largely unchanged. In essence, there has been no material change since the application in April 2021 for minor residential development, which as noted, was rejected.

Bio-diversity and landscape

The Planning Case Report goes on to state ‘The development incorporates high quality landscape including significant Biodiversity Net Gain areas which are located outside of the red line boundaries but within area within the wider site under the ownership of the applicant’. This is misleading. The reality stated in the Bio-diversity Net Gain assessment (Report Ref. ER-7560-04C) is that the site will **not** be able to deliver the required BNG of 10%, and will result in an ‘overall net loss of 4.63 Habitat Units’. The applicant will be required to ‘trade’ with off-site Habitat units in order to achieve the required gain. In essence, the development will have a negative impact on bio-diversity on the site and the wider landscape of West House, negatively impacting a listed building and its surroundings.

Finally, the report also concludes “Tree loss is minimal and concerns predominantly low value species, with substantial replanting and landscaping achieved to benefit local amenity”. I would again highlight that there has already been substantial tree loss on the site, and no evidence of any substantial re-planting, despite this being a condition of the TPO planning applications over the past 5 years.

Suitability of Latham Lane as an entry point

On page 2 of the Highways supporting statement, it states that ‘the second site to the southwest of the application site, will be accessed via the existing private access with Latham Lane.’ It goes on to say Latham Lane is “a single-carriageway, two-way road with a 20mph speed limit”. Both these statements are factually incorrect – there is no existing access on Latham Lane, which is a 30mph road. Whilst corrected later in the report, it again brings into question the information used during the assessment.

The report does not mention the proximity of the Latham Lane entrance to 2 existing properties, and the potential traffic conflicts this could create. It also does not consider that the entrance is close to a junction with Drub Lane which is on a blind bend. Latham Lane also has no footpath

(again, not mentioned in the report), meaning the entrance will conflict directly with any pedestrians on the lane. As a semi-rural no-through road, this is a popular area for recreational walkers and horse riding – the additional entrance and 5 large dwellings change both the nature of the lane, and present a risk to those using it.

Finally, the existing footpath from Oxford Road which runs along the southern side of the development emerges directly onto Latham Lane, close to the new proposed entrance. Again, this is a well-used footpath, notably for children attending BBG, and this proposed entrance would pose an additional risk to them.

Although the report does not discuss any collisions at this site, I am aware of at least two incidents in recent years where vehicles have lost control and crashed into the walls of properties at the top of Drub Lane. It should be noted that Drub Lane is frequently used as a short-cut from Gomersal to the M62, and as such is a disproportionately busy road for its size.

In summary, I object to the application on the basis that the proposals are unsuitable for the grounds of a historic listed building and will change the nature of its setting

forever. There has already been a significant reduction in the visual amenity and bio-diversity of the area through the removal of a number of trees, and despite the claims of the planning report, the proposals will lead to a further reduction in that bio-diversity. Focus for the site should be on restoration of the landscape, rather than development. As a semi-rural lane, Latham Lane is an unsuitable entry point for any development, as is the immediately adjacent road network. Finally, I would like to be assured that all existing planning obligations have been adhered to prior to any further permission being granted on this site.