**Extension to Guildenford Car Park, Burford.**

**Heritage Considerations**

**1. Introduction.**

Burford is a small medieval town granted a charter between 1088 and 1107 but probably founded by King Edward or Athelstan as a fortified settlement guarding the ford over the River Windrush which was the territorial boundary between Wessex and Mercia to the north. Consequently, Burford climbs away from the river up the north facing side of a steep hill. The main street is lined with buildings dating from before 1350 through to the coaching days of the 1850s. 252 of its buildings are listed and form a very attractive, unspoilt burgage formation lining four streets, primarily, with fields behind.

Due to its setting and unspoilt nature, Burford is an extremely popular visitor attraction and has approximately 60 shops and business on its High Street while only having a population of about 1300 people.

There is 100% on-street parking occupancy at all times and 100% occupancy of the WODC Guildenford car park at weekends and holiday times. The redeveloped Warwick Hall beside the church has proved a vibrant success with capacity for 200+ people and is used for business purposes, weddings, and other functions. Its demand for car parking equals that from visitors such that one will suffer on frequent occasions and be denied the parking facility.

**2. Heritage Considerations.**

This application proposes an extension to the existing car park into an area visible from the bank of the millstream which flows past the churchyard. Other listed buildings are in the immediate vicinity and are also considered.

Each building is considered on two counts:

1. Visual impact and its setting;
2. Flood risk. (Climate Change)

The buildings considered are:

Church of St John the Baptist (UID 1053287), Grade 1 listed.

Ladyham (UID 1053489), Grade 2 listed house built 1583. (Flood risk)

Island House (UID 1266915) Grade 2 listed former Mill House. (Flood risk).

Church Schools (UID 1367800) Grade 2 listed, also known as the Warwick Hall, built 1863 in a Tudor/Gothick style and recently redeveloped to have a modern extension on the rear.

The Great Almshouses (UID 1053285) Grade 2\* listed and also known as the Warwick Almshouses. Built 1457 and rebuilt 1828. Still in use as almshouses. Long garden and the rear is clearly visible from the existing car park onto which it backs.

Fysshers Croft (UID 1053286) Grade 2 listed house connected to the Almshouses but built before them. May have been a guest house for the Priory which dates from 1226. Backs onto the existing car park.

Dove Cottage (UID 1367801) Grade 2 listed and may have been a kitchen for the almshouses. Now extensively enlarged and modernised.

Rose Cottage (UID 1223722) Grade 2 listed 17th century cottage.

**3 . Church of St John the Baptist.**

3.1 The church was officially founded in 1175 and building completed to today’s size in 1475. It does contain possible Saxon structure and stonework with Saxon masons’ marks and stone sizing. It is mentioned in Sir Simon Jenkins’ books as worth visiting and does attract many visitors during the year. The churchyard is closed but also contains listed monuments, chest and bale tombs and other artefacts.

Visually it is set in a street scene of other listed buildings, the Warwick almshouses, Fysshers Croft and the Burford Grammar School Tudor to Victorian buildings.

Rurally it is partially visible from the permissive footpath around the field housing the current car park and the proposed site for expansion. However, yew trees and pollarded lime trees prevent a full view and appreciation of its structure with the tower and spire only being visible above the trees.

It is not regarded as being prejudiced in its setting by this application.

3.2 Although this proposal has no impact on the situation, flooding is regarded as a serious risk to the church from two aspects. The west door and west end can flood when water backs up covering the four arches at Burford bridge, flows into the road and down Lawrence Lane into the houses and church. This happens if the flow rate is too slow through Burford bridge during winter rains. Opening the northern spillway at Bury Orchard dramatically increases the flow rate of water through the bridge.

The second aspect is the eastern end when water overflows the banked up mill leat, trickles through the banking and ground water rises in the churchyard. The church is approximately one metre below the median water level in the mill leat. Water ingress into the fabric of the vestry adjacent to the sanctuary renders the area wet. Pumps need to be brought in to reduce the churchyard water level in order to mitigate the above and further prevent ingress through the priest’s door.

The church has flooded seriously in 1947 and 2007, water risk has occurred in the churchyard in October 2019 and December 2020/January 2021. Climate changes are noticeable and flow rates need to be increased in the mill leat in order to prevent water backing up at Burford bridge. This application would enable flood conditions around the church to be more easily monitored and, maybe, controlled.

The Church’s history fully described in (1) Burford: buildings and people in a Cotswold town, (2) A Thousand Years of Burford by Raymond Moody and (3) the church guide book.

**4.Ladyham.**

**4.1**  The house is not visible from the proposed parking area and vice versa.

4.2. Flood risk is the main concern as the River Windrush flows close to the rear of the house.

**5. Island House.**

Island House is most at risk from flooding and is remote from the application site. However, sluices adjacent to Island House can affect the volume of floodwater released into the application area. Monitoring during winter rains in critical.

**6. School Buildings.**

No impact either visually or from flooding.

**7. Warwick Almshouses, Ffyschers Croft, Dove Cottage & Rose Cottage.**

All in the vicinity but no impact from this application. They currently back the existing car park.

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