Dear Ms Thompson

& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990

NORTH OF THE A420 BOTLEY ROAD TO SOUTH OF THE A423 RING ROAD,
RUNNING PREDOMINANTLY BETWEEN THE A34 TO THE WEST & THE OXFORD
TO LONDON RAILWAY LINE TO THE EAST, INCLUDING LAND BETWEEN THE
A4144 ABINGDON ROAD TO THE TO THE WEST & THE RIVER THAMES...
Application No. MW.0028/18

Thank you for your letter of 18 December 2018 regarding further information on the
above application for planning permission. On the basis of this information, we offer
the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Historic England Advice
The further information provided does not alter the advice which I gave in my letter to
you dated 13th June 2018. For any matters other than that discussed below I refer you
to my previous letter.

I am disappointed that the predicted impact of the scheme in the area of the Old
Abingdon Road causeway has not been reconsidered, particularly with reference to
the new structures which are proposed. For ease of reference I have quoted below
from my original letter and I advise that the applicant should provide a detailed
response as addenda to the Environmental Statement and Planning Statement as
appropriate. I would be happy to meet on site with the applicant to discuss this, as
both the new structures and the heritage assets are complex and more easily
understood on the ground

With regard to impact on the scheduled culverts, the submitted documents
(environmental statement, based on the heritage statement) conclude as follows: ...the
low-lying floodplain setting, associated channels of the Hinksey Stream and the route
of the Old Abingdon Road are considered to make a small positive contribution to the
significance of this asset, providing its historical and functional setting. The
Scheme forms part of this low-lying floodplain and is considered to make a negligible positive contribution to its overall significance. I advised the applicant, when these documents were in draft, that this was not an adequate assessment of the impact but it has not been revised. There is no detailed explanation of the proposed ‘negligible positive contribution’ in relation to the construction or operation of the scheme. I advise that the construction and use of the new channel and road bridge, with attendant features such as flood walls, fencing and a telemetry cabinet, will have a negative impact, as set out in the table above.

Although there are already modern features in the landscape, the effect of the introduction of major new features can be clearly appreciated from the applicant’s own Landscape and Visual Assessment (ES Appendix I-8, Figure 7.37, Viewpoint 23) shows the significant change to the landscape as seen from the community woodland at Kendall Copse, even with the new bridge largely outside of the view. My advice is therefore that the scheme will cause some harm to the significance of the scheduled culverts but not substantial harm. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that where there is less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal (para. 134 [196 in revised 2018 NPPF]).

Recommendation
Historic England has no objection to the application on heritage grounds. Paragraph 193 of the NPPF (2018) reads:

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.

Paragraph 194 reads

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.

I advise that by engaging with the comments I have made above the applicant will be able to set out their justification for any harm caused to the scheduled monument.

Your authority should take these representations into account in determining the application. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us. Please advise us of the decision in due course.
Yours sincerely

David Wilkinson
Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments
E-mail: david.wilkinson@HistoricEngland.org.uk

cc: Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist, Oxfordshire County Council
    David Radford, Archaeologist, Oxford City Council