WALLINGFORD CONSERVATION AREA
CHARACTER APPRAISAL

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Note: The information contained in this character study was collated between 2005 and 2012. The omission of any particular feature or features from the text and accompanying maps is not to be regarded as an indication that the feature is necessarily without significance or importance in conservation and planning terms. Tree identification on the Townscape Appraisal Map is indicative rather than exact. In addition, it should be appreciated that the legislative background may change.

None of the statements contained in the document can be held as binding on the Council in the determination of applications for planning permission, listed building consent or conservation area consent.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Special Interest of the Wallingford Conservation Area

Wallingford is an historic market town in South Oxfordshire of national importance. A Norman castle was built over the Saxon burg, and the settlement was then overlaid by medieval expansion. Its location on the banks of the river Thames at a strategic crossing point has created, since prehistoric times, an impetus for development. Roman occupation of the area is also recorded, but it is the remarkable survival of the Saxon earthwork defences around Wallingford which provides the town with its most defining feature.

The addition of a Norman motte and bailey castle of some considerable scale and status in the north east quadrant of Wallingford encouraged the development of the market town at a key (and for many years only) local crossing point of the River Thames. Remains of the 13th century bridge can still be seen within the fabric of the existing bridge and confirm the extent of Wallingford’s historic links to the river and the important role that the bridge has always played as a gateway to the town.

A large Benedictine Priory also stood in the area of the town which is now known as the Bullcroft. This extensive complex of buildings exerted an equal influence as the Norman castle on the shaping of early Wallingford, although much of its building stone was robbed out and reused in other buildings throughout the town. However, nationally important archaeology remains below both Bullcroft and its southern counterpart, Kinecroft. Both areas are open and make a major contribution to the landscaped and tree-lined setting of Wallingford.

Wallingford’s Saxon street plan can still be traced in the present grid layout. The town’s medieval prosperity, reflected in the presence in the early 13th century of at least 11 parish churches within the town walls, has had its influence on the town, not least in the survival of some particularly fine timber framed buildings. Also of note is the presence of the burgage plots which are best seen between St Mary’s Street and Wood Street, or, though less well preserved, facing High Street. The width and depth of these plots has produced the fine grained townscape which can still be seen in Wallingford in the 21st century. Typical materials include the use of red or blue brick, which sometimes conceals earlier timber framed buildings behind. One of Wallingford’s most prestigious brick buildings is Calleva House (No. 6 High Street), which adds to the quality, variety and interest of the exceptional historic streetscape in this part of the town.

Wallingford no longer holds its cattle market or the bull baiting which occurred throughout the 18th century in the Market Place, but 20th century improvements to the street surfaces and attention to the public realm in the town centre have created a series of memorable spaces which are complemented by many important historic buildings. It also remains a popular destination for shoppers and tourists, this position being strengthened by the recent provision of a new high quality supermarket next to the Market Place.

Today, Wallingford remains inextricably linked to the River Thames and the activities along the river, which provide an active, vibrant and very attractive setting to the town. The Conservation Area, which was designated on 22nd January 1969, covers the whole of the historic core of the town within the Saxon defences, two small areas of mainly 19th
century residential development to the west and south, and part of Crowmarsh Gifford on the east side of Wallingford Bridge. A large more rural area, associated with Wallingford Castle, is also included to the north east, along with a cemetery and Park Farm House, which sits just outside the line of the Saxon defences on the northern edge of Wallingford.

1.2 Planning background

Whilst listing procedures focus on the protection of individual buildings, the designation of conservation areas is the principal means available to local authorities to recognise areas of special architectural or historic interest. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on every local planning authority to determine which parts of their area are ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’, and to designate them as conservation areas. The Act also states that the local planning authority should, from time to time, formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas.

English Heritage has also provided guidance on the effective management of conservation areas which was published in March 2011 entitled: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management. This suggests that local authorities should prepare both Character Appraisals and Management Plans for their conservation areas, principally to inform the local community what is important about the area in which they live or work, and also to provide guidance to the local authority when applications for change are considered.

This Wallingford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is part of this process. As an approved document for development control purposes, this statement will provide detailed background information for the interpretation of the South Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan, adopted by the Council in January 2006. Whilst this Plan is incrementally being replaced by the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF), the various historic environment polices contained within the Local Plan are currently (June 2011) still relevant. The emerging Core Strategy, which forms the central part of the LDF, includes objectives to maintain the character of towns and enhance both the built and the natural environment. The strategy for Wallingford (Policy CSWAL1) includes supporting schemes which enhance the town’s environment, while the policy for town centres (CST1) includes reinforcing the local distinctiveness of the market towns in the District, including Wallingford.
2 LOCATION AND SETTING

2.1 Location and population

Wallingford is located in south Oxfordshire on the flat, low-lying floodplain of the River Thames. The town lies on the west bank of the Thames about 50 miles west of London. The A4130, which connects Henley to Didcot, once passed through the town centre from east to west but a southern bypass was provided in the 1990s.

Wallingford is well connected by road and local bus services to Oxford, Reading and Henley. There is a railway station at Cholsey, three miles away. Mooring facilities are available for those arriving by boat along the River Thames.

The town lies on the Thames Path National Trail which runs for 184 miles from the source of the Thames to the Thames Barrier in Greenwich. Routes 4 and 5 of the National Cycle Network pass through the town.

In 2001, the census recorded a population of 6,273.

2.2 Landscape setting

Wallingford lies within the River Thames Corridor Landscape Character Area (as defined by the Local Plan 2006) which is described as flat, alluvial land which forms the corridor of the River Thames between Long Wittenham and Goring, and includes the lower reaches of its main tributary, the River Thame. The immediate landscape is made up of large fields with a number of drainage ditches and low hedges. There is little woodland apart from a line of trees along the east side of the road from Shillingford. On the east side of the river, long rows of willows and other trees are more evident, particularly in views from Wallingford Castle.

To the immediate west is the Wessex Downs and Western Vale Fringes Character Area, an area of low lying land encircled by the chalk hills of the Wessex Downs and the outlying Sinodun Hills. To the east, the Central Vale Fringes Character Area is a continuation of the chalk 'shelf' which is sandwiched between the Chilterns escarpment and the River Thames. This is defined along its eastern edge by the steep escarpment of the Chilterns, which leads to the higher Chiltern plateau, which is characterised by a row of ridges and valleys.

The Chilterns AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and the North Wessex Downs AONB lie to the south of Wallingford on either side of the Goring Gap, where the River Thames breaks through the Chilterns on its way to Reading.

2.3 Topography and geology

Wallingford lies on a gravel spur next to the river although the level of the land in the town is generally no more than 55 metres above sea level. The town is immediately surrounded by the flat flood plain of the river, although on the east side of the river beyond Newnham Murren and Mongewell, the land rises gradually along a gentle escarpment. To the west, the land also rises to Cholsey Hill (74 metres) and Brightwell-cum-Sitwell (105 metres).
Whilst clay is found in the Vale to the east of the River Thames, the immediate geology is gravel and alluvium over chalk. This provides the distinctive flints and clunch (chalk building stone) which is typical of the area, along with deep red or blue bricks made from the local clay. Historically, the limestone of the Oxford Heights to the north of Wallingford has also provided a popular building material.
3. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 The origins and the development of Wallingford

Prehistoric/Roman
Wallingford is situated at an important crossing point of the flat, low lying floodplain of the River Thames. As with many other Thames-side settlements, the ford at Wallingford was an accessible crossing point and had a number of prehistoric track routes converging upon it. The settlement here also benefited from its proximity to the Goring Gap, where the river cuts through the Chilterns and provides easy access to the Thames valley beyond. This made Wallingford one of the most accessible crossing points of the Thames on the route to London, ensuring good trade links and its use as a strategic political location in later years.

Evidence for Bronze Age activity has been found in the river, and traces of settlement and flints have been found nearby, including a burial site just south of the town. Though no structural remains have linked Wallingford to the Roman period, a large number of Roman coins and pottery were found to the west of the town in the 19th century and it therefore seems likely that some form of Roman activity took place which made use of the advantageous river crossing. A further more detailed assessment of these finds in and around the town needs to be undertaken.

Saxon
The name Wallingford means ‘the ford of the Wallinga (Welsh) people’. Whilst Wallingford today contains the best example of a late Saxon town plan in England, an early Saxon cemetery outside the defensive earthworks to the south west of Kinecroft contains burials from the 5th and 6th centuries, suggesting that there was a settlement beside the river for at least five hundred before the creation of the 9th century burh.

Wallingford was clearly already an important settlement even before it became a burh, being first mentioned in a Saxon document of c. 919 AD. The town had royal connections which granted the town the privilege of having its own mint which was possibly located in the vicinity of Goldsmiths Lane. The present day location of Wallingford arises from King Alfred’s decision to found one of his many burhs (fortified towns) from which to defend Wessex from the Danes.

Alfred’s decision to protect the town later in the same century involved a series of large earthworks being constructed on three sides, probably topped by further timber fortifications, creating a roughly square enclosure against the river. By the time the earthworks were complete, Wallingford was the largest defended town in the kingdom of Wessex and the template for the town’s future development was established. The earthworks continued to encircle the town for the next nine centuries, and even now maintain a formal boundary between the historic town and its more recent suburbs.

Post Norman Conquest
The second major phase of Wallingford’s development began after the Norman Conquest, when Robert d’Oyley carried out William I’s orders and reinforced the Saxon defences with a sizeable motte and bailey castle (meaning mound and attached enclosure), adjacent to the Thames. In addition, a Benedictine Priory of the Holy Trinity was built around the same time (circa 1077-1093) and its complex of buildings was located somewhere on the present day Bullcroft. These two significant additions to
Wallingford occupied approximately a third of the enclosed town, and reinforced the influential status of the town which had been established over a century earlier.

During the medieval period, the castle and the priory maintained their importance and were involved in a series of significant historical events. The Civil War between Stephen and Matilda was resolved by the Treaty of Wallingford which was signed in 1153. Just prior to this the castle’s defences were increased by the addition of two concentric rings of shallow ditch defences around the existing bailey. During the reign of King John, Wallingford became a royal residence (1199-1216) and appropriate modifications were made to the castle to emphasise its significant occupant. These changes included the deepening of defence ditches and the addition of stone curtain walls to replace earlier timber palisades. In the 13th century the castle was given to Richard, brother of Henry III, who constructed a stone bridge across the Thames as a suitable approach to his new home. Parts of this original bridge, constructed from stone quarried upstream at Marcham, can be seen incorporated within the existing bridge. In the early 14th century Queen Isabella used Wallingford as her headquarters, and the Black Prince later made the castle his chief residence for himself and his wife until 1385.

The three centuries following the construction of the castle brought great prosperity to the town with eleven parish churches existing in the early 13th century. The granting of the Charter of Liberties in 1155 allowed the town to hold regular markets and encouraged thriving trade. It is likely that during this period most of the whole area within the Saxon earthworks, apart from the land which immediately surrounded the castle and priory, would have been developed to some extent to accommodate the bustling population. However, recent excavations in Kinecroft and Bullcroft indicate that these areas may have been kept more open and used by the priory for food production and grazing for animals.

From the 15th century onwards, Wallingford entered a period of decline with the effects of the plague reducing the number of houses to just 44 with only four parish churches. The castle was used less and less as a royal residence and more as a prison and billet for troops. Other river-crossing points were established at Abingdon and Culham in 1415 reducing the traffic through the town, and by the 16th century Henry VIII moved his court from Wallingford to his favoured palace at Ewelme. Shortly afterwards, the priory was also dissolved, leaving the town to shrink in importance and be overtaken by places such as Oxford. Nevertheless, it is this decline which has helped to preserve the Saxon defences and the large areas of open space around the castle ruins and the two crofts. Without this, Wallingford’s town would have been rebuilt several times over and as is the case in Oxford, the castle grounds may have been encroached upon, leaving most of the archaeological interest buried beneath the ground.

The Civil War
The mid 17th century Civil War marked a brief revival for Wallingford, as the castle was re-defended by Charles I in 1642. Improvement works were carried out in order to use the decaying structures to defend the important Thames crossing, and the castle became an important Royalist stronghold. Following a long siege in 1646, the Royalists eventually surrendered after the Parliamentary forces had destroyed sections of the 13th century bridge in order to gain control over the Thames crossing. Though these were later rebuilt, the mixture of 17th and 13th century spans, combined with later 19th century widening works, explain the bridge’s irregular appearance. In 1652 Cromwell ordered that the castle was totally destroyed and much of the good quality stonework available
from the ruins was incorporated into local buildings. The town centre was also significantly altered with the market place being enclosed in 1653 by the construction of St Mary’s Church and, in 1670, by the addition of the new Town Hall. Regular markets selling agricultural produce and animals remained an important part of the town until at least the 18th century, when other industries began to develop.

*The 18th century*

Because the Thames was navigable, goods were able to travel to and from London via an established network of waterways all accessed from the wharfs off Thames Street. By the 1700s industries such as milling, brewing (maltings), leather production and manufacturing (including agricultural equipment) were able to make use of this quick route to the city to bring a new phase of prosperity to the town. The money this brought in, combined with the fashionable influences of the capital, had a significant impact upon many of the buildings in Wallingford. Many of the older, mostly timber framed, properties were re-fronted or modernised using brick, whilst others had their roofs raised or parapets introduced to hide old fashioned pitched roofs. Some properties were newly built in the prestigious Georgian style whilst others were just given a radical facelift, sometimes using render to hide the original timber frame or local stonework.

*19th and 20th centuries*

The widespread use of brick continued into the 19th century, although the relative prosperity it had represented was much reduced. The river, aside from its trade potential, began to be recognised for its picturesque qualities and leisure opportunities. Large villas were constructed along the west bank of the Thames, turning what must have once been a bustling Thames Street into a quiet residential lane. The coming of the railway in 1866 led to a station being constructed to the west of the town centre. A number of good quality terraced workers cottages, some larger semi-detached villas, and an imposing school building were all constructed in the latter half of the 19th century. The railway did not bring any great prosperity to Wallingford, but this has meant that the settlement has not been radically extended or altered and today retains its character as a small, but busy, ‘market’ town.

A bypass was built to the south and west of the town in the 1990s, which has advantageously removed most of the traffic through the narrow streets in the town centre. Wallingford is the smallest market town in the District although the recent growth of Didcot, which is only some six miles away, has had a major impact. In the mid and late 20th century the town has therefore expanded with new housing being provided mainly to the west of the town centre. The Hithercroft Estate, the town’s major employment area, has also been developed to the south west of the town.

### 3.2 Development of plan form

The strategic positioning next to a naturally shallow crossing of the River Thames made Wallingford a meeting point for several ancient routes. The Ridgeway passes within five miles and Icknield Way is even closer. A medieval road called the Portway, linking Oxford to Reading, once led to the river crossing and this may have followed the line of an early Saxon route which was later diverted through the town. The east-west route was the also the main route from London to Gloucester and Wales, so it had more than local significance. Old drove-roads similarly converged at Wallingford, as animals could be driven across in relative safety.
It is likely that some form of early timber bridge existed prior to the founding of the 9th century burh, though no evidence has ever been found. The first documented evidence of a bridge, probably timber, is by Henry of Huntingdon in 1141.

The first most significant phase in the development of Wallingford's layout, which effectively mapped out its basic plan and primary routes, probably took place in the late 9th century when the Saxon settlement's defensive earthen banks were constructed. It is thought that at this time a grid of streets was laid out within the rectangle formed by the river to the east and the newly-constructed defensive ramparts to the north, west and south. These new streets created a grid pattern with, at the centre of the settlement, an east-west route across the Thames intersecting the north-south route. The east-west route followed the existing line of the High Street, and the north-south route followed today's Castle Street, St Martin's Street and Squires Walk. The positions of Wood Street, Thames Street, and Goldsmiths Lane may also date from this early period. Generally speaking, the Saxon settlement within the defences may have been primarily 'urban' only in the south eastern quadrant.

St Leonard's Church in the south east corner appears to interrupt the Saxon defences indicating the possibility that it predated the late 9th century earthworks and may point to the location of an earlier settlement.

Following excavations at the castle's North Gate in the 1960s, it has been argued that Castle Street was located further east than at present, having been forced to relocate slightly west due to enlarged earthworks around the castle. If this is true, the main north-south through road would have been not along St Martin's Street but along St Mary’s Street (formerly Fish Street) and there is a lost link through from High Street.

It is still possible to identify the original street plan in some areas although some elements have been lost and altered. Radical changes in the street plan may have been caused in 1006 when Sweyn Forkbeard, the father of King Cnut, attacked and burned Wallingford. Better documented are the changes brought about by the original construction of the Norman castle (and its major rebuilding in the late 13th century) and by the contemporaneous founding of the Priory of Holy Trinity, the two most significant post-Conquest additions to the town.

The castle now occupies nearly the whole of the north eastern quarter of the town. As part of the first phase of construction 1067-1071, it is recorded that eight ‘hagae’ or tenements of the Saxon town were destroyed to make way for the fortifications. The castle was enlarged in the early 13th century and again in the late 13th century when the castle was given to Richard, brother of Henry III, who constructed a stone bridge across the Thames as a suitable approach to his new home.

The continuation of the line of Thames Street by the hollow way entrance to the castle grounds, and the western end of Bear Lane where it enters Castle Street, are probably all that remain visible of the original street pattern in this area. However, it is still not clear how dramatic an effect the Norman castle had on the re-ordering of the Saxon street plan.

Similarly, the north western quarter of the town, now occupied by Bull Croft, was the site of the buildings, precincts and land of the Benedictine Priory of the Holy Trinity, built between 1077-1093. The priory thrived as a religious house of some considerable
status until it was systematically demolished in 1525. There would have been a series of streets which provided access to the priory but no specific archaeological remains have been found which establish the priory’s exact location.

During the period from around 1070 until the Dissolution in 1530, Wallingford Castle and the Priory of Holy Trinity occupied approximately one third of the enclosed town, constituting a presence of considerable high status. Some of the castle ruins remain today and its occupation of a large part of the town is readily appreciated. By contrast, there is almost no trace of the Priory today, but its impact on the development of the settlement should not be under-estimated.

The town went into a general economic decline after the 14th century and was apparently reduced to just 44 houses by the middle of the 15th century. The next major alteration to the town’s layout occurred in the 17th century during which time the medieval market place gradually became enclosed, culminating in the building of St Mary’s Church and a new Town Hall in 1670 (an earlier medieval Guild Hall once stood south of the church). The present church is mostly Victorian but the tower of 1653 is partly built using stone from the dismantled castle.

Late 18th century growth in local small-scale industries changed the face of the town as new wealth was used to modernise and re-model houses, shops, and inns throughout the town. The formerly direct line of Thames Street was altered to its present kinked route, possibly at the behest of Judge William Blackstone (1723-1780) who wanted to increase the already sizeable river setting to his house (Castle Priory). Otherwise, the town’s plan form was unchanged.

Despite the arrival of a railway with a station terminus to the west of the town in 1866, Wallingford did not see much expansion in the 19th century and the only significant addition to the street pattern was the length of New Road between Wood Street and Thames Street. The railway and some industrial expansion within the Saxon ramparts (such as brewery and iron foundry in Goldsmiths Lane) initiated the development of a Victorian suburb which hugged the western boundary of the Saxon defences, but remained clearly outside of, and separate, from the old town.

Significant expansion in the 20th century in the form of ribbon suburban housing development focused again on the west of the town, engulfing the small Victorian suburbs in the vicinity of Croft Road. 20th century developments within the defended town have taken place mainly in the town’s south west quarter, with some infill and backland development in the south eastern quarter.

The town defences have formed a ‘natural’ boundary between town and suburbia and preserved the essential layout of the Saxon street plan of Wallingford with its significant layer of 17th century improvements. The late medieval shrinking of the town has also resulted in the remarkable survival of the Saxon defenses and castle earthworks and the open areas of the Bullcroft and Kinecroft. More recently, the removal of the railway link has probably saved the town from the kind of engulfing development associated with ‘commuter towns’ and enabled Wallingford to retain its unique character.
3.3 Archaeological significance

The town of Wallingford is justly renowned for its surviving late Saxon burh and medieval rampart-ditch defenses, and for the complex and extensive earthworks of a Norman castle imposed into the north east quarter of the urban space. The main known archaeological sites are the burh defences, Bullcroft, Kinecroft and the site of the castle. These are designated as Scheduled Monuments but there are in addition many sites of known archaeological significance which are not scheduled.

Wallingford is highlighted thus in the 1975 *Historic Towns in Oxfordshire* survey:

“The importance of Wallingford’s archaeology... is only heightened by comparison with the other towns, for (apart from Oxford) it is the only late Saxon walled town in the region.... Late Saxon and early medieval layers are unlikely to be stratified deep beneath or destroyed by later archaeological deposits as they frequently are in Oxford... Some [unpublished] archaeological work has already taken place on the castle and the defences, but many components of the early town, like the domestic and industrial buildings, the churches, the street plan and the waterfront remain unstudied. Because there is still so much to be learnt about this period, large scale work on any of these aspects is likely to produce results of national importance”.

Given this sensitivity, it is considered appropriate to designate the entire area covered by the Wallingford Conservation Area as having archaeological potential. This reflects the complexity and multi layered nature of the character of the settlement seen above ground today.

Maps showing the scheduled monuments and the area of archaeological potential are included in the Appendix.
4. GENERAL CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

4.1 Layout and plan form

Wallingford still predominantly retains the appearance of a prosperous 18th century market town. This stems in part from the continued use of the characteristic mellowed red bricks with vitrified headers in various combinations through into the 19th century, and the absence of many notable Victorian buildings apart from the boldly assertive industrial structures in the vicinity of Goldsmiths Lane.

The South Oxfordshire District Council’s Design Guide provides a wider context for the town. It characterises Wallingford as an example of an ‘urban settlement with a dense structure’ of which the key characteristics are:

- Grid of streets
- High density core with central landmark
- Minimal or no setback of buildings from street
- Narrow building frontage (5-10m) and deep plots
- Plot coverage average of 50% in central area
- Consistency of materials and design in central area
- Gradual reduction in building densities towards edge of settlement

Its early history and subsequent revivals have produced a rich and diverse pattern of development and a very strong sense of place and individual identity. The overlaying periods of historic wealth and poverty are inextricably linked to the strategic and commercial importance of the town, its relationship with the river, and the patronage of both royal and church institutions. Together, these have produced the extremely diverse and high quality townscape which can be experienced today.

The key to the understanding and legibility of Wallingford is the urban hierarchy, which flows through the town on both a north-south and east-west axis. In townscape terms, this is broadly defined by the central Market Place, reinvented and remodelled in the 17th century. The roads and lanes radiate from this space out to what is a more softened and open landscape, apart from the southern entrance to the town, where the defences have historically been breached and the historic town boundary blurred.

Within this hierarchy the scale of built form significantly contributes to the legibility and perception of the various sub-areas. In height terms the range is from the three or even four storeys in the Market Place and its environs, to the much lower one or one and a half storeys such as can be seen in Wood Street (east) and Kinecroft terrace (west).

The north-south axis is less well defined in scale terms but compares the predominantly three storey (although Calleva House is one four storey property for example) of the High Street to the one and a half to two storey cottages in St Leonard’s Lane. There are exceptions, for example Nos. 46-50 St Mary’s Street (a range of three storey Victorian shops in a large block spanning the width of the former market place) on the north-south axis, and No.12 Wood Street (a large three storey town house set on this service lane to St Mary’s Street) on the east-west axis.
Building lines in the town are almost consistent within each sub-areas. For example, the southern approach is characterised by buildings set back from the street with front gardens, some of them generously sized. This contrasts with the almost continuous back of pavement development of the central core of the Conservation Area, as can be seen in the Market Place and in the High Street/ Castle Street (southern end). The breaks in this line are the exceptions rather than the rule and in townscape terms are largely lost (except, for example, in the case of No. 90 High Street - where a mature tree signals this set back and is a welcome punctuation in the townscape).

Maintaining the building line is an important part of the character of the central core of Wallingford and creates robust and cohesive historic townscape accentuating the varied building character and modulation of the facades to produce such an authentic and aesthetically pleasing mix of styles and finishes.

An important part of the medieval townscape is the survival of small gaps, alleys and lanes. These link the principle routes and provide access to the burgage plots which define the consistent plot widths particularly to the High Street and present in St Mary’s Street. These alleys make an important contribution to the character and understanding of the urban morphology of Wallingford.

4.2 Former and prevailing activities and uses

The town’s economy, which collapsed in the 14th century, began to revive in the 17th century as the town was able to exploit its location on important road and river routes, not for defensive purposes (as in the past) but to re-establish Wallingford as a centre for trading, particularly with the rapidly expanding city of London. Wallingford’s markets became busy and the town remained an important crossing point to the Thames with the advantage of large crofts (Kinecroft and Bullcroft) for the overnight grazing of cattle before they were sent to market the next day.

Industrial activity developed in the 18th century with milling, brewing, malting, leather production and working, and some manufacturing. Goods went to and from London and other cities using an improving network of turnpike roads, rivers and canals.

The Wilder Foundry was first established in St Mary’s Street in 1830 and later expanded into a new purpose-built brick factory in Goldsmith’s Lane. It was a particularly prolific exporter of goods and specialized in agricultural equipment. The firm used Lower Wharf for the loading and unloading of its products and raw materials. In this period the Town Council sold considerable holdings of property and land to concentrate on maximising the potential for the markets of the town. The town’s prestigious Corn Exchange was built in 1856, and a railway station was opened to the west of the town centre in 1866 but was finally closed to passengers in 1959. The cattle market (now the site of Cattlemarket Car Park) was in use throughout the 19th century.

By the late 20th century industrial and agricultural activity had disappeared from the town centre. The town has grown mainly to the west, and the Hithercroft Estate is the town’s major employment area leaving the Conservation Area (which encompasses the town centre) as a mainly residential and retail/commercial area. As well as a small number of typical chain stores, the town centre contains a large number of independent specialist shops and restaurants and hosts a weekly market. Leisure activity associated with the river has increased and Kinecroft, Bullcroft and Castle Gardens are popular recreational
areas. In the town as a whole, there is a good range of facilities in terms of schools, health and recreation. The town encourages people to visit through markets, a lively theatre, local history museum, walks, festivals and rowing events. Today, the town continues as an active and diverse regional settlement of some importance but is constantly challenged by the combined pressures of modern retail trends and traffic management.

4.3 Open spaces, trees and landscape

‘Positive’ enclosure is a characteristic of the entire developed areas of the Conservation Area, but there are some exceptions, for example in parts of Goldsmith’s Lane and in the back of St Martin’s Lane, where this strong sense of enclosure breaks down with a corresponding diminution in spatial quality.

The Market Place is the most important open space in the Conservation Area and is surrounded by mainly listed buildings of very high quality. The larger scale of these buildings contrasts with the more modestly sized buildings on the outskirts of the Conservation Area, such as can be seen in St Leonard’s Lane. Similarly, the enclosure of the High Street and the upper part of St Mary’s Street are relieved by the comparative openness of Wallingford Bridge and Market Place respectively. It is that juxtaposition of open and enclosed space experienced throughout the Wallingford Conservation Area which makes for such interesting, dynamic and significant townscape.

Gateways are very important to the townscape quality of Wallingford, and are largely defined by breaks in the historic town defences. These are best experienced travelling north into the town from Reading Road and east from Station Road. However, the most visually rewarding entry into the town is via Wallingford Bridge, particularly at night when the St Peter’s Church is floodlit. This provides the traveller with the best sense of ‘arrival’ to Wallingford.

4.4 Views and vistas

Particular views and vistas are discussed in the sub-areas and indicated on the Townscape Appraisal Map. The essential character of these views is defined by the Saxon street plan and the late medieval and later building survivals which provide diversity and depth. There are no planned vistas other than elements of the landscaped grounds of the castle. Views are glimpses or defined by the particular scale of buildings (primarily the churches - St Peter’s, St Mary’s and St Leonard’s) or the topographical situation. Whilst it is not easily possible to look down into Wallingford, its roofscape is a defining and important part of elevated views, principally from the castle and the town defences, which could be easily damaged by inappropriate development.
5. BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

5.1 Introduction

Wallingford is noted for its high quality historic buildings, many of which are located along the eastern end of the High Street and down the north to south spine of the town (St Mary’s Street and Market Place) to St John’s Green. In addition, almost all of the other street buildings along this length make a positive contribution to an area of exceptionally high quality historic streetscape. These ‘positive’ unlisted buildings are marked, together with listed and locally listed buildings, on the Townscape Appraisal Map.

The survival of the medieval street pattern and the remains of the burgage plots have ensured that buildings have kept to a modest plot size, although facing the river are a number of much larger detached houses set in spacious gardens. Whilst nearly all of these buildings are only two storeys high, there are examples of three or occasionally four storeys.

The historic buildings date to between the 16th and the 19th centuries and use a variety of materials, of which brick, clunch and timber framing are the most common. The decline in the town’s economy means that the 17th century is not well represented (by number) but the gradual increase in prosperity in the 18th century is shown by the large number of new 18th century buildings and a similarly large number of 16th or 17th houses which were re-fronted with the more fashionable brick at a same time.

As is to be expected in a small market town, the uses found in these historic buildings vary immensely, so the buildings are very varied in their form, materials, and detailing, although apart from the churches, they all retain a relatively modest scale and height. There is a range of building types including religious (several churches, a chapel and a Quaker Meeting House), civic (the Town Hall, Corn Exchange, and almshouses), residential (detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings of differing social status), industrial (former breweries, a malthouse, an iron foundry, and a mill), and commercial (banks and purpose-built shops). Finally, Wallingford Bridge and the remains of Wallingford Castle make a unique contribution to the town’s rich architectural heritage.

5.2 Listed buildings

There are nearly 150 list entries in the statutory listed for the town of Wallingford, and the Townscape Appraisal Map confirms that these make a major contribution to the built form of the historic town. Of these, four are listed at grade I and eleven are listed at grade II*, 10% of the total. Nationally, grade I and grade II* listed buildings make up about 8% of the approximate total of 374,000 listed building entries and are considered to be “of exceptional interest” and “of more than special interest” respectively.

The four grade I listed buildings are as follows:

- Wallingford Castle (the remains of Queen’s Tower, the remains of St Nicholas’ College and a fragment of wall which may have formed part of the inner bailey)
- Wallingford Town Hall (the Town Hall in the Market Place was built in 1670 and has stone Doric columns on the ground floor creating an open sheltered area
which was once used for market stalls – not only is it an exceptional historic building but it is important for its dominating location overlooking the Market Place, with a particularly fine Venetian window at first floor level).

The grade II* listed buildings are:

- Wallingford Bridge (800ft long with 19 arches)
- The Quaker Meeting House (c.1734) off Castle Street, an excellent and well-preserved example of its type
- Nos. 17, 18 and 19 High Street (these retain some 14th century fabric); the George Hotel which has 16th century origins with distinctive gables and a jetty facing the street; St Michael’s House (Nos. 94, 95 and 96 High Street) dating to the late 17th century house; and Calleva House (a fine early 18th century dwelling in a faintly Baroque style)
- Castle Priory College, Thames Street
- Church of St Peter, Thames Street
- No. 6 St Mary’s Street
- Church of St Leonard, St Leonard’s Lane
- Church of St Mary, Market Place
- St Lucian’s and attached maltings, Lower Wharf

Amongst the grade II listed buildings, there are a number of more unusual entries such as:

- The red K6 telephone kiosk outside the Town Hall, designed in 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott – it stands close to the 1930s Old Post Office which has a rare monogram of Edward VIII who abdicated in 1936
- The stone pillar in Bull Croft Park dating from the 18th century, which was re-located from the Market Place
- The drinking fountain in the Market Place, dating to c.1885
- The War Memorial in the Market Place, dating to c.1921
- The milestone outside Angier’s Almshouses, dating to the 18th century and inscribed OXFORD 13, READING 15
- The stone gate piers to Castle Priory College, Thames Street
- A wall in Bear Lane which probably dates to the 17th century

5.3 Locally listed buildings

A number of significant unlisted historic buildings in the Conservation Area are included in the unadopted ‘Local List’ for Wallingford. These are buildings which, though they may not be of national importance, nevertheless are locally significant. Many of these were on the old statutory list but were not included when the list was reviewed in the 1980s. The production of a new local List for Wallingford is an issue which is considered further in the Management Plan. They are marked in orange on the Townscape Appraisal Map.

5.4 Unlisted positive buildings

In addition to the listed and locally listed buildings, a large number of unlisted buildings have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal Map as being positive buildings of
townscape merit. Buildings identified as being positive will vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the Wallingford Conservation Area. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impractical, they are excluded. In Wallingford, most of these buildings date to the 18th or 19th century, and some of these may be eligible for statutory listing, or local listing, in the future. They are marked in blue on the Townscape Appraisal Map.

Examples include:

- Buildings of the former Wells Brewery in Goldsmith’s Lane
- Post-railway late 19th century brick terraces outside the historic ramparts
- Former Wilders iron foundry building near Goldsmith’s Terrace
- Edwardian houses in Castle Street

The identification of these ‘positive’ buildings follows advice provided within English Heritage’s guidance, which advises that a general presumption exists in favour of retaining those buildings which make a ‘positive’ contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Proposals to demolish such buildings will therefore be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings. Whilst this therefore implies that all buildings marked blue on the Townscape Appraisal Map will be retained in the future unless a special case can be made for demolition, justification will also be required for the demolition or radical alteration of any building identified as contributing to the townscape character of the Conservation Area.

5.5 Article 4 Directions

There are several areas in Wallingford which are subject to an ‘Article 4 Direction’ of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1963. The effect of the Direction is that certain minor works which are usually permitted development require planning permission. The Direction was imposed in 1971 on six areas in order that the pleasing harmony and contribution to the landscape of these areas was not impaired. The areas include, for example, Kinecroft Terrace, St Leonard’s Lane and unlisted buildings in Castle Street. The possibility of withdrawing these existing Directions, which are now of date, and replacing them with a town-wide Direction which would apply to all unlisted family dwellings, is discussed in the Management Plan.

5.6 Building materials and details

Wallingford Conservation Area contains a wide range of building materials whose popularity altered as fashions changed. Whilst early 16th and 17th buildings are vernacular (i.e. built by local craftsmen with locally available materials), later buildings from the mid-18th century onwards began to make use of building materials from further afield, usually with an increasing degree of architectural pretension. For example, early buildings are built with local timber or brick under thatch or clay tiles but as transport improved by canal and railway, slate and stone from distant quarries became more used.

Of note are several timber-framed buildings, such as the George Hotel, which have been refronted with brick or plaster. Many of these timber buildings had jetties and gables.
facing the street to denote high status, the even today these dominant features are important in views in High Street and St Mary's Street.

Brick does not become regularly used until the late 17th century when improved methods of production made them, and clay roof tiles, a more affordable material. The local red and grey-blue brick has often been used to create well-designed and detailed frontages such as Calleva House, as well as many lesser dwellings throughout the town.

Render or its finer quality equivalent, stucco, became common at the start of the 19th century, applied over both brick and timber-framed structures, and often a highly prestigious frontage is accompanied by somewhat lower quality side or rear elevations. There are also variations on the type of render – Nos. 17, 18 and 19 High Street all have a roughcast rendered finish. St Lucian's in Lower Wharf is a mid 16th century house with roughcast walls and pargetting, a form of decorative external plasterwork.

There was no convenient supply of good quality local building stone and stone buildings are therefore not common in the area apart from religious buildings or buildings of high status, where the stone was brought in by cart or river. However, chalk blocks, or clunch, can be seen throughout the Conservation Area but as it is not very weather-resistant, it is only used for the less prestigious buildings or for boundaries. It is also often combined with brick or flints which provide the necessary robustness for details such as corners and parapets. No. 90 High Street is an early 19th century which is built with Bath stone, but to save money other buildings were simply faced in render which was then lined out to replicate stone blockwork.

Flints are found in the chalk which underlies the adjoining Chiltern Hills, and provides a source of hard-wearing facing material – Flint House, used as Wallingford Museum, is a good example. High quality 'knapped' (split and faced) flint with stone dressings can be found at St Mary's Church. Flint is often used in combination with brick in boundary walls throughout Wallingford.

Until improved transport made Welsh slate readily available, roofs were normally covered in plain handmade clay tiles, usually a rich reddy-brown colour. There are no examples of thatch in the Conservation Area although some of the humbler town cottages may once have been roofed in this material. The threat of fire may have made the use of thatch unpopular in such a densely built-up area.
6. CHARACTER AREAS

The townscape of Wallingford Conservation Area varies and for the purpose of this document the area has been divided into ten separate Character Areas according to their period of development, their location, their historic form and layout, and the current and past uses within them.

These Character Areas are shown on the Character Area Map and are:

- Character Area 1: Victorian suburbs
- Character Area 2: Kinecroft and environs: Goldsmith’s Lane and Church Lane
- Character Area 3: Bullcroft and environs
- Character Area 4: High Street and Castle Street
- Character Area 5: Market Place and environs: St Martin’s Street, St Mary’s Street, Leonard Square, and Wood Street
- Character Area 6: St Leonard’s Church: St Leonard’s Lane, Thames Street (lower part), Lower Wharf and St Lucian’s Cottage
- Character Area 7: Reading Road and St John’s Green
- Character Area 8: Wallingford Castle
- Character Area 9: Riverside: Thames Street, St Peter’s Church and Castle Priory College
- Character Area 10: The northern approaches: Wallingford Bridge, the cemetery and Castle Street (part)

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of each Character Area, including an assessment of negative features which have been used to inform the list of current issues in Chapter 7. These in turn provide the basis for the proposals which are included in the Management Plan.

Whilst it is hoped that the descriptions included in the Character Areas are comprehensive, the omission of a particular feature or detail does not mean that it has no significance.
6.1 Character Area 1: Victorian suburbs

Summary

This sub-area lies wholly outside the town’s Saxon ramparts and is almost entirely residential in use. The special interest of the area is found in the short rows of late 19th century terraced houses that stand alongside and to the west of Croft Road. These terraces are representative of speculative housing built after the arrival of the railway in 1866 and the subsequent gradual development of land between the defended town and the railway station. The houses are notable for their variety in design and decorative brickwork.

Character of the area - Character Area 1: Victorian suburbs

The historic character of this area is that of a Victorian suburb albeit diluted with unremarkable late 20th century houses and modern accretions such as overhead wires, satellite dishes, and parked cars. The typical building form is comprised of a series of distinct groups of formal and informal terraced housing.

The Cross Keys Public House is not representative of the area as it is a vernacular 18th century building (grade II) which predates the railway station. The grade II listed former Wallingford School (c1877), Station Road, is also unrepresentative because of its size and the plentiful use of bright red brick in the Arts and Crafts style. Indeed, it is unlike anything else in the whole Conservation Area. It is set back from the road with an imposing presence on the street scene but is somewhat at odds with the scale of the rest of the street and suburbs beyond. The school is now converted into residential units.

The most prominent element in this Character Area are the rows of houses in Croft Villas, Egerton Road, South View, Brookside (St John’s Road) and Nos. 17-31 (odd) and Nos. 30-46 (even) Croft Road. Croft Villas (north side) are the earliest post-railway buildings. Though much altered they retain some of their robust Victorian details such as bargeboards, brick chimney stacks with multiple clay pots, and Welsh slate roofs, which were brought in by the new railway.

Egerton Road (south side), nos. 30-46 (even) Croft Road and South View are the most intact and well-detailed terraces in the area with only limited loss of original architectural details. They are primarily built with red brick with white/grey brick window and door dressings. Ground floor canted bay windows are a feature. In South View (and in Nos. 30-46 Croft Road) these are jointly covered with a continuous roof. In Egerton Road each bay has an individual roof. There is some particularly fine brick detailing and decorative brickwork. Chequered terracotta tile paths survive on South View and are very attractive original features.

Dwellings on the north side of Egerton Row are rendered and although they have the appearance of twin-gabled pairs of houses, they are in fact linked into a single terrace.

Brookside (St John’s Road) is more piecemeal and disjointed than the side streets off Croft Road. Here, small terraces and semi-detached pairs in contrasting brickwork and with plain frontages are interspersed with some sensitive infill.
Terraces are mostly two storeys. The exception is Nos. 17-23 Croft Road which have tall dormers and are, in practice, three storeys. Some terraced houses have inserted rooflights which are prominent on front slopes.

**Materials and details - Character Area 1: Victorian suburbs**

- Red brick and some buff brick alternating to form window and door surrounds, quoins and string courses
- Decorative brickwork
- Dog-tooth brickwork string courses and arch window and door details
- Uniform brick chimneys with buff brick bands and large clay pots forming pleasing rhythms and prominent in street scenes
- Original windows are timber framed single glazed vertical sliding sashes with glazing bars (varying configurations))
- Shared timber porches supported on carved timber brackets
- Canted first floor bays
- Predominantly Welsh slate roofs but some clay tiles on older buildings
- Distinctive timber decorative bargeboards to Croft Villas

**Open spaces, trees and greenery - Character Area 1: Victorian suburbs**

There are few trees in this small suburban area. A small clump of trees opposite The Cross Keys Public House at the junction of Croft Road and High Street stand beside a gap in the Saxon ramparts. Some mature trees are located in private gardens, most notably two tall roadside trees in the gardens of Croft Villas which soften the otherwise harsh built form of Croft Road. Trees and greenery elevated on the Saxon ramparts give a green character to the area especially when glimpsed through, and above, the built development on the east side of Croft Road and on the north side of St John’s Road.

The most significant open spaces in this sub-area are the front gardens of South View and the ‘forecourt’ of the former school in Station Road. The former is a pleasant informal grassed lawn with low shrubs immediately in front of the brick terrace (with no boundary between front door and garden), the latter is a more formally managed area of lawn behind a red brick wall. Both are private.

**Contribution made by unlisted buildings - Character Area 1: Victorian suburbs**

The character of this area is supplied by unpretentious Victorian suburban terraced houses of varying quality and condition. The area has a cohesive architectural style due to the relatively short period of development between around 1870 and 1910.

The terraces add to Wallingford’s wide range of terraced houses (see, for example, terraces in High Street, Church Lane, St Leonard’s Lane, Beansheaf Terrace and St Rumbold’s Road) and are good examples of small scale post-railway building. Examples of higher status post-railway houses can be found in Reading Road and the north end of Castle Street

The former fire station in Station Road, dated 1924, is a well-considered functional building and is a good example of its type. Its decorated Dutch gable and strong quoin detailing contributes to an attractive façade which addresses the street well.
Important views - Character Area 1: Victorian suburbs

There are no significantly special views within this sub area. A local view from Station Road eastwards picks up the strong line formed by the roadside trees in Kinecroft and the western gateway through the Saxon ramparts. The glimpse of the front gardens of South View and the richly detailed terrace frontage is pleasing.

Boundary treatments - Character Area 1: Victorian suburbs

With the exception of low red brick walls with rounded brick coping in South View, original 19th century front boundaries to the Victorian terraces have all but disappeared. They have been demolished or replaced by modern brick or concrete block walls. Some front gardens are ‘green’ others have become parking spaces or covered with chippings for ease of maintenance.

Negatives features - Character Area 1: Victorian suburbs

- Replacement of timber windows with uPVC
- Cumulative loss of architectural features and detail
- Insensitive alterations and/or extensions
- Artificial stone cladding
- Unsympathetic repair/replacement of original front boundaries

6.2 Character Area 2: Kinecroft and environs: Goldsmith’s Lane and Church Lane

Summary

This sub-area covers the south western quarter of the Conservation Area. With the exception of Church Lane, until the late 18th century much of the land between Kinecroft and St Martin’s Street was given over to market yards, large private gardens and a nursery. In the 20th century, derelict sites have been re-developed and some remaining open spaces have been developed for housing or as large areas of car parking.

Historically, this area is important for the survival of industrial buildings relating to the town’s small-scale industries that developed towards the end of the 18th century and into the beginning of the 19th century. This included the iron foundry, former malthouses (now demolished) and former breweries (some buildings survive and have been converted for new uses).

The area’s main features are:

- Kinecroft, an area now in recreational use but historically an open green area used for grazing animals
- Historic development at the western end of High Street
- A built-up area between Kinecroft and the town centre which contains small 17th, 18th and 19th century vernacular cottages together with (comparatively) large industrial buildings and a high proportion of 20th century development.
Architecturally this Character Area is far more diverse than others. Its relatively recent industrial links has left a piecemeal pattern of development. This, combined with building status ranging from workers’ cottages to large private houses, makes for an interesting and contrasting townscape.

**Character of the area - Character Area 2: Kinecroft and environs**

Present uses are mostly residential. However, there is a community centre located in a converted Victorian school, a public house, and businesses on High Street. Flint House on the High Street houses Wallingford’s Museum.

The character of the area is varied, and it is characterised by an eclectic mix of formal and informal architecture. The survival of robust, utilitarian and functional buildings relating to the industrial uses of this area (primarily brewing and iron manufacture) contrasts with the more vernacular terraced housing from the mid 18th century, as can be seen in Beansheaf Terrace and Church Lane.

Kinecroft is a Scheduled Monument and has great archaeological potential. Recent (2008) archaeological investigations in Kinecroft revealed traces of a 12th century timber house or row of houses aligned along an east-west road extending from Church Lane. However, there were no earlier or later phases of occupation, suggesting that Kinecroft started as open space (perhaps for cattle belonging to the Priory), was briefly occupied then returned to open space.

Kinecroft’s expanse of grass is enclosed to west and south by the well-tree’d Saxon defensive banks, and to north and east by High Street and the rear boundaries of properties on Goldsmith’s Lane. The grass is crossed by tarmac footpaths, is regularly mown and has the feel of an urban park. It is well used by dog walkers and is a popular pedestrian route into the town centre. It has a peaceful atmosphere in which birdsong prevails over the sound of traffic.

High Street is a busy vehicular route into the town with an urban character despite the softening effect of the trees in Kinecroft. Roadside development is mainly on the north side of the road, characterised by large buildings in wide plots. Three grade II listed buildings, each with a distinctive historic frontage, dominate the streetscene. The first is No. 51 High Street, which has an early 19th century front on an earlier building – its rendered façade is unadorned except for a square portico with Doric columns. The building’s bright colour is unusual and catches the eye, contrasting well with the second distinctive building, Wallingford Museum, which has a flint façade. The third is No. 61 High Street, which has a symmetrical five-bay façade with a central front door under a typical Georgian fanlight.

Development, old and new, alongside Goldsmith’s Lane and Church Lane forms the third sub-area. Both lanes are probably part of the town’s original 10th century street pattern. Historic properties in Church Lane date from the late 17th and 18th centuries, and are small in scale and open directly onto the pavement. Nos. 3 to 10 The Mint are grade II listed, and lie within a row of houses that formerly formed part of the Wells Brewery. On the other side of Goldsmith’s Lane stand the main brewery buildings.
**Materials and details - Character Area 2: Kinecroft and environs**

Flint House’s flint walls with stone quoins and mullion windows are atypical as brick characterises this area with a prevalence of 19th century red bricks, which lack the subtlety and warmth of their 18th century counterparts.

Beansheaf Terrace and buildings along Church Lane display the use of Flemish bond brickwork under clay tile roofs. The exposed timber framing of Kinecroft Terrace and their sweeping old clay tile roofs make this a distinctive and unusual urban terrace.

The former Wells Brewery, Goldsmith’s Lane is notable for its use of red brick with random grey brick headers in English bond, and very distinctive half hipped clay tile cross gables fronting the street.

There is a noticeable use of traditional casement windows rather than the sashes commonly found in the 18th century facades of the High Street and Market Place. Casements are in various configurations – two light openings to Kinecroft Terrace and nearby cottages, and distinctive multi-paned casements in Beansheaf Terrace.

On Kinecroft Terrace in particular, gabled pitched dormers sit on the wall plate, a common local feature to South Oxfordshire.

**Open spaces, trees and greenery - Character Area 2: Kinecroft and environs**

Kinecroft is obviously the most significant open space, described above. Other large open areas are two ordinary car parks to the north and to the south of Church Lane. These are necessary and functional but contribute nothing to the special interest of the Conservation Area.

Trees perform an important role in this Character Area by defining the line of the ramparts and giving a strong sense of enclosure to two sides of Kinecroft. Their influence is increased by their elevated location on top of the banks. There are no trees in the central area of Kinecroft but those on the north side, fronting High Street, provide an attractive leafy approach to the town centre and help to absorb traffic noise. On the east side, trees make a positive contribution to the townscape through screening the unattractive backs of former brewery buildings.

**Contribution made by unlisted buildings - Character Area 2: Kinecroft and environs**

Despite the presence of late 20th century developments such as Crispin Place, St Ruald’s Close and St Alban’s Court, the area’s unlisted buildings complement the area’s listed buildings to create a notable historic character especially at the junction of Goldsmith’s Lane and Church Lane.

Kinecroft Terrace, although modest in scale, is an important visually prominent terrace. Article 4 Directions have ensured the survival of original windows, doors and roof materials. The dormers and chimneys are particularly prominent and provide rhythm and skyline interest.
The brewery complex makes a positive contribution to the character of this part of the Conservation Area, not only as a valuable historic survival but as a local landmark. The brewery manager’s house (No. 46 High Street) complements the High Street’s key listed buildings on the opposite side of the road. By Crispin Terrace, the pyramidal roof of the hop kiln has an obvious industrial scale when compared to the surrounding modest domestic buildings.

In contrast to the plain brickwork and design of the former brewery buildings in Goldsmiths Lane, the former Wilders Foundry building displays decorative brickwork and a pleasing rhythm of arched window openings which enliven the streetscene.

Important views - Character Area 2: Kinecroft and environs

There are good open vistas to be had across Kinecroft towards No.50 High Street which is painted a distinctive red/ pink colour. An open vista down Kinecroft Terrace and along Church Lane guides the eye towards the solid 17th century stone tower of St Mary’s. The roof of the hop kiln to the former brewery site is a local landmark and adds interest to the roofscape.

From the path running along the top of the defences to the south of Kinecroft a clear sense of the wider setting of the Conservation Area can be gained. Large mature trees of diverse species form the skyline and backdrop to the town in a sweeping arc from the west of the defences round to the tower of St Mary’s.

Negative features - Character Area 2: Kinecroft and environs

- Replacement of timber windows with uPVC
- Cumulative loss of architectural features and detail
- Insensitive alterations and/or extensions

6.3 Character Area 3: Bullcroft and environs

Summary

This Character Area occupies most of the north west quarter of the Saxon burh and includes all of Bull Croft Park with its park-related buildings together with a few unremarkable backland developments off Castle Street. It is the open space and the underlying archaeology, not historic buildings, that forms the special interest of this Character Area.

The area is bounded to the west and north by the earth banks of the Saxon defences. To the east lies Castle Street and to the south is High Street where lies the formal gated entrance to the park.

The Bullcroft is the site of the former Priory of Holy Trinity before it was demolished at the start of the 16th century. The Priory stood about half way between Castle Street and the town’s West Gate and its grounds occupied nearly the whole of the Saxon burh. For this reason, the whole of the park is designated a Scheduled Monument. The exact location of the Priory is still not known but further archaeological investigation would be helpful as the area clearly has tremendous archaeological potential.
Building materials from the former Priory are said to have been used in the construction and repair of various structures in the town, notably Wallingford Bridge, Flint House and Nos. 17, 18 & 19 High Street.

Development on No. 60 High Street in 1983 revealed inhumations in chalk cists, thought to be the Priory cemetery. An archaeological excavation in 2010 as part of the Wallingford Burh to Borough research project revealed patterns of ridge and furrow at the northern end of Bullcroft indicating that the whole of the north of the Bullcroft had been extensively ploughed in late medieval times. It is likely that for much of the medieval period it was farmed as part of land belonging to the Priory.

**Character of the area - Character Area 3: Bullcroft and environs**

Bull Croft Park is a managed recreational area part of which is occupied by tennis courts, children’s play areas, a bowling green and timber-clad buildings that house a pavilion and community centre. In outward appearance the park is no different to other well-used urban parks.

**Buildings - Character Area 3: Bullcroft and environs**

A curiosity in the south west corner of the park is a late 18th century stone pillar which is listed grade II. It was moved here from the Market Place in 1921, where it reputedly marked the spot where bulls were baited.

The only other historic buildings of note are the park’s lodge house, gates and gate piers which face the High Street. The lodge is an early 20th century building of one and a half storeys with a steeply pitched tiled roof with a gable end which faces the High Street. It has a red brick lower storey with a rendered upper storey, and a first floor oriel adds to its charm.

Three brick gate piers topped with stone ball finials mark a pedestrian and vehicular entrance beside the lodge and a red telephone kiosk stands nearby. An inscribed stone on one of the gate piers records the fact that the Bullcroft was presented to the Borough of Wallingford in 1914.

**Open spaces, trees and greenery - Character Area 3: Bullcroft and environs**

The Bullcroft is a large green space which is enjoyed by the town’s residents and visitors. Its amenity and diverse recreational uses are a great asset to Wallingford and an important part of both the history and setting of the town.

There are no trees in the central area of the park thereby enabling formal games and other outdoor pursuits, but the amenity space seems rather bleak when empty. The boundaries to the park are marked by mature trees and greenery, which to the west and north stand on the Saxon ramparts. A large group of trees stands to the west of the park’s entrance helping to disguise the nondescript timber-clad buildings which, unfortunately, obscure the expansive views to visitors entering the park.
Important views - Character Area 3: Bullcroft and environs

There are important views towards the spire of St Peter’s Church especially from the path skirting the edge of the Bullcroft. However, other than this, a sense of openness is experienced. The town and outlying suburban development is largely hidden from view by mature trees.

Trees in the Castle grounds form an important part of the skyline in extended views across the town from parts of the Bullcroft. Trees in the Kinecroft perform a similar role in views south.

Negative features - Character Area 3: Bullcroft and environs

- The timber-clad buildings beside the entrance appear unwelcoming and have a temporary look
- The erosion of the historic earth banks caused mainly by children sliding down into the ditch below

6.4 Character Area 4: High Street and Castle Street

Summary

This area includes historic development on either side of High Street between Wallingford Bridge and the entrance to Bullcroft Park. Also included is a short length of the southern end of Castle Street and its junction with High Street.

High Street and Castle Street are part of the Saxon layout of the town and contain some of the town’s oldest and finest historic buildings. High Street is a direct continuation of the river crossing and two major coaching inns were located here, The Lamb and The George. Despite its prime location on the main east-west thoroughfare through the town, High Street does not appear to have been a commercial centre and many of the houses were built as, and remain, private residences. Some have been converted to flats.

The eastern end of the street retains a residential feel despite the gathering of a number of business and retail uses close to the Castle Street junction. Beyond the junction (westwards) the street’s historic character and appearance fades away quickly partly due to the large supermarket on the south side of the street but also because there are far fewer historic buildings. The relative absence of historic development on the north side of this part of High Street may relate to the fact that the former Priory (demolished in the early 16th century) occupied this part of the town.

Present uses of this area include a mix of banks, shops, offices, public houses and residential – private dwellings, houses converted to apartments, and flats above shops and houses.

Character of the area - Character Area 4: High Street and Castle Street

General: Many of the buildings on High Street date from the 17th century and have a timber-frame construction but some have been re-fronted in brick. The resulting variation between buildings, some with parapets, some with pitched roofs, and some
with gables onto the road make for an overall complex and interesting historic townscape.

Roofs do not figure prominently on the upper section of the High Street or Castle Street because of the narrowness of the High Street and the scale of the buildings fronting the street. The use of parapets on many of the Georgian fronted buildings also reduces the impact of the roofs. This does, however, change on approaching the river with pitched roofs and a low two-storey scale becoming more prevalent.

The George Hotel (grade II*) is one of the area’s oldest structures. This timber-framed building dates from the early 16th century but, unlike the High Street façade of the Lamb Arcade, it was not re-fronted with brick in the 18th century. The George Inn is a good example of a courtyard plan coaching inn, and creates a distinctive feature in the streetscene with its prominent jettied gables.

Wallingford was still in decline in the 17th century and the next main representative buildings are from the 18th century and later. No. 12 and no. 94, however, appear to date from the 17th century, the former is a modest vernacular timber-framed dwelling from the early part of the century, the latter is a substantial late 17th century house with some architectural pretension.

No.6 Calleva House (grade II*) is an early 18th century town house of a double depth plan. Its Baroque-style façade is on a grand Georgian scale not repeated in Wallingford. It was built for William Hucks, who was the Member of Parliament for the Borough between 1714 and 1740 and was also the brewer to George I’s household. His house makes a very bold and imposing architectural statement in the High Street, and demonstrates a very high level of workmanship particularly in the carved brickwork to the cornices and pilasters.

No. 90 is an early 19th century house notable for its Greek Revival style and use of ashlar Bath stone. This is an unusual departure from the brick facades commonly found in Wallingford.

At road junctions it is of note how buildings carefully ‘turn’ corners by the provision of architectural embellishments. Good examples include No. 1 Castle Street, the Lamb Arcade and No.28 High Street, at the junction with St Mary’s Street east side.

Some historic shopfronts survive and are of interest, notably the detailing of No.25 and the shuttered shopfront of No. 86. In pre-1850 buildings shopfronts give the impression of being shoe-horned into buildings which did not possess a commercial front on their inception.

High Street (east): The antiquity of the eastern end of High Street can be seen not only in the historic buildings but also in the apparently random varying width of the street and the slight bend as it rises gently from the river. Tall buildings on either side contribute to a feeling of enclosure broken only by street junctions and the entrance to Castle Park.

With the odd exception of No. 90 High Street (set back behind railings), buildings open directly onto the street. On the south side, Nos. 17-19 are approached by a short flight of stone steps. The street is at its widest outside No. 90 narrowing to a pinchpoint outside The George Hotel with its overhanging jetty. This part of the street is only wide...
enough for one car, necessitating traffic lights. Plot widths vary, and buildings can be two or three storey.

The eastern end of High Street is architecturally one the finest lengths of historic development in the town, and almost every building contributes positively to its special historic appearance. Looking up the street (eastwards) from the Thames Street junction (which permits a view of the spire of St Peter’s Church) the variety and quality of historic building frontages, building materials and period details is exceptional. The view is enhanced by the curve and rise in the street such that one can also see a pleasing roofscape of parapets and gables, warm red clay tiles and brick chimneys neatly stepping up the shallow ascent from the river.

High Street (west): The character and appearance of High Street between Castle Street and Bullcroft is disappointingly less attractive than the eastern length. Although No. 1 Castle Street and Nos. 79, 80, 81 High Street are 18th century (grade II), the majority of buildings in the street are modern and unremarkable. On the north side some new development has bricks that are not uncharacteristic of Wallingford. The road has a uniform width with two lanes of traffic beneath a line of tall regularly spaced streetlights. The presence of a large modern supermarket and car park on the south side further adds to a commonplace modern suburban atmosphere although the 17th century tower of St Mary’s Church is visible to the south east.

Castle Street: Premises around the Castle Street/High Street junction are part of the town’s primary shopping frontage but the street soon becomes residential. The twin-gabled Castle Street frontage of the Lamb Arcade, jettied on two floors, contrasts markedly with the brick facade around the corner in High Street, making this an unusually interesting corner building.

Proceeding northwards, roadside development is primarily Victorian (west side) and modern (east side) before the local Georgian vernacular re-asserts itself at No. 8 and No. 12 Castle Street, both early 18th century buildings (grade II). At this point trees beside All Hallows Cemetery and in private gardens further along the road begin to lend a semi-rural character and the bustle of the town centre has been left behind. After No. 16 there is even a grass verge to the road.

Bear Lane leads eastward from Castle Street, possibly part of the early Saxon street pattern and therefore pre-dating the castle. The lane is now a cul-de-sac leading only to Bear Lane House, a mid 17th century house with an eye-catching glazed lantern with cupola atop. The narrow lane is bounded on one side by a 17th century limestone rubble and flint wall (grade II).

Materials and details - Character Area 4: High Street and Castle Street

This area has some of the best examples of the mellow reds and dark vitrified headers which characterise many of the 18th Georgian fronted houses of Wallingford. There is some variation, for example some buildings are finished in painted lined render which often masks earlier timber framing. The use of local bricks, particularly the heavily vitrified headers, is distinctive and used to great effect on these high status houses.
Nos. 7-11 (consec.) High Street are notable as a terrace of early 19th century houses incorporating the ‘stylistic’ elements of its earlier neighbours with grey brick with red dressings, keystone lintels and the use of sashes.

There is a predominant use of multi-paned timber Georgian sliding sash throughout the High Street and this is perhaps best seen on No.6, with the size and detailing of the windows also reflecting the hierarchy of uses within the building. Some of the frames are flush, and some slightly recessed, adding to the variation between facades.

Open spaces and trees - Character Area 4: High Street and Castle Street

Open space and trees are not significant features in this urban area although there are trees in some large private rear gardens. A large chestnut in the garden of No. 16 Castle Street stands close to the roadside and is prominent in the streetscene.

The front ‘garden’ of no. 90 High Street is a unique space in a street which is otherwise lined with a continuously built-up frontages. A small tree makes a valuable and untypical contribution to this otherwise urban town centre location. Trees beside The Boathouse soften the streetscene at the east end of High Street.

Trees in All Hallows Graveyard and along the east side of upper Castle Street (Character Area 8) bring a rural atmosphere close to the town centre.

Contribution made by unlisted buildings - Character Area 4: High Street and Castle Street

Almost all buildings in this area either individually or in groups make positive contributions to the character of the Conservation Area. Many have been mentioned above.

Important views - Character Area 4: High Street and Castle Street

Views are limited due to the scale of the built form and enclosure formed by topography, trees and street plan. The spire of St Peter’s Church is glimpsed through the opening to Thames Street, and from this junction eastwards it is possible to gain sight of Wallingford Bridge. There is a good long view towards the tower of St Mary’s looking south along Castle Street although this has been somewhat truncated by the recent development on the north side of the Market Place.

Negatives and issues - Character Area 4: High Street and Castle Street

- Traffic fumes from cars waiting at traffic lights in High Street and Castle Street
- Parked cars spoil the ambience of All Hallows Cemetery
- Some buildings in need of routine maintenance and repair, such as the removal of buddleia
- The loss of containment in High Street (west) beside the supermarket car park
- Garish shopfronts and signage
- Sign-posting to the main entrance to Castle Gardens (off Bear Lane) could be improved
- Replacement of timber windows with uPVC
Cumulative loss of architectural features and detail

6.5 Character Area 5: Market Place and environs: St Martin’s Street, St Mary’s Street, Leonard Square, and Wood Street

Summary

This area is the commercial heart of the town containing almost all the primary shopping frontage as well as the historic core of the town centred on the Town Hall and Market Place. The area extends from High Street to Lower Wharf and the southern limit of the Saxon ramparts. It covers the developed part of the south east quarter of the defended town which has always been the most urban part of the Saxon burh.

St Martin’s Street and St Mary’s Street run parallel forming the north-south ‘spine’ of the area along which there are four nodes of activity: High Street cross-roads (Character Area 4), Market Place, St Leonard’s Square and St John’s Green (Character Area 7). Apart from these spaces (and car parks, one of which is located on the site of the former cattlemarket), there are no large open spaces such as Bullcroft, Kinecroft or Castle Gardens.

This area is notable for the survival (in part) of former burgage plots to the east and west of the spine. Burgage plots represent the original property boundaries of the medieval town. They are long narrow strips of land usually enclosed by high brick or stone walls. These are archaeologically significant and should be protected from development which would detract from their historic interest.

This Character Area also includes Wood Street which runs in a north-south alignment parallel to St Mary’s and St Martin’s Street and is also part of the town’s early street pattern. Wood Street lacks the historic character and appearance of the central spine but nevertheless contains historic buildings (including walls) and features that merit inclusion in the Conservation Area.

Character of the area - Character Area 5: Market Place and environs

Market Place: Market Place is the focus of the town. The absence of a backdrop of hills, tall backland development or trees gives prominence to the building frontages. The Town Hall (grade I), stands at its southern end and is a well preserved 17th century building which dominates but does not overbear the space. Three and four storey buildings enclose a rectangular space which, despite the surrounding tall buildings, has a domestic pedestrian-friendly scale, aided by the small amount of space given over to vehicles and the presence of shared vehicle and pedestrian areas. There are no trees but the War Memorial (1921, grade II), the water fountain (1885, grade II) and the 1930s K6 telephone kiosk add interest to the wide space.

The Market Place has four main entry/exit points. To the south the approach roads narrow to pinchpoints at either side of St Mary’s Church. The church is partly obscured from views from the Market Place by the Town Hall. To the north, St Mary’s Street is a narrow pedestrian-only street, almost an alley, but St Martin’s Street is a bland wide vehicular carriageway along which the enclosed space appears to ‘leak’. Mousey Lane and Feathers Yard are two alleys leading east and west respectively.
Buildings around the Market Place range in type, building material and design. Two hundred and fifty years of architecture is well represented from the Town Hall (1670) to the Old Post Office (1936). There is a mix of stone (No. 24 and Corn Market), render (No. 3, No. 23), painted brick (No.17, No. 19) and red/grey brick (No. 5, No. 16). Clay and slate roofs contribute to a lively roofscape of gables and parapets.

The public realm, though not historic, complements the buildings well. It consists of natural stone paving, setts for shared surfaces and a tarmac highway. Benches and lantern-style light columns are co-ordinated.

Traffic through the area is slow-moving and relatively light (due to the by-pass and the main east-west through route which follows High Street) and low noise and pollution levels enhance the experience of pedestrians – except where vehicles queue for the traffic lights at the High Street junction.

**St Mary’s Street:** St Mary’s Street divides into three lengths of different character. At its north end (between High Street and Market Place), the pedestrianised street has an intimate character arising from the domestic scale of the shopfronts which, for the most part, have a ‘traditional’ appearance that avoids large areas of glazing and is comprised of a vertical pattern of timber transoms. Historic shopfronts such as Champions, the glazed stallriser of The Dolphin and first floor jetties of 17th century timber-framed buildings give the street a historic feel which can be appreciated at ground floor level.

The street has a slight kink and narrows at the north end but, surprisingly, one can look southward down the length of St Mary’s Street to greenery in St John’s Green. The street hosts several specialist shops and eateries encourage sitting out on the pavement. ‘A’ boards enliven the streetscene but may be considered a hazard by some.

The middle section of St Mary’s Street between the Town Hall and St Leonard’s Square is still commercial in character but has a less ‘town centre’ feel. Historic buildings on either side maintain the quality of the frontages. Immediately next to the churchyard, Nos. 52 and 53 are two mid 17th century timber-framed houses (now shops) which are particularly small in scale for such a location. Ironically, beyond this Nos. 46-50 (Pettits) is an unusually large, imposing three storey mid 19th century terrace. In between these two contrasting buildings is St Mary’s Arcade, a 20th century conversion of a former Police Station which leads directly through to St Martin’s Street.

The lower (southern) end of St Mary’s Street between The Green Tree and Boughton’s Mill marks the transition between the commercial and residential part of the town. St Leonard’s Square has an urban atmosphere, whilst St John’s Green is semi-rural. Nos. 27 and 28 are well set back from what, in contrast to the northern end of St Mary’s Street, has become a highway carrying fast moving two-way traffic.

**St Martin’s Street:** St Martin’s Street lacks the high quality of buildings and the special interest of St Mary’s Street. For much of its length, particularly at its northern end and south of St Mary’s Church, the east side of the street looks and feels like the rear of St Mary’s Street. There are four listed buildings in St Martin’s Street but almost five times as many in St Mary’s Street.

On the west side, the large modern supermarket (present-day Waitrose) at the north end and the smaller late 20th century superstore in the middle (the former Waitrose, opposite
St Mary’s Arcade) dilute historic character. A small area of planting at the north end of St Mary’s churchyard make a ‘green’ contribution to the streetscene but the street’s historic interest is limited.

**St Leonard’s Square:** In contrast to Market Place and St John’s Green, this urban square gives priority to traffic. The open space between a near exact square of enclosing buildings is completely covered with tarmac except for a small roundabout colourfully planted with flowers.

The strong sense of enclosure is lost to the west where New Street enters and exits the square. New Street is wide and the view along it is ordinary. Because of this, the view across the square from the south east corner towards Nos. 6 - 9 is much more attractive than the view from the south west corner which looks upon the entrance to New Street.

**Wood Street:** Wood Street is mostly residential. There is a short parade of shops beside the junction with St Peter’s Street, a car park and a garage. The urban grain is much more tightly knit on the west side.

The historic appearance of roadside developments is fractured by openings to the rear of properties in St Mary’s Street or to relatively modern backland developments. Historic development is most notable on the east side and there are two blocks of historic development at the top and bottom of the street (covered by an Article 4 Direction). Development on the west side is primarily 19th or 20th century.

**Open spaces, trees and greenery - Character Area 5: Market Place and environs**

Within this tightly-knit town-centre location, the principal open spaces are the urban squares of Market Place and St Leonard’s Square. Cattlemarket Car Park leaves a hole in the townscape but development is, anyway, less dense on the east side of Wood Street as the built form of the town becomes more spacious near to the riverside.

There are no trees amongst the central spine of this urban Character Area except for a tree and greenery in St Mary’s Churchyard but mature garden trees do play a part in the streetscene of Wood Street.

**Important views - Character Area 5: Market Place and environs**

Market Place is fronted by fine historic buildings and there are good panoramic views all around the square. The width of St Leonard’s Square permits long views of historic buildings – views in which, as in the Market Place, the whole frontage and roof of a building can be appreciated. Elsewhere, in the narrow streets, oblique views of individual or short rows of buildings can be admired, particularly at the north end of St Mary’s Street. Walking southwards along St Martin’s Street from High Street provides a good view of the tower of St Mary’s beside the Town Hall.

Views out of this area are generally restricted by built development but from the Cattlemarket car park there are long views through to greenery on the east side of the Thames.
Negatives - Character Area 5: Market Place and environs

- Large modern developments, particularly in St Martin’s Street, have destroyed the historic grain of development
- Traffic fumes from cars waiting at traffic lights in St Martin’s Street
- Some modern development has eroded the integrity of historic burgage plots
- Loss of containment around the car parks west of St Martin’s Street
- Illegal temporary parking in Market Place causes confusion for pedestrians
- Poor quality floorscape in St Mary’s Street (north)
- Unkempt site in Hart Street (south)
- Garish shopfronts and signage
- Replacement of timber windows with uPVC at upper levels
- Cumulative loss of architectural features and detail
- Loss of historic walls

6.6 Character Area 6: St Leonard’s Church: St Leonard’s Lane, Thames Street (lower part), Lower Wharf and St Lucian’s Cottage

Summary

The St Leonard’s Church character area occupies the south east corner of the former Saxon Burh, as well as including Wharf Lane which runs parallel to, but just south of, the earthwork ditch. Unlike all other parts of the Wallingford Conservation Area, St Leonard’s has a village character, with small scale buildings clustered around and dominated by St Leonard’s Church.

Character of the area

The majority of buildings in this area are simple cottages of a modest two storeys built up to the road edge, creating blocks of development punctuated only occasionally by narrow alleys or lanes which provide glimpses through to other parts of the Conservation Area. There are a few more spacious plots on the north side of St Leonard’s Lane, though generally plots are quite small, and the lengths of continuous frontage combined with important sections of walling creates a strong sense of enclosure.

Nosy 18-23 St Leonard’s Lane maintain this modest scale and simplicity of design in their single storey appearance, though have made use of their location on top of the Saxon earthwork in order to disguise an additional storey beneath the level of the lane. In contrast to this, the scale of the late 19th and early 20th century two storey terrace at Nos. 1-6 St Leonard’s Lane is more imposing on the street scene, though the quality of materials and details continues to make a positive contribution to the Character Area.

In addition to cottages, this Character Area also retains remnants of commercial activity in the form of warehouses, mills and maltings which formerly thrived when Lower Wharf was used as a landing point by local industries. The grade II* maltings to St Lucian’s survive intact, whilst Boughton’s Mill and at least two former warehouses have been converted to domestic accommodation, somewhat compromising their simple functional character. There are also two former public houses along St Leonard’s Lane, the Row Barge at No. 14 which retains its hanging sign and footbridge access from Wharf Lane, and Anchor House at No. 6. These buildings, which point to a time when this area was a
busy industrious part of Wallingford, rather than the quiet residential area seen today, are important and should be protected from development which would further erode their unique character.

Materials and details – Character area 6: St Leonard’s Church and environs

As in other parts of Wallingford, the oldest and most prestigious parts of this character area can be easily identified by their use of limestone rubble and flint such as St Leonard’s Church (11th century) where it is employed in a distinctive herringbone pattern, and St Lucians (16th century) where it is used on the ground floor and in the construction of the Maltings. Timber framing is also evident at St Lucians Cottage and the former Row Barge, resulting in steeply pitched roofs. Brick and render are commonly used for modest cottages, and brick in particular is used in the construction of the mill and warehouses. In contrast to other parts of Wallingford, the use of brick here is more simply detailed than elsewhere in the town (see Character Areas 5 and 9), and unusually in the case of Anchor House, painted brickwork also features.

Detailing is limited, with only a few instances of dentil courses or plat bands on the slightly higher status cottages such as Nos.10 and 11 St Leonard’s Lane. There is a mixture of window types, mostly set flush to walls and often tucked under eaves, and instances of sashes which are mostly later insertions. The variation of window styles, shapes and locations enhances the informal character of the area.

Boundary treatments - Character area 6: St Leonard’s Church and environs

A good set of cast iron railings to the churchyard form an attractive and traditional boundary to the east, and a low flint wall with brick dressings and half round capping forms a good quality traditional boundary to the roadside. There are various other boundary treatments of varying quality including some historic brick walls and 19th century railings, all contributing to the sense of enclosure in this area. However the use of timber fencing has generally had a negative impact on the character of the area.

Open Spaces and Greenery - Character area 6: St Leonard’s Church and environs

The most important open space in this otherwise quite enclosed part of the Conservation Area, is the churchyard, surrounded by walls and railings and featuring some important trees which help to establish the setting of the church. These trees are important both in their number and scale, helping to dominate the surrounding cottages. However, from the river frontage they currently somewhat obstruct views of St Leonard’s tower during the summer months and would benefit from maintenance. Another important space, though not one which is directly accessible or necessarily open, is the earthwork ditch which runs parallel but south of St Leonard’s Lane. This is important in defining the extent of the Saxon defended town, but it also creates a natural green lung within what is otherwise quite a built up area and has in addition some value for nature conservation.

Contribution made by unlisted buildings - Character area 6: St Leonard’s Church and environs

The terraces along the south side of St Leonard’s Lane make an important and positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. The small group of buildings comprising Nos. 9-11 and 13 St Leonard’s Lane to the immediate west of the church are
well detailed and appropriately scaled, and their informal relationship to the road enhances the village-like character. Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Wharf Lane, combined with St Lucian’s Cottage and St Lucian’s opposite form an attractive and important group framing a former commercial approach to the Thames. The modern terrace at Nos. 10 to 37 (odd) Wharf Lane, although outside the Conservation Area, does relate to the scale of the St Leonard’s Church Character Area and is appropriately designed to preserve the setting of this part of the Conservation Area.

**Important views - Character area 6: St Leonard’s Church and environs**

St Leonard’s tower is dominant in views looking east along St Leonard’s Lane and unlike St Mary’s church in the centre of town (Character Area 5) the church and its tower dominates the surrounding buildings, creating a strong focal point. From the east bank of the Thames, there is also an important view, reinforcing the St Leonard’s Church Character Area as a village-like cluster around the church.

**Negatives - Character area 6: St Leonard’s Church and environs**

- Cherwell Close (cul-de-sac) fails to follow the historic form of development
- Replacement of timber windows with uPVC
- Cumulative loss of architectural features and detail
- Insensitive fences
- Uncharacteristic introduction of dormers

**6.7 Character Area 7: Reading Road and St John’s Green**

**Summary**

This long thin character area with a north-south axis is located immediately south of, and outside of, the town’s Saxon ramparts. It encloses historic buildings, trees and greenery on either side of St John’s Green and the west side of Reading Road that enhance the southern entrance to the town.

The three main features of the area are: St John’s Green and its surrounding buildings, Angier’s Almshouses, and prestigious 19th and early 20th century houses which were built beside Reading Road following the re-alignment of the road in the late 18th century.

**Character of the area - Character Area 7: Reading Road and St John’s Green**

Today’s built form overlays, at least in part, the site of the medieval Hospital of St John. Angier’s Almshouses (dated 1681) are located opposite. The medieval Church of St Lucian’s has now been demolished, but it once sat on a site to the south of the almshouses. Only these almshouses and, a short distance away in Lower Wharf, a mid 16th century house named St Lucian’s, survive from what may have been a medieval settlement of some importance located outside the defences of the town.

In the late 18th century Reading Road took over from Squires Walk as the principal route into the town. Once established as the principal route, Reading Road attracted prestigious private dwellings such as No. 20 (High Trees) and No. 21 (Sandford Lodge), both of which date to the 1820s and are listed grade II.
There is a strong rhythm to the facades that face onto and directly relate to St John’s Green. Angier’s Almshouses (1681) begins with its strongly defined cross gables to the street and large stacks in symmetrical composition. Then the subtle yet refined facades of Nos. 1-3 St John’s Green and the arches and gables of Ptolemy House lead the eye towards the bend in the road which signals the entrance to the walled town.

Buildings are mostly two or two and a half storeys high, the latter using roof voids. However, they are often on a grand scale making their overall massing considerably larger than two storey houses in other parts of the Conservation Area.

**Materials and details - Character Area 7: Reading Road and St John’s Green**

Historic buildings fronting St John’s Green are unified by their use of render. Roofs are either covered in slate (No. 4) or in handmade clay tiles. A noticeable asymmetry to two of the important roofs addressing this space (the gable to No.5 and the distinctive gambrel roof to No.34 St Mary’s Street) reinforces local distinctiveness. The two early 19th century listed buildings in Reading Road are rendered and have Welsh slate roofs.

Angier’s Almshouses (grade II), dated 1681, are faced with roughcast render on limestone rubble with a plain tile roof. The windows are provided by a symmetrical composition of cast iron casements with Gothick glazing bars (probably inserted in the 19th century) and hoodmoulds, which set this apart from anything else in Wallingford.

Brick features highly in the area in a variety of tones and textures but most prominently red brick as used in Nos. 1 and 2 Reading Road and Blair Lodge, two late 19th century houses which sit opposite each other across Reading Road.

Windows are generally timber sashes with multiple variations in their glazing bar arrangements but Angier’s Almshouses and Ptolemy House have cast-iron casements. Of note are the large sashes of No. 34 St Mary’s Street, a late 17th century house with old clay tile gambrel roof. No. 34 is also notable for horizontal sliding sashes in one of the dormer windows.

**Open spaces and trees - Character Area 7: Reading Road and St John’s Green**

With Market Place and St Leonard’s Square, St John’s Green is one of three squares that punctuate the historic north-south spine of the Conservation Area. Whereas Market Place and St Leonard’s Square have an urban feel, St John’s Green is more suburban.

Trees to Squires Walk which are not in the Conservation Area (although some are individually protected by Tree Preservation Orders) form an important part of character of this lane and strongly define the edge of both the Conservation Area and the surviving historic townscape of Wallingford.

Individual and groups of trees (particularly the mature yew to No. 4 St John’s House) complement the flint boundary walls by adding to a positive sense of enclosure. They provide the lane with a particularly attractive, tranquil and semi-rural feel.

Trees also form an important role in softening the edge of Reading Road to the east and west side and framing and forming backdrops for the large detached houses lining the
road or spilling over and above the important boundary walls. This contributes to the enclosure and framing of views towards the town.

**Contribution made by unlisted buildings - Character Area 7: Reading Road and St John’s Green**

Most of the buildings in this Character Area make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, particularly the buildings to Squires Walk and the grouping and pairing of houses on Reading Road. Of note here is the prominence and importance of the rear of buildings as well as the front elevations. Both are very clearly seen from public viewpoints. This is particularly the case for Nos. 1 and 2 Reading Road, an attractive and well-detailed pair of semi-detached Edwardian Houses, largely in their original form.

Ptolemy House, an early 20th century garage, is a particularly fine, robust and well detailed building. Its highly articulated façade, with arches, Venetian window and cross gables lead the eye into the town and form a very successful side to St John’s Green.

No.11 Reading Road (Coachmakers’ Cottage) is of particular note as a very modest late 18th or early 19th century timber-framed cottage which has lost its thatched roof.

**Important views - Character Area 7: Reading Road and St John’s Green**

The views of St John’s Green as one enters from St Mary’s Street are particularly attractive, as is the oblique view across the square to the tripartite façade of Angier’s Almshouses.

Approaching from the south, developing views of the prominent gable to Ptolemy House are unfortunately marred in parts by ugly ‘wirescape’ along Reading Road, but this remains one of the two most notable approaches to the town (the other being across the river bridge).

**Negatives and issues - Character Area 7: Reading Road and St John’s Green**

- Replacement of timber windows with uPVC
- Cumulative loss of architectural features and detail
- Inappropriate boundary treatments

**6.8 Character Area 8: Wallingford Castle**

**Summary**

This character area focuses on the ruins and surrounding grounds of Wallingford Castle. The earthworks and remaining masonry of the Castle, including the whole of the Scheduled Monument, are included. The area contains Castle Gardens and the southern part of Wallingford Castle Meadows and includes the remains of St Nicholas’s College and a small area of old and new development beside Castle Lane. Castle Street and Bear Lane define the western extent of this Character Area. The riverside water meadows (Kings Meadow and Queen’s Arbour in Character Area 9) form the eastern boundary.
This area has had several key roles in the town’s history. The most significant is that of a Norman motte and bailey castle imposed into the Saxon street plan which led to the building of a large castle that underwent several remodellings and enlargement until demolition in 1652.

A later important phase in the use of this area was as the country house setting and landscaped gardens to the now demolished Castle House. Castle House was built by the Hedges family in 1837 and demolished in 1972. The Hedges undertook considerable structural planting, which has resulted in the planned parkland setting to the castle ruins seen today.

The area is now a semi-public open space easily accessed from the town (entry is free) and used by walkers as a route to and from the river.

**Character of the area**

The area consists of two distinct parts: Castle Gardens and Castle Meadows, separated by Castle Lane. This ‘hollow lane’ may be part of the original Saxon street pattern. Today it is bounded on either side by an attractive brick wall, although frustratingly for the pedestrian it cannot be accessed from the Castle grounds.

Castle Meadows lie on the north side of Castle Lane, and were acquired by South Oxfordshire District Council in 1999. The Wallingford Castle Meadows Site Management Plan 2006-2011 says:

“It is managed for informal recreation with the proper preservation and interpretation of the Wallingford Castle Scheduled Ancient Monument and other historical landscape features, and the conservation and enhancement of wildlife.”

It is a rural landscape containing earthworks of the castle, grassy meadow and many trees. There are several public access gates. The principal features are historic masonry, a ditch that is part of the Saxon defences, the Queen’s Tower (part of the riverside wall of the Castle), an earthen outwork from the 17th century Civil War and a former Victorian grotto. Full details of this site are in the Wallingford Castle Meadows Site Management Plan.

Castle Gardens, south of Castle Lane, contains remains of the middle bailey, remains of the College of St Nicholas and the site of the Victorian mansion which existed between 1837 and 1972. It is essentially the garden of the former Victorian house together with the motte and bailey. The gardens have been restored for public access by the Town Council.

**Open spaces, trees and greenery - Character Area 8: Wallingford Castle**

The former Castle defences are mixed and interwoven with a Victorian landscaped garden - the location of the trees and their relationship with the Castle and Castle House are particularly important to the character of the open spaces.

The spaces are also defined by the survival of historic fabric from remains of the Castle walls and buildings. Unfortunately, there is limited accessibility to the motte which
though heavily vegetated and affording excellent views of the town is rarely open to visitors.

Many of the trees form part of the 19th century planned landscape, planted to create a striking ‘natural’ setting for the now demolished Castle House. In the upper meadows pines and oaks are planted in a line to draw the eye to a focal point, in this case two exotic ‘Wellingtonia’ trees (Giant Redwood).

The trees within this sub area not only relate to significant phases in the Castle’s history but also form an important backdrop to the town and setting to the Castle. They are seen in extended views across the town and contribute to the rural setting of Wallingford.

There are many important examples of trees forming the setting or backdrop to views towards St Peter’s Church spire for example, or in defining the line of the riverbank. More than any other Character Area, trees of a very diverse character form an important part of the character of the Conservation Area. Given their landscape value, proposals for the management of these natural resources should be very carefully considered.

**Contribution made by unlisted buildings - Character Area 8: Wallingford Castle**

Domestic buildings in this area are modest in scale and survive from various different layers of the history of the site, including farm buildings, boundary walls and Victorian lodges. The small group north of the High Street leading up to and included in the grounds of the modern Castle Farm house are distinctive for their vernacular characteristics and rural village qualities.

The survival of the graveyard to the former All Hallows Church is of considerable local interest and contains a grade II listed monument to Thomas Bennett (c.1616).

Boundary walls and farm buildings individually and in groups form positive elements of the Conservation Area. Similarly the two lodges and boundary walls to Castle Street are valuable survivals of the Victorian phase of the Castle’s history and should be afforded statutory listed protection.

**Important views - Character Area 8: Wallingford Castle**

There are good views through the landscape towards the spire of St Peter’s Church which constantly reminds the visitor of the presence of the town so close to the semi-rural grounds and meadows around the castle remains.

**Negatives - Character Area 8: Wallingford Castle**

- Sign-posting to the main entrance to Castle Gardens (off Bear Lane) could be improved
- Public access to Castle Gardens is very limited due to controlled opening hours

*A detailed assessment of positive and of negative factors affecting Castle Meadows can be found in the Wallingford Castle Meadows Site Management Plan 2006-2011.*
6.9 Character Area 9: Riverside: Thames Street, St Peter’s Church and Castle Priory College

Summary

The riverside character area is bounded by the Thames to the east and by the modern-day line of Thames Street to the west. This narrow strip of development is perhaps the most visually prominent part of the town, incorporating the landmark spire of St Peter’s Church, with the river and flood plain to the east allowing long views of the grand houses and their private grounds along the western bank of the Thames.

Character of the area

Unlike any of the other character areas, the Riverside has a distinctly dual personality. When viewed from outside, from the river or the bridge for example, large classically inspired houses, separated by spacious grounds and mature trees, dominate the river banks, creating a unique and attractive setting to the town beyond. These prestigious houses tend to be of three storeys with parapets or very shallow pitched roofs, and with the exception of Bridge House, present rendered elevations with sash windows to the river. By contrast, the character along Thames Street is dominated by a sense of enclosure created by the long stretches of wall and structures built up to the street. There are no views of the river at all when inside the Character Area and properties fronting the street have a modest scale, with simple pitched roofs.

As with the St Leonard’s Character Area, there are a few remaining clues to Thames Street’s commercial past, though much appears to have been erased by 18th and 19th century development when the Thames became a source of recreation. The former maltings, now Wallingford Boat Club, along with Wharf House on the far side of the Bridge, have similar functional characteristics which should be protected, whilst the mysterious hatch in the high wall to Riverholme may also be associated with trade use of the Thames, and predate the current house.

Materials and details - Character Area 9: Riverside

The dominant materials in the riverside area vary dependent upon whether they are being viewed from within or from outside. From the river, pale coloured materials with simple classically inspired detailing help the large prestigious buildings to stand out amongst the trees and greenery of their landscaped settings. Render is common for 18th and 19th century buildings, including the ‘polite’ river frontage to Cromwell Lodge, though unusually yellow brick is used at Bridge House. Aside from its use in the high quality construction of St Peter’s Church, with its flamboyant Gothic spire, ashlar is used, or perhaps re-used in very localised areas, as it may be that some of this stonework came from the ruined Castle in the 17th century. Examples include the blank door on the north boundary of Bridge House and sections of the boundary wall to Castle Priory. Local rubblestone and flint are also evident in this Character Area, being favoured historically for use on the higher status buildings such as the church, prior to the fashion for render. Rubblestone and flint can both be seen incorporated randomly within the length of Castle Priory’s wall, and rubblestone is employed with best effect in the street-facing range of Cromwell Lodge which has recently been skilfully restored. The more modest properties along Thames Street make good use of Flemish bond brickwork with vitrified...
headers and simple detailing, including the use of modest casement windows which contrast with the grander proportions and finer detailing of the sash windows (many of which are unhorned) in the larger detached properties.

**Boundary treatments - Character Area 9: Riverside**

This Character Area includes a number of important stretches of high wall which help to create the important sense of enclosure to the street. These walls are distinctive for both their length and quality, and incorporate a variety of traditional materials which add interest to the streetscene. Some modern sections of wall have been constructed from inappropriate materials or with non-traditional copings, and though these walls are not of interest in themselves, their height, length and enclosure remain important and should be maintained. Within these walls, large solid gates and doors are an important feature, emphasising the privacy of the large riverside properties.

For the few cottages which are built facing Thames Street but which maintain a small distance from the road (Nos. 2-3 and nos. 5-7 Thames Street), their low walls and either railings or picket fences are important to the settings of the buildings themselves, and allow small areas of greenery into the otherwise hard-landscaped street.

**Open spaces and greenery - Character Area 9: Riverside**

The mature tree-lined landscape settings of the grand riverside properties are extremely important to this Character Area. However, they are also important to Wallingford as a whole, particularly when considered in conjunction with the Northern Approach Character Area, in establishing the riverside setting of the town. With the exception of a few discreet ancillary structures and a couple of decorative boathouses on the river’s edge, the plots here remain large, open and green, in direct contrast to the concentrated development seen elsewhere in Wallingford.

Trees frame many riverside views, though in a few cases their scale has started to dominate the built form and would benefit from maintenance. On Thames Street, the east side is particularly well enclosed by trees which screen Castle Priory from pedestrian view.

**Contribution made by unlisted buildings - Character Area 9: Riverside**

The pair of attractive brick cottages (Nos. 2 & 3 Thames Street), make a positive contribution to the Character Area, occupying a prominent corner on the bend in the road, as well as framing the entrance into Bridge House, enhancing its setting. The ‘Boathouse’ pub occupies an important position just north of the bridge. Its Arts and Crafts style and viewing platform on the first floor is in keeping with the attractive detailing of the Riverside Character Area, whilst its scale is sympathetic to surrounding buildings, allowing important views through to the Castle motte behind. Despite presenting their rear elevations to the road, Middle Wharf, Riverside and Riverholm, combined with the length of high wall to the south, to form an important group within this Character Area. Their scale, use of materials, and quality of detailing enhances the distinctiveness of the riverside, continuing the visual barrier to the river and the important sense of enclosure. These buildings also form an interesting contrast when located in such close proximity to the modest cottages of the St Leonard’s Character Area.
Important views - Character Area 9: Riverside

The long view of the trees and riverside properties along the west bank of the Thames, gained either from walking over the bridge or travelling along the river is an important one, establishing Wallingford as a town of status. In addition, the view into the High Street from the bridge, with St Peter’s Church on the left and the Boathouse Public House on the right, is the principal and most historic approach to the town which has changed very little in over a century.

Negative features - Character Area 9: Riverside

- Trees are beginning to obscure views of historic buildings as seen from the east bank of the Thames
- Walls of non-traditional appearance in Thames Street
- Access to St Peter’s Church is restricted

6.10 Character Area 10: The northern approaches: Wallingford Bridge, the cemetery and Castle Street (part)

Summary

The Setting and Northern Approach character area covers land from the town’s northern entrance round to the eastern entrance and bridge across the Thames. This area has important landscape qualities, framing views into the ancient town and its castle, and maintaining an open green setting.

Character of the area

The majority of this large Character Area remains open as undeveloped land, particularly adjacent to the river where it is liable to regular flooding and where the banks are used for moorings. This area has a timeless feel about it, with modern signage and litter bins being the few low-key concessions to the 21st century. Development is focused around the two entrances to the town: To the north, the approach is characterised by two clusters of formal Victorian/Edwardian development including a high quality cemetery complex dating from the 1860s, and a small group of semi-detached and detached villas dating to between 1890 and 1910.

These developed areas remain spacious and are further broken up by green open areas in between, which emphasise the location on the edge of the town. To the east, the narrow approach into Wallingford focuses on the impressive stone bridge, funnelling views into the town. Some small scale 20th century leisure development lies on the periphery of the Conservation Area on the northern side of the bridge, and a World War II pillbox also overlooks the east bank of the Thames as a reminder of the continued strategic value of Wallingford on the River Thames.

Materials and details - Character Area 10: The northern approaches

Wallingford Bridge, in common with other most significant historic structures in the town, is constructed of stone, forming a grand entrance to the town. The use of such a large amount of stone is unprecedented in Wallingford and reflects the status and importance of this bridge. Some of the original 13th century stonework remains on the southern side,
whilst 17th century and later 19th century alterations can be identified by the use of finer and more squarely cut ashlar.

Stone combined with flint is used to great decorative effect in and around the cemetery in the construction of the two chapels as well as the gate lodge and boundary walls. The stonework is ornamented further by patterned slate roofs not seen elsewhere in the town and decorative metal work. All these details taken together create a high quality and elaborate design, entirely characteristic of the Gothic Revival style. Brick is combined with high quality detailing in the sizeable Victorian or Edwardian properties on Castle Street.

**Boundary treatments - Character Area 10: The northern approaches**

The type of boundary varies according to function and location. The sizeable properties on the west side of Castle Street are set back behind low brick walls supplemented with an evergreen hedge for privacy. Iron railings bound the Castle site along the east side of Castle Street for security. The cemetery is bounded by a long brick and flint wall. Post and rail or post and wire fences sub-divide the rural open spaces.

**Open Spaces and Greenery - Character Area 10: The northern approaches**

Kings Meadow and Queen’s Arbour, as their names suggest, had close associations with the Castle and are now used as important amenity spaces and for nature conservation. They are dominated by the earthwork remains of the Castle and incorporate a large number of significant trees. These areas combine with the green open spaces on the opposite bank of the Thames to establish a direct connection with the surrounding countryside, bringing a strong rural quality to an area which is in some cases less than 200 metres from the densely built up High Street.

South of bridge is another important amenity space, though this area has an additional important role in the setting of the bridge, being the only point from which large sections of the earliest 13th century structure can be still seen. Openness on either side of the bridge permits views of almost its entire length, helping viewers to appreciate its grand scale, its series of changes over the centuries and also its vital relationship with Wallingford. As with the western bank of the Thames, trees are dotted along the eastern bank creating a green frame for views along the river.

A belt of TPO trees define the edge of the Conservation Area to the north of Park Farm House and help to screen the modern housing and sports field to the north, from the otherwise green and rural approach to the town. Trees are also extremely important in and around the cemetery, being specifically planted to establish a designed setting for the two chapels and their surrounding monuments.

**Contribution made by unlisted buildings - Character Area 10: The northern approaches**

The group of unlisted Victorian and Edwardian buildings which form the western side of the northern approach both individually and collectively make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area through their quality, detailing and spacious plots, with their density acting as a transition between the built-up town centre and rural outskirts. The high quality ashlar stone walls to The Coach House
opposite are also important and should be protected, as they create an important sense of enclosure which anticipates the more built-up town centre.

**Important views - Character Area 10: The northern approaches**

Many important town-defining views can be had within, through and from this sub area. Views from the bridge and the riverbank for some distance south and north are dominated and animated by St Peter’s spire. The view back towards the bridge from the riverside going north gives some idea of its scale and historic importance. Progressing northwards, this view is soon masked by trees. From the riverside one can also see some of the castle’s surviving masonry and from the motte there are panoramic views across the rooftops of the town.

From Kings Meadow there are open views to the north east. From the cemetery and parts of the upper length of Castle Street there are views of the motte and the series of earthwork ridges in between.

**Negative features - Character Area 10: The northern approaches**

- Some replacement of timber windows with uPVC in Castle Street
- Unsympathetic repair/replacement of original front boundaries
- Extended views north are marred by large industrial sheds towards South Oxfordshire District Council offices (across the river).

*A detailed assessment of positive/negative factors affecting Castle Meadows can be found in the Wallingford Castle Meadows Site Management Plan 2006-2011.*
Chapter 7  ISSUES

1  Conservation area boundary review

The existing Conservation Area largely follows the extent of the Saxon burg and Norman Castle, with small extensions to the west and south to encompass 19th century residential expansion. A further extension in Crowmarsh Gifford to the east of Wallingford on the other side of the River Thames encompasses the full extent of the listed bridge.

Following extensive survey work, a small extension to include well detailed late 19th century properties is proposed along Reading Road. In addition, a small area to the north of Bullcroft is proposed for removal.

A new conservation area based on a number of important historic buildings is also proposed for the Winterbrook area to the south of Wallingford. Further details are provided in the Management Plan.

2  Design quality: The control of new development and local distinctiveness

New development within or on the edges of the Conservation Area is already constrained by policies contained within national guidance, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan and within the South Oxfordshire Design Guide. There has already been a certain amount of infilling of backland sites, as well as new frontage buildings. The challenge for the future lies within balancing the need for new development with the preservation or enhancement of the high quality historic environment. The scale, bulk, materials and detailing of all new development must be carefully specified to be in accord with the existing character of the Wallingford Conservation Area.

3  Setting and entrances

Wallingford is notable for the drama of the entrances into the town, most notably from the north and east. These need to be protected and new development carefully controlled. New development around the edges of the Wallingford Conservation Area, which could impact on the town’s setting, must also be sensitively designed.

4  Town centre regeneration

Wallingford is currently suffering from a number of underused or vacant business premises, although the residential market is still buoyant. Issues for the town centre include:

- Shops and shopfronts – design guidance and enforcement
- Car parking and traffic – surface car parking and traffic congestion
- Public realm – improvements needed, and the possible introduction of a common palette of materials and details
- Sites for enhancement – these include St Leonard’s Square, the public car parks, and Kinecroft and Bullcroft
4 Article 4 Direction

There are many high quality but unlisted residential properties in the Conservation Area which are threatened by inappropriate alterations such as the use of uPVC windows and front doors, which are currently considered to be permitted development. In the past, South Oxfordshire District Council has used Article 4 Directions to impose additional planning controls on a number of properties within the Conservation Area but these are very limited and now out of date. The withdrawal of these existing Directions, and the imposition of a new Article 4 Direction covering the whole Conservation Area, would be beneficial.

5 Statutory and local listing

The statutory list for Wallingford was produced in the early 1980s and has not been updated since, although a few individual buildings have been spot listed. A thorough review would be welcome. In addition, some of the old grade III buildings, which were not considered of sufficient architectural or historic interest, were put on what was then called a ‘Local List’ for Wallingford. These have no statutory protection, and have not been monitored since. The production of a new Local List for Wallingford, as supported in guidance to the new PPS5, is therefore a priority.

6 Site specific

A number of specific sites within the Conservation Area require enhancement or other improvements. These are principally:

- Wallingford Castle – particularly issues of public access and the control of trees (further information is in the existing Wallingford Castle Meadows Management Plan 2006-2011)
- Kinecroft and Bullcroft – these large public open spaces are in need of a variety of improvements and certain additional controls may be required to ensure that the scheduled features are not adversely affected by public use

All of these issues, with accompanying recommendations for action, are considered in greater detail in the Wallingford Conservation Area Management Plan.
BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES

A Walk around Wallingford’s History (J & S Dewey 2010)
South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011
Victoria County History of Berkshire
Wallingford Burgh to Borough Research Project
Wallingford Museum
Wallingford Castle Meadows Management Plan 2006-2011
www.wallingford.co.uk
Ordnance Survey maps 1877, 1897, 1912
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APPENDIX 1

Proposed criteria for local listing in South Oxfordshire District
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of the Management Plan

Part 1 of this document, the *Character Appraisal*, has identified the special positive qualities of the Wallingford Conservation Area which make the Conservation Area unique. Part 2 of this document, the *Management Plan*, builds upon the positive features and addresses the negative features which have been identified to provide a series of recommendations for improvement and change, most of which are the responsibility of South Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council or Wallingford Town Council.

The involvement and approval of the local community in the formulation and delivery of these documents helps to strengthen their status and will hopefully mean that the various actions identified in the Management Plan will have greater impact and longevity. For Wallingford, this has been achieved through the current six week public consultation exercise. Any necessary amendments will be made before the final version of the document is completed. The document will be adopted by the Council as a ‘material’ document for development management purposes.

1.2 Relevant documents

The structure and scope of this document is based on the suggested framework published by English Heritage in *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (2011). Both the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the Management Plan should be subject to regular monitoring and reviews, as set out in section 3.

*Other relevant documents include:*

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
  - This Act sets out the legislative background for the control of conservation areas and listed buildings.

- Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5)
  - This provides recent (March 2010) government policies which relate to the historic built environment, and is accompanied by detailed guidance on the interpretation of the PPS by English Heritage.

- The South Oxfordshire Local Plan
  - This document, which is incrementally being replaced by the Local Development Framework (LDF) for South Oxfordshire, details a number of planning policies which relate to Wallingford. These are set out in Chapter 13 *Wallingford*.

- South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008
  - This advocates high quality design for all new development and provides detailed guidance.
1.3 The scope of this Management Plan

This Management Plan has been drawn up following detailed survey work of the Wallingford Conservation Area by conservation staff of South Oxfordshire District Council and by staff of The Conservation Studio. Its recommendations relate specifically to the Conservation Area, and it is not intended to include general advice about the control of other conservation areas in the District, although some of the issues will be common.

The document is intended to be as comprehensive as possible, but the omission of any particular feature does not imply that it is of no significance.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Conservation area boundary review

The existing Conservation Area largely follows the extent of the Saxon burg and Norman Castle, with small extensions to the west and south to encompass 19\textsuperscript{th} century residential expansion. A further extension in Crowmarsh Gifford to the east of Wallingford on the other side of the River Thames encompasses the full extent of the listed bridge.

Following extensive survey work, a small extension to include well detailed late 19\textsuperscript{th} century properties is proposed along Reading Road, and a small area to the north of Bullcroft is proposed for removal. A new conservation area, encompassing listed properties and other historic buildings of townscape merit in the Winterbrook area, immediately to the south of the existing Wallingford Conservation Area, is also proposed.

2.1.1 The existing Wallingford Conservation Area – proposed changes to the boundary

- Add six Edwardian properties in Reading Road.

This stretch of the Reading Road was developed between 1899 and 1912 on what was until then an area of allotments called Chalmore Gardens, a use which continued into the 20\textsuperscript{th} century on the remaining land between the new houses and the river. The six substantial houses are set back from the road with front driveways and spacious well planted front and rear gardens. Two of them are detached (Chalmore House and Herries) and the other four are arranged in matching pairs (Ecclesbourne and The Firs, and Adlestowe and Fynamore). Overall, they display details which are typical of the Edwardian period, with red brick or rendered facades (painted white), sash windows, some false timber-framing, and steeply pitched roofs covered in machine-made clay tiles. Some have two storey canted bays, the most notable examples being on Ecclesbourne and The Firs, where the windows are mullioned and transomed, with small panes divided by glazing bars to the upper lights. Some curved glazing bars also add interest. The largest and most imposing property is Chalmore House, which has all of these elements plus very tall and elegant brick chimney stacks, and a recessed front porch with heavily panelled front doors. Overall, these six buildings are particularly well preserved and form a distinctive group which is worthy of conservation area designation. Some may also be eligible for ‘local’ listing (see section 5 Statutory and local listing below).
• Delete a small section of land to the north of Bullcroft.

This piece of undeveloped land contains no buildings or other features of special interest and does not relate visually to the existing Conservation Area, as it is somewhat overgrown. It is also beyond the boundary of the Saxon burg.

RECOMMENDED ACTION 1:

• Amend the existing boundary to the Wallingford Conservation Area as detailed above.

2.1.2 The new Winterbrook Conservation Area

• The development of Winterbrook

Winterbrook appears to have been developed principally from the mid-19th century onwards as a middle-class suburb to Wallingford, presumably when the industrial processes of the town centre drove the gentry out into more salubrious surrounding areas. The earliest building is probably the locally listed former Nag’s Head Public House (No. 25) which may be 18th century or earlier. Winterbrook House is mid-18th century and clearly represented the first prestigious house to be built in the area. Otherwise most of the buildings are mid to late-19th century, with a few Post-war houses on the west side of the street. The area is shown on the 1879 as thinly built up along the main road with fields beyond to either side.

• Boundary of the proposed Winterbrook Conservation Area

Winterbrook is a long straight historic street which is the continuation of Reading Road, itself a continuation of the main north to south route through Wallingford. The hamlet of Winterbrook lies to the immediate south of the line of Bradford’s Brook, a small stream which flows in a west to east direction before flowing into the River Thames.

The Wallingford Conservation Area reaches southwards from the town centre along Reading Road, and finishes barely 100 metres to the north, with a small area of Inter-War development providing a break between the two Conservation Areas. On both the western and eastern boundaries of the proposed Conservation Area are large open fields which provide an attractive setting, with the River Thames not far away.

The proposed Conservation Area boundary encompasses a group of some 30 buildings which face Winterbrook. Apart from No. 25, they date to between the late 18th and the end of the 19th century and only six are 20th century. The boundary has been tightly drawn to encompass these historic buildings and to exclude late 20th century development including properties in The Murren. Four 1960s houses, and a newer more recent property (Nos. 6, 8, 8a, 10 and 12 Winterbrook) have been included in the Conservation Area as they sit back from the road so their contribution to the character of the area is more muted. One of them (No. 6) also contains a particularly fine copper beech tree in its front garden, which is important in views along the road. Otherwise, nearly all of the other buildings in the proposed Conservation Area are listed, locally
listed, or considered to make a positive contribution. One further building, No. 2
Winterbrook, is a 1930s building of pleasing design (being relatively unaltered) but it is
currently vacant and the site around it neglected and negative in its impact. Of note is
the sylvan character of the road, the high concentration of well preserved historic
buildings, usually set in spacious plot sizes, the high quality historic boundaries (mainly
brick walls and cast iron railings), and the major contribution made to the street scene by
these boundaries and the accompanying planting and mature trees, including several
mature copper beech trees.

- The buildings of the proposed Winterbrook Conservation Area

A Townscape Appraisal Map has been prepared for the proposed Winterbrook
Conservation Area which identifies the existing listed, locally listed, and ‘positive’ historic
buildings in the new Conservation Area, as well as the more important historic front
boundaries and the most significant trees or tree groups. Suggestions for new ‘local
listing’ are also included. The historic buildings represent mainly upmarket 18th and 19th
century residential development outside the Saxon burg boundary, with several large
and prestigious family houses, now all listed, as well as a number of mid to late 19th
century houses or groups, similarly built to a very high standard. One property,
Winterbrook Farm, retains some agricultural buildings on its western boundary, and one
of the listed buildings, Winterbrook Lodge, is attached to a probably 18th century barn,
which is also listed. There are five listed buildings, all listed grade II, the earliest and
most prestigious of which is Winterbrook House. A summary of the list description for
each of these is included below.

**Listed buildings**

**Winterbrook House grade II**

Winterbrook House is a high status two storey Georgian house, almost symmetrically
arranged. It dates to c1750 and was for many years the home of the crime writer Agatha
Christie, as recorded by a plaque on the front elevation. The two storey house is built
from grey brick with red brick dressings, and the old plain-tiled roof is hipped to the right,
with brick end stacks. The building retains a six-panelled front door to the centre of the
front elevation, with painted wood Doric pilasters supporting a triangular pediment. The
windows are 12-paned unhorned sashes to all openings. Brick bands between ground
and first floor, and beneath the parapetted eaves, add to the interest of the building.
The adjoining stables are also 18th century and are separately listed. They are built
using squared coursed limestone with knapped flint bands and red brick dressings. The
hipped roof is covered in old clay tiles

**Winterbrook Close grade II**

Winterbrook Close dates to the early 19th century and is built using yellow brick with red
brick dressings. The two storey structure retains a hipped Welsh slate roof, with grey
brick internal stacks with red brick dressings to left and right returns. A principal feature
is the six panelled front door with a rectangular fanlight set beneath a square Tuscan
Doric open porch. Each of the sash windows has 16 panes.
Winterbrook Lodge and attached barn grade II

Winterbrook Lodge dates to the early 19th century and is faced in render, with a hipped roof covered in Welsh slate. Two storeys high, it retains a central six panelled front door with a fanlight and an open square porch on Doric columns. The sashes are all 12 paned. The attached barn on the south-west side may be earlier and is also listed. It is built using timber-framing with weatherboarding and a plain clay tiled half-hipped roof.

The Lawns Winterbrook grade II

The Lawns has an early 19th century two storey rendered frontage which possibly conceals an earlier house. The roof is covered in Welsh slate with a brick rendered end stack to the right and various stacks to the rear. The building is four windows wide, and the front door is slightly left of centre and is framed by a square porch supported on fluted Doric columns. The ground floor windows are 12 paned unhorned sashes with architrave surrounds and bracketed cornices. A moulded string course between the ground and first floor may confirm the earlier building underneath.

Locally listed buildings

There is one locally listed building, No. 25 Reading Road, the former Nag’s Head Public House which is now a private residence. This simple, vernacular building is one and a half storeys high and four bays long as demonstrated by the four small dormers which sit on the eaves. Whilst the front is faced in painted render, the north flank elevation has chequer-work brick, with an unusual crow-stepped gable. The steeply pitched tiled roof is covered in handmade clay tiles. The date is probably 18th century with later alterations.

Positive unlisted buildings

The proposed Conservation Area provides a number of well detailed mid to late 19th century buildings which are considered to make a ‘positive’ contribution to the special interest of the Conservation Area. Most of these are typical of the period between 1850 and 1875, with sash windows, shallow pitched slate roofs and canted bay widows. The use for many of them of the local red and grey brick provides a strong visual link along the street. Some of these properties, most notably No. 1, Nos. 5-15 and Winterbrook Close (listed) retain original cast iron railings. The most notable of these positive buildings are:

- No. 1 Winterbrook – a substantial pair of houses dating to c1850 now in single occupancy. Of note are the Tuscan porches to each side, the use of grey and red brick, with slate roofs, and the six over six sash windows.
- Nos. 5-15 odd Winterbook – an outstanding terrace of matching three storey houses with canted bay windows, red brick dressings and second floor windows which break through the eaves line.
- No. 33 Winterbrook – a detached Arts and Crafts house shown on the 1889 map when it was called ‘Cwichelm’. It is faced in painted roughcast with casement windows and an original central dormer set between two front-facing gables.
- No. 24 Reading Road – a grey brick house with red brick dressings of c1850. It retains a pleasingly symmetrical front façade with three sash windows to the first
floor and two canted bays with a long slated roof below (probably an addition of the late 19th century). It retains a decorative Georgian fanlight over the front door.

RECOMMENDED ACTION 2:

- Designate the new Winterbrook Conservation Area
- Consider an article 4 Direction to protect the unlisted ‘positive’ buildings from unsympathetic change
- Prepare a detailed Character Appraisal and Management Plan for the Winterbrook Conservation Area within three years of designation.

2.2 Design quality: The control of new development and local distinctiveness

New development within or on the edges of the Conservation Area is already constrained by policies contained within national guidance, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2006 and within the South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008. There has already been a certain amount of infilling of backland sites, as well as new frontage buildings. The challenge for the future lies within balancing the need for new development with the preservation or enhancement of the high quality historic environment. The scale, bulk, materials and detailing of all new development must be carefully specified to be in accord with the existing character of the Wallingford Conservation Area.

The most relevant policies in the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2006 are:

- Listed buildings – policies CON1, CON2, CON3, CON4 and CON5
- Conservation areas – policies CON6 and CON7
- Burgage plots – policy CON10

RECOMMENDED ACTION 3:

- The District Council will ensure that all new development within, or on the edges of, the Wallingford Conservation Area, is of the highest possible quality and conforms to national and local guidance.

2.3 Setting and entrances

Wallingford is notable for the drama of the entrances into the town, most notably from the north and east. These need to be protected and new development carefully controlled. New development around the edges of the Wallingford Conservation Area, which could impact on the town’s setting, must also be sensitively designed.

Views into and out of Wallingford, and across the town, are of special importance, and the most significant of these are marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map. These take in the rural setting to the town and also the long line of the River Thames. The view into Wallingford from Wallingford Bridge, taking in the spire of St Peter’s Church (which is attractively floodlit at night) is one of the defining views of the town.

RECOMMENDED ACTION 4:
• The District Council will ensure that all new development does not impinge on important views into or out of the Conservation Area, and will also protect the views within the Conservation Area, including the removal of buildings or features which are considered make a negative impact on the Area.

2.4 Town centre regeneration

Wallingford is currently suffering from a number of underused or vacant business premises, although the residential market is still buoyant. The Market Place has been enhanced recently, including new paving and street furniture, and the Town Council is also in the process of installation a number of Visitor Interpretation Panels at key sites within or on the edges of Wallingford.

Issues for the town centre include:

Shops and shopfronts

All new shopfronts should follow the guidance contained within the Council’s document *Traditional Shopfront Design Guide* (Planning Guidance 6) which is available on line from the Council’s website. A grant scheme for Wallingford, as is currently available in Thame, would help property owners with the additional costs of using traditional materials. Where negotiation has failed to achieve a satisfactory result, the District Council should consider taking enforcement action against property owners or tenants who have carried out unsympathetic work without consent.

Car parking and traffic

There are four large public car parks in Wallingford, of which the largest is located outside Waitrose in the town centre. This was relandscaped when Waitrose was built and is currently not in need of any improvements. These car parks provide a useful facility and are popular, bringing in both visitors and local residents to the town centre. The car park on the west side of St Martin’s Street is particularly in need of enhancements, including new surfacing and the provision of new street furniture and possibly new street trees. A small car park off Castle Street, next to the disused graveyard, is an unfortunate facility as it sits between the graveyard and the main road, adversely affecting the setting of the graveyard.

Public realm

Whilst landscaping works to a high standard have been carried out in the Market Place, other parts of Wallingford have not been improved, and there are poor quality pavements, street lighting and signage. However, the pedestrian signage within and around the edges of the town is being replaced and upgraded to a standard design and colour by the Wallingford Partnership, in conjunction with the Town Council. Subject to the funding being available, South Oxford District Council, the Wallingford Partnership, and Wallingford Town Council (and Oxfordshire County Council where appropriate) should work together to carry out further phased improvements, including the possible introduction of a common palette of materials and details.
RECOMMENDED ACTION 5:

- South Oxfordshire Council, the Wallingford Partnership and Wallingford Town Council will work together to carry out improvements to the public realm in Wallingford, as and when funding is available.

2.5 Article 4 Direction

There are many high quality but unlisted residential properties in the Conservation Area which are threatened by inappropriate alterations such as the use of uPVC windows and front doors, which are currently considered to be permitted development. In the past, South Oxfordshire District Council has used Article 4 Directions to impose additional planning controls on a number of unlisted residential properties within the Conservation Area but these are very limited and now out of date. The withdrawal of these existing Directions, and the imposition of a new Article 4 Direction covering the whole Conservation Area, would be beneficial.

RECOMMENDED ACTION 6:

- South Oxfordshire District Council will consider withdrawing the existing Article 4 Directions and serving a new Article 4 Direction to cover all of the unlisted family dwellings in the Conservation Area including the buildings in Reading Road which are proposed for inclusion in section 1 of this Management Plan.

2.6 Statutory and local listing

The statutory list for Wallingford was produced in the early 1980s and has not been updated since, although a few individual buildings have been spot listed. A thorough review would be welcome. In addition, some of the old grade III buildings, which were not considered to be of sufficient architectural or historic interest to merit statutory protection, were put on what was then called a ‘Local List’ for Wallingford. With no policy guidance in the Local Plan, these buildings have not been given any special consideration and some have even been demolished, although a full survey of their existing condition has never been carried out and the condition of the buildings has not been monitored. The production of a new Local List for Wallingford, as supported in guidance to PPS5, is therefore a priority.

Some possibly criteria for assessing potential ‘Local List’ entries, largely following English Heritage guidance, is enclosed at Appendix 1. Any Local List should be subject to:

- A validation system, with selection panels set up in local areas – these could existing groups such as Conservation Area Advisory Panels or local amenity groups
- The use of specialist experts such as local authority conservation staff or academic institutions with local knowledge
- The use of a member-level ‘Heritage Champion’ to give the Local List additional weight within the council
• Full public consultation, including consultation with property owners, on the draft Local List for an area
• The ratification of a proposed Local List by an appropriate committee
• The inclusion of Local List entries on the Historic Environment Record (HER), usually held by the relevant county council
• The inclusion of Local List entries on the council’s GIS system, so that the entries are easily identified when applications for change are received which may affect them or their setting
• The regular review of the Local List and the capability of adding or subtracting entries
• The publication of the Local List and of guidance for the preservation and enhancement of entries on the Local List on the council’s website
• The production of a Local List Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will include:
  o A list of entries
  o The selection criteria
  o A list of policies which the council will refer to applications for change are received which could affect a Local List entry
  o The use of Article 4 Directions to protect Local List entries from inappropriate harm (where buildings in residential use as a family dwelling are concerned)
• The production of commemorative plaques for each local List entry to identify the various structures or other features

RECOMMENDED ACTION 7:
• South Oxfordshire District Council will consider reviewing the existing Local List for Wallingford with a view to rolling out a District-wide Local List review as resources allow
• South Oxfordshire District Council will continue to monitor the number of statutorily listed buildings in the District and will make recommendations to English Heritage for additional listings when appropriate

2.7 Site specific

A number of specific sites within the Conservation Area require enhancement or other improvements. These are principally:

• Wallingford Castle – particularly issues of public access and the control of trees (further information is in the existing Wallingford Castle Meadows Management Plan 2006-2011)
• Kinecroft and Bullcroft – these large public open spaces are in need of a variety of improvements and certain additional controls may be required to ensure that the scheduled features are not adversely affected by public use
• St Leonard’s Square – new surfacing, street furniture and possibly tree planting is needed
• The public car parks – new surfacing, street furniture and possibly tree planting is needed
RECOMMENDED ACTION 8:

- South Oxfordshire District Council will work with Wallingford Town Council to ensure that works of enhancement and protection are carried out at the above sites, any works being subject to funding and full public consultation.

3 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Local authorities are required by law to periodically review their conservation areas and the preparation of Character Appraisals and Management Plans is part of this obligation. Indeed, in the past keeping Character Appraisals and Management Plans up to date has been a Key Performance Indicator in the Best Value assessment of local authorities, and as a result, a five year review cycle is now considered to be best practice.

Subject to staff resources being made available, the District Council should therefore be expected to regularly review the content of this document, to carefully monitor change within the Wallingford Conservation Area, and to involve the community in any proposals for enhancement.

The District Council should therefore:

- Carry out periodic reviews of the effectiveness with which the service addresses pressures for change;
- Update the baseline photographic survey of the Wallingford Conservation Area, ideally on a three yearly basis;
- Review the Wallingford Conservation Area Character Appraisal, ideally on a five yearly basis;
- Review and update the recommendations within Wallingford Conservation Area Management Plan on an annual basis, and ensure that where possible, actions are included within existing staff work plans.
APPENDIX 1 PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR LOCAL LISTING IN SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT

A new Local List for South Oxfordshire could be based on the following:

A Local List can include the following ‘heritage assets’ as defined by PPS5:

- Locally significant ‘Places’ including historic landscapes and historic gardens
- Locally significant ‘Monuments’ such as non-scheduled archaeological sites, including sites on the Historic Environment Record (HER)
- ‘Buildings’ which are locally distinctive or unusual due to their past uses, constructional details, joinery details, or use of materials
- Buildings or sites associated with a famous event or person
- Buildings or sites which are important either socially or culturally to the locality
- Individual types of structures or features such as:
  - Well preserved historic shopfronts
  - Good examples of historic public realm features such as historic street surfaces, cast iron coal holes, street gutter details, street lights, public seating, water troughs, fountains, post boxes, and street nameplates
  - Boundary treatments such as cast iron railings or brick or stone walls
  - Graveyards, grave stones, and monuments
South Oxfordshire District Council

Wallingford Conservation Area
Character Areas Map

Not to scale

- Conservation Area Boundary

CHARACTER AREAS:

1. Victorian suburbs
2. Kinecroft and environs: Goldsmith’s Lane and Church Lane
3. Bulcroft and environs
4. High Street and Castle Street
5. Market Place and environs: St Martin's Street, St Mary's Street, Leonard Square and Wood Street
6. St Leonard's Church: St Leonard’s Lane, Thames Street (lower part), Lower Wharf and St Lucian's Cottage
7. Reading Road and St John’s Green
8. Wallingford Castle
9. Riverside: Thames Street, St Peter’s Church
10. The northern approaches: Wallingford Bridge, the cemetery and Castle Street (part)