

**South Oxfordshire Local Plan
Publication Version**

**Historic Environment
Topic Paper**

October 2017

Historic Environment Topic Paper 2017

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This paper supports the publication version of the proposed South Oxfordshire Local Plan. It provides information about the historic environment of South Oxfordshire, information on the studies and evidence base supporting the plan, and information on the proposed planning policies relating to the historic environment contained within the proposed plan.

2. Historic Environment of South Oxfordshire

- 2.1. South Oxfordshire has a beautiful natural and built environment, which makes the district an attractive place to live and work. The district has a rich cultural history that has provided South Oxfordshire with over 3,500 listed buildings, 52 scheduled monuments, 13 registered Parks and Gardens, a Registered Battlefield, and 72 conservation areas. All of these buildings, monuments, parks and areas are considered to be 'Heritage Assets'. Sadly in 2017 there are 16 sites on the Heritage at Risk register. Parts of the district's natural environment and some of the historic assets are of national significance. These heritage assets help establish the distinctive character of South Oxfordshire. These heritage assets also attract visitors from near and far who contribute significantly to the local economy.
- 2.2. We seek to ensure the conservation, enhancement, enjoyment and understanding of all our heritage assets as they make a positive contribution to sustainable communities, including their economic vitality.

3. National Planning Policy

- 3.1. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013) covers the recording of listed buildings (buildings that are seen to be of special architectural or historic interest) and the designation of Conservation Areas (areas of special architectural or historic interest where it is desirable to preserve or enhance their character or appearance).
- 3.2. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 consolidates and amends the law relating to Ancient Monuments. It makes provision for the investigation, preservation and recording of matters of archaeological or historical interest, and for the regulation of operations or activities affecting these matters.
- 3.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 advises that our historic environment, buildings, landscapes, towns and villages can be cherished better if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers. The NPPF seeks sustainable development which involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the historic environment.
- 3.4. The core planning principles of the NPPF advise that planning should conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.
- 3.5. Chapter 12 of the NPPF provides the requirements for conserving and enhancing the historic environment. The NPPF requires that the council sets out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. The council must recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.
- 3.6. In determining applications, the council requires an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
- 3.7. The NPPF advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.
- 3.8. The NPPF provides advise on developments that would lead to:
 - substantial harm, and
 - less than substantial harm.
- 3.9. Substantial harm to, or loss of a Grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional and substantial harm to scheduled monuments,

protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites should be wholly exceptional.

- 3.10. Less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use
- 3.11. For non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement is required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

4. Evidence Studies

Heritage Impact Assessment

- 4.1. The council commissioned consultants Oxford Archaeology Ltd to prepare a Heritage Environment Assessment (HIA).
- 4.2. The HIA considers the heritage impacts resulting from proposals to develop eight allocation sites in South Oxfordshire:
 - Berinsfield (STRAT8)
 - Chalgrove (STRAT9)
 - Culham (STRAT6 and STRAT7)
 - Nettlebed:
 - Land to the west of Priest Close (H5) – site 1
 - Land to the South and West of Nettlebed Service Station (H7) – site 2
 - Joyce Grove (H6) – site 3
 - Wheatley (Local Plan reference STRAT 10)
- 4.3. The HIA draws upon the Historic Environment Record (HER) held by Oxfordshire County Council. The HIA follows the guidance contained within Historic England's Advice Note 3, 'The Historic Environment and Site Allocations in Local Plans' (2015)
- 4.4. The HIA has determined that all of the strategic allocation sites considered have the potential to impact upon designated and non-designated heritage assets within the sites or their environs. To mitigate against these impacts, recommendations for further archaeological work have been put forward and will need to form part of any planning application.
- 4.5. Following the implementation of a mitigation strategy the HIA has concluded that the potential impacts of proposed developments at Berinsfield, Chalgrove, Culham, Land to the west of Priest Close and Land to the South and West of Nettlebed Service Station, could be mitigated or offset to an acceptable level.
- 4.6. The proposed development of the Chalgrove site would provide an opportunity to enhance the setting of the Grade 2 listed buildings located to the north-west of the site within Rofford. This could result in a beneficial effect.
- 4.7. With reference to Joyce Grove, the assessment advised that modern development in the grounds of the listed buildings would substantially and negatively impact on the setting of the three grade II listed buildings within the site. Therefore, policy H6 states that development should only take place within the buildings.

Oxfordshire County Council Historic Landscape Characterisation project

- 4.8. The Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) project uses maps to examine the historic and archaeological processes which have influenced the modern landscape. It allows us to identify the specific characteristics of an area or district, so that we can understand what makes that place special or distinct and helping us to make sure it is managed appropriately. It recognises that all parts of the landscape have historic value and contribute to the landscape in which we live.
- 4.9. A full report on the project was published in July 2017 and an online interactive map is available. The data is also available from the county council.
- 4.10. HLC data can be used for:
- planning the conservation and management of heritage sites and landscapes
 - developing and assessing planning applications and development strategy
 - preparing landscape management schemes
 - academic and local research
 - assisting community projects and initiatives.
- 4.11 HLC data was used to inform the Heritage Impact Assessment.

5. Historic Environment policies within the Proposed Local Plan

STRAT1 – The overall strategy

- 5.1. Policy STRAT1 sets out how proposals for development within the district will be assessed. Proposals should be consistent with the overall strategy of supporting and enhancing our historic environment.

STRAT5 – Strategic Development

- 5.2. Policy STRAT5 sets out that proposals to deliver strategic development need to be supported by a variety of criteria including a Heritage Impact Assessment and an archaeological desk based assessment to provide an assessment of archaeological significance.

STRAT6 – Culham Science centre

- 5.3. Policy STRAT6 requires that proposals for the redevelopment and intensification of the Culham Science centre will be supported where this does not have an unacceptable visual impact, particularly on the Registered Parkland associated with Nuneham House.

STRAT7 – Land adjacent to Culham Science Centre

- 5.4. Policy STRAT7 requires that development of the site is expected to deliver a layout and form that respects the setting of the heritage assets within and beyond the site; in particular, the Listed buildings & structures (the Culham railway station and rail bridges and “Schola Europaea”) and the registered Parkland associated with Nuneham House.

STRAT9 – Land at Chalgrove Airfield

- 5.5. Policy STRAT9 requires that development of the site is expected to deliver a layout and form that respects the setting of the Listed buildings (particularly Rofford Hall and Rofford Manor) and the registered battlefield (Battle of Chalgrove 1643).

STRAT10 – Land at Wheatley campus, Oxford Brookes University

- 5.6. Policy STRAT10 requires that development of the site is expected to deliver a layout and form which provides an appropriate buffer to protect the Scheduled Monuments (in particular the moated site of Holton House and its associated ice house adjacent to the site and moated site 580m south west of Church Farm).

HEN1, TH1 and WAL1 – Market Towns

- 5.7. The policies relating to the market towns required development proposals to enhance the town's natural and historic environment and conserve and enhance the town's heritage assets.

ENV6 – Historic Environment

- 5.8. Policy ENV6 is a general policy in relation to the historic environment. The policy advises that proposals for new development that affect heritage assets (designated and non-designated) must conserve or enhance the significance of the heritage asset and its setting. Proposals are expected to meet a variety of criteria. The policy is in line with the NPPF.

ENV7 – Listed Buildings

- 5.9. Policy ENV7 identifies how proposals affecting a listed building or its setting will be considered.

ENV8 – Conservation Areas

- 5.10. Policy ENV8 advises that proposals must protect the site and setting of Scheduled Monuments or nationally important designated or undesignated archaeological remains identifies and sets out how such proposals will be considered.

ENV9 – Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

- 5.11. Policy ENV9 advises that proposals must protect the site and setting of Scheduled Monuments or nationally important designated or undesignated archaeological remains identifies and sets out how such proposals will be considered.

ENV10 – Historic battlefields, Registered Parks and Gardens and Historic Landscapes

- 5.12. Policy ENV10 advises that proposals should conserve or enhance the special historic interest, character or setting of a designated battlefield, historic landscape, park or garden contained in the Historic England registers and sets out how such proposals will be considered.

DES4 – Masterplans for allocated sites and major development.

- 5.13. Policy DES4 advises that such developments must be accompanied by a masterplan which illustrates how the proposal integrates with the surrounding built, historic and natural environments.

DES 9 – Promoting sustainable design

- 5.14. Policy DES9 – Promoting sustainable design advises that a sensitive approach will need to be taken to safeguard the special character of heritage assets e.g. in a conservation Area or where historic assets would be affected.

DES 10 – Renewable Energy

- 5.15. Policy DES10 – Renewable Energy, encourages schemes for renewable and low carbon energy generation subject to the protection of the historic environment, both designated and non-designated assets, including by development within their settings.
- 5.16. Other policies in the plan also contain criteria to protect and enhance the historic environment.