

INTRODUCTION

The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 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 or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. 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.

This document is an appraisal of the East Hagbourne conservation area to give an overview of the established character to be preserved and to identify possible areas for future enhancement. It is intended to assist in defining what is of special architectural or historic importance, what should be protected and to give guidance as to the form, style and location of future change and development.

The document is divided into various sections as follows:

1) The History of the Area

This covers the period from prehistory to the present day. It includes significant architectural history, important dates and references to people and events that have helped to shape the area we see today.

2) The Established Character

This is an assessment of the existing character, including the topography of the area, the vernacular style, predominant building materials and natural or man-made features of local interest.

3) Possible Areas for Enhancement

These can range from major areas for environmental improvement, to very minor works of repair and redecoration.

4) Existing Conservation Policies

This is an extract from the South Oxfordshire Local Plan identifying policies relating to listed buildings and conservation areas.

5) Plan of the Conservation Area

This is a scale plan of the area which aims to identify the elements which contribute to the character. The plan includes the conservation area boundary, listed buildings (buildings identified by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport as being of special architectural or historic interest), former Grade III listed buildings (a now obsolete category but where the buildings may still be of architectural or historic interest) and other buildings of local note. This latter group consists of buildings that play a part in establishing the character of the street scene but have not yet been considered to be of sufficient importance to meet the current criteria for listing. Recent government guidance contained in **PPG.15-Planning and the Historic Environment** indicates, however, that there is a presumption against the demolition of such buildings.

Important trees are also identified. These are usually highly visible from public places and/or they contribute to the setting of a listed building. Important open spaces are identified as these are a vital element in the character of an area. Character is defined not just by buildings, walls and trees, but also by the spaces between them. These contribute to the setting of buildings. They allow views around the area and they are often an important element in the historical development of a settlement.

Important unlisted walls are identified. These are usually built of local materials and help to define spaces and frame views. Lastly, important views into, out of and around the conservation area are identified. It should be appreciated that a conservation area's character does not end with a line drawn on a map. Often the character is closely associated with attractive views out to surrounding countryside, sometimes via gaps between buildings. Views within an area such as that to a church or particularly attractive group of buildings are also important.

6) Archaeological Constraint Plan

The character and history of an area are closely linked to its archaeological remains. This plan identifies the location of ancient monuments, earthworks and known cropmarks, find spots, archaeological sites and linear works identified on the Sites and Monuments Record maintained by Oxfordshire County Council. If nothing has yet been identified within an area then this map will be blank, but this does not mean that the area is necessarily archaeologically sterile.

EAST HAGBOURNE

1) The History of the Area

Evidence for Iron Age occupation of the area around East Hagbourne was found in 1803 when an excavation on Hagbourne Hill revealed several oblong pits, one of which contained horse bits, rings, lanceheads, chisel-edged tools and many coins. These represent an Iron Age burial of a horseman, horse and probably also his chariot. They are now kept at the British Museum. Traces of Romano-British settlement are said to have been found at some distance from Hagbourne, on the borders of Chilton parish. However, the earliest evidence for the existence of a settled community at Hagbourne is not found until the 9th century. A charter, contained in the 12th century cartulary of the Cathedral of St. Swithun, Winchester, records the transfer of land in Cholsey and two villas (which appear to cover the Hagbourne area) owned by Bishop Denewulf to King Alfred in exchange for land in Hampshire. One of these villas is called Hacca Burn or Hacca Broc, which is thought to have been corrupted over time to Hagbourne. Legend has it that there was a Saxon chief called Hacca, who in the 5th century advanced up the Thames, fought and settled by a stream which was named after him; Hacca's Burn (Teutonic for brook) (Clare et al, 10), but the name may simply be derived from Old English words meaning "stream with sluice or fish weir".

By the reign of Edward the Confessor (1042-1066), Hagbourne had become two separate holdings. The Domesday Survey (1086) shows that West Hagbourne became part of land owned by Walter, son of Otherius, while East Hagbourne was held for the crown by Regenbald, priest of Cirencester Abbey and former chancellor to Edward the Confessor. In 1133, when Regenbald died, Henry I granted East Hagbourne to Cirencester Abbey in perpetuity, the abbey continuing to hold it until the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539 when it reverted to the crown. It seems likely that with this connection to the abbey, a church would have existed in East Hagbourne by the 11th century, while by c.1150 the building is likely to have comprised an aisleless nave and chancel constructed of stone: indeed, the external quoins of two corners of the 12th century nave are still visible today. In the early 13th century the south aisle was added and in about 1340 the north aisle was built. The church was further remodelled in the late Middle Ages, including the widening of the south chapel and aisle, altering the west tower, and raising the walls of the nave so that clerestory windows could be inserted, while in the early 17th century a new roof was added over the south chapel. The church, like only one other in England, has a Sanctus bellcote on the east side of the tower. In 1545 Alice Aldworth of West Hagbourne who died of the plague, left 16d for a Sanctus bell which is still rung twice daily. The church was restored in 1860.

After the Reformation, the manor changed hands several times until in 1632 it was acquired by Lord Craven. Apart from a gap during the Commonwealth, the Craven family held the land until 1863 when it was

transferred to Lord Wantage of Lockinge Park. The Lockinge Estate continued to own many houses in East Hagbourne until the 1940s.

The manor house itself also changed ownership after the Reformation and James and Alice Anger were the lessees of “a certain moat, the houses and a garden within the moat and a pastorage at Hagbourne Park” (Underhill, 1). The present manor house is an attractive Victorian building, still set within the moat and with an interesting old hop-drying kiln in its grounds.

East Hagbourne has at its centre the Upper Cross. This fine medieval cross, which has a 10ft shaft was damaged, (probably during the Civil War), but later a sundial and square capital were added. The pedestal had two niches cut in its sides. One may have been used to house the pyx enclosing the Host to be used on Palm Sunday and other processions, and the other is said to have had vinegar or water in it, which was used to disinfect coins left by villagers in return for the food left at the base of the cross during the plague. Although now heavily weathered, the pedestal still bears evidence of the remnants of one square niche in its western face. At the east end of the village is the base of the Lower Cross and near Coscote there is a base of another roadside cross. It is sometimes claimed that these crosses would have provided an area of sanctuary, possibly in response to the setting up of gallows in the village by the Abbey of Cirencester. The main door of the church has a 14th century solid iron sanctuary ring or knocker, the medieval tradition being that a fugitive could touch it and say "pax" to be allowed sanctuary within the church.

In 1644, during the Civil War, the Royalists lost the battle of Newbury and fled back to Oxford. They were pursued by Parliamentary troops, 6,000 of whom stayed at East Hagbourne, at which time some may have registered their disapproval of the established Church by smashing the village cross mentioned above.

A significant event in Hagbourne's history was the Great Fire of 10 March 1659. It is traditionally believed that the fire destroyed the buildings between the church and West Hagbourne causing the separation between East and West Hagbourne. While there is no firm evidence for this somewhat unlikely claim, the fire was clearly exceptionally severe as additional fire hooks, which were used to pull burning thatch from houses, had to be brought from Blewbury Church and the loss of goods alone amounted to £3,631. A proclamation of Charles II dated November 6th 1661, was sent to all English churches asking congregations to donate money to help the villagers of Hagbourne because of the "great impoverishment and deplorable conditions of the poor inhabitants". Later, the villagers of East Hagbourne were keen to reciprocate the help they had received and sent money to London in the aftermath of the Great Fire of London.

Throughout its history, East Hagbourne's community has chiefly been involved in agriculture and Domesday lists 14 farms in the area. In the post-medieval period, a Mistress Keate is recorded as growing turnips at East Hagbourne in 1717 and orchards were cultivated by her husband before 1705, while hops

were still farmed as late as 1896. In the hop kiln at Manor Farm the internal beams are covered with pencilled notes (now protected by plasterboard) relating to the building's use dating back to 1850. These notes typically record the date when hopping finished and how many bushels were collected, as for example, "finished hopping Sept 16, 1868, 5053 bushels". Names of many hop-pickers are also written on the door (Underhill, 1). There were originally three kilns at Manor Farm but two were demolished in 1938 as they had become derelict and the remaining kiln has since been converted into a holiday cottage.

Until enclosure in 1840-3 there were four open fields around East Hagbourne which were divided up into small parcels farmed by individuals who also had rights of common, i.e. the right to farm the common land. In the late 19th and early 20th century East Hagbourne was known for its orchards and water cress beds as well as hops. The Buckel family used their orchard to bottle home-made soft drinks, such as ginger beer and cherry cider. The drinks were sold with a marble in the neck of the glass bottle which sealed it; many such bottles and marbles were uncovered when Nos.14 and 15 Main Road were built in the early 1970s on the orchard which formerly lay between Buckells and Green Shutters.

Part of the farmland included mills, and in 1086 Domesday records that there were two distinct mills in East and West Hagbourne. There is evidence that in 1196 Jordan and Alice Bassett surrendered a mill, known as Blakemelne, to the Lord of the Manor. A mill, possibly on the same site as the Blakemelne, is mentioned in the 16th century and was called Demyne Mill. Hagbourne mill, which still stands to the south of the village, was rebuilt in the early 18th century utilising some earlier timber framing and it is possible that it stands on or close to the site of the corn mill mentioned in 1196 and the 16th century mill. However, apart from a map dated 1775, which shows a paper mill, there are no earlier maps to prove if the mill was located on the same site as the earlier mills. Also, recent small-scale archaeological excavation around the present mill has not revealed evidence of any structure pre-dating the existing building (Leary, p.3). East Hagbourne was noted for its paper making and it is said that blotting paper was invented by accident at the paper mill, which existed here from the mid-17th century until c.1860. Indeed, blotting paper was exhibited at the 1855 Paris Exhibition by the mill owner, William Slade, who was awarded a medal for his invention. Eventually, due to expansion, the business moved to Hampshire and the paper mill was later demolished but some of its bricks were used for a footbridge over the stream.

Maps of 1876 and 1899 show that most of the village's buildings were confined to Main Road, with a few buildings along Baker's Lane. Behind the houses on both the north and south sides of Main road were open fields. The development was also then much "looser" with large spaces between the buildings on Main Road. The boundary of the village to the south was, however, much as it is today, while to the north there was no development beyond Higg's Farm (now Higg's Close) on New Road.

In the late 19th century the railway line linking London and Bristol was built across Hagbourne Marsh. This was a period of considerable building activity in the village. The primary school was founded in 1873 and the Methodist Chapel was opened in 1884 from money raised by local subscription. In 1987 the last service was held here, since when the building has been converted into a house. Interestingly, there appears also to have been an earlier chapel in the village as the 1876 Ordnance Survey map shows a Methodist Chapel between the former Traveller's Welcome public house and Higg's Farm.

There has been relatively little late 20th century development within the historic core of East Hagbourne, but sizeable areas of new housing exist north of The Croft and on the Blewbury and New Roads leading out of the settlement. The centre of the village was designated a conservation area on 16 December 1970 and the boundary extended on 19 October 1993.

2) The Established Character

East Hagbourne is an extremely attractive and special place. Despite its proximity to Didcot it has retained a strong rural character with a distinct identity despite the nearby town's urban sprawl. The historic core of the settlement is along Main Road which runs east to west and bisects the stream running north-south through the village. Although there has been some infill development on Main Road, the majority of buildings are historic and this forms much of the village's charm. Since many different building materials have been employed in the village, a wide variety of textures and colours in the buildings also add to the interest of the place. An important and attractive part of East Hagbourne's character is the curving nature of the Main Road which allows tantalising views along it. Despite the fairly flat topography, the twists in Main Road and the fact that the buildings are situated quite close to the street, mean that the view constantly and delightfully changes along Main Road.

As the village is mainly surrounded by farmland, apart from the residential development along New Road and Blewbury Road, views out of East Hagbourne to the fields around it form a strong element of the village's character. There are small areas of open space within the centre of the village, such as the orchard opposite Kingsholm on Main Road, the allotment gardens alongside Tudor House and the field in front of Lower Cross Farm. Roads and footpaths lead off Main Road into the surrounding fields and add to the village's rural character. Indeed, the various types of footpath through the village are a key element within it. These include the raised pavements near the Upper Cross, the small stretch of stone path along Church Close and the raised pavement along the bend of Main Road opposite East Grange. There are also many footpaths crossing the fields and leading out of the village, bringing fields and village closely together. A particularly attractive and unusual path is that alongside Kingsholm which is formed of a long raised island with the stream flowing on either side of it.

A wide variety of vernacular materials is employed in East Hagbourne's historic buildings. These include extensive timber-framing with rendered or brick infill (often in a herringbone pattern), tile hanging, local limestone, red brick, vitrified brick, thatch, clay tile, slate, colour-washed render and weather-boarding. Brick chimneys also form a distinctive part of the village's roofscape. Small timber casements are the predominant window type, but there are also sashes and leaded lights on some buildings. Many of the street entrances to the historic houses are of high quality, having stone steps leading to boarded doors, such as at 30-36 Main Road.

Most of the historic houses within the conservation area are statutorily listed and East Hagbourne therefore boasts a selection of extremely high quality and unusual buildings. There is a mix of vernacular and polite styles such as the Tudor House by the Upper Cross, and Parsonage Farmhouse. Kingsholm has four cruck trusses which through dendrochronology (tree ring dating) have been given a felling date of c.1550

(Vernacular Architecture 20, 1989). Jettied first floors in the timber framed houses are part of the area's special character, as at Cobblers Cottage, Shoe Lane, which has the date 1659 on an internal beam, or the jetty at Buckels on Main Road. Both these houses have decorated braces supporting the jetties. Equally distinctive are the interesting and unusual stair towers built into Cobblers Cottage and The Old Bakery, Bakers Lane.

There are several buildings of local note within the conservation area. These include the Victorian red brick school buildings and an interesting single storey house called Starfields on Blewbury Road, which has an attractive curved porch with ornate cast iron metal brackets. The Old Post Office is another attractive unlisted building within the conservation area which has blue vitrified brick diaper work in its walls and has retained its old shop front. Nos. 3 and 5 Church Close also use blue glazed bricks extensively while the former Methodist Chapel, despite its conversion to residential use, retains its original external form largely intact with a terracotta crested ridge to its slate roof.

Kingsholm Close was designed by the architect Eric Throssell in the mid 1960s and is a rather good modern development of "lobby-entry" type houses using detailing reminiscent of the Arts and Crafts movement.

The former agricultural character of the village is well illustrated by the mix of agricultural buildings found within the heart of the village, many of them attached to domestic dwellings. The listed barn at Lime Tree Farm, opposite the end of Shoe Lane, and the barn attached to Tudor House are particularly attractive and prominent examples.

The pubs in the village are important historic buildings. In the 19th century there were six pubs, but only one (The Fleur de Lys) remains in operation today. The Fleur de Lys dates to the 17th century and was originally owned by the Lockinge Estate. It is reputed to have been in the Napper family for 142 years and they, at one time or another, owned four other pubs in the village. The Spread Eagle was a former Belcher and Habgood Brewery establishment and was originally built in 1890 as an alehouse and four cottages. The pub was bought by Morland Brewery in 1928, the cottages were demolished in the 1960s and the pub itself ceased trading in 1997. The other pubs existing in the 19th century were The Greyhound, The Boot, The Traveller's Welcome and The Happy Dick.

Several of the thatched buildings in the village have traditional flush ridges, a number of which have been reinstated in recent years. Examples can be seen at the Tudor House barn, the barn opposite the end of Shoe Lane, the barns to Lime Tree Farm, and 34-36 Blewbury Road.

There are many notable stretches of walls and railings. The railings surrounding the Tudor House and 19 Main Road make a particularly important contribution to the character of this part of the conservation area,

while there is an attractive stretch of brick and soft clunch wall around the Old Vicarage and a limestone and brick wall to Kingsholm. The rural character of the village is also emphasised by the lack of formal boundaries and kerbs on the paths: many of the roads just have simple grass verges.

A number of trees also contribute to the character of the conservation area. The large conical shaped yew outside 19 Main Road, trees in the churchyard, the large ash to the front of Manor Farm and the trees in the grounds of Shelton Lodge are particularly important, while the pleached limes, with their almost sculptural forms, lining the garden wall of 11 Main Road, make a strong impact on this part of the conservation area. The trees which line the edges of the stream and run along the southern edge of the conservation area are absolutely crucial to its wider setting.

A large scale map of the conservation area identifying the location of traditional street furniture worthy of retention and attractive road surfaces and paving materials has been produced and is available for inspection at the District Council offices by appointment.

3) Areas of Enhancement

East Hagbourne is in general an extremely picturesque and well maintained village. However, there are some areas where relatively minor improvements could still significantly enhance the character of the village. The District and Parish Councils have recently helped to negotiate the laying underground overhead of electricity wires around the church. This will make a significant improvement to the character and appearance of the area but considerable benefit could also be gained by the burying of the wires and cables in Main Road (see front cover) and consideration should be given to how and when this can be achieved.

There are only a few benches in the conservation area; one near each of the crosses and one at the bottom of the path next to Kingsholm. As East Hagbourne is such an attractive place, it would be beneficial if there were more places to sit and admire the local scene, particularly in the churchyard.

The use of traditional materials and detailing can have considerable effect in enhancing the character of a conservation area. The owners of historic properties are therefore encouraged to remove modern, unsympathetic materials, such as plastic windows, like those found on some of the Victorian houses on Church Close, Cobblestones on Blewbury Road and in the Old Post Office and to replace them with timber ones. Plastic rainwater goods, which are widespread, could also with benefit be changed to traditional cast iron guttering. The barns near Manor Farm, which have been converted to residential use, would greatly benefit from the use of conservation type roof-lights rather than the large and obtrusive roof-lights currently in place.

As discussed in the section on 'The Established Character', only four of the thatched buildings in the conservation area currently have traditional plain, flush ridges and the owners of those houses with the modern block cut ridge detail are encouraged to reinstate the traditional type when re-thatching becomes necessary.

Areas of walling, old metal fences and high hedges are part of the character of the village and much thought needs to be given to means of enclosure to properties within the conservation area. For example, various types of fencing may not be appropriate in these rural surroundings.

The bus stop and telephone box do not enhance the setting of the Lower Cross and the whole scene would benefit from improving the quality and design of these structures. The area of carparking behind the Fleur-de-Lys could also be improved by the use of a more attractive surface material and from a better quality wall along its front boundary. Some of the signage at the pub, with signs on short free-standing poles dotted around the car park, also makes the area appear rather cluttered.

4) Bibliography

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- Underhill, F. “An Old Berkshire Hop Kiln” *Berkshire Mercury* (13.9.73).
- Victoria County History for Berkshire*, vol. 3 (1923), pp.475-84.

5) **South Oxfordshire Local Plan adopted by Council, April 1997**

LISTED BUILDINGS

POLICY CON 1

Proposals for the demolition of any building included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest will not be permitted except in most exceptional circumstances.

POLICY CON 2

The council will make full use of its powers to serve repairs notices to prevent the wilful neglect of listed buildings.

ALTERATIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS

POLICY CON 3

The use of modern materials such as aluminium and upvc will not normally be permitted for the doors or windows of listed buildings. Sealed double-glazed timber windows will not normally be permitted unless their mouldings precisely match those of traditional windows. The use of secondary glazing will normally be acceptable.

POLICY CON 4

Listed building consent will not normally be granted for proposals which involve the use of cement-rich mortars, abrasive cleaning methods and chemically-based sealants, nor for the painting of unpainted brickwork and stone or the use of unsuitable colour schemes on listed buildings.

POLICY CON 5

The alteration or removal of historic internal features in buildings included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

CHANGES OF USE AND EXTENSIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS

POLICY CON 6

Any change of use of a listed building must be appropriate to its character, and any extension must be sympathetic to the original structure in design, scale and materials and must not dominate or overwhelm it.

THE SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS

POLICY CON 7

Proposals for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will normally be refused.

CONSERVATION AREAS

POLICY CON 8

The council will use all its powers under the relevant acts to ensure that the character of individual conservation areas is preserved or enhanced.

POLICY CON 9

Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will normally only be granted if the loss of the building would not adversely affect the character of the area, and if there are detailed and acceptable plans for the redevelopment of the site.

POLICY CON 10

When considering proposals for development in conservation areas, the council will require:-

- (i) the design and scale of new work to be in sympathy with the established character of the area;
- (ii) the use of traditional materials, whenever this is appropriate to the character of the area;
- (iii) the retention of existing walls, hedges, or any other features which contribute to the character of the area.

THATCHING STYLE

POLICY CON 11

In order to protect the traditional thatching style of South Oxfordshire the District Council will generally promote the use of long straw and resist the introduction of patterned block-cut ridges on thatched buildings.

ADVERTISEMENTS IN CONSERVATION AREAS AND ON LISTED BUILDINGS

POLICY CON 12

The council will not normally permit the display of signs on a listed building or in a conservation area which are in any way harmful to the character and appearance of the building or area. Where it is accepted that a sign is needed, its design and materials should reflect the best traditional practice.

POLICY CON 13

The installation of blinds or canopies of untraditional form or materials on buildings within conservation areas will not normally be permitted.

BURGAGE PLOTS

POLICY CON 14

In the historic towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford the burgage plots to the rear of the principal streets will generally be protected from amalgamation and from development which would diminish their historic interest and value.

PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS

POLICY CON 15

In conservation areas, the council will take all available steps to ensure:

- (i) that the introduction or intensification of uses which conflict with the special character of the area is resisted;
- (ii) that existing walls, buildings, trees, hedges, open spaces and important views are retained, where they contribute to the character of the area;
- (iii) that whenever the opportunity arises, unsightly overhead wires and unnecessary signs are removed. The statutory undertakers will be urged to site their services underground;
- (iv) that where necessary, improvements are made to the visual quality of the floorspace, street furniture, lighting and signs; and
- (v) that development outside a conservation area would not have a detrimental effect on the conservation area.

ARCHAEOLOGY

POLICY CON 16

The council will not normally permit development which would adversely affect the sites or settings of nationally-important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, or those of monuments of special local importance.

POLICY CON 17

Before the determination of an application for development which may affect a site of archaeological interest or potentially of archaeological importance, prospective developers will be required, where necessary, to make provision for an archaeological field evaluation, in order to enable an informed and reasoned planning decision to be made.

POLICY CON 18

Wherever practicable and desirable, developments affecting sites of archaeological interest should be designed to achieve physical preservation in situ of archaeological deposits. Where this is not practicable or desirable, the district planning authority will impose conditions on planning permissions, or seek legal obligations, which will require the developer to provide an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication by a professionally qualified body acceptable to the district planning authority.

PARKS AND GARDENS OF SPECIAL HISTORIC INTEREST

POLICY CON 19

Proposals which would damage the character, setting or amenities of a park or garden of special historic interest, especially those contained in the English Heritage Register, will not normally be permitted.

COMMON LAND

POLICY CON 20

Proposals for development on or affecting common land, village greens and other important spaces within settlements will not normally be permitted.