



Listening Learning Leading

Station Road, Didcot Conservation Area Character Study

January 2003

Didcot Station Road Conservation Area Character Study

The Council first published the Didcot Station Road Conservation Area Character Study in draft form in May 2001. Following a period of public consultation, including a public meeting held on 16th October 2001, the Council approved the Character Study on the 27th February 2003.

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 Station Road, Didcot 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

This includes areas with potential for development and improvement and advice on extensions and repairs to existing buildings.

4. The Article 4 Direction and Financial Assistance

5. Summary of Possible Areas for Enhancement

6. Acknowledgements and Bibliography

7. Existing Conservation Policies

These are extracts from the 1997 Adopted South Oxfordshire Local Plan and the 2011 Second Deposit Draft South Oxfordshire Local Plan identifying policies relating to listed buildings and Conservation Areas.

8. 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. 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.

1. Station Road, Didcot - the History of the Area

When the railway arrived in 1840 the village was still a tiny hamlet. Records from the census of 1841 show only 39 inhabited houses there and 203 inhabitants.

At the time of the railway's arrival in 1840 a small station house was built some distance from the village on the Great Western Railway's (GWR) main line from London to Bristol. Didcot halt remained a quiet rural stop on the line for the first few years of its existence until the GWR built a branch line to Oxford in 1844. This departed from the main line at Didcot and so a larger station and improved facilities were needed for the passengers and goods changing trains. From the later 1840s and through the next decade Didcot Junction, as it had now been renamed, became a key point in the western portion of Britain's railways system, an importance only increased by the construction of another branch line south from Didcot to Southampton via Newbury in 1882.

Soon after the construction of the Oxford branch the village's population had grown (to 241 in 1851) with the influx of railway workers from the West Country and London. Just twenty years later the population had almost tripled and the sleepy rural village had become a bustling railway town with a cosmopolitan population. Initially the new residents were housed among the population in both Didcot village and nearby East Hagbourne or at the White Hart inn or the newly built (1846) Junction Hotel. A handful of new houses was, however, soon built near the station and by 1861 36 new houses had been erected by local developers on a piecemeal basis, again, mostly

near the station. From 1866-7 local farmer Stephen Dixon purchased a large area of land in what is now Northbourne and started developing it as a workers' settlement. He also sold on small parcels of land to other local developers and by 1873 63 houses had been built. By 1887 a church and a shop had been added and a defined area, christened New Town, had grown up as a community distinct from old Didcot village. The GWR had helped facilitate this growth in 1848 by constructing Station Road to link the Northbourne area with the station.

At first the GWR played no role in the actual development of housing for its workers at Didcot. This was in striking contrast to Swindon, where the company had constructed 300 houses and was a major force in the development of the town and its civic life. In 1904, however, the company constructed a terrace of workers' houses on Wessex Road (since demolished) and, later that year, the housing on Station Road. This was to be the only company housing to grace Didcot but the GWR went to some pains to make it apparent that these buildings were the products of a modern ordered, business-like organisation. As such they were well built with modern facilities including some of the first gas lighting to be found in Didcot's workers' homes.

The Station Road housing was designed to reflect not only the qualities its creator wished to display to the world but to express the strict hierarchy amongst employees in the company structure. The core of the development consisted of four terraces of six houses sited on the west side of the road. At the northern end of these terraces a single terrace of four larger houses was built. Four detached

houses with reasonably sized gardens were also built, one at the southern end of the street and three at the northern end (two on the eastern side of the road). The sizes of these three types of house and the amount of garden provided related to the status of the employees they accommodated. The detached house at the southern end belonged to the permanent way inspector, who looked after the railway track. At the other end of the road the detached house on the western side was occupied by the locomotive foreman and across the road from here were the officials in charge of the telegraph office and the signalling and telephone section. The terrace of four larger houses was reserved for those staff famously respected in the railway world – the engine drivers. The terraces of six houses were for ordinary workers but were assigned to specific sections. They were, by terrace from south to north, permanent way workers; signalmen and ticket collectors; provender store workers (who provided fodder for the cart horses) and the telegraph line men.

Though these designations may have changed with time the GWR maintained the houses until nationalisation of the railways just after the Second World War. At this point British Railways took over responsibility until they passed them on to Wallingford Rural District Council in 1968. The then new South Oxfordshire District Council took over management of the houses in 1974 but during the 1980s and 1990s several of the houses were sold to private owners, with the remaining properties passing into the care of the South Oxfordshire Housing Association in 1997. In 1982 the District Council designated the former GWR housing as a Conservation Area

in recognition of its historic interest and in 1992 an Article 4 Direction was served in order further to protect this historic character. The extent and purpose of this Direction are set out in Section 4.

2. The Established Character

The former Great Western Railway housing on Station Road, Didcot, was developed by the railway company against a background of piecemeal and chaotic provision of housing by numerous small local developers in the New Town. Station Road, (originally called Station Hill), the main road between New Town and the station was, at the time, in a rural setting still surrounded by fields. As such the GWR must have been very much aware that the housing would serve as an advertisement for the company and its modern and business-like approach and suggest an appropriate paternalistic attitude towards its employees. This may explain why the design of the Station Road housing is so strictly ordered, both in the general arrangement of the buildings and in their detailing. This attention to design details was painstaking and rigorous. Although the buildings are of three types (reflecting the status of the employees accommodated) there are numerous architectural devices and details common to all the buildings and it is the remarkable survival of this uniformity that makes the road so attractive and characterful.

Station Road runs on a north-south line from its junction with The Broadway to near the railway line. It then turns sharply westwards and runs parallel with the line towards the station. The GWR housing is mostly set on the western side of the first straight stretch of the road from The Broadway where a gentle gradient runs downhill towards the railway line. The three detached houses are on the corner as the road turns towards the station and neatly define the end of the development. A fourth detached house formerly stood

at the top of the road, equally well punctuating this end of the group but sadly this has been demolished along with the first block of six houses.

Taken together, the housing forms a neat and coherent group which presents its principal elevation to the eastern side of Station Road. Although now surrounded by modern housing at the rear and currently commercial buildings across Station Road, the area still benefits from a surprisingly open aspect. At the northern end the railway embankment has stopped encroachment from the north and the large gardens around the detached houses serve to create space between the development and the rest of Station Road. The result of all this is that views of the housing's principal elevations and into and out of the conservation area are clear and open.

There are four blocks of terraced houses on the western side of Station Road that form an almost continuous range of buildings. All the roofs (plus those of the detached houses) are hipped and covered in artificial slate with grey ridge and hip tiles, replacing the original natural slate roofs. As the road slopes down hill towards the railway line the roofline of each terraced block steps down at the party wall between individual houses to follow the fall in ground level. Each block is two storeys high and built of a mixed dark red and blue brick in English bond. Brighter, orange-red bricks have been laid as string courses at the top and bottom of the principal ground and first floor windows with a double width stringcourse defining the division between floors. This motif is carried all the way down the street, stepping down with the changes in roof height. Indeed, the stringcourses also continue on the front elevations of the

detached houses, even though these are set further apart than the terraces. These essential similarities, along with the many details mentioned below, lend a uniformity to all the buildings, regardless of their size. This uniformity gives the conservation area a strong sense of identity and historic character.

The front elevation of each house in the terraces of six houses (Nos. 29 to 63) has a front porch with small stair window above it and a three-light multi-paned casement window on the ground and first floor. The ground floor window is larger with a continuous transom and includes a top opening vent above the centre light of each window. The terraced blocks are made symmetrical by placing single houses at each end with their own porch and two pairs of houses in the centre sharing double porches. The porches are of lean-to form on timber brackets supported by simple quarter-round stone corbels. Their roofs are covered with artificial slate (presumably all roofs were recovered in this material at the same time) and the sides clad in tongue and groove panelling cut to points on the lower edge in a fashion reminiscent of railway station platform canopies. Each house was originally defined vertically by the party wall head standing proud of the roof. These features were removed (presumably when the roofs were re-clad) but today a small brick corbel at the eaves remains to mark these divisions. Rainwater goods are in cast iron. Front doors were also standard; simple ledged and braced painted boarded doors with iron door furniture, several of which still survived in the late 1970s. The dominant colour scheme of recent years for doors, windows and rainwater goods has been black and white, comprising black gutters, white windows and black

doors. The original colour scheme used by the GWR is uncertain but it may have been the 'light and dark stone' (brown and light buff) livery the company gave its buildings.

At the rear each terraced house features a back door from the kitchen with two stone-capped brick steps down to the garden. The kitchen windows are two-light multi-paned casements with top vents that match the front. A pair of similar windows is on the first floor. The terraces all feature uniform combined toilets and coal sheds to the rear. These are simple L-plan buildings in the same brick and slate as the houses and with rainwater goods to match. They are built in back-to-back pairs for adjoining houses.

The engine drivers' houses (Nos. 65-71) form a single block of four houses. Each house has its own porch rather than sharing it with a neighbour. These porches are closed on the sides with small windows unlike those in the six-house terraces and the houses themselves are larger, extending to the rear in an L-plan with a second chimney on the party wall between the houses (unfortunately one chimney has been removed). Otherwise, the design is very similar to the smaller houses: the brick stringcourses continue to mark the descent down the hill and the triple light casement windows are the same as on the smaller houses. The rear walls of these houses, however, have more windows than the smaller terraced houses and slightly larger gardens but curiously the houses were only provided with outside toilets (built back-to-back in pairs) and not the attached coal shed seen up the street.

The three detached houses (Nos. 73, 74 & 76) are three bay two-storey structures built on an L-plan with

hipped slate roofs. The brick and slate match the terraces as does the pattern of stringcourses, which define windows and floor level in the same fashion. This imparts a strong sense of group cohesion even though the detached houses are set apart from the terraces in larger plots and on the curve of the road. Where the detached houses differ, apart from their sheer size, is in the detailing. Sash windows (of a two pane over two pane horned type) adorn the front elevations instead of casements. The front doors are original and feature four lights in the top half and a pair of panels set in mouldings below. The porches are larger and more elaborate. They are built of timber with hipped (artificial) slate roofs and are enclosed on two sides with fixed windows above tongue and groove panelling. The detached houses were provided with larger gardens which set them apart from the terraces and displayed the houses to best advantage. They did, however, have at the rear the standard type of combined outside toilet and coal shed seen on the smaller terraces.

When first built the whole street, including the detached houses, had low close-boarded timber fences to Station Road. At some point these were replaced with privet hedges. Although the hedges are not universal there are enough of them fronting all three classes of building to suggest that they were planted and maintained when the properties were still in GWR ownership and, whatever their original date, they certainly convey a strong sense of unity to the development. The back of the terraced houses is bounded by an alleyway. Originally the back gardens would have extended to open fields and the path behind their gardens was only formed into an alleyway when the

modern housing to the west was built. There is little to suggest what kind of boundary would have originally existed to the rear of the terraces but an early photograph of the detached house that stood at the southern end of the road shows a close boarded timber fence, similar to those originally along Station Road but higher, enclosing the path to the rear of the house. This may well have continued behind all the GWR houses but there is now a wide range of fences of various heights. Several mature trees have grown in the large gardens around the detached houses that make the entrance to the Conservation Area from the railway station end much more pleasant. Chief among these are two large chestnut trees outside Nos. 73 and 74 but the smaller trees in the gardens of Nos. 73 and 76 also make a contribution.

In summarising the character of the Conservation Area it is above all important to stress the uniformity of the buildings. The architectural devices and detailing that are common to the houses of all three types give a unity to the area which is a major part of its historic character. Having said this there are also important differences, such as in porches and windows, which mark one type of house from another. These are also vital ingredients. While the overall form of the houses and the spaces between them create the essential nature of the Conservation Area it can be said that it is the detail which imbues it with special character.

3. Possible Areas for Enhancement

Enhancement of the Station Road Conservation Area is best done by more rigorous attention to detail, for it is in its detail that so much of the character of the area lies. Indeed, so great is the degree of uniformity in the buildings that even minor alterations can have a very strong negative impact on the character of the area as a whole.

Almost all the original windows and porches are intact on all the houses. Where there has been any change to windows at all it has been confined to 'like for like' replacement or to the rear of houses where there are some instances of glazing bars having been removed and new bathroom windows inserted. Unfortunately many of the windows, including a number of the replacement windows, are now in very poor condition and the time has now come for consideration to be given to a unified scheme of renewal/replacement. This would have the advantage over piecemeal replacement of ensuring that the unified appearance of the windows is retained and by using a "standard" one-off section for details like the glazing bars would also help to reduce costs. Consideration could be given to the incorporation of sealed-unit double glazing (although the perceived need for this might diminish once the planned town centre redevelopment has been implemented and Station Road is closed to through traffic) but only if this can be achieved without compromising the slender proportions of the windows' original Edwardian glazing bars. The paint scheme for all the windows should remain white and where other colours have been introduced they should be returned to the original white finish.

All the porches are intact at present but there has been some change in detailing; for instance, the enclosure of porches, as seen at No. 76 is to be avoided. While original doors are to be seen on all the detached houses, all of the terraced houses have had their doors replaced by inappropriate and generally poorly made half-glazed doors, painted in a variety of colours. Only Nos. 49 and 69 currently have doors in keeping with the period in which the houses were built but these are copied from the doors on the detached rather than the terraced houses. It would greatly enhance the character of the area if all doors were eventually returned to the original form and painted black, unless other evidence is forthcoming about the use of GWR livery colours.

Another small but important detail is the colour of rainwater and waste pipes. As the original cast iron rainwater pipes have been well preserved along the whole street any deviation from the dominant black (as seen on No. 37) is all the more noticeable. The soffit and fascia boards at the front of each house were similarly painted a uniform black. Although most retain this colour some (such as No. 37) have changed colour. The soil pipes are modern additions, having been added when internal bathrooms were fitted to all the terraced houses. This said, they are at least uniform in size although there is a good deal of variation in colour. It would be most appropriate for the soil pipes to be painted black to match the rainwater goods. The roofscape is not well served by the large number of television aerials to be seen. At the moment there is frequently more than one per house, even though there is no reason why one aerial should not serve

more than one dwelling. Satellite dishes have also appeared on the front of some of the buildings. These are highly intrusive modern additions that are better located in the rear gardens at ground level. Cabling relating to telephones, electricity supply and television are also frequently seen snaking across the front of the houses in a seemingly random manner. In many cases these wires could be taken in through walls near the eaves to run inside the house or at least be fixed adjacent to a down pipe to minimise their visual impact.

As mentioned above, the original front fences have long been replaced by privet hedges which are attractive, in keeping with the type and period of the houses and form a well established part of the local scene. It is regrettable, therefore, that several sections of hedge have been removed and replaced by brick walls or picket or chain-link fences, as at Nos. 31 and 33. Such walls and fences are not to be encouraged and those which do exist could with benefit be replaced by new hedges. Areas of hedge have also been removed for vehicular access at the detached houses. The large gardens at these properties have also encouraged the construction of hard standings and garages and sheds visible from the street. Such development can reduce the quality of the garden spaces between the detached houses which is such an important part of their character.

Many of the houses have seen large amounts of repointing. This is especially evident on the ends of terraces and on the detached houses where most of the corners have been repointed. The use of a mortar of matching type and colour is important when carrying out such repairs. Not

only will a mortar of inappropriate strength either weather too rapidly or pass excessive weathering on to the brickwork of adjacent pointing, but a difference in colour will be highly visible. Much of the repointing that can be seen is strikingly light in tone. The original mortar is quite dark, possibly partly as a result of atmospheric pollution over the last century, but probably deliberately soot-coloured to blend with the dark brick. If repointing is to be undertaken the joints should be raked out by hand, rather than mechanically cut out, in order to preserve the edges of the brick, and a suitable matching mortar used.

There is no real scope for extension of buildings in the conservation area. The roofs of all the houses are too low to encourage loft conversions with the resultant roof lights or dormers. There has already been some construction of minor extensions to the rear of the houses, including enclosed porches and links to the outhouse, that are temporary and insubstantial in appearance. Despite these and the proliferation of sheds, greenhouses and the like at the rear, Station Road still retains a very strong sense of the original aspect of the GWR houses and forms of extension which would compromise this character will not be encouraged. The character of the rear elevation is a plain, functional one and is easily compromised by more solid forms of construction such as kitchen extensions.

The impact of any new development in the areas immediately surrounding the conservation area needs to be carefully considered. Despite the dramatic changes that have taken place in Didcot over the last 100 years the character of the Station Road GWR housing has survived remarkably well.

Both the car park at the southern end of the terrace and the area of commercial premises on the eastern side of the road are programmed to be redeveloped as part of the Didcot town centre development. Any development in the car park needs to be of a scale and in a position that will not dominate or detract from the first terrace of houses. While it may not be possible (or even desirable) to ensure that any new building is in a style that directly matches the houses, the car park is a large enough space to accommodate a new structure and preserve the setting of the terrace. Replacement of the present concrete block wall between the terrace and car park with one of a suitable brick would also help to define the boundary of the conservation area and improve its appearance.

The eastern side of Station Road similarly presents a large area with potential for redevelopment. Terraced housing to compliment, but not ape, the historic buildings might be an appropriate solution but, again, needs to be of a scale and in a position that will not dominate or detract from the Conservation Area. By keeping any new buildings to two storeys with suitably low roof lines and especially by setting them back from the road behind a wide grass verge, the character of the existing houses will be preserved. Indeed, development of this scale on Station Road would present a perfect opportunity for more general environmental improvements. A significant benefit will be the removal of the heavy through traffic. This may enable the laying of granite setts on the road surface, while replacing the existing tarmac pavement with stone paving would also greatly enhance the overall character and appearance, especially if combined with an

appropriate rationalisation of overhead wires and street lighting. It is recognised, however, that all this would require considerable funding and is unlikely to be undertaken in a single phase. Another important matter to be addressed is the issue of on-street residents' parking which may become practicable with the removal of through traffic; here the benefits of convenience and security will need to be balanced against the potentially adverse impact of parked cars on the character and appearance of the conservation area. One possible solution would be the provision of a purpose-designed garage block close to but outside the conservation area.

4. The Article 4 Direction and Financial Assistance

The Article 4 Direction served by the District Council in 1992 removes the right to carry out certain works such as replacing or painting doors and windows, normally regarded as 'permitted development', without first applying for planning permission. No fee is charged for a planning application where it is simply the result of the serving of the Direction.

The Council recognises that a number of alterations took place before the Direction was served, such as the replacement of many original doors, the removal of some hedging and the repainting in different colours of windows and guttering. The Council therefore wishes to encourage owners not only to retain surviving architectural features, but also to reinstate lost ones, such as front doors to the original pattern. Financial assistance may be available in some circumstances for the repair or reinstatement of original features. It could also be beneficial to restore original Great Western Railway Company colours to front doors and the timberwork of the prominent open porches. The Council's Conservation Team can provide further advice on this.

The reason for serving a Direction is not to preserve Station Road as a museum piece. Rather, it is to ensure that full consideration is given to the likely effect of any proposed alterations, not only on the character of individual buildings, but also on the appearance of the whole area. This is felt to be to the benefit of every resident of Station Road where the properties all have a very strong and attractive visual link. The Council hopes that it can work with the

residents to protect the character for this and future generations. Meanwhile, planning permission is required for the following works:

1. Any extensions to the front, side or rear, whatever the size.
2. Alterations to the roof, including the roof material.
3. Alterations to windows and exterior doors.
4. The painting of any part of the exterior, including windows and doors, walls, fascia boards, guttering and downpipes.
5. Alterations to the front porch.
6. Alterations to the means of enclosure of the property i.e. hedges, fences and walls.
7. The erection of a satellite dish anywhere on the property or within its curtilage (boundaries).

A full copy of the Direction may be obtained from the Council, along with a leaflet explaining the background to it. The Council's Conservation Team can also provide advice on possible grant-aid, whether for individual buildings or to the area as a whole.

5. Summary of possible areas of enhancement

The Council encourages:

- owners to retain surviving architectural features and to reinstate lost ones, such as front doors to the original colour (black) and pattern.
- the laying of granite setts on the road surface, while replacing the existing tarmac pavement with stone paving and if combined with an appropriate rationalisation of overhead wires and street lighting
- replacement of the present concrete block wall between the terrace and car park with one of a suitable brick
- repointing of the joints should be raked out by hand, rather than mechanically cut out, and a suitable matching mortar used
- the replacement of front walls and fences by new privet hedges
- cabling relating to telephones, electricity supply and television could be taken in through walls near the eaves and run inside the house or at least be fixed adjacent to a down pipe to minimise their visual impact
- the use of one aerial serving all the dwellings and that Satellite dishes are better located in the rear gardens at ground level
- the waste and cast iron rainwater pipes should be painted uniform black
- that soffit and fascia boards should be painted a uniform black
- a unified scheme of renewal/replacement windows, painted white. Consideration could

be given to the incorporation of sealed-unit double glazing but only if this can be achieved without compromising the slender proportions of the windows' original Edwardian glazing bars.

- open porches (the enclosure of porches is to be avoided)
- no extensions which would compromise the character.

6. Acknowledgements and Bibliography

The Council gratefully acknowledges the information provided by a number of individuals in preparing this text. Particularly helpful were the comments provided by Mick Dean of the Didcot Railway Centre, the Town Council and residents of Station Road.

Further material on the railway workers' houses can be found in the following sources:-

Airs, M

Notes on 19th century census returns (MS held in SODC files)

Lingham, BF, 1992

The Railway Comes to Didcot, A History of the Town, 1839-1918 (Alan Sutton)

A Poor Struggling Little Town, 1918-1945

Lingham, BF and Hall, MJ 1977

The Changing Face of Didcot (Didcot and District Archaeological and Historical Society)

Sands, TB 1971

The Didcot, Newhaven and Southampton Railway (Oakwood Press)

7. Existing Conservation Policies

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.

2011 Second Deposit Draft Local Plan

Demolition of Listed Buildings

Policy CON1

Proposals for the demolition of any listed building will not be permitted.

Alterations and extensions to listed buildings

Policy CON4

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

Policy CON5

Any alteration to a listed building must respect its established character and not diminish the special historical or architectural qualities which make it worthy of inclusion on the statutory list.

Policy CON6

A change of use of part or the whole of a listed building will be permitted only if its character and features of special architectural or historic interest would be protected. Proposals for a change of use should incorporate details of all intended alterations to the building and its curtilage, to demonstrate their impact on its appearance, character and setting.

Policy CON7

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

CONSERVATION AREAS

Proposals affecting a conservation area

Policy CON9

Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only if the loss of the building would not

adversely affect the character of the area and, where appropriate, if there are detailed and acceptable plans for the redevelopment of the site.

Policy CON10

The Council will not grant permission for development which would harm the character or appearance of a conservation area. 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; and
- (ii) the use of traditional materials, whenever this is appropriate to the character of the area.

The Council will also take account of the contribution made to a conservation area by existing walls, buildings, trees, hedges, open spaces and important views. Proposals for development outside a conservation area which would have a harmful effect on the conservation area will not be permitted.

Advertisements in conservation areas and on listed buildings

Policy CON13

The Council will not grant consent for 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, it should generally be non-illuminated, made of natural materials and to a design and scale reflecting the best traditional practice.

Blinds and canopies in conservation areas

Policy CON14

The Council will not grant permission for the installation of blinds or canopies

of nontraditional form or materials on buildings within conservation areas.

Burgage plots

Policy CON15

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 by its nature would detract from their historic interest, amenity and nature conservation value.

Archaeology and historic building analysis and recording

Policy CON16

The Council will not 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 CON17

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 CON18

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 Council will impose conditions on planning permissions, or seek planning 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 Council.

Policy CON19

Before the determination of an application which affects a building of archaeological or historic interest, applicants will be required, where necessary, to submit a detailed record survey and analysis of the building. In some circumstances, further survey and analysis will be made a condition of consent.

Historic battlefields, parks, gardens and landscapes

Policy CON20

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

Common land

Policy CON21

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