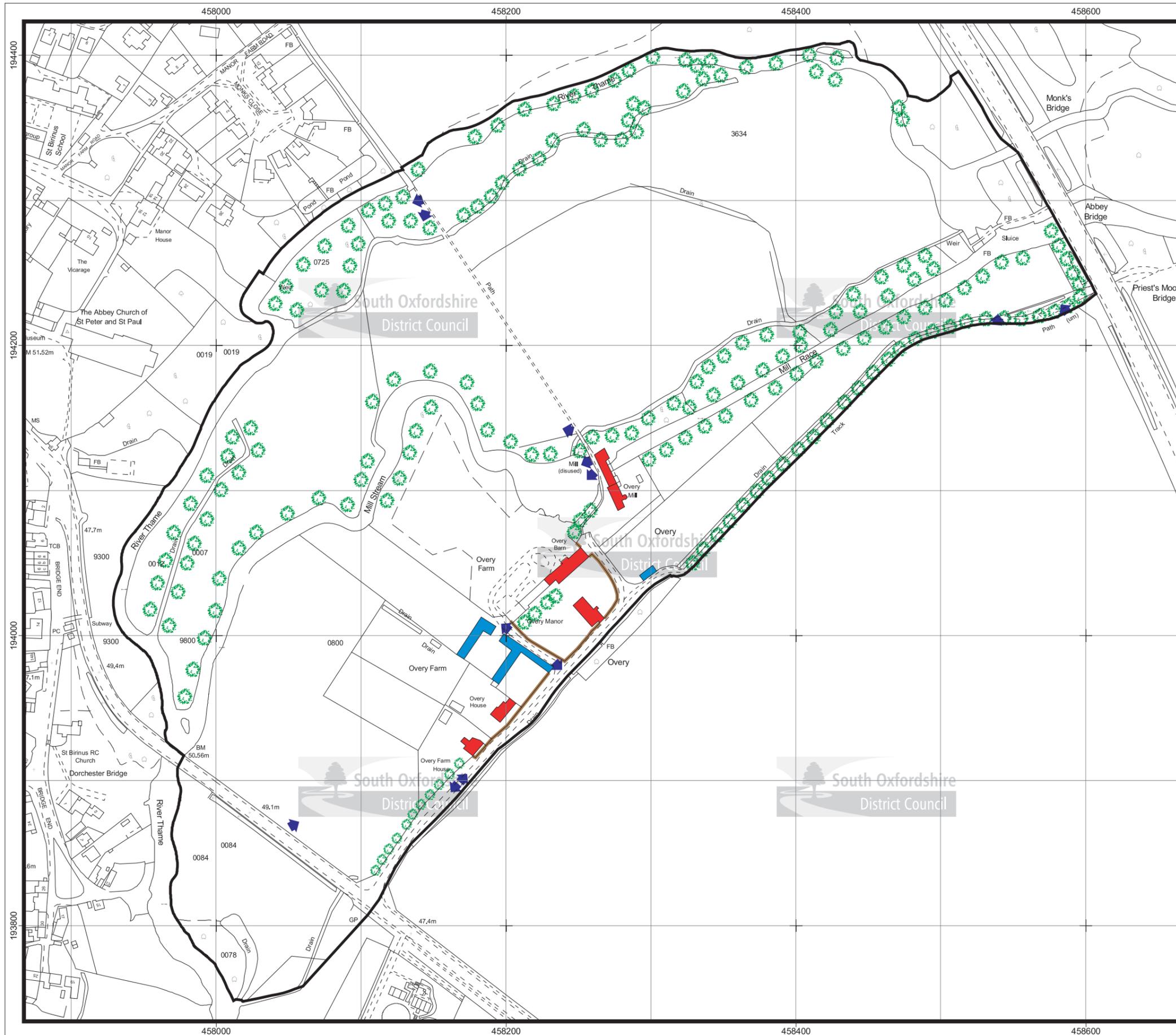


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-  Conservation Area (CA) boundary
-  Listed building
-  Building of local note
-  Important views in, out and around
-  Important wall
-  Important trees

With the exception of views, only those features in the key that are located within the boundaries of the conservation area are defined on the plan.





Listening Learning Leading

Overy Conservation Area Character Appraisal

May 2005

Dorchester and Overy Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The Council first published the Dorchester and Overy Conservation Area Character Appraisal in draft form in July 2004. Following a period of public consultation, including a public meeting held on 26th July 2004, the Council approved the Character Appraisal on 2nd September 2004.

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 Overy 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 appraisal also includes a review of the boundaries of the conservation area and possible extensions are identified. Any extension to the conservation area will be subject to a separate consultation exercise.

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.

1. Overy - the History of the Area

The small hamlet of Overy, within the parish of Dorchester, has a long history inextricably bound up with its larger neighbour and yet it remains a place apart, with its own distinctive character.



Overy from Dorchester Bridge

The present buildings of Overy were mostly constructed in the 18th century, but the hamlet probably laid down its roots some 700 years earlier. During the latter part of the 11th century two mills were granted to the Dorchester Abbey estate by Bishop Remigius, one on the Thames, the other on the Thame 'beyond the bridge'.¹ Both were known as Overy Mill, but it was the latter, "to the east over the bridge on the Thame"² which was the forerunner of the present weatherboarded building presiding over the mill pond and still in operation as a water mill in the early 20th century.

Overy, although small, was no poor relation. Before the middle of the 12th century, the hamlet was tithed



Overy Mill

separately from Dorchester and had its own rectory, indicating a degree of wealth. It may even have had its own church, perhaps one of the three around Dorchester that impressed Leland in the sixteenth century.³

¹ Lobel, M.D., ed., *Victoria County History, Oxfordshire*, Vol. VII, 'Dorchester and Thame Hundreds', p. 46.

² *Ibid.* p.45.

³ Quoted in Cook, C & Rowley, T. (ed), *Dorchester Through The Ages* (Oxford 1985), p.48.

⁴ *Op. cit.* (1962) p.48.

⁵ *Ibid.* p.50.

⁶ *Ibid.* p.50.

The grant of the mills came with good farm land: fields, meadows and pastures bringing income to the two manors of Dorchester - that of the Bishop of Lincoln and of the Abbey. After the Dissolution, the wealth from Overy's fields and stands of timber was collected by a succession of private landlords.

However, contrary to the increasing trend for enclosing land over the centuries, some of the Overy fields remained as unenclosed common well into the nineteenth century: it was only after 1861 that all the land was privately owned.

It seems that the farmers of Overy always had a "[R]eadiness to experiment with new agricultural methods'.⁴ And foremost among them were the Daveys who, by 1757 appear to have been farming most of Overy. Their innovative methods of using a four-course rotation, including beans to enrich the soil and root crops to "clean the ground" ⁵, caught the attention of King George III - Farmer George - who is said to have driven over from Nuneham to see William Davey's model farm.

Two generations later, another William Davey founded the Oxford Agricultural Society and was acknowledged to be "one of the most intelligent farmers" and "one of the best" in Oxfordshire, keeping South Down sheep but mainly concentrating on arable and continuing to experiment with new methods of husbandry. His son George continued the long tradition, farming over 300 acres at Overy and becoming a successful exhibitor at Smithfield.

Apart from the Cherrills in the sixteenth century, the Earls of Abingdon appear to have been the only other substantial landowning family in Overy. But by the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the Abingdon lands were sold off and the Daveys' star was waning too, their farm being bought in 1874 by St John's College, Oxford, to add to the College's 1,000 acre estate in the area. Arable farming and sheep breeding was to continue in the fields of Overy into the 20th century but perhaps without the same intensity of purpose.

The Daveys repaid any debt they may have owed to the area by giving generously to both Dorchester and Overy through their building projects. Although Roman Catholics, it seems that the family had long-standing responsibilities for repairing the chancel of the Abbey church, a duty they continued to perform as late as 1860.⁶ In 1712 the William Davey of the time rebuilt Overy Manor House, proudly recording the completion of this quietly classical red and silver grey brick house in a stone panel set into the front elevation. This house was extended, in the late 18th century and again in the 19th century, presumably by subsequent generations of Daveys,.



Overy Manor

It seems likely that the Daveys were also responsible for re-building Overy Farmhouse (originally their home when they were yeoman farmers), Overy Farm Cottage next door, the present Mill, and the Mill House.



Overy Farm House



The Mill House

All these buildings appear to have been constructed during the 18th century and share a similarity in style, possibly stemming from the use of the same limited palette of materials: brick (red and silver grey), some coursed clunch rubble, timber weatherboarding for barns and outbuildings, and plain clay roof tiles.

The barn, to the north east of Overy Manor, may be the only survivor from the 17th century in Overy, although it contains 18th and 19th century brickwork and was radically altered in the late 20th century when converted to domestic use.

It seems that the Daveys brought not only sophisticated farming methods

and fashionable building styles to Overy but also other links to the wider world through the succession of visiting priests who lodged with them, their hospitality extending to a French priest fleeing from the Revolution during the 1790s who is now buried in the Abbey.

In the mid-19th century, George Davey made Overy House a meeting place for Roman Catholics and his brother, John, built the chapel of St Birinus on land by Dorchester Bridge, next door to his home at Bridge House. Their nephew, Robert was the last of the Daveys to live at Overy, dying childless in 1901 - the same year that brought Queen Victoria's long reign to an end.

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Sherwood, J., & Pevsner, N. (ed.), 'Oxfordshire', *The Buildings of England* (Yale 1974).

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2. The Established Character

Overy is a small, self-contained hamlet lying along a narrow lane, sheltered by trees from the surrounding water meadows and open fields. Only the constant noise from the Oxford-Henley road disturbs the rural isolation which must have remained largely unchanged since William Davey built his quietly elegant manor house in 1712.



Overy

The rural character of Overy is evident immediately on turning into the lane, bordered on either side by hedges and grass verges. Where the fields on the western side end, the few buildings that make up the hamlet begin.



Lane to Overy

The first two buildings, Overy Farm House and Overy Farm Cottage, both face out across the lane and the overgrown dry ditch to the wide open fields beyond. Built of brick and coursed clunch rubble in the 18th century, they have the composed look of buildings with proportions rooted in a classical style, but they are undeniably vernacular in character. Each is set back from the road behind a grass verge, Overy Farm House behind understated wrought iron railings, Overy Farm Cottage behind a low brick wall interrupted by a graceful wrought iron gate.



Overy Farm Cottage

The only sizeable unlisted buildings in Overy, the 19th century barns at Overy Farm, are set well back from the road behind a brick wall which curves into one of the two courtyards around which they are set. Single storey red brick buildings, they were adapted to business use in the late 20th century, both facts indicated by understated areas of modern glazing.



Overy Farm Barns

One range of these barns backs on to a side lane leading to the entrance to Overy Manor, forming a hard edge, softened at ground level by a grass verge. On the opposite side is another hard edge formed by the stone wall around the garden of the Manor. Underscored by a timber farm gate at the end of this short lane is a fine view of Dorchester Abbey church across flat fields and watermeadows. In the opposite direction is an equally spectacular but distant view of the northern sweep of the Chilterns.



View of the Abbey

The fine stone wall of Overy Manor curves round to join the main part of the lane, being interrupted by an unexpected two-storey bay window on the side elevation of the house, before continuing around another corner to form a hard edge to the drive of the Mill House. This is also the public footpath to the mill pool and to Dorchester beyond. Again, grass verges soften the edge between road and wall.



Isolated barn

At the junction between the private drive and the lane is an isolated weatherboarded barn, linked to the settlement by the remains of a buttressed stone wall and together forming an important marker at the edge of open farmland. The view back down the lane from the barn emphasises the visual importance of the walls on the right hand side, the grass verges, the open land to the left and the pleasing leisurely curves in the road. Framed at the end of the lane is a distant view of Wittenham Clumps.



View of Wittenham Clumps

Unusually for a South Oxfordshire village, cars do not dominate the scene. The lane is too narrow for two cars to pass one another and does not invite strangers. Only near the junction with Henley Road does the wider grass verge suggest a parking place.

Trees play an important role in the character of the conservation area. The largest, most striking group are those in the grounds of Overy Manor. Elsewhere, other less formal, trees follow ditches and water courses, grouping around the mill pond and the mill stream, creating important contrasts in the flat expanse of Hurst Meadow which lies between Overy Mill and Dorchester.



The Mill Pond

The future of Hurst Water Meadow, historically attached to Overy Mill and an open space of vital importance to the area, was secured in 1996 when it was purchased by the residents and Parish Council of Dorchester to save it from unsuitable development and to provide a place for recreation.



The Hurst

The Hurst Water Meadow Trust now manages the area and has already implemented measures to conserve and enhance natural habitats, improving grazing, planting trees, and stabilizing river banks.

The future of Overy hamlet itself could be less secure. Despite the quiet sophistication of the houses, the legacy of the 18th century Daveys, Overy is deeply rural in character and therefore particularly vulnerable to unsympathetic change - even on a small scale - in a modern, generally non-agrarian culture.

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Listening Learning Leading

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Listening Learning Leading

Overy Conservation Area Management Plan

May 2005

Dorchester and Overy Conservation Area Management Plan

The Council first published the Dorchester and Overy Conservation Area Management Plan in draft form in July 2004. Following a period of public consultation, including a public meeting held on 13th January 2005, the Council approved the Management Plan and the conservation area extensions on 16th June 2005.

Possible Areas for Enhancement

The delicate structure of Overy's character is vulnerable to inappropriate intervention, to neglect and to its opposite - over-zealous neatening.

Landowners should be encouraged to manage and maintain the trees, hedgerows and ditches which make such an important contribution to the character of the area - but care is needed not to destroy essential informality and the natural habitats of local flora and fauna.



Trees at Mill Pool

The land around the mill pool is currently sadly neglected and overgrown, obscuring views from the public footpath. The former open character of the mill pool should be reinstated and views, particularly of Overy Mill, should be opened up. The mill race should be cleared and maintained to prevent the pool becoming stagnant. The length of footpath between two timber stiles is presently defined by metal fencing and larch-lap panels, inappropriate forms of



Path from the Hurst to the Mill Pool

barrier in a rural location. The original width of the path should be reinstated and maintained, and the stiles kept in good repair.

There is an opportunity here to open up views across the mill pond to the distant Wittenham Clumps, giving privacy to the garden of Mill House perhaps by a hedge of indigenous plants or a low fence of woven willow hurdles.

Carefully-considered planting of suitable indigenous trees could screen several intrusive elements: the 20th century houses to the south east visible from the corner of the lane to Overy Manor; the rear elevations of one or two houses in Dorchester which are highly visible in winter from the footpath across Hurst Meadow; the gas installation opposite the end of the drive to Mill House; and the sewage works which currently provides an unfortunate focal point at the end of the lane. Fast-growing imported species, such as leylandii, should be avoided: they are



Gas installation



Sewage works

View of Abbey and new trees



uncharacteristic and can alter and block important views. New planting, even of indigenous species, should also respect these views.

The earlier brick and cobbled surface of the footpath by the Mill pond - still evident in places - could be reinstated to make what is clearly a popular walk less muddy and more enjoyable.



Cobbled surface of path

The broken surface of the lane through Overy reveals an earlier surface of brown aggregate which would be a more appropriate finish than the existing black tarmac.

The walls, firmly defining the boundary along the lane, should be carefully maintained and sensitively repaired.

Overhead wires and cables should be laid underground by the statutory undertakers to remove a visual intrusion. It may sometimes be possible to relocate television aerials within roofspaces where these are available, and any satellite dishes should be sited unobtrusively (Planning Permission and/or Listed Building Consent may be required to erect satellite dishes).



Intrusive cables

New building in Overy should not be encouraged - the entire hamlet was built more or less at the same time and therefore has an air of completion which could easily be put in jeopardy. There is already a risk of the existing houses being over extended and losing their character. Similarly, the commercial presence in the barns should be kept as low key as possible, with signs being kept to a minimum.

Repairs to existing buildings and walls require a thorough understanding of the original materials and careful observation of their traditional use. The use of cement rather than lime mortar for repointing, for example, wide joints, the over-formal setting of flints or stone - seemingly small details - all can undermine the visual quality of the area and the performance of traditional construction.



Examples of good and bad pointing

Traditional materials and detailing generally can have a considerable and positive effect in enhancing the character of a conservation area, so easily undermined by the use of modern materials such as uPVC rainwater goods, or non-traditional styles of doors and windows. Rooflights and pipes breaking through the sweep of a clay tile roof can be visually intrusive and should be avoided wherever possible.

Some modern paint colours can also bring a certain intrusive harshness to the scene: appropriate colours selected from historic colour ranges can be more sympathetic and make a positive contribution.

Walls, fences, gates and garage doors can also affect the character of a conservation area for good or ill. Generally, simple forms in traditional materials, based on historical local examples, are likely to make a positive contribution. Close-boarded fencing and larch-lap panels are inappropriate

in a rural location. So, too, are up-and-over garage doors, particularly made of fibreglass or metal: side-hung vertical boarded timber doors would be more in keeping.

The South Oxfordshire Design Guide provides guidance on appropriate forms and materials to use in conservation areas.

At present, only part of the Hurst is within the Conservation Area. It would seem logical and appropriate to extend the boundary of the Conservation Area to include the entire area to the north east bounded by the River Thames.

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.

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