



Design and Conservation Strategy for Cherwell 2012-2015

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Vernacular buildings from the north (above) and the south (below) of the District, illustrating the differing materials and building style, relating to the geology



1 Introduction

1.1 The Purpose of this Document

The protection of the local heritage and the promotion of high quality urban design are very important to Cherwell District Council and the people who live and work in the area. This strategy sets out the Council's remit in these areas, within the broader Planning framework, illustrates what has been achieved and what we will strive to achieve in the future. The document covers a three year period from April 2012 to March 2015. This document has been subject to public consultation between 17th April to 25th June 2012.

1.2 What is Special about Cherwell?

The valley of the River Cherwell, after which the District is named, threads its way north south through the area and is a symbol of its evolution. The softly bucolic pastoral landscape accommodates, not only the river, but the Oxford Canal, once a vital transport route between the Midlands and the South East, the London and Oxford to Birmingham railways and now, in parts, also the M40.

The landscape character, settlement pattern and building materials of the area are derived from the local geology and make the District highly distinctive. Landscape and heritage are intertwined and no more so than in our villages which, built out of locally hewn stone and roofed in locally grown thatch, literally grow out of the landscape in which they sit.

North Oxfordshire is rich in history, having pre-Roman routes and settlements, and with medieval wealth derived from sheep farming. Banbury and Bicester are market towns, still with their medieval street pattern intact. Banbury was always a route and trade centre (its cattle market was once the largest in Europe) and, following the construction of the Oxford Canal and the London and Oxford to Birmingham railways, the town expanded significantly with planned Victorian suburbs.



St Mary's Church, Banbury Grade 1 listed

Early 20th century development to cater for rapid expansion saw Garden City style suburbs with spacious layouts. Bicester, despite being located near the crossing of Roman roads, remained a small market town until the late 20th century, since when it has experienced very rapid growth.

Throughout the District the villages are remarkable in retaining their strong vernacular architectural style using locally distinctive materials, so creating harmony in the street scene. In the north the incised valleys of the Ironstone Uplands see villages of rich brown ironstone with thatch and slate clinging to the upper valley sides; in the south the flatter landscape has cooler toned cornbrash and oolitic limestone, often traditionally lime-washed for protection, and often with window and door openings framed in red brick, with thatch or clay tile being the main building materials.

The centres of Banbury and Bicester display a complex palette of building materials, types and styles. Grander buildings display stone slates and the railway brought Welsh slate. Bricks were made locally and the warm red Banbury brick is quite distinctive. The sheep-derived wealth led to a local architectural style based on farming and industry rather than great estates and model villages.

1.3 Heritage and High Quality Design is Important

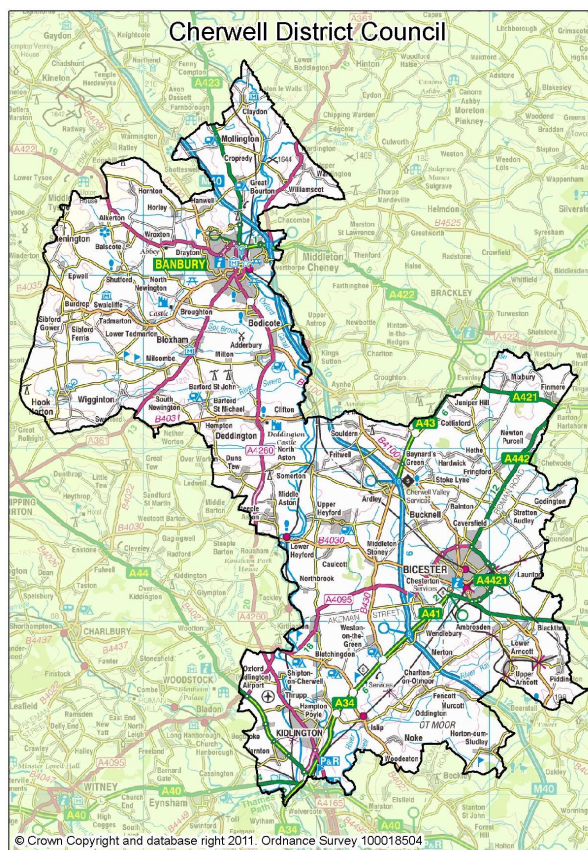
There are 59 conservation areas and over 2,300 listed buildings in Cherwell. Not only is this attractive rural and historic environment locally distinctive, so engendering a sense of belonging and local pride, it makes a substantial contribution to the local economy.

The area is an attractive one in which to live and its location, with excellent transport links, ensures that there is constant pressure for substantial growth. The challenge of accommodating continued growth in a sustainable way continues. Villages need to be assisted in retaining essential local services without being swamped by new building and the market towns need to retain their identity whilst developing as major service centres.

Banbury sits alongside the busy London to Birmingham railway and motorway but, despite the wealthy area, there are pockets of relative deprivation. The town occupies a bowl in the landscape, which poses physical limitations on continued outward expansion. The challenge is to ensure that development is directed towards regenerating rundown areas, where heritage, local distinctiveness and sense of place will be key drivers for change.

Bicester finds itself in a strategic location in relation to modern transport routes and continues to attract further expansion. Military sites lent the town a garrison image but, now that these are available for redevelopment, they offer unique development opportunities.

The centres of our two market towns also require refitting to accommodate higher level facilities to support this growth, so there are challenges in regeneration and place-making here too.



Cherwell District Council area showing transport connections

Understanding and conserving what is special about each place and using this to inform decisions on where and how new development should be accommodated is key to **promoting and managing change to create high quality design**. Identifying and protecting the special character is an essential starting block, but identifying appropriate locations for and ensuring high quality and inclusive design of new development are also essential in maintaining a high quality environment that is attractive to residents, visitors and investors.

1.3.1 Economy and regeneration

The overall vision of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Cherwell in 2030 is:

A diverse economy with opportunities for all, vibrant communities connected by a sense of pride, place and purpose

Cherwell's Economic Development Strategy (2011-16) has a key aim:

Our district will be an even better place in which to live, work, learn and spend leisure time

The quality of the natural and built environment is central to achieving these aims. A prosperous economy, consisting of thriving businesses, provides the basis for the maintenance of the local environment and investment in its development. Sustainable and energy efficient design can also help the operational efficiency of businesses. The design of buildings and neighbourhoods provides the 'form' to support the 'function' of businesses and the local economy, and vice versa. This not only benefits the visitor to a locality but also the investment decisions of people who live and work there.



1.3.2 Tourism

Tourism contributes £300 million to the local economy every year. The District benefits from the neighbouring 'tourism honey pots' of Oxford, Blenheim Palace, Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon, Stowe (the most visited National Trust property outside London), Silverstone and the Oxfordshire Cotswolds, all accessible within 30 minutes travel time. Many visitors base themselves in North Oxfordshire and make day excursions, responding to the marketing of the District as a touring base.

The District possesses a wealth of distinctive and attractive traits of its own that include the diverse Ironstone and Otmoor countryside, the Oxford Canal, the gentle Cherwell Valley and picturesque villages with pubs offering high quality cuisine. Recognised by many for its market cross and nursery rhyme connection with a fine lady on a white horse, the area also has strong links to the English Civil War, the author Flora Thompson and, over the last 40 years, the annual Fairport Convention folk rock festival at Cropredy, thriving farmers' markets and an annual canal day. We are working to promote the connections with more recent military history, the Second World War and The Cold War at RAF Bicester and former RAF Upper Heyford respectively, and these will offer a synergy with the nearby attraction at Bletchley Park. Four and a half million people, including many from the Far East and China, visit Bicester Village every year, but few venture beyond their shopping experience.

The challenge is how to get these visitors to explore further and stay longer. The weekend break and holidays at home are growth areas to be tapped and we are drawing on the intrinsic landscape and heritage of our 59 conservation areas, promoting green tourism, food trails, literature, music and canal festivals and, in so doing, helping to keep village shops open, pubs trading, footpaths maintained, villages well cared for, the local economy buoyant and the District looking the way it does. North Oxfordshire has a unique position as a quality tourism destination, but can only thrive if the quality of the historic and rural environment is maintained and championed.

1.4 A Word Picture of Cherwell: SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Varied attractive landscape
- Historic villages
- Historic market towns with medieval street pattern intact and well preserved historic cores
- Strong local distinctiveness
- Rich palette of materials
- Oxford Canal
- River Cherwell
- Buoyant economy
- Growth area
- Rural areas in demand
- Leisure opportunities
- Excellent accessibility by rail and road



The District experiences continued pressure for housing growth. Urban extensions to the market towns have delivered sustainable urban extensions

Weaknesses

- Loss of industrial heritage, both buildings and skills
- Some characterless suburbs
- View of Banbury from the motorway
- Lack of high quality contemporary architecture; tendency towards reliance on pastiche or “dumbed down” or “safe” design
- Poor design of some shop fronts and corporate design
- Under use of some upper floors of commercial premises in towns
- In shadow of Cotswolds

Opportunities

- Consolidate local character
- Channel development pressure positively to regenerate
- Raise standards of design
- Retain character of historic cores whilst regenerating underused sites to attract new investment
- Upgrade shop fronts
- Environmental improvements to key spaces e.g. Market Square
- Invest in Grimsbury
- Eco Bicester
- The Garth and Garth Park
- Integrate Bicester Village into the town
- Redevelopment of MOD estate, especially around Bicester
- Promote the visitor attractions e.g. Civil War connections, cheese manufacturing, brewing, Oxford Canal, River Cherwell
- Link with OCVC to reinstate traditional skills, e.g. long straw thatching, use of lime
- Heritage based tourism
- Historic significance of RAF Bicester regarding Bomber Command and Cold War significance of RAF Upper Heyford

Threats

- Growth pressures favours fast growing urban extensions, making organic growth difficult
- Gentrification of villages, resulting in change of character
- Out of town retail undermining historic core
- Effect of Permitted Development, particularly in villages, including uPVC glazing
- Effect of bin storage in Victorian suburbs
- Pressure to meet decision deadlines in development control, leaving little time for negotiating improved proposals
- Over-use of reconstituted stone
- Corporate signage

2 Policy Background

2.1 Legislation and National Guidance

The Council has a statutory duty to protect the heritage within its area. This is manifested in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 [The Act], which places a duty on Local Planning Authorities [LPAs] to control development affecting listed buildings, to designate conservation areas, to review these from time to time and to have regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas.

The Act is supplemented by the *National Planning Policy Framework* [the NPPF], published late March 2012, which provides more detailed policies for protecting designated and non-designated heritage assets.

English Heritage publishes an array of useful guidance and best practice documents, the most overarching of which is *Conservation Principles*.

As regards design, LPAs are required by the NPPF to promote high quality and inclusive design and this is supported by guidance from Design Council Cobe.

The relevant national policies and guidance are listed at Appendix 1.

2.2 The Localism Act

This introduces community led planning, whereby local communities can, through parish councils, produce their own Neighbourhood Development Plans that can have the status of being part of the Development Plan. The Council has published guidance for local communities on how to prepare such plans and expects the protection of the historic environment and the need for high quality design to feature as priorities.

2.3 Local Plan

The Proposed Submission Cherwell Local Plan 2012 is currently out for public consultation and it is anticipated that the document will be formally adopted as policy in Summer/Autumn 2013. This document will then supersede the 1996 Cherwell Local Plan.

The proposed submission Local Plan sets out the Council's vision for the District over the next 20 years; establishing a plan that will guide economic growth and sustainable development. The location and form of development are particularly important issues and the Proposed Submission Local Plan contains generic and site specific policies that direct growth to sustainable locations, reinforces Banbury and Bicester as important centres and protects the historic environment. Detailed policies on design quality, place-making and the protection of designed and non-designated landscape and heritage assets are set out to preserve and enhance the character of the District.

A list of relevant existing local policies can be found at Appendix 2.

2.4 Local Policy Documents and Guidance

The Council has published a range of formal and informal guidance documents on the conservation of the built heritage and on design issues. These are both generic and site specific.

When a major windfall site (i.e. not one anticipated and covered by planning policy) comes onto the market, we try to ensure that the planning policy position is set out, that any constraints are identified that would have an impact on capacity of the site, so that a realistic expectation of value can be made by the vendor in advance of sale.

A list can be found at Appendix 3.

2.5 The Cherwell Sustainable Community Strategy

Our District Our Future (2010) produced by the Local Strategic Partnership sets the vision for North Oxfordshire for the next 20 years. This notes that the quality of the environment is one of the features that people value most, both the natural and historic environment, with its “breathtaking array” of listed buildings, and the generally high quality built environment. The aims for the future are set out and include:

- Cherish the resources that define Cherwell’s character and distinctiveness including our natural environment, our built heritage and the vitality of our towns and villages.
- Support our towns and villages to be different from each other and maintain their local distinctiveness and qualities that define their identity.

This Design and Conservation Strategy will sit along side and work with other Strategies produced by the Council, which include the Economic Strategy and the Housing Strategy.

2.5.1 Economic development strategy

The central theme of this Strategy is the creation of ‘economic resilience’, whereby the Council focuses on combining the resources of private, social and public sector partners to develop our local economy to ensure it remains internationally competitive. It recognises our unique resources contained within People, Business and Place. There is a collective will to join together, particularly through the Local Strategic Partnership and informally to maximise opportunities locally for the benefit of the District’s businesses, employees, residents and visitors.

2.5.2 Housing strategy

This strategy deals with the supply of, access to, conditions of and provision of housing across all sectors and including for the most vulnerable. There are a number of themes in common with this strategy in the conservation of heritage and provision of high quality homes.

3 Working in Partnership

No public authority works in isolation in the provision of services to the people who live and work in its area and the provision of design and heritage service relies upon collaboration with others to be effective

3.1 Oxfordshire County Council

The County Council holds the Historic Environment Record for Oxfordshire and is responsible for above and below ground archaeology. The County Records Office can be contacted at:

<http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/oxfordshire-history-centre>

The HER can be accessed at: <http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/historic-environment-record>

Oxfordshire Highways plays a major part in determining the appearance of streets and public places, both in its role as adoption authority on new developments but also in undertaking repairs to existing adopted roads and footways. We work closely with Oxfordshire Highways on the detailed design of new places and, as a result, high quality design, sustainable drainage, innovative use of materials, street trees and street furniture assist in making quality places. In conservation areas we have agreed a protocol with Oxfordshire Highways whereby, before undertaking repair works for which the authority has deemed consent, the Area Office contacts us to discuss what materials would be appropriate. This has resulted, for example, in some sensitive repaving in local materials in villages.

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/.../highwaymanagementpolicy/hmpmsectionc.pdf



Mallards Way, Bicester, incorporates sustainable highway drainage and traffic calming along the route through the flood plain of the River Bure

As Education Authority the County Council commissions new school buildings and these are often the centrepiece of new developments. We have agreed a protocol with the Education Authority whereby we input into the client's brief to ensure that the architect is fully aware of the context in which the building will sit, aware of the content of any adopted design code or design brief and generally aware of the aspirations of this Council as well as of the client group.



The former Banbury Grammar School building, Stanbridge Hall, converted and extended in accordance with our brief to provide extra care homes for Housing 21

We work with Oxfordshire County Council on the sale of its surplus sites and prepare Planning and Design Guidance in collaboration with the County Council.

One recent example is Stanbridge Hall, a redundant former Banbury Grammar School building, where our Planning and Design Brief ensured that the whole of the former facade of this locally important building was retained and sensitively incorporated into the extension of the building as an extra care housing scheme by Housing 21. A further example has seen the conversion of the Locally Listed Victorian former Dashwood School into affordable homes by Paradigm Housing.

3.2 Parish and Town Councils

The seventy eight Parish Councils and two Town Councils across the District share our commitment to the conservation of the local heritage and high quality design and, being, on the spot, play a helpful role in alerting us to breaches of planning control and reflecting public opinion about development proposals. Requests for new conservation area designations come from Parish Councils representing the consensus support of local people. We engage with Parish Councils in the preparation of conservation area appraisals and incorporate their comments. These documents are a celebration of the place, as well as an appraisal of the historic and architectural character, and are generally much appreciated locally. In Banbury the Town Council has convened a Heritage Working Group, which was influential in drawing up the Local List for Banbury and in researching the historical interest of the extensive extension to the conservation area that was designated in 2004.



In Bicester we have been working with the Town Council to secure a viable future for The Garth, a locally listed building and park much valued locally and current home of the Town Council.



The Oxford Canal is a key feature of the District

3.3 English Heritage

English Heritage is the Government's advisor on the historic environment. It is the body responsible for adding buildings to the Statutory List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest, for designating Historic Parks and Gardens and for scheduling ancient monuments. Members of the public can make suggestions to English Heritage for additions to these lists through their web site. The Council may provide documentary evidence in support but plays no part in the decision making process. A local case officer provides advice to Cherwell District Council on listed building applications of particular significance. We have worked collaboratively with English Heritage on major schemes affecting conservation areas in the District such as RAF Upper Heyford and RAF Bicester, where English Heritage's Head of the Government's Historic Estate contributed to the preparation of the adopted Planning Brief. English Heritage has published a wealth of documents on the historic environment, which can be found at <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications>

3.4 The Canal and River Trust

Formerly British Waterways, the Trust owns and manages the network of canals in England. The Oxford Canal, with its locks, bridges and wharves, contributes a very great deal to the character of the District. The Council has commissioned an appraisal of the character of the canal corridor along the entire route through the District and part of South Northamptonshire, with a view to identifying buildings and structures that are of Local Interest and also the appropriate boundaries for a conservation area. An important output of this work will be to agree those matters of maintenance and repair to be covered by a Heritage Partnership Agreement between the Councils and The Trust.

<http://www.waterscape.com/features-and-articles/features/introducing-the-canal-and-river-trust>

3.5 Registered Social Landlords

We have worked with colleagues in the Strategic Housing Team to deliver affordable homes on major developments and urban extensions across the District. These aim to be tenure blind and provide decent homes of high quality design. We have also contributed to identifying Rural Exceptions Sites in small villages, where affordable housing is difficult to achieve and high quality design particularly important.

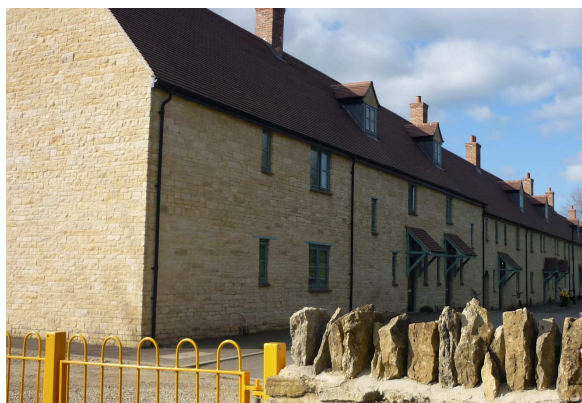
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/affordable-rural-housing-amp-the-historic-environment/>

We contributed to the self-build Front Runner Neighbourhood Planning projects at Miller Road and The Fairway in Banbury.

Projects such as the conversion of Stanbridge Hall, the conversion of Dashwood School and the Chapel Street / Bryan House development have been largely driven through by the Team. At Chapel Street / Bryan House the initial proposal was to simply redevelop Bryan House, but we saw the opportunity for a land swap with the Council's car parks on Chapel Street to enable this historic street frontage to be repaired and the car parking tucked behind the building line. Our Design Brief and layout was used to good effect by Sanctuary Housing and the resultant Chapel Street frontage is a high quality infill within a conservation area, that achieves level 5 of the Code for Sustainable Homes.



Chapel Street, Bicester, Code level 5 affordable homes by Sanctuary in accordance with our Design Brief



Locally distinctive housing in local stone at Bletchington providing affordable homes for local families



The former Dashwood School Banbury is being converted to affordable homes by Paradigm Housing in accordance with our Design Brief, retaining the attractive features of this Victorian School

We have published guidance on flat conversions, working closely with the Private Sector Housing Team, to ensure that property, often of heritage value, converted to flats or houses in multiple occupancy provide not only decent homes, but preserve the character of the building and the street scene. We are currently working on a Shop Front Design Guidance document, which will, inter alia, aim to ensure that access to upper floors is available and will use this with the Strategic Housing Team, through their Empty Homes Scheme, to bring back upper floors to productive use. Under the *Build!* Project we have shown, by drawing up conversion floor plans, how heritage assets, some long-term empty properties, can be brought back into productive use as affordable homes.

3.6 Stakeholders

At its broadest, the Council’s stakeholders are the Council tax payers, hundreds of whom come into contact with the work of the team each year through submitting planning or listed building applications. Greater numbers are affected by the conservation area appraisal review process and engage in the consultation process out of concern for their local environment or, perhaps, are more directly affected by new or extensions to existing designations. However, the public generally, including everyone who lives in, works in or passes through the District, is aware of the high quality historic rural and urban environment with which this District is blessed and which draws people to visit, live in, work in or invest in Cherwell.

3.6.1 Applicants

People who apply for planning permission and their agents receive a service from the Design and Conservation Team, including general and pre-application advice. Pre-application advice is essential in influencing proposals before an applicant’s ideas are firmed up. If proposals are inappropriate for the site we are able to make suggestions as to what would be more likely to be suitable.

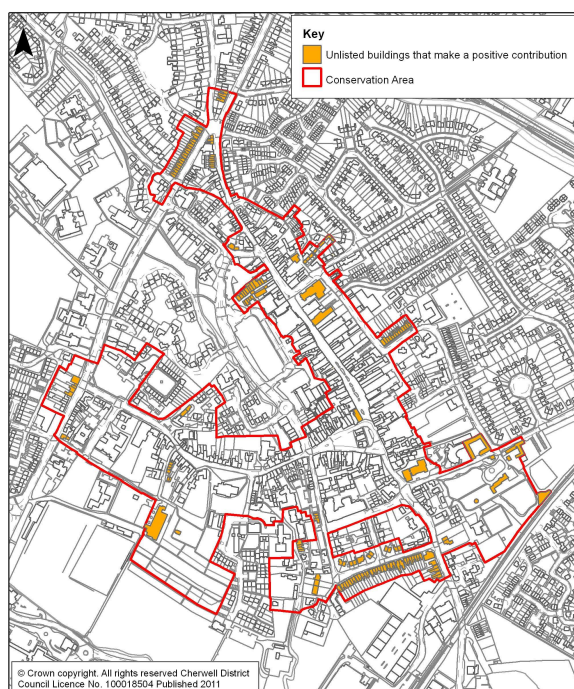
3.6.2 Local societies

Many of the town and villages have active local history, amenity or other societies. We try to engage with these groups in advance of the preparation of conservation area appraisals, not only to draw on the vast local knowledge but also, to engage local people in the process. Banbury Civic Society frequently articulates its comments on planning applications and this can be helpful in giving an added dimension to the heritage perspective. Bicester History Society made a valuable contribution to the review of the Bicester conservation area appraisal and we were able to contribute to their very successful History Day in 2011 to publicise the review of the Bicester Conservation Area Appraisal, RAF Bicester Conservation Area Appraisal and Planning Brief.

3.7 Neighbourhood Planning

In line with the Localism agenda, the Council is moving towards greater engagement of local people and stakeholders in its decision-making. The appointment of a Community Engagement Officer is assisting in this process. There is, however, scope to widen this engagement and, at the same time, to celebrate and further enhance the heritage and high quality design in the District. The Council has published a Protocol for Preparing Neighbourhood Plans to encourage this.

<http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning>



Bicester Local History Society made a valuable contribution to the review of the conservation area in 2011, recommending buildings for addition to the Local List (above)

Market Square before the construction of Manorsfield Road. Notice how the space funnels views towards the Parish Church (below)



4 Understanding What is Special

4.1 Conservation Areas

There are currently 59 conservation areas in Cherwell, with one further designation currently proposed. The table overleaf indicates the date of designation and date (s) of review of each.

4.1.1 New designations

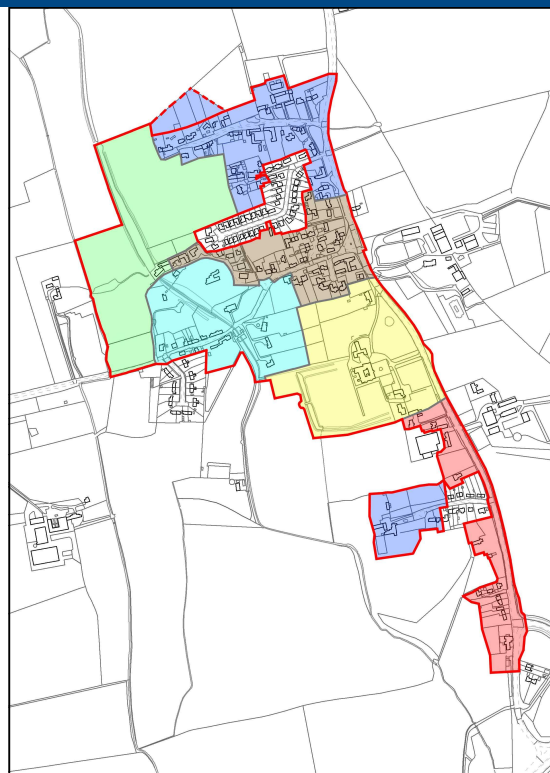
There have been 5 new conservation areas designated in Cherwell in the last 5 years. We are intending to imminently designate a further conservation area along the 32 mile length of the Oxford Canal. Other than former RAF Upper Heyford and RAF Bicester, whose historic significance was revealed through an English Heritage national thematic study, new designations are generally undertaken at the request of the local Parish or Town Council, whose view is taken to reflect that of the local parishioners.

4.1.2 Review

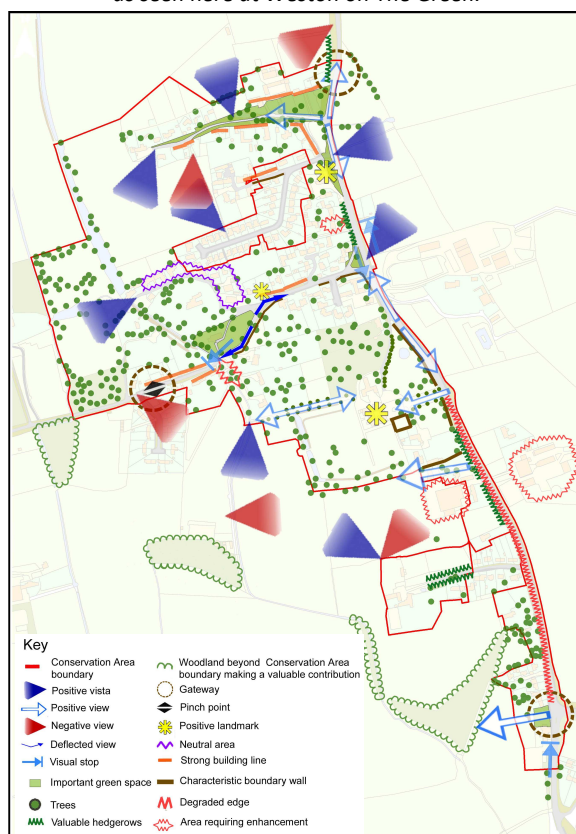
Of the 59 conservation areas 84% have character appraisals. We operate a rolling programme that aims to review 6 conservation areas annually, which, if sustained, should mean that all conservation areas are reviewed every 10 years to ensure that they are up to date and fit for purpose. During 2011-12 we reviewed Bicester, Adderbury, Deddington, Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower & Burdrop. A review of Cropredy is underway.

Priorities for appraisal take account of:

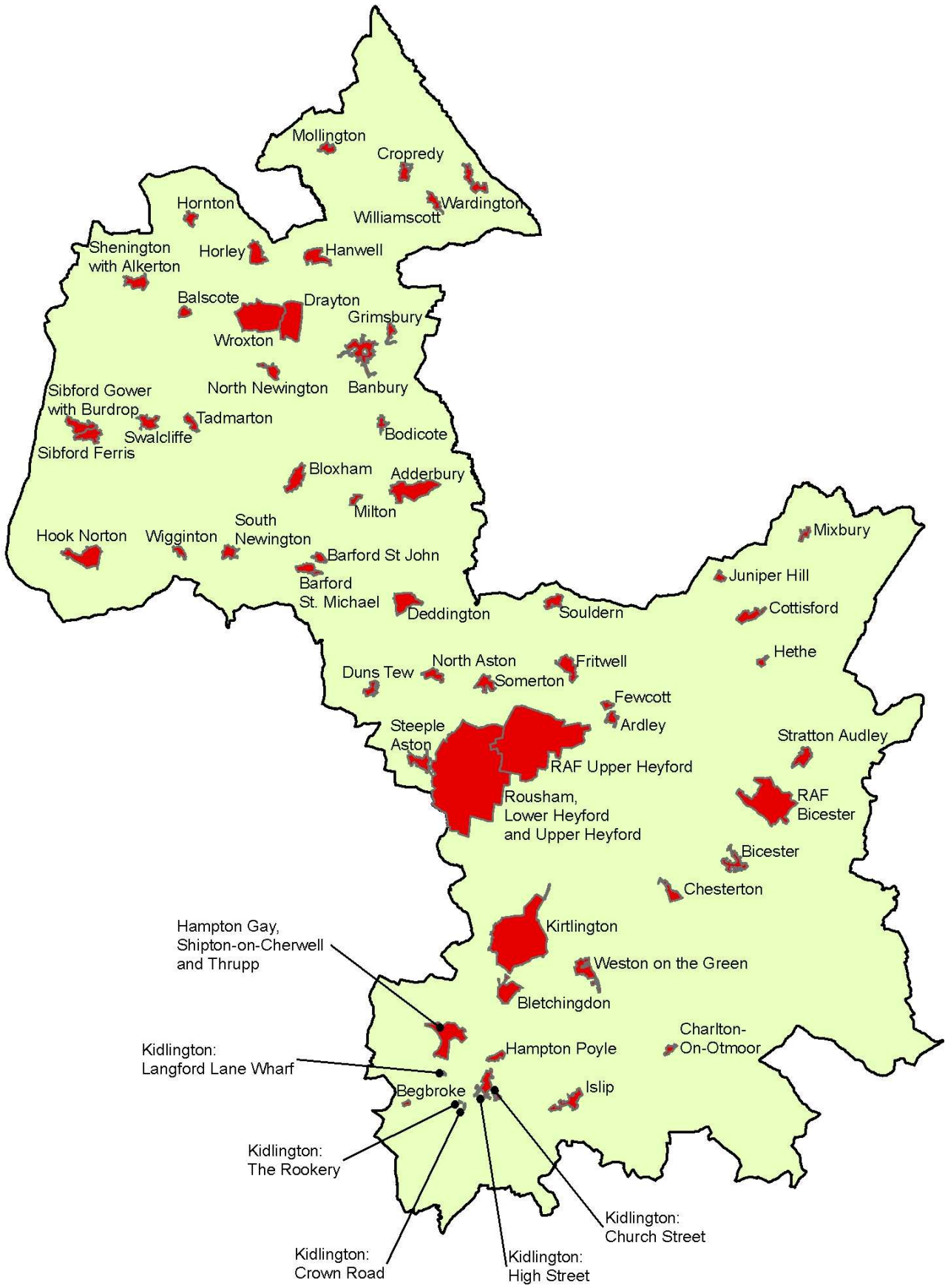
- Pressure for change (e.g. Banbury, Bicester, former RAF Upper Heyford, RAF Bicester)
- Proximity to expanding urban areas (e.g. Bodicote, Hanwell, Drayton, Chesterton)
- Lack of an existing appraisal (e.g. Sibford Ferris and Sibford Gower & Burdrop)
- Level of interest (e.g. Juniper Hill and Cottisford in response to the serialisation of *Lark Rise to Candleford* on television).



Conservation area appraisals define the special architectural and historic interest of each place through character appraisal (above) and visual analysis (below) as seen here at Weston on The Green.



Location of the 59 existing conservation areas in Cherwell

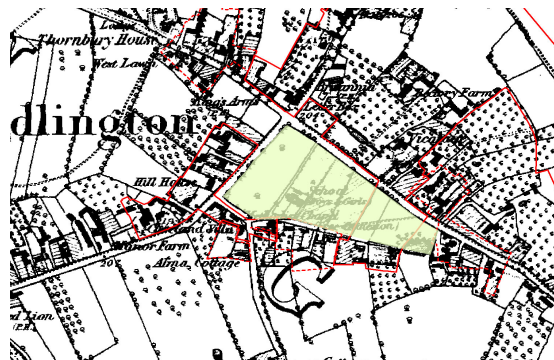


Conservation Area	Date of designation	Date reviewed
Bold type = reviewed within 5 years		<i>Italic type : Review 2012 -13</i>
Adderbury	Apr 75	Jul 91, Sep 97, Mar 11
Ardley	Aug 05	
Balscote	Apr 80	Mar 92
Banbury	1969	May 91, Oct 04
<i>Barford St John</i>	<i>Mar 88</i>	<i>Review 2012-13</i>
<i>Barford St Michael</i>	<i>Jul 88</i>	<i>Review 2012-13</i>
Begbroke	Jul 91	Jun 08
Bicester	1969	Oct 92, Jan 98, Sep 11
Bletchington	Apr 80	May 91, Jul 08
Bloxham	Apr 75	Jul 91, May 07
Bodicote	Mar 88	Nov 95, Apr 08
Charlton-on-Otmoor	Nov 89	Mar 96
Chesterton	Mar 88	Jan 95, Jan 08
Cottisford	Nov 80	May 09
Cropredy	Feb 78	Sep 95, May 11
Deddington	Mar 88	Nov 97, Mar 11
Drayton	Feb 77	Oct 08
Duns Tew	Dec 05	
Fewcott	Oct 08	
Fritwell	Mar 88	Jan 08
Grimsbury	Jan 07	
Hampton Gay/Shipton on Cherwell/Thrupp	Oct 75	Aug 07
Hampton Poyle	May 91	
Hanwell	Jan 85	Aug 07
Hethe	Mar 88	Jul 93
Hook Norton	Mar 88	May 07
Horley	Jan 87	Jul 91, Mar 96
<i>Hornton</i>	<i>Mar 88</i>	<i>Jul 88, Review 2012-13</i>
Islip	Nov 89	Nov 94, April 08
Juniper Hill	Nov 80	Mar 09
Kidlington, Church St	1974	May 91, Mar 96, May 09
Kidlington, High Street	May 91	May 09
Kidlington, The Rookery	May 91	Mar 96, May 09
Kidlington Crown Road	May 09	May 09
Kidlington Langford Lane Wharf	May 09	May 09
Kirtlington	Mar 88	Nov 98, Oct 10
Milton	Mar 88	Mar 96
Mixbury	Mar 88	
Mollington	May 10	
North Aston	Mar 88	
<i>North Newington</i>	<i>May 89</i>	<i>Review 2012-13</i>
Oxford Canal	TBC Sep 2012	
RAF Bicester	Jul 02	Nov 08
RAF Upper Heyford	Apr 06	Apr 06
Rousham (includes Lower & Upper Heyford)	Jul 91	May 96
Shenington with Alkerton		Feb 09
Sibford Ferris	Nov 85	Mar 11
Sibford Gower & Burdrop	Jan 88	Mar 11
Somerton	Oct 92	Mar 96
Souldern	Mar 88	
<i>South Newington</i>	<i>Apr 89</i>	<i>Review 2012-13</i>
<i>Steeple Aston</i>	<i>Mar 88</i>	<i>May 96, Review 2012-13</i>
Stratton Audley	Mar 88	July 96
Swalcliffe	Mar 88	
Tadmarton	Oct 92	Nov 95
Wardington	Mar 88	Oct 10
Weston on the Green	Oct 2000	May 09
Wigginton	Mar 88	
Williamscot	Oct 92	Nov 95
Wroxton	Sep 77	Nov 96
Total 60		

4.1.3 Appraisal process

The steps in the process are:

- 1 We advise Parish Council that a review is about to commence, ask for this to be publicised locally, explain the process, timescale and invite contributions and suggestions for possible changes to boundary or additions to the Local List. We ask for suggestions as to local individuals or organisations to contact for input.
- 2 We undertake desk based and field work research.
- 3 We share an early working draft with the Parish Council and any others who have contributed. Where alterations are proposed to the boundary of the conservation area or additions to the Local List of Non-Designated Heritage Assets are proposed, these are fully justified.
- 4 We organise an afternoon drop in public exhibition (3.30 – 6.30pm) and a follow on evening public meeting setting out the special character of the conservation area, any proposed changes to the boundary, the buildings that are proposed to be identified as undesignated heritage assets and a management plan that aims to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. The event takes place in a local venue, is chaired by the Lead Member for Planning or Local Member and attended by Design and Conservation and Development Management staff. We try to ensure that this is well advertised through early liaison with the Parish Council through their magazine, posters, leaflets, press release etc.
- 5 We make the draft appraisal available through the Parish Council, on the Council's web site and in local venues.
- 6 At the end of the consultation period we tabulate comments received and the action that is proposed to be taken in response.
- 7 We advise the Parish Council of any intended change to the boundary or other significant change from the Draft document.
- 8 We write a report to the Lead Member setting out the process, the outcome of the public consultation, the views of those directly affected, the changes to the document and the justification, seeking approval to the revised document.
- 9 If this is a new designation we report to the Council's Executive Committee.
- 10 Once the report to the Lead Member or to the Executive is approved, we immediately advise Land Charges, Development Management and the Council's GIS manager of any changes.
- 11 We send hard copies of the approved document to the Parish Council, any other contributing organisation, Oxfordshire County Council, English Heritage and Oxfordshire Studies Library.
- 12 All residents within the conservation area are written to with a reminder of how the designation affects their property.



Historic maps reveal the development of an area: here the former Green at High Street, Kidlington

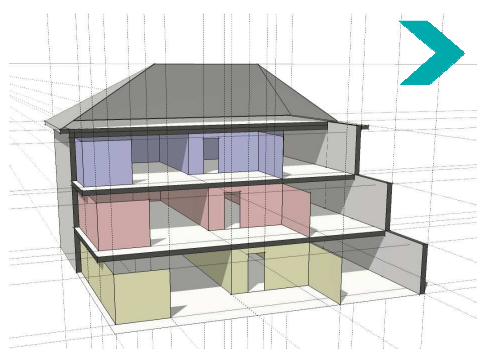
On an annual basis we place a Notice in the local press and the London Gazette of conservation areas newly designated and of boundary changes.

4.1.4 Conservation areas at risk

English Heritage's *Heritage at Risk Report* is published annually. The 2011 Report identified a number of conservation areas in Cherwell as being "At Risk".

- **Grimsbury** was included because some of its historic fabric and general environment had become degraded. The degradation of the area was unfortunately well underway prior to designation, but conservation area status has not enabled the Council to adequately control the many permitted development *ad hoc* changes to dwellings. One of the issues identified locally as a problem is the conversion of houses to flats and Houses in Multiple Occupancy. The Team published guidance to set standards for such development.

In view of the extent of permitted development rights, even in conservation areas, we commissioned a study to provide an assessment of the potential for Article 4 Directions to remove selected permitted development rights from selected properties in selected settlements. A qualitative assessment process will follow as to the benefits of such an approach including to Grimsbury. In addition, the Team has secured some capital funding, to work with match funding from Oxfordshire County Council and Banbury Town Council, to focus on specific improvements to the public realm.



Planning and Design Guidance:
Sub Division of Buildings
for Residential Use

Planning, Housing and Economy

Cherwell
DISTRICT COUNCIL
NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

- Other rural conservation areas were erroneously included due to problems with data entry. It is anticipated that this error will be corrected in the next HAR Report.
- **RAF Bicester and former RAF Upper Heyford** were included due to remaining uncertainty about their future.

At **former RAF Upper Heyford** the Council is working with the Dorchester Group to bring forward proposals that balance the preservation and enhancement of the heritage asset with the needs of the enabling development. A series of strategies aiming to ensure proper management of the flying field are being agreed.



The buildings at RAF Bicester remain in poor condition whilst the Crichel Down process is concluding

As regards **RAF Bicester technical site**, the Council has been putting pressure on DIO and the Minister for many years to ensure the site is properly maintained whilst the outstanding Crichel Down matters are resolved. The Council's Planning Brief (2010) and the recent "master plan for Bicester" identify the opportunities for heritage related tourism.

The **RAF Bicester domestic site** is currently being restored and converted to residential accommodation by City and Country Ltd. This is considered to be a high quality development that will secure the future of this important heritage asset. This part of the site should be removed from the Heritage At Risk Report for 2012.

4.2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

There are fifty six Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) within the District, of which five are identified on English Heritage’s Heritage at Risk Register. These are:

- Manor House, Hampton Gay (also listed Grade II)
- Castle Bank Enclosure, North Newington
- Ilbury Camp Hillfort, Deddington
- Islip Roman Villa, Islip
- Bomb Stores, former RAF Bicester, WWII Airfield, Bicester

The power to grant Scheduled Ancient Monument consent lies with English Heritage and therefore, as a local planning authority, the Council has less control than over other aspects of the built heritage.

St. John’s map of Kirtlington. 1750, reproduced by kind permission of the President and Fellows of St. John’s College, Oxford (below)

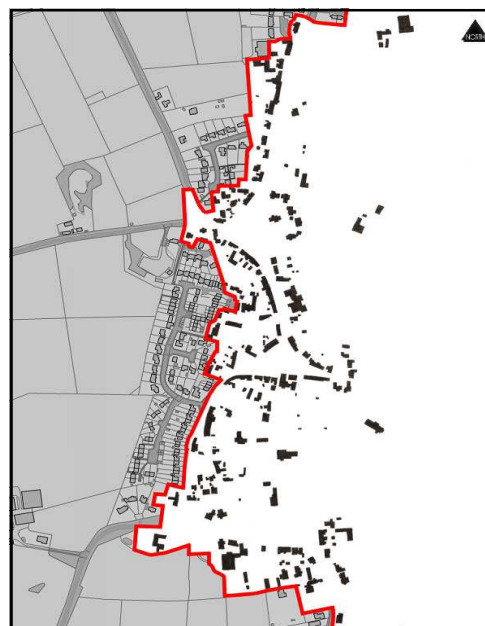
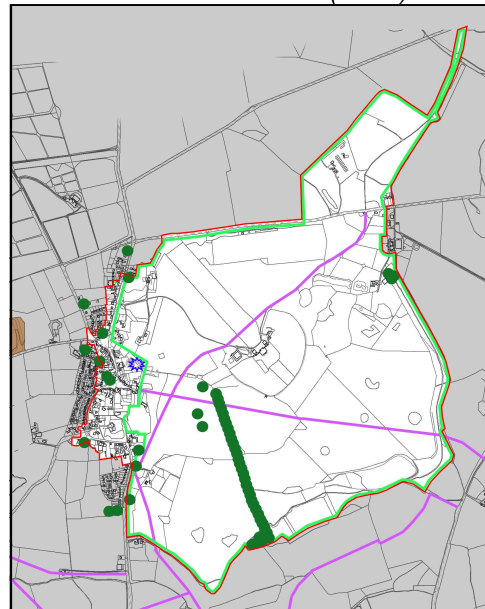


A figure ground plan of Kirtlington Conservation Area reveals consistency of building lines framing the two village greens, which are historic spaces that add much to the character of the village even today (right)

4.3 Historic Parks, Gardens and Battlefields

There are five registered parks and gardens and one battlefield (Cropredy) that appear on English Heritage’s list of designated heritage assets for Cherwell district, and six considered as non-designated heritage assets by the Council. None are currently identified as being at risk, but the pressure remains for owners to maintain the historic fabric of these vast estates and find viable uses for such buildings and areas to secure their future.

Kirtlington Park, (listed Grade I) a handsome Palladian mansion, stands in a park of 3,000 acres east of the village: the whole park lies within the conservation area (below)



4.4 Listed Buildings

4.4.1 Statutory list

English Heritage is responsible for compiling the statutory list of buildings of architectural or historic interest and the last general survey of the District was undertaken by English Heritage in 1977. A Thematic Study of military airfields resulted in a number of buildings being added to the list in 2000 and others have been spot listed since the 1977 survey. Anyone can ask English Heritage to add a building to the statutory list. The criteria that English Heritage uses when identifying buildings for statutory listing can be found at:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/listing/criteria-for-protection/selection-guidelines/>

There are currently 2327 statutorily listed buildings in the District:

- 39 Grade I
- 102 Grade II*
- 2186 Grade II

There is an array of building typologies: most parish churches are listed, several at Grade I; farm houses, tithe barns and other agricultural buildings; structures relating to military heritage; manors and grand houses, but most are modest domestic vernacular buildings. This is a high level of designation for the population and reflects the high quality historic environment of the District.



The Grange Adderbury, recently restored

4.4.2 Curtilage listed buildings

If a building within the curtilage of a listed building was on the site prior to 1948, had a physical and functional relationship at the time of listing and was in the same ownership at the time of listing, it is a curtilage listed building and should be treated as a listed building.

Curtilage listing is defined in law under Section 1.5(b) of the 1990 Act. If owners are not aware of the status of the building, at best it can cause confusion or, at worst, it can result in unauthorised works and potential enforcement action. Therefore, listing status is established by applying three standard tests, set out in by the Court of Appeal in the case of *Attorney-General v Calderdale BC* [1983] J.P.L. 310:

"three factors had to be taken into account in deciding whether a structure (or object) was within the meaning of [s1(5)], whatever might be the strict conveyancing interpretation of the ancient and somewhat obscure word 'curtilage'. They are:

- 1) the physical 'layout' of the listed building and the structures;*
- 2) their ownership, past and present;*
- 3) their use or function, past and present."*

As we become aware of potential curtilage listed buildings, through planning applications, site visits, inquires or other means, we establish whether they meet the above tests. If they do, we identify them on the publicly available mapping system on the Council's web site and advise the owners accordingly.



Coombe Hill Farm, Milton, an Inclosures farm built in the mid 18th century with all out-buildings intact and now recognised as curtilage listed

4.4.3 Non-designated heritage assets

These heritage assets fall into two categories:

- Locally listed - having special interest for the locality desirous of protection under the NPPF, but not worthy of statutory listing
- Making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area - these have protection under The Act as part of a designated heritage asset

The NPPF requires LPAs to identify and register these non-designated heritage assets and we are drawing together such a register across the District. The location of these assets is not currently available for the public to view because the register is incomplete and has not yet been endorsed by the Council's Executive.

Initially, identifying potential locally listed assets was one of the outputs of the conservation area appraisal and review process, where buildings that made a positive contribution to the conservation area were identified and the best of them were added to the local list. This process was slow and also excluded assets not within conservation areas.

The NPPF places a great emphasis on the regard that is to be paid to non-designated assets. Therefore, as part of a rapid area assessment commissioned in January 2012, non-designated assets worthy of being locally listed. In identifying their special significance, regard will be had to the local vernacular, to good surviving examples of local building typologies or use of local materials, to structures or areas with a social history or that have an impact on the local area. As well as buildings, non-designated historic assets include structures such as walls, crosses, bridges, street furniture (for example historic water pumps) and may also include significant spaces.



Holmby House, Sibford Ferris, nineteenth century gentleman's villa, a non-designated heritage asset

Heritage can be a catalyst to regeneration, as acknowledged by English Heritage in their document *Regeneration and the Historic Environment* and, where historic buildings and spaces exist in areas of major change, these can be a positive tool in retaining local identity, creating character and in place-making generally. At Canalside in Banbury, the value of the remaining canal-related buildings is already recognised by their inclusion on the local list of non-designated heritage assets and the significance of this area will be further acknowledged by inclusion within the Oxford Canal conservation area. The former wharves, winding hole, spaces and routes associated with the Canal are also key to understanding how the place came to be and these will also need to be reflected in the redevelopment proposals.



Springdale & Bishop's Cottage, non-designated heritage assets in Kirtlington; former Estate cottages where the window and door openings are framed in local red brick, with the burnt headers creating an attractive chequer board effect, that is highly locally distinctive

It is important to understand that identification as a non-designated heritage asset on the Local List does not mean that owners need to apply for listed building consent. The NPPF requires Local Planning Authorities to have regard to the undesignated asset in determining applications that would affect its significance whether directly (to the structure) or indirectly (to its setting).

4.4.4 Heritage at risk

Heritage assets fall into the status of being ‘at risk’ for a number of different reasons. These could be to do with the lack of adaptability of the asset to other uses, the location, the financial environment associated with the asset, or the owner. Rescuing an ‘at risk’ asset can be a complex matter and the officer-hours spent dealing with such a case may not necessarily result a successful outcome. Criteria for action is based on the simple Risk Level Assessment drawn up by English Heritage, but the extent of local authority action is always modified by the likely success of the outcome. Only risks levels 1-3 indicate assets to be ‘at risk’ and in need of some immediate action to prevent further deterioration. The following listed buildings in the District are on English Heritage’s Heritage at Risk Register:

- Manor House, Hampton Gay (SAM/Grade II)
- Church of St Peter, Hook Norton (Grade I)
- Church of St Peter & St Paul, Swalcliffe (Grade I)



Above: 4 Church Lane, Hornton (before repair)

Below: The Granary, Manor Farm, Lower Heyford: works were undertaken after the Council served an Urgent Works Notice



Condition	Occupancy	Risk Level
1. VERY BAD Likely structural failure or substantial material loss.	0. NOT APPLICABLE	1A. Extreme Risk
	1. VACANT	1
	2. PARTIALLY OCCUPIED	2
2. POOR Deterioration which may lead to structural failure.	0. NOT APPLICABLE	3A. At Risk
	1. VACANT	3
	2. PARTIALLY OCCUPIED	
3. FAIR Structurally sound but lack of maintenance.	0. NOT APPLICABLE	4A. Vulnerable (Buildings to Watch)
	1. VACANT	4
	2. PARTIALLY OCCUPIED	
4. GOOD Structurally sound and well maintained.	0. NOT APPLICABLE	5A. Buildings not at Risk
	1. VACANT	5
	2. PARTIALLY OCCUPIED	6
	3. OCCUPIED	

English Heritage Risk Level Assessment
(The letter ‘A’ refers to structures and monuments that cannot be occupied)

We work to remove buildings from the English Heritage and our own local list of HAR following the English Heritage protocol and in the last few years the Team have successfully removed four buildings, illustrated in the photographs below:



Above: Montague Farm, Hethe (grade II), after restoration

Below: Finmere House (grade II), now undergoing a programme of repairs



The Council has also compiled a Local Heritage at Risk Register and there are currently twenty eight assets listed including:

- Cargo, 16 Market Place, Banbury (where upper floors are in a hazardous condition) (Grade II*)
- SAPA, Banbury (Grade II) now subject to current planning application
- 18 structures on the Technical Site at former RAF Bicester (Grade II)
- Elephant & Castle Public House, Bloxham (Grade II) where some progress has been made
- Barn at Clattercote Priory Farm (Grade II)
- Manor Farm, Epwell (Grade II)
- 1 Church Lane, Hornton (Grade II)
- Barn at Mill House, Kidlington (Grade II) where some progress has been made
- Co-op Buildings, Broad Street, Banbury (locally listed)



We served a Repairs Notice on Grimsbury Manor, which is now beautifully restored

4.5 Urgent Works and Repairs Notices

The key to the preservation of historic buildings is, wherever possible, to keep them in use and in good repair. Where deterioration and dilapidation are in evidence local authorities can take action to secure repair of the building by serving either an Urgent Works Notices on an uninhabited building, or a Repairs Notice on an occupied building, under sections 54 and 48, respectively of the 1990 Act. These can be effective tools to help secure the preservation of historic buildings. The serving of such notices is outlined in the English Heritage publication *Stopping the Rot*, which is designed to help local authorities make effective use of these powers. The Council has adopted this process as its standard procedure, and guidance is currently being formulated for our website.

Urgent Works Notices enable local authorities to execute any works that appear to them to be urgently necessary for the preservation of a listed building within their area. The owner must be given a minimum of seven days' written notice of the intention to carry out works. The notice must describe the proposed works to be carried out and can only relate to unoccupied parts of the building. We served an Urgent Works Notice in 2007 on the owner of the Granary, Manor Farm, Upper Heyford. The building was subsequently repaired by contractors working on behalf of the Council.

Repairs Notices may be served on the owner of a listed building at risk as the result of its poor condition; the notice must specify those works which are considered reasonably necessary for the proper preservation of the building. If, after a period of not less than two months, it appears that no reasonable steps have been taken towards preserving the listed building then the authority may begin compulsory purchase proceedings under section 47 of the same act. We served a Repairs Notices and Compulsory Purchase Order, following decades of neglect, on Grimsbury Manor in 1997 and this has been restored to a high specification.

4.6 Article 4 Directions

Even in conservation areas certain kinds of development and alterations to dwellings do not require planning permission. These works are known as ‘permitted development’. They usually involve small scale alterations such as replacement of windows and doors, changes to roof coverings, and removal of boundary walls.

Individually many of these changes may appear fairly minor but cumulatively begin to have a significant effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Local Authorities can introduce specified additional planning controls known as Article 4 Directions which withdraw certain permitted development rights within conservation areas in order to prevent this effect.

There are currently six Article 4 Directions in place in Cherwell. These are:

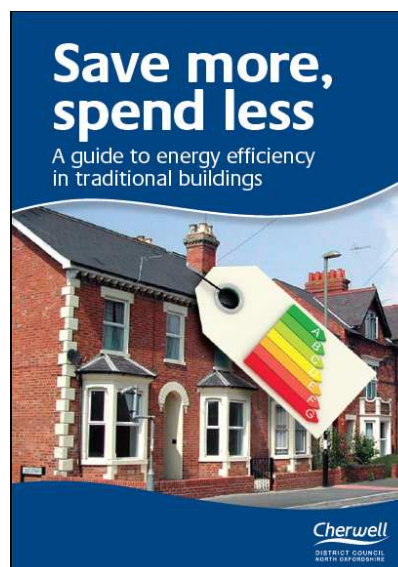
- Wroxton (1954) removes all permitted development rights within the core of the historic village
- Balscote (1969) restricts the use of a given plot of land to agriculture only
- Mollington (1970) restricts the use of a given plot of land to agriculture only
- Kidlington Oxford Airport (1978) restricts the use of the land and the placing/erection of movable structures
- Land at Castle End Deddington (1982) places a restriction on works to the boundary and gates
- 162 Bloxham Road, Banbury (1996) places a restriction on works to the boundary and gates.

Some Councils routinely remove some permitted development rights from conservation areas through the appraisal process. This Council has historically been reluctant to serve Article 4 Directions, taking the view that requiring householders to apply for planning permission for works that would not otherwise need consent would result in an increase in planning applications that would attract no fee. Concern has been raised over the past few years that the cumulative effect of many small changes is leading to the rapid deterioration of some environments.

In January 2012 we therefore commissioned a study to establish the scale of these changes and the extent of the harm that these cause to the character and appearance of the public realm in all settlements across the district. Once the data has been collected, in the form of a database audit of the built environment, and analysed, a qualitative assessment will be made as to the benefits of serving such orders on specific properties in specific locations to remove specific permitted development rights. The audit has been prepared in such a way as to enable periodic update of the data.

4.7 Energy Efficiency in Older Homes

The need for energy efficiency is well understood and is promoted in government guidance, but it can pose a conflict with the preservation of historic fabric. Replacement of historic fenestration with double glazing, floor and wall insulation, solar and photovoltaic panels etc. can all cause harm to an old building, whether a designated asset or not. Whilst we can control works to a listed building, the appearance of undesignated assets and, indeed, of whole streets, can be harmed by energy saving changes, however well intentioned. The Team has therefore published guidance called *A Guide to Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings* that aims to encourage householders to consider a range of energy saving actions before investing in measures that involve the loss of historic features.



4.8 Making Information Available

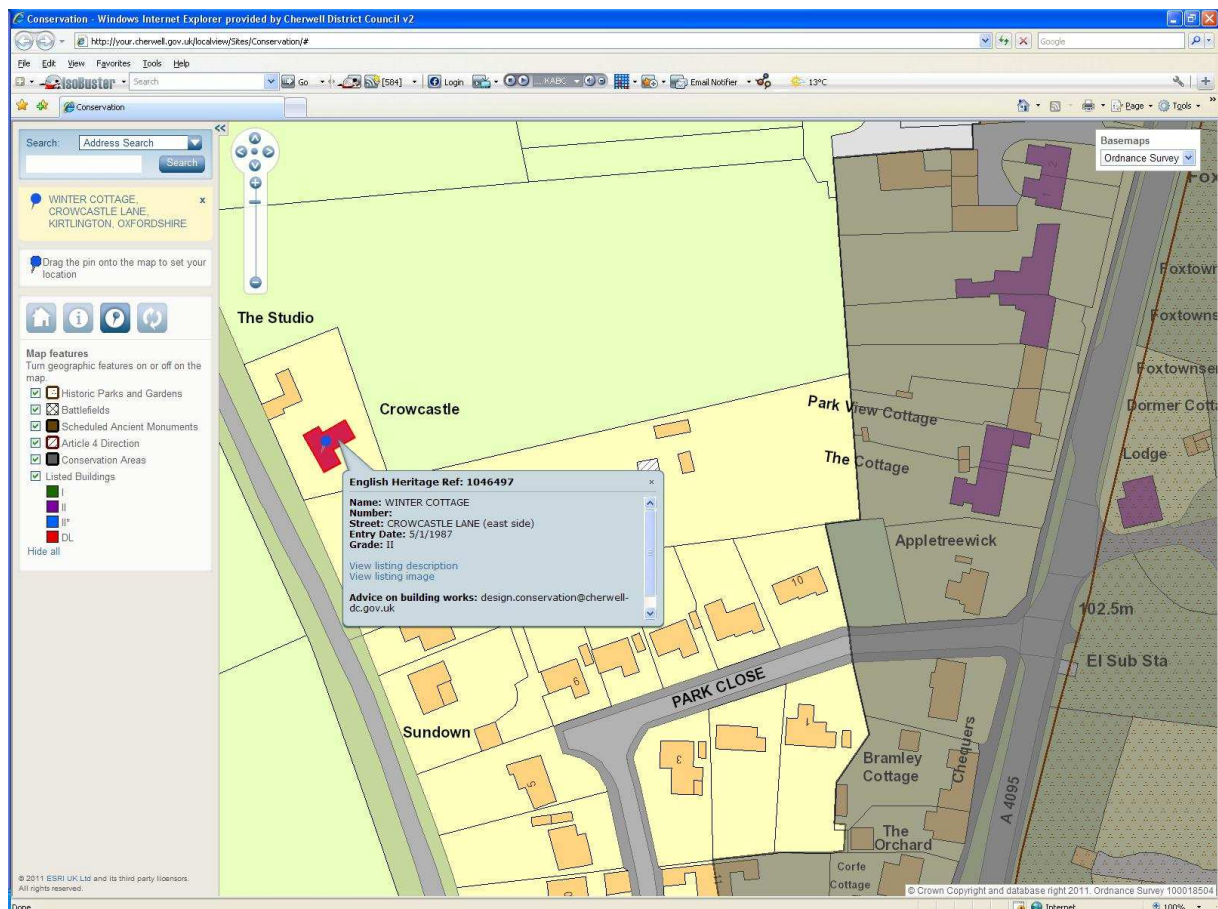
The Council's web site provides public access to designations via its online web mapping application. This enables members of the public to view interactive maps showing the location of conservation areas, scheduled monuments, Article 4 Directions, registered battlefields and historic parks and gardens. All Statutorily listed buildings, together with their grades, are shown and a link is provided to English Heritage's web site where the list description and a photograph can be viewed. It is also intended to provide a link to Google Street view in due course. We upload curtilage listed buildings as and when these are defined.

The link to the Council's mapping system is <http://your.cherwell.gov.uk/localview/Sites/Conservation/>

As far as known undesignated heritage assets are concerned, these have been captured digitally in-house and they are currently available to GIS users within the Council. They will be uploaded for public use once the local list has been approved by The Executive. In the meantime they can be made available on a case by case basis if required.

Each conservation area on the appraisal page has a link directly to an interactive map of each conservation area using the Council's online web mapping application.

<http://your.cherwell.gov.uk/LocalView/Sites/localview/>



This map of Kirtlington illustrates the heritage information that is available on the Council's website

4.9 Conservation Priorities

During 2012-13 we will:

- Review six conservation areas: Barford St John, Barford St Michael, Hornton, North Newington, South Newington and Steeple Aston, the first five of which will be first time appraisals.
- Designate a new conservation area along the length of the Oxford Canal.
- Consider additional powers of control and work towards significant upgrading of the environment in Grimsbury, albeit that it is likely that the investment of finance and any policy change will not take immediate effect.
- Work closely with the owners of former RAF Upper Heyford to ensure all buildings of historic interest, including unlisted buildings, are brought to a wind and weather tight condition pending future suitable uses.
- Work with DIO on a disposal to the market of RAF Bicester technical site and flying field to enable the development of the site for heritage related tourism and in the interim that the buildings are brought to a wind and weather tight condition.

Specific Ongoing Tasks

During 2012-2015 we will:

- Submit a report to the Council's Executive identifying the non-designated heritage assets across the District, the special significance of each and the implications of inclusion on such a list. Once the list is approved by the Executive, the non-designated heritage assets will be identified on the Council's web site. A policy that aims to provide non-designated heritage assets with a level of protection reflective of the NPPF will be included within the Local Plan.

Ongoing Tasks During 2012-2015 we will:

- Review six conservation areas annually. During 2012-15 twelve further conservation area appraisals will be published and this will ensure that all the conservation areas in the District will have been the subject of review within 10 years. Thereafter, assuming that the number of designations remains the same, a programme that continues with 6 appraisals a year will ensure that every conservation area is reviewed on a ten year cycle.
- Work with Economic Development and Development Management to secure suitable uses for heritage assets that promote economic development and tourism.
- Consider requests for further conservation area designations formally submitted by Parish Councils as resources allow.
- Continue to engage local communities in the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals.
- Strive to ensure that the historic parks and gardens in the District are protected from unsuitable development.
- Continue to identify curtilage listed buildings as opportunities occur, inform owners and make the information publicly available on the Council's web site.
- Strive to remove one building from the Building at Risk Register every year. If necessary we will use our powers under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) Act 1990 to serve Repairs Notices or Urgent Works Notices as appropriate.
- Give careful consideration to the benefits of removing specific permitted development rights through Article 4 Direction, and report to the Council's Executive and consult publicly on any such proposal.
- Keep the online mapping service updated whenever new designations are made and strive to secure ongoing improvements to it for public use.



Recent developments in Bicester

5 Promoting and Managing Change to Create High Quality Design

Understanding place is critical to ensuring successful change. How places have evolved is important, but so is the way that places function now and in the future. High quality design is about making vital, vibrant, sustainable and successful places that are robust enough to respond to changing needs over time. This is not only about individual buildings but also the routes and spaces and the role and relationship that buildings have with one another. In an area of change, such as Cherwell, it is vital to understand the place we are dealing with as a first step towards regeneration and growth. Protecting what is special is an essential tool in promoting and managing change in a positive way.

5.1 Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington Centres

5.1.1 Integration of new development

The town centres of both Banbury and Bicester are remarkable in retaining their medieval street layouts which are very much intact.

Conservation areas have been designated to cover the entire historic cores and many buildings are listed. The Parish Churches are located slightly off centre and Banbury also boasts a professional business quarter housed in the grand houses, immediately west of the retail core. The commercial areas still focus on the historic street pattern and new shopping centres have been sensitively integrated into both towns while maintaining the main street frontages. The challenge will be to ensure that the historic streets retain a viable commercial function, with an attractive retail offer, and high quality public realm and where heritage is protected, integrated and well used.



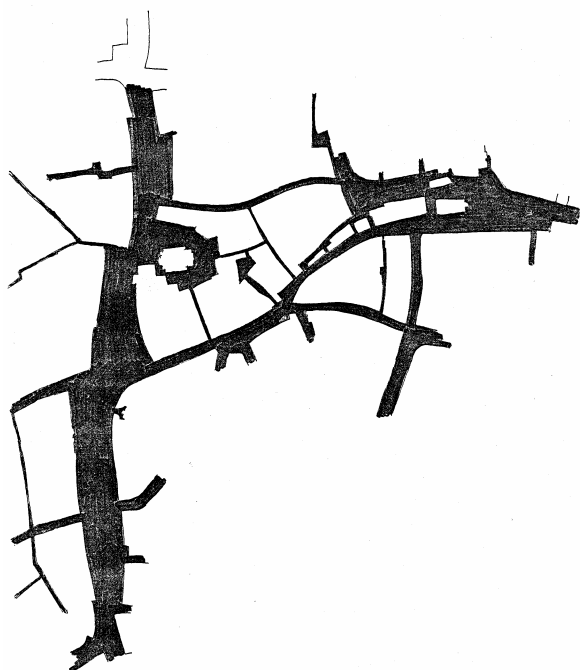
Bolton Road, Banbury, where a retail-led regeneration scheme is being promoted by the Council which will integrate with Parsons Street and Corn Hill

In Banbury the Council is actively promoting mixed-use redevelopment of key sites, at Bolton Road and at Canalside, where residential-led regeneration will upgrade the amenity of the Oxford Canal and River Cherwell corridor, linking the rail station with the town centre. The Council also aspires to create a cultural quarter east of the town centre, focussing on the Mill Arts Centre, Banbury Museum, the recent Spiceball leisure centre redevelopment and proposed Oxfordshire County library. It is intended that this will lever in private investment from the commercial leisure industry, such a multi-screen cinema operator and quality entertainment and food and drink establishments to create a destination that maximises the leisure potential of the Canal.

Other “soft” sites remain, for example either side of Calthorpe Street and the former Crest Hotel, derelict for over 15 years, immediately south of Bridge Street. These sites are complex in terms of land assembly and sensitive in terms of historic context but their appropriate redevelopment would enhance the town centre, increase its critical mass and create a series of distinct character zones. The Council will work with owners in these areas on preferred site uses to bring sites back into productive use. Key to this will be retention and incorporation of heritage buildings, spaces and features to inform the design principles for each site, in acknowledgement that heritage, as well as water, adds value to successful regeneration.

In Bicester food-store-led development, including a cinema, is under construction on the former burgage plots to the rear of Sheep Street, which had been the site of the main town car park for nearly 40 years. The Supplementary Planning Document for this development was produced by the Team and helped the Council choose a development partner, guided the scheme design and also proved robust when commercial considerations led to a reduced scheme being implemented. The challenge remains to ensure that the northern extension of this development to house, inter alia, public authority functions, will also make a positive contribution to this historic centre. Beyond this, Bicester has outgrown its commercial centre, which is constrained by existing roads and has few underdeveloped sites, so radical restructuring of significant fringe town centre areas will be required to enable the continued expansion of the town centre.

Kidlington has seen two reasonably sized retail developments, with office and residential uses over, which have helped to consolidate the built form within the village centre. The challenge here is to continue to establish a critical mass both functionally and visually.



A plan showing only the routes reveals that Banbury's medieval street pattern remains intact

5.1.2 Shopfront design

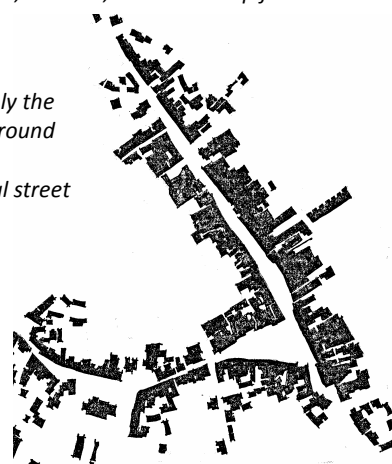
The small grain of the historic plots is still very much in evidence in both Banbury and Bicester, with original properties from medieval timber framed units to elegant 18th and 19th century shops, still lining the streets. Many of these boast fine, mainly Victorian or early 20th century shop fronts, but there are also examples in both towns of shop frontages that are not true to the period of the property and are of unsympathetic materials.

The Team is preparing guidance on the design of shopfronts, which aims to resist corporate standardisation and inappropriate pastiche but promotes locally distinctive high quality design where permission is required. It will also promote the active use of upper floors. It is the intention to use this guidance as a tool in the regeneration of Parsons Street and Market Square, in particular, to complement the recent and impending investment in the streetscape. A bid for funding to assist property owners financially in this respect has been submitted.



North Street, Bicester, Victorian shop fronts

A plan showing only the buildings (figure ground plan) shows that Bicester's medieval street pattern also remains intact



5.1.3 Pedestrian environment

High Street, Banbury and Sheep Street, Bicester were pedestrianised approximately 20 years ago and vastly improved the shopping environments. Parsons Street and Corn Hill, Banbury, were also pedestrianised in 2010, to enhance the historic retail core in response to a shift of footfall towards the expanded indoor shopping centre. These are considered by the public and traders to have been successful interventions. As car parking has shifted further from the main commercial environment the importance of creating welcoming arrival points and pedestrian routes through high quality public realm to the retail core becomes increasingly important.



Parsons Street, Banbury

In Bicester, Market Square is required to accommodate bus stops during the construction of the new retail development but an environmental enhancement scheme has been approved in principle by Oxfordshire County Council to be implemented as soon as construction is complete. This will see the pedestrianised environment of Sheep Street extended across half the gyratory road layout, creating a civic space where currently car

parking dominates. The Design and Conservation Team has secured a budget of £250,000 to ensure that the Oxfordshire Highways scheme includes high quality materials and street furniture.

Kidlington High Street was partly pedestrianised about 20 years ago, but rights of vehicular access to individual frontages have resulted in some confusion and the traffic orders has recently been amended.

5.1.4 Public art

We have a well established public art policy that actively encourages developers to make suitable provision for public art as part of any new development and have a track record of working with artists to produce permanent pieces that enhance the public realm. We encourage the engagement of local people and local sourcing of design ideas, whether from local history or local materials.

In Banbury works include the fine lady on a white horse statue at Banbury cross, a word map of the town centre carved in stone, plaques in the street surface on Parsons Street, a photograph wall at Spiceball leisure centre and a carved poetry trail near The Mill arts centre.

In Bicester, as well as the popular sheep in Sheep Street, the Courtyard Centre has bespoke gates, ironwork and furniture and artist Gordon Young engaged with local people form all walks of life to devise a Dictionary of Bicester, a remarkable resource that lists what makes the town special to its residents. It is the intention that the artist be commissioned as lead artist to the Market Square environmental enhancement scheme.

In Kidlington, floorscape mosaics were developed from ideas suggested by local people as part of the High Street environmental improvements, wooden sculptural works involving school children and were installed and further floorscape works are found in Kidlington library.

5.2 The Rural Area

Some of the highest quality environments in the District are to be found in the villages, where the building materials bring harmony, the vernacular architecture is distinctive and the places are well cared for. The villages are therefore sought after and affordable housing is in short supply. Villages which have primary schools and other services have seen modest growth in recent years, which helps to keep these facilities viable, but smaller villages have few facilities, or even bus services. The challenge is to ensure that such places meet the needs of the whole community. The Council's programme of Rural Exceptions Sites enables the provision of affordable homes on land where market housing, by definition, would not be permitted. Such sites therefore have to be chosen with care to ensure that the setting of conservation areas is not harmed and the design needs to be sensitive to the local building traditions, whilst still affordable.

The historic cores of many villages are designated conservation areas but, even so, small scale permitted developments on unlisted buildings, such as uPVC double glazing, loss of boundary enclosures, erection of solar thermal cells etc, can cumulatively erode character and cause harm. The output of the Built Heritage Audit will assist in determining whether there is benefit in withdrawing any permitted development rights from any dwellings in any settlements.



The Oxford Canal is a linear route that has architectural, historic, ecological, landscape amenity and visitor interest

5.3 Oxford Canal

The Oxford Canal runs through the entire length of the District and was built between 1770 and 1790 to connect the industrial Midlands with London, but is now a leisure route, largely passing through tranquil countryside and near historic villages. This section of the Canal was built cheaply and is a contour canal, which gives rise to an attractive winding route, with timber lift bridges and brick bridges. The Canal is also linked with the River Cherwell, which actually forms part of its route. There are a number of conservation areas along the route, generally focussing on historic wharfs and many of the bridges and locks are listed. Tooleys Boatyard, which now forms part of the Banbury Museum, is a scheduled ancient monument, restored as part of the Castle Quay shopping centre. The Cherwell Local Plan and the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan contain policies that seek to protect the Canal environment from inappropriate development.

The Canal is more than a route; it is a corridor through the centre of the District that has a sensitive ecology and brings tourism. It also faces development pressures. Given changes in the role of The Canal and River Trust (from April 2012) and likely change of remit and funding, additional protection for this special resource is considered helpful. The Council therefore intends to designate a conservation area along the entire length of the Oxford Canal and is publishing an appraisal that identifies its special character, ensures its protection and identifies management proposals including matters to be covered by a Heritage Management Agreement with the new Trust. As well as identifying a conservation area boundary, it is the intention that additional buildings and structures will be recommended to English Heritage for addition to the Statutory List and others will be added to the local list of undesigned heritage assets. Other than in central Banbury, Canal related assets are largely intact and the intention is to ensure that these survive, that the setting is protected, whilst the assets in areas of change are acknowledged, preserved and sensitively incorporated.



RAF Bicester Domestic site is being converted to residential use by City and Country Ltd in accordance with our Planning Brief. All the historic buildings and the key spaces are being retained

5.4 Military Heritage

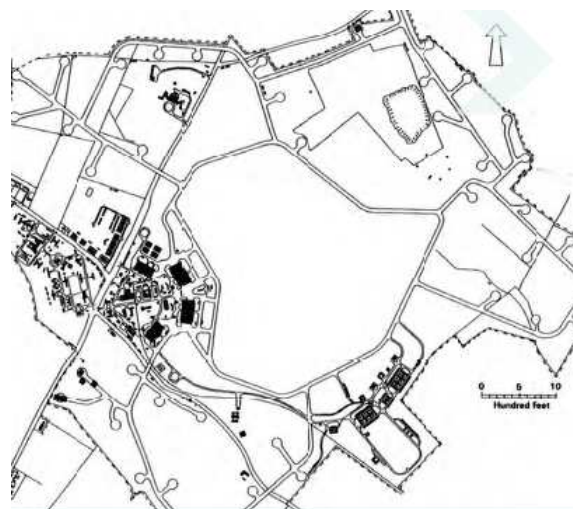
The District is fortunate to have two of the finest examples of historic air bases in the country.

5.4.1 RAF Bicester

Located immediately north east of Bicester, this is described by English Heritage as the best preserved bomber airfield dating from the period up to 1945. The flying field, technical site and domestic site have been designated as a conservation area and 35 buildings are listed grade II and other structures are scheduled. The Team published a Planning Brief in 2010, which sets out the Council's aspirations and includes a Management Plan for the whole site. The Domestic site, comprising the former Sergeants' Mess, Officers' Mess and barrack blocks is currently undergoing restoration and conversion to create new homes by City and Country Ltd. following extensive detailed negotiations with the Team. The parade ground and other key spaces in the campus style layout will be retained with limited private outdoor space and a handful of new buildings of iconic contemporary design constructed. The Council considers this to be a carefully considered approach to bringing the site back into productive use and worked closely with the developers to secure a high quality scheme.

The technical site and flying field, although also declared surplus to defence requirements, are still in the ownership of DIO, which is following the Cichel Down process prior to disposal. One hangar is used by Windrusher's Gliding Club but all the others are disused and most buildings are in a very poor condition. The conservation area is on English Heritage's Heritage at Risk Register and the bomb stores are identified as Buildings At Risk.

The Planning Brief and Management Plan sets out the uses that are considered appropriate for the site and the works that are needed to bring the buildings back to a wind and weather tight condition. The aspiration of the Council is to see retention of gliding on the flying field together with heritage tourism with complementary uses on other parts of the site and public access. These proposals will be taken forward through Bicester Master Plan and the Core Strategy, being mindful that new uses need to be sensitively integrated into this very rare historic environment.



Below: The dining room and institute, RAF Bicester Domestic site, being restored and converted to residential use



5.4.2 The former RAF Upper Heyford

This is considered by English Heritage to be the most intact UK example of a military airbase dating from the Cold War period. The entire 505 hectares are designated as a conservation area and several structures are listed or scheduled. The USAF withdrew in 1994 and, eighteen years, two Planning Briefs and two public inquiries later, the plans to resolve the future of this huge, unique and complex site are settled and awaiting implementation by the Dorchester Group.



RAF Upper Heyford from the air (taken from the east)

The Council has been keen to balance the productive use for employment purposes of some of the vacant and redundant buildings, whilst ensuring that the character of the flying field, which inspires a sense of awe and foreboding, should not be compromised by the paraphernalia of a business park.

Accordingly, a series of strategies are required as part of a Management Plan for the flying field, to control matters such as signage, lighting, parking, refuse and access. This is designed to preserve the character and appearance of the flying field.

The former technical and domestic sites will also see the retention of many buildings dating from the 1920s. In the revised proposals the bungalows dating from the period of USAF occupation are also proposed to be retained.



One of the 56 hardened aircraft shelters across the 505 hectare base at RAF Upper Heyford

Into this landscape a new settlement of a further 700 or so dwellings is to be integrated, balancing the creation of an attractive living environment with the preservation of some iconic reinforced concrete and other structures. The Team will be working with the developers to bring forward a Design Code to ensure that the established character is respected in the design of the new settlement.

5.4.3 Graven Hill

Although of limited historic and architectural significance (only 2 groups of buildings are being considered by English Heritage for Statutory listing) Bicester Ordnance Depot, located immediately south east of Bicester, has recently been declared surplus to Defence requirements and is being promoted by DIO for residential and employment development. This iconic brownfield site, with its roads and railway encircling the wooded hilltop, which is a local landmark, presents opportunities to restructure the wider road network, link new employment areas to the rail network and create pleasant living environment relatively close to the town centre. The Team has been working with DIO to create a sustainable development here and this work will be reflected in the Bicester Master Plan and Local Plan.

5.5. Small Enhancement and Regeneration Schemes

Small enhancement and regeneration schemes can make an important contribution to the character and function of an area. These schemes are considered on an annual basis and currently the Team has a very limited capital budget for enhancement schemes.

The team is currently working with Oxfordshire Highways on the enhancement of Market Square Bicester where our 'top up' budget is being used to improve the details of the scheme. We have also championed and secured a small budget that combined with match funding from Oxfordshire County Council and Banbury Town Council, will enable small scale environmental improvements to be carried out in Grimsbury. In this area planters were used as part of a highways scheme to prevent rat running some decades ago and now need replacement / structural repair.



We have secured funding to work with Oxfordshire Highways and Banbury Town Council to undertake streetscape improvements in Centre Street and East Street, Grimsbury



Kingsmere, Bicester, where we were involved in the scheme design from the master plan through Design Code to detailed design with lead developer Countryside properties

5.6 Major Development Sites and Urban Extensions

The team provides design and heritage input into Council-led initiatives.

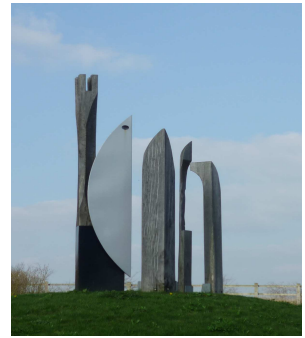
Recent schemes include the redevelopment of Spiceball leisure centre, where we produced Planning Briefs, worked with the architects and advised the Project Board. For Bicester Town centre retail redevelopment we produced the SPD and were involved throughout the design process. Current projects include Bolton Road redevelopment and Banbury Cultural Quarter. Engagement of the Team in the active regeneration of both Banbury and Bicester is considered essential.

We have a role in the development of Town Master Plans for Banbury and Bicester and contribute to the Banbury Development Team to ensure proper co-ordination of development proposals including consideration of heritage and design matters from the outset.

The team provides urban design and master planning advice to Project Teams set up to deliver the major developments lead by the private sector, such as the urban extensions at Banbury and Bicester, including NW Bicester EcoTown.

Recent projects include Kingsmere at SW Bicester, where the multi disciplinary team of developer's consultants and County and District Officers worked together to design the initial master plan, then the Development Principles document and finally the Design Code; we are now advising on the implementation of Reserve Matter applications.

At NW Bicester we contribute to the work of the Joint Steering Group, Design Team and Project Team. We are also working with the landowners of other major sites to produce Design Codes that will inform the submission of Reserve Matter applications.



Recent developments in Banbury

5.7 Buildings and Land in Council Ownership

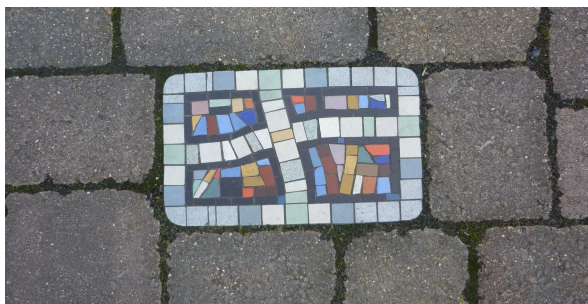
The Council's assets include land and buildings. The Team offers design advice on the redevelopment of the Council's assets, such as the leisure centres.

The Council's own offices at Bodicote House are grade II listed. The refurbishment of the Old Bodicote House was informed by a brief prepared by the team, which identified, room by room, features of historic interest to be retained and restored and later incursions that could be stripped out. Regular site inspections were undertaken with the Clerk of Works. The resultant refurbishment is, at the time of writing, almost complete and the character and quality of the original architecture is, once again, able to be appreciated.

The site of the former Spiceball leisure centre is available for redevelopment, as part of a wider Cultural Quarter involving enhanced facilities at The Mill Arts Centre and a new public library. The Team has been involved in pulling together proposals for this area, working closely with Oxfordshire County Council.



Interior of Old Bodicote House, refurbished, following guidance from the Team



Mosaics inserted into streetscape improvements on Council car parks in Kidlington



Above: The new Spiceball Sports and Leisure Centre linked to the town centre by bridge in accordance with our Design Brief

Below: The site of the former centre now awaiting redevelopment as part of a new cultural quarter



In terms of car parks, the Team has been actively involved in bringing forward redevelopment proposals through writing SPDs, Design Briefs and working closely with the design teams, for example at Bicester town centre with Sainsbury's and at Chapel Street with Sanctuary Housing Association.

At Chapel Street we identified an opportunity for a land swap so that slum clearance land held by the Council along the Chapel Street frontage, which had been vacant for 50 years, was developed for housing, so repairing this historic street frontage, and the Council's car parking was relocated to the rear. In Banbury the Team is contributing to the evolution of redevelopment proposals for the Bolton Road area, and has also been active in trying to engage developers in complex redevelopment proposal for Calthorpe Street.

5.8 Design Priorities

During 2012-13 we will:

- Publish Guidance on the Design of Shop Fronts for use as a tool in the regeneration of Town Centres in the District.
- Work with Oxfordshire Highways to ensure that the detailed design and implementation of environmental enhancements in Market Square are of the highest quality and that a memorable people-oriented place is created in the heart of the historic town.
- Seek a contribution to public art in major developments across the District and to appoint public artists who engage with the local community to create locally distinctive public realm, ideally as part of the Design Team from the outset of a project.
- Work with our partner authorities and local people to implement soft landscape proposals to upgrade the local environment in East Street and Centre Street, Grimsbury.

Ongoing Tasks During 2012-15 we will:

- Provide urban design and heritage input to Council-led regeneration and development initiatives.
- Contribute urban design advice to private sector led development projects, including with the developers of major sites, urban extensions and NW Bicester to ensure that the proposals create high quality and sustainable places.
- Publish Design / Planning Guidance on other key sites to promote sensitive redevelopment of gap sites within the market towns and mend the holes in the historic townscape.
- Work with DIO to ensure that the former flying field and technical site at RAF Bicester are disposed of for gliding and heritage tourism purposes and work with successor land owners to bring forward the phased restoration of the technical site that enables public access.
- Work with the owners of former RAF Upper Heyford to ensure that the creation of a new living and working environment preserves and enhances the established character and appearance of the former Cold War airbase.



At the Canalside regeneration area, canal and heritage led regeneration of this run down employment area in a highly sustainable location, will require strong urban design principles from the outset to inform a master plan that maximises the amenity value of and the enhanced return from the Canal and Riverside locations, whilst respecting the historic buildings, spaces and places

6 Service Delivery Action Plan 2012-15

6.1 Resources

The Design and Conservation Team sits within the Strategic Planning and The Economy Service, but works closely with other service areas of the Council, particularly Development Management, including Building

Control, and Strategic Housing. The Team consists of 3.8 FTE staff, with 50% of the Team Leader's time currently seconded to the Eco Bicester Team, so current staff levels are 3.3 FTE. It consists of 3 officers with conservation qualifications, of which one is a short term contract due to terminate July 2013. The Team Leader is an Urban Designer.

6.2 Remit

The Team provides specialist conservation and urban design advice to Development Management officers, applicants and the public on planning applications and applications for listed building consent. It has a rolling programme of conservation area appraisals and reviews of the District's 59 conservation areas. The Team provides the urban design and conservation input in to the Development Plan process and also publishes policy documents on generic design and conservation matters and site specific planning and design briefs. The team additionally contributes the urban design input to a number of project teams dealing with Council initiatives, regeneration projects and private sector led initiatives.

On average about 46% of all applications received within Cherwell are within conservation areas and 10% are for Listed Building Consent. Conservation officers are consulted routinely on all works requiring LBC and on selected applications within conservation areas or those having an impact on a listed building. This has varied in total between 530 and 789 applications per year over the last 4 years, equivalent to between 20% and 36% of all applications, depending upon our available staff resources, as they have fluctuated.

In addition, urban design advice has been provided on all major applications including applications for urban extensions) averaging about 50 per annum. This equates to each Design and Conservation officer providing advice on up to 250 applications per annum. Additionally, advice is provided on applications for discharge of conditions, but this has not been not included in the recorded figures.

The Team contributes to the appeal and inquiry process and the current rate of success at defending conservation related refusals is 75% compared with 50% of general planning refusals. The Team offers pre-application advice, including site visits and meetings, to owners of property and also to prospective purchasers by telephone, for which there is currently no charge.

The importance of heritage and high quality design to the economic well being of the District as a whole and the regeneration of key sites places these matters high on the Council's agenda. Proactive policy work is therefore a priority so, in addition to contributing to Local Plan policy formulation and selection of strategic sites, the Team publishes Design Briefs for key allocated sites and windfall sites and writes specialist guidance notes on design and conservation matters. In the last twelve months guidance documents have been published or are in preparation on *Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings*, *Shop Front Design* and *The Use of Lime in Historic Buildings*.

A programme of six conservation area appraisals has been established during recent years. There have been five new conservation areas designated within the last five years.

Conservation related telephone and other queries are handled by the Team, many of which, given access to the Council's GIS system, could be handled by the Customer Service Team.

6.3 Balance

The immediacy of the target-driven development management process tends to dominate the work load of the team. However it is important that adequate time is set aside for the preparation of policy documents, so that the Council can be proactive as well as reactive. Consideration should be given to requests for advice from conservation officers being more selective where the proposal does not directly affect a statutorily listed building, but might affect the character of a conservation area or the setting of a listed building. Expansion of the Customer Services remit could also assist in handling routine inquiries. The input of heritage and urban design advice into the Development plan process will be important as the Council's policy is being developed over the next few years.

6.4 Award Schemes

As part of a strategy to improve the quality of design across the District, we intend to instigate an award scheme that recognises and celebrates the best development. Categories may include renovation, new development (of all types) and landscape design. It is suggested that, to avoid debasing the award due to shortage of suitable candidates, it should be awarded every three years in rotation between the categories.

6.5 Design Review Panel

Design review can be a valuable process that offers an impartial opinion of design proposals within a swift timescale. We have made use of the CABI National, Eco Town and Regional Design Review service, particularly for development proposals in which the Council has an interest (e.g. Bicester Town Centre redevelopment and Spiceball Leisure Centre redevelopment) and this has generally been helpful. Although Design Council CABI and the SE Regional Architecture Centre (SERDP) continue to offer a restricted service, it is costly.

The Council is a member of the Bucks, Oxon, Berks and Milton Keynes Design network (BOBMK) which has recently established a sub-regional design review service. This service provides a local panel of experts who understand the regional context. Using this service to provide pre-application and post application reviews would be appropriate, especially on strategic schemes.

6.6 Conservation Area Advisory Groups

Local heritage is highly valued by local people. This is evidenced by the level of interest in development proposals and conservation area appraisals. In the larger conservation areas there are active associations concerned with the historic environment. In Banbury, for example, there is a Civic Society, which frequently articulates well informed comments on planning applications and other matters, the CPRE which does likewise and the Heritage Working Group, established by the Town Council, which draws together these interests. Many villages have active Local History Groups.

Such groups are consulted on conservation area appraisals and are often highly informative about their community's past. Involvement with local residents has proven to be invaluable when working on good design principles and heritage-led regeneration.

6.6 Delivery Priorities

During 2012-2015 we will:

- Work with the Customer Service Team to enable them to expand their remit to cover general conservation related telephone enquiries.
- Instigate a Cherwell Design Award for renovation, built and landscape design on a three yearly rotation.
- Maintain staffing at current levels and retain the urban design / master planning resource.
- Strive to ensure that the provision of specialist advice on Development Management matters and heritage and urban design policy formulation will be equally balanced in the work of the team.
- Respond to requests for advice on planning and listed building applications within 10 working days.
- Review six conservation areas annually.
- Provide urban design and heritage input to the Local Plan process, including policy formulation, SPDs and Development Principles for Strategic Sites.
- Publish other site specific development briefs and generic guidance as required.
- Continue to consult local historical societies with regard to better community involvement in the design and conservation of villages and urban centres.
- Continue to contribute to the BOBMK Design Review Panel and to avail ourselves of its service in equal measure, which will be cost neutral.



In both Banbury and Bicester town centres there are redevelopment and regeneration sites where promoting and managing change to create high quality design will require conservation and design input into master planning



APPENDIX 1

National Policy background

The National Planning Policy Framework was published on 27 March 2012. It aims to distil Planning Policy Guidance and Statements into one succinct document. The key aspirations relating to urban design in PPGs1 and 3 and the provisions of PPS5 are largely taken through in to the new NPPF, whose policies are material considerations in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and in planning decisions.

The Ministerial Forward states that:

- Our historic environment – buildings, landscapes, towns and villages – can better be cherished if their spirit of place thrives, rather than withers.
- Our standards of design can be so much higher. We are a nation renowned worldwide for creative excellence, yet, at home, confidence in development itself has been eroded by the too frequent experience of mediocrity.

The Core Planning principles retain reference to:

- High quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- The different role and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of urban areas.... the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities.
- Supporting the transition to a low carbon future by encouraging [inter alia] the conversion of existing buildings.
- Conserving heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

In term of **requiring good design** the NPPF states (in précis) at the following paragraphs:

- 56 Good design is indivisible from good planning.
- 57 It is important to plan positively for high quality and inclusive design.
- 58 Local and neighbourhood plans should have robust policies that aim to ensure that developments function well over their lifetime, requiring developments to:
 - Establish a strong sense of place.
 - Optimise the potential of the site with an appropriate mix of uses including green and other public space, local facilities and networks.
 - Respond to local character and history and reflect the identity of surroundings and materials.
 - Create safe and accessible environments.
 - Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- 59 Design Codes should be considered where they could help deliver high quality outcomes. Policies should avoid unnecessary prescription or detail, but should concentrate on guiding the overall scale, density, massing, height, landscape, layout, materials and access of new development.
- 60 Planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles, stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements. It is proper to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

- 61 Visual appearance and architecture are very important but planning policies and decisions should also address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.
- 62 LPAs should have local design review arrangements in place and should, when appropriate, refer major projects for national design review and should have regard to recommendations from the panel when assessing applications.
- 63 Great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs.
- 64 Permission should be refused for poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.
- 65 LPAs should not refuse permission for buildings or infrastructure which promote high levels of sustainability because of incompatibility with existing townscape, if concerns have been mitigated by good design, unless this would cause material harm to a designated heritage asset or its setting which is not outweighed by economic, social and environmental benefits.
- 66 Proposals that have taken account of the views of those directly affected should be looked upon more favourably.
- 67 Control over outdoor advertisements should be efficient, effective and simple in concept and operation. Advertisements should be subject to control only in the interests of amenity and public safety.
- 68 An Area of Special Control Order may be approved for advertisements following consultation with local trade and amenity organisations and after demonstrating that the direction would improve visual amenity and that there is no other effective control.

In terms of **conserving and enhancing the historic environment** the NPPF states (in précis) at the following paragraphs:

- 126 LPAs should set out strategies in local plans, recognising that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, taking into account of:
- The desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance.
 - The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits.
 - The positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
 - The contribution of the historic environment to the character of a place.
- 127 Conservation areas should only be designated where justified by special architectural or historic interest.
- 128 In determining applications, LPAs should require a description of the significance of the assets affected, proportionate to importance, sufficient to understand the potential impact.
- 129 LPAs should assess the significance of an affected heritage asset.
- 130 A deteriorated state of a heritage asset caused by deliberate neglect or damage should not be taken into account in any decision.
- 131 LPAs should take account of:
- Sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets.
 - The positive contribution heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including economic viability.
 - The positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.
- 132 When considering the impact on an asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, relative to its significance. Any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building should be exceptional and to a scheduled ancient monument, grade I or II* listed buildings should be wholly exceptional.

- 133 Consent should be refused for proposals leading to substantial harm or total loss of significance unless there is substantial public benefit that outweighs the harm or loss or all of the following apply:
- The nature of the asset prevents reasonable use of the site.
 - No viable use of the asset can be found in the medium term.
 - Conservation by grant funding or charitable or public ownership is not possible.
 - Harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of re-use.
- 134 Less than substantial harm should be weighed against public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use.
- 135 For non-designated assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.
- 136 LPAs should not permit the loss of whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed.
- 137 LPAs should look for opportunities for new development in conservation areas and settings of heritage assets that enhance or better reveal their significance.
- 138 Loss of a building that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area should be treated as substantial harm or less than substantial harm relative to its significance.
- 139 Non-designated assets of archaeological interest of equivalent significance to scheduled ancient monuments should be subject to policies for designated assets.

140 LPAs should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development outweigh the disbenefits of departing from policy.

141 LPAs should make information about the significance of the historic environment publicly accessible and should require developers to record and make publicly available their understanding of the significance of any asset to be lost.

English Heritage Publications

English Heritage has published a wealth of conservation related advice, which can be viewed at:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/>

Design Council / Cabe publications

Cabe, the former government advisor on urban design has now merged with the Design Council. Many of their publications are informative on matters relating to placemaking and can be viewed at:

<http://www.designcouncil.org.uk/publications>

APPENDIX 2

Local Policy

The Cherwell Local Plan Proposed Submission Draft August 2012

- SLE 2 Securing Dynamic Town Centres
- SLE 3 Supporting Tourism Growth
- SLE 5 HS2: high quality design solutions to protect communities and minimise adverse impacts
- BSC 1 Housing Distribution
- BSC 2 Ensuring Sustainable Housing Delivery
- BSC 3 Efficient and Sustainable Use of Land
- ESD 1 Mitigating and Adapting to Climate Change
- ESD3 Sustainable Construction
- ESD 7 Sustainable Drainage Systems
- ESD 12 Cotswold AONB: protection of the area and its setting
- ESD 13 Local Landscape Protection and Enhancement: setting of important natural and built features of interest
- ESD 14 Oxford Green Belt
- ESD 15 Green Buffers to Growth
- ESD 16 Character of the Built Environment: how to protect the best of the past while encouraging positive and sustainable growth
- ESD 17 Oxford Canal: promote tourism uses and protect its character
- ESD 18 Green Infrastructure

Cherwell Local Plan 1996

- C10 Resist development which harms historic landscapes, battlefields, parks and gardens and/or their settings
- C11 Protect the vista and setting of Rousham Park
- C18 Alterations/extensions to listed buildings must be minor and sympathetic
- C23 Retention of positive features within a conservation area
- C25 Protect the site or setting of Scheduled Ancient Monuments
- C27 Respect the historic settlement patterns of villages
- C28 High standard of design and sympathy to the locality is required in conservation areas
- C29 High standard of design and sympathy to the locality is required adjacent to the Oxford Canal
- C30 Designs should be compatible with the local character and appearance
- C31 Excessive visual or audio intrusions are unacceptable
- C32 Support proposals which improve access for disabled people
- C33 Preserve gap sites in loose-knit settlements or within the setting of a listed building
- C34 Preserve views of St Mary's Church, Banbury, by restricting building heights
- C38 Satellite dishes on listed buildings or within conservation areas should not be visible from the highway

Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011

- EN34 Conserve and enhance the landscape through control of development
- EN35 Retain features important to local character or justify their loss
- EN39 Development should preserve or enhance listed buildings and conservation areas
- EN40 Development in conservation areas should preserve or enhance, retain positive features and respect the sense of place
- EN42 Sympathetic reuse of a listed building should minimise damage to the fabric and character
- EN43 Substantial demolition of a listed building will require clear and convincing evidence of market testing
- EN44 Development within the setting of a listed building must respect the character of the building
- EN45 Listed building applications must include an assessment of the impact of the proposals on the structure and setting
- EN45A The local list will be a material consideration in planning determinations
- EN46 Enabling development may be permitted where it is the only viable means to ensure the retention of the heritage asset
- EN47 Development should protect and enhance archaeology, provide accurate records and include appropriate field evaluations
- EN48 Refuse development which harms designated parks, gardens, battlefields and landscapes or their settings
- EN49 Development should not harm the vista or setting of Rousham Park
- EN49A Sympathetic reuse of RAF Bicester will be considered
- EN51 Adverts in a conservation area should preserve or enhance the area
- EN53 Satellite dishes should be located away from public view in a conservation area and should respect the character of a listed building
- D1 Proposals should demonstrate compliance with the Urban Design Objectives
- D2 Applications should be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement
- D3 Proposals should be locally distinctive
- D4 High quality contemporary architecture is required that expresses its use and importance and possesses visual interest
- D5 Requirements for proposals that impact on the public realm
- D6 Design control on house extensions and alterations
- D7 Proposals should retain and consolidate and extend areas of mixed use
- D8 Requirements for the design of shopfronts
- D9 Encourages energy efficient design
- D10A Requirements for incorporating tall buildings
- D10 Requirements for canal side development in Banbury
- D11 Requirements for canal side development in villages
- D12 Protection of views.

APPENDIX 3

Adopted and Informal Guidance

Generic guidance

- Listed Buildings: A guide for owners and occupiers
- Conservation Areas: A general guide
- Planning Guide no 1: Windows and Doors in Historic Buildings
- Planning Guide no 2: Hot Food Takeaways
- Planning advice for farmers: Siting and design of farm buildings
- Design Guide for the Conversion of farm buildings
- Design and Layout of Employment Sites
- Colour Palette for Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington
- Countryside Design Summary
- Building in Harmony with the Environment
- Home extensions and alterations: a design guide for householder applications
- Subdivision of dwellings for residential use
- Energy efficiency in traditional buildings

Site specific guidance

- Urban Design Strategies for Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington
- RAF Upper Heyford Revised Comprehensive Planning Brief

Bicester

- RAF Bicester Planning Brief and Management Plan
- Land between Manorsfield Road and Sheep Street
- Bicester Fields Farm
- Redevelopment of Bryan House, Chapel Street
- St Edburg's School
- Old Place Yard

Banbury

- Hanwell Fields
- Banbury Regeneration Area (east)
- Land east of Southam Road and South of Noral Way
- Spiceball Park Sports Centre modernisation: existing site and island site
- Stanbridge Hall
- Dashwood School
- Orchard Way shopping parade

Kidlington

- Redevelopment of Co-op car park

APPENDIX 4

Finance

Grant aid

Cherwell District Council no longer provides grants or loans towards the repair of heritage assets. Other sources of funding that might be worth exploring include the following:

The Heritage Lottery Fund Townscape Heritage Initiative offers grants to help communities regenerate conservation areas displaying particular social and economic need. It encourages partnerships, which are to include the local authority, to carry out repairs and other works in conservation areas to preserve and enhance the character, to bring buildings back into a sustainable use and increase training in heritage skills and community engagement. It is not aimed at single buildings. Contact:

enquiries@hlf.org.uk 020 7591 6000

English Heritage can provide grant funding towards the repair and conservation of the most significant heritage assets (however only for works to scheduled ancient monuments or grade I and II* listed buildings or grade I or II* designed landscape on English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens). These are mainly offered for urgent repairs or other work required within two years in order to prevent loss or damage to important heritage assets. Exceptionally English Heritage may offer grants to projects that are within conservation area and involve a grade II listed buildings, an unlisted building of significant historic or architectural merit a designed landscape on English Heritage's Register of parks and Gardens at grade II or public realm of historic importance. Further information can be obtained from:

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/imported-docs/f-j/hbmdl-guidenotes-300304>

A Disabled Facility Grant is available from the Council to help towards the cost of adapting a home to enable a disabled person to continue to live there. For further information please contact housing@cherwell-dc.gov.uk.

The Fund for Historic Buildings web site lists additional sources of grant aid with an ability to search by region, building type and organisation applying, including specialist sources for religious buildings. <http://www.ffhb.org.uk/>.

VAT

The Chancellor announced in the Budget Statement on 21 March 2012 that the VAT relief that applies to alterations to listed buildings is being withdrawn with effect from 1 October 2012. The Chancellor described the existing relief as an "anomaly", which "gives a perverse incentive for change as opposed to repair". Only buildings reconstructed from a shell now continue to benefit from the zero rate.

Anti-forestalling legislation will be introduced in the Finance Bill 2012 to prevent businesses entering into avoidance arrangements from 21 March 2012 to obtain zero rating of supplies.

English Heritage agrees that the removal of VAT relief on approved alterations to listed buildings will eliminate a perverse incentive to carry out more changes to a listed building than are necessary, and is currently seeking clarity on a number of detailed issues with HMRC in order to make a full assessment of the impact of the proposed changes. For further information contact:

<http://hmrc.gov.uk/budget2012/tiin4806/htm>

or Stephen Roberts on 0207 147 0428

stephen.roberts@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk

Insurance

Companies that specialise in the insurance of historic property including listed buildings includes Lark Insurance group through the Listed Property Owners Club and Ecclesiastical.com.

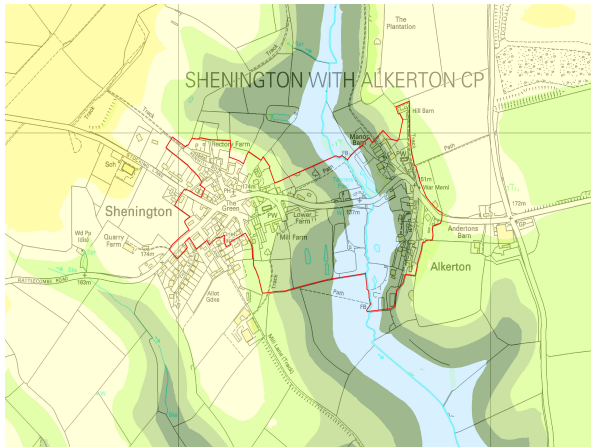
APPENDIX 5

Glossary

DIO	Defence Infrastructure Organisation (formerly Defence Estates)	MOD	Ministry of Defence
EH	English Heritage	NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
HER	Heritage Environment Record (the record of all heritage assets, above and below ground, held by the County Council)	RAF	Royal Air Force
LPA	Local Planning Authority	SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
LBC	Listed building Consent	USAF	United States Air Force



Wisteria Cottage, Wardington



Topographical map of Shenington with Alkerton with conservation area boundary overlaid



Former Royal Oak public house in Adderbury, now a dwelling with rear garden and off-street parking



The historic bridge over the River Ray, Islip

How to contact us

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The information in this document can be made available in other languages, large print braille, audio tape or electronic format on request. Please contact 01295 227001

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać. 01295 227001

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ। 01295 227001

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。01295 227001

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔
01295 227001

Call **01295 221845**

or visit www.cherwell.gov.uk/conservation