

To: West Area Planning Committee

Date:

Report of: Head of City Development

Title of Report: East and West Oxford Character Studies

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To ask committee to note the completion of Character Studies for East and West Oxford, which have recently undergone public consultation. These were undertaken in two pilot study areas (East and West Oxford) and assess the important features that contribute to these areas' character. The studies resulted in nominations for additions to the Oxford Heritage Asset Register. These nominations will be considered at CEB.

Key decision: No

Report Approved by: Mark Jaggard

Policy Framework: National Planning Policy Framework; Oxford Local Plan Core Strategy; Policy CS18 Urban Design and the Historic Environment; Saved Local Plan Policy HE.6 Buildings of Local Interest; and Policy HE.8 Important Parks and Gardens.

Recommendation(s): That the West Oxford Planning Committee:

a) Note that the character statements will be a material consideration in determining relevant planning applications against Saved Policies HE.6 & HE.8 of the Adopted Local Plan 2001-2016 and Core Strategy Policy CS18 (or any subsequent replacement policy)

Appendices:
Appendix 1: Summary of consultation responses

Background

1. English Heritage has funded the preparation of two trial studies to contribute to the development of the Oxford Heritage Assets Register. Community groups and stakeholders were involved in the preparation of the criteria; nomination form and; identification and review process, which was adopted by Full Council in December 2012.
2. The Council adopted three processes by which heritage assets could be added to the register¹. Registration of heritage assets could occur:
 - a. Within the context of a planning application
 - b. Within the context of a programme of area studies
 - c. After the completion of the pilot studies

Working with community groups to prepare character statements

3. The funding of the Oxford Heritage Asset Register Project by English Heritage was dependent on making the process as inclusive as possible. This was so that local communities could contribute to the process of assessment of significance in the historic environment both to identify heritage assets and to develop an understanding of character.
4. The process for the West and East Oxford Character Statements began by forming a steering group of local residents, including representatives of residents associations as well as local history experts.
5. With assistance from English Heritage and Oxford Preservation Trust the City Council has completed the pilot studies.

Consultation on the Character Statements and the Candidates for Heritage Assets

6. Consultation on the Character Statements (prepared for East and West Oxford) took place from 18 December 2014 until 23 January 2015.
7. At the same time as the consultation on the character statements, the nominated heritage assets were also consulted upon. Owners of nominated heritage assets were notified by post with an invitation to submit comments on the potential registration of their property as a heritage asset. The general public were also consulted.
8. A summary of the responses received in relation to the character studies is attached as Appendix 1. No changes to the character studies were considered necessary as a result of the consultation responses. Comments received relating to nominated heritage assets were passed on to the Review Panels of Ward members set up to make

¹ More information about this process can be found in Background paper 3

recommendations to CEB about whether the nominated assets should be added to the register.

Recommendations for registration of heritage assets

9. Following consideration by each of the review panels, 70 potential Heritage Assets have been recommended for registration on the Oxford Heritage Asset Register and 7 Heritage Assets have been identified as not meriting registration on the Oxford Heritage Asset Register. These nominations have arisen from work on the character studies. CEB will consider which nominated heritage assets to add to the register at their meeting on 2nd April 2015.

Legal issues

There are no legal implications of this report

Financial Issues

Environmental Impact

No specific environmental impacts identified.

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Background papers:

Background paper 1: East Oxford Character Statement
Background Paper 2: West Oxford Character Statement
Background Paper 3: OHAR Process

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