

## Background Paper 1: The OHAR Process.

1. This background paper sets out in detail the process undertaken in order to register heritage assets. It also sets out which heritage assets were recommended for registration by the review panels and the process for the creation and consultation of the character assessments.
2. English Heritage funded the preparation of two trial studies to contribute to the development of the Oxford Heritage Asset Register. The trial, or pilot studies were undertaken as a means of developing good practice for involving communities in planning for the historic environment. The pilot studies also looked at developing good practice in how to identify heritage assets and how best to assess their significance.

### **Working with community groups to prepare character statements**

3. Character studies were prepared for each of the study areas. Community groups and stakeholders were involved in their preparation through participatory workshops and field study. The character studies cover two large areas of the city outside the city's conservation areas.
4. Funding for the Oxford Heritage Asset Register Project by English Heritage was dependent on making the process as inclusive as possible for local communities. This allowed local communities to contribute to the process of assessment of significance in the historic environment both to identify heritage assets and to develop an understanding of character.
5. For both character studies, the process started by forming a steering group of local residents, including representatives of residents associations as well as local history experts. These groups helped identify key themes contributing to the character of each area, which were then explored through a literature search, as well as through field survey.

### **Consultation on character statements and candidate heritage assets**

6. The City Council completed the pilot studies for the "East Oxford Victorian and Edwardian Suburb" and the "St Ebbe's and St. Thomas' Suburb" areas of West Oxford. The pilot studies were completed with assistance from English Heritage and Oxford Preservation Trust.
7. The Character Studies (prepared in partnership by the City Council and Oxford Preservation Trust with the assistance of various community groups) used findings from previous studies and involved the use of the City Council's award winning character assessment toolkit.
8. Members of local residents' associations were given training in the use of the Oxford Character Assessment toolkit either through the OHAR project by the City Council's Conservation Officers or, as part of the development of the West End Context Study by Oxford Preservation Trust. Where possible the community representatives prepared their own character statements. These

informed the preparation of the character statements, or the results of their assessment were used to prepare statements with opportunity to comment on the draft statements.

9. The West Oxford Character Statement was prepared with reference to several earlier projects, including the West End Context Study (prepared by Oxford Preservation Trust with Oxford Archaeology and through consultation with community groups including the St. Ebbe's New Development Residents Association). The West Oxford report by the Oxfordshire Building Survey (a voluntary organisation) also provided a useful source of information, which was supplemented by information from local historian, Liz Wooley.
10. The East Oxford Character Statement (Our East Oxford) received input from representatives of Divinity Road Residents Association; St. Mary's Road Residents Association; Stockwell Street Residents Association; Hill Top Road Residents Association; Friends of SS Mary and John's Churchyard; as well as Oriel College; Christ Church College; St. John's Home; and East Oxford Primary School. Residents from Cowley Road; Hurst Street; Marston Street; Stanley Road and a number of City Councillors also had an input. As part of the consultation process, the City Council's Conservation Officer ran an information stall at the East Oxford Farmer's Market. The process of research also included a literature review with a particular emphasis on the work of local residents. Local historian, Anne Skinner provided information to support the character statement.
11. Working in partnership with Oxford Preservation Trust, the City Council has completed the Characters Statements which were subject to public consultation from 19<sup>th</sup> December 2014 to 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2015. The Character Statements were made available online on the City Council's website and at the City Council Offices. A basic questionnaire was provided online, which could be completed for either statement.
12. A total of 19 responses were received for the consultation on the East Oxford Character Statement and 10 were received on the West Oxford Character Statement.

### **Identification of Heritage Assets**

13. Nominations for Heritage Assets demonstrate that outside the city's designated conservation areas, the older suburbs contain important heritage of local value. This local heritage merits positive management due to its contribution to local character even where it may not meet the requirements for statutory designation.
14. Heritage Assets have been reviewed by review panels of Ward Councillors, who have been asked to make recommendations to City Executive Board. These recommendations have been made, having regard to the City Council's adopted criteria on whether to register the heritage assets of local interest, not to recommend them to City Executive Board, or to defer making a decision until further information is received.

15. With regard to the registration of heritage assets, the conservation officer's report identified heritage assets into three categories:

- i. High priority – these assets make a high level of contribution to the character and identity of an area.
- ii. Medium priority – these assets meet the criteria
- iii. Low priority – the heritage significance of these assets is less clear/ additional information requested.

16. The review panels had access to the conservation officer's identifications of priority for heritage assets.

### Panel recommendations

17. The following table shows whether or not the Panels agree that the nominated heritage asset should be added to the Oxford Heritage Asset Register:

### WEST OXFORD

#### Carfax Ward

Heritage Asset Nomination	Panel Recommendation
<b><i>St Thomas' Suburb</i></b>	
Former Cantay Depository 37-39 Park End Street	Agree
Victoria Buildings 18-22 Park End Street	Disagree
Former Castle Hotel Park End Street	Agree
24-28 Park End Street	Disagree
The Royal Oxford Hotel Holly Bush Row	Agree
The Maroon Public House (Formerly the Chequers) St Thomas Street	Agree
Former crèche and invalid kitchen 1 Woodbine Place	Disagree
<b><i>Oxpens</i></b>	
Former Underhills Hide and Skin Market Ovada, 14a Osney Lane	Disagree

Oxpens Road Bridge	Agree
Oxpens Meadow	Agree
<b><i>Oxford Station and Railway Lands</i></b>	
Osney Lane Footbridge	Disagree
<b><i>St Ebbe's Suburb</i></b>	
The Wharf House 13 Thames Street	Agree

### Hinksey Park Ward

<b>Heritage Asset Nomination</b>	<b>Panel Recommendation</b>
Former Gas Works Pipe Bridge	Agree
Former Gas Works Rail Bridge	Agree

### Jericho and Osney Ward

<b>Heritage Asset Nomination</b>	<b>Panel Recommendation</b>
<b><i>Rewley</i></b>	
Former Boatman's Chapel Hythe Bridge Street	Agree
Sheepwash Chanel	Agree (board member recommendation as Ward members did not agree)
<b><i>New Osney</i></b>	
The Former Oxford Electric Lighting Power Station, Arthur Street	Agree
The River Hotel Botley Road	Agree
The One (Former Botley Road Turnpike Tollhouse) 2 Botley Road	Agree
The Kite Public House Mill Street	Agree
The River Thames and Towpath from Four Streams Junction to Osney Bridge	Agree (board member recommendation as Ward members did not agree)
29 Abbey Road	Agree

## EAST OXFORD

### St. Clement's Ward

Heritage Asset Nomination	Panel Recommendation
<b><i>Cowley Road</i></b>	
Rectory Road Halls of Residence (Formerly Nazareth House)	Agree
East Oxford Community Centre, Princes Street	Agree
The Corridor Public House, 119 Cowley Road	Agree
<b><i>East Oxford First Estate</i></b>	
Jeune Hall Jeune Street (former Methodist Sunday School)	Agree
<b><i>Union Street to Manzil Way</i></b>	
East Oxford Primary School Main Building	Agree
Oxford Central Mosque	Agree
Asian Cultural Centre (Former workhouse chapel)	Agree
<b><i>Divinity Road Area</i></b>	
46 Hill Top Road	Agree
8 Hill Top Road	Agree
Divinity Walk	Disagree
Hill Top Road properties	Disagree
<b><i>The Morrell Avenue Estate</i></b>	
Upper Morrell Avenue	Agree

### St. Mary's Ward

Heritage Asset Nomination	Panel Recommendation
<b><i>Cowley Road</i></b>	
The Cowley Retreat Public House	Agree
Former Co-operative Hall	Agree

211-215 Cowley Road	Disagree
The Old Vicarage 276 Cowley Road	Agree
The City Arms Cowley Road	Agree
118 Cowley Road	Agree
The Old Music Hall 108 Cowley Road and offices above 104-110	Agree
Vietnamese Temple Mural 49 Cowley Road	Agree
<b><i>The Triangle</i></b>	
The Temple Lounge Temple Street	Agree
Garden Wall at 40 Stockmore Street	Agree
4 Marston Street (Formerly dispensary and church)	Agree
9 and 10 Marston Street	Agree
Oxford Blue Marston Street	Agree
Jingle Cottage 49 Marston Street	Agree
50 and 51 Marston Street	Agree
55-63 Marston Street	Agree
Sundial 35 Marston Street	Agree
<b><i>Central East Oxford</i></b>	
The James Street Tavern	Agree
The Black Swan Public House 11 Crown Street	Agree
Former Boot Repairing Department	Agree
Green Street Bookbinders	Agree

Former Furniture Factory 55 Randolph Street	Agree
Craft building and store at St John's Home St Mary's Road (formerly St Mary's Infant's and Girls' School)	Agree
<b><i>The Robin Hood Area</i></b>	
Magdalen Road Church 49a Magdalen Road	Agree
Shopfront at 39 Magdalen Road (Oxford)	Agree
The Rusty Bicycle Public House, 28 Magdalen Road	Agree
The Mission House 14 Magdalen Road	Agree
<b><i>Iffley Road Sports Ground</i></b>	
Roger Bannister Running Track	Agree
<b><i>Green Spaces</i></b>	
SS Mary and John's Churchyard	Agree
Long Meadow	Agree

### Iffley Field's Ward

<b>Heritage Asset Nomination</b>	<b>Recommendation for nomination to be on register</b>
<b><i>The Robin Hood Area</i></b>	
Irving Building, SS Mary and John Primary School, Hertford Street	Agree
147-151 Howard Street	Agree
Old Church Hall and 60 Percy Street	Agree
St Alban's Church Charles Street	Agree
91-97 (odds) Howard Street (Former House of Compassion)	Agree
Former Prince of Wales Public House, Charles Street	Agree

<b>Iffley Fields</b>	
Convent of the Incarnation Parker Street	Agree
Old Builders Merchant's Workshop	Agree
The Motz House 16 Bedford Street	Agree
The Chester Arms Chester Street	Agree
<b>Green Spaces</b>	
East Ward Allotments	Agree
Aston's Eyot Jackdaw Lane	Agree
The Kidney's Meadow Lane	Agree
SS Mary and John's CoE School Field Meadow Lane	Agree

18. The pilot studies have allowed thorough testing of the process (i.e. identifying, assessing and registering heritage assets through the preparation of character statements). The process followed was designed to encourage community participation, be robust and, to provide accountable decision-making. The value of the nomination form and criteria adopted by Oxford City Council, have been tested.
19. The nomination assessment and registration of Oxford Stadium, Sandy Lane and No. 333 Banbury Road also provided experience of using the Council's adopted process.
20. The registration of No. 333 Banbury Road by the West Oxford Planning Committee was a relatively rapid process. However, the route adopted for the pilot studies has taken considerable time and effort. It involved community capacity building as well as reporting the findings of the assessment to three different council panels or committees. It also required additional administrative procedures, including the addition of items to the forward plan. The funding of the project by English Heritage was on the basis of testing such procedures as recommended in national guidance. These findings are useful and will be reported to inform the development of future guidance. As such, a number of improvements are recommended for the development of the heritage assets register going forward.



- a. In future the review panel and nomination to City Executive Board stages should be replaced by reporting to the relevant area planning committee. This would streamline the process to a single decision regarding whether to register one or more candidate heritage assets while having regard to the Council's adopted set of criteria. This should be added to the terms of reference for these committees.

**Reason:** To reduce the number of steps in the process of nomination, assessment, registration and review. To use the existing expertise and cross-party public representation of the area planning committees to ensure decisions are made efficiently and transparently.

- b. Given the above change, it is recommended that nomination of heritage assets by the area planning committee can be made by officers or ward members outside the specific circumstances of a planning application. Ward members would be expected to follow a similar process to requesting a call-in for a planning application. In such cases the owner should be notified by letter, at least three weeks before the publication of the agenda for the committee at which the nomination will be considered. The nomination form and any comments received from the owners should form a part of the publicly available agenda along with an officer's report.

**Reason:** To allow periodic and regular updating of the heritage assets register in a responsive manner that enables communities to be fore involved in planning, including working with their elected representatives and ensuring stakeholders are properly consulted and decisions are made transparently.

- c. That members are made aware of the potential to request call-in of a planning application where they believe a heritage asset may be affected. This is in order for due consideration to be given of its potential for registration as a heritage asset prior to determination of the application.

**Reason:** To support the proper consideration of non-designated heritage assets within the planning decision-making process.