Oxford Heritage Assets Register: Process for identification, review and registration of heritage assets.

Stage 1. Area Survey – Character Assessment and identification of Candidate Heritage Assets

- We are piloting the register in four trial areas across the city.

- We will work with community groups to prepare character statements for each neighbourhood. These will provide a firm basis to assess the local contribution of individual heritage assets.

- Heritage assets that have potential for inclusion on the register will be identified in each neighbourhood during the preparation of these statements.

Stage 2. Consultation on Area Surveys

- Each statement will be subject to public consultation, providing an additional opportunity for the public to highlight potential heritage assets in their neighbourhood and to provide their views on the character of each area.

- Following public consultation, the character statements will be presented to the relevant area planning committee for consideration and will become part of the City's heritage evidence base.

Stage 3. Consultation on candidate heritage asset lists

- The heritage assets identified as having potential for inclusion on the register will be subject to separate public consultation.

- Owners' of properties that have been nominated for registration as heritage assets will be invited to participate in the consultation.

Stage 4. Review panel consideration of candidate heritage assets

- After consultation, the heritage assets proposed for registration in each ward will be reviewed by a panel comprising the City Ward Councillors and the lead member for City Development (the City Heritage Champion), who will be voting members, as well as Council officers and local volunteer experts who will provide information and advice (i.e. non-voting members).

- The panel will be provided with the criteria, character statement, heritage asset nomination form, any results of public consultation and supporting historical and photographic resources.

- The panel will be asked to provide their recommendation on whether a heritage asset should be registered based on the majority view. The panel's decision will be a recommendation to the Lead Member for City Development, whilst addition to the register will be a single member decision delegated to that member.
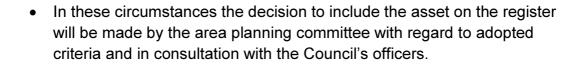
Stage 5. Publication

- All Registered Heritage Assets will be included on a publicly accessible list available via the Council's website, including details of the particular heritage significance that has merited the inclusion of the asset on the register.

After the Pilot Studies

- Subsequent to the completion of the pilot studies, it may be necessary to identify heritage assets across the city without a wider programme of area assessment.

- In these circumstances it is expected that an application for a heritage assets' inclusion on the register should be accompanied by an assessment of the local area's character.

- The Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit provides an accessible means of collecting the information required to prepare a character statement through research using archive, library and online resources and site survey.

- A character statement should include a description of the present local character including uses and activity, description of the area's historic development and identification of characteristics of the environment that are considered to make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

- Subject to the availability of funding and resources, the City Council will seek to expand the coverage of the register to other parts of the city outside designated conservation areas, through additional area surveys, working in partnership with local community organisations.

Registration of Heritage Assets through Planning Decisions

- In certain circumstances a heritage asset may be identified as meriting registration during the planning decision-making process, either by Council Officers or by the area planning committee.

- Where this is an officer's recommendation it should form a recommendation to planning committee as part of their report and should not be part of a delegated decision.

- In these circumstances the decision to include the asset on the register will be made by the area planning committee with regard to adopted criteria and in consultation with the Council's officers.

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