

To: City Executive Board
Date: 9 February 2017
Report of: Head of Planning and Regulatory Services
Title of Report: North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area Appraisal

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present the conservation area appraisal to committee and seek consent to go out to consultation.
Key decision:	No
Executive Board Member:	Cllr Alex Hollingsworth, Planning and Regulatory
Corporate Priority:	None
Policy Framework:	Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016
Recommendations: That the City Executive Board resolves to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Endorse the draft conservation area appraisal as the basis for public consultation (attached to this report); 2. Approve the carrying out of consultation upon the draft appraisal; and 3. Approve the seeking of views on additions and deletions to the conservation area. 	

Appendices	
Appendix 1	North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area Appraisal (draft)
Appendix 2	List of Illustrations

Introduction and background

1. Under guidance from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Historic England, all designated conservation areas must undergo a formal character appraisal to justify their original designation, to define their significance and values and to inform decisions regarding future change.

Character Appraisal

2. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve, should be designated as conservation areas.
3. The appraisal (attached to this report as Appendix 1) seeks to define the elements that contribute to the special character of North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area, highlight the areas of significance and associated vulnerabilities together with brief potential enhancement opportunities.
4. The appraisal recommends reviewing the boundary of North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area (see Appendix 1 p.50). Possible alterations include:
 - Either the addition of Bainton Road and Moreton Road to the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area
 - Or removing Staverton Road and Lathbury Road from the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area, in order to create a new conservation area covering Staverton and Lathbury Roads, and Bainton Road and Moreton Road
 - combining North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area with Walton Manor Conservation Area. This would likely require an immediate appraisal of the Walton Manor Conservation Area.
 - transferring the Radcliffe Observatory, and the area between Woodstock and Banbury Roads south of Bevington Road, into the Central Conservation Area. This would then be included in the Central Conservation Area Appraisal when it is carried out.

These options will be part of this consultation.

Consultation

5. Preparation of the draft North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area Appraisal involved engagement with residents' associations. The authors were also supported by a number of independent members of the public and ward councillors.

Financial implications

6. The appraisal will provide evidence for the management of the existing conservation area and justifying designation. The only financial implications that would flow from the recommendations being accepted would be the costs of the consultation exercise itself and the collation and consideration of the results of consultation. Those costs are provided for in existing budgets.

Legal issues

7. The carrying out of the proposed consultation exercise can be expected to enhance the robustness of the appraisal subsequently approved. Accordingly it would assist with the integrity and defensibility of decisions made which rely on that appraisal. That would include decisions as to the alteration of existing conservations areas or the designation of a new conservation area (see paragraph 4).

Level of risk

8. There is not considered to be any material risk involved in approving the draft appraisal for consultation.

Equalities impact

9. The consultation will meet the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement for Planning and will have due regard to meeting the needs prescribed in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The consultation will be structured in order to avoid differentiation between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Conclusion

10. The historic environment is a precious and vulnerable resource that requires effective management to protect it for both present and future generations to enjoy.

A Local Planning Authority's justification for designation, as reflected in the assessment of the area's special interest, its character and appearance, is a factor which the Council and the Secretary of State will take into account when exercising functions under the planning legislation concerning buildings and land within the relevant conservation area. The Committee is recommended to approve the draft conservation area appraisal for the purpose of consultation as to that appraisal, and the seeking of views in the consultation process on additions and deletions to the conservation area.

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Background Papers: None

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