

# **Oxford City Council**

## **Street Naming and Numbering Policy**

**Street Naming and Numbering  
City Development  
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Version	Purpose	Author	Date
0.1	Initial draft	Rosie Bell	28/2/2012
0.2	Final draft for approval	Rosie Bell	21/03/2012
1.0	Approved version	Rosie Bell	22/05/2012

## 1. Introduction

Oxford City Council has the legal responsibility for the naming and numbering of streets and properties within the Council's administrative area.

The objective of the street naming and numbering service is to provide a unique and unambiguous address for every property in the city of Oxford, this will ensure that:

- Emergency Services can find a property quickly – delays can cost lives
- Mail is delivered efficiently
- Visitors can easily find where they want to go
- There is a reliable delivery of services and products
- Services providers have up to date and accurate records. Poor record keeping is only a disadvantage to the customer.
- We bill the right person, in the right property, at the right time for Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

Many legal transactions associated with properties are withheld until they can be identified by street name and numbers, for instance, statutory undertakers will not normally connect their services until such time as the premises have been given a formal postal address.

## 2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the Street Naming and Numbering Policy is to establish the correct process, rules and fees for the following activities:

- Naming of new streets and numbering properties on those streets
- Renaming existing streets
- Numbering or naming new properties on an existing street
- Renumbering properties on an existing street
- Changing the names of properties
- Registration of house names for properties with a number
- Allocation of numbers to properties with names only
- Addition of a name to a numbered property

The naming of a street includes any road, court, alley or thoroughfare.

### 3. Legislation

Oxford City Council is responsible for the street naming and numbering service under the provision of the Oxfordshire Act 1985. This Act makes a number of alterations to the law applicable only within the County.

Sections 13 and 14 of the Oxfordshire Act 1985 define the Council's authority to:

- name any street
- alter the name of any street
- allocate numbers to buildings in a street
- alter numbers allocated to buildings in a street

See Appendix A for an extract of the relevant sections of the Act.

### 4. Other Factors for Street Naming and Numbering

The Council has an obligation to provide address data to the National Land and Property Gazetteer and we follow best practice by conforming to:

*Data Entry Conventions and Best Practice for the National Land and Property Gazetteer (DEC-NLPG Version 3.2 January 2012)*

This ensures that we are also compliant with the relevant British Standard, *BS7666 - Spatial datasets for geographical referencing*, which specifies a national format for holding details on every property and street.

### 5. Naming of Streets

#### 5.1 New Developments

Where a new development creates a new street or streets, the developer is required to apply to the Council to have these officially named. Names will be determined following consultation with local residents' associations, ward councillors and parish councils.

Developers are encouraged to submit proposals for street names but must be aware that the final determination will be made by the Council as described above.

## 5.2 Guidelines on Street Names

The Council recognises that Oxford has many distinctive street names which reflect its great history, however for new street names the following will apply except in exceptional circumstances:

- 5.2.1 Street names will not duplicate existing names in the Authority or adjoining Authorities, nor will they be sufficiently similar as to cause confusion.
- 5.2.2 Preference will be given to street names that refer to the history and heritage of the local area.
- 5.2.3 Proposals relating to a living person's name will not be permitted.
- 5.2.4 Proposals relating to a recently deceased person's name will not be permitted unless there is a proven historical connection to the land intended for development or a proposal is put forward for commemorative purposes. The Council would require acceptance from the person's family or estate administrators.
- 5.2.5 Names that could be construed as obscene, racist or which would contravene any aspect of the Council's Equal Opportunities policies will not be acceptable.
- 5.2.6 Names are unacceptable that would give rise to spelling difficulties or would involve punctuation (not acceptable in BS 7666).
- 5.2.7 The consent of the Lord Chamberlain's office must be obtained if a name with any reference to the Royal family or the use of the word 'Royal' is suggested.
- 5.2.8 Street names that could be construed as advertising will not be allowed.
- 5.2.9 Phonetically similar names within a postal area will be avoided.
- 5.2.10 Street names should not commence with the word "The".
- 5.2.11 Names should not include a number either in numerical or written form.
- 5.2.12 All new street names should end with a suffix which reflects the nature, history and / or location of the street:

<b>Avenue</b>	for residential roads (usually lined with trees)
<b>Close</b>	for a cul-de-sac only
<b>Crescent</b>	for a crescent shaped road
<b>Drive</b>	for residential roads
<b>Gardens</b>	for residential roads subject to there being no confusion with

	any local open space
<b>Grove</b>	for residential roads (usually relating to an area of trees)
<b>Hill</b>	for a hillside road only
<b>Lane</b>	for residential roads
<b>Place</b>	for residential roads
<b>Rise</b>	for residential roads (usually relates to upward rising thoroughfare)
<b>Road</b>	for any thoroughfare
<b>Row</b>	a group of attached properties not a thoroughfare
<b>Square</b>	for a square only
<b>Street</b>	for any thoroughfare
<b>Terrace</b>	a group of attached properties not a thoroughfare
<b>Vale</b>	for residential roads (usually relating to low land or near a river/stream)
<b>Way</b>	for any thoroughfare
<b>Wharf</b>	for residential roads which are near water

5.2.10 All pedestrian ways should end with one of the following suffixes:

**Walk, Path, Way**

### 5.3 Renaming of Streets

Streets will only be re-named under exceptional circumstances, such as when there are potential problems for the emergency services. If the Council decide that it is necessary to re-name any street, this will proceed as specified in the Oxfordshire Act 1985 – See Appendix A.

## 6. Addressing of Properties

All new properties will be allocated a number, the only exception to this are new properties on existing streets where there is no numbering scheme, in such cases the property will be named, see section 6.3. Numbering will accord with nationally accepted best practice to ensure that it is logical and sequential.

Once a property has been given a number it must be used and displayed. Where a name has been given to a property together with its official number, the number must always be included. The name is an optional addition, not an alternative.

Requests for new or amended addresses will only be accepted from or on behalf of the owner(s) of the property or lessees with at least three years of their lease left to run.

All requests for new addresses will be checked to ensure that they have the necessary approved planning permission or building control approval, official

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addresses will not be issued unless these are in order and any queries may be notified to the Council's Planning Enforcement team. Issuing of an address does not serve as confirmation that any building or structure is authorised under Planning, Building Regulations or any other legislation. See Section 7.

All new addresses or changes of address will be notified to the relevant Council departments.

## **6.1 Guidelines on Numbering of Properties**

- 6.1.1 A new street should be numbered with the odd numbers on the left and the even numbers on the right from the most important street from which they lead.
- 6.1.2 In the case of a small cul-de-sac, consecutive numbering in a clockwise direction is preferred.
- 6.1.3 All numbers should be used in the proper sequence. No numbers will be excluded from a numbering scheme for religious, superstitious or cultural reasons.
- 6.1.4 Where an existing street is to be extended and it would be appropriate to continue to use the same street name, the numbering will be a continuation of the existing scheme.
- 6.1.5 Infill developments on existing numbered streets will be numbered into the existing sequence by the use of suffixes (eg 15A, 15B etc).
- 6.1.6 Buildings (including those on corner plots) will be numbered according to the street which provides direct access to the property, generally the street that the front door of the property faces.
- 6.1.7 Where flats and units have individual doors to a street they shall be given individual numbers to the street where possible; the sequence of the numbering depends on access to front doors of individual premises.
- 6.1.8 If a multiple occupancy building has entrances in more than one street, then each entrance can be numbered in the appropriate road.
- 6.1.9 Where a property is sub-divided, individual properties should always be numbered rather than suffixed with a letter or described (ie Flat 1, 36 High Street rather than 36A, Flat A or First Floor Flat).
- 6.1.10 Where two or more properties on a numbered street are merged, the numbers of the original properties should normally be retained. For example, 4 and 6 High Street being combined would become 4-6 High Street.

6.1.11 Private garages and similar buildings used for housing cars, etc, will not be numbered.

## **6.2 Renumbering of Properties**

Properties will only be re-numbered under exceptional circumstances, such as when there are potential problems for the emergency services or consistent delivery problems. If the Council decide that it is necessary to re-number the properties in any street, this will proceed as specified in the Oxfordshire Act 1985 – See Appendix A.

## **6.3 Guidelines on Naming of Properties**

All new properties will be allocated a number, the only exception to this is new properties on an existing street where there is no numbering scheme, in such cases the property will be named.

Numbered properties may, in addition, be given a name - in such cases the number must always be included in the address and displayed on the property. It should be noted that where a property has both a number and a name, Royal Mail will regard the number as the main identifier and will only hold the name as an “Alias” and may not pass this name on to other organisations who use their database to identify addresses.

Whilst the Council cannot impose a name on a property, it will not register as official any name which has not been agreed in line with the following guidelines:

- 6.3.1 The principal property name should be unique and not duplicated within the locality or postcode. For example, Rose House and Rose Cottage - only one property named Rose should be accepted. Property names should not replicate street names.
- 6.3.2 The word “Flat” should not be used in the principal property name.
- 6.3.3 Properties should not be named with a business name; this will be added to the address separately.
- 6.3.4 Property names that could be considered or construed as obscene, racist or which would contravene any aspect of the Council’s equal opportunities policies will not be acceptable.
- 6.3.5 No abbreviations or punctuation should be used, ie Marks House rather than Mark’s House.
- 6.3.6 Property names should not include a number either in numerical or written format.



## 7. Procedures for Street Naming and Numbering

### 7.1 Addressing New Developments

Contact the Street Naming and Numbering team at:

Email: [snn@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:snn@oxford.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01865 252425

Post: Street Naming & Numbering  
City Development  
Oxford City Council  
St. Aldate's Chambers  
109-113 St. Aldate's  
OXFORD  
OX1 1DS

If you wish to obtain addresses for small developments (9 properties or less) or you wish to change or add a name to an address you can use the request forms available on our website.

For any other requirement, or if you have a query about Street Naming & Numbering please call or email us.

The process for issuing addresses is as follows:

- We receive your request, this must include a site plan showing the location. Where the development includes flats you should also include a floor plan. You must also send us the correct fee.
- We will propose a suitable address or addressing scheme, this will take into account any suggestions you make as well as our guidelines and any relevant local circumstances.
- We will send you an annotated plan for your comments.
- We agree the details with you.
- We request postcodes from Royal Mail.
- We formally issue the new official address.

## **7.2 New Streets**

If a development requires new street names, there will be a consultation with local residents' groups, ward councillors and parish councils (where appropriate).

The process will be as follows:

- You submit a request, as above. You may propose your choice of street names. If you do not propose any names, we will do so.
- We will send the proposals to the appropriate consultees.
- There will usually be a two week period of consultation.
- We will notify you of the results and the proposed name(s).
- If you agree with the proposed name(s) we will proceed with the issuing process as above.
- If you do not agree with the proposed name(s), there will be a further consultation with the consultees.
- If no proposal can be agreed, the proposals will be submitted to the relevant Development Control Committee for a final decision.

## **8. Developments without Planning Permission or Building Regulations Approval**

Official addresses will not be issued where the development does not have the necessary permissions. However, issuing of an address does not serve as confirmation that any building or structure is authorised under Planning, Building Regulations or any other legislation.

The Council may allocate unofficial addresses for emergency services purposes and for internal authority purposes e.g. collection of Council Tax and no postcodes will be requested from Royal Mail.

## **9. Charges**

The Council will charge for the Street Naming and Numbering process. Under Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003, Local Authorities have the power to charge where they provide a service if they are authorised, but not required, to provide the service. The charge must not exceed the cost of providing the service.

Details of our current charges can be found on our website. These will be reviewed on an annual basis.

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## 10. Street Naming and Numbering in the Absence of Payment of Charges

- 10.1 The Council will remind developers of new properties of the need for an official address and the process to follow. Preparation of new addresses will not commence until the appropriate fee has been paid.
- 10.2 If payment of fees is not received within 3 months of a completion date, the Local Authority may allocate official addresses for emergency services purposes with no further consultation. If the developer or owner requests amendment to the allocated naming or numbering at a later date, the standard street naming and numbering processes and the current fees and charges will apply.
- 10.3 In this case internal notifications will be made for Authority business purposes only but no requests for postcodes will be made to Royal Mail.
- 10.4 If payment of fees is not received in relation to adding, amending or removing an existing property name, the official name will remain unchanged.

## 11. Claims for Compensation

- 11.1 The Local Authority is not liable for any claims for compensation arising directly or indirectly from the naming of streets, re-naming of streets, numbering or renumbering of properties, renaming/renumbering of properties.
- 11.2 The property developer must not give any postal addresses, including the postcode, to potential occupiers, either directly or indirectly (for example via solicitors or estate agents) before the official naming and numbering scheme has been issued by the Local Authority. The Council will not be liable for any costs of damages caused by failure to comply with this.

## 12. Appeals

If you are unhappy with our decision regarding any matter covered by this policy you can make a complaint using the Council's complaints procedure, details can be found at: <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/feedback>.

## 13. Royal Mail

Once an official address has been assigned, the Council will apply to Royal Mail for a postcode. Allocation and maintenance of post codes is managed by Royal Mail and all post codes must be confirmed by them, they will also allocate a post town – all properties within the Oxford City area have a post town of Oxford.

Royal Mail will only register properties which have their own entrance and/or their own secure letter box. Sometimes this can cause problems as people think their address/flat should be registered. If mail for a building is delivered to a single letter box, and occupants then collect their own mail, Royal Mail class this as a 'building in multiple occupation' and will only register the parent building and not individual flat numbering schemes within the building.

Royal Mail can be contacted at:

**Address Management Centre  
Royal Mail  
Admiral House  
2 Admiral Way  
Doxford International Business Park  
SUNDERLAND  
SR3 3XW**

**Telephone 08456 045060**

## Appendix A – The Oxfordshire Act 1985 (Extract)

13(1) Subject to subsection (2) below a district council may name any street or any part of a street in their district which is without a name or which bears two names and may from time to time alter the name of any street or any part of a street in their district.

13(2) (a) Where the district council propose to alter the name of a street or part of a street they shall:

(i) post notice of the proposal in a conspicuous position at each end of the street or part to which it relates; and

(ii) serve a copy of the notice on the owner or occupier of every dwelling-house in that street or part.

(b) The notice under paragraph (a) above shall state the new name proposed and that objections to the proposal may be made in writing to the district council before a day, specified in the notice, not earlier than 28 days after the district council have complied with paragraph (a) above.

(c) Before determining any alteration of name in accordance with a proposal to which this subsection applies, the district council shall consider all objections made as provided in paragraph (b) above and, in the case of an objection by the owner or occupier of any dwelling-house in the street, give to the objector an opportunity of appearing before and being heard by a committee or sub-committee of the council.

13(3) A district council may from time to time cause the name of any street or any part of a street to be placed or marked on a conspicuous part of any building or other erection in their district in or near the street.

13(4) Any person who, without reasonable excuse, removes any such name shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.

13(5) The following enactments shall cease to have effect in the county:

(a) in the words in the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 introducing sections 64 and 65, the words "naming the streets" and;

(b) in the said section 64 the words from "and shall" to "to be known", and the words "or name" wherever occurring;

(c) section 21 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907; and

(d) sections 17-19 of the Public Health Act 1925

14(1) A district council may allocate to buildings in a street in their district such numbers as they think fit.

14(2) Where a number has, or numbers have, been allocated to a building under this section or any other enactment, the district council may serve on the owner or occupier of the building a notice requiring him within such period, not less than three weeks, as may be specified in the notice to mark the

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*building with that number, or those numbers, in such a way as to make the mark legible from the street*

*14(3) The owner or occupier of a building shall:*

*(a) maintain the mark in such a way that it remains legible from the street; and*

*(b) keep the view of the mark from the street unobstructed to such extent as is practicable.*

*14(4) A district council may alter the number or numbers allocated to a building. and where they do so subsections (2) and (3) above shall apply to the altered number or numbers.*

*14(5) A district council may, instead of requiring a building to be marked with a number or numbers under this section, require it to be marked with such other means of identification as they may, at the request of the owner or occupier, allow; and subsections (2) and (3) above shall have effect accordingly.*

*14(6) An owner or occupier of a building who without reasonable excuse:*

*(a) fails to comply with a notice served on him under subsection (2) above; or*

*(b) contravenes subsection (3) above;*

*shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale.*

*14(7) The following provisions of the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 shall cease to have effect in the county:*

*(a) in the words introducing sections 64 and 65, the words "and numbering the houses";*

*(b) in section 64 the words from "shall from time to time" to "think fit. and": and the words "number or" wherever occurring; and*

*(c) section 65.*

## Appendix B – Notifications List

### Internal Departments

Council Tax  
Electoral Services  
Highways and Engineering  
LLPG  
Planning  
NNDR (National Non Domestic Rates)  
Waste Team

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