

Agenda Item 8

To: East Area Planning Committee
Date: 7th July 2011 **Item No:**
Report of: Head of City Development
Title of Report: Conservation Area Appraisal Report on Final Draft

<u>Summary and Recommendations</u>	
Purpose of Report: To inform the committee of the completion of public consultation on the Old Headington Conservation Area Appraisal and to request endorsement of the amended appraisal for approval by the Board Member, City Development.	
Key decision:	No
Report Approved by	
Finance: Paul Jemetta Legal: Cathryn Yeagers	
Policy Framework:	PPS5: Planning for Historic Environment Adopted Oxford Local Plan 2001-2016 Core Strategy 2006-2026
Recommendation(s): to endorse the conservation area appraisal	

Summary

1.0 Following public consultation between 1st April and 11th May the draft conservation area appraisal has been amended to take account of representations received. The Committee is asked to endorse the appraisal prior to approval by the Board Member for City Development. Copies of the final draft of the appraisal have been circulated to committee members.

Consultation undertaken

2.0 Preparation of the appraisal involved engagement with The Friends of Old Headington, Oxford Civic Society, Oxford Architectural and Historical Society, Friends of Bury Knowle, Ruskin College and Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department. Walking workshops were held with members of the local community in August and September 2010. Preparation of the appraisal was advertised via the North East Area Committee, the Development Control Users Forum, meetings of the Friends of Old Headington and via a local community magazine. The authors were also supported by a number of independent members of the public and the ward councillors.

- 3.0 Relevant extracts of the consultation draft were circulated to the City Council's Planning Policy, Development Control, Parks and Leisure and Estates Departments, as well as the John Radcliff Hospital's estates managers and Ruskin College.
- 4.0 The public consultation was advertised via the City Council's website, on community websites, the parish notice board, at Headington Library, the City Centre Library and at the City Council's Planning Reception. The consultation was also announced at the Friends of Old Headington AGM and at North East Area Committee. Copies of the appraisal were available for inspection at the City Council's planning reception, the two libraries named above and via the internet. A community surgery event was held on the last weekend in the consultation period at Headington Baptist Church with the assistance of the Friends of Old Headington. Comment on the draft appraisal was invited as written representations.

Consultation responses received.

- 5.0 63 responses to the consultation draft were received. There were a high number of commendations and compliments on the quality, accuracy and comprehensiveness of the appraisal (74% of responses), although 1 response considered the report to be inaccurate in certain respects and two considered it too long.
- 6.0 Where appropriate the appraisal has been amended to address these document wide comments.
- 7.0 A table setting out the more specific comments received, with specific responses to them has been circulated to committee members with the appraisal and is available to view on the City Council's web site. Copies will be made available at the meeting.
- 8.0 Representations included suggestions of features of character that should either be retained or given greater emphasis due to their contribution to the character and appearance of the area and vulnerability to change. These included the following:
- 56 responses (88%) recommended either retaining or increasing the emphasis on the contribution to the character of the conservation area of **the green setting of the village**, comprising fields inside the area's boundary. The majority of these identified the area of Ruskin Fields as of particular significance. 1 response was received stating that these fields did not make a positive contribution to the special historic or architectural interest of the area.
 - 49 responses (77%) identified the **damaging effect of traffic** through the village as a major impact on its character and/or highlighted the potential negative impact of increased traffic as a significant threat to the area's character.
 - 29 responses (46%) requested that greater emphasis should be given to the **character of Stoke Place as an attractive green lane**. A

number of these expressed concern that this character could be negatively affected by insensitive alterations to upgrade the route.

- 25 (39%) responses identified the survival of the **village character** of the conservation area as an important element within the appraisal, whilst numerous others included references to the area as 'the village'. 1 response was received stating that the conservation area was not a village but formed part of a wider suburban area.

9.0 **Other features identified as making a positive contribution** to the character of the area in a smaller number of responses included the following:

- The wildlife habitat value of the area (5 responses);
- The importance of surviving rural lanes to the character of the area (3 responses);
- The variety of building styles and sizes (3 responses);
- The characteristic building materials in the area (2 responses);
- The high boundary walls in the area (2 responses);
- The importance of trees to the character of the area (2 responses);
- The importance of parks and historic parkland (2 responses);
- The positive wildlife value of overgrown land adjacent to No. 17 The Croft (2 responses);
- The history of orchards in the conservation area (1 response);
- The historic interest of the sports facilities and the modern water feature at Bury Knowle (1 response); and
- The survival of buildings with a rural or agricultural character, including the barn and stables at Bury Knowle (1 response)

10.0 Two responses asked for more information on historic mapping of the area to be provided. We expect to add additional historic mapping during desktop publishing of the appraisal following its approval.

11.0 Other **features identified as having a negative impact** on the character of the area included:

- The cumulative impact of numerous minor alterations to buildings within owners' permitted development rights and potential vulnerability to change through installation of micro-generation equipment (1 response);
- The John Radcliffe Hospital Chimney (2 responses);
- The impact of traffic on the junction at St Andrew's Lane/Dunstan Road/Stoke Place (1 response);
- Damage to kerb stones by vehicles overrunning pavements (1 response); and
- The intrusive impact of wheelie bins on the appearance of the area (2 responses).

12.0 Following the completion of the amendments in response to comments received the appraisal now represents a widely supported assessment of the conservation area's special historic and architectural interest,

which identifies the character and appearance that is desirable to preserve and enhance.

Financial and legal implications

13.0 The appraisal provides evidence for the management of the existing conservation area and does not require any additional works or have any additional financial or legal implications.

Recommendation:

14.0 That the committee endorse the appraisal prior to the approval by the Board Member, City Development.

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Background papers:

English Heritage, *Understanding Place: Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals and Management*, 2011

English Heritage, *Conservation Principles*, 2008

PPS5: Planning and the Historic Environment 2010

Version number: 1 June 2011