

To: Cabinet
Date: 15 November 2023
Report of: Scrutiny Committee
Title of Report: Central (City & University) Conservation Area Appraisal

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To present Scrutiny Committee recommendations for Cabinet consideration and decision
Key decision:	No
Scrutiny Lead Member:	Councillor Lucy Pegg, Scrutiny Committee Chair
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities
Corporate Priority:	All
Policy Framework:	Oxford Local Plan 2016-2036, Policies DH1-DH7
Recommendation: That the Cabinet states whether it agrees or disagrees with the recommendations in the body of this report.	

Appendices	
Appendix A	Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee

Introduction and overview

1. The Scrutiny Committee met on 06 November 2023 to consider a report concerning the Central (City & University) Conservation Area Appraisal. The report, which is due for Cabinet consideration on 15 November 2023, recommends that Cabinet adopts the Central (City & University) Conservation Area Appraisal and endorses the adopted Conservation Area Appraisal for use in informing development management decisions and as part of the evidence base for planning policy decisions.
2. The Committee would like to thank Councillor Upton (Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities), Rachel Williams (Planning Policy and Place Manager) and Clare Golden (Team Leader, Urban Design and Heritage) for attending the meeting to answer questions.

Summary and recommendations

3. Councillor Louise Upton, Cabinet Member for Planning and Healthier Communities introduced the report. The appraisal had been through public consultation three times before the final report was brought through Committee and informing any decisions referring to local planning policy.
4. The Committee asked a range of questions, including questions relating to if the Council had any authority for planning applications relating to the replacement of certain 'historical' features across the City, with an example of certain stones used on unlisted historic pathways.
5. In particular, the Committee discussed the provision of retrofitting modern features, such as energy efficient, windows onto the historic buildings, keeping the character of the building while also meeting modern energy saving requirements.

Recommendation 1: That the Council would encourage the use of modern windows and other retrofitting measures on historic buildings where appropriate, and the relevant documents are signposted within the report.

6. The Committee also wanted the appraisal to include the notion that private green spaces are made more accessible to the public, and to ensure applicants were invited to work with the planning team in implementing this.

Recommendation 2: That the Council amend the appraisal to welcome applications that would make private green spaces more accessible to the public.

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