



Listening Learning Leading

# **Aston Tirrold & Aston Upthorpe Conservation Area Management Plan**

May 2005

## **Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Conservation Area Management Plan**

The Council first published the Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Conservation Area Management Plan in draft form in July 2004. Following a period of public consultation, including a public meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2005, the Council approved the Management Plan and the conservation area extensions on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2005.

## Possible areas for enhancement and design guidance for new development.

### Introduction.

The established character of the Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Conservation Area must be protected in order to maintain its special architectural and historic interest. Any alteration or extension of existing buildings in the villages should be carried out in a sensitive fashion, which takes account of the established character and there are no sites which could accommodate substantial new development. Infilling existing open space within the conservation area would alter the historic and locally distinctive form of the village. Some improvement or enlargement of the existing buildings may be possible subject to very rigorous controls. In the conservation area, where the quality of the general environment is already acknowledged by designation, the community expects the Council to insist on good quality schemes which respond positively to their historic setting, this extends to garages and ancillary buildings.

The following guidance will apply to most schemes, including the creation of parking areas, extensions to existing properties and new houses or commercial buildings. It is based on central government advice, contained in PPG 1 and PPG 15, the South Oxfordshire Local Plan. The South Oxfordshire Design Guide and the Chilterns Building Design Guide (1999).

### The need for contextual design.

All development, but particularly in the Aston Upthorpe and Aston Tirrold

Conservation Area, must respond to its immediate environment, its context, in terms of scale, density, form, materials and detailing. Applicants for planning permission must provide a "Design Statement", to justify the design decisions that have been made as the scheme was developed and to show how proposed alterations relate to their context.

Many sites on the edge of the village have an open character and long views of and from the site must be taken into account. It is also vital to respect the agricultural character of the margins of much of the village.

The following are general principles that should be adopted for all development in all parts of the conservation area:

### Grain of the village.

Although Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe are villages rather than towns, they still have a distinct "grain", or built form, of historic development. This gives the village great individuality, characterised by the pattern of historic buildings following ancient footpaths and highways and by the compact nature of the village with its clearly defined boundaries. This "grain" is an important part of the character of the conservation area and should be protected. Proposals for development must include a detailed analysis of the locality and demonstrate that there is a full appreciation of the local streetscape and how it has developed, including prevailing building forms, materials and plot ratios.

### Appearance, materials and detailing.

The emphasis in any proposed alteration, new or replacement building

must always be on the need to provide a high quality of design. There may be scope for innovative modern design, however a dramatic contemporary statement would probably be unlikely to be appropriate in this conservation area and a more traditional design is likely to be more suitable. Good contemporary design can be used to create positive change in historic settlements and may be appropriate in listed buildings provided it respects their scale, form and historic development.

The materials that characterise the conservation area can be used to help alterations to respect its established character. Roofs should be pitched and covered in handmade clay tiles, or natural slate. Local features such as full or half hips may be suitable. Dormers and rooflights should be avoided, unless modestly sized and away from the public viewpoint. Chimneys may sometimes be required in certain locations.

Walls are brick, tile-hung, rendered or black/dark brown weather-boarded with traditional feather-edged boarding (not modern ship-lap). Occasionally tile-hanging is used and the use of knapped flint is not uncommon. This can be painted or stained an appropriate colour. The depth of board is typically at least 200mm. Painted brick or render are more modern alternatives which are rarely appropriate. The inclusion of small decorative details, such as string courses, shaped cills or lintels, recessed panels and other features can add interest and a sense of place but must be based on local precedent and used correctly.

The commonest window type within the conservation areas is single, glazed, painted timber windows, either in the

form of side hung casement windows to many of the older and more modest dwellings or vertical sliding sashes such as those associated with higher status eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings within the conservation area. Listed Building Consent is always required to alter the form of fenestration in listed buildings. It should be emphasised that the presence of windows of traditional design which are in keeping with the building they belong to and respect the historic nature of the villages make a very important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Windows should not be stained. If windows are to be double glazed, then these must be carefully designed. Avoidance of glazing bars can assist in achieving a satisfactory solution. 'Stick-on' glazing bars should be avoided at all costs. Consideration should be given to alternative ways of complying with Building Regulations if traditional windows are to be used. In all cases joinery details must be submitted with planning applications. Modern top-hung lights and modern materials, such as uPVC or aluminium, are generally unacceptable in the conservation area. Front doors should also usually be painted timber, again reflecting local historic styles.

Rainwater goods should only be used where appropriate to the building. Barns, for example, historically would not have had guttering or down pipes.

### Boundary treatments.

Traditionally, brick or flint walls, with trees and soft hedging define most boundaries in the conservation area. There are few footpaths to the roads in the conservation area and the boundary with the highway in most

cases is a steep grass verge. For new or replacement boundaries in the conservation area it is important that local materials and detailing are used. To respect the established character of the conservation area the historic precedent of brick and flint in the more built up parts of the village and post-and-rail type fencing in the more rural margins should be followed. Modern alternatives, such as concrete blocks, ranch-style timber fencing, are not acceptable.

### Scale.

Scale is the combination of a building's height and bulk when related to its surroundings. Most of the buildings in the conservation area are of one or two storeys and are of a modest character. For proposals for new or replacement buildings, such as garages or out buildings, applicants must provide accurate elevations of the surrounding buildings, showing how the new structure will relate to them. Proposed house extensions must take into account the scale of the existing building, and must not dominate or overwhelm the existing building.

### Extensions to existing buildings.

Extensions must respect the form and character of the original house and its locality and use high quality materials and detailing. For listed buildings this is particularly important. Design should be of high quality, whether modern or traditional. Roof lines, roof shape, eaves details, verge details and the creation of new chimneys are important considerations. Extensions should not overlook neighbouring properties, lead to an unacceptable loss of garden space, or result in the loss of historic plot boundaries. Extensions should not dominate the original building

### Repairs

Repairs to existing historic structures must be undertaken sensitively to ensure that the appearance and condition of their fabric is not harmed. The regular maintenance of historic buildings can help to avoid the costly repair work required to rescue a building from dereliction. It is especially important to ensure that historic buildings are kept weather and water tight to prevent further deterioration and for this reason it is necessary to keep roofs in particular in a good state of repair.

### Negative elements

The presence of standard UPVC windows in several otherwise traditional buildings detracts from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Attempts should be made to repair traditional windows where possible in order to conserve the historic character of the Conservation Area, and in many cases to prevent the loss of historic fabric.

There are a number of thatched roofs with patterned block cut ridges but the local thatching tradition in South Oxfordshire is to leave the ridges plain and flush to the slopes of the roof. The re-introduction of plain ridges when buildings are being re-thatched would enhance the traditional character of the Astons and reflect local tradition.

### Services

Thick, telephone cables detract from several important views within the Conservation Area, especially in Baker Street; laying them underground would enhance the traditional character of the Conservation Area.



### Street Furniture

The narrow, enclosed nature of the highways within the Astons does not allow many opportunities to enhance the conservation area with street furniture. At the site of the War Memorial, at the junction of Fullers Road and Baker Street, the existing bench is of a modest design. It complements this valuable, peaceful green space within the heart of the villages. The bench is made from traditional materials, timber panels and black painted cast iron supports, (originally from the Great Western Railway Company), which will mellow with age and should provide a long lasting and attractive feature within the conservation area. Similar benches are found elsewhere in the village at Hagbourne Road, the Burial Ground and in the recreation ground. The modern telephone kiosk on Baker Street, beside The Manse, however, lacks any local character. More sensitive solutions need to be found to accommodate modern amenities within the villages. Standard solutions more suited to town centres are not acceptable.

### Proposed extensions to the Conservation Area

Several areas for extension are proposed:

- The burial ground - this is of special architectural and historic interest and contains old memorials and well established yew trees. It provides important views out of the village.
- Aston Upthorpe Stud - the stud has a strong architectural character which contributes to the villages' well established association with horse racing so the area is of special architectural and historic interest.

- Blewburton Hall - The house and its grounds have a strong association with a prominent local family and make a historical and architectural contribution to the conservation area.
- Land to the south west of the existing conservation area between Rose Barn and Spring Lane - this is an area of open space including a paddock and a former orchard which has a closer relationship to the village than to the open fields beyond. The predominantly rural character of the land provides an appropriate setting for the listed agricultural buildings adjacent to the site.
- In addition there are three small areas where the boundary is proposed to be slightly extended to provide a more logical one i.e. to the east of Filberts, one to the east of Skirmers and one to the east of Manor Farmhouse.

## Existing Conservation Policies

### South Oxfordshire Local Plan adopted by Council, April 1997

#### LISTED BUILDINGS

##### POLICY CON 1

Proposals for the demolition of any building included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest will not be permitted except in most exceptional circumstances.

##### POLICY CON 2

The council will make full use of its powers to serve repairs notices to prevent the wilful neglect of listed buildings.

#### ALTERATIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS

##### POLICY CON 3

The use of modern materials such as aluminium and UPVC will not normally be permitted for the doors or windows of listed buildings. Sealed double-glazed timber windows will not normally be permitted unless their mouldings precisely match those of traditional windows. The use of secondary glazing will normally be acceptable.

##### POLICY CON 4

Listed building consent will not normally be granted for proposals which involve the use of cement-rich mortars, abrasive cleaning methods and chemically-based sealants, nor for the painting of unpainted brickwork and stone or the use of unsuitable colour schemes on listed buildings.

##### POLICY CON 5

The alteration or removal of historic internal features in buildings included on the statutory list of buildings of

special architectural or historic interest will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances.

#### CHANGES OF USE AND EXTENSIONS TO LISTED BUILDINGS

##### POLICY CON 6

Any change of use of a listed building must be appropriate to its character, and any extension must be sympathetic to the original structure in design, scale and materials and must not dominate or overwhelm it.

#### THE SETTING OF LISTED BUILDINGS

##### POLICY CON 7

Proposals for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will normally be refused.

#### CONSERVATION AREAS

##### POLICY CON 8

The council will use all its powers under the relevant acts to ensure that the character of individual Conservation Areas is preserved or enhanced.

##### POLICY CON 9

Consent to demolish a building in a Conservation Area will normally only be granted if the loss of the building would not adversely affect the character of the area, and if there are detailed and acceptable plans for the redevelopment of the site.

##### POLICY CON 10

When considering proposals for development in Conservation Areas, the council will require:-

- (i) the design and scale of new work to be in sympathy with the established character of the area;
- (ii) the use of traditional materials, whenever this is appropriate to the

- character of the area;
- (iii) the retention of existing walls, hedges, or any other features which contribute to the character of the area.

### **THATCHING STYLE**

#### **POLICY CON 11**

In order to protect the traditional thatching style of South Oxfordshire the District Council will generally promote the use of long straw and resist the introduction of patterned block-cut ridges on thatched buildings.

### **ADVERTISEMENTS IN CONSERVATION AREAS AND ON LISTED BUILDINGS**

#### **POLICY CON 12**

The council will not normally permit the display of signs on a listed building or in a Conservation Area which are in any way harmful to the character and appearance of the building or area. Where it is accepted that a sign is needed, its design and materials should reflect the best traditional practice.

#### **POLICY CON 13**

The installation of blinds or canopies of untraditional form or materials on buildings within Conservation Areas will not normally be permitted.

### **BURGAGE PLOTS**

#### **POLICY CON 14**

In the historic towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford the burgage plots to the rear of the principal streets will generally be protected from amalgamation and from development which would diminish their historic interest and value.

### **PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF CONSERVATION AREAS**

#### **POLICY CON 15**

In Conservation Areas, the council will take all available steps to ensure:

- (i) that the introduction or intensification of uses which conflict with the special character of the area is resisted;
- (ii) that existing walls, buildings, trees, hedges, open spaces and important views are retained, where they contribute to the character of the area;
- (iii) that whenever the opportunity arises, unsightly overhead wires and unnecessary signs are removed. The statutory undertakers will be urged to site their services underground;
- (iv) that where necessary, improvements are made to the visual quality of the floorspace, street furniture, lighting and signs; and
- (v) that development outside a Conservation Area would not have a detrimental effect on the Conservation Area.

### **ARCHAEOLOGY**

#### **POLICY CON 16**

The council will not normally permit development which would adversely affect the sites or settings of nationally-important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, or those of monuments of special local importance.

#### **POLICY CON 17**

Before the determination of an application for development which may affect a site of archaeological interest or potentially of archaeological importance, prospective developers will be required, where necessary, to make provision for



an archaeological field evaluation, in order to enable an informed and reasoned planning decision to be made.

#### **POLICY CON 18**

Wherever practicable and desirable, developments affecting sites of archaeological interest should be designed to achieve physical preservation in situ of archaeological deposits. Where this is not practicable or desirable, the district planning authority will impose conditions on planning permissions, or seek legal obligations, which will require the developer to provide an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication by a professionally qualified body acceptable to the district planning authority.

### **PARKS AND GARDENS OF SPECIAL HISTORIC INTEREST**

#### **POLICY CON 19**

Proposals which would damage the character, setting or amenities of a park or garden of special historic interest, especially those contained in the English Heritage Register, will not normally be permitted.

### **COMMON LAND**

#### **POLICY CON 20**

Proposals for development on or affecting common land, village greens and other important spaces within settlements will not normally be permitted.

## **2011 Second Deposit Draft Local Plan**

### **Demolition of Listed Buildings**

#### **Policy CON1**

Proposals for the demolition of any listed building will not be permitted.

### **Alterations and extensions to listed buildings**

#### **Policy CON4**

Any extension to a listed building must be appropriate to its character, must be sympathetic to the original structure in design, scale and materials and must not dominate or overwhelm it.

#### **Policy CON5**

Any alteration to a listed building must respect its established character and not diminish the special historical or architectural qualities which make it worthy of inclusion on the statutory list.

#### **Policy CON6**

A change of use of part or the whole of a listed building will be permitted only if its character and features of special architectural or historic interest would be protected. Proposals for a change of use should incorporate details of all intended alterations to the building and its curtilage, to demonstrate their impact on its appearance, character and setting.

#### **Policy CON7**

Proposals for development which would adversely affect the setting of a listed building will be refused.

### **CONSERVATION AREAS**

#### **Proposals affecting a conservation area**

#### **Policy CON9**

Consent to demolish a building in a conservation area will be granted only if the loss of the building would not

adversely affect the character of the area and, where appropriate, if there are detailed and acceptable plans for the redevelopment of the site.

#### Policy CON10

The Council will not grant permission for development which would harm the character or appearance of a conservation area. When considering proposals for development in conservation areas, the Council will require:

- (i) the design and scale of new work to be in sympathy with the established character of the area; and
- (ii) the use of traditional materials, whenever this is appropriate to the character of the area.

The Council will also take account of the contribution made to a conservation area by existing walls, buildings, trees, hedges, open spaces and important views. Proposals for development outside a conservation area which would have a harmful effect on the conservation area will not be permitted.

### Advertisements in conservation areas and on listed buildings

#### Policy CON13

The Council will not grant consent for the display of signs on a listed building or in a conservation area which are in any way harmful to the character and appearance of the building or area. Where it is accepted that a sign is needed, it should generally be non-illuminated, made of natural materials and to a design and scale reflecting the best traditional practice.

### Blinds and canopies in conservation areas

#### Policy CON14

The Council will not grant permission for the installation of blinds or canopies

of nontraditional form or materials on buildings within conservation areas.

### Burgage plots

#### Policy CON15

In the historic towns of Henley, Thame and Wallingford the burgage plots to the rear of the principal streets will generally be protected from amalgamation and from development which by its nature would detract from their historic interest, amenity and nature conservation value.

### Archaeology and historic building analysis and recording

#### Policy CON16

The Council will not permit development which would adversely affect the sites or settings of nationally-important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, or those of monuments of special local importance.

#### Policy CON17

Before the determination of an application for development which may affect a site of archaeological interest or potentially of archaeological importance, prospective developers will be required, where necessary, to make provision for an archaeological field evaluation, in order to enable an informed and reasoned planning decision to be made.

#### Policy CON18

Wherever practicable and desirable, developments affecting sites of archaeological interest should be designed to achieve physical preservation in situ of archaeological deposits. Where this is not practicable or desirable, the Council will impose conditions on planning permissions, or seek planning obligations, which will require the developer to provide an

appropriate programme of archaeological investigation, recording and publication by a professionally-qualified body acceptable to the Council.

#### Policy CON19

Before the determination of an application which affects a building of archaeological or historic interest, applicants will be required, where necessary, to submit a detailed record survey and analysis of the building. In some circumstances, further survey and analysis will be made a condition of consent.

### **Historic battlefields, parks, gardens and landscapes**

#### Policy CON20

Proposals which would damage the character, setting or amenities of a battlefield, park or garden of special historic interest, especially those contained in the English Heritage Registers, will not be permitted.

### **Common land**

#### Policy CON21

Proposals for development on or affecting common land, village greens and other important spaces within settlements will not be permitted.

## Acknowledgements and Bibliography

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compiled the notes from which the  
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