North Aston Conservation Area Appraisal
August 2017

Public Protection and Development Management
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1. Introduction

1.1 What is a conservation area?
Conservation area status is awarded to places that are deemed to be of ‘special architectural or historical interest’. The intention is not to prevent change or development in conservation areas, but to try and manage change in order to protect or enhance the special character and appearance of the area.

1.2 Key Characteristics
North Aston is a small, rural village. It is set back from main roads, but is well-connected to both Oxford and Banbury by the nearby A4260. The village grew up around the church, Manor and Hall and historically was predominantly agricultural. Today, North Aston retains a pleasant, green character and has suffered relatively little inappropriate development or damage to its built heritage. There are a range of land based employment opportunities including in agriculture, dairying, market gardening, nursery growing, landscaping and forestry at two local businesses - Nicholsons Nurseries and North Aston Organics. There is however no shop, pub or post office in the village. A range of building types are present in the village including the medieval church, 15th century manor house and 18th century Hall as well as a range of vernacular cottages. Most buildings are constructed of local limestone with slate or tiled roofs.

1.3 The conservation area was first designated in March 1988. This is the first appraisal to be carried out since then.

1.2 Summary of issues and opportunities
The future preservation and enhancement of the special character of the conservation area will owe much to the positive management of the area by homeowners, landowners, highways, and service providers. In addition to existing national statutory legislation and local planning control, the following opportunities for enhancement have been identified:

- add to the Register of Local Heritage Assets, structures and areas, and establish policies for their protection;
- encourage the protection of historic detail and the reinstatement of missing architectural details;
- consider how an Article 4 Direction to remove selected permitted development rights could protect the character and appearance of the conservation area;
- ensure that any new development is of high quality, sustainable and sympathetic to the conservation area;
- promote the sympathetic management of public spaces, including working with the highway authorities to encourage more traditional materials for kerbing and footpaths.
2. Planning Policy Context

2.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Section 69 requires local planning authorities to identify areas of 'special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' through an appraisal process and to designate them as conservation areas. Since 1967 some 9,600 conservation areas have been designated in England, including 60 in Cherwell District.

2.2 The purpose of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is:

- to provide a clear definition of the area’s special architectural and historical interests;
- to identify ways in which its unique characteristics can be preserved and enhanced;
- to strengthen justification for designation of the conservation area;
- to create a clear context for future development in accordance with conservation area policies in the Local Plan; and
- to consult with the public and raise awareness of conservation area issues.

2.3 This assessment and management plan aims to promote and support developments that help to preserve and/or enhance the character of the North Aston Conservation Area. This document examines the reasons for designation, defining the qualities that make up its special interest, character and

Figure 1. Area designation
appearance. The omission of any reference to a particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

2.4 The identified significant heritage assets for North Aston are shown in Figure 1. These include designated heritage assets, the conservation boundary and tree preservation orders.

2.5 The council is obliged by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to identify ‘heritage assets’ that are locally significant – this includes a structure, object or place that may have historical importance or contribute to the built heritage, character or appearance of the area. Buildings and structures which make a positive contribution to the conservation area are identified in Appendix 3 and will be considered for inclusion on the district-wide Register of Local Heritage Assets.

3. Location

3.1 The village of North Aston is approximately 14 km (8.5 miles) south of Banbury close to the river Cherwell. The A4260 from Oxford to Banbury passes to the west of the village and North Aston is connected by ancient roads to Middle Aston, Steeple Aston, Duns Tew, and Somerton. The Oxford canal (opened 1787) and the Oxford-Banbury railway line (opened 1850) both pass close to North Aston to the east.
4. Village Layout

4.1 North Aston has a multi-focal settlement pattern. The key focal points are along the Somerton Road and around St Mary’s Church and North Aston Hall. There is a smaller cluster of building to the north of the green.

Figure 3. Aerial photography

4.1 The two principal houses form the key focal points of the village. North Aston Manor is located at the north-eastern extremity of the village and provides the focal point along the Somerton Road. North Aston Hall is situated in very close proximity to the church and is the focus for the southern section of the village.
5. Topography and Geology

5.1 North Aston is situated above the River Cherwell in an area where the southern limestone meets northern clay. The land slopes from a height of 150m in the south-west of the parish to 140m at the village and down to 75m at the river. The village itself was built on an outcrop of limestone and sand. Alluvium is found lower down in the flood plains of the Cherwell. The Dane’s Hill and North Aston faults run from west to north-east. Between the faults Chipping Norton limestone, Great Oolite limestone and sand are found rather than clay.

Figure 4. Geology
Figure 5. Topography

Key:
- 70 - 90m
- 90 - 110m
- 110 - 130m
- 130 - 150m
6. Archaeology

6.1 There is an 'Archaeological Constraint Area' to the north east end of the settlement which contains the historic core of the settlement. There have been relatively few archaeological discoveries within the North Aston Conservation Area to date. Perhaps the most important discovery has been the traces of a number of house platforms, hollow ways and pottery found south of the church. These are believed to be the remains of a dozen houses that were abandoned in the late 15th Century. Other discoveries in the area include a bronze axe dating from 400 BC found at Dane’s Hill.

6.2 Evidence of Roman settlement has been discovered at neighbouring Steeple Aston including a tessellated pavement unearthed in 1658, a Roman burial ground and a number of Roman coins.
7. History

7.1 This section provides a brief history of the development of North Aston. It is not intended to be a definitive history of the area. Further information can be gained from *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 11* and *North Aston: A Millennium: 2000AD A thousand years of rural life*.

7.2 At the time of the Domesday Book of 1086 the village of North Aston fell within the area of Estone. This covered the area which later became the parishes of North Aston, Middle Aston and Steeple Aston. The area which was later to become North Aston was held by Edward Earl of Salisbury. The area was recorded as having twenty five households including six villagers, ten smallholders, seven slaves and two Frenchmen. A mill, a fishery and twenty plough lands were also listed.

7.3 In the early years following the Domesday survey, the area of North Aston was divided between diverse freeholders of modest wealth. The landholdings in the area later became concentrated and the land was divided between Bradenstoke Priory and the Anne family. The Manor Hall and associated land remained in the ownership of the Anne Family and then descended to the Brooke family through marriage. The area previously owned by Bradenstoke Priory was sold by the Crown following the Dissolution of the Monasteries. In 1574 John Broke (husband of Grace Anne) purchased this land and the area of North Aston were united. The estate remained in single ownership until 1911, when Captain John Vickris Taylor who had purchased the estate in 1908 sold the hall and 150 acres of land to Thomas Packenham, Earl of Longford.

7.4 North Aston has historically been a closed parish and a number of the owners of the estate had a significant impact on the physical development of the village.

7.5 In 1484 John Anne took a 30 year lease on the lands held by Bradenstock Priory. During this time he enclosed the lands and turned them from arable into pasture and re-built the tower of North Aston church using stone from a building belonging to Bradenstock Priory.

7.6 In 1862, William Foster-Melliar initiated a number of changes in the village, many of which can be seen today. He had a number of 17th and 18th Century buildings demolished. A farmhouse to the south-east corner of the village green was partially demolished: part becoming a school in 1872 and another rebuilt as a row of cottages at the top of the drive to the hall. A number of cottages on the Somerton road were also knocked down at the time. In 1863 he had a number of semi-detached houses built in the village including those east of the green.

Figure 7 – Domesday Book

William Foster-Melliar cottages
7.7 In the 1950s widespread renovations were commissioned by Lt Colonel A.D. Taylor, including the replacement of many thatched roofs in the village with tiles, the provision of mains water and the construction of some new semi-detached houses.

1950s semi detached houses

7.8 North Aston was understood to have had a conventional two-field system. There was a common for cattle (possibly in the north-east of the village) and a horse common at Horsemoor. The village was one of the last parishes in Cherwell Valley to retain mixed ownership of meadow land with sheep and pigs still being routinely grazed on the village green in the 17th century. Livestock can still be seen grazing on the area at certain times of the year today.

Population

7.9 At the Domesday Survey there were 25 householders recorded in the area which later became North Aston. In 1377 there were 58 people over the age of 14 and in 1676 there were 82 adults. By 1738 there were 34 households (approximately 150 people). The 19th century census provided a more accurate method of measuring population with 220 recorded in 1801, a peak in population in 1851 of 308 and 207 in 1901. In 2011 there were 212 residents in the village of North Aston.

Industry and employment

7.10 North Aston has historically been a predominantly agricultural village. For most of its history the majority of the population have been relatively poor. Historic records of the 16th to 18th centuries show shepherds, graziers and masons, in addition to a small number of craftsmen such as shoemakers, tailors and a maltster. In the 19th and early 20th centuries the number of normal village occupations such as grocers, bakers and publicans were very limited.

The big houses would also have provided a source of employment with domestic service being especially important for women and girls who would have had few other options. A small limekiln operated west of the Oxford-Banbury road and there were also a number of quarries that were used from time to time for building stone or aggregate. North Aston has increasingly become a dormitory village from the late 20th Century with residents commuting to work elsewhere.

Education

7.11 North Aston had a chequered history of educational provision throughout the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. A voluntary school failed in 1759 due to lack of support, but a further two were established in 1785 and 1799, which were still operating in 1815. In 1834 there were two day schools a mixed private school and a school for girls supported by one of the residents at North Aston Hall. In 1844 a new school was built, although it was understood to be of a low standard. In 1872 William Foster-Melliar converted a row of cottages on the south of the green into a school, which was funded by various government grants from 1875 onwards. It remained in use until 1955 when it closed due to the declining number of children in the village, with the remaining pupils being transferred to Steeple Aston.
Former village School now converted to cottages

Religion

7.12 There was a church in North Aston since the early medieval period as it was given to Bradenstoke Priory by William of Aston in 1151. The Church of St Mary is the parish church and the building dates to the 14th century. It has a three bay chancel, which is longer than the two bay nave and perhaps relates to its monastic past. The church is in very close physical proximity to North Aston Hall.

Church

7.13 In the 19th century there was a strong and flourishing community of Methodists, who had their own meeting hall. By the late 19th century they had amalgamated with the Deddington Wesleyan Reform Union.

Transport

7.14 The Oxford-Banbury Road was turnpiked in 1754 and became a public road in 1875.

7.15 The Oxford Canal, which passes a short distance to the east of the parish was opened in 1797.

7.16 The Oxford to Banbury railway line was finished in 1850, with a station opened in neighbouring Somerton in 1855.

7.17 The transport networks had limited impact on the development of North Aston, which remained a largely self-sufficient agricultural settlement.

Charity and poor relief

7.18 In 1702 the parish built a cottage for a destitute family and by the end of the century there were four such properties in the village. During the 1770s the old vicarage was rented for use by the poor of the parish. In 1834 North Aston became part of the Woodstock Poor Law Union.

7.19 There are two long standing charities in North Aston, which later amalgamated into one. Poor’s Plot was a piece of land given by William Kendall for the poor of the parish in 1570, but it had a history of being badly administered. Poor’s Stock was established from a gift of £10 of stock made by Henry Churchill in 1628 and the interest was distributed at Christmas in the form of firewood, a loaf and 1lb of beef to every poor family in the village. In the 19th century coal or blankets were distributed instead. In 1847 the vicar of the parish Robert Brown left £40 in stock, the interest of which was to be divided between the poor of the village with those named Robert or Mary (the name of his wife) to be given double portions.
Administration

7.20 At the Domesday Survey North Aston was part of the administrative area of Estone. Throughout the medieval period manorial courts were held by both Bradenstoke priory and the lords of North Aston and in 1894 it was included in Woodstock Rural District. In 1932 it changed to Banbury Rural District which became part of Cherwell District in 1974.

Historic development

7.21 Little remains of the medieval settlement of North Aston other than the Church of Saint Mary and the building of North Aston Manor. There are understood to be earth works of the original medieval settlement around the church, but these are not readily visible on the ground.

7.22 There was a church on the site from at least the middle of the 12th century, but the current building is of 14th century origin with 15th, 16th and 19th century additions and alterations.

7.23 North Aston Hall is on the site of the medieval priory. The priory buildings were demolished by the Brooke family who built a large house on the site. The Hall was partially restored and enlarge in the 18th and 19th century. North Aston Manor House originated in the 15th century and has been subject to later modifications.

7.24 The majority of buildings surviving in the village today are 18th and 19th century cottages, some of which were constructed by William Foster-Melliar. A small number of cottages were built in the 1950s.

7.25 The Hall, Manor and Old Vicarage were all substantially altered in the late-19th and early-20th centuries. Later 20th Century and early 21st Century development within the conservation area has mainly consisted of alterations to existing buildings. There are some more recent buildings to the south of the conservation area, but these are not included within the conservation area boundary.
8. Historic Maps and Photographs

8.1 The 19th and 20th centuries were a period of stability for North Aston and the historic maps show relatively little development during this period.

**Figure 8.** 1881 map

![1881 map](image1)

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**Figure 9.** 1900 map

![1900 map](image2)

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Figure 10. 1920 map

Figure 11. 1974 map
The analysis of the historic and contemporary photographs demonstrates that compared to many other settlements there has been very limited change in the village, particularly in relation to large-scale structural change. The change which has occurred relates to materials or details.

North Aston Green looking north-west

North Aston thatched houses

North Aston Post Office

There have been some minor changes to the former Post Office including the removal of the entrance door and the alterations of some of the windows.
The photographs demonstrate that the cupola has been lost from the former school building and that the form of the porches has been altered (to add a two storey element) at the William Foster-Melliar houses.
9. Summary of Special Character

North Aston is a small rural village of dispersed or multi-focal settlement form. Its special character has been shaped by its manorial history and the strong patterns of ownership. The principle buildings in the village are St Mary’s Church, North Aston Hall and North Aston Manor.

The Figure Ground Plan shows development clustered around the North Aston to Somerton Road and the land surrounding the church and hall.

The character of the village changes from north-east to west. Approaching from Somerton the village has an enclosed feel with the topography, high walls and buildings tight to the road. As you reach the plateaux the village opens out onto The Green with long vistas over the agricultural landscape to the north. North Aston Hall is set away in its own estate landscape and has a character which is distinct from the remainder of the village.

Figure 12. Visual analysis

Figure 13. Figure ground plan

Key:
- Characteristic boundary wall
- Strong building line
- Positive landmark
- Positive vista
- Positive view
- Important green space
9.1 **Green Space**
The village green is especially important to the open, informal character of the settlement. It also has an important role in the social life of the village – and is the area used for the annual gathering on Christmas Eve for bonfire and carol singing.

9.2 **Architectural History**
North Aston has a typical mix of building types found in rural villages throughout the North Oxfordshire area. St Mary’s Church, North Aston Manor and North Aston Hall are all architecturally distinguished. The former is of 14th century origin with later alterations and its configuration (as discussed above) indicates monastic as well as parish use. North Aston Manor is of 15th century origin with later alterations and includes a number of late medieval features. The current building of North Aston Hall was constructed in the late 18th century by John Yenn, but was almost completely remodelled in 1867. Bradenstoke Barn, of 17th century origin was originally associated with North Aston Hall, but has been much altered and is now in domestic usage. The remainder of the buildings in North Aston are of simple vernacular form and range from 18th and 19th century farm houses, terraces and cottages to later 19th and 20th century semi-detached houses. The influence of various owners of the Hall and Manor on the village can be seen throughout the settlement from the much altered 18th Century terraces to the pairs of estate-built semi-detached houses around the green and the 1950s tiled roofs.

9.3 **Local Building Materials and Features**
Limestone is the most common building material used throughout North Aston, this was traditionally used for both the construction of dry stone walls as well as buildings in the village. Brick was traditionally reserved for chimney stack construction. Jericho House, a late 20th century development, is the only substantial building constructed of brick in the village, although there are also a number of brick outbuildings.
9.4 Roofing
Thatch was the traditional roofing material for the settlement, but with the exception of one remaining thatched roof this has been largely replaced by tile since the 1950s. There are, however, fine examples of slate and stonesfield slate roofs around the settlement too.

Thatched house, North Aston

9.5 Chimneys
Simple brick chimney stacks are the most common form in the village, although there are also examples of ornate brickwork and stone chimney stacks in the area.

Brick chimney stacks

9.6 Windows
The majority of buildings in North Aston have timber flush casement windows, either dark-stained or painted white, which helps to create an estate village feel to the settlement. There are relatively few inappropriate modern windows, but a number of old steel casements can be seen around the settlement.

Standardised window and door details

9.7 Doors
There are a variety of doors within the conservation area; the majority are of simple vernacular construction - timber frame and panel being the most common, followed by more traditional plank doors. There are relatively few inappropriate modern insertions.

9.8 Canopies
The cottages converted from the old School House to the south of the green have distinctive canopies over their front doors that resemble scissor trusses. These canopies make a valuable contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and should not be altered or removed.

Scissor trusses
9.9 **Means of enclosure**

Boundary walls are a distinctive feature of North Aston and include both mortared and dry-stone boundary walls, of high quality. In parts of the settlement they provide a sense of enclosure and are one of the core defining characteristics. The substantial buttressed wall surrounding Jericho House is made of limestone with brick buttresses and pre-dates the building. The parkland surrounding North Aston Hall is characterised by broad-leaved hedges and railings. There are also distinctive hedgerows around the properties surrounding The Green.
Glimpse view from The Green

Parkland Railings, North Aston Hall

St Mary’s Walk, North Aston
10. Character Areas

North Aston is divided into three distinct character areas – The Green, the Central Spine running along the North Aston to Somerton Road and the area surrounding the Hall and Church.

10.1 The Green

This area is characterised by a sense of openness and tranquillity. The Green is a large, triangular space with some mature trees and clear views out of the conservation area towards the village of Deddington. A number of houses line the south side of the Somerton Road. A pair of semi-detached houses with their associated rear outbuildings are located to the north of the green, they are little altered and provide a sense of confinement for the village, separating it from the countryside beyond. A pair of estate cottages also frame the western end of the Green. To the north-west end of the Green is the Old Vicarage, this is set back behind trees. There are some additional estate houses in this area which are set back from the Green and located in close proximity to the open countryside.

Figure 14. Character areas
10.2 **Central Spine**

10.2.1 The area running through the village along the Somerton Road is another distinct character area. The area is characterised by a relative sense of enclosure, particularly in contrast to the open nature of the green.

10.2.2 The building form in the area is predominantly two storey vernacular cottages. The cottages throughout the area are of limestone construction with slate or tile roofs and timber windows. To the north of the road are the estate cottages constructed by William Foster-Melliar in 1863. They are constructed in semi-detached pairs and are largely unaltered and retain their boundary walls, gates and with the exception of one property their open porches. The gardens are well tended and the properties back onto open countryside.

10.2.3 To the south of the road the properties are of more historic origin, dating to the 17th and 18th centuries and at the south end of the road have distinctive protruding bay windows indicating that they may have been used as shops or other commercial premises.

10.2.4 All the buildings in this area have similar dark stained timber windows, which reflects the estate village nature of the settlement. As the road winds to the north-east of the village the houses become closer to the road edge providing a more defined sense of enclosure, before giving way to the high walls on either side of the road, which enclose the large properties of the Manor and Jericho House. The principal building of the Manor is shielded entirely from the road, although some
outbuildings at the periphery abut the boundary wall. Jericho House is a modern construction in classical style and is located within the historic walled gardens, previously associated with the Manor. The high stone walls with brick buttresses form a distinct barrier between the building and the surrounding countryside, but the modern double gates and walls to the south side of the property are left open to provide views in towards the building.

10.3  Church and Hall
10.3.1 The distinctive landscape surrounding the church and hall is approached along St Mary’s Walk. The approach is initially enclosed by a small planted woodland and hedgerow to the east of the track and a series of historic cottages and later modern houses to the west. As the track progresses southward there is a sudden change from the informal nature of the lane to the iron gates and railings of the formal parkland. North Aston Hall and St Mary’s church are initially hidden from view behind formal planting and hedgerows. The church and hall become suddenly visible and stand in extremely close proximity to each other.

10.3.2 The Hall is understood to have been substantially re-built and re-modelled in the 18th and 19th centuries. Its proximity to the former monastic church related to Bradenstoke Priory would perhaps indicate the location of monastic settlement.
11. Summary of Negative Features

North Aston has suffered relatively little in terms of inappropriate development or change and has retained much of its historical character. There are, however, some negative features that undermine this character and the appearance of the area.

11.1 Loss of original features

There has been very limited inappropriate replacement of original features in the village, in comparison to many other settlements. The removal and replacement of original or traditionally detailed timber or metal casement windows and doors with poorly detailed new joinery or uPVC alternatives has the potential to slowly erode the character of the area.

11.2 Dormer windows

Dormer windows are not a traditional feature in North Aston. Several dormer windows have been added to houses in recent decades, some of which are out of character.

11.3 Damage

There are a number of examples in the village of damage that has been done through careless alterations or piecemeal repairs. For example, damage to cut stone mullions and window frames during the installation of alarms or television cables that could have been avoided by better planning and site practice.

11.4 Solar panels

Solar panels and other forms of micro-generation help to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and reduce our energy consumption, however careful consideration needs to be given to their location in relation to heritage assets including conservation areas and listed buildings. The very large areas of solar panelling at the Coach House are quite conspicuous and affect the setting of Bradenstoke Barn and St Mary’s Church.
11.5 **Parking**

Rural villages were not built with cars in mind and as a consequence parking can be a problem. This does not appear to be a significant issue in North Aston in comparison to other larger villages, but needs to be considered in future development of the village.

11.6 **Wiring, Satellites and Aerials**

Overhead wiring, television aerials and satellite dishes can have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Overhead lines around the Somerton Road area detract from a full appreciation of the historic street scene. The issue is less of a problem elsewhere in the village as work has previously been undertaken to ensure the cables have been re-routed underground, which has had a positive impact on the conservation area. Satellite dishes can also pose a threat and should be positioned in an inconspicuous location hidden from public view.

11.7 **Sporadic Maintenance**

Maintaining a property rather than conducting large scale repairs or replacement is cheaper, more efficient, and ensures the building retains its appearance. While the over-all standard of maintenance in North Aston appears to be quite high, there are a number of examples of neglect. It should also be noted that serious damage can sometimes be caused by over-zealous but well-intentioned works such as sand-and-cement pointing or damp-proofing. With any maintenance or ‘up-grading’ of old buildings or structures the over-riding principle should be to do no harm.
12. Management Plan

12.1 Boundary Treatments
Total demolition of traditional boundary features will be resisted as they form part of the core character of the conservation area. The use of appropriate traditional methods of construction and materials including drystone-walling, the use of lime mortar and the planting of indigenous or appropriate naturalised species of hedgerow is encouraged in all schemes of repair, reinstatement or new work.

12.2 Important Views: Views into, out of, and within the Conservation Area, in particular those of the church and around the Green are essential to the special quality of the place. Views between North Aston and Deddington are also of importance. Their protection and enhancement will be an important consideration in the determination of any proposed development.

12.3 Building Maintenance: Sensitive repair and regular maintenance will be encouraged through distribution of guidance notes and general advice through the Development Management process. It is of the utmost importance that appropriate traditional techniques and materials are used to retain the special historical character and appearance of the area. In particular, the use of lime mortar and like-for-like repairs.

12.4 Archaeology: Varying levels of archaeological mitigation may be required in response to development proposals. Early consultation with Oxfordshire County Council’s Archaeology Department in relation to any proposed new works involving foundation excavation or ground levelling is encouraged at the outset to prevent delay at the application submission stage.

12.5 Development
As a Category C village (The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031. Part 1 adopted 20 July 2015), North Aston is not considered to be suitable for any further residential development apart from extensions or the conversions of existing non-residential buildings. Any proposed development or extensions must respect the scale, design, proportions and materials of the surrounding architecture to strengthen the cohesion of the street scene.

12.6 Reinstatement of lost features
Traditional architectural details and local materials are important and should be retained, repaired or reinstated where lost. Article 4 Directions can ensure that existing original and traditional details are protected and - where necessary - sensitively replaced in the future.
A conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It would be inappropriate for the whole village to be included within the designated area. Different planning controls apply in Conservation Areas and therefore it is vital that only areas which are demonstrably of special architectural or historic interest be included.

The North Aston Conservation Area was designated in 1988 and this is its first appraisal. The original boundary was drawn to include the buildings of architectural or historical interest and includes most of the houses in the village except for the more modern Hall Close.

This appraisal makes only one minor change to rectify the boundary where it currently cuts through an existing property.

**North-western Boundary**
The boundary runs from the north-western corner of the Old Vicarage garden to the northern corner of the garden of Jericho House.

**Eastern Boundary**
The boundary runs from the northern corner of the garden of Jericho House in a south-easterly direction towards Somerton Road turning north-east at the

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**Figure 15.** Conservation area boundary
trees and continuing for approximately 35m before turning east, south-east and travelling between the pond and tennis court at North Aston Manor for a distance of approximately 66m. It then turns south, south-west and continues for 121m before curving east across the road. At this point it travels along the bank of trees on the northern side of the road for a distance of 174m – as far as the junction. It then follows the road south as far as the junction at Gardener’s Cottage and turns east, looping around the boundaries of The Lower House, King’s Wednesday and Justice’s Cottage.

13.6 Southern Boundary
The boundary follows St. Mary’s Walk as far as the junction for Hall Close where it turns west, following the rear boundaries of the houses north of Hall Close. The new boundary follows the current property boundary of Magnolia Cottage.

13.7 Western Boundary
The boundary turns north at the road at the corner of Windana, crosses the Somerton Road and continues along the back of numbers 21 and 22 The Green. At the road, the boundary then travels west along the boundary of the Old Vicarage back to the north-western corner.

Figure 16. Conservation area boundary review
### 14. Effects of Conservation Area Designation

#### 14.1 Special Controls

In order to protect the special environment, stricter controls exist within the conservation area restricting the kinds of alterations to domestic properties that can be carried out without specific planning permissions (known as 'permitted development'). These are not intended as a hindrance to change, but as a positive management to safeguard the character of the area as a whole. Planning permission is required for:

- a two storey rear extension of any dimensions;
- a single storey side extension of any dimension;
- a building, enclosure, pool or container situated on land between a wall forming a side elevation of the dwelling and the boundary of the curtilage of the dwelling;
- cladding in any material;
- any extension to the roof;
- a satellite dish on any chimney, wall or roof slope that faces onto and is visible from a highway;
- a flue, chimney, soil or vent pipe on a wall or roof slope that fronts a highway and forms the principal or side elevation of the house.

Further up to date information can be found on the Planning Portal [http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/]({link}).

#### 14.2 With all proposals for development and the display of advertisements in a Conservation Area, greater care is necessary to ensure that schemes preserve and enhance the area's special character. Design and choice of materials are of particular importance in this respect.

#### 14.3 Article 4 Directions

Experience has shown that significant damage can be done to the character and appearance of a conservation area by the cumulative effect of numerous small changes such as the loss of original features or their replacement with less sympathetic modern designs and materials. The local planning authority may serve Article 4 Directions that would limit development that can be carried out without planning permission. Where an Article 4 Direction is made, planning permission can be required to replace windows for a different material or design. No fee would be charged for this but the application would give the planning department an opportunity to assess how the conservation area would be affected.

#### 14.4 Listed Buildings

A Listed Building is a building that is considered to be of 'special architectural or historic interest' and - as such - requires special protection. Once listed, a building is protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The listing protects the entire building both externally and internally irrespective of the reason for listing as well as any object or structure fixed to it or any object or structure within the 'curtilage' of the building, which has existed since before 1st July 1948. This is to ensure that the special character of both the building and its setting are protected.

Where works are proposed to a Listed Building, it is always advisable to check with the council's Design and Conservation Team whether Listed Building Consent is required. In any works proposed, special regard must be given to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting and special architectural and historical interests.
In considering any works to a listed building the principle objective must be to retain all original features and fabric of the building wherever possible. Listed Building Consent is required for the demolition of a listed building or for alteration, which would affect the building’s character, integrity or special interest. This could include works such as: changing windows and doors, changing roofing materials, painting brickwork, moving or replacing internal walls, fireplaces or staircases or alterations to boundary walls.

Like-for-like repairs may not need consent, but it is always advisable to check prior to undertaking any works as the carrying out of works without the necessary consent is a criminal offence. If convicted, an offender (the owner, builder, architect etc) could face up to two years’ imprisonment or an unlimited fine. Neither showing that you were unaware of the law, nor that the works that were carried out would have been granted consent had it been applied for would be accepted as a defence.
15. Design and Repair Guidance

High quality design and informed decision making are essential if we are to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. The following considerations are particularly important:

15.1 Scale
The scale of any new development - including extensions and alterations to existing buildings - must be consistent with, and relate to, its surroundings in the conservation area.

15.2 Building Line
Development must conform to the traditional settlement pattern and established building lines.

15.3 Roofs
Many roofs in North Aston were originally thatched. It is very important that the original pitch of roofs is maintained. Traditional eaves, verge and ridge details should be retained. Chimneys are important features of the roofing and should be retained even if no longer required for fireplaces. Where roofing materials are to be replaced the new materials should ordinarily match the original in colour, size, texture and provenance. Where ventilation is required (where roofs have been insulated for example), this should be achieved by inconspicuous means (e.g. under-eaves ventilation); visible roof vents would be discouraged.

15.4 Proportion
In most buildings within the Conservation Area the relationship between windows, doors, floor heights and the relationship of solid to void in the design of elevations is very important. Traditional proportions should be emulated in new development. It is of particular importance that traditional proportions are respected when designing an extension to an existing building. In most instances these will need to be subservient to the existing properties.

15.5 External Walls
Any alteration or repair to external walls must respect the existing building materials and match them in texture, quality and colour. Every effort should be made to retain or re-use facing stonework which should not ordinarily be rendered, pebble-dashed or painted. Repointing should be carried out with a mortar to match the existing in colour, type and texture. Historically mortars would usually have consisted of lime and sand (though mud, animal dungs, fly-ash etc may have been used at various times). Hard, modern Portland cement mortars are inappropriate as they prevent the evaporation of moisture through the joints. This is instead drawn through the nearest permeable surface – usually the stone or brick work – resulting in spalling. Where original render exists this should not be stripped off to expose rubble stone or brick walls, which were not intended to be exposed. Traditionally, render finishes were usually lime-based. Modern, hard, impermeable Portland cement renders are inappropriate for old buildings. Their inability to accommodate minor seasonal movements in the structure will result in hairline cracks that may be invisible to the human eye. This will lead to moisture ingress into the building fabric. In addition, cement renders will prevent the evaporation of water vapour resulting increased heat loss from the building (higher U values) and increased risk of timber decay and damp staining internally. Where appropriate, hard cement renders should be replaced with a lime alternative.

15.6 Rainwater goods
Rainwater goods (guttering, downpipes, hoppers) should be repaired if original or reinstated in original materials. Plastic guttering is not appropriate for listed buildings or buildings in conservation areas.
15.7 **Windows**

15.7.1 Windows should be correctly proportioned, well related to each other and neighbouring buildings, and should respect any existing openings. Retention and repair of original windows is preferable to replacement. Where replacement is necessary it should match the original. This not only includes the structural elements of the window (e.g. frame, lintel) but also historic glass and window furniture. Particularly important is the method of opening, the set back within the reveal and the sections of glazing bars. The thickness and moulding of glazing bars, the size and arrangement of panes are vital elements in determining appropriate replacement windows, which respect the age and history of a building.

15.7.2 In many cases, for example, the replacement of flush casement windows (very common in North Aston) with storm proof casement windows of a very similar design would seriously affect the appearance of a building. This would not be appropriate.

15.7.3 Inappropriate replacement windows damage the character and appearance of a building and its surroundings and can undermine a property’s monetary value. It is often a false economy as it can take decades for any savings on energy costs derived from the change of windows to match the cost of their purchase and installation.

15.7.4 Replacement of timber or metal windows with uPVC alternative, no matter what the pattern or design, is inappropriate.

15.7.5 Dormers are not a traditional feature for North Aston. There are a number of examples of dormer windows from the second half of the twentieth century: some more carefully considered than others. Rooflights to the rear would be preferable where possible.

15.7.6 Where it is proposed to remove inappropriate windows; replacements will be required to be sympathetic to the history and architecture of the building and its surroundings.

15.7.7 Further advice on appropriate alterations to windows can be provided by Historic England 'Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading' [https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/traditional-windows-care-repair-upgrading/](https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/traditional-windows-care-repair-upgrading/)

15.8 **Doors**

Old timber doors should be repaired rather than replaced wherever possible. The thermal performance of existing doors can be improved by the use of draught-stripping and curtains. uPVC doors are not appropriate for the conservation area. Where the replacement of an existing door is necessary, appropriate traditional designs of planked or panelled timber doors should be used.

15.9 **Boundary Treatment**

The removal or alterations of boundary walls or railings will not be viewed favourably. Repairs should be carried out on a like-for-like basis using identical materials and techniques. Pointing existing walls with sand-and-cement mortar, for example, would be entirely inappropriate; as would pointing of an historic dry stone wall.

15.10 **Micro Energy Generation**

Whilst the use of micro energy systems might be generally encouraged, special care will be necessary to find suitable sites for their use within the conservation area. Equipment fixed to principal or visible elevations or roof planes will damage the character and appearance of the conservation area.

15.11 **Highway Works**

Redundant or unnecessary street furniture such as signs or poles should be removed to reduce clutter. Any new items such as bollards, sign-posts etc. must be carefully integrated within the streetscape and respect adjacent buildings and the area as a whole. The number and size of road signs should be kept to a minimum and only illuminated where essential. Backing plates should be grey or black and luminous colours should be avoided.
16. Bibliography


Communities and Local Government, (2012), National Planning Policy Framework


English Heritage (2011) Good Practice Guidance for Local Listing (consultation draft)

English Heritage (2005) Measuring Change in Conservation Areas

English Heritage (2010) Understanding Place: Historic Area Assessments in a Planning and Development Context


English Heritage (2011) Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management

English Heritage (2011) Valuing Place: Good Practice in Conservation Areas


Victorian County History

http://domesdaymap.co.uk/place/SP4729/north-aston/


http://oxfordshirelocalhistory.modhist.ox.ac.uk/original-documents/visual/photography/
17. Acknowledgments

This document has been produced as part of Cherwell District Council’s ongoing programme of conservation area appraisals.

Images used are sourced from the Victoria County History Vol XI. and from the Oxfordshire Local History Centre unless otherwise accredited.

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Appendix 1: Policies

There are a number of policy documents which contain policies pertaining to the historic built environment. The main policies are summarised in this section. Other policies of a more general nature are also of some relevance. These are not listed here but can be found elsewhere in the specific documents mentioned below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Legislation</th>
<th>National Policy Guidance</th>
<th>Local Policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**National Planning Policy Framework**
in particular:

**Point 17** Core planning principles.

**Points 56 to 68** Section 7 – Requiring good design.

**Point 77** Local green space identification.

**Points 126 to 141** Section 12 - Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

**Point 157** Identification of land within the Local Plan.

**Point 169** Using a proportionate data base.

**Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 1996**

**H18**: Proposed new dwellings beyond the built up limits will need to be essential for agriculture or be a rural exception site only.

**H19**: Proposed conversions will need to retain existing appearance and not cause harm to historic assets or wider countryside.

**H21**: Residential conversion favoured unless it would harm the character or interest of a building of historic interest.

**C18**: Extensions/alterations to a listed building should be minor and sympathetic.

**C23**: Presumption in favour of retaining positive features within a conservation area.

**C30**: Design control to ensure compatibility with existing street scene and vicinity.

**Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 Adopted 20 July 2015**

**ESD1**: Mitigating and adapting to climate change

**ESD5**: Renewable energy

**ESD10**: Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment

**ESD13**: Local landscape protection and enhancement

**ESD15**: The Character of the built and historic environment.

**Policy Villages 1: village categorisation**: the village will be Category C and therefore development will be restricted to conversions only.

**Policy Village 2: distributing growth**: the village will be Category C and therefore development will be restricted to infilling and conversions only.

**Policy Villages 3: rural exception sites**
Listed Buildings in North Aston

Figure 17. Listed buildings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map Number</th>
<th>List Entry Name</th>
<th>List Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1046271</td>
<td>Bradenstoke Barn Grade II</td>
<td>05.05.1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200620</td>
<td>Church of St. Mary Grade II*</td>
<td>08.12.1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1046272</td>
<td>Church of Saint Mary: group of headstones approximately 4 metres south of south chancel Grade II</td>
<td>05.05.1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1369871</td>
<td>Church of St. Mary: chest tomb approximately 10 metres south of south aisle Grade II</td>
<td>05.05.1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1206649</td>
<td>Gate cottage/Middle Cottage/Nether Cottage Grade II</td>
<td>05.05.1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1046275</td>
<td>1 Magnolia Cottage/ 2 The Green/ 3 The Green Grade II</td>
<td>05.05.1988</td>
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<tr>
<td>1300645</td>
<td>North Aston Hall Grade II</td>
<td>08.12.1955</td>
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<tr>
<td>1369832</td>
<td>North Aston Hall Icehouse approximately 150 metres north-west Grade II</td>
<td>05.05.1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1369833</td>
<td>Rosemary Cottage Grade II</td>
<td>05.05.1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200646</td>
<td>North Aston Manor Grade II</td>
<td>08.12.1955</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:
- Grade II listed buildings
- Grade II* listed building
Buildings and structures making a positive contribution to the conservation area

Not all structures within a conservation area make a distinctly positive contribution to its particular character. There are, however, sometimes landmark buildings, structures or areas that add to the character and enhance the setting of the other buildings and open spaces. This contribution may be made by buildings, structures or spaces that:

• provide evidence of the area’s history and development
• are of architectural merit
• are of local historical importance
• exemplify local vernacular styles
• make a positive contribution of the street scene as part of a group

The Register of Local Heritage Assets is intended to recognise buildings, landscapes and monuments of architectural and historical importance that contribute significantly to the unique character of the district. Whilst not statutorily listed, these features are of historical significance and/or of importance to the local community. The criteria for the designation of such assets are set out in the council’s guidance.

Unlike Listed buildings, Local Heritage Assets do not enjoy statutory protection and are subject to normal planning controls. However, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) emphasises the importance of understanding the significance of heritage assets and the impact that changes will have on them before decisions are made about new proposals.

Inclusion on the Register of Local Heritage Assets will mean that the council will take into account the asset’s significance when considering planning applications. Applications that affect the character, setting or significance of a Local Heritage Asset will be carefully considered, and additional information may be required to justify the proposed works.

For more details, see the council’s published guidance.

Structures listed below may be worthy of inclusion on the Register of Local Heritage Assets. We expect to assess them in the future, using council’s approved criteria. There should be a presumption in favour of their retention in all but exceptional circumstances. All make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and are significant features in their own right.

This list is not exhaustive. We would welcome any additional proposals.

The Fountain

![Photo from 1881]
The fountain was constructed in the early 1860s (date on stone is 1865), a gift of William Foster-Melliar to the village. It was built with finely cut limestone with tight joints and an inscribed plaque reading:

As the birds drink and so lift up their head
So must man sit and think
Of better drink
He may attain after he is dead

It was originally supplied from a reservoir and provided water to many of the houses at the top of the village until mains water was connected in the 1950s. It is thought to have been built by a man called Sykes of a family who also built ‘Sparrows’ in 1925 and ‘Juniper House’ in 1970. The fountain was restored by the local community as part of a millennium project in 2000.

Figure 18. Local Heritage Assets
1-4 Somerton Road, North Aston

Two pairs of semi-detached cottages constructed by William Foster-Melliar in 1863. Constructed in the local limestone, dressed and coursed with narrow mortar joints. and with tile roofs in a simple Arts and Crafts style. The roofs are now of slate. Little altered externally apart from the addition of a two storey extension to the porches. Retain simple outbuildings to the rear. Important historical link to North Aston estate.

10 Somerton Road, North Aston

Simple, linear plan vernacular cottage constructed in the local limestone with tile roof. Central and end red brick stacks. Make a positive contribution to the streetscene.

11-13 Somerton Road, North Aston

Row of simple, linear plan vernacular cottages constructed in the local limestone with tile roofs. Central and end stacks of red brick. Distinctive form of bay windows, which may link to earlier commercial use. Make a positive contribution to the streetscene.

The Old Post Office, 14 Somerton Road, North Aston

The former Post Office is a building of vernacular construction built in the local limestone with a tile roof. The building faces with its gable end on to the road. There have been some changes to the building including the change from thatch to tile and the alteration of the fenestration, but it remains of interest due to its historic use. Makes a positive contribution to the streetscene.
14-15 The Green

Pair of semi-detached stone cottages of 19th century date. Constructed of the local limestone with tile roof and large, red brick central stack. Retain canopy porches, stone boundary walls and single storey outbuildings to the rear. Makes a significant contribution to the setting of the village green.

16-18 The Green

Row of three cottages constructed of the local limestone with tile roofs and red brick chimneys. Porches have been added to the frontage, but retain estate cottage feel.

19-20, Brew House Cottage, The Green

Two former outbuildings (reportedly Brew House and Cow Shed) converted to estate workers cottages. Houses of local limestone with tile roofs, Brew House has an inserted dormer window. Brew House structure is

21-22 The Green

Pair of estate cottages constructed of local limestone with tile roofs and red brick chimney stacks. Concrete lintels and later dormer windows added, but the buildings have a strong visual presence at west end of The Green.

1-4 Old School House

Former school building. Simple linear form constructed of limestone now with tile roof. Much altered with loss of cupula and wide range of window styles. Retains linear form and has scissor brace trusses to all the porch canopies. The building is of historic interest as the former school.
Upper House

Stone detached building, originally of L-plan construction. 19th century gardeners cottage. Constructed in local vernacular materials, but with ashlar quoins and decorative details including stone gabled dormers and stone drip moulds.

The Lodge

The Lodge at the entrance to North Aston Manor. Arts and Crafts aesthetic. Significantly altered, but has strong historical links to North Aston Manor and is in an important location to the north of the village.
What is an Article 4 Direction?
Certain types of minor alterations, extensions to buildings and changes of use of buildings do not require full planning permission from the council. These forms of development are called permitted development. An Article 4 Direction is a special planning regulation adopted by a Local Planning Authority. It operates by removing permitted development rights from whatever is specified in the Article 4 Direction.
The effect of these Article 4 Directions is that planning permission is required for developments that would otherwise not require an application.
In September 2013 the executive of Cherwell District Council approved the rolling out of a district-wide programme of limited Article 4 Directions to ensure that accumulative minor changes do not undermine the visual amenity of conservation areas within the district. By doing so this enables the Council to consider these developments through the planning process so as to ensure that they accord with its policies to improve the local environment, protect businesses or any other issues.

The Planning Portal (http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/permission/responsibilities/planningpermission/permitted) provides a useful summary of permitted development and provides links to the legislation which need to be referred to. It also sets out the Use Classes Order and permitted changes of use.

What are the effects of Article 4 Directions?
Once an Article 4 Direction has been made planning permission becomes necessary for the specific changes as set out in the direction. This is only the case for the buildings covered by the direction.
There is no fee for any application made necessary by the serving of an Article 4 Direction.

**How will an Article 4 Direction affect North Aston?**

The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies a number of non-listed dwellings which make a special contribution to the character and appearance of North Aston. Within the conservation area limited Article 4 Directions are proposed for the following non-listed buildings because of their contribution:

- 14-15 The Green
- 21-22 The Green
- 1-4 Somerton Road
- 5-6 Somerton Road
- 7-8 Somerton Road
- 9, The Bakery, Somerton Road
- 10 Somerton Road
- 11 Somerton Road
- Rose Cottage, 12 Somerton Road
- 13 Somerton Road
- 14 Somerton Road
- 1-4 School Cottages, Somerton Road

The directions cover changes to the front elevations of these buildings which may include:

- The removal of traditional boundary walls
- The removal or rebuilding of chimney stacks
- The replacement of doors
- Changes to roofing materials and the insertion of rooflights
- Erection of porches
- Erection of renewable technology including solar panels
- Replacement of rainwater goods + external drainage
- Erection of satellite dishes and other antennae/aerials
- Replacement of windows
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<th><strong>Document title</strong></th>
<th>North Aston Conservation Area Appraisal</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Executive date</strong></td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Recommendation of the Executive</strong></td>
<td>Delegate authority to Lead Member for Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Further recommended changes to the document</strong></td>
<td>No changes undertaken</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Amended document approved by</strong></td>
<td>[Signature]</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date approved</strong></td>
<td>1 August 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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How to contact us

Design & Conservation Team
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
Oxfordshire
OX15 4AA

Tel: 01295 227006
e-mail: design.conservation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
www.cherwell.gov.uk