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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
Somerton is a village in the Cherwell Valley, it was a relatively large and prosperous settlement throughout the medieval period. There is archaeological evidence of the medieval castle of the De Grey family as well as settlement remains to the west of the church and the medieval manor house of the Femour family to the south east of the settlement.

The standing built remains of the settlement consists largely of 17th and 18th century farmhouses and cottages. The oldest building in the village is the former school building dating to the 16th or 17th century. There are also a number of 19th and 20th century additions.

Agriculture was of primary importance to Somerton. Enclosure took place in Somerton in 1765 and at the time there was just one landholder – William Femour. A substantial amount of the land was common land. The settlement has a good water supply and is known for its good meadowland. Much of the agricultural land surrounding the village was historically used as pasture.

There were strong links to Catholicism in the village due to the Roman Catholic connections of the Femour family and Somerton was known as one of the key centres for Catholicism in Oxfordshire.

The Femour family had a substantial impact on the settlement and were the principal landowners (despite the fact they predominantly resided in Tusmore) until 1815, when the land was sold to Lord Jersey (George Augustus Frederick Villers).

Somerton is well placed in relation to transport networks. The historic routeways of Aves Ditch and the Portway lie to the eastern boundary and north-south of the parish respectively. The Oxford Canal runs to the west of the settlement, which historically had a weighbridge, wharf and lock, in close proximity to Somerton. There was also a train station for the Banbury to Oxford Branch of the Great Western Railway.

The settlement does not actively address the current road network and the most significant buildings within the village (Rectory, School House etc) are all located away from the road. Dovecot Farm, with its outbuildings and extensive boundary wall, all face away from the road. This is due to the shrunken nature of the settlement and reflects where buildings have historically been lost from key locations.

The proximity of the settlement to the River Cherwell is one of the key reasons for its location and relative prosperity. There were numerous historic bridges and a causeway across the river, in close proximity to the settlement.

1.3 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 and establish policies for their protection;
- review the boundary for Somerton Conservation Area;
- 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 a high quality, sustainable and sympathetic to the conservation area;
- consider how to effectively manage the distinctive characteristics of the settlement
2. Planning Policy Context

2.1 This document is an appraisal of the character and appearance of the Somerton Conservation Area, first designated in 1992 (Figure 1 – designation map). This is the second review of the conservation area, the first review taking place in 1996. It is intended that the document will provide a comprehensive assessment of the current character and appearance of the conservation area for Somerton. It also provides a basis for providing informed judgements on the future conservation and management of the settlement.

2.2 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 9600 Conservation Areas have been designated in England, including 60 in Cherwell District.

2.3 The purpose of this Conservation Area Appraisal and management plan is:

- to provide a clear definition of an 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

2.4 This assessment and management plan aims to promote and support developments that help to preserve and/or enhance the character of Somerton Conservation Area. It is not an attempt to stifle change. Our responsibility towards the conservation of our built heritage must be balanced with the demands of progress and growth. This document examines the reasons for designation, defining the qualities that make up its special interest, character and 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.

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

2.6 The council is obliged by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to identify ‘heritage assets’ that are locally significant. That is; 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.

2.7 This document should be read in conjunction with The Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1. Adopted 20 July 2015, the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 and the Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan (Submission Document)

2.8 This draft appraisal will be the subject of public consultation, which will run until 9 April, with the document available to download from the Council’s website and to view in local libraries during this time.
Figure 1. Plan showing final conservation area boundary with listed buildings.
3. Location

3.1 The village of Somerton lies approximately 15 miles due north of Oxford and seven miles to the northeast of Bicester. The settlement nestles on the east side of the Cherwell Valley.

3.2 Somerton lies along a network of local roads and footpaths leading between the villages of North Aston, Ardley, Fritwell, Souldern and Upper Heyford.

3.3 The Cherwell Valley Railway, Oxford Canal and River Cherwell all run immediately to the west of the village.

Figure 2. Location
Figure 3. Outline of conservation area boundary on vertical aerial photograph background
4. Geology and Topography

4.1 Somerton Conservation Area lies within two character areas, as identified by the Cobham Landscape Survey. The majority of the settlement lies within Cherwell Valley character area to the west, with its clearly defined valley sides with open fields and water meadows to either side of the River Cherwell and other areas of the parish lie within the Upper Heyford Plateau Character Area to the east, with its distinctive (landford) unit on elevated land.

4.2 The topography of the area is entirely influenced by the river Cherwell, with a well defined valley bottom and steep slopes to either side. The area is green and well-wooded. The size of the Cherwell valley is considerable considering the current size of the river.

4.3 The geology of the area is also influenced by the River Cherwell with two distinct geological strata running to either side of the river. To the east of the Cherwell there is a band of the Great Oolite Group and to the west there is a band of Dynham Formation. Separate bands of Marlestone Rock Formation, Horsehay Sand Formation and Cornbrash foundation run along the trajectory of the river.

Figure 4. Flood Zone
Figure 5. Topography

Figure 6. Geology
5. Archaeology

5.1 Somerton is an archaeologically rich parish. There are a wide range of archaeological monuments and features from all periods including Bronze Age ring ditch, Aves Ditch (possibly Iron Age tribal boundary), iron age enclosures and pottery finds and Portway Roman Road with a burnt out Romano-British building with significant pewter ware finds in close proximity. There is a rare Turf Cut maze at Troy Farm to the east of the core settlement a medieval dagger was found.

5.2 The most substantial archaeological remains, however, relate to the shrunken medieval village of Somerton, which was once the largest and most prosperous village in the Ploughley Hundred. There are visible earthworks remains located throughout the village and archaeological excavations within the current village have revealed medieval remains in the form of building platforms and additional holloways. There are believed to have been several house platforms to either side of High Street, some of which have modern houses constructed on them.

5.3 The 16th century Fermour manor house lies to the south east of the existing settlement and is a scheduled monument. The rectangular earthworks of the house and surrounding landscape are clearly visible from ground level and there were reports of standing remains of the former hall, although these were not visible from public footpaths. There are also quarry pits and early enclosures in the vicinity.

5.4 There are also substantial earthworks to the western side of the current settlement which include a hollow way (the original main street for the village) and fishponds as well as house platforms. This area is also scheduled as an ancient monument.

5.5 To the north east of this area, around the historic school site, is understood to be the site of the medieval castle of the de Grey family (mentioned in an extant of 1295). There is no confirmed archaeological evidence for this and the schedule does not refer to a castle, but there is conjecture that there was a moated area around a central rectangular platform near the school. The castle could either have been a motte and bailey or a simple moated enclosure with the lower moat lying parallel to the River Cherwell. The school is believed to have been built on the site of the chapel associated with the castle; the current building is of 16th century origin, but incorporates earlier work, and evidence for a burial ground was discovered with burials found during excavations in 1953 (8) and 1969 (5). Significant areas of archaeological interest, including potentially part of the castle, are likely to have been lost during the construction of the railway in the mid19th century.

5.6 Somerton was an open field parish until the late 18th century and aerial photographs show ridge and furrow earthworks to the north and south of the village. Several enclosure hedges reflect the reverse S shape of former ridge and furrow.
Figure 7. Archaeological Constraint Area
6. History

General

6.1 The Somerton Conservation Area Appraisal provides a brief overview of the history and development of the settlement. It is not intended to be the definitive history of the area. Further information about the settlement can be gained from the Oxfordshire Local History Centre.

6.2 The Anglo-Saxons doubtless chose to settle at Somerton largely on account of the good water supply and the rich meadowland, which afforded pasture for cattle in the summer months when the uplands in this area were liable to drought. The old English name Sumortun means ‘farm used in summer’ and it is possible that it was originally used for a part of the year only by the upland settlement at Fritwell and later permanently colonized from there. Historical records dating from 1086 show Somerton to have been the largest and richest settlement in the Ploughley Hundred in the Middle Ages, probably partly due to the rich grazing land available in the Cherwell Valley. The settlement has a good water supply and rich meadowland, which no doubt contributed to its prosperity.

6.3 Somerton was largely owned by Odo of Bayeux (who appears in the Bayeux tapestry) at Domesday with Miles Crispin owning a minor share of the manor. The Cogges family then held the manor until 1512 when it passed to William Femour and it remained in the family ownership until the early 19th century. The Femour family were staunch Roman Catholics and had a significant influence on religious development in Somerton. They were absentee landowners from 1596 onwards (when they began to reside in Tusmore, but were all buried in the church at Somerton). In 1815 Somerton was sold to Lord Jersey for £90,000. The manor was then sold again to Thomas Edwin Emberlin in 1915 and parts of the parish remained in family ownership into the late 20th century, but the majority of the manor was sold and divided.

6.4 The settlement was historically of some significance, the medieval castle of the de Grey family was located to the north east of the church and a court, dovecote, fishponds, curtilages and gardens were also mentioned in 1295. In the early 16th century William Femour built a new manor house on an alternative site. The tenants of the land in Somerton included Eynsham Abbey and the smaller religious houses of Cogges Priory and Merton Priory.

6.5 Three eminent rectors resided in Somerton at different times – Master Nicholas Hereford (1397); Robert King (1537-52 - first Bishop of Oxford) and William Juxon (1615 - 1633- President of St Johns College, Oxford later became Archbishop of Canterbury). James Jennings (d.1832), the well known Oxfordshire surveyor for Inclosure Awards, also lived in the settlement in the former Railway Tavern.

Population

6.6 Somerton was the largest village in the Ploughley Hundred and had an unusually large population at Domesday. The village remained large and prosperous throughout the medieval period with 108 adults recorded during the poll tax of 1377 and 242 adults in 1676.

6.7 There was a relative decline in the population from the post-medieval period through to the 19th century, which can be seen in the shrunken form of the village. By 1801 the population numbered only 254. There was a subsequent rise, but it fell again between 1821 (400) and
1841 (329) as a result of the agricultural depression. By 1901 the population was 265 and this had reduced further to 200 inhabitants by 1951.

**Agriculture and industry**

6.8 Somerton has a very fertile and extensive pasture land and agriculture contributed significantly to its prosperity. It remained an open field system until enclosure in 1765. The only evidence for the layout of the field system comes from 1634 when a terrier shows 4 fields, the individual field names and allocations had changed by 1685. Somerton’s pastures were carefully controlled – in the 16th century the holder of each yardland was allowed to keep five horses or oxen at most and 30 sheep on the common in winter. The stint was rigorously enforced by the court, and even the lady of the manor’s son was presented in the 1560’s for overstocking the common with sheep.

6.9 There was an Act of Parliament to enclose the land in 1765, which was a very simple procedure as there was only one landowner – William Femour. At the time of inclosure there were 1,800 acres (or 48 yardlands) of common land.

6.10 Inclosure had the effect of increasing the size of the farms – the number of farms reduced from 12 in 1720 to 5 in 1820. The largest farm at this time was Troy Farm with 600 acres. Farming practice does not appear to have altered significantly though and a high proportion of land remained devoted to pasture. Somerton was known for its dairy products into the 20th century.

6.11 Milling was also present in the settlement. At Domesday one mill was recorded and by the 15th century there were two including a fulling mill. This rose to three mills during the 16th century – Somerton Mill and 2 belonging to the Femour family. By the 19th century just one mill remained and this provided employment for the miller and 5 men.

6.12 There were also the usual range of other rural trades. In the 16th century two bakers and a butcher were recorded and by the 18th century a shop, bakehouse, butcher, shoemaker, blacksmith and carpenter were noted. By the 19th century there was a brickmaker, stone mason, thatcher 2 dressmakers, a tailor, lacemaker, smockmaker, wheelwright, instrument maker, station master and two men employed on railway work.

**Education**

6.13 Thomas Femours endowed a free school for boys in 1580. The former chapel in the castle courtyard was converted for use as the school and land was purchased in Milcombe, near Bloxham, to pay for it. An associated school masters house was later
built in 1750. It may have been intended as a grammar school, but only taught reading, writing and arithmetic.

6.14 The school only admitted those who were already able to read and so by 1787 the majority of Somerton children were excluded from attending. In 1815 only 4 boys attended during the summer and approx. a dozen during the winter. Master supplemented his income by taking in fee paying boarders. By 1833 there were 26 boys at the school, but only 5 were receiving a free education.

6.15 In the early 19th century there were two other schools in the village – opened by Lady Jersey in 1815 – one for 12 girls and the other for 12 children. By 1854 numbers had risen to 24 girls and 18 infants. These schools merged into the main school between 1864 and 1871.

6.16 In the mid 19th century the land associated with the school was truncated by the railway and the school received some compensation which was spent on repairs to the school building. The school was affiliated to the National School movement by 1887 and attendance rose from 40 in 1889 to 55 in 1906. In 1955 there were 18 pupils. The school has now closed with residents from the village attending school at the neighbouring village of Fritwell. The building has now been converted to a private residence.

Religion
6.17 A church was in existence in Somerton in 1074, but the current building of the church of St James dates to the 12th century with only small amounts of fabric dating to this time. The layout of the church includes a chancel, nave, north and south aisles, north tower and west porch and was largely complete by the end of 15th century.

6.18 The church was in a state of decay in the late 19th century. The chancel was restored in 1854 and the remainder of the building was conservatively restored in 1891 by architect JD Sedding. A number of early items survive including 16th and 19th century box pews, a 14th century reredos and a 15th century chancel screen; it is believed that the latter items may have been hidden for a period of time due to the catholic sympathies of the parish. The Femour family were patrons to the church and there is a 16th century chantry and a number monuments to the Femour family added by William Femour, but the family were later barred.

6.19 The Femour family had strong catholic connections and under their influence the parish of Somerton was one of the key centres in Oxfordshire for Catholicism. The chapel in the castle grounds, which later became the school, was used during Mary’s reign for Catholic services and there is believed to be a Roman Catholic graveyard there. A new chapel was built as part of the 16th century manor house and is believed to have been used to celebrate mass, even after the Femour family ceased to reside in Somerton. The catholic community in Somerton was both large and prosperous. The numbers were relatively static with 52 recorded papists in 1676, 45 in 1706, 47 in 1738 and 48 in 1811. Relations between catholics and anglicans in the parish appeared to be civil and only one member of Femour family, the wife of Richard Femour, was ever fined for popish practices. Catholicism gradually declined in
the parish after the Femour family sold the manor and by the end of the 19th century there were only 2 catholics left.

6.20 Protestant non-conformism in the parish was limited with no evidence of dissent until 1834 when two non-conformists were report. In 1840 a house was licensed for Wesleyan meetings. By the 1880s they had joined the United Free Church Methodists and in the early 20th century there was a cottage meeting place, but this had closed in 1914 and been pulled down by 1915.

Transport

6.21 Somerton lies in close proximity to the Ancient Routeway – the Portway which pre-dates Roman occupation. The route is still in use as a public right of way. The settlement also lies immediately to the east of the River Cherwell and there were numerous bridges and causeways crossing the river to allow access across.

6.22 The Oxford Canal was completed in 1790 and lies immediately to the east of the River Cherwell and follows its course in this location. A wharf and weighbridge were established in the parish and Somerton lock was based on the northern boundary of the parish. These features all now lie within Oxford Canal Conservation Area.

6.23 The Oxford to Banbury section of the Great Western Railway, now known as the Cherwell Valley line, lies to the west of the village. It was completed in 1850. The works associated with the railway destroyed the former castle site and some of the shrunken medieval settlement of Somerton. The Fritwell and Somerton station was constructed in 1854, south of the railway bridge, this was a simple wooden structure with just room for one siding with a cattle dock and space for the local coal merchant to unload his wagons. The station closed during the 1960s.

6.24 There are a network of local roads running through Somerton between North Aston, Ardley, Upper Heyford and Fritwell. It is, however, noteworthy that the settlement does not specifically address the road network.
Figure 8. Somerton 1875 - 1887 map

Figure 9. Somerton 1899 - 1905 map
Figure 10. Somerton 1913 - 1923 map

Figure 11. Somerton 1974 - 1976 map
7. Architectural History

7.1 Somerton was once a large and prosperous village, although it has now contracted considerably. There are a number of significant surviving buildings around the settlement, but many of these do not positively address the main road running through the settlement, which has been infilled with later properties.

Cottages

7.2 There are a range of historic, vernacular cottages around the settlement, predominantly constructed of coursed limestone; notable examples dating from the 17th and 18th centuries include Jasmine Cottage and The Old Cottage, Church Street. There are also some 19th century cottages in Church Street, Ardley Road, Heyford Road and Water Lane. The two pairs of brick semi-detached cottages opposite the church are of typical estate cottage design with gabled half dormers, door hoods on brackets and decorative lintels. The brick and welsh slate was presumably brought in by canal and railway during the 19th century.

Inn

7.3 The Railway Inn or Railway Tavern is of 19th century date and constructed in close proximity to the railway line to the east. The building is of coursed limestone construction and is a series of three linked buildings with associated barn, the central building is of three storeys and is a handsome building, it was once the home of the renowned Oxfordshire Inclosure Surveyor James Jennings. It is now a private dwelling.

Farms

7.4 There were five farms in Somerton throughout the 18th and 19th centuries (7 in 1955).

7.5 The largest farm was Troy Farm, which lies at some distance to the east of the settlement along the Ardley Road. The current building is of early 18th century date with extensions in the 19th century. It of coursed limestone construction. The site is of particular note for its 16th century turf cut maze, which is one of only 5 in the country. The building does not lie within the Somerton Conservation Area, but has strong historic links to the settlement.

7.6 There are two remaining 17th century farms within Somerton itself – Jersey Manor Farm and Dovecot Farm.
Jersey Manor Farmhouse originated in the 17th century with alterations in the 18th and 19th centuries. The building is of coursed limestone; it has a stonefield slate roof and a number of 12 pane sash windows. It is located at the southern extreme of the current settlement. The building is currently in a very poor state of repair and has been classified as a building at risk for quite some time, but there is now a management plan for bringing the building back into use. The associated barn and farm buildings have been converted to residential use.

Dovecot Farm is based in a core location within the settlement on the junction of Ardley Road with Water Street. The farm, farmyard buildings (including barn, stables and cartshed) and dovecot (from which the farm gets its name) are separately listed. The dovecot has a datestone of 1719 and there are reportedly over 1000 nesting boxes within the building. The farmhouse is of 17th century origin with alterations in the 18th and 19th centuries. The buildings are all constructed of coursed, squared limestone rubble. The buildings all face away from the road and have a strong visual presence in terms of their unbroken facades which line the road and create a sense of enclosure. It is assumed that the barn conversions and modern development along Dovecot Lane are on land historically associated with Dovecot Farm.

There was a 17th century farmhouse along Church Lane, but this has now been converted into 3 cottages (1-3 Church Lane). Rectory Farm is noted on OS maps from the mid 20th century onwards and appears to be based in converted barns. It is likely that this was one of the ‘new’ farms recorded in the Victoria County History in 1955.

The Old School is the oldest secular building in Somerton. The building is of 16th century construction (the school was endowed in 1580), but incorporates earlier medieval work reputedly related to the castle chapel on the site. The building was extended in the mid 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. The building originally consisted of a school house and school room and the school room retains its 7 light 16th century mullioned and transomed window. The list description provides an outline of the layout and interior of the building. It is now a private house.
Rectory

7.11 The 19th century rectory was built in 1847 and extended in 1896. It replaced an earlier 17th century rectory and was built at a cost of £2,000. The building is of simple design and of coursed limestone construction. It is accessed from a driveway to the north of the church and has views over the shrunken medieval settlement earthworks.

7.12 A small rectory (Rectory Cottage, a stone-built cottage to the northern end of Water Lane) was constructed in 1928 and the building has been a private dwelling since that date.

Manor House

7.13 The 16th century manor house of William Fermor (which was in a ruinous condition in 1738 and largely pulled down in the early 19th century) remains predominantly in earthwork form. There is a section of limestone rubble walling with a 16th century window, believed to be part of the former hall range of the house. The manor house is both listed and scheduled.

Church

7.13 The Church of St James originally dates from the 12th century with additions in the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. It went through two restoration projects in the 19th century, in 1854 and 1891. The building comprises a chancel, clerestoried nave, north and south aisles, western tower and south porch. There is a small 16th century Tudor arched doorway which is believed to have been taken from the ruined manor house. The church has a number of significant fixtures, fittings and monuments which are separately listed.
8. Character and Appearance

Settlement pattern

8.1 The current settlement of Somerton has no regular settlement pattern or layout, this is due to the extent of shrinkage in the settlement.

8.2 The current pattern of the settlement is based around the central spine of Water Lane, which runs from North Aston to Upper Heyford. This leads through the length of the current village, but there are few historic properties which address this main road. The Archaeology section notes that there is evidence for historic house platforms along this alignment, but the majority of standing buildings are of 20th century date. Similarly, the adjoining roads of Fritwell Road and Ardley Road only have a small number of historic properties.

8.3 The settlement had already shrunk by the late medieval period, but the construction of the Oxford Canal and Great Western Railway in the late 18th and 19th centuries truncated the settlement remains and confused the situation further. The remains of the historic settlement pattern can be gleaned from the network of footpaths which lead through the shrunken settlement and around the former Manor House. A number of historic buildings are based in close proximity to these footpaths or along Church Lane.

8.4 The map of the Manor of Somerton in 1765 shows the central spine road well populated with buildings and lanes leading off to the west providing access to the church and school with a link road running past the area where the 19th century now stands.

Land use

8.5 The majority of the historic village is now in domestic use. The rectory, school and former Railway Inn have all been converted to residential. The former settlement remains of both the shrunken village and the Manor House can still be clearly seen and the agricultural history of the settlement can be seen from the former farmyards. Dovecot Farm remains in use for agriculture, but the only other historic building with a function other than residential is the church.

Building age, type and style

8.6 The majority of historic buildings in the village are simple, rectilinear cottages and farmhouses of coursed limestone construction dating to the 17th century and later. The buildings are of simple vernacular style and two storey construction.

8.7 The larger, bespoke buildings including 17th century school and 19th century are similarly constructed in the local limestone, but are not prominent within the streetscape.

Construction and materials

8.8 The majority of historic buildings throughout the settlement are constructed of the local limestone. Somerton is situated on the edge of the marlstone belt and ironstone has been used for architectural detailing at the church and Dovecote Farm House.

8.9 There are a number of historic buildings of brick construction including the estate cottages along Church Lane, the reading room or Sunday school, in close proximity to the church, and some small outbuildings. Brick is used for infilling timber framed panels on the cart shed at Dovecot Farmhouse and also used for the chimney stacks in the village.

8.10 There are a wide variety of roofing materials used throughout the village including Stonesfield slate (on dovecot and Jersey Manor Farmhouse) and Welsh slate as well as 20th century imitation products. There are no thatched buildings in Somerton.

Means of enclosure

8.11 The main form of enclosure found around Somerton are limestone boundary walls. These are predominantly of approximately 1 metre high and are either mortared or of dry stone wall construction. There are retaining boundary
walls around the churchyard and part of Dovecot Farm. There are 2 metre high walls which surround Dovecot Farm and create a sense of enclosure in that area.

8.12 There are a range of cappings including rounded mortar caps, flat stone caps, stone on edge and stone / tile capping in different locations around the settlement. The boundary walls make a significant contribution to the character of the area.

Trees and green spaces

8.13 There are a number of important areas of green space within Somerton Conservation Area. These are predominantly areas relating to the shrunken medieval settlement and include scheduled monument earthworks to both the north-west and east of the current settlement.

8.14 The wharf area, to the south-east of the Oxford Canal, is also of significance in the historic development of the settlement. The canal itself, and the water meadows adjoining the River Cherwell to the north of the canal, make a contribution to the wider setting of Somerton but have not been included in the Somerton Conservation Area. The canal forms part of the Oxford Canal Conservation Area.

8.15 The churchyard and orchard to the south make a positive visual contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

8.16 There are a number of trees which make a positive contribution to the conservation area including individual trees in the churchyard, the trees in the orchard to the south of the church, a belt of trees around the site of the shrunken settlement to the west of the village and a centrally placed tree in the area around the Manor House earthworks.

Carriageways, pavements, footpaths

8.17 Heyford, Fritwell and Ardley Roads are constructed of tarmac, but other than road markings at key junctions the roads, retain their rural character including small areas of grass verges and informal pavements, some with stone setts. Church Lane, which runs to, west of the road, has a similar appearance until it peters out to a pebbled track as it leads into the fields containing the earthworks of the shrunken village.

8.18 There is an extensive network of footpaths leading through the village, which were the original routeways through the larger, historic settlement. The footpaths vary in form and include former hollow ways, routes through fields and meadows, footpaths through the churchyard and small enclosed lanes. The footpaths contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the conservation area and help to tell the story of the development of the settlement.

Key Views

8.19 There are very few views into Somerton Conservation Area from the surrounding area.

8.20 The canal and railway cut off views of the historic settlement from the north and west. The only view of Somerton from the northern part of the settlement is funnelled through the 19th century railway bridge and is predominantly of the former Railway Inn.

8.21 Modern development obscures any historic views from the Fritwell and Ardley Roads and similarly at the southern entrance along Water Lane, the only extant historic building – Jersey Manor Farm – is set back from the road and therefore views into the settlement are of late 20th century developments.

8.22 There are key views within and across the conservation area – notably from the site of the former (Fermor) Manor House, the shrunken settlement area and from the church and churchyard.
Figure 12. Visual Analysis

Key:
- Strong building line
- Positive view
- Important green space
- Vista
- Area of archaeological interest directly related to Somerton
9. Character areas

Central spine
9.1 The street running through the current settlement of Somerton is a through road to surrounding villages, but there are only a very few historic properties (Railway Tavern and a small number of cottages) along the route. Dovecot Farm is lined along the road; it presents a large blank stone wall to the road which creates a sense of enclosure, but does not address the street. The village does not, therefore, have the character of a roadside settlement and the road is in fact almost incidental to the settlement.

Lanes and footpaths
9.2 The lanes and footpaths are a very distinctive characteristic of the settlement and link the existing built development with the shrunken medieval settlement. The lanes and footpaths have differing characteristics, but contain a number of the historic properties within the village.

Shrunken settlement
9.2 The shrunken settlement and manor house earthworks are located in meadowland to the east and west of the settlement and make a significant contribution to the understanding of the settlement. The meadowland in which they sit provides a positive setting to the current built up extent of the village.

Figure 13. Character Area
10. Materials and Details
11. Management Plan

Policy context

11.1 The 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas. In line with English Heritage guidance (2011) Conservation Area Management Proposals are published as part of the process of area designation or review. The Conservation Area appraisal document is designed to inform planning decisions, and other actions that the Council and/or property owners within the designated area take. The role of the Management Proposals is to identify actions that could contribute to the enhancement of the special character and appearance of the area by the Council, owners and other stakeholders alike.

11.2 The main threat to the character and appearance of any Conservation Area is the cumulative impact of numerous alterations, some quite small in themselves, to the traditional but unlisted buildings within the area. These changes include such works as the replacement of traditional window casements, usually with uPVC double-glazing, replacement of original doors, additions such as non-traditional porches and erection of satellite dishes on the front elevations of properties. Such alterations to unlisted residential properties are for the most part permitted development and therefore do not require planning permission. Unauthorised alterations and additions may also be a cause for concern and are often detrimental to the appearance of a property. The loss of dilapidated stone walls can also have a significant impact. Both unsympathetic permitted development and unauthorised development cumulatively result in the erosion of the historic character and appearance of the conservation area.

11.3 The aim of management proposals is not to prevent changes but to ensure that any such changes are both sympathetic to the individual property, sympathetic to the streetscape and overall enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

11.4 The principal policies covering alterations and development of the historic built environment are given in Appendix 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Proposals for Preservation and Enhancement</th>
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| Retention of historic features and building maintenance | Traditional architectural details and local materials are important and should be retained, repaired or reinstated where lost. It is important that traditional techniques and materials (including the use of lime mortar and the like for like repair of buildings) are used to retain the special historic character and appearance of the area.

The unsympathetic alteration of minor features could have a significant impact on the character and appearance of Somerton. An Article 4 Direction could ensure that existing original and traditional details are protected and, where necessary, sensitively replaced in the future. |
| --- | --- |
| New Development | As a Category C village (Cherwell Local Plan 2006-2031) Somerton is considered suitable for conversions and extensions only.

Any proposed extensions or infill must respect the scale, design, proportions and materials of the immediately surrounding architecture to strengthen the cohesion of the street scene. There are distinctive character areas within the village and any development must use an imaginative and high quality design which reflects its immediate context. |
| Character of roads and lanes | The majority of roads within the village are small lanes which have an informal, rural character, which make a significant contribution to the settlement. It is important that this character is retained in any proposed development.

The main road which passes through the settlement also retains its rural character and has not been urbanised. It is important to prevent proliferation of road markings and signs in the area. |
| Overhead electricity lines | Overhead electricity lines can have a significant negative impact on historic buildings and areas and any opportunity to remove, underground or place these in a more sensitive setting should be taken. |
12. Conservation Area Boundary

Somerton Conservation Area was established March 1992 and reviewed in March 1996. No review of the conservation area or boundary has taken place since that date.

A review of the boundary has now taken place; this was based on an analysis of current and historical maps supplemented by investigation on the ground from public rights of way. The proposed boundary has been drawn based on current heritage policy and guidance and considers the importance of spaces and settings as well as buildings.

Key boundary changes

South west boundary

The railway track has been removed from the Somerton Conservation Area as this does not positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area.
North west boundary
12.4 The area including the canal has been removed from the Somerton Conservation Area as the canal forms part of the Oxford Canal Conservation Area. The former wharf will remain in the Somerton Conservation Area as this is of significance to the Somerton Conservation Area and is not covered by the Oxford Canal Conservation Area.

Eastern boundary
12.6 The extension (in two separate sections) is proposed to ensure the whole of the field is included within the conservation area boundary.
12.7 There are earthwork remains, some perhaps related to quarrying, throughout the field.

Northern boundary
12.5 The boundary has been altered to include two barn conversions and a meadow at the edge of the village.
**Southern boundary**

12.8 The boundary has been amended to include the whole of the access to Jersey Manor Farm and the associated land rather than cutting across the access way.

**Boundary description**

**Northern boundary**

12.9 The boundary begins to the east of the Oxford Canal and runs along the road (and under the railway bridge) to the track leading up to Rectory Farm and continues to the rear of Rectory Farm and adjacent barn.

**Eastern boundary**

12.12 The boundary to the east begins at the rear of the barn associated with Rectory Farm and runs along the wooded hedge line to the rear of The Croft and then along the stream and to the rear of the properties associated with Dovecot Lane. The boundary then runs across the road to include the converted barn / outbuilding of Fallowfields and then sweeps round to Ardley Road, excluding the council houses, but including the entrance to the field and bridleway.

**Southern boundary**

12.13 The boundary runs around the field with the Manor House earthwork remains and crosses the Heyford Road and continues to the rear of the built development associated with Jersey Manor Farm. It follows the hedge lines of the paddocks and meadows associated with the village and runs along the southern edge of the shrunken medieval settlement earthwork remains.

**Western boundary**

12.14 The boundary begins at the southern edge of the field containing the shrunken village earthworks and continues to the east of the railway until it meets the track which leads from Church Walk. It then crosses the railway and continues to the east of the Oxford Canal, encompassing the former wharf area.
13. Effects of Conservation Area Designation

13.1 Conservation areas are designated by the Council under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. There are different planning controls in conservation areas and anyone proposing development should seek advice from the Council's Development Management Team at an early stage. The main effects of designation are as follows:

**Development should preserve or enhance the area**

13.2 Development should preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, ‘the special architectural or historic interest of which it is desirable to conserve or enhance’. This enables the achievement of higher standards of design in new developments and secures the conservation of existing important features and characteristics. Information supporting planning applications must demonstrate the proposal, and its impact on a conservation area, in sufficient detail to enable a thorough assessment.

13.3 Land use planning policies in the Cherwell Local Plan 2011–2031 Part 1 and the saved policies in the Cherwell Local Plan 1996 aim to ensure that special attention is given to the preservation or enhancement of designated conservation areas. Proposals for new development will only be acceptable if they assist in the achievement of that objective.

**Control over demolition of buildings**

13.4 Planning permission is required from Cherwell District Council, as the Local Planning Authority, for the demolition or substantial demolition of unlisted buildings in a conservation area that has a volume of more than 115 cubic metres. Where a building is of demonstrable architectural or historic interest, consent for demolition will only be given as a last resort.

**Control over trees**

13.5 The Council must be notified of any intention to carry out works to fell, lop or top any tree with a trunk/stem diameter greater than 75mm, when measured at 1.5m above ground level not already the subject of a tree preservation order. This provides the Council with an opportunity to consider making a tree preservation order and the provision of an extra degree of control over the many trees that are important to the appearance of a conservation area.

**Protection of important open spaces and views**

13.6 It is important to protect the open and aesthetic quality of the countryside adjacent to the village because it is integral to the character and appearance of a conservation area. Open space sometimes has its own historic significance. The inclusion of peripheral open spaces around the settlement in the designation of a conservation area is specifically to ensure that the character of these spaces is preserved.

**Control over the demolition of enclosures**

13.7 Permission is also required to demolish a significant proportion of any means of enclosure over 1 metre in height abutting a ‘highway’ (including a public footpath or bridleway), waterway or open space; or above 2 metres in height in any other case. This ensures that walls not relating to listed buildings that add to the character and appearance of the street scene are protected from removal.

**Powers to seek repair of unlisted historic buildings**

13.8 The Council has powers to seek the repair of unlisted (as well as listed) buildings in a poor state of repair where the building makes a valuable contribution to the street scene or is of local importance as a building type.

**Reduced permitted development rights**

13.9 Permitted development rights allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application. Permitted development rights are subject to conditions and limitations which
are set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

13.10 Permitted development rights are more restrictive inside conservation areas than they are in areas outside. In respect of works to residential properties, the following additional restrictions apply to properties within a conservation area:

- A two storey rear extension of any dimension;
- A single storey side extension of any dimension;
- Cladding any part of the exterior of the dwellinghouse with stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles;
- Any additions (e.g. dormer windows) to the roof of a dwellinghouse;
- Any part of an outbuilding, enclosure, pool or container situated between a wall forming the side elevation of the house and the boundary;
- A flue, chimney, soil or vent pipe on a wall or roof slope that fronts a highway or can be seen from a highway and forms the principal or side elevation of the house;
- A satellite dish on any chimney, wall or roof slope that faces onto and is visible from a highway or on a building which exceeds 15 metres in height.

13.11 It is worth noting that the permitted development rights legislation is subject to frequent amendment. Further up to date information can be found on the Planning Portal [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk) permission or by contacting the Development Management Team of Cherwell District Council:
Email: planning@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Telephone: 01295 221006.
14. Design and Repair Guidance

14.1 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:

Scale and settlement pattern
14.2 Somerton is a village without a defined settlement pattern and a proliferation of streets and lanes. This aspect of the settlement should be respected in any new development and a bespoke approach will be needed based on the specific character of the localised area around any proposed new development.

14.3 There is very little built-up frontage and the historic properties are spread throughout the settlement rather than being focused along the main streets. There is a tendency for the historic buildings to be set back from the street. The properties through the settlement are of two storey construction and this scale should be represented throughout the village.

Proportion
14.4 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.

Roofs
14.5 There are a variety of roof types in Upper Heyford including thatch, slate, clay and concrete tile.

14.6 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 roofscape, often constructed in brick, and should be retained even if no longer required for fireplaces.

14.7 Where historic roofing materials are to be replaced, the new materials should preferably 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) and visible roof vents will be discouraged.

External Walls
14.8 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 lime mortar to match the existing in colour, type and texture. Hard, modern Portland cement mortars are inappropriate as they prevent the evaporation of moisture through the joints and cause deterioration of the stonework.

Rainwater goods
14.9 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.

Windows
14.10 There are a range of windows in Somerton including timber sash and casement windows and a wide range of later replacements. Historic windows should be retained wherever possible with specialised repair - where replacement is necessary it should match the original in every detail.

14.11 The style, design and construction of windows can have a significant impact on the character
of the property and any replacement windows should be appropriate to the host building (casement or sash windows depending on building type). Windows should be correctly proportioned, well related to each other and neighbouring buildings and should respect any existing openings. Where more recent replacements have occurred it may not be appropriate to replace on a like for like basis, but to ensure a more appropriate form of window is utilised. 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.

14.12 Inappropriate replacement windows can be extremely damaging to the character and appearance of a building and conservation area alike and can undermine a property's monetary value. Replacement of timber or metal windows with uPVC alternative, no matter what the pattern or design, is inappropriate.

Doors
14.13 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 sheeted or panelled timber doors should be used.

Boundary Treatment
14.14 Stone boundary walls make a significant contribution to the character of Somerton and should be retained in-situ where possible. Repairs should be carried out on a like-for-like basis using identical materials and techniques. The copings of walls are usually regionally distinctive and should be replicated with the appropriate technique.

Micro Energy Generation
14.15 Whilst the use of micro energy systems are generally encouraged and satellite information systems generally tolerated, special care will be necessary to find suitable sites for their use within the conservation area. Preference will be given to equipment located away from principal frontages. Equipment fixed to main or visible elevations or roof planes will damage the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Highway Works
14.16 The road running through the settlement links to local villages and needs to conform to highway standards. The area hasn’t been overly urbanised and it is important that the conservation area status is respected when any roadworks are undertaken and that no unnecessary items such as bollards, signs etc are introduced to the area.

14.17 The rural lanes in the settlement make a particular contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and special care should be taken to retain their informal character.
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16. Acknowledgments

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Images used produced by Cherwell District Council or sourced from Oxfordshire Local History Centre unless otherwise accredited.

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Please submit any comments before:

**9 April 2019**

All comments will be reported to the Lead Member for Planning, and the Appraisal may be amended in accordance with comments received.

Written comments should be sent to:
Design & Conservation Team
Cherwell District Council
Bodicote House
Bodicote
Banbury
OX15 4AA

Email comments should be sent to:
design.conservation@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
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.

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<th>Main Legislation</th>
<th>National Policy Guidance</th>
<th>Local Policies</th>
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**National Planning Policy Framework**

**Section 16** – Conserving and enhancing the historic environment; paragraphs 184-202

**Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2031 (Submission Document)**
At the time of publication of the Somerton Conservation Area Appraisal the document had completed Regulation 16 submission and is awaiting Independent Examination.

Individual policies (both wording and numbers) could be subject to change and therefore cross reference to the document is necessary.

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

**EDS1**: Mitigating and adapting to climate change.

**EDS5**: Renewable energy.

**EDS10**: Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment.

**EDS13**: Local landscape protection and enhancement.

**EDS15**: The character of the built environment.

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

**Policy Villages 2: distributing growth across the rural areas**

**Policy Villages 3: rural exception sites**: rural exception sites will only be considered where there is an identified and demonstrable need which has the support of the local community.

**Cherwell Local Plan 1996**

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

**H20**: The council will normally resist proposals to convert rural buildings to provide two or more dwellings within a farmstead situated beyond the built up limits of a settlement unless the buildings are unsuitable for conversion to an employment generating use.

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

**C18**: Works to a listed building should preserve the building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest. Alterations or extensions to a listed building should be minor and sympathetic.

**C23**: Presumption in favour of retaining positive features within a Conservation Area.

**C28**: The layout, design and materials proposed within a new development should respect the existing local character.

**C30**: The design of the proposed scheme should show compatibility with the existing street scene and vicinity.

**C33**: Undeveloped gaps of land which have historic value, preserve the character of a loose-knit settlement or the setting of a listed building should be retained.

**C38**: Satellite dishes within a conservation area or on a listed building will not normally be permitted when they would be visible from a public highway.
## Appendix 2: Listed Buildings

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<th>Listing/Scheduling</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Listing</td>
<td>The Old School House, North Aston Road, Somerton Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,2 and 3 Church Street</td>
<td>Listing</td>
<td>1,2 and 3 Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of St James</td>
<td>Listing</td>
<td>Church of St James, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headstone, Church of St James</td>
<td>Listing</td>
<td>Headstone approximately 4 metres north of chancel of Church of St James, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remains of Manor House</td>
<td>Listing</td>
<td>Remains of Manor House, Heyford Road, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jersey Manor Farmhouse</td>
<td>Listing</td>
<td>Jersey Manor Farmhouse, Heyford Road, Somerton Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm building range, Dovecote Farmhouse</td>
<td>Listing</td>
<td>Farm building range approximately 10 metres south of Dovecote Farmhouse, North Aston Road, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dovecote Farmhouse</td>
<td>Listing</td>
<td>Dovecot Farmhouse, North Aston Road, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
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<td>Churchyard Cross, Church of St James</td>
<td>Listing</td>
<td>Churchyard cross approximately 12 metres north of Church of St James, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Headstones, Church of St James</td>
<td>Listing</td>
<td>Group of 4 headstones approximately 1 metre north of north aisle of Church of St James, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headstone approximately 5 metres east of Chancel of St James</td>
<td>Listing</td>
<td>Headstone approximately 5 metres east of Chancel of Church of St James, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Collingridge Memorials, Church of St James</td>
<td>Listing</td>
<td>Group of 4 Collingridge memorials approximately 1 metre east of south aisle of Church of St James, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dew memorial, Church of St James</td>
<td>Listing</td>
<td>Dew memorial approximately 2 metres south east of Chancel of St James, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dovecot, Dovecote Farmhouse</td>
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<td>Dovecot approximately 30 metres west of Dovecote Farmhouse, North Aston Road, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
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<td>Jasmine Cottage</td>
<td>Listing</td>
<td>Jasmine Cottage, Church Street, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
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<td>Somerton Manor House; earthworks and remains of hall</td>
<td>Scheduling</td>
<td>Somerton Manor House; earthworks and remains of hall, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somerton Village earthworks</td>
<td>Scheduling</td>
<td>Somerton Village earthworks, Somerton, Cherwell, Oxfordshire</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Appendix 3: Local Heritage Assets

Figure 15 – Local Heritage Assets

Buildings and Features that make a Positive Contribution

A number of ‘non-designated heritage assets’ (unlisted buildings) within the village make a significant positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. There are also a number of buildings outside the conservation area which nevertheless are associated with Somerton and similarly make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration of the heritage asset. Therefore, non-designated heritage assets are protected under the NPPF and the retention of such buildings within any conservation area is preferable to demolition and redevelopment.

The following buildings are considered regionally or locally significant, either for their architectural detail or for their part of the social history of Somerton, and therefore have been put forward for inclusion to the district-wide register of non-designated heritage assets.

The Old Inn / Railway Tavern, Water Lane
Stone building divided into three separate ranges. Central range of three storeys with two storey ranges to either side. Originally a domestic residence, later converted to use as Railway Tavern, and now returned to use as an individual house known as The Old Inn.
The Rectory, Church Street
Large 19th century former Rectory set within substantial grounds. The property has accesses on to Church Street and Water Lane as well as an outlook over the shrunken village remains. The building is of stone construction with regular fenestration, tile roof and red brick chimneys.

1-4 Church Lane
Two pairs of red brick cottages in Arts and Crafts style. Dated 1879. Half dormers, canopied porches and simple timber fenestration.

Fermour House, Heyford Road
Substantial stone-built property built adjacent to site of Manor House earthworks. Main central range with side extensions. Large eyebrow dormer to central roof section detracts from simplicity of the form.

The Croft, Water Lane
A crenellated lodge house or folly to the Water Lane frontage, conceals larger property to the rear with extensive gardens.

The Dormers, Ardley Road
Large stone, linear building with regular fenestration and row of dormer windows. Stone building with tile roof. Possible farm house or former manor.
Old School Cottage and Orchard Cottage, Water Lane
Row of stone built cottages of simple, rectilinear form with tile roof and limited openings. Originally three cottages and now two.

Orchard End, Church Street
Single storey red brick building immediately adjacent to the church. Likely to have been a Sunday School or Reading Room – now converted to residential.

Post Cottage and Hollow Way, Ardley Road
Stone built cottages set back from road with outbuilding ranges to the rear. Both properties have a large conservatory to the frontage.

Yew Tree Cottage, Ardley Road
Stone built cottage with tile roof and red brick chimneys. Simple canopy porch and low boundary stone wall.

Station House, Water Lane
Early 20th century detached property in close proximity to the railway. Red brick and pebble dash render of significance in relation to links to railway.

1-3 Adams Cottages, Heyford Road
Terrace of stone built cottages set back from the road. Simple rectilinear form and cottages retain their simplicity and regular rhythm of fenestration.
1-2 The Paddocks
Pair of cottages, originally identical. Constructed of stone with large gables. Modern extension has been added to the side which unbalances the pair.

3 The Paddocks
Originally a pair of stone cottages with decorative barge boards and red brick chimneys. The cottages are now converted into one dwelling.

4-5 The Paddocks
Pair of stone built cottages forming a pair with 1-2 and 3 The Paddocks. The cottages are less decorative than the other properties and do not have pronounced gables.

Pillbox, SW of North Aston Road
Hexagonal, precast concrete pillbox intended for use as a guard post in case of enemy invasion during the Second World War. Loopholes as an opening for machine gun fire on every face.

Pillbox, NW of North Aston Road
Hexagonal, precast concrete pillbox intended for use as a guard post in case of enemy invasion during the Second World War. Loopholes as an opening for machine gun fire on every face.
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 heritage 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](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 Somerton?
The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies a number of non-listed dwellings which make a special contribution to the character and appearance of Somerton. Article 4 Directions are proposed for the following non-listed buildings because of their contribution to the conservation area and its environs:

- The Old Inn, Water Lane, Somerton
- 1 Water Street, Somerton
- Orchard Cottage, 2 Water Street, Somerton
- Croft Orchard, Water Street, Somerton
- The Old Rectory, Church Street, Somerton
- Orchard End, Church Street, Somerton
- 1 Church Street, Somerton
- 2 Church Street, Somerton
- 3 Church Street, Somerton
- Martins Haven, 4 Church Street, Somerton
- Yew Tree Cottage, Ardley Road, Somerton
- Post Cottage, Ardley Road, Somerton
- Dormer House, Ardley Road, Somerton
- 1 Adams Cottages, Heyford Road, Somerton
- 2 Adams Cottages, Heyford Road, Somerton
- 3 Adams Cottages, Heyford Road, Somerton
- 1 The Paddocks, Heyford Road, Somerton
- 2 The Paddocks, Heyford Road, Somerton
- Ashfield, 3 The Paddocks, Heyford Road, Somerton
- Keys House, 4 The Paddocks, Heyford Road, Somerton
- 5 The Paddocks, Heyford Road, Somerton
- Paddock End, The Paddocks, Somerton
- Fermour House, Heyford Road, Somerton

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

**Figure 16 – Article 4 directions**
Appendix 5: Public consultation

Cherwell District Council considers public consultation an important part of conservation area designation and review.

As part of the designation/review process, the historic settlement in question and the environs are assessed, and an appraisal document produced setting out what is significant about the place.

A similar process is undertaken for individual buildings, either for putting a structure forward for statutory designation as a heritage asset (formerly known as ‘listing’), or for those buildings, structures or archaeological features that are locally significant for inclusion in the district-wide Register of Local Heritage Assets.

An exhibition and public meeting are to be held on 26 February 2019 to enable local residents and those interested to inspect the draft document and talk to the Design and Conservation team and planning colleagues.

Comments on the draft document are welcome, as are suggestions for inclusion or exclusion of areas and/or buildings within the designation.

The draft document may be viewed on-line from Cherwell District Council’s website https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/directory/34/conservation-area-appraisals or may be inspected in hard copy at the libraries within Banbury or at Cherwell District Council Offices in Bodicote.

Members of the public who do not have internet access may also request a paper copy of the document either at the public meeting or by writing to the address given in Section 16.

Residents and members of the public are asked to complete the map and a questionnaire that are available. Respondents are asked to annotate the map to indicate where the boundaries should be changed (if at all) and secondly to make a list of buildings and structures that they would like to see identified as special.

Although inclusion into the Register of Local Heritage Assets is not subject to the same rigorous controls as statutory designation, once identified as a local (non-designated) heritage asset, the Council has a duty of care.

Definition

Heritage Asset: A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing). (NPPF, Historic Environment, 27 March 2012 (Glossary)).
How to contact us

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