

7.27 Green Infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space in both urban and rural areas, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities. Such networks can also include “blue” infrastructure features such as ponds, lakes, reservoirs, streams and rivers. When assessing planning applications, we will take into account the findings of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) to define new Green Infrastructure requirements and how they should be delivered. Where new Green Infrastructure is identified as a mitigation requirement within the HRA this must be delivered by the applicant to meet requirements. Green Infrastructure can have an important role to play in enhancing biodiversity, acting as a carbon store, and enhancing the quality of life for residents. Applicants should refer to guides such as the Fieldfare Trust ‘Countryside for All – A Good Practice Guide to Disabled People’s Access in the Countryside’ and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide to ensure that the positive contributions of Green Infrastructure are maximised.

Historic Environment and Heritage Assets

Policy ENV6: Historic Environment

1. **Proposals for new development that may affect designated and non-designated heritage assets should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of those assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Heritage assets include statutorily designated Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings or structures, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields, archaeology of national and local interest and non-designated buildings, structures or historic landscapes that contribute to local historic and architectural interest of the district’s historic environment, and also includes those heritage assets listed by the Oxfordshire Historic Environmental Record.**
2. **Proposals for new development should be sensitively designed and should not cause harm to the historic environment. Proposals that have an impact on heritage assets (designated and non-designated) will be supported particularly where they:**
 - i) **conserve or enhance the significance of the heritage asset and settings. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the**

- weight that will be given to its conservation;
 - ii) make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (through high standards of design, reflecting its significance, including through the use of appropriate materials and construction techniques);
 - iii) make a positive contribution towards wider public benefits;
 - iv) provide a viable future use for a heritage asset that is consistent with the conservation of its significance; and/or
 - v) protect a heritage asset that is currently at risk.
3. Non-designated heritage assets, where identified through local or neighbourhood plan-making, Conservation Area Appraisal or review or through the planning application process, will be recognised as heritage assets in accordance with national guidance and any local criteria. Development proposals that directly or indirectly affect the significance of a non-designated heritage asset will be determined with regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the asset.
4. Applicants will be required to describe, in line with best practice and relevant national guidance, the significance of any heritage assets affected including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance. In some circumstances further survey, analysis and/or recording will be made a condition of consent.
5. Particular encouragement will be given to schemes that will help secure the long term conservation of vacant and under-used buildings and bring them back into appropriate use.
6. Alterations to historic buildings, for example to improve energy efficiency, should respect the integrity of the historic environment and the character and significance of the building.

This policy contributes towards achieving objectives 5, 6 & 7

7.28 Heritage assets may be classified as either 'designated' or 'non-designated' and both can be important to consider through the planning process. Heritage assets can include Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Parks and Gardens, archaeological sites and other assets.

- 7.29 Development proposals at an early stage should refer to sources of information on the historic environment such as the Oxfordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project, The Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record, The National Heritage List for England, the South Oxfordshire Heritage Impact Assessment, and, where relevant, Conservation Area Character Appraisals to ensure that proposals are based on an understanding of the significance of any heritage assets that may be affected. Development proposals should also take into account the principles set out in the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and other relevant guidance.
- 7.30 In some circumstances, further surveys and analysis may be required prior to any application being determined. Heritage Statements, Statements of Significance, and Impact Assessments should be produced in line with current best practice and relevant national guidance.
- 7.31 The Council will monitor buildings or other heritage assets at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, proactively seeking solutions for assets at risk through discussions with owners and willingness to consider positively development schemes that would ensure the repair and maintenance of the asset, and, as a last resort, using its statutory powers. The Council will work with relevant stakeholders to encourage better understanding of the heritage assets on the Historic England “Heritage at Risk” Register. Where appropriate the Council will encourage Heritage Partnership Agreements, particularly for Listed Buildings on any ‘at risk’ register.
- 7.32 The Council will support Neighbourhood Development Plans where they seek to assess their heritage assets and add to the evidence base.

Listed Buildings

Policy ENV7: Listed Buildings

1. **Proposals for development, including change of use, that involve any alteration of, addition to or partial demolition of a listed building or within the curtilage of, or affecting the setting of a listed building will be expected to:**
 - i) **conserve, enhance or better reveal those elements which contribute to the heritage significance and/or its setting;**
 - ii) **respect any features of special architectural or historic interest, including, where relevant, the historic curtilage or context, such as burgage plots, or its value within a group and/or its setting,**