

Conservation Area Appraisal



Eton

Adopted November 2009

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Foreword

By Councillor Mrs Alison Knight

Lead Member for Planning and Development

The Borough Council has carried out an appraisal for the Eton Conservation Area and produced this draft appraisal document, which describes the important features and characteristics of the area and will be used when planning decisions are made that affect the area. The approach used follows advice set out in English Heritage guidance, which follows on from more general guidance in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15.

This document is a revision of the 1996 appraisal for the area and is part of a longer-term project to review all the existing Conservation Area Appraisals in the Borough, and to complete appraisals for Conservation Areas that do not presently have one.

The Eton Conservation Area Appraisal also includes a Five Year Conservation Area Management Plan, which is intended to summarise the actions that the Council will take in the period to ensure that the character and appearance of the area is preserved or enhanced. The appraisal is not proposing any alterations to the existing Conservation Area boundaries.

A draft version of this document was subject to a public consultation exercise during July and August 2009, and this final version contains amendments made as a result of comments received.

If you have any queries regarding any aspect of the Appraisal or Management Plan, please contact:

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Foreword

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Introduction

1 Introduction

What does Conservation Area designation mean?

1.1 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* (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 69). The responsibility for designating Conservation Areas lies with the Local Planning Authority.

1.2 The aim of Conservation Area designation is to protect the wider historic environment. Areas may be designated for their architecture, historic street layout, use of characteristic materials, style or landscaping. These individual elements are judged against local and regional criteria, rather than national. Above all, Conservation Areas should be cohesive areas in which buildings and spaces create unique environments that are irreplaceable.

1.3 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to review all their Conservation Areas regularly. English Heritage recommends that each area is reviewed every five years.

1.4 Conservation Area Designation provides extra protection within Conservation Areas in the following ways:

- Local Authorities have general control over most complete demolition of buildings within Conservation Areas
- Local Authorities have extra control over minor development
- Special provision is made to protect trees within Conservation Areas
- When assessing planning applications, Local Authorities must pay careful attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

1.5 The Local Authority can include policies in the Local Plan or Local Development Framework to help preserve the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas.

What is the purpose of a Conservation Area Appraisal?

1.6 The aim of the Appraisal is to:

- Identify the Special Architectural and Historic Interest and the changing needs of the Conservation Area
- Clearly define the Conservation Area boundaries
- Increase public awareness and involvement in the preservation of the area
- Provide a framework for planning decisions
- Guide controlled and positive change within the Conservation Area, thus avoiding mediocrity of development

What is the status of this document?

1.7 This document has been produced by the Conservation team of the Council's Planning and Development Unit, in consultation with other Council officers. A draft version of the document was published for public consultation during July and August 2009, and this process is summarised in Appendix 7. This final version of the document was approved for publication by the Cabinet of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead on Thursday 26th November 2009, taking into account the consultation responses, for use to guide and inform all planning considerations and other council activities in the Conservation Area.

1.8 This Conservation Area statement is not part of the Local Development Framework (see chapter 2) but has been prepared in the context of national, regional and local planning policy. Upon adoption it will be used to guide future planning decisions.

Introduction

1.9 The contents of this appraisal and the associated maps and appendices are intended to highlight significant features but they should not be regarded as fully comprehensive and the omission of, or lack of reference to a particular building or feature should not be taken to imply that it is of no significance. This significance may only be fully identified at such time as a feature or building is subject to the rigorous assessment that an individual planning application necessitates.

1.10 Similarly, the controls that apply to elements vary and in some instances the items that have been identified as significant features cannot be fully protected by planning legislation. Further guidance on the controls that apply in conservation areas is given on the council's website www.rbwm.gov.uk <<http://www.rbwm.gov.uk>> or in the leaflet 'Conservation Areas- what they are and what it means to live in one'. Copies of the leaflet or initial advice on individual planning queries can be obtained by contacting the Council's Customer Service Centre either in person at the Town Hall Maidenhead or within the Council offices in Windsor, via the Council website, or by telephoning 01628 683 810.

Introduction

Planning Policy Context

Planning Policy Context

2.1 The current Development Plan for the area consists of the following documents:

- Regional Spatial Strategy: The South East Plan May 2009
- The Replacement Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire incorporating alterations (1997 & 2001);
- The Waste Local Plan for Berkshire (adopted 1998)
- The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (Incorporating Alterations Adopted June 2003)

2.2 Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Local Plan will be replaced with a new form of planning strategy called the Local Development Framework (LDF). Unlike the Local Plan, the LDF will consist of a number of documents which fit together. Until the LDF is established, relevant policies from the Local Plan have been saved and will continue to guide planning decisions. Several saved policies directly relate to Conservation Areas.

2.3 Further details about the Local Plan, and the progress made on the LDF, can be found on the Council's website, or by contacting the Council's Strategy and Plans Team.

Background

Background

3.1 Eton Conservation Area was first designated by Buckinghamshire County Council in 1971. Prior to the designation a consultation document, 'A future for Eton' was published by the County Council in 1968. This study considered the issues then affecting the town in relation to increasing traffic flows, and the need to redevelop an area to the east of the High Street, and also identified the need to safeguard the historic character of the area through Conservation Area designation. This study was therefore a very early Conservation Area assessment since the national legislation establishing this designation was only introduced with the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. Following the consultation exercise a Conservation Area including the main area of the town and College was designated, and an accompanying Conservation Area Report published.

3.2 Changes in local government following the Local Government Act of 1972 resulted in Eton becoming part of Berkshire in 1974.

3.3 In June 1996 a Conservation Area Statement for the Conservation Area was approved by the Borough Council in order to describe the character and appearance of the area, and for use in guiding future development decisions in the area. This document included some amendments to the boundary of the area from the original 1968 designation, to include an area of College buildings between Keats Lane and Eton Wick Road, and to exclude two small areas of land on the east and west sides to bring the boundary consistently to the edge of the built area. These boundary amendments had been subject to consultation in the Consultation Draft of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan (April 1993).

Summary of Special Interest

Summary of Special Interest

4.1 The special interest of Eton is made up of 6 principal components:

- The College and town include a considerable number of important historic buildings: Modern developments are very limited, and where they have taken place they are generally well related to the traditional details and materials of the area.
- The presence of the College gives the town international renown and recognition, and its proximity to Windsor increases its significance as a visitor attraction.
- The development of the town has been constrained by the physical limitations of the river, common land and the College, so that it retains the form of the single medieval High Street connecting the College and bridge crossing.
- There is a distinct change in character and hierarchy of areas from the spacious and varied College areas, to the typically 'Georgian' High Street, and to the more modest developments at the rear of the High Street.
- The surrounding unenclosed open land and river provide opportunities for long views to and across the town, and many view points are terminated by Windsor Castle and the College buildings.
- The town has an independent character, with many small, specialist, independent traders, and very few national retailers.

Summary of Special Interest



Summary of Special Interest

Location, Setting and Development of the Area

Location, Setting and Development of the Area

Location and Setting

5.1 The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead is a large borough situated to the west of London. The principal towns are Windsor and Maidenhead, and there are several other villages and settlements, although the area is predominantly rural beyond the main towns.

5.2 Eton is situated immediately to the north of the bridging point of the Thames at Windsor. The College is situated at the northern end of the High Street, separated from the town by the narrow watercourse running under Barnespool Bridge. The town is situated within a loop of the river, and the built area extends close to the river frontage on both the south and east sides. The road bridge between Windsor and Eton is now closed to vehicles, and therefore traffic can only enter the town at the northern end. To the west of the town there are the elevated routes of the A332 Windsor and Eton Relief Road, and the rail line connecting Windsor and Eton Central station to the main line at Slough. The town is also served by the Windsor and Eton Riverside railway station which provides services to Waterloo.

5.3 Eton Parish includes the settlement of Eton Wick, which is situated approximately 1 mile west of the town. Although this settlement has origins related to agriculture, since the mid 19th century it has experienced quite an extensive growth due in part to the severe physical constraints to the development of Eton itself. To the north of Eton is the town of Slough, and the M4 motorway.

Topography, Geology and Landscape Setting

5.4 Eton is built on the flat flood plain on the north bank of the river Thames. The town has a compact form, restrained by the river and flood plain limits and it is still surrounded by green open spaces. The underlying geology is varied and includes Chalk and Reading Bed sands.

5.5 The surrounding landscape is included in the area defined as Settled Farmed Flood plain in the Landscape Character Assessment for the Royal Borough (2004), which has the following general distinguishing features:

- Wide, meandering river with diverse river edge habitats including pollarded willows
- Flat and open floodplain with a rich farming heritage
- Quiet, intimate waterside routeways with riverside and floodplain historic built features
- Linear woodlands and designed landscapes with their parkland trees give a subtle wooded character to much of the valley floor
- Riverside recreation 'hotspots'
- Large farmsteads set within a rich mosaic of farmland
- Traditional vernacular buildings
- Dispersed small scale modern residential development which is unsympathetic to the vernacular style of traditional building forms seen in the locality
- Rich archaeological heritage
- Increasing influence of aviation and road traffic, and associated infrastructure development

5.6 In addition, the Eton area has the additional specific characteristics;

- Historic town of Eton and its riverside setting
- Views of the college buildings from surrounding farmland
- Mature parkland trees
- Rich arable farmland
- Wooded river corridor with pollarded Willows

Location, Setting and Development of the Area

- Influences of recent residential development at Eton Wick on surrounding farmland
- Views of Windsor Castle and St Johns Church

History and Development

5.7 Although Eton is now associated, at least to the world outside the town, with the College, it is a town in its own right with origins much earlier than the foundation of the College. The settlement dates from Saxon times, perhaps earlier, its location related to a ford across the Thames and Eton meaning 'settlement on an island'. The Parish was founded in the 10th century and at the time of the Domesday survey was held by Walter Fitzother, Constable of Windsor Castle, and recorded as 'Ettone' and had 2 mills, meadow, woodland and fisheries.

5.8 A bridging point across the river had been established by at least 1172, when records show that tolls were being levied on river traffic passing under the bridge. In 1236 oak from Windsor Forest was used to repair the bridge. Because the Thames flowed in several channels at this time, bridging points to the north of the town were also significant and a bridge on the site of Barnespool Bridge is mentioned in records in 1274. In medieval times the town developed in a linear form between the bridges that carried the King's Road to Slough and beyond from Windsor Castle. The church of this period was on the site of the present College chapel and the market place, established by a charter in 1204, was probably in the area now occupied by 44-47 High Street.

5.9 In 1440 Henry VI founded Eton College taking his inspiration from Winchester College. The foundation at Eton was called "The King's College of Our Lady of Eton beside Windsor" and was originally intended to comprise a Provost, ten Fellows, four Clerks, six Choristers, a Schoolmaster, 24 poor and indigent Scholars and 24 poor and infirm Men. Shortly after, the number of scholars was increased to 70 and further chaplains and choristers were added to the staff. The provision of almshouses ceased after about 30 years of the foundation. The earliest College building was in the area of the then existing parish church which had been made collegiate at the time of the foundation. The Cloister Buildings were commenced in 1443 and by 1475 the previous parish church had been demolished and replaced by the College chapel which became the church for the town.

5.10 From the time of the establishment of the College the town started to take on the role of the benevolent servant to the College although it retained some independence because of the road and river traffic and the relationship to the Windsor.

5.11 Eton was one of the few religious establishments not affected by the dissolution of the monasteries and throughout the 16th and 17th centuries the College and town continued to develop, although the physical expansion of the town was limited by the confines of the river in the south and College to the north. In 1694 the College had expanded to accommodate 300 boys. The town remained an important route to Windsor and several inns developed both to serve traffic to the castle and to accommodate the College students. The town formed the route for several royal funerals and by 1512 the King's Stables were established in the area of King Stable Street, possibly because of the problem of heavy vehicles and horses crossing the bridge to Windsor.

5.12 In the 18th and 19th centuries the College and town continued to develop together. The occupants of the town began to turn more towards craft and minor manufacturing work as opposed to their previous agricultural work, but with the work as College servants continuing. The College buildings began to include the development of the purpose built boarding houses to supplement and partially replace the previous private/individual boarding arrangements throughout the town. The first boarding houses were managed by dames and by 1766 there were 13 of these. In the 18th century some masters undertook the building of boarding houses such as Godolphin House and Jourdelays, built by former headmaster Andrew Snape. The first houses built by the College itself are Hawtrey and Durnford Houses, which date from 1843.

5.13 The College population increased from about 300 boys in 1800 to 900 in 1871. In a similar period the population of the town grew from 1688 to 3122. This growth in population of the town was reflected in a physical expansion to the east and west of the High Street with the construction of houses such as those in Tangier Lane and Brocas Terrace. Some new accommodation was also provided in small densely built courts, and by extending at the rear or within the gardens of the High Street properties.

Location, Setting and Development of the Area

5.14 In the 19th century the town began to re-establish a separate identity from the College. A chapel of ease for the town had been established on the site of the present war memorial gardens in 1768 to provide a separate place of worship for the town. This was replaced in 1819 with a new church and again in 1852 the foundation of a new church (of which the tower and chancel survive in the present sanatorium complex) was laid. This church achieved independence from the College with its own full time vicar and parish church status in 1875. In 1813 the original Eton Porney School was established for the education of children of the town on the site at the rear of 29 High Street. The existing larger school was built in 1863.

5.15 A significant event in the early part of the 19th century that gives Eton its unique setting was the defence in 1826 of an attempt to enclose the parish lands. This was defeated, leaving Eton one of the very few English parishes not to have been enclosed. Much of the land is lammas land which is similar to common land and gives certain rights to feed animals to the holders of certain plots of land.

5.16 The impact on, and loss of, lammas land was one of the reasons why the introduction of a rail connection to the town was resisted. In the event the Great Western rail line to Windsor which runs to the west of the town was completed in 1848. The completion of this link and also the Southern Railway line to Windsor opened earlier that year resulted in a decline in the road traffic of coaches etc. through Eton.

5.17 The disposition of lammas land and the College buildings have also been significant in the 20th century in restricting availability of land for new housing, and resulted in the decision being made to locate the majority of new housing beyond the confines of the old town in Eton Wick. One small area of housing was redeveloped in the 60's to the west of the High Street to create Atherton Court, and more recently some land to the east of the High Street off Tangier Lane has been redeveloped for housing. College building has continued to the present time.

5.18 Despite this new building the appearance of the buildings in the High Street has changed little in the 20th century. A comparison of the historic maps in appendix 1 showing the town in 1876 and 1932, together with the present day map, confirm this, and show that the main area of development over that period has been in the area to the west of the College.

5.19 The main recent changes have been in traffic, with the town suffering from extensive through traffic between Windsor and Slough until the building of the Eton Windsor Relief Road in 1966 which removed about 40% of the traffic from the town. A further dramatic reduction came in 1970 when Windsor Bridge was closed to vehicles. This loss of through traffic was combined with other factors to make the town more reliant on tourist and College related activities and many of the shops and businesses in the town today serve primarily the College community or tourists attracted to the town by the College.

5.20 Eton has also been affected by changes in local government boundaries. Until 1974 the town was with the county of Buckinghamshire with the local administration an urban district council centred in Eton. In 1974 the town became part of Berkshire and within the area of The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. The previous separation of control has probably helped the town retain a separate identity from its close and larger neighbour Windsor.

5.21 At the time of the 2001 Census, the town area which is broadly contiguous with the Conservation Area had a population of approximately 3000. Eton College presently has 1,300 pupils, and 200 masters, and also employs in the region of 700 other staff.

Archaeology

5.22 The historic core of the town is considered to be of high archaeological potential, and many sites of interest are noted on the Berkshire Sites and Monuments Record. Although little fieldwork has been carried out in the town centre, any excavations tend to reveal deposits relating to medieval settlement and craft activities, and post-medieval structures. Excavation of the medieval waterfront in King Stable Street identified a working area for the properties fronting onto the approach to the north end of the Windsor Bridge, and revealed timber revetments to the river bank and a variety of ceramic and metalwork finds, as well as evidence for industrial activities.

5.23 Like most of the Thames Valley, the area also would have been exploited in Prehistoric times, and finds from the area include Mesolithic stone and bone tools, and metalwork dredged from the river.

Location, Setting and Development of the Area

5.24 Groundworks within much of the Conservation Area would be likely to have an impact on archaeological remains, relating to medieval and post-medieval settlement, craft, industry and waterside activity, with archaeological mitigation often being required in line with local and national planning policy.

Location, Setting and Development of the Area

The General Character and Form of the Area

The General Character and Form of the Area

6.1 Eton has evolved in a linear pattern along the main street leading up and away from the river until it reaches the College, where the street pattern changes to an open one with wider roads which branch off and terminate in a gradual curve towards Datchet and Slough. The area is flat, and the High Street curves gently to align with Windsor Castle and the bridge to the south, and the College to the north. It has a compact shape, with open lammas land to the west, and the river bounding the south and east sides. There is a network of narrower, primarily residential, streets and connecting paths leading off the lower part of the High Street .

6.2 The development of Eton has been influenced by the location of two major uses, Windsor Castle and Eton College. These institutions still dominate Eton today. The northern end of the Conservation Area is dominated by the College buildings and their associated uses. The southern end of the town holds the majority of the commercial element of Eton, but today the tourist who visits the Castle, also often visits Eton, and so many of the shops have uses such as galleries, antique shops and gift shops and there are a considerable number of restaurants and public houses. There is also an unusual mix of shops and services for the College. These include barbers and outfitters, stationers and the services such as laundry and catering, which can be smelt, if not seen.

6.3 The Conservation Area lies within the area analysed in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Townscape Assessment (2008), which provides an assessment of the character and composition of the built environment of the whole of the borough area that is outside the designated green belt. The analysis includes a factual description of the townscape of all settlements, defines generic townscape character types that occur throughout the borough, and identifies character areas within each settlement that fall within these generic types. Using this analysis the following character types are identified within the Eton Conservation Area ; Historic Town Core, Collegiate, Victorian and Edwardian Suburbs, Post War residential Flats and Post War suburbs. Whilst the analysis of the character types in the Townscape Assessment has been used in reviewing the Conservation Area, and the guidance of that document can be considered together with this appraisal, for the purposes of dividing the Conservation Area into character zones, a slightly different approach has been taken to include detailed consideration of the historic development and functioning of the area, as well as the nature of the present buildings. This has resulted in the identification of four broad character areas which are described in detail in Section 8;

- The College area to the north of Barnespool Bridge
- The High Street area
- The residential areas to the east and west of the High street
- The River frontage.

The General Character and Form of the Area

The General Character and Form of the Area

Special Features of the Area

Special Features of the Area

Important Buildings

7.1 Whilst the vast majority of buildings, within the Conservation Area make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area, it is possible to identify certain specific buildings that are of particular importance. This importance may be derived from their historic association, architectural interest, technological innovation or how important an impact they have on the street scene, or any combination of these factors. Eton contains so many fine buildings that this is of necessity a very broad overview, and more details are included in Appendix 2, which describe listed buildings, and Appendix 3, which describes the buildings that are considered to be of local significance.

7.2 The Conservation Area contains a high density of listed buildings, particularly within the High Street and College itself, where the majority of buildings are listed either for their architectural or historical significance and/or their group value. The earliest listed buildings date from the 15th century, with two separate but equally as important examples of different forms of building technique illustrated in the brick constructed buildings of the College's original form and the timber frame traditions as illustrated in the former Cockpit restaurant in the High Street. These two buildings, although contrasting in their appearance, are contemporary with each other, both dating from around 1440. Next to the Cockpit is a rare survival of an early Victorian post box, still in working order, which dates from 1856 and immediately under the jetty to the front of No. 47 are a pair of old wooden stocks.

7.3 The College Chapel is of slightly later date, being completed in 1483, but once again demonstrates a different approach in construction, being built with a variety of different stone in the later Perpendicular style. The chapel represents the most famous symbol of Eton College, and is particularly important for its internal 15th century wall paintings which are virtually the only surviving paintings in England from this period. As well as these factors, the chapel when viewed from the M4 motorway and its slip roads, can be seen standing out beside Windsor Castle and St George's Chapel providing a view of an unusual collection of exceptional buildings. The Lower Chapel in Keates Lane is a smaller version of the main chapel, being of Perpendicular style and built in ashlar stone blocks. This building is however later in date, being attributed to the architect Sir Arthur Blomfield and constructed between 1889-1891.

7.4 The remaining College buildings, include several examples of the work of Henry Woodyer, the Victorian architect, who was responsible for redesigning the interior of the College Hall, and the New Schools. Timbralls on the Slough Road, and the Burning Bush, an ornate iron lamp put up in 1864 at the Junction of Slough Road and Common Lane, are also by Woodyer. Although it has since moved from its original site, the Burning Bush is still a prominent feature in this part of the town.

7.5 Entering Eton from Eton Wick a series of interesting buildings and structures are passed in succession. The first of this group is the Pound, a square brick compound constructed to act as an enclosure for grazing animals on the adjacent meadows, but has long since become disused. It is, however, an important survival. Further into Eton, a series of imposing 4 storey brick buildings belonging to Eton College on each side of the road, are houses for some of the boys and date from the 19th century. The refectory known as Bekynton House is a striking low single storey modern building set within a large area of open space with covered walkways linking it to some of the teaching blocks on Keates Lane.

7.6 Between the main part of the College and the start of the town itself in the Barnespool area, is Gulliver's. This is an 18th century fronted property in front of an older timber framed structure which is particularly prominent for the contrast between the tuck pointed front elevation and the timber frame on the side. Barnespool bridge is a sturdy cast iron and polished granite structure dated 1883 with stone columns at each end. On each side of the southern end of the bridge are two unusual properties; No 1 High Street is one of the established tailors – Tom Brown, and the brickwork on the side elevation gives clues to the date of the building "TB 1865", whilst opposite, No 138 the Baldwins Bridge Trust building, is a tall narrow gothic style building. Along the northern edge of Baldwins Shore are a variety of different College related buildings, which apart from Corner House, all face onto this lane and the attractive series of gardens beyond which run down to open fields and a stream.

7.7 Within the High Street are a number of non-listed buildings which were originally built for specific functions some of which are now redundant. The former National Westminster Bank building, has some good quality brick work with very fine mortar joints, and a richly- moulded terracotta frieze, and is dated 1894. Next door to this is Barclays Bank, which has a handsome façade of red brick and carved stone from 1931. The old Police Station at No. 54 is a prominent red brick, art deco style building. Porney School built between 1862-63, is another listed building with quality brickwork designed by G.E. Street, the Victorian architect and was specifically

Special Features of the Area

designed as a school for the town's inhabitants. The school buildings themselves are screened from the High Street by the master's houses which are of cottage style in brick with diaper patterning and the old entrance to the original fire station which has now been incorporated into the School.

7.8 Away from the High Street are some other buildings of significance, again some are listed, others are not. The Almshouses in Eton Square are a good example of early 18th century brick cottages with clay tile roof. A cobbled passage way on one side of them goes up the side of the former Cockpit Restaurant onto the High Street. Behind 40 High Street is a long weather boarded workshop with a slate roof, which can be clearly seen from Eton Square. The former New Inn of about 1840, stands alone surrounded by cottage flats by the Eton Society for the Improvement of Cottage Accommodation in 1935.

7.9 In Eton Court on the western side of the High Street, is the Baldwin and Austen-Leigh Institute built in 1911 by E L Ware which is a good example of the Arts and Crafts style with simple brickwork and decoration. The present Town Council offices at 102, High Street was previously the 1904 Fire Station for the town and is a painted brick building of Queen Anne Style.

7.10 The river frontage is quite different in character to the remainder of the town, with the boathouse style predominantly reflected in buildings on the west side of Windsor Bridge.

Building Materials and Architectural Details

7.11 Eton's buildings have a wealth of different architectural styles and individual details, the simple and somewhat understated buildings along the High Street contrasting with the exuberant and occasionally ostentatious buildings belonging to the College. The buildings are described and analysed in more detail within the Character Zones that follow, but despite the variety of building types and periods of construction the Conservation Area does have a unity that comes from the use of a limited palette of materials, with red and yellow/brown brick the most common facing material, together with slate and tile roof coverings.

7.12 The length of period over which these materials have been used within the town has resulted in them being used and developed to reflect the evolving styles of architecture of the time, and this is represented in both the vernacular local styles that are found in the High Street area, and in the grander buildings of the College, where many of the buildings are examples of works of distinguished architects. In addition to the descriptions within each Character Zone, Appendix 4 contains an analysis of the typical details and uses of materials related to periods of construction.

Open Spaces

7.13 Eton is a small town surrounded by countryside. This setting is especially important with the many views and glimpses that are provided to the traveller through Eton and from beyond the town where the open approaches give many important long distance views particularly of the College buildings. Many of these are seen from the network of footpaths that cross the land to the west of the Conservation Area, which are shown on the adjacent map, and enhance the perception of Eton being a small town. This is more pronounced in the southern part of the Conservation Area where the built up area is denser, and the open space more accessible, and therefore the abrupt transition between buildings and open space is more apparent.

7.14 Open space also cuts through Eton where the Barnespool area forms a natural divide between the College and High Street and also allows views out to the fields beyond.

7.15 In the southern part of Eton there are many small courtyards and the streets have very few trees and green open spaces, making the gardens and few mature trees more valuable. The Church of St. John's war memorial garden is a small and important space along the built up High Street.

7.16 The Thames is also an open space in its own right. It now supports a mixture of mainly recreational activities and gives opportunities for views out and across the Conservation Area, particularly to the Brocas land to the west. The riverbank to the east of the town is more enclosed and tree lined. At the end of Tangier Lane is the Old Mill House now the home to a Thames Water treatment works. The trees and the sound of water are features which, although the river is not visible from here, reinforce its presence.

Special Features of the Area

7.17 The College contains garden areas listed in the Register of Parks and Gardens. The gardens are divided into three main sections, the first two are situated within the Conservation Area and are: the Provost's garden and adjacent Memorial Garden to the King of Siam, and the Headmaster's Garden lying adjacent to the Fellow's Garden. These gardens have a formal layout of lawns, borders and paths with some enclosing walls and railings. The gardens contain several fine trees that contribute to the views of the college buildings.

7.18 A further garden area, Luxmoore's Garden, lies to the east of the Conservation Area on an island in the Thames. This is a more natural garden with informal planting of shrubs and trees that now form an important backcloth to this area of the Conservation Area. The designated garden area also extends to include the parkland to the south, east and north of the College buildings, which includes the area of rough grass and trees that lie between the college and Luxmoore's garden, and the area to the north that is used for more formal playing fields, but with many mature specimen trees. The relationship of the designated garden area to the Conservation Area is shown on the adjacent map.

7.19 Many of the College houses are also set within substantial gardens, with mature planting and trees, which act as important breaks between buildings, and provide attractive settings to the buildings.

Important Views, Vistas and Landmarks

7.20 The most important view from within Eton is that of Windsor Castle from the High Street. Many views of the Castle can be seen around Eton from the residential streets and College buildings. These views not only give Eton an important historic backdrop but also aid orientation throughout the twisting back streets. There are also important views of Eton from the Castle and surrounding terraces. The elevated position provides views across the roofs of the town to the College and open land to the north.

7.21 Travelling through Eton there are many different views. Some have an element of surprise as corners are turned, and others are glimpses between buildings to what is beyond. The many surprise views come from the contrast of tall buildings to open space, especially in the College area. From all directions the roads that lead into the area that surrounds the Burning Bush, are enclosed with high buildings. Upon entering the College the area opens into a large space with some impressive views of Chapel and Memorial buildings. There are many glimpses into courtyards and activities between the buildings on the High Street, as well as the views through the college entrances into the formal College squares and buildings.

7.22 The views looking into the Eton from the surrounding open space, the river, approach roads into Eton and the railway viaduct are also important. There are views of the skyline of the Chapel and St John's Church set within the greenness of the countryside. The views of Eton from the river and bridge are especially important as they are the first views many visitors have of Eton. The boat houses, restaurants and other buildings are an attractive mix of styles and river frontage uses.

Special Features of the Area

Special Features of the Area

Character Areas

8 Character Areas

The College Area to the North of Barnespool Bridge

8.1 This is the area to the north of Barnespool Bridge, which has been predominantly associated with College uses since its foundation. Here the buildings are large and set back from the street. The buildings are individually designed and distinctive, and many are the work of noted architects. This prevents the area having an institutional appearance, despite the predominant use. They are often set within large gardens and integrated with courtyards and green space which gives the area a much greener and open feel and on a much larger scale, in contrast with the narrow streets and small buildings found in the southern end of the town. Between the roads and the large buildings exists a network of small alleys which provide a safe pedestrian link between many of the main buildings, and an interesting network of footpaths for the visitor to explore.

8.2 The College generates varying day long activity with marked contrast both between term and holiday time, and within the day during term time, with periods of quiet whilst lessons take place contrasting with the breaks between, when the footways are crowded by large numbers of the Eton students in their distinctive clothing moving between buildings. Bicycle traffic is also significant around the College buildings.

8.3 All road traffic enters the town through the College area. Although most then travels through the area, the presence of the traffic signal control at the junction of Eton Wick Road does lead to traffic queuing on the approaches. There are some areas of on street parking in the area, but these are quite dispersed and do not tend to dominate the environment.



Character Areas

<h2>The College Area</h2>			
<p>Building period</p>	<p>The buildings are predominantly from the 19th and 20th C, but within the area there are buildings dating from the earliest foundation of the College in the 15th C. The buildings at the outer edges of the town, particularly along Eton Wick Road and Common Lane are predominantly 20th C.</p>		
<p>Plot size and form and relationship to road</p>	<p>The plot sizes vary with the functions of the buildings, but the earliest buildings located west of the foundation buildings are closely built on relatively narrow plots that are built close to the pavement edge. This pattern of building close to the street continues with many of the school buildings along Meadow Lane and Common Lane. There are also groups of school buildings, including the foundation buildings that are set around courtyards, with forecourt entrances. Many of the later purpose built boarding houses on the western side of the area are set back from the road in wider plots which provide garden areas. The western section of the area is divided by a series of narrow footways, connecting the College buildings in Eton Wick Road and Common Lane.</p>		 


Character Areas

<p>Building height</p>	<p>The majority of the school buildings are three or four storeys in height, with those in the High St area mostly 4 storey. Several have had additions or alterations at roof level to increase the accommodation. Some of the older houses are on a more conventional domestic scale at two storeys.</p>		
<p>Rooflines</p>	<p>Rooflines are varied and richly detailed and include a considerable mixture of details including substantial chimneys, dormers of different forms, elaborate gables and parapet details and collegiate details such as towers, pinnacles and crenellations.</p>		
<p>Windows and doors</p>	<p>Again there is a rich variety of detail in these items. Windows are predominantly timber vertical sliding sashes, but there are also timber and metal casements of varying styles, and the size and design of windows in many of the classroom buildings relate to those functions, rather than a domestic proportion. Many windows have elaborate details such as moulded hoods and transoms. Doors are timber, and mostly with a painted finish. The detailing of the doors and doorcases reflect the status and function of the entrances, and there is a clear hierarchy of principal entrances, boy's entrances and service entrances. The main entrance doors</p>		

Character Areas

	<p>have ornate doorcases in brick, stone and timber. Many of the older main College buildings have elaborate doors with decorative ironwork. Several doors have decorative plaques or engraved details.</p>		
<p>Facing materials</p>	<p>The majority of the buildings are constructed in red brick, and this continues from the earliest foundation buildings, through to those of the 20th C. The foundation buildings are amongst the earliest in the country to be constructed from brick, which are much narrower than the standard modern brick. There are also several buildings in yellow/brown brick. Many of the brick buildings incorporate decoration in contrasting colours such as the blue/black diaper work on New Schools. College Chapel and Lower Chapel are constructed in stone, which is also used in detailing on many other buildings. Roofs are covered in a variety of materials including slate, clay tiles and sheet coverings including lead and copper.</p>		

Character Areas

<p>Special features</p>	<p>The forecourts and courtyard areas contain several statues and decorative items such as cannons, and throughout the area there are distinctive signs and wall plaques.</p>		
<p>Boundaries</p>	<p>Properties are separated from the road and pavements by walls and railings of varying height, often with a considerable amount of detailing. There are also areas that are simply enclosed with high boarded fences, which generally relate to garden areas and are therefore softened by planting behind. Some of the properties have small garden areas at the front.</p>		
<p>Street furniture and paving</p>	<p>Most of the roads in the area are edged with stone kerbs with examples of both Denner Hill stone and granite present. There are also substantial stone quadrants on many of the carriage entrances and corners. Several of the pavements and alleyways are paved in large size exposed aggregate slabs, others are continuous surfaces in concrete and tarmac. There are no large areas of stone paving, in the public highway areas but several crossovers and carriage entrances are constructed in Denner Hill setts. Several of the College areas, in particular School Yard, are paved in high quality materials. There is relatively little street furniture other than signs, but there are several wall mounted post boxes, including a Victorian model, and a traditional red telephone box. The 'Burning Bush' outside the Library building is an ornate light unit.</p>	 	 

Character Areas

<p>Trees</p>	<p>Trees are significant in this area, and include street trees in Eton Wick Road and Common Lane, trees within the forecourts to New Schools and the Chapel, and more informally those within the many garden areas that can be viewed between buildings from the roads and footpath network.</p>		
<p>Open spaces</p>	<p>There are a considerable number of mainly hard surfaced courtyards and alleyways throughout the area. The most visible 'green' open spaces within the area is the graveyard to the south of the College and the planted area around Barnespool Bridge. The foundation buildings are also surrounded by significant private garden spaces that are included on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. To the north and west are areas of playing fields, and there are large areas of private garden space around the boarding houses.</p>		
<p>Parking</p>	<p>There is a considerable amount of parking along the road edges, and there are small off road parking and garage areas associated with most of the College buildings. This does not generally intrude in front of the main elevations.</p>		
<p>Landmarks</p>	<p>The main landmark is the College Chapel, with its ornate roofline of pinnacles and lanterns. There are glimpses of this between many buildings, and along roads and pathways. The lower Chapel has a similar role in its locality. The Memorial buildings and Burning Bush are an important local landmark and meeting place.</p>		

Table 1

Character Areas

The High Street Area

8.4 The High Street has a strong building line, extending from Barnespool Bridge to Windsor Bridge. The line has been established since medieval times and is related to an early crossing point of the Thames. The road is flat with a slight curve providing a progression of views along the route. The buildings are built up to the street frontage on narrow plots, reflecting the original medieval development that was typified with burgage plots, that are long narrow strips of land. There has been back-land development over the years but the strong linear element has prevailed and walking along the High Street there are several opportunities to see between buildings and out to open space behind.



8.5 The combination of the strong building line of the High Street and back-land development has led to the many narrow alleyways, carriage entrances, courtyards and small side streets leading away from the High Street. There is evidence of narrow garden plots to the rear of many of the properties, and at the northern end of the High Street, although they are disused, these spaces combine to give a natural break in the built form before the college. In the area around St John's Church there are several areas of new development including houses and apartments. These are screened to front and rear by the High Street buildings and boundary vegetation, contained within the overall linear form of the rear plots, and are accessed from the High Street.

8.6 There is a high level of residential accommodation in the High Street buildings, both over commercial properties and in houses interspersed between the commercial frontages. There are also several small businesses situated in buildings behind the High Street frontages.

8.7 Despite the closure of Windsor Bridge to vehicle traffic in 1970, the High Street still has a fairly high level of vehicle traffic and the parking capacity of the town in both car parks and on street is usually in high demand. There is a considerable amount of pedestrian usage of the High Street, often by tourist groups who cause local congestion on the narrow pavements. Bicycle traffic is also significant in the southern part of the High Street where the bridge is still used as a route for cyclists from Windsor.




Character Areas

<p>The High Street Area</p>		
<p>Building period</p>		
<p>Plot size and form and relationship to road</p>	<p>The layout of the High Street was largely established before the end of the Middle Ages, and from that period buildings have been replaced and altered. There are therefore buildings obviously surviving from mediaeval period, such as The former Cock Pit building, with exposed timber frame, whilst others have had the earlier building refaced in later periods. The northern end of the High Street has a concentration of early 19th C buildings in yellow/brown brick, and there are several late 19th C and early 20th C public buildings, including the Porney School and the Town Council Offices. Overall the predominant appearance is of buildings from the early 19th C.</p>	<p>The properties are typically on narrow plots and front directly onto the High Street pavement in a continuous built frontage. There are some terraces, but most buildings are individually detailed. There are several carriageways and lanes leading off the street. The High Street is quite wide with pavements at either side. Many plots have garden areas to the rear, some now occupied by outbuildings and former workshops and some have been infilled, historically with separate cottages, and with more recent developments.</p>

Character Areas

			
			
	<p>Buildings are predominantly 3 storey, but with some, typically the older timber framed buildings, lower at 2 storey, and a few taller at 4 storey. The outbuildings and cottages at the rear of plots are more modest at two storey.</p>	<p>The roofs of most of the buildings are hidden behind high parapet walls, but these vary in height, and are intermixed with other roof forms including some gabled fronts. The more visible lower roofs of the timber framed buildings are simple gabled roofs clad in clay tiles. On several properties an old clay tile roof can be glimpsed behind a later parapet front, and the rear rooflines are more varied than on the High Street. Some of the roofs contain small attic dormer windows.</p>	<p>The predominant window style is vertical sliding sash windows, with multiple glazing bars. Windows are often set beneath fine rubbed brick arches. Earlier buildings have simple timber side opening casements. Doors to domestic entrances are 4 and 6 panelled in painted timber, with simple doorcases, often incorporating a boot scraper, and raised from pavement level with an entrance step. Several have decorative fanlights. Many properties have frontages which retain a shop window and part</p>
<p>Building height</p>		<p>Rooflines</p>	<p>Windows and doors</p>

Character Areas

	<p>glazed doorway and a separate side door to the domestic accommodation above. Some properties have French casements at the upper levels with decorative balconies.</p>		
<p>Facing materials</p>	<p>The predominant material is brick, both red and yellow/brown. Many buildings are also rendered and painted. There are several buildings constructed from timber frame with painted infill panels of brick or render. Roof materials are slate and orange/red plain clay tiles.</p>		
<p>Special features</p>	<p>A considerable number of the High St properties contain good quality timber shop fronts with simple timber fascias and modest signage. Many are very decorative, and date from the 19thC. Several former shops are now converted to residential use, but have retained the shop windows. A distinctive feature of the High Street is the intermix of domestic frontages with the shop fronts.</p>		

Character Areas

<p>Boundaries</p>	<p>Most properties front directly onto the pavement, but the few that are set back have high boundary walls to the pavement. Boundaries between and to the rear of properties are contained with high walls and fences, but some on the western side are more open to accommodate car park accesses.</p>		
<p>Street furniture and paving</p>	<p>The High Street pavements are edged in long granite kerbs and there are distinctive granite quadrants at the carriage entrances. The southern section of the road had the paving relaid in riven Yorkstone as part of a traffic management scheme in the late 1990's. The northern end of the road is in concrete paving slabs. There are some areas of setts in the carriage entrances, and in the alleyway to the west of the Almshouses. There is little traditional street furniture, the main exception being the Victorian post box. Modern planting boxes and Victorian style bollards were introduced in the southern section of the street with the repaving scheme. The polished steel bollards on the approach to the bridge were designed for this location by the artist Wendy Ramshaw CBE as part of an art project supported by the Council and local traders and installed in 2000. Street lighting in the High Street is in the form of small light units attached at high level to buildings.</p>	  	 

8 Character Areas

<p>Trees</p>	<p>The tightly built character of the High Street limits the space available for trees. There are two areas where they are significant; The chestnut tree on the corner with Eton Court, and the trees visible within the War Memorial Garden. There are other trees to the rear of plots which are locally important, and there is a significant amount of screening at the western edge of the Conservation Area adjacent to the South Meadow.</p>		
<p>Open spaces</p>	<p>The war memorial garden at the east end of St John's church is a small but important open space that provides a link through to South Meadow. The open area to the north of the Church Hall off Sun Lane, currently partly used for car parking, was formerly used as a series of narrow garden plots, and retains some planting related to that use.</p>		
<p>Parking</p>	<p>There is extensive on street parking along much of the High Street and also surface parking areas around Eton Court, and off Baldwin's Bec. These are all generally in high demand. Several of the High Street businesses have private car parks at the rear of the properties accessed from the High Street, through former carriage entrances, or from the rear around Atherton Court..</p>		

Character Areas

<p>Landmarks</p>	<p>The principal landmark is Windsor Castle situated beyond the Conservation Area, but visible in views along the High Street. At the northern end of the street the College buildings and Chapel become the focal point.</p>		
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Table 2

8 Character Areas

The Residential Areas to the East and West of the High Street

8.8 This area is predominantly residential in use. This back of High Street development has evolved over the last 200 years creating a greater variety in the architecture and urban morphology of the town. In the early 19th century, the town experienced a considerable amount of new building, much in the areas between the back of the established High Street frontage, the lammas land and the river. Terraced houses were built, many examples of which remain such as along Tangier Lane and Sunbury Road. These small houses were built fronting onto the street with small gardens and alleys to the rear. These properties are typically much smaller and more modest than the grander High Street buildings, and much of the original development in these areas, was very cramped and of poor quality. Some areas have subsequently been redeveloped. Early in the 20th century the east and west sides of Eton Square were rebuilt as semi detached blocks with a road replacing the former central garden areas, and Atherton Court partly replaced a range of terraced houses in the 1960's. Part of Tangier Lane and land to the south were developed in the 1970's. These later developments have introduced some variety of form, a good example of the mix is the comparison of two complexes of flats. Atherton Court, with large blocks set within landscaped gardens is a contrast to the more recent development, built off King Stable Street, which has perimeter blocks and an enclosed garden.

