9: BUILDING DESIGN AND USE

Historic built environment

9.1 Chipping Norton has a high density of listed and locally listed buildings, reflecting a particularly rich historic environment borne out of its Cotswolds location and prominence as a market town that was at the centre of the wool trade. A market has been held here since the 13th century, the word ‘Chipping’ stemming from the word ‘Cheaping’, meaning a market.

9.2 Within the town there is one Grade I listed building (Church of St Mary’s), 11 Grade II* listed buildings and 114 Grade II listed buildings\(^1\). All lie within the town’s designated Conservation Area. There are also 468 locally listed structures within the Conservation Area. The Grade II* listed buildings are: Church Street (north side) nos. 1 to 4 (consecutive, Almshouses); High Street nos. 7, 15, 20 and White Hart Hotel; Market Place nos. 15, 16, 20 and The Town Hall; New Street (south side) King’s Head Court; and Bliss Tweed Mill.

9.3 The historic core of the town has changed little over the centuries, ensuring a real sense of place and an anchor for the town’s newer 20th and 21st century housing developments.

9.4 Other elements aside from buildings contribute to the town’s character. These include, for example, stone boundary walls. All these elements can add up to create the special sense of place that the town enjoys. It therefore stands that where these traditional assets exist they should be preserved for future generations.

9.5 Trees within the Chipping Norton Conservation Area help to soften the townscape and create cooling spaces on hot days. Similarly, open spaces such as Chipping Norton Common contribute to the appearance of the town and its rural setting, providing a valuable amenity for local residents.

9.6 The special character of Chipping Norton includes, though is not limited to, Bliss Mill and its setting, St Mary’s and its church yard and setting, Castle Mound, Pool Meadow, the Regulated Pasture (common owners), tree-lined approaches to the town, remaining burgage plots between Albion Street and High Street, and Market Place. Any proposal should have due regard to the WODC document ‘Chipping Norton Conservation Area Character Appraisal’ (adopted in September 2013) and the general design principles linked with it.

B1: The parish’s designated historic heritage assets and their settings, both above and below ground, including listed buildings, scheduled monuments and Conservation Area will be conserved and enhanced for their historic significance and their important contribution to local distinctiveness, character and sense of place.

Proposals for development that affect non-designated historic assets will be considered taking account of the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012).

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\(^1\)WODC, Chipping Norton Conservation Area Appraisal, Sept. 2013
Figure 9.1: Location of the Conservation Area and all nationally Listed buildings
B2: The special character of Chipping Norton’s Conservation Area should be preserved or enhanced. New development or proposals involving the alteration or extension of a building in or within the setting of the town’s Conservation Area will be supported subject to the following criteria:

• The form, design, scale, methods of construction and materials used should respect the characteristics of historic buildings and other assets in the area, the townscape and its landscape setting.
• The siting of proposals should respect existing open spaces, significant trees and the townscape.
• It does not reduce the total area of open space which makes an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.
• Features of historic value such as stone boundary and significant walls are preserved or enhanced.
• Major, minor and landscape views within, into and out of the area are preserved or enhanced.

Justification

9.7 The questionnaire results forming part of the initial consultation with residents and local businesses highlighted the importance of the town’s pleasant physical environment, with 93% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that this element of the town makes it a desirable place to live.

9.8 The West Oxfordshire Design Guide\(^2\) was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in September 2006. An updated version is currently being written and will be consulted on in spring 2015. The Design Guide sets out the design features that make West Oxfordshire special. It includes a section on Chipping Norton and its surrounding area – the ‘Northern Valleys and Ridges’ of West Oxfordshire. All development should have due regard to the West Oxfordshire Design Guide.

9.9 The preservation and enhancement of the existing historical built environment is essential if the town is to retain its attractive townscape. This will prove essential to the town’s economy as it seeks to position itself to attain a greater share of the local tourist market.

9.10 Full descriptions of Chipping Norton’s built environment and the individual components that contribute to its character can be found in the WODC document ‘Chipping Norton: Conservation Area Character Appraisal’\(^3\) adopted in September 2013. The document includes a map and full list of all listed and locally listed buildings. This Plan supports the use of this document as a guideline for development and alterations within the Conservation Area of the town.

9.11 Chipping Norton is currently undergoing an appraisal of its heritage assets through the English Heritage-funded project ‘Early Fabric in Historic Towns’. This is likely to increase understanding of the historic interest and significance of many of the town’s buildings.

9.12 The Neighbourhood Plan encourages the recording by developers of any historic fabric which would otherwise be lost in the course of development. The Plan therefore strongly supports the intention of WODC to oblige developers to protect and record heritage assets as outlined in paragraphs 8.84 and 8.89-8.90 of the pre-submission West Oxfordshire Local Plan\(^4\). It also supports any additional guidance from English Heritage when it becomes available.

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\(^2\)WODC, West Oxfordshire Design Guide, Sept. 2006
\(^3\)WODC, Chipping Norton: Conservation Area Character Appraisal, Sept. 2013
\(^4\)WODC, West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, March 2015
9.13 Records of archaeological sites, finds and all designations may be found in the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record held by Oxfordshire County Council. Email archaeology@oxfordshire.gov.uk for further information. Oxfordshire County Council is also completing a Historic Landscape Character project, which is due to be made available in 2016.

Relevance to planning framework
NPPF paras 7, 9, 17, 57, 126, 131, 132; WODC Local Plan BE1-2, BE4-7, BE8, BE10, BE12, H2, NE6; Pre-submission Local Plan CO2, 3, 13, 14 and paras 4.43-4.35, 8.75-8.92

Relevant Neighbourhood Plan objectives
OB2, OB7, OB8
Housing typology policies

9.14 Housing costs are higher than the national average, with affordability issues common among those with even average salaries\(^5\). Social housing comprises 17.3% of the housing stock, higher than the West Oxfordshire average of 12.5%\(^6\).

9.15 The consultation process found a desire for a wide mix of housing, particularly affordable housing for young people, families and those on low incomes.

9.16 WODC’s emerging Local Plan allocates a Strategic Development Area for housing within Chipping Norton. The remaining housing requirement will be met through a combination of homes already built, existing commitments, speculative ‘windfall’ development on unidentified sites that come forward in accordance with the Local Plan’s general housing policies, and other sites identified as being potentially suitable and deliverable in WODC’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)\(^7\).

Affordable housing schemes that meet the housing needs of households who have connections with Chipping Norton and its local community will be favoured. Households may have connections with the town because of current or previous residence, family associations, employment reasons or because of other social, health and wellbeing considerations. Someone has a local connection to Chipping Norton if they:

- Live here in permanent accommodation
- Have lived here for three years out of the last five years before applying for affordable housing, or ten years in total
- Are employed here or have the offer of a job here
- Have close family who have lived here for at least five years
- Are threatened with homelessness and WODC has a duty to secure accommodation.

B4: Housing developments that increase the choice of different types of housing available to older\(^9\) and disabled people in the town will be supported including:

- Specialised housing provision that meets both the housing and care needs of people (taking due consideration of recent developments of this type in Chipping Norton)
- Accessible housing that meets the needs of people with disabilities
- Housing that offers people the opportunity to move into more manageable accommodation that better meets their needs as they grow older.

B3: Residential development should meet a range of households’ needs for affordable housing\(^8\) to either rent or buy. In accordance with national guidance, small residential developments of 1-5 units will not be required to contribute towards the provision of affordable housing. Medium-sized developments of between six and ten units where located within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be expected to make a financial contribution towards off-site provision of affordable housing. Schemes of 6-10 units outside the AONB will not be required to contribute towards the provision of affordable housing. All larger developments of 11 or more units or a combined gross floor space greater than 1000m\(^2\) will be expected to deliver 40% affordable housing on site. Proposals exceeding these levels will be strongly supported.

\(^5\)DCA, West Oxon Housing Needs Assessment Update, 2011
\(^6\)ONS 2011 Census
\(^7\)LDF Update, Aug 2014: [www.westoxon.gov.uk/ldf](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/ldf)
\(^8\)Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market
\(^9\)Persons of 55+ years
**B5:** Housing developments that will enable younger people and families that have connections to Chipping Norton (as defined in policy B3) to set up a new home in the town will be supported.

**Justification**

9.17 Within West Oxfordshire 96% of concealed households cannot afford a deposit for a one-bedroom flat without parental assistance, while 83.8% of new households forming cannot afford to rent in the private market\(^\text{10}\).

9.18 According to the Housing Needs Assessment 2011, the income needed to buy a one-bedroom flat in Chipping Norton was £28,200, meaning that 80.3% of concealed households were unable to buy\(^\text{10}\). Furthermore, 32.0% of recently formed households were unable to buy a one-bedroom flat in the town. The recent revival of the property market is likely to have exacerbated this situation.

9.19 Within the social rented sector there is a significant undersupply of one-bedroom units with demand vs supply at 14.6:1. This stock size represents 56.9% of the total Housing Register.

9.20 As of 3 December 2014 the number of applicants on the WODC housing waiting list specifically requesting a property within Chipping Norton was 179\(^\text{11}\), an increase of 38% on just nine months earlier. Of this number 120 are applicants of working age seeking a one- or two-bedroom property, while 41 applicants of retirement age seek a similar home. Combined, this represents an application weighting of 90% for one- and two-bedroom properties. In addition to the housing waiting list there are a further 61 transfer applicants within the town.

9.21 Taken as a percentage of the population\(^\text{12}\) of Chipping Norton, the waiting list corresponds to 2.8% of the total – a similar figure to Witney (3.0%) though less than neighbouring Charlbury (3.8%) and nearby Woodstock (4.9%).

9.22 The Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) identifies that lower quartile house prices in Oxfordshire are on average nine times higher than annual lower quartile incomes in the county (the Government’s preferred indicator of the affordability of market housing). This is significantly above the national average of 6.6 times\(^\text{13}\).

9.23 The SHMA expresses concern over rising house prices, stating that this has lead to ‘an increasing proportion of households renting homes for longer, and more young people... living with families or in shared accommodation’. It highlights a 30% increase in households living in overcrowded homes between the 2001 and 2011 censuses and adds: ‘these factors point strongly towards a need to deliver more homes in the future in order to ensure that young households can form a home or get a foothold on the housing ladder’. It suggests 274 new affordable homes are needed per year to 2031 in West Oxfordshire.

\(^{10}\)DCA, West Oxon Housing Needs Assessment Update, 2011
\(^{11}\)WODC housing waiting list supplied by WODC.
\(^{12}\)Population data from Census 2011
\(^{13}\)GL Hearn, Oxfordshire Strategic Housing Assessment summary - Key findings on housing need, Mar 2014
9.24 Smaller housing units will be increasingly in demand as the local population continues to age; population projections to 2026 signal significant growth in the over 65 category with an increase of 66.1% during the forecast period. The Housing Needs Assessment 2011 suggests the housing market sector delivers 60% of units for single/couple and small households and 40% for larger families to bring about a more balanced housing offer across West Oxfordshire\(^\text{14}\).

9.25 This Plan’s definition of a local connection to Chipping Norton is a town-scale execution of WODC’s district-wide criteria for eligibility for social housing\(^\text{15}\).

9.26 To ensure opportunities for local people this Plan believes applying these criteria on a town-wide scale is appropriate.

**Relevance to planning framework**

NPPF paras 7, 9, 17, 47, 50; WODC Local Plan H3, H11; Pre-submission Local Plan CO6 and paras 5.1-5.3, 5.36-5.53 5.67-5.89, 5.94-5.95

**Relevant Neighbourhood Plan objective**

OB5

\(^{14}\text{DCA, West Oxon Housing Needs Assessment Update, 2011}\)

\(^{15}\text{www.westoxon.gov.uk/residents/housing/register-for-housing/how-we-assess-housing-applications/}\)
Self-build policies

9.27 Until recently the process of building your own home was almost universally referred to as ‘self-build’. In 2011 the Government’s ‘Housing Strategy for England’ introduced the term ‘custom-built housing’ to more accurately reflect the variety of ways in which people can have their own home built for them. The term ‘self-build’ is now used to describe homes which are largely self-organised or built as a DIY project. The self-build policies in this section of the Neighbourhood Plan refer to both self- and custom-built units.\(^{16}\)

9.28 In the UK 10-15% of new homes are self or custom built compared to at least 50% in most other developed countries. Self and custom builders can support the area’s economy by stimulating the local supply chains and providing local employment.\(^{17}\)

9.29 Self- and custom-built units also have the potential to provide better quality homes built to a higher standard of sustainability/energy efficiency. They offer the chance to express individual architectural style (in conformity with local planning standards) and are generally cheaper to build than equivalent units, offering a valuable route to affordable housing. As they are more likely to be built by local residents, they can enhance the area’s sense of community while allowing bespoke housing tailored to meet the exact requirements of those involved.\(^{17}\)

9.30 The residents’ questionnaire identified housing and employment opportunities as the least favourable aspects of living in Chipping Norton. Over half of respondents (56%) disagreed that local employment opportunities make them want to live in the town. One third (33%) felt the right housing is not available in Chipping Norton. Self-build has the potential to address both these areas.

B6: Developments over 50 units in size should allocate at least 5% of dwelling plots for self- and custom-builders. The allocation of plots should also take into account the need as identified by West Oxfordshire District Council. Developers should undertake activities to sub-divide the site into plots and provide supporting infrastructure such as roads and services. In addition to the proportional allocation of larger developments, the provision of new sites specifically for self-build is strongly supported.

B7: Dwellings may only be built on self/custom-build-allocated sites by individuals, or builders or developers acting on behalf of individuals or a community group of individuals. Those wishing to purchase a self/custom-build plot should demonstrate that they intend to live in the property once it is completed. Dwellings should be constructed within three years of purchase and should be built with due regard to the West Oxfordshire Design Guide or its future equivalent.

Where plots have been made available and marketed appropriately for at least 12 months and remain unsold, the plot(s) may be offered to West Oxfordshire District Council or a Housing Association before being built out by the developer.

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\(^{16}\)NaSBA, A second progress report to Government on the implementation of the Action Plan to promote the growth of self build housing, August 2013

\(^{17}\)NaSBA, An Action Plan to promote the growth of self-build housing, July 2011
Justification

9.31 Finding suitable self-build plots is the greatest hurdle to projects of this type. A recent analysis of users of the Self Build Portal found that 41% believed this to be the case, with obtaining planning (12%) and securing finance (10%) the next biggest hurdles18.

9.32 Nationally there is strong demand for self-build plots. A 2011 survey by the Building Societies Association found that 53% of consumers would consider building their own home if they had the opportunity19. The majority were attracted by the ability to have control over the design and layout of their home; they also felt a self-build home would be cheaper than buying on the open market.

9.33 Another survey by the Norwich and Peterborough Building Society showed that 30% of the population would like to tackle a self-build project in the next five years. Up to 400,000 searches for self-build plots are made on property website Rightmove every month19.

9.34 Evidence collected by WODC suggests that there are 427 potential custom/self-builders seeking suitable plots within West Oxfordshire20. The Council states it is ‘keen to support increased delivery [of custom build and self-build housing] to promote greater diversity in the local housing stock, innovative design and more affordable and sustainable construction’.

9.35 According to National Custom & Self Build Association21: ‘The Government wants to double the size of the sector over the next decade so that custom built homes become a ‘mainstream’ source of housing. It is keen on growing the sector for the following reasons:
• It is important to the national economy (it’s value is estimated at £3+ billion per year)
• It makes an important contribution to housing output, and creates an opportunity to diversify housing supply
• There is growing public demand for this type of housing
• It protects/creates local jobs and strengthens local supply chains in the construction sector (each self build sustains two construction jobs)
• It offers choice and is often better value for money
• It reflects the Government’s Localism ambitions
• It can provide opportunities to achieve a diverse mix of housing in both urban and rural areas.’

9.36 Neighbouring planning authority Cherwell District Council proactively supports self builders through its Build! project which aims to deliver 250 new homes in Banbury and Bicester during 2014 and 2015 alone22.

9.37 Allocating a modest provision for self-builders within Chipping Norton will help to address the demand within this town. It could also help to deliver a route to more affordable owner-occupied housing.

Relevance to planning framework
NPPF paras 7, 9, 17, 47, 63; WODC Local Plan n/a; Pre-submission Local Plan CO6 and paras 5.99-5.107

Relevant Neighbourhood Plan objective
OB5

18NaSBA, A second progress report to Government on the implementation of the Action Plan to promote the growth of self build housing, Aug. 2013
20WODC, West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, Mar 2015, para 5.105
22www.cherwell.gov.uk/build
Bicycle and bin storage policy

9.38 Clutter on pavements and streets is common on and around refuse collection day. This not only contributes a detrimental aesthetic to the street scene but can lead to scattering of refuse on windy days.

9.39 Chipping Norton’s low uptake of cycling may start to be addressed by making cycling more accessible. Offering convenient, well-placed cycle storage will help with this.

B8: Any proposals for development should provide adequate storage for bicycles as laid out in the Code for Sustainable Homes Technical Guide November 2010 or its future equivalent. There should also be adequate closed storage for wheelie bins and recycling boxes in order to reduce impact on the street scene.

Justification

9.40 The West Oxfordshire Design Guide\textsuperscript{23} offers guidance for storing bins and recycling boxes. This Plan supports the implementation of its recommendations in all new developments.

9.41 The current Code for Sustainable Homes awards credits for the provision of adequate secure cycle storage as it encourages the uptake of this more sustainable form of transport, thereby reducing carbon emissions. With such a low level of cycling uptake within the town this Plan considers the provision of cycle storage a small step towards improving cycling rates.

Relevance to planning framework

\textbf{NPPF} paras 7, 9, 17, 30, 35, 57-58; \textbf{WODC} Local Plan BE2, T2; Pre-submission Local Plan CO1, 2, 11, 18 and paras 4.33-4.35, 8.72, 7.3, 7.14

Relevant Neighbourhood Plan objectives

OB2, OB4, OB10

\textsuperscript{23}WODC, West Oxfordshire Design Guide
Energy and water efficiency policies
9.42 Feedback from the consultation process emphasised the importance to residents of energy efficiency in new development and the prudent use of water. With temperatures set to rise over the coming years and summers predicted to become drier24 it is important that the root causes of climate change are addressed.

9.43 The eastern side of town sits above the Ground Source Protection Zone for the public water supply at Old Chalford. The quality of water in this Principal Aquifer will need to be protected in the instance of any new development within this area.

24http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/

Figure 9.2: Map showing area of the local Ground Source Protection Zone

B9: New development and extensions and alterations to existing buildings should strive for the highest possible energy efficiency standards suitable for the project in question. This could include, for example, the incorporation of renewable energy technologies and other low energy systems, community scale renewable and/or low carbon energy schemes, exemplary standards of insulation, and passive measures such as intelligent development layout and building orientation and design.

Proposals seeking to comply with the Government’s zero carbon standard are encouraged. Where developers cannot achieve a zero carbon standard they will need to provide a robust assessment to the local planning authority as to why this isn’t possible. The use of construction materials with low embodied energy is also encouraged.
B10: New development should incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) and provision for their ongoing maintenance in order to buffer rainwater runoff and alleviate flood risk.

B11: All new houses with a garden should include water butts to reduce treated water consumption within the garden. Where feasible new development should also incorporate rainwater harvesting and/or grey water recycling techniques in order to reduce household water consumption further.

B12: As much of Chipping Norton is underlain by a Principal Aquifer, foul water from all development should connect to the foul sewer so as to avoid groundwater pollution. Developers should demonstrate that adequate water supply and sewerage infrastructure capacity exists both on and off sites to serve developments being proposed and that any development would not lead to problems for existing users.

Where there is a capacity problem and no improvements are programmed by the water company, then the developer needs to contact the water company (Thames Water) to agree what improvements are required and how they will be funded prior to commencement of the development.

Justification

9.44 Climate change is a very real threat to global security. By 2050 the median prediction is that temperatures will have risen by 2°C in Central England, bringing substantially wetter winters and drier summers. To help mitigate these effects it is important that local development takes its contribution seriously.

9.45 New development over the coming decades is one of the most accessible means of taking action through preventative measures. Standards already exist in the Code for Sustainable Homes, which it is anticipated will soon be disbanded through incorporation into building regulations. Aiming for the very highest environmental standards, above that of current building regulations, is achievable and will save building occupants considerable running costs over the lifetime of the building.

9.46 The Neighbourhood Plan supports the principle of stand-alone renewable energy proposals such as solar farms and wind turbines. WODC’s adopted Local Plan and pre-submission Local Plan carry policies relating to decentralised and renewable or low carbon energy development. The Neighbourhood Plan concurs with these policies.

9.47 Water requires considerable energy to treat and distribute. West Oxfordshire lies within an area of ‘serious’ water stress. Many day-to-day uses such as garden and car washing and toilet flushing do not require potable, treated water.

9.48 Rainwater collected on site would save energy and reduce the load on the local water supply system. Stalling runoff will help to reduce the impact of storm events and unusually wet periods. The promotion and adoption of water efficient practice in new developments will help to manage water resources and work towards sustainable development.

25http://ukclimateprojections.metoffice.gov.uk/
27WODC, West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031, Mar 2015, para 8.57
9.49 Overloading of existing water and sewerage infrastructure could lead to supply problems and ineffective treatment of sewerage. In some circumstances it may be necessary for developers to carry out appropriate studies to ascertain whether the proposed development will lead to overloading.

9.50 Further information for developers on water/sewerage infrastructure can be found on Thames Water’s website at [www.thameswater.co.uk/cps/rde/xchg/corp/hs.xsl/558.htm](http://www.thameswater.co.uk/cps/rde/xchg/corp/hs.xsl/558.htm) or by emailing developer.services@thameswater.co.uk or calling 0845 8502777.

**Relevance to planning framework**
- **NPPF** paras 7, 9, 17, 93-96, 99, 103, 110;
- **WODC** Local Plan BE2, NE7, NE10-12;
- Pre-submission Local Plan CO15-18 and paras 4.22-4.31, 8.44, 8.57

**Relevant Neighbourhood Plan objective**
- OB10