

## Conservation Principles and Tools

*Michael Crofton Briggs, former Head of City Development, Oxford City Council*

Oxford 'city of the dreaming spires' and historical views

Oxford's Heritage Assets

- 1580 listed buildings
- 12% grade I (national average 2%)
- 8% grade II\* (national average 4%)
- 17 conservation areas – 20% of city area
- 11 scheduled monuments
- 11 registered parks and gardens

Historic & Vibrant City

University of Oxford, no .1 in the world

Remarkable economic growth in last 10 years

Plant Oxford, BMW electric mini in 2019

Regional Centre for Retail, Research and Health

9.5m tourists p.a.

*But not without its challenges*

Spires and cranes

Tradition of modern architecture

### Conservation Principles

**NPPF** paras128 -137; the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness

**Historic England;** Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment  
Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2

**Oxford Local Plan;** Enhancing Oxford's unique heritage and creating quality new development

### Assess significance

NPPF 129. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

Former Ruskin College, Walton Street  
13/00832/FUL Alison Brooks Architects

Exeter College Cohen Quad

### Conservation Tools

- 1) Oxford Heritage Plan
- 2) View Cones Study
- 3) Tool kit and Conservation Area Appraisals
- 4) Context Analysis
- 5) Verified Views
- 6) Oxford Design Review Panel

### Context Analysis for Westgate

Four Blocks

The Scheme

Westgate before

Brasenose Lane

Block 2

Westgate now

Verified Views, Westgate

### **Oxford Design Review Panel**

Partnership with Design Council CABE

Operational since January 2014

Independent design support, review and training

Core Panel of built environment professionals, leading experts in their field

Schemes reviewed early in the planning process

“We want to ensure that we have the best quality of design for our future buildings that works within the demands of the historic city, but also can move with the times”

Lincoln College 11/03307/FUL,

Berrow Foundation Building  
RIBA 2017 National Award Winner

### **Process management**

John Henry Brookes Building  
RIBA 2014 National Award Winner

Longwall Library, Magdalen College  
RIBA 2017 National Award winner

Sultan Nazrin Shah Centre,  
Worcester College

RIBA 2018 National Award winner?

### **The Right Approach**

Relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land

Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it

Respect important views

Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings

Use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings

Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of the setting

Not predetermined by style

*(English Heritage and CABE 2001)*