

bridge

Issue 51 • Summer 2017

Newsletter of the Sonning & Sonning Eye Society

5 years in the making!

Mike Hart, Chairman

We are pleased to report that the 2017 Sonning Conservation Area Appraisal (SCAA) was adopted by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) at their meeting on 7 April and became effective on 19 April 2017.

The aims of the SCAA are to define the historic and architectural character and appearance of Sonning; identify what is worthy of conservation; and to encourage protection of the area and to safeguard its character.

The WBC recommendation to adopt the SCAA included the following background explanation:

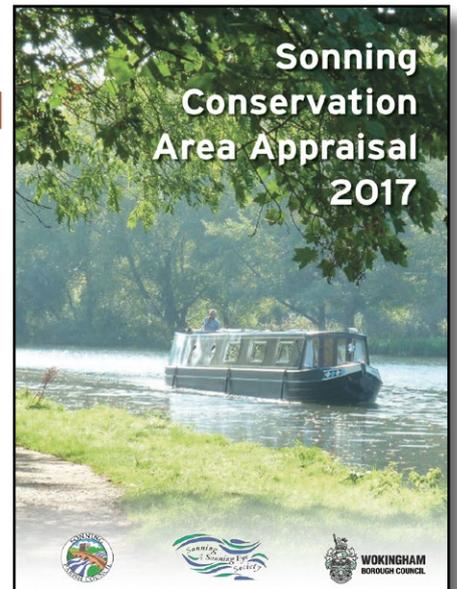
“Conservation areas (CA’s) are areas of special architectural or historic interest. Local Planning Authorities (LPA’s) have a duty to designate these areas under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and

‘from time to time’, to review the boundaries and to formulate proposals to preserve and enhance their special historic and architectural character.

Since 2012 the Council has been working with the Parish Council and Sonning & Sonning Eye Society in the production of an appraisal document for Sonning CA. The Parish Council and Sonning & Sonning Eye Society have carried out the research and produced the draft document. This was passed to the Council to finalise and consult on. A 6 week public consultation has been undertaken and amendments have been made to the appraisal to reflect consultation responses. It is now proposed that the document is adopted by the Council and will constitute a material planning consideration in assessing planning applications.

The Appraisal assesses the special architectural and historic significance of the conservation area through considering issues such as the layout, open spaces, trees and landscape, focal points and important buildings. The Appraisal identifies both positive features and those which are considered to detract from its special interest of the area. It also highlights vulnerabilities and opportunities for enhancement.

The designation of a conservation area gives the LPA additional controls over the demolition of unlisted buildings and works to trees, restricts some permitted development rights and tightens regulations on advertising.



Once designated, the LPA has a duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of their conservation areas in undertaking their planning duties. In providing an up to date assessment of the character of the conservation area, this Appraisal is a material planning consideration.”

There is a link where you can download your own copy of the final SCAA on the Society’s website www.sonning.org.uk.

The Society would like to thank all the volunteers who comprised the teams who went round the village to record the details that were to define the important features that make Sonning special.

Bridge is the newsletter of the Sonning & Sonning Eye Society

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APPENDIX 1 BUILDING MATERIALS

All areas in the country have their own style of buildings often based upon locally sourced or vernacular materials. This applies particularly to buildings over 60-70 years old before building materials became stereotypical and nationally mass produced. The improvement in transportation of materials made standardised building material available all over the country and therefore encouraged the loss of vernacular style and locally-sourced materials.

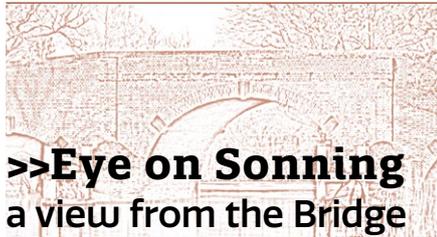
Despite this reality many vernacular styles are sustained by maintaining the use of local materials (recycled or otherwise). There is therefore a careful balance to be achieved in building design between keeping a local style without simply copying or making a pastiche.

Brick

The Conservation Area derives its style and character in part from the local traditional materials. Most common are locally made red brick walls, often using bricks sourced from local kilns within a 20 mile radius. Because of local river clays there were many local brick producers in and around the Reading-Maidenhead area producing bricks and tiles. The colour and texture of these bricks resulted from a combination of the particular local clay the way in which they were fired. In cases there is a multi-red bricks same applies to tiles used for roofs and for wall hanging.

Executive Committee & Panels

Patrick Hamblin, Planning & Traffic Panel



>> Eye on Sonning a view from the Bridge

Mike Hart, Chairman

We are delighted to report that a new audio-visual system has been installed in Pearson Hall comprising a permanently fixed high definition projector and large electrically operated screen. The system, which can be operated from a laptop computer, will greatly enhance the visual aids for future talks and even allow us to show films in the hall. Our thanks go to the Fire Brigade Trust who generously covered all the supply and installation costs.



We are pleased that our talks and walks are so well attended and with the new audio-visual system in place we can now cater for a bigger audience in the hall. We welcome the new members who have joined us and we are planning on launching a new initiative to welcome even more Sonning newcomers to join the Society.

In this issue of Bridge we are pleased to include an article from Lesley Green summarising the after-dinner talk on her memories as headteacher of Sonning Primary School that she gave at the AGM last November as well as an article from David Woodward, the Chairman of the Eye and Dunsden Parish Council, on the recently issued interactive Oxfordshire flood map.

I would remind you that we welcome comments or suggestions for future issues of Bridge to any of our editorial sub-committee (Jeremy Gilmore (IT), Lesley Heaney (distribution), Pauline Simmonds, Annabella Marks, Bob Hine, Andy Bell, Joyce Reed or myself) or email the team at bridge@sonning.org.uk.

Planning applications

The Planning and Traffic Panel continues to meet monthly. There have been 21 applications reviewed at the three meetings held since the last edition of Bridge.

Letters of objection were sent to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) relating to the application to vary a condition of planning consent to allow for up to 825 pupils to be enrolled at Reading Blue Coat School, the demolition and replacement of Pool Court, the provision of a car park in Sonning Field, the replacement of the existing property at 12a South Drive with a much larger property and the installation of an artificial grass pitch and floodlighting at Old Redingensians Sports Ground. A letter expressing our concern with the long-term use of the land to the west of Orchard Lodge, Sonning Eye as a car park was sent to South Oxfordshire District Council.

Sonning Parish Council Planning Committee meetings

The Society has been represented at all the above meetings since the last edition as an observer.

Local Plan Update:

No changes have been made to the list of sites for updating the local plan that will guide development in the Borough for the next 20 years and also the gypsy and traveller local plan since its publication by WBC. 7 sites are listed in Sonning. The Society is continuing to monitor the list.

Sonning Bridge

The bridge, a Grade II listed structure, was recently damaged by a vehicle and the Society is monitoring its repair.

Traffic

The joint working group consisting of representatives from the S&SES and SPC have had discussions with local businesses and others relating to traffic issues. A meeting was held at the end of May between the RBCS Headmaster and representatives of WBC Traffic Team, SPC and the Society. WBC will be taking over the responsibility for enforcing parking restrictions later this year and will consider extending the yellow lines along Sonning Lane.



A digital speed indicator has been installed by SPC in Pound Lane near the school entrance.

Cycle racks

A cycle rack has now been installed in the St George's playing field. The Society thanks Brian O'Callaghan for donating the cycle rack and to the Scarecrow Committee for funding the installation costs.

>> Membership news

We do hope you like the new format of our quarterly newsletter. We wanted to have more room to allow for the occasional in-depth piece and also to be able to do justice to the photos that accompany the articles.

If you have any comments or suggestions about Bridge then do let us know by emailing the editorial team at bridge@sonning.org.uk and please, if you have any ideas of articles of local interest that you'd like to read about or better still to contribute we'd love to hear from you!

A warm welcome is extended to the following new members:

Ms Simmons & Mr Keeshan

Ms Hulett & Mr Sherwood

Mr & Mrs Goddard and Family

Mr and Mrs Smyly

Welcome packs for new residents are available from Lesley Heaney, our Membership Secretary (0118 969 7231).



Clockwise from above: Map from Oxfordshire's Flood Toolkit showing areas that are at risk of flooding from rivers and from surface water. Courtesy of www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com; January 2014: Sonning Bridge; February 2014: Milestone Avenue; March 2007: The flood plain behind the French Horn doing its job; 1947 issue of the Sonning Parish magazine; Feb. 2014: Thames overflows footpaths; some houses on Thames Drive are built on stilts.

community resilience projects in their areas. The money can be used both for flood prevention measures as well as to provide for emergency response kit. New technology is also increasingly being used to collect better information about flood and rain levels in ways that can help predict severe flooding with greater accuracy.

Aside from these grand and possibly impractical schemes, what is the reality for Sonning Eye? Many resent any publicity which draws attention to flood risk in their area, fearing a detrimental impact on house values. In fact that risk is well-known, even if only crudely documented by the national flood mapping system. The majority of houses in Sonning Eye lie just above the functional floodplain' for a one in 30 year flood event. Those at risk are keenly aware that local flood patterns are complex and likely to be influenced both by ground and surface water levels and that no matter what, water will eventually rise of its own accord beneath their homes.

The lush water meadows around us have for centuries provided land

over which the rising Thames can spread, averting the worst consequences of flooding. Any changes to that floodplain, such as building works or the new gravel extraction and landfill works about to begin, are likely to have an impact on flooding which even the best experts find it hard to precisely quantify. Those that love living here must decide for themselves if the risks are counter-balanced by the joys of living on the edge of Old Father Thames.



Oxfordshire's Flood Toolkit Website

<https://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/>

1947 UK River Floods Retrospective

http://forms2.rms.com/rs/729-DJX-565/images/fl_1947_uk_river_floods.pdf

Climate Modelling

<http://www.climateprediction.net/human-influence-on-climate-in-the-2014-southern-england-winter-floods-and-their-impacts/>

Auction of Promises

To support Dunsden Village Hall

Saturday 10th June at 7.30pm at the Loddon Brewery

<https://auctionofpromises.com/DunsdenVillageHallAuction>

