

Nominate a Heritage Asset

Name and location of your candidate heritage asset (please provide a photograph and a map showing its location): Morrell Avenue, Oxford

1. WHAT IS IT? Is it one of the following?	Tick
a building or group of buildings	y
a monument or site (an area of archaeological remains or a structure other than a building)	
a place (e.g. a street, park, garden or natural space)	y
a landscape (an area defined by visual features or character, e.g. a city centre, village, suburb or field system)	y

2. WHY IS IT INTERESTING? Is it interesting in any of the following ways?	Tick / Rank
Historic interest – a well documented association with a person, event, episode of history, or local industry	y
Archaeological interest – firm evidence of potential to reveal more about the human past through further study	
Architectural interest – an example of an architectural style, a building of particular use, a technique of building, or use of materials	y
Artistic interest – It includes artistic endeavour to communicate meaning or use of design (including landscape design) to enhance appearance	

What is it about the asset that provides this interest?

Historic interest: Morrell Avenue was laid out on land taken from the Morrell family's parkland covering the former Cheney Farm. It was established in 1929 by the City Council as part of a programme to build high-quality council housing. Unusually, Morrell Avenue was designed to be a mixture of social housing in the lower part with property built by the local authority for sale to owner-occupiers. The intention to build a mixture of housing in a single street was an unusual practise at that time. Although the decorative details vary, the quality of the housing throughout the Avenue is high. The terrace of houses at the foot of Morrell Avenue (no.s 2-12) are already part of the St Clements Conservation Area, and the houses at the top of the Avenue (Nos. 177 –219 (odds) and Nos. 120 – 146 (evens)) have already been proposed for inclusion in the Oxford Heritage Assets Register.

Architectural interest: The houses were built between 1929 and 1931 to designs by Kellett Ablett (City Architect). The properties are a deliberately varied mixture of semi and short terraces of houses with a mixture of flat fronted and bay ground floor windows, a mixture of brick and stucco facing and a mixture of tile and pantile roofing materials. The brickwork is of particularly high quality, particularly surrounding the central passageways in the terraces, the design of which may be influenced by designs by Voysey (an architect Ablett was known to admire). The junctions with existing streets are notable by their wide, semi-circular nature. The entire avenue is built in the Neo-Georgian style in a single colour brick with contrasting colour brick detailing on corners, window surrounds, increasing the unified character of the Avenue. The slope of the hill is an important part of the overall visual environment as the terraces are stepped and front and side roof slopes are prominent in views and currently maintain a high level of uniformity.

Nominate a Heritage Asset

3. WHY IS IT LOCALLY VALUED? Is the interest of the asset valued locally for any of the following reasons?	Tick / Rank
Association: It connects us to people and events that shaped the identity or character of the area	y
Illustration: It illustrates an aspect of the area's past that makes an important contribution to its identity or character	y
Evidence: It is an important resource for understanding and learning about the area's history	
Aesthetics: It makes an important contribution to the positive look of the area either by design or fortuitously	y
Communal: It is important to the identity, cohesion, spiritual life or memory of all or part of the community	
<p>How is the asset locally valued as heritage?</p> <p>Association and Illustration: The entire avenue of houses was built by the local authority as a mixture of social and private housing in a garden suburb environment. The mixture of privately owned and council tenanted properties in this Arcadian setting suggests an intention on the part of the local authority to provide housing consistent with a Utopian ideal of not only decent quality housing for working people, but also of social integration.</p> <p>The quality of the houses throughout the Avenue reflects the high status among working people that attaining the tenancy of a council house represented in the early 20th century.</p> <p>Aesthetics: The buildings are well designed and attractive, whilst the setting of green gardens, with generous set-backs and the tree lined road, with its curving line climbing the hill, provides a highly attractive environment that is now a desirable residential area. The architecture of the houses, the design of the road, planting and green space combines to create a successful aesthetic impact.</p>	

4. WHAT MAKES ITS LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE SPECIAL? Do any of the following features make the heritage significance of the asset stand out above the surrounding environment?	Tick
Age ... Is it particularly old, or of a date that is significant to the local area?	y
Rarity ... Is it unusual in the area or a rare survival of something that was once common?	
Integrity ... Is it largely complete or in a near to original condition?	y
Group value ... Is it part of a group that have a close historic, aesthetic or communal association?	y
Oxford's identity ... Is it important to the identity or character of the city or a particular part of it?	
Other ... Is there another way you think it has special local value?	y
<p>How does this contribute to its value?</p> <p>Age: The development represents a significant period in the development of the city, as the council played a more significant role in providing public housing in response to the overcrowded conditions of the city's older suburbs, as well as responding to the pressure on housing created by the rapid growth of the Cowley car factory in the 1920s and 30s.</p> <p>Integrity and Group value: The houses are generally well preserved (although the majority of windows and doors have been replaced with unsympathetic designs), whilst the planting and landscaping of the road and gardens has matured positively to create an</p>	

Nominate a Heritage Asset

attractive townscape. The houses at the foot of the Avenue are already included in the St Clements Conservation Area, and the houses at the top of the avenue have been nominated by the Council for inclusion in the Oxford Heritage Assets Register. However, the aesthetic value of the avenue needs to be considered as a whole and for this reason the houses in the central part of the avenue need to be included in any aesthetic appreciation of the architecture and layout of the avenue.

As described above, the avenue represents not only a development to accommodate the influx of workers to Oxford at a time when the Cowley works was expanding rapidly (in marked contrast to other areas of Britain), it is also an example of a social experiment to integrate privately owned and council tenanted properties. This integration contrasts with the usual practice of segregating local authority and speculative developments. At the same time as Morrell Avenue was built on the other side of Oxford the Cutteslowe estate was segregated by the now infamous Cutteslow Wall.

The inter-war garden suburb movement was a relatively short-lived period of estate development. Morrell Avenue is an excellent example of an estate designed on garden suburb principles. At present the more humble local authority houses such as those in the middle part of the avenue are largely ignored by architectural historians. Unfortunately there is a danger that the integrity of the entire Avenue will be lost unless its significance is recognised now.

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Welcome to the nominations form for the Oxford Heritage Assets Register

What the form is for

The nomination form asks you to demonstrate how your candidate asset meets the criteria for inclusion on the Oxford Heritage Assets Register (the criteria are set out on the next page). The criteria ensure registration as a heritage asset is the most appropriate means to manage your valued feature of the environment.

Registration does not mean an asset will be preserved in its current state in perpetuity. Planning policy allows change to heritage assets that conserves or better reveals their significance or, where change requires their loss, replaces the benefit to the public that they provide. The information provided in support of your nomination will help determine what forms of change might be acceptable. Saying "it's important and must never change" won't tell us what we need to know to manage your heritage asset in the future.

Tick or rank?

In answers to Questions 2 – 4 you can rank the interests, values and significance your candidate asset provides to show which you consider the most and least important to its significance; i.e. 1st (most important) – 4th (least important).

Alternatives

If your candidate asset does not have significance that merits inclusion on the register but does contribute to the valued character of the local environment, consider preparing a character statement for the area using the Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit. This identifies features that contribute positively to local character and opportunities for enhancement. It may help to identify other ways that change can contribute to the quality of the local environment and its sense of place.

Where the use of land, buildings or places now or in the recent past, furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community (and this is not an ancillary use), it may be considered to be an asset of community value (community asset), for which the government has made provision in the Localism Act 2011. Regulations give communities the opportunity to identify assets of community value and have them listed and, when they are put up for sale, more time to raise finance and prepare to bid for them. The Council is maintaining a list of community assets. Nevertheless, there may be examples where land is considered to both qualify as a community asset and heritage asset, in which case it will be necessary to distinguish which features of their value and significance are relevant to each designation.

Sites and buildings in conservation areas

Nominate a Heritage Asset

Conservation Areas are 'designated heritage assets' as defined by the government's planning policy and receive a higher level of protection than locally registered heritage assets, including legal restrictions on demolition and some permitted development rights. Nevertheless, they are designated locally and reflect the local value of these areas as heritage assets. Features of the historic landscape within conservation areas that would be considered to have a significance meriting consideration in planning decisions would be considered to contribute to the significance of a conservation area and therefore are considered to be part of a designated heritage asset. As such, we will not consider them for inclusion on the Oxford Heritage Assets Register.

What happens next?

We will prepare a list of candidate heritage assets, which will be presented to the public (including the owners of candidate heritage assets) for consultation. Any responses received from the public will be placed with the nomination form and will be included in the report made to the review panel.

A panel of councillors, council officers and local experts will review the candidate assets nominated to ensure they meet the criteria. The information you provide in answering the questions will be essential for the panel's consideration of your candidate's significance. If they are uncertain, you may be asked to provide further information. Where the panel consider that a candidate has met the criteria they will recommend that the Council include them on the Oxford Heritage Asset Register.

In some instances the review panel may decide that the candidate does not meet the criteria to be included as a heritage asset but might be appropriate for consideration as a community asset. If this is the case, you will be asked to consider making an application for the inclusion of your asset on the Council's list of community assets, which may require additional or different information.

Nominate a Heritage Asset

The Criteria:

Registered Heritage Assets must meet all of the four following criteria:

Criterion 1. They must be capable of meeting the government's definition of a heritage asset.

Demonstrate that your candidate is able to fall within the government's definition of a heritage asset; i.e. a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape.

Criterion 2. They must possess heritage interest that can be conserved and enjoyed.

Identify the properties of your candidate asset that need to be cared for as heritage – this is its *heritage interest*. This might include physical things like its appearance and materials, as well as associations with past people or events. Consider whether the physical features of the candidate asset help to illustrate its associations. The four types of heritage interest listed are recognised in national planning policy.

Criterion 3. They must have a value as heritage for the character and identity of the city, neighbourhood or community because of their heritage interest beyond personal or family connections, or the interest of individual property owners.

Tell us why or how the heritage interest you identified in your answer to Question 2 is of local value - this is its *heritage value*. The types of heritage value suggested on the nomination form are based on national guidance by English Heritage.

Criterion 4. They must have a level of significance that is greater than the general positive identified character of the local area.

Tell us what raises your candidate's heritage value to a level that merits its consideration in planning. Many features of the historic environment are a valued part of local character that should be managed through policies relating to townscape character in the local plan. Registered heritage assets should stand out as of greater significance than these features for their heritage value. The suggested options listed on the nominations form are based on national best practice. If you think your candidate asset has special local significance for another reason please state what it is.

Criteria adopted By Oxford City Council 17.12.12