

Nominate a Heritage Asset

Name and location of your candidate heritage asset

Fiddler's Island Streams and surrounding landscape from Port Meadow to Osney Island
Location to Central Conservation Area and western meadows

1. WHAT IS IT? Is it one of the following?	Tick
a building or group of buildings	
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)	X
a landscape (an area defined by visual features or character, e.g. a city centre, village, suburb or field system)	X

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	X
Archaeological interest – firm evidence of potential to reveal more about the human past through further study	X (poss)
Architectural interest – an example of an architectural style, a building of particular use, a technique of building, or use of materials	
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?	
See below	

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	X
Illustration: It illustrates an aspect of the area's past that makes an important contribution to its identity or character	X
Evidence: It is an important resource for understanding and learning about the area's history	X
Aesthetics: It makes an important contribution to the positive look of the area either by design or fortuitously	X
Communal: It is important to the identity, cohesion, spiritual life or memory of all or part of the community	X
How is the asset locally valued as heritage?	
See below	

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?	X
Rarity ... Is it unusual in the area or a rare survival of something that was once common?	X
Integrity ... Is it largely complete or in a near to original condition?	X
Group value ... Is it part of a group that have a close historic, aesthetic or communal association?	X
Oxford's identity ... Is it important to the identity or character of the city or a particular part of it?	X
Other ... Is there another way you think it has special local value?	X
How does this contribute to its value?	

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Fiddler's Island Streams and Thames Riverine Landscape

General

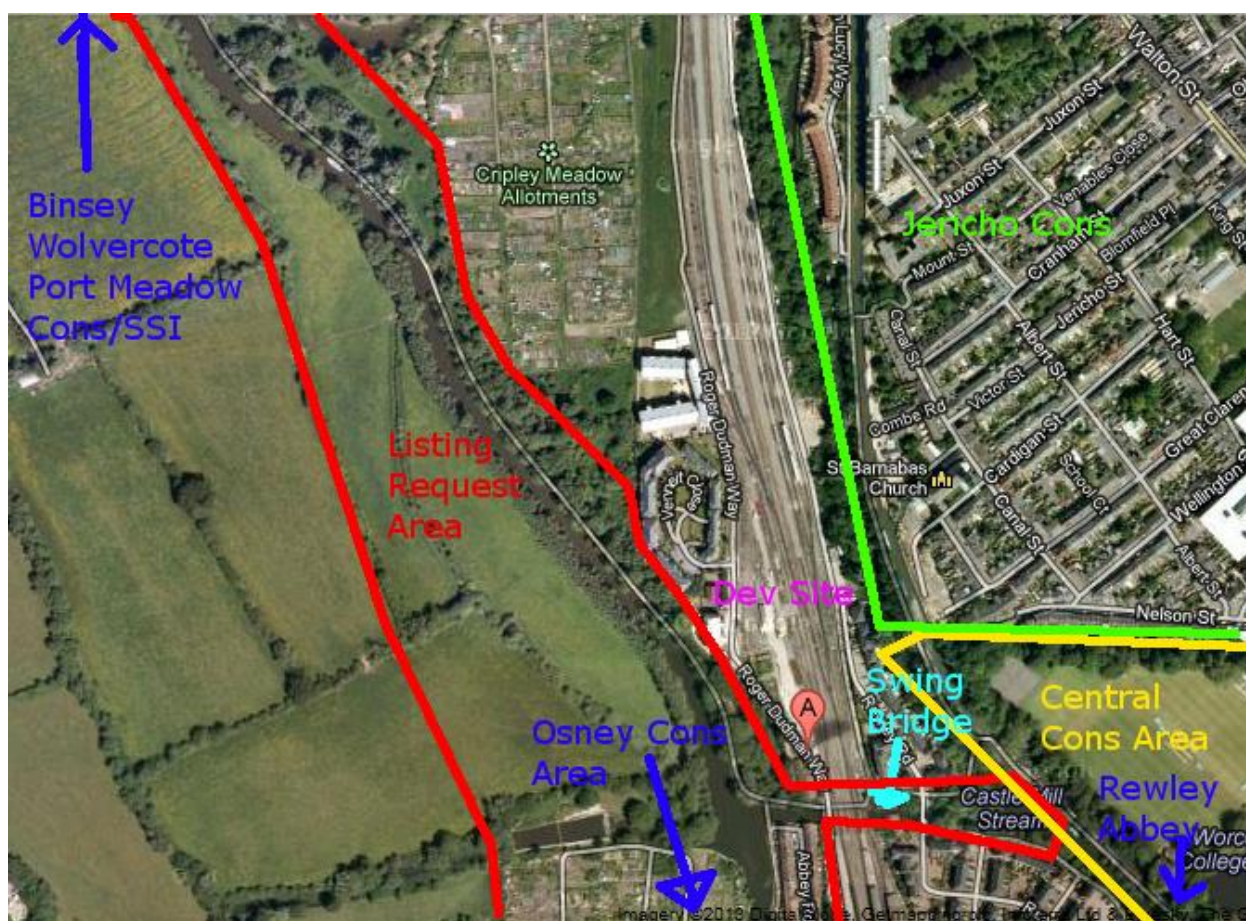
The Thames and associated path are nationally important ancient trackways used since prehistoric times, that are intimately, if not fundamentally, connected, with the *raison d'être* of Oxford (Ox-Ford) revealing and preserving the heritage of the city, as it grew mainly from Saxon times onwards.

The national Thames Path is a recognition of the area's outstanding beauty and national significance.

Boundaries

Logically and geographically defined to Port Meadow/Binsey/Wolvercote Conservation Areas to Osney Bridge, the northern boundary of the Osney Conservation Area.

East to join the Central Conservation area to include Rewley Abbey stream, canal junction, Rewley Abbey wall (in central) and swing bridge next to stream owned by the OPT (Swing bridge, LNWR Station List entry Number: 1003651) and east into meadows.



Possible boundary protecting riverine landscape and linking conservation areas/SSIs

Saxon - Medieval

Little changed since medieval times when almost certainly used (both in boats and foot) by pilgrims and other travellers journeyed between Godstow abbey and the then nationally important pilgrimage site of St Frideswide's at Binsey, (and its associated service town of Seckworth) and ford to St Frideswide's monastery at current Christchurch, Rewley and Osney abbeys – this was almost certainly a Pilgerweg or Pilgrim's Way.

The river and its landscape is almost all that remains of this important part of Oxford's heritage.

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Modern

18th Century

The presence of narrow boats moored along the banks of the Thames and Fiddler's Island is an important reminder of an 18th century heritage.



One of many traditional style boats moored here and in Rewley Abbey Stream

19th Century

The junction to the nearby canal under the railway, and the unique railway turntable and nearby complete Victorian streets backing on to the river and allotments are worthy of preservation in their current form.

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Swing Bridge Heritage Asset – Looking east along Rewley Abbey Stream to the Canal



Rewley Abbey Stream at Swing Bridge Heritage Asset looking east to canal

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Complete Victorian terracing with allotments south to Osney Bridge, Rewley Abbey Stream to left

Group Value

Port Meadow, Binsey, Wolvercote, Central and Osney conservation areas all share characteristics of this green corridor. Listing would unify the fragments of the riverine landscape they contain in each a logical and legible whole.

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Approaching Port Meadow looking north

Associations

Certainly many associations with famous people over time.

Rarity

Cows still graze on meadows only hundreds of metres from the city centre, and it is possible to walk from Port Meadow to Abbot Road, Osney with an almost intact rural landscape except for the Roger Dudman Way development.

Currently, these are partially set back from the river, and can be at least partly screened *on the river side* by tree planting on the river side.

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Cows grazing at River Thames at development site looking north-east

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Environmental

Fiddler's Island Streams, as distinct from the Thames, provide a very narrow band of habitat on the east side, connecting Port Meadow to areas downstream.



Fiddler's Stream at development site looking north

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Fiddler's Stream 20m north of development site looking south

Threats

The planning application currently under consideration:

Erection of 9 student study rooms on 3 floors, together with pedestrian footbridge to the Thames Towpath, 1 disabled car parking space, bin and cycle stores. | Land Adjacent Thames Wharf 3 Roger Dudman Way Oxford Oxfordshire OX1 1AG

Will substantially harm this heritage asset as:

- Will present an discordant, ugly modern façade directly onto the river, destroying the mostly intact countryside feel of the area only 100s of metres from the city centre
- Will not only preclude any possibility of screening the south west elevation of the current building nearest the river, (see satellite dish, to right), but cannot itself be screened as it will be built directly onto, and into, Fiddler's Stream.
- Block attractive glimpses to St Barnabas from the river
- Preclude any possibility of blocking the railway infrastructure to the immediate east of the river at this point
- Impact severely on a narrow corridor of slow moving water/pond of Fiddler's Stream, with building into the river bank.

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Current Development – Screening still possible – note satellite dish



Unmeasured attempt to visualize new development based on submitted plans

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Conclusion

The current, and largely intact, riverine landscape is a precious survival where much of Oxford's heritage at various epochs is still legible but under immediate threat.

Please review above and consider emergency listing.