



Henley Bridge Design, Access and Heritage Statement

Milestone Infrastructure

19/06/2024

HENLEY BRIDGE DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

Notice

This document and its contents have been prepared and are intended solely as information for Milestone Infrastructure and use in relation to the Listed Building Consent Application for Henley Bridge.

AtkinsRéalis assumes no responsibility to any other party in respect of or arising out of or in connection with this document and/or its contents.

This document has 39 pages including the cover.

Document history

Document title: Henley Bridge Design, Access and Heritage Statement

Document reference:						
Revision	Purpose description	Originated	Checked	Reviewed	Authorised	Date
1.0	Listed Building Consent	TM	MJ	KS	DB	19/06/2024

Client signoff

Client	Milestone Infrastructure
Project	Henley Bridge Design, Access and Heritage Statement
Job number	5208104.701
Client signature/date	



Contents

1.	Introduction.....	6
2.	Methodology	7
2.1	Aims	7
2.2	Assessment of Significance	7
2.3	Baseline Research	8
2.4	Consultation	8
3.	Legislation and Policy	9
3.1	National Legislation	9
3.1.1	The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	9
3.2	National Policy	9
3.2.1	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2023	9
3.2.2	Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) July 2019	11
3.3	Local Policy	11
3.3.1	South Oxfordshire Adopted Local Plan 2035 (2020)	11
3.3.2	The Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2035 (2022).....	13
3.3.3	Wokingham Borough Council. Managing Development Delivery: Local Plan. 2014	14
3.4	Guidance	15
4.	Design and access	15
4.1	History of maintenance of the bridge	15
4.1.1	Requirement for conservation works to Henley Bridge.....	15
4.2	Design philosophy	16
4.3	Description and justification	17
4.4	Access.....	18
4.4.1	Maintaining access while works are undertaken	18
4.4.2	Improvements to general access	19
5.	Historic Background	19
6.	Heritage Assets	20
6.1	Henley Bridge (Grade I listed, NHLE 1117419 and NHLE 1369131)	20
6.2	Conservation Areas.....	24
6.2.1	Henley-on-Thames, St Marks Road and Reading Road Conservation Area (South Oxfordshire Council)	24
6.2.2	Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area (Wokingham Council)	26
6.3	Other heritage assets.....	28
7.	Impacts of the Proposals on Heritage Assets	30
7.1	Henley Bridge (Grade I Listed, NHLE 1117419 and NHLE 13691310).....	30
7.2	Conservation Areas.....	31
7.3	Setting Impacts on nearby Heritage Assets.....	31



8. Conclusion	32
9. Bibliography.....	34
Appendix A. Historic drawings of Balusters.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
A.1 Baluster Drawings from 1953.....	36
A.2 Baluster Drawings from 1981.....	37
Appendix B. Location of designaed assets	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Appendix C. Sample of Soultng Stone	Error! Bookmark not defined.

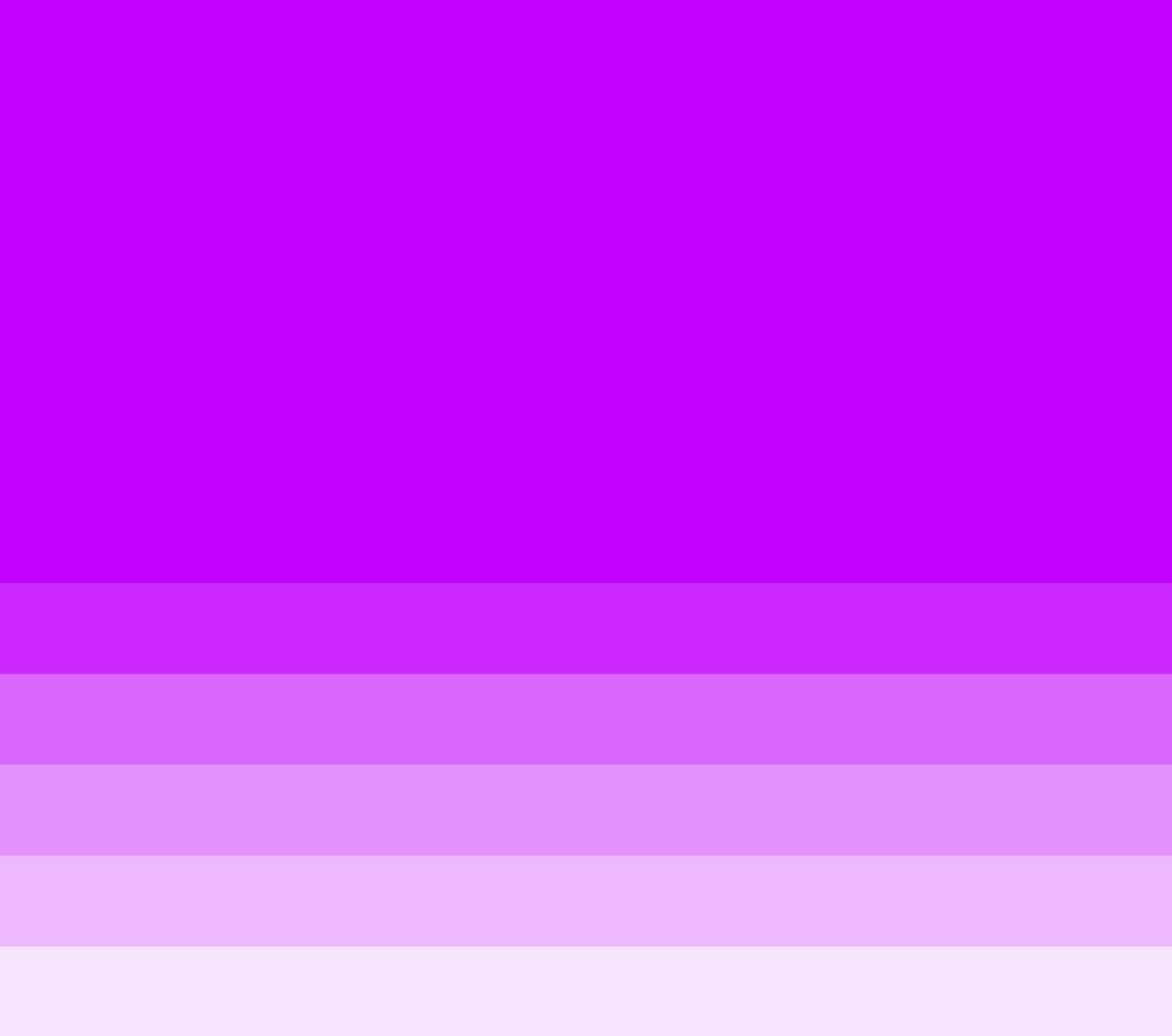
Tables

No table of figures entries found.

Figures

Figure 1 - Henley Bridge location plan	6
Figure 2 - Proposals on the south elevation of Henley Bridge	17
Figure 3 - Proposals on the north elevation of Henley Bridge	17
Figure 4 - Flint possibly dating to the 12th century bridge, identified on the south eastern elevation of Henley Bridge.	21
Figure 5- Henley Bridge, Southern elevation.....	21
Figure 6 - Henley Bridge, Northern elevation	22
Figure 7 - Balustrade on Henley Bridge's northern elevation. The baluster identified with a red arrow is believed to be from the 1953 or 1981 (Appendix A), whilst the baluster on the right is believed to predate this.	22
Figure 8 - Evidence of Portland Stone repairs on the balustrade.....	23
Figure 9 Extract from Henley on Thames, St Marks Road and Reading Road Conservation Area Appraisal showing the important views in Character area 6.....	25
Figure 10 - View of Henley Bridge looking north from an identified important view from Thameside	25
Figure 11 - View of Henley Bridge looking south from an identified important view	26
Figure 12 - Views looking east towards the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area	27





1. Introduction

This Design and Access, and Heritage Statement has been prepared by AtkinsRéalis on behalf of Milestone Infrastructure, as part the Listed Building Consent (LBC) Application for the proposed conservation works to grade I listed Henley Bridge (NHLE 1117429 and NHLE 1369131). This Design, Access and Heritage Statement should be read in conjunction with the submitted drawings and the Henley Bridge Stonework Repairs Specification Appendix (5208104-ATK-SBR-0147-SP-CB-0002). The largely late 18th century bridge is located in Henley-on-Thames within the jurisdiction of both South Oxfordshire District Council and Wokingham Borough Council, centred on the River Thames SU 76375 82642.

The proposals seek to undertake targeted conservation repairs to areas of severe spalling and weathering in order to safeguard the special interest of Henley Bridge. This Design, Access and Heritage Statement:

- Assesses the heritage significance of the grade I listed bridge and the most relevant heritage assets;
- Describes the proposals and their design evolution/intent;
- Assesses the extent of harm to heritage significance and balances the harm against the benefits that the proposals would have in line with the requirements set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2023).
- Sets out the access arrangements for the bridge during the works and discusses the improvements to access that would result from the works.

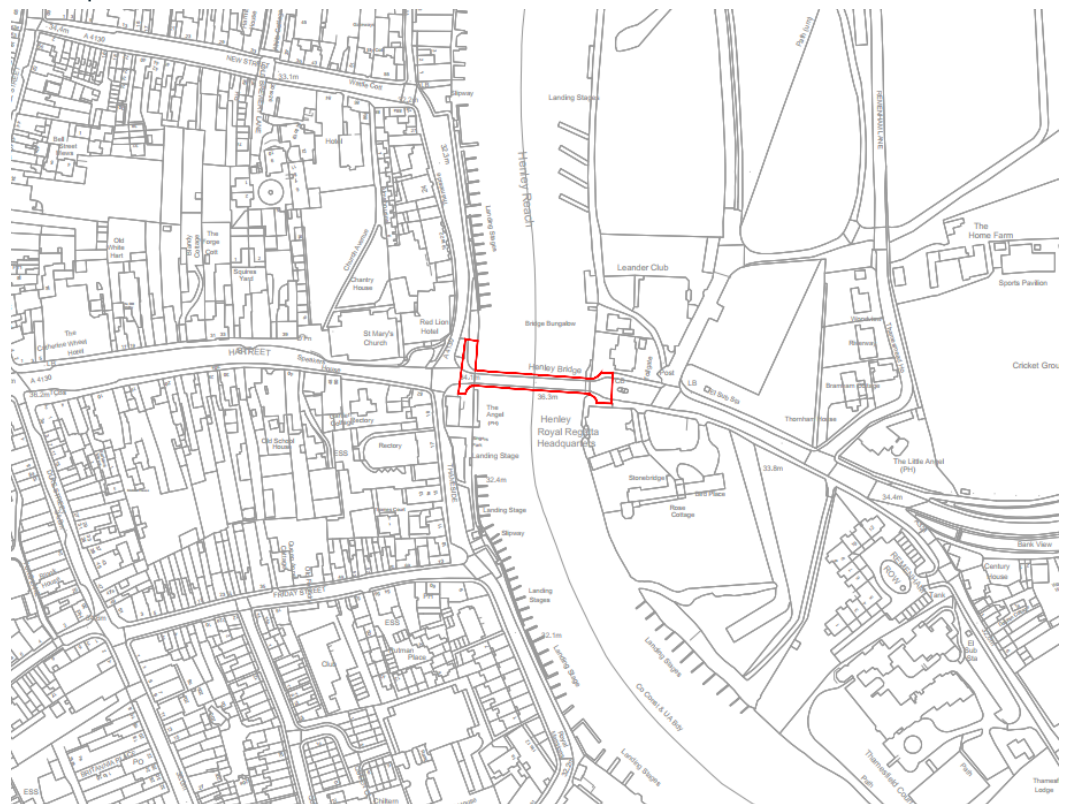


Figure 1 - Henley Bridge location plan

2. Methodology

2.1 Aims

The aims of this Design, Access and Heritage Statement are to:

- Summarise national and local planning policy and guidance with respect to the historic environment.
- Describe the proposals and their design evolution and intent, including their response to context and historic character and heritage significance.
- Present the proposed works in relation to Henley Bridge and the surrounding historic environment, including details of design development and embedded mitigation by design.
- Present the access arrangements and improvement to accessibility that would result from the proposals.
- Describe the significance of the grade I listed Henley Bridge, and known heritage assets present within the setting of the bridge and assess their significance and setting where relevant.
- Assess the likely impacts on Henley Bridge and other identified heritage assets in terms of harm to their significance, including consideration of change to their setting, as required by the NPPF, and weigh harm against the wider public benefits of the proposed Scheme.

2.2 Assessment of Significance

Current English guidance for the assessment of the significance of heritage assets is provided by Historic England in the document *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance: For sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*, 2008. Significance of place is defined as: *'embracing all the diverse cultural and natural heritage values that people associate with it, or prompt them to respond to it. These values tend to grow in strength and complexity over time as understanding deepens and people's perceptions of a place evolve.'* Significance is weighed by consideration of the potential for the assets to demonstrate the following values criteria:

- **Evidential value.** Value deriving from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.
- **Historical value.** Value deriving from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present.
- **Aesthetic value.** Value deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
- **Communal Value.** Value deriving from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory.

The contribution of setting to significance is also a factor in assessing the harm that proposed changes to setting will cause. This is also considered where appropriate.



2.3 Baseline Research

In order to assess the impacts of the Proposed Scheme on the historic environment, a desk-based review of existing baseline data was undertaken to identify the historic character and development of Henley-on-Thames and Henley Bridge. This was augmented by a site walkover to assess setting. Given the nature of the proposed conservation works, there are unlikely to be large scale permanent impacts on surrounding assets or on the archaeology around the bridge, and only nearby assets have been assessed. A full HER search has therefore not been deemed to be necessary.

The data sources consulted include the following:

- The National Heritage List for England (NHLE) is managed by Historic England for information on designated heritage assets including Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens.
- Baseline and historic information gathered from online resources such as the Victoria County History accessed via British History Online.
- Historic mapping.
- South Oxfordshire Council, *Henley-on-Thames, St Marks Road and Reading Road Conservation Area Appraisal*. January 2023.
- Site inspection, undertaken on 21 July 2023 by members of the AtkinsRéalis Heritage team.

2.4 Consultation

A pre-application meeting was held with Caitlin Phillpotts and Emily Tucker, Design and Conservation Officers from South Oxfordshire District Council and Keith Frost Design and Conservation Officer from Wokingham Council on February 1st 2024 to discuss the proposed works to Henley Bridge. A subsequent pre-application written response letter was sent from the council and confirmed that there are no objections to the principles of works discussed in the meeting and presented in this application (the drawings submitted for the pre-app were similar to those submitted for approval, with some changes, mostly resulting from detailed comments at the Pre-Application walkover meeting).

Communication with Historic England (HE) during November 2023 was also sought. HE responded that given the nature of the proposals and the conservation led design philosophy to be adopted, they did not need to attend on site at pre-application stage and that they were content for the Conservation Officers to provide advice pre-application and that they would provide any comments post-application to the Planning Authorities.



3. Legislation and Policy

3.1 National Legislation

3.1.1 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, governs the designation of and works to Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas in England. Under the Act, no one is permitted to undertake or cause to be undertaken any works that would affect the character of a Listed Building unless the works are authorised. Listed Building Consent (LBC) fall under this Act in section 8(1), (2), (3) and section 16. Works affecting Listed Buildings are subject to additional planning controls administered by Local Planning Authorities.

In relation to decisions on granting LBC, Section 16 (2) requires the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 66 of the 1990 Act states that where a proposed development may affect a listed building or its setting, special regard must be given to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting, as well as any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Subsequent case precedent and changes to policy in line with it means that Section 66 is interpreted as meaning that the desirability of preserving a listed building and its setting carries 'great weight' in the planning process.

Section 72 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990) states that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

3.2 National Policy

3.2.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2023

Relevant national historic environment policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), revised 2023. Section 16 of the NPPF sets out the specific policies relating to 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'.

The NPPF states that heritage assets should be afforded proportionate weight to their significance when determining acceptable impacts on the asset or its setting.

The following paragraphs of Section 16 of the NPPF are of particular relevance:

Paragraph 200 specifies that *"In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate*

to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation."

Paragraph 201 specifies that *"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 into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal."*

Paragraph 203 states that *"In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:*

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness."*

Paragraph 205 states that *"When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance."*

Paragraph 206 states that *"Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:*

- a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;*
- b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional."*

Paragraph 207 states that *"Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and*



d) *the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*"

Paragraph 208 states that *"Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."*

Paragraph 212 states that *"Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably."*

In relation to conservation areas, **Paragraph 213** states that *"Not all elements of a Conservation Area or World Heritage Site will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 208 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area or World Heritage Site as a whole."*

3.2.2 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) July 2019

The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) guidance on the historic environment expands on NPPF Chapter 16 and should be read in conjunction with it. The historic environment guidance was last updated in July 2019.¹

3.3 Local Policy

The east end of the bridge is in Wokingham Borough Council and the west end of the bridge is in South Oxfordshire District Council. The local policies of both authorities are therefore relevant.

3.3.1 South Oxfordshire Adopted Local Plan 2035 (2020)

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 was adopted in December 2020, covers the whole of South Oxfordshire and provides a broad strategic framework, setting out the future of development in South Oxfordshire until 2035.

Alongside the Local Plan, local planning policy in South Oxfordshire is also outlined in Neighbourhood Plans. The Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan adopted in December 2022.

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2035 includes the following relevant policies:

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/conserving-and-enhancing-the-historic-environment>



Policy HEN1: The Strategy for Henley-on-Thames;

1. Neighbourhood Development Plans are expected to, and the Council will support development proposals that [...]
- iii. Enhance the town's environment and conserve and enhance the town's heritage assets;

Policy ENV7: Listed Buildings;

1. Proposals for development, including change of use, that involve any alteration of, addition to or partial demolition of a listed building or within the curtilage of, or affecting the setting of a listed building will be expected to:
 - i) conserve, enhance or better reveal those elements which contribute to the heritage significance and/or its setting;
 - ii) respect any features of special architectural or historic interest, including, where relevant, the historic curtilage or context, such as burgage plots, or its value within a group and/or its setting, such as the importance of a street frontage or traditional shopfronts; and
 - iii) be sympathetic to the listed building and its setting in terms of its siting, size, scale, height, alignment, materials and finishes (including colour and texture), design and form, in order to retain the special interest that justifies its designation through appropriate design, with regard to the South Oxfordshire Design Guide.
2. Development proposals affecting the significance of a listed building or its setting that will lead to substantial harm or total loss of significance will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that demonstrably outweigh that harm or loss or where the applicant can demonstrate that:
 - i) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
 - ii) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and
 - iii) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and
 - iv) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
3. Development proposals that would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a listed building will be expected to:
 - i) minimise harm and avoid adverse impacts, and provide justification for any adverse impacts, harm or loss of significance;
 - ii) identify any demonstrable public benefits or exceptional circumstances in relation to the development proposed; and
 - iii) investigate and record changes or loss of fabric, features, objects or remains, both known and unknown, in a manner proportionate to the importance of the change or loss, and to make this information publicly accessible.
4. Changes of use will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the new use can be accommodated without any adverse effect on the significance of the building and its setting.

Policy EN8: Conservation Areas;

1. Proposals for development within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area must conserve or enhance its special interest, character, setting and appearance. Development will be expected to:
 - i) contribute to the Conservation Area's special interest and its relationship within its setting. The special characteristics of the Conservation Area (such as existing walls, buildings, trees, hedges, burgage plots, traditional



- shopfronts and signs, farm groups, medieval townscapes, archaeological features, historic routes etc.) should be preserved;
 - ii) take into account important views within, into or out of the Conservation Area and show that these would be retained and unharmed;
 - iii) respect the local character and distinctiveness of the Conservation Area in terms of the development's: siting; size; scale; height; alignment; materials and finishes (including colour and texture); proportions; design; and form and should have regard to the South Oxfordshire Design Guide and any relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal;
 - iv) be sympathetic to the original curtilage of buildings and pattern of development that forms part of the historic interest of the Conservation Area;
 - v) be sympathetic to important spaces such as paddocks, greens, gardens and other gaps or spaces between buildings which make a positive contribution to the pattern of development in the Conservation Area;
 - vi) ensure the wider social and environmental effects generated by the development are compatible with the existing character and appearance of the Conservation Area; and/or
 - vii) ensure no loss of, or harm to any building or feature that makes a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
2. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a Conservation Area, consent will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.
 3. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a Conservation Area, this harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
 4. Wherever possible the sympathetic restoration and re-use of structures which make a positive contribution to the special interest, character or appearance of the Conservation Area will be encouraged to prevent harm through the cumulative loss of features which are an asset to the Conservation Area.

3.3.2 The Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2035 (2022)

The Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2035 was adopted in 2022 and sets out the community vision for the future of the area during the plan period of 2020-2035. The relevant policy which pertains to this application is as follows

Policy SD3: Local Character

1. Development proposals should respond positively to the setting of the surrounding area, having regard to the character of adjacent buildings and spaces, including scale, orientation height and massing. In particular, they should demonstrate high quality, sustainable and inclusive design and architecture that respects the relevant Character Areas, as shown in the Conservation Area Appraisal Management Plan.
 - a. Development proposals should have regard to the importance of responding creatively to, and where practicable enhancing, the setting of the surrounding area, having regard to the character of adjacent buildings and spaces, including scale, orientation, height and massing.
 - b. For each of the respective Character Areas identified on the Policies Map, proposals should respect the design, use of materials and views identified in the Character Area.



- c. High quality materials should be used that respect the local setting and contribute positively to the particular Character Area or Conservation Area or the general surrounding area if outside of these designations.

3.3.3 Wokingham Borough Council. Managing Development Delivery: Local Plan. 2014

Wokingham Borough Council are in the process of producing a new local plan – the Local Plan Update – which will outline planning strategy for the borough until 2040. While this Local Plan Update is emerging, the local planning policy for Wokingham Borough is outlined in the Core Strategy (adopted January 2010), which sets out the strategy for managing development in the borough until 2026, and the associated Managing Development Delivery local plan document (adopted February 2014).

The Core Strategy documents identifies in the overarching spatial vision for the borough that the document intends to deliver the development necessary to sustain the area's economic growth and needs of its population while maintaining the borough's landscape, ecology, heritage and environment as far as possible². In addition, the Core Strategy includes the following policy of relevance in relation to the historic environment:

Policy CP3 – General Principles for development

Planning permission will be granted for proposals that:

...

- c) Have no detrimental impact upon important ecological, heritage, landscape (including river valleys) or geological features or water courses.

The Managing Development Delivery document contains the following policies relating to the historic environment, of relevance for this application:

Policy TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas)

1. Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Monuments and Conservation Areas are shown on the Policy Map.
2. The Borough Council will conserve and seek the enhancement of designated heritage assets in the Borough and their setting by:
 - a. Required works to or affecting heritage assets or their setting to demonstrate that the proposals would at least conserve and, where possible enhance the important character and special architectural or historic interest of the building, Conservation Area, monument or park and garden including its setting and views.
 - b. Supporting development proposals or other initiatives that will conserve and, where possible, enhance the local character, setting, management and historic significance of designated heritage assets, with particular support for initiatives that would improve any assets that are recognised as being in poor condition or at risk.

² Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (Adopted 29 January 2010). 3.1. [Microsoft Word - Final adopted Core Strategy.doc \(wokingham.gov.uk\)](#). Accessed 25 April 2024.



3. Proposals for building works shall retain or incorporate existing features or details of historic or architectural significance or design quality into the scheme.

3.4 Guidance

This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with current best practice and in line with, but not limited to, the following standards and guidance:

- Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (Historic England, 2008).
- Managing significance in decision-taking in the historic environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2 (Historic England, 2015).
- The Setting of Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 3 (Historic England, revised 2017).
- Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (Historic England 2019).

4. Design and access

4.1 History of maintenance of the bridge

Henley Bridge has undergone a number of alterations since its inception, including the conservation and repair works undertaken in September 2001, and most recently in 2011 – 2012. During the most recent repairs, extensive stonework repairs to the five masonry spans, spandrel walls, wingwalls and balustrades were undertaken. The schedule of works undertaken included:

- Provision of jack up pontoons on the river as works platforms with scaffolding access to the bridge elevations.
- Removal of defective and damaged sections of stonework to the bridges arches, elevations, and spandrel walls.
- Replacing natural stone in lime mortar to bridge arches, cutwaters, spandrel walls and balustrades in individual stone blocks and 'piecing-in-stones'
- Raking out and re-pointing stonework with lime mortar
- Plastic repair of balustrades (pin & fill)
- Plastic repairs to some arch intrados stones
- Lime mortar repairs in small areas
- Biocidal treatment of weeds on cutwaters and wingwalls.

These historic works much like those proposed in section 4.3 below, were undertaken to safeguard and conserve the overall aesthetic and historic value of Henley Bridge, which is largely derives from its architectural quality.

4.1.1 Requirement for conservation works to Henley Bridge

Henley Bridge is experiencing defects as a result of water ingress, erosion and collision damage on the up and downstream elevations and on the spans, the wing walls, spandrel



walls and parapet. Light touch and sensitive actions to mitigate these defects and prevent further erosion and damage to the bridge are required in order to ensure its ongoing viable use. In addition to the conservation benefits of such interventions, the works proposed to Henley Bridge would also ensure the long term load carrying capacity of the structure in addition to repairing damage, the extent of which has been identified during scheduled structural inspections, considered to be essential to the long term maintenance of the structure. By mitigating these defects early, this would reduce the risk of more serious structural concerns as a result of water seepage which would require more invasive conservation action as time passes. As such, like-for-like repairs are being proposed, and are discussed in more detail below.

4.2 Design philosophy

The works proposed as part of this LBC have prioritised instances of live deterioration, spalling, erosion and damage which, without mitigation will result in substantial damage to the significance of the bridge. This approach was taken to ensure that the conservation works target areas trending towards deterioration and revert these with like-for-like, with some hidden pinning and innovative conservation solutions designed to conserve and enhance the aesthetic value of the bridge. These works would be undertaken following best conservation practice to ensure that the structure retains its significance.

The design development initially considered repairing all existing damage on the bridge. However, the preferred and ultimately adopted approach considered the areas of damage to the bridge which have 'live'/progressive deterioration and/or areas where damage is more detrimental to the features of special interest to the bridge, given that these have the potential to more severely cause harm to the significance of the bridge. This approach would also improve the appearance of the bridge, improve setting and the settings of surrounding heritage assets. With regard to the vegetation removal, where it has roots in the mortar joints, the proposed approach is to cut proud of the wall face, to establish where intrusive roots are located (many can be seen, but some are hidden within thick vegetation). These will then be treated with herbicide by a qualified member of BASIS to consider both the health and safety aspects as well as its application to the stonework and mortar joints. Following this, the roots can be carefully removed once dead and make good the joints with lime based mortar to match the surrounding mix in texture and colour/aggregate.

The removal of the graffiti will be undertaken using a sensitive and gentle steam cleaning approach which will comprise either a TORC (thermal organic reduction cleaning system) or Doff system. Such approaches involve a gentle swirling vortex with low air pressure, minimal water, and a safe inert granulate. Cleaning of the stonework will be undertaken by a specialist contractor. The contractor will undertake site trials to determine which nozzle to use in order to achieve the gentlest clean with minimum pressure so as to not damage the stonework. This approach to removing the graffiti will not cause any significant damage to the stonework and have no long term impact on the performance of the bridge or its surface porosity.

The approach undertaken for the works is the best approach given that it can target isolated areas of severely spalled and/or damaged masonry. Plastic repairs have been applied sparingly.



4.3 Description and justification

Henley Bridge is a Grade I listed; five span loadbearing masonry bridge built to the design of William Hayward in 1786. As further elaborated in section 6.1 it derives significance from its inherent historic and architectural value as a grand landmark feature spanning the River Thames in Henley-on-Thames. The proposed conservation work to the Grade I listed bridge comprises the following:

- Repair missing dentils.
- Remove vegetation which is growing from mortar joints.
- Reface stones on northern and southern elevations where there is severe deterioration.
- Repoint with an appropriate hydraulic lime based mortar.
- Remove insensitive graffiti on the south eastern wing wall via TORC or DOFF cleaning systems.
- Install hidden slate reinforcement behind stones for extra stability.
- Remove vegetation on the south western wing wall.
- Remove vegetation on the north eastern bridge deck wall.
- Undertake repairs to the balustrade where there are cracks and chips.
- Replace the few balusters that are severely eroded
- Remove insensitive adhesive material that was used on a previous lighting scheme (the cabling was already removed).

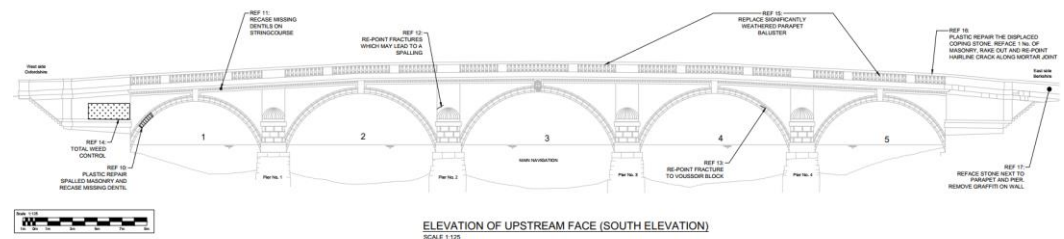


Figure 2 - Proposals on the south elevation of Henley Bridge

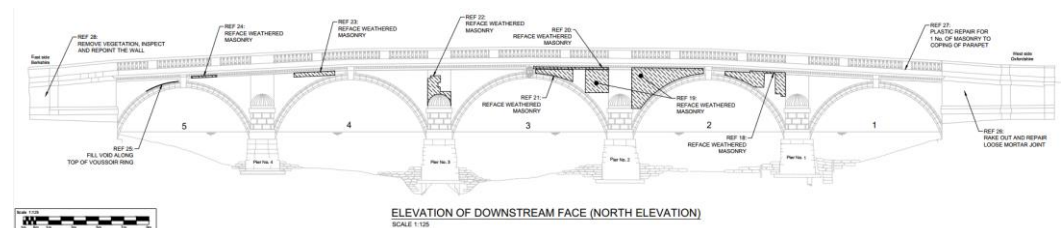


Figure 3 - Proposals on the north elevation of Henley Bridge

The works would be undertaken in a sympathetic manner which would retain the elements of historic fabric which contribute to the significance of the structure. Where new materials would be introduced, these would be like-for-like and will use stone which will be sourced from Douling Quarry. This stone has been used in previous repairs to Henley Bridge, which will ensure consistency in appearance and minimise the visibility of these interventions by ensuring the stone ages and weathers in a similar way to the existing historic stonework.

Hydraulic lime based mortar will be used for repointing. The mixture will be tailored to each location given the varying interaction with water, in order to make sure that it successfully sets and protects the stonework adequately. This will ensure that moisture can escape through the mortar joints and prevent the stone, both existing and new, from spalling. Such works will ensure that legibility of the structure's form and appearance are retained and the bridge's architectural language would be understandable in the proposed elevation.

The stonework repairs will be like-for-like to a depth that minimises removal of the existing fabric; removal of the existing fabric has been conducted on the structure for many years and is a proven response to structural loss of performance. The use of a sympathetic lime based mortar mix that is tested and approved on site in line with the specification ensures the prolonged life of the stonework repair. The stone selected via the quarries identified in the Henley Bridge Stonework Repairs Specification Appendix (ref: 5208104-ATK-SBR-0147-SP-CB-0002) aims to match the existing stonework for colour, texture, properties and performance. The original structure was built from Heading Stone (freestone and Hardstone) from Oxford, which can weather with a cavernous texture due to presence of micrite rich burrows. The new stone would avoid such inherent defects in favour of a more prominent grainstone. The parapets and main structure differ in stone quality, thus the construction work should be mindful of the exact stone selected for replacement.

Photos and detail of the stone from Doultong Quarry are attached in Appendix C, which was used for Hertford College at Oxford University. The contractor will discuss the stonework texture and details with the quarry to best match the varying stonework on the bridge.

The proposed works to Henley Bridge have been provided in the following drawings:

- 5208104-ATK-SBR-0147-DR-CB-0001 P01
- 5208104-ATK-SBR-0147-DR-CB-0002 P01
- 5208104-ATK-SBR-0147-DR-CB-0003 P01
- 5208104-ATK-SBR-0147-DR-CB-0004 P01
- 5208104-ATK-SBR-0147-DR-CB-0005 P01
- 5208104-ATK-SBR-0147-DR-CB-0006 P01
- 5208104-ATK-SBR-0147-DR-CB-0007 P01
- 5208104-ATK-SBR-0147-DR-CB-0008 P01
- 5208104-ATK-SBR-0147-SP-CB-0002 P01

4.4 Access

4.4.1 Maintaining access while works are undertaken

Access both over and under the bridge will be maintained during these works. The works to the parapet will require a temporary lane closure to provide the workers with appropriate and safe working areas given that the existing pedestrian footways over Henley Bridge are not wide enough for safe working.



4.4.2 Improvements to general access

A phased traffic light system will be temporarily installed to control and maintain road access over the structure during the works. River access under the spans will be undertaken using a phased approach to ensure no more than two arches, and only one of the central three arches are closed at any time using pontoons and scaffolding. The pontoons and scaffolding can be easily removed should access to other arches be required.

5. Historic Background

Henley-on-Thames is located on the River Thames on the local authority border of South Oxfordshire and Wokingham. Though there is evidence of early human occupation within the Chiltern Hills in the wider vicinity of Henley-on-Thames, the town itself was not formally established until the 12th century.³ It was recorded that in the Early Medieval period, King Henry II had '*bought all the land in Henley for making buildings*' which included replacing an existing ford with a new bridge.⁴ This bridge was an important development in the town, improving the linkage between London and Oxford.⁵ Part of the 12th century bridge appears to survive in the bridge's south abutment. By the 13th and 14th century, Henley-on-Thames has become known for its social status which prompted subsequent phases of development.⁶

The Early Medieval bridge underwent repairs in 1554-5, and again in 1712, before succumbing to a flood in 1719 which damaged its structural integrity.⁷ As a result, the Henley Bridge Act of 1781 was passed which granted townscape improvements focused around the construction of a new masonry bridge. The 18th century bridge was established to the north of the medieval bridge and built to the design of William Hayward in 1786.⁸ It is understood that the eastern abutment of the medieval bridge was incorporated into the eastern abutment of the 12th century bridge. The 18th century five span structure was built of Headington hardstone, with a balustraded parapet, a wide curved entrance and domed cut waters. Anne Seymore, cousin of Horace Walpole, sculpted the keystones on the central arch to depict Thamisis and Isis.

The Act of 1781 also instigated other improvements in Henley-on-Thames including the introduction of lighting and paving to existing streets, road improvements, street widening, and clearance of market place encroachments.⁹ Development at this time took on a predominantly Georgian character using brick and flint, whilst existing buildings were refaced to adhere to the Georgian brick and stucco fashion.¹⁰ At this time industrial

³ Purcell, 2023, Henley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

⁴ Victoria County History, 2011, 'Henley: Communications,' in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 16*. Accessed from BHO.

⁵ Victoria County History, 2011, 'Henley: Communications,' in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 16*. Accessed from BHO.

⁶ Victoria County History, 2011, 'Henley: Origins and Development of the Town,' in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 16*. Accessed from BHO.

⁷ [Ibid.](#)

⁸ Victoria County History, 2011, 'Henley: Communications,' in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 16*. Accessed from BHO.

⁹ Victoria County History, 2011, 'Henley: Origins and Development of the Town,' in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 16*. Accessed from BHO.

¹⁰ [Ibid.](#)



structures and boat mooring which were established along the river embankment were removed as they were considered to detract from the area.¹¹

In the mid 19th century, developmental changes included the first annual Royal Henley Regatta in 1839, the construction of the Red Lion Granaries, rebuilding of the Wharf with boathouse and villas, rebuilding the White Hart Pub and the establishment of the Leander Club, all of which were established along the embankment of the River Thames and in the environs of Henley Bridge.¹² Development was further encouraged by the introduction of the Great Western Railway in 1857.¹³

At the end of the 19th century, historic maps (not reproduced here) depict the medieval morphology of Henley-on-Thames along Hart Street whilst development along Thameside was more gridded representing later phases of development. At this time, the eastern bank of the River Thames remained undeveloped with only a small concentration of buildings around Henley Bridge. The morphology of Henley-on-Thames at that time appears to have persisted through the 20th century, as evidenced in subsequent OS Maps, with building along the River Thames kept to a minimum. As a byproduct, views and experiences of Henley Bridge were maintained.

6. Heritage Assets

6.1 Henley Bridge (Grade I listed, NHLE 1117419 and NHLE 1369131)

Henley Bridge is a Grade I listed structure which is dually designated given that it falls within the Local Planning Authority (LPA) boundaries of South Oxfordshire and Wokingham Councils. The first designation was in January 1951 in South Oxfordshire and subsequently in December 1983 in Wokingham. Both councils and list descriptions have been consulted in the production of this Heritage Statement.

As discussed in Section 5, Henley Bridge is located at the site of two former bridges: a 12th and early 18th century bridge. Evidence of the earlier 12th century bridge remains extant in the easternmost span and abutment wall of the current bridge which was confirmed during a site survey in February 2024 (Figure 4). The 12th century remains are almost completely covered by the stairs attached to the bridge (albeit a small section is visible part way up the stairs). Given such evidence, it is not discernible whether it is a medieval abutment or the face of an arch. There is a possibility that there is evidence of a medieval abutment on the north east side of the bridge. However, the bridge is likely to have been narrower in medieval times and its north face may not have extended to the north face of the current bridge's abutment. The presence a river crossing in Henley-on-Thames has been largely influential in its development and expansion. However, as a result of natural circumstances which resulted in structural failures in the earlier timber bridges, the Henley Bridge Act of 1781 prompted the development of a new bridge and wider town improvements. The extant flintwork from the 12th century bridge contributes to

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Victoria County History, 2011, 'Henley: Communications,' in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 16*. Accessed from BHO.



its overall historic significance, representing the early phases of evolution and growth in Henley-on-Thames as well as a degree of evidential value for revealing further information about the construction of the early medieval bridge. Similarly, the association of the current bridge with this previous historical development is a notable element for which the bridge derives historic value.



Figure 4 - Flint possibly dating to the 12th century bridge, identified on the south eastern elevation of Henley Bridge.

The current five span masonry bridge was built to the design of William Hayward in 1781 and was built of local Headington hardstone and freestone which created a monumental and robust landmark in Henley-on-Thames. The bridge is adorned with a dentilled cornice, voussoirs, rectangular piers, domed buttresses/cut waters, projecting fluted keystones, bottle balustrades and four fluted metal lamp posts on each corner. The keystones on the central span were sculpted by Anne Seymore Damer (cousin of Horace Walpole) and depict Isis and Thamesis who represent the personification of the River Thames. These features and the materials used contribute towards the robustness and elegance of the bridge, which reflects the wealth and social status of Henley-on-Thames and are key features that contribute to the appreciation of its aesthetic value.



Figure 5- Henley Bridge, Southern elevation



Figure 6 - Henley Bridge, Northern elevation

The bottle balustraded parapet was originally made of Headington hardstone with freestone facework. A site visit undertaken in February 2024 found that the balustrade had undergone various phases of alterations represented by the different baluster shapes and stone. Drawings dated from 1953 identify one type of baluster which is also repeated in drawings from 1981 (Figure 7 and 8, Appendix A). In Figure 7 below, the baluster on the right is larger in width/circumference and is less ornamented and is believed to predate the ones from the mid-late 20th century (Appendix A), though it would have been designed to resemble the earlier balusters. Some of the balusters have been repaired and/or replaced with Portland stone; these are clearly identifiable due to their more white and porous texture, with close set, fine ooliths, which is visibly eroding as a result of their exposed location (Figure 8).



Figure 7 - Balustrade on Henley Bridge's northern elevation. The baluster identified with a red arrow is believed to be from the 1953 or 1981 (Appendix A), whilst the baluster on the right is believed to predate this.

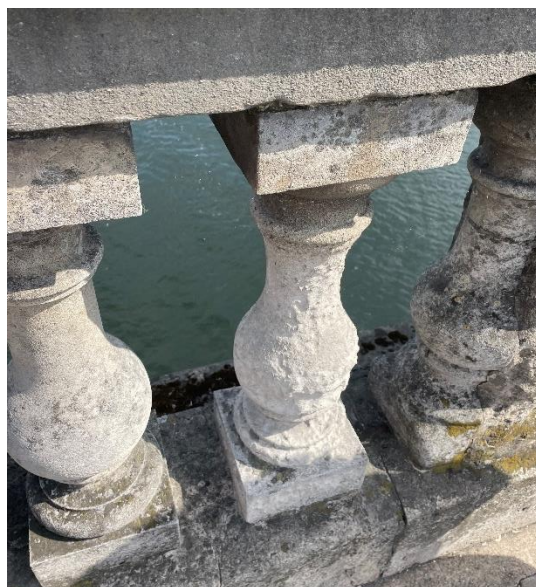


Figure 8 - Evidence of Portland Stone repairs on the balustrade.

Henley Bridge remains a prominent feature within its surrounding townscape, which is a key component of its setting and overall significance. The bridge remains the only crossing of the River Thames in Henley-on-Thames and its historical prominence within the surrounding townscape remains today, particularly along the river embankment. The bridge, which was built in tandem with the wider Georgian improvements as a result of the Act of 1781 resulted in unified changes to the embankment and character of the area which has largely persisted. The setting of the bridge has undergone some changes, albeit minor, which include the establishment of the Henley Regatta Headquarters (NHLE 1449077) in the late 20th century, and the development of the Villas to the north. However, the bridge remains wholly visible in views north and south. Views and movement east and west from Henley Bridge are framed by its wide curved entrance which has been acknowledged in the Conservation Area as framing the approach into and out of Henley-on-Thames. Likewise, movement under the bridge remains intact. To this extent, its setting has been largely retained and has ensured the continued legibility and use of Henley Bridge which therefore contributes to its overall significance by maintaining this integral aspect of its history.

Henley Bridge has been subject to damage caused by boating collisions, weathering, spalling and some insensitive former lighting installation. Previous interventions have sought to mitigate such defects and ensure the structural integrity and aesthetic value of the bridge which is evident in its architecture. These works have maintained the structural stability of the bridge and the legibility of its ornamental features which contribute to its special interest, ensuring that the ability to appreciate the bridge is maintained and sustained.

Although it is exhibiting evidence of erosion, the bridge is highly significant for its historic, aesthetic and evidential value which remain legible today.

6.2 Conservation Areas

6.2.1 Henley-on-Thames, St Marks Road and Reading Road Conservation Area (South Oxfordshire Council)

The Henley-on-Thames, St Marks Road and Reading Road Conservation Area was designated by South Oxfordshire Council on the 18th May 1967. The boundaries of the conservation area are defined to include the ‘*ancient core of the town centred on the grid of streets [...] and also includes the important approaches to the town; Fair Mile, Gravel Hill, Greys Road and Station Road as well as Henley Bridge.*’ The western part of Henley Bridge falls within the eastern boundary of this conservation area.

The features of special interest of the conservation area are rooted in the medieval development of the town and the 18th century Georgian reconstruction. Development in Henley-on-Thames began during the early 12th following the royal patronage of Henry II (see above, Section 5). Although Henley has medieval origins which remains evident in its morphology, the character of the conservation area is rooted in the 18th and 19th century redevelopment at which time a majority of the medieval buildings were refaced with Georgian features such as red, yellow and grey brick and stucco facades and classical fenestration.

Henley Bridge lies within Character Area 6: Riverside which is of special interest as a result of the River Thames and the medieval street pattern which radiates from it. Views within this character area look to the riverfront which captures views of Henley Bridge against the medieval morphology and Georgian character. The character area also specify the panoramic views from Henley Bridge which allow for views of characterful boathouses, pubs, hotels and residential terraces along the riverfront.¹⁴

Section 4.3 of the Conservation Area Appraisal (2023) identifies important views throughout the conservation area. Given its origins as a medieval town, there are no designed vistas in the town, with important views noted as being ‘*experienced through incidental, kinetic and transitional views*’.¹⁵ Given its location on the Thames, views of Henley Bridge are, by definition, to an extent kinetic, though the 18th century development was also conscious of creating a distinctive viewshed east and west into and out of Henley-on-Thames, in order to accentuate the grandeur and elegance of the town.

River views are identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal (2023) as one of the most important features of the conservation area’s character and appearance. The views identified look to the north, west, and south of the River Thames from the western embankment and capture Henley Bridge from each identified perspective (see Figures 9 and 10, Appendix X). Additionally, views from Henley Bridge are also mentioned for providing excellent vantage points of looking the north and south of the River Thames.

The bridge therefore makes a very strong contribution to the significance of the conservation area.

¹⁴ Purcell, 2023, Henley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

¹⁵ Purcell, 2023, Henley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

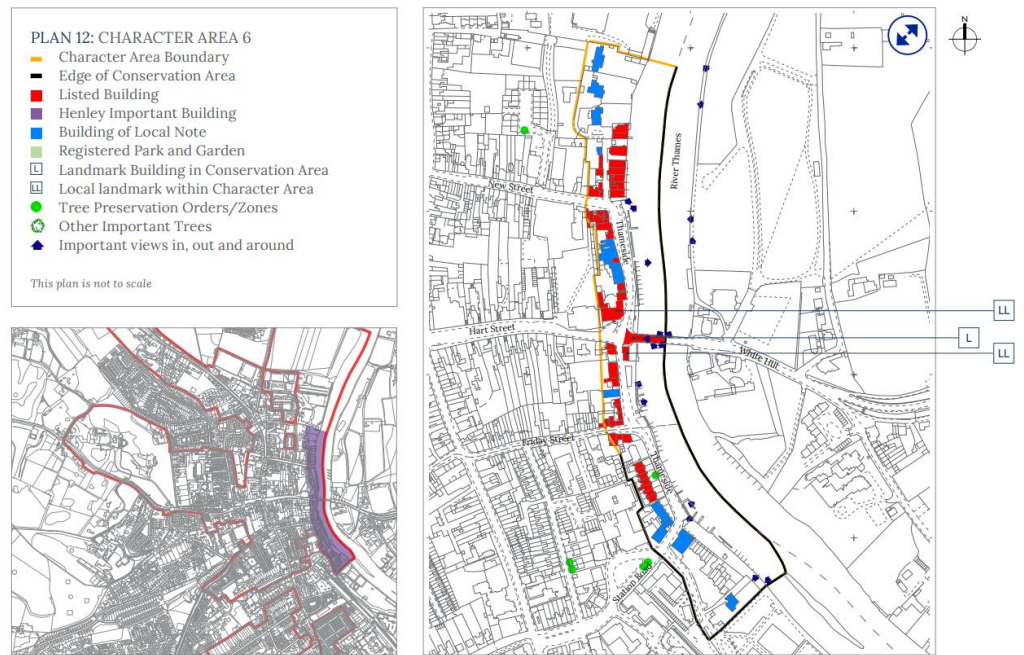


Figure 9 Extract from Henley on Thames, St Marks Road and Reading Road Conservation Area Appraisal showing the important views in Character area 6



Figure 10 - View of Henley Bridge looking north from an identified important view from Thameside



Figure 11 - View of Henley Bridge looking south from an identified important view

6.2.2 Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area (Wokingham Council)

The Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area is designated by Wokingham Borough Council. The conservation area encompasses the eastern embankment of the River Thames in Remenham and includes the eastern part of Henley Bridge. The conservation area has largely retained its rural character due to the minimal development in the area. Historic map evidence from 1875 to 1878 shows that the area was formerly large fields with a cricket ground and Remenham Wood and some scattered development around Henley Bridge, though the river embankment itself was mostly lined with trees. Whilst development slightly increased, as shown the 25 inch OS map from 1910, the overall character of the area remained rural. Throughout the 20th century, minor changes occurred and development slightly increased, though this remained scattered in the landscape, without any area of extensive nucleated settlement within the conservation area, with any development along the river being focussed on the area's location on the fringes of Henley-on-Thames. In the current landscape, the cricket ground has been relocated to the east of the Conservation Area, and the fields accommodate the Henley Royal Regatta which was first established in the mid 19th century.



Figure 12 - Views looking east towards the Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area

The features of special interest of this conservation area include its rural setting, the numerous listed structures including Henley Bridge, and its association with the Henley Regatta which has taken place annually since the mid 19th century. The open space which dominates the north western extent of the conservation area is retained in order to be able to accommodate the rowers, festive tents and amusements of the Royal Regatta. This association is further strengthened by the various rowing clubs which have settled along the river and the Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters (Grade II, NHLE 1449077) which was built in 1984-86 by Terry Farrell Partnership.

Another contribution to its special interest is the extant 12th century easternmost span of Henley Bridge which is retained within the south eastern abutment of the grade I listed bridge. Such evidence can help to further understand the construction of the initial bridge, and its persistence in the contemporary landscape contributes to the historic development of the conservation area.

Remenham Henley Bridge Conservation Area is of significance for being a rural settlement which established along the River Thames, and for accommodating the Royal Henley Regatta.

The bridge plays a major role in the conservation area's character appearance and significance.

6.3 Other heritage assets

There are 12 other listed buildings along the River Thames which maintain a visual and/or historic relationship with Grade I listed Henley Bridge. A location map can be found in Appendix B of this report. They are as follows:

- Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters (Grade II, NHLE 144077) is located approximately 13m to the immediate south of the eastern side of Henley Bridge.
- Bird Palace Cottage (Grade II, NHLE 1154558) located approximately 66m to the south east of Henley Bridge
- 18 Tameside (Grade II, NHLE 1219570) located approximately 22m to the south west of Henley Bridge
- 53 Hart Street (Grade II, NHLE 1047785) located approximately 22m to the west of Henley Bridge
- Railings at the Coach House (Grade II, NHLE 1369145) is located approximately 42m to the south west of Henley Bridge.
- Coach House (Grade II listed, NHLE 1047728) is located approximately 47m to the south west of Henley Bridge.
- Railings at Rectory (Grade II, NHLE 1047729) is located approximately 30m to the south west of Henley Bridge.
- Rectory (Grade II*, NHLE 1219566) is located approximately 35m to the south west of Henley Bridge.
- Angel Hotel Including Attached Medieval Arch (Grade II*, NHLE 1047786) is located approximately 8m to the immediate south of Henley Bridge.
- The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade II*, NHLE 1218999) is located approximately 100m to the west of Henley Bridge.
- Red Lion Hotel (Grade II listed, NHLE 1047731) is located approximately 23 to the west/north west of Henley Bridge.
- Red Lion Stable (Grade II, NHLE 1219578) is located approximately 43m to the north west of Henley Bridge.

The bridge contributes to the setting and significance of all of these buildings to a greater or lesser degree. Of the listed buildings identified above, only five structures warrant particular consideration with respect to this application, as a result of their physical and historic relationship with Henley Bridge and the strong contribution that the bridge makes to their significance. They are discussed in more detail below.

The Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters (Grade II, NHLE144077) was built between 1984 to 1986 by the Terry Farrell Partnership and is located to the immediate south of Henley Bridge. The three storey Post-Modern structure is made of red brick and draws inspiration from temples and boathouses. The main elements of its significance relate to its association with the Regatta, a national event, its design by Sir Terry Farrell and its architecture. It has communal value due to its Regatta associations. Its location along the River Thames and relationship with it is a contributing factor to its significance, including its relationship with the adjacent Henley Bridge, which serves as the backdrop to the Regatta. The bridge therefore plays a strong contributory role in its setting, both physically/visually and functionally



The Angel Hotel including its Medieval Arch (Grade II*, NHLE 1047786) is located to the immediate south of the south western elevation of Henley Bridge at its west end. It originates from the late 16th to 17th century with 19th century additions and is a three storey building with painted timber framing, brick and flint. The Angel Hotel predated the construction of Henley Bridge, and its cellar was incorporated into the bridge's western wing wall, a factor contributing to its historic significance. To this effect, the Angel Hotel has a physical and historic relationship with Henley Bridge and the bridge is a key component of its setting. The Angel Hotel is also of significance for its contribution to the approach to the town together with Henley Bridge, the Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade II*, NHLE 1218999) and the Red Lion Hotel (Grade II, NHLE 1047731), as acknowledged in the Henley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2023).¹⁶ Given its designation as a Grade II* listed structure, the Angel Inn is of particular significance, and is considered to have group value with Henley Bridge, despite its contrasting architectural style.

The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin (Grade II*, NHLE 1218999) is located to the west of Henley Bridge along Hart Street. The church has 13th century origins although various phases of rebuilding have taken place in the 14th, 15th, 16th, 18th and 19th centuries. The church is an important feature in the approach into Henley from the east, together with the Angel Inn (Grade II*, NHLE 1047786), the Red Lion Hotel (Grade II, NHLE 1047731) and Henley Bridge, a relationship from which the building derives group value. This approach remains legible in the historic streetscape today, and therefore is a key factor in its overall significance.

The Red Lion Hotel (Grade II, NHLE 1047731) and Red Lion Stables (Grade II, NHLE 1219578) are located to the north west of Henley-Bridge and were built in the 18th century. The three storey hotel structure is made of red brick with bracketed modillion wooden eaves cornice, slate roof and a portico with a terracotta lion. The sash windows on the exterior are flush with the brickwork which indicates its early 18th century construction and contributes to its historic and aesthetic value. The hotel was built to accommodate the growing coaching travel industry which developed in the area at this time, an historical association which also contributes to its overall significance. The Red Lion also contributes to the approach into Henley-on-Thames from the east, along with the Angel Inn (Grade II*, NHLE 1047786), Henley Bridge, St Mary Church (Grade II*, NHLE 121899) and this shared relationship with these other buildings contributes to the group value from which it derives significance.

¹⁶ Purcell, 2023, Henley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.



7. Impacts of the Proposals on Heritage Assets

7.1 Henley Bridge (Grade I Listed, NHLE 1117419 and NHLE 13691310)

The light touch conservation work being proposed to Henley Bridge will result in permanent alterations to the targeted areas of repair. As discussed in Section 5, the current condition of Henley Bridge is exhibiting defects to the stonework caused by spalling, weathering, collisions and vegetation growth which is having an impact on the ability to appreciate the overall special interest of the bridge and also threatening its significance in the longer term. As such, undertaking the proposed schedule of work to areas of severe deterioration would therefore reduce the risk of larger scale and more intrusive interventions to the bridge as a whole in the future. This will result in some alteration to the appearance of the structure given the introduction of new stonework, albeit the proposed stones will be closely matching the existing masonry. The proposed works have been designed to use sympathetic materials, with modern changes, such as the use of slate in some joints and pins/dowels, hidden from surface view. The proposed repairs would be consistent with the conservation led upkeep and maintenance of the grade I listed bridge and will ensure that the long term survival and legibility of its overall significance, This will in turn have a positive, beneficial impact on the listed structure.

As previously discussed in Section 6, the bridge derives significance from its aesthetic and historic values as well as its setting. Aesthetic value is demonstrated through the masonry construction and ornamental features which contribute to the grandeur and elegance of the bridge. The proposed works will therefore seek to reintroduce some of these deteriorating and/or missing attributes such as missing dentils, damaged voussoirs, spalling stone, and spalling balusters. This will be undertaken in a like-for-like manner, using stone that closely matches the existing in order to minimise evidence of the proposed works on the appearance of the bridge. The designs for these alterations have been developed to sensitively respond to the aesthetic features of the bridge and minimise impact on its appearance as much as reasonably practicable. The proposals would restore the aesthetic value of the bridge.

Setting is also a key component to the overall significance of Henley Bridge. Given that it is the only structure spanning the River Thames in Henley-on-Thames, its setting is an important factor in the overall appreciation of the bridge. The defects identified on the bridge therefore reduce the appreciation of this significance in views from, towards and across the bridge. The works being proposed would ensure that the bridge retains its status as a prominent feature which is emblematic of the wealth, elegance, architectural quality and grandeur of Henley-on-Thames as a whole. The proposed conservation works will therefore have a positive beneficial impact on the setting of the bridge by addressing areas which are currently detracting from the ability to appreciate its significance from its setting, and ensure that its dominance and elegance remains wholly legible.

There would therefore be little permanent harm to the bridge from the proposed works, equating to considerably less than substantial harm.



Some temporary impact on the significance of the bridge would occur during the construction phase of works. The erection of scaffolding and construction measures, which are necessary to ensure that works are effectively and safely undertaken, will be wholly reversible, and will only be kept up for the duration of works. During this time, views of the bridge will be limited, thereby impacting on the aesthetic value of the structure and appreciation of its significance from its setting. The bridge would still substantially retain its significance, although it can be less appreciated in its context. There would be temporary less than substantial harm at the medium to high end of the scale during construction only.

Though proposals will effect permanent alterations to the historic bridge, these works will in turn have positive beneficial impact on the ability to appreciate its overall significance. Reinstating the bridge to its former appearance, albeit with new stonework sourced from Douling quarries which produces a similar stone to the historic stone, will help to retain its overall significance and character. The implementation of works which seeks to mitigate ongoing erosion, weathering and spalling is therefore understood to be an overall enhancement to the bridge. The proposals will better reveal the significance by restoring some of its architectural character, in accordance with paragraph 200 of the NPPF, and it is assessed that proposals will have less than substantial harm to the significance of Henley Bridge, and also beneficial longer term effect on its heritage significance.

7.2 Conservation Areas

Henley Bridge sits within the Henley-on-Thames, St Marks Road and Reading Road Conservation Area (designated by South Oxfordshire Council), and the Remenham Conservation Area (designated by Wokingham Council). It is a key feature in both conservation areas as it is the only bridge which spans the River Thames and is therefore present within and framing key views as well as forming the gateway to both conservation areas. The defects caused by spalling, weathering, collision and vegetation are visible in and from the conservation areas, cause minor detractions to the character and appearance of the bridge and its presence in the nearest parts of the conservation areas, and detract from the river frontages of the conservation areas. Given the sympathetic, like-for-like nature of the interventions which will be targeting areas exhibiting severe erosion, the detracting elements relating to condition will be repaired and improve the contribution that the bridge makes to the conservation areas.

The proposed works would therefore have a very minor, but positive impact on the contribution that the bridge makes to the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation areas.

There would therefore be no permanent harm to the significance of the conservation areas, with slightly beneficial effect.

7.3 Setting Impacts on nearby Heritage Assets

The proposals will have a very small, but positive impact on the settings of the surrounding grade II and grade II* listed buildings identified in Section 5. The proposed works will introduce light touch, like-for-like repairs to areas exhibiting severe deterioration. Though the bridge retains a visual and physical relationship with these structures, the current



condition of the bridge detracts to a small degree from their setting. However, given the nature of the scheme which is conservation driven and addresses targeted areas of spalling, deterioration and vegetation, this will in turn provide an enhancement by reinstating the appearance of Henley Bridge, which will in turn have a positive impact on the contribution that the bridge has on the settings of the associated listed buildings.

Henley Bridge retains group value with Church of St Mary (Grade II*, NHLE 1218999), Angel Inn Hotel (Grade II*, NHLE 1047786) and Red Lion Hotel (Grade II, NHLE 1047731) due to these buildings framing the approach onto Henley Bridge and into the town centre. The improvement being undertaken, particularly to the balustrade, will accentuate their group value and improve the relationships.

Proposals will have a positive beneficial impact on the settings of these buildings as it will better reveal the significance of Henley Bridge, and in turn enhance the aesthetic value and setting of the surrounding townscape and associated listed buildings.

8. Conclusion

Henley Bridge is a grade I listed structure that was designated for its architectural and historical interest, of which its setting makes a strong contribution. The bridge was built following the approval of the Bridge Act of 1781 which sought remove the early medieval bridge and replace it with a masonry bridge which would communicate the grandeur and elegance reflect the social status of the wider town.

The structure has undergone constant upkeep and maintenance since its construction, the phasing of which is evident in patches across its elevations. It is located within the setting of a number of listed buildings and in two conservation areas. It makes a significant contribution to their setting, character and appearance.

The proposed conservation works to Henley Bridge will help to better reveal its significance via targeted interventions that will mitigate areas of spalling and weathering. The design development has targeted areas of extreme weathering and spalling which could, without intervention, result in more severe permanent impacts, and has been shaped to ensure that there is a minimal impact to historic fabric in doing so. The interventions are proposed to be like-for-like, using material sourced from Doultong quarry to ensure that the new stonework is sensitively incorporated into the bridge, with new pins and slates inserted so as not to be visible. Despite the permanent alterations the architecture of the bridge would be enhanced, with little permanent harm to the bridge from the proposed works, equating to considerably less than substantial harm to significance.

Given the nature of the works, there will be no harm and very slight benefits to the listed buildings and structures which maintain any historic and visual relationships with the bridge. There will be no harm to their significance or setting, and whilst the structure forms a notable landmark feature within the conservation area, the proposals will provide an enhancement to these by restoring the bridge. The proposals would realise considerable positive beneficial impacts to the structure and the character and appearance of the nearby designated assets by maintaining the aesthetic value of the structure which will in turn preserve its long term viable use.



Paragraph 208 of the NPPF requires that where there is less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals. The small degree of harm at the lower end of the scale of less than substantial harm would be more than outweighed by the benefits that the proposals would restore the architecture of the bridge and its presence in the historic townscape. Stabilising the bridge's stonework would also provide safety benefits for the bridge's users, making river navigation and the road and footways safe from falling masonry.



9. Bibliography

Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (Last updated 2019). *Guidance: Historic Environment*. Accessed from [Historic environment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/historic-environment)

Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities. 2023. *National Planning Policy Framework*.

Historic England. 2008. *Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance: For the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment*.

Joint Henley and Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2035. [JHHNP-Neighbourhood-Plan.pdf \(southoxon.gov.uk\)](https://southoxon.gov.uk/media/10000/JHHNP-Neighbourhood-Plan.pdf)

Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. 2021. *National Planning Policy Framework*. London: MHCLG.

Purcell. 2023. Henley Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

South Oxfordshire District Council. 2020. *South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011-2035 (Adopted December 2020)*.

Victoria County History. 2011. 'Henley: Origins and Development of the Town,' in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 16*. Accessed from BHO

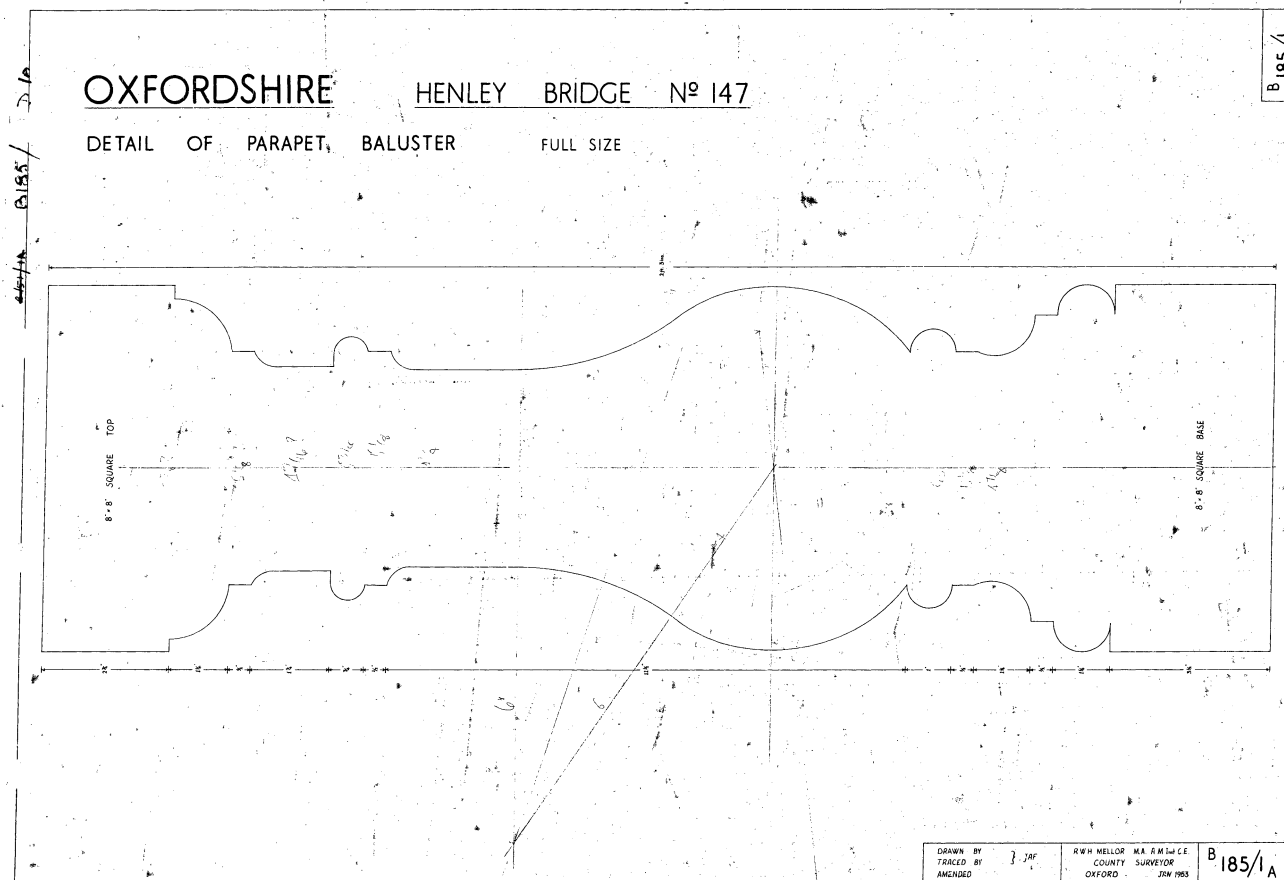
Victoria County History. 2011. 'Henley: Communications,' in *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 16*. Accessed from BHO.

Wokingham District Council. 2010. Wokingham Borough Core Strategy (Adopted 29 January 2010). [Microsoft Word - Final adopted Core Strategy.doc \(wokingham.gov.uk\)](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/media/10000/Microsoft-Word-Final-adopted-Core-Strategy.doc).

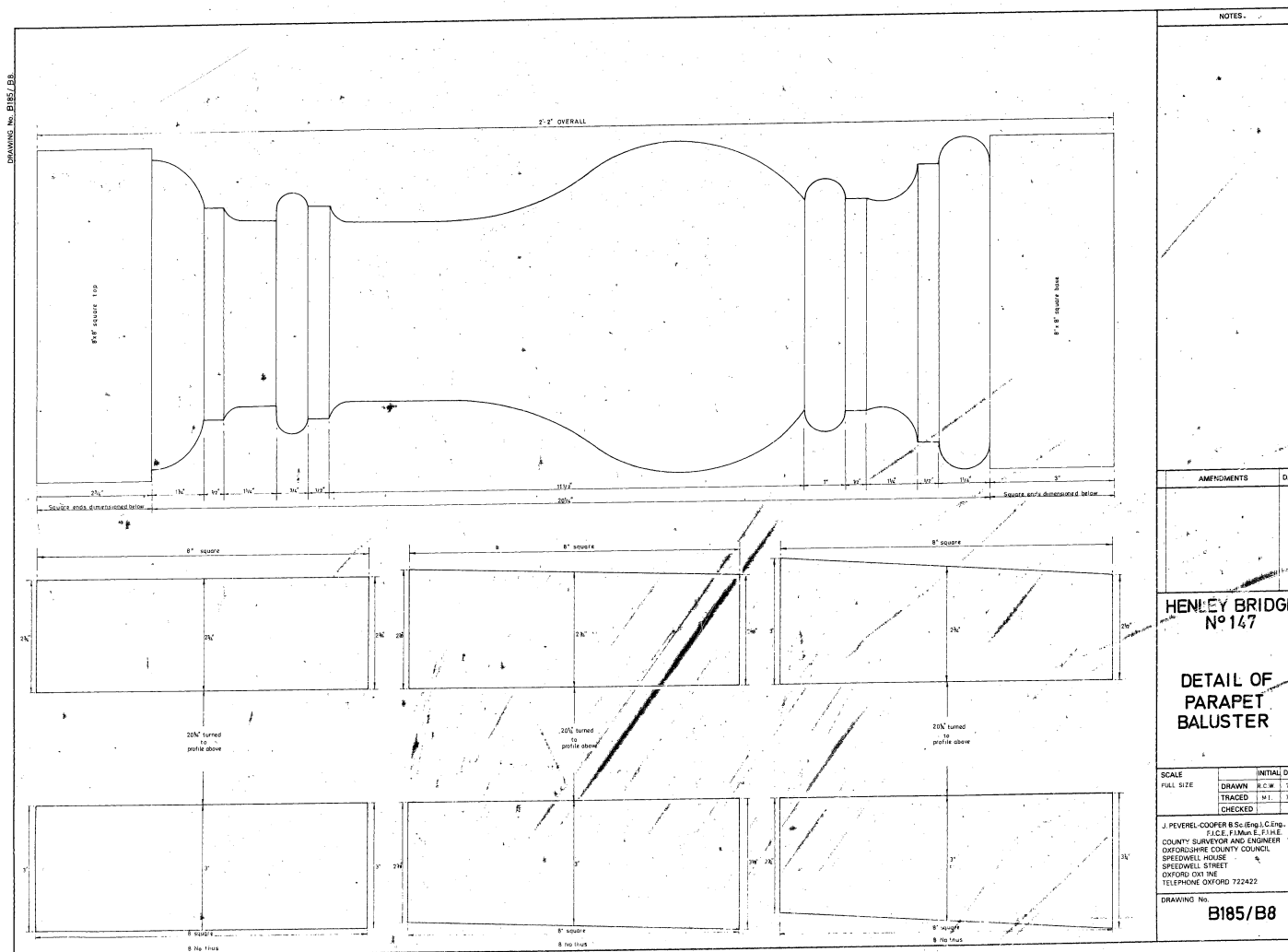
Wokingham Borough Council. 2014. Wokingham Borough Development Plan: adopted Managing Development Delivery Local Plan. [Managing Development Delivery Development Plan \(wokingham.gov.uk\)](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk/media/10000/Managing-Development-Delivery-Development-Plan.pdf)



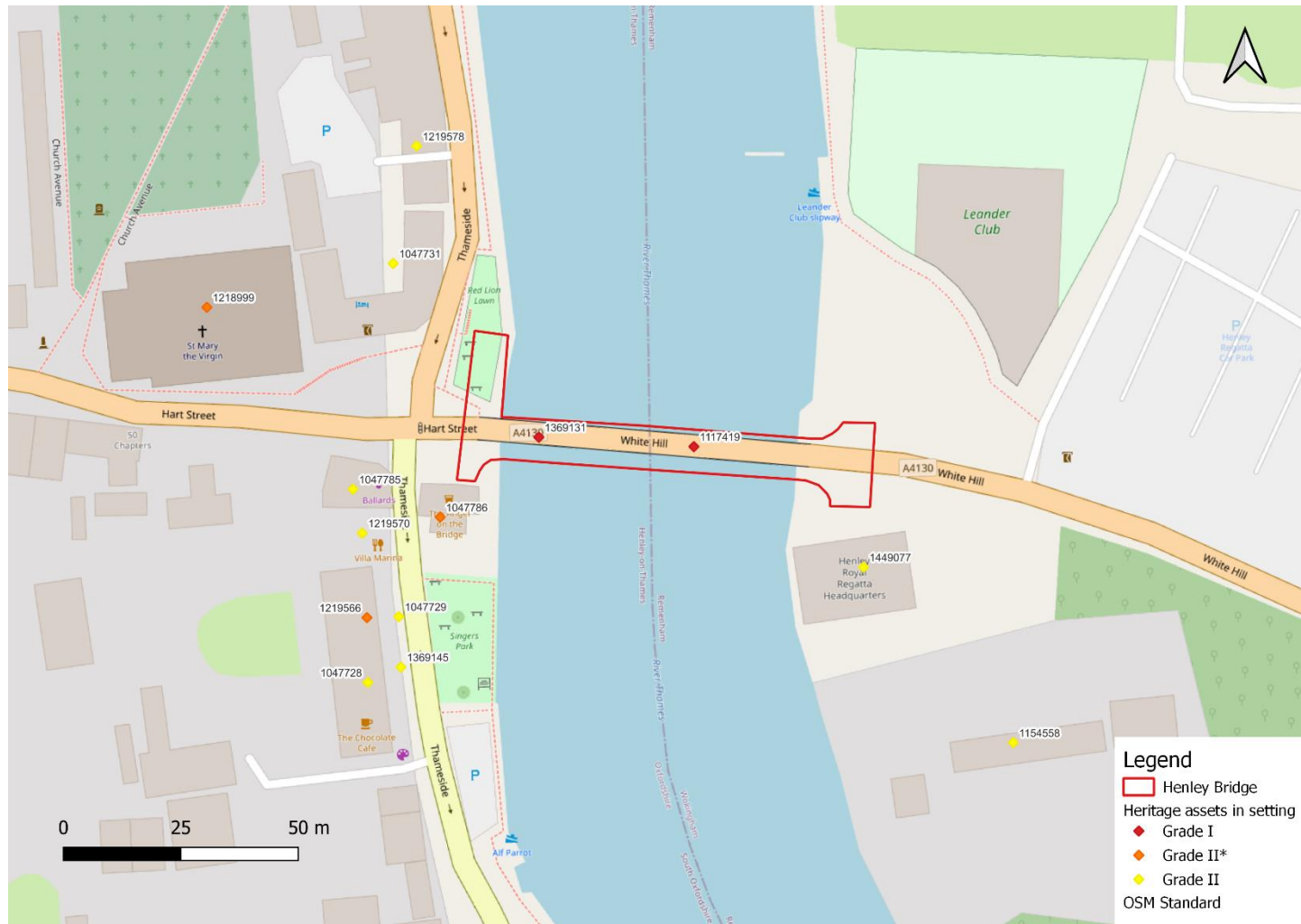
A.1 Baluster drawing from 1953



A.2 Baluster drawing from 1981



Appendix B. Location of designated assets



Appendix C. Sample of Douling Stone



AtkinsRéalis



Tyesha McGann
AtkinsRéalis

Nova North,
11 Bressden Place,
London,
SW1E 5BY

© AtkinsRéalis except where stated otherwise

Classification, e.g. AtkinsRéalis - Sensitive
/ Sensible

Henley Bridge Heritage Statement
Submission
19/06/2024