



**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTE 21
OXTON VILLAGE CONSERVATION AREA**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Oxtton was designated a Conservation Area in 1978. Once a farming community, Oxtton developed into a large village with the inauguration of the steam ferries in 1822. From that date, Oxtton grew into a wealthy suburb of Birkenhead.
- 1.2. Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policy CH7 relates to planning controls within this area.

2. BOUNDARY DEFINITION

- 2.1. The boundaries of the Conservation Area have been drawn so as to define with few exceptions the early Victorian commuter settlement which developed over the summit of Oxtton Hill during the 19th Century.
- 2.2. The slow development of the area over a period of time and in a spatially haphazard manner has given the present variety of residential form and quality of design. Not all the area has the same character and appearance as the earlier parts of the village, and groups of attractive buildings are interspersed with examples of late Victorian and 20th Century development which is mundane.
- 2.3. The boundaries have been drawn to include both the best and the ordinary so that practically the whole of the original hill top settlement has been included. This differentiates it from the surrounding housing of a later period.
- 2.4. Although there is such variety of development within the Conservation Area, the boundary has not been contorted in an attempt to exclude what is deemed to be the less attractive development. This development not only shares the same townscape features of stone walls and mature tree cover, but also often relates well to some of the better period housing. It is therefore essential to retain its inclusion within the boundaries in order to preserve the wider setting of the area.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

- 3.1. The variety of the buildings in Oxtton, ranging from terraces, to stone built cottages and detached stuccoed villas, give the area a character which is unique in Birkenhead. A substantial number of houses stand on their own or are semi-

detached, and set in spacious gardens. Others stand in groups where the loss of even one would prejudice the group effect created by them all.

- 3.2. The number of trees which cover Oxton Hill and the dominance of sandstone walls throughout the area form important unifying features and are crucial to its character and appearance. These often act in concert, with overhanging branches sweeping over the top of mellow stone walls, projecting high over the pavement and road below. In many cases, the continuity of the walls is helped by lintels being carried over gates and doorways.
- 3.3. Oxton is also characterised by a number of narrow roads, unmade roads, and narrow lanes and paths. Together with the high sandstone walls and mature trees, a strong sense of enclosure is often given, as well as a semi-rural ambience which belies Oxton's urban location.
- 3.4. The centre of the village is formed by the rows of shops and restaurants on Rosemount, Christchurch Road, and Claughton Firs. Their continued operation is crucial to the vitality of the Conservation Area. Although not every shop front has escaped alteration over the years, the overriding impression is still one of visual coherence.
- 3.5. Gardens, ranging from large landscaped areas surrounding single villas to small 'cottage' gardens of the terraced housing also contribute to the semi-rural sense of the village, and often provide a visual frame for dramatic views of period buildings.
- 3.6. Another unifying feature of the village is the number of small details such as window consoles, sash windows or side-hinged casements, and ornate cast iron porches. These, along with elements such as slate roofs, stone flags and granite kerbstones all help define the unique character of the Conservation Area.

4. POLICIES

- 4.1. An Article 4 Direction will be made, subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State, to remove the following permitted development rights:

Part 1, Class A, The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house

Part 1, Class B, The enlargement of a dwelling house consisting of an addition or alteration to its roof

Part 1, Class C, Any other alteration to the roof of a dwelling house

Part 1, Class H, The installation of a satellite antenna on a dwelling house

Part 2, Class A, Gates, fences, walls and other means of enclosure

Part 9, Class A, Works to maintain or improve an unadopted street or private way

This is to ensure that changes to those elements which are so important to the appearance and character of the Conservation Area, such as window styles and materials, slate roofs, stone boundary walls and attractive lanes etc, are controlled through the need to apply for planning permission. In considering planning applications which fall within the above classes, there will be a presumption against proposals which, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, are unsympathetic to individual buildings or the surrounding area.

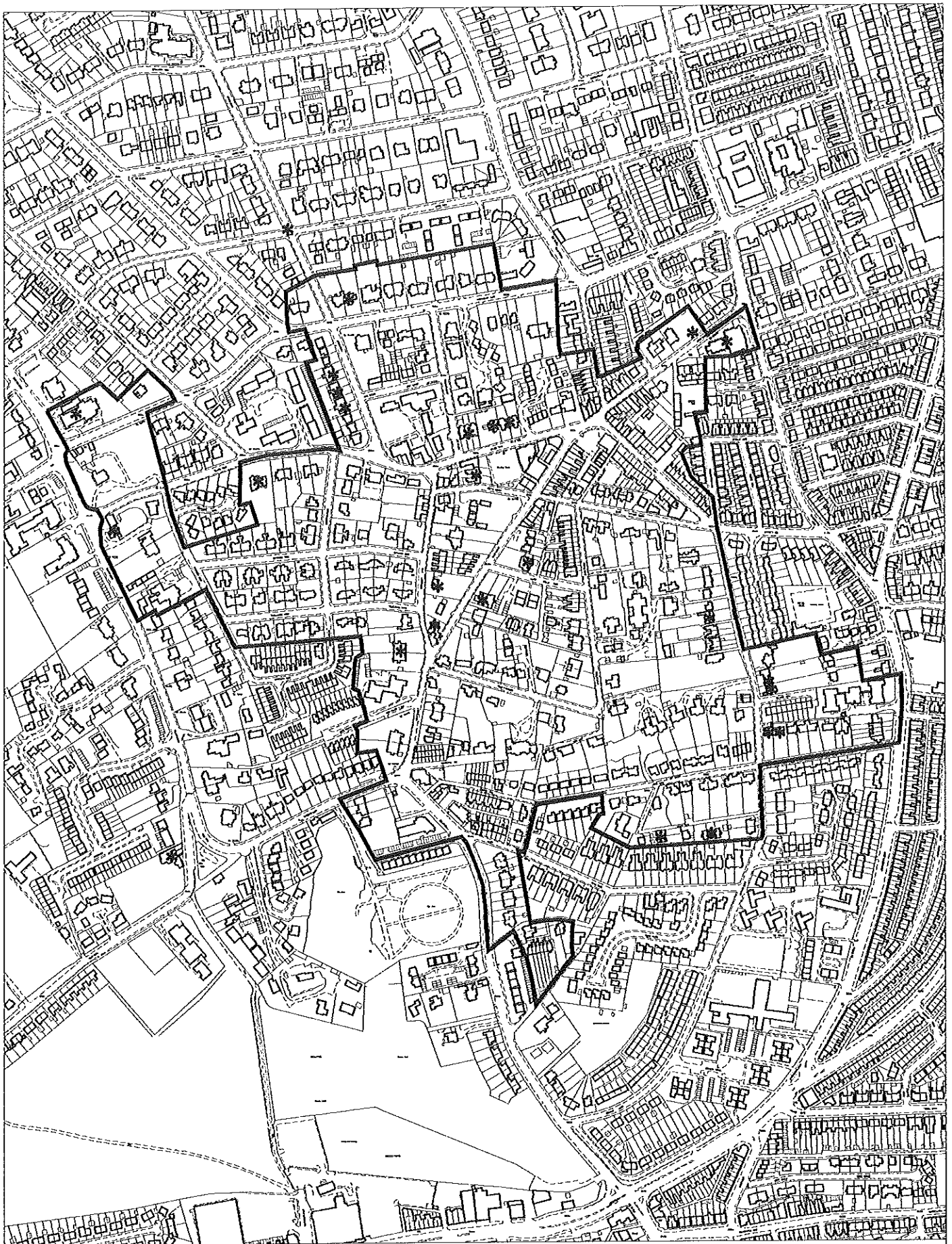
- 4.2. Due to the sensitive nature of the Conservation Area, outline planning applications for new buildings will not normally be accepted.
- 4.3. New development must respect Oxton's historic context in volume, scale, form, materials, and quality, as should proposals for development adjacent to or affecting the setting of the Conservation Area. In considering applications for new development within garden areas, particular regard will be given to the setting of the parent building and adjacent dwellings, and to the density of surrounding dwellings.
- 4.4. Proposals for new development for commercial, office, or industrial use will not normally be acceptable outside the area of existing shops along Rosemount, Christchurch Road or Claughton Firs. Development will not be permitted if it would generate levels of traffic, parking, noise, or environmental problems which would be detrimental to the character or appearance of the area.
- 4.5. New shop fronts should conform to the Local Planning Authority's Shop Front Design Guide. In particular, advertisements on fascia boards should be painted, and should not consist of individual acrylic lettering. Internally illuminated signs, and externally mounted, solid roller shutters will not normally be permitted.
- 4.6. The demolition of period buildings within the Conservation Area will not normally be permitted. This includes buildings such as coach houses, lodges or conservatories, which help to give a historic context to some older properties. Similarly, the demolition or partial demolition of stone walls will be resisted. In order to promote their long term preservation, the Conservation Officer has produced a re-pointing guide, which also relates to the maintenance of other stone buildings.

5. FURTHER INFORMATION

- 5.1. Further information with regard to planning policies within Oxton Village Conservation Area can be obtained from the Local Planning Authority's Conservation Officer.
- 5.2. The following documents may also be of assistance:-
 - DoE Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, Planning and the Historic Environment (September 1994).

- Wirral Borough Council Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 43 Shop Front Design Guide.
- Wirral Borough Council Repointing: A Good Practice Guide.

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Conservation Area :- OXTON

Scale : - 1: 5963
Map : 71NE

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* *Listed Buildings and structures (Grade 2 or better)*

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