



**Elmbridge**

Borough Council

*... bridging the communities ...*



# Elmbridge Heritage Strategy

December 2015



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## Foreword

Heritage is more than old buildings, however beautiful - it is about the wider history, setting and associations of our villages, towns and landscapes that provide the sense of place and identity to our communities and that give places meaning for us. In every case they are more than just a sum of their parts and contribute at many levels to the social, environmental and economic life of the Borough.

However, they are irreplaceable resources which are vulnerable to gradual change from lack of maintenance as well as from more dramatic changes including development pressures that can cause them to reduce or lose their significance and place in our consciousness.

As a Regulatory Planning Authority and landowner the Council has a duty to care for its historic environment and the assets it contains. I am pleased to recommend this new Heritage Strategy which identifies some of the issues and makes recommendations for the immediate and longer term. It is aimed at everyone who is concerned with the historic environment whether as residents, owners, organisations, applicants, developers, advisors, councillors and officers and shows that heritage considerations are as much about the present and the future as they are about the past!

Councillor Andrew Kelly  
Portfolio Holder for Planning Services



**The Old Manor House in Walton-on-Thames which is Grade I Listed**

## 1 – Introduction

We think of our listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled monuments and historic parks as being the Borough's "Crown Jewels". They are important as individual entities but together they also help to create our unique historic environment. Whilst they add architectural, historic, artistic and archaeological value beyond their functional utility they also contribute towards the social and economic vitality of the Borough.

Our heritage defines who we are and what makes ourselves and our environment distinctive. It is also about our attitudes and changing perspectives. Conservation planning used to be seen as seeking to preserve sites "in aspic" but now the focus is changing to a more positive and integrated approach where heritage is seen as an asset rather than a constraint and where conservation is about a more informed management of change.

### Planning for our heritage

Local planning authorities already have various statutory duties under heritage legislation but have also recently been tasked to set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. The presumption is to deliver sustainable development and conserving and harnessing the heritage should play an important part in this process.



Giggs Hill Green Conservation Area

### What does heritage do for Elmbridge?

The case for heritage providing key economic, social and environmental benefits is well-argued and evidenced.

**Economy:** In terms of the economy, heritage can act as a major catalyst and building block for attracting investment and businesses and supporting

tourism and jobs. A survey by South East Tourism shows that in Elmbridge the value of the visitor economy is over £233 million which is the second highest turnover in Surrey. Recognition by owners of the economic value of their heritage assets encourages appropriate management and maintenance.

**Social:** The social benefits from understanding our heritage include protecting and building the sense of local identity, pride and community. There are wider education benefits both within and beyond the school curriculum when heritage activities offer opportunities for integration and life-long learning for all ages. In an increasingly stressful world, visits to and walks through a historic park or garden, village or townscape improves mental and physical health and well-being.

**Environmental:** Among the environmental benefits of heritage is its sustainable credentials. Due to embodied energies it is more sustainable to convert and re-use a historic building than demolish it and build a new one. Heritage projects and improvements make the Borough a more attractive place to live and work and a heritage based approach to asset management has benefits for ecology and nature conservation.

Appendix A contains supporting data from Heritage Counts 2014 and other sources that provide evidence of the value of heritage at a national, regional and local level.

### **What is this strategy for?**

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a framework for how we understand, preserve, manage, integrate, interpret and promote our heritage in both the immediate and long term future. It is for everyone who is involved with and has an interest in the Borough's historic environment including residents, owners, organisations, applicants, developers, advisors, councillors and officers. The document reviews the national and local heritage context, identifies some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the service before suggesting key priorities and recommendations. This will establish our "direction of travel" and form the basis for prioritising the future work of the Heritage team. This strategy focuses on areas where the Council has a direct role or responsibilities and where it has influence in the decision making and management process through the planning system.

The study was undertaken by Council's Heritage Manager with input from other heritage and planning colleagues and key stakeholders including English Heritage. The evidence base came from the responses to the national Heritage Count 2014 survey and questionnaires sent to local heritage organisations and heritage professionals and questions set for the 2014 Elmbridge Residents Panel. The responses (summarised in Appendix A) showed how passionately people in Elmbridge feel about their historic environment and these views have informed the strategy document.

The consultation document has been subject to a 6 week period of public consultation which commenced on 11 May 2015 and will be endorsed by Elmbridge Borough Council. It will become an Evidence Base document to inform the Council's Local Plan and will be subject to periodic review.

## 2 – The national context

Local Planning Authorities derive their duties, responsibilities and powers in relation to the historic environment from the following:

- Primary legislation such as the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Growth and Infrastructure Act 2013, the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013, Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.
- Government policy and guidance such as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) March 2012 and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) March 2014.
- Policies and guidance produced by national bodies such as English Heritage including Conservation Principles April 2008, the National Heritage Protection Plan (NHPP) November 2012 and Historic Environment Good Practice Advice notes (2014/15).

In delivering the Council's statutory planning functions the Heritage team must have special regard to listed buildings, their features and setting when considering development, advise on appeals, determine listed building consents, serve Building Preservation Notices and repairs notices where appropriate and offer grants for building repair and maintenance. For conservation areas they must pay special attention to preserving and enhancing these when considering development proposals, determine worthy areas and designate them as conservation areas, review previous designations and controls, to formulate, publish and consult on proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and the control over building demolition. Wider responsibilities come from the documents below.

### Heritage in the National Planning Policy Framework

In recent years central government have sought to reduce the amount of legislation, guidance and policies to deliver more focussed and effective planning services. The new National Planning Policy Framework, a 59-page document replaced over 1,000 pages of different planning policies. The NPPF shows how the planning system should deliver sustainable development which satisfies 3 mutually dependant economic, social and environmental roles. One of the NPPF's 12 core principles is to conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

A heritage asset is defined in the NPPF as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest and includes those designated at national and local level. It is recognised that these are irreplaceable resources whose significance should be identified, assessed and considered in determining any planning application. The different types of heritage asset, potential harm, securing its optimum viable use and public benefit should be weighed to produce a balanced judgement. Local Planning Authorities should look for opportunities for new development to enhance or better reveal the significance of heritage assets and should assess the benefits of enabling development which would secure the future

conservation of a heritage asset against the policy dis-benefits. Reference is also made to the importance of having an up-to-date historic environment evidence base and maintain or having access to such a record.

### **The National Heritage Protection Plan and Heritage 2020**

The on-going National Heritage Protection Plan aims to identify those parts of England's heritage that matter to people most and are at greatest risk – and then concentrate efforts at saving them. It recognises this can be sudden and catastrophic as well as gradual and incremental. Although there are many public, commercial and voluntary organisations which ensure heritage is cared for, appreciated and enjoyed in the current economic climate all of these groups are short of resources and joint working is encouraged. At the present time its authors and co-ordinators English Heritage have separated into Historic England which provides advice and guidance and English Heritage which will take over the maintenance and management of its historic property portfolio. The successor to the NHPP is Heritage 2020 which has been prepared by the Heritage Alliance; this has identified 5 key priorities which are listed in Appendix A.

### **National heritage “stakeholder” organisations**

Different bodies have different responsibilities and remits for the historic environment and its heritage assets which can cause confusion. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) are responsible for Statutory Listing and Ancient Monuments with the guidance of Historic England. Local planning authorities are responsible for designating and reviewing conservation areas and local listing and for determining planning decisions which affect all historic assets although Historic England is also a statutory consultee in some cases. Expertise for archaeology and management of the Historic Environment Record (HER) lies with the County Council.



**1793 Enclosure map of The Tilt in Cobham showing how land ownership influenced later layout and development within the Conservation Area  
Reproduced by permission of Surrey History Centre**

### 3 – The local context

Elmbridge has a number of historic towns and villages set within a diverse landscape of woodland, common land, farmland, rivers, reservoirs and parkland. These have developed outside the floodplains of river corridors, along important historic routes such as the London-Portsmouth Road and around transport nodes such as railway stations when they were built in the mid c19th. This mixed character belies its close proximity (17 miles) to central London and the Borough's geographic location and attractive environment makes it a highly desirable place to live and work. It is considered to be a wealthy area with above average socio-economic indicators although there are pockets of relative disadvantage.

Data for 2013-14 showed that, in comparison to the other 10 Surrey Borough Councils, Elmbridge is in the mid-range for the number of designated heritage assets and its total area. Tourist attractions include Brooklands Museum, Claremont Landscape Gardens and Painshill Park. Elmbridge also has the highest proportion of the workforce in tourist related employment which accounts for 10.6% of the workforce. However, it also has the third highest population in the county, the highest population growth rate in the South-East and the highest number of planning applications per annum compared to all the other Surrey Boroughs. Development pressures are intense with high house prices and pressures on existing infrastructure and services. The main pressure is for residential development and this is spread throughout the Borough, 57% of which is designated as Green Belt.

#### **Elmbridge's heritage assets include:**

**770 Statutory Listed Buildings**, these are designated by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on the advice of English Heritage. One of the oldest is the Grade I Manor House in Walton-on-Thames. This a timber framed building with a c14<sup>th</sup> core which was reputedly owned by Justice Bradshaw, one of the signatories on Charles I's death warrant. One of the latest examples is the concrete and glass Modernist Walton Court built in the early 1960s. Others include the Georgian Picton House in Thames Ditton which was owned by the freed slave Caesar Picton, the 1822 Chatley Heath Semaphore Tower in Cobham and Semaphore House in Telegraph Lane, Claygate (which were both part of a signalling system stretching from the Admiralty to Portsmouth) and the Victorian Hatchford House in Cobham.



**Hatchford House in Cobham, a Grade II Listed building which was originally built in the Victorian era and is now divided into private apartments**

**300+ Locally Listed Buildings** which are recognised by the Council as being of local interest and include a restored chapel at Downside Village, a Victorian chemist in East Molesey and the gates to the old racecourse at Hurst Park.

**25 Conservation Areas** which are designated by the local authority and are recognised as being areas of special architectural or historic interest. These include c17th Wey Navigation channels in Weybridge, historic town centres in Esher and Cobham, village greens at Giggs Hill Green and West End and an Edwardian “Arts and Crafts” style retirement village at Whiteley Village. Also a celebrated motor racing circuit at Brooklands, where many world speed records were originally set when it opened in 1907 and where aircraft clubs and manufacture became important up to WWII. The Council recently designated a private estate built in the 1970s near Esher in recognition of its contemporary c20th architecture and layout around an c18th lake.

**3 Historic Parks and Gardens** which are designated by the DCMS on the advice of English Heritage. Claremont includes the National Trust owned gardens with its lake, amphitheatre, camellia terrace and bowling-green together with the Claremont Fan Court School’s c18th Capability Brown parkland landscape and Vanbrugh walled garden and belvedere. Painshill has a set piece landscape of follies including a ruined temple, tented pavilion, crystal grotto, tower and an ice house with a vineyard and period plant collections. Oatlands Park near Weybridge is famous for its views from the elevated terraces over the Broad Water and River Thames floodplain.



**Painshill Park with the temple, which was deliberately built as a romantic ruin, lake and vineyard**

**6 Scheduled Monuments** which are designated by the DCMS on the advice of English Heritage including the buried multi-vallate Iron Age hill fort in St Georges Hill, a Roman bath house at Chatley Farm and Henry VIII’s palace at Oatlands. Above ground is an c18th Milestone at Esher, c18th Belvedere at Claremont and the oval concrete Brooklands Motor racing circuit. **56 Sites of High Archaeological Potential** and also a number of **County Sites of**

**Archaeological Importance** which are designated by Surrey County Council and these are currently under review. These are often also designated under different categories and their buried nature means they are often overlooked.

### **What does the Council do?**

The Council has set out its 5 year Vision (2013-2018) for “A confident and cohesive community with a thriving local economy and cherished environment served by quality public services delivered cost effectively”. This is supported by a range of measurable targets and identifying annual Top Priorities. The Council’s Heritage team is based within Planning Services which delivers the national and local planning agenda through its Local Plan and Development Management processes. Appendix B lists relevant Council policy documents

The Council’s Heritage team currently:

- Provides specialist advice to the Council’s Policy team on its strategic approach and policies.
- Provides specialist advice to the Council’s Development Management team on all applications affecting heritage assets and provides advice to owners, applicants and their agents.
- Provides planning officers with urban and landscape design advice on large and/or sensitive sites.
- Identifies opportunities through the planning process to conserve, restore and find viable uses for historic assets, to require specific schedules of work, materials samples and maintenance and management schedules through conditions attached to planning permissions or through separate legal agreements.
- Negotiates agreements through the planning process to secure the conservation of heritage assets which are identified as being or potentially being “At Risk”.
- Supports the Conservation Area Advisory Committees (CAACs),
- Provides grant assistance for the restoration of historic buildings.
- Maintains lists of its historic assets on the Council’s website.
- Undertakes heritage projects and supports local heritage initiatives.
- Protects the heritage of the Borough by working with partner authorities including negotiating with the County Council to secure the replacement of heritage-style street lighting in the Borough’s historic conservation areas.
- Undertakes a rolling programme of community-oriented Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans (CAMPs). These are based on the Community Heritage Initiative Project (CHIP) which was developed with English Heritage to encourage and develop community based heritage skills. At the present time appraisals have been completed for 14 of the 25 Conservation Areas (CA) and community input ensures they carry significant weight in planning decisions.
- Investigates new areas for potential Conservation Area designation and undertakes comprehensive appraisals in conjunction with local residents and organisations.
- Works in partnership with other organisations to share resources and expertise including the Thames Landscape Strategy, Surrey Gardens Trust and Brooklands Heritage Partnership.

## Case studies showing successful project work

### A) Claremont Fan Court School, Portsmouth Road, Esher

An example of part of a Grade I 18th C Listed Historic Park with many Grade I and II\* Listed Buildings where the planning application process identified opportunities to protect, restore and re-vitalise these assets and their setting. A hybrid planning application was permitted in August 2014 for a series of phased developments and improvements secured by reserve conditions and legal agreements.



1842 Engraving of Claremont Mansion



Aerial view of Claremont Mansion

### B) Lakeside Drive, Esher

An example of how 20thC modern architecture is recognised by designating an estate of brick and glass built modular houses set around an 18thC lake as a new Conservation Area. The Heritage Section undertook a character appraisal with local residents and heritage organisations to understand the area, what made it special, its issues and potential solutions. It is based on the Community Heritage Initiative Project (CHIP) which has received national recognition. The project received unanimous support from all those involved and also from the 20thC Society and English Heritage. Wider public awareness was raised with articles on the BBC News, the Economist website and in Context magazine.



General view of Lakeside Drive



Local residents appraising their area

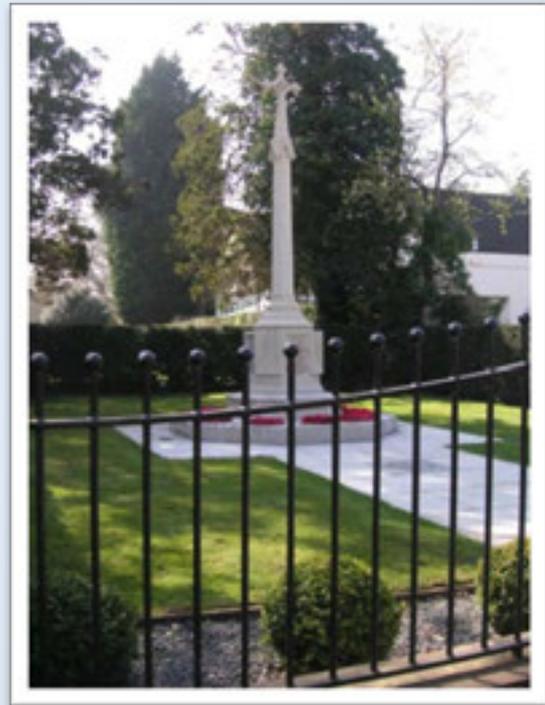
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### C) Historic Building Grants And Projects

The Heritage section has provided heritage interpretation boards in Claygate, East Molesey, Walton and Weybridge and made grants towards community heritage projects including the restoration of the war memorial in Claygate and the Riverhill project in Cobham. It has supported research by the local CAAC to investigate a local listed building for statutory listing in East Molesey and for volunteers compiling digital photographs of Conservation Area buildings.



Claygate Village Heritage Board



War memorial restoration in Claygate

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### D) The Brooklands Heritage Partnership

The partnership is a good example of organisations and stakeholders working together to share resources and expertise to raise the profile of this unique conservation area. Brooklands Museum Trust, Historic England, Elmbridge Borough Council and Surrey County Council meet regularly to discuss issues and identify solutions for the racing circuit and aerodrome. A new Conservation Management Plan has recently been commissioned to update the recorded heritage assets, demonstrate good conservation practices and foster greater understanding and responsibility for visitors and landowners.



Section of Byfleet Banking



Well managed section of Members Banking

## **Background evidence**

Benchmarking for a previous Value for Money Review found the Council's Heritage team compared favourably with the other Surrey Boroughs in terms of its service provision against its level of staff resources. Identifying and communicating with our wide variety of stakeholders is undertaken as part of the Council's on-going heritage initiatives and these provided preliminary research for the strategy. Further evidence came from more specific questionnaires to local heritage organisations, heritage professionals and the Elmbridge Resident's Panel. These findings are summarised in Appendix A.

Locally identified issues include:

- A high value is placed on heritage assets with 95% of the Residents Panel considering that Conservation Areas were very or fairly important and 97% considering that Historic Parks and Gardens were very or fairly important. The top priority is "protecting the character of the area from building development".
- Concerns from the local community over the lack of investment in the Council's heritage team resources to protect and enhance the Borough's heritage assets.
- The need for more pro-active work, there is very strong support for the delivery of Conservation Area appraisal project work to build understanding and informed management of change and also to provide the finance to deliver the appraisal recommendations and support sustainable management.
- Better support for the CAACs to support engagement and build community capacity.
- Suggestions were also made for the promotion of heritage initiatives, of successful heritage solutions and new examples of excellent design and architecture, a new Local List of Parks and Gardens, the restoration of historic landscapes and considering using Article 4s.
- The need for up-to-date evidence base information for most of the Borough's heritage assets. A "Buildings at Risk" survey (BAR) was undertaken in 2005/06 but now needs a complete review. The Local Listed Buildings list was prepared in 2000 but this is incomplete.
- Concerns over the lack of financial support for heritage projects and initiatives. Finance traditionally came from budget underspends and revenue monies but as these are no longer available the Heritage Section can no longer undertake these works. The annual fund for historic building grant aid is currently £1,000.
- Limited enforcement activities for monitoring compliance with planning conditions for the maintenance and management of historic assets, this reflects the staff resources available within the service.
- There is an increased need to provide web-based information which is readily accessible and offers 24/7 access. Although the heritage website has received positive responses with increasing web usage, feedback has indicated that information can be difficult to navigate and access. Service users expect a higher corporate profile, with more links to further information and the promotion of heritage activities.

## 4 – Issues and challenges

The issues and challenges affecting the delivery of heritage services in Elmbridge are identified through a SWOT analysis as follows:

### Strengths

- Increasing levels of awareness and recognition of the importance of heritage assets and issues which is being demonstrated by central and local government and local communities.
- A wide base of stakeholders who support heritage, particularly at the local level. This is demonstrated by the number of voluntary heritage organisations including conservation trusts and history societies.
- Good links and effective engagement with the local community through initiatives such as Conservation Area Designations and Character Appraisals. The Elmbridge CHIP programme is promoted as a national example of good conservation practice.
- Elmbridge can demonstrate best practice through its engagement with applicants and other stakeholders to deliver improvements through the planning process, through partnership working and as a landowner.



Aerial photograph of Whiteley Village, a registered charity providing social care and housing for the elderly. Most of the Arts and Craft buildings are Grade II listed, the entire estate is designated as a Conservation Area and is set within Green Belt

### Weaknesses

- A perception that heritage services are a luxury rather than a regulatory planning function.
- The lack of clear strategic priorities for the Heritage team and constraints on resources create a focus on short term reactive work.
- Limited budgets to support heritage initiatives and activities.
- Heritage responsibilities are spread between a wide range of external organisations and also internal parts of the Council which can cause confusion over responsibilities and the dilution of expertise.

- The need for up-to-date records about heritage assets makes it difficult to guide and deliver appropriate sustainable development which effectively considers the historic environment.
- Different public perceptions of the Council's role, which can be seen as being too interfering by imposing unnecessary conditions for applicants or not being sufficiently pro-active and protective.
- Heritage can sometimes be seen as academic, re-active and elitist and it is particularly difficult to engage younger sections of the community.

### Opportunities

- To deliver the objectives set out in recent planning policy guidance (NPPF and NHPP) through the Council's Local Plan and Development Management Plan where heritage is seen as an the integral part of the decision making process and contributes to the quality of decisions.
- To build on the strong local support to protect the character of the area, the historic environment and its assets.
- To recognise the value and significance of heritage assets rather than seeing them as negative constraints to future development.
- To support and publicise local initiatives through the Council's website and social media.
- To use the strategy to identify and agree the heritage section's objectives and priorities to develop an efficient and effective service with identified resources. Agree on work programmes and explore new sources of funding including the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to deliver some heritage related projects.
- Develop and expand partnership working with existing and new stakeholders.

### Threats

- The South-East is a major focus for development with a high volume of planning enquiries and applications which can affect the historic environment. These pressures are unlikely to change in the future and will continue to affect the whole borough. Over the past 2 years there has been a 39% increase in the volume of planning applications affecting Conservation Areas.
- Organisations and their structures are changing, e.g. English Heritage have separated into Historic England and English Heritage, and reduced resources for other national and local authorities will put increasing pressure on service delivery.
- The voluntary sector is an important heritage stakeholder but can require professional input to maintain their high standard of influential engagement. It is important that any proposals to help deliver the Council's heritage services are realistic, appropriate, rewarding for participants and do not over rely on this sector.
- There are high expectations for the Heritage team to deliver a range of quality services within existing frameworks and resources. These are limited, some project work and staff posts rely on finite sources of funds and this makes the section vulnerable to external and internal change.

## 5 – Key priorities

The objective of this strategy is to provide a framework for how we understand, preserve, manage, integrate, interpret and promote our heritage in the immediate and long term future. Previous sections have identified some of the different issues and challenges which affect the historic environment and the shortfalls in our knowledge base and service delivery. These have identified key priorities for future work and suggested a number of recommendations to deliver them.

### The four key work priorities are as follows:

#### 1. Deliver an informed regulatory planning service which maximises opportunities for the conservation of heritage assets, including those most at risk through decay, neglect and other threats.

Recommendation – develop accurate and up-to-date records, work with the planning decision and plan making process to improve design quality and target improvements to those heritage assets most at risk.



#### 2. Work with our partners to co-ordinate a “joined-up” approach to delivering heritage services.

Recommendation - work with internal colleagues and partners to deliver a seamless “One Council” service and work with external partners to share resources and expertise.



### 3. Work with and support the local heritage community.

Recommendation - engage with local voluntary organisations and individuals as part of a two-way learning and support process to extend capability and capacity.



### 4. Improve awareness and understanding of Elmbridge's heritage assets and issues.

Recommendation – develop a programme to increase and extend awareness through different communication channels and initiatives.



These are developed further in the following table.

## Table of key priorities and recommendations

**Key priority 1 - Deliver an informed regulatory planning service which maximises opportunities for the conservation of heritage assets, including those most at risk through decay, neglect and other threats.**

**Recommendations - update and review the heritage records including:**

- a) Obtain quotes for, and subject to funding commission an up-to-date condition survey for all statutory Buildings at Risk (BAR). In the longer term consider extending the survey to cover other designated Heritage Assets At Risk (HAAR) Following this work:
- b) Compile lists of those Buildings/Heritage assets considered “At Risk”;
- c) Review survey findings, identify any major issues and trends, what improvements can be delivered and how e.g. via grant aid, enforcement action and/or the development management process;
- d) Contribute evidence to assist in the Strategic Plan Making Process.
- e) Continue rolling programme of appraising the special character of Conservation Areas, produce Management Plans and regularly review these;
- f) Compile lists of all existing and potential designated and non-designated heritage assets including Parks and Gardens of Local Interest and identify areas where the evidence base is incomplete;
- g) Compile an electronic data base for the management and maintenance of historic assets records including reports and photographs;
- h) Review the Historic Building Grant fund to target assistance and continue joining up with other sources of match funding.

**Recommendations – work within the Development Management process to promote conservation and high quality design and also to target improvements to BAR/HAAR including:**

- i) Encourage pre-application meetings with planning officers and applicants to establish heritage significance and identify issues and opportunities at an early stage.
- j) Promote and negotiate improvements to preserve, restore, re-generate and interpret heritage assets through the planning process. Demonstrate how they can create a sense of place and together with high quality design can add value to a development and improve the quality of decision making.
- k) Recommend the addition of appropriate reserve conditions and legal agreements to secure, deliver and monitor improvements e.g. schedules and specification for repair and restoration, management and maintenance.
- l) Work with enforcement officers to review and implement existing heritage related legal agreements and conditions attached to planning permissions e.g. S106 agreements relating to the maintenance of Brooklands Motor Racing circuit, consider the use of urgent works and repairs notices on other sites identified through the BAR review.

**Key priority 2 – Work with our partners to co-ordinate a “joined-up” approach to delivering heritage services**

**Recommendations – work with internal colleagues to deliver a seamless “One Council” service including:**

- a) Support Asset Management and Property Services to fulfil its duties as a landowner, landlord and developer for the heritage assets within its control.

b) Support Leisure and Cultural Services to publicise heritage related events and access to historic resources.

c) Subject to the findings of the Tree Strategy, work with the Tree Officers to consider protection for sylvan heritage assets such as Ancient and Specimen trees, including those in Historic Parks and Gardens. Also to identify significant trees as part of the Conservation Area Character Appraisals.

**Recommendations – work with external partners to share resources and expertise including:**

d) Continue working with existing partnerships and develop new arrangements to deliver agreed projects e.g. Brooklands Heritage Partnership delivering the Brooklands Conservation Management Plan, Thames Landscape Strategy delivering riverside heritage projects, Surrey Gardens Trust delivering a Local List of Historic Parks and Gardens.

e) Explore the advantages and disadvantages of sharing services with other local authorities and alternative service delivery mechanisms.

**Key priority 3 – Work with and support the local heritage community**

**Recommendations – develop an engagement plan with local heritage organisations and individuals as part of a two-way learning and support process including:**

a) Encourage participation in Council led initiatives such as Conservation Area designations and character appraisals where joint working produces stronger, community based planning documents and project outcomes.

b) Identify ways to support local community organisations to further the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment e.g. by providing publicity for events and initiatives such as lectures, heritage walks and local heritage plaque schemes, updates on heritage issues and grant aid advice such as access to new CIL funding sources.

c) Support CAACs by providing regular updates on new guidance and legislation, consult and update the grants, constitution and protocol agreements, use faster and more cost-effective means of communication.

d] Identify opportunities for work on heritage projects with local schools and colleges to inspire the next generation to look after our heritage.

**Key Priority 4 – Improve awareness and understanding of Elmbridge's heritage assets**

**Recommendations – develop a programme to increase and extend awareness through different communication channels and initiatives including:**

a) Review the Council's web site to make it more succinct and easier to navigate, use headlines with links to further information such as listing descriptions, useful organisations and archive sources.

b) Provide information about or links to the different types of heritage assets and sources of advice for owners and agents such as energy efficiency improvements for older properties.

c) Work with the Council's Communications team to raise the heritage profile and provide publicity for local and national heritage events and initiatives. Investigate using social media and visual initiatives such as Instagram.

d) Support elected Members with pre-meeting training sessions and review and promote the work of the Heritage Champion.

## 6 – Conclusion, implementation and monitoring

### Conclusion

There is a clear steer from national legislation and guidance for local authorities to set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. It is essential to recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and to conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. The presumption is to deliver sustainable development and heritage should play an important part in this agenda. This includes the re-use or regeneration of existing historic buildings which utilises “embodied” energy. The use of the words “historic environment” makes it clear that any strategy should be about more than just individual heritage assets.

The Council’s Heritage Strategy will provide the framework for how we understand, preserve, manage, integrate, interpret and promote our heritage in the immediate and long term future. It has reviewed the national and local heritage context, identified some of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for the service before identifying key priorities and making recommendations. It establishes our “direction of travel” to form the basis for scoping and prioritising the future work of the Heritage team. The findings and recommendations are based on existing and gathered evidence but wider stakeholder and public consultation in early 2015 on the Consultation draft will enable us to test and refine this strategy further. In an economic climate where there are on-going constraints on local authority resources it is important to ensure that Elmbridge Borough Council delivers an **informed, focussed, resilient, efficient and cost-effective heritage service.**

### Implementation

Successful implementation will depend on the effective and innovative use of existing and future resources, on joined up thinking, co-operation from other stakeholders and an acknowledgement of collective responsibility. Four Key Priorities with Recommendations have been identified and these will need to be developed into an **Action Plan for Delivery**. More detail is now required on each recommendation to define what is needed, how and who delivers them and the resources required. Priority actions need to be highlighted as do those that are phased and all actions need to be costed and given timescales.

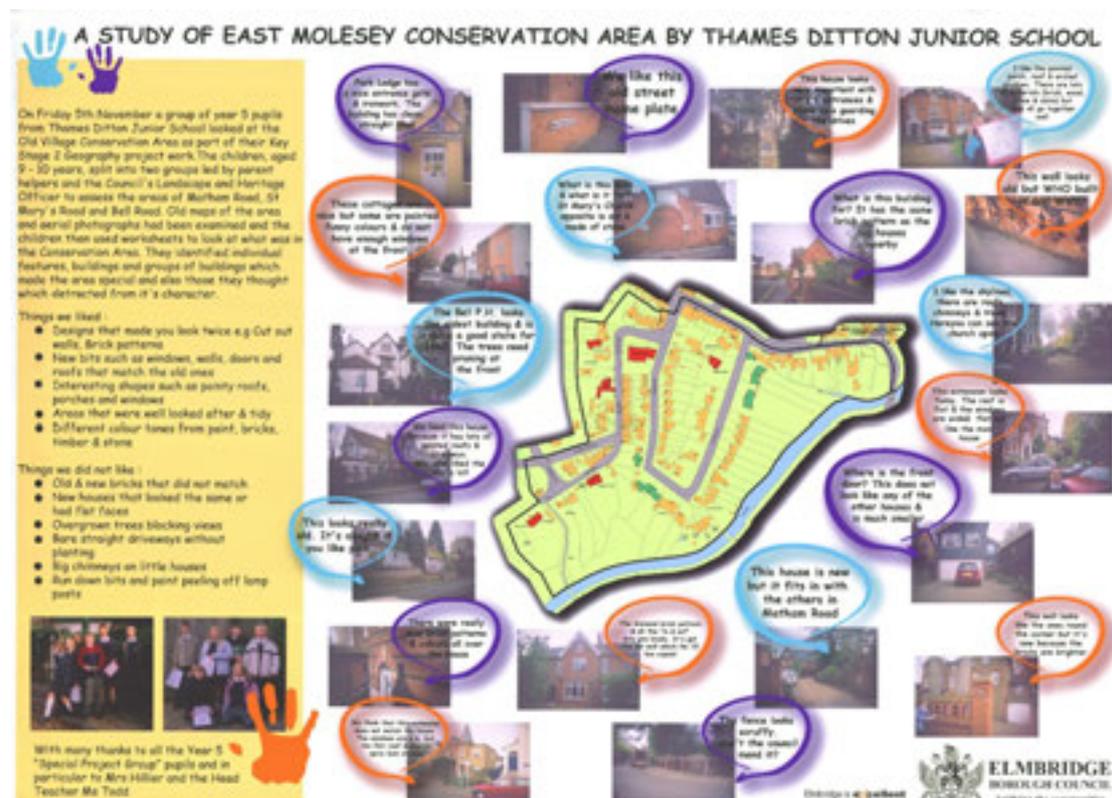
A realistic assessment of the resources and timescales required to deliver the actions is vital and the Heritage team will need a robust and resilient staff structure. A number of actions can be delivered in-house by existing heritage officers, others will need additional funding and can only be delivered through growth bids and some may be delivered via partnership working with other stakeholders and/or voluntary sector activities. To deliver many of the desired heritage related actions the Council will need to develop an enabling and facilitating rather than a “doing” role. This has some advantages as other bodies often have better access to grants and it can encourage a wider degree of involvement and ownership. Although traditional funding sources may no longer be available, alternative monies such as the Heritage Lottery

Fund and the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) offer the opportunity for communities to deliver their own local heritage projects.

### Monitoring and review

Monitoring is important to ensure the strategy is being implemented and effective and should follow a programmed timetable of actions. Performance indicators might include progress on compiling and maintaining up-to-date historic evidence bases, the number of Buildings At Risk and/or Heritage Assets At Risk within the Borough and the number removed from the BAR list through the planning process, progress on Conservation Area appraisals undertaken, specialist advice provided and/or grants for community based heritage initiatives.

Inevitably some work will be opportunistic as new sites come forward for development and opportunities are identified to protect and enhance the heritage assets they contain. A process of review is also fundamental to ensure resources are focussed on identified priorities, that they are either delivering the required outcomes and/or need to reflect altered ones. It is recommended that the new Heritage Strategy should be subject to timely appraisal and review.



Heritage for the next generation – a Heritage Appraisal by pupils from Thames Ditton Junior School for the East Molesey Conservation Area

## Précis of evidence base surveys

### Elmbridge Resident's Panel survey 2014

The panel comprised 1,510 members of which 645 responded in October 2014. Residents were asked for their top three priorities of which "Protecting the character of the area from building development" remained a clear priority supported by 57%. Residents were also asked how important various heritage, landscape and tree assets were to them and all these received a very high degree of support:

95% considered Conservation Areas were very (72%) or fairly important and 97% considered Historic Parks and Gardens were very (71%) or fairly important.

87% considered Veteran or Specimen trees to be very (54%) or fairly important.

### Local organisations survey

Questionnaires were sent to local organisations including history societies, Conservation Area Advisory Committees [CAACs] conservation trusts, residents associations and Surrey Gardens Trust in July 2014. A series of 8 questions sent to 20 organisations of whom 8 responded including 3 of the 10 established CAACs.

Responses included:

Most orgs have a good understanding of what heritage is in its widest sense and that this includes cultural aspects, all consider these contribute to the unique character and appearance of Borough. They recognise that there are a wide range of heritage assets including open spaces, the river landscapes and the setting of CAs. With regard to "threats" there is strong criticism of identikit architecture in new builds and mansions, "wealth vandalism" of existing historic buildings, concern over changes to planning laws promoting development, the effects of changes to permitted development and effects of infilling. Other threats are the lack of investment on resources within the Council's heritage section which makes it difficult to protect and enhance the Borough's heritage.

Future priorities are identified as continuing with Conservation Area appraisal project work, providing finance to deliver the recommendations e.g. heritage boards and public realm improvements, better support for the CAACs, the recognition and preservation of more recent 20thC architecture, promotion of more exciting examples of design and architecture, support for a "List of Parks and Gardens of Local Interest", suggestions for the restoration of historic landscapes and the use of Article 4s. Maintaining and investing in Heritage staffing levels, particularly for Listed Buildings is also seen as a priority action. There was unanimous enthusiasm and support for Conservation Area appraisal project work, which was commended for being a worthwhile process, involving a range of local people and producing "immensely useful" outcomes.

With regard to the Council's website it was noted that Heritage is not even listed on Council's A-Z home page, it is considered to be lost within the

Planning web pages and too “Council” like. It needs a higher profile, to be more visual and educational and provide specialist links to other websites including “gems” such as Claremont and Painshill. There was unanimous support for the Council to use the web to publicise and promote local initiatives such as heritage walks, plaques, lectures and events.

There was a limited level of understanding about how planning documents such as the National Policy Planning Framework and National Heritage Protection Plan will affect heritage priorities. Note - these are difficult for non-professionals to understand and apply and inevitably this causes frustration to these groups when unpopular planning decisions are made within the context of this framework.

### **Heritage professionals’ survey**

Questionnaires were sent out to private and local authority heritage professionals in July 2014 containing 9 questions. Out of 20 professionals contacted only 3 responded but these had over 75 years of collective heritage experience.

Responses:

All agreed that heritage should be considered in its widest sense and all were concerned about:

- the lack of financial resources at present and in future,
- the trend towards income generation and cost recovery rather than service delivery,
- the lack of understanding about significance for heritage assets and the wider benefits for economy and tourism,
- the lack of political support at national level,
- a tendency for “building-centric” approach at expense of elements that make up historic landscapes and gardens such as ancient woodlands and buried archaeology.

### **Value for Money Review**

This was conducted in 2008-9 as part of a wider council review to find cost-efficiencies and savings, it used Cipfa statistics and data collated from other 10 Surrey Boroughs. It found the Heritage team had the 3rd highest number of Listed Buildings, the 2nd highest population and the 4th highest number of Conservation Areas. However this was against having the lowest budget for policy and conservation, the 2nd lowest net expenditure on environmental initiatives and only an average number of full time equivalent Conservation Officers employed. With regard to priorities at that time, 97% of residents and 96% of businesses consider that Elmbridge retaining its distinctive, green and unique character is a very or quite important activity. The VMR made a number of recommendations to strengthen the team but only a limited number of these were implemented due to financial constraints.

### **Heritage Counts 2014 evidence**

National survey data produced by English Heritage, further info can be found on [www.heritagecounts.org.uk](http://www.heritagecounts.org.uk)

- Britain is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> out of 50 countries in terms of being rich in historic buildings and monuments.

- Over 58 million visits were made to historic sites in 2013 with the worth of £1,646 pp pa comparing well with sport which was worth £993pp pa.
- 90% of respondents agreed that investment in their local historic environment made the area a better place.
- 87% of people agree that better quality buildings and public spaces can improve the quality of life.
- 69% believe that heritage sites are important to the local community.
- 92% felt historic environment-led regeneration projects raised pride in their area.
- 92% of Heritage Lottery Fund volunteers meet new people when volunteering.
- 1 in 4 high growth businesses agree they are attracted by historic places and that the historic environment is an important factor in deciding where to locate, the same as for road access. Businesses that occupy listed buildings generate £13,000 extra gross value added (GVA) per business per year.
- 23% premium in the value of properties within a conservation area compared to those outside it. Source: London School of Economics May 2012.

### **National Heritage Protection Plan evidence**

The National Heritage Protection Plan (NHPP) is now in the last year of the first plan period and preparation for the next phase is underway. This phase will run from 2015-2020 and will be branded 'Heritage 2020'.

The most urgent priorities reported were:

- Addressing capacity loss in local authorities.
- Underpinning local planning processes.
- Reducing risk to heritage assets through expert advice.
- Building specialist capacity and skills to manage and conserve heritage assets.

### **South East Tourism survey**

Based on 2009 data and compared to the other Surrey districts Elmbridge has:

- 1<sup>st</sup> highest number of people in the tourism related sector, employing 5,700 people out of a total of 42,100 within the County,
- 1<sup>st</sup> highest proportion of workforce in tourist related work, 10.6%,
- 3<sup>rd</sup> highest number of day visits in the Borough, 3,260,000,
- 3<sup>rd</sup> highest day spend from day visits in the Borough, £122,241,000,
- 2<sup>nd</sup> highest total spend from all trips £177,053,000,
- 2<sup>nd</sup> highest total business turnover £233,495,000.

## **Council documents and publications**

(these are all available online and some are available in a printed format)

Elmbridge Core Strategy - July 2011

Development Management Plan - April 2015

Elmbridge Policies Map - July 2011

Design and Character SPD plus 8 Companion Guides - April 2012

Developer Contributions SPD - April 2012

Character Appraisal and Management Plans for Conservation Areas in:

- Bridge Road, East Molesey - April 2006
- Church Street/Bridge Street and Riverside, Walton-on-Thames - April 2013
- Claygate Village Character Appraisal - December 2000
- Downside Village, Cobham - March 2014
- Esher - February 2008
- Kent Town, East Molesey - December 2011
- Lakeside Drive, Esher - November 2013
- Monument Green, Weybridge - December 2006
- Old Village, East Molesey - April 2006
- Thames Ditton and Giggs Hill Green - October 2009
- The Tilt, Cobham - March 2015
- Town Centre, Weybridge - December 2006
- Whiteley Village, Hersham - July 2012

Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest

Locally Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest index

Conservation Area guide

Shop fronts in Conservation Areas guide

Wine and Coal Tax Posts guide

Advice on producing a Heritage Statement

## Glossary of terms (based on the NPPF definitions)

**Aged or Veteran tree:** A tree which, because of its great age, size or condition is of exceptional value for wildlife, in the landscape, or culturally.

**Archaeological interest:** There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

**Conservation (for heritage policy):** The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate, enhances its significance.

**Designated heritage asset:** A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under relevant legislation.

**Heritage asset:** A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

**Historic environment:** All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

**Planning condition:** A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood development order.

**Planning obligation:** A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

**Setting of a heritage asset:** The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

**Significance (for heritage policy):** the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.