

VILLAGE CHARACTER AREA SURVEY

The Character Area being surveyed is:

The survey team includes:

Date:

- This survey is designed to help you examine and record key aspects of the character of the built environment of Sonning Common.
- The evidence and understanding provided by your work will enable appropriate choices to be made about possible development sites and about the form and nature of any development that might then take place.
- The Character Areas we are suggesting you look at are all very much 'first stab', done just to make the tasks manageable and generate different results.
- Each basic area may be broadly right but that doesn't mean they are all different. Nor does it mean that the boundaries are right.
- Live with all that for now and we'll discuss (and possibly change) things later.

We are giving you:

- *This introduction and form.*
- *A map of all the Character Areas, including 'yours'.*
- *A map of your specific Area.*
- *Just for information:*
 - *A map showing the old field boundaries underlying the current village – they helped to shape what development happened when.*
 - *A map showing the currently suggested development sites.*

Getting the survey done:

- *Even if you (think you) know the area well, walk up and down, look all around.*
- *Start by taking some photos of the Character Area from outside looking in.*
- *Then take a few from near the edges of the Area looking out.*
- *Watch out in particular for any links between inside and outside – for example tree or hedge lines that carry through, or roads that go well beyond your area.*
- *Take a few photos of what seems to be typical of the character of your area.*
- *Mark on a map wherever you take any photos from, and in what direction (use a dot and a little arrow).*
- *For most of the form just add notes in boxes in response to the questions. There are some hints in brackets.*
- *Don't get too hung up on our terms and feel free to add 'not sure' if that helps.*
- *There is space at the end of the form to add notes suggesting different areas/boundaries if you wish to.*

When you have finished:

- *Place the form and map back in the envelope (keep anything else if you wish).*
- *We also need your photos so please either:*
 - *call in to the Parish Office with your camera or memory card and we can download them on the spot, or*
 - *put the photos on a CD and drop that into the office at any time.*
- *Once you've sorted how to get us the photos, make sure you also get us the envelope!*

General

1. What's the general pattern of the roads and 'blocks of buildings? If there are a few, can you show them on the map? (*Regular, irregular, straight, curved, small blocks, large blocks, narrow, wide open, contained, spacious etc.*)

2. What's the general mix of buildings? (*All residential, some mixed, commercial, industrial, other? Mark any non-residential uses on the map.*)

Houses

3. Are they all on one building line or does that vary? (*On pavement, with small front gardens, with large front gardens?*)

4. Can you guess when all (or different ones) were built?

5. What heights are they? (*All one height on each house or are there extensions etc. that are different?*)

6. Would you call the houses very small, small, medium-sized, large, very large?

7. What are the main building materials used? (On walls, roofs, chimneys, windows etc.)

8. Are front gardens open or closed in? (If open, just grass or bushes etc.? If closed, low walls, high walls, hedges, full of greenery, paved etc.? Well maintained?)

9. Any idea about back gardens (if you can see them)? (Big, small, fenced, with walls - low/high, heavily' greened' or just grass, paving, decking? Well maintained?)

10. What are the parking arrangements? (On the street, pull-off spaces, single garages, double garages – some of each? Any way to tell if the garages are actually used for cars?)

11. Are there major trees in front or back gardens? (On their own or in lines? Do those lines go off into the surrounding areas? If so, show those on the map.)

Roads and Public Areas

12. What are the roads like? (Wide, narrow, about right? Is there on-street parking? Does that limit access/movement? Well maintained?)

13. Are there always pavements to walk along? Well maintained?

14. Are there other footpaths that link through the area or into other areas? (Use map)

15. Are there street signs? (Lots? Just a few? Necessary? Too many?)

16. Is there street lighting? Are columns obtrusive or low key? Light pollution?

17. Do you feel entirely safe here? At night? Would children feel/be safe?

Now some *Broader Judgements!*

18. Are there any features, additions, oddities that detract from or damage the character of the area?

19. Are there any features, additions, oddities that help to create a clear character for the area?

20. If you had to pick just one or a few of all the aspects above that most helps to shape the character of the area, what would it/they be?

21. Other comments?

22. Is this a distinct area? Are the boundaries sensible? Should it be combined with others? Should it be sub-divided?