



Heritage Appraisal

*Submitted as part of the Outline Planning Application for
Land to the east of Clitheroe Road (Lawsonsteads Farm), Whalley*

COMMERCIAL ESTATES GROUP

**Land east of Clitheroe Road
(Lawsonsteads), Whalley**
Heritage Appraisal

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Contents	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. Relevant Heritage Assets	2
3. Impact of the Proposal on the WCA	3
Evolution of the proposal	3
Character and Significance of WCA	3
Impact on the WCA Setting	5
Other Matters Raised	9
4. Conclusion	10

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Whalley Townscape Appraisal Map

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Heritage Appraisal is submitted on behalf of Commercial Estates Group (CEG). It relates to proposals for a residential led development on land east of Clitheroe Road (otherwise known as 'Lawsonsteads'), Whalley in the Ribble Valley.
- 1.2. Its purpose is to consider the impact of the proposal on the historic environment of Whalley, in particular, it is to be read alongside the Historic Environment Assessment (Northern Archaeological Associates), Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (Planit), Design and Access Statement (Planit) and Planning Statement, all of which have been submitted in support of the application.
- 1.3. The Planning Statement provides details of the policy framework against which the proposal has been assessed, including National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the saved policies of the Districtwide Local Plan. However, this Appraisal has also had regard to extant PPS5 Planning Practice Guidance on the Historic Environment (March 2010); guidance on Seeing the History in the View (English Heritage May 2011) and the Setting of Heritage Assets (English Heritage, October 2011); the Whalley Conservation Area Appraisal (Adopted); and Whalley Conservation Area Management Guidelines (Draft).
- 1.4. As set out in the Planning Statement (Section 5), this site has been subject to a much larger previous application for 300 dwellings, a nursing home and a new primary school (Ref: 3/2011/0111), which was refused by the Council in January 2011 on three grounds, including the impact of the development on the Conservation Area.
- 1.5. However, since then, the Council has approved a smaller scheme for 55 dwellings and a nursing home, adjacent to the settlement boundary and Conservation Area (Ref: 3/2012/0687 dated November 2012). This has established the principle of development in this location.
- 1.6. In advancing earlier schemes, a significant amount of background work has been undertaken, by both NAA and Indigo. Known heritage assets (totalling 57) within a 1km study area have been confirmed in the updated Desk Based Assessment undertaken by NAA. However, no additional heritage assets that might be affected by the new proposal have been identified, further to the grant of planning permission in November 2012.
- 1.7. The following sections of this Appraisal identify relevant heritage assets and consider the impact of the proposal on, in particular, the Whalley Conservation Area, against the key guidance contained in the NPPF and other relevant guidance. It concludes that there is no reason to withhold planning permission on heritage grounds.

2. Relevant Heritage Assets

- 2.1. There are no heritage assets within the site apart from the possibility of archaeological assets. The updated assessment by NAA concludes that there is only small potential for the site to contain previously unrecorded archaeological remains of prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods and that a programme of staged archaeological work ((geophysical survey, watching brief and / or excavation of potential archaeological features) is likely to be recommended as mitigation.
- 2.2. Responses from Lancashire County Council (Archaeology) on the two previous applications confirmed no objection to the principle of development of the site on archaeological grounds subject to the imposition of suitably worded condition relating to the need for a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation. Such a condition was attached to the recent permission granted in November 2012 for the small site fronting Clitheroe Road.
- 2.3. No above ground heritage assets would be directly affected by the proposal. The only potential effects on heritage assets are, as discussed in relation to the previous proposal, on the setting of the Whalley Conservation Area (WCA) and a potential indirect impact on its character through an increase in traffic in the centre of Whalley.

3. Impact of the Proposal on the WCA

Evolution of the proposal

- 3.1. Following the previous refusal of a larger application in January 2012 (Ref: 3/2011/1111), discussion with Council Officers confirmed that the Council considered it possible to develop an area of the site extending from the east side of Clitheroe Road without causing harm to the character or appearance of the WCA although officers could not confirm how far east they considered such development might acceptably extend.
- 3.2. The later proposal for 55 units and a nursing home (Application Ref: 3/2012/0687), restricted development to the west part of the site north of the converted Lawsonsteads barn. In determining the acceptability of that proposal, the planning officer concluded in the report to Committee that the scale of the development would not prove detrimental to the WCA, nor to highway safety
- 3.3. Following a Member refusal of this smaller scheme, the application was resubmitted and subsequently approved at Committee in October 2012. It is thus clear that the Council accepts development of the western part of the site for residential purposes would preserve the character and appearance of the WCA and would not harm its significance, meeting the statutory test of the Planning (Listed Building & Conservation Areas) Act Section 72, and the fundamental test of the NPPF that development should not harm the significance of a heritage asset (paragraphs 133, 134 and 137).
- 3.4. The key question is how much of the site and how far east of Clitheroe Road could the site be developed without causing harm to the significance of the WCA or without any identified harm being unacceptable. In determining this point a clear understanding of the WCA character, its setting, and the contribution the site makes to the WCA's significance, is necessary.

Character and Significance of WCA

- 3.5. WCA was designated in 1972, its special architectural and historic interest that merited protection focussed around the Abbey, the valley of the River Calder in which the Abbey sits, and the main commercial street (King Street). The 2006 Conservation Area Appraisal summarises the special interest as comprising:
 - The ruins of a late 13th century Cistercian Abbey;
 - St Mary's and All Saints' Church and churchyard;
 - The principal commercial street, King Street, with its inns and variety of small shops; and
 - The river setting and fields and open green spaces that provide an attractive rural character to the conservation area.
- 3.6. The Appraisal defines and describes 3 Character Areas (Zones) within the conservation area:
 - The Sands, Whalley Abbey and Church Lane;
 - King Street; and
 - Whalley Bridge and the River Calder.
- 3.7. As part of the conservation area review carried out in preparation for the Appraisal in 2006, the boundaries of the conservation area were reviewed and recommended extensions subsequently adopted including adding:
 - fields and properties between the River Calder and Nab Hill, and

- properties in Station Road, Clitheroe Road, and Brookes Lane.
- 3.8. The inclusion of the fields and properties south of the river is noted in the Appraisal as important to protect the setting of the conservation area and, more particularly, the setting of the Abbey (a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a Grade I Listed Building). This emphasises the importance of the Abbey and its surroundings by the river to the character of the conservation area itself and the need to protect views between these areas, hence confirming the key contribution they make to the significance of the WCA.
- 3.9. The area of properties in Station Road, Clitheroe Road, and Brookes Lane within the newly extended boundary is noted as representing late 19th century expansion of the town but also including an 18th century (or earlier) lane. The Appraisal describes a number of buildings in these roads including 'well detailed 19th century houses' along the north side of Brookes Lane and the Manor House, a pre-18th century now altered and converted building, at its east end closest to the site. It also notes the presence and importance of mature trees within the area (the garden of the Croft) and the existence of a small stream to the south of The Croft. Identification of these features suggests they are considered to make a positive contribution to the conservation area although there is no reference to the specific reason why the boundary was extended to include this particular area or sub-area.
- 3.10. The revised boundaries of the WCA and important views are shown on the Townscape Appraisal Map (see **Appendix 1**) included in the Conservation Area Appraisal
- 3.11. A number of important views are identified on the Townscape Appraisal Map. These views are focussed on the Abbey, the river valley itself, and along King Street. None of these important views include the application site. Various references are made in the Appraisal to the character of Whalley and its conservation area being contained within a river valley and surrounded by hills that provide a rural setting. It is clear that the special character of the WCA that the designation seeks to protect derives from the medieval core of the town around the Abbey in its riverside location, and the historic centre focussed on King Street set within a wider rural and largely wooded landscape and surrounding hills. The Appraisal describes this on page 5 as:
- 'The town is surrounded on three sides by hills: to the south, Whalley Nab rises steeply from the river valley, with a similar, though much higher range of hills to the east and north-east'.*
- 3.12. The Appraisal also makes reference to the value of open green spaces within the conservation area, noting that the most important is that along the banks of the River Calder and that the green area west of the Sands is a particularly valuable space and should be protected from development. A number of important views are identified here across the river to the opposite bank.
- 3.13. It is this character of an historic settlement in a river valley, with the dramatic steeply rising hillside of the Nab to the south and the wider surrounding, largely wooded, hills to the north and east visible beyond later 19th and 20th century development of the town, that give significance to the WCA.
- 3.14. The Appraisal highlights the role of King Street as the principal commercial street in Whalley and notes that its busy traffic and few established pedestrian crossings is one of the principal negative features of this part of the conservation area. Similarly, busy traffic is noted as a principal negative feature of the Whalley Bridge and river Character Area. In contrast, the Appraisal notes the little traffic and peaceful character of The Sands, Whalley Abbey and Church Lane Character Area is a principal positive feature here (in the western part of the conservation area).
- 3.15. As part of a SWOT analysis the Appraisal identifies one of the most important positive features of the WCA to be the rural, open character of the town with trees and open green spaces. It notes that the tight urban form of Whalley means there are very few sites for

development within the conservation area. Important views from Whalley bridge and up to the Nab are also highlighted. Threats to the conservation area are identified as loss of architectural details and use of inappropriate modern materials, loss of existing front boundary walls, and poor quality shop fronts.

- 3.16. At the time the Appraisal was prepared, a public consultation document providing guidance on management of the WCA was produced (Whalley Conservation Area Management Guidance). The stated intention of the Guidance was to assist in the preservation and enhancement of the WCA. It reprised the Summary Special Character of the conservation area set out in the Appraisal, and the issues identified through the SWOT analysis. In following up the recommendations of the Appraisal the Management Guidance set out design guidance intended to counter the Threats identified to the WCA. It also provided design principles for new development in the conservation area which addressed such issues as:
- Urban grain
 - Scale and density
 - Height
 - Massing
 - Appearance, materials and detailing
- 3.17. This public consultation document has not been progressed but, together with the analysis of Townscape Character Areas in the Design and Access Statement, it does establish a basis for designing an appropriate historic environment informed approach to development in Whalley.

Impact on the WCA Setting

Policy and guidance

- 3.18. The NPPF provides an understanding of the meaning of setting in Annex 2. This notes setting to be the surroundings in which an asset is experienced, and that elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, or may be neutral.
- 3.19. The most recent guidance on setting 'The Setting of Heritage Assets' (English Heritage October 2011) reprises much of the earlier extant guidance in PPS5 Practice Guidance on understanding what comprises a heritage asset's setting. This latest document is of particular relevance to the application proposal where the concept of setting and its contribution to the significance of a heritage asset is discussed.

'Setting is not a heritage asset, nor a heritage designation. Its importance lies in what it contributes to the significance of the heritage asset. This depends on a wide range of physical elements within, as well as perceptual and associative attributes, pertaining to a heritage asset's surroundings. Each of these elements may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the asset, or be neutral. In some instances the contribution made to the significance of the asset's significance may be negligible; in others it may make the greatest contribution to significance' (our emphasis).

- 3.20. Design of a development can also be important in assessing its impact on the setting of a heritage asset, as highlighted in the PPS5 Planning Practice Guidance;

'The design of a development affecting the setting of a heritage asset may play an important part in determining its impact. The contribution of setting to the historic significance of an asset can be sustained or enhanced if new buildings are carefully designed to respect their setting by virtue of their scale, proportion, height, massing, alignment, and use of

materials. This does not mean that new buildings have to copy their older neighbours in detail, but rather that they should together form a harmonious group'.

- 3.21. The NPPF sets out specific requirements for the achievement of good design in Section 7. It discusses the factors that should influence proposals to ensure they deliver high quality and inclusive design and notes that planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure development:
- functions well and adds to the quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;
 - establishes a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work, and visit;
 - optimises the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses;
 - responds to local character and history, reflecting the identity of local surroundings and materials;
 - creates safe and accessible environments; and,
 - are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.
- 3.22. It also notes that whilst visual appearance and architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations and that connections between people and places and integration of the new development into the natural, built, and historic environment should be addressed.

Contribution of the site to the WCA significance

- 3.23. The application site lies immediately east of Clitheroe Road between the edge of the main settlement of Whalley and the more dispersed development leading north and east from the junction with Wiswell Lane towards the A671, beyond the north east boundary of the conservation area. It extends east across an existing large open field that slopes up to the north east corner of the site, and to the south on a smaller field that slopes down towards the rear of existing development on Sydney Avenue and Woodland Park.
- 3.24. Hedgerows and trees border the northern boundary with existing development along Wiswell Lane, and to the south behind existing housing development in Woodland Park, Sydney Avenue, and the west edge of Archbishops Wood.
- 3.25. A public footpath dissects the site between these two main areas, linking Brookes Lane to Spring Wood, an area of Ancient Woodland stretching up the slopes of the surrounding hills east of Whalley beyond the A671.
- 3.26. The land rises west to east to meet the A671 with the highest point at the north east corner of the site adjacent to the boundary with Oakhill College sports pitches. There is a small roughly triangular area of woodland, an outlier of Spring Wood, within the site alongside the A671. A small stream meanders through the site from the north west corner of the site at Wiswell Lane diverging at the footpath to flow west alongside Brookside Close and east along the public footpath and then under the A671. It is lined with a number of trees.
- 3.27. The landscape and built character of the site and surroundings are discussed more fully in the Design and Access Statement and Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA).
- 3.28. The detached and semi-detached villa style houses fronting Brookes Lane (identified as Buildings of Townscape Merit) back on to an area of open space lying between them and the

site boundary close to Clitheroe Road. Brookes Lane runs roughly east but turns north as it reaches the outer edge of existing development, culminating in front of Manor House and its adjacent building (both Buildings of Townscape Merit) that face east and converted farm buildings (Lawsonsteads) facing south into a tarmac courtyard area created by the road end. A field gate at the east end of the lane provides access to the footpath running through the site.

- 3.29. The site is not visible from within the conservation area except for limited long distance views from the slopes of The Nab, and from the east end and land north of Brookes Lane.
- 3.30. In views from the Nab (see the LVIA View 1, view from the southern most point of the conservation area) the existing open fields can be seen to the east of the main part of the conservation area in the foreground, beyond later housing development that rises up the valley slopes north east and east of King Street.
- 3.31. The wooded boundaries of the site define its upper edge where it adjoins the grounds of Oakhill College and the A671, and the east edge of the lower field as it adjoins Archbishops Wood. Beyond these boundaries the surrounding well wooded landscape continues to rise towards Wiswell and Pendle Hill in the distance, providing the setting of relatively wild moorland and wooded landscape with surrounding hills described in the WCA Appraisal. The landscape characteristics of the area are described further in the Design and Access Statement and LVIA.
- 3.32. The site can be seen from this high vantage point at the southern edge of the conservation area and could be considered to form part of the WCA setting, appearing as an area of green between the edge of existing development and the rising wooded slopes beyond the A671. As such these views of it make only a very marginal or negligible contribution to the WCA significance as discussed above.
- 3.33. Development that is sensitively designed to respond to the scale, proportion, height, massing, alignment, and use of materials of its existing surroundings would not have an adverse impact on these views, would aid its integration into its surrounding natural, built, and historic environment, and would not harm the significance of the conservation area.
- 3.34. Land at the rear of Brookes Lane included within the conservation area is an area of domestic gardens behind properties fronting Clitheroe Road, these properties themselves lying outside the conservation area boundary.
- 3.35. To the north is an open green space, crossed diagonally by a footpath, which abuts the south boundary of the application site. The site only becomes visible from Brookes Lane approaching the east end, at which point it appears as gently rising open green fields backed by the wooded hillsides beyond the A671 and framed by the houses and garden enclosures bordering the lane. At the end of the lane on the conservation area boundary, the field gate marks the beginning of the public footpath leading through the site.
- 3.36. Views of the site here make no contribution to the fundamental significance of the WCA, which lies in its historic interest deriving from early development and focus around the Abbey, the River Calder, and King Street. The interest of this part of the conservation area to which it is immediately adjacent lies in the architectural character of the buildings along Brookes Lane and the winding informal character of the semi-rural lane itself from the end of which views of the undeveloped site appear. This character is very clearly described and illustrated in the Design and Access Statement.
- 3.37. As with views from the Nab, sensitively designed development of the site that respects the character of Brookes Lane and its buildings, informed by the streetscape and spaces in this part of the conservation area, would aid the transition between the more developed urban character of Whalley and the surrounding hillsides and would not harm the significance of the conservation area.

Impact of the Proposals on Setting

- 3.38. The site's contribution to the WCA significance as part of the setting is negligible, as discussed above.
- 3.39. The proposals have been carefully designed, informed by a thorough analysis of the townscape and buildings of the immediate and wider surroundings including the conservation area as set out in the Design and Access Statement. The Parameters Plan accompanying the application shows how the design parameters for development of the site would respect the character of the conservation area and relevant views, and maintain a green wedge of land on the higher slopes of the site that would provide a natural edge to the development.
- 3.40. The Illustrative Masterplan contained within the Design and Access Statement demonstrates how the proposed school, new link road, and housing could successfully be integrated into the adjacent semi-rural environment at the outer north east edge of the conservation area and continue the transition between the tighter knit more urban form of the heart of the conservation area further down the valley slopes and its wider rural landscape. It also illustrates how in the limited views from the slopes of the Nab the proposals could be designed to ensure they appear as a natural addition to the existing settlement representing a further phase of growth on the slopes of the valley nestled into the rising wooded slopes beyond.
- 3.41. The design of the proposed development as illustrated with its spatial sequences, open landscaped areas, building scale and typologies, and use of materials makes the most of the opportunities of the site to accommodate new housing and a new school in a manner that would complement the character of the conservation area, not adversely affect views in or out, or its setting, and would not harm its significance. This can be seen in views presented in the LVIA.

Impact of Traffic on WCA Character

- 3.42. King Street is the commercial heart of the village and is lined with a variety of buildings dating mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries in use principally for a range of retail purposes. These buildings are generally good quality, some being statutorily listed (Grade II), and have mostly been well maintained so that they form an attractive centre to the conservation area, generally providing a good sense of enclosure. The northern section of King Street is more open with buildings on the west side set back behind a wider pavement and front gardens whilst the bus terminus area and Memorial Gardens opposite open out the east side of the street.
- 3.43. The existing street environment has some good features (traditional paving slabs, setted areas) but suffers from poorly-defined road layout and parking areas which contribute to a degree of indiscriminate and intrusive parking including on the pavement. There are a number of car parks within the town centre that make provision for long stay visitors. The management of the existing public and private car parks, however, is not well co-ordinated with the on-street parking provision for short-stay visitors.
- 3.44. Details of surveys carried out to establish existing patterns of use and availability of parking spaces within the car parks and on-street are reported in the accompanying Transport Assessment (TA). On the basis of the information provided in the TA, there is no shortage of parking provision in Whalley. However, it appears that within the shopping area, unconstrained on-street parking results in vehicles parking for more than 2 hours thus limiting availability at peak times and giving rise to concerns that there are parking and traffic problems in Whalley centre.
- 3.45. Traffic on King Street is at times constrained by existing uncontrolled road side parking and its associated manoeuvring which leads to the perception that busy traffic is a problem within the centre.

- 3.46. In the context of the previous larger application, the Councils Conservation Officer raised concerns that additional traffic from the development would increase flows through the centre and lead to an adverse impact on King Street and the significance of the conservation area itself.
- 3.47. The TA submitted with this application reports the results of updated traffic surveys and a further assessment of projected traffic flows from committed development as well as the application proposal. This assessment shows that, with the proposed link road in place, there will be an overriding strategic benefit to Whalley as there is the potential for this new road to act as an alternative route and reduce two way traffic flows on King Street, Accrington Road, and Wiswell Lane.
- 3.48. It is anticipated this diversion of traffic could result in a reduction of 24-35% of trips in the morning peak from Accrington Road and King Street, and 25% to 37% reduction of trips in the evening peak. The removal of this level of traffic from the centre of Whalley would provide considerable benefits by reducing congestion and the impact of traffic that is noted as a principal negative feature of the WCA in the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 3.49. There would thus be an enhancement of the conservation area character by the reduction of traffic intrusion at its heart.

Other Matters Raised

- 3.50. The Councils Conservation Officer has previously suggested there would be harm to the individual setting of Lawsonsteads (Manor) House, a Building of Townscape Merit.
- 3.51. As described above, Manor House lies at the east end of Brookes Lane facing towards the site. It is a traditional stone building which is present on the 1848 OS map on a track at the edge of the town. At two storeys high, with a slate double pitched roof it is set behind a walled garden at the edge of the tarmac turning area of Brookes Lane. It is readily visible approaching from the east along the public footpath with the adjacent higher two storey stone building (15 Brookes Lane) and the converted former barn, now Lawsonsteads, to the north, and the houses on Brookes Lane beyond.
- 3.52. It is an undesignated heritage asset and of low or limited value and has been much altered. Its significance lies primarily in its appearance that is characteristic of traditional rural farmhouses. Its surroundings now comprise the semi-rural character of Brookes Lane and residential development behind, the domesticated barn conversion of Lawsonsteads, and the tarmac road at the front beyond which lie the open green fields of the site.
- 3.53. The site itself makes little contribution to the significance of the building and development that is sensitively designed to continue the transition from the existing semi-rural character of its immediate surroundings towards the wooded hills beyond would not adversely affect the setting of this building.
- 3.54. Comments on the previous proposal by the Conservation Officer also identified concern at the loss of the backdrop to ambulatory views on Brookes Lane impacting on the proximity of surrounding hills and the rural open character of the conservation area.
- 3.55. The character and significance of the conservation area, the contribution the site makes to this, and the impact of the proposals on this significance is discussed in detail above including on views along Brookes Lane. The Design and Access Statement and the LVIA address the issue of views beyond this part of the conservation area and the integration of the proposals into the surrounding landscape.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. No designated heritage assets would be affected by the application proposal.
- 4.2. There is potential for unrecorded archaeological assets to be present on the site but a suitable condition would mitigate the risk of harm to any such assets.
- 4.3. The significance of the WCA lies in its character as an historic settlement located in a river valley beneath the dramatic steeply rising hillside of the Nab to the south and the wider surrounding, largely wooded, hills to the north and east. The area within the newly extended boundary that includes Brookes Lane adds little to this character but has a character that derives from the nature of the lane and the buildings that line it.
- 4.4. The site makes a negligible contribution to the significance of the conservation area. The proposal has been sensitively designed to take account of the character and appearance of the adjacent conservation area. This is reflected in the submitted Parameters Plan which seeks to ensure no harm would result to the setting of the Whalley Conservation Area or its significance.
- 4.5. The Transport Assessment accompanying the application concludes that the proposal will provide an alternative route for existing and development generated traffic. It will reduce traffic flows in the centre of the town and thus relieve existing congestion and the intrusion of vehicles in the principal street through the conservation area. This would result in a benefit as it would enhance the WCA character.
- 4.6. No harm would be caused to the setting of any undesignated heritage assets.
- 4.7. The main policy background against which the proposal should be determined is set out in Section 5 of the Planning Statement. This Heritage Appraisal has considered those aspects of policy specifically relevant to the historic environment issues arising from the application. In carrying out the assessment specific regard has been had to Sections 7 (Requiring Good Design) and 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the NPPF, and the RVDLP Policy ENV16.
- 4.8. The findings of the assessment are that the impact of the proposed development would not be harmful to the setting of the WCA, or to any other heritage asset, and that the proposal provides an opportunity to enhance the WCA character by reducing through traffic in its centre.
- 4.9. In conclusion, the proposal fully accords with planning policy on the historic environment and there is no reason to withhold planning permission on heritage grounds.

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Ribble Valley Borough Council

Whalley Conservation Area

Townscape Appraisal Map

-  Conservation area boundary
-  Proposed extension to conservation area boundary
-  Listed Buildings
-  Buildings of Townscape Merit
-  Significant open spaces
-  Historic surfaces
-  Important tree groups
-  Important trees
-  Proposed Article 4 Direction
-  Important views
-  Focal buildings

