

## CHARACTER APPRAISAL - KINGTON

**PF 702**

Project: Character Appraisal  
Kington Parish Council  
Herefordshire

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## INTRODUCTION

### Terms of Appointment

OHA have been appointed by Kington PC to prepare a Character Appraisal of Kington Town, to be included within their Neighbourhood Plan. The Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit has been used as a basis for the appraisal.

The appraisal will take into account the findings of the Neighbourhood Questionnaire, local maps, information and photographs.

The findings of the character appraisal will then be used to formulate policies and guidelines that the parish council can use within their Neighbourhood Plan, so that any future development within the settlement takes account of these guidelines and policies.

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## **PART 1: OXFORD CHARACTER ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT**

Several visits to Kington were made, with information, photographs and notes taken, together with a comprehensive mapping exercise undertaken. All of this data has been used in preparation of this character assessment.

### **1.00 INITIAL REACTION**

- 1.01 After our initial visit around Kington, we wrote down our initial impressions, and have summarised these as follows:
- Town sits within the bottom of the valley - hidden
  - Tightly packed town 'core'
  - Residential development on the periphery of the town core, uncharacteristic development that dilutes the surrounding architectural quality.
  - Traditional building materials within the town core; stone, stone / slate roofs, painted brickwork, timber fenestration, white render. Residential developments consist of red brick, some slate but mostly concrete tile roofs, yellow render.
  - Narrow footpaths with high stone walls
  - Narrow roads and tightly packed streets with tall buildings in the town core.
  - Few views to the surrounding countryside, some glimpsed views between buildings and footpaths / roads. The main views being of the town centre itself.

## 1.10 SPACES

1.11 There are a number of spaces that have helped form and define Kington, and these are highlighted on the maps below. The main spaces that we believe are integral to Kington include; the Motte & Bailey Castle (Scheduled Ancient Monument), the Recreational Ground, Kington Football Ground, St Mary's Church and Hergest Croft.

*View of the Recreational Ground*



1.12 These spaces have acted as a natural border to development, providing the town with its unique character, allowing and opening up views to the surrounding countryside, thus keeping the town linked-to and rooted-to, its context.

*View of St Mary's Church*



- 1.13 It is evident that no development has taken place on any of these spaces since 1928, and this evidence alone reinforces their unique distinction to Kington.

*View of Kington Town football pitch*



- 1.14 Other spaces that stood-out during our visits were those formed by the tall stone walled footpaths and tightly packed town centre. These spaces shield views of dwellings and the wider landscape, providing channelled views within the village itself. It is only on the periphery of the village where views of the surrounding landscape open up, providing perspective of how the town sits within the valley floor.

*Channelled view from stone walled footpath with glimpsed views of the landscape across rooftops.*



- 1.15 Other examples of spaces are those that act as nodes (eg. The centre of the town), and urban spaces (eg Place de Marines, Common Close and The Square). These spaces are all quite different, and subtlety to the variety of spaces available to the residents of Kington.

*View of Place de Marines*



*View of Common Close*



*Centre of town*



*View of The Square*



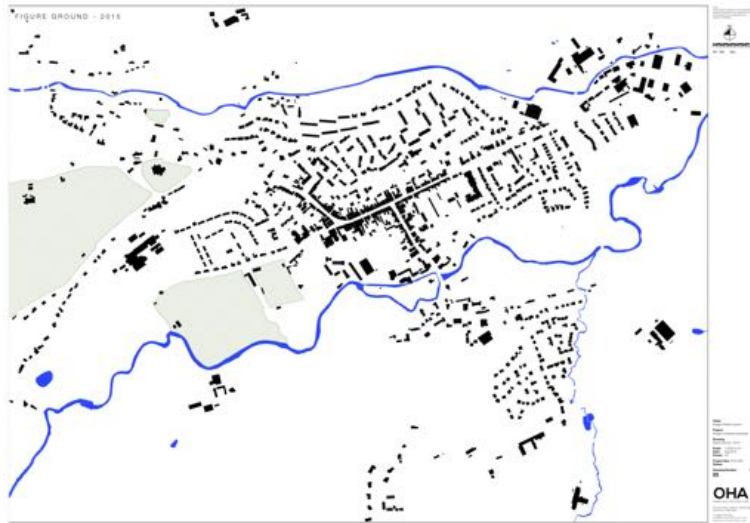
Once thing that is evident when you walk around the town centre of Kington and that is the lack of open spaces. This is largely to do with how the town itself has been constructed i.e. tightly packed buildings adjacent to the roads. This has resulted in a lack of street furniture around the town and has prevented there being a central focal point within the town – the nearest to this being the Place de Marines adjacent to the museum.

This compact townscape, and the generic, post war / late 20<sup>th</sup> century residential development that has taken place has pushed Kington closer and closer to the natural features that constrict it (River Arrow, Back Brook, Hergest Ridge and valley walls). The result of which has meant an increase in pressure to develop the few open spaces within Kington, and most recently has seen development spill out over to the opposite bank of the river Arrow, which includes a new doctors surgery located to the east of the A44 and a large scale residential development along the Old Eardisley Road.



## 1.16 Maps

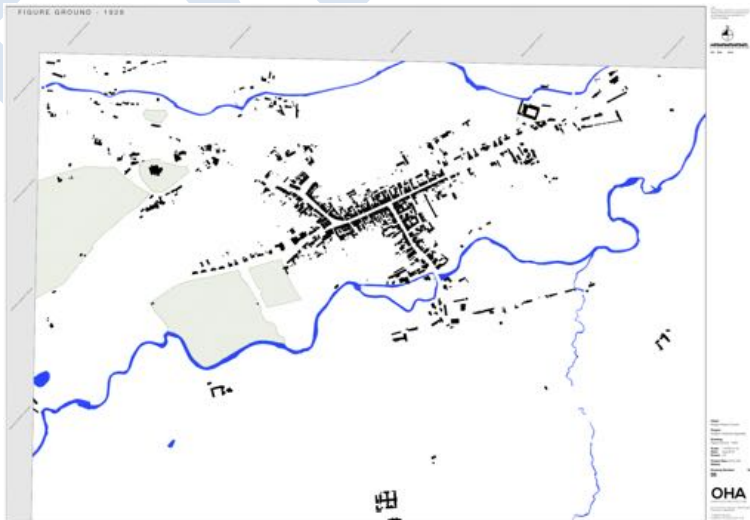
### 2015 Figure / Ground Map



### 1980 Figure / Ground Map



### 1928 Figure / Ground Map



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## 1.20 BUILDINGS

1.21 The local buildings, have a strong impact on the character of the town. The town centre has tightly packed buildings, predominantly three stories tall, constructed using a mixture of coursed and natural stonework, painted brickwork, white render, painted timber sash windows and doors, and slate roofs with brick chimney stacks.

*View down into the town centre*



Moving out from the town centre the built environment becomes mostly residential. Large scale residential developments that have taken place over recent years dominate the periphery of Kington, and detract from the many good examples of traditional dwellings and cottages found around Kington.

*View of more recent residential development*



The river Arrow, Back Brook and their tributaries have influenced the location of buildings in Kington, and this is evident in the tightly packed 'core' which

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straddles the central space between the River Arrow, Back Brook and their associated flood plains. These natural features have 'controlled' development over the years by channelling buildings along the valley between these two watercourses to the east and west.

Looking at the maps above, it is clear to see how Kington has grown, and been developed over the years. Development has ranged from infill plots between existing buildings, to large-scale residential developments. The footprint of Kington has expanded greatly and has seen recent development spill out from the tightly packed nature of the town, onto the outskirts of the town itself.

*View of dwellings on the outskirts of the town centre (painted brickwork, render, stone and slate)*



*View of established dwellings (stonework, timber fenestration, slate roof with brick chimney stack)*



*View of a more sympathetic modern development (white render, stone, slate roof)*



*View of a traditional building in the town centre*



It is clear from looking at the above figure ground maps that given the large amounts of development that has taken place in Kington over the years, the central 'core' of the city has remained relatively untouched. This is thanks to the quality of the buildings within it, which help make up and define the fabric of Kington. This point is further reinforced when viewing drawing 6.1, which shows the large number of listed buildings within Kington town centre.

- 1.23 The majority of windows within the town centre tend to be painted timber, often with the casements painted in contrasting colours to that of the frames and sills. The style of window tends to be traditional sash windows with glazing bars. More recent residential developments tend to all have white UPVC windows

*Some typical timber windows*



- 1.24 The majority of doors tend to be painted timber, often in matching colours to the windows.

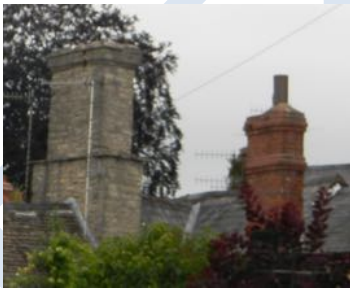
*Some typical doors*





1.25 Given the historic nature of dwellings in the village, the majority of them have chimneys, either in brick or stone.

*Some typical chimneys*





- 1.26 Kington town centre has many traditional shop fronts with full to three quarter glazed timber windows and doors. These add to the homely feel of Kington town centre, as well as its heritage, and help emphasise a sense of community within the town centre.

*Some examples of shop fronts found in Kington*





### 1.30

### VIEWS

#### 1.31

The town itself sits within the base of a valley and ‘nestles into’ the valley and river landscape. The centre of the town is well screened when viewed from afar with only the church spire and roof tops visible between the many mature trees that shelter Kington. Due to the growth of Kington over the years, buildings have been pushed out, and often onto higher areas of the valley and naturally become more visible to the surrounding landscape.

Within the village itself, views are glimpsed between buildings, along roads and footpaths. Kington has a strong link with walking, being located near the Offa Dyke path, and hosts an annual walking festival. It isn’t until you reach the outskirts of the town, however, that you get a sense of the surrounding landscape and its clear links with the neighbouring hills.

The majority of the views in Kington are of its characterful town centre, and mainly inward looking, with views of the architectural quality of the buildings contained within it.

*View of the town centre*



*View down High Street*



*View down Bridge Street*



*View up Bridge Street with landscape in background*



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#### 1.40 LANDSCAPE

Kington has many landscape features that have influenced its culture and built environment. Most notable of these are the river Arrow, Back Brook and the valley walls at which it settles at the base of.

*View of the river Arrow*



*View from Tanyard Lane*



- 1.41 Only on the periphery of the village, where the buildings are less densely spaced, do the views of the wider landscape open out, and come into view.

*View between recently built dwellings on the periphery of the town.*



*View from rear of Co-op towards hills in background*



*View from Chapel Lane looking North*



- 1.44 When looking at the maps, the River Arrow and Back Brook are quite strong features, which have obviously affected how Kington has developed. When visiting the town, however, these do not seem to have the same impact on the built landscape, with the only significant marker being the bridge on Bridge Street.

*View along the bridge on Bridge Street*



- 1.45 Looking at boundary treatments, there are very few within the core of Kington, as these are predominantly formed by the buildings themselves. Where there are boundary walls, these are mainly stonewalls, which also form the many paths and walkways around the centre of Kington.

*Example of stone boundary walls*



Once you move into the residential areas, the boundary treatments are more established domestic type: hedgerows, brick walls and timber fencing.



## 1.50 AMBIENCE / GENIUS LOCI

The overall ambience is of a small rural town, with a strong agricultural feel. There is a 'relaxed' air about the place, as though both the people and the buildings are well established in this location. There is a feeling of longevity about the place, a quality that has been built up over the last century, which creates this spirit of place.

*Pathways, walkways and the landscape beyond*



Taking into account all of the above information, we believe that although the natural landscape has played a very strong role in determining Kington's character, it is its tight urban grain in the centre of Kington that creates its sense of place. Together with the narrow walkways and footpaths, these help establish the atmosphere and experience of Kington.

## **PART 2: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **2.00 MAPS**

#### **2.01 FIGURE / GROUND MAPS**

Figure / ground maps have been prepared, which show graphically, how Kington has developed, grown and changed during the timeframe noted above.

1928 Figure / Ground Map

1980 Figure / Ground Map

2015 Figure / Ground Map

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## 2.04

### CURRENT MAPPING

Having carried out a number of visits to Kington, we were also able to highlight the various features of Kington.

2015 Map: Land Uses

2015 Map: Infrastructure

2015 Map: Legibility

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