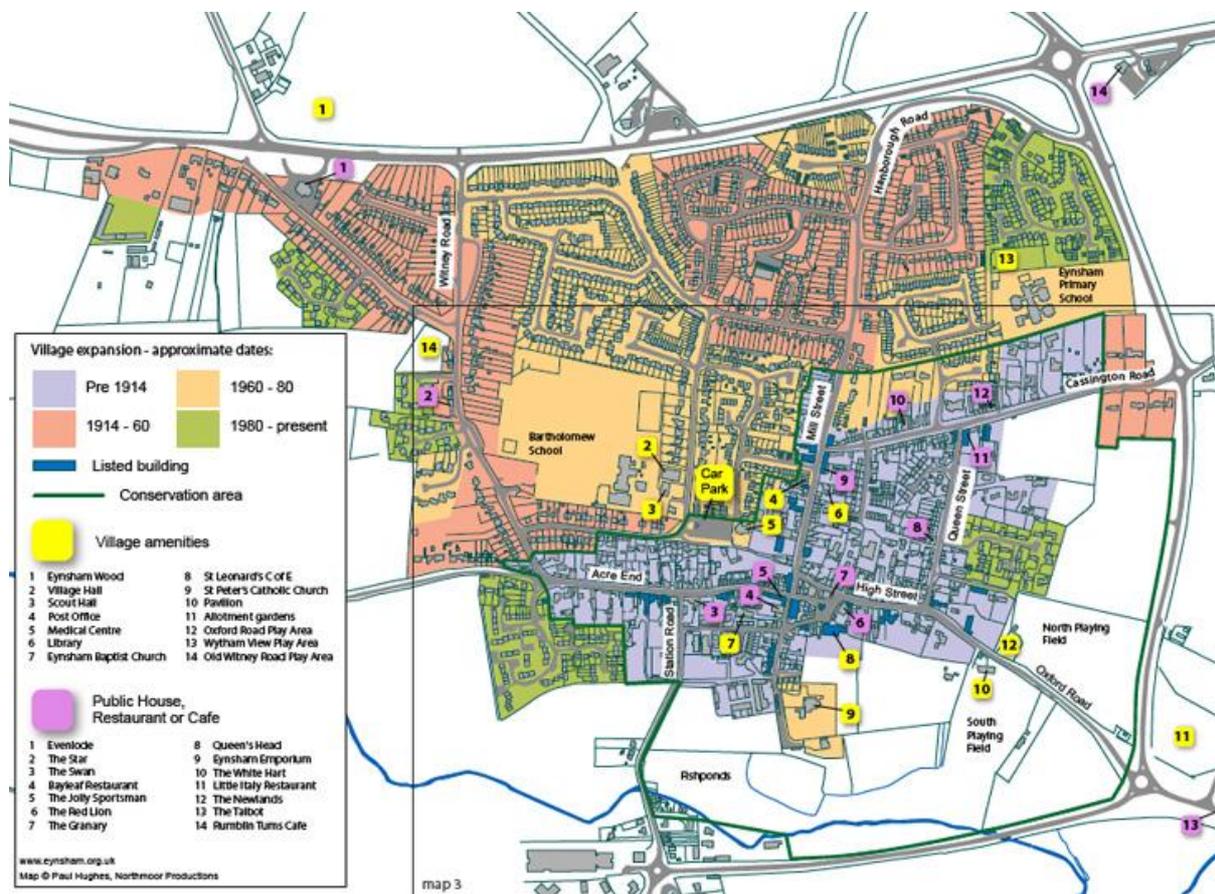


Eynsham Parish Plan 2007-08

54 HOUSING

54.1 The Facts

Housing growth in Eynsham is not new, as shown on the map below:



54.1.1 From its historic core beside the Abbey, the village expanded north-east into New Lands in the 13th century; and then almost doubled in the first half of the 20th century with ribbon development further north, along the Witney and Hanborough Roads. The period from 1960-1980 was a time of systematic consolidation – linking the newer and older areas – with little consideration for local materials and style, or for parking need.

54.1.2 The issues are ably covered in the Village Design Statement (2004), especially on pages 15-18. More recent development has largely consisted of infill or “rounding off” and has arguably been more successful, e.g. Merton Close, Orchard Close.

54.1.3 Figures for recent completions show a rapid tailing off in new build:

i.	1 April 1981 - 31 March 1986	237
ii.	1 April 1986 - 31 March 1996 (10 years)	116
iii.	1 April 1996 - 31 March 2001	47
iv.	1 April 2001 - 31 March 2005	20



Illustration 1: Infill on Newland Street beside the White Hart, June 2007



Illustration 2: Work begins on ten dwellings behind Acre End Street, June 2007

- 54.1.4 At the same time, West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)'s Housing Need Survey 2004 has seen a dramatic rise in price of housing, far in excess of wage inflation and especially in the more affordable properties. In the two year period since the previous survey:

“The average price of a terraced house has increased by 29.7% (and) flats / maisonettes have increased ... by 39.1%”

- 54.1.5 The number of properties for sale at this end of the market is low in any case, at 16.7% and 3.6% respectively of the total market in Eynsham, against 27% and 7.2% respectively across the district as a whole.

- 54.1.6 The picture for rented accommodation is hardly brighter, with prices above the district average for properties of every size. The income level required to buy a 1-bedroom flat is £37,200 and to rent it £24,000, yet 54.4% of the population earn under £23,920. Furthermore, the 20-29 age group (the most likely to be forming new households) is expected to increase by 7.9% between 2006 and 2011; and 95% of first time buyers cannot afford current access prices to either the private rental or home ownership market. In short, more affordable housing has become essential.

WODC defines affordable housing as:

“... housing provided with either public or private subsidy for people who are unable to resolve their housing requirements in the local housing market because of the relationship between housing cost and local incomes”

- 54.1.7 For Eynsham, the first significant response to the need for affordable housing came in summer 2005, with a planning application by Cottsway Housing for 40 homes between Chilbridge Road and Merton Close, on land owned by Oxfordshire County Council, for individuals or families who could show a direct connection with the village under Rural Development Exemption Site legislation. Any future residents would also need to have a local connection and properties would be either part owned or rented.

54.1.8 Eynsham Parish Council rejected the application on 15 November 2005:

“Despite acknowledging the need for affordable houses ... (the Council) had to weigh this against the danger of further development from opening up this side of the village, the infrastructure and additional traffic using Chilbridge, Acre End Street and Witney Road, together with the environment and threat of flooding in Station Road.”

54.1.9 The application was discussed by the Lowlands Planning Committee of WODC on 19 December 2005. About 40 people from Eynsham attended the meeting. Permission was granted subject to the applicant's first entering into a Legal Agreement requiring that the development is limited to affordable housing.

54.1.10 Further consultation between Cottsway Housing and the residents of Chilbridge Road was planned.

54.1.11 In December 2006 WODC announced:

“There is a possibility that there will be 28 properties for rent at Chilbridge Road Eynsham available in Summer 2007: 4x one bed roomed flats; 6x two bed roomed flats; 9x two bed roomed houses; 7x three bed roomed houses; and 2x four bed roomed houses... (also) 12 properties for sale on a new build Home Buy (shared ownership) basis at Chilbridge Road Eynsham available in summer 2007 ... 6 x 2 bed roomed houses and 6 x 3 bed roomed houses.”

In each case:

“To be eligible, applicants need to have a local connection with Eynsham or neighbouring parishes”

Subsequent delays seem to be due differing legal opinions on the road access.

54.1.12 In July 2005 the independent Inspector's Report on the Local Plan recommended the addition of a new housing site on the eastern edge of Eynsham, off Bitterell.

54.1.13 Objections at the time were strenuous and a meeting called by the Eynsham Society on 29 November 2005 attracted 138 electors.

54.1.14 The West Oxfordshire Local Plan – 2011: Housing (adopted June 2006) steers the majority of new house building to Witney and the four largest towns and key service centres: Carterton; Chipping Norton; Eynsham and Woodstock. Allocations for the period 2001-2011 are:

i.	Witney	1563 - 1613
ii.	Carterton	2116 - 2186
iii.	Chipping Norton	65 - 105
iv.	Eynsham	100
v.	Woodstock	60

54.1.1 Development of Eynsham East is scheduled for Phase Two (planning permission will not be granted before 1 April 2008). Detailed provisions follow:

“Land to the west of the B4449 Eynsham eastern by-pass as shown on the Eynsham inset Map is allocated for housing. Within this area the following provision will be made:

- i. Housing (2.8ha) which shall include up to 50% affordable housing, taking into account the level of local housing need;*
- ii. Structural landscaping and amenity open space (0.9ha).*
- iii. The site should accommodate around 100 dwellings together with open space and structural landscaping on the boundary with the by pass. The site lies within the Eynsham Conservation Area and any application should be of sufficient detail to enable the Local Planning Authority to assess the impact of the proposed development. Development will not be permitted before a planning brief has been approved by the Local Planning Authority. The brief shall include measures for improving pedestrian and cycle links between the site and the centre of the village. Investigations will be required to demonstrate sufficient sewerage capacity before development is permitted. An archaeological field evaluation will be required prior to development.”*

54.1.15 The two land owners held a meeting with West Oxfordshire District Council Planning Department towards the end of 2006 and later undertook some archaeological work on the site. In spring 2007 they offered the land for sale as a single parcel to developers, without binding themselves “to accept the highest or any offer”. Written bids were to be submitted by 3 July.

54.2 Housing: The Opinions

54.2.1 Eynsham Parish Council (EPC) conducted its own survey in May 2004 in preparation for the Local Plan Enquiry. The sample was small but representative (every tenth name on the electoral register) and the response rate high (85%). The slightly milder positions expressed in our recent survey (Question 9) may be due to its wider scope:

54.2.2 Affordable housing:

	EPC	Survey Q9
Respondents	295	710
in favour/strongly in favour	67%	59%
balance of support/opposition	48%	36%

54.2.3 Open market housing:

	EPC	Survey Q9
Respondents	295	621
in favour/strongly in favour	25%	20.0%
balance of support/opposition	-23%	-19.6%

54.2.4 The EPC survey also asked:

“Should the Local Plan Inquiry conclude that one of these sites should be recommended for development, which do you think should be chosen?”

The responses were:

i.	Eastern bypass	147	(55%)
ii.	Station Road	71	(27%)
iii.	Western fringe	49	(18%)
iv.	No answer	28	

54.3 Housing: The Vision



Illustration 3: sympathetic blend of old and new building materials along Oxford Road

54.3.1 Perhaps the Parish Council's response to the Draft Local Plan still best expresses our hopes:

“With the appropriate type and scale of development through to 2011, Eynsham can continue as a real community, one which accepts the need to change but which maintains its essential village identity. Starved of new housing, the village will age and its younger generations will be denied the chance to stay and contribute to the village in which they were born. Encircled by new development, that essential identity would be fatally weakened and its physical setting irreparably damaged. It is the sincere hope of the Parish Council that developers and planners alike recognise the need to strike the appropriate balance.”