

Nominate a Heritage Asset

Aston's Eyot, Jackdaw Lane



1. WHAT IS IT? Is it one of the following?	Tick
a building or group of buildings	
a monument or site (an area of archaeological remains or a structure other than a building)	
a place (e.g. a street, park, garden or natural space)	y
a landscape (an area defined by visual features or character, e.g. a city centre, village, suburb or field system)	y

2. WHY IS IT INTERESTING? Is it interesting in any of the following ways?	Tick / Rank
Historic interest – a well documented association with a person, event, episode of history, or local industry	y
Archaeological interest – firm evidence of potential to reveal more about the human past through further study	
Architectural interest – an example of an architectural style, a building of particular use, a technique of building, or use of materials	
Artistic interest – It includes artistic endeavour to communicate meaning or use of design (including landscape design) to enhance appearance	
What is it about the asset that provides this interest?	
<p>Historic interest: This land has been recorded since the 15th century when the king took it from Abingdon Abbey's property and granted it to the newly founded All Soul's College. The college let it out to various local landowners up to the late 19th century as a mixture of water-meadow and market gardens. In 1884 The Cherwell New Cut separated the northern part of the eyot (where the University boat clubs landing stages and boathouses now stand) from the rest of the island to the south). Christ Church bought the land in 1891, completing their control of the belt of green space that would lie across the Cherwell from their famous meadow. During the early 20th century the land was used as the city's rubbish dump. It was used as a military training ground during the Second World War and as a pig run afterwards, as well as having a short life as a rugby pitch. It has gradually generated scrub cover during the later 20th century. In the 1970s and '80s, Christ Church</p>	

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granted a non-exclusive license to the City Council to use the Eyot as public open space.

3. WHY IS IT LOCALLY VALUED? Is the interest of the asset valued locally for any of the following reasons?	Tick / Rank
Association: It connects us to people and events that shaped the identity or character of the area	y
Illustration: It illustrates an aspect of the area's past that makes an important contribution to its identity or character	y
Evidence: It is an important resource for understanding and learning about the area's history	
Aesthetics: It makes an important contribution to the positive look of the area either by design or fortuitously	y
Communal: It is important to the identity, cohesion, spiritual life or memory of all or part of the community	y
<p>How is the asset locally valued as heritage?</p> <p>Association and Illustration: As semi-natural green space the eyot helps to illustrate the meadowland and green spaces into which the East Oxford suburb expanded in the late 19th century and which the colleges (particularly Christ Church) sought to retain as part of the attractive surroundings to their property.</p> <p>Aesthetics and Communal value: The eyot has been returned to an attractive semi-natural appearance, whilst the management regime includes a commitment to return areas to wildflower rich grassland. As publicly accessible land this attractive environment is enjoyed by the people of the suburb and forms a part of the countryside setting of Oxford as one of a series of meadows alongside the many channels of the rivers Thames and Cherwell that thread their way around the city. The community have been able to access the eyot (with the permission of the College) since the 1970s and it is now a resource that contributes to community cohesion through its management by the Friends of Aston Eyot.</p> <p>The green space also provides part of the attractive green setting to the river experienced by many rowers.</p>	

4. WHAT MAKES ITS LOCAL SIGNIFICANCE SPECIAL? Do any of the following features make the heritage significance of the asset stand out above the surrounding environment?	Tick
Age ... Is it particularly old, or of a date that is significant to the local area?	y
Rarity ... Is it unusual in the area or a rare survival of something that was once common?	
Integrity ... Is it largely complete or in a near to original condition?	
Group value ... Is it part of a group that have a close historic, aesthetic or communal association?	y
Oxford's identity ... Is it important to the identity or character of the city or a particular part of it?	y
Other ... Is there another way you think it has special local value?	
<p>How does this contribute to its value?</p> <p>Age: Aston's Eyot along with several other green spaces lining the riverbanks, provides a surviving (or in this case reconstructed) element of the landscape of the river valley that has existed since, at least the later middle ages, with the river winding through numerous backwaters between green meadows, as well as the main channel. The public access to the Aston's Eyot allows an appreciation of this landscape for the people of East Oxford.</p> <p>Group value and Oxford's identity: Aston's Eyot forms part of the group of meadows that line the river banks and together form part of the distinctive character of Oxford as the city amidst the willow lined banks of the streams of The Rivers Thames and Cherwell, that have inspired authors, poets and artists and contributed to the city's identity.</p>	