

## Old Abbey House Timeline

Feb/March 2014	<p>Prospectus issued by Savills including the garden bounded by the semicircular wall. This garden is not part of the scheduled Ancient Monument</p> <p>A number of bids were submitted (including one for a Community Arts Centre which was subsequently withdrawn).</p>
12 May 2014	<p>Letter from Friends of Abingdon Civic Society (FoA) to Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC) expressing concern at the terms of the sale and the inclusion of the garden</p>
18 May 2014	<p>Application from FoA to VWHDC for Asset of Community Value (ACV)</p>
30 May 2014	<p>Meeting between FoA representatives and the Leader and CEO of VWHDC</p>
July 2014	<p>ACV status approved. VWHDC decided to delay notification of intention to dispose until outcome of Heritage Listing application known.</p>
25 September 2014	<p>Report from Historic England in response to application for Grade II listed status. Noted many interesting internal features but the criteria for listing were not met.</p>
<p>No further action for many months – delay partly due to destruction of VWHDC offices by fire and consequential disruption to their activity</p>	
22 June 2015	<p>VWHDC issue notice of intention to dispose and activate six-week moratorium for community groups to make an offer (ACV status). No offers were made.</p>
July 2015	<p>FoA met with representatives of a local company (J Ltd) interested in acquiring OAH for the provision of office space for start-ups, charities, sole traders, etc. This company has a strong community ethos and FoA believed that their proposals would be a good use for OAH</p>
8 September 2015	<p>Savills issued a ‘revised’ prospectus which still included the garden</p>
10 October 2015	<p>Letter from FoA to VWHDC re status of garden (Heritage Lottery Funding, Tree protection orders, public access)</p>
October 2017	<p>No further formal contacts but various informal contacts between FoA and J &amp; Co and between FoA and VWHDC leader. FoA were told that VWHDC and J &amp; Co were negotiating a long lease, but in</p>

October 2017 J & Co informed FoA that they had withdrawn their offer because negotiations were taking too long and, despite still being interested, they had been unable to reach a satisfactory arrangement with VWHDC.

- 6 October 2017      Announcement by Leader of VWHDC that OAH would be redeveloped as social housing. Unclear whether this meant conversion or demolition
- Late October 2017      Obtained the Surveyor's Report on OAH via a Freedom of Information request
- 12 November 2017      Meeting of FoA with local businessman (HS) to discuss his proposal for OAH: rooms available for community use (music, art, etc.), family accommodation, holiday apartments (AirBNB). Further meetings followed during December and January
- 22 January 2018      Meeting (FoA and HS) with two Abingdon District Councillors. Agreed to seek a meeting with VWHDC Leader asap
- 30 January 2018      FoA met with two more businessmen who had expressed an interest in OAH. No further contact.
- 12 February 2018      Meeting (FoA and Abingdon District Councillors) with VWHDC Leader. Cautiously favourable response, but many caveats. Three options for VWHDC: sell, community use, social housing. All have political pros and cons.
- VWHDC Leader resigns. New Leader shows no interest in OAH. During summer 2018 OAH continues to decay including theft of lead roofing. No further progress with either HS's proposal or the social housing project.
- 25 October 2018      Vandals break all the ground floor windows which are replaced with metal sheeting.
- 3 December 2018      Local businessman who had put in a bid for OAH in 2015 contacts Mike Murray, VWHDC Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Economic Development and Property, commenting on the continuing decay of OAH and asking about the council's intentions with respect to OAH. The implication was that the intention is to let the building decay until it is past repair.  
Immediate response from Mr Murray reiterating the statement made in October 2017 with respect to social housing and a review of publicly owned properties.
- May 2019      Local elections result in change of control of VWHDC. New Leader (Emily Smith) and new Cabinet
- August/September 2019      OAH continues to deteriorate. More vandalism and evidence of small fires being set on rear lawn. Trees shedding branches and garden in general state of disrepair.

20 September 2019	Application made to renew ACV status Email to VWHDC asking for a meeting with the Leader, relevant Cabinet member and relevant officer(s) to discuss future plans (if any) for OAH
21 September 2019	Reply from Leader emphasising that VWHDC want to get OAH back into (unspecified) use asap, and that officers had been asked to work up some options (again!)
December 2019	Civic Soc told that ACV application did not have sufficient information. Resubmitted with more detail.
February 2020	Civic Soc told that ACV application required more evidence in support of the additional information provided and would have to be resubmitted (again!). Appeal lodged on grounds that requirements being applied were beyond the statutory provisions of the Localism Act 2011.
February 2020	Update from VWHDC Leader – Cabinet will be discussing OAH options in confidential meeting at end of February.