

Conservation Area Appraisal, Ashdon

Cabinet 17 January 2013, item 8

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 17 January 2013

8

Title: Conservation Area Appraisal, Ashdon

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Barker

Key decision: **No**

Summary

1. This report has been prepared and discussed with Ashdon Parish Council who support its general content. The draft Conservation Area Appraisal for Ashdon was made available on the council's website and as printed copies. A public exhibition on 19 November 2012 was attended by officers who presented the findings and answered questions. This report summarises and comments on the representations made at the exhibition and subsequent to it in the consultation period which lasted from 5 November until 16 December 2012.
2. Ashdon Parish Council welcomed the Conservation Area Appraisal in principle and considered it a worthwhile document which is likely to strengthen the control of development. This comment is valuable and is one shared by officers. The experience of the Conservation Area Appraisals so far undertaken indicates that the process is both important and popular with the local communities.

Recommendations

3. That the Conservation Area Appraisal be approved and used to assist in the process of determining planning applications and for implementing Management proposals.
4. That an additional Conservation Area be formally designated at Church End, Ashdon.

Financial Implications

5. The recommendation would require the advertising of the boundary changes which would cost in the region of £500 - 600. This can be met from existing budgets for Conservation.

Background Papers

6. The notes of the public exhibition held on 19 November 2012 and all representations received.

Impact

- 7.

Communication/Consultation	Full consultation undertaken.
Community Safety	Not affected
Equalities	Not affected

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Finance	Advertising costs can be met from existing budgets. The document will be disseminated through the website.
Health and Safety	Not affected.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Not affected.
Sustainability	The report focuses on environmental issues seeking to preserve the environment of the respective communities, including their buildings and open spaces.
Ward-specific impacts	Ashdon - various proposals as amended and as contained in report.
Workforce/Workplace	Existing staff resources.

Situation

8. There is incomplete information on the date that the Ashdon Conservation Area was originally designated with the archives only advising that 'the revised boundary ... was designated in 1983'. The Council has a duty within section 69 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Act 1990 to consider the designation of Conservation Areas and to undertake periodic reviews. As part of this work the Council has undertaken a number of Conservation Area Appraisals of existing Conservation Areas.
9. This report sets out the key issues within the attached Conservation Area Appraisal and records the results of the consultation exercise and the changes proposed.
10. The principal issues and recommendations set out in the document are:

Changes to the existing Conservation Area boundary. None are proposed.

New Conservation Area at Church End. An additional Conservation Area is proposed at Church End to include the following: The Church, the Guildhall, the Old Vicarage, Ashdon Hall and its arboretum, Church Farm, the former school building, now Lucy King Curtains and the site of the abandoned medieval village being a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Note: As a result of the consultation, respondents, including Ashdon Parish Council, have responded to the above alterations to the Conservation Area. A number of other points were raised by respondents relating to issues raised in the Appraisal report. These representations are included in the table below with appropriate officer comment.

General notes:

Planning Controls and Good Practice in Respect of Other Buildings that Make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution. A number of such unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area

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have been identified. The council should seek to ensure that these are retained and these are set out in the Appraisal.

Proposed Article 4 Directions. There are other distinctive features that are integral to some of the unlisted buildings identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal for Ashdon that make an important architectural or historic contribution, including selected chimneys, windows and other architectural detailing. In some situations protection already exists through existing planning controls but in other cases protection could only be provided by removing Permitted Development Rights via an Article 4 Direction. Should the Council consider such a course of action appropriate there would be a process of notifying the affected owners separately at a later date. This would be associated with further detailed consideration and possible refinement of the general proposals set out earlier in this Appraisal.

Planning Controls and Good Practice in Respect of Other Distinctive Features that Make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution. This Appraisal has identified several features including walls and railings that make a particular contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Some walls/railings are protected from demolition without prior consent virtue of exceeding the specified heights relevant to Conservation Area or by Listed Building legislation. Any proposal involving their demolition is also unlikely to be approved. However selected unprotected walls and railings at the Baptist Church are proposed for an Article 4 Direction, following separate notification and further consideration to take place with the owners at a later date. The pump on the green sward is worthy of listing and application to English Heritage to achieve this would be an appropriate course of action.

Planning Control and Good Practice, Important Open Spaces, Trees and Groups of Trees. *Important open land, open spaces and gaps.* The open spaces as identified being the triangle of land extending from the Radwinter Road junction to the southern boundary of the Allotment Gardens and the churchyard represent landscape features that materially contribute to the character and appearance of the existing and proposed Conservation Areas respectively that must be protected.

Particularly important trees and hedgerows. Many trees have already been made subject to Tree Preservation Orders but others worthy of protection have not. Subject to certain exceptions all trees in a Conservation Area are afforded protection and a person wanting to carry out works has to notify the Council. Trees that have not been identified may still be considered suitable for protection by Tree Preservation Orders.

Enhancement Proposals to Deal with Detracting Elements. The Appraisal identifies a number of detracting elements together with a proposed course of action. It is recognised that such improvements will frequently only be achieved with the co-operation of owners and other bodies as appropriate.

10 Consultation results

The comments received at the public exhibition and during the consultation period are set out in the table arranged in the subject order above. Those responses which noted minor inaccuracies in the text of the Draft Conservation Area Appraisal, such as the misspelling of building names, are not included here.

All maps are included in Appendix 1 to this report.

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	<p>should be re-drawn encompassing only the Walled Gardens described above.</p> <p>An Ashdon Resident states that they are in principle in favour of the new area at Church End, but they think that it is unnecessary to include Pightle Cottage and suggest that the south-west boundary be moved northwards to exclude it. All important buildings would still be within the area.</p>	<p>Officers consider this modern property, which is in close proximity to key historic assets, properly forms part of the overall proposed Conservation Area.</p>
Management proposals	<p>The Parish Council have provided an update on the current status of the of the management proposals noting that action is underway or proposed for many of the identified areas of concern</p> <p>An Ashdon resident notes that the Appraisal identifies the finger post at Crown Hill as worthy of preservation, but the one c. 200 yards further east, pointing to Steventon End, the Camps and Haverhill is equally attractive and needs some maintenance.</p>	<p>Suggested actions are contained in the Management Proposals section of the report which officers are happy to endorse. Where works have already been carried out the report has been amended appropriately.</p> <p>The finger post in question is located outside the boundary of the Ashdon Conservation Area and so was not originally noted. Signs and railings have been repainted by the Uttlesford Ranger Service.</p>

11 Conclusion

The public consultation raised a number of useful points which have been incorporated into the Conservation Area Appraisal. The document should be amended to incorporate the above comments and the documents use should commence immediately to assist in the determination of planning applications and for implementing the management proposals as set out.

Formal changes to designate a new Conservation Area Boundary at Church End will need to be advertised prior to them coming into force. It is necessary to inform the Secretary of State and English Heritage and place an advert in the London Gazette and local newspapers. The owners of affected properties will also be notified of the changes.

Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
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Revisions to the Conservation Area	1 There is some risk that revisions will be approved which cannot be justified by the guidelines provided by English Heritage.	2 If revisions to the Conservation Area are approved which the council cannot justify through good practice guidelines, the report and its recommendations will be unsound. Planning officers and applicants will then be without any up to date guidance and applications will be determined against out of date resources.	The report has been carefully produced and amended where any inaccuracies were noted. Consultation has been carried out with the Parish Council and Ashdon residents and advice sought from specialist officers and experts to support the findings.
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.