

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 12 September 2013

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Title: Conservation Area Appraisal, Great Sampford

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Barker

Key decision: **No**

Summary

1. This report has been prepared and discussed with The Sampfords Parish Council who support its general content. The draft Conservation Area Appraisal for Great Sampford was made available on the council's website and as printed copies. A public exhibition on 28 June 2013 was attended by the Council's Conservation Officer and the fieldworker who had been commissioned to carry out the on-site survey and produce the appraisal report. Both officers 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 24 May until 6 July 2013.
2. The Sampfords 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 the Great Sampford Conservation Area boundary be formally amended.

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 28 June 2013 and all representations received.

Impact

7.

Communication/Consultation	Full consultation undertaken.
Community Safety	Not affected
Equalities	Not affected
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	The Sampfords - various proposals as amended and as contained in report.
Workforce/Workplace	Existing staff resources.

Situation

8. The Great Sampford Conservation Area was designated in 1977. 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. Alterations to the Conservation Area boundary are proposed to:

- (a) Extend the Conservation Area to include land at and to the east of the school, Finchingfield Road.
- (b) Exclude the later 20th century estate at Homebridge and Willetts Field, behind and to the south of Finchingfield Road (whilst retaining frontage properties to Finchingfield Road).

Note: As a result of the consultation, respondents, including The Sampfords 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 and the proposed extension to the Conservation Area have been identified. The Council will seek to ensure that these are retained. These are as follows: on the High Street - The Manse, Baptist Church, Church Hall adjacent to the Baptist Church and Bull House; on Finchingfield Road - Leycam, The Old Village Hall, School House and the original late 19th century school building.

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 Great Sampford 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 by 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.

Planning Control and Good Practice, Important Open Spaces, Trees and Groups of Trees. The open spaces, as identified in the Appraisal, represent open landscape features that materially contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and which must be protected. These are St Michael's churchyard; the Baptist churchyard, the small greens to the front of Church side and Flint Cottage, the small triangular green, junction of the B1053 and B1051; the two small greens adjacent to the River Pant and the open space being the curtilage garden to Stone Cottage. 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.

Issue	Representations made	Officer comment
Changes to the Conservation Area	<p>The Sampfords Parish Council support in full the findings of the appraisal in the three key areas comprising the changes to the extent of the Conservation Area, the proposed safeguarding of individual non listed properties and the measures identified to protect and enhance the Conservation Area itself.</p> <p>A Great Sampford resident considers the revised area to be very appropriate.</p>	
Detracting elements	<p>A Great Sampford resident notes that the triangular green at the junction of the B1053 and B1051 is an important green area but this junction has lost some of its original character due to the highway developments and that bridge strengthening has changed the rural village bridge. The removal of excess signage is considered desirable.</p>	<p>The Appraisal notes the duplication of signage at Junction of B1053 and B1051. Officers suggest that both issues are brought to the attention of the Parish Council who will be able to contact Essex Highways to consider possible options.</p>
Other	<p>The Sampfords Parish Council suggests that consideration should be given to carrying out a similar appraisal for Little Sampford.</p> <p>The Sampfords Parish Council notes that councillors found the appraisal itself to be informative and of high quality, and appreciated the time and effort taken by officers to hold the recent public exhibition in the village.</p> <p>A Great Sampford resident queries the potential introduction of an Article 4 Direction in relation to the Bull House.</p>	<p>There is currently no Conservation Area designated for Little Sampford. Consideration should be given to this in the future.</p> <p>In relation to the Bull House, the Appraisal notes that an Article 4 Direction to provide protection for selected architectural features may be appropriate. The possible implementation of an Article 4 Direction is a separate process subject to a more detailed assessment, consultation and notification at a later date.</p>

	<p>A Great Sampford resident is concerned about the financial implications of undertaking repairs to tombs in the churchyard as suggested by the Appraisal.</p>	<p>Management proposals are made as suggestions for implementation by the community as, and when, funds might permit. Officers may be able to provide some limited advice on possible grant sources should the church authorities wish to consider repairs to the tombs.</p>
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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 use of the document should commence immediately to assist in the determination of planning applications and for implementing the management proposals as set out.

Formal changes to the Conservation Area Boundary 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

11.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
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 Great Sampford residents and advice sought from specialist officers and experts to support the findings.

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.