

Report of Public Participation on Widdington Conservation Area Appraisal and Draft Management Plan 1 July – 11 August 2013

Report One Comments made at the Public Exhibition and during the consultation period



September 2013

Contents

Introduction

Summary of findings of the Widdington Conservation Area Appraisal

Publicity

Results from Consultation

1. Exhibition

2. Consultation

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Copy of letter to Widdington Residents

Appendix 2 – Widdington consultation form (the Council's standard equalities monitoring forms were also made available)

Introduction

This report outlines the responses received from the public exhibition held at Widdington Village Hall on Monday 15 July 6.00 to 8.00pm and all responses received during the consultation period 1 July to 11 August 2013.

The Government encourages Councils to undertake appraisals of Conservation Areas and as part of an ongoing programme an appraisal of the Widdington Conservation Area was carried out in 2013. Anyone with an interest in Widdington was invited to respond to the consultation on the draft Appraisal which was available on line at <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/widdingtoncaa> or, from 1 July paper copies could be inspected at the Council Offices in Saffron Walden, Saffron Walden library and the mobile library, or from the Widdington Parish Clerk.

Consultees were invited to visit one of the above venues or to go to the Council's website where pdf and online interactive versions of the appraisal document were available via the Objective consultation portal. Respondents were able to read the document and send in responses as to whether all the measures should be included or just a selection of them. For those who could not access the website, anyone could send comments to the Project Officer at the Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER by email, letter or fax.

There was also a chance to see details of all the proposed changes, to discuss them with Council officers and to make comments at a public exhibition which was held at Widdington Village Hall on Monday 15 July 6.00 to 8.00pm.

Following the consultation the District Council will take into account all comments and approve an amended document that will be an important material consideration when processing applications.

Summary of findings of the Widdington Conservation Area Appraisal

The historic core of Widdington has a high quality environment where the 26 Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area make a significant contribution to its architectural and historical importance. Two are designated Grade I and one is Grade II star. These are respectively Priors Hall, Priors Hall barn and the Church of St Mary. A

large percentage, about 45%, dates from the 19th century, many having specifically been built at this time for agricultural workers.

Several quality non-listed buildings have been identified as worthy of protection. These include the range of outbuildings between Bishop's and Barn Cottage; Barn Cottage itself, on the corner of Cornells Lane; and The Old Bakery in the High Street. This appraisal, though, has noted one building as potentially at risk, this being part of a range of outbuildings immediately south of Prior's Hall. Unless repairs are carried out, it is a prospective candidate to be added to Essex County Council's Buildings at Risk Register.

Trees and hedgerows within the existing Conservation Area play an important function in adding to the high quality and diversity of the environment particularly in the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin. The grouping of greens in the centre of the village; open grazing land adjacent to Prior's Hall barn and open paddock to the west of Widdington Hall also represent open landscape features that materially contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area which must be protected. The general distinctiveness of the Conservation Area, though, is eroded by the presence of utility poles carrying overhead services and the future undergrounding of these services is suggested as being desirable. It is also noted that the edges of greens and verges have been eroded by traffic and a watching brief with further advice is suggested.

The boundaries to the Conservation Area are considered to be generally well defined and no amendments are proposed.

Publicity

Publicity was carried out to advise all possible respondents of the publication of the Appraisal, the duration of the consultation period, ways of making a response and the details of the public exhibition held in the village.

Parish Council - Widdington Parish Council were notified of the Council's intention to appraise the Conservation Area and were supplied with advance notification of the consultation and with a pre-publication copy of the Appraisal report to which they were invited to make an initial response.

Posters were distributed around the village and copies were sent to the Parish Council.

Information letters were delivered to all properties within the Conservation Area and in any other areas affected by any amendments. A copy is included in Appendix 1.

Website – a dedicated page on a marketing url <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/widdingtoncaa> was created on the Council's website from which links were supplied to enable access to pdf and online interactive versions (via the Council's Objective consultation portal) of the Appraisal. Summary information on the report was given on the page and links to pdf and Word versions of the comments form.

Direct Mailing - key consultees on the Council's database (Objective) were emailed advising them of the new consultation event.

Public exhibition – a public exhibition was held at Widdington Village Hall on Monday 15 July 6.00 to 8.00pm.

Press release – a press release was issued on 1 July to coincide with the publication of the Appraisal. This was subsequently published in local newspapers. It was also available on the Council's website and via its Twitter and Facebook pages.

Copies of the Appraisal - The Appraisal document was available online, as noted above, and paper copies could be inspected at the Council Offices in Saffron Walden, Saffron Walden library, the mobile library, or from the Widdington Parish Clerk.

Results of the consultation on the Widdington Conservation Area Appraisal

A public exhibition was held at the Widdington Village Hall on Monday 15 July 6.00 to 8.00pm and was attended by 21 people including members of the Parish Council. The exhibition 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 were on hand to answer enquiries. Maps, plans and copies of the Appraisal were available as were paper copies of the response forms.

The consultation period ran for six weeks between 1 July and 11 August 2013 and all responses received during this period are detailed below:

Widdington Parish Council

Following the recent Widdington Conservation Area Appraisal Public Consultation and Exhibition, and Extraordinary General Meeting of Widdington Parish council held on Thursday 25th July, Widdington Parish Council wishes to submit the following comments in response to the Widdington Conservation Area Appraisal and draft Management Proposals 2013;

- i. The Parish council requests that the Fleur de Lys public house garden is included as an important green area
- ii. The Parish Council requests that the Conservation Area boundary is altered to encompass Dove House, School House, Dorf House, Church Mead and Meadow Croft.
- iii. The Parish Council endeavours to support the recommendations raised by Mr Bosworth by
 - a. management of current trees on The Green
 - b. planting to fill the track across The Green with appropriate support and consultation of public services, whilst acknowledging the historic interest and value of the origins of the track.

The Parish Council would like to thank Mr and Mrs Bosworth for attending the meetings and for the support they have provided and have offered to provide moving forward in protecting the Conservation Area within Widdington.

A Widdington resident

Any other comments

In my view the village of Widdington retains strong historic and aesthetic qualities which it is important that we protect. I see the designation of the conservation area being a key tool to support that and believe that it should be given significant weight in any future deliberations regarding development in or around it.

A Widdington resident

Outbuildings immediately south of Prior's Hall: ...I also find it odd that [the fieldworker] never noticed that the barn is not as described in the listing, yet felt obliged to speculate that it might need to go on the 'at risk register'. Surely not the observations of a professional surveyor, and certainly not of a heritage surveyor, who would understand that looks are often deceptive, at most he should have written that further investigation should be carried out. ... I am not sure I see the reason for putting photo's of damaged property in a report like this. Do they add to the overall appraisal of the conservation area? If photographs are required then use pictures showing the general high quality of maintenance that has been spent on these historic buildings.

A Widdington resident

Comment here on the character analysis of Widdington village

The analysis understates the visual evidence of at least 1000 years of domestic occupation. Especially with reference to the village centre and the surrounding manor houses. A rare environment undoubtedly due, as you state, to the cul-de-sac characteristic or in modern terms limited infrastructure. Back in 1985 the long gone Rural Plan was quite specific about the need to protect the historic rurality of Widdington.

Comment here on the conservation area boundary

What influence, if any, does the Conservation Area designation have on the area itself and the immediately adjacent areas? Surely development in a non conservation area immediately adjacent to buildings in a Conservation Area diminishes those buildings. Note the withdrawal in 2010 of the first detailed plan by Grange Builders for four executive houses immediately opposite St Mary's church because of "concern with regard to the design and layout of the site which did not fit well with the character of the adjacent Conservation Area". I would suggest that the existing Conservation boundary is reviewed with regard to Church Lane and the church View site.

Comment here on the management proposals

Your proposals are largely directed at private owners with the exception of greens and verges. You have referred to the "cul de sac" character of Widdington and the consequent lack of development that has diminished so many Essex villages. But you fail to make the connection between the "cul-de-sac" character and the consequent green and verge destruction. They go hand in hand and should be a major consideration with any proposed development and the positioning of the conservation boundary. As you were made aware at the public meeting the Parish Council is attempting to reverse the above damage. It would be helpful if our limited infrastructure was acknowledged in any conservation proposal.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Copy of letter to Widdington Residents

Widdington conservation area appraisal and draft management proposals consultation



Dear Widdington resident

The Government encourages councils to undertake appraisals of Conservation Areas and one has just been completed for your village. We now need your comments on the Conservation Area appraisal for Widdington; a consultation on the draft document will be running between **1 July and 11 August**. The document will be available on line at <http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/widdingtoncaa> or, from 1 July, paper copies can be inspected at the Council Offices in Saffron Walden, Saffron Walden Library and the mobile library or from the Widdington Parish Clerk. The main findings are set out below. There will also be a chance to see details of all the proposed changes and to discuss them with council officers at a public exhibition which will be held at Widdington Village Hall on **Monday 15 July 6 to 8pm**.

The historic core of Widdington has a high quality environment where the 26 Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area make a significant contribution to its architectural and historical importance. Two are designated Grade I and one is Grade II*. These are respectively Priors Hall, Priors Hall barn and the Church of St Mary. A large percentage, about 45%, dates from the 19th century, many having specifically been built at this time for agricultural workers.

Several quality non-listed buildings have been identified as worthy of protection. These include the range of outbuildings between Bishop's and Barn Cottage; Barn Cottage itself, on the corner of Cornells Lane; and The Old Bakery in the High Street. This appraisal, though, has noted one building as potentially at risk, this being part of a range of outbuildings immediately south of Prior's Hall. Unless repairs are carried out, it is a prospective candidate to be added to Essex County Council's Buildings at Risk Register.

Trees and hedgerows within the existing Conservation Area play an important function in adding to the high quality and diversity of the environment particularly in the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin. The grouping of greens in the centre of the village; open grazing land adjacent to Prior's Hall barn and open paddock to the west of Widdington Hall also represent open landscape features that materially contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area which must be protected. The general distinctiveness of the Conservation Area, though, is eroded by the presence of utility poles carrying overhead services and the future undergrounding of these services is suggested as being desirable. It is also noted that the edges of greens and verges have been eroded by traffic and a watching brief with further advice is suggested.

The boundaries to the Conservation Area are considered to be generally well defined and no amendments are proposed.

Please visit our website, read the document and let us know what you think and whether we should include all the measures or just a selection of them. If you cannot access our website, please send any comments to the Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER. For further information please call Bruce Tice, our Project Officer, on 01799 510670 or email btice@uttlesford.gov.uk who will be pleased to assist and answer any of your queries.

**If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language please
contact us on 01799 510510**

Widdington conservation area appraisal
and draft management proposals consultation



Important information on the Widdington
Conservation Area Appraisal

For the attention of the property owner

**Widdington
Conservation Area
Appraisal
Public Exhibition**



**Monday 15 July 6-8pm
Widdington Village Hall
The High Street Widdington
CB11 3SG**

**Your chance to have your say on the draft Conservation
Area Appraisal for Widdington**

The consultation runs 1 July to 11 August 2013
For more information call 01799 510670 or take part online at
www.utlesford.gov.uk/widdingtoncaa



If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language please
contact us on 01799 510510

Appendix 2 – Widdington consultation form (the Council's standard equalities monitoring forms were also made available)

Widdington Conservation Area Appraisal Consultation

Consultation Feedback Form

Comment here on the character analysis of Widdington village:

Comment here on the revised conservation area boundary:

Comment here on the buildings that make an important architectural or historical contribution to the conservation area:

Comment here on the management proposals:

Any other comments:

Please send any comments to the Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER. For further information please ring Bruce Tice, our Project Officer, on 01799 510670 or email btice@uttlesford.gov.uk who will be pleased to assist and answer any of your queries.

**If you require this publication in an alternative format and/or language
please contact us on 01799 510510**