

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 28 October 2014

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Title: Conservation Area Appraisal, Hazel End

Portfolio Holder: Cllr S Barker

Key decision: **No**

Summary

1. This report has been prepared and discussed with Farnham Parish Council who support its general content.

The draft Conservation Area Appraisal for Hazel End was made available on the Council's website and as printed copies. A public exhibition on 10 September 2014 was attended by the Council's Conservation Officer and the fieldworker who had undertaken the appraisal, both of whom 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 25 August to 5 October 2014.

2. Farnham 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 Hazel End 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 10 September 2014 and all representations received.

Impact

- 7.

Communication/Consultation	Full consultation undertaken.
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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	Stort Valley - various proposals as amended and as contained in report.
Workforce/Workplace	Existing staff resources.

Situation

8. The Hazel End Conservation Area was first designated in 1976. 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:

A number of amendments to the boundary of the Conservation Area are suggested, principally to remove:

- 1 . Land to the north of Home Farmhouse consisting of two large 20th century agricultural barns.
- 2 Home Farm Cottages and New Cottages.
3. Land to the south east of the Castle being a miscellany of storage sheds and a Nissen Hut.

Other minor proposed boundary changes are proposed to better reflect selected existing physical boundaries:

1. Include land to north of estate buildings 56-57 which has effect of protecting a mature tree.
2. Include land to the west of range of timber-framed outbuildings that in turn are located to the west of Home Farmhouse.
3. Include small area to west of barns to west of Upper Farmhouse to follow access road.

Note: As a result of the consultation a number of 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.

One such unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area has been identified being the reconstructed barn to the south east of Upper Farmhouse. If as proposed this barn is de listed it nevertheless is worthy of retention and should not be demolished.

Proposed Article 4 Directions.

None are proposed.

Planning Controls and Good Practice in Respect of Other Distinctive Features that Make an Important Architectural or Historic Contribution.

This Appraisal has identified a number of pre 1948 walls within the curtilages of Listed Buildings that add significantly to the character of the Conservation Area and which should be retained. One contains a Victoria Letter box inscribed VR. Letter boxes of the latter type are relatively rare and attractive and this one adds to the character and history of Hazel End.

Planning Control and Good Practice, Important Open Spaces, Trees and Groups of Trees.

The central open space and pond and sunken edges of northern approach road represent landscape features that materially contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Areas which must be protected.

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. Owners are advised to make regular inspections to check the health of trees in the interests of amenity and Health and Safety.

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 or attributed dates are not included here.

Issue	Representations made	Officer comment
Character analysis of Hazel End	Farnham Parish Council agrees with the character analysis of Hazel End.	Noted
Changes to the Conservation Area Boundary	<p>Farnham Parish Council agrees with the proposals to revise the Conservation Area Boundary.</p> <p>The proprietors of Hazel End Farm support the proposed boundary changes</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p>
Important buildings	<p>Farnham Parish Council agrees that the important buildings should continue to be protected by the Conservation Area.</p> <p>The proprietors of Hazel End Farm support the de-listing of the barn at Hazel End farm that was erected in the early 1980s.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Noted. Officers will pursue this with English Heritage.</p>
Management proposals	<p>Farnham Parish Council agrees with the management proposals in general but the Parish Councillor feels the suggestion for improving the state of the track by pond is too onerous unless Uttlesford District Council wish to undertake work in consultation with the owners and the farm. The pond is noted as an important local feature and has been commented upon by Essex Biodiversity Unit. However, the base of pond is damaged and requires significant work and resources.</p> <p>The proprietors of Hazel End Farm do not consider that the proposals are either necessary or appropriate. They consider that Hazel End ... should not be expected to have the immaculate appearance of upmarket suburbia. Nor should it be the role of local government to be telling property owners how to tidy their yard or tend their water features.</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that Hazel End is a rural hamlet with rural characteristics.</p> <p>The English Heritage guidance “Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management” requires that, as part of the appraisal process, an assessment of condition be made and any problems be identified. English Heritage also require the formulation of an overview and summary of the main problems and pressures identified in the appraisal that will be addressed through a management plan.</p> <p>The suggested enhancement proposals for Hazel End are considered appropriate and would only be achieved through the</p>

	<p>References to both features should be deleted from the document.</p> <p>The proprietors of Hazel End Farm consider the area around the central green to be in keeping with the character of the village. It is misleading to call it “Broken road surface” because it is not a road and it has a surface of loose gravel to distinguish it from roads on two sides and to discourage vehicles from dangerous short cuts.</p> <p>The proprietors of Hazel End Farm consider the mention of “2 utility poles” is confusing because there are several more than that in or within sight of the conservation area ... if there is no mechanism and/or no money with which to undertake this, what is the point of including it in the report?”</p>	<p>cooperation of landowners. Management proposals are made as suggestions for implementation by the community as, and when, funds might permit.</p> <p>It is accepted that the track is not a road. The Appraisal has accordingly been amended to remove reference to this being a roadway.</p> <p>The Appraisal has been amended to mention other utility poles within the Conservation Area and within sight of it. Officers consider the electricity poles an unsightly element detracting from the character of the Conservation Area. Officers will support the local community and Parish Council should they wish to enter into discussions with utility companies.</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.

11. Risk Analysis

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 Hazel End 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.