

<b>Committee:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b> Thursday, 2 November 2023
<b>Title:</b>	Conservation Area Appraisal, Smiths Green Takeley	
<b>Report author:</b>	Bruce Tice, Principal Website and Consultation Officer	
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## Summary

1. A new conservation area at Smiths Green Takeley is proposed.
2. A Heritage Assessment and Audit was commissioned in 2022 by Takeley Parish Council as part of their Neighbourhood Plan. This assessment highlighted the potential to designate Smiths Green as a Conservation Area.
3. Takeley Parish Council commissioned Place Services in 2023 to undertake a conservation area appraisal of Smiths Green. The appraisal recommends the designation of a conservation area and identifies the extent of a proposed conservation area boundary. The parish council considers the appraisal a worthwhile document which is likely to strengthen the control of development. This comment is valuable and is one shared by officers.
4. Takeley Parish Council approached Uttlesford District Council officers to request the designation of a conservation area at Smiths Green. As the LPA the council is required to carry out a public consultation on the proposed conservation area. The consultation included holding a public meeting in the settlement.
5. This report considers the results of the consultation and recommends a course of action.

## Recommendations

6. That the Smiths Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan be approved and used to assist in the process of determining planning applications and for implementing management proposals.
7. That the Smiths Green Conservation Area be formally designated.

## Financial Implications

8. The recommendation would require the advertising of the designated boundary which would cost in the region of £600 - 700. This can be met from existing budgets for Conservation.

## Background Papers

9. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report:
  - Smiths Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

- notes of the public exhibition held on Saturday 9 September 2023 and all representations received during the consultation period

## Impact

10.

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	Takeley - various proposals as amended and as contained in the report.
Workforce/Workplace	Existing staff resources.

## Situation

11. Takeley Parish Council approached District Council officers in 2023 with a request to consider the designation of a Conservation Area at Smiths Green. 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. In this case Place Services has produced an appraisal which recommends the designation of a new conservation area at Smiths Green.
12. This report sets out the key issues within the attached Smiths Green Conservation Area Appraisal and records the results of the consultation exercise and the changes proposed.
13. The principal issues and recommendations set out in the document are:

A conservation area is proposed to include properties to the east and west of Smiths Green Lane and bounded at the south by the B1256 with the Flich Way country park beyond.

The appraisal also identifies a number of heritage assets not included within the

current Uttlesford Local Heritage List, which make a positive contribution to the conservation area and should be considered for local listing in the future.

A number of opportunities for enhancement and management actions are recommended by the appraisal including a proposal to introduce Article 4 Directions to provide additional control over the types of development which are potentially the most harmful to the area's significance.

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 comment.

## 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 initial Draft Conservation Area Appraisal, such as the misspelling of building names, corrections to descriptions or attributed dates are not included here.

As the appraisal document is owned by Takeley Parish Council, this report includes comments on representations, where relevant, from the parish council and their heritage advisor, Place Services.

Issue	Representations made	Takeley Parish Council / Place Services comment and recommendation
General	<p><b>Historic England</b> welcome the production of this appraisal and management plan for the Smiths Green Conservation Area and are reassured by considered and sound approach outlined within the document, and clear and accessible presentation which expresses a compelling narrative of Smiths Green's history, character and heritage.</p> <p>Historic England also suggest a number of minor revisions to the content and format of the appraisal.</p> <p><b>The Hundred Parish Society</b> support the proposed conservation area.</p> <p><b>Bill Critchley</b> Support for the designation of Smiths Green as a conservation area.</p>	<p><b>Takeley Parish Council</b> supports the Place Services draft document in its entirety, subject to inclusion of the minor points made by Historic England and any appropriate changes to individual property descriptions that have been provided by residents.</p>

<p>Character analysis of Smiths Green</p>	<p><b>The Hundred Parish Society</b> note the importance of the rural landscape and heritage at Smiths Green and that walk route 158 passes through the northern part of the settlement.</p> <p><b>Jackie Cheetham</b> suggests a revision to the description of Beech Cottage as given in the appraisal from one storey with attics to two storeys with attic.</p> <p><b>Bill Critchley</b> supports the preservation of the unique nature and qualities of the area.</p> <p><b>Anthony Johnson</b> notes that the area should be preserved / maintained and not developed.</p>	<p>Noted</p> <p>Place Services advise to not revise the description of Beech Cottage. This will keep the description in line to that on the NHLE (list entry number: 1112212).</p> <p>Noted</p>
<p>Designation of the conservation area boundary</p>	<p><b>National Highways</b> do not have any comment.</p> <p><b>The Rural Planning Practice on behalf of the Executors of Margaret Haynes</b> suggest that the proposed conservation area boundary should exclude land formerly used for agricultural purposes and situated to the rear of The Croft. The stated reason is that the enclosed paddock has no views into or out of the site and does not add in any way to the value and significance of the conservation area or to the setting of The Croft. The suggestion is that the conservation area boundary should be drawn to follow the natural boundary that encloses The Croft and its former garden.</p> <p><b>Bill Critchley</b> suggests that should the conservation area should be extended to include Warish Hall Lane to a point north of the entrance to Warish Hall. The wood, copse to the north of Jacks Lane behind The Limes, a non listed heritage asset, should be included as this forms an important aspect of the rural area.</p>	<p><b>Takeley Parish Council</b> note that there is a comment to extend the boundary to just north of Warish Hall and to the east along Jacks Lane, and a request to redraw the boundary to exclude a domestic garden, to bring it outside the proposed boundary on the edge of the conservation area.</p> <p>Neither request for boundary changes would seem to meet the criteria carefully followed by Place Services and there has been no suggestion by Historic England that the boundary should be amended.</p> <p>Takeley Parish Council does not believe that there is merit in changing the proposed boundary to suit an individual owner.</p> <p>Place Services have agreed with this approach and do</p>

	<p><b>RPS Group on behalf of Weston Homes</b> agree that the southern part of the proposed conservation area (between Dunmow Road/Stane Street and 1&amp;2 Bulls Cottages) has a distinct character and, as such is worthy of designation.</p> <p>RPS Group on behalf of Weston Homes, however, question the inclusion of the northern section of the proposed conservation area (Jack's Lane north of Woodside). They note that the area is entirely different in character and does not demonstrably have a relationship with the green either historically or at present.</p> <p>RPS Group further suggest that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the relationship between the arable land to the north and the rurality of the village green / the whole of the proposed conservation area be clarified</li> <li>• as demonstrated by the views noted in the appraisal, the contribution that arable land makes to the proposed conservation area is negligible</li> <li>• that the setting and surviving landscape features, especially that at Warish Hall, do not share a functional link with the proposed conservation area</li> <li>• only a minority of buildings identified in the appraisal as potential assets for inclusion on the Uttlesford Local Heritage List should be considered as such</li> <li>• opportunity sites within the proposed conservation area should be considered as to not do so would be at</li> </ul>	<p>not consider that that a boundary change would strengthen the conservation area as a whole.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Takeley Parish Council and Place Services agree that no modifications are required in response to comments received from Weston Homes.</p> <p>All noted</p>
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	<p>variance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>potential development sites within Takeley in the Uttlesford draft Regulation 18 Local Plan should be noted by the appraisal</li> </ul>	
Buildings that make an important architectural or historical contribution	<b>National Highways</b> do not have any comment.	
Management plan actions	<p><b>Historic England</b> welcome the opportunity for enhancements in relation to 'wayfinding on the approach to and within the settlement' and removal of overgrown vegetation to reveal the 19<sup>th</sup> century listed pump.</p> <p><b>Historic England</b> recommend regular periodic monitoring of existing street furniture to ensure these items are routinely maintained and do not fall into disrepair and negatively impact the village green.</p> <p><b>National Highways</b> note that as all roads belong to the local highways authority, any integration may require collaboration between the local highways department and the local planning authority within this proposed conservation area.</p> <p><b>The Rural Planning Practice</b> note that much of the rural character of Smiths Green has been lost by the erecting of excessive highways signage and that any extraneous signage should be removed following discussion with Essex Highways.</p> <p><b>Anthony Johnson</b> notes the detrimental effect of bus routes, disabled access provision, street signage and light pollution on the character rural areas such as Smiths Green.</p>	<p><b>Takeley Parish Council</b> would support an ambition that future improvements could include removal of modern highways road signs, subject to highways safety considerations.</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</p> <p>Noted</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 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 designation of 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 Historic England and place an advert in the Gazette and local newspapers.

## 12. 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 Historic England.	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 statutory bodies, Takeley Parish Council and local residents and advice sought from Place Services, 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.