

Executive

Juniper Hill Conservation Area Appraisal: Consideration of Responses to Consultation Draft and Approval of Final Appraisal

2 March 2009

Report of Head of Planning and Affordable Housing Policy

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report on the consultation responses to the draft review of the Conservation Area appraisal.

This report is public

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended:

- (1) To resolve, under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to approve the Juniper Hill Conservation Area appraisal and to extend the boundary with immediate effect

Executive Summary

Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the comments received on the draft appraisal and the proposed extension to the Conservation Area (as indicated in the attached plan) and indicates the amendments that are considered appropriate in response.

Proposals

- 1.2 To approve the Juniper Hill Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 1.3 To extend the boundary of the Conservation Area to include the playing field to the south east of the hamlet.

Conclusion

- 1.4 To approve the Juniper Hill Conservation Area appraisal and to extend the boundary with immediate effect.

Background Information

- 2.1 This report is in accordance with Paragraph 9.48 of the Adopted Cherwell Local Plan 2001 and paragraph 9.89 of the Non-Statutory Cherwell Local Plan 2011, which state that the Council will from time to time propose new or review existing Conservation Areas.
- 2.2 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, does not require local planning authorities to undertake public consultation prior to designation but this Council considers it to be good practice. It does require Conservation Areas to be reviewed from time to time and for proposals for preservation and enhancement to be submitted to a public meeting.
- 2.3 Public consultation took place on the draft Conservation Area Appraisal following consultation with, and the approval of, the ward member and Parish Chairman.
- 2.4 The appraisal was posted to every house in Juniper Hill, was available to download from the Council's website and in hard copy from Bodicote House.
- 2.5 A public exhibition was held in St Mary's Church, Cottisford. Posters were put up in Juniper Hill and Cottisford. The event was attended by approx. 25 people and questionnaires were available asking for comments on the appraisal and the conservation area boundary. The comments received are recorded in the sections following 3.2.
- 2.6 The appraisal comprises an outline of the development of the village, including its history and literary connections, followed by an analysis of the established character of the village including its land use, settlement pattern, building types and style, construction materials, features of special interest and means of enclosure.
- 2.7 The document proposes the inclusion of the playing field, which lies to the south-east of the hamlet, in the Conservation Area boundary. Under the 1854 Inclosure Act this area of approximately two acres was set aside for the recreation of the residents as compensation for the loss of the common lands around the hamlet. The playing field is still actively used by local residents. It is felt to represent an important element of Juniper Hill's history and to be an area of historical and visual importance to the settlement.
- 2.8 The appraisal also contains a Management Plan comprising proposals for preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area, justification for the Conservation Area boundary and the effects of Conservation Area designation.

Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options

- 3.2 Feedback from the Public Meeting and Questionnaires
- 3.3 Statements within the appraisal on the threats of urbanisation to the hamlet were discussed. In particular the state of the un-surfaced un-adopted road locally known as 'The Rise' was the cause of some concern and the reference within the appraisal of its importance to the character of the hamlet was felt to be unnecessary. Pot holes make the lane difficult to drive along after wet weather and some resident's were unhappy with its un-surfaced state. Councillor Wood stated that he would explore the possibilities for sympathetic resurfacing work and report back to the Parish Chairman.
- 3.4 The appraisal's comments regarding the urbanising effect of security lighting were also discussed, some resident's feeling that extra lighting was necessary for the safety of homeowners and should not be discouraged. The appraisal text was altered as a result to reflect the delicate balance between the need to preserve the character while respecting the desires of the residents.
- 3.5 There was some concern over the erosion of grass verges by refuse vehicles on the corner of the lane that leads to Candleford. Possible use of granite kerbing was discussed, although it was acknowledged that the retention of un-edged grass verge elsewhere in the hamlet was preferable. This was agreed to be a matter for discussion between the Parish and the Highways Authority.
- 3.6 Residents felt that moving the signs further out of the village would encourage traffic to slow down. This was a matter for the Parish Chairman to take up with the Highway.
- 3.7 The surplus materials around the edges of the allotments were felt to be detrimental to the appearance of the Conservation Area and there was some expectation amongst those present at the meeting that their removal could be enforced by the Council. There is a careful balance to be struck between over gentrification of a rural hamlet and preserving and enhancing the character of Juniper Hill. Villagers were encouraged to approach the allotment committee and Parish meeting for action on this matter.
- 3.8 There was concern about the implications of Conservation Area control in regard to trees, in particular the potential future need to remove the Horse Chestnut outside the The Old Fox. Residents requested that details of controls within the Conservation Area were added as an appendix to the appraisal; this was an oversight in the draft appraisal and the document has been amended as a result.
- 3.9 The availability of information on the implications of living within a Conservation Area for new house buyers was raised. The fact that a dwelling is within a Conservation Area should be revealed by a property purchasers search. To encourage estate agents to make purchasers aware of implications we are sending an information pack to all agents in the vicinity.

- 3.10 The implications of the category 3 status of Juniper Hill were discussed. There was some concern in questionnaire feedback that the appraisal implied the possibility for infill development in the hamlet despite the category of the settlement. The appraisal text has been reworded to make it clear that there is very little likelihood of significant new residential development in the area.
- 3.11 Several residents sent very helpful detailed responses to the appraisal following the public meeting amending a number of minor grammatical errors, historical detail and changes to house names which have all been corrected in the final document.
- 3.12 There were no objections to the proposed extension and many of those present at the public exhibition and meeting were actively in favour of the boundary alteration.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward as this will enable the Council to publish the finalised version of the Appraisal which will then become a material consideration to be weighed against other considerations in the determining of planning applications within the Conservation Area and its setting.

Option One	To approve and to publish the Conservation Area Appraisal including the proposed extension to the boundary
Option Two	To not extend the Conservation Area
Option Three	To make further changes to the Juniper Hill Conservation Area Appraisal as members see fit

Consultations

Cllr Gibbard	Made no formal representations
The Parish Council	Thanked the Council for organising the meeting and exhibition and returned a copy of the appraisal with suggestions for minor amendments to names and descriptions.
Cllr Wood	Made no formal representations
Local Residents	Comments are discussed in detail under headings 3.3 to 3.12
Richard Oram, County Council Archaeologist	Made no formal representations

Implications

Financial:	Financial effects - There are no financial implications arising from this report. The costs of preparing the
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Appraisal and the public consultation are met from the approved revenue budget and the Council does not operate any grant aid scheme that would be triggered by the Appraisal.

Comments checked by Eric Meadows, Accountant 01295 221552

Legal: No comments

Comments checked by Nigel Bell, Assistant Solicitor 01295 221687

Risk Management: The Conservation Area Appraisal analyses the special character and appearance of the designated area and sets out proposals for the management of the area. Having been publicly consulted upon, the Appraisal will become a material consideration in the determining of planning applications within the designated area and will be used by Inspectors in considering appeals.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management and Insurance Officer 01295 221566

Wards Affected

Fringford

Corporate Plan Themes

Theme 6: Protect and enhance the local environment

Theme 8: Rural Focus

Theme 10: Focus on Cherwell's People

Executive Portfolio

Councillor Michael Gibbard

Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Economy

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix [X]	
Background Papers	
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Conservation Area map showing proposed extension

