

# **Cherwell District Council**

## **Lead Member Report – Lead Member for Planning**

**12 November 2018**

<h3><b>Williamscot Conservation Area Appraisal</b></h3>
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### **Report of Assistant Director for Planning Policy and Development**

This report is public

#### **Purpose of report**

To consider the adoption of the Williamscot Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and the revised boundary of the Williamscot Conservation Area.

#### **1.0 Recommendations**

1.1 The Lead Member is recommended:

To approve the revisions to Williamscot Conservation Area boundary and to adopt the Williamscot Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

#### **2.0 Introduction**

2.1 The Williamscot Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan have been produced as part of a rolling programme of works, which includes the review of all the conservation areas within Cherwell, undertaken by the Design and Conservation Team.

2.2 This report sets out the comments received on the draft appraisal, the proposed changes to the Williamscot Conservation Area boundary. The report requests that both the proposed changes to the conservation boundary and the amended appraisal are approved under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (“the Act”) with immediate effect.

2.3 The Conservation Area Appraisal looks to identify and analyse the distinctive character of an area derived from its unique topography, historic development and features such as buildings, streets, layout and form.

- 2.4 The Management Plan seeks to outline opportunities to enhance the area and identify threats to its character and appearance. This determines a series of action points outlined to address these issues.
- 2.5 The appraisal of the character of a conservation area provides a sound basis for development control and for developing initiatives for improving the area. A clear definition of those elements which contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of a settlement will provide a robust framework for the future management of that settlement against which applications can be considered.
- 2.6 The Act provides legislation for the protection of the nation's heritage of buildings and places of architectural and historic interest, '*the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.*' Local planning authorities have a duty under the Act to consider boundary revisions to their conservation areas 'from time to time'.

### **3.0 Report Details**

- 3.1 Williamscot Conservation Area was first designated in October 1992 and was subject to a review in November 1995. The current review and conservation area appraisal took place between January and March 2017.
- 3.2 The purpose of a conservation area appraisal is to provide a comprehensive assessment of the current character and appearance of the conservation area to provide a basis for informed judgements on the future conservation and management of the designated area.
- 3.3 This report sets out the comments received on the draft appraisal and the proposed changes to the conservation area boundaries and indicates the amendments that are recommended appropriate in response.
- 3.4 The report requests that both the proposed changes to the conservation boundary and the amended appraisal are approved under Section 69 of the Act with immediate effect.

#### **Public consultation**

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- 3.5 A draft appraisal document was prepared and an exhibition and public meeting arranged for Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017 to enable local residents and those interested to inspect the draft document in order to comment upon the proposed conservation areas boundary and to identify buildings of local interest.
- 3.6 Public consultation took place on the draft appraisal between 27 July 2017 and 8 September 2017 with the approval of the lead member. The document was available to download from the Council's website and in hard copy from Bodicote House and available to view at

Banbury library. Copies of the document were handed out at the public meeting and additional copies made available by request. Publicity was undertaken through local leaflets and posters.

### **Feedback from the Public Meeting, Questionnaires and Decisions**

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- 3.7 The draft appraisal document covered the existing conservation area for Williamscot and a number of proposed amendments to the boundary.
- 3.8 The public meeting was chaired by Cllr Colin Clarke, attended by the Senior Conservation Officer and the Team Leader for Design and Conservation and approximately 20 residents, who engaged in debate about the proposals.
- 3.9 The discussion at the public meeting centred on the proposed boundary extension and an additional extension proposed by members of the community to the north east of the road through to Cropredy. Various views were expressed about these boundaries.
- 3.10 A total of 10 written responses were received. Of these all were supportive or neutral about the Williamscot Conservation Area Appraisal. In terms of the boundary alterations – 2 were happy with the proposed boundary, 3 wanted the boundary to be extended to include land to the north east of the road through to Cropredy. 2 objected to the proposed south east boundary extension and 3 to the proposed western boundary extension. There were no objections to the small proposed boundary extension to the south.

### **Boundary changes**

#### **Proposed western boundary extension**

- 3.11 An analysis of the current boundary indicated that there was an illogical boundary to the western side of Williamscot House that was neither restricted to the immediate gardens surrounding the house nor encompassed the wider area of the Williamscot House estate.
- 3.12 At the time of the draft appraisal it was unclear where the modern extent of the Williamscot House estate lay and so a boundary was proposed based on a mixture of historic maps and existing landscape features (viewed from public footpaths as consent had not been granted for access to the estate).
- 3.13 Following the public consultation and a site visit to Williamscot House and surrounding area it is felt that a boundary reflecting the existing estate boundary would be most appropriate, but the appraisal has been adjusted to reflect the importance of the land to the south to the setting of Williamscot House and Williamscot Conservation Area.

### **Proposed south eastern boundary extension**

- 3.14 No objections were raised and the owner of the land indicated at the public meeting that he was happy for his land to be included in the new conservation area boundary. This aspect of the proposed boundary extension will be incorporated as proposed.

### **Proposed southern boundary extension**

- 3.15 The boundary to the south was proposed in order to incorporate the double entry route into Williamscot which forms a core element of its plan form. It is of interest as it has the effect of aligning the settlement away from the principal road of the A361.
- 3.16 It had been proposed to include the green space between the two historic entrances to the village, but queries were raised about the justification for including this land as there are no historic features.
- 3.17 There were also queries about whether the land to the north of the road could be incorporated as there are concerns within the settlement about the future use of that land. No further information was forthcoming about this area to justify its inclusion (other than the fact that it lies within the Register Battlefield for the Battle of Cropredy Bridge which is covered by a different designation).
- 3.18 It is felt that the core element of significance of this area is the double entry route into Williamscot and with no known evidence of historic significance to either side of the road that the boundary should be drawn around the road only. Any development proposed to either side of the boundary would be considered to impact on the setting of the conservation area.

### **Other issues**

- 3.19 A number of issues were raised through the consultation regarding traffic management, signage, pot holes and speed restrictions. The Management Plan section of the appraisal relating to roads and lanes has been amended, but these issues are the responsibility of the Highways Authority. Similarly issues relating to ditches and drainage do not really fall within the scope of the conservation area appraisal.

### **Buildings of local significance**

- 3.20 Buildings of less than national significance can be locally significant. This is identified within the NPPF and reflected in the Cherwell District Council's programme for their inclusion within the district-wide register of Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs) - formerly known as the Local List. No comments were received on any of these buildings and monuments and no additional suggestions were made. The proposed list will therefore go forward as suggested in the draft appraisal.

## **Article 4 Directions**

- 3.21 A small number of Article 4 Directions were proposed as part of the appraisal process, but the majority of the historic buildings in the settlement are listed. The issue was not raised either as part of the discussions or in any written consultation responses.

## **4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 4.1 Conservation area appraisals are an important way of ensuring that this aspect of policy framework is up-to-date, robust and of the greatest value in the consideration of development proposals within conservation areas.
- 4.2 Up-to-date conservation area appraisals will assist the consideration of planning applications in the areas covered by the appraisal from the point at which they are adopted, and will also assist the implementation of the Cherwell Local Plan.
- 4.3 It is for these reasons that it is recommended that the revisions to the boundary of the Williamscot Conservation Area be adopted along with the Williamscot Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

## **5.0 Consultation**

Public consultation – 29 July 2017 – 8 September 2017

## **6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

- 6.1 The following alternative options have been identified:

Option 1: To agree the recommendations as set out in the report

Option 2: To amend the recommendations

Option 3: Not to agree the recommendations

## **7.0 Implications**

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 Any expenditure in relation to the conservation area reviews for the settlements will be from existing resources.

Comments checked by:

Kelly Watson, Assistant Director - Finance and Procurement

Tel. 0300 003 0103

[Kelly.watson@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:Kelly.watson@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)

## Legal Implications

- 7.2 Conservation areas may affect residents of the district, business and other parties. Works that can usually be undertaken to the land and property as 'permitted development' may be restricted in conservation areas.
- 7.3 If adopted, the Williamscot Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will become part of the evidence base for the forthcoming Local Plan and represent a material consideration in the planning process.

Comments checked by:

Ben Arrowsmith: Solicitor (Planning & Litigation)

Tel: 01295221690

Email: [ben.arrowsmith@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:ben.arrowsmith@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk)

## 8.0 Decision Information

### Wards Affected

Cropredy, Sibfords and Wroxton

### Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

This report directly links to all three themes from the Joint Corporate Strategy 2018-19:

- District of Opportunity & Growth
- Protected, Green & Clean
- Thriving Communities & Wellbeing

### Lead Councillor

Cllr Colin Clarke

Portfolio Holder for Planning and Environment

### Document Information

Appendix No	Title
Appendix 1	Williamscot Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan
Appendix 2	Williamscot Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan
<b>Report Author</b>	Jenny Ballinger
<b>Contact Information</b>	01295 221885 <a href="mailto:Jennifer.ballinger@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk">Jennifer.ballinger@cherwellandsouthnorthants.gov.uk</a>