

Cherwell District Council

Report to Assistant Director – Planning and Development

29 November 2021

Stratton Audley Conservation Area Re-Appraisal – Delegated Matter

Report of Planning Policy and Conservation Manager

This report is public

Purpose of report

To consider the approval of revisions to the Stratton Audley Conservation Area Appraisal, following its re-appraisal.

1.0 Recommendations

The Assistant Director – Planning and Development is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the proposed revisions to the Stratton Audley Conservation Area boundary and the Stratton Audley Conservation Area Appraisal.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 comprises 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'.
- 2.2 The Stratton Audley Conservation Area was first designated in 1988 and the boundary reviewed in 1996. An updated appraisal has been produced as part of a rolling programme to keep conservation areas within Cherwell up-to-date. A final document is presented for approval at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.3 A consultation on the draft document took place between 9 April and 17 May 2019. This report sets out the comments received on the draft appraisal and on the proposed changes to the boundaries. The report requests that both the proposed changes to the conservation boundaries and the amended appraisals are approved under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ("the Act") with immediate effect.
- 2.4 Six boundary changes were proposed for amendment in the draft document. Two of these have been further amended following the consultation.
- 2.5 In brief, the changes involve (see **Appendix 2**):

- i. Inclusion of gardens to the rear of properties on Bicester Road.
- ii. Inclusion of land to north east of Stone Row.
- iii. Removal of half of the paddock to the rear of Willows Farm House and the inclusion of the entire field on the northern edge of the village.
- iv. Inclusion of the entrance to Elm Farm and the buildings located adjacent to Mill Road.
- v. Removal of the area of land to the south, at the rear of Longlands.
- vi. Inclusion of the whole footprint of the buildings to the south of Bicester Road.

- 2.6 The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies and analyses the distinctive character of an area derived from its unique topography, historic development and features such as buildings, streets, layout and form.
- 2.7 The Appraisal includes a Management Plan which outlines opportunities to enhance the area and identifies threats to its character and appearance. A series of action points are outlined to address these issues.
- 2.8 The appraisal of the character of a conservation area provides a sound basis for development management, for developing initiatives for improving the area and for assisting with plan-making. A clear definition of those elements which contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of a settlement provides a robust framework for the future management of the historic environment of that settlement, against which applications can be considered.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The 2019 Stratton Audley Conservation Area re-appraisal reflects guidance in Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management 2019. The six proposed minor alterations to the conservation area boundary are shown in **Appendix 2** of this report.
- 3.2 The required public consultation (April-May 2019) was supported by an exhibition at the annual parish meeting in the village on 9 April. The document was available on-line and in hard copy at Bodicote House and Bicester library. Copies of the document were handed out at the public exhibition and additional copies were available by request. A summary of consultation responses is provided at **Appendix 3**.
- 3.3 The exhibition was attended by approximately 30 local residents. No written responses were received on the night. Subsequently a total of three written responses were received which included one from the Parish Council and two from local residents. One resident also made verbal comments at a meeting at their property.
- 3.4 The response from the Parish Council highlighted that it supports the conservation area designation. The comments also highlighted some anomalies with the proposed boundary and urged the Council to give due weight to the submissions from landowners affected. The Parish Council also pointed out that although there is no formal village boundary there are properties outside of the village that are potentially Heritage Assets and could therefore be considered to be entered in the Council's Heritage Assets list register. Appendix 3 of the Conservation Area Appraisal lists the buildings and structures with potential for consideration in the

register and makes clear their registration will form part of a separate process. The comments regarding the boundary were fully acknowledged and meetings were arranged with the relevant landowners.

- 3.5 One written response related to a farm affected by the boundary change. Concerns were raised about the whole of the farm being included within the boundary as many of the buildings were built during the 1980's. The resident also highlighted that other areas of 20th century development within the village were not being included. A meeting was arranged with the relevant landowner, the concern was accepted by officers and the boundary amended.
- 3.6 The other written response was a general concern relating to the conservation area boundary as a whole. It was commented that the boundary fails to include any of the post WWII development on the north side of the village. It highlights that late 20th century development along Cavendish Place is included but properties around Cherry Street and in Glen Gorse are omitted. It was also suggested that this could be inconsistent and confusing. The comments advocated the inclusion of all property within the village borders. This suggestion was considered but the view of officers is that it is not appropriate for the whole village to be included, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) asserts that when designating conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area has sufficient special architectural or historic interest not to devalue the concept of conservation. Cavendish Place, a late 20th century development is included within the Stratton Audley conservation area boundary because it is within the centre of the village, surrounded by more historic properties and it sits within the historic limits of the walled garden of Stratton Audley Manor.
- 3.7 Verbal comments were received at a site visit which took place with the landowner of the fields to the north of the village that are affected by a boundary change as originally proposed in the draft appraisal. Concerns were raised regarding the need for the boundary extension to include whole fields and agricultural land and clarification was sought on the current boundary. Officers accepted that a change would be appropriate, and the proposed boundary has been amended.
- 3.8 There has been a delay in adopting the document due to a reprioritisation of resources during the Covid 19 Pandemic. The appraisal was finalised in February 2020 but polices and references have been updated where necessary. There have been no major planning applications submitted since February 2020.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal has been reviewed and consulted upon. It is recommended that the Assistant Director – Planning and Development, using delegation within Officer Scheme of Delegation (Part 3 of the Constitution), endorses the proposed appraisal presented at **Appendix 1** and the six minor boundary changes (including those amended as a result of the consultation).

5.0 Consultation

- 5.1 A summary of public consultation is presented at **Appendix 3** of this report.

Councillor Colin Clarke, Lead Member for Planning

Supports the approval of the appraisal

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To seek further amendments to the Conservation Area Appraisal.

Officers consider that the reviewed Conservation Area Appraisal and the proposed changes to the conservation area boundary are in the best interests of preserving the district's built heritage.

Option 2: To oppose the proposed changes – would result in the AD Planning and Development reconsidering those changes.

Officers consider that an updated appraisal and conservation area boundary are in the best interests of preserving the district's built heritage.

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 7.1 The review of the Conservation Area Appraisal has been met from existing budgets.

Comments checked by:
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Legal Implications

- 7.2 If approved, the Stratton Audley Conservation Area Appraisal will become a material consideration in development management decision making and in policy formation.
- 7.3 Proposed development is required to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas. Specific classes of 'permitted development' are restricted within Conservation Areas.

Comments checked by:
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Risk Implications

- 7.4 There are no risks associated with adopted CAA's. They are a recognised planning tool and are prepared following best practice including Historic England guidance.

Comments checked by:

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Equalities and Inclusion Implications

- 7.5 The Conservation Area Re-Appraisal has been prepared with regard to the Council's Equalities and Climate Impact Assessment. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment is a key strand within the National Planning Policy Framework and is supported by a comprehensive legislative framework. Conservation Area Appraisals are a valuable tool to assist in conserving the historic environment and are a material consideration in decision making, but do not set policy in themselves. The Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared in accordance with best practice including the Historic England Advice Note.

Comments checked by:
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8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision N/A as not an Executive report

Financial Threshold Met: N/A

Community Impact Threshold Met: N/A

Wards Affected

Fringford and Heyfords Ward

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

This report directly links to all three themes from the Cherwell District Business Plan 2021-22

- An Enterprising Economy with Strong Vibrant Local Centres
- Healthy, Resilient and Engaged Communities
- Leading on Environmental Sustainability

Lead Councillor

Councillor Colin Clarke
Lead Member for Planning and Heritage Champion

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix 1 – Stratton Audley Conservation Area Appraisal, 2021 (for approval)
- Appendix 2 – Stratton Audley Conservation Area Boundary changes map
- Appendix 3 – Summary table of consultation responses

Supporting information

- Stratton Audley Conservation Area Appraisal Consultation Draft (February 2019)
<https://www.cherwell.gov.uk/directory-record/1832/stratton-audley>

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