

Adoption of revised Conservation Area Appraisal Boundaries, Appraisal and Management Plan for the Church Green Conservation Area

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Matt Dormer
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
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Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Run and Grow a Successful Business• Finding somewhere to live• Aspiration, work and financial independence• Living independent, active and healthy lives• Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green The Green Thread runs through the Council Plan
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee RESOLVE that:-

- 1) It approves the Church Green Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, and endorses its contents as a material consideration for planning purposes.
- 2) It approves the designation of the proposed extension to the Conservation Area to include 5 – 11 Alcester Street.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory duty under s69(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate any areas which they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest as Conservation Areas. The Council has a further duty under s71(1) to formulate and prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas.

- 2.2 A Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared for the Church Green Conservation Area. The character appraisal identifies the factors and features which make the area special, based on an in-depth assessment of the area's buildings, spaces, evolution and sense of place. The Conservation Management Plan provides a strategy for the management of the conservation area in a way that will protect and enhance its character and appearance and support the wider regeneration of the town centre.
- 2.3 The conservation area appraisal identified the need for a small boundary change.
- 2.4 Having obtained the support of the Executive Committee for the draft boundary extensions, Appraisal and Management Plan, full consultation with local occupiers, owners and other interested parties between 8th February 2021 and 19th March 2021.
- 2.5 A broad range of views were expressed in respect of the Appraisal and Management Plan, these can be viewed at appendix 2. There were no objections to the proposed boundary extension.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The cost of producing and consulting on the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been met by the existing Strategic Planning Team budget.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty under s69(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate any areas which they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest as Conservation Areas. The Council has a further duty under s71(1) to formulate and prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 The publication of the Church Green Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) will help support the Strategic Purposes by supporting the ongoing regeneration of Redditch Town Centre.
Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 The publication of the CAAMP has no direct climate change implications.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The publication of the CAAMP has no equality or diversity implications.

Operational Implications

- 6.2 Guidance in relation to the designation, preservation and enhancement of conservation areas are contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) as outlined in the Character Appraisal and Management Plan.

The NPPF states that

191. When considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.

The PPG states that

Local planning authorities need to ensure that the area has sufficient special architectural or historic interest to justify its designation as a conservation area.

- 6.3 The architectural and historic significance of the area, including the additions and proposals for managing them, are set out in the Appraisal and Management Plan.
- 6.4 Designation of conservation areas have planning consequences, some of which are outlined in the Appraisal and Management Plan, which include controls over trees in the area, more restrictions on permitted development rights and advertisements rights, and the duty to pay attention to the historic and archaeological significance of the area when considering the grant of planning permission and the duty to formulate proposals to enhance and preserve the conservation areas

- 6.5 The Character Appraisal identifies the factors and features which make a conservation area special, based on an in-depth assessment of an area's buildings, spaces, evolution and sense of place. The Management Plan then provides a strategy for the management of the conservation area in a way that will protect and enhance its character and appearance, and support the wider regeneration of the Town Centre.
- 6.6 The CA has many positive features, which are noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal. It sits at the centre of the town with the Grade II Church as the focus, surrounded by green space. The historic buildings which surround the Green, both listed and locally listed, enhance the setting of the Church and this open space. Being predominantly pedestrianised it is a safe and attractive space for pedestrians. There are, however, some issues which potentially threaten the character of the CA. These include;
- Poor state of the public realm
 - Poor state of shop fronts
 - Parking around the church
 - Parking on the corner of Evesham Walk/Unicorn Hill
 - Vacant Units
- 6.7 It is also recommended that 5-11 Alcester Street are incorporated into the CA. It would seem to be anomalous that they have been left out especially as 5 and 7 are a continuation of 3, and 9 and 11 are the last historic buildings in this run and probably date to the late 18th century. All the buildings are sympathetic in terms of character with the existing buildings in the CA.
- 6.8 The attached Conservation Management Plan identifies strategies to protect and enhance the character and significance of the CA by addressing the issues identified in the appraisal. In terms of the issues noted above proposals include;
- Poor state of the public realm - Working with Highways at the County Council and NWEDR to finalise a uniform scheme of public realm works, probably following what has been introduced in Alcester Street. This is under way.
 - Poor state of shop fronts- encourage the reinstatement of historic detailing when opportunities arise through the development control process and Investigating the possibility of

obtaining grant funding to finance a programme of upgrading shop fronts.

- Parking around the church - Approach the Church with the aim of discussing their parking requirements. Look at ways of accommodating their needs while at the same time improving the appearance of the space around the Church.
- Parking on the corner of Evesham Walk/Unicorn Hill- The Local Authority is in the process of issuing a Traffic Order to prevent parking in this area, but there will be a continual need to monitor the situation and liaise with Town Centre Management at RBC and NWEDR.
- Vacant Units- RBC with the assistance of NWEDR has submitted a Town Investment Plan as part of the Town Deal programme and has been offered a Town Deal of £15.6million. Phase 2 of the Town Deal programme is now progressing with Business Case Development for the projects. A Town Deal Board has been established, and the Board through consultation with the public and stakeholders will prioritise projects which will include work in the Town Centre. Work with partners at RBC and NWEDR to obtain funding to improve the appearance of the CA and in particular units within it to make the Town Centre a more attractive to prospective occupiers.

6.9 The proposed action points are in accordance with national policy guidance, local policies and follow on from the Conservation Area Appraisal. As noted above there have been discussions between NWEDR and the County Council regarding the upgrading of the Public Realm, and the intention is to continue working with NWEDR in respect of other elements of town centre regeneration.

6.10 Every year Historic England asks local authorities to assess whether listed buildings and conservations areas can be assessed as being 'At Risk' using their assessment criteria. Currently many town centre conservation areas are at risk, and the future is uncertain for large numbers of them, the impact of Covid 19 is only likely to make the situation worse in the short term. Church Green Conservation Area, for the reasons identified in the appraisal, and noted above, now meets the criteria for being 'At Risk'. If this is formally recognised, we will begin to look at what funding may be eligible from Historic England to address some of these issues.

6.11 The occupiers of the Conservation Area, as well as a number of other interested parties including The Victorian Society and Historic England were notified either by a hand delivered letter or email of the Consultation. Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, it was not possible to hold any consultation events, but information was provided on the RBC website together with links to the relevant planning page and a press release resulted in coverage in the Redditch Standard.

6.12 Thirteen written responses were received.

From those who expressed an opinion there was support to extend the Conservation Area as proposed.

A number of consultees expressed concern about the poor state of the public realm, various parking issues in and around the CA, and the increasing number of vacant units within the Area. The Management Plan details proposals for tackling these issues; public realm improvement works are underway; there are plans to discuss ways of improving the parking in the vicinity of the Church with the Church Community; and when the CAAMP is adopted we will be looking in obtaining grant funding to improve the appearance of the shop fronts as well as working with the BID and NWEDR on wider regeneration in the area.

The comments together with a response from the Conservation Officer where appropriate, are tabulated in Appendix 2.

6.13 Two responses required amendments to the text of the CAAMP. The following has been added to the end of the first paragraph of section 4.3.1, 'Outside of the Church, to the south is an early 14th century vault springer, with moulded ribs and a ballflower decoration, from Bordesley Abbey'. While, 'Work with the Church and NWEDR to improve the appearance of the Churchyard which forms part of the public realm, and improve the integration of the Church into the CA.', has been added to 4.2.2 of the Management Plan

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 There are no associated risks with this report .

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Church Green Conservation Area Appraisal and Conservation Management Plan

**Executive Committee
2021**

26th October

Appendix 2 – Church Green CAAMP Consultation Comments

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Executive Committee report December 2020
[Conservation Report - 8th December 2020](#)

**Executive Committee
2021**

26th October

Historic England Guidance - [Historic England Information](#)

**Executive Committee
2021**

26th October

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder		
Lead Director / Head of Service		
Financial Services		
Legal Services		
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)		
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)		