

Public Document Pack

Date of meeting Tuesday, 12th April, 2016
Time 7.00 pm
Venue Committee Room 1. Civic Offices, Merrial Street,
Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffs ST5 2AG
Contact Geoff Durham

Conservation Advisory Working Party

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

PART 1 – OPEN AGENDA

6 Draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (Pages 3 - 52)
Documents for the Brampton Conservation Area and Watlands
Park Proposed Conservation Area

Members: Councillors Allport (Vice-Chair), Cooper, Eastwood, Johnson and Naylor
(Chair)

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Members of the Council: If you identify any personal training/development requirements from any of the items included in this agenda or through issues raised during the meeting, please bring them to the attention of the Democratic Services Officer at the close of the meeting.

Meeting Quorums :- 16+= 5 Members; 10-15=4 Members; 5-9=3 Members; 5 or less = 2 Members.

FIELD_TITLE

Officers will be in attendance prior to the meeting for informal discussions on agenda items.

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DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS FOR THE BRAMPTON CONSERVATION AREA AND WATLANDS PARK PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA

Purpose of the Report

That the Working Party considers the documents and the issues set out in this report and gives its views on recommendations going to Planning Committee on 26th April.

Recommendations

1. That the Working Party recommends to the Planning Committee that the draft Appraisal and Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document for The Brampton is approved for public consultation purposes.
2. That the Working Party considers the designation of a Conservation Area at Watlands Park.
3. That the Working Party recommends to the Planning Committee that in order to inform its decision on whether or not to designate a Conservation Area at Watlands Park that the the draft Appraisal and Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document for Watlands Park be approved for public consultation purposes
4. That the Working Party recommends to the Planning Committee that it makes an immediate Article 4 Direction with respect to 7 Park Avenue, Wolstanton on the terms set out below

Reasons

1. The SPDs seek to provide additional information to ensure that the Borough's Conservation Areas are safeguarded for the future to supplement the objectives and policies contained in the Joint Core Spatial Strategy. In accordance with the statutory regulations, an SPD has to undergo a consultation process before it can be adopted;
2. The report also proposes the designation of Conservation Area Status for Watlands Park, Wolstanton; and
3. It proposes the making of an Article 4 Direction which can help to protect historic buildings and the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and areas of high amenity.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory obligation to review its Conservation Areas from time to time and to consider new areas. It also must publish from time to time its proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and consult the local community about the proposals.
- 1.2 A key purpose of a Conservation Area Appraisal is to define the special interest of Conservation Areas, identify the issues which threaten these special qualities and to provide recommendations and guidance to manage change and suggest potential enhancements through the Management Plan. The documents also consider the boundary of the Conservation Area or of any proposed Conservation Area.

2.0 Context

- 2.1 The Brampton Conservation Area was designated in 1984 and the review now undertaken has reconsidered the special character of the Area, as well as its boundary. The proposed Management Plan suggests amending the boundary to include the adjacent streets at Gower Street and Granville Avenue (see The Brampton Appraisal map). The Sidmouth Avenue Residents Association has been involved in the review and is in support of the proposals to extend the Conservation Area boundary and to increase the level of control over permitted development.
- 2.2 Watlands Park Residents Association have approached the Council about designating a Conservation Area around the former Watlands Park estate. They have written a review of the area and it is proposed that a Conservation Area is designated around the former Watlands Park estate (see boundary on Watlands Park Appraisal plan).
- 2.3 The Watlands Park Residents Association have requested that the Council to consider issuing an immediate Article 4 Direction with respect to 7 Park Avenue, Wolstanton to remove permitted development rights that otherwise allow, without the need for planning permission, certain development. The reason given for the request is that the building has been empty for some time and is under pressure for overdevelopment and clearance of the site. The building is a fine detached Victorian villa set on a double plot with a high amount of original features including doors, a timber porch, ornamental brickwork, string courses and windows, etc. It also has many other internal features of interest, works to which would not come within planning control as a result of an Article 4 Direction.

3.0 Consultation Arrangements

- 3.1 It is proposed to hold t consultations for The Brampton and the proposed Watlands Park Conservation Area with both Residents Associations.
- 3.2 The draft SPD's will be publicised on the web and made available in Newcastle Library. The Council will use its e-panel, its website to raise awareness of the SPD. A surgery will hopefully be held in a convenient venue on one day during the consultation process.
- 3.3 All representations received will be considered and a report submitted to the Working Party and Planning Committee with recommendations for changes, if appropriate, to the draft documents.
- 3.4 Once adopted, the SPD's (Conservation Appraisal and Management Plans) will carry more weight in giving advice and determining planning applications in the Conservation Areas or in any planning appeals.

4.0 Article 4 Directions

- 4.1 National guidance indicates that the use of Article 4 Directions to remove national permitted development rights should be limited to situations where this necessary to protect local amenity of an area. A Direction can withdraw permitted development rights straight away; however it must be confirmed by the local planning authority within 6 months of coming into effect to remain in force. Immediate Directions can be made in relation to development permitted by Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the GPDO which grants permitted development rights to minor external changes for single dwellinghouses. An immediate Direction can only be made where the local planning authority consider the current permitted development presents an immediate threat to local amenity or prejudices proper planning of an area.

- 4.2 A number of Article 4 Directions have been made through the Appraisal process within other Conservation Areas in the Borough, such as Basford and Butterton. It is recommended within the documents for the Brampton and Watlands Park Conservation Areas (the latter if designated) that an Article 4 Direction is made on certain properties to control harmful development.
- 4.3 Article 4 Directions are a means to control kinds of development to windows, doors, roofs, frontages and boundary walls and which in the Council's opinion can harm the appearance or character of a Conservation Area.
- 4.4 After being vacant for more than a year and in a state of neglect number 7 Park Avenue within the proposed Conservation Area at Watlands Park, represents a particularly unaltered original red-brick detached property set in generous grounds with a large side garden and a coach house. It is currently in a vulnerable state of repair but has many original features, such as sash windows, which are all still in place, as set out above.
- 4.5 The Council received a planning application from a property developer in March 2015 at this address for a large extension and alterations to the existing house into 14 apartments, demolition of the coach house and widening of the access. This application was considered unacceptable, but before being determined, was withdrawn by the applicant. The plot was subsequently sold again at auction and has been boarded up with no indication as to the intentions of the new owners. The site has recently been cleared of unprotected trees and shrubbery and to date there has been no response from the owner to several attempts to make contact.
- 4.6 Although an Article 4 Direction is recommended with the Management Plan for Watlands Park (if designated as a Conservation Area), due to the relatively lengthy timescales involved, it would be some time before the Direction came into place and the features referred to would be at risk in the interim. In the circumstances it is proposed to recommend to the Planning Committee that an immediate Direction should be made at 7 Park Avenue, Wolstanton to help protect the features of the building and therefore the contribution that it makes to the appearance of the area. Once the Direction is made, notice is served on the owner, advertised locally and 21 days is given for any representations, after which the notice can be confirmed and will remain in force. If not confirmed the Direction will lapse.

It is being recommended that the Direction should remove the following permitted development rights:-

- The enlargement, improvement or other alteration of the house, any alteration to its roof, the construction or alteration of a porch, outbuildings, hard surfacing, satellite dishes, including erection (Classes A, C, D, E, F and H of Part 1 of Schedule 2)
- The erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall, or other means of enclosure within the curtilage of a house (Class A of Part 2 of Schedule 2)
- The demolition of a building and all or part of a gate, wall or other means of enclosure within the curtilage of a house (Class B and C of Part 11 of Schedule 2)

5.0 Background Papers

English Heritage: Guidance on conservation area appraisals and the management of conservation areas. Feb 2006

English Heritage: Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (2014)

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The Brampton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

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1. Introduction

The Brampton Conservation Area was designated in July 1984 as an “area of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. There is an existing appraisal document from Feb 1985 after the Conservation Area was designated which sets out its architectural and historical interest. There has inevitably been change over the last 30 years and this current document aims to see if the area still retains a special character and is still worthy of its status as a Conservation Area.

Local planning authorities are required to review and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

The purpose of the Appraisal is to describe the area’s character and the Management Plan is to provide a good basis for planning decisions and for development proposals in the area in the future. Once agreed by the Planning Committee of the Borough Council, the Draft Appraisal and Management Plan will be discussed with the wider community.

Planning Policy Context

These documents should be read in conjunction with the wider policy framework as set out in various policy documents. The Development Plan for the Borough currently consists of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy and saved Local and Structure Plan Policies. More information about the planning system can be found on the Borough Council’s website: www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/planning

These documents will therefore provide a firm basis on which applications for development within the Conservation Areas can be assessed. The government’s online Planning Practice Guidance is a valuable and accessible resource <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/> and Historic England (formerly English Heritage) guidance sets out the importance of appraisals and management plans, www.historicengland.org.uk. Additional historic and archaeological information can be obtained from the Historic Environment Record (HER) which is held at Staffordshire County Council. The Council has a Register of Locally Important Building and Structures. Information about the Register and the current list is available to view online at www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/localregister.

It is important to note that no appraisal can ever be completely comprehensive. If a building, feature or space is not mentioned this should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

2. Summary of Significance

The Brampton Conservation Area is significant for the following reasons:

- High quality mature environment marked by large properties in generous plots glimpsed through a parkland landscape.
- Distinctive high quality Victorian Villas, creatively embellished with many original features retained, such as tile patterning, decorative banding, clay tiles and boundary walls with piers.
- Interesting history named after a former open field representing expanding 19th century town of professional classes.
- Attractive setting with historic public walks with mature natural landscaping open spaces and pathway networks, including civic buildings such as museum, park and informal open green space.

The Character Appraisal concludes that the key issues in the area are:

- Protection of the townscape and built features of the Conservation Area including the trees, shrubs and front boundary walls.
- Use of modern materials on historic buildings, such as upvc windows and doors and inappropriate changes to historic buildings.
- Consideration of additions to the Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures.
- Signage on businesses
- Control over intensification of plots within the Conservation Area which could be harmful to character
- Control over loss and inappropriate development of important open space to ensure high quality environment is preserved.

3. Location and Setting

The Brampton Conservation Area is located to the north of Newcastle-under-Lyme Town Centre just beyond Nelson Place roundabout. The original intention of the designation was to preserve the “parkland” landscape appearance of the area and conserve the area’s general environment quality and to maintain the open landscaped appearance of the area, resisting intensification of the uses in the area.

The area reflects the expansion of the town in the mid-19th century and the boundary starting in the north runs along the rear of the properties between Wulston Drive and Stations Walks, along the southern boundary of Station Walks to include the Borough Arms Hotel. It includes the west side of Northcote Place, The Birches garden at the end of Sidmouth Avenue which stretches to Gower Street and up past the east boundary of Brampton Park and includes 4 properties in Granville Avenue. The boundary also runs along the rear boundary properties of the east side of Brampton Road to the open space by the roundabout with Sandy Lane.

Its southern boundary adjoins the Town Centre Conservation Area and is marked by the distinctive Station Walks, a pathway network which runs parallel to the town centre on a west/east axis partly on the former railway line (and canal). From Nelson Place roundabout built in 18th century, Queen Street radiates north and becomes Brampton Road and leads up towards May Bank. Sandy Lane is also characterised by some large properties set in large grounds, although still of some value, this is not as high quality and as well preserved as Brampton Road and the rest of the Conservation Area.

Large properties in large grounds set either side of the road characterise this area and many of the houses nestle behind extensive shrubbery and trees. The landscape value of trees, shrubs and plants is particularly high and provides an attractive setting. The character to the west and north changes quite distinctly and the value is not as high.

The area was predominantly residential but now has a clear mix of uses including offices and businesses housed in large buildings, and substantial car parks, a church, Registry Office and the Borough museum.

Whilst new dwellings have been erected on land to the rear of the original houses they are often not visible due to the dense vegetation and set back which generally means that though the quality of the buildings are not to the same standard as the original development, due to the location within the plots, they do not generally cause harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

4. Historic development

Until the late 18th/early 19th Century, Newcastle under Lyme was a small market town surrounded by open countryside and open strip fields and in agricultural use. Populations began to increase and the land was claimed. Brampton Road was a new road, leading to Wolstanton. The late 18th century brought with it the Industrial Revolution, and wealthy industrialists built large houses on the edge of the towns and this was particularly the case in Sidmouth Avenue. This became a principal residential area for the town's professional classes - Newcastle was less polluted than the pottery towns. The grand houses set in large grounds were built and many still remain today although several are in commercial use.

In the medieval period this area was marshland and strip fields. Stubbs Field along with Brampton Field and four other fields were still surrounding the town under crop cultivation until the early 19th century. By the early 19th Century, with the decrease in reliance of agriculture and increasing populations, the land was enclosed to the local Burgesses in 1819. No longer common land, the fields were managed by trustees and part of their role was to support the making of public walks in Brampton Field and Stubbs Field. The linear walks were laid out by a landscape architect, and they still exist today and are a key feature of the character of the respective Conservation Areas. The central island on the walks, below Sidmouth Avenue is where the statue of Queen Victoria stood since 1963 until it was moved to Queen Gardens in the town centre.

Spatially the history of the wider area is significantly defined by former canals and roads that linked them to the southwest. The historic maps from the mid and late 19th Centuries show that the general spatial layout and character remains the same with the principal streets.

Historic maps depict the Town Fields under the Inclosure Act that in 1826 no building had taken place on The Brampton as yet. Some of the houses started to be built towards the middle of the 19th Century and Brampton Lodge built in 1836, along with Brampton Tree House and Brampton Cottage but only Brampton Lodge still survives. Mapping shows that by 1861 the canal had been replaced by the railway and the west side of Brampton Road was developed first. On the east side, Pitfield House, The Firs were also built.

Sidmouth Avenue is so called because the land was owned by The Viscount Sidmouth (in Devon). The street was developed towards the end of the 1870s and several of the houses have date stones of 1877. Evidence of gate piers at the end of Sidmouth Avenue reveals that this street was gated and therefore very exclusive. It is also of note that Vera Britain, "writer and reformer" was born in Sidmouth Avenue and the blue plaque scheme commemorates this. Further research may also reveal that properties along the Avenue were built by AR Wood, an architect from Burslem.

The Extensive Urban Survey for Newcastle under Lyme states that overall there is a low potential for the survival of below ground archaeology in the area. However further research will always help with the understanding of any unknown heritage assets.

5. Spatial and Character analysis

Topography

The land rises quite steeply from Queen Street/Brampton Road to the start of the Conservation Area. Station Walks is a generally level west/east pathway cutting through the incline, the main road then continues to rise up to and beyond the junction with Sandy Lane. Land to the east of Brampton Road is more level than to the west, which rises up to the properties set back some considerable distances from the road. The SE tip of the Conservation Area falls away down to the Borough Arms Hotel which marks the end of this part of the Conservation Area.

Due to the dense vegetation and tree cover the topography doesn't tend to create impressive vistas and the views are limited along the roads. There are attractive views across the park to the former villa, Pitfield House (now a nursery and café).

Layout and street pattern

The landscape character of the area and buildings are Victorian and the area retains its original charm and character. Brampton Road bisects the area north/south and the properties are set back considerable distances from the road, all at least 45 metres, and some in the excess of 75 metres.

The area has a parkland character especially on the eastern side where Brampton Park provides attractive vistas up towards the Borough museum (The Firs). In the south, due to the layout of the Area with Brampton Park to one side and the Walks on the other, the backs of the houses on Sidmouth Avenue are also visible and incremental domestic development such as outbuildings and fences can have a detrimental effect on the high quality environment.

Sidmouth Avenue has a separate and distinct character, slightly different to Brampton Road, a linear quiet residential street built in phases, set in more regular smaller sized plots, it is a series of very fine and attractively embellished large detached and semi-detached Victorian villas. The villas on the south side have large rear gardens which back onto Station Walks. The large property at the end, The Birches, marks the end of the no through road and the plot extends towards Gower Street.

Open spaces, trees and landscape

The natural environment in the Conservation Area is an integral part of its significance.

There is a tranquil feeling about the area and in general terms the mature landscape and trees play an important part in the character of the area. The public walk was designed and laid out to be an area that residents could enjoy and get exercise. The Council manages the park and open space and there is also a children's playground in the centre. It is on the edge of the town centre but this first suburb of the town has a large amount of open space thanks to the public park and Station Walks and an (informal) open space at the northern end of the Conservation Area. Even the businesses have a quiet and peaceful ambience set back from the road behind dense vegetation.

Trees are extremely important in this area and there are a large number of Tree Preservation Orders for individual trees and groups. Along Brampton Road, many

Orders protect the trees along the plot frontages. All trees (of a certain diameter) are afforded some protection by being in the Conservation Area.

The museum has used the former residence (The Firs) as a museum since 1956. Both the museum and the park are well used and respected and provide high quality civic amenity for residents and visitors of the Borough.

At the northern end of the Conservation Area is the area of informal public open space, designated as such in an earlier Borough wide Local Plan. The Council has since identified this area as having development potential and public consultation has been undertaken. The area makes a positive contribution marking the start of the Conservation Area from the north – a green entrance - is bounded by important trees, and in line with retaining the general character of the Area, the intensification of this area land is likely to have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Any development in this area should respect the general building line and be set back a considerable distance from the back of the pavement. The important trees should be retained and this green, semi enclosed setting should be allowed to continue to complement to the character of the area.

Equally important are the large areas of private open space at the front of most of the properties – again providing a sense of spaciousness and high quality landscape as one traverses up the hill away from the town centre.

Focal points, focal buildings, views and vistas

Focal points in the Conservation Area are `the environment` as a whole - the green landscape and the open spaces, stone boundary walls, glimpses of high quality buildings through the trees and vegetation.

Due to the topography and mature trees, the views are limited across the park but they provide vistas along the pathway networks. There are significant key buildings which are visible and make a positive contribution to the overall character of the area. Pitfield House is also visible across the park from the main road.

Perhaps the most prominent building fronts Sidmouth Avenue and is the current Registry Office with its distinctive pale brick and later round bay.

Buildings on corners, including the large villas which are designed to have presence and prominence and are in elevated positions, including decorative gables, deep eaves, embellished string courses with tiles which all contribute towards a high quality environment.

Boundary features

There are a variety of boundaries in the Conservation Area, generally man-made except the hedges. The historic natural sandstone walls and piers are a distinctive feature of the area. They are higher and more impressive on the west side and on the east side the low walls are in need of some repair. Later walls are brick.

It important that walls are repaired sensitively with lime based mortar, finished flush, brushed back and by appropriately qualified contractors. If unsure, advice should be sought by a conservation specialist or by contacting the council's Conservation Officer.

Public Realm

There are few examples of historic public realm in the Conservation Area. The principal features in the public realm are the walls marking the entrance into the public walks. Modern bins benches are located within the park and there is a playground and gardens within Brampton Park. Large grass verges and pathways make the area feel more spacious.

Stone kerbs are also still present within the area and sets are retained along the edge of the road helping to provide a little more character within the streetscene.

The character of the area is determined by more than just the appearance of the buildings. Due to the nature of the area even though it is a residential area, there is some signage clutter due the fact that it is a busy route in and out of the town centre.

Sidmouth Avenue, has some mock Victoriana lamp standards which were installed. These are also found with the area to the far north leading to Hobbergate and The Manor House. These are fitting and contribute the special character of the streets although require some decoration and repair along Station Walks.

6. Quality and Character of Buildings

The historic buildings and structures in the area contribute greatly to making the area aesthetically special, and this is complemented by the presence of some nationally designated buildings as well.

The Conservation Area contains 3 listed buildings and structures, all listed Grade II. There are currently no buildings included on the Council's Local Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures.

- Brampton Lodge, 1836 villa, in stucco with sash windows and later 19th Century bay. Set within very extensive grounds the plot is bounded by a stone garden wall with piers (separately listed).
- The gate lodge to Brampton Lode, of the same date built from rusticated sandstone with a hipped roof sits at the bottom of the drive to the main house.

There remain many fine Victorian houses, generously proportioned and set in large grounds in this Conservation Area. They were all formerly houses but some have now a commercial use and have been extended.

Now the Registry Office at the end of Sidmouth Avenue, this property has been modified and extended for this use but is still a prominent building with the Conservation Area – probably designed by R Scrivener, a key North Staffordshire Architect in the 1850's, known for his yellow brick and elaborate architectural style. This building highlights the quality and nature of the residential street. Number 15 is also probably by Scrivener. The later mock Tudor houses are extremely impressive the end semi notably where Vera Brittain once resided.

In terms of joinery, many of the timber windows and doors are still in situ. Some have been replaced with uPVC but generally window openings have not been altered and the window proportions have retained their traditional proportions. They are substantial 2 and 3 storey brick properties with a wealth of detailing, both slate and clay pitched roofs, and stone or brick boundary walls – which originally had railings.

Eversley perhaps is one exception which is built by Longdon a nationally significant architect. This property has somewhat been compromised a little by subdividing the plot but can be glimpsed through the trees.

Neutral Buildings

Generally it is considered that the more recent housing whilst not of the same quality as the original houses, still are respectful to the general layout of the area, and do not harm the special character by being set back within the large plots.

New residential development has generally been sensitive. The largest was set in the former railway cutting in the south of the area, access from Brampton Road, developed in a linear form, units designed as a gated street, reflecting the former character of Sidmouth Avenue. Another residential development was built in the garden of Glen Mayne, which did not involve the removal of the main building, and did intensify the plot but it remains set back behind and in line with the existing building and is not visible from the road due to the dense vegetation.

Businesses

Some of the town's key businesses in the town situated in the Brampton either in converted and extended historic properties or in large new build properties. The main ones being Knights Solicitors, Aspire housing, the Museum. Cheeky Monkeys play barn and café, nursery, and the Borough Arms Hotel.

The large buildings and extensions have meant some loss of open space since the designation of the Conservation Area. Fortunately adherence to the general building line and the setting back of buildings into the plots has helped to reduce harmful impact on the overall character of the Area. Large offices to the northern edge of the Conservation Area have crept into the informal open space but again, set amongst the trees and vegetation the impact is reduced. Some non-residential uses on Sidmouth Avenue do not really cause harm to the character of the area as signage and size of plots means that cars can be accommodated. The Registry Office has an unsympathetic flat roofed extension into the car park and unsightly air conditioning units but hopefully these can be removed when the use moves out of the building.

7. Summary of Issues

Clearly since the last appraisal the Conservation Area has changed and accommodated a variety of developments - some more sensitive than others. The area will also continue to change and evolve but it is important to ensure that future changes continue to respect the special ambience and character of the area.

Despite these changes it is concluded that the area is still special and worthy of being designated as a Conservation Area.

Protection of the area's character must be continued and improved when practicable, and this can only be achieved by continual vigilance by concerned local inhabitants and groups, informed decisions by planning officers and positive action by enforcement where necessary, all acting in liaison for the common benefit.

Opportunities and Constraints

- Careful control over inappropriate signage on businesses occupying former residential sites.
- Many properties have substantial plots and the front and rear gardens are large. There has been significant pressure for development on this backland and in order to maintain the historic character of the road, this should be resisted to help preserve the open character of the area.
- Loss of historic features such as windows and doors. Where possible these should be retained or opportunities found to reinstate such features.
- The effect of permitted development can be harmful by incrementally removing significant historic features from buildings. An Article 4 Direction should be considered to tighten control over important buildings and frontages which are not protected from harmful change.
- Appropriate use of materials when altering or extending structures and properties within the Conservation Area.
- Retain trees and landscape features and important open spaces.
- New development should be respectful of character set out in this review but should not mimic the existing development but inventively enhance the character.
- Identify positive buildings in the Area and consider adding them to the Register of Locally Important buildings and structures to encourage sympathetic repair and maintenance and alteration of the buildings.

Section 2: Conservation Area Management Plan

1. Introduction

The purpose is to provide a framework for further actions which although primarily the responsibility of the Borough Council, will also depend on the cooperation and enthusiasm of local people and local organisations/institutions. This Plan is informed by Section 1 of this document which identified the special character and significance of the Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area in the Brampton has been existence for over 30 years and the effectiveness of the designation depends on the way it has been managed in the past by the Borough Council, local businesses and residents.

Government policy guidance on Conservation Areas is contained in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), where the government is still promoting informed and evidenced based conservation. It considers that parts of the environment which have significance due to their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are called heritage assets whether formally designated or not. These assets promote a sense of place and contribute towards the aims of sustainability.

Government policy has made it clear that Conservation Areas are not areas of preservation and that change is an inevitable fact of modern life. The challenge is therefore to manage that change in a manner which respects the special historic and architectural qualities of a place. The context for these policies is provided by the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the Core Spatial Strategy.

Local authorities are required by law to review their Conservation Areas and the preparation of management plans and conservation area appraisals form part of this obligation. The management plan has been drawn up in consultation with the Sidmouth Avenue Residents Association who will form an essential part of this consultation process.

Consultation

The involvement of the local community in the formulation and delivery of these documents helps to strengthen the status and impact of Appraisals and Management Plans. A full period of consultation will take place with the documents to provide opportunities from the local community to input further into the documents. Following this the final document will go back to Committee before going to Cabinet for final approval and adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Both documents will be of use to the Borough Council when determining planning applications for change within or on the edges of the Conservation Area, and for property owners and their agents when considering schemes for alteration or new development. Both documents have been drawn up in consultation with the local Residents Association.

* The proposed actions contained in the Management Plan will be undertaken using existing Council resources unless otherwise stated.

2. The implications of Conservation Area designation.

Designation as a Conservation Area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the “preservation and/or enhancement” of the area. The overriding policy is that new development should pay special regard to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Other effects are:-

- Extra publicity must be given to planning applications affecting Conservation Areas. This is done through a site notice and an advertisement in the local newspaper.
- Permission is required for the demolition of most unlisted buildings in a Conservation Area (except small structures) and the local authority may take enforcement action or consider criminal prosecution if permission is not obtained.
- Written notice must be given to the Borough Council before works are carried out to any tree in the area to give the Council the opportunity to include the tree within a Tree Preservation Order.
- The Borough Council may take steps to ensure that a building in a Conservation Area is kept in good repair through the use of Urgent Works Notices and Amenity Notices.
- The energy conservation expectations of the Building Regulations (Part L) do not necessarily apply to buildings within a Conservation Area.
- Powers exist for local authorities, Historic England or the Heritage Lottery Fund to provide financial grant schemes to help with the upkeep of buildings in Conservation Areas, if the area is economically deprived.
- The Council has a Historic Building Grant Fund for the repair and reinstatement of buildings and structures which are considered as heritage assets, namely Listed Buildings, buildings in Conservation Areas and on the Council’s Register of Locally Important Buildings.

It is always a good idea to check with the Planning Service before carrying out any work and seek advice on any planning issues.

Where a building is designated as a Listed Building separate legislation applies to all internal and external alterations which affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building and will probably require Listed Building Consent. Planning permission is also needed for all proposed buildings in the garden of a domestic Listed Building including gas/oil containers. Listed Building Consent is practically always required for the installation of `antennas` and if the Borough Council considers that the installation will have an adverse effect on the special interest of the building, consent will usually be refused.

3. The Management of the Historic Environment

The Borough Council has policies which are aimed at preserving the significance and character and appearance of Conservation Areas.

Each application has to be determined on its own merits but much can be achieved by having a clear interpretation of statutes, detailed policy and guidance and training to help elected Councillors and officers to work within these constraints. Development proposals can have an effect on a Conservation Area even when they are some distance outside it. In such cases, the duty to pay special attention to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area still applies. Alterations to the external appearance of a property often require planning permission.

Action 1 The Borough Council will adopt a consistent interpretation of what it considers to be a `material` change in the external appearance of a building.

Certain works to Single dwelling houses within a Conservation Area are considered "permitted development" that enable some alterations to be carried out without the need for planning permission. These can include changes to windows and doors, roofs materials or construction of minor extensions. Although they may be minimal in each case, such alterations can have a cumulative effect that is damaging to historic areas. In summary:

- Planning permission is needed for extensions to houses in Conservation Areas if it extends the side wall of the house or if it has more than one storey to the rear and if it exceeds certain length and height restrictions.
- Planning permission is needed for external cladding to houses using stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles.
- Planning permission is needed for any alteration to the roof of a house in a Conservation Area.
- Planning permission is needed for the erection of any structure within the curtilage of a house in a Conservation Area if the structure proposed would be on land to the side or front of the house. This is especially important for sheds, garages and other outbuildings in gardens.
- Planning permission is required for satellite dishes and antennas if they are mounted on a chimney, wall or roof slope which faces onto and is visible from a highway or a building which exceeds 15 metres in height. In these cases, planning permission would not normally be approved. Conventional TV aerials and their mountings and poles are not considered to be `development` and therefore planning permission is not required.
- With commercial properties, such as shops and pubs, planning permission is generally required for alterations to these buildings.
- Solar PV or thermal equipment needs planning permission if it is to be located on a wall or roof slope of the main elevation of the main house or outbuilding or on a Listed Building or a building in its garden.
- Within Conservation Areas, lopping or felling a tree greater than 75 mm. diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground requires six weeks' notice to be given to the Borough Council before starting the work. This provides the Borough Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, in which case a Tree Preservation Order may be served.

Article 4 Directions

Where this kind of development is considered to be harming the character of an area, an Article 4 Direction can be made by the Borough Council which removes permitted development rights. This does not mean that development will not be possible but it does mean that planning permission has to be sought for certain changes. This allows for the merits of the proposal to be considered against the conservation interests of the area.

In the case of The Brampton Conservation Area, it is considered that the exercise of permitted development rights would undermine the general aims and objectives for the historic environment and its local distinctiveness.

For example under an Article 4 Direction planning permission would then be required for

- All extensions whatever the size including porches on the *front* of the building
- Changing roof materials and insertion of rooflights on *front-facing* roofslope
- Replacing windows or doors on the *front* elevation
- Painting a house, and the removal or partial demolition of a chimney.
- The erection, alteration or removal of a wall, gate or fence at the front of the house can also be controlled as well as demolition (front means facing a public highway or road).

Action 2 The Borough Council will propose an Article 4 Direction within The Brampton Conservation Area for certain and relevant types of development on properties in residential use in the Conservation Area as shown on the Townscape Appraisal Plan, in order to seek to retain historic and architectural features which combine to give the Conservation Area its special character and significance. Consideration will be given to removing rights on commercial properties for development, where appropriate and if it is felt that this will likely have a positive effect of the areas character. Full consultation will be undertaken with those affected.

Enforcement Strategy.

Planning permission is not always sought or implemented correctly. Here it is important that enforcement action is considered and if action where needed is taken. This does reinforce that the development control process is fair and should be followed.

As well as following the Cabinet Office Enforcement Concordat, which sets out best practice principles for enforcement like openness, consistency and proportionality, the Borough Council has its own local Planning Enforcement Policy and within this historic building and conservation matters are given a greater priority. Usually issues are resolved through effective communication but this is not always the case.

Action 3 Where appropriate the Council will take enforcement action against unauthorised development within the Brampton Conservation Area.

Promotion and awareness

Some degree of change is inevitable in Conservation Areas and the issue is often not so much whether change should happen, but how it is undertaken. Owners and residents

can minimise the negative effects of change by employing skilled advice when preparing development proposals and by avoiding unrealistic aspirations.

It is important that the community should understand the significance of their surroundings if they are to play their part. There is a clear need to publish information on the history of each Conservation Area and its special qualities. This could be an effective outcome of the character appraisal process. There is also a significant role for amenity societies and other stakeholders to explain what matters, what is possible, what is expected and what has been achieved elsewhere.

Action 4 The Borough Council will encourage and work with the community and other organisations to help recognise and manage the heritage assets in the Conservation Area for future generations.

Action 5 The Borough Council will ensure that information is available to enable communities to understand the significance of their Conservation Areas and the consequences of living and working within them.

Community involvement is an integral part of the planning process. The Borough Council has a Conservation Advisory Working Party, which considers all relevant applications and acts as an important interface between local understanding and council decision making.

Action 6 The Council will continue supporting the Conservation Advisory Working Party and will continue to seek to ensure that it is given the opportunity of commenting on applications affecting the historic environment in the Borough.

Action 7 The Borough Council will consider increasing its offer of guidance and update its range of published guidance to include specific topics such as historic buildings and living in a Conservation Area.

Control of historic buildings

It is important that this historic environment continues to be recognised and that local policies are included in future policy documents for the future protection of Newcastle-under-Lyme's Conservation Areas and Listed Building entries. Listed Building Consent is required for the demolition alteration or extension of statutorily listed buildings. There is current guidance for owners of listed building on the Borough Councils website.

Action 8 The Borough Council has placed information on its website on Listed Buildings and on the Conservation Areas in the Borough and this information should be updated and expanded upon.

Action 9 The Borough Council will continue to assess applications for Listed Building Consent in line with policy and guidance.

Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures

There are buildings of local significance which, although not statutorily listed, are nonetheless important to the history and character and cultural value of the Borough.

The Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures is a list of buildings which are of good design quality, attract appearance and historic interest which make a significant contribution to the character of the area. It is one way that the Council can help to identify buildings which are important to the character of the area and help to prevent harmful changes that would be detrimental to the character of the area. The current Register and information about the process by which buildings can be added to the Register can be seen at www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/localregister.

There are number of buildings which have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal map as being positive buildings of townscape merit. Buildings here will vary in quality but will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings. Where their style, materials and detailing provides the Conservation Area with interest and variety they will be considered for inclusion of the local Register during the next review process. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impractical, they are excluded.

Action 10 The Borough Council will consider all buildings identified as making a positive contribution to the character of the area for the local Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures and will encourage the local community to suggest other buildings that might be eligible for inclusion on the Register.

Action 11 The Borough Council will ensure that the Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures is continually updated.

Action 12 Positive buildings, buildings on the Council's local Register and Listed Buildings should be retained and their settings protected from unsympathetic development.

Control and management of the natural environment

Tree cover provides an important part of the Conservation Area especially within and around the Park. These trees should be maintained retained and replaced when appropriate. All trees in Conservation Areas are already automatically protected by the requirement to notify the Council of any intention to carry out works to trees. Tree Preservation Orders provide additional protection for significant trees or groups of trees and permission is required from the Council for any proposed works.

Action 13 The Borough Council will continue to maintain the trees within the public park and carry out any works which are necessary.

Action 14 The Borough Council will continue to work with landowners to manage the trees within the Conservation Area in a way which recognises the important contribution they make to the character of the Conservation Area.

4. The Conservation Area Boundary Review

Local authorities are required by law to review their boundaries of existing Conservation Areas from time to time. This is to ensure that they still retain special architectural or historic interest.

The Brampton Conservation Area contains buildings and features which are of principally Victorian architectural styles and periods. It is relatively compact and defined either side of Brampton Road from Station Walks including the best of the largest houses in the area.

Additions

It is considered that there are further worthy areas with fine examples of Victorian early to mid 20th century properties on Gower Street, Granville Avenue and Northcote Place.

1. Add area east of Station Walks up to north (east) side of Granville Avenue. This includes north side of Northcote Place, 17-29 (odd) High Street, Gower Street and Granville Avenue

Whilst this does include a small amount of properties which have very little architectural merit such as the flats to the top of Northcote Place and some modern infill plots. The latter are not visible from principle views and others whilst not contributing greatly to the character of the area, properties on either side do and they are often set behind historic walls which form part of the character of the area.

It makes sense to complete the boundary by squaring off this corner of the Conservation Area to try and protect the large villas which make a clear and positive contribution to the character of the area.

5. The setting of the Conservation Area

The Brampton has a large number of trees, particularly within but also on the edges of the Conservation Area. The combined effect of the trees, shrubs, gardens contribute towards the character of the Conservation Area. These features are cherished by the local community and are well cared for including private gardens and the public open spaces and the park.

Action 15 The Borough Council will continue to protect and enhance the qualities of the Conservation Area carefully considering applications for new development which would result in the removal or reduction of trees or established planting which enhances the Conservation Area.

The control of new development

New development should preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It must respect the historic and architectural context and should not necessarily copy existing styles but create sensitive, sympathetic and good quality modern architecture so that the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area is not downgraded or diluted, but reinforced, and enhanced whenever possible. The pattern and grain of the area is part of its special character and appearance and should be respected. It is important to have a good architect or advisor who understands the issues and context of Conservation Areas. New development should not increase the volume of development on the site and should be sympathetic to surrounding historic buildings in terms of scale materials and details. It should also respect views both within and into and out of the Conservation Area.

The pressure for development in The Brampton for infill and backland development (usually in the gardens of existing buildings) some of which sit in spacious plots which will intensify and may harm the character of the Conservation Area.

Action 16 The Borough Council will seek to ensure that new development conforms to policies within the LDF, saved Local Plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework and does not have an adverse impact on the existing building or important landscape features of the Conservation Area.

Demolition

Permission is needed for demolition all buildings in the Conservation Area (over 115 cubic metres). Demolition of historically significant buildings within the Conservation Area will not be permitted unless the building to be demolished can be proven to have a harmful or negative effect. Partial demolition does not require permission, but some control will be exercised through an Article 4 Direction, particularly in relation to boundary walls and chimneys.

6. Implementation

It is important that The Brampton Conservation Area should be a self sustaining as possible if it is to remain in its present state. Achieving this requires management to control any necessary changes so that its special character and appearance is not adversely affected. Success will require commitment by all Borough Council departments and their partners such as building control and the Highways Authority to ensure the sensitive exercise of controls, in the best interests of the Conservation Area, and the sensitive deployment of any resources which may become available. Success depends on the part played by other stakeholders: property owners, residents, businesses and amenity groups.

Those who live and work in the Conservation Area are encouraged to recognise the collective benefits they enjoy. For this they must understand the need to take a contextual view of proposals rather than acting in isolation. Change is inevitable in Conservation Areas but it is how rather than if it is undertaken. Employing skilled advice minimises the effects of these changes.

It is important that communities are well informed about the qualities of their Conservation Areas and of the opportunities for enhancing them. There is also a role for the Borough Council resident community groups and others such as the Civic Society.

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April 2016 - Draft

Brampton Conservation Area Townscape Appraisal Map

Key

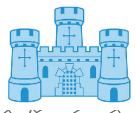
- Conservation Area boundary
- Proposed extension to Conservation Area boundary
- Listed buildings
- Positive buildings
- Neutral building
- Significant open space
- Proposed Article 4 buildings
- landmark building
- characteristic boundaries
- Important views



1:2,500
at print size A3

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Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council - 100019654 - 2016

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BOROUGH COUNCIL

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PROPOSED WATLANDS PARK CONSERVATION AREA

DRAFT

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1. Introduction

The proposed Watlands Park Conservation Area is located approximately one and a half miles north of Newcastle under Lyme Town Centre in Staffordshire, between the urban villages of Wolstanton and Porthill.

Conservation Areas are defined as “areas of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. Local planning authorities are required to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas and must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

The purpose of this Proposal is to provide a good basis for planning decisions and for development proposals in the area in the future. The proposal will inform the production of a management plan for the area. Once agreed by the Planning Committee of the Borough Council, the Draft Proposal and Management Plan will be discussed with the wider community.

Planning Policy Context

These documents should be read in conjunction with the wider policy framework as set out in various policy documents. The Development Plan for the Borough currently consists of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy and saved Local and Structure Plan Policies. More information about the planning system can be found on the Borough Council’s website: www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/planning

These documents will therefore provide a firm basis on which applications for development within the Conservation Areas can be assessed. The governments online Planning Practice Guidance is a valuable and accessible resource <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/> and Historic England (formerly English Heritage) guidance sets out the importance of appraisals and management plans, www.historicengland.org.uk. Additional historic and archaeological information can be obtained from the Historic Environment Record (HER) which is held at Staffordshire County Council. The Council has a Register of Locally Important Building and Structures. Information about the Register and the current list is available to view online at www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/localregister.

It is important to note that no proposal can ever be completely comprehensive. If a building, feature or space is not mentioned this should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

2. Summary of Significance

The proposed Watlands Park Conservation Area is significant for the following reasons:

- It represents a well preserved example of a principally late Victorian/Edwardian planned suburban development.
- It offers a high quality and characterful environment marked by tree-lined avenues and substantial residential properties of pleasingly varied design.
- It retains a mix of distinctive high quality Victorian and Edwardian detached, semi-detached and terraced properties, creatively embellished with many original features intact, such as tile patterning, decorative banding, faience work, ornamental fenestration, clay tiles and boundary walls with piers.
- Significant history as the area was developed in stages from the grounds of Watlands House, and features several examples of the work of noted Potteries architect Absalom Reade Wood (Middleport Pottery, Burslem School of Art, Tunstall Park et al), including his own house, 'Hillcrest'.

This proposal suggests that the key issues in the area are:

- Protection of the townscape and built features of the Conservation Area including the trees, landscape and front boundary walls.
- Use of modern materials on historic buildings, such as uPvc windows and doors and inappropriate changes to historic buildings.
- Consideration of additions to the Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures.
- Removal of significant trees.

3. Location and Setting

The proposed Watlands Park Conservation Area forms a rough rectangle is located between - and including - the section of Wolstanton High Street which runs between Keeling Street and Oaklands Avenue on the north side, and Marsh Avenue and Watlands Avenue on the south side, and Albert Terrace to include the properties at the lower end of Silverdale Road which are in effect a continuation of Albert Terrace and run down to Wolstanton Marsh. The area thus includes the whole of Marsh Avenue, Woodland Avenue, Watlands Avenue and the section of Park Avenue between its intersection with High Street and its intersection with Clarence Street.

Three large detached properties at the High Street Street end of Woodland and Park Avenues are now used as offices; one house on Woodland Avenue is a specialist residential care unit; the rest of the area is fully residential.

4. Historic development

*[*Extensive reference will be made here to the only known academic work entirely concerned with Watlands Park, Andrew Dobraszczyc's printed handout for his Watlands Estate WEA course of circa 1992. This includes maps, plans and other reproduced primary source material. A copy forms an appendix to this proposal; notes in the text citing it are in the format Dobraszczyc 1992, p1 etc]*

Wolstanton is one of Newcastle's earliest known settlements and is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1087:

WOLSTANTON. Earl Algar held it. 2 hides, with its dependencies
In lordship 2 ploughs; 14 villagers and 2 smallholders with a
priest have 8 ploughs. Woodland 1 league long and 1 furlong
wide. Value before 1066, 100s; now £6

Historically Watlands Park was farmland, running down to Wolstanton Marsh and Dimsdale. Watlands House, built in the late eighteenth century on a site at the head of the present Lodge Grove and extended in the first half of the nineteenth century, was one of North Staffordshire's noted gentlemen's houses. The area which forms the proposed Conservation Area, closest to the house, thus became park rather than agricultural land. Only a small part of Watlands House's boundary walls now survives: much built around and having fallen into multi-occupancy, the house was finally demolished circa 1951.

(Dobraszczyc 1992, pp2 & 20)

The present estate was laid out when the Watlands House grounds were gradually sold off, beginning in 1875/6. The southern side of Park Avenue was built up first, followed by Woodland Avenue (originally Woodlands Parade), Albert Terrace, Marsh Avenue (originally Marsh Road), the northern side of Park Avenue and finally Watlands Avenue, which had not formed part of the initial sale of building plots.

(Dobraszczyc 1992, pp10-12)

However, not all the plots offered for sale were purchased immediately, or then quickly built on, so that the proposed conservation area offers a fascinating and generally well-preserved history of changing architectural fashions between the 1870s and the First World War (with now-maturing later infill where older properties were lost to subsidence or large gardens sold for development), from grand redbrick and early Mock Tudor villas to Arts and Crafts cottage-style semi-detached properties.

Originally all four avenues plus Albert Terrace were gated but only one photograph, of the Park Avenue gates at the High Street end, is known to survive.

'There were similar gates at the end of each street on the estate in the 1880s, though the gates at the end of Marsh Avenue and Albert Terrace had been removed by the end of the 1890s. The gates at the end of Park Avenue and Woodland Parade [now Woodland Avenue] survived until the inter-war period and the the last gates at the end of Woodland Parade appear to have been removed in about 1940.'

(Dobraszczyc 1992, p13)

The section of the High Street included in the proposed Conservation Area was mainly developed in the same period, and aesthetically is very much of a piece with the avenues, two of whose focal point buildings - noted below - face on to the High Street.

The Extensive Urban Survey for Newcastle under Lyme states that overall there is a low potential for the survival of below ground archaeology in the area. However further research will always help with the understanding of any unknown heritage assets.

5. Spatial and Character analysis

Topography

The topography of the proposed Conservation Area is generally flat, with a slight descent towards Wolstanton Marsh. Vantage points close to the area give outstanding views of the northern part of the Etruria Valley, the remaining visible parts of its important industrial heritage and rising open country beyond towards Mow Cop.

Layout and street pattern

Street layout is a planned grid, encompassing the area between the pre-existing High Street section - historically the main road between Newcastle and the northern Pottery towns - to the north, Silverdale Road (formerly Robinson's Lane) to the south and the edge of Wolstanton Marsh to the west. Plots and therefore houses are largest on Park Avenue: the plots in Watlands Park were sold with a stipulated minimum front garden depth and now feature mature trees and shrubberies. Woodland Avenue had a smaller but still larger than average stipulated minimum front garden depth. Albert Terrace, Marsh Avenue and Watlands Avenue have smaller front gardens and a higher density of houses but remain a cohesive part of the original estate, as intended. Plot sizes on the High Street vary, from landmark buildings too large for modern residential use to a run of more modest, but elegantly designed semis facing them.

Open spaces, trees and landscape

The proposed Conservation Area has mature trees lining Park Avenue, part of the High Street and parts of Woodland and Watlands Avenue, some of which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders. Several of these are believed to be survivors of the original planting when the Watlands Park estate was laid out. In general the proposed Conservation Area has the sense of a tranquil, somewhat secluded enclave. Wolstanton Marsh, on the edge of the proposed Conservation Area, is very much part of its landscape. The back lanes between Park and Woodland Avenues and Woodland and Marsh Avenues - both of which have exits on to Albert Terrace - have become habitats for small wildlife as they have been used less for rear access to properties and their garages or coach houses. The back lanes are unadopted by the Council and maintained by residents.

Focal points, focal buildings, views and vistas

The largest house in Watlands Park, now the Co-op Funeral Home, stands back from the junction of Park Avenue and High Street, next to 'Hillcrest,' AR Wood's own house, completed in 1891. Both have piecemeal additions from their time in institutional/commercial use but retain their visual integrity as houses. Within the residential streets, much of the area's especial feel comes from smaller vistas: original chimneys, the mix of roof lines and features unique to each house or pair of houses, the large front gardens and for much of the year, the trees.

Boundary features

There is a variety of boundaries in the Proposed Conservation Area. Some original stone and brick walls remain in their original form on all of the roads, and many of these retain their original stone piers, with embellishments. There are many well-established hedges

and trees as house boundary features and they help to unify the area especially where there are modern infill buildings but the historic boundaries remain in situ.

Public Realm

The pavements of the proposed Conservation Area are in a poor state, tarmaced rather than slabbed with the tarmac in roughly-patched and potholed condition. Lamp standards are modern and unremarkable. Highway and commercial signage make for a cluttered environment on the High Street.

6. Quality and Character of Buildings

The historic buildings and structures in the area contribute greatly to making the area aesthetically special. Nothing is nationally Listed; the combined effect of the buildings and streetscapes in Watlands Park is its particular strength, retaining as it does many architecturally distinctive and well preserved houses.

There is a unified palette of materials in the area - presumed to have been sourced mainly locally - which gives a sense of coherence despite the changes in style during the forty years of the estate's main period of development, so that softened gothic detailing from the 1870s sits alongside hanging-tiled house fronts and flamboyant 'Mock Tudor' black-and-white, and half a generation later, roughcast rendering and vernacular woodwork in a garden suburb style. The terraced villas on Albert Terrace are only uniform in short runs: there are Dutch gables and other detailing unusual in similar streets, and on Park Avenue a lovely understated pair of small detached Art Deco houses. This sense of architectural layering is quietly very special.

In terms of joinery, a high number of the timber windows and doors are still intact, with survival rates lower as the properties get smaller. Some have been replaced with uPvc; some of these with altered window openings. Taking Watlands Park as a whole, a sufficient proportion of fenestration in the older properties has retained its original character.

At the heart of the proposed Conservation Area, 7 Park Avenue, a particularly original red-brick detached property with large side gardens, and retaining its coach house intact, is currently in a vulnerable state of repair.

Businesses

There are a number of businesses, noted above, at the High Street end of the proposed Conservation Area.

Neutral Buildings

The post-1945, principally post-1960s infill buildings and extensions within the proposed Conservation Area generally neither contribute to nor detract from the character of the area and these are considered to be neutral buildings. However it must be noted that in terms of architectural quality, most fall well short of the original built environment.

7. Summary of Issues

The key issues facing Watlands Park can be summarised as follows:

- Conservation of the area and its original properties in a way which is sensitive and appropriate.
- Actively ensuring the future of properties at risk, including large gardens in danger of plot subdivision.
- Conserving the best of the Public Realm and actively seeking to bring the worst up to a good standard.
- Loss of important trees

This desirable state can only be achieved by continual vigilance by concerned local inhabitants, informed decisions by planning officers and positive action by enforcement where necessary, all acting in liaison for the common benefit. Watlands Park Residents' Association regards engagement with this process as a vital part of its remit.

Opportunities and Constraints

- Inappropriate signage on businesses occupying former residential sites and action needs to be taken to improve or remove the signage.
- Loss of historic features such as windows and doors. Where possible these should be retained or opportunities found to reinstate such features.
- The effect of permitted development can be harmful by incrementally removing significant historic features from buildings. An Article 4 Direction should be considered to tighten control over important buildings and frontages which are not protected from harmful change.
- Appropriate use of materials when altering or extending properties within the Proposed Conservation Area.
- Retain important trees and landscape features, on public and private ground within the Area.

Section 2: Conservation Area Management Plan

1. Introduction

The purpose is to provide a framework for further actions which although primarily the responsibility of the Borough Council, will also depend on the cooperation and enthusiasm of local people and local organisations/institutions. This Plan is informed by Section 1 of this document which identified the special character and significance of the Conservation Area.

The effectiveness of the Proposed Watlands Park Conservation Area's designation will depend on the way it is managed by the Borough Council, residents and local businesses.

Government policy guidance on Conservation Areas is contained in National Planning Policy Framework, where the government is still promoting informed and evidenced based conservation. It considers that parts of the environment which have significance due to their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are called heritage assets whether formally designated or not. These assets promote a sense of place and contribute towards the aims of sustainability.

Government policy has made it clear that Conservation Areas are not areas of preservation and that change is an inevitable fact of modern life. The challenge is therefore to manage that change in a manner which respects the special historic and architectural qualities of a place. The context for these policies is provided by the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the Core Spatial Strategy.

Local authorities have a duty to designate areas as 'Conservation Areas' which they consider have special historic and/or aesthetic significance.

Consultation

The involvement of the local community - in particular Watlands Park Residents' Association - in the formulation and delivery of these documents helps to strengthen the status and impact of Appraisals and Management Plans. The Residents Association has played a significant role in instigating this process to propose a new Conservation Area and in writing this review of the area, including research and providing the material included in the documents. A full period of consultation will take place with the documents to provide opportunities for the wider local community to input further into the documents. Following this the final document will go back to Committee before going to Cabinet for final approval and adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Both documents will be of use to the Borough Council when determining planning applications for change within or on the edges of the Conservation Area, and for property owners and their agents when considering schemes for alteration or new development.

* The proposed actions contained in the Management Plan will be undertaken using existing Council resources unless otherwise stated.

2. The implications of Conservation Area designation

Designation as a Conservation Area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the “preservation and/or enhancement” of the area. The overriding policy is that new development should pay special regard to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Other effects are:-

- Extra publicity must be given to planning applications affecting Conservation Areas. This is done through a site notice and an advertisement in the local newspaper.
- Permission is required for the demolition of most unlisted buildings in a Conservation Area (except small structures) and the local authority may take enforcement action or consider criminal prosecution if permission is not obtained.
- Written notice must be given to the Borough Council before works are carried out to any tree in the area to give the Council the opportunity to include the tree within a Tree Preservation Order.
- The Borough Council may take steps to ensure that a building in a Conservation Area is kept in good repair through the use of Urgent Works Notices and Amenity Notices.
- The energy conservation expectations of the Building Regulations (Part L) do not necessarily apply to buildings within a Conservation Area.
- Powers exist for local authorities, Historic England or the Heritage Lottery Fund to provide financial grant schemes to help with the upkeep of buildings in Conservation Areas, if the area is economically deprived.
- The Council has a Historic Building Grant Fund for the repair and reinstatement of buildings and structures which are considered as heritage assets, namely Listed Buildings, buildings in Conservation Areas and on the Council’s Register of Locally Important Buildings.

It is always a good idea to check with the Planning Service before carrying out any work and if you need any advice on any planning issues.

Where a building is designated as a Listed Building separate legislation applies to all internal and external alterations which affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building and will probably require Listed Building Consent. Planning permission is also needed for all proposed buildings in the garden of a domestic Listed Building including gas/oil containers. Listed Building Consent is practically always required for the installation of `antennas` and if the Borough Council considers that the installation will have an adverse effect on the special interest of the building, consent will usually be refused.

3. The Management of the Historic Environment

The Borough Council has policies which are aimed at preserving the significance and character and appearance of Conservation Areas.

Each application has to be determined on its own merits but much can be achieved by having a clear interpretation of statutes, detailed policy and guidance and training to help elected Councillors and officers to work within these constraints. Development proposals can have an effect on a Conservation Area even when they are some distance outside it. In such cases, the duty to pay special attention to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area still applies. Alterations to the external appearance of a property often require planning permission.

Action 1 The Borough Council will adopt a consistent interpretation of what it considers to be a 'material' change in the external appearance of a building.

Certain works to Single dwelling houses within a Conservation Area are considered "permitted development" that enable some alterations to be carried out without the need for planning permission. These can include changes to windows and doors, roofing materials or construction of minor extensions. Although they may be minimal in each case, such alterations can have a cumulative effect that is damaging to historic areas. In summary:

- Planning permission is needed for extensions to houses in Conservation Areas if it extends the side wall of the house or if it has more than one storey to the rear and if it exceeds certain length and height restrictions.
- Planning permission is needed for external cladding to houses using stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles.
- Planning permission is needed for any alteration to the roof of a house in a Conservation Area.
- Planning permission is needed for the erection of any structure within the curtilage of a house in a Conservation Area if the structure proposed would be on land to the side or front of the house. This is especially important for sheds, garages and other outbuildings in gardens.
- Planning permission is required for satellite dishes and antennas if they are mounted on a chimney, wall or roof slope which faces onto and is visible from a highway or a building which exceeds 15 metres in height. In these cases, planning permission would not normally be approved. Conventional TV aerials and their mountings and poles are not considered to be 'development' and therefore planning permission is not required.
- With commercial properties, such as shops and pubs, planning permission is generally required for alterations to these buildings.
- Solar PV or thermal equipment needs planning permission if it is to be located on a wall or roof slope of the main elevation of the main house or outbuilding or on a Listed Building or a building in its garden.
- Within Conservation Areas, lopping or felling a tree greater than 75 mm. diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground requires six weeks' notice to be given to the Borough Council before starting the work. This provides the Borough Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, in which case a Tree Preservation Order may be served.

Article 4 Directions

Where minor development is considered to be harming the character of an area, an Article 4 Direction can be made by the Borough Council which removes permitted development rights. This does not mean that development will not be possible but it does mean that planning permission has to be sought for certain changes so that consideration can be given to the merits of the proposal and for them to be considered against the conservation interests of the area. Certain buildings are more vulnerable than others at certain times and it is considered that a No 7 Park Avenue, a redundant building which is changing hands regularly at the moment is at risk from significant change which could harm the character of the area.

For example under an Article 4 Direction planning permission would then be required for

- All extensions whatever the size including porches on the front of the building
- Changing roof materials and insertion of rooflights on front-facing roof slope
- Replacing windows or doors on the front elevation
- Painting a house, and the removal or partial demolition of a chimney.
- The erection, alteration or removal of a wall, gate or fence at the front of the house can also be controlled as well as demolition (front means facing a public highway or road).

Action 2 The Borough Council will propose an Article 4 Direction within the proposed Watlands Park Conservation Area for certain and relevant types of development on the majority of properties in residential use in the Conservation Area as shown on the plan, in order to seek to retain historic and architectural features which combine to give the Conservation Area its special character and significance. Full consultation will be undertaken with those affected.

Enforcement Strategy

Planning permission is not always sought or implemented correctly. Here it is important that enforcement action is considered and if action where needed is taken. This does reinforce that the development control process is fair and should be followed.

As well as following the Cabinet Office Enforcement Concordat, which sets out best practice principles for enforcement like openness, consistency and proportionality, the Borough Council has its own local Planning Enforcement Policy and within this historic building and conservation matters are given a greater priority. Usually issues are resolved through effective communication but this is not always the case.

Action 3 Where appropriate the Council will take enforcement action against unauthorised development within the proposed Watlands Park Conservation Area.

Promotion and awareness

Some degree of change is inevitable in Conservation Areas and the issue is often not so much whether change should happen, but how it is undertaken. Owners and residents can minimise the negative effects of change by employing skilled advice when preparing development proposals and by avoiding unrealistic aspirations.

It is important that the community should understand the significance of their surroundings if they are to play their part. There is a clear need to publish information

on the history of each Conservation Area and its special qualities. This could be an effective outcome of the character appraisal process. There is also a significant role for amenity societies and other stakeholders to explain what matters, what is possible, what is expected and what has been achieved elsewhere.

Action 4 The Borough Council will encourage and work with the community and other organisations to help recognise and manage the heritage assets in the proposed Conservation Area for future generations.

Action 5 The Borough Council will ensure that information is available to enable communities to understand the significance of their Conservation Areas and the consequences of living and working within them.

Community involvement is an integral part of the planning process. The Borough Council has already established a Conservation Advisory Working Party, which considers all relevant applications and acts as an important interface between local understanding and council decision making.

Action 6 The Council will continue supporting the Conservation Advisory Working Party and will continue to seek to ensure that the Working Party is given the opportunity of commenting on applications affecting the historic environment in the Borough.

Action 7 The Borough Council will consider increasing its offer of guidance and update its range of published guidance to include specific topics such as historic buildings and living in a Conservation Area.

Control of historic buildings

It is important that this historic environment continues to be recognised and that local policies are included in future policy documents for the future protection of Newcastle-under-Lyme's Conservation Areas and Listed Building entries. Listed Building Consent is required for the demolition alteration or extension of statutorily listed buildings. There is current guidance for owners of listed building on the Borough Councils website.

Action 8 The Borough Council has placed information on its website on Listed Buildings and on the Conservation Areas in the Borough and this information should be updated and expanded upon.

Action 9 The Borough Council will continue to assess applications for Listed Building Consent in line with policy and guidance.

Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures

There are buildings of local significance which, although not statutorily listed, are nonetheless important to the history and character and cultural value of the Borough.

The Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures is a list of buildings which are of good design quality, attract appearance and historic interest which make a significant contribution to the character of the area. It is one way that the Council can help to identify buildings which are important to the character of the area and help to prevent harmful changes that would be detrimental to the character of the area. The current Register and information about the process by which buildings can be added to the Register can be seen at www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/localregister.

No buildings currently included on this Register lie within the proposed Watlands Park Conservation Area, but the Watlands Park History Project Group has begun to compile a list of AR Wood houses, is researching other houses of particular interest and hopes to offer nominations for the register in future.

There are a number of buildings which have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal map as being positive buildings of townscape merit. Buildings here will vary in quality but will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings. Where their style, materials and detailing provides the Conservation Area with interest and variety they will be considered for inclusion of the local Register during the next review process. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impractical, they are excluded.

Action 10 The Borough Council will consider all buildings identified as making a positive contribution to the character of the area for the local Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures and will encourage the local community to suggest other buildings that might be eligible for inclusion on the Register.

Action 11 The Borough Council will ensure that the Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures is continually updated.

Action 12 Positive buildings, buildings on the Council's local Register and Listed Buildings should be retained and their settings protected from unsympathetic development.

Control and management of the natural environment

Tree cover provides an important part of the proposed Conservation Area. These trees should be maintained, retained and replaced when appropriate. All trees in Conservation Areas are already automatically protected by the requirement to notify the Council of any intention to carry out works to trees. Tree Preservation Orders provide additional protection for significant trees or groups of trees and permission is required from the Council for any proposed works.

Action 13 The Borough Council will continue to work with landowners to manage the trees within the Conservation Area in a way which recognises the important contribution they make to the character of the Conservation Area.

4. The Conservation Area Boundary

The proposed Conservation Area boundary is based around the former estate of Watlands Park laid out at the beginning of the 19th century and put up for auction in in the late 19th Century when the first streets were laid out and building plots sold. Please see attached Plan for the suggested boundary of the proposed Conservation Area described in more detail in Section 3 and Section 4 of the Appraisal document.

5. The setting of the Conservation Area

Watlands Park has a large number of trees, particularly within but also on the edges of the Conservation Area. The combined effect of the trees, shrubs, gardens contributes to the especial character of the Conservation Area. These features are cherished by the local community and are generally well cared for.

The control of new development

New development should preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It must respect the historic and architectural context and should not necessarily copy existing styles but create sensitive, sympathetic and good quality modern architecture so that the special character and appearance of the proposed Conservation Area is not downgraded or diluted, but reinforced, and enhanced whenever possible. The pattern and grain of the area is part of its special character and appearance and should be respected. It is important to have a good architect or advisor who understands the issues and context of Conservation Areas. New development should not increase the volume of development on the site and should be sympathetic to surrounding historic buildings in terms of scale materials and details. It should also respect views both within and into and out of the proposed Conservation Area.

The pressure for development in Watlands Park is mainly for changes of use, signage and extensions to existing buildings, but as noted above there is concern about the potential for over-dense infill and backland development - usually in the gardens of existing buildings which sit in spacious plots that contribute much to the area's character, which has evolved over many years. There is an existing policy which helps protect part of Park Avenue; this should help ensure that special attention is given to retaining this character.

Demolition

Permission is needed for demolition all buildings in the Conservation Area (over 115 cubic metres). Demolition of historically significant buildings within the Conservation Area will not be permitted unless the building to be demolished can be proven to have a harmful or negative effect. Partial demolition does not require permission, but some control will be exercised through an Article 4 Direction, particularly in relation to boundary walls and chimneys.

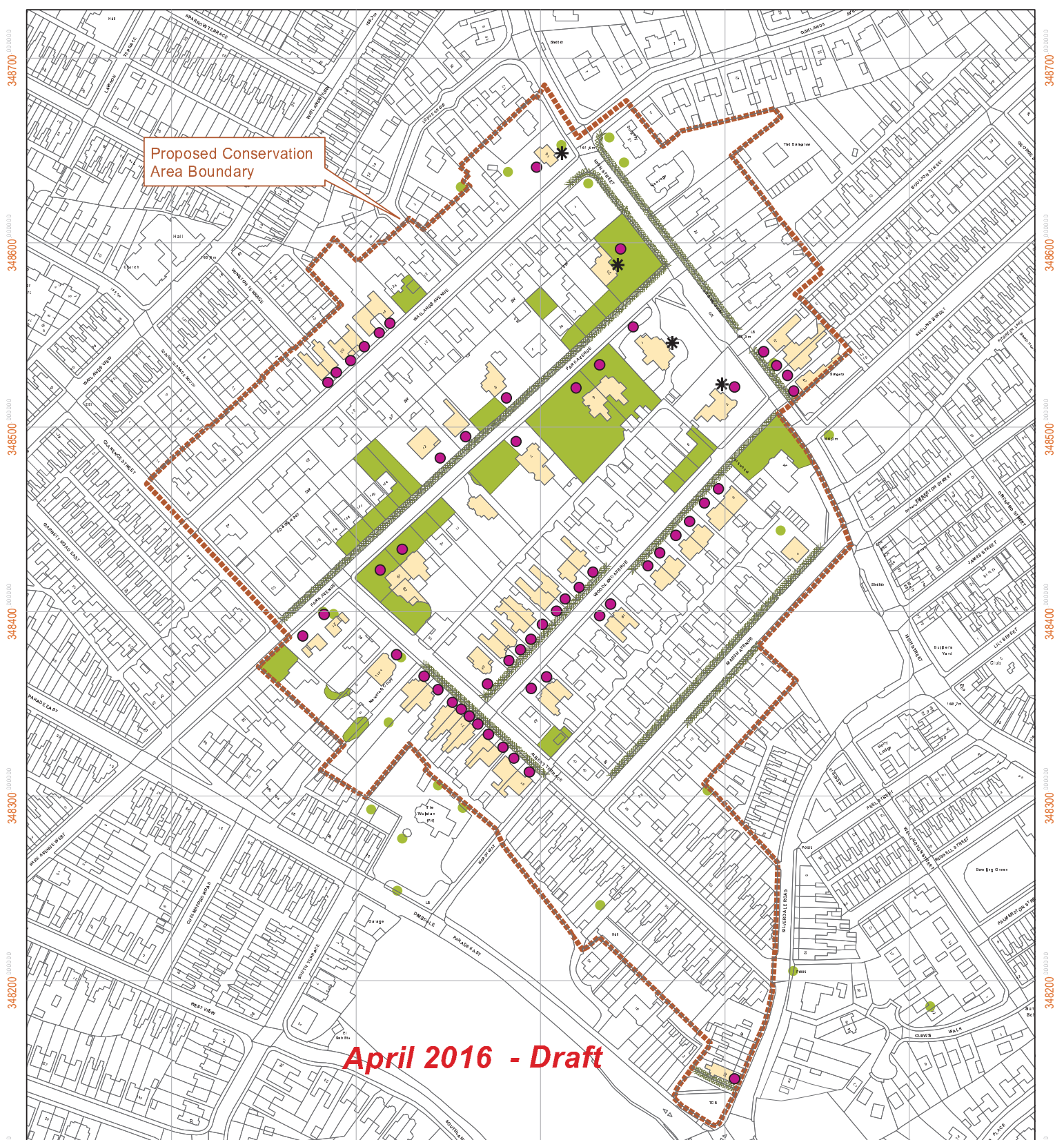
6. Implementation

It is important that the proposed Watlands Park Conservation Area should be as self-sustaining as possible if it is to remain in its present state. Achieving this requires management to control any necessary changes so that its special character and appearance is not adversely affected. Success will require commitment by all Borough Council departments and their partners such as building control and the Highways Authority to ensure the sensitive exercise of controls, in the best interests of the Conservation Area, and the sensitive deployment of any resources which may become available. Success depends on the part played by other stakeholders: property owners, residents, businesses and amenity groups.

Those who live and work in the Conservation Area are encouraged to recognise the collective benefits they enjoy. For this they must understand the need to take a contextual view of proposals rather than acting in isolation. Change is inevitable in Conservation Areas but it is how rather than if it is undertaken. Employing skilled advice minimises the effects of these changes.

It is important that communities are well informed about the qualities of their Conservation Areas and of the opportunities for enhancing them. There is also a role for the Borough Council and other recognised community groups such as the Civic Society.

JF/28.3.16



Proposed Conservation Area Boundary

April 2016 - Draft

Proposed Conservation Area Watlands Park, Wolstanton Townscape Appraisal Map

- Key**
- Proposed Conservation Area boundary
 - Positive buildings
 - Proposed Article 4 buildings
 - Landmark building
 - characteristic boundaries
 - Area TPOs
 - Individual TPOs

1:2,000 at print size A3
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