



DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Date – 5th November 2009

Report of Head of Regeneration, Development and Delivery

Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for Aldridge, Bloxwich and Highgate, Walsall.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform members of the Development Control Committee of Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans for the following Conservation Areas: -

- i) Aldridge
- ii) The adjacent Bloxwich Park, Bloxwich High Street and Elmore Row areas, produced as one document
- iii) Highgate.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the results of the public consultation on the Conservation Area Management Plan, are noted.
- 2.2 That the contents of the (i) Aldridge (ii) Bloxwich and (3) Highgate Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans are approved as a formal Council document to be used as a material planning consideration.
- 2.3 That the proposed amendments to the conservation area boundaries and implementation of Article 4(2) directions, as set out in the Management Plan sections of each of the documents are noted and that committee agrees to officers undertaking formal consultation on these proposals. Results of the consultation will be reported back to this committee for formal approval.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Implementation of the recommendations of each Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan may require further funding, but applications will be made separately following further approvals.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations of this report are within Council policy. All planning applications and enforcement proceedings relate to local and national planning policy.

PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' (1994) paragraph 4.3 refers to Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 where local planning authorities have "a duty to review their [conservation] areas from time to time".

The adopted Walsall UDP 2005, paragraphs 3.15 and 3.104 state the Council's duty on providing a "phased rolling programme of re-appraisals".

The production of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans aid the implementation of Policy ENV29 'Conservation Areas' as well as providing evidence base for the forthcoming Black Country Core Strategy that forms part of the emerging Local Development Framework that will contain new policies on the historic environment.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Local Planning Authorities have a duty to review the overall extent of designation of Conservation Areas in their boundaries regularly and if appropriate, to designate additional areas.

The plans will be a material consideration when determining planning and conservation area consent applications.

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from the report. The Development Control and enforcement service is accredited by an Equality Impact Assessment.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Conservation Areas are created to preserve and enhance the character or appearance of an area of special architectural and historical interest. Having up-to-date Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans will provide a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for local policies and development control decisions that will preserve and enhance the conservation areas.

8. WARDS AFFECTED

Aldridge Central and South; St Matthew's; Bloxwich East and Bloxwich West.

9. CONSULTEES

Officers in Legal Services, Planning Policy, Development Control, Enforcement, Highways Maintenance, Streetpride, Countryside Services, Property Services,

Development and Delivery and Strategic Housing have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

The three Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans were all produced in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement and current legislation and guidance.

Consultation included walkabouts of each area with residents, interest groups and ward members, and draft plans were available for six weeks in libraries, the First Stop Shop and on the internet.

10. **CONTACT OFFICERS**

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11. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The three Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans are attached as appendices, along with a summary of public consultation responses.

Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, English Heritage (2006)

Guidance on the management of conservation areas, English Heritage (2006).

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: *Planning and the historic environment* (1994).

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Simon Tranter, Head of Development and Delivery

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Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for Aldridge, Bloxwich and Highgate, Walsall.

- 12.1 Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (“The Act”), Local Planning Authorities have a duty to review the overall extent of designation of Conservation Areas in their boundaries regularly and if appropriate, to designate additional areas.
- 12.2 Under section 71 of the Act, following designation, local planning authorities have a duty
 - from time to time to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts and to consult the local community about these proposals”
 - in exercising their planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.
- 12.3 Government Policy in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: *Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG15) stresses the need for local planning authorities to define and record the special interest, character and appearance of all conservation areas in their districts.
- 12.4 There are 18 Conservation Areas in Walsall. The five areas subject to the appended Conservation Area and Management Plans are some of the last to be reviewed. As a result, 15 out of the 18 Conservation Areas now have up-to-date Conservation Area and Management Plans in accordance with the Act and PPG15.
- 12.5 Consultants appointed following an invitation to submit quotations in January 2009. The Conservation Studio was appointed in February.
- 12.6 Residents, interest groups and local ward members were invited to walkabouts of each conservation area with officers and consultants.
- 12.7 Following these walkabouts, draft plans were produced and agreed by officers across the authority, local ward members and the chair of the Development Control Committee. Reports were submitted to relevant LNPs informing them of the plans and consultation.
- 12.8 The draft plans were then made available to the public for six weeks from July 20th to August 28th. External agencies and stakeholders were also consulted. The consultation responses are detailed as appendix A, together with responses from the consultants and officers.
- 12.9 The majority of consultation responses were supportive of each of the Conservation Area Appraisals. There was also overall support for the Management Plans, including many responses that specifically supported the boundary amendments and article 4(2) direction. Only two responses raised a strong objection to the

article 4(2) direction proposal, one of which is immaterial as the objector did not realise that Article 4(2) directions only apply to residential properties.

12.10 Final versions informed by the consultation responses were produced and have been attached as appendices to this report. The main findings of the Appraisals and Management Plans have been summarised below.

12.11 Following approval by the Development Control Committee, the three plans will be illustrated and produced ready for uploading to the Walsall MBC website and in hard copy for reference.

13 Aldridge

13.1 The Aldridge Conservation Area and Management Plan is available online at http://www.walsall.gov.uk/alldridge_ca_management_plans.pdf. A hard copy is available in each of the Party group rooms in the Council House.

13.2 The special interest of the Aldridge Conservation Area that justifies its designation includes:

- Historic village centre located on a ridge of high ground and surrounding historic open spaces;
- A focus of listed and locally listed buildings, creating an area of high architectural and historic interest;
- Attractive green open spaces which include areas hidden away from the main roads and others immediately adjacent to them;
- Established parkland tree planting in green open spaces;
- Gently sinuous narrow lanes shaded by mature tree lines;
- Views out to rolling rural surroundings to the north and east;
- A variety of front boundary treatments making particular use of the locally produced red and blue brick, complementing the materials of historic buildings;
- Some notable high brick walls, such as the ones surrounding the former gardens of Cedar Court on Walsall Wood Road;
- Eight listed buildings of importance: St Mary's Church, The Manor, Moot House, The Cottage, The Old Rectory, Cedar Court and an associated stable block and Shutt Cross House;
- The unlisted former maltings and Moot Cottages;
- Unlisted 19th century mansion and stable block at Aldridge Court, Little Aston Road;
- Other traditional cottages, farmhouses and villas including Nos. 22 – 26 (even only), Nos. 29 and 31 and No. 46 Walsall Wood Road, Nos. 4-6 The Granary, Lee House (locally listed) and Nos. 48-50 Walsall Wood Road (locally listed);
- Late 19th century cottages at Nos. 53 – 57 Portland Road (south side);
- Nos. 1 and 3 Little Aston Road (just outside the current conservation area);
- Use of red brick (sometimes with terracotta eaves corning, painted render or blue brick string courses, and other decorative details), slate or locally produced fired clay tiled roofs, sashed windows, flat or canted bay windows, and a variety of panelled front doors;

- More occasional use of painted render.

13.3 The recommendations in the management plan can be summarised as:

- To extend the boundary of the Conservation Area to include number 1 and 3 Little Aston Road.
- Add three buildings to the Local List
- Serve an Article 4 (2) direction on a number of older, unlisted buildings to protect their contribution to the Conservation Area. Article 4 (2) Directions can be used to withdraw permitted development rights for a range of alterations or small extensions to family houses in conservation areas, and are served by the local planning authority concerned without reference to the Secretary of State, after public consultation
- Several opportunities for enhancement are suggested for buildings or sites in need of improvement, the public realm, highways, pedestrian safety and trees.
- Policies for the maintenance and enhancement of existing buildings and new development are suggested
- Priorities for managing and monitoring the Conservation Area are listed.

14 Bloxwich

14.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for the three areas in Bloxwich was produced as one document. The Bloxwich Conservation Area and Management Plan is available online at http://www.walsall.gov.uk/bloxwich_ca_management_plans.pdf. A hard copy is available in each of the Party group rooms in the Council House.

14.2 The special interest of the three Conservation Areas that justifies their designations include:

- Busy commercial centre with attractive, well-used public open spaces to north and south;
- Bloxwich Park to the north retains a large number of mature trees, footpaths, a children's play area, and public gardens;
- The Promenade Gardens are another public open space which will shortly be enhanced when the restored fountain is reinstated;
- High quality 19th century buildings, some of them listed or locally listed, around Bloxwich Park;
- The High Street contains much denser development with some well detailed 19th century buildings;
- Views down the side streets from the High Street provide interest;
- Elmore Green in the south is dominated by All Saints Church, with its contemporary locally listed former vicarage next door;
- The adjoining Bloxwich Hall and former Manor House (Bloxwich Hospital) are also important buildings;
- Other unlisted buildings, such as the two schools, add to the architectural merit of the Elmore Green Area;

- Throughout the conservation area, a number of well detailed 19th century terraced houses survive with brick and terracotta details, typical of this part of the Midlands.

14.3 The recommendations in the management plan can be summarised as:

- Alter the Conservation Area Boundary in several locations
- Add several buildings to the Local List both within and outside the boundary
- Introduce Article 4 Directions on a small number of properties
- Improve a number of buildings and sites, the public realm and trees
- Adopt new policies for the enhancement and maintenance of existing buildings, new development and monitoring of the area
- Prioritise several actions for managing the Conservation Area

15 Highgate

15.1 The Highgate Conservation Area and Management Plan is available online at http://www.walsall.gov.uk/highgate_ca_management_plans.pdf. A hard copy is available in each of the Party group rooms in the Council House.

15.2 The special interest of the Conservation Area that justifies its designation can be summarised as:

- Residential suburb to Walsall, located on high ridge, with winding roads punctuated by a variety of historic houses set back from the front boundaries;
- Subtle changes in the topography with long views up or down the streets;
- The mature trees which made an important contribution to the special character of the conservation area and its setting;
- A variety of front boundary treatments, including red brick with blue brick copings, as well as metal railings or hedging;
- Some notable high brick walls, such as the ones in Highgate Road;
- Three listed buildings of importance: Doveridge Place, a well detailed Georgian terrace of c1800; Highgate Brewery, of 1898; and the windmill tower;
- High status detached villas along Belvidere Road, with two being locally listed (nos. 6 and 8);
- Fairfield Mount, an interesting development of c1870 houses, set back from Highgate Road in a private setting;
- Rows of well detailed terraced houses of the period 1880 -1910, in Emery Street and Sandy Mount Road, some of them built for brewery workers;
- Use of red brick (sometimes with terracotta eaves corning, painted render or blue brick string courses, and other decorative details), slate roofs, sashed windows, flat or canted bay windows, and a variety of panelled front doors;
- More occasional use of painted render;
- Generally the properties within the conservation area retain their original details and materials, suggesting that the Article 4 Direction has worked well;
- Highgate Brewery retains a number of curtilage buildings which relate to its original establishment, such as the brewery 'office' at the main entrance to the brewery from Sandy Mount Road;

- Highgate Brewery, with its tall buildings and square chimney, is the focal point of the conservation area, and although the windmill tower is also important it is relatively hidden.

15.3 The recommendations in the Management Plan can be summarised as:

- A large addition is proposed to the existing conservation area to include the southern ends of Sandwell Street and Highgate Road, as well as Vincent Street;
- Seven proposed additions to the Local List;
- The existing Article 4 Direction be replaced with a new Article 4 (2) Direction to cover all of the unlisted residential properties within the existing conservation area and within the proposed extension;
- Improve a limited number of buildings and sites, public realm and trees;
- Adopt new policies for the maintenance and enhancement of existing buildings, new development and monitoring of the area;
- Prioritise actions for the improvement of the area.