



DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

Date: 7th August 2007

Report of Head of Regeneration, Delivery and Development

Proposed extension to Church Hill and Bridge Street Conservation Areas

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Further to a report made to Development Control Committee on 26th June 2007, this report seeks final approval from Development Control Committee, to designate the extension of the Church Hill and Bridge Street Conservation Areas, as shown on the plans in appendices 1 and 2.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Committee is recommended to:

- a) designate an extension to the Church Hill and Bridge Street Conservation Areas, as defined on the plans in appendices 1 and 2.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Within Budget – YES

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Within Council policy – YES

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The designation of a conservation area has implications for property owners and occupiers. It makes certain types of normally permitted development 'unlawful'. In particular, the substantial or total demolition of a structure or building within a conservation area requires Conservation Area Consent.

6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

Conservation Area policy is applied equally to all owners / occupiers / property owners within the area of designation.

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Conservation Areas can be established in areas which have been assessed as having special architectural or historic interest. Conservation Areas provide a local authority with an opportunity to preserve or enhance areas that are considered worthy of such action.

8.0 WARD(S) AFFECTED

The proposed Conservation Area extension will be entirely within the St Matthew's Ward.

9.0 CONSULTEES

Property owners and occupiers
Black Country Chamber of Commerce
Walsall Regeneration Company
Walsall Town Centre Management
Walsall Civic Society

10.0 CONTACT OFFICER

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11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- **Bridge Street/Ablewell Street Proposed THI Scheme Area Appraisal**
- **Church Hill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan**
- **Bridge Street/Ablewell Street Townscape Heritage Initiative, Stage 2 Bid**
- **Replies to consultation exercise**

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12 BACKGROUND AND REPORT DETAIL

12.1 Introduction

- a) Section 69 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:
- Every local planning authority –*
- i. *shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and*
 - ii. *shall designate those areas as conservation areas.*
- b) Section 69 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states:
- It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.*
- c) Development Control Committee gave approval on 26th June 2007 for public consultation on the designation of the extension of the Church Hill and Bridge Street Conservation Areas, as shown on the plans in appendices 1 and 2. These areas incorporate sections of Bridge Street, Freer Street, Ablewell Street, Paddock Lane and Lower Rushall Street.
- d) This report contains the results of the public consultation and the reasons and implications of the extension of the Church Hill and Bridge Street Conservation Areas.

12.2 Public consultation

- a) It is proposed that the Bridge Street and Church Hill Conservation Areas are extended. In order for such a policy to be accepted and successful, a consultation exercise on the designation of the proposed extension was carried out to identify the public feeling on the matter.
- b) Letters were sent to all property owners on 4th July 2007. There were only two responses. One from a business enquiring about the impact this would have on putting up a new sign for their shop. The other was from a business enquiring about a Townscape Heritage Initiative grant. There have been no other comments from the residents.
- c) In addition letters were sent to the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, Walsall Regeneration Company and Walsall Town Centre Management. The THI project manager also gave a presentation to Walsall Civic Society about the Bridge Street/Ablewell Street THI and the extension of the conservation areas.

- d) Walsall Civic Society wrote to confirm:
- i. Their agreement with the principal of supporting the THI investment by making the proposed extensions to the Conservation Areas.
 - ii. Their suggestion that the boundaries for the extensions to the two conservation areas should be expanded. The aim would be to include some areas very closely associated with buildings covered by the THI and also some specific buildings worthy of additional protection. This would cover additional sections of Ablewell Street, Paddock Lane, Tantarra Street, Union Street, Freer Street, Goodall Street and Intown.
- e) These suggestions have been taken on board and will be taken into account at the future review of the Conservation Areas.

12.3 Justification for the extension of the Church Hill and Bridge Street Conservation Areas

- a) The Bridge Street/Ablewell Street Proposed THI Scheme Area Appraisal carried out an assessment of this areas special interest. It included an assessment of the areas':
- Historic development and archaeology
 - Townscape
 - Architecture
 - Character
- As a result of this the Area Appraisal recommends the extension of the Bridge Street and Church Hill Conservation Areas to the new boundaries proposed on the plans in appendices 1 and 2.
- b) The Church Hill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan recommends the extension of Church Hill Conservation Area to include the area shown on the plans in appendices 1 and 2.
- c) The buildings within the proposed areas represent the development of Walsall from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. The majority are of historical significance.
- d) The proposed extension to the Church Hill Conservation Area includes the opposite side of Ablewell Street so that the streetscape as a whole will fall within the Conservation Area.
- e) This side of Ablewell Street contains 13 Ablewell Street a locally listed 18th century town house. The locally listed Central Hall Methodist Church which dates from 1859 also falls within this area. Through looking at these and other buildings in this area, such as 12 Ablewell Street, the 18th/19th century line of the street frontage can be clearly seen several metres back from the existing built edge of the shop fronts.
- f) The proposed extension to the Bridge Street Conservation area contains 6, 7, 8 and 11 Lower Rushall Street which are grade II listed buildings dating from c. 1800. It also contains a number of locally listed buildings. These are:
- 8 Freer Street, a 19th century building

- Silver Knight Garage, which dates from the 1930s
 - 73-75 Bridge Street, a 19th century building with surviving sash windows and shop fronts
 - 67-71 Bridge Street, an early to mid 19th century terrace of three houses, now shops
- g) There are a number of other unlisted buildings of value in the area such as, the 1930s buildings at the side of Silver Knight Garage, the Victorian timber framed 65 Bridge Street, Kings Court dating from 1904 and 47 to 55 Bridge Street that formed the central premises for Walsall and District Co-operative Society.
- h) These buildings together make a townscape of historical significance and interest that would benefit from Conservation Area status.
- i) Conservation areas provide Local Authorities with an opportunity to bid for external heritage based regeneration funding. Walsall Council has successfully bid for a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) for this Bridge Street/Ablewell Street area with a budget of £1,100,000, until March 2011. At present the Council can only offer grants within the defined conservation areas; this means that, although grants can be offered under the THI for properties in Bridge Street and Church Hill conservation area, no grants can be offered in the part of THI area which is outside the Conservation Area.
- j) The preservation and enhancement of a conservation area creates an asset that is available for all members of the community to learn from and enjoy. The existence of a conservation area, and its interpretation, can be brought to the attention of residents of, and visitors to the Borough. A community's knowledge of an area can be improved and local identity developed and strengthened.
- k) Conservation Areas provide a local authority with an opportunity to preserve or enhance areas that are considered worthy of such action, through encouraging new and sympathetic design of buildings, preservation of important historic features in the area and requiring permission for the demolition of any buildings

12.4 The implications of the extension of the Church Hill and Bridge Street Conservation Areas

- a) The designation of a conservation area has implications for property owners and occupiers and the planning authority. It makes certain types of normally permitted development 'unlawful'. In particular, the substantial or total demolition of a structure or building within a conservation area requires Conservation Area Consent, prior to work taking place. Six weeks notice must also be provided to the council before specific works are carried out to trees in conservation areas. The local planning authority must determine applications for planning permission in the light of whether or not the proposed development will 'preserve or enhance' the appearance or character of the conservation area.

- b) Council policy provides further information on the implications of the extension of Conservation Areas. Paragraph 3.104 of the Unitary Development Plan states:
'The Council has a duty to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas. Designation alone does not ensure that the most is made of the individual features and the 'group value' of buildings which form a conservation area. Guidelines and proposals are necessary. These will be provided, in part, through a phased rolling programme of re-appraisals of the existing conservation areas. Revised character statements will normally be published as leaflets for each area and will include advice on the rights and obligations of property owners, occupiers and managers. Details of all Conservation Areas in the Borough are set out in a booklet that is available separately'.

12.5 Conclusion

- a) Overall as a result of public consultation, the Bridge Street/Ablewell Street THI that is operating in the area and the suggestions of the Bridge Street/Ablewell Street Proposed THI Scheme Area Appraisal and the Church Hill Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, we recommend the Development Control Committee to designate the extension of the Bridge Street and Church Hill Conservation areas as shown on the plans in appendices 1 and 2.

Walsall Council

PROPOSED EXTENSION TO CHURCH HILL CONSERVATION AREA

CHURCH HILL CONSERVATION AREA

Streets shown: WEDGE STREET, UNION STREET, TANTARRA STREET, PADDOCK LANE, BRIDGE ST, WAREWELL STREET, GALT STREET, CROOKALL STREET.

Landmarks and buildings: Telephone Exchange, Central Hall Methodist Church, Military Car Park, Tantarra Court, Craft House, Millam House, The Church.

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Appendix 2: Plan showing proposed extension to Bridge Street Conservation Area



