



DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE

30th March 2005

**AGENDA
ITEM:**

Report of Assistant Director – Urban Regeneration

Re : Appraisal of the Caldmore Green Conservation Area

Ward(s): St Matthew's and Palfrey

Summary of report:

This report outlines the role that Conservation Area Appraisals play in enabling the Council to fulfil its statutory functions in relation to Conservation Areas.

The Built Conservation Team is currently undertaking a rolling programme of Conservation Area appraisals.

The full Caldmore Green Conservation Area Appraisal is appended to this report.

Recommendations:

Committee is recommended to:

1. Adopt the Caldmore Green Conservation Area Appraisal

Signed:

**Tim Johnson - Assistant Director
(Urban Regeneration) :**

Date:

Resource and Legal Considerations

There are no financial implications relating to the adoption of this appraisal.

Conservation Areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance (Section 69 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Local Authorities are required to designate conservation areas, to keep them under review and, if appropriate to designate further areas (Section 69 (2).

This appraisal fulfils the Council's duty under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to 'review our areas from time to time.'

Citizen Impact

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.

Environment Impact

Local Planning Authorities are bound in exercising their planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

The Caldmore Green Conservation Area Appraisal defines aspects of the character and appearance that either contribute to or detract from the nature of the area.

This appraisal will be used to inform development control decisions on planning applications and applications for Conservation Area Consent within the Caldmore Green Conservation Area.

Performance Management

From 1st April 2005 BV 219b will measure the percentage of conservation areas in the local authority area with an up-to-date character appraisal.

Together with BV 219a (number of Conservation Areas) and BV 219c (the percentage of Conservation Areas with published management plans) this indicator will monitor whether planning and other decisions are based on an informed understanding of the special character of the local historic environment and the needs of the community it supports.

The adoption of this appraisal will contribute to the Council's outturn in relation to this BVPI.

Risk Management Issues

None.

Equality Implications

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

Consultation

There has been no public consultation on this document.

Vision 2008

The report has particular relevance to priority 6 of a Vision for Walsall – *Encourage everyone to feel proud of Walsall*. This priority states:

'Walsall people, deep down, have a pride and loyalty to their community, their town and their borough. They are frustrated at Walsall's poor image, and at negative perceptions of the Black Country and the West Midlands generally. Local people, local businesses, our schools and colleges want Walsall to be a borough with a strong, positive image, that is known for its good things – its people, its industry, its commitment and pride, its location and its attractions.'

The Caldmore Green Conservation Area appraisal will help to ensure that this historic area and the setting of the White Hart, one of the most important historic buildings in the Borough will be preserved and enhanced so that present and future generations of Walsall citizens can be proud of it.

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REPORT DETAIL

- 1.0 A copy of the Caldmore Green Conservation Area Appraisal is attached to this document.
- 1.1 Conservation Area designation is the main instrument available to Local Planning Authorities to give effect to conservation policies for a particular neighbourhood or area. Designation introduces a general planning control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest.
- 1.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 stresses the need for local planning authorities to make an assessment of the special character, and appearance of all conservation areas in their districts. An objective and clear character appraisal will provide a sound basis on which to make fully informed development control decisions and to carry out initiatives to promote the area. The more clearly the special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded, the sounder will be the basis for local plan policies and development control decisions. Such definition will also assist in the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of an area.
- 1.3 The definition of an area's special interest should derive from an assessment of the elements that contribute to (and detract from) it. Conservation Areas vary greatly, but certain aspects will almost always form the basis for a coherent assessment:
 - the topography and its historical development;
 - the archaeological significance and potential;
 - the prevalent building materials;
 - the character and hierarchy of spaces;
 - the quality and relationship of buildings in the area and also of trees and other green features.
 - those unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the special interest of the area.
- 1.4 The format of this appraisal is based on the English Heritage publication 'Conservation Area Appraisals'.

**Caldmore Green
Conservation Area
Appraisal**

March 2005

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Introduction

Conservation Areas were introduced through the Civic Amenities Act in 1967, and more than 9000 now exist. Conservation Areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance (Section 69 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Local Authorities are required to designate conservation areas, to keep them under review and, if appropriate to designate further areas (Section 69 (2))

PPG15 stresses the need for local planning authorities to make an assessment of the special character, and appearance of all

conservation areas in their districts. An objective and clear character appraisal will provide a sound bases for development control and for initiative to promote the area

The format of this appraisal is based on the English Heritage publication 'Conservation Area Appraisals', a copy of which is available for inspection.

This appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive. The omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to apply that it is of no interest.

1. Location

Walsall is the principal town of the Metropolitan Borough, situated 9 miles to the North-west of Birmingham, and within the Black Country, the heart of the West Midlands.

The district of Caldmore (pronounced Karma) is situated half a mile to the South-west of the town centre with the Caldmore Green Conservation Area towards the east of the locality. The Conservation Area includes the buildings surrounding the Green and those down Corporation Street as far as Rutter Street.

The land rises gently away from the town centre towards Caldmore. The Conservation Area itself is on a slight incline that continues up past the Green towards the parish church of St Michael.

2. Origins and development of the area

During the 18th and 19th Centuries saddlery became a major industry in Walsall, at the height of this period; the town was supplying the leather for the British Army, and exporting its goods worldwide. During this time the town expanded rapidly and engulfed much of the then open countryside surrounding it.

A map of 1845 shows Caldmore as a small village surrounded by open fields. By the 1880's (Appendix A) the town of Walsall had expanded to include the village and most of the neighbouring open land had been built on, with terrace houses turning the area into a Victorian suburb. The houses and shops in the immediate vicinity of the Green appear to have respected the earlier layout of the village and formed a pleasant part of Victorian Walsall.



29 Caldmore Green, an eighteenth century farmhouse with modern alterations.

The second half of the twentieth century saw a downturn in the fortunes of Caldmore, a trend reflected throughout much of the Borough. Lack of investment and inappropriate alterations have taken their toll on the building stock but concerted efforts since the designation of the Conservation Area have made significant improvements. Unfortunately the constant tide of alterations continues to compromise the historical character of the locality.

3. Archaeology

It is unlikely that significant archaeological remains would be found within the Conservation Area. The remains of the original village are likely to have been destroyed during the construction of the Victorian suburb, in particular during the excavation of cellars and the installation of underground statutory utilities.

There were public toilets underneath the Green in the 1940s' and 1950's which will have disturbed any archaeology in this area. There is an oral tradition of tunnels running between the White Hart and the Green in Caldmore up to St Matthews Church in Walsall and as far as Barr Beacon; however, evidence for this is weak.

4. Civic Design and Townscape

One of the principle reasons behind the designation of Caldmore Green as a Conservation Area was to safeguard the setting of one of the districts most historically important building. The Grade II listed White Hart, which dates from the late seventeenth century, was originally a public house but is now in residential and office use.



The White Hart
Dating to the late seventeenth century

Other early buildings include the former Co-op laundry on the corner of Victor Street whose double gable roof suggests it was an eighteenth century farmhouse. Unfortunately its brickwork was covered up during alterations in the 1980's.

Most of the remainder of the built form of the Conservation Area dates from the later nineteenth century and the majority of these buildings positively contribute to the

character of the area through their traditional scale, materials and detailing. The present layout has changed little since these houses were built, with the exception of some road improvements.

In the early twentieth century significant positive alterations were made to buildings within the area. In particular the Forum Cinema was created in a former shop and despite recent alterations, including the erection of modern signage; this remains a visually interesting feature.



18 Caldmore Green, the former Forum Cinema

Many of the buildings around the green are in business use. Some of which operate

at subsistence levels meaning that maintenance arrears can build up and upper floors remain vacant. Economic factors greatly influence how and when most repairs and alterations are carried out frequently leading to inappropriate work

being done. More recently some unsympathetic alterations have been replaced with more suitable designs and visually the area has improved significantly.

5. Focal Points and Unifying Features

The main focal point of the present village is The Green a small, open, grassed space, presumably on the site of the original village green. It was the target of a steering group in the mid 1990's, which implemented a number of environmental improvements based around the green and the existing form of the green, the artwork and street furniture date from this time.



The Green viewed from the White Hart with ornamental railings in the foreground

Today the Green consists of a small, grassed area with a low level retaining wall of red brick with pale stone coping. There is a central brick paved area with stepped entrances at either end. It is essentially triangular in shape with two sides open to a busy road and the main entrance point situated in a small pedestrian area on the third side. The

entrance area has been monumentalised with stone monolith structures on both sides and a circular mosaic with the village emblem of a tree inserted in the brick herringbone paving. There are three lime trees one in each corner of the Green, two established trees and one sapling.



The entrance to the Green with mosaic

Ornamental railings create a feeling of continuity within the Conservation Area with the words 'Caldmore Green' included in the railings facing the road junction from the Green. This aligns with a set of steps up from the pavement to the Green which is flanked by circular stone art work inserted into the wall. The railings facing Spout Lane are plain which detracts from the overall effect.

Traditional style street lighting surrounds the green in contrast to the standard lights

on the other side of the road. Bollards preventing vehicular access match the streetlights, which is a nice detail.

The overall effect of the improvements is to create a smart, inclusive focal point for the immediate area. If properly maintained this should continue to make a very positive contribution to the Conservation Area.

The Green is dominated by the White Hart that dates to the late seventeenth century. It was retained, with contemporary alterations, by the Victorians who built their new suburb around it, respecting both the building and the green it fronts onto.

The uniformity of the Victorian architecture provides a constant theme through the Conservation Area. The traditional materials used are red brick with stone detailing with a mixture of slate and tile roofs. Unfortunately, modern alterations have reduced the visual impact of this partly through rendering and through a variety of window designs and shop front designs replacing the more

uniform, and more visually pleasing, Victorian originals.



**4-18 Corporation Street,
a fine example of a Victorian
terrace, note the modern windows**

The Green provides a visual focal point from wherever you are in the Conservation Area. The improvements implemented by the Dreaming the Green Steering group have given a greater and more positive physical presence to the Green and have created unifying themes that run through the area in particular with the use of decorative railings at prominent points.

6. Negative and Neutral Features

The area has suffered from unsympathetic alterations, particularly with regards to the rendering of buildings, the insertion of modern shop fronts and the use of uPVC double-glazing. Significant improvements were made following the designation of the Conservation area in 1987 but some of these improvements have been compromised by further alterations. The replacement of all the original timber sash windows in 418 Corporation Street with uPVC is a particularly sad loss.

Planning regulations should be used to curb the use of roller shutters and to remove unauthorised advertisements as they blight the Conservation Area.



The use of Roller shutters gives a negative impression of the area.

While at present most of the buildings are being maintained to a reasonable standard there is room for improvement. It is almost

certain that the floor space above many of the shops is not being used to its best advantage and therefore may not be being well maintained, although some is in use as residential units.



The Royal Oak

Buildings which reflect negatively on the Conservation Area include the building on the corner of Brace Street and Caldmore Green, and The Royal Oak on the corner of Spout Lane neither of which are architecturally interesting and so could potentially be developed. Additionally 23 Corporation Street, an empty shop in a prominent position on the edge of the Conservation Area has the potential, with the restoration of the original shop front to become a positive feature of the area. Certain shop fronts within the Conservation Area can be considered neutral features but with a little thought

and care they could all become positive features.

The high volume of traffic around the Green is a significant problem and while being a transient rather than permanent

feature does detract from the area both visually and through the creation of noise and air pollution. While this problem remains the potential amenity value of the Green is limited.

Appendix A

Map of Caldmore Green Conservation Area

Please see attached maps.

Map A – A current map outlining the extent of the Conservation Area

The Conservation Area is outlined in purple.

Listed Buildings are highlighted in red.

Map B – An historical map from the 1884-1890 Ordnance Survey



Little London

1627
1-797

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Appendix B.

Schedule of Buildings within the Caldmore Green Conservation Area.

Bruce Street	Nos. 46 – 49 (inclusive)
Caldmore Green	Nos. 30, 32 – 40 (inclusive)
	Nos. 13, 15 – 29 (inclusive) The White Hart Public House (<i>Grade II</i>)
Corporation Street	Nos. 4 – 18 (even) Nos. 1 – 23 (odd)
Watery Lane	Nos. 1 – 11 (odd)
West Bromwich Street	Old Kings Arms PH