



Report to Cabinet

Subject: Calverton Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to report on the findings of the Calverton Conservation Area Character Appraisal in order to gain Cabinet approval for proposed boundary changes to the Calverton Conservation Areas. These proposals are in line with the Council's corporate objective to enhance the physical environment of the Borough.

Background

Under Sections 69-71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 there is a duty on local planning authorities to determine which parts of their areas are of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them accordingly, in order that their character or appearance may be preserved or enhanced. Three Conservation Areas in Calverton, forming approximately 6% of its built-up area, have been designated since 1974: Labray Conservation Area (designated 1974); Burnor Pool (designated 1974); and Windles Square (1983).

The Appraisal Process

Between December 2005 and November 2006 officers completed a Conservation Area Character Appraisal of Calverton (attached), reviewing the existing three Conservation Areas within the village and undertaking consultation with local residents, the Parish Council and the Calverton Preservation and History Society. Consultees engaged constructively with the issues and made many helpful suggestions. There was considerable support among respondents for merging the existing Conservation Areas and for greater recognition of the integrity of the village's linear historic core.

Proposed Boundary Changes

English Heritage's *Guidance on Conservation Appraisals* (2005) notes that "Many early conservation areas were too tightly drawn". Officers, and most respondents to the initial consultation, believe this to be the case with Calverton, where an artificial distinction was made between what were three separate Conservation Areas along

Main Street. It is felt that there is sufficient continuity of character along Main Street to justify the joining of the three areas. While it is true that there are some stark modern interventions along Main Street, this is not unusual within any conservation area and does not devalue the purpose or contribution such a designation makes to the overall quality of the village. Furthermore, designation will increase the scope for improving these areas should opportunities arise in future.

The former and proposed Conservation Area boundaries are shown on the attached maps. The extensions have been proposed to ensure that future development in this area is of a high quality and enhances that which is already present. It is also felt that extensions are justified to ensure that the setting of the Conservation Area is properly protected and that any potential future development is of a design and scale appropriate to this setting.

Some minor extensions worth noting include the three pubs along Main Street and Bonner Lane, which have a significant impact on the setting of the Conservation Area, along with 92 Main Street, which makes an important contribution to the open setting of Main Street around the James Seely playing field. Minor deletions are the modern properties at 36 and 42 Orchard Drive.

Implications

While the Conservation Area Character Appraisal does not have the status of a Supplementary Planning Document, it nonetheless seeks to highlight the specific qualities of Calverton that contribute to the character of the village and are worthy of protection and enhancement, in order to provide a framework against which decisions about future development can be made. It does this through exploring how social and economic change is reflected in the present layout of streets, buildings and open spaces. It describes the origins and development of Calverton, its prominent historic buildings, local building materials and styles, important views and the importance of tree cover and open spaces. It works on the principle that once the character of an area is clearly understood then it will be easier to draw up development proposals and to consider them in a way that ensures that they are sympathetic to the Conservation Area. Its target audience is anyone with an interest in a conservation area be they a resident, planner, developer or local historian.

Designation also brings certain responsibilities for Local Authorities, as follows:

- Local Authorities should review Conservation Areas from time to time to consider whether further designations are required;
- Local Authorities must formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas;
- In exercising their planning powers, Local Authorities should pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Conservation Area designation does not prevent development. It does, however, provide a means of maintaining the quality of an area for present and future generations, ensuring that development is of a sufficiently high standard of design (be that traditional or modern) that it will preserve or enhance the Area's character. In

this context there is a range of planning controls that relate specifically to development in conservation areas, as follows:

- There is a restrictive range of permitted development rights. These rights exclude, for example, roof extensions; certain types of cladding; the erection of satellite dishes on structures fronting the highway; a reduction in the size of extensions permitted without planning permission;
- There are additional controls over demolition in conservation areas. Consent to demolish is called Conservation Area Consent and must be applied for through the Borough Council;
- Anyone proposing to carry out any works to a tree that is in a conservation area must give at least six weeks written notice of their intentions to the Borough Council;
- Local Authorities are able to carry out urgent works to preserve unlisted buildings in a conservation area;
- New development should be designed to respect and enhance its surroundings and complement the character of the area.

Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet resolve to adopt the Calverton Conservation Area Character Appraisal and the proposed Conservation Area boundary changes.

Cllr Paul Feeney..... Date.....