

CABINET – 23 JUNE 2011

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN – HARTSLANDS, SEVENOAKS

Report of the: Director of Community & Planning

Status: For Decision

Also considered by: Environment Services Select Committee – 12 April 2011

This report supports the Key Aim of the Green and Healthy Environment theme of the Community Plan

Portfolio Holder Cllr Mrs J Davison

Head of Service Head of Development Service – Jim Kehoe

Recommendation: That the Cabinet approve the designation of the Hartslands Conservation Area and the adoption of the Hartslands Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (Appendix A) as informal planning guidance and a material consideration in the determination of development proposals.

Background

1. This report seeks approval for the designation of a new Conservation Area at Hartslands, Sevenoaks and the accompanying Appraisal and Management Plan. At their meeting of 12 April 2011, the Environment Select Committee recommended to Cabinet that the Hartslands Conservation Area be designated, the Plan be adopted as informal planning guidance and a material consideration in the determination of development proposals and that additional guidance be provided to residents. The additional guidance refers to one of the Management Proposals contained in the Appraisal to prepare an information leaflet for residents on replacement doors, windows and roof materials considered to be suitable within Conservation Areas. This information will be prepared as part of a forthcoming Supplementary Planning Document taking into account the cost of products.
2. This new appraisal will assist in achieving appropriate high quality development and form part of background work which will contribute to the Local Development Framework (LDF).
3. People in the District place a high value on the quality of its landscape, historic character and open spaces according to the Sevenoaks District Sustainable Community Plan. One of the Development and Environment Priorities of the Plan for the next three years is to ensure that new development is designed to

a high quality and takes into account local character. This new Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan will help to achieve this local priority.

Introduction

4. The Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on local authorities to designate as conservation areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Clear and concise appraisals of the character of conservation areas provide a sound basis for their designation and management, inform local development documents (LDDs), and provide a framework for the control of development. Management proposals can be used to inform future policy and guide all involved in the planning, development and enhancement of specific conservation areas.

Proposed Hartslands Conservation Area

5. This Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAMP) is the first to be produced for the Hartslands area and supports the designation of the proposed Hartslands Conservation Area. It has been produced in collaboration with District Council Members, Sevenoaks Town Council and local amenity groups (the Hartslands Group; the Hollybush Residents Association and the Sevenoaks Society).
6. The evaluation of the Hartslands area has involved an assessment of historic maps and documents and comprehensive site surveys including a walkabout involving local amenity groups, Ward Councillors and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning. This has informed the recommendation to designate the area as a Conservation Area and its proposed boundary. A thorough assessment of the boundary of the area has been undertaken and following public consultation the boundary illustrated in the CAMP is recommended.

Hartslands Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

7. This Appraisal and Management Plan (see Appendix A) is based on best practice contained within the English Heritage guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.
8. The Appraisal has been produced to capture the character and quality of the area as a whole. This compact Victorian neighbourhood has a distinctive sense of place and cohesion provided by generally straight, narrow, sloping streets, the intimate domestic scale of predominantly two storey terraced housing, narrow plots, shallow front gardens, larger community and commercial buildings and the recurring use of materials, decorative features and chimneys.
9. Whilst the proposed Hartslands Conservation Area possesses a cohesive and unified character, there are architectural and townscape variations between each street. For this reason, the Appraisal assesses the distinctive character of each street - with key features such as Buildings Contributing to Character,

important trees and views illustrated on the Character Appraisal map. Some features which detract from the character are also noted.

10. In proposing to designate the Hartslands area as a Conservation Area, the Appraisal makes it clear that the designation is as a result of a range of factors including the unique compact, Victorian neighbourhood within Sevenoaks which contrasts with the surrounding larger scale lower density development and played an important part in the historic development of the town. This unique neighbourhood within the town remains an important reminder of Sevenoaks' history and social development.
11. The management of the historic environment depends on three things: sound core principles; clear adopted policies, based on those principles; the quality of decisions and actions that stem from these policies. In terms of future development and enhancement, all development in the conservation area, or which forms part of its setting, must respect to its immediate environment and context, in terms of scale, alignment, form, materials and detailing. The Appraisal sets out a series of design guidelines aimed at ensuring appropriately designed development in the Conservation Area. In relation to replacement windows, doors and roofs, the Appraisal recommends a Good Practice Guide for replacement for doors, windows and roofing, which will be incorporated into the forthcoming Heritage Assets Supplementary Planning Document. The Appraisal also seeks the protection of views and trees, the repair of some street surfaces and the co-ordination of street furniture.

Procedure

12. There is no statutory duty to consult when preparing appraisals and management plans. Nevertheless, there has been considerable engagement in the preparation of the Hartslands CAMP including a half day briefing and walkabout with local representatives; a publicity leaflet sent to every household and business in the proposed area; a local exhibition of the draft CAMP with consultants present to explain the CAMP and answer questions and a formal four week consultation period with the document available on line, at the Council offices or library. Comments received and proposed responses are set out in Appendix B.
13. Amendments made in response to consultation have been incorporated into the Hartslands Conservation Area and Management Plan which is attached at Appendix A.
14. It should be noted that the response to consultation shows strong support from residents living in the area for the designation of the Hartslands area as a Conservation Area. Comments were received concerning the proposed boundary and some minor amendments have been made to the draft boundary. Detailed points were raised about the Character Appraisal Map and as a result several changes have been made to the map. The careful control of development, enforcement and enhancement measures were generally supported as appropriate future management measures.

Options

15. The Council has a statutory duty to both designate and review conservation areas and to produce appraisals and management plans.

Key Implications

Financial

16. The production of this appraisal and management plan including local engagement has been carried out by a planning consultant and is accommodated within existing budgets.
17. The cost of printing and map production has been allowed for in existing budgets.

Legal, Human Rights

18. The council has a statutory duty under the provisions of section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate and review conservation areas and has followed good practice in producing an appraisal and management plans for the Hartslands area.

Resource (non-financial)

19. When producing conservation area appraisals and management plans it is important that the implications are fully understood. There are implications for owners of buildings and land in conservation areas which are likely to require high quality designs, materials etc. The local planning authority will also need to give very careful scrutiny to development proposals affecting the conservation area.
20. The Appraisal sets out potential enhancements to the proposed conservation area, subject to resources. If approved, the District Council should inform Kent County Council, as Highway Authority, of the designation of the new Conservation Area and seek sympathetic improvements to street surfaces, street furniture and signing.

Sustainability

21. The LDF policies have, and will, be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. The Management section of the CAMP contains advice on sustainable design.

Risk Assessment Statement

22. This Appraisal and Management Plan is based on best practice contained within the English Heritage guidance and has involved considerable local engagement. The document is therefore considered a sound basis for the future conservation and management of the area.

Conclusions

23. Under the statutory powers of section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Council has assessed the historic and architectural character of the Hartslands area, Sevenoaks, and proposes to designate a new conservation area for the area shown on the Character Appraisal Map of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. Following extensive local engagement, there is strong community support for the Hartslands Conservation Area. The CAMP, as amended following consultation, will help the local community, developers, local authorities and development professions engage in the conservation and enhancement of the local historic environment and secure the long term preservation of the character of this conservation area as an important heritage asset.

Sources of Information:

Sevenoaks District Local Plan Adopted March 2000 Sevenoaks District Council

Sevenoaks District Core Strategy 2011
Sevenoaks District Council

Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document 2009 Sevenoaks District Council

Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals
English Heritage 2006

Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas
English Heritage 2006

Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the
Historic Environment, 2010

Highway Works in Conservation Sensitive Areas
Kent County Council 1993

Kent Design Guide, Kent Design Initiative 2005

Hartslands Design Statement, 2008

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