

# REPORT TO CABINET

**REPORT OF:** Economic Development Portfolio Holder

**REPORT NO:** PLA759

**DATE:** 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Grantham Conservation Area Boundary Changes</b>	
<b>KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:</b>	Key Decision	
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:</b>	Councillor Frances Cartwright, Economic Development Portfolio Holder	
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Karen Tomlinson, Assistant Conservation Officer, ext 6472 K.Tomlinson@southkesteven.gov.uk	
<b>INITIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT:</b>	Carried out and Referred to in paragraph (7) below:	Full impact assessment Required:
<b>Equality and Diversity</b>		
<b>FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:</b>	This report is publicly available via the Local Democracy link on the Council's website: <a href="http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk">www.southkesteven.gov.uk</a>	
<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	None	

## 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. formally adopt the draft Grantham Conservation Area appraisal,
2. approve the recommended boundary changes,
3. delegate authority to the Corporate Head of Sustainable Communities in conjunction with the Economic Development Portfolio Holder to approve minor amendments to the appraisal and appraisal maps if required.

## 2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT/DECISION REQUIRED

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts, to consult the local community about these proposals and to review the overall extent of designation in their areas regularly and if appropriate to designate additional areas.

English Heritage guidance states that the general appropriateness of current boundaries should be reviewed as part of the appraisal process. If the original interest has been eroded by subsequent changes or by inappropriate development then the boundary should be revised.

The purpose of this report is to enable Cabinet to consider the public representations received in response to the proposed boundary changes and appraisal and to decide whether to confirm the revised boundary with or without further amendment and to approve the Conservation Area appraisal.

The appraisal contributes to the priority themes of Quality Living and Good for Business. It should be regarded as the first step in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the designated area and to provide the basis for making sustainable decisions about its future. The appraisal document makes reference to potential public realm enhancement works which could augment the attractiveness of Grantham as a place to live and work, such as the partial pedestrianisation of Market Place and improvements to Watergate and the Civic Centre.

Grantham has a rich heritage value which could be used to generate wider social and economic benefits, such as a learning or recreational resource, a generator of tourism or inward economic investment. Grantham is uniquely placed to exploit the attractiveness of its built environment due to its excellent rail and road transport links.

### **3. DETAILS OF REPORT**

The Conservation Area appraisal provides a brief overview of the historic development of Grantham, an analysis of its special architectural and historic character and identifies buildings which detract from the character of the Conservation Area as potential opportunity sites for future sensitive redevelopment. It establishes management proposals to provide guidance for Development Control staff in exercising their planning powers to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

The appraisal proposes amendments to the boundary of the Conservation Area. It recommends the exclusion of the following areas which are considered to be of insufficient architectural or historic interest to justify inclusion (these are shown on the maps included in the report appendix):

- The west side of Watergate north of The Playhouse. The character of this area has been adversely affected by insensitive post war commercial developments which do not reflect the traditional plan form, scale, mass, materials or design of the Conservation Area (Map 3).
- The east side of Union Street to the north of The Union garden centre. This area consists of modern functional office and retail developments which are set back from the roadside with car parks located in front which is inconsistent with the enclosed character of the Conservation Area (Map 3).
- The boundary currently extends from Westgate to incorporate the west side of Sankt Augustin Way. This was the site of a listed building which was demolished in 1977 and therefore the site is no longer worthy of inclusion (Map 3).
- The Kings Hotel on North Parade. The character of the building has been adversely affected by insensitive modern extensions and it does not relate to the adjoining terrace of brick buildings in terms of design, scale or materials (Map 5).

The original boundary of the Conservation Area omitted Victorian and Edwardian phases of development which are now considered to be of special interest. Therefore the appraisal recommends the following areas for inclusion within the boundary (these are shown on the maps included in the report appendix):

- London Road to the junction with Rycroft Street on the west side and College Street on the east consists of an attractive range of late 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. Although the ground storeys have been converted into retail units with modern shop fronts, the upper storeys remain largely unaltered. The buildings are largely constructed of brick with stone detailing which reflects the quality of the townscape of St Peters Hill (Map 4).
- Albion Street, Albion Place, Chambers Street and Gladstone Terrace are characterised by late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> century terraced housing. The terrace on the south side of Albion Street is largely intact and have retained their timber bay windows and boundary walls. The east side of Gladstone Terrace is particularly attractive as the buildings are largely unaltered and are constructed of brick with stone mullion bay windows and stone detailing on the front elevations. Other significant buildings include the Masonic Hall on Chambers Street and the former school building on Albion Street which has been converted into a nursing home. Although some properties have been modernised, this area is still regarded as being of sufficient architectural interest to include within the boundary (Map 5).
- Welby Gardens is an attractive planned development consisting of large semi detached and detached brick houses of varying architectural styles dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> - early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The houses are arranged around a central tree lined oval garden. The spacious elegant layout and scale of the development forms a pleasant contrast with the high density housing found elsewhere within the Conservation Area (Map 5).

### **Responses from the Public Consultation**

The appraisal was subject to a six week public consultation with residents and commercial occupants within the Conservation Area, English Heritage, the National Trust, the Grantham Civic Society, Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire and Grantham Charter Trustees.

A total of nineteen representations were received. Twelve of these, including English Heritage, the National Trust, Springfield Park Properties and the Kings School endorsed the appraisal and management principles set out for each area. A summary of the representations received is set out below.

### **Representations to the Appraisal**

Five respondents were concerned about the suggestion of public realm improvements to Market Place. A total pedestrianisation scheme and removal of free car parking was perceived by four respondents as being detrimental to their businesses and one believed it could attract anti-social behaviour.

The appraisal does not specifically advocate a full pedestrianisation scheme for Market Place but it does suggest that the removal of or a reduction in the number of car parking spaces, particularly those adjacent to the medieval cross which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a listed structure. This would enhance the

appearance of Market Place, improve the setting of the cross and Conduit House and improve pedestrian movement around the town centre. There are alternative car parks in close proximity to Market Place on Conduit Lane, wide Westgate and the multi-storey car park at the Isaac Newton Centre which could accommodate the proposed reduction of parking spaces in the centre of Market Place.

The pedestrianisation of Market Place has been suggested in the Transport Strategy for Grantham which would form the impetus for any scheme rather than the appraisal document. If a scheme is to be taken forward it will be subject to a wider public consultation to take into account the views of residents and businesses within the town.

One respondent objected to the proposal to remove the pedestrian guard rail adjacent to the zebra crossing on North Parade as they felt this acted as a buffer between the traffic and their property. This matter should be determined by Lincolnshire County Council Highways who are responsible for highway safety.

One respondent raised the issue that all buildings within the Conservation Area had received planning permission and that the council was responsible for the poor specification of materials. These decisions were taken in the absence of a robust character appraisal which is why Cabinet is being requested to endorse this document.

#### **Representations to the Proposed Boundary Changes**

Four responses were received in relation to the proposed boundary amendments. Three supported the proposed enlargement of the residential district. One resident objected on the grounds that they would have to remove their satellite dish from the front elevation of their house. However as this is an existing dish and the appraisal took into consideration existing features such as satellite dishes, it is unlikely that any enforcement action would be taken against existing satellite dishes.

Of these four respondents one also supported the proposals to partially exclude Watergate and Union Street and one objected to the exclusion of Union Street.

The objection was based upon the former historical significance of this area as the site of the friary and for its fortifications during the English Civil War. Conservation area designation is intended to protect the character of the built environment and is not an appropriate mechanism to protect archaeology where no trace remains above ground. There was also concern that this amendment would exclude early 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings located to the rear of Market Place. These buildings are to be retained within the boundary; it is only the modern office blocks and supermarket on Union Street which are proposed for exclusion.

#### **4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

The council is required by Section 72 of the 1990 Act to produce character appraisals and to publish proposals for their management. This is the first Conservation Area appraisal document produced for Grantham which contains a comprehensive analysis of its special architectural and historic character since it was designated in 1970.

Previous documents produced in 1970 and 1985, following a boundary revision, do not contain sufficient information to provide a basis for sustainable planning decisions which will preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

Not to amend the boundary. However, this would constitute a missed opportunity to include areas which are of sufficient architectural quality to merit protection and would positively contribute to the overall character of the Conservation Area and to exclude detrimental areas as set out in Section 3 of the report. These alterations will ensure that the boundary is robust and justifies its status as an area of special historic and architectural importance.

## **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

The costs associated with the publication of statutory notices and printing costs of the appraisal can be accommodated within the existing Conservation budget.

## **6. RISK AND MITIGATION (INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY AND DATA QUALITY)**

There are no identifiable risks associated with this report.

## **7. ISSUES ARISING FROM EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

Not applicable.

## **8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

None in relation to this report.

## **9. COMMENTS OF SECTION 151 OFFICER**

I have no specific financial comments to make in respect of this report.

## **10. COMMENTS OF MONITORING OFFICER**

Local authorities have a duty to review the overall extent of conservation area designations in their area regularly. Designations such as this remain the principal means by which conservation policies can be applied to particular areas.

Detailed guidance on the appraisal of conservation areas has been produced by English Heritage in association with the Planning Advisory Service. This has been followed so far as it is appropriate for this particular designation.

It is appropriate this matter is dealt with as a key decision of Cabinet as the appraisal affects more than 2 wards of the district

## **11. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICE MANAGER**

Lead Professional (Development Control). The Council has a legal duty, when determining planning applications, to preserve and enhance the Conservation Area. Adoption of this document will provide the framework for Development Control Officers to advise developers and the Council to appropriately determine applications.

**12. APPENDICES:**

**Grantham Conservation Area Appraisal**