



Ropsley Conservation Area Appraisal

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

In accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, The Council is required to review its Conservation Areas from time to time and to prepare and publish any proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of the District that are designated as a Conservation Area. This report considers whether the Council should designate the Ropsley Conservation Area and adopt the Ropsley Conservation Area Appraisal.

Recommendations

That Full Council

- 1. Approves the formal designation of the Ropsley Conservation Area boundary as shown in Appendix A to this report.**
- 2. Approves the adoption of the Ropsley Conservation Area Appraisal, as part of the Development Plan evidence base and as a material planning consideration; and**
- 3. Delegates the decision making to the Assistant Director of Planning to make minor changes, typographical corrections or non-material amendments to the Ropsley Conservation Area Appraisal and associated documents prior to formal publication and to undertake the necessary statutory actions to implement agreed recommendations.**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Sustainable South Kesteven Enabling economic opportunities Housing Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	Lincrest;

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 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.

Completed by: James Welbourn, Democratic Services Manager

Climate Change

- 1.3 While the Conservation Area Appraisal is not associated with any direct climate change implications, conservation areas limit permitted development rights and will restrict the ability of homeowners to carry out retrofit work on properties without first seeking planning permission. South Kesteven District Council should remain mindful of the balance of preserving historic buildings versus the requirement to increase the energy efficiency of properties in keeping with sustainability guidance.

Completed by: Serena Brown, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 One of the key ambitions at South Kesteven District Council is to build on, and celebrate, the rich heritage and culture of the District. The contribution historic areas make to quality of life is widely recognised. There are currently 48 conservation areas in South Kesteven. Conservation Areas are a link to the past that can provide a sense of continuity and stability and have the reassurance of the familiar which can provide a point of reference in a rapidly changing world. The way building traditions and settlement patterns provide local distinctiveness can deliver a catalyst for regeneration and inspire well-designed new development which brings economic and social benefits valued by everyone.

- 2.2. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (“the Act”) requires local planning authorities to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts. Such areas are defined as “*areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”.
- 2.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (paragraph 202). The guidance goes on to state that local planning authorities should ensure that a conservation area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.
- 2.4. Conservation area appraisals identify the special qualities of a conservation area. The accompanying Management Plans set out how the conservation area can be improved, along with local priorities for enhancements. Conservation area appraisals seek to manage positive change within a designated conservation area, and its setting.
- 2.5. Conservation area appraisals contribute towards the Council achieving its priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. *A key ambition of the Plan is to ‘celebrate and promote the strong heritage and rich culture of South Kesteven’.*
- 2.6. The South Kesteven Local Plan Policy EN6: The Historic Environment seeks to protect and enhance heritage assets and their settings. The Policy requires development proposals to take into account Conservation Area Appraisals, where these have been taken into account.
- 2.7. By deciding to designate the Conservation Area, the Council would be setting the boundaries of the Conservation Area; this is defined on a map at **Appendix A**. The Conservation Area Appraisal sets out the special qualities of the area to be designated. The Management Plan sets out how the conservation area can be improved along with local priorities for enhancements.

Consultation has been carried out in accordance with the requirements set out in the Legislation from 20th January and 3rd March 2025. A summary of responses received as part of the public consultation are set out in **Appendix B**.

Ropsley Conservation Area Designation

- 2.8. Ropsley is a village within South Kesteven with a long-standing history which can be traced back to the Domesday Book, with evidence of an abbey on the Ropsley Heath. Due to the historic, architectural and archaeological evidence, the Ropsley Conservation Area was designated in 1981 comprising two small separate areas, one covering Chapel Hill and the other following the High Street.

2.9. The boundary of the conservation area is very well defined along the village's historic core which follows a linear plan centred on High Street and Peck Hill, created by consistent use of historic materials, areas of open space and archaeological interest.

Ropsley Conservation Area Designation Review

2.10. In 2024, a review of the boundary was undertaken including desk-based assessment and site visits. Significant positive improvements to the historic streetscape of the village were identified and consequently, an expansion is proposed. This was revised following the Consultation period.

2.11. The review of the boundary now connects the two smaller areas, and includes more areas considered to be of heritage significance, such as positive unlisted buildings, non-designated assets defined in the Historic Environment Record, and important open spaces that add to the landscape significance.

2.12. The Rectory, No 50 High Street, and No 48 High Street are proposed to be included. Ropsley Church of England Primary School, No 2-4 School Lane and Holly Cottage are also proposed to be included due to their architectural and historical significance, which adds to the conservation area.

2.13. The boundary amendment also proposes the exclusion of no. 2 Peck Hill from the conservation area due to being identified as fragmented in character and of mixed material, negatively impacting the conservation area.

Ropsley Conservation Area Appraisal

The Ropsley Conservation Area was created in 1981; however, there is currently no Conservation Area Appraisal available for Ropsley. Under the Act, it is a legal requirement to provide Conservation Area Appraisals and update them at regular intervals. A draft Conservation Area Appraisal is provided at **Appendix A**.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 Conservation Area Appraisals manage positive change within the designated conservation area and its setting, minimising harm and encouraging preservation and enhancement of our heritage assets.

3.2 Whilst the Ropsley Conservation Area Appraisal was created in 1981, there is currently no Conservation Area Appraisal available for Ropsley. Conservation Area Appraisals are legally required to be published and reviewed regularly. The Ropsley Conservation Area Appraisal will safeguard Ropsley's historic environment for all to appreciate in the future and highlight the importance of the historic character and fabric present within the village.

- 3.3 A boundary change to the Ropsley Conservation Area is proposed which will connect the two smaller areas and include more areas considered to be of historic importance. The appraisal also proposes the exclusion of building from the conservation area due to being identified as fragmented in character and of mixed quality in terms of design and materials.
- 3.4 The Area Appraisal will also help achieve the Council's aspirations in the Corporate Plan, such as Priority 1: Connecting Communities, which aims to promote the strong heritage and culture of the district, as well as Priority 3: Enabling Economic Opportunity, as the Ropsley Conservation Area is part of the expansive heritage of the district.
- 3.5 The appraisal will provide the public with more in-depth information about the Conservation Area and how the Council aims to manage the area. The proposed expansion and appraisal would also support Priority 5: Effective Council, by providing a fully publicly accessible document explaining the extent, important features and management of the Conservation Area.

Once adopted, the Ropsley Conservation Area Appraisal will be a material consideration when considering planning applications within the conservation area. The adoption of the appraisal document and management plan will allow for the positive management of development whilst safeguarding historic character and appearance.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The alternative option is not to expand the Conservation Area; however this may result in a failure to preserve or enhance the historic interest and character of the village and the conservation area as identified in the appraisal. Conservation Areas are defined as "designated" heritage assets in the NPPF for the purposes of local plan making and development management. Designated heritage assets are afforded considerably more protection both in planning policy but also in legislation than non-designated heritage assets.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 Section 69(2) of the 1990 Act requires local planning authorities (LPAs) to determine which parts of their area possess special architectural or historic interest and to designate them conservation areas.
- 5.2 As the provision of a Conservation Area Appraisal is a requirement as noted in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it is recommended to approve the updated documents to provide an up-to-date assessment and strategies for the preservation of the conservation area. The adoption of the

Appraisal and Management Plan will allow for the positive management of development whilst safeguarding historic character and appearance.

5.3 It is acknowledged that historically, conservation area boundaries have often been drawn too tightly, omitting areas now considered of special interests, especially green spaces and open space, boundary treatment or smaller outbuildings. The appraisal and proposed extension have taken this into account, considering not just the built heritage, but also the wider streetscape and the impact open space has on the appreciation of the village.

6. Consultation

6.1. A public consultation was undertaken for six weeks between 20th January and 3rd March 2025. This included a public engagement event at the Ropsley Village Hall, and the distribution of consultation letters to relevant Consultees and members of the public affected by the proposed update to the Conservation Area.

6.2. Consultations were also sent to the Parish Council, Ward Member/s, Historic England, Heritage Lincolnshire and addresses within the proposed Conservation Area. There were no objections received from these organisations.

6.3. A total of 10 responses were received by members of the public and Statutory Consultees. A summary of these consultation responses along with officer comments is produced in **Appendices B and C**.

6.4. Concerns were raised regarding the proposed exclusion of No 16-18 Chapel Lane, as well as No 4 Peck Hill. Further information was provided by members of the public that was thus far unknown. Careful consideration has been given to whether or not these properties should be included or excluded within the Conservation Area, and based on the information provided, however, it was decided that they should remain within the conservation area.

6.5. No 2 Peck Hill is still proposed for exclusion. Concerns were also raised regarding restrictions on works to trees within the Conservation Area, as well as future developments. Further advice was subsequently added to the Appraisal and Management Report/.

7. Background Papers

7.1. Adopted South Kesteven Local Plan: [The South Kesteven Local Plan | South Kesteven District Council](https://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/local-plan)

8. Appendices

Appendix A: Ropsley Conservation Area Appraisal 2025

Appendix B: Table of Public Consultations received and officer response

Appendix C: Table of Public Consultations received with no actions required

Appendix D: Equality Impact Assessment