
REPORT TO:	ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 8
DATE OF MEETING:	31 January 2013	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	Director of Community Services	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Philip Heath, Conservation and Heritage Officer Ext. 5936 philip.heath@south-derbys.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	Conservation Area Character Statements	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Aston, Melbourne, Repton, Seals, Stenson, Swadlincote, Willington and Findern	TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS16

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That public consultation, with an eight week response period, be undertaken on the second eleven of twenty two conservation area character statements, with a view to reporting back to the committee afterwards, adopting them for use in the development management process, and placing them permanently on the Council's website.
- 1.2 That the public consultation seeks views on suggested boundary extensions to the Stanton by Bridge conservation area and boundary adjustments (small exclusions and additions) to the Trent and Mersey Canal conservation area.
- 1.3 That proposed boundary amendments at Milton and Repton, previously deferred for further consideration, be adopted.
- 1.4 That the conservation character statements for Milton and Repton, previously deferred pending consideration of boundary changes, be adopted.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To seek approval to issue, for public consultation, eleven Conservation Area Character Statements.
- 2.2 To resolve outstanding matters concerning conservation area boundary amendments at Milton and Repton.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 Under conservation and listed building legislation, local planning authorities have a continuing duty to consider whether they should designate new

conservation areas, or change the boundaries of existing ones following review.

3.2 In fulfilling this duty, English Heritage advise that the designation of a conservation area is not an end in itself and that Conservation Area Character Appraisals should be undertaken. They further advise that: “ ... Clear assessment and definition of an area's interest and the action needed to protect it help to generate awareness and encourage local property owners to take the right sort of action for themselves. Character Appraisals will also identify areas where enhancement through development may be desirable.”

3.3 The eleven character statements now under consideration were produced by Mel Morris Conservation of Staffordshire in close collaboration with the former Design and Conservation Officer and the Heritage Officer in order to fulfil the duty to review our conservation areas, and to further the understanding, appreciation and preservation of them. As a result, changes to the boundary at Stanton by Bridge are recommended. The draft Character Assessments can be viewed on screen via the following link;

revise: <http://cmis.south-derbys.gov.uk/CmisWebPublic/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=1396>

3.4 The adopted character statements will have a variety of purposes. They set out what is special about each conservation area and why it has been considered worthy of special designation. They enable the public, particularly applicants, to appreciate and understand the characteristics that the local authority will seek to preserve and protect in determining planning applications in designated areas. The value that the public places on conservation areas is likely to be increased by an improved understanding of what is special about them. The statements are useful to inform the development control process on a day-to-day basis and lend weight to the Council's stance when the Planning Inspectorate considers appeals.

3.5 The core of each character statement is a written document which begins by setting out the geographical and historical context of the conservation area. The statements then describe the setting, approaches and the character of the sub-areas of the conservation areas, followed by a description of the various changes that have disfigured them, usually within recent decades. The statements are accompanied by photographs and plans.

3.6 For full weight to be given to the use of these appraisals by the public and in the development control process, it is necessary that they be made the subject of a prior public consultation exercise.

3.7 Consultation on the first batch of 11 character statements (comprising letters A – R) took place early in 2011. The responses and proposed amendments were reported to committee on 9th June 2011 when nine of the eleven character statements were formally adopted. The second batch comprises Shardlow, Smisby, Stanton by Bridge, Swadlincote,

Swarkestone, Ticknall, the Trent and Mersey Canal, Trusley, Twyford, Walton on Trent and Woodhouses.

3.8 It is proposed that the consultation be advertised by:

- contacting relevant contacts for whom we already hold details, and advising them of how the consultation material may be accessed.
- depositing hard copies of the consultation drafts in the libraries at Derby (Local Studies Library), Etwall, Melbourne and Swadlincote, at the Council Offices, and with officers of the appropriate Parish Council or meeting.
- contacting individually all addresses that are proposed for inclusion within an extended boundary.
- placing the draft documents on the SDDC website, with a facility for response.
- posters in the conservation areas concerned.
- press releases.
- staffed 'drop-in' public exhibitions already arranged to run in February and March 2013.

3.9 The relevant locations for the public exhibitions are:

- Melbourne - Assembly Rooms (Studio), Wednesday 20th February, 2.30pm – 7.30pm
- Swadlincote - Sharpe's Pottery (Conference Room), Wednesday 27th February, 2.30pm – 7.30pm
- Walton on Trent – Village Hall, Wednesday 13th March, 2.30pm – 7.30pm
- Shardlow – Village Hall, Wednesday 20th March, 1.30pm – 6.30pm

3.10 The Conservation and Heritage Officer will be on hand at each event, **along with a Development Management Officer TBC**, to consider and take note of comments, and to answer questions.

3.11 Final adoption of the revised conservation area boundaries at Milton and Repton, and of their respective character statements, was deferred in 2011 pending consideration of representations by interested parties. These have now been considered and the recommended boundaries and supporting documents may be viewed by following the link given in paragraph 3.3.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The costs of printing and exhibition material can be drawn from existing budgets. Consultation will be in electronic form as far as possible.

5.0 Corporate Implications

5.1 The District's conservation areas are a key component of its vibrant communities which offer opportunities for the future, such as tourism and job creation. The effective protection of conservation areas, through analysis and good management, enhances quality of life for all and safeguards the environment. Investment in conservation areas

with a business/retail function can support local businesses by creating a climate for inward investment.

6.0 Community Implications

- 6.1 The District's Conservation areas are a key component of its attractive rural environment. Many of them are situated in areas of natural beauty, including several which are wholly or partly situated within the National Forest. Consultation on the conservation area character statements, and continued care for the conservation areas themselves, will nurture the existing strong sense of community and the value that people already place on the environment, culture and heritage. This in turn is likely to increase the percentage of people who feel that South Derbyshire is an attractive place in which to live.
- 6.2 Conservation Area Appraisals help to sustain the District's built heritage, a valuable and non-renewable resource. Investment in built heritage promotes tourism and improves environmental quality for all.

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The consultancy work on the District's conservation areas has produced a sound base of material for public consultation. They will be a useful tool both in the development management process and in furthering public interest and education concerning these areas.

8.0 Background Papers

- 8.1 Draft Conservation Area Character Statements