

Area West Committee – 20th August 2008

## 12. Crewkerne – Conservation Area Appraisal and Designation of Extensions to Conservation Area (Executive Decision)

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### Purpose of the Report

To approve the recently prepared Crewkerne Conservation Area Appraisal and to formally designate an extension to the conservation area.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that members:

- (1) approve the Crewkerne Conservation Area Appraisal;
- (2) formally designate an extension to the Crewkerne conservation area;
- (3) advertise the extension to the designated area in accordance with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990;
- (4) commit £200 from the area budget to cover the cost of statutory advertising.

### Background

#### Conservation Areas

Conservation areas are areas of 'special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on local authorities to identify appropriate parts of their areas, to designate them as conservation areas and to keep them under review.

Historic areas are now extensively recognised for the contribution they make to our cultural inheritance, economic well-being and quality of life. Public support for the conservation and enhancement of areas of architectural and historic interest is well established. By suggesting continuity and stability, such areas provide points of reference in a rapidly changing world: they represent the familiar and cherished local scene. Over 9000 have been designated nationally since they were introduced in 1967 and there are now 87 in South Somerset.

Designation is a matter for local (Area Committee) decision and is the principal means by which a local authority can apply conservation policies to a particular area.

Crewkerne conservation area was designated in 1973 and has not been reviewed since that date.

## Report

The Crewkerne ABCD Group are to prepare an Urban Development Framework (UDF) for the town but as a precursor to this it was recognised that it was necessary to fully understand the historic and conservation interests that will need to be taken account of. One means to achieve this is through a Conservation Area Appraisal that defines the special architectural or historic interest and is prepared in accordance with the English Heritage guidelines. The ABCD Group duly commissioned an appraisal from a local consultant (at a cost of £3,000 approximately) working in partnership with the council's Conservation team and the result both provides the necessary background analysis of the historic interest of the town for the following UDF, and has served to assist the council in meeting its BVPI targets in 2007/08 and its duty to keep its conservation areas under review.

This review process has led to this recommendation for extensions to the designated conservation area shown on the attached maps. As stated above, it is a duty of the local planning authority to review conservation area boundaries from time to time and the proposed modifications are considered to be appropriate. The Appraisal and the proposed extensions have been considered in detail and are fully supported by the ABCD Group. Both are also supported by Crewkerne Town Council, have been consulted upon locally, publicised in an exhibition in the Crewkerne Heritage Centre and have been modified as a result of comments and suggestions.

The proposed extensions are

1. The valley on north side of Chard Road. This is an attractive area well-defined by hedges and tree groups with a steep defile immediately west of Gouldsbrook Terrace, a ridge along Sunnyside Terrace and another, shallower bowl beyond, rising to a ridge that forms a skyline west and NW when viewed from the edge of the churchyard. It contains a defining view east towards the church and is an essential part of the setting of this key part of the conservation area.
2. Westover Lane, north of Pople's Well. An area of pasture and woodland; an SSSI. The suggested extension includes the whole of the first field compared to the existing line in the middle of the field. This will protect the setting of Pople's Well and the CA boundary will align with physical boundaries.
3. The southern slopes of Bincombe Hill to the skyline, with an eastern extension parallel to Mount Pleasant, up to include the grounds of DeCombe House, the cemetery and the land between Oakhayes, Mount Pleasant southwards to Easthams Lane which was formerly the garden of Oakhayes. This is recognition of the crucial importance of the wooded skyline to the setting of the conservation area and of the group value of later C19 housing on the north side of Mount Pleasant.
4. Extension at the Linen Yard, South Street, to include good quality C19 industrial buildings (former Robert Bird factory).
5. Large extension down South Street to Viney Bridge to include the listed Viney Bridge Mills group. The mills with the mill-workers housing in South Street form a coherent group of architectural and historic interest.
6. Extension to include the historic area of Lyewater
7. An extension up Lyme Road, beyond the Hermitage Street boundary, including the avenue and war memorial at Severalls Park, the groups of attractive terraced cottages and listed Chard's House.
8. Belle Vue Terrace, west of Hermitage Street, a characterful late Victorian brick row of group value, and the architectural quality of the early C20 hospital and listed John Patch's house opposite in Middle Path.

9. The field in the southern angle of Barn Street and Tower Hill Road; an attractive green space, owned by the Town Council. The current boundary runs across it without reference to any physical features.
10. Two smaller extensions in the angle of Barn and West Streets, to include the whole of the rear of the listed Community Church and an unlisted row on the western side of the West Street and Middle Path junction.

#### Small amendments

1. Amendment at the track NW off Rose Lane to include the remainder of a terrace currently cut through by the boundary and to exclude an untidy garage court that is of no apparent architectural or historical value.
2. The straightening of the boundary behind Ashlands School, in North Street, to coincide with an actual boundary.
3. The rationalization of the boundary to South Street car park, to run around the Telephone Exchange boundary, the ends of the two supermarkets, a car park boundary wall and behind the new day centre.

Members are now asked to formally designate the extension areas and to approve the appraisal so that it can be put into use as guidance in planning and development matters.

A copy of the Crewkerne Conservation Area Appraisal (Final draft) is attached at pages 15 - 46.

Maps showing existing and proposed extensions to Crewkerne Conservation Area are attached at pages 47 and 48.

#### **Financial Implications**

Cost of statutory advertising requirement - approximately £200.

#### **Implications for Corporate Priorities**

Contributes to Corporate Aims 4 - 'Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities' and 5 - 'Promote a balanced natural and built environment'.

#### **Other Implications**

Designation of extensions would add to the number of planning applications advertised but will not add significantly to overall costs.

Written notification to residents/occupants affected by the extension of the area will be required.

**Background Papers:**      *Conservation Area Designation File*

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