

Ilminster – Conservation Area Appraisal and Designation of extensions to Conservation Area (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

To formally designate an extension to the Ilminster Conservation Area and approve the recently prepared Conservation Area Appraisal.

Public Interest

This report proposes alterations to the conservation boundary and the adoption of the Conservation Area Assessment for Ilminster.

Conservation areas are *areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*. The Conservation Area at Ilminster was first designated in 1973 and is therefore in need of review.

The District Council is also required to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. A conservation area appraisal that identifies what is special about an area assists in making the designation effective in conserving that special interest, allowing planning decisions to be made with a thorough understanding of the conservation area's character.

An appraisal is therefore an essential tool for the planning process and for managing informed intervention. It should provide a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for the relevant development plan policies and development control decisions made in the area. The appraisal is intended to provide the District Council and the local community with a clear idea of what features and details contribute to the character of the conservation area and how these may relate to any wider proposals for regeneration.

Recommendations

- (1) Formally designate changes to the Ilminster conservation area boundary;
- (2) Approve the Ilminster Conservation Area Appraisal;
- (3) Advertise the changes to the designated area in accordance with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Background

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 88 in South Somerset.

Local Authorities are required by the Act to review conservation areas from time to time and formulate and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. The preparation of character appraisals forms a part of this process, offering the opportunity to re-assess a designated area and to evaluate and record its special interest, particularly to help guide the way change and development takes place. An up to date appraisal will help guide development and regeneration in ways that will preserve the special character of the area. Appraisals are designed to provide guidance and support to parish councils, on decisions taken by the Council, its Development Management Service and to raise public awareness about the special character of the areas.

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

To manage changes in Conservation Areas, normal permitted development rights (works that can be carried out without planning permission) are restricted and planning permission is required for some works that may affect the external appearance of dwellinghouses. Trees in conservation areas are also protected and works to them require prior notification.

Ilminster Conservation Area appraisal and boundary review.

The Ilminster conservation area was first designated in 1973 and has not been reviewed since that date. To remain sound and effective conservation areas need to be reviewed and brought up to date with revisions to the boundary where they are necessary or desirable, taking account both of current understanding of historic significance and reviewing changes and development that has taken place since original designation.

Through the process of review and the preparation of the appraisal, some amendments to the boundary are felt to be necessary to the area, some to correct boundary anomalies and ensure the boundary coincides with on-the-ground features and some to add areas that have now been identified as worthy of inclusion. The proposed alterations and extensions to the designated conservation area are shown on the attached map.

Consultations

The boundary proposals and the draft appraisal have been consulted on locally by letter to all the properties that would be affected by inclusion in the conservation area for the first time, by public notices displayed in the town and by inclusion of all the details on the SSDC website

As a result a small number of residents made contact to ask about the implications for them and were satisfied by the explanations they received.

Two letters correcting factual errors in the appraisal were received.

One objection was received to the proposed inclusion of a garden area containing a number of trees. The owners' concern is over the curtailment of their freedom to trim the trees by conservation area control. The council's tree officer has spoken with this objector to reassure them that the control simply requires the council to be notified and that he is always happy to advise and take a helpful, practical approach.

The Town Council, Ward members, Historic England, the Dillington Estate and South West Heritage Trust have also been consulted. Historic England have written in support of our proposals.

The Save Shudrick Valley Group in supporting the proposals also suggested the inclusion of a small extension area at the lower end Love Lane including a listed cottage and other houses of interest. This had been consulted on and is included in the proposals (see area 18 below)

Proposed boundary changes

These are shown numbered on the attached map. The details are

1. **Exclude** - 37, Station Road – A modern house not of historic interest.
2. Amendments to boundary of Conservation Area to follow physical boundary features.
3. **Add** - Uplands House – A good Victorian house in grounds. Substantial tree cover is a feature on New Road contributing to the setting of the house and area.
4. **Add** - Edwardian terraces at New Road and Hill View Terrace – fine terraced houses with much original detail surviving forming a significant group.
5. **Add** - Speke Court and Coachmans – C19th buildings of quality and local interest. Converted stables court and coachman's house perhaps formerly associated with now demolished Hazelwell House or what is now the Shrubbery Hotel in Station Road.
6. **Add** - Three pairs of well-detailed late C19th semi-detached villas at 10 - 20 Station Road adding to the character of the street.
7. **Add** - Edwardian villas at 7, 12 and 14 New Road, all good quality buildings retaining historic details and adding to the character of the street.
8. Amendments to boundary of Conservation Area to follow physical boundary features
9. **Add** - Length of former driveway to Dillington House of historic interest and contributing to setting of the listed lodges and gates on Bay Hill. Also features substantial trees that form a part of the skyline behind the conservation area and remains of WW2 defences of historic interest.
10. **Add** – An area to include two listed houses, 12 & 14 Bay Hill and unlisted thatched houses at 17 & 18 Townsend together with significant treescape at entrance to the town on A30 road.
11. Amendments to boundary of Conservation Area to follow physical boundary features.
12. **Exclude** - Area of recent development Frog Lane not of historic interest.
13. **Exclude** - Area of 1970s development at Isle Court not of historic or architectural interest.
14. **Add** – a range of historic mill and other buildings and a high quality listed house, Ditton Lea, Ditton Street.
15. **Add** – An area at Ditton Street to include the library of 1889, listed Olcote House and Ditton House, the former school and teacher's house of 1877, good quality terrace 34 - 40 and houses 41-43 Ditton Street.
16. Amendments to boundary of Conservation Area to follow physical boundary features

17. Amendments to boundary of Conservation Area to follow physical boundary features
18. **Add** - Area in Love Lane around the listed house at 17 and including thatched no.18 and neighbouring older houses.

The attached map shows the existing boundary and proposed alterations marked and numbered.

Procedure

The boundary amendments are designated by a decision by this committee and it only remains to publicise the decision. The appraisal will be an advisory document that will form part of the Historic Environment Strategy that in turn forms part of the local plan and is required by the National Planning Policy Framework.

Financial Implications

The cost of statutory publicity in the local press and the London Gazette is expected to be approximately £100.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

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

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

No implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

None

Background Papers: Conservation Area Files
Ilminster Conservation Area Assessment.
