

9. CULTURAL HERITAGE

OBJECTIVES

- CH/a To protect historic landscapes and rights of way.**
- CH/b To protect, preserve and enhance the archaeological heritage.**
- CH/c To maintain the character of villages including important open areas.**
- CH/d To protect and enhance Conservation Areas and their settings.**
- CH/e To protect Listed Buildings and their settings.**

HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

POLICY CH/1 Historic Landscapes

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect or lead to the loss of important areas and features of the historic landscape whether or not they are statutorily protected.

- 9.1 The landscape is the product of human action on the natural landscape over many thousands of years, particularly relevant in South Cambridgeshire which has been significantly settled for a long period. This is most obvious in the parklands, waterways, trackways, hedges, field patterns, woodlands and wetlands of the District. Some of these are individual features (such as Wandlebury Hill Fort, Car Dyke, Fleam Dyke and the Roman Road) while others cover wide tracts of countryside (such as Wimpole Hall Park).
- 9.2 Historic landscapes are particularly valuable in South Cambridgeshire where they add interest and variety to an intensively farmed countryside. Some historic landscapes and features are protected by other policies or legislation, for instance if they are a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or a Scheduled Ancient Monument. However, the complexity of the historic landscape means that there are many sites and features which do not have such a designation but nevertheless they should be retained because of their contribution to the wider landscape and our ability to read our heritage. The Cambridgeshire Historic Landscape Database, developed by the County Council, provides a valuable tool in defining the evolution of landscape and in identifying historic landscapes. Regard will be had to the database in determining whether proposals would have an adverse impact on historic landscapes.
- 9.3 Parkland as an important landscape feature is relatively rare in the District and so those parks that there are make a particularly valuable contribution. Some of these are included in English Heritage's Register of Parks and

Gardens of Special Interest and are of national importance; they are shown on the Proposals Map. They may be added to over the plan period. Others have a more local value, often forming the setting of a Listed Building. Parks and Gardens which have a local significance will be identified in a Supplementary Planning Document.

ARCHAEOLOGY

POLICY CH/2 Archaeological Sites

The District Council will protect, preserve and enhance known and suspected sites and features of archaeological importance, together with their settings, by:

- 1. Requiring, in all cases involving proposed works at sites of known or potential archaeological interest, that an appropriate level of assessment and / or evaluation is carried out by a suitably qualified person to define the location, extent, character, condition, significance and quality of any remains, so that the archaeological implications of any proposed development can be established and enable an informed judgement to be made on appropriate mitigation strategies; and**
- 2. Refusing planning permission for development which would result in damage to sites and features of national archaeological importance, and their settings, including Scheduled Ancient Monuments.**

Where planning permission is granted for development on sites of archaeological interest, in-situ preservation of remains is preferred. In all cases where this is not justified or is not feasible, satisfactory provision must be made for a programme of excavation and recording of remains by a suitable person or body prior to the start of any development.

- 9.4 Archaeological remains are an important, although often hidden, part of our heritage. They are finite and non-renewable. As well as having historic value in their own right they are important for education, leisure and tourism. Government policy favours the retention of important remains in-situ. Only where the development clearly outweighs the need for in-situ preservation, and it is clearly demonstrated that in-situ preservation is not feasible, would it be acceptable to preserve by excavation and recording of finds.
- 9.5 Scheduled Ancient Monuments are designated by Government as being of national importance, and this will be a major consideration in determining any proposals which affect them directly or indirectly.

- 9.6 However, there are other sites which potentially may be of national importance. Other sites may have a regional or local significance. Government guidance is that in such cases where they are threatened by development, there should be an appropriate evaluation and then either preservation in-situ or by excavation and recording.
- 9.7 The Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record, held by Cambridgeshire County Council, gives information on archaeological sites and monuments. However, given the wealth of the past in South Cambridgeshire, this record can never be complete and new areas will be added as new information comes forward. Prospective developers should contact the County Council's Archaeological Officer for information to establish whether there is potential archaeological interest and establish the need for investigation and evaluation at an early stage. Where it is deemed that there is archaeological potential, the developer will be required to commission an archaeological evaluation to define the character and condition of any remains. This will include the character and depth of remains together with the impact of development upon the remains together with any mitigation measures to avoid unnecessary damage.

LISTED BUILDINGS AND THEIR SETTINGS

POLICY CH/3 Listed Buildings

There is a presumption in favour of the preservation of Listed Buildings.

Development involving the extension or alteration, conversion or change of use of a Listed Building will not be permitted unless it would preserve or enhance the building and / or any special features which contribute to the reason for its listing.

Proposals involving the total or substantial demolition of a Listed Building will be considered in the light of:

- 1. The architectural or historic merit of the building;**
- 2. The cost of repair in relation to the importance of the building;**
- 3. The setting of the building and its contribution to the local environment;**
- 4. The merits of alternative proposals for the site.**

Proposals must provide clear and convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to retain the building in use.

In all cases involving the total or substantial demolition of Listed Buildings, the District Council will require by condition an appropriate

record be made including photographs, drawings and a written analysis and the appropriate salvage of materials and preservation.

- 9.8 Listed Buildings represent a heritage of national importance as they are included in the Government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Importance. They are a finite resource and they contribute significantly to the character of the District.
- 9.9 PPG15 sets out the criteria to be applied where the demolition of a Listed Building is proposed. There is a presumption in favour of retaining Listed Buildings so permission to demolish will be the exception and only allowed if all other options to retain the building are demonstrated to have been thoroughly explored.
- 9.10 Given the finite nature of the resource of Listed Buildings it is essential to retain as much information and material from those rare cases where there is no alternative to demolition. The District Council will therefore require by condition an appropriate record to be made and the appropriate salvage of materials.
- 9.11 The repair, renovation, alteration and extension of a Listed Building should not be at the expense of its intrinsic value. It is important to guard against unnecessary change or over-restoration. In any change, materials should be sympathetic to those used in the original building.
- 9.12 Listed Buildings may become vacant and derelict if no acceptable alternative use can be found. The original use may be the most appropriate and will be encouraged where possible. Where this is not practicable the alternative use proposed must not require alteration to the extent that the character and historical importance of the building is destroyed.
- 9.13 The District Council will adopt a Supplementary Planning Document, and provide detailed specialist advice on the maintenance, repair, alteration and other changes proposed for Listed Buildings.

POLICY CH/4 Development Within the Curtilage or Setting of a Listed Building

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would adversely affect the curtilage or wider setting of a Listed Building. Proposals must provide clear illustrative and technical material to allow that impact to be properly assessed.

- 9.14 Where the District Council considers that a proposal would have an impact on the setting of a Listed Building, it will require the submission of illustrative and technical material to allow that impact to be properly assessed. This will include details to show the existing situation and the precise effect on the fabric, character or setting of the Listed Building and its setting. Planning permission will be refused where the District Council considers that the

proposal would dominate the Listed Building and those within its curtilage by scale, form, mass or appearance or harm the visual relationship between the Listed Building and its formal or natural landscape surroundings.

CONSERVATION AREAS

POLICY CH/5 Conservation Areas

Development proposals in or affecting Conservation Areas must preserve or enhance their character and setting and be accompanied by sufficient details to allow the proposals to be assessed. Proposals will have to preserve or enhance the special character and appearance of Conservation Areas, especially in terms of scale, mass and materials.

- 9.15 The District Council is required to survey its area from time to time to determine whether to designate Conservation Areas (areas of special architectural or historic interest). Conservation Areas are designated not on the basis of individual buildings but because of the overall quality of the area, its mix of uses, historic layout, characteristic materials, scale and detailing of buildings and open spaces. It also takes into account the need to protect trees, hedges, walls, railings and other characteristic features. Once designated, special attention must be paid in all planning decisions to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character and appearance. In South Cambridgeshire there are now around 80 Conservation Areas which make a very significant contribution to the attractiveness of the District.
- 9.16 In order to assess the impact of development proposals the District Council will require details including drawings or other pictorial material which shows the proposed development in its context. In most cases this means that outline planning applications will not be acceptable.
- 9.17 The District Council will be looking for development to provide a level of visual interest equivalent to that of the existing buildings in the Conservation Area. The choice of materials and detailed design are vital elements in achieving new buildings worthy of the small-scale village context which typifies South Cambridgeshire's Conservation Areas.
- 9.18 Further advice on development in Conservation Areas will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document. The District Council will prepare detailed appraisals of its Conservation Areas. Such reviews will review the appropriateness of the Conservation Area boundary, define their special character and evolve guidelines for development and enhancement schemes. They will be adopted as Supplementary Planning Documents.

VILLAGE CHARACTER

POLICY CH/6 Protected Village Amenity Areas

Development will not be permitted within, or adjacent to Protected Village Amenity Areas if it would have an adverse impact on the character, amenity, tranquillity or function of the village.

- 9.19 Protected Village Amenity Areas (PVAAs) are important to the amenity and character of villages and should be protected for their own sake.
- 9.20 The character of villages is made up of a blend of buildings and open spaces. Given the pressure for development in the District, the remaining open land within villages is threatened. Some undeveloped land can be built on without harm to the character of the village and can contribute to the full and effective use of land in accordance with national policy, but others are important to maintain the village character and should not be developed. PVAAs have therefore been designated in order to safeguard those areas of undeveloped land within villages which are important to retain.
- 9.21 Some of the PVAAs may have important functions for the village such as allotments, recreation grounds and playing fields whilst others have an important amenity role in providing a setting for buildings and offer tranquil areas where there is minimum activity. Not all PVAAs have public access as some undeveloped areas which are important may be private gardens. They also vary from those which are very open to visual penetration to those which may be enclosed or semi-enclosed.
- 9.22 Whilst PVAAs are identified, smaller gaps or spaces between buildings may also be important for local amenity or character and should also be protected from development.

POLICY CH/7 Important Countryside Frontages

Important Countryside Frontages are defined where land with a strong countryside character either:

- 1. Penetrates or sweeps into the built-up area providing a significant connection between the street scene and the surrounding rural area; or**
- 2. Provides an important rural break between two nearby but detached parts of a village framework.**

Planning permission for development will be refused if it would compromise these purposes.

- 9.23 In many places land with a strong countryside character penetrates or sweeps into South Cambridgeshire's villages or separates two parts of the built-up

area. Such land enhances the setting, character and appearance of the village by retaining the sense of connection between the village and its rural origins and surroundings. The frontage where this interface particularly occurs is identified to indicate that the frontage and the open countryside beyond should be kept open and free from development. In most cases it is land which adjoins the village built-up area but in some cases it separates two parts of the village and the open intervening land therefore assumes an importance for the character of the village as a whole.

ADVERTISEMENTS

POLICY CH/8 Advertisements

Advertisements will be restricted to the number, size, format, materials and design appropriate to the building to which it is proposed they be attached and the locality in order not to detract from the character and appearance of the District.

Advertisements alongside roads will not be permitted where they would prejudice road safety.

In Conservation Areas and on, or affecting, Listed Buildings, advertisements will be kept to a minimum in order to maintain the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and to avoid harm to the fabric, character or setting of Listed Buildings.

- 9.24 Advertisements can greatly influence the appearance of an area. A balance has to be made between commercial needs and the protection of the environment.
- 9.25 The most stringent controls are needed in Conservation Areas, which are often the original village centres where most commercial activity is located. Advertisements can also detract from the appearance of Listed Buildings.
- 9.26 In Conservation Areas the District Council will seek to ensure that advertisements are kept to the minimum necessary to identify the building and its function in order to protect the appearance of the area. It is therefore unlikely that any advertisement will be permitted which involves:
- Internally illuminated or other projecting fascia signs.
 - Obtrusive blinds or window / door canopies.
 - Obtrusive externally illuminated signs.
 - Obtrusive lettering, lighting, symbols, material or colour of fascia displays, window stickers, pavements signs and signs advertising particular products.

- 9.27 In the case of Listed Buildings, permission will not be given where the District Council considers there would be harm caused by advertisements, lighting, colour schemes and blinds or canopies.

SHOP FRONTS

POLICY CH/9 Shop Fronts

The District Council will only grant planning permission for shop fronts and alterations to existing shop fronts which:

- 1. Create a fascia and shop window which is in character with the building itself and the street scene;**
- 2. Do not result in a needless loss of architectural features; or**
- 3. Do not introduce 'house styles' and materials which are alien to the building and its surroundings.**

- 9.28 Both customers and shopkeepers benefit if the environment of the street scene is enhanced by well-designed and maintained shop fronts. In villages it will be important to respect the existing street and village character, while in major new developments like Northstowe new town and the urban extensions to Cambridge, the emphasis will be on creating a quality and vibrant environment.