

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Conservation Advisory Group
Conservation, Sustainability &
Community Planning Portfolio Holder

AUTHOR/S: Conservation Manager

25th January 2006

FEN DITTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Purpose

1. To advise members of the Conservation Advisory Group on the outcome of the public consultation exercise on the Fen Ditton Conservation Area Appraisal and seek support to recommend the adoption of the document as Council Policy, incorporating the proposed changes to the boundaries of the Conservation Area.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. Quality, Accessible Services	The Conservation Area Appraisal will be used as a local design guide and therefore assist in achieving the Council's aim of improved design standards and the delivery of a high quality planning service. Conservation Area Appraisals are now a Best Value Performance Indicator for all District Councils.
Village Life	The Conservation Area Appraisal will have a significant impact on the enhancement of village life by ensuring that new development in the historic environment is both appropriate to its context and of demonstrable quality.
Sustainability	The Conservation Area Appraisal will provide a valuable resource in ensuring the delivery of new sustainable development.
Partnership	The Conservation Area Appraisal will be a useful resource for both the District Council and the relevant Parish Councils.

Background

3. In 2005 a draft Conservation Area Appraisals was prepared for Fen Ditton. This Appraisal included a number of proposed boundary changes comprising: Separating off the area adjacent to Baits Bite Lock and combining it with the existing adjoining conservation area on the west side of the river, to create a single conservation area at Baits Bite Lock; to remove the two small modern housing estates at Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close from the Conservation Area; to incorporate into the Conservation Area two small parcels of land either side of Ditton Lane, south of the cross roads in the centre of the village.

Considerations

4. The draft Appraisal was issued for public consultation on 7th November 2005 and the consultation period concluded on 3rd January 2006. Copies of the draft Appraisals were published on the Council's web site, and copies were circulated to the local District and County Council Members, the Parish Council, The County Council Highways and Archaeology Depts, English Heritage, the Wildlife Trust, The Green Belt Project, Cambridge Preservation Trust, CALC, CPRE, and Go-East. Copies

were also circulated to relevant officers within the Development Services Dept. In addition, a leaflet was distributed to every household or business within the existing and proposed Conservation Area.

5. Fen Ditton Parish Council requested an extension to the consultation period due to it spanning the Christmas holiday period. The Parish Council were advised that the 6 week consultation period would have terminated in the middle of December and was extended into the New Year because of overlapping with the run-up to Christmas. It was therefore not practical to extend it further especially as it was necessary to report the outcome to Conservation Advisory Group at its meeting on 25th January 2006. However, the Parish Council were further advised that all comments received before completion of the report would be included in the report, and any comments received after completion of the report would be reported verbally to the meeting.
6. Up to 13th January 2006, 18 responses have been received in respect of the Fen Ditton Appraisal and these are summarised in the attached appendix.

Options

7. The Conservation Advisory Group are requested to either:
 - a) Recommend that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio holder presents a report on this matter to Cabinet seeking approval of the draft appraisal and adoption as Council Policy, including approval of the boundary changes contained therein;
 - or
 - b) Recommend that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio holder presents a report on this matter to Cabinet seeking approval of the draft appraisal and adoption as Council Policy, including approval of the boundary changes but with the revised boundary for Fen Ditton Conservation Area amended to retain Stanbury Close (since this would retain a more logical and less convoluted boundary to the Conservation Area and address many of the concerns raised during the consultation process);
 - or
 - c) To require officers to bring a revised draft appraisal to a future meeting of the Conservation Advisory Group incorporating additional revisions to the proposed boundary changes.

Financial Implications

8. None specific.

Legal Implications

9. The Conservation Area Appraisal is to be adopted as Council Policy. Following adoption of the new LDF (due March 2007) the Conservation Area Appraisal may be reviewed for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document. This would require it to be cross-referenced to the relevant policies contained within the LDF and for a sustainability appraisal to be prepared. The revised appraisal (together with the sustainability appraisal) will then be issued for public consultation prior to adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

Staffing Implications

10. None specific.

Risk Management Implications

11. Adopting the Appraisal as SPD will ensure Planning Inspectors give the Appraisal due consideration when undertaking planning appeals for sites located within or affecting the Conservation Area.

Consultations

12. Residents of the existing and proposed Conservation Area, local District Council Member, the Parish Council, The County Council Highways and Archaeology Depts, English Heritage, the Wildlife Trust, The Green Belt Project, Cambridge Preservation Trust, CALC, CPRE, and Go-East.

Conclusions/Summary

13. The consultations received in respect of the draft Conservation Area Appraisal (including the proposed boundary changes) are as set out in the attached appendix.

Recommendations

14. That the Conservation Advisory Group recommends that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio holder presents the draft appraisals to Cabinet to seek its approval and adoption as Council Policy and including approval of the boundary changes contained therein, but with the revised boundary for the Fen Ditton Conservation Area amended to retain Stanbury Close.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Summary of Consultations on the Fen Ditton Conservation Area Appraisal and Proposed Conservation Area Boundary Changes.

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Appendix : Fen Ditton Conservation Area

Summary of Consultations on Conservation Area Appraisal and Proposed Conservation Area Boundary Changes

Consultee	Nature	Representation	Assessment	Recommendation
1. Fen Ditton Parish Council	Objection to removals Support for additions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The leaflet provided insufficient information and the map was difficult to read. 2. Object to the removal of Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close from the Conservation Area. Both areas are important parts of the village and it is important that their character (albeit modern) is maintained in line with the standard required for the rest of Fen Ditton. 3. Modern and old houses sit side by side in Fen Ditton and the Conservation Area has ensured that this has been very successful thus far. 4. Fen Ditton's historic cemetery is adjacent to Stanbury Close and removal of Stanbury Close might allow inappropriate 'permitted development' to take place. 5. Serious concern that if Stanbury Close is taken out of the Conservation Area this would allow future development on the adjacent field that would also have a serious adverse effect on the rest of the village. 6. Support for the inclusion into the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The leaflet was intended to draw residents' attention to the Conservation Area Appraisal and to advise them of where they could inspect the document. It was not intended to be a summary of the appraisal document. The appraisal document contained a larger (A3) version of the map. 2. The criteria for Conservation Areas set out in PPG 15 and by English Heritage define Conservation Areas as areas of 'Architectural or Historic Interest' and the suggested revised boundaries have been drawn up in light of this. It is accepted that most Conservation Areas will include some modern infill developments (and both High Street and High Ditch Road include examples), but the 	Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close are both discreet modern estates and, as such, are outside the criteria for inclusion in Conservation Areas. However, removal of Stanbury Close from the Fen Ditton Conservation Area would result in a more convoluted boundary and members may feel that it is better to retain a more logical boundary in this vicinity and therefore retain Stanbury Close within the revised Conservation Area. Shepherds Close can be removed whilst still retaining a logical and clear boundary to the Conservation Area.

		<p>Conservation Area of the land south of the crossroads either side of Ditton Lane.</p>	<p>expectation is that complete estates of modern houses do not meet the classification of 'Architectural or Historic Interest' and therefore should be excluded from Conservation Areas.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. See 2 above.4. If permitted development is going to harm the cemetery it would have been best to have removed PD rights when planning permission was granted for Stanbury Close. Conservation Area status does reduce some PD rights (particularly in respect of size of extensions and outbuildings) and location of satellite dishes. However some permitted development is still allowed.5. The Local Plan defines the village framework and indicates where development may take place. The field is outside the village framework and in the Green Belt. Development of this field would therefore clearly be	
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			<p>contrary to the policies set out in the Local Plan. The powers contained within the Conservation Area legislation are more concerned with the quality of development. Therefore, if the Local Plan had included that field within the village framework, the Conservation Area could not have prevented development from taking place. It is important to view the Conservation Area alongside the framework boundaries and policies set out in the Local Plan, and it is not appropriate to rely on Conservation Area status to control where development should take place.</p> <p>6. Noted.</p>	
2. Susan and Keith Martin 4 Shepherds Close	Objection	Objection to the removal of Shepherds Close from the Conservation Area, since it provides a very important buffer zone to protect the individuality of Fen Ditton and to prevent the village from being absorbed within the eastern expansion of the city.	As set out in point 5 on consultee 1 above, the village framework and green belt are the means by which Fen Ditton will be protected from the eastern expansion of Cambridge.	See above
3. James McCann 1 Church Street	Objection	Object to the removal of both Shepherds Close and Stanbury Close from the	See item 2 against consultee 1 above.	See above

		Conservation Area, which will result in unsightly and unacceptable development (eg mobile phone masts) close to the centre of the village.		
4. Michael and Elizabeth Middleton, Fen Ditton Hall	Objection	Object to the removal of Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close from the Conservation Area, it has implications and possibilities that will have an adverse impact on the village and conservation area as a whole.	See item 2 against consultee 1 above.	See above
5. Richard Green 22 High Ditch Road	Objection	Object to the removal of the conservation status of Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close. Lead to believe that conservation status is a means of protecting and preserving an environment in its entirety. Removal of this status on selected areas within the village makes not sense as it simply erodes the conservation status applied to the rest of the village.	See item 2 against consultee 1 above. Note also, the current conservation area does not include the whole of Fen Ditton.	See above
6. Richard Tuck 28 High Street	Objection	Object to the removal of Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close. Concerned that this will result in excessive motor traffic, with implications for the junior school and the elderly. The fields surrounding the village provide a breathing space between the village and the city.	Mr Tuck's objections appear to stem from a misinformed belief that it will allow development on the adjacent green belt areas. See item 2 against consultee 1 above.	See above
7. I. S. Ritchie 6 High Ditch Road	Comments, with support for the additions and objection to the removals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commend work that has gone into the Appraisal. 2. Fen Ditton is approved for infilling only. Backland developments refereed to are not technically backland. 3. Little Ditton is north of High Ditch Road. 4. 2 large beech trees at the north 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted. 2. Policy SE4 of the local plan defines Fen Ditton as a <i>Group Village</i>, where groups of up to 8 dwellings will be permitted within the village framework. This would include backland 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revise para 6.6 to read: <i>Little Ditton is the ara north of High Ditch Road, which was Little Ditton Field and farmed as open-field arable in</i>

		<p>eastern and south eastern corners for the cross roads should be marked as significant trees.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The photo of the two new houses under construction in High Ditch Road contributes nothing to the document. 6. Para 7.52 The text refers to the <i>former</i> church hall. The building is still owned by the Church and operated as a church hall. 7. Two photos are included of the Blue Lion Public House. This is overkill for such an ugly building. 8. Support for the inclusion of the two areas south of the cross roads into the Conservation Area. Along the Ditton Lane side of the field are a row of Rowan trees. These were planted as a memorial to the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II and should therefore be marked as significant trees. 9. The newly installed signage associated with traffic calming (although outside the Conservation Area) is over large and unsightly. 10. Object to the removal of Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close. Rather it would be better to include the whole village into Conservation Area since this would enable the evolving 	<p>development where it accords with Policy HG11. Fen Ditton has a strong linear character and in most instances backland development is likely to be out of character with the pattern of development in the vicinity, and therefore contrary to Policy HG11.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Noted. Para 6.6 to be revised. 4. Noted. Map to be revised to include these trees. 5. The photographs are a record of the village at the time and therefore are relevant. However, it may be appropriate to include a photo of the completed dwellings in the final version of the appraisal. 6. Noted. Para 7.52 to be revised. 7. One of the photos of the Blue Lion is an illustration of the visual clutter around the crossroads. 8. Noted. The fact concerning the row of Rowan trees to be recorded in the text and the row noted on the map. 	<p>1790.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Include 2No. beech trees by cross roads on map. 3. Provide replacement photo of new development in High Ditch Road 4. Revise para 7.52 to omit the word 'former' in the first sentence. 5. Para 9.2 to include the sentence: '<i>The row of Rowan trees along the Ditton Lane side of the field were planted to mark the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.</i>' The trees are also to be added to the map. 6. See above for recommendation in respect of removals from the
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		<p>character of the whole village to be protected. The dwellings on the east side of Green End should be incorporated into the Conservation Area.</p>	<p>9. This is outside the scope of the appraisal, but is a further example of our on going concern of traffic calming measures impacting on Conservation Areas.</p> <p>10. See item 2 against consultee 1 above. (The argument to include the whole village could be extended to create a single Conservation Area covering the whole of South Cambridgeshire).</p>	<p>Conservation Area.</p>
<p>8. Lee and Karen Wells The Old Dairy, High Street</p>	<p>Objection</p>	<p>Object to the removal of Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close from the Conservation Area.</p>	<p>See item 2 against consultee 1 above.</p>	<p>See recommendation against consultee 1 above.</p>
<p>9. Dr Helen Sant 35 Stanbury Close</p>	<p>Objection</p>	<p>Object to the removal of Stanbury Close from the Conservation Area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The close was within the Conservation Area at the time it was originally developed. 2. The appraisal describes Stanbury Close as 'bland', objects to this description and in particular notes that the two large houses at the end of the close have both spent considerable time and money on hanging baskets, pergolas and other ornamentation to create a village feel. These are two of the most attractive houses in the entire village and should be 	<p>See items 2 and 5 against consultee 1 above.</p>	<p>See recommendation against consultee 1 above.</p>

		<p>conserved.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Removing the Close from the Conservation Area will allow inappropriate changes to be made to the detriment of the Close and village as a whole. 4. Removing the Close from the Conservation Area may allow development of the field behind. 		
10. Lynne Stover 23 High Street	Objection	<p>Object to the removal of Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close from the Conservation Area. Although recent developments, they area of a style that represents a particular period in the development of the village. Any alterations/extensions to these buildings will impair the appearance of the conservation area. For the same reason, requests that Wrights Close be included in the Conservation Area.</p>	See item 2 against consultee 1 above.	See recommendation against consultee 1 above.
11. Mr and Mrs Mark Woofenden 18 Stanbury Close	Objection	<p>Object to the removal of Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close from the Conservation Area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Removal would be the first step to making planning permission easier for development of the adjacent fields. Believe it is not a coincidence that both Closes back onto open fields. 2. Development of the field at the back of Stanbury Close could be achieved through an access road between No 27 and 29. This would cause increased traffic and damage to historic structures in 	See items 2 and 5 against consultee 1 above.	See recommendation against consultee 1 above.

		<p>the village.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Removal of the Closes could lead to an 'us and them' culture in the village. 4. The proposed new boundary makes no sense as there are old and new buildings throughout the whole village. 5. The Conservation Area is an important 'selling point' for properties. 6. The Cemetery is next to Stanbury Close and the hedgerow that encloses the cemetery continues around the back of Stanbury Close. 		
12. Mrs M Smith 5 Stanbury Close	Objection	<p>Object to the removal of Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close from the Conservation Area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If these properties 'do not contribute positively to the character of the Conservation Area' why were they placed in the Conservation Area in the first place? 2. As the properties back onto the Cemetery, which is of historical significance, they should remain within the Conservation Area to protect the Cemetery. 3. Removal of these two Closes will make it easier to develop the adjacent fields. 	See items 2 and 5 against consultee 1 above.	See recommendation against consultee 1 above.
13. Laura Marshall 17 High Ditch Road	Objection	Objection to the removal of Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close from the	See items 2 and 5 against consultee 1 above.	See recommendation

		Conservation Area. Main concern is that this would allow planning permission on the adjacent land. Would like to see the Conservation Area extended to cover the whole village.		against consultee 1 above.
14. Paul & Lesley Jenkins 46 Church Street	Objection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There seems little logic in the proposal to include the areas to the east and west sides of Ditton Lane, south of the cross roads, whilst excluding much of the village on the east side of Green End, which has an equal, if not greater, claim to conservation status. The properties in both areas are of a similar mix and age, ie largely post war. 2. The proposal to exclude Shepherds Close and Stanbury Close would open up the adjacent fields for development. 3. Access to any new development adjacent to Standury Close would be through the cul-de-sac and result in increased traffic past historic buildings along the High Street. 4. Old and new buildings exist side by side in the village and we wish the village to continue to evolve in a controlled and sympathetic manner. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The land on the east side of Ditton Lane is an open field, while on the west side there are only two houses, of which No 104 is C19. The area is therefore of much more significance than the C20 ribbon development along the east side of Green End. 2. See items 2 and 5 against consultee 1 above. 3. See item 5 against consultee 1 above. 4. See items 2 and 5 against consultee 1 above. 	See recommendation against consultee 1 above.
15. Mrs D Sullivan 16 Stanbury Close	Objection	<p>Object to the removal of Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close from the Conservation Area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Removal of these areas would 	See items 2 and 5 against consultee 1 above.	See recommendation against consultee 1 above.

		<p>allow the possibility of development on the fields adjacent to both Closes.</p> <p>2. The whole village is a pleasant mish-mash of old and new buildings, so why single out these two Closes?</p>		
16. Mrs N Winter 17 Stanbury Close	Objection	<p>Object to the removal of Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close from the Conservation Area.</p> <p>1. There are old and new buildings alongside each other throughout the village and removal of these two Closes may disrupt the spirit and working of the village as a whole.</p> <p>2. The proposal would make it easier for development to take place on the open fields behind both Closes that would lead to significant increase in traffic noise and disturbance.</p>	See items 2 and 5 against consultee 1 above.	See recommendation against consultee 1 above.
17. Dr IM Fearnley & Mrs JL Yarrow 3 Shepherds Close	Support for additions and objection to removals	<p>1. Welcome the proposed additions to the Conservation Area for Fen Ditton.</p> <p>2. Object to the removal of Shepherds Close. Concerned that this removal might make it easier in the future for development of the adjacent fields and a reduction in the green separation between Fen Ditton and Cambridge.</p> <p>3. Whilst Shepherds Close may be of no special architectural</p>	<p>1. Noted</p> <p>2. See item 5 against consultee 1 above.</p> <p>3. See item 2 against consultee 1 above.</p>	No change.

		<p>interest, it was originally developed sympathetically and has an extremely pleasant character. As a result of the Conservation Area status, all modifications undertaken over the last 12 years do not detract from its character.</p>		
<p>18. Mrs and Miss Oxbury 12 Stanbury Close</p>	<p>Objection</p>	<p>Object to the removal of Stanbury Close and Shepherds Close from the Conservation Area.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Removal would be the first step to making planning permission easier for development of the adjacent fields. Believe it is not a coincidence that both Closes back onto open fields. 2. Development of the field at the back of Stanbury Close could be achieved through an access road between No 27 and 29. This would cause increased traffic and damage to historic structures in the village. 3. Removal of the Closes could lead to an 'us and them' culture in the village. 4. The proposed new boundary makes no sense as there are old and new buildings throughout the whole village. 5. The Conservation Area is an important 'selling point' for properties. 6. The Cemetery is next to Stanbury 	<p>See items 2 and 5 against consultee 1 above.</p>	<p>See recommendation against consultee 1 above.</p>

		Close and the hedgerow that encloses the cemetery continues around the back of Stanbury Close.		