

THREE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS FOR STRENSALL, STRENSALL RAILWAY BUILDINGS AND TOWTHORPE VILLAGE CONSERVATION AREAS: CONSULTATION DRAFTS

Summary

1. This report requests that three separate draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals for the neighbouring conservation areas of Strensall (No.23, 19.16ha), Strensall Railway Buildings (No.31, 1.58ha) and Towthorpe Village (No.32, 8.81ha) are approved for public consultation. Copies of the appraisals are in **Annex A**.

Background

2. Strensall Conservation Area was originally designated in 1979 and was extended in 2001 following public consultation. Also in 2001, Strensall Railway Buildings and Towthorpe were designated as two new conservation areas following the request of Strensall and Towthorpe Parish Council. These conservation areas are the subject of 3no separate draft appraisal documents. Prior to the production of the draft appraisals the character of these three conservation areas had been summarised in conservation statements within Appendix B of the City of York Draft Local Plan.
3. Both Strensall and Towthorpe Village conservation areas were identified as “conservation areas at risk” by English Heritage (EH) in 2009 (ref. English Heritage’s ‘Heritage At Risk’ information www.english-heritage.org.uk). At Towthorpe the significant number of redundant farm buildings was cited as being of particular concern; whereas at Strensall general development pressures were identified as leading to some loss of special character. Based on the findings of EH’s survey, the City of York Council prioritised these conservation areas in their rolling programme of producing Conservation Area Appraisals for each of their 35 conservation areas. Given the proximity of Strensall Railway Buildings within the Parish, it seemed logical to review this conservation area at the same time, as appraisal work and consultations could run simultaneously saving both time and resources. The work is being jointly funded by Strensall and Towthorpe Parish Council and from the existing budget of the Design Conservation and Sustainable Development Section.
4. The appraisals offer an opportunity to re-assess the character of the designated

areas and the extent of their boundaries and to evaluate and record their special interest. New guidance on Planning for the Historic Environment, PPS 5, advises local authorities to develop a firm evidence base for plan-making (policy HE 2) and to use established methods of environmental appraisal to better understand the significance of heritage assets such as conservation areas. By defining the special architectural and historic interest which makes designation justified, development control decisions will be better informed. The appraisal should also provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about the future of an area through the development of management proposals.

5. The draft conservation area appraisals are attached at **Annex A1, A2 and A3**. The documents have been developed by a team of independent conservation consultants. The format and content of the report have been discussed with officers in the Design Conservation and Sustainable Development Section of the City Strategy Directorate and there has been an interim meeting with the Parish Council.
6. If adopted the appraisals would form part of the review process incumbent on Local Authorities under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. An important element of this process is a reassessment of the conservation area boundary.
7. Each appraisal follows the sequence recommended by English Heritage. The first sections (2-4) describe the context and development of the areas and draw attention to factors which have contributed to their present day character. Section 5 outlines the findings of the boundary reviews. Section 6 describes the general character of the areas (as revised). In the case of Strensall four different character areas have been identified and each of these is analysed in more detail in sections 7-10. The final section of each appraisal outlines issues which should be incorporated into future management strategies.

Boundary Reviews

8. **Strensall** - Chapter 5 proposes two areas of extension to the conservation area boundary (areas B&C) as shown on the map in **Annex B1**. It is proposed that Areas B and C be added due to their historical significance to Strensall. Area B is to the north of Southfields Road, which is an important historic back lane defining the rear boundaries of the properties along the main street, and Area C includes some impressive properties associated with the railway along Princess Road and Moor Lane. A further area was put forward for exclusion from the conservation area (area A) due to its modern layout and appearance. For reasons related to the historical significance of the block plan it has been decided to retain the current boundary position.
9. **Strensall Railway Buildings** – Chapter 5 recommends that the boundary be extended to include the storage facilities associated with the former railway station (Area A, map **Annex B2**), and to the west the boundary would extend around numbers 93-103 The Village. The latter buildings appear contemporary with other houses in the area which were developed around the turn of the century (C19th-20th) to take advantage of the new railway halt (Area B, map **Annex B2**).

10. **Towthorpe Village** – Chapter 2 concludes that no areas are considered to be included inappropriately within the current boundary and no further areas are proposed to be added (map **Annex B3**).

Consultation

11. This report seeks approval for a consultation process to take place. If Members agree the draft appraisals, then a public consultation will be carried out based upon the methods used for other conservation areas. This would take place over a six week period in December and January as follows:

- A letter to consultees including Conservation Area Advisory Panel, the Local Ward Members, Strensall and Towthorpe Parish Council, Strensall Local History Group and appropriate amenity bodies (see list of consultees in **Annex C**).
- A single leaflet summarising the three appraisals and boundary changes, with a tear-off comments slip, will be distributed to all properties within and adjoining the proposed conservation area (approximately 400 households as opposed to the whole parish which would be approximately 2372 households). The map in **Annex D** shows the existing Conservation Area boundaries, proposed amendments, and suggested delivery area for the leaflet. The Parish Council have kindly offered to assist with the delivery of the leaflet.
- Copies of the appraisal documents will be made available at the Council offices 9 St Leonard's Place, Strensall Parish Office, Strensall Library, The Half Moon Public House and The Ship Inn as well as on the Council and Strensall and Towthorpe Parish Council websites.
- Representatives of the Consultants and the City of York Council will attend Strensall and Towthorpe Parish Council meeting on 11th January 2011 to allow residents to see the documents and talk to the team who will be on hand to help with any queries. We propose to run an exhibition/ drop-in session before the start of the meeting, rather than hold a separate event, and consider that this along with the delivery area of the leaflet will provide sufficient coverage for the Appraisal.
- A press release will be sent to the York Press, and posters advertising the exhibition and meeting on the 11th January and also where the appraisals can be viewed will be placed in local venues in order to promote it to the wider village residents. An article will also feature in the December/ January parish 'Outreach' magazine which is delivered to each property in Strensall and Towthorpe.

Options

12. Option 1 – approve the draft document(s) for consultation purposes and approve the method and range of consultation.
13. Option 2 – amend the draft document(s) and/or change the method and range of the consultation process.
14. Option 3 – do not approve the draft document(s) for consultation.

Analysis

15. Unless any obvious omissions or inaccuracies can be identified within the draft documents, or concerning the consultation process proposed, option 1 would allow the consultation process to start in November. Subsequent feedback from this process could be assessed comprehensively rather than in stages as implied by option 2. Option 3 would halt the statutory process and this should only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

Corporate Priorities

16. The appraisals aim to assist in improving the actual and perceived condition and appearance of each of the conservation areas. This aim supports the following objectives of the corporate strategy: “thriving city”, “inclusive city” “sustainable city”. It would also provide a more informed basis for decision making and for policy formulation.
17. The appraisal would contribute towards the Local Authority’s statutory obligations with regard to conservation areas in their control.

Implications

18. **Financial** – Production of the consultation documents and delivery costs would be met by existing budgets and from a significant contribution by the Parish Council.
19. **Human Resources (HR)** – No known implications.
20. **Equalities** – Different formats of the consultation leaflet will be made available on request. Documents will be lodged in accessible locations.
21. **Legal** – No implications at this stage.
22. **Crime and Disorder** – No known implications.
23. **Information Technology (IT)** – No implications.
24. **Property** – No implications.

Risk Management

25. There should be no additional risks.

Recommendations

26. i) Members are asked to agree Option 1 to approve the 3no draft Conservation Area character appraisals (Strensall, Strensall Railway Buildings and Towthorpe Village), as proposed in Annex A1, A2 & A3, for use as consultation documents.

ii) Members are also asked to approve the proposed consultation methods.

Reasons:

(1) the documents have been prepared in accordance with current guidance from English Heritage. They have adopted a structured approach to the assessment process and as consultation documents they are clearly written and capable of being amended where required

(2) the boundary reviews have been carried out in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and conform with the latest policy guidance on the historic environment - PPS 5 and the related practice guide.

(3) the proposed consultation process would be based on previous practice

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Report
Approved



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Design Conservation and
Sustainable Development

Specialist Implications Officer(s) none

Wards Affected – Strensall

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

PPS 5 Planning for the Historic Environment - March 2010
PPS 5 Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide - March 2010
Guidance on conservation area appraisals - English Heritage 2006

Annexes

- Annex A1 - Strensall Conservation Area Appraisal consultation draft
- Annex A2 - Strensall Railway Buildings Conservation Area Appraisal consultation draft
- Annex A3 - Towthorpe Conservation Area Appraisal consultation draft
- Annex B1 - Map showing the existing boundary and proposed amendments to Strensall Conservation Area
- Annex B2 - Map showing the existing boundary and proposed amendments to Strensall Railway Buildings Conservation Area
- Annex B3 - Map showing the existing boundary of Towthorpe Conservation Area
- Annex C - List of consultees
- Annex D – Map showing the proposed consultation area