

EXETER CITY COUNCIL**EXECUTIVE****17 JUNE 2008****DRAFT ALPHINBROOK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL
AND MANAGEMENT PLAN****1 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To agree the draft Alphinbrook Conservation Area appraisal and management plan for the purpose of public consultation.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Exeter has twenty conservation areas that have been designated because of their special architectural or historic interest. The Council has a duty to preserve and enhance the character of these areas. Seventeen conservation areas in Exeter currently have adopted appraisals.
- 2.2 The Government and English Heritage recommend the preparation of appraisals and management plans to identify what contributes to the character of Conservation Areas. The documents assist development control and facilitate a programme of environmental enhancements.
- 2.3 The appraisal document has been prepared on the basis of the existing designated conservation area. Proposed amendments to the boundary are listed below; the final document will incorporate adopted amendments.

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Executive is asked to agree the draft document as a basis for consultation. There will be a period of about six weeks for public comment and due to the small scale of the proposed area and lack of suitable venue, all residents will receive a copy of the draft appraisal and it will be advertised in the local press. The consultation will enable the appraisal of the character of the area to be finalised and additional ideas for the enhancement of the area to be identified and formulated into the management plan. Residents have shown an interest in similar exercises conducted elsewhere.
- 3.2 The results of the consultation will be reported to Planning Member Working Group for comment and then to Executive for adoption.
- 3.3 The draft document in black and white is in the Members' room. The published document will include colour plans that will be easier to interpret.

4 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO BOUNDARY

- 4.1 A set of criteria has been developed to ensure consistency in the evaluation of changes to the boundaries of Conservation Areas. These are attached at Appendix One.

4.2 There are two distinct and important areas of urban development set within open countryside, most of which is land designated within the Local Plan as Valley Park and a Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

4.3 The purpose of conservation area designation is primarily concerned with the protection of the historic built environment and the open space immediately affecting that setting. Whilst the character of this area is unusually rural within the confines of the city boundary, conservation area designation is not necessary or intended to protect the wider landscape setting of the Alphinbrook and therefore it is proposed to retain just two small conservation areas and delete the remaining open countryside.

- **Area 1 - Twisted Oak**

With Twisted Oak junction at the centre, this proposed conservation area includes the properties in the immediate vicinity and east to Balls Farm, taking in adjacent fields for the setting of the conservation area.

- **Area 2 - Crabb Lane**

The proposed Crabb Lane conservation area includes the historic properties of The Briars and The Elms, and continues east along Balls Farm Road to the junction with Cowick Lane. It is also proposed to include the frontages onto Cowick Lane and the listed cross on the corner of Alphington Road as an extension to the existing conservation area.

4.4 It is proposed to delete the rest of the current conservation area. The Alphington Spur has severed a small but unremarkable part of Ide Lane from the remainder of the area and it also includes modern highways including an underpass alien to the essentially arcadian character and appearance that defines Alphinbrook.

4.5 At the west end of the area, from the rear of the Twisted Oak pub to Rolls Bridge between the A30 and Doctor's Walk are several low lying fields featureless apart from a large agricultural building and a group of stables of no architectural or historic merit.

4.6 North of Doctor's Walk there is a large area of rough grassland that rises steeply towards the ridge at the rear of Perridge Close and Dunsford Road properties. These are mainly mid 20th century properties with no consistency of design. The rough grassland runs along the hillside to Little John's Cross Hill where a corrugated metal shed can be seen from the roadside. There are no listed or locally listed buildings in this area, nor are there any obvious architectural or historic elements requiring preservation.

4.7 The attached plan shows the proposed alterations to the boundary creating two smaller conservation areas.

5 PLANNING MEMBER WORKING GROUP

5.1 On 8 April, Planning Member Working Group discussed the issues raised in the appraisal, particularly the proposed boundary alterations. In response to Members' questions, it was confirmed that a new small strip of land containing Alphington Cross would be included in the proposed Crabb Lane

conservation area and that an area of land being considered as a potential Park and Ride site which would not be covered by the new conservation areas was already subject to Valley Park and Site of Nature Conservation Importance policy designation.

6 RECOMMENDED

- 6.1 Members are recommended to agree the proposed boundary amendments outlined in section 4 above and the draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for public consultation.

**RICHARD SHORT
HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES**

ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Local Government (Access to information) Act 1985 (as amended)

Background Papers used in compiling the report:-

None

APPENDIX I

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS CRITERIA FOR PROPOSED BOUNDARY AMENDMENTS

The starting point should be a presumption against altering boundaries unless there is a strong case based upon the appraisal.

1	Conservation Area boundaries should be drawn to include relevant building groups that have coherence and similarities in either materials, periods or styles and open spaces surrounding these that form an integral part of the building groups (with regard to the fact that CA's are primarily about buildings and their related land not open spaces).
2	Boundaries should still exist on the ground and make sense.
3	The setting of important features should be adequately protected.
4	Changes in attitude to architecture and history should be addressed.
5	The impact of any changes in legislation should be addressed.
6	There must be a compelling case for deleting areas that were previously designated.
7	Areas that lack character (holes) lying within the proposed Conservation Area may be included where there is a reasonable probability that a substantial part of the area will be redeveloped within 5-10 years and the designation can therefore influence the quality of development. (It is assumed that CA's will have a life of 5-10 years between reviews). Where a substantial redevelopment scheme has already been approved and is likely to proceed, the decision should rest on whether there is a clear case that the approved scheme will enhance the character of the area.
8	Holes characterised by substantial areas of relatively modern or mundane development where redevelopment is unlikely should be excluded.
9	Where existing areas of a Conservation Area are considered in the appraisal to have more in common with an adjoining Conservation Area, it should generally be removed from the area being appraised and appended to the adjoining area in order to be fully appraised when that area undergoes its next appraisal.
10	Existing Conservation Areas should only be amalgamated or subdivided if there is a clear case that the proposed amendment more accurately reflects the appraised character.