

South Croxton Conservation Area DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Introduction

A character appraisal of South Croxton Conservation Area was carried out in 2005 and adopted by Cabinet in November 2005. This management plan has been based on the findings of the appraisal. It should be read in conjunction with the character appraisal.

General Principles

Any proposed changes should be carried out in a sensitive manner, taking into account the established character. New development must respond to its immediate environment i.e. its context, in terms of scale, form, materials and detailing. Otherwise, alterations will have a detrimental effect on the historic and locally distinctive form of the village.

Within the Conservation Area, where the quality of the general environment is already considered to be high, the Council will insist on good quality schemes which respond positively to their historic setting, this extends to small buildings such as garages and even boundary walls and fences. Minor alterations need to be carefully considered as incremental change can have a significant detrimental affect on the character of an area over a period of time.

Central government guidance contained in PPS1 and PPG 15, Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, Leading in Design and other SPD will be used to assess the quality of proposal for new development.

The character of the Conservation Area identified in the appraisal document is such that the following general principles should be noted when considering any development in all parts of the Conservation Area:

1. The Conservation Area has a distinct “grain” or pattern of built form and spaces which are part of its historic development. This gives the Conservation Area great individuality, characterised by the pattern of buildings and clearly defined boundaries. This “grain” is an important part of the character of the Conservation Area and will be protected.
2. The aim must be to ensure continuity of the village form. Any proposal should preferably contribute to one of the existing clusters. If the proposal is for development behind existing buildings consideration should be given as to whether this would create a new cluster, or partial cluster or how it could relate to an existing cluster.
3. The emphasis for new proposals will be on high quality of design. There may be opportunity for good modern design which can be used to create positive changes in historic settlements. However a dramatic contemporary statement is unlikely to be appropriate.
4. Scale is the combination of a building’s height and bulk when related to its surroundings. Any proposed new development must take into account the scale of the existing buildings, and must not dominate or overwhelm them. Therefore, The

scale and massing of each property should be small, with elements that are in proportion. A large development may be appropriate but it should consist of several smaller components.

5. Alterations and extensions must respect the form of the original building and its locality. The use of high quality materials and detailing, whether modern or traditional is essential. Roof lines, roof shape, eaves details, verge details and the creation of new chimneys are important considerations. Dormers and rooflights are not traditional in the Area. Any such proposals will require very careful consideration to ensure they do not damage the integrity of the character.
6. Windows and doors of a traditional design respect the historic nature of the buildings to which they belong and make a very important contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The use of upvc and standardised high speed joinery techniques nearly always leads to unsuitably detailed windows which will be generally unacceptable in the Conservation Area. In most cases the building regulation requirements can be met without the need to use clumsy and awkwardly detailed windows.
7. The appraisal has identified the types of materials that characterise the Conservation Area and where possible these should be used so that any alterations will respect the established character.
8. Applicants for planning permission must provide a meaningful "Design & Access Statement" to explain the design decisions that have been made and to show how proposed alterations relate to their context. A detailed analysis of the locality should demonstrate that there is a full appreciation of the local streetscape and how it has developed, including prevailing building forms, materials and plot ratios.

Procedures to Ensure Consistent Decision-Making

The basis of the character appraisal is to inform and guide development control decisions. A consistent approach to decision making will be aided by providing:

- Conservation and design surgeries to help development control officers to make informed decisions, no matter how minor the proposed changes.
- Opportunities for pre-application discussion regarding significant alterations.
- Opportunities to review decisions and assess the impact of approved alterations through post development site visits.

Enforcement Strategy

Effective enforcement is vital to make sure there is public confidence in the planning system to protect the special character of the Area. Unauthorised development can often be damaging to that character.

Taking proactive action can improve the appearance and character of the Area, making it more attractive and in some instances increasing the potential for investment. Effective monitoring of building work to make sure it is carried out in accordance with the approved details and with planning conditions ensures new development makes the positive contribution envisaged when permission was granted.

In order to protect the character of the Conservation Area the Borough Council will seek to:

- use enforcement powers in cases where unauthorised development unacceptably affects the character of the Conservation Area.
- take proactive action to improve or enhance the appearance of the Area.

- monitor development under way to make sure it fully complies with the terms of any planning permission or listed building consent.

Carrying out unauthorised work to a listed building or to protected trees and hedgerows and the unauthorised demolition a building within a conservation area is an offence. In such cases, the Council will consider prosecution of anyone responsible and any necessary remedial action.

The powers set out in Section 215 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 will be used where sites are identified as detracting from the character of the conservation area by being eyesores or untidy.

Article 4 Direction

The quality of a conservation area is often threatened by the cumulative impact of numerous small changes to many buildings. On the whole such changes do not require planning permission.

In order to preserve and enhance the character of conservation areas, many planning authorities use Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights on groups of buildings or areas. Restrictions normally relate to particular elements such as replacement windows and doors, or roofing.

It is not intended to create such a Direction in South Croxton.

Buildings at Risk

It is the intent of the Borough Council to take necessary action to secure repair and full use of any buildings at risk. The appraisal has not identified any of the statutorily listed buildings as being at risk.

Review of the Conservation Area Boundary

The current boundary of the Conservation Area generally incorporates the historic village. While the appraisal noted inconsistencies it is not proposed to change the boundary.

Possible Buildings for Spot Listing

In carrying out the appraisal none of the buildings within the Conservation Area were identified for spot listing, i.e. considered for inclusion on the list of statutory listed buildings.

Enhancement Opportunities

While street furniture is generally minimal, the telephone services are supplied by overhead wires. These intrude into the street scene and it is in the long-term interest of the conservation area for the wires to be placed underground.

There is an area of open storage of disused plant, lorry bodies and vehicle parts at the northern entrance to the Conservation Area. This is an untidy piece of land that detracts from the Conservation Area.

Proposals for Economic Development and Regeneration

Historic building grants are available from both Charnwood Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council. Repair and reinstatement works to historic buildings, that make a vital contribution to maintaining and improving the character of the Conservation Area may be eligible for grant assistance.

Management and Protection of Important Trees, Greenery and Green Spaces

The Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the Borough Council's priorities for conservation of a variety of wildlife and their habitats within Charnwood and details the actions required to bring about a reversal in its fortune. The BAP will be reviewed and modified as required, to ensure that the necessary actions are being taken by the appropriate agencies

Monitoring Change

It is planned to review the conservation area character appraisal and its management plan every five years, although the management plan may under certain circumstances need to be reviewed over a shorter time period. A photographic record of the Conservation Area has been made and will be used to help identify the need to review how changes within the Conservation Area are managed. A greater degree of protection will be accomplished if the local community help monitor any changes.

Consideration of Resources

This management plan sets out the commitment of the Borough Council to protecting the character and appearance of Charnwood's conservation areas and how it will use its resources to achieve these aims.

Summary of Issues and Proposed Actions

Conservation Area Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Partner	Other Partners
Untidy site	Approach landowner to discuss potential for improvement.	CBC	
Telephone wires	Encourage BT to put the wires underground	CBC	BT

Developing Management Proposals

Various forces, historical, cultural and commercial, have shaped the development of the conservation area, creating a sense of place and individual identity. The character and appearance of the conservation area is vitally important, both in attracting investment in the area itself, and in the encouragement of initiatives to the benefit of the wider community.

Based on the issues that have been identified the following objectives will have a positive impact in both protecting and enhancing the character of the conservation area, and provide the basis of a long term management plan:

- 1 A policy regarding the co-ordination of the placing of all permanent items within the streets needs to be formulated. The opportunities to renew, redesign, re-site, eliminate or combine existing street furniture are substantial. Similarly there is a need to look at traffic signs and highway markings with a view to their rationalisation. The appropriateness of the existing street lighting and the scope to introduce imaginative lighting schemes, including the illumination of key buildings, also merits examination. Guidelines could be set out in a public realm manual.
- 2 The production of heritage trail leaflets to increase community awareness and appreciation, including the encouragement of tourism, should be considered. This might involve interpretation material, plaques or similar for key sites and buildings.

Community Involvement

In 2005 residents of South Croxton were invited to comment on the Character Appraisal which was amended as a result before submission to Cabinet.

Residents of the village will also be invited to comment on this Management Plan document. It will be made available as a draft via the website and a public meeting will be held in South Croxton so that people can contribute their ideas for enhancement and preservation of the Conservation Area. All comments and responses will be considered and appropriate amendments made to the document prior to submission to Cabinet.

Advice and Guidance

The Borough Council Development Department can advise on the need for Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent and can provide guidance on matters such as appropriate methods of maintenance/repairs, changes to shopfronts, alterations and extensions and suitable materials.

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