

Committee:	Planning	Agenda Item No.:	11
Date:	22 nd July 2009	Category	*
Subject:	Stony Houghton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan - Start of Public Participation	Status	Open
Report by:	Head of Planning (written by Temporary Assistant Conservation Officer)		
Other Officers involved:	Creswell Townscape Heritage Initiative Project Officer		
Director	Director of Strategy		
Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Member for the Environment		

RELEVANT CORPORATE AIMS

Environment - Promoting and enhancing a clean and sustainable environment.

One of the Council's priorities for its aim for the environment is to protect, enhance and improve the natural and built environment in a sustainable way.

The proposed Stony Houghton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan seeks to ensure that the historic and natural environment of the Stony Houghton Conservation Area is preserved and enhanced by defining its special character and appearance and by setting out appropriate policies and proposals. As a result, the proposed Stony Houghton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will form an extremely important policy tool in the Council's efforts to protect and enhance the built and natural environment in a sustainable way.

TARGETS

Achieving the milestones set in the Historic Environment Scheme by March 2011 is a specific target in the Corporate Plan. Within this target, preparing and adopting the Stony Houghton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan by November 2009 will achieve one of the milestones.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Preparing and adopting Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans aids efforts for a more efficient planning determination process as the additional guidance they contain enables applicants to better prepare their proposals, which in turn reduces the need for amendments, and enables the district to gain better developments.

In addition to this, the proposals for enhancement that the Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans contain aids efforts to secure external funding for the district.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To seek Committee approval to carry out a public participation exercise on the draft Stony Houghton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan.

THE REPORT

Background Information

Members will be aware that the process for the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans was set down in the Historic Environment Scheme that was approved by the Council at its meeting on 6th February 2008.

This process involves the following stages:

- Stage 1 - Evidence gathering
- Stage 2 - Prepare draft conservation area appraisal and management plan addressing issues raised at initial consultation stage
- Stage 3 - Public participation on draft appraisal and management plan
- Stage 4 - Final document prepared and reported to Planning Committee and then Council for adoption as Council Policy setting out how representations have been taken into account. Procedure for speaking at Committee clearly identified

Stages 1 and 2 of the process have been completed, with the stakeholder (local experts) meeting held at the New Houghton Community Centre, Rotherham Road, New Houghton on 9th October 2008. The main issues raised were:

- the large number of unlisted buildings of merit in the village;
- a small stream runs through the village which causes occasional localised flooding;

- the village red K6 telephone box and post box are important and should be retained;
- traffic issues concerning the heavy use of roads passing through the conservation area and their poor condition;
- off-road motorcycling and fly-tipping along Water Lane;
- large-scale electricity pylons close to the conservation area has a detrimental impact on views;
- the potential for wind turbine development at Losk Lane

Appendix 1 contains a list of attendees and the note of the meeting.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan issues

The draft Stony Houghton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan seeks to define the special character and appearance of the Stony Houghton Conservation Area by assessing the built form, landscape and streetscape value. It also provides guidance on the implementation of certain saved policies in the Bolsover District Local Plan and where appropriate proposes schemes for the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area.

In the preparation of the draft document, the issues raised at the stakeholder meeting have been considered and where appropriate incorporated in the draft document.

In considering when the proposed schemes for the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area should take place, regard has been paid to the Council's Historic Environment Scheme and its approved conservation work programme.

Therefore, given that the preservation proposals contained in the draft Stony Houghton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, such as the retention of the K6 telephone box and post box are largely dealt with through current but non-programmed work, it is considered at this stage that they do not require prioritisation above existing work programme management plan actions.

The enhancement proposals, which are generally less urgent than preservation proposals, given that they pose less immediate threat to the conservation area, are considered to be desirable but not able to be delivered before the next available date within the work programme management plan actions without additional resources.

A copy of the draft document is contained at Appendix 2.

Note of Meeting

Stony Houghton Conservation Area – Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Local Experts Meeting

Venue: New Houghton Community Centre, Rotherham Road, New Houghton
Time: 6pm – 8pm
Date: 9th October 2008

Present:

	<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Organisation</u>
1	L A Dixon		Resident
2	Mr D Maries		Resident
3	Mr P Dowling		Resident
4	Mr and Mrs Ball		Residents
5	Mr K Heath		Resident
6	Mr T Bedford		Resident
7	Mr L Grant		Resident
8	Mrs G Grant		Resident
9	Pauline Bowmer	Councillor	Bolsover District Council and Pleasley Parish Council
10	Jonathan Moore	Assistant Conservation Officer	Bolsover District Council
11	Chris McKinney	Creswell Townscape Heritage Initiative Project Officer	Bolsover District Council

Apologies: Councillor Joan Dixon, Councillor Ann Syrett, Councillor Sandra Peake, Louise Brennan (English Heritage)

Note Prepared by: Jonathan Moore

		<u>ACTION</u>
1.0	Introduction	
1.1	Chris McKinney opened the meeting and explained that the District Council had started an ambitious programme for preparing Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans for the 27 conservation areas in the district. He explained that the Stony Houghton Conservation Area was the seventh conservation area in the current programme and that the purpose of the meeting was to	

- meet with local stakeholders, such as local representatives and residents, at an early stage in the process.
- 1.2 Mr Ball drew attention to the incorrect postcodes used on letters from the Council inviting residents of Stony Houghton to the stakeholder meeting. Jonathan Moore explained that the postcodes were those provided by the Royal Mail. The discrepancies were identified and resolved.
- 1.3 Jonathan then explained that the Stony Houghton Conservation Area was designated in 1978 and that the District Council has a duty to review designated conservation areas from time to time. He also outlined why conservation areas are designated and their primary role in preserving and enhancing the historic and architectural interests of each area.
- 1.4 Jonathan also outlined the conservation area appraisal and management plan process. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to gather information regarding the character and appearance of the conservation area and to identify any management issues. It was also important to identify any threats and opportunities to the conservation area and that local knowledge is important in this process.
- 2.0 Characteristics**
- 2.1 Jonathan outlined that Stony Houghton has a long history which pre-dates the Domesday Survey of 1086. The hamlet is recorded in the Domesday Book as '*Holtune*', which is thought to mean "*farm on a hill spur*". Records indicate the word '*Stony*' first appears on a map of 1767 – earlier maps, such as William Senior's map (1610) identify the settlement simply as Houghton. Comparison of maps also reveals that the layout and size of the settlement has changed little over several centuries. There is no church in Stony Houghton.
- 2.2 Jonathan also explained that from available historical records the settlement appeared to have originally comprised three adjoining landholdings – (Stony) Houghton, Houghton Bassett and Houghton Felley. 'Bassett' is thought to refer to the family of that name who held land in the area for several centuries, whilst 'Felley' refers to Felley Priory in Nottinghamshire. The current parish boundary between Pleasley and Scarcliffe also runs through the settlement.
- 2.3 Jonathan noted that there is only one listed building in the settlement - Hall Farm was listed Grade II in 1980. According to the Listing Description published by English Heritage only the old farmhouse is listed. This was disputed by Mr Downing who stated that he was under the impression that his property, The Old Stables, which lies behind the main house, was also listed. Chris explained that the list

description gave the identity and a general description of the building in question. However, he added that the legal interpretation of what constitutes the listed building that is subject to the listed building consent regime is often a complex matter and it was common for buildings within the curtilage of the listed building to be classed as the listed building also, although the age of the building and its current relationship with the principal and listed building were factors that needed to be considered. This judgement over what is listed would initially be made by the local planning authority when determining whether works to the building needed listed building consent. This judgement however could be challenged in court and at this stage English Heritage may be consulted.

2.4 Jonathan then mentioned that there are a number of unlisted buildings of merit in the village and that these would be identified in the appraisal. Older Ordnance Survey maps indicate several buildings in the village that no longer exist, including several cottages, a public house - The Devonshire Arms (closed 1895) – and a Sunday School. Residents generally thought that a number of important features had been lost over the years and suggested contacting a local historian for old photographs of the area.

2.5 Mr Maries mentioned that a watercourse runs through the village and maps indicate a 'sheepwash' feature at the east end of the village along Water Lane. Mr Maries stated that the watercourse runs through his land (Spring Cottage) but rises somewhere on higher land to the west in the vicinity of Devonshire Farm. There is occasional flooding in the area.

2.6 Residents stated that there is a red telephone kiosk, which may be the K6 model, and a traditional post box in the village. Chris stated that from these features being identified by the 'local experts' at this meeting, they would be considered for recording as important features for protection and attempts would be made to date them.

3.0 Boundaries and potential extensions

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3.1 Jonathan explained that the conservation area covers an area of 10 hectares, that it was designated in 1978, and that the boundary had not been reviewed since designation. He explained that the process allows for a review of conservation area boundaries but that any proposed extension would need to be assessed and considered to be worthy of designation on the basis of its historic and/or architectural interest.

3.2 There was a general discussion about the Glapwell by-pass, the possible routes that have been looked at, and the possible implications for Stony Houghton if a by-pass scheme went ahead. Chris explained that the idea of a by-pass had been discussed at

- County and District level for many years and no firm proposals were yet on the table. However, it was noted that a by-pass would result in a lot of traffic being removed from travelling through Stony Houghton.
- 3.3 There was then a general discussion about the boundary of the conservation area and questions from residents about the line of the existing boundary were clarified. The general view from residents was that the existing boundary was adequate and that no extensions required consideration.
- 4.0 Identification of possible threats to character and appearance**
- 4.1 Mr Maries raised several issues relating to the impact of traffic in the village and of the poor condition of roads – he stated that the roads are not swept regularly or repairs undertaken. Other residents agreed that traffic problems are a cause of great concern and adversely affect the character of the area.
- 4.2 The main problems mentioned included heavy use of the road junction near Hall Farm and use at certain times of day of Rotherham Road as a ‘rat run’. The other route through Stony Houghton via Water Lane was similarly affected as some people used it as a short-cut. Traffic calming was considered by some residents to be the appropriate response and there was then some discussion about ways in which traffic management could take place, including a weight restriction order (7.5 tonnes) and 20mph speed limit. However, residents were not keen to see lots of additional street furniture installed which they thought would detract from the character of the area. It was also thought that the cutting back of roadside vegetation in certain places would reduce the risk of accidents.
- 4.3 Opinion was that the road through Stony Houghton was generally unsuitable for heavy vehicles and damage had been caused to several walls.
- 4.4 Other issues raised included the regular use of Water Lane by off-road motorcycles and fly-tipping/rubbish being left, particularly along Water Lane. The presence of pylons close to the conservation area was seen as a detrimental impact on the conservation area and that further pylons would similarly detract.
- 4.5 Councillor Bowmer mentioned that she had recently been contacted by Banks Developments in her capacity as a locally elected Council member regarding their investigation into the merits of siting several wind turbines on a site close to the conservation area (Lusk Lane). Councillor Bowmer explained that the developer had indicated that there could be up to 5 turbines with a maximum tip height of 130 metres and added that Banks Developments had made this information public and that it had recently been reported in the

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- Mansfield Chad. However, Councillor Bowmer added that that very little information was currently available but wanted people to be aware and that the developer would be undertaking a public consultation exercise in due course. At this point, Councillor Bowmer asked the officers to explain some of the background to this.
- 4.6 Chris explained that the Council was generally supportive of renewable energy projects and that its policy on such types of development was contained within the Bolsover District Local Plan. He added that this was accompanied by national planning policy guidance and statements. He explained that should this proposal come forward as a planning application, the proposal would be assessed against the development plan policies, including those relating to conservation areas, and any other relevant material considerations.
- 4.7 There then followed a general discussion about renewable energy and Government and Local Plan policy, and about the advantages and disadvantages of wind turbines. Some residents questioned the viability of wind turbines compared to other means of generating electricity and were concerned about the visual impact on the conservation area and wider environment. Other residents said that wind turbines would be detrimental to the conservation area and that they were surprised that the officers from the Conservation Team were not stating their objection to the proposal. Chris explained that he and Jonathan were representing the Council as officers and thus were required to set out the Council's policy position on such types of development.
- 4.8 In view of the purpose of the Local Experts Meeting to listen to the views of residents and other local representatives on the character and appearance of the conservation area and any threats and opportunities so that these can be fed into the conservation area appraisal and management plan writing process, to conclude this discussion Chris proposed that the group should give a display of hands from stakeholders as to whether they considered the potential development would be a threat to the character and appearance of the conservation area – there was unanimous agreement that it would. Councillor Bowmer did not take part in this aspect of the discussion.
- 5.0 Identification of possible opportunities to enhance character and appearance**
- 5.1 Residents considered that measures to improve the local road network and reduce traffic flows and/or speeds would help to enhance the conservation area. Also, preventing the use of Water Lane by off-road motorcycles was seen as a useful action. Chris explained that discussions would need to take place with the County Council as

- Highways Authority in order to determine the most appropriate actions.
- 5.2 Some residents felt that improvements to the street lighting would be beneficial. Again, this would have to be discussed with the Highway Authority and also considered in the context of maintaining the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 5.3 Residents were keen to see both the post box and telephone box retained and did not wish to see them replaced with modern versions.
- 5.4 Lee Grant asked about the availability of grants for the reinstatement of windows at his property in the conservation area. Chris advised that the Council operated a Historic Building Grant Scheme that provided grants for repairs and reinstatement of lost features and that historic buildings in conservation areas were eligible for grants under this scheme. He added that details of the Historic Building Grant Scheme could be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website.
- 6.0 Next steps**
- 6.1 Jonathan and Chris thanked everyone for attending the meeting and advised that this information would now feed into the preparation of a draft appraisal and management plan.
- 6.2 Jonathan advised the group that the next stage was to report the draft document to Bolsover District Council's Planning Committee followed by a four week consultation period. After this, it was intended that the outcome of the exercise and a revised document would be reported to Planning Committee followed by formal adoption by the Council.

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