

COMMITTEE: PLANNING COMMITTEE
DATE: 2ND October 2012
SUBJECT: Torfield Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan
REPORT OF: The Planning Policy Manager

Ward(s): UPPERTON

Purpose: To seek approve the Torfield Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for adoption and publication

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Recommendation: Members are asked consider the Torfield Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan which will be presented to Cabinet for adoption and publication.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Torfield Conservation Area Appraisal is the fourth of a rolling programme of appraisals, to cover all the Conservation Areas in the Borough. The Council has a duty to review, formulate and publish appraisals and management plans for the preservation and enhancement of the Borough's 12 Conservation Areas. The Torfield Conservation Area Appraisal sets out the special interest of the area with a recommendation for a small extension to the boundary.
- 1.2 A draft of the Torfield Conservation Area Appraisal was approved by Cabinet and Planning Committee on the 27th March 2012. It was requested that an additional assessment of Potential Area A be undertaken.

2.0 Torfield Conservation Area Appraisal

- 2.1 The purpose of the **Torfield Conservation Area Appraisal** is to define the special architectural and historic interest of the designated area in the form of a detailed character analysis. The Conservation Appraisal also contains a Management Plan, which seeks to manage change in ways that maintain and strengthen the area's special qualities.

The Area comprises an area of 1.5ha, bordered by an Anglo Saxon burial ground to the West. The estate comprises 14 houses, built within the grounds of the original Torfield Manor, of which only The Cottage and the gate posts remain. The estate was developed by PD Stonham, Architect in the 1920's and is characterized by Mock Tudor dwellings, set in spacious, mature gardens. Each house is individual in detail, but display monochrome exteriors, with exposed timbers, clay hanging and roof tiles, brick noggin to the façades and distinctive roofscapes with clay tiles and chimneys. The public realm is characterised by imposing sandstone walls, with brick copings, granite kerbs and brick gutters to the road. The houses retain their original gateposts and gates, typical of the period.

Following the initial evaluation of the character and extent of the Area, the Area Appraisal was reviewed along guidelines set out by English Heritage, this was reviewed by Planning Committee and Cabinet in Spring 2012, Suggested Extension Areas A and B were considered at this time, and although they contain Buildings of Local Interest, some older buildings and some features in the public realm in common with the existing area, the extensions either do not comprise part of PD Stoneham's original estate layout, or the original layout has been diluted by modern infill development, and eroded by unsympathetic treatments to individual dwellings and in the public realm.

Since the last Cabinet/PC Meetings, minor changes in wording to Page 26 of the Draft Torfield CA Appraisal have been made to reflect current Planning Law. The boundary line of the extension to include The Cottage, has been amended to contain both gateposts of the original Torfield Court.

- 2.2 The Conservation Appraisal area proposes to extend the boundary as designated in 1991) to include 'The Cottage', on St Anne's Road. This is the oldest and only surviving original building on the Torfield Estate. It is of architectural interest and an important part of the history and development of the Torfield Estate. It contributes to the historic context for the conservation area. When the original estate of Torfield Court was subdivided it was to accommodate the 1920-30's interwar housing which provides the conservation area with its special architectural and historic character. 'The Cottage' was originally the Gatehouse for Torfield Court and helps to explain the historic development of the site, thereby warranting its inclusion. The modern Torfield Court has been excluded from the Conservation Area; however the original Torfield Court gateposts are within the conservation area boundary, as they contribute to the historic context of the site.

- 2.3 Although the proposed extension includes this important property, the impact of the additional planning controls upon the property's owner will not be substantial; the protection afforded by the conservation area's extension provides control over the demolition of historic properties and works to trees within the area. The impact of the extension on the Council's ability to exercise control may result in some additional planning applications but this will not have a significant implication on resources.

3.0 Assessments

- 3.1 As a result of Planning Committee's request, an assessment has been undertaken of the surrounding area to the Torfield Conservation Area. This included Mill Gap Road and the associated areas of Torfield Road (south side), Selwyn Road (east side), Arundel Road (north side), St Anne's Road (west side) and Ivy Lane. Also, an assessment for the west side of Selwyn Road and the associated north side of Arundel Road (No. 1a, 3 and 3a). These are identified in Appendix A.
- 3.2 The assessments were undertaken in line with the Criteria for extensions to the boundary of the Conservation Areas, as set out in Appendix A of the adopted Guidance Manual for Designation and Review of Conservation Areas and in line with guidance from English Heritage. The recommendation from this assessment was that with respect to the special interest and character of Torfield Conservation Area, as defined within the appraisal document, no further extensions warranted inclusion into the conservation area. This was due to a culmination of factor under the criteria set out in the Guidance Manual. The criteria looks at the architectural quality and historical relevance of the area, the townscape and public realm quality and the current boundaries, in relationship to the special character of the Conservation Area.

In Proposed Extension A, although the Victorian buildings have retained a relatively high proportion of their original features, many have unsympathetic alterations and repairs. The area has suffered modern intrusions from large extensions and unsympathetic infill development within the original plots, breaking the original generous layout, as still visible in the existing Conservation Area. The mid to late 20th century development has led to interruption of the historic walling, various crossovers, gate posts and boundary treatments. As such, they are not representative of the urban grain of Torfield Conservation Area, nor of Eastbourne's architectural development, and individual buildings are not examples of work by key architects.

- 3.3 Therefore, the recommendation of this report is that the boundary of Torfield Conservation Area be retained with the exception of the extension to include The Cottage, St Anne's Road, to help maintain the special architectural and historic character of Torfield Conservation Area and to extend the line to encompass both of the original gateposts.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 During the period additional consultation, public representation, in the form of a petition was made to include Potential Extension A in the reviewed Torfield Conservation Area. This petition contains 58 signatures in support of the petition "We the undersigned call for the Torfield Conservation Area to be extended to include the area from Torfield Road Junction to Selwyn Road Junction. To the Arundel Road Junction up to the Arundel Road Junction up to Anne's Road up to Torfield, St Anne's Junction and all roads and lanes within this area."
- 4.2 Public comment was invited on the areas' special architectural and historic interest, the appropriateness of the boundary and the content of the draft Appraisal and Management Plan. Therefore, the public was able to view the document explaining the Conservation Area's special architectural and historic character and also to understand why the boundary has not been extended further.
- 4.3 Upon revisiting the existing and potential Extension A, boundaries of Torfield Conservation Area, it is clear that Extension A includes no properties which resemble or date from the interwar period, as designated within the Conservation Area. Torfield Conservation Area has a clear and defined special architectural and historic character, as a distinct group of homogeneous interwar housing built by P. D. Stonham on the site of the Victorian Villa, Torfield Court.

There are two identified key features within Potential Extension A:

- St Wilfred's Hospice
- The wall surrounding the Mount
Both are Buildings of Local Interest
- It is worth noting that The Cottage is not marked as a Building of Local Interest, and it may be prudent to review this, given its significance in the old Torfield Manor estate.

5.0 Financial and Staffing Implications:

- 5.1 The cost of the consultation will be met from within existing budgets and will largely consist of staff time.

6.0 Sustainability Implications

- 6.1 The conservation of heritage assets, which are a finite and diminishing resource, is an integral aspect of sustainable development. The designation and extension of the conservation areas will assist in the conservation of heritage assets.

7.0 Other Implications

- 7.1 There are no youth, anti-poverty, equality or community safety implications as a direct result of the draft documents.

8.0 Conclusion

8.1 The Torfield Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared according to English Heritage Guidance Manual (2011) and English Heritage's Guidance. It aims to set out, in a clear and concise manner, the special architectural and historic interest of the area and to provide information on the best approach to managing change, in order to conserve or enhance the special interest of the area.

As such, it is recommended that the Appraisal is adopted and published as shown in Appendix A.

**Clare Dales
Conservation Officer**

Background Papers:

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

Planning Policy Statement 5

Eastbourne Borough Plan (2001 – 2011)

Draft Torfield Conservation Area Appraisal

English Heritage: Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals

English Heritage: Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas

English Heritage: Conservation Area Practice

English Heritage: [Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management](#)

Eastbourne Borough Council: Guidance Manual for Designation and Review of Conservation Areas

Eastbourne Borough Council: Conservation Areas in Eastbourne - Companion Document

Officers Assessment of Mill Gap Road and the associated areas of Torfield Road (south side), Selwyn Road (east side), Arundel Road (north side), St Anne's Road (west side) and Ivy Lane.

Officers Assessment of west side of Selwyn Road and the associated north side of Arundel Road (No. 1a, 3 and 3a).

Appendix

Appendix A – Review of Boundary to include Gateposts to the original Torfield Court