

**Report to:** Planning Committee

**Date:** March 2020

**Title:** College Conservation Area Appraisal

**Report of:** The Head of Planning

**Ward(s):** Meads

**Purpose of report:** To note the College Conservation Area Appraisal and to recommend to Cabinet the designation of the revised College Conservation Area

**Officer recommendation(s):** (1) To note the revised College Conservation Area as set out in Appendix 1, and recommend to Cabinet its designation

(2) To delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Planning in consultation with the Chair of Planning to make minor or technical amendments as necessary to the revised College Conservation Area

**Reasons for recommendations:** To allow the expansion of the College Conservation Area Appraisal as detailed in the draft in Appendix 1

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## **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Conservation areas were introduced nationally in the late 1960s to support heritage retention at a time of significant change in the built environment through designating areas of architectural and historic interest that were able to benefit from additional protection. Previously, protection tended to be concentrated on individual assets such as scheduled monuments or listed buildings rather than broader settings such as streets, neighbourhoods and squares.
- 1.2 In the half century since the passage of the original 1967 Civic Amenities Act, there are now over 10,000 conservation areas across the UK. There is no typical form, and they come in different sizes, cover different property periods and types, and evidence different conditions.

- 1.3 Eastbourne Borough Council has adopted 12 conservation areas since the passage of the original legislation. They very much mirror the national situation, covering different size areas and different property periods and types, though they are concentrated in central and southern areas of the town.
- 1.4 College Conservation Area was first adopted in 1986 to cover a central area immediately adjacent to Eastbourne College, the institution that confers it with meaning and provides its distinctive identity.
- 1.5 Independent heritage consultancy Locus Consulting was commissioned to lead on this review during Autumn 2018, with a brief to produce an appraisal document, to include a consideration of the area's current boundaries.

## **2 Methodology**

- 2.1 The appraisal was undertaken by heritage and planning consultancy Locus Consulting on behalf of Eastbourne Borough Council.
- 2.2 A detailed survey of the conservation area and immediate setting was undertaken on the 2nd and 3rd of October 2018. The character and appearance of the conservation area was recorded according to established townscape characterisation methodologies (Historic England, 2017) and guidance regarding the production of conservation area appraisals (Historic England, 2016). Relevant documentary, cartographic and other archival resources were consulted as set out within the Bibliography of the draft report attached at Appendix 1. The appraisal also assessed the current boundaries and made suggestions for possible extensions.

## **3 Statement of Significance**

- 3.1 The suburb at Lower Meads, within which the College Conservation Area lies, is a well-executed and well preserved example of a 'residential park' suburb. The residential parks influenced the garden suburb movement that emerged in the late 19th century, going on to herald new orders of town planning, including the Garden Cities Movement that prevailed well into the 20th century.
- 3.2 The College Conservation Area, and surrounding suburb, is a planned townscape with a consciously designed aesthetic. A rich assemblage of 19th-century private villas can be observed within and outside of the area. Prestigious through their spacious size and ornate decoration, the villas embrace many of the Revival styles distinctive of the late Victorian era, notably Gothic and Queen Anne styles. The architecture of many houses is influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement and appears as an early example of the movement nationally, before it became popularised.
- 3.3 Eastbourne College campus has architectural and historical interest in its own right. The establishment of the initial school was subsidised by William Cavendish and was a major investment by the then newly formed town council, creating a new civic landmark. The Tudor revival style distinguishes the college from the remainder of the suburb. The plot also features a series of landmark

structures.

## **4 Boundary Extension**

- 4.1 The review undertaken by Locus Consulting provided an objective evaluation of levels of special architectural and historic interest in proximity to the Conservation Area, identifying candidate areas for expansion.
- 4.2 Recommended areas of extension were deemed to exemplify those architectural and historical elements that combine to create the special character and appearance of the existing Conservation Area.

## **5 Consultations**

- 5.1 At its meeting on 22 January 2019, Planning Committee endorsed public engagement in relation to the appraisal of the College Conservation Area, with a formal public consultation established between 14 February 2019 and 28 March 2019. During this period, the draft appraisal document was made available online and in hard copy formats at the Customer Contact Centre and in the library, along with alternative larger print versions for those requiring this adaptation. The consultation cycle was advertised in the local press, and also included a dedicated website and an open public meeting facilitated by Locus Consulting. This allowed for the presentation of headline findings and for questions and comment. A second session was also run for members of the Conservation Areas Advisory Group. 19 responses were received through the portal, along with submissions from the Eastbourne Society and Turley Heritage. These responses where they differ and or raise a new issue are included at Appendix 2.
- 5.2 The responses received were strongly in support of the extension with some suggestions of further extension and better publicity of the consultation.
- 5.3 Following the first consultation, the authority's Conservation team undertook a review of the proposed boundary changes and other suggestions to extend the conservation area. On the basis of the identified characteristics of the area, and further conversations with Locus Consulting and other stakeholders, they agreed a set of proposals which then formed the basis for further consultation.
- 5.4 A second cycle of consultation was undertaken on the proposed extension to the Conservation Area boundary. This ran between 28 October 2019 and 6 December 2019, and involved the establishment of a dedicated website and, in response to requests of better publicity, a door-to-door delivery of postcards within the proposed extension area. This activity generated a total of 23 responses. The responses where they differ and or raise a new issue are included at Appendix 3.
- 5.5 The responses received were broadly in support of the proposed boundary extension. The comments received that did not agree with the extension were based on reasons that would not in fact be affected by the adoption of the boundary extension; such as preventing home owners installing double glazing into their homes.

## **6 Financial appraisal**

6.1 There are no identified financial implications.

## **7 Legal implications**

7.1 A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance (section 69(1), Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A local planning authority (LPA) is under a duty to designate conservation areas within its locality and to review them from time to time (section 69(2)). This can result in:

- New areas being designated.
- Boundaries of existing conservation areas being extended or reduced.
- Cancellation of the designation, if the original special interest of a conservation area has been significantly eroded.

7.2 The Act requires the local planning authorities to notify the Secretary of State and English Heritage of any new designations, and to advertise the designation in the London Gazette and a local newspaper.

7.3 There is no statutory right of appeal following the designation of a conservation area although it is possible to seek a judicial review of an LPA's decision to designate a conservation area in the event the correct procedures have not been followed.

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## **8 Risk management implications**

8.1 There are not considered to be any risk management implications arising out of this report.

## **9 Equality analysis**

9.1 There are not considered to be any equality implications arising out of this report.

## **10 Environmental sustainability implications**

10.1 Building Conservation is predicated on the repair and re-use of existing buildings and materials wherever possible and the adoption of the report and extension of the boundary is commended as making a positive contribution to the borough's sustainability agenda.

## **11 Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – College Conservation Area Appraisal Draft Document
- Appendix 2 – Public consultation responses March 2019
- Appendix 3 – Public consultation responses December 2019

