

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Consultation response from Wall Parish Council

Wall Parish Council welcomes the recognition and protection given to the Wall Conservation Area as an area of “special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

Section 1 - Appraisal

The Wall Scheduled Monument site is of national importance and its historic significance forms a major element in the justification of the Conservation Area status. The Appraisal should therefore include:

- greater detail on the Scheduled Monument
- how the Scheduled Monument relates to the Conservation Area
- how Conservation Area policies will assist in enhancing and preserving the Scheduled Monument
- how Scheduled Monument policies complement Conservation Area policies.

In particular, the Plan showing the boundary of the Conservation Area should have superimposed upon it the boundary of the Scheduled Monument site, in order to show the inter-relationship between the two.

Section 1 should also include reference to the Green Belt and the level of planning protection this affords.

Para 1.6 The recognition of the importance of the re-used Roman stonework in the wall at Castle Croft fronting onto Watling Street is welcomed. This wall makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and the protection against demolition provided by Conservation Area status is needed because, somewhat incongruously, this small section of the north side of Watling Street is not within the Scheduled Monument site.

The Plan as a whole would benefit from proof-reading to correct spellings, typos and punctuation errors etc. e.g. page 48 “*historic assets that are cleverly worthy of protection*”; page 25 “*The major issue is to carefully manage any future development where it would be potentially crowd and physically impact on the value of the Roman remains and the character of the listed buildings*”; and the two paragraphs on page 28 which are an exact repetition of text on page 18.

Section 2 – Management Plan

Action 1 The boundary of the current Conservation Area should remain unchanged.

1. There is no reason to include the additional areas proposed:
 - a. The houses at The Butts were built in the 1920’s and 1950’s and have little (if any) historic merit. They are not part of the Scheduled Monument site and have little impact on views or the main streetscene. Inclusion of these properties within the Conservation Area would impose unjustifiable and unnecessary planning restrictions on them by removal of certain permitted development rights, and with the additional burdens of requiring formal consent for any pruning or felling of trees etc.
 - b. The land to the north of Castle Croft is an open field and it is inconsistent to propose adding this to the Conservation Area when elsewhere fields are proposed to be removed from the Conservation Area.
 - c. The land to West of Wall Lane is mainly an undistinguished row of early 20th century terraced housing so there is little reason to add this to the Conservation Area. The existing Conservation Area boundary along Wall Lane provides a far more logical and clearly-defined boundary.

2. There is no reason to remove any areas from the current Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area provides a much needed and additional layer of protection against development, over and above that afforded by Scheduled Monument designation or Green Belt. The boundary of a Scheduled Monument can potentially be changed by English Heritage and so is not within local planning control. As regards Green Belt, the experience within Lichfield District is that it only protects land from small-scale development such as single dwellings or home extensions. When major development is proposed (such as 1,500 new houses on land bordering Wall to the south of Lichfield), then land is simply removed from Green Belt. Nor does existing Green Belt provide protection against large-scale commercial development. For example, on land north of Wall Island a major business park and its forthcoming extension have been granted consent, even though in full Green Belt and despite any policy for development of this site appearing in the Local Plan. Previously the Wyevale Garden Centre (including its many non-garden retail units) was granted consent just south of Wall Island, even though in confirmed Green Belt.

It should also be noted that under the National Planning Policy Framework, new agricultural buildings, which may be both large and unsightly, are not classed as “inappropriate development” within the Green Belt. The Conservation Area designation is therefore a key factor in the control of such developments in the proximity of Wall village which might otherwise have a detrimental effect on the historic character of the village or the views from it.

Action 2 and Action 3 It is noted that an Article 4 direction (removing certain permitted development rights) can only apply to residential properties, and that these are listed in Appendix A. The list in Appendix A should not therefore include Wall Village Hall as it is not a residential property. Consideration should also be given as to whether The Trooper Inn would qualify as a ‘residential’ property, as it is also listed in Appendix A.

Action 4 The Council welcomes the list of buildings for ‘local listing’ given in Appendix B but the terminology of “local listing” is confusing with formal designation of Listed Buildings.

Action 5 Action 5b which is to “review and if necessary modify the management proposals” is too vague, particularly since the current Conservation Area has not been reviewed for over 40 years. This action point should therefore set out the frequency and timescale for future reviews.

Action 6 states that, “The Council will ensure that all proposed advertisements accord with policy set out in the emerging Local Plan”. The Local Plan was adopted by Lichfield District Council in February 2015, so the word “emerging” should be deleted.

Action 7 As for Action 6, the reference should be to the Local Plan which has already been adopted, and not the “emerging Local Plan”.

Action 8 Para 2.3.1 on page 40 refers to “works to historic buildings within Drayton Bassett Conservation Area” and appears to have been ‘cut and pasted’ from some other Conservation Area Plan. It would be helpful if the Wall Conservation Area Plan referred only to Wall and not to any other villages in the District.

In order not to unduly raise expectations of the grant funding which owners of properties within the Conservation Area can apply for, it would be useful to set out in Action 8 the level of such funding which is available annually within the District.

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