

# **WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS**

### **Phase 1**

## **Project Brief - July 2011**

### **Introduction**

A conservation area is an area that has been awarded protection by the local planning authority (LPA) and/or English Heritage in order to ensure that its natural features, including buildings and landscape and its cultural history are protected. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 69 (1) states that “every local planning authority (a) shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance...”.

Currently there are 45 conservation areas (CA) in Waverley. The majority were designated in the 1970 – 80s and some have since been extended. However, it is not enough for a LPA to just designate an area as a conservation area, Section 71 of the same act explains that “it shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas”. PPS 5 and the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also detail the importance of protecting heritage assets.

It is therefore considered pertinent for Waverley to undertake Conservation Area Appraisals (CAA) with the aim to appraise the character of each conservation area; identify the qualities which should be preserved and enhanced, and produce a management plan to include proposals for enhancement. In other words, CAAs are about understanding what is important about these particular areas, what gives them their local distinctiveness and why we need protection in those areas. There will be an opportunity to review the CA boundaries as part of the process.

There are 45 CAs in Waverley; four have an adopted CAA (Bramley, Wrecclesham, Farnham Town Centre and Chiddingfold). Undertaking 41 CAAs within Waverley will take a significant period of time and it would be impossible to undertake all of them in one go, so it is considered appropriate to identify a programme for undertaking this work. This report aims to develop this programme.

CAAs are identified as a Planning Services priority in the 2011/12 Service Plan (PS/09).

# **The Conservation Area Review**

There are 3 phases to the CA review:

- Phase 1 - Identifying the programme for undertaking the CAAs,
- Phase 2 - Undertaking the CAAs,
- Phase 3 - Implementation of management plans and environmental enhancement schemes.

CAAs will not only fulfil the Council's obligations to Planning legislation and it's stakeholders by ensuring the protection and preservation of the built environment, but also by involving the community in the process.

The CAA documents will be used to inform the planning process; they can offer guidance and advice to homeowners, developers, parish and town councils as well as being a "material consideration" in planning applications. CAAs can also aid the Local Development Framework and strategic policy making by developing a management strategy for all 45 conservation areas.

Guidance has been produced by English Heritage in the form of the 2011 "Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management" to aid the development of CAAs. In addition there are best practice examples from other local authorities, which will assist in putting together a strategy and framework.

## **Phase 1 – Identification of Programme of CAAs**

Undertaking 41 CAAs within Waverley will take a significant period of time and it would be impossible to undertake all of them in one go. Therefore a robust methodology of assessment has been developed to prioritise the order in which the CAAs should be commenced. The methodology has been devised to be fair, transparent and recognise that some CAs are under significantly more pressure than others and therefore are in need of being appraised more urgently.

### **Methodology**

In October 2001, Executive endorsed a project brief for CAA's which included a scoring matrix. Since that time new advice and guidance has been published by English Heritage, although the principle of using a scoring matrix is still relevant. Given the new guidance, and time elapsed since 2001, it is considered pertinent to update the scoring system. The purpose of the scoring system is not to compare sites directly with each other, but to independently score each site against the established criteria.

Six criteria have been identified to be used in the scoring matrix and will be assessed either in the field or through a desk top study. These tests are outlined below:

<b>Test</b>	<b>Field/Desk Study</b>
Quality of the public realm/ street scene	Field
Quality of the built form	Field
Traffic	Field
Development pressure	Desk
Is there a Village Design Statement?	Desk
Are there additional safeguards in place such as AGLV, AONB and Green Belt?	Desk

Each of the 41 CAs were visited as part of the project to obtain accurate first hand information about the area. These visits were undertaken between January 2011 and April 2011. A decision was taken early in the process to exclude those CAs which already benefit from a CAA – there may be a need to review these in the future, but the priority here is to ensure those without a CAA are considered as a matter of urgency.

## **Criteria**

Each criterion is set out below and includes a description of how they are assessed and scored.

### **Quality of Public Realm & Street scene**

This refers to the pavements, public squares, highways and street furniture. Is it in keeping with the conservation area or are improvements needed? Improvements could be removing “street clutter”, such as signs, guard rails and advertising boards, improving public space, and reinstating historic paving such as iron stone, which has had tarmac placed on top. There could also be loss of boundary walls, fences and hedges.

A high quality public realm is one that has been maintained and compliments its surroundings, however a poor public realm generally shows a lack of maintenance and inappropriate materials/detailing that does not compliment the surroundings.

Scoring:        0 = quality of public realm excellent  
                       5 = quality of public realm poor

### **Quality of built form**

Some buildings in conservation areas may need redecoration or repair due to age, land use or lack of understanding by owners of the building. This can also refer to buildings that have been neglected such as unoccupied shops,

unsightly satellite dishes, unsympathetic replacement doors and windows, etc. In the worst case scenario this may include listed buildings on the buildings at risk register.

If a number of buildings in the conservation area are in poor repair, the area is likely to score high, if the standard is good, it would score low.

Scoring:        0 = quality of built form excellent  
                     5 = quality of built form poor

### **Traffic**

This refers to busy roads; one-way systems, traffic calming and areas where traffic dominates. Is it to the detriment of the conservation area?

Scoring:        0 = Traffic not an issue  
                     5 = Traffic is a problem.

### **Development Pressure**

Certain CAs will have more development pressure than others due to demand for housing or other uses. The level of planning applications made can also help to quantify this. A desk top survey of adverts for planning permission in conservation areas was undertaken to establish a historical record of planning applications over the past two years (from June 2009 – April 2011). Those areas with a greater number of planning applications scored higher in terms of development pressure. In order to ensure that the desk study was not an unusual record of development pressure, the Area Team Managers were consulted to get their input on this matter.

Other policy constraints (including AGLV, AONB, SPA and Green Belt) are likely to reduce the development pressure on an area.

Scoring:        0 = Low Development Pressure  
                     5 = High Development Pressure.

### **Policy Constraints**

There are a number of specific policy constraints that add additional controls throughout Waverley. These are highlighted within the Local Plan.

AGLV - is a policy designating an area as an Area of Great Landscape Value and therefore this has implications (material considerations) on any planning applications.

AONB - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt is a policy and land use designation used to retain areas of largely undeveloped, wild, or agricultural land surrounding or neighbouring urban areas (but not always);

Green Belt -

All three policy constraints have a significant impact on the ability to develop within a specific area and would therefore affect future development.

Scoring:        No constraint = 5  
                    Part constraint = 3  
                    Constraint = 0

### **Village Design Statements**

Village design statements are material considerations for use when determining planning applications. They afford less weight than those policy constraints already discussed. Therefore the scoring system has been amended to reflect this difference.

Scoring:        No village design statement = 3  
                    Village Design Statement = 0

The criteria and scoring matrix was tested after 5 CAs were examined to ensure that the methodology was robust. This was repeated throughout the process to confirm that the scoring was fair and transparent.

A comments sheet was produced for each CA to provide an audit trail of the scoring system. These can be found in Appendix 2.

## **Results**

The process has identified that the CAs within the centre of the three main settlements (Cranleigh, Godalming and Haslemere) obtained the highest scores (around 27). This is unsurprising given that these settlements have larger conservation areas, higher development pressure, more users and subsequently greater “wear and tear” by the public. It is therefore concluded that CAA’s should be undertaken in these areas ahead of other CAs.

The lowest scores were for Frensham and Westbrook Green, Elstead. Both of these CA’s are full of character, are within smaller settlements, off of the main highway and suffer less wear and tear. It is important to note that they are also protected by policies such as Green Belt, AONB and AGLV and both have an adopted Village Design Statement. In addition development pressure in these areas is considered to be low. Therefore it was concluded that the priority for Conservation Area Appraisals in these areas is also low.

## Next Steps

Phase 1 has been completed and a matrix prioritising the CA developed (see Appendix 1). Godalming Town Centre CA has the highest score (28.5) and is most in need of a CAA. It would therefore be advantageous to commence a CAA as part of phase 2 within 2011/12. However, it has been some time since Waverley has undertaken a CAA (the last being in 2007), and new guidance has been published by English Heritage (Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management). It is therefore considered prudent to undertake a pilot CAA in order to set out, test and review the methodology (including public consultation), in a smaller CA (with a lower score) before rolling it out.

It is therefore concluded that the first CAA to be undertaken as part of phase 2 should be Wheeler Street, Witley (score 24) subject to the agreement of Witley Parish Council. Whilst this has a high score, it is a relatively compact CA which will enable the methodology to be easily tested and reviewed. A draft project plan is attached at Appendix 2.

It is expected that CAAs will be adopted by Waverley as material planning considerations. Key stakeholders (including parish and Town Councils, Amenity Societies and residents) will be involved in their preparation, including a formal six week consultation. This will reinforce that the ownership and responsibility of CAAs falls wider than with the Borough Council.

Following the successful adoption of Wheeler Street, Witley CAA, the methodology can then be rolled out to the Godalming Town Centre CA with early in 2012/13. However, it is important to note that the methodology is likely to change over time to be responsive to the CA being appraised.

Longer term it is suggested that at least two CAA be undertaken each year, more if the CAAs are smaller. The suggested five year programme is shown below:

Table 1: Proposed five year rolling programme for commencement of CAA

Conservation Area	Score	Year CAA to be commenced
Wheeler Street, Witley	24	2011/12
Godalming Town Centre	28.5	2012/13
Milford	23	2012/13
Haslemere	28	2013/14
Godalming Crownpits	26.5	2013/14
Cranleigh Centre	27	2014/15
Witley	25	2014/15
Godalming Ockford Road	28.5	2015/16
Alfold	24.5	2015/16

A further Executive report will then be presented in 2015/16 to agree the programme for the following five years.

Phase 3 will implement the management action plans identified as part of the CAA and will be ongoing once the CAA has been adopted. Currently a management plan is being developed for the Farnham Town Centre Conservation Area as a separate document to the CAA (completed in 2005). The expectation is that this will begin to be implemented in 2012.

### Conservation Area Appraisal Scoring Matrix

The purpose of this scoring sheet is to prioritise the 45 conservation areas in Waverley. 41 are listed here as 4 CAAs have already taken place.

Conservation Area	Quality of Public Realm & Street Scene	Quality of Built Form	Traffic	Development Pressure	AGLV	AONB	Green Belt	Design Statement	Total
Godalming	1.5	2	2	5	5	5	5	3	28.5
Godalming Ockford Road	2.5	2.5	3	2	5	5	5	3	28
Haslemere	3	2	4	4	5	5	5	0	28
Cranleigh	2	2	4	4	5	5	5	0	27
Godalming Crownpits	1.5	2	2	3	5	5	5	3	26.5
Witley	3	3	4	2	5	5	0	3	25
Alfold	1.5	2	1	2	5	5	5	3	24.5
Wheeler Street, Witley	3	2	4	2	5	5	0	3	24
Milford	2	3	3	2	5	5	0	3	23
Ewhurst Green	1.5	1	1.5	0	5	5	5	3	22
Haslemere Spring Head	1	1	3	1	5	5	5	0	21
Haslemere River Wey	1	2	2	1	5	5	5	0	21
Farnham Old Church Lane	1	1	1	2	5	5	5	0	20
Farnham Great Austins	1	1	1	2	5	5	5	0	20
Godalming Navigations	1	1	1	1	5	5	3	3	20
Birtley Green	3	2.5	4	0	0	5	0	3	17.5
Wonersh	1	1	3	2	5	5	0	0	17



Conservation Area	Quality of Public Realm & Street Scene	Quality of Built Form	Traffic	Development Pressure	AGLV	AONB	Green Belt	Design Statement	Total
Dunsfold	1	1.5	1.5	2	0	5	5	0	16
Dunsfold Church	2	1.5	2	0	0	5	5	0	15.5
Munstead	2.5	1.5	3	0	0	5	0	3	15
Binscombe	1.5	2	1.5	0	0	5	0	3	13
Shamley Green	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	3	10
Ewhurst	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	3	10
Hambledon A and B	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	3	9
Tilford	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	3	8
Waverley Abbey, Farnham	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	3	8
Blackheath	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	7
Bowlhead Green Thursley	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	7
Hascombe	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	7
Millbridge, Frensham	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	7
Elstead	2	1.5	2	1	0	0	0	0	6.5
Thorncombe Street	1.5	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	6.5
Peperharrow	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	6
Sandhills Witley	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	3	6
Shackleford	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	6
Thursley	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	5
Frensham	1	1.5	1	1	0	0	0	0	4.5
Westbrook Green, Elstead	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	4

**Wheeler Street, Witley  
Conservation Area Appraisal (project plan)**

Project	Lead	PDF	Service Plan Priority	Item	Date	Completion Date
Wheeler Street, Witley Conservation Area Appraisal	Colin Bannon	*	PS/09	Research: - requirements of CAA - EH guidance - NPPF/PPS5 - Template/main headings - Other LPA CAA examples (best practice)	Prior to 26/9/11	<b>17-Apr-12</b>
				- Initial site visit - Photographic survey - General field work -History of CAA (when designated, why, original committee report if available)	From 26/9/11	
				- Make contact with Parish Council, The Godalming Trust (if they cover the area), Local Members - bring together work and produce first draft	After 4/10/11	
				Final draft required	23/11/11	
				CMT deadline (for consultation)	28/11/2011	
				CMT (for consultation)	30/11/2011	
				Community O&S deadline (to consult members formally)	19/12/2011	

Project	Lead	PDF	Service Plan Priority	Item	Date	Completion Date
				Executive (for consultation)	10/01/2012	<b>17-Apr-12</b>
				Consultation Starts	13/01/2012	
				Start consultation statement		
				Community O&S (to consult members)	16/01/2012	
				Consultation closes	24/02/2012	
				Update document, complete consultation statement, complete adoption report	05/03/2012	
				Report sign off	5/3 - 8/3/2012	
				Executive deadline (for adoption)	08/03/2012	
				Executive (for adoption)	27/03/2012	
				Full Council (for adoption)	17/04/2012	

Committees\executive\2011-12\011111\003a Annexe 1, conservation phase1