

# CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS FOR ALMELEY, WEOBLEY AND AND HAMPTON PARK

**Report By: Head of Planning Services**

## Wards Affected:

Backbury, Castle and Golden Cross with Weobley

## Purpose

1. To recommend views are sought on the issues raised through the Conservation Area appraisals for Almeley, Weobley and Hampton Park.

## Financial Implications

2. Minor costs for printing and publicity to be met from existing budgets.

## Background

3. Planning Committee, 21<sup>st</sup> April 2006, recommended a programme for the preparation of appraisals and management proposals for 16 conservation areas. The first three appraisals were to be for Hampton Park, Almeley and Weobley to be prepared by the end of June.
4. Analysis work for all three conservation areas is complete. However at the time of publishing this report drafting of the appraisals documents had only been completed for Hampton Park and Almeley. That for Weobley should be finished for the end of the month.
5. The major part of the documents comprise factual appraisals of the particular character and appearance of the conservation areas, together in some instances with areas beyond where consideration might be given to extending boundaries.
6. The form and content of the appraisals will follow, to a large extent, guidance prepared by English Heritage.
7. The Cabinet Member for the Environment will be asked to confirm the final content of the appraisal documents and, more particularly, the issues raised through the appraisals. It is then intended that consultations upon the issues raised at this stage should be undertaken. These may subsequently influence the management proposals that will form part of the next stage of work in relation to the particular conservation areas.
8. The issues identified for these three conservation areas at this stage fall into three categories:
  - Changes to boundaries to include further or exclude areas or to enable better definition of boundaries on the ground.

- Identification of those non-Listed Buildings that may be of local interest, and those important buildings that appear to be 'at risk' through decay/obsolescence/being unoccupied.
- Other generally visible problems that may need to be addressed at some stage if the character and appearance of the particular area is to be conserved or enhanced.

These are summarised for each conservation area below.

9. Hampton Park Conservation Area:

- **Boundary Issues –**

Large-scale housing developments have taken place since the designation in 1969 and are not in keeping with the original large Victorian villas that were the core of the area. These do not contribute to the special character and appearance of the area. It is suggested therefore that they be removed so that the conservation area retains the special coherent architectural character that formed the basis for its designation.

However, it is considered that a number of Villas on the east side of Vineyard Road, but outside the Conservation Area, have an interesting character that has affinity to it. It is suggested that they be included within the Conservation Area.

- **Buildings Issues –**

It is suggested that the following be identified as Buildings of Local Interest:

- The Salmon Inn A late Georgian house which seems to have been re-fronted. Brick built 3 storey symmetrical with later extensions and coach house.
- Llanwye St Margaret's Rd A substantial Elizabethan style house brick built 2 storey.
- 15 St Margaret's Rd Tall Gothic house 2 storey and attic stone steep tiled roofs.
- Coach house to 4 St Margaret's Rd. 2 storey brick built with banding interesting roof with ornate louvered vent above.
- The Clyst Vineyard Rd Italianate Villa 2 storey with tower.
- 26/28 Hampton Park Rd Possible early core but redeveloped in 1862 in a gothic style with steeply pitched roofs. 2 storey highly detailed features.
- 41 Hampton Park Rd very grand 3 storey Italianate Villa brick and stucco ornate veranda.
- Hampton Grange Hampton Park Rd Half timbered house brick ground floor Edwardian domestic revival style 2 storey designed by Nicholson and Hartree for Mr Hewitt who was the owner of the nearby tile works. There is number of later extensions.
- 59 Hampton Park Rd 1903 Prominent villa 3 storey symmetrical by WW Robinson. Timber framing in apex of bay window gables steeply pitched roofs brick.

- **Other Issues –**

Within the villa area subdivisions of plots and the loss of particular features such as windows, doors, external materials, boundary features are important and may need to be protected.

The future of the limited number of open spaces within the conservation area is unclear. Many of the villa properties on the southern side of Hampton Park Road have long undeveloped gardens that extend down towards the River Wye. Their character is important to the settings of the properties and area as a whole.

There are a number of features within this conservation area, which could be enhanced with some improvement works. Work could be undertaken to improve the boundary walls particularly along Hampton Park Road. This could result in the stabilisation of the brickwork and possibly the restoration of the iron railings. Further works could be undertaken to introduce a more sensitive street lighting scheme and the removal of the current concrete and metal conventional lighting that is currently within the conservation area. Planting of additional hedging could fill in the gaps, which are currently experienced particularly close to a number of areas of new housing. The surface treatments are not in keeping with the historic buildings of the area and in the long term it would be beneficial if these were upgraded particularly between St. Margaret's Road and Halbroom Close. It may also be necessary to plant new specimen trees so that the area can keep these important features in the long term.

10. Almeley Conservation Area:

- **Boundary Issues –**

i) Spearmarsh Common, in the eastern part of the village, is an important open space today. The common was a significant component of the medieval farming system. Encroachment of the common by cottages and gardens probably took place during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries, and the pattern of encroachment is still evident today in the layout of houses and gardens, and paddocks. A number of 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> Century cottages occupy original plots. It is suggested that consideration be given to including this part of the village in the conservation area.

ii) In the southern part of the conservation area, the boundary:

- crosses a field to the east of the Eardisley Road
- cuts through Bridge Farm
- crosses a field south of The Whittern Farm.

It is suggested that the boundary here be re-aligned to follow recognisable boundaries without any significant loss to the conservation area.

iii) On the north side of the village a small part of a housing development encroaches onto the conservation area. This development post-dates the designation of the conservation area in 1987. It is suggested that consideration be given to re-aligning the boundary to exclude this small area of modern housing, which is not in character with the conservation area. At this time, consideration should be given to including in the conservation the Victorian coach house of the Old Vicarage.

iv) In the northern part of the conservation area is the hamlet of Almeley Wootton, a shrunken medieval settlement. It is suggested that consideration be given to re-aligning the boundary of the conservation area to include Green Common, and The Green house and water pump.

v) The boundary in the vicinity of the Bell Public House was defined before the houses at Bells Orchard were built. There is some confusion over the actual alignment of the boundary at this point. The opportunity should be taken to clarify the boundary in the vicinity of Bells Orchard, to include the Bells Public House and all its curtilage, and to follow a realistic and rational boundary that is visible on the ground.

- **Buildings Issues–**

It is suggested that the following be identified as Buildings of Local Interest:

- The Whittern Farm House
- Church House
- The Old Shop
- Manor Cottage
- The Bells Inn
- Railway Station (disused), platform and bridge piers
- Batch Cottage, Batch Dingle
- Ross Cottage, Batch Dingle
- Glen Cottage, Almeley Wootton
- Lady Lift Villa, Almeley Wootton
- Methodist Chapel (disused), Almeley Wootton

The following has been identified as a Building at Risk

- Summer House (Grade II), Almeley Wootton

The building appears structurally sound and is in fair condition but shows some signs of a lack of general maintenance (paintwork).

- **Other Issues –**

The primary school and the village hall located on the south side of Spearmarsh Common, both attract large numbers of vehicles as a result of parents picking up their children and people attending functions. Consideration might be given to mitigating the impact through seeking parking facilities that do not detract from the character of the area.

11. Weobley Conservation Area:

- **Boundary Issues –**

i) At several locations the conservation area boundary does not follow marked or recognisable boundaries:

- crosses a field to the north-east of Parkfields where a former field boundary has been removed
- crosses several fields on the west side of the conservation area

It is suggested that at these locations the boundary should be realigned to follow recognisable boundaries, such as field boundaries or public footpaths, without any significant loss to the conservation area.

ii) The development of new estates on the east side of the village post-dates the designation of the conservation area in 1977. It is proposed that these developments do not contribute to the character of the conservation area, and it is suggested that consideration be given to re-aligning the boundary to exclude these areas of modern housing.

- **Buildings Issues –**

It is suggested that the following be identified as Buildings of Local Interest:

- Methodist Chapel, redbrick with stone dressings, built 1861, Hereford Road
- Barn, timber-framed and stone, adjoining Oak View, Hereford Road
- Barn, timber-framed and stone, timber frame exposed on west elevation, at rear of The Hayloft, Gadbridge Road
- Stone wall, re-used masonry that may be derived from the fabric of Weobley castle, aligned north-south along west side of open space on north side of the castle.

- **Other Issues –**

Views into the conservation area from the A4112 offer a sweeping panorama of the historic landscape. When looking south across the Newbridge Brook meadows towards the parish church, the timber-framed buildings on rising ground beyond, and the distant wooded uplands of Garnstone, an insight is gained to the outstanding character of the area.

This view is potentially at risk. Presently, trees and hedges screen to some extent the large abattoir building with a red roof that is located near the north-west corner of the conservation area, and this may improve as the trees mature. Additional planting should be considered if further development is planned on or around the small industrial area.

In addition a number of mature trees in the parkland setting of Garnstone (southern part of the conservation area) may be at risk due to their advanced age. It is suggested that additional planting be promoted.

12. It is proposed that the above issues are raised within the appraisal documents. Appendices 1 and 2 to this report comprise the appraisal scripts for Hampton Park and Almeley Conservation Areas. Examples of the plans that will accompany them will be shown at the Planning Committee.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the Cabinet Member (Environment) be advised to consult upon the appraisals for Hampton Park, Almeley and Weobley Conservation Areas and particularly the issues raised in association with these.**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Report to Planning Committee dated 21<sup>st</sup> april 2006 entitled 'Programme for the Review of Conservation Areas'.
- Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals – English Heritage et al.