

## **CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS FOR ROSS ON WYE, MORDIFORD, DILWYN, AYLESTON HILL**

Report By: Head of Planning Services

### **Wards Affected:**

Ross on Wye, Backbury, Aylestone and Golden Cross with Weobley

### **Purpose**

1. To recommend these draft conservation area appraisals to the Cabinet Member for the Environment for initial consultation with relevant parties.

### **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 character appraisals and management proposals for 16 conservation areas. The first three appraisals, which have been approved for initial consultation, were Hampton Park, Almeley and Weobley, and four more have now been completed.
4. This latest batch, comprise Ross on Wye, Mordiford, Aylestone Hill, and Dilwyn. The major part of these documents comprises factual appraisals of the special architectural and historic character and appearance of each conservation area, together with their setting.
5. The form and content of the appraisals follows guidance recommended by English Heritage and endorsed by the Government.
6. Only areas that have special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which the Council considers is desirable to preserve or enhance should be designated as conservation areas. The appraisals have identified areas for exclusion and inclusion. Criteria forming the basis for determining such are set out in UDP policy HBA5.
7. The implications arising from designation are that the Council is required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of the conservation area when determining planning applications. Applications have to be advertised and the Council must take account of material comments received. Conservation area consent for the demolition of buildings is required and additional planning controls apply which would normally be

permitted in other areas. These primarily relate to the size of freestanding buildings that require planning permission, the size of extensions the type of external cladding, insertion of dormer windows and satellite dishes. Proposed work on all trees require prior notice to the Council to enable them to consider the desirability of serving a tree preservation order.

8. The Cabinet Member for the Environment will be asked to confirm the appraisal documents including issues. It is intended that some consultation upon the draft appraisals and issues will be undertaken although formal comments will be sought at a later stage when management proposals have been developed. The final document for adoption will be prepared for Council approval having regard to all material comments being taken into account.
9. The issues identified for these four conservation areas at this stage fall into three categories:
  - Features such as non-listed buildings that significantly contribute to the area because of their local architectural or historic interest.
  - Features which detract from the special interest of the area such as
    - i. Historic buildings in poor condition building.
    - ii. Inappropriate alterations to historic buildings such as modern windows.
    - iii. Modern buildings that do not relate to the character of the area.
    - iv. Open gaps where street enclosure is desirable.
    - v. Untidy land.
    - vi. Street clutter and signage.
  - Changes to the conservation area boundaries
    - i. To include areas that are considered to contribute to the special historic or architectural character of the area
    - ii. Rationalisation of boundaries so that the boundaries relate to defined edges of property curtilages.
    - iii. Exclusion of significant areas which are considered to detract from the special character and appearance of the conservation area.
10. The full detailed text for each conservation area is included in a number of Appendices to this report and the principal features are summarised below. A selection of diagrammatic plans will be displayed at the committee meeting.

**Ross on Wye Conservation Area**

11. The conservation area was designated in 1970 and extended in 1976. Evolving from prehistoric times it developed rapidly during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century as a crossing point on the River Wye linking to, Gloucester, Hereford and South Wales. It became an ecclesiastical centre, market place, industrial area and port. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century it had developed as a tourist centre with the railway bringing further expansion during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today it is a busy commercial town, but it still clearly reveals its historic origins of a medieval street plan and burgage plots.
12. The older part of the town occupies the summit and north-facing promontory overlooking the flood plain of the River Wye. Its general character is defined by its location on a broad meander of the River Wye. On the south side of the flood plain the spire of the parish church and the gables of the Royal Hotel rise dramatically above the exposed red – brown sandstone give the impression of a medieval citadel high above the river.
13. Heritage assets include 4 Scheduled Ancient Monuments 158 Listed Buildings including 3 grade 1 and 8 grade II\*. In excess of forty buildings are identified in the appraisal as having local interest, thus making a positive contribution to the special character of the conservation area. These include Perricks Almshouse, Old Gloucester Road; Baptist Church, Broad Street; Chase Hotel, Chase Road; St. Josephs Convent, Walford Road and the Cricket pavilion off Wilton Road. Some of these may be worthy of listing in their own right, particularly where they predate 1850. There are nine groups of tree preservation orders
14. Because of the complexity of the area five areas of distinctive architectural or historic character are defined and for each of these detailed assessments are made. They are
  - Ross Historic core
  - Northern and Eastern Area
  - Southern Area
  - Wilton
  - River Wye Floodplain
15. Positive areas and features include
  - Eight groups of buildings such as Mill Brock Cottages and nos 2-8 Kryle Street.
  - Nine shop fronts including 48 High Street and no 18 Gloucester Road
  - Eight boundary walls including Rope walk and Royale parade

- Other significant streetscape features include the extensive cobbled roadbed with stone kerbs off Copse Cross Street., cast iron rainwater channels , cellar covers and gates and a wall mounted street signs.

16. Neutral and Intrusive features are identified as:

- Six features were found to either not to be contributing or detracting from its special character. These included 20<sup>th</sup> century residential areas in the northern part of the conservation area and southeast corner in the rear grounds of Chase Hotel. Two listed buildings detracted from the area because of their unoccupied appearance.
- Some 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial and retail buildings, particularly those within the historic core, fit uncomfortably within the street scene by virtue of their overall form or because of inappropriate shop fronts and advertisement signage. Outside this area other features that detract from the area are upvc replacement windows, particularly in unlisted residential buildings.

17 Potential boundary changes:

Inclusions

- Gloucester Road (south side) group of 19<sup>th</sup> century houses
- Eastfield Street (west side) to include Waynefleet.
- Five ways (Brookend) to include piers of the dismantled railway, 19<sup>th</sup> century dwellings and industrial buildings in Over Ross Street.

Exclusions

- High-density 20<sup>th</sup> century housing area in northern part of conservation area.
- High density housing area to the south east of Chase Hotel.
- Realignment of the boundary in the southwest along field boundaries, excluding the modern primary school and grounds. This would also result in the removal of the partially restored timber framed building at Cleeve. It is considered that this rural building is not an integral part of the conservation area.
- In Wilton the petrol filling station is considered to make no contribution to the conservation area and should therefore be excluded.

**Mordiford Conservation Area**

18. The former South Herefordshire District Council designated Mordiford conservation area in 1976. Since Roman times it has been an important crossing point of the River Lugg on the Hereford to Gloucester road. The present stone bridge at Mordiford dates to the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, but before then a ford existed at this location. It is likely that a small settlement existed on this river crossing since at least Saxon times. A number of 17<sup>th</sup> Century timber-framed buildings are located along the Pentaloe valley, just above the flood plain. These include Brook House at the west end, and the Moon Inn further east at the junction of the Fownhope road and the Woolhope road. These buildings probably indicate the extent of the linear medieval settlement.
19. There has been a mill on the Pentaloe Brook since at least medieval times. The extant building, a disused corn mill, is located on the south side of the brook and is dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Sufton Court was built in the northern part of the conservation area by James Hereford in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The house replaced an older building to the north of the conservation area, now known as Old Sufton. A group of stone-built dwellings located on the south side of the brook, east of the mill, may also be of 18<sup>th</sup> Century date. A further group of 18<sup>th</sup> Century stone cottages is also located further east in the Pentaloe valley, just outside the conservation area.
20. There are several buildings of 19<sup>th</sup> Century date in Mordiford. The most prominent is the primary school on the Prior's Frome Road. During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the construction of new houses was undertaken outside the boundaries of the conservation area, mainly to the east along the Pentaloe valley.

The general character of Mordiford Conservation Area is defined by its location on the western edge of the wooded uplands of the Woolhope Dome overlooking the broad floodplain of the River Lugg. The wooded hills to the east of the conservation area provide a dramatic backdrop in contrast to the extensive arable plain to the west. Between these two extremes, the landscaped park and permanent grasslands of Sufton Court act as a transitional zone between 'wild nature' and agriculture. Open space accounts for 75% of the conservation area and this includes the Sufton landscaped park and the flood plain of the River Lugg. However the focus of the conservation area is the small settlement of Mordiford.

21. Heritage assets which are the key contributors to the conservation areas special character include the two Scheduled Ancient Monuments of the Mordiford Bridge and the church yard cross; four grade II\* listed buildings including the Church of the Holy Rood and Sufton Court; 10 grade II buildings including The Moon Inn, Old Post Office, lock on the river Lugg and the registered park and garden of Sutton Court. The appraisal identifies nine buildings of local interest which contribute to

the special architectural and historic character of the area. They include Bridge House, Meadow Sweet and Wallflower Row.

22. Three areas of distinctive historic or architectural character are defined in the appraisal. They are:

- Mordiford settlement
- Sufton Court landscaped park
- The Lugg Valley

23. Positive areas and features include:

- On the east side of Mordiford Bridge: a group of buildings that include the Parish Church, Bridge House, and the bridge itself with mature trees, set against the backdrop of a wooden hillside.
- On the south side of the conservation area: Garland Farm, a group of farm buildings laid out in traditional courtyard plan, including stone, brick and steel-framed structures. This is a working farm with a long history that has adapted to changes in farming practices, architecture and technology.
- Walls of sandstone rubble with vertical ('cock and hen') coping stones
- Fretted and decorative bargeboards fitted to gable ends, porches and dormers.(for example at Meadow Street and Forge House)
- Mature trees

24. Neutral and Intrusive features are identified:

Five features detract from the character of the area. These include the Hereford to Ross-on-Wye road severing the settlement, representing rapid movement through the historic area, the clutter of road signs at the junction of Priory Frome Road and Fownhope Road; the high brick wall near Wallflower Row which is uncharacteristic of the predominant stone rubble walls of the area; the condition of the Listed lock on the River Lugg and the disused listed mill.

25. Potential boundary changes and other issues:

#### Inclusions

- At several locations the boundary is unmarked or obscure and needs to be realigned to follow recognisable field boundaries

such as on the northwest side where the boundary crosses the floodplain

- The Rock including the Listed Woodshot Cottage and group of five unlisted 18<sup>th</sup> century cottages.

### Issues

- Measures should be considered to minimise the impact of the B4224.
- Improvements to the appearance of a few buildings would enhance the character of the conservation area.
- The lock on the Lugg is at risk and sensitive repairs are necessary.

### **Dilwyn Conservation Area**

26. The former Leominster District Council designated Dilwyn Conservation Area in 1974. It includes the village of Dilwyn and the rural area that immediately surrounds the village on the north, east and west sides. The settlement dates to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, with the Church and castleworks following a century later. Today, a significant number of timber-framed buildings dating to between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century survive, and continue to be used as domestic dwellings. Remodelling in the Georgian fashion of earlier timber-framed buildings with brick and render took place during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century more dwellings and institutional buildings were constructed and with improved drainage the meadow land became arable. Rapid residential growth of the village took place in the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
27. Heritage assets which are key contributors to the special character of the conservation area include the Grade I Listed building of the Church of St Mary and fourteen Grade II buildings or structures including Dilwyn VC school, Wren Cottage and Lynwood, Karen Court, and one Scheduled Monument. Ten unlisted buildings are identified as buildings of local interest making a significant contribution to the historic character. These include Perrymead – 16 to 17<sup>th</sup> timber framed cottages, the Old Parsonage and Castle Barn. The moated mound, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is deemed to be at risk from the residential development built partially over it.
28. The village of Dilwyn is located on a gentle south-facing slope on the edge of the valley of the Stretford Brook and is surrounded by arable and grazing land. Its character is defined to a great extent by a cluster of 17<sup>th</sup> century timber framed buildings centred on a village green, set within in a timeless agricultural landscape.
29. Positive areas and features include:

- The historic core of the village, with its prominent church, cluster of timber-framed buildings, and well-kept gardens and village green;
- Townsend House and ancillary buildings, the ha-ha and park-like landscape to the south.

30. Neutral and Intrusive Features include:

- At the crossroads in the centre of the village, the small triangular 'green' has acquired highway clutter which detracts from its rural character. Further, traffic control systems in the form of white lines and 'Give Way' signs painted on the carriageway surrounding the green tend to reduce it to simply a road junction;
- On the west side of the conservation area the A4122 bypass;
- In the south-western part of the conservation area (Barn Close, Orchard Close): an area of recent (20<sup>th</sup> Century) residential development. The gardens of several houses encroach on the moated mound, a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- In the eastern part of the conservation area (Probert Close, The Glebelands, Dilwyn Common road) are areas of recent (20<sup>th</sup> Century) residential development.

31. In terms of plan form, architectural design, building materials and site density, the residential developments listed above are similar to recent planned residential developments in many other areas.

32. Potential boundary changes include:

Exclusions

It is proposed that the following landscape areas on the periphery of the conservation area should be excluded since they do not form an integral part of the historic built environment.

- On the west side of the conservation area: an area west of the A4112 bypass, including the carriageway and verges of the road;
- Several fields on the north-east side of the conservation area;
- Several fields on the south-east side of the conservation area.



It is proposed that further discussion be undertaken and opinion sought on the exclusion of the following neutral or intrusive areas that do not contribute to the character of the conservation area

- An area of recent (20<sup>th</sup> Century) residential development in the south-western part of the conservation area (Barn Close, Orchard Close);
- Areas of recent (20<sup>th</sup> Century) residential development in the eastern part of the conservation area (Probert Close, The Glebelands, Dilwyn Common road).

### Issues

It is proposed that measures be taken to enhance the character of the crossroads and small triangular 'green' at the centre of the village, including:

- Re-siting intrusive elements, or their replacement by street furniture or signs that are more compatible, e.g., in terms of colour and design;
- Reconsideration of traffic control systems.

### **Aylestone Hill Conservation Area**

33. Aylestone Hill Conservation Area was designated in 1969 by the former Hereford City Council. The conservation area is located within the City of Hereford, to the northeast of the city centre, on a major arterial road (A465) linking the city with Bromyard and Worcester (via A4103). Its character and appearance is defined very much by its large late Georgian (late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century ) and Victorian (mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> Century) houses set on large plots with mature gardens, trees and shrubs (native and ornamental species). Many of the large houses are screened, in some cases almost completely hidden, by high stone walls and mature hedges. A variety of architectural styles is represented, including Victorian Gothic and late Georgian Classical. Materials include brick, stone and stucco.
34. Heritage assets within the conservation area, which are the key components of the core character of the conservation, are 16 Listed Buildings; all are Grade II. In addition there are nine buildings identified as of local significance, which make a group value contribution to the special architectural and historic character of the area. These include Hillside, The Shires and Burcott House. There are also eight Tree Preservation Orders applied to individual trees that significantly contribute to the mature landscape amenity of the area.
35. Positive areas and features include:

- Imposing 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century dwellings.
- Spacious garden settings
- Mature landscape with specimen trees
- Stone walled enclosures

36 Neutral and Intrusive features include:

The following areas are identified as features which do not contribute to the special architectural and historic character of the conservation area. They include:

- Adult Training Centre, Rockfield Road/Aylestone Hill;
- Carter Grove, Folly Lane/Aylestone Hill;
- Hereford VI<sup>th</sup> Form College, Folly Lane;
- Small infill sites, generally of mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> Century residential development in cul-de-sacs
- The subdivision of large residential plots,
- Inappropriate alterations to some Victorian buildings including replacement windows, car parking, and their slightly rundown appearance.
- Areas of landscape that do not form an integral part of the historic built environment:

37 Potential boundary changes.

Exclusions

It is proposed that the following areas that do not contribute to the character of the conservation area should be excluded:

- Adult Training Centre, Rockfield Road/Aylestone Hill;
- Carter Grove, Folly Lane/Aylestone Hill
- Hereford VI<sup>th</sup> Form College, Folly Lane;
- Aylestone Grange;
- Broadlands Lane (north side, east of no. 78 Aylestone Hill);
- Walney Lane (south side, east of no. 82 Aylestone Hill);

- Lugg View Close (east side).

It is proposed that further discussion be undertaken and opinion sought on the possible exclusion of:

- Nos. 120 to 144 Aylestone Hill
- Nos. 173 to 191 Aylestone Hill and The Swan Inn
- An area of Lugg Meadows at the north end of the conservation area on the east side of Aylestone Hill;
- An area of open land under development as a park near the north end of the conservation area on the west side of Aylestone Hill.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT            The Cabinet Member for the Environment is requested to accept these appraisals and the issues raised in association with these for the purpose of instigating the initial consultations with interested parties.**

## **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.

