

Matter 6 Historic Environment – 27 February, 2019
Further Statement of Keep Prestbury Green: Rep.285

1. Introduction

1.1 This statement explains in detail the views of KPG with regard to paras. 9.21 to 9.30 of Section 9 of the CP. One general matter and two detailed matters are of concern. The first relates to the lack of any policy that sets out the complete list of Conservation Areas both extended and new. Each should be supported by an appropriate designated boundary and refer to the detail contained in the relevant Character Appraisal and Management Plan. This will give each Conservation Area full policy status and have the statutory weight of the Local Plan behind it.

1.2 We make this request in the light of CBC having sought to add changes and additions to the list of Conservation Areas in the Borough when other legislation could have been used to achieve the same results without the delay caused by the LP process. If there is no imperative to assign policy status to each area then why use the LP process in the first place. With no policy (suggested it should be a new HE4) in place the Plan is not soundly worded.

1.3 The rest of this submission is in relation to the boundaries of the extended Prestbury Conservation Area (para.9.25) and the proposed new Park Lane Conservation Area. Again, as the Council has chosen to use the Local Plan for designation purposes then this becomes the mechanism for objections to the boundary designations to be heard.

1.4 In both cases KPG would put on record that it wholeheartedly supports CBC in the designations in principle. It is only with regard to the appropriateness of the boundaries that we have different views.

2. Prestbury Conservation Area.

2.1 The boundary to the proposed extended Conservation Area recommended to the Inspector by KPG is shown on a plan attached to this submission. It differs from the CBC proposal by adding an area bounded by the frontage properties abutting Bowbridge Lane and Shaw Green Lane. The extensions proposed by CBC are supported as far as they go.

2.2 The additional area recommended is in open use largely for livestock and horse grazing purposes. It is a remnant of the larger tracts of farmland which once penetrated many parts of Prestbury village and

gave it its predominantly open and rural feel, particularly in its outer and central areas. A large remnant in the existing Conservation Area is to be found to the south of Mill Street behind what was once the old Prestbury Hotel. This latter area is recognized in the Character Appraisal of 2009 prepared by CBC and its links to the farming past are noted.

2.3 The area proposed to be added by KPG is contiguous to the Hayes (Prestbury Manor House), another large open area extending to the Winchcombe Road. Both areas have a number of mature trees worthy of protection. The significance of the extension is that it is heavily used by the general public walking on public footpaths which give excellent views from Shaw Green Lane towards the existing Conservation Area and from the Conservation Area out towards open countryside. It is noted that one of the extensions proposed by CBC on the extreme western boundary is also adjacent to a heavily used footpath, part of a predominantly open area north of Lake Street that contributes greatly to the openness of the village character.

2.4 As an open space, in our view, the proposed extension area has considerable value in providing a setting for the more built up part of the Conservation Area and, also as said above, a link to its agricultural past. It is noted that in the 2009 Character Appraisal, CBC also referred to the areas around the Hayes and behind Prestbury House Hotel as key features contributing greatly to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as it existed at that time.

2.5 KPG would emphasise that Prestbury is a unique heritage that still survives as a distinctive village on the edge of the town. It has not been enveloped or intensified such as other suburbs of Cheltenham that once had village character e.g. Swindon Village, Leckhampton, Up Hatherley or the Reddings. It is the combination of buildings, public and private open spaces, roads and footpaths and its views inwards and outwards that make this a valuable asset. The Conservation Area therefore has a crucial role in preserving this wonderful inheritance for years to come. It is our view that the adding of the area shown on the attached plan will assist greatly in achieving this objective. We therefore formally ask the Inspector to request CBC to modify the Prestbury Conservation Area boundaries to include the land as shown.

3. Park Lane Conservation Area

3.1 As with the proposed Prestbury Conservation Area extensions, KPG support the new Park Lane Conservation Area but wish to see further

land included. The area involved is clearly shown on the plan attached to these representations. Park Lane has been subject to two relatively recent applications for demolition and replacement of an existing property. Both of which were eventually resisted by CBC. The determination of these applications would have been made much more straightforward had the Conservation Area been designated some time ago.

3.2 The land that is recommended for addition is a large paddock of some 1.2ha. , lying to the south west of Park Lane. It is abutted on two sides by the CBC proposed boundary. The land is relatively flat, often used to graze horses, but has some mature trees worthy of retention on its eastern and southern boundaries. A similar paddock is located to the north but is now occupied by a single dwelling – Monks Meadow, built some years ago, but modern in style and of relatively poor architectural quality. Nevertheless, the building does not overdominate the large plot, maintaining an open aspect.

3.2 Park Lane is an unique rural lane on the edge of Prestbury that owes its interest and character to its uniformity of building form, materials, age and scale. Built largely as a small estate around 1909/1910 with one or two properties built after the war, the lane has retained most of its original character and is considered worthy of preservation and enhancement. The detailed merits of the built form are dealt with by CBC in its Draft Character Appraisal(January 2018) and are not repeated here. Suffice to say, the residents of the lane wholeheartedly support the analysis with the exception of the additional land which should be included.

3.3 The land which KPG wish to be added has been mooted for development many times and has been resisted. If it was to be developed, the Conservation Area attributes would be destroyed completely. A major and harmful visual impact contiguous with the currently proposed boundary, coupled with additional traffic, parking and general movement would render the Conservation Area objectives proposed by CBC useless. Any vestige of the rural, village atmosphere would immediately disappear forever. The area has its own value and therefore deserves to be regarded as an integral part of the Conservation Area.

3.4 Specifically, the paddock has the following attributes:

- Walking in either direction to or from the Racecourse, one is immediately in a rural environment. Moving due west from the end of the building line on the south side of the lane, one is

looking across the paddock to the built up parts of the town. This fact and the value of it is recognized in para.3.4 of the Draft Character Appraisal:

“ Views from Park Lane across the paddock to the south west of the conservation area provides long views to the built fringes of the prospect highlights the conservation area’s detached nature from the town and enforces the rural aspect of the area’s character.”

Moving towards the built part of the lane from the Racecourse, one sees the streetscene from the boundary. Even more distant views are also to be had from within the Racecourse. Many people use the footpaths and take great enjoyment from the juxtaposition of open spaces and built form which together, not separately, give this area its unique charm.

- As mentioned above, the paddock also contains a considerable number of mature trees along three boundaries – north, east and south. These provide a form of backcloth to many of the properties on the lane, notably Edge House, Kenelm, St. Francis and Crossways and add to the garden trees which are prevalent in the lane. The picture is one of a coherent whole, adding to the rural character which is obvious to the eye.
- The paddock effectively balances the openness of the Monks Meadow plot only more so, the two straddling the footpath leading from the end of the lane. This gives the feel of the built form of the lane opening out to the wider vista of the Racecourse. It also balances the open farmland abutting the eastern boundary of the Conservation Area on Spring Lane.

3.5 The paddock therefore, in the opinion of KPG, should be an integral part of the proposed Conservation Area for the reasons set out above. The lane and its environs is an entity which should be preserved and enhanced for its own sake. The Inspector is requested to recommend the addition proposed.

4. Summary

4.1 KPG ask that CBC be requested by the Inspector to amend the proposed boundaries of the Conservation Area to include the land shown on the attached plan.

KPG/WWS/ 20/1/19