

Ecclesfield

CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

Final Draft October 2007



MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

ECCLESFIELD CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

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After a period of public consultation Sheffield City Council adopted this Conservation Area Appraisal and accompanying management proposals for Ecclesfield on 23rd October 2007, which means that they are now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the area.

1. Introduction

1.1 The recommendations in this document are based upon the findings the Ecclesfield Conservation Area Appraisal, which assesses the special interest of the Ecclesfield Conservation Area and identifies negative factors and weaknesses that detract from the conservation area's character and appearance.

1.2 Based upon the appraisal and supported up by a further site survey, this document identifies a number of specific and general issues affecting the Ecclesfield Conservation Area, including enhancement opportunities, negative features and threats. Each issue is accompanied by recommendation(s) for action, sometimes identifying further or more detailed work needed for their implementation.

1.3 The recommendations include proposals for enhancement and policies for the avoidance of harmful change, some of which are the responsibility of the City Council

1.4 The proposals are written in the awareness that in managing the City's conservation areas the Council's resources are limited and therefore need to be prioritised. Financial constraints on the Council mean that proposals for which it is responsible may take longer than is desirable to implement. However, the Council will continue to encourage improvements to the conservation area in co-operation with property owners, groups and local businesses.

1.5 The structure and scope of this document is based on the suggested framework published by English Heritage in Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas (2006). Both the Conservation Area Appraisal and the Management Proposals will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a regular basis (see below).

2. Legislative background

2.1 This document reflects Government guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15: 'Planning and the Historic Environment' and satisfies the statutory requirement of section 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 namely:

"It shall be the duty of the 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."

2.2 The *Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (UDP)* is the statutory development plan for Sheffield, adopted in March 1998. Policies BE15-22 relate to historic buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and archaeology (pages 76-86).

Other key documents include:

- *The emerging Sheffield Development Framework (SDF).*
- *Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Designing House Extensions.*
- *Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Historic Parks and Gardens.*
- *Sheffield Urban Design Compendium (2004).*
- *Sheffield Buildings at Risk Survey (2005) and emerging Buildings at Risk Strategy.*
- *Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology (HMSO)*

2.3 Up-to-date details of current planning policy can be obtained from Sheffield City Council's Development Services or the Council's website at: www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/planning-and-city-development

2.4 Breaches of planning control that are causing significant harm and are clearly unacceptable will be enforced against. A planning application may be invited where breaches of planning control might be acceptable, possibly with amendment. This will enable the issues to be thoroughly tested, including consulting local people.

2.5 Sheffield City Council has signed up to the 'Enforcement Concordat' (1998), which sets national best practice standards for planning enforcement. The concordat can be viewed and downloaded from: http://bre.berr.gov.uk/regulation/reform/enforcement_concordat/enforcement_background.asp

2.6 Other specific strategies that will impact upon this management plan either currently being developed or already adopted:

- Woodland Policy (1987)
 - Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy (1991)
 - Forthcoming Tree Strategy (proposed 2007)
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3. Issues and recommendations

3.1 Ecclesfield is a large village built around a fine church with numerous historic buildings, including the remains of a 12th-century priory, a medieval church, a 19th-century filemaker's workshop and several 19th-century pubs and chapels.

3.2 Many of the negative features of the Ecclesfield Conservation Area stem from planning decisions taken before the conservation area was designated, and mainly concern new buildings whose design and materials do not respect the character of neighbouring buildings. Even so, there are recently built houses within the conservation area that do not blend well with the historic fabric, and almost all of the historic buildings in the parish have suffered from the loss of historical and architectural detail and several of the older buildings in the parish are at risk from redundancy, lack of maintenance or inappropriate use.

3.3 In addition there are empty plots to the east of the conservation area on the site of former garages and lavatories. These lie alongside an area of neglected woodland that could be improved to form a link from the centre of the village to the playing fields, sports grounds and playgrounds to the north east of the conservation area.

3.4 Loss of historical and architectural features and poor quality of design

3.4.1 Most of the buildings in Ecclesfield have suffered from the loss of historical features and many of the buildings affected are ones that otherwise make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. That positive contribution has been weakened by:

- Large extensions that do not match the original building in terms of material, colour or scale;
- Replacement of traditional timber windows and doors with aluminium framed, uPVC and treated timber windows, some with leaded diamonds instead of plain glass or traditional glazing bars;

- Walls rendered with concrete or pebble dashed and repointing carried out in cement-based mortar rather than lime-based mortar;
- Large rooflights and poorly designed dormers intruded into prominent roof slopes;
- Front elevations marred by drainage pipes, wiring, burglar alarms, exterior lighting and satellite dishes;
- Traditional timber guttering on brackets being replaced by plastic alternatives;
- Garden walls built of patterned breeze block or larch lap fencing in place of stone walls;
- Conversion of front gardens into hard standing for vehicles;
- Insensitive siting of garages.

3.4.2 In addition, the conservation area has infill buildings whose style is undistinguished and not in keeping with surrounding buildings.

3.4.3 Where single family dwellings are concerned, the changes noted above can, with certain exceptions, normally be carried out without planning permission from the Council. Development of this kind is called "Permitted Development" and falls into various classes which are listed in the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995*. Powers exist for the Council, known as Article 4(2) directions, to withdraw some of these permitted development rights in the interest of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. This might be considered to prevent the further erosion of historic character of residential properties, particularly where they form a coherent group of well detailed properties.

Recommendation:

- *The Council will consider the need for Article 4(2) Directions to protect buildings that retain original features from inappropriate alteration in*
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particular the stone roofscape. The primary focus will be on dwellinghouses that have been identified in the relevant conservation area appraisal as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- *In particular, the following individual buildings might be considered for inclusion within an Article 4(2) Direction on the grounds that they are the best representatives of their type and have retained more of their original features than neighbouring properties of similar type:*

High Street: No. 107 (Sycamore House), No. 40 and Escafeld House

Yew Lane: No. 2

Town End Road: Nos 12 and 10

Church Street: Nos 8 and 10

- *The Council will encourage property owners to reverse unsympathetic alterations and to reinstate architectural features, notably windows and doors, with modern replacements in the style and materials of the originals.*

3.5. Buildings at Risk

3.5.1 Listed historic buildings in the Ecclesfield Conservation Area appear to be currently in a generally good condition.

Recommendation:

- *The Council will seek to monitor the condition of all historic buildings and will report findings and advise action as necessary. Where the condition of a building gives cause for concern, appropriate steps will be sought to secure the future of the building, including the use of statutory powers.*

3.6 Historic pubs and shop fronts

3.6.1 Ecclesfield has a number of traditional pubs and historic shopfronts dating from the late 19th century and early 20th centuries. Good well-designed historic pubs include the Black Bull, the White Bear and The Stocks. No. 2 Yew Lane is a purpose-built corner shop with angled corner housing the original door and with five original stone steps.

3.6.2 The conservation area also has some examples of inappropriately designed fascias and shopfronts and of pubs where traditional sash windows have been replaced with diamond-leaded sealed window units.

Recommendation:

- *The Council will seek to ensure the retention of Ecclesfield's historic shopfronts and the facades and external features of historic public houses.*
- *The Council will consider preparing guidelines on good shopfront design including detailed reference to the design of traditional shopfronts.*
- *The Council will encourage the replacement of inappropriately designed shopfronts with shopfronts and fascias of appropriate proportions, materials and size that respect the whole building and neighbouring properties.*

3.7. Boundary walls, the public realm and churchyard

3.7.1 Ecclesfield's magnificent church is surrounded by an extensive churchyard, but this shows many signs of neglect. Some graves and headstones are overgrown with ivy, self-sown sycamore seedlings and deep rooted perennial weeds, such as dock, that will eventually lift and fracture the stonework. Some paths are weedy and most of the churchyard seats are broken. Perimeter walls have collapsed or lack coping stones. One of the main gates posts is broken. All in all, what should be an asset to the parish, a place of retreat and of relaxation, is in need of care and maintenance.

3.7.2 The *Ecclesfield Conservation Area Appraisal* has identified the contribution that traditional drystone and mortared boundary walls with triangular copings make to the character of the conservation area.

3.7.3 In general, these are in a good state of repair, though there are some examples of broken or collapsed boundary walls that have not been repaired to the same standard as the original, especially around the perimeter of the churchyard.

Recommendation:

- *The Council will, wherever possible, assist the parish council to draw up and implement a list of enhancements to the churchyard, and to seek possible grant aid for the repair of walls and gates, so as to realise the full potential that this green space has in making a strong positive contribution to the conservation area.*
- *The Council will advise those responsible for boundary walls to keep them in a good state of repair using historic materials and techniques.*
- *The Council will normally resist proposals included within planning applications for the demolition of, or alterations to, boundary walls, gate piers, fences and gates that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.*

3.8 Repointing of Stonework

3.8.1 Many of the area's historic buildings are constructed of natural stone. Stone boundary walls are common. The use of natural stone as a building material is a key characteristic of the conservation area.

3.8.2 Unfortunately, some of the stonework of old buildings and walls has been disfigured by repointing in thick lines of grey Portland cement (in place of more suitable pointing in lime based mortar). Such repointing with hard cement is almost always to the detriment of the appearance of the wall, or building and eventually, will damage the stone itself.

Recommendation:

- *Consideration will be given to the publication of guidance on best practice in pointing and re-pointing of stone walls for the use of local residents, property owners and building contractors.*

3.9 Traffic issues

3.9.1 Despite double yellow lines, the pavements along both sides of Town End Road are being used for parking, obstructing pedestrians and forcing them into the road. In one case, grass verges have been eroded by parking and partly patched with tarmac.

Recommendation:

- *Consideration should be given to enforcing parking regulations and / or to providing alternative parking provision for owners of property along Town End Road.*

3.10 Opportunities for enhancement

3.10.1 a) There is vacant land on the eastern side of St Mary's Lane where a former garage and public lavatory block once stood.

Recommendation:

- *The site might suitably be developed with an appropriately scaled and designed development. Alternatively, if development is not considered compatible with the character of the conservation area, steps should be taken to enhance the site.*

3.10.2 b) The woodland between St Mary's Lane and Ecclesfield Park is also a candidate for sympathetic maintenance, especially the cobbled paths (perhaps the remains of packhorse tracks) along the eastern boundary of the conservation area and the littered stream bed and footbridge at the point where the path emerges from the woods. As well the litter and graffiti around this bridge, litter is a problem throughout these woods.

Recommendation:

- *The Council will consider improvements, subject to funding, for the repair and maintenance of paths, bridges and stream banks within these woods, working with the local community to enhance this valuable green space and create a more attractive link from the centre of the village to the playing fields, sports grounds and playgrounds of Ecclesfield Park.*

3.10.3 c) Two of the road junctions close to the church (the junction of Church Street and St Mary's Lane and the junction of Town End Road and Stocks Hill) have traditional post World War II finger posts, but these are damaged and broken and in need of repair.

Recommendation:

- *Consideration will be given to enhancing the conservation area by repairing these signs (guidance on such repairs can be found in the joint Department of Transport and English Heritage leaflet, Traditional Direction Signs).*

3.11 Trees

3.11.1 Large and mature trees (mainly oak, ash and sycamore) make a major contribution to the character of the Ecclesfield Conservation Area as individual specimens, or as deciduous woodland lining the banks of the brook that runs along the southern side of Town End Road. There is also an area of dense and mature woodland in the angle between Church Road and St Mary's Lane and further areas of woodland covering much of the scheduled monument on the site of the priory.

Recommendation:

- *The preparation of a Tree Management Programme would be welcome, identifying all mature trees within the conservation area (privately as well as publicly owned) and ensuring that priorities are agreed and*

funding set aside for the costs involved in remedial works or replacement;

- *The Council will normally resist proposals to cut down a tree in the conservation area.*

3.12 Archaeological issues

3.12.1 Although the Sites and Monuments Record and the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service's Historic Environment Characterisation Study cannot be regarded as definitive or comprehensive, data from both sources indicates the possibility of Bronze Age activity in the area, while the name of the village suggests an early-medieval (pre-Conquest) church foundation. The site of the mid-12th century priory and its associated fishponds to the north and north east of the church is a scheduled monument. Just outside the conservation area to the south east of the High Street there are the remains of early medieval open-field strip systems. The standing buildings in the conservation area include a number of early industrial metal-working workshops.

3.12.2 The whole of the conservation area therefore has archaeological potential above and below the ground, and it is likely that further consideration will need to be given to the effect of applications for substantial new development.

Recommendation:

- *An Archaeological Assessment of the site should be prepared prior to any application being submitted. Where below ground archaeological remains are expected, conditions may then be used to secure a detailed scheme for the foundation design and all new ground works, to protect buried remains in situ, and/or a programme of archaeological excavation, recording, analysis and publication. Further information is available from the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service.*
- *Where substantial alteration/demolition of listed buildings or other historic buildings is proposed a more detailed Building Appraisal will also be required. This includes a detailed appraisal of the special architectural or historic interest of the buildings on the site. The results*

will inform the design process and act as supporting information with a planning application. An AABA (Archaeological Assessment and Building Appraisal) should be prepared prior to the application being submitted. Once a satisfactory scheme has been agreed, conditions may then be used to secure a programme of building recording, analysis and publication. Further information is available from Sheffield City Council's conservation section.

3.13 Buildings of Townscape Merit/Positive buildings

3.13.1 Marked on the Townscape Appraisal map for the Ecclesfield Conservation Area are a number of *unlisted* buildings, known as Buildings of Townscape Merit, which have been judged as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Recommendation:

- *The Council will only grant conservation area consent for the demolition of a 'building of townscape merit' or 'positive building' (as identified on relevant townscape appraisal map) if demolition is justified against the criteria specified in PPG 15 paragraphs 3.16 – 3.19*

3.14 New development

3.14.1 There are few opportunities for development in this small conservation area. For minor works, the City Council has produced guidance entitled 'Designing House Extensions'.

3.14.2 New development should aspire to a quality of design and execution, related to its context, which may be valued in the future. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but will normally involve respecting values established through assessment of the significance of the area.

3.14.3 Development proposals will be judged on their effect on the area's character and appearance as identified in the Ecclesfield Conservation Area

Appraisal together with relevant Development Plan policies and any other material considerations.

Recommendation:

- *Ensure that all new development accords with policies in the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (adopted 1998) and any other policies which supersede this in the emerging Sheffield Development Framework (SDF);*
- *Require a Design and Access Statement in the validation of all planning applications. A Design and Access Statement is a method by which applicants and agents should be able to show how they have achieved good design in their development proposals, taken account of sustainable construction principles and ensured equal and convenient access to buildings and spaces and the public transport network, and access for emergency services where relevant. It should clearly demonstrate how the proposal fits the context of the site and its immediate surroundings.*

4. Monitoring and Review

4.1 As recommended by English Heritage, this document should be reviewed every five years from the date of its formal adoption. It will need to be assessed in the light of the emerging Local Development Framework and government policy generally. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the conservation area including a full photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action;
 - An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, and how successful this has been;
 - The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed, requiring further actions or enhancements;
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- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;
 - Publicity and advertising.

4.2 It is possible that this review could be carried out by the local community under the guidance of a heritage consultant or the City Council. This would enable the local community to become more involved with the process and would raise public consciousness of the issues, including the problems associated with enforcement.



5. Useful contacts and addresses

For information on listed buildings and conservation areas:

Urban Design and Conservation Team
Sheffield City Council,
Howden House,
1 Union Street,
Sheffield S1 2SH.
Tel: 0114 273 5804

www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/planning-and-city-development/urban-design--conservation

For information on the status and interpretation of the statutory Development Plan and supplementary planning guidance:

Forward and Area Planning Team
Sheffield City Council,
Howden House,
1 Union Street,
Sheffield S1 2SH.
Tel: 0114 273 4157

For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas:

English Heritage
37 Tanner Row
York
YO1 6WP
Tel: 01904 601901

For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets:

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB),
37 Spital Square, LONDON E1 6DY Tel: 020 7377 1644
The Georgian Group,
6 Fitzroy Square, LONDON W1T 5DX Tel: 0207529 8920

The Victorian Society,
1 Priory Gardens, Bedford Park, LONDON W4 1TT Tel: 0208994 1019

The Twentieth Century Society,
70 Cowcross Street, LONDON EC1M 6EJ Tel: 020 7250 3857

6. Photographs



The churchyard could be a place of retreat and of relaxation, but is in need of care and maintenance



Some graves and headstones are overgrown with ivy, self-sown sycamore seedlings and deep rooted weeds.



Traditional timber windows and doors replaced with leaded diamond sealed units.



Buildings a risk: the Wesleyan Chapel and Sunday School in the High Street.



Some paths are weedy and most of the churchyard seats are broken.



Contrast between good and less good shopfronts on historic buildings.



Large extensions that do not match the original building in terms of material, colour or scale.



Enhancement opportunity: unused land, the site of former nursery gardens, on the edge of Ecclesfield Park.



One of the main gates' posts is broken.



Ecclesfield streetscene.



A good historic shopfront with original door and stone steps.



Enhancement opportunity: footbridge and stream in the woodland linking St Mary's Lane and Ecclesfield Park.

7.0 Summary of Consultation Undertaken

A consultation draft of this document was subject to a period of consultation between 25th June and 20th July 2007. All local residents in the conservation area were sent details of where they could view the document with a survey form asking for their comments. The public were also invited to a half-day workshop at Ecclesfield Library on 5th July where they could discuss the appraisal with officers from the Council's Urban Design and Conservation Team further. Local members and local community groups were also consulted as part of the process.