

Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED: CASTLE

CABINET

15th March 2004

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
New Walk Conservation Area Character Statement

Report of the Service Director, Community Protection and Wellbeing

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval of the New Walk Conservation Area Character Statement as supplementary planning guidance to the City of Leicester Local Plan.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The New Walk Conservation Area covers an area of 29.5 hectares (73 acres). The boundaries are defined by Granville Road, Regent Road, Lancaster Road, Welford Road and Wellington Street. Originally covering only the immediate area of New Walk, the conservation area was extended in 1974 and 1980 to include the King Street and Holy Trinity areas.
- 2.2 Under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 local planning authorities are required to review their conservation areas from time to time to ensure that their continued designation is justified. A character statement is an analysis of the character of a conservation area on which such a review is based. It identifies the factors that make a conservation area an 'area of special architectural or historic interest'. A statement helps ensure that decisions on planning applications that are likely to affect the character or appearance of the conservation area are soundly based. Increasing importance is being placed on character statements by both planning inspectors and English Heritage.
- 2.3 Statements are to be prepared for each of the city's 23 conservation areas; to date 7 have been adopted and 4 others are in preparation.
- 2.4 The draft character statement for the New Walk Conservation Area is included as part of the Supplementary Information report. A consultation exercise on the statement was carried out in February 2004. Details are included in the Supplementary Information. There are no proposals to alter the boundaries of the conservation area.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 CABINET is recommended to ADOPT the New Walk Conservation Area Character Statement as supplementary planning guidance to the City of Leicester Local Plan.

4 Financial & Legal Implications

- 4.1 The Assistant Head of Legal Services comments are attached at paragraph 3.2 in the 'Supporting Information'.
- 4.2 There are no financial implications associated with this report

5 Report Author

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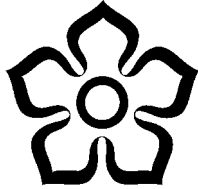
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DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	No
Reason	N/A
Appeared in Forward Plan	No
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)



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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. Report

Background

- 1.1 The periodic review of conservation areas to determine whether they still possess the special interest that led to the original designation is an integral part of the delivery of the Local Plan. The reviews take the form of character statements that will form the basis for subsequent enhancement proposals. The Local Plan contains general guidance on design and development in conservation areas and character statements complement these policies of the Local Plan by providing further guidance as to how conservation areas can be preserved and enhanced. (Paragraphs 9.17 to 9.21 of the Replacement City of Leicester Local Plan 2nd Deposit Copy refer).
- 1.2 There are also stricter controls on development in conservation areas, essentially demolition, strengthened controls over minor development and the protection of trees. These are set out in detail in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15).

New Walk

- 1.3 The New Walk Conservation Area was originally designated in 1969, then extended in 1974 and 1980. It is not homogeneous in character and the differences can be observed in three main sub-areas – New Walk itself, the Regent Road area and the Holy Trinity area. For the purposes of describing the architectural character of the conservation area (Section 5 of the report) these sub-areas are used. A location plan is attached.
- 1.4 This is the first character statement to be prepared for New Walk and it sets out the factors that make this part of the city special as well as identifying those elements that detract from its quality. The history, archaeology, land uses, townscape, open spaces and trees are described and attention is also drawn to particular buildings that, though not listed, make positive contributions to the area's character. I have considered the architectural, historic and landscape

merits of the area and recommend that its conservation area designation remains. I do not recommend any alterations to its current boundaries.

2. CONSULTATIONS

2.1 The following interested and/or affected parties were consulted on the draft statement:

- Other Council Departments (Housing and RAD).
- Cabinet Lead, Ward Members, Conservation Advisory Panel.
- Police Architectural Liaison Officer, English Heritage, City Centre Manager, Friends of New Walk.

2.2 Local owners, occupiers, users and visitors were able to comment on the statement during a week long exhibition held at the New Walk Museum. This was advertised by means of posters strategically placed throughout the conservation area, an article in the Leicester mercury and an item on Radio Leicester.

2.3 Other than text amendments, no comments were received from Council Departments, Members or the Conservation Advisory Panel.

2.4 Several visitors to the exhibition responded to the request for their views. These are summarised at 2.5 below, together with my observations on the issues raised.

2.5 Responses to exhibition.

Respondent	Comments	Response to Comments
<p>1 Friends of New Walk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Walk and Holy Trinity should each have a separate statement for reasons of clarity; • Need to be explicit about building height; the max. limit for new development should be 3 storeys (as compared to the 5 storeys of the new flats on Salisbury Road); • Specific protection should be given to existing areas of open space and loss of more gardens for car parking should be resisted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration was given to splitting NW into 2 conservation areas. However, the Introduction and Architectural Character sections acknowledge the diversity within the area and deal with these as 3 separate sub-areas. I consider that this approach resolves this issue. • A recommendation as to massing and maximum height has been included in sections 11.4 and 11.5 • The need to prevent the further loss of front gardens has been added in section 11.6. I do not think it necessary to add anything which would specifically protect the 3 main open spaces. They are already protected by conservation area status and are under no threat from development.
<p>2 Resident of Central Avenue</p>	<p>NW feels unsafe especially for women, children and elderly people. The people in Museum Square are very intimidating.</p>	<p>Street lighting levels have been increased and CCTV cameras installed to improve public safety. NW is also within the city centre 'Alcohol Control' zone and Police enforcement of the ban elsewhere has been successful. Their attention has been drawn to this respondent's concerns.</p>

<p>3 Resident of Regent Road</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gradual loss of architectural detail is a concern. LCC should police this better and pursue offenders. • Some buildings should be listed – Council not willing to seek listing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enforcement of Article 4 Directions has become easier since the creation of an Enforcement Team within the Planning Service and unauthorised alterations (providing they have been carried out within the previous 4 years) can now be better targeted. • The Council is always willing to put forward buildings for listing if it considers them to be worthy of such. It may be that buildings suggested by the respondent have not been considered worthy. However, anyone can write to English Heritage to ask for buildings to be listed. I have therefore contacted the respondent to remind him of this and to ask that he let me know to which buildings he refers. The issue will then be addressed.
<p>4 Resident of Launde Road, Oadby</p>	<p>Continue to keep the gold paint finishes (by subsidising owners if necessary)</p>	<p>One of the conditions of the grant for the walls and railings is that they are kept in good condition. This would include the use of the appropriate colours and finishes.</p>
<p>5 Resident of Abingdon Road</p>	<p>Wondered about the appropriateness of the butterfly pavement at the museum and what the sculptures were.</p>	<p>The public art projects were funded by the Council's Public Art Unit. The comment has been passed to them</p>
<p>6 Resident of Blankley Drive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New railings at the Museum too high and intrusive (spoil the view). • Other modern buildings also poor eg 20-40 New walk and the new flats at Salisbury road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The railings are a modern interpretation of the original design and were acceptable to English Heritage who part funded the New walk Restoration Scheme. • Opinions differ on the townscape value of the former; the scale of the latter is perhaps too great, hence the proposal that new development should be restricted to 3 storeys (section 11.5)
<p>7 Resident of Spinney Hill Road</p>	<p>The tree at 62-64 New Walk needs attention before it damages the building</p>	<p>This property has been sold by the Council and has planning permission for conversion to flats. The Council would have no objection to its removal if the owner applied to fell it.</p>
<p>8 Resident of Bourton Crescent, Oadby</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would like more modern sculpture along NW and more public art. Need to use more local artists • More wildflower planting and hanging baskets • Museum artwork OK but slippery when wet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This comment has been passed to the Public Art Unit • The New Walk is a formal space. Wildflower planting and baskets would not be appropriate, although bulbs have been planted in de Montfort Square. • This issue is being dealt with by the Public Art Unit.

9 Resident of Granville Road	Old leaves are disfiguring the new surface. Power wash them off.	A management plan for New walk is being prepared. This matter will be considered as part of that plan.
10 Resident of Barrow-upon-Soar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to NW are excellent. Like the beauty and peacefulness, the quiet in the busy city. • Keep the area litter free • Thanks to all concerned 	The frequency and quality of street cleaning will be included in the NW Management Plan
11 Anonymous	The 2 buildings opposite the museum should be restored	See 7 above
12 Resident of West Street	Article 4 strikes the right balance. Well done and thanks for the thoughtful presentation	

3. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Financial Implications

The Acting Head of Finance has nothing further to add to the report (James Slater, Acting Head of Finance)

3.2 Legal Implications

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on the City Council, a local planning authority, to review from time to time conservation areas. As part of that duty the Council is required to establish consistent local standards for designation of conservation areas and periodically review existing conservation areas and their boundaries against these standards. (Anthony Cross, Assistant Head of Legal Services)

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	PARAGRAPH REFERENCES WITHIN SUPPORTING PAPERS
Equal Opportunities	YES	4
Policy	YES	4
Sustainable and Environmental	YES	4
Crime and Disorder	YES	See 2.3 Respondent 2
Human Rights Act	No	

Older People on Low Income	No	
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4.2 Risk Assessment Matrix

Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/or appropriate)
1 NONE			
2			
3			
4			N/A
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

L - Low
M - Medium
H - High

L - Low
M - Medium
H - High

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS – Local Government Act 1972

City of Leicester Local Plan. 1994

New walk Conservation Area draft Character Statement, February 2004

6. CONSULTATIONS

Consultee	Date Consulted
ER&D Head of Finance	
RAD Assistant Head of Legal Services	
ER&D Development Control, Development Plans, Traffic,	9.12.03
RAD Property	9.12.03
Cultural Services & Neighbourhood Renewal	9.12.03
Ward Members	9.12.03