

Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED: Castle

Cabinet

27th November 2006

CATHEDRAL GUILDHALL CONSERVATION AREA

Report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration & Culture

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval for amendments to the boundary of Cathedral Guildhall Conservation Area and for the adoption of the Character Appraisal (attached as Appendix 2) as supplementary guidance to the Local Plan.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The provisions of ss. 69(1)9a) and 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 require that local authorities review their conservation areas from time to time and to formulate and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement. A character appraisal is the best way of doing this.
- 2.2 The Cathedral Guildhall Conservation Area was designated in March 1969, one of the first three conservation areas designated in the city. Although a basic appraisal was done at that time, a full appraisal is now necessary because of the major changes that area taking place in and around the area. This document, and the responses to the consultations that have taken place, forms the substance of this report.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Members are recommended to:
1. Approve the amendments to the boundaries of the Cathedral Guildhall Conservation Area;
And,
 2. Adopt the Character Appraisal as supplementary guidance to the City of Leicester Local Plan 2006.

4 Financial & Legal Implications

Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.
M Judson, Head of Finance

Legal Implications

- 4.2 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on the City Council as local planning authority to review the past exercise of their functions under s.69 from time to time to determine whether any parts or further parts of its area should be designated as conservation areas. If it so determines, the Council 'shall designate those parts accordingly'.

A Cross, Head of Litigation

5 Report Author

June Gray

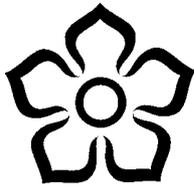
Planner

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DECISION STATUS

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



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CABINET

27TH NOVEMBER 2006

CATHEDRAL GUILDHALL CONSERVATION AREA

Report of the Corporate Director, Regeneration & Culture

Report

1. Background

- 1.1 The Cathedral Guildhall Conservation Area covers an area of 4 hectares (10 acres). It stretches from the north side of Guildhall Lane to the south side of Friar Lane with its western boundary behind the Arriva bus garage on Southgates. The eastern boundary is Loseby Lane and Grey Friars. The Council designated its first three conservation areas, covering the most historic parts of Leicester, in 1969. One of these was the Cathedral Guildhall area, partly because of its historic buildings, but also because its layout and scale was an interesting and rare survival of pre-industrial Leicester. Today, there is one Grade 1 listed building in the area (the Guildhall) and two Grade II* listed buildings (The Cathedral and Wigston's House). In addition, over half of the remaining buildings within the area are Grade II listed, making this the conservation area with the highest density of listed buildings in the city.
- 1.2 While there has been little physical change in the area since that date, the Council is required by s.69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to review its conservation areas from time to time. Up-to-date appraisals and management proposals (that is, appraisals that are less than 5 years old) are also now Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs 215b and 215c). The review of the Cathedral Guildhall area is therefore timely. To date the Council had adopted 13 Appraisals of which 9 are up-to-date and 3 have approved management proposals. A rolling programme of appraisals is under way and 100% coverage will be achieved in 2010.
- 1.3 Conservation area status imposes some stricter controls on development, such as demolition, some minor development and a general protection of all trees). An appraisal sets out the features that make an area worthy of conservation area status.

2. The Character Appraisal

- 2.1 Character appraisals are important tools in the management of conservation areas. They define the elements that make conservation areas special and set out the features that contribute to their special architectural and historic interest. This provides a robust base upon which planning decisions can be made and informs building owners and developers of the elements that need to be taken into account when alterations or redevelopment are being considered.

2.2 The appraisal report attached at Appendix 2 shows how history, archaeology, architecture and townscape have combined to create the Cathedral Guildhall conservation area's special character. It also sets out the problems and pressures in the area and suggests ways in which these could be tackled or addressed. Three additions to the boundary are proposed – the Arriva bus garage on Southgates, the north half of the BBC Radio Leicester building on St Nicholas Place and the vacant factory known as 1 Southgates. The inclusion of the BBC building resolves the problem of the building currently falling within two conservation areas (High Street and Cathedral Guildhall), and the other sites are included in view of their potential for development and the impact this could have on the historic environment of this area.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

3.1 Members are recommended to :

1. Approve the amendments to the boundaries of the conservation area as shown on the map attached to the Character Appraisal; and,
2. Adopt the Character Appraisal as supplementary guidance to the City of Leicester Local Plan 2006.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Other Implications

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	PARAGRAPH REFERENCES WITHIN SUPPORTING PAPERS
Equal Opportunities	No	No specific reference. Although the appraisal has no direct impact on equal opportunities, alterations to buildings within it will have to balance the need for conservation with the needs of all groups such as disabled people, elderly people, children, ethnic minorities etc.
Policy	Yes	No specific reference. The appraisal supports the Local Plan policies set out in Appendix 5
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	No specific reference. Conservation area status helps to prevent unnecessary loss of the existing built fabric and helps to minimise demands on scarce resources by ensuring the continued use of existing buildings.
Crime and Disorder	No	No specific reference. There is evidence of anti-social behaviour in the area and some suggestions of physical steps that might be taken to address this are included in the Management Proposals in the Character Appraisal. The impact of such problems can also affect the appearance of the area (boarded up windows, security shutters etc) and it is important that such remedies take account of the need to preserve or

		enhance the character and appearance of the area.
Human Rights Act	No	No specific reference. There are additional controls over development in conservation areas but these are not over-turned by the Human Rights Act.
Older People on Low Income	No	No specific reference. Conservation areas as concerned to enhance and preserve historic areas. Their designation may only directly affect low income people if they own, but cannot afford to maintain, buildings within these areas.

4.2 Risk Assessment Matrix

	Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/or appropriate)
1	De-designation of the conservation area would mean that the area's unlisted, but important, buildings would have no protection from unsympathetic alterations or demolition	L	H	Retain conservation area designation to protect the character and appearance of the area.
2	Not adopting the Character Appraisal as supplementary guidance would mean that important information about the area's special character would not be available to Council officers and outside organisations/people who need to make decisions about development in the area	L	H	Adopt Character Appraisal as supplementary guidance to the Local Plan

L - Low

M - Medium

H - High

L - Low

M - Medium

H - High

5. Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

- City of Leicester Local Plan 2006
- Constitution of Leicester City Council
- English Heritage guidance on Character Appraisals and Management Proposals

6. Consultations

Consultee	Date Consulted
Conservation Area Panel	28 June 2006
R&C Head of Finance	11 th October 2006
Head of Litigation	11 th October 2006

City Council – Highways & Traffic, Urban Design, Development Control, Development Plans, Housing, Property, Trees & Woodlands, Museums Service, Regeneration	18 th July 2006
Local businesses, residents and property agents (where known)	11 th August 2006
Ward Councillors	“
Leicester Regeneration Company	“
Police Architectural Liaison Officer	“
Leicester Victorian Society	“
Leicester Asian Business Association	“
Chamber of Commerce	“

7. Appendix 1

Respondent	Comment	Response to Comment
Cathedral Administrator	<p>1. Text changes to clarify land ownership;</p> <p>2. Alcohol & drug abuse around the Cathedral is a real problem not just ‘occasional’ as stated in the appraisal. Police presence has improved matters but Alcohol Control Zone still needs to be extended and CCTV installed to help remove the problems;</p> <p>3. Traffic calming measures needed on Peacock Lane and St Martins.</p>	<p>1. Changes have been made to the text as suggested;</p> <p>2. Reference to this issue has been improved at paras. 4.77, 4.79 and 4.84 of the appraisal and also passed on to appropriate authorities. It has also been incorporated in Appendix 3 of the Appraisal;</p> <p>3. This suggestion has been incorporated in Appendix 3 of the Appraisal.</p>
Dean of the Cathedral	<p>1. Text changes needed to clarify land ownership;</p> <p>2. The area has high levels of anti-social behaviour and needs CCTV etc to help remove this;</p> <p>3. Lighting levels should be increased;</p> <p>4. Closing St Martin’s East would help to reduce opportunities for criminal and anti-social behaviour;</p> <p>5. The bus garage should be included in the conservation area because of its potential impact on the area if it is redeveloped. Any future development should be no more than 3-4 storeys;</p>	<p>1. Text amended as suggested;</p> <p>2. See 2 above;</p> <p>3. Suggestion passed to Street Lighting Section and to the Council officers responsible for planning and design of the Streets and Spaces improvement scheme;</p> <p>4. St Martin’s East is a public highway and its closure would need to be undertaken by the Council. The request has been passed to the appropriate officers;</p> <p>5. The boundary of the conservation area has been extended to include the bus garage. The site is included in the area to covered in a masterplan for the Old</p>

		Town area. General urban design principles have been included in the Waterside SPD (Supplementary Planning Document). The views on building height will be passed to relevant officers.
Visitor public meeting	to 1. Object to reference to redevelopment of car parks on New Street. They need to be retained to attract staff and for the convenience of clients; 2. Concerned about proposed access restrictions in the Carts Lane/Guildhall Lane area;	1. The appraisal indicates that the car parks neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. For this reason the removal of the car parks is included as a long term goal and reference to re-use of the land in the management and enhancement proposals has been improved to make this clear. 2. The proposed access restrictions to High Street, Carts Lane, Guildhall Lane are proposed as part of the Council's Streets and Spaces programme rather than the proposals resulting from the conservation appraisal. Visitors were directed that evening to the Town Hall where officers were available to discuss their concerns. They were also advised to take the matter up by phone or letter with the officers named on the 'Streets & Spaces' consultation letter.
Powrie Appleby, New Street	4 Concerned that reference to the car parks on New Street as inappropriate forms of development means that the Council intends to remove them. The car parks are needed for staff and clients;	See above.
Local residents	1.The mature trees in the Cathedral precinct need to be retained; 2.Litter, school children playing truant, drug users and street drinkers in the area are disheartening and put off people wanting to relax in the Cathedral	1. The trees on the west side of the Cathedral precinct are of townscape value but many others are in poor health or of poor form. Any decision to remove trees will be carefully considered in the

	<p>grounds; 3. Drug dealers are selling to students at the Grammar School right next to the Cathedral;</p>	<p>light of this, and of the age and vigour of any tree affected by new landscaping proposals. 2. These issues have been passed to the police and other responsible parties for action. However, the need to address these problems has been noted and will form part of the basis for considering any alterations to the design of the open spaces around the Cathedral.</p>
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8. Appendix 2 – Cathedral Guildhall Conservation Area Character Appraisal (document attached overleaf)