

PLANNING POLICY AND LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

18 APRIL 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (PLANNING)

A.1. CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR GREAT CLACTON, LAWFORD, BRADFIELD AND RAMSEY

(Report prepared by William Fuller)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT
<p>To report to Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee another set of four ‘Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans’ prepared for the Council by Essex Place Services, and for the Committee to agree a recommendation to Cabinet that they be published for consultation.</p>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
<p>As Members will recall, Brightlingsea Hall and All Saints Church Conservation Area Appraisal was considered at this Committee in January 2023 where a decision was made to progress that appraisal to Cabinet and then to public consultation.</p> <p>This report asks Members to consider the next Conservation Area Appraisals of Great Clacton, Lawford, Bradfield and Ramsey. The Committee is asked to consider these appraisals and to agree a recommendation to Cabinet to publish them for consultation.</p> <p>The Conservation Area Appraisals are those of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Great Clacton Conservation Area,• Lawford Conservation Area,• Bradfield Conservation Area, and,• Ramsey Conservation Area. <p>Once these Appraisals have been considered at this Committee, there will only be three Appraisals left to assess.</p>
RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>That the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee:</p> <p>a) endorses the new Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans for Great Clacton (Appendix 1), Lawford (Appendix 2), Bradfield (Appendix 3) and Ramsey (Appendix 4) Conservation Areas;</p>

- b) recommends to Cabinet that the above documents (forming Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4) be published for consultation with the public and other interested parties; and
- c) notes that Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans for the District's three remaining Conservation Areas will be brought before the Committee in due course.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The Conservation Area Appraisals will support the Corporate Plan 2020-24 (aligned with the core themes of Tendring4Growth and Community Leadership) through delivery of interventions aimed at:

- Delivering High Quality Services
- Community Leadership Through Partnerships
- Building Sustainable Communities for the Future
- Strong Finances and Governance
- A Growing and Inclusive Economy

RESOURCES AND RISK

Resources: TDC Officers are leading on this project with the input of Essex County Council Place Services under a service level agreement.

Adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisals will assist in attracting external funding for heritage related activity in the District. Potential sources of funding include:

- National Heritage Lottery Fund
- Section 106 Agreements
- Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas with Historic England

Risks: The adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisals supports the Council's duties to maintain and enhance heritage assets and so reduces the risk of the district's heritage assets being diminished or lost.

LEGAL

National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019), paragraph 185 states:

“Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets, and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;

(b) the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;

(c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and

(d) Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.”

Consideration of any legal implications of actions proposed in the strategy will be needed in due course.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Crime and Disorder: Heritage assets are, unfortunately, vulnerable to crime. Having a strategy for promoting heritage assets in the District should contribute positively to their maintenance.

Equality and Diversity: The recommendations in this report are aimed at benefitting all who live, shop, work and visit the District.

Health Inequalities: There is a growing wealth of evidence that demonstrates the role heritage plays in improving mental wellbeing and physical health. People who visit heritage sites reported higher life satisfaction and happiness scores, as well as lower anxiety (Department for Culture Media and Sport 2015). Across Essex there are a number of schemes and organisations to encourage and support healthy activity, such as Active Essex and Healthy Life Essex. Tendring’s heritage provides a positive platform to encourage people to enjoy the outdoors and take positive steps for their personal health and wellbeing. Heritage Trails, for example, are already established in Harwich and Dovercourt, Frinton-on-Sea, Clacton- on-Sea, Jaywick Sands and Walton- on-the-Naze, they encourage walkers to take routes through the historic environment. Promoting these to new groups and partnering with healthy organisations can open heritage to new audiences and increase wellbeing.

Area or Ward affected: All, with a focus on those where Conservation Areas are being reassessed.

Consultation/Public Engagement: Members will recall that it was agreed at the October Committee meeting to send the first five Conservation Area Appraisals to public consultation. Officers are in negotiation with Place Services on the exact arrangements for this. It is anticipated that this will take place at the end of April – after the closure of the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Garden Community Development Plan Document consultation – for a period of six weeks.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

Members will recall that the Council's Heritage Strategy was considered by the Local Plan and Planning Policy Committee on 29th October 2019. At that meeting it was resolved that the Committee noted the Strategy and comments made by Members at the meeting.

On the 20th of March 2020 Cabinet agreed to formally adopt the Council's Heritage Strategy. This Strategy contained a number of actions which were envisaged to be carried out by the Council and its partners throughout the lifetime of the Strategy. Two of these actions were for Officers to update Conservation Area Appraisals and prepare a 'Local List' of non-designated heritage assets within the District.

After identifying the first twelve Conservation Areas to be assessed in 2021, Members then agreed the thirteenth Appraisal for Brightlingsea Hall & All Saints Church in January of this year.

Members are now presented with the next four draft Conservation Area Appraisals (Nos. 14, 15, 16 and 17);

- Great Clacton Conservation Area,
- Lawford Conservation Area,
- Bradfield Conservation Area and
- Ramsey Conservation Area

Officers intend to review the last three remaining Council's Conservation Areas as soon as possible in the new Municipal Year.

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS

Each of the Conservation Area Appraisals share a broadly similar structure. At the start of each Appraisal a section detailing the context and general character of the Conservation Area and the evolution of the Conservation Area is given.

The following areas of assessment are specific to each Conservation Area so have their own section headings.

Alterations To Boundaries

At Great Clacton, to the south of the churchyard and east of the twentieth century vicarage, mid-twentieth century housing has been augmented with a new development of further bungalows at the northern end of Nightingale Way, on previously undeveloped land. These are characterful in design and have been carefully detailed but are not of sufficient architectural quality to merit inclusion in the Conservation Area. It is also proposed to omit an area of unkempt scrubland directly fronting Valley Road and a tarmacked area behind this surrounding the Army Cadets' building located off Valley

Road. The map on page 4 of the Appraisal shows the proposed amended Conservation Area boundary.

For Lawford the proposed addition to the Conservation Area includes the Ogilvie Hall and early twentieth century social housing with some later infill development.

The boundary of the Conservation Area shall be expanded eastwards along Wignall Street to include Nos. 11-16 Wignall Street on the southern side of the road. Together these buildings form a pleasing and uniform group on the approach to the historic core of Lawford. The buildings are of special historic interest and some architectural interest, representing a period of time when social housing was expanded in response to a post First World War national housing crisis.

The boundary change would also include the 1909 Ogilvie Hall, which is in the Arts and Crafts style and plays a prominent role in the approach to the historic core of Lawford.

At Bradfield it is proposed to revise the boundary to remove Old Hall House, Harwich Road, from the Conservation Area [Figure 4]. Built since the previous appraisal, Old Hall House [Figure 3] is not considered to reflect the prevailing character of the Conservation Area due to its construction date, massing, and appearance.

Minor alterations are also proposed to the northern edge of the Conservation Area's boundary to remove an outbuilding associated with Greenacres (a modern dwelling which is not within the Conservation Area boundary) on Station Road from within the Conservation Area. Other minor amendments are proposed to rationalise the Conservation Area boundary against existing plot boundaries. These are depicted on the map on the following page.

At Ramsey the modern properties in Windmill Close have been excluded. The west boundary of the designation has been moved to the lane adjacent to White House Harm. Windmill Close, and the properties within it, are not considered to contribute to special interest nor do they form part of the historic settlement.

A large portion of the Conservation Area has been removed to the south of the village. This area holds no architectural or historic interest in its own right and is better considered as part of the settlement's setting.

Three modern properties at the east of the Conservation Area have been removed from the designation.

The junction of The Street, Main Road and Wrabness Road has been added. This confluence of roads, and the triangular junction, have been in place since at least the mid-nineteenth century and form the gateway to this part of the Conservation Area. Marsh View and Revans have also been incorporated into the extension of the designation here. Whilst altered, the buildings form part of the historic building stock and termination of the former village envelope. Revans was also formerly the village store and one of the commercial buildings located on this road junction.

Other minor changes to the boundary have resulted from a tightening of the designation to take account of property boundaries which makes for more practical management of the designation.

Designated Heritage Assets

The Appraisals make note of the listed buildings, scheduled monuments and registered parks and gardens in each Conservation Area.

Proposed Non-designated heritage assets.

Members will note that there is some overlap between these Appraisals and the Local List project which came before Members in October last year. Each of the Conservation Area Appraisals proposes a number of buildings to be considered on the Council's Local List.

These buildings have been identified as they are either considered to be good examples of their type or architectural style, are prominent local landmarks, demonstrate use of local materials or design features, or are connected to local historical events, activities or people, and are all relatively complete in their survival.

At Great Clacton

- 11 North Road
- 17 North Road (The Great Clacton Surgery)
- 9 StJohn's Road (Foxes Garden and Furniture Shop)
- 397 and 399 Old Road (Vacant shop and Liberal Democrats office)
- 395 Old Road
- Former Public Convenience (Old Road, adjacent to The Ship public house)
- 406 and 404 Old Road
- Old Mill Cottage, 402 Old Road
- Eaglehurst, 6 Valley Road
- Great Clacton Methodist Church and adjacent semi-detached cottages on Valley Road
- 17 Valley Road • Sudbury House, Nightingale Way (outside of the Conservation Area boundary)

At Lawford

- Hall Farm
- Ogilvie Hall
- The Old School, Church Hill
- Woodman, Church Hill
- Almshouses
- 11-16 Wignall Street
- The Old Laundry

At Bradfield

- Bradfield Place
- Strangers' Home
- The Church of St Lawrence Lychgate

At Ramsey

- The Castle Public House;
- 12-14 The Street (excluding Owl Cottage which is Grade II Listed);

- 18 The Street (The Gables);
- 24-27 The Street;
- The former Methodist Chapel;
- Old Mill Cottage;
- 28-29 The Street (The Old Ramsey Cash Stores);
- The Windmill House; and
- Swan House.

Heritage at Risk

There are no buildings or features in the Great Clacton Conservation Area which are on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. However, Grade II listed 383 Old Road appears to have been unoccupied for several years and is in a neglected state, thus this building could be considered at risk. Grade II listed Great Clacton Hall also appears to be unoccupied following the closure of the Abbey Care Home formerly on these premises, though appears to be in a reasonable state of external repair.

At the time of writing in 2023, no buildings within the Lawford or Bradfield Conservation Areas feature on the national list of Heritage at Risk published by Historic England.

There are no buildings or features in the Ramsey Conservation Area which are on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. However, Grade II* listed Ramsey Windmill appears to have been unoccupied for several years and this building could be considered at risk. Given the condition of the Conservation Area, and the issues identified, this appraisal recommends the inclusion of Ramsey Conservation Area on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register.

Archaeology

Throughout these Conservation Areas there is the potential for a multitude of below-ground heritage assets yet to be discovered. In general, the appraisals promote a cautious approach to development, which might disturb or destroy these assets.

Assessment of significance

A detailed assessment of significance of each of the Conservation Areas is then presented. These Conservation Areas are split into distinct character areas. Each assessment considers the following features:

- Layout
- Building materials and boundary treatments
- Listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets.
- Other buildings
- Landscaping and open spaces
- Views

Opportunities for Enhancement

- At Great Clacton, due to its location, there are issues with traffic through the Conservation area

- All of the Conservation Areas would benefit from Interpretation of the historic features in the area
- At Great Clacton there are a number of vacant buildings in the Conservation area
- All areas suffer from loss of architectural detailing.
- Gt Clacton and Lawford also have street furniture that requires attention and inappropriate signage.
- Road surfacing is of poor quality particularly in Great Clacton
- At Great Clacton and Bradfield there are areas of poorly kept public open space
- All of the Conservation Areas suffer from inappropriate modern development

Interestingly, in this section whilst considering Ramsey Conservation Area there is a like-for-like photographic study of views throughout the village.

Management Proposals

- Production of a list of local non-designated heritage assets
- The council using Article 4 Directions and its enforcement powers within all Conservation Areas
- Production of heritage guidance leaflets for residents and business owners
- The Council should work closely with the Highways Authority to address street clutter and signage in Great Clacton and Lawford Conservation Areas
- Bradfield would benefit from heritage interpretation within the Conservation Area.

Funding Opportunities

- Heritage lottery fund
- S106 Agreements
- Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas

CONCLUSION

Taking into account the discussion had at this meeting, Members of the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee are asked to recommend to Cabinet that the three Conservation Areas to be put to a six-week public consultation.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Great Clacton Conservation Area Appraisal
 Appendix 2 – Lawford Conservation Area Appraisal
 Appendix 3 – Bradfield Conservation Area Appraisal
 Appendix 4 – Ramsey Conservation Area Appraisal

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None