

**Analysis of Responses received on draft Middleton One Row Conservation Area Character Appraisal July 2010**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Action</b>
Member of the public	Suitable boundary additions to include noteworthy houses.	Noted. It has been decided not to proceed with the proposed boundary additions at this time for three reasons: 1. The proposed boundary additions were minimal so would not provide enough benefit to justify the resources. 2. Proceeding with the Character Appraisal but not the boundary additions involves fewer resources and is more efficient. 3. The proposed boundary additions are currently adjacent to the Conservation Area so currently have protection because development on such sites would be considered to affect the setting of the Conservation Area. We may consider boundary additions in the future, we can at any time it is considered expedient.
	Minor factual inaccuracies: Thorntree House and Thorntree Lodge have been juxtaposed.	Noted and agreed, however this is Ordinance Survey data we cannot correct. We have informed them it requires correcting.
	Would support the Article 4 (2) Direction to further protect the Conservation Area but are aware it could be costly to repair some original features.	Noted. Onus on residents to retain and repair original features should an Article 4 (2) Direction be put in place, will be flexible for modern properties because it will be about retaining or reinstating features appropriate to the age of the property, so will not be unreasonable.
	One key issue within the Conservation Area is ensuring the character provided by historic properties is not lost.	Noted and agreed. Without an Article 4 (2) Direction residents are able to make many changes to their homes, often the very sort of changes that alter character such as window and door replacement, without the need for planning permission. Should residents be broadly supportive of an Article 4 (2) Direction we hope we could better protect the area's character.
	Another key issue is the possible detrimental effect from new developments.	Noted and agreed. New development in a Conservation Area is often sensitive and needs to be of high quality and well designed to fit in.
	Note reference to 'curved entrance to Thorntree House in Appraisal. In this context there are plans to have the gate blocked up, which if carried out would be detrimental to the area.	Understand we granted approval for the entrance to be blocked (but not removed, so it could be unblocked in the future), but this does not necessarily mean it will be implemented.

Member of the public	Suggest including the barn and farm buildings to the rear of no. 3 The Front as a new boundary addition.	It has been decided not to proceed with the proposed boundary additions at this time for three reasons: 1. The proposed boundary additions were minimal so would not provide enough benefit to justify the resources. 2. Proceeding with the Character Appraisal but not the boundary additions involves fewer resources and is more efficient. 3. The proposed boundary additions are currently adjacent to the Conservation Area so currently have protection because development on such sites would be considered to affect the setting of the Conservation Area. We may consider boundary additions in the future, we can at any time it is considered expedient.
	Supportive of an Article 4 (2) Direction because it protects our overall environment and should retain current rear gardens from new development.	Noted and agreed. Conservation Area designation can be effective at resisting garden land development, where greenspace is evidenced to be characteristic of the Conservation Area, as with Middleton One Row. This Character Appraisal should assist but support of Planners and Elected Members is required to implement this.
	The key issue is the retention of historic structures, including brick walls, throughout.	Noted and agreed. Where we have planning control over historic buildings and structures we should use it to protect them, if inappropriate change is proposed.
Member of the public	Agree with proposed boundary additions. Feel they will increase the area protected from further invasive development. Ask if this means we will use greater control over planning applications?	It has been decided not to proceed with the proposed boundary additions at this time for three reasons: 1. The proposed boundary additions were minimal so would not provide enough benefit to justify the resources. 2. Proceeding with the Character Appraisal but not the boundary additions involves fewer resources and is more efficient. 3. The proposed boundary additions are currently adjacent to the Conservation Area so currently have protection because development on such sites would be considered to affect the setting of the Conservation Area. We may consider boundary additions in the future, we can at any time it is considered expedient.
	Supports and Article 4 (2) Direction because it may help to stop insensitive 'restorations' such as uPVC windows, larger plain windows instead of smaller paned ones in keeping with the building's character and date. Should help preserve the local building character.	Noted and agreed. Article 4 (2) Directions allow planning control over replacement windows where change is proposed, which should enable us to guide residents towards appropriate windows, which will impact positively on the Conservation Area and potentially increase the value of their house.

	<p>One key issue within the Conservation Area is the infilling of open spaces or splitting of large gardens to building new houses, Thorntree Lodge and houses on Middleton Lane.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed. The Appraisal highlights this as a risk to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, but can only be implemented with the support of Planners and Elected Members.</p>
	<p>The second key issue within the Conservation Area is the Church of St Lawrence, which is empty. If it is to be demolished what will happen to the resulting open area? Is it planned to restore and reopen the existing building?</p>	<p>We have been consulted by the Diocese of Durham about a proposal to declare the church redundant. This is very sad and we will work with the Diocese to help in any way we can, but we cannot prevent this happening. However, as Local Planning Authority we have control over development requiring planning permission and external alterations that we could argue would impact on the Conservation Area, but we have limited, if any, direct control over internal alterations because of Ecclesiastical Exemption (which negates the need for Listed Building Consent, but the Local Planning Authority, English Heritage and the public, via a site notice and press notice in a local paper, are notified of proposals).</p>
	<p>The Appraisal looks like a good thing! Anything which helps resist unsuitable development is very welcome.</p>	<p>Noted. The Appraisal is not intended to resist all change, but where change is appropriate, to manage it to ensure it impacts positively on the identified character, appearance and significance of the Conservation Area.</p>
<p>Member of the public</p>	<p>Does not agree with the proposed boundary additions. The potential imposition on properties some of which are post-war, is debatable in terms of the benefit to the Conservation Area.</p>	<p>It has been decided not to proceed with the proposed boundary additions at this time for three reasons: 1. The proposed boundary additions were minimal so would not provide enough benefit to justify the resources. 2. Proceeding with the Character Appraisal but not the boundary additions involves fewer resources and is more efficient. 3. The proposed boundary additions are currently adjacent to the Conservation Area so currently have protection because development on such sites would be considered to affect the setting of the Conservation Area. We may consider boundary additions in the future, we can at any time it is considered expedient.</p>

	Does not support the potential Article 4 (2) Direction because he feels it is a draconian measure give controls already in place within the Conservation Area.	Noted. This is an understandable view as the resident of a modern property within an historic area. However planning controls as a result of Conservation Area designation are limited to the need for Consent for demolition of large buildings and some walls and 6 weeks notice to undertake works to a tree. In the view of Central Government (through PPS5), English Heritage and the Conservation Officer, this is minimal control and does not allow the Authority to undertake its statutory duty to <i>preserve or enhance</i> the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
	The key issue within the Conservation Area is protecting the 'One Row' vista. The majority of Middleton Lane has already been developed and in some respects the horse has already bolted! Clearly the 'green' break on Middleton Lane must be protected.	Noted. Agree to some extent, protecting the 'One Row' is vital as is protecting the green break on Middleton Lane between Middleton St George and Middleton One Row. There is an argument that some of the character on Middleton Lane has been altered by the loss of garden land and greenspace.
Member of the public	Agreed with the proposed boundary additions, which are few in number. They are welcome to maintain the character of the village. The addition of the Old School House is excellent. There is a great need to retain the green areas to enhance the locality.	Noted and agreed. The Appraisal highlights the need to retain green areas.
	<u>Supports an Article 4 (2) Direction.</u>	<u>Noted.</u>
	The key issue is that even if the proposed Appraisal is accepted what impact will it have on decision making? Past experience shows that a few years after approval and good intentions are set aside, particularly regarding the retention of green areas.	Noted and agreed. An adopted Appraisal can only be implemented with the support of Planners and Elected Members. The issue of the gap between what is said and what is done has been raised and the response was positive and supportive of the role of Conservation Areas and Character Appraisals.
Member of the public	Agree to the boundary additions, think they will be a good improvement to the village.	It has been decided not to proceed with the proposed boundary additions at this time for three reasons: 1. The proposed boundary additions were minimal so would not provide enough benefit to justify the resources. 2. Proceeding with the Character Appraisal but not the boundary additions involves fewer resources and is more efficient. 3. The proposed boundary additions are currently adjacent to the Conservation Area so currently have protection because development on such sites would be considered to affect the setting of the Conservation Area. We may consider boundary additions in the future, we can at any time it is considered expedient.
	Support and Article 4 (2) Direction, think it will improve the area.	Noted.

	The key issue is improvement and keeping the Listed Buildings looking good.	We have a statutory duty to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area as required by The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. There is a general duty on owners of Listed Buildings to keep them in a good state of repair, which we encourage and assist where we can.
Member of the public	Agrees with the proposed boundary additions although the views of the residents living in the properties should carry some weight.	It has been decided not to proceed with the proposed boundary additions at this time for three reasons: 1. The proposed boundary additions were minimal so would not provide enough benefit to justify the resources. 2. Proceeding with the Character Appraisal but not the boundary additions involves fewer resources and is more efficient. 3. The proposed boundary additions are currently adjacent to the Conservation Area so currently have protection because development on such sites would be considered to affect the setting of the Conservation Area. We may consider boundary additions in the future, we can at any time it is considered expedient.
	Supports an Article 4 (2) Direction, to retain original frontages and the character of the frontage and therefore the village as a whole.	Noted and agreed.
	The key issue within the Conservation Area is the lack of information before now. Suggest signage such as "You are now entering a Conservation Area" and information to new residents when they move in.	Such signage would be unlikely to be appropriate, but people are made aware when they purchase a property that it lies within a Conservation Area.
	There appears to be no recognition or evidence of Middleton St George's heavy industrial past.	Middleton St George is a separate settlement from Middleton One Row, is much younger and does indeed have an industrial past because it's sitting is as a result of the railway line.
	Previous experience (Thorntree Villas) shows that double standards exist in enforcement in both building regulations and tree conservation. There are differences in building details and the many dead trees, yet no action has been taken.	This is an ongoing issue which the Council is addressing.
	Member of the public	Supports the proposed boundary additions because they are common sense
	Supports an Article 4 (2) Direction to maintain the character of the village and to ensure sympathetic restorations are made. To inhibit / restrict selfish acts of monetary investment and greed.	Noted. The Direction is aimed at ensuring the character and appearance of the Conservation Area can be preserved or enhanced.

	Thinks the key issues are the repair of the Church to make it safe and stable, to protect mature and beautiful trees, to guard against unsuitable buildings, to save gardens from the developers and to maintain the open spaces.	Agree, these issue are raised in the Appraisal. Development itself is not necessarily negative, in fact it can be positive; new development needs to respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and there are sites that are not appropriate for development.
Member of the public	Agree with proposed boundary additions because any action to conserve the beauty and character of the village has our full support. We commend our Parish Council for their excellent work.	It has been decided not to proceed with the proposed boundary additions at this time for three reasons: 1. The proposed boundary additions were minimal so would not provide enough benefit to justify the resources. 2. Proceeding with the Character Appraisal but not the boundary additions involves fewer resources and is more efficient. 3. The proposed boundary additions are currently adjacent to the Conservation Area so currently have protection because development on such sites would be considered to affect the setting of the Conservation Area. We may consider boundary additions in the future, we can at any time it is considered expedient.
	Support an Article 4 (2) Direction because any relevant alteration or improvement would not be opposed unless it damaged the property.	Noted and agreed. The Direction would give the Council planning control over more alterations to properties, but this control would be used to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and would be flexible, particularly where change is proposed to modern rather than historic buildings.
	Think the key issue is to preserve historic properties and areas of interest.	Noted.
	Spotted a typing error on page 4: the potential Article 4 (2) Direction is not on page 26 as stated, it is on page 36.	Noted, this will be corrected in the final Appraisal.
Member of the public	They do not agree with the proposed boundary additions because they suggest focus should be on proper and efficient enforcement of the current area and the proposed boundary additions will not add anything to enhancing to the character of the village plus the local authority budget should be spend on maintaining and supporting the original area. They do not wish their property, the Red House, to be included in the proposed extension to the Conservation Area.	It has been decided not to proceed with the proposed boundary additions at this time for three reasons: 1. The proposed boundary additions were minimal so would not provide enough benefit to justify the resources. 2. Proceeding with the Character Appraisal but not the boundary additions involves fewer resources and is more efficient. 3. The proposed boundary additions are currently adjacent to the Conservation Area so currently have protection because development on such sites would be considered to affect the setting of the Conservation Area. We may consider boundary additions in the future, we can at any time it is considered expedient.

	Factual inaccuracy: about the traditional boundary treatment of stone walls to Church Lane.	It is agreed that there are red brick boundary walls to Church Lane, which will be amended in the document. However there is a stone boundary wall as near the Scheduled Monument, as evidenced by the photograph in the document.
	They do not support the proposed Article 4 (2) Direction because they believe it would place sever restrictions on local residents and could involve them in serious expense which some could not afford.	Noted although it is considered Conservation Area designation alone is not sufficient to enable the Council to ensure the significance of the Conservation Areas is sustained or enhanced, to meet the requirements of Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, which encourages the use of Article 4 (2) Directions.
Member of the public	Suggested correction of typing errors.	Noted, these will be corrected in the finalised Appraisal.
	Comment that the group Tree Preservation Order on trees in Almora Wood are a very significant feature of the Conservation Area. Suggest a photograph would be useful.	Noted and agreed. Further information about the positive contribution trees and protected trees make to the Conservation Area has been added to the Appraisal. Additionally tree preservation order data is now included on the Key Map, although there is a caveat in the Appraisal that we cannot guarantee the preciseness of the tree data.
	Comment that the street lights in Middleton Lane are of a more pleasing design than those erected with the new housing development in the early part of this century. The two-tone green on the columns is particularly appropriate for a Conservation Area and it is to be hoped there is to be no change.	Noted and agreed. Where we have input on new or changes to existing lighting, this message will be put across.
	There is no mention of the very negative impact the overhead electricity supply cables make on the Conservation Area.	Noted and agreed, this can be included in the document.
	Suggests the handsome pre-war house at Low Tile Close, Roman Way should be a Building of Local Interest.	Noted and agreed, this property was considered but has not been proposed to be brought within the boundary of the Conservation Area so could not be identified as a Building of Local Interest.
	The use of the words 'house prices' is entirely inappropriate.	There is evidence from English Heritage's survey of estate agents that, for example, unsympathetic replacement windows and doors, particularly plastic/PVCu, is the single biggest threat to property values in Conservation Areas. Therefore it is not such a leap to link the use of an Article 4 (2) Direction, which can resist the use of uPVC where it is considered inappropriate, with improved house prices. This is why the Appraisal says an Article 4 (2) Direction can, rather than will, improve house prices, because it is possible but not guaranteed.

	<p>He opposes the introduction of an Article 4 (2) Direction because the area is not of a sufficiently high calibre to warrant such a draconian measure.</p>	<p>The area is considered of a very high calibre, one of Darlington's finest Conservation Areas. It is felt, and English Heritage recommend, that Article 4(2) Direction is the only way to protect Conservation Areas, particularly those relatively intact but at risk from the cumulative impact of numerous, minor alterations to dwellings.</p>
Member of the public	<p>He does not consider either of the two groups of houses proposed to be added conforms to any concept of the Conservation Area character. Suggests there is a case to taking Church Lane and its offshoots out of the Conservation Area altogether.</p>	<p>It has been decided not to proceed with the proposed boundary additions at this time for three reasons: 1. The proposed boundary additions were minimal so would not provide enough benefit to justify the resources. 2. Proceeding with the Character Appraisal but not the boundary additions involves fewer resources and is more efficient. 3. The proposed boundary additions are currently adjacent to the Conservation Area so currently have protection because development on such sites would be considered to affect the setting of the Conservation Area. We may consider boundary additions in the future, we can at any time it is considered expedient.</p>
	<p>Suggests some minor factual and typing errors are corrected.</p>	<p>Noted, these will be corrected in the finalised Appraisal.</p>
	<p>There seems to be no great confidence that there was actually a Roman road here, though many do believe it.</p>	<p>Noted, it is understood there was but I have not found substantial documentary evidence that this was the case.</p>
	<p>Comment about the assertion about the cause of the disappearance of the two villages. Suggests caution unless it is source-referenced.</p>	<p>Noted. Sources are invaluable and I reference them as used. Where content is not academically sourced it is caveated to ensure it is stated as a general understanding rather than fact.</p>
	<p>Comment that Middleton One Row was farmed by small land owners, his understanding is that the major land owners in the area were strongly represented and asks this assertion is only made on the basis of sourced evidence.</p>	<p>This information in the Appraisal is provided as a general understanding rather than fact because the source is journalistic rather than academic; equally no evidence has been found to the contrary although access to sources is limited to what is in the library so agree there may be sources that evidence this. The content of the Appraisal is meant to help explain patterns of development, but is not intended or provided as an academic piece of work.</p>
	<p>He is against the idea of making the Scheduled Monument (and many other things like it) too publicly.</p>	<p>There is certainly a balance to be found to enable people to enjoy but not spoil heritage. We will aim to reach this balance.</p>
	<p>From our description of an Article 4 (2) Direction he would oppose introducing it because it is hard to see it would provide any material advantage and people are very sensitive to the irritations of official interference.</p>	<p>Noted. We are of the opinion that there would be considerable material advantage to bringing in the Direction. We are aware it would not necessarily be a popular decision with everyone and would be as flexible and reasonable as we can in managing it.</p>



Cramming houses behind and between villas certainly changes the character of the road and converting villas to multiple-occupancy also starts a visible process of decay. If this cannot be prevented by the status of Conservation Area, it is not worth the cost and trouble of having one.

Noted and agreed. The Appraisal is intended to assist with this, but the support of Planners and Elected Members is required to prevent such changes.