
COATHAM MUNDEVILLE CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor John Williams, Economy Portfolio

Responsible Director - Richard Alty, Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To report the outcome of the consultation process for the Coatham Mundeville Conservation Area Character Appraisal.
2. To seek Members' approval of the appended Coatham Mundeville Conservation Area Character, **Appendix 1**.

Appraisal Summary

3. Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 says that it is the duty of Local Planning Authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are Conservation Areas.
4. This is achieved through Conservation Area Character Appraisals and ultimately through detailed policy in a Conservation Supplementary Planning Document that draws on the Appraisals.
5. The Environment Scrutiny Review Action Plan adopted by the Cabinet highlighted the need for Conservation Area Character Appraisals to be undertaken.
6. Through Appraisals, sound decisions can be made on planning applications received for development within Conservation Areas.
7. Coatham Mundeville is the sixth in a programme of 16 Conservation Area Character Appraisals as shown in the timetable considered by Environment and Scrutiny on 8 January 2009.

Recommendation

8. It is recommended that Cabinet approve the **attached** Coatham Mundeville Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

Reason

9. The recommendation is supported to provide a document to assist in the preservation and enhancement of the Coatham Mundeville Conservation Area.

Richard Alty
Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)

Background Papers

Coatham Mundeville Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Heather Grimshaw : Extension 2604

S17 Crime and Disorder	No issues are raised.
Health and Well Being	The Appraisal encourages a high standard of environment, preserving and enhancing existing.
Sustainability	The Appraisal encourages a high quality, sustainable environment within the Conservation Area.
Diversity	No issues are raised.
Wards Affected	Sadberge and Whessoe
Groups Affected	Residents of Coatham Mundeville Conservation Area.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not recommend a change to the Council's budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	No
Urgent Decision	For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this does not represent an urgent matter.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The Planning and Development Brief addresses a number of priorities within this strategy including a Green Darlington and well-designed Darlington, Quality of Life and Distinctive Darlington.
Efficiency	Conservation Area Character Appraisals assess the character and appearance of the area and look at design requirements for new development. This should lead to savings in officer time and workload later in the planning application process.

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

10. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a duty on Local Planning Authorities to designate as Conservation Areas any *areas that from time to time they determine are* 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Conservation Areas are places where buildings and the spaces around them interact to form distinctly recognisable areas of special quality and interest.
11. Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 emphasises that it is the duty of Local Planning Authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are Conservation Areas.
12. PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment stresses the need for Local Planning Authorities to make an assessment of the special interest, character and appearance of all Conservation Areas in their areas through an Appraisal.
13. The Environment Scrutiny Review Action Plan adopted by the Cabinet highlighted the need for Conservation Area Character Appraisals to be undertaken.
14. Darlington has 16 Conservation Areas designated between 1978 and 1997; Coatham Mundeville was designated on 6 March 1980. The Appraisal is the sixth in a programme of 16 Conservation Area Character Appraisals as shown in the timetable taken to Environment and Scrutiny on 8 January 2009. The target is to produce 3 Appraisals a year, thereby ensuring all Conservation Areas have Appraisals in place by 2012.
15. Character Appraisals are a tool to assist in the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. Through Appraisals, areas (or buildings) and spaces of special landscape or historic and / or architectural character can be highlighted as possessing particular interest, and being worthy of preservation and enhancement. Features of special interest, such as historic walls, stiles, open spaces, trees or historic surfaces, for example cobbles, Yorkshire flags or setts, can be highlighted through the Appraisal.
16. The production of a Character Appraisal is a step in the process of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of a designated area, and to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about its future. Undertaking an Appraisal offers the opportunity to re-asses the designated area and to evaluate and record its special interest. An Appraisal is not an end in itself, the process should lead to a better understanding of the character of the area and what makes it the place it is today, and so provide the basis for a positive Management Plan of the Area and / or an Article 4 Direction to remove Permitted Development Rights. Appraisals provide a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for Development Plan policies and future Development Control decisions.

Methodology

17. Defining the 'special interest' of an area is the main purpose of an Appraisal and is gained from the area's appearance but other senses and experiences, local environmental conditions and historical associations can be drawn on.
18. Historic street patterns (building plots, layouts and the relationship of buildings to open spaces), archaeology (including any Scheduled Ancient Monuments), buildings (listed or unlisted), spaces and townscape, materials, green spaces, uses and the built environment and landscape can all contribute towards the character of an area.
19. The document is an assessment of the area's special architectural and historic interest, based on careful analysis of the area as a result of time spent in the area and academic literature sources.

Consultation

20. Public participation is an integral part of the Appraisal process to encourage valuable public understanding and 'ownership'. The formal consultation period ran from Monday 10 February until Friday 20 March 2009, during which events were held and people were encouraged to comment on the draft Appraisal.
21. Clearly residents of the Conservation Area were a high priority and were likely to want more input than those living elsewhere in the Borough. Therefore a participation event was held at Brafferton Village Hall between 18:30 and 20:00 on Tuesday 11 February 2009. Posters were produced and put up in the village in the month before the consultation period began and residents were invited to drop-in at the event via letters posted to all residents and nearby residents of the village; these letters included a response form and free-post envelope to return responses.
22. An unstaffed exhibition was set up in the Town Hall reception during Town Hall opening hours from Wednesday 11 February until Friday 13 February 2009. Displays boards were put up, copies of the draft Appraisal were available for viewing or taking away and response forms were provided. Colleagues on reception were asked to inform the Conservation Officer if members of the public wanted to ask questions or make comments verbally.
23. Emails and a link to the electronic copy of the draft Appraisal were sent internally to senior officers within Planning, Highways, Building Control, Estates and the Communications Section.
24. Externally, letters and copies of the draft Appraisal were sent to Councillor Brian Jones (the Ward Member for Sadberge and Whessoe), Durham County Council's Archaeology section, the Parish Meeting, Darlington Civic Trust, English Heritage, the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) and the Victorian Society.

Key Findings from the Consultation

25. 3 formal responses were received: 2 letters, one from English Heritage and one from the CPRE, both were entirely supportive and recommended no alterations to the draft Appraisal. 1 email was received from The Council's Highways section, raising no Highways issues with the Appraisal nor suggesting any alterations to the draft Appraisal
26. The participation event held at Brafferton Village Hall was particularly successful, with a turnout of approximately 15 people, which is good considering there are less than 25 properties within the designated Conservation Area. People were pleased about the interest being taken in their village. Again comments were supportive and people were more than willing to provide anecdotal evidence and additional social history for the area. Those residents who attended were happy with the Appraisal and recommended no alterations.

Conclusions

27. The attached Coatham Mundeville Conservation Area Character Appraisal is the sixth in a series of Appraisals concerning the 16 Conservation Areas in the Borough. The final document required no amendment because none were suggested in the comments received. This document will provide a useful tool in assisting the preservation and enhancement of the Coatham Mundeville Conservation Area.