

**CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AGENDA
15 July 2010**



Thursday, 15 July 2010

at 6.30 pm

in the Croft Room, Borough Hall, Middlegate, Headland, TS24 0JD

Prior to the meeting there will be a short walk to look at two Townscape Heritage Initiative projects. For those wishing to take part please meet at 6.00pm outside the entrance to the Borough Buildings.

MEMBERS: CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond

Councillor Rob Cook, Chair of Planning Committee

Mr David Bentham, Hutton Avenue Residents Association

Mr John Cambridge, Headland Conservation Area Advisory Committee

Ms Joan Carroll, Hartlepool Civic Society

Ms Jo Lonsborough, Elwick Parish Council

Ms Julia Patterson, Park Residents Association

Mrs Maureen Smith, Hartlepool Archaeological and Historical Society

Mr Richard Tinker, Victorian Society

Mr Brian Walker, Greatham Parish Council

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of last meeting held on 29 April 2010
- 3 Matters arising
- 4 Limestone Landscape Partnership – Rural North Hartlepool (2011 To 2014)
- 5 Headland Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme
- 6 Draft Visual Appraisal Stranton
- 7 Any other business

CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

29 April 2010

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm at Bryan Hanson House, Hartlepool

Present: The Mayor, Stuart Drummond (In the Chair)
David Bentham, Hutton Avenue Residents Association
Joan Carroll, Civic Society
Jo Lonsborough, Elwick Parish Council
Julia Patterson, Park Residents Association
Richard Tinker, Victorian Society
Brian Walker, Greatham Parish Council

Officers: Sarah Scarr, Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager
Peter Graves, Townscape Heritage Initiative Manager
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

26. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Rob Cook and Andy Creed-Miles (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings).

27. Minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2010

Confirmed as a true record

28. Matters Arising

Market Hotel – The Chair advised members that there were no plans to demolish the building and officers were working to find an alternative use to incorporate it as part of a future housing scheme. A development brief had been prepared in order to elicit interest. Concerns were raised that the building would stand out from those adjacent to it but the Chair indicated that the lateness of the objections in relation to the timetable for the housing scheme planning application had left the applicant with no time to redesign the housing scheme. Every effort would be made to incorporate the building appropriately.

Guidance leaflets – A member suggested leaflets be produced on wind turbines and solar panels. The Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager reported that a link to this information via the English Heritage website was provided on the Council's website. This would be made more prominent during the forthcoming website redesign.

Tunstall Court – The site had now been secured and no further fires reported. Officers were working with the owners to find a permanent solution.

Core Strategy – The Chair advised that the core strategy consultation was now closed and officers were collating the responses.

29. Review of Windows in Conservation Areas Policy

In February 2009 the Planning Committee agreed a policy relating to windows in conservation areas, whereby residents were permitted to use modern materials when replacing windows providing certain design criteria were met. Residents in all conservation areas were made aware of the policy, firstly by letter and more recently through a series of leaflets outlining the change in policy and providing details on the repair and maintenance of traditional windows. Since the introduction of the policy 7 applications had been submitted for replacement UPVC windows with a further four applications for timber windows. These numbers represented a very small proportion of the 900 properties in Hartlepool's conservation areas. Before and after photographs of properties where UPVC sliding sash windows had been installed were appended to the report along with a copy of the policy.

Members still had concerns regarding the use of UPVC rather than traditional materials however they accepted that the current policy was a vast improvement given the number of planning applications which had been approved by the committee contrary to officer advice and national conservation policy. The inability of manufacturers to replicate certain features of traditional windows was highlighted as a problem and officers were asked to encourage manufacturers to be more responsive to these needs. The Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager also referred to the replacement of traditional timber doors with UPVC saying that often residents were unaware they needed permission. Officers were now advising anyone submitting an application for replacement windows of the rules regarding replacement doors.

Decision

That the review of the policy be noted.

30. Greatham Conservation Area Appraisal Final Document

Members were advised that the final appraisal report for the Greatham conservation area was complete. This followed research by Council officers and consultation with residents, ward members, the Parish Council and the Hospital of God, a major property owner in the village. Details of the consultation responses were appended to the report. A summary of the appraisal findings was given within the report. A number of key issues would need to be addressed as follows:

Design statement for Greatham

Potential extension to the Article 4 direction
Environmental investment
Potential properties for local list

An action plan, appended to the report, had been produced outlining ways in which these issues could be addressed through existing working practices.

Members expressed their support for the document. Concerns were raised regarding recent problems with traffic calming in the village. The representative of Greatham Parish Council advised that bollards had recently been installed and previous plans for pinch points were currently under review. The proposed extension to the Article 4 direction was also discussed. The Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager indicated that the only property subject to an Article 4 direction related to the use of a building for farming purposes and as this would be unsuitable for other properties a new Article 4 direction would be required rather than just an extension of the existing direction.

Decision

That the appraisal and action plan be noted.

31. Elwick Conservation Area Appraisal Final Document

Members were advised that the final appraisal report for the Elwick conservation area was complete. This followed research by Council officers and consultation with residents, ward members and the Parish Council. Details of the consultation responses were appended to the report. A summary of the appraisal findings was given within the report. A number of key issues would need to be addressed as follows:

Design statement for Elwick
Existing Article 4 direction
Environmental investment
Alteration to the conservation area boundary
Potential properties for local list

An action plan, appended to the report, had been produced outlining ways in which these issues could be addressed through existing working practices.

Members expressed their support for the document. They queried whether Council officers would be able to carry out a design study for the conservation areas. The Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager felt it would be preferable to hire outside consultants as internal officers might not have the necessary knowledge. Payment would need to be made to both internal and external officers so cost would not have an impact. Members also suggested the removal of 3 telegraph poles and the reinstatement of a traditional red telephone box would improve the public realm.

Decision

That the appraisal and action plan be noted.

32. Planning Policy Statement 5 : Planning for the Historic Environment

Members were advised that a new planning policy statement relating to listed buildings, conservation areas and archaeology had recently been released by the Department for Communities and Local Government. A copy of the policy was circulated. The aim of the policy was to streamline the system by referring to these structures now as 'heritage assets'. There would be a need to identifying their significance and put this information on a database known as the Historic Environment Record. People could then research this database before making planning applications. A copy of the policy statement practice guide could be sent out to members upon request. Members referred to PPG15 which had been in place since 1984 saying they hoped there would not be too much loss of detailed control. The Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager commented that the policies had changed slightly but there was detail in the guidance document to support this. It was currently too early to know what effect these changes would have.

Decision

That the report be noted.

33. Any Other Business

Training - The Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager advised members that a number of training courses were available throughout the year. These covered a wide variety of topics including sash windows, lime and blacksmithing. Fees were minimal or free. Members were provided with contact details should they wish to attend.

Archive Buildings – The representative for the Victorian Society reported that a letter had been submitted to his organisation objecting to the proposed alterations to the listed Archive Buildings. Officers were aware of this objection, indicating that the matter had now been partly determined. The side door, which was the bone of contention, would be considered separate from the rest of the building. Members queried the terms of the sale of the building to Cleveland College of Art and Design, the Chair advised that there were covenants in place regarding the use of the building for education and that the Council would be given first refusal should the College decide to sell at a later date.

The meeting concluded at 7:40 pm.

CHAIR

Report of: Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

Subject: LIMESTONE LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP - RURAL NORTH HARTLEPOOL (2011 TO 2014)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report will update the committee on a project currently being carried out within eastern County Durham and parts of Sunderland, South Tyneside, Hartlepool and Durham known as the Limestone Landscape Partnership.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Limestone Landscapes Partnership is a funding initiative based on the underlying limestone geology of the region which stretches from South Shields in the north to Hartlepool in the south and partly out to Bishop Auckland in the west. The underlying limestone geology has influenced a diverse and in some ways unique fauna and flora, a distinct built history in the form of the villages and settlements within it, using the limestone as a building material and the agricultural and industrial activities which have taken place.
- 2.2 The purpose of the Limestone Landscapes Partnership is to develop a variety of projects with partners from local authorities, voluntary groups, private individuals and trusts that respect and enhance this unique area and its character. It is interested in specific projects which have links to the biodiversity, geology, cultural heritage, archaeology and historic landscape within the limestone landscape. The Partnership will be overseen by a Steering Group made up of Partnership members which Hartlepool Council has been invited to join.

3. OUTLINE OF GRANT APPLICATION

- 3.1 On the basis of the aims of the Limestone Landscape Partnership the Council has made an application based on multi-element, interlinked projects on the separate themes of ecology, landscape, history, archaeology and geology utilising increased public access and interpretation, as a method of connecting the projects together. The Limestone Landscape area extends to the northern part of Hartlepool only, which is the extent of the limestone geology. Therefore for the project area is based around the historic villages of Hart and Elwick and extending north to Heselden Dene. A plan of this area will be provided at the meeting. The individual projects are described in detail below.
- 3.2 **Ecology Project** – The ecology project is to investigate more closely wildlife areas which have either not been surveyed at all or where there have been few surveys undertaken in any detail. Species of plants and animals, thought to be extinct in the immediate area, may still be present. Surveys will

establish whether this is the case. The areas covered will include the Heselden Dene / Crimdon Dene woodland complex and areas around Elwick. The survey work is to be undertaken by the Councils Ecologist, expert volunteers and individuals. The results will inform management options for identified species of conservation concern and form the basis of interpretative material for the public visiting the area. Part of the project will also be positive management to restore and enhance a number of Local Wildlife sites.

- 3.3 **Built History Project-** The built history project is to be based on Hart and Elwick villages. A heritage project was undertaken in Hart in autumn 2009 by Tees Archaeology. The additional project under the Limestone Landscape Partnership is proposed to extend the work already completed at Hart by engaging consultants to work with village residents to produce a village historic atlas and environmental design study. Elwick has been subject to a conservation area appraisal which identified that improvements could be achieved to the environment of the village green. The proposed project is to employ a landscape design consultant to produce a village design statement involving the community in the design process and undertake a heritage project similar to that undertaken at Hart, with Council officers providing guidance and advice.
- 3.4 **Public Access Project –** This project looks to improve the accessibility of existing public rights of way and create links by providing new rights of way and access. The project has three elements with the first part centred on Heselden, Nesbitt, Crimdon and Thorpe Bulmer Denes to the north of the project area. This part of the project looks to improve existing access, utilising any results from the ecology surveys to improve public appreciation. The second part of the project is based around Hart village and its aim is to improve the existing rights of way network, creating new linkages including those to Elwick. The third part of the project will be around Elwick and like Hart will create new foot path linkages and access paths, using any results from the ecology and heritage studies to improve public appreciation.
- 3.5 **Tree Survey Project –** This project is to survey and interpret significant trees in the landscape (as part of further public appreciation) in the project area next to existing rights of way or extensions to right of way and within the villages of Hart and Elwick. Part of the project will be the planting of future landmark trees and management of trees within specific locations like the villages of Hart and Elwick.
- 3.6 **Geology Project –** This project is to utilise working and disused quarries in the project area to allow public appreciation of the underlying limestone geology. It is proposed that this project will be developed over the 3 years of the Limestone Landscape Project with implementation subsequent to it.

4. PROJECT BENEFITS

- 4.1 The area in question has only received small amounts of public investment previously, relative to areas like the Headland or the centre of Hartlepool for example. The proposed scheme would redress this. The ecology and tree

survey projects will be beneficial in their own right in the understanding of the area but also increasing public appreciation of the area for those that live there or for those visiting. The public footpath project will further increase resident and visitor appreciation of this part of Hartlepool and will have benefits for physical and mental health by encouraging walking. The history element of the project will again increase resident and visitor understanding of the area, but also by undertaking environmental village design studies, can lead to further investment in the village environments of Hart and Elwick after the Limestone Landscape project is completed, by defining issues together with costings to be addressed subsequently.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the committee notes the proposed application to the Limestone Landscape Project.

Report of: Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

Subject: HEADLAND TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE SCHEME

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report will update the committee on the work carried out as part of the Headland Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme which has recently come to an end.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) commenced in September 2001. The original THI was a programme of works totalling £7.36 million comprising a £1 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund with the remainder being made up of funding from Single Regeneration Budget and Council funding. The THI was a five year programme until 2006 but received several extensions of time until December 2009.

2.2 The THI programme consisted of several elements including

- nine key buildings,
- a railing restoration scheme,
- conservation grants for residential properties and
- an environmental improvement programme.

2.3 The presence of the THI stimulated further investment in the heritage assets of the Headland on projects which were not in the original THI, like the Heugh Gun Battery, Borough Buildings and St Hilda's Church (an additional £2.28 million overall). Increased investment also occurred within the THI with £6.5 million being spent on environmental improvements, as against the original £3.12 million in the THI application. The eventual investment from public and charitable source has amounted to £11million against the original £7.36million intended.

3 TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE PROJECTS

3.1 Outlined below is a summary of the schemes completed as part of the THI programme.

3.2 **Victoria Buildings** – This is a grade II listed building that sat empty for well over 10 years with structural problems and disrepair to all elements externally. A THI grant of £200,000 was provided to undertake structural repairs, re-roofing, external joinery consisting of windows and shop fronts, rainwater goods and internal repairs and fitting out. The intended use was for a kitchen,

bedroom and bathroom furniture shop but the intervening economic circumstances have required a re-think.

- 3.3 **St Andrews Church** – St Andrews is also a grade II listed building that stood empty for a considerable period. It was last used as a community building owned by St Hilda's Church. A THI grant of £160,000 was provided to convert the building to a tea room and restaurant. Final fitting out works and decoration are being completed at the moment for opening prior to the Tall Ships event in August.
- 3.4 **Carnegie Building** - This former public library, built as a result of a donation from the Carnegie Foundation (one of 3,200 in the world) in 1903 is also a grade II listed building. The building was last used as a library some 2 or 3 years before the THI commenced. The building was converted to a local authority office and back office library use with a THI grant of £806,900, £237,000 of which came from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The works involved re-roofing, structural works, external repairs, some replacement joinery and joinery repairs. Internally there was extensive decorative plaster repairs (water had been coming in over a long period) and fitting out to accommodate a lift and the new use. The interior besides its rich decorative plaster work also had high quality timber panelling and doors and decorative mosaic floors.
- 3.5 **Railing Scheme** - The railing restoration scheme was to 50 properties to the sea front along The Promenade at York Place, Albion Terrace and South Crescent. The initial survey of the properties indicated that original examples of railing were still in situ and this provided the patterns to restore railings at York Place, Albion Terrace and South Crescent with only conjectural restoration to two properties occurring. Good historic photographs were also available. The project was difficult to implement as it required individually priced schemes for each property owner, the signing of individual legal agreements (with a 20% turnover rate of owners during the period of the scheme) and the need to run a contract as economically as possible. However with the exception of one owner all residents took part in the railing scheme against initial expectations of up to 10 or 20% either not being able or wishing to take part. The railing scheme was run in conjunction with investment in the restoration of individual houses and street environmental works along The Promenade with a mutual reinforcement achieved between the schemes.
- 3.6 **Environmental Improvement Programme** – The public realm works concentrated on the most visited areas of the Headland which are the sea front and the centre of the Headland outside the Borough Buildings. Along the sea front the scheme extended from Redheugh Gardens near the Heugh Battery, along The Promenade and the Town Wall to the former ferry landing. In detail the scheme consisted of new sandstone paving, lighting (based on an original Edwardian street column) and railings over Sandwellgate which is part of the Town Wall. These works complimented other investment in the railing scheme and restoration of dwellings along the sea front.

- 3.7 **Residential Conservation Grants** – This was a project aimed at 275 houses on the Headland of which approximately 90 were considered unfit. The budget for the project was £1,008,000 with the majority of the funding coming from the Councils Housing Investment allocation and from Single Regeneration Budget with £80,000 from the HLF. The scheme was intended to restore and repair houses to a conservation standard with re-roofing in natural slate, timber joinery and lime pointing. 72 houses were restored and improved with £876,000 spent. The investment was concentrated on those houses where other investment was taking place like the railing restoration scheme or street improvements to achieve a greater overall impact in specific areas.

4 UNCOMPLETED SCHEMES

- 4.1 The original project included nine key buildings however a number of the properties still require work to secure a long-term future. Of the nine properties grant assistance was provided to three. Work was able to start on the restoration of Durham Street Church based on an end use of flats through private finances. Two properties remain occupied but chose not to take part in the scheme (Kirkham Hotel and Harbour Tavern). Officers continue to work with owners of the remaining three properties to try and find a solution to the issues that were surrounding them however these projects are still ongoing.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That the committee notes the end of the Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme.

Report of: Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods

Subject: DRAFT VISUAL APPRAISAL STRANTON

1 Introduction

- 1.1 There is a need to review the existing eight conservation areas across the Borough. Full appraisals have been carried out on the Headland, Park and Grange conservation areas. This process takes time and as an interim measure visual assessments have been carried out in other conservation areas to ensure that a short document is available to define their character. Members of this committee have in the past considered visual appraisals of Church Street, Seaton Carew, Greatham and Elwick. A visual appraisal of the Stranton Conservation Area has been prepared.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 states that local planning authorities shall 'determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Once areas are designated it is then the 'duty of a local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly.' The starting point in reviewing an existing conservation area is to carry out an appraisal.
- 2.2 Appraisals are a means of assessing the key factors contributing to the appearance and character of existing and potential conservation areas, local authorities are encouraged to undertake periodically conservation area appraisals. There is no formal requirement for the form and content of appraisals, or the methodology to be used, but typically appraisals cover such subjects as historical development of the area, archaeological significance, prevalent building materials, the character of open spaces, the quality and relationship of buildings and also of trees.
- 2.3 The local authority have committed to carrying out two conservation area appraisals a year. It is acknowledged that as an interim measure there is a need to carry out an assessment of the other existing conservation areas to review their boundaries and ensure that their character is clearly defined. In order to do this visual assessments will be carried out in these areas.
- 2.4 The visual assessments will be based on the English Heritage document 'Guidance on conservation area appraisals'. It will include desk based work

considering historic plans showing the development of the area, along with on site assessments of the current state of properties within the area.

3 Visual assessment of Stranton Conservation Area

- 3.1 A draft visual appraisal of Stranton Conservation Area has been prepared and will be circulated as a separate document prior to this meeting. This draft will be circulated internally within the Council to gauge officer views and will be taken out to public consultation soon.
- 3.2 The appraisal considers the development of the Stranton area and its town centre location, the impact of the commercial properties within the area including the brewery and how the area has changed in recent years.

4 Recommendation

- 4.1 The committee comments on the visual assessment.