

**CONSERVATION AREA  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
AGENDA**



**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

**at 6.00 p.m.**

**in  
The Ward Room, Historic Quay**

**MEMBERS: CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE:**

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond  
Councillor Bill Iseley, Chair of Planning Committee  
Mrs Sheila Bruce, Hartlepool Civic Society  
Mrs Maureen Smith, Hartlepool Archaeological and Historical Society  
Mr Brian Walker, Greatham Parish Council  
Mrs Pat Andrews, Headland Parish Council  
Ms Julie Bone, Headland Residents Association  
Mr Lloyd Nichols, Seaton Carew Renewal Advisory Group  
Mr Richard Tinker, Victorian Society  
Mrs Andy Creed-Miles, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings  
Mr Brian Watson, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors  
Mr Andy Riley, Royal Institute of British Architects  
Mr Ian Campbell, Park Residents Association  
Mr Ron Clark, Princess Residents Association

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2006 (*attached*)**
- 3. ANY MATTERS ARISING**
- 4. CONSERVATION GRANT SCHEME**
- 5. HEADLAND CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**
- 6. PARK CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

**7. PLANNING COMMITTEE WORKING PARTY**

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

# CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

11 December 2006

### **Present:**

Ms Pat Andrews, Headland Parish Council  
Ms Julie Bone, Headland Residents Association  
Mrs Andy Creed-Miles, Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings  
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  
Stuart Green, Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development)  
Mike Blair, Transportation and Traffic Manager  
Sarah Scarr, Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager  
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

Also present Mr Ian Campbell, Park Residents Association  
Mr Eric Smith, Hartlepool Archaeological and Historical Society

### **45. Appointment of Chair**

In the absence of both The Mayor and Councillor Iseley it was agreed that Stuart Green would facilitate the meeting.

### **46. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from The Mayor, Stuart Drummond, Councillor Bill Iseley, Mrs Sheila Bruce (Hartlepool Civic Society) and Mr Ron Clark (Princess Residents Association)

### **47. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2006**

Confirmed

### **48. Matters Arising and Updates**

- (i) Headland Conservation Area Appraisal

The Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) advised that the appraisal was ongoing, following a public consultation event in November 2006. Comments had been received from approximately 150

respondents and these were being analysed with a view to initial feedback and draft proposals being presented at a second stage consultation in February 2007. Members of the Committee would continue to be made aware of progress in this matter.

(ii) Briarfield House and Lodge Development Brief

The Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) advised that received bids were still being analysed prior to further discussions with the highest bidders in financial terms. All bids had a duty to comply with the development brief and any that did not were discounted no matter what the monetary value. It was hoped that the final outcome could be reported at the next meeting of the Committee.

## 49. Street Furniture and Surface Treatments

At the meeting of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2006 a question was raised regarding Council policy on the maintenance of street furniture and surface treatments within conservation areas. Members were advised that there were eight conservation areas across the Borough and there was no specific Council policy relating to this matter. Each area was dealt with individually when works were carried out. There were also no specific Council budgets allocated to replace street furniture or surface works in conservation areas and works were often dependent on the availability of external funds through grant schemes such as Heritage Economic Regeneration and Townscape Heritage Initiative. The Transportation and Traffic Manager advised that given budgetary pressures it was Council policy to replace like with like in terms of materials, unless there was additional funding available. In approximate financial terms his department had a £1 million a year budget and a backlog of work totalling £25 million.

Richard Tinker, Victorian Society, asked if the Council budget allowed only for the replacement of damaged areas. The Transportation and Traffic Manager reported that replacement was based on need in terms of damage. A list of work was prepared in priority order and those areas most in need were dealt with first. This list was assembled by Council officers who would regularly inspect road surfaces for damage. Replacements would not take place purely for cosmetic matters, there had to be a health and safety issue.

Brian Walker, Greatham Parish Council, queried whether external grants for conservation areas could be used for this kind of work. The Transportation and Traffic Manager advised that grants were usually given to upgrade an area, rather than for general maintenance.

Richard Tinker, Victorian Society, asked if Council officers were aware of an area's conservation status when work was carried out. The Transportation and Traffic Manager explained that there were two types of maintenance – reactive and general. Reactive was used to respond to unplanned incidents, general was for planned maintenance. In the latter case the advance

preparation allowed for an area's conservation status to be picked up.

Julia Patterson, Park Residents Association, suggested that individual conservation area representatives could put suggestions for improvement works through to the Council. However the Transportation and Traffic Manager advised a better method might be for the Council to contact resident associations for any comment when their area reached the top of the list.

## 50. Conservation Grant Scheme

The Conservation Grant Scheme was launched in July 2006 at the Windows Workshop. A budget of £50,000 was made available to residential properties in conservation areas built pre-1919 and listed buildings. Grants were available for works to make properties structurally sound and watertight and to restore and repair traditional details.

So far over 60 enquiries had been made regarding the grant scheme. To date 3 applications had been approved as follows:

- Repair works to a canopy on a grade II listed building in the Headland Conservation Area
- Replacement windows to the rear of a property covered by an Article 4 Direction in the Headland Conservation Area
- Re-roofing works and replacement windows to a property within the Seaton Carew Conservation Area

Although the level of interest had been great the number of applications was low. Feedback suggested that applicants had found difficulty in obtaining the required three quotes and consideration was being given to reducing the requirement to two. Applicants who had been sent information had been contacted again to encourage them to outline any problems with officers.

Members were advised that there were two more applications currently pending with the expectation of others to follow and it was therefore hoped that the whole £50,000 would be spent by the end of March 2007. A further £50,000 grant was included in the Council's current budget proposals for 2007-8 but was still to be confirmed.

Richard Tinker, Victorian Society, asked how much grant the 3 applications would receive. The Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager reported that the overall total was approximately £14,000. The Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager advised that £5,000 had been agreed as the maximum grant for each application. This had been decided as a means of ensuring a reasonable spread and avoiding the bulk of the funding going to a small number of large applications.

Mrs Maureen Smith, Hartlepool Archaeological and Historical Society, suggested that properties receiving a grant could display a laminated sign outside while the work was ongoing. This was acknowledged as good practice and officers agreed to pursue this measure via a grant condition.

## **51. Planning Working Group**

The agenda papers and minutes for the meeting of the Planning Working Group held on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2006 were submitted for the Committee's information. Representatives of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee had attended the meeting, items discussed included the recent Windows Workshop and a View point Survey carried out regarding conservation.

A further meeting had taken place on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2006, the minutes of which were not yet available. Representative of the Committee had once again attended the meeting, where discussions covered national policy including a comparison of local authority policy in similar coastal locations.

A meeting of the Planning Working Group was scheduled for 12<sup>th</sup> December, to be attended by Carol Pyrah of English Heritage. The Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) advised that consideration would be given to a review of the existing conservation policy at the meeting. A discussion followed during which members were advised as to the possible outcomes of the discussion and action following on from that.

## **52. Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2007 commencing at 6.00pm. Venue to be confirmed.

## **Subject                      Conservation Grant Scheme**

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### **1            Introduction**

- 1.1    This report is intended as a progress update for Members of the Committee on the Conservation Grant Scheme.

### **2            Background**

- 2.1    The Conservation Grant Scheme was launched in July at the Windows Workshop. A budget of £50,000 has been made available to residential properties located within conservation areas that were built pre-1919 and listed buildings.
- 2.2    Grant is available for works to make properties structurally sound and watertight, and to restore and repair traditional details such as sash windows.

### **3            Current Progress on the Scheme**

- 3.1    There continues to be a steady stream of enquires into the grant scheme. Over 60 properties have been visited and schedules of work put together for interested parties.
- 3.2    To date twelve grants have been approved totalling £34,308. As suggested at the previous meeting of this committee further press releases have been compiled on the basis of these grant approvals.

### **4            Future Schemes**

- 4.1    A further budget of £50,000 has been approved for the financial year 2007-2008. Publicity around this scheme will be launched in the coming weeks.

### **4            Recommendation**

- 4.1    The committee notes the report.

**Subject                      Headland Conservation Area Appraisal**

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**1            Introduction**

1.1    This report is intended as an update on the current position with the Headland Conservation Area Appraisal

**2            Background**

1.1    The consultants Scott Wilson (formerly Ferguson McIlveen LLP) have been appointed to carry out an appraisal of the Headland Conservation Area. A steering group of local representatives has been established to guide this process.

2.2    The first round of public consultation was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2006. This included displays and an opportunity for residents to discuss the area. In addition all households in the St Hilda's ward received a questionnaire on which to fill in their views.

**3            Current Position**

3.1    A further round of public consultation will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2007. An update on this event will be provided verbally at the meeting.

3.2    The next stage of the process will be to produce a draft report with recommendations. This will be the subject of a third round of public consultation. It is anticipated that the final report will be produced in June 2007.

**4            Recommendation**

4.1    The committee notes the report.



## **Subject                      Park Conservation Area Appraisal**

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### **1            Introduction**

- 1.1    This report is to gauge the views of the Committee on a brief which has been drawn up to tender for consultants to carry out an appraisal of the Park Conservation Area.

### **2            Background**

- 2.1    Over the past year the Park Conservation Area has been the subject of various planning applications. This pressure of development has demonstrated the need to provide a clear statement of the character of the area.
- 2.2    An approval has been given to use Planning Delivery Grant to commission consultants to carry out an appraisal of the area. A brief has been put together for this purpose.

### **3            Brief**

- 3.1    A copy of the proposed brief can be found in Appendix 1 of the report. The brief has been put together to reflect the English Heritage Guidelines on conservation area appraisals.

### **4            Recommendation**

- 4.1    The committee notes the report and provides comments on the brief.

## Appendix 1

### An Appraisal of The Park Conservation Area

This brief has been prepared to outline the expectations of Hartlepool Borough Council in an appraisal for the Park Conservation Area. The appraisal will be an assessment of the conservation area. It will be used to summarise the character of the Park and contain a review of current conservation policies in the area.

#### Location and description

The Park Conservation Area is characterised by large late nineteenth century houses, little altered since originally built, and set in extensive landscaped grounds surrounded by walls and railings. Overall the area presents a feeling of spaciousness with dwellings concealed by mature trees and shrubs. Within the Park conservation area is Ward Jackson Park, a formal park established in the late 1880's.

Given the individual design of properties there is a great variety of architectural features and styles, but most are characterised by the use of smooth red brick, with contrasting terracotta or stone decoration. Architectural features include a variety of towers, bays, balconies, balustrades and projecting porches.

The Park Conservation Area was extended in 2004 to include part of The Grove. Branching from the west end of Grange Road, a principle residential street even back in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the construction of The Grove followed that of the Victorian and Edwardian mansions set around Ward Jackson Park.

There are 17 listed buildings located within the conservation area in addition to Ward Jackson Park which is on the English Heritage list of Registered Parks and Gardens; no article 4 directions are in place.

#### Objectives of the assessment

The aims of the assessment are:

- To demonstrate how the history of the area is reflected in its present day character and linked to the broader heritage context of the town of Hartlepool.
- To identify the nature and extent of the special character of the conservation area.
- To identify those areas where the special character retains its integrity and those where loss has occurred.
- To make recommendations for policies to improve and enhance the conservation area.
- To identify the need, if any, for further assessment and recording of the conservation area.

#### Methodology

There is no prescribed form which such a statement or conservation area appraisal should take but the following is a recommended list of contents suggested by English Heritage and should be used to guide the content of the appraisal.

#### Location and setting

- Location and context.
- General character and plan form.
- Landscape setting (topography and land form; geology; setting of the conservation area and its relationship with the setting/landscape; identification of significant landmarks and panoramas).

**Historic development and archaeology**

- The origins and historic development of the area
- The archaeological significance and potential of the area (including identification of scheduled monuments).

**Spatial analysis**

- Character and interrelationship of spaces within the area
- Key views and vistas (both out of and into the area; view points)

**Character analysis**

- Definition of character areas or zones – characterisation.
- Activity, prevailing or former uses within the area, and influence of these (and any historic patronage) on the plan form and building types.
- The architectural and historic qualities of the buildings and the contribution they make to the special interest of the area.
- The contribution made by key listed and unlisted buildings (including any recommendations for locally listed buildings).
- Local details
- Prevalent local and traditional building materials and the public realm.
- An audit of heritage assets
- The contribution made by greenery (particularly trees) and green spaces: and ecology/biodiversity value.
- The extent of loss, intrusion, or damage, i.e. negative factors
- The existence of any neutral areas.
- General condition of the area and built fabric, identification of buildings at risk
- Problems, pressures and the capacity for change and scope for new development.

It is envisaged that the appointed consultant would work closely with residents of the area to produce the appraisal. The style of consultation would be chosen by the appointed consultants however it should be inclusive to allow both established community groups, individual residents and businesses an opportunity to be involved in the appraisal at all stages.

A photographic survey of the conservation area will be carried out by the Council's photographer alongside the appraisal. Photographs will be taken of all residential properties and listed structures located within the boundary of the conservation area. This information will be made available to the appointed consultants.

The output of the appraisal should describe, analyse and attribute value to the character of the conservation area. In particular the appraisal should consider the;

- Existing boundary of the area.
- Analyse the special character(s) within the area.
- Current conservation policies and supplementary planning guidance.

**Information Required**

Please provide the following information as part of your submission

- A list of previous clients or appropriate experience of similar work.
- Identification, background and skills of all staff that will undertake the work and their proposed roles.
- Description of approach to undertaking the work and individual roles if more than one member of staff will be involved (this should include the number of hours each member of staff will spend on the project).

- Detailed information on the consultation that you would intend to carry out with stakeholders, this should include an indicative timetable of events and a description of the methodology proposed.
- A full costing for the proposal including expenses.

You should note that the currently allocated budget for this appraisal is £10,000, but that consultants will be appointed not only on the basis of price but also having regard to the other points referred to above, notably the proposed methodology and consultation with stakeholders.

### **Final report**

It is expected that the final appraisal will be presented in report form with research carried out attached in appendices.

In addition a short summary of the assessment should be presented in the form of a leaflet which could be distributed to households.

The appointed consultants should be prepared to present the appraisal to a public meeting at the end of the process.

All information presented to Hartlepool Borough Council should be in both paper copies and an electronic format to be agreed. Hartlepool Borough Council will retain the copyright of the report.

### **Timescale**

Expressions of interest should be submitted to Sarah Scarr, Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager, by **XXXX**, consideration of submissions will take place by a steering group with interviews, if necessary, taking place on **XXXX**.

The appointment will be made by **XXXX** with the inception meeting expected to be held in the week beginning **XXXX**.

The final appraisal and any supporting information should be completed by **XXXX**.

### **Supporting information**

The following supporting and general background information is attached.

- Plan showing the extent of the Park Conservation Area.
- Copies of current conservation area leaflets
- Copies of Development Control Policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- Hartlepool in the Tees Valley, An Investment Prospectus.

Further information on Hartlepool Borough Council can be found at [www.hartlepool.gov.uk](http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk)

02/01/07

Sarah Scarr

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## **Subject                      Planning Committee Working Party**

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### **1            Introduction**

- 1.1    The Committee will be aware that a Planning Committee Working Party has been established to review conservation policy. This report will outline the current position and progress made to date by the Working Party.

### **2            Background**

- 2.1    The first meeting of the Working Party was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> July. Further to this five meetings have been held. Members of this group have been invited to those meetings to take part in the discussions and minutes of past meeting have been fed back into this Committee. In addition at the December meeting the Regional Director of English Heritage attended.

### **3            Update on Working Party Progress**

- 3.1    The Working Party has completed a tour of six of the predominantly residential conservation areas. It is these areas that have been affected by the discussions around policy. These visits were an opportunity for Members to see the character of the area and the degree of change that may have occurred.
- 3.2    Further to the site visits, round table discussions have covered both national and local policy. In addition information was gathered from other local authorities in similar situations to gauge comparisons and from English Heritage. Attached are the minutes of those meetings at Appendix 1 of this report.
- 3.3    Discussions around the current policy and potential changes to this have led to the consideration of revised policy guidance. The revised guidance would be considered after brief appraisals have been carried out in four of the six conservation areas in question and full appraisals in two (Headland and Park).
- 3.4    Members have indicated that a three tier system should be considered whereby properties in conservation areas are covered by the following controls;
- Listed building controls
  - Properties in conservation areas covered by Article 4 Directions
  - Properties in conservation areas not covered by Article 4 Directions

- 3.5 Those properties which would be covered by Article 4 Directions would be of particular importance in contributing to the character of the conservation area. This may mean that some properties that are currently covered by Article 4 Direction have the direction removed and conversely some properties which are not covered by a Direction at the moment will be proposed for additional controls. Any proposed changes in policy would be subject to full public consultation to gauge the views of residents.

#### **4 Recommendation**

- 4.1 The committee notes the report.

APPENDIX 1

**PLANNING WORKING GROUP MINUTES**

**2 November 2006**

**Present:**

Councillor Rob Cook (In the Chair)

Councillors Stuart Drummond, Gordon Henery, Stan Kaiser and Ray Waller

Representatives of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee:

Julie Bone, Headland Residents Association  
Brian Watson, Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

Also present

Ian Campbell, Park Residents Association

Officers

Stuart Green, Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development)  
Sarah Scarr, Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager  
Richard Teece, Development Control Manager  
Denise Wimpenny, Principal Democratic Services Officer

**10. Apologies for Absence**

Councillors Bill Iseley, Gordon Henery and Carl Richardson  
Sheila Bruce, Hartlepool Civic Society, Brian Walker, Greatham Parish Council and Rachel Wilson, Park Residents Association

**11. Site Visit**

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Working Group visited the Park and Grange Conservation areas and viewed many of the buildings that gave the area its distinctive character and also the issues/features that were causing some concern.

**12. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2006**

Confirmed.

**13. National Conservation Policy**

The Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Development referred to national conservation policy. Advice was provided in relation to listed buildings, Planning Policy Guidance 15, Conservation Areas, Article 4 directions and development in conservation areas. It was pointed out that proposals for development within a conservation area would

be approved only where it could be demonstrated that the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. In addition to the Conservation Policy further information could be obtained from planning case law. Members were referred to Appendix 1 which gave details of relevant appeal decisions.

Comparisons had been carried out with other local authorities in similar coastal locations in relation to their policy towards upvc within conservation areas and on listed buildings, details of which were outlined in Appendix 3.

Members were advised that English Heritage had been invited to attend the next Working Group. It was envisaged that following the next meeting the Group may be in a position to report to the Planning Committee. The current uncertainty around conservation policy and its affect on providing planning advice to residents and pursuing potential enforcement cases was noted.

Members were requested to consider the following issues:-

- (i) whether the current guidance implemented in 2004 was the way forward or whether this should be refined.
- (ii) with regard to Article 4 Directions, Members were advised of the different levels of control within conservation areas and whether there was a case to extend this level of control.

It was reported that if a change of policy was felt appropriate, a consultation would need to be carried out across all conservation areas. There was no clear view at the moment of residents' views or preferences. Some people did not wish to see the current standards relaxed and it was therefore recommended that this be tested by way of public consultation before a view was taken.

Some Members felt that each conservation area should be looked at separately and more emphasis be placed on style and design. Following a lengthy discussion with regard to the issue of upvc installations, concerns were expressed about a number of installations that were out of character. However, it was acknowledged that some upvc manufacturers provided good quality windows in keeping with the character of the area and to a high standard. In such cases it was difficult to determine the difference between upvc and wood windows. The Group suggested that further detailed information on upvc window designs and specifications might well be useful. The possibility of providing a recommended list of suppliers to residents was also discussed. A Member suggested that other conservation areas be examined and the opinions of English Heritage be obtained prior to any recommendations being taken. Comments were made in relation to the varying designs in the Park conservation area.

Discussion ensued with regard to the various property designs and characteristics within the Grange conservation area and one Member felt that the current regulations were too severe. In response, the Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Development advised that to adopt a flexible approach in different conservation areas would require considerable time for analysis and consultation before such a system could be put in place and could be open to perceptions of inconsistency. The Development Control Manager added that at present it was difficult to advise residents on the conservation policy.

A representative from the Park Residents Association stated that the general feeling of the Association was whilst design issues should be flexible, there was also a need for firmness and an appreciation of conservation rules.

In response to a query in relation to consultation processes, the Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Development advised that addresses were usually sought from everyone taking part in the consultation in order to understand the perspective of that respondent.



In closing the meeting, it was agreed that the next meeting be held on Tuesday 12 December at 3.30 pm with a site visit prior to the meeting commencing at 2.00 pm.

R W COOK

CHAIRMAN

## PLANNING WORKING GROUP MINUTES

12 December 2006

**Present:**

Councillor Rob Cook (In the Chair)

The Mayor, Stuart Drummond

Councillors Stan Kaiser, Carl Richardson and Edna Wright

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2(ii) Councillor Jonathan Brash was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Ray Waller

Representatives of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee:

Sheila Bruce, Hartlepool Civic Society  
Julia Patterson, Park Residents Association  
Brian Walker, Greatham Parish Council  
Brian Watson, Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

Officers Stuart Green, Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development)  
Sarah Scarr, Landscape Planning and Conservation Manager  
Peter Graves, Townscape Heritage Initiative Manager  
Jo Wilson, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Carol Pyrah, Regional Director for English Heritage

### 14. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Gordon Henery, Bill Iseley and Ray Waller.

### 15. Site Visit

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Working Group visited the Headland Conservation Area and viewed many of the buildings that gave the area its distinctive character and also the issues/features that were causing some concern including

prominent vacant buildings and alterations to residential properties.

## **16. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2006**

Confirmed

## **17. Update on Current Position: Discussion with Carol Pyrah, Regional Director, English Heritage and Conservation Area Advisory Committee Members**

At previous meetings of the Planning Working Group members had agreed the need to review existing conservation policy but felt that in the short term the existing approved policy should be maintained. It was agreed that the review of the policy should consider national legislation, guidance, case law, local policy and views, including public consultation. The Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) gave detailed information on the following:

- National Conservation Policy
- Local Planning Policy
- Representatives with an interest in conservation policy
- Future development of policy

During the discussion which followed a number of issues were raised. Chief among these was the consideration of UPVC windows versus traditional wood windows. Among the varying views expressed by members were:

- UPVC can give the same appearance as wood for less cost.
- Wood windows do not last long in a coastal area
- UPVC is more energy efficient
- The cost of replacing wood windows is prohibitive so people don't replace them. This leads to energy conservation costs.
- UPVC is characterless
- The quality of material in wood windows is far superior to UPVC.
- The problem with wood windows is poor maintenance. Wood will last longer than UPVC if taken care of by someone who knows what they're doing
- Old people will not get the cost benefit of maintaining wood windows.
- If you move to a Conservation Area you have to take these matters into account. Residents do not want their property to be devalued by the actions of their neighbours.
- UPVC is maintenance free
- You cannot marry modern materials and old houses
- A lot of properties convert to UPVC to be fashionable. Replacements are done unnecessarily.

A number of members criticised English Heritage for having no flexibility on this issue and called for them to consider a variation in their approach. Carol Pyrah, representative of English Heritage explained the role and function of English Heritage with regard to Conservation Areas as being there to give advice on national policy. Part of this advice was that original features should be retained. Independent research showed wood was more cost effective than UPVC in the long term, provided it was well maintained. Draft-proofed secondary-glazed wood windows were also better at retaining heat than their UPVC counterparts. It was also a fallacy to suggest that wood always needed to be fully replaced as in many cases repairs were sufficient. Members asked that a copy of the independent evidence produced on this issue be provided for their consideration and Ms Pyrah agreed to produce this information for the Working Group's consideration at its next

meeting. In addition Ms Pyrah said that should Members have any queries regarding the information she would investigate the possibility of a member of the London-based English Heritage technical team coming to a future meeting of the Planning Working Group in order for them to advise Members further.

Members also queried the current status of Conservation Areas within the town. The Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) felt existing Conservation Areas should be reviewed by means of an appraisal of individual areas to produce policy guidance. In an ideal world such appraisals would be conducted prior to Conservation Area designation and five years thereafter however this had not happened in recent years. It was felt that should members feel the need for specific policies relating to individual Conservation areas this should be done as quickly as possible in order to clear up current uncertainties for residents. Members were advised that they could decide to continue with or modify the current policy and this was something which could be given consideration at the next meeting.

In closing the meeting, it was agreed that the next meeting be held on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2007 at 3.30 pm with a site visit prior to the meeting commencing at 2.00 pm.

R W COOK

CHAIRMAN

## PLANNING WORKING GROUP MINUTES

23 January 2007

**Present:**

Councillor Rob Cook (In the Chair)

Councillors Stan Kaiser and Ray Waller

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2(ii) Councillor Jonathan Brash was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Carl Richardson

Representatives of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee:

Sheila Bruce, Hartlepool Civic Society

Brian Walker, Greatham Parish Council

Brian Watson, Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.2(ii) Ian Campbell (Park Residents Association) was in attendance as substitute for Julia Pattison (Park Residents Association)

Officers Stuart Green, Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development)

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

## 18. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from The Mayor, Stuart Drummond, Councillors Bill Iseley and Carl Richardson and Julie Bone (Headland Residents Association).

## 19. Site Visit

Prior to the commencement of the meeting the Working Group visited the Greatham and Elwick Conservation Areas. They viewed many of the buildings that gave the areas their distinctive character.

## 20. Confirmation of the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2006

Confirmed

## 21. Matters Arising

The Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) referred to a request at the previous meeting for independent evidence on the issue of traditional wood versus UPVC to be provided by English Heritage. This had been received on 22<sup>nd</sup> January and was circulated to members. It was intended that members consider this information at the next Planning Working Group meeting.

## 22. Policy Review

At previous meetings the Planning Working Party had agreed to review the existing policy position relating to alteration to residential properties in conservation areas and consider whether any revisions were necessary. The Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) had formulated a proposed methodology for this policy revision which he outlined to members.

There were currently 3 different types of control covered by national and local policy as follows

- Listed buildings
- Article 4 properties
- Properties located within conservation areas without any restrictions

Listed buildings were covered by national policy guidelines and would therefore remain unchanged. However the other categories could be revised as deemed necessary. It was suggested that to consider an amendment to policy with regard to these properties an assessment should be made of each of the 8 conservation areas. This would identify sensitive areas and consideration could then be given to the appropriateness of the levels of control available and whether they should apply to the front, rear or side of properties. It was anticipated this process would take approximately 1 year to be fully completed. Members expressed their concerns that these appraisals be undertaken thoroughly, however the Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) advised that in most cases more brief interim appraisals would need to be conducted to minimise the effects of prolonged uncertainty.

This would in theory lead to three levels of control within conservation areas:

- Listed buildings where traditional designs and materials would be used

- Article 4 properties where traditional designs and materials would be used
- Other unrestricted properties where non-traditional designs and materials could be used. Guidance would be provided on appropriate changes.

An alternative option was to limit the requirement for traditional designs and materials to listed buildings only and allow non-traditional methods for all other properties. This would be a significant departure from the national policy, the Local Plan and the previous Planning Committee policy statement. It could lead to the widespread introduction of UPVC and other modern materials in an area, jeopardising a conservation area status and reducing the prospect of securing any English Heritage funding which may become available in the future.

The Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) emphasised that any changes would need to go out to public consultation to gauge the opinion of residents living within conservation areas.

A discussion ensued during which members expressed their support for retaining the 3 levels of control on properties in conservation areas. Among the issues raised were concerns about the consultation process given the previous low level of responses. Members suggested that questionnaires should be targeted at those areas of particular concern to residents, such as the financial implications, in order to garner a higher response level.

Members also discussed the current grants available for home improvement. It was proposed by the Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) that any policy revisions would retain the current ruling that the Council-run conservation grant scheme, which offers grant on traditional works in conservation areas, should not include modern solutions such as UPVC windows. Members called on English Heritage to provide more in the way of monetary funding as encouragement to homeowners to continue using traditional materials.

The Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development) indicated he would bring a timescale for completion of this stage of the process to the next Planning Working Group meeting.

R W COOK

CHAIRMAN