

Report by the Planning Policy Manager

Former Coast Guard Station, Albion Street, Southwick

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 Local planning authorities have a duty to designate as conservation areas those areas of special interest which are desirable to preserve or enhance. A recent review of the Southwick Conservation Area has revealed a small additional area nearby which may be worthy of inclusion. However, as it is isolated and has a very different history and character than the existing conservation area, it is considered more suitable to designate this as a separate area.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee give approval in principle to the potential designation of the former coast guard station, Albion Street, Southwick as a conservation area, subject to officer investigations and public consultation.

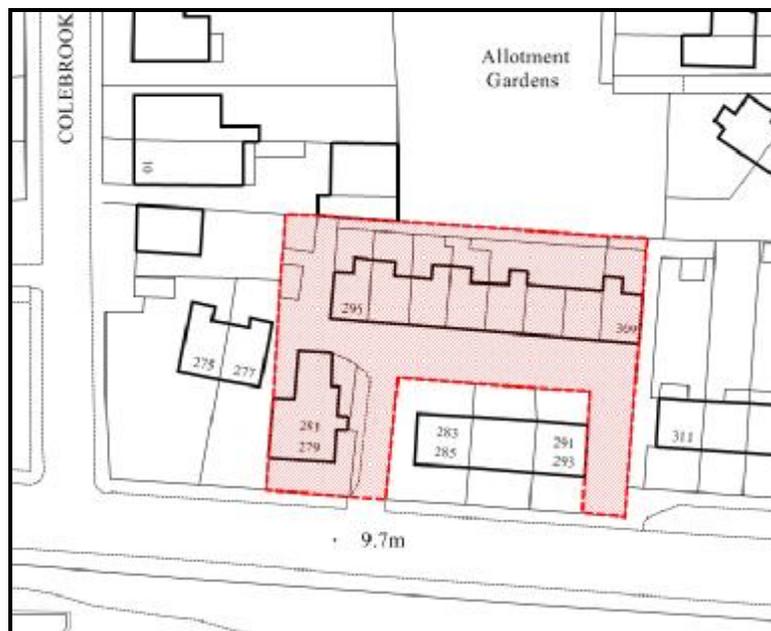
3.0 Background

- 3.1 In accordance with the agreed schedule of conservation area reviews, the Planning Policy team has recently begun work on the character appraisal and management strategy for the Southwick Conservation Area. In assessing this area, it has been noted that a small area containing the buildings associated with the former Coast Guard Station on Albion Street may be worthy of designation as a conservation area.
- 3.2 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 of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Whilst listing procedures are focused on the protection of individual buildings, conservation area designation is the main instrument available to authorities to give effect to conservation policies for a particular neighbourhood or area. The principal concern of a local planning authority in considering the designation of a conservation area should be to form a judgment on whether the area is of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.
- 3.3 Local planning authorities also have, under Section 69, a duty to review their areas from time to time to consider whether further designation of conservation areas is called for and in considering further designations authorities should bear in mind that it is important that conservation areas are seen to justify their status and that the concept is not devalued by the designation of areas lacking any special interest.

4.0 Proposals & Options

4.1 The area for consideration is located on the north side of Albion Street, Southwick, approximately 100 metres to the east of the existing Southwick Conservation Area (Riverside area) and 300 metres to the south-east of the main body of the conservation area. The area of the site is 1545m² and contains a large detached house on the road frontage and a terrace of 8 houses at the rear, containing much of their original features. These buildings were part of the coastguard station which was built in the 1880s but replaced when the Brighton 'B' Power Station blocked out the view of the sea. It is one of the few original groups of buildings remaining in this area after extensive redevelopment post World War II.

4.2 The area is shown on the maps below:



- 4.3 Conservation area status means that some tighter controls will apply to development within the area above the usual planning controls, in relation to such matters as exterior cladding, dormer windows and roof alterations, curtilage buildings and installation of satellite dishes or antennas on an elevation facing the highway. Conservation area consent will be required for demolition of some buildings and walls/fences/gates. Works to all trees (not subject to Tree Preservation Orders) are also controlled, with owners required to give the Council six weeks notice of their intention to undertake the works.
- 4.4 While further investigation and public consultation will need to be carried out to confirm the special interest in this area, if the Committee agrees with the principle of this potentially becoming a conservation area, the following two options will need to be considered:
- 4.5 Designation as a Separate Conservation Area
While the area proposed is small, this does not preclude it from receiving its own designation, character appraisal and management plan. It is sufficiently isolated from the nearby conservation area that it is unlikely to be considered as part of this by the public, particularly given its significantly different history and character.
- 4.6 Designation as Part of the Existing Southwick Conservation Area
The Southwick Conservation Area already contains an area which is isolated from its main body (Riverside) so this is an option. However, if further isolated “patches” are added, the conservation area may begin to appear too fragmented. The recently completed draft character appraisal and management strategy recommends that the Riverside area is re-designated as a separate conservation area which will retain the main body (centred on Southwick’s original village) as the Southwick Conservation Area. [This will be the subject of a separate report to be presented to the Committee at a later date].
- 4.7 The preferred option is to designate the former Coast Guard Station as a separate conservation area, should further investigations and consultations reveal that the area possesses special interest.

Local Government Act 1972

Background Papers:

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 15 ‘Planning and the Historic Environment’ (ODPM September 1994)

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Appendix 1

1.0 Council Priority

1.1 Designating this area as a conservation area will help to:

- Create a clean, green and safe environment by helping to protect an important area from inappropriate and unsympathetic development.

2.0 Specific Targets

2.1 (A) Designating this area as a conservation area will help to:

- Enhance and protect the environment by discouraging inappropriate development and proposing measures to protect and enhance the conservation area through a character appraisal and management strategy.

(B) The proposal aims to achieve the Government's target of protecting and enhancing areas of special interest as set out in the Act and PPG15.

3.0 Sustainability Issues

3.1 Protection and enhancement of the area as a conservation area will have environmental, economic and social effects.

4.0 Equality Issues

4.1 Designation as a conservation area seeks to protect and enhance the area for the benefit of all residents of the district.

5.0 Community Safety issues (Section 17)

5.1 Matters considered and no issues identified.

6.0 Human Rights Issues

6.1 Matters considered and no issues identified.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 The next stage of investigation and consultation will entail costs which can be met from the existing budget.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 The Council's legal obligations with respect to designating conservation areas are outlined in the main report.

9.0 Consultations

9.1 No consultation has occurred to date. If the principle of designation is approved, consultation will be undertaken with conservation stakeholders and local residents prior to any formal designation.

10.0 Risk assessment

10.1 The risk of not designating this area is that inappropriate alterations or demolitions may occur and the special interest is lost.

11.0 Health & Safety Issues

11.1 Matters considered and no separate issues identified.

12.0 Procurement Strategy

12.1 Matters considered and no separate issues identified.

13.0 Partnership working

13.1 Matters considered and no separate issues identified.