

**CABINET MEMBER FOR
PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

11 JANUARY 2024

Staplehurst Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
PIED PAC	7 December 2023
Decision to be made	8 December 2023

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman
Lead Officer and Report Author	Janice Gooch
Classification	Public
Wards affected	Staplehurst

Executive Summary

This item is to consider whether to approve the draft Staplehurst Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan document for public consultation purposes. The proposed Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (known as CAAMP) recognises and summarises the significance and character of Staplehurst and provides a framework system to ensure that this character of the area is protected or enhanced.

Staplehurst was first designated in November 1987 and the boundary had not been reviewed since that time. The records relating to the designation are no longer available.

The Appraisal states that the conservation area boundary is still relevant though proposed changes were considered to include Iden Manor. However, as the site is owned by the NHS, is within the setting of the Conservation Area and has a listed building within the grounds, it was considered that including the estate would restrict the NHS operation and it has some protection due to the setting of the designated heritage assets.

The Conservation Area is focused on the church and the large houses of Surrendon (now converted into flats), Loddenden Manor and Staplehurst Manor. In between these larger houses are smaller domestic properties, the retail core of the village, including public houses. The village has developed and altered, which is reflected in the architecture, however, much is polite and responds to a period of wealth in the late 17th and early 18th century. It is most likely that older buildings are screened by their new polite façades, with only one building, Crown Cottages, still showing the close studding of the timber frame. The appraisal provides a description of the character, including key features.

The Management Plan sets out a framework for conserving, enhancing, and managing development in the Staplehurst Conservation Area to ensure that it retains its special qualities as required by the Conservation Area designation under section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A new Management Plan would fulfil the Council's duty to prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. Failure to approve the Management Plan would mean that this duty was not observed.

The Staplehurst Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan would provide a stronger base for development management decisions in resisting inappropriate developments by providing a good understanding of the character of the area, including the architecture and material palette to enable good design for future develop or proposed changes. The creation of the Management Plan will ensure that development retains or enhances the character of the Conservation Area.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development: That

1. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Staplehurst Conservation Area be approved for public consultation;
2. Delegated powers be given to the Head of Development Management to undertake the necessary statutory requirements to undertake public consultation for the Staplehurst Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan; and
3. The following work streams be explored (in accordance with the draft CAAMP report attached at Appendix 1):
 - a. An Article 4 Direction
 - b. A Design code centred on the Staplehurst Conservation Area
 - c. Extending the boundaries of the Staplehurst Conservation Area.

Staplehurst Conservation Area

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>• Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to protect the historic environment.</p>	Landscape Team Leader
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations support the achievements of encouraging protection of the heritage at Staplehurst and within the borough.</p>	Landscape Team Leader
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section	Landscape Team Leader
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Head of Finance
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Landscape Team Leader
Legal	Pursuant to s.69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	Landscape Team Leader

	<p>("1990 Act") the Council, as the local planning authority, is under a duty (from time to time) to review the conservation area.</p> <p>Pursuant to s.71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 the Council, as the local planning authority, is from time to time required:</p> <p>(1) under a duty to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.</p> <p>(2) Proposals under this section shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate.</p> <p>(3) The local planning authority shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.</p>	
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Information Governance Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Housing and Inclusion Team Leader
Crime and Disorder	No anticipated impact	Landscape Team Leader
Procurement	None required	Landscape Team Leader
Biodiversity and Climate Change	There are no direct implications on biodiversity and climate change, but a CA can be used to offer further protection, including to trees, biodiversity and open spaces.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2.INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local authorities to review their Conservation Areas from time to time to consider whether they should be amended, are still worthy of being designated and the possibility of revising their boundaries and to identify changes and pressures which may affect the original reasons for their designation.
- 2.2 In order that informed decisions can be made on planning applications, it is important to identify the special character of Conservation Areas which are proposed for preservation and enhancement. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan allows for an informed decision to be made by recognising the character of the Conservation Area and providing a framework of actions.
- 2.3 The first part of the document, the Appraisal, identifies the key elements which combine to produce the special historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area and considers how they interact and impact upon one another and explains how the area has developed into their current form. It seeks to identify pressures and developments which threaten the special character of the Conservation Area, and sites and features which detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The clear understanding of the Area's qualities provided in the appraisal offers information to guide future policies and improvements as well as providing a framework against which decisions on individual planning proposals may be assessed. This is further elaborated upon, in the second part of the document: the management plan.
- 2.4 Resulting from the findings of the Appraisal, the Management Plan contains proposals to preserve or enhance Staplehurst Conservation Area. The document includes the policy background to the management plan, principles for development control, and, where appropriate, suggested boundary alterations. It also contains information on review and good practice procedures.
- 2.5 As part of the review process, the existing Conservation Area boundary was deemed to be appropriate. Consideration was undertaken to include Iden Manor (and parts of its former Estate, such as The Quarter) to the south of the existing Conservation Area but this was considered to be at low risk of development and would constrain the NHS who currently occupy/own the site. Consideration was also undertaken to extend the boundary to the north to include the Victorian Villas and terraces, but due to the piecemeal alterations and infill development, this was not considered to reach the special architectural or historic interest requirements.
- 2.6 Many Conservation Areas are subject to Article 4 Directives to protect the character of the CA. Staplehurst currently does not have any Art. 4 Directives, and as part of the review process, it is currently not recommending implementing any. This will be reviewed again following the public consultation.

- 2.7 At present there is no Design Code for Staplehurst. Some guidance has been provided within the CAAMP and there is some guidance commissioned by the Parish Council. The creation of a solid Design Code should be considered within the near future to provide additional support to protect the character of the Conservation Area and its setting.
- 2.8 The Staplehurst Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP) has been written in accordance with guidelines set down by Historic England and the National Planning Policy Framework (2023). This has been drafted for Cabinet Member approval to enable a consultation process to be carried out in accordance with the Planning Act 1990 requirements under section 71(2). This will include the following bodies and individuals:
- a) Historic England
 - b) Kent County Council Heritage Unit
 - c) Ward Members
 - d) Staplehurst Parish Council
 - e) Any other relevant organizations with an interest in Staplehurst
- 2.9 In addition, copies will be placed on the Borough Council website and in the local library. A formal notice will be published in the London Gazette and a local newspaper (KM), as per the Planning Act 1990 requirements under section 70(8) and there will also be a press release. This should ensure that the combined Appraisal and Management plan documents are brought to the attention of the local public.
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3 AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Option 1 – That the recommendations be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development.
- 3.2 Option 2 – That the recommendations not be approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development. If not approved there is a risk that Maidstone Borough Council are failing to comply with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990
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4 PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is option 3.1
- 4.2 By approving the public consultation for the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, this provides a clear steer on enabling the council to take appropriate action and engagement to protect our heritage.
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5 RISK

- 5.1. There is not anticipated to be any discernible risk associated with the report and its recommendations. Any risk has been assessed with regard to the Council's risk management principles.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 The combined document will be the subject of repeat consultation in accordance with the Planning Act 1990 and Historic England Guidance. This will include the following bodies and individuals:

- Historic England
- Kent County Council Heritage Unit
- Ward Members
- Staplehurst Parish Council
- Any other relevant organisations with an interest in the Staplehurst Conservation Area.

The matter was considered by the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee on 10 January 2024, with support expressed for the recommendations of this report.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 The report and guidance, if approved, will go out for public consultation. If approved by the Cabinet Member the guidance will go out for public consultation.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Staplehurst Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CAAMP)

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A