



THORNTON HOUGH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

PART 2 – CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Prepared for Wirral Council by Donald Insall Associates Ltd, 2007 –Wirral Council 2009

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PART 2 – CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.0 ROLE OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 1.1 The Management Plan at this stage of the process is an agenda for future action and consideration. This part of the document relies on the analysis contained within the appraisal to set out the issues and negative factors affecting the both the private and public realms. It is a first professional assessment made by Wirral Council Conservation Section as to the issues which need to be addressed and makes suggestions for policy, guidance and investment. This agenda needs to be considered against budgetary and staff capacity in future years. As such it is the first stage in a management plan process which will refine the plan through further consultation, joint officer working and budgetary request.
- 1.2 It is recommended that the Appraisal as an audit of the Conservation Area is adopted by Wirral Council and used as a material consideration in determining any planning applications within, or visually affecting, the conservation area. The Management Plan should be accepted for the time being pending further consultation with the local Conservation Area Advisory Committee and further review. In accordance with the English Heritage guidance, the Appraisal and Management Plan should be reviewed every 5 years. This review process may be tied into that of the key Local Development Framework documents to ensure consistency in approach and referencing.

2.0 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

- 2.1 The following is a list of features that are part of Thornton Hough Conservation Area's special character:
- Historic village dating back to before the Domesday Survey.
 - 'Model' village with two distinct primary phases of construction.
 - Grouping of church, former school and Wilshaw Terrace by wealthy woollen mill owner Joseph Hurst
 - Association with philanthropist William Hesketh Lever.
 - Pioneering concept of workers housing, considered to benefit workers' health and well-being.
 - Picturesque layout of buildings, carefully planned to create views and vistas between key elements.
 - High quality landscaping including mature trees and sandstone walling.
 - Most buildings are of an exceptionally high level of architectural design, with gothic and vernacular revival styles dominating.

- The materials seen within the village are of a very high quality - red sandstone, buff sandstone, red brick, polychromatic brick, timber framing, render and pebbledash are seen on walling with stone slates, Welsh slates and plain clay tiles all used traditionally on roofs.
- The level of detail and craftsmanship is exceptionally high – the village is particularly noted for its carved stone and timberwork.
- A number of locally important late 19th / early 20th century architects worked in the village including Jonathon Simpson, William and Segar Owen, Grayson and Ould, Douglas and Fordham and James Lomax-Simpson.
- Recent change and development has had little effect on the character of the village.
- A particularly high standard of repair and maintenance prevails in the village.
- A small number of agricultural buildings help indicate the form and nature of the village prior to the mid 19th century. These are simple forms with red sandstone / brick walls and slated roofs.

3.0 ISSUES, POLICIES AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

3.1 UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND OTHER EXISTING PLANNING POLICY

3.1.1 Thornton Hough Village is located within the Green Belt and this has considerable restrictions on acceptable uses, new development, re-use of buildings, extensions to existing dwellings or their replacement either within the village, its setting or open land beyond. There is a general presumption against inappropriate development unless very special circumstances can be demonstrated. Applications for planning permission would be assessed for compliance with the policies set out in Section 7 of the UDP and Policies CH1, CH2 and CH15 set out in Section 11 of the Unitary Development Plan, as well as Supplementary Guidance Note SPG35.

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DESIGNATION OF LAND WITHIN UDP	
Issue	Location
The future re-designation of land within or around the conservation area in the Unitary Development Plan may be detrimental to its character or setting	Throughout
Policy	
The future re-designation of land within or around the conservation area in the Unitary Development Plan should be considered in terms the effects on of its special character and setting.	
Action	Priority
Consider special character of area before any proposed changes of policy	Mid-long-term

GREEN BELT POLICY	
Issue	Location
In the application of Green Belt policy on land and affecting buildings within the conservation area or affecting its setting, the character and appearance of the conservation area should be preserved or enhanced.	Throughout
Policy recommendation	
In the application of Policies GB 2, 3, 4, 5 the effects of any proposals on of the special character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting should be strong material considerations	
Action	Priority
Consider the special character of the Thornton Hough Conservation Area in the application of policy	Immediate

APPLICATION AND INTERPRETATION OF EXISTING POLICY	
Issue	Location
Policies CH1, CH2 and CH15, together with the guidance in PPG15, may not always be rigorously applied during the planning process, resulting in development or changes to buildings which are detrimental to the character of the conservation area.	Throughout
Policy recommendation	
Ensure that all new development within the conservation area complies with polices CH1, CH2 and CH15 together with the relevant sections of PPG15.	
Action	Priority
Rigorous inspection of planning, conservation area and listed building consent applications. Improve allocated resources and knowledge of planning staff to ensure that proper consideration is given to these issues in applications.	Immediate

3.2 NEW DEVELOPMENT AND ALTERATION TO EXISTING BUILDINGS AND SITES

QUALITY OF NEW BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
Any potential buildings constructed within the conservation area may not be of an equal quality and do not have the design attributes of the historic buildings that characterise the area, therefore cannot be shown to be preserving or enhancing its character.	Throughout
Policy recommendations	
In any new development within Thornton Hough Conservation Area, there should be a strong presumption in favour of using traditional materials such as natural red or buff coloured sandstone, red brick, timber framing, plain clay tiles and slate together with any high quality traditional crafted details.	
Any new buildings should match the very high quality of materials and level of architectural design of the	

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original buildings, although simplification of the detailing may be acceptable.	
The use of contrasting modern materials of the highest quality may be appropriate if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that they do not have an adverse effect on the setting of neighbouring existing buildings.	
The use of imitation materials such as reconstituted stone or slate should not be permitted.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details including materials	Immediate

CHARACTER OF NEW BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
The appearance of any potential new buildings constructed within the conservation area may be detrimental to its rural model village character.	Throughout
Policy recommendation	
In any new development within the Thornton Hough Conservation Area, there should be a strong presumption in favour of using the traditional craftsmanship that characterises the model village.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and insist that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details.	Immediate

SCALE, MASSING, POSITION OR PROPORTIONS OF NEW BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
New buildings may detract from existing buildings in terms of their scale, massing, position or proportions	Throughout
Policy recommendations	
New buildings generally should be no higher than existing comparable buildings within their immediate vicinity in terms of both their eaves and ridge heights.	
New buildings should respect the footprint sizes of existing neighbouring buildings and their relationships with each other (spacing), the road and their site boundaries.	
New buildings should match the floor-to-ceiling heights and general proportions of existing neighbouring historic buildings.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details.	Immediate

EFFECT OF DEVELOPMENT ON KEY VIEWS	
Issue	Location
New development or extensions to existing buildings may adversely affect key views within or the setting of the conservation area	Throughout
Policy recommendation	
Applications for planning permission for new development or significant extensions to existing buildings within the conservation area must demonstrate, where appropriate, that key views or the setting of the conservation area are not adversely affected.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details.	Immediate

3.2.2 SPG 16 “Landscaping and New Development” and SPG 17 “Trees and Development” set out guidance on landscaping throughout the Wirral. The following are matters which have been identified as particular issues in the Thornton Hough Conservation Area.

LANDSCAPING ASSOCIATED WITH NEW OR EXISTING BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
Poor or inappropriate landscaping around new buildings or extensions to existing buildings can detract from the character of the area	Throughout
Policy recommendations	
A detailed landscaping scheme should be submitted with any planning application for new buildings or significant alteration to existing sites	
The magnitude of necessary car parking should be considered alongside the level of occupation of any proposed building. Schemes for buildings that require an extent of car parking / number of cars that will detract from the character of the conservation area should be rejected.	
New buildings should preserve existing areas of mature trees and other landscaping. Where any trees are removed, they should be replaced with semi-mature trees of the same or more appropriate species (e.g. native).	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by full landscaping schemes.	Immediate

PROTECTION, RETENTION AND PROVISION OF HEDGES AND TREES	
Issue	Location
To maintain and enhance the character of the area attention needs to be paid to the retention of hedges as well as trees and their provision where appropriate	Throughout
Policy recommendations	
Hedges of native or traditional species should be retained in areas of agricultural land and on the boundaries of domestic curtilages	
Trees which contribute to the character of the conservation area should be retained and if needing to be removed for reasons of health, replaced by trees of appropriate species and maturity.	
Planting of further trees and hedges of native or traditional species should be promoted, particularly in areas devoid of such trees and hedges	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of hedges and trees within the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by full landscaping schemes showing the retention of trees and hedges and any replacement planting.	Immediate

3.2.3 Extensions to dwellings are covered by Policy HS 11 in the UDP in terms of house extensions. The policy covers matters relating to scale, materials, design details, dormers, set backs of extensions and retention of amenity space. The following are additional matters which have been identified as particular issues in the Thornton Hough Conservation Area.

EXTENSIONS TO BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
Extensions to buildings within the conservation area may detract from the significance of the individual building or the setting of adjoining buildings	Throughout
Policy Recommendations	
Extensions to those buildings that have been shown to contribute to the conservation area should only be permitted where it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that the additional structure has no adverse impact on the principal elevations of the parent structure. Extensions should be subservient to the parent building	
The choice of the materials of the extension should be considered so as to provide the minimum visual distraction from the original structure. Generally, it should be assumed that materials should match in terms of colour and texture. Traditional and/or natural materials such as sandstone, brick, timber and slate should be used unless an alternative can be adequately justified in terms of its visual effect on the conservation area. Where buildings are extended using traditional forms and materials, the subtle dating of the new element should be encouraged.	
Where a building has existing detrimental features, the opportunity should be taken to secure improvements as part of the new building work.	
There should be a strong presumption against extensions that adversely affect the balance of pairs or groups of buildings which had symmetry as one of their original predominant design characteristics.	

Dormers, if acceptable, should be confined to rear elevations, situated below the ridge and of a scale and design appropriate to the building on which they are mounted.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications.	Immediate

3.2.4 In carrying out conversions or alterations to the fabric of buildings and boundaries the following good conservation practice should be applied.

ALTERATION TO HISTORIC FABRIC	
Issue	Location
Alterations to the historic fabric of a building can lead to the loss of some of its visual history and aesthetic value and can be detrimental to the visual setting of the area as a whole.	All pre WWII buildings
Policy recommendations	
Where alterations can be justified to be necessary for the continued use of the building they should be prioritised towards the less significant areas of the building.	
Alterations should be chosen that require the least possible degree of permanent loss of or change to historic fabric. For instance, secondary glazing should be installed in preference to the wholesale replacement of existing windows.	
Where replacement of existing original or early fabric is proved necessary it should always be done on a like-for-like basis where possible, not exchanging materials for modern alternatives.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details. Prepare guidance leaflets for local residents. Take enforcement action where appropriate.	Immediate

ALTERATION OR LOSS OF FEATURES ON HISTORIC BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
Alterations to or loss of specific features on historic buildings can be detrimental to the character of the individual building and the area as a whole.	All pre-WWII buildings
Policy recommendation	
Existing original or early features should be retained if at all possible. Where their replacement is necessary, it should be on a like-for-like basis in terms of materials and design. Any changes to primary features such as windows, doors, chimneys and boundary walls should be carefully considered by the local authority.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details. Prepare guidance leaflets for local residents. Take enforcement action where appropriate.	Immediate

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INSTALLATION OF NEW FIXTURES	
Issue	Location
The installation of new fixtures, such as aerials, satellite dishes, rooflights and ventilators, generally detracts from the character of the individual building and the area as a whole. Particular care should be taken in the use and location of microgeneration equipment to minimise intrusion on the building or its setting	All buildings
Policy recommendation	
The installation of rooflights into existing roof slopes should not generally be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that they are not visible from public areas or adversely affect the setting of other buildings. Any rooflights installed should be of a 'conservation' type and fixed flush with the roof covering.	
Building owners should be strongly encouraged to only install satellite dishes and aerials in positions not visible from public areas or adversely affect the setting of other buildings.	
Building owners should be strongly encouraged not to install ventilators and other fixtures onto roof slopes or prominent elevations. Where they are absolutely necessary their visual impact should be minimised in terms of their location, number, size and design.	
Whilst microgeneration of energy is to be encouraged in terms of conservation principles, the impact on buildings and their settings within the conservation area should be minimised by careful positioning in parts and areas not visible from public locations	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details. Prepare guidance leaflets for local residents. Take enforcement action where appropriate.	Short term

LOSS OR ALTERATION TO BOUNDARY WALLS AND RAILINGS	
Issue	Location
The loss of or alteration to boundary walls, railings and gateposts would adversely affect the character of the conservation area.	Throughout
Policy recommendation	
All existing historic boundary walls, railings and gateposts should be retained. Alteration as part of any planning permission should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and when fully justified and mitigated.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Prepare guidance leaflets for local residents. Take enforcement action where appropriate.	Immediate

CHANGES OF USE	
Issue	Location
Changes of use of an existing building (subject to Green Belt Policy) can result in a number of incremental changes which result in an adverse effect on the conservation area.	All buildings

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Policy recommendation	
In considering applications for change of use, the council will require information on the design of refuse storage, waste pipes, ventilation fixtures, satellite dishes and aerials, any other fixtures, signage and car parking.	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area. Use more stringent design criteria in determining future planning applications and require that all applications are accompanied by relevant design details.	Immediate

ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS	
Issue	Location
Small scale alterations to buildings in the conservation area can lead to a gradual and progressive loss to its character. Article 4 directions can bring such alterations under control as matters requiring planning permission	All buildings
Policy recommendation	
Consider the need for article 4 directions in respect of windows and doors, roof coverings and roof features; colour and surface treatment of elevations; and boundary walls	
Action	Priority
Promote an understanding of the special qualities of the conservation area, discuss the need for and extent of Article 4 directions, and determine the priority for them in relation to other conservation areas and the resources available	Short to mid- term

3.3 GENERAL GUIDANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS

- 3.3.1 The following are recommendations relating to building condition, management of the public realm, highway matters, and involvement of local groups in securing improvements to the Conservation Area. They have major implications in terms of staff resource and finance but are set out as an agenda for future action.

CONDITION OF INDIVIDUAL SITES AND BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
The condition of an individual site or building can be detrimental to the appearance of the area and may set a poor example to other owners.	Throughout
Policy recommendations	
The local authority should serve Section 215 notices on owners of buildings or land whose condition adversely affects the amenity of the area, requiring them to remedy the detriments or face the necessary costs for the local authority to do so.	
Under section 54 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, urgent works notices should be used to secure emergency or immediate repairs on any unoccupied building (or part of a building) within a conservation area where it adversely affects the character of the area. Where the building is unlisted a direction from the Secretary of State will be required.	
Prepare a guidance leaflet and issue to all residents within the conservation area explaining the benefits of	

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good, regular maintenance and appropriate repair techniques.	
Action	Priority
Regularly visit the conservation area, noting any sites or buildings in a poor condition. Serve relevant notices where appropriate. Preparation of guidance leaflet.	Immediate to midterm

CONDITION / MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING PUBLIC REALM AREAS	
Issue	Location
The existing public realm areas may be insufficiently maintained and act as a poor example to conservation area residents.	
Policy recommendation	
The existing public realm areas should be maintained and where necessary replanted / resurfaced to a standard that befits the conservation area and enhances the setting of the existing buildings.	
Action	Priority
Regularly monitor condition of public realm areas and make necessary improvements where necessary	Short-term

DETRIMENTAL CHANGES TO LISTED BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
Certain changes to listed buildings, such as insertion of replacement windows and changes to chimneys, boundary walls and roof coverings, can not only be detrimental to the appearance of the individual buildings and their immediate setting, but they are also setting a poor precedent to other building owners.	Listed buildings
Policy recommendation	
Owners of listed buildings should be notified of unauthorised changes to their buildings. Where evidence is available, (e.g. in the form of dated photographs) enforcement should be taken to ensure the reinstatement of the original fabric unless retrospective consent can be given.	
Action	Priority
Carry out a survey of all buildings, photographing them and noting any changes. Notify building owners of unauthorised changes and take necessary enforcement action. Where changes are unenforceable and not attributed to the current owners, the potential for grant-funded reinstatement should be investigated.	Short to mid-term.

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DETRIMENTAL CHANGES TO UNLISTED BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
There are some instances of detrimental changes to un-listed buildings, such as insertion of replacement windows and changes to chimneys, boundary walls and roof coverings. These are not only detrimental to the appearance of the individual buildings and their immediate setting, but they are also setting a poor precedent to other building owners.	Un-listed buildings which contribute to the conservation area
Policy recommendation	
Through example and encouragement promote reinstatement of historic features	
Action	Priority
A guidance leaflet should be issued explaining the benefits of reinstatement works.	Mid-term

CHANGES TO FABRIC OF UNLISTED BUILDINGS	
Issue	Location
The character of unlisted building may be threatened by future changes to historic fabric.	Un-listed buildings which contribute to the conservation area
Policy recommendation	
Through example, encouragement and extended control, promote good conservation practice for older buildings and sympathetic change to more recent buildings.	
Action	Priority
Put in place article 4 directions to protect unlisted features of interest. A guidance leaflet should be issued explaining the benefits of retaining historic fabric.	Short to mid-term

HIGHWAYS MARKINGS AND SIGNAGE	
Issue	Location
Highway markings and signage can be visually intrusive and detrimental to its character and appearance. Existing and future highways features, such as speed control measures may be visually obtrusive and of an inappropriate design / materials.	Roads and pavements
Policy recommendations	
Reconsider all existing signage, highways features and markings and make necessary improvements to enhance the character of the area, whilst maintaining / enhancing the safety of all village users.	
Ensure that all future highways features, such as speed control measures, railings etc are proven to be necessary and are of an appropriate design and constructed of appropriate materials.	
Action	Priority
Carry out an assessment of existing signage, highways features and markings in terms of their impact on the character of the area. Obtain advice on appropriate alternatives (e.g. narrower lines etc).	Mid-term

TRAFFIC	
Issue	Location
The level of traffic through the village (in particular at rush hour) is detrimental to the village's rural character.	Roads
Policy	
Consider means of discouraging through traffic and managing road usage. (N.B. new highways features should preserve or enhance the character of the area).	
Agree improved traffic routes with major distribution companies	
Action	Priority
Carry out an assessment of existing vehicular movements and recommend improvements	Mid-term

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND CONTRIBUTION	
Issue	Location
Residents are often inadequately aware of the purpose of a conservation area, the benefits designation may have to them and how they may influence its future. The skills and expertise of local residents groups, individuals or major landowners may be underutilised.	-
Policy recommendations	
Make conservation area information readily available to residents, using for instance existing notice boards to publicise boundaries and making appraisals / managements available in local libraries (or other well used public buildings) / on the internet.	
Encourage the involvement of the Conservation Area Advisory Committee for the area to help preserve its special character and to instigate enhancements where appropriate. Residents groups may be particularly useful in the recording of the area in terms of its present day character and historical development.	
Encourage dialogue between local residents groups and major landowners to promote enhancement and maintenance works within the conservation area.	
Action	Priority
Dialogue between local authority, residents groups and major landowners	Immediate

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOUNDARY AMENDMENTS AND PROVISION OF ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

4.1 BOUNDARY AMENDMENT

- 4.1.1 The current boundary roughly follows the extent of the historic village core and covers most buildings of interest within the immediate area. The boundary is fairly clearly defined by the roads and ownership boundaries, wherever it is practical to do so. It is therefore recommended that the boundary does not change.

4.2 ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

- 4.2.1 The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 allows building owners to carry out a range of minor developments without planning consent subject to limits and conditions. These 'permitted development' rights are automatically limited within conservation areas: restrictions include the addition of dormer windows, various types of cladding, the erection of satellite dishes fronting a highway and the reduction in the size of extensions.
- 4.2.2 Amendments for Part 40 for domestic microgeneration equipment (April 2008) and for Part 1 development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse (October 2008) have altered these rights chiefly in regard to the extent of ancillary buildings in back gardens and solar panels on the front of properties.
- 4.2.3 Article 4 of the General Permitted Development Order enables local authorities to withdraw some specified permitted development rights on buildings or land, such as removal of a chimney, changes around the front boundary of a building, construction of porches, painting of houses or removal of architectural features such as windows and doors. Local authorities must notify local people and take account of their opinions before confirming an Article 4 direction and in certain instances obtain approval from the Secretary of State.
- 4.2.4 Article 4 directions are not just an automatic consequence of conservation area designation, but should derive from a careful assessment of what is of special interest within an area and should be preserved. Permitted development rights should only be withdrawn where there is evidence to prove that such development would damage the character of a conservation area and is currently taking place.
- 4.2.5 In the case of Thornton Hough, there are currently no article 4 directions associated with the unlisted buildings. In order to protect the existing unlisted original buildings and to encourage the reinstatement of loss features, it is recommended that article 4 directions are used withdrawing permitted development rights for the following elements:
- Windows and doors
 - Roof coverings and roof features
 - The colour and surface treatment of elevations.
 - Boundary walls.
 - Solar Panels
 - Microgeneration