

Item no.



District of **easington.**

Report to: Executive
Date: 20th March 2007
Report of: Executive Member for Regeneration
Subject: Castle Eden and Seaham Conservation Area Appraisals
Ward: Hutton Henry, Seaham Harbour, Seaham North, Dawdon

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the Castle Eden and Seaham Conservation Area Appraisals and to designate revised boundaries at both locations.

2. Consultation

- 2.1 A public meeting was held in each location, with assistance from the Town and Parish Councils, to gauge residents views on the conservation area, its importance and extent. Subsequently a draft appraisal of each conservation area was published for consultation, supported by an exhibition in Seaham where the conservation area also incorporates much of the commercial centre. The response to the public consultation is included in the option appraisal section of this report.
- 2.2 English Heritage have been informally consulted in the preparation of the Appraisals. The Management Team have been consulted.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council has a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to determine which parts of the authority area are of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. This should be reviewed from time to time through the preparation of appraisals for all conservation areas, to provide a sound basis for their designation and management, and to ensure that planning decisions are based on an informed understanding of the local historic environment. This is the first review to be undertaken since the Conservation Areas were first designated over 10 years ago.
- 3.2 Residents at the public meetings were asked to identify the features they considered important to the character of the respective existing conservation areas of Castle Eden and Seaham, and to review the continuing appropriateness of the existing boundaries in the light of land use changes since their original designation. Draft Appraisals have been prepared in response to the views expressed, and include revisions to the boundaries to extend both Conservation Areas. The draft documents are published on the Council's website. A plan of the proposed boundary amendments at each location is appended to this report (Appendix 1 and 2).

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4. **Position Statement and Option Appraisal – Conservation Area Boundary Amendments**

Boundary Revisions – Castle Eden

- 4.1 At Castle Eden, the boundary to the conservation area was drawn very tightly around the built settlement using field boundaries. Residents agreed that around the former Brewery site this was now illogical as the recent housing development eradicates any evident physical boundary and is no longer identifiable. The proposed boundary changes would be in two places, extending up to the A19 and around Hallow Hill, as indicated in Plan 1 (Appendix 1).
- 4.2 The proposed A19 boundary recognises the importance of the landscape setting that encloses and permeates the village, and is more readily identified than the field boundaries. It would also remove any confusion, particularly at the south end of the village, about which buildings are inside or outside the boundary. At the north end of the A19, it is proposed to remove from the existing conservation area that part of the former brewery site that has now been developed for housing, but to retain the original buildings and the new development along the road frontage which do make a contribution to the linear pattern of development that includes the Brewery House, Entrance Gate and Bonded Warehouse, making a strong and identifiable edge to the village.
- 4.3 Hallow Hill is a substantial historic building and the former vicarage and was not previously included probably because it is at the end of a lane and not highly visible from the road. It appears in the appraisal as a building of local importance.
- 4.4 Castle Eden Parish Council objected to the revision of the conservation area boundary on the grounds that, as the surrounding area was designated green belt and high landscape value, it would be devalued to incorporate it within the conservation area. The Parish Council have been advised that the surrounding land does not in fact enjoy protection as designated green belt and that the additional land proposed for inclusion in the conservation areas would be beneficial to preserving it's setting.
- 4.5 The Castle Eden Society is concerned that inclusion of agricultural land within the boundary will create development pressure to incorporate it within the settlement boundary and therefore open it up for housing development. The conservation area boundary serves a different purpose to settlement boundaries and will not release additional land for development or influence the future location of settlement boundaries in the Easington Development Framework.
- 4.6 Residents at Castle Eden particularly, expressed concern at insensitive works by public agencies, such as lighting, street furniture, overhead cables. A significant number raised traffic issues, notably speed restrictions. The Appraisal will improve understanding of the special character of these areas and help to foster partnership working to prevent incremental damage and improve design standards in new development.

Boundary Revisions - Seaham

- 4.7 At Seaham, the boundary is proposed to be extended to include comprehensive coverage of the residential terraces at Cornelia, Adolphus, Emily and Clarence Streets in recognition of their quality, being largely unchanged from the historic form with good architectural detailing. In recognition of the success of regeneration projects along the seafront, it is also proposed to extend the boundary along the seafront as far as East Shore Village in the north to maintain and protect the high standard of development and landscaping, indicated in Plan 2 (Appendix 2).

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General Issues

- 4.8 The principle consequences of designation are that demolition would require consent, work to trees would require written notice to the Council and some development would be brought into planning control. This refers mainly to changes to roofs and cladding. The additional controls in reality are relatively minor, allowing for greater attention and control of detailed design issues related to the physical characteristics of the area. However in practice the success of a conservation area in maintaining a localities character relies very much on the support of building owners and the general public to ensure changes are undertaken in a sensitive manner. Where planning permission is required, the test is whether the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 4.9 From the many residents who attended the meetings and visited the exhibition, there was overwhelming support for proposed extensions to both conservation areas.

Conservation Area Management Plans

- 4.10 A management plan for each conservation area will be prepared to guide development control, and also to foster partnership working to preserve and enhance their special characteristics, in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance 15, Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). They will be prepared during the next six months.
- 4.11 Two further appraisals, for Easington Village and Hawthorn, will be prepared during the remainder of 2007/08.

5. Implications

5.1 Financial

There are no financial implications

5.2 Legal

Under the terms of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, a notice of designation is required to be published in the London Gazette and in at least one local newspaper and submitted to the Secretary of State.

5.3 Policy

Revision to the Conservation Area boundary will extend the area to which heritage policies will apply.

5.4 Risk

As this is a technical document, there are no risks associated with the proposal.

5.5 Communications

Designation of the revised conservation areas will be reported in accordance with the legal requirements and the approved Appraisals will be published on the Council's website. Notification will also be made to householders in the extension areas to ensure they are aware of the implications in respect to development works requiring planning permission and work to trees.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Corporate Plan and Priorities

Having Appraisals of the conservation areas is a performance measure, the appraisals meets corporate plan priorities for clean tidy communities. There are no procurement or other corporate implications.

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7. Recommendations

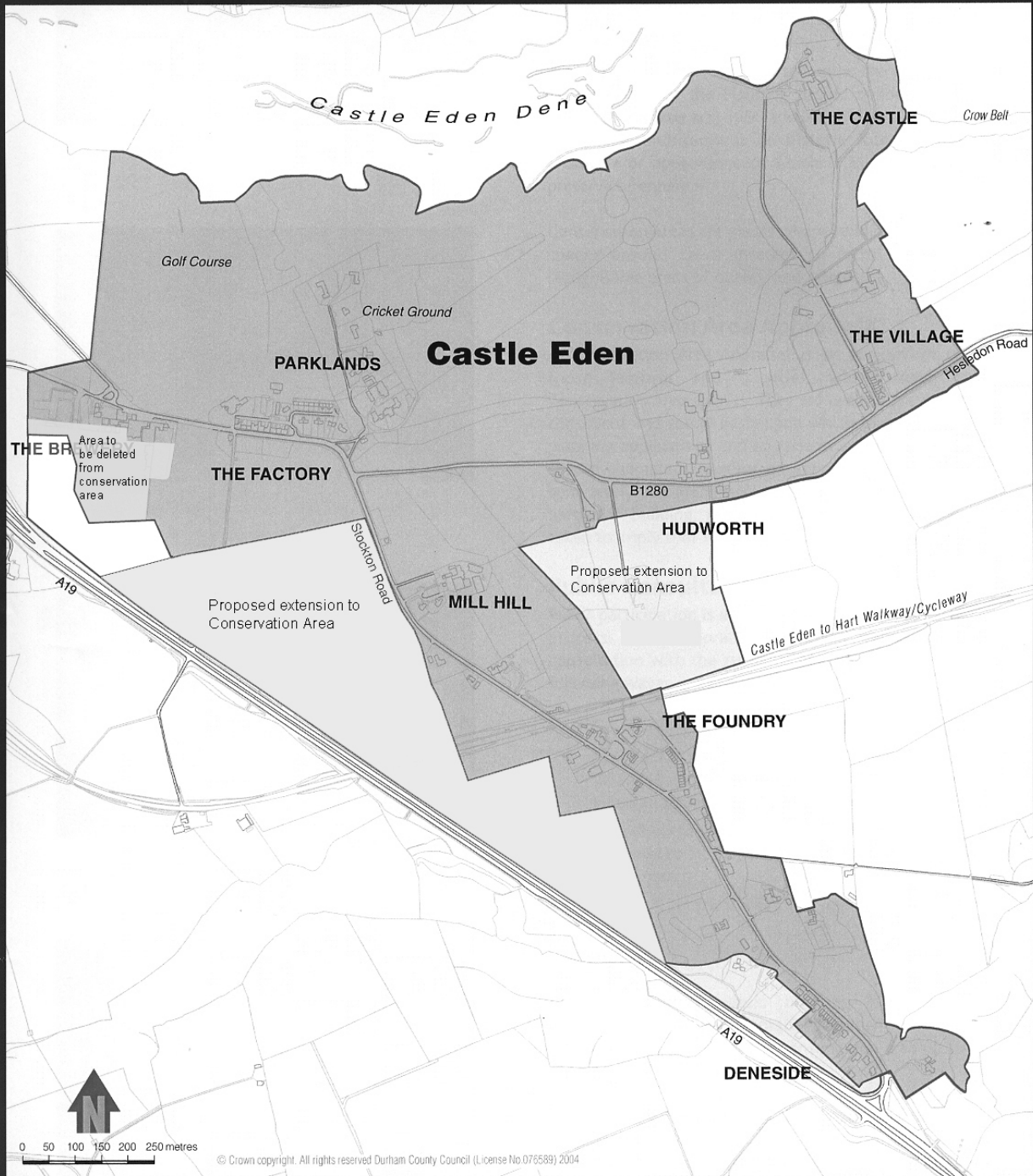
It is recommended that the Council approve the Conservation Area Appraisals of Castle Eden and of Seaham, and agree to designate revised boundaries to the Castle Eden and Seaham Conservation Areas under the terms of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Background Papers/Documents referred to:



Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, Planning and the Historic Environment

CASTLE EDEN CONSERVATION AREA Existing and Proposed Boundary



KEY

-  Existing boundary
-  Proposed extension

SEAHAM CONSERVATION AREA PROPOSED BOUNDARY EXTENSION

