

Dunkeswell Conservation Area Management Plan

Adopted 2011

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A Conservation Area Character Appraisal provides the basis for developing management proposals for a conservation area. There is a requirement under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 of all local authorities to review their conservation areas and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement.
- 1.2 The Management Plan outlines the policies and guidance to be applied to conservation areas both generic and local. Guidance produced in terms of local policy and guidance, in the form of development briefs for example, may be linked to the Local Development Framework in order to carry weight in planning decisions.
- 1.3 Proposals will take the form of mid to long term strategies and include the setting of objectives arising from the Conservation Area Appraisal. All aspects of control within conservation areas will be addressed, from monitoring change to formulating strategies for decision making, buildings at risk, Article 4 directions, trees, biodiversity and the public realm.
- 1.4 The management plan will need to be realistic, bearing in mind the resources likely to be available and will need to be updated on a 5 year cycle, in-line with the review of the Conservation Area Appraisal. The plan will define priorities for the conservation area while recognising limitations of planning controls and resources.

2.0 Enhancement Within the Public Realm.

2.1 The character and appearance of public spaces, rights of way and commercial centres in conservation areas are paramount in defining a sense of place and local distinctiveness. Where character is eroded through either neglect or unsympathetic alteration solutions should be sought to enhance the public realm of the conservation area. Dunkeswell's character remain relatively untainted when compared with other conservation areas and the public realm contributes far less to the overall character of the area than in larger village and town conservation areas.

2.2 A degree of creativity is needed with regard to resources, both financially and administratively (please refer to appendix B). Partnerships will need to be formed to initiate projects and to ensure match funding when this is appropriate. While enhancement projects are now often seen as a means of regenerating an area many conservation areas are not considered eligible for such funding. English Heritage 'Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas' for example need to have exceptional measurable results and comply with regional and local government historic environment strategies. It is not considered that Dunkeswell would necessarily attract such funding and therefore alternative initiatives and funding bodies would need to be sourced as the Council does not currently have a budget for enhancement work specifically within conservation areas.

2.3 The Dunkeswell Conservation Area Appraisal outlines some aspects of the built environment that contribute to the compromise of its overriding character and appearance:

- **The prominence of overhead power lines in prominent locations.**
This is an issue within most conservation areas and the onus is upon utility companies to consider the relocation of cabling underground as and when services are renewed.



Prominent power and telephone lines immediately south of the church.

- **Means of enclosure in the public realm.** The historic centre of the village is more sensitive to change than the airfield and the Conservation Area Appraisal identifies that some of the more modern additions to street furniture are inappropriate within their setting. There are two areas where modern railings have been constructed from concrete/wooden posts and bulky tubular steel rails. The yellow painted barrier at the entrance to the public recreation area and chain-link fence are equally as incongruous and should be considered for replacement subject to funding opportunities. Where railings are needed these should be simple solid-section metal construction with a curved section handrail. Metal fences could be substituted with native hedges or even willow hurdles on a temporary basis.



The entrance to the recreation area north of the church provides an opportunity for enhancement of the public realm with more appropriate means of enclosure.

- **Temporary roofs and claddings on agricultural buildings.** While the Appraisal recognises the character contributed by the common use of corrugated iron roofs in the conservation area there is also concern over the longer term condition of these buildings. Metal roofs have been in common use in rural areas for over 150 years but their life is relatively short and the best long-term solution is a return to the original material which was probably a mix of thatch and slate. There could be opportunities for Countryside Stewardship funding from English Nature. They offer grants for the repair and renovation of historic agricultural buildings still in use.



Various stone and cob agricultural buildings temporarily clad in corrugated iron.

3.0 Design in Dunkeswell Conservation Area.

- 3.1 Design is expressed through many means and as Dunkeswell's character is founded upon the local vernacular tradition there are many common traits that help define a consistency in the architecture of the conservation area. There is not the diversity and design fashions found in many of East Devon's larger conservation areas, and as a result there are some broad principles that can be applied to the design of new buildings and additions to existing buildings in the conservation area.
- 3.2 In terms of urban grain or the layout of buildings within the conservation area there are three distinct character areas that are identified in the appraisal. This includes a distinction in the density of buildings, the position and orientation of buildings in relation to thoroughfares and the proportions of the building footprint or figure ground.



The strong identity of the conservation area is created by the proportions, massing and situation of individual and groups of buildings. This is key design criteria when considering proposals for development.

Where the principle of development is accepted these three criteria should be adhered to. For example new buildings or extensions within the village centre should be coherent with the dense urban grain and not creating substantial building separation, be orientated either tight against the rear of the highway or perpendicular to it, and probably most importantly to restrict the footprint depth to the common average of 5m for two storey buildings and 3m for single storey. This will provide the correct building proportions and massing when the correct footprint is extruded.

- 3.3 New development must make every effort to follow the proportions, design and construction of traditional fenestration. New openings in existing buildings and windows in new development should follow the pattern of two and three light side-opening casements, fitting flush with the frame and constructed in painted timber rather than PVCu or stained wood. Where double-glazing is required in unlisted buildings the sealed units should fitted without heavy timber beading or over-sized glazing bars. Modern off-the-peg units particularly with asymmetrical layouts and top-hung fanlights should be avoided.
- 3.4 Contemporary design in the historic environment can add vibrancy and variety while respecting the form and character of surrounding traditional architecture. It is often considered that a first class contemporary approach incorporating good quality materials and finishes that will stand the test of time is a more honest contribution to the growth and evolution of a historic settlement. There are limited circumstances where this can be successful and certainly in the case of Dunkeswell village the character is overwhelmingly defined by the vernacular tradition there would be few cases where any markedly contemporary design approach would be appropriate.
- 3.5 With regard to building materials there is a prominence of rendered and un-rendered rubble walls with limited patches of exposed cob. Rubble construction is relatively well coursed and bedded in a course lime mortar. Render is roughcast on the whole with later work on some properties in a

smoother stucco-type finish. Render colour finishes are generally white and this is best achieved with a natural limewash rather than a harsh proprietary masonry paint. Roofs are either thatched in the Devon tradition without ridge decoration with a preference for locally grown wheat reed as opposed to imported water reed. Some roofs are clad in natural slates fixed with nails while there is a strong tradition for corrugated iron on outbuildings and agricultural buildings. Design in the village should incorporate this distinct palette of materials and make a meaningful effort to source these locally and adhere to local construction traditions and detailing. Artificial slates and concrete tiles should be avoided particularly as the roofscape throughout the village is a prominent character feature. Repairs to existing boundary walls and new sections should use matching materials and constructed with the appropriate level of masonry skill. Poorly constructed stone walls can be just as detrimental as other inappropriate means of enclosure. Most types of fencing are suburban in appearance and should be resisted although there may be some situations where traditional hazel or willow hurdles may be appropriate.



The conservation area demonstrates a very distinct palette of building materials, and proposed development and repairs should be conceived with this in mind.

- 3.7 Sustainable design within the conservation area will be actively encouraged. This will form a significant part of future government policy in the historic environment and this is a key agenda of the Council. This may vary from the retention and conversion of existing buildings rather than demolition to promoting the use of locally sourced building materials. High levels of thermal insulation can be applied to traditional forms of design and measures such as grey water recycling and taking greater advantage of solar gain can help reduce the impact of buildings on the environment. Domestic energy generation through solar panels and wind turbines may be acceptable in non-obtrusive locations within the conservation area. English Heritage has published recent guidance on microgeneration in the historic environment which can be viewed via www.english-heritage.org.uk. Solar panels for example can be mounted on frames in rear gardens and enclosed with hurdles or planting. New development may need to be designed to stringent sustainability codes and care must be taken to reach the required level of insulation while not compromising the aesthetic of the building.
- 3.8 While it would be expected that replacement windows in listed buildings would be an exact facsimile of the historic unit Part L of the Building Regulations requires replacement windows in unlisted buildings in conservation areas to demonstrate compliance with the current prescribed level of thermal insulation. This usually requires either primary or secondary double glazing. Further guidance is contained in an East Devon District Council publication: 'Building Control/ Conservation Policy Guide'. The design of such windows will need to follow the pattern and construction of the original window as much as possible and although low maintenance materials may be considered in certain cases the presumption for replacement windows would be painted timber.

4.0 Article 4(2) Directions.

4.1 When the local authority has made a clear assessment of the special character of a conservation area through the Conservation Area Appraisal the local authority is able to serve a Direction under Article 4(2) removing certain permitted development rights outside the categories outlined in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 (GPO). Article 4(2) directions enable the local authority to withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development affecting the external appearance of dwelling houses such as windows, doors, roof claddings and front elevations.

4.2 With regard to the character and appearance of Dunkeswell there is no significant perceived threat from alterations to buildings, particularly the installation of PVCu windows. This may be an overriding issue in other conservation areas but as this is not a current problem in Dunkeswell it is not considered that an Article 4(2) is required at the present time. When the conservation area is reviewed in five years time the opportunity for serving an Article 4(2) direction can be considered.

5.0 Buildings at Risk at the Repair of Historic Buildings

5.1 Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, para. 7.2 recommends that local planning authorities monitor the state of repair of listed buildings and other historic buildings within conservation areas. Poorly maintained or dangerous buildings are often detrimental to the character and appearance of a conservation area. The condition of listed buildings are monitored through the Buildings at Risk survey. The local authority holds a register of buildings considered to be at risk from further deterioration, damage and occasionally collapse. Grade I and II* listed buildings are also included on the national register published by English Heritage and such buildings may be eligible for English Heritage grant funding.

- 5.2 The strategy for dealing with buildings at risk within the conservation area is based upon protocol advice given in the English Heritage publication; '*Stopping the Rot*'. This outlines the procedure for serving Urgent Works and Repairs Notices to ensure that a building is made weather tight or repaired appropriately. Should these measures be deemed ineffective the local authority is able to consider serving a Compulsory Purchase Order although this is a last resort. Although this procedure relates mainly to listed buildings the Secretary of State following consultation with English Heritage can serve Urgent Works and Repairs Notices on unlisted buildings in conservation areas that contribute positively to their character.
- 5.3 Buildings on the national register are monitored annually. Entries on the local register will be subject to investigation although solutions may not always be found. This is most common in cases of listed chest tombs in serious decay when the family cannot be contacted. It is anticipated that current entries on the list are monitored every 5 years and additional buildings that have fallen into disrepair are added to the register as and when these are identified. Action taken to ensure that buildings on the register are suitably repaired will be ongoing.
- 5.4 There are no entries on the local Buildings at Risk Register within the conservation area although it should be noted that the Operations and office annex, Crew briefing room, Watch office, fire tender shelter, floodlight trailer and tractor on the nearby airfield are presently at risk although future uses for these important structures are being discussed.

6.0 Management and Protection of Trees and Green Spaces.

- 6.1 Green spaces whether these are village greens, playing fields, parks or public gardens are intrinsic to the character and appearance of any conservation area. They form the framework and breathing spaces between buildings and local townscape. Many such spaces are offered additional statutory protection through local planning policies but nonetheless pressures for change and development can exist and their importance needs full recognition. Green spaces are identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal together with an appraisal of their significance and contribution to the character of the conservation area. Relevant local plan policies for green spaces in Dunkeswell include policies RE1 and RE4 (Recreation Area and Allotment) which covers the small park to the north of the church. Proposals for the enhancement of this particular space is outlined in section 2.3 of this document.
- 6.2 Map 2 in the Conservation Area Appraisal identifies important green spaces within the conservation area. These include the agricultural land where the barrow is located and the land to the north of the church. It is their open aspect and the views that they afford that is most significant to the character of the conservation area, so there are no onerous management issues that need to be addressed.
- 6.3 Trees are often very much part of the visual structure of a town or village. In many cases their scale dominates surrounding buildings and spaces. Their retention and appropriate management therefore needs to be kept a high priority. The designation of conservation areas offers such protection to trees and woodland with a requirement for notice to be given to the local authority for felling, topping and lopping. This provides opportunity for the designation of Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) on individual specimens or larger groups of trees. It is important that development which proposes to remove trees due to their condition or safety are replaced to help maintain the screening or amenity of the site.

6.4 Dunkeswell has prominent and important tree groups as highlighted in the Conservation Area Appraisal. The setting of the conservation area is defined by significant tree belts and woodland, often on higher ground creating visual impact on the skyline. Within the village there are three areas of tree preservation orders and these are offered statutory protection with regards to their management. There are other groups, most notably along the roadside above the village to the west. These contribute to the amenity of the area and offer a belt of screening and backdrop to the historic village. There are also several individual specimens throughout the village and in many cases these are non-indigenous conifers. In such cases removal may benefit the character and amenity of the area, although there it may often be appropriate for replacement trees to be planted as part of a planning condition.

7.0 Summary

7.1 The management of the conservation area requires a multi-faceted approach. The erosion of character is almost always incremental and the removal of small building details or the addition of inappropriate extensions will have a marked effect over a longer period of time. It is therefore important to manage, monitor and enforce seemingly insignificant changes.

7.2 While mechanisms are in place for monitoring and managing change the greatest pressure will be upon resources available to provide comprehensive policing and financial means to contribute to the enhancement of the public realm.

7.3 The strengths of Dunkeswell's conservation area are reinforced by a strong architectural identity and a very distinctive topography providing a dramatic natural canvas upon which the village and airfield is set. Weaknesses are defined by poor boundary treatments and prominent power and telephone cables. The conservation area appraisal and management plan together with

future Supplementary Planning Documents must given due weight in planning decisions and the appeal process.

Appendices.

A. Conservation Area Policy and Guidance

- A.1 Planning Policy for Conservation Areas is contained within The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Sections 69-74 of the principal Act contains policies on conservation area designation and the levels of control upon various types of development. With regard to management plans, section 71 of the Act places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.
- A.2 Planning Policy Statement 5 gives a full statement of Government policies relating to conservation areas in the main Act. Policies HE2 and HE3 elaborate on conservation area policies and these are augmented in the English Heritage Practice Guide. PPS5 is the policy guidance most often referred to and gives weight to planning decisions. PPS5 also provides guidance for the consideration and controls over all types of archaeology whether this be above or below ground. As conservation areas are very often centred around the historic core of a settlement there is usually varying degree of archaeological potential when developing a site.
- A.3 Policy EN11 and EN12 of the East Devon Local Plan 1995-2011 supported by paragraphs 4.79-4.84 outlines local policy in regard to proposals for the demolition of buildings and proposals for development and advertisements in conservation areas. The Devon Structure Plan is due to be replaced by the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West 2006-2026.

- A.4 The Devon Structure Plan adopted by Devon County Council in 2004 contains similar policies for the designation, management and development control within conservation areas.
- A.5 In addition to generic and local policies for conservation areas more specific guidance will be offered by development briefs prepared for individual sites in East Devon. Development briefs will also be supported by the East Devon Design Guide and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) which will form part of the Local Development Framework (LDF). These documents will take Development Plan policies and guidance and apply them in a specific and transparent manner to development within East Devon.
- A.6 Development briefs for individual sites within conservation areas are invaluable tools in defining design and development constraints and opportunities. In respect to the historic environment they will provide a character appraisal of the site and set out appropriate levels of massing and density, positioning and an appropriate palette of materials and finishes. Where there are opportunities for the enhancement of the conservation area through the restoration of historic assets on the site, or improvements to infrastructure and the public realm, legal agreements may be recommended.
- A.7 Conservation Area Appraisals together with Area Action Plans (AAP's) will be used to provide the planning framework for areas within the district where significant change and conservation is required². These may include areas where regeneration, partially through the conservation and restoration of heritage assets is needed. In many cases where there is pressure for change AAP's will set out the policies and proposals for action based upon the outcome of the conservation area appraisal. This may involve the identification of sub-areas where Article 4(2) directions can be applied to control specific controls over development.

²Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks, paragraph 2.17

B Resources.

- B.1 With regard to regeneration and enhancement funding for projects within conservation areas the key is to consider as widely as possible the range of outcomes that can be secured for the area, and to consider whether they can be matched with public sources of funding. English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund are the two main sources of direct funding for the repair and conservation of historic buildings and sites. Compared with the HLF, funding from English Heritage is much more restricted in scale and is targeted primarily at the most important elements of the historic environment. There are other smaller but significant sources such as the Architectural Heritage Fund³.
- B.3 At a local level partnerships with building trusts, Devon County Council, local amenity societies and voluntary groups can be sources for funding and identifying aspects of conservation areas in need of preservation and in some cases, enhancement.
- B.4 Resources in terms of administration of enhancement projects and seeking funding is presently very limited and it is therefore unlikely that any significant projects would be embarked upon in the foreseeable future.

C Decision Making and Procedures.

- C.1 Procedures to ensure consistent decision making need to be included within policies and guidance for conservation areas. In terms of development management policies for conservation areas these will provide a generic framework for acceptability in controlling erosion of the character and appearance of conservation areas.

³www.helm.org.uk

- C.2 Monitoring planning appeal decisions by the Planning Inspectorate is a good mechanism in the decision making process. While some decisions are quite site specific there are general trends that emerge from time to time relating to certain types of development within conservation areas (for example replacement windows in flats above shops in conservation areas).
- C.3 Benchmarking the quality of design within the district is a valuable way to maintain good decision making and to improve the quality of the built environment in more general terms. The promotion of good design and the recognition of award winning developments could be a mechanism for helping Members and planning officers to understand more fully the attributes of good design. The Design Review Panel has been set up to scrutinise design within the district on a quarterly basis and conclusions are reported to Members and officers. The Design Review Panel aims to measure the level of success of recent planning decisions and looks at the control of detail particularly through planning conditions. Within conservation areas development proposals must demonstrate that the character and appearance of the area is either preserved or enhanced. It is therefore important to help define through policy, guidance and monitoring how these standards and levels of decision making are measured and maintained.
- C.4 With regard to conservation area reviews greater emphasis needs to be given to community involvement. The local authority will devise a strategy for public consultation when conservation area appraisals, boundaries and management plans are reviewed. In addition to those directly affected by the changes proposed by the review groups such as parish councils, amenity groups and residents' associations will need to be involved in discussing the main issues. The degree of consultation will vary according to the size, complexity and proposed revisions within each conservation area. However, the following strategy will be adopted for the basic consultation process:

- Town/Parish councils, resident and amenity groups consulted directly following Committee approval of proposals for consultation.
- Residents and businesses within the proposed extensions consulted directly.
- Copies of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be made available on the EDDC website and at local libraries or village halls for residents living within the existing conservation area.
- Press releases outlining the proposed documents and any changes.
- Exhibitions or surgeries for those affected where proposals will have a marked impact upon the area.
- Feedback will be via questionnaires which will be distributed or made available locally or on-line.
- Re-consultation with key groups once any significant amendments or further major proposals have been made.
- Following approval by Committee the Appraisal and Management Plan together with any boundary amendments will be published.

D Monitoring Change in Conservation Areas.

D.1 Conservation area appraisals are not seen as static documents but help monitor change in conservation areas. The ongoing review of conservation area appraisals is subject of a heritage Best Value Performance Indicator (BV219). This requires a review of conservation area appraisals, conservation area boundaries and management plans every 5 years. In many cases there will be few changes within this period but it will provide a primary mechanism for monitoring the incremental changes often apparent within larger conservation areas in particular.

D.2 As part of the Local Development Framework process local authorities are required to prepare an annual monitoring report assessing the progress of

implementation of policies including those for conservation areas. This process will also monitor the effectiveness of Supplementary Planning Documents.

D.3 The local authority holds an ever increasing photographic record of all conservation areas including recent and historic aerial photographs. Maintaining and constantly updating this database is a primary resource in monitoring change and can provide evidence for enforcement.

E Enforcement Strategies.

E.1 One of the primary concerns for the local authority with respect to the historic environment is the extent and occurrence of unauthorised works to listed buildings and un-listed buildings in conservation areas. In many cases it is a criminal offence to carry out works of alteration to a listed building or the demolition of either a listed building or an un-listed building within a conservation area.

E.2 Enforcement strategies within conservation areas will be informed to an extent by monitoring change through regular reviews. Unauthorised works become evident on regular basis through site inspections or by complaints made to the local authority. Enforcement cases within conservation areas are managed by the enforcement team with advice and support given by conservation officers.

E.3 It is important that enforcement strategies offer an appropriate level of consistency although each case will be dealt with on an individual basis. For example enforcement action taken against the installation of unauthorised replacement windows cannot be independent of a similar breach at a neighbouring property. It may therefore be appropriate to approach certain enforcement issues en masse rather than taking piecemeal action. This approach would also send out a strong message locally.

- E.4 The nature of enforcement action within conservation areas and the time scales imposed for compliance with enforcement notices will be informed by guidance provided in Planning Policy Guidance note 15. As the type of action may vary from non-compliance with a planning condition to prosecution for irreversible alterations to a listed building the strategy will need to be adapted to individual cases. With regard to time scales for compliance there needs to be a balance made between an appropriate degree of leniency and ensuring that the period of visual detriment is kept to a minimum. In many cases unauthorised works can encourage similar breaches on nearby properties. The cumulative impact of such works can be quite detrimental to the character and appearance of a conservation area and will put additional pressure upon resources needed to take appropriate enforcement action. Where unauthorised works such as unlawful fences or satellite dishes can be easily removed a compliance period of 28 days may be deemed appropriate. However, where the works involve more significant alterations such as replacing unauthorised windows the compliance period given would be a maximum of 5 years in line with Council policy.
- E.5 The key to limiting the extent of unauthorised works in conservation areas is by making information readily available, education and community involvement. Many amenity groups, parish and town councils are instrumental in monitoring change in conservation areas and this is often the most effective means for policing unauthorised works. The consultation process for conservation area appraisals and management plans will also raise awareness of conservation area controls. Additional guidance has also been produced by the local authority with regard to conservation area designation and the implications of the Building Regulations upon historic buildings in conservation areas. It is anticipated that its distribution will raise awareness and help limit the need for enforcement action.