

Interim Planning Guidance

Dosthill Conservation Area Statement of Designation & Reasoned Justification

INTERIM PLANNING GUIDANCE

As part of the Local Plan process, supplementary planning guidance was prepared to supplement policies and proposals in the Local Plan. The Borough Council consulted the public on the guidance at the draft deposit and revised draft deposit stages of the Local Plan preparation process. Some of the comments on the Draft Deposit Guidance were taken into account in formulating the Revised Draft Guidance.

It was not appropriate for the Borough Council to adopt the guidance as supplementary planning guidance because this can only supplement an adopted local plan and the Tamworth Local Plan 2001-2011 will not be adopted until 2006. Furthermore, under the new development plan system, supplementary planning guidance has been replaced with supplementary planning documents.

This guidance was approved as interim planning guidance by the Borough Council's Cabinet on 15th August 2005. It contains information about the special character of the Dosthill Conservation Area, a justification for its designation and guidelines for development. Appropriate guidance will be replaced with supplementary planning documents in due course. This is in accordance with the Council's Local Development Scheme that came into effect in March 2005.

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1. INTRODUCTION

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is important to preserve or enhance. Tamworth Borough Council has a duty to decide which areas are special and fall into this category, and these are then designated as conservation areas. It is not only the individual buildings but also the way in which they are situated and the surrounding areas that give an area its character.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides the legislative backing for such designations, stating that:

'Every Local Planning Authority should from time to time determine which parts of their area are of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance, and shall designate those areas as conservation areas.'

It also imposes a duty on Local Authorities to review their areas from time to time. The Dosthill Conservation Area was originally designated on 9th July 1985, under the enabling powers of the 1971 Town and Country Planning Act. It was therefore felt that a review of the boundary then designated was necessary to comply with the requirements of the 1990 Act.

In the review of Dosthill, it was considered that the designated conservation area boundary as determined in 1985 remained appropriate, and therefore no changes to the boundary were proposed. The individual characteristics of the area have however been identified, and as such a comprehensive statement of designation has been produced.

This reviewed conservation area boundary and associated statement of designation were presented to and approved by the Borough Council's Programme and Monitoring B Committee on 10th September 1997.

2. THE NEED FOR CONSERVATION

The Dosthill village area Tamworth comprises a satellite village core which was mentioned in the Domesday Book, and lies 2.5 miles to the south of the town centre of Tamworth. In its more recent history, it has become incorporated within the urban fabric of Tamworth, and is surrounded by much new residential development.

The area's special setting and its important church buildings give it an individual character. This ambience is complimented by many mature trees, hedges and other landscape features, which serve to provide a sense of enclosure.

The aims of the conservation area are not confined to keeping areas and buildings

pleasant to look at, or as a record of some aspect of history. They must also involve the continuing life and function of the area, and be receptive to change, and some new residential development has been permitted during recent years, all of which does not detract from the conservation area or its historic buildings.

In designating the Dosthill Conservation Area, the Borough Council has therefore recognised the demands of progress and preservation. Conservation to be effective requires the commitment of a wide range of interests in the community. In this respect the enthusiastic works of both the Tamworth Civic Society and Conservation Area Advisory Committee are welcomed by the Borough Council.

3. CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES

The conservation area of Dosthill is located approximately 2.5 miles south of Tamworth town centre and is focused around St. Paul's Church and grounds.

To the north the boundary begins along a public footpath linking Wigford Road with High Street, Dosthill. It follows the boundary of 32 Wigford Road, and then incorporates some new residential development along Church Farm Mews. The boundary here follows the line of the rear gardens of these properties and those facing High Street, Dosthill. To the south the boundary avoids the modern residential development of 2-12 Church

Road and follows the boundaries of the Cruck Barn, Church Farm, Hawthorn Cottage and adjacent residential properties. The boundary then crosses Church Road to follow the boundary of St. Paul's Church, leading west to the Dosthill Quarry site. Using its edge as the conservation area boundary it then returns north to Wigford Road along a track to the north of the quarry.

4. REASONED JUSTIFICATION

The Dosthill Conservation Area is based around St. Paul's Church and that part of Dosthill which originally its focus, where buildings were clustered round a ridge overlooking the valley below. The original chapel dated from the 12th century, but the major periods of development occurred in the late 18th and 19th centuries when a number of large farms and associated cottages were developed. By the 20th century it had become a colliery village and its character had much changed.

The boundary has therefore been designated to include the principal historic buildings, which form the focus of interest, while excluding the more recent development of Dosthill High Street.

Conservation area status emphasises the importance of the historic development of the village, and illustrates the acceptance of the individual character of this area by the Borough Council. It is intended to

protect the special architectural and historic character of the buildings and their settings, and goes some way to promoting the area as a separate entity from the rest of the more Victorian development along Dosthill High Street.

The designation gives a more positive context to the restoration of older properties of character and owners and occupiers should be more confident that retention, repair and restoration of the original buildings and their appearance is worthwhile.

Conservation Area status also justifies the formulation of stricter policies to control the design and form of any development. It protects the original street pattern, which is of the utmost importance when considering the original development of the area.

5. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Although Dosthill has ancient origins, it seems to have remained a hamlet until modern times. Although there are some outlying houses, and 19th century buildings on what is now Dosthill High Street, its development was limited to relatively few buildings clustered around the Norman chapel. These occupy a ridge above the River Tame either side of the old north/south route represented by Slade Lane and Wigford Road.

The most important buildings in the area are the Norman Chapel dating from the 12th century, which is listed Grade II*, and the Cruck Barn, a timber framed building dating from the 15th century. Although converted to residential use in 1990, it still stands as one of the most important timber framed buildings in the Borough.

The road pattern of Wigford Road and Church Road where they pass through the Conservation Area remain in their original location, although the later addition of Church Farm Mews now gives access to modern residential development created in what would have originally been the farm yard of Church Farm.

6. EXISTING CHARACTER OF DOSTHILL

The conservation area of Dosthill was originally focused around the ecclesiastical buildings of the Norman Chapel and St. Paul's Church. Originally the majority of properties were associated with agricultural uses, including Church Farm and the Cruck Barn.

In more modern times the principal use within the area has become residential, with a small area of new development built at Church Farm Mews complimenting the existing and more historic buildings. These properties while typical of modern housing development do not detract from either the character of the conservation area of the listed buildings within it.

The ecclesiastical buildings within the area are important both from a historical point of view and also because their grounds do much to provide the setting and overall character of the conservation area. The existing graveyard is well tended and an area of land adjacent to it provides an important area of open space.

The trees and landscaping in the area as a whole is mature and are as a result important in creating the overall appearance of the area.

7. EXISTING LAND USE CHARACTER

There are three main land uses within the Dosthill Conservation Area

1. Ecclesiastical uses

Two important churches stand within the Dosthill Conservation Area, St. Paul's and the Norman Chapel. St. Paul's continues as a functioning parish church and dates from 1870. It was designed in Early English style by E. Holmes of Birmingham and has a two bay chancel with south vestry and four bay nave. Internally it has a deep arch-braced roof with some elaborate carving and stained glass by Hardman & Co.

The Norman Chapel by contrast is now used as Sunday School, day nursery and Parish Room. It dates originally from the 12th century but has later additions and alterations. It has a typical rectangular plan with round headed entrance which

has some renewed moulded archivolt and plate detailing.

The two form an important focus for the conservation area, and stand as an impressive reminder of the original reason for the development of the area as a whole.

2. Residential Uses

The area was originally developed as a residential core to an ancient settlement, and whilst there are relatively few properties within the conservation area as a whole, these houses are in many cases historically and architecturally important. No single style predominates as each was built very much individually, and served its own function within the farming community.

3. Open Space

The conservation area as a whole is characterised by much open space, both public and private, the majority of which is within the grounds of St. Paul's Church. The mature trees and landscaping create a feeling of enclosure and provide an important interlude within the surrounding densely packed modern residential development.

8. DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

The need to appreciate and conserve the existing built environment does not preclude new development. Potential exists to develop some sites within the

conservation area and the intention is therefore to provide guidance that will accommodate flexibility in design while maintaining the essential character of the conservation area.

1. New Development

It is not practical here to give design guidance relating to each situation that might arise. However the broad principle can be established that new development should seek to compliment the domestic scale prominent throughout the area and the existing properties in terms of scale, form, proportion, massing and elevational treatment.

2. Refurbishment/Conversion

The refurbishment and conversion of existing properties is becoming increasingly important as properties age and essential repairs become necessary. The Borough Council would seek to encourage the retention of the historical characteristics that are important within the conservation area. There should be a presumption against the removal of boundary walls that add much to the overall feeling of enclosure. Emphasis should therefore be placed on the retention and restoration of individual architectural features that give each building its individual character.

3. New Materials

The use of new materials and elevational treatments can have an interesting effect on building elevations and often determine

whether alterations will be acceptable or not.

The colour, pattern and texture of materials in many cases make the difference between success and failure. The uses of brightly coloured or strongly moulded modern materials are rarely successful and should be avoided. Materials which contrast with traditional materials used in older buildings should also be avoided.

The principle should also be employed when looking at roadway and footway surfacing. Although tarmac seems the only option for the road surface, the retention of original materials on footways should be encouraged wherever possible, and where original materials have been removed in the past, new works or repair works should seek to replace original materials wherever possible.

4. Tree Protection

The retention of existing mature trees throughout the Conservation Area should be considered as primarily important when looking at any proposed works. Existing trees add much to the mature character of the area and any application to remove them should be discouraged as a matter of priority.

