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Cambridge City Council

ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To: Councillors Ward (Chair), Kightley (Vice-Chair), Herbert, Kerr, Newbold, Pogonowski, Saunders, Tunnacliffe and Znajek

Despatched: Monday, 7 March 2011

Date: Tuesday, 15 March 2011

Time: 9.30 am

Venue: Committee Room 1 & 2 - Guildhall

Contact: Toni Birkin

Direct Dial:

AGENDA

- 14 **WEST CAMBRIDGE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL** *(Pages 1 - 8)*
- 15 **DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW FOR MILL ROAD AND ST MATTHEWS, TO INCLUDE ROMSEY** *(Pages 9 - 14)*

Information for the public

Public attendance

You are welcome to attend this meeting as an observer, although it will be necessary to ask you to leave the room during the discussion of matters which are described as confidential.

Public Speaking

You can ask questions on an issue included on either agenda above, or on an issue which is within this committee's powers. Questions can only be asked during the slot on the agenda for this at the beginning of the meeting, not later on when an issue is under discussion by the committee.

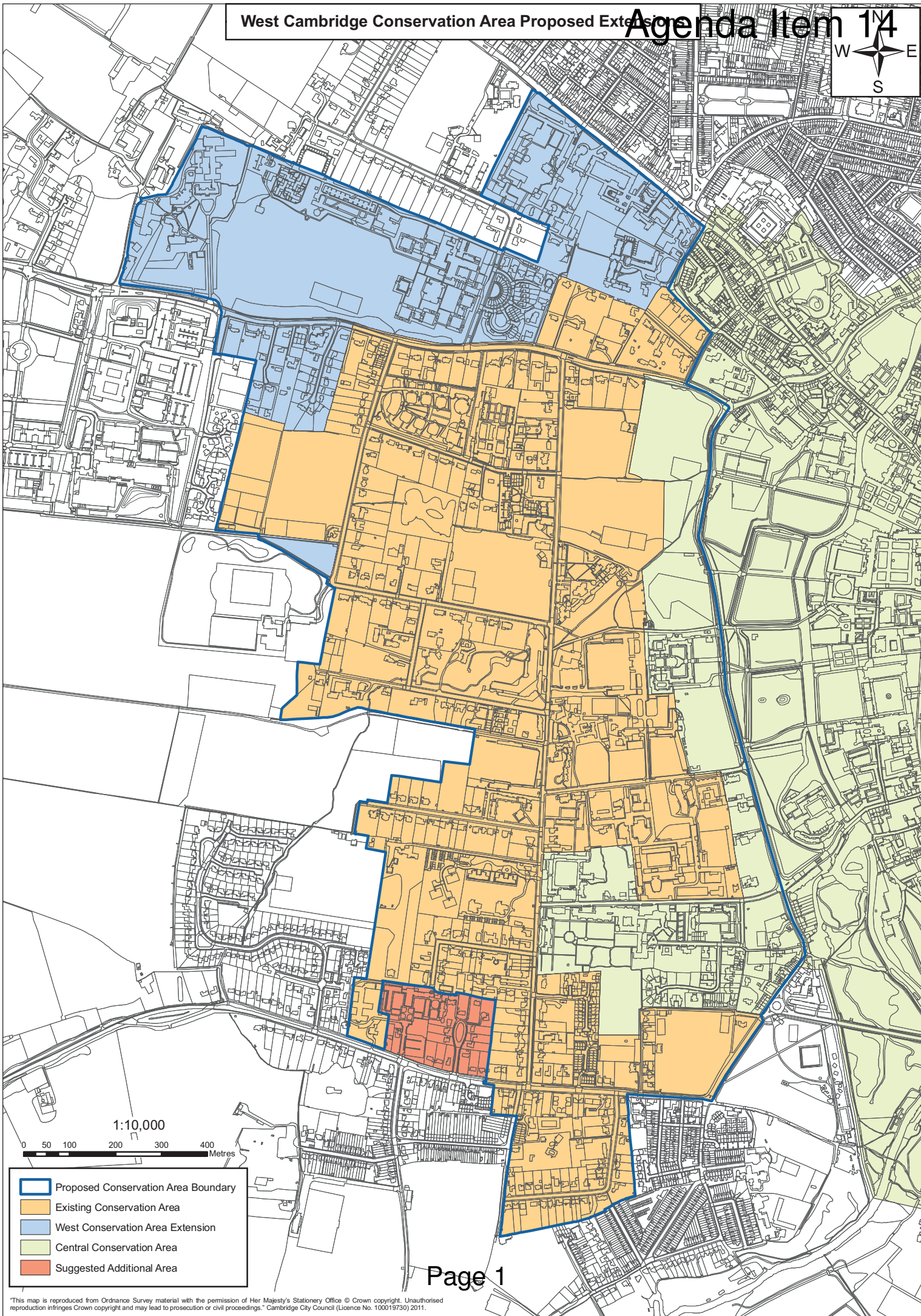
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- Proposed Conservation Area Boundary
- Existing Conservation Area
- West Conservation Area Extension
- Central Conservation Area
- Suggested Additional Area

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ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 15 MARCH 2011

Pre- Committee Amendment Sheet for Items 14 and 15

ITEM 14 West Cambridge Conservation Area

Revised recommendation (revised for clarity):

2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to approve the new Conservation Area boundary and the content of the draft Appraisal.

Note

The new boundary to be approved takes in only the areas coloured blue on the attached plan. No change is recommended at this time to the area coloured pale yellow.

Additional recommendation:

2.2 The decision on whether to designate an additional area north of Barton Road, and including Barton Close and Wolfson College, will be taken by the Executive Councillor in consultation with the Chair and Spokes, after the end of the further consultation period on 24th March.

Background to additional recommendation:

Since the report was drafted, Ward Councillor Sian Reid has submitted a representation asking that consideration be given to including Wolfson College, Barton Close and adjacent properties (including nos 32-42 Barton Road) in the new Conservation Area boundary. This area is shown in red on the attached plan.

This area was assessed in the Barton Road Suburbs and Approaches study (<http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/planning-and-building-control/historic-environment-and-trees/suburbs-and-approaches.en>). The consultants who drafted the West Cambridge Appraisal reviewed this study; they did not recommend the area be included in the Conservation Area.

Officers have reassessed the area, and feel that there may be justification for taking a different view. The following text has been drafted for potential inclusion in the Conservation Area Appraisal:

Barton Close, to the north of Barton Road, is a cul-de-sac of originally ten detached houses. The properties are typical of the 30s constructed from brick with hipped roofs and metal windows, apart from no. 3 which is a new build in a different style. They are set back from the highway with hedges and trees to separate the different properties. Nos. 38, 40 and 42 Barton Road are of similar date and character to these properties. The central island is in a semi-wild state and the path around the cul-de-sac is narrow tarmac with a grass verge between it and the road. This gives an informal character to the area.

Wolfson College has a range of buildings of varying dates from the 20th century. Some of the 1930s buildings that were existence before the College was founded, nos. 72 and 74, have been incorporated into the site. The other buildings date from the 1960s onwards. The car park to the front of the building, by Barton Road, is not a particularly interesting feature, but it is behind the metal railings, with brick pillars, which run the length of the boundary between the College and Barton Road.

With the agreement of the Executive Councillor and Chair, consultation letters have been delivered to the properties affected (32-42 Barton Road, 1-11 Barton Close, and Wolfson College including 72 and 74 Barton Road and 26 Selwyn Gardens). Responses have been invited by 24 March 2011.

ITEM 15 Mill Road and St Matthews Area, and Romsey Conservation Area Boundary Review

Recommendation

No change.

Additional representations (see Appendix 1)

a) 2 responses were inadvertently omitted from the table in Appendix 1:-

Cambridge Past Present and Future (CPPF) support the proposed designations, including Romsey and Burnside, and the approaches to the railway bridge and adjacent land. Many detailed suggestions are made regarding the content of the draft Appraisals; these will inform the drafting of the proposed combined Appraisal.

A resident of Devonshire Road has written in response to the consultation, raising specific concerns in relation to trees on Devonshire Road, to wheelie bins, and to potential impacts of developments in the Station area. He did not comment on the proposed designations.

b) The following late response has been received from Sally Fletcher of Januarys on behalf of NHS Cambridgeshire:

“PROPOSED ROMSEY CONSERVATION AREA

REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF NHS CAMBRIDGESHIRE

It is requested these late representations on behalf of NHS Cambridgeshire, the owner of the Brookfields Hospital site, be taken into account. NHS Cambridgeshire only became aware of the proposal on 4 March 2011 and there is no record of letters or emails being received by either the land owner or the various occupants of the buildings although it is understood from the Local Planning Authority that all affected parties were notified.

Objections are raised to the inclusion of the Brookfields Hospital site, and the Burnside Extension, in they appear to be an illogical extension, unconnected to Romsey Town, which is incompatible with the primary character of the proposed Romsey Town Conservation Area, which comprises ‘mainly residential streets which lie at right angles’ (LPA Appraisal Paragraph 1.2).

It is considered that the inclusion of part of Brookfields Hospital site as proposed, and Burnside, unnecessarily extends the Conservation Area thereby debasing its value by incorporating areas which fail to comply with the predominant architectural and historical character as identified in the LPA’s appraisal.

As noted in PPS6, and Article 50(5) of the Planning (NI) Autumn 1991, ‘where any area is for the time being designated as a

conservation area special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance’.

The Listed Buildings Act 1990 also emphasises the need for a Conservation Area to be “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (Paragraph L69.03).

As noted in the Conservation Area Appraisal, the defining characteristic built form of Romsey Town comprises the small terraced houses situated at right angles to one another. This is not the defining character of the Brookfields Hospital site which differs in the following ways:

- i) It does not comprise small terraced properties.
- ii) It is surrounded on three sides by potential redevelopment sites namely:
 - a) Priory Garage (vacant)
 - b) Robert Sayles former depot (to be redeveloped potentially as a mosque)
 - c) Seymour Court belonging to the City Council (no longer fit for purpose)
 - d) Brookfields Health Centre (in need of upgrading or replacement to remain fit for purpose)
 - e) Offices belonging to the Cambridge and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (accessed via Vinery road)
- iii) It adjoins relatively modern existing hospital buildings to the rear.

The Brookfields Hospital site is therefore not located in a wider area the appearance of which it is important to preserve. This is seen by the fact that it represents an isolated ‘outlier’ of the proposed Conservation Area not physically abutting the remainder of the proposed Romsey Town designation on the Northern side of Mill Road. The benefit of including such a small isolated site within the Conservation Area is questioned.

With regard to the buildings within Brookfields, it is important to note that the site was clearly assessed by English Heritage when it undertook its schematic study of hospitals in the 1990s. The only element of the Brookfields site which is mentioned in the published

volume was the X-shaped wing demolished in the 1980s. Interestingly, the Chesterton Union Workhouse which is described and illustrated in more detail has already been demolished.

It also has to be recognised that the main access to the extensive hospital buildings to the rear meanders through the existing buildings on the front of the site in a random way with no clear delineation of footpaths and of a width and layout clearly unsuited to its function.

When resources are available, and in order to improve Health and Social Care facilities for Cambridge residents, it is proposed that the area including the Seymour Clinic and that part of Brookfields fronting onto Mill Road should be redeveloped whilst at the same time facilitating adequate access to the rear of the site.

It is important to note that all the trees within the site are currently subject to a Tree Preservation Order and therefore the green setting, which is considered to be of significance, is already protected without the proposed Conservation Area designation.

Similarly, Mill House, fronting onto to Mill Road, could always be Listed to ensure its retention if it was considered to be of particular architectural or historical significance.

The proposed inclusion of areas of essentially different characteristics, poorly related to the main Romsey Town Conservation Area, would only serve to devalue the salient features of, and the *raison d'être* for, the proposed designation area.

In summary, support is given to the designation of the Romsey Town Conservation Area but excluding the Brookfields and Burnside outlier.

Romsey Town represents a clearly homogenous area of similar architectural design which has, for the most part, remained largely unchanged.

No justifiable benefit can be achieved from including that part of the Brookfields Hospital site which has entirely different characteristics from the main body of the proposed Conservation Area,, which has buildings in medical use which are no longer fit

for purpose and which cannot be converted without substantial modification, which serves as an access to the retained Hospital land to the North and which will be surrounded by new development which will entirely change the appearance and character of the immediate area.

The Burnside extension is also considered inappropriate in that it does not comprise the typical residential units along streets at right angles to one another and the division of the area by the Ring Road irrevocably erodes the benefit of including land to the East of that road as it can in no way be viewed as a homogenous area.

Should Councillors wish to have the benefit of a site visit to view the outdated, and much altered buildings within the Brookfields Hospital site and to understand its relationship with proposed redevelopment areas and lack of compatibility with the main Romsey Town Conservation Area, then a site visit will gladly be facilitated.”

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