

Executive Committee

25th June 2019



CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW:

Little Malvern

Relevant Wards

Little Malvern

Portfolio Holder

Councillor David Harrison

Head of Service

Gary Williams

Contact Officer

Bryony Taylor (Conservation Officer)

(If you have any queries or questions about the content of this report, please speak to the portfolio holder or contact officer in advance of the meeting.)

1. Purpose and Summary

- 1.1 This report informs Members of the conservation area review undertaken for Little Malvern. It seeks the approval of Committee to progress the review to formal public consultation and adoption of a separate conservation area at Little Malvern as a revision of the existing Malvern Wells Conservation Area.
- 1.2 The conservation area review looks at two areas:
 - (a) Whether the existing conservation area boundary at Little Malvern, originally drawn as part of the Malvern Wells Conservation Area, is still relevant and whether amendments are required, and
 - (b) The drafting of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan to explain the special interest and character of the Little Malvern Conservation Area.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the suggested boundary of the Little Malvern Conservation Area and the draft Character Appraisal and Management Strategy are subject to

public consultation.

3. Background

- 3.1 Conservation Areas were introduced through the Civic Amenities Act of 1967. A conservation area is an “area of special architectural and/or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. There are currently 21 conservation areas within the Malvern Hills District.
- 3.2 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to:
- (a) Keep its conservation areas under review;
 - (b) Prepare policies and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of its conservation areas; and
 - (c) Pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area in exercising its planning function.
- 3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out government policy and guidance on the protection of conservation areas and other elements of the Historic Environment. The NPPF advises that Local Planning Authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest. Historic England’s guidance on Conservation Areas advises that there are many benefits to a character appraisal, including as a tool to demonstrate an areas special interest and in providing a basis for development control and informing management proposals.
- 3.4 Little Malvern was originally designated as an extension to the Malvern Wells Conservation Area during a review of its boundaries in January 1995.

4. Boundary Changes

- 4.1 The following amendments are proposed:
- 4.2 **1.** Separate the existing Malvern Wells Conservation Area into two new conservation areas: Malvern Wells and Little Malvern.

This is proposed in order to:

- (a) Acknowledge and better respond to the character and appearance of both areas as distinct from one another, including their individual origins and development.
- (b) Make the process of reviewing and appraising the conservation areas of Malvern Wells and Little Malvern more manageable.
- (c) Allow priority to be given to the boundary review and appraisal of the proposed Malvern Wells Conservation Area, where

development pressures are comparatively higher than the proposed Little Malvern Conservation Area.

4.3 The boundary of the existing Malvern Wells Conservation Area will remain unaltered until after the adoption of the proposed boundaries to the new Malvern Wells and Little Malvern conservation areas.

4.4 **2.** Extend the conservation area to encompass Poplar Cottage. This unlisted building is considered to contribute to the special architectural and historic interest of Little Malvern.

4.5 The reasons for this proposed extension are:

- (a) Poplar Cottage is a prominent roadside dwelling in Little Malvern. It has a vernacular character, distinctive of the area, visible through its modest scale and form and the survival of historic fabric and features including timber box framing.
- (b) The building emphasises the contrasting phases of settlement and social hierarchy of the area.
- (c) The domestic curtilage, defined by trees, hedges and Malvern Stone walling is considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the street scene along Wells Road.

4.6 **3.** Extend the boundary of the conservation area to encompass the walled garden to the west of Pipes Lane. This structure is associated with grade II* listed Little Malvern Court and is considered to contribute to the special historic and architectural character of Little Malvern.

4.7 The reasons for this proposed extension are:

- (a) The walled garden is a mid-19th century addition to the gardens at Little Malvern Court. Its form and red brick construction, with integral outbuildings to the north, buttressing and coping details contribute to its historic and architectural character.
- (b) Unusually, the walling is incomplete to its eastern side which allows visibility of the garden from Pipes Lane. This contributes to the formal character of the garden at Little Malvern Court and the built presence along Pipes Lane.

4.8 **4.** A minor extension to rationalise the boundary to the north of Little Malvern Priory to include the grassed verge between the road and the boundary of the churchyard.

4.9 The reasons for this proposed extension are:

- (a) To rationalise the boundary so that it follows logical ground features.
- (b) To acknowledge the positive contribution that the verge make to the

setting of the Priory and the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4.10 **5.** Remove land between the northern boundary of the plantation to the north of St Wulstan's Church, and south of the curtilage of Seatstone Lodge to the east of Kings Road.

4.11 The reasons for this proposed deletion are:

- (a) Whilst acknowledging that this area makes a valuable contribution to the rural setting of the conservation area, the process of review and assessment has not found the area to possess sufficient special historic or architectural interest to warrant its inclusion as part of the conservation area and would be considered contrary to HE advice and guidance in this regard
- (b) However, this area would remain a significant consideration within local and national planning policy as part of the setting of the Conservation Area, and as part of the AONB.

4.12 The suggested boundary changes are shown in the plan attached to this report. The joint public consultation period for the Little Malvern and Malvern Wells conservation area is proposed to last for a period of six weeks, within which a Joint public meeting will be held in the Malvern Wells Conservation Area. Any representations made as part of that consultation will be reported back to Executive Committee in consideration of a future recommendation to adopt.

5.

5.1 **How does it meet Council priorities?**

This initiative contributes to the Five Year Plan, especially the goals and objectives encompassed under 'Making the most of our superb environment', and in particular 'Protecting, enhancing and promoting our natural and built heritage'. It also contributes to meeting the objective within the Planning and Infrastructure Service Plan to review and prepare character appraisals for two conservation areas within the Malvern Hills District 2018/19.

5.2 **What are the financial / resource implications?**

Financial implications- any limited expenditure would be met from within existing budgets.

Staffing implications - none.

Legal - none at this stage.

Property - none identified.

5.3 **What are the Risks?**

Failure to deliver a programme of appraisals will impact on the ability to deliver against the Service Plan. Failure to periodically review conservation areas is in conflict with statutory legislation and national planning policies and has the potential for some reputational risk.

6. Is a Diversity Impact Assessment Required?

6.1 No

7. Has a Privacy Impact Assessment been completed?

6.1 No

Appendices

Little Malvern Conservation Area Character Appraisal Draft
Little Malvern Conservation Area Boundary Amendments Map

Background Papers

Held with the heritage team