

Executive Committee

26th March 2019



CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW:

Malvern Wells

Relevant Wards

Malvern Wells

Portfolio Holder

Councillor Melanie Baker

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 Malvern Wells and seeks the approval of Committee to progress the review to formal public consultation and adoption of a revised conservation area boundary for Malvern Wells.
- 1.2 The conservation area review looks at two areas:
 - (a) Whether the existing conservation area boundary as drawn at Malvern Wells 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 Malvern Wells Conservation Area.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the suggested amendments to the Malvern Wells Conservation Area boundary and the draft Character Appraisal and Management Plan 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 The Malvern Wells Conservation Area was originally designated in February 1973. The boundary was reviewed and substantially enlarged in January 1995 to incorporate settlement around the Wyche, Little Malvern and land towards Upper Welland.

4. Boundary Changes

- 4.1 The following amendments are proposed to the existing Malvern Wells Conservation Area Boundary:
- 4.2 1. Separate the existing Malvern Wells Conservation Area into two new conservation areas: Malvern Wells and Little Malvern. The Malvern Wells Conservation area is proposed to finish at the southern end of Kings Road.

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 existing Malvern Wells conservation area 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. This will maintain the conservation area status of Little Malvern in the interim period.
- 4.4 **2.** Extend the conservation area to encompass properties to the north of Assarts Road, to reflect part of the settlement that is considered to be of special architectural and historic interest. This interest is discussed in detail in paragraphs 4.50 to 4.55 of the appraisal document.
- 4.5 The reasons for this proposed extension are:
- (a) This development encompasses a compact group of historic cottages, modest Victorian and Edwardian dwellings and The Homestead, a Victorian residence set within extensive wooded grounds.
 - (b) The area reflects early phases of settlement shown on late 18th century maps and the subsequent social and economic development of the area. This is illustrated through surviving historic building forms, architectural details and materials.
 - (c) The extensive wooded grounds of the Homestead are considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the street scene along Assarts Road.
- 4.6 **3.** Remove the playing field south of Assarts Road and grazing land and buildings to north of Upper Welland Road and west of Chase Road.
- 4.7 The reasons for this proposed deletion are:
- (a) Whilst acknowledging the contribution 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.
- 4.8 **4.** Make a number of minor amendments to rationalise the existing boundary including:
- (a) Redraw the boundary to eastern side of Wells Road so that it follows the logical boundary of the hedgerow. This acknowledges

the positive contribution that this green boundary makes to the character and appearance of the conservation area, the particular connection of this stretch of road with the wider rural setting and recognises the positive contribution of the listed gas lamps.

- (b) Redraw the boundary to include Holywell Park on Holywell Road. The boundary currently cuts through this property. The inclusion of this building rationalises the boundary following logical ground features and includes a stretch of Malvern stone wall which makes a positive contribution to the special historic and architectural character of the area.

4.9 The suggested boundary changes are shown in the plan attached to this report. The public consultation period is proposed to last for a period of six weeks, within which a 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

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

Background Papers

Held with the heritage team