



Oadby Hill Top & Meadowcourt Conservation Area Development Control Guidance

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document has been produced in tandem with the Conservation Area Appraisal written for Oadby Hill Top and Meadowcourt. Its purpose is to provide guidance to prospective developers by clearly setting out the key issues which will influence the Local Planning Authority's decision on any application.
- 1.2 Conservation Area designation is not intended to 'pickle' an area by preventing all new development. This guidance therefore seeks to ensure that the area continues to thrive, but without prejudicing the key features which define the character and appearance of the area.
- 1.3 This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Conservation Area Appraisal for the area and the supporting policies in the adopted Local Plan / Local Development Framework.

2.0 Consultation

- 2.1 This guidance is a Supplementary Planning Document which replaces the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Oadby Hill Top and Meadowcourt Conservation Areas.
- 2.2 This document was subject to public consultation before being considered by the Full Council of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council on 26th July 2005.
- 2.3 A 'Statement of Consultation' has been produced by the Borough Council which summarises all the representatives received during the public consultation exercise which accompanied the production of this document.

3.0 Submission of applications

3.1 ***Outline planning applications***

Outline applications for development within the Conservation Area will not be accepted unless they contain sufficient supporting information by which the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area can be judged. On major development sites this may include a masterplan supported by detailed design codes or statements to demonstrate the form which new buildings will take.

3.2 ***Full planning applications for new buildings***

These will need to include sufficient detail by which the full impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the area can be judged. This will need to include consideration of the issues raised in the Conservation Area Appraisal (especially the 'Key Characteristics' Section) and a Design Statement which clearly sets out how the proposal is felt to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area.

3.3 ***Listed Building Consent***

This is required for any works which affect the architectural or historic interest of the interior or exterior of any Listed Building and any building constructed before 1 July 1948 which stands within its curtilage. Applications must include a statement which demonstrates an understanding of the aspects of the building to be affected, describes why the work is needed, explains why any alternative options were discounted and considers how the damage to any historic fabric will be minimised.

3.4 ***Conservation Area Consent***

This is required for the demolition of any unlisted building within the Conservation Area. In order to justify the works, a statement may need to include consideration of:

- The importance or otherwise of the building to the character and appearance of the area.
- The structural condition of the building and the works necessary to repair or convert the building.
- Details of why the building is incapable of beneficial reuse.
- Details of the recording of the building to be demolished.

Where a building is to be replaced by a new structure, consideration of how the building will contribute to the character and appearance of the area will need to be included in the Design Statement which accompanies any planning application.

4.0 Demolition

- 4.1 Listed Buildings (including their outbuildings and lodges) and Significant Local Buildings will enjoy a general presumption against their demolition.
- 4.2 The demolition of such buildings will only be approved where it can be proved that:
- The building is structurally unsound and repairs would involve the significant loss or alteration of the original structure and any elements of particular historic interest; or
 - it cannot continue in its current use, and it is not capable of being converted to a suitable new use in its current form; and
 - the building has been offered for sale on the open market at a sensible market price for at least six months and that no reasonable offer has been received; and
 - any proposed replacement building will make an equal or greater contribution to the character and appearance of the area; and
 - demolition would not result in a long term cleared site to the detriment of adjacent listed buildings or the Conservation area.
- 4.3 The demolition of unsympathetic extensions to buildings will be approved provided that the intention is to return the building to its original state, or where any replacement extension will better respect the special architectural or historic interest of the building.
- 4.4 The demolition of other buildings will be approved provided that:
- The building makes either a negative or insignificant contribution to the character or appearance of the area.
 - Any replacement building or feature will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Any application for a replacement building must be accompanied by a Design Statement which describes how the new building respects the 'Key Characteristics' of the area as defined in the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 4.5 To avoid unsightly gaps in the Conservation Area, a condition will be imposed on any grant of Conservation Area Consent which prevents the demolition taking place until a contract has been let for the redevelopment of the site.

5.0 Change of use

5.1 *To residential uses*

The change of use of single family houses to hotels, industrial uses, including halls of residence, boarding houses, or guest house, or for the provision of flats or other more intensive residential uses (including hospitals or nursing homes) will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- The amenity of adjoining residents will not be significantly affected.
- Adequate car and cycle parking and refuse storage can be provided and suitably screened from public view.
- Existing vehicle accesses are adequate, or appropriately sized accesses can be provided without affecting the setting of the building or involving the loss of any important tree, boundary or hedge.
- Car parking can be accommodated without the need for large areas of hardstanding.
- The appearance of the dwelling will be maintained without the need for disfiguring extensions or alterations.
- The setting of the building will not be adversely affected and appropriate measures are in place for the maintenance of gardens, trees and hedges.
- No important trees will be lost or unsuitably pruned either as a result of the change of use, any alterations or the likely future needs of occupiers of the building with regard to adequate lighting levels.
- Any signage will not adversely affect the residential character of the area and will not be illuminated.
- There will be no significant increase in traffic generation or on street car parking.

5.2 *Change of use to non-residential use*

There will be a presumption against the change of use of existing family homes to non-residential uses. In any case applications for such a change of use will only be permitted where the above criteria can be met.

6.0 Subdivision of plots

6.1 Buildings within the gardens of existing buildings will only be approved when they will not:

- Adversely affect a 'Good Vista' as defined in the 'Conservation Area Appraisal'.
- Adversely affect the setting of a Listed Building.
- Interrupt the pattern of development on any particular street by failing to respect the ratio of building to plot when seen from the streets or public areas.
- Give the impression of a predominantly built frontage, contrary to the character of the Conservation Area, by infilling the gaps between buildings.
- Adversely affect the amenity of adjoining residents.
- Have highly visible or inadequate car and cycle parking and refuse storage facilities.
- Require the provision of inappropriately wide accesses or involve the loss of lengths of important hedges or boundaries or the loss of important trees.
- Provide insufficient garden and amenity space for the existing or proposed building.
- Involve the loss or unsuitable pruning of an important tree either now or in the future to maintain adequate daylight levels.
- Be of an inappropriate scale, materials or design.
- On streets where other plots have already been subdivided, will cumulatively change the character of the area.

7.0 The design of new buildings

7.1 In order to be acceptable, the design of any new building will need to respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area by:

- Being of an appropriate mass and scale to avoid over-dominating the traditional 2 – 2.5 storey houses which characterise the Conservation Area.
- Being of an appropriate form to sit comfortably with the Jacobethan, Vernacular Revival and Neo-Georgian styles of the buildings in the area.
- Having interesting roof forms and producing an interesting silhouette.
- Using materials which either reflect those found on the traditional buildings in the area or producing an acceptable and exciting contrast.
- Taking their inspiration from the interesting plan forms, bays, oriels, gables and sweeping roofs of the traditional buildings in the area.
- Providing a Design Statement as part of a planning application which sets out the rationale behind the design of the building.

8.0 Alterations and extensions

8.1 Alterations and extensions should normally be confined to the rear or least important elevations unless the result would sustain or improve the architectural character of the building in its setting. Planning permission will be granted for proposals which:

- Respect the prominent building line.
- Do not destroy symmetry of balanced elevations or groups.
- Do not lead to terracing.
- Do not interfere with key architectural features of the composition.
- Are subordinate and appropriate to the form of the main building and either of the same materials as the main building or provide an appropriate contrast.
- Serve to reinstate missing traditional features, such as doors, windows, front porches and other decorative features.
- Use traditional and, where appropriate, reclaimed or recycled building materials.

9.0 Works to Listed Buildings

9.1 Works which affect the special architectural or historic interest of a Listed Building require Listed Building Consent. This applies to works to the main building, any outbuildings or boundaries (built before 1 July 1948) and the interior of any building.

9.2 The acceptability of works to Listed Buildings is governed by relevant local and national planning policy. The Listed Buildings in the Oadby Hill Top Conservation Area are predominantly used as flats or student accommodation. Whilst such uses have ensured that the buildings are well maintained and enjoyed, the need to adapt buildings to comply with changing legislation can occasionally lead to inappropriate incremental alterations to the buildings. This section therefore seeks to give some additional guidance.

9.3 **General**

- Before considering any work to a historic building, applicants must fully understand what the implications of the proposed work are on the historic building.
- For complex buildings or major applications, a Conservation Plan or Statement of Significance will help define what the significant aspects of the building, group and setting are.
- When submitting an application to alter a Listed Building, a Design Statement will be needed which describes why the alterations are needed, what alternative approaches have been considered and how the proposed works are felt to be the least damaging to the special interest of the building.

9.4 **Fire precaution works**

- Ensure regular discussion with the Fire Officer and Building Control Officer and consider to what extent, for example, improved management regimes, improved heat and smoke detection and alarm systems and physical alterations can be 'traded' against physical alterations.
- Ensure that any compartmenting of the building does not adversely affect principal rooms, staircases, corridors or hallways.
- Consider how historic doors and glazing can be upgraded by use of intumescent products etc rather than replacing them.
- Where improved insulation is needed to floors, install this from above to avoid damage to plaster ceilings.
- Place alarms, sniffers and other equipment in the least prominent location possible (eg by locating them close to light fittings etc).
- Do not place equipment on panelling and ensure that cable runs do not cut across cornices, dados, panelling or open areas of wall.
- Only consider external fire escapes as a last resort and locate them away from prominent facades and key architectural features.

9.5 ***Kitchens and bathrooms***

- Keep away from principal elevations if it would mean external SVPs, vents or obscured glass.
- Keep out of sensitive rooms with decorative plasterwork and panelling and do not locate them above such rooms.
- Group them together vertically so that pipe runs can be minimised.
- Route vents up redundant chimney flues where possible.

9.6 ***Disabled access***

- Fully understand the issues and problems before proposing modifications and carry out an access audit of larger buildings and groups.
- Respect the balance of symmetrical facades when proposing ramps.
- Use appropriate materials.
- Keep lifts away from principal rooms / staircases.

10.0 Significant Local Buildings

- 10.1 The buildings identified as Significant Local Buildings in the Oadby and Wigston Local Plan and in the Conservation Area Appraisal make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. In order to protect these properties and their boundaries from unsympathetic alterations, consideration should be given to making Directions under article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.
- 10.2 'Article 4 Directions' effectively remove householders' permitted development rights. The types of development which might be controlled would include:
- Painting, cladding or rendering of building facades.
 - Insertion or replacement of doors and windows.
 - Removal or replacement of boundary walls and fences.
 - Alteration of roof profiles and replacement of roofing materials.

11.0 Trees and landscaping

11.1 **Trees**

All trees within the Conservation Area already enjoy a degree of protection as owners are required to give the Borough Council 6 weeks notice of the intention to carry out works to trees.

11.2 Development involving the felling, significant surgery (now or in the foreseeable future), or potential root damage to trees will only be permitted where there are demonstrable public benefits accruing from the proposal. When felling is permitted, replacement planting will be sought wherever possible and conditions will be imposed on planning permissions to ensure the replanting and maintenance of new tree planting.

11.3 New buildings will not be permitted in close proximity to important trees, where the likely needs of future occupiers will lead to disfiguring pruning works to the detriment of the tree or its felling.

11.3 **Landscaping**

Landscaping schemes will be required to accompany proposals for new development where it is appropriate to the character of the development. Conditions will be imposed on planning permissions to ensure the implementation of approved landscaping schemes.

11.4 **Open Spaces**

Development on major areas of public or private open space will only be permitted where there is clear, demonstrable public benefit accruing from the proposal and where there are no significant adverse impacts upon ecological habitats.

12.0 Proposals affecting the setting of the Conservation Area

- 12.1 Development will not be permitted which, although not within the Conservation Area, will have an adverse effect upon the area's special character or appearance, including intruding into any significant vista or view into, out of, within or across the area which is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.