

HERITAGE (LOCAL CHALLENGES)

Conservation areas
Listed buildings and locally listed buildings



*Oadby and Wigston
Borough Council
Leicestershire*

Conservation Areas

What the government says:

- 4.1 NPPF states that planning policies should ensure the *'conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure'*. Further it states that *'plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats'*.
- 4.2 Heritage assets such as Conservation Areas, should be conserved and enhanced wherever possible as they are irreplaceable assets of real significance. They should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. Conservation is an active process of maintenance and managing change and requires a flexible and thoughtful approach to get the best out of assets.
- 4.3 The NPPF is prescriptive in its approach to conservation and enhancement of heritage assets, and sets out a clear framework for both plan making and decision taking.
- 4.4 The designation of conservation areas and the role that local authorities play in the conservation and enhancement of conservation areas is set out in legislation (Part 2 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Further, NPPG sets out national guidance relating to the 'Historic Environment'.

What the Council says:

- 4.5 Conservation Areas exist to assist the conservation and enhancement of areas of particular architectural or historic interest and they play an important role in local community's everyday way of life. They are a reminder of history gone by and examples of high quality historic architecture and methods of construction that you don't necessarily see today.
- 4.6 The character and heritage associated to conservation areas must be conserved for now and future generations. For example, according to heritage experts, the majority of the buildings nationally listed now, will continue to be the majority in the future, due to the low number of buildings currently being built that would be eligible for national listing.
- 4.7 Demolition or changes to buildings within a conservation area can have a long lasting damaging impact; by removing or changing structures that contribute to their character and heritage. Hence, as with listed buildings, it is appropriate to employ a presumption in favour of retention. The Council will not permit development if it adversely impacts buildings, open spaces or uses which contribute towards the character of a conservation area. The character of Conservation Areas is often the product of various elements such as the mixture and style of buildings, the extent and form of open spaces and other natural elements such as trees and hedges.
- 4.8 Legislation requires that special attention is paid to the conservation and enhancement of conservation areas, and, therefore, the Council has prepared Conservation Area Appraisals and a Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document for all of its designated Conservation Areas. Within the Borough area there are ten designated conservation areas, nine of which identified by the Council and one of which designated by Leicestershire County Council. The conservation areas are listed below:



- All Saints Conservation Area, Wigston
- London Road and Saint Peters Church Conservation Area, Oadby
- Midland Cottages Conservation Area, South Wigston
- North Memorial Homes and Framework Knitters Conservation Area, Oadby
- Oadby Court Conservation Area, Oadby
- Oadby Hill Top and Meadowcourt Conservation Area, Oadby
- South Wigston Conservation Area, South Wigston
- Spa Lane Conservation Area, Wigston
- The Lanes Conservation Area, Wigston
- The Grand Union Canal Conservation Area, (Leicestershire County Council designation)

4.9 Each of the Council designated conservation areas are set out within the Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document and the Adopted Policies Map. Further, the Council currently protects conservation areas and other heritage assets in Local Plan policies 40 (Culture and Historic Environment Assets) and 41 (Development in the Conservation Area).

Potential options:

- Continue to protect conservation areas from unacceptable development, by maintaining local planning policy in the new Local Plan.
- Reassess all of the designated conservation areas to ensure that they continue to meet the designation criteria.
- Seek to increase or decrease the number of conservation areas subject to evidence base.

Questions:

- Should the Council continue to protect conservation areas from unacceptable development, by maintaining local planning policy in the new Local Plan?
- Are there any areas of the Borough that are not currently designated as conservation areas, however you believe they should be?
- Are there any areas of the currently designated conservations areas that should be removed from the designation?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.



Listed and locally listed buildings

What the government says:

- 4.10 One of the key areas of the NPPF is the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and heritage assets.
- 4.11 The NPPF defines heritage assets as *‘a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)’*.
- 4.12 In addition, the NPPF suggests that *‘when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance’*.
- 4.13 The NPPF also states that *‘the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset’*.

What the Council says:

- 4.14 Listed buildings are of national importance, representing the best of our historic and architectural built heritage. The Borough area contains 37 listed buildings or structures and it is vital that any works affecting them or other buildings of local importance is guided by appreciation for their importance. In addition to nationally listed buildings, the Borough also has a number of non-designated heritage assets in the Borough, for example, locally listed buildings.
- 4.15 Although not nationally designated, locally listed buildings are important to the local historic landscape and heritage of the Borough. The Borough Council recognises their importance locally and seeks to conserve and enhance these heritage assets wherever possible. All of the locally listed buildings within the Borough were collated and set out in the Borough’s Schedule of Locally Listed Buildings (2017) which was published as evidence to support the current Local Plan.
- 4.16 Policy 40 – Culture and Historic Environment Assets, in the current Local Plan recognises the importance of conserving and enhancing the Borough’s unique cultural identity, as well as identifying and protecting designated and non-designated heritage assets. The Policy states that *‘where development is likely to have a significant adverse impact on designated heritage assets and their settings and / or non-designated heritage assets and their settings, and / or other historic / heritage character areas and cannot be avoided or they cannot be preserved in situ, the development will not be permitted, unless there are substantial public benefits, which outweigh that harm or loss’*.
- 4.17 It is expected that the Council will ‘roll forward’ the existing planning policy approach set out within the current Local Plan into the new Local Plan ensuring that it is up-to-date with national planning policy and guidance.



Potential options:

- Continue with Policy 40 and its approach, as set out in the Council's current Local Plan and its supporting evidence base.
- Consider whether or not to retain all of the buildings and structures on the Schedule of Locally Listed Buildings and to undertake a review of the Schedule to establish whether to retain, amend or delete buildings or structures on the Schedule.

Questions:

- Should the Council 'roll forward' the current Local Plan policy relating to Culture and Historic Environment Assets with wording amendments as and where necessary and a local evidence base update?
- Should the Council undertake a review of the Schedule of Locally Listed Buildings to establish whether or not to retain or amend the Schedule?
- Are there any buildings or structures within the Borough area that are of heritage significance that should be placed on the Schedule of Locally Listed Buildings?

Please explain your answer in a few words. Also if there are other options that you feel are more appropriate please explain.

