

**Brierley Hill Area Committee – 1st February 2007**

**Report of the Director of the Urban Environment**

**Wordsley Hospital Conservation Area-  
Public Consultation on a Draft Conservation Area Character  
Appraisal with Management Proposals.**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To seek the views of Brierley Hill Area Committee and those attending the meeting upon draft documentation comprising a Conservation Area Character Appraisal incorporating proposals for future management for the Wordsley Hospital Conservation Area.

**Background**

2. At their meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> December 2005 Development Control Committee endorsed the designation of Wordsley Hospital as a Conservation Area, approved the preparation of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal and agreed that a draft Wordsley Hospital Conservation Area Character Appraisal document with proposals for management be submitted to Development Control Committee in due course. The draft was subsequently considered at the Development Control Committee meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> October 2006 and approved for public consultation (of which this report forms a part).
3. In brief summary the draft comes to the conclusion that the special interest that justifies designation of the Wordsley Hospital Conservation Area derives from the following features:

- Its significance as part of the early 19th to early 20th century development of the Borough and the architectural and historic interest of the area's historic buildings, particularly the 1903-1907 workhouse complex, both locally and regionally;
  - Its social significance as a tangible link to local attitudes, in light of national policy in dealing with the disadvantaged within the community and its importance as a historic record of the development of care in the Borough;
  - The group value of surviving buildings and spaces related to the former use as both Workhouse and Hospital as a largely self contained complex and the unity of design achieved through the consistent use of distinctive details.
  - Local details that collectively and individually give the conservation area a distinctive identity; i.e. the strong sense of enclosure, the quality of surviving historic buildings, the survival of intact detailing, the institutional character and the relationship to open space.
4. The Appraisal also identified certain weaknesses that currently detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, for example:
- Negative buildings or sites;
  - Weak streetscape;
  - Inappropriate alterations to buildings;
  - Condition of open spaces and green areas;
  - Potential for loss of traditional boundary structure;
  - Retention and opening of important views into and out of the conservation area.
5. All of these issues are currently being addressed by taking a proactive approach to the management of the Conservation Area in the context of the recent planning approval for the retention and conversion of historic buildings and the provision of a high quality and complementary layout of new housing.
6. For the future the Appraisal also sets out a broad set of management principles that the Council will adhere to when considering new proposals within the Conservation Area. These will help to ensure that any changes that are approved in future will have the effect of preserving or enhancing

the areas character or appearance. These include:

- Dudley Council will seek to ensure that all unlisted buildings and structures of a positive contribution to the area are protected from inappropriate alteration, extension or unjustified demolition.
  - Dudley Council will seek to resist proposals to remove traditional boundary walls or promote new boundary treatments which fail to respect the form and materials of existing traditional boundary treatments in the area.
  - Dudley Council will seek to work with partners to ensure that any new highway works will bring a positive improvement to the conservation area. All works should accord with English Heritage guidance.
  - Dudley Council will seek to ensure that important views within, into and from the conservation area are respected and protected from inappropriate forms of development.
  - Dudley Council will endeavour to ensure that areas of open space are managed and protected from development. It will explore landscape enhancements and provide information for the local history of the area and past use of the site.
7. The undertaking of Conservation Area Reviews and the formulation of proposals for the enhancement of conservation areas including public consultation is a statutory duty for local authorities as is their designation. The provisions of Sections 69 and 71 of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act apply.
8. Such Appraisals are in line with government policy as expressed in Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG 15) *Planning and the Historic Environment* (1994). The detailed format and content of the draft Conservation Area Character Appraisals is based on the guidelines issued by English Heritage in *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas* (2005) and *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals* (2005).

## **Finance**

10. The publication of the proposed Conservation Area Character Appraisal is allowed for within existing work programmes and budgets.

## **Law**

11. Section 69 of the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act imposes a duty on Local Planning Authorities to designate as Conservation Areas "*any areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.*" The act also places a duty on local authorities to designate conservation areas where appropriate and from "*time to time*" to review the extent of conservation area designation within their districts. Section 69 also imposes a duty on local planning authorities "*from time to time, to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts and to consult the local community about these proposals*".

### **Equality Impact**

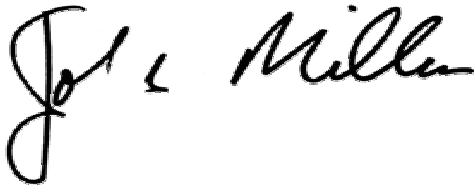
12. The proposals contained in this report are in full accordance with the Councils equal opportunities policies and should in no way have any impact on different racial groups, disabled people, children and young people, both genders and/or other relevant groups.

### **Recommendation**

13. It is recommended that:-

Area Committee make comment upon the draft Wordsley Hospital Conservation Area Character Appraisal, including management proposals.

(To facilitate comments there will be a short presentation at the meeting, exhibition material will be displayed and feedback questionnaires will be provided).



.....  
**John B Millar**  
**Director of the Urban Environment**

Contact Officer: Pete Boland – Principal Conservation  
Officer/Borough Archaeologist  
Telephone: 01384 814190

Email: [pete.boland@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:pete.boland@dudley.gov.uk)

Jayne Pilkington – Senior Conservation  
Officer

Telephone: 01384 814168

Email: [jayne.pilkington@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:jayne.pilkington@dudley.gov.uk)

### **List of Background Papers**

- Development Control Committee Report dated 19<sup>th</sup> December 2006.
- Development Control Committee Report dated 17<sup>th</sup> October 2006.
- Development Control Committee Report dated 27<sup>th</sup> November 2006.