

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum
Conservation & Heritage Working Group
Minutes of Meeting 31st October 2019
7.30 pm Knighton Parish Centre

Names of attendees are redacted from minutes made public for privacy reasons.

1.0 Welcome: SB welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2.0 Minutes of Previous Meeting 3rd October 2019: These were read and apart from an alteration to include GW to be an attendee rather than an apology, the minutes were approved.

2.1 Matters Arising: SB commented on the fact that he had received no response from De Montfort University with regards to student participation. It was agreed not to pursue this any further. Other matters to be discussed were as per the agenda.

3.0 Discussion on Draft Policies: SB led the discussion, taking in turn each item of the draft policies, all as had been discussed with and produced by Consultant, PT.

Comments were made on the generalisation of the information presented and that more specific information would be added in a series of Appendices. RC was thanked for his additional documentation detailing the Heritage Street Scenes of Knighton.

SB clarified the difference between Designated and Non-designated Heritage Assets.

The term 'Special Townscape Character Area' was also discussed, as this had not been specifically referenced at the last meeting with PT.

RA & TH felt that this should also be inclusive of protecting open areas & 'Vistas'.

SB raised the question as to how one differentiated between 'harm' and 'substantial harm'. The consensus was that any development that would result in 'substantial harm' should be rejected. It was recognised that 'substantial harm' was a subjective measure.

SB made specific notes to changes to the policy wording, and the revised policy document is attached to these minutes as Appendix 1.

The policies were discussed in relation to the order in section 1 of the document, ie designated assets, then non-designated assets, then areas of special township character, and the contents of the document were re-ordered to follow that structure.

In brief these include:

3.1 Draft Policy - Section 1: Designated and Non-designated Heritage Assets
Should be regarded as a general introduction to the policy document.

3.2 Draft Policy - Section 2: Areas of Special Townscape Character

SB identified this policy as giving the lowest level of protection.

RC made the comment that greater control could possibly be introduced using an Article 4 Direction, e.g. to protect windows & doors etc.

AA made reference to the protection of surrounding settings and vistas. SB agreed that this should be a paramount concern, which received unanimous agreement as discussed earlier.

It was also agreed that, where there were good examples of property repairs or alterations, then these should be identified and photographically recorded.

TH made reference to the fact that a lot of the property the Forum had so far identified, as being good examples for protection, were on the South side of the Knighton Neighbourhood Area and it was agreed that good examples of repairs / alterations should be sought also from the West Knighton locality.

3.3 Draft Policy - Section 3: Locally Listed Buildings

The opening sentence should remove the words 'a list'.

Further discussion took place with regards to Local Listed and Listed buildings. AO asked what Local Listing involved and how long the process may take and if this should be sought before giving example in the Appendices. GW said that he would see if the Leicester City Council had a specific remit for doing this and what the timeframe would be.

RA agreed that further clarification should be sought and felt, generally, the wording for this policy appeared confusing and repetitive and was in need of some tightening up for greater clarification and to be consistent with other aspects of the policy document.

3.4 Draft Policy - Section 4: Development in Conservation Areas

Revisions made: the proposed developments in the Stoneygate & Knighton areas will be supported.

The word 'That' should be added to the first bullet point.

TH raised the point about the statement for new buildings, with regards to the use of traditional locally distinctive building styles and materials. It was generally agreed that these would need to be identified and examples, with supporting photographs put into an appendix. The point was reinforced that this rule should also apply when a building is altered or extended.

RA pointed out that the statement 'seek to avoid demolition.....' should be more strongly worded in that it should state to, 'Avoid demolition...'

RA led the discussion with regards to Article 4 restrictions and how this would be implemented by Leicester City Council. It was thought that more guidance should be sought to confirm how Article 4 could restrict development or alterations and to remove any permitted development rights. It was generally felt that a clear definition of Article 4,

as specified in the context of Forum Policy, should be given in an appendix as well as how this links to listed and locally listed buildings particularly within conservation areas.

3.5 Draft Policy - Section 5: Listed Building & Their Settings

Control over settings. Remove brackets where it refers to vistas & views. RA stated that by removing the brackets the statement has more relevance as to retain the townscape / road & street scene was of paramount importance.

AO referred again to the importance of locally listed buildings and how these need to be defined, identified and recorded.

At this point in the meeting, reference was again made to the document that had been produced by RC, referenced: Heritage Street Scenes of Knighton. (A copy is attached to these minutes as Appendix 2).

SB thanked RC for producing this document, which helps to identify the key features of Knighton, which should be preserved. It was unanimously agreed that this document should be expanded upon and should form part of the Policy Document Appendices together with photographic evidence.

3.6 Questions to Discuss with Paul Tebbitt

The following questions were identified that need to be discussed with Paul Tebbitt.

- Generally for conservation areas and Areas of Special Township Character do we need examples and counter-examples?
- Can we have our own local list of buildings, or are we effectively asking the council to add buildings to their local list?
- What is the process for local listing and how long does it take?
- Do we need an architect to advise us on the rarity or uniqueness of buildings?
- Should we apply for extension of the conservation areas and new conservation areas, but use the Areas of Special Township Character as a fallback?
- Should we ask for Article 4 directions to be put on the proposed Areas of Special Township Character?
- How many such areas should we go for?
- Is there any mechanism that can protect other heritage assets such as kerbstones?
- Have other Neighbourhood Forums tried to protect such items?

4.0 Walks in the Area: A brief resume was given of the last walk, which ended in Elms Road and was part of walk that explored the Stonegate Conservation Area. It was agreed that the next, and possibly the last Knighton walk. Should take in London Road and the Ring Road area, which borders with Oadby & Wigston.

It was agreed to meet at 10.00 am on Saturday 23rd November outside the Tram Depot on London Road.

5.0 AOB: A brief account was given by AO and GW regarding the University of Leicester liaison meeting held on the 23rd September. The main comments being that the University declared that they have no plans for the Grove Farm building situated behind

College Court and that the new Vice Chancellor would be taking up residence in Knighton Hall, but possibly only on a temporary basis. The University are exploring other options for the Knighton Hall building, one of which may be for corporate entertainment to complement College Court.

AO & TH made reference to the fact that a summary and brief report from the Working Group is required for the upcoming Newsletter and to update the Website. SB agreed to do this.

6.0 Date of Next Meeting: It was agreed that the next Conservation & Heritage Meeting would be held on the 21st November, 7.30 pm at the Glass Meeting Room in College court.

SB Thanked everyone for attending the meeting which closed at 9.35 pm.

Appendix 1 – Revised Policy Document

Knighton Neighbourhood Forum Conservation and Heritage Policies Draft Version 2 – 31st October 2019

1. Introduction

Development will only be allowed where it avoids harm to designated and non-designated heritage assets. Development proposals that conserve or enhance the historic environment will be supported.

Designated heritage assets

Designated heritage assets and their settings (including Listed Buildings and the Conservation Areas) will be protected to ensure that they are conserved and enhanced in a way that reflects their significance and contribution to the historic environment.

Development that would result in substantial harm will only be supported in exceptional circumstances. Where less than substantial harm would result, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.

Non-designated heritage assets

Developments that would impact non-designated heritage assets will be considered in a balanced way. Development will be allowed where the benefits of the scheme outweigh any harm in the context of the significance of the heritage asset.

Applicants must submit a Heritage Statement where development has an impact on designated or non-designated heritage assets in accordance with Historic England best practice.

2. Development in Conservation Areas

Proposals for development within the Stoneygate and Knighton Conservation Areas will be supported where they pay special attention to preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the areas. All proposals in Conservation Areas that are likely to affect the significance of the Conservation Area and its setting should:

- Demonstrate an understanding of the impact of the proposal on the significance of the area using a Heritage Statement based on available evidence;
- In the case of alterations and extensions, use building styles, materials, built form and details which are sympathetic to the original building and surrounding area;
- In the case of new buildings, use traditional, locally distinctive building styles, scale, massing, materials and details such as chimneys, brickwork, windows and doors, that are consistent with surrounding buildings;
- Seek to improve negative features where opportunities arise;
- Avoid demolition or destruction of heritage assets within Conservation Areas. Proposals to demolish a building will need substantial justification proportionate to the significance of the asset. Public benefit will need to be demonstrated to outweigh any damage or loss;
- In the case of material alteration or demolition, undertake appropriate recording of the property, to a recognised standard, prior to demolition or material alteration taking place.

Leicester City Council will be encouraged to review the existing Conservation Areas with a view to expanding them. The City Council will also be encouraged to seek Article 4 directions on new and existing Conservation Areas.

3. Listed Buildings and their Settings

New development that affects a listed building or its setting will be supported where it is of high quality, sympathetic design and materials, and appropriate scale. Proposals that affect listed buildings and their

settings, in particular, any vistas or long distance views of the buildings, will be required to demonstrate that development would not harm the special architectural or historic interest of these buildings.

4. Locally Listed Buildings

Locally Listed Buildings and Structures are identified in Appendix x of the Neighbourhood Plan. Locally listed buildings and structures are non-designated heritage assets, which should be afforded some protection when planning applications are submitted.

Planning applications for development that would lead to the demolition or loss of a locally listed building will be assessed in relation to the scale of harm or loss and the significance of the asset against the benefits of the scheme. Development involving locally listed buildings will be allowed where:

- The loss of any asset is justified by a statement that sets out the significance of the asset and the impact of development in sufficient detail to allow an adequate assessment.
- Development is sympathetic to the building or structure concerned and propose its creative reuse and adaptation
- Development uses locally distinctive: materials, architectural detailing, scale and massing.

Leicester City Council will be encouraged to pursue Article 4 Directions on locally listed buildings and structures in order to ensure greater control over their loss or inappropriate development.

Where planning permission is proposed for the demolition of a locally listed building or structure it should be demonstrated that it is impractical to retain the building, in whole or in part. If permission is granted in whole or in part the developer should undertake appropriate recording of the property, to a recognised standard, prior to demolition taking place.

5. Areas of Special Townscape Character

The Areas of 'Special Townscape Character Area' at Portland Enclave and South Knighton as identified on the policies map have a special character, local distinctiveness and sense of place that should be protected.

New development within the 'Special Townscape Character Area' which requires planning permission will be allowed where it does not have a negative impact or result in the erosion of the distinctive character by reason of:

- The loss of or alteration to any property which contributes positively to the character of the area;
- The impact of any new buildings on the special townscape area, including its buildings and open spaces;
- Development that adversely impacts on the homogeneity of existing development;
- The scale, massing, siting, layout, design or choice of materials used in any new building or structure being incongruous;
- The ratio of buildings and plots being incongruous;
- The proposed use being incompatible with the well-established residential character of the area;
- The anticipated levels of traffic, parking and other activity resulting in adverse impacts.

Appendix 2 – Heritage Street Scenes of Knighton

Heritage Street Scenes of Knighton

Heritage features of street scenes have relevance in several areas:

- Civic pride.
- Industrial heritage.
- Evolution of utility companies.
- Road names.

Civic Pride:

Drain covers dating from c 1890 to c 1935 have legends proclaiming the 'Borough of Leicester' (Rare: e.g. Holbrook Road, Knighton Church Road) or 'Corporation of Leicester' (Widespread: e.g. Northcote Road, Craighill Road).

Some streets show great attention to detail in design.

E.g. Northcote Road west of Queens Road has 'blue granite' kerbstones but the curved sections at the side of pavement slopes are 'pink granite'. The arrangement is reversed on sections of Shirley Road and Shirley Avenue.

Beresford Drive is a rare example where setts have been cut specially for the base of slopes to match the colour of the kerb stones.

Industrial Heritage:

Drain and manhole covers represent several local companies and chart their evolution through name changes.

E.g. 'Wright Bros, Leicester' evolve through 'S. Wright, Ironfounders' to 'Wright's Foundry Co. Ltd. Leicester'.

The Foundry was in Havelock Street.

E.g. 'W. Richards & Son, Leicester' (Shirley Avenue).

E.g. 'Cort & Paul, Ironfounders, Leicester' (Knighton Drive) became 'Cort, Paul & Cornick, Ironfounders, Syston' (South Knighton Road).

Kerb stones occur in three main types: Rare limestone kerbs (South Knighton Road), pink 'granite' (possibly Mountsorrel quarries) and 'blue' 'granite' (possibly Markfield quarries) and are therefore representative of local extraction industries through time.

A wide variety of different coloured 'granite' and slate (Rare e.g. Hylion Road) setts occur at the base of pavement slopes, probably relics of reclaimed material from slum clearances.

Evolution of Utility Services:

Manhole covers exist representing the evolution of the telecom industry:

'Post Office Telegraphs' (Chapel Lane) 'Post Office Telephones'; 'GPO'; 'British Telecom'; 'Diamond Cable'; Cable Television ('CATV').

Similarly, with water services with legends on stop valves and fire hydrants:

'Leicester Corporation Water Works' ('LCWW'); 'Leicester City Water Works'; 'Severn Trent Water Authority' ('STWA') and 'Severn Trent Water' ('STW').

Road Names:

There is a traditional shape to cast iron road name plates in Knighton. This tradition could be preserved using modern resin materials surrounded by protective metal frames (E.g. Carisbrooke Road).

A neighbourhood plan should perhaps acknowledge all these historic connections and aim for the preservation of representative samples.