

CHAPTER 18 – CONSERVATION AREAS (CHARACTER APPRAISALS & POLICY STATEMENTS)

Note: *I have previously recommended in Chapters 1 and 14 of my report that this section of the Plan should be deleted and reissued as supplementary guidance. In my view its inclusion in the Plan is contrary to the advice in paragraph 4.10 of PPG15, which states that a local planning authority’s detailed statement of proposals for a conservation area should not itself be part of the development plan. My comments on the detailed objections are therefore made within this context.*

18.1. BERKHAMSTED CONSERVATION AREA 4. HIGH STREET IDENTITY AREA

Objections

<i>Rep No</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Rep No</i>	<i>Name</i>
4255	Glaxo Wellcome plc	4752	The Chiltern Society

Key Issues

- (a) Should the land between Ravens Lane and Manor Street be identified for development and/or redevelopment and as an Environmental Priority Site. (4255)
- (b) Does the chapter need to be updated. (4752)

Inspector’s Conclusions

(a) *Redevelopment of land at Ravens Lane/Manor Street*

18.1.1. Glaxo Wellcome plc argues that the land between Ravens Lane and Manor Street which it owns should be identified for redevelopment as the buildings are not capable of re-use because of their extensive contamination. The Council states that the High Street Identity Area only identifies the main priorities. This would not exclude other proposals coming forward for consideration under Policy 116 of the Plan.

18.1.2. As planning permission has now been granted for the redevelopment of this site, subject to a Section 106 agreement, the change the objector requested is no longer of particular importance. However, I consider that it would be appropriate for section 4 of the Statement to be updated to reflect the permission that has been granted and I recommend that it should be modified accordingly.

(b) *Updating the chapter*

18.1.3. The Chiltern Society points out that the Character Appraisal and Policy Statement takes no account of recent developments, particularly those on the High Street and at Lower Kings Road. The Council proposes to address this by making minor amendments to the text of paragraph 4.1.28 under the provisions of FC182.

18.1.4. This objection highlights the difficulties of including such a detailed policy statement within a local plan as it will very quickly become out of date. This reinforces my view that it would be better for the Appraisal and Policy Statements to be issued as supplementary planning guidance since this would allow them to be updated on a more frequent basis. More importantly it would enable the Council to be far more responsive to subsequent changes and new threats.

18.1.5. In relation to the specific change put forward under FC182, I am not satisfied that this goes far enough in recognising the current situation. The text still refers to both sites being at present unattractive and harmful to the character and appearance of the area, which is clearly no longer the case. In my opinion, paragraphs 4.1.28 and 4.2.7 need to be amended to reflect the current situation. References to the Waitrose and AgrEvo sites should therefore either be deleted or revised.

Recommendation

18.1.6. **Section 4 of the Character Appraisal and Policy Statement should be modified to refer to the redevelopment of land at Ravens Lane/Manor Street and to reflect changes in relation to the Waitrose (S1) and AgrEvo sites.**

**18.2. BERKHAMSTED CONSERVATION AREA
5. GRAND UNION CANAL IDENTITY AREA**

Objections

<i>Rep No</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Rep No</i>	<i>Name</i>
2987	British Waterways	2900	British Waterways
2899	British Waterways		

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2898	British Waterways
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Key Issues

- (a) Should paragraph 5.1.3 refer to the need for redevelopment schemes to acknowledge the canalside setting. (2897)
- (b) Does paragraph 5.2.2 need to state that high-density development would only be acceptable where there is a high standard of design/materials and it would respond positively to the waterside location. (2899)
- (c) Should paragraph 5.2.3 encourage the provision of canal-related uses or facilities in any redevelopment. (2900)

Inspector’s Conclusions

(a) *Redevelopment schemes and the canalside setting*

18.2.1. Paragraph 5.1.3 refers to the redevelopment of the AgrEvo site. As this development has now been completed and improvements have been made to the canalside setting I see no need for any reference to be made to the need for such improvements.

However, the text should in my view be updated to reflect the changes that have occurred to the canalside setting since the appraisal was written.

(b) High density development in a waterside location

18.2.2. British Waterways consider that high-density development should be required to respond positively to its waterside location. The Council contends that this is already addressed by Policy 9 of the Plan and no amendment is therefore required.

18.2.3. The need for high quality design and materials relates to all new development and is, in my view, already adequately addressed by Policy 9. However, while the preceding bullet point in paragraph 5.2.2 highlights the need for development that is over two storeys to be sympathetic to the character and appearance of the area, which would include the canal, there is no similar requirement for two storey development. More importantly, I agree with the objector that although high-density development may well be appropriate alongside the policy should seek to ensure that such development safeguards the setting of the canal. I recommend therefore that the fifth bullet point in paragraph 5.2.2. should be modified by the addition of the words “and it would enhance the setting of the canal”.

(c) Provision of canal related uses

18.2.4. The objector suggests that the enhancement priorities listed in paragraph 5.2.3 should include the provision of canal-related uses or facilities as part of any redevelopment. The Council contends that this is adequately covered by Policy 112, which deals with the canalside environment. While I accept that this issue is covered by Policy 112 I consider it would make sense for the Policy Statement to reflect more closely the relevant guidance that is contained elsewhere in the Plan, especially as it gives positive encouragement for the provision of canalside facilities. I would recommend therefore that an additional bullet point should be inserted in paragraph 5.2.3 relating to the provision of appropriate canal related facilities.

Recommendation

18.2.5. **Section 5 of the Character Appraisal and Policy Statement be modified as follows:-**

- (a) revise the text in paragraph 5.1.3 to reflect changes to the AgrEvo site;**
- (b) add the words “and it would enhance the setting of the canal” to the fifth bullet point in paragraph 5.2.2;**
- (c) insert the following additional bullet point in paragraph 5.2.3**
 - “- Providing appropriate canal related facilities.”**

**18.3. BERKHAMSTED CONSERVATION AREA
6. CHARLES STREET IDENTITY AREA**

Objections

<i>Rep No</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Rep No</i>	<i>Name</i>
462	D R Sandford	1420	Mr M I Ogilvy-Stuart
466	Ruth Walker	1424	Julia & Brian Staton
470	Mr & Mrs N Hill	1428	Mr Stephen Bell
474	Mr I H Rance	1432	Mr & Mrs M Sadler
478	Mr & Mrs D M Stevenson	1436	Mr C H Verney
482	Mrs E Hewitt	1440	Mr Julian Omerod
486	T & G Goldsmith	1444	Mr & Mrs B G & E V Jones
490	G M Allen	1448	Simon & Jane Chumas
512	Mr G W Pike	1452	Mr E D Saggerson
516	Dr C P Green	1456	Mr & Mrs A J Coles
520	D & J Francis	1460	Mr G Margrove
524	J M Crooks	1464	Mr D Burrows
528	Mr & Mrs J M Hedge	1468	Mr David Glascock
1408	Victoria Sims	4870L	M H & P A Snow
1412	Yen Lien	4874L	J H E Davies
1416	Mr & Mrs P A Baker		

Key Issue

- (a) Does the Charles Street Identity Area section need to be amended to include a policy in respect of on-street residents parking. (462, 466, 470, 474, 478, 482, 486, 490, 512, 516, 520, 524, 528, 1408, 1412, 1416, 1420, 1424, 1428, 1432, 1436, 1440, 1444, 1448, 1452, 1456, 1460, 1464, 1468, 4870L, 4874L)

Inspector’s Conclusion

- 18.3.1. These objectors have made related objections to Policies BTC4 and BTC5 of the Berkhamsted Town Centre Strategy, which I have already addressed in paragraphs 14.10.4-14.10.5 and 14.11.2. Their primary concern would appear to relate to the difficulties of on-street parking for residents in Torrington Road and Cowper Road due to parking by those visiting or working in the town centre. The object to the lack of any policy for residents on-street parking. The Council acknowledges the problem and is currently undertaking a car parking study in Berkhamsted. It proposes to incorporate the findings of this study into the Plan at the appropriate stage.
- 18.3.2. I acknowledge that the problem of parking congestion in residential streets surrounding Berkhamsted town centre is an important issue that needs to be addressed. As I have previously indicated I consider that the adopted Plan should include a parking strategy for the town centre. In my view this would be most appropriately incorporated into the Town Centre Strategy. Since it is a question of parking management rather than predominantly a character or appearance issue I see no need for any amendment to be made to section 6 of the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Policy Statement.

Recommendation

18.3.3. **No modification be made to section 6 of the Character Appraisal and Policy Statement in response to these objections.**