

## Newnham Conservation Area Consultation Questions

### Question 1

Solar panels – there is no mention of how if at all, it is proposed to deal with these going forward. Is the default position that none are allowed – is an application always going to be required and what needs to be addressed (as there appears to be no consistent policy ...) – are they allowed on rear elevations that do not face into the conservation area

### Answer

The regulations determining the installation, design and placement of solar panels will not change in the conservation area as the result of the conservation area review. The installation of solar panels is currently classed as “permitted development” meaning that you are not required to seek planning permission as long as they meet certain requirements, which relate to their size, placement, the depth of the panel, the reveal of the panel (i.e. how much it extends out from the surface it is affixed to). These requirements are national planning requirements, regardless of whether you live in a conservation area. The only change in a conservation area is that permission must be sought should you wish to affix solar photovoltaics to a wall which fronts a road (note, this does not cover roof slopes). Alterations to listed buildings, such as solar panels, are likely to require listed building consent. To install solar panels on a building within the curtilage of a listed building may require permission.

### Question 2

Likewise, Electric vehicle charging points on properties – are these going to require an application before any installation can be carried out? What are the parameters, if any, that will dictate if an application is required?

### Answer

EV charging points do not currently require planning permission within conservation areas, provided they also meet the national conditions for installation, placement etc. Again, please note that if you are affixing anything, such as a charging point, to a listed building, you are likely to need listed building consent.

### Question 3

There appears to be little, if any, consideration on how the village is to evolve. It cannot become a shrine to the past – how is evolution therefore built in?

Answer

The aim of the conservation area appraisal is to highlight the special interest of the designation, what about the buildings and spaces creates its character and appearance, and therefore what needs to be taken into consideration in forming or determining development proposals. This does not mean that all change is negative or prohibited. Decisions are made taking both local and national policy into account, to reach a balanced outcome.

Question 4

On a similar point, the consultation makes no reference to how to encourage climate change and the need to think differently – how is that to be addressed?

Answer

As with question 3, decisions made about the conservation area will take numerous factors into account, including the need to work towards sustainable solutions, whether this be through development or maintenance for example. Both the council and central government have set policy regarding climate action, which will form part of the decision making process.

Question 5

Conservation areas protect our nations distinct, local heritage. The proposed expanded areas include modern properties – how and why are those included?

Answer

It is not unusual for “modern” properties to be included within conservation areas. The most common reasons are that they sit within the legible historic layout of an area, such as a street network; that they have been built on the footprint of an historic building, perhaps using local vernacular materials; they are in a prominent position between or opposite historic buildings, which means that their appearance could greatly affect the overall character of a streetscape or landscape; they sit in an area which, if removed from the conservation area, they would create a hole, which can be difficult from a future management perspective, should the site be redeveloped; or the building itself, regardless of its age, has architectural merit. In Newnham, there are properties on Badby Road, School Hill and Mounts Lane which have been suggested for inclusion. Some of these properties are built in the local vernacular ironstone and therefore make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Others are situated adjacent to or opposite historic buildings, and their development could, as earlier stated, have an impact on the overall character of the area.

## Question 6

The proposed expanded area's need to be redrawn omitting the more modern property; villagers have bought a modern property which was outside the conservation area, but now find that it is to be included and with it the withdrawal of permitted development rights. That creates a cost that was not factored into their purchase

### Answer

I cannot comment at this stage regarding changes to the proposals as the consultation has not been concluded. However, whilst the issue of cost is understandable, it is not a technical consideration of whether a conservation area should be extended or reduced.

## Question 7

Conservation areas are areas of "special architectural or historic interest" – the proposed extension appears to have been drawn without any thought as to whether an individual building meets those criteria. It appears to be a case that it is easier to include everything rather than looking at the detail – this relates to the more modern properties that now find themselves with additional costs and burdens because it was "easier to colour the plan that way"

### Answer

In these cases it is certainly not that it is easier to propose. As noted earlier in response to question 5, certain modern properties are included due to their placement, for example adjacent to an historic property or part of an historic streetscape. Whilst individual buildings are indeed considered as part of the field work, the legislation covering the designations refers to the overall character and appearance of the area, which must be taken into consideration.

## Question 8

Demolition of a building – how is a building defined? Does it include sheds, potting sheds etc?

### Answer

In line with national conservation area regulations, permission is required to demolish buildings which measure over 115 cubic metres. This refers to non-listed buildings. Listed buildings within conservation areas and buildings within the curtilage of a listed building will require consent for demolition.

### Question 9

How are Openreach and other similar providers able to erect new telegraph poles and run new wires without any consultation – or are they excluded from planning requirements within a conservation area

### Answer

Utilities providers are permitted to undertake the majority of their work in the public realm without the need for planning permission. Conservation area policy can be helpful in encouraging higher quality design.

### Question 10

Whilst there are a number of properties that have parts which are listed (so that work on unlisted parts may not require planning permission) only one property has been proposed for a Local List? Why is a local list required if it falls within the conservation area anyway

### Answer

If a property is listed, it should be assumed that the whole property as well as any affixed structures or structures within its curtilage, are also listed (unless otherwise specified in a listing summary or agreed with the relevant public bodies). Therefore lbc will be required for any alterations as a minimum. Local Lists are a national form of heritage protection which recognises unlisted local heritage of any kind (including buildings, structures, monuments, archaeological sites, landscape and elements of the public realm). Assets which are placed on local lists are recognised for their positive contribution to local heritage, and they are afforded consideration in policy. So if development is proposed, the decision makers can be informed of its local importance. Being on a local list does not remove any permitted development rights in of itself.

### Question 11

Please provide details of the scoring threshold that "Bartons" achieved to justify its inclusion on the Local List

### Answer

This is undertaken using agreed criteria, adopted by the Council in line with Historic England's Local Heritage Listing advice. A form is used to undertake the assessment, taking age, condition, historic fabric, and group value into account. These can be made public, so if anyone would like to see these it is easiest to email them directly, just let us know.

## Question 12

Please identify those other properties that you considered for inclusion on the local list but which did not meet your scoring threshold

### Answer

Victoria Cottage and The Forge, Weedon Road had previously been identified as possible candidates for a local list should it be formed. They were assessed against the council's criteria and Victoria Cottage and The Forge did not meet the threshold due to the number of modern alterations which had been made to the properties.

## Question 13

There are notable absences from the consultation including Newnham Hall, the Windmill on Newnham Hill – why is the proposal limited in this way – why have such buildings been excluded?

### Answer

Local heritage which relates to the wider history of the village and conservation area may be relevant to its development, however not all buildings can be included within the designation, due to proximity. Newnham Hall has not been included in the proposed extension as it is a discrete development which is covered by both the listed building regime and private management plans.

## Question 14

Why has UPVC been excluded? What is considered an "historic" property. There are a number of properties with UPVC replacement windows which you would be hard to identify as not being wooden windows.

### Answer

The replacement of historic timber fenestration and doors with UPVC alternatives can lead to the unnecessary loss of historic fabric, which contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Furthermore, in general UPVC alternatives rarely achieve the finish of timber frames, as they usually have thicker frames and non-structural glazing bars.

## Question 15

Street surfaces such as cobblestones have been tarmacked over – this has been done by the local authority – are they going to remove the poor modern (pot holed) surfacing and will they not be tarmacking over them in the future

Answer

These surfaces are the responsibility of the highways authority. However as with utility companies, the information included within the conservation area appraisal could encourage the safe uncovering of historic materials.

Question 16

On page 56, there is a footnote to "Newnham History pg 103" – That source is not listed.

Answer

This is a typographical error, and refers to Newnham Past and Present, by R.Key.

Question 17

On page 60 – permitted development rights to be withdrawn – do all 3 categories of rights being withdrawn apply to all the properties listed?

Answer

On the whole yes- however this would be subject to a separate consultation, which could lead to changes to these proposals. All those locations affected will be contacted at that time.

Question 18

The level of minute detail is concerning – how and why should the route that any external wiring, aerials follow, be the subject of planning control; likewise the colour of paint to be used-

Answer

The installation of aerials and satellite dishes is controlled under planning regulations by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended). It is generally considered good practice to site these so that they are not visible from a public highway, wherever possible. Consideration for the routing of external wiring and paint colours on fenestration, for example, should be given in order to mitigate the effect of such issues on the external appearance of a building, but are not controlled by conservation area regulations. Wiring can be unsightly on historic buildings and detract from their character. Likewise, if there is a typical paint scheme in a conservation area for certain elements such as windows it is good practice to maintain that character.

### Question 19

How and when is a consultation carried out in respect of proposed Article 4 directions – what is the process and timing (assuming that the proposed conservation plan as a whole is approved) and importantly, will the consultation be public and not just addressed to the properties affected

#### Answer

It is not known exactly when any Article 4 Direction consultation will take place, but it would certainly be at least a few months after any adoption of the conservation area, were that to be agreed. The consultation which would then take place would be open to the public, but those addresses stipulated in any draft direction would be contacted directly, in accord with regulations.

### Question 20

Why is there no mention of possible traffic restrictions in the Conservation area. To preserve properties with little or no foundations against vibration from heavy traffic then limitations should be referred to in the consultation; likewise, parking, both on street and on grass areas within the conservation area - how are those to be controlled, all of which have a significant detrimental impact on what you are seeking to maintain/establish

#### Answer

If there is concern that heavy grade vehicles are causing identifiable, indirect damage to buildings or infrastructure, through vibrations for example, this should be taken up with the highways authority. Likewise, if direct damage can be highlighted to the police. Forms of traffic regulation are usually reserved for where there is an identifiable safety issue which requires a weight, height or width restriction. There may be local traffic and parking measures which may be explored by the Parish Council, such as signage. Within conservation areas, consideration should be given to signage being kept to a minimum or designed into existing infrastructure.

### Question 21

Many of the reasons given to try and justify the current proposed restrictions appear to emanate from a failure over the last 20 years (when the conservation area was last reviewed) in terms of planning controls. How is this document going to bring certainty along with a consistent decision making process instead of an individual's opinion

#### Answer

The adoption of an up to date conservation area appraisal and management plan will provide both decision makers and those forming proposals with

important and consistent information. The appraisal, as well as other local and national guidance, is termed as “material consideration” and therefore decisions must consult this evidence and refer to it should it be of relevance to any decision.

Should you have any further questions, please contact [planning.ddc@westnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:planning.ddc@westnorthants.gov.uk).