

Appendix 3

Specific comments and points made at Public Meetings

Nascot and Civic Core Conservation Areas

The meeting for the Nascot and Civic Core conservation areas took place from 19:00 at the Town Hall Annex on 21 February 2023. 12 members of the public attended, along with one ward councillor.

The following comments/issues were raised:

- Whether the increasing levels of high density and tall development are rendering the conservation areas “obsolete”.
- Whether searches or land charge documents include links to websites that provide more information on conservation areas and Art 4 Directions. This is an option that we will investigate. A related comment asked whether it would be possible to have signage stating that ‘you are in a conservation area’. This is not an action proposed for the next three year period, but requires further consideration.
- Why owners of locally listed buildings are expected to use original materials when replacing elements of their buildings and doing repairs work.
- Why fees have to be paid for planning applications for properties subject to Article 4 Directions.
- There was a more general discussion regarding solar panels and the problems that can be faced when trying to install heat pumps.
- That it is disgraceful that Little Cassiobury has been allowed to deteriorate to the state it is now in. The resident also questioned what powers the Council have to make the owners repair the property.
- The Little Cassiobury Community Interest Company provided an update regarding their claim that HCC had agreed to let them have the building for a nominal sum once they could put a business plan and project together to raise the money for the restoration; they have an outstanding complaint with the Ombudsman regarding this.

Grove Mill Lane and Macdonell Gardens

The meeting for the Grove Mill Lane and Macdonell Gardens conservation areas took place from 19:00 at Cheslyn House on 23 February 2023. 4 members of the public attended, along with one ward councillor.

The following comments/issues were raised:

- That improving the accessibility of information on the Council website is very welcome.
- A discussion on how the town has developed since the 1840s.
- A general discussion around energy efficiency and how improving this aspect of traditionally built dwellings can be much more complex than it might seem.
- A reduction in the speed limit on Grove Mill Lane is welcomed; the ward councillor stated that they are already working with HCC on this issue and are happy to work with the Conservation Team collaboratively to see what can be achieved.

- The requirement for the repair of the railings on the canal bridge was also raised. Apparently many requests have previously been made to the Canal and River Trust in an attempt to have the railings repaired; it is hoped that we can make a more progress on this by working alongside HCC on this as they have an interest in the highway over the bridge.
- Some comments were made that the actions for Grove Mill Lane were little more than working with partners. It was pointed out that as we are not owners or the responsible party for either issue, we are unable to sort the issues directly.

Estcourt, St Mary's & High Street/King Street

The meeting for the Estcourt, St Mary's and High Street/King Street conservation areas took place from 19:00 at The Chamber Hub (Urban Room) on 28 February 2023. It was preceded by a drop-in session from 17:00-19:00. Two groups attended the drop-in session, along with 4 members of the public at the evening meeting.

The following comments/issues were raised at the drop-in session:

- Residents of Estcourt conservation area welcomed the idea of guidance on small-scale changes and stated that guidance on energy efficiency is particularly needed.
- They would also like to see the Queens Road local shopping area improved and more made of it in terms of the local community. Neighbourhood grant was discussed as one possibility.
- It was suggested that historic maps should be made easily accessible on the Council's website.
- A local business owner discussed the project to improve the churchyard area surrounding St Mary's. He recommended involving local stakeholders and having a consultation on any ideas proposed.
- The same business owner also asked about Little Cassiobury. He felt that the building could be used as managed office space, with the potential of an area provided for the Little Cassiobury Community Interest Company. The individual was concerned about extent of the property actually included in the sale.

The following comments/issues were raised at the evening meeting:

- That copies of Article 4 Directions need to be provided and sent with explanations when search documentation is provided. If that was not an option, links to clearly explained information could be provided as an alternative.
- Questions were raised on fence restrictions in rear gardens, solar panel installation and energy efficiency improvements.
- There was a feeling that compliance with the requirements would be higher if people better understood what they can and cannot do.
- The possibility of installing roundels and signposting to inform residents that they are in a conservation area was again raised.
- The attendees were generally supportive and interested in finding out more; they support the actions, which will aid this.

Oxhey & Watford Heath

The meeting for the Oxhey and Watford Heath conservation areas took place from 19:00 at Bushey and Oxhey Methodist Church on 6 March 2023. 11 members of the public attended, along with one ward councillor.

The following comments/issues were raised:

- Concern was raised that residents in older properties have many restrictions but many have the perception that developers can come in and build what they like. The principle of building on former garden sites was strongly disapproved of.
- A question was raised about what the community as a whole get out of being in a conservation area and also whether any new conservation areas were likely to be designated.
- The question of why residents have to pay for pre-application advice; they feel that it is difficult to find simple guidance or speak to an officer about what can and cannot be done.
- A question was raised about how local noticeboards could be used regarding heritage matters.
- The possibility was raised of having roundels of signposting installed so residents know they are in a conservation area.
- A comment was made by a resident that did not understand why changes of paint colour have been so contentious with the council.
- Information on how to restore or reinstate character and whether this would be supported.
- Advice was sought on where to find good trades people who know how to deal with traditional buildings.
- How long before any guidance would be produced and whether there would be interim advice and signposting to information.
- Attendees were generally supportive and interested in finding out more; they supported the actions that will aid this.

The Square

The meeting for The Square conservation area took place from 19:00 at Cornerstone Church on 8 March 2023. 7 (signed in) members of the public attended, along with three ward councillors.

The following comments/issues were raised:

- The potential use of Little Cassiobury for community usage was definitely preferred over other options.
- An interesting point was raised about using local competitions as a way of encouraging residents to beautify spaces in front of their homes with plants and flowers. The same individual also suggested the provision of wild flower seed in schools as a way of helping support this and involve local children. Although not considered as an action at this stage, it is an interesting idea and would provide an enhancement that could be supported.