

 Reigate & Banstead BOROUGH COUNCIL Banstead Horley Redhill Reigate	TO:		PLANNING COMMITTEE
	DATE:		9 March 2022
	REPORT OF:		HEAD OF PLANNING
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AGENDA ITEM:	10	WARD:	Reigate

SUBJECT:	Report Back on Comments Received on Reigate Hill Conservation Area following designation on the 20th January 2021
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:	For the Planning Committee to consider the comments received following designation of Reigate Hill Conservation Area on the 20th January 2021
RECOMMENDATION: 1. It is recommended that there is no change to the Conservation Area designated on 20 th January 2021 and as varied on the 22 nd January 2021 for Reigate Hill Conservation Area as delineated on the plan in Appendix 1, under sections 69 and 70 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.	
Planning Committee has authority to determine the recommendation.	

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Borough currently has 24 Conservation Areas. They are defined by the legislation as areas of special architectural or historic interest, which are desirable to preserve or enhance. The Council has a statutory duty to regularly review designations and boundaries, and a review of all boundaries took place in 2007, looking at identity areas and cohesive character groups as well as the age of buildings and their architectural interest. That programme of designations and extensions was completed in 2013. Following “Conservation Areas @ 50”, the Historic England national study of Conservation Areas in 2017 which considered the practice of designations nationally, a review is currently taking place in regard to boundaries of existing Conservation Areas and potential new designations for other areas as part of the regular review process.
- 1.2 Reigate Hill Conservation Area was designated on the 20th January 2021. Owners were notified of the designation and the purpose of this report is to consider comments received.

2.0 STATUTORY PROVISION

- 2.1 Public attitudes in favour of the retention and enhancement of local character and distinctiveness within the built environment are reflected in statutory legislation and guidance. Historic buildings and conservation areas are, therefore, vitally important to the environmental quality of life in this country. Consequently, local planning authorities have a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to determine and review which parts of their area are of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate such areas as conservation areas.

3.0 CHARACTER ASSESSMENT OF THE PROPOSED REIGATE HILL CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATED ON THE 20TH JANUARY 2021

- 3.1 The settlement dates from the early 19th century, the first properties being 101 and 103 Reigate Hill constructed in the 1800's. However Reigate Hill was a dangerous route despite being made a turnpike road in 1755. William Constable, the surveyor who designed Reigate Tunnel, carried out major improvements to Reigate Hill in 1825 including the suspension bridge (replaced in 1910) and an Octagonal toll house was built at the base of the Hill (demolished 1890). From the 1830's this attracted a number of buildings around the Toll House, such as the Yew Tree inn and the Rifle Volunteer public house opposite and a number of artisan's cottages, including the Reigate Stone Quarry Cottages associated with the Chalk pits, lime works and Reigate Stone mines, as well as country houses in large grounds such as The Rock, and The Brokes (Reigate Manor). Following the arrival of the railway in 1847 further large houses in spacious grounds were built in the vicinity and further cottages in the arts and crafts style were built later in the century and early 20th century. The Yew Tree public house was rebuilt in 1937 and was designed by the notable architect Paxton Watson in the local arts and crafts style. During the Second World War properties in the area were commandeered as for the Army's South East Command with Montgomery, Eisenhower, Churchill and several generals staying occasionally in the properties and the communication centre known as Monty's Hideout was built into Reigate Hill.
- 3.2 It is considered that the area forms a cohesive settlement of composite elements. The centre is characterised by low two storey cottages in arts and crafts and Victorian styles, with a collection of Victorian country houses in spacious grounds in the vicinity, with associated lodges and coach houses. Reigate Hill forms a green corridor to the town with buildings set back behind verdant and sylvan setting, except for the cottages on the south east side. The settlement forms a foreground to the backdrop of the Reigate Hill Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, particularly on the north and west sides of the main road. Whilst the Esso garage is a negative element in the area, it was nonetheless designed to have a reduced impact with clay tile roof and very limited advertising fascias.

4.0 REPORT BACK ON COMMENTS RECEIVED

- 4.1 107 properties were notified of their inclusion in the designated Reigate Hill Conservation Area. Three properties responded in support of the designation including one which suggested extension, and two against the designation and two requests for a property to be excluded from the Conservation Area. The Beech Road and Underhill Park Road Frontagers' Association (BUFA) also supported the designation of the Conservation Area.
- 4.2 Hillside in Fox Lane requested exclusion from the Conservation Area due to being a modern house on the edge of the Conservation Area. It is considered however that this has a close relation to the neighbouring Victorian terrace as well as being in the former back garden of 90 Reigate Hill the boundary of which encloses it on two side. Officers consider the boundary should not be varied in this case.
- 4.3 1 Fox Lane objected to the designation of the Conservation Area for the following reason. They considered properties south of Beech Road are new build, properties of importance are already locally listed and trees and hedges in the area are protected with Tree Preservation Orders. They request that an area of Fox lane was excluded from the Conservation Area. Officers consider that there are a considerable number of buildings in this part of the Conservation Area that are Victorian in date and add to the character of the area. 1 Fox Lane is embedded between the boundaries of two 19th century properties in a central part of the Conservation Area and Officers considered that it should remain in the Conservation Area.
- 4.4 4 Hadley Place requested removal from the Conservation Area as a modern building with permitted development rights for extensions. Officers consider it should remain in the Conservation Area as it has been designed as a Victorian coach house style building in the former grounds of the adjacent Locally Listed Building.
- 4.5 There was a request to include the 1930's Art Deco reservoir on Reigate Hill within the Conservation Area. This would require further investigation and would be considered at a later review.
- 4.6 The owner of the Yew Tree PH objected to the designation of the Conservation Area. He objected to the lack of a Conservation Area Appraisal, and raised issues in regard to the architectural quality of the Yew Tree and character of the area. These were considered by the inspector who dismissed the appeal for development of the Yew Tree application 20/02602/F. The inspector made the following comment relevant to the objections.
- 4.7 The inspector noted in relation to the Conservation Area appraisal, *"Planning Practice Guidance only guides that an appraisal may help a local planning authority decide whether to designate an area as a conservation area. There is no requirement to carry one out. In my judgement, for the purposes of designating the Conservation Area and consultation, the character assessment that was used was adequate."*

- 4.8 The inspector noted in relation to assessing the significance of the designated Conservation Area and the contribution that the Yew Tree PH ;

“10. The Conservation Area is centred on the Yew Tree public house and extends along Reigate Hill and nearby adjacent roads to contain well designed, older and historic buildings which vary in scale from two storey cottages to large, detached houses. Use of brick, render, clay tiles and slate is widespread. The mature trees and landscaping along Reigate Hill form an intrinsic part of the Conservation Area’s verdant character. The significance of the Conservation Area and its listed buildings, which predominantly date from the early 19th century through to pre-World War Two, is therefore architectural and historical.

11. The Yew Tree public house is an arts and crafts revival style, two storey building dating from 1937 designed by Paxton Watson. With its low eaves height, first floor contained within its roof space, clay tiles and vernacular style it complements the cottages on the opposite side of Reigate Hill and on the same side of this road to its rear. Positioned directly facing traffic approaching up Reigate Hill from the south, and framed in these views by the canopy of trees that encloses the road, it is the most prominent building in the Conservation Area and makes a noteworthy contribution to its significance.”

- 4.9 Officers consider that the above supports the Council’s view that designation of the area was justified, that the Yew Tree PH is an important feature of the area and that the character assessment was adequate.

5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Whilst heritage resources are limited, the greater certainty in the development management process will considerably reduce time spent on negotiation and discussion of proposals.

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The local planning authority has a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to review the exercise of their functions in respect of the designation of conservation areas, and to consider the designation of further parts of their area as conservation areas. The legal status of Conservation Areas is not expected to change in the near future.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 It is considered that Reigate Hill Conservation Area was worthy of designation as a Conservation Area, as it contributes significantly to the special architectural and historic interest of the area, its identity and character and is desirable to preserve and enhance. No representations or circumstances forwarded have evidenced against the designation as a whole or warrant further inclusions or exclusions at this time.

- 7.2 It is recommended that there is no change to the designation of the Reigate Hill Conservation Area or its extent, as designated on the 20th January 2021 and as delineated on the plan in Appendix 1, under sections 69 and 70 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Appendix 1

THE REIGATE HILL CONSERVATION AREA AS DESIGNATED ON THE 20TH JANUARY 2021



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Conservation Area – Reigate Hill