

Board/Committee:	REGULATORY BOARD
Date of meeting:	6 th SEPTEMBER 2023
Title:	PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT GOSPORT LINES CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (INCLUDING THE RECOMMENDATION THAT TRINITY GREEN AND WALPOLE PARK BE DESIGNATED A CONSERVATION AREA); AND REVIEW OF PRIDDY'S HARD AND ROYAL CLARENCE YARD CONSERVATION AREAS
Author:	PRINCIPAL CONSERVATION AND DESIGN OFFICER
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

To seek Members' support to go out to public consultation on the draft 'Gosport Lines Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan' (including the recommendation that Trinity Green and Walpole Park be designated a Conservation Area); and, to review Priddy's Hard and Royal Clarence Yard Conservation Areas, as set out in the Heritage Action Zone Delivery Plan.

Recommendation

To go out to public consultation on the following:

- i) the potential designation of a new Conservation Area covering Trinity Green and Walpole Park;
- ii) a review of the Royal Clarence Yard Conservation Area;
- iii) a review of the Priddy's Hard Conservation Area;
- iv) a draft 'Gosport Lines' Conservation Areas Appraisal and Management Plan covering the existing St George's Barracks North and South Conservation Areas and the proposed Trinity Green and Walpole Park Conservation Area;
- v) a draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for the Royal Clarence Yard Conservation Area; and,
- vi) a draft Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for the Priddy's Hard Conservation Area.

1.0 Background

1.1 In accordance with Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), the Local Planning Authority is required to identify areas of special historic or architectural interest which it is desirable to 'preserve or enhance', and shall designate those areas as Conservation Areas. The area of Trinity Green and Walpole Park is considered to have the potential characteristics making it suitable for designation and through the Heritage Action Zone (HAZ) it is proposed that the public are consulted on the proposal and also on a potential boundary for such an area. The less well known historic interest of the area makes consultation particularly valuable to aid publicity and understanding of this area of Town. It is intended that together with the existing St Georges Barracks North and St Georges

Barracks South Conservation Areas, the new Conservation Area will collectively form 'The Gosport Lines Conservation Areas' which follow the path of the town's historic inland fortifications. For ease of use and management, a single draft Gosport Lines Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been produced that covers these three closely related areas.

- 1.2** Section 72 of The Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 (as amended) requires that the authority also pay: "special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area" and formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas. The review of Priddy's Hard and Royal Clarence Yard Conservation Areas will both assess the merits of the existing boundaries as well as provide up to date Appraisals of the special interest of each area, highlighting features worthy of preservation and/or enhancement with accompanying Management Plans.
- 1.3** The purpose of a designated Conservation Area is to 'preserve and enhance' the special historic or architectural interest of an area and help ensure that future development has regard to that special interest. It limits some permitted development rights and planning permission is required to demolish buildings. Six weeks written notice is also required to carry out a range of works to most trees. Designation would not prevent development but would help to ensure that it is appropriate in form, scale, material and design such that it would not harm the setting and would help to positively enhance the Conservation Area's unique character.
- 1.4** As set out in the Gosport Borough Local Plan 2014, Policies LP10 (Design) and LP12 (Conservation Areas) would be relevant were designation supported.

2.0 Discussion

- 2.1** The Heritage Action Zone Delivery Plan includes a proposal to go out to public consultation on the potential for a proposed new conservation area forming part of 'The Gosport Lines', to protect the rich military legacy of the area which spans several centuries, as well as to better understand and appreciate the history of this area. The HAZ project also allows for the review of the boundaries to Priddy's Hard and Royal Clarence Yard Conservation Areas and the preparation of up to date Appraisals and Management Plans for these areas.
- 2.2** Gosport is defined by its strategic setting, physically enclosed by sea and historically by military fortifications which constrained the expansion of the town and confined development until the early part of the 19th Century. These military fortifications by Sir Bernard de Gomme of mid-17th century and mid-19th century known as the 'Gosport 'Lines' had a fundamental influence on the development of the town and continue to do so.
- 2.3** Many elements of the Lines remain and their influence on the landscape constraining Gosport town to the west can still be discerned. The historic physical route of the Lines has lost some geographical legibility due to developmental intervention and change over the centuries, however surviving components of the Lines have retained their unique characteristics which can still be identified. As such, designating Trinity Green and Walpole Park as a Conservation Area and providing a single Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for all three Conservation Areas (incl. St Georges Barracks

North and St Georges Barracks South) together forming 'The Gosport Lines' will provide an opportunity to aid understanding of the fundamental importance of the Lines in Gosport's history and key role in its development as a town, furthermore celebrating and protecting its uniqueness and encouraging access and enjoyment of perhaps a lesser known heritage asset of great importance and contributor to the landscape.

2.4 The boundaries of this proposed new Trinity Green and Walpole Park Conservation Area capture elements of all the prevailing themes that characterise the historic environment of the Gosport Lines and their subsequent redevelopment. This includes:

- No. 1 Bastion, the Cockle Pond, Trinity Close and the alignment of the Walpole Park Car Parks and Creek Road effectively reflect the historic course of the Lines. This is of historic interest in illustrating how this major landscape feature, though now mostly gone, continues to influence the form and layout of Gosport's townscape. Alongside the national importance of No. 1 Bastion as a scheduled monument, the other former sections of the Lines are likely to possess archaeological potential.

- The openness of Walpole Park (both the north and south sides) preserves evidence of the fields of fire, which extended through this area west and south of the Lines. The fields of fire were an integral part of the defensive network and the preservation of open space in their former location is of historic interest.

- The use of Walpole Park as a public recreation ground since 1868, and the use of Cockle Pond for international model yacht racing events since the 1920s, is of historic interest in illustrating the democratisation of the Lines following recognition of their obsolescence by the military authorities. Alongside its historic interest, Walpole Park and Cockle Pond are of immense landscape, ecological and amenity value, providing vital public open space immediately adjacent to the town centre and creating a green buffer between the town centre to the east and the residential suburbs to the west.

- Exceptional views across Haslar Lake towards the historic naval facilities at Haslar are gained from the southern parts of Walpole Park. This creates a visual connection which is significant in heritage terms, linking one historic military site (the fields of fire) to others across the lake.

- The eastern part of the proposed Conservation Area strongly reflects the influence of post-war redevelopment upon the townscape of Gosport, both in forming the setting of the locally listed Seaward and Harbour Towers, but also in the physical manifestation of Trinity Close as modest but attractive post-war housing blocks.

- Holy Trinity Church is one of the oldest surviving buildings in central Gosport, with its churchyard preserved on its original footprint. This grade II* Listed Building is of high historic and architectural interest both in a local context as Gosport's principal church and an early development just within de Gomme's Lines, but also in a national context due to the involvement of a renowned ecclesiastical architect in its refurbishment and extension (Sir Arthur Blomfield).

- The survival of Holy Trinity Church and its churchyard, Holy Trinity Vicarage (Grade II Listed) and No. 1 Bastion in close proximity creates an historic enclave

which provides a striking contrast to the post-war development of Gosport surrounding it, most overtly in the form of the locally listed towers.

2.5 This historic enclave is highly informative of the character and appearance of Gosport prior to its post-war redevelopment but is also of high amenity value as an attractively landscaped and well-used public space. For the reasons set out above, it is recommended that Trinity Green and Walpole Park attain Conservation Area status.

2.6 The two existing Conservation Areas of Priddy's Hard and Royal Clarence Yard require Conservation Area Appraisals, and carrying out their review alongside the draft Gosport Lines Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan would be appropriate along with the amount of new historic information available on these areas.

2.7 It is a statutory requirement of the LPA to review Conservation Areas in order to protect their special character and unique place in the history of Gosport. As part of the HAZ budget with Historic England support, the research and production of the Conservation Appraisals and Management Plans has been carried out by specialist Heritage Consultants Alan Baxter Ltd.

2.8 The proposed consultation will be accessible to a wide range of people, using a variety of inclusive communication methods to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders in keeping with the Council's Statement of Commitment to Equality & Diversity. Consultation documents will include the statement: 'Gosport Borough Council is committed to equal opportunities for all: If you need this document in large print, on tape, CD, in Braille or in other languages, please ask'.

3.0 Risk Assessment

3.1 The Gosport Lines Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and the review of Priddy's Hard Conservation Area and production of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan were jointly funded by GBC and Historic England (£9,613 each). The review of Royal Clarence Yard Conservation Area and production of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was funded by GBC (£18,900).

3.2 The Heritage Consultant's work and recommendations are nearing completion. Final drafts for consultation have been received for The Gosport Lines Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and for the Priddy's Hard Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. The final draft of the Royal Clarence Yard Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is expected imminently.

4.0 Conclusion

The consultation process will provide opportunity for the community and other interested parties to comment on the proposed Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans and comment on the proposed designation of Trinity Green and Walpole Park as a Conservation Area. The Draft Conservation Area Appraisals, once adopted, will be a material consideration when determining future planning applications and will provide a framework to help coordinate future action by the Council and its partners.

Financial Services comments:	Contained within the report.
Legal Services comments:	This report addresses the legal requirements concerning the designation and extension of Conservation Areas. It also indicates the implications of Conservation Area designation for the area in terms of the changes to planning control. This report is seeking permission to go out to consultation as part of the process of determination rather than to provide a substantive, final decision.
Equality and Diversity:	Contained within the report.
Climate Change implications:	There are no climate change implications.
Crime and Disorder:	There are no crime and disorder implications.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	N/a
Corporate Plan:	The proposed Conservation Area designation, draft Appraisals and Management Plans will contribute towards the Council priority to protect, enhance, and promote our unique rich heritage.
Risk Assessment:	Contained within the report and the HAZ Risk Register.
Background Papers:	Heritage Action Zone Delivery Plan
Appendices:	None
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