

Frequently Asked Questions – Bushey Heath High Road Conservation Area Appraisal

What is a Conservation Area Appraisal?

Conservation Area Appraisal should define the special historic and architectural interest of a Conservation Area. A Conservation Area is described in law as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. The form and content of an appraisal can vary depending on the Conservation Area being assessed, however the Bushey Heath High Road Conservation Area Appraisal looked at 'character zones' within the area and analysed each in detail, taking in what were considered to be good, negative and neutral features. Recommendations were made based on this analysis.

Why has the Council carried out an appraisal of the Bushey Heath High Road Conservation Area?

The Council has an obligation to review Conservation Areas from time to time and to determine whether any additional adjoining sites should be included or sections removed. This is under Section 69 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This is the sixth appraisal to have been undertaken in the last 6 years and there are two more in progress.

Who undertook the appraisal?

The appraisal was commissioned by Hertsmere Borough Council and undertaken by the Built Environment Advisory and Management Service (BEAMS), part of the Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust. BEAMS is independent of the Council and currently advises the Council on historic building conservation.

What are the main recommendations of the appraisal?

The main recommendation is to de-designate the Conservation Area. The appraisal also sets out a number of other management mechanisms, such as the designation of individual buildings of local interest, TPOs and Article 4 Directions to protect front boundary treatment along the High Road.

What would be the benefit of de-designating the Conservation Area?

Good practice guidance issued by English Heritage recommends that, as part of any appraisal, Conservation Areas are re-assessed to establish whether their boundaries are still appropriate. If the Conservation Area no longer reflects the special historic and architectural interest of the area as a whole, it is recommended that it be removed. If the Council did not appraise the Bushey Heath High Road Conservation Area and de-designate the area that did not add to special historic interest, the overall historic value of the area would be affected. The Council would be at risk of losing control over future development and lead to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area being increasingly affected. There is greater benefit in using alternative forms of protection, depending on the aspects that require protection, such as front boundary treatment, significant trees, and individual buildings.

It should be noted that house prices and Council tax rates are not a consideration for any proposed changes to a Conservation Area boundary.

What is a Locally Listed Building?

Locally listed buildings have special architectural significance, they may be of interest because of a historic connection, or contribute significantly to the quality of the built environment, streetscape or rural landscape. They are given priority in the determination of planning applications, where the designation is a material consideration. The designation in itself does not affect permitted development rights of the property. The List of Locally Important Buildings was originally compiled in 2008.

What is an Article 4 Direction?

Article 4 Directions are issued by the Council where specific control over the built environment is required, such as where a particular characteristic of the area might be at risk. They are generally applied where there is a common or special characteristic on a group of buildings that makes a positive contribution, and are registered as a local land charge. The effect of Article 4 Directions is to remove permitted development rights, thereby resulting in the requirement of a planning application. Article 4 Directions are not issued without very careful consideration of each case. This is a separate legislative process to the de-designation of the Conservation Area.

Would it be easier to develop sites in and around the High Road in Bushey Heath if they were to be removed from the Conservation Area?

If the Conservation Area was de-designated sites and properties would still be significantly protected because of their location adjoining existing listed buildings and sites with tree preservation orders (TPOs). There are seven statutorily listed buildings and three TPOs in the Conservation Area as it exists at the moment. Hertsmere Local Plan (2003) policy E16 states that, in the case of proposals adjacent to a listed building, planning permission will be refused for those developments that would not preserve its special character or appearance or that would adversely affect its setting.

Are there any plans to develop these properties in and around Bushey Heath High Road?

The Council's Planning department is not currently aware of any plans for new residential development in the area currently designated as a Conservation Area.

How can I respond to the recommendations of the appraisal?

The Council is currently inviting comments on the draft version of the Bushey Heath High Road Conservation Area Appraisal. Any comments should be made by 5pm on 29 July 2013. Please fill in a response sheet or send comments in writing to:

Policy and Transport Team
Planning and Building Control
Hertsmere Borough Council
Civic Offices
Elstree Way
Borehamwood
WD6 1WA

Or email:
local.plan@hertsmere.gov.uk

Will the Council listen to my views?

All comments will be carefully considered and reported back to the Council's Executive Committee before the final appraisal and recommendations are agreed.

When will a final decision be made?

A final decision is expected to be made by Councillors at the Executive Committee in late 2013. You are welcome to attend this meeting – the date and details will be available nearer the time and will be published on our website. These meetings are also broadcast live via our website so if you are unable to attend you can watch via the internet.