

CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW GERRARDS CROSS

South Bucks District Council is currently engaged in a review of its conservation areas in line with its duties under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. These include duties:

- to determine which parts of the district are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and to designate those areas as conservation areas.
- from time to time to review the extent of designation and to designate further areas if appropriate.

The Gerrards Cross Common Conservation Area was first designated in 1987.

In 2004 residents of Gerrards Cross established a Heritage Programme entitled GX2006 with the object of staging a centenary exhibition to celebrate the built heritage of the “new” Gerrards Cross created after the arrival of the railway in 1906. The two-day exhibition in April 2006 was attended by 2,700 visitors. The increased public interest in the Edwardian built-heritage of Gerrards Cross led to a request on behalf of residents for a much-enlarged conservation area in Gerrards Cross.

Members of the GX2006 team have liaised closely with the Council, sharing the results of their research and providing a comprehensive database on the buildings and history of Gerrards Cross. We are extremely grateful for this assistance which has proved invaluable in formulating our proposals which are also based on our own detailed survey of Gerrards Cross.

GERRARDS CROSS

The medieval hamlet known as “Jarret’s Cross” grew up where the main road from London to Oxford crossed an area of common grazing land shared by several parishes. A cluster of buildings developed where Bull Lane meets Oxford Road, near the original entrance to Bulstrode Park.

Farms and cottages were built along the northern edge of the Common. In the 18th century Oxford

Road was turnpiked and the inns on the Common, the Bull, the French Horn and the Packhorse, catered for travellers.



West Common

After the building of the parish church in 1859 the “gentrification” of Gerrards Cross gathered pace and it came to be known as the “Brighton of Bucks”.

Before the railway station even opened in 1906 the property developers were devising schemes for the creation of a new settlement north of the Common. New roads were laid out with spacious plots for large detached houses. These houses were designed by architects working in the Arts and Crafts style. Such was the Edwardian building boom that some London architects made their homes in Gerrards Cross, whilst several builders and estate agents set up offices here. New shopping parades in “Tudorbethan” style catered for everyday needs.



Edwardian shops in Packhorse Road

Development ground to a halt during World War I, but the 1920s saw another period of growth with the redevelopment of the Ethorpe estate for houses and more shops. By 1930 the leafy “garden village” north of the Common was complete.

The large green expanse of the Common was to ensure that Gerrards Cross retained its rural character. The Common now provides a valuable recreational space. A recent survey of botanical

and wildlife species has also demonstrated its ecological value.

The buildings around the Common, many of them vernacular, have resulted from organic growth and display a variety of styles, ages, materials and uses, but all in keeping with the rural character of the Common. Several of them are listed.

The character of the “garden village” with its carefully laid out streets and plots is quite different. The high quality of the individually architect-designed houses has remained remarkably consistent. Many houses appear to have been sympathetically extended in the 1920s when architects were still skilled in the Arts and Crafts idiom. Much of the original architectural detailing, such an important element in forming the character of the new Gerrards Cross, has been preserved. Gardens and the leafy streetscapes have matured well. The generous spacing of the houses allows views of trees, gardens and the sides of buildings which were designed to be seen, not hidden from public view as in closely-spaced modern developments.



Bulstrode Way

The commercial centre either side of the railway line has also retained much of its original character and detailing with the Tudorbethan parades dominating the streetscene.

PROPOSALS

The Council has followed English Heritage guidance in formulating the following proposals:

- That Gerrards Cross Common Conservation Area be re-designated with revised boundaries. The existing conservation area is edged red on the plan overleaf. The revised conservation area is coloured green on the plan. Some properties in the existing conservation area would be excluded

whilst other properties not in the current conservation area would be included in the revised conservation area. Details of both sets of properties are given overleaf.

- That a new “Gerrards Cross Centenary Conservation Area” be designated to recognise the special architectural and historic interest of the “garden village” developed after the coming of the railway in 1906. This proposed conservation area is coloured mauve on the plan. A list of the properties which would be included in that conservation area is also given overleaf.

Information on the effects of conservation area designation is available:

- Online at :www.southbucks.gov.uk
- In the council’s leaflet “Conservation Areas - Guidance for Residents” available from the Council.
- From the Council’s Conservation and Design Officer on 01895 837374.
- At the public exhibition (see below).

A draft character appraisal describing both proposed conservation areas, including maps and illustrations, is available:

- to download from www.southbucks.gov.uk
- for inspection at the Council’s offices.
- for inspection at the Parish Council’s offices.
- for inspection at Gerrards Cross library.

HAVE YOUR SAY

You are invited to the exhibition at the Gerrards Cross Memorial Centre on 29th and 30th November (10am-4pm) where a Conservation & Design Officer will be available to answer your questions. Members of the GX2006 team will also be on hand to deal with historical queries.

Whether or not you attend the exhibition we welcome your views on the proposals. You can send these to us:

- online at www.southbucks.gov.uk - please follow the links from the “Have your say” section on the Home page, or
- by completing the questionnaire and returning it to us in the enclosed envelope, or
- by writing to:
Mrs Marian Miller
Conservation and Design Officer
South Bucks District Council
Capswood, Oxford Road, Denham, Bucks UB9 4LH

The deadline for receipt of your comments is Friday 9th January 2009.