



**NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Name of Committee
CABINET**

Directorate: People, Planning & Regeneration

Corporate Manager: Chris Cavanagh

Date: 9 July 2007

Report Title	Delapre Park Conservation Area
---------------------	---------------------------------------

Key Decision	YES
---------------------	------------

1. Recommendations

1.1 That Cabinet agree that:

(a) Delapre Abbey, the adjacent buildings, part of the gardens and parkland be designated as a conservation area pursuant to Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and be known as Delapre Park Conservation Area.

(b) The Delapre Park Conservation Area Character Appraisal be adopted.

(c) The Delapre Park Conservation Area Management Plan be adopted.

2. Summary

2.1 It is proposed to designate a Conservation Area centring on Delapre Abbey and covering part of the gardens and parkland, following the recommendation in the Delapre Conservation Plan adopted December 2006. Conservation Area designation will provide a greater level of protection to smaller unlisted buildings in the area and to key landscape features.

2.2 As part of this process, a character appraisal identifying the special qualities of the area and a management plan discussing methods of protection and enhancement have been produced.

3. Report Background

- 3.1 Northampton Borough Council as stewards of the Grade II* listed Abbey recently commissioned consultants to produce a Conservation Plan for Delapre Abbey which was adopted by Cabinet in December 2006. The purpose of a Conservation Plan is to assess the historic importance of the asset and identify how it may be sensitive to change. The Plan included a series of recommendations for the future of the site. One of the key recommendations was that the Abbey, surrounding buildings and part of the gardens and parkland should be designated a conservation area due to their historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Designation as a conservation area will provide a broader form of protection than listed building control.
- 3.2 In response to the recommendations in the Delapre Conservation Plan, a Draft Character Appraisal and Management Plan has been produced for consultation. This provides information to define and understand the special quality of Delapre Park before a conservation area is designated.
- 3.3 Based on initial research, the proposed boundary was drawn up to encompass the complex of buildings, the surviving historic parkland and landscape within the immediate setting of the buildings only. While other areas such as the Charter wood and the golf course have been suggested for inclusion within the conservation area, a full and detailed assessment of the surviving parkland has yet to be undertaken. Once further assessment of the landscape has taken place the boundary can be amended if appropriate. If designated, the Council will have a duty to review the Conservation Area on a five-yearly basis – this is currently undertaken for all Conservation Areas.
- 3.4 The key benefit of declaring a conservation area is that enhanced protection of the area is achieved because the proposed demolition of unlisted buildings exceeding 115 cubic metres within the designated boundary would require consent and works to trees would require six weeks prior notification to the Council's Arboricultural Officer. Also planning applications in or around a conservation area will have to take into consideration the impact the proposed development may have on the character and appearance of the conservation area. It may also provide a better chance for future projects within the conservation area to receive funding from national bodies.
- 3.5 Through the consultation process, it has shown that many interest groups, local residents and English Heritage consider that the boundary should be drawn wider than that proposed. It has been suggested that the boundary should include Charter Wood, Delapre Lake, the Rookery and the Golf course. Some respondents have suggested these areas should be included to protect the diverse wildlife.
- 3.6 Charter Wood is within the boundary of the registered Battlefield but the planting is of no historic value and therefore is not included within the proposed boundary. The area is likely to have been used during the Yorkist attack during the Battle of Northampton and evidence of 'ridge and furrow' agricultural earthwork remains are identifiable in this area. Delapre Lake is

not included in the proposed Conservation area. The Lake, whilst an important asset to the town, did not form part of the historic landscape; being formed during the 1960's following gravel extraction. Whilst the area has been identified as a site of acknowledged nature conservation value in the adopted Local Plan, the purpose of designating a Conservation Area is to identify and protect the heritage value of the area. Including the lake within the conservation Area for nature conservation reasons would therefore be inappropriate.

- 3.7 The Conservation Plan commissioned by the Council also made the recommendation that the wider landscape be fully assessed and the Council make an application to English Heritage for the site to be included on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens if appropriate. The Rookery and golf course are not included within the proposed Conservation Area as both areas form part of the wider landscape setting and would be assessed as part this further work.

4. Options and Evaluation of Options

4.1 Options:

1. Do nothing – this would be contrary to the recommendation in the Conservation Plan adopted by Cabinet in December 2006.
2. Designate a conservation area as proposed and adopt the character appraisal and management plan; or
3. Designate a conservation area with wider revised boundary and adopt a modified appraisal and management plan following further appraisal of the wider landscape.

- 4.2 Options 4.2 or 4.3 would confirm the Council's commitment to the protection of this important heritage asset. The report recommends option 2 as it offers protection to the immediate setting of the Abbey complex and allows for a more detailed assessment of the wider landscape and therefore accords with the recommendations published in the Conservation Plan.

5. Resource Implications (including Financial Implications)

- 5.1 Conservation Area status for the landscape surrounding the Abbey may provide access to additional financial resources for the interim Building Preservation Trust.

- 5.2 A character reappraisal and updated management plan will need to be produced every five years in order to meet BVPI 219, resourced within existing revenue budgets.

- 5.3 Proposed works to any trees within a conservation area requires six weeks prior written notice to the Council's arboricultural officer, resourced within existing revenue budgets.

6. Risk and Opportunity Issues

6.1 The designation of a conservation area will ensure that any new development within or around it will have to take its character and appearance into account.

7. Consultees (Internal and External)

Internal	Asset management, parks, councillors, legal services
External	<p>A total of 132 consultations have been dispatched to national amenity groups, local organisations, residents and other interested parties and the response rate has been excellent with a total of 64 returns.</p> <p>Appendix 1 offers a broad overview of the responses received and whether the principle of a Conservation Area is supported.</p>

8. Compliance Issues

A: How Proposals Deliver Priority Outcomes

Recovery Plan
Improving our interaction with the public.
Corporate Plan
To ensure that our communities are safer, greener and cleaner – objective 1.

B: Other Implications

Other Strategies
Local Plan (adopted 1997), emerging Local Development framework.



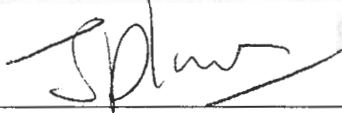
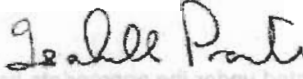
Finance Comments

Legal Comments

9. Background Papers

Title	Description	Source
Delapre Abbey Conservation Plan	Assessment of the historic importance of the building	
Draft Conservation Area Assessment & Management Plan	Full report analysing the character of the area and considering ways to improve its quality.	
Summary of Proposals	Leaflet distributed to stakeholders including members of the public.	
Detailed Schedule of Comments		

[Report Author, title and extension]

Name	Signature	Date	Ext.
Author	Jane Jennings		7637
Corporate Manager	Chris Cavanagh 		8461
Director	Clive Thomas 		
Monitoring Officer or Deputy (Key decision only)		2/7/07	7335
Section 151 Officer or Deputy (Key decision only)			

Comments Summary – Most chosen topics

While most people have put their comments in the appropriate boxes, some topics have been raised in more than one area. The additional comments have been counted under the one heading, but where a respondent has mentioned the same topic in more than one area they are counted only once.

Designation and proposed area

Comments regarding the bunds have been counted under "Unauthorised vehicles", unless also mentioned there.

- 28 Area shown does not extend far enough
Suggestions include Charter Wood, Delapre Lake, The Rookery and the Golf Course. Many people ask for the whole of the Delapre area to be included.
- 10 Approve the making of a conservation area for Delapre
This figure does not include the 28 above who are in favour of the conservation area, but think the boundary should be wider.

Footpaths

- 15 Footpaths should be designed with disabled access in mind
- 6 Proper maintenance is important
- 4 Footpaths are currently of a poor standard

Access routes

- 9 The bund has restricted access to the park from London Road
- 6 There should be no further access routes
- 3 Should prevent access for joyriders
- 2 Access routes need to be fit

Unauthorised vehicles

- 23 { 17 Replace the bunding with something more in keeping with the area
Various suggestions include ha ha, walls, fences/railings, hedges, logs, posts
- 6 Bunding should be removed (no suggestions made as to replacement measures)
- 6 The present measures are not effective – cars & motor cycles still gain access
- 5 Vehicles have never gained access from London Road
- 5 Keep the bunding (now it's there)

General comments

All comments on topics included above have been counted under the appropriate headings, where there is no duplication.

- 8 In praise of the work already done to improve the Abbey and its surroundings
- 4 Disapprove of the plans to erect a Mencap building

**Delapre Park Proposed Conservation Area
Feedback Questionnaire Results**

Questionnaires Received	64
--------------------------------	-----------

Number representing an organisation 18 28.1%

Statistical summary of tick-box answers

Questions Relating to the Conservation Area

Is there a need to designate Delapre Park as a conservation area?		
--	--	--

Yes	59	98.3%
No	0	0.0%
No Opinion	1	1.7%

Is the suggested outline appropriate?		
--	--	--

Very Appropriate	20	33.3%
Appropriate	21	35.0%
No Opinion	4	6.7%
Inappropriate	8	13.3%
Very Inappropriate	7	11.7%

Questions relating to the Management Plan

Should footpaths be addressed in the management plan?		
--	--	--

Definitely Needed	32	55.2%
Needed	22	37.9%
No Opinion	3	5.2%
Not Needed	1	1.7%
Definitely Not	0	0.0%

Are the access routes appropriate for the site?		
--	--	--

Very Appropriate	13	22.8%
Appropriate	27	47.4%
No Opinion	9	15.8%
Inappropriate	6	10.5%
Very Inappropriate	2	3.5%

How necessary is protection from unauthorised vehicles to the site?		
--	--	--

Definitely Needed	43	75.4%
Needed	9	15.8%
No Opinion	1	1.8%
Not Needed	3	5.3%
Definitely Not	1	1.8%