

## **Appendix 1: Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) – Introduction**

### **3.1 Purpose of the Design Guidance**

3.1.1 Cyprus Avenue, King's Road and Knockdene Conservation Areas are distinctive and special due to a combination of their physical fabric and buildings, spaces and their landscape character.

3.1.2 Designation provides statutory protection for these areas. It is essential that the established character and appearance of the areas is preserved and enhanced and that both the individual and cumulative effects of proposals do not harm it. Indeed under Article 104 of the Planning Act (NI) 2011, the character or appearance of the Conservation Area must be enhanced where the opportunity arises.

3.1.3 This guidance is intended for all those with an interest in Cyprus Avenue, King's Road and Knockdene Conservation Areas, or for those intending to undertake work on their buildings, trees and landscapes, streets or spaces.

3.1.4 It is intended to guide future development and assist the Council in managing change, within, and in the setting of the Conservation Areas, to ensure that it conserves or enhances their special character and appearance and their setting.

3.1.5 Applicants seeking planning permission, conservation area consent, advertisement consent or listed building consent for work in the Conservation Area should be able to demonstrate how they have taken the character appraisal and design guide into account and how their proposals will contribute to its preservation or enhancement. The local planning authority will endeavour to ensure that the activities of statutory undertakers and public agencies will maintain or improve the environmental quality and distinctive attributes of the Conservation Area.

### **3.2 Methodology**

3.2.1 Detailed research and analysis was carried out to identify the specific architectural and historic elements which make the Conservation Areas special and distinctive. From this, a set of detailed design guidelines has been formulated.

3.2.2 Conservation Areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Article 104, The Planning Act (NI) 2011.)

### **3.3 The Importance of Conservation**

3.3.1 Conservation is not a cosmetic exercise. Securing the preservation or enhancement of the historic built environment stems from strong cultural, economic and environmental objectives, the recognition of which is long established in various International Charters.

3.3.2 The character and appearance of a Conservation Area is inseparable from the physical fabric of which it is made. It is important therefore that anyone intending to carry out any work in a Conservation Area which affects its buildings, their settings, trees, open spaces or street scenes considers the implications and sees all prospective changes, however small, within the context of their wider impact.

3.3.3 Conservation Areas exhibit a strong sense of place and, by suggesting continuity and stability provide points of reference in a rapidly changing world: they represent the familiar and cherished local scene. The mixture of historic buildings, frequently reflecting an older framework of streets and spaces, will almost always be visually pleasing, whether the buildings illustrate the local vernacular

refined over time, the calculated proportions of the Georgian building, the exuberance of Victorian architecture, Inter and Post-War design themes (or a mixture of these) or landscape features.

3.3.4 Buildings are a source of evidence of the past, and assist our understanding of the present. They are often assessed against the criteria of commodity, firmness and delight, which suggest that they should be fit for function, technically sound and objects of beauty. Buildings will often have aesthetic qualities of beauty, as works of fine architecture or the craftsmanship embodied in them. The aesthetic response to a building depends on factors such as its inherent beauty, age, patina, (formal or informal) design, contribution to the character of its context and the picturesque quality of its setting (including its interaction with other buildings), incorporated art and craftsmanship, its narrative qualities and legibility, interiors and historic associations (cultural value).

3.3.5 A building is an economic asset, its character, quality and interest or beauty often enhancing the value of the immediate area within which it is set, with the resultant environment encouraging economic activity. Old buildings also contribute to maintaining craftsmanship skills. Historic buildings symbolise the relationship between the physical and economic geography of a place, its people and its culture. This sense of place is a major driver of the tourism industry.

3.3.6 Conservation is not just preservation of the best quality architecture or those that form the best of a particular type of building style – these are often recognised through listing. Other buildings may not have, for example, such extensive detailing or quality of materials as these best examples. However this does not lessen their contribution to the architectural and historic interest or character and appearance of the area. Such ‘backcloth’ buildings strongly contribute to the sense of place of the Conservation Area. They provide a contextually appropriate setting for the exemplars, reflect the architectural evolution of the area over time and are part of the historical fabric of an established townscape of neighbourly buildings which together form aesthetically pleasing compositions.

They reflect the social and economic circumstances of their period of construction, the architects who designed them and the people (and their professions) who commissioned and lived in them. These buildings form component parts of the reading of the area.

3.3.7 Conservation is also about ensuring that change is managed so that new development preserves or enhances the essential character of the area. The general objective is to ensure that new development reinforces character. Therefore new development should be strongly informed by a character appraisal of the townscape context in which it is proposed.

3.3.8 New development should respect its immediate context (particularly the historic context that provided the rationale for the designation) in terms of massing, scale, elevational appearance and materials. The geography and history of the place is important, as are existing and created views.

## **3.4 Objectives of Designation**

3.4.1 The key objectives of conservation area designation are:

- To provide statutory protection to an area in order to preserve or enhance its character or appearance. This provides the regulatory framework for its protection or enhancement through clear and consistent planning policy and the development management process, ensuring proposals and their design take account of their context;
- To retain those buildings which materially contribute to its character or appearance, to encourage their reuse and appropriate and sympathetic repair and maintenance;
- To increase local awareness of the Conservation Area designation and to promote commitment and support for its conservation or enhancement – its distinctiveness;

- To guide, co-ordinate, and influence development, maintenance, or minor works by statutory authorities to ensure that they secure the conservation or enhancement of the Conservation Area; and
- To secure enhancement of the significance and special character of the Conservation Area through both its protection and the pro-active management of change.

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