

<b>REPORT FOR DECISION</b>
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Agenda Item	
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**MEETING:** PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 27 September 2005

**SUBJECT:** Proposed Boundary Adjustments. Bury Town Centre Conservation Area.

**REPORT FROM:** Borough Planning and Economic Development Officer

**CONTACT OFFICER:** M Nightingale, Conservation Officer, Environment and Development Services.

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**TYPE OF DECISION:** Key

**REPORT STATUS:** For Publication

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**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:**

Bury Town Centre Conservation Area was designated in 1978. Its boundary has remained unaltered since that time. Two amendments to the boundary are proposed. Firstly, the inclusion of the East Lancs Railway Station, Castlecroft Goods Shed (which houses the ELR Bury Transport Museum), and parts of Bolton Street. Also, the deletion of the site of the former Methodist Church and rear of the Post Office building off Crompton Street. These buildings were demolished some time ago and the Millgate Shopping Centre extended. Approval is sought, following consultation undertaken in May 2005, for these boundary adjustments.

**OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED OPTION (with reasons):**

The options are as follows:

- (a) Not to alter the conservation area boundary.
- (b) To alter the conservation area to different boundaries than those recommended.
- (c) To alter the Bury Town Centre Conservation Area boundaries as described in this post consultation report.

Option (c) is recommended for the following reasons:

- (1) To respond to actual changes on the ground since the 1978 designation.

- (2) To reflect the impact of the ELR and it's buildings on the area's character.
  - (3) As a result of further assessment of the character and history of parts of Bolton Street.
  - (4) To follow best practice as advised by PPG15.
  - (5) Following receipt of written support from English Heritage.
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## **IMPLICATIONS -**

### **Financial Implications and Risk Considerations**

#### **Corporate Aims/Policy Framework:**

Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? **Yes**

1. Developing a Stronger Community Spirit.
  - celebrate the heritage of local areas.
  - conserving and protecting the Borough's heritage.
2. Improving Transport and the Environment.
3. Bury MBC's Heritage Strategy.
4. PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment.
5. Current UDP and UDP Review.
6. Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Are there any legal implications? Yes  No

**Considered by Monitoring Officer:** Yes  Comments

The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that the guidance set out in this report is consistent with the Statutory requirements placed on the Council as Local Planning Authority.

#### **Statement by Director of Finance and E-Government:**

There are no direct financial implications for the authority associated with the alteration of the conservation area boundary.

The conservation area appraisals and action plans will be prepared using existing staff time and other existing resources, including planning delivery grant. Whilst it is hoped to undertake this work in 2006/07 this will be subject to competing demands on staff time.

#### **Staffing/ICT/Property:**

There are no significant implications for the Council's land ownerships within the proposed extension to the town centre conservation area.

Ward - East

#### **Wards Affected:**

Board - Bury East

#### **Scrutiny Interest:**

There was a separate report to the Economy, Environment and Transport Scrutiny Commission in February 2004 covering the whole of the Council's conservation and built heritage/environment service.

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**TRACKING/PROCESS****DIRECTOR:**

Chief Executive/ Management Board	Executive Member/ Chair	Ward Members	Partners
No	E-mail 28 February and 6 September 2005	E-mail 28 February and 6 September 2005	Bury History Society February 2005 English Heritage May 2005
Scrutiny Panel	Executive	Committee	Council
General report February 2004	No	Planning Control Committee	

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**1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Bury Town Centre Conservation Area was designated 27 years ago. At that time its boundary took into account the development framework for the Millgate Shopping Centre. The Conservation Area covers the remaining old core of the town centre and contains buildings and structures spanning over 500 years, whilst the new areas of the town centre have developed immediately to the east. However, the area did not include the then largely derelict railway land and buildings centred around Bolton Street. The majority of this report relates to the review of the area to the west of the current boundary, covering the site of the East Lancs Railway and land/buildings along Bolton Street.
- 1.2 Committee considered an initial report about the proposed boundary amendments in April 2005. The changes were approved in principle and subject to consultation in the area and with interest groups. This consultation is now complete.
- 1.3 In response to English Heritage best practice guidance a programme of Conservation Area appraisals and action plans has been established. Currently, one action plan and two appraisals are complete with a further four appraisals underway. The appraisal for Bury Town Centre Conservation Area is, subject to funding, planned for 2006/07.

**2.0 ISSUES**

- 2.1 Although the Methodist Church off Crompton Street and the rear of the Post Office were demolished some time ago, the Conservation Area boundary still includes their sites. The land is now part of the Millgate Shopping Centre covered by modern buildings and a service yard. This area is now put forward for deletion from the Conservation Area, but with

- the remainder of Crompton Street, the former Post Office and the Lion Garden retained within the revised boundary.
- 2.2 The current western boundary of the Conservation Area runs from the Castle Armoury south along the line of the railway tunnel and, after crossing Bolton Street, along the stone retaining wall to the east of the railway cutting. The ELR town centre site and the western part of Bolton Street are therefore excluded. However, there is strong justification for their inclusion.
- 2.3 Bolton Street/Castlecroft and the areas to the west - Tenter's Field, Bury Bridge and Bury Ground, and the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal - were key areas during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the town. The 1848 OS map shows not only the new railway with its extensive buildings and sidings, but also an array of mills, foundries, workshops, yards and squares, together with significant and modest houses, chapels, inns and shops. The building of the ring road and the Bury Bridge junction and roundabout, together with the police station and the Council's leisure complex, have changed much of this area. However, the railway and its cutting, and the Castlecroft area on the northern side of Bolton Street, retain much of their 19<sup>th</sup> century character. It is this area that is put forward as an extension to the conservation area.
- 2.4 Comparing OS plans from 1848 onwards a significant number of current frontages and courtyard properties on the northern side of Bolton Street appear to be from the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The current number 34/36 has the appearance of a 5 bay late Georgian building, probably a town house, which still contains an early 19<sup>th</sup> century central main street entrance doorway. 38/40 is probably of the same period and 42 was narrowed/removed prior to 1932 to improve access to the rear. The line of the earlier sett roadway and the edge of 42 can still be seen on the ground. Numbers 44-48 and number 52, standing at the rear, are from this same period. Many of the frontages have been rendered with windows blocked in, details covered over and with shops added at the ground floor. Numbers 60-64 are also of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and were re-fronted to widen the highway prior to 1909. A view of the rear of many of the properties reveals that they are much less altered and although in need of some repair and improvement show many of the features of early 19<sup>th</sup> century building. To the west is the 1906-10 former temperance billiard hall and, at the corner of Castlecroft Road, numbers 82/84 are early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings. The former 1936 cinema/bingo hall has now been replaced with a sympathetic housing and commercial development by the Irwell Valley Housing Association.
- 2.5 The original East Lancs Railway was opened in 1846. At the rear of the above properties, and within a cutting, stands the original rail/road transshipment shed, now a grade II listed building. It had an extensive and elaborate set of sidings and turning areas. Some of these remain within the courtyard around the building. The shed is home to the Bury Transport Museum and has currently undergone emergency roof propping work prior to full refurbishment (for which Heritage Lottery Fund feasibility money has been granted). The main station site contains the early platforms, canopies, walls and gate piers, with the upper level Bolton Street entrance rebuilt in

the 1950s, but in a style typical of the 1930s. The ELLR Co has, over the last 15 years, continued to restore and repair the station area true to its original character. Historically, this is an important part of the town centre.

- 2.6 The railway architecture; the scale, materials and detail of the railway cutting; and the mix of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century frontage and courtyard development on Bolton Street, justify conservation area protection. The heritage railway has become a very positive part in the town's heritage credentials, with a potential to contribute further. Conservation Area status may also help in future funding bids for the railway and buildings. The whole of the area put forward is within the town centre's defined cultural quarter, with Castlecroft Road seen as a gateway location.
- 2.7 Extension of the Conservation Area to include the Bolton Street buildings may raise questions about the condition of some buildings and the benefits that redevelopment can sometimes bring. In this report the Conservation Area designation is a broad policy statement that heritage issues are an important starting point and not that all change must stop. The Irwell Valley HA scheme is an example of a good new scheme amongst older buildings. This report is not the place to set out detailed policies, but it can be said that, for this part of the area, there appears to be some potential for selective and sympathetic development, alteration and restoration within the context of the proposed designation.
- 2.8 In May 2005 a consultation letter was sent to all the properties in the proposed conservation area extension. The April Committee report and the Council's Conservation Areas booklet were attached to the letter. English Heritage and the Bury Local History Society were also consulted. English Heritage has written in support of the proposed boundary amendments. A response is awaited from the local history society.
- 2.9 There has been one written response to the local consultation. This is from a consultant acting for the owner of the Bury Snooker Club located in the former temperance billiard hall, 66 Bolton Street. In summary, the consultant raises objections to the proposed extension for the following reasons (with officer comment in the following paragraph) –
- (a) Inclusion in the conservation area will reduce business options for the possible redevelopment of the site if this becomes necessary.
  - (b) There may also be the burden of greater repair and improvement costs for the building's upkeep and an increase in the Council's powers to require repairs.
  - (c) The proposed extension is not justified in terms of the character and history of the area and the guidance given in PPG 15 and written guidance given by English Heritage.
  - (d) Bury Snooker Club should be excluded from the conservation area extension if designation proceeds.

#### Officer Comment

The snooker club is a prominent and well preserved building within the area. It merits the level of protection given by inclusion in the conservation area. Inclusion within a conservation area does not stop redevelopment, it requires that any proposal should be fully considered through applications

for Conservation Area Consent and Planning Permission. The Council's powers to require repairs can only be justified in extreme circumstances when all options for the owner to act responsibly have not been taken up. These are powers of last resort, the designation should not impact on the normal good practice of building maintenance. Limited grants are available from the Council in circumstances where contributions can be justified. There is no overriding justification for the exclusion of this building from the proposed extension and English Heritage has given written independent support to the proposed boundary changes.

### **3.0 CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 The proposed deletion of part of the Conservation Area is consistent with the situation on the ground. The ELR station and Castlecroft areas make a big contribution to the town's history and architectural heritage. The Bolton Street area in general contributes to the area's history and is an important part of the town's Cultural Quarter and its historic setting. The proposed amendments to the Bury Town Centre Conservation Area are therefore recommended in accordance with the attached plan.

**BRIAN DANIEL**  
**BOROUGH PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**

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#### **List of Background Papers:-**

OS and other base plans, Bury Archive Service.  
Photographic Survey of Bolton Street.  
Consultation letters May 2005  
Letter from Lambert Smith Hampton 7 July 2005

#### **Contact Details:-**

Mick Nightingale, Conservation Officer – Tel: 0161 253 5317  
[m.nightingale@bury.gov.uk](mailto:m.nightingale@bury.gov.uk)

Howard Aitkin, Development Manager – Tel: 0161 253 5274  
[h.Aitkin@bury.gov.uk](mailto:h.Aitkin@bury.gov.uk)