

Deputation – Cllr Gary Robinson

Leader, Members of the cabinet.

As Councillors it is us that have a duty to determine our Conservations Areas and a responsibility to protect our heritage on behalf of the residents that elected us. Havant Borough currently has 14 Conservation Areas of various sizes and shapes with a large number overdue a review.

Over the last 12 months I have spent a considerable amount of time researching and reviewing the existing and proposed Conservation area in Old Bedhampton. I have not only worked with the residents but also the consultant who was contracted by the local community group following a recommendation by this Council. As you know our officers do not believe an extension to the current Conservation Area in the South West or South East meet the criteria of.....

‘Special Architectural OR, OR Historic interest’

I was deeply disappointed and somewhat surprised that in view of the fact that board members did not support the officers recommendation at Operations and Place Shaping Scrutiny back in July the papers remain unchanged for approval here today. As a council with a reasonably new Scrutiny arm, this is not how I or the local residents envisage this to happen. Surely the recommendation should have been modified.

The original report written by Eimear Murphy detailed a large number of points that seem to be overlooked by the officers’ report. Specifically, areas known as Donkey Meadow, Land owned by Portsmouth Water Company, Lower Road, the Land South of Lower

Road and Manor Farm Buildings. Around 90% of the experts' report was accepted but there is contention over a small proportion.

You may have heard or read about 'Sunken Lanes' are they, or aren't they?? The original officer's advice and response in the public consultation was that Lower Road is not Sunken. As there was so much uncertainty on this important point, I requested a visit from Professor Boardman of Oxford University who travelled specifically to review Kingscroft Lane and Lower Road and it was agreed on site that; Yes Both Kingscroft Lane and Lower Road ARE Sunken Lanes. They may not be good examples, but they ARE! I highlight that this is *both Kingscroft Lane aswell as Lower Road*, although you see Kingscroft is denoted in the papers. WHY??

I find this extraordinary as surely both Roads, according to the professor should hold the same historic value? These roads also make up the historic road network throughout the original settlement of Bedhampton. Even more that whilst they may not be great examples they are pretty much the only examples in Havant. To my knowledge there is only one other Sunken lane in the Borough and that is in Warblington so actually Lower Road makes up 33% of the Sunken Lanes in the Borough and therefore does have '**Historic interest**'. Lower Road is the most Westerly pedestrian entry point to Old Bedhampton Conservation Area and we should seek to preserve this passage to the main area.

I move to the Manor Farm Buildings, whilst an acknowledgement to locally list them within the papers I believe that these buildings should be included in the Conservation Area. They have great Special Architectural interest and should be connected to the Old Bedhampton Conservation area. Other Councils, Mole Valley District Council as an example have totally disconnected areas within one of

their Conservation Areas. In Havant, we too have unusual shaped areas. Emsworth and Staunton Park to name just two of many.

As a forward-thinking Council with a new Regeneration strategy we need a 'Vision to Protect'. This is our opportunity. If resources had permitted and the review had been undertaken back in the early 2000s this area surely would have been added. Conservation has intangible character that we should enhance and not neglect. When it is gone it is gone and only us as councillors can stop that happening. The additional protection of the Article 4 direction will help to prevent this.

Members, I understand that the officers have dismissed the idea of the full adoption of report plan submitted but I propose that there is enough Special Architecture and Historic Evidence to include Lower Road and the Manor Farm Buildings.

I would therefore like to see an update to the papers and cabinet recommendation to detail...

An amendment to Appendix 2: Townscape Appraisal to recognise Lower Road as a Sunken Lane,

Page 130 in the papers

AND

An amendment to Appendix 4: Proposed Extension to Conservation Area to include Lower Road and Manor Farm Buildings

Page 133 in the papers

