5.0 Audit

5.1 This appraisal has conducted an initial audit of the fabric of the area, undertaken principally from the highway and from reference to previous studies of the area, to identify buildings that contribute to the area’s character and appearance, elements of streetscape interest and other elements that detract from its character and appearance. It is considered that a more detailed audit at an individual property level throughout the Conservation Area should be undertaken as part of the development of a subsequent Management Strategy.

5.2 Currently there are a total of 27 buildings in the Conservation Area that are included either on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest or which have been designated as Locally Listed Buildings. These buildings have been laid out in the analysis of the various character zones of the Conservation Area in the analysis section above. The assessment of whether a building makes a positive contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of a Conservation Area is based on guidance provided in English Heritage's publication ‘Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals’.

5.3 Elements of streetscape interest and important views. The character and the appearance of the Conservation Area are not solely a function of its buildings. There are many important views throughout the Conservation Area.

5.4 Elements within the public realm, such as original pavement materials, boundary walls, signage and vegetation contribute greatly to the area’s quality, character and appearance. The following elements of the area considered to be of special interest are as follows:

- open space with fringe development
- islands (dells) of development
- attractive views across open green belt land
- attractive and historic architectural details
- diverse building styles
- inclusion of the Metropolitan Railway
- mix of religious, agricultural and high status residences

5.5 The Detractors. Inevitably there are buildings (and street furniture) that detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This may be due to a building’s scale, materials, relationship to the street or due to the impact of alterations and extensions. There are also structures and elements of streetscape (e.g. visual clutter from excessive signage or advertisements) that impinge on the character and quality of the Conservation Area. These detractors have been highlighted within the analysis of the various character zones of the area in the character appraisal section above.

5.6 It was noted that there has been a significant amount of patching carried out to the pavements, and highways which has been finished in differing materials detracting from the appearance of the area. It was also noted that in addition there remains a relatively large level of deterioration and need for repair to the pavements and highways across the area.
5.7 There has been a high level of development along Station Approach, located within the area of Character Zone D, which has had a detrimental impact of the character and appearance of the area.

5.8 **Original features**: There is evidence within the Conservation Area of the loss of original and traditional features. Again this has been detailed in the analysis section above but includes the replacement of original doors and windows.

6.0 **Conservation Area Boundary Review**

6.1 Chorleywood Common Conservation Area is situated just to the west of junction 18 of the M25. The area extends from the east of Dog Kennel Lane to Chorleywood Bottom in the south, Chorleywood House in the north and Homefield Road in the west, taking in the whole of the Common and a diversity of built environments and open spaces.

6.2 It is considered that existing legislation and policies are sufficient to regulate further development proposals in the areas surrounding the conservation area, specifically the Three Rivers Local Plan 1996-2011 Policy H14 states that the Council will seek to protect the character and residential amenity of existing housing areas from backland or infill development and Policy GEN3 provides to ensure that applications for development satisfy design and landscape criteria and accord with relevant parking standards. Policies will be included in the forthcoming Local Development Framework.

6.3 As such this appraisal does not consider that further major boundary reviews are required at this time. However, consideration could be given to the inclusion of Chorleywood Station within the Conservation Area although the Council’s ability to control development on this site could be limited and would require further investigation. It is recommended that the matters outlined in the analysis section above be given further specific consideration as part of the subsequent development of a Management Strategy for the Conservation Area.

6.4 A large proportion of Chorleywood Common Conservation Area is located within the Metropolitan Green Belt which is considered to provide adequate protection against inappropriate development.

7.0 **Development Criteria**

7.1 Permitted Development rights allow restricted domestic alterations to be carried out without requiring planning permission. These rights are more restricted in Conservation Areas, for example, permission is required for satellite dishes, dormer windows and other alterations to a roof as well as external cladding and works to trees.

7.2 The Three Rivers Local Plan (to be replaced by the Local Development Framework) sets out the planning policies for the Green Belt and Conservation Areas and it is recommended that anyone wishing to carry out any alterations should refer to these documents which are available on the Council’s web site; [http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/PlanningPolicy](http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/PlanningPolicy)

7.3 Where new development is proposed it is important that it is guided by sound principles of historic conservation and urban design, as well as sympathetic detailing in relation to its historic context. All forms of new development in the Conservation Area should:

- Preserve and reinforce the distinctive pattern of historical development including street patterns, open spaces, plot size and boundaries and boundary treatments;
• Maintain key views and vistas within, into and out of the Conservation Area;

• Reinforce the distinctive architectural character of the Conservation Area through an informed understanding of distinctive building forms and types, features and materials. The superficial echoing of historic features in new buildings should be avoided;

• Reinforce the scale and massing of surrounding buildings. It is essential that new development is not out of scale with existing buildings typical of the conservation area, by way of its height, floor levels, size of windows and doors and overall massing.

• Reinforce existing building lines and the orientation of existing development;

• Minimise the existence of parked vehicles and the provision of parking areas on the streetscape setting of historic buildings.

7.4 In addition to normal planning requirements, certain additional controls apply in Conservation Areas. Legislation is complex and can change so in case of doubt you should contact the Council's Planners or the Development Plans Team for advice.

7.5 Demolition

7.6 Conservation Area Consent and/or Listed Buildings Consent and/or planning permission is needed for the demolition of buildings and in some cases for the demolition of parts of buildings, including chimneys. Policies in the Three Rivers Local Plan (to be replaced by the Local Development Framework) detail the Council’s criteria for demolition and is available via the Council’s web site.

7.7 The Council will give high priority to retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

7.8 Any one of the nine criteria/characteristics listed in the Three Rivers Local Plan 1996 – 2011 (Demolition in Conservation Areas, Section 3.25, Page 50) may provide the basis for considering that a building makes a positive contribution.

7.9 Policy C.6 Demolition in Conservation Areas (Three Rivers Local Plan 1996 – 2011) states that proposals to demolish such buildings will only be permitted if the following criteria are met:

• The condition and cost of repairing the building outweigh the buildings importance and the value derived from its continued use (less weight will be given to the cost of repair where a building has been deliberately neglected).

• Adequate efforts have been made to retain the building in its present use or a compatible alternative use, including freehold sale at a realistic price on the open market.

• Exceptionally a proposed scheme benefits the community which outweighs preservation

• Any replacement building would preserve or enhance the Conservation Area.

• Consent for demolition (including demolition of a building which makes little or no contribution to a Conservation Area) will not be given unless there are detailed acceptable plans for redevelopment.
7.10 If the reason for proposed demolition is the poor condition of the building, applications for Conservation Area Consent should be accompanied by a structural survey.

8.0 Developing a Management Strategy

8.1 Article 4 Direction

8.2 Features such as window design and chimneys can create special characteristics of individual dwellings which reflect the history of the area and contribute to the visual aspects of the Conservation Area. The loss of these features can result in the deterioration of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The Appraisal has highlighted the special features of original buildings within the Conservation Area which help to preserve its character. The Appraisal also demonstrates how previous alterations to windows can have a detrimental impact on the visual amenities of the Conservation Area, especially when there are a row of identical buildings.

8.3 The appraisal also identifies that the front residential boundaries of the properties within the Conservation Area generally consist of low brick walls, picket fences or soft vegetation. These boundary treatments maintain the special and important rural characteristics of the Conservation Area. It is therefore considered necessary to ensure that planning permission is required for the erection of any hard boundary treatment above 1m in height, within the front amenity space and to restrict the level of hardstanding. These measures are considered to be necessary to ensure that the open and rural character and integrity of the Conservation Area is protected from inappropriate forms of development now and in the future.

8.4 An Article 4 Direction restricting permitted development rights with regards to: alterations to and the replacement windows, removal of chimneys, erection of front boundary treatments and alterations and extensions to hardstanding is necessary to ensure that the integrity of the Conservation Area is protected.

8.5 Management Strategy

8.6 Local Performance Indicator DP04 formalises the requirement for the Council to draw up and publish proposals for addressing and implementing recommendations for action contained in the Appraisal. This includes:

- policy guidance to enable planning applications to be processed
- consideration of resources needed to sustain historic environment
- mechanisms for monitoring change
- enforcement strategy to address unauthorised development
- use of Article 4 powers, as detailed above
- action to ensure repairs of buildings at risk
- enhancement/regeneration schemes if appropriate
- strategy for management and protection of important trees, greenery and open spaces
- what the resource implications are for the Council
- community consultation on the Draft Appraisal and the Management Strategy

8.7 In line with the Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas published by English Heritage in conjunction with the Planning Advisory Service, it is considered that the development of the Management Strategy should be based on the character appraisal that is provided by this document. As such it is not proposed that any detailed work should be undertaken on this Strategy until there has been full consultation undertaken on the Conservation Area Appraisal and a finalised document has been approved by the Executive Committee of Three Rivers District Council.
9.0 Bibliography


Statutory Instruments

Grade II Listed Buildings Located within the Chorleywood Common Conservation Area:

The Court
West Lodge
East Lodge
The Manor House
Christ Church
Well House
The White Horse Public House
K6 Telephone Kiosk
Appletree Farmhouse
Barn Range

Barn and Stable Range
The Granary
Constables Cottage
1, Dog Kennel Lane (Cobwebs)
The Cedars
4, 5, 6 and 7 Chorleywood Bottom
Berkley House
The Old Cottage
Pond Cottage