

# Crondall Conservation Area: Alan Baxter response to consultation comments

## 1.0 Introduction

This document sets out Alan Baxter’s response to the comments and queries raised during the Crondall Conservation Area consultation of summer 2023. Any actions from this response document will be incorporated into the Crondall Conservation Area Appraisal before final issue to Hart Council.

## 2.0 High-level telecoms and power; additional car parking; increase control of through traffic

### 2.1 Comment 1

*Extended C Area seems sensible and protective. Supported. BUT for your consultants to suggest the removal of high level telecom and power seems bold. Also extremely expensive, but a great idea. Who pays, ditto additional carparking. Better to restrict cars altogether. Or manage strict control of cars entering village*

### 2.2 Alan Baxter response:

The removal and replacement of all high-level services would be an extensive project and we do not suggest that this should be undertaken wholesale. It is our opinion that these overhead services detract from the character of the conservation area. We mention in our document that redundant services should be removed, but we shall clarify in our document that there should be a preference for buried services when new services are added, or when existing services are renewed or upgraded.

With regards to parking and traffic, Recommendation 5 sets out that signage should be improved to discourage HGVs and that Hampshire County Council should consider traffic calming measures. Recommendation 6 outlines the requirement for an assessment of village parking. For clarity, we will add to our document that following this assessment a plan should be made in collaboration with Hampshire County Council to alter the on-street parking permissions in the village if necessary.

Existing text:	Proposed amendment:
<p data-bbox="261 1480 869 1653"><b>Recommendation 7</b> The removal or consolidation of unsightly overhead wires, or other communications technology, will be encouraged as enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area(s).</p> <p data-bbox="261 1666 869 1809"><b>Reason</b> Overhead wires and obsolete technology can detract from the character and appearance of the conservation areas and impede views into and out of them. Therefore, their removal would have a positive impact.</p>	<p data-bbox="919 1467 1355 1671">The removal or consolidation of unsightly overhead wires, or other communications technology, will be encouraged as enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area(s). <b>When undertaking works, service providers should be encouraged to remove redundant services and to install any new services below ground if possible.</b></p>

Existing text:	Proposed amendment:
<p data-bbox="272 277 469 300"><b>Recommendation 6</b></p> <p data-bbox="272 311 861 421">The Parish and District Councils should carry out an assessment of parking in the village and consult with local residents to establish where parking is most needed and where it should be prevented.</p> <p data-bbox="252 454 331 477"><b>Reason</b></p> <p data-bbox="252 488 869 651">A lack of car parking provision in the village often leads to irresponsible parking on the side of the road or on pavements, which detracts from the appearance of the conservation area. This is particularly problematic on Croft Lane when activities or events take place at village facilities, such as the village hall, the Church Rooms, All Saint's Church and Crondall Primary School.</p>	<p data-bbox="922 253 1345 481">The Parish and District Councils should carry out an assessment of parking in the village and consult with local residents to establish where parking is most needed and where it should be prevented. <b>On completion of this assessment, a plan should be made in collaboration with Hampshire County Council to alter the on-street parking permissions in the village if necessary.</b></p>

### 3.0 Justification and explanation of the conservation area extension and the inclusion of modern buildings

Several of the comments query the logic and reasons for the proposed extension to the conservation area, especially the inclusion of more modern buildings. These comments are grouped below.

#### 3.1 Comment 2

*I would like to object, in the strongest terms, to the proposed expansion of the Conservation Area in Crondall.*

*The current conservation area is more than sufficient to safeguard and protect the historic buildings within Crondall Parish and the general character that makes our village unique. I have a very strong suspicion that the aim of expanding the conservation area is entirely about preventing home owners from developing properties adjoining the current conservation area boundaries. I am of the view that developments that have taken place in such properties have actually enhanced our village. Indeed our family have developed our property over recent years, transforming a property of previously little architectural merit, to one that adds significant interest. Indeed upon completion of our works, we received notes through the door from neighbours commending the development and stating that it had improved their views and the street scene. I also believe that the demolition of a scrappy bungalow near the centre of the village and replacement with a new property along Pankridge street, has also enhanced Crondall.*

*I believe that the planning department have made some very poor decisions in recent years regarding homeowners within the current conservation area, wishing to make their properties more energy efficient. I know of homeowners wishing to replace draughty single pane glazing with quality bespoke, hand-built, wooden double glazing – in the same style as the original windows. Yet such proposals have been met with initial point-blank refusal of planning permission – only for these homeowners to be told to appeal and they would be granted permission. This tends to suggest to me that the planning department are out of touch with the challenges and realities facing us as a result of climate heating/climate emergency. I would certainly not welcome more stringent planning rules interfering with homeowner's desire to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Indeed, this should be actively encouraged rather than impeded.*

*The vast majority of buildings that would be ensnared in the enlarged conservation area are of little architectural significance. According to the National Planning Policy Framework*

*“An unlisted building that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area is individually of lesser importance than a listed building” (para 201) “However, the justification for a building’s proposed demolition will still need to be proportionate to its relative significance and its contribution to the significance of the conservation area as a whole..”(para 196). As such, properties in the enlarged area would likely still be able to developed, but just with additional bureaucracy and cost – this is something that nobody would welcome. It’s questionable therefore what the enlarged area would actually achieve?*

*Finally, the proposed expansion of the conservation area looks incredibly arbitrary. Why expand to include Glebe road, Croft lane, Heath Lane, Pankridge Street, Dippenhall street where the majority of the additional houses are of little architectural significance? And yet not expand to include Farm lane, Itchel lane and the furthest out homes on Dippenhall street – where arguably more architecturally interesting properties are situated.*

*I am strongly against the proposed expansion of the Crondall Conservation Area. I think there are much more effective ways to enhance our village, for example sorting out the huge problem of parking near the centre of the village – perhaps by purchasing land and constructing an additional village carpark? Or ensuring grass verges are properly maintained by the council or highways agency as appropriate rather than been left in an unkempt state as is often the case. The role of the conservation area must be limited to protecting our genuinely historic buildings and the current conservation area does this more than adequately.*

### 3.2 Comment 3

*I realise I am past the deadline for this but had a few questions as Lavender Cottage would be included. What is the thinking behind all of Dippenhall Street on one side being included?*

### 3.3 Comment 4

*We note the proposed changes to the Conservation area and the inclusion of our property and wish to inform you that we are completely opposed to the proposed changes.*

*We are mystified as to why a 1960’s property should be included in the conservation area. The property is of no architectural or historic value. When we considered buying a property one of the considerations was that the property had no encumbrance such as a listing or being in an area that restricted use, other than the standard constraints. What you are now proposing is to add significant restrictions and costs.*

*When we purchased Four Acres the condition of both the property and adjoining field on the same curtilage was in sorry condition. We have spent considerable time and money improving the look and the view that your report now considers important was not the view we inherited on purchase. Not only have we improved the look of the Field but have made improvements to the right of way over the edge of the field for users of this right of way.*

*You are now proposing to penalise us for the amenity that we have provided for the Village. This is not the spirit of co-operation and reciprocal goodwill that we expected.*

*Furthermore, there are areas of the Village that have been excepted from this conservation creep, perhaps we are owed an explanation.*

### 3.4 Alan Baxter response:

The NPPF requires that the setting of conservation areas should be a material planning consideration in development with the specific aim of protecting and enhancing the character and appearance of those conservation areas. There is a slight anomaly in policy terms however

that where development occurs just beyond the boundary of a conservation area it often does not come under the control of the planning system and the setting of a conservation area is not considered in the design, scale and appearance of any new development. Where the immediate setting of a conservation area does not potentially impact the historic and defining core of a conservation area, this is not normally an issue.

In Crondall, however, the conservation area boundary is unusually tightly drawn around the historic core, in many areas running in the centre of the road, excluding properties within the core of the village because they themselves are not historic. It is our view that development along these roads should take account of the historic location and the character of the village as failure to do so could detrimentally impact the character and appearance of the historic village.

This is not to say that development along these roads should not occur nor that the current houses should be preserved as existing, but rather to allow any new development to come under the control of the planning system so as to better and more consistently apply the requirements of the NPPF and to preserve and enhance the character of Crondall. This would, in our view, offer more certainty and consistency to those wishing to develop any of these sites. High quality new developments of the type of scale and design described in the comments above would be encouraged in the enlarged conservation area.

Where development would be less likely to affect the historic core of the village, the inclusion of these properties cannot be justified and we have not suggested a boundary change, regardless of the architectural merit of the individual properties.

We would be happy to incorporate the above into Section 6 of the revised final document, if further clarity is required.

The Local Planning Authority's ability to marry the needs of the Climate Emergency with historic environment legislation is beyond the reach of this study, however it is widely accepted that climate mitigation is significantly important, and should have an increasingly high weight in the planning balance.

We agree that the construction of a village car park may be a good solution to some of the village's on-street parking problems. This may be an outcome of the parking review we recommend in Recommendation 6.

## 4.0 Queries about Byrons, the adjacent parcel 18 and view

### 4.1 Comment 5

*I'm writing regarding the proposed amendments to the Crondall conservation area. I live at Byrons, Dippenhall Street which is proposed to be included in the new boundary.*

*1) With the current proposed changes, I do not agree that Byrons should be included in the Conservation area. Neither the house nor garden can be seen from the road at present and the house is of no relevance to the character of the village having been built in 1988. The garden is no longer in a conservation view in the proposed changes.*

*However,*

*2) There was a conservation view from Dippenhall Street down the shared drive of Byrons Farmhouse across the field (parcel 18). With the proposed changes this key view has been lost and would be of detriment to the character of the village. At present there is a tree in line with the view, however it is diseased and will in due course need to be removed.*

*3) Parcel 18 is marked as only being of some contribution. This is a serious underestimation of its importance, being a key view across land from the village threshold up to the trees of*

*the golf course, Ewshot and is a natural horizon seen from the village. It's one of the few places one can see abundant trees throughout the seasons and is of significant natural beauty. It is most definitely a strong contribution and should be protected.*

*Added as an addendum later:*

*Further to my previous email regarding parcel 18, these are the views where the existing conservation view lies. It's proposed that this view is removed, to which I strongly object as it's of great importance. Since Allan Baxter did their review I have removed some branches from the tree that was obstructing the view (see below), and would undertake to remove more if required to do so in order to reestablish the view further.*

*If you wish to inspect the view from my property please don't hesitate to ask.*

#### 4.2 Alan Baxter response:

The proposed extension to the conservation area is designed to protect and enhance the setting of the historic core (see 1.3.4.) Although the building is indeed modern, Byrons was included less for the historic character of the buildings on the site and more for their appropriate scale, and for the positive contribution of its large gardens. These characteristics together form a suitable setting for the conservation area.

It is our opinion that Parcel 18 is correctly identified as of some importance, being set back quite far from the historic core beyond a private garden. However, if the Parish Council are in agreement that this is a highly significant element of the village setting we shall adjust this in the document.

In a similar vein, we agree that the view down the driveway of Byrons is a good view, and appreciate that since the work mentioned above it is now clearer to see, but are of the opinion that is not one of the key views of the village's setting. We defer to the opinion of the village however and shall restore this view to the document if the Parish Council agree with the comment above that it is important to the village as a whole.