

Caversham Bridge July edition

A new Appraisal of St Peter's Conservation Area

There is to be a community led re-appraisal of St Peter's Conservation Area (CA) and you are invited to attend the launch event on 16 July. Once adopted by the Council, the revised appraisal will be an important influence on planning decisions.

Conservation Areas in Reading

Reading has 15 Conservation Areas, including Surley Row and St Peter's, north of the river. They should be appraised every 5 years to ensure that they reflect the up to date situation and are continuing to do the job they are designed for – to protect areas, *'the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'*.

A new community-led, Reading-wide Conservation Area Advisory Committee (CAAC) has been set up to advise the Council when preparing CA Appraisals or policies for the preservation and enhancement of CAs, Heritage Sites or other areas of historical importance. CADRA and Friends of Caversham Court Gardens are both represented on the new CAAC.

Community-led appraisals will involve local people in assessing their CAs. Once a series of stages have been successfully completed the new appraisals will formally adopted by Reading Borough Council and they will inform local planning decisions. The first Reading CA to begin their community-led appraisal was the Russell Street & Castle Hill CA, a large densely populated CA experiencing many of the problems of multiple occupation and inner city living.

Advice from Historic England

Historic England has a statutory role to give expert, constructive advice to owners, local authorities and the public, and to champion the wider historic environment. (English Heritage – now an independent charity – manages heritage sites and buildings.) Historic England have recently been advising both the Council and community volunteers. They organised training in Reading for local volunteers to teach them how to do appraisals of CAs using a 'toolkit'.

Launching work on St Peter's CA

Historic England are clear that the appraisal should include local involvement and should capture local views on what makes the area special and distinctive. A launch event is to be held:

Saturday 16 July at 4 pm, in St Peters Church, Caversham, with drinks and cakes

People who live or have a business nearby, or anyone with an interest in the CA, are invited to come along to learn more and give their views. Those who wish will be able to walk part of the CA using The Oxford Character Assessment Toolkit, which has been designed to help to examine the character of areas, buildings and places to identify and record what makes them distinctive and special. You will find information on the toolkit and all the key documents at www.cadra.org.uk/conservation-areas.php or tinyurl.com/hxvh7cf

As part of the exercise, historical maps, photographs and other information are being gathered. If you can contribute information about individual buildings in or near the CA, that would be very welcome. Please

contact: StPeterCA@cadra.org.uk

Please join us for the launch event!