

Dyers Almshouses Conservation Area Statement

February 2018



Central Crawley Conservation Area
Advisory Committee

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Part 1: Introduction

What is a Conservation Area?

Conservation Areas are designated because they are recognised as areas of special architectural or historic interest that is worthy of preservation and/or enhancement. The designation of a Conservation Area is determined by a number of factors, particularly the presence of buildings that are of historic or architectural interest, but also by the retention of a historically significant settlement layout pattern or other significant features of the design and character of the area.

Conservation Areas require careful management to protect their special character. This is not to say that all new development and change is prohibited, but rather that where development is proposed, it should come forward in a manner that preserves or enhances the intrinsic features of the Conservation Area.

Conservation Area designation introduces controls over the way owners can alter or develop their properties and it therefore brings with it planning controls that limit the works that can be undertaken through permitted development and place additional planning requirements on other developments such as new buildings, alterations to and demolitions of existing properties, and the management of trees. Development proposals that are outside the Conservation Area that would affect its setting, or views into or out of the area are also subject to additional controls.

Status of a Conservation Area Statement

Only by understanding what gives a Conservation Area its special architectural or historic interest can the character and appearance of the area be preserved or enhanced. This document therefore identifies the special architectural or historical values of the area and the features that contribute to its character and appearance. It sets out guidance that should be taken into account by development proposals and establishes wider management proposals for the future enhancement of the conservation area.

This Conservation Area Statement has been prepared jointly by Crawley Borough Council in cooperation with the Central Crawley Conservation Areas Advisory Committee ('the 4C's').

The statement is a material consideration when the Council determines planning proposals for the area. It should be used to manage change in a positive manner and help inform future action by the council and other parties; including informing decisions on planning applications that may have an impact within or adjoining the conservation area. It will also assist in the design of proposals affecting existing buildings as well as providing guidance on the care and maintenance of the public realm including the streetscape and open space.

Central Crawley Conservation Areas Advisory Committee ('the 4C's')

Most Conservation Areas have advisory bodies whose membership is formed of people that live and work locally and are interested in helping to ensure that the special setting and character of the Conservation Area is preserved or enhanced.

The Central Crawley Conservation Area Advisory Committee ('the 4C's') is the Conservation Area advisory group responsible for the four Conservation Areas in Crawley's Town Centre (Dyers Almshouses Conservation Area, Crawley High Street Conservation Area, Sunnymead Flats Conservation Area and St Peter's and St John's Conservation Area). The 4C's works for the local community, providing input

to Crawley Borough Council and other organisations (where relevant), to ensure the Conservation Areas retain their defining character for everyone to enjoy.

Part 2: History and Designation

History

The Dyers Company is one of the oldest of the London livery companies. It was mentioned as a Guild in the City of London records in 1188 and received its first Royal Charter from Henry VI on 16th February 1471.

The first Almshouses were established in London in 1545, and by 1739 the Company had built, and was maintaining, 26 houses on various sites in London. In 1840, 26 houses were erected at Balls Pond in Islington. These were subsequently sold in 1939 and the funds were used to erect 10 Almshouses and wardens quarters in Northgate, Crawley. The architects for the scheme were Bertram and Co. and the houses were built by the local building firm, Longley's. The first block was completed in October 1940 and each house typically comprised a living room, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom suitable for a single person or a couple.

With the aid of a major bequest, a further 16 houses were erected in 1952 and the final 4 were added in 1971 making 30 in total. The final wing of the Almshouses marked the 500th anniversary of the granting of the Company's first Royal Charter of Incorporation.



The Court of the Dyers Company acts as a trustee for the Almshouses Charity which is responsible for the Almshouses. Under the regulating charity commission scheme, the Almshouses are made available to "poor people of good character", and traditionally these have been retired people.

Designation

On 15th October 1996, the Borough Council's Environment Committee approved the designation of the Dyers Almshouses as a Conservation Area. This statement describes the area's special character and appearance and the policies needed to protect it. The Statement will draw upon the relevant policies contained within

Crawley Borough 2030 Local Plan¹ and explain the level and types of development that may be appropriate within and adjacent to this Conservation Area.

¹ Crawley 2030: Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 (December 2015). CBC, <http://www.crawley.gov.uk/>

Part 3: Detailed Character Appraisal of Dyers Almshouses Conservation Area

Objectives of Conservation Area

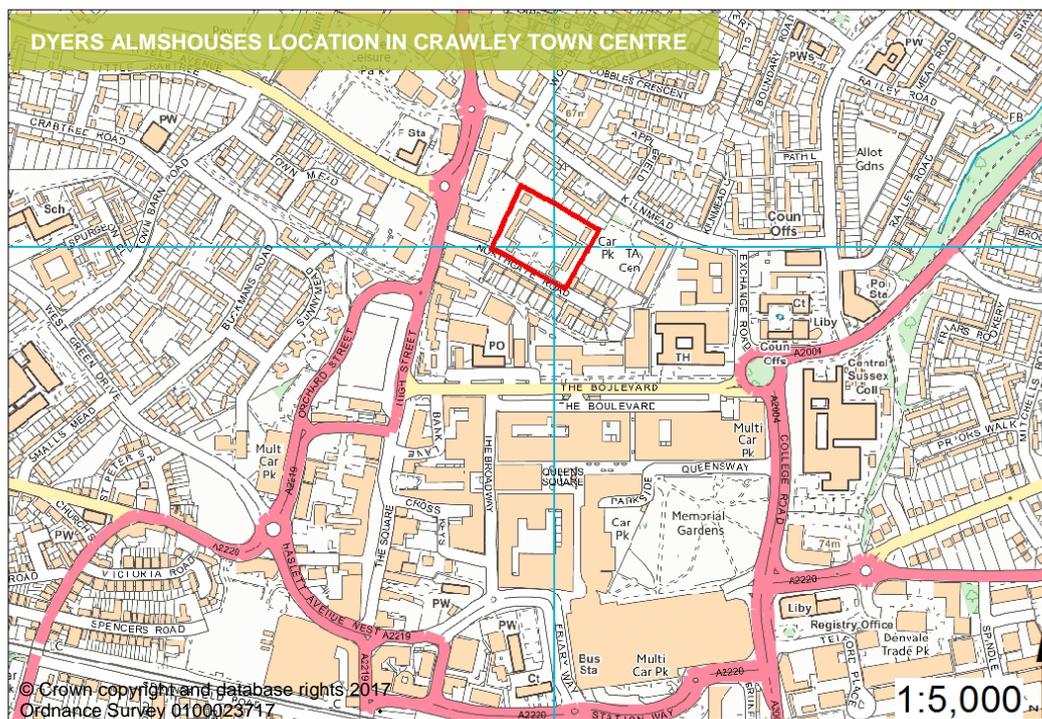
The guiding principles for this Conservation Area Statement are to preserve and enhance the area's historic character and appearance. For this Conservation Area, particular importance is the low density formal layout of dwellings which are separated by semi-private open space. In addition, the Conservation Area's setting could also be subject to Town Centre development pressures from the south and west, and the impact of a residential land allocation to the east.

Accordingly, the objectives of the Conservation Area are:

1. To protect the distinctive character of the Almshouses and their landscaped gardens, trees and hedges;
2. To retain the scale, character and appearance of the individual Almshouses;
3. To ensure that nearby proposals for development are of a scale, form and design which respect the character and setting of the Almshouses;
4. To promote environmental improvements within the Conservation Area consistent with its distinctive architectural style and landscaping.

Location, Context and Setting

The Dyers Almshouses lie adjacent to the north side of Northgate Road, a residential cul-de-sac within the Northgate neighbourhood. Behind Northgate Road, to the south, is the Town Centre and to the east is the Kilnmead car park which is an allocated housing site in the Local Plan and beyond that is the Territorial Army Centre. The Conservation Area borders the Town Centre Boundary to the west, where offices fronting onto the High Street can be found. These offices also feature significant amounts of surface parking which back onto the Almshouses site.



Since development of the Almshouses commenced prior to the construction of Crawley New Town, modern Crawley has since subsumed it into the modern urban fabric of the town. The built up fabric of Crawley stands in contrast to the uniform and unique character of the Almshouses.

Key Features

The Dyers Almshouses in Crawley are reminiscent in their style and appearance of the planned settlements of the nineteenth century when pioneers such as Richard Rowntree and the Lever brothers built villages for their workers. The Almshouses are a good example of a comprehensively planned group of residential buildings and form an important part of Crawley's pre-New Town history.



The Almshouses surround, on three sides, a grassed quad. Surrounding the landscaped quad are low perimeter boundary walls which include wooden seats and oak lamp posts that are integral features of the overall design. In addition to the design of the buildings, it is the formal layout of open spaces and the driveway which are also of importance to this Conservation Area.



The Arts and Crafts influenced buildings take their distinctive architectural design from a Dutch rural cottage style. The deep pitched roofs, pronounced graduated chimney stacks and high pitched front facing gables with tile hanging features are locally unique and this could reflect the fact that they were built by a local construction company.



DETAILS OF ROOFS, CHIMNEYS AND GABLE FRONTS



DETAILS OF CHIMNEY STACKS



The buildings are constructed from simple local materials characterised by the use of non-decorative tiles and a red stock brick. The use of a darker stock brick around the original casement windows distinguishes them from the main red brick used for the walls. Each of the Almshouses has original oak doors designed in a Tudor style with original cast iron hinges and knockers. To the rear of the properties are several iron drains, including their hoppers, dating from 1852. It is believed that these drainage features were specifically brought down from a London Almshouse.



DETAILS OF DEEP PITCHED ROOFS

The perimeter of the Conservation Area contains a mix of planted hedging, fences and brick wall. The rear of the Almshouses are punctuated by unfenced but well maintained gardens which are well used by residents. The southern boundary of the Almshouses site comprises a thick hedge line which is a dominant feature in the street and important to the setting of the Conservation Area.



Locally Listed Building Status

The Dyers Almshouses are locally listed buildings. This listing reinforces the contribution they make to the Conservation Area and the townscape as a whole.

Part 4: Guidance for Development

Key Local Plan Policies

Local planning policy for Conservation Areas is currently stated in the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030. The Local Plan should be read as a whole, although there are a number of key policies within the Local Plan that are of particular relevance to development proposals within or adjacent to Dyers Almshouses Conservation Area.

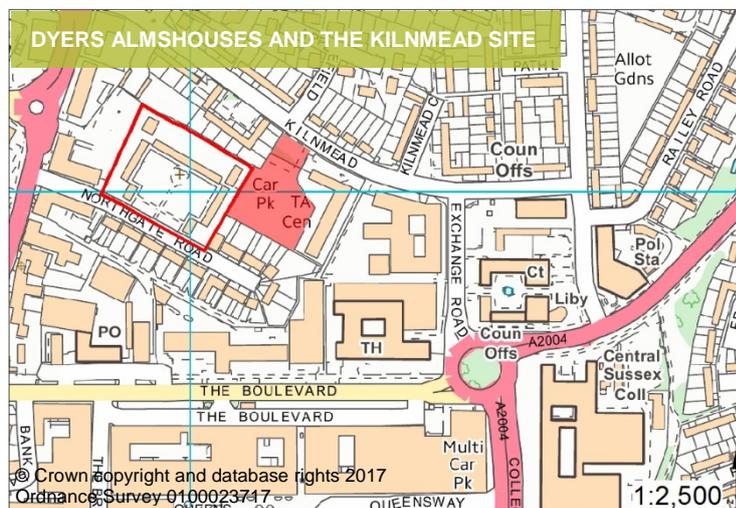
Policy CH12 recognises Crawley's heritage assets as a finite resource, and seeks to ensure that their key features or significance are not lost as a result of development. Where development affects a heritage asset or its setting, a Heritage Impact Assessment will be required to consider the significance of the heritage asset and the contribution it makes to its setting and the wider area. The Heritage Impact Assessment will also need to consider the impact of the development on the Conservation Area and its assets and will need to detail any measures that will be implemented to ensure that a heritage asset is respected, preserved, enhanced or, in exceptional cases, relocated.

Policy CH13 is specifically concerned with development in Conservation Areas. It sets a general requirement that development in a Conservation Area 'should individually or cumulatively result in the preservation or enhancement of the character and appearance of the area', and should respect:

- The distinctive character of the designated area
- Historic landscape features
- The area's landscape value in terms of mature trees, hedges and public green spaces
- The spacious character and landscaping of lower density developments
- The area's architectural quality and scale

Policy CH16 relates to Locally Listed Buildings. Although these are not considered to be of national significance, they possess local architectural or historical merit, and should be retained wherever possible.

The Dyers Almshouses Conservation Area is adjacent to the Kilnmead Housing Allocation site which is identified in **Policy H2** of Crawley's Local Plan. The Kilnmead site along with others identified in the policy is critical to the delivery of Crawley's housing needs for the duration of the Local Plan and Kilnmead in particular has been earmarked as a 'deliverable' site meaning housing is planned to be brought forward between 2015/6 and 2019/20. Housing development on the Kilnmead site



will need to consider the impact on the setting of the Conservation Area including the views from within.

More specific guidance is provided in the section on Development Adjacent to the Conservation Area, below.

Urban Design SPD

The [Urban Design SPD](#) is available on the Crawley Borough Council Website. Part 4 of the Urban Design SPD provides general principles and guidance for development in heritage areas.

Applications that are associated with or that will affect a heritage asset will need to include a heritage impact assessment in order to assess the impact any development, change or works associated with the asset may have on its historic integrity

At the back of the Urban Design SPD you will find *Appendix A – Heritage Impact Checklist* which can help you prepare an application for development that will have an impact on the Dyers Almshouses.

Guidance for Existing Buildings

Conservation Areas are subject to additional controls under planning legislation, and within a Conservation Area, certain permitted development rights are removed. This means that planning permission may be required to undertake particular works or alterations inside the Conservation Area, even where permission would not normally be needed outside of Conservation Areas. For example, planning permission will normally be required for:

- Demolition of any building with a volume of more than 115 cubic metres;
- Demolition of a gate, fence, wall or railing over 1 metre in height next to a highway (including a public footpath or bridleway) or public open space; or over two metres in height elsewhere.

Other examples of development subject to special control in a Conservation Area include:

- external cladding;
- alterations or additions to the roof of a house;
- erection of chimneys or flues;
- erection of satellite dishes;
- installation of radio masts;
- domestic side extensions;
- domestic rear extensions of more than one storey;
- larger single-storey rear extensions covered by the temporary permitted development rights introduced in May 2013

It is strongly advised that you should check with the council's [Development Management](#) team prior to undertaking any works in the Conservation Area in order to ensure that the development is acceptable in planning terms.

The Almshouses are the primary buildings that make up the Conservation Area and enjoy locally listed status. While other structures in the Conservation Area (such as a garden shed) may not enjoy listed status, they are recognised as being important to the character and setting of the Conservation Area. As such, it is generally expected

that these structures will be retained and accordingly, proposals for their demolition will be resisted where this would be to the detriment of the Conservation Area.

In cases where proposed development will lead to the restoration of or extension to a non-listed structure within the Conservation Area, the proposed development will need to be sympathetic to the original structure, in terms of style, massing and materials. A development of this type will be considered in the context of its overall effect on the existing structure and the Conservation Area as a whole.

Developments affecting non-listed existing buildings should aim to maintain the present use of the buildings, so as to try and maintain the character of the area. In exceptional circumstances however, suitable alternative uses may be considered if this helps to preserve the building provided that the proposed use would not detract from the character and setting of the Conservation Area.

Prior to undertaking any development or works, it will be important to contact the Development Management team to understand whether or not planning permission is required. For cases where planning permission is needed, proposals will be required to respect and contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Even if planning permission is not required, the expectation is that development will be carried out with sensitivity and respect for the setting and character of the Conservation Area.

The Almshouses - Locally Listed Buildings

While the Almshouses Locally Listed status does not provide as a great a level of protection as that of a (Nationally) Listed Building, the designation does recognise the positive contribution to local character made by these buildings as heritage assets, and it ensures that this contribution is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The demolition or partial demolition of a Locally Listed Building is generally not deemed appropriate, but may be acceptable only in very exceptional circumstances.

Proposals that would affect a Locally Listed Building must be supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment that should demonstrate how the development proposed has been considered in regard to the historic, architectural, townscape and community value of the Locally Listed building.

Guidance for Extensions and Alterations to the Almshouses

Small scale new development such as extensions to the Almshouses will be strictly controlled and where undertaken should reflect and not conflict with the existing materials, design, layout and ultimately the overall character of the area.

Alterations to the specific architectural detailing within the Conservation Area will also be strictly controlled in order to retain the area's distinctive character. Features such as the Tudor doors, the thick hedge line, wrought iron drainage system, perimeter wall and lamps are essential to the Conservation Area's character and its setting.

Guidance for New Buildings

The Conservation Area occupies a small area comprising the individual Almshouses and a semi-formal private garden/open space. Consequently, the opportunity for new development or re-development is severely limited and any changes would almost certainly conflict with the policies of the Local Plan. However, there may be

occasions when proposals for new development come forward and the following provides guidance for these circumstances:

Proposals for substantial new buildings within the Conservation Area will not normally be permitted because they would almost certainly have a significant impact on the character of the Conservation Area and would conflict with the planning objectives of Local Plan Policies CH12, CH13 and CH16. It may, in exceptional circumstances however, be appropriate to consider proposals for some new small scale development provided that:

- the proposal is in keeping with the scale, design and materials of the existing Almshouses;
- the essential open character of the Northgate Road aspect of the Conservation Area is not prejudiced; and
- the proposal does not seriously prejudice views from other directions of the Conservation Area.

Satellite Dishes and Antennae

Planning permission will be required where satellite dishes or antennae are to be fixed to a chimney, wall or roof slope which fronts the road or other highway. Care should be taken to minimise the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the fixture should be sympathetically sited to ensure it is of a suitable scale and not harmfully prominent on either the building, within the site or from the street.

Where satellite dishes are no longer required, their removal is encouraged. If a dish or antenna is proposed to be installed on any part of a Listed Building or its curtilage, Listed Building Consent will be required and planning permission may also be required.

Solar Panels

Solar panels are allowed under permitted development rights, within specific parameters, and do not generally require planning permission in a Conservation Area. The main exception to this is where they are proposed to be installed on a wall that faces a road, in which case planning permission will be required. However, since solar panels can detract from the architectural integrity of the Almshouses, the erection of solar panels on all roofs within the Conservation Area is not encouraged and those wishing to do so should pursue early engagement with the council.

Lighting

Lighting changes can affect the character and ambience of an area. The Conservation Area has a uniform setting. Where lighting is proposed, including security lighting, careful consideration should be given to the impact any new lighting fixtures will have on the character and the appearance of the area, and in particular of the Almshouses as a collective. Things to look out for in particular include avoiding glare to neighbouring properties and public areas. Flashing or intermittent light fixtures will not be acceptable in the Conservation Area.

Traditional lighting is a major source of energy consumption. There are however, many options available for traditionally styled light fixtures that employ LED or similar energy saving lighting elements. Please consider these fixtures for any development that includes new lighting.

Frontages, Boundary Treatments

Boundary treatments for individual dwellings will not be supported due to the impact on the collective setting of the buildings. Improvements will also be sought to enhance the boundary, including the distinctive hedge along Northgate Road.



VIEW INTO THE DYERS ALMSHOUSES FROM THE ALLEYWAY OPPOSITE

Valued Views

The linear view down the centre of the Almshouse complex from Northgate Road (shown in yellow) and its continuation beyond via a narrow alleyway directly south (shown as a broken yellow line) are important vistas into the site from the surrounding area and will need to remain unobstructed. Similarly, the open, expansive and sweeping views across the grassed quad (shown in blue) contribute to the historic setting of the Conservation Area and reinforce the views of the Almshouses. This view should therefore be carefully maintained.



Vegetation, Landscaping, Hedges and Trees

The distinctive hedge line and the open grassy quad is particularly characteristic of the Conservation Area and contributes significantly to the expansive setting whilst reinforcing the uniform character of buildings. It is important to the setting of the

Almshouses that the hedge is retained as an integral part of the site and protected from damage or removal.

The open and vegetated nature of the grassed quad is reinforced by limited provision of car parking within the quad. The low level of parking provision should be maintained so as to ensure the quad remains an important landscape feature of the Dyers Almshouses.

There is currently a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) within the Conservation Area. A TPO requires that consent must be obtained prior to the carrying out of any works including felling, shaping, pruning and works to the roots. A failure to comply can result in a criminal prosecution.



In addition it is also an offence to cut down, uproot, top or lop most trees in a Conservation Area without giving prior notification to the Local Planning Authority. Crawley Borough Council's Development Management team should therefore be consulted prior to undertaking any tree works in the Conservation Area.

The Local Planning Authority must be given six weeks' notice of the intention to carry out works on trees in a Conservation Area, which should include a description of the nature of proposed works. Where trees are threatened by works which would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding environment, the Local Planning Authority will consider serving a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) to provide further protection.

It is not necessary, however, to notify the Local Planning Authority for the following works to trees in a Conservation Area provided the tree is not subject to protection from a TPO:

- the cutting down, topping or lopping or uprooting of a tree whose diameter does not exceed 75 millimetres; or

- the cutting down or uprooting of a tree, whose diameter does not exceed 100 millimetres, for the sole purpose of improving the growth of other trees (e.g. thinning as part of forestry operations)

In either case, the diameter of the tree is to be measured over the bark of the tree at 1.5 metres above ground level.

Prior to undertaking any works to trees within the Conservation Area please contact the Development Management Team via telephone on 01293 438512, or email at protectedtrees@crawley.gov.uk.

Development Adjacent to the Conservation Area

Proposals for new development adjacent to the Conservation Area will need to respect its setting. Specifically, new development should retain important views into and out of the area and this may require proposals to be smaller in scale and lower in density where proposals are situated close to the Conservation Area's boundary.

The height of any adjacent development will need to be limited so as to not encroach on the setting of the Almshouses but also to respect the privacy of the Almshouses rear gardens around the site's periphery.

There is a grouping of mature trees along the boundary between the Almshouses and the Kilnmead allocated housing site. These trees play an important role in screening the site from the surrounding area and also contribute to the setting of the Conservation Area. New development should therefore ensure the retention of the trees as an important feature.

Part 5: Conservation Area Management Plan

The Dyers Almshouses and their open spaces are maintained to a very high standard. Notwithstanding this, there may be some opportunities for minor improvements which will enhance the area. Such improvements could include preservative treatment to the woodwork and wrought iron work, repointing the York stone paving and parts of the brickwork, improving the perimeter boundary with additional planting and re-fencing and enhancement works to the telephone kiosks which are in poor decorative order.

The Dyers Almshouses are privately owned and managed by the Dyers Almshouse Charity which acts as trustee. Consequently, the responsibility for improvements lies with the owners. However, the borough will work in cooperation with the Worshipful Company of Dyers to enhance the area.

Further Information on Development and Works

Applicants are strongly advised to contact the Development Management team prior to undertaking any works within the Conservation Area. For further information, please contact the Development Management team by phone: 01293 438512, or email at development.control@crawley.gov.uk.

For Further Information:

Crawley Borough Council

The Crawley Borough Council website provides further information on the Dyers Almshouses Conservation Area. To view this Conservation Area Statement or a location map of the conservation area please visit www.crawley.gov.uk/conservationareas.

For planning and development related enquiries, including any questions about proposed works inside the conservation area, please contact the Development Management team by telephone at 01293 438512, or via email at development.control@crawley.gov.uk.

For other general enquiries, the council has produced a list of useful contacts. This covers a range of different issues, including street lighting and furniture, dog fouling, anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping among other areas. If you have a particular question, please visit www.crawley.gov.uk/usefulcontacts to find out the most useful contact, or call the council's contact centre on 01293 438000.

Central Crawley Conservation Areas Advisory Committee

If you would like to find out more about the activities of Central Crawley Conservation Areas Advisory Committee or would be interested in joining the group, please contact keith.parsons@btinternet.com.

The Worshipful Company of Dyers

The Worshipful Company of Dyers is a City of London Livery Company and is the owner and manager of the Almshouses.

For more information about the Livery Company or the Almshouses, please contact the Clerk by telephone 020 7236 7197 or via email at clerk@dyerscompany.com.