



WILLASTON

Residents' and Countryside Society

PLANNING GUIDELINES Issue 2

Approved at the WR&CS Committee meeting 20 January 2020

Background information

Any new development within our area is in general governed by the requirements of the Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan, with Part 1 Strategic Policies adopted in January 2015, and Part 2 Land Allocations and Detailed Policies adopted in July 2019, plus the associated government National Planning Policy Framework of 2012 and its latest update (most recently in 2019). These documents lay out the broad principles applicable to any new development, and are supplemented by additional guidance documents which can provide more detailed information on, for example how house extensions within the green belt might or might not be acceptable, and on parking standards etc.

The Cheshire West Local Plans and these guidance documents can be accessed on the internet at

http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/adopted_cwac_lp/

Our area, the Willaston district, comprises the Willaston village settlement and its surrounding countryside. Willaston district sits within the North Cheshire Green Belt and the map in Appendix 1 shows the boundary of our district area and Appendix 2 shows the extent of the Willaston village "Inset" whose boundary is there to prevent the outward expansion of the village into the Green Belt. Appendix 3 shows the extent of the village "Conservation Area".

Outside the village inset boundary the National & Local planning rules severely restrict housing, business and non-agricultural development within the Green Belt. These rules are intended to preserve the openness of the Green Belt with only modest house extensions and replacement of old buildings being usually permitted. The "Inset" village of Willaston, as defined on the map, is excluded from this Green Belt policy, thereby enabling limited infilling and small new developments within the village providing their scale, density, design and use of materials is in sympathy with the character of the neighbouring area and the village as a whole.

The Conservation Area, the original centre of the Willaston Village, is subject to more strict rules to preserve and enhance its character and appearance. Any extensions or developments must be in sympathy with, and make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Within the village there are also

some “Listed Buildings” where additional strict rules apply, one such building is the Station Masters House on Hadlow Road Station.

In any village there is always pressure to provide more housing and associated infrastructure, Willaston is no different. Infill in available plots of land within the village continue and some new housing developments have also been approved in recent years on the fringes of the Willaston District. Many residents also extend or alter their homes to provide more space for their families. In addition applications have and will no doubt continue to be made to develop new buildings on the Green Belt, or to convert existing farm buildings into habitable dwellings. In the absence of a Parish Council, who would be expected to comment on any such developments on behalf of the village residents, the Willaston Residents’ and Countryside Society (WR&CS) review and make comments as appropriate.

Policy considerations

The majority of planning applications within the Willaston district, which sits within the Green Belt, are for new or modified extensions and similar work to existing properties. On most of these WR&CS advise the Council that the Society have no objections in principle to the application. The only exceptions would be if we felt that

- the new or modified extension is too large relative to the existing property or curtilage
- and/or the modified property would not look appropriate in its setting within the village or specific street scene
- and/or the modified property might be considered as of significant detriment to the neighbours

Depending on the severity of these issues we might simply add some additional comments about our concerns without formally objecting to the development, perhaps requesting specific restraining conditions are applied on the approval notice. However on applications for extensions or modifications which we consider to be inappropriate then WR&CS would make a more detailed and clear objection

A small number of planning applications are for new houses and/or alterations or conversions of commercial properties, or conversion of agricultural buildings into dwellings. On all these WR&CS endeavour to make more detailed comments which we hope will be noted by CW&C Planning Department, and in cases where the application falls within the list of objection points below we make a detailed objection.

Whenever we make any comment or objection we always state that the Council Planning Department must ensure any extensions, or replacement houses, and any new infill houses on a road frontage, or any other development comply in full with the relevant Government and Local Plan rules and published guidance documents. We do this by typically using the “standard comments” or modified versions of these for other than extensions, as listed in Appendix 4 below. These are referred to in the WR&CS Monthly Planning Reports

Note: WR&CS normally restrict any comments on planning applications to sites within the Willaston district. However if a major development was proposed in the areas adjacent to the Willaston district the Society might decide to submit comments and/or

an objection if we believe it will have a significant impact on Willaston. Such an example in recent years requiring comments was the ROFTEN development by Hooton Station

Policy issues requiring an Objection

WR&CS major concerns and any objections usually relate to certain types of development that we believe to be unacceptable within the Willaston district. WR&CS policy is based largely on the village views and comments expressed within the Willaston District Community Plan that was published in early 2014.

WR&CS aims to be consistent in the approach taken in submitting any objections which are usually focussed on one or more of the following points:

1 – Any new development, including infill, on green field sites outside the village “inset” that would cause any outward expansion of the village into the green belt, and/or any degradation of the openness of the green belt around Willaston. WR&CS acknowledges that infill of one or two houses on an otherwise developed road frontage can also take place within the “built up” area of the village, not just the “village inset” (e.g. up Mill Lane to the edge of the main village development), following the Government adoption of the NPPF policies

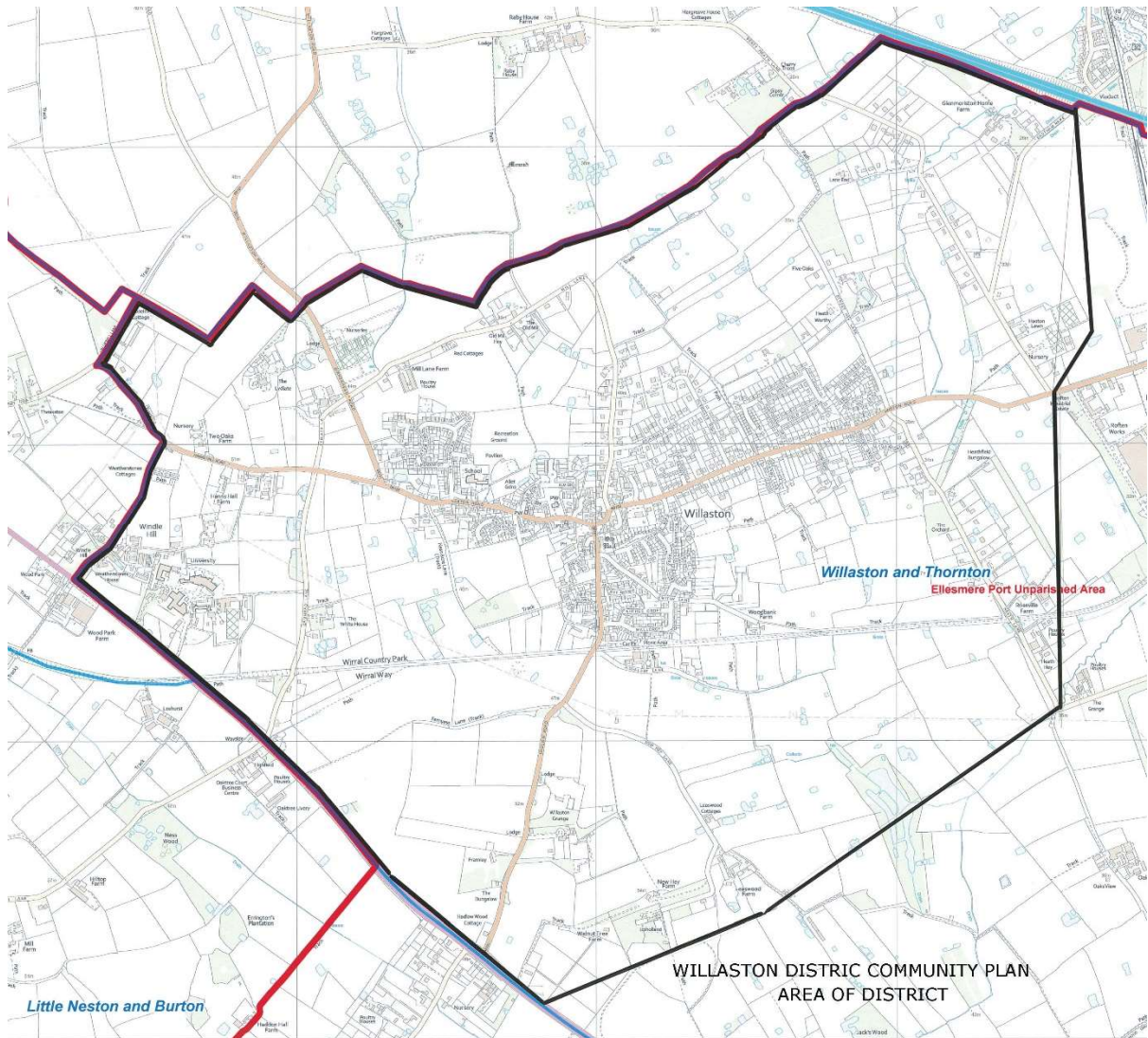
2 – Any new tandem or back land development that WR&CS consider is not proper infill between houses on a road frontage and/or where a proposed new development is not on the same building line as the existing road frontage

3 – Any development within the Conservation Area of the village in particular, and the wider village in general, that is not in keeping with the style, size and character of the other adjacent buildings. This is particularly important within the village Conservation Area

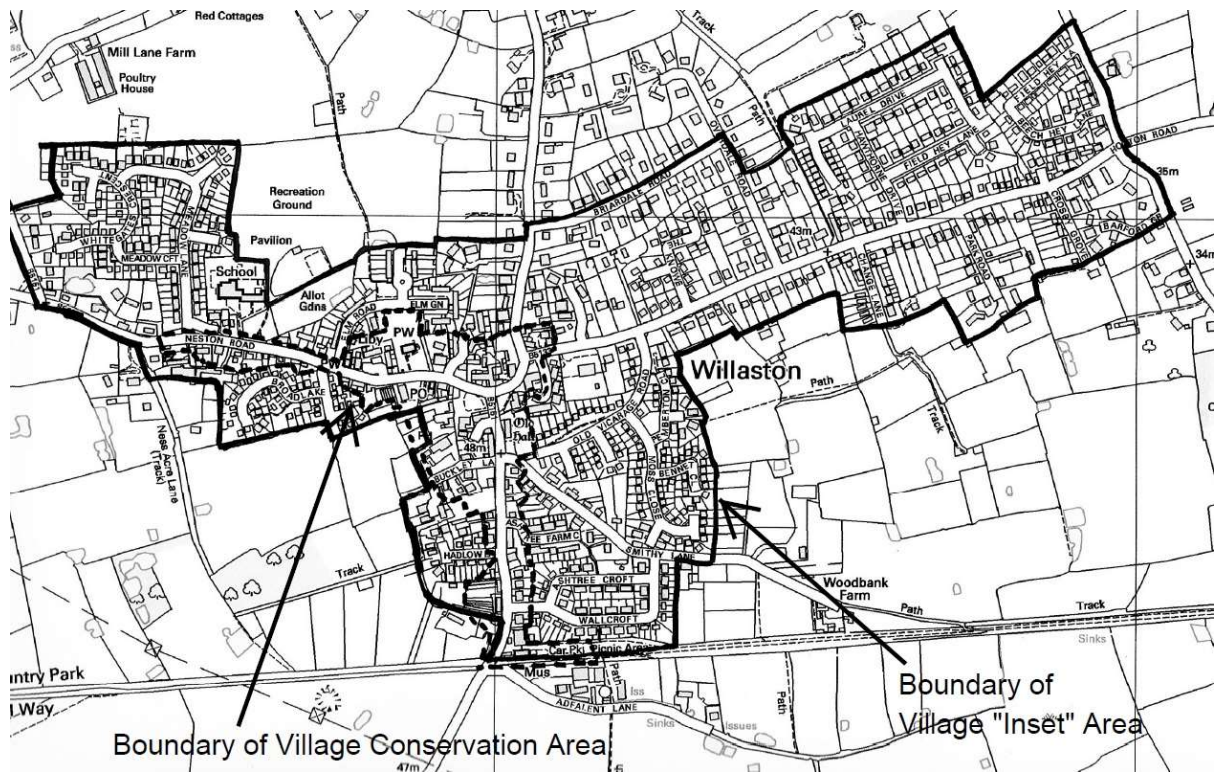
Note: in addition to all the above points WR&CS always request the Council Planning Department to also take into account any neighbours views. However WR&CS do not go out and canvass those neighbours’ views directly, although occasionally neighbours may contact us for advice and assistance. Similarly WR&CS does not normally engage directly with any of the planning applicants or their agents to provide pre-application advice to avoid any conflict of interest. We may of course discuss details of the application with the applicant or agent, should they approach us, but this will only happen after the application has been submitted and registered with Cheshire West & Chester Council

When the WR&CS decides to raise a serious objection to a planning application the assistance of the Local Borough Councillor is sought who, if he agrees with the objection, can “call in” the application to ensure it is not determined by Planning Officers under delegated powers. An application called in must be heard, discussed and determined by the elected members of the Planning Committee at their meeting that is held in public. A representative of the WR&CS would in this case be expected to speak for up to 3 minutes to the Planning Committee to voice the relevant WR&CS planning objections to the Application.

Appendix 1 – Willaston district area



Appendix 2 – Willaston Village inset



Appendix 3 – Willaston Conservation Area detail



Appendix 4 – WR&CS Standard Comments

1 - House extension in Green Belt outside the Village Inset

This comment is made on behalf of Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society. The Society notes that this application relates to a house within the Green Belt, outside the Willaston Village Inset.

The Society has no objection in principle to the application providing plans comply with the Cheshire West & Chester Local Plan Parts 1 & 2 and any associated Supplementary Planning and Guidance documents including the EP&NBC SPG "Extensions in the Green Belt" dated March 1999, and/or any other relevant Council Planning rules for the Green Belt.

We request that the views of the neighbours are taken into account in any decision

2 - House extension in Willaston Village Inset

This comment is made on behalf of Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society. The Society notes that this application relates to a house within the Willaston Village Inset and/or the defined built up area boundary of the village.

The Society has no objection in principle to the application providing plans comply with the Cheshire West & Chester Local Plan Parts 1 & 2 and any associated Supplementary Planning and Guidance documents including the EP&NBC SPD for "House Extensions" dated December 2006

We request that the views of the neighbours are taken into account in any decision

3 - House extension in Willaston Conservation Area

This comment is made on behalf of Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society. The Society notes that this application relates to a house within the Willaston Village Conservation Area.

The Society has no objection in principle to the application providing plans comply with the Cheshire West & Chester Local Plan Parts 1 & 2 and any associated Supplementary Planning and Guidance documents for development within a Conservation Area

We request that the views of the neighbours are taken into account in any decision