

Appendix A

Lutley Mill Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Public Consultation Process Report

November 2021



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Proposals outlined in the *Draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal for Lutley Mill Conservation Area* were approved for consultation by the Development Control Committee on 2nd June 2021 and were the subject of public consultation between 28th June and 13th August 2021.
- 1.2 This Report of Consultation describes the various methods employed to engage the local community and key stakeholders in the process of preparing the Conservation Area Character Appraisal. All the participants were invited to fill in a questionnaire offering their views on the proposals. The questionnaire responses have been analysed and the results are presented in this report.

2. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 2.1 Between the 28th June and 13th August 2021 a public consultation exercise was undertaken on the **draft** Conservation Area Character Appraisal for the Lutley Mill Conservation Area. Dudley MBC sought to engage all members of the local population.

3. QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

- 3.1 By the 13th August, 21 questionnaires had been received where most questions had been answered or a comment made. Three specific questions were posed in the questionnaire which allows quantitative assessment of the results. Respondents had the choice of answering 'yes', 'no' or 'no opinion' to this series of questions posed by the Draft Character Appraisal proposals. Two further questions were provided on the questionnaire for people to make general comments and state their own opinions. **Appendix 1** provides detailed analysis of the results.

Quantitative Questions; Nos 2, 3, 5

Q2. Does the draft management plan clearly explain what is special about the historic and architectural character of the Lutley Mill Conservation Area?

All 21 respondents answered this question with a majority of 80.95% supporting the view that the draft management plan clearly explained the special status of the historic and architectural character of the Lutley Mill conservation area. 9.52% said they were not sure.

Several respondents provided some very positive additional comments:

'Interesting and accurate assessment of the area.'

'Clearly shows archaeological and historic significance of the area and the importance of the area as green space to the surrounding community.'

'I fully understood the conservation area and surrounding area of specific interest including buildings and outbuildings.'

'Good summary of history of the site and related close locations.'

'The history going back to Anglo-Saxon times, and the context of the area shows how unique it is.'

Another respondent felt that some elements of the conservation area were not worthy of preservation, however, this was a minority view:

'I do not really see the historic value of a relatively new driveway and a row of oversized conifers.'

Q3. Do you think the proposals set out in the draft management plan will help to preserve or enhance the special character of the Lutley Mill Conservation Area?

Again, all respondents answered this question with a majority of 71.43% agreeing that the draft management plan will help enhance or preserve the special character of the Lutley Mill conservation area, leaving 23.81% unsure and only 4.76% in disagreement.

A lot of positive comments were provided expressing support for the proposals set out in the draft management plan:

'Explains clearly what needs to be done to maintain the area.'

'It's one of the few surviving areas in Halesowen that connects to not only the industrial past but to the pre-medieval landscape. It needs conserving for future generations to enjoy'

'Assuming any proposals are in line with the preservation of Lutley Mill Conservation Area, then I think the plan will help preserve or enhance the special character of Lutley Mill.'

'It is important to recognise and protect the history and development of social and cultural sites connected to the historic town of Halesowen'

Some respondents expressed the view that the proposals were in fact just a starting point should be expanded upon, emphasising Lutley Mill conservation area's importance and the need to preserve it for the future:

'The proposals seem sensible; however, I worry that they do not go far enough to protect the area from adverse impacts of potential residential development on adjacent land.'

Only 4.76% of the respondents did not agree that the proposals set out in the draft management plan would not help preserve or enhance Lutley Mill conservation area.

Q4. What do you think are the most important issues facing the Lutley Mill Conservation Area?

Again, all respondents answered this question. Several issues were raised with a few respondents focusing on problems relating to access and the maintenance of paths:

'Loss of traditional style windows due to replacement with modern uPVC -- I have uPVC windows but it is leaded, light and looks good. The public right of way is permanently overgrown. No signage to keep people off farmers field and on right of way at the entry point. Motor bikes racing up and down field, very dangerous for walkers, dogs etc and very noisy.'

'Improve public access to the area and make it more widely known in the area'

'Main issue is the lack of public awareness of the mill. I've lived here 20 years and never seen the mill as there's no public access. The only photo I've ever seen is the one in the management plan. Indeed, the website that lists all UK Listed Buildings has no photo of this building. Perhaps a display board would help?'

'Overgrown and poorly managed footpaths which could threaten the surviving ancient woodland. Preserving the surviving heritage assets. Fly tipping in the surrounding woodland especially the rear of Abbey Road sloping to the Lutley Gutter'

'Access is vitally important for walkers, horses and conservationists surrounding our historic site and to ensure that the wildlife including birds are taken into account. Sympathetic enhancement of the site is vitally important.'

'The mill itself being in private ownership may be at risk from actions of owners including to surrounding land. More widely the ancient connecting right of way of Lutley Lane is in part in poor condition partly through overgrowth from low use and at the Lutley Lane end from erosion through farm traffic exacerbated by water damage.'

'Maintenance of footpaths. Threat of development.'

'Maintenance of footpaths alongside area especially that which goes up the steps adjacent to the mill and runs along the western edge towards the track leading to Grange and Whitehouse Farms. Maintenance of the water course and its bio health, both within the conservation area and also streams running into the area.'

A further issue that was frequently raised was the threat of development upon the protected land:

'The state of the water wheel, keeping walking access open and ensuring future developments do not compromise the area.'

'To avoid the building of any houses.'

'The adjacent land seems to be regularly under threat of residential development, and this would have a detrimental effect on the conservation area. It is vital that the entire Lutley Gutter area is protected from further building.'

'The threat of future residential building.'

'Development encroaching.'

Q5. The above map of the Lutley Mill boundary revisions shows some additional areas outside of the current Conservation Area boundary that are also considered to be of architectural or historic significance. Do you support the proposals to amend the conservation area boundary to include these additional areas?

All respondents answered this question with 76.19% supporting the proposals for the extension of the conservation area leaving a minority of 4.76% with no opinion and 19.05% opposing. Some of the respondents provided very positive additional comments:

'Anything that extends the protections on this area is most welcome.'

'The bridge and footpath are an essential component of the conservation area and give access to the adjoining land. As such, they should rightly be protected.'

'It makes sense at this stream feeds the watercourse within the conservation area and so it is important that the stream and bridge are appropriately maintained.'

'Securing architectural or historic significance to Lutley Mill is very important.'

'Any extension can surely only be a good thing.'

A minority of 19.05% of the respondents did not support the proposals for the extension of the Conservation Area. It is important to note however that one of the respondents who expressed their opposition did it on the grounds that they felt the management proposals do not go far enough. They stated:

'Support the proposed small extension but it would be more relevant and appropriate to extend further to include extended length of Lutley Lane.'

The other respondents who did not support the extension of the conservation area did not provide a clear explanation for their response.

Q6. Any further comments about the draft Conservation Area Appraisal? Please feel free to share any local knowledge that may give us a better understanding of the Lutley Mill Conservation Area and please do list what improvements you feel could be made to enhance the special character or appearance of the Lutley Mill Conservation Area.

3.2 Located at the end of the questionnaire there was space for members of the public to provide additional comments and raise further important features that may be known only to local residents. Comments generally fell into a few broad categories which can be summarised as follows:

Importance of the footpath/holloway

A few of the comments were reiterating the importance of the footpath/holloway as both a historic feature of the area, but also as access to the site:

'My family and I love walking the public footpath around the conservation area and the surrounding farmland. If any of that farmland were to be developed on (as well as the conservation area) it would also negatively impact the conservation area.'

'This area is part of the local Lutley walk and is used by residents throughout the year and it has never been more important than over the last 18 months. If possible, some gateway signs with a brief history of the area would be helpful in explaining the historical significance of the area.'

'My grandfather always told me that his grandfather said that the holloway/footpath (HLS0137, HLS137A and HLS0161) was at least Saxon if not older. The track runs past what was a fort/enclosure at Hasbury (now under the housing estate) and out towards the hillfort at Wychbury. There are also earthworks in the woodland nearby that are supposed to be the remnants of the medieval Lutley village.'

'The ancient right of way of Lutley Lane should be fully protected. There is little value in including only the south east end when the north west end is not protected.'

The importance of the ecology found within the conservation area.

Several comments were made which expressed how important the Lutley Mill conservation area is as habitat for wildlife, in addition to its historic character:

'Never seen the mill but I walk this area regularly and it has some very special and unique features. The area supports a number of less common birds (Nuthatch, Bullfinch, Song Thrush, Stonechat and Yellow Hammer) and has some very old hedgerows (along Lutley Lane). In general, this wider area is a very special oasis on our doorstep with lingering traces of its medieval past so all measures in support of its continued protection are welcome.'

'I grew up in a house that overlooks the conservation area - it was hugely important in my physical and mental development as a child and gave me a

lifelong appreciation for nature. Pudding Brook is a rich habitat for wildlife, and in my opinion, must be preserved along with the historical buildings that are part of the Black Country's heritage.'

'Extension along the feeder stream back towards Whitehouse Farm and away from the Mill towards Drew's Holloway, including the tress, hedges and other wildlife corridors.'

Signage

A couple of comments were made which commented on the installation of signage when entering the conservation area:

'As before, the bridle path needs clearing, signage improved by entry from Huntingtree Road. Motor bikes stopped Trees lumbered where necessary. Dead trees removed. Bridle path improved. We have paid for patching between us but would appreciate a contribution from council as well.'

'Information signs for visitors to the Conservation Area would be helpful. Set up a working party to improve the areas where overgrowth exists. Keep me informed of any developments to the Area.'

Lack of communication from DMBC:

One respondent had commented on a perceived lack of communication from DMBC to the residents:

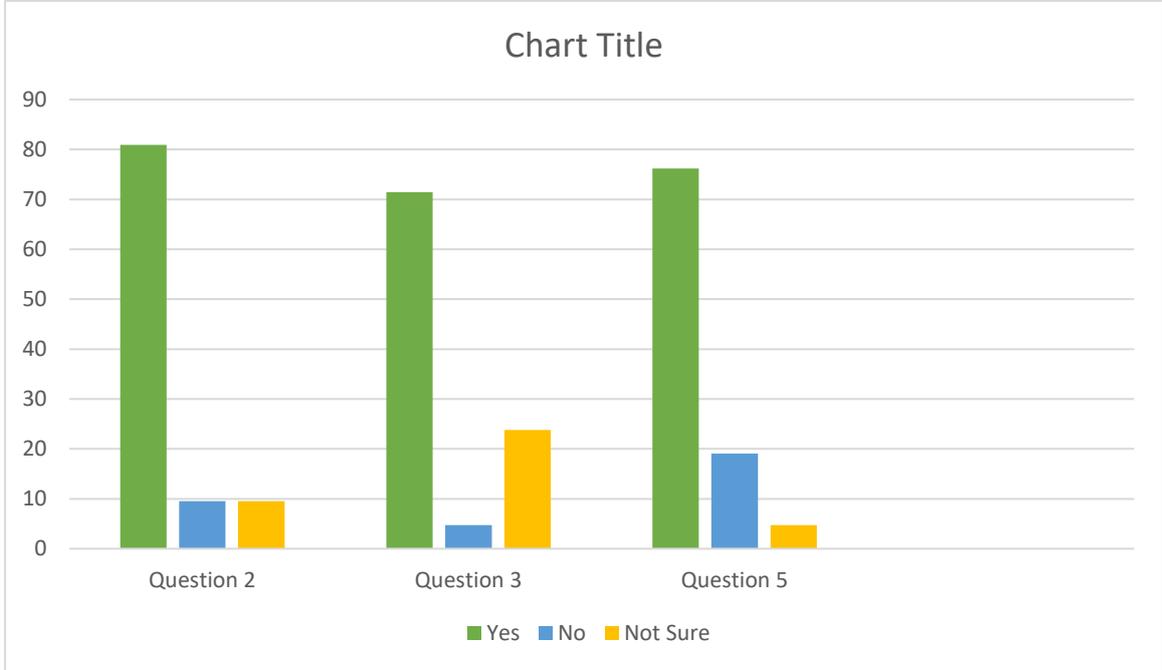
'I am disappointed nobody in the avenue has been made aware of this and also I believe this is a legal requirement. Yet again the council are cutting corners at the cost of the residents.'

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The questionnaire responses demonstrate substantial support for the extension of the Lutley Mill conservation area and the adoption of the draft management plan. The overall total response to all three questions revealed that 76.2% of the respondents supported the proposals thus leaving 12.7% with no opinion and only 11.1% opposing the proposals.
- 4.2 Question 2 illustrated that 80.95% of the respondents think that the draft management plan clearly explained what is special about the historic and architectural character of the Lutley Mill conservation area. Question 3 illustrated that 71.43% of the respondents believe the proposals set out in the draft management plan will help preserve or enhance the special character of the Lutley Mill conservation area. Question 5 illustrated that 76.19% of respondents supported the amendment of the Conservation Area boundary proposed.

APPENDIX 1
PUBLIC CONSULTATION SURVEY RESULTS

Figure 1: Bar Chart and table showing how many people responded to each question



<u>Totals</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No Opinion/Not sure</u>
Question 2	17 (or 80.95%)	2 (or 9.52%)	2 (or 9.52%)
Question 3	15 (or 71.43%)	1 (or 4.76%)	5 (or 23.81%)
Question 5	16 (or 76.19%)	4 (or 19.05%)	16 (or 4.76%)

Figure 2: Pie Chart showing the overall total survey results

