
Knighton Neighbourhood Forum

Conservation and Heritage Working Group

Minutes of Meeting 31st January 2019

7.30 pm, College Court

Attendees

Redacted for reasons of privacy.

Apologies

Redacted for reasons of privacy.

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Chair welcomed the members of the working group and gave the apologies.

2. Purpose and Remit of the Working Group

The Chair explained the purpose and remit of the working group. Knighton Neighbourhood Forum is a Neighbourhood Forum under the terms of the Localism Act 2011 and is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Knighton Designated Area, which was agreed with the City Council following a public consultation in 2016. The Designated Area is smaller than the Knighton Ward and is based on other boundaries such as the Overdale Schools catchment and St Mary Magdalen Parish. The Designated Area includes all of the Knighton Conservation Area and the southern part of the Stonegate Conservation Area. A map showing the Designated Area was presented.

The Neighbourhood Forum has taken the approach of forming working groups to explore issues and develop policies. The Conservation and Heritage Working Group is the fourth, following on from those on Transport, Open Spaces Sports and Leisure, and Housing and Planning.

The focus of the Conservation and Heritage Working Group is on conservation of heritage assets within the area, mainly buildings of historic, architectural or cultural interest. The aim is to develop a set of policies that will become part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

3. Issues with Conservation and Heritage in Knighton

A discussion was held in which members of the working group talked about the issues that are of importance to them in the conservation of the Knighton area. These were captured as bullet points on a flipchart and are listed below.

1. When the Conservation areas were created in the 1970s, the focus was on Victorian houses. In the intervening 50 years, many Edwardian houses in the area have become more significant to the heritage of the area but are not protected.
2. Even in the existing conservation area, there have been recent cases where planning permission has been given for houses that people thought were protected by being in the area to be demolished and rebuilt in a different style.

3. It would be interesting to know how people who live in the conservation areas feel in terms of the benefits and disadvantages in living in an area with restrictions on what can be done to properties.
4. The Leicester Civic Society put forward proposals in 2011 to extend the Stoneygate and Knighton Conservation Areas and to create two new Conservation Areas in South Knighton and the Portland Enclave.
5. The City Council, as part of its programme of place-making, has put up banners on lamp-posts to say that people are entering Knighton Village, it would be interesting to know what they see as the boundaries of the village, as Knighton doesn't have a village centre in the same way as Evington and Aylestone, for example.
6. The green space at 'Knighton Green' is part of the character of the area.
7. The character of properties across the whole area, not just the older ones needs to be considered.
8. The art deco flats on London Road were subject of a planning application recently, and don't seem to have any protection.
9. There are areas of older houses that could be protected by new conservation areas.
10. There are individual properties that could benefit from some status such as local listing.
11. Development needs to be in keeping with the area, wherever it takes place.
12. The overall street scene (street furniture, hedges, garden walls, trees and changes such as traffic calming) all contribute to the character of the area, not just the architecture of the houses.
13. Knighton has a definite character, but it is difficult to define.
14. We need to take a holistic view of the properties in the area and their environment.
15. Extensions and changes need to be in keeping with and sympathetic to neighbouring buildings and the character of the area.

Following this discussion, it was agreed that a first step for the group would be to understand better the character of the area, including areas that are not Edwardian or Victorian in construction. It was agreed to organise a walk round part of the area. This will be the area round Kingsmead Road, starting at the bridge over the Wash Brook, and including Kingsmead Road South and possibly the area on the west side of Welford Road near Baldwin Road. This will take place on Friday 15th February, starting at 2.00 pm for at most two hours.

It was agreed to find a copy of the Leicester Civic Society study published online.

4. People and Organisations to Contact or Involve

Stoneygate Conservation Area Society
The Knighton Society
Leicester Victorian Society
Leicester University School of Architecture
De Montfort University School of Architecture
Heritage Open Days

5. Any Other Business

None

6. Dates of Next Meetings

Provisionally the next meeting was set for Thursday 28th February, 7.30 pm at College Court, subject to the meeting room being available.