6

County Planning Committee
20th January, 1971.
Agenda Item No. 6(b)

The Civic Amenities Act, 1967
Fairford Conservation Area
Statement of Policy

It is intended, under the Civic Amenities Act, 1967 to control development and advertisements within the Conservation Area with the aim of securing conservation. The County and District Councils will consider ways of enhancing the area and controlling traffic in the interests of the amenities which the area possesses. Every effort will be made to preserve the best buildings, groups of buildings, open areas, natural features, and trees upon which the character of the Conservation Area depends.

Fairford, with a population of approximately 1900 people, is situated at the southern edge of the Oolitic Limestone area close to the River Thames gravel terrace. Here the relatively narrow and steep sided valley of the River Coln widens out into the Thames Valley.

At the centre of the town the Market Place is flanked on two sides by handsome 16th to 18th century three storey buildings of the local stone roofed for the most part with Cotswold stone slates. On the northern side the various species and sizes of trees in the grounds of Fairford House are an element of contract to the buildings.

On the southern side, beyond the narrow A417 London Road which carries an excessive amount of traffic through the town, the two and three storey terraced buildings provide a pleasant sense of enclosure to the square. The continuous terrace of stone buildings on the east side of the Market Place runs northwards along High Street as far as the entrance to Fairford Park and, in complete contrast, the west side of High Street has been developed in quite an open form around the 15th century Church of St. Mary famous for the quite remarkable set of original stained glass windows, particularly the great West window depicting the Last Judgement.

Fairford Park shown as an Area of Great Landscape Value on the County Development Plan plays a special role in the total character of the town. The country landscape penetrates almost to the heart of the town, and this has been recognised in determining the extent of the Conservation Area, which is "open-ended" on the north side to include that part of the Park, the Mill and the Broad Water, where the Coln has been artificially widened which together play a significant part in forming the town's character.

Eastwards from High Street, Park Street with its 18th Century cottages leads to the more open form of development around the Park Villas and Mount Pleasant where the stone boundary walls play an important part in the character of the district. In this eastern part of Fairford the trees dominate the scene, adding to the open and informal quality of the development which consist mainly of terraces of cottages with larger houses set back from the road and surrounded by their well maintained large gardens. The pleasant approach to the town from the east owes much to the continuous belt of lofty trees on the south side of London Road and the smaller trees and bushes in the front gardens of the houses on the north side of the road.

To the west of Fairford the houses at Milton End, along Milton Street and Coronation Street in particular are formally sited in orderly terraces in contrast to the housing at East End. Interest is centred around the triangular green at the west end of Milton Street although its pleasant appearance suffers through the intrusion of an excessive amount of overhead wire with associated multiple pole structures. Moving to the East end of Milton Street a sense of openness is provided by the low lying meadows alongside the River Coln. These meadows which form the view northwards also serve to emphasise the compact building group at the centre of the town.

Fairford is therefore a place of great variety with open country penetrating right to its centre. The whole scene is unified by the adoption of locally produced building materials with doorways and windows all of a vertical nature in scale with the street and of good proportion and colour.

It would be unrealistic not to expect that development of various kinds will need to take place from time to time so that the Area and its buildings can be adapted to changing modern needs. However, <u>any</u> development within the Conservation Area will be expected to be in harmony with the Area in size, form, grouping, materials and colour. In addition Development Control will be exercised in accordance with the following principles:-

(i) Permission in outline form will not normally be given for building development in the Conservation Area and detailed plans, including elevations showing the new development in its setting and particulars of colours, materials and existing trees will normally be required. Particular care will be exercised to ensure that inappropriate materials or colours are not used.

(ii) Replacement of buildings may be permitted when it can be shown that the existing building is of an inappropriate character or wholly beyond repair. Additional buildings, or additions to existing buildings, will be permitted only where they will make a positive contribution to the design of the area or will be entirely unobtrusive.

(iii) Within the Area, uses which generate unreasonable noise, other nuisance or excessive traffic, or would result in untidy sites will not be permitted. Existing uses of this nature will not normally be allowed to expand. Amusement centres are considered to be out of place within the Area.

(iv) Any proposal to demolish any building, whether listed * or not which would create a gap in a continuous building frontage which forms an essential part of the character of the area will be resisted.

(v) Proposals to develop 'open areas' and significant natural features forming an essential part of the character of an area will not normally be permitted.

(vi) In exercising development control, regard will be paid to the amenities afforded by rear gardens of houses and other residential buildings.

(vii) Advertisements, signs and notice boards will be subject to the most stringent control afforded by the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations, 1969, and will be permitted only if they are considered to be essential and are well sited and designed to harmonise with the Area generally.

FOOTNOTE:

(a) Essential development by Statutory Undertakers and similar bodies is frequently exempt from planning control. In such cases it is the Local Planning Authority's intention to foster a spirit of co-operation with these Bodies to ensure that such works are being carried out in sympathy with their surroundings and in the spirit of the Civic Amenities Act.

(b) Local initiative will be encouraged in any suitable efforts which are made to enhance and improve the Area within the spirit of the Civic Amenities Act.

* on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest drawn up by the Minister of Housing and Local Government and which is being progressively reviewed.

THIS POLICY IN NO WAY IMPLIES ANY RELAXATION OF PLANNING CONTROL OUTSIDE THE DESIGNATED CONSERVATION AREA.