

Bredgar Conservation Area Appraisal – Bredgar Parish Council Response, July 2023

Introduction

The comments which follow are submitted by Bredgar Parish Council. They are intended as a positive contribution to the continued protection of the Conservation Area and its management.

Representatives of Bredgar Parish Council were pleased to be able to accompany Peter Bell, of Peter Bell Historic Building Consultancy, and Swale Borough Council Conservation Architect Jhilmil Kishore, on a tour of the village and hamlets on 30th March 2023, affording the opportunity to contribute information and opinion to the the Appraisal.

The comments are submitted under the following headings:

1. A schedule of corrections.
2. Some points of uncertainty, requiring checking.
3. Comments on the sections of the Appraisal

Concerning 1.0 Introduction

Concerning 2.0 Character Appraisal

Concerning 3.0 Summary and Conclusions

Concerning 4.0 Bredgar Conservation Area Management Strategy

4. Conclusion

1. A schedule of corrections.

Page 7. Image legend. Text should read “ ...Gore Road in 1908” not “..2008”

And: “Courtesy Mr D. Priestley” not “Courtesy Mr. D Priestly”

Page 7, paragraph 3 . “...license” should be “..licence”

Page 7, paragraph 3. The “Chantry” is technically in the church, in the enlarged north aisle, where the chaplain and scholars sang their masses . So, in the penultimate line of the paragraph: “chantry” is not correct. Better would be “... dedicated building,....”.

Page 8, paragraph 5, line 4 “...Bredgar’s the village...” should be “...Bredgar..”

Page 8, paragraph 2, “kilometers” should be “ kilometres”.

Page 10, paragraph 1, add “, together with a barbers shop and hair salon”, so “The Farm Shop, Tea Room, Post Office, together with a barbers shop and hair salon, now occupy...”

Page 11, paragraph 3, line 1, "The Old Post Office" should be "The Old Post House"

Page 11, paragraph 3, line 2, "The Old Post Office" should be "The Old Post House"

Page 11, paragraph 4, line 1, "The Old Post Office" should be "The Old Post House"

Page 11, image legend "The Old Post Office" should be "The Old Post House"

Page 13, image legend "The Street. Cottages demolished in the 1950s" should be "The Street. Cottages demolished in 1960", or (maybe better) "The Street. Terraced cottages demolished in 1960."

[See Helen Allinson, Bredgar, p. 262, for the date of demolition]

Page 13, paragraph 3. "... although their use of reclaimed Kent peg tiles on the roof helps to assimilate them into their historic cottages" . Unfortunately this is no longer the case as the tiles have been replaced with modern ones, so please delete.

Page 21, paragraph 2, "The Old Post Office" should be "The Old Post House"

Page 25, paragraph 4, line 4 "...Bregar" should be "Bredgar".

Page 26, paragraph 4 "Chantry College" sounds like it is a proper name. Better would be "chantry college" or just "medieval college".

Page 30, paragraph 3 (list) "The Old Post Office" should be "The Old Post House"

Page 40, please add "working" to the title or description. Perhaps "K6 TELEPHONE KIOSK (WORKING) TO THE NORTH WEST..."

2. Points of uncertainty, requiring checking.

Page 4, image. Legend reads "Inter-war postcard of The Street looking north" but this image was used for our Coronation Celebrations as an illustration of 1952/53 Bredgar. The car in the image looks like a Ford Prefect (?) which would make it likely 1940s at the earliest, probably 1950s.

Page 9, paragraph 3. Please check the origins of the anti-tank buoys. They may have been placed around the war memorial much later.

Page 12, paragraph 1 "... but the current building is Victorian,...." Is this right? See Helen Allinson, p.47 (new edition) for suggestion that it is late 15th century.

Page 42, please check name. Is it really "The Old Vicarage"? Or just "The Vicarage"?

Page 33 et seq. "Appendix 1, Map regression". The Appraisal includes a useful collection of early maps, from 1575 to 1946. Please check that the the legend "Ordnance Survey First Series 1816" on the fifth map is correct. It appears to be a map from about 1860-1870.

3. Comments on the sections of the Appraisal

Concerning 1.0 Introduction

Page 4. See note above under "Points of Uncertainty" concerning the postcard image

Page 4. "Map 1. Bredgar Conservation Area". The map used for the 2006 Appraisal, on SBC's website is more detailed than the one used here. Presumably this is standardised across all the Conservation Area Appraisals, but it would be good to have the detailed version somewhere in the document, perhaps as an appendix. The current map does not properly resolve the buildings discussed.

Concerning 2.0 Character Appraisal

This section provides an excellent overview of the various elements making up the character of the village, and is the better for the occasional more subjective opinions, sometimes negative.

Some minor suggestions:

Page 11, first image. The yellow typeface appears to be a mistake.

Page 11, paragraph 3. "...Brickwall which, despite its name, ..." Maybe add about the grade 2 listed old wall, perhaps "... Brickwall which, despite its name (that refers to the old adjoining wall), has ..." or something similar.

Page 19, "2.6 Archaeology", paragraph 4. "the garden of no 1 Chantry Cottages" . Since "Chantry Cottages no longer exist (under that name) , perhaps it would be good to add "...no 1 Chantry Cottages, now part of Chantry House" .

Page 19, "2.6 Archaeology", paragraph 4. I recently discovered that the "pot" is on show in Milton Regis Court Hall Museum. Perhaps this could be added as an extra sentence. "The pot has survived and is on show in the Milton Regis Court Hall Museum". Maybe not relevant enough.

Page 19. Perhaps a short paragraph could be added here about "The Bredgar Die" . Something like " In 2013 another find of significance made in the village was a copper coin punch known as "The Bredgar Die", believed to be the earliest coin die found in Britain, dating to around 150 B.C."

Page 20. "Map 3: Significant Trees" . Perhaps a legend explaining why the green dots are different sizes would be useful. Is it just individual size of the trees? If so, seems odd that the big horse chestnut by the pond (for example) does not show as large as some of the trees of Parsonage Farm.

Page 24. "Map 4: Significant views" .

The Appraisal includes a good number of views, both from external points looking towards the conservation area and from the conservation looking out. It would be helpful if the images were numbered and corresponded in a more one-to-one fashion with the numbers in the map.

Page 25. "2.10 Setting"

Bredgar Parish Council are keen to emphasize the importance of the links between the central village of Bredgar and the hamlets. Perhaps the last paragraph could be adjusted a little, to something like:

"...and later the shops and school.

Whilst there is little visual link between Bredgar and the small hamlets, the significance of the historical connection is demonstrated by the extensive network of lanes and footpaths, formed long before the advent of motor transport. "

Concerning 3.0 Summary and Conclusion

Page 26. Bredgar Parish Council concurs strongly with the view (paragraph 4) that "there is no doubt that it should continue to be a designated conservation area".

Page 27. Bredgar Parish Council also agrees with the list of "Key negative characteristics". However, we would like it noted that several derelict houses, e.g. Ides House and Wigmore House have been rebuilt to a high standard since the last review.

The author of the Appraisal visited the village during the day, so did not have a chance to understand the night-time lighting in the village. The impression of residents – and it would be useful to quantify this somehow – is that light pollution has increased significantly within the Conservation Area, even since the last appraisal in 2006. So... perhaps an extra bullet point in the list of "Key Negative Characteristics" , like:

- Increased light pollution from security lighting and other sources

Page 27. In "3.0 Summary and Conclusion" , the Appraisal discusses the boundaries of Conservation Area, with regard to whether they are correctly drawn and whether the area should be extended or reduced in size. Particular consideration is given to the possibility of including parts of Silver Street, to the west of the current Conservation Area. However, because there is modern development between the areas, interrupting the visual continuity, the recommendation is that the boundary should not be extended or revised.

The Parish Council accepts this analysis and conclusion, which springs from the requirement (see "1.2 The Purpose of conservation areas", p.5, final paragraph) that conservation areas should be "cohesive". However, this requirement, while understandable, does lead to inconsistencies. The Airey houses south of the pond, for example, are readily included in the Conservation Area, whereas significant houses, or groups of houses, such as those making up the hamlets of Bexon or Silver Street, are excluded because they are separated by a field or a short section of road with some

modern development. If the larger aim of conservation areas is to “protect historic places.....so that their special character is safeguarded and sustained” (see “1.2 The Purpose of conservation areas”, p.5, second paragraph) then this problem needs to be addressed. Either a greater willingness to create very small Conservation Areas, perhaps only comprising a few buildings, or – preferable – a system recognising “satellite” Conservation Areas, subsidiary to the main Conservation Area but linked by history as well as by lanes and footpaths needs to be considered. In particular, Bredgar Parish Council believes that the hamlet of Bexon, to the east of the Conservation Area of Bredgar, should be recognised as an important area deserving of the protection that Conservation Area status could give to it.

While we recognize that the determination has been fairly and reasonably made in this instance, we would recommend that it is noted, either in the document itself or in associated material held by Swale Borough Council, that the option for further Conservation Areas or similar entities within the larger parish of Bredgar is still open for consideration in the future.

Concerning 4.0 Bredgar Conservation Area Management Strategy

Page 28. Bredgar Parish Council fully endorses all the conservation-related aims of the Swale Borough Local Plan in the bullet-point list.

Page 29, paragraphs 3, 4. Bredgar Parish Council agrees that “...alterations have, and could continue to erode the character of Bredgar Conservation Area over time”, and understands and affirms the suggestion that an Article 4 Direction could be used to bring Householder alterations under control within the Conservation Area.

An example of why Bredgar Parish Council believes this to be a good idea is the case of the four housing association bungalows referred to in the Assessment, p. 13, where the Kent peg tiles on the roofs of the original cottages, which the bungalows replaced, were retained but are now lost when re-roofing took place earlier this year. An Article 4 Direction may have prevented this.

This includes a list of buildings in Bredgar Conservation Area eligible for inclusion within the Swale Local Heritage List.

Noting that the Local Heritage List can also include structures other than buildings, as well as green spaces etc., Bredgar Parish Council would like to put forward the following to add to the list:

- Gore Pond, at the junction of Gore Road and The Street. The Pond has been in its present form since at least the 18th century, probably much longer.
- The Recreation Ground, Gore Road. This was opened in 1897 and had been in continuous use.
- The Village Sign. On the corner of Gore Road and Primrose Lane. Made of wrought iron, showing a view across the pond to the gable end of Chantry House, this was designed by Norman Hepple R.A. and installed in 1972. It was given by Bredgar Women's Institute to celebrate their golden jubilee.

Page 30 (last line) and Page 31, first paragraph.

Bredgar Parish Council notes with approval the suggestion that investigations should be made with a view to removing or undergrounding redundant cable and reducing the number of poles; as also the suggestions in the bullet-point list, p. 31 concerning audits of signage, street furniture, supply lines and the possible replacement of concrete highway kerbs with more traditional ones.

Page 32. "4.8 Heritage at risk"

BPC is pleased to see that three village assets have been flagged up as in poor condition and possibly eligible for inclusion in the Swale Heritage at Risk Register.

4. Conclusion

Bredgar Parish Council, subject to recognition of the various points outlined above, fully approves the Appraisal and would like to thank Peter Bell for his thorough and detailed work and for the benefit of his deeply informed opinions, which will contribute greatly to the protection of the village of Bredgar and Bredgar's Conservation Area in the coming years.

David Priestley

Parish Councillor with responsibility for conservation

for Bredgar Parish Council

July 13th 2023

