



Windermere Villas Conservation Area

Summary

- 1 Members are asked to consider designation of the Windermere Villas Conservation Area following approval of the draft for consultation by Park Strategy and Vision Committee and subsequent public consultation.

Recommendations:

- a **It is recommended that Members designate Windermere Villas Conservation Area (Annex 1).**
- b **It is recommended that Members adopt the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (Annex 2) and delegate final minor amendments to the Director of Sustainable Development.**

Background

- 2 Park Strategy and Vision Committee has discussed the assessment and consultation for creating a new conservation area as follows:

Previous Committee	Main points discussed	Changes made
Park Strategy and Vision Committee, 7 August 2025	A draft appraisal and management plan identified the special qualities of the eastern shore of Lake Windermere. A case was made to create a new conservation area.	Members agreed to hold a period of public consultation to seek views.

Previous Committee	Main points discussed	Changes made
Park Strategy and Vision Committee, 25 November 2025	Consultation feedback which included representations to remove some of the proposed area and introduce new areas within the boundary. A revised boundary was proposed.	Members agreed to a further period of targeted consultation on the revised boundary.

- 3 Conservation areas were first designated under the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 and are defined as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.”
- 4 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to survey and keep under review their district for areas which are of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate those areas as conservation areas. This Act also requires local authorities to review from time to time their existing conservation areas.
- 5 Within the Lake District National Park there are 23 conservation areas, covering both large and small settlements. The first Conservation Area to be designated was Ambleside in 1980; the most recent being Windermere in 2011. Keswick Conservation Area was reviewed in 2019/2020 and an amended boundary adopted in 2022.
- 6 Designation as a conservation area allows the National Park Authority to formulate specific policies and proposals to preserve or enhance the conservation area. These documents set out the special character of the conservation area (the appraisal) and make recommendations for future management of the area either through Development Management controls or enhancement projects (the management plan).

- 7 As the local planning authority for the area we must consider whether further historic areas need conservation area designation. Legally we must formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of our conservation areas by preparing Conservation Appraisals and Management Plans and keeping these under review.

Policy context

- 8 Paragraph 204 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2025) states that when considering the designation of conservation areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.
- 9 Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Management – Historic England Advice Note 1 (Second Edition) sets out the process for appraising and designating potential conservation areas. It also provides guidance on the types of areas which may be suitable for conservation area designation. Paragraph 73 states that: “Conservation area designation is not generally an appropriate means of protecting the wider landscape (agricultural use of land falls outside the planning framework and is not affected by designation as a conservation area) but it can protect open areas particularly where the character and appearance concerns historic fabric, to which the principal protection offered by conservation area designation relates.”
- 10 The eastern shore of Lake Windermere exemplifies many of the characteristics of the high-quality historic environment that typifies the surrounding landscape. An appraisal (Annex 2) of the area has been carried out to assess the special qualities that would merit its designation and to help define a boundary for a proposed conservation area. A management plan (Annex 2) has also been prepared outlining the measures for the preservation and enhancement of the area if the designation is supported.

- 11 The Appraisal and Management Plan (Annex 2) has been updated following two rounds of public consultation, including the revised boundary. The proposed conservation area boundary contains a number of internationally recognised Villas and their associated Villa Landscapes, which are individually significant as designated heritage assets, but collectively form an Attribute of Outstanding Universal Value contributing to the overall significance of the World Heritage Site.

Links to Vision and Management Plan

- 12 The eastern shore of Windermere is also highly significant for its tracts of ancient woodland and individual specimen trees planted as part of the designed villa landscapes. Our intention for the Lake District's historic environment and cultural landscape is described in the Vision and the strategies in the emerging Lake District National Park Partnership Plan 2026-2031 and Lake District National Park Partnership Plan 2020 - 2026. The Partnership Plan is the management plan for the National Park and World Heritage Site. Of particular relevance is Partnership Plan (2020-2026) Strategy 2 - Sustained distinctive and well maintained built historic environment and landscape, Strategy 5 - Well considered tree and woodland establishment and improvement and Strategy 7- The continuation of the Lake District as a source of artistic, literary, and cultural inspiration.

Links to Business Plan

- 13 Business Plan Action 6 Historic Environment: Lead the delivery of the Lake District Historic Environment Strategy 2020-2025 Action Plan, through the Historic Environment programme board. Within this action, the designation of the Windermere Villas Conservation Area is a key milestone.

Links to other strategic plans

- 14 Local Plan Policy 01 'National and International significance of the Lake District' states that the extraordinary harmony and beauty of the Lake District landscape and its Special Qualities, including the attributes of Outstanding Universal Value, will be conserved and enhanced.

- 15 Local Plan Policy 07 'Historic Environment' seeks to conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including the character, authenticity, integrity, setting and views of the historic environment. This includes the designation and management of conservation areas. The designation of the Windermere Villas Conservation Area supports the implementation of these planning policies.

Options

- 16 Members are presented with the following options:
- a) Designate the Windermere Villas Conservation Area in line with the amended proposed boundary (Annex 1);
 - b) Adopt the accompanying Conservation Area Appraisal and Management plan (Annex 2) and delegate sign off by final minor amendments to the Director of Sustainable Development;
 - c) Do not designate the conservation area; or
 - d) Propose an alternative approach.

Proposals

- 17 It is recommended that Members select options a) and b). Members of Park Strategy and Vision Committee have contributed to and agreed the draft Conservation Area boundary, Appraisal and Management Plan for public consultation and the feedback from public consultation (Annex 4 and 5) generally supports the establishment of the Windermere Villas Conservation Area.
- 18 The boundary has been refined twice following these rounds of public consultation and the boundary for adoption includes Belle Isle following careful consideration of its inclusion (Annex 6). The designation of the Windermere Villas Conservation Area will support the LDNPA's responsibilities to conserve or enhance an area of special historic interest which includes a number of internationally recognised Villas and their associated Villa Landscapes and wider setting. The Windermere Villas are individually

significant as designated heritage assets but collectively form an Attribute of Outstanding Universal Value contributing to the overall significance of the World Heritage Site.

Stakeholder consultation

- 19 A Consultation Statement, April 2026, is enclosed in Annex 5. This summarises all representations received on the amended boundary and how these have been taken into account. This adds to the Consultation Statement produced in November 2025 (Annex 4) to inform outcomes from the first consultation, resulting in the revised boundary now being proposed for designation.
- 20 Briefings were held with several businesses located in the proposed area, Bowness & Windermere Town Council and Cartmel Fell Parish Council. Key stakeholders, partners and the public were invited to take part in the public consultations. We have listened to the feedback, reviewed the proposals and now suggest an amended proposed conservation area boundary (Annex 1).
- 21 There has been a particular focus of interest as to whether or not Belle Isle should be included in the Conservation Area. This is outlined fully in the Consultation Statement April 2026 (Annex 5) and in the supporting justification (Annex 6).

Demonstrating best value

- 22 **Challenged** – Considering whether further historic areas need conservation area designation fulfils our Statutory Purpose, Management Plan Strategies and Business Plan Action.
- 23 **Compared** – Our approach is best practice and follows Historic England guidance on preparing conservation area appraisals and management plans and using the tools available to conserve and manage conservation areas.

- 24 **Consulted** – Consultation has been carried out both internally and with key partners, stakeholders, and wider public via a range of engagement methods. This has resulted in proposed changes to the boundary.
- 25 **Compete** – We are the only organisation with the duty and powers to designate, manage and adopt strategies for conserving conservation areas in the Lake District National Park.

Finance considerations

- 26 There are no immediate financial implications from the designation of a Conservation Area. It is anticipated that the designation will result in an increase in tree work applications which may impact slightly upon resourcing – mitigation measures have been considered below.

Risk

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Risk	Type	Mitigation	Level
There is a risk that if we do not designate the conservation area, we will be unable to conserve and enhance this area to the extent to which we could if the designation was in place.	Reputational	Members take a decision on the recommendations to designate the Conservation Area and agree to adopt the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. The process of reviewing the condition and status of areas of architectural and historic interest mitigates the risk of loss of buildings and features of special interest along with the context and setting of	Low

Risk	Type	Mitigation	Level
		heritage assets and component attributes of Outstanding Universal Value.	
There is a risk in raising expectations by highlighting areas where improvements are needed but our resources limit our ability to deliver action on the ground.	Reputational	Designating the Conservation Area and adopting the Appraisal and Management Plan will help us to lever in external funding and partner support for future work.	Low
There is a risk of additional tree work applications and enforcement cases placing strain on Development Management Resources.	Financial	Following adoption, we will prepare additional guidance on the implications of the Conservation Area for managing trees and when/how to seek our advice and seek consent.	Low
There is a risk that the designation of the conservation area will be legally challenged.	Financial / reputational	The preparation of the Conservation Area boundary and Appraisal and Management Plan has followed due process, and we have taken account of the feedback received and made amendments accordingly. The appraisal and	Low

Risk	Type	Mitigation	Level
		management plan provides evidence for why designation is appropriate.	

28 There are some risks associated with the conservation area designation. However, greater controls over demolition and works to trees, along with recommendations in the management plan have received public support in the majority.

Legal considerations

29 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to survey and keep under review their district for areas which are of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate those areas as conservation areas. This Act also requires local authorities to review from time to time their existing conservation areas.

Diversity implications

30 We have considered diversity and equality issues in this process, and it is not considered that there will be a negative impact on groups with relevant protected characteristics as a result of this work. We have paid particular regard to diversity and equality issues through the consultation process and will also take these issues into account when delivering our services in relation to conservation areas in future.

Sustainability

31 Long term, the designation of a new conservation area, along with the associated appraisal and management plan seeks to develop and support a sense of place and context for communities to benefit from the potential and intrinsic value that the historic environment and cultural landscape can provide for tourism, culture, wildlife and wellbeing. It also contributes to sustain the social and economic

vibrancy of the area. Conserving the historic environment is inherently a sustainable approach to development and promotes the best use of existing resources – this is particularly relevant in an area of the National Park.

Background papers	1. Park Strategy & Vision Committee, 7 August 2025, Item 10, Windermere Villas Conservation Area 2. Park Strategy and Vision Committee, 25 November 2025, Item 7, Windermere Villas Conservation Area
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Date written	28/05/2026

Annex 1: Map of the proposed Windermere Villas Conservation Area boundary

Annex 2: Windermere Villas Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan
(March 2026)

Annex 3: Superseded Windermere Villas Conservation Area boundaries used for public consultation

Annex 4: Consultation Statement (November 2025)

Annex 5: Consultation Statement (April 2026)

Annex 6: Justification for the inclusion of Belle Isle within the Windermere Villas Conservation Area

Annex 1: Map of the proposed Windermere Villas Conservation Area boundary

Annex 2: Windermere Villas Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (March 2026)

Annex 3: Superseded draft Conservation Area Boundary

Annex 4: Consultation Statement (November 2025)

Annex 5: Consultation Statement (April 2026)

Annex 6: Justification for the inclusion of Belle Isle within the Windermere Villas Conservation Area