Bottesford Conservation Area
Designating Authority: Melton Borough Council
Area: 22.32 hectares

Introduction

Conservation Areas are ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. Designation of a conservation area recognises the character of an area worthy of preservation and enhancement and ensures the safeguarding of the best of our local heritage as represented by both buildings and the ambient environment, i.e. the spaces between and around buildings when viewed as a whole. Local Planning Authorities have a general duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas, consequently there are more stringent planning controls and obligations in respect of new development, demolitions, alterations, highway works and advertisements.

Conservation Area status is not just about the attractive areas of settlements. In some instances, areas, which either contribute little, or are even detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area, are included within the boundary because of their potential for enhancement. Conservation Area status does not mean that new development may not take place but must reflect the local architectural vernacular in scale, siting, massing, details and materials. Special attention should be paid to not only building form but also fenestration and materials.

A Character Appraisal is seen as the best method of defining the key elements that contribute to that special historic and architectural character of an area. It is important that all interested parties are aware of those elements that must be preserved or enhanced. It is intended that the character appraisals will guide the local planning authority in making planning decisions and, where opportunities arise, preparing enhancement schemes. It will be a material consideration when considering applications for development within the conservation area.

Location and Context

Bottesford is situated in the northern part of the Vale of Belvoir close to the borders of both Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. The village lies adjacent to the A52 trunk road some 16 miles east of Nottingham and 7 miles north west of Grantham. Melton Mowbray is 14 miles to the south. The Nottingham to Grantham railway also serves the village.

The village has traditionally served as a market centre for local trade and today fulfils a modest role as a rural centre and source of local employment although it is principally a dormitory settlement.

Bottesford derives its name from the Anglo-Saxon ‘Ford belonging to the botl (house) and appears on record in the Domesday book as Botesford (Eckwall 1960). The village developed as a fording place on the River Devon and later as a convenient stopping place en route from Grantham to Nottingham.

Bottesford is a Domesday village close associated with the Counts, Earls and Dukes of Rutland and the name indicates a mixed Saxon-Danish-Norse population before the Norman Conquest.

The Conservation Area Boundary

The conservation area boundary encompasses the central High Street and old Market Place and seeks to protect the historic core of the village.

Spatial Character and Townscape Quality

The village is somewhat unique in Leicestershire in that due to its location in the north of the county its buildings reflect the traditions of neighbouring Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire as well as local influences. There is a tradition of local materials, initially locally quarried ironstone, but latterly local bricks and distinctive roofing tiles.

Throughout the Conservation Area, the more traditional buildings built in brick and stone, have had modern bungalows and houses (not necessarily in complementary styles) built alongside as infill housing.
High Street

The edge of the conservation area commences from the west with number 67, a relatively untouched red brick property with clay roofing pantiles. A plaque declares its date as being 1B June 1830. This red bricked house is typical of many delightful properties within the village.

The street is wide at this point with a grassy verge and high hedge to the left and sweeps round to the right to a visual stop in the distance at the junction with Belvoir Road. Properties on the right-hand side tend to be built up to the road edge, whilst properties on the left are generally set back with front gardens, thus giving the street a sense of space and light with the benefit of many mature trees and shrubs. A property of merit is the fine Edwardian villa (Beechwood) dated 1903.

Many traditional outbuilding ranges are located to the rear of properties along High Street and number 51 is a fine example of this trend. Number 43 has Yorkshire sash windows to the ground and first floors.

The street continues along past the grade II Thatch Restaurant with many properties having a “stepped” appearance in relation to the road. Number 10 has unusual windows, wonderful diaper patterned brickwork and a fine range of outbuildings. Numbers 4, 6 and 8 are a magnificent Georgian terrace. The old Bank building adds historic character to the area and the street ends with J R Mowers, having a traditional shop front, and the Rutland Arms public house. New-build together with some unfortunate modernisations have had a detrimental impact upon the historic character of this section of the Conservation Area.

Albert Street

A small grassed area at the left-hand side marks the entrance to Albert Street, with Vine House to the right. This is a wide street with buildings to both sides. Some principal elevations are onto the highway with others end-on. A beautiful mature tree forms a visual stop at the far end. There are several traditional red-brick and slate buildings set back behind a grass verge. The Doctor’s surgery is to the right and the church spire can be viewed over the rooftops. Honeypot cottage is an attractive property of brick and pantiles with an eye-catching dentil course.

Queen Street

The commercial centre of the village can be said to have developed here. There is a mixture of old and new buildings to both sides with red brick and pantiles predominating. The older buildings are generally unspoilt whilst there is also a mixture of older and more modern retail outlets. The police station and a terrace of fine Victorian houses dominate the eastern side. Queenswalk leads through to the old chapel and a small park. Towards Chapel Lane the Church spire is very evident over the surrounding rooftops.

Chapel Street

At the junction with Queen Street a group of red brick houses and outbuildings roofed with Bottesford Blue pantiles can be seen. Looking in a westerly direction, the Wesleyan Chapel can be seen with a date stone of 1845; this was converted to housing in 1988. Looking towards the east, the gable end of the Old Manse is very evident with its substantial chimney stacks. More modern properties tend to dilute the historic character of the street.

Devon Lane

Devon Lane runs north from Chapel Street through the ford on the river Devon adjacent to the late 18th Century footbridge. The spire of St Mary’s church is evident at this point looking towards the east. The ford area dominates the streetscene and provides a tranquil, calm and beautiful location with many trees and much greenery overhanging the stream. The sound of birds singing and water flowing has a very soothing effect.

Trees provide a ‘tunnel effect’ over the road before number 18 and the primitive chapel. Adjacent cottages provide a strong feature marred by a pole mounted sub-station to the rear. The Green is surrounded with lovely red brick houses and cottages with Bottesford Blue pantiles. Traditional brick paving traverses the pathway in front of number 12, 14, 16 and 18 behind a grass verge. Ivy house is also built in red brick with slate tiles and is a traditional Victorian Villa set back behind copper red walls.
The Green, 26 Devon Lane, is a grade II listed building located behind a fine brick wall to the west of the road. This traditional red brick dwelling is located behind a long brick wall and has several unusual outbuildings.

The road takes a sharp turn to the east, twisting towards Rutland House and the bridge over the river with an open space fronting the Church of St Mary. The area is beautifully tranquil where ducks swim under the bridge and the main iron entrance gates herald the main entrance into the churchyard. Red brick predominates whether from the expansive two metre high wall surrounding the churchyard at this point, or from the magnificent grade II listed Providence Cottage dated 1723 and brickwork surrounds.

**Church Street**

A view of roofscapes prevails towards Station Road and the hard landscape is interspersed with trees. The magnificent old Rectory can be seen behind substantial brick walls to the south of the church. Some new development within its old grounds can be viewed.

**Station Road**

There is an area of substantial new development to the north of the road incorporating Beacon View, Stroud Court and Marsh Court. This has been relatively well designed and pays tribute to the vernacular brickwork within the older parts of Bottesford.

The railway arrived in 1850 with the line bringing minerals to the extensive Bottesford sidings from workings behind Belvoir Castle. The station was designed by T C Hine, the great 19th century Nottingham Architect. The Conservation Area envelopes the whole area surrounding the Victorian railway station and its peripheral buildings including the station master's house, level crossing keeper's cottage and original station building. These buildings are traditional and generally unspoilt. A wide grass verge lies to the south of the site.

**Market Street**

Here lies the historic heart of the village with Market Street leading into Grantham Road. A scheduled Ancient Monument (the old market cross) is located in the centre of the Market Place and the old stocks and whipping post are close by. An old trough for floral planting was presented in 1985. The old Victorian village school is situated opposite and this has been transformed into the village library and is classed as a building of local interest.

At this location there is a range of properties to the west of the road, including The Bull Inn, and the Red Lion to the north. There are distant views out of the village as the road meanders into the distance towards Grantham.

There is a striking barn conversion at Daybells Farm with traditional red brick buildings and finer brick detailing is evident encompassing a vernacular feature of the village.

**Quality and Character of Building**

Bottesford is blessed with many magnificent listed buildings including the grade I listed 13th Century Church of St Mary the Virgin. As with many churches this is a building with a mixture of architecture added over the centuries. The lower part of the chancel dates from the 12th century with the remainder added during the next three hundred years. The nave roof was finally completed in 1740. The octagonal crocketed spire is considered to be the tallest in the County at 210 feet and there are two stunning gargoyles on the south transept. A headstone to Thomas Parker and a table tomb are both grade II listed within the grounds along with the gate piers and gates to the churchyard to the north.

There are two Scheduled Monuments within the village – Fleming’s Bridge and the stone cross within the Market Place. The stocks and whipping post are grade II listed.

A building worthy of its grade II listing is Providence Cottage on Rectory Lane. The cottage is dated 1723 in burnt bricks on the eastern elevation and also has the initials REH set into the elevation. The roof is now pantiled, but the slope would suggest that it was thatched in times gone by.
Over the road from St Mary’s is the Duke of Rutland’s Almshouse which is grade II listed. This was begun in 1590 and was a home for elderly local men called Bedesmen having once been a hospital. The building has two M shaped roofs of differing pitches, both with concrete tiles dating from 1985.

The Rectory, grade II listed is an ironstone and brick building dated 1708 and enlarged during the 19th Century and altered in 1988. Located on Rectory Lane behind wrought iron gates and within large, landscaped gardens this is a magnificent and stylish building has a slate roof.

The Police Station, on Queen Street, is grade II listed and is dated 1846. It is red brick with a slate roof and three bays. The central bay projects under a pediment and the building is an early example of a purpose built police station.

Market Street is the location of Dr. Fleming’s house which was once a series of women’s’ almshouses built in ironstone and mainly rebuilt in brick during the late 18th century. A stone plaque over a door reads “Dr. Fleming’s Hospital 1620”. This is grade II listed.

There are several grade II listed properties on High Street and a really exceptional example of this is the Thatched Restaurant set back from the road in spacious grounds. This is the only thatched building in Bottesford.

There are many listed buildings within the confines of the Conservation Area

Natural Elements

There are several open areas within the village of Bottesford, most notably, an area to the north east of the churchyard, the churchyard itself and an area of trees to the south of Devon Lane. Trees play a significant part in the streetscene in most of Bottesford.

The river Devon flows through the village, almost circling the church and this provides a beautiful and tranquil location for residents.

Along the banks of the Devon within the centre of the village, the soil is a pebbly sand known locally as running sand. Tractors have been known to sink into this.

Views within the village tend to be intimate and enclosed, though the wider Grantham Road provides a slightly extended view out of the village towards Grantham.

Negative factors

The use of inappropriate materials, such as upvc double glazed window units, plastic rainwater goods and modern brickwork has had a negative effect on the character of the conservation area in some instances.

For further help and advice please contact:
The Council has also prepared a leaflet entitled ‘A Guide to Conservation Areas’ which gives general advice. Copies are available from the Regulatory Services Section as detailed above.

The above is an appraisal of the Bottesford Conservation Area which highlights the most significant factors which make it worthy of Conservation status. The omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to apply that it is of no interest.