

Edmondthorpe Conservation Area

Designated: October 1994

Designating Authority: Melton Borough Council

Area: 27.00 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 the buildings and the ambient environment, ie: 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 not only to building form but also to fenestration and materials.

A Character Appraisal is seen as the best method of defining the key elements that contribute to the 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

Originally a Danish settlement currently comprising a few farms and cottages gathered around the Church of St Michael and All Angels. Edmondthorpe is an attractive stone built village which has grown in linear fashion along a 'cul-de-sac' lane. It is located 6 miles to the east of Melton Mowbray and approximately 1 mile south of Wymondham relatively close to the County border with Rutland.

The village name is defined from the Old English as 'Edmaer's outlying farm/settlement'. It was later the fee of 'Edmund' Crouchback, Earl of Leicester and brother of Edward I (1298). There is also evidence of Roman occupation.

The opening of the Melton Mowbray to Oakham canal had a considerable impact on village life. Three locks, a lock-keeper's cottage and a public house existed to support the boatmen and maintenance workers. All have now disappeared, demolished shortly after the canal closed in 1847.

The Conservation Area Boundary

The conservation area is centred on the historic core of the village and includes large tracts of open land to both the north and south.

Special Character and Townscape Quality

The village form is essentially linear with limited development interspersed by open spaces and paddocks on either side of High Street, giving the village a very open textured feel. However the extensive length of low stone walling between the dispersed properties provides a strong visual link through the central part of the village

The Drift

The approach to the village from the west is via a gated access. On passing through the gate is the Drift which basically comprises six cottages, in two groups, to the right hand side. Numbers 1 to 4 are within a fine unspoilt red brick building with slate roof with decorative eaves detail, plat bands and window dressings in contrasting pale brick. It bears the date stone WAP 1872.

By contrast numbers 5 and 6 are a pair of semi detached cottages in natural stone with stone drip moulds window dressings under a slate roof with brick chimney stacks.

Main Street

Unusual slate gate post. The varied roofscape is a strong feature of the view down Main Street from here with the village hall forming a visual stop and the backdrop of mature trees framing the view.

Beyond New Farm on the left hand side is a row of unspoilt stone and slate cottages, with dormer windows breaching their eaves, set back behind neat front garden areas. Opposite the village hall and at the junction with Woodwell Head Lane stands No 20, another unspoilt stone and slate detached house with a date stone WAP 1899. There are extensive views down the lane over open countryside and also over fields towards the Edmondthorpe Hall outbuildings.

The village hall, formerly the village school, is a fine stone building with a steeply pitched slate roof. The feature window is arched with stone mullions and transoms. Date stone WAP 1863. Directly in front stands the splendid grade II listed village pump which is in cast and wrought iron, obelisk shaped on a square base with coved moulded panels on each side, has a curved handle and a spout in the form of a dragon. It is inscribed 'WAP 1856'.

Continuing along Main Street towards the Church, which can be viewed in the distance, there is a long stretch of stone wall with stone cappings on the left hand side marking the back edge of the highway and enclosing part of the former Hall grounds, indeed some of the surviving Hall outbuildings can be glimpsed through the tree cover. On the right are two pairs of Estate cottages set back from the road and beyond them the Old Post Office (WAP 1885) closer to the highway and set against a backdrop of mature trees. There is a wide grass verge at this point with a gnarled and twisted hollow tree stump and a K6 Telephone kiosk. Further down is Manor Farm a fine stone dwelling set back in its own extensive grounds and beyond that the stone boundary wall enclosing the former walled garden to The Hall comes into view. This is currently overgrown and the timber entrance gate is in very poor condition. Opposite the original water pump is still in situ within a niche in the boundary wall. Entering Main Street from the west the outbuildings of New Farm form a visual stop on the bend. These are a group of traditional stone and slate buildings set around a yard, with the listed farmhouse (NWP 1772) standing to the rear. There are also some associated stone outbuildings on the opposite side of the road also set around a cobbled central yard.

The grade II listed Holly Cottage, formerly the North gate lodge, marks the entrance driveway to the site of the former Hall and its outbuildings. It was probably designed by RW Johnson in the Tudor revival style and was built in 1867 as witnessed by the inscribed rainwater heads and WAP 1867 datestone. It is in ironstone with limestone dressings with slate roofs. The original decorative iron barred gate is still in situ. From the road near Holly Cottage a set of bee boles may be seen in the wall to the left of the church..

Edmondthorpe Hall



Edmondthorpe Hall was built by Sir Roger Smith in 1621 and extensively altered by the Pochin family, the present Estate owners. Various outbuildings were added in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All are all grade II listed and built in local ironstone under Swithland slate roofs. These include the stable range and lodgings (C18 but remodelled by RW Johnson in 1868), grooms quarters and service wing and the carriage store, workshop and loose box , all designed by RW Johnson in 1869.

In 1881 William Ann Pochin (1844-1901) lived at Edmondthorpe Hall. He is credited with establishing and improving many properties locally, which often carry a date and his initials. By 1912, Edmondthorpe Hall was the residence of Victoria Alexandrina, Countess of Yarborough

During the Second World War the Hall was used as a prisoner of war camp for Italian personnel, but was destroyed by fire in 1943 and all that now remains are part of the cellars. However the outbuildings survived and remain in a reasonable condition following some restoration works. These include the grade II listed Stable range and lodgings dating from the eighteenth century but remodelled by R. W. Johnson in 1868, the groom's quarters and service wing (1869) and the carriage store, workshop and adjoining loose box (1869).

Main Street (Continued)

Opposite the lodge The Gables stands in an elevated position and has an unusual patterned slate roof. To the left the grade I Parish Church of St Michael and All Angels is situated within an elevated walled churchyard which serves to separate it from the open countryside beyond and consequently offers fine views to the north. The Church has thirteenth century origins and provides a focal point within the street scene situated amongst surrounding farms and cottages.

On the opposite side of the street to the Church is a small cemetery enclosed by a stone wall and adjacent the Church stands Church Farm now comprising a fine stone and slate farmhouse with associated traditional farm outbuildings set around a yard.

As the road bends beyond Church Farm a narrow track leads off to a cluster of traditional farm buildings, one of which abuts the highway, that are unfortunately in poor condition, adjacent to Sycamore House (WAP 1887) which stands in an elevated position. Stoneycroft House, a fine dwelling, and its associated outbuildings sits back from the highway within its own grounds.

Dairy Lane

This narrow lane runs off Main Street and leads to a pair of cottages which demark the boundary of the conservation area.

Teigh Road

Heading South from the junction of Main Street, Teigh Road forms the western boundary of the conservation area. The Old Rectory set back behind a stone boundary wall and line of mature trees is a fine, unspoilt building. Further South is Lavender Cottage, a darker stone building, which has a beehive attached to its facade.

Quality and Character of Buildings

Building materials are generally natural stone with slate roofs although there are examples of red brick. Stone walling is also a significant feature within the street scene and generally provides a visual link between buildings. In general terms the built environment of the village is largely unspoilt and the majority of buildings are maintained to a high standard.

There are seven listed buildings within the village, all of which have been mentioned previously. Additional information on the Church:

The Parish Church of St Michael and All Angels is grade I listed and currently maintained by The Churches Conservation Trust. The fine tower is 13th century, with a 15th century upper part where the stone changes. Decorated work predominates in the mixed styles of the body of the church. Inside are a series of impressive monuments to members of the Smith family: the most stunning is the three-tiered alabaster monument to Sir Roger Smith, d. 1655. Other items of interest in this light interior include a mediaeval screen and a George III Coat of Arms dating from 1777.

Natural Elements

There are open areas of particular significance throughout the length of the village. Open land to both the north and south affords good views out into the open countryside. Edmondthorpe is a well treed village and the area around the former cricket ground and the ruins of the Hall are fine examples.

Negative Factors

The use of inappropriate materials such as upvc double glazed window units and plastic rainwater goods has been kept to a minimum within Edmondthorpe although there are some examples which do adversely affect the character of the conservation area. Overhead cables also mar the street scene in some parts of the village.

For further help and advice please contact:

The Regulatory Services Section
Melton Borough Council
Parkside
Station Approach
Burton Street
Melton Mowbray
Leicestershire
LE13 1GH
Telephone: 01664 502502

The Council has prepared a leaflet entitled 'A Guide to Conservation Area' which gives general advice. Copies are available from the Regulatory Services Section as detailed above

The above is an appraisal for the Edmondthorpe 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 imply that it is of no interest.