

Ashby Folville Conservation Area
Designated: March 1974
Designating Authority: Leicestershire County Council
Area: 17.65 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, 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 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

Ashby Folville forms part of the Parish of Gaddesby with the nearby villages of Barsby and Gaddesby. Ashby Folville is a small, open textured linear village in a well-landscaped valley setting alongside the Gaddesby Brook.

The name Ashby Folville indicates a Danish settlement, later given a Norman French family name. The 'ash' part of the name is common for villages in places where ash trees grew but it can also be from an old Norse personal name of Aski.

The Conservation Area Boundary

The historic core of the village is centred on St Mary's Church but the Conservation Area boundary is widely drawn and extends beyond the built area to include the mature wooded landscape to the west of the village as well as some open land to the north.

Spatial Character and Townscape Quality

The secluded village is hidden amongst a wealth of tree cover within a valley setting. There is a distinct linear feel to Ashby Folville as the main road meanders through the village.

The main entrance to the village is from the west. A well-treed approach leads you into the village via a bridge, over the brook, into Folville Street. There is a loose texture to this section of the village, the only properties visible are located to the North of Folville Street, and these are predominantly detached dwellings set back from the road within large gardens. The south of Folville Street is dominated by a large expanse of open land surrounded by mature trees used as the village cricket ground. This area brings the countryside into the heart of the village.

Around the first bend Folville Street winds through the village and the juxtaposition of buildings and styles becomes evident. The loose textured theme continues into the centre of the village, the properties being predominantly detached dwellings situated within their own grounds and set back from the highway.

Leading north from Folville Street at the western edge of Ashby Folville is Highfield End. This narrow road is initially bordered on each side by a significant amount of open space giving an open texture. Proceeding along Highfield End the properties are situated closer to the highway with a variety of principal and gable end elevations fronting the road.

Church Lane, south of Folville Street to the west of the village creates a particularly beautiful setting. The wealth of trees bordering the Lane forms a leafy canopy overhead. Bordered to the west by the cricket ground and to the east of the churchyard, Church Lane has a distinctly rural feel.

Unfortunately there is little variation in floorscape, being predominantly modern materials. Notable exceptions are the glimpses of cobbled courtyards leading to the farmyard at the rear of Harewell House and Morton House opposite. However, the variation in means of enclosure offers greater visual interest in the form of brick and stone walls, iron railings and hedging.

The use of brickwork patterns is widespread in the village, notable examples being the prolific use of dentil eaves courses. Most properties within the village setting are unspoilt with the majority of original architectural features still intact, for example stone mullions, Yorkshire sliding sash windows and leaded light windows. The wide variety of building styles creates a wealth of architectural diversity within the village.

There has been very limited infill building in recent years, exceptions being to the north of Highfield End and along the east of Folville Street. As a result there are still many open spaces throughout the village, reinforcing its rural character.

Quality and Character of Building

There are seven listed buildings in Ashby Folville, the majority of these being located to the south of Folville Street and include the Manor House and its old stables (now converted to residential use), St Mary's Church, the Vicarage and adjoining Almshouses.

The Manor House, once the residence of the Smith-Carrington family is still a family home. Originally built in the mid 17th century, the property is Jacobean in style with ironstone and limestone ashlar dressings and slate roofs. The leaded casement windows are in cross and mullion style. The property is not visible from the street as it is well screened within its own 48-acre landscaped grounds.

The Old Stables built in the 17th century once part of the Manor complex have now been converted to create four separate dwellings. Although set back from Folville Street the front elevation is highly visible within the street scene with its timber framing, rendered noggin and Swithland slate roof.

St Mary's Church was built late 13th century and was subsequently restored in 1875 and again between 1885 and 1913, by J. Ely. The Church built of coursed and squared ironstone and ashlar limestone, with ashlar dressings. The roofs are lead. The elevated churchyard is surrounded by a stone wall. The setting of the Church provides a focal point within the centre of the village, the tower being visible from vantage points around Ashby Folville.

The Vicarage and adjoining Almshouses are situated to the South of St Mary's Church along Church Lane. The Vicarage built during the early 18th century and remodelled and extended during the 19th century is a striking building with its mix of architectural detailing and materials, using coursed rubble and brick with stone dressings, partly pebble dashed, with steep pitched Welsh and Swithland slate roofs and 5 gable brick stacks. The three Almshouses, now one single house is subservient to the Vicarage. There is a similarity in style marked by the use of coursed and squared ironstone with brick dressings and a steep pitched Swithland slate roof. The east gable is also noted for its exposed tie beam.

Harewell House is situated on Highfield End and occupies a highly visible position within the street. The farmhouse and service wing were built during the 18th century with a mid 19th century rear addition. The first floor bears a shaped stone incised with the house name and the initial 'C' indicating that the property once belonged to the Smith-Carrington family. A characteristic of the building is the use of dentillated eaves.

A further focal point within the village is the Tudor style Carrington Arms Public House. This substantial roadside building forms a visual stop when entering the village from the west at the junction of Highfield End and Folville Street.

Boundary walls are a particular feature of Ashby Folville and throughout the village there are substantial lengths of low stone walling. Much of the curtilage of the Manor House fronting Folville Street is defined by a high red brick wall, which is topped by traditional tile capping. This continues on the opposite side of the road and is a distinct feature of the street scene.

Whilst building styles and materials are varied throughout the village, red brick and slate roofs, including Swithland, dominate. There are several colour-washed properties with exposed timber framing to the front elevations which are a contributory factor to the village character. The best examples are Wootton Cottages built in the early 20th century which are located on Folville Street in the centre of the village. A notable feature of these buildings are the unusual decorative panels on the front façade bordering the oriel windows.

Natural Elements

A particularly distinctive characteristic of the village is the wealth of mature landscaped areas both within the village and its periphery. There is an abundance of mature trees, particularly to the west and south of the village. There are several important open spaces within the village notably the grounds of the Manor House, The Vicarage, the Almshouses and around St Mary's Church. Open land adjacent to Morton House and to the north of the Village Hall and Carrington Arms are also significant. Particularly sensitive areas of open countryside beyond the built up area include the extensive 'parkland' to the west of the village south of Ashby Road and woodland either side of Folville Street on entering the village from the east. The trees form a backdrop to views into the village from higher ground to the north west and the open fields to the west of Highfield End.

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. Although a certain amount of the modern development is incongruous to the setting of the Conservation Area these are overwhelmed by the traditional essence of the village and its typical rural character.

For further help and advice please contact:

*The Physical Environment Section
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The Council has also prepared a leaflet entitled 'A Guide to Conservation Areas' which gives general advice. Copies are available from the Physical Environment Section as detailed above

The above is an appraisal of the Ashby Folville 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.