

Buckminster Conservation Area

Designated: April 1973

Designating Authority: Leicestershire County Council

Area: 15.70 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

Buckminster is an attractive and well treed village situated 8 miles east of Melton Mowbray astride the B676 Melton to Bourne road, close to the County border with Lincolnshire. The village grew during the Victorian era as an 'Estate' village for the Earls of Dysart and has remained virtually unchanged since. Many properties in the local area are still owned by the Buckminster Estates, who are linked with the Tollemache family who live in Buckminster Park: the former home of the Earl. The village was first recorded in the Domesday Book as Buchminstre meaning 'Bucca's monastery church' and the land was owned by the Bishop of Lincoln.

The Conservation Area Boundary

The conservation area boundary encompasses the whole of the built up area of the village. It also includes the open 'village green' area at the northern end of the settlement.

Special Character and Townscape Quality

The majority of properties were built as part of an agricultural workers community and now fall under the ownership of the Buckminster Trust Estate. In that regard the main characteristic of the village is its spacious layout and uniformity of the age, materials and architectural styling of the estate properties. Boundary walls are a particular feature of the conservation area and granite kerbstones are widespread.

Coston Road

The approach to the village from Melton Mowbray on the Coston Road is well treed. Passing a row of unspoilt estate cottages on the left hand side and turning the right angled bend in the road opens out into The Crescent, a circular arrangement of more estate houses set back behind grassed frontages. Around the next bend, at the junction the road layout splits three ways – Sproxton Road due west, and Main Street and Back Lane in a north easterly direction.

Sproxton Road

This road has a very rural and pleasantly tranquil feel, benefitting from a wealth of mature trees and extensive views over the surrounding open fields. The tree coverage is particularly dense to the west of the junction with canopies overhanging the road causing a tunnel effect but eventually thinning out to an avenue with a single evenly spaced row on either side. The only properties are on the south side - a group of unspoilt Estate cottages, in brick and tile but typified by a series of tall chimney stacks and the uniform colour scheme of burgundy front doors. These are arranged in a terrace of six and a pair of semi detached dwellings all set back behind well tended garden frontages.

Main Street

From the three way junction Main Street and Back Lane run almost parallel through the village. Stonelea, a fine stone and tile 1½ storey dwelling with a row of five roof dormers stand at the point where the roads part, facing onto Main Street. Opposite is the delightful village stores and post office. Cow Row adjacent is a splendid terrace of largely unspoilt dwellings in brick and

slate with varying front porches. The roofline is perforated by a series of pitched roof dormers with wavy bargeboards, typical of Estate properties, and topped by a row of tall chimney stacks and pots. Beyond the terrace there are views towards the south east over open countryside.

By contrast on the north side of Main Street the buildings are more randomly arranged interspersed with gardens and other open areas. Various building materials are evident but natural stone and red brick dominate. Beyond the slight bend in Main Street the tree cover becomes denser and complements the street scene the pattern of development too becomes more random although generally closer to the highway.

Two of the finer buildings in Main Street are located towards the northern end. Located on the north side behind a hedgerow and line of mature trees is the former Mowbeck Construction building. This is a fine industrial building, standing two storeys high in red brick under a hipped slate roof and currently under refurbishment. The grade II listed nineteenth century cast iron water pump is located at the entrance to this building.

Opposite The Tollemache Arms, the village public house dating from 1814, is a large stone building with a very steep pitched multi gabled roof. This is one of several examples throughout the village of the direct contrast between the pale grey limestone and mellow red brick.

Beyond this point Main Street splits at a three way junction with Stainby Road and School Lane.

Stainby Road

The red brick outbuildings associated with Manor Farm line the back edge of the highway on the north side. Dominating the views and acting as a landmark building in this part of the village is the tall, square red brick former water tower. These buildings contrast with the pale stone buildings opposite which mark the junction of School Lane.

Back Lane

Development along Back Lane is generally sparse. The north side has no buildings which enables distant views over open countryside. The south side comprises random buildings interspersed with open spaces which include the garden areas of some of the Main Street properties which run through to Back Lane. There are a mixture of dwellings and farm outbuildings mostly linked by boundary walls, all built close up to the highway giving a sense of continuity to the street scene. As elsewhere in the village the juxtaposition between red brick and pale stone is very evident.

One of the finest buildings in the lane is the Buckminster Farms Office. This three storey red brick Georgian property was formerly a shop and retains its original frontage. All the elements of a traditional shop frontage are evident including the fascia board, pilasters with decorated tops, an ornate door case and fanlight above the entrance door. The upper floors too remain unspoilt with the original Georgian double hung small pane sash windows under flat brick heads with stone cills.

The top end of Back Lane opens out into an extensive open grassed area interspersed with a series of pathways and planted with a selection of specimen trees. The area is bounded to the north by the tall brick boundary wall to Buckminster Park, the former home of the Earls of Dysart, and overall forms a splendid setting to the Parish Church.

The green continues on the other side of Main Street and is terminated by the front wall of the former stable block to Buckminster Park. This is a fine façade comprising a series of flat stone pilasters with brick panelling with windows between and topped by triangular pediments. The stable yard behind is entered through an impressive archway with a pair of fine panelled timber gates with a cast iron grill insertion in each. Regrettably some unfortunate changes to the stable buildings which enclose the yard have marred its original character.

Church Drive

Leading off the western end of the green space this is the location of St John the Baptist Church, The Dysart Mausoleum and The Old Vicarage, a trilogy of listed buildings, all built in natural local stone of three different colours and all closely inter related. The Church acts as a village landmark, its spire visible on the Leicestershire Wolds for miles around.

Quality and Character of Buildings

Uniformity is the most striking characteristic of the built environment within Buckminster. As an Estate village the majority of buildings are of a similar age, generally late Victorian, similar architectural styling and built of similar materials. Red brick predominates, although there is some natural stone, with slate or concrete tiled roofs.

There are only four listed buildings within the village, the Parish Church, Mausoleum and Old Vicarage form a close knit group at the northern end whilst the grade II village cast iron water pump stands on Main Street opposite the public house.

St John the Baptist Church is grade I listed and dates from the thirteenth century but was restored and extended during the latter part of the nineteenth when repairs were undertaken to the spire and vestries added. It is in ashlar limestone with dressings under a lead roof. Adjacent is the Dysart family Mausoleum, built c1880 in ashlar with stone slab roof and grade II* listed.

Completing the group is the grade II Old Vicarage built in the early nineteenth century in brick and roughcast with a hipped slate roof. On the principal elevation is a fine Doric porch. The building has recently been restored to a high standard and the roughcast removed to expose a splendid stone frontage.

Natural Elements

The approach to the village from all directions is spectacular with a wealth of mature trees on every roadside. Views out of the village are available in all directions. Many open spaces, both within and abutting the village, contribute to the open village character set amongst an abundantly treed landscape. The grounds of the Parish Church and associated Mausoleum and Vicarage together with the open land between the Vicarage and Hanby House are of particular importance.

The vast woodland area known as Buckminster Park, although beyond the conservation area boundary does form a spectacular backdrop to the Church of St John the Baptist.

Negative Factors

The use of inappropriate materials such as upvc double glazed windows, plastic rainwater goods and unfortunate building materials is reasonably minimal within Buckminster.

Likewise telegraph poles and the associated overhead cables are also minimal and the impact of some is lessened as they merge into the background set against a backdrop of trees.

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 Areas' which gives general advice. Copies are available from the Regulatory Services Section as detailed above

The above is an appraisal for the Buckminster 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.