

Rotherby Conservation Area
Designated: February 1976
Designating Authority: Melton Borough Council
Area: 5.62 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

Rotherby is essentially a linear village located within the River Wreake valley some 7 miles to the west of Melton Mowbray. It sits on a minor road which runs parallel with the A607 Melton Mowbray to Leicester Road a quarter of a mile to the south. The village can be viewed from the Leicester road nestling amongst an area of mature trees.

The Conservation Area Boundary

The conservation area boundary encompasses the whole village.

Spatial Character and Townscape Quality

Main Street

The village of Rotherby, when approached over a cattle grid from Brooksby, nestles amongst an array of mature trees with canopies overhanging wide grass verges. There are two semi-detached properties to the left, numbers 3 and 5 with tile clad dormers and bay windows. The Grange at number 2 Main Street is located on the right hand side – a substantial ivy-clad dwelling set in mature grounds including an orchard and large gardens.

Red brick walls are an important element of the street scene along the whole of Main Street, particularly that stretch fronting a newer group of houses at the Nurseries.

The road climbs slightly and veers to the left showing All Saints Church, within its elevated church yard, as a focal point swathed within an area of trees. At this point number 4 Rotherby Cottage

can be seen, a double bay fronted house with unusual metal fenestration. Attached is number 6 Pump Cottage which was formerly a sixteenth century public house. The pump, to the northern side on The Row, was originally the only source of water in the village. Both cottages have replacement railings on brick walls forming the roadside boundary. A two metre high red brick wall complements the road on the right hand side.

At this point the road reaches a brow then sweeps downhill and bends to the right with views of dwellings and a varied roofscape beyond. Trees also frame the view and brick boundary walls continue to be a strong feature on the left hand side but grass verges predominate to the right. The properties to the south-east tend to be at a higher level, set back from the highway with their principal frontages facing the road - a red K6 telephone kiosk comes into view further along the road.

Main Street continues to snake and widen as it climbs away from the village centre, with the attractive, listed, Post Office Farm on the right hand side. There are two more modern dwellings, number 22 and 24 Main Street, located in a slightly raised position at this point immediately adjacent to the village wildlife garden. Opposite lies a modern brick-built development on a former Leicester City Council Nursery site. This development has been sympathetically designed successfully combining conversions of existing buildings with new buildings. The roofscape is a strong visual feature together with a two metre high old red brick wall which fronts the properties thus uniting the development and contributing to an attractive area within the village.

At the end of the village, to the south, are three pairs of semi-detached houses the middle pair displaying an unusual brick feature. These much-altered houses benefit from extensive views over the fields towards Hoby and Ragdale.

The Row

The Row, to the south-east, comprises a single terrace of small traditional red-brick cottages, some with Swithland slate roofs. The cottages all have bay windows to the front elevation and steps leading up their front doors. The road surface is partially cobbled, a rare survival of a traditional material.. The Row inclines slightly and it is terminated by a pair of substantial red-brick houses that were formerly a terrace of 5 cottages. One of the houses has a Swithland slate roof.

The Lane

The Lane runs in a northwesterly direction between numbers 23 and 25 Main Street. There is a strong feeling of enclosure at its junction with Main Street due to the imposing presence and nature of Manor Farm together with the two-metre high red-brick walls which run along both sides of the Lane.

The Lane opens out to a wider aspect at Amberwood to the west, and the pair of semi-detached properties at the end – numbers 2 and 4 – are unusual tile fronted properties with an ornate red-brick chimney stack with terracotta pots. These echo the design of numbers 3 and 5 Main Street.

The railway has a strong presence due to the close proximity of the Leicester to Melton Mowbray railway line which runs to the west of the village; trains can often be heard in the distance.

Quality and Character of Building

The village as a whole demonstrates a wide variety of building styles and materials, but red brick with slate roofs predominate. Swithland slate, Rosemary tiles and terracotta pantiles are also in evidence.

There are four listed buildings within the village. The imposing grade I All Saints' Church which was begun in the early 13th Century is constructed in ironstone ashlar with limestone dressings.

There is a Swithland slate roof to the chancel, lead roofs to the nave and aisles. Inside there is a perpendicular-style rood screen forming part of a complete scheme of decoration of chancel carried out from 1914-1920 as a memorial to the Beresford family who were rectors and patrons of the living for almost a century from the mid 19th Century.

Orchard House at number 33 Main Street has a plaque dated 1774 between the middle and left first floor windows. This property is constructed in hand-made red brick laid in Flemish brick bond with an attractive dog-tooth dentil course and has a Swithland slate roof. Substantial barns front the road as an integral part of the site.

Post Office Farmhouse and Laburnum cottage form a pair of substantial semi-detached buildings comprising the former post office, now a dwelling, and a farmhouse. They were probably constructed in the eighteenth century. Laburnum Cottage, number 22, has an original bowed shop front window and very attractive traditional red-brick and slate outbuildings. Both dwellings appear to have been constructed with handmade red-bricks and Post Office Farmhouse has recently been restored in a very sympathetic manner.

Manor Farmhouse is worthy of mention. This is a very substantial double-fronted property situated on Main Street at the junction with The Lane. Built in red brick, with a slate roof and central canopy over the six-panelled front door the house has a low brick front boundary wall topped with black railings.

Natural Elements

Rotherby has several areas of mature trees, most notably surrounding the church, and on both sides of the southern end of Main Street. The village benefits from a Wildlife Garden and pond which is situated adjacent to 23 Main Street. The whole of this area is protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

Negative factors

The use of inappropriate materials, such as upvc double-glazed window units, plastic rainwater goods and modern brickwork and render, although minimal, still has a negative effect on the character of the Conservation Area in part. There have been several modern developments within the Conservation Area which, together with cumulative change and modernisation, has not been of benefit to the historic character of the village.

For further help and advice please contact:

The Regulatory Services Section
Melton Borough Council
Council Offices
Nottingham Road
Melton Mowbray
Leicestershire LE13 0UL
Telephone; 01664 502502

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