

Croxton Kerrial Conservation Area

Designated: November 1981

Designating Authority: Melton Borough Council

Area: 18.76 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

High up in an ironstone area approaching on the A607 from Waltham on the Wolds, the village is seen in a panorama of colours and textures amongst tree cover towards the crest of a ridge in the landscape. Croxton Kerrial is some nine miles north east of Melton Mowbray, close to the Lincolnshire border. Croxton Abbey, the remains of which are still visible in Croxton Park, once a hunting seat of the Dukes of Rutland, are about one and a half miles south of the village. Race meetings were held at a racecourse in the park until 1914. There is a water spout on the main A607, which is part of an historic water supply scheme, using spring water from a nearby hill.

The Conservation Area Boundary

The conservation area boundary encompasses almost the entire built environment of the village with the exception of Highfield Crescent, three houses on Saltby Road and several dwellings at the eastern end of Main Street. It also includes a large area of open land along the western edge of the village, as well as fields and paddocks interspersed amongst the buildings.

Spatial Character and Townscape Quality

Croxton Kerrial is essentially a village split by the main Melton to Grantham road. The Conservation Area to the south of Main Road has few historic buildings and includes two areas of intensive new housing which do little to enhance the village character.

Middle Street

This street runs due north from its junction with Main Street. At the southern end it has an open character with buildings generally set back from the highway. There are two pairs of attractive ironstone cottages on the left with drip-moulds above the lower floor windows. Drip moulds are a common feature within the village and are found on several properties. To the right is Lings View Farm, a substantial ironstone farmhouse. It has a central panel in ornate stonework which incorporates a moulded hood over the doorway with an upper pediment. This is embellished by a carving of sheaves of corn and a stylistic peacock.

As it progresses the street narrows and dips past many stone and brick built cottages and the very prominent and elevated Old School House and Police House situated at the junction with Thorpes Lane. These imposing buildings are in ironstone with limestone dressings and have decorative barge boards to the gables.

On the opposite side, the Old Vicarage sits within its own extensive and well treed grounds. This stone property has a substantial timber porch providing a covered access from the street.

The street rises again towards the older part of the village which surrounds the Church, skirting a significant open area enclosed by a stone boundary wall, north of Thorpes Lane en-route. At the top end is Church Farm, a fine stone built

farm house occupying a prime location opposite the Church. It is an unspoilt property with sash windows surrounded by stone lintels and sills and is enclosed, in part, by attractive iron railings.

Beyond the conservation area boundary extensive views open up over attractive countryside with Belvoir Castle a focal point in the distance.

Chapel Lane

Chapel Lane runs west from Middle Street. At the junction is a relatively modern bungalow, in an elevation position, representing an unfortunate addition to the more traditional buildings on the lane.

The narrow lane slopes in an upward direction to a pinch point at number 8. There are many stone cottages both gable facing the lane and gable end on. Beecroft, Bank House and Ivy House are particularly fine examples of the local vernacular. The former Methodist Chapel is situated adjacent to the rear of Ivy House. The properties are widely spaced and on differing levels which gives a more open feel to this end of the lane and this is enhanced by the superb views over rolling countryside beyond the Conservation Area.

Church Lane

This is dominated by the Church of St Botolph and St John the Baptist which occupies an elevated position overlooking Church Lane as it sweeps down to join Top Road. To the north of the Lane is open countryside whilst there are several attractive cottages with an open area beyond on the south side.

One of the two village pumps occupies a roadside position.

Top Road

Approaching Top Road from the south gives an impression of spaciousness consistent with the buildings being set back from the road, both facing and gable end on, supplemented by wide grass verges on either side. There are several modern bungalows and houses at the commencement of the road whilst number 3 is a fine stone property. Paddock Farm to the east has been built with three differing roof levels, and includes an outbuilding tiled with a Bottesford Blue pantiled roof. There are fine open views towards Belvoir as the road sweeps down into Church Lane.

Thorpes Lane

The Lane links Middle Street with Top Road. The open area to the north drops away steeply beyond the stone boundary walls with views of the distant elevated church enhanced by the varied roofscape in the foreground. To the south are two unspoilt traditional stone and brick buildings. Number 2 has a datestone 1677.

School Lane

This is a narrow lane which encloses the school grounds and joins Middle Street to the east. Number 5, Corsican Cottage, is a fine example of an ironstone and red brick property with a brick dentil course under the eaves. Eye-catching traditional red brick paving extends along the highway, fronting the property.

The school is typically Victorian with many extensions added over the years. It has a plaque displaying the date 1845.

Saltby Road

The Conservation Area boundary runs directly to the east of The Forge following the line of the road. It then cuts back across the road and continues to the rear of the Windmill and the modern housing estate on Mill Lane and Shires Orchard. The Forge is an imposing stone building facing Main Street with drip mouldings above all the doors and windows. It is linked to a small outbuilding with Bottesford Blue pantiles.

Shires Orchard, Mill Lane and The Nook

These modern estates are unfortunate additions to the village which do not merit their Conservation status. The listed Windmill is on Mill Lane and has now been converted to residential use and assimilated into the new estate. The remains of a village pump are to be found in The Nook.

Main Street

Main Street, the A607 Melton to Grantham road, divides the village and creates a physical barrier between north and south. This part of the village has its attractions, however, the noise, pollution and speed of the traffic detracts from any advantages gained. The Conservation Area commences in the west with a pair of semi-detached stone cottages, 1 and 3 Main Street, set back from the road, behind a grass verge, adjacent to the Peacock Inn Public House. Opposite, the new Doctor's Surgery sits in an elevated position. The road slopes upwards, within a cutting, many of the buildings are located at a higher level close to the road-side. This gives an enclosed feel to this area of the village. The village hall, a

typical Victorian building with a more modern extension, is situated to the north of the street and two of the six listed structures are located on this road.

Hillside Farm is a particularly imposing building which is now unfortunately surrounded by the modern "Stackyard" development and new doctor's surgery. A cast-iron mile post, one of several on the road between Melton Mowbray and Grantham, can be seen on the pavement opposite the open land adjacent to the village hall.

The village post office is on the south side of the street along with more modern buildings. There are several interesting stone estate cottages and a substantial brick boundary wall outside number 10, with attractive dogtooth pattern.

Quality and Character of Building

The village as a whole demonstrates a wide variety of building styles and materials, but ironstone, limestone and red brick are evident throughout. Roofing materials are predominantly Welsh Slate and Bottesford Blue pantiles, but concrete tiles are widespread. Granite setts and kerb stones are found throughout the village.

There are only three listed buildings within the Conservation Area namely the Windmill, Hillside Farm and the Church of St. Botolph and St. John the Baptist with three listed tombs.

The Windmill is a Grade II listed, early to mid nineteenth Century example of a smock-mill built in yellow brick in English Bond. It has now been renovated and incorporated, not unsympathetically, into a modern house.

Hillside Farm is a late eighteenth Century farmhouse built in coursed ironstone with limestone dressings, which has been altered in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The house occupies an elevated position fronting the busy road.

A grade II listed Milepost is situated on the highway adjacent to The Old Post Office. This is of early-mid nineteenth century and made of cast-iron. It is triangular in section and hollow to the rear and gives the number of miles to both Grantham and Melton Mowbray.

The Church of St Botolph and St. John the Baptist is a grade II* listed building situated on the northern edge of the village. It dates from the fifteenth century and is built in ironstone and limestone. Inside there are many carved medieval pews that are outstanding in both quality and decoration.

Natural Elements

The built environment of Croxton Kerrial is supplemented by many large, open spaces which contribute greatly to the character of the Conservation Area. There is a significant hedge along Middle Lane but only one lime tree has a preservation order on it and this is in the garden of 2 Church Lane. There are magnificent views from most areas of the village, most notable of which are those north to Belvoir Castle and those in a westerly direction from School Lane.

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
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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 Croxton Kerrial 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