

Old Dalby Conservation Area

Designated: May 1986

Designating Authority: Melton Borough Council

Area: 18.75 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

Old Dalby is an attractive village that evolved from the gradual merging of scattered farm settlements. It is located approximately 8 miles to the west of Melton Mowbray at the south western end of the Vale of Belvoir. The village has a Danish name derived from the words wolds and dale and was previously called 'Wold Dalby' or 'Dalby on the Wolds'.

The Conservation Area Boundary

The conservation area was designated in 1986 and encompasses the oldest part of the village, the southern half of the built up area, as well as some open areas on the periphery of the village.

Special Character and Townscape Quality

That part of Old Dalby that is within the conservation area boundary displays a mixture of development pattern. Predominantly linear where rows of properties line the roadsides and village green whilst others are more randomly located within their own grounds, dispersing that linear character to a degree.

Paradise Lane

Paradise Lane is a narrow tranquil lane that defines the south east boundary of both village and conservation area. The lines of mature trees along the lane, whose canopies overhang the highway in a 'tunnel' effect, form a feature which establishes a sense of enclosure and seclusion to this part of the settlement. Various hedgerows and verges add further to the greenery. A small brook also runs alongside the lane for part of its length, the sound of trickling water reinforcing the tranquillity.

Only one property is situated on the east side, namely Willow Cottage, a grade II listed building, dating from 1830, that sits close to the highway in its own grounds but screened by a tall boundary hedge. Those properties on the west side are all set back and display a selection of ages, styles and materials. The white painted buildings, Twin Trees and Old Dalby Cottage contrasting with the red brick properties.

Towards the top the lane opens up behind wider verges with views of the Church possible through the tree cover. The Old Vicarage is the last property on the north side and is a very fine unspoilt decorative red brick and slate building with associated outbuildings set within its own mature gardens.

The grade II* listed Church of St John the Baptist situated within its elevated churchyard forms a visual stop at the top end of the lane. It dates from 1835 but was restored in 1894. It has a tower and is constructed in red ashlar sandstone.

Clustered around the Church and the green are a group of fine buildings which form an area of unique character within the conservation area. These include Home Farm, grade II listed, dating from 1835 in red brick and slate which stands directly opposite and the former gate lodge to Old Dalby Hall, gate piers and stretch of boundary wall all in local stone. The listed stables to Old Dalby Hall are situated behind the Church and the rear wall forms the churchyard boundary and displays some very fine semi circular Georgian windows. The group of traditional farm buildings associated with it, including pig sty's, stables and a converted barn, line the approach road to Old Dalby Hall and The Old Hall adjacent, the combined roofscape with various pitches and ridge alignment providing a strong visual feature. Views over open countryside including the village roofscape and backdrop of mature trees are particularly special from the churchyard.

Paradise Lane extends into Church Lane and leads away from the Church up an incline towards the village green. Properties are predominantly newer and set back although there are some older properties, notably Barn Cottage a fine stone building with stone window dressings and chimney stack and The Old Post office, dating from 1903 which is in white painted render under a slate roof and is notified as being a building of local interest. There is lots of greenery present in the street scene including the hedgerows that enclose the equipped children's play area that occupies the corner plot.

The Village Green is a strong focal point within the village together with the Church. The green sits on higher ground affording fine views over village rooftops and distant open countryside beyond to the north east and comprises an open space interspersed with trees. It is surrounded on all sides by properties, some older traditional buildings but also some newer infill to the north-west side. Properties of note include The White house, a white painted thatched cottage and Rosedale both of which are grade II listed which date from the seventeenth century; Claremont Cottage, The Green at the bottom end of Wood Hill and The Grove all buildings of local interest and Langham House.

There is a narrow pedestrian walkway that links The Green to Debdale Hill. This is a very peaceful area and well treed area and the roof of The Crown public house, a building of local interest, can be glimpsed through the tree canopies. This area contains randomly arranged older properties the most notable being Debdale House, grade II listed, that stands on higher ground nestled amongst trees and overlooking the village and Debdale Farmhouse, a three storey grade II listed building that stands in an elevated position opposite The Crown.

Chapel Lane

Leading downhill from The Green this is another green lane with trees, hedgerows and verges visually strong. There are a mixture of property ages but in general terms the older ones are more stylish. Wad Cottage, a building of local interest and The Croft an unspoilt early nineteenth century grade II listed building are prime examples. The lane meanders towards the former Wesleyan Church dating from 1902 which marks the end. This building, now converted to residential use, displays some fine architectural detailing not least the door surround, cills and eaves.

There is a small triangular grassed area at the junction with Main Road which is home to the traditional village sign, modern telephone kiosk and a bench.

Main Road contains a variety of properties in terms of age, materials and style. Those at the north east end are generally early twentieth century and of a similar gabled style whilst those opposite are of similar age but of a different design. Beyond the junction with Chapel lane the road has a more intimate feel, boundary hedges being a strong feature with properties set back. Again styles vary and painted buildings predominate, notably The Cottage, dated 188 which is a fine example of village vernacular and The Old Reading Room, a building of local interest which has unique fenestration and Village Hall, formerly the village school. Opposite the Village Hall are a range of three late eighteenth century red brick cottages, notified as being of local interest, that have been refurbished but retaining their historic integrity.

Quality and Character of Buildings

The village demonstrates a variety of building styles but there is no unifying feature. There is little evidence of the use of local stone although both the Parish Church and Old Dalby Hall are particular examples. Roofing materials are generally slate or clay pantile although there are examples of concrete interlocking roof tiles. Indeed roofscape is a visually strong feature throughout the village with varied colours, textures ridge heights and orientation

There are ten listed buildings in the village nine of which are within the conservation area, all have been previously mentioned. Those of particular note include The Old Hall which is situated at the southernmost extent of the conservation area. This is a fine Country House dating from c1830 but has older origins. It is in local ironstone and has graded slate roofs and tall octagonal Tudor style chimneys.

Examples of the locale vernacular are typified by Debdale Farmhouse which dates from c1800 and is in red brick under a slate roof and nearby Debdale House, a similar red brick and slate building, dated 1723 but with twentieth century alterations.

By contrast The White House on the village green is a late seventeenth century white painted cottage, altered and extended in the twentieth century that is timber framed with rendered infill under a thatched roof. Attached to it is Rosedale also dating from the late seventeenth century and also timber framed. The framing is exposed to the rear whilst the principal elevation is rendered, the roof is a mixture of slate and old plain tiles.

Natural Elements

Viewing the village from the east both Longcliffe Hill and Woods Hill form a backcloth, which is accentuated by the fact that Old Dalby lies within a valley bowl. The open areas which surround the village are particularly important to its valley setting and several open areas within the village also contribute to its character and form. Amongst the prime examples are the village green, land to the south of Debdale Farmhouse and land around the church. The village also benefits from several groups of mature trees as well as individual examples both within and on the periphery.

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 Old Dalby

For further help and advice please contact:

The Regulatory Services Section
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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 Old Dalby 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.