

Knipton Conservation Area

Designated: April 1973

Designating Authority: Leicestershire County Council

Area: 16.15 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

Knipton is an attractive Estate Village almost entirely within the ownership of the Belvoir Estate. It is located approximately 10 miles to the north of Melton Mowbray and sits in the valley of the River Devon. The name means 'steep hillside farm or settlement'.

The Conservation Area Boundary

The conservation area was designated in 1973 and encompasses all of the built up area as well as extensive open areas surrounding the village.

Special Character and Townscape Quality

Knipton is an open textured settlement typified by clusters of traditional rural buildings set within hilly, well landscaped countryside. Its character is further enhanced by the open countryside which surrounds it and adds a further dimension to its open form.

Branston Lane

The downhill approach to the village from Branston Lane is a pleasant well treed route. Passing Devon Cottage which sits in a dip on the left hand side, on reaching the junction All Saints Church comes into view in an elevated position across the open field. The lane continues towards the village centre with Branston House, a fine building discretely located behind a tall hedge and tree cover together with the Granby Farm group of predominantly traditional stone and pantile outbuildings on the left hand side. The stone wall of the roadside barn is visually imposing in the street scene. Just beyond Granby Farmhouse, an unspoilt stone and pantile building with a symmetrical frontage stands back from the highway behind boundary railings. The trees on the bend beyond form a visual stop at this point

The character of the lane at this point becomes more rural being enclosed by mature trees to both sides. Approaching the listed road bridge there is an attractive open 'pocket park' type area on the left with the stream running alongside the highway, benches and a small stone and pantile shelter. Opposite is a wide grass verge at the junction with Church Hill.

Crossing over the bridge the lane straightens with the village pump dominant in the street scene. Mature trees on the left hand side draw the eye towards the twin gabled roofline complete with wavy perforated bargeboards of the Cottage, a splendid and unchanged late nineteenth century house in vernacular revival style, and the fenced green of the village war memorial with mature trees forming a backdrop which form a visual stop before the lane bends to the right and joins Pasture Lane.

Pasture Lane

Pasture Lane runs northwards out of the village towards Harston and is generally defined by roadside hedgerows. From the junction with Croxton Lane the lane is lined on the right hand side by a terrace of relatively modern red brick and tiled dwellings that were likely formerly Council housing which are set back behind front garden areas giving an open feel to the street scene. Adjacent are a pair of fine unspoilt vernacular estate cottages in stone and slate with steeply pitched roofs, central tall chimney stack and gables to the front decorated by typical local style bargeboards.

Opposite are Jasmine and Briar Cottages a matching pair of unaltered stone and pantile cottages with small porches to the front that are notified as being of local interest. To the rear is No 2 Nursery Lane another building of local interest which stands in its own extensive grounds.

Church Hill

Running uphill towards All Saints Church and the Rectory beyond Church Hill is unique insofar as five of the six buildings on the hill are listed whilst the other is notified as being of local interest. The former Knipton C of E Primary School now used as the village hall stands at the junction at the bottom of the hill. The roadside gable of School House adjacent is a strong visual feature of the street scene and beyond that views of the Church emerge with the tower standing proud at the brow of the hill with trees surrounding it. Intimate glimpses of the Rectory can be seen through the churchyard from the Church gates.

The opposite side of the hill comprises of open fields behind a stone boundary wall with views of the roofscape beyond.

Main Street

From the village pump shelter at the bottom of the street the eye is drawn uphill, the view framed by substantial buildings, the elevated Vine House and the Post Office with associated listed K6 telephone kiosk on the left hand side and a stone boundary wall on the right. Continuing uphill boundary walls in brick and stone are a strong feature of the street scene as is the varied roofscape of Cliveden House and the buildings beyond. The Baptist Chapel is a simple brick building in an elevated location on the bend however the unfortunate use of upvc fenestration somewhat mars its appearance.

Around the bend the road appears to narrow and becomes enclosed to both sides which alters its character to a large degree. The feel becomes more intimate and the juxtaposition of materials and positioning of properties adds a contrast to the street scene.

Reaching the top at The Old Hill the street narrows further, a terrace of stone and red brick cottages defining the right hand side whilst there are open fields opposite with a backdrop of mature trees.

Finns Lane

The entrance to the lane is marked by a very fine and unspoilt property in stone and slate with wavy perforated decorative barge boards and tall stone chimneys, its front boundary marked by the typical local style fence. The lane is completed by some modern housing set back behind a green and open countryside beyond.

Nursery Lane

This is another narrow lane which leads to Glebe Farm a fine house with associated group of outbuildings, some traditional and some modern. Open countryside beyond.

Croxton Lane

The lane leads from the village uphill towards Croxton Kerrial. This is generally an open textured lane enclosed by hedgerows and mature trees to both sides with distant tree cover forming a visual stop. The grade II listed Manners Arms stands resplendent in its own grounds and marks the termination of the conservation area boundary as does the ramshackle timber stable building complex opposite.

Quality and Character of Buildings

Local materials are well represented within the village, particularly locally quarried ironstone which predominates. Red brick is also evident, however, a particularly fine example being the grade II listed Manners Arms, formerly a hunting Lodge of the Dukes of Rutland. Roofing materials are varied and include Welsh, Cumberland and Swithland slates, Bottesford blue and red pantiles. In terms of building design the village benefits from a mixture of styles and ages. Palisade fencing of different designs is also a regular feature within the street scene and there are extensive stretches of granite kerbing.

There are twelve listed buildings within the village, including two tombs in the churchyard and a K6 telephone kiosk. Amongst those of particular note are;

The Parish Church of All Saints which has thirteenth century origins but was restored in the nineteenth century with the south aisle added in 1869. It is in ironstone with limestone dressings generally with lead roofs with the exception of the nave that has a copper roof.

The former Primary School was built in 1850 and enlarged in 1868. It is built in coursed ironstone with limestone quoins and dressings and distinctive 'wavy and pierced' bargeboards. Other distinctive ironstone buildings include the nineteenth century Old Rectory which has a mixed slate and Bottesford Blue pantile roof, the Post Office (c1870) and Knipton Lodge (c 1830) which have Cumberland slate roofs and the late eighteenth century Vine House which has a graded Swithland slate roof.

The Village pump and shelter stands on a small grassed and fenced triangle at the bottom end of Main Street and forms an unusual focal point in the village. The mid C19 water pump is in ironstone and it is housed under a timber shelter with shingle roof.

There are also several buildings which are notified as being of local interest which include the small late C18 brick two arched bridge which crosses the stream in the village centre, the C18 School House on Church Hill and C19 Jasmine and Briar Cottages on Pasture Lane.

The village is blessed with a fine array of individually architecturally rich and pleasing buildings which complement each other as a whole

Natural Elements

There is a swathe of open land running in a north-south direction through the centre of the village collectively designated as protected open area. This includes a large area of land north of Nursery Lane at the top end of the village, the land that sweeps around the former primary school and All Saints churchyard which displays a fine array of particularly attractive mature trees. The village green, home to the War Memorial is another important space and a focal point within the street scene. The small stream which meanders through the village with well treed banks also adds to the rural character.

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 Knipton although there are some examples which do adversely affect the character of the conservation area.

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

The above is an appraisal for the Knipton 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.