

Stonesby Conservation Area

Designated: April 1973

Designating Authority: Leicestershire County Council

Area: 5.68 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

Stonesby is a compact and tranquil village set close to the border with Lincolnshire of the 'stone belt' uplands of the Wolds. It is located about 6 miles north east of Melton Mowbray.

The Conservation Area Boundary

The conservation area boundary is centred upon the village green area on the northern side of Main Street and tightly drawn to encompass the majority of the built up area of the village.

Special Character and Townscape Quality

Approaching the village from the west the varied roofscape is visible in the distance; the tower of the Church particularly prominent nestled amongst a group of mature trees. The juxtaposition of roofing materials, their varying colours and textures are an important element in the village character. Likewise the substantial lengths of stone boundary walling linking the buildings are visually pleasing and add to the feeling of intimacy in the street scene.

A series of traditional stone dwellings clustered around the Parish Church forms the historic core of the village.

The Green

The onset of The Green is marked by two small triangular grassed areas that together constitute the village green. The Parish Church of St Peter dominates the backdrop with unspoilt stone dwellings set around the green in the foreground. Pear Tree Farm and its associated outbuildings, a building of local interest, and Fox Inn Cottage are two fine examples. A K6 telephone kiosk and pole mounted post box add to the rural scene. The feeling of openness is enhanced by the paddock area to the rear of Gorse Farmhouse enclosed by post and rail fencing.

A narrow lane runs in a westerly direction from The Green and the natural stone rear elevation of Gorse Farmhouse is a crucial element of the street scene here. The lane is terminated by The Cottage, a natural stone building once thatched that occupies a discrete location and the red brick and pantile outbuildings associated with it form a stop at the end of the lane. The varied roofscape is an important visual element in this vicinity, the mixture of colours, textures, materials and orientation all adding to its interest.

The Green continues in a north westerly direction past Pear Tree Farm, its edges marked by granite kerbstones. On the left hand side the stone gable end of Cobblers Cottage topped with a Bottesford Blue pantile roof and

ornate chimney stack with backdrop of mature trees draws the eye. To the right hand side various stone buildings built close up to the back edge of the highway enclose the street scene.

The Green divides into three beyond Swallow House. To the west The Croft ,a fine stone house with brick dressings, and adjacent The Old Forge, a recent conversion, are prominent and beyond are extensive views over open fields towards Waltham on the Wolds. Terminating The Green to the north is a small development of new build dwellings in a mixture of styles and materials. To the east the Church of St Peter in its elevated well maintained churchyard, which is enclosed by a stone boundary wall and range of buildings of local interest, marks the end of the street and in turn dominates the view.

Back Lane

Leaving the churchyard via the west gate the varied roofscape of Back Lane is immediately evident. Back Lane benefits from several listed buildings including a cluster of 4 built in stone in the immediate vicinity of the churchyard. These are Church Farm, its associated stable range which together form a visually pleasing group, Glenroy is a small cottage with decorative slate roof and Redland Farm with its outbuildings that occupy the corner plot. Opposite is the Old school another listed building set back from the highway in its own grounds. The only unlisted building in this area by contrast is an unspoilt Georgian Farmhouse in red brick with a slate roof with fine brick eaves detailing.

The junction of Back Lane with Main Street is marked by a listed building on each corner, namely Manor Farm, supplemented by several recently converted stone and brick outbuildings and Home Farm with its courtyard enclosed by unspoilt traditional farm outbuildings.

Main Street

There are very few properties on the south side of Main Street, but the former Post Office and adjacent cottage are buildings of local interest. On the north side the grassed area marking the village green is the focal point. Views along Main Street are mostly open aspect and as such are dominated by stone boundary walls, grass verges and hedgerows rather than buildings which are generally set back from the highway.

Opposite the junction with Chapel Lane the road name changes to Waltham Road and the buildings are closer to the back edge of the highway at this point. The stone building, located gable end on, which is of local interest marks the limit of the conservation area. Beyond the road drops away downhill and affords fine views over open countryside as it climbs again out of the village.

Chapel Lane

The junction is marked by an unfortunate blockwork Dutch Barn, adjacent on the left hand side however are the fine honey coloured stone gables of the Hall Farm outbuildings linked by a splendid pantile topped stone boundary wall which enclose the street scene and contrast well against the greyer stonework of Hall Farmhouse itself. Opposite the Wesleyan Chapel with 1847 date plaque is the only red brick building in the Lane and therefore also contrasts further against the stone buildings. The building benefits from arched windows with yellow brick surrounds and the gable end has a fine stained glass window that was inserted in 2000.

There are fine views over open fields to the south as the road drops away downhill.

Quality and Character of Buildings

The village contains a variation of building styles, ages and materials. The predominant building material is natural ironstone and limestone, some red brick is evident although its use is limited. The village however benefits from a variety of roofing materials including different slates, blue and red clay pantiles as well as some examples of concrete interlocking tiles. Natural stone boundary walls abound within the village adding to the sense of enclosure. Many buildings date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and twelve of them are listed.

St Peters Church is grade II* listed and is probably Norman in origin. It is in stone with lead roofing and has a three stage square tower. The Church was restored in 1875 by local architect RW Johnson. Other listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of the Church include Church Farm a former C17 Vicarage, its C18 stable block, Redland Farm an early C18 stone farmhouse with slate roof and Glenroy an early C18 cottage.

Also on Back Lane are the Manor House dated 1714, a stone building with Swithland slate roof; Home Farm with datestone 1718 SAM, and the Old School a mid C18 house which was converted for use as a school in 1850 when a bell cote was added then converted back to residential use in the 1970's.

Hall Farmhouse on Main Street which has C17 origins is grade II listed whilst on The Green are three listed buildings - Gorse Farm, Opal Cottage and the K6 telephone kiosk.

There are several buildings of local interest including Pear Tree Farm, and Grassmere which combine with other historic buildings to enhance the character of the village and Conservation Area.

Natural Elements

Trees and mature boundary hedges are important elements in the village scene. Approaches to the village are particularly well treed and enhance the rural character of the settlement. There are several significant open areas within the conservation area boundary that are important to the form and character of the village, notably the two areas that comprise the village green and the adjacent paddock area to the rear of Gorse Farm.

The area of undulating pasture land south of Main Street provides extensive views both into and out of the village.

Negative Factors

The use of inappropriate materials such as upvc double glazed windows and plastic rainwater goods is reasonably minimal within Stonesby. However some properties have been re-roofed using concrete roof tiles which is unfortunate.

Overhead cables are also prevalent within the village and as such are visually intrusive. There is also an unfortunate pole mounted Electricity Sub Station located in the field to the rear of Gorse Farm.

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 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 Stonesby 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 imply that it is of no interest.