

WYCHAVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
ASHTON UNDER HILL CONSERVATION AREA
APPRAISAL

ADOPTION STATEMENT

The Ashton under Hill Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted by Wychavon District Council as a document for planning purposes on 16th May 2006. Minute 222 of the Executive Board meeting of 16th May 2006 refers.

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May 2006

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		In making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, we must, under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, give special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. While this should ensure that harmful change is not allowed, some changes, normally not requiring planning permission (known as “permitted development”) can still damage the special qualities of a conservation area. We can make directions to limit the permitted development rights of residential properties and have done this in the Ashton under Hill Conservation Area.
		We also have to review the boundaries of our conservation areas from time to time. The Ashton under Hill Conservation Area was first designated in November 1969. The boundary was reviewed in 2006 during the preparation of this character appraisal. The current conservation area boundary is shown on the attached appraisal map.
		ASHTON UNDER HILL CONSERVATION AREA
		ITS SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL & HISTORIC INTEREST
		The special architectural or historic interest of a place depends upon more than just its buildings. The layout of streets, spaces between buildings, views, ground surfaces, boundary treatments and trees are also important. The uses of buildings and spaces contribute to the special interest of a place, and the level of noise and activity, such as traffic, will also contribute or detract from that special interest.

WHAT IS THIS APPRAISAL FOR?

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, usually the historic part of a town or village, where we wish to preserve or enhance its character or appearance. Part of Ashton under Hill is a conservation area. This appraisal identifies the special interest of the Ashton under Hill Conservation Area, and provides guidance on how the preservation or

The special interest of Ashton under Hill includes:

Its long history, still evident in the layout of the village, in its buildings and in visible archaeological remains

The survival of a clear demonstration of historic social hierarchy within the village, evident in the size, design and siting of buildings

The survival of the historic form of buildings, plots and village layout

The number of historic buildings

The significant contribution of the natural environment in trees, gardens, open spaces, hedges and water

The strong relationship between the village and its surrounding rural landscape

The conservation area boundary is drawn to reflect this special interest.

LANDSCAPE SETTING

Ashton under Hill sits on the eastern foothills of Bredon Hill, at the junction of the lower slopes of the hill where it meets the edge of the Vale of Evesham.

Its main street forms part of a quiet meandering road encircling the hill, following the contour at its base. The grazed and wooded slopes of the hill descend into the village, forming its immediate setting to its west, while large arable fields, native hedgerows, narrow winding country lanes, trees and pockets of woodland of the flat cultivated vale form its setting to the north, south and east. Dumbleton Hill and the western escarpment of the Cotswold Hills plateau frame medium and distant views out across the vale.

The quality of this rural landscape setting is recognised by the inclusion of part within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

There are clear views of the village in its setting across the vale from the south and east. From the north and west its presence in the landscape is partly concealed by the topography of Bredon Hill.

The immediate setting of the north side of the conservation area is affected by modern development. Here, in marked contrast to the quality of the landscape setting elsewhere, modern residential expansion abuts the conservation area and has replaced the rural setting of the former fields and orchards that once flanked this side of the village.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Archaeology

Ashton under Hill is rich in archaeology.

The remains of huts, enclosures and tracks dating from the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman period have been found at several sites between the present village and the Carrant Brook to the east. These are apparent as crop marks, ditches and pits and are part of a wider multiphase Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman settlement pattern extending along the brook and close to the present village south of The Groaten.

There are several recorded finds of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman coins and pottery in the same area.

A Medieval or Post Medieval settlement site is visible as earthworks on the west side of Beckford Road, immediately south and west of the church of St Barbara.

Rectangular enclosures extend back from a central pond, which is still present in an enlarged form, known locally as the moat. Medieval and Post Medieval ridge and furrow is visible as earthworks and cropmarks surrounding around the present day village and can be seen to have covered most of the parish in a virtual blanket. The most visible remains immediately flanking the village are in fields to the west of the church, on the lower slopes of Bredon Hill and to the east of the main street near the playing field.

The ancient salt route from Droitwich to Winchcombe is thought to have passed through the village along the line of the main street and Back Lane

Holloways link the village to the outlying settlement at Paris and Bredon Hill, indicating old routes between the two settlements and to cultivated land and the sheep common on the hill.

Origins and Development

There was undoubtedly settlement at Ashton under Hill in Saxon times. The Domesday Book records an established settlement of 27 inhabitants by 1086 at what was then known as Estone. The availability of a supply of fresh water from the springs emerging from Bredon Hill, and the proximity of fertile land, were likely reasons for settlement at this location. Water taps which once provided a water supply to the village are still set into the roadside bank of the main street and would seem to confirm the presence of water as a reason for settlement.

The earthwork remains close to the church of St. Barbara suggest that settlement may once have focussed immediately to the south and west of the church. The present church building has 12th century origins, although there are records of an earlier church in existence by 1071. A medieval wayside cross nearby, dating from the 15th

century, stands at the junction of medieval roads and, together with the church, this part of the village would have been the heart of the early community.

There were 20 houses and 10 cottages recorded in Ashton under Hill in 1421. One of the earliest surviving house in the village today, Old Farmhouse, near the cross, dates from around 1400. Although there are no other surviving dwellings from such an early date, the form of the centre part of the village, with its roughly straight main street and remnants of a parallel back lane and linear plots stretching between the two, suggests this part to be a planned settlement dating from the early middle ages, possibly as an extension to the early settlement around the church. It is likely that many of the older dwellings still surviving in the village have replaced earlier buildings on these plots as the settlement became more established.

The majority of the earliest surviving dwellings are farmhouses and cottages dating from the 16th and 17th centuries. These are sited at the cross and along the main street and Cotton's Lane to the north. A particular feature of the village is the number of farmhouses from this period, reflecting the high proportion of wealthy yeoman families at Ashton under Hill by this time. The remains of ridge and furrow surrounding the village suggest an established and thriving agricultural community, with probable crops of wheat, barley and pulses, a common grazing meadow along the Carrant Brook and a sheep common on Bredon Hill.

The locations of surviving buildings from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries, lining the main street, entry roads and tracks, indicate that the layout of the village we see today was already well established by this time. Traffic from the towns at Broadway and Evesham entered the main street at a widened junction at its south near the cross, and from Elmley Castle at

the north and Beckford at the south of the street. Tracks branched west to the outlying settlements at Paris and Shaw Green and on to Bredon Hill.

Enclosure in the 18th century saw a consolidation of common land into individual farm holdings. The population census for 1801 records a decline in population of the village by this time, possibly the result of a combination of loss of land for poorer tenants and a series of poor harvests. Surviving buildings in the village indicate that development at this time appears to have been limited mainly to the consolidation of existing farm buildings, including extensions to and re-modelling of farmhouses and renewal and expansion of farmyard buildings.

The 16th, 17th and 18th centuries were a time of consolidation of Ashton under Hill into something resembling the built up form we would recognise today.

Records reveal a resurgence in population growth and a host of trades in the village during the 19th century, with 3 public houses, a bakery, a smithy, glove makers, carpenters, wheelwrights, thatchers, a coach builder, shoe maker and basket maker all present. Records from 1831 show that nearly half the families in the village were supported by trade. There are several new houses in the main street dating from this period. Some of the cottages outwardly display 19th century design features, although their orientation suggests that these are more likely a re-modelling of earlier buildings. The established form of the village remained unchanged.

Many of the older farmhouses and cottages are associated with the writings of the celebrated local author and raconteur, Fred Archer, who was born and lived in the village in the early to mid-20th century. The later 20th century has seen much new development in the village. New housing

developments have extended it to the north and south. Orchards and gaps between buildings have been infilled with new houses and bungalows, and some of the earlier cottages have been replaced with new houses. Just one of the farms, Old Manor Farm at the southern end of the village, remains in active farming use, with the other farms either re-developed for new housing or their former farm buildings converted to residential use. Some of the ancillary buildings, such as stores, stables, workshops and barns, formerly associated with other houses and cottages have disappeared as they have become redundant for modern use. Other changes are the loss of two of the pubs, the shop, the bakery and the trades that once proliferated.

Despite these rapid changes in more recent years, the architectural and historic interest of the old core of the village is still apparent in its layout and surviving buildings.

CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

The character of the Ashton under Hill Conservation Area is that of a medium sized, quiet, rural village, comprised mainly of residential uses set within an historic framework of buildings, defined plots, narrow roads and sunken lanes. Its remoteness from principal roads, the lack of through traffic and its close relationship with the surrounding countryside, are key contributors to its rural character. Its countryside setting is ever present, with the wooded and grazed flanks of Bredon Hill rising sharply from the west side of the main street and frequent views of the farmed vale to the south and east.

It is a conservation area of contrasts, an eclectic mix of buildings of different periods, with scattered pockets of modern development and the occasional formality

of Victorian buildings set against the rural village vernacular. Farming has historically played an important role in the development of the settlement and the continued presence of an active farm within the village contributes to its rural character.

The presence of hedges, old walls, gardens, trees, open space, grass verges and deep grassy banks, are all significant contributors to its rural village character.

Notably, modern intrusion in the form of street lighting and obtrusive road markings is largely absent from the conservation area.

DETAILED ASSESSMENT

Layout

Ashton under Hill has a simple narrow linear form aligned north-south with the remnants of a parallel back lane and a gently curving main street. Loose junctions at its two ends mark the joining of approach roads and the branching of narrow dead-end lanes. Footpaths and tracks link the main street and lanes with the surrounding fields and Bredon Hill. This framework of roads, lanes, tracks and footpaths is medieval in origin and is little changed.

Within this framework the long rectangular plots of the early planned settlement are still apparent in the main street, terminating at the common boundary of the line of the former back lane.

Individual buildings line both sides of the upper and central main street, sited to the front of well defined and predominantly rectangular plots of varying width, with some buildings sitting tight against each other and others more widely spaced. Some are sited tight against the road while

others are set behind enclosed front gardens, with no overall prevailing pattern.

Progressing south along the main street the spacing of buildings fragments into a looser pattern as buildings become more widely spaced in larger plots punctuated by open space, until the village eventually gives way to countryside. In Cottons Lane modern development lines both sides of the lower lane with individual buildings regularly spaced in rectangular plots, giving way to a sporadic pattern of buildings sited in larger irregular shaped plots.

Dwellings are typically sited to the front of their plots, with gardens at the rear backing on to the flanking countryside. The only exceptions to this characteristic pattern of linear frontage development are farms, where the house and related buildings are typically grouped around yards, ancillary buildings which are frequently sited to the rear or side of plots, and modern residential developments sited behind frontage buildings at Wynch Farm, Manor Farm, Hollymount and Larkspur.

Most buildings face on to the road, the notable exceptions being the smaller cottages, which face south, presenting their gables to the road.

Open space is a feature of the settlement at the southern end of the village and the western end of Cottons Lane. Here gardens and fields stretch down to the road and lane side, giving increasing gaps between development as the village gives way to countryside. These gaps are an essential element of and contributor to the rural character of the conservation area.

Architecture

Buildings in the conservation area are a mix of historic buildings built from local materials of the forms and types which are typical of the local Worcestershire tradition,

and modern with no particular design reference to the locality.

Cottages

Cottages, dating from the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, are simple in form with a rectangular plan and limited spans dictated by historic building construction methods. These vernacular buildings are very modest in size and scale, single storey and attic to two storeys in height on a small footprint. In timber framed cottages the framing is box-frame construction with square panels.

Roofs are simple and steeply pitched with single ridges and plain gables, reflecting the simplicity in plan of the building. Gable verges are shallow or non-existent, with no barge boards. Eaves are shallow with no fascia boards.

Small eaves mounted dormers are an occasional feature, having pitched gabled roofs on tiled buildings and swept roofs in thatch. Rooflights are noticeably absent.

Chimneys are a prominent feature of all buildings, with ridge mounted brick chimneys found on most cottages, and examples of large external stone stacks set against gable or rear walls on some earlier timber framed cottages.

Within these modest vernacular buildings the fenestration is typical of their period and construction. Windows in timber framed cottages are side hung casements in small squarely proportioned openings arranged in a random pattern and fitted flush to the wall with minimal cills and flat heads. In early stone cottages they are a mix of stone mullioned windows and casements under flat stone or timber heads. In cottages dating from the 18th century, casement windows are more carefully arranged on principal elevations in a symmetrical composition, typically with flat or cambered stone heads.

Doors are mainly solid and vertically planked, or occasionally part glazed. Some have simple open porches on timber posts.

Houses

The earliest houses are farmhouses dating from the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries. Their style is characteristic of their periods and materials. They are larger in plan, typically hall and cross-wing, "L" or "H" - plan, and single storey and attic and two storey in height. In timber framed houses the framing is box-frame construction with square panels, with occasional examples of close-studding and at least one example of cruck framing, although hidden by later extensions.

Roofs are steeply pitched and plain gabled. Gable verges are shallow with no barge boards and eaves are shallow with no fascia boards. Large prominent chimneys are a feature of all buildings, and are a combination of ridge mounted and external stacks, some with twin shafts, some in brick and others in Cotswold stone. Stone chimneys are typically ashlar with moulded caps. Dormers are a feature and are modest in size and eaves mounted. Rooflights are largely absent.

Fenestration is generally more ordered, with a careful arrangement of larger casements or mullion and transome windows on principal elevations, with vertically planked doors, some with modest open porches on timber posts. Sash windows at the Manor House are the exception.

Houses from the 18th and 19th centuries are typical of the "pattern book" architecture of the period.

These buildings have simple rectangular plan forms with limited spans. The smaller houses are modest in size and scale, two

storeys, and have designed and ordered elevations with a vertical emphasis provided by height and a symmetrical arrangement of vertically proportioned sash windows and door.

The larger houses are similarly designed and ordered in their elevations but with a double pile and three storeys.

Sash windows are vertically sliding, set back from the outer face of the wall, and with stone cills. Window and door openings are spanned with stone, or cambered or rubbed brick arches. Doors are solid panelled, occasionally with fanlights above. There are examples of door cases with pediment features, small decorative hoods and larger decorative wrought iron porches.

Roofs are simple, moderately pitched and gabled, with single ridges running parallel to the road. Some eaves have a little decorative dentilling, while others are flush. Gable verges are also flush, and there are no barge or fascia boards. Dormers are not typical. Those that are present are mounted within the roofslope and a combination of gables or hipped roofs. Rooflights are absent. Ridge mounted chimneys are a significant feature, although smaller than those on earlier buildings.

20th century housing is varied in size, plan and design, with no predominant style. Common features are a forward projecting gable, large windows with a horizontal emphasis, insignificant chimneys, dormers which break the eaves, repetitive designs, fascia and barge boards, large or enclosed porches and integral or attached garaging. Some fit better into the streetscene, while others are suburban in style or too similar in style to each other, and are out of place.

Farm Buildings

Barns and farm buildings are other notable building types. These are grouped around yards close to their respective houses and are typical of the Worcestershire vernacular, with simple rectangular plans, simple plain gabled or half-hipped roofs, and walls with minimal openings.

Larger modern farm buildings are also present, with similar characteristics of simple plans and plain elevations.

The majority of farm buildings have been converted to residential use. Former farm buildings at Middle Farm, Stanley Farm, Wynch Farm, Manor Farm, Old House Farm and Holloway Farm are all now converted to residential use. The only farm buildings remaining in agricultural use are at Old Manor Farm, where the stone granary and timber-frame barn are separately listed as buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

Other Building Types

St. Barbara's Church displays architectural features from its several periods of development, from the 12th to the 19th centuries including a pinnacled and embattled 13th and 15th century tower, a 14th century porch and a chancel re-built in the 17th century.

The one remaining Public House, The Star, is much remodelled from its small 17th century origins. The front is now of painted brick and with a stone gable at one end.

The village schoolroom, built in 1876, is a simple building in local red brick with features in yellow bricks, large windows typical of its period and type and a plain tiled roof with ornamental ridge-pieces. It is still in use as a First School and has been extended by several late 20th century classrooms to the rear. The combined school hall and village hall, built in low

profile style in 1964, forms a continuation of the road frontage with the original schoolroom.

Surviving outbuildings and other buildings ancillary to houses and cottages are typically sited close to their respective parent buildings and have simple rectangular plans, plain gabled roofs and walls with minimal openings.

Materials

The use of building materials in the conservation area reflects what would have been locally available at the time, with materials only being transported long distances for expensive high status buildings.

The earliest dwellings are of timber frame and locally quarried, dressed and coursed Cotswold stone. Timber framed buildings have wattle and daub or later rendered or painted brick infill panels, with Cotswold stone plinths. Exceptionally, The Manor House is faced in Cotswold ashlar.

Dwellings from the 18th and 19th centuries are either of dressed and coursed Cotswold stone or of local brick, which is a distinctive brown-red colour in the earlier buildings and rich red in later buildings after the opening of the brickyard in the adjoining village of Dumbleton in the 1860s. The exception is Graham House, in painted stucco.

Roof coverings in the conservation area are a mix of materials relative to the various periods and status of buildings. The predominant covering is plain clay tile with some good examples of surviving local hand made tiles. Most tiled roof coverings date from the 19th and 20th centuries and in many cases would have likely replaced earlier coverings of thatch, stone slates or earlier hand made tiles. Welsh slate frequently covers the roofs of 19th century buildings. Several houses

and cottages still retain a thatch covering and there are occasional examples of surviving stone slate and hand made clay tiles. The presence of these earlier roofing materials is surviving evidence of traditional usage of local materials and part of the special interest and character of the conservation area.

Doors and windows are predominantly painted timber with some surviving wrought iron casements. Few iron gutters and down-pipes remain, most having been replaced with black PVC.

The church is typically stone built, and barns and ancillary buildings are of dressed and coursed Cotswold stone, brick or timber frame, with thatched, plain clay and stone tiled roofs.

Stone and brick are both used for boundary walls.

The pattern of materials used in the older buildings is typical of the South Worcestershire vernacular.

Recent buildings in the conservation area are constructed in a variety of materials, including reconstituted stone, brick of various colours, painted render and, more recently, of Cotswold stone blocks or re-claimed brick. Many are roofed with plain or interlocking concrete tiles. The use of these materials is at variance with the traditional materials in the conservation area. There are also a number of houses and cottages where windows and doors have been replaced with uPVC or stained timber, sometimes incorporating lead strips in imitation of leaded lights. These materials and finishes, and some of the details of these windows, are inconsistent with the traditional joinery design, detail and finishes of the conservation area.

The public highway is surfaced in tarmac with concrete and older granite kerb stones defining the edge of some of the

footways. Private drives and yards are generally surfaced with loose gravel, giving a softer surface finish appropriate to a rural village conservation area.

Local Details

There are a number of local features which have survived in the conservation area and which contribute to its special interest, character and appearance.

The village cross, later modified with the addition of a sundial, stands in a prominent position on a neat grassy verge at the centre of the village and is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The listed stone gateposts surmounted by stone ball finials which stand outside The Manor form a distinctive part of the village scene. The red telephone box, sited besides a former post house, is a familiar village feature.

The grassed verge which runs along the west side of the main street from Old Manor Farm to Bakers Lane, becoming a high grassy bank from The Star, is a distinctive feature of the village. The footway running along the top of the bank was in former times known as the Church Causeway and would have provided a dry raised route to the church.

Let into the roadside edge of the bank is a number of water taps set within an open brick enclosure with flagstone roof. These provided a spring water supply for many villagers before the provision of a municipal supply.

The war memorial in the main street is on the site of the old village pound. Erected in 1924 it commemorates men from the village who fell in the first and second world wars.

Boundary Treatments

Boundaries are an important feature throughout the conservation area. Many of

them are historic in their position and materials, and their presence makes a significant contribution to its character and appearance.

Boundaries are mainly a mix of hedges, local Cotswold stone and brick walls and ornate wrought and cast iron railings. Most are low, permitting views of the buildings, into gardens and beyond, some incorporating wooden or wrought iron pedestrian gates. Front hedges are variously made up of Yew, beech, hawthorn, privet and other garden shrub varieties.

Rear boundaries and most side boundaries are hedged in native field hedgerow species. These provide a soft edge to properties and make a significant contribution to the rural character of the conservation area, particularly in views between buildings and into the conservation area from outside.

The material and height of boundaries relate to the relative status or date of buildings. Hedges and low dry stone walls are prevalent in association with early cottages, and railings, brick walls and dressed dry or mortared stone walls prevalent in association with larger houses, typically with moulded stone cappings and large ornate gate piers in association with larger houses. This differentiation of boundary features is an important element of the character and appearance of the conservation area. Notably, many of the stone and brick walls defining earlier buildings have been retained around modern infill development, retaining established historic features of the conservation area and helping to integrate new development into its historic context.

The retention of these boundaries is important to the character of the area.

Natural Environment

The natural environment makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the Ashton under Hill Conservation Area.

Trees, remnants of orchards and hedges provide a green, soft edge to the village, and setting for its buildings, as well as being present throughout the conservation area. They make a significant contribution to the rural character of the area viewed both from within the village or when seen more distantly from Bredon Hill and The Vale.

Notable trees are the several Ash and Yews in the main street in the vicinity of Rockland House and Yew Tree Cottage; the pair of tall Giant Redwoods adjacent to the front garden wall of The Old Manor Farm; the several Yews and the large Copper Beech within the churchyard; the Pine, Horse Chestnut and Beech trees at the roadside near the war memorial and the significant groups of trees behind buildings fronting the westside of the main street. These stand out in the streetscene and are visible as features in views from the vale and the slopes of Bredon Hill.

Of equal importance to the character and appearance of the conservation area is its open spaces. Many of the former gardens and gaps between buildings have been lost in recent years to modern development, particularly at the northern end of the village. Those that remain maintain appropriate settings to historic buildings and make an important contribution to the rural character of the conservation area by their presence as green undeveloped gaps and the views they permit into the surrounding countryside.

Most apparent from roads and footpaths are the fields stretching to the road side near The Star Inn, Little Thatch, Honeysuckle Cottage and Halfpenny Horn,

the large gardens flanking the roadside at Plough Cottage, Hollymount, Pear Tree Cottage, Bredon Pound, The Close, Old Farmhouse, Middle Farm and Willow Cottage, the open space of the church yard and the fields and orchards at the rear of properties on the west side of the main street.

Less apparent, but just as important, are smaller private gardens. While the full extent of these gardens may not be entirely publicly visible, the lack of interruption by buildings and presence of planting contributes to an impression of openness appreciated from glimpses over boundaries, between buildings and from footpaths to the rear. Gardens behind buildings also play an important role in the visual relationship between the built up frontage of the street and the natural environment of the open countryside behind. They are the interface between the buildings of the street frontages and the natural environment of the open countryside beyond, and provide the setting of buildings as seen from the rear.

Ponds and streams are features of the conservation area and contribute to the quality of its natural environment. Streams run through several gardens on route to the Carrant Brook from springs on Bredon Hill. The pond to the south-west of the church, locally known as The Moat, marks the centre of the early settlement at Ashton under Hill and today forms a quiet reserve for wildlife.

Grass verges and green roadside banks are present throughout the conservation area. Most are undefined by roadside kerbs and provide a soft green edge to the roads, making a significant contribution to its rural character and appearance.

Views

A notable feature of the conservation area is the views to, from and within the area.

There are frequent views throughout the conservation area into the surrounding countryside and into plots at the rear and side of properties. In many cases these views are limited to narrow glimpses, but nevertheless are part of the cumulative appreciation of the way in which the village remains linked to its countryside setting. This constant visual link with the countryside and open space makes a significant contribution to its rural character.

Notable long distance views are those of the vale and to the Cotswold Edge and Dumbleton Hill from the main street, and views of the village in its countryside setting from footpaths in the vale and on the slopes of Bredon Hill.

There are shorter vistas punctuated by buildings along the gently curving main street and Cottons Lane. These have a distinctly rural charm that delights photographers and has inspired many local painters.

Negative Factors

Parts of the conservation area have been adversely affected by modern development. Many of the former gardens and gaps between buildings have been lost to development in recent years. Much of this development has introduced repetitive designs, layouts and building forms, designs and materials that are uncharacteristic of the conservation area, undermining in part its historic interest and rural character.

In other parts it remains unspoiled by inappropriate development. and there are only occasional features that compromise or detract from its character and appearance. These are:

- the numerous poles and overhead service supplies for electricity and

telephone which disfigure the main street

- replacement windows and/or doors in uPVC or stained timber. Window and door replacements with new ones of a different design, detail, materials or finish, erodes local building detail, which is an essential part of the distinctive character and appearance of the conservation area
- occasional rooflights prominently sited on roof slopes facing the highway
- some properties have modern timber panelled or boarded fences which, although well maintained, jar with the prevailing character and appearance of the conservation area
- increasing numbers of road signs which clutter and interrupt the views and vistas of the main street, undermining its rural village character
- the roadside car park opposite The Star Inn which interrupts the historic definition of the main street, introduces a group of parked cars at odds with the rural village street scene and spoils the setting of the adjacent cottages
- the neglected appearance of Willow Cottage
- new houses built in the rear of plots. These have eroded the historic settlement plan in parts of the conservation area and intruded on the visual and historic relationship between principal frontage buildings and the natural environment of the open countryside behind
- modern infill development of house designs that are inconsistent with the character of the conservation area.

We would welcome the opportunity of discussing with owners the scope for improving these features.

Neutral Areas

There are some parts of the Conservation Area which in their present form neither enhance or detract from its character or appearance.

The five modern houses on the west side of Beckford Road are each of a different design set on large plots and variously set back from the road with hedges and a variety of trees. Although representing a significant area of modern development in the conservation area these features reflect some of the characteristics of the conservation area and help to integrate it into its surrounds. Other modern houses, while not always reflecting the design characteristics of the conservation area, are integrated by the presence of the tree planting and boundary features.

We would welcome the opportunity of discussing the scope for enhancing their appearance with owners. We will also be careful to guard against these properties becoming too dominant through future additions or alterations.

PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

New Development

It is our aim that the existing character and appearance of the Ashton under Hill Conservation Area should be preserved or enhanced.

Preservation will be achieved by:

Refusing permission for:

- the demolition of any building or structure if its loss would damage the

character or appearance of the conservation area

- the extension or alteration of a building where the change would damage the character or appearance of the conservation area
- development which would be harmful to the setting or character or appearance of the conservation area
- development which would adversely affect or result in the loss of important views, open spaces, tree cover or boundary features within the conservation area.

Design Guidance

The designation of the conservation area is not intended to prevent change, especially that which would enhance the character or appearance of the area. It does, however, seek to ensure that future development is appropriate to the character of the area. Any proposed development should therefore be in accordance with the following guidance:

- New buildings or extensions should reflect the general pattern of building within the area, especially in scale, form, proportion and detailing, although there may be scope for some architectural invention provided that this is sympathetic to the existing architecture of the place.
- Materials used should be in accordance with those traditionally used in that particular part of the conservation area, and should maintain a similar mix. Extensions to buildings should be in materials that are sympathetic to the existing building.
- Any new buildings or extensions should be located on their sites in a similar

way to the general pattern of building in that part of the conservation area.

- Boundary walls, railings and hedges should be incorporated in the development in a similar way to those already in existence in that part of the conservation area, and these should use similar materials and detailing, or species.

Listed Buildings

There are 28 buildings within the Ashton under Hill conservation area included in the List of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest. Other buildings and structures attached to, or pre-dating 1st July 1948 and forming part of the curtilage of, these identified buildings, are also listed by association. While the aim of the listed building legislation is to preserve these buildings for their own sake, any changes affecting them will also be considered in terms of the effect on the conservation area.

Buildings and structures which are listed by association with those buildings included in the List are shown on the appraisal map where they have been able to be identified. The information shown on the map is not definitive. The Council's Heritage Team should be contacted for advice on whether a building or structure is listed by association before any works are carried out to potentially listed buildings or structures.

Unlisted Buildings

Although many alterations to all types of buildings can be controlled by planning permission, changes can still take place to unlisted dwelling houses and their sites which can damage the character and appearance of the conservation area, but which are "permitted development", ie. they do not ordinarily require planning permission.

There are many buildings in the Ashton under Hill conservation area which, although not listed, have qualities of age, style and materials which are locally distinct and which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. That many of these properties retain much of their original character and appearance is to the credit of those owners who have carefully preserved them. There is, however, no guarantee as to their future and these properties are vulnerable to future change.

An Article 4(2) Direction has been made in the conservation area to provide long-term protection against unsympathetic alterations. The effect of the Direction is that certain alterations which formerly did not require planning permission now need permission, but only where the change affects those parts of a property fronting a highway or public open space. There is no fee for applications required because of the Direction.

Those properties affected are:

Back Lane

Bramble Cottage
Forge Cottage

Beckford Road

Halfpenny Horn
Honeysuckle Cottage
Stonebarn

Chandlers End

Chandlers
Mill Forge

Cottons Lane

Cider Mill Cottage
The Cider House

Elmley Road

1 Manor Farm Cottage
Archburn
Bramble Bank
Folly Cottage
Foster Cottage
Graham House
Holloway Farm House
Hollymount
Manor Barn
Maybert
Old Bakehouse
Pear Tree Cottage
Rockland House
St Barbara's Cottage
The Cottage
The Old Barn
Walnut Tree Cottage
Walnut Tree House
Willow Cottage
Yew Tree Cottage

The Groaten

Plum Tree House

The works for which Planning Permission will be required are:

Removal of, new or replacement windows and doors at the properties listed above

Our Heritage team can advise where there is uncertainty over what may be covered.

Trees

All trees over a certain size are protected in the conservation area. Written notification must be given to the Council before carrying out any works to these trees. Our Landscape Team can advise on which trees are protected, the type of works which would need to be notified, the procedure and the likelihood of getting consent for the works. The contribution of

the tree to the character and appearance of the conservation area will be a factor in the consideration of a notification.

Scheduled Ancient Monuments

These are protected by law. Consent is needed from the Secretary of State for any works affecting a monument.

Enhancement Opportunities

There are some opportunities within the conservation area for enhancing its character and appearance, and improving on some of the negative and neutral features.

- 1. Re-routing underground of electricity and telephone services** would eliminate the numerous poles and overhead supplies presently disfiguring the main street
- 2. Reinstatement of traditional windows and doors.** The reinstatement of traditional window and door designs, details, materials and finishes, would restore traditional building features where they have been lost to modern replacements
- 3. A reduction in and more sensitive siting of road signs** would de-clutter the main street of damaging signage
- 4. Boundary improvements.** The replacement of panelled timber fences with hedging would remove inappropriate boundary features and reinstate more appropriate and characteristic boundary features.
- 5. Re-introduction of orchard planting.** The reintroduction of orchard planting would restore a declining village feature

We are willing to work in partnership with the Parish Council and residents in the

consideration of schemes which would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

NOTE

Although it is intended that this appraisal should highlight significant features of the conservation area which are important to its character or appearance, omission of a particular feature should not be taken as an indication that it is without merit and unimportant in conservation and planning terms.

FURTHER READING

This Statement should be read in conjunction with the most recent versions of the Wychavon District Local Plan, the Worcestershire County Structure Plan, national planning policy statements, especially Planning Policy Guidance note 15 – “Planning and the Historic Environment” and the guidance leaflets “Conservation Areas” and “Listed Buildings” produced by Wychavon District Council

USEFUL WEBSITES

Wychavon District Council:

www.wychavon.gov.uk

English Heritage:

www.english-heritage.org.uk

English Historic Towns Forum:

www.ehtf.org.uk

FURTHER ADVICE & INFORMATION

For further guidance and information please contact:

The Heritage Section
Planning Services
Wychavon District Council
Civic Centre
Queen Elizabeth Drive
Persnore

Worcs. WR10 1PT

Tel. 01386 565565

e.mail: planning@wychavon.gov.uk

web: www.wychavon.gov.uk

ASHTON UNDER HILL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Statement of Consultation

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is a summary of consultation undertaken by Wychavon District Council in respect of the Ashton under Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

2. Background

- 2.1 A report to the Council's Development Control Committee on 16th February 2006 explains the reasons for preparing a character appraisal for the Ashton under Hill Conservation Area. Specifically, the character appraisal is drafted in accordance with the requirements on Wychavon District Council imposed by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to:

- keep its conservation areas under review;
- prepare policies and proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of its conservation areas; and
- pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area in exercising its planning functions.

- 2.2 The preparation and publication of conservation area character appraisals is a key step in the Council fulfilling these duties.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 The consultation period began on 8th March 2006 and ended on 12th April 2006. The following documents were available for public consultation between these dates:-

- Draft Ashton under Hill Conservation Area Character Appraisal
- Proposed amendments to the Ashton under Hill Conservation Area boundary

4. Availability of Documentation

4.1 The above documents were available for public inspection at the following locations:-

- Planning Reception Wychavon District Council, Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore, 9.00 am - 5.00 pm Monday to Friday.
- Droitwich Community Contact Centre
- Evesham Community Contact Centre
- Evesham and Pershore public libraries
- Ashton under Hill Post Office
- The Ashton under Hill village website www.ashtonunderhill.org.uk
- The Council Website www.wychavon.gov.uk

5. Consultees

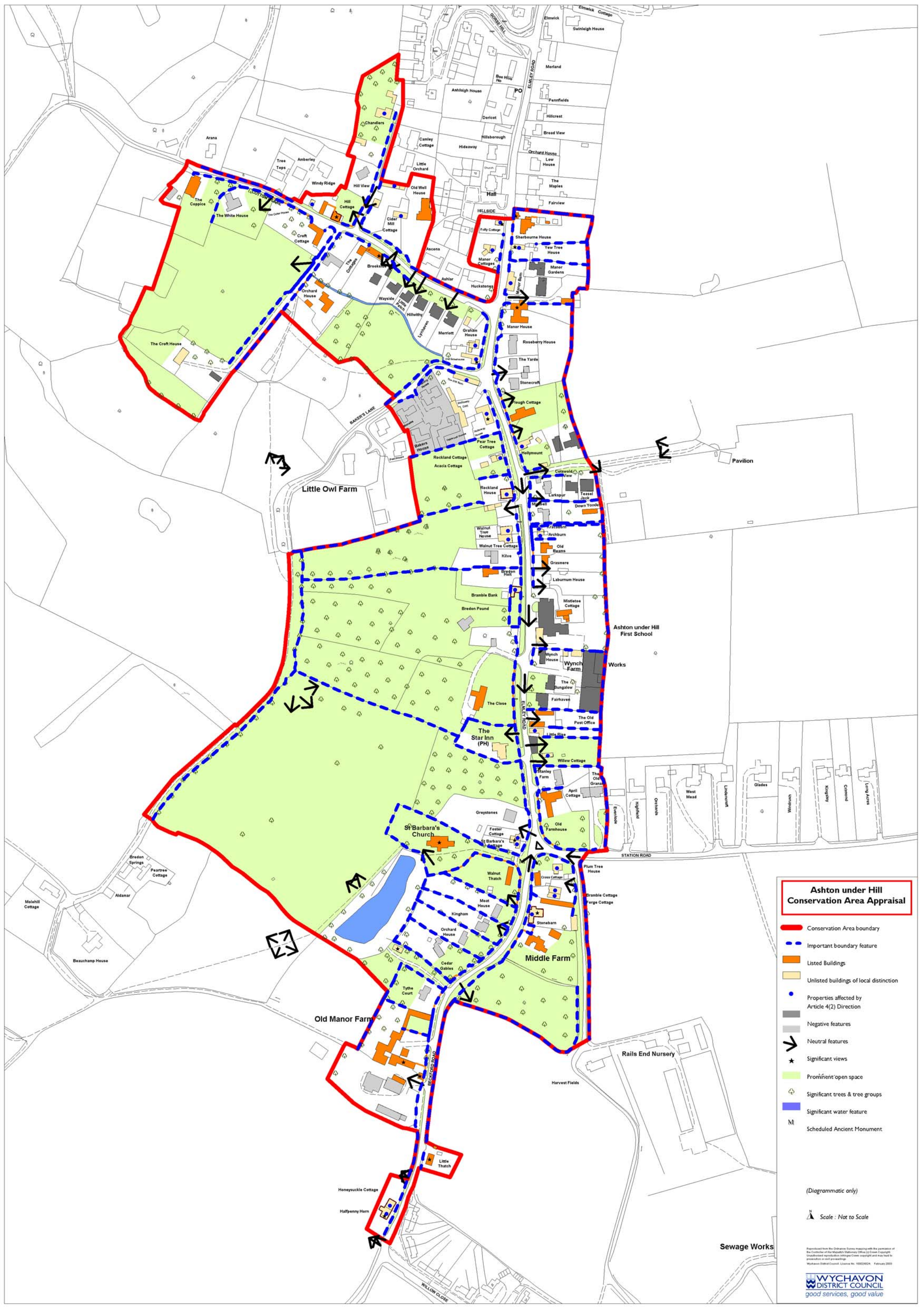
5.1 The draft appraisal was forwarded to the following:

- Ashton under Hill Parish Council
- Cotswold Conservation Board
- Worcestershire County Archaeological Service
- Worcestershire County Council
- English Heritage
- Residents of Ashton under Hill were informed of the appraisal through local publicity

6. Publicity

6.1 Notice of the consultation period was given by way of:

- local advertisement in the Ashton under Hill village newsletter, "Ashton News", March edition
- local advertisement on the Ashton under Hill village website
- local advertisement on the Ashton under Hill village notice board
- information forwarded direct to consultees



**Ashton under Hill
Conservation Area Appraisal**

- Conservation Area boundary
- - - Important boundary feature
- Listed Buildings
- Unlisted buildings of local distinction
- Properties affected by Article 4(2) Direction
- Negative features
- Neutral features
- ★ Significant views
- Prominent open space
- 🌳 Significant trees & tree groups
- Significant water feature
- M Scheduled Ancient Monument

(Diagrammatic only)

Scale : Not to Scale