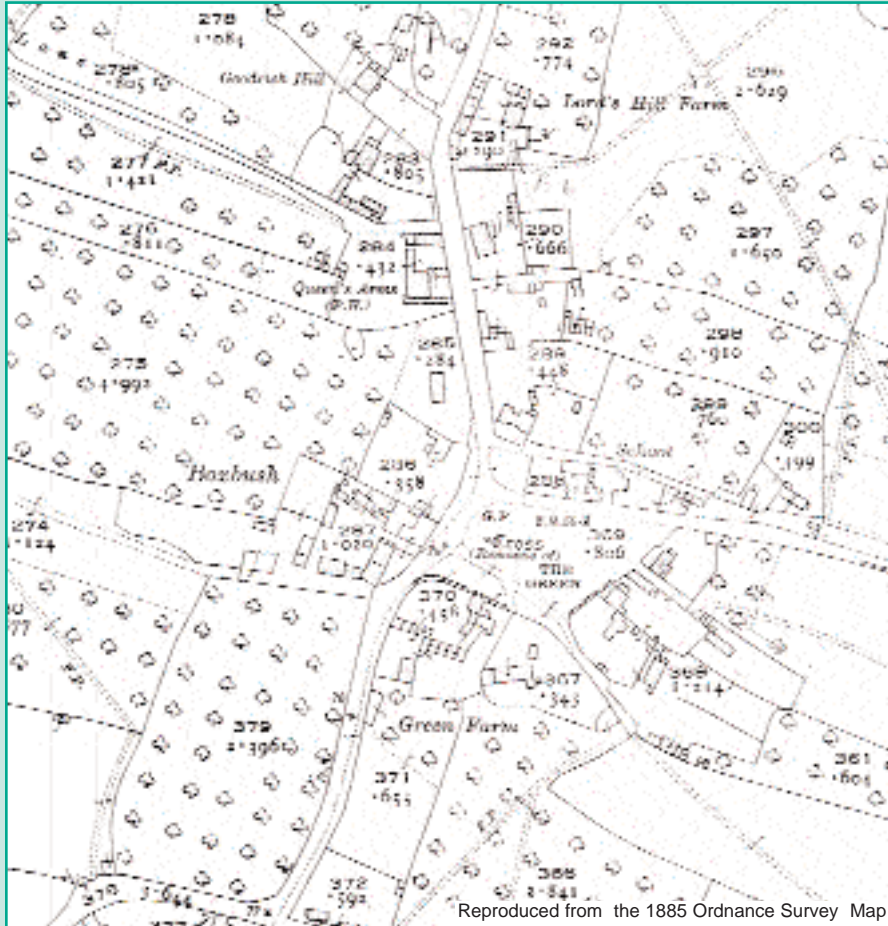


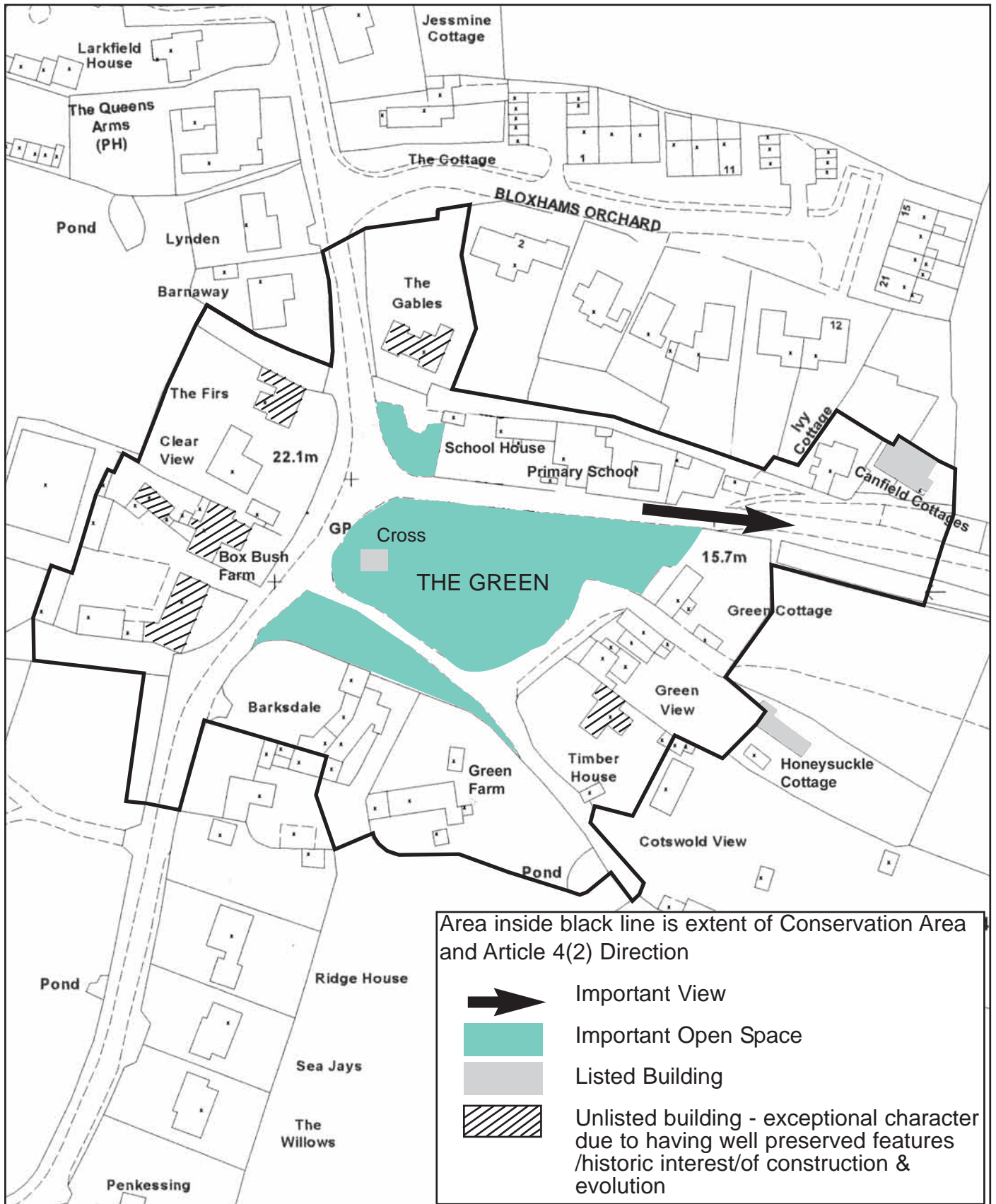
Ashleworth Green



CONSERVATION AREA Character Statement

February 2002

Ashleworth Green Conservation Area



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PREFACE

Ashleworth Green, just to the south of Ashleworth village, is a small rural settlement with its origins in agriculture and the nearby river Severn. Despite its small size, the settlement has evolved much over the years, and the thirteen principal buildings around the green provide a clearly visible cross-section of this evolution. There has been little modern development around the green, which consequently retains a very compact plan form and a comparatively unaltered aspect.



Ashleworth Green looking North

Purpose of the Conservation Area

Ashleworth Green Conservation Area was designated on 19th June 2001.

The purpose behind conservation area designation is not to prevent any future change, rather it is to ensure that whatever change does occur is carefully managed. The definition of a conservation area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest

the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.' Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 69 (1) a. Changes should be sympathetic to what has been identified as the character and appearance of the area. In that way it can be preserved - and enhanced if necessary - not just for our enjoyment, but also for that of generations to come.

Purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal

This document identifies the special architectural and historic interest, character and appearance of Ashleworth Green. It indicates how these will be preserved and enhanced and will be of use to residents, businesses, potential developers and the Council in the making of development control decisions and environmental improvements.

SITUATION

Ashleworth Green is situated on the southern edge of the village of Ashleworth, upon the western side of the river Severn, on land that slopes gently to the east, allowing views across the Severn Vale, towards Cheltenham and Gloucester, several miles distant.

The character of the surrounding country is that of well-wooded flood meadows, composed of small fields, used mainly for pasture, surrounded by thick hedgerows and willow trees, interspersed with copses of oak and ash. Narrow, shady lanes meander between the fields, before gently rising up as one approaches Ashleworth.

ORIGINS

The origins of the settlement of Ashleworth go back at least to the Roman occupation; in recent years a number of Roman artefacts have been excavated in the area around Ashleworth Quay, which date from between A.D.69 and A.D.390. Ashleworth Quay seems to have been a major crossing point for the river; the flood meadows here are narrower than they are for many miles upstream. Consequently, Ashleworth would have been the last place from which to cross before reaching the outskirts of Tewkesbury, nearly eight miles upstream. A road still leads from the Green down to Ashleworth Quay.

There is little record or evidence of the Anglo-Saxons at Ashleworth, although the strong presence of these invaders in the area, building structures like Odda's Chapel, makes their occupation here likely. The eleventh/twelfth century remains within the Church of Saint Andrew and Saint Bartholomew include some herringbone walling; a distinctly Anglo-Saxon feature, which would indicate an Anglo-Saxon presence after the Conquest. The

principal activity throughout the Middle Ages was agricultural, although fishing from the river (often illicitly) seems to have been a common pastime. The river terraces provided valuable dry land for a string of settlements supported by the fertile flood meadows: Ashleworth, Hasfield, Tirley and Forthampton.

The Domesday Book records the village as being Crown property, which it remained until 1154, when it was granted to one Robert Fitzharding of Berkeley Castle (he was subsequently ennobled and his descendants were later created Barons (1295) and Earls (1697) of Berkeley). Fitzharding was instrumental in the establishment of the Augustinian monastery at Bristol, which he endowed with several manors in his possession, including Ashleworth.

EVOLUTION

Given the importance of the site as a river crossing and the fertility of the land, one can imagine Ashleworth as a small settlement occupied by farmers and cottagers, managed by Robert Fitzharding's agents. The buildings would have been humble, timber and earth structures, or 'hovels', and the centre of the village may have been closer to the church than it is today. More permanent structures than these were built during the tenure of Bristol Abbey, including the stone-built Ashleworth Court and Tithe Barn, and the timber-framed Ashleworth Manor; all late fifteenth-century and all located close to the church and the quay.

Ashleworth Green would seem to have its origins in the seventeenth century, a time of agricultural growth and development, often characterised by the replacement of poor quality rural housing with more substantial timber framed buildings. It was quite usual for the church to invest in its agricultural estates, as it was a major commercial landowner. It may well be that the Green developed as the domestic heart of Ashleworth around this time, linked less to the river than to the agricultural estate.

Map evidence suggests that Parliamentary Enclosure came late to Ashleworth (1790's), but that informal enclosure had taken place resulting in the development of a number of substantial farms just outside the village centre. Thus a pattern emerged in which the larger, better quality properties were built outside the village, with the Green developing as a centre for smaller farms and labourers' cottages.

Ashleworth survived the Reformation as an ecclesiastical estate, only passing into secular ownership in 1865, when it was sold to Thomas Fulljames. In 1887 the estate was broken up and sold, in the most significant tenural change in the recorded history of the settlement. Such changes in

the pattern of ownership are usually reflected in the pattern of building. From being run as an estate village, Ashleworth was now open to piecemeal development and improvements to individual building plots.

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 treatment and trees - features which can loosely be described as 'landscape' are also important. The level of noise and activity, such as traffic, will also contribute or detract.

The special interest of Ashleworth Green emanates from the following sources, which are special for the reasons given.

The sense of an unspoilt traditional village green, now very rare.

The uniform scale of dwellings around the green, despite very different styles, which gives a sense of harmony .

A number of unlisted buildings which nevertheless are significant to their immediate locality and whose loss would make the area less interesting.

The wide spaces between the buildings, and their large front gardens, giving an uncluttered feeling.

The significant presence of trees, both in and around the green, whose colours and shapes enhance the landscape through the seasons.

CHARACTER & APPEARANCE

The key sources of the special interest given above can be analysed further, by looking at their character and appearance in detail. This section should therefore be used as a source of reference when planning new development and changes to existing features.

LAYOUT

The layout of the green is trapezoid, with its four corners orientated approximately to the points of the compass. There are lanes entering it at three corners (the north, from Ashleworth; the west, from Hartpury; and the east, from Hasfield) and a short dead-end lane running out of the fourth (south) corner.

Arriving along either the Hartpury Road, or the Hasfield Road, there is a sharp transition as one enters the green. Both these roads are fairly narrow and closely hemmed in by tall trees, the Hasfield Road is also quite deeply cut into the ground to ease the degree of the slope as it rises from the flood meadows, so they form a marked contrast to the openness of the green. The third road, from Ashleworth has been widened since the 1950's, entailing the removal of several trees and consequently this road has developed a less characteristic, suburban feel. Due to the irregular form of the green, none of the roads align with any of the others, so that on entering the green, the immediate view is confined by the buildings and trees that surround it, this further heightens the sense of enclosure.

The green is bound in on all sides by buildings. The plots are of varied size and frontage width and, with the exception of Barksdale, all the houses are set back within their plots, although the depth to which they are set back varies. This layout creates good-sized front gardens which are mostly fronted by dry-stone walls.

BUILDINGS

Building Types

The predominant character of Ashleworth Green is of a quiet, residential settlement, although there is an underlying agricultural feeling, enhanced by the outbuildings of Box Bush Farm and Green Farm (although these are no longer working farms). There is no visible sign of commercial activity around the green, and looking up the road towards Ashleworth, the only visible commercial activity is the local public house: 'The Queen's Arms'.

Scale

The buildings are primarily two storey in height, with pitched roofs, although The Gables and Green Cottage are single storey with pitched roofs containing attic rooms and Green View has a catslide roof to the rear. No single building or group of buildings dominates the green, reflecting its role as an agricultural-estate village.

Orientation

Buildings are primarily placed facing the green. With the exception of some single-storey outbuildings and a modern bungalow, only The Gables, with its 'H'-shaped floor plan, displays gables towards the Green.

The only principal buildings within the conservation area that do not front directly onto the green are on the north side of the Hasfield road. Standing up above the road, which here sits in a deep cutting, are Ivy cottage and Canfield Cottages, the only listed building within the proposed area, apart from the cross.

Significant Historic Buildings

Canfield Cottages (listed grade II) is a seventeenth century box-framed timber building, with brick nogging and a coursed stone nineteenth century extension to the west end. Until the early part of this century, it had a thatched roof, but it is currently tiled.

The cross on the green is also a listed building (grade II), and is in the 'Decorated', or second Gothic style. It probably dates from the fourteenth century but was pieced together from fragments in the nineteenth century, when it was placed in the churchyard. It was re-erected in its present location in the 1970's.

Views out of the conservation area encompass Honeysuckle Cottage, an eighteenth-century timber framed building, listed grade II and glimpses of the distant Ashleworth Tithe Barn (listed grade II*).

The Gables, on the north side of the green, although not listed, is also of much historic interest. Its 'H'-shaped plan would appear to indicate that it was originally a modest 'hall-house', with a longitudinally placed two storey hall between two cross-wings of unequal size, the smaller, at the 'low end' of the hall containing kitchen, storage, and the larger, at the 'high end' containing the living room and communal bedroom. It is entirely consistent with this type of house that the front door should be at the low end of the hall, furthest from the living rooms. It is also consistent that the main chimney should be near the front door, as it was quite usual, when the upper storey of hall was divided off to create additional space, that a chimney should be inserted at the low end; such 'modernisations' were common in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which may give some indication of the age of this house.



The Gables

Box Bush Farm house and barn also stand out as unlisted buildings, being hardly altered since they were built, probably in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.



Box Bush Farm

Materials

The use of building materials reflects what would have been available locally at the time, as materials were only transported large distances for very expensive, high status buildings. The earliest buildings would have been timber framed, with wattle and daub nogging (infill panels) and thatched roofs. Later, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the use of stone and brick became more widespread, both as nogging for older timber buildings, and as a structural material for new ones, and thatch was gradually replaced by hand-made flat clay tiles.

There are thirteen principal buildings within the proposed conservation area. Of these, eight are constructed from brick, two from stone and three are timber framed (although one of these has a brick facade). There are a number of subsidiary structures and outbuildings, primarily in brick and stone.

WALLS

Brick:

The predominant brick is a local rough textured one, brown-red in colour with considerable variation in the shade of individual bricks, due to differing quality of local clay and the varying of firing times for different batches.

Exceptions are School House, which stands out as it is built in a hard, smooth textured deep red brick, with black brick decorative bands. There is very little variation in the colour of these bricks. This brickwork is typical of the 'High Victorian' date of this house and reflects the machine made, factory origins of the bricks. The brickwork of Barksdale and Ivy Cottage has been hidden; the former has been rendered and the latter pebble-dashed.

There is considerable variety in the bonding of the brickwork. Flemish Bond is the most common bond, but examples of Flemish Garden Wall Bond, English Bond, English Garden Wall Bond and Stretcher Bond can also be seen.

Lintels are either flat-arches, with neatly radiating brick voussoirs (The Gables and Green Farmhouse), or more vernacular segmental arches (Green View). Box Bush Farm probably also has flat-arches, but these have been rendered over.

Timber Framing:

As well as the brick buildings, there are three timber box-framed principal buildings (including The Firs). All have a very regular, grid-like timber frame, forming almost square panels; all three have brick nogging within the panels, although they would originally have had wattle and daub nogging.

Presently, all three have the exposed timbers painted black and the nogging painted white. Before it became the standard colour scheme for timber framed buildings in the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century, this black and white scheme was only one of many ways of decorating such buildings. Timber framed buildings were just as often limewashed (with both white and tinted limewash), the same colour being applied to both timbers and nogging, or entirely covered with a lime render or lime roughcast (course-textured render).

Stone:

There are two principal buildings constructed from squared blocks of blue lias limestone laid in regular courses. The poor structural quality of this local stone renders it unsuitable for lintels, consequently blue lias buildings usually have either timber lintels (outbuildings to Box Bush Farm), brick segmental arches (barn to Box Bush Farm), or mullions of a harder lime or sand stone (Primary School).

ROOFS

There are several different angles of roof pitch, the steeper roofs generally being the older buildings (for example Canfield Cottages and The Gables which have pitches of around 45 degrees), The Firs, which used to have a pitch of around 50 degrees), and the shallower pitches on the newer ones (for example Green View and Barksdale at around 35 degrees). Roof pitch is a product of the roofing material, those over 45 degrees were probably thatched in the past, more recent materials such as slate and clay tile can be laid on lower pitches without problems of water ingress.

Originally most of the buildings around the green appear to have had plain verges and eaves, with the exception of The Gables, which had rafters visible (now covered in plain barge-boards) and School House, which was built with barge-boards. The remainder of the fascia boards and barge-boards appear to be modern additions.

Clay Tiles:

The majority of original roofs that survive are of local flat hand-made clay tiles, of a brownish-red colour. Replacement materials include interlocking profiled concrete tiles and corrugated asbestos on some outbuildings. These materials do not make a positive contribution to the character of the area, compared with traditional local materials.

Thatch:

Although no longer a feature of the conservation area, thatch is recorded in a photograph of Canfield Cottages taken c. 1900. This may indicate that other buildings around the green could also have been thatched in the past. The steep roof pitches of some buildings support this theory so it would not be inappropriate if examples were re-introduced.

WINDOWS

Casement Windows:

The oldest form of casement window still surviving on the green is the timber two-light window, with either one or both lights opening as side-hung casements and each light divided into six panes by glazing bars. The casements were flush-set, not storm-proofed and closed against a central timber mullion. Such windows were typical of the eighteenth century and not uncommon in the nineteenth. They were made of pitch pine and always painted and still survive in The Timber House. The earlier form of leaded light casement in an untreated oak frame is recorded in a photograph of c.1900 of The Gables.

Sash Windows:

The Gables had two large sash windows (removed c.1955, but replicas have since been reinstated) and the front range of Box Bush Farmhouse retains four sashes. Both have concealed boxes, which became common after 1774 (the date of the Building Act that banned exposed boxes on the grounds that they were a fire risk). Sash windows were almost always made from pitch pine and would always have been painted, not stained.

Dormer Windows:

Several buildings in the proposed conservation area have dormer windows in their roofs; Canfield Cottages had two 'eyebrow' dormers, but with the loss of the original thatch, these became 'catslide' dormers. The Gables has a catslide dormer, Green Farm has a gabled dormer and Green Cottage has unusual triangular dormers.

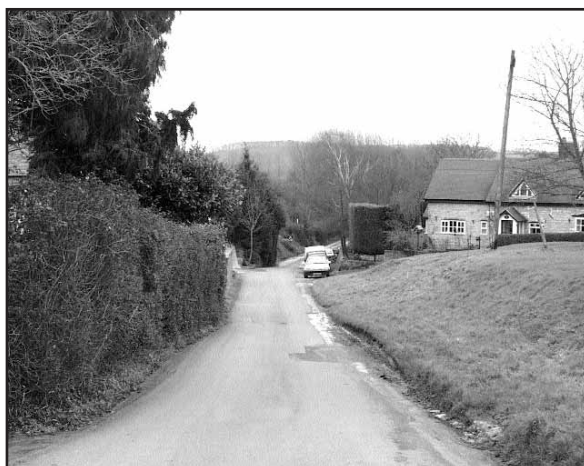
LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Spaces, Views and Focal Points

All but one of the houses face in, towards the green, which gives the central space a very communal

character. This, combined with the narrowness of two of the three lanes into the green, creates a space that has a rather self-contained character, despite its spaciousness. This sense of separation from the outside world is further emphasised by glimpses of the distant Cotswolds which are visible between the houses on the east side, each opening between the buildings acting like a narrow window in a thick wall, reinforcing the remoteness of the view beyond. Despite this the overriding character of the green itself is openness. This is a result of not just the open nature of the green itself, but also derives from the fact that virtually all the buildings are set back behind front gardens, and are well spaced from each other. The downward slope of the land to the east, which is sufficient to allow distant views in this direction between and over the buildings, also contributes significantly to the feeling of 'enclosed spaciousness'.

The views along the roads to the south and east, which are narrow, well-wooded lanes, contribute significantly to the character of the conservation area. There are also distant views of the Cotswold escarpment along the eastern horizon, and between the houses on the east side of the green, one can obtain fleeting glimpses of Ashleworth church and tithe barn.

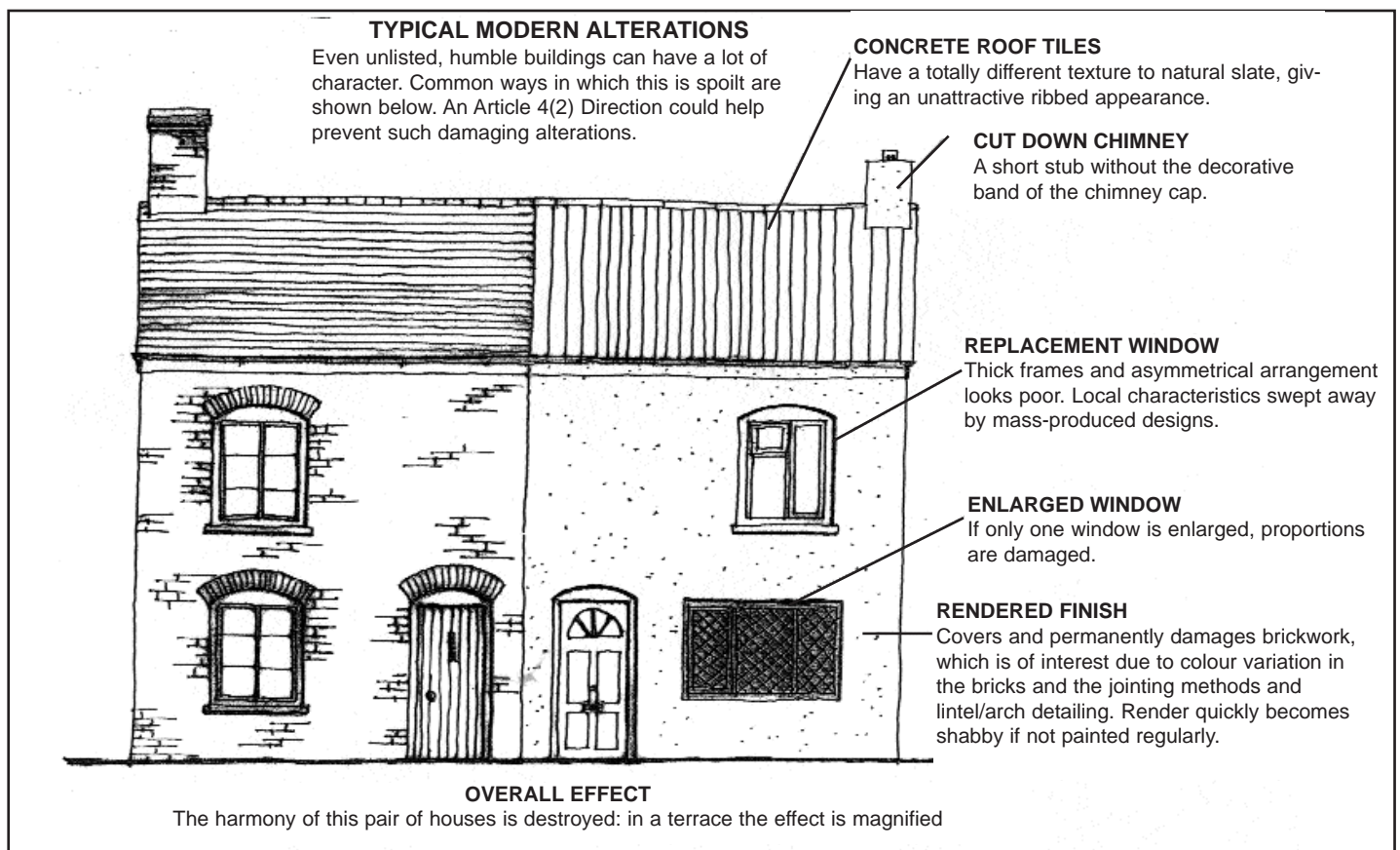


Road to Ashleworth Court & Church

Trees

The large numbers of trees, both in and around the proposed conservation area, contribute significantly to its appearance, giving a wooded character to the environment.

Within the proposed conservation area there are a considerable number of mature and semi-mature trees of various species, including both deciduous (ash, horse chestnut, maple, willow, silver birch, laurel, elder) and coniferous (yew, cypress). These are situated mainly around the edges of the green and in the surrounding gardens; the grass of the green itself is broken only by one red maple.



From the green a great many trees outside the proposed conservation area contribute to it, as they appear along the lanes leading into the green and between and above the buildings around the green. These distant trees are primarily indigenous deciduous species (including ash and willow).

Boundary Treatment

Plot boundaries around the green are clearly delineated. Dry-stone walls separate most of the gardens from the green; these are of around three feet in height, constructed from thinly split, irregularly coursed blue lias. Those properties that lack a dry-stone wall have clipped hedges and some have clipped hedges behind their dry-stone walls. There are a variety of gate designs, of differing quality.

PRESERVATION

In order to ensure that the special interest of Ashleworth Green is preserved, any applications that affect the conservation area will be considered in relation to the following guidelines:

Existing Buildings

Existing buildings within the conservation area will be preserved by the following ways:

Listed Buildings

Buildings (and other structures and monuments) that have been included by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest are protected by the 1990 Act. This states that no works which involve the demolition, or which would affect the character or material appearance of

a listed building (alterations, extensions etc.), may be executed without first obtaining listed-building consent.

Two structures within the conservation area are listed (Canfield Cottages and the cross). Whilst the aim of 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 and the design guidance below.

Unlisted Buildings DEMOLITION

The demolition of unlisted buildings within the conservation area requires Conservation Area Consent (there may be certain exceptions). Demolition of unlisted walls, gates and fences over one metre high facing a highway and over two metres high elsewhere also requires Conservation Area Consent.

ALTERATION

Although many alterations to all types of buildings can be controlled by planning permission, changes could still take place to unlisted dwelling houses that would damage the character of the conservation area, but that are ordinarily classed as 'permitted development' (that is to say, they do not ordinarily require planning permission). That many of the houses around the green retain much of their original character and appearance is to the credit of those owners who have carefully preserved their buildings. However, there is no guarantee as to the future.

An Article 4 (2) Direction has been made which means some alterations to houses, which previously did not require planning permission, now require it for elevations fronting a highway or open space.

The principle alterations that are covered by this are alterations to windows, doors, porches, chimneys, bargeboards, roof coverings, gates, walls, fences and painting the exterior where it has not previously been painted.

In any case installation of satellite dishes on elevations facing a highway, and stone, timber, plastic or tile cladding require planning permission in a conservation area.

All applications for planning permission and Conservation Area Consent within the conservation area will be considered with reference to the Conservation Policies in the Tewkesbury Borough Council Local Plan to 2011, Revised Draft Deposit. Those policies most immediately relevant to Ashleworth are listed below (the entire Local Plan may be viewed at the Council Offices, or most public libraries).

SUBJECT: CONSERVATION AREAS- GENERAL POLICY CON1

Within conservation areas special attention will be given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing their character and appearance. Proposals that preserve or enhance the historic built environment and landscape quality will be supported. In appropriate cases environmental enhancement schemes within conservation areas will be implemented. Special attention will be given to the protection and enhancement of historic features that contribute to the townscape and historic character. Particular importance will be attached to the retention of traditional materials in the repair and refurbishment of existing buildings, and in the construction of new buildings and other works.

SUBJECT: CONSERVATION AREA: SETTING AND IMPACT POLICY CON2

In proposals for development within or in close proximity to a conservation area, particular attention should be paid to the development's impact upon the conservation area, including any existing trees. In such cases full details of design materials to be used will normally be required. Thus planning applications in outline form will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. Where new development is proposed within a conservation area, it must be to a high standard of design and preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area in terms of scale, form, materials and quality. Drawings (and in

the case of major development or development within particularly sensitive sites), scale models, which clearly show the proposed development in its townscape context of setting must normally be submitted. Proposals retaining traditional building lines within designated conservation areas will be favoured and consideration may be given to relaxing approved policies and standards if, by doing so, features of particular townscape merit in the conservation area under serious threat can be retained.

SUBJECT: VISUAL IMPACT OF PARKING PROVISION, STREET FURNITURE AND THE REINTRODUCTION OF LOST FEATURES AND INTRODUCTION OF NEW FEATURES IN CONSERVATION AREAS POLICY CON3

Within designated conservation areas, the materials used and the design and layout of parking areas and the provision of vehicular access must minimise the adverse visual impact that may arise from such development. Consideration may be given to relaxing approved policies and standards if features of particular townscape merit under threat can be retained.

Within designated conservation areas new and replacement street furniture should be of appropriate design and materials to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding street scene.

Proposals for the reintroduction of a lost historic feature or for the introduction of a well-designed new feature will be encouraged where it can be shown that preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of the conservation area will result.

SUBJECT: DEVELOPMENT INVOLVING DEMOLITION WITHIN A CONSERVATION AREA POLICY CON4

There is a presumption in favour of retaining existing buildings, walls and structures within a conservation area. Only in exceptional circumstances, where an existing building, wall or structure of importance to the character of the conservation area is proved to be completely beyond repair will its demolition be permitted. Any proposals for replacement should be in accordance with Policy CON2. Demolition of a building in a conservation area will only be permitted where the proposals for the re-use of the site are acceptable. The implementation of planning permission for demolition will be conditional upon the letting of a contract for the approved redevelopment of the site.

SUBJECT: OPEN SPACES, WATER FEATURES, HEDGEROWS AND TREES WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS

POLICY CON5

Planning permission will not be granted for development that adversely affects important open spaces, water features, hedgerows and trees within designated conservation areas.

Notification must be given to The Council before felling or lopping trees in the conservation area.

NEW DEVELOPMENT: DESIGN GUIDANCE

The designation of a conservation area does not automatically preclude any further development, however, it does seek to ensure that it would be appropriate to the character of the area. Any proposed development should be in accordance with the following guidance:

New buildings or extensions should reflect the general pattern of building around Ashleworth Green, especially in scale and proportion, although there is scope for some architectural invention, provided that this is sympathetic to the green's existing architecture.

Materials used should be in accordance with those traditionally used in that particular part of the conservation area, and should maintain a similar mix.

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 and railings 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.

The local plan policies referred to previously will form the basis for making development control decisions with regard to new development and extensions.

ENHANCEMENT

Within the conservation area there are a number of features that could be said to compromise or detract from its overall character and appearance, the replacement or removal of which would enhance the character of the area. These would include:

Black tarmac road surfaces with white and yellow lines and concrete kerbing which have a suburbanising effect on this comparatively unspoilt rural settlement. Softer colours and natural materials would reduce this.

The stained timber fencing and galvanised steel

gate of the pumping station on the edge of the green whose materials are harsh and alien in a rural setting.

The bright yellow salting-bin, in front of the school, which acts as an incongruous focal point.

The pre-fabricated structure next to the school.

A number of unsympathetic twentieth-century windows including Crittal windows, storm-proofed timber windows with top-hung opening casements, brown-stained timber windows and PVC windows.

A SPECIAL NOTE ON WINDOW REPLACEMENT

Windows have become the most frequently replaced parts of a building in recent times and failure to respect traditional materials and patterns has ruined many an otherwise untouched façade. The windows identified as negative features above may be appropriate on modern buildings, but they almost always damage the character and appearance of old buildings. This is because the use of heavier glass, poor quality timber and modern materials means that glazing bars and frames usually have to be thicker and more clumsy looking, in order to achieve the same strength of an equivalent piece of good quality slow grown pitch pine. Rubber beading strips to the glass instead of mitred painted putty alter both the appearance and the texture of the window and can be recognised instantly even from a distance. Where double-glazing can be accommodated into traditional timber frames it will be acceptable on unlisted buildings. In all cases frames to patterns which complement the building's style will be encouraged.

The Borough Council will strive to find solutions to these negative elements by negotiation with owners and other interested parties.

GRANT-AID.

Tewkesbury Borough Council does run 'Environmental Improvement Grants', aimed at encouraging schemes to protect and enhance the environment of the borough, including both natural-landscape environment, and historic-built environment. The aim of the scheme is to preserve and encourage local distinctiveness and variety through the use of traditional methods and materials.

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