

Castle Bytham Conservation Area

Designated September 1973
Appraisal May 2010

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South Kesteven District Council

STAMFORD • GRANTHAM • BOURNE • THE DEEPINGS

Castle Bytham Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

Location and Context

Castle Bytham is a large rural village in the Kesteven Uplands, located to the east of the A1 and 9 miles north of Stamford. The surrounding undulating landscape is characterised by large fields enclosed by hedgerows with deciduous ancient woodlands and commercial plantations occupying the higher ground.

The village has developed along the floor and western hillside of the Glen Brook valley; the name "Bytham" is derived from the Old English word "bythme" which meant valley bottom. The eastern hillside is dominated by the earthwork remains of the Norman castle which stands on an isolated spur of high ground and projects westwards into the valley.

Archaeological evidence indicates that the village and surrounding area has been inhabited since the prehistoric period. Finds include a late Mesolithic – late Bronze Age (7000 BC-801 BC) flint scatter on land at Red Barn Quarry; a Stone Age axe head found in the fields behind Glebe Farm and a Bronze Age arrowhead discovered in the village lime pit during the 1960s.

It was an important centre of iron production in the Roman period. Burnt material and slag from the smelting process was found in Cinder Field. Evidence of other early iron working sites has been discovered at Iron Stone Corner to the north of the village, Mill Field to the east and along the banks of the Glen Brook below the castle. The remains of a Roman villa were discovered in the 1930s at Poodle Field on the south side of the Glen Brook. The finds included an uninterred human skeleton, remnants of a red and yellow tesserae pavement, roof tiles and fragments of coloured plaster and pottery.

The village was well-established by the time of the Norman Conquest of 1066 and was known by the ancient name of Westbitham. The Domesday Book, compiled in Lincolnshire in 1085, records that it consisted of three square miles of pasture, 60 acres of meadow and three ironworks. It also notes the presence of seven foreigners which implies that the Norman motte and bailey castle was under construction by foreign, possibly French, labourers. The name was changed to Castle Bytham some time after the castle was completed.

The castle was destroyed in 1220-1 by King Henry III following an unsuccessful siege by William de Fortibus, an infamous robber baron. The castle was rebuilt and occupied by its former owner, William de Colville, who abandoned the old motte and strengthened the bailey to form a square keepless castle with mural drum towers at each corner and a double barbican to protect the gatehouse. The castle was occupied until the late 14th century but fell into decline during the 15th century and was in ruins by 1544. The castle was subsequently used as a quarry for building stone and by 1906 no trace was left above ground.

St. James' Church was founded circa 1190 by William de Colville. It stands on a prominent rise to the south of the village overlooking it. Its dominant position mirrors that of the castle mound and reflects the central, authoritative role of the church in medieval society which was equal to that of the ruling political elite. The church was built in the Transitional Norman style of 1200, the tower was added in the 13th century and the church was largely rebuilt in the 14th century, although some fragments of the Norman fabric have survived.

The village evolved as a prosperous farming community as the loamy clay soil and clay subsoil was ideal for arable farming. Forestry, stone quarrying and the production of lime were also important local industries and sources of wealth. Prior to the early-mid 20th century, it was a thriving community and commercial centre which served neighbouring rural communities and supported a number of shops and trades associated with agriculture.

The population began to expand in the 19th century, rising to 815 by 1891, which initiated new development within the village. The school was built to the rear of the church in 1814 and was enlarged in 1890 with the addition of an infant classroom; it closed in 1988. The Wesleyan Chapel on High Street was built in 1836 and was converted to a private dwelling following its closure in 1974. The single track railway line between Saxby and Bourne was constructed to the south of the village 1890-93 and provided a direct link for residents and business to the Midlands and East coast until its closure in 1959. Social housing was built in 1914 and the 1930s on Glen Road and Station Road followed by the construction of bungalows in the post war period on Pinfold Road, Turners Close and Glen Road.

The character of the village began to change in the post war period as the mechanisation of agriculture meant that redundant farm yards, stock yards, crew yards and paddocks were sold for housing. Today the village is largely a dormitory which has retained only one working farm.

Archaeology

The well preserved earthwork remains of the Norman castle are a Scheduled Ancient Monument. They are highly significant as there are very few examples of its type in the country which have an internal barbican.

The motte is a conical flat topped mound on top of the spur which rises 18 metres above the valley. The remains of the quadrangular shell keep are visible on the motte and define a series of rectangular shaped rooms arranged around a central courtyard. The motte is

surrounded on three sides by a deep ditch and large external bank surmounted by the stone curtain wall with mural towers at its south western and north western corners. To the east of the motte is a mound of similar height with the remains of a hexagonal tower which has been identified as the internal barbican.

The bailey lies on the high ground to the south and east of the motte and the remains of former agricultural, domestic and service buildings are visible within it. Castle Yard, the area between the water course and castle, formed part of the castle's defence system and also symbolically separated the castle from the village.

Adjacent to the castle are the remains of the fishpools which comprised of a series of artificial channels and ponds linked by dams and sluices constructed along the original course of the river. The fishpools were an integral part of the castle's economic and defensive development as fish farming was an important source of revenue for the landed classes in early medieval England. To the south and west sides of the pool is a man made channel which served as a bypass to carry water away from the pool at times of increased flow, through which the Glen Brook now flows. A medieval levelled terrace bounds the pool to the north west and the earthwork remains of an early post-medieval small house and garden are visible at the eastern end of the terrace.

The defensive system associated with the castle was completed in the medieval period by the construction of a wall to the south west of the castle. The remains of the wall form a linear bank which runs from the fishpools to the edge of Station Road and partially follows the line of the road northwards to the earth covered remains of a small building or gatehouse.

The fishpools and settlement defences are a Scheduled Ancient Monument and have been identified by English Heritage as an outstanding example of its type in Lincolnshire as they survive in excellent condition having been relatively unaltered since medieval times. However, the integrity of the remains has been compromised by the construction of dwellings between the remains of the fishpools and Castle Hill.

Planning Policy Context

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as "an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". It is the quality and interest of an area, rather than that of individual buildings, which is the prime consideration in identifying a conservation area.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area that are designated as conservation areas. Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This document should be read in conjunction with national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) – Planning for the Historic Environment and the accompanying Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in conjunction with English Heritage.











Listed Buildings

A listed building is one that is included on the government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The interiors and exteriors of these buildings are protected by law and consent is required from South Kesteven District Council before any works of alteration, extension or demolition can be carried out.

Positive Unlisted Buildings

In addition to listed buildings, the Conservation Area contains a large number of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. These are identified on the townscape appraisal maps as "positive buildings". This follows advice provided in English Heritage guidance on conservation area character appraisals, and within Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5), both of which stress the importance of identifying and protecting such buildings.

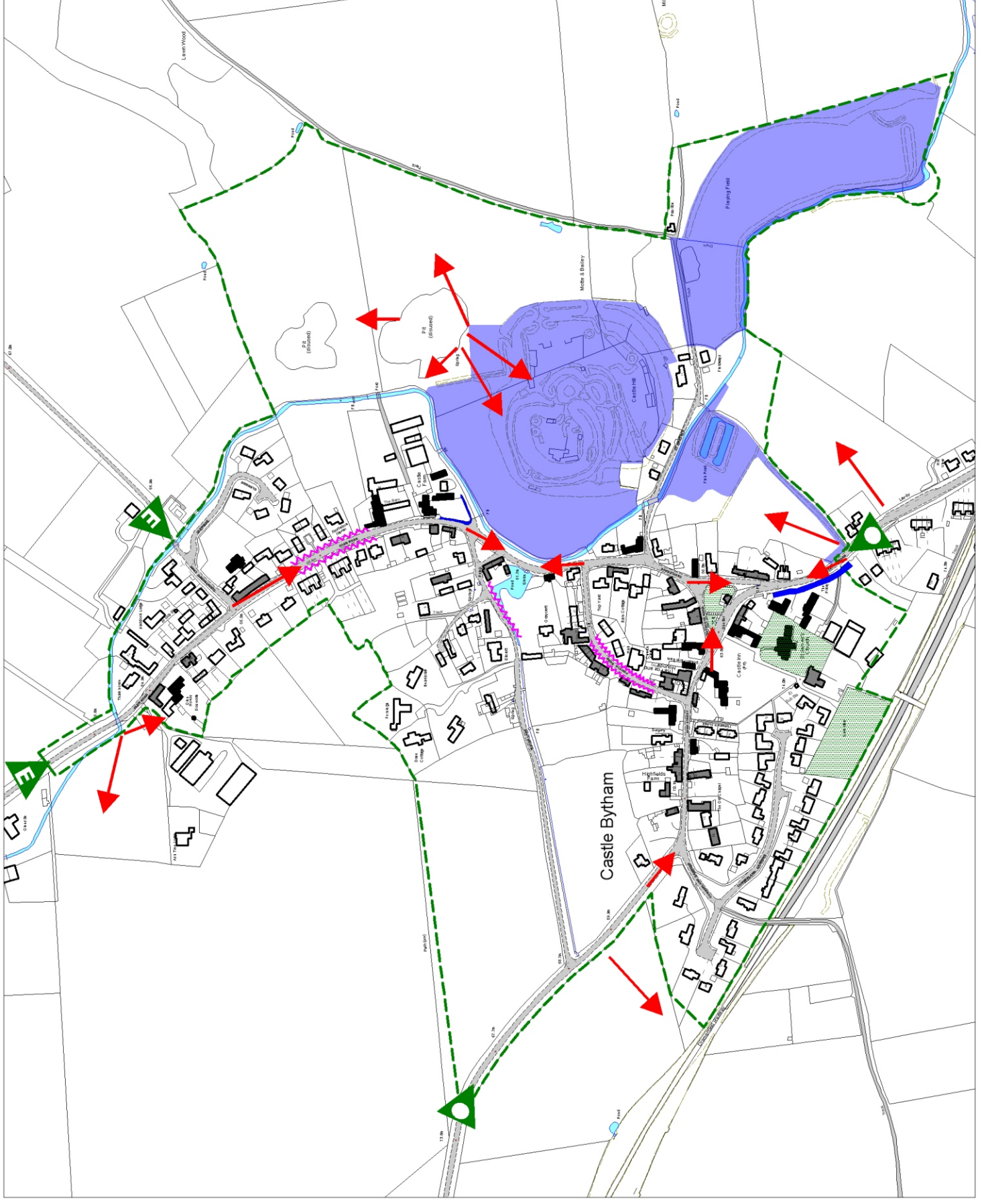
Symbol Key

-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Scheduled Ancient Monument
-  Important View
-  Enclosed Approach
-  Open Approach
-  Deflected View
-  Important Enclosing Feature
-  Important Open Space
-  Listed Building
-  Positive Unlisted Building

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Castle Bytham Conservation Area



Conservation Area Boundary

The Conservation Area encompasses the historic core of the village and modern peripheral housing developments. The buildings along Station Road situated to the south of The Priory are excluded from the boundary.

Character of the Approach Routes

There are four principal approaches to the Conservation Area; from the north along Glen Road, from the east along Couthorpe Lane, from the south along Station Road and from the west along Morkery Lane.

Glen Road is enclosed by narrow grass verges and hedgerows which allow glimpses of the open countryside beyond. As the boundary of the Conservation Area is approached Glen House and the unusual 17th century circular pigeoncote are visible on the west side. There are attractive western views from the boundary across the surrounding countryside towards Tortoiseshell Woods.

Couthorpe Lane is enclosed by dense hedgerows and mature trees which restrict views to the north and south. The hedgerow on the north side has been partially removed as the junction with Glenside is approached which allows views of the buildings on the east side of Glen Road whilst those along Glenside are visible to the south. To the west of the junction the views northwards are contained by the modern housing development and those southwards by the boundary hedge to Rectory Farmhouse, now a private dwelling.

The southern approach along Station Road has an attractive open character. There are pleasant views eastwards across to the surrounding countryside and northwards into the Conservation Area of the buildings along High Street, Castlegate and Heathcote Road. The tower of St James Church can be glimpsed to the west between mature trees.

Morkery Lane is a rural country lane with an open character. There are attractive distant views westwards to Little Haw Wood, whilst views to the east are constrained by a raised verge and hedgerow. To the south east of the junction with Water Lane, the road follows an upward slope towards the village and the eastern and western views are constrained by hawthorn hedgerows and subsequently the cultivated hedges of the houses on the western periphery of the village. As the brow of the hill is approached, the facades of No. 31 and the adjacent Old Chapel form the backdrop to views southwards along the High Street.

Spatial Character and Townscape Quality

The northern section of Glen Road from Glen House to the junction with Water Lane, has an enclosed character which is derived from the narrow width of the road and relatively high density of development. The buildings are aligned to the rear of the footway or are set back behind boundary walls and hedges which form a continuous building line along the street. The sloping topography of the valley contributes to the enclosed character as the buildings on the west side are slightly elevated above those on the east, with the exception of the former Castle Farmhouse, now known as The Old Farmhouse. The high stone boundary wall to The Old Farmhouse is an important enclosing feature along the east side of the road. The linear plan form has been eroded by recent housing developments to the rear of buildings on the east side along Couthorpe Road and Glenside.

The gentle curve of the road curtails the views along its length and deflects them along the building frontages. To the south of the junction with Couthorpe Lane, the top of the castle mound forms the backdrop to views along the street. The surrounding hillside can be glimpsed between the buildings on the east side whilst the views to the west are constrained by the building frontages and mature planting in the rear gardens. To the south of No. 15 on the west side, the rooftops and houses on the hillside along Water Lane and Pinfold Road are visible.

To the south of the junction with Water Lane, Glen Road has a more open character and a lower density of development. The east side is dominated by the castle mound and Castle Yard, which is partially obscured by a hedgerow, and is separated from the roadside by the deep channel of the Glen Brook. The picturesque village pond, flanked by the Water Keepers Cottage, Old Forge and mature trees, is situated on the west side and enhances the southern and northern views along the street. The cobbled ramps which allowed livestock to be driven in to the pond to wash or drink are still clearly visible.

Castlegate has a low density of development and the two wide triangular junctions where it meets St Martins and Heathcote Road confer an open character. The buildings occupy large plots and are aligned to the rear of the highway or are enclosed by low boundary walls which form a continuous building line along the street. To the south of the junction with Heathcote Road, the green lies on the west side of the road whilst the buildings on the east side follow the steep topography of the hillside. The stepped pitched rooflines and the mature trees on the green together with planting in the rear gardens of the buildings at the southern end of the street, enhance the visual interest along the street. The flat roofed extension to No. 13 is an incongruous feature which detracts from the character of the street.

Heathcote Road follows the steep topography of the hillside with an east-west incline. It has an open character as the green is situated on the south side and there is a low density of development on the north. The buildings occupy large plots, in particular No. 5 which has a wide attractive frontage and is a prominent feature along the road. The buildings are aligned to the rear of the footway or are enclosed by boundary walls. At the elevated western end of the road at the junction with High Street, there are attractive views to the surrounding countryside which enhances the open character.

High Street is aligned along a gentle downward west-east slope and has two contrasting characters. The western section from Morkery Lane to the junction with Heathcote Road is enclosed by buildings which occupy large plots. The road is relatively narrow and the elevated position of the buildings on the south side contributes to the enclosed character. The buildings are aligned to the rear of the highway, with either the façade or gable adjacent to the road, or are set back and enclosed by boundary walls which form a continuous building line along the street. The gentle southern curve of the road curtails views along its length and deflects them along the building frontages. There are glimpses of the distant countryside between the buildings on the north side, whilst views to the south are constrained by the buildings. To the east of the junction with Pinfold Road, the buildings at the southern end of Castlegate provide a backdrop for eastern views along the street which are enhanced by the mature trees and planting in the gardens along High Street.

To the east of the junction with Heathcote Road, the character of High Street becomes more open as the road widens and the density of development is lower, particularly on the north side which abuts the green. However there is a continuity of the established building line as the buildings abut the footway or are enclosed by boundary walls. The footway and buildings to the east of the Castle Inn are slightly elevated which allows open views across Heathcote Road and Castlegate to the surrounding countryside. There is an attractive wide view across the green from the junction with Heathcote Road and the buildings at the north end of Castlegate can be glimpsed between the trees.

Station Road has an open character due to the low density of development, particularly on the east side which allows uninterrupted views across to the surrounding countryside. The Priory and associated outbuildings are elevated above the footway on the west side and enclosed by a stone boundary wall which is an important enclosing feature along the street.

Pinfold Road is a steep narrow road which connects High Street with Glen Road. The eastward curve of the road from the junction with High Street curtails views along its length and deflects them along the building frontages. The buildings occupy small plots and are set back from the footway enclosed by stone or brick boundary walls which form a continuous building line. The Village Hall is set back from the highway on the east side and the absence of a boundary interrupts the enclosure along the street. To the north of the hall the bungalows on the east side are built on elevated ground which contributes to the enclosed character. The façade of No. 1 Castlegate, the former Wheatsheaf public house, can be glimpsed between the trees in the gardens at the north end of the street with the castle mound visible in the background. From the junction with Glen Road, the westward views along the street are deflected along the building frontages by the curve of the road. As the curve is rounded, the view terminates with the façade of No. 17 High Street which stands opposite the junction.

Water Lane which links Glen Road and Morkery Lane, has two distinct characters. The eastern end from the junction with Glen Road is enclosed by hedges and the narrow road curves gently westwards which restricts the views along its length. The visual interest of the lane is enhanced by the restored water pump on the north side and the stream which discharges into the pond on the south side. There are attractive eastern views along the lane to the pond with the castle mound visible in the background. There is a low density of development on the north side, the buildings are set back from the highway and the absence of boundary walls contrasts with the established character of development within the village. To the west of No 34, the lane has a more rural character. It is enclosed by verges and high boundary hedges which allow glimpses northwards to the countryside and the paddocks to the south which form a buffer between the village and wider landscape.

There have been a number of housing estates constructed within the village during the post war period. The development on Couthorpe Lane is the most sympathetic as the design, alignment and use of materials reflects the vernacular character of the Conservation Area.

Glenside, built to the rear of the buildings on the east side of Glen Road, and Cumberland Gardens which stands to the rear of High Street and Morkery Lane, are cul-de-sac developments which are inconsistent with the traditional linear plan form and vernacular characteristics of the Conservation Area. However they do not unduly detract from its overall character or impact upon views within the boundary due to the relatively unobtrusive locations.

Throughout many parts of the Conservation Area, overhead wires supplying electricity and telephone lines are a detrimental feature, particularly along Glen Road, Castlegate and Pinfold Road. In areas where the services have been undergrounded, for instance at Cumberland Gardens, the appearance of the Conservation Area has been greatly enhanced.

Quality and Character of Buildings

There are 19 listed buildings within the Conservation Area, which include the 12th century St James Church (Grade I) and The Priory (Grade II*) which dates from the 15th century with later additions and alterations.

There are a number of unlisted buildings, indicated on the map, which make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The buildings are generally constructed of limestone with clay pantile or Collyweston slate roofs which reflect the vernacular architectural character of the village and contribute to the harmonious street scene. These include the barns associated with Glen House and Rectory Farmhouse, which are important enclosing features along the east and west sides of Glen Road and the former Methodist Chapel on High Street.

The buildings are domestic in scale, comprising mainly of two storeys. The historic buildings generally have wide frontages and many have adjoining or detached single storey outbuildings which are important visual components of the street scene. The uniformity of materials is a key characteristic of the Conservation Area as most of the older buildings are constructed of limestone, although there are examples of attractive late 19th century terraced brick buildings along High Street to the east of the junction with Pinfold Road. The roofs are mainly pitched with clay pantile and Collyweston slate coverings, many of the buildings have retained their chimneys and the use of dormer windows contribute to the visual interest and character of the Conservation Area.

The character of some of the traditional buildings has been eroded by insensitive alterations such as the insertion of upvc windows and doors and replacement concrete pantiles which detract from the unity of character.

Boundary walls are an important feature throughout the village. They maintain a distinct building line along the street and contribute to the enclosed character whilst allowing a flexibility in the alignment of the buildings which creates views between them and adds to the visual interest of the Conservation Area.

The post war buildings generally do not reflect the vernacular traditions of the village in relation to the use of materials and architectural detailing, with the exception of the Couthorpe Lane development. However, they do respect the scale of the traditional buildings, comprising of two storey buildings interspersed with bungalows, and are mainly situated in unobtrusive locations and have a neutral impact upon the character of the Conservation Area.

Management Opportunities and Constraints

- * Any new development, including extensions and replacement buildings, should have regard to the historic context in terms of scale, height, form, style, design and materials.
- * Overhead wires, supporting poles and associated equipment have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The appropriate agencies should be encouraged to replace them with underground cables.
- * Important trees and open green spaces which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area, highlighted on the map, should be retained.
- * Existing boundary walls and hedges along the street frontages should be retained.
- * The boundary wall north of Red Barn House is in a poor state of repair. It is an important enclosing feature and should be repaired and maintained.
- * An appropriate boundary treatment to Roxholme Haven to restore the enclosure along this part of Glen Road would enhance the overall character of this part of the Conservation Area.
- * The barn associated with Rectory Farmhouse occupies a prominent position on the corner of Glen Road and Couthorpe Lane. It would benefit from a permanent water proof roof covering to prevent damage caused by water ingress.
- * The flat roofed extension to No.13 Castlegate is inconsistent with the vernacular character of the Conservation Area. If the opportunity arose, the extension could be improved by the addition of a pitched roof.

Please note that no appraisal can ever be completely comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Effects of Designation

The designation of a conservation area seeks to manage change in order to enhance conservation areas and ensure that new developments do not harm the existing character. Below are some of the key requirements for conservation areas.

- * Six weeks written notice is required prior to any work being carried out to prune or fell a tree in a conservation area.
- * Conservation area consent is required to demolish a building in a conservation area. There is a general presumption in favour of keeping all buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a conservation area. It is a criminal offence to demolish a building without first obtaining consent.
- * Applicants will need to demonstrate that any development proposal preserves or enhances the character or appearance of a conservation area. The council has greater control over building work in conservation areas, including materials and detailed design. New buildings within a conservation area do not necessarily need to directly imitate earlier styles; however they should be designed with respect for their context, as part of a larger whole which has a well-established character and appearance of its own.

- * Extra publicity is given on planning applications affecting the character or appearance of conservation areas.

Within conservation areas permitted development rights are restricted compared to those not in conservation areas. Planning permission is required for the following alterations:

- * Extensions over 50 cubic metres
- * Cladding of any part of the exterior with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles
- * Building within the curtilage of the dwelling house any structure over 10 cubic metres, this includes garden sheds, greenhouses etc.
- * Dormer windows
- * The installation of satellite antenna on a chimney, on a building that exceeds 15 metres in height or on a wall which fronts a highway
- * The installation of micro generation equipment.

For further help and advice please contact:

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E-mail: planningpolicy@southkesteven.gov.uk

Alternative formats and languages

South Kesteven has a rich and diverse culture – a community made up of people from different cultures, with differing backgrounds, beliefs or experiences. This diversity is one of the things that make South Kesteven such a great place to live and work.

To ensure all residents of South Kesteven have access to our information material, our information is available in a range of different languages and formats, including large print, Braille, audio tape/CD and computer disc. To request a document in a specific language or format, you can ring us on: 01476 40 61 27, or email: communications@southkesteven.gov.uk.



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