



Folkingham Conservation Area

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Appraisal & Amendment January 2009

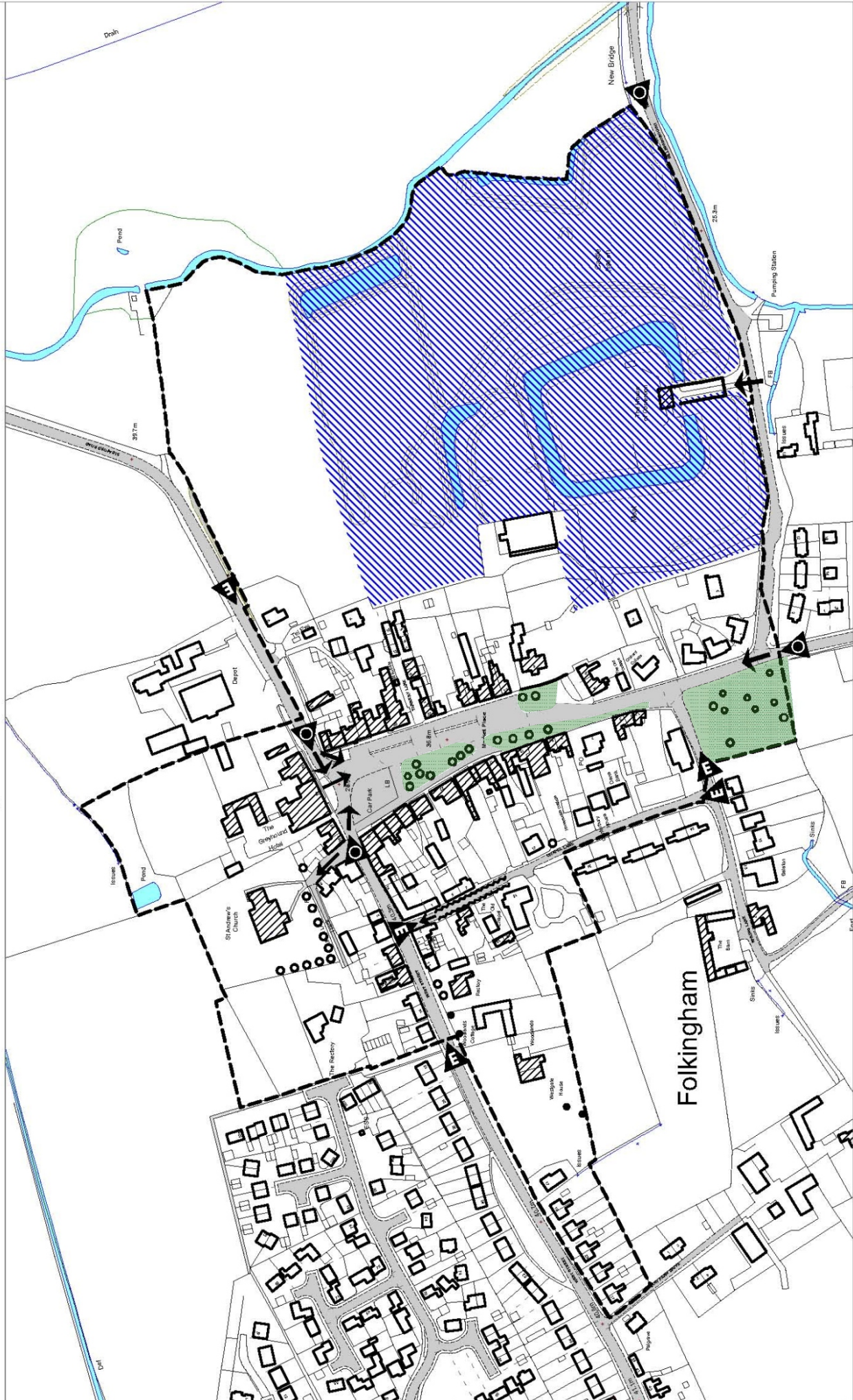


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South Kesteven District Council

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Folklingham Conservation Area



Map Key

- Listed Building
- Conservation Area
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Important Green Space
- Open Approach
- Enclosed Approach
- Important View
- Deflected View
- Important Tree (approximate location)
- Tree with Preservation Order

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Character Appraisal

Location and Context

The village of Folkingham is located on the western edge of the fens on a gently sloping hillside, midway between Bourne and Sleaford. It is bisected by the A15 Peterborough to Lincoln road which runs through Market Place.

The village was well-established by the time of the Norman Conquest in the 11th century; the Domesday Book records that it had a minimum population of 38 peasants, a mill and a church. William the Conqueror granted the manor of Folkingham to Gilbert de Ghent, one of the greatest landowners in Lincolnshire who later became Earl of Lincoln. Ghent built a castle on low lying ground to the south of the village close to the stream which was used to fill the castle's defensive moat. The castle stood on a rectangular island surrounded by a moat encircled by a larger moat which enclosed a large area to the west where the original entrance lay, to the north was a garden or orchard with a pond. By 1535 the castle was described as being in a ruinous condition by the antiquarian John Leland and was eventually destroyed during the Civil War in the 17th century. The remains of the castle are still clearly visible in the landscape and are a protected scheduled ancient monument.

Little is known about the development of the village prior to 1789 apart from the fact that it was growing into a large village or small town. This was partly due to its importance as a trading centre for outlying villages as a Saturday market was held from 1239 and Edward II also granted a Thursday market and seven annual fairs. The village's strategic location midway between Bourne and Sleaford meant that it became an important staging post on the London to Lincoln coaching route which boosted the agricultural economy. The importance of the coaching trade is reflected in the prominent location of The Greyhound, a former coaching inn dating from 1650, at the northern end of Market Place on the brow of the hill.

John Heathcote purchased the manor in 1788; he described the village as consisting of a mass of irregularly built thatched cottages. Market Place had a large pond in the middle with a market cross, butchery, town hall and two wells and The Greyhound was described as being a hovel. In 1789 Heathcote commenced a programme of rebuilding, replacing the cottages with the elegant houses and plan form it has largely retained to this day. The façade of The Greyhound was rebuilt in red brick with a stone lined archway for coaches and the Assembly Rooms were added to the east wing with a Venetian window overlooking Market Place.

The village was an important centre for civil and criminal justice, The Quarter Sessions for Kesteven were held in the village from 1646 in the town hall, which was demolished in the 1789 rebuilding of Market Place. The fortnightly Magistrates Court and Quarter Sessions were held in the Assembly Rooms at The Greyhound from 1789 to 1828. They were suspended following Heathcote's refusal to provide a courtroom in the village and the Magistrates' belief that a room attached to an inn was inconsistent with the dignity of the law.

The House of Correction was located in Number 32-34 Market Place from 1609 to 1808 where the able bodied poor were put to work; beneath the building was a jail with four cells for men and two for women with an exercise yard in Market Place. A larger House of Correction was built in 1808 within the remains of the Norman castle. It was enlarged in 1825 and a west wing was constructed in 1852. The prison closed in 1878 and the remaining inmates were transferred to other institutions. The prison staff rooms were used to house local people until after the Second World War when new housing was built in the village. The gatehouse, which also served as the governor's house, is all that remains and has been restored by the Landmark Trust as holiday accommodation.

The decline of the coaching trade and the decision to run the railway line through Billingborough in the 19th century had a negative impact on the village's economy. Agriculture remained the main economic activity but the mechanisation of farming means that it now employs few people and provides little direct benefit to the village. Until recently Folkingham supported a number of local businesses but these have gradually dwindled and it is now primarily a residential village.

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 Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) – Planning and the Historic Environment.

Conservation Area Boundary

The Conservation Area is based principally around Market Place, West Street and Chapel Lane, encompassing the historic centre of the village. To the east the boundary incorporates the gatehouse to the House of Correction and remains of the castle, and extends northwards to Sleaford Road. To the west it includes the village green adjacent to Bourne Road and Spring Lane. The northern boundary encompasses land to the rear of the new Rectory, the churchyard of St Andrew and fields to the rear of The Greyhound, terminating at the eastern edge of the village to the east of Hollowell Cottage on Sleaford Road.

Spatial Character and Townscape Quality

There are four approaches to the Conservation Area, each has a distinct character. The undulating eastern approach along Sleaford Road is enclosed by hedgerows; the tower of St Andrew’s Church can be glimpsed over the hedgerow on the north side of the road. The upper storey of the Village Shop can be seen as the road approaches the brow of the hill and as it dips a wide attractive view of the north and west sides of Market Place opens out. The spacious character of Market Place provides a pleasant and unexpected contrast with the enclosed approach.

The south east approach along Billingborough Road is also enclosed by hedgerows but glimpses of open fields on the south side and views of the Gatehouse to the House of Correction to the north create a more open character.

The southern approach along Bourne Road offers long views of the village from the brow of the hill. The church dominates the village from this vantage point in terms of scale, positioning and materials. The houses appear to be clustered around the soft grey limestone church which contrasts pleasantly with the clay pantile roofs which are a key feature of the village. To the east the Gatehouse to the House of Correction can be glimpsed between a screen of mature trees. As the road approaches the southern boundary of the Conservation Area, there are attractive views up the hillside towards Market Place which is dominated at the northern end by The Greyhound with the tower of the church visible in the background to the west.

The western approach along West Street is enclosed on the north side by two storey brick post war houses set back from the road within modest gardens. The mid section of this development is laid out in a curve with a large grass verge in front which creates an open character to the street. On the south side the boundary of the Conservation Area incorporates the five pairs of former estate cottages. The cottages are built of brick with stone quoin corner details and are set back from the street within modest gardens. The linear eastern view down the street of building frontages is broken up by the mature planting in the gardens of Westgate House and the Rectory. The tower of St Andrew’s Church is visible on the north side, partially obscured by the mature trees which line the boundary wall of the churchyard. Towards the end of West Street a wide view of the elegant townhouses on the eastern side of Market Place opens out.

Market Place is the historic centre and focal point of the village. It is a spacious, irregular shaped rectangle which tapers to the south and is enclosed on three sides by buildings dating from the 17th-19th centuries. The north side is built on the brow of a hill and there are pleasant views southwards of Market Place with the undulating countryside in the background. The two

irregularly shaped green spaces on the west side are planted with an attractive mix of deciduous trees and contribute to the visual interest and open character of Market Place. The buildings on the west side are elevated above road level as the land gently slopes to the east. The green spaces to the south and car park to the north together with an access road for cars and a pavement, which is partially paved with York stone to the south of Ye Olde Bakehouse, physically separate the buildings from the A15. The car park is surfaced with compacted gravel, which is also used on the access roads, to differentiate these areas from the A15. Buildings on the east side are level with the road as the ground is relatively flat but the wide pavement and access road provide a barrier between the buildings and the traffic.

Building plots in Market Place vary in size; the larger plots tend to be located at the northern end with smaller plots towards the south. The buildings abut directly onto the pavement and the larger properties to the north have small frontages. The relatively small spaces between the buildings on the west side create a continuous building frontage. The eastern side beyond the junction with Tannery Lane has a more open character, as there is a lower density of development and wider spaces between the buildings. The open character is enhanced by the grass verge and trees in front of the Manor House, which is set back from the road within large grounds. The cottages adjacent to the Manor House are located at a right angle to the road and demarcate the historic centre from the recent residential developments along Bourne Road.

West Street has an enclosed character as buildings abut directly onto the pavement. The building plots are varied in size and are irregularly spaced but a continuous frontage is formed beyond the junction with Church Lane up to the New Inn by boundary walls. To the west of the New Inn, the character becomes more open on the south side as the Rectory, Woodlands Cottage, Woodlands and Westgate House are set back from the street within large grounds and are partially obscured by mature planting. The tower of St Andrew's Church framed by mature trees can be glimpsed between buildings on the north side of the street.

St Andrew's Church occupies a relatively secluded position to the north west of Market Place and is accessed via Church Lane, which is enclosed on both sides by two storey buildings. The church is set centrally within the churchyard, which is enclosed on three sides by a stone wall with mature trees planted along its length, and by iron railings to the rear with views across open fields.

Chapel Lane has an enclosed character due to the narrow width of the road. The irregularly spaced buildings to the south are set back from the road with modest front gardens. The appearance of the road is softened by grass verges and the planting of trees and shrubs in the private gardens; the absence of a footpath emphasises its enclosed character. Looking north, the road curves slightly to the west which deflects views along the building frontages. Beyond the Old Chapel on the west side the buildings abut directly onto the narrow pavement and there is an attractive view of the façade of Number 4 West Street with St Andrew's tower framed by mature trees in the background.

The village green to the west of Bourne Road is an attractive open space planted with trees which offers the opportunity for social interaction and recreational activities and is an important public space within the village.

Quality and Character of Buildings

There are a large number of listed buildings within the Conservation Area, which are primarily clustered around Market Place. The most notable examples include St Andrews Church which is Grade I listed together with the Greyhound, Manor House and Gatehouse to the House of Correction which are Grade II*.

The buildings in Market Place largely date from the late 18th century reconstruction undertaken by John Heathcote. The three storey Greyhound is an important component of the Conservation Area as it dominates the north end of the square due to its wide seven bay frontage. It is flanked on either side by two storey stone cottages which emphasise the large scale and dominance of The Greyhound. The buildings on the north east and west sides of Market Place consist of large scale elegant townhouses of two and three storeys with wide frontages of two to five bays. Beyond The Lodge on the west side and the junction with Tannery Lane on the east, the buildings become more modest in scale, consisting mainly of two storeys with narrower frontages.

The buildings around Market Place have a strong group value achieved by a unity of design and use of materials. Buildings are constructed mainly from brick interspersed with some constructed of coursed limestone. A combination of pitched roofs, some with dormer windows, and mansard roofs covered in clay pantiles, Collyweston slate or Welsh slate creates an attractive and varied skyline. The majority of buildings have retained their original features which contribute to the architectural quality and interest of Market Place. Attractive examples of fanlights, moustache shaped lintels and ornamental doorcases are evident and Number 17 has an interesting example of an original 18th century shop front with a bowed window on the ground floor.

West Street consists of small scale two storey brick buildings with pitched roofs, some with dormer windows, covered in clay pantiles. The three storey Grade II listed Rectory on the south side is set back from the street within modest grounds and is constructed of coursed limestone rubble and ashlar. Mature trees line part of the boundary wall which partially screens the building from the road.

Chapel Lane to the south consists of modern two storey housing constructed of brick, to the north beyond Number 18, the older buildings are generally two storeys built of brick and limestone with pitched roofs covered in clay pantiles.

The Gatehouse to the Grade II* House of Correction on Billingborough Road is an imposing limestone ashlar and brick structure located on the periphery of the village. It can only be clearly viewed from the bottom of the driveway as it is partially hidden from view by the contours of the castle's earthworks and is not visible from the centre of the village.

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.
- * The traditional 18th century shop front at Number 17 Market Place should be retained and maintained in good repair.
- * The historic York stone paving on the west side of Market Place should be retained.
- * The compacted gravel surfaces of the car park on the north side of Market Place and the access roads on the east and west sides should be retained to differentiate these areas from the A15.
- * The earthwork remains of the Norman castle should be protected from overgrazing and from the penetration of scrub which may encourage burrowing animals and threaten the stability of the monument.
- * The Village Hall would benefit from an appropriate boundary to screen the hard landscaping to the rear of the building and enhance the appearance of the southern end of Chapel Lane.
- * The boundary walls along West Street which extend from Church Lane to the New Inn should be retained as they are an important enclosing feature.
- * The trees in the churchyard of St Andrews Church should be pruned as necessary to protect the views of the tower from West Street and Market Place.
- * Important trees, enclosing hedges and open green spaces which contribute to the character of the Conservation Area, highlighted on the map, should be retained.

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 effects of designation include the following;

1. Subject to certain exemptions, the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority is required for the demolition of buildings within the conservation area.
2. Subject to certain exemptions, six weeks prior notice must be given to the Council of any proposals to top, lop, fell or uproot any trees within the conservation area. The wilful damage or destruction of such trees may also result in an offence having been committed.
3. Certain forms of development, which, by virtue of the provisions of the Town and County Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 could otherwise have been undertaken without planning permission, cannot be undertaken without formal approval from the Local Planning Authority.
4. Applications for planning permission for development which would affect the character or appearance of the conservation area will be advertised.
5. In considering proposals for development within the conservation area, the Local Planning Authority will have regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance.

For further help and advice please contact:

Planning Policy, Council Offices, St Peter's Hill, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 6PZ.

Telephone: (01476) 406080 E-mail: planningpolicy@southkesteven.gov.uk

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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

