



*Basingstoke
and Deane*

Conservation Area Appraisal

Ramsdell



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Introduction

The Ramsdell Conservation Area was first designated in April 1992 by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council in recognition of the special architectural and historic interest of the village.

Having designated the Conservation Area, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that those elements that form its particular character or appearance should be preserved or enhanced, especially when considering planning applications.

It is therefore necessary to define and analyse those qualities or elements that contribute to, or detract from, the special interest of the area and to assess how they combine to justify its designation as a Conservation Area. Such factors can include:

- its historic development;
- the contribution of individual or groups of buildings to the streetscape and the spaces that surround them, and
- the relationship of the built environment with the landscape.

They can also include the less tangible senses and experiences, such as noise or smells, which can nevertheless play a key part in forming the distinctive character of an area.

The Appraisal takes the form of written text and an Appraisal Plan. In both respects every effort has been made to include or analyse those elements key to the special character of the area. Where buildings, structures or features have not been specifically highlighted it does not necessarily follow that they are of no visual or historic value to the Conservation Area. The document is intended to be an overall framework and guide within which decisions can be made on a site-specific basis.

This Appraisal of the Ramsdell Conservation Area follows its review in 2003 by the Borough Council and explains what its designation means for those who live and work in the area.

This document was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council on 19th February 2004 and complements the policies of the Borough Local Plan (review).

The document was subject to consultation with Councillors, Parish Councils and local amenity groups. A full list of consultees, copies of their responses, and details of the Council's consideration of the issues raised during the consultation period are available for inspection, by appointment, at the Civic Offices, during normal office hours.

Location and Population

The village of Ramsdell is situated five miles north-west of Basingstoke, in an undulating arable landscape. The core of the settlement is loosely focussed on a crossroad, formed by the Ewhurst and Monk Sherborne Roads, and by the Baughurst and Basingstoke Roads.

The population of the Conservation Area in 2003 was approximately 75 (projection based on the Hampshire County Council Planning Departement Small Area Population Forecasts 1995).

Historic Development

Settlement Origins

Ramsdell appears to have emerged as a settlement at a relatively late date. It is known that, at the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the land around the present settlement was owned by Pamber Priory, Winchester Cathedral and Queen's College. The land at the periphery of these holdings was sold to create the site of the village today.

The village has developed around the crossroads and the three farms originally to be found in the area, creating a dispersed settlement pattern. The village is, however, given some cohesion by the network of roads and lanes.

Settlement Development

The prevailing use in and around the Conservation Area was originally an agricultural one, including both arable and sheep farming. Historic references survive today – for example Sheepwash Lane and Sheepwash Cottage. Physical vestiges of agricultural use can also be seen around the pond.

Although the origins of the development of the village can be traced back to the sale of the ecclesiastical land, it was not until the construction of a brickworks on the edge of the village, during the 19th century, that any significant growth took place. A church was not constructed in the village until 1867.



Crossroads at Basingstoke and Monk Sherborne Road



Basingstoke Road



8 Basingstoke Road



Crocus Cottage



16 Basingstoke Road

An Appraisal of the Conservation Area

An Overview

The Ramsdell Conservation Area has an essentially rural character. The sporadic and irregular arrangement of buildings relates more to the fields and pastures surrounding them, than to each other. This verdant character is reinforced by the established and visually dominant native hedgerows, they encompass both the buildings and the surrounding green spaces – uniting the two forms.

There is a diverse mixture of architectural styles and periods. The essential appearance of the Conservation Area is of glimpses of parts of buildings, in the context of mature vegetation and trees.

Of special interest are the small, unmetalled tracks, radiating from the main roads, converging on the former sheepwash and pond. These tracks afford access to several properties, and are evocative of the rural origins of the settlement.

Built Form

There are three buildings within the Ramsdell Conservation Area which are included in the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Christ Church, Crocus Cottage and Digweed Farm are all Grade II listed. They are constructed in materials characteristic of their period, and linked by their architectural appearance as buildings of intended status.

The villagescape also comprises a number of unlisted buildings, mainly dating from the 19th century. These are predominantly constructed of brick, and illustrate the social and agricultural history of the settlement. Some possess features of particular interest. However, it is their group value, in association with adjacent listed buildings, that significantly contributes to the overall special interest of the Conservation Area. Historic buildings of particular individual or group value are identified on the Appraisal Plan. This is not to undermine the value of other unmarked buildings or structures, which reflect the historic development of the village.

Key Individual Buildings

Christ Church was designed by J Colson and constructed in 1867. Unaltered since this date, it is constructed of flint with decorative bands of red and blue bricks, and narrow sets of lancet windows between the buttresses. The principal architectural feature of the building is the slender tower, on the north-west tower corner. It has a shingled spire set above a wooden, octagonal open-frame belfry, and rests on a small red clay tile roof. Built on an east/west line, at an angle to the crossroads, its position therefore dominates the approach from the west.

Digweeds Farmhouse dates from the late 18th century and forms the southern boundary along Sheepwash Lane. The façade of the building is characteristic of the period, with its symmetrical form, sash windows and a central doorway. Set back from the track, it dominates the setting of this part of the Conservation Area.

Associated with the farmhouse is a small, timber clad, agricultural building strongly evocative of a rural past. The presence of this building, together with the sheepwash, boardwalk and adjoining track, make an important contribution to the rural character of the Conservation Area.

Although unlisted, the other building of individual significance in the Conservation Area is The Vicarage. Set back from the public highway and well screened by mature planting, this symmetrical brick building is dominated by a large portico. Glimpses of the front elevation and the large, hipped slate, roof-slopes and chimney-stacks are prominent in views from the main roads. In conjunction with the associated ancillary stable and coach-house buildings, these add variety to the more vernacular character of the settlement.

8 Basingstoke Road can only be glimpsed from the main road. This one and a half storey, 17th century, thatched, timber-framed building is located down an unmetalled track. The original, smaller, core of the building is still apparent. This, together with its close association with the pasture land to the south-west, provides an insight into the form and appearance of the settlement from its earliest phase.

Significant Groups of Buildings

The most significant and visually inter-related group of buildings in the Conservation Area is the group focussed around the crossroads. The church, The Vicarage, Church Close House, the school and School House form a small communal centre for the village. The construction of these buildings is also indicative of the village expansion in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The former school dates from the turn of the 20th century. Although it has now been converted into a private house, its original use is still apparent. The façade is of particular note, and has a highly decorative appearance. It is created by the use of yellow, red and black bricks, and a striking, dentiled eaves course of header bricks.

Located immediately to the south-east of the school, and visually linked by a continuous brick boundary wall, is the former schoolhouse. It has a tile-hung façade, creating a regular vertical 'zig-zag' pattern around a central, ornate timber porch.



Christ Church



Digweeds Farm



The Vicarage



The school



School House



View towards Conservation Area

This closely juxtaposed pair of buildings forms an unusually strong association, in contrast to the other more restrained and individual buildings of the village. Moreover, they help to establish a context and setting for the church.

The Character and Importance of Public and Private Spaces

The most significant space in the Conservation Area is the open grazing land separating Digweeds Farm from the Basingstoke Road. This land forms an essential component of the form, character and appearance of the area. A number of paths fan across the space, focussing on the pond and former sheepwash, giving it a strong relationship to the built form. The views from Sheepwash Cottage and the path northwards (towards the rear of the buildings along Basingstoke Road), provide the most complete overall impression of the form and character of the built settlement.

The space to the south and east of The Vicarage is important in defining the building in a mature and structured setting and reinforces the status and individuality of the building. The area of space surrounding The Wilderness is a private area, well-screened from Basingstoke Road. However, it has a strong effect on the character of the Conservation Area, by virtue of its secluded, and impenetrable, wooded setting. This is in contrast to the open, rural character of the rest of the settlement.

To the north of the church is a small field that has separated the church from later 20th century developments on Basingstoke Road. This area, along with a small area to the south-west of the village hall, is still being grazed, helping to retain the agricultural and rural character of the settlement.

Building Materials

The limited nature of the building materials prevalent in the Conservation Area reflects the vernacular tradition of utilising locally available resources. Early buildings are, therefore, constructed of timber-frame and thatch. With the later development of the brickworks, and associated fashion for brick from the 18th century onwards, this material is dominant throughout the village. Some slate and flint was used during the late 19th century, but is limited to the architecture of the more consciously designed buildings, such as the church.

Other Features of Architectural or Historic Interest

There are few boundary walls in the Conservation Area. Hedges are the most prevalent boundary feature. The dwarf wall and railings to the school and former schoolhouse are therefore prominent features. They also help to reinforce the association of the two buildings, and indicate their former use.

Green Spaces, Trees, Hedges and other Natural or Cultivated Features

Hedges are a fundamental feature of both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and hence have not been identified individually on the Appraisal Plan.

Mature trees can be found in landscaped gardens and throughout the more agricultural parts of the Conservation Area. They are mainly broad leaved oak, ash, horse chestnut and lime with birch, beech, and evergreen oak also present. There are a few scattered conifers, including scots pine, spruce and yew. There are two maturing cedar of Lebanon trees, one in the churchyard and the other in the garden of Church Close.

There are several trees of note in the Conservation Area, including a number of young hornbeams and an old hedgerow hornbeam in the front garden on 16 Basingstoke Road. There are also two weeping ash trees – one in the churchyard and the other in the garden of Church Close.

The line of trees along the northern hedge line of Towns End and the Monk Sherborne Road, creates a particularly strong entrance to the village. It is an appropriate setting to the church when approached from the west.

The tall spruce tree in the churchyard is also of significant importance to the village scene. The vertical form of the tree matches that of the church spire to create a particularly strong impression of this area as a focal point of the Conservation Area.



Old school walls



Basingstoke Road



Boughurst Road



View towards Lower Manor Farm

The Setting of the Conservation Area

Ramsdell is located within a predominantly rural landscape, known as the North Basingstoke Mosaic. This is an area of countryside containing clay, gravel and sand, along with some woodland cover and a low settlement density. A dense network of winding lanes, skirt a mosaic of irregular shaped fields and grazing land, connecting scattered villages and farming settlements. On the south-west boundary of the Conservation Area is Withers Copse, a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

Areas of Archaeological Significance

To date, there has been no extensive evidence for archaeology in the Conservation Area. Ramsdell could, therefore, be considered as an Area of Archaeological Potential for the future. The site of the former brickworks represents the industrial archaeology of the community, and some Roman material is reported to have been found during clay extraction here.

Conservation Area Planning Controls

The following controls apply within the Conservation Area in addition to normal planning controls:

- Conservation Area Consent is normally required for the demolition of buildings or structures over a certain size within a Conservation Area.
- The Council must be given six weeks notice of any intention to undertake works to, cut down or uproot any trees over a certain size in the Conservation Area.
- Planning applications which, in the opinion of the Borough Council, would affect the special character of the Conservation Area must be advertised and the opportunity given for public comment. This may include proposals outside the Conservation Area which nevertheless affect its setting.

Statutory policies relating to Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings are set out in the adopted Basingstoke and Deane Borough Local Plan. These policies reflect the statutory duty on the Local Planning Authority to have regard for the preservation of historic buildings or their setting, and to promote the enhancement of areas designated as being of special interest. These policies seek to ensure that particular regard will be paid to the scale, height, form, materials and detailing of proposals including boundary treatments and other features of note. In order to consider the implications of development and given the detail required, the Borough Council will normally require proposals within the Conservation Area to be submitted in the form of a full, and not outline, application. The Borough Council's Conservation Officers are available for advice and information on all matters relating to development proposals in a Conservation Area.

Grants

The Borough Council provides grants for various types of work. These include Historic Building Grants, Environment and Regeneration Grants, and Village and Community Hall Grants. Leaflets are available explaining the purpose and criteria for each grant. Please contact the Council for further information on any grant.

Historical OS map of Ramsdell



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