

AMPFIELD CONSERVATION AREA POLICY



AMPFIELD

Conservation Area Policy

After a period of public consultation this policy was adopted by Test Valley Borough Council on 1st November 1989, the date of designation of the Ampfield Conservation Area.

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INTRODUCTION

This policy document for Ampfield is part of the Borough Council's continuing programme, as approved in 1979, for conservation area designations throughout Test Valley. The study describes the village and its history and identifies the conservation area. It also explains the special planning controls which would result from designation.

Conservation of the environment is one of the most important functions of local planning authorities. To be successful it must be the concern of all of us who value our towns and villages which have evolved over centuries and contain many beautiful and historic areas. Their individual character is due to a highly diverse combination of buildings, trees and spaces.

Historic buildings are at the forefront of conservation, as a tangible record of our architectural and social history. Since 1947 the Secretary of State has compiled Lists of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest for each locality. Buildings included on the Statutory List enjoy legal protection under the Town and Country Planning Acts and are classified into Grades I, II* and II to show their relative importance. In recent years the Department of the Environment has been progressively revising the Lists throughout England and Wales. The revised List for Ampfield was approved by the Secretary of State in 1986 when the number of statutorily listed buildings in the village was increased substantially.

The concept of conservation areas is a more recent innovation. Prior to 1967 the emphasis was on the preservation of individual buildings as distinct from areas. The Civic Amenities Act 1967 imposed a duty on local planning authorities to "determine which parts of their areas were of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it was desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate such areas as conservation areas". These powers have been expanded and strengthened in subsequent Planning Acts and at present there are more than 6,000 conservation areas in England and Wales; of these 255 are in Hampshire and 31 in Test Valley.

In defining areas of special architectural or historic merit there can be no standard specification as naturally there will be many different kinds. The boundary of any conservation area reflects the factors which give a place its unique and "special" character. Thus, significant groups of buildings, architectural style, historic settlement pattern, spaces, trees, etc., all have to be taken into account following detailed surveys and an examination of historical records. The intention is to identify core areas of particular interest. This need not include every single historic building in the vicinity

of the village and does not mean that occasional poorly designed or unsightly buildings are excluded if they lie within the core. Neither does it necessarily include all of a village or the surrounding countryside, as there are parallel planning policies which protect the countryside against inappropriate development.

Conservation policies are designed to complement rather substitute for other planning policies. This document is not a village plan or a local plan and therefore is not concerned with the principle of whether development takes place. It will, however, have much to do with the form that any such development should take, including alterations or extensions to existing buildings. Particular attention is given to such matters as design, scale, location, use of materials and effect upon the street scene.



Looking across Smiths Meadow to Ampfield House

THE CHARACTER OF THE VILLAGE

Historical Background

Ampfield is situated about three miles north-east of Romsey astride the A31 Winchester road, an historic route dating back to at least the Saxon period. The underlying ground is generally of Bagshot Sands, with tongue of pebble beds stretching northwards along Knapp Lane which provided the basis for local gravel working. The surrounding country is well wooded, especially to the north and east, towards Hursley and Braishfield.

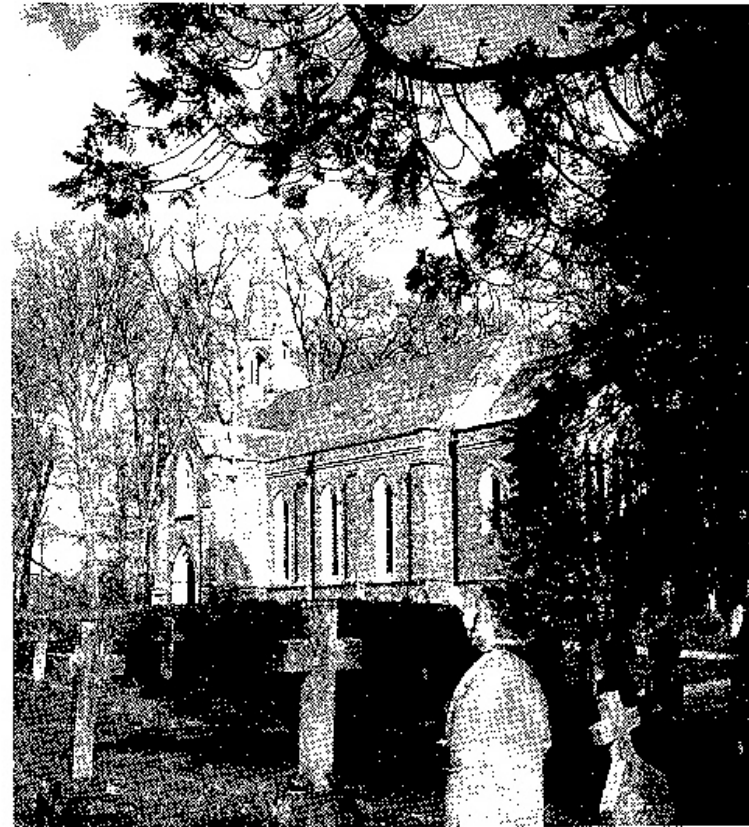
Due to the generous tree cover, archaeological research has been somewhat inhibited but there have been several significant prehistoric finds, including a flint flake near the site of St. Marks Church and a Bronze Age axe which may be linked to one of three Bronze Age barrows in Hocombe Upper Plantation. Their presence would indicate the existence of a Bronze Age village in the area, although no site has yet been discovered.

Roman remains are also present, particularly to the north and west of the village, where foundations of villas have been found in both Ampfield Wood and Woolley Green Farm. However, the earliest known reference to Ampfield itself is a Saxon Charter granting land in the area from King Edward to Winchester Cathedral in 963 AD.

Ampfield (or Anfelde, as it was then called) continued under episcopal control for almost six centuries. In 1316 it was recorded as a hamlet of Hursley belonging to the Manor of Merton. Merton Castle, the remains of which are about two and a half miles north-east of Ampfield, was one of several fortified palaces built by the Bishops of Winchester - in this instance by Henry of Blois in 1138. Merton was eventually relinquished to the crown in 1551, and thereafter had a variety of proprietors, including Richard Cromwell, Lord Protector of England. By c.1600, however, Merton was a ruin and the seat of the manor was transferred to a new house at Hursley Park.

At Ampfield evidence of medieval remains has been found near St. Marks Church and it is also likely that there existed a moated medieval house west of Ampfield House. The pattern of settlement appears to have been broadly as it is today, with the principal buildings dispersed along the main road, and more modest cottages extending north up Knapp Lane. The hamlet's fortunes fluctuated during this period, and in the winter of 1604-5 there was a serious outbreak of plague, its victims being buried not at the parish church at Hursley, but on waste ground near their homes, for fear of spreading infection.

Ampfield did not have its own church until St. Marks was completed in 1841, and only became a separate parish in 1894. The modern name of the village "Ampfield" has been in use since the mid-19th century, evolving from "Anfield" which was usual from about 1500.



St. Marks Church

The Area Today

Approaching from Hursley, the turning to Knapp is just after St. Marks Church (Listed Grade II) which occupies a prominent position amidst fine firs and cedars on the north side of the A31. Its existence is due mainly to the efforts of two individuals, John Keble, who was vicar of Hursley from 1836-66 (and had the privilege of an Oxford College being founded in his honour), and Sir William Heathcote, then owner of Hursley Manor, who funded the building. Designed in Early English style by Owen Carter and William Yonge, it was constructed during 1838-40 of distinctive blue brick with honey coloured stone dressings and lancet windows. At the western gable is an elaborate stone bell turret with an octagonal spire. The stained glass, which includes a window commemorating Keble, was designed by William Butterfield.

Tucked behind a belt of trees on the west side of Knapp Lane is the Old Vicarage (Listed Grade II), a pleasant house of Georgian origin. Opposite, the village school, with patterned brickwork and gabled windows, dates from 1896. There is an attractive steepled bell tower at its northern end, topped by a weathercock.



Ampfield Village School



Monks Barn

On the left, Monks Barn (Listed Grade II), is amongst the oldest cottages in Knapp Lane, with a timber framed core, although its Tudoresque detailing is an embellishment of 19th century origin. The cast iron square and diamond patterned casements are also Victorian, a feature typical of other cottages in the village, and common throughout the Hursley Estate. By contrast Kingfisher House (Listed Grade II), opposite the old thatched Post Office, is a symmetrical early 19th century white painted brick villa, with a shallow pitched slated roof and large wooden sliding sash windows.

Further along, the thatched and tile hung gable end of Number 168 (Listed Grade II), faces onto the lane. Its timber frame dates from the 17th century, whilst neighbouring Number 169 is typical of the later 19th century workers' cottages on the Hursley Estate. Here the vista opens out as the road approaches Knapp Hill. Arable land to the west is screened by a long hedgerow and more recent coniferous planting, whilst on the east side a large paddock extends back to Ampfield Plantation, an area of mostly deciduous trees. There is an interesting group of farm buildings adjacent to the path through the woods, including a large weatherboarded timber framed barn with a roof of clasped purlin construction and angled queen posts, and a brick pigsty next to the lane.

Opposite the farmyard is another group of 19th century estate cottages with the former village school at Number 172. Numbers 174 and 175 (Listed Grade II) have timber framed cores dating from the 17th century, but were subsequently extensively modified during the 19th century with tile hanging, cast iron windows and a Tudor style chimney stack, all reflecting the so called "Picturesque" fashion of the period. Next door, Number 176 (Listed Grade II), a thatched one and a half storey cottage, shows similar influence.

At this point the lane narrows, confined between the high hedges which are a feature of the village, until the view opens out again past Hawkers Hill Lodge (Listed Grade II), another 17th century cottage which has the appearance of a 19th century Cottage Orn  as a result of extensive "Picturesque" treatment. The roof is thatched with a tall Tudor style chimney stack. Its timber framed core has been infilled with brick and hung with fishscale banded tiling at first floor level, whilst the front door is Gothic, set in an arched frame. The Lodge is an important terminal point to the lane which here splits into two unmade tracks into Ampfield Wood. Within the wood, the Portland Bank forms part of the parish boundary and marks the southern limit of the former Hursley Deer Park.



Hawkers Hill Lodge



Ampfield House

A further group of historic buildings is situated along the main A31 road to the west of Knapp Lane. Ampfield House was built for the White family c. 1755 and is notable for its fine Georgian interior features. It also has several interesting outbuildings, now in business use, whilst the house itself is used as the headquarters of Hilliers Nurseries. There is a fine view of Ampfield House from Pound Lane across Smiths Meadow.

Until at least the 18th century the line along the main road differed from today, running down the west side of Smiths Meadow and west along Lower Farm Lane. The White Horse was an important coaching inn on the main road and is one of the oldest buildings in the area, dating back to c. 1600. Its timber frame has been infilled with brick and later cast iron "Hursley" casements installed. Inside two large "inglenook" fireplaces survive.

BOUNDARIES

The Conservation Area is centred on the historic core of the village which is contained by natural boundaries of Forestry Commission plantation to the north and east and arable land to the west and south.

The key to maintaining the character of Ampfield and enhancing its environmental quality lies in retaining those features which contribute towards its unique character and ensuring that any new development is sympathetic in character. Key features are:-

- local landmarks along the A31 formed by St. Marks Church, the Primary School, Ampfield House and the White Horse Inn;
- the small scale domestic nature of the buildings in Knapp Lane;
- the low density of development;
- hedgerows forming linking elements between groups of cottages and giving a sense of enclosure in Knapp Lane;
- open vistas from Wide Wood; eastwards and westwards from Knapp Lane; south east from the A31 towards Broadgate Farm and from Pound Lane across Smiths Meadow; and
- woodland forming natural boundaries at Ampfield Plantation and Ampfield Wood.



Kingfisher House



Cottage at Great Close

FURTHER READING

Victoria County History of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight - ed. William Wright 1911

Buildings of England, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight - Nikolaus Pevsner/ David Lloyd 1976

Hampshire Treasures Survey, Volume 9, Test Valley South - Hampshire County Council, 1984

Memoranda of the Parishes of Hursley and North Baddesley - John Marsh, 1808 (Hampshire County Library Local Studies Collection)

PLANNING POLICIES AND CONTROLS

Planning policies for the conservation area aim to preserve and enhance its special character. They are complementary to existing land use and countryside policies contained within the Romsey Area Local Plan and the South Hampshire Structure Plan. These two documents currently provide a detailed and up to date framework for development decisions affecting the Ampfield area, although they will soon be superseded by the Test Valley Borough Local Plan, currently in preparation. The designation of a conservation area automatically brings into effect certain planning controls which include :-

- a) limits on normal permitted development tolerances;
- b) restrictions on demolition of buildings and structures; and
- c) restrictions on felling and other tree work.

Designation brings a presumption that the design of new development will be sympathetic to and enhance the character of the area; furthermore there will be extended opportunities for public comment on proposed development. You are strongly advised to consult the Planning Department before **ANY** works are undertaken to **ANY** building, structure or tree.

1. Demolition

All buildings including walls within a conservation area are protected by law from demolition. The only exceptions are certain very small or temporary buildings. Anyone intending to demolish all or part of a building within a conservation area must first apply for consent from the Borough Council.

2. Listed Buildings

Buildings which are statutorily listed as being of special architectural or historic interest by the Secretary of State are additionally protected, and it should be noted that this applies to interiors as well as exteriors. Prior listed building consent must be obtained from the Borough Council before ANY works to alter, extend or demolish any part of a listed building are commenced. Such works could include external redecoration, re-roofing, the alteration of doors and windows, changing rainwater goods, removal of internal fixtures, or structural changes. Permission is also required for the erection of small buildings such as garden sheds within the grounds of a listed building, or for changes to gates, fences or walls enclosing it.

Some key points to note when considering repairs or alterations to listed buildings:-

- Repair existing traditional windows, cast iron gutters etc. wherever possible. Avoid the use of non-traditional materials such as uPVC or aluminium windows, concrete tiles, artificial slates or plastic gutters in any proposals.
- Retain original internal features such as doors, fireplaces, panelling and plasterwork.
- Do not use damaging cleaning techniques such as sandblasting on old timbers or brickwork.
- Ensure that new brickwork is a good match with existing and use lime mortar.
- Do consult the Borough Council for advice.

3. New Development and Alterations to Non-Listed Buildings

Designation of an area as a conservation area does not preclude the possibility of new development within the area; what is important is that new developments should be designed in a sensitive manner having regard to the special character of the area and should enhance it.

Similar considerations apply where alterations or extensions are proposed to existing buildings of local interest or other non-listed properties in the area. One of the chief threats to the general character of conservation areas are the many "small" alterations to non listed buildings that can take place. For example, the use of mass-produced doors and windows in wood stain or uPVC should be avoided. Although a few minor works are regarded as "permitted development", and may be carried out without the need for planning permission, regulations have recently been strengthened in conservation areas and, in many cases, formal consent will be required. Owners should therefore check with the Planning Department at an early stage when considering works to their property.

Detailed applications will be required to show the relationship of any proposals to its site and ensure that new development "fits in" to its surroundings. Outline applications will not be accepted.

New development should positively enhance the Conservation Area by:-

- reflecting traditional building forms in terms of density, height, massing and scale;
- using local or traditional materials, colours and detailing;
- retaining and reinforcing local landscape features such as trees and hedgerows.

Where development involving building work is proposed, the Borough Council, mindful of the archaeological potential, will ensure that adequate time is allowed for excavation/investigation of selected sites before and during development and may attach conditions to planning permission, as appropriate.

4. Opportunities to Comment on Proposed Developments

The Borough Council is required to advertise applications for development affecting a listed building or the character of a conservation area in order to allow opportunities for public comment. Notices are placed in the Romsey Advertiser and on or near the land to which the application relates. Twenty-one days are allowed for the public to inspect the details of the application and to make representations to the Borough Council.

5. Trees and Landscape Features

In conservation areas all trees are protected broadly as though they were subject to Tree Preservation Orders. The only exceptions are some very small specimens, such as garden fruit trees. The Borough Council must be notified at least six weeks before a tree is proposed to be felled, uprooted or pruned in any way (unless being done in connection with a previously approved development).

The retention of trees and hedgerows is generally encouraged, but where development proposals would involve their removal, this should be clearly indicated as part of any detailed planning application. A landscaping scheme should include an accurate survey of existing features showing their location, height, spread and species, together with any new planting.

Not only are there important groups of trees within and adjacent to the conservation area, but there are certain open spaces which contribute significantly to the character of the village. Because of this it is improbable that any new development will be permitted on them. The Borough Council would therefore wish to see them retained and enhanced accordingly.

6. Advertisements

Due to the predominantly residential nature of Ampfield, there are relatively few business signs in the area. Signs will continue to be kept to a minimum and strict controls concerning the display of outdoor advertising will be applied within the conservation area, similar to those operating in other rural areas of the Borough.



Old Post Office

ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT

In addition to the legal consequences of designation of a conservation area, it is important that action is taken to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the area. It is not just the buildings which are important. A number of more general improvements to footpaths, bridleways, open areas or tree planting may contribute to the overall attractiveness of a place. Special financial assistance is available from central government in certain circumstances. However, in the case of Ampfield the source of any grant aid is likely to be the Borough Council and the County Council and is summarised below:-

1) Historic Building Grants

Under the Local Authorities (Historic Buildings) Act 1962 both the Borough Council and the County Council are empowered to contribute towards the cost of essential repairs to historic buildings. The offer of grant - aid is entirely discretionary and the amount of grant will be related to the nature and extent of repairs to be carried out. Works regarded as coming within the normal maintenance liability of an owner are not eligible, but structural repairs, re-roofing, window repairs, etc. may well qualify for assistance.

2) Environmental Enhancement Grants

The Borough Council and the County Council have funds for environmental enhancement projects, which may be initiated by Ampfield Parish Council, voluntary groups or individuals. Such work is not limited to only the conservation area, but projects within the village centre are certainly encouraged. Suitable works include tree and shrub planting, the removal of eyesores, the provision of appropriate surfacing and street furniture and clearance of waterways and footpaths.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Advice and information on legal requirements and development matters can be obtained from the Area Planning Officer, Planning Department, Council Offices, Duttons Road, Romsey (Tel: Romsey 515117). Advice on historic building work, repair, details of grants and landscape matters are available from the Design and Conservation Section at the same address.



Knapp Lane - view from Wide Wood

APPENDIX : Trees in Conservation Areas

The Town and Country Planning Act 1971 (Section 61A) requires anyone who proposes to "top, lop, uproot or wilfully damage or destroy" a tree in a conservation area to give six weeks notice to their district council (in this area, Test Valley Borough Council). This requirement is intended to give the district council a final opportunity to serve a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) before work is commenced. Work may not be commenced within the six week period without consent.

If the work to a tree in a conservation area is begun without the six weeks notice, the person carrying out the work becomes liable for penalties similar to those for contraventions of a tree preservation order and a similar duty to replant. If the authorised work is not completed within two years of giving notice of consent, further notice must be given. The particulars of a notice are recorded by the council in a register open to public inspection. "Notice" forms are available from the Planning Department, Test Valley Borough Council, Duttons Road, Romsey.

The six weeks rule does not apply to trees that are dying, dead or dangerous, or where works are necessary for the prevention or abatement of a nuisance. Except in an emergency, however, a minimum of five days should be given to the Authority to decide whether to dispense with a requirement to replant with a tree of appropriate size or species.

There are certain categories of trees that are exempt from most tree preservation or conservation area controls; these are summarised below.

Main exemptions

- i) Trees of less than 75mm in diameter, 1.5m above ground level or 100mm where the act is carried out to improve the growth of other trees (except Woodland Tree Preservation Orders);
- ii) Trees cultivated for fruit production that are growing or standing in an orchard or garden;
- iii) Trees cut down in accordance with a forestry dedication covenant or Forestry Commission plan;

iv) Trees cut down by a statutory undertaker (such as British Telecom or river authority); and

v) Trees which need to be felled to enable development to be carried out following the granting of planning permission.

