

Girton Conservation Area Appraisal

Draft

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NEWARK &
SHERWOOD
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Document Passport

- Title:** Newark and Sherwood District Council; Girton Conservation Area Appraisal
- Summary:** This document sets out in draft the Council's appraisal of the character and appearance of the village of Girton, which the Council feels should have conservation area status
- Please note:** **This document is available in alternative formats on request**
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Consultation Summary:

Consultation period: 1st October – 9th November 2007

Copies are deposited at Kelham hall (open between 8.30am and 5.15pm Monday to Thursday and until 4.45pm on Friday) and on the Council's web site, www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk

After the consultation

Once the round of consultations is complete on the Draft Conservation Area Appraisal the District Council will consider the responses it has received and then prepare a document for approval by Cabinet.

Estimated Date of Final Adoption: Jan 2008

M Evans *Dip TP (Dist) MRTPI*
Head of Planning Services
Newark and Sherwood District Council
Kelham Hall
Newark
Nottinghamshire NG23 5QX

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GIRTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1. Status of the Appraisal

- 1.1** This appraisal document is an assessment of the special interest, character and appearance of the village of Girton. If the appraisal concludes that the village is of sufficient architectural or historic interest to warrant designation as a conservation area, the qualities of the village highlighted here will be a major influence on that decision
- 1.2** If a conservation area is designated the finally adopted document will subsequently be used as a tool to help in the making of decisions about future development and the making of policies for the preservation and enhancement of the village.

2. Introduction

- 2.1** The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires all Local Authorities to determine which parts of their areas are of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as conservation areas. Designation requires that special regard be taken to preserve or enhance their character and appearance.
- 2.2** It is the quality of areas, as well as individual buildings that is important. There are many factors that contribute to the character of a village:
- The historic layout of properties, boundaries and thoroughfares
 - A particular mix of uses
 - Vistas along streets and between buildings
 - Characteristic materials
 - Appropriate scaling and detailing of buildings
 - Traditional shop fronts
 - Quality street furniture and hard and soft surfaces
 - Trees and open spaces.
- 2.3** This Appraisal seeks to highlight the architectural, historic and townscape qualities in Girton and has been produced using the framework of the suggested format for conservation area appraisals developed by English Heritage

3. Planning Policy Framework

- 3.1** This report relates to several policies in the Newark and Sherwood District Council Local Plan (Adopted March 1999), which are given in Appendix A.

If you are considering putting forward any development proposals please note that several policies and not just a single policy may be relevant. A full list of all the policies are available in the Local Plan, which can be viewed at Kelham Hall or on our web site from <http://www.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/>

- 3.2** There are a number of designations in the Local Plan relating to Girton that merit mention here. The built up part of the village is tightly contained within a Village Envelope Boundary and this line is also the line of the Mature Landscape Area (Policy NE8), that wholly surrounds the village and a substantial area of land to the west of the village as far as the River Trent opposite Sutton on Trent.
- 3.3** The MLA also includes land to the south of the village encompassing The Fleet and part of the Mill Dam Dyke to the south and east of the settlement.
- 3.4** An additional notation considers that the whole of the area within the defined Village Envelope should be considered as an Area of no further intensification of development. This Policy (H22), was specifically designed to protect those parts of villages outside conservation areas which retain their traditional rural form and character
- 3.5** The Appraisal has been produced in line with the following Acts, Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Advice Notes:

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 69 of this Act asks every local planning authority “ from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and designate them as conservation areas”

Section 71 of this Act places the local authority under a duty to “formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of [their] conservation areas.”

PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment (HMSO, September 1994)
Section 4 of this guidance note relates to Conservation Areas.

PPG16 Archaeology and Planning (1990)

Conservation Area Appraisals (English Heritage, March 1997) and
Guidance on conservation area appraisals (draft) (English Heritage, February 2006).

The structure and content of the appraisal is based on the ‘checklist’ contained in this non-statutory advice note.

Guidance on the management of conservation areas (draft) (English Heritage, February 2006)

4. Statutory Designations

4.1 Listed Buildings

A listed building is one recognised as being of special architectural or historic interest. Listing is made at three levels of importance - Grade I, Grade II* and Grade II. Listed Building Consent is required before any alterations, extensions or demolitions can be made to a listed building which might affect its character.

In Girton there are only 3 listed buildings;

- Church of St. Cecilia, the Parish Church with 13th Century origins and rebuilt in 1879
- The Old Vicarage, a late 18th Century three storey building
- Fleet Farm Cottage, a 17th Century brick and Lias stone timber framed building

Listed building legislation may also apply to what are called curtilage listed buildings, which are normally buildings with a historic association with the main listed building, for example a barn associated with a listed farmhouse.

The listed buildings marked on the maps are only the principal listed buildings as noted on the statutory list and curtilage buildings are not often identified - please be aware of this when using these maps. Please also note that some buildings marked, as being buildings of Local Interest could also be curtilage Listed Buildings. Please seek the advice of the Conservation Officer on this matter if there is any doubt.

4.2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Certain nationally important archaeological sites and monuments enjoy special protection as Scheduled Ancient Monuments under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. This protection ensures that the case for preservation is fully considered should there be any proposals for development or other work that might damage the Monument. Any proposals are subject to Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent procedures, administered by English Heritage. There would normally be a presumption in favour of the physical preservation of the monument.

In Girton there are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments

5. Historic Development and Archaeology

5.1 Thoroton makes reference to the village of Girton in 1677, noting that the Trent had been straightened at Girton by a series of weirs. Throsby's 1790 update to Thoroton's history describes Girton as a hamlet that is 'larger than others hereabouts' and 'in the possession of several proprietors'. Of particular interest he notes that the village had at this time a thatched chapel.

- 5.2** Girton is depicted in Chapman's map of 1774 as a village spread along a north-south road, which runs adjacent to the modern day A1133 and loops round to join the A1133 at the north of the village, a triangular village green being formed at the confluence, with the church shown to the south of the green. The modern day layout of the village is not particularly represented here, but how much is to do with accurate mapping or a change in the village over time is not certain.
- 5.3** With the exception of Green Lane, which had not yet been formed, the village layout as shown in Sanderson's Map of 1835 is the same as seen today. What is particularly interesting is that at this date Girton is shown without any obvious roads in or out of the village. At this date the Fleet forms a large pool by Girton and is shown diverted off into a dyke at the south of the village and then running north into very regulated east - west fields on the east of the village.
- 5.4** This layout survives today and the fields were probably either drained into the Fleet or the Fleet was diverted to create water meadows here, the purpose may have been to protect the village by absorbing floodwater from the Mill Dam Dyke. Girton was enclosed relatively late, not until 1845, and the medieval strip fields are still clearly marked to the north of the village on Sanderson's map of 1835.
- 5.5** The overall pattern of boundary plots as shown on Sanderson's can still be traced in the layout of the village today. While smaller fields have been merged into larger ones the general pattern survives and is especially visible in the east to west plots laid out on the east of the village, leading down towards Mill Dam Dyke. A field on the north side of West Lane is shown here as empty and undeveloped and has remained so until the present day.
- 5.6** In 1835 the church is shown as occupying a much larger plot in the north east of the village than it does today. This is probably the main change in the last 170 years as the village layout today is virtually unchanged from 1835 with remarkably little new development.
- 5.7** By the OS Second Edition in 1898 -1900 the road layout as seen today had been fully established. The map shows that the land that was once the graveyard was turned over to orchards, with a pinfold shown at the very north of the village.
- 5.8** This map shows a number of banks around the village, which still survive today. The banks were undated but were presumably part of flood defences, the village being in the washlands of the Trent. Despite these defences the village used to flood regularly and a flood stone on the wall of Chantry Cottage contains a flood marker. In a particularly bad flood of 1977 a boat was moored at the church gate and used to ferry villagers to the main road and children to their school in Besthorpe!
- 5.9** There is evidence of archaeological activity in the village of Girton right back to prehistoric times with Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery having been found within the village at Holly Farm. A Bronze Age burnt mound has been found to the north of the village and there have been two Roman finds within the village.

- 5.10** The village is home to a medieval cross, to the right of the church door, said to date from the 8th century, if so making it the oldest ecclesiastical artefact in the diocese of Southwell.
- 5.11** The earliest documentary reference to Girton is in Domesday book where it is referred to as 'Gretone'. In 1066 Girton was in the manor of Newark and in the ownership of Lady Godiva. Upto 1055 she actually owned in her own right Girton, Besthorpe, South Scarle, Spalford, Thorney, Wigsley and Harby.
- 5.12** Historically the place name has been written as Grettuna in 1145, Grettona 1147, Grettonoke 1292, Girtone 1525, Gyrtton 1538, Gertton 1559, Gretton 1604 and Gherton in 1743. The place name comes from 'greet tun', meaning farm on the gravel.
- 5.13** As well as the documentary evidence Medieval Girton is represented by the village? church, dating back to the C13 but largely rebuilt in 1879. Fleet Farm Cottage is thought to date back to the C16 or C17, Pevsner describing it as a 'good example of the early North East Nottinghamshire Cottage', being of limestone ground floor with timber framing above.

6. Landscape Setting

- 6.1** Girton lies within the Trent Washlands landscape character area which are principally formed by the broad valleys of the Trent and Soar, and within the Terrace Farmlands landscape type which is a low lying agricultural landscape characterised by a traditional pattern of hedged fields and nucleated village settlements.



- 6.2** The characteristic features of the Terrace farmlands are
- Broad flat river terraces
 - Regular pattern of medium-to large-sized fields, breaking down and becoming open in many areas.
 - Hedgerow trees main component of tree cover, ash principle species
 - Willow pollards
 - Predominantly arable with permanent pasture around settlements and roads
 - Nucleated villages with traditional red brick and pantile roofed buildings
 - Large power stations
 - Sand and gravel quarries

- 6.3** Girton, like many of the smaller villages, has retained its traditional character, of red brick and pantile roof construction.
- 6.4** The field pattern is well defined and the occurrence of hedgerow trees enhances the enclosed nature of the landscape and gives structure and form. Ash is the most numerous and widespread species. Oak is also found throughout. Willow is found along stream lines, ditches and in many hedgerows, particularly those to the east of the village. Willow pollards are a special feature found throughout the landscape and are particularly prevalent in the more intact enclosed areas. Mature Horse Chestnut trees are found in parts of the landscape, especially in roadside hedges close to the settlement. Hedgerows are mainly strong, trimmed and hawthorn. Although hedgerows are dominated by hawthorn, mixed species hedges are found locally.
- 6.5** Although the terrace farmlands are dominated by arable farming, grassland landscapes are an important feature, usually being located adjacent to the red brick villages. The small fields to the east of the village have a particularly strong character with mature hedgerow trees, strong mixed hedgerows and willow pollards. These areas represent the most diverse and undisturbed parts of the landscape and are particularly worthy of protection as areas of historic and wildlife interest.
- 6.6** Hedgerow trees are the most important element of the landscape's overall cover.
- 6.7** Outside of the village there are relatively large tracts of landscape where field patterns have become poorly defined, fragmented or lost. The loss of the field pattern has led to a more open landscapes with field edges defined by roads, stream lines and ditches. Occasional Ash trees provide reminders of the former landscape structure. Power stations, pylon lines and mineral workings are even more prominent and visible when viewed from these open areas.



- 6.8** The Landscape strategy for this character area is to conserve and strengthen the traditional agricultural character and continuity of the landscape with the key recommendations:

- To conserve and restore the traditional pattern of hedged fields. This is of particular importance to Girton as many of the field boundaries are pre enclosure fields shown on Sandersons map of 1835. These form an important and distinctive feature, which should be conserved. It is especially important to avoid the removal of hedgerows particularly primary hedgerows alongside roadsides, footpaths, bridleways and parish boundaries.
- To promote measures for strengthening the existing level of tree cover
- To strengthen the continuity and ecological diversity of stream corridors. Lines of willow and other riparian scrub running along the river are an important feature of the village particularly on the approach from the south. The trees pick out the meandering course of the watercourse and offer valuable habitat to a range of wildlife to breed, and overwinter.
- To conserve the character and setting of village settlements

7. Spatial Qualities

7.1 Girton appears in pure plan form to be a relatively compact though strung out settlement with a small core area around the church, some clusters of cottages around the village street corners and some isolated development both to the north and south of these areas.

7.2 From the ground however the charm of the village stems primarily from the tightness of the village street and the enclosure provided by an extensive run of walls and hedges, the integration of landscape and the buildings and the contribution made to the setting of the village by the extensive Trent Valley landscape.

7.3 The almost continuous runs of walls and hedges enclosing the village street is an important feature of the village and provides an important visual link between the built form and the open spaces dotted in an around the settlement.

7.4 The western side has a more open feel to it with the areas around The Fleet and the Green Lane displaying the wide and extensive character of Trent Valley

8. Townscape Character

The Entrance from the North

8.1 From its northern entrance the village is all but invisible from anywhere on New Lane, and even through the larger gaps in the hedge line, from where you can see down into the meadowland, the settlement is still not noticeable.



The entrance to the village is dominated by electricity pylons



Woodpecker Cottage at the northern extreme of the village

- 8.2** It is only when you turn into the High Street that you gain a first impression that there may be a settlement here, but even then the only building visible from distance is the long back wall of Woodpecker Cottage, but even from here the cottage looks to be set slightly adrift in the landscape with Yaffles Barn adding to this impression. The High Street here is long and straight with a raised grass verge on the west side with a strong hedge line on top, and a line of self set trees and some untidy hedging on the east side of the road.
- 8.3** This narrow, virtual single-track road is completely at odds with the character and appearance of the rest of the High Street in the heart of the village, but from here the overall impression is one of a settlement dominated by trees. Unfortunately the other overall impression is one of a landscape setting dominated by electricity pylons and this is a consistent problem not only in the way it affects the character and appearance of the landscape on the western side of the village but also on its impact on critical views from within the village.
- 8.4** The true entrance to the village is probably between Woodpecker and Pinfold Cottages and though neither cottage can be readily seen there is a small forge type building on the roadside the “greenness” of the trees, bushes and hedges dominate. The village street turns to the south and glimpses to the west gives a view of an open paddock, so still the feel of the place is one of a collection of small cottages in extensive grounds and not of a formal settlement.



Churchyard wall channels views into the settlement



The village centre, Ingram House with, in the distance, the Village Hall

8.5 It's only when you stand close to the brick churchyard wall that the image of a small settlement finally dawns. The wall itself is probably the first "hard" structure that is viewed from this entrance to Girton, but quickly the cottages at the corner of West Lane terminate the view and encourage longer distance views towards the Village Hall. The initial prevailing feeling is that Girton is a small settlement with vernacular scale buildings, as even from here the importance of the best house in the village, the Old Vicarage is fairly limited, mainly because of the position and stature of the Oak tree in the churchyard.

The Entrance from the South

8.6 The entrance to the village from the south is as spectacular as it is unexpected. The turning from the Gainsborough road is not especially noticeable and whilst Tinkers Lane is a compact well-enclosed space views over to the west are prevented by a Willow tree on the outside of the bend. However the suddenness with which the panoramic views along the Trent Valley open up is quite dramatic as the lane takes a sharp turn to the north. The wide-open views to the south towards Besthorpe, west to Sutton on Trent and north towards the edge of the village itself gives Girton an extensive landscaped setting probably unique to the Trent valley villages. The dozen or more trees along the Fleet help to frame the view.



Fleet Farm Cottage in its landscape setting



The Fleet towards Besthorpe

- 8.7** Unfortunately the impact of the view is somewhat diminished by the overly intrusive electricity pylons and their myriad of multi strand wires which stretch into the distance running parallel with The Fleet.
- 8.8** To the north the first glimpse of the edge of the village can be seen with a long distance view of Fleet Farm Cottage, one of only three Listed Buildings in the village. The vision of the largest electricity pylon dominating the overall view of the cottage from behind its pantiled roof is truly unfortunate.
- 8.9** The single-track lane to the village cuts across the water meadow to the west and over Mill Dyke before reaching the cottage. Fleet Farm Cottage stands on a slight rise but close to the edge of the road and is a trademark Trent Valley brick and lias stone building. Beyond here the openness of the landscape disappears behind tall hedges until the south end of the Green Lane is reached.

8.10 The High Street takes the first of its characteristic right-angled turns, this time to the east and the start of the village proper is appreciated across the open paddock to the back of Fleet Farm. The single-track road though continues in a northerly direction from this bend as a Green Lane, which runs along the entire length of the village on its western edge.

The Centre of the Village

8.11 Gautby House is the start of the village proper though its visual impact is somewhat softened by the mature vegetation around it. The existence of mature vegetation in private and public areas is a strong characteristic of the village core and one that needs to be nurtured. The feature hedges on the roadside give continuity to the character and appearance of the village that is key to its pleasurable nature.

8.12 The lane rises slightly towards the Fleet Farm corner where a large hedge terminates the view from here but again the view is also enclosed by a variety of property boundary walls, hedges on slightly raised banking and the back wall and gable end of Fleet Farm itself.

8.13 The second bend takes the High Street towards the north but the majority of the street is still well contained between walls and hedges though there is a greater degree of openness on the west side and a slightly more restricted feel on the eastern side where Bridge Cottage occupies a position directly on the lane side and The Chantry appears as merely a slightly taller painted gable. In reality both buildings have an important role as corner buildings on the inside of yet another right-angled bend, both being important when viewed from the top of Procter Drive, but from the Chantry Cottage corner The Chantry itself dominates the view.



Views towards Procter Drive



A more modern intrusion softened by hedgelines

8.14 This leg of the High Street is fairly level and about 60 metres long and whilst most of the street is well enclosed, what appears to be the only recent development in the village significantly alters the appearance of the frontage. Hurlingham House appears to be a late 1970's development typical of its time and less than sympathetic to the character of the rest of the village. Whilst the front boundary treatment is unfortunate, the impact that the development could have had if it was placed close to the High Street in the manner of the more traditional

buildings in the area, could have been considerably more damaging. The positioning of the front of the house in line with the sidewall of a former barn attached to Gautby House also helps minimise the disruption to the character of this part of Girton.

- 8.15** From here the first glimpse of the paddock in front of Holly Farm can be gained but the channelled view is dominated by the magnificent Oak tree, which is set on the western edge of the paddock but in direct line of sight from the High Street.



*Oak tree in
Holly Farm paddock*



Holly Farm and paddock

- 8.16** At the corner of the High Street and Proctors Drive the visual character of the village changes. Proctors Drive is basically an unmetalled simple track between the High Street and the Green Lane. This small area, which contains Holly Farm, The Old Carpenters Shop and the paddock to the east of the farm has a character of its own and provides a pleasant counterpoint to the tight enclosed nature of the rest of the south side of the village.

- 8.17** The farm, which from a viewpoint close to the Village Hall, looks like a more formal 19th century farmhouse, from Proctors Lane reveals a much earlier building with an attached group of stables and barns. These are set in an L-shaped configuration that meets the drive at a point opposite West View. The two-storey barn is set right up to the edge of the track and immediately opposite the cottage known as West View. The pinch point that these buildings create frame the view down the slight slope towards Green Lane, whilst The Old Carpenters shop also helps to enclose the view as well as being a strong focal point on the High Street side.

- 8.18** The High Street turns back towards the east and for the first time a building, and the boundary wall containing the flood marker, terminates the view. Chantry Cottage appears to sit at a slight angle and offset when viewed from close to The Chantry, but it sits gable end hard close to the road and is a positive introduction to the final stretch of the High Street, which could be said to be the only formal piece of “townscape “ in the settlement.

8.19 The importance of the paddock at the front of Holly Farm cannot be underestimated as it provides an attractive setting to the farm itself and allows important and unaccustomed longer views across it towards the Old Vicarage, another of Girtons listed buildings. The substantial blank south gable of the Plough House, the original village pub, also comes into prominence but it is only when the final corner is turned that the well balanced frontage of the Plough House can be fully appreciated.



8.20 From around here Girtons finest view of the church can be taken; the Plough House, the Old Vicarage and to a lesser extent the slightly set forward front of the converted barn next to Ingram House, frame a view of the west end of the nave, the 19th century porch and a particularly magnificent Oak tree.



The Old Vicarage one of Girtons listed building



St. Cecillia's Parish Church

8.21 The collection of cottages that run towards the West Lane corner, including Ingram House, Chestnut Cottage and Lindum all reinforce the sense of enclosure that might have been lost because of the more open nature of the area around the west end of the church. Emphasizing the importance of trees to the character of the village, a fine bank of trees along Mill Dyke provides an attractive backdrop to the Church and Churchyard.

8.22 West Lane is the most northerly link between the High Street and the Green Lane. It is also probably the most informal looking and apart from some corrugated tin garages behind Lindum both sides of the narrow lane has hedging and trees though the field boundary on the north side is considerably more effective in its contribution to the character of the area than that on the south side.

8.23 The open paddock between Chester Cottage and Lindum allows glimpsed views of the north side of Holly Farm but the rough, overgrown and neglected nature of the paddock and the lack of good laneside vegetation stands out as a particularly negative factor in the appearance of the village and also stands out in the context of the character of the majority of the village

8.24 The reverse view along the lane towards the church shows the west end slightly offset but the 19th century circular window is seen to good effect, as is the bellcote and gable cross. A good Holly tree just inside the churchyard wall terminates the view.

The Green Lane

8.25 West Lane curves slightly to the north as it rejoins the Green Lane to the south west of West House. At the junction of the two lanes a memorial silver Birch tree has been planted in a small triangular parcel of land. The Lane then carries on northwards and, beyond the limits of West House's garden, crosses the open landscape till it meets Trent Lane.



Green Lane and recent tree planting scheme



Proctors Drive from Green Lane

8.26 The ubiquitous electricity pylons can again be seen in their full glory from here and if anything their closeness to the Lane makes for an uncomfortable visual relationship with the village, but nonetheless the Green Lane is a very pleasant place to be in on the whole.

8.27 Whilst the views to the west are disrupted by the stature of the pylons there are some glimpses of the village to be had to the east over paddocks and garden areas. The Lane varies in width but along most of its length it has hedges on one side or another that gives it an enclosed feel. Much of the village can only be glimpsed from the Lane but where Proctors Drive joins it the north and west elevations of Holly Farm are visible to a degree, and from the end of the Drive, West View and The Old Carpenters Shop frame a good view to The Chantry, which is set on higher ground.

8.28 There may be a case to be made for some additional hedge planting at the end of Proctors Drive and northwards from this corner to improve the area where there is no planting and to replace a short length galvanised wire fencing. This should not affect the informal character of the area and would make a positive contribution to the Green Lane environment.

Gainsborough Road and the Water meadows

8.29 From the Gainsborough to Newark road, the A1133, very little can be seen of the village save for a small glimpse across the water meadows in the direction of Fleet Farm Cottage. The most noticeable difference in the appearance of the area compared with the approaches to the village from both the north and the south is that the open views and hedgelines are replaced by a significant tree belt set along the eastern side of the road and a series of rectangular paddocks set between Mill Dyke and the road which are noted on Sanderson's map of 1835.



The main road passes to the east of the village



Distinctive Water meadows off the Gainsborough road

8.30 The area is important in creating an enclosed setting to the village, together with the paddock already noted south of New Lane and the extensive area between Fleet Farm Cottage and Tinkers Lane, and fairly attractive glimpses in to the paddocks can be made from the roadside

8.31 Between Tinkers Lane and Girton Lane on this side of the road is the line of the administrative boundary between Newark & Sherwood District Council and North Kesteven District Council

9. General Character Analysis

Materials

9.1 There are around 20 dwellings in the village almost all of which are brick built with clay pantiled roofs, though a significant number of the pantiled roofs are unfortunately covered in concrete pantile profiled tiles. The bricks range from the older and narrower early bricks on the listed Fleet Farm Cottage to a smoother, wider and later brick as seen on the Plough House. The only modern brick in the village is displayed on Hurlingham House and surprisingly there is little evidence of any Lias stone on dwellings, which is generally seen around the Trent Valley, though there is a small amount on Fleet Farm Cottage. Chantry Cottage is the only building with a painted render finish



Closer view of Holly Farm paddlock



The unusual roof covering on the Parish Church

- 9.2** Stone is not prevalent in the village in any quantity though the Parish Church is built in Blue Lias with some attractive ashlar dressings. It is also has a Westmorland and Welsh Slate roof which is unique to the village, probably because of the wider availability of the material when the church was rebuilt in 1879

Local architectural styles and features

- 9.3** Most cottages sit in their own generally generous plots and the only semblance of continuous townscape is opposite the Parish. Cottages are generally simple in character with plain gables and eaves and generously proportioned chimneys usually set on the gable. The only fully hipped roof is on the three storey listed Old Vicarage, though the original Village Hall building has a smaller version and has been extended at the front in a similar way. Chantry Cottage has a hip end on the Procters Drive corner. Evidence of raised verges can be seen on Gautby House, Chantry Cottage, and Fleet Farm Cottage and on one of the agricultural buildings at Holly Farm.
- 9.4** The majority of the cottages in the village are small in scale and display pleasantly proportioned window openings with simple brick on edge-arched detail. Many windows have been either changed within the original openings or have been modified and widened to accommodate larger units. The changes in most instances have made a difference to the character of the cottage, particularly where Upvc units have been introduced, the Yorkshire sliding sash windows on the back range of Holly Farm giving an indication of the character that timber windows, traditionally detailed give to historic buildings.
- 9.5** The two higher status buildings, Holly Farm and The Old Vicarage were the only buildings that had vertically sliding glazing bar sashes and the only Victorian style sliding sash windows are on the Plough House where a series of windows are set in deep reveal with stone cills. Unfortunately the sashes on Holly Farm have recently been replaced with Upvc units, which have affected its character and appearance.



Holly Farm with replacement windows



The Old Vicarage

- 9.6** Boundary walls are not overly prominent in the village but where they fall they do provide a linking feature in front of and between buildings around corners and the wall fronting the church is a visually pleasing village feature, which could be improved by replacing the concrete coping with a more traditional capping.

Contribution made by trees and open spaces

- 9.7** Girton is the kind of settlement where its informal appearance and lack of a really strong built townscape form brings the landscape and spatial quality of the place into greater prominence. Trees in the village are important in that there are no prominent groups of trees but the trees that are in the village core are seen as maturing individual specimens which give great character to the village. Some tree planting has been carried out along and at the top end of the Green Lane, which will in time help to alleviate the intrusion of the electricity pylons into the village.
- 9.8** Girton though has a village street that is a well-contained and pleasantly enclosed space. The narrowest parts rely upon front walls of cottages or small boundary walls but in wider spaces and on the linking lanes the influence of the grass verges is heightened and helps to soften the character and appearance of the village.
- 9.9** The only real formal space is that in front of the church where the verge on one side and churchyard wall on the other gives a kind of strength to the street, the only formal footway and kerb in the village adding to this view. But even here the area behind the churchyard wall leaves the overall feel of an open space. The numerous hedgelines both on the entries to the settlement and along the village lane helps to reinforce the “green” character of the village as a whole.

Extent of loss, intrusion and damage

- 9.10** Generally the historic building stock is varied and quite well preserved. However, there has been some significant erosion of traditional features, especially in non-listed buildings, by the replacement of original or traditional details and finishes with inappropriate materials, for example the use of concrete roof tiles instead of natural clay pantiles and replacement double glazed UPVC windows, the impact of which may have been lessened if timber windows had

been used. Even where traditional materials have been used for replacements it is still very important to be accurate with the detailing and there are several examples of poorly detailed replacement timber doors and windows.

Community involvement

- 9.11** Conservation areas are designated by local planning authorities as part of their statutory responsibilities, usually following consultation with local communities. An Appraisal is written to make an assessment of the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation area. There is a statutory consultation period of not less than four weeks, during which time anyone can submit representation on the contents of the Appraisal.
- 9.12** The Council advertised the existence of a draft Appraisal for Girton in the local press and copies were available in local libraries, on the web site and for reference at Kelham Hall. A copy of the Appraisal was delivered to each household within the boundary of the proposed conservation area. All comments received within the consultation period will be considered and the Appraisal altered if it is considered necessary following formal consideration of the comments received.
- 9.13** In the case of Girton, the Council also consulted at an early stage directly with the Parish Meeting regarding the designation of a Conservation Area, and they have accepted this proposed boundary.

Suggested conservation area boundary

- 9.14** It is clear from the foregoing consideration of the character and appearance of the village that a considerable case can be made for the village to gain conservation area status. The District Council is therefore proposing that a boundary be drawn quite generously around the village, which acknowledges the importance of the surrounding agricultural landscape setting, particularly on the eastern side of the settlement.
- 9.15** The boundary follows the County boundary between Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire between Girton Lane to the north and Tinkers Lane to the south. From Baxter Bridge the boundary follows the Mill Dam round as far as Pinfold Cottage and skirts around Woodpecker Cottage till it meets the Green Lane. Going south the boundary follows the Lane closely as far as Proctors Drive and turns in a westerly direction as far as The Fleet which it then follows as far as Tinkers Lane. The boundary from The Fleet to the County boundary is set slightly into the field to the south of the lane to include the trees on the field boundary.

Appendix A Relevant Local Plan Policies

Policy C1 (Development in Conservation Areas) states:

“Planning permission will not be granted for development which would harm the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Development should be designed to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of Conservation Areas - in terms of scale, form and massing, and the use of traditional materials.”

Policy C2 (Outline Planning Applications in Conservation Areas) states:

“Outline planning permission will not normally be granted for development within Conservation Areas.”

Policy C3 (Demolition in Conservation Areas) states:

“Where a proposal for development would involve the demolition of an un-Listed building in a Conservation Area, the District Council will have regard to the architectural and historic contribution of the existing building in considering whether the development proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of a building in a Conservation Area will not be granted if the building makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the area and could be put to effective use. If a building makes no positive contribution, or is not reasonably capable of effective use, Conservation Area Consent will be granted only if there are acceptable detailed proposals for the redevelopment of the site, or demolition would itself enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.”

Policy C4 (Natural and other Features of Interest in Conservation Areas) states:

“The District Council will seek the retention of open spaces, trees, hedges, walls, fences and other features upon which the character and appearance of a Conservation Area depends. Planning permission will not be granted for development which involves the loss of such features - where they are considered to be important to the character or appearance of the area.”

Policy C5 (Environmental Improvement Schemes) states:

“The District Council will promote and implement environmental improvement schemes in Conservation Areas, such as re-paving, planting or provision of high quality street furniture. Private owners or tenants of land will be encouraged to implement appropriate schemes of hard and soft landscaping using traditional materials.”

Policy C10 (Alterations, Extensions and Changes of Use to Listed Buildings) states:

“Planning permission and/or Listed Building Consent will not be granted for development which involves internal or external alterations, or extensions to Listed Buildings, or changes of use to such buildings - which would adversely affect their architectural or historic interest.”

Policy C11 (Setting of Listed Buildings) states:

“Planning permission will not be granted for development which adversely affects the setting of Listed Buildings or involves the loss of features which contribute to the setting of such buildings. Planning permission will also not be granted for development within the curtilage of, or adjoining, a Listed Building, where this would threaten the viability of the historic building.”

Policy C13 (Relaxation of Planning Policy) states:

“In exceptional circumstances, the District Council will accept a relaxation of the relevant planning policies, including car parking standards, to help ensure that significant buildings of character, considered to be at risk, are fully and properly maintained.”

Policy C15 (Advertisements in Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings) states:

“Where advertisement consent is necessary, this will not be granted in Conservation Areas or on Listed Buildings for:

- 1. Internal or external illumination of fascia signs or internal illumination of projecting box signs;*
- 2. Signs which use excessively bright or intrusive colour schemes or highly reflective synthetic materials;*
- 3. Excessively large or obtrusive signs; and*
- 4. High level signs, other than hanging signs, above normal fascia level, including blinds and canopies.”*

Policy C17 (New Shopfronts in Conservation Areas) states:

“Planning permission will only be granted for new shopfronts in Conservation Areas, if they preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area and respect the character, scale, proportion and detailing of the building into which they are to be inserted.”

Policy C18 (Use of Traditional Materials in Shopfronts) states:

“In Listed Buildings and other buildings of character in Conservation Areas, planning permission will only be granted for new shopfronts which use traditional materials. Elsewhere in Conservation Areas, the use of such materials will be encouraged and consent for the installation of intrusive alien features will not be granted.”

Policy C24 (archeological Evaluation Elsewhere) states:

“In assessing planning applications elsewhere within the District, the District Council will take account of the effect of development upon sites of known archaeological interest. Where such proposals are likely to disturb/destroy important sites, the District Council will normally request an archaeological evaluation prior to determining the application.”

Policy C25 (archeological Record) states:

“Where damage to suspected archaeological deposits by development is felt justifiable in light of the benefits brought about by a particular proposal, planning permission will be granted only where satisfactory provision for an archaeological record has been made, involving (where appropriate) funding, time and access for excavation and/or salvage, recording, publication, treatment and custody of finds. This will be secured by means of a voluntary agreement or through the imposition of a negative planning condition.”

Policy NE8 (Mature Landscape Areas) states:

“Development which would have an adverse effect on the visual or nature conservation importance of a Mature Landscape Area will be permitted only where it can be shown that there are reasons for the proposal that clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the area’s intrinsic value. Where development is permitted, proposals should minimise the harm to the area. The District Council will make use of planning conditions or negotiate planning obligations in order to secure appropriate conservation measures.”

Policy FS7 (Main Open Areas) states:

“Planning permission will not be granted for built development in the Main Open Areas, defined on the Proposals Map.”

APPENDIX B

Listed Buildings in the Village

There are only three Listed Buildings in the village

- The Parish Church of St Cecilia, a church originally dating to the 13th Century but rebuilt in 1879 by Ewan Christian
- The Old Vicarage, a late 18th Century house with a hipped tile roof
- Fleet Farm Cottage, a 17th Century lias stone, brick and rendered cottage sitting on the extreme southern edge of the village

APPENDIX C

Management Strategy

As well as defining the character of the conservation area and what makes it special, it is important to develop proposals for the future management of the conservation area. The Management Strategy will be updated and reviewed on an approximately 5-year basis.

There are several mechanisms through which the Council can manage the future of the conservation area:

1. Application of policy
2. Design guides
3. Guidance leaflets
4. Design briefs and Informal Planning Statements
5. Application of an Article 4 Direction
6. Monitoring change
7. Monitoring the condition of the historic buildings and developing a strategy for repair
8. Enforcement proceedings
9. Proposed enhancement schemes
10. Proposals for economic development and regeneration (including grants)

Conservation Area Character Appraisals and the application of policy guidance

There are several Local Plan policies already in place that deal with the issue of historic buildings and conservation areas specifically - these are given in Appendix A. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal will therefore be a material consideration in any planning decision. It is anticipated that the Conservation Area Character Appraisal will help inform and therefore strengthen decisions made in line with these policies, which will be one of the most direct and effective means of managing the conservation area long term.

Policy C1 of the Local Plan, for example, states that planning permission for development will not be granted that would harm the character and appearance of the conservation area. However, it follows that without a detailed appraisal of the character and appearance of a conservation area that decisions made in line with policy C1 are more likely to be ill-informed and made on an ad hoc basis. The Appraisal, therefore, can help guide development by defining the plan form of the area, the typical scale, form, massing and materials of buildings, traditional detailing, important views, significant trees etc – all elements that must be considered when looking at any development proposal.

The Conservation Area Character Appraisal can also be used to inform other decisions made in line with Local Plan conservation policies, for example with regard to demolition within conservation areas and decisions that effect natural features. By defining and identifying significant buildings and areas of open space, trees etc the Conservation Area Character Appraisal provides a good base line of information for informed and justifiable decisions.

It is anticipated that the information provided in the Conservation Area appraisal advises and informs not only those making the planning decision but also anyone considering development within a conservation area.

Design Guides

The District Council currently has Supplementary Planning Documents on 'Extensions to Dwellings' and 'Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings'. Already adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance is 'Shopfronts and Advertisements - Design and Policy'.

All these design guides may be relevant to anyone thinking of undertaking development within conservation areas. It is hoped that these documents can help guide development and help make informed planning decisions and in this way they contribute directly to the positive management of conservation areas.

If you would like a copy of any of these design guides please contact the Conservation Officer.

Guidance Leaflets

The District Council produces several leaflets for the public that are relevant with regards to conservation areas:

- How to Repair Historic Buildings (2001)
- Tree Surgeons & Arboriculturists/Woodland & Forestry Contractors/Advisory Services (2004)
- Living in a Conservation Area
- Listed Buildings – A Guide for Owners and Occupiers

It is hoped these leaflets will inform the public about relevant planning constraints (and so avoid unauthorised works) and advise on what kind of development would be appropriate within conservation areas. Through the advice on repairs to historic buildings is hoped that carrying out repairs to historic buildings will be encouraged and that ill-advised, and often damaging, repairs can be avoided.

If you would like a copy of any of these leaflets please contact the Conservation Officer.

Design Briefs

It is intended that the Conservation Area Character Appraisal will, where appropriate, identify any sites that would benefit from a design brief. This might be a gap site, buildings under pressure for demolition and re-development, or perhaps areas that have a neutral impact on the conservation area where there is pressure for redevelopment. The definition and characterisation of the conservation area can be expanded to form a detailed design brief to help promote an appropriate form of development on the site.

There would appear to be no sites in the proposed conservation area that would benefit from a Design Brief

Application of an Article 4 Direction

Common to most conservation areas is the damaging cumulative effect of small but significant alterations to the architectural features of historic, but non-listed, properties. The prime example is the exchange of traditional timber windows for UPVC replacements. Alterations like this can be very harmful to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is possible to bring such alterations under planning control by the implementation of an Article 4 Direction, which would require an application for planning permission for alterations which otherwise fall outside normal planning control, like altering windows and doors, cladding, changing roof covering etc.

An Article 4 Direction can have a big impact on helping preserve the character and appearance of a conservation area through the additional protection it provides for traditional architectural features.

The implementation of an Article 4 Direction requires a detailed survey of the area, a strong justification for proposing the Direction and local support. There are, therefore, significant resource implications in the implementation of an Article 4 Direction and while often desirable it is not often practicable.

If Girton is designated a conservation area it is considered that at this stage that as there has already been some significant changes to a number of unlisted buildings the introduction of an Article 4 Direction would not be a priority in any future work programme.

Monitoring Change

Monitoring change, both positive and negative, is very important in the long-term management of a conservation area. It can help highlight problems that can be best tackled with an Article 4 Direction (see above) or show how effective Policies have been, for example. By monitoring change it can assist in identifying where more resources are required and in modifying priorities.

A conservation area is thoroughly surveyed and described when an appraisal is carried out. Local Authorities are then supposed to review conservation areas from time to time and update appraisals. The District Council does not currently have a timetable for reviewing existing conservation area appraisals, as the priority is to carry out appraisals in conservation areas currently lacking them. In time, however, resources will become available to review existing appraisals, allowing detailed monitoring of change.

Through the Buildings at Risk Survey (see below) a survey is undertaken approximately every 5 to 10 years of every Listed building, and some unlisted buildings, within the County. This is designed to monitor the condition of the buildings (see below) but may also record any alteration to traditional features, which can be useful in seeking an Article 4 Direction (see above). The survey is usually accompanied by a photographic record, which when compared with earlier photographs provides a very useful way of monitoring change in Listed, and some unlisted, buildings in conservation areas.

Monitoring the condition of the historic buildings and developing a strategy for repair

A Countywide survey is carried out approximately every 5 to 10 years of the condition of every listed, and some unlisted, buildings. This identifies buildings that have fallen into disuse, dereliction or disrepair, commonly referred to as 'Buildings at Risk'. While this survey is largely limited to Listed buildings, this does provide a very good means of monitoring the condition of a significant proportion of the historic buildings within conservation areas.

A 'Buildings at Risk Register' for the whole County has been produced, giving the result of survey work completed in 2004. This can be compared to previous survey results to monitor change and can be used to identify problem areas or problem building types, for example, and to therefore help target resources. These resources may be in the form of grant aid or can also be the serving of a notice by the Local Authority on the owner, to bring about works to a building to either repair it or make it wind and water tight.

There are no buildings at risk within the proposed conservation area

Enforcement Proceedings

Unauthorised works and breaches of planning control can cumulatively harm the quality of both the built environment and surrounding spaces within a conservation area.

An obvious example of this sort of damage is unauthorised works to Listed buildings. A Listed building is a building of special architectural or historic interest and it has Listed status to protect this interest. Listed Building Consent is required for any works of alteration to a Listed building and it is a criminal offence to carry out unauthorised works to Listed buildings. It can be very damaging when misguided and authorised alterations are carried out to a listed building, like the removal of traditional timber windows and doors and their replacement with UPVC or poor modern imitations, for example. If unauthorised works to Listed buildings are not pursued it cumulatively damages the building stock of conservation areas.

It is not only alterations to Listed building that can damage the character and appearance of conservation areas - the unauthorised demolition of buildings, or unauthorised works to unlisted buildings, through for example the use of non-approved modern materials, can all erode the special character of a conservation area.

It is, therefore, important that the District Council follows up breaches of planning law within conservation areas, as this can help preserve the quality of the environment.

The survey process that goes into producing a Conservation Area Character Appraisal may highlight breaches in planning law and anyone can confidentially report a suspected breach. The District Council regularly follows up reports of unauthorised work and may take enforcement action. Breaches of Listed building law and other issues in conservation areas are regularly reviewed across the District and prioritised so action is taken.

There are currently no known breaches of planning control at this time that directly affect the character and appearance of the proposed conservation area

Proposed enhancement schemes

Policy C5 of the Local Plan states that the District Council will promote and implement environmental improvement schemes in conservation areas. The benefit of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal is that it can firstly highlight where such schemes would be beneficial and secondly guide the nature of the works to ensure they are appropriate.

There are no planned enhancement schemes for Girton at the moment. If the opportunity arises then reference will be made to the Appraisal in developing priorities and an appropriate approach.

Proposals for economic development and regeneration (grants)

The District Council has managed various conservation grant schemes in the recent past and these often target buildings within conservation areas. The Appraisal can be used to help identify a list of properties that would benefit from repair, reinstatement of traditional features, or improvements required to bring the building back into use, for example.

At the moment there is one conservation grant scheme running in the District that can be used to help regenerate conservation areas. The grant can be used towards the cost of repairs and improving the appearance of buildings by reinstating traditional features where these have been lost. A variety of buildings are eligible, they do not have to be listed, but they do need to be historic buildings of architectural or historic merit (and for residential properties these must be within a conservation area). For more information contact the Conservation Officer.