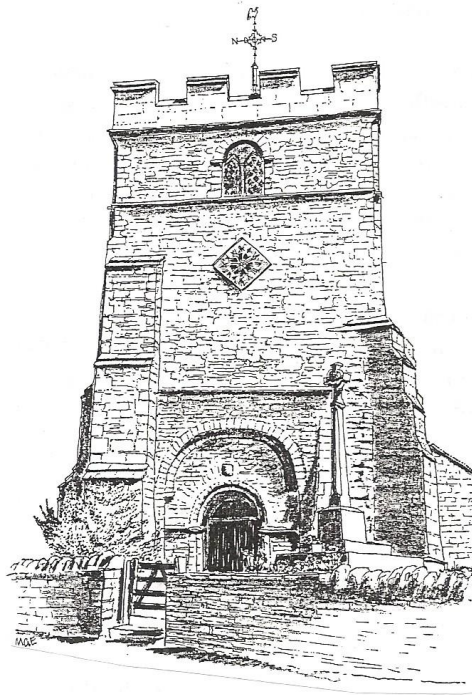


CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



DIDDLEBURY

Designated 16TH DECEMBER 1993



PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREA) ACT, 1990

DIDDLEBURY CONSERVATION AREA

STATEMENT

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1. PLAN OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT, 1990

DIDDLEBURY CONSERVATION AREA

1.0 THE EXTENT OF DIDDLEBURY CONSERVATION AREA.

- 1.1 The Diddlebury Conservation Area consists of part of the village of Diddlebury in the parish of Diddlebury and its immediate environs as illustrated in the Diddlebury Conservation Area Plan.

2.0 THE DESIGNATION OF DIDDLEBURY CONSERVATION AREA

- 2.1 Diddlebury Conservation Area was designated as a conservation area by South Shropshire Council on the 16th December 1993 in accordance with the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and conservation Areas) Act, 1990.



3.0 THE HISTORY OF DIDDLEBURY

- 3.1 The name Diddlebury is derived from 'Dudela's Byrig'; byrig meaning a manor and Dudela being a personal name.
- 3.2 Diddlebury is referred to in the Domesday Book as being in Culverstone Hundred. In 1086 Corfham was the caput and had greater status. Diddlebury has since displaced Corfham in importance. The Manor was held by Walter de Gifford. The church was at Diddlebury and was given by Earl Roger to St Peter's Shrewsbury and was subsequently given to the French abbey, St Martin of Sées.
- 3.3 In 1236 Bishop Ralph of Maidstone persuaded the abbey to give the church to him, and in the following year he proceeded to appropriate it to the dean and chapter to provide two chaplains and two deacons to serve the church of Hereford on a permanent basis with a plan to add two subdeacons when the then rector and vicar of the church of Diddlebury should die.
- 3.4 In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Baldwin family were the Lords of the manor but in 1753 the present Delbury Hall, an elegant 11 bay Georgian mansion, replaced their family house. This building was built by their successors, the Cornewalls. In the 16th and 17th centuries Diddlebury was important enough to have a small endowed grammar school, which Lord Herbert of Chirbury (d. 1648) attended as a private boarding pupil of the master. This school may have occupied the small building in the churchyard between the church and lychgate.

- 3.5 In 1672 there were more than 20 houses in the village. By 1841 the population was 132, about a sixth of that of the whole of the parish.

4.0 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DIDDLEBURY CONSERVATION AREA

Introduction

- 4.1 Diddlebury is one of the main villages in the Corvedale with a limited range of services that include a church, a primary school and a village hall. It is mainly an agricultural village with three farmhouses, a variety of farm buildings, together with a number of houses and cottages. It is on low lying ground adjoining the Bache which drains into the River Corve.
- 4.2 A character appraisal of the village has been carried out and the main findings are set out under the following headings: -

Setting
Archaeological Significance
Architectural and Historic Quality
Street Scene
Key Buildings
Materials
Natural Features
Negative Factors

Setting

- 4.3 The village of Diddlebury is located in the Parish of the same name on the dip slope of the Wenlock Edge escarpment where the river valley, draining from Hope Dale, enters the larger, broader valley of the Corvedale. It is one of several such settlements that are located along the road (B4368) that divides the Dale from the slopes to the northwest, where the limestone and rich valley soil meet.

Archaeological Significance

- 4.4 The church of St. Peter is noted for its Saxon work that reflects the settlements pre-conquest origin and importance. The village has an unusual street format and like many areas in the Corvedale several of the houses have earlier cores. Glebe Farm is such an example. The building may be sub-medieval in origin and may be built on the foundations of a medieval hall. The settlement is much shrunken from its format in the medieval period, but the replacement of timber frame with stone is not unattractive.

- 4.5 The following are classed as monuments in the Diddlebury Conservation Area: -

- Church of St Peter (Grade II* Listing)
(Late Saxon to Medieval - 800 AD to 1499 AD)
Parish Church of Saxon origin, restored in the 19th Century)

- Church Cottage (Grade II Listing)

The former Schoolmaster's house, this is a 2-storey building of the late 18th or early 19th Century of stone rubble construction with a plain tile roof; a brick end stack and a stack to the left rear)

- The Parish Room (Grade II Listing)
(This is believed to have been built as a school and was later used as a clubroom. It is a 19th Century single storey building of stone rubble construction with a plain tile roof and rubble external end stacks with brick chimneys)
- Delbury Hall (Grade II Listing)
(16th Century to Early 20th Century (pre WW1) - 1500 AD to 1913 AD
A country house of the mid 18th Century, it is of brick construction with a hipped slate double-pitch roof, 4 cross-axial brick ridge stacks and 2 brick end stacks)
- Coach house and stables at Delbury Hall (Grade II Listing)
(16th Century to Early 20th Century (pre WW1) - 1500 AD to 1913 AD
The 2-storey coach house and stables are of 18th Century brick construction with a hipped plain tile roof with a gable parapet to the right and 2 brick ridge stacks. It has an arcaded wood bellcote with a moulded cornice to the lead pavilion roof with a ball finial and ornate wrought-iron weather vane)
- Dovecote at Delbury Hall (Grade II Listing)
(16th Century to Early 20th Century (pre WW1) - 1500 AD to 1913 AD
A dovecote of the mid 18th Century constructed in coursed sandstone rubble with a plain tile roof with brick gable-parapets and a restored louvred lantern to the ridge. The interior has brick nesting holes with platforms and a collared truss with missing raking struts)
- Delbury Hall - a park of 19th to 20th Century date
(Early 19th Century to Early 20th Century (pre WW1) - 1800 AD to 1913 AD
In 1827 Delbury Hall had a park that occupied the area around the Hall and southwest of it up to what in 1883 was Corfton Plantation. By 1883, however, the park had been done away with. Of two ponds at Delbury one, the more northerly, had been formalised by 1883)
- The Glebe Farmhouse (Formerly known as 'Cleeve Farmhouse')
(Grade II Listing)
(16th Century to Early 20th Century (pre WW1) - 1500 AD to 1913 AD
A 2-storey farmhouse of the 16th or 17th Century and later)

4.6 The following are recorded in the 1981-82 South Shropshire Parishes Survey (of Vernacular Architecture): -

- Church Farm
- School & Schoolhouse
- House adj. Church wall Diddlebury
- Glebe Cottage
- Ag Bldgs at Glebe Farm - Cartshed and Granary
- Ag Bldg at Glebe Farm - Cowhouse

- Delbury Farm
- Ag Bldgs at Delbury Farm - Cartshed, Granary and Pigsty
- Ag Bldg at Delbury Farm - Cowhouse and Granary/Cartshed
- Outbuilding now Garage at Delbury Farm

Architectural and Historic Quality

- 4.7 The historic core of the village is loosely centred upon St Peter's Church. The buildings form a loose grouping and the open spaces created between them are of much importance to the character of the village.
- 4.8 Delbury Hall is a large mid Georgian brick house set back from the centre of the village. It forms an impressive sight from the lane leading south out of the village.
- 4.9 Apart from the listed buildings in the conservation area, the number of buildings of the local vernacular style are also an integral part of the character of the village. Church Farm in particular is very important, not so much for its intrinsic qualities but because of its position at the top of the land adjoining the entrance to the village school. The siting here punctuates the view up the lane to St Peter's Church and has a profound impact upon the spatial composition of the village. To a lesser extent the same applies to the traditional stone built farm buildings adjoining the stream at the lower end of this part of Diddlebury. Without the presence of these buildings the village would not appear so attractive. Delbury Farm and the small stone humped bridge over the village stream are also other built structures in the village that contribute a great deal to its character and charm.



Street Scene

- 4.10 The unusual street format of the village is one of its distinctive qualities, together with the location of Delbury Hall and its parkland setting. The twists and turns in the road and the changes in level create a series of views that contribute to the sense of place of the village.
- 4.11 In many ways the siting of the three key historic buildings, the church, Glebe Farm and Delbury Hall, have a marked influence on the composition of the village and its appearance. St Peter's church dominates the street scene with its west tower. The lych gate, the old schoolroom and Church Cottage all add to the peace and tranquil setting of the church.

Key Buildings

- 4.12 The **Church of St Peter** is of late Saxon origin. The north wall of the nave consists entirely of herringbone masonry on the inside, and squared sandstone blocks on a three-step plinth on the outside. The north doorway is typically Saxon

with big block-like imposts and raised moulding that is square in section framing the doorway and arch. The north wall has one Saxon window that is small and set high in the wall, another window is of Norman origin.

The Saxon plinth continues along the north wall of the west tower. The arch in the west wall, now partly blocked, has the size of a tower or chancel arch. It is Norman in detail as is the corbel table above. In the early 12th Century the Saxon porch was enlarged and heightened into a tower in the late 12th Century. The bell openings have twin openings on a colonnette set under a super-arch.

The west doorway and tower arch are both pointed. The chancel is Norman and in the 13th Century a south aisle of 5 bays with octagonal piers and double-chamfered arches was added. In 1862 the aisle walls were rebuilt and a south porch was added in 1883.

The chancel was remodelled in the early 14th Century. It has two tomb recesses with ballflower decoration and handsome 2-light windows to the north and south. The roofs throughout are late medieval with collar beam trusses, alternate arch braces and a tie beam in place of a chancel arch.

The floor tiling is of 1883 by Godwin of Hereford and was part of the restoration and refurnishing carried out by Thomas Nicholson. The north chancel has restored 14th Century stained glass depicting the Crucifixion, and the Saints Peter and Paul, probably by David Evans, 1840s; in the south chancel is the Descent from the Cross and Entombment, 1871, by Done & Davies.

There is also stained glass by Hardman of Birmingham: in the east chancel the Crucifixion between Empty Tomb and Call to Peter, c. 1888, and the south aisle windows depict parables, the one to the southwest is of c. 1872 and the one to the west c. 1889.

A north window of the nave has fragments of a Saxon cross, one with interlace and the other with scrolls, birds and two human demi-figures. There is a wall monument to Frederick Cornewall who died 1756 and various other tablets as well as some early wood figurehead corbels to the roof and funeral hatchments.

- 4.13 **Delbury Hall** is a country house built in 1753-6 by William & David Hiorne of Warwick for Frederick Cornewall. Constructed entirely in warm red brick, it has a hipped slate double-pitch roof, 4 cross-axial brick ridge stacks and 2 brick end stacks. The 3-storey main block has 7 bays with the centre 3 slightly advanced, a symmetrical 7-window range and a brick modillioned stone cornice to the parapet with moulded stone coping. 9/6 sashes flank the central 12/8 sash as well as the 20th Century glazed door, and there are further 3/3 sashes and a 4/4 sash. The entrance door with its Gothic-glazed fanlight is in round-headed panelled reveals under a moulded wood open-pediment hood on fluted pilasters. There is a similar cornice and parapet to the 2-bay wings that are 2 storeys in height and are also slightly advanced, with each wing having four 9/6 sashes. The fenestration has moulded cases under gauged brick flat arches. The left returned side has French windows with a barred overlight, and a 9/6 sash and two blind openings over 9/6 sashes and a central blind opening. The rear of the building is similar to the front and has 2 blocked openings to the second floor and a 9/9 sash under a moulded wood pediment on plain pilasters. The single storey advanced wing is of the late 19th Century with 9/6 and 6/4 sashes, a 4-light casement to the north and a moulded stone cornice to the leaded parapet.

The interior has a central oak double-height staircase hall with the stair rising against its walls. There are two twisted balusters per tread and the balustrade continues along a gallery against the entrance wall.

Delbury Hall is now a venue for weddings and shooting parties, it has a plant nursery in the walled garden and a trout fishery a short walk from the hall.

- 4.14 **Glebe Farm** was formerly known as Cleeve Farmhouse. It was built in the 16th or 17th Century and later and is a 2-storey plus attic and cellar timber-frame construction with lath and plaster infill and rubble on a rubble plinth, and a steeply pitched plain tile roof. The stonework conceals the timber frame core of the building and this is most visible on the southern gable of the house. To the centre front is a 17th Century brick stack with 20th Century superstructure and a similar stack is to the left returned side. Glebe Farm is H-shaped on plan and has a 4-window range. All fenestration is of the 19th Century.
- The entrance is a 20th Century studded and battened plank door in an earlier frame under a brick segmental arch. The right returned side has three 2- and 3-light casements over a 20th Century glazed door, which has a 3-light casement to the left and a 2-light casement to the right.
- The interior of Glebe Farm has exposed timbers, chamfered ceiling beams and panelling. The farmhouse is now run as a guesthouse.

Materials

- 4.15 The traditional building materials used in Diddlebury are mainly the local coarse limestone and timber framing with either small clay tiles or slates. Occasionally red brick has been used and some facades have been whitewashed.
- 4.16 As with many other villages in the Corvedale, the use of stone boundary walls is an important characteristic that contributes a great deal to the appearance and character of the village. Its almost continuous use on both sides of the lane leading through the village determines the broad colour and texture of the village. The stonewalls adjoining Glebe Farm, St Peter's Church and Church Cottage stand out in particular. Likewise the use of stone in the raised footpath is an attractive feature.

Natural Features

- 4.17 The presence of a large number of trees is an essential part of the character of the village. The mixture of conifers and deciduous species to the south provides a pleasing soft backcloth, as well as a shelter belt for Delbury Hall.
- 4.18 There are also a number of mature trees along Mill Lane that dominate the street scene and a number adjoining Delbury Farm which are of townscape importance.
- 4.19 The stream running through Diddlebury is a major feature in the village scene. The stone road bridge, the footbridge and the weir all add to the attraction of this part of the village.
- 4.20 While the village is surrounded by rich farmland, there are limited views out across the open countryside. The trees and buildings combine together to form an enclosed area. The best views out of the village are from the churchyard across the Corvedale and from the village hall carpark.

Negative Factors

- 4.21 The area for improvement relates to the raised pavement along the village lane. This is tarmaced at present and would be considerably enhanced if a more appropriate material for a conservation area were used.

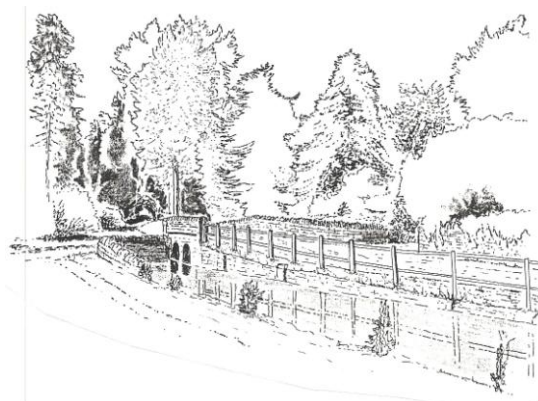
5.0 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 Conservation areas are defined by section 69 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990 as “...areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. This is a strictly applied definition and should not be confused with Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or other designated areas.
- 5.2 Conservation areas are designated by Local Planning Authorities, usually after public consultation, although this is not a legal requirement.

The Effect of Conservation Area Status

The consequences of designation as a conservation area are as follows:

- 5.3 The Local Planning Authority is under a duty “from time to time” to publish and consult on proposals to preserve and enhance conservation areas.
- 5.4 In dealing with planning applications in conservation areas, the Local Planning Authority is required to “pay special attention” to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. This means that there is a higher standard of design required in conservation areas than elsewhere.
- 5.5 Outline planning applications will not normally be entertained.
- 5.6 Planning applications in conservation areas must be advertised as prescribed by Regulations.
- 5.7 It is an **offence** to demolish a building or structure in a conservation area without the consent of the Local Planning Authority. There are some exceptions – please ask before taking action.
- 5.8 English Heritage has the power to make grants or loans for preservation or enhancement, although none are currently available.
- 5.9 It is an **offence** to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or destroy a tree in a conservation area without having given 6 weeks notice to the Local Planning Authority. There are some exceptions – please ask before taking action.
- 5.10 Permitted development and the right to display advertisements are more limited than elsewhere.
- 5.11 Telecommunications operators have more onerous obligations placed on them.



6.0 PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 5

PPS5 is the current policy guidance on protection and enhancement of the historic environment.

Development proposals in conservation areas will need to take into account the requirements of PPS5 and in particular the extracts below.

6.1 Planning Policy Statement 5 Planning for the Historic Environment

HE10.1 Special regard should be given to such matters as scale, height, form, massing, respect for the traditional pattern of frontages, vertical or horizontal emphasis, and detailed design (e.g. the scale and spacing of window openings, and the nature and quality of materials)

HE10.2 Whilst the character and appearance of conservation areas should always be given full weight in planning decisions, the objective of preservation can be achieved either by development, which makes a positive contribution to an areas character or appearance, or by development which leaves character and appearance unharmed.

6.2 In determining applications for proposals to which this policy guidance applies, the Council will have regard to:

Any conservation area statement or village design statement;

The quality of the design and the appropriateness of the proposed use;

The appropriateness of materials and building techniques

Reasons

- a) To ensure new development in a conservation area preserves or enhances its character and appearance and conserves its distinctive qualities;
- b) To ensure that the character or appearance of a conservation area is not adversely affected by the demolition of buildings;
- c) To conform to Policy QE5 of the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy;
- d) To conform to PPS5

7.0 Guidance on the policy criteria

7.1 **Special regard given to the scale, design and materials** means that new developments must blend in with the character of the area, not that individuals building styles must be copied.

7.2 The requirement for **demolition of buildings in conservation areas** to be part of the scheme of redevelopment is to avoid unsightly gaps occurring in street frontages.

7.3 There is specific **Supplementary Planning Guidance**:

- Conservation Area statements for most conservation areas
- A variety of Town and Village Design Statements

7.4 **Quality and appropriateness of design, materials and use** is required for all proposals in conservation areas. In considering applications for new development in Conservation Areas, the Council will generally have regard to the following criteria:

- The siting of the development must conform to the general pattern of development in the area and not dominate existing buildings or occupy part of their curtilages.
- The scale of the proposal must be in conformity with the scale of existing buildings within that part of the Conservation Area.
- The use should be one, which is appropriate to the area and will give rise to development of an appropriate scale.
- The proportions of the building and its fenestration must be in keeping with the characteristics of existing buildings in the area.
- The alignment of the proposal along its highway frontage must conform to the pattern of development in the area.
- The proposal must maintain the characteristics of the roofline of the street as regards height, shape and pitch of roof and is not be of a height, which would intrude onto the skyline from any viewpoint.
- The proposal should conform to the existing pattern of door and window openings and their detailing prevailing within the area.
- The proposal should be constructed in materials traditionally used in the Conservation Area matching exactly the colour and texture of that material.
- The proposal should retain, restore or add traditional boundary walls in stone or brick in accordance with the tradition in the Conservation Area.
- The proposal should retain existing trees and provide for the planting of new specimen trees where possible.
- The proposal should retain, and take account of traditional burgage plot layouts or other historic plot and layout forms and ancillary buildings and boundary treatments.

8.0 OTHER CRITERIA

- 8.1 As far as possible the Council aims to conserve **traditional shopfronts** by preventing their removal and discouraging unsuitable alterations. Proposals for **new shopfronts and fascias** within conservation areas will be permitted provided: -
- they complement both the architectural character and detail of the building onto which they are to be fitted.
 - they do not result in the removal of any existing separate access to upper storeys or preclude the restoration of such an access if already removed.
- 8.2 Where appropriate the Council, in consultation with the Highway Authority, will seek to introduce schemes to **rationalise traffic and pedestrian signs and other street furniture** in conservation areas in the interests of the amenity. It is recognised that obstructive traffic signs and other street furniture can create 'clutter' and form a visual intrusion that detracts from the appearance and character of the District's conservation areas. The intention of this guidance is to minimise such impacts.
- 8.3 Through the control of new development and Enhancement Schemes carried out in conjunction with the Highway Authority, the Council will ensure that **traditional paved areas** are conserved and maintained. Considerable investment has been made on many listed and non listed buildings in the conservation areas throughout the County. The purpose of this advice is to ensure that similar

attention is paid to the space between the buildings in particular the traditional paved areas.

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Sources: Shropshire County Council Sites and Monument Records
The Buildings of England, Shropshire, by John Newman and Nikolaus Pevsner
British History Online