

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



ASTON MUNSLOW

Designated 16TH DECEMBER 1993

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREA) ACT, 1990

ASTON MUNSLOW CONSERVATION AREA

STATEMENT

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1. PLAN OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT, 1990

ASTON MUNSLOW CONSERVATION AREA

1.0 THE EXTENT OF ASTON MUNSLOW CONSERVATION AREA

- 1.1 The Aston Munslow Conservation Area consists of most of the village of Aston Munslow in the Parish of Munslow and its immediate environs as illustrated in the Aston Munslow Conservation Area Plan.

2.0 THE DESIGNATION OF ASTON MUNSLOW CONSERVATION AREA

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



3.0 THE HISTORY OF ASTON MUNSLOW

- 3.1 The "Concise Oxford Dictionary of Place Names" gives the meaning of Aston Munslow as east of, or near Munslow. An alternative suggestion is that the Aston part of the name refers to the parish of Munslow rather than Aston village as being east of Eaton on Haywood.
- 3.2 Unlike today, where Aston Munslow village forms part of the parish of Munslow, at the time of Domesday, Aston or Estune was the Manor. Almund (Elmund) held it before 1066. An extensive manor of 8½ hides (approx. 1020 acres), it was held in chief at Domesday by Roger of Montgomery, cr. earl of Shrewsbury in 1068, from whom the sheriff Reynold of Bailleul then held it. The earl's tenancy in chief ended in 1102, and by 1115 the sheriff's interest had ceased too.
- 3.3 Aston, which then included Munslow, was held in chief by Richard Banastre in 1115. Richard's son and heir Thurstan Banastre was succeeded as tenant in chief by his daughter Maud, wife of William de Hastings, who had the lordship until her death c. 1222 when it passed to their son William (d. c. 1225). William's son Sir Henry held Aston and Munslow in chief as ¼ knight's fee by 1243. From him (d. 1250) the tenancy in chief appears to have descended from father to son through Sir Henry, at first a minor (d. c. 1269), Sir John (Lord Hastings 1290, d. 1313), John, Lord Hastings (d. 1325), Lawrence, Lord Hastings (cr. earl of Pembroke 1339, d. 1348), and John, earl of Pembroke (d. 1375), to John, earl of Pembroke, who died childless in 1389. It seems likely that the tenancy in chief

was afterwards disputed. Under a settlement of 1372 it should have passed to William Beauchamp, Lord Bergavenny, a kinsman of the last John, earl of Pembroke; Beauchamp had the advowson¹ of Munslow church by 1396. Nevertheless Reynold, Lord Grey of Ruthin, Pembroke's heir general, was named as tenant in chief of Aston in 1401. It seems that by then a compromise had been reached, involving separation of the tenancies in chief of Aston and Munslow.

- 3.4 The tenant in chief of Aston in 1428 was Sir John Talbot, Lord Furnivall, cr. earl of Shrewsbury in 1442. He died in 1453 and under a settlement of 1452 his tenancy in chief descended successively to his sons Sir Lewis (d. by 1458) and Humphrey (later Sir Humphrey). It seems afterwards to have merged in the terre tenancy, which Humphrey acquired in 1463. From Sir Humphrey (d. 1493) Aston descended successively to his grandnephew John Grey, Viscount Lisle (d. 1504), and to Lisle's daughter and heir Elizabeth, Lady Lisle and countess of Devon (d. 1519). Sir Arthur Plantagenet, Viscount Lisle, second husband of the countess of Devon's aunt and heir Elizabeth, held it in 1529 and in the same year Lady Lisle's son (by her first husband) Sir John Dudley sold his reversionary interest in the manor to Sir John Allyn, who sold it next year to John Smith, a baron of the Exchequer from 1539. Smith presumably came into possession on Viscount Lisle's death in 1542. In 1605 Aston passed directly to Sir Francis Smith and Charles Carington (or Smith), Viscount Carrington (d. 1706), was evidently succeeded by his cousin's son Francis Smith (d. 1721), who was succeeded by his son Francis Smith (or Carington). Aston is presumed to have descended from William Smith (d. 1758) to his grandnephew John Wright, in possession by 1787, perhaps through John's mother, Mrs. Constantia Holford. John died in 1792 and was succeeded by his son John (d. 1826); the latter's grandson and heir J. F. Wright (d. 1868) was in possession by 1843 and was followed by his nephew E. C. Wright. In 1911 Wright sold Aston Hall and 100 acres to P. G. Holder, who sold that property next year to J. I. Benson. In 1978 Maj. D. Benson sold the Hall and 13 acres to R. N. Broad. Broad sold it in 1985 to Cdr. J. L. Skinner, who sold it in 1988 to Mr. and Mrs. P. A. G. Cressall.
- 3.4 In 1086 the Manor of Aston contained 2 ploughteams, 6 slaves, 5 villagers, and 8 smallholders. Nine more teams might have been employed. In 1340 it was said that 5 carucates² in the parish lay untilld, sheep had been killed by murrain³, and corn lost in storms.
- 3.5 Aston's open-field land seems to have been mainly in three fields in the 16th century and worked in a three-course rotation. In 1664 Aston's farmland was reckoned at 11¼ yardlands, in 1694 at 12¼.
- 3.6 There was a water mill at Aston in 1086, and William the miller held land in Aston in 1341. Aston's mill was called Bache mill by 1651; it closed in circa 1920.
- 3.7 In 1086 the church was located at Aston Munslow, only to be transferred to Munslow in approximately 1115.

¹ The right in English ecclesiastical law of presentation to a vacant benefice

² A plowland; as much land as one team can plow in a year and a day; - by some said to be about 100 acres

³ Any of various highly infectious diseases of cattle/sheep, as anthrax

- 3.8 Aston anciently had woodland between Bache brook and Mynde field. By the 17th century it was home to several squatters and parts at least were inclosed. Only fragments survived into the 19th century.

4.0 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ASTON MUNSLOW CONSERVATION AREA

Introduction

- 4.1 Aston Munslow is largely a farming community with a mix of buildings that include farmhouses, cottages, the Swan Public House and a medieval cruck hall.
- 4.2 The stream running along the main lane into Aston Munslow adds to the attractiveness of the village, as do the hedges and trees that overhang most of the lanes. This provides not only a high degree of privacy in some instances, but gives an overall effect of lush leafy country lanes. The wealth of trees within the grounds of Tudor Cottage and opposite the steep lane alongside the Methodist Chapel, in particular, enhances the character of the village.
- 4.3 To a large extent, most of the views of the village are inward looking and there are few striking views looking out across open countryside. An exception, perhaps, is the view from the curtilage of the Swan Inn looking over the rich farmland of the Corvedale, which stretches out to the south and to the west.
- 4.4 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
Negative Factors

Setting

- 4.5 The small village of Aston Munslow lies in the Parish of Munslow on the dip slope of Wenlock Edge where the river valley draining from Hope Dale enters the longer, broader valley of the Corvedale. It is one of several such settlements that are located along the road that divides the Dale from the slopes to the west and where the limestone and rich valley soils meet; it lies c. 16 km southwest of Much Wenlock and c. 10km northeast of Craven Arms.

Archaeological Significance

- 4.6 There are a number of monuments of archaeological importance in the village, including the White House. The dovecot in the grounds of the White House is designated as an ancient monument.

The following are classed as monuments in the Aston Munslow Conservation Area: -

- The White House (Grade II Listing)
(Medieval to Early 20th Century (pre WW1) - 1400 AD? to 1913 AD)

This manor house, which is now a house, is of the 15th Century and has early 19th Century additions. It is a 2-storey and single-storey and attic building of painted render on a coursed rubble plinth, stone rubble, and a painted timber frame with painted infill panels. It has plain-tile roofs and a hipped tile roof, a large central stone ridge stack with a brick shaft and 19th Century integral brick eaves stacks.

It is thought to have been the manor house of Aston Munslow in medieval times, before the building of the present house)

- Stable block to the north of The White House (Grade II Listing)
(Early 20th Century (pre WW1) - 1550 AD? to 1913 AD
A house of probable post medieval date, a stable of probable post medieval date, a barn of probable post medieval date
Barn and stables reputed to incorporate the core of a late 16th Century timber-framed house)
- Dovecote at South Hill Farm (Scheduled Monument⁴)
(Medieval to 17th Century - 1300 AD? to 1600 AD?
The remains of a circular, stone built dovecote probably constructed in the 14th or 15th Century, it is situated 30m south of the White House. It is one of only a few medieval dovecotes known in Shropshire.
The dovecote survived as a roofed structure until about 1930. Limestone tiles, with peg holes, from the roof of the dovecote have been used to edge the flowerbeds of the surrounding garden)
- Arbour Cottage No's 1 and 2 (Grade II Listing)
(17th Century to early 20th Century (pre WW1) - 1632 AD to 1913 AD
2 houses, now a single house, 2 storeys and single storey with attic. It is dated 1632 and of painted timber frame construction on a stone rubble plinth with painted brick and render infill panels, and a stone rubble gable end. The slate roof is graduated)
- Washwell Cottage (Grade II Listing)
(18th Century - 1700 AD to 1732 AD
Between 1953 and his death in 2002, it was the home of Fred Jordan, a farm worker and folk singer, and during his time there the cottage underwent little change.
The cottage is built of local uncoursed pink sandstone rubble with a corrugated iron roof replacing original thatch and a plain clay tile roof to 19th Century addition. Smallholders' cottages of this type, typical of Shropshire and the Welsh borders, are characteristically found in locations such as this, by a quarry or on the edge of common land. In 1953 the cottage became the home of Fred Jordan (1922-2002), a local farm worker who was one of the last, genuine rustic English folk-singers to learn his songs via an ancient oral-based tradition. He recorded a number of albums and became nationally known on the traditional folk music scene. During this time it underwent little modernisation or change, as despite his success as a recording artist, Jordan continued to retain the values, lifestyle and outward trappings of a pre-war farm worker. (Obituary in The Times, 13 August 2002)
- Aston Munslow Chapel

⁴ Scheduling revised in 2002

(A nonconformist chapel of unknown date)

- Tudor Cottage (Grade II Listing)
(17th Century to Early 20th Century (pre WW1) - 1600 AD? to 1913 AD
A 2-storey house of the early 17th Century and later of painted timber frame construction with painted brick infill panels on a restored brick plinth, with 20th Century restored wood casements throughout and thick slates and plain-tiles to the extension)
- Lower Farm Farmhouse (Grade II Listing)
(16th Century to Early 20th Century (pre WW1) - 1550 AD? to 1913 AD
Shown on OS map as Lower House Farmhouse. A farmhouse, now a house, it is late 16th Century in origin with 17th Century, 18th Century and later alterations. It is a stone rubble, painted timber frame 2 storey construction with brick and painted rendered infill panels, painted brick and plain-tile roofs)
- Swan Inn public house (Grade II Listing)
(16th Century to Early 20th Century (pre WW1) - 1550 AD? to 1913 AD
A public house of the late 16th or 17th century with later alterations)
- Outbuildings to northwest of Swan Inn (Grade II Listing)
(Late 18th Century - 1767 AD to 1799 AD
Outbuildings to the Swan Inn, formerly stables now a garage and store, of the 18th Century or early 19th Century. The single storey with loft building consists of partly painted stone rubble, has plain-tile roofs and is T-shaped with a 2-bay range and cross wing. The street front has the gable-end to the left with the brick segmental-arched loft opening with a boarded door and boarded garage doors below; the long range to the right has a loft opening with a boarded door and the 2 brick segmental-arched ground-storey openings also have boarded doors. There are boarded openings on each return side)
- Nos 8 and 9 (Grade II Listing)
(16th Century to Early 20th Century (pre WW1) - 1550 AD? to 1913 AD
A farmhouse, now 2 houses, of the late 16th century with 20th century extensions, it is of painted timber frame construction with painted render infill panels and painted and unpainted stone rubble. A single storey plus attic building, it has a graduated slate roof with a brick integral end stack and a projecting rendered eaves stack with a brick shaft to the front. T-shaped on plan it consists of a main range and a cross wing. The street front has 2 jettied gables, one over the main range to the right and a larger cross wing gable to the left. A projecting stack divides the gables and the main range continues to the right with a painted rubble extension. The main range gable has a 3-light attic casement and 2-light and 3-light casements below; the cross wing gable has one 2-light casement at both storeys. The right return gable is covered by a later slate-roofed lean-to extension with a 20th century casement. The left side is partly covered by 20th century single-storey gabled slate-roofed extension wing containing the entrance door.
Interior: The ground-floor rooms have exposed timber framing and moulded stop-chamfered ceiling beams)

Architectural and Historic Quality

- 4.7 The 6 listed buildings within the village contribute to its sense of place because of their character and appearance. However, there are several other traditionally built properties, which, owing to their position, scale, materials and vernacular style, are of historic and architectural importance; they add greatly to the quality of the village. Several of these buildings ought to be listed.
- 4.8 Of the key buildings in Aston Munslow, the Swan Inn, through its position adjoining the busy B4368, is particularly visible and perhaps the most associated with the “black and white” character of the village. It is probably of late 16th Century origin and is roughly L shaped on plan. It is largely timber frame and stone rubble with clay tile roof (see ‘Materials’ below). Further up the lane behind the Swan Inn lies Tudor Cottage, an early 17th Century building, again of timber frame construction. Numbers 1 and 2, Arbour Cottages, because of their position at the junction of several country lanes, stand out. The building’s black and white painted timber frame and brick infill, together with its slate roof, are particularly visible. Lower House Farm is also late 16th Century and is L shaped on plan.
- 4.9 Historically, the most important building in Aston Munslow must be the White House, which is perhaps 14th or 15th Century in origin. It consists of a former great hall with a cross wing and an early 19th Century front block. Recently, it was a museum of country life, but in 1990 it was given to the Landmark Trust and has now been carefully restored to provide self-catering holiday accommodation.

Street Scene

- 4.10 Much of the character of the village stems from the relatively loose knit layout of its historic buildings and the enclosed spaces that are created between the buildings. In addition, the topography of the area creates a number of steep sided lanes, which converge at a point below the White House that produces a sense of enclosure. Besides the layout of the village with its 6 narrow country lanes, there are a number of historic buildings that add to the appearance and character of the village. While these individual buildings do not form a continuous street scene, as found elsewhere in South Shropshire, they do relate to one another and create a sense of place and enclosure.

Key Buildings

- 4.11 The **Swan Inn** is a public house of the late 16th or 17th Century with later alterations, and is of painted stone rubble, brick and render, and painted timber frame construction with painted infill panels. It has plain-tiled roofs with plain 19th century bargeboards and finials, projecting stone and brick eaves stacks with brick upper shafts and 2 integral brick stacks. It is a 2-storey and single-storey, with attic and basement building that is irregular and roughly L-shaped on plan, with extension wings. The east side has a projecting stone gable-end with a multi-pane casement at each storey. There is a stone stack with a small dormer to the south return. To the right is the framed gable-end of the smaller extension with full-height close studding and a jettied first-floor gable-truss with a straight tie beam with 2 vertical struts. The entrance door is under the lean-to roof between the gables. The right north side has a central gable-end of a framed gable truss of vertical struts, collar with twin raking struts, a 2-light casement and a rendered wall below with leaded casements. Square framing 2 panels high to the right return side; to the left is the side wall of the smaller extension with a 2-light casement covered below with a lean-to outshut with a 2-light casement; to the far left is the side wall of the main wing with a multi-pane casement. The interior has square-panelled timber-framed partitions and chamfered bridging beams)

- 4.12 The **White House** was built in the 15th Century and has early 19th Century additions. It is thought to have been the manor house of Aston Munslow in medieval times, before the building of the present house. It is a 2-storey and single-storey with attic building of painted render on a coursed rubble plinth, stone rubble, and painted timber frame with painted infill panels. It has plain-tile roofs, a hipped tile roof, a large central stone ridge stack with a brick shaft, and 19th Century integral brick eaves stacks. The long range with one end of the former great hall with a cross wing and an early 19th Century extension now form the main house at the other end. The southeast front to the left is a early 19th Century rendered 2-storey, 3-window hipped range of 6/6 sashes under flat-keyed lintels, a central door with a surround with pilasters and a flat canopy. To the right is the stone rubble range of the old hall with a 2-light upper-level casement and three 2-light casements at the ground storey, with a plain-boarded door to the left. Gable end: The rendered gable has a 2-light casement under weatherboard, and the lower level is covered by a later lean-to extension. To right at the rear is the stone rubble range with a 6/6 sash at the first storey and a blocked window at the ground storey. The central projecting gabled 2-storey 16th Century timber-framed wing of close studding with straight tension braces and an arched brace is situated to the return side, with a gable-truss of straight tie beam, vertical struts, collar and twin raking struts. To the left is the stone rubble hall range with a framed dormer with a 3-light casement over a 3-light casement at the ground storey.
- Interior: The great hall of 4 unequal bays was divided into 2 storeys in the 16th Century; a large chimney and fireplaces occupy the north bay. The roof slopes have curved windbraces.

Materials

- 4.13 The traditional building materials used in Aston Munslow are mainly stone or timber framing with either small clay tile or slate roofing materials. Occasionally red brick has been used.
- 4.14 The use of boundary stonewalls is very much a characteristic of the village. These add to its quality and reinforce the traditional appearance of the village. In particular, the restored stone walling at the White House and those adjoining Swan Cottage and the Swan make a marked contribution.



Negative Factors

- 4.15 To a degree, the open area of the village and the space between buildings has been undermined by new development.

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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