

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



LITTLE STRETTON

DESIGNATED JUNE 1986



PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREA) ACT, 1990

LITTLE STRETTON CONSERVATION AREA

STATEMENT

CONTENTS

1. EXTENT OF CONSERVATION AREA
2. DESIGNATION OF CONSERVATION AREA
3. HISTORY
4. CHARACTERISTICS
5. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK
6. PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE 15
7. GUIDANCE ON POLICY CRITERIA
8. OTHER CRITERIA

APPENDIX

1. PLAN OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

PLANNING (LISTED BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION AREAS) ACT, 1990
LITTLE STRETTON CONSERVATION AREA

1.0 THE EXTENT OF LITTLE STRETTON CONSERVATION AREA.

- 1.1 The Little Stretton Conservation Area includes most of the centre of the village from Ragleth View to the Old Post Office, Small Batch, Brook House, part of O.S. plot 1191 and their environs as illustrated in the Little Stretton Conservation Area Plan.

2.0 THE DESIGNATION OF LITTLE STRETTON CONSERVATION AREA

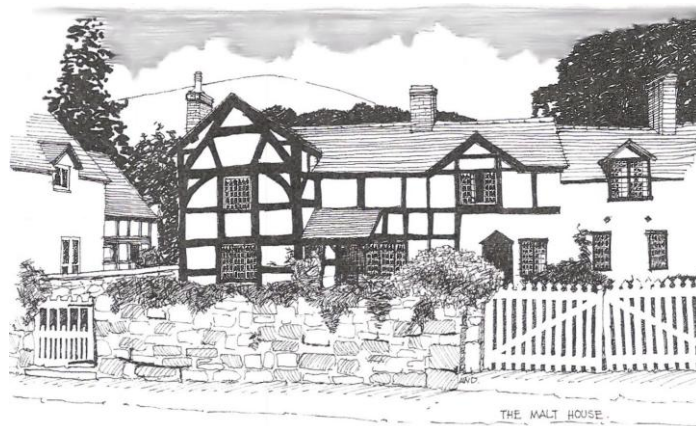
- 2.1 Little Stretton Conservation Area was designated as a conservation area by South Shropshire District Council in June 1986.
- 2.2 From 24th August 1990 the statutory provisions for the designation, preservation and enhancement of Conservation Areas are contained in Part II of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. From the same date the statutory provisions for the control of development in Conservation Areas is contained in that Act and in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3.0 The HISTORY OF LITTLE STRETTON

- 3.1 In the 19th Century Little Stretton formed the manor of Stretton-en-le-Dale along with Church Stretton and All Stretton. It lies near the Roman road from Deva (Chester) via Viroconium Cornoviorum (Wroxeter) to Isca (Caerleon, Mon.) This road initially known as Botte (Bot) Street, which was by about 1580 changed to Watling Street, gave a name to Little Stretton as 'Stretton' is derived from Old English, 'stroet' meaning road and 'tun' meaning settlement. The Shrewsbury-Ludlow road south of Little Stretton joins Watling Street, while the Stretton-Ludlow road was a turnpike in 1756-1873 with a tollgate and stop gate into Watling Street in Little Stretton.
- 3.2 A Little Stretton estate comprised three, eventually only two, ancient copyhold messuages ¹: Bonham Norton's, John Thynne's of Deverill, and the Medlicotts (earlier Vernolds and Hayles), or parts of their lands. The Jones family, whose estate was sold out of Chancery in 1724, acquired it. The purchaser John Brewster, of Burton Court in Eardisland, Herefordshire, sold it in 1761 to Thomas More the younger (d. 1767), of Millichope, whose representatives sold it to Thomas Gibbon (d. 1789), of the Marsh in Wistanstow, in 1781. In 1796 Gibbon's son and namesake owned 97 acres extending along most of the northern boundary of Little Stretton township as far east as the lowest slopes of Ragleth hill. The chief house, presumably representing one or more of the old copyhold messuages, stood apart from the lands in Little Stretton village and was later known as the Manor House. The younger Thomas Gibbon's estate passed to his brother Edward, after whose death in 1855 it remained in the Gibbons' hands for a Century or more.

¹ A dwelling house and its adjacent buildings and the adjacent land used by the household

- 3.3 In the 19th Century the head of the Gibbon family resided near Liverpool, but other members lived in the Manor House and the estate was enlarged from time to time. Still 97 acres in 1838, it had increased to circa 332 acres by about 1910. To Manor House farm Edward Gibbon (d. 1897) added the small Malt House farm (formerly Thynne's messuage) bought from the Robinsons in 1872. His executors continued to buy land: notably, in 1902 and 1904, most of Old Hall farm (including, besides the Hall, the ancient Medlicott's and one of the Bright's messuages, both enfranchised in 1881) and in 1920 the 150-acre Brook farm (including the other Bright's messuage and Harrington's). Those acquisitions were made during the time of Edward Gibbon's daughter-in-law, Mrs. A. E. Gibbon, who lived in the Manor House from 1896 until her death in 1932. In 1942 her sons sold about 58 acres of the land bought in 1902, which had enlarged Malt House farm and the estate was presumably broken up circa 1958 when her younger son, E. L. L. Gibbon, left the Manor House. The Gibbons were descended from Thomas Bridgman, a Little Stretton tanner and owner of part of Lloyd's or Pigge's copyhold, the chief messuage of which was added to the Gibbon estate in 1901. There was more than one branch of Little Stretton Bridgmans and in the earlier 18th Century a John Bridgman had been tenant under the copyhold owner of the Hall farm, most of which the Gibbons bought in 1902 and 1904.
- 3.4 The village has some early 19th Century buildings but grew little before the mid 20th Century. Half a dozen small scattered houses were built north of the Sun (later Ragleth) inn in the later 19th and earlier 20th Century, but it was only the addition of about 20 more, mainly in the 1950s and 1960s, that formed a continuous northern extension of the village along Ludlow Road. By 1949 the village had begun to extend south with six semi-detached houses in the angle between Ludlow Road and the railway, built by the owner of the adjacent saw mill for his workers; some became council houses after the closure of the mill, whose site was redeveloped as private bungalows (Crown Close) in the earlier 1960s and there was later some infilling in the centre of the village.



4.0 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LITTLE STRETTON CONSERVATION AREA

Introduction

- 4.1 Little Stretton village is a rough quadrilateral formed by two lanes forking out of one descending from Ashes Hollow: the northern lane runs due east and the southern one south and then south-east, both to form crossroads with Ludlow Road and continue to Watling Street.

4.2 A feature of Little Stretton is its relative “quietness” on the B4370 – avoiding the heavy trunk road traffic of the A49 nearby. The railway forms a distinct physical barrier between the village and the trunk road whilst the small railway bridges over it form one of the characteristics of the village.
Many of the roads leading into the village consist of small, narrow, sometimes winding lanes and together with the adjoining boundaries of stonewalls, hedges and fences are a distinctive part of the village.

4.3 Several special features that enhance the area, relate to the stream that flows through the village. There are several small footbridges over this fast flowing stream and several fords. Further upstream towards the caravan site/car park there is also a small weir, which adds to the character of the village.

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

Natural Features

Setting

4.5 This small village lies on the edge of the Long Mynd situated in the valley below Ragleth Hill. It's setting within the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and particularly the views of the surrounding countryside are one of the major assets that contribute to its character.

Archaeological Significance

4.6 The following are classed as monuments in the Little Stretton Conservation Area: -

- Tan House (Grade II* Listing)
(A tannery of post-medieval date
16th Century to early 20th Century (pre WW1) – 1500AD to 1913AD)
- Linden Lea (Grade II Listing)
(A house of 19th to 20th Century date)
- Old Hall Farmhouse (Grade II Listing)
(A farmhouse of medieval to post medieval date, a manor house of medieval to post medieval date)
- Farm building to north of Old Hall Farmhouse (Grade II Listing)
(18th Century - 1700 AD to 1799 AD)
- The Malt House (Grade II Listing)
(A house of the 15th Century with 17th Century additions and later restorations)

- Little Stretton (East side) Milestone 27m southwest of The Malt House (Grade II Listing)
(A milestone of 18th Century date in painted ashlar, a rectangular slab set vertically and with a rounded top. Inscribed: 'LUDLOW XIV MILES')
- Brook Farmhouse (Grade II Listing)
(Farmhouse and stables, late 18th Century remodelling of earlier house)
- Barn, Cowshed and store to south of Brook Farmhouse (Formally listed as: Brook Farmhouse and Barn) (Grade II Listing)
Barn, cowshed and agricultural shed; 17th Century barn, 19th Century the remainder)
- Barn and Cowsheds approx 5m west of churchyard of All Saints (Grade II Listing)
(Barn and 2 cowsheds, 17th Century barn, 18th Century and 19th Century the remainder)
- Church of All Saints (Grade II Listing)
(A church dated 1903)
- The Manor House (Grade II Listing)
(Farmhouse, now a house.15th Century with 17th Century left-hand wing and later additions, heavily restored in the 20th Century)
- Courtyard Cottage at The Manor House (Grade II Listing)
(A house of the 17th Century, restored in the 20th Century)
- Bircher Cottage (Grade II Listing)
(A house, circa 1500)
- Ragleth House (Grade II Listing)
(A house, circa 1800)
- The Ancient House (Grade II Listing)
(A late 16th/early 17th Century house, formerly a posting house called The Sun Inn until the 19th Century)
- The Ragleth Inn (Grade II Listing)
(An early 19th Century public house)
- No's 3 and 4, Brook Cottage (Grade II Listing)
(Two houses, circa 1600)



Architectural and Historic Quality

- 4.7 Several buildings in Little Stretton are of timber frame construction and are considered to be one of the village's main assets. (The Manor House, All Saints Church, the Ancient House etc.)

Street Scene

- 4.8 The disposition of buildings around the 2 road junctions in the village creates a certain spatial quality and forms distinct townscape groups. To the west of the village the two farms and their outbuildings have a value as a group and add to the village's character. There appear to be no "anchor" buildings with which Little Stretton is immediately identified, although there are several major townscape buildings that contribute a great deal to the village as a whole.

Key Buildings

- 4.9 **All Saints Church** is a most attractive building that was provided by Alice Elizabeth Gibbon as a chapel of ease and arrived, as a kit, from a Manchester prefabricated building supplier in 1903. It has "black and white" painted softwood close-studded timber framing, painted rendered infill panels on a red brick plinth and painted timber arched windows with intersecting tracery. The thatched roof, which was a later improvement provided by Derwent Wood, has a projecting timber bellcote with a single spire. There is wooden panelling inside, open bench seats and a very fine late 20th Century altar cloth.
- 4.10 **The Manor House** is a 15th Century farmhouse that is now a house. The 2-storey building has a painted timber frame with painted rendered infill panels on a rubble plinth, brick additions and plain-tile roofs. It has an elongated H-shape, which consists of a long main range with cross wings at each end. The west front is a long restored range of close-studded framing with three 3-light casements flanking a central 2-light casement over an 18th Century panelled pilastered doorcase with a moulded pediment. The advanced gabled bays at each end have restored close studding, jettied tie beams and a single 3-light casement at each storey. The right return side has a gable-end rebuilt in brick and is partly covered by the adjoining Courtyard Cottage, while the left return side has a projecting stone chimney with a tall brick stack.
- 4.11 **Courtyard Cottage** is a 17th Century house that was restored in the 20th Century. It is a single storey plus attic building of painted timber frame construction with painted rendered and unpainted brick infill panels on a rubble plinth, a thatched roof and a projecting rubble stone and brick end stack.

Rectangular in plan, it has 2 framed bays with a gable-end to the street. The south front has square-panelled timber framing at attic level underbuilt with brick. The boarded front door to the left has a thatched canopy and there are two 2-light casements to the right with segmental-arched heads. The west gable end has a gable truss of a straight tie beam, a collar with twin raking struts over and 2 20th Century casements at both storeys.

- 4.12 **The Ancient House** is a late 16th/early 17th Century house, which was formerly a posting house called The Sun Inn until the 19th Century. It is of painted timber frame construction with painted brick infill panels, painted stone rubble and a plain-tile roof with a brick ridge stack. A rectangular 2-storey building, it has four framed bays parallel to the street. The street front has square-panelled timber framing three panels high with an extra panel for probable raised eaves to the main three bays while the lower extension bay to the left remains three panels high. It has various wood casements, a projecting entrance porch and a stone rubble left return gable.



Materials

- 4.13 Black timber framework with whitewashed or brick infill form the dominant traditional building material and the widespread use of whitewash in the village complements its use.

Natural Features

- 4.14 Similar to nearby Church Stretton, the village has a wealth of mature trees and these, with other landscaping features such as the generally well maintained gardens and open spaces, are one of the features of Little Stretton. The location and size of several specimen trees within the village also adds to its scenic quality.

5.0 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

- 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 Monuments Records
- A History of the County of Shropshire: Volume 10: Munslow Hundred (part), The Liberty and Borough of Wenlock (1998), pp. 72-120