

BRIDGNORTH: INNAGE GARDENS CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

The Innage Gardens Conservation Area was designated on 26th. October 1994.

ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION

An Article 4 Direction was made for the **Innage Gardens Conservation Area** on the 21st August 2000 in order to prevent the erosion of the area's distinct characteristics through the application of inappropriate materials and detailing.

The Direction means that planning permission is now required for the alteration addition, removal or replacement of the following features of domestic dwellings, when fronting a highway, waterway or open space within the **Innage Gardens Conservation Area**: -

- Windows (including roof lights and dormers)
- External doors
- Gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure
- Roofs
- Hard standing
- Porch
- Chimneys (whether or not the development fronts a highway, waterway or open space)

LOCATION

The Conservation Area is situated approximately 90 metres north west of the main Bridgnorth Conservation Area and comprises of Innage Gardens, Flats 1-28 Andrew Evans House (Innage Lane), Edward Terrace (3-15 Innage Lane) and Alexandra Terrace (17-29, Innage Lane).

HISTORY



Very little development occurred north of Bridgnorth's old town walls at Northgate until the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The oldest extant building in the Innage Gardens Conservation Area is the imposing Andrew Evans House. Formerly known as Innage House it was originally built by Bridgnorth Workhouse and Poor Law Union as a facility for the poor in 1848, on Innage Lane just outside the town boundary. The workhouse was originally constructed on a U-shaped plan with separate male and female

wings on each side, an administration block at the centre and a dining hall, probably to the centre rear. A map of 1901 shows a Hospital (Infectious Diseases) block had been added by then to the north of the workhouse with an Infirmary building to the east of the site. The workhouse became a Public Assistance Institution at some time after 1930 and, subsequently, a residential home for the elderly known as Innage House. In more recent times the property has been converted to residential use comprising of twenty-eight Housing Association flats.

The date stones on Edward Terrace (3-15 Innage Lane) and Alexandra Terrace (17-29 Innage Lane) proclaim that they were constructed in 1902. The Terraces were undoubtedly named in commemoration of the Coronation of King Edward VII and his Consort, Queen Alexandra in 1901. Situated on the southern side of Innage Lane, opposite the old workhouse building, they form two terraces of typical urban Edwardian houses set out in two mirror imaged rows.



W. H. Foster, owner of the Apley Estate, had the Innage Gardens complex built around 1913 as rented houses. Clustered around three sides of a communal "village green", the Innage Gardens group are virtually hidden from view of passers-by on the busy Innage Lane. They still remain in the ownership of the Apley Estate to-day. The construction of the Endowed School and Bridgnorth Hospital extended Bridgnorth outwards. However, it was only the spread of extensive housing

developments of the pre and post Second World War periods that the Innage Gardens Conservation Area finally became absorbed into the town.

A small example of a post war infill housing development is evident in Innage Gardens. Numbers 13 to 15 Innage Gardens are a trio of late 1940's detached houses. Fronting a narrow footpath to the north-east of the green they are partially hidden from view, positioned as they are to the rear of Alexandra Terrace and end-on to the Innage Gardens access road. Travel west of the Conservation Area and away from the town, however, and the post war expansion in housing development becomes more evident.



PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT

The Innage Gardens Conservation Area is made up of three separate planned developments. The former workhouse, Andrew Evans House, set back slightly from Innage Lane, was designed as a large formidable institutional building and has a sizeable enclosed formal fore garden. Edward and Alexandra Terraces on the opposite of Innage Lane to the workhouse building are two terraces of small houses built as a single composition. They lie behind shallow front gardens bounded on the highway by cultivated clipped hedges. Just off Innage Lane to the south is Innage Gardens, a purposely planned group of semi-detached cottages positioned on three sides of a contrived central green. The cottages are positioned gable end on to a narrow access road running around the green. This gives the cottages an inward looking appearance and partially shields them from public view. The detached post war houses to the north-east corner of Innage Gardens are the only example of a modern infill development within the Conservation Area.

BUILDINGS



The special character of the Conservation Area is strongly influenced by the houses located within its boundary. Despite the fact that they were all conceived within seventy years or so of each other the housing developments vary greatly in size, type and style. The former workhouse now known as Andrew Evans House is a formidable and imposing edifice of a large, early to mid Victorian public building. The architecture is of the Gothic Revival style that typifies the period; randomly borrowing elements of Greek, Romanesque, Tudor, Elizabethan and Italianate architectural styles. The stone hood drip mouldings above the workhouse's entrances are reminiscent of a Tudor influence, while the red brickwork, heavy moulded stone dressed and mullioned window and door openings have been borrowed from Elizabethan architecture. The design of the moulded stone dressed, central front gable on the other hand is very reminiscent of the classical Italianate style. All of these different architectural features

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were strongly influenced by the 19th century chivalric writings of such renowned luminaries as Sir Walter Scott, Alfred Lord Tennyson and Thomas Love Peacock. The quality of the workmanship is very high and sets Andrew Evans House above the usual Victorian institutional building. With the exception of a number of rear additions, the ubiquitous PVCu replacement windows and guttering to the side and rear elevations, the building's original features, notably its front façade, remains largely intact.

Edward and Alexandra Terraces are small utilitarian Edwardian houses that give greater impact by being composed of two identical halves of a single composition. The majority of the dwellings are of two storeys the exceptions being the centrally positioned, gabled properties, which have an additional faux timber framed third storey. The window and door details of these gabled houses distinguish them from their more simple neighbours, making them the central focal point of the terraces. Both terraces are largely intact, retaining much of the period architectural details thus preserving coherence of its original design. As a result the terraces retain their distinctive character, which many contemporary terraces have lost through ill conceived and inappropriate “modifications”.



The J. Leonard Williams designed Innage Gardens cottages of 1913 are an extremely good example of the Arts and Craft architecture so indicative of model villages of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The architectural styles are evocative of the eminent architects of the day, such as M. H. Ballie Scott, Richard Norman Shaw, Philip Webb, William Lethaby and Edwin Lutyens. The design, materials and workmanship are of extremely high quality. The red brickwork, oak beams, high gables, hanging tiles

and leaded windows are typical of traditional cottage architecture that epitomises the model housing concept of the period. The grouping around a large communal garden is equally typical of the Arts and Crafts Movement philosophy. Attractive housing combining the concept of good sanitary provision and gardens where fresh produce can be grown is evocative of the healthy lifestyle vision of the period. The Innage Gardens group, whilst retaining the original features that contribute to their important character are looking a little tired and in need of some prudent maintenance work to ensure their future survival.

The infill development of three detached houses tucked away in the north-east corner of Innage Gardens is typical of the post war need for utilitarian, albeit bland looking, dwellings. Only time will bear testimony to their architectural merits.



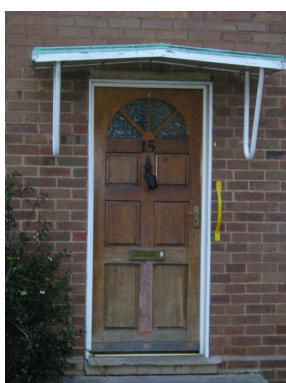
MATERIALS

In all of the buildings, except the 1940's infill ones, bricks have been used with contrasting materials to produce striking effects. The front elevation of Andrew Evans House has striking blue coloured bricks, which contrast in colour and texture with the pale limestone dressings of the gables, string courses, and door and window openings. The side and rear elevations on the other hand are of rather drab brown brickwork.



Edward and Alexandra Terraces are built of standard mass produced red brick, relieved by blue brick string courses, timber framed, pebble-dash panelled gables and ground floor pent roofed canopies. Polychrome brick work diamonds surround plain incised date and name stones adding further relief to the centre of the otherwise repetitive brickwork façade terraced houses.

The skilful employment of traditional materials on the Innage Gardens Cottages produces a rather romantic and picturesque effect. Low sweeping mansard roofs, high gables and small dormers are adorned with rustic clay roof and hanging tiles, red brickwork, high chimney stacks with moulded brickwork oversailing courses, and oak framed window openings and door surrounds are all major elements of the character of the cottages. Machine-made clay tiles on Edward and Alexandra Terraces are no less attractive and all contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. The replacement of any of these components with non-traditional materials would adversely affect the character of the Conservation Area.



The buff coloured plain brickwork, timber bargeboards, non-traditional door styles, copper canopies and replacement PVCu windows and rainwater goods of the later infill houses are less characteristic of the Conservation Area's earlier housing developments.

BOUNDARIES

The boundary treatment of Andrew Evans House is of low brick walls facing directly on to public footpaths and supplemented by traditional cast iron railings to form internal divisions. Front boundaries elsewhere in the Conservation Area are of clipped hedging with few if any dividing fences.



ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS

Although the original detailing of the buildings are very varied their survival makes a vital contribution to the appearance and special interest of the Conservation Area and is in character with the buildings.



As befits an institutional building of the Victorian period, Andrew Evans House has a very formal architectural treatment. A dominant central feature is a double storey height bay window with moulded stone-coped “Dutch” gable. End gables with moulded stone copings and kneelers, stone dressed porches with “Tudor”-arched doorways, chamfered stone mullioned and transomed windows linked by stone cill courses also typify the architectural style of the period. Cast iron railings dividing the gardens add to the workhouse’s grandiose and opulently designed facade.



The Edwardian terraces in Innage Lane are of a basic domestic housing design typical of the late Victorian/early Edwardian period. However, the houses are enlivened by simple but attractive details included “timber-framed gables, canted bay windows, half glazed doors, moulded brickwork chimneys with castellated buff clay pots, timber mullioned and transomed casement window frames, blue brick arched lintols and chamfered stone cills. This attention to detail gives the Conservation Area, and the houses within it, a strong period character.

The cottages of Innage Gardens are rather naïve in appearance. They look rather traditional in design but in fact they have been carefully contrived. Traditional details such as oak framing, herringbone brickwork panels, hanging clay tiles, large oversailing brickwork chimneys, oak doors and mullioned leaded light casements are much more reminiscent of 16th and 17th vernacular architecture more common to the southern counties of England than Shropshire. The quality of materials and detailing is excellent but the end result is unmistakably early 20th century Arts and Craft Movement.



THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

Despite the fact that the Innage Gardens Conservation Area is relatively small in area it does not have a single unified character but consists of three very distinct parts. Buildings are the predominant element of all three. All are the result of very carefully considered, albeit unrelated compositions rather than gradual development.

Edward and Alexandra Terraces and Andrew Evans House are very much part of the Innage Lane streetscape yet they are very different. The latter, a former workhouse dominating the northern side of the highway, epitomises the grandiose institutional architecture of the Victorian era, while the modest terraces with their small foregardens are typical examples of the early 20th century, Edwardian, urban housing developments. Although similar housing can be found in many towns and cities it is the completeness of these terraces with their original details as well as hedges in tact that make them so rare and distinctive.

Innage Gardens, on the other hand, is more inward-looking and secluded from the street, giving a private rather than public atmosphere. It has a rural rather than town feel about it and is more 'country estate' than 'urban development'. The central "village" green and the hedging to front and rear gardens are more characteristic of an estate village to a large country house. The fact that the cottages have remained in continuous ownership by the estate that built them not only adds to their historic value but has effectively played an important part in preserving their original appearance. This has also prevented piecemeal alterations to individual dwellings that might have otherwise occurred had they been owner-occupied.

BRIDGNORTH: INNAGE GARDENS CONSERVATION AREA PLAN

