

BURWARTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Burwarton Conservation Area was designated on 9th. March 1981

LOCATION

The small village of Burwarton lies 9 miles south west of Bridgnorth (10 miles north east of Ludlow) and is wholly within the Conservation Area boundary. Lying roughly on a north-south axis astride the B4634 Bridgnorth to Ludlow Road, this striking estate village is dominated by the splendid Burwarton Hall Park on high ground to the west of side of the road with open farmland sloping away to the east. The Conservation Area's northern boundary is crossed by the B4634 approximately 70 metres north of Burwarton Park's North Lodge. It then turns westward behind the Lodge and along the northern side of the Park's road, in one direction, and south along the eastern edge of the B4634 road to the Old School House in the other direction. To the west of the Lodge the boundary turns south to the western edge of the Park before re-emerging again back at the B4634 at a spot close to the Park's main gates and the South Lodge. Here it crosses over the road and, on reaching the highway's eastern edge, sets off immediately south for a short distance. 70 metres south of the "new" Church of St. Laurence, now a private dwelling called "*Sunset Clear*", the border turns sharply east behind the Burwarton Farm House complex before turning north again. The boundary then runs north to the rear of the hamlet, running east of 16 Burwarton and Oak Tree Lane. On reaching Oak Tree Cottage it turns at right angles in a westerly direction along the northern boundary of the Old School House, terminating at the roadside and thus completing its encirclement of the whole village.



HISTORY

Burwarton has a long, albeit fairly uneventful, history. The entry in the Domesday Book refers to the settlement as being named '*Burertone*'; the word probably means '*Burweard's farm or homestead*'. The first mention of Burwarton appeared in records dated 1138 when a grant of land was made to Buildwas Abbey. At that time Burwarton was under the control of the de Girros family of Holgate Castle. By 1207, however, the Manor of Burwarton had passed from the control of Castle Holgate to the direct rule of the de Mortimers. At the demise of Isobel de Mortimer the Lordship of the Manor of Burwarton was passed down over the centuries through a number of families, namely the Hoptons, Corbetts, Wallops and Hollands, until Elizabeth Holland's daughter, Harriet, married Gustavus Hamilton who was later to become the 6th Viscount Boyne. Their son, the 7th Viscount, married Emma Russell and the name Russell was added to that of the Hamiltons and so the Hamilton-Russell lineage was created.

It was in the 19th century, that Burwarton became the estate village of the Viscounts Boyne. Gustavus Michael Stucley Hamilton-Russell, 11th Viscount Boyne currently occupies the family seat of Burwarton Hall, built by Anthony Salvin in the *Italianate* style 1835-9. It is from the mid to late nineteenth century that the majority of the significant buildings in Burwarton date.

LANDSCAPE



Burwarton village is a small hamlet situated in an attractive rural setting at the foot of the Brown Clee Hill beside the main B4634 Bridgnorth to Ludlow road. As the B4634 road rises up to enter the Burwarton Conservation Area, either from the direction of Bridgnorth or Ludlow, hedgerows & mature trees line the main road closing the views to the east and west. It is only on entering the conservation area and village proper, however, that these closed vistas suddenly open up with impressive park land on one side and open, gently sloping farm land on the other. On either side of the road the landscape is liberally sprinkled with venerable oaks and chestnut trees bounded by wrought iron estate fencing, open railed, timber field fences or low hedges.

The parkland of Burwarton Hall, nestling at the foot of Brown Clee Hill, slopes gently down towards the B4634, the mature trees on the skyline closing the view to the west. On the opposite side of the road the rolling farmland slopes away into the distance, the patchwork of fields bounded by ancient hedges and punctuated by mature trees standing sentinel over the landscape. A few isolated farmsteads are barely evident, nestling in



the folds of undulating fields. Sheep and cattle graze both the parkland and the arable fields. On entering the Conservation Area roadside hedgerows give way predominately to wrought iron estate fencing creating a sense of openness and space. In the village proper, these are supplemented with neatly clipped hedges or walls of grey local stone to form property boundaries.



Travelling south towards Ludlow the main road rises gently before turning sharply to meet the Conservation Area boundary adjacent to the North Lodge of Burwarton Hall. Here, the vista is opened up to expose a landscape that is one of genteel, tree-encrusted Parkland slopes on the west side of the main road, and undulating farmland sloping gently eastwards. The views are of magnificent scenes of trees and hedgerow bounded fields being laid out like a patchwork quilt for

as far as the eye can see. The trees of the Parkland, grouped in solitary isolation at first, become more densely planted further away from the main road, becoming thick, lush green woodland, closing off the view to the west. Both the parkland and fields support grazing cattle and sheep thus epitomising a sense of what one might consider being the quintessential English rural idyll. Here the landscape is contrived to form an excellent example of man's intervention living in harmonious accord with nature.



As it wanders southward the main road meanders gently through a village of predominately 19th century, substantial stone built, detached houses fronting, but set back from, the main road. The historic nucleus was probably centred on the old Norman church of St. Laurence, now ruinous. Walk up the farm track, pass the 'New Houses' and on in to the Burwarton Farm complex and you enter into a scene reminiscent of a Constable—esque landscape. A half-timbered and brick panelled worker's cottage stands beside the farm road immediately before it becomes washed by the Moor Brook, babbling across a dip in the concrete roadway, forming a shallow ford. Insert a haywain and the picture would be

perfect.

Returning back to the B4634 and reality, the road shies away from 'New Houses' towards the Boyne Arms where it veers away sharply in a southerly direction passing the South Lodge to Burwarton Hall before rising up slightly towards Ludlow and closing the view in that direction. The roadside here is bounded by high hedges and mature trees, which close off the views to the west and east and form a tunnel of arching upper branches. The most prominent natural feature of Burwarton is its trees, which abound.



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BUILDINGS

With the exception of one or two buildings, such as the Georgian Grade II Listed Boyne Arms, much of the extant architecture abutting the B4364 is in fact late 19th century. The Boyne Arms, circa 1840 sits beside the main road on a tight bend so that it dominates the scene for travelers entering or leaving the village. Stone built dwellings and farm buildings stand back from the side of the main road, whereas the sprinkling of red brick Victorian buildings are relegated to lanes leading off the main road.

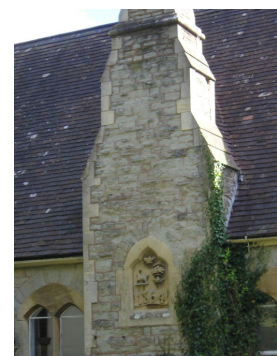


The scene is one of a well-ordered and well-maintained model estate village that has barely changed for centuries. A clutch of late nineteenth century, large semi detached, estate workers' houses of stone construction with red brickwork dressings are situated to the east side of Oak Tree Lane just across the green playing field and running parallel to the B4634. Half a dozen modern semi-detached Housing Association bungalows occupy the opposite side, backing on to the grassed play area,



their pitched roofs barely discernable to the passing observer scurrying along the main road. Oak Tree Cottage, its date stone bearing the Boyne monogram surmounted by a Viscount's coronet and inscribed 1929, stands at the end of the lane closing it off to the north, forming a cul de sac. The workers' houses creep out of Oak Tree Lane onto the Aston Botterell road, Numbers 1 & 2 and 3 to 5, Burwarton their date stones conveniently indicating a construction date of 1879, stand on both corners of Oak Tree Lane where it adjoins the Aston Botterell road. On the opposite, southern, side of the road stand a pair of red brick built, semi detached houses of 1947. The impressive stone built detached Estate Office occupies a large plot on the corner of the main road and the minor lane that leads to Aston Botterell.

A former 19th century school building, of coursed dressed stone with ashlar corners and dressings, occupies a sizable plot abutting the playing field fronting the road immediately to the north of the Estate Office. This large edifice to the fledgling free educational system of the Victorian era has since converted to the guesthouse *Peace Haven Centre*. Embedded in to the external face of its impressive stone chimneystack is a date stone inscribed with the year 1864.



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The Laurels (Burwarton Estate office), also from the Victorian era, dominates a large corner beside the B4634, at its junction with the Aston Botterell road, and is also of stone construction. Its roof, terminating in dressed stone verges on kneelers, is of



natural slate and punctuated by half gables, also of stone verges on kneelers and natural slate coverings. Ashlar stone dressings form the cills, jambs and heads of window and door openings, contrasting with the rough textured, random coursed, dressed dhu stone finish of the external walls. The windows here are chiefly soft wood vertical sashes, common to many dwellings of the Victorian period.

A little to the south of the Burwarton Estate Office on the B4364, where it bends sharply, the terrace of four 1960's "New Houses" close the view to the south west. An unadopted estate road runs at right angles to the main road before becoming the farm road leading to the Burwarton Farm complex several hundred metres further on. The "New Houses" are of dark brown face brickwork construction at ground floor level. Their upper storey has been coated with a cream coloured paint finish, which is now peeling off exposing the original light coloured silicate brickwork beneath. Whereas the majority of Burwarton's diverse architecture blends in harmoniously with its surroundings the "New Houses", designed and constructed more out of utilitarian necessity rather than a result of good taste, are in total architectural disharmony with their neighbours.



Passing the "New Houses" and on up the farm track is the farmyard proper. To the right of the track lies the substantial dhustone Burwarton Farmhouse reputed to contain a fifteenth century core that is reckoned by some to be that of the original Burwarton Manor House. Here, massive ashlar dhustone blocks share the same wall space with smaller dressed stonework blocks intermingled with stone and brickwork rubble.

To its southern elevation is an unusual stair tower incorporating an entrance porch.

Leaving the farm track and walking beside the Moor Brook to the northern edge of Burwarton Farm House, a dirt track leads to the remains of the Grade II Listed derelict Norman church of St Laurence, the old church.



The now ruinous "old" church is hidden from view behind trees to the north and west with Burwarton Farm House on its eastern flank. The 19th century "new" Church of St. Laurence that replaced the older church stands on its southern side. Only the east and west walls of the

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diminutive old church, abandoned since 1877, remain standing, the north and south elevations having long since collapsed. However, its graveyard is still being maintained and bears witness to the last resting place of the Boyne dynasty



The Moor Brook, which trundles in a west to east direction, separates the derelict Norman church from the 19th century, Grade C Listed, “new” Church of St. Laurence. This tree lined Brook runs amiably between the old and new churches before passing under a delightful little stone bridge and spewing across the farm road before disappearing into the meadow beyond. Built by Salvin in 1876, the new church stands on a large

plot, partly obscured from the B4634 by mature trees and rhododendrons. It sits close to the Conservation Area’s southern boundary and, having been declared redundant in 1972, is now a house.

Returning once more to the Burwarton farmstead proper the observer will be aware of a number of farm buildings and dwellings that, despite being constructed from a variety of traditional materials, are of similar architectural styles. Immediately above where the Moor Brook fords the farm track is the delightfully distinctive workers cottage, No. 6, Burwarton.



Situated in a central position within the farmstead, it is of two-storey, timber-framed construction with red brick infill panels, sitting in part upon a stonework plinth.



Despite the fact that it is surrounded by outbuildings and dwellings that are predominately stone built, it dominates the farmyard. Numbers 8 and 10 Burwarton now form just two residential properties but were formerly a range of three separate units, the central one apparently having previously been a shop. These are reputed to be the oldest workers’ cottages in the village. The central section is of stone construction with the two outer cross wings being faced in black timbering with white colour washed infill panels. Behind this range is number 7, Burwarton, originally a worker’s cottage of stone construction. The 1678 date stone inserted into its eastern gable is clearly spurious, the house undoubtedly being of an early 1800’s construction. A later red brick addition has been tacked on to the rear of the original stone dwelling at some time in its history.



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The South Lodge to Burwarton Park is situated along the B4634 on the opposite side of the main road to the former new Church of St. Laurence. Tucked discreetly to one side of the gated south entrance to the Park, it is a single storey gate lodge, finished in a cream colour washed, block scribed stucco with rounded openings. Built by Anthony Salvin, circa 1839, in the Italianate² style, it has a natural slate roof and overhanging gable ends. Classical round-headed timber sashes fill the

gable window openings. Elsewhere the external walls are pierced by narrow rounded and pilastered openings into which are fitted narrow rectangular sashes to form tripartite lancet windows.

The former Dower House to the Burwarton Hall, and one time Rectory, is now a private dwelling. Shielded from public gaze by mature trees, it stands off from the highway behind a sweeping driveway. Situated beside the main road as it passes the Boyne Arms towards Ludlow, this impressive residence, stands in its own well manicured grounds. It was built in the "Tudor" style, circa 1853, and is of coursed stonework with ashlar mullions, window and door surrounds and quoins. Tall, slender chimneys of moulded, brickwork stand in groups above a plain tiled, stone coped, gabled and dormered roof.



MATERIALS

Stone



Dolerite is an igneous rock, known locally as **dhu stone**, that occurs in sills or layers, in the upland areas of Titterstone Clee and Brown Clee Hill. Dhu stone is one of many locally quarried stones that have been extensively used for building purposes and it is one that predominately features in the architecture of Burwarton. It occurs as ashlar, dressed and random rubble, depending upon the purpose and status of the buildings concerned. Dhu Stone (dhu being a Celtic word meaning 'black') is still quarried today and is mainly used as crushed road

stone. It occurs in the fabric of Burwarton Farm House both as rubble stone walling and large ashlar blocks. In many Burwarton properties it appears as coursed dressed stone, as in the cases of prominent buildings, such as the Burwarton Estate office and the Old School, for example. Random or coursed stone rubble



appears in buildings of a more utilitarian nature, such as some workers' cottages, agricultural buildings and so on. In many cases the where random rubble has been used as the construction material for external walls, ashlar stone blocks or red brickwork has been employed to form corners and door and window surrounds. Window cills on dwellings throughout the area are chiefly of stone or stucco with the exception of those on cottages in Oak Tree Lane, the New Houses and the pair of 1947 dwellings fronting the Aston Botterell road.



Other varieties of stone to be found in Burwarton include imported masonry such as Purbeck marble and other non-local stone in the new Church of St. Laurence. However, locally quarried sandstones, limestones, etc., predominate. In contrast to the mostly dark coloured dhu stone is the attractive pink hued, ashlar stone gate piers and serpentine wall of the south entrance to Burwarton Park. The coped serpentine wall is mainly of a light buff colour with occasional traces of pink in its grain. The substantially constructed, stone blocked piers, however, have a distinctively pink-coloured appearance and support a rather fine set of 19th century cast iron entrance gates.

Brickwork



Hand made red, clay-fired brickwork features regularly in the Conservation Area's architecture, initially as an inclusion in random rubble structures or as dressings to openings and corners of stone buildings of the middle to late 19th century. The only example of brick noggin being in use is in the timber framed No. 6 Burwarton, a token to the Aesthetic Movement situated amongst a small nucleus of traditional dwellings and farm buildings located around the Burwarton farmstead. By the 20th century solid brickwork was more commonly being used as a construction medium. The workers' cottages in Oak Tree Lane are a product too of the Arts and Crafts Movement, having large brick moulded chimney stacks of corbelled and over-sailing brick courses. The transition from traditional stone built dwellings to the solid brickwork constructions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries gives way to cavity wall construction after the Second World War. Finally, in the late 50's and early 60's, manufacture turned to machine made concrete bricks of multi colouring and textures as in the case of the New Houses and the recently constructed Housing Association bungalows.



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Lintols over openings are usually rounded or arched where stone or brick is employed, changing to straight brick or concrete types from the mid 20th to the start of the 21st century. Window cills of moulded clay creasing tiles occur in Oak Tree Lane whilst the pair of 1947 cottages fronting the Aston



Botterell road is of canted clay bricks. Machine made brickwork form the cill details in the modern housing.

Roofing



Gabled roofs, of pitches around 50° tend to be the norm in the Burwarton Conservation Area, with many having dormers or half dormers of similar construction. One exception is the hip roofed Boyne Arms Inn of around 1840. Plain, hand made, clay tiles cover the earlier 19th century buildings before giving way to machine made clay and concrete tiles in the 20th century. The natural slate roofed Estate Office, Old School and



Boyne Arms are the exceptions. Timber bargeboards, where they appear, tend to be narrow and plain and probably occur as frequently as their plain cement pointed counterparts. The gabled roof theme has been perpetuated in the architectural design of the modern bungalows. The only example of decorative roof tiles being employed is on the roof of the North Lodge of Burwarton Park where alternate bands of plain and scalloped clay tiles have been used as a decorative feature.



Windows



Traditional frames of the timber sliding sash type or side hung casements in softwood or iron are the main window styles in use throughout the conservation area. The few exceptions being the centre pivots of the New Houses and the PVCu double glazed units fitted to the modern bungalows. The majority of the pre 20th century frames are set back from the outer surface of external walls. In the case of the post World War II stock, window frames

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tend to terminate flush with the surface of the outer walls. Earlier frames are round or arch headed whereas by the end of the 19th and start of the 20th centuries the arches flatten out and are prone to be square headed frames with oak or straight brickwork lintols supporting imposed loads above the openings.

Boundaries

The vast majority of dwellings in the Burwarton Conservation Area are situated in their own plots with, at the very least, front and rear gardens. Boundary delineation is, therefore, a major feature of the area. Various traditional methods have been applied to enclosed land and these define ownership of land within the Conservation Area. They can be categorised as follows:

- a. metal estate fencing
- b. timber field fencing
- c. masonry walling
- d. hedging



Traditional wrought iron estate and parkland fencing has been largely employed for park and farmland enclosure, although there exists within the village a number of examples where this type of fencing has been extended to encompass domestic usage, especially in the case of estate owned property. This is apparent immediately on entry to the Conservation Area where it has been extensively used to contain park and farmland, particularly where livestock range.



Ornamental metal fencing exists in some instances to identify boundaries; most notably those that bound the Old School and the playing field. In other places cast ornamental rails have been used to adorn the tops of masonry walls. Examples of this can be seen on the stone walling to the south and north of South Lodge. Brickwork as a medium for boundary walling is fairly rare although it does appear, probably as a repair, to a section of stone wall, between the Boyne Arms and South Lodge. However, it is hardly discernable thanks to a generous covering of vegetation.



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Timber fencing and gates are sparsely featured in Burwarton except for a short section of field fencing close to the “*New Houses*”, for bridle path gates leading to the Park and a footpath gate that follows the north bank of the Moor Brook behind the Dower House en route for St. Laurence Old Church. There appears to be very little usage of timber fencing in domestic situations.



Masonry, especially natural stonewalling, occurs frequently in the nucleus of the village in the vicinity of the Boyne Arms and Burwarton Park’s South Lodge. In most cases it takes the form of either random or coursed dressed stone, usually of the local dhu stone although examples of random rubble can be found. The fine ashlar stone blocks of the curved wall and monolithic, moulded stone piers abutting the South gateway to Burwarton Park are unique within the confines of the Conservation Area.



Field boundary hedgerows, in contrast to the open estate fencing of the parklands to the west, close the views to the east as the main road enters the Conservation Area. On entering the village proper, however the hedgerows abutting the roadsides become lower and well managed as they enclose the farmland beyond. It is these hedgerows, although contrived, that contribute greatly to the hamlet’s rural ambiance, enclosing the patchwork of fields around the settlement and containing livestock. In rare cases manicured, clipped hedging forms domestic plot boundaries but these are few and far between, traditional materials such as stonewalling and metal estate fencing being the norm hereabouts.

ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS



The predominant architectural style in Burwarton is 19th century neo classicism which manifests itself in the design of the Gothick styled Old School, the psuedo Tudor styled Dower House and the Italianate South Lodge, for example. The style has also influenced chimney, window and roof designs of many of the properties

constructed in the 19th century right up to up the period leading to World War I. The Aesthetic Movement has clearly influenced the designs for the workers’ cottages in Oak Tree Lane and 6 Burwarton. The Arts and Crafts style can be seen in the traditional window styling, large brickwork chimneys decorated with over sailing,



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corbelled bands together with the liberal use of gabled roof and dormer designs. The use of traditional styles together with the inclusion of vernacular materials such as local brick, stone and half timbering, or a combination of all these materials, is also indicative of this period. The employment of these styles and materials in property design within the village envelope is particularly evident in the Oak Tree Lane and the Burwarton farmstead areas. Bargeboards, where they appear are usually plain and fairly wide in style and coloured.

THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA



This Estate Village of the Viscounts Boyne at Burwarton has its own very distinctive character, which gives it a strong sense of purpose. This special character is a result of a combination of many factors including its self-containment, topography, trees, architectural styles, materials, hedgerows, walls and fences. The over-riding quality, however, comes from the hamlet's planned layout together with the materials used in the construction of its buildings. Plain roof tiles, large

chimney stacks, gabled roof and dormers, stone and red brick are all materials together with the surrounding rural countryside of tree planted parkland, hedgerow enclosed farmland and a self containment that epitomises the quintessential *olde* English country village. The feel is deceptive, however, because Burwarton is a place of purpose. It is, in essence, the hub of a rural farming community whose main function was, and still is to a large extent, to support the working purposes of the Burwarton Estate to which it owes its existence. There are few visible commercial ventures in Burwarton apart from a public house, guesthouse and farming and stock raising activities. Amenities are few, the hamlet having no shop, garage, village hall or other amenities that most modern communities depend upon. This lack of commercialism and over development is an endearing factor to the casual observer.

PATTERN OF DEVELOPMENT

Burwarton developed along two axes, east west where the houses of the original settlement generally aligned gable end to the main road and south-north where the houses front the roadside. The pattern of development, however, covers several definite phases. The earliest and, possibly the original nucleus, sits in close proximity to the ruined Norman church and the Burwarton Farm House. Apart from the Norman architecture of the ruined church, it is here that can be found the vestiges of what possibly could be some of the village's oldest domestic properties. It has been suggested that the Burwarton Farm House has a medieval core and may even have been the original Manor House. The development here appears to be somewhat haphazard, however, and one that has evolved out of necessity rather than having been planned. In contrast to that is the contrived south-north planned and orderly estate village development of the mid 19th century. From the mid 1800's the pattern of development remained relatively static for a period of a hundred years or more. It was not until the second half of the 20th century that further development in the form of a

pair of workers' cottages ensued. These 1947 red brick houses, fronting the Aston Botterell road, were the start of a new era of expansion for the Burwarton Estate and some forty years or so later a further four workers dwellings, the *New Houses* were added to the community, being built gable end to the main road in the vicinity of Burwarton Farm. More recently half a dozen modern Housing Association bungalows have been constructed fronting Oak Tree Lane with their backs to the playing field. Much of the village's development has followed a linear plan with the exception of the Burwarton Farm area, which, as previously stated, has a more haphazard feel about it.

Although some small-scale housing developments have occurred spasmodically over the last 60 years, Burwarton's feet are planted firmly in the 1860's when the bulk of the Estate Village of the Viscounts Boyne was conceived and laid out in its current planned form.

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BURWARTON CONSERVATION AREA PLAN

