

QUATFORD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

The Quatford Conservation Area was designated on 5th January 1981.

LOCATION

Quatford is located approximately two miles south east of the historic town of Bridgnorth on the eastern banks of the River Severn. The village lies on the A442, sandwiched between the River Severn to the west and sandstone cliffs to the east.



The A442 bisects the Conservation Area, running south to north through Quatford. There are three distinct pockets of occupation, the smallest of which is to be found to the south of the Conservation Area where its southern extremity borders Danery Cottage and The Danery public house. To the north towards Danesford the Conservation Area boundary terminates by a terrace of white painted cottages, numbers 1-3.

To the south, towards Kidderminster, properties that are set back from the main road form the southern boundary of the Conservation Area. A metalled access road leaves the A442 at the Danery Cottage and joins the main road again just before the Collegiate Church of St. Mary Magdalene. To the north of the public house, where the minor road terminates at the church and Church Cottage, is a single track that rises up in front of the church, at right angles to the main road and towards Hill House Cottage. The southern and eastern boundaries of the Conservation Area at this point terminate immediately in front of and at the side of the cottage grounds. Both the minor access road and trackway are in a poor state of repair in parts and there are no public footways.

The central pocket of occupation is located around Chantry Lane, just north of the church, where there is a cluster of historic properties as well as 20th century dwellings. A single track, Chantry Lane, runs at right angles to the A442 before petering out amongst the trees of Wyches Wood.

A small distance north of this area, towards Danesford, on the east side of the main road is Chapel Lane and the larger portion of the Conservation Area. Here a mixture of 18th -20th century properties cling to the steep sandstone cliffs on either side of Chapel Lane as it rises steeply eastwards at right angles to the main road. The eastern boundary terminates a short distance along Chapel Lane. The northern boundary of the Conservation Area terminates a few hundred yards past a row of white painted cottages, numbers 1-3, fronting the A442.

LANDSCAPE

The A442 road sits on a sandstone ridge that runs parallel to the River Severn and overlooks the gently rolling landscape of the Severn valley to the west. The landscape to the east of the main road is more dramatic with sandstone cliffs, steeply undulating land and outcrops of sandstone.

Much of the settlement is located on this high ground to the east and in particular along the steep winding Chapel Lane, which passes through chestnut woods in its higher reaches.



The area to the south of the Conservation Area is reached by a narrow spur road descending from the A442, passing Danery Cottage and The Danery Public House and then rising slightly towards the ancient church of St. Mary Magdalene, where it rejoins the main road again. The church stands on a high sandstone crag amongst pine trees, though there is an ancient oak tree beside the church that is a remnant of the Morfe Forest that once covered the area. The A442 is all but closed from view by belts of mature trees between it and the minor road. A single track, at right angles to the main road, is cut into the sandstone between the church and Church Cottage opposite. It then rises sharply alongside the churchyard, peaking just beyond Hill House Cottage on the Conservation Area's eastern fringe. The land to the east of the A442 undulates quite dramatically, rising and falling spectacularly to form little dips between grassy hillocks and sandstone ridges. Belts of mature trees together with the lush grass-covered, hilly landscape close the views to the east and south in this southern tip of the Quatford Conservation Area. The rising lane, with the farmstead beside it, closes the view eastwards from Hill House Cottage. Steeply rising ground, sandstone outcrops and belts of trees lining the lane close views to the north at this point, while the steeply undulating landscape and mature trees close the view southwards. However, a caravan park is clearly discernable on a high prominence to the south west, which mars the view from this eastern edge of the Conservation Area. At its highest peak a bend in the lane obscures the views to the west while further down, towards the A442, the views are obscured by housing.

To the west of the A442 main road the land is lightly developed and mainly grassland as it descends towards the River Severn. Views to the west are closed for much of its length by the hedging and belts of mature trees that line both sides of the main road.

HISTORY

The name of Quatford comes either from the personal name, *Cwatt*, or *cwead* meaning a muddy place.

The Danes began their attacks on the area in 793 and in 865 a large army arrived. In 893 a force of Danes from London set up camp here by the river. The Danes fortified the site in 896 and probably named it with reference to the river crossing at that point. In 910 a bridge at 'Cwatbridge' was mentioned in the records of the Danish Wars. This was probably at Quatford. The village of Danesford, to the north of Quatford, represented the furthest extent of the kingdom of the Danelaw. In 912 Mercian Queen Ethelfreda

constructed a fort, or burg, here as one of ten such constructions built in the Midlands to defend the area from Danish attacks.

The borough of Quatford was listed in the 1086 Domesday survey. Before the Norman invasion Quatford was part of the manor of Eardington, held by Wenlock Abbey. This passed to Roger de Montgomery after 1066. A collegiate church was built here in 1084-86 by Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, as part of his plan to establish a town at Quatford. The college, however, was transferred to the church of St. Mary's in Bridgnorth Castle by the mid 12th century. In the 1086 Domesday survey Eardington was recorded as being the size of five hides, and worth 30 shillings (formerly 40). The description of Eardington manor also referred to a mill, a 'new house' and the borough of Quatford, which was sufficiently diminutive in scale to 'pay nothing'.

The borough passed to Roger de Montgomery's son, Robert de Belesme, upon his death and in 1102 Quatford's inhabitants, castle and church were transferred upstream to a new defensive position, leaving Quatford deserted and its church demoted. The borough's new position became Bridgnorth, and had its first Royal charter granted in 1157. The new castle at Bridgnorth was besieged and captured by Henry I in 1102 and all of Robert de Belesme's land and property was forfeited to the Crown.

BUILDINGS

The original Norman Motte and Bailey castle was located on a steep summit of sandstone above Camp Hill, providing a prime vantage point over the river. Nearby a collegiate church was built by Roger de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, as part of his plans to establish a town at Quatford. The present day A442 now separates the two sites.

Positioned next to a cliff above the River Severn to the west of the Collegiate Church of St. Mary Magdalene, all that survives of the castle today are earthworks, damaged due to the road widening. The 'D' shape Motte stands approximately 9 metres high and the bailey is about 0.5 hectare in area.

The present Collegiate Church of St. Mary Magdalene stands amongst pine trees on a high sandstone outcrop. This was the site of the former Collegiate Church, which was consecrated in 1086 and richly endowed by Roger de Montgomery's second wife, the Countess Adelissa. The present church, which retains evidence of the early Norman Chancel of Roger's church, was remodelled in the 14th century. There is also evidence of a Norman nave and west tower, although Henry Paget and William Higgins rebuilt them in 1714. Robert Griffiths added the south aisle and porch in 1857.



A long flight of brickwork steps and a green metal lift shaft access the front of St Mary Magdalene Church. The later building is predominately of local pink sandstone on a tufa plinth whereas the north elevation and the most ancient elements of the nave and chancel

are almost entirely constructed from tufa. Plain red clay tiles cover the slopes of the pitched roof.

To the south of the church on the opposite side of the track, and sitting atop a sandstone ridge, is Church Cottage, a two-storey residence, probably of 19th century construction with 20th century additions. Its character has been eroded by the painting of its sandstone external walls and the installation of modern PVC-u double glazed casement windows.

Near the top of the track and located on high ground to the south is the 19th century Hill House Cottage, a colour-washed, brick walled, two-storey house under a pitched roof of large slates. Twentieth century softwood casement windows sit flush with the surface of its external walls. A modern glass conservatory sits uncomfortably on its red brick plinth at the gable end nearest the lane.

A modern brick built bungalow stands on the opposite side of the track, south of the cottage and just outside the Conservation Area boundary.



Chantry Lane is a single track rising steeply at right angles from the minor road running parallel to the A442. Perched high on a sandstone crag and peering through mature trees overlooking Chantry Lane is The Watch Tower, an early 19th century embattled folly built of buff stone and red brick. Its castellated turret houses a clock in its west face and its walls are pierced by arrow slits, arched recesses and rustic glazed windows. This Grade II Listed folly stands sentry at the lower end of Chantry Lane.

A short distance higher up the lane is The Cottage, a Grade II Listed 17th-18th

century sandstone and brick two-storey cottage, built against the rock and having its larder quarried into it. A cave gouged out of the sandstone cliff separates The Cottage from The Chantry. This is a seemingly unpretentious, white painted sandstone 18th century Grade II Listed cottage, with a later wing built on at right angles to it. However The Cottage has a 15th century core, including integral piscina from that period, and appears to have been converted from a small, late medieval chantry chapel. Small paned timber windows with top opening lights fill the window openings and terminate flush with the building's outer whitewashed sandstone walls. The front of the property is adorned with a pair of 18th century wrought iron gates, together with a section of adjoining iron fencing of similar age and material. These look a bit out of place, having been moved to the site from another location and reset on the boundary line with the lane. The gates, along with the adjoining iron fencing, have been Grade II Listed in their own right.





Several caves have been formed in the large sandstone crags, which outcrop along the southern edge of Chantry Lane. The purpose of these caves is obscure, but they are reputed to have been created by medieval religious orders for use as monks' cells, another hint to the location's monastic past.

Towards the summit of Chantry Lane, Chantry Cottage, a 1950s concrete rendered and pebble dashed bungalow, sits on high ground on the north side of the lane. Here the metalled Chantry Lane becomes an unmade track serving two properties. The first of these is The Wyches Bungalow, a 20th century bungalow, which sits amongst trees to the south of the track. East of the bungalow the track terminates at The Wyches, a 19th century cottage tucked away behind trees at the very end of the track. The eastern-most extremity of the Conservation Area boundary runs to the rear of The Wyches.

Further down the A442 towards Bridgnorth is Chapel Lane, a steeply rising single-track lane rising at right angles to the main road towards the A458 at Stanmore. No single historic period of construction predominates here. Most of the dwellings in Chapel Lane are constructed on higher sandstone outcrops running parallel to the lane, and in the main their frontages terminate directly on to it. Others cling to the high sandstone cliffs bordering the lane and have steep accesses leading up to them.



Standing back from Chapel Lane, at its junction with the A442 main road, is Greenacres, now known as the Coach House, which is an elegant Regency residence of two storeys plus an attic. This is a Grade II Listed, three bay building with a pedimented central doorcase and a Venetian window above with a lunette in the central plain gable. This imposing and attractive residence contrasts greatly with

neighbouring properties, many of which have had ubiquitous PVC-u double-glazed windows fitted. 20th century infill developments of unsympathetic design and materials occupy a number of plots along Chapel Lane. Colour washed brickwork or sandstone facades, modern plastic or timber casement windows and plain clay or concrete roof tiles predominate throughout the Conservation Area. The three terraced cottages fronting the A442 at Chapel Lane, together with a handful of Victorian properties close to Chantry Lane, have slated pitched roofs.



The A442 main Bridgnorth to Kidderminster road runs along a route cut out of the sandstone between the River Severn to the west and high cliffs to the east. Running parallel with the Severn, the main road bisects the Conservation Area north to south. Land to the west of the A442, which is largely undulating countryside descending towards the River Severn, is lightly developed, having dwellings at intervals alongside the main road. The larger portion of the settlement lies on the sandstone belt to the east side of the A442. Much of the development runs at right angles to the main road on steeply rising ground, built onto the sandstone outcrops. Modern development has been restricted to infill housing and is mainly in the Chapel Lane area, although a number of 20th century

dwelling occur spasmodically in a narrow band running along the western edge of the A442. No shops or other commercial activities are evident within the Quatford Conservation Area.

DEVELOPMENT

Much of the development within the Conservation Area has been spasmodic, occurring to the east of the A442 and in particular around Chapel Lane, in the centre of Quatford. A small number of modern residences are randomly positioned along the west side of the main road towards the River Severn. The historic area to the south around the Danery Cottage and The Danery Public House is largely underdeveloped.

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