

Shirley

Conservation Area Appraisal

5. Landscape Context

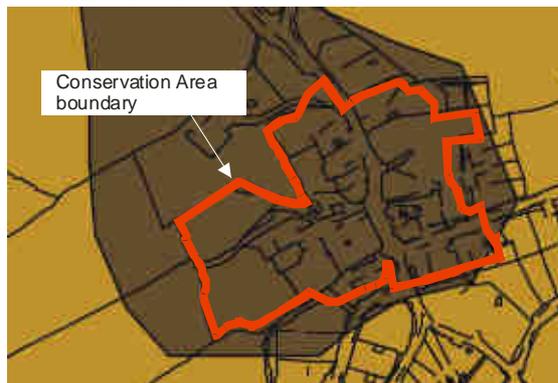


LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

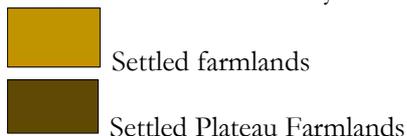
Landscape Character

In 2007 Derbyshire Dales District Council adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) for Landscape Character and Design. As such, within that document it is identified that the Conservation Area and its surroundings fall within the Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands landscape character area. The Conservation Area itself lies almost entirely within the Settled Plateau Farmlands landscape type while the surroundings to the east, west and south lie within the Settled Farmlands landscape type. Further definition of these landscape types can be found in Derbyshire Dales District Councils' 'Landscape Character and Design' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was adopted in July 2007.

Landscape Character Map- Extract from SPD



Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands



Landform is strongly influenced by the underlying geology. In the north and centre, sandstones and shales which form the higher ground, extend into the area between the Shirley and Brailsford brooks. The surrounding lower ground is underlain with mudstones and siltstones. This creates an undulating to gently rolling landscape.

Land-use is predominantly dairying and stock rearing on improved permanent pasture with arable farming of wheat, oats, barley and oil seed rape where local topography and soil conditions are suitable.

The intensively farmed fields have little in the way of ecological value. Patches of wet grassland with rushes do occur where drainage is

impeded and areas of unimproved grassland occupy some of the steeper slopes and provide local floristic interest. In these circumstances terrestrial corridors comprising well-managed field boundary hedgerows with hedgerow trees and a network of water courses with dense riparian trees are particularly valuable.

Occasional marl pits support base rich wetland communities.

Small blocks of woodland, some of it ancient, occupy the steeper slopes where heathland vegetation can be found characterised by bracken within the hedgerows and roadside verges.

Though woodland is quite poorly represented tree cover remains dense with mature boundary and watercourse trees densely scattered throughout. Occasional small belts of woodland and shelterbelts also occur. The trees filter views through the landscape creating a sense of enclosure though more open views across the rolling landform to the south are gained from the higher ground of the Conservation Area

The farmed landscape comprises small to medium sized semi-regular fields enclosed by hedgerows. The pattern remains largely intact though there has been some amalgamation of the fields particularly in areas of arable farming. Many hedgerows are species rich – hawthorn, holly, hazel, blackthorn, dog rose and others – which is a general indication of age and maturity.

Landscape Context (see Figure 10)

Grade II Agricultural Land

Land on the western side of the Conservation Area - and beyond – is some of the finest in the county and is designated as Grade II Agricultural Land.

The best and most versatile agricultural land is a national resource that needs protection for future generations. Development is not permitted on land so designated, except under circumstances detailed within local planning policy (see Section 9).

Protected Trees

The Conservation Area designation provides all trees with a stem girth of 75 mm and above measured 1 metre above ground level with a measure of protection. No felling, lopping or topping of these trees is permitted without providing six weeks notice to the Council.

Public Rights of Way

The rights of way system including footpaths, green lanes and bridleways is a most important means of access to and enjoyment of the countryside and is protected by local planning policy.

Derbyshire Dales District Council records show relatively few public footpaths traversing open fields within the Conservation Area and footpaths are generally located to the west and south of the village (see *Figure 10*).

Topography

Shirley occupies land between 114 metres and 138 metres above ordnance datum (aod). It is in an elevated position relative to Shirley Brook to the west, Brailsford Brook to the east and Marsh Hollow to the south. Ground falls, in undulating fashion from north to south the village being situated at the southern end of a “finger” of land that extends southwards between the valleys of the two brooks from the higher plateau.

The high point of 137.8 metres aod is at Church Lane by Swallow’s Nest Cottage. The low point of 114.1 metres aod is at Mill Lane by the former Wesleyan chapel.

Surroundings and Approaches

The village is set within an agricultural landscape of open fields enclosed by field boundary hedgerows and hedgerow trees. The mixed land-use of pasture and arable farming reflects the high quality of the agricultural soils that prevail. The hedgerows are particular features creating the patchwork field pattern that is so characteristic of the surrounding landscape.



View of the agricultural landscape setting to the south west

Hedgerows continue along the roadsides into the outskirts of the village. Main species include hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna* and *Crataegus laevigata*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and hazel (*Corylus avellana*) with elder (*Sambucus nigra*), beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*).

Mature hedgerow trees are widely scattered throughout. They filter views through the landscape and many are features in their own right.

Other local features include:

- The approach to the village from the north, particularly at the junction of Park Lane with Hall Lane. Here the lanes are sunken between well vegetated embankments with mature specimens of oak (*Quercus* spp.), beech, sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*).



Approach along Hall Lane

- A line of mature trees and individual specimen trees on the western side of Mill Lane – mainly sycamore and ash – protected by a Tree Preservation Order.
- The specimen oak tree in a field immediately to the south west of the Conservation Area



Oak tree in field to the south west

Village Trees

The Conservation Area encompasses an area synonymous with the historical centre of the village, where mature trees are associated with private gardens, the churchyard and the Saracens Head Public House. Many trees make a significant contribution to the attractive character of the Conservation Area. Principal among these are:

- Trees in St Michael's churchyard – yew (*Taxus baccata*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*), cherry (*Prunus* spp.), redwood (*Sequoiadendron giganteum* Wellingtonia) and, most particularly the sycamore that straddles the church wall.



Sycamore tree "straddles" the church wall

- Lime (*Tilia* spp.) and yew trees on the Church Lane frontage south of the Saracens Head pub.



Lime and Yew trees – fronting Thirwell Farm

- Cedar (*Cedrus atlantica glauca*) in the front garden of The Old School.
- Redwood on the Derby Lane frontage close to The Old Rectory.



KEY

-  Grade 2 Agricultural Land
-  Tree Preservation Orders
-  Main Groups and Individual Trees, Hedgerows
-  Footpaths

SHIRLEY
CONSERVATION AREA

Landscape Context

FIG 10

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