



Forest of Dean
— DISTRICT COUNCIL —



Forest of Dean District Council

Supplementary Planning Document

Blaisdon Character

Appraisal Adopted March 13th 2008

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The purpose of the Character Appraisal

The statutory definition of a conservation area is 'an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.' Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for designated conservation areas. This requirement is expanded on in government guidance.

This document is also written to support the wider policies for the historic environment stated in the recently adopted Forest of Dean District Council Local Plan 2005. Character appraisals will ultimately fit with the new Supplementary Planning Guidance for the historic environment.

As Blaisdon has an existing conservation area the additional planning controls over whether certain development needs planning permission in this area already exist, these controls do not alter because a Character Appraisal is produced. However the Character Appraisal will clearly identify the features or aspects of special architectural or historical interest that should be preserved or enhanced when development is proposed. In addition it will consider alterations or additions to the existing boundary.

Best Value Performance Indicators

The percentage of up to date and completed character appraisals is currently a Best Value Performance Indicator; the indicators are used to determine the effectiveness of a local authority. It is therefore important that the Forest of Dean has an increasing number of up to date adopted Character Appraisals.

Target Audience

This document has been written as an aid to determining planning applications and for residents, agencies and people with a general interest in the area. It is hoped that through the analysis of the area the elements that produce its special character will be clearly identified. Once the special character has been established any new development that is permitted can be designed to fit harmoniously in the village.

Process

Blaisdon Conservation Area is not under any significant development pressure as the settlement is classed as being in the 'open countryside', however changes are occurring to the properties through minor alterations and small extensions. Because of its attractive nature, a character appraisal has been written to identify the elements that produce Blaisdon's special character. The assessment process will also include a review of the appropriateness of the existing boundaries and any possible modifications that could be made. On this basis it is proposed to adjust the boundaries to the south of the village to include the Mill on the hope brook and the Leats in the immediate area.

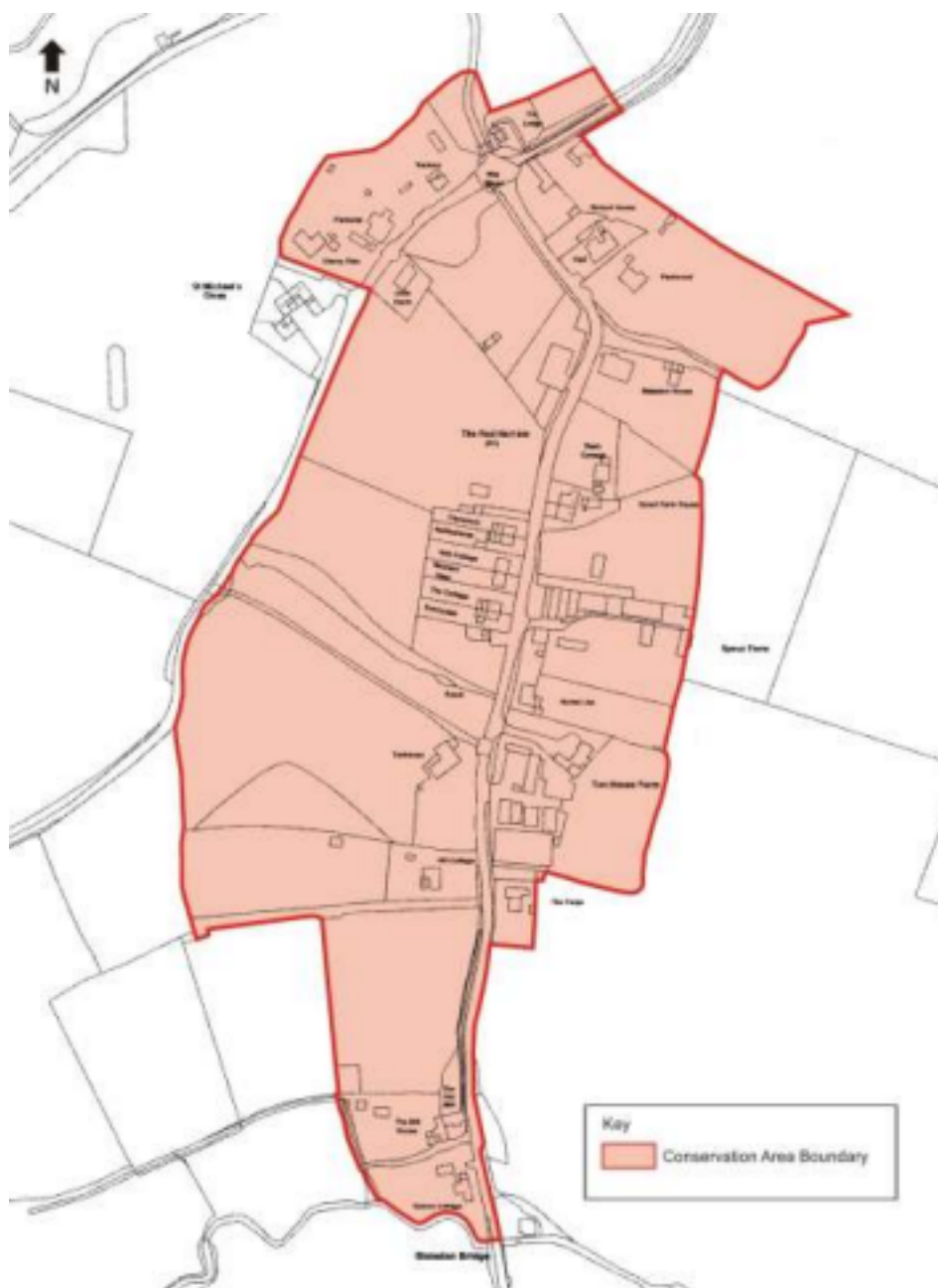
The process of adopting a character appraisal has a number of stages; the draft document is the subject of a public consultation. The local community of Blaisdon are consulted, as are a number of interested local and national organisations. All

the comments received during the consultation period are considered and any amendments made, a final draft is then produced. This document is formally considered by members of the Forest of Dean District Council and if approved it is then formally adopted.

Blaisdon Conservation Area

Originally designated as a conservation area on 31st January 1990, this Character Appraisal and the revised boundaries was adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document on March 13th 2008 and supersedes all previous versions. The area covers 13.94 hectares, (34.45 acres) and is centred on the dispersed historic settlement and associated open spaces, many of which were originally orchards.

For avoidance of doubt, where the boundary of the conservation area is shown on a wall, fence, hedgerow, tree line or other means of enclosure, it shall be deemed to be included within the conservation area.



village centre suggests that the nucleus of the original settlement may have been closer to it.

In 1699 the village was destroyed by fire, many of the buildings would have been timber framed in construction, similar to Spring Cottage at the north end of the village. However by the 18th Century some rebuilding had taken place.

Historically the majority of Blaisdon's inhabitants made a living from the land as farmers with only a few working in trades such as butchers or cobblers.

The famous Blaisdon Red plum was cultivated at Tan House Farm. The plum was popular for jam making but has declined in popularity. There are a number of these plum trees still growing in and around the village. They can be seen in the hedgerows and the remains of orchards. See Fig 1 & 2.

The 1891 Ordnance Survey map for the area shows much of the land surrounding the village as orchards.

The Red Hart Inn is the only public house to have been recorded in the village and is thought to have opened in 1816. It is a busy, thriving village pub.

In the 1930's the Salesians of Don Bosco, purchased Blaisdon Hall and used it as a seminary (religious training college). It has since been sold and returned to private residential ownership.

Archaeological significance

Within the Parish of Blaisdon there are a number of important archaeological sites such as Welshbury Hillfort (Scheduled Ancient Monument) and Flaxley Abbey.

In woodland to the northwest of Blaisdon Hall there is said to be an undated Holy Well, however no masonry or spring remains. There are also records of a Holy Well in the grounds of Blaisdon Hall; early Ordnance Survey maps plot it as being in Holywell Grove, north of the house. (SMR, 1st Addition OS Map)

To the west of Blaisdon, fields with the names Ash Plot and Cinder Hill may have originated as a result of metal smelting on the sites, as it was common practice to name a field after the way it was used.



Fig 1.



Fig 2.

Evolution of area

Development

Blaisdon is a small village built along two roads, situated in the open countryside.

The settlement of Blaisdon does not have an individual entry in the Domesday book, but it is possible that it was included as part of the Manor of Longhope. It is not clear when Blaisdon first became established, but records show that a church was present in the area by the 13th Century, which suggests that a settlement had been established by that time. The isolated location of the church from the current

To the west and south of the village ran the Hereford Gloucester line of the Great Western Railway and Blaisdon had a Halt (a minor stopping point) on it. The route is still visible as earthworks on aerial photographs and is tree lined past Blaisdon. See Fig 3.



To the south of the village is 'Old Mill' on the Hope Brook. A mill has been here since at least 1652 and possibly the 14th Century (SMR). Associated leats and watercourses are visible. The present building with weather boarded "locum" adjoins the mill house. The Mill would have been an important part of



Fig 3.



Fig 4.



Fig 5.



Fig 7.



Fig 6.



Fig 8.

Townscape Analysis

Setting

Blaisdon is set within rolling countryside surrounded by areas of wooded high ground. *See Fig 5.*

Skyline

The settlement of Blaisdon is on various levels as it is situated on a gentle slope and because of this there is no cohesive built skyline.

It is the tall and occasionally specimen trees which preside over the village. *See Fig 6.*

Approaches

The roads leading to the village are narrow and winding, edged by hedges of mixed species, which creates a sense of enclosure and expectancy, this is enhanced by bits of 'hollow way'; the result of years of use as the road has eroded down. As a result it is not often possible to see long distances along the road as the village is approached.

Landmarks

As Blaisdon is a small settlement with the parish church situated on the fringe, there are no buildings that can be described as landmarks in the centre of the village.

The area does, however have a number of high status buildings, Blaisdon Hall and Blaisdon House. There is a popular and well-known pub the Red Hart. *See Fig 7.*

The gatehouse to Blaisdon Hall is a significant and visually

attractive feature of the village as you leave in the direction of Huntley. *See Fig 8.*

Views

The views from the village are mostly of open countryside ranging from the areas of open field and orchard within the village, to the extensive wooded hills surrounding the settlement. The views change through the seasons due to the amount of tree cover, with glimpses of Blaisdon Hall visible in the winter but obscured during the summer months. *See Fig 9. (on opposite page)*

Structure

Most of the buildings in Blaisdon are slightly set back from the roadside. The form of the village is loose with no rigid built pattern, there are large areas of open space between small groups of buildings.

Hierarchy

Although not within the conservation area itself, Blaisdon Hall is the most commanding building in the area, positioned on higher ground with views over the south east of the village.

Blaisdon House is a significant building within the centre of the conservation area. Formally the Rectory, it was extended in 1847 and has the appearance of a largely Victorian house, but may have elements of earlier fabric not visible from the highway. *See Fig 10. (on opposite page)*

Quality of Spaces

Historical maps show the village surrounded by orchards, fragments of these do remain but the trees are very mature.

The orchards are important as they are vestiges of Blaisdon's past and add to the biodiversity of the area. They should be retained wherever possible.

Although the use of the land has changed, with more grazing for cattle and horses, these fields are still important as open spaces and attractive as they integrate the village with its rural context. A large percentage of the conservation area is open space, this is characteristic of this settlement and should be considered as valuable open space. *See Fig 11.*



Fig 9.



Fig 10.



Fig 11.

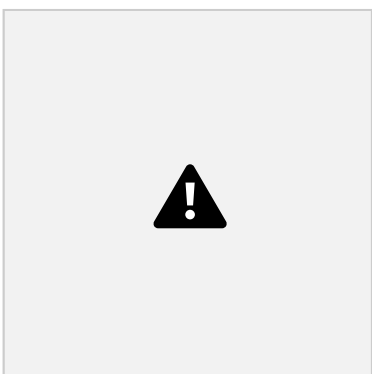


Fig 12.

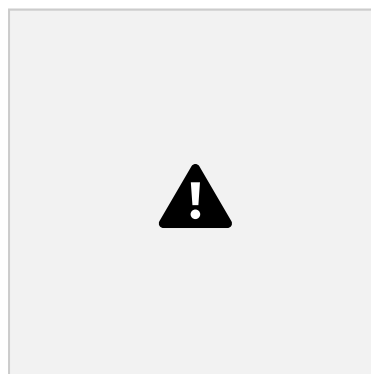


Fig 13.

there is no continuous street scene. See Fig 12.

Many of the buildings are set apart, giving each property ample garden. The properties are separated from the road by attractive hedges or walls and front gardens. There are wide verges in places. This layout means that the settlement is considered open in form.

Throughout the village the grass verges are a mixture of mown and uncut. At the time of the survey the verge outside Blaisdon Nurseries had not been cut. In spring and early summer this provides habitat for wild flowers, butterflies and small animals.

There are a number of mature and specimen trees within the conservation area and these are a visually attractive feature of the village (indicated by the green dots on the map on page 7). However there are some overgrown Leylandii, at odds with the rural setting and native species.

The walled garden at the centre of the conservation area is a reminder of the village's association with Blaisdon Hall. The attractive high red brick walls run along the main street. See Fig 13.

Condition of built fabric

Buildings

Blaisdon is a well-maintained village, as a result most of the buildings have not undergone significant or damaging alterations.

Within the village there has been some modern development. Bungalows built in the last 40 years were not designed to complement the local styles or setting, however they are part of the development of the village as it is today.

Occupation levels

Occupation levels of the residential properties in Blaisdon are good, however there are a group of farm buildings near Spout Farm House that appear to be redundant, these are at risk from deterioration.

Negative Spaces

The farm buildings and yard adjacent to Spout Farm could deteriorate over time and detract from the character of the area. Their condition is fair but without

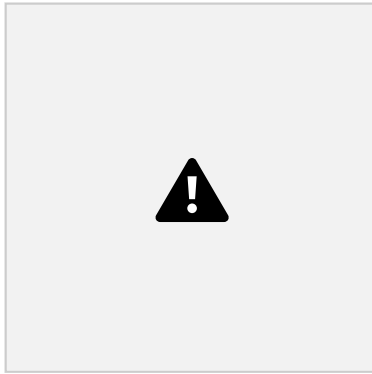


Fig 14.

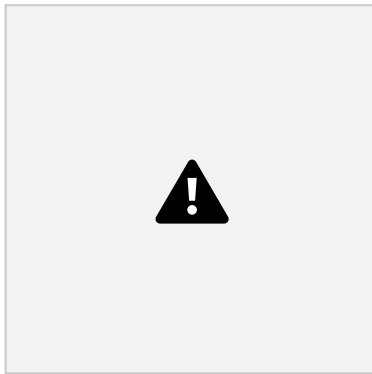


Fig 15.

Landscape setting

Topography

Blaisdon is on the edge of two Landscape Character Areas, as defined in the Forest of Deans District Council's Landscape Character Assessment document, adopted in 2002.

The first character area is the vale of the Severn Valley, characterised by soft rolling land forms and small settlements in extensive farmland. The second character area are the wooded slopes and steep hills of the 'Littledean Ridge' and 'May Hill and Outliers'.

Identification of sub areas

As Blaisdon is a small conservation area there is no need to divide the village into sub areas.

General Character

Most of the houses are built along the main road, but are staggered and set at various distances from the road, so

regular maintenance they could deteriorate rapidly. Similarly the yard linked with the farm buildings was over grown at the time of survey. See fig 14 (opposite page).

Were the farm buildings and yard to be kept in a reasonable condition and not deteriorate any further than their present state, the site will not become an issue. The whole complex is attractive and it would be beneficial for the buildings to be returned to agricultural use or other appropriate use.

Potential areas which could be enhanced

The area around the entrance to Blaisdon Nurseries could be enhanced by the removal of plastic bollards, however

these prevent cars from parking on the verges by visitors to the village. New signs could improve visibility and trade for the business and enhance the aspect. See Fig 15 (opposite page).

Street furniture

Street furniture in Blaisdon is minimal, with only a bench next to a bus stop recorded at the time of survey.

The war memorial stands in a prominent position at the entrance to the village from the direction of Huntley and Longhope.

There is a negative conglomeration of road and services signage around the Blaisdon Hall gatehouse, detracting from this notable feature of the village; this is particularly noticeable as you are leaving the village travelling towards Huntley. See Fig 16.

Wirescape

The wirescape in Blaisdon has an intrusive and negative effect on the village, with cables criss-crossing the street along its length. Blaisdon would be greatly enhanced if in future plans wires were redirected below ground. See Fig 17.

Local Building Patterns

Local Building patterns

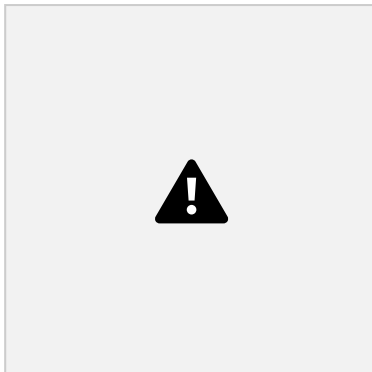


Fig 16.

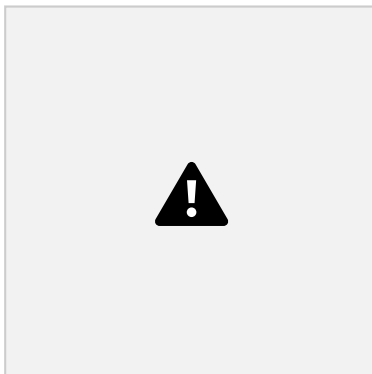


Fig 17.

Vernacular is a term used to describe buildings that are built to suit the needs of the owner, with materials that are to hand, rather than following a set form of architectural style such as neoclassical or gothic. Vernacular buildings are generally simple in form and primarily functional.

!

Polite architecture is the reverse of vernacular, it relates to buildings, which are architecturally designed in a well defined style, using materials sourced from afar that sometimes needed to be transported into the area. This form of architecture generally relates to country houses and other status buildings.

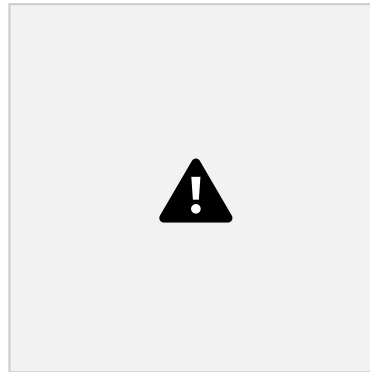


Fig 18.

Gabled roofs are the most common roof form in Blaisdon with only one example of a hipped roof in the village.

Most of the buildings are two storey, but there are some one and a half storey buildings with dormers in the roof See fig 18. Blaisdon House is the only three storey property in the conservation area.

A number of the buildings within the village were built as estate cottages by the Maclver family who were the owners of Blaisdon Hall in the early 20th Century. These houses have elements of the Domestic Revival Architectural Movement, with sections of timber framing; lucarne's and tiled roofs. A Lucarne is shown in Fig 19.

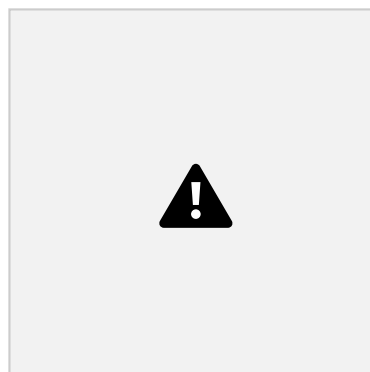


Fig 19.

conservation area.

UPVC windows are not overly predominant, with many original window forms surviving or having been sensitively replaced in most cases, this enhances the appearance of the village.

Due to the age of most of the properties, chimneys are prevalent in the village and vary from simple stacks to decorative features as found on Blaisdon House.

Most of the more recent buildings in the village are bungalows, constructed in the 1960's and 70's. *See Fig 20.*

The form of these buildings does not reflect the features found in the older and more traditional properties in Blaisdon, however Parkwood is a classic example of its time and as it is set back from the road it is less intrusive to the overall character of the village.

Materials

The buildings in Blaisdon are constructed of a variety of different materials. Brick, render and stone are the main walling materials, with some buildings having elements of timber framing incorporated as part of the Domestic Revival Architectural style. *See Fig 21.*

There is one original timber framed building in the village, Spring Cottage, which is a grade II listed cottage to the north of the settlement. A number of older properties are thought to have elements of timber framing incorporated into the structure, but they have been expanded and altered so that it is no longer visible. *See Fig 22.*

There are several examples of 17th Century brick built buildings, some with string courses, this feature is evident on Tan House Barn (grade II) and is noted on the rear of The Tanhouse (grade II). *See Fig 23.*

It is likely that Spout Farm House is also of similar construction, however a modern render has been applied and conceals the original warmth and softness of the original brick. Blaisdon Court has been painted, however you can still see the original structure. These buildings are all of a similar date and were probably constructed in a period of prosperity within the village. *See Fig 24. (on opposite page)*

Red pan tiles are seen throughout the village on a variety of the buildings such as the gateway to Blaisdon Hall. However slate roofs are also present, for example on the Red Hart and a number of other buildings.

Paving traditions

Kerbstones and pavements are not obvious in Blaisdon. In

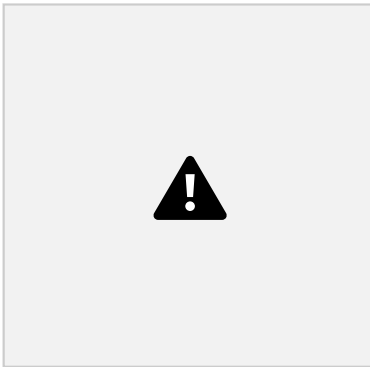


Fig 20.

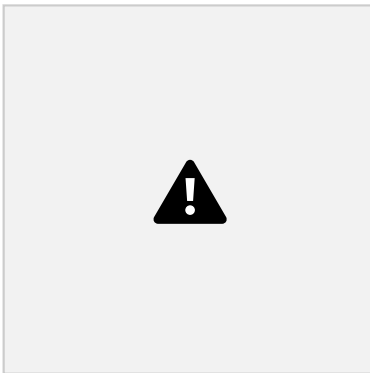


Fig 21.

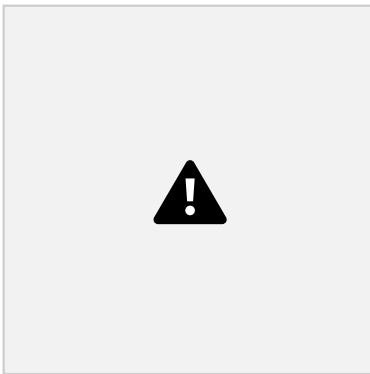


Fig 22.

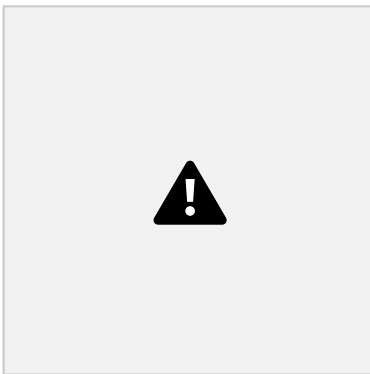


Fig 23.

The windows in properties tend to be casement and a high proportion of the properties have maintained the original window forms, which helps preserve the historic street scene of Blaisdon. Dormers are a common feature in the

the centre of the village the roadside is edged by soft grass a result of the large vehicles passing through. Though this verges, which enhances the rural ambience of the village. is not severe in the centre of the village. However some damage to the green verges does occur as

Activities, uses and linkages

Uses

Blaisdon is now a mainly residential area, with the majority of its occupants travelling outside the village to work and school and for amenities such as shops. The village is therefore quiet during the daytime.

The village school is now the village hall. *See Fig 25.*

The Red Hart is a busy and popular public house, serving local produce in a relaxed environment, a focal point used by locals and visitors. Tan House Farm has a bed and breakfast providing accommodation for visitors to the village.

The walled gardens in the centre of the village are now home to Blaisdon Nursery, providing another reason for people to visit Blaisdon.

In previous years the village has held festivals and fetes using the Blaisdon Plum as a theme, this has done much to highlight this locally important fruit.

Images and associations

Sounds

The dairy herd, which grazes the fields around the centre of the conservation area, can be heard throughout the village, strengthening the villages close association with the countryside.

During the middle of the day there is no background traffic noise, with the village being several miles from main roads, the lanes are quiet with the occasional passing car. Rural sounds such as bird song, lawnmowers and the cows are the most obvious noises *See Fig 26.* However it has been noted that during peak traffic time the village is used as a 'rat run', this changes the ambience dramatically.

Conclusion

Blaisdon is often described as being one of the most attractive villages in the Forest of Dean with its pleasant approaches and rural atmosphere. One of the main reasons for the attractive nature of the village is the quality of many aspects of the street scene. On the whole Blaisdon has fortunately escaped from extensive alterations; new development and infill has been minimal.

The village retains a softness often lost through hard modern building styles.

On its own the designation will not fully safeguard the area's special character. It is the responsibility of all those with an interest in the area including developers, planners, agencies and organisations responsible for services in the public domain and not least local residents to respond sensitively to change in the village and its surroundings. This document will aid in this decision making process by clearly identifying the issues of primary importance to maintaining Blaisdon's special character.

The Forest of Dean District Council has limited funds to enhance the area but intends to work with developers; agencies and other organisations with an interest in undertaking work in the village. When initiatives are proposed, sound conservation advice will be offered to try to ensure that the special character is safeguarded and enhanced wherever possible for the benefit of the existing and future generations of the area.

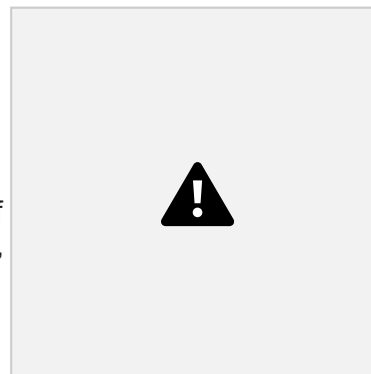


Fig 24.



Fig 25.

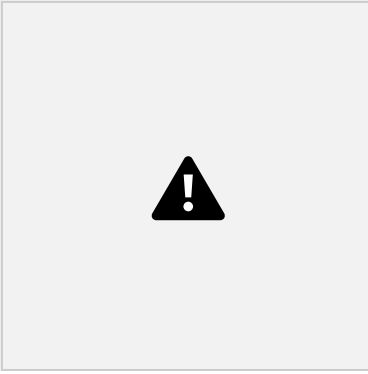


Fig 26.

SWOT Analysis

A SWOT analysis identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the area.

Strengths

- !
- ! Its rural setting and atmosphere
- !
- ! The retention of areas of orchards
- !
- ! The attractive architecture of the buildings
- !
- ! Two high status properties, Blaisdon Hall and Blaisdon House !
- ! Mature trees and other greenery
- !
- ! Narrow hedge lined roads
- !
- ! Houses built in own land/garden
- !
- ! Views to surrounding hills

Weaknesses

- ! A small number of bungalows and houses built in inappropriate forms !
- ! Historic change of use of orchards to grazing
- ! Extensive overhead wiring
- ! Poor location of road signage, particularly around Blaisdon Hall Gatehouse !
- ! Overgrown conifer hedges
- ! Lack of village amenities
- ! Lack of regular public transport

Opportunities

- ! To maintain an attractive and small rural village which remains relatively unaffected by major alterations.
- ! To keep vestiges of the once extensive areas of orchards which were found throughout Severnside.
- ! To re-route wiring underground

Threats

- ! Threat from infilling of land
- ! Loss of orchards
- ! Deterioration of apparently redundant farm complex !
- ! Loss of hedge rows
- ! Alterations and introduction of uPVC into historic properties !
- ! Increase in poorly located road signage
- ! Further deterioration from large vehicles using the lanes

Management proposals

Application of policy guidance

The Forest of Dean Local District Local Plan 2005 sets out a number of policies that this authority will follow when dealing with conservation areas. The policies are as follows:

(R)FHE.1 Preservation and Enhancement of Conservation Areas

The Council will seek to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas and will review from time to time the need for further designations. Development which would detract from the visual, historic or architectural character of such areas or their settings will not be permitted. Consideration will be given to the use of Article 4 directions where permitted development would be likely to have an adverse effect, particularly upon a programme or scheme of conservation works, or on buildings which have been grant aided.

(R)FHE.2 Demolition in Conservation Areas

Where the buildings or walls make little or no positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area, their demolition will be permitted, but only if the demolition proposal is accompanied by fully detailed and acceptable plans for the redevelopment proposed after demolition which demonstrate that the redevelopment scheme will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Where buildings or walls in any Conservation Area make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of that Conservation Area, their total or substantial demolition will not be permitted unless:

1. All reasonable efforts have been made to sustain existing uses or to find viable new uses
2. Preservation in some form of charitable or community ownership is not possible
3. Redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community that would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition.

(R)FHE.5 Change of Use of Buildings of Architectural or Historic Importance

Where an alternative use is proposed for a Listed Building or a building of local historic or architectural importance planning permission will be granted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will preserve the historic and architectural character of the building in its setting and that no other reasonable alternative use exists which would better safeguard the architectural or historic importance of the building.

(R)FHE.7 Requirement to Provide Archaeological Information

Development proposals likely to affect sites of archaeological interest and their settings or within areas of known or likely archaeological potential must be accompanied by an archaeological assessment and where appropriate the results of a field evaluation appraising the likely extent or nature of the archaeology,

archaeological remains will be mitigated. This information will be a material consideration when determining an application.

There are wider issues relating to conservation areas and these are set out in government guidance, these together with the local plan policies will be used to guide the consideration of proposals in the designated conservation area.

Amendments to boundaries

The original conservation area designated 31st January 1990 has now been extended to include the area down to Blaisdon Bridge on the Longhope brook around the old Mill complex. Its inclusion within the conservation area will protect and maintain the character of an important cluster of buildings, waterways and setting that is clearly a valuable part of the village's early historical development. Although the buildings are set apart from the main village with open space in between, this is a characteristic of this settlement, with its open structure.

Consideration of the resources needed to maintain area

There are no major financial resource implications arising out of this character analysis for local authorities.

There are extremely limited resources available from central or local government specifically to maintain Blaisdon conservation area; however the character appraisal maybe useful for Blaisdon Parish Council in identifying proposals for the future. For other agencies or authorities such as the district council and Gloucestershire County Council this character appraisal can identify issues that may be able to be dealt with when considering on going maintenance or planned programmes affecting the village.

It offers an opportunity for private developers investing resources in the area to recognise the needs of the village when undertaking major or minor development.

Monitoring Change

Change in Blaisdon needs to be monitored over the coming years in order to control the small alterations which take place, but which could eventually further erode the character of Blaisdon. Monitoring will take place subject to officer time and as funds allow; the photographic recording of the conservation area every two years would produce a comparison exercise and a record for use in the future.

Procedures for consistent decision-making

There is considerable detailed government guidance for dealing with development in conservation areas which is used by all local authorities in England and Wales. However the nature of historic buildings and conservation areas means that it is virtually impossible to produce a standardised strategy, as every building or area needs to be dealt with individually.

The production of character appraisals, a Local Development framework and Supplementary Planning Guidance will help provide a consistent base for decision making within this local authority.

Enforcement strategy

It is occasionally necessary for local authorities to use their statutory powers to initiate the repair of buildings that are having a detrimental affect on the conservation area; these powers included urgent works notices and section 215 notices.

Local authorities also have the statutory powers to instigate the repair of listed buildings, and non-listed buildings within a conservation area, through the use of urgent works notices. If an urgent works notice were to be issued on a non-listed building in a conservation area, it would require permission from the Secretary of State. An urgent works notice is used to secure emergency repairs to a building to alleviate the deterioration of a building, the notice is issued to the owner, but if the owner refuses to carry out the necessary works the local authority can, and then claim the costs back from the owner.

Section 215 notices are part of the local authorities planning powers; the notice can be served on the owner of any land or building whose condition affects the quality of the area. If the notice were served, the owner would be expected to redeem the situation through cleaning up the site or building. If the owner does not comply with the notice the authority can carry out the works then reclaim the cost from the owner.

Enforcement action will be taken where there are breaches of regulations and where it is necessary to do so. Aspects like the introduction of satellite dishes to walls and roofs fronting a highway without permission are issues that need to be seriously considered.

Proposals for article 4 directions

A local authority has power to withdraw further permitted development rights by issuing Article 4(1) and 4(2) directions, however a conservation area has to be deemed of considerable importance before Article 4 directions can be justified. This is an option available to the Forest of Dean District Council, however there are no proposals in this Character Appraisal to introduce Article 4 directions.

Intended action for buildings at risk

Blaisdon Conservation Area has no buildings formally identified on its Buildings at Risk Register.

The group of farm buildings adjacent to Spout Farm and Blaisdon Nursery are a potential risk in the long term but these are currently in good order.

Proposed enhancement schemes

The Planning Act 1990 (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) states that Local authorities have a duty to prepare schemes for the enhancement of conservation areas. Many of the suggested areas of enhancement are included in this character appraisal, these suggestions relate back to the policies for the historic environment as set out in the Forest of Dean Local Plan 2005. At the present time there is no specific budget or strategy for the completion of such schemes, which means that they can only be achieved through close partnership with other public bodies, agencies or sections within Local Authorities.

There are some ways in which the Local Authority could guide the enhancement of Blaisdon.

Wirescape

Where the opportunity arises electricity and telecommunication wiring could be provided underground, to the benefit of the village. The removal of these

overhead wires would reduce the clutter seen along the rural lanes and significantly enhance the conservation area.

Street furniture

If street furniture were to be introduced in Blaisdon, every effort should be made to ensure that they are appropriate to the context.

Signage

It would be a positive move to rationalise the accumulation of signage around the gateway to Blaisdon Hall, this would improve the overall appearance of the gateway and improve the overall aspect of this visual stop when leaving the village in the direction of Longhope.

Economic development and regeneration

New development

Conservation area status is not designed to stop all future development in that area. However it is also made clear in government guidance and the local authorities own local plan that new development in conservation areas should be of a high standard.

However in the case of Blaisdon, new development is unlikely as it would be contrary to Council Policy. As Blaisdon is identified as being within the open countryside, there are numerous policies preventing new development, in order to protect the countryside.

New development should relate to its surroundings, in scale and form, and the grain of the settlement, e.g. street patterns. However in order to relate to its surroundings new development does not automatically have to be an imitation of the buildings already present in an area. Conservation philosophy advises against the reproduction of old styles in new buildings, and encourages new development to be in the style of the time. It is the quality of a design that is fundamental in producing a high quality of building, linked with the level of detailing and finish.

The special architectural character of an area does not need to stand still at the date of designation providing any development enhances or at least has a neutral effect on the character of the area. New developments could be a way to further improve the quality of an area if sensitive yet innovative designs are produced. In 1998 the Forest of Dean District Council adopted the 'Residential Design Guide', the document was produced by the University of the West of England, and provides information and guidelines suitable for new development in the Forest of Dean, the document is a highly useful resource for those intending to develop areas of the District or for householders wishing to extend their properties.

Building regulation relaxation

The Building Regulations through Government policy requires new buildings, building works or services installed in them to be continually achieving better energy efficiency and lower CO2 emissions, as well as requiring in certain circumstances better access in and around the building.

Special considerations apply if the building on which the work is to be carried has special historic or architectural value and where compliance with the current requirements of the regulations would unacceptably alter the character or

appearance of the building.

When undertaking work on or in connection with buildings with special historic or architectural value, the aim should be to improve energy efficiency and access

Where and to the extent that is practically possible. This is provided that the work does not prejudice the character of the listed building or increase the risk of long term deterioration to the building fabric or fittings.

Therefore when carrying works to such buildings which require Building Regulations Consent, it is important to speak to the Building Control section at an early stage so any perceived conflicts of legislation can be identified and resolved in a manner that satisfies the current requirements of the affected Regulations and Legislation.

Strategy for the management of trees and other greenery

Most trees within the conservation area boundary are automatically safeguarded, as written notice is required to be submitted to the local authority six weeks before the work is carried out. This allows the local authority time to place a tree preservation order on the tree in question if it is felt worthy of the designation. However the protection granted by the designation of conservation areas does not normally extend to hedges or small scale planting. The loss of such features should be seriously considered before the work is carried out, as the impact on the conservation area could be harmful, both visually and ecologically.

In the case of non commercial fruit trees it is necessary to obtain consent to cut the tree down, but not needed for pruning if cultivated for the production of fruit.

The Forest of Dean District Council's Countryside Section can help and advise on the management of fruit trees, hedge rows, felling and Tree Preservation Orders.

Please note all the photos used to illustrate this document have been taken from the public highway with a standard lens.

All property boundaries and names used in the Conservation Area Appraisal are based on the latest information published by Ordnance Survey at the time of going to print.

This document can be made available on audiotape, in Braille, large print, a range of languages and in other formats if required. For further information contact us on 01594 810000.



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