



WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Hailey

What are Conservation Areas?

Conservation Areas are places of special architectural or historic interest, which have a particular character or appearance worthy of preservation or enhancement. Groups of buildings, walls, trees and hedges, open spaces, views, and the historic settlement patterns all combine to create an individual sense of place. It is this character, rather than individual buildings, that Conservation Area status seeks to protect. The first Conservation Areas in the District were identified in the late 1960s. Since then, there has been a rolling programme of designations. Recent Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Hailey Conservation Area was designated in 1992, following a process of public consultation.

The purpose of this document

This Conservation Area Character Appraisal describes the main aspects of character or appearance which contribute to the special interest and quality of the area. This document is intended to complement the approved policies for Conservation Areas contained in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan. In Conservation Areas there are controls over the demolition and minor alterations of unlisted buildings, and on works to trees. Full details can be obtained from the Planning Service. The Preservation and Enhancement document for Hailey accompanies this Character Appraisal and describes strategies for the future maintenance and improvement of Hailey, as well as providing development advice, and guidance on conversions, extensions and the design of new buildings within the Conservation Area.



Location and setting

Hailey lies close to the centre of the District, two miles north of Witney and five miles south of Charlbury. The modern core of Hailey lies along the main road linking the two towns; with the two earlier Ends – Delly and Poffley – located down lanes that branch off this main road at either end of the Middletown portion of the village. Both Delly End and Poffley End are linked to various outlying farmsteads, houses and cottages by a network of narrow lanes.

The Conservation Area boundary encompasses the three distinct portions of the village. To the north is Delly End, whose period housing overlooks the expansive village green with its unusual ‘Peace Memorial’ (erected in c.1920 and paid for by Mrs Phipps of Hailey Manor). Tightly packed along the main Witney to Charlbury road is Middletown. This forms the core of today’s settlement and is served by a school, post office and church. Here, both the density of housing and the proportion of new housing is at its highest. Poffley End has a straggly, linear form, with stretches of period housing interspersed with more recent developments. Here, the shallow depth allows numerous views through to the fields beyond.

Hailey is set in an elevated and smoothly rolling landscape bounded by the Cotswold uplands to the north and the deeply-incised Windrush valley to the south. The southern portion of Hailey overlies cornbrash limestone and adjoins an area of glacial deposit to the east. The northern part of the village overlies the southern fringe of the expanse of oolitic limestone that dominates the geology in the north of the District.



Historical development

Hailey once lay within Wychwood forest. ‘Hailey’ means ‘hay clearing’, and the ‘ley’ suffix is one common to former woodland settlements. Whilst there was Roman and prehistoric activity in the area (and a section of the late Iron Age earthwork, Grim’s Ditch, runs through the parish) it was during the medieval period that the village took on the form visible today.

Up until the 19th century, Hailey was part of Witney Manor, granted to the Bishopric of Winchester in 1044. During the 13th century, large areas of woodland were cleared in Hailey (a process promoted by the Bishop). Many of the field names recorded in the 19th century around both Ends incorporate the words ‘assart’ or ‘breach’ - both indicative of woodland clearance. The Bishop initially maintained control of the cleared land between University Farm and Downhill Farm: an area known as ‘the Bishop of Winchester’s Assart’. Much of the rest of the land was held in small parcels by a variety of landowners (many of whom came from Witney itself) and a vibrant land market operated throughout the 13th and 14th centuries.

After the Black Death in the 14th century, the Bishop’s lands were leased to local farmers. The Bishopric took a less direct interest in the estate and there is evidence of an increase in pasture and shepherding. No single large landowner took the Bishop’s place, and although the Duke of Malborough had acquired the manor by the early 19th century, the pattern of landholding was dominated by numerous relatively small farms.

By the early 17th century most of the parish was held in ‘closes’: enclosed fields of varying size used for both pasture and arable farming. Small-scale mixed farming was the principal land use and many of the land parcels are described in terms that evoke a rich and complex landscape of small-holdings, cottages, gardens, woods and orchards. The basic structure of today’s landscape, with its small-scale field pattern and strong network of lanes leading eastwards away from the settlements towards common grazing, was thus in place from an early date. Hailey’s open fields, covering less than a quarter of the parish, lay mostly between Foxburrow Lane and Crawley Road, and were enclosed early in the 19th century.

Settlement pattern

Hailey's polyfocal form is typical of the hamlets found in former woodland landscapes. The Roman highway Akeman Street passed by on a north-east to south-west axis to the north, and was in use until at least the 4th century. Hailey's earliest settlers may have been drawn from users of this route. With settlement established, the process of assarting land from the forest could begin. Besides good communications the area could also claim forgiving and elevated topography, and land well suited to agriculture. The adjacent forest would have provided timber and game, along with foraging for pigs.

The two ends represent the earliest portions of Hailey, with the linking element, Middletown, effectively masking the fact that these were once entirely separate and distinct settlements. Both ends possess centres for administrative control in the form of manor houses. Hailey Manor in Delly End was built in c.1730, but The Old Manor House in Poffley End dates from the late 15th century. Much of Hailey's early settlement took place around village greens. Delly Green survives, but several other greens are mentioned in 16th-century documents. By the early 17th century the two ends had been joined by a third area of settlement in the form of Middletown.

Delly End is the most contained of the three portions of Hailey. To the north, development along Wood Lane and Delly Close marks the modest and recent northward expansion of this part of Hailey. To the south-east is Poffley End. Here the pattern is linear and less contained. Period houses and cottages huddle along Poffley End Lane, with recent development (including some infill) accentuating this linear form. The two ends form spurs coming off the main road through Middletown at right angles. Middletown itself has a dense linear form, and comprises a large volume of recent housing (much of it arrayed along Giernalls Road and New Road) interspersed with occasional period structures.

Hailey's tripartite form was still intact in the early 19th century, but during the 20th century, expansion saw a blurring of the demarcation between the three parts.



Hailey Conservation Area



Key

-  Conservation Area Boundar
-  Listed Buildings
-  Locally Listed Buildings
-  Significant Boundary Walls
-  Significant Hedges
-  Significant Trees and Tree Group
-  Tree Preservation Order
-  Significant Views
-  Article 4 Direction



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Listed Buildings

There are 21 Listed structures of architectural or historic interest in the Conservation Area. Listed Buildings are classified in grades of relative importance.

Grade II* – Particularly special and important buildings (4% of Listed Buildings)

22/113 POFFLEY END The Old Manor House (Formerly listed as Old Manor House)

Grade II – Buildings of special interest

22/92 CHAPEL LANE (North side) Grass Ground Cottage

22/93 CHAPEL LANE (North side) Grass Ground Farmhouse

DELLY END

9/94 Hailey Manor (Formerly listed as Manor House)

9/95 Steps with flanking walls approx. 7m SE of front door of Hailey Manor

9/96 Greystones and attached forecourt wall (Formerly listed as Pair of Cottages behind the Peace Memorial)

9/97 Ivydene and Greenside

9/98 Manor Cottage

MIDDLETOWN

22/101 The Lamb and Flag Public House

22/102 Hunters Close Farmhouse (Formerly listed as Hunters Close Farm)

22/103 Giernalls Farm Cottage (Formerly listed as Giernalls Cottage)

22/104 The White Cottage

22/105 Church of St. John The Evangelist

POFFLEY END

9/109 Swanhall Farmhouse (Formerly listed as Swanhill Farmhouse)

9/110 Barn approx. 10m SE of Swanhall Farmhouse

22/111 Cornerways Cottage

22/112 Swanhall Cottage

22/114 Hill View

22/115 Winnings Farmhouse

22/116 Outbuilding approx. 12m SW of The Moos (*not included*)

22/117 Greyroofs

Note: The numbers indicate the unique identification number by which Listed Buildings are referenced

Architectural character and quality of buildings

The architecture of Hailey is largely vernacular in character. Most of the period houses and cottages date from the 17th and 18th centuries and feature local grey, oolitic limestone employed in coursed rubble form. Roofs are predominantly of stone slate. Two- and three-bay ranges, stone or brick stacks, and 20th-century windows predominate. Although consistent in their use of materials, the buildings exhibit a wide variety of plan forms. In Poffley End, an outbuilding roofed with bundle thatch survives: a rare feature and the only example of thatch in the village.

Despite the vernacular character of Hailey's buildings, a formal architectural vocabulary can be read on several of the buildings. Gigley Farm, Hailey Manor and Downhill Farmhouse all use ashlar; Greystones and the Old Manor House have stone mullion windows (the latter with hood moulds), and Hailey Manor has banding, architraves and a bracketed cornice.

The earliest structure in Hailey is the Old Manor House, dating from the late 15th century. It began life as a hall house but was extended and remodelled in c.1600 to give a T-plan with a rear wing. The well-preserved interior may be the work of Robert Yate in c.1609, and is notable for its period timberwork.

The Church of St. John Evangelist is by Clapton Crabbe Rolfe, and was designed in 1866 for his father, who was vicar of Hailey. The building is characterised by some quirky architectural details and fittings, and is described by Pevsner as, 'a fantastic Gothic in colourful materials with bulbous forms and freakish detail'.

Hailey also contains a large volume of 20th-century housing, the majority of which is concentrated in Middleton. Inevitably, this has resulted in some dilution to the historic character of the settlement as a whole (although Delly End in particular remains largely undisturbed). However, the colour precedent set by Hailey's period buildings has largely been honoured throughout the settlement (there is, for example, virtually no red brick in Hailey). More recent infilling has sought to restore something of Hailey's original small-scale vernacular character.

Boundary treatments

Drystone walling forms the most conspicuous boundary feature in Hailey. This employs the same pale limestone as the period housing, and helps to pull together, both physically and visually, the three distinct portions of the village. Throughout Hailey, the period housing either fronts on to the road, or stands back from the road behind soft verges of varying depth, or further back still behind front gardens. The recent housing in Middletown is arranged in closes or along streets running parallel to the main road. The green in Delly End and the adjacent fields of Poffley End are elements key to each area. Stretches of hedgerow and remnants of Wychwood forest are also significant components of the Conservation Area.

Landscape, trees and views

Hailey is set in the attractive, gently rolling farmland of the Wychwood uplands. Wychwood forest maintains a residual presence in the area, most notably at St. John's Wood (north of Delly End), and in the scattered woodland species that fringe the roadsides. Within the village there is a pleasing variety of internal views: enclosed, along Chapel Lane and the main street through Middletown; open, south-west of Church Lane and at Poffley End; and airily contained, around the green at Delly End. From the western fringe of the village there are long views across to the high land on the opposite side of the Windrush. There is a slight ridge running north-east from Middletown from which long views are possible over the rolling wooded landscape towards Leafield, Ramsden and Wilcote. From Wood Lane there are views west across a landscape crisscrossed with stone walls; and from the Swan Hill Farm area towards Witney to the south.



West Oxfordshire District Council - Planning Service
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General planning enquiries and application forms
List entries and grant enquiries
Trees and landscape enquiries
Architectural and technical enquiries

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