

Boroughbridge

Conservation Area

Harrogate
BOROUGH COUNCIL



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BOROUGHBRIDGE CONSERVATION AREA

Boroughbridge Conservation area was designated on 17th March 1976. Following a review of Harrogate District's conservation areas, the boundary was amended on 16 March 1995 and is shown on the map in this leaflet. A condensed and updated version of the Conservation Area Designation Statement is set out below.

Historic Significance

The earliest evidence of human settlement in the Boroughbridge area is provided by the three great gritstone monoliths, known as the Devil's Arrows, which are located on the west side of the town, two to the north and one to the south of Roecliffe Lane. A legend says that, one day, the Devil, bent on mischief, took his stand on How Hill to the south of where Fountains Abbey now stands and declared "Borobrigg keep out o'th way, For Aldbro' town I will ding down". He then took aim but his arrows fell a mile short of the target. Originally at least four, they are composed of a millstone grit not found in the locality and are thought to date from the Neolithic or Bronze Age periods although their precise purpose remains obscure.

Boroughbridge is first mentioned (as "Pons Burgi") in a charter of Newburgh Priory in 1145. It was created as a new town some time in the early C12 at the highest navigable point of the River Ure where a timber bridge was built across the river. The town's raison d'être was trade. Wool and grain from the Fountains Abbey estates, woollen cloth and later linen from Knaresborough, lead from Upper Nidderdale and the various products of Ripon were brought overland to Boroughbridge and then sent on to York and beyond by water. Wine, spices and timber formed a corresponding flow of imports in the reverse direction.



Hall Square off High Street



The Midland Bank, Claro Chambers and the Sweet Shoppe, Bridge Street

In 1318 the Scots invaded Yorkshire, burning Northallerton, Knaresborough and Boroughbridge and, in 1319, defeated the English at the battle of Myton-on-Swale. However, the tables were turned at the battle of Boroughbridge (1322) when they were defeated by the forces of Edward II, commanded by Sir Andrew Harcla. The battle, which took place in the vicinity of the River Ure, is included in English Heritage's Register of Historic Battlefields.

The first bridge across the Ure was of wood but was rebuilt in stone in 1562. Forming part of the Great North Road, it carried an enormous amount of traffic and was in constant need of repair. 21 major repairs or widenings were carried out in the C17 alone. In 1785 it was widened by John Carr and was again reconstructed in 1969. Major improvements were made to the Ure in the later C18, including the construction of Milby Cut, which, together with the Ripon Canal, extended the limit of navigation from Boroughbridge to Ripon, and water transport remained an important industry in Boroughbridge until the coming of the railways.

Perhaps even more important to the economy of Boroughbridge was its location on the Great North Road. At certain times of the year, thousands of cattle passed daily over the bridge and along Horsefair on their way from Scotland to Smithfield, and were shod at smithies in Horsefair and at Langthorpe. Horses were traded in the street of that name, particularly at the time of the annual Barnaby Fair which continued to be held until the 1980's.

The C18 and early C19 saw the domination of inland passenger transport by the stage coach and the town developed as an important staging post where horses were changed and travellers fed and accommodated, but trade must have suffered to some degree with the coming of the branch line from the Great North of England Railway at Pilmoor in 1848 and its extension to Knaresborough in 1875.

A much more serious effect on the local economy was that of the construction of the Boroughbridge By-pass of the A1 in the early 1960's. The hotel and catering trades in particular were badly hit. However, Boroughbridge weathered the storm and today has once again become an attractive small town with a lively range of shops.

Setting

Boroughbridge is situated at the point where the Great North Road crosses the River Ure (the only crossing point of the Ure/Ouse between Ripon and York). To the north and south the land rises by gentle undulations to the "heights" of Kirby Hill and the Grafton Hills respectively, whilst to the east and west is the flood plain of the River Ure.

The town is firmly defined to the north and west by the line of the former Pilmoor-Knaresborough railway line and of the A1 Boroughbridge By-pass, now widened and upgraded to a motorway. To the east it is defined by the floodbank constructed in the early 1990's to protect Boroughbridge from once frequent inundations and the open land separating Boroughbridge from Aldborough. There are no particular physical or natural boundaries to the south.

Layout

The plan of the town was determined by the siting of the main bridge over the Ure and of the two minor bridges (at Fishergate and St. Helena) across the Tutt, together with the roads from Knaresborough and York. The Normans laid out three squares: St. James's Square was the site of the medieval church until this was demolished in 1851 and the present church built in Church Lane; the Market Square (now Hall Square) was probably larger until encroached on by the grounds of Boroughbridge Hall, which was originally built in the early C17; and St. Helena at the junction of Horsefair and the Low Road to Aldborough. Named after the mother of Constantine the Great, this was a small, triangular "square" until the central part was built on in the C19. Together with the streets linking them to the Ure bridge - Horsefair/Bridge Street, Fishergate and High Street - they constitute the basic layout of Boroughbridge.

Spatial Qualities

Boroughbridge focuses on the High Street and on the two squares - Hall Square and St. James's Square - at





High Street

either end. Here the buildings form continuous frontages and are set at the back of the footway, giving a compact, enclosed character to the centre of the town. Fishergate has a slightly more fragmented appearance, being broken visually in two by the River Tutt. In Bridge Street buildings are generally larger in scale and set back behind forecourts, resulting in a more open character. The top end of Horsefair, near its junction with Fishergate, also has a compact and enclosed character but, southwards from Vine Terrace and North Road Garage, its character is more open and sporadic. A number of buildings give rise to important terminal vistas or act as important focal points.

Architectural Significance

The Devil's Arrows are a Scheduled Ancient Monument. There are around 60 individual Grade II listed buildings in Boroughbridge Conservation Area (38 separate entries, including 3 in the Parish of Langthorpe).

The most historic part of Boroughbridge largely coincides with the main shopping/commercial area of the town, comprising Bridge Street, Fishergate, High Street and St. James's Square. In this area the majority of buildings are of brick but there are also a large number which are rendered. Pantiles are the predominant roofing material but there is also some Welsh slate. Most buildings form part of continuous terraces. Detached buildings are mainly gabled (some with parapets) with only a few hips. Notable among the latter are Mauleverer House, Ladywell House and Chatsworth House (the last two of which have overhanging eaves typical of their Regency date), and the Midland Bank. Other buildings may be hipped at the end of a terrace or where they turn a corner. Most stacks are on the ridge at the gable end or between adjacent properties in a terrace. Windows to the street are usually vertical sliding sashes, the majority set forward with exposed frames.

Landscape Features

The most important landscape features in Boroughbridge Conservation Area are the River Ure and Milby Cut with their associated banks. The river divides Boroughbridge proper from the parishes of Langthorpe and Milby and before 1974 was the boundary between the North and West Ridings. Milby Island, which forms a tongue of land between the river and the cut, has been greatly tidied up in recent years and forms a valuable local amenity. Trees make an important contribution to the riverside area although there are few of great individual importance.

The Holms, an area of parkland to the south of the River Ure, provides an attractive setting to the town on its north-east side. The Vicarage Glebe once separated the area of local authority development to the south-east of Boroughbridge from the historic part of the town when approaching it along York Road, but recent development has largely eroded this distinction. The grounds of the Rose Manor Hotel (formerly The Three Arrows), now being developed for low density housing, still retain most of their trees which make an important contribution to the setting of the town on its south-west side. There is a fine cedar in the grounds of Ladywell House.

Hall Square and St. James's Square are attractive cobbled spaces situated at nodal points within the town. The cobbles in Hall Square were re-laid a few years ago when the Buttermarket was also repaired. Those in St. James's Square should also be re-laid. Repairs have recently been carried out to the Market Well. However, much of the Square is in private ownership and the co-operation of all owners would be needed to enable a comprehensive scheme to be undertaken.

Objectives

1. The primary objective is to protect, restore and enhance the character of Boroughbridge Conservation Area.
2. Regard will be had to maintaining the historic relationship of the town with its landscape setting.
3. The Council will seek the use of traditional materials and the adoption of traditional proportions, styles and details when considering proposals for the restoration or alteration of existing buildings or the erection of new buildings within the Conservation Area.
4. Landscape features such as walls, trees and traditional floorscape materials which are important to the Conservation Area should be retained and the Council will exercise its powers to protect these. Trees have a finite life and consideration will be given to the need for their replacement.
5. Bearing in mind that Boroughbridge has changed and evolved over the centuries, its economic well being and development needs will be fully considered.

It is hoped that these objectives and the identified enhancements can be progressed in liaison with owners, the Town Council, amenity groups and other interested parties.

Local Plan Policies

Current statutory policies in respect of the Conservation Area are contained in the Harrogate District Local Plan which was adopted on 19 February 2001. For further details on Local Plan policies please contact the Local Plan Policy Section on 01423 556581

ENHANCEMENT PROPOSALS

The condition and appearance of Boroughbridge Conservation Area has improved greatly in recent years, following the restoration/redevelopment of the greater part of the Anchor Brewery site, the redevelopment of the former mill on Mill Lane and the progressive refurbishment/redevelopment of derelict buildings on Back Lane. However, a number of further improvements can be identified:

1. Restoration and conversion to residential or other suitable use of the 'new' Maltings.
2. The relocation of the Water Rats Club to new premises, demolition of the present building and landscaping of this important riverside site.
3. Planting of trees along the north side of Milby Cut to screen the sand and gravel workings and industrial buildings on the former station goods yard from users of the waterway and pedestrians on Milby Island. These should be set back from the bank so as not to interfere with the integrity of the cut, as it is likely that the present self-seeded trees may have to be removed in due course.
4. Planting of trees along the line of the former railway from Leeming Lane to Tinkler Lane to screen or soften new housing development and commercial/ industrial buildings when seen from the approach to Boroughbridge along Leeming Lane or Dishforth Road.
5. Relaying the cobbles in St. James's Square and repairing the Market Well.
6. Replacing poorly designed shopfronts with ones of improved and/or traditional appearance.
7. Avoiding the replacement of traditional timber windows with ones in uPVC or of otherwise poor design.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES & CONSERVATION AREAS

A conservation area is defined by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) gives further guidance on policy and practice in conservation areas.

Local authorities have a duty to:-

- (i) identify, designate and periodically review conservation areas.
- (ii) prepare proposals for their preservation and enhancement, submit them for consideration at a public meeting and have regard to the views expressed.
- (iii) have regard to their preservation and enhancement in carrying out their general planning functions.
- (iv) publicise applications affecting their character or appearance.

ADDITIONAL CONTROLS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

Broadly, the main additional controls which apply in a conservation area (and Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) are as follows:

1. DEMOLITION OF BUILDINGS

The total or substantial demolition of any building exceeding 115m³ requires conservation area consent. (However, the total demolition of dwelling houses, buildings adjoining them and other buildings exceeding 50m³, both within and outside conservation areas, requires prior approval by the local planning authority.)

2. DEMOLITION OF WALLS

The demolition of any wall exceeding 1m in height (if abutting a highway or public open space) or 2m in height elsewhere requires conservation area consent.

3. WORKS TO TREES

Six weeks notice must be given to the local planning authority of the intention to fell, top or lop any tree with a trunk in excess of 75mm in diameter measured at a height of 1m above ground level.

4. EXTENSIONS TO DWELLING HOUSES

Domestic extensions which do not require planning consent are limited to 50m³ or 10%, whichever is the greater, compared with 70m³ or 15% for non-terraced houses outside conservation areas.

5. CURTILAGE BUILDINGS

Any curtilage building greater than 10m³ requires planning consent and is treated as an enlargement of the dwelling house. (Less stringent controls apply outside conservation areas.)

6. DORMERS

All dormers require planning consent. (Less stringent controls apply outside conservation areas.)

7. SATELLITE DISHES

Satellite dishes on chimneys, front walls or on front roof slopes require planning consent. (Less stringent controls apply outside conservation areas.)

8. EXTERNAL CLADDING

External cladding of a dwelling with stone, tiles, artificial stone, plastic or timber requires planning consent.

GRANTS FOR WORKS IN CONSERVATION AREAS

To complement these additional controls, grants may be available from the Council for the repair of listed buildings or for projects which will enhance the character of conservation areas. In specific areas of the District, e.g. Ripon, Knaresborough and the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, a wider range of grants may be available. For more information, contact Customer Services at the Department of Technical Services (01423 500600) for an explanatory leaflet.