



Ickwell Conservation Area

Introduction

18 May 2005

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. This document is one of a series of revised conservation area appraisals in Mid Bedfordshire. Ickwell Conservation Area was designated on 6th October 1971 and no review has been undertaken since. The setting, character and appearance of Ickwell are considered separately. This will enable Development Control to determine whether proposals preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area or its setting. Areas in need of enhancement are also identified.

Setting

The village of Ickwell lies on gently undulating land and is surrounded by agricultural land with the registered Historic Parks and Gardens of Old Warden Park and Southill Park (both grade II*) to the south and Moggerhanger Park (grade II) to the north. Ickwell Conservation Area includes the houses facing the large village green together with Ickwell Bury which is set within its own registered parkland setting (grade II). The area also includes a spur of houses running west along Warden Road and a shorter leg running south along the bridleway towards the aerodrome to the east of Shuttleworth House and which serves the Shuttleworth Collection.



Warden Road

The entrance to the village along Warden Road (from the south west) is through attractive countryside and parkland. The land to the north and west of the road comprises the parkland of Ickwell Bury and the road is flanked by belts of mature trees.

From the north, although the parkland of Ickwell Bury dominates the west side of the road, ribbon housing development on the west side means that the settlements of Ickwell and Northill virtually join. Along the footpath from the south east, the setting of the village is dominated by paddocks. The only other route into the village is from Caldecote to the east where a short ribbon of residential development, either side of the road, announces the village before the historic core is reached.

Character



Ickwell Green

Ickwell is dominated by the large village green and by the presence of Ickwell Bury to the west. In the C13, Ickwell Bury Manor was attached to the Barony of Eaton and by the C17 covered almost 500 acres. The C17 house burnt down in 1937 and was soon rebuilt. It is the new house together with earlier outbuildings that are seen when viewed across the impressive landscaped park which contributes much to the village character.

The Home Farm of Ickwell Bury survives on the north side of The Green together with a very attractive range of estate cottages plus the old village bakery on the west side. A separate farm occupied the south side; the farmhouse surviving, whilst on the east side is The Old House which is of medieval origins and is still partly surrounded by a moat. Several timber framed cottages with either thatched or clay tiled roofs survive around The Green and on Warden Road whilst the former village smithy is now a changing room on The Green.



The right to hold a fair on The Green has existed since 1676 and the permanent maypole on the west side of The Green is a reminder that there have been May Day celebrations here for over 400 years and continue to present day. During the

Summer, the larger area of The Green is used for cricket and rows of cars and at times an ice cream van line the cricket pitch's northern boundary. The cricket field is distinctive in that an impressive oak tree stands inside the boundary. The Green remains the social and physical heart of the village.

A major characteristic of the village is that it does not have a church, pub or shop. Ickwell is part of Northill Parish and it is in the village of Northill that the church and village pub may be found.

Appearance

Warden Road

The road running north from Old Warden turns through 90 degrees towards The Green and this corner marks the beginning of the conservation area. To the north of Warden Road is the Historic Park and Garden of Ickwell Bury. A boundary within these grounds effectively divides pasture land to the south west from parkland with large forest-scale trees to the north east. There are also belts of mature trees along the road side. These are not so dense as to prevent views across the park to the house and associated buildings in the distance. A new footpath, created in the raised bank to avoid the blind corner, allows some particularly good views. Heading west towards The Green, the bank drops and becomes a grass verge. The timber boundary fence is rather low-key for such grand parkland.



Ickwell Bury from Warden Road

All the properties along Warden Road are along the south side and include a fine group of four thatched cottages with rendered timber framed walls. Nos.5 and 7 are gabled onto the road whilst nos.9 and 13 are parallel to the road. No.7 is C17 whilst the others are C18. No.9 has a simple picket fence characteristic of several traditional cottages in the village. No.13 has a weatherboarded gable at the west end and is single storey whilst the others have attic rooms. Most have been extended, no 5 with an L-shaped addition with weatherboarded walls and a pantiled roof.



No.5 Warden Road

The majority of the other buildings are C20, however, an exception to this is no.11 which sits very close to the east side of no.13 and is rendered with exposed timber framing and a shallow pitched slate roof and probably dates from the C19. Nos.8 and 9a are modern and whilst the latter is largely hidden behind a hedge, no.8 has an open frontage dominated by the vehicle turning area and formal brick walls.

The rest of Warden Road, before arriving at The Green, contains houses built in the C20. These are all substantial properties many of which have been significantly extended. With the exception of 'Clare House', which is a bungalow, all are one and a half or two storeys. Perhaps the most interesting is 'Whitethorn' which although C20 has a thatched roof. Otherwise the houses usually have concrete tiled roofs which are hipped, have prominent gables or dormers, and painted rendered walls. Although the eastern part of the road lacks the historic buildings and intimacy of its western leg, the grass verges, hedge lines and mature shrubs in the gardens do soften the impact of the large houses which have a more consistent building line further back in their plots than the earlier buildings.

Nearest The Green, the two cottages on either side, Old Warden Cottage on the north side and Corner Cottage on the south side are technically on Warden Road though of course they contribute much to The Green itself. Corner Cottage is a C17 thatched cottage of similar form to those found further



Corner Cottage

up Warden Road with a large C20 extension. Old Warden Cottage is of similar character to the group of cottages on the south west corner of The Green and is a one and a half storey timber framed cottage with a clay tiled roof with gabled dormers.

The cottage garden is well defined by hedges and the view across the garden to nos.12-14 The Green is a very attractive composition. However the main vista from the end of Warden Road is the remarkable panorama across The Green.

The Green

Whilst The Green is read more or less as one space it is in fact a group of smaller greens. The cricket pitch occupies the larger, the maypole the second largest and the war memorial the third largest. The Green is dissected by the Old Warden – Northhill road which meets with Caldecote Road at a crossroads where the fourth arm is a track on the west side which leads to Ickwell Bury. A perimeter track gives access to the houses which border the space. The track is unmetaled and whilst it has a suitable rustic appearance, it is heavily pot-holed in places and could be enhanced.



Ickwell Green as viewed from the cricket pavillion

The north and west sides of The Green have a very strong character where there are no modern houses and the traditional cottages, houses and agricultural buildings are seen against a backcloth of parkland trees in Ickwell Bury Park. The other sides of The Green have seen more change by way of new houses and extensions. Despite this the vast scale of the space, the low-rise (no more than two storeys) scale of all the houses and judicious planting mean that there are very few discordant features in views across The Green.

Beginning at the north end, no.1 (Thackitt Eaves) is another C18 thatched timber-framed cottage of one and a half storeys. It has pointed-arched casement windows with leaded lights whilst the double porch shows that the cottage was originally a pair. The cottage sits behind a picket fence and the tree on the corner is important in helping enclose the north corner of The Green. No.3 is a contrast in that it is a simple cottage which from the front elevation appears single storey though



No.3 The Green

in fact it does have rooms in the tall clay tiled roof. As usual in the village it is timber framed and rendered though more unusually, it sits on a high plinth.

Nos.4 and 6 date from the C20 and are the only row of houses

in the old part of the village. However, the materials of construction and the picket fences around the garden mean that this block does not appear discordant when seen alongside its older neighbours.