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Introduction

Horndon-on-the-Hill Conservation Area was designated in 1969. It is the oldest conservation area in Thurrock.

The designation of a conservation area should not be seen as an end in itself. It is important that conservation areas are regularly reviewed and the preparation of a character appraisal is a part of this process. An appraisal should be regarded as an opportunity to re-assess a conservation area and to evaluate its special interest and significance. It is the defining of special interest that is the main purpose of the appraisal. The appraisal should also provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about the future of the conservation area through the development of management considerations.

The core of the appraisal is the definition of the special interest of the Horndon-on-the-Hill Conservation Area and this is intended to provide a vivid, succinct picture of how it is today together with an evaluation of its key characteristics.

Reference is made to the relevant national and local planning policy framework. An outline is provided of the steps that have been taken to involve the local community and other interested parties in the preparation of the appraisal.

Boundary changes are described and an indication of management considerations provided.

It is emphasised that no appraisal can ever be fully comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.
Planning Policy Framework

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’ (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Designation places certain duties upon local planning authorities. They must review the ‘special interest’ of their areas from time to time and also consider whether new conservation areas should be designated.

The Adopted Thurrock Borough Local Plan 1997 forms part of the development plan for Thurrock and provides the basis for decisions on land use planning. It contains policies regarding the designation, review and enhancement of conservation areas, together with guidance relating to the control of development within them. These Local Plan policies are outlined in Appendix 1.

The Council is currently preparing its Local Development Framework. This will be a range of documents containing policies and proposals to guide the future development and use of land in Thurrock up to 2021, including those relating to conservation areas. It will form part of the statutory development plan and will replace the Local Plan.

With regard to the control of development within conservation areas the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 requires that planning applications be made for certain types of development which are elsewhere considered to be ‘permitted development’. This includes various types of cladding; the insertion of dormer windows into roof slopes; the erection of satellite dishes on walls, roofs or chimneys fronting a highway; and the installation of radio masts and antennae. The size of house and industrial extensions that may be carried out in conservation areas without a specific grant of planning permission is also more restricted.

www.thurrock.gov.uk
n.b. detailed information regarding listed buildings should be verified separately
Special interest of Horndon-on-the-Hill

1. Origins and historic development

There are very few indications of a settlement at Horndon-on-the-Hill before the Saxon period. At this time it is thought to have been the location of a 11th century Saxon mint, one of only three in Essex. Immediately to the east of High Road is a rectilinear field system and substantial lynchets and it has been suggested that these are the remains of a possible defended enclosure possibly linked to the mint.

The centre of the historic village was in the vicinity of the junction of High Road with Orsett Road. In this location is St Peter and St Paul’s church, which although dating from the 13th century, must have had a predecessor, probably on the same site, as the Domesday Book refers to a church here in 1066. Other important buildings were located immediately adjacent to the market place and High Road.

During the Medieval period Horndon-on-the-Hill became important as a collection point for wool, which at the time of the Domesday Book was the principal product of the Essex marshes. At this time Horndon-on-the-Hill took on the status of a ‘town’ and was an important administrative centre. It had a market and fair both dating from the 13th century.

Horndon-on-the-Hill failed to develop significantly after the Medieval period. As a result, the Medieval street pattern is well preserved and a significant number of Medieval and post-Medieval buildings and burgage plots have survived in the central part of the historic village. The Medieval tenement plots are still extant on the east side of High Road but their survival is more fragmentary to the west.

The Medieval street plan appears to have consisted primarily of High Road, which runs north-south through the village. To the west two roads lead off High Road - Mill Lane and Orsett Road on either side of the church.

The alignments of two other Medieval alleyways are also discernible either side of the Woolmarket. These probably led to the area of the former market.

Chapman & Andre map (1777)

A period of prosperity returned in the 18th century when several of the larger buildings in the village were either rebuilt or remodelled. Despite this new building, the village remained relatively small continuing to be clustered around the junction of Orsett Road and High Road.

The 19th century and early 20th century saw the extension of the historic village north along High Road. However, the form of the village began to alter significantly during the 20th century with the development of land to the west of the historic village. This was initially of a sporadic nature with the sale and development of individual plots. It was only with the provision of essential services such as road access and water supply that more extensive residential development took place to fill most of the gaps that had been created.

The Bell PH, Horndon-on-the-Hill

Map of Horndon-on-the-Hill (1922)
2. Character analysis

General character and settlement form of Horndon-on-the-Hill

High Road (Orsett Road to Mill Lane)

i west side

High Road has a concentration of 14th, 15th and 16th century timber-frame buildings, set on the edge of the pavement. This includes the 15th century listed building (LB) The Stores (now Country Fayre), the 19th century façade to the 16th century Woolmarket Cottage (LB); and in its own space the 14th century Woolmarket (LB) (formerly the Old Market Hall). To the rear of the Woolmarket are two pairs of 19th century brick cottages, 1 to 4 The Square, which back onto a lane leading to the east side of the churchyard and framing this narrow view. There is a narrow walled passage (locally called the ‘gobble shoot’) at the side of the churchyard wall. Framing this on the north side is the 18th century façade of a 16th century house, Oxley House (LB), and the 19th century façade to the workshops to the rear. The prominent corner of Mill Lane has, set on the edge of the pavement, a well-proportioned 20th century development, which frames the corner.

High Road – west side

High House

ii east side

Set at the edge of the pavement, as the road narrows, and with long plots to the rear field boundary, are the rendered early 19th century The Swan PH (LB) and attached 19th century Swan Cottage (LB) followed by the suburban small front garden and set back 20th century Hope House.

High Road – east side

High House

Set behind a small front yard, the early 18th century red brick Georgian façade of High House (LB) is framed by the protruding adjacent buildings. Attached to the south but set forward on the edge of the road is the late 17th century red brick Hill House (LB). Separate, but also set on the edge of the road, is the smaller pebble dash rendered house, Butchers (LB) which frames the north side of the easterly footpath. On the south side is the timber frame sidewall jetty of the 14th century The Bell PH (LB) side wing. Attached to The Bell PH to the south is an 18th century shop (LB) (formerly Bell Cottage). A wide entrance to the gravelled rear car park is framed by the quirky applied timber 20th century façade of the older house, Grice’s, which is set amongst mature trees, the canopy of which joins the west side where High Road descends south towards Pump Street and the site of the former village pump.
South Hill

The west side is framed by gardens, which are dominated by mature trees and shrubs, in front of 20th century houses. Within this group is the 19th century Lower Thatched Cottage (LB). There is a 19th century brick semi-detached cottage at the edge of the road. As the road rises into the slope, it has the character of a sunken lane with brick retaining walls on either side in front of the higher gardens. The lower wall is 19th century and, near the ridge, there is a length of 18th century battered (sloping) retaining wall. Set back within the large garden is the rendered façade of the 16th century Old House (LB). At the ridge there is an angled drive access widening the road space. Set close and framing the road is a well-detailed 19th century brick semi-detached house. Beyond the 20th century surgery is the 19th century rendered corner building, The Old Bake House, with its chamfered corner. This building returns to a high brick garden wall which frames the extremely narrow lane Orsett Road, along with the opposite 16th century side wing of The Stores (Country Fayre) and its low red brick boundary wall.

Orsett Road

i south side

Orsett Road is wider in front of the churchyard. Behind a low wall and slightly set back on the south side are two pairs of 19th century brick semi-detached cottages.

ii north side

The low red brick wall and mature trees within the churchyard frame the road. Set back within the churchyard, entered by the pleached lime framed path, is the ragstone and flint rubble faced 13th century St. Peter and St. Paul’s church (LB). The 15th century timber belfry and spire is a distant landmark pinnacle, which rises above the roofs and trees of the village. The west side of the churchyard is framed by pollarded mature trees near the edge, which overhang the footpath outside to the west. To the north, the churchyard has the character of a low walled green, which is edged by a line of pleached limes, framing the south side of Mill Lane. The edge of pavement gault brick wall of the commercial buildings also frames the south side of Mill Lane.
High Road, north of Mill Lane

To the north of Mill Lane and set on the pavement edge is the recent brick fronted village hall. It has a large bituminous surface car park to the rear entered off Mill Lane.

After a 20th century group of houses set close to the pavement is the 17th century house, now a terrace of cottages, nos. 1 to 4 Halls Row (LB). Within the pavement is a 1935 cast iron (type K6) telephone box (LB), which sits isolated in front of a set back 20th century house. Following the 20th century housing estate holding the corner, with Vincent Avenue, is the 19th century red brick old school and schoolhouse building. This is followed by four pairs of 19th century semi-detached houses. The corner of High Road with Hillcrest Road is where the ancient lane levels off after rising from the north.

Building materials and details in Horndon-on-the-Hill

Although the village’s timber frame buildings and oldest plan forms date from the Medieval period, the present external appearance of many of these earlier original buildings owe their external surface character from the later prosperity of the 18th and 19th centuries. Although retained, these alterations hid a wealth of earlier historic fashion and detail. The later use of render or re-facing in brick, the raising of roofs and the alteration of doors, porches and windows took place.

The basic building forms with later detail changes give Horndon-on-the-Hill Conservation Area its varied sense of historic detail, with the exception of the majority of the 20th century buildings and additions. The use of locally sourced materials and skills unites the character of the historic vernacular structures to give them their special interest.

In addition to the historic building forms, walls, roofs, doors and windows, the materials and details also have special interest.

St. Peter and St. Paul’s church appears to be the only ragstone or flint rubble structure in the village. Timber frame was commonly used with all pre-17th century buildings and subsequently rendered or clad with brick walls.

Timber frame

The Medieval and Tudor buildings in Horndon-on-the-Hill are constructed in timber frame with timber external walls. In Horndon-on-the-Hill they are town buildings in Medieval plots, as opposed to farm buildings. There is no evidence of retained farm buildings within the village.

Within Medieval plots, the ancillary functions and buildings were clustered or attached to the rear and were smaller than the principal building. However, these structures were constructed from the same range of locally available materials. If not originally attached to the main structure, the kitchen was a freestanding structure close to the brick lined well.

From the 17th century, many buildings were plastered over and lime washed, concealing much of their framing.

Weatherboarding is also in use as a later cladding for house external walls. This is usually painted white on the front or other important elevations and black or tarred on the sides or rear.
Brick

Hand made bricks come into use, apart from early chimneystacks, as external walling in the 18th century (red brick) and in the 19th century (yellow stock or grey gault brick).

Until the later 19th century lime mortar was used.

In the 20th century, re-pointing and repair often uses detrimental cement based mortar. Its use can often be seen in combination with the use of unsuitable protruding and thickened cement.

20th century

In the late 19th and early 20th century, cement and machine made bricks became available as a walling material.

Although previously lime render and weatherboard had been used to reduce the penetration of damp on traditional buildings, with the availability of expanded metal lath, some buildings have now been encased in cement render.

Industrially produced materials such as asbestos and concrete tiles also came into use in the 20th century. Due to their interlocking, lower pitched roofs than before were constructed.

All of these forms contribute to the interest and character of Horndon-on-the-Hill Conservation Area although not all are externally visible. Earlier buildings are often upgraded with features such as lime washed render, sash windows or Victorian chimney stacks attached to the sides, rising from the ridge or parapet gables.

Community involvement

Involving the local community and raising public awareness has been an integral part of the process of preparing the character appraisal.

This took the form of sending consultation letters to all residents and occupants in the Conservation Area requesting views on the following-

- What features are important to Horndon-on-the-Hill Conservation Area and make it special
- What adds to the character
- What takes away from the character

Included with the consultation letter was a questionnaire together with a plan of the Conservation Area and a summary of the considered character and possible issues.

In addition, the entire public consultation process took place online on the Council’s website. Notice of the public exhibitions was given in the local press.

The Horndon-on-the-Hill Community Forum and Horndon-on-the-Hill Society were consulted, as were local ward members, the MP and other interested parties.

An exhibition with historic maps, photographs and documents was held on 17th and 20th October 2006 at The Woolmarket, Horndon-on-the-Hill, where Officers were available to talk through issues and answer questions.

Consultation responses affirmed the following issues:

- The importance of the designated Conservation Area
- The possible expansion to include other areas of special interest
- Involvement of the public in the process of character appraisals
- Involvement of the public in the production of management proposals
- The preservation and management of the special issues
- Any new proposal should respect and not detract from the existing character
**Boundary changes**

An important aspect of the appraisal process is the consideration of where the boundary of the Conservation Area should be drawn. The appropriateness of current boundaries should be regularly reassessed, perhaps on a five-year cycle (Guidance on conservation area appraisals – English Heritage 2006).

Four changes to the boundary of Horndon-on-the-Hill Conservation Area have been made.

- At the northern boundary of the Conservation Area, the road junction of High Road with Hillcrest Road is important because it is at the entrance to the Conservation Area. The properties on the northwest corner were diagonally bisected by the original boundary. As they do not have significant architectural or historic interest it has been resolved that these properties should not be included in the Conservation Area. The boundary has been revised to the back of pavement.

- To the north of Mill Lane, the gardens of some of the properties within Romagne Close and on Mill Lane were diagonally bisected by the original boundary. It has been resolved that the boundary be revised to exclude the properties of Romagne Close and include the properties Sandelwood, Birchwood and Gablewood fronting Mill Lane.

- To the west of the churchyard of St. Peter and St. Paul, the original boundary divided the staggered terrace of 27 to 39 (odd) Francis Close. Although this terrace does not have architectural or historic interest, the framing of the churchyard to the west is important to the character. It has been resolved that the boundary follow the east front of the terrace and include the gardens and path, as well as the space fronting Orsett Road.

- To the east of High Road, adjacent and behind Grice’s, part of Saffron Close (nos. 7, 8, 9 & 10) was originally included in the Conservation Area. As these properties are not of special architectural or historic interest it has been resolved that they should no longer be within the Conservation Area.

**Management considerations**

Conservation Areas are living environments, which are inevitably subject to change and evolution. The original character of some buildings in the Horndon-on-the-Hill Conservation Area has already been altered, through for example replacement windows, concrete roof tiles, and the painting or rendering of brickwork.

It is important to try and prevent erosion of the essential character of the Conservation Area as a result of such changes. The restoration of original features should be promoted.

The spread of the use of UPVC, a material that is neither sympathetic in appearance nor sustainable should be checked. Poor maintenance means that there will be a need to replace windows in many buildings and in such circumstances the opportunity should be taken to ensure the new windows are in character. The appearance of properties that have already undergone alteration would be greatly improved if new windows were inserted to the original pattern.

Front doors can also contribute greatly to the appearance of houses and controls to ensure that they are not replaced unsympathetically may also be valuable. Prominent boundary treatments in the Conservation Area are important and their alteration has the potential to be a problem.

The Council will consider the production of design guidance with regard to matters of the nature outlined to assist residents and landowners in their choices.

Once a conservation area is designated, additional planning controls can be introduced by limiting permitted development rights through the issue of an Article 4(2) direction under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. Planning permission would then be required for the works that are specified. There is no intention at this stage to consider use of an Article 4 direction.

Nevertheless the Council reserves the right to consider use of a direction in the future if it is deemed necessary and appropriate to control serious loss of character.

In the event that such a decision is taken, there would be a formal process of notification and opportunity for those affected to support or object to the proposal.

Management Proposals for Horndon-on-the-Hill Conservation Area were published in March 2007. The Management Proposals provide an outline of general issues relevant to the Conservation Area.
Appendix 1 – Thurrock Borough Local Plan 1997 – Conservation Area policies

BE22 – Conservation Areas – Designation, Review and Enhancement

‘The Council will regularly review conservation area boundaries, amend them when necessary and examine the need to designate new conservation areas using the following broad criteria to assess the special interest of areas:

(i) The origins and development of the topography of the area;
(ii) Archaeological significance and potential;
(iii) Prevalent building materials, character and hierarchy of spaces;
(iv) The quality and relationship of buildings in the area including the contribution of unlisted buildings;
(v) The contribution made by trees and other green features.

Using the above criteria, the Council will also formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas’.

BE23 – Development affecting Conservation Areas

‘Development proposals within, adjacent to, or affecting the Borough’s conservation areas will be expected to preserve and enhance their character or appearance. The Council will not permit any development that would be in conflict with this objective.

In this regard, special attention will be paid to the following:

(i) The retention and protection of all buildings, whether listed or not, trees and any other features which are important to the character or appearance of that area;
(ii) The position of new buildings, which should enhance the character and appearance of the area and be in scale and harmony with the adjoining buildings and the area as a whole;
(iii) The use of materials, which should be appropriate to the area and sympathetic to adjoining buildings.

The desirability of preserving or enhancing the area will also be taken into consideration by the Council in the handling of development proposals which are outside the area but would affect its setting, or views into or out of the area.’

BE-23A-Demolition in Conservation Areas

‘The Council will not grant consent for the total or substantial demolition of a building in a conservation area unless it can be shown to their satisfaction that the building is wholly beyond repair; incapable of reasonably beneficial use; or where its removal would enhance the character or appearance of the area.

If necessary, the Council will impose a condition on the grant of any consent providing that any development shall not take place before a contract for carrying out the works of redevelopment on the site has been granted for the development for which the contract provides.’

BE24-Article Four Directions in Conservation Areas

‘In exceptional circumstances, including where there are real and specific threats to the character of the conservation area, and subject to approval by the Secretary of State, the Council will make direction under article 4 of the General Development Order to restrict permitted development rights in conservation areas.’
Appendix 2-Listed Buildings in the Horndon-on-the-Hill Conservation Area as shown in the 17th list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (as at January 2007)

HIGH ROAD (west side)
Halls Row (Nos 1, 2, 3 and 4)
Grade II GV
C17 or C18 house, now a terrace of cottages. Timber-framed and weatherboarded, with red plain tile gambrel roof. Two storeys and attics. Four window range C19 horizontal sliding sashes with glazing bars to ground floor and C19 casements at first floor. Four gabled dormers.

HIGH ROAD (west side)
Old Market Hall (formerly listed as Woolmarket House)
Grade II GV
C14 with extensive later alteration and modernisation. Ground floor is open on massive oak posts, with flat arch bracing, and heavy joisted first floor. Timber is exposed externally at first floor level and largely of C17 and C20. Modern windows. (RCHM 8).

HIGH ROAD (west side)
Woolmarket Cottage
Grade II GV
C19 front range, to C16 or earlier rear wing. Timber-framed, plastered and weatherboarded. Red plain tile roof. Two storeys. Two window range modern casements at ground floor and C19 sashes at first floor. Modern chimney at north end.

HIGH ROAD (west side)
The Stores (formerly listed as premises opposite Hill House)
II GV
C15, house and shop. Timber-framed and plastered and part weatherboarded. Red plain tile roof. Two storeys. Two early C18 double hung vertical sliding sashes with glazing bars at south end, and original C18 door incorporated into modern shop front, at southern end. Southern end also has modern “exposed timber” at first floor. North range has original frame exposed at first floor and 3 double hung vertical sliding sashes with glazing bars. South side has long wall jetty and is weatherboarded. Gabled wings at rear. Internally much of the original frame remains including simple crown post roof. (RCHM 6-7).

SOUTH HILL (west side)
The Old House
Grade II GV

HIGH ROAD (east side)
Mayfield Cottage
Grade II GV
Late C19 picturesque cottage, brick and timber frame with weatherboarding, and thatched roof. One storey and attic. Two window range. C19 casements. Two large feature dormers to south front. Central red brick chimney stack.

HIGH ROAD (east side)
Swan Inn
Grade II GV
Early C19, timber-framed and plastered with some painted brick. Two storeys. Grey slate roofs. Two, 3 window range double hung vertical sliding sashes with glazing bars. Centre range windows have segmental heads. Carriage arch at north end. Modern casements to ground floor. Modern extensions at rear.

HIGH ROAD (east side)
Swan Cottage
Grade II GV
Early C19 house, painted brick with grey slate roof. Two storeys and attics. Two window range double hung sashes. Modern casement at ground floor. Doors have semi-circular arches. Gabled dormer.

HIGH ROAD (east side)
High House
Grade II* GV
Early C18, house. Red brick with flared headers, parapet wall, and grey slate roof with tile capping. Two storeys, cellars and attics. Six window range double hung vertical sliding sashes with glazing bars, cambered heads, cased frames and brick aprons on brackets.
Three flat dormers with casements. Carriage arch at south end, with original doors, having raised and fielded panels, and tops curved down to centre. Open pedimented doorcase on columns with 6 panel door, approached by steps up. Date panel inscribed (W. K. 1728). Good C18 detailing internally. (RCHM 3).

HIGH ROAD (east side)
Hill House
Grade II

Late C17 house in red brick with flared headers. Two storeys and attics, with red plain tile roof. Five window range, double hung vertical sliding sashes with glazing bars, 2 now blocked. Six panel door with flat hood on fretted brackets with semi-circular fanlight. Coved plaster eaves cornice. Two hipped dormers and lean-to at rear.

HIGH ROAD (east side)
Butchers
Grade II

Early C19 house, brick and timber framed with render. Two storeys. Modern tile roof. Three window range C19 casement and 2, C19, and one modern double hung sashes below. Shop at north end in lean-to extension.

HIGH ROAD (east side)
Bell Inn
Grade II*

Late C14 with C15 and C16 alteration. Timber-framed and plastered with some painted brick. Red plain tile roof. Two storeys. Three window range double hung vertical sliding sashes with glazing bars. Two 3 light sash windows and modern doors at ground floor. Jettied on north elevation, with original framing exposed. Modern casements. Carriage arch with projecting upper storey, gabled above. Plan is complex but has crossing of late C14 or early C15, at south end, with oversailed roof. Remainder of front range if C15 with C16 additions at rear. Internally there are hollow chamfered tie beams, crown post roofs, moulded beams and C15 window and doorway. (RCHM 4).

HIGH ROAD (east side)
Shop adjacent to Bell Inn (formerly listed as Bell Cottage)
Grade II

C18 or possibly earlier house. Timber-framed and plastered. Two storeys, with red plain tile roof. Modern shop to ground floor. First floor projects. Three window range double hung sashes.

HIGH ROAD (east side)
K6 Telephone Kiosk opposite Wesleyan Chapel
Grade II GV


ORSETT ROAD
Church of St Peter and St Paul
Grade I


Now blocked. C15 window in west wall. C13 south aisle has 2, C14 windows with trefoiled ogee lights and an early C13 lancet with moulded splays, carved imposts and a restored head. South doorway is early C13, with rounded arch of 2 moulded arches, jambs have 2 attached columns with moulded capitals and bases. C15 north chapel, has one C15 window. Late C15 timber belfry and spire with multiple arch bracing and cambered tie beams. C15 roof to chancel is 7 cants, on moulded wall plates. Nave is basically crown posts with Soulsaces and ashlar pieces. Dormer windows inserted in C16 and C17.

South aisle has 3 cant roof. South porch is C15 with arch braces to collar roof with spur ties at eaves. C14 font, with square bowl. Monument of 1634 to Daniel Caldwell and wife, with figures of prophets. Late C19 wood lectern with turquoise and copper inlay. (RCHM 1).

SOUTH HILL
Lower Thatched Cottage
Grade II
