

Somerset County Council

Civic Amenities Act 1967

Martock

Conservation area



Martock

Introduction

The Civic Amenities Act, 1967 requires the Local Planning Authority to determine which parts of their area are *"areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance and to designate such areas as Conservation Areas."*

The Act also provides that when a Conservation Area has been so designated, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance in the exercise of powers under Part I of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act, 1953, the Local Authorities (Historic Buildings) Act, 1962, or the Town and Country Planning Acts 1962-68 with respect to any buildings or other land in such areas.

Brief Description of the Town

Martock, together with Hurst and Bower Hinton, form a continuous settlement in an open level setting along almost two miles of the B.3165

Entering the Conservation Area from the southern end gives the visitor the impression that he has arrived at the "back door". The twists and changes of direction in this stretch of road provide the basic elements for an exciting and dramatic approach; what is needed is the removal of the overhead wires,



road midway between Somerton and Crewkerne, and some 7 miles west of Yeovil. The County Development Plan schedules it as a place of more than average amenity value.

Martock was the centre of a large estate belonging to the West Saxon Kings which included the modern parishes of Ash and Long Load. Together they formed the Hundred of Martock. This was divided between several large manors, such as Hurst, Bower, and Stapleton, and lands there were also held by the Vicars Choral at Wells the Abbey of Mont St. Michel (later by Syon Abbey) and by the Treasurer of Wells Cathedral. It was largely an agricultural community until the eighteenth Century, when the glovemaking industry became established and the function of the town gradually changed from agricultural to industrial. Glovemaking prospered until early this century, since when a wider range of industry has been introduced. At present considerable residential and commercial development is taking place.

The centre of Martock shows a well proportioned arrangement of buildings reflecting the earlier historical significance of the village. Early development at Hurst and Bower Hinton has been partially obscured by the subsequent industrial development and the accompanying housing that now links together the three formerly separate settlements.

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The Conservation Area

The main concentration of buildings of special architectural or historic interest is situated in Church Street at Martock. The width of this street stems from the time Martock was a market centre.

The market was founded in 1247 and held in the street weekly until the early part of the present century. The Church of All Saints at the southern end of this street is noted for its size, fine tower and Somerset tracery. The roof interior is reputed to be the finest example of its kind in the County. To the west of the Church is a moat partially now filled in, probably the site of the Old Manor House of Martock Manor. A fragment of the former building remains. Near the centre of Church Street is the new Manor House dating from 1679 and largely rebuilt during the nineteenth century.

Two further buildings contribute to the particularly fine group around the Church. The most outstanding is the thirteenth century Treasurers House. Set back from the street and visible through an archway, it has several distinctive features. Fronting the carriageway is the former Grammar School founded in 1662 and closed in 1860. The present building dates from the foundation of the school.

A feature of Church Street is the variation in the alignment of buildings which form an almost continuous frontage interspersed with walling and archways. At several points along the street buildings

Whilst the character of a village lane, as distinct from a town street, must be carefully maintained, some parts display an "uncared for" appearance which is something very different



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have been set back and collectively they provide a group of outstanding significance.

The vista along Church Street in the opposite direction is terminated by the Town Hall in front of which stands the Market Cross. The former is a Georgian structure and the Cross, which is of the same period and takes the form of a Pinnacle is of an unusual design for this type of feature in this county. The column, which has a fluted shaft supported on an octagonal base is surmounted by a capital of Tuscan design, a ball finial and a sundial, was recently restored. The grouping of buildings immediately north of the Town Hall is of great interest with glimpses between buildings and views that change quickly with movement. The feeling of enclosure in this area serves as a marked contrast to the broad, generous spaces in other parts of Martock.

The character of the adjoining settlements of Bower Hinton and Hurst is chiefly rested in a scattering of domestic buildings from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries some of which still display particularly fine mullioned windows and doorways with cambered heads and examples of original boundary walls and gateways can still be found. Like parts of Martock itself, the more recent development in these areas does not display the same high regard for design and appearance.

In Bower Hinton the informal grouping of the buildings around a network of lanes and the use of thatch as a roof covering, establishes a rural character in contrast with the more urban linear

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form of development of Hurst with its housing arranged in continuous terraces, many displaying their own identifiable characteristics and punctuated by larger detached buildings of considerable charm and architectural importance.

Within the area there are several groups of trees which enrich the scene. Of special importance are the several evergreen trees of various species near the Church, a Tulip tree to the rear of "The Moorlands" in North Street and a group of Scots Pines at Bower Hinton.

Throughout the area there are a number of buildings, often of temporary nature, which have been constructed in materials which have become unsuitable to their use. A considerable improvement could be effected to the appearance of the area if they were replaced by new buildings, well designed and constructed using materials which are better suited to their requirements and in keeping with those which are established in the older buildings.

A damaging feature within the Conservation Area is the presence of varying amounts of through traffic and street parking. However the problem is not, as yet, so acute as in some of the other Conservation Areas in the county.

The Local Planning Authority consider it to be most desirable that the character and appearance of the areas described above, should be maintained and,

The strong linear form of these terraces makes an important contribution to more urban character of Hurst. It is important that a new "infilling" of development in this street or the replacement of existing buildings which have become decayed with new, should be carried out in a form which respects this character. The street scene would be improved



where possible, enhanced, and accordingly the whole area which is more specifically defined in the schedule below and on the Map, has been designated as a Conservation Area under Section One of the Civic Amenities Act, 1967. It contains sixty three buildings listed as being of special architectural and/or historic interest fifty seven of which are on the Statutory List, and six on the Supplementary List.

Policy For The Conservation Area

The broad objective of the Local Planning Authority for the Conservation Area will be to safeguard and, where possible add to the basic character and visual appearance of the designated area in the exercise of the powers described in the Introduction. In particular they will:-

- a. endeavour to safeguard those buildings statutorily listed as being of special architectural or historic interest,
- b. in the control of new development have special regard to scale, external appearance, and the suitability of materials, and the extent to which new development (including changes of use) can reasonably be allowed in the area. Proposals likely to have a material effect on the character of the area will be published and representations made to the Local Planning Authority will be considered by them when determining an application for planning permission,

by the removal of the overhead wires, the replacement of television aerials by those of the indoor type and the decoration and re-decoration of some properties using colours which are closely related to the more sombre shades to be found in nature and the use of white or cream for windows and door frames and railings.



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- c. as and when possible, and in co-operation with the statutory bodies concerned, endeavour to secure the removal of unsightly overhead wires and supporting structures,
- d seek improvement in the design and placing of street furniture and the removal of unnecessary and disfiguring items including signs;
- e. encourage the renovation of listed buildings in poor condition and the removal or improvement of disfiguring structures;
- f. promote the relettering or replacement of unsightly signs and fascia boards and the encouragement of a harmonious colour theme in external redecoration schemes;
- g. ensure that existing building lines are maintained;
- h. as and when possible, in co-operation with the Highway Authority, endeavour to find alternative routes for through traffic;
- i. encourage the provision of adequate and satisfactory off-street parking space for vehicles.

This section of the street contains many fine individual buildings but the area is generally untidy and uncared for. The stream has been forgotten, except by some, who have used it to discard their unwanted possessions. If the bed of the stream were cleaned and the area landscaped with trees, seats and a well designed footpath, the area would be greatly improved and would become a source of pleasure for those who walk along this street.



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The Local Planning Authority, when considering any proposals within the area will actively encourage:-

1. The use of Ham stone or of reconstructed Ham stone of a suitable external finish for buildings;
2. Traditional forms (including colour) of roofing material and roof pitches;
3. the study of the three dimensional form and proportion and the detailing of external features such as doorways and window frames of the existing buildings — prior to the design of new buildings and the rehabilitation of existing ones;
4. the use of appropriate materials and forms in the construction of boundary walls, footpaths and steps, garages and parking areas, where required, to ensure integration with the established scene;
5. the continuing use of stone in the form of either paving, setts, or cobbles as appropriate for the repair and maintenance of public and private footpaths;
6. the maintenance of the existing fine stock of specimen trees and shrubs by the making of Tree Preservation Orders where appropriate and the planting of new specimens.

In addition to the foregoing, the Local Planning Authority will, when they think it necessary, seek approval of the Secretary of State for The Environment to bring under control particular classes of development otherwise permitted by the Town and Country Planning General Development Orders, 1963 to 1969.

The Market Place, Town Hall and Market Cross

Greater use should be made of this, probably the most important "space" in the whole area. Some of the new buildings do not display the high standard of design which should be demanded in the future, but by narrowing the road to a less extravagant width, and by a minimal reduction in the area given over for car parking it would be possible to

The Local Planning Authority will not grant planning permission in respect of an outline application unless satisfied that the development proposed will be of the requisite standard. Powers available under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1960 to 1969 will be used as necessary to prevent the display of inappropriate advertisements.

The Local Planning Authority will welcome the co-operation of local associations and the public in implementing the foregoing policies and recognise that the success of the latter will depend in no small measure on the degree to which such assistance is forthcoming.

Fringe Area Policy

The character and appearance of the Conservation Area could be affected detrimentally by unsympathetic development within the closely related fringe areas bounded by the broken black line on the attached Designation Map. The Local Planning Authority will endeavour to ensure that new development proposals within these fringe areas are not detrimental to the Conservation Area and where they consider it to be necessary, they will seek public opinion on this issue before determining an application for planning permission.

Schedule

The Conservation Area is bounded by the solid brown line on the Designation Map and includes properties abutting or in close proximity to North Street (part); East Street to East Street Drive; Church Street and Market Oak; Water Street; Hurst and Bower Hinton including Middle Street and Higher Street and parts of Broad Lane.

reduce the amount of unsightly tarmac, to introduce some trees with the interest of colour, light and shade that this will mean, to re-pave the area in more acceptable materials and make this a place where people would be encouraged to stop and sit for a while and meet friends.



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