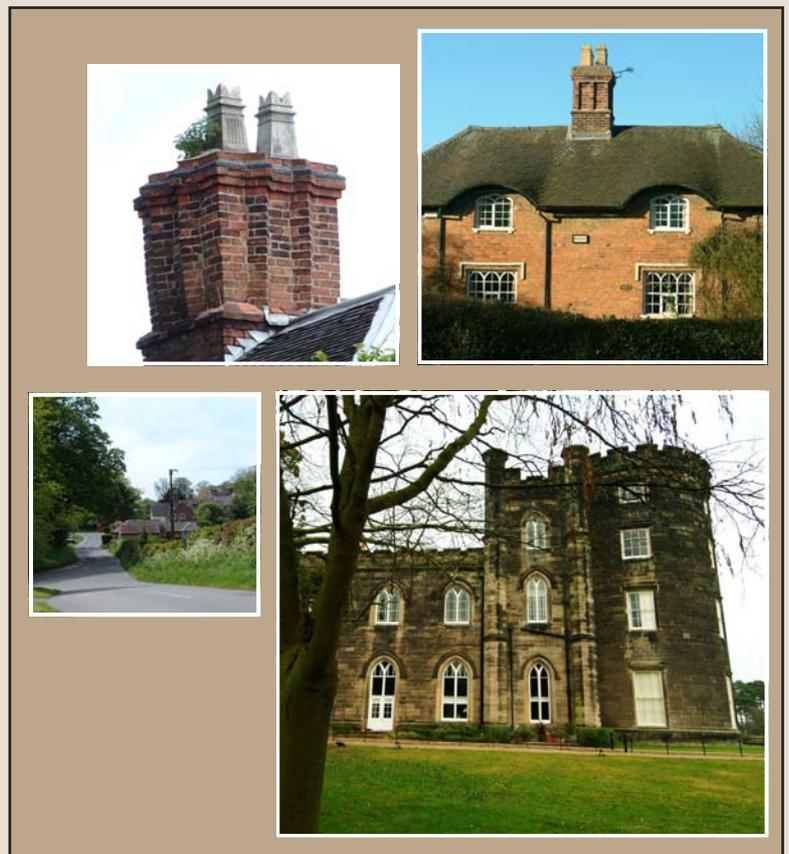


Bretby
Conservation Area
Character Statement



2010
CONSULTATION DRAFT

**SOUTH DERBYSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Brethby *Conservation Area*

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Bretby *Conservation Area*

Introduction

This statement has been produced by Mel Morris Conservation for, and in association with, South Derbyshire District Council. It sets out the special historic and architectural interest that makes the character and appearance of Bretby worthy of protection. It also assesses the degree of damage to that special interest and thus opportunities for future enhancement. This document will be used by the Council when making professional judgements on the merits of development applications.

The Bretby Conservation Area was designated by South Derbyshire District Council on 27th May 1976.

Summary

The character of Bretby conservation area is defined largely by its landscape setting and by important views within a historic 17th and 19th century parkland landscape. It has a rural character strengthened by rich tree planting, full hedgerows and the absence of kerbs and payments.

Whilst the approaches are along narrow leafy lanes, the roads within the village are more open in character, spacious with wide verges.

The conservation area incorporates only a small fragment of a much larger historic parkland (now listed grade II on the English Heritage register of parks and gardens). This was one of the largest designed landscapes within Derbyshire, on a par with Chatsworth, although much of the detail has been lost over the years due to the cumulative effects of deliberate destruction, generations of neglect and some later layers of 19th century re-landscaping. The scale and quality of the gardens and park created by the first and second Earls of Chesterfield between 1639 and 1702 is therefore difficult to appreciate today. They were among the finest in the country.

The village of Bretby has at its core an historic castle site (a Scheduled Ancient Monument). To the east of the castle, the village developed and is now largely composed of early 19th century cottages, although a few are substantial reconstructions of earlier structures. There is evidence in the form of hollow ways and possible abandoned building platforms that the village was once much larger, and has retreated over the years to its present size. Although the main road between Burton and Swadlincote (A511) runs through an area of 20th century development identified as Bretby (also within the parish), the original village of Bretby is hardly more than a hamlet. Despite this, because of its historic importance and its wealthy patron, it had two schools and a chapel, much more than a hamlet would usually require.

In spite of its rich history, the earliest parts of Bretby are well hidden from public view, inaccessible and difficult to interpret.

The distinctive characteristics of Bretby conservation area can be summarised as follows:

- a landscape with picturesque qualities deliberately exploited by successive owners of the estate. The hilly location enables long exchanges of view between the various undulating parts of the conservation area. This picturesque potential was successfully realised in the early 19th century redevelopment of the village.
- two distinct areas of different but complementary character, tied together by their historic links and shared design principles as buildings intended to be enjoyed as part of a wider landscape:
 - Bretby village – a largely early 19th century hamlet of picturesque estate cottages; and
 - Bretby Hall – a largely early 19th century Gothic country house with ancillary buildings.
- large areas of historic parkland landscape and more intimate open spaces, which punctuate the conservation area. The small intimate spaces form two structural spaces, one formal and one informal:
 - the village Green; and
 - the junction of The Green and Watery Lane.



Area of Archaeological Potential

An area of archaeological potential has been defined through an assessment of the known archaeological, documentary and plan-form evidence of the settlement. It has been carried out as part of the review of each conservation area in consultation with the County Archaeologist, the Development Control Archaeologist and the Sites and Monuments Record Officer at Derbyshire County Council.

An area of archaeological potential may encompass both statutory designations (including Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Registered Historic Parks and Gardens) and other non-statutory site information from the Derbyshire Sites and Monuments Record. It shows the probable extent of settlement and industrial activity during the medieval and/or post-medieval periods.

Within the area of archaeological potential there may be reasonable expectation that archaeological evidence relating to the medieval and/or post medieval periods may survive below ground.

Over the centuries, as settlements grow and develop, their focus may shift. Consequently, an area of archaeological potential need not necessarily coincide with the boundary of the conservation area.

Conservation Area Analysis

Historic Development

The conservation area has two distinct clusters of buildings, each one now evolving independently although historically their evolution was completely intertwined:

1. The village is a hamlet of historic estate housing running in a linear form east of the site of Bretby Castle.
2. Bretby Hall and its surrounding buildings form the second part of the conservation area.

Between these two clusters is a section of the former parkland to the Hall, the boundary of which is defined by the south side of Watery Lane, the south-east side of The Green, the entrance drive from the village to the Hall and Philosopher's Wood.

The oldest recorded reference to Bretby was in the Domesday Book of 1086, although its name, meaning "farm of the Britons" is of earlier Danish origin.

The site of Bretby Castle (a Scheduled Ancient Monument) is now a massive outer bank with a ditch inside and 2 large courts (one to the north and one to the south). None of this is easy to make out from the earthworks and deposited excavation material and the site appears to be a series of grassy tussocks and large mounds of earth. Its actual origins are probably 12th century. It was not designed as a proper defensive castle, but was adapted into a fortified manor house and "crenellated" by John Segrave under a licence from Edward I granted in 1301. It apparently remained occupied until 1610 when the new owner, Philip Stanhope, is said to have begun robbing its materials for the construction of a new hall in his new park.

In the medieval period Bretby was one of eight local hamlets that had a "chapel-of-ease" owned by Repton Priory. A "chapel of ease" was one where parishioners could worship to save them from having to travel to the parish church. The Augustinian Canons of Repton Priory would have taken services for each chapel. This chapel survived until 1876 when it was replaced with the current church, built by the Countess of Chesterfield.

Little more is known about the history of the original settlement as early buildings appear to have been completely obliterated during a period of building in the early 19th century.

Philip Stanhope's creation of Bretby Park in 1610, to the south of the castle, would have required a Royal licence. Emparkment



Church Tower

would have involved constructing a brushwood or timber fence (or “pale”) around the perimeter of the area being enclosed, although trees and hedgerows now form the boundaries. The character of deer parks was generally more open than wooded, frequently comprising a mixture of grassy flatlands or “lawns” and tree-clothed banks. There have been substantial losses of trees at Bretby, particularly during the late 18th century and again during the two world wars. In spite of this, the richness of the tree planting remains a dominant characteristic of the conservation area.

At the centre of this park Philip Stanhope built his new house, on elevated land. The house was largely complete by 1639. The precise appearance of the park and gardens at this time is not known, but it is likely that as a deer park it would have used the dramatic changes in level and rolling landscape to good advantage for viewing hunting parties. For this reason, mounts and outcrops were important at this time as viewing points. Its original size was approximately 600 acres and its emparked boundary appears on early County maps. The next phase of its development is recorded in secondary sources but, sadly, the original documentation apparently no longer survives. The park was developed by the second Earl of Chesterfield from 1660 and he employed the French architect Louis Le Vau to develop his house and gardens. It is unlikely that before this time that the great avenues, which distinguished the Bretby landscape, would have been planted, as these are a late 17th century fashion. Before this time, most effort tended to be expended on creating walled gardens and enclosed spaces or courtyards that had an intimate relationship with the house.

The scale of the park in 1707 is reflected on an engraving produced by two Dutchmen (Knyff and Kip) in “Britannia Illustrata”, which was a published series of birds-eye view engravings of the largest country estates in England in the early 18th century, but even this does not show the whole park.

Visitors and diarists of the time commented on the park and gardens and these accounts provide a valuable insight into its appearance. The lavish and lengthy descriptions are almost overwhelming and difficult to conceive today, given that so much of what they saw has been removed.

The Hall eventually fell out of use and was demolished in 1781 by the 5th Earl of Chesterfield. Some time later, plans were developed by the Earl to build a replacement house, which was eventually built between 1813 and the 1830’s.

Around the same time, the 5th Earl of Chesterfield also made his mark on the village and the park. He built many of the historic cottages that survive today and probably re-planted some of the tree clumps (his agent was very keen on forestry). The character of the village as we see it today belongs largely to that period in its history.

Bretby Mews (formerly a stableblock and coach-house) was built circa 1890, and first appears on the second edition OS map of 1900. It is much altered. This was built by another member of the family, the 5th Earl of Caernarvon, to replace the old and probably original 17th century stables (the site of which is now occupied by Cedar Court).

Eventually the estate was sold in 1915 and shortly after sold on to the County Council. In 1926 Bretby Hall and part of its grounds were opened as Bretby Hospital, specialising in bone and spinal deformities. Over the next 30 years an ad hoc assortment of ugly buildings was erected to support the hospital use.

By 1997 the hospital had become redundant and was bought by a developer. Carnarvon Court and Park Row replaced the hospital ward and theatre blocks and the Hall was repaired and converted into flats. Carnarvon Court was built on a U-shaped courtyard plan using a strong orange brick. Designed by conservation architects Brownhill Hayward Brown, it takes its points of reference from other country house ancillary buildings in the area. The typical regional details include gauged brick lintels, chamfered casement windows and stone string courses.

Carnarvon Court was built on the site of the “Bretby Cedar”, planted in 1676 or 7. It once formed the focal point in a courtyard of the 17th century house, and can be seen in the Kip and Knyff engraving of Bretby published in 1707. It survived the demolition of the house in 1781, providing a link with the past, and was reputed to be the oldest surviving tree of its species in Britain. It was eventually felled in 1954, having slowly died back over the previous decades.

Cedar Court is the only hospital era building that survives. Cedar Court was built in 1938 as nurses’ accommodation, on the site of the 17th century stableblock demolished some time earlier, and is now a private Nursing Home.

Approaches

Given the rolling landscape and the dense tree cover, the approaches into Bretby are all rural in character, following winding routes between broad hedgerows.

The approach into Bretby from Hartshorne (along Watery Lane) is dominated by the large rolling landmass of the arable field to the north. This is in marked contrast to the heavily wooded edge to the conservation area, which overshadows the southern side of the road. The trees are dense in the area of Philosopher’s Wood and continue to line the boundary of the conservation area to the north west in a narrow strip of embankment. This means that there are no views into the park from this direction. The road then rises sharply into the village but opens out at the next junction. To the south of this junction, a stretch of woodland runs along the south side of Watery Lane and around the corner towards The Green. This has evidence of small-scale quarrying activity, possibly for a pond.

From Burton the road follows Geary Lane, narrow and winding, with broad generous hedgerows. As the road reaches the junction with Mount Road it opens out and forms a wide entrance to the village with broad green verges.

From the north Bretby is approached by Repton or Newton Solney and the road roughly follows the ridge overlooking the Trent floodplain to the north and the rolling landscape to the south. The road into Bretby diverts from the ridge and drops gradually down into the village. This approach is dominated by a leafy backdrop of mature trees. There is the occasional glimpse of the large distinctive mound called Bretby Mount to the east. At the bottom of the hill is Home Farm. Here a large coursed stone wall and the double-pile red brick gable ends of the farmhouse form a strong edge to the road before it turns sharply left into the village.

Views

There are a number of important views in the conservation area that have changed little since the park was first established in the 1600s:

- from the Village Green looking south across the shallow valley into the Park
- from the church looking north-west to Bretby Mount
- from the churchyard looking west to the site of Bretby Castle

In all three cases time has taken its toll - the numbers of trees has depleted and the ruins of the Castle have dwindled to grassy mounds, but these are nevertheless strategic views of long-standing.



View of the Castle site from the church yard

The 17th century Hall was the centrepiece of an axially designed landscape, with avenues radiating out from the centre to far-off horizons. This created some long vistas (although probably limited in part by the undulating landform). During the 19th century, when at some parks the avenues were supplemented with further avenues, at Bretby the remains of the avenues were simply allowed to co-exist in a depleted form alongside later meandering approaches to the new Hall. The early 19th century picturesque movement placed much greater weight on the element of surprise and discovery of new views and interesting scenes in the landscape. Few of the original avenues and vistas are now clear, and the picturesque qualities of the landscape have taken over.

The large trees within the field lining the south side of The Green appear to be the remnants of a planted avenue, which continued all the way to the site of the old Bretby Hall. The surviving trees running alongside the hedge are four large oaks and several horse chestnuts. The line of the avenue is clearly shown on the first and second edition OS maps, and has only been lost in recent years. There are also a number of horse chestnuts in the middle of the field that are probably the remnants of this avenue. This appears to have been intended as a long avenue creating a vista directly from the original site of the 17th century Hall to the site of Bretby Castle, of which much more must have survived at that

time (standing remains were documented in the early 18th century). The avenue may have been intended to frame picturesque views of the ruinous Castle from the Hall, but the site of Bretby Castle is now largely hidden from public views by mature embanked hedgerows.

A line of mature horse chestnuts still edges the north east side of the access drive into the park from Bretby Village. Their size suggests that they may be a 19th century re-planting of the earlier avenue. The avenue was interrupted by the construction of Bretby Mews circa 1890. From the approach drive adjacent to Bretby Mews there are occasional glimpses through the trees of long views to the north east across the Trent valley.

From the Village Green and along this length of road there are long views into the park to the south east. It is likely that before the growth of Philosopher's Wood there would have been clear views of the original 17th century house from The Green.



Views towards the Village Green from the east (left) and west (right).

Within the village, the landform drops into a slight valley at the junction of Watery Lane and The Green. This accentuates views between the group of buildings at The Square and the group of buildings at The Green, the two built parts of the hamlet. There are important exchanges of view. The ground also rises between The Green and the level of the church, creating further interesting views. Looking south-west down the hill from the corner of Watery Lane towards the cluster of roofs on the north side of The Green, the roofscape is picturesque assisted by the various tiled roof shapes – hips, half-hips and gables with bargeboards, which jostle together and mingle with the decorative brick chimney stacks. This appears to have been a deliberate picturesque design intention. In views of The Square there are 3 half-hipped roofs that stand out – another likely design intention.

The Green is a large green space, with no kerbs, framed by tall hedges and dominated by three large beech trees. The Green is the main focal point on entering the village and is the heart of the conservation area. All of the development within the village has taken place on the north side of the main street. Opposite The Green the verge is very wide. Both of these factors enable long views across the fields to the south. The small octagonal timber war memorial placed over the village pump is a modest structure, surmounted by a simple wooden cross. From here views of the church are important, as are the outward views across the park. To the east of this area and the church is a large and distinctive grassy mound, with a deep curving ditch on one side. This is not part of the Scheduled Ancient Monument but appears to be the remains of a hollow way, hinting at an earlier pattern of development and perhaps another early approach to The Green.

Bretby Mount, to the north of The Green, lies on high ground to the far north of the conservation area. It has a distinctive landform, slightly mounded above the surrounding rising field, which may be partly manmade. Its prominence in the past was increased by a fine stand of trees on the top, most felled since the 1970s. The Mount appears to have had a long history as part of the wider parkland landscape, although it is in fact outside the park boundary. It would have been visible from the old Hall before Philosopher's Wood became established.

Individual copses, clumps and plantations tend to be 18th century introductions into the landscape. The trees on the Mount were clearly established by the mid 18th century, when they were recorded as a "Clump" on the 1767 Burdett County Map, but the Mount may have had a different significance at an earlier period. In the early 17th century the presence of a mount within a landscape was more important as a viewing area for a hunt and from which to view other high points, and was probably not tree-covered at that time. The site of the original Hall was the next highest point.

Historic Buildings

The village had a long history as a settlement but the current appearance is dominated by early 19th century cottages. Although there are few common features, the buildings share the same historic design roots and relate to the stylistic movement known as cottage orné. The main exception to this is Home Farm, which has design characteristics of a late 18th century farmhouse – raised coped gables and segmental arched windows. It is the most striking of the historic buildings in the village, largely because of its location and the dominant character of the unbroken two and three-storey brick and stone walls fronting the street. The farm buildings were developed as a model farm c1800. This was recorded as an important model farm group in 1813 (Farey), built in hewn stone, but most of the buildings were demolished in 1969. The east-facing wall incorporates a section of a pre-existing coursed sandstone building on the site.

The principal stone building in the village is the church. This is built from a "snecked" sandstone (walling with broken courses), with different tooled finishes. This late 19th century popular trend is uncharacteristic of any other stonework in the village. The stone has been laid on different beds and has now taken on an uneven patina and colour.

The "cottage orné" style buildings of Bretby are its most distinctive architectural characteristic. These buildings may have been designed by William Martin, the Earl's architect, to whom several have been attributed. The cottage orné was a style of architecture sometimes adopted by landowners in the early 19th century, to create a picturesque quality in their estate villages. It was developed from the Picturesque movement which started off as a landscape movement but moved into the sphere of building design. It sought to transcend the ordinary and create an interesting and irregular composition of buildings in their landscape setting, with strong contrasts of light and shadow. These domestic buildings could be both asymmetrical and symmetrical in plan.

Buildings were placed according to how they would appear in the landscape, rather than being strictly related to historic street frontages. Elements or features were often borrowed from Gothick buildings, such as pointed arches and hood moulds. Gothick windows were typically made in timber using slender glazing bars to create the effect of tracery (seen in ecclesiastical masonry) or cast-iron or leaded diamond lattice casements.

Bretby Hall is itself also typical of the early 19th century Picturesque movement, with many of the same principles applied on a larger scale to a country house.

The 5th Earl of Chesterfield built two schools on the village green, one for boys on the east side and a later one for girls on the west side. The boys' school also had a schoolhouse for the master. The boys' school has an inscription, which reads "Bradby School – Opened for the admission of scholars October 20th 1806"(pictured right). The former girls school on the other side of The Green is now rendered and has less tangible evidence of its historic use but shares features in common with the boys school, i.e. a central 2-storey hipped roof, single-storey wings and star-shaped chimney stacks, which were an interpretation of a Tudor stack. The boys' school still incorporates Gothick glazing, but the original windows in the girls' school have been replaced.



School sign 1806

A small group of cottages around The Square also developed in the early 19th century but the row at the back appears to have had earlier origins. This pair called Rose Haven and Glen Haven may have started life as a terrace of three or more cottages, but were quickly turned into just two houses. There is no obvious formal layout but it seems that Fern Lea was deliberately placed to look east, rather than face the road, so that its half-hip was more prominent, in order to create a more picturesque composition.

Honeysuckle Cottage on The Green (originally a semi-detached pair) has similar architectural details to the pair of cottages Hillside and Woodland View on The Square. Indeed, these two pairs of cottages, both with datestones bearing the date 1824, may have been virtually identical when first built. They share the same mellow orange brickwork, a central chimney stack with buff-coloured "square spiked" pots, hood moulds over the ground floor windows using square-cut projecting bricks, half-hipped roofs, and distinctive pilaster strips at each corner. In the case of Honeysuckle Cottage there is a distinctive chimneystack with similar strips of raised brickwork, which may have been rebuilt in plainer form on the other cottages. Honeysuckle Cottage also has eyebrow dormer windows suggesting that it was once thatched. Only Honeysuckle Cottage retains its original Gothic style timber windows, those to Hillside and Woodland View having been replaced in stained hardwood. Both pairs of cottages were probably limewashed externally when first built; traces still remain under the sheltered eaves.

Rose Cottage and Yew Tree Cottage, on The Green, appear to be a little later than the other cottages (circa 1860). They both have an original L-shaped plan, with gable-front and small wing to the right, although Rose Cottage has been much extended. One cottage has been set forward of the other, which increases the picturesque variety in the street frontage. The drip moulds over the ground and first floor windows are shaped in moulded brick and there is a common eaves detail of a deep raised band, possibly of stone or stucco. Both cottages have lost the distinctive recessed chamfered timber mullioned multi-paned casement windows (only one example survives – see appendix). The windows are recessed in deep chamfered surrounds, created by using bricks set on a splay, and these were probably rendered. Rose Cottage appears to have lost its decorative bargeboards during a

previous re-roofing, although it retains its unusual central brick chimneystack with raised strips of brickwork. The combination of decorative bargeboards and render was especially popular in the area during the 1860s.

Bretby Hall forms the centrepiece of the other half of the conservation area. It overlooks a large terraced lawn to the south east, and beyond the conservation area boundary, which follows the edge of the lawn, to a series of 6 lakes or fish-ponds in the middle distance. Long distance views across the park are now sadly obscured by recent heavy tree growth around the perimeter of the lawn. This principal elevation is not visible to the public, except at a distance from a public footpath. The Hall was built between 1813 and the 1830's. The patron was the 5th Earl of Chesterfield, who also carried out much of the rebuilding work in the village. He employed several architects; the first being James Wyatt and then after his death in 1813, Jeffry Wyattville (Wyatt's nephew). He also used his own estate architect, William Martin, and this has led to some confusion in attributing the different elements of the design and phases of construction.

The Hall was designed around a courtyard. The rear range of the house that faces west is early 17th century in origin and incorporates chamfered mullioned windows. Together with a matching range to the west (demolished), it framed the approach to the earlier Hall (visible in the 1707 engraving), and was probably stabling or ancillary accommodation. It was retained following the demolition of the 17th century Hall. The Hall is a handsome Keuper sandstone building with a strong and dramatic roofline, defined by two round corner towers on the front elevation, with a central projecting bay and a castellated parapet. The central doorway has a Gothic arch and is framed by narrow turrets with blind lancet windows. It was an early experiment in gothic architecture (before the great Victorian revival), and incorporates some classical elements of design (a largely symmetrical frontage and classical Georgian proportions to the sash windows).

The views within the vicinity of Bretby Hall and the main public space are dominated by a large expanse of tarmac car park, which sits between Cedar Court Residential Home and the Hall. This level area once formed a forecourt between two ranges of buildings framing a view of the 17th century Hall to the north. A brick 2-metre high wall encloses the rear of the Hall, preventing immediate views of the rear range of the building, although this is still visible from a distance.

Historic Landscape

The original designed landscape of the 17th century incorporated avenues fanning out from the Hall and a large number of small gardens, designed as compartments, and defined by a rigid structure of formal rows of trees (many clipped) and changes in level. It followed the formal French style of garden popular at the time.

Philosopher's Wood occupies a large area at the south east perimeter of the conservation area. Watery Lane demarcates the current and the original boundary of the registered historic park. The tree canopy masks a number of significant changes in level between the drive to the Hall and Watery Lane. Philosopher's Wood was originally laid out in the late 17th century as a sequence of formal ponds and lakes to the west of the original Hall. These made use of the sloping topography to create the multiple tiers of water features and fountains. The top pond was circular but the others were straight-sided, one with apsidal ends, with fountains and water features. Some of these water features were probably designed by Grillet (a French designer who was also working at Chatsworth). He

specialised in creating special effects using water to play tricks on people, which was a common device of the time. Fragments of this historic landscape survive in the understorey of the tangled woodland, but they are not accessible to the public. Along the west side of these ponds was a long greenhouse or orangery and each pond was framed by lines of sweet chestnuts. At the very bottom lake was a small island upon which stood a large statue of Perseus. All of this appears in the 1707 engraving, although it is very hard to imagine this scene now. This was magically described by Celia Fiennes in her journal when she visited Bretby in ca.1700:

“... that which is most admired – and justly so to be – by all persons and excite their curiosity to come and see is the Gardens and Waterworks;...in one garden there are 3 fountaines wherein stands great statues, each side on their pedestalls is a Dial, one for the sun, the other a Clock which by the water worke is moved and strikes the hours and chimes the quarters, and when they please play Lilibolaro on the Chymes...beyond this garden is a row of orange and lemon trees set in the ground....this has a penthouse over it which is cover'd up very close in the winter; this leads on to a great wilderness....”

The platforms and changes in level still survive in the undergrowth, as do the skeletal remains of the ponds and the island, still linked by ramped earthworks or dams, connected underground by pipes. Some water still trickles through the site from the original spring-fed supply. The huge stumps of a number of the Spanish chestnuts survive, and a few standing sweet chestnuts.

By the late 18th century this whole area of waterworks had been dismantled and by the 1880s it was submerged under the wooded canopy and largely forgotten. It is now young and dense woodland, with the exception of the large horse chestnuts lining the north-east side of the entrance drive, which edge the perimeter of the wood and the occasional mature sweet chestnut and oak within the wood. At the north-eastern end is a large dam, which contained the lowest and largest of the lakes. Below the dam the tree planting is much older and richer.

The approach drive to the Hall from Bretby village, at the bottom of Mount Road, is one of the original approaches to the 17th century hall. The drive now defines the edge of the conservation area between the village and the Hall. It is dominated by rich tree planting incorporating yew, oak and horse chestnut.

Opposite Bretby Mews is a large brick wall behind which is the 19th century walled kitchen garden that served the Hall (outside the boundary of the conservation area). The wall defines the boundary and is a strong feature, although largely covered in ivy. On the south side of the drive there are open meadows skirting the tall brick walls.

Sadly many of the avenues and clumps of trees have sustained losses during the 20th century with no plans for replacement and the carefully conceived landscaping of the park is gradually being weakened.

The composition of the cottage orné buildings, how they clustered together in their immediate setting and in the wider landscape, is as important as the individual quality of the buildings and this is an important consideration when looking at the landscape. This has been described in more detail under “Views”.

Building Materials and Details

Local geology and availability of building materials directly influenced the form and appearance of Bretby. The range of materials and the way in which they were used in local building details is intricately linked with local identity. The Appendix lists the special and typical traditional building details encountered within the conservation area, and is supplemented by photographs, to provide a snapshot of the local vernacular details.

Red brick is the predominant material. This mellow orange appearance is now the strongest characteristic within Bretby, but there is evidence that when the buildings were first built the brickwork was in many cases limewashed and the orange colour has only become exposed as the limewashing has been discontinued and weathered away. Woodland View and Hillside (a semi-detached pair on The Square), share traces of limewash under the eaves and large areas of smooth render in the blind recessed panels of brickwork. Yew Tree Cottage (on The Green) was also part rendered until recently but its precise original appearance is not recorded. In the case of Honeysuckle Cottage (on The Green) there are still traces of limewash visible under the eaves. Where the windows incorporate hood moulds (raised mouldings designed to throw water off the window), these are all square headed and the brick lintel above the window frame is finished square with a soldier course. The historic alternatives used in the village are a pointed arch, created with rubbed gauged bricks (The Schoolhouse and the first floor of Honeysuckle Cottage) or a segmental arch (Home Farmhouse). However, many of the original lintels have been replaced using modern methods of construction (incorporating steel or concrete).

Where render does exist, it is generally not the original smooth lime finish, but a modern replacement, which is harsher in appearance (Rose Cottage, The Old Schoolhouse). Fern Lea has recently been rendered using a smooth render.

One of the most striking features of the village is the decorative brick chimney stacks. These do not follow any vernacular tradition but appear to have been adopted by the estate as a device to add a picturesque quality to the buildings. There are several types. The earliest is the star-plan chimney, found on the two former school buildings. Fragments of two such stacks also survive on the stone and rendered house below the church, suggesting that it might have earlier origins than its late 19th century appearance would suggest. Then, chronologically there are several variations of ribbed and panelled brickwork found on the buildings at The Square and Rose Cottage (The Green).

The earliest buildings appear to be late 18th century although like other local villages, there are fragments of stone buildings that survive from earlier buildings (Rose Haven on The Square, Home Farm, Hillgrove), but these are few and far between as the programme of reconstruction during the early 19th century was quite comprehensive.

With the exception of Bretby Hall and the Church, there is only one other stone building - the house south-east of the church, which has a stone-built ground floor. This may have been a deliberate choice because of its proximity to the church.

All of the village roofs are tiled, creating a uniform quality of roofscape. Features of the roofs, such as half-hips, deep overhanging eaves and eyebrow dormers, are more commonly associated with thatched roofs than tiled ones. This may be an indication that the roofs, or at least some of them, were once thatched. However, it is equally possible

that these details were deliberately chosen for their picturesque quality, evoking the appearance of a thatched roof without the regular maintenance required by a thatch.

The broad overhanging eaves create a heavy shadow, emphasising the shape of the roof and dormers and the contrast between light and shade, a common device of “cottage orné”. The later 19th century cottages (e.g. Yew Tree Cottage on The Green) also had large overhanging eaves and verges, exaggerated with the use of scalloped bargeboards.

Staffordshire blue clay tiles were easily imported into the area after the Trent and Mersey canal opened in 1777. The roof pitches associated with clay tiles vary between 35 and 45 degrees, a requirement of the material. Most of the cottages have a roof pitch of 40-45 degrees. Original handmade blue clay tiles also incorporate subtle fluctuations in colour, which are not found in the new Staffordshire blue clay tiles being manufactured today, so it is important to preserve these examples as well as the rarer red clay tiles.

Boundaries are predominantly hedgerows, mainly hawthorn with other mixed native species such as holly, but also occasionally privet in front of the cottages. The dense evergreen hedges means that views of cottages are sometimes quite restricted. The only place where stone is used is the roughly-coursed sandstone walls to Rose Cottage and Yew Tree Cottage on The Green.

Loss and Damage

The concept of conservation areas was introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967, as an acknowledgement of the need to conserve the “cherished local scene” in the face of accelerated change following the Second World War. It was not intended that development should be prevented, but rather that settlements should develop over time in a way that reflects and strengthens their special character. At Bretby, some of the undesirable changes described below predate the designation of the conservation area in 1976. The designation was put in place as a safeguard against further harmful development, so far as this could be achieved by the need for planning permission.

In defining the character of the conservation area we can also identify instances where the village has suffered alterations or losses that either individually or cumulatively have diluted this character. It is hoped that identifying these will help householders, designers and the planning authority to reverse some of the damaging alterations and to avoid the same mistakes in the future.

Loss of Building Details

Of the 10 buildings that can be positively identified as estate buildings, only 3 are listed. As a result, in recent years the village has suffered from the loss of window joinery and replacement in modern materials - stained hardwood and uPVC. This has affected the “estate” character of the village (see appendix for details).

Bretby Mews and Home Farm are both conversions of



The lowered remains of an original star-shaped chimney

working estate buildings. They are peppered with new window and door openings which has diluted the original agricultural character of the buildings.

New Development

There have been no new houses within the village part of the conservation area, except for residential conversions, since the early 19th century. The original estate cottages were small, some built as semi-detached pairs in the cottage orne style. Where these have been amalgamated into one house, the outward appearance has not been affected. However, there have been some large extensions of individual properties, resulting in the loss of the original, modest scale of the cottages (e.g. Rose Cottage on The Green, and the house to the south of the church).

The boundary wall in front of Fern Lea (The Square), that retains the garden, is quite dominant and has been constructed in “sneaked” sawn stone. This is an unfamiliar treatment in this rural setting, where coursed rubble stone walls are the traditional hard boundary feature.



Fern Lea, The Square - stone walls with sharp-edged and sneaked courses

Adjacent to Bretby Hall is Cedar Court, a nurses' home built in the mid 20th century. It does not impose on views of the Hall, although it has a negative impact on the setting of the historic grouping. It is a large block with two courtyards, designed in a typical mid 20th century style rather than the local vernacular, but by keeping the roofline low the impact of the building has been reduced. It is most prominent on entering the site by the Bretby village drive, as it is located on higher land behind a large sweeping lawn, which emphasises its presence. More shrub planting near the drive would screen this block and enhance the conservation area.

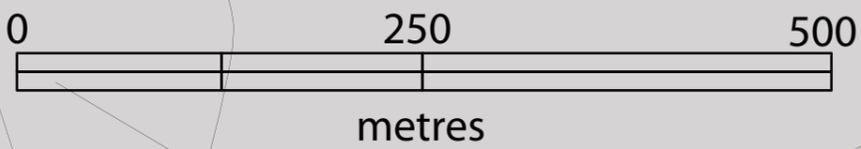
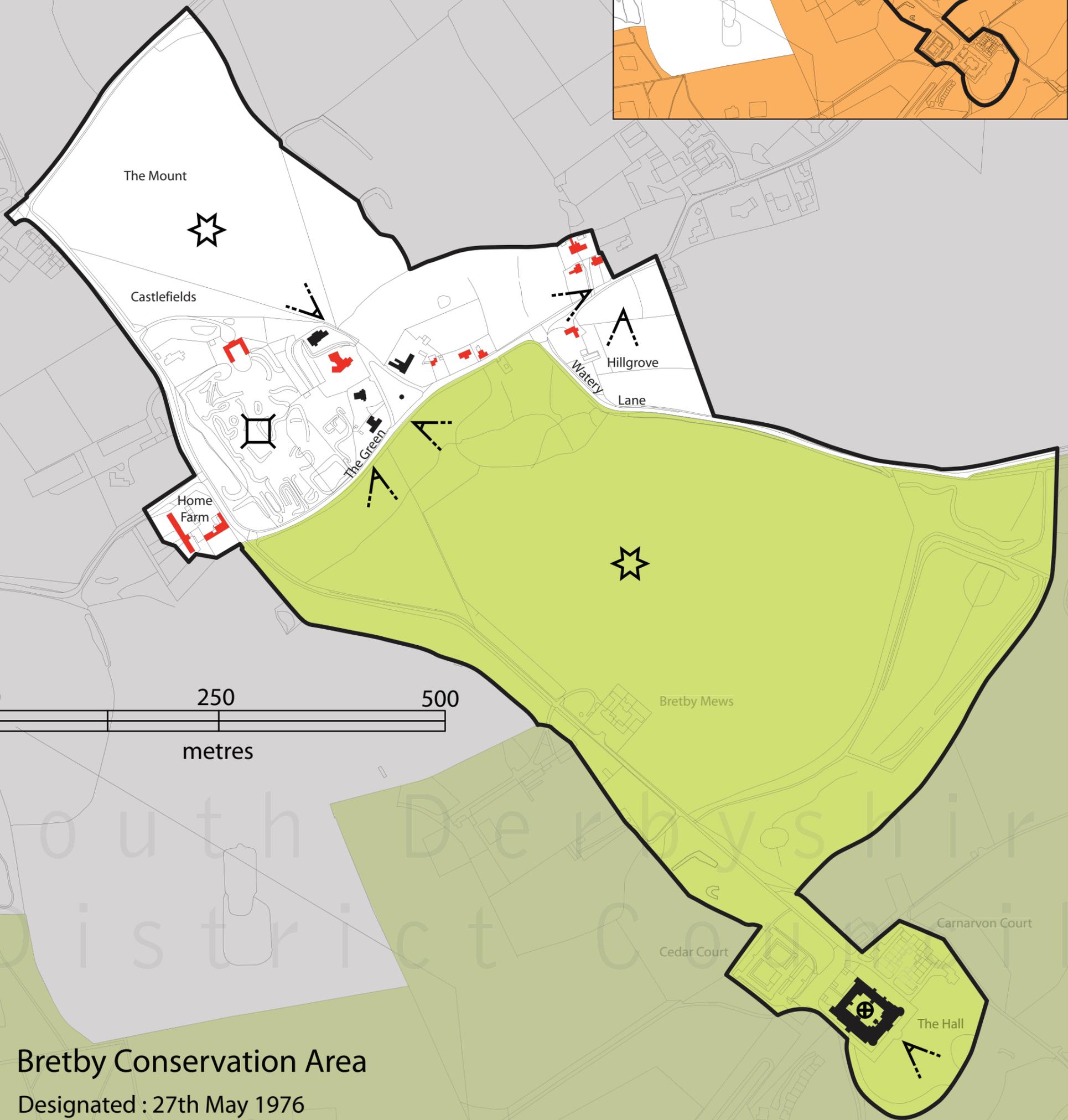
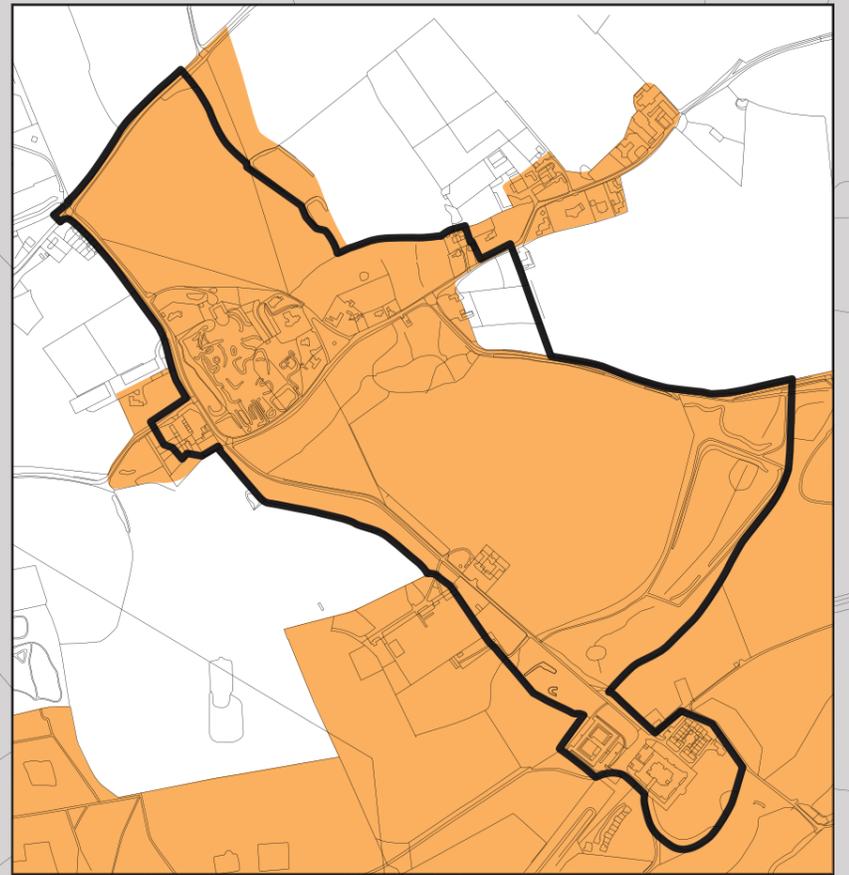
The detached house called Bretby Lodge was part of the Carnarvon Court development at Bretby Hall in the late 1990s. Unfortunately, because it stands detached from the rest of the development, it encroaches on views to and from the front of the Hall.

Loss of Landscape Features

There has been widespread loss of trees during the 20th century, with little evidence of re-planting within the conservation area boundary. This has led to the loss of vistas and avenues and landscape devices, such as tree clumps, used to create points of interest as well as cover. These include individual yew and cedars and clumps of Scots Pine, all planted in the 19th century to increase the picturesque quality of the landscape. By contrast, where the designed views do survive some of these are being obscured by unmanaged tree and shrub growth, for example, the growth of small trees in Philosopher's Wood has obscured the remains of the planted avenue lining the access drive, and the vistas from the Hall to the south-east over the ha-ha are being obscured by young tree growth on the boundary.



- Conservation Area boundary
- ☆ Open spaces
- 👁️ Principal views
- ⊕ Architectural landmarks & focal points
- Listed buildings
- Other buildings which contribute positively to the special architectural or historic character
- Scheduled Monuments
- Parks & gardens on the English Heritage register
- Areas of high archaeological potential



Bretby Conservation Area
Designated : 27th May 1976

Appendix

Distinctive Architectural Details

BRETBY



Checklist of details

The details in this appendix illustrate those building elements that help to define Bretby's particular character. These may be common everyday vernacular details found repeatedly throughout the conservation area or may be more exceptional, consciously designed features.

This appendix may prove useful in providing inspiration for new development, whether traditional or contemporary, if used with care. Paradoxically, the outstanding architectural details of a conservation area may not be the ones that are most typical of the area. They often belong to the important key buildings of a village and may look out of place on smaller buildings in subordinate locations. The majority of buildings in the conservation areas of South Derbyshire are plainly and simply detailed.

Boundary treatments

- Coursed sandstone rubble boundary walls with half-round copings
- Hedgerows of privet, holly and hawthorn

Chimney stacks and pots

- Buff-coloured and square spiked pattern chimney pots
- Articulated brick chimney stacks of several patterns – star, panelled with ribs

Lintels and cills

- Segmental brick arches
- Pointed gauged brick lintels
- Flat soldier course lintels with brick hood moulds
- Plain brickwork without masonry cills

Roof types and details

- Wide overhanging eaves
- Hipped and half-hipped roofs
- Raised coped brick gables (Home Farm)

Windows

- Casement windows - multi-paned and Gothic arched cottage orné
- Dormer windows

Street furniture

BOUNDARY TREATMENTS



Within Bretby village boundaries are predominantly hedges of hawthorn and holly (bottom), with the occasional stretch of privet. There are few walls. The local sandstone in front of Rose Cottage (above) is one of only two traditional stone walls in the conservation area. The other, at Home Farm (right), is evenly coursed stone, reputedly taken from the castle ruins.



CHIMNEY STACKS & POTS



The picturesque chimney stacks of Bretby village present the visitor with one of its most distinctive and enduring images.

They were built from local hand-made red brick. There are some common themes or patterns; star-shaped on plan (above), and those with raised strips of brickwork creating panels (right). Chimney pots are predominantly buff-coloured, and square shaped, sometimes with spikes.



LINTELS AND CILLS



Left - hood mould constructed from painted bricks, over soldier course of brickwork forming a lintel. This window relied on the strength of the timber window to support the brickwork above.

Below left - gauged brick lintel, shaped into a pointed arch.



Right - although projecting cills, of any kind, were rarely used on the smallest vernacular buildings in this part of South Derbyshire, this example at Bretby (right) is quite rare. It incorporates a projecting oak cill laid on top of timber plugs.



ROOF TYPES AND DETAILS



Hipped roofs (above) and half-hipped roofs with “eyebrow” dormers (left) are a distinctive feature of Bretby, deliberately used by the estate to enhance the picturesque quality of the village scenes.

The half-hipped roofs of Staffordshire blue clay tiles, with “bonnet” hip tiles and deep overhanging eaves, echo thatched roof forms. Note the contrast between wall and roof, highlighted by deep shadows.



ROOF TYPES AND DETAILS



Eaves can be accentuated with a raised band, as on the 1860s examples (left) or a large overhang, as on the eyebrow dormer (below).



The example of decorative scalloped bargeboards at Yew Tree Cottage (right) is the only surviving example in the village.

Ornamental bargeboards create pretty shadows. They were commonly used in the mid 19th century in a style called Gothic Revival and were designed to emphasise picturesque character.



WINDOWS

Within Bretby village the main historic window type was the timber casement window. This had several historic forms based on a “Gothick” style, some with pointed arches incorporated into the joinery (right and bottom). All shared the common multi-paned, painted characteristics.

The original 12-paned casement at Yew Tree Cottage survives (below – on the right), although the left casement was later replaced by a 4-paned casement.



The casement windows (above) at Rose Haven are new and were based on an historic pattern.

STREET FURNITURE

Right - K6 red telephone box, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott design located on the Village Green.

(grid ref. N 429, 536 / E 323, 217)



Right - Post box, Sir Giles Gilbert Scott design, located on the Village Green.

(grid ref. N 429, 536 / E 323, 217)

