

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971

SADBERGE CONSERVATION AREA

Part XV (Section 277) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 is designed to secure the protection and improvement of the character of areas of special architectural or historic interest by their designation as Conservation Areas. The emphasis on areas, which can include whole streets, village greens, groups of trees, means that all the elements which compose an attractive scene can be protected as a whole, and improvements planned and changes controlled comprehensively. Thus the Act strengthens the powers already available. The County Council as Local Planning Authority is required to determine the areas to be designated and to consult with the Local Authority and other interested bodies.

Sadberge lies at a point where the Roman Road from Middleton One Row to Chester le Street crossed a commanding east-west ridge. The green falls sharply northwards from the ridge road and provides wide views over the open countryside. Evidence of Roman remains here is uncertain (the earthworks to the north may be Roman or Medieval), but it was an important place in Saxon times. The Saxon derivation of the name is the "Court on the Hill" and its role as a seat of justice continued long after the lands were acquired by Bishop Pudsey from Richard I, having specially appointed justices and a jurisdiction that included Coatham Mundeville, Hurworth and Egglecliffe and may have included lands in Upper Teesdale. The County Court continued into the 17th Century.

The manor and jail occupied the south western part of the village; traces of the moat exist along the east side of the Church, which was built from stones from these buildings, but restored in 1890. The predominant building materials of the houses, all 18th Century or later, are brick and pantile, with a small proportion of render and slate. Several buildings are listed, including notably Town Farm (early 18th Century occupying a medieval site) and most of Chapel Row which occupies a dramatic site at the head of the green.

The Conservation Area includes the green, the earthworks and the historic areas round the church, which now also have considerable visual merit; and land on the slopes necessary to safeguard the appearance of a ridge village in the landscape.

The main consequences of designation will be:-

- (a) Greater emphasis on improvement works, including improvements to property. Certain properties which make an outstanding contribution to the village may become unsound, and the District Council would be asked to give early notice of any clearance programmes in case the planning authority should wish to make representations about the possibility of rehabilitation.

In addition to housing improvement grants, in certain cases grants or loans may be available from the County Council towards repairs, mainly to meet the additional cost of more appropriate external materials than might otherwise have been used. All alterations to Listed Buildings now need specific consent, and on others, particularly where improvement grants are given and the work involves alterations to the main elevation, a higher visual standard will be required than has always been evident in the past. The Council will seek Directions under Article 4 of the General Development Order, to bring under planning control external alterations which are at present permitted under that Order.

- (b) New Development, which will be extremely limited, will be controlled to ensure it accords with the special architectural and visual qualities of Sadberge. In appropriate cases permissions will be given on detailed applications only and no conditional or outline approvals issued, as is provided for under the General Development Order.
- (c) Any application which, in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, would affect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area will be advertised and comments invited and taken into consideration.
- (d) A condition requiring tree planting and landscape work will be attached where appropriate, and Tree Preservation Orders made elsewhere.
- (e) The improvement of the village through minor repairs, and improvements to fencing, painting, paving, street furniture will be encouraged and where appropriate agreement for additional tree planting sought. In these matters it is hoped to enlist the active participation of the District and Parish Councils, and discussions will be held to formulate policy and decide on action.
- (f) A programme for removing overhead wires from areas of high amenity value is operated in the County by the North Eastern Electricity Board on a shared-cost basis. Sadberge will be allotted a place in this programme.

It should be made known to the public that the advice of the planning department is freely available at any stage before an application is made or when problems arise and early consultation could in many cases be helpful.

Schedule of the Area

The whole village between the east side of the reservoir to the west and the old Stockton Road to the south east, the earthworks north of the village and open land adjoining it to the south.