

FULFORD VILLAGE

Conservation Area No.30 (33.3ha)

Introduction

The Fulford Village Conservation Area was designated in November 1998 and extended in October 2008. It is an historic linear village lying parallel to the River Ouse south of York, and the Conservation Area is centred on Main Street (which is the 'backbone' of the village) but includes areas to either side which are part of the historic settlement pattern. These areas include the former medieval back lanes, known as Fenwick's Lane (close to the flood-prone 'Ings' by the River Ouse) and School Lane (bounding open fields).

History

The Parish of Fulford comprises two historic settlements -Water Fulford and Gate Fulford - which were united in 1828 to become one parish known as Fulford Ambo, that is " both Fulfords". The Conservation area covers Gate Fulford (now usually just called Fulford), which is separated by open fields from Water Fulford which lies a short distance further down the river.

It is thought that Main Street is of Roman origin, providing a route from York to Doncaster on a firm gravel ridge parallel to the River Ouse. At the south end of the village the ridge is broken by a tributary to the river, now known as Germany Beck, resulting in a ford of strategic importance and giving the village its name: at the time of the Domesday Survey (1086), Fulford was known as "Foleford" or "Fuletorp", referring to a muddy ford. There is strong evidence that the Battle of Fulford, fought in September 1066 between the northern Earls and Harald Hardrada immediately before the Battle of Hastings, was fought across Germany Beck. The beck itself may derive its name from a mid-13th century landowner named 'German de Brettgate'.

Sometime before 1086 the Manor of Fulford passed from Morcar, Earl of Northumbria, to the Count of Brittany, who gave it in 1100 to St Mary's Abbey. It is not known exactly where the original settlement was located but it seems likely that Fulford as it now stands was built by the Abbey as a speculative venture, conveniently straddling the important trading route.

In 1759 the common land was enclosed to form Walmgate Stray, and by the late 18th century the burgage plots were being subdivided to create a more intensive pattern of building. High status houses began to appear, with increased affluence and easier access to the city, and by 1884 the northern part of the parish became part of York, and a desirable residential suburb with a population now in excess of 3,000. Even so, the village has retained its character as a self-contained settlement based on agriculture and related industries of a domestic scale.

Important Buildings

Fulford possesses a wide variety of buildings, from small 18th and 19th Century cottages to larger farmhouses and elegant Georgian and Regency houses. Several of the houses along Main Street and just south of Heslington Lane junction are good quality Listed Buildings dating from the 18th and 19th Century, including Fulford House (now the Pavilion Hotel) set in its own grounds. Off Fenwick's Lane, Delwood Croft, also listed, is similarly set in extensive grounds. The Church of St Oswald on Main Street dates from 1877-8: it was designed by J.P.Pritchett in a Gothic Revival style, built in a sandstone masonry with ashlar dressing and Welsh slate roof and is Listed Grade II. The mid 20th century Sir John J Hunt Almshouses at the northern end of the village, with their distinctive 'Dutch gables' are not listed but have great character and charm.

The predominant building materials in Fulford are pinkish-brown brick, with pantile and some Welsh slate roofing. Most of the older properties retain their traditional four-paned or multi-paned sash windows. These elements are important in maintaining the sense of scale and detailing associated with a rural village.

Character

There is no complete break in the built-up area between York and Fulford, yet the village has its own sense of identity (reflected in the way people refer to "Fulford Village") due to its unity of character, historical form and setting.

Main Street has become a busy traffic route, yet is still essentially a village street. From the south it is entered from open fields near the junction with Fordlands Road, marked by an attractive group of Edwardian cottages. The street curves gently, with grass verges and the short terraces of mostly 18th and 19th Century

building fronting directly onto the street, or sometimes set behind small front gardens. These elements are each important in creating an attractive linear village street, with a gradually unfolding sequence of views. It is cohesive overall, despite interruptions to its traditional character from some recent developments. Along parts of the street the grass verges and footpaths are slightly higher than the vehicle carriageway, and dotted by occasional trees, adding to the village character and giving an extra degree of separation from the traffic.

There is a subtle change in the massing of the buildings near the junction with Heslington Lane, due to the appearance of some three storey houses and a slight narrowing of the street. The village character is carried part-way along Heslington Lane by Victorian and Edwardian housing, but the spacious entry to Fulford from York is marked St. Oswald's Church and its churchyard on one side, and by the former parkland of Fulford Park House on the other.

The areas behind the frontage of Main Street are an integral part of the village character, and are based upon the medieval back lanes (now known as Fenwick's Lane and School Lane). Narrow paths cross **Fenwick's Lane**, descending to the riverside Ings. Boundary walls and railings, with copses of mature trees and holly bushes create a strongly rural character. The contrast between the cultivated gardens of the large houses along Fenwick's Lane and the wildness of the 'Ings' is a striking feature, and defines the edge of the settlement. Between Fenwick's Lane and Main Street some of the traditional paddocks remain, with the attractive irregular outline formed by the rear of the buildings on Main Street. South of Fenwick's Lane, recent developments make for a less cohesive character. However, this area contributes to the Conservation Area, being part of the historic village setting against the Ings, and includes pleasant examples of early 20th Century detached houses.

School Lane, in its northern section, retains a walled character with the traditional long, narrow-fronted plot boundaries still evident, even though there has been considerable infil development.

The main elements of the character and appearance of the area are:

- 1) The strong identity of the village, despite now being attached to the suburbs of York.
- 2) The surviving historic street pattern, and the way in which this has evolved (especially on Fenwick's Lane) into areas of a strongly rural, secluded character so close to the bustle of Main Street.
- 3) The linear village character of Main Street and the gradually unfolding views along it.
- 4) The contrast between the character of the Ings and gardens at the western fringe of the settlement.
- 5) The attractive mixture of cottages and larger houses, ranging across different styles and periods, but with a shared sense of scale and unity of building materials.
- 6) The attractive open space of Fulford Park, with its mature trees and the highly distinctive almshouses with their 'Dutch' gables.
- 7) The contribution of trees to the character of the village and views within it.



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