



LITTLE BARROW

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL
JANUARY 2008



Maps can be seen on the following link: www.chester.gov.uk/conservationareareview

LITTLE BARROW CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL - JANUARY 2008

DESIGNATIONS

Conservation Area	First designated in January 1980
Listed Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Little Barrow Hall (II)</i>
Scheduled Monuments	None
Registered Parks and Gardens	None
Archaeological Priority	None
SSSI	None
Article 4 Directions	None
Regulation 7 Directions	None
Any other Designations	
Area of Special County Value (ASCV)	None
Site of Biological Interest (SBI)	None
Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV)	None
Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV)	None
Other	None

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Little Barrow lies in the Parish of Barrow, which is in the Rural Deanery, Archdeaconry and Diocese of Chester. At the time of the Domesday Survey, Barrow stood in the Hundred of Riseton (or Risedon), and since then it has been in the 2nd Division of the Eddisbury Hundred which came into existence towards the end of the twelfth century.

Barrow (or Barue as it was written then) is first mentioned in an early charter of Edgar, King of the Mercians, in the year AD 958. It has been suggested in the past that the name of Barrow indicated the existence of an early burial mound or Tumulus, but more recent research suggests that the most likely derivation comes from the Old English word 'Bearu' meaning a 'wood' or 'grove'¹. However the Oxford Dictionary of English place names gives the derivation as coming from the Old English word 'beorg' meaning a 'hill' or a 'mound'.



Barrow Lodge, Little Barrow

The spelling of the name has changed over the centuries, Bero (1066), Barowe (1226), Barowe (1318), Barou (1329), Browe (1512), and Berrow (1687). Old documents distinguish Little Barrow from Great Barrow with 'Magna, Parva, Micel, Lytel and Petit'². At the Norman conquest Little Barrow appears to have been a township within the bounds of Delamere Forest, which was then called the Forest of Mara.

¹ J. Mc. N. Dodgson, *The place names of Cheshire*, p212, University Press, Cambridge, 1972.

² F.A. Latham, *Barrow: The History of a Cheshire Village*. p 11, Whitchurch, Shropshire, 1983.

KEY FEATURES OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

General:	The area has a strong rural influence
Topography:	Little Barrow lies on a low sandstone hill.
Streetscape:	The settlement is linear in form following the B5132 road. A econdary lane joins it at the southern end of the village, i.e. Broomhill Lane.
Settlement layout:	The settlement lines the western side of the road, but a small number of buildings are to be found on the eastern side at the southern end of the settlement.
Building environment re: residential units:	Mainly detached houses, but some semi detached two storey high. The dominant building material is sandstone or brick, with slate roofs. The buildings date from the 17 th to the 20 th century
Building setting:	Detached houses with varied setbacks.
Boundary treatment:	Sandstone, brick and breezeblock walls.
Trees and hedgerows:	Presence of medium and high hedgerows bordering properties and fields. Mature trees line the road, mainly on the western side of the road.
Open spaces:	None
Other:	The old Chester to Manchester rail line runs through the middle of the settlement on an east – west line.

Change of conservation area boundaries: none

CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

Little Barrow is a small settlement built on the brow of a hill which slopes downwards in a northerly direction onto the flat lands at the base of the Wirral peninsula, and is

to be found approximately 6 miles to the north-east of Chester. The character of the village is predominantly rural with quite an exposed setting with a very open built form.

Although the village is very small, with less than twenty residential properties and a handful of agricultural outbuildings, the buildings and their settings are of great architectural and environmental interest. One of the buildings is grade II listed, although two others were listed in previous decades, evidence of the rich built heritage of the area.

The village is linear in form, following the B5132 road on an approximate north-south axis, with the majority of the buildings to be found on the western side of the road. There are however, a small number of cottages and the Foxcote Inn to be found on the eastern side of the road at the south end of the village. At this southern end of the settlement, two small lanes leave away from the main road in opposite directions.

The buildings of the conservation area are quintessentially west Cheshire in character. They are mainly built in red Cheshire sandstone or brick, some having been rendered over, with slated roofs. Many of the buildings retain their original windows and doors.

With the exception of four semi detached cottages and Little Barrow Hall Mews, all the other residential properties are detached and of two storey construction. The buildings are dispersed and address the road in a variety of ways. Some are set back helping to relieve the linear form, whilst others come close to the road. Agricultural sheds and other outbuildings help to give additional character to the peaceful and quiet rural atmosphere, whilst the open fields to the east of the settlement offer spectacular views across to Helsby Hill in the distance.

Most properties stand in their own plots with sandstone or brick walls and/or dense hedgerows of various native species to divide them. Gardens are generally well maintained and landscaped which contribute significantly to the unspoilt rural character and distinctiveness of the area.

The disused railway station to the northern end of the settlement sits in an isolated area on a lower level to the buildings around it, but in accordance to the rail line for which it served. The station has been closed since the 1950's, and is now privately owned as a residence, and under restoration. The station building itself, although in need of some work, differs architecturally to the other buildings of the village, but its distinctiveness and previous function also adds to the setting of the area.



The Foxcote Public House, Little Barrow

POSITIVE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Listed buildings

There is currently only one listed building within the conservation area of Little Barrow. Little Barrow Hall is a Grade II Listed former farmhouse, of mid 18th century date, with 20th century interior alterations. The building is of Flemish bond red brick with some yellow headers, and a Welsh slate roof and two ridge brick chimneys.

Unlisted buildings of merit

There are a number of buildings within this comparatively small conservation area that are of interest, whose character and appearance would be significantly undermined by inappropriate alterations.

Next door to Little Barrow Hall is Station Farm, which rather confusingly, was the original Little Barrow Hall. This building dates supposedly from the mid to late 17th century, and must have been an important house at one time.

Barrow Lodge to the north of the village, was previously a listed building, but lost its designation with the introduction of the latest grading system. This building dates from the 18th century, and is of brown brick construction, with Flemish bond and a slate roof. The original six panelled entrance door adds to the character and aesthetics of the building. The sandstone boundary walls with their round top coping stones and the mature deciduous trees within its grounds, all add to the special setting of this building within the village.

Station Farm house and its outbuildings was also previously listed, and is of 17th century date. Again of brown brick construction with a red sandstone plinth and first floor band, the building has a square central stack, a slate roof and flat arches to its casement windows. The farm buildings are of two storey red brick of 17th century date, with alterations over the last two centuries.

As mentioned previously, the railway station is of great interest and worthy of merit not only for its architecture, but also for its previous use and the influence upon the village. The station was first opened in 1874 for goods, and 1875 for passengers, and was named as Barrow-for-Tarvin station. It was closed to all passengers on 1st June 1953.



Sandstone wall, Little Barrow

Local Views

Local views are important and contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is essential that full consideration be given to the impact of development proposals upon these views

There are fine views of the countryside when leaving the village to the north as one descends the hill, and to the east throughout the length of the village.

Townscape, topography and landscape details

The relationships existing between topography, local townscape and landscape details often contribute to the sense of local distinctiveness and are often unique to a particular conservation area.

Townscape details

There are no distinctive townscape details, but there are however some factors which contribute to the overall character of the area, including;

- The use of red sandstone as a building material in house, outbuilding and boundary wall construction.
- The use of slate as a roofing material
- Agricultural sheds and outbuildings help to give depth to some areas, providing interesting views into the plots.

Topography

Little Barrow is located on the brow of a low hill, and has quite an exposed setting. The settlement descends from the Foxcote Inn (formerly the Railway Inn) in the south of the village, to Barrow Lodge in the north in a gradual slope. Sandstone outcrops are a further feature of the village and can be found protruding from underneath the foundations of buildings and walls. Good examples of this can be seen at the Cobwebs and Snail Top Cottages, and at the east end of Little Barrow Hall Mews.

Boundary treatments, hedgerows and trees

Boundary treatments, hedgerows and trees have a significant impact upon the setting of properties, the coherence of a group and the overall character of a conservation area. Traditional and appropriate treatments will preserve or enhance the appearance of the conservation area.



Cobwebs Cottage, Little Barrow

Boundary Treatments

Throughout the conservation area, the boundaries of properties and of the open areas are defined mainly by sandstone and brick walls. These give a definite hard edge to the street and help to assert the area of this dispersed settlement. They are softened in places by hedging on top, and grass verges. Moving southwards over the bridge, the road and boundary hedges become softer and are defined by the walls and hedges.

Hedgerows and Trees

The hedgerows of the village vary in size and height from 1100 mm up to over 3000mm such as that which defines the boundary of Foxstone Cottage in the south of the village. There are a wide variety of plants and trees in the conservation area, including oak, thorn, mountain ash, horse chestnut, ash, holly and scots pine. The trees at the bottom of the hill to the north help define and enclose the spaces within the area.

Open spaces

The open spaces are important elements in defining the character of Little Barrow. This is particularly evident along the eastern edge, though this land is outside the boundary of the conservation area. Views up the hill are defined in places by the built form providing an interesting composition with the open area, sandstone walls and hedges.

Buildings and their setting in the landscape

The centre of the village is the junction at the southern end where the built form agglomerates to form the most defined built line. The space here becomes more enclosed with sandstone walls and hedges helping to define the streets. Some properties abut the road directly giving a hard edge and a feeling of enclosure. However the level of enclosure on the western side is particularly weak.

Boundaries

The boundaries have been reviewed and no changes have been proposed.



Rose Cottage, Little Barrow

NEUTRAL OR NEGATIVE ELEMENTS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA AND ENHANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Neutral elements represent features within the conservation area that offer no strong positive or negative influence upon the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, negative features detract from the special character of an area and present the opportunity for change, which will enhance the character and appearance of an area. Those elements considered neutral or negative features and those elements that represent enhancement opportunities within the conservation area are listed below.

Negative elements

- Despite the majority of the surrounding area and views being of exceptional beauty, the oil refinery and power stations are visible to the north of the village.
- The verge opposite Foxstone cottage is heavily weeded and looks unsightly.
- The gable end of the outbuilding at Station Farm that faces the main road has been painted a bright pink colour, and may be deemed inappropriate to the character of the area.
- The boundary wall fronting Barrow Station Cottage has been built of exposed breezeblock with no coping stones and looks out of character with the rest of the boundary walls of the village properties.
- The rendering to the external wall of Barrow Station Cottage is uncharacteristic of the area, and looks drab and dirty.
- The brick floor surface to the front of Hillview Cottage is inappropriate for the setting of the conservation area, and a material that is more sympathetic to the local setting is recommended.

Enhancement opportunities

- The heavily weeded verge would benefit from re-turfing or grass seeding.
- The outbuilding at Station Farm deserves a more appropriate wall covering or colour rendering.
- The boundary wall of Barrow Station cottage should be replaced with a more appropriate building material, or the breezeblock wall could be rendered and painted, with a coping added. A more suitable wall covering and colour to the external walls of the cottage is further suggested.
- The railway station should be sympathetically and appropriately restored.
- The floor surface outside the Little Barrow Hall Mews would benefit from a more suitable material, for example gravel or appropriate cobblestones.

To try to realise these improvements, it is hoped that funding mechanism to achieve it may be explored within the Community.

NB: These are suggestions for improvement, but owners should note that the Planning Authority has no powers to implement those recommendations.

MANAGEMENT TOOLS

In order to maintain the character and appearance of conservation areas, Chester City Council will use the appropriate pieces of legislation relevant for this task:

- Urgent Work Notice.
This notice relates to a building which is in a very serious state of disrepair and needs basically to be water safe. It should be confirmed by the Secretary of State.
- Tidy Land Provision Notice, section 214 of the Planning Act 1990.
This notice relates to a building and its curtilage that is poorly maintained. It requires a tidy up of the property.
- Dilapidated Building Notice, section 16 of the 1984 Building Act.
This Notice refers to a building that is in a poor state. It implies either repairing the building or removal of the building. In a Conservation Area, such demolition would need a Conservation Area Consent.

THREAT

Increasing car traffic - mainly due to commuting - with its side effects such as street widening, road signs, tree cutting, poorly designed garages and drive ways, inappropriate traffic calming measures, etc. often seriously and irreversibly affects the character of a conservation area.

It is therefore important to foresee and manage very carefully the design and material impact of traffic on new developments, in order to maintain the essential features that make a conservation area special, in line with the latest guidance on streets published by the Department for Transport (Manual for Streets, March 2007, www.communities.gov.uk).

SURROUNDINGS OF A CONSERVATION AREA

Developments on properties located in the surrounding of a conservation area should also be considered with great care, in order to maintain the essential features that make an area special.

APPENDICES

- Map of the conservation area as existing, scale 1:2,500

FURTHER READING

Chester City Council - 1997 *Living in a Conservation Area - A Guide to Householders*
Chester City Council - November 2006 *Chester District Local Plan*

Relevant Local Plan Policies

- ENV21 Protection of trees and woodland
- ENV24 Preservation of key features within the landscape and its overall character
- ENV37 Preservation or enhancement of conservation areas
- ENV38 Protection of local views
- ENV45 Preservation of the special interest of listed buildings
- ENV46 Appropriate changes of use to listed buildings
- ENV47 Protection of unlisted buildings of merit