

East Meon Conservation Area

1.0 EAST MEON

Contents

Page

1.0 East Meon

1.1 Archaeology

1

1.2 Historical Development

1

1.3 Village Form

2

1.4 Buildings

2

2.0 Conservation Legislation

4

Map of Conservation Areas

5

3.0 The effect of Conservation

Area designation

6 & 7

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EAST MEON CONSERVATION AREA

1.0 EAST MEON

East Meon lies at the foot of typical Hampshire downland some 6 miles west of Petersfield, on the route of the old Winchester to Petersfield road. Park Hill, rising steeply to the north of the Parish Church, and the River Meon flowing east - west through the village make a particularly attractive contribution to the setting of the village.

1.1 Archaeology: The area immediately around the village has produced little archaeological evidence, probably due to a lack of systematic field work, as field systems and burial mounds in the parish suggest that there was settlement in the area from as early as the Neolithic period. A Romano-British sculptured head has been found near the village, providing further evidence of early settlement, and it is probable that the area has been farmed continuously since the Neolithic period. It is believed that evidence of Saxon and Medieval occupation may survive beneath the present village as it is known from documentary sources that a settlement was in existence in the Parish in those times.

1.2 Historical Development: The Domesday Survey indicates that the Manor of East Meon was in existence in the late Saxon period, when it belonged to the Bishop and Monks of Winchester Cathedral. The Manor passed to the Crown after the Norman Conquest but reverted to the Bishop during the Middle Ages, probably when the present church was built in the 12th Century. The growth of the village was constrained to the north by the high ground on which the Bishop's deer park was located and so in the Middle Ages it expanded along the banks of the River Meon close to the old Winchester to Petersfield Road. In the 16th and 17th Centuries further expansion took place along Workhouse Lane, Temple Lane and the High Street. The disposition of cottages at the eastern end of the High Street may indicate that at one time they bounded a road to a fording point of the river and that the roadway to the north of the now culverted river was part of the original main street. The growth of the hamlet of Frogmore can probably be attributed to the existence there of a mill, owned by the Manor of Meon Church, from at least the 17th Century, and to its location at a second fording point of the River Meon.

1.3 Village Form: The street plan of East Meon is formal, and consists basically of a grid pattern which extends into the lands west and south of the village. This is unusual in a village which was established during the Middle Ages and suggests that East Meon may have been "planned" in the expectation that it would grow into a town as important as the size of its church suggests. East Meon Church was an important mother church in the Middle Ages as shown by the existence of daughter chapels at Westbury, Froxfield, Steep and St. Mary in the Field, and it is also believed that East Meon was an important Minster or mother church, in the Saxon period with control over a number of dependent chapels. It seems to have retained its role as a mother church into the Middle Ages despite the general decline in status of Minster Churches at the end of the Saxon period. Its continuing importance is further reflected in the impressive scale of the 12th Century church, probably built on the site of the earlier Minster, and in the installation of a Tournai marble font, of which there are very few examples in this country. Tournai fonts are normally found in major churches and Cathedrals such as Winchester Cathedral, Lincoln Minster and St. Michael's Church in Southampton.

Although the street plan is formal the individual streets are irregular, varying in width and direction. The village centre is visually restricted by bends in the streets and the disposition of the buildings which line them. This, combined with the almost universal use of brick or timber framing in building construction, creates a sense of unity which is enhanced by the presence of the River Meon flowing through the heart of the village.

Development has taken place during the 20th Century but this has tended to follow the existing street line, with the one exception of Glenthorne Meadow which has broken through the close-built frontage of the High Street. East Meon therefore, remains a village of largely unspoilt character.

1.4 Buildings: There are many interesting buildings in East Meon, 15 of which are included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest compiled by the Department of the Environment. In addition, more than 40 other buildings in the village are to be found on the Supplementary List. *1* The most interesting of the buildings in East Meon are the Church and the Court House.

The Parish Church of All Saints was built about 1130 -1140. The south aisle was not added until the early 16th Century and there is no north aisle as the Church was built too near to the hillside to permit any additional building on the north side. The Lady Chapel was built in the mid 19th Century and further changes were made between 1904 and 1906 at the same time as the churchyard was extended to the east.

The Court House is a Grade I Listed Building and dates from the late 14th Century although documentary evidence records the existence of a hall and residence on the site in the early 13th Century. The earliest part of the existing building is the Medieval Hall in which the Manor Court was held. This has a simple trussed rafter roof and some original 14th Century windows. At right angles to the Hall and adjoining its eastern side is a two-storey 16th Century farmhouse which has been converted into modern living accommodation.

Another early building is the "Tudor House" on the corner of Workhouse Lane which dates from the 16th Century and many buildings in the village date from the 17th and 18th Centuries. It is likely that those in Church Street and the Cross replaced earlier dwellings on the site, whilst those further from the centre of the village and in Frogmore belong to a period of village expansion.

1 The Supplementary List was compiled to draw attention to buildings of architectural or historic interest not sufficiently important for inclusion on the Statutory List. No statutory protection is given to these buildings but special attention is paid to the design of alterations which are the subject of planning applications.

2.0 CONSERVATION LEGISLATION

- 2.1 Civic Amenities Act, 1967: Conservation Areas were introduced in 1967 under the Civic Amenities Act, which empowered Local Planning Authorities to designate Conservation Areas in order to protect groups of historic buildings and features of the landscape important to their setting, which individually would not merit protection as Listed Buildings but which, as a group, would be deemed to be a loss to the locality if demolished or greatly altered.
- 2.2 Town and Country Amenities Act, 1974: (As amended by the Local Government and Land Act, 1980): In 1974 the Town and Country Amenities Act required all Local Authorities to consider the designation of further Conservation Areas, and to consider publishing, at a later date, schemes for the preservation and enhancement of these areas. The Act also increased the powers of the Local Planning Authority in respect of the demolition of buildings and the felling of trees within a Conservation Area.
- 2.3 Demolition of Buildings: With certain minor exceptions all proposals for demolition within a Conservation Area must be the subject of an application for Listed Building Consent, which must be made separately from a planning application to redevelop the site. It is an offence to carry out demolition without consent in a Conservation Area.
- 2.4 Tree Felling: Anyone wishing to fell or carry out any other operation on a tree in a Conservation Area must give the Local Planning Authority six weeks notice of their intention. During that period the Local Planning Authority will decide whether to make a Tree Preservation Order. It is an offence to commence works before the end of the Notice Period; penalties for contravention are the same as if a Tree Preservation Order was already in force.
- 2.5 If a tree is dead, or in a dangerous condition, the Notice Period may be waived and the work carried out. However, the onus of proof rests with the owner and it is therefore advisable to retain all felled timber for inspection. Felled trees should be replaced by trees of a similar species; the Local Planning Authority will be pleased to offer advice on this matter.
- 2.6 Designation of a Conservation Area in East Meon: East Hampshire District Council, as the Local Planning Authority, has designated, under Section 1 of the Town and Country Amenities Act, 1974, a Conservation Area in East Meon, outlined on the Map on page 5.

East Meon

Notation

Boundary of Conservation Area

Scale 1:2500

20 0 20 40 60 80 100 Metres



3.0 THE EFFECT OF CONSERVATION AREA DESIGNATION

3.1 The designation of a Conservation Area will not result in the preservation of an area as it stands today. Instead the use of conservation policies will ensure that the changes which are necessary for the area to adapt to modern needs, and so continue to flourish in the future, take place in sympathy with the overall character of the area. This necessarily implies a closer control of proposals for new uses, new structures and materials within a Conservation Area.

3.2 As Conservation Areas are limited to the protection of the historic environment, the general conservation policies outlined below should be used in conjunction with the Petersfield Area Local Plan and the Mid-Hampshire Structure Plan, which set out the overall policies controlling development in the area. These documents are available from East Hampshire Council's Planning Department and from Hampshire County Council respectively.

3.3 In East Meon it is the intention of the Local Planning Authority to retain, as far as possible, the close-knit and unified character of the village by retaining the existing building lines, particularly in the High Street, and ensuring that new development is appropriate to the village both in design and detailing. Strict attention will also be paid to the detailing of alterations to existing buildings.

3.4 Planning Policies: (Policies BE.2, 4 and 8 of the Petersfield Area Local Plan)
The general planning policies to be upheld in the East Meon Conservation Area are as follows:

- a) Uses which generate unreasonable noise, nuisance or excessive traffic, or which could result in untidy sites will not be permitted.
- b) Additional buildings, or additions to existing buildings will be permitted only where they will make a positive contribution to the appearance of the area. Replacement buildings will be permitted only if it can be demonstrated that the existing building is of an inferior character or wholly beyond repair.
- c) Certain buildings and their intervening spaces form an essential part of the character of East Meon. Any proposal to demolish a building which would result in an unsightly area, or to fill an important open space, will be critically examined.

- d) Permission in outline form will not normally be given for development within the Conservation Area. Detailed plans, including elevations showing the new building in its setting, and particulars of colours, materials and existing trees will be required. Particular care will be exercised to ensure that inappropriate materials and colours are not used.
- e) Existing trees should, wherever possible, be retained for their value and contribution to the village scene. The planting of new trees will be encouraged.
- f) Whenever any development is proposed in the Conservation Area the Planning Authority will be mindful of East Meon's potential archaeological interest and will take all steps within its power to ensure that sites of interest are properly excavated, or otherwise investigated, before any new building is commenced.
- g) Special care shall be exercised in the design of new buildings in areas adjacent to the Conservation Area. The fact that adjacent site buildings fall outside the boundaries of the Conservation Area does not imply the relaxation of planning control in these areas.

3.5 Enhancement Schemes: As well as protecting historic areas from unsuitable development, the conservation legislation provides for schemes to improve the appearance of the Conservation Areas. In the future the Parish Council, landowners and local residents may wish to prepare a Conservation Enhancement Scheme for East Meon; the District Council will be pleased to advise on the preparation of such a scheme and may be able to make resources available, in the form of grants, for repairs to buildings and walls, planting, and general improvements to the environment. More information can be obtained from the Chief Planning Officer at:

East Hampshire District Council,
Penns Place,
Durford Road,
Petersfield,
Hants. GU31 4E