

AYLESTONE HILL CONSERVATION AREA

APPRAISAL

DRAFT

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AYLESTONE HILL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Introduction

No appraisal can ever be completely comprehensive. Omission of any particular building, feature or site should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Aylestone Hill Conservation Area was designated in 1969 by the former Hereford City Council. The conservation area is located within the City of Hereford, to the north-east of the city centre, on a major arterial road (A465) linking the city with Bromyard and Worcester (via A4103).

The designation of a conservation area is no longer considered appropriate as an end in itself. For the designation to be meaningful, the process requires the preparation of an appraisal to define what is special, thereby warranting the status of a conservation area. This should also form the basis for making decisions about the future of the area, ensuring its character and appearance is taken properly into account.

An appraisal has been carried out to review Aylestone Hill Conservation Area's special qualities, particularly in the light of any changes that may have occurred since the conservation area was originally designated. The scope of the appraisal has included a review of whether new areas might be added to, or some parts removed from, the designation. At this stage, any proposals for boundary change will be put forward as the basis for further discussion and consultation. Any decision on changes to the boundary of the conservation area will be taken at a later stage in association with the consideration of management proposals.

Planning Policy Context

There is a considerable amount of policy published by a number of sources (including English Heritage and the Department of the Environment) about the designation, appraisal and review of conservation areas. A bibliography of pertinent publications is given at the end of this document.

Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) sets out Herefordshire Council's planning policies. These policies will influence how development proceeds throughout the County, including the Aylestone Hill area of Hereford.

The UDP contains policies setting out criteria for designating and reviewing conservation areas (Policy HBA5), and on how planning applications for development within such areas will be considered (Policy HBA6). The purpose of setting criteria against which the designation of a conservation area will be judged is to ensure consistency of approach and help avoid the inclusion of areas that would not be in keeping with the special character of the area. A conservation area is defined as an area of special architectural and historical interest, the character and appearance of which should be conserved or enhanced. The criteria against which the importance of the area is judged are reflected in the analysis that follows in this document.

Much of the Aylestone Hill Conservation Area is defined by the UDP as an 'Established Residential Area' within Hereford City where the provision of housing will be restricted to within the defined settlement boundary (Policy H1). The policy further states that established residential areas should remain primarily residential in character, and other uses proposed should be compatible with this primary use and appropriate for the site. Residential development will be permitted within these areas where compatible with the housing design and other policies of the UDP, including new housing development site density (Policy H15) and the sub-division of existing housing (Policy H17).

Within the conservation area (and within the settlement boundary), three open spaces are protected from residential development. Two of these open spaces are Churchill Gardens and part of the grounds of Athelstan Hall (Policy RST4, Safeguarding existing recreational open space). A third open space, Aylestone Park near the north end of the conservation area, has been designated as a new public recreational space (Policy RST5, New open space in/adjacent to settlements).

A small area in the north-west part of the conservation area (within the settlement area) and in the north-east part (outside the settlement area) is in an area at risk from flooding (Policy DR7, Flood risk). In the north-east part, mineral resources are protected (Policy M5, Safeguarding mineral reserves). A smaller part of the north-east area is within the Lugg Meadows where proposals for new development that would adversely affect the overall character of the landscape will generally be resisted (Policy LA2, Landscape character and areas least resilient to change).

Summary of Special Interest

The Aylestone Hill area is known to have been occupied since at least the medieval period. Evidence of medieval and early post-medieval agriculture can be seen in the form of earthworks, including lynchets, and ridge and furrow.

Today, Aylestone Hill, as the A465, is a major road link between Hereford, and the Worcester and Bromyard roads. It is also an important access road into the city centre.

In the late 18th Century, several large houses with extensive grounds were built on the lower south-facing slopes and on the crest of the Aylestone-Tupsley ridge. During the 19th Century, the area became a popular upper-middle class residential suburb as large plots were laid out, and large and medium-sized houses built, initially on the south-facing slopes and, later, on the north-facing slopes of Aylestone Hill. Many of these houses now stand in well-kept gardens with mature trees, bordered by hedges and stone walls.

Residential development continued into the 20th Century, mainly in the form of detached family homes, generally on smaller plots. Other developments include a hospital and expanding educational facilities. Recent, late 20th Century, high-density residential development has taken place on the periphery of the conservation area in cul-de-sacs, or where larger properties have been sub-divided.

Heritage assets within the conservation area include 16 Listed Buildings; all are Grade II. In addition, seven Buildings of Local Interest have been identified. There are also eight Tree Preservation Orders applied to individual trees and groups.

Location and Setting

Aylestone Hill Conservation Area occupies a narrow corridor on both sides of the thoroughfare known as Aylestone Hill, a major arterial road (A465) on the north-east side of Hereford City. The boundary of the conservation area generally coincides with the rear boundary of residential properties on each side of the thoroughfare, following the linear pattern of residential development that began in the 18th Century. The conservation area also includes Churchill Gardens, a landscaped open space, and, at the northern end, several narrow strips of more extensive open spaces, including Aylestone Park, currently under construction.

Aylestone Hill extends north-east as a continuation of Commercial Road, a medieval suburb of Hereford formerly known as Bye Street. The A465 (and the conservation area) follows a sweeping curve from the small valley of the Eign Brook (at the south end), climbing over the Aylestone-Tupsley ridge, and dropping down onto the floodplain of the River Lugg (at the north end). At its highest point on the ridge, near Churchill House, the conservation area rises to 83m above Ordnance Datum (OD). From this location, there are extensive views to the west as far as Hay Bluff and the Black Mountains. At its lowest point on the floodplain, the conservation area falls to 50m OD in an area liable to flooding.

The underlying bedrock of the Aylestone-Tupsley ridge is the Raglan Mudstone Formation, consisting of red-brown mudstone with beds of brown or greenish-grey sandstone. In the vicinity of Churchill House, the bedrock is capped by glacial drift deposits of the fourth terrace of the River Lugg. On the Lugg floodplain, the bedrock underlies more recent alluvial deposits. Mudstone gives rise to fine silty soils (typical argillic brown earths) that support cereals, short-term pasture with stock raising, and hops. These deposits have also been quarried to provide raw material for brick production.

Historical Development and Archaeology

Possibly the earliest settlement on Aylestone Hill was reported by the antiquarian Alfred Watkins, who interpreted earthworks located in the vicinity of Churchill House as the remains of an Iron Age hillfort. Earthworks, in the form of lynchets, can be seen today in Churchill Gardens that delineate part of the long sinuous boundaries of medieval or early post-medieval open fields, and short straight field boundaries associated with more recent (17th or 18th Century) enclosures. The field boundaries were removed during the 19th Century when the landscape park was set out. Further evidence of medieval agriculture is found near the northern edge of the conservation area in the form of ridge and furrow (earthworks associated with medieval ploughing techniques and land management).

Aylestone medieval settlement was located on the west side of Aylestone Hill in the parish of All Saints, and was first documented in the early 11th Century. A reference to Aegelnoth's Stone (OE: *Ægelnoðes Stane*) has been interpreted as the site of a shire moot (court). Walney medieval settlement was located on the east side of Aylestone Hill in the parish of St John, and was first documented in the 12th Century as Wallneya (OE: *Wællan-ēg*, island of the spring). The name is perpetuated in Walney House Farm (outside the eastern boundary of the conservation area), Walney House (within the conservation area) and Walney Lane. In the early 19th century, Aylestone consisted of a small linear settlement on Venn's Lane to the west of Churchill House. At the same time, a small settlement known as Walney Cottage

was located on Walney Lane. By the late 18th Century, encroachment of small plots had taken place on the edge of the Lugg Meadows at the north end of Aylestone Hill near the junction with Roman Road.

From the late 18th Century, Aylestone Hill became a popular upper-middle class residential area with the construction of large houses on the lower south-facing slopes and on the crest of the Aylestone-Tupsley ridge. Further residential development had been undertaken by the mid-19th Century with the layout of large plots, and the construction of medium to large houses, on the lower south-facing slopes, and the construction of large houses set in extensive grounds on the crest of the ridge and on the upper north-facing slopes. Development of the lower north-facing slopes continued into the later 19th Century, with the construction of additional large houses set in extensive grounds.

During the early 20th Century, the construction of town houses on smaller plots took place on the lower south-facing slopes. By the middle of the 20th Century, residential development had taken place on the lower north-facing slopes (on small plots) and on the upper slopes on both sides of the ridge (mainly on the east side of Aylestone Hill). Later 20th Century development has included the construction of a hospital and the Hereford VIth Form College on the crest of the ridge (Venn's Lane and Folly Lane), and of residential development on medium to small sites, generally in cul-de-sacs or at the rear of large plots that have been subdivided. These later developments have been at a far higher density than previously.

Spatial Analysis

Character and Interrelationship of Spaces

The character of Ayleston Hill Conservation Area is defined very much by its large, late Georgian (late 18th to early 19th Century), Victorian (mid to late 19th Century) and Edwardian (early 20th Century) houses set, generally, on large plots with mature gardens, trees and shrubs (native and ornamental species). Many of the large houses are screened, in some cases almost completely hidden, by high sandstone walls and mature hedges. A variety of architectural styles is represented, including late Georgian Classical and Victorian Gothic; materials include brick, stone and stucco.

There are several large open spaces within the conservation area. The largest, Churchill Gardens, is located on a steep, south-facing slope near the crest of the Aylestone-Tupsley ridge. The grounds of Churchill House were laid out as a landscape park with specimen trees and a small pleasure garden; this area is now a public park. Within the park, earthworks in the form of lynchets indicate that the area was once used for agricultural purposes. From this location there are extensive views to the west. There is further large open space on the crest of the ridge, a short distance to the north. Formerly the grounds of Athelstan House, this area has been levelled for use as a school sports field.

On the south-facing slopes there are two smaller open spaces, both of which are part of more extensive open areas. On the east side of Aylestone Hill are the Lugg Meadows on the floodplain of the River Lugg. Evidence of earlier agricultural activities has been recorded here in the form of ridge and furrow. On the west side of Aylestone Hill, several large fields are under development as a public park to be known as Aylestone Park. This land is now drained by a ditch, but evidence of earlier drainage systems can also be seen in the form of shallow depressions.

Key Views and Vistas

The abundance of mature trees and shrubs, and high walls, contributes to the enclosed character of much of the conservation area. This also tends to limit views in and out of the area to the line of the carriageway.

There are, however, two panoramic vistas looking out of the conservation area; looking into the conservation area, a view of a landmark building; and several key views along Aylestone Hill:

- Looking west from Churchill Gardens near the top of the crest of the Aylestone-Tupsley ridge: a panoramic vista across the city centre, with views of the cathedral tower and the spires of All Saints and St Peter's, towards Hay Bluff and distant Welsh mountains;
- Looking north from Aylestone Hill, just below the crest of the ridge: a panoramic vista of distant hills and woods towards Clee Hill, framed by mature trees;
- Looking north-east into the conservation area from the city centre (Commercial Street at the junction with Union Street): a view of Churchill House, a landmark building on the crest of the Aylestone-Tupsley ridge, the white stucco of the building standing out in contrast to the dark green trees of the landscape park;
- Looking north-east into the conservation area from the southern end along Aylestone Hill: on the right, the character of the conservation area can be seen immediately in the form of a large 18th/ 19th house (Aylestone Hill Hotel) behind a screen of mature broadleaf trees on the roadside verge; while on the left, tall redbrick houses on staggered plots begin to climb the hill;
- Looking north-east from the crest of the ridge along Aylestone Hill: the view becomes enclosed quite suddenly as mature trees and hedges crowd the edge of the carriageway and overhang the road;
- Looking south from the floodplain along Aylestone Hill: as the road climbs the ridge, a large Victorian Gothic house overlooks the floodplain and mature trees begin to enclose the view;
- Looking south from the crest of the ridge along Aylestone Hill: as the road sweeps downhill, curving out of sight, it is bordered immediately on the right by a high stone wall and overhanging trees of Churchill Gardens; on the left, there is a steep, grassy bank that follows the road down the slope, losing height and gaining trees as it goes.

Character Analysis

On entering the conservation area at the north end, the road curves to the south along the western edge of the Lugg Meadows before beginning to climb the Aylestone-Tupsley ridge. On the east side of the road, behind mature hedges, are the low-lying meadows of the broad, lower valley of the Lugg. Where the road starts

to rise, there is a series of two storey houses and bungalows (even nos. 120 to 144 on the east side of Aylestone Hill). Most are of brick or render, situated on small plots.

On the west side of Aylestone Hill at the north end, there are four small houses, a public house and a shop (both with car parks) set fairly close to the road. Two of the houses are brick-built with central entrances, small wooden porches, and wooden casement windows (no. 191) or wooden sash windows and decorative bargeboards (no. 173). Both appear to be of Victorian date; the public house may be earlier but with later additions. Behind these buildings (to the west) are several mid to late 20th Century houses. Further south, on the east side of the road, are several open fields currently under development as a park.

On rising ground on the west side of Aylestone Hill, overlooking the floodplain, is Burcott House (unlisted, formerly Quarry House). This large stone-built house (with brick to minor elevations) has a number of gables and gabled dormers under a slate roof, and was built c. 1870. It is set on a large plot behind mature trees and a high stone rubble wall. The house has recently been converted into flats. A large car park has been constructed in the grounds, and several late 20th Century buildings have been constructed at the rear.

South of Burcott House (on the west side of Aylestone Hill) is a fairly extensive area of open land set behind a high stone wall, trees and mature hedges. These boundary features continue to Overbury Road, effectively screening two large houses set on generous plots. No. 87 Aylestone Hill (unlisted) is built of stone with ashlar quoins and dressings at the front elevation (brick at other elevations) under a hipped slate roof, and with sash windows; it was built in 1871. At the rear of the house, in Lugg View Close, are five late 20th Century houses on small plots. The second of the two large houses is Overbury House, no. 2 Overbury Road (unlisted). It is described as Victorian Italianate, stuccoed, and built c. 1840; it cannot be seen from the road.

The stone wall, trees and hedges continue southwards as boundary features screening Beech Tree House, no. 3 Overbury Road/Danesmere, no. 79 Aylesbury Road (Grade II). Beech Tree House, built in the early 19th Century, is of painted brick under a hipped slate roof with a central entrance and porch. The house was extended c. 1880 (now known as Danesmere) in brick with terracotta and moulded brick ornamentation.

Just below the crest of the Aylestone-Tupsley ridge, on the west side of Aylestone Hill, is a pair of semi-detached houses, set on a large plot with mature trees, visible behind a low wall of dressed stone with a hedge above. Nos. 75 and 77 Aylestone Hill (unlisted), built in 1910, are roughcast in white with half-timbered gables under a hipped tile roof.

On the east side of Aylestone Hill overlooking the floodplain (south of no. 120), are the house and grounds of The Shires (unlisted, formerly Walney House). This is a large, multigabled stone-built house with a slate roof, decorative bargeboards and a porch at the front elevation. The house is set in extensive grounds with mature trees (many of which are under a Tree Protection Order), with hedges along Aylestone Hill and stone gate piers. On the north side, a former coach house of similar architectural design is now a separate residence (no. 118 Aylestone Hill). A high redbrick wall with stone capping delineates the northern boundary of the property. To the south, facing onto Aylestone Hill behind mature, well-tended gardens, are six mid-20th Century detached houses (nos. 94 to 102 (even numbers) and no. 108 Aylestone Hill).

Number 88 Aylestone Hill (Grade II) is an elegant stuccoed house of Classical design, dating to the early to mid-19th Century. It is set on a large plot behind a mature hedge. There is a stuccoed extension to the south (no. 86), and a very large detached garage of matching colour (with accommodation above) on the north side.

South of this location, Aylestone Hill commences a wide curve to the south-west. Tall trees and high hedges behind stone rubble walls become more prominent, and create a sense of enclosure as the road rises towards the crest of the ridge. At the junction with Broadlands Lane, a mid-19th Century cast-iron mile marker with three facets (Grade II) indicates that it was once one mile to Hereford from this location.

On the north side of the junction with Broadlands Lane, nos. 78 and 80 Aylestone Hill (Grade II) is a mid-19th Century building of Classical appearance. Painted white, with canted and crenellated bay windows, and a decorative iron veranda on the ground floor, it is set behind lawns and stone walls with ashlar gate piers. By contrast, on the opposite side of Broadlands Lane, Athelstan Hall (Grade II), no. 76 Aylestone Hill, also of Classical design, is built of dressed stone with ashlar detailing. At the central entrance is a painted portico with entablature and balustrade supported by plain and fluted columns. The extensive grounds of the house are now used as school playing fields. Trees, shrubs and a low, iron fence screen the grounds from Aylestone Hill.

Number 60 Aylestone Hill (unlisted) is an attractive medium-sized house of Classical design. It is stuccoed, with canted bay windows and a central porch under a pedimented gable. The house was rebuilt in 1858.

At the crest of the Ayleston-Tupsley ridge is the staggered junction of Aylestone Hill and Folly Lane/Venn's Lane. There is a sense of openness here, particularly on the west side of the junction. To the south-west is a small garden with a cider press exhibit; to the north-west are the grounds of the Wye Valley Nuffield Hospital bordered by low, iron railings. The hospital is screened from view by a group of small native trees (under a Tree Protection Order). On the east side of the junction, a large block of flats was under construction at the time of the survey. Hereford VIth Form College is adjacent to this site on Folly Lane. The college is of two stories, built of brick and painted panels under a flat roof, and was constructed after the conservation area was designated. The boundary of the conservation area runs through the college buildings. At this location, there is a group of trees, including a mature cedar (all under a Tree Protection Order). To the south-east of the junction is a late 20th Century residential development behind a high wall.

Vehicle and pedestrian traffic is very heavy at this location at specific times of day. Traffic control is by means of two mini-roundabouts, islands and bollards. For pedestrians, there are designated crossing points and metal safety railings.

The conservation area extends a short distance westwards along Venn's Lane where it includes three large buildings and their grounds. Wye Valley Nuffield Hospital (unlisted) is a mid-20th Century building of brick with concrete dressings and roughcast panels under a flat roof. On the west side is an open car park. This is the largest modern building in the conservation area (with the possible exception of the building under construction on the east side of the junction). It is not in keeping with character of the area; it is, however, screened by trees on its east (Aylestone Hill) side.

Elmhurst (Grade II) is a large mid-19th Century house presently used as a nursing home. This outstanding, two-storey stuccoed house has canted bay windows with

margin-glazed French windows, coloured leaded clerestory lights, a cast-iron veranda on columns and an entrance porch with four-centred arch, all under a slate roof with hipped gable and mansard wing. The grounds, which were truncated to accommodate the hospital to the east, contain outbuildings, a large car park on the south side and lawns on the east side. The house is screened from the road by mature hedges and trees, including native broadleaf species and several very large evergreens.

On the south side of Venn's Lane, at the junction with Aylestone Hill, lie Churchill House (Grade II, formerly Penn Grove House) and gardens. This landmark building can be seen from the centre of the city. The two-storey stuccoed house has a central entrance and porch with cornice and parapet, sash windows with shouldered architrave, all under a hipped slate roof with modillioned wood eaves. The house was built c. 1850 to replace an earlier house at this location, and was extended, in similar style, in 1907. A short distance to the north of the house is a 19th Century brick coach house with a 20th Century porch. On the west side of the house is a small pleasure garden with hedges and mature specimen trees, including a cedar. Churchill House recently housed a museum; at the time of the survey it was undergoing internal alterations for use as the Performing Arts Centre of Herefordshire College of Art and Design.

Churchill Gardens, a landscape park, is the largest open space within the conservation area. The park contains both native broadleaf trees and conifers, including mature specimens and more recent plantings. Tree cover is heaviest in the north-western section of the park, giving the appearance of woodland. On the east side of the park, mature trees and bushes, and a high stone wall of random rubble, effectively screen the house and gardens from the heavy traffic on Aylestone Hill. Tree cover is quite light on the steep south-facing slopes of the park, resulting in extensive views across the city centre towards distant hills.

On the south side of the mini-roundabout at the crest of the Aylestone-Tupsley ridge, Aylestone Hill drops downhill, curving towards the south-west and out of sight. On the west side, the road is bordered immediately by the high stone wall and overhanging trees and bushes of Churchill Gardens; on the east side, there is a steep, grassy bank with a tarmac footpath at the top of the slope running parallel with the carriageway.

At the foot of Churchill Gardens, on the west side of Aylestone Hill, the streetscape becomes more suburban in character with medium-sized houses set behind well-kept gardens and hedges (and some wooden fencing), screened from the road by mature trees and bushes, and with a footpath alongside the road. Most of the houses are brick-built, of two stories, and of 19th Century date. Three are Grade II Listed, i.e., Holly House, The Lawns and Bank House (nos. 23, 25 and 27 Aylestone Hill). These houses are symmetrical in design with central entrances, stone dressings and sash windows under hipped slate roofs; they were built in the early to mid-19th Century. In this area, two rendered houses with timbered gables under tiled roofs offer variety to the streetscape.

At the foot of the Aylestone-Tupsley ridge, on the east side of Aylestone Hill, the streetscape becomes fully urban in character and Edwardian in appearance. Here, there is a series of tall houses (two stories, attic and basement), nos. 1 to 15 Aylestone Hill (odd numbers), on narrow plots with very small front gardens bordered by low brick walls and hedges. The houses are built of brick with stone dressings, and with timbered gables over bay windows under slate roofs with dormer windows. The front elevation of each house is set forward slightly, from south to north, giving

the impression that the houses climb up the hill. In a number of cases, original wooden sash windows have been replaced by uPVC windows, and front gardens have been replaced by paved hardstandings.

On the east side of Aylestone Hill, south of Folly Lane, is a late 20th Century high-density residential development at Carter Grove, a cul-de-sac. This estate is not in keeping with the character of the conservation area. Iron railings separate the estate from Aylestone Hill, and a number of trees (protected by a Tree Preservation Order) and bushes act as a screen. Further south is a series of detached, mid-20th Century houses (nos. 22 to 40 Aylestone Hill, even numbers) set fairly close to the front of mature, well-kept gardens bordered by hedges or low walls. These houses are separated from the road by a wide grass verge with a row of mature specimen trees. In this area, a light-controlled pedestrian crossing, with a central refuge, links both sides of Aylestone Hill and, together with speed cameras, moderates traffic speed.

Extending south to the foot of the hill is a series of large, brick-built late Georgian and Victorian town houses. Most have been sub-divided into flats; one is now a hotel; three are listed buildings.

Aylestone Court Hotel (Grade II, formerly Aylestone Hill House) is a late 18th Century house with 19th Century additions. The three-storey house is symmetrical in form, and built of brick under a hipped slate roof with corbelled brackets to the eaves, and with sash windows. At the front elevation, the central entrance is flanked by plain columns and ashlar canted bay windows surmounted by a balustrade. The grounds at the rear of the house have been subdivided; at the front is a large gravelled car park.

Numbers 8 and 10 Aylestone Hill (Grade II), also of late 18th Century date, is a large, late Georgian three-storey brick house (painted at the ground floor) under a hipped slate roof. The house has a central entrance with canopy, sash windows, and an extension on the south side. The dwelling has been sub-divided. At the front of the building is a hedge, several mature trees, and a large gravelled parking area. Gates, piers with ball finials and railings delineating the property boundary are of early 19th Century date and are listed (Grade II) separately. Gates, piers and railings, and door, canopy and sills of no. 10 have been painted turquoise, a colour that is not characteristic of the late Georgian period, or of the conservation area.

St Hylda's, no. 14 Aylestone Hill (Grade II), is an early 19th Century three-storey house of symmetrical appearance, built of brick under a plain tile roof, with sash windows and a central door with fanlight and a lamp above. At the front of the house is a small lawn with box hedge, and a driveway and parking area paved with flags and cobbles that create an attractive textured surface. At the front of the property is a low brick boundary wall with brick piers and stone ball finials. At the rear of the house, the grounds have been sub-divided.

Nos. 16 and 18 Aylestone Hill (unlisted) is a pair of substantial semi-detached two-storey houses with attics, dating to the late 19th Century. These houses are brick-built with stone dressings; they have gables with bargeboards at the front elevation, sash windows, bay windows at the ground floor, all under slate roofs with dormer windows. At the front are paved parking pads, distressed lawns and unkempt hedges. A low brick wall and hedge delineate the front boundary. These houses appear to have been sub-divided into flats.

Hillside, no. 20 Aylestone Hill (unlisted) is a detached two-storey house with attic. Built in 1880 of brick with ashlar dressings, the house has a large gable to the front

elevation at the right side, with decorative tiles and plasterwork, timber panelling and decorative bargeboards. To the left side are canted bay windows at ground and first floor; the door, with gabled porch, is central. The slate roof has gabled dormer windows with bargeboards. The house appears to have been sub-divided into flats. The adjacent stable block is in similar style and has been converted to residential use. At the front of the house is a large gravelled car park; a recently installed wooded fence delineates the front boundary.

At the southern end of the conservation area is the Adult Training Centre. This is a one-storey brick building with flat roofs and metal windows, built in mid-20th Century 'institutional' style. It is not in keeping with the character of the conservation area.

Buildings of Local Interest

The following unlisted buildings are considered to make a positive contribution to the special architectural and historical interest of the conservation area:

- Aylestone Hill, no. 20, Hillside: two stories and attic, brick with ashlar detailing, central door case with porch, dormer windows, canted bay windows on left side, large gable on right with decorative tiles and plasterwork, timber panelling, decorative bargeboards, slate roof; adjacent former stable block (separate dwelling) in similar style; 1880.
- Aylestone Hill, no. 21: two stories, roughcast and half-timbered, hipped tiled roof, gables at front with bargeboards, latticed windows; 1911 (architects Groom and Bettinger also designed nos. 75 and 77 Aylestone Hill).
- Aylestone Hill, no. 60: two stories, symmetrical Classical style, central door case with porch set forward under pedimented gable, hipped tiled roof, canted bays on first floor, later balcony on second floor at right, sash windows; rebuilt 1858.
- Aylestone Hill, nos. 75 and 77: two stories and attic, hipped tiled roof, roughcast with half-timbered gables, rounded bay windows on first and second floor, mullion and transom windows; 1910 (architects Groom and Bettison also designed no. 21).
- Aylestone Hill, no. 87: two stories, stone with ashlar quoins and dressings at front elevation, brick at other elevations, hipped slate roof, sash windows; 1871.
- Aylestone Hill, no. 116, The Shires (formerly Walney House): two stories with attic, stone with ashlar quoins and dressings, slate roof, multigabled with decorative bargeboards, door case with porch, sash windows; adjacent former stable block (separate dwelling) in similar style; 1874.
- Aylestone Hill, no. 131, Burcott House (formerly Quarry House): two stories with attic, stone with ashlar dressings, brick at minor elevations, slate roof, multigabled with barge boards, sash windows and bay windows; c 1870 with later additions.

Prevalent Building Materials and Local Details

The most prominent building material seen in the conservation area is sandstone. It was used in the construction of large houses with ashlar dressings, generally under multigabled slate roofs with bargeboards, including Athelstan House, The Shires, Burcott House, and no. 87 Aylestone Hill. Sandstone rubble was also used in the construction of prominent boundary walls. This material is locally available, occurring as brown and greenish-grey sandstone beds in the underlying mudstone bedrock.

Stucco was used in the construction of a number of large elegant houses, in white or pale cream colours, all under hipped slate roofs. These include Elmhurst, Churchill House, Broadlands, nos. 86 and 88 Aylestone Hill, Overbury House, and no. 60 Aylestone Hill.

The most common building material, however, is brick. It was used in the construction of a number of late 18th/early 19th Century Georgian houses, including Aylestone Hill Hotel, St Hilda's and Bank House; mid and late 19th Century Victorian houses, including Hillside and nos. 16 and 18 Aylestone Hill; and early 20th Century Edwardian houses, including nos. 1 to 15 (odd numbers) Aylestone Hill. Brick was also used to construct the minor elevations of most of the large, stone-fronted houses. A number of local brickyards, on both sides of Aylestone Hill, were in active production well into the 19th Century.

Brick continues to be used in the construction of more recent buildings, including the Wye Valley Nuffield Hospital and residential developments such as Carter Close. It has also long been used in the construction of boundary walls.

Slate was the most common roofing material between the late 18th and early 20th Century; it was imported from south Wales. Clay plain tiles were used occasionally. Concrete tiles have become more common on houses constructed since the mid-20th Century.

Positive Areas and Features

The following elements are considered to make a positive contribution to the special architectural and historical interest of the conservation area:

- Imposing historic buildings of late 18th to late 19th Century date;
- Spacious, well-kept gardens on generous plots;
- Mature landscape with specimen trees, both broadleaf and conifer;
- Significant boundary features, including high sandstone rubble walls and mature hedges.

Neutral and Intrusive Elements

The following areas and elements are not considered to contribute to the special architectural and historical interest of the conservation area:

- Aylestone Hill, nos. 120 to 144 (even numbers): a group of two storey houses and bungalows of brick and render, generally on smaller plots, c. 1930;

- Aylestone Hill, between nos. 173 to 191 (odd numbers): a group of mid to late 20th Century dwellings on infill sites (also at this location are two small, brick-built 19th Century houses and The Swan Inn public house);
- Aylestone Hill, at the north end of the conservation area on the east side of the road: an area of open land on the Lugg Meadows liable to flood;
- Aylestone Hill, near the north end of the conservation area on the west side of the road: an area of open land under development as a park;
- Carter Grove: late 20th Century high-density residential development on a cul-de-sac (a number of mature trees on this site are protected by TPO 209);
- Folly Lane, Hereford VIth Form College: two stories, brick and painted panels under flat roof, late 20th Century 'institutional' style building (a group of trees adjacent to this site are protected by TPO 523);
- Venn's Lane, Wye Valley Nuffield Hospital: two and three stories, brick with concrete dressings and roughcast panels under a flat roof, large open car park, mid-20th Century 'institutional' style building (a group of trees on this site is protected by TPO 071);
- Rockfield Road, Adult Training Centre: one storey, brick with flat roof, metal windows, mid-20th Century plain 'institutional' style building;
- Various small sites of mid to late 20th Century residential development on the periphery of the conservation area, generally on cul-de-sacs or where large plots have been subdivided, including:
 - Aylestone Grange
 - Broadlands Lane (north side)
 - Lugg View Close
 - Walney Lane
- Various inappropriate alterations to, and unkempt appearance of, several historic buildings (late 18th to early 20th Century), including:
 - Replacement windows, particularly uPVC;
 - Replacement of front gardens with paved hardstandings and gravelled parking areas;
 - Replacement of walls and hedges with wooden fencing;
 - Re-painting in colours not characteristic of architectural period or context.

General Condition, Pressures and Capacity for Change

Generally, the condition of the conservation area is very good. In only a small number of cases is there evidence of poor maintenance of buildings, grounds and hedges.

There is significant, and on-going, pressure for change, including:

- Change of use, e.g., conversion of large houses to flats, nursing homes, or for educational purposes;
- Sub-division of large plots and construction of cul-de-sacs with high-density residential development, particularly on the periphery of the conservation area;
- Expansion of educational facilities in the vicinity of Folly Lane.

Capacity for change is limited. Further development is likely to involve loss of open spaces and sub-division of plots leading to increases in the density of residential occupation, in the use of public facilities, and in traffic. Ultimately, this would result in the erosion of the character of the conservation area.

Issues

Buildings at Risk

Generally, the listed buildings in the conservation area are occupied and appear, from the exterior, to be in good or reasonable condition. The following building may be at risk as a result of a recent change of use:

- Churchill House (Grade II), Venn's Lane: this building is to be used as a performing arts centre. It is suggested that heavy use may be detrimental to the appearance and character of the building.

Proposed Boundary Changes

It is suggested that consideration should be given to a number of boundary changes that would involve the removal of certain areas from the conservation area. General reasons underlying such proposals include:

- (i) To exclude neutral or intrusive areas that do not contribute to the character of the conservation area;
- (ii) To exclude areas of the landscape that do not form an integral part of the historic built environment;
- (iii) To include areas of special architectural and historical interest that would contribute to the character of the conservation area;
- (iv) To realign the boundary to follow recognisable features, such as field boundaries, property boundaries or public footpaths.

It is proposed that the following neutral or intrusive areas (discussed above) that do not contribute to the character of the conservation area should be excluded:

- Adult Training Centre, Rockfield Road/Aylestone Hill;
- Carter Grove, Folly Lane/Aylestone Hill;
- Hereford VIth Form College, Folly Lane;

- Small infill sites, generally of mid to late 20th Century residential development in cul-de-sacs or where large plots have been subdivided, on the periphery of the conservation area, including:
 - Aylestone Grange;
 - Broadlands Lane (north side, east of no. 78 Aylestone Hill);
 - Walney Lane (south side, east of no. 82 Aylestone Hill);
 - Lugg View Close (east side).

It is proposed that further discussion be undertaken and opinion sought on:

- The exclusion of the following neutral or intrusive areas (discussed above) that do not contribute to the character of the conservation area:
 - Nos. 120 to 144 Aylestone Hill (even numbers);
 - Nos. 173 to 191 Aylestone Hill (odd numbers) and The Swan Inn;
- The exclusion of the following areas of the landscape that do not form an integral part of the historic built environment:
 - An area of Lugg Meadows at the north end of the conservation area on the east side of Aylestone Hill;
 - An area of open land under development as a park near the north end of the conservation area on the west side of Aylestone Hill.

It is proposed that the following area of special architectural and historical interest would contribute to the character of the conservation area and should be included:

- No. 17 Walney Lane, house and grounds: a Victorian house of Classical design.

It is further proposed that, following any changes, the boundary of the conservation area be realigned to follow recognisable features, such as field boundaries, property boundaries or public footpaths.

Other Issues

It is suggested that the character of the conservation area may be at risk as a result of:

- Changes of use of large historic houses, e.g., conversion to flats, which may lead to:
 - Loss of mature grounds and replacement with extensive parking areas and ancillary buildings;
 - Increase in traffic as a result of multiple occupancy;
 - Deterioration in the appearance of houses and grounds.
- Changes in the character and appearance of historic buildings as a result of inappropriate additions, alterations or decoration, e.g.,
 - Replacement windows, particularly uPVC;
 - Construction of conservatories and garages;

- Replacement of front gardens with parking pads;
- Removal of walls and hedges;
- Re-painting in inappropriate colours.

Enhancement

A small number of detrimental features within the conservation area can be enhanced with some improvement works, including:

- Basic maintenance of house exterior, lawn and hedges, where required;
- Reinstatement of hedges and walls;
- Reconsideration of parking facilities, e.g., re-location to the rear of premises, use of attractive textured surfaces, screening by hedges and bushes.

Sources

Planning Documents and Guidance

Department of National Heritage (1990) *Revised List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historical Interest, City of Hereford 1990*.
Department of the Environment and Department of National Heritage (1994) *Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment*.
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Soil Survey of England and Wales (1987) *Soils of England and Wales. Sheet 3, Midland and Western England*. Ordnance Survey.
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Appendix I: List of Heritage Assets

Listed Buildings

Grade II: Buildings of special interest

- Aylestone House, nos. 8 and 10 Aylestone Hill
- Gate piers and railings to nos. 8 and 10
- St Hilda's, no. 14 Aylestone Hill
- Holly House, no. 23 Aylestone Hill
- The Lawns, no. 25 Aylestone Hill
- Bank House, no. 27 Aylestone Hill
- Churchill Gardens Museum, Aylestone Hill
- Elmhurst, Venn's Lane
- Athelstan Hall, no. 76 Aylestone Hill
- Milestone, Aylestone Hill, near junction with Broadlands Lane
- Nos. 78 and 80 Aylestone Hill
- Beech Tree House, no. 3 Overbury Road, includes
- Danesmere, no. 79 Aylestone Hill
- No. 86 Aylestone Hill
- The Highlands, no. 88 Aylestone Hill
- Aylestone Hill House, Aylestone Hill

Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record

- Roman Road, Stretton Grandison to Kenchester
- Ring Ditch (possible site of), south of Roman Road
- Iron Age Hillfort, Aylestone Hill
- Ridge and Furrow, Field 5577, Aylestone Hill
- Aylestone Medieval Settlement
- Walney Medieval Settlement
- Brick Kiln, Aylestone Hill
- Toll House
- Three Counties Hotel, Aylestone Hill
- Milestone, Aylestone Hill

Appendix II: Buildings of Local Interest

- Aylestone Hill, no. 20, Hillside: two stories and attic, brick with ashlar detailing, central door case with porch, dormer windows, canted bay windows on left side, large gable on right with decorative tiles and plasterwork, timber panelling, decorative bargeboards, slate roof; adjacent former stable block (separate dwelling) in similar style; 1880.
- Aylestone Hill, no. 21: two stories, roughcast and half-timbered, hipped tiled roof, gables at front with bargeboards, latticed windows; 1911 (architects Groom and Bettinger also designed nos, 75-77 Aylestone Hill).
- Aylestone Hill, no. 60: two stories, symmetrical Classical style, central door case with porch set forward under pedimented gable, hipped tiled roof, canted bays on first floor, later balcony on second floor at right, sash windows; rebuilt 1858.
- Aylestone Hill, nos. 75 and 77: two stories and attic, hipped tiled roof, roughcast with half-timbered gables, rounded bay windows on first and second floor, mullion and transom windows; 1910 (architects Groom and Bettison also designed no. 21).
- Aylestone Hill, no. 87: two stories, stone with ashlar quoins and dressings at front elevation, brick at other elevations, hipped slate roof, sash windows; 1871.
- Aylestone Hill, no. 116, The Shires (formerly Walney House): two stories with attic, stone with ashlar quoins and dressings, slate roof, multigabled with decorative bargeboards, door case with porch, sash windows; adjacent former stable block (separate dwelling) in similar style; 1874.
- Aylestone Hill, no. 131, Burcott House (formerly Quarry House): two stories with attic, stone with ashlar dressings, brick at minor elevations, slate roof, multigabled with barge boards, sash windows and bay windows; c 1870 with later additions.

Appendix III: Tree Preservation Orders

- TPO 065: Individual trees in the gardens of Aylestone Court Hotel (formerly Aylestone Hill House), Aylestone Hill and no. 2 Southbank Road;
- TPO 071: Group of trees in the grounds of Wye Valley Nuffield Hospital, Aylestone Hill/Venn's Lane;
- TPO 209: Individual trees and groups in private gardens at Carter Grove;
- TPO 248: Individual tree in the garden of no. 28 Aylestone Hill;
- TPO 290: Individual trees and groups in the grounds of The Shires (formerly Walney House), Aylestone Hill;
- TPO 300: Individual tree in the garden of no. 82 Aylestone Hill;
- TPO 319: Individual tree in the garden of no. 24 Aylestone Hill;
- TPO 523: Individual trees and group in the area of Carfax House (demolished), Aylestone Hill/Folly Lane.