

**ASHWELL CONSERVATION AREA
CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**



February 2013

**Ashwell Conservation Area
Character Appraisal and Management Proposals**

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rutland County Council is required to designate as conservation areas, *“any area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”* (Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). There are 34 conservation areas in Rutland.
- 1.2 It is not the purpose of a conservation area to prevent development but to manage change to reflect the special character of the area. In making decisions on future development within a conservation area, the Council is required under Section 72 of the Act to pay “special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area”.
- 1.3 Ashwell Conservation Area was designated on 16th March 1999 and includes the historic core of the village and later housing to the south of Brookdene, as well as adjacent countryside that is important to the setting of the village. It covers an area of approximately 30.8 hectares.
- 1.4 This appraisal and the attached proposals map are intended to define those elements that contribute to Ashwell’s special character and appearance and which justify its designation as a conservation area. It also identifies possible management proposals that are intended to preserve and enhance the special character. It is important that all interested parties are aware of the elements that need to be safeguarded in order to preserve the character of the village. The appraisal will be a material consideration when the County Council as local planning authority considers planning applications within the conservation area.
- 1.5 The appraisal follows the guidelines set-out in the English Heritage document “Guidance on conservation area appraisals” published in 2006.

2. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.1 Guidance on the historic environment is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework, introduced in March 2012. Local planning authorities should:
 - set out in the Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation of the historic environment (paragraph 126);
 - ensure that a conservation area justifies its status because of its special architectural or historic interest (para. 127);

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- identify and assess the particular significance of a conservation area and take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposed development (para. 129);
- take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of the area in determining planning applications, the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (para. 131);
- give “great weight” to the conservation of a heritage asset when considering the impact of proposed development. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or development within its setting and requires clear and convincing justification (para. 132);
- proposals resulting in substantial harm should be refused consent unless it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm; less than substantial harm should be weighed against public benefits (para. 133 & 134);
- look for opportunities for new development to enhance or better reveal the significance of conservation areas; proposals that preserve those elements that make a positive contribution should be treated favourably (para. 137);
- loss of a building that makes a positive contribution to the significance of a conservation area should be treated as either substantial or less than substantial harm, taking into account the significance of the element affected and its contribution to the conservation area (para. 138);
- information about the significance of the historic environment should be publicly accessible (para. 141);
- Article 4 directions should be limited to where necessary to protect local amenity (para. 200).

Local Plan

- 2.2 The Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted by Rutland County Council in July 2011. This identifies Ashwell as a restraint village that is not a sustainable location for further development, unless it is development normally acceptable in the countryside.
- 2.3 Policy CS22 states that the quality and character of the built and historic environment will be conserved and enhanced, with particular protection given to conservation areas. New development will be expected to protect and where possible enhance conservation areas and their setting. Measures to protect and enhance conservation areas include

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the production of management plans to identify and explain how the special interest will be preserved and enhanced and the use of “Article 4” Directions to control certain types of development which could cause harm to the special character and appearance of conservation areas.

- 2.4 Policy EN5 has been saved from the Rutland Local Plan. This states that planning permission will only be granted for new development where the scale, form, siting, design and proposed materials would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. Planning permission for development outside of conservation areas will only be granted where there is no adverse effect upon the setting of the conservation area and views into and out of the area.

3. ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Location & setting

- 3.1 Ashwell is a small village with a population of 290 in the 2001 census and lies three miles to the north of Oakham. It is situated in a secluded location on the western side of a shallow valley formed by a stream that flows northwards to join the River Eye at Stapleford.
- 3.2 The village developed at the crossroads of the route from Oakham to Teigh and the cross-country route between Whissendine and Cottesmore. The historic core of the village is grouped to the south-east of St Mary’s church. The tower is prominent but the village is largely screened by mature trees and is not dominant in the landscape.
- 3.3 The village is surrounded by open farmland that is mainly arable but with some grassland. Land to the east of the village rises to a ridge and provides shelter, whilst to the west, historic open glebeland is bordered by the Leicester to Peterborough railway line.

4. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The historic development of Ashwell defines its special character. The village is recorded in the Domesday Book as Exewelle but the name “Ashwell” is a derivation of “ash-lined stream”. The medieval settlement lay to the north of St Mary’s church and the remains of the settlement, watermill, ponds and gardens associated with the manor house are a scheduled monument.
- 4.2 The core of the present village is grouped within a square to the south-east of St Mary’s church and comprises buildings mainly dating from the 17th and 18th centuries. The centre of the village is dominated by the church, Ashwell House (originally the rectory), Ashwell Lodge and the Old Hall. The church dates from the 12th century but was extensively restored in the 19th century while the three-storey Georgian rectory dates

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from 1812. Ashwell Old Hall originated as an 18th century house but was extensively altered and extended in the 19th century.

- 4.3 Ashwell is, however, significant as an example of a Victorian estate village. The mid-19th century growth of the High Church movement had a strong impact on the social and religious history of the nation and can be seen in Ashwell. Of particular importance is the role of the 7th Viscount Downe, who, as landowner undertook improvements to the village between 1856 and 1859. His Tractarian values recognised the importance of religion, education, the provision of charity and of good quality housing for his tenants. One of the foremost Victorian architects, William Butterfield, was engaged to “restore” the interior of the church and to build a school, almshouses (now 3&5 Cottesmore Road) and cottages for estate workers. The houses on Woodside (formerly Braeside) and Croft Lane are rare examples of small-scale domestic building by a prominent Victorian architect normally associated with ecclesiastical work and form a group of national importance. The group on Croft Lane, although unsympathetically extended, comprise an unusual architectural form - the L-shaped terrace - while those on Woodside are symmetrical and feature Butterfield’s favourite half-hipped roofs, dormers and sash windows. The style and layout, based on a revival of traditional vernacular architecture, predate the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th century and the garden suburbs in the early 20th century. Butterfield also designed the lych-gate and cross in the church yard and rebuilt the top of the tower with a pyramidal cap. The small grotto-like structure containing the village well on Oakham Road also dates from the mid-19th century.



Ashwell church was restored in the late 1850s by William Butterfield, a prominent Victorian architect, who also designed the lych gate. The use of banded limestone and ironstone is unusual and distinctive.



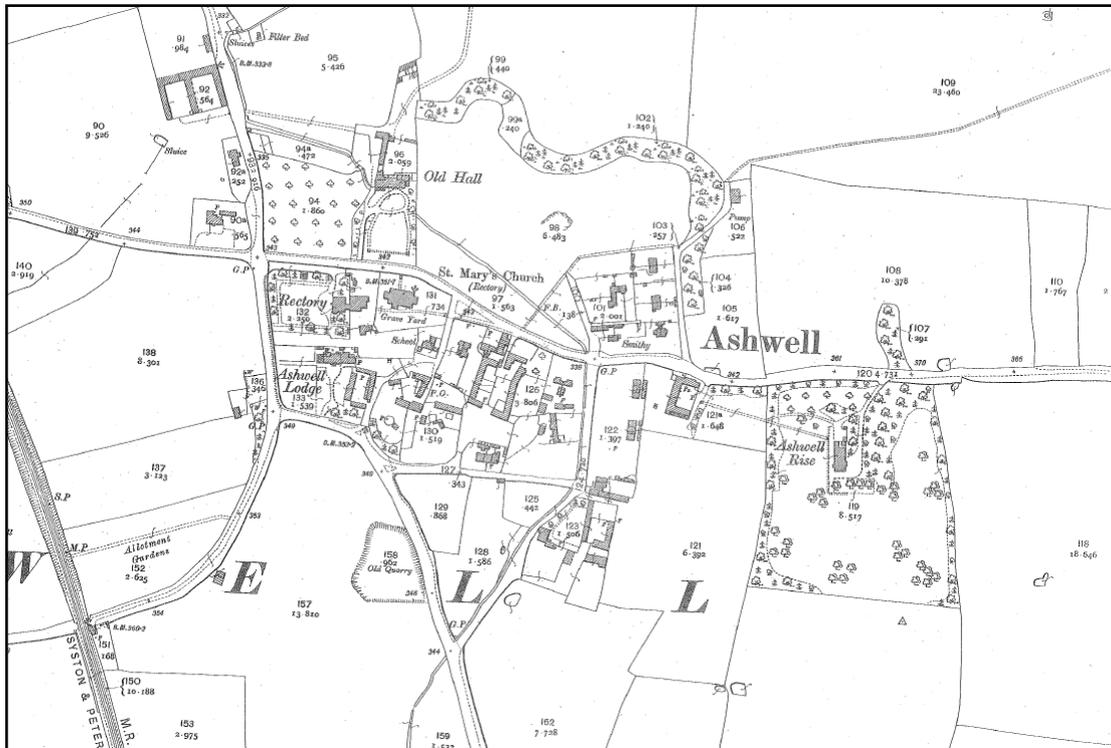
Ashwell is also distinguished by several estate house designed by Butterfield; key features are the half-hipped tiled roofs, red brick with blue diaper-patterned walls, small pane sash windows and prominent chimney stack.

- 4.4 The principles followed by Butterfield, in particular of the house set within a generously-sized garden, are apparent in other buildings in the

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village, notably the later estate workers' houses on the east side of Water Lane and houses on Cottesmore Road.

- 4.5 The Ashwell estate was sold to the gun maker Westley Richards in 1859, who had a new country house (Ashwell Hall) built to the south of the village in 1879 in a style described in Pevsner's "Buildings of England" as "neo-Elizabethan".
- 4.6 The Ordnance Survey map of 1904 (below) shows the limited extent of the village at the start of the 20th century. The historic settlement pattern has housing on one side of the road only and there was no development to the south of Brookdene. A railway station on the Leicester to Peterborough line opened in 1848 but had little impact on the growth of the village; the station closed in 1966.



- 4.7 Ashwell remained an estate village until 1912, when the estate was split-up and sold at auction. Since then, the previous dependence on the local agricultural economy for employment has declined, resulting in a number of cottages being sold-off. In addition, the availability of non-local building materials and of national styles of building removed previous design constraints and, since the 1960s, there has been a considerable amount of infill development of former farmyards, gardens and enclosures within the village, notably to the south of Brookdene and along Cottesmore Road. Even so, the integrity of Ashwell as a former estate village within a rural setting survives.

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- 4.8 A number of buildings and structures within the conservation area are of national significance and are included on the National Heritage List for England. The list is included as Appendix 1.
- 4.9 The most recent planning appeal decision in Ashwell (2010) describes the attractive character of the village and conservation area as resulting from “the informal siting and spacious setting of the dwellings, the unifying effect of the frontage walls and the widespread, mature frontage trees and vegetation which dominate the village street scenes”.

5. PREVAILING USES

- 5.1 Ashwell remained an estate-owned village until the early part of the 20th century but with the break-up of the estate and changes in farming, the reliance on local agricultural employment has declined. Ashwell is now primarily a quiet residential village for people who work elsewhere and the historic character as a working village has been lost.
- 5.2 There remain two farms within the village – Manor Farm on Teigh Road and Middle Farm in the centre of the village. Middle Farm in particular occupies a prominent position within the historic core and its thatched building reflects the rural setting.

6. PREVALENT BUILDING MATERIALS AND DETAILS

- 6.1 Ashwell is interesting in that, historically, there are two contrasting building styles – the local vernacular style used for the earlier farm buildings and estate cottages and the Domestic Revival style used by Butterfield for the properties built in the 1850s. New development since the 1960s has introduced a wider range of nationally-available building materials and styles. The following section identifies the building materials and local details that have traditionally been used and is intended to provide a guide for appropriate styles and materials for new building.

Walls

- 6.2 The 17th and 18th century buildings are mainly of local ironstone, often in coursed rubble form but with squared stone used for higher status buildings. The front elevation of traditional houses tend to have a simple, uncluttered appearance punctuated by relatively small window and door openings. As such, an important characteristic is the large proportion of solid masonry in relation to the size of openings, which reflected the limited size of timber lintels. More durable limestone was used for quoins, lintels and cills, an example being the row of houses at 5-11 Water Lane. The church and tower were rebuilt by Butterfield in contrasting bands of ironstone and limestone to give an unusual and distinctive striped appearance.

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6.3 Ironstone was also used for a number of the boundary walls that are an important feature of the village, particularly along Oakham Road and Cottesmore Road.

6.4 A number of the 19th century buildings, notably Ashwell House and the estate cottages, were constructed in brick. Butterfield's cottages, built in deep rose-coloured brick, are further distinguished with diaper patterning in blue-black brick. The brick and timber framed former almshouses on Cottesmore Road have been whitewashed.



The use of ironstone for walls and chimneys and with large gables of Collyweston slate is a distinguishing feature of this pair of houses on Cottesmore Road.

Roofing materials

6.5 A wide variety of materials have traditionally been used for roofs in the village:

6.5.1 Thatch

The most common roofing material until the 19th century for low and medium status buildings was long straw thatch, with a simple, flush wrap-over ridge, as at the stables to Ashwell Lodge. Thatched roofs are typically steep and buildings where the thatch has been replaced with an alternative material such as slate may be identified by the steepness of the pitch and the height of the gable parapets.



A few farm houses and outbuilding have retained their thatched roofs; long-straw with a simple flush ridge is the traditional local style.



Plain clay tiled roofs are a distinguishing feature of the Butterfield designed buildings. The former almshouses and later post office on Cottesmore Road is listed grade II; whitewashed walls and timber framing are not a common feature of the village. The red telephone box is also listed.

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6.5.2 Plain tiles

The most common roofing material in the village, small clay tiles are found on a number of 19th century buildings, notably the buildings by Butterfield, which feature his favoured half-hipped roofs.

6.5.3 Collyweston stone slates

There is a limited amount of Collyweston slate in the village. The slates are traditionally laid in diminishing courses. Collyweston roofs are steeply pitched, usually with gable forms and swept valleys. Hipped Collyweston roofs are more characteristic of large, higher-status estate properties. Collyweston slate is a locally distinctive material in Rutland and should be retained.

6.5.4 Blue slate

Slate was not widely used until the mid-19th century, when the arrival of the railways enabled it to be transported cheaply across Britain from quarries in north Wales. Slate can be laid at a shallow pitch and where seen on a steeply pitched roof is likely to be a replacement for thatch or Collyweston slates, as at 3 Water Lane. The former estate cottages on Water Lane have attractive slate roofs laid at a shallow pitch.



Welsh slate roofs on former estate workers houses on Water Lane; the twisted brick chimney stacks are an attractive feature.

6.5.5 Clay pantiles

Red and orange clay pantiles, some with a double roll, could be laid at a shallow pitch and only required a lightweight roof structure. It is an inexpensive roof covering and historically, was usually confined to cottages and outbuildings.



Clay pantiles are not common on roofs within the village, but provided a lightweight roof often associated with farm cottages and outbuildings.

6.6 The former village smithy on Cottesmore Road has a corrugated iron roof.

Chimneys

6.7 Prominent chimney stacks are an attractive feature and create roofline interest. Buildings of medieval origin usually have central stacks rising from a position to one side of the doorway, with later stacks on the gable

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end. The estate houses were built with decorative brick chimneys in the centre of the roof while properties on Cottesmore Road are distinguished by large central stone stacks. Chimney stacks projecting from the gable are not a local feature.

Dormers

6.8 Dormer windows are not a common feature of traditional buildings in Ashwell, although Butterfield introduced eaves level windows beneath semi-hipped roofs for the first floor of his cottages on Woodside and Croft Lane. There are eaves level dormers on houses at 5-11 Water Lane.

Eaves detailing

6.9 Verges, particularly to thatched properties, are often in the form of coped gable parapets, although on smaller cottages the verge is likely to be plain. Collyweston roofs sometimes have prominent overhanging eaves with stone detailing to the gables. Rainwater goods are traditionally black painted cast iron with the gutters supported on brackets spiked directly into the wall. Decorated bargeboards and timber fascias are not a typical feature.

Windows

6.10 Window types tend to reflect the status, period and style of the building. Higher status properties have stone mullioned windows, with the window frames made of iron and with small leaded panes. The simpler vernacular buildings generally have side hung timber casements, usually made of painted softwood. The upper floor windows are usually smaller in height and width than those at ground floor level. Window frames are usually recessed from the external face of the wall to provide greater weather protection and the recess provides additional interest and relief within the elevation. Window openings are generally beneath timber or stone lintels with stone cills. Hood moulds are not a common feature.

6.11 Timber sash windows are a later detail requiring a deeper opening and were used by Butterfield on his estate cottages.

Doors

6.12 Door types also vary according to status, period and style, although many have been altered. The simplest and earliest are solid, vertical boarded ledged and braced doors. Panelled doors were popular from the 18th century onwards but are not a common feature within the village. Enclosed porches are also not common.

Driveways

6.13 Many driveways are laid in buff shingle or gravel which gives a softer, more natural tone than hard paving. Permeable material should be used, although the first five metres may require a hard surface to prevent material carrying onto the road. The use of block paving or large areas

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of asphalt can detract from the historic appearance of the conservation area.

7. KEY VIEWS AND VISTAS

7.1 The village is very open since, historically, buildings were mainly confined to one side of the road. The tower and pyramidal roof of St Mary's church is prominent in a number of views within the village and is an important marker to the village when approaching from all directions. Development within the village is essentially low-rise and it is important that views of the profile of the church and tower are not affected.



The tower and pyramidal cap of St Mary's church is a landmark feature, emphasised by the low height of buildings in the village; stone boundary walls frame the view.



The view along Water Lane of the verge and brook emphasises the open, green, low density character of the village.

7.2 The view along Water Lane of the verge and brook is a distinctive feature that reinforces the semi-rural character of the village. The bend in the road adjacent to Brookdene means that the prominent two and a half storey house at 3 Water Lane terminates the view.

7.3 The view into the village from the east along Cottesmore Road is constrained by a reverse bend in the road, which creates a sense of anticipation. An important feature is the hedgerow along front boundaries. The view approaching the village from the west is dominated by the trees in the grounds of Ashwell House and the churchyard, with a glimpse of the pyramidal cap of the church visible above the trees.

8. OPEN SPACES AND TREES

8.1 The setting of the village within attractive countryside is one of its distinctive characteristics. The conservation area is bounded to the north and east by mature trees which largely hide the village from the

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surrounding countryside and enhance its integrity as a village within a rural setting.

- 8.2 An integral feature of the character of the village is the space between buildings and the resultant number of large trees and greenery that it allows. A number of trees within the village are protected by Tree Preservation Order (Appendix 2). However, there are a number of other trees which, although individually not of sufficient size to justify a preservation order, are collectively important to the “green” character of the village. Conservation area status offers protection to all of the trees within the village, since it is an offence to undertake work without giving the Council notice.



The importance of trees to the character of Ashwell is illustrated in this view along Cottesmore Road.



Conservation area status means that all trees are protected since anyone wishing to undertake work is required to notify the council. This group on Water Lane are further protected by Tree Preservation Order, due to their amenity value.

- 8.3 Of particular significance is the group of pine trees on Oakham Road and trees along Water lane which are protected by tree Preservation Order. There is also a prominent lime and willow at the corner of Cottesmore Road and Water Lane. The group of trees on the approach from Cottesmore – particularly the four lime trees facing the Methodist chapel create a particularly green and attractive entrance to the village. The beech tree planted adjacent to Cottesmore Road in commemoration of the Queen’s Silver Jubilee is important in the history of the village.

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- 8.4 The village is unusual within Rutland in that most of the houses do not front directly onto the street but are set back behind gardens. The green appearance is further enhanced by the retention of hedgerows for boundaries, notably along Cottesmore Road and with ivy growing on the stone walls. Grass verges are also important, notably alongside the brook on Water Lane, along Oakham Road and on Cottesmore Road.



The view eastwards from the junction with Teigh Road, with views of the trees at Ashwell House and the church tower.



The view out of the village along Cottesmore Road is constrained by the reverse bend in the road. Ashwell is distinguished from many other Rutland villages by the large number of mature trees, which help create the green character of the village.

- 8.5 In addition, there are several areas of open space within and around the village which, although not in public use, contribute to the open character and setting of the village. Of particular importance are:

- the glebe land between the village and the railway;
- land alongside the footpath linking Oakham Road and the church, adjacent to the village hall;
- the scheduled monument adjacent to Ashwell Old Hall that is the site of the medieval settlement and manorial gardens;



The glebeland to the west of Ashwell is included within the conservation area boundary on account of its importance to the setting of the village.

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- Middle Farm farmyard between Brookdene and Cottesmore Road - an important open area in the centre of the village;
- land surrounding The Rise on the eastern edge of the village provides an attractive entry point.

9. BUILDINGS OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE

9.1 In addition to the buildings that have been statutorily listed, there are a number of other buildings in Ashwell which, although not of national significance, contribute to the character and appearance of the village. Demolition of a building that makes a positive contribution would constitute harm to the character of the conservation area.

9.2 The following buildings are considered to fall within this category. The list is selective and the absence of a particular building should not be taken to imply that it does not make a positive contribution.

9.2.1 1 Cottesmore Road/2&4 Church Close

The large brick and rendered house at the corner of Cottesmore Road and Church Close shows the same design features as the estate cottages - half-hipped tiled roof, eaves level dormer, small-pane windows and with the house set back behind a front garden – and may also have been designed by Butterfield. The brick boundary wall is unusual for the village.



1 Cottesmore Road/ 2 & 4 Church Close (above) and The Old School (below) are designed by Butterfield and make a positive contribution to the appearance and the social history of the village.

9.2.2 The Old School, 1 Church Close

The former village school is important to the social history of the village and was one of the buildings provided as part of the improvements undertaken by Viscount Downe in the 1850s. The building was designed by Butterfield in Victorian gothic style that was favoured for church schools, with tall pointed arch windows but with a slate half-hip roof and prominent bell tower. The school closed in 1970 and has been converted to residential use.



9.2.3 The Cottage, 11 Cottesmore Road

An attractive ironstone house with a good Collyweston roof, twin gables facing the front and prominent chimney stacks. It was built as two houses and is set well back from the road frontage.

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9.2.4 14 Cottesmore Road/2 Woodside

The semi-detached pair of houses at the corner of Cottesmore Road and Woodside are in the same style as 11 Cottesmore Road - ironstone with limestone detailing, prominent gables and stone eaves facing the front, a steep Collyweston roof and large central stone chimneys. The houses are set back from the front and form an attractive feature at the entrance to the village.



The pair of houses at the corner of Woodside and the former Methodist Church (above) make a positive contribution to the character of the village; a sympathetic new use for the vacant church is required.

9.2.6 Ashwell Primitive Methodist Church

The simple proportions and scale of the former Ashwell Primitive Methodist Church (1915) on Cottesmore Road are typical of a non-conformist chapel. The building is important to the social history of the village but is presently vacant. A sympathetic new use is required to prevent long-term deterioration of the structure.



9.2.5 13-17 & 19-23 Water Lane

The two groups of former estate workers cottages on the east side of Water Lane are also set well back behind a front garden and illustrate the principles that were followed by Butterfield. Built in stone with a low slate roof, the pairs of brick twisted chimney stacks are an attractive feature.

The converted stables on Cottesmore Road form an attractive building at the entrance to the village.

9.2.7 The Rise, 17 Cottesmore Road

A large, late-Victorian house glimpsed amongst trees from Cottesmore Road on the eastern approach to the village.

9.2.8 Hunters Lodge and Telham Court

The converted former stables on the south side of Cottesmore Road (now Hunters Lodge and Telham Court) also date from the late 19th century and are built of ironstone with a plain tiled roof, prominent weather vane and a projecting half-hipped dormer. Being set close to the road frontage, the buildings form a prominent entrance feature to the village.

9.2.9 Ashwell Manor House

This occupies a prominent position on the west side of Ashwell crossroads and is a large detached late-Victorian house, built in mock-Tudor style with attractive stone detailing.

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10. BOUNDARIES

10.1 Stone boundary walls are a unifying feature along the village roads and around gardens and other enclosures. The majority are constructed of local ironstone and of either dry or mortared construction with a stone coping. Most are approximately 1.5 metres in height. Of particular significance in the street scene are the stretches of walling along the east side of Oakham Road, Teigh Road and the north side of Cottesmore Road. The boundary wall to the churchyard is capped by large blocks of limestone.



Stone boundary walls are an important and unifying feature in views of the village, as seen along Oakham Road. Most are built of ironstone, here of mortared construction with a stone capping.

10.2 Elsewhere within the conservation area, boundaries are formed by hedgerows. Of particular importance is the hedgerow on Cottesmore Road at the eastern entrance to the village and the hedgerow alongside the brook on Water Lane, which reinforce the semi-rural location.

11. HIGHWAYS

11.1 Ashwell is at the crossroads of two cross-country routes and the speed of some through traffic can be intrusive and dangerous. Footpaths are generally on one side of the road only. Small granite setts have been used to define the footpath along Cottesmore Road and are an attractive feature. Elsewhere inappropriate concrete replacements have been introduced; it would be desirable to try to match the granite kerbs. In other parts of the village, the highway verge is not defined. Although the absence of a hard edge reinforces the semi-rural nature of the village, it can result in vehicle damage to the verge.

11.2 The direction sign at the crossroads is of the traditional fingerpost style and reflects the rural character and identity of the village. It is important that this style of sign is retained. The traditional street nameplates are also an attractive feature which should be retained.

11.3 Footpaths within the village, notably that linking Oakham Road and the church, are an important feature that maintains the rural character.

12. DEFINING THE SPECIAL INTEREST

- 12.1 The special character of Ashwell has been influenced by its setting within the landscape, the openness and low density of the historic settlement pattern and its development as a Victorian estate village with a distinctive architectural style and influential buildings designed by William Butterfield.
- 12.2 The generally **low height of buildings** in the village ensures that the church is the most prominent feature in distant views, the tower being particularly important as a “marker” of the village. Mature trees mean that the village is largely hidden in the landscape.
- 12.3 Architecturally, the village is of national importance due to the work by William Butterfield. Butterfield respected and enhanced the historic layout of the village and maintained the open spaces which were important for economic and aesthetic reasons. The use of brightly coloured polychromatic brickwork, with deep red brick and blue-black diaper patterning and with the house set within generously sized gardens, was an influential design concept followed by later Victorian architects.
- 12.4 The principles followed by Butterfield, **of low-density housing, mostly two-storey and informally sited behind front gardens with natural stone boundary walls**, are seen throughout the village. Although the former estate cottages on Water Lane are in groups of three, they are the exception to the traditional pattern for houses to be detached or semi-detached.
- 12.5 Widespread **trees and vegetation within the village creates an open, spacious and green character** and distinguishes Ashwell from other Rutland villages.

Key elements that create the attractive appearance of Ashwell can be seen in this view from Cottesmore Road towards Water Lane: low density and informally positioned houses set behind front gardens resulting in a spacious, open character.



13. LOSS OF CHARACTER

- 13.1 There are very few features within the village which detract from the overall quality and appearance of the conservation area. In places, overhead power lines are visually intrusive but are not as prominent as in other villages.
- 13.2 Alterations have been made to some of the Butterfield houses that detract from their architectural and historic interest. It emphasises the importance of ensuring that extensions are sympathetic to the character of the original building.
- 13.3 Some of the infill development that has taken place has not been sympathetic to the traditional character of the village in that it has introduced suburban housing designs and layouts and non-local materials. It is important that new development respects the low density that characterises the village and is built in materials and to a design and scale that is in keeping with the location.
- 13.4 Stone boundary walls are an important feature and should be kept in good condition. The wavy lap fencing that has been erected alongside the footpath from Church Close is not in keeping with the character of the village.

14. PRESERVING THE CHARACTER

- 14.1 An important feature of the special character of Ashwell is the traditional use of a limited range of building materials, including ironstone or red brick for walls, timber windows and thatch, Collyweston slates, slate or plain tiles for roofs. Widespread replacement or loss of traditional features would result in the gradual erosion of the character of the village, and for this reason an Article 4(2) Direction was declared in 2004. This means that planning permission is required for alterations to houses fronting a highway that would affect the external appearance and which could otherwise be undertaken without requiring planning consent.
- 14.2 The Article 4(2) Direction helps to prevent the gradual erosion of the character and appearance of the conservation area and it is not proposed that the order be revoked. However, the current Article 4 Direction does not control the installation of solar panels on the roofs of houses, which can be undertaken as permitted development. These can have a detrimental impact on the appearance of a conservation area. It is proposed that the Article 4 Direction be amended to require planning permission for the installation of solar panels on the front roof slope of houses.
- 14.3 The appearance of the conservation area can also be preserved by careful repair and restoration of existing features rather than

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replacement. By matching as closely as possible the original material and design, the appearance of a building and the overall character of the area can be maintained. Planning permission is not normally required for like-for-like repairs where they match the original feature.

14.4 Examples of sympathetic repair might include:

- Re-using original slates or tiles when re-roofing a property; if a roof does require re-covering and there is insufficient original material available, the new roof should be in natural material rather than artificial or imported slates, which are likely to differ in appearance;
- Re-pointing brick or stone with soft lime and sand mortar rather than with hard cement;
- Cills and lintels should be in stone. Although there has been some use of concrete for replacement window cills in the past, this is not an appropriate material;
- Rebuilding chimney stacks, using matching replacement bricks only where necessary;
- Repairing timber windows and doors. The use of alternative materials such as upvc to replace original windows and doors on historic properties within the village is not widespread and will not normally be acceptable. Not only is upvc an alien material but the appearance, details and proportion of the original windows can rarely be replicated. Secondary double-glazing and simple draught proofing can be as effective and be cheaper than replacing windows and doors. Where windows are beyond repair, they should be replaced in timber with the proportion of the window openings matching the original style. Top-opening windows are not historically appropriate.
- Boundary walls are an important feature within the village and should be carefully maintained and, if necessary, rebuilt like-for-like.

14.5 It is important that new development reflects the generally low density and low height of buildings within the village. Hard surfacing within plots should be kept to a minimum to maintain the green character of the village.

14.6 Trees within conservation areas are given special protection; it is an offence to cut down, lop, top or uproot a tree without giving six weeks notice to the local planning authority. In addition, trees at 3 Water Lane and a silver birch at 12 Water Lane are covered by Tree Preservation Order. The protected trees are listed in Appendix 2.

15. CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

- 15.1 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 advises that the boundaries of conservation areas should be the subject of periodic review to consider whether further extension is justified. Alternatively, the designation should be cancelled if an area no longer possesses special interest.
- 15.2 The conservation area was designated in 1999 and the boundary includes areas of open land surrounding the village that are important in creating the rural setting. It is considered that Ashwell remains an area of special architectural and historic interest sufficient to justify its status as a conservation area. It is not therefore proposed to cancel the conservation area designation at this time.

16. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 16.1 Ashwell Parish Council, residents and key stakeholders were consulted on the draft of this document from 3rd September until 1st October 2012. An exhibition and public meeting were held in the village hall on 13th September 2012.
- 16.2 In light of comments received, the following changes have been made:
- The boundary of the conservation area to the north of the village has been extended to include all of the scheduled monument (this is the remains of the medieval settlement and contributes to the setting of the village);
 - The conservation area and area of important green space was extended to include land to the north of Langham Road (this land forms part of the historic glebe field and contributes to the setting of the village);
 - The area identified as important green space was extended to include open land in the centre-east of the village that is within the conservation area);
 - Stone walls along the south side of Cottesmore Road and west side of Croft Lane have been identified as of importance to the character and appearance of the village;
 - A short section of stone wall at the entrance to Middle Farm has been deleted as an important feature (this is a short, incomplete section of wall that, although historic, does not front the road and is not prominent).

17. MANAGEMENT AND ENHANCEMENT

17.1 The Council is required to formulate and publish proposals for the management and enhancement of the conservation area. The proposals set out in Appendix 3 are based on this appraisal and were the subject of consultation with local residents and other interested parties.

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APPENDIX 1

Listed Buildings within Ashwell Conservation Area

The following are included on the National Heritage List for England:

Church Close	No.6 (Ashwell Cottage)	Grade II
Cottesmore Road	Ashwell Old Hall	Grade II
Cottesmore Road	Church of St Mary	Grade I
Cottesmore Road	Lychgate, North gate, West gate and walls at Churchyard of St Mary	Grade II
Cottesmore Road	War memorial at Churchyard of St Mary	Grade II
Cottesmore Road	Medcalf Tombs at Churchyard of St Mary	Grade II
Cottesmore Road	Cole tomb and headstone at Churchyard of St Mary	Grade II
Cottesmore Road	5 headstones at Churchyard of St Mary to south of south porch	Grade II
Cottesmore Road	Cross at Churchyard of St Mary	Grade II
Cottesmore Road	No.5 (Post office) roofed gate and wall	Grade II
Cottesmore Road	No.7	Grade II
Cottesmore Road	K6-type telephone kiosk	Grade II
Croft Lane	The Croft	Grade II
Croft Lane	Nos.1-5	Grade II
Oakham Road	Ashwell House	Grade II
Oakham Road	Stable block at Ashwell House	Grade II
Oakham Road	Ashwell Lodge	Grade II
Oakham Road	Stable block at Ashwell Lodge	Grade II
Oakham Road	Village well	Grade II
Water Lane	No. 3 (Home Farm)	Grade II
Water Lane	Nos. 5-11	Grade II
Woodside	Nos. 4 and 6 (listed as 4 and 6 Braeside)	Grade II
Woodside	Nos. 8 and 10 (listed as 8 and 10 Braeside)	Grade II

(Ashwell Hall, Stables, Tower Cottage, Coach House, Rising School and outbuilding are also listed Grade II but are outside of the Conservation Area).

Scheduled Monument

The remains of part of Ashwell medieval settlement, a watermill, millponds and gardens associated with a medieval manor house adjacent to Ashwell Old Hall are included in the national List of Scheduled Monuments.

APPENDIX 2

Tree Preservation Orders

There are two Tree Preservation Orders within the Conservation Area:

1- The Water Lane, Ashwell No. 1 TPO, 1991. The following trees at 3 Water Lane are protected:

T1- Ash

T2 - Beech

T3 - Ash

T4 - Sycamore

T5 -Sycamore

T6 - Holly

T7 - Oak

T8 - Beech

T9 - Copper Beech

T10 - Sycamore

2 -The (Land at 12 Water Lane, Ashwell) No 1 TPO 2007:

T1 - Silver Birch

(Although outside of the Conservation Area, two Horse Chestnuts and a Lime tree at Ashwell Hall are also protected by Tree Preservation Order)

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APPENDIX 3

Management and Enhancement Proposals

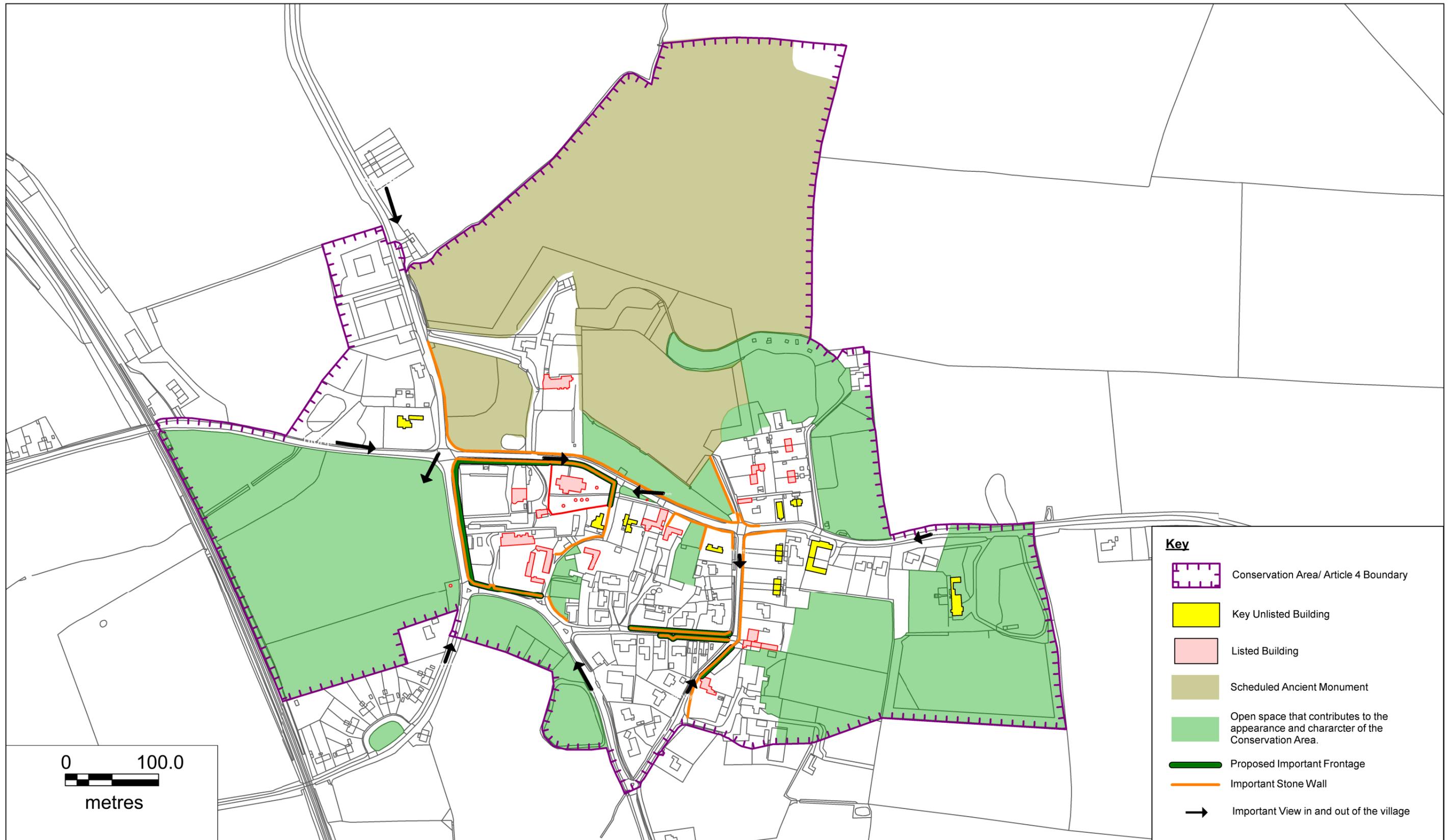
In order to safeguard the character and appearance of Ashwell Conservation Area, the County Council as local planning authority will undertake the following:

1. Apply guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework and policies CS22 and EN5 of the Rutland Local Plan to ensure that new development pays special attention to the preservation or enhancement of the character or appearance of Ashwell Conservation Area, as identified in the character appraisal.
2. Publish an explanatory leaflet about the Conservation Area, the implications of designation and the restrictions which apply.
3. Revise the existing Ashwell Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights to install solar panels on the front roof slopes of houses.
4. Ensure that the Article 4(2) restrictions are enforced.
5. Provide advice and encourage the sympathetic repair of features of architectural or historic interest that contribute to the appearance of the conservation area.

CONTACT

Your views on the conservation area are welcome and will be taken into consideration in any future drafts of this document.

Comments should be sent to:
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Rutland County Council
Places Directorate

Ashwell Conservation Area Appraisal

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