

Advisory Leaflet

Crosby Hall and Little Crosby

Conservation Areas



History

The name Crosby has a Scandinavian ending –by, meaning a place or village, this indicates there has been a settlement here from before the time of the Domesday assessment in 1086. Crosby means “the place of the cross”. In general, until attempts were made in the 18th century to reduce the water table by drainage, the older settlements like Little Crosby were sensibly related to outcrops of sandstone. These outcrops also provided useful building materials for the local inhabitants. To improve the quality of agricultural land, the use of marl (a limey clay) has been widespread in Sefton since the medieval period, evidence of marl pits can be found in the grounds of Crosby Hall. Records of marling in Little Crosby date back to about 1275. Fishing also played an important part in the economy of the district, with fish being readily available from rivers, mossland meres and the sea.

The lands and estate of Little Crosby were held by the Molyneux family by 1212. Later it was granted to the Blundell family of Crosby in the 1300s. Crosby Hall remains the home of the Blundell family.

Prior to the Reformation, the lord of the manor, his family and the inhabitants of Little Crosby would attend Mass at the Parish Church at Sefton. After the

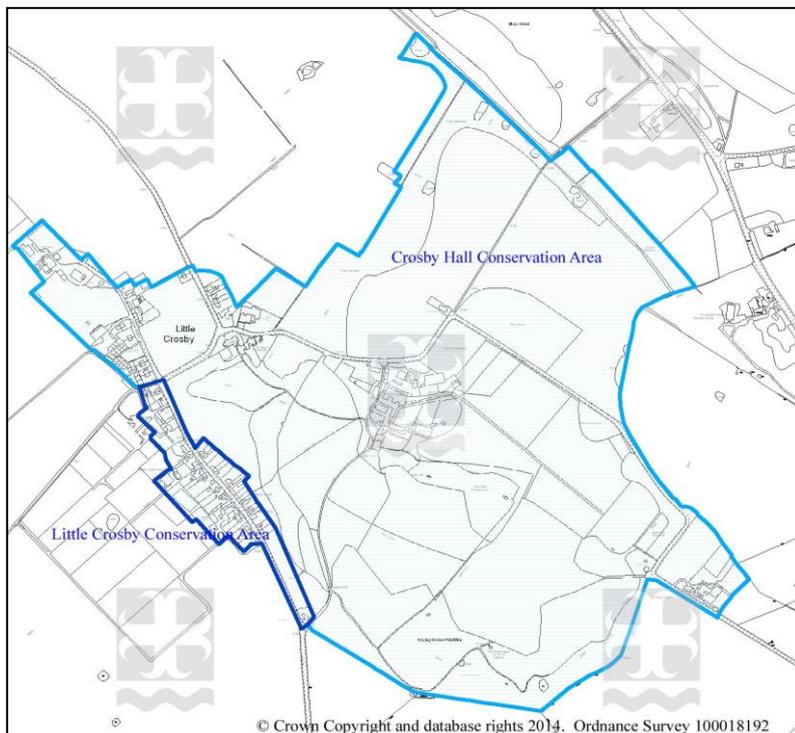
Reformation they continued to hear mass secretly and quietly in Crosby Hall or at one of the houses in the village, while facing heavy fines or even imprisonment if discovered. In 1611 William Blundell, the lord of the manor, decided to give a portion of his estate to be used as a Catholic burial ground after the burial of Catholics was refused at Sefton Church, this site was called the Harkirk which is an Old Norse word meaning ‘grey church’ and it is believed that an ancient chapel had been established here by the early tenth century if not before. Many of the burials took place secretly at night and a hoard of silver Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Continental coins was discovered on this site in 1611. The hoard indicates “loot” which was of Scandinavian origin. The coins have not survived, but it is possible some were melted down for church silver.

It is thought that extensive making of the fields in the 18th century may have removed much of the archaeological evidence of this area.

In 1702 Nicholas Blundell became squire of Little Crosby. For 26 years he kept a detailed diary which provided a great insight into the life of the district at that time. His keen interest in trees and plants led to much of the woodland in the Hall grounds being planted. As well as his extensive gardening activities, he constructed a sniggery for the trapping of fish (“snig” meaning eel). He also constructed a duck-decoy, consisting of a series of interconnected ponds and ditches.

There is documentary evidence of a Hall at Little Crosby as early as the 13th century, however, the present Crosby Hall (a grade II* listed manor house) is a 1784-86 rebuilding of an earlier house (with re-located datestones of 1576 and 1609). During the period 1953-55 the two wings of Crosby Hall were demolished and the house reduced to its present size. The two gate lodges, Liverpool Lodge and Ormskirk Lodge were built during the early to mid 19th century. By 1835 the estate was completely encircled by a wall in which is set an 18th century cross. This would seem to indicate the proximity of the medieval cross in the hall grounds.

To the north of the hall are the 18th century stables and the great barn that probably dates from the 16th



century. These buildings were converted in the 1980s to a residential educational centre run by the Crosby Hall Educational Trust.

In the 17th and 18th centuries Little Crosby village was established as the estate village to Crosby Hall, a close-knit community that existed for most part on good terms with the lords of the manor. Many of the properties have remained relatively unchanged for the past few hundred years and the village retains much of its quaint charm. A few examples are the Smithy built in 1713, the village farmhouse with its attached cottage and barn, bearing the datestone 1669, and about half way through the village a low white cottage once known as the Priests' House (also called Ned Howerd's cottage), where in the 1700s Mass was secretly celebrated. The cross and well are sited in the village, the cross is restored and dated 1758 on the base of the shaft and the well is filled in. Much of the sandstone used for construction at Little Crosby was taken from the delph (quarry) at Delph Road, which in 1953 was filled in.

With the abolition of restrictions on Roman Catholic worship in the early 19th century, Catholics were encouraged to build places of worship. Plans for a new church in Little Crosby began in 1839, which resulted in the Roman Catholic Church of St Mary designed by a nineteenth century architect, Mathew Hadfield of Sheffield. It was consecrated in 1847 and is a fine example of the gothic style of architecture.

The Conservation Areas

Little Crosby conservation area was designated in June 1974 and Crosby Hall conservation area in 1985.

Designation of the Crosby Hall conservation area was due not only to the importance of the Hall and its outbuildings but also its enclosed parkland, which has a considerable number of historic features. These include former boundary ditches of open fields, the site of the 10th century church called the 'Harkirk', medieval marl pits, medieval hill mounds, a medieval cross and a 17th century burial ground.

Collectively all the buildings in Little Crosby Village form a valuable group of similar scale, but of varied materials and style. It has a distinctive character derived from the grouping of brick or stone built cottages and farms unified by their extensive use of stone walling.

To the east of the village are the attractive trees of Church Wood and on the western side the buildings frame views of the open agricultural land beyond.

It is necessary to ensure alterations to the properties within these areas are carried out with the attention to detail and use of materials consistent with the listed status of the buildings and the group value of the conservation areas.

Designation of the two areas secures the relationship between the village and the Hall which has existed since medieval times.



Within the Conservation Areas, it is not the intention to prevent change but rather to ensure that any new development, alterations or extensions are in keeping with the character and that any harm is balanced against wider public benefits.

Additional Planning Powers

Conservation Area status means that the Council possesses a number of statutory powers to safeguard against some changes. These are special planning controls which relate to specific works which would normally be considered 'permitted development', i.e. works which would not require planning consent.

Within the Conservation Area the following additional planning powers apply:-

If a building is a Listed Building additional special controls will also apply.

- Any proposal involving the demolition of any building, wall or other structure within the Conservation Area (with minor exceptions) will require planning permission.
- Anyone wishing to cut down, top, lop or uproot a tree with a stem diameter of 75mm or greater measured at 1.5m above ground level must give the Local Planning Authority six weeks written notice of their intention to do so (a "Section 211 notice" under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) subject to specific exemptions. Within this time the Authority may grant consent for the proposed work, or they may consider making a Tree Preservation Order. It is an offence to carry out tree works without permission.
- There are greater restrictions over 'permitted development' rights for the enlargement of dwellinghouses, and on the provision, alteration or improvement of outbuildings within their curtilage.
- Dormer windows will require planning permission, and in some cases, other changes to roofs and chimneys may require planning permission.
- Cladding of external walls in stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles is not permitted. The cladding of any part

of external walls would require planning permission.

- Planning permission is needed for satellite dishes where they are to be located on a chimney, wall or roof slope which faces onto a highway.
- Micro-generation (e.g. wind turbines/solar panels) installations will require planning permission in some cases.
- The Council has powers under the Act to require owners to carry out essential repair works to empty or partly occupied buildings in order to protect the fabric of buildings important to the conservation area.

For up to date advice on what needs planning permission go to www.planningportal.gov.uk In determining applications for the development of land and alterations or extensions to buildings within the Crosby Hall and Little Crosby Conservation Areas the Council will pay special regard to:-

- The overriding restriction on new development within the Green Belt. See Council's website for further details.
- The retention, replacement and restoration of historical details and features of the buildings and their gardens including boundary walls and landscaping.
- The design, materials and detail of extensions and alterations to existing buildings which will be expected to be in sympathy with the architectural and historic character of the building as a whole and to the setting of that building.
- The design of any new building (including form, massing, scale and materials) and its integration with its immediate surroundings and the special architectural and visual qualities of the Conservation Area.
- The retention and preservation of existing trees and the provision of further appropriate landscaping.
- The retention and enhancement of views into and out of the area, vistas within the area and the general character and appearance of the village scene and skyline.

Guidance Notes for planning applications and use of materials:

Pre-Application Advice

You can request advice from Planning Services prior to submitting a formal application. In some cases we make a charge for this service. Forms are available on the Council's website.

Planning applications

A Heritage Statement will be needed to support your planning application. This should include an explanation

of the heritage significance of the site and how the design takes account of this.

Outline applications will not usually be considered.

Demolition

The demolition or redevelopment of any building of individual or group value will not be permitted unless the Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the building cannot be used for any suitable purpose and it is not important enough to merit the costs involved in its preservation. Any consent to demolish would normally be conditional on the building not being demolished before a contract is made to carry out redevelopment. This redevelopment must be of a high standard of design and will normally be granted consent at the same time.

Trees

Anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work on a tree over 75mm in diameter measured at 1.5m above ground level is required to give the local planning authority six weeks prior notice (a "Section 211 notice" under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). Within this time the Authority may grant consent for the proposed work, or they may consider making a Tree Preservation Order. It is an offence to carry out tree works without permission.

New development on vacant sites

Any new development should be conceived with the architectural character and scale of the area in mind. Early discussions with Planning Services are advised. The services of a qualified architect are strongly recommended.

Conversion of existing buildings

Where planning permission to convert buildings into new uses is sought, the new use and internal layout of the building should be carefully considered. Particular attention will be paid to plan form, the character of the building and its external appearance, the layout of gardens, car parking and the position of bin stores.

Every effort should be made to minimise external alterations, such as fire escapes and new windows (including dormer windows). Where external changes are required it should be made to a non-prominent elevation. Alterations or extensions should use carefully chosen materials that match or complement the building. Again, the services of a qualified architect are strongly recommended.



External alterations to existing buildings including extensions

The following deals with some of the details of alterations and extensions to buildings.

Windows

There are a number of types and styles of original windows in the area. They should be retained and renovated where possible. If all or part of any window needs to be replaced it should match the original design. Care should be taken to ensure that 'reveals' are retained. This is important for practical (weather protection) as well as aesthetic reasons. If additional windows are essential, they should be restricted to the non-prominent elevations. Their size and proportion should complement the overall design of the building.

When repairing or replacing windows, care must be taken to retain and restore details. Imitation 'leaded' lights should always be avoided, whilst aluminium and UPVC windows which have a different surface finish, are likely to have different detailing and proportions to the originals and consequently are likely to detract from the character of the building.

Dormer Windows

New dormer windows are not generally accepted on principal elevations. Any new dormer windows should be well-proportioned and kept to non-prominent elevations and any new cladding must match roofing materials.

Wall Surfaces

Brickwork and stonework should not be painted or rendered. Areas of brickwork or stonework requiring renewal should be repaired or replaced in their original form or pattern. Brick pointing should be compatible with existing construction, which is generally flush finish. Repointing with cement slurry, bagging or bag-rubbing is not acceptable. Where stonework is to be cleaned, professional advice should be sought, to prevent damage.

Brick, stone and terracotta features should be retained wherever possible. 'Stone cladding' should always be avoided again for practical as well as aesthetic reasons. If missing or damaged, stucco or plaster mouldings and similar details should be replaced in their original form or pattern. Care should be taken to use correct mixes and finishing coats.

Roofs

Original roofing materials and existing rooflines and views should be retained. Any renewals or repairs should use reclaimed or new materials to match those on the existing roof. Care should be taken to retain roof features such as open eaves and barge boards.

Chimneys

In most cases, the original chimney stacks and pots form an integral part of the design of buildings and create an interesting 'roofscape'. If they become unsafe, they should be repaired or rebuilt to the original height and design, taking care to replace chimney pots, even if no longer in use.

Porches

Existing porches should be retained and repaired where necessary. Mineral felt or other similar roofing materials should not be used. Where new porches are proposed they should be appropriately designed with materials that are sympathetic to the age and style of the building. Where porches are not part of the original design of the building, their addition should be avoided. Classical style porticoes are inappropriate.

Satellite Dishes and Aerials

Aerials and satellite dishes should be located as sensitively as possible and should avoid main street elevations. The use of dark grey semi-transparent dishes on the rear or sides of houses is advised as they are the least obtrusive.

Front Doors

Original doors and door surrounds should be retained and repaired wherever possible. Replacements should be to a sympathetic design. Wooden moulded and panelled doors are likely to be the most suitable. "Georgian style" doors with imitation semi-circular fanlights and UPVC should be particularly avoided. Again, advice should be sought from the Planning Services. Care should be taken to retain and repair details around openings, such as architraves, thresholds, transoms and fanlights.

Boundary Walls, Fences, Gates and Gate Posts

Original stone boundary walls, including their stone copings, should be repaired or rebuilt to the original design, using reclaimed or matching materials. Boundary walls and gateposts should not be painted. Gate posts should not be painted. The street scene can be 'softened' and enhanced by the planting of boundary hedges, which has the added benefit of improving privacy. Existing gates should be repaired or replaced to the original design. 'Suburban' features such as close boarded fences and fancy metalwork should be avoided, as these detract from the area's rural character.

Openings in boundary walls should be kept to a minimum especially on principal street elevations so that the streetscape is not adversely affected.

Services

Wherever possible original rainwater gutters and downpipes should be replaced in cast iron to the same patterns. If replacements cannot be obtained then cast aluminium of similar colour and profile could be considered. Care should be taken in the siting of burglar alarms, central heating flues, meter boxes and bin stores so as not to detract from the appearance of principal elevations.

Maintenance

It is strongly advised that owners keep their property in good repair and condition. As with all buildings regular and thorough maintenance can help avoid major structural repairs that can develop through neglect.

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