

Metropolitan Borough of Sefton

Advisory Leaflet

Homer Green

Conservation Area



Architectural and Historical Significance

Homer Green lies at the north end of the medieval township of 'Torentun' (Thornton) within the ancient parish of Sefton. It comprises a small hamlet on the route from Ince Blundell to the parish church at Sefton. There is some indication that the hamlet and the farmholding may have been one of the two domesday ploughlands given to the barony of Warrington and subsequently granted to the Molyneux family of Sefton. Robert Molyneux held the land in 1212; he was the ancestor of the branch of the family who became associated with Melling where they moved at the beginning of the 15th century.

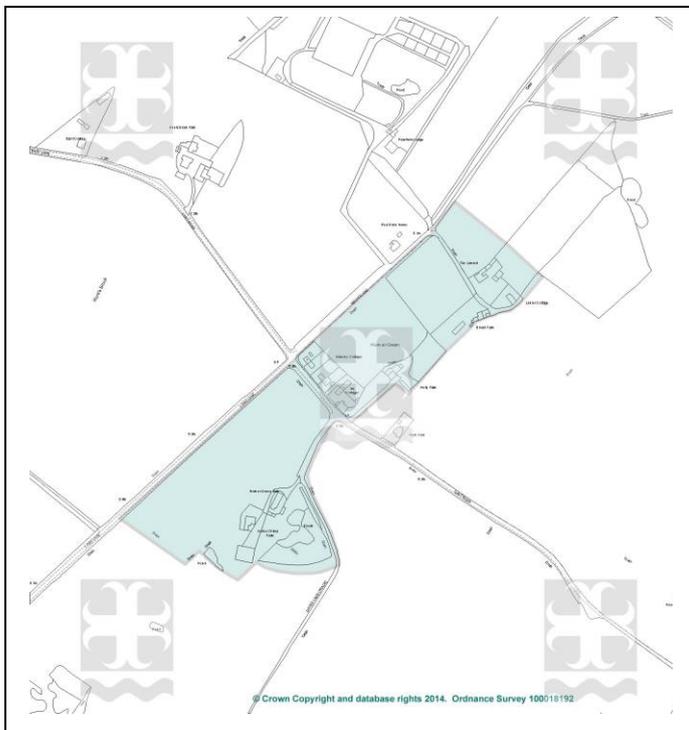
Other documents relating to land upon "Houlmore" (the old name for Homer Green) date from the 14th century and regard grants of lands and buildings thereon.

The hamlet was arranged informally around a field called "Common Croft" which ran parallel to Long Lane and Broad Lane in a north-easterly direction from Homer Green Farm to where the "Laurels" cottage is today. The current settlement pattern resembles the one recorded on the estate plan of 1769 when several landowners held property there. This plan records further cottages and crofts on the south side of Lunt Road, which are now cultivated fields. The orientation of the settlement pattern has been disrupted and obscured by the development in 1921 of "Stanley Cottages" built by Sefton Rural District Council. These attractive agricultural workers' cottages tend to obscure the historical relationship of Homer Green Farm with the settlement as a whole. Homer Green Farmhouse is a grade II listed building and a cruck framed dwelling which retains some stonewalling at the base of the east gable but is now mostly of brick. Homer Green Farm has extensive areas of ponds east of the farmyard. It is likely these were caused by extraction, perhaps for marl for spreading on the fields. However there are other unexplained water-filled features and infilled ditches which suggest that this may have been a moated site although this has never been established.

Many of the surviving buildings retain 18th century features and it is very likely that they lie on or near the site of earlier buildings although all have been altered to varying degrees. "Ivy Cottages" bear a datestone on the southern gable reading 1719 although it is probable that this relates to the building prior to being extended at both ends.

The Conservation Area

Sefton Council designated Homer Green Conservation Area in April 1991 under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The area is in the Green Belt and includes an attractive settlement pattern, based on a dispersed medieval layout. The surviving buildings include the listed Homer Green Farm, a number of properties dating from the 16th century and attractive vernacular farm buildings. It is these elements that justify its designation as a Conservation Area.



In determining applications for the development of land or the alteration, demolition or extension of existing buildings, Sefton will protect the Green Belt to prevent unrestricted sprawl and safeguard the surrounding countryside from further encroachment and preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the area.

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

Additional Planning Powers

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

Within the conservation area the following additional planning powers apply:-

- Any proposal involving the demolition of any building, wall or other structure within the Conservation Area (with minor exceptions) will require planning permission.
- It is an offence to carry out tree works without 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.
- 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 Homer Green Conservation Area the Borough 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 hedges.
- The design, materials and detail of extensions and alterations to existing buildings which will be expected to be in sympathy with the rural 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, scale and materials) and its integration with its agricultural surroundings and the special architectural and visual qualities of the conservation area.
- The retention and preservation of gaps between buildings, 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 rural scene.

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.

well as aesthetic reasons. If additional windows are essential, they should be restricted to the non-prominent elevations. Their size and proportion should match the original windows.

When repairing windows care must be taken to retain and restore details. Imitation 'leaded' lights should always be avoided whilst aluminium and UPVC windows are likely to have different detailing and proportions to the existing and are likely to detract from the character of the building.

Dormer Windows

Dormer windows are not normally acceptable on principal elevations unless they can be shown to complement the original design. If they are found necessary for internal planning reasons then they should be as small as possible and confined to non-prominent elevations. The cladding should complement or be the same as the roofing material.

Brickwork

Brickwork should not be painted. Areas of brickwork requiring renewal should be replaced with matching or second hand bricks in the original bond. Materials and techniques for brick pointing should be compatible with existing construction. Samples can be prepared to obtain the correct match of colour. Pointing should match the existing work which is generally flush finish. Repointing with cement slurry, bagging or bag-rubbing is not acceptable.

The rendering of brickwork should be avoided for both visual and practical reasons. Rendered surfaces require a greater level of maintenance and repointing. Limited repair to brickwork is usually cheaper and visually more acceptable. 'Stone cladding' of brickwork should always be avoided again for practical as well as aesthetic reasons.

Stonework

Stonework should be left unpainted. Where stonework is to be cleaned, professional advice should be sought on the appropriate method, so as not to damage the surface of the stone or details and mouldings. If missing or damaged stone details should be replaced in their original form. Care should be taken to source matching stone.

Roofs

Existing simple rooflines and profiles should be maintained. Any renewals or repairs should use reclaimed or new materials to match those on the existing roof. Plastic membrane or felt coverings laid over the existing roof finish are not acceptable. They cause damage to slates and tiles, and can lead to condensation problems and rot in roof timbers.

Chimneys

The original chimneystacks and pots form an integral part of the design of buildings and create an interesting 'roofscape'. It is important, therefore, to opt for repairing rather than dismantling stacks when they become redundant. If the stacks become unsafe, then

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 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

Original windows 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

they should be taken down and rebuilt to the original height and design taking care to replace chimney pots.

Porticoes and Porches

Where new porches and porticoes are proposed they should be of a design and use of materials contemporary with the age of the building and care should be taken to ensure that any new structures do not visually dominate the existing building. Where porches and porticos are not part of the original design of the building, their addition should be avoided.

Satellite Dishes and Aerials

Aerials and satellite dishes should be located as sensitively as possible and should avoid main street elevations. The use of gauze or matt, dark painted dishes is advised as the least obtrusive in relation the building and the street scene.

Front Doors

Original doors should be retained and repaired wherever possible. Replacements should be to a sympathetic design. "Georgian style" doors with imitation fanlights should be particularly avoided. Care should be taken to retain and repair details around openings, such as architraves, thresholds, transoms and fanlights.

Boundary Walls, Gates and Gate Posts

Original brick and stone boundary walls, including their stone copings, should be repaired or rebuilt to the original design, using reclaimed or matching materials. Where new development results in new boundary walls, then they should be of a similar design, proportion and material to those of neighbouring properties. Boundary walls and gateposts should not be painted. Gates should complement the rural nature of the area.

The street scene can be 'softened' and enhanced by the planting of boundary hedges which has the added benefit of improving privacy. Existing hedges, if cared for and maintained, enhance the appearance of the area.

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.

Website & email:

www.sefton.gov.uk/planning

planning.department@sefton.gov.uk

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