

Metropolitan Borough of Sefton Advisory Leaflet

Sefton Village

Conservation Area



History

Prior to the Norman Conquest, the ancient settlement of Sefton was an agricultural hamlet held by five thegns and granted to Roger de Poitou after 1066. He in turn granted the whole township to William de Molines. William made Sefton his chief seat and his descendants, the Molyneux family, built Sefton Hall on a moated site of about a quarter of an acre opposite where St Helen's church stands. This was home of the Molyneux family from at least the end of the 12th century. Nothing now remains above ground of the Hall as it was dismantled in the 18th century, after the family had previously removed to Croxteth Hall, although parts of the moat and fishponds are still evident. This site is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

St Helens Church, which contains architectural details from the 14th century and is a Grade I listed building, stands as a conspicuous landmark in the fen-like country that surrounds the village. The status and wealth of the Molyneux family can be gauged from the quality of the interior of this church.

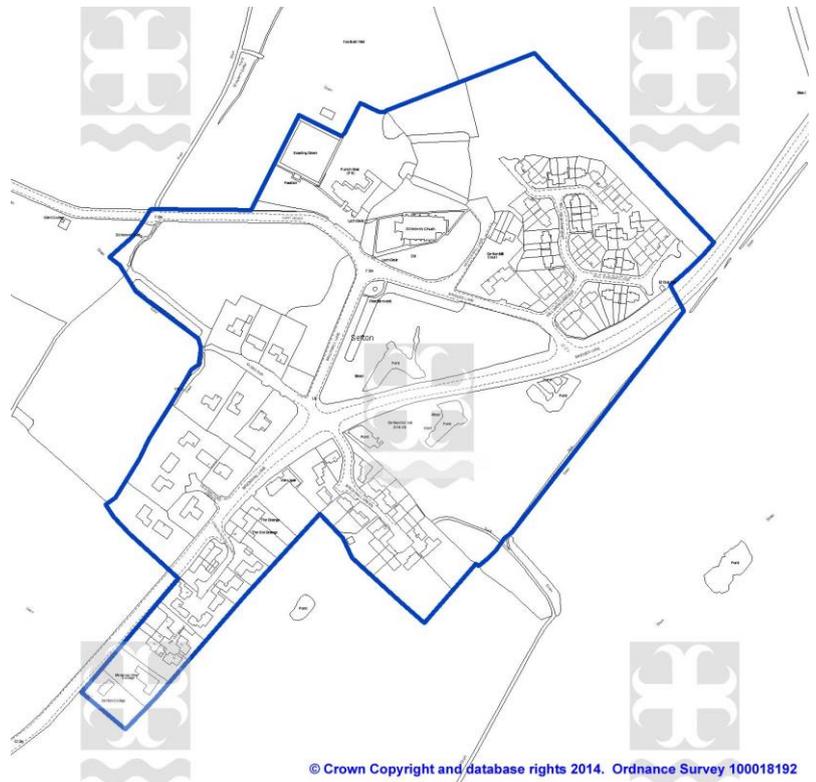
The hamlet of 'Sefton Town' grew up about half a mile to the south along Brickwall Lane at the crossroads. It is difficult to establish the relationship between the manor and the village as a medieval settlement, however by the 18th century, estate maps indicate just a small cluster of buildings around the crossroads.

The Sefton Mill Houses and Cottages form a group of 18th century buildings and are important as a physical reminder of the presence of the original Sefton Mill, said to have been built in 1595, which had been a traditional component of the medieval settlement. The original mill was destroyed by fire in the 1940s and a concrete replacement erected at a later date. This building was in turn demolished in the 1990s as part of a renovation and conversion programme of the listed mid-18th century Mill House and Cottages. The Punch

Bowl Inn is also listed, although in recent years it has been extensively altered. Dating from the early 19th century, the pub forms part of the attractive setting around Sefton Church, creating a balanced group with the mill buildings.

Moving south along Brickwall Lane from the church lies an interesting group of buildings (again listed) centring on the Grange Farmhouse, which dates from the 18th century, if not earlier. The outbuildings were formerly used as a brewery and have now been converted into houses.

The Old Hall Farmhouse and barn date from the 17th century. The buildings were converted into houses in the late 1980s and are now known, along with a number of new buildings, as Brickwall Green.



The Conservation Area

Sefton Village Conservation Area was designated in 1974. An Article 4 Direction was made in 1983 to protect its character and appearance. The area includes a concentration of important historic buildings, including St Helen's Church, Sefton's only Grade I listed building and the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Sefton Old Hall moated site and fishponds. The architectural and historical importance of Sefton Village Conservation Area is emphasised by the number of protected buildings within its boundary. The range of surviving buildings bears testimony to the continued occupation and shifting status of the village from pre-conquest minor hamlet through chief seat of the medieval lord, returning to a mixed residential agricultural village. Since designation, the village has significantly grown, in accordance with the 1980s Village Plan.

The elements of architectural and archaeological importance combined with a high quality townscape environment justify its designation as a Conservation Area and efforts to preserve and enhance its character and appearance. The present day character of Sefton Village is established by these elements. In the flat landscape the village is identified clearly from all directions by the tall spire of the Church and the mature forest trees that border the churchyard and encircle the old rectory site. The Conservation Area designation seeks to preserve the quality of the village scene within the context of a working rural environment.

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

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

- Any proposal involving the demolition of any building or part of a building within the Conservation Area (with some 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 alteration and enlargement of dwellinghouses and on the provision, alteration or improvement of outbuildings within their curtilage.
- Micro-generation (e.g. wind turbines/solar panels) installations will require planning permission in some cases
- Any alterations, improvements or extensions to houses will require planning permission.

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 Sefton Village Conservation Area the Council will pay special regard to:-

- The desirability of retention, replacement and restoration of historical details and features of the buildings and their gardens including layout, boundary walls and landscaping.
- The design 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 detailed 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 street scene and roofscape.



Guidance Notes for planning applications and use of materials:

Pre-Application Advice

You can request advice from the 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 what the significance of the property is, and what impact the proposals will have on that significance.

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.

New development on vacant sites

Any new development should be conceived with the original layout, architectural character and scale of the area in mind. Early discussions with the Planning Services are advised prior to any design work being commenced. 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 the building's external appearance, use of materials, the layout of gardens and car parks 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 match the original windows.

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 existing and consequently are likely to detract from the character of the building.

Dormer Windows

New dormer windows are not generally accepted unless they can be shown to complement the original design. Any new dormer windows must be well-proportioned and kept to non-prominent elevations. 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 should be carried out with lime mortar rather than cement to prevent softer bricks from deteriorating. Where stonework is to be cleaned, professional advice should be sought as the incorrect choice of treatments can result in damage.

Brick and terracotta features such as keystones, corbels, finials and leaf designs should be retained wherever possible. Cladding of brickwork in stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles is not permitted for practical as well as aesthetic reasons and the use of bright obtrusive colours for stucco render should be avoided. 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.

Stucco render or plaster mouldings and similar details should be replaced in their original form or pattern if missing or damaged. Care should be taken to use correct mixes and finishing coats. Dry dash or pebble dash is typical of some late 19th or early 20th century buildings and any repair should be to a similar finish.

Roofs

Original rooflines and profiles should be maintained. Any renewals or repairs should use reclaimed or new materials to match the original roof covering. Care should be taken to retain roof features such as decorated ridge tiles, eaves and gables details.

Chimneys

In most cases, the original chimney stacks 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 if they are no longer in use. If the stacks become unsafe, then they should be taken down and rebuilt to the original height and design taking care to replace chimney pots.

Satellite Dishes and Aerials

Aerials and satellite dishes should be located as sensitively as possible and should avoid main street elevations.

Front Doors

Original front 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 should be particularly avoided. Care should be taken to retain and repair details around openings, such as architraves, thresholds, transoms and fanlights.

Porticoes and Porches

These features should be retained and repaired where necessary. Mineral felt or other similar roofing materials should not be used. Where new porches and porticoes 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.

Boundary Walls, Fences, Gates and Gate Posts

Original brick and stone boundary walls, including their stone or terracotta copings, should be repaired or rebuilt to the original design, using reclaimed or matching materials. Boundary walls and gateposts should not be painted; this has a poor visual appearance and can trap moisture which will cause deterioration.

Wooden fences or railings should not be installed above existing walls, particularly along frontages. The street scene can be 'softened' and enhanced by the

planting of boundary hedges, which has the added benefit of improving privacy.

Openings in boundary walls should be kept to a minimum especially on principal street elevations so that the streetscape is not adversely affected. Original gates should be repaired or replaced to the original design. New gates should utilise authentic designs, avoiding the use of gold or multi-coloured paints.

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 store locations 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. Regular and thorough maintenance can help avoid major structural repairs that can develop through neglect.

Website and Email:

www.sefton.gov.uk/planning

planning.department@sefton.gov.uk

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