

**HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF ASHBY
2: THE CASTLE AND THE EAST**

**DRAFT
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1. Context

- 1.1. Ashby-de-la-Zouch is a parish in NW Leicestershire District. Ashby is about 15 miles S of Derby and about 22 miles SE of Nottingham.
- 1.2. The amended NW Leicestershire Local Plan (NWLDC, 2021) recognises Ashby as a ‘key service centre’, i.e. a settlement that provides services and facilities to the surrounding area and that is accessible by some sustainable transport. Because of its role as a key service centre, a significant amount of development will take place in Ashby.
- 1.3. The District Council has permitted the erection of about 1460 dwellings including 675 dwellings on land at Burton Road (13/00486/OUTM and 14/00578/OUTM) and 605 dwellings on land at Money Hill (15/00512/OUTM). The District Council has allocated “land north of Ashby” for the erection of a further 1750 dwellings.
- 1.4. For statistical purposes, England and Wales is divided into Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). The study area is in ‘NW Leicestershire 3A’. It is among the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country¹.
- 1.5. The Boys’ Grammar School, the Cottage Hospital and Mount House are situated on a summit at about 140m AOD. Ascott House is situated at about 125m AOD. The railway bridge on Upper Packington Road is situated at about 130m AOD.
- 1.6. Generally the study area is situated on the Wingfield Flags sandstone formation. The sandstone has been quarried; Wood (1837) indicates a quarry off North Street. Land between 130m and 135m AOD is situated on the Pennine Lower Coal Measures formation of sedimentary bedrock.

2. Sources

- 2.1. Section 8 contains a bibliography. In addition, the following sources have been consulted:
 - The estate map of 1735.
 - Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale maps of 1884, 1903, 1923 and 1971.
 - Vertical aerial photographs of c.1948.
 - Census data including the 1911 and 1921 censuses and the 1939 register.
 - Entries on the National Heritage List including the schedule entry for Ashby Castle.
 - Trade directories including Kelly’s Directories of 1916 and 1922.
- 2.2. Ashby was administered from 1894 to 1974 by the Ashby Urban District Council. It has been administered since that date by NW Leicestershire District Council.
- 2.3. NW Leicestershire’s planning registers from 1974 to present have been consulted. Planning applications determined by Ashby Urban District Council between 1948 and 1974 have been retained, but the applications are not catalogued and hence they have not been consulted.

¹ There are 34378 LSOAs in England and Wales. These are ranked by deprivation with 1 being the most deprived and 17189 being the national median. NW Leicestershire 3A is ranked 29097.

3. The manor since c.1464

- 3.1. The manor was granted in 1464 to William, Lord Hastings². He built the castle's keep and chapel c.1464-83. He obtained a licence to crenellate in 1474; he was beheaded in 1483. William's grandson George was created Earl of Huntingdon in 1529.
- 3.2. The castle was "surrendered to the Parliamentarians in 1646"; hence the keep was partly demolished (schedule entry). The remaining buildings were altered and extended to form a house ('Ashby Place'); the estate map (1735) indicates a wing to the north of the earlier buildings. The house was used principally "as a dower house [for] widowed Countesses of Huntingdon" (Goodall, n.d.). It is associated principally with Selina Hastings (d.1791), founder of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.
- 3.3. The Manor House was erected c.1831-32 (Scott, 1907). It was occupied by John Mammatt, steward to the Hastings family, until his death in 1851. The house was let to tenants between 1851 and 1905. Between 1867 and 1879 the tenant was Walter Leith JP, a brewer. Between 1886 and 1905 the house was leased to the Hemsley family, silk manufacturers, who had a factory in Melbourne.
- 3.4. In December 1906 the Hon Paulyne Hastings and his wife Lady Maud moved to the Manor House. Paulyne died in October 1907; in 1916 his widow continued to occupy the house. In 1921 and 1922 it was occupied by their daughter Edith (the twelfth Countess of Loudoun) and her husband Reginald³. By 1925 Edith had "left to reside in Scotland" (Leicester Chronicle, 7 February).
- 3.5. In 1937 and 1939 the Manor House was occupied by Reginald's sister Dorothy and her husband Frederick Greenish. In 1939 it was occupied by children evacuated from King Edward's Grammar School in Aston. By 1949 it was used as the preparatory school to the Boys' Grammar School⁴.

4. Historic development

Development before c.1780

- 4.1. Map 1 indicates the extent of the area c.1780.
- 4.2. The settlement appears in the Domesday Book of 1086 as *Ascebi*. The castle was much rebuilt in the mid-to-late fourteenth century, but the great hall retains twelfth century fabric. The church was much rebuilt in the late fifteenth century but retains early fourteenth century fabric (Pevsner, 1984).

² According to Pevsner (1984) and the schedule entry. Goodall (n.d.) says 1462.

³ Born Reginald Huddleston; he took the surname Abney Hastings upon his marriage in 1916.

⁴ Leicester Daily Mercury (20 October 1939); Leicester Evening Mail (21 December 1949). By 1954 Prior Park 'south' was used as the preparatory school to the Girls' Grammar School.

- 4.3. The castle's keep and chapel were erected c.1464-83. Mount House was erected in the fifteenth or sixteenth century. It may have been a summer house or a warren lodge (Pevsner, 1984; Newsome, 2008)⁵. A sunken parterre and water garden were laid out in the sixteenth century, with "isolated towers at the SE and SW angles" (list entry).
- 4.4. The estate map (1735) indicates the church and 'vicaridge' (sic); it indicates the 'free school'. It indicates Ashby Place and the sunken parterre and water garden [i]. It indicates an open space – the 'wilderness' [ii] – with a tree lined avenue leading to the 'moats' [iii]. It indicates buildings on 'Near Mount Close' including Mount House [iv].

Development before c.1923

- 4.5. The 'English School' was erected c.1807. Ashby Place was "demolished" (i.e. the north wing was demolished and the earlier buildings were reduced to ruins) and replaced c.1831-32 by the Manor House (Scott, 1907). Map 2 indicates the extent of the area c.1837. Development between c.1837 and c.1923 comprises:

- 1) Castle Lodge: Erected in the mid-nineteenth century.
- 2) Boys' Grammar School: Designed by Nicholas Joyce and erected 1876-80.
- 3) Cottage Hospital etc: A hospital designed by George Lilley and erected 1897-98. Adjoining houses erected c.1884-1903 (note date stones of 1900 and 1901).
- 4) Girls' Grammar School: Designed by Barrowcliff & Allcock and erected 1901-02.
- 5) Mount Walk Cottage: A detached house erected c.1903-23.
- 6) 43 to 87A Leicester Road: Detached and semi-detached houses erected c.1903-23.
- 7) Range Road: Houses erected c.1903-23.

Development since c.1923

- 4.6. Map 3 indicates the extent of the area c.1923. Development since that date comprises:

- 8) Ascott House: Offices for Ashby Rural District Council designed by Goddard & Wain and opened in 1938.
- 9) Manor Close: The 1939 Register records William Musson of Manor Close, a solicitor⁶.
- 10) Leicester Road: On the north side of the street, five houses were erected c.1923-48.
- 11) Shenanna: A detached house erected c.1948-71.
- 12) Boys' Grammar School: Development including a science block opened in 1958 and a swimming pool opened in 1963⁷. In 1980 a sports hall⁸ received planning permission (80/0642/C).
- 13) Top Garden: A detached house erected c.1971-74.
- 14) Design Centre: In 1971 a 'design centre' was erected at the Girls' Grammar School (Hillier, 1989).

⁵ Mount House has been identified as the Civil War 'Irish Fort'. Newsome (2008) says that "it seems unlikely that the 'Irish Fort' was Mount House, or that Mount House was built during the Civil War".

⁶ Musson died at 'The Court' (4 Manor Close) in 1962. Leicester Daily Mercury (10 April 1963). 1 Manor Close was probably erected c.1971-76. The Leicester Daily Mercury (2 July 1976) refers to the property.

⁷ Birmingham Daily Post (10 May 1958); Burton Observer (5 September 1963).

⁸ Ken Hillier says that the sports hall was not erected until 1983 (pers comm, 2024).

- 15) Range Road: Two detached houses erected piecemeal⁹ since c.1923.
- 16) Leicester Road: In 1991 we permitted the erection of two dwellings (our refs 91/0108/P and 91/0109/P).
- 4.7. In 2017 planning permission was granted to demolish later phases of the Cottage Hospital [a] and to erect five dwellings (17/01034/FUL). Four dwellings ('Cottage Row') were erected¹⁰.
- 5. Prior Park**
- 5.1. Wood (1837) indicates 'Prior Park' [17]. Pevsner (1984) refers to a pair of semi-detached houses possibly designed by Robert Chaplin. Two detached houses, 'Blakemoor' [18] and 'Priorfield' [19], were erected c.1903-11.
- 5.2. Almost thirty houses – mostly detached – were erected c.1923-39: 'Finlandia' to 'Althorpe' [20], 'Mountfield' to 'Prior Lea' [21]¹¹, 'Tsingtau' to 'Ulverscroft' [22] and 'Newlands' to 'Penshurst' [23]¹². 'Braehead' was erected c.1939-48 [24].
- 5.3. Since c.1948 development has comprised:
- 25) 'Eredan' to 'The Gates': Three detached houses erected c.1948-74.
- 26) 'Bridge House': A detached house¹³ erected c.1948-67.
- 27) 'Amberley': A detached house erected c.2013 (13/00654/FUL)¹⁴.
- 28) 'The Hollies': A bungalow erected c.2004 (04/00015/FUL).
- 29) 'Torran': A detached house probably erected c.1971-74.
- 5.4. Since c.1948 redevelopment has comprised:
- b) 'Priorfield': Vehicular access to a new cul-de-sac¹⁵ ('Priorfields') had been laid out before 1964. 'The Hawthorns' and 'Orchard House' were erected¹⁶ c.1973-75. 'Priorfield' was demolished c.2005 (our reference 05/01117/DEM) and three detached houses were erected c.2012 (12/00039/FUL).
- c) 11A Upper Packington Road: A detached house erected c.1982 (81/1264/P).

⁹ 'Holbeck' was erected c.1923-48. 'La Fontaine' was erected c.2005 (05/01642/FUL). In c.1981 a two-storey side extension was erected at 'North View' (81/0438/P).

¹⁰ The later phases included a "maternity unit extension" (1957) and "a new outpatient and casualty department and an operating theatre" (1959).

¹¹ The 1939 register refers to 'Cranleigh', which may be the house now known as 'Rawdon'.

¹² The 1939 register refers to a 'new house', which may be the house now known as 'Newlands'.

¹³ The Burton Observer (11 May 1967) refers to Mr & Mrs Kernan of 'Bridge House' on Packington Road.

¹⁴ At the same date a replacement side extension was erected at 'Blakemoor' (13/00653/FUL).

¹⁵ Searanckes advertised "a few plots still available on their Priorfields site". Burton Observer, 2 July 1964.

¹⁶ Probably the building plots with a "60' frontage to the Upper Packington Road" and a "50' frontage to Priorfields" advertised in the Leicester Daily Mercury (24 March 1973). The Leicester Daily Mercury (21 August 1976) refers to Orchard House, a detached house "built about eighteen months ago".

6. Girls' Grammar School

- 6.1. The school was designed by Barrowcliff & Allcock [i]. The foundation stone was laid in June 1901 and the school opened in September 1902 (Leicester Journal, 19 September). A 'new wing' [ii] was opened in October 1935 (Leicester Daily Mercury, 18 October). In December 1958 a science block [iii] was "approaching completion" (Burton Observer, 11 December).
- 6.2. A science block and dining hall [iv] was erected in two phases c.2001-02 (00/00176/COM and 01/01290/COM). A 'science classroom building' [v] was erected c.2010 (10/00286/COM). In 2020 the District Council granted planning permission for a two-storey extension (20/00351/FUL).

Design Centre

- 6.3. The design centre¹⁷ was erected in 1971 [vi]. In 1980 extensions received planning permission (80/0642/P). The extensions comprised a 'design base' [vii], 'sixth form' [viii] and 'geography' [ix]¹⁸.
- 6.4. An information technology centre [x] was erected c.2001 (01/00479/COM). A detached classroom block ('music and art') [xi] was erected c.2005 (05/00754/COM)¹⁹. A 'dining area' [xii] was erected c.2007 (07/00281/COM). An extension including an 'ICT block' and a 'textile studio' [xiii] was erected piecemeal c.2004-09 (04/00507/COM and 09/00374/COM).

7. Boys' Grammar School

- 7.1. The school was designed in 1876 by Nicholas Joyce [i]. It was opened in September 1880 (Leicester Chronicle, 18 September). A detached building [ii] was erected c.1884-1903. The school was extended in facsimile c.1903-23 [iii] and c.1923-48 [iv]. A large extension [v], a small extension [vi] and a detached building [vii] were erected c.1923-48. Small extensions were erected c.1971-74 [viii] and c.2002 [ix] (our reference 02/01475/COM).

Headteacher's house

- 7.2. Wood (1837) indicates a building on 'school land' [x]. An extension [xi] was erected c.1884-1903. A science block [xii] opened in 1958 and a swimming pool [xiii] opened in 1963. A sports hall [xiv] was erected in 1983; an extension [xv] was erected c.2007 (07/00316/COM).
- 7.3. A 'classroom block' [xvi] was erected c.2005 (05/01682/COM)²⁰. An 'extension to the school house' [xvii] was erected c.2008 (08/01604/COM)²¹. A 'pavilion' [xviii] was erected c.2016 (16/00817/COM).

¹⁷ Ken Hillier says that the library and theatre were not erected until 1976 (pers comm, 2024).

¹⁸ Ken Hillier says that the sixth form was not erected until 1983 (pers comm, 2024).

¹⁹ The District Council objected, finding that the building would "detract from the setting of the conservation area ... as a result of its scale and design".

²⁰ The District Council objected, finding the building "unnecessarily ... complicated in its overall appearance and composition", while finding the north elevation "somewhat stark and visually dominant".

²¹ The District Council objected, finding that the building "fails to respond adequately or imaginatively to the context for which it is proposed ... in terms of its form and design".

Manor House School

- 7.4. The Manor House was erected c.1831-32. The OS 1884 map indicates the principal building [i] and a detached outbuilding [ii]. Development between 1903 and 1923 comprised an extension [iii] and three greenhouses [iv]. In 1939 the Manor House was used as a house, but by 1949 it was used as the preparatory school to the Boys' Grammar School.
- 7.5. A 'new hall' [v] was opened in 1971 (Burton Observer, 7 October). An infill extension ('changing rooms and showers') [vi] was erected c.1974 (74/1273/P). A 'timber building' [vii] was erected c.1995 (95/0233/P).

8. Bibliography

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