

**HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT OF ASHBY
3: THE SPA AND THE SOUTH**

**DRAFT
NOVEMBER 2024**

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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). Generally land to the east of Station Road is in ‘NW Leicestershire 3A’ while land to the west of Station Road is in ‘NW Leicestershire 6D’. These LSOAs are among the 20% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country¹.
- 1.5. The topography is effectively flat. The junction of Station Road and Wilfred Place is situated at 124m AOD while the Bath Grounds occupy a shallow bowl at about 120m AOD. The east boundary of the Bath Grounds follows the natural course of the Gilwiskaw Brook. The brook had been culverted before c.1923.
- 1.6. Generally the study area is situated on the Pennine Lower Coal Measures formation of sedimentary bedrock. The broad course of the Gilwiskaw Brook is situated on superficial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel.

2. Sources

- 2.1. Section [s] contains a bibliography. In addition, the following sources have been consulted:
 - The 1865 Quarter Sessions map held at Leicestershire Record Office.
 - Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale maps of 1884, 1903, 1923 and 1971.
 - Vertical aerial photographs of c.1948.
 - Census data including the 1881 and 1901 censuses.
- 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 while NW Leicestershire 6D is ranked 28334.

3. Historic development

Development before c.1849

3.1. Map 1 indicates the extent of the town c.1815-21 and the extent of Hill House c.1837. The map indicates development before c.1849 thus:

- i. Hillier (1984) refers to tramways laid out c.1799-1802. Stevens (1821) indicates a tramway leading SW from the town toward Willesley Basin on the Ashby Canal.
- ii. Wood (1837) indicates a 'wharf yard' adjoining the tramway.
- iii. Stevens (1821) indicates development to the NW of the 'old' Tamworth Road.
- iv. Stevens (1821) indicates development to the SE of the 'old' Tamworth Road.
- v. The Paragon (two "newly erected" houses) was offered for sale² in 1829.
- vi. Building land "forming part of a crescent" was offered for sale in 1829.
- vii. Wood (1837) indicates 'Wilfred Place; Mr Smith'.

3.2. Wood (1837) indicates the Ivanhoe Baths (1822) and a designed landscape to its east, Rawdon Terrace³ and the Royal Hotel (1826) and its stables.

Development c.1849 to c.1884

3.3. The Midland Railway Leicester to Burton Branch opened in 1849, running from east to west across the south side of the town [1]. The Derby to Ashby Branch opened in 1869, reflecting the route of the tramway through the town centre [2]. Tamworth Road was realigned to accommodate the Leicester to Burton Branch; Station Road was laid out, bisecting the Royal Hotel and its stables.

3.4. Map 2 indicates development to the north of the Leicester to Burton Branch thus:

3. The OS 1884 and 1903 maps indicate a nursery on the site of the failed 'crescent' development (the OS 1923 map indicates a nursery and allotment gardens).
4. The OS 1884 map indicates three cottages on the 'old' Tamworth Road.
5. The OS 1884 map indicates 'Smithfield', a sale ground⁴.
6. Holy Trinity Vicarage, designed by James Piers St Aubyn, was erected in 1860.
7. The Loudoun Monument, designed by George Gilbert Scott, was unveiled in 1879.
8. Bath Meadow: The OS 1884 map differentiates between a designed landscape to the north and a recreation ground to the south (the OS 1923 map indicates a cricket ground)⁵.

3.5. Map 2 indicates development to the south of the Leicester to Burton Branch thus:

9. 'Wamba Cottage', a house erected in the mid-nineteenth century⁶.
10. The OS 1884 map indicates farm buildings adjacent to 'Wamba Cottage'.
11. 'The Firs' and 'The Hollies' appear on the 1865 Quarter Sessions map.
12. Houses addressing Lower Packington Road and Tamworth Road appear on the 1865 Quarter Sessions map.

² Leicester Journal, 15 May 1829. *Advertisement: Desirable residences at Ashby-de-la-Zouch.*

³ Six houses at Rawdon Terrace were offered for sale in 1827 (Leicester Journal, 29 June 1827).

⁴ The earliest newspaper reference to a "sale ground near the railway station" appears in the Leicester Journal, 15 September 1865. A cattle trough and drinking fountain was erected in 1893.

⁵ The Leicester Chronicle, 6 December 1873, refers to a football match "in the Bath Meadow".

⁶ 'Wamba' is the name of a character in Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819).

13. The 1881 census refers to 'Oak Villa' (a detached house), later known as 'Oakfield'.
14. The 1881 census refers to 'Loudoun Villas' (a terrace of eight houses) and 'Ivanhoe Villa' (a detached house). The OS 1884 map indicates a stone yard to the rear of 'Ivanhoe Villa'.
15. The OS 1884 map indicates development including a malthouse⁷.
16. The OS 1884 map indicates two long terraces on the north side of Tamworth Road.
17. Houses on the south side of Tamworth Road (including 'Ivanhoe House') were developed piecemeal between 1865 and 1903.
18. Houses on Avenue Road and Lower Packington Road were developed piecemeal between 1865 and 1903.

Development c.1884 to c.1923

- 3.6. Map 2 indicates development between c.1884 and c.1923 thus:
 19. The 1901 census refers to 'Fernleigh' and 'Westwood' (a semi-detached pair).
 20. The 1901 census refers to 72 to 78 Tamworth Road (two semi-detached pairs).
 21. The 1901 census refers to 'Sandhurst' (a detached house).
 22. 'The Grange' (a detached house) is dated 1903.
 23. 34 to 48 Avenue Road: The OS 1903 map indicates eight houses; 'Skelsmergh Villas' (42 to 48 Avenue Road) are dated 1888.
 24. The RC Church of Our Lady of Lourdes was erected c.1913-15 on the site of the 'wharf yard'. It was designed by Frederick Walters.
 25. A colliery rescue station was erected on the east side of Lower Packington Road c.1912-13.
 26. Bath Meadow: The recreation ground was extended to the east c.1903-23⁸.
- 3.7. The OS 1923 map indicates houses on the south side of Avenue Road [27] and on either side of Lower Packington Road [28 to 30].

Selected modern development

- 3.8. Map 3 indicates selected modern development thus:
 31. 33 & 35 Lower Packington Road: A semi-detached pair erected c.1923-48.
 32. 7a, 9 and 11 Lower Packington Road: Three detached houses erected piecemeal⁹.
 33. 50 & 52 Avenue Road: Two detached houses probably erected c.1971-74.
- 3.9. The colliery rescue centre was extended c.1948-71; the 1971 OS map indicates tennis courts [34]. The extended rescue centre was demolished [a] and replaced with seven apartments and 17 houses (our references 04/00682/REM and 04/01677/REM)¹⁰.

⁷ The Leicester Chronicle (22 November 1873) refers to the "new malt offices" on Tamworth Road.

⁸ The OS 1923 map indicates a short-lived drill hall addressing Station Road.

⁹ 7a Lower Packington Road was erected c.2019 (our reference 19/01082/FUL).

¹⁰ 1 to 4 Spinney Close (two semi-detached pairs) were probably erected c.1971-74.

4. Redevelopment

Redevelopment north of the railway line (i)

- 4.1. Map 3 indicates redevelopment c.1948-74 thus:
- b. On South Street, six detached or pseudo-detached houses erected piecemeal¹¹.
 - c. A service station was erected c.1960-61¹².
 - d. The Ivanhoe Baths were demolished¹³ in June 1962. Pevsner (1984) said that the spa was “the most rewarding part of the town” until the baths were demolished; the baths were “something Ashby should have been proud to preserve”.
 - e. The Ivanhoe Social Club was erected c.1966¹⁴.
 - f. Pithiviers Close: In 1968 the Urban District Council bought the railway station and ‘about six acres of land’¹⁵. Fifty-four houses arranged in semi-detached pairs were completed in 1972¹⁶.
 - g. Fire station: Three cottages were demolished; a fire station opened in 1971¹⁷.
 - h. Wilfred Gardens: The nursery and allotment gardens were redeveloped c.1948-1971.

Redevelopment north of the railway line (ii)

- 4.2. Map 3 indicates redevelopment since c.1974 thus:
- i. Station Mews: In 1974 we permitted the ‘erection of five houses’ (74/1282/P).
 - j. Wilfred Place: In 1976 we were granted permission for ‘three bungalows’ (76/1223/R). 14 to 24 Wilfred Place were demolished¹⁸ in 1977. The bungalows were erected¹⁹ in 1980.
 - k. 3 to 9 Wilfred Place: Erected in 1977 as part of ‘station site phase two’²⁰.
 - l. Churchside Walk: In 2002 we permitted the ‘erection of four dwellings’ (02/00529/FUL).
 - m. Sale ground and stables: Demolished. In 2007 we permitted a ‘three-to-four storey apartment building comprising 37 units’ (07/00564/FUL).

¹¹ “Frank and Marion Rutland Crowley ... sold off parts of the Bath Grounds for building purposes” c.1921-23 (Hillier, 1984).

¹² In June 1960 planning permission was granted on appeal. Leicester Evening Mail, 28 June 1960. The Leicester Evening Mail, 10 October 1961, refers to “a petrol station under construction”.

¹³ ‘Ivanhoe Baths coming down’. Coalville Times, 8 June 1962, page 6.

¹⁴ In 1966 the social club “transferred to newly built premises in Wilfred Place”. Leicester Daily Mercury, 13 November 1971.

¹⁵ Coalville Times, 20 October 1972 and 27 October 1972.

¹⁶ Information from NWLDC Resident Housing.

¹⁷ The Leicester Daily Mercury, 23 March 1971, refers to “the new fire station at Ashby-de-la-Zouch”.

¹⁸ Demolition order held at Ashby Museum.

¹⁹ Information from NWLDC Resident Housing.

²⁰ Information from NWLDC Resident Housing.

Redevelopment south of the railway line

- 4.3. Map 3 indicates redevelopment to the south of the railway line thus:
- n. Alliance Church: A club erected c.1948-58²¹.
 - o. Paragon: Probably demolished c.1971-74 as part of the development of Lodge Close.
 - p. The Maltings: Buildings were demolished c.1948-71.
 - q. Woodhouse Court: Buildings were demolished. In 2005 we granted planning permission for fourteen dwellings (our reference 05/01367/FUL).
 - r. Ashby Court: Buildings were demolished. In 1990 we granted planning permission for a nursing home (our reference 90/0438/R).
- 4.4. Grange Close [s] was developed c.1948-71. 2A to 2C Grange Close [t] were erected c.2015 (our reference 15/00688/FUL).

5. The Bath Grounds

- 5.1. The 1884 OS map indicates the designed landscape at the Bath Grounds. It indicates carriage entrances on South Street and Station Road and a carriage drive between them. It indicates a carriage circle in front of the Ivanhoe Baths with a fountain at its centre.
- 5.2. The 1884 OS map indicates tree planting. It indicates a path winding from the Ivanhoe Baths along the north, east and south boundaries of the site. It indicates paths to the south of the baths. It indicates six 'seats' and one 'trough'. The 1923 OS map indicates the men's bowling green and pavilion²². It indicates a pavilion to the north of the men's bowling green and a cruciform pavilion to the north again.
- 5.3. Map 4 indicates the appearance of the Bath Grounds c.1923.

Redevelopment c.1923 to present

- 5.4. Map 5 indicates the redevelopment of the Bath Grounds since c.1923.
- 5.5. The north part of the Bath Grounds was "sold off ... for building purposes" (Hillier, 1984). Four houses were erected c.1923-61 [i] and two were erected after c.1961 [ii]. Land was taken from the Bath Grounds c.1923-61 to provide gardens to the rear of Rawdon House [iii] and Rawdon Terrace²³ [iv].
- 5.6. Before 1948 the greater part of the tree planting had been removed; the carriage circle and fountain were also removed before that date [v]. The Ivanhoe Baths [vi] were demolished in 1962 (see paragraph 4.1 above).

²¹ In 1958 the St John's Ambulance Brigade was "given the first option to buy premises in Tamworth Road ... formerly used as the West End Club" (Birmingham Daily Post, 27 May 1958). The building has been used as a place of worship since about 1975 (our reference 75/1941/P).

²² But the Leicester Chronicle (29 March 1890) said that "the Baths and Hotel Company had prepared a new bowling green in the Bath Grounds".

²³ Registers of title for 4 Rawdon Terrace (LT125995), 6 Rawdon Terrace (LT439255) and 7 Rawdon Terrace (156082) indicate that land was taken from the Bath Grounds by a conveyance dated 22 June 1923.

- 5.7. After 1948 the path that delineated the Bath Grounds and the Bath Meadow was removed [vii]. The path winding along the east boundary of the site has been realigned [viii] and a path has been formed along the new north boundary. The seats and the trough indicated on the 1884 OS map have been removed.
- 5.8. The men's bowling green and its pavilion survive; a new pavilion was erected c.1978 (our reference 78/1875/P). The other pavilions have been removed [ix and x]²⁴. The carriage entrances and parts of the carriage drive survive. Since 1971 part of the carriage drive adjoining 'Park Holme' has been removed [xi].
- 5.9. Some elements of the designed landscape survive to the south of the bath site. In 2024 planning permission was granted for development including the erection of a terrace of seven houses and the formation of a surface car park (22/01552/FULM).

6. Bibliography

Hillier K (1984) *The book of Ashby-de-la-Zouch*

NW Leicestershire District Council (2021) *NW Leicestershire Local Plan*

Pevsner N (1984) *The buildings of England: Leicestershire and Rutland*

Stevens H (1815) *Ordnance Survey drawing: Leicester and Loughborough*

Stevens H (1821) *Ordnance Survey drawing: Hartshorn*

Wood J (1837) *Plan of Ashby-de-la-Zouch*

²⁴ A women's bowling club was established in 1928 (Leicester Daily Mercury, 20 July 1978). The 1948 aerial photograph indicates a bowling green to the north of the men's bowling green; the 1971 OS map indicates a pavilion. The bowling green and its pavilion have been removed.