

MORTON



An Appraisal of the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

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MORTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

CONSERVATION AREAS

Section 69 of The *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* requires all Local Authorities to determine which parts of their areas are of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as conservation areas. Designation requires that special regard be taken to preserve or enhance their character and appearance.

Conservation areas are places where the buildings and the spaces around them interact to form distinctly recognisable areas of quality and interest. There are many factors that contribute to the character of a conservation area:

- The historic layout of property, boundaries and thoroughfares
- A particular mix of uses
- Vistas along streets and between buildings
- Characteristic materials
- Appropriate scaling and detailing of buildings
- Quality street furniture and surface treatments
- Trees and open spaces.

This conservation area appraisal is an assessment of those features and qualities in Morton, which give it its own special character. The appraisal justifies the designation of the Morton conservation area and will be used a framework against which decisions about future development can be made.

Morton is part of the civil parish of Fiskerton-cum-Morton but is a separate parish with regard to the Church. It is also physically separated from Fiskerton which has it's own conservation area boundary.

CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

The special character of Morton lies in its compact size and simple layout that has not changed to any great degree since the village was enclosed between 1839 and 1841. The boundary has been drawn to encircle most of the settlement and includes Middle Lane, Back Lane, Manor Drive, Church Lane and Main Street. It excludes the C20 development on and behind Main Street.

LOCATION AND POPULATION

Morton is located in the Trent valley but is $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from the river and within a farming landscape. The nearest village is Fiskerton, which is on the river and the nearest town is Southwell (3 miles). Morton is not on any through route and this contributes to its quiet rural character.

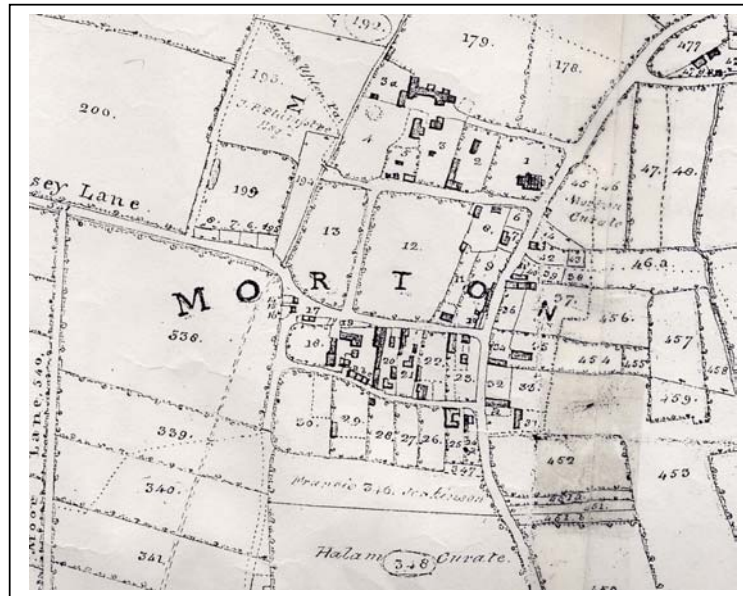
There is a population of 770 (2000) living within the parish but this also includes the larger settlement of Fiskerton. Figures for Morton alone compiled during the C19 show that the population of the hamlet stayed fairly stable at 101 while the 2000

Electoral Roll shows a population of 135 adults aged over 18 years. This would indicate that there has been no substantial increase in the population during the C20 and this is a significant feature of the village.

ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Morton is mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086) with a spelling of “Mortune”.

Morton has historically been involved in farming. Farms and small holdings in the conservation area have included Manor Farm, Morton Hall (formerly Morton House Farm) on Middle Lane, Morton Farm on Main Street, Hollycroft on Church Lane, Chestnut House on Back Lane, Clumber Farm on Main Street and Ivy Cottage on Main Street. Of these only Manor Farm is active today. As a consequence, there are several agricultural buildings scattered around the village with most having been converted to residential use.



*Extract from the Inclosure Map for Morton and Fiskerton
- 1839, 1840, 1841*

The most significant change in farming practices took place with the enclosure of the open fields. This took place in Morton between 1839-1841 and it is a special feature of the village that its form and layout have changed very little since then. The “Inclosure Map” above shows a concentration of buildings between Middle Lane and Back Lane with a straggle along Main Street and another grouping along Church Lane. Most of the building groups shown can be identified today and they form the backbone of the conservation area.

The Midland Railway opened its line from Nottingham to the public in 1846. There is no station at Morton and the line remains detached from the built area. It does however, form a gateway feature to the village and the conservation area.

LAYOUT

Morton is a nucleated settlement that is compact and well defined. The layout is a grid of country lanes lined with trees, hedges and grass verges giving a very rural and natural character. There are no pavements or kerbs to add formality and the buildings also do not follow any rigid building lines.

The built form is based around Middle Lane, Manor Drive, Church Lane, Main Street and Back Lane. Each road has its own character.

Back Lane

Back Lane is arguably the most interesting of all the roads being very narrow and with the greatest number of historic buildings. Traditionally it would have provided rear access from Middle Lane to the open fields and the area between Middle Lane and Back Lane certainly has the highest concentration of farm buildings in the village.

The road still resembles a country lane having no kerbs or pavement and a winding route. To either side are walls or hedges with overhanging trees giving it a slightly unkempt appearance, which is an important part of its character. This informality is broken only once at approximately its midway point at Chestnut House where there is a matching wall with railings on either side of the road. This contrasting formality adds interest to the lane.

Buildings are either at the back edge of the lane or close to the lane behind walls and are generally widely spaced allowing the vegetation to dominate.



Middle Lane

Middle Lane is a much wider and straighter road than Back Lane and has a more open character with grass verges along most of its length. Like Back Lane there are no kerbs.

There is a distinct difference in character to either side of the road, the west side having buildings and walls and the east side having gardens and hedges. The west side is the more interesting with converted farm buildings and walls giving a continuous line of development of varying heights and shapes. These link through to Back Lane and contribute to creating some of the most interesting groups of buildings in the village.

The east side of Middle Lane is not built up and there is only one property, Gable House, which is set back within a large garden and the road is lined with a hedgerow and occasional trees.



Manor Drive

Manor Drive leads directly from the entrance to Morton Hall towards Manor Farm. It might be expected that it would be lined with historic property but in fact it is entirely modern with large houses and bungalows in large plots. They do not detract from the rural quality of the Drive however, because they are all set well back from the road behind hedges and mature trees. These hedges and trees assume a greater importance here than would normally be the case, because of the contribution they make to absorbing these properties into the street.

The road itself has no kerbs and has grass verges to either side typical of the rest of the village.



Church Lane

Church Lane is so named because of the presence of the church of St Denis. It is the least developed of all the lanes having only a small cluster of dwellings at its midway point and the church at one end. For a church, St Denis is very small and this sets the tone for the lane where the buildings are small and the road is narrow. This small scale is an important feature of this lane. Hedges as boundary features are important while trees in the churchyard also make a significant contribution.

To the rear of Church Lane is the important group of buildings at Morton Manor Farm but they are too far away from the road to have a significant impact from Church Lane.



Main Street

Main Street is the principal road through the village with the road widening out at the Full Moon public house to provide a focal point and curving around so that there are no through views. Main Street exhibits a variety of buildings and boundary treatments giving a mixed character. There are also some significant gaps in the frontage particularly at Daybill Close, Clumber Farm, and The Full Moon car park although the trees here partly fill the gap.

There is potential along Main Street to strengthen boundary treatments and fill gaps. In contrast the quality of the buildings is generally high with the majority being traditional and making a positive contribution.



LANDSCAPE SETTING

Morton is set on arable land on the flat gravel plain of the River Trent. The area is characterised by a traditional pattern of hedged fields and nucleated villages and Morton represents a good example of a nucleated settlement. Morton, unlike Fiskerton in the same parish, has no links with the river.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The area is rich in buried archaeological remains, this part of the river valley having attracted settlement for millennia. There is a scheduled ancient monument site immediately outside the village on the southern boundary where aerial photographs have revealed a complex settlement of Iron-Age or Romano-British date. There are also several cropmarks surrounding the village that demonstrate the presence of buried features. It is probable that such features also exist under modern houses, roads and gardens. It is therefore likely that conditions regarding archaeology will be attached to any permission for development. The scheduled ancient monument is not included in the conservation area as it is protected under its own legislation and it does not make a contribution to conservation area character.

ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC QUALITIES OF BUILDINGS

(Refer to Appendix 1 for a schedule of the listed buildings and unlisted buildings contributing to townscape character and Appendix 2 for a description of them).

Listed Buildings

There are 3 listed buildings in Morton and all are in the conservation area. They are

- Church of St Denis, Grade II*
- Dovecote at Morton Manor farm, Grade II
- Clumber House, Grade II

A listed building is one recognised by the government as being of special architectural or historic interest, as specified by the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. Listing is made at three levels of importance Grade I, the most important, Grade II* and Grade II. Listed building consent is required before any alterations, extensions or demolitions can be made to a listed building which might affect its character.

Unlisted Buildings

Despite the low number of listed buildings, the proportion of unlisted buildings contributing to townscape quality is high. They are grouped particularly on Back Lane, Middle Lane and Main Street and include many historic buildings. Features of these buildings include

- The use of natural materials. Red brick and clay pantiles predominate.
- Simple shapes. Buildings are generally rectangular. Extensions are usually kept distinct from the main building by having a separate roof at a different height.
- The roofs are simple and are generally gabled. Chimneys are a feature of residential properties.
- There is more wall than window particularly on the gable ends.
- The windows in domestic dwellings are generally small with either a square or vertical emphasis. They are usually grouped symmetrically.
- Informal layout. There are no rigid building lines. Buildings can be on the street frontage or set back, at right angles to the road or facing it.



Many former agricultural buildings have been converted to domestic use either as the principal building or as outbuildings. In this way they continue to have a use and contribute to village character. Care must still be taken in the future to protect their essential character if applications are made for further alterations.

Modern buildings whilst normally not detracting from the village have generally not made a positive contribution. A good example of a modern building designed to complement the character of the village is Bay Tree Cottage on Middle Lane because it incorporates the qualities of traditional buildings as described above.

Walls are also important particularly where they are alongside the road. The most significant of these walls is associated with Morton Hall, which has a distinctive design created by the pillars and coping bricks.



A special feature of the village is the pinfold at the end of Middle Lane, which is one of only 26 remaining in the County. It was completely rebuilt in 1987 by the Parish Council and makes a positive contribution to Morton's rural character. It was originally used to keep stray animals.



OPEN SPACE AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF TREES AND HEDGES

Open Space

Morton has no formal open space in the sense that there is no village green or park and instead the spaces are created by the widening and narrowing of roads and the gaps between buildings. Back Street is a particularly good example of this subtle relationship of space and buildings and the impact of any new development upon this balance should always be considered.

The open space that surrounds the village is also important because it helps to highlight the compact nature of the village within the landscape. There has been some encroachment outside this boundary along Main Street and Moor lane but essentially the surroundings are rural. In order to highlight the importance of setting, fields surrounding the village particularly towards the railway line have been included in the conservation area boundary.

Trees and Hedges

The unique landscape at Morton is characterised by informal and formal hedgerow, parkland trees, mature garden planting and groups of deciduous trees arranged on a simple grid of country lanes.

Hedges are particularly significant as boundary features and they make a special contribution to the informal and natural character of the lanes. In contrast fences are not so successful and there are very few in the village. There is a variety of



species of hedge plants including hawthorn, blackthorn, beech and holly.

Along all the lanes hedges and trees combine and these together with the grass verges and the lack of kerbs gives a very natural and unmistakably rural appearance to the whole of Morton.

Trees are important everywhere but the most outstanding group is within the churchyard. The variety of yew, cedar, holly, pine and redwood along with the deciduous limes and beech trees create an important focal point at the entrance to the village.



A further group of trees with a defining role runs parallel to the stream and forms a strong boundary to the northern edge of the village contrasting with the open fields on the other side.

Individual trees of importance are dotted throughout with some very good mature trees such as the oak at 1 Manor Drive, the row of limes at Manor farm, 2 sycamores on Back Lane and a Black Locust tree at Morton Hall amongst others.

An area that would benefit from additional planting is to the rear of Back Lane. The 1919 OS map shows an orchard or a wood here and the strengthening of this boundary to further define the edge of the village would be an enhancement.

APPENDIX 1

LISTED BUILDINGS

Location	Building	Grade
Church Lane	1. Church of St Denis	II*
	2. Dovecote at Manor Farm	II
Main Street	3. Clumber House	II

N.B. Buildings and features such as boundary walls within the curtilage of listed buildings are also regarded as being listed.

UNLISTED BUILDINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST

Location	Building	
Back Lane	4. Outbuilding at White Cottage	
	5. Westside House	
	6. Denham House and outbuilding	
	7. Wall at Ejidos opposite Morton Hall	
	8. Barn at Birchwood	
	9. Chestnut House, outbuildings, Wall and railings	
	10. White Hall and adjoining wall	
	Church Lane	11. Holly Croft
		12. 1 and 2 Church Lane and outbuildings and wall
		13. Manor farm and outbuildings
14. Church Cottage adjacent Manor Farm		
Main Street	15. The Village Hall formerly the school	
	16. Morton farm	
	17. Wall at Chalfont	
	18. The Old Garage	
	19. Clumber Farm	
	20. The Full Moon inn and wall	
	21. Red telephone box opposite The Full Moon Inn	
	22. Sign Post opposite The Full Moon Inn	
	Middle Lane	23. Jacaranda and adjoining wall
		24. Bay Tree cottage and wall
		25. Ivy House, wall and gate
		26. The Barn
27. Wall at The Stables		
28. Morton Hall and wall		
29. The Pinfold		
30. The Gables		
31. Fiskerton junction signal box		
32. End House (formerly The Crossing House)		

APPENDIX 2

DESCRIPTION OF BUILDINGS

Listed Buildings

1. **Church of St Denis, Church Lane** – Parish Church. 1756. Red brick and ashlar, slate roof. Important position at the entrance to the village and with some significant mature trees in the churchyard.
2. **Dovecote at Manor Farm** – Red brick with plain tile pyramidal roof topped with a wood and felt glover also with a pyramidal roof. Glimpsed in views from Manor Drive.
3. **Clumber House, Main Street** – Early C19. Red brick and plain tile roof. Traditional farm house with some good holly trees on the frontage.

Unlisted Buildings of Local Interest

4. **Outbuilding at White Cottage, Back Lane** – Brick and pantile cottage to the rear of White Cottage. Included as an historic building
5. **Westside House, Back Lane** – Traditional house. Rendered and painted white with a pantile roof. Prominent on the roadside
6. **Denham house and Outbuilding, Back Lane** – A brick and pantile house and outbuilding, the outbuilding is particularly prominent in the street scene.
7. **Wall at Ejidos opposite Morton Hall, Back Lane** – Formerly associated with Morton Hall but now in a separate curtilage. Brick with brick piers and distinctive coping bricks. Architecturally interesting and prominent in the street scene.
8. **Barn at Birchwood, Back Lane** – Modern outbuilding, brick with concrete tiles. Important feature defining the edge of the road and creating enclosure.
9. **Chestnut House, outbuildings and wall, Back Lane** – Traditional house. Brick and pantile with distinctive low wall and railings. Architecturally interesting and making a valuable contribution to the street. Shown as a farm of 136 acres in the 1851 census.
10. **White Hall and adjoining wall, Back Lane** – Traditional house and wall. Brick and concrete pantile. At right angles to the road and making a contribution to the street scene.
11. **Holly Croft, Church Lane**, - Traditional farmhouse, extended. Rendered and painted, concrete pantiles. At right angles to the road and significant in the street. Formerly a smallholding.
12. **1 and 2 Church Lane**, - Pair of cottages. Brick and pantile. Significant in the street at the back edge of the road. To the rear a brick and pantile outbuilding with a pyramidal roof. Architecturally interesting and making a reference to the strong links with farming.
13. **Manor Farm**– Significant group of farm house and farm buildings and the only working farm remaining in the village. The house is rendered with concrete tiles. The outbuildings are brick and pantile. The group includes the listed dovecote.

14. **Church Cottage, adjacent to Manor Farm** – traditional brick and pantile cottage
15. **The Village Hall, Main Street**- formerly the village school until 1959. Present buildings erected in 1855 and enlarged in 1888. The porch was added in 1897. There is a commemorative plaque on the porch with the words “Jubilee Commemoration 1897”. Brick and slate. An important meeting place for the village.
16. **Morton Farm, Main Street** – Traditional house, brick and slate. At right angles to the road. Previously a market garden.
17. **Wall at Chalfont, Main Street** – Tall brick wall prominent in the street behind the telephone box and the sign post. Important for enclosure.
18. **The Old Garage, Main Street** – Brick and pantile barn. Important as a traditional building.
19. **Clumber Farm and Outbuilding, Main Street** – Good group of traditional brick and pantile farm buildings alongside the road and making a strong contribution to the appearance of the street.
20. **The Full Moon Public House and adjoining wall, Main Street** – Formerly a terrace of three cottages. Brick and pantile. Important in the street scene where the road widens out and as a much appreciated community facility.
21. **Telephone box opposite the Full Moon.** Traditional red telephone box in a prominent position on Main Street.
22. **Sign Post opposite The Full Moon** - Traditional black and white painted metal sign post with circular top. Important local feature.
23. **Jacaranda and adjoining wall, Middle Lane** -Traditional house at right angles to the road. Painted brick and pantile roof. Prominent in the street.
24. **Bay tree Cottage and wall, Middle Lane** – A good example of a modern dwelling designed to be sympathetic to the village. Of particular note is the correct scale, the use of natural materials and attention to local detail. The wall and the trees are also important in the street.
25. **Ivy House, wall and gate, Middle Lane** – c 1700. A traditional dwelling. Painted brick and pantile. The wall and the metal gate are also important to the street. Formerly a small holding and also known as Holly Farm.
26. **The Barn, Middle Lane** – A successful barn conversion keeping the essential appearance of a threshing barn. Very prominent in the street and a reminder of the farming past.
27. **Wall at the Stables, Middle Lane** – Wall formerly part of the curtilage of Morton Hall. Brick with brick piers and distinctive coping bricks. Architecturally interesting and prominent in the street scene.
28. **Morton Hall and wall, Middle Lane** – Believed to date from 1740 with a major front extension a century later. Significant building of larger scale than most in the village. Painted brick and plain tiles. Distinctive detailing particularly around the windows. On the boundary is a brick wall with parts built on a stone plinth, brick piers and distinctive coping bricks. There is also a good holly hedge on the boundary. Formerly a farm with many of the outbuildings now converted to residential use and in separate ownerships.
29. **The Pinfold** – Coursed stone. A plaque reads “Morton pinfold. Here stray animals were impounded until a fine was paid. Restored for the Parish Council by Newark Community Programme 1987”.
30. **The Gables, Middle Lane** – Brick and plain tile Victorian dwelling set back from the street and with a large garden.

31. **Fiskerton Junction Signal Box** – 1929. Traditional signal box. Timber with a slate roof. Name board “Fiskerton Junction”.
32. **End House (formerly The Crossing House)** – Victorian station masters house. Cream brick with slate roof and large chimneys. Sensitively extended.

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The Village Book Archive by the Community, *Millenium Edition 2000*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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