

CUCKOO'S NEST

Cuckoo's Nest is a small hamlet located on the Wrexham Road where it makes a junction with a small lane leading to Hallfield Farm.

The settlement owes its existence entirely to the mid to late 19th century works and estate improvement undertaken by the Grosvenor Family. The hamlet's particular importance is that it was the location chosen to establish the estate's works department. Today little of the settlement remains in the ownership of the estate. Although the estate workshops are vacant with various peripheral light industrial operations located about them, the complex remains essentially complete.

The estate workshops remain the most prominent feature of the settlement today. They comprise of an inner enclosed walled courtyard flanked by good quality brick sheds, stores and workshops with a small though prominent office range with clock and bellcote. Between the inner courtyard and the Wrexham Road is a semi enclosed outer courtyard with a prominent barn like warehouse to the roadside boundary. In close association with the former workshop is the superintendent's house by John Douglas in typical estate vernacular revival style. The remainder of the settlement comprises five pairs of estate cottages with associated domestic and small holding ranges. They are set amongst pasture, paddocks and small orchards. They range from the typical simple mid-19th century estate designs of Hodkinson through a pair of rather subdued vernacular revival style cottages to a pair of good quality immediate post war cottages. Although there has been some unsympathetic alterations, particularly to windows, the basic character of the cottages remains intact. Both cottages have been extended in a broadly sympathetic style. Two infill plots have 1960s housing built upon them.

POULTON

Poulton possibly represents the best surviving example of a Westminster Estate hamlet (as opposed to a village), and as such it merits designation. The settlement contains good examples of the work of both Douglas and Harrison for the Dukes of Westminster.

The settlement originated as a monastic site, however this archaeological site is somewhat distant from the present hamlet. The settlement is essentially dispersed linearly along the Straight Mile, which is bisected by the tree lined former Poulton Approach to Eaton Hall. The Poulton Approach is within the designated Garden of Historic Interest associated with Eaton Hall.

To the north of the Pulford Approach the Straight Mile is bound by hedges, whilst to the south the road is bound by broad grass verges. The setting of the hamlet has been somewhat marred by the proximity of a wartime aerodrome. Although restored to pastureland the landscape particularly to the south of the Poulton Approach is somewhat bleak and devoid of mature trees and hedged field boundaries.

On the eastern side of the Straight Mile north of the intersection with the Poulton Approach there are three Harrison style paired estate cottages of brick and slate, one pair retaining its original window details. On the opposite side of the road is the brick and sandstone detailed school and schoolmaster's house now converted to a residence.

Occupying a prominent position opposite the crossroads to the north of the Pulford Approach is an early 19th century house with recent extensions, in a somewhat grandiose style. In close proximity is a well detailed estate house, The Lilacs, in Ruabon brick and render with interesting roof detailing.

To the south of the Pulford Approach the settlement becomes rather more dispersed. On the western side of the Straight Mile Grange Farm is a good example of a small estate farm in Ruabon brick. Yew Tree Farm is a rather larger building also in Ruabon brick. Yew Tree Farm has a fine range of farm buildings including steeply pitched shippon/barn ranges with timber gabled driftheuses. To the eastern side of the Straight Mile, Green Farm has a Georgian frontage with extensive late Victorian modification to the rear. It too has an extensive brick farmyard range where work has begun on conversion, although currently halted. To the south of this there is a typical late Victorian pair of estate cottages in Ruabon brick. At the termination of the Straight Mile and at the furthest extremity of the hamlet is the 17th century Chapel House Farm, with Ruabon brick dairy range and an extensive courtyard of Victorian shippons/barns.

PULFORD

The motte and bailey castle located below the present Pulford Church attests to this settlement's considerable antiquity. The appearance of the present settlement is however very much a product of the works of estate improvement carried out both on a domestic and institutional scale by the Grosvenor family during the latter half of the 19th century. It is unfortunately the case that the sale of the village off from estate ownership in the 1920s has led to some development which compromises this legacy.

The village core is centred about the Church and the termination of the heavily wooded Pulford approach to Eaton Hall. It lies on land which rises gently from Pulford Brook, which is bridged on the southern approach to the village. The southern entry to the village is clearly defined by the bulk of the Grosvenor Hotel in a Jacobean style of Ruabon brick with stone and polychromatic brick detail, and by the very distinctive shingled spire of the Church. Both buildings are the work of John Douglas for the estate. The Church in banded red sandstone stands in an extensive walled churchyard and flanks the entry to the Pulford approach. The Pulford approach itself is guarded by two distinctive single storey Jacobean sandstone lodges together with substantial sandstone walls and gate piers. Below the Church and lodges and concealed within wooded gardens lies the early 19th century rectory. Other estate buildings within the village core are also the work of John Douglas and are characterised by the high quality of materials and their execution in a vernacular revival style. Materials are typically Ruabon pressed brick with tile roofs and terracotta detailing; stone mullion windows with leaded lights, and brick or stone detailing to sills, band courses, stacks, gables and dormers. Most of these buildings retain their original features.

Although in general the post sale buildings contribute little to the character of the settlement there are, within the village core, a number of good 1920s and 1930s infill semi-detached buildings, including in particular, The Grange and Fairways which echo in their timber frame detailing and good quality brickwork some of the aspects of Douglas' work. At the northern end of the village core is the 17th century row of timber framed cottages known as Pump Cottages, the oldest domestic dwellings in the settlement. To the north of these and included within the proposed Conservation Area are a group of post-war Chester Rural District Council houses. These are well laid out about a small green and are primarily of interest not for their architectural features, but rather for their social history, all incorporating workshop ranges for rural artisan dwellers.

To the north of the village core the nature of the settlement changes completely and is characterised by a dispersed pattern of ribbon-like Eaton estate development along the Wrexham Road. The buildings are separated by extensive areas of pasture, large gardens and orchard. This part of the parish is distinguished by a number of notable architectural essays by John Douglas. These include the large and well detailed farm Limes Farmhouse now known as Green Paddocks, Manor Farmhouse with distinguished drift house and the small country house known as The Elms. Additional significant former farm

complexes including those at Siglen and Lindale Farms. In contrast, dispersed at intervals along the Wrexham Road are a number of more modest estate cottages, including two pairs by Hodgkinson in his characteristic style.

Cheshire
City Council

The Town
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20th June 1994

Dear Sir,

CONSERVATION AREA PROPOSALS AND CHARACTER AREA PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The City Council's Conservation Section has recently completed a review of the rural part of the district. The review has identified several areas which should be designated as Conservation Areas and several existing Conservation Areas which should be extended. The proposals have been agreed by the Council's Development Committee and are now being put to a public consultation. The proposals are to designate several new Conservation Areas, extend existing Conservation Areas and make boundary changes to several existing Conservation Areas.

The Conservation Section is now holding public consultations to establish the views of the public on the proposals. The consultations will be held on the following dates and at the following locations. The public consultation period will be completed by the end of August and the results of the consultations will be reported back to the Development Committee on the 1st September for approval and implementation.

It is requested that if the City Council would discuss the proposals at their next meeting, the meeting and display the proposals and plans in a public location for public consultation. If you are unable to discuss the proposals at the next Council meeting, please contact us to discuss possible alternatives.