

Advisory Leaflet

Carr Houses Conservation Area



Drawing of a house inside Carr Houses Conservation Area

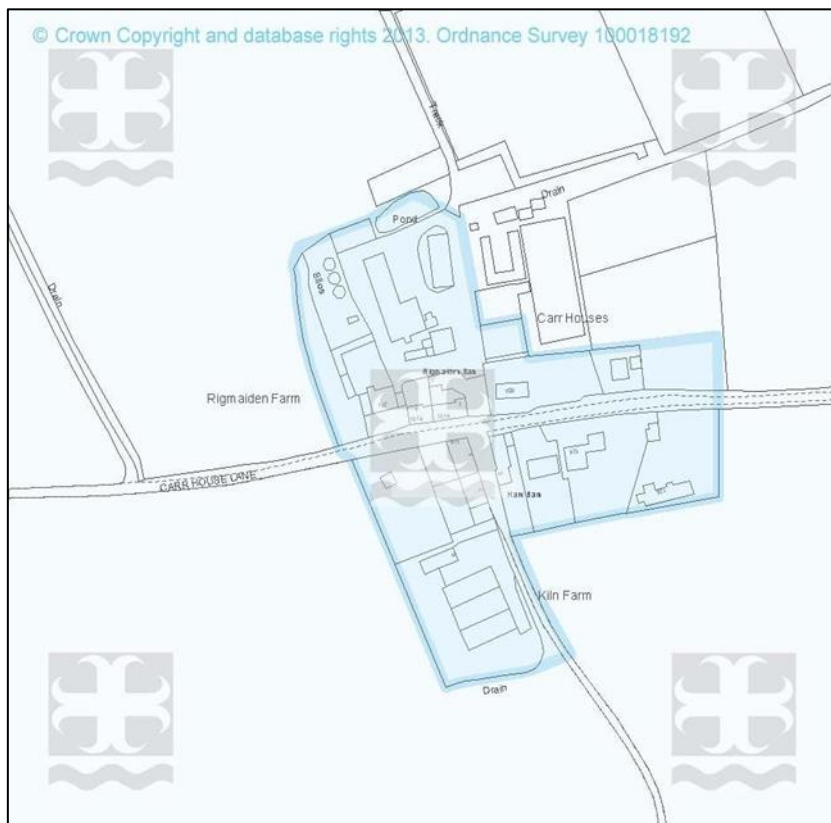
Architectural and Historic Significance

Carr Houses is a small hamlet to the north east of Ince Blundell Park. 'Carr' is an Old Norse word, meaning a group of trees on muddy land, so called, probably because of its closeness to the River Alt. From around 1100, each medieval hamlet would have been surrounded by town fields divided into furlongs for agricultural use, with riverside carrs and marshes most likely to flood, used as meadow or common pasture.

Carr Houses has had a connection with Ince Blundell for many centuries, the name Ince recorded in the Domesday Book as 'Hinne' and then at around 1100, as 'Ynes', a Celtic derivation similar to 'ynys' meaning island. The Celtic name may refer to the fact that Ince Blundell is located on higher ground.

Following the Norman Conquest, Ince Blundell was held by the Barony of Warrington, later passing to the Blundell family in 1195. The Blundells kept an interest in the land from the medieval period until the 1960s.

Field names show something of the history of an area, the earliest recognisable reference to individual fields around Carr Houses, show the names generally have a Norse influence, for example, 'Carceland' and 'Wranglands'. Later field names include Clover Hey, Gorseland Hey, Meadow Hey, Green Carrs and Black Carrs. Some field names can be traced, including 'Long Shoot', which was nominated as the site of archery practice enforced by law in the Middle Ages. The medieval field pattern around Carr Houses is reasonably intact.



Carr Houses Conservation Area Boundary

Carr Houses was first identified in documents dating from 1402. A grant from this date records that land attached to the properties was distributed throughout the open fields in Ince Blundell. Although the extent of the settlement at this time has not been determined, it probably consisted of a row of buildings extending along Carr House Lane. An estate plan dating from the 18th century shows this line of buildings. The current settlement has shrunk to form a tight group around the junction of Carr House Lane and Hall Lane. The influences of intensive agriculture, land drainage, plantation and embankment have removed all visible trace of former houses.

The surviving buildings are mostly connected with the two farms, Rigmaiden's Farm and Kiln Farm. The farm buildings that form the junction of Carr House Lane and Hall Lane are the focal point of the hamlet. They are like the working farm buildings found throughout the West Lancashire Plain. As a vernacular building type, their charm lies in the use of hand-made bricks, random slate roofing and simple timber window frames.

Rigmaiden's Farmhouse is listed as a grade II building and dates from the early/mid-18th century. It is a part-brick and part-rendered two-storey farmhouse and retains fine original interior features. Connected with the farmhouse is Rigmaiden's Cottage which is a low single-storey rendered dwelling with a slate roof which was probably formerly thatched.

The Conservation Area

Sefton Council designated Carr Houses Conservation Area in April 1991, under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The area is in the Green Belt and includes a tight and cohesive settlement pattern built on medieval foundations. Despite having shrunk from its earlier size, it still keeps its 18th century character as a rural hamlet. The elements of architectural and historic interest justify its designation as a Conservation Area. The area also has significant archaeological interest and potential.

In deciding applications for the development of land or the alteration, demolition or extension of existing buildings, Sefton will protect the Green Belt to prevent unrestricted sprawl, safeguard the surrounding countryside from further intrusion and preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the area.

Within the Conservation Area it is not the purpose of the Council to prevent change, but rather to ensure that any new developments, alterations or extensions, preserve or enhance its character and any harm is balanced against wider public benefits.

The Conservation area designation will lay greater stress on the retention of existing buildings (including their historic features). Alterations to the historic properties will be required to be sympathetic to their character and features. Focus is also placed on the preservation of trees and the maintenance of the simple low key streetscape. New developments will be expected to maintain local character.

A detailed appraisal and management plan of the conservation area was adopted by Sefton Council in 2023.

Additional Planning Powers

Conservation Area status means that the Council possesses a number of statutory powers to safeguard against some changes. These are special planning controls which relate to specific works which would normally be considered 'permitted development', i.e. works which would not require planning permission.

If a building is a Listed Building additional special controls will also apply

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

- Any proposal involving the demolition of any building, wall 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 permission 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 enlargement of dwellinghouses and on the provision, alteration or improvement of outbuildings within their curtilage.
- Dormer windows will require planning permission though are not appropriate in this area. In some cases, other changes to roofs and chimneys may also require planning permission.
- Cladding of any part of external walls in render, pebble dash, stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles would require planning permission, but is not normally considered appropriate.
- Planning permission is needed for satellite dishes where they are to be located on a chimney, wall or roof slope which faces onto a highway.

- Micro-generation (e.g. wind turbines/solar panels) installations will require planning permission in some cases.
- The Council has powers under the Act to require owners to carry out essential works to empty or partly occupied buildings in order to protect the fabric of buildings important to the conservation area.
- Permitted development rights are only for single residential properties.

For up to date advice on what needs planning permission go to www.planningportal.co.uk In deciding applications for the development of land and alterations or extensions to buildings within the Carr Houses Conservation Area the Council will pay special regard to:-

- The overriding restriction on new development within the Green Belt. See Council's website for further details.
- The retention, replacement and restoration of historical details and features of the buildings and their gardens including boundary walls and hedges.
- 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 design of any new building (including form, 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, within the area and the general character and appearance of the rural street scene and skyline.

Guidance Notes for planning applications and use of materials

Pre-Application Advice

You can request advice from the Planning Services before submitting a formal application. In most 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 have on that significance.

Outline applications will not usually be considered.

Demolition

The demolition or redevelopment of any building of individual or group value will not be permitted unless the Local Planning Authority is content 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 permission 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 and already have planning permission.

New development on vacant sites

Any new development should be conceived with the architectural character and scale of the area in mind. Early discussions with the Planning Department are recommended. The services of a qualified architect are strongly advised.

Conversion of existing buildings

Where planning permission to convert buildings into new uses is required particular attention should be paid to the impact on the character of the building and its external appearance, and the layout of gardens and car parking areas.

Every effort should be made to minimise external alterations, such as fire escapes and new windows (including dormer windows). Where external change is needed it should be made to a non- prominent elevation. Alterations or extensions should use the same materials as used elsewhere on 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

Although scale, proportion and sizes may differ, a combination of vertical sliding sash and horizontally sliding cottage windows and agricultural windows are typical of this 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 kept. This is important for practical (weather protection) as well as aesthetic reasons. If there is any doubt as to the original design of a window the Planning Department will be able to offer advice. If additional windows are necessary, they should be restricted to the non-prominent elevations. Their size and proportion should match the original windows.

When repairing windows care must be taken to retain and restore details. Imitation leaded lights should always be avoided whilst aluminium and UPVC windows are likely to have different detailing and proportions to the existing and are likely to detract from the character of the building.

Dormer Windows

Dormer windows are not a feature of the area therefore they are not normally acceptable especially on principal elevations.

Brickwork

Brickwork should not be painted. Areas of brickwork needing renewal should be replaced with matching or second hand bricks in the original bond. Materials and techniques for brick pointing should be compatible with existing construction. Samples can be prepared to obtain the correct match of colour. Pointing should match the existing work which is generally flush finish. Repointing with cement slurry, bagging or bag-rubbing is not appropriate.

The rendering of brickwork should be avoided for both visual and practical reasons. Limited repair to brickwork is usually cheaper and visually more acceptable.

Brick and stone features should be retained wherever possible. Covering of brickwork in stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles is not usually permitted as this completely changes the visual appearance and character of the property.

Stonework

Stonework should be left unpainted, unless there is sufficient evidence to suggest that it was painted as part of the original design. Where stonework is to be cleaned, professional advice should be pursued on the appropriate method, so as not to damage the surface of the stone or details and mouldings.

Roofs

Existing roof lines and profiles should be maintained. Any renewals or repairs should use reclaimed or new materials to match those on the existing roof. Plastic membrane or felt coverings laid over the existing roof finish are not acceptable. They cause damage to slate and tiles, and can lead to condensation problems and rot in roof timbers. Care should be taken to retain roof features such as ridge tiles and barge boards.

Chimneys

In most cases, the original chimney stacks and pots form an important part of the design of buildings and create an interesting 'roofscape'. It is important, therefore, to opt for repairing rather than dismantling stacks when they become redundant. If the stacks become unsafe, then they should be taken down and rebuilt to the original height and design taking care to replace any chimney pots.

Porches

Any historic porches should be retained and repaired where necessary. New porches should be of a design and use of materials contemporary with the age and character of the building, converted farm buildings should not have porches added as they would be architecturally inappropriate. Care should be taken to ensure that all new structures do not visually dominate the existing building.

Satellite Dishes and Aerials

Aerials and satellite dishes should be located as sensitively as possible and should avoid main street elevations. The use of dark grey semi-transparent dishes on the rear or sides of houses where they are not seen on the skyline is advised as this is the least prominent.

Front Doors

Original 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 appropriate for the original farmhouses and dwellings. For converted agricultural buildings simple boarded doors should be used. "Georgian style" doors with imitation semi-circular fanlights and uPVC should be especially avoided. Care should be taken to retain and repair details around openings, such as architraves, thresholds, transoms and fanlights.

Boundary Walls, Hedges, Gates and Gate Posts

Original boundary walls, including their stone copings, should be repaired or rebuilt to the original design, using reclaimed or matching materials. Boundary walls and gate posts should not be painted. Wooden fences and railings should not be installed above brick or stone walls. Hedges should be retained.

Openings in boundary walls should be kept to a minimum especially on principal street elevations so that the streetscape is not negatively affected.

Landscaping

Stone cobbles and setts form an important part of the street scene. They enhance the historic agricultural character of the hamlet. Such surfaces should be retained and enhanced where appropriate.

Services

Wherever possible original rainwater gutters and downpipes should be replaced in cast iron to the same patterns. If replacements cannot be found then cast aluminium of similar colour and profile could be considered. Care should be taken in the siting of burglar alarms, central heating flues and meter boxes 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. Sefton Council Conservation team have developed a [Maintenance Guidance](#) and an [Energy Efficiency Guidance](#) for historic homes that can be downloaded from the website.

