



# CALDY VILLAGE CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

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## PART 1 – CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Prepared for Wirral Council by Donald Insall Associates Ltd 2007 – Wirral Council 2009

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## PREFACE

### **Background to the Study**

This report has been prepared by Donald Insall Associates Ltd on behalf of Wirral Council. Its purpose is to clarify the designation of the Conservation Area, which will protect and enhance the character of the historic core of Caldby Village.

### **Scope and Structure of the Study**

The scope of this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is based on the guidelines published by English Heritage ('Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' and 'Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas', both dated February 2006) and represents a factual and objective analysis. In accordance with the guidelines, the following framework has been used as the basis for this analysis:-

- Location and population
- Origins and development of the settlement
- Prevailing or former uses and their influence on plan form or building type
- Archaeological significance
- Architectural and historic qualities of buildings
- Contribution made by key unlisted buildings
- Character and relationship of spaces
- Prevalent and traditional building materials
- Local details
- Contribution made by green spaces, trees, hedges, etc
- Setting of the Conservation Area and its relationship with the surrounding landscape
- Extent of loss, intrusion or damage
- Existence of any neutral areas

The document has been structured to encompass these areas of study and concludes with recommendations for the Conservation Area boundary and other matters such as provision of Article 4 Directions.

### **Existing Designations, Legal Framework for Conservation Areas and the Powers of the Local Authority**

Since the 1967 Civic Amenities Act local authorities have been empowered to designate as Conservation Areas those areas within their districts which were considered 'special'. The subsequent Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act of 1990 consolidated those powers and defined Conservation Areas as:-

*"areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".*

Such areas are diverse. They may be large or small; residential or commercial; civic or industrial; old or relatively modern. They may represent social ideals or civic pride. They may be specifically designed or speculatively produced; modest or grand. They may contain Listed Buildings of architectural or historic interest or may simply have local historic association. However, common to all will be an identifiable environmental quality which should be protected from unsympathetic redevelopment or alteration.

Wirral Council has declared 25 Conservation Areas throughout the Borough reflecting the variety of building styles and environments exhibited within its borders.

The content of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is clarified by national Planning Policy Guidance (PPG15): Planning and the Historic Environment and is supported by more recent Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (RPG13), which identifies as a key objective the need to ensure active management of the regions environmental and cultural assets.

The principles of these documents are further supported by Wirral Council's local Heritage Conservation policies contained within its Unitary Development Plan.

This legislation and policy framework enables the authority to exercise greater control over development within Conservation Areas and, where appropriate, this may be supplemented by the use of 'Article 4 Directions' to remove permitted development rights. In this way, minor changes, such as window replacement or loft conversions, which may be cumulatively detrimental, can be controlled.

National policy stipulates that local authorities have a duty to review, from time to time, their regions to ensure that places of special architectural or historic interest are being protected. The boundaries of existing Conservation Areas may be revised, new areas may be designated and those areas which have been eroded to the extent that their special character has been lost may be de-designated.

Whilst the Council recognises that, for Conservation Areas to remain 'live' and responsive to a changing society, changes must and will occur, it nevertheless undertakes to ensure that all changes make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of its Conservation Areas and do not result in any serious loss of character or features.

Planning legislation supports the authority in this by increasing its control over development. It does this in the following ways:

- Buildings and structures may not be demolished without formal consent from the Council (Conservation Area Consent).
- Trees are protected and all work to them requires consent from the Council.
- New development is expected to reflect the quality of design and construction of the surrounding area and should make a positive contribution to the area's character.
- Local planning authorities may, if necessary, exercise even greater control by removing the basic permitted development rights of householders.
- Under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Council has a legal obligation to ensure that "special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance" of the area when formulating decisions on planning applications.

The first step to protecting the inherent qualities of a Conservation Area is having a thorough understanding of its character and Planning Policy Guidance PPG15 advises that "the definition of an area's special interest should derive from an assessment of the elements that contribute to (and detract from) it".

This should then underpin local policies for the areas protection. Such a definition requires a thorough appraisal of the area to assess the contribution of each element (e.g. buildings, boundaries, trees, surfaces, etc.) to the areas overall character. PPG15 notes that "the more

clearly the special architectural or historic interest that justifies designation is defined and recorded; the sounder will be the basis for local plan policies and development control decisions".

Whilst an appraisal aims to identify the essential elements which give an area its character, it is not intended as a detailed evaluation of each building and feature. Therefore any buildings, features and details may still have importance even though not specifically referred to in the document and any omissions do not indicate lack of merit or interest.

## PART 1 – CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

### **1.0 LOCATION**

#### **1.1 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION**

- 1.1.1 Caldy village lies in the north-western part of the Wirral Unitary Authority area. It adjoins West Kirby, the principal settlement on the western shore facing the Dee estuary. The village is largely south and west facing but is separated from the shore by the Wirral Way, a former railway line.

#### **1.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

- 1.2.1 The village has developed on the southern slopes of a small rocky eminence which rises to a maximum height of about 77m above sea level. Parts of the village are on the top of Caldy Hill, some houses are located on the steeper slopes, but most are located on the more gentle lower slopes which merge with the coastal verge which generally lies at about 25m above sea level.
- 1.2.2 The geology of the area is Bunter sandstone overlain in the southern part by Boulder Clay.

#### **1.3 GENERAL USAGE (E.G. RESIDENTIAL)**

- 1.3.1 The village has a narrow range of building uses. Private dwellings predominate to a considerable degree. The only properties falling outside this category are the church and village institute and the residential home at Caldy Manor. There are no commercial premises. This situation arises largely from the restrictive covenants of the Caldy Manor Estate.

#### **1.4 CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY**

- 1.4.1 Caldy was designated as a Conservation Area (CA) in 1974. The focus of the CA is the grouping of older buildings around the church and manor. From here it expands out in all directions to include the majority of the early C20 planned estate, extending to Telegraph Road in the east and the line of the Wirral Way in the west. The CA was extended by the inclusion of the farm north of Caldy Road at its junction with Telegraph Road in the 1980s. Part of the Gleneagles Park development to the south was also included but was taken out of the Conservation Area subsequently.

### **2.0 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **2.1 Early History and Origins**

In the Domesday record the settlement is recorded as Calders. Eckwall in The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names refers to the derivation as Cold Hill or 'cold arse' referring to the hill name, from the Old English cald-ears. In 1136 the name appears as Caldelrs, in 1182 as Caldei and in 1606 as Cawedy.

In the Domesday record Caldý is held by Robert of Rodelent (later known as Rhuddlan), one of the associates of the Earls of Chester. The estate passed through the families of Thursteston and Heselwall, subsequently to the Whitmore family.

Little seems to be recorded of the history of the estate in the Middle Ages and through the Georgian period, although Caldý Manor has its origins in the Elizabethan period.

## 2.2 19th Century Development

In 1832 the manor was purchased by a Mancunian, Richard Watson Barton who set about modernising the estate. In 1801 the population of the township was about 90 and it hovered at this level throughout the century. At the time of Barton's purchase the village was described as 'one of the worst in the neighbourhood, consisting of a few fishermen's huts and small cottages scattered over and at the foot of a rocky eminence.' (Mortimer).

The Manor itself was extensively altered and modernised during Richard Barton's occupation and with similar energy and enthusiasm he set about modernising the estate. The evidence of datestones suggests that he rebuilt or renovated every house. His architect was Mr. Clark Rampling (1793- 1875) of Birkenhead, and the builders were Messrs. Walker of Birkenhead.

'Richard Barton was an enthusiastic agriculturalist and sometime president of the Wirral Farmers' Club in which he took a warm interest. Caldý was a model farm.' (Aspinall). The evidence of the model farm can be seen on the 1870 Ordnance Survey map which shows an extensive and well planned range of farm buildings near the manor and at Little Caldý and also a formal kitchen garden to serve the house.

In 1866 the GWR and LNWR combined to open a branch line from Hooton to serve the affluent residential area of Parkgate. In 1886 this line was extended through Heselwall along the coast to West Kirby. Apparently it was to have run slightly further inland but Mr Barton objected to the route and it was moved closer to the shore, thus involving more embankment works.

The same map shows a PO Letter Box, a pinfold (for stray animals) where the hall now stands and a building designated as a school on the site of the present church. Near to the school on the opposite side of the road is the former smithy.

There are a number of sandstone quarries on Caldý Hill and the 1890 OS map has evidence of a trackway leading from one of the quarries down to the shore from which presumably, construction stone was exported.

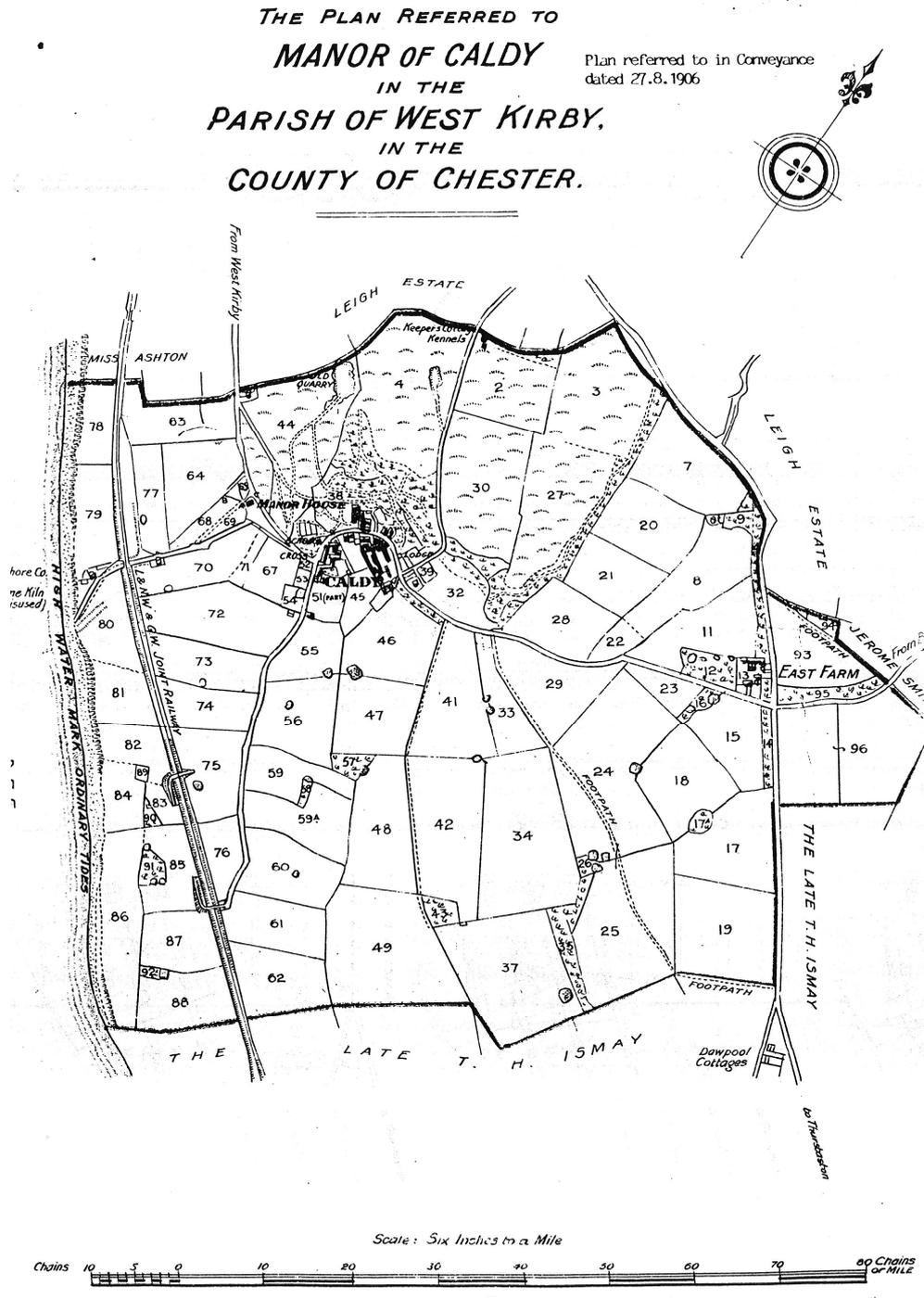
In 1868 a village school was constructed to designs by G.E. Street, later to be converted into the church.

## 2.3 20th Century Growth and Expansion

Richard Barton (son of Richard Watson Barton) died in 1881 whereupon the estate passed to his wife Elizabeth who survived him by nine years. Following her demise, and by a series of complex transfers, the estate passed to Rev Ernest Alured Waller, a relative of the Bartons, who in 1905 sold it to Frederick Kitchen for £60,000.

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Unfortunately Mr Kitchen died one month later, at which time the estate was sold by his executors to D.B. Rappart who then sold it on to the Caldý Manor Estate Ltd.



Copy of 1906 Conveyance plan

This company was set up with the express purpose of acquiring the Caldý Manor Estate, which extended to about 600 acres, and developing it as a high-class residential area. It is therefore one of a series of such estates which have developed in the Wirral in response to the demand for high quality housing within easy reach of Liverpool.

The development of the estate was controlled through a series of covenants which run with the land – prescribing use, density, building location, some aspects of materials to be used and boundary fencing.

By the time of the 1910 OS map (which would record the situation some years earlier) the road known as King’s Drive had been set out, rising up from near the core of the old village to the top of Caldý Hill. The company no doubt realised the prime value of the higher land for residences which being wooded would give an instant exclusivity, and also with the possibility of views to Wales being opened up to the west.

By the time of the 1930 map about 15 houses had been built on the land made accessible by Kings Drive, while on the lower land to the south and west Croft Drive, Croft Drive West and Croft Drive East had been laid out and about 50 houses built.

During the 1930s another 30 or so houses were built, mainly on Croft Drive East, in the south-east section of the estate. In the post war period another about 90 further houses were built at the prescribed density of the original Caldý Manor Estate, with another 30 built in the vicinity of the Manor farm at a higher density.

The Caldý Manor Estate was officially wound up in 1985.

## 2.4 **Archaeology**

There is no evidence of prehistoric settlement activity within the Conservation Area itself but there are a number of individual Neolithic find sites on Caldý Hill and on the foreshore. There is evidence of ironworking on the south slope of Caldý Hill.

The area includes 10 listed buildings, all Grade II; the Historic Environment Record also includes a Hunting Lodge adjacent to Caldý Road which is not listed.

The Management Proposals which follow this appraisal recommend the setting up of a ‘local list’ of properties worthy of protection but not of national significance.

## 3.0 **LANDSCAPE AND VISTAS**

### 3.1 **Setting and Relationship with the Surrounding Areas**

Caldý settlement is on the south facing slopes of Caldý Hill, spreading onto the lower, flatter land to the south and west. The natural landscape of the sloping site is of oak woods, with a predominance of birch and heathland on the top of the hill. On the flatter land to the south there is some residual oak woodland but agricultural activity has considerably reduced the tree cover of the pre-development landscape.

To the north Caldý adjoins West Kirby, although the green space of Caldý Hill provides some separation. Along the coastal band the residential areas of West Kirby directly abut the Caldý Conservation Area and there is quite a well marked change of character. The low density, leafy character of Caldý quite suddenly gives way to the more typical suburban development of semi-detached properties.

On the east side of the Conservation Area, the character of the area continues to some extent across on the opposite side of Telegraph Road where the land rises

again to Royden Country Park. On the south side the area gives way to open agricultural land, mainly grazing, some of which is used for horses and ponies.

The Caldby Conservation Area is bounded on the west by Wirral Way, the former railway line to West Kirby. This raised embankment, topped by a tree belt forms a fairly solid barrier. However 'outside' this, between the Wirral Way and the shore is an unadopted road lined with dwellings facing the sea. The character of this area is quite similar to that of the conservation area itself and the Management Proposals recommend that its inclusion within an extension to the boundary should be considered.

### 3.2 Character and Relationship of Spaces

The majority of the space within the CA is strongly enclosed and held within the private domain. Public or semi public spaces are limited to the streets and roads themselves, a small number of more open green areas around the village core and the grassed areas within the development known as The Green. There is some degree of openness at the approach to Caldby Wood where the less enclosed nature of some private gardens give a looser and more open feel. Apart from these instances the public spaces are constrained and there is a strong feel of exclusiveness.

Some of the streets are enclosed on either side by tall fences, hedging or trees, and, is partly canopied over by trees giving an almost tunnel like character.



When travelling through the village the space bounded by Banks Farm, the church and the woodland of King's Corner, The Croft and The Heys provides a welcome sense of openness in contrast to the majority of Caldby Road which is generally quite narrow. The 'busy-ness' of Caldby Road as it passes through detracts from the character of this little space, but nevertheless the close mown grass, the war memorial and the herbaceous planting along with views of the adjacent buildings make for a very attractive focal point.

The development known as The Green is set out around a semi-public 'village green' area of short, mown grass and mature trees. This belongs to the occupiers or to a management company and is an undoubted asset for residents, operating somewhat in the style of a London Square. There is limited gated access from outside the enclosing ring of houses with the result that the area has limited benefit for the wider community or those passing through.

Between the second section of King's Drive, after the hairpin, and the houses off Thorsway is an area of wooded heathland designated by the Wirral Council as Urban Greenspace and managed by The National Trust. There is public access to this area by footpaths from the bend in King's Drive, from near the property known as Hortiack and from the main Caldby Road as it enters West Kirby.

Other small open spaces occur at road junctions e.g. the head of Croft Drive West and as turning points at the head of the cul de sac.

The area is crossed by a number of public footpaths and bridleways. These paths tend to be leafy and enclosed in character, suddenly emerging onto the estate roads, and then disappearing again into woodland on the opposite side.

### 3.3 Views and Vistas within the Area

Caldy can be viewed from the main road as it approaches from the south where it leaves the slopes of Thurstaston hill. The road does not afford many easy stopping places and so the view from a vehicle is rather fleeting. The overall appearance is of one large wooded area with individual roofs and gables appearing through the greenery.

On entering the village from Telegraph Road there are views out into the open fields lying on the north side of Caldly Road and south east of the hill.

Views *within* the Conservation Area are extremely limited because of the density of the tree cover. They are limited to views along the main thoroughfare, Caldly Road and along the estate roads. Travelling through the centre of the village there is a series of spots where medium length views open up and are then closed off by the quite sharp bends in the road. This adds strong visual character but, due to the volume of traffic using the road it can be quite a hazardous experience for pedestrians.



In some of the older parts of the estate the views along the roads have an almost tunnel-like character, particularly during the summer, because the roads are overhung by large trees from both sides.

This strong sense of enclosure which the trees and fences give to the majority of the plots means that views of individual houses are in many cases very limited, or indeed impossible from the public road.

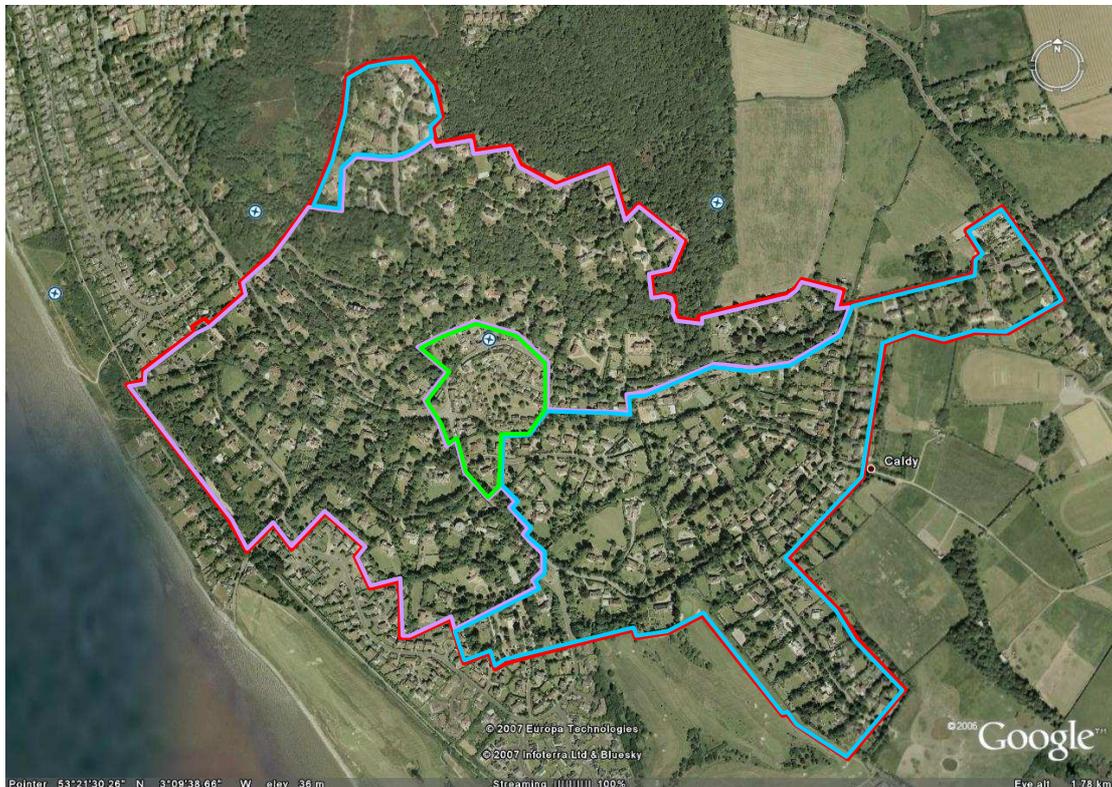
### 3.4 Green Spaces and Planting

The general approach to the early stages of the development of the Caldly Manor Estate seems to have been to create building sites within the existing woodland, retaining the majority of the tree cover, but with some opening up of views to the south and west of house plots. These areas remain, and have been described on the following map as areas with *high density* tree cover. Within these earlier stages, the predominant tree species are indigenous oaks, Scots Pine, birch etc.

In the later stages of the development on the flatter land there was less tree cover to begin with, and although many pre-existing trees were retained, these were heavily supplemented by new planting, particularly to define and enclose the plot perimeters. This produces areas characterised as *medium density* tree cover. On the larger plots there are introduced Monterey Pine and Cedar, some of which are now becoming over-mature. Also there are Common Beech and Copper Beech, with maple and other smaller trees on the smaller plots.

The over-riding impression at ground level for the majority of the Conservation Area is therefore of the predominance of woodland with houses set between trees and rather limited open spaces.

The exception to this general character is the historic core of the village where the area of the Manor, older cottages and The Green is largely free of large trees and is denoted on the map as *low density* tree cover.



- conservation area boundary
- solid or high density tree cover
- medium density tree cover
- low density tree cover

Within the village core there is a considerable level of herbaceous planting of strong character. This is obviously high maintenance but adds considerably to the distinctiveness of the area.

## 4.0 TOWNSCAPE AND PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS

### 4.1 Grain, Scale, Repetition and Diversity

The ‘grain’ of the development in Caldy village falls within four distinct types, closely related to the density of the development.

The *historic village* provides the first of these areas. The grain of this zone is not strongly consistent but may be described as ‘buildings closely related to the main street and easily visible from it, often with roof ridges parallel to the street.’ Closeness to and visibility from the street are consistent, however some of the ridges are at right angles to the street giving some variety. Buildings on the south side of the street are never more than two storeys, and sometimes single or one and a half storeys in height. Those to the north tend to be grander in scale, culminating in the block-like four storeys of Caldy Manor.

Enclosed within the half circle of Caldy Road is the development on the site of the former farm buildings and nursery, known as *The Green*. This development of about 25 houses with garages is strongly reminiscent of the principles of the Essex Design Guide. Houses are of simple rectangular forms, and although they are distributed around an irregular space the orientation of the roof ridges tends to be either approximately *e-w* or *n-s*. The houses and garages abut their neighbours quite tightly which, along with the use of tall screen walls prevents almost completely any views from the outside into the open green area around which the houses are arranged. Whilst the large properties on the Caldy Manor Estate exclude views by trees and tall fences, these houses exclude views by careful disposition of the houses themselves. Access is by means of a horseshoe shaped road circling the rear of the properties.

Along the majority of *Croft Drive East, Long Hey Road and Links Hey Road* a strongly consistent grain prevails. Houses are all detached and set out parallel to the road about 20m away with main ridges parallel to it. Plot widths tend to be reasonably even at about 30 m but are quite deep in proportion. The proximity of the houses and their outbuildings mean that they form an almost continuous wall of development in some sections.

The majority of *Caldy Manor Estate* follows the principles set out in the original covenants. Plots are large, in excess of one acre, and are rectilinear or polygonal. Houses are situated approximately in the middle of their plots. Some of the earlier ones are quite large and of three storeys. Most are large two storey houses of the Garden Suburb type. With this density and consequent wide spacing it is difficult to define a ‘grain’ as such. For the most part, at road level the individual houses are hidden and so the predominant effect is created by the boundary enclosure material and the prevalent tree growth.

4.2 **Principal Buildings and Features**



The *Manor House*, now partly a residential home, partly luxury apartments is of two main parts. The wing nearest the street dates from the late seventeenth century, the main block from 1864 being the principal investment in the property by Richard Barton. This main block was designed by W. and J. Hay of Edinburgh. Subsequent alterations were carried out in the early C20 for Alexander Percy Eccles, a Liverpool cotton broker.

In 1882 part of the house was converted to a chapel by Elizabeth Barton in memory of her late husband Richard. She employed C E Kempe to carry out the internal decorations, to install stained glass windows and to add the clock turret.



The *Church* was built originally as a school in 1868 to designs by G.E. Street. It was extensively altered in 1906/7 by Douglas and Minshull and dedicated as the Church of Resurrection and All Saints, a chapelry of St. Bridget, West Kirby. Some of the interior features and also the stained glass were taken from the Manor House chapel. On the small green area to the west of the church is a sandstone war memorial.



The site of the *village hall* was formerly the village pound or pinfold. It was built in 1883 as a reading room by Elizabeth Barton and acquired by the parish and fitted out as a hall in the 1920s. The ground floor is of stone with simple mullioned windows to the street. The first floor is timber framed under a tiled roof with two casement windows and one oriel window facing the road.



Immediately opposite the hall are *Corner House and Dee House*, two mock timber framed houses nearly connected. In fact, they are converted eighteenth century stone barns subsequently clad in ‘black and white’ when they were renovated in the 1830s by Rampling.

Other key historic buildings in the heart of the village are *The Smithy* (unlisted), *Banks Farm* and the adjoining *Barn, Sunny Fold and Manor Farm*. To the east are the *Lodge* and *Pinewood* the property on the west side of the entrance to Caldy Wood.

*Little Caldy Farm* is a good complex of C19 model farm buildings now converted into private dwellings

*Little Dene* is a C18 sandstone house, much altered, just below Caldy Road.

The heyday of building in Caldy was perhaps the first years of the *Caldy Manor Estate* development. One of the earliest houses to be completed was *Caldecott* on Caldy Road by Hastwell Grayson. Between Croft Drive and Caldy Road is *The Croft* from 1911 to designs by Sir Guy Dawber and the property known as *Orovales* by Gilbert Fraser.

The flat roofed octagonal house, *Newlands* and its pitched roofed octagonal lodge date from 1914.

There is a cluster of distinctive houses on Links Hey Road. Specific designers are not known but there is a large Arts and Crafts House, a 1930s neo-Classical house, a copper-roofed 1950s house and a recently completed house using cream render, horizontal boarding and plate glass in grey frames.

#### 4.3 **Boundaries and Surfaces**

There is a fairly narrow range of boundary treatments, with a fairly strong distinction between those in the core of the village and those on the surrounding planned estate.

Within the historic core of the village many properties are enclosed by walls constructed in the local red sandstone. The modest sized houses and cottages have walls up to about three feet in height, in some cases (e.g. the Old Manor) surmounted by an attractive Yew hedge to give a fairly solid boundary. Caldly Manor itself, and properties constructed on the site of the former nursery are enclosed by stone walls of about eight feet in height, which give a high degree of privacy and noise abatement.

In the development known as The Green, boundary and enclosing walls to the public realm are six feet high and are constructed wither of brick to match the houses or of sandstone.

The property boundaries for most sites within the planned estate are the subject of restrictive covenants. According to information provided by advisory solicitors to a meeting of The Caldly Society in 1996 a typical covenant clause, applying to most of Caldly, contains the following wording:

‘ ... (the property) shall be fenced in front to the road or roads and along the boundaries of the land with a fence not more than four feet six inches in height above the level of the road consisting of either ornamental iron railing or oak or wire fencing’.

With the exception of entrance gates, there is almost no ornamental iron-work or wire fencing. Within the Caldly Manor Estate the vast majority of properties are enclosed by vertical timber boarded fences, in many cases supplemented by hedging or trees. Originally there was a preferred style of fencing against the road consisting of wide-spaced riven oak palings, alternately tall and shorter with pegged joints onto rails. Little of this survives and should be protected, rare examples surviving in Croft Drive West. Documentary evidence suggests that this fencing was made by the Caldly estate carpenter.

Observation reveals that in quite a number of cases the covenant clauses are not being observed, in that increasingly fences are above four feet six inches in height. Significant lengths of Croft Drive and Croft Drive East are bounded by solid timber boarded fences of over six feet high. Apart from flouting the covenants this has a very negative impact on the street scene, which becomes increasingly devoid of interest at pedestrian level.

## 5.0 ARCHITECTURE, MATERIALS AND DETAILS

### 5.1 Prominent Styles

There is a wide range of architectural styles within the village, parts of which appear almost as a catalogue of house designs. The main styles represented are:

- the local vernacular
- Edwardian
- Arts and Crafts and its revivals
- 1930s International style
- 1970s/80s modernist

The estate was established during the flourishing of the Arts and Crafts style and to a large extent this has been followed as a preferred estate style, although some of the more recent examples show a very diluted, standardised form not in accordance with the original ethic.

To consider them in turn:



*The vernacular cottages* at the heart of the village are largely one and a half storeys in height with eaves dormers. Whilst they have local characteristics the design shows conscious placement of windows etc which gives them the aspect of “polite” architecture. They are of sandstone with stone mullioned windows and have slated roofs. Gable parapets are frequent. The houses are generally one room deep, perhaps extended with a wing at right angles. Main roofs tend to run parallel to the street.



*Edwardian houses* generally continue the characteristics of the late Victorian period. They are the earliest houses on the Caldry Manor Estate and tend to be large

detached dwellings for large families with staff. They frequently have generous outbuildings – whether stables or garages. They are of two storeys with attics, or, in one or two cases a full three storeys. Plan forms tend to be loose rather than compact and many have verandahs and generous bay windows so that they relate well to their gardens and grounds. They are of stone or are rendered, with large pane sash windows and Westmoreland slate or tiled roofs. There are one or two brick built houses but the use of bricks is generally precluded by covenants.



*Arts and Crafts houses* form the largest style group on the estate. Again plan forms are loose and spreading with the use of verandahs and loggias to link the house to the gardens. They are generally of two or 1.5 storeys, although sometimes with very generous storey heights. Roofs tend to predominate and they are usually of clay tiles and often descend from roof to ground floor window head, perhaps with dormers, thus rather enveloping the house. Walls are usually finished with a rough dash material, now mostly painted, and windows are multiple casement style. Creepers, usually Wistaria and Virginia Creeper, are sometimes encouraged to grow up the wall by means of fixed trellis and frames, thus strengthening the bond of the house to its site, albeit at some expense to the built fabric.



*International style* houses are few in number but are important representatives of an endangered species. They are characterised by flat or low-pitched roofs, white, or light coloured walls with steel windows, predominantly horizontal in orientation and curving corners. There is often a marine emphasis, redolent of liners, and blue is the usual colour for details.

A small number of 1960s houses remain in and around the conservation area, their being characterised by rectilinear forms, square or double-square windows set in strong alignments, brick construction, sometimes partnered with cladding, low-pitched roofs. They display a concentration on form over ornamentation, and an austere but calming simplicity, e.g. Rock Bottom on Kings Drive, Rowardennan – no. 3 Croft Drive East and no. 9 Croft Drive West. The preservation of the better

examples is important in terms of retaining a faithful historical profile of the area's building heritage.



*1970s/80s modernist houses* are well represented. Roofs are low pitched with 'stonewold' flat concrete tiles, roman tiles or other bold profiles. Walls are brown brick in a rather dull stretcher bond, windows are large and often aluminium casements or sliders in wooden subframes. White bargeboards and white paint generally tends to predominate. Garages are double with very wide up and over doors. Boundaries are open plan, often formed by vegetation rather than fencing.

### 5.2 **Known Architects and Designers**

A number of architects and designers of national importance have worked in Caldy. George Edmund Street designed the village school, later taken over as the church. CE Kempe, primarily an ecclesiastical designer and decorator converted part of Caldy Manor to a family chapel and added the clock tower. His stained glass panels and some of the chapel fittings were relocated in the present church when it gained its present status in 1907. Sir Guy Dawber, Arts and Crafts architect and one of the founders of the Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England did the designs for the house known as The Croft, off Caldy Road, although it was not built entirely to the original scheme.

Among architects of a more regional significance were Clark Rampling of Birkenhead who did much of the remodelling for Caldy Manor and the estate cottages in the early to mid C19. Hastwell Grayson designed the late Edwardian house known as Caldecott. Gilbert Fraser designed the house known as Orovales near The Croft and Douglas and Minshull designed the conversion of the village school into the church in 1907.

There are a number of other properties with a strong design stamp within the area e.g. the International Style houses, a number of distinctive houses in the west of the area near to The Croft and further properties on Links Hey Road. It would be greatly helpful to identify the architects of these properties partly as an aid to understanding the social development of the estate.

### 5.3 **Materials**

The principal vernacular building material is the locally quarried pinkish red Bunter sandstone. This would have been extracted from the nearby hillside and carried only a short distance to the construction site. There is evidence of some export of stone. Old maps also record the presence of limekilns on the shoreline which would probably provide a source of lime for mortar. The Old Manor is lime rendered with exposed pink stone dressing.

The roofs on these earlier properties of vernacular origin are largely of slate. However with a pitch of about 45 degrees they could have been tiled or probably thatched prior to the arrival of Welsh slate.

With the renovation of the buildings in the C19 came the introduction of reproduction timber framing. The three black and white buildings in the old village are more picturesque than an attempt at genuine mock timber framing and have their own interest as a result.

The most influential phase in the development of Caldy was the burst in construction activity following release of sites by the Caldy Manor Estate from 1906 onwards. This was the period of large detached houses in the late Edwardian and Arts and Crafts styles. With these comes a specific palette of materials. The grander late Edwardian houses make use of red brick, limestone dressings, Welsh slate roofs, and bold half timbering (through usually for only a gable or a first floor wing). Some of the houses are in the Queen Anne style with red brick and white painted Georgian style windows.

The Arts and Crafts style houses use a rather softer palette of materials nearer to the vernacular tradition. Roofs are often of plain clay tiles or Westmoreland slate, walls are brick or rough-cast (usually now painted white) and windows are steel casements, sometimes in long ranges of vertical lights with small subdivisions of square or diamond leads.

Porches are often dominant, with either swept roofs or their own small gables, and front doors are often set in deeply recessed multiple-centred arched openings.

Of the more recent developments there is almost a standardised use of brick for ground floor, white or cream render for the first floor and plain clay tiled roofs.

Most recently houses have tended to be built entirely of brick and in a style which is fairly anonymous, although the most recent houses have seen a revival of the use of rendered facades.

#### 5.4 Typical Features and Details from the early C20

- Ground floor brick / 1<sup>st</sup> floor render
- Steeply pitched roofs – clay tile or Westmorland slate - no slate except for the early village houses
- Steel-framed casement windows
- Roof parallel to road with one or more forward facing gables
- Dark bargeboards and fascias (if any) not white
- Use of roughcast (now often painted) and dark brown bricks
- Central door opening
- Porches are often dominant, with either swept roofs or their own small gables, and front doors are often set in deeply recessed multi-centred arched openings.
- Garages at side (often at right angles) with multiple door openings, rather than wide openings

## 6.0 NEGATIVE FACTORS

### 6.1 Overview

Caldy Conservation Area falls into two distinct areas as previously discussed, and in making overall judgements about the standards of the area distinct sets of criteria apply according to these two zones. There is the village, which consists of the grouping of buildings from the C17 to C19 along with The Green. Surrounding this on all sides is the planned development of the Caldly Manor estate.

The *village* is largely an organic development and has grown in modest increments over time. The underlying style is vernacular and the guiding principles for layout were largely utilitarian. The original mixed uses – the manor house and its range of activities, the farm, nurseries, shop and school had their own imperatives for change and development of the built structure. This modest mix of uses has been replaced almost entirely by a single use category – residential, and of quite a high social level. The relative affluence of the occupants, and the general respect for and value placed on the historic property means that maintenance levels are high and that there are not too many jarring features.

*The Green* was developed wholesale within strong guidelines and the precepts of the development have been maintained either through covenant or through the influence of a management company such that there remains a consistent high standard.

In contrast to the village, *Caldly Manor Estate* has been developed in a planned way within the limits of a defined set of principles (enacted through the covenants) and consequently different assessment criteria apply. The earlier stages of the development have produced an attractive leafy suburb, with glimpses of the large houses and gardens and with a degree of variety created by the winding roads. Regrettably later stages have been less successful. Roads are straighter, there is more rigidity in the layout of the houses adjacent to the road, there is rather less tree cover. Within earlier and later stages the increased use of high fences means that glimpses of the houses are prevented and the character of the streets is thus diminished.

### 6.2 Recent Development

With the exception of The Green, all recent developments within the CA have been of individual houses. In general, The Green appears to be a most successful addition to the fabric of the Conservation Area. However, some of the individual properties are less successful for various reasons.

Some dwellings seem over-large for the site



Others are poorly proportioned, with too great a bulk.



A small number of bungalows have appeared, one on Kings Drive in cedar cladding is reasonably harmonious, but another on Caldy Drive East is quite alien.



There are a number of instances where the roof pitch and roof materials are inappropriate. Plain ‘Stonewold’ or concrete interlocking tiles have been used.



### 6.3 Unsympathetic Extensions



A flat roofed extension appears on a house in Croft Drive West but is largely hidden by trees. This may be the case with other extensions so it is not easy to make an assessment.

A number of large garage extensions have appeared in recent years, which are out of proportion with the main dwelling. There is pressure for these structures to be two-storey, or 1.5 storey with bulky dormers, with additional accommodation upstairs and sometimes linked to the first floor of the main house. Garages should be clearly subordinate to the main building, with a maximum ridge height of 6.0m and eaves height of 2.75m, especially where detached.

### 6.4 Unsympathetic Alterations



In a number of cases there are 'add-on' glass fibre Georgian details which do not fit in with the generally 'Arts and Crafts' nature of the houses and in any case are rarely appropriate to the style of house to which they have been appended.



Replacing windows which have a strongly vertical system of subdivisions with large 'picture' type glazing is heavily detrimental to the character of the properties. The incorporation of fanlights with a strong horizontal orientation are also inappropriate.



The use of brown stains, particularly combined with polyurethane lacquer, or their plastic equivalent also have no historical design precedent. In this instance the character is also confused by the use of stick-on leaded lights

Some Juliet balconies have appeared on some houses within the CA, particularly to the rear. This has a limited affect on character, but such openings often clash with the traditional arrangement of windows and window details, and their installation should be resisted on the more impressive and historic properties where this would be particularly visible.

#### 6.5 **Loss and Development Pressures**

Loss within the Conservation Area seems to take the form of acquisition of modest houses on large plots and redevelopment with single much larger houses, often with multiple garages. Associated with this type of development there is often a full enclosure of the boundary with high fencing and the installation of high remote controlled gates. This produces a series of exclusive enclaves largely isolated from their setting.

Where everyday buildings have been demolished and subsequent redevelopment has not taken place, some plots have been left vacant and overgrown or neglected. Any permissions granted for redevelopment of houses held not to be contributing to the character of the conservation area should be tied to a condition whereby a copy of a valid, signed JCT contract for full redevelopment within a specific timescale has been lodged with the Council's Planning Department, prior to demolition taking place. Landscaping details for maintenance of the site post demolition should be attached.

#### 6.6 **Gates boundaries and enclosure**

The covenants which run with the properties in most cases stipulate the use of four feet six inches high timber fencing. There is a preponderance of the use of this fencing, in some cases augmented by hedging. However increasingly fencing of a greater height has been used which produces a solid wall of fence. Parts of Croft Drive East are affected by this change, to the severe detriment of the street scene.



The fences from the very first stages of the development seem to have been constructed of oak palings alternately long and short. Where these remain on Kings Drive, and Croft Drive West they should be conserved and this type should be encouraged for new developments.

A number of the earlier oak five bar gates remain. Where this is so they should be retained and this style implemented for new developments.



By contrast with these simple styles many new gates are elaborate metal designs in pairs with arched heads and automatic openers. Accompanied by side gates, elaborate brick piers and American style letterboxes they display a degree of pretence which is at variance with the understated nature of the area generally.



6.7 **Street surfaces and furniture**

Street surfaces are largely of tarmac and are not a particularly distinctive feature. In a number of areas stone kerbs remain and there has been a tendency to replace these with concrete units, which tend to produce a rather hard smooth line. Individual drives were almost invariably of gravel and there is a strong tendency towards the use of interlocking paving or brickwork. In large expanses this has a rather hard appearance.

Almost the only street furniture is the lighting standards. Early lamp standards remain in some locations but modern standards are rather characterless by comparison. Many of the old standards are in a poor condition, with flaked paint and covered in algae – this should be rectified.

## 7.0 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

### 7.1 Caldy Conservation Area has two distinctive character zones – *the historic village* and the *C20 planned development*

*The historic village* is characterised by the following:

- Winding roads with sandstone walls
- properties enclosed by high walls with private yards or gardens
- well maintained public or semi-public spaces with shrubs and herbaceous plants
- few mature trees
- Relatively high density
- Low building heights
- ‘single material’ houses
- use of natural stone, pale brown brick or ‘black and white’
- many houses have eaves dormers, mullioned windows and kneelers on gables

*The C20 planned development* is characterised by the following:

- A mixture of winding and long straight roads overhung with mature trees
- Proliferation of mature trees, in some areas the character of woodland
- Vertical boarded timber front fences
- Plain clay tiled roofs (and less often slate) at steep pitch with dormers, gables and prominent chimneys enlivening the roofscape
- Low density (originally 1 dwelling / acre)
- Full 2 - storey height including some houses with attics
- Many houses have differing materials at each storey level (usually rendered first floor over brickwork ground floor)
- In many cases there are ‘catslide’ roofs (i.e. from main ridge across an extension to ground floor door-head height)
- ‘Additive’ and irregular plan forms (i.e. complex plans with extensions for bays, porches, outbuildings, garages, rather than simple rectangles and symmetrical layouts)