

Angel Hill & Athenaeum Lane

Angel Hill is the most significant urban spaces resulting from Abbott Baldwin's laying out of the town of St Edmundsbury in the late 11th C. Here is one of the most impressive urban spaces in the UK and while it is now largely employed as a car park, on the occasional days when the area is cleared for civic and other events, it is still possible to enjoy the grandeur and vision of the founder in creating a place for such occasions to be accommodated and enjoyed in this town centre location.

Angel Hill is the setting for a rich and varied history of architectural elements, not really dominated by any, but with some contributing more than others. Perhaps it is inevitable the 14th C Abbey Gate and earlier perimeter walls should be high on the list of containing elements to the east, while the late 19th C faced Angel Hotel is a major element on the west side. In addition the Athenaeum to the south and the handsome Georgian (faced) terraces to the north rather complete the containment. The former Borough Council Office building from the inter-war years is in the north eastern corner and that is one of a handful of buildings in the area which is not protected by designation - remarkable enough in itself for a location where even the 'Pillar of Salt' road sign dating from 1935 is listed! Pavings here, to the perimeter, are Yorkstone, and the road finish is concrete setts, the car parking area has an asphalt finish. There are modern reproduction period light fittings. The surfacing and other items of street furniture on Angel Hill (as in other areas of the town centre) were installed in the late 1990s/early 2000s as part of a Historic Core Zone Scheme. This initiative sponsored and utilised non-standard highway items which sought to demonstrate that a historic environment merited the use of materials, signage and other street furniture which were more sensitive and appropriate to such a location than the functional and utilitarian equipment normally used by Highway Authorities.

This is as good a space with as good buildings as any town of its size in the UK, and better than most bigger towns too.

The geographical area of Angel Hill also includes the road to the north and east, meeting Mustow Street at the junction with Northgate Street, again this part is dominated by listed buildings, many being late Mediaeval.

Athenaeum Lane is one of those passageways which add to the experience of urban locations, providing a contrast in experiences - moving north from Chequers Square through Athenaeum Lane into Angel Hill provides an interesting experience of different urban scales which is a real pleasure. Pavings here are Yorkstone with granite setts. The passage is tightly squeezed by tall buildings to the east with somewhat smaller ones to the west. An interesting and rewarding route between larger grander spaces.

The Flower Hut

A very small and rather charming little building in red brick and neo-Georgian in style, with a single storey and a flat roof hidden by a parapet with a stone coping.

There is one large multipane sash below a flat gauged lintol and a paneled door with a fanlight below an arched lintol. Large modern shop sign which doesn't detract.

The building presumably dates from the same interwar period as No 7 to its east and may be by the same architect, or at least a follower.

A building which because of its scale and use makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.

26 Angel Hill

Now (spring 2019) a development site following the destruction by fire of the interwar garage building occupying it in the winter of 2017. A new building with residential uses is being constructed. To the rear (south) of the site is the mediaeval Abbey boundary wall a Scheduled Ancient Monument.



7 Angel Hill, Former Borough Council Offices.

An inter-war building in the early 18th C Palladian style designed by Basil Oliver (also credited with designing the 'Pillar of Salt' road sign) with a central pedimented three bay section breaking forward and flanked by two similar three bayed elements. In two storeys of red/brown brickwork with a stone base, plat band at first floor and quoins. The clay tiled roof has projecting eaves with dentilled cornice. The town's arms in carved stone relief decorates the pediment.

The window joinery is multipane sashes in the early 18th C style and the door joinery is panelled and imitating the same period. There are flat gauged arches to the windows and semi-circular arch to the entrance door, with a multipane fanlight. Two large chimney stacks and a flag pole furnish the roof.

To the frontage is a concrete brick paved parking area behind a somewhat suburban dwarf brick wall, with ramps and railings which are somewhat detracting in the conservation area. These ramps were provided in response to meeting accessibility legislation due to problems posed by the original stone steps which remain.

A flat roofed extension to the Lower Baxter Street frontage was added circa the 1960s but this part of the building has now been remodelled and converted into flats. Part of this flat roof was visible from Angel Hill but this has been disguised in the conversion scheme by the addition of an additional floor in modern materials. This addition also obscured the roof of St Edmunds House in Lower Baxter Street from being visible from the eastern part of Angel Hill/Mustow Street. Nevertheless, the addition of the extra floor of accommodation on the Borough Offices has attracted some criticism as it is deemed to be particularly noticeable in certain views although there were specific planning reasons why it was given permission to be built.

This office building was built for Bury St Edmunds Borough Council but was inherited by St Edmundsbury Borough Council when that organisation was formed in 1974. It continued to be used as civic offices until St Edmundsbury Borough Council relocated from the town centre to premises in Western Way.

The building is well enough designed but in the context of such high historical architectural standards it seems somewhat pedestrian. Notwithstanding that it does make a positive contribution to the conservation area although the debate about the rear roof addition remains.



9 Angel Hill

This is a rather pedestrian modern neo-Georgian house constructed in circa 2014 as an extension to the listed group of 18th C fronted houses to the east of it. It is in three storeys of white bricks with a slated roof and is set back slightly from its neighbors. It has a garage at ground floor level, in contrast to the adjacent historic buildings French casements with balconettes and unconvincing fanlights at first floor level, also in contrast to the earlier buildings while the second floor rather matches its neighbors with paired quartered sashes and bracketed eave.

A building that could have learnt more from its progenitors to the east and neutral in the conservation area



19a to 19f Angel Hill

In reality belonging to Mustow Street rather than Angel Hill these are modern (late 20th C) buildings with a rather suburban appearance for such an important central urban location. There is a central three storey block in red/ brown brick with flanking smaller lower elements to the east and west, these are mainly stucco rendered with brick dressings. Each element has a clay tiled roof.

The east element has with paired Oxford type sashes at each floor flanking a central paneled door. The central block has a recessed part to the east and paired Oxford type sashes at each floor otherwise, the second floor having an eccentric tripartite window to the east bay. T porch, he recessed section, which is stucco rendered has the part glazed entrance doors, with a lean-to pitched roof and sash windows at the other floor levels, the second floor being very small.

The west element is single storey and has a dormer in a pantiled roof, paneled door and single Oxford type sash windows otherwise.

A large development in a very important site which could have been more urban in character. Neutral in the conservation area.



11-12 Athenaeum Lane

A modern pair of houses but constructed incorporating an older wall to the passage. In a single storey of red brickwork in Flemish bond (and presumably 18th C) with a mansard type roof with a slate finish which incorporates Velux type roof lights, two to each property. The ground floor has modern casements set within the brickwork, as well as entrance doors.

Because these are an interesting incorporation of the historic wall into a new building they are positive in the conservation area.



5-6 Athenaeum Lane

These appear to be a pair of 18th C or early 19th C houses in three storeys of stucco rendered construction below a slated roof. The houses have had modernisation to a degree. There are 19th C sashes and No 5 has French casements at first floor with a steel balustraded balconette. Both have modern panelled doors in modern door cases in a sort of period style.

There is evidence of an earlier house which bounded the south flank of No 5 and here is a truncated brick chimney too.

An interesting pair of houses which would benefit from further research , but certainly positive in the conservation area.



Anselm House

A modern red brick construction with blue brick dressings a tiled roof and with a door off the passage and an oriel window at first floor level to this elevation. Seemingly the ground floor windows overlook the walled garden to the north of the house. At first floor the gable end of the house has a large oriel which also overlook the garden. The garden wall is also modern and has both a modern steel gate with overthrow, which leads to a property in Angel Hill, and boarded door which leads to the garden.

Neutral in the conservation area.

