

ASHBY ROAD CONSERVATION AREA LOUGHBOROUGH

**CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER STATEMENT
Consultation Draft**

If you would like extracts from this document in your language, in Braille, on audio tape or large print, please contact the Conservation & Design Team (Tel: 01509 634769).

Prepared in partnership by the Storer and Ashby Area Residents' Group and the Conservation & Design Team, Charnwood Borough Council.

June 2005

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FOREWORD

The Ashby Road Conservation Area was designated in April 2002 with the support of the Ashby and Storer Area Residents' Group. However, designation is not an end in itself but more of a beginning. From designation onwards the area will change and develop in a manner befitting its architectural and historic significance. Any change needs to be carefully controlled and guided if the special character which led to the area's designation in the first place is to be maintained and enhanced for the enjoyment of future generations.

To this end, everyone concerned must clearly understand and identify what it is about the character or appearance of the area which should be preserved or enhanced. This Character Statement aims to identify the particular qualities of the Ashby Road Conservation Area. The Statement is being made available for consultation so that everyone who has an interest in the area may have the opportunity to make their opinions known.

We hope that you will consider the document and give us your views and comments. At this stage we are looking for factual descriptions of the qualities, elements and features which you feel should be included in the Character Statement. We would like your comments in writing. If you wish to include photographs to make your point please do so. We will consider all your comments very carefully. A final version of the document will then be prepared and presented to Cabinet for adoption. The adopted Statement will be used to inform management proposals for the conservation area using further guidance from English Heritage.

Please send your views and comments to the Conservation and Design Team, Charnwood Borough Council, Southfields, Loughborough LE11 2TN or email them to built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk. The closing date is **Friday 2nd September 2005**.



Councillor Cameron MacLeod
Lead Member for Planning

I INTRODUCTION

This Character Statement sets out the special qualities of the Ashby Road Conservation Area, to provide a sound basis for proposals for its preservation or enhancement and for development control decisions. The aim is to provide a guide to the varied elements that contribute to the distinct character and appearance of the conservation area.

The statement may be adopted by Charnwood Borough Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance. If it is adopted, it will be taken into account when planning applications are assessed. It will support the Local Plan, Regional Planning Guidance and any other relevant planning guidance.

I.1 The Purpose of the Statement

The special architectural and historic interests which justify designation as a conservation area are defined and recorded in order to create a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for local plan policies and development control decisions. The statement is a careful analysis of the area which seeks to be as factual and objective as possible. It is an appraisal that sets out how the area has evolved as an exciting but unfinished story, drawing out the key elements of the townscape and the character of the place as it now is. It includes elements which are both positive and negative, suggesting opportunities for beneficial change. The statement is needed for the formulation of proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of the area. The clear definition of the special interest, and therefore of what is important to retain, helps to reduce uncertainty for those considering investment or development in the area and thus the character statement will be used as the framework for managing change in the conservation area¹.

Change is brought about not only by large developments of local institutions and industry but also by the smaller day to day adjustments to homes and gardens, open spaces, paths, hedges and tree cover. All of these have the ability to alter the look and feel of the whole area. The Character Statement and its associated Management Proposal seek to sustain those living in the area and to influence the form and content of new development. Where significant development proposals are anticipated the documents seek to provide guidance on priorities. Furthermore, the documents seek to promote sympathetic alterations or extensions related to proposed function and diversity of use.

The documents are addressed to:

- Residents and property owners
- People considering alterations to existing buildings
- People proposing new building projects
- Statutory bodies and public authorities
- Planners, developers, builders, architects, designers, engineers
- Local industry and commerce
- Local education bodies
- Local community groups

¹ The document covering management of the Conservation Area will be produced separately

1.2 What is a Conservation Area?

The designation of a Conservation Area recognises that an area has particular qualities or character and that those qualities are worth keeping and caring for. Firstly, it must be an area of special architectural or historic interest. Secondly, the character or appearance of the area must be worthy of preservation or enhancement. Such an area usually comprises a pleasant, attractive and interesting mixture of traditional buildings, street patterns, trees, open spaces, features and views. The evidence of history or archaeology or traditional social activity may supplement this mixture, combining with it to create the individual impression of a particular place.

National Planning Guidance for conservation areas is contained in PPG 15, Planning and the Historic Environment, while PPG 1, Policy and Principles, provides the framework for all aspects of the effective protection of the historic environment.

The Local Plan guides Charnwood Borough Council when applications for planning permission are determined. The Plan includes policies that seek to protect the special character of the conservation area and to prevent harmful development and policies to prevent the loss of or unsympathetic alterations to historic buildings. It also includes policies relevant to the protection of nationally listed buildings. The policies are listed in the Appendices.

1.3 The Effect of Conservation Area Designation

The Borough Council is charged with selecting conservation areas and, in carrying out its planning functions, trying to protect and improve the quality of such areas. The designation of a conservation area does not mean that any particular area will remain unchanged and that no new development will be allowed. Rather, it means that only change that respects the identified, special character of the locality will be permitted and that extra attention will be paid to the quality of the environment and the protection of important buildings, spaces and trees. In development proposals, whether for new buildings or for extensions and alterations to existing buildings, the Council will expect a high standard of design.

The Borough Council has a duty, in exercising its planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of any conservation area. Within such an area all development proposals that require planning permission must be advertised and public opinion invited. The Council must prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the area and submit them to public consultation.

Designation as a conservation area has implications for the owners and occupiers of property within the area.

Demolition control - with a number of minor exceptions you cannot demolish any part of your property without the consent of the Council. If you want to demolish anything you must apply for Conservation Area Consent.

Control over trees - you must give the Council at least six weeks notice if you intend to cut down, top, lop or uproot a tree in a conservation area. This gives the Council an opportunity to decide whether or not to make a Tree Preservation Order.

Dwelling houses - conservation area designation places additional restrictions over and above the usual planning requirements that affect properties. These additional restrictions mean that:

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Planning permission is required to clad with stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles any part of your property which faces the highway, street or any public space.

Planning permission is required to install a satellite dish on any chimney, wall, or roof slope which faces the highway, street or any public space.

Planning permission is required to enlarge or change the shape of the roof, eg by inserting a dormer or Velux type window.

Planning permission is required to erect or alter any building or enclosure with a cubic content greater than 10 cubic metres.

Planning permission is required to extend your house by more than 50 cubic metres or by 10%, whichever is the greater. Normally the allowance is 70 cubic metres or 15%. These figures can include outbuildings in the calculation.

Other permitted development: Other building or land uses which normally benefit from permitted development rights such as industrial and warehouse development, development by statutory undertakers or development by telecommunications code systems operators may have these rights affected by designation of the conservation area.

1.4 The Reasons for Designation

Ashby Road Conservation Area consists of four areas bound together by the Ashby Road, an ancient gateway route between Loughborough and Ashby de la Zouch.

To the west of the area in a parkland setting lie the original imposing buildings of Loughborough University. The University is the enduring and highly successful result of the entrepreneurial vision and determination of Herbert Schofield, Principal of Loughborough College from 1915 to 1950. From the base of the Technical Institute in the centre of the town he purchased land on the western edge of the town and initiated a policy of buying and building student residences, many of which are now included in this conservation area.

To the east and on either side of the Ashby Road the Storer Road and Radmoor Road areas form two almost complete Victorian urban communities that illustrate the rapid development of Loughborough town during the latter years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth. This is demonstrated by the growth in population from 4,500 in 1801 to 21,500 in 1901 during the era of industrialisation and the introduction and expansion of the railways. The need for housing produced tight grids of well built, terraced family housing.

Linking the area is Ashby Road with several large detached gentlemen's dwellings set in spacious and well treed grounds.

In the conservation area as a whole, the late Victorian character predominates. There are many notable buildings, including churches, university halls, private dwellings, schools, a mission hut, disused railway buildings and the world famous Messenger's factory complex. Uniquely in Loughborough the terraced areas remain largely untouched since the Edwardian era and form a valuable reminder of the cultural inheritance for the local area and for the town as a whole.

2 The Character Statement

2.1 Historical Description

The Ashby Road Conservation Area was designated in April 2002. It is based on the Ashby Road corridor running west from the town centre. The eastern part of the area designated is largely formed from the Paget and Storer Estates, important family holdings which also instituted charitable trusts and donated large areas of land to the town. Ashby Road is an historic road linking Loughborough to the older market town of Ashby de la Zouch. In the nineteenth century Loughborough became famous for its heavy engineering and hosiery industries. Companies such as Brush Electrical, Falcon, Willowbrook, Messengers, Herbert Morris Cranes and Taylor's Bell Foundry provided work for men as the hosiery manufacturers such as William Cotton did for women. Locomotives, train carriages, trams, buses, lorries, cranes, bells, boilers and heating systems, stockings and knitted goods were exported all over the Empire.

This industry is represented within the conservation area by Thomas Goode Messenger who founded his company in 1858 and moved to the Cumberland Road site in 1884. The firm built conservatories, glasshouses, verandas, summerhouses, cucumber frames, vineries, peach houses and winter gardens for the larger home. There was also a busy foundry which provided boilers and heating systems for their own buildings as well as others. There are plans and orders for these systems and glass houses from Chile, South Africa, Malaysia and Australia. The firm was acquired in 1874 by the Burder family shortly before its move from the High Street. Walter C. Burder is noted as living at Field House on Ashby Road in 1891. The Burder family are shown as continuing to live at addresses on Ashby Road through to 1912. Historically, this area has been referred to as 'Messenger's Village', containing the homes of both the workers and owners of the firm. An excellent catalogue from the 1920's shows the full range of the products and has an impressive client list.

The bigger industries were located at the edges of the conservation area along Derby Road, Regent and Broad Streets and Ashby Road. They included a brewery, timber yards and the gas works for Loughborough. Charnwood Railway, whose industrial presence still exists along Station Avenue, was a minor branch line to the coalfields of Coalville and eventually closed in 1965. Other industries are still current along Derby Road and Regent Street, though commercial pressures are as active as they were in Victorian times and the scene changes for each generation.

An important part of the Victorian industrial scene was the workhouse. The Loughborough Union Workhouse was a large and important building set in extensive grounds to the east of the conservation area. It was accessed from Derby Road and Regent Street. When its use as a workhouse became obsolete it was converted into the Regent Hospital for the elderly. In the latter years of the 20th century it was once more deemed to be obsolete and was demolished. However, its memory lives on in the presence of a modern home for old people in Huntingdon Court.

The terraced streets on either side of Ashby Road demonstrate classic Victorian and Edwardian speculative development as the various lots of land were sold off in single or double plot sizes. The series of sales allowed local builders and individual architectural practices to build pairs or series of terraced houses, or villas for the wealthier families, according to their capacity. It was a common

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practice to buy one house for occupation and one for rental. Many houses show this 'pairing' in the terraced street scene, a decorative brick plaque naming the pair and giving the date of building, eg Primrose Villas 1881, Nos 11 & 13 Fearon Street. The estate included workshops, churches and schools and at the intersections of the streets there were corner shops, and in one case a public house, to service the new population of the area. Besides the corner shops there were other necessary services for the community such as plumbers, joiners, coal merchants, dairymen and undertakers, etc, in individual houses.

The estate was built over a 30 year period but the street layout, plot sizes, house plans and elevations were established when the orchards and gardens were sold off by the Paget and Storer Estates. They remain largely unchanged and any infill or backland development has taken place to the rear of the site and does not intrude on the street scene. However, development did not progress regularly along each street, rather it was haphazard and for several years there were long gaps in the completed terraces. Each builder, and possibly each workman, was allowed a degree of freedom in the detailing of windows and doors, their cills and lintels, ridgetiles, decorative panels and whether they were given small front gardens. Even storey heights varied occasionally by 3 or 6 inches.

The width of frontage for each terraced house determined the quality, status and pricing of the property. The meanest were allocated 12 feet while the more substantial have up to 20 feet. The width of the alleys between the houses, the steepness of the internal stairs, the amount of architectural detailing, decoration and quality of features and the existence of a front garden, were all similarly determined according to status. Before the advent of piped water, the water supply for the meaner houses was a single pump in the backyard for each group of houses.

A second development occurred after World War I. A Technical Institute had begun in the town centre during the war and in 1920 Herbert Schofield, the principal, purchased over 400 acres for a greatly enlarged educational establishment which eventually became Loughborough University and Loughborough College. Hazlerigg Hall and Rutland Hall were the first buildings on the new site, built around a lawn with a fountain in the centre. The halls were used for instruction as well as residences for the students. Hazlerigg Hall has a fine stained glass window made by the students to demonstrate the skills they were learning and a fascinating weathervane on the roof to record their gratitude and affection for Dr Schofield. On the other side of Ashby Road are several houses known as William Morris Hall purchased for student residence.

As a result, Ashby Road, which until then had been a quiet tree lined turnpike, was developed into a beautiful parklike setting of large detached houses set in the centre of gardens which were planted with cedars, pines and copper beeches. Following World War II many of these large houses became uneconomic to be maintained by single families. They have become offices, surgeries, a creche, clinics, the local Registrar of Births Marriages and Deaths occupies one and the University has acquired many of them for student residences. However, although the University owns a large part of the land, the University Campus is still understood by residents of the town to be bounded by Epinal Way and Ashby Road.

2.2 Essential Qualities

The conservation area is a key reminder of two important developments of Loughborough town. The vast expansion of the town at the end of the 1800s which created the streets of villas and

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terraced housing and the development of Ashby Road in the 1920s and 1930s when Dr Schofield built Loughborough University.

Within the terraced streets, housing, employment, recreation, religion and education still contribute to the street scene. The predominant building materials are red brick under slate roofs, sash timber windows with white painted joinery. The front gardens of the villas and the terraced houses which have them are marked by low brick walls or hedges. Many of the streets contain houses with beautiful decorative terracotta panels and brickwork, original stained glass panelled doors and some have tiled front porches that form a double entrance to the house. Original decorative foot scrapers and cellar coal grills are still common. There is a significant number of houses which are still intact.

Along Ashby Road, the mature trees and parkland settings of the large detached houses in their gardens create a fascinating evolution as one progresses along this gently curving gateway route into the town. The part of the university campus which is included in the conservation area is marked by the formal setting of the two halls fronting the circular lawn and fountain. The style of the houses is more varied but red brick, sometimes rendered and painted, white painted joinery, tiled and slate roofs dominate. There are superb examples of decoration.

2.3 Boundary of Area

The boundary of the conservation area has been drawn to include the area least changed since the Victorian and Edwardian expansion of Loughborough which created it. The nationally listed buildings amply demonstrate the better quality individually designed dwellings of the prominent families of this period. The contemporary terraced streets housed employees of Messengers factory and other industries in the town. The proprietors of these companies and many prominent local Aldermen lived in the gentlemen's residences of the area. The western boundary of the conservation area is a natural gateway composed of large trees overhanging from either side of the road which mark the entry into the historic urban area of the town.

2.4 Buildings of Historic & Architectural Significance

Along Ashby Road, the area is marked by the William Morris site and Hazlerigg and Rutland Halls of Loughborough University at one end and St Mary's Roman Catholic Church at the other. They form the anchor points for the conservation area together with Field House which was the old family home of the Pagets, The Grove which was the home of the Middleton banking family, and the Station Hotel built for the Charnwood Railway on Derby Road. Within the area of the terraced streets and along Ashby Road there are other buildings of local historic and architectural importance. These bespoke buildings reflect the use of locally available building materials and craftsmanship in their brick banding detail, stained glass windows and ironwork.

National Listed Buildings	Field House, Ashby Road
All Grade II	The Grove, Ashby Road Gatepiers at entrance to The Grove, Ashby Road St Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Ashby Road
Prominent Local Buildings	Hazlerigg Hall, University Campus Rutland Hall, University Campus Fountain in Hazlerigg Lawn Sports Pavilion, University Campus

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Bastard Gates, Ashby Road entrance to the University
Lodge at Ashby Road entrance to the University
Beam engine, University Campus
Somerton, William Morris Site, Ashby Road
Ashby Lodge, William Morris Site, Ashby Road
Highfields, William Morris Site, Ashby Road
Clavering, William Morris Site, Ashby Road
Tynte, 184 Ashby Road
Iffley, 186 Ashby Road
Redholme, 188 Ashby Road
137 – 145 Ashby Road
190, 196 and 198 Ashby Road
Rosebery School, Rosebery Street & Storer Road
Mission Church, Storer Road
St. Peter's Church, Storer Road
St Peter's Community Centre, Storer Road
Paget Arms public house, corner of Oxford Street & Paget Street
Station Hotel, corner of Station Street & Derby Road
Messengers factory site group
- foundry building and chimney
- front office range
- workshops
Charnwood Railway depot, Station Avenue
Elim Church (originally a Methodist chapel), Burleigh Road
Radmoor House, Radmoor Road

2.5 Important Streets and Spaces

The principal thoroughfare is Ashby Road which is wide, gently curving and tree lined for the most of its length. The road offers a developing aspect as one follows its length into the town. At first the road is distinctly bounded by the trees but after the Epinal Way roundabout there are views through the buildings on either side into the green spaces between and behind them, which give an open and airy character. Where metal fence railings survive they contribute to the character. The road narrows as it approaches the town centre and acquires a more urban character and finally delves beyond the conservation area into a street scene of small shops.

The terraced estates to the north and south of Ashby Road are serviced by Radmoor Road, Cumberland Road and Storer Road and bounded at the eastern edge by Derby Road, another ancient road, now busy with a lot of heavy traffic. Radmoor Road is an ancient lane that led originally to a cluster of cottages, now demolished to make way for Loughborough College. Cumberland Road was constructed on an old track between the fields and Storer Road was built on the line of an existing field boundary. The streets that lead off from these roads into the terraced housing were laid out in a strict rectilinear pattern with little provision of public open space. The field to the west of Cumberland Road remained open. Part of it was used as allotments until recent times when it was grassed over and is now used as a recreation and playing field. The rest of the field has been used for the new Epinal Way Hospital. To the south of Ashby Road, Burleigh Fields was used as a popular though private open space until the land was sold for development ca.1970.

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The house known as Burleigh Fields was occupied by the army during World War II and was subsequently left empty. It was badly damaged by fire.

Along Radmoor Road, Radmoor Recreation Ground was established beside Radmoor House as part of the building of the terraced housing. On the other side of Ashby Road, the only public open space within the terraced housing is the area surrounding St Peter's Church and Community Centre which was once allotments and gardens. Most of it has been paved and given over to car parking. The playgrounds of Rosebery School and St Mary's Primary School are paved and enclosed. There is a green open space, namely the garden of the Station Hotel, which though private is of course open to the customers of the pub.

Hastings Villa was a private house with a large garden, owned by the Upton family, not included in the original sale of the Paget estate to create the terraced housing. The Villa had an access from Oxford Street with an imposing gate. It has now been redeveloped as an enclave of 1990's housing. The access, St Mary's Close, is a private road.

Originally, the burial ground in front of St Mary's Church provided a small open space with trees. In the 1930's the church was greatly extended by Italian masons and turned through 90 degrees so that it fronted Ashby Road; the burial ground and the trees were lost.

The whole campus of Loughborough University is marked by its spacious nature with many relaxed areas of lawns and trees and several playing fields and sports pitches, which by their nature are more restricted. Within this setting Hazlerigg Lawn provides a formal and open setting to the original buildings. It is separated by a collection of graceful and delicate trees from the relaxed Student Union lawn. The William Morris site is characterised by its park-like garden setting.

Field House is located within its own mature and secluded garden, protected from the noise and traffic of Ashby Road by trees and thick plantings and an ugly close boarded fence.

2.6 Architecture and Materials

Overwhelmingly the most popular building method used in the area is brick under a slate or rosemary tile roof with white painted joinery for the window and door frames. Good brick detailing with Flemish bond brickwork, substantial sash windows and doorcases with decorative lintels, jambs and mullions, often painted white or very pale colours, contribute to the overall appearance of quality craftsmanship. The development of plate glass contributed to the fashion for the lower sash to be in one piece with small panes in the upper sash. The front doors to the terraced houses are well made with four or six panels. Where a door is fitted to the side passage it is of a much cheaper ledged and braced construction. There are some good examples of terracotta decorative panels set into the brickwork. The typical roofscape is of steeply pitched slate roofs with brick chimney-stacks and a variety of styles of terracotta chimney pots still in situ.

The smaller terraced homes which form the majority of the houses are based on a two-room floor plan with a rear kitchen/scullery extension. Generally, the front door from the street opens directly into the front parlour and the staircase rises between the front and rear parlours. Each group of two, four or six houses has a side passage leading to a narrow footpath giving access to the rear. It is not clear whether each house had its own separate rear garden as today, since in Victorian times

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the water supply was a shared pump for each group. Some of the houses have a small walled front garden separating the house from the street front. There are also more substantial houses with large courtyards and buildings to the rear for workshops and business use in Station Street and Leopold Street.

Although there was an overall plan for the development of the estate as a whole, individual builders decided their own detailing, such as window lintels, ridge tiles, and even storey heights. Careful observation reveals how individual workmanship allowed for the creation of artistic and decorative features to mid price homes. The advent of the era of mass production in building materials provided affordable decorative exterior details, which include decorative brick courses, window cases and porches. Public interest at the time in the Arts and Crafts movement also acted as an encouragement for quality in design and materials used in homes of the period. This is demonstrated in the use of encaustic tiling in porches and interior floors. Magnificent examples exist of tiling in hallway floors in houses along the Ashby Road as at No. 131, or sunflower finials on roof ridges in Ashby Road and sunflower motif brickwork banding in Fearon Street.

The villas in Storer Road and Ashby Road are more elaborate and varied in design and architectural detail. Decorative brickwork, terracotta panels and strings, stone mouldings, extensive use of stained glass, tiled porches and metalwork details, fretted barge boards and exposed pegged joinery work on jutting gables can all be found. The chimneys are tall with corbel detail and many still retain their original pots. There are also internal features such as fireplaces, panelling and staircases which are worthy of keeping.

Where buildings with original decoration and fittings remain they stand out as excellent examples of local craftsmanship from an important period of domestic architecture in Britain. This is especially important for Loughborough where the late Victorian industrial expansion was such a significant milestone in the history of the town.

While the terraced houses are two storey, many villas are three storey with cellars and attic rooms originally used by domestic servants. Sometimes the roof was used to house these smaller rooms in the third storey as a dormer or half-timbered gable front. The windows were smaller to these upper floors. The houses do not all show their frontage to the main road with some having the main living rooms facing onto the gardens at the rear.

The larger detached houses on Ashby Road are characterised by their distinctive individual appeal, some obviously influenced by the well-known Leicester architects, Goddards. The local building firm of William Moss and the Barrowcliffe architectural practice worked together in this area using the locally produced Tuckers' bricks and tiles. These houses, along the upper stretch of the Ashby Road, set high standards of craftsmanship and design on a human scale. The Grove and some other houses are examples of the older technique of rendering and painting.

Public buildings are substantial and well built, generally using the same materials as the houses. An exception is the later structure of St Peter's Church which is built of local random granite. They contribute good quality design and construction with individual features. Schools, churches, public houses and factory buildings add a valuable functional element to the community and reflect the full historical vitality of activities carried out in the area to sustain the community.

2.7 Scale and Massing of Development

The upper Ashby Road, creates an atmosphere of large houses set well away from the road in their own individual parklike gardens planted with cedars and other tall and mature trees. On the University campus the effect is grander but still well within human scale. As the road nears the town there is a short stretch of large terraced houses on either side of the road with their steeply pitched roofs set rhythmically at right angles to the road and their small front gardens protected by broad and high privet hedges. The two areas of terraced housing are more compact and low. The feeling is often of two solid rows of houses with little variation. Where there are front gardens there is a somewhat greater feeling of space. The length of the street plays a part in the feeling of enclosure.

2.8 Relationship Between Existing Structures and Open Spaces

The character of the area is currently defined by the contrast between the University, the main road and the terraced streets. The campus is open and accessible. The roadway of Ashby Road is rather enclosed by the trees and hedges though the land on either side is open and spacious with the houses well detached and set within their private garden plots. In contrast the open spaces of the dense terraced housing are less obvious; the few that exist are part of the grid of streets. However, while the streets do not offer public open space the gardens to the rear of the terraced houses provide important and valuable private spaces for the residents. These gardens are accessed through passageways with an entrance arch for each pair or group of houses. An exception to this pattern is the wide open Cumberland Playing Field which is protected from the street by a good hedge.

2.9 Trees, Hedges and Plantings of Importance

Cedar, pine, copper beech, lime and other mature trees for the length of Ashby Road from Nos 129/184 to Nos 200/205 and especially at The Grove and Nos 184-188 and the delicate group of trees in the garden of Storer Hall;

Mature trees along Ashby Road from the Epinal Way island to the western boundary of the conservation area including cypress trees protecting the William Morris site and the belt of trees alongside the path to the Student Union;

Trees and flower beds within the Ashby Road roundabout on Epinal Way;

Privet hedges on both sides of Ashby Road for much of its length;

Wooded garden of Field House;

Trees in front of St Peters Community Centre;

Lime trees surrounding St Peters Church;

Lime trees surrounding the garden of The Station Hotel;

Hedgerow protecting Cumberland Road Playing Field;

Poplar trees bounding Radmoor Road Recreation Ground;

Avenue of poplar trees at The Grove.

3 Weaknesses and Enhancement Opportunities

3.1 Architecture

The vast majority of the current building stock in the area dates from before 1915. On Ashby Road Inter and Post war development echoes the scale of the earlier developments with detached and semi detached houses standing in large gardens, though often lower in scale. The later domestic buildings on Havelock and Rosebery Streets, though excluded from the conservation area, have the same basic characteristic of their neighbours: terraced family housing in the idiom of their time, 1930s and modern alike, showing that the builders have been sensitive to the original two storey residential scene. Not so sensitive is the development at St Mary's Close, where a bright red brick cluster has allowed rooflights and a stepped frontage to intrude. The Close also suffers from a poor quality approach.

A great deal of small scale damage has been done by refurbishment to many houses, especially those in the terraced streets. Most noticeable is the replacement of windows often with uPVC frames and double glazing. Especially sad is the chopping out of stone mullions between pairs of windows to form one larger picture window and the alteration of window shapes by raising or lowering cills.

The original window frame and door makers were limited by the materials with which they worked. These limitations imposed their own design which gave a distinct aesthetic flavour. With new technology which does not impose these limits, installers of replacement windows are often tempted to make simulated copies of what they are replacing with crude detailing and no concept of what constitutes an aesthetic geometry. Many doors have also been replaced by inappropriate uPVC doors.

Damage has also been done by inappropriate rendering and in some cases artificial stone facing, including obliteration of brick mouldings. There are losses of chimney details, tops of stacks have been removed and pots replaced or removed. Re-roofing has been carried out with modern tiles and rooflights have been inserted.

Front gardens have been damaged by the removal of hedges and brick walls to allow for parking off the street. The private open space of the rear gardens between the terraces has been damaged by the intrusion of large extensions to the houses to provide additional living space.

3.2 Boundaries of the Conservation Area

The edges of the Storer Road part of the area are significant. Regent Street to the south east offers a nondescript featureless industrial building which effectively stops the aspect of Oxford Street. Derby Road to the north east offers a a similar though more interesting industrial end of view. To the north west the area is bounded by much greater variety, old industry and new three storey housing. The industrial scene is messy and unappealing, often dilapidated, while the new housing on Wheel Tappers Way and Goods Yard Close offers an invitation. The Victorian industrial buildings which were built to service the Charnwood Railway are of simple build and what features they might have had have been bricked up or obscured by signs and other trappings of modern industrial usage. The Messenger chimney is a landmark but the edge of the factory complex bounding the Cumberland Road Playing Field gives an impression of neglect and lack of concern. The Messenger site itself has degraded into a series of individual workshops with little overall control. The roadway

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is rough and potholed and a fine canopy was badly damaged by fire leaving only the skeleton of its steel frame.

To the south and west the Cumberland Road Playing Field, the line of trees and large houses at the back of Ashby Road and the glimpse of the Carillon tower at the end of Storer Road give some continuity into the rest of the town. However, the new Epinal Way hospital leaves something to be desired. It is bounded by intrusive galvanised steel railings and the architecture of the hospital is not as interesting as could be deserved. There is little evidence that any substantial trees have been planted which will soften the view in the future.

3.3 Social Changes

Since the early 1900s the street scene has been altered significantly by the dominance of cars so that streets which were once open and accessible to people are now filled with traffic and lined with parked cars. Derby Road and Ashby Road are busy thoroughfares throughout the day but the terraced streets are quiet, with few people around for most of the time but the roadways have been damaged by traffic calming in the form of sharply raised brick plateaux.

The area contains a social mix with many people both living and working within it. Many buildings previously used as large family homes have found new life as economically viable offices, creches, clinics, doctor's surgeries, and flats and especially student accommodation.

Much of the housing is rented from absentee landlords and neither they nor their tenants have much regard to the maintenance of the building. Front doors are obviously not in use, they are dusty and have no patina. Front parlour rooms are used as bedrooms with tatty curtaining. There is loss of amenity where corner shops have been converted into residential use. There is often a proliferation of "To Let" and "For Sale" signs. The latest litter is the presence of wheelie bins on the pavement. Fortunately, the area has not been over targetted by a clutter of highway signs but St Peters Community Centre has been damaged by the "amenity" of a recycling centre with its accompanying propaganda signposting.

One feature that could improve the area would be to restore the streets. It would have been this character of people using the street in Victorian times when the area was built that provided the interest to the unrelieved terrace. The restrictive strategy of traffic calming offends car drivers and still leaves them in charge of the roadways. The alternative strategy of pedestrianisation is also not viable because the people must have car and vehicle access to their houses. However, the streets are not used for more than access and a more imaginative way could be found so that car drivers, goods deliverers, cyclists, pedestrians and residents can all share the street as their community.

Along Ashby Road, many street signs, including white lining, are dictated by the requirements of traffic. As a consequence motorists are focussed only on moving as quickly as possible through the area; the aesthetic qualities of the fine houses, trees and spaces are lost to them, pedestrians and residents are adversely affected.

3.4 University Campus

Within the University, the conservation area touches the edge of the new athletics stadium. The boundary is marked by a tall ugly galvanised steel railing to maintain the security of the arena and to prevent undue access.

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While the university campus, as popularly recognised by the town being bounded by Epinal Way and Ashby Road, is very well managed, the grounds of the William Morris site, The Grove and several other properties now used as student accommodation are suffering from a minimum maintenance regime. The beautiful park settings to the houses are being eroded; lawns are becoming overgrown and weedy; undergrowth is not removed and boundary features are being allowed to fall into disrepair.

The fence protecting Field House from the traffic of Epinal Way has already been noted. A similar close boarded and creosoted fence which does not enhance the conservation area protects No 219 Ashby Road.

There is an opportunity for incorporating the Sir Richard Morris Building, affectionately known as "Sun, Sea and Sand", into the conservation area. The building is a good and interesting example of contemporary architecture and it has been sensitively placed in relation to Hazlerigg and Rutland Halls. It forms a natural extension to Hazlerigg Lawn.

Appendices

1 Local Plan policies which affect Conservation Areas & their Listed Buildings:

- EV/A - Design Policy
- EV/3 - Listed Buildings
- EV/4 - Alterations or extensions to listed buildings
- EV/5 - Setting of listed buildings
- EV/6 - Change of use of listed buildings
- EV/7 - Buildings of local historic or architectural interest
- EV/8 - Historic parks or gardens
- EV/9 - Development in conservation areas
- EV/10 - Enhancement of conservation areas
- EV/11 - Article 4 directions
- EV/12 - Advertisements
- EV/13 - Advertisements above first floor level
- EV/14 - Advertisements on listed buildings or in conservation areas
- EV/15 - Advertisements along main road corridors
- EV/16 - Areas for special control of advertisements
- EV/18 - Projecting Signs
- EV/21 - Open spaces of special character
- EV/22 - Tree Preservation Orders

2 Useful Contacts

Conservation and Design Team
Charnwood Borough Council, Southfields, Loughborough LE11 2TN
Tel: 01509 634767
www.charnwood.gov.uk/environment/133.html - main page
www.charnwood.gov.uk/environment/28291.html - further contacts

Ashby and Storer Area Residents Group
Community Office, St Peter's Community Centre, Storer Road, Loughborough
Tel: 01509 213144

English Heritage
www.english.heritage.org.uk

The Victorian Society (Leicester branch)
Eileen Chambers
28 Rectory Lane, Thurgate, Leicester LE7 7JQ
Tel: 0116 292 5824.

Loughborough and District Civic Trust
Secretary, Stephen Bradwell
29 Kingfisher Way, Loughborough LE11 3NF

Loughborough Archaeological and Historical Society
Secretary, Barry Gidley, 19 Woodbrook Road, Loughborough LE11 3QB

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Tel: 01509 237433

3 References and Further Reading

Local History Library, Granby Street, Loughborough
Public Record Office, Wigston, Leicestershire
PPG 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment Sept. 1994
Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 2001
Victorian Architecture - Roger Dixon & Stefan Muthesius, Thames & Hudson 1978
The Arts and Crafts Movement - Elizabeth Cumming & Wendy Caplan, Thames & Hudson 1991
Desirable Locations - Helen Boynton & Grant Pitches, Leicester City Council 1996
Victorian Society, Leicester Branch - Casework Manual and Archives
Messenger & Co - Catalogue Fifth Edition 1926
Glasshouse archives, Royal Horticultural Society Lindley Library, Vincent Square, London

4 Acknowledgements

Valuable assistance in compiling this character statement has been received from many people, especially current and former residents of the area.

Clare Allen initiated the idea of designating the conservation area.

Over a weekend of intense activity, a comprehensive survey was carried out by 20 volunteers from the Storer and Ashby Residents Group.

The data was entered into a spreadsheet by Trish Avis and Carol Humphreys.

A wealth of photographs were taken by Steve Bullman and Martin Allen.

Clare Allen, together with Audrey Leeson, Rosie Peddle and Hilda Puttick compiled a draft document which was the basis for a public consultation.

Ward Councillors John and Lynn Hawkes and Sandra Forrest, who took part in the survey, gave their valuable support to the project.

Rosebery School provided the venue for the public consultation.

The survey covered a very wide area from the university campus to Queens Park from which two conservation areas were designated: this Ashby Road area and the Queens Park area.

Further assistance has been received in drafting the character statement:

David Paterson, who was vicar of St Peters for 40 years;

Patricia Pinder who remembers pushing her pram in Burleigh Fields;

Eric Oldham, who lived at No 28 Oxford Street, and remembers the plumber, the joiners, the knitting mill, undertakers, coal merchants and Mrs Upton, of the family who owned Hastings Villa, as a famous radio cookery expert;

Mr Brian Blayney of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Monuments for his research on Messengers.