



Barkby and Barkby Thorpe Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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- Character analysis identifies the uses, types and layouts of buildings, key listed and unlisted buildings, coherent groups of buildings, distinctive building materials and architectural details, significant green spaces and trees, and biodiversity.

These elements are brought together in a summary of the special interest of the Conservation Area as a whole and of the two settlements in particular.

The document is intended to provide an understanding of what the Borough Council is seeking to conserve. It will help inform the adoption of planning policies and development management decisions and provide guidance to people considering development which may affect the Conservation Area. It may also, of course, be used by the Parish Council, residents of the Conservation Area and other bodies considering works within the area such as the Highway Authority.

Planning Policy Context

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a conservation area as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. Local planning authorities have a duty to review the overall extent of designation in their areas regularly and if appropriate, to designate additional areas. The Act sets out the general duties of local planning authorities relating to designated conservation areas:

- From time to time, to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts and to consult the local community about these proposals;
- In exercising their planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

‘Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment’ (PPS 5), published by the Department of Communities and Local Government, states the Government’s objectives for heritage assets and puts forward policies to balance the need to ensure the viability or usability of an asset against doing no harm to its architectural, historic, cultural or artistic values. The PPS advises that “*local planning authorities should ensure that they have evidence about the historic environment and heritage assets in their area and that this is publicly documented*” (Policy HE2.1). Conservation areas are ‘designated heritage assets’.

A conservation area contains a number and variety of elements which combine together to create the significance of the heritage asset overall. This appraisal describes those elements but it does not attempt to be exhaustive and the policies in PPS 5 lay the duty on all concerned, including residents and prospective developers, to understand the significance of any element.

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS), published in March 2009, advises local authorities that the historic environment should be understood, conserved and enhanced, in recognition of its own intrinsic value (Policy 27: Regional Priorities for the Historic Environment). The RSS is due to be withdrawn but remains in place until the enactment of the ‘Localism Bill’ by Parliament, which is expected in 2012.

Charnwood Borough Council Local Plan Saved Policy EV/1- Design, seeks to ensure a high standard of design for all new development and that the design should be compatible with the locality and utilise materials appropriate to the locality.

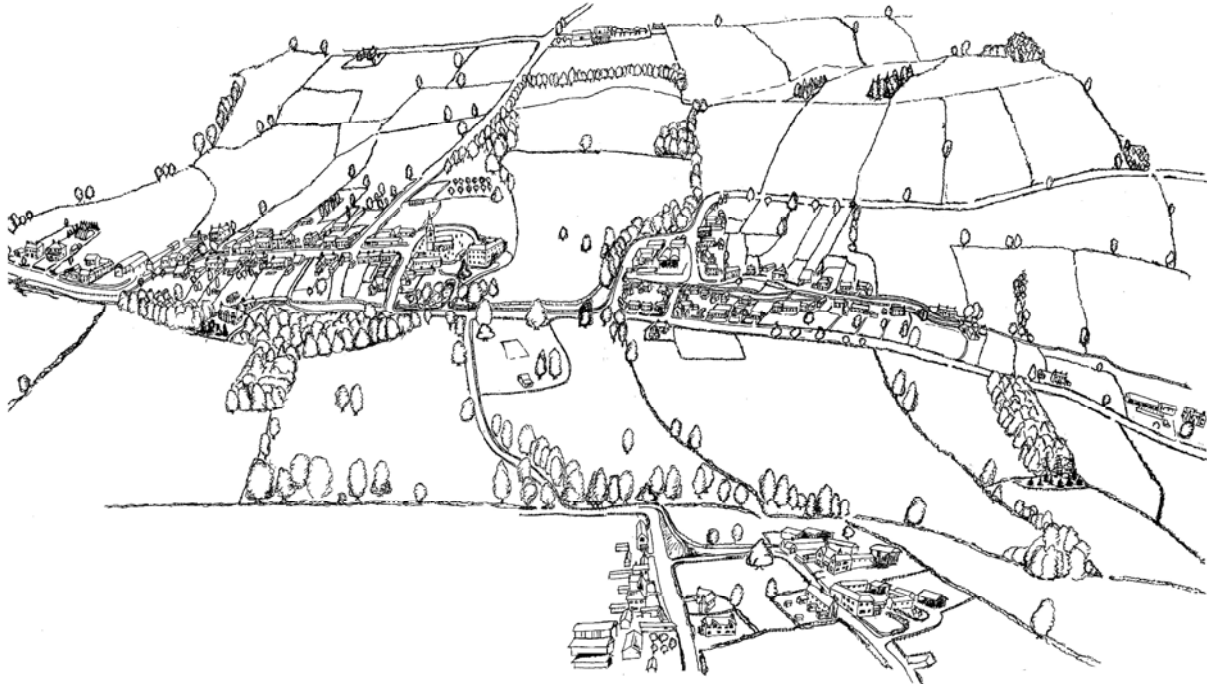
The Council’s adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) ‘Leading in Design’ reinforces the need to understand the setting and context when proposing development in a sensitive location such

as a conservation area. It encourages developers to use local guidance such as Conservation Area Character Appraisals when considering their designs.

Other guidance adopted by CBC

- Backland & Tandem Development Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)
- House Extensions SPG
- Shopfronts & Signs SPD

ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST



Drawing by Nick Toms

Location and Setting

Barkby lies in the valley of Barkby Brook, a tributary of the Wreake, at a crossing of two minor roads, from Syston and the Fosse Way up to High Leicestershire, and from Queniborough to Thurmaston and Hamilton and hence to Leicester. It is about 8 Km north-east of Leicester.

In the landform the settlement is at the base of the slope up to the plateau and hills of high Leicestershire to the south-east. To the north-west lies the broad valley of the Wreake and the Soar. The settlement sits on glacial deposits of marl, sand and gravel to the west and boulder clay to the east.

The Conservation Area encompasses almost the whole of the two settlements with the large area of parkland between them, set in an area of Grade 2 and Grade 3 agricultural land.

The village of Barkby is set in a landscape of agricultural fields, pasture, and woodland. Barkby Thorpe is a hamlet at the top of the hill on the road out to Hamilton and Leicester¹. It is set in an open, sometimes exposed, landscape of large agricultural fields and paddocks with occasional trees and spinneys. To the southwest below the fields is the urbanised valley of the Soar with the city of Leicester and Charnwood Forest in the distance.

The historic pattern of the two settlements, the parkland and the agricultural setting has remained fairly unaltered for two centuries.

¹ Archaeological surveys undertaken in the fields in and around Barkby Thorpe suggest that it was a larger settlement in times gone by.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Origins and Development

From its name it is assumed that Barkby is a Viking settlement. However, there is evidence of human settlement from well before the Viking invasions and it is more likely that the village was taken over by them. It is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 where its name was written Barcheberie, taken to mean the village by Birch trees. At the time of the survey it consisted of 18 carucates, had 16 ploughs and 16 acres of meadow. The name is also written as Barchebi which may refer to the separate settlement of Thorpe Barkby which at the survey had 2 ploughs and 5 acres of meadow.

The church of St Mary was built in the 13th and 14th centuries on the site of an older place of worship. The chancel of the church was probably built in 1225. Also in the 13th century Merton College, Oxford, began its long association with the village by purchasing Manor Farm in 1271. Their purchase included the Malt Shovel Inn from which it is presumed that part of that building is now 750 years old.

The association with the Pochin family also began in the Mediaeval period and their relationship with the village and the hamlet has formed and is still very much part of the character.

For centuries the settlement has been based on an agricultural economy, providing a mix of dairying with arable crops. Major changes took place in the 18th century as pressure grew to change the system of farming. Until then the open fields were used in which each farmer was allocated a variety of strips in different parts of the parish so that, in theory, each would have a mixture of the better and the poorer land. Farmers wanted to bring their holdings together and in 1779 an Act of Inclosure was passed. Many of the poorer people were dispossessed.

In common with all neighbouring villages many people engaged in framework knitting. There is a group of houses called the Frameworkers Cottages on Vicarage Lane¹. This home industry did not last long; with improvements to transport in the Soar and Wreake valleys it migrated to factories in the larger centres, such as Syston and Leicester, so that Barkby was left only with its agricultural economy.

In 1807 Barkby Hall was rebuilt to a design by William Wyatt on the site of the previous Jacobean building. The Hall was altered in the 1850s, 1870 and 1902, and extended in 2000. In the 19th Century and into the 20th the Pochin family built a school in 1869 and a number of houses for their tenants, mostly on the eastern side of the village. Gas was introduced in 1900, sewerage in 1910, piped water in 1921 and finally electricity arrived in 1935. The Village Hall was opened in 1929. Also in this period, throughout the village many of the thatched and timber framed houses were rebuilt in brick and slate.

In more recent years there has been remarkably little development. The stability of the village, the loyalty of the families, particularly the Pochin tenants, forms a great part of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Later into the 20th Century in the western part of the village a number of houses and bungalows have been built filling in plots on the brook side of Main Street and a group of council houses were built on land between Beeby and School Lanes.

Much of the information about the history of the village is taken from John Nichols' monumental work about Leicestershire at the end of the 18th Century. He sent a list of over 70 queries to every parish in the county. The responses for Barkby provided by the vicar, Henry Woodcock in 1790, were so comprehensive that even John Nichols felt obliged to acknowledge his source and publish the answers as given.

¹ Estate records do not record that framework knitting actually took place in these cottages.

The Inclosure map was drawn by John Seagrave in 1780. It refers to the Inclosure only of Barkby: Barkby Thorpe was a separate settlement. The map shows that there has been remarkably little change to the village over 230 years. The Hall and church are at the centre, dividing Main Street from Brookside; the street system is the same - except that the jitty from the Malt Shovel to the brook remains today as a footpath, unused by vehicles; the tight enclosure of Main Street and the loose enclosure of Brookside look remarkably similar. Another change at the time of inclosure was the loss of the back lane, which originally gave access around the north side of the village. It continues today as Barkby Holt Lane, originally Croxton Road, and remnants of the sunken lane are still visible in places. Since Inclosure the greatest change has been the amalgamation of the strips that were allocated within the village. At Inclosure the villagers were provided with garden spaces for growing their vegetables and probably raising chickens or a pig. Some of these strips are still apparent but many have been joined together either as the farms have altered or as they have been made into larger fields especially at the end of Brookside.

Archaeological Interest ¹

It is known that people have been in the vicinity since before Roman times. There have been finds of pottery and tools from neolithic and paleolithic times in the fields.

Within the Area there is evidence of Romano-British settlement. A Roman drain was unearthed underneath the Dairy Farm and there have been Anglo-Saxon finds in excavations at Barkby Hall.

Beyond the Area there is evidence of an Iron Age enclosure north east of Barkby Hall, evidence from Roman times of a villa at Hamilton, a farmhouse between Barkby and Beeby and a villa or temple on the hill at Barkby Thorpe and evidence of Mediaeval earthworks and a mill at Brookside, and more earthworks along Beeby Road. There used to be a water-mill at the west end of the village, on the south side of the brook, close to the bottom of the garden of No 49 Main Street.

There are several areas of archaeological interest at and in the vicinity of Barkby Thorpe. There is a windmill mound to the east of the hamlet. To the south there have been finds of Anglo-Saxon pottery, prehistoric crop marks, a Neolithic arrowhead and a Bronze Age scraper.

To the south of the hamlet is Abbots pond, a visible reminder of the ownership of much of the land by Leicester Abbey before the dissolution of the monasteries. In this same area a burial site was found during quarrying in the early 18th Century.

Within the hamlet there are 15 known wells. Within living memory a brick yard on the Barkby side of Barkby Thorpe Lane opposite the bridle road to Humberstone was reclaimed for agricultural use.

It is likely that, especially below ground, there is evidence of previous settlement anywhere within the Conservation Area and potentially in a wide area surrounding the two settlements.

Population

Barkby and Barkby Thorpe are small villages. The actual figures for population are difficult to calculate because what is and has been counted is so variable. In 1670 55 householders were assessed for the hearth tax. In the 1801 Census a population of 389 was counted which had increased to 955 in the 1931 Census. However, these figures are unreliable because in 1935 the parish boundary was redrawn and up to half the people found themselves living in Thurmaston instead. According to Barker's Directory, in 1875 Barkby parish had a population of 440 with 107

¹ Information taken from Leicestershire County Council's Historic Environment Record and the fieldwalking exercises carried out by archaeology students at Leicester University.

inhabited houses. In 1973 the population was 360. Today there are about 175 addresses in the parish, of which 130 are in the Conservation Area.

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

Plan Form

Barkby village has a linear form which is bisected by the extensive parkland of Barkby Hall, so that it appears as two distinct and separate parts. At the centre are St Marys Church and the Hall. To the north-west is a linear development of farmsteads and houses along Main Street. On the further side of the park, to the south-east, are more farmsteads and a number of houses and cottages spread along each side of the brook. Unusually, most of these houses and cottages are only accessible by the footpaths which run along the brook connected by simple footbridges. This part of the village also contains a late 18th Century terrace of housing and the Pochin School beside the road to Beeby and a small group of 20th Century council housing. There are a number of private access drives across the fields from Beeby Road to some of the houses along the south side of the brook.

Barkby Hall is approached by a drive from Beeby Road; an additional new drive has been created from Queniborough Road. The Hall has its own gateway into the churchyard. The Hall itself and the parkland to the north are almost invisible from the rest of the village being surrounded by substantial trees and woodland and high brick or stone boundary walls. To the south the parkland is open and sweeps up the hillside bounded by simple iron railings. It contains the village cricket ground and several fine oak trees. There is a road leading through the park to Barkby Thorpe.

Barkby Thorpe itself is a small hamlet of three working farmsteads and a few cottages clustered around a series of open grass paddocks, centred on a junction of two minor roads, Queen Street and King Street.

Linking the village and the hamlet to their surrounding settlements is a web of roads and footpaths. Some of these footpaths are ancient rights of way, such as the broad path to Keyham, known as the "County Road", and assumed to have been in existence since before the Romans. At a cross roads on this track is an old cast iron pole of a signpost whose finger signs have now gone. The footpath continues to the west as Barkby Thorpe Lane. Local people remember that this was formerly called Salters Gate. It is known that ancient salt routes crossed the country from the North Sea to the Midlands, and this may be one of them.

Villagescape

The Conservation Area has several very different characters.

1. The western side of the village is a tightly enclosed long linear space in which the buildings are close to the edge of the pavement which itself disappears to almost nothing in places. Some of the buildings, such as No 22 Main Street or the front gable of Manor Farm, are taller than the average 2 storeys, which strengthens the sense of enclosure. Within the tightness there are some openings where the houses are set back from the road although most of these have a significant brick wall, sometimes with a hedge or small trees. The tight enclosure continues around the sharp bend by the church, past the barn, down to Jack's Bridge over the brook.
2. To the south of the brook is an area of woodland, a spinney which was originally bounded by a semi-circular drive leading from Spinney Bridge at the western end of the village to the entrance to Barkby Hall. It was intended as a private drive to the Hall, bypassing the village. Part of it was built on Merton College land so it was never properly used and is now almost completely overgrown. Within the spinney are the Pinfold Cottage and Gamekeepers Cottage.

3. From Jack's Bridge one enters into the parkland which at first is overhung with trees and soon opens out with a vista of the park sweeping up the hill, with the enclosure of the stone wall and trees behind bordering the private grounds of Barkby Hall. Many of the free-standing oak trees in the park are exceptionally well proportioned, tall and mature. The open railings along the roads bordering the park add significantly to the character and the feeling of spaciousness.
4. At the centre of the village is Barkby Hall, a substantial, three storey house of simple Regency style. The Hall itself is largely unseen from the public realm. Its impact on the Conservation Area is noticed through its mature landscaped grounds defined by many trees and the stone and brick boundary walls;
5. After the park there is a mixture of farmsteads, Council housing and private houses all set back from the road. This area is partly rural, partly suburban in character.
6. Along the brook is a distinctive setting of houses and cottages, some close to the road or footpaths, some set well back, all with gardens, allotments and green space between them going down to the banks of the brook. Most of the buildings are on a slight terrace in the valley side so that they are barely visible from the surrounding fields.
The water in the brook is clear flowing. At intervals there are little concrete footbridges with post and tube railings which continue along the footpaths. The banks of the brook are well maintained, almost landscaped, interspersed with stretches of natural vegetation. The whole valley has an intimate character.
At night the low level of lighting allows for good views of the stars when the skies are clear. There are a number of tracks from Beeby Road across the fields giving vehicle access to the houses on the south side of the brook.
7. School Lane is a street with a long terrace of housing against the pavement on one side and the Council housing set back on the other. At one end is the Pochin School, an early nineteenth century building, and at the other is the later Pochin's End (No 32). Both buildings are slightly larger and more decorated than the intervening terraced housing.
8. After the road junction at the top of the hill, Barkby Thorpe is an open space of grass paddocks bordered by three large farmsteads with their associated farm buildings and a few cottages. The paddocks are surrounded by open railings and by a stone wall along Queen Street. Well maintained grass verges border Queen Street but there is only one short stretch with a footpath. King Street leads into a narrow and tightly enclosed short section before the road dips down to the valley and Hamilton.

Despite the differences of enclosure there is a uniformity derived from the restricted palette of building shapes and materials. Most of the cottages and houses are of simple rectangular form with a simple ridge parallel to the street. Amongst them the farmhouses and the Old Vicarage and The Dower House, stand out. They are more complex in plan, some have hipped roofs and many have more complex shapes. Also more complex are the later Pochin Estate houses at Brookside, some built in Arts and Crafts style and some Victorian houses in Gothic style with steeper roofs, gables and dormers.

Interrelationship of Spaces

Main Street is characterised by the feeling of tight enclosure. However, within this appearance there are many gaps in the enclosure where houses, especially the later bungalows, are set back from the road. This is particularly so at the western end where the feeling of enclosure is more relaxed. Beside the Malt Shovel is their car park. The sad loss of the brick boundary wall a few years ago left a wide opening off the street, which is now much improved with the newly refurbished railings. At the back of the car park the woodland surrounding the brook is seen. After the junction with Queniborough Road there is a broadening at the forge which, if it were not for the stream of traffic, would be a pleasant meeting place. This space is terminated quite abruptly by the cottage, attached

old barn and the gate to the churchyard. From here, after the sharp bend, the road goes down to the bridge.

After the bridge, and a further sharp bend, from under the canopy of trees one approaches the principal space in the village of the parkland which divides the two parts of Barkby and rises up the hill.

At Brookside the roads, footpaths and footbridges form a pleasant web in which to wander as they follow the turns in the brook. The winding valley alternates between openings of gardens and allotments and areas of trees. On either side, occasionally visible, one notices the fields beyond the village.

Key Views and Vistas

In the western part of the village, the arrival from Syston is marked by the bend in the road with the farm buildings of Merton Farm on the left and a backdrop of trees which surround the brook. Main Street winds gently creating a changing scene, eventually terminated by the Parish Church of St Mary, with its fine broach spire. In the other direction, going towards Syston, the countryside is unseen until after the double bend at the farm. The long brick wall to the garden and the front face of the farmhouse deflect the view.

Along Brookside there is a sequence of views which unfold as one moves through the valley of the brook with allotments and gardens and the variety of cottages at the edges. The scene is all the more attractive from the footpaths because one necessarily appreciates it at walking pace and free from the volume of traffic using the through roads of the village.

As one enters the village along Beeby Road there is a pleasant view alongside of the cottages at Brookside. There are fine vistas of the parkland from Beeby Road and especially from the junction at the top of the hill. The views are enhanced by the open railings.

From outside, the village appears surrounded by trees, in a landscape which otherwise has few trees. From inside, there are limited views into the countryside beyond but as one leaves the village, to the west Thurmaston and its bright red brick shopping centre is clearly seen on the hill as well as the settlements of Syston and Queniborough.

Barkby Thorpe is prominent and distinctive in its position on the hilltop as one arrives from Leicester. Looking out from the hamlet there are expansive views, ranging from the city centre in the south west to the hills of Charnwood Forest in the north west. South of the hamlet there is an intervening ridge from where, especially on the road to Hamilton, the distinct urban edge of the city becomes visible.

From the footpath to Keyham, the "County Road", there are fine views northwards of the village laid out along the valley of the brook. The hall and the church are both clearly seen.

Landmarks

The spire of St Mary's church is visible from every approach to the village. Rising above the trees which surround the village, the spire is a quintessential reminder of the presence of the village. It is the focus for Main Street. The most noticeable building besides the church is White House Farm, No 22 Main Street, whose Georgian façade, with its unexpected semi-circular window, is set close to the road.

At Brookside the landmark is the brook itself, set within its sloping banks landscaped by the gardens and allotments.

The Pochin School which is still well-used has an important setting at the corner of School Lane and Beeby Road.

Barkby Thorpe is a landmark in itself when approached up the hill from both Thurmaston and Hamilton.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Building Types, Layouts and Uses

Barkby and Barkby Thorpe remain to this day farming communities in which the farmsteads and their associated activities within the village and hamlet comprise an important part of the character of the Conservation Area. There are four working farms in Barkby and three in Barkby Thorpe. Other farmsteads in the settlement are now domestic. The buildings that comprise the farmsteads have grown organically. The principal farmhouse sometimes stands separate; sometimes it is attached to barns and outbuildings. Many of the associated barns, stables and outhouses are built in traditional materials of brick with slate or clay tile roofs. Newer, are the parlours and silos, etc., which have a more industrial feel, being constructed of steel frames with corrugated iron, asbestos cement or other sheeting. Taken as a whole the buildings create a variety of shapes and textures within the fabric of the village. Two of the farmhouses are substantial three storey buildings but in the main the buildings are two storey.

The presence of so many working farms in Barkby and Barkby Thorpe is unique in the Borough of Charnwood. Although other villages have some working farms within them, only in this Conservation Area does agricultural activity form such a significant part of the character of the settlement.

Besides the farmsteads, St Marys church and Barkby Hall, there is a surprising variety of different buildings in the Area. There are the Old Vicarage and its companion, The Dower House, on Vicarage Lane, two pubs, the Pochin School, a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel at No 20 School Lane and a Primitive Methodist chapel at No 18 Brookside, both now converted as dwellings, the Village Hall and a row of one storey workshops, which include the forge. Most of the other buildings are houses of two storeys. They are of simple rectangular form, often in terraces, with simple ridged roofs parallel to the street. The Victorian houses, such as the Dairy Farm and Thorpe Farmhouse at Barkby Thorpe, and the later houses in Arts and Crafts style erected by the Pochin Estate are of more complex shape. The 20th Century developments include a number of bungalows.

Within the domestic houses there is evidence of previous commercial use, such as the post office only recently closed at No 11 Main Street and a shopfront at No 12 Main Street.

The character of Brookside is enhanced by the presence of the Brookside Inn which adds a degree of vitality to the scene.

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

At the Main Street side:

Barkby Hall;

St Marys Church, which dates from the 13th Century and has a fine broach spire. It is interesting also for its interior. It is one of the few churches still to have features such as box pews and galleries for music and choir. It is known as a “prayer book” church from the changes introduced to allow the whole congregation to hear the prayers and readings from the Bible;

Forge and workshops;

Whitehouse Farm, No 22;

At Brookside:

The Old Vicarage and its companion The Dower House;

The Frameworkers Cottages on Vicarage Lane;

There are no listed buildings in Barkby Thorpe.

Key Unlisted Buildings

The Malt Shovel Inn, is vital to the village as much for its social significance as its history. It is not listed because it has been rather too much altered, especially internally, where previously much loved features such as the enormous copper for brewing have been removed.

At Barkby Thorpe, Manor Farm , rebuilt in 1915, is an imposing complex of buildings at the junction of Queen Street and King Street and Thorpe Farmhouse is a well built Victorian house, in Flemish bond brickwork, with sash windows with stone lintels.

Coherent groups

The core of the Conservation Area is one large coherent group constituted by all the buildings at the sharp bend of Main Street with the focus of the church, namely from No 1 to the Post Office, No 11, the terrace of Nos 13 to 21, No 25 and the Malt Shovel Inn on one side, Nos 2 to 6, including the barn, the row of buildings along the south side of the churchyard, the forge and its single storey workshops, the rows of outbuildings extending up Queniborough Road, Nos 10, 12 & 14, including the shop, and No 16 on the other side of the road. Together they form a villagescape remarkably largely unaltered for the last 100 years.

Each of the farmsteads comprises the farmhouse with a range of barns, outhouses, etc. Many of these outbuildings are constructed in traditional style of brick with a slate or tile roof and they form pleasing groups in the villagescape.

At Barkby Thorpe the terrace of Pochin houses and Hilltop Farm form a short tight enclosure at the entrance to the hamlet.

Building Materials and Architectural Details

Walls

Apart from St Marys church and Barkby Hall the buildings are now almost without exception¹ built of brick. Until recently this was a soft red brick from local clay. Some of the brickwork is quite ancient as seen in the narrow coursing of the late 18th Century brickwork. In Victorian times the brickwork became more regular, laid in Flemish bond with contrasting headers and stretchers, occasionally decorated with buff or dark blue brick. In the 20th Century the use of cavity walling meant that brickwork became less decorative. Some walls are rendered or painted and some of the buildings have a plinth of cobbles and field stone. An example of new brickwork is in the latest extension to No 31 Main Street, where the new walls are in a mottled brick in order to approximate the new plain stretcher bond to the pattern of the older Flemish bond immediately adjacent. The result is successful.

There is evidence externally in only a few places of the timber framing that would have been common. It is still visible at Manor Farm, No 24 Main Street, but elsewhere one must presume that the timber framing is interior and that the outer walls have all been rebuilt in brick. By contrast, the evidence of thatch is often visible where the low eaves have been raised to provide a better height

¹ The exceptions are the modern agricultural barns and silos in corrugated sheet materials.

to the first floor and the change in brickwork is obvious. Unfortunately, the timber framing at No 18 Vicarage Lane does not appear genuine because black painted planks have been fixed to the façade.

Some houses and cottages have simple decorative dentils at the eaves, and often a simple brick band between ground and first floor. No 25 Main Street has much more elaborate egg and dart at the eaves and dentil coursing both at the eaves and as a band.

There are some more elaborate buildings, such as The Dower House¹ which has stone quoins and stone surrounds to the windows, and the Arts and Crafts style house, No 52 Brookside, where the walls are rendered but the quoins and window surrounds are brick. The Council houses on Beeby Road and School Lane have either clay tile-hung gables or first floor weatherboarding, neither of which are truly Leicestershire.

These exceptions create part of the variety in the character, allowing such houses to stand out. Care should be taken not to copy these exceptions or unnecessarily to devise new exceptions which would diminish their difference and also diminish the general appearance of the Conservation Area which is formed of simple red brickwork.

Roofs

The predominant roofing material is Welsh slate. There is evidence of previous thatch, for instance at No 25 Brookside, where the eaves line has been raised but only one building remains with a thatch roof at No 18 Vicarage Lane. Amongst the Welsh slate there is some Swithland slate and there are also roofs of plain clay tile. Some of the more modern barns and outhouses of the farms are roofed with corrugated asbestos or corrugated iron. In general the roofs have a simple ridge, but the more polite farmhouses have hipped roofs, such as No 16 Main Street.

Doors and Windows

Throughout the Area, there is an excellent survival of traditional timber windows.

Architectural style and use of materials generally follows the period in which the building was erected. The oldest buildings are from the 18th Century. The larger buildings such as the farmhouses have sash windows, the cottages have Yorkshire sliding sashes. Later Victorian houses have well made timber mullion and transom windows, while the cottages have simple casements. In the Victorian buildings there are often bay windows and small gables, which in the early 20th Century Arts and Crafts styles become rather more elaborate.

Some of the more modest cottages display a particular detail where the window head on the first floor may be taken up to the eave, interrupting the line of the corbel or dentil course of brickwork.

The White House farmhouse, No 22 Main Street has a large semi-circular sash window to the staircase in the front façade. No 16 Main Street has rubbed brick arches to the sash windows.

Some of the buildings have simple doorcases. Examples are at No 38 Main Street, No 22 Main Street and No 27 Brookside.

Details

A treasured detail is the use of dark green paint for the doors of the Pochin Estate houses. For a short period at the turn of the 19th Century William Pochin placed a date stone on the walls with his initials and date, e.g. "WAP 1887"; William Pochin also placed date stones between 1731 and 1798 as did G W Pochin between 1843 and 1929.

¹ The building was called The Dower House in the 1970s because a Reverend Pochin had lived there in the Victorian era.



Parks, Gardens and Trees

The parkland of Barkby Hall is a very important feature of the village and the Conservation Area. It is bounded by simple iron railings which makes it a distinctive and attractive open feature for all who pass by. It contains the village cricket ground and several fine oak trees. It divides rather than unites the two parts of the village, Main Street and Brookside.

Main Street has its own green space in the quiet and reflective churchyard, while Brookside has the particularly attractive space of the gardens and allotments and scattered trees on the banks of the brook. The footpaths on either side are bounded by

concrete post and tube railings, which replace, except for a short stretch, the older iron hooped railings.

To the south of Main Street, the brook flows behind the houses in a valley secluded with trees. The general landscape around the village has been cleared of trees to create the arable farmland leaving a few patches of woodland but from outside, the village appears quite surrounded by trees.

Within the village, along Main Street, there are few trees. Mainly the yews in the churchyard, the beech trees in the front garden of Merton Farm, No 32, and the trees lining the path from the Malt Shovel down to the brook. This makes the little birch tree at No 24 rather important. By contrast Barkby Hall is surrounded by numerous fine and mature trees.

The grass paddocks at Barkby Thorpe are bounded mostly by simple iron railings, with a stone wall along Queen Street. The northern paddock has a row of lime trees, the southern has an ancient horse chestnut and a younger beech tree. The hamlet is framed at the back by the oak trees at the top of the parkland.

The OS Map of 1894 shows that there were many orchards around both Barkby and Barkby Thorpe. Most of these have disappeared.

Biodiversity

Although the villages of Barkby and Barkby Thorpe are located within the High Leicestershire Landscape Character Area, most of the Conservation Area has a distinctive landscape more akin to lowland wood pasture and parkland.

The tree cover is substantial. There are deep woodland belts along field boundaries and around the grounds of Barkby Hall, trees lining the banks of Barkby Brook, and isolated mature trees within the parkland.

The Area includes cattle grazed pastures on ridge and furrow – conjuring up a pastoral, tranquil landscape – and, although the more intensively managed cricket pitch has been integrated within this area, mature trees close by have been retained and the planting of new trees is a positive measure which should ensure the long-term continuity of the mature tree habitat, on which many other species are dependent.

Barkby Brook gently meandering is the main wildlife corridor and it provides a key link with the surrounding countryside. Together with the woodland belts and the mature trees, and the cattle-grazed pastures, the brook represents a cohesive ecosystem network. The habitats support a rich diversity of invertebrates, mammals and birds and provide excellent connectivity between the

Conservation Area and the network of habitats, such as hedgerows, copses and small spinneys, found in the countryside further afield.



Several bat roosts have been recorded within the Conservation Area, including those of the common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. Bats in Britain are exclusively insectivorous. They rely on good-quality foraging grounds close to their roosts and on uninterrupted ecological networks to commute and disperse.

In summer, the Area is graced by the aerial displays of house martins *Delichon urbicum* catching insect preys in flight. This sociable species nests in close colonies often near human habitation and there are several colonies in Barkby. Rows of enclosed mud nests, with an entrance hole at the top, can be seen cupped under the eaves of dwellings and farm buildings. Another characteristic summer visitor is the swallow *Hirundo rustica* which swoops low over the insect-rich pastures. Besides a wide range of typical garden bird species, resident birds such as the green woodpecker *Picus viridis*, great spotted woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*, jay *Garrulus glandarius*, kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* and song thrush *Turdus philomenos* have been recorded in the Area.

With several farms operating from within the Conservation Area, the surrounding rural landscape always feels in close proximity. The great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* is known to be closely associated with the field ponds of the surrounding countryside.

Several species of principal importance, such as the skylark *Alauda arvensis*, a ground nesting bird species well known for its sustained melodious song whilst ascending and hovering high up above fields, and the brown hare *Lepus europaeus*, have been recorded in the fields adjoining Barkby Thorpe.

DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST

The main contributions to the special character of Barkby and Barkby Thorpe Conservation Area are:

- The seven working farmsteads with their associated activities;
- The fine open parkland, with many mature oak trees and the village cricket ground;
- The impact of the trees and boundary walls of the mature and well defined landscaped grounds of Barkby Hall which itself is largely hidden from view;
- The attractive scene at Brookside created by the collection of houses and cottages within the landscape of gardens and allotments along either side of the brook, the sense of which is enhanced by being largely accessible only on foot;
- The continuity provided by the Pochin Estate's centuries long interest in the village;
- The coherent collection of buildings which enclose Main Street from No 1 to the Malt Shovel, and No 2 to No 16 with the focus of the church;
- The plan of the settlement which is almost unaltered for 230 years;
- The landmark of Barkby Thorpe at the top of the hill;

Threats and Weaknesses

The roads from Queniborough and Syston to the fringes of north Leicester have become extremely popular as rat runs with steady streams of traffic throughout the day but especially with commuters and even heavy goods vehicles trying to avoid the main trunk roads. The effect of the traffic is particularly pronounced at the sharp bend by the church. In Barkby Thorpe it has a major impact on the two narrow streets of the hamlet: it is not a place to feel comfortable as a pedestrian. Traffic management measures have been adopted just outside the Area at the bottom of the hill to the south of Barkby Thorpe and on Queniborough Road. These measures have included a proliferation of signs, road markings and street lighting which have been designed with little sympathy for the heritage asset and rural context.

Land between Barkby Thorpe and the urban edge of Leicester and Thurmaston is being considered as an option for a Sustainable Urban Extension. To the south of the hamlet, the current urban edge of the city has a dramatic impact on the landscape of the open fields. Although the urban edge is not visible from the Conservation Area, some of the fields, paddocks and spinneys that surround the hamlet are visible. The relationship of the hamlet and the village to their rural setting is an important part of the character of the Area.

Any future development proposals which affect this relationship will need to be carefully assessed in the context of the duty in the 1990 Act to *pay special attention to the desirability to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area*. PPS 5 clarifies that *Local Planning Authorities should treat favourably applications that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to, or better reveal the significance of the asset. When considering applications that do not do this, Local Planning Authorities should weigh any such harm against the wider benefits of the application.*

Traditional farm buildings, which as noted in the appraisal form a significant part of the character of the Area, are among the most ubiquitous of historic building types in the countryside. They are not only fundamental to its sense of place and local distinctiveness but also represent a major economic asset in terms of their capacity to accommodate new uses. The restructuring of farming and other economic and demographic changes in the countryside provide both threats and opportunities in terms of retaining the historic interest of this building stock and its contribution to the wider landscape.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

General Principles

The appraisal above should be used to inform and guide development decisions.

Any proposed changes should be carried out in a sensitive manner, taking into account the established character. New development must respond to its immediate environment i.e. its context, in terms of scale, form, materials and detailing. Otherwise, alterations will have a detrimental effect on the historic and locally distinctive form of the Area.

Within the Area the Council will insist on good quality schemes which respond positively to their historic setting, this extends to small buildings such as garages and even boundary walls and fences. Minor alterations need to be carefully considered as incremental change can have a significant detrimental effect on the character of an area over a period of time.

Central government guidance contained in PPS 1 and PPS 5, the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, Leading in Design and other SPD will be used to assess the quality of proposal for new development.

The character of the Conservation Area identified in the appraisal above is such that the following general principles should be noted when considering any development in all parts of the Conservation Area:

- The conservation area has a number of distinct “grains” or patterns of built form and spaces which are part of its historic development. These give the area great individuality, characterised by the pattern of historic buildings, ancient footpaths and highways and clearly defined boundaries. These “grains” are an important part of the character of the conservation area and will be protected.
- The emphasis for new proposals will be on high quality of design. There may be opportunity for innovative modern design. However, a dramatic contemporary statement is unlikely to be appropriate. As noted in the appraisal, there are several buildings which stand out as individual buildings. Care should be taken not to copy these, nor to create further individual buildings which would dilute the general character of the buildings in the Area.
- Scale is the combination of a building’s height and bulk when related to its surroundings. Proposed new development must take into account the scale of the existing buildings, and must not dominate or overwhelm them.
- Alterations and extensions must respect the form of the original building and its locality. The use of high quality materials and detailing, whether modern or traditional is essential. Roof lines, roof shape, eaves details, verge details and the creation of new chimneys are important considerations.
- Windows and doors of a traditional design respect the historic nature of the buildings to which they belong and make a very important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The use of upvc and standardised high speed joinery techniques nearly always leads to unsuitably detailed windows which will be generally unacceptable in the conservation area. In most cases the building regulation requirements can be met without the need to use clumsy and awkwardly detailed windows.
- The appraisal has identified the types of materials that characterise the conservation area and where possible this should be used to help alterations respect that established character.
- Applicants for planning permission must provide a meaningful “Design and Access Statement”, to explain the design decisions that have been made and to show how proposed alterations relate to their context. A detailed analysis of the locality should demonstrate that there is a full appreciation of the local streetscape and how it has developed, including prevailing building forms, materials and plot ratios.

- Safeguarding of protected species must be taken on board when considering planning proposals such as conversion, tree felling, housing development and other changes which may affect their roosting places, commuting routes and feeding areas.

Enforcement strategy

Effective enforcement is vital to make sure there is public confidence in the planning system to protect the special character of the Area. Unauthorised development can often be damaging to that character.

Taking proactive action can improve the appearance and character of the Area, making it more attractive and in some instances increasing the potential for investment. Effective monitoring of building work to make sure it is carried out in accordance with the approved details and with planning conditions ensures new development makes the positive contribution envisaged when permission was granted.

In order to protect the character of the Conservation Area the Borough Council will seek to:

- use enforcement powers in cases where unauthorised development unacceptably affects the character of the conservation area.
- take proactive action to improve or enhance the appearance of the area.
- monitor development under way to make sure it fully complies with the terms of any planning permission or listed building consent.

Carrying out unauthorised work to a listed building or to protected trees and hedgerows and the unauthorised demolition a building within a conservation area is an offence. In such cases, the Council will consider prosecution of anyone responsible and enforcement of any necessary remedial action.

The powers set out in Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 can be used where the condition of land or property is considered to be seriously damaging to the amenity of the locality.

Article 4 Direction proposals

The quality of the Conservation Area is often threatened by the cumulative impact of numerous small changes to many buildings. Terraces that once displayed integrity of design through the use of matching features such as doors, window, chimneys and porches, have been unbalanced by various alterations and additions. On the whole such changes do not require planning permission.

In order to preserve and enhance the character of conservation areas, many planning authorities use Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights on groups of buildings or areas. Restrictions normally relate to particular elements such as replacement windows and doors, or roofing.

It is not proposed to introduce any Article 4 Direction for Barkby and Barkby Thorpe Conservation Area.

General condition

The Conservation Area is in a very good condition. There is a good survival of traditional details such as windows and doors. No particular part has been noted as needing attention.

Boundary of the Conservation Area

The current boundary is drawn arbitrarily at the rear of Merton Farm and at Hill Top Farm where the lines go through some of the current outbuildings. These anomalies should be clarified.

Where the boundary crosses the private grounds of Barkby Hall it appears to follow the line of the old back lane, where Barkby Holt Lane connected to Syston. The back lane was diverted on the building of the new hall. It is suggested that the whole of the grounds of Barkby Hall be included in the area.

Possible buildings for spot listing

None of the buildings within the Conservation Area were identified for “spot listing”, i.e. considered for inclusion on the list of statutory listed buildings.

Enhancement opportunities

The impact of through traffic has been identified in the appraisal above as a significant issue. Traffic calming measures to reduce speed have been introduced on the edges of the Area at Queniborough Road and below Barkby Thorpe. Any additional measures should respect the special character and appearance of the Area.

There is little need for environmental enhancement of the streets. The broadening of Main Street at the Forge has been noted as having the potential to be a more pleasant space within the village.

Opportunities for the maintenance of the buildings, their historic fabric and features, may be assisted by historic building repair grants, which are available from both Charnwood Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council.

The management and protection of important trees, greenery and green spaces

The Borough Council supports the priorities set out in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan for the conservation of a variety of wildlife and their habitats within Charnwood. The Council will collaborate with its partners when the plan is reviewed and modified to ensure that the necessary actions are being taken by the appropriate agencies.

General management guidelines encourage:

- Retention and protection of mature trees.
- Replacement planting to provide the next generation of trees.
- Additional planting at key strategic points to reinforce habitat connectivity within the biodiversity network.

Monitoring change arrangements

A photographic record of the Conservation Area has been made and will be used to help identify the need to review how changes within the Conservation Area are managed. A greater degree of protection will be accomplished if the local community help monitor any changes.

Consideration of resources

This management plan sets out the commitment of the Borough Council to protecting the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and how it will use its resources to achieve these aims. Pursuing all actions may be seen as desirable but continued monitoring and review will help focus the use of available resources in the most effective way.

Summary of issues and proposed actions

Conservation Area Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Partner	Other Partners
Impact of through traffic.	Encourage more appropriate design of any future traffic management measures; Improvement of the broad space at Main Street by the Forge.	Leics CC	CBC Barkby PC
Conservation Area Boundary.	Clarify the boundary.	CBC	Barkby PC

Community involvement

A public meeting was held in Barkby so that local residents and businesses could contribute their ideas about the Conservation Area, its character and appearance. The document was made available as a draft via the website. As a result of representations received the draft appraisal was further amended and a limited re-consultation was held prior to the final report. All comments and responses received were considered and appropriate amendments were made to the document before submission to Cabinet for approval.

Advice and Guidance

The Borough Council Development Department can advise on the need for Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent and can provide guidance on matters such as appropriate methods of maintenance/repairs, changes to shopfronts, alterations and extensions and suitable materials.

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Statutory Listed Buildings in Barkby

All listed Grade II except the church which is listed Grade I

Church of St Mary	27 Brookside
Churchyard wall and Gateway to Barkby Hall	Barn*, 2- 6 Main Street
Barkby Hall	The Forge, Main Street
The Old Vicarage, Vicarage Lane	10 Main Street
The Dower House*, Vicarage Lane	12 Main Street
Coach House at the Old Vicarage	13 - 19 Main Street
Rose Cottage, 4 Vicarage Lane	16 Main Street
6 Vicarage Lane	21 Main Street
8-14 Vicarage Lane	The White House Farm, 22 Main Street
The Pochin School	24 Main Street
6-10 School Lane	32 Main Street
12-16 School Lane	Barn at 32 Main Street
20-30 School Lane	K6 Telephone Kiosk, Main Street
25 Brookside	

* These are names taken from the listings by English Heritage.