

Barkby and Barkby Thorpe Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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BARKBY AND BARKBY THORPE CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Introduction

Barkby and Barkby Thorpe Conservation Area was designated in May 1976. It covers an area of 46 Hectares, much of which is the large parkland belonging to the Pochin Estate of Barkby Hall.

The purpose of this appraisal is to examine the historic development of the Conservation Area and to describe its present appearance in order to assess its special architectural and historic interest. The document sets out the planning policy context and how this appraisal relates to national, regional and local planning policies.

The main part of the report focuses on the assessment of the special interest of the Conservation Area:

- Location and setting describes how the Area relates to the two historic settlements and the surrounding area;
- Historic development and archaeology sets out how architecture and archaeology are related to the social and economic growth of the two settlements;
- Spatial analysis describes the historic plan form of the settlements and how this has changed, the interrelationship of streets and spaces, and identifies key views and landmarks;
- 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 detrimental features.

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 as a guide to people considering development which may affect the Conservation Area. It will be used by Development Control in their assessment of proposals. It may, of course, be used by residents of the Conservation Area.

Planning Policy Context

A conservation area is a designated heritage asset, an area of special architectural or historic interest, whose character or appearance should be preserved or enhanced. In making decisions on potential development within a conservation area, the Council is required to '*pay attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area*'.

By the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, sections 69 and 72, permission will not be granted for proposals that are likely to harm the character or appearance of a conservation area. Section 71 of the Act lays a duty on Local Authorities to formulate proposals to preserve and enhance conservation areas and to consult widely in doing so.

Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS 5) on "Planning for the Historic Environment", 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. *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.*

A conservation area contains a number and variety of elements which combine together to create the significance of the asset overall and this appraisal describes those elements. However, the appraisal 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 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.

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

The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document '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 the Conservation Area Character Appraisal when considering their design.

Other SPG/SPD guidance

- Backland & Tandem Development
- House Extensions
- Shopfronts & Signs

ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

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 land is very fertile, believed by the parish to be some of the best in the county.

Barkby Thorpe is a hamlet at the top of the hill on the road out to Hamilton and Leicester.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Origins and Development

From its name it is assumed that Barkby is a Viking settlement of the early Mediaeval period. 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 refers 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 of the village with the Pochin family also began in the Mediaeval period and their relationship with the village 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 Lane. 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 the 1830s Barkby Hall was rebuilt on the site of the previous Jacobean building. 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 re-roofed in slate and the walls re-faced with brick.

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 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.

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 path from the Malt Shovel to the brook remains today as a simple footpath; the tight enclosure of Main Street and the loose enclosure of Brookside look remarkably similar. The greatest change has been the amalgamation of the strips that were allocated within the village. At enclosure 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

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. Certainly there is evidence of Romano-British settlement, of a villa at Hamilton, a farmhouse between Barkby and Beeby and a villa or temple on the hill at Barkby Thorpe. There have been Saxon finds in excavations at Barkby Hall. It is likely that, especially below ground, there is evidence of previous settlement anywhere within the Conservation Area.

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 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. Remarkably 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.

The approach to the Hall used to be a drive from Beeby Lane; there is now a new drive 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 a high stone boundary wall. 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.

Villagescape

The village 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. Within this tight enclosure 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 the bridge over the brook.
2. From the 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.
3. After the park there is a partly rural, partly suburban mixture of farmsteads, Council housing and private houses all set back from the road.
4. Along the brook is a unique 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.
5. 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.
6. After the road junction at the top of the hill Barkby Thorpe is an open space of grass paddocks bordered by farmhouses and a few cottages. King Street leads into a narrow and tightly enclosed short section before the road dips down to the valley and Hamilton.

Despite the differences 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, the Vicarage and Dower House, stand out. They are more complex in plan, some have hipped rooves 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 rooves, 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. The alternation of opening and closure terminates after the car park beside the Malt Shovel, which is a wide opening off the street, much improved with the newly refurbished railings. 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 old barn and the gate to the churchyard. From here and 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 which are the life-blood the agricultural economy.

Key Views and Vistas

In the western part of the village Main Street winds gently creating a changing scene, eventually terminated by the church.

Along Brookside there is a wonderful changing scene of the brook within its banks with allotments and gardens and the cottages at the edges. The scene is all the more attractive from the footpaths because one necessarily appreciates it at walking pace.

There are magnificent vistas of the parkland both from Beeby Lane and especially from the junction at the top of the hill.

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.

There are grand views of Barkby Thorpe on the top of the hill as one arrives from Leicester and Hamilton. Looking out from the hamlet the fragility of its position so close to the seemingly ever expanding suburbs of the city is all too obvious.

Landmarks

St Marys church provides 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 astonishing 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 has an important setting at the corner of School and Beeby Lanes.

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 are very much farming communities. There are four working farms in Barkby and three in Barkby Thorpe. Another farmstead in Barkby is now purely domestic. The buildings composing all 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 rooves. 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 3 storey buildings.

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 Dower House at 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 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.

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

At the Main Street side:

St Marys Church which 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 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, 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 village scene almost uniquely unaltered for 200 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 village scene.

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 plain stretcher bond to the pattern of the 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 to the first floor and the change in brickwork is obvious. Unfortunately, the timber framing at No 18 Vicarage Lane does not appear genuine.

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 House 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 Lane 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 rooves 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 rooves have a simple ridge, but the more polite farmhouses have hipped rooves, 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

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

Victorian buildings there are often bay windows and small gables, which in the early 20th Century Arts and Crafts styles become rather more elaborate.

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, eg, “WAP 1887”.

Parks, Gardens and Trees

The parkland of Barkby Hall is amongst the finest green village spaces in the county. It is bounded by simple iron railings which makes it a wonderful open feature for all who pass by. It contains the village cricket ground and several fine oak trees. Its drawback is that 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 unique 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 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.

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 allied 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 across the Area and it provides a key link with the surrounding countryside. The woodland and individual trees, the cattle-grazed pastures and the brook represent a cohesive ecosystem network and provide excellent biodiversity connectivity within the Area which links up to the network of hedgerows, copses and small spinneys of the surrounding countryside.

Several bat roosts have been recorded within the Conservation Area, including those of the common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. Bats in Britain are exclusively insectivorous and 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.

With several farms operating from within the Conservation Area, the surrounding rural landscape is always in close proximity. 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 six working farms with their associated barns and outbuildings;
- And hence the presence of house martins within the village.
- The beautiful open parkland, which contains the village cricket ground;
- The delightful collection of houses and cottages, accessible only on foot, along either side of the brook and
- The unique landscape of gardens and allotments on the banks of the brook at Brookside;
- The centuries long interest in the village by the Pochin family and the loyalty and stability of many of their tenants;
- The coherent core of Main Street from No 1 to the Malt Shovel, and No 2 to No 16;
- The plan of the settlement which is almost unaltered for 230 years;
- The landmark of Barkby Thorpe at the top of the hill;

Weaknesses

The road from Queniborough to the fringes of north Leicester has become extremely popular with a steady stream of traffic throughout the day but especially with commuters and even heavy goods vehicles trying to avoid the main trunk roads. The village is suffering greatly from this traffic; its effect is particularly pronounced at the sharp bend by the church and in the narrow streets of Barkby Thorpe. The speed controls at the bottom of the hill to the south of Barkby Thorpe have not

necessarily reduced the volume and the absence of repeater signs of the 7 ton weight limit allows heavy goods vehicles to flaunt this restriction.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

General Principles

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 affect on the character of an area over a period of time.

Central government guidance contained in PPS 1 and PPS 5, 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 distinct “grain” or pattern of built form and spaces which are part of its historic development. This gives the area great individuality, characterised by the pattern of historic buildings, ancient footpaths and highways and clearly defined boundaries. This “grain” is 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.

Procedures to ensure consistent decision-making

The purpose of the character appraisal is to inform and guide development control decisions. A consistent approach to this decision making will be aided by providing:

- Conservation and design surgeries to help development control officers to make informed decisions, no matter how minor the proposed changes;
- Opportunities for pre-application discussion regarding significant alterations;
- Opportunities to review decisions and assess the impact of approved alterations through post development site visits.

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 will be used where sites are identified as detracting from the character of the Conservation Area by being eyesores or untidy.

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 windows and no particular part has been noted as needing attention.

Boundary of the Conservation Area

The current boundary is drawn arbitrarily in a number of places, notably across the private parkland of Barkby Hall, 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 and 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 most important requirement for enhancement would be the alleviation of the village and the hamlet from the stream of traffic.

Proposals for developing an economic development and regeneration strategy for the area

Historic building repair grants are available from both Charnwood Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council. Repair and reinstatement works to historic buildings, that make a vital contribution to maintaining and improving the character of the conservation area are likely to be eligible for grant assistance.

Strategy for 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:

- 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
Burden of through traffic	?	Barkby PC	Leics CC
Conservation Area Boundary	Clarify the boundary	CBC	

Community involvement

This document will be made available as a draft via the website for 4 weeks prior to submission to Cabinet for adoption. A public meeting will be held in the Area so that local residents and businesses may contribute their ideas about the Conservation Area, its character and appearance. All comments and responses will be considered and appropriate amendments will be made to the document before it is submitted to Cabinet.

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.

Contacts: Conservation and Landscape Team
Tel. 01509 634748
built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk

Development Control
Tel. 01509 634691
Development.control@charnwood.gov.uk

Planning Enforcement
Tel. 01509 634722

Bibliography

John Nichols, "History and Antiquities of the County of Leicestershire", Vol 3, 1800.

Mary Toms, A History of Barkby Village, 1974

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<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/LEI/Barkby/index.html>

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<http://www.leicestershirevillages.com/barkbyandbarkbythorpe/>

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Acknowledgements

The Council is grateful for the help and assistance from Keith Randon

Statutory Listed Buildings in Barkby

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

Church of St Mary

Churchyard wall and Gateway to Barkby Hall

Barkby Hall

The Old Vicarage, Vicarage Lane

The Dower House, Vicarage Lane

Barn at the Old Vicarage

Rose Cottage, 4 Vicarage Lane

6 Vicarage Lane

8-14 Vicarage Lane

The Pochin School

6-10 School Lane

12-16 School Lane

20-30 School Lane

25 Brookside

27 Brookside

Barn, 2-6 Main Street

The Forge, Main Street

10 Main Street

12 Main Street

13-19 Main Street

16 Main Street

21 Main Street

The White House Farm, 22 Main Street

24 Main Street

32 Main Street

Barn at 32 Main Street

K6 Telephone Kiosk, Main Street