

## **CABINET – 18th March 2010**

### **Report of the Director of Development**

#### ITEM 18      Hoton, Rearsby and Seagrave Conservation Area Character Appraisals

##### Purpose of the Report

To request formal adoption of the Conservation Area Character Appraisals and Management Plans for Hoton, Rearsby and Seagrave.

##### Recommendation

1. That the Character Appraisals and Management Plans for Hoton, Rearsby and Seagrave Conservation Areas be adopted.
2. That delegated authority is given to the Director of Development, in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning, to make minor amendments to Hoton, Rearsby and Seagrave Conservation Area Appraisals prior to publication

##### Reason

1. To provide adopted guidance that identifies the special character and creates a sound basis for the management of Hoton, Rearsby and Seagrave Conservation Areas.
2. To allow the Director of Development to make minor amendments to documents before they are finalised for publication.

##### Policy Context

A priority of the Council's Corporate Plan is to "Sustain Charnwood's economy by ensuring that the borough remains attractive to investors and residents alike through the conservation and enhancement of the natural and built environment".

A task of the Conservation and Landscape Team Plan 2009-10 is to prepare three Character Appraisals and Management Plans for the Borough's Conservation Areas.

The Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance 15 on "Planning and the Historic Environment" encourages local planning authorities to pursue their duties under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to formulate proposals to preserve and enhance conservation areas and of the need to consult widely in doing so. It also contains several policies that are relevant to conserving the character of conservation areas.

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 Character Appraisal is a requirement of Best Value Performance Indicator BV 219b. It will inform the preparation of management proposals for the conservation area.

## Background

Hoton Conservation Area was designated in December 1978 and extended in January 1991.

Rearsby Conservation Area was designated in June 1975.

Seagrave Conservation Area was designated in August 1980.

A Conservation Area Character Appraisal is intended to be an objective statement and factual description of the local distinctiveness of the conservation area. It justifies the historical and architectural reasons for designating the area and describes the particular qualities of buildings, spaces and landscape that together create a distinctive street scene or other part of the public realm. It describes the strengths and weaknesses of the area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. The appraisal should establish a sound basis for the guidance of planning and development control decisions, which can ultimately be defended at appeal.

Public consultation on the three draft character appraisals have taken place through public meetings in Hoton on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010, in Rearsby on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2010, and in Seagrave on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

Final versions of the documents, which take account of the comments and responses received at the public meetings and subsequently, are given in Appendices 1, 3 & 5 and are submitted to Cabinet for adoption as guidance. Summaries of the comments and responses are set out in Appendices 2, 4 & 6. The Character Appraisals have been used to set out management proposals for the conservation areas using further guidance from English Heritage, "Preserving the Special Character of Conservation Areas: Management Proposals".

## Financial Implications

None

## Risk Management

Risk Identified	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Actions Planned
Appraisals not adopted results in failure on BVPI 219b	Low	Low	Adopt appraisals incorporating revisions
Management Plans not adopted results in failure on local indicator in Service Delivery Plan	Low	Low	Adopt Management Plans incorporating revisions

Key Decision: No

Background Papers: Leading in Leicestershire. Corporate Plan to 2011/12. Charnwood Borough Council  
The Department of the Environment: Planning Policy Guidance Note 15:  
Planning and the Historic Environment

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## **Hoton Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	2
Planning policy context	
<b>ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST LOCATION AND SETTING</b>	4
<b>HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	4
Origins and development, Archaeological interest Population	
<b>SPATIAL ANALYSIS</b>	6
Plan form, Villagescape and Inter-relationship of spaces Key views and vistas, Landmarks	
<b>CHARACTER ANALYSIS</b>	8
Building types, layouts and uses Key listed buildings and structures, Key unlisted buildings Coherent groups Building materials and architectural details Parks, gardens and trees Biodiversity Detrimental features	
<b>DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST</b>	11
<b>CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>	12
General principles Procedures to ensure consistent decision-making Enforcement strategy, Article 4 Direction General condition, Review of the boundary Possible buildings for spot listing Enhancement, Proposals for economic development and regeneration Management and Protection of Biodiversity Monitoring change, Consideration of resources Summary of issues and proposed actions Developing management proposals Community involvement Advice and guidance	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	16
<b>LISTED BUILDINGS IN HOTON</b>	17

# HOTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

## Introduction

Hoton Conservation Area was designated in December 1978 and extended in January 1991. The original designation incorporated the main built part of the village. The extension was proposed in order to include the medieval site of the village, based on archeological evidence. Ultimately the whole village was included in the Conservation Area which now covers 22.2 Hectares.



Current map of Hoton showing the extent of the Conservation Area and the listed buildings.

The purpose of this appraisal is to examine the historical development of the Conservation Area and to describe its present appearance in order to assess its special architectural and historic interest. The appraisal will then be used to inform the consideration of management and development proposals within the Area.

This 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 historic village and surrounding area;

- Historic development and archaeology sets out how architecture and archaeology are related to the social and economic growth of the village;
- Spatial analysis describes the historic plan form of the village 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. An assessment of the general condition of the buildings and spaces within the Area is included.

The main issues and proposed management actions are summarised. Recommendations for developing longer term management proposals for the area are suggested.

## Planning Policy Context

A conservation area is 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'*. Permission will not be granted for proposals that are likely to harm the character or appearance of a conservation area. *Sections 69 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.*

The Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance 15 on "Planning and the Historic Environment" encourages local planning authorities to pursue their duties under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to formulate proposals to preserve and enhance conservation areas and of the need to consult widely in doing so. It also contains several policies that are relevant to conserving the character of conservation areas.

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' builds on the design policies set out in the Charnwood Local Plan and will contribute to the development of more effective approaches to securing good design in the emerging Local Development Framework. The guide is also intended to support the implementation of the community strategy, Charnwood Together, by providing a set of principles that will inform the physical development implicit in the initiatives and actions of all partners in the local strategic partnership.

### Other SPG/SPD guidance

- Backland & Tandem Development
- House Extensions

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During World War II Wymeswold Airfield was constructed to the east of the village. The airfield finally closed in the 1970s.

### **Archaeological Interest**

The present linear form of the village, focussing on the Loughborough and Wymeswold Roads, is a contraction from an earlier more complex settlement pattern. Some evidence of this survives in the form of earthworks. A road, called the Holloway, which ran from the corner of Old Parsonage Lane straight to the Wymeswold Road, is clearly visible as a pronounced broad ditch in the field and there are well preserved house platforms or plot boundaries alongside it. Other earthwork remains and historic mapping suggest that the settlement also extended more densely to the north, along Rempstone Road. Various early post-mediaeval timber framed houses survive along the main road, as well as the mediaeval church. The village was originally surrounded by ridge and furrow earthworks, caused by mediaeval cultivation, some of which are still present.

### **Population**

In the Middle Ages Hoton was sparsely populated with eleven households in the 1300s, nine in 1564. By the time of the 1666 hearth tax there were nineteen. In 1788 seventy households were recorded. The current population is estimated to be about 350 in 100 houses.

## **SPATIAL ANALYSIS**

### **Plan Form**

Hoton is a small settlement based on a junction of four streets, the roads to Loughborough, Prestwold, Wymeswold and Rempstone. However, this simple plan is masked by the heavy use of the A60 between Loughborough and Nottingham which has been a major route for a long time. It gives the impression that the village is linear in form. Besides the four principal roads there are two back streets, Old Parsonage Lane and Vine Tree Terrace which form a square around an open space of meadow at the rear of Loughborough Road and Prestwold Road. A cul-de-sac has been created leading off Wymeswold Road, on land to the rear of Holly Tree Farm.

### **Villagescape and Interrelationship of Spaces**

Farmsteads, cottages and Georgian Houses are the principal features of the settlement, lining the north side of the Loughborough and Wymeswold Roads. The larger houses are set well back from the road, protected by brick walls and hedges. The smaller cottages and barns are often set at the back of the pavement. Twentieth century development has filled in the spaces between and has more or less completed the south sides of Loughborough Road and Wymeswold Road, giving a more suburban aspect.

Wymeswold Road has maintained its rural and agricultural character: a haphazard blend in which the space is enclosed by cottages and the timber framed barn with important farmhouses set in their own space and a row of council housing with more or less open gardens.

The important houses on Loughborough Road are set well back from the road and protected from the traffic by brick walls with often substantial plantings of hedges, shrubs and trees. On the south side of the road the houses and bungalows are also set back from the roads but the front gardens are more open.

Prestwold Road is a country road. Where it borders the Conservation Area it is very well tended, the verge is mown and it has been planted with trees to form an avenue.

Rempstone Road climbs and turns into the village with a sharp bend at the top into Loughborough Road. The enclosure of trees and hedging gradually increases from the valley, eventually meeting the pinch point created by the Packe Arms.

The two back streets of Vine Tree Terrace and Old Parsonage Lane form a narrow rural lane. Vine Tree Terrace is secluded and tightly enclosed at first by the terrace of cottages hard by the edge of the road and then by overhanging trees and hedges. There is a narrow pavement on one side underneath the overhanging trees. Old Parsonage Lane is more open without any kerbstones or pavements. At the junction of the two lanes is a large builders yard, largely screened from view by a tall but old brick wall. Heavy vehicles using the yard have had a detrimental effect on the quality of the lanes, leaving muddy edges, damaging the hedges and trees and creating a hazard to pedestrians.

Holly Tree Close is a twentieth century cul-de-sac of bungalows and houses, set in a fairly tight arrangement with well matured front gardens.

The four detached houses of Nos 26-32 Loughborough Road have been arranged in a form of two back to back courtyards.

### **Key Views and Vistas**

Because Hoton sits at the top of the slope of the Wolds there are sweeping panoramas from the edge of the village to the west across the Soar Valley to Charnwood Forest and to the north across

to the Rempstone ridge. Looking in towards Hoton from the countryside one sees that the village is endowed with many trees through which in general one gets only glimpses of the houses.

At the approaches from Wymeswold and Rempstone there is in each case a dramatic entrance into the village at a bend in the road which leads into the street scene. From Rempstone one passes the pinch point of the Packe Arms and then the very sharp bend at the old smithy. From Wymeswold the bend is not so sharp but the change from countryside to village is immediate. There is a similar change of scene when arriving from Loughborough but it is less pronounced.

After entering the village, the curving nature of the Loughborough and Wymeswold Roads provide developing views of the street. However, the volume of traffic on the A60 makes it hard to appreciate the village scene.

The view to the south from Old Parsonage Lane has been obscured by the bunds erected to screen the noise of activities from Wymeswold Airfield.

### **Landmarks**

The stubby tower of the Church of St Leonard can be seen at the crossroads. However, since the church closed as a place of worship and was converted to a private residence there has been substantial planting around all the boundaries of the churchyard which effectively screens the church from view, leaving just the top of the tower visible.

The Old Smithy or Old Forge is a low single storey building and despite its stature it makes a significant mark at the sharp bend in the A60. Set into the wall of the smithy is a George VI letterbox.

There is a K6 telephone box on Wymeswold Road.

## **CHARACTER ANALYSIS**

### **Building Types, Layouts and Uses**

Hoton was an agricultural settlement. Even the framework knitting industry seems to have had little effect on the village. Several buildings are laid out as farmsteads with a principal house and a variety of outbuildings leading away from the road. The larger Georgian houses are substantial, having a square plan often with 3 storeys and a number of outbuildings. The cottages are generally based on a simple rectangular plan with the roof ridge parallel to the street but the cottages also have extensions and outbuildings to the rear.

The twentieth century dwellings are modest in scale. There are bungalows and detached houses along Loughborough Road, the string of semi-detached council housing on Wymeswold Road, and the estate of bungalows and houses in Holly Tree Close. More substantial are the detached houses of Nos 26 - 32 Loughborough Road.

Besides the farmsteads and domestic dwellings there are the Church, Village Hall, the Packe Arms and the Smithy.

### **Key Listed Buildings and Structures**

Hoton is blessed with a wealth of listed buildings, farmhouses, Georgian houses, cottages and barns. The timber framed barn with herringbone infill brick panels is a very significant building on Wymeswold Road.

Unfortunately, the Church has lost its visual prominence. Following its deconsecration it has been enclosed with hedges which together with the lime trees form a screen. However, the building itself has been preserved for the future and is well maintained. It represents the continuity of history in the village and it is therefore an important building.

### **Key Unlisted Buildings**

The principal unlisted building is the Village Hall in the centre of the village. The hall is built in Arts and Crafts style, with a steeply sloping tall plain clay tile roof and heavy black framed leaded light windows. It also has a village clock. The setting of the Hall could be enhanced by improving the landscaping of the forecourt and restoring the railings to the road.

The Old Smithy should also be recognised as an important building, marking as it does the sharp bend in the A60.

At the corner of Vine Tree Terrace and Old Parsonage Lane is the imposing Pear Tree Farm, whose character has been slightly lost through the uPVC replacement windows though the doorcase is still in timber.

### **Building Materials and Architectural Details**

#### **Walls**

The vast majority of buildings are made of red brick laid to Flemish bond but without the distinctive pattern of differently coloured header and stretcher. Widespread in the older buildings is the use of local blue lias stone to form a plinth. It is also seen in substantial parts of the outbuildings and in other walls away from the principal façade of the building. The lias is mixed with random pieces of granite, cobble and field stone.

The Victorians used dark blue brick as decoration in bands and as damp proof courses. In the twentieth century there is greater divergence from the traditional red brick, in particular, the houses in Holly Tree Close are of buff or yellow brick with render and timber cladding.

There is evidence of the vernacular timber framing which must have been common before the more polite Georgian style of building. Timber frames can be seen in the gable ends of Holly Tree Farm and No 28 Wymeswold Road and especially in the Barn to Holly Tree Farm where the infill panels are of herringbone brick.

### **Roofs**

A particular feature of Hoton along Wymeswold Road is the use of red pantile for the roofs. The pantiles are seen on the agricultural buildings and small cottages, such as the Barn at No 19 and the cottage at No 3. The more prominent Georgian houses along Loughborough Road as well as the almshouses, Nos 1 - 5, have roofs of Swithland slate. There is one remaining thatched cottage at No 28 Wymeswold Road. Elsewhere there is some Welsh slate and later buildings have mostly concrete tiles which, through colour and texture, blend reasonably well with the clay pantiles.

### **Doors and Windows**

The listed buildings have retained their traditional timber windows. In the finer houses these are vertical sash windows whereas in the cottages and farmhouses there is a mixture of vertical sash, Yorkshire side sliding sash and casement windows. Unfortunately, in the non-listed buildings most of the traditional windows have been lost to a motley of uPVC windows, much to the detriment of the character of the Conservation Area.

The Packe Almshouses, Nos 1 - 5 Loughborough Road, have lovely diamond paned cast iron casement windows.

There are some very fine doorcases in the Georgian houses and the farmhouses. Examples are at Hollytree Farm and Hoton House on Wymeswold Road, and at No 38, No 14 and No 12 Loughborough Road. Unfortunately the doorcases of Nos 7 - 19 Vine Tree Terrace do not display the same attention to detail or tradition.

### **Details**

For most of its length the northern kerbstones of Wymeswold Road are of small pieces of pink Mountsorrel Granite.

### **Parks, Gardens and Trees**

The extension of the Conservation Area in 1991 incorporated a significant area of fields, pastures, meadows and arable land, thus emphasising the relationship of the built part of the village with its historic agricultural land.

Within the village itself there is little open space. Behind the Village Hall there is a pleasant expanse of grass.

Behind the church is the Burial Ground containing several fine Swithland slate headstones. This open space is curtailed by the sale of the church and the planting of hedges to protect the privacy of the now private dwelling and the approach from the gate at the corner of the road is rather cramped.

There is a great deal more open space beyond the confines of the built part of the village. At the end of Old Parsonage Lane, outside the Conservation Area, is a superb playing field, equipped with a young children's playground, climbing frames, multi-purpose court for tennis and basket ball, with a brick wall climbing face and a mini football pitch. The field is well tended and planted with a herb garden and a living willow sculpture.

In the square between Loughborough Road and Old Parsonage Lane is a magnificent space of green meadow bounded by the Pingle footpath on the eastern side. There is a very fine mature oak tree in this meadow beside the footpath.

The landscape of the Wolds is fairly open with few trees or woods. However, the gardens of most of the houses in the village have many trees and shrubs.

## Biodiversity

The countryside surrounding the Conservation Area is primarily managed for intensive farming. Greatly enlarged fields, removal of boundary hedgerows and agricultural intensification have resulted in a significant wildlife loss and fragmented biodiversity network where habitat connectivity across the landscape has become tenuous. The Conservation Area forms a small oasis in the midst of this ecologically-impooverished environment.



Within the village there are gardens with lawns and shrubberies, clusters of trees, small grassland fields and some hedgerows. The gardens form a patchwork of sub-urban habitats, and represent an important biodiversity resource when pooled together. They are particularly valuable where native and wildlife-friendly shrubs and herbaceous plants are grown and where the management is not excessively manicured. Local residents may also put into action wildlife-friendly measures such as the provision of nest boxes and supplementary bird feeding.

Species found in the Conservation Area are those which are expected in association with the built-up environment. Birds such as robin *Erithacus rubecula*, blackbird *Turdus merula*, blue tit *Parus caeruleus*, great tit *Parus major* and wren *Troglodytes troglodytes* are some of the most familiar garden species. Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* are known to frequent the village.

The Conservation Area comprises a number of trees, with some noteworthy clusters and significant trees, such as the mature lime *Tilia sp.* on Loughborough Road opposite Prestwold Lane. Most groups are made up of ornamental species although self-set native trees also occasionally occur. The few hedgerows which remain within the Conservation Area and at the rural edge lack connectivity but still contribute to the local biodiversity resource.



## Detrimental Features

The location of the village on the main road between Loughborough and Nottingham brings with it a burden of traffic, which is often heavy, so that Loughborough Road is not a pleasant street in which to linger and appreciate the qualities of Hoton. However, this complaint goes back a very long time to the construction of the turnpike in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century and there is little that can be done to alleviate it.

## **DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

The main contributions to the special character of Hoton Conservation Area are:

- The wealth of listed buildings, farmhouses, Georgian houses, cottages and barns;
- The rural, agricultural setting, enhanced by the inclusion within the Area of several fields;
- The variety of domestic buildings, in scale and layout, which achieve unity through the use of locally sourced materials;
- Many buildings with traditional red clay pantile roofs;
- The clear evidence of the medieval road, the Holloway, through the fields;
- The number of trees, compared to the wider landscape of the Wolds which is generally sparsely planted with trees;

## 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 village.

Within the Conservation Area, where the quality of the general environment is already considered to be high, 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 PPS1 and PPG 15, Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, Leading in Design and other SPD, and Village Design Statements will be used to assess the quality of proposal for new development.

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

1. The Conservation Area has a distinct “grain” or pattern of built form and spaces which are part of its historic development. This gives the Conservation 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.
2. 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. Good modern design can be used to create positive changes in historic settlements
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Applicants for planning permission must provide a meaningful “Design & 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.

### **Procedures to Ensure Consistent Decision-Making**

The basis of this character appraisal is to inform and guide development control decisions. A consistent approach to 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 any necessary remedial action.

The powers set out in Section 215 of the Village & 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**

The quality of a 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.

## **General Condition**

The Conservation Area is in reasonable condition. The buildings and gardens are well maintained. There has been some loss to the character by the replacement of traditional timber windows with uPVC.

## **Buildings at Risk**

It is the intent of the Borough Council to take necessary action to secure repair & full use of any buildings at risk. The appraisal has not identified any such buildings.

## **Review of the Conservation Area Boundary**

The present boundaries of the existing Conservation Area incorporate the principal areas of special historic and architectural interest within the village. The appraisal has not identified any need to change the boundary.

## **Possible Buildings for Spot Listing**

In carrying out the Appraisal 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 heavy traffic on the A60 poses problems along the whole route through the village but especially at the sharp bend between the Loughborough and Rempstone roads, where the bank of the churchyard is frequently subject to damage. The solution hitherto has been to clad the bank with paving slabs which are easy and cheap to replace. A more attractive solution would be desirable.

The forecourt of the Village Hall would benefit from new landscaping and the railings along the pavement need restoration. The use of the hall could be improved by creating an access to parking at the rear.

The main road through the village is the subject of ever increasing regulation with new signage. The requirements for safety should be balanced with the needs to protect the character of the Conservation Area.

## **Proposals for Economic Development and Regeneration**

Historic building 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 may be eligible for grant assistance.

## **Management and Protection of Biodiversity**

Threatened species and habitats can be protected by wildlife legislation. Where protected species may be present, appropriate surveys and assessments should be carried out to ensure that development or management proposals will not have a detrimental effect.

The Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the Borough Council's priorities for conservation of a variety of habitats and species within Charnwood and details the actions required to bring about a reversal in their decline. Not only should habitats and species of principal importance (UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species) be retained and protected, but opportunities maximised to restore or enhance such habitats and populations.

## Monitoring Change

It is planned to review the conservation area character appraisal and its management plan every five years, although the management plan may under certain circumstances need to be reviewed over a shorter time period. 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 Charnwood's conservation areas and how it will use its resources to achieve these aims.

## Summary of Issues and Proposed Actions

Conservation Area Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Partner	Other Partners
Damage by traffic to the bank at the corner of Rempstone Road and Wymeswold Road	Agree a more attractive solution with the Highway Authority	Leicestershire CC Highways	Hoton PC and Charnwood BC
Setting of the Village Hall	Improve the landscaping of the forecourt and renovate the railings	Hoton PC	Charnwood BC
Street signage	Encourage the Highway Authority to review the signage to establish that all are necessary	Charnwood BC with Leicestershire CC Highways	Hoton PC
Highway interventions and their impact on conservation areas	Encourage the Highway Authority to adopt an agreed approach to more sympathetic works in Conservation Areas	Charnwood BC Leicestershire CC Highways	Hoton PC

## Developing Management Proposals

Various forces, historical, cultural and commercial, have shaped the development of the conservation area, creating a sense of place and individual identity. The character and appearance of the conservation area is vitally important, both in attracting investment in the area itself, and in the encouragement of initiatives to the benefit of the wider community.

Based on the issues that have been identified the following objectives will have a positive impact in both protecting and enhancing the character of the conservation area, and provide the basis of a long term management plan:

- 1 A policy regarding the co-ordination of the placing of all permanent items within the streets needs to be formulated. The opportunities to renew, redesign, re-site, eliminate or combine existing street furniture are substantial. Similarly there is a need to look at traffic signs and highway markings with a view to their rationalisation. The appropriateness of the existing street lighting and the scope to introduce imaginative lighting schemes, including the illumination of key buildings, also merits examination. Guidelines could be set out in a public realm manual.

- 2 The production of heritage trail leaflets to increase community awareness and appreciation, including the encouragement of tourism, should be considered. This might involve interpretation material, plaques or similar for key sites and buildings.

### **Community Involvement**

This document has been made available as a draft via the website prior to submission to Cabinet for adoption. A public meeting was held in Hoton so that local residents could contribute their ideas for enhancement and preservation of the Conservation Area. All comments and responses have been considered and appropriate amendments made to the document prior to submission 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 & Landscape Team  
                          Tel. 01509 634748  
                          [built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk)

                          Development Control  
                          Tel. 01509 634691  
                          [development.control@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:development.control@charnwood.gov.uk)

                          Planning Enforcement  
                          Tel. 01509 634722  
                          [development.control@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:development.control@charnwood.gov.uk)

### **Bibliography**

Hoton - A Stroll round a Conservation Village by Rachel Flynn, 1992  
Guidance on conservation area appraisals, English Heritage, 2006  
Guidance on the management of conservation areas, English Heritage, 2006

### **Internet Resources**

[www.hoap.co.uk/who/hoton.htm](http://www.hoap.co.uk/who/hoton.htm) Accessed 30 June 2009

## **Statutory Listed Buildings in Hoton**

All Listed Grade II.

Church of St Leonard, Wymeswold Road  
Hoton House, Wymeswold Road  
3 Wymeswold Road  
5-7 Wymeswold Road  
9-11 Wymeswold Road  
Holly Tree Farmhouse, Wymeswold Road  
Barn to Holly Tree Farmhouse, Wymeswold Road  
23 Wymeswold Road  
28 Wymeswold Road  
Holts Farmhouse & Barn, Wymeswold Road  
1-5 Loughborough Road  
2 Loughborough Road  
12 Loughborough Road  
14 Loughborough Road  
Field Cottage, 20 Loughborough Road  
Rose Farmhouse, 22 Loughborough Road  
38 Loughborough Road

Appendix 2

## Hoton Conservation Area Responses to the Draft Appraisal

A public meeting was held in Hoton Village Hall on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010. 32 people attended.

	Respondent	Issue	Response
1	Comments from Public Meeting	The 3 storey Georgian houses should be seen as landmarks and not used to set a precedent for new 3 storey development	Document amended.
2		Describe builders yard	Description added
3		Village Hall is a building at risk	The building needs maintenance but it is not “at risk”
4	Email from Parish Council	<p>Include telephone box and George VI letterbox as historical features; Granite kerbstones along Wymeswold Road; Graveyard is locally referred to as the Burial Ground and the historic gravestones are important; Most prominent roof material is Swithland slate;</p> <p>Expand upon the areas of Vinetree Terrace and Old Parsonage Lane; Refer to the Hoton bunds against Wymeswold Airfield and the builder’s yard; Note intended improvements to the Village Hall;</p> <p>Sensitivity to need for privacy relating to occupants of the church The playing fields are not in the Conservation Area;</p>	<p>Telephone box and Letterbox noted in appraisal</p> <p>Kerbs noted in appraisal Changed to Burial Ground, importance of gravestones noted in appraisal Swithland slate is mainly on the Georgian houses &amp; the almshouses on Loughborough Road but most buildings on Wymeswold Road have red pantile: wording altered Additional description added</p> <p>Loss of view noted and description of builders yard added</p> <p>The Appraisal can only observe the appearance from the public realm which precludes comments about the interior of the hall. The potential for enhancement by improving the forecourt has been added. Wording amended</p> <p>Agreed. Description of playing fields retained as they have</p>

		<p>Biodiversity sections are missing;  Note Oak tree next to The Pingle  Query about consultation over improvement works</p> <p>Include street signage as an action point in the summary of issues along with the slabs.</p>	<p>an impact on the green spaces of the Conservation Area  Sections added  Oak tree added  The summary of actions is intended as a list of ideas for enhancement. It is not intended to imply that the proposals will definitely be carried out. It would be up to the lead partner to engage in any consultation process or notification of work starting. Currently, Conservation and Landscape has little scope for initiating proposals. To avoid any further confusion, issues that can be more easily addressed will be included in the summary of Action points. Other desirable improvements will be identified under Enhancement Opportunities.  Document amended.  Officers belong to and regularly attend meetings of the Forum of conservation officers for the County, including the City and Rutland. The forum is engaged in dialogue with County Highways to encourage them to take account of the different needs within conservation areas.</p>
5	Email from Graeme Chessum, local resident	Additional information about birds in the area	Noted.

## **Rearsby Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	2
Planning policy context	
<b>ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST LOCATION AND SETTING</b>	4
<b>HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	4
Origins and development, Archaeological interest, Population	
<b>SPATIAL ANALYSIS</b>	6
Plan form, Inter-relationship of spaces, Villagescape Key views and vistas, Landmarks	
<b>CHARACTER ANALYSIS</b>	7
Building types, layouts and uses Key listed buildings and structures, Key unlisted buildings Coherent groups Building materials and architectural details Parks, gardens and trees Biodiversity Detrimental features	
<b>DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST</b>	11
<b>CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>	12
General principles, Procedures to ensure consistent decision-making Enforcement strategy, Article 4 Direction General condition, Review of the boundary Possible buildings for spot listing, Enhancement Proposals for economic development and regeneration Management and Protection of Biodiversity, Monitoring change Consideration of resources, Summary of issues and proposed actions Developing management proposals, Community involvement Advice and guidance	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	16
<b>LISTED BUILDINGS IN REARSBY</b>	17

# REARSBY CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

## Introduction

Rearsby Conservation Area was designated in June 1975. It covers an area of 16.75 hectares. Rearsby is one of a string of villages which sit on both sides of the Wreake Valley. It began as a Danish nucleated settlement with a local agricultural economy beside the Rearsby Brook. Great changes took place in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century with the Inclosure of the open fields and the building of the Leicester to Melton turnpike. There was development in Victorian times and a significant expansion of the village in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In recent times the Conservation Area itself has witnessed major changes with the demolition of one of the large houses and development of the gardens and orchards in the centre of the village. The boundaries of the Conservation Area encompass the village as it was up to the end of the Victorian period.

The purpose of this appraisal is to examine the historical development of the Conservation Area and to describe its present appearance in order to assess its special architectural and historic interest. The appraisal will then be used to inform the consideration of management and development proposals within the Area.

This 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 historic village and surrounding area;
- Historic development and archaeology sets out how architecture and archaeology are related to the social and economic growth of the village;
- Spatial analysis describes the historic plan form of the village 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. An assessment of the general condition of the buildings and spaces within the Area is included.

The main issues and proposed management actions are summarised. Recommendations for developing longer term management proposals for the area are suggested.

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 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*'. Permission will not be granted for proposals that are likely to harm the character or appearance of a conservation area. *Sections 69 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.*

The Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance 15 on "Planning and the Historic Environment" encourages local planning authorities to pursue their duties under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to formulate proposals to preserve and enhance conservation areas and of the need to consult widely in doing so. It also contains several policies that are relevant to conserving the character of conservation areas.

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/I- 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.

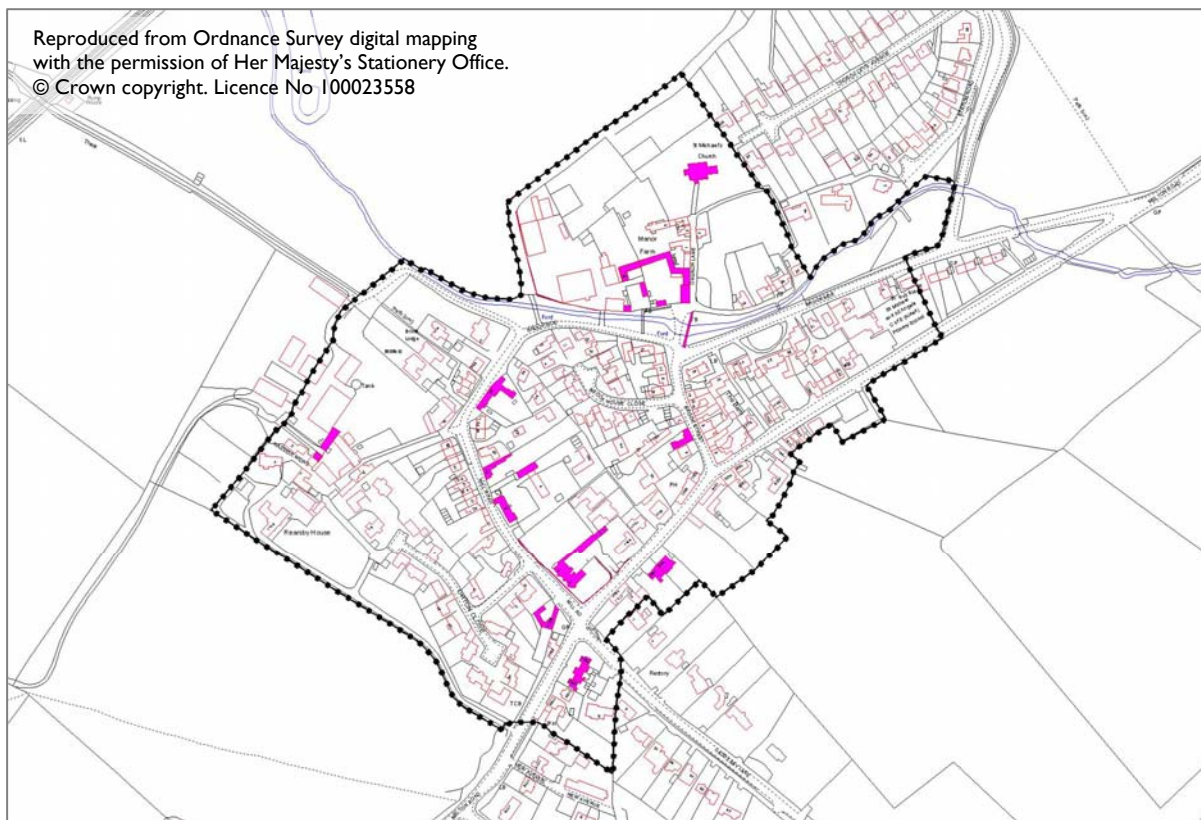
The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document 'Leading in Design' builds on the design policies set out in the Charnwood Local Plan and will contribute to the development of more effective approaches to securing good design in the emerging Local Development Framework. The guide is also intended to support the implementation of the community strategy, Charnwood Together, by providing a set of principles that will inform the physical development implicit in the initiatives and actions of all partners in the local strategic partnership.

#### **Other SPG/SPD guidance**

- Backland & Tandem Development
- House Extensions
- Shopfronts & Signs<sup>3</sup>
- Rearsby Village Design Statement

<sup>3</sup> While it is recognised that there are currently no shops in Rearsby, the shopfront at the corner of Brook Street and Melton Road remains and its design is significant to the character of the Conservation Area.

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Current map of Rearsby showing the Conservation Area and the Listed Buildings

## ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

### Location and Setting

Rearsby lies on the road from Leicester to Melton Mowbray, about 7 miles from Leicester, 8 miles from Melton. The village sits in the shallow valley of Rearsby Brook at the south side of the Wreake valley, but separated from the main valley by the low hill on which the church is a landmark.

## HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

### Origins and Development

Rearsby, as its name suggests, is a Danish settlement founded in the late 9<sup>th</sup> Century. It was a nucleated settlement, similar to the Saxon settlements elsewhere in the East Midlands, with an economy based on three open fields on the drier land for crops, and pastures in the lower wetter land for cattle and grazing.

At the time of the Domesday survey in 1086 Rearsby was part of the land of the Lord of the Manor of Barrow. It was recorded as Redresbi or perhaps Reresbi. The name probably derives from the Old Norse personal name, Hrietharr, with the suffix “by” indicating Hrietharr’s Farm.

The church of St Michael and All Angels was built of stone beginning in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century with more work over the next two centuries.

In 1675 the number of open fields had been increased to five, but in 1762 there was a major change when an Inclosure act was passed allowing the wealthier farmers to bring their land together and operate a more profitable system. Nichols notes that they produced “excellent barley, oats and turnips”. Though this must have been at the great expense of the thus dispossessed poor. It is from this time that most of the houses that are seen today were built and the villagescape was established.

Along with Inclosure, which produced the surplus, came the need for much improved transport. The road from Leicester to Melton, which had often been completely impassable for days or weeks at a time in wet weather, was turnpiked. The famous packhorse bridge was rebuilt over the brook in 1714. The navigability of the river was improved and the Leicester to Melton railway was built in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1831 a new piece of road for the turnpike was built to eliminate two notorious bends in the village, where the road turns down Brook Street and then along Brookside; this is the current Melton Road which in 2004 was itself superseded by the Rearsby bypass, so that what was once the busy main road of the village is now a very quiet scene.

There was great expansion of the village in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century by the building of housing, mostly semi-detached, along the roads to Thrussington and Gaddesby and also along the Melton Road with a number of culs-de-sac. The centre of the village was left as gardens but more recently the parkland of Rearsby House and the gardens of Brook House which constituted a large part of the green centre have been developed with detached housing.

Until the arrival of framework knitting the economy was agricultural along with the various trades and professions to support ordinary life. It is known that there were framework knitters in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries but there is little surviving evidence in the cottages. Today, the village still has a working agriculture but mostly the economy is based on people working in Leicester and elsewhere.

As with the straightening of the turnpike when the Rose and Crown by the brook became a domestic dwelling, No 27 Brookside, so the roadside inns, The Horse and Groom and The Wheel have lost their passing trade. The village has no shops or post office any more, but it does have a primary school. John Wesley is famously said to have preached from the Blue Stone by the brook in 1753 but the Methodist Chapel has been converted for commercial use. A new Village Hall was opened in 2009.

### **Archaeological Interest**

The village has two focuses of historic settlement: the church to the north and the main settlement to the south, divided by the brook, joined by the packhorse bridge. The village was originally surrounded by ridge and furrow earthworks, created by mediaeval strip field cultivation, though little evidence of this now remains. Recent archaeological investigation has recorded mediaeval activity to the rear of the houses on Mill Road, thought to be the result of quarrying for building materials. A shard of Anglo-Saxon pottery from this trial trenching indicates the early mediaeval origins of the village. Fieldwork has also recorded prehistoric flint and buried archaeological features demonstrating earlier settlement in the vicinity.

### **Population**

The village of Rearsby appears to us today as small, in 2001 the population was just over 1000, yet Nichols in 1800 called it a “a large and populous village”! However, for most of its life the population of Rearsby has numbered not more than a few hundreds.

## **SPATIAL ANALYSIS**

### **Plan Form**

The village is based on the junctions of the Leicester to Melton road with the road across the Wreake to Thrusington and the road to Gaddesby and up into High Leicestershire. The plan today consists of a loop in which Melton Road forms a primary axis and from which Mill Road and Brook Street curve down to Brookside along the brook. Brookside continues out of the village to the east towards Melton. From Brookside, Church Lane fords the brook and forms a narrow cul-de-sac as far as the gate of the churchyard from where a footpath connects to the Thrusington Road.

Recent development within the Conservation Area has created two new culs-de-sac. The most significant involved the demolition of Brook House to create Brook House Close which has penetrated the gardens behind Brookside and Brook Street, leaving the high brick retaining wall intact along Brookside. Orton Close has had a less dramatic effect but it too has occupied former gardens, this time the parkland of Rearsby House.

### **Interrelationship of Spaces**

The original centre of the village was based on the relationship of the church, the brook and the area known as The Sands. The Sands, now called Brookside, is an open space with little sense of enclosure, from which Church Lane and Brook Street rise up the hillsides. These two lanes still maintain a medieval quality being tightly enclosed on both sides. Brookside running East and West along the willow edged brook has the feel of a quiet country street.

While Brook Street is medieval and enclosed, Mill Road by contrast has a variable quality, being partly enclosed, either by houses or brick or stone walls and partly open as the houses encroach or are set back from its edge.

The cutting through of Melton Road in 1831 created new opportunities for the village. The road curves gently through the village. The original houses or their high brick front walls are tightly enclosed at the edge of the road but later development, Victorian and modern, has created gaps in the sense of enclosure.

### **Villagescape**

The character of the Conservation Area is greatly determined by two factors: firstly, the setting on Rearsby Brook with its fords and the packhorse bridge joining the slopes on either side and, secondly, its position on the Leicester to Melton Road.

With the cutting through of the turnpike in 1831 and more recently the construction of the bypass, the lower part of the Area is quiet, with roads which are in general unmarked and rural in character. There is a spacious feel with many areas of grass and houses sited within their own land plots.

The upper part of the Area has been dominated for many years by the busy road, which still bears all the markings of attempts to control traffic. Pavements are rather narrow and while the road curves gently and the traffic is minimal it is not a place to feel comfortable in.

Overall, the Area is characterised by a great variety of buildings sitting beside each other. Some, larger, more imposing houses sit in their own garden space, separated often by substantial red brick walls from the street. Others join closely to their neighbour, sitting directly at the edge of the pavement. Not one building is the same size or shape as its neighbour with the exception to this pattern of short terraces of housing for the poorer inhabitants, begun in the Victorian period with the Pochin almshouses and continued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with council housing.

Recent development has broken the tradition of variety. The two culs-de-sac consist of almost monolithic estates of houses which appear to be the same size, and quality, even though there are minor variations in terms of gables, dormers and separate or attached garages.

### **Key Views and Vistas**

The curving streets offer a number of delightful progression of views as one travels along them: the curving Melton Road in either direction; Mill Road as it descends and curves into Brookside and Brook Street as it drops down to the brook.

There is a strong sense of direction as one looks along Brookside as it leaves the village for Melton and a similar sense of the horizon on Melton Road.

There are some pleasant views of the villagescape and roofscape in the Area. Looking across the brook into the yard of Manor Farm with the Retreat beyond and the church on top of the hill gives a wonderful sense of continuing agricultural and village life. From the Melton Road into the back of Brook Street there is a delightful view of the roofscape with several interesting chimneys: from Brook Street this roofscape is seen as a rhythm of simple ridged slate roofs.

From the valley and the approach roads the village appears to be formed of a cluster of trees within which one sees glimpses of the houses. Rearsby House stands out clearly from the West but the church is almost hidden from any direction.

### **Landmarks**

The principal landmarks are St Michaels and All Angels Church and the seven arch Packhorse Bridge. In summertime, the church is hidden by trees. The bridge is a well loved focus of the village.

The Village Design Statement says that the Blue Stone is also a landmark but, since it is set in the grass beneath the willow trees beside the brook at the bend of Mill Road into Brookside, it is not particularly easy to notice. Nevertheless, it is an important feature of the Area: it is said that John Wesley preached from the stone in 1753.

## **CHARACTER ANALYSIS**

### **Building Types, Layouts and Uses**

Rearsby contains a variety of buildings based on the agricultural economy. There are the large farmsteads of Manor Farm and Rearsby House Farm and several other houses bear the mark of agricultural use in the past, such as No 32 Mill Road and No 1819 Melton Road with its complex of barns and outhouses which are currently being developed.

The chief buildings are the Church of St Michael and All Angels and the imposing properties of the Rectory, Old Hall and The Olde House and, hidden from views within the village, Rearsby House.

There are relatively few public buildings: two public houses, The Horse and Groom and The Wheel; the Parish Church, Primary School and the new Village Hall. The Methodist Chapel is now a commercial, design studio but otherwise the buildings are domestic.

Regardless of use, the older buildings are simple rectangular forms with a single ridge. The houses are mostly two storey, set close to and parallel to the edge of the street. Some of the houses extend to the rear as a "T" or "L" shape, again with simple rectangular forms and single ridges. There is an assumption that some of the three storey houses, such as No 2 Church Lane and No 11 Mill Road, were used for framework knitting. The shop front of No 2 Brook Street remains.

The Victorians introduced a Gothic form with much steeper rooves, gables, dormers and porches. These houses are set back from the street edge with front gardens and brick walls at the front which are often high enough to obscure the ground floor of the house. Victorian development included the Pochin almshouses, Nos 1787 - 1795 Melton Road and Nos 1794 - 1800 Melton Road, individual houses such as No 1845 Melton Road, and the Village School. The Methodist Chapel is earlier.

The 20<sup>th</sup> Century introduced two terraces of council housing, Nos 19 - 25 Mill Road built in the 1930s and Nos 13A - 17A Mill Road built in the 1980s together with some detached houses and bungalows.

The most recent developments in Brook House Close and Orton Close have introduced large suburban style detached houses. The development of Brook House Close in the centre has successfully incorporated some of the historic outhouses into the new structures.

### **Key Listed Buildings and Structures**

The Conservation Area has a wealth of listed buildings, see page 17.

Old Hall is a significant mark at the junction of Melton Road and Mill Road, a playful combination of roofscape and interesting gables and bays. As one descends Mill Road, the street is firstly lined by the separately listed high red brick wall to the grounds of Old Hall after which the delightful timber framed Olde House, a former Yeoman's Manor House, sits in its carefully tended and formal garden. Beyond is the red brick range of No 30 & 32 Mill Road. Within the latter can still be seen a small window of original glass panes.

At the core of the village is the seven arched Packhorse Bridge of which six arches are easy to spot but the seventh, hiding in the grass bank, must be sought for. The bridge is beside the ford which leads to Manor Farm, a splendid complex of farm buildings with a separately listed barn and pigeon house. The buildings have great variety, of red brick with cobble and granite, Welsh and Swithland slate, simple rooves and hipped, dormers and gables and several interesting chimneys. To the west of the main farm buildings the yard is surrounded by an ancient mud wall, topped with clay tiles.

On Melton Road, two large buildings stand out: the Pochin almshouses, Nos 1787 - 1795 by virtue of the Gothic architecture and the beautifully decorated rooftiles; and the Old Rectory, Nos 1807 & 1809, by virtue of its dramatic symmetrical fenestration, picked out in black, with square hoods, against the white painted render of its walls.

### **Key Unlisted Buildings**

It is perhaps unusual to describe a ford as a building, however, the ford at Rearsby is a most important feature at the core of the village.

The ford leads directly into the yard of Manor Farm and behind the farmbuildings can be seen the four bay Georgian house of The Retreat, No 3 Church Lane, with its sash windows, hipped slate roof and interesting chimneys.

The new Village Hall ought to be a more significant building but it is bland, oversized, the detailing is ineffectual and the lack of a front door means that it loses any sense of presence.

The original wall of Brook House has been retained around the development of Brook House Close. It is massive and solidly built, forming a long imposing and nearly impenetrable boundary to Brookside.

## **Coherent groups**

The buildings surrounding the junction of Brook Street and Melton Road form an excellent village group. In particular, The Wheel Inn, No 2 Brook Street and No 1819 Melton Road, define the junction and the bend in Melton Road.

## **Building Materials and Architectural Details**

The general building materials are red brick with slate rooves and white painted timber sash windows.

### **Walls**

Soft red brick predominates throughout the Area. The church is the exception being built of ironstone, grey limestone and granite. In the older properties the brickwork is simple, often standing on a plinth of cobbles or occasionally granite. The bricks are rather longer and narrower than is normal in England: it is said that they were carried as ballast in boats from France to replace the trade in wool from this country. In the wealthier houses which have 9 inch walls the brickwork is laid to Flemish bond but only occasionally with the contrasting pattern of differently coloured stretcher and header. The Victorians used dark blue, almost black, and buff brick to decorate their brickwork, with plinths, quoins, strings and cornices, and window arches.

The Rectory and Old Hall are rendered and painted. The Olde House is astonishingly timber framed with herringbone brick infill panels, carefully restored by Sir Frank Craven in 1934.

No 1792 Melton Road has a lovely piece of dogtooth brickwork to the apex of the gable, topped with a terracotta finial.

### **Roofs**

The general roofing material is Welsh slate. There is evidence of thatch in some of the houses but all have now had their first floor raised and been re-roofed with slate. Examples are No 27 Brookside and No 12 Mill Road. Besides the Welsh slate there is some use of Swithland slate and plain clay tiles, a very sympathetic new example is at 39A Mill Road. In more recent time, concrete tiles have been used.

There is some excellent decorative tiling of the Pochin almshouses at Nos 1787 - 1795 Melton Road. There are examples of decorative ridge tiles at No 11 Mill Road and No 1845 Melton Road.

### **Doors and Windows**

There is a variety of timber windows: fine Georgian and Victorian vertical sashes and the more vernacular and thus cheaper horizontal sliding sash windows, some of which have been converted to casements. There are also examples of timber mullion and transom windows. In the older properties the window arches may be of rubbed red brick, the Victorian houses have window heads of stone, such as No 8 Brook Street. There is an older example of curved stone window arch at No 2 Brook Street with a carved head in the centre.

Many of the timber windows have been lost to replacement uPVC double glazing which has no aesthetic charm. These modern windows crudely mimic the timber sashes and casements, they damage the character of the historic houses and erode the character of the Conservation Area.

Doors are generally simple without doorcases, porches or canopies. The exceptions give individuality to the variety of buildings. Examples are at No 2 Brook Street, a much simpler rustic canopy at No 10 Brook Street, and the superbly restored canopy and doorcase at No 32 Mill Road.

Several houses have carriage entrances to give access to the rear yard. Examples are at No 4 Brook Street, No 8 Brook Street, with a modern example in the terraced housing at Nos 13A - 17A Mill Road.

### Other details

A number of buildings have date stones and other decorative devices. Examples are the initials WAP and date on both Pochin Almshouses on Melton Road, a carved lion over the door at No 12 Mill Road and a rosette and date-stone in the gables of the new house at No 39a Mill Road.

Mulberry Cottage at the corner of Melton Road and Mill Road has a multicoloured tile path in the front garden.

### Parks, Gardens and Trees

The village of Rearsby is remarkable for the number of trees in a landscape which has relatively few trees and the centre of Rearsby Conservation Area is remarkable for its extensive area of grass and willows beside the brook.

Public open space is rather limited to the area of grass beside the brook and in front of the old post office but beyond the brook is a quiet secluded area known as The Park. Around the church is the peaceful, rather secluded, churchyard.

The centre of the village between Mill Road and Brook Street still maintains a substantial quality of garden and orchard, despite the development of Brook House Close. This is largely due to the private gardens of Old Hall and The Olde House.

Along Brookside the built area merges almost seamlessly into the countryside, especially at the end of Manor Farm where another ford leads into Bog Lane, a muddy footpath and tractor way. There is a small area of paddock at the junction with the road to Thrussington.

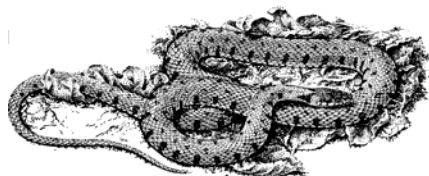
### Biodiversity

The Conservation Area has retained small oases of valuable habitats for wildlife in the midst of the surrounding countryside, which is largely managed for intensive arable production. Rearsby Brook flows through the Area and forms the main wildlife corridor, connecting the Conservation Area to the countryside across the landscape of the Wreake Valley.

The brook is lined in places with trees such as crack willows *Salix fragilis*, but the banks are mostly open. Next to the watercourse, small paddocks and wet grassland provide a valuable resource for many species which rely on damp ground conditions.

Although strong groups of mature trees are present within the Conservation Area, the hedgerow network is fragmented and interrupted and, except for the brook, there is a lack of strong habitat connectivity throughout and around the Area.

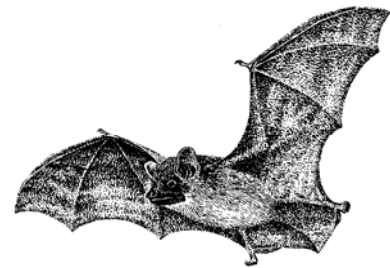
A small area of wet woodland to the east of the Conservation Area has been notified as a Local Wildlife Site. It comprises mature crack willow pollards *Salix fragilis* and alder *Alnus glutinosa* trees and complements the habitats found within the Area, such as the watercourse, damp grasslands, lawns and mature trees.



The grass snake *Natrix natrix*, a species associated with damp grounds has been recorded basking on the bank of the brook within close range of the Conservation Area. This harmless snake is a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species.

The water vole *Arvicola terrestris*, another UK BAP species and a Local Biodiversity Action Plan priority species, has been recorded along ditches off Rearsby Brook. It is likely that the species commutes along the brook, although human disturbance may prevent it from establishing territory within the Conservation Area.

Bats such as the common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* are known to roost within the Area, whilst the brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* has been found in very close proximity.



The song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, another UK BAP species, can be seen feeding on the lawns of larger gardens within the Conservation Area. The loss of lawns from paving, hard surfacing, and infill development is likely to decrease the availability of foraging habitat for this and other species.

Mature trees will eventually senesce and decline. Without the provision of the next generation of trees to replace existing mature trees, both the wildlife resource and visual quality of the Conservation Area may be affected in years to come.

### **Detrimental Features**

Melton Road, now by-passed, is superfluous as a major road, yet it is still marked as if it were a road to take volumes of traffic. It could have been part of the project of building the bypass to restore the village character of its street and return it for the enjoyment of the inhabitants.

## **DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

The main contributions to the special character of Rearsby Conservation Area are:

- The setting on Rearsby Brook with the fords and packhorse bridge
- The agricultural economy: Manor Farm and No 32 Mill Road
- The imposing larger properties of The Rectory, Old Hall and The Olde House
- The Victorian Pochin almshouses
- The extensive areas of grass and willows beside the brook
- The developmental views along Melton Road
- Views of Manor Farm
- The number of trees in a landscape with relatively few trees
- The great variety in shape and size of the older buildings
- The common use of a restricted palette of red brick, slate and timber sash windows

## 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 village.

Within the Conservation Area, where the quality of the general environment is already considered to be high, 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 PPS1 and PPG 15, Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, Leading in Design and other SPD, and Village Design Statements will be used to assess the quality of proposal for new development.

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

1. The Conservation Area has a distinct “grain” or pattern of built form and spaces which are part of its historic development. This gives the Conservation 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.
2. 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. Good modern design can be used to create positive changes in historic settlements
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 lead 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.
6. 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.
7. Applicants for planning permission must provide a meaningful “Design & 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.

### **Procedures to Ensure Consistent Decision-Making**

The basis of this character appraisal is to inform and guide development control decisions. A consistent approach to 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 any necessary remedial action.

The powers set out in Section 215 of the Village & 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**

The quality of a conservation area is often threatened by the cumulative impact of numerous small changes to many buildings which individually 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.

While the survey has identified a loss of character through the replacement of timber windows with uPVC it is not thought advisable to seek an Article 4 Direction.

## **General Condition**

Rearsby Conservation Area is in a reasonable condition. The buildings and their gardens and the public spaces are well cared for.

The by-pass, by removing almost all the through traffic, has restored peace and calm to the village but it has also taken away some of the vitality. Although there is still a working agriculture in the village, it has very little other economic life.

## **Buildings at Risk**

It is the intent of the Borough Council to take necessary action to secure repair & full use of any buildings at risk.

During the survey of the Area it was noted that uPVC windows fitted some years ago to Charlotte Cottage have damaged the character of this listed building.

The old barn at Brookside is very dilapidated.

## **Review of the Conservation Area Boundary**

The present boundaries of the existing Conservation Area incorporate the principal areas of special historic and architectural interest within the village. The appraisal has not identified any need to change the boundary.

## **Possible Buildings for Spot Listing**

In carrying out the Appraisal 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**

With the building of the by-pass there has been an enormous reduction in traffic using Melton Road. This road should now be returned as a village street. The road width could be reduced and all trappings and markings of traffic control should be removed. Widening the pavements would allow the street to regain some social function with particular opportunities outside the Horse and Groom.

The railings at Brookside are functional in design and not inappropriate to the village. An improved design that would enhance the character of the village is an option.

The telephone exchange is untidy. Enhancement could be achieved by a greater level of care.

The mud wall at Manor Farm is the subject of an ongoing scheme of repair. Dialogue with the owners and their agents is being maintained.

The wirescape of telephone and electricity cables detract from the character of the Area. Undergrounding is a possibility but is likely to be low priority for the utility companies.

## **Proposals for Economic Development and Regeneration**

Historic building 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 may be eligible for grant assistance.

## Management and Protection of Biodiversity

Threatened species and habitats can be protected by wildlife legislation. Where protected species may be present, appropriate surveys and assessments should be carried out to ensure that development or management proposals will not have a detrimental effect.

The Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the Borough Council's priorities for conservation of a variety of habitats and species within Charnwood and details the actions required to bring about a reversal in their decline. Not only should habitats and species of principal importance (UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species) be retained and protected, but opportunities maximised to restore or enhance such habitats and populations.

## Monitoring Change

It is planned to review the conservation area character appraisal and its management plan every five years, although the management plan may under certain circumstances need to be reviewed over a shorter time period. 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 Charnwood's conservation areas and how it will use its resources to achieve these aims.

## Summary of Issues and Proposed Actions

Conservation Area Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Partner	Other Partners
Melton Road	Reduce the carriageway width, widen the pavements and remove markings of traffic control.	Leics CC Highways	Rearsby Parish Council and Charnwood BC
Barn at Brookside	Ensure that the building does not fall into disrepair. Encourage renovation.	Charnwood BC	The owner.
Mud wall at Manor Farm	Continue to monitor ongoing scheme of repair.	Charnwood BC	The owner.

## Developing Management Proposals

Various forces, historical, cultural and commercial, have shaped the development of the conservation area, creating a sense of place and individual identity. The character and appearance of the conservation area is vitally important, both in attracting investment in the area itself, and in the encouragement of initiatives to the benefit of the wider community.

Based on the issues that have been identified the following objectives will have a positive impact in both protecting and enhancing the character of the conservation area, and provide the basis of a long term management plan:

1. Review how the Council's adopted 'Shopfronts & Signs' guidance and the adopted Rearsby Village Design Statement are being used.
2. A policy regarding the co-ordination of the placing of all permanent items within the streets needs to be formulated. The opportunities to renew, redesign, re-site, eliminate or combine existing street furniture are substantial. Similarly there is a need to look at traffic signs and highway markings with a view to their rationalisation. The appropriateness of the existing street lighting and the scope to introduce imaginative lighting schemes, including the illumination of key buildings, also merits examination. Guidelines could be set out in a public realm manual.
3. The production of heritage trail leaflets to increase community awareness and appreciation, including the encouragement of tourism, should be considered. This might involve interpretation material, plaques or similar for key sites and buildings.

### **Community Involvement**

This document was made available as a draft via the website prior to submission to Cabinet for adoption. A public meeting was held in Rearsby so that local residents could contribute their ideas for enhancement and preservation of the Conservation Area. All comments and responses have been considered and appropriate amendments made to the document prior to submission 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 & Landscape Team  
Tel. 01509 634748  
[built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk)

Development Control  
Tel. 01509 634691  
[Development.control@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:Development.control@charnwood.gov.uk)

Planning Enforcement  
Tel. 01509 634722  
[Development.control@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:Development.control@charnwood.gov.uk)

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John Nichols, "History and Antiquities of the County of Leicestershire", Vol 3, 1800  
Barrie Cox, "The Place Names of Leicestershire", Part III, 2004  
Rearsby Village Design Statement, Rearsby Parish Council, 2002  
Rearsby, The Story of a Village, Rearsby Local History Society, 1984  
Sue Dix, Portrait of Rearsby, Article in Leicester Advertiser, 25 April 1980  
Bryn Howell, A History of The Olde House, Rearsby, 2007  
David Smith & Robert Hayward, Rearsby Old Hall, A Standing Building Evaluation  
Guidance on conservation area appraisals, English Heritage, 2006  
Guidance on the management of conservation areas, English Heritage, 2006

## **Internet Resources**

[www.rearsby.net](http://www.rearsby.net) (accessed 18 May 2009)  
[www.leics.gov.uk/rearsby.pdf](http://www.leics.gov.uk/rearsby.pdf) (accessed 7 July 2008) giving census 2001 information  
[www.natural-england.org.uk/conservation/wildlife-management-licensing/species/bats.htm](http://www.natural-england.org.uk/conservation/wildlife-management-licensing/species/bats.htm)

## **Statutory Listed Buildings in Rearsby**

The Church of St Michael and Old Hall are Listed Grade II\*.

The Seven Arch Packhorse Bridge besides being listed Grade II is also a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The other buildings are listed Grade II.

Church of St Michael and All Angels, Church Lane  
Seven Arch Packhorse Bridge, Church Lane  
Charlotte Cottage, No 5 Brook Street  
The Old Vicarage, Nos 1807-1809 Melton Road  
Nos 1787-1795 Melton Road  
Mulberry House, No 1756 Melton Road  
The Olde House, No 8 Mill Road  
Barn to rear of The Olde House, Mill Road  
Moorhurst & Pump, No 12 Mill Road  
Manor Farmhouse & Outbuildings, Mill Road  
Barn at Manor Farm, Mill Road  
Wall at Manor Farm, Mill Road  
Pigeon House at Manor Farm, Mill Road  
Old Hall, Mill Road  
Wall to grounds of Old Hall, Mill Road - Melton Road  
Barn at Rearsby House Farm, Mill Road  
Former stable at Rearsby House Farm, Mill Road  
No 30 Mill Road  
No 32 Mill Road

## **Other Listed Buildings in Rearsby Parish**

Rearsby Mill, Grade II  
Rearsby Station, Locally Listed  
Church Leys House Convent, Locally Listed  
The Grange, Locally Listed

**Rearsby Conservation Area**

**Comments received for the Draft Appraisal**

Public Meeting at Rearsby Village Hall, Thursday 21 January 2010

30 people attended

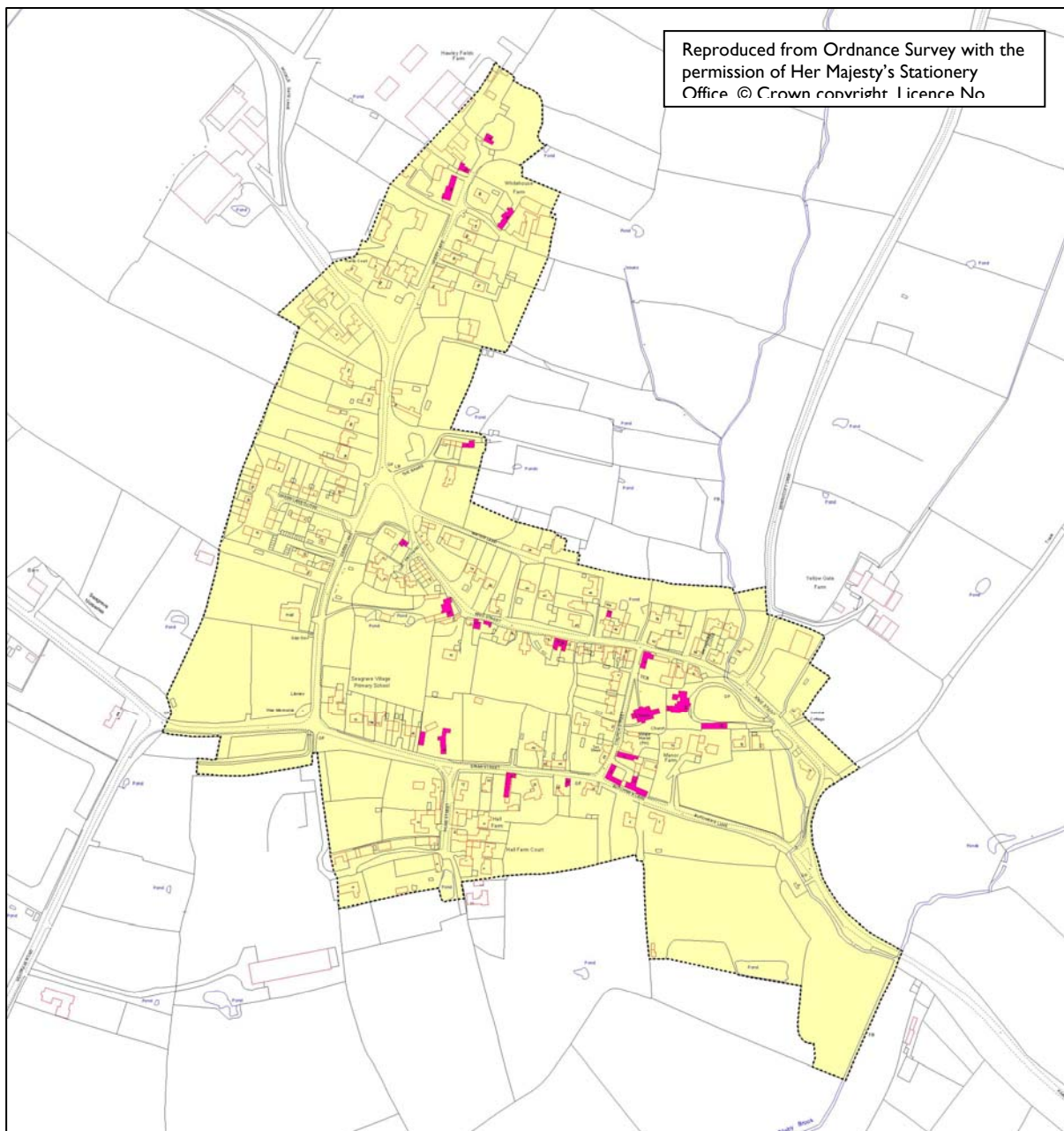
	<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Comment</b>	<b>Response</b>
1	From the public meeting	The Packhorse Bridge is a Scheduled Monument	Document amended
2		The Olde House was not reconstructed - it was restored	Document amended
3		Concern to maintain adequate arrangements for traffic within the village even with the by-pass; Scope for dialogue between the Parish, County Highways and C&L on highway related schemes such as 20mph zones	Agreed
4		Railings at Brookside - an opportunity for enhancement	Document amended
5		The Methodist chapel is now in commercial use	Document amended
6		Management proposals should also refer to the VDS	Document amended
7		The dilapidated barn at Brookside is a building at risk	Agreed, document amended
8		The Listed mud wall still needs restoration	Noted. There is an ongoing scheme of repair.
9		Document needs to be more robust in identifying issues which need attention which are included in the VDS.	Agreed. Document amended.
10		Old Hall is listed Grade II*	Document amended
11		Extend area towards Leicester to protect trees, eg at Grange Avenue	Grange Avenue is detached and a long way from the area of architectural and historic interest.
12		Nos 13-17a Mill Road were not council housing	Document amended

13		Can anything be done to get telephone and electricity wires underground?	In theory this is possible but it would be difficult and expensive to achieve. Added to Action Points
14		There is a length of mud wall in very good condition in the garden of 33a Mill Road	Noted
15	Notes from C&L officer	No 1819 Melton Road has been renovated and is now to let	Document amended
16		The telephone exchange looks untidy	Agreed. Possibility of enhancement added to Action Points.
17		The school extension is now finished	Noted
18		Slate headstones in the churchyard should be mentioned	Document amended
19		Work on putting buttresses to the boundary wall of the churchyard is starting	Noted
20		Comment has been received that the boundary wall to Brook House is in a poor condition	The wall is certainly leaning, but it is leaning inwards and the gates are upright. It is uncertain whether movement is still occurring. Situation to be monitored.
21	Letter from Bryn Howell, local resident	Corrections to history.	Document amended

## **Seagrave Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	2
Planning policy context	
<b>ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST LOCATION AND SETTING</b>	4
<b>HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	4
Origins and development, Archaeological interest, Population	
<b>SPATIAL ANALYSIS</b>	6
Plan form, Inter-relationship of spaces, Villagescape Key views and vistas, Landmarks	
<b>CHARACTER ANALYSIS</b>	7
Building types, layouts and uses Key listed buildings and structures, Key unlisted buildings, Coherent groups Building materials and architectural details Street lighting Parks, gardens and trees, Biodiversity	
<b>DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST</b>	10
<b>CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>	11
General principles, Procedures to ensure consistent decision-making Enforcement strategy, Article 4 Direction General condition, Review of the boundary Possible buildings for spot listing, Enhancement Proposals for economic development and regeneration Management and Protection of Biodiversity Monitoring change, Consideration of resources Summary of issues and proposed actions, Developing management proposals Community involvement, Advice and guidance	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	15
<b>LISTED BUILDINGS IN SEAGRAVE</b>	16

# SEAGRAVE CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL



*Current map of Seagrave showing the Conservation Area and the Listed Buildings*

## **Introduction**

Seagrave Conservation Area was designated in August 1980. It covers an area of 33.8 Hectares.

The purpose of this appraisal is to examine the historical development of the Conservation Area and to describe its present appearance in order to assess its special architectural and historic interest. The appraisal will then be used to inform the consideration of management and development proposals within the Area.

This 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 historic village and surrounding area;
- Historic development and archaeology sets out how architecture and archaeology are related to the social and economic growth of the village;
- Spatial analysis describes the historic plan form of the village 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. An assessment of the general condition of the buildings and spaces within the Area is included.

The main issues and proposed management actions are summarised. Recommendations for developing longer term management proposals for the area are suggested.

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 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’. Permission will not be granted for proposals that are likely to harm the character or appearance of a conservation area. *Sections 69 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.*

The Department of the Environment’s Planning Policy Guidance 15 on “Planning and the Historic Environment” encourages local planning authorities to pursue their duties under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to formulate proposals to preserve and enhance conservation areas and of the need to consult widely in doing so. It also contains several policies that are relevant to conserving the character of conservation areas.

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’ builds on the design policies set out in the Charnwood Local Plan and will contribute to the development of more effective approaches to securing good design in the emerging Local Development Framework. The guide is also intended to support the implementation of the community strategy, Charnwood Together, by providing a set of principles that will inform the physical development implicit in the initiatives and actions of all partners in the local strategic partnership.

### Other SPG/SPD guidance

- Backland & Tandem Development
- House Extensions
- Shopfronts & Signs<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> While it is recognised that there are currently no shops in Seagrave, the shopfronts, such as at the corner of Church Street and King Street, remain and their design makes a significant contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

## **ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

### **Location and Setting**

Seagrave is a village nestling in a fairly steep sided valley in the Wolds. It lies about 1 mile west of the Fosse Way and about 7 miles from Loughborough. Although many of the people now living in Seagrave work in Loughborough, Leicester and elsewhere, it was until recently a predominantly agricultural settlement being surrounded by good quality land. The Wolds are a limestone formation and the area around Seagrave is covered with a thick layer of cold, strong clay. The limestone itself, of the same quality as in Barrow upon Soar, has not been worked.

The Conservation Area encompasses the whole of the built part of the village except for a few farm outbuildings. Included in the Area are the medieval earthworks to the south of Hall Farm as well as all the green spaces, such as the cemetery, the allotments, the playing field at the top and the hay meadows at the bottom, which are integral to the village.

## **HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **Origins and Development**

In 1630 Robert Burton was made Rector of Seagrave. In his *Anatomy of Melancholy* he described Seagrave as “sited in a champain at the edge of the Wolds and more barren than the villages about it; yet no place likely yields a better air”.

Seagrave belongs to the system of parishes which radiate from the moot at Six Hills at the top of the Wolds. There is evidence of human activity in the area from the Stone Age and its proximity to the Fosse Way indicates that there was also Roman activity. However, the Foss was possibly constructed by the Romans on an already existing trackway. There was another trackway, called the Salt Way connecting Barrow upon Soar and Sileby and further west with the North Sea to the east.

The settlement which we see today has its origins in a nucleated Saxon settlement, typical of the East Midlands. The village was surrounded by open fields which were divided into strips. There were three fields, Over, Milne and Nether, one for wheat or barley, one for peas and beans and one fallow. Decisions on when to sow, reap and plough were taken by common consent of the villagers, who were allocated strips in each field so that each would have a measure of the poorer and a measure of the better land. There were also meadows for the cattle and sheep and there were grazing strips amongst the arable land, variously called Hills, Plains, Wolds, Gorse, Plebbs and Walring Leys. Later, at the time of Enclosure in 1760, there were four open fields called Brinkfield, Ansleyfield, Overfield or Averfield and Netherfield, which may have been called Wichelsfield.

The documentation of Seagrave starts with the Domesday survey of 1086 where the village is called Setgrave, Satgrave or Segrave. At this time half the village was owned by the King’s manor of Rothley which in 1140 passed into the ownership of Leicester Abbey.

Much of the medieval history of the village is concerned with the ownership of large parts of the parish by the de Segrave family but it is no longer clear where this family lived, if indeed they did live in the village.

The present church of All Saints dates mostly from the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, with some 12<sup>th</sup> Century fabric. The Norman font is still in use.

There were changes to the village with the Black Death of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, with the Civil War and other events but the most significant change occurred with the Enclosure Act of 1760 when, a year later, the open fields were awarded to the major landholders thus enabling more efficient farming practice by holding the land in one area rather than on the strips scattered around the village. At the same time the poorer people in the village were dispossessed. The effect of enclosure was to create

a landscape of hedgerows. At least until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century there were 11 working farms within the village.

Following Enclosure the wide roads leading to the village were laid out and at the same time there were major improvements to transport in the Soar valley, first with the navigation of the Soar, followed not long after by the building of the railway. Seagrave did get some benefit but the effects on the village were not pronounced.

There were several developments in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with the establishment of the Village School and the provision of other facilities such as bakery, smithy, post office, but there is little evidence of any industry. Even for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Seagrave remained a small agricultural village. Piped water was not available until 1927, electricity was brought in in 1938 and mains drainage in 1965.

There has been a significant demographic change in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century and up to the present. Agriculture requires fewer people to actually work on the land and most people now work in Loughborough, Leicester and elsewhere. At the same time rising affluence has had an effect on the quality and size of dwelling which people feel they need. There is pressure to build and the demand is for ever larger houses and increasing mobility means more traffic through the village and a corresponding loss of facilities in the village.

### **Archaeological Interest**

Prehistoric remains within the village are limited but a Mesolithic pebble hammer has been found which indicates that there was early prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the village. There is also some evidence for Roman settlement - Roman pottery suggests an occupation site in the southern part of the village. Most recorded archaeological remains are medieval in date. To the south of the village (south of Swan Street/Butchers Lane) are various earthworks, the sites of medieval houses, the manor house, fishponds and 'hollow ways'. Further village earthworks are recorded to the north of Water Lane and to the south of King Street (the 'Village Dyke' ran alongside this road). In addition to settlement remains, a medieval deer park is recorded abutting the village to the south. There are also some medieval ridge and furrow earthworks surviving in fields around the village, reflecting the open field agriculture prior to Enclosure.

### **Population**

Seagrave has always been a small settlement. It currently has a population of about 500. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century it was little more than 300. Earlier surveys tended to count households instead of individuals. Thus in 1563 there were 46 households and in 1670, tax was assessed against 58 hearths.

## **SPATIAL ANALYSIS**

### **Plan Form**

Seagrave is based on a small grid of streets, Swan Street - Butchers Lane and King Street, running parallel to each other joined across by Church Street. From this grid the roads run out to Paudy Cross Roads, Sileby and the Fosse Way with the minor Berrycott Lane to Six Hills. The village also has a good network of footpaths and green lanes connecting the village and its farmsteads to the fields around and a number of metalled lanes leading to small groups of houses and farms, Green Lane, Muckle Gate Lane, The Banks, Water Lane and Pond Street. In the twentieth century there has been a growth of culs-de-sac to accommodate small developments, starting with the council housing on Green Lane Close and continuing with The Orchard and more recently with the private roads of Hardy Court and other developments off Muckle Gate Lane.

The core of the village retains its quality as a farming community set amongst the fields from which its economy is derived. Its character and its quality are greatly determined by the large areas of green space within and around the grid of streets juxtaposed against the streets themselves which are tightly enclosed; sometimes the houses are close up against the edge of the street and sometimes there are high banks, retaining walls and mature overhanging hedges and trees. There has been a great deal of development since the 1950s which has been fairly well accommodated by the original settlement.

The character of Green Lane is different to the rest of the village. It was until recently, it is clear, a rural lane leading to a few houses and farmsteads. The lane itself is narrow, unmarked by any white lines, without footpaths and bordered by hedges, trees and wild flowers which were allowed to grow freely. The larger farmsteads were positioned to give a sense of importance with a broad opening of green space while the workers cottages were built tightly against the edge of the lane. It is acknowledged that the original farmyards were often walled but this pattern is almost being destroyed by the building of large detached houses set in their own walled off enclosures with manicured grass and daintily grown trees. Mucklegate Lane is made ridiculous by the declaration that twenty metres before the road ends is outside the speed limit!

### **Interrelationship of Spaces**

Seagrave is remarkable for the juxtaposition of open green spaces with tightly enclosed streets. Almost the whole of the area between King Street and Swan Street is fields and trees and there are large areas of open space on both sides of Green Lane and on the outside of the grid of streets. The houses cling tightly to the streets although since the 1960s the tendency has been to build well back from the street.

### **Villagescape**

The origins of Seagrave as an agricultural village can still be recognised in the layout of the buildings. Only 40 years ago there were 11 working farms within the Conservation Area:

- Home Farm - Green Lane;
- Hawley Field Farm - Green Lane;
- White House Farm - Green Lane;
- Rose Farm - Green Lane;
- Hall Farm - Pond Street;
- Manor Farm - Butchers Lane;
- Park Farm - Church Street;
- White House Farm - Corner of Church Street and King Street;
- Ivy House Farm - top end of King Street;
- Another Ivy House Farm down the bottom on King Street near to Berrycott Lane Junction;
- Dicegate Farm (otherwise known as The Firs);

Yellowgate Farm on Berrycott Lane is outside the Conservation Area and more recent.

The farmsteads occupy their own plot with the principal house and outbuildings arranged to suit the work of the farm while the smaller workers cottages are arranged along the street at the back of the pavement. Thus there is variety in the villagescape, an alternation of tight enclosure with more open aspect, which is further interspersed with undeveloped fields and paddocks. This pattern has been largely filled in through the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with a further mixture of small bungalows and larger detached houses. Mostly, these later developments are set back from the pavement, in some cases well back on the top of the bank with substantial front gardens and often substantial hedges and shrubs which shield the building from view. The older smaller houses are very modest in scale and they present a simple rectangular form with a simple ridge parallel to the street, though there are often substantial rear developments away from the street. The larger buildings may have a more complex shape, with a gable end fronting the street, such as The Croft, and its barn, now converted, on Swan Street and Park Farm on Church Street, where the barn and other outbuildings are parallel to Church Street and other outbuildings parallel going down Butchers Lane.

### **Key Views and Vistas**

The narrow winding streets of the village offer many opportunities for views. Whether going up or down the hill there is a continually changing scene. There are corresponding views looking East out to the opposite hillside with the Fosse Way running along the ridge in the distance.

Coming from the Fosse Way there is a dramatic vista of the village nestling among the trees on the hillside across the valley of the brook, though in summertime the foliage tends to mask this view. The views are even better from the footpaths, particularly when one takes time to appreciate them and one sees the drama of the variety of roofscape interposed by the many trees and it is from here that the tower of the church is seen rising above.

Coming from Sileby or Paudy Crossroads the village is hidden from view until one rounds the sharp bend at the top of the hill. Then, from Green Lane especially, the vistas of the village in its bowl are wonderful, with the Wolds as a backdrop.

### **Landmarks**

The tower of the church may be seen from a few places, especially from the footpath going up from King Street beside Sundial Cottage. At the other side the village school marks the entrance to the village from Sileby.

## **CHARACTER ANALYSIS**

### **Building Types, Layouts and Uses**

Farmsteads, workers cottages, council housing, only one truly large property: Seagrave Hall. More recently there are bungalows and detached houses. The trend in more recent years is for larger and larger detached houses. There are few non-domestic buildings, some barns and outbuildings related to the farms, which have mostly been converted to residential use. Otherwise the church, village school and the village hall. There are no shops left, nor a post office, though the evidence is still there in the shopfront windows, for instance at 45 King Street and No 1 Church Street.

Among the farmsteads and houses are hidden relics of the past, such as the brewhouse attached to No 54 King Street. Sometimes, the names of properties indicate former uses, such as Chapel Cottage - the Virginia creeper covered No 20 Green Lane.

## **Key Listed Buildings and Structures**

The most important buildings in the core of the village are Seagrave Hall and All Saints Church. The former Inn on Swan St, now called Abbotsbury Court, is very prominent in the street, jutting out from the bank, painted white, and tall with three storeys. It may be one of the oldest surviving properties in the village.

The two farms, Hawley Fields Farmhouse, with Home Farm behind it, terminate the view at the end of Green Lane.

## **Key Unlisted Buildings**

Seagrave School at the top of the hill is an important landmark at the entrance to the village.

## **Coherent groups**

The run of buildings, from the former shop at the corner of Church Street to No 41 King Street is a significant group.

## **Building Materials and Architectural Details**

### **Walls**

The normal construction is a soft red brick with lime mortar, sometimes laid to Flemish bond with the pattern of alternating header and stretcher. Many of the bricks were fired from clay dug from pits around the village. In the older buildings, the walls sit on a plinth of granite and field stone. It is surprising to find so much granite in this Wolds village at a fair distance from the source of the stone in the Forest on the other side of the Soar valley but it is used also for many of the retaining walls against the high banks. And the church is built of granite with the quoins, especially of the tower, in ashlar.

Not uncommonly walls are painted white or rendered and painted. The Victorians introduced dark blue brick as decoration. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century and later, as the soft red brick became unobtainable, and the lime mortar was replaced by the harder cement mortar, there are examples of buff brick, and latterly of a much deeper red brick or a mottle of pink and grey brick.

### **Roofs**

There is a variety of roofing material, Swithland Slate, red clay pantile, plain clay tile and Welsh slate. No one material is dominant though the use of red pantile is a common feature of the Wolds villages. There are also grey pantiles and grey plain tile. Some houses have been re-roofed with concrete tile.

### **Doors and Windows**

Windows are of white painted timber, sash windows in the more expensive properties, horizontal sliding sash and casements in the cottages. Unfortunately there are many properties where windows have been replaced with uPVC double glazing. These plastic windows have neither style nor charm and they do no justice to the character of the village. The cumulative effect of these replacement windows has done great damage to the Conservation Area.

Doors are simple without decoration, canopy or doorcase. There are a few stone or brick porches. However, recently there has been a fashion to introduce porches, gables and dormers, possibly in the mistaken idea that this constitutes a rustic character, but such features are not historically part of the character of Seagrave.

## Street Lighting

Seagrave Parish Council have taken great care to ensure that the level of street lighting in the village is kept to a minimum, thus preserving the quality of a rural village and adhering to the recommendations of the National Dark Skies Campaign.

## Parks, Gardens and Trees

Seagrave is astonishing for the extent of open, though not necessarily accessible, green space. At the top of the hill is the village green, which slopes down into King Street. In the centre of the green is an important chestnut tree. Closely associated with the Green are the broad verges which extend along Green Lane, the allotment gardens, the playing field on the other side of the road and the cemetery.

Most of these green spaces are registered common land and thus protected from any development, including the forming of driveways across the verges.

In the centre of the village is a large expanse of meadow with many trees and lower down the hill there is the hay meadow at the start of the village. Outside the built area is the site of the medieval village, with fish ponds, and other evidence of settlement.

Significant parts of Butchers Lane and Swan Street are bordered by trees and hedges. Throughout the village there are grass verges and grassy banks, especially Green Lane, the top of Swan Street and the east end of King Street.

At the bottom of the village behind Sundial Cottage rising up from King Street is a fine area of parkland with many large trees, walnut, sweet chestnut, lime and predominantly beech. Many of these trees were planted by a former rector. Some of them have been lost to drought in recent years. The field is traversed by a footpath which gives fine views over the village.

## Biodiversity

The Conservation Area is closely surrounded by high quality habitats and attractive countryside. It comprises part of a Local Wildlife Site along its mid-northern boundary. High Tor Fields has been notified for its species-rich grassland with lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, black knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and many meadow flowers.

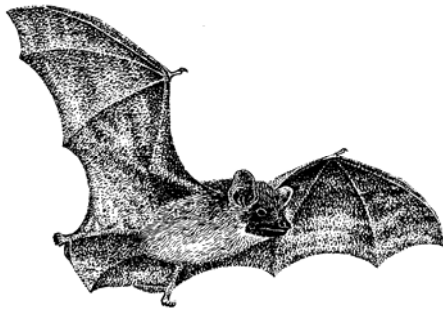
Other Local Wildlife Sites, such as Fields off Berrycott Lane and Hall Farm, are in close proximity to the Area, to the east and south, and contain rich assemblages of flowering plants typical of old unimproved meadows.



Along Park Hill Verges – another Local Wildlife Site adjacent to the south-east corner of the Conservation Area – one can still come across species which once used to be common in the countryside but have now seriously declined, such as cowslip *Primula veris*, agrimony *Agrimonia eupatoria*, bulbous buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus* and adder's-tongue fern *Ophioglossum vulgatum*.

Roadside verges form a valuable resource bringing the countryside into the heart of the Conservation Area. Wild flowers, such a cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, garlic mustard *Alliaria petiolata*, wood avens *Geum urbanum* and herb-robert *Geranium robertianum*, provide sources of nectar and pollen to many invertebrates. However, the introduction of non-native ornamental species can displace the native flora and detract from the natural environment.

The countryside in Seagrave comprises a good network of ponds with amphibians, including the great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. The pond network extends to the Conservation Area, and it is possible that some of the ponds still support this UK Biodiversity Action Plan species. The great crested newt spends most of its life cycle on quality terrestrial habitats, only returning to ponds to breed.



The Area still retains some grassland fields bounded by free-growing hedgerows. Uninterrupted native hedgerows contribute to the rich local biodiversity network. They extend to the surrounding countryside and connect the range of wildlife habitats within the Area and beyond. They also function as commuting highways for many species, such as the common pipistrelle bat *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* which is known to roost in several dwellings within the Conservation Area.

Sibley Brook flows from the higher grounds of the Wolds through the Conservation Area towards the River Soar. The tree-lined watercourse forms another important biodiversity link with the surrounding countryside. Mobile species such as the otter *Lutra lutra* and water vole *Arvicola terrestris* have been recorded close by and are likely to travel through the Conservation Area. Both are UK Biodiversity Action Plan species and the water vole is also a priority species in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Lowland meadows, ponds and hedgerows are all listed as UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitats. The rich mosaic of habitats within the Conservation Area and in its vicinity enables wildlife to flourish and be an integral part of the life of the parish.

## DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST

The main contributions to the special character of Seagrave Conservation Area are:

- Location in the Wolds nestling in the steep narrow valley
- Superb views of the village in its bowl especially from the footpaths
- Inclusion within the Area of medieval earthworks
- Quiet streets, particularly King Street, Church Street and Green Lane
- Variety of farmsteads and modest cottages
- Extent of open green space between King Street and Swan Street and all around the village
- Juxtaposition of the houses with the green space
- Minimum street lighting to preserve the rural quality and protect the night sky

## 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 village.

Within the Conservation Area, where the quality of the general environment is already considered to be high, 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 PPS1 and PPG 15, Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, Leading in Design and other Supplementary Planning Documents will be used to assess the quality of proposal for new development.

The character of the Conservation Area identified in the appraisal above, pages 3 - 10, is such that the following general principles should be noted when considering any development in all parts of the Conservation Area:

1. The Conservation Area has a distinct “grain” or pattern of built form and spaces which are part of its historic development. This gives the Conservation 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.
2. 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. Good modern design can be used to create positive changes in historic settlements
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Applicants for planning permission must provide a meaningful “Design & 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.

### **Procedures to Ensure Consistent Decision-Making**

The basis of the character appraisal is to inform and guide development control decisions. A consistent approach to 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 or the unauthorised demolition of a building within a conservation area is an offence. In such cases, the Council will consider prosecution of anyone responsible and any necessary remedial action.

The powers set out in Section 215 of the Town & 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**

The quality of a 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 considered appropriate at this time to impose such a direction.

### **General Condition**

The core of the village which is wholly within the Conservation Area is in a reasonable condition. There has been some loss of character, particularly through the replacement of timber windows with uPVC.

However, beyond the core, Green Lane and its associated spur roads is in danger of losing its character. Until recently it was a rural lane of farmsteads and cottages. It is now being developed with substantial detached housing.

### **Buildings at Risk**

It is the intent of the Borough Council to take necessary action to secure repair & full use of any buildings at risk. The appraisal has not identified any such buildings.

### **Review of the Conservation Area Boundary**

The present boundaries of the existing Conservation Area incorporate the whole of the area of special historic and architectural interest within the village. The appraisal has not identified any need to change the boundary.

### **Possible Buildings for Spot Listing**

In carrying out the Appraisal 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.

### **Proposals for Economic Development and Regeneration**

Historic building 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 may be eligible for grant assistance.

### **Management and Protection of Biodiversity**

Threatened species and habitats can be protected by wildlife legislation. Where protected species may be present, appropriate surveys and assessments should be carried out to ensure that development or management proposals will not have a detrimental effect.

The Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the Borough Council's priorities for conservation of a variety of habitats and species within Charnwood and details the actions required to bring about a reversal in their decline. Not only should habitats and species of principal importance be retained and protected, but opportunities maximised to restore or enhance such habitats and populations.

The trees in the parkland behind Sundial Cottage are a valuable asset to the Conservation Area. New trees need to be planted every so often to replace those which have died or are reaching the end of their lives.

### **Monitoring Change**

It is planned to review the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and its Management Plan every five years, although the Management Plan may under certain circumstances need to be reviewed over a shorter time period. 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 Charnwood’s conservation areas and how it will use its resources to achieve these aims.

### Summary of Issues and Proposed Actions

Conservation Area Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Partner	Other Partners
Intrusive overhead wires	Encourage the laying of electricity and telephone wires and cables underground.	Utility Companies	Charnwood BC & Seagrave PC
Intrusive highway signage	Encourage an audit of street signs to determine whether they are necessary.	Leicestershire CC Highways	Charnwood BC & Seagrave PC

### Developing Management Proposals

Various forces, historical, cultural and commercial, have shaped the development of the conservation area, creating a sense of place and individual identity. The character and appearance of the Conservation Area is vitally important, both in attracting investment in the area itself, and in the encouragement of initiatives to the benefit of the wider community.

Based on the issues that have been identified the following objectives will have a positive impact in both protecting and enhancing the character of the Conservation Area, and provide the basis of a long term management plan:

1. Review how the Council’s adopted ‘Shopfronts & Signs’ guidance is working.
2. A policy regarding the co-ordination of the placing of all permanent items within the streets needs to be formulated. The opportunities to renew, redesign, re-site, eliminate or combine existing street furniture are substantial. Similarly there is a need to look at traffic signs and highway markings with a view to their rationalisation. The existing low level of street lighting makes a significant contribution to the character of the Area and any proposed changes would need very careful consideration.
3. The production of heritage trail leaflets to increase community awareness and appreciation, including the encouragement of tourism, should be considered. This might involve interpretation material, plaques or similar for key sites and buildings.

## **Community Involvement**

This document was made available as a draft via the website prior to submission to Cabinet for adoption. A public meeting was held in Seagrave so that local residents could contribute their ideas for enhancement and preservation of the Conservation Area. All comments and responses have been considered and appropriate amendments made to the document prior to submission 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 & Landscape Team  
                      Tel. 01509 634748  
                      [built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk)

                      Development Control  
                      Tel. 01509 634691  
                      [Development.control@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:Development.control@charnwood.gov.uk)

                      Planning Enforcement  
                      Tel. 01509 634722  
                      [Development.control@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:Development.control@charnwood.gov.uk)

## **Bibliography**

Seagrave Parish Plan, Seagrave Parish Council 2003  
Seagrave Village Plan, Charnwood Borough Council 1979  
Seagrave by Stanley Hincks 1993  
John Nichols, "History and Antiquities of the County of Leicestershire", Vol 3, 1800  
Guidance on conservation area appraisals, English Heritage, 2006  
Guidance on the management of conservation areas, English Heritage, 2006

## **Internet Resources**

<http://www.leicestershirevillages.com/seagrave> (accessed 11 August 2009)  
This website contains an excellent and comprehensive history of Seagrave by Robert Hill

## **Acknowledgements**

Many thanks:  
To John and Lesley Tyers for their wealth of knowledge about the village;  
To Cynthia Spence for her introduction to many hidden corners of the village;  
To John Hardy for his fascinating collection of artefacts from the agricultural past of the village.

## **Statutory Listed Buildings in Seagrave**

All Listed Grade II except the Church which is listed Grade II\*

Church of All Saints, Church Street  
No 2 Church Street  
Park Farmhouse, No 8 Church Street  
Barn & outbuildings at Nos 12 & 14 Church Street  
No 58 Green Lane  
Hawley Fields Farmhouse, No 60 Green Lane  
Home Farmhouse, No 62 Green Lane  
Whitehouse Farmhouse, No 63 Green Lane  
No 5 King Street  
Ivy House Farmhouse, No 19 King Street  
No 29 King Street  
No 45 King Street  
Dovecote at The Firs, No 50 King Street  
Seagrave Hall, No 83 King Street  
Outbuildings at Seagrave Hall  
The Croft, No 26 Swan Street  
Barn approx 20m west of The Croft  
Abbotsbury Court, No 31 Swan Street  
No 45 Swan Street  
No 7 The Banks

## Seagrave Conservation Area Comments on Draft Appraisal

A public meeting was held on Tuesday 26 January at All Saints Church.  
44 people attended.

	Respondent	Comment	Response
1	People attending the public meeting	Is the Management Plan included?	Yes.
2		When there is no character appraisal for a Conservation Area the quality of planning decisions may be poor.	Agreed.
3		Comments made in the appraisal about the value of open spaces, hedges, and roofscape do not match planning decisions that have been made.	These decisions have been made without the benefit of the appraisal.
4		With reference to the suggestion in the Management Plan relating to street lighting, Seagrave Parish Council have a deliberate policy of keeping the level of street lighting low. If anything is done in respect of lighting it should be to secure a more appropriate style of light column.	Management Plan amended
5		Query whether “conservation” means to keep things as they are.	National understanding is that keeping things as they are is “preservation”, whereas “conservation” implies managing change.
6		Extend the boundary to include countryside at Berrycott Lane.	The existing policies in the Local Plan protecting the countryside are adequate.
7		Why are uPVC windows allowed, aren't they subject to planning control?	The legislation allows for the replacement of doors or windows in individual dwellings as a permitted development right.
8		There were 11 working farms in Seagrave in the 1960s and 1970s.	Appraisal amended
9		With reference to the dispossessing of the poor at the time of the Inclosure Act, the allotments were intended as gardens for the poor.	The allotments were established many years after Inclosure.

10		<p>Is the laying of hedges included within the protection of trees?</p> <p>Is there any ruling on the planting of non-native species?</p>	<p>If it is judged that plants, even substantial plants, are part of the hedge and not specimen trees, the hedge may be laid as appropriate. It is recommended that a diversity of species, mostly native, are used for hedge planting.</p>
11		<p>Overhead wires are detrimental to the character of the Area.</p>	<p>Recommendation that Telephone and Electricity wires be laid underground included in the Management Plan</p>
12		<p>Road signs (in particular with reference to creating a 20mph zone for the school) can be detrimental to the Area</p>	<p>The decision on road signing must be balanced between the needs for safety and the requirements of the character of the Area.</p> <p>The forum of Conservation Officers in all the Districts of the County and in the City are in discussion with County Highways to produce a more relevant guide for highway management within Conservation Areas.</p>
13		<p>Do the bungalows on Church Street and the newer developments of houses on King Street match the character of the Conservation Area?</p>	<p>It is hoped that the Appraisal will help to guide future development so that it fits better with the character of the Area.</p>
14		<p>Additional houses will mean extra traffic.</p>	<p>Agreed. Planning decisions take account of traffic.</p>
15		<p>What weight does the Appraisal have when making planning decisions?</p>	<p>The Appraisal is a material consideration. It provides the evidence for assessing the impact of the proposed development on the special character and appearance of the Area, i.e. the context of the proposed development. It is one of any number of factors which may need to be taken into account.</p>
16		<p>Is the Appraisal available?</p>	<p>Yes, the appraisal may be downloaded from the website and hard copies will be supplied on request.</p>
17		<p>The walled estate off Green Lane was always a walled off area.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
18		<p>How can ordinary people judge and interpret a planning application? Can they have confidence that the planning</p>	<p>It is hoped that the Appraisal will better inform everyone about what is special about the Area and therefore allow them to identify the issues that</p>

		officers will use the document and that it will be influential?	need to be considered.
19		How does the Conservation and Landscape Team relate to the Planning Department?	The Team is part of the Development Directorate and there is good communication between the Team and other officers in the directorate.
20		Is the Management Plan geared to the needs of Seagrave? The draft is too generic.	Document amended with appropriate specific references to Seagrave.
21		The size of new housing and the concern over the mass and size of new development is causing distress.	Social and economic needs must be balanced with trying to maintain the character of the Conservation Area. The Appraisal will be used to control how development takes place and as a guide to what is appropriate.
22		How are the appraisals of the villages programmed? Is there any plan to increase or reduce the number of Conservation Areas?	The appraisal programme is not intended to judge the value of any Area. It is a process of discerning and identifying what is special about each individual Area so that it can be better protected. There is no intention to remove any Conservation Area; on the contrary the Council has recently designated two new Areas.
23		What weight is assigned to the appraisal once it has been adopted?	The appraisal is a material consideration in the determination of any planning application. It is one of potentially several considerations which may be in conflict with each other.
24		How do conservation area appraisals differ to village design statements?	A conservation area is specifically an area of unique history and appearance, which the appraisal sets out to characterise. The appraisal is carried out by the Borough Council as a professional assessment. A Village Design Statement covers the whole of a parish. It is written by local people and identifies what they feel are important features and how they themselves as well as developers can be guided to preserve such features.
25		Many areas of green space, such as the allotments, cemetery, verges, field at the village hall, are	Appraisal amended.

		registered common land.	
26	Letter from Jonathan and Nicola Willars, local residents	Seagrave night sky needs protecting. Area abutting the Conservation Area needs careful attention. Highway signage.  Satellite housing (SHLAA) developments which are isolated from the rest of the village.	Document amended. The area outside the Conservation Area is protected by policies in the Local Plan. The forum of Conservation Officers in all the Districts of the County and in the City are in discussion with County Highways to produce a more relevant guide for highway management within Conservation Areas. The document already notes that the existing new development on Green Lane has had a detrimental effect on the Conservation Area which is likely to be compounded by any further development.
27	Letter from John Seddon, local resident	Document lacks clear objectives Lack of reference to the role of English Heritage The tree on The Green is a horse chestnut	Document amended.
28	Email from Jenny Dyer, local resident	Value of trees behind Sundial Cottage and their replanting Scale of new development  Limits to Development and prevention of coalescence with Sibley	Document amended  It is anticipated that the guidance in the Appraisal will ensure that any new development fits in with the character, scale and proportion of the existing buildings. There are strong existing policies in the Local Plan to prevent development in the countryside. These controls will be carried through into the Local Development Framework.