

Anstey Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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ANSTEY CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Introduction and Executive Summary

Anstey Conservation Area was designated in July 1984 and covers an area of 10 hectares. Anstey is described in White's History, Gazetteer and Directory of the Counties of Leicester and Rutland (1877) as "a village and township ... picturesquely situated in the vale of a rivulet". The Conservation Area includes much of the medieval heart of the settlement, focussing on St Mary's Church (Grade II listed) and its surrounding roads, along with the western extension of the village around The Green. The boundaries of the Area generally define the part of the settlement along Bradgate Road as it existed at the end of the 19th century. Within these boundaries is a broad range of residential and commercial development that is representative of the settlement from the medieval period through to the Victorian and Edwardian expansion of the village in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The commercial heart of the village at The Nook, the large scale Victorian industrialisation and urban expansions and the subsequent 20th century development which has mostly taken place outside the historic core, are excluded from the Conservation Area.

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 town and surrounding area;
- Historic development and archaeology sets out how architecture and archaeology are related to the social and economic growth of the town;
- Spatial analysis describes the historic plan form of the town 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 2005 advises local authorities to develop strategies that avoid damage to the region's cultural assets. *Policy 27: Protecting and Enhancing The Region's Natural and Cultural Assets.*

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 Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1996 to 2016, published in December 2004, seeks to identify, protect, preserve and enhance areas, sites, buildings and settings of historic or architectural interest or archaeological importance. Development within conservation areas should preserve or enhance their character and appearance. *Environment Policy 2: Sites and Buildings of Historic Architectural and Archaeological Interest*.

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

In previous appraisals Policy EV/10 of the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 1991–2006 was cited. The policy was adopted in January 2004 to ensure that new development in conservation areas preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area. The policy expired in September 2007 because it repeats PPG15.

ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Location and Setting

Anstey lies approximately 4 miles north-west of Leicester, and historically was strategically situated between the medieval forests of Leicester Forest and Charnwood Forest and on a major droving route into Leicester. The Conservation Area covers a small part of the present village. It is based around St Mary's Church and The Green linked by Bradgate Road, representing the surviving core of the village as it existed towards the end of the 19th century. It does not include The Nook much of which has been redeveloped in the 20th Century. However, The Nook is the commercial centre of Anstey, as it possibly always has been, an important meeting place and road junction leading to the bridge over the Rothley Brook towards Leicester.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Origins and Development

The name 'Anstey' appears to have originated from the Old English 'Hanstige' although the settlement is recorded in the Domesday Book as 'Anstige'. Subsequently the name went through various alterations (15th century 'Anesty' and 17th century as 'Ansty') before arriving at its present version in the 19th century. It is suggested (Kibble, 1970a) that the name means 'high path' or 'narrow forest track' reflecting perhaps that the settlement originated at an important crossing point of the Rothley Brook on a clearing out of the Charnwood Forest.

Anstey may have a direct link to the Roman presence in Leicestershire. It is known that the Roman road that linked Leicester and Chester, the *Via Devana*, crossed the area and a Roman road may have crossed the Rothley Brook at the location of the present Pack Horse Bridge (Lycett, 1999). Kibble (1970b) notes that a track, pre-dating the establishment of the Saxon ridge and furrow open field system, ran from the Pack Horse bridge to the site of St Mary's Church and then northwards into Charnwood Forest and the direct visual alignment between the bridge and the Church is still evident (Kibble, 2000, pages 30-31). Archaeological field work has also uncovered further evidence of Roman presence in the form of a linear earthwork north west of the village which may be the stone surface of a Roman road (TLHAS, 1986) and by the discovery of a Roman coin at Link Road (TLHAS, 1972-3).

Anstey is located within the ancient Charnwood Forest and it is likely that the area was first settled during the 9th and 10th centuries by Saxons, moving south from a settlement at Thurstaston, on land that had been cleared from the woodland. At this time there appears to have been a major re-organisation of the landscape and many small dispersed settlements came together as nucleated village settlements surrounded by open fields (Courtney, 2003). This early historical link continued until 1894. Up to that date Anstey was part of Thurstaston parish and only in 1894 did it become a separate parish.

The settlement of Anstey is subsequently recorded by the Domesday Survey of 1085-86 as being held by Hugh de Grantemesnil, the first Earl of Leicester. However, following the survey, the medieval settlement of the village appears to have developed around two independent centres, the Church and The Green, and this has had a most significant impact on the overall layout of the present village and this Conservation Area.

The oldest part of the settlement lay around the Church extending down the hill to the junction of the drovers roads, The Nook. The third Earl of Leicester, Robert fitz Parnell, gave land in this area to Leicester Abbey and a settlement appears to have grown up around a manor house and manorial closes located on Church Lane to the west of the Church, with a series of tofts and crofts¹ laid out along the south side of Bradgate Road and Cropston Road, a pattern of development that has now been lost as a result of recent developments.

A second and separate settlement grew up around The Green on land held by the Ferrers family who were lords of the manor in the adjoining parish of Groby. This land eventually descended by marriage to the Grey family. The Green is likely to have grown out of a small area of woodland first identified in the Domesday Survey but which was excluded from the Abbey's land. Courtney (2003) notes that this woodland had the characteristic concave shape of a woodland pasture and it was also a place where two streams came together

¹ "Toft and Croft" – a system of settlement in which each house had a toft or small yard surrounding it and a croft, a strip of land beyond the house away from the street, which supplied the household with root crops, legumes and, perhaps, grain.

and the site of the communal well which is now marked by a circular granite wall in the middle of The Green. The 1762 Enclosure Map shows this settlement as a series of tofts and crofts on the north and south side of The Green and along the line of the public footpath known then as Dog Lane, with the Manor House situated on the western side of The Green.

The emergence of these two centres has clearly influenced the overall shape and size of the village: as late as 1894 White's Directory comments that Anstey was a scattered and irregularly built village almost a mile in length.

The development and prosperity of the medieval village relied on farming based on its open fields. But the dual nature of the settlement resulted in the formation of two sets of open fields, one to serve the Abbey settlement which consisted of the Nether, Stocking and Nothill fields to the north of the village with the Mill and Groby fields and Holme Closes to the south and east; whilst the fields serving the Ferrers settlement, the Holgate, Middle and Horserood fields, were situated to the west of the settlement in Groby parish, the home parish of the Ferrers family.

An Enclosure Act was passed by Parliament in 1760 to enclose the open fields, which amounted to some 1,100 acres. These acts of enclosures had a profound effect on the local landscape as the communal open fields passed into the hands of private landowners, removing the villagers' traditional dependency on the land and forcing many to seek alternative employment. The enclosure awards also left many of the new holdings too small to be viable, forcing many villagers to sell their holdings so that by the turn of the 19th century ownership of land was in the hands of a smaller group of people than at the time of Enclosure (Kimble 1970a).

The Enclosures brought about changes in agriculture as shown by the 1801 Crop Returns for Leicestershire. These show that out of some 2,225 acres of land in Thurcaston parish only 447 acres were used for arable farming; but Anstey now produced less grain than it did before Enclosure, unlike Thurcaston and Cropston which produced more, indicating that the local landowners, no longer tied to community needs, were able to convert former arable land into more profitable pasture land for the production of milk, cheese and butter for sale locally and possibly in Leicester (Hoskins, 1948).

To replace agriculture, many villagers turned to the hosiery trade and by the mid-18th century Anstey had become an important centre for domestic framework knitting. Early knitters were traditionally employed as out-workers by larger factories, principally based in Leicester, working within their main home or in purpose built workshops to the rear of their properties with the involvement of the whole family, men on the frame, women seaming and children winding wool onto bobbins. Out of a population of 660 persons in 1800, 48 were employed in agriculture while 221 were employed in trades and industries, and the Victoria County History notes that Anstey had 215 framework knitters in 1814 and 300 in 1845, after which the trade went into decline (Lowe, undated). Whilst there do not appear to be any surviving domestic workshops in the village, anecdotal evidence describes the building in 1874 of no. 3 Park Road with a stockinger's workshop to the rear (Lowe, undated).

As well as agriculture and industry, Anstey may have been a 'tourist' centre as White's Directory of 1863 describes the village as one the most salubrious in the County with many persons from Leicester and other places residing there during the summer months.

From the middle of the 19th century the cottage hosiery industries went into decline as the trade became increasingly concentrated in factories, particularly those in Leicester. From the second half of the 19th century and into the 20th century the manufacture of boot and shoes became increasingly important and White's Directory 1877 notes that many of the inhabitants were employed in the manufacture of boots and shoes. This new industry resulted in new factories being built in the village and new housing to cater for the rapid increase in the population principally on the Nook and along The Jetty, outside the present Conservation Area, where for instance George Palmer acquired land to build a shoe factory and new houses for his workers in an area referred to as New Anstey (Lowe, undated).

This rapid growth in the village through the 19th century was also reflected in the improvements and growth of community facilities and its independent status as a separate parish in 1894, which introduced the first gas lighting into the village in 1895. A National School supported by the Church of England was set up in 1833 in Church Lane (now St Mary's Church Hall) and it continued until 1880 when it was replaced by a new Board School built in Park Road in 1873. Subsequently two schools, which are still in use, were built in Latimer Street in 1896 and 1912. On Bradgate Road two places of worship were built, a Wesleyan Chapel in 1895

replacing an earlier chapel from 1797, a Congregational Chapel in 1879 replacing an earlier chapel from 1858 (this is now the United Reform Church) and a Methodist Chapel built on Cropston Road in 1870 replacing an earlier chapel from 1840.

By the early 20th century the historic development within the Conservation Area was virtually complete. The most serious intervention since has been infill development replacing older buildings demolished in the late 20th century.

The present Conservation Area therefore reflects the basic historic street pattern that had been established as a result of the local topography and the particular historic development of the village and contains many of the buildings built in the village between the 17th and early 20th centuries.

Archaeological Interest

The Conservation Area encompasses the core medieval settlement of Anstey and the historical development of the Area, which is evident in the pattern of streets, housing plots and the age of many of the properties, would suggest that there is good potential for below ground archaeology.

Excavations carried out in 2002 (Browning & Higgins, 2003) on a vacant plot of land in Cropston Road revealed evidence of a toft and croft occupied from Saxon times through to the 14th century, after which the plot appears to have been unoccupied. These excavations show that there is significant archaeological potential in the form of below ground archaeology and any major development within the Conservation Area requiring excavation works should therefore be preceded by a considered archaeological assessment and investigation.

Population

The population of Anstey has varied over time. The most recent census figures published by Leicestershire County Council show that in 2001 there were 5,821 people residing in the parish of Anstey. The historical rise and fluctuations of the village's population are recorded in the Victoria County History and these records show that the population has risen steadily from about 21 households at the time of the Domesday Survey, to about 88 people at the time of the 1377 Poll Tax, to 24 people recorded by the Diocesan Returns of 1563, to 140 people in the late 17th century (Ecclesiastical Returns 1676), followed by a relatively steady rise in population throughout the 19th and into the 20th century, from 660 in 1801; to 848 in 1841; 1,012 by 1871 and 2,544 in 1901. This steady increase in population was attributed by White's Directory (1877) to the development of stocking-frame knitting and the shoe trades and to the demand for labour at the local granite quarries.

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

Plan Form

Anstey stands on a gravel terrace above the valley of Rothley Brook on the eastern slopes of the Charnwood Forest. Historically the village appears to have developed as two distinct settlements, one tightly clustered around the Church, the other around The Green, an unusually wide and pastoral open space, higher up the hill to the west. These two historic centres, linked by Bradgate Road (shown as Main Street on the 1884 OS plan) form the basis of the Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area does not include The Nook at the bottom of the hill nor any of the village to the north and east of the Church. Whilst there is evidence of early medieval development extending northwards from The Nook along Cropston Road, modern 20th century development had destroyed much of the architectural and historic interest in this part of the village before the Conservation Area was designated.

St Mary's Church stands on a distinctive island site surrounded by Bradgate Road and Church Lane at the eastern end of the Conservation Area. The present building, except for the tower, was substantially rebuilt in a Decorated style in 1846, although there is evidence of Norman work in the form of an arched doorway on the north side of the Church and in the tower. The Church occupies a prominent elevated site but, although it is a distinctive landmark, its squat tower is visible from only a few places.

From the Church, Bradgate Road follows quite a sinuous uphill path, closely hemmed in by buildings for most of its length, before reaching The Crown public house which marks a distinct crest in the road. After The Crown the road levels out and the space opens out onto The Green, a relatively level plateau where the character of the Conservation Area reverts to a rural and pastoral prospect. Beyond The Green the road again begins to climb quite steeply into Charnwood Forest towards Newton Linford.

This distinct linear historic settlement pattern is clearly evident on the 1884 Ordnance Survey plan which shows the tight cluster of development around the Church and the linear development along Bradgate Road that abruptly changes around The Green. Whilst there have been significant changes around the Church and along Bradgate Road since 1884, this historic core is still evident on the ground, providing the basis of the Conservation Area within which there are a number of surviving domestic and commercial buildings that date from the 17th century through to the early 20th century and include 17 Grade II listed buildings and structures.

Interrelationship of Spaces

There is a marked difference in character between three principal elements of the Conservation Area.

Bradgate Road is a busy thoroughfare carrying both local traffic and traffic going between Leicester and Charnwood Forest. It is a relatively narrow street for such a busy road and in several places there is not room to accommodate a footpath on both sides. Many of the houses and shops front directly onto the pavement and where the buildings are set back there are high boundary walls with overhanging hedges.

Leading off Bradgate Road to the north is Church Lane, a narrow street which retains some of its medieval quality as it goes around the churchyard. Many of the later and more modern developments have created large gaps but the sense of enclosure of the street is still there. The lane is a quiet retreat enclosing the green stillness of the churchyard.

Grobby Road to the south side of Bradgate Road is rather broader with more traffic to service the housing beyond the Conservation Area. Modern development has opened out the space of this street so that it no longer has a sense of enclosure which it might have done in medieval times. The same is true of Park Road until the end stretch which retains its more human scale.

At the top of the hill is the quite different area of The Green. Unless one stops it is easy to pass by without appreciating the quality of this ancient settlement. It is a pleasant undulating grassy sward covering nearly 2½ hectares with many trees. On the south-western side it is bordered by farmhouses and other buildings which have survived the ages well. The houses and their associated boundary walls create a strong sense of enclosure to open space. Where there is no wall or building there is a strong boundary of trees. The north-eastern side of The Green is bordered by 20th century mostly detached suburban style properties with front gardens which create a more open and softer feel to the space.

Key Views and Vistas

The lower part of the Conservation Area, around St Mary's Church is fairly tightly developed so that opportunities for broad views are limited. But the hilly nature of the terrain provides many changing scenes. Along Bradgate Road as one passes uphill from The Nook around the sharp bend of the churchyard, one sees the squat tower of the church with the visually strong cypress trees at the gate. At the bend the view is terminated by The Old Hare and Hounds public house which points the traveller to the right. Then the road winds uphill, passing the Plough until it crests at The Crown when it dips into the open space of The Green, where it becomes a pleasant unfenced country road before it passes again between a mass of trees to continue uphill through the suburban houses and gardens on its way to Newtown Linford.

Travelling in the opposite direction there is a similar changing view which culminates in the final descent to the busy streetscene of The Nook.

On a smaller scale Church Lane also provides a pleasant changing scene, past the shaded stone walls of the churchyard with the three storey red brick house of no. 55 terminating the view.

Landmarks

The tower of the church is rather too short to be visible as a landmark for most of the Conservation Area. Nevertheless, with its churchyard wall it is an important reference point and visual element. Of the other buildings The Crown and The Old Hare and Hounds serve as strong markers in the change of the street.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Building Types, Layouts and Uses

The present activities and land uses within the Conservation Area reflect Anstey's historical development and whilst the principal land use is now residential, as is typical of many historic settlements, there is a range of commercial and industrial uses that have developed alongside each other over time and are now well integrated into the urban fabric.

As a small village the basic economy of Anstey was tied to agriculture, providing employment and activity within the village. The legacy of this agricultural economy is reflected in the large number of farmhouses that stand within the Conservation Area, on Church Lane, Groby Road and more significantly around The Green. Alongside the farms there would also have been a range of local trades and businesses serving the local economy, such as the smithy shown on early OS plans on Bradgate Road which is now The Farriers, at 80 Bradgate Road.

With the enclosure of the open fields in the post-medieval period, the population of Anstey first relied on domestic framework knitting and then in later half of the 19th century on the boot and shoe trade. Whilst this early framework knitting activity was a domestic activity there does not appear to be any surviving evidence of knitters' workshops, although the building at the rear of no. 60 Bradgate Road (the Old Manse), adjacent to the United Reform Church, has a range of large windows indicating that it may have been a factory but it is not marked on any of the early OS plans. The development of the boot and shoe industry took place outside the Conservation Area and appears to have had little impact on it.

As well as hosiery and boot and shoe manufacturing, other ancillary businesses such as dyeing plants, tanneries, a box works and a brown paper mill (mentioned in White's 1877 Directory) were established in the village and the Groby quarries were also a major source of employment.

Anstey is a busy commercial centre, and whilst most of the shops are concentrated around The Nook, there are a number of shops with traditional shop fronts in the Conservation Area and a number of public houses along Bradgate Road.

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

The most important building in the village and in the Conservation Area is St Mary's Church, the parish church, listed Grade II. It is clearly defined within its churchyard and the walls of the churchyard are also listed for their use of local stone.

Nearly all the buildings on the south-west border of The Green are listed. Both in themselves and as a coherent group they make a very important statement about the character of this part of the Conservation Area. Besides the principal buildings, particular attention should be paid to the boundary walls of these properties, to their arrangement around the border of the open space and to the approaches to these buildings which are driveways of variable width and natural surfaces.

To the south of Bradgate Road is the former granite-built School House at no. 1 Park Road. This building has been well restored and won a Charnwood Design Award for Conservation in 1989. From Park Road, the building is attractive and open but it is heavily screened by a hedge of Leyland Cypress from Bradgate Road and it would be improved if this hedge were removed or replaced by a more open hedge of native species.

Within The Green is a granite enclosure marking the site of the 18th century Well. This is a much loved monument in Anstey.

Key Unlisted Buildings

The Crown Inn and on the opposite side of Bradgate Road, no. 1, The Green, are a pair of buildings which mark the gateway into the main part of Anstey from The Green. The road is slightly constricted at this point and the buildings stand close up to the roadway.

The Old Hare and Hounds is an important building marking the view up the hill from The Nook and marking the turn in Bradgate Road.

Coherent groups

The most important group of buildings are those on The Green, including The Well. Also important as a group is the terrace of Nos. 51 to 61 Bradgate Road which includes some of the surviving shopfronts.

Building Materials and Architectural Details

Being on the edge of Charnwood Forest, a number of buildings and boundary walls are built of the local granite. Within the present Conservation Area, the principal buildings constructed of granite are St Mary's Church (Grade II listed) and its adjacent church hall on Church Lane and the former Anstey school buildings (Grade II listed) on the corner of Bradgate Road with Park Road. In several of the older buildings stone is used in conjunction with other materials, such as in the gables and rear annex of no. 2, Church Lane (Grade II listed) and the front wall of no. 4, The Green (Grade II listed), which is claimed to be Anstey's oldest building (Kibble, 1970, page 5).

Forest stone has also been extensively used in the construction of boundary walls, most notably for the churchyard walls (Grade II listed) and those along Bradgate Road and into The Green. These walls make a significant and distinctive contribution to the local street scene and the Conservation Area generally.

The earliest medieval buildings are likely to have been timber frame and thatched properties but most of these buildings appear to have been lost as a result of age and demolition. The archaeological excavations at Cropston Road (Browning & Higgins, 2003) revealed evidence of a 12th century timber framed building and early photographic records show a large number of timber frame and thatch buildings that existed around The Nook but which have since been demolished (see Lowe, opposite pages 35 & 39, and Kibble, 2000, pages 10 & 16). However, the most distinguished building to be demolished was The Old Ship on Bradgate Road near to the Nook and records made in 1955 and 1956 prior to its demolition reveal a two bay, timber framed hall of 15th century origin (TLHAS, 1955 & 1956).

Within the present Conservation Area there are few surviving examples of the timber-framed buildings and no thatched buildings. The most complete example of a timber frame building is the Grade II listed threshing barn at no. 4, The Green, while the best examples of domestic timber framing is restricted to the remnants of an earlier timber frame locked in later render or brickwork, such as in the front and side elevations of no. 2, Church Lane and the front and rear elevations of no. 3, Groby Road (Grade II listed).

Brick is now the most common building material, reflecting the principal period of development within the Conservation Area during the 18th and 19th centuries, and it now provides a broad uniformity of material and appearance. In many properties, such as at nos. 5-9, Park Road, nos. 47-53, Church Lane and nos. 20-30 & 36-52, Bradgate Road, the brick is laid in Flemish bond, a distinctive pattern of alternating headers and stretchers. English Bond of alternating courses of headers and stretchers has been used in the former chapel on Bradgate Road and in the 1920's extension to no. 1, The Green.

A small number of properties have been rendered either in whole or in part. The main examples are no. 3, Park Road, nos. 102-104, Bradgate Road (Grade II listed), The Old Hare and Hounds and The Crown, although in the case of The Crown photographs would suggest that this has been a 20th century alteration (Kibble, 2000, page 46). Render can also be part of the original design as in the Edwardian properties at nos. 65-71, Church Lane, which have a rendered first floor over a brick ground floor.

Welsh slate is the predominant traditional roofing material which, as a mass-produced product relying on the railways for its distribution, reflects the period of development during the 19th century. In many cases the original roof slates have been replaced but they can still be found on properties throughout the Conservation Area such as the Old School House and nos. 3 and 5-9, Park Road; nos. 20-30, 36-48, 51-53, 69, 84 & 112-114, Bradgate Road, nos. 55-57, Church Lane (Grade II listed) and no. 1, The Green.

Before the availability of Welsh slate there was a reliance on local materials, Swithland slate in particular, and this remains a common roofing material throughout the Conservation Area and is found on a large number of properties such as St Mary's church hall and no. 2, Church Lane, the side annexe to no. 57, Church Lane, the front roof slopes to nos. 65-71, Church Lane; The Plough and the United Reform Church (formerly the Congregational Church) on Bradgate Road; no. 1, Groby Road and its rear extension at no. 72, Bradgate Road (both Grade II listed). Swithland slate is also widely used on the principal residential properties and their associated farm buildings around The Green and this may reflect the early historical associations of this part of the Conservation Area with Groby and the granite quarries in that parish.

There are few examples of properties using plain tiles, the most notable being at The Mount, no. 177, Bradgate Road and on the rear annex to no. 57, Church Lane along Caters Close. However a number of properties retain attractive clay ridge tiles, such as nos. 38-40 & 69, Bradgate Road, the Old School House on Park Road and nos. 51-53, Bradgate Road, where there is also a single surviving terracotta finial above the front gable.

One of the most significant visual changes to the Conservation Area has been the widespread use of concrete roof tiles to re-roof a large number of properties. These tiles look out of place and are visually intrusive and should be avoided by specifying either Welsh or other natural slate or plain clay tiles for any new development within the Conservation Area.

There is a broad range of window types throughout the Conservation area but, unfortunately, the overall survival rate of original windows and doors has not been good. Whilst such features are often integral to their appearance, a substantial number of properties have been fitted with replacement upvc windows and doors that have little respect for the building's original appearance.

Of the surviving traditional windows the most common are vertical sash windows. The best examples are the multi-pane sash windows in the front elevation of no. 16, Bradgate Road and no. 2, The Green (Grade II listed) and the large split-pane Victorian sashes at no. 3, Park Road and no. 112, Bradgate Road. An unusual window type used throughout the Conservation Area is the tripartite sash window. There are examples at no. 69, Bradgate Road, nos. 5-9, Park Road, and nos. 55-57 & 65-67, Church Lane. A number of properties have mullion and transom windows with opening casements such as in the first floors of nos. 16 & 102-104, Bradgate Road, no. 4, The Green and no. 1, Groby Road. A variation on the mullion and transom window is found at no. 72, Bradgate Road which has a sliding sash in the upper frame.

There are some good examples of other traditional window styles such as the Yorkshire sliding sashes at nos. 16 and 72, Bradgate Road (first floor) and no. 2, Church Lane.

A number of properties have distinctive bay windows with visually strong timber mullion posts and cornices, such as nos. 5-9, Park Road, no. 69, Bradgate Road, Manor Farm on The Green (Grade II listed), where a Victorian bay has been added to the front of the Georgian farmhouse, and at no. 102, Bradgate Road where a prominent bay has been added to the road side gable. Some of the most prominent bay windows are those on the front of the Old Hare and Hounds but contemporary photographs indicate that these and the casement windows on the first floor are 20th century additions (Kibble, 2000, pages 36 & 37).

As well as timber windows, many of the properties in the Conservation Area have retained their original timber panel doors. Some of the best are those at nos. 3 & 5-9, Park Road and no. 69, Bradgate Road, which all have attractive toplights above the door. No. 2, Church Lane has a 4-panel door of which the upper two panels are glazed. The most elaborate doorway is perhaps that at no. 2, The Green, where the original panel door and fanlight is surrounded by an attractive timber doorcase with a flat canopy supported by console brackets.

These original architectural features make a unique contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and wherever possible should be retained as they add to the collective wealth and variety of architectural details.

Window and door openings are typically defined by arches and projecting cills. The most pronounced are found in the Victorian and Edwardian cottages, such as at nos. 36-52, Bradgate Road, nos. 5-9, Park Road and no. 112, Bradgate Road, where the lintels have a central keystone and splayed sides. Many of the earlier Georgian farmhouses that were built in a more polite architectural style have splayed brick arches over the windows, such as no. 1, Groby Road, nos. 55-57, Church Lane and no. 2, The Green.

Most properties are simply detailed and lack architectural embellishment, although some buildings have relatively subtle detailing. The Edwardian terraced houses at nos. 65-71, Church Lane have a moulded brick string courses under the first floor windows, while at nos. 36-40, Bradgate Road there is a simple moulded brick string course over the heavy ground floor lintels. Simple projecting brick string courses are used to give some visual interest to the overall front elevation at no. 2, The Green and in the side elevation to no. 1, the Green. There is one example of diaper work in the Conservation Area within the end elevation of no. 57, Church Lane facing Caters Close.

Most properties have retained their original chimney stacks and pots which show a great variety of styles adding considerable skyline interest. Most of them are quite simple brick stacks, but two notable exceptions are the decorative stacks at nos. 36-40, Bradgate Road, which have an elaborate oversailing course made up of moulded bricks with a dentil course, and The Mount, no. 177, Bradgate Road where the external gable chimneys have fluted brickwork. In addition many original chimney pots survive and they show a great variety of styles with round and square profile crown pots and tapered terracotta pots being the most common.

There are a number of longstanding commercial properties in the Conservation Area with surviving traditional shop fronts. The best examples are those at nos. 57-59, Bradgate Road (CB Till Butcher's); 61-63, Bradgate Road (Carpet and Flooring Company) & 64, Bradgate Road (F & G Harris Hardware), dated to 1939 (Kibble, 2000, pages 36 & 37). The shop front of most historic interest is that of Till's butchers shop which has a single display window framed by timber fluted pilasters with brackets and a fascia panel. The frontage of white glazed bricks, for easy cleaning, and the open grill above the door both suggest that this shop was originally built as a butcher's shop. Given their rarity within the Conservation Area all these shop fronts make a significant contribution to the historic character of the Area.

Parks, Gardens and Trees

Anstey Conservation Area contains one of the finest rural village green spaces in the Borough, namely, The Green. Its peaceful, untouched nature is enhanced by the many trees, the undulating grass, the character of the drives leading to the properties bordering the south-western edge, the old buildings themselves at the edge and the unfenced, unhedged Bradgate Road passing through the centre. As Bradgate Road passes up the hill towards Newtown Linford there is a wealth of trees on both sides of the road, those on the south side almost completely hiding the old St Mary's Rectory from view.

The churchyard of St Mary's is a green grassy space beside the Bradgate Road. It is unusual for its tall cypress trees as well as the more usual limes, hollies, birch and cherry trees.

On the other side of Bradgate Road there are two stretches of stone wall with dense hedges of leylandii behind and above them, one hiding and protecting the Old School building and one hiding no. 60. The leylandii is visually overbearing and its removal would open up the space. Replanting with a native hedge species would enhance the Conservation Area and provide a better setting, especially for the listed buildings of the School House.

Detrimental Features

Much damage has been done to many properties whose traditional timber windows and doors have been replaced by uPVC. There is no consistency in the design of these modern windows and almost all of them have clumsy detailing; thus what had once been an essential part of the character is now lost. There have also been losses to the character by inappropriate roofing materials, such as heavy concrete tiles.

The space in front of St Mary's Church Hall is rather untidy, and bounded on one side by a tall hedge, it detracts from the medieval character of Church Lane.

The electricity sub-station on The Green intrudes visually into the open space.

DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST

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

- The open space of The Green with its trees and undulating grass bordered by a number of well preserved historic buildings, most of them listed Grade II, including The Well;
- The church of St Mary's with its churchyard, monuments and granite boundary walls, all listed Grade II;
- The narrow Church Lane with its medieval nature as it winds around the churchyard;
- The wealth and variety of original architectural features and details;
- The interesting skyline with its great variety of original chimney stacks and pots;
- The number of longstanding commercial properties in the Conservation Area with surviving traditional shop fronts.

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

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

- Conservation and design surgeries to help development control officers to make informed decisions, no matter how minor the proposed changes.
- Opportunities for pre-application discussion regarding significant alterations.

- Opportunities to review decisions and assess the impact of approved alterations through post development site visits.

Enforcement Strategy

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

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

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

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

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

The character assessment has identified a wealth and variety of significant historic features which could justify the introduction of an Article 4 Direction.

General Condition

There is a broad range of window types throughout the Conservation Area, but unfortunately the overall survival rate of original windows and doors has not been good. Such features are often integral to the appearance of buildings but a substantial number of properties have fitted replacement upvc windows and doors which greatly detract from the appearance and character of the Area.

To maintain the character of the Conservation Area, any new development should ideally use red brick laid to follow the prevailing bonding pattern in the particular part of the Conservation Area. As an exception it may be acceptable to use a roughcast render. Care should be taken in specifying reclaimed brick to avoid significant variations in the colour of the brick that would give a random and mottled appearance.

Welsh or other natural slate or plain clay tiles should be specified for rooves in any new development. Concrete roof tiles are out of place and visually intrusive. They should be avoided.

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. At the moment none of the listed buildings are at risk of decay and all appear to be in a good state of repair. The Listed Buildings in Anstey are generally in good condition.

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 Nook and the southern end of Cropston Road are the heart of the village and are clearly important to the historical development of the village. There are some interesting buildings (exceptional in the case of no. 22 Cropston Road) and architectural features. However, the extent of modern (and often poor) development has seriously compromised the architectural interest of this part of the village.

The boundary of the Area should be revised to include no. 177, Bradgate Road – an attractive Edwardian property, similar to The Mount and with some fine surviving architectural details and features.

Consideration has been given to Latimer Street. This is an interesting street on the edge of the present Area with two attractive groups of terraced houses, nos. 1-19 and nos. 8-14, and the two County primary schools. These buildings are of significant local interest and have a range of surviving architectural features. However alongside and between them are a number of poor quality and modern buildings. It would be difficult to include the valuable buildings without also bringing in these modern developments which would degrade the Conservation Area.

A suggestion has been made that a separate conservation area be designated within the settlement of Anstey which could incorporate Latimer Street, including the schools, The Nook, Cropston Road and Leicester Road. This separate area might also stretch to include the Pack Horse Bridge and the open space on either side of Rothley Brook. This area has played an important role in the historical development of the village but there are substantial gaps in the historic fabric and the modern developments are largely not worthy of conservation. Of the buildings that have survived there has been a loss of architectural detail, mostly by replacement of windows with uPVC and, in some cases, rendering, cladding or painting of the brickwork.

A full survey will be undertaken to judge whether the area as a whole has sufficient integrity to be a conservation area.

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

If it is agreed that The Nook and the southern end of Cropston Road should be included in the Conservation Area there will need to be a careful consideration of how to improve the architectural quality of many of the modern buildings. The public space will also need to be improved.

In general the public spaces in the Conservation Area are of a good quality.

Proposals for Economic Development and Regeneration

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

Management and Protection of Important Trees, Greenery and Green Spaces

The Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the Borough Council's priorities for conservation of a variety of wildlife and their habitats within Charnwood and details the actions required to bring about a reversal in its fortune. The BAP will be reviewed and modified as required, to ensure that the necessary actions are being taken by the appropriate agencies

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
Parts of the historic settlement are currently not included in the Conservation Area.	Review the Conservation Area boundary	Charnwood BC	
Visual impact of the hard-standing in front of the church hall on Church Lane	Discuss ways to improve the appearance with relevant owners	Charnwood BC	
Detrimental visual impact of the electricity sub station on The Green.	Discuss possible improvements to the appearance of the sub-station on The Green with E-on.	Parish Council	Charnwood BC

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 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 Anstey 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 have been 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.

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 built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk

 Development Control
 Tel. 01509 634691
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 Planning Enforcement
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Statutory Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area

All Grade II Listed

Bradgate Road

St Mary's Church

Heard Family Tombs in the Churchyard

Shaft of Former Cross in the Churchyard

No. 72

No. 102

Bradgate Road and Church Lane

Churchyard Walls

Church Lane

No. 2, Stable and Wall

No. 55 (including no. 2a, Caters Close)

Groby Road

No. 1

No. 3 (The Limes)

No. 3 Stable Block

Park Road

Anstey School and No. 1

The Green

No. 2

Stable and Cottage at No. 2

No. 4

Barn at No. 4

Nos. 20 and 20A (Manor Farmhouse)

The Well