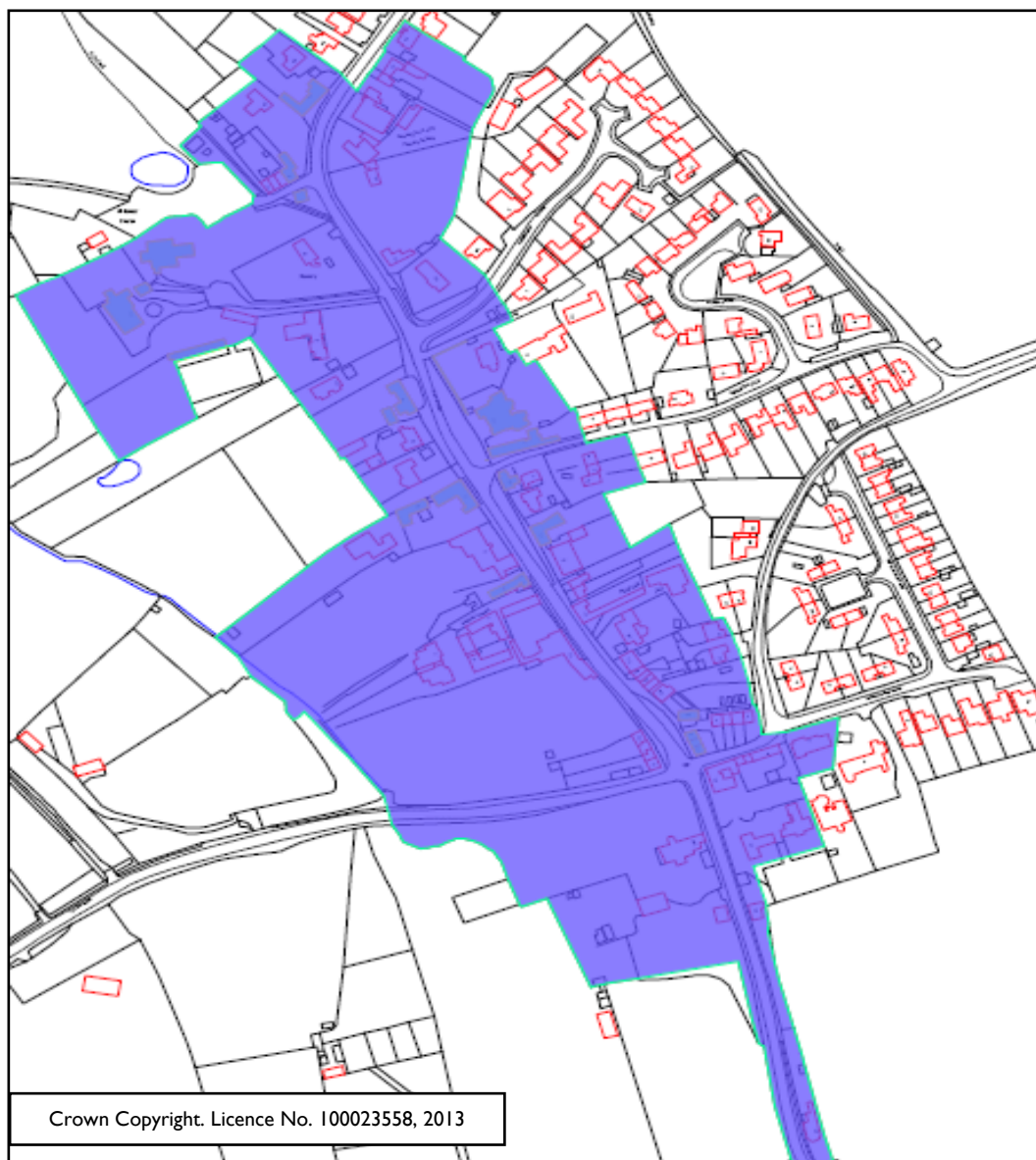




## **Cossington Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

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## **COSSINGTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL**



*Current map showing Cossington Conservation Area and listed buildings*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Cossington Conservation Area was designated in July 1975 and covers an area of 10.7 Hectares.

The purpose of this appraisal is to examine the historic development of the Conservation Area and to describe its present appearance in order to assess the special architectural and historic interest.

This document sets out the planning policy context and how this appraisal relates to national and local planning policies.

The main part of the report focuses on the assessment of the special interest of the Conservation Area. The assessment is made up of the following four elements:

- **Location and setting** describes how the Area relates to the historic village and surrounding area;
- **Historical development** 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 then brought together in a **summary** of the special interest of the Conservation Area.

The document is intended as a guide for people considering development which may affect the Conservation Area. It will be a material consideration in the assessment of development proposals by Development Management. It may, of course, be used by residents of the Conservation Area and we would advise anyone thinking of developing in the Conservation Area to consider the appraisal before drawing up plans.

### **Legislation and Planning Policy**

The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 defines a conservation area as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Section 69). Local planning authorities have a duty to review the overall extent of designation in their areas regularly and if appropriate, to designate additional areas. The Act sets out the general duties of local planning authorities relating to designated conservation areas:

- From time to time, to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in their districts and to consult the local community about these proposals (Section 71);
- In exercising their planning powers, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas (Section 72).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Department of Communities and Local Government in 2012 and outlines the government's intentions regarding planning policy. The NPPF emphasises sustainable development as the present focus and future legacy of planning policy. It also places responsibility on local planning authorities to assess and understand the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be

affected by a proposal by utilising available evidence and necessary expertise. This should be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset to avoid or minimise conflict between an asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal. This understanding should not only be used as an aid for decision making, but should take on a more dynamic role by actively informing sensitive and appropriate developments.

Responsibility for understanding the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution it makes to the local area is also placed on the applicant, bringing into greater importance the need for information relating to the historic environment. The NPPF reinforces this expectation by stating that the local planning authority should make information about the significance of the historic environment publically accessible, as well as being informed by the community.

Conservation areas are 'designated heritage assets', each containing a number and variety of elements which combine to create the overall significance of the heritage asset. Its character is formed not only of the elements which it shares with other places, but those which make it distinct. Both tangible static visual elements and intangible aspects such as movements, sounds, and smells create the atmosphere in which we experience a conservation area and shape how we use it. This appraisal describes these elements but it does not attempt to be exhaustive and the policies in the NPPF lay the duty on all concerned, including residents and prospective developers, to understand the significance of any element.

Providing a usable and accessible Conservation Area Character Appraisal to underpin and shape future decisions is now particularly important in response to the Localism Act (2011) which gives local people the power to deliver the developments their community wants.

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

The Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 'Leading in Design' reinforces the need to understand the setting and context when proposing development in a sensitive location such as a conservation area. It encourages developers to use local guidance such as Conservation Area Character Appraisals when considering their designs.

#### **Other guidance adopted by Charnwood Borough Council**

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

## **ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

### **LOCATION AND SETTING**

Cossington is a relatively small linear settlement between the larger village of Sileby and Syston Road which connects Rothley with villages to the west. It is approximately seven miles from both Loughborough and Leicester and is close to the more bustling settlements of Sileby and Rothley. Main Street forms the backbone of the village, with smaller roads connecting to pockets of development which are located to the north and east of the Conservation Area boundaries.

### **HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

#### **Origins and Development**

The village of Cossington almost certainly has Saxon origins, its name being derived from the Saxon Chief names Coss or Cussa who established a “tun” (enclosure) in this location, although there was certainly human activity there previously. The open space, proximity to woodland, spring water and availability of animals for hunting would have made it an ideal location for settlement.

The earliest written record of Cossington can be found in Domesday (1086) where “Cosintone” is mentioned and the Earl Hugh of Chester held 6 carucates of land here, approximately 600 acres. It is relatively unusual for such a small settlement to be referenced specifically, indicating that it must have been a village of some significance by this time. By 1220 Cossington was under the patronage of Hugh Despenser and Henry Lord Beaumont became Lord of the Manor. Both the Priory of Ulverscroft and the Abbey at Garendon had a presence in the village with their ownership of some of the land from the fourteenth century.

The manor at Cossington passed through various hands throughout the medieval period. Most notably the Duke of Suffolk held the manor here until it passed to the Crown following his death and that of his daughter, Lady Jane Grey. It was however the Babington family that boasted the longest and most fruitful connection with the village and was responsible for influencing much of village life over the centuries. Thomas Babington bought one of the manors in Cossington in 1549 before acquiring the manor at Rothley in 1565 with which the family is perhaps more commonly associated. At the time of his death Thomas Babington held 5 carucates of land in the parish which passed to his second son, Matthew.

The medieval period saw a great change in the agricultural practices which dominated the every day life of the villagers in Cossington. Piecemeal enclosure took place under Matthew Babington and an Enclosure act was passed in 1666. From the late eighteenth century further changes found their

way into the Cossington community. The canalising of the rivers Soar and Wreake was effected in 1790 and 1794 which altered the course of the Wreake between Syston Mill and Cossington Mill. Cossington Mill (Grade II) dates from the seventeenth century having probably been built on the site of a previous mill and lies to the south west of the village outside the Conservation Area. A further infrastructure development that affected Cossington was the Midland Counties Railways which opened in 1832. The line which is now the Midland Main Line runs along the eastern edge of the village and the stop at Cossington Gate was abolished when the line was expanded in 1873.

Several buildings within the village have been used for different purposes over their lifetimes. The Manor House was used as a girls' boarding school in the nineteenth century, run by the Hogg sisters who occupied Lime Tree Cottage opposite. Cossington Hall was home to several generations of the Fisher family and played a significant part in the war effort over the years. During World War I the riding school and stables were used to train horses for the army and police. It was later home to the Royal Engineers before becoming an ATS Transport Unit during the Second World War. The Fisher Close development was built later on the former nursery gardens and Cossington Hall itself was converted to three flats.

Despite being a small settlement, a commercial interest did develop within the village to serve the needs of the community. A local shop was originally located at Rose Cottage before being moved to 85 Main Street where it closed in the 1970s and a bakery and post office was located at 101-103 Main Street. The village pump was located outside 129 Main Street and The Anchor Inn was located here until it became the village school in the nineteenth century. A more permanent village school was built in the mid-1870s to the north of the village and was later enlarged in 1902. The blacksmith's forge now forms part of 125 Main Street and some of the original equipment remains intact inside. Today the only remaining commercial premises operating in the village is the Royal Oak Public House.

There are several notable individuals with which Cossington is associated. In 1882 Lord Kitchener's father came to live at The Manor House until his death in 1894 whereupon he was buried in the village churchyard. In the twentieth century Colonel Abel Smith came to live at The Grove following his residence at Ratcliffe Hall. Lady Isobel Barnett, a radio and television personality famous for her role in 'What's My Line?' during the mid-1900s also lived in the village at the White House and Barnett Close is named in her memory.

### **Archaeological Interest**

An area of archaeological alert covers almost the entire Cossington Conservation Area and extends slightly into the area of Cossington Meadows close to the church and The Old Rectory. Specific areas of archaeological interest cover The Old Rectory and the moated garden and another focuses on the The Grove and Grove Cottage close to the southern edge of the Conservation Area.

Archaeological potential also exists within Cossington's historic built environment. Many of the older buildings have been adapted and altered or repaired and restored, often incorporating elements of older separate structures. Thus many of the historic buildings may conceal medieval or post-medieval remains and any works involving the disturbance of the existing fabric of such buildings would merit further investigation.

## **Population**

The population of Cossington has remained consistently small relative to other neighbouring settlements although it has grown over time. Nichols writing in 1800 noted that there were forty dwellings. The 1861 census records approximately 409 residents which rises slightly to roughly 448 by the 1901 census. This information has to be adjusted slightly as Ratcliffe School falls within Cossington Parish and therefore the students have been included in the census. By the beginning of the last century the census in 2001 recorded 583 people.

Historically the employment of the residents in Cossington was varied with census records from the mid-nineteenth century indicating people generally worked in trade, agriculture, teaching or domestic service. The trades represented range from a laundress and grocer to carpenters and drapers and it is likely that residents travelled to larger neighbouring settlements for work. There were several large farms located in and around Cossington which explains the large number of agricultural labourers. Within the parish there were a number of educational establishments which included the village school and a girls' boarding school at The Manor House. Ratcliffe College designed by AW Pugin was established in 1841 by the RC Rosminian Order of monks. The number of schools necessitated the large numbers of teachers and other staff found in the censuses. This pattern of employment remained relatively unchanged until the twentieth century and the 1901 Census sees some residents employed in shoe or hosiery manufacture, reflecting employment trends across the wider area.

## **SPATIAL ANALYSIS**

### **Plan Form**

Cossington is seen today as a linear settlement stretching north to south between Sibley and Syston Road. The concentration of listed buildings and historic houses along the length of Main Street indicates the historic form of the village, which despite some development to the east has retained its linear form.

The Conservation Area is primarily concentrated around the oldest part of the settlement along Main Street with the majority of development since the twentieth century lying outside its boundaries.

The buildings within Cossington developed along Main Street with the church, rectory and latterly the school situated to the north of the village and dwellings and farmsteads to the south. Originally of timber and thatch, the more substantial materials of brick, stone and slate were used for additions to buildings as well as their replacement over time. The form and materials of the early village dwellings are still evident in a number of surviving houses including a number of examples of exposed timber framing and thatched roofs.

## **Villagescape**

Cossington is situated along a relatively flat stretch of land and the architectural forms and elements of the streetscene are relied on to create interest rather than changes to the topography. Although the Conservation Area primarily follows the buildings along a single road, distinct areas can be discerned as you move along the road.

The first is the stretch from the north of the Area to the junction with Homestead Close where Main Street curves before straightening out. There is a relaxed feel to this part of the Conservation Area with houses occupying larger plots and generally set back from the road with front gardens and driveways. The timber framing of Magpie Cottage is a prominent feature and the open space, the War Memorial and the trees surrounding the churchyard contribute to the open feel of this area. Front boundaries are generally low and formed of either red brick or granite and slate rubblestone. This ensures that the houses are generally very exposed within the streetscene and this characteristic continues throughout the Conservation Area.

From Homestead Close to Back Lane the road appears to widen thanks to the wide verge to the east of the road. Houses are generally closer together here and there is a pleasing variety of architectural styles. Although there are a number of eye-catching buildings no single one dominates the space. The established commemorative oaks complement the wide verges and open aspects of the properties. Along the west buildings are located closer to the street and there is a wide variety of scales and proportions with the prominent half hipped roof of The Manor House juxtaposed with the delicate proportions of Christmas Cottage. Low level front walls, hedges or estate style fencing continue along the street and this bestows an open nature to the space.

The final part of the Conservation Area is from the crossroads of Main Street with Platts Lane and Back Lane to the southern boundary edge. The houses become more widely spaced with larger plot sizes and there is more variety in the placement of the buildings with several set back from the road. Chine House and The Grove are both set within their own grounds with their main elevations perpendicular to Main Street. Platts Lane is undeveloped but the dense vegetation, established trees and the red brick and granite rubblestone wall reflect the characteristics found elsewhere within the Conservation Area.



## **Key Views and Vistas**

The long sweep of Main Street lends itself to open views along the street which take in the buildings and trees and provides interrupted stretches of interesting roofscapes, especially looking north from The Royal Oak.

In particular the view south along Main Street outside of Old Manor House which takes in the oaks, the bright red of the K6 telephone kiosk and post box, the thatched roof of 85 Main Street and the red and white elevations of the surrounding buildings creates a pleasing village scene.

## **Landmarks**

The grouping of the church and War Memorial close to the north boundary of the Conservation Area forms a focal point within the village. The opening up of the land around the memorial provides a pleasing setting for the monument which is complemented by the view through the trees of the church and churchyard together with a large pond beyond the car park.

## **CHARACTER ANALYSIS**

### **Building Types and Uses**

Cossington developed primarily as a residential village and it remains this way today. Houses are generally of two stories although there are significant differences in the sizes and scales of the buildings. Agriculture played a significant role in the origins and development of the village and was responsible for sustaining it through the centuries until modern industries and professions became more prominent. Farmsteads were scattered throughout the village and the surrounding land although this has now been largely lost from the Conservation Area itself.

A commercial interest was sustained within the village with the blacksmith's forge and village shop operating from properties along Main Street. Education was also a large employer within the village with the boarding school at The Manor House and the village school established in the nineteenth century.

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

The Old Rectory (Grade II\*) although set back from Main Street and not very visible was described by Nichols' writing in 1800 as "picturesquely beautiful" and he was supported by Pevsner who declared it "one of the best small domestic buildings in the county". Dating from the fifteenth century, alterations across the centuries have left their mark on the building. Of note is the very elaborate sixteenth century timber framing and a two storey cantered bay with stone mullions and transoms. The rear elevation was altered in the eighteenth

century with vertical sash windows inserted to keep up with the fashions of the period. There are numerous ornate details across the elevations and include Y tracery and crenellated transoms to first floor windows. Above there is a parapet with a frieze of shields in quatrefoils and battlements. A unique oak plank room with painted Tudor ceiling was discovered during repair work and restored. The moated garden which the Georgian elevation overlooks has also been recreated.

The Church of All Saints (Grade II\*) dates from the thirteenth century and was heavily altered during the course of the nineteenth century. It is primarily of granite rubblestone with stone dressings and a mixture of Swithland slate and leaded roofs. The tower dates from the thirteenth century and was built in three stages, evident in its present form. There are distinctive stained glass windows with Y tracery and the east window features one of the best examples of Douglas Strachan's stained glass designs. The east window also provides the backdrop for the granite grave of Colonel Kitchener, Lord Kitchener's father. The open north boundary of the churchyard ensures it retains its connection with the village.

The Vestry (Grade II) is unusually a separate building located close to the church which was built in 1835. Also of granite rubblestone with a Welsh slate roof it is a simple one storey building with the top glazing bars of the casement windows forming Gothic arches. A stone tablet carved with the Babington coat of arms and the inscription "Erected April 1835" is located above the door. The Fisher family tomb is located by the Vestry door.

Cossington Hall (Grade II) to the east side of Main Street is an unusual building. Dating from the eighteenth century with earlier origins possible, its Gothic style arched windows and battlemented parapet lends the whitewashed walls a distinctive charm. Prominent Bishop chimney pots and houndstooth brick bands above the second floor windows in the projecting gables complement the Strawberry Hill style architecture.

Magpie Cottage (Grade II) has some of the earliest origins of any building in the Conservation Area and its post and span timber framing and prominent position on a curve of the street ensures it is a notable building. There are intricate latticed leaded lights to the casement windows on the front elevation which complement the embellished timber frame which includes herringbone patterns and a trefoil in the gable apex.

The nineteenth century Christmas Cottage (Grade II) is another unusual building within the Conservation Area with its compact size not deterring the use of a wealth of architectural features. The Flemish bond brickwork with pale headers is enhanced by the use of Tudor style hoodmoulds, ornamental brick frames to the first floor windows across the front elevation and a moulded brick band. The Swithland slate roof is enhanced by the two octagonal flues and the door and windows utilise Tudor style arches.

## **Key Unlisted Buildings**

The Manor House is an imposing building on the west side of Main Street across two storeys. The brick has a brown tone to it and sits under the vast half hipped Swithland slate roof. Rebuilt in 1938 on the site of the previous manor house, the distinctive chimney stack with datestone and large windows evoke the Arts & Crafts style fashionable at the time of its rebuilding. The garage to the side of the dwelling is believed to be part of the original manor house.

Chine House is located towards the southern end of the Conservation Area. The white painted brick and render walls sits attractively behind the red brick wall and hedging to the front boundary along Main Street. It is an interesting property and the main elevation is perpendicular to Main Street, however there is also a door facing the street. Both doors are ornate with overlights with the main door set within a decorative arrangement of glazed panels beneath an arched porch. The windows are vertical sashes with distinctive square leaded panes to the top light and arranged in series of twos and threes. There are large bay windows to both the road frontage and the main elevation.

A valuable community asset is the Pinfold nestled adjacent to Grove Cottage. Rescued by the Village Society, it reflects the agricultural history of the village as it was where errant livestock was stored in the annual drive across the fields where owners could claim their animals for a fee.

### **Coherent groups**

Standing opposite The Manor House, the view south towards The White House which includes Christmas Cottage takes in an interesting mix of building scales and materials and the large number of chimneys adds further interest to the scene.

## **Building Materials and Architectural Details**

### **Walls**

There are a multitude of elevation finishes within the Conservation Area but red brick is the most common. This generally has a deep red tone as seen at 63 Main Street, The Manor House, Lime Tree Cottage, 90-92 Main Street and The Grove.

Easily discernable within the Conservation Area is the use of red brick laid to a Flemish bond with alternating pale headers found at 46 & 48-50 Main Street, 68 Main Street, Christmas Cottage, 121 & 123 Main Street and 1,3,5 & 7 Back Lane.

The red brick is broken up with the use of painted or whitewashed brick at 39 Main Street, Millstream Cottage, Cossington Hall and The Royal Oak.

Render is also found within the Conservation Area to houses of all ages as shown by Old Manor House, 41 Main Street, 65 Main Street, 60 Main Street and 129 Main Street.

The use of rubblestone as the primary building material within Cossington is uncommon and therefore its use at 133,135 & 137 Main Street and 85 Main Street is quite striking. It is also used in conjunction with both red and painted brick at Rose Cottage.

There are a number of buildings of which the timber frame is visible such as at Lime Tree Cottage, Magpie Cottage and to the side elevations of Christmas Cottage. The cruck frame at 129 Main Street hints at its late medieval origins.

Generally recent development within the Conservation Area has respected the use of these materials with red brick being a common choice as shown at Fintry, 62 Main Street and 99 Main Street.

### **Roofs**

There are three main roofing materials to the buildings within the Conservation Area.

Swithland slate with its distinctive greenish tones, rough texture and diminishing courses is found throughout the Conservation Area at Rose Cottage, 36 Main Street, Cossington Hall, The Manor House, Christmas Cottage and The White House. Occasionally a mixture of both Swithland and Welsh slate is found as at Old Manor House and the contrast between the materials is clear as demonstrated where Magpie Cottage and 46 Main Street connect.

The use of Welsh slate with its natural grey tones is used at the Cossington School, 101 & 103 Main Street, 119,121 & 123 Main Street and 90-92 & 94-96 Main Street.

Thatch would once have been the dominant roofing material in the village but now only Millstream Cottage and 85 Main Street retain this finish.

Chimneys are generally simple structures but they create interesting roofscapes along the street. There are often several chimneys to each property and the use of decorative Bishop pots in some cases adds to this interest. Distinctive octagonal chimneys are found at Christmas Cottage and there are large brick examples at The Manor House.

Houses built since the twentieth century have generally utilised roof materials from the same palette and the continued use of traditional materials allows new builds to complement rather than dominate the established grain of the Area. Both Welsh slate and replica and reclaimed Swithland slates have been used along with more modern concrete tiles in some instances.

### **Windows and Doors**

There is a large variety of individual window designs used throughout the Conservation Area. Often there is a mixture of window types to each property with the front elevation utilising one type and those to the side and rear of a different size, style or both. The foundation for these windows is most commonly a timber casement window however these are often embellished or ornamented with unusual frame designs or patterned leaded lights.

Arrangements of two and three light casements with traditional narrow glazing bars are found at Millstream Cottage, Townend House, 90-92 Main Street, 2 Back Lane and The White House. Traditional shutters are also found to the front elevation of Millstream Cottage.

Examples of casements with square leaded lights can be seen at Old Manor House and 85 Main Street. More intricately leaded lights are found to the front elevation of Magpie Cottage.

More individually designed windows can be found at several properties. The Gothic style arched windows at Cossington Hall and the Tudor style arched windows at Christmas Cottage both contribute to the overall architectural design of the buildings.

The polite proportions of the vertical sliding sash are visible at The White House, Chine House, The Grove, 36 Main Street and 119 Main Street. The examples throughout the Conservation Area utilise different arrangements of glazing bars displaying the changes in fashions and design that influenced the architecture of these houses.

A less common window type is the mullion and transom of which a large timber example is found to the front of The Manor House. Stone mullions are used to divide pairs of casements at Cossington School.

Dormer windows are found at several properties within the Conservation Area such as Hall Cottage, 129 Main Street, Rose Cottage and Chine House. Distinctive examples utilising timber bargeboarding are found to the front elevation of 1,3,5 & 7 Back Lane. Dormer windows are also seen in more recent developments as a means of accommodating a reduced building scale, such as at 6,8 & 10 Bennetts Lane, 4 Bennetts Lane and 87 Main Street.

Bay windows often add texture and interest to elevations and these are found at Rose Cottage, 39 Main Street and to the front and side of Chine House.

There are several examples of doors and door openings within the Conservation Area that have retained their historic design. A Tudor arched doorframe defines the porch at Cossington School and this shape is also found at Christmas Cottage. The doorway of Chine House visible on Main Street retains its timber surround with pilasters. Intricate gabled porches with dentilled cornices and open work trefoils in the apex can be seen at the aptly named Porch Cottages of 133,135 &137 Main Street.

## **Details**

The high quality of the architecture within the Cossington Conservation Area is enhanced by a number of individual details which cumulatively enrich the interest of the streetscene.

The use of brick dentilled eaves is common and found at 36 Main Street, 80 Main Street, 63 Main Street, 90-92 & 94-96 Main Street and 133,135 & 137 Main Street.

Cossington School makes use of blue brick courses which complement the stone mullions, lintels and cills to create an attractive building.

There are a number of decorative elements to the gable end of 7 Back Lane which faces the road. A herringbone brick panel with dentilled brick course sits beneath timber bargeboards and a timber open work panel.

There is a moulded brick course defining the apex of the gable between the eaves at Grove Lodge.

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

There is no significant area of open space within the Conservation Area although Cossington Meadows Nature Reserve forms a pleasing setting to the area surrounding the church and War Memorial.

Trees are fundamentally important in contributing to the character of the Area and there are a number of Tree Preservation Orders throughout the Conservation Area. An Area TPO includes the trees at 56, 58 & 60 Main Street and there are also a number of individual TPOs throughout the Conservation Area. Of particular importance are the coronation oaks planted along the east side of Main Street which are protected through Conservation Area legislation relating to works to trees.

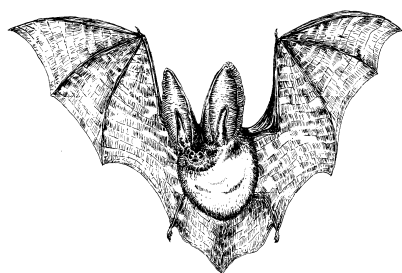
### **Biodiversity**

Properties to the west of Main Street within the Conservation Area are located at the edge of the open countryside. The influence of the River Soar Valley can be perceived from the public realm as one can catch glimpses of the floodplain, a mainly pastoral landscape with fields grazed by stock.

Close to the Conservation Area, extensive wetland habitats have been created following sand and gravel extraction, with a range of diverse water bodies from small ponds to reedbeds and shallow pools, interspaced with hedgerows, ditches and blocks of wet woodland. Cossington Meadows Nature Reserve, which is owned and managed by the Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust, and the wider countryside of the River Soar Valley are readily accessible from the network of footpaths which radiate from the Conservation Area.

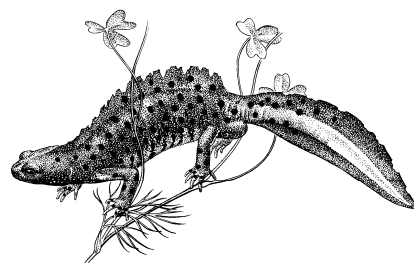
The large gardens along the west of Main Street comprise substantial mature tree cover which confers a lush vegetated character to the Conservation Area. In places, this character is reinforced where grass verges along Main Street are wide enough to accommodate specimen trees and elsewhere where a few incidental green spaces have been planted with trees.

As Main Street and Platts Lane lead away from the village core, hedgerows comprising a mix of native and ornamental species border either side of the roads, providing ecological links between the built up area and the wider countryside.



Several bat species have been recorded within the Conservation Area. Brown long-eared bats are associated with spacious lofts, often with immediate tree cover close by. Common pipistrelle bats are typical crevice dwellers and their roosts are found either within buildings or in mature trees with features such as woodpecker holes, raised bark and fissures. Their activity close to the

church is particularly noticeable as their droppings are often found within the body of the church. Being strictly insectivorous, all UK bat species require good quality habitats and favour commuting routes along linear habitats such as tree belts, hedgerows and watercourses. Because of their vulnerability and severe decline, all bat species and their roosts are now fully protected under wildlife legislation\*. Many are listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006.



Close to the Conservation Area old field ponds are known to support great crested newts, another species of principal importance. This charismatic species also receives full protection under wildlife legislation\*. Great crested newts only return to ponds at breeding time; otherwise most of their life cycle is spent on terrestrial habitats.

The quality of the built and natural environment found within the Conservation Area, coupled with habitat connectivity linking the Conservation Area to the wider countryside of the River Soar Valley, forms a valuable ecological network. Factors such as aging tree stock, the potential impact of tree diseases on native trees and the loss of trees through development could affect the special character of the Conservation Area and the biodiversity it supports.

\* These species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2012. Further information is available at <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/wildlife/species/europeanprotectedspecies.aspx>

## **Detrimental Features**

Cossington has developed along what is now a busy connecting road and resulting noise and speed of vehicles harms the character of the Conservation Area.

## **DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

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

- the individuality of architectural styles and wealth of influences from different periods all found along a single street, from medieval remains and Tudor inspired details to the Gothic revival, Georgian terraces, Victorian villas and Arts & Crafts alterations;
- the interplay of chimneys with the tones and textures of traditional building materials which creates attractive distinctive roofscapes;
- the contribution of the mature trees throughout the streetscene which is an uncommon feature of the Soar Valley villages;
- the consistency of the front boundary treatments which are often at a low level and combined with open frontages ensures that buildings are relatively exposed allowing the architecture to define the streetscene;
- the easily discernable historic forms and fabric which are not dominated or overwhelmed by infill developments.



## **MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **General Principles**

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

Within the Conservation Area the Council will insist on high 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 the NPPF, the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, Leading in Design and other SPD will be used to assess the quality of proposal for new development.

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

- The Conservation Area has a distinct “grain” or pattern of built form and spaces which are part of its historic development. This gives the Area great individuality, characterised by the pattern of historic buildings, ancient footpaths and highways and clearly defined boundaries. This “grain” is an important part of the character of the Conservation Area and will be protected.
- The emphasis for new proposals will be on high quality of design. There may be opportunity for innovative modern design. However a dramatic contemporary statement is unlikely to be appropriate.
- Scale is the combination of a building’s height and bulk when related to its surroundings. Proposed new development must take into account the scale of the existing buildings and must not dominate or overwhelm them.
- Alterations and extensions must respect the form of the original building and its locality. The use of high quality materials and detailing, whether modern or traditional is essential. Roof lines, roof shape, eaves details, verge details and the creation of new chimneys are important considerations.
- Windows and doors of a traditional design respect the historic nature of the buildings to which they belong and make a very important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The use of uPVC and standardised high speed joinery techniques nearly always leads to unsuitably detailed windows which will be generally unacceptable in the Conservation Areas. In most cases the

Building Regulation requirements can be met without the need to use clumsy and awkwardly detailed windows.

- The appraisal has identified the types of materials that characterise the Conservation Areas and where possible they should be used to help alterations respect that established character.
- Applicants for planning permission must provide a meaningful “Design and Access Statement”, to explain the design decisions that have been made and to show how proposed alterations relate to their context. A detailed analysis of the locality should demonstrate that there is a full appreciation of the local streetscape and how it has developed, including prevailing building forms, materials and plot ratios.
- Safeguarding of protected species must be taken on board when considering planning proposals such as conversion, tree felling, housing development and other changes which may affect their roosting places, commuting routes and feeding areas.

### **Procedures to ensure consistent decision-making**

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

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

### **Enforcement strategy**

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

Proactive action can improve the appearance and character of the Conservation 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 Charnwood 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 Conservation 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 of a building within a Conservation Area are offences. In such cases, the Council will consider prosecution of those responsible and enforce any necessary remedial action.

The powers set out in Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will be used where sites are identified as detracting from the character of the Conservation Area by being eyesores or untidy.

### **General condition**

The Conservation Area is generally in excellent condition.

### **Possible Boundary Changes to the Conservation Area**

The present boundaries of the existing Conservation Area incorporate the principal areas of special historic and architectural interest within the village. It is intended to carry out a full assessment of the character of the village and surrounding area in the future to identify areas that it may be appropriate to incorporate into the Conservation Area boundary.

As part of the consultation period the following locations have been put forward for future consideration:

- The long garden wall that bounds Crabtree Lane
- Temple Cottages, 6, 8 & 10 Main Street
- The stretch of Syston Road from Goscote Nurseries to the railway line, to include fields on both sides as well as Cossington Grange
- the right hand side of Platt's Lane to the end of 70 Main Street to join up with the wildlife area
- the bridge on Humble Lane
- Homestead Close
- Hall Close
- Bennett's Lane
- Fisher Close
- Back Lane
- Middlefield Road
- Derrys Nurseries
- Blackberry Lane

### **Proposals 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.

### **Strategy for the management and protection of important trees, greenery and green spaces**

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

General management guidelines:

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

The Landscape Character Assessment (2012) contains a structured evaluation of each landscape area within the Borough and details the Council's commitment to achieve high quality sustainable development proposals which will protect, conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Borough's landscape and reinforce local distinctiveness. This Assessment should be utilised to inform and guide development decisions in conjunction with guidelines for the built environment.

### **Monitoring change arrangements**

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

### **Consideration of resources**

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

### **Developing management proposals**

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

### **Summary of issues and proposed actions**

<b>Conservation Area Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Action</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>Other Partners</b>
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Boundaries of the Conservation Area	<p>A full assessment of the character of the village and surrounding area. Suggested areas to focus on are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The long garden wall that bounds Crabtree Lane</li> <li>- Temple Cottages, 6, 8 &amp; 10 Main Street</li> <li>- The stretch of Syston Road from Goscote Nurseries to the railway line, to include fields on both sides as well as Cossington Grange</li> <li>- the right hand side of Platt's Lane to the end of 70 Main Street to join up with the wildlife area</li> <li>- the bridge on Humble Lane</li> <li>- Homestead Close</li> <li>- Hall Close</li> <li>- Bennett's Lane</li> <li>- Fisher Close</li> <li>- Back Lane</li> <li>- Middlefield Road</li> <li>- Derry's Nurseries</li> <li>- Blackberry Lane</li> </ul>	Charnwood BC	
Impact of volume and speed of traffic on the Conservation Area	Investigate appropriate methods of traffic calming through the village	LCC Highways	Cossington PC Charnwood BC

### **Community involvement**

This document will be made available as a draft via the website for 6 weeks prior to submission to Cabinet for adoption. A public meeting will be held so that local residents and businesses may contribute their ideas about the Conservation Area. All comments and responses will be considered and appropriate amendments made to the document before it is submitted to Cabinet for approval.

### **Advice and guidance**

The Borough Council 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, alterations and extensions and suitable materials.

Contacts: Conservation and Landscape Team  
Tel. 01509 634971

[built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk)

Development Management  
Tel. 01509 634737  
[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**

Meadows, J (2009) *Cossington: History, Stories, People, Places & Pictures*

Pevsner, N (1992) *Leicestershire and Rutland*

Skillington, F (unknown) *Post Medieval Cossington*

Skillington, S H (1936) *Medieval Cossington*

W.I (1935) *A Short History of Cossington*

W.I (2001) *Memories of Cossington Women's Institute*

## **Internet Resources**

'1861 Census' at  
<http://www.leicestershirevillages.com/cossington/census-1861-fiches.html>  
[Date accessed 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013]

'1871 Census' at  
<http://www.leicestershirevillages.com/cossington/1871-census-fiches-only.html>  
[Date accessed 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013]

'1901 Census' at  
<http://www.leicestershirevillages.com/cossington/1901-census-fiches-only.html>  
[Date accessed 13<sup>th</sup> November 2013]

'Cossington' at <http://www.leicestershirevillages.com/cossington/>  
[Date accessed 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013]

'Cossington, Leicestershire' at  
[http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results\\_Application.aspx?resourceID=1021](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Application.aspx?resourceID=1021)  
[Date accessed 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013]

'Cossington, Leicestershire' at  
<http://www.pastscape.org.uk/SearchResults.aspx?rational=g&criteria=cossington,%20leicestershire&search=ALL&sort=4&recordsperpage=10>  
[Date accessed 17<sup>th</sup> October 2013]

### **LISTED BUILDINGS IN COSSINGTON CONSERVATION AREA**

All buildings below are listed at Grade II with the exception of the Church of All Saints, Main Street and The Old Rectory, 54 Main Street which are listed at Grade II\*.

#### Main Street

No. 40, Millstream Cottage  
No. 44, Magpie Cottage  
No. 60, Old Manor House  
No. 68, Townend Farm  
No. 74, Christmas Cottage  
No. 85, Old Thatched Shop  
No. 91, Lime Tree Cottage  
No. 129, Cruck Cottage  
Nos. 133-137, Porch Cottages  
Close Cottage, Hallside and The Hall  
Coach House and Stable at The Old Rectory  
K6 Telephone Kiosk  
Vestry at the Churchyard of All Saints  
War Memorial