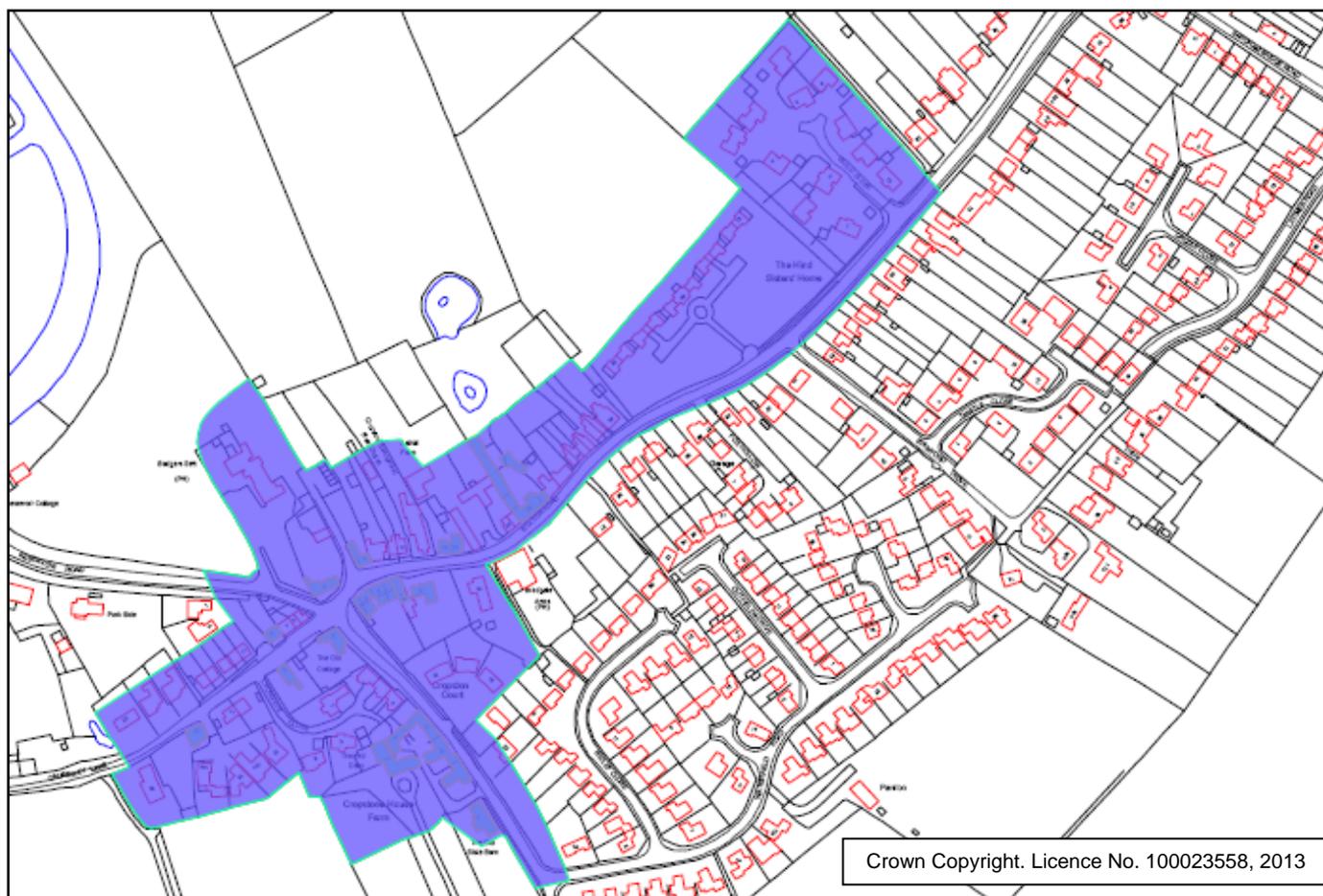




Cropston Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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CROPSTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL



Current map showing Cropston Conservation Area & listed buildings

INTRODUCTION

Cropston Conservation Area was designated in July 1984 and covers an area of 7.4 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 relate 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 Areas 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

Cropston is a relatively small linear settlement within the Charnwood Forest approximately seven miles from Loughborough and five miles from Leicester. It is close to Thurcaston with which it shares a parish and is within four miles of its neighbours Swithland, Newtown Linford, Rothley and Anstey. Cropston is closely connected both geographically and historically with Bradgate Park which lies to the east of the village. Cropston Reservoir is found close to the north-western edge of the village along Reservoir Road outside of the Conservation Area.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Origins and Development

Cropston has its origins in Saxon times and has been known variously through time as Cropstone and occasionally, Crapstone. There is no specific reference to the settlement at the time of Domesday although it certainly existed at this time and is likely to have been included in the figure for the Manor of Groby. Cropston is first mentioned by name in the Leicestershire Survey of 1130 as Cropestone.

Despite laying to the west of the village, the crossroads of Station Road, Cropston Road, Causeway Lane and Reservoir Road represent the core of the village. The historic development of the village centred on this crossing which was close to one of the entrances to Bradgate Park on Causeway Lane. The Gate House incorporates what was the former gatehouse at the entrance to the park on this lane and the earliest part of the house dates from the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

Cropston remained relatively unchanged until the latter half of the nineteenth century when the present day form of the village began to take shape. Cropston Reservoir was completed in 1871 to supply water to Leicester and this necessitated some alterations to the road network within the village. The road through the village from Anstey to the Charnwood Forest was diverted over the dam on Reservoir Road. Whilst some of the original road still exists and can be found between The Thatch and Corner Cottage, the reservoir waterworks now occupies much of its original route.

The formation of the Cropston Land Society in the 1890s brought the first real residential expansion to the village, albeit on a small scale. This was part of a movement to enable ordinary people to own their own land and provide for themselves. The Society bought an area of land on Station Road and divided this into long narrow plots large enough for owners to be self sufficient before offering them for sale. These are now the row of mostly semi-detached homes on Station Road and would have been outside of the main village at the time.

The plaques to their fronts give their names and dates between 1898 and 1905. The first housing development in the village was nicknamed “Klondike” after the Gold Rush which was then at its peak. The Cropston Land Society was dissolved in 1900.

Larger expansion of the village followed swiftly in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The building of Rothley Station on the Great Central Railway opened in 1899 hence the renaming of Main Street as Station Road around this time. A significant number of houses on Station Road were built during this period on land that became available following the sale of the Bradgate Estate in 1928 and many of the new residents were professionals who commuted to Leicester on the railway. Further expansion occurred in the 1950s with the building of Latimer Road and Waterfield Road some time later.

Situated at the eastern end of the Conservation Area are the Hind Sisters’ Homes which were originally built for retired ladies of limited means. The money for the building of the Homes was left by Sarah Jane Hind on her death in 1922 who was part of the family who quarried for slate at Swithland and was born in Cropston. Adjoining this site is Guild Close, a modern development which was built on the site of a holiday home for the Leicestershire Guild of the Crippled (now Mosaic).

The connection of Cropston with Thurcaston both historically and today means that the parish church of All Saints is located in Thurcaston. Cropston Evangelical Free Church was built in 1879 by a non-conformist Christian fellowship who had been meeting in a house in Cropston since 1850. This building was further extended in 1908.

Archaeological Interest

An area of archaeological alert covers the majority of the Conservation Area with its boundaries being drawn just before the eastern edge of the Area to exclude the Hind Sisters’ Homes and Guild Close. Within the Conservation Area, specific areas of archaeological interest are identified at the centre of the crossroads. Numerous areas of interest also lie close to the settlement, especially further down Causeway Lane close to Bradgate Park.

Archaeological potential also exists within Cropston’s historic built environment. Many of the older buildings have been adapted and altered or repaired and restored and often incorporated 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

Historically residents of Cropston were employed in agriculture as well as the manufacture of lace, knitwear and hosiery. The neighbouring Bradgate Estate

was a large agricultural employer and many of the villagers would have found employment there. The Enclosure Act for Cropston was passed in 1781 with the area bounded by Bradgate Road, Leicester Road and Brooky Lane included in the Thurcaston Enclosure of 1798. Historically three or four working farms were located in Cropston with Cropston House Farm remaining the only one in operation today. As the end of the nineteenth century approached, the reservoir waterworks as well as the boot and shoe factories in Anstey provided employment. The emerging industry of tourism also had an impact on employment by the beginning of the twentieth century.

There was also a small commercial interest in Cropston although this has diminished over the years. In recent history the village had a butcher with its own abattoir, a post office with general store and a village shop. 34 Station Road was formerly a pub, supplied by the brewery behind the White House next door. Today the commercial interest within Cropston is restricted to one pub within the Conservation Area, The Badger's Sett, with a second village pub, The Bradgate Arms, and a small garage located just outside its boundaries.

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century the village did not experience significant growth and remained at a consistent size of around 26 houses. From the latter half of the twentieth century Cropston expanded considerably with the great majority of the housing from this period lying outside of the Conservation Area boundary. The population of Cropston was about 1200 in 2001 and there are now over 400 houses within the village boundary.

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

Plan Form

The concentration of historic buildings which predate the twentieth century around the crossroads suggests that Cropston was once a nucleated settlement. All of the listed buildings within the Conservation Area are located in or close to this junction indicating the historic form of the village.

The present day form of Cropston has undoubtedly altered from its historic origins. The significant growth of Cropston from the twentieth century has been focused along Station Road, with new networks of roads and considerable residential development located to the south east, utilising the open space which existed between this road and Cropston Road. Cropston can now be more accurately described as a linear settlement but the boundaries of the Conservation Area indicate the historic plan form of the nucleated settlement as it was until the early twentieth century. There are however pockets of later development within its boundaries such as 16, 16A, 18 & 18A Causeway Lane and the Guild Close housing but on the whole the historic character and features prevail.

Villagescape

The village of Cropston is centred on the crossroads which form the focal point of the village, especially with regard to its historic character and it is this area which is largely responsible for the character of the Conservation Area. A pleasing mix of rendered and red brick walls with thatched or slate roofs can all be found here, with the buildings of various scales and proportions reflecting the different periods in which they were built.

Causeway Lane is much narrower than the other three roads which extend from the crossroads, a legacy from its previous purpose as providing access to Bradgate Park. Houses are close to the road and there are a large number of trees and hedges giving the road a verdant feel. Front boundaries are generally open or formed of low rubblestone walls, planting or both. This means the features of the houses are prominent and there is an interesting mix of materials and proportions along its length. As you reach the western extent of the Area, the residential street gives way to open fields and expansive views as the land gently slopes to the south.

Cropston Road falls relatively steeply to the south and is an unusual space within the Conservation Area as the properties to the west back on to the road rather than front it. The rear elevation of the modern development of Lychgate Close is prominent and echoes the style of the converted outbuildings of Cropston House Farm which it gives way to. A number of more recent builds are found to the east of the road and the use of planting and trees enables these later architectural styles to look more established within their setting. There are also wide views of the open fields surrounding the village across to Anstey.

Station Road is the most built up area of the Conservation Area and a number of varying architectural styles can be found along its length. The nineteenth century architecture of 42, 44, 46 & 48 Station Road sits attractively alongside the thatch of 18 & 20 Station Road and the polite proportions of The Old House. The Cropston Evangelical Free Church with its distinctive Gothic inspired arched windows adds to this mix of styles. There are fewer trees here and properties mainly front directly onto the street giving the space an enclosed feel close to the crossroad junction. This gives way to larger plot sizes as you travel east and there is a long expanse of hedging which forms the front boundary of the Hind Sisters' Homes.

Reservoir Road is the least populated area of the village and the number of trees and sharp corners gives no indication of the open stretch and tranquil space of Cropston Reservoir slightly further north. The Badger's Sett pub is the most significant building in this part of the Conservation Area, dating from the latter half of the nineteenth century and is surrounded by a large open green space away from the road.

Within Cropston there is a continuity of front boundary treatments which serves to unify the wealth of architectural styles and contribute to Cropston's sense of place. These are typically formed of hedging and planting with the

use of low walls, generally of granite and slate rubblestone. Interestingly the front boundaries of the properties to the south east side of Station Road up to those opposite Guild Close have been included with the Conservation Area, protecting the contribution they make through the trees, planting and walls and reinforcing the importance that these elements have within the streetscene.

Key Views and Vistas

The views along each of the four roads radiating from the crossroads are arguably all important for demonstrating the elements that are important to the character of the Cropston Conservation Area. The mix of materials, building styles and features complement the natural tones provided by the planting and trees creating a series of attractive and different views along each of the four roads.

Landmarks

The most prominent building within the Conservation Area is The Thatch with its striking black and white walls and heavy thatched roof situated at the crossroads.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Building Types and Uses

Cropston developed primarily as a residential village and it still fulfils this purpose today. Buildings are generally formed of two storeys and are grouped closely together. Detached properties are common but the building of houses adjoining others is also prevalent as seen at 7 & 9 Causeway Lane, 6 & 8 Station Road and 5, 3 & 7 Station Road. Often these are of different ages and the contrast in materials, scales and proportions makes for a distinctive streetscene. This is most evident in the stretch of buildings from 28 Station Road to 40 Station Road. The most significant departure from this is the Hind Sisters Homes which are in their own grounds and more recently the new developments of Guild Close and Lychgate Close. The last century has also seen the introduction of several bungalows and semi-detached properties which can be found along Cropston Road and Station Road.

There is a small commercial interest within the Conservation Area which is restricted to the Badger's Sett public house although there are two other commercial premises situated outside of the Conservation Area. The Evangelical Free Church is the only other public building within the Conservation Area. The agricultural legacy of the village still continues at Cropston House Farm.

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

The Thatch (Grade II) dates from the sixteenth century and has inevitably been altered and extended over time, notably the refacing of the front elevation in the twentieth century with a decorative timber frame. It is of granite and rubble stone construction with a mixture of window styles including two twentieth century cantered bays and two dormers peeping from under the thatch.

The Gate House (Grade II) dates from the sixteenth century with additions over the centuries which have culminated in its charmingly jumbled appearance. The walls are variously of granite and slate rubble stone, render and red brick with timber framing. There are large three and four light casements to the front elevation and a mixture of casements sizes on the east elevation. An overlight to the door on this elevation has been interestingly formed using the timber frame. The scale of The Gatehouse is somewhat larger than its neighbours and the striking mix of materials ensures that this building is a prominent feature of Causeway Lane.

Key Unlisted Buildings

The Hind Sisters Homes lay at the eastern end of the Conservation Area and the hedging along the roadside ensures that they remain hidden from view except from the driveway. The Homes were completed in 1926 to designs by the architect J.O. Lancashire and comprise ten cottages and bungalows with a warden's cottage. They form an attractive grouping of buildings and the coherency of the original 1920s design can still be discerned although some unsympathetic alterations have been made, such as the replacement of the windows with uPVC. They are generally of red brick, with brown brick detailing and the hipped roofs and projecting gables evoke the architectural style of the period.

Cropston Evangelical Free Church is a simple building, relying on the gothic inspired arched windows and door to add interest to the white render and red brick walls. The window design hints at the purpose of the building and the ecclesiastical architecture is easily discernable within the streetscene.

Coherent groups

The cluster of buildings that are grouped around the crossroads forms a pleasing group which include the black and white elevations of The Thatch sitting comfortably alongside the tall granite and slate rubblestone of 2 Causeway Lane and the deep red brick of 3-7 Station Road.

Building Materials and Architectural Details

Walls

There is an abundance of materials used within the Conservation Area and there is no dominant finish discernable.

The use of red brick laid to a stretcher bond is found along all four roads within the Conservation Area. This was used both historically as shown at 3-5 Station Road, The Old House, The Hind Sisters Homes and 18-20 Station Road. More recent building in the Conservation Area has also utilised red brick such as the housing on Lychgate Close, 12-14 Causeway Lane and 12, 14 & 16 Cropston Road. At 18-20 Station Road and 3-5 Station Road the red brick walls are supported on a granite and slate rubblestone plinth.

In some cases red brick has been combined with other locally distinctive materials. The converted outbuildings of Cropston House Farm utilise red brick with granite and slate rubblestone with the contrast of tones creating a pleasing finish along Cropston Road.

The use of render in a white or cream finish is relatively common as shown at 6 Station Road, 8 Causeway Lane, the front range of the Evangelical Free Church and 1, 3 & 7 Causeway Lane,

Painted finishes are also found as shown at the Badger's Sett and painted granite at 32 & 34 Station Road. This is generally to a white or cream colour.

The use of the locally distinctive granite and slate rubblestone finish is found at 2 Causeway Lane and Jasmine Cottage. The rubblestone effect has been used more recently in combination with white render panels at 21 and 23 Causeway Lane.

The only examples of surviving timber framing are visible at The Gate House and to the building in front of 9A Station Road. There is also the distinctive applied timber framing at The Thatch.

Roofs

The use of Swithland slate with its distinctive greenish tones, rough texture and diminishing courses can be found throughout the Conservation Area at 2 Causeway Lane, 3-5 Station Road, 6 Station Road, The Gate House and 8 Causeway Lane.

Welsh slates are also visible within the streetscene at Lychgate Close, 1, 3 & 7 Causeway Lane and 50-52 & 54-56 Station Road.

Historically thatch would have been common within Cropston however it is now only found at The Thatch, Apple Tree Cottage and 18-20 Station Road.

More modern roofing finishes such as concrete and clay plain tiles are also apparent at 12-14 Causeway Lane and 12, 14 & 16 Cropston Road.

Windows and Doors

The traditional windows found within the Conservation Area are generally casement windows although these are found in a wide variety of forms.

Two light casements are generally located to the side of buildings although these are visible from the streetscene at 2 Causeway Lane, The Gate House and The Thatch. 6 Station Road has two examples of two light horizontal sliding sashes.

Larger three light casement window examples are evident across the front elevation of 2 Causeway Lane, 9 Causeway Lane and 32-34 Station Road. Three light horizontal Yorkshire sliding sashes are found at The Old House.

A unique example of a four light casements is found to the ground floor of The Gate House.

The use of dormers is not common within the Conservation Area although they can be seen at The Thatch. Distinctive eyebrow dormers are used at 18-20 Station Road and large three light half hipped dormers define the eaves line at 5 Station Road.

The Thatch has two examples of twentieth century cantered bays to the ground floor.

The historic doors and their openings are generally simple and without ornament. Examples of more embellished doors however are found to some houses within the Conservation Area. Overlights are found at The Gate House and at 42, 44, 46 & 48 Station Road. An ornate nineteenth century stone doorcase with canopy and pilasters adds interest to the front elevation of The Old House. Distinctive hoods and door cases are found at 32 Station Road and 5 Station Road which also has a large six panelled door.

Details

Generally homes within Cropston Conservation Area are simple attractive buildings whose character is created by the arrangement and design of the windows and the natural tones of traditional building materials.

On occasions the brickwork has been used to create interest. Dentilled eaves can be found at 3 & 5 Station Road, 6 Station Road, 32 & 34 Station Road and 2 Causeway Lane and red brick dressings to the windows at Cropston House Farm contrast with the grey rubblestone walls.

Arched brick lintels can be found at 2 Causeway Lane, 9 Causeway Lane, The Old House and 32 Station Road whilst stone lintels offset the red brick at 3 Station Road and 42 & 44 Station Road.

The diamond brick ventilation panels at the converted outbuildings of Cropston House Farm which are visible along Cropston Road are characteristic of agricultural buildings and their retention is important for referencing its former use.

Parks, Gardens and Trees

There is no significant open space within the Conservation Area and expansive views are only possible from the boundary edges. There is however a small pocket of land outside 3 Station Road at the crossroads which contributes to the open nature of the Conservation Area at this point. Notwithstanding this however there are a large number of trees and established hedges and planting which give the Conservation Area a leafy feel within it. The importance and the contribution of the trees to the area are recognised by the individual and group Tree Preservation Orders throughout the Conservation Area.

Houses generally have a small front garden bounded by stone walls and planting. There are others such as 42, 44, 46 & 48 Station Road however where the buildings front directly on to the street.

Biodiversity



To the west of the Conservation Area, Cropston Reservoir forms part of Bradgate Park and Cropston Reservoir Site of Special Scientific Interest. Several bat roosts have been recorded within the Conservation Area, and it is likely that bats commute from the Conservation Area to the high quality foraging grounds of the Reservoir. The tall hedgerows along Reservoir

Road provide an important link and represent a significant element of the local biodiversity network.

All bat species in the UK are strictly insectivorous and hibernate in the winter months when food preys are scarce. All bats and their roosts are protected under wildlife legislation mainly due to their acute decline in numbers and to their high vulnerability during key stages of their life cycle.



Badgers have been recorded to the west of the Conservation Area: the name of the local Public House – Badgers Sett – is a testimony that badgers have been present in the area for a long time.

The Conservation Area comprises a number of mature trees which tend to be grouped within several properties. As trees mature the number of invertebrate and lichen species they support increases and they become highly valuable for biodiversity.

Detrimental Features

The location of Cropston and its connection with the larger settlements of Anstey, Rothley and the wider Charnwood Forest means that there is a significant amount of traffic which is intrusive in terms of the volume and noise of the vehicles. There is also a significant amount of street parking particularly along Causeway Lane and Station Road which detracts from the appearance of the streetscene.

DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST

- the wealth of materials and mix of building scales used throughout the Conservation Area which create a rich and lively streetscene with the combination of different styles and architecture unifying to create a distinct character;
- the survival of a high level of historic fabric and details, from several buildings with medieval origins to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries;
- the historic core of the village which is still easily identifiable by the form of the buildings and the narrowing of the roads;
- the contribution made to the villagescape by the hedges, planting and trees lining the roads and the consistency of the front boundary treatments which bring together the different elements of the Conservation Area.

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. However following the survey and public consultation, it is suggested that future consideration be given to the following minor amendments:

Reservoir Cottage and the open space, hedges and trees adjacent to Badger's Sett

The large area of open space to the front of the Badger's Sett makes an important contribution in framing this part of the Conservation Area. The established trees, hedging and planting to the boundaries with Reservoir Cottage in the distance make a more natural terminus to the Conservation Area than they are drawn currently.

18 & 20 Cropston Road

The current boundary is drawn so that the front garden of 18 Cropston Road is included and goes through the house at 20 Cropston Road. This boundary line should be neatened so the area to the front of both properties is included given the contribution made to the streetscene by the granite wall and trees and 20 Cropston Road itself is wholly outside of the Conservation Area.

The Bradgate Arms, Station Road

The historic Bradgate Arms public house is currently just outside of the Conservation Area. The character and style of the building is in-keeping with that of the rest of the area and its origins date back at least 400 years. It is positioned directly adjacent to the open expanse of the car park which interrupts the built form of the street, therefore making a more natural boundary line. The contribution that this building makes to the streetscene

and its location should be recognised by its inclusion within the Conservation Area.

A full assessment of the character of the village and the surrounding area will be made as part of any future investigation into possible boundary amendments. Therefore there may be other areas and spaces within the village which area identified as being appropriate to be incorporated into the Conservation Area boundary.

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

Conservation Area Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Partner	Other Partners
Boundaries of the Conservation Area	Review the Conservation Area focusing on: <u>Reservoir Cottage and the open space, hedges and trees adjacent to Badger's Sett</u> <u>18 & 20 Cropston Road</u> <u>The Bradgate Arms, Station Road</u>	Charnwood BC	
Impact of volume and speed of traffic on the Conservation Area and general highway safety concerns	Investigate appropriate methods of traffic calming through the village	LCC Highways	Thurcaston & Cropston PC Charnwood BC
Concern of a lack of awareness of the Conservation Area designation	Consideration of a scheme to raise awareness of the Conservation Area designation, possibly including the installation of appropriate signage	Thurcaston & Cropston 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.

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LISTED BUILDINGS IN CROPSTON CONSERVATION AREA

All buildings, structures and features below are listed at Grade II.

Causeway Lane

No. 2

No. 8

No. 9

No. 20, The Gate House

Cropston Road

Nos. 32 & 34 and Outbuildings to rear
Cropston House Farm, Cropston Road

Station Road

No. 2, The Thatch

Nos. 3-5

No. 6

No. 9, The Old House

Nos. 18-20