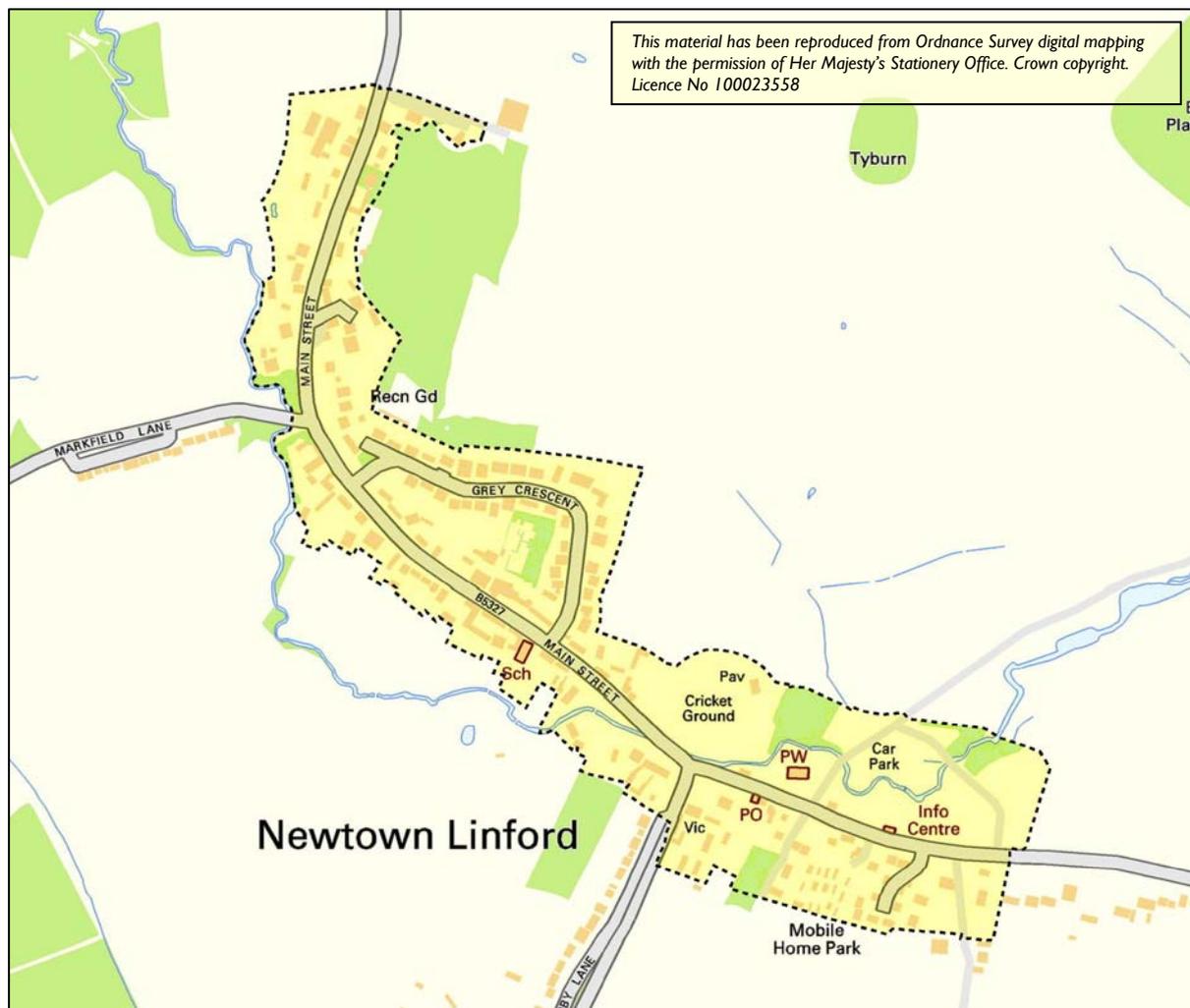


Newtown Linford Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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NEWTOWN LINFORD CONSERVATION AREA



Current map showing the village and the Conservation Area

CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Introduction and Executive Summary

Newtown Linford Conservation Area was designated in April 1972 by Leicestershire County Council. It covers an area of 26 hectares.

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

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

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

- Location and setting describes how the Area relates to the historic village and surrounding area;
- Historic development and archaeology sets out how architecture and archaeology are related to the social and economic growth of the village;
- Spatial analysis describes the historic plan form of the village and how this has changed, the interrelationship of streets and spaces, and identifies key views and landmarks;
- Character analysis identifies the uses, types and layouts of buildings, key listed and unlisted buildings, coherent groups of buildings, distinctive building materials and architectural details, significant green spaces and trees, and detrimental features.

These elements are brought together in a summary of the special interest of the Conservation Area. An assessment of the general condition of the buildings and spaces within the Area is included.

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

Planning Policy Context

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance should be preserved or enhanced. In making decisions on potential development within a conservation area, the Council is required to 'pay attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area'. Permission will not be granted for proposals that are likely to harm the character or appearance of a conservation area. Sections 69 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment says that special attention should be paid when considering proposals for development in a conservation area.

The key principles of PPS9 require that planning policies and decisions not only avoid, mitigate or compensate for harm but also seek ways to enhance, restore and add to biodiversity and geodiversity.

The East Midlands Regional Plan (Regional Spatial Strategy): Proposed Changes, published in July 2008, recommends that strategies should adopt an approach based upon the assessment of natural and cultural assets, the contribution that these make to local character and the impact of these assets to absorb change. *Policy 27: Regional Priorities for the Historic Environment.*

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

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

Other SPG/SPD guidance

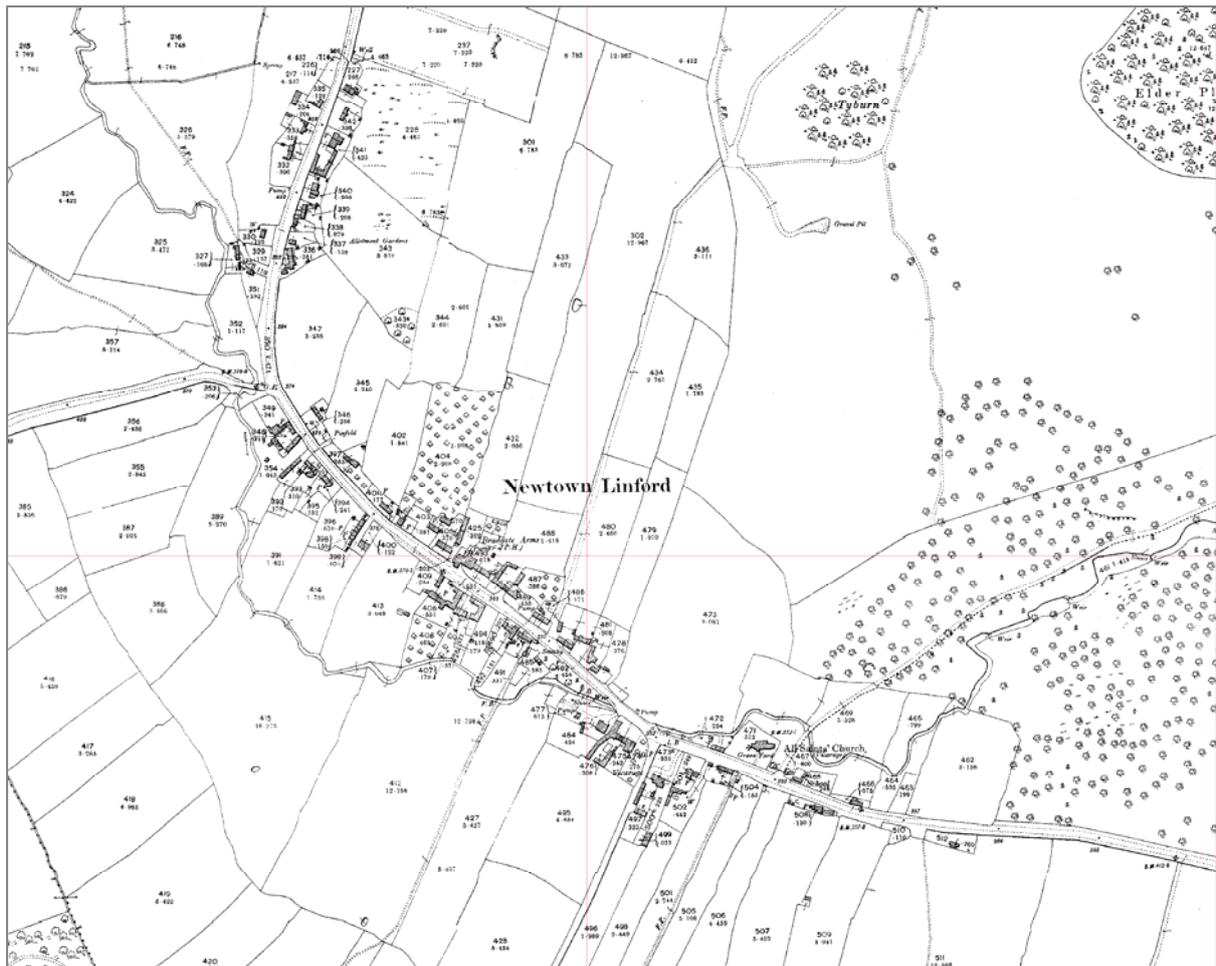
- Backland & Tandem Development
- House Extensions
- Shopfronts & Signs
- Newtown Linford Village Design Statement

ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Location and Setting

Newtown Linford is a linear village in the valley of the river Lin at the edge of Charnwood Forest. It is about 10 Km north-west of Leicester, 12 Km south of Loughborough. The name of the village describes the 'new settlement by the ford where the lime trees grow'. The village is closely associated with Bradgate Park around which the village curls. The Conservation Area encompasses the historical settlement including the development that took place after the Sale of the Estate in 1925 but excluding the development in the latter 20th Century.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT



Map of 1903 showing the village before the development following the Sale of the Estate

Origins and Development

Newtown was colonised from Groby in the 13th century, the first mention of Bradgate being in 1241 as a deer park. The history of the village was very much dependent on the fortunes of the Grey family who owned the park from 1445. All the villagers were tenants of the Greys and the village was a “closed” estate. In 1740 Bradgate House was boarded up and never lived in again. It soon fell into disrepair and a flock of sheep was kept within the 22 acre enclosure around the house and gardens. Nevertheless, the villagers continued to pay rent to the estate.

Over the years there was little development in the village. A map of 1773, the earliest known of the village shows little difference to the Ordnance map of 1883. However, the estate was sold in 1925 which prompted a spurt of development especially in the many open fields bordering the road. Edward Haslegrave, who had been the agent for the estate was keen to maintain the character of the village. Under the Terms of the Sale he was empowered to advise upon the styles, nature and colours of materials and upon the siting of any new buildings. It is largely due to his work that the village of Newtown Linford has maintained such a strong character, since he tried to ensure that the new houses would be built of local stone with local slate or thatch.

In 1928 the Park itself was finally sold to Charles Bennion who presented it to the people of Leicester and Leicestershire for their quiet enjoyment for all time, thus formalising a long tradition of local people walking in the park.

In distinction to other settlements in the area, the industrial revolution does not appear to have had much of an effect; the extent of framework knitting and boot making in the cottages appears to have been small. The economy was more geared to the needs of the Estate and local farming, including vegetable plots, orchards, pigs and chickens for the individual households. Some men in the village were employed by Groby Granite. In

1833, after years of neglect, the 6th Earl of Stamford, owner of the estate, began a programme of repairing and building houses at Newtown.

In the 20th century the village expanded significantly along Groby Lane, Markfield Lane and Bradgate Road but these developments are not within the Conservation Area. The opening up of the park to the public brought large numbers of people to enjoy its peace and beauty. Several restaurants, pubs and cafes opened for business. And though many have closed (and others have opened) the tourist trade forms a significant part of the economy of the village, even if the intrusion of traffic and large numbers of people, especially on sunny weekends, is not always appreciated.

The village has one church, All Saints, which had its origins around the year 1400. Until the extensions of the 19th Century it was a small, simple village church described by John Nichols as "a mean rude structure ... not at all ornamented". The Grey family ensured that non-conformists were not allowed any chapels and equally ensured that there would only be one pub.

A Sunday School was built in 1822 and a new primary school was built in 1907. The village also has a large village hall built by Lindsay Everard in 1930.

Archaeological Interest

The village and Bradgate Park are relatively young. Nevertheless, there are several remaining timber framed cottages and many of the houses which appear to be stone built reveal earlier timber framed origins. Great care should be taken when undertaking new construction work so that relevant information about medieval and later activity is not lost or damaged.

Population

Tax records, such as Poll Tax and Hearth Tax suggest that for the first 500 years the number of households in the settlement was less than 100. The first official population census in 1801 recorded 377 people in Newtown Linford. The population has fluctuated somewhat, doubled to 850 in 1961 and is now about 1000.

SPATIAL ANALYSIS

Plan Form

Newtown Linford is a linear village which follows the course of the river Lin as it comes off Charnwood Forest to flow towards the Soar. The Conservation Area comprises the original settlement of farms and cottages for the people who worked for the Greys. It stretches from the flat area around All Saints church to the foot of Sharpley Hill curling between the river and Bradgate Park.

The village consists essentially of a single street. A map of 1773 shows that the land plots were often long narrow closes at right angles to the street. There are two junctions where roads lead off to Markfield and Groby and the latter has been developed. Grey Crescent is the main exception to the single street forming a loop off Main Street rising up the hillside. Recent developments in the centre of the village have been based on private gated cul-de-sacs. While the gating and private nature may respect the single street, the idea of a cul-de-sac is foreign to the character of the village and the Conservation Area.

Included within the Area are several properties built in the 1930s after the sale of the park, but excluded is the later development along Bradgate Road towards Anstey, and similar later development along Groby Lane.

Townscape

Newtown Linford has a fairly broad open relaxed quality. The entrance to the village from Sharpley Hill is also the beginning of the Conservation Area and it is quite distinct. However, the entrance to the Conservation Area from Anstey along Bradgate Road is blurred by the extensive ribbon development that has taken place in the latter 20th Century and into the present.

Within the Conservation Area, although some houses are built close up to each other, the general effect is of substantial spaces between the houses, between each other and in relation to the street. Thus, the sense of enclosure is marginal and for most of its length the village has an open aspect stretched along the street. In places the street scene is formed by farm buildings, now converted to dwellings, where the outbuildings form a long low edge to the street.

Interrelationship of Spaces

The space around All Saints Church forms the core of the Conservation Area and the commercial and tourist centre of the village. Within this core the relatively few buildings are dispersed with many open spaces around them, creating a strong connection with Bradgate Park both immediately by the roadside and to the hills beyond. The central core is bounded to the west by the crossing of the river, though more visibly by the Groby Lane junction, with the cricket ground at one side which seems to merge directly into the park. To the east the open meadows of the park, bounded by dry stone walls, gradually disperse into the ribbon development along Bradgate Road.

Main Street is a broad loosely enclosed linear space with broad grass verges and some trees. The connection to the park is more limited but there is a stronger connection to the hills on the other side of the river.

At the junction with Markfield Lane the character of Main Street changes as it traverses the fairly steep slope of the hillside. On one side the houses stand high above the road, while on the other the houses are set well below the road. On both sides there is a strong connection with the surrounding hilly, wooded landscape.

Key Views and Vistas

The principal view is of the hills of Bradgate Park, which is seen very well from the cricket ground and also beyond the visitors car park.

The broad linear nature of Main Street allows a developing view of the trees bordering the river as it crosses into the Park. Within the trees nestles the tower and spire of the church.

From the higher end of Main Street there are views across the valley to the hills of the Forest, while opposite, the houses on the hillside are framed by the woods behind and by Sharpley Hill.

The setting of the village in the wooded valley of the Lin means that there are few views of the village from outside. Only occasionally can one see the houses nestling in the landscape.

Landmarks

The only built landmark in the Conservation Area is the tower and recessed spire of All Saints Church.

CHARACTER ANALYSIS

Building Types, Layouts and Uses

Most of the buildings in the Conservation Area are domestic dwellings. In the centre with the church there are the post office and village shop, a restaurant and tearooms and some smaller shops and kiosks. There is also the original Sunday School. The central area also contains some previously commercial land which has been redeveloped to create two new private culs-de-sac, one of bungalows, the other of detached houses, on either side of a mobile home park.

On Main Street, besides the domestic houses, there are The Linford Club and The Bradgate Arms, the Village Hall and the Village Primary School.

Both the domestic dwellings and the non-domestic buildings are of 1 or 2 storeys (No 11-13 Main Street has an attic storey). Mostly they have a simple ridge line parallel to the road and mostly they are set fairly well back from the road with a substantial front garden bounded by a hedge or dry stone wall. Some dwellings have been created out of farmhouses which are often at right angles to the road, with a gable facing the road. Some of them are set back from the road and some are bounded by low outhouses at the edge of the pavement with a covered entrance giving access to the house beyond. Examples are at Nos 34, 36 and 38 Main Street; The Paddocks, No 78 Main Street and No 93 Main Street.

Key Listed Buildings and Structures

The Conservation Area is well endowed with listed buildings, 29 besides the church, the village pump and a K6 telephone kiosk. The listed buildings are spread throughout the Conservation Area. Being the original buildings of the settlement, they make an important and valuable contribution to the historic character which has been amplified by the development of the 1930s and is very well cared for by the residents and much appreciated by the visitors to the village. All Saints Church is the key building.

Key Unlisted Buildings

The Village Hall and the Bradgate Arms, both unlisted, are the dominant buildings in Main Street.

Coherent groups

Nos 7 to 19 Main Street form a very attractive group partly composed around a “courtyard” and partly bounded by the footpath to Woodhouse Eaves.

Building Materials and Architectural Details

Most of the original buildings in the village would probably have been timber framed with thatched roofs, some would have been built of local stone. Gradually, the timber frames have been replaced or built over or around with local Charnwood granite and the thatch replaced with Swithland or other local slate. When many new houses were built after the sale of the Estate in 1925 the new builders were required by Edward Haslegrave, the Agent for the Estate, to use the same existing palette of materials. The character of the Conservation Area derives strongly from this common heritage. It is unfortunate that the craftsmen who were able to use these materials with their own skills and experience are being replaced by builders who rely more on drawings and regulations which tell them what to do.

Walls

The predominant building material visible today is granite from Charnwood Forest. The granite is laid as random rubble due to the great difficulty in dressing the hard stone. It is often combined with a soft red brick to form quoins, eaves and door and window surrounds. Examples are seen at No 7 Main Street; The Bradgate; No 75 Main Street; No 87 Main Street; No 114 Main Street and Lenthill Farm. Sometimes only the lintels are in brick as at No 2 Main Street.

The alternative to granite is the soft red brick, especially when the structure is timber framed. Examples are at No 32 Main Street and No 72 Main Street and both these have panels where the brick is laid herringbone fashion. An example of a red brick house which was timber framed but the frame is no longer visible externally is at No 35 Main Street. Occasionally the walls are rendered or painted. Good examples are at No 534 Bradgate Road; Nos 68 & 70 Main Street and at No 124 Main Street. Examples of timber framed cottages where the infill panels are rendered are at No 64 Main Street and Yew Tree Farm, No 41 Main Street. Unfortunately, there are some houses decorated with mock timber framing which does not necessarily add to the character and may detract from it. Examples are the Village Post Office and Shop, Bradgate Road and No 61 Main Street.

Besides these traditional materials there are signs of fashion such as the use of buff coloured brick as in Grey Crescent and buff brick has been used for the window surrounds in the granite walled row of cottages, Nos 21-25 Main Street. Pebble dashing, slate hanging and timber weatherboarding are also seen but the use of these materials generally erodes the character of the Area and they should be seen as an aberration from the common palette. An inappropriate example is the use of timber shingle hanging at No 33 Main Street. Where timber weatherboarding is used for garages or outhouses the use reflects the less important quality of the structure.

Roofs

The original roofing material in the village was presumably thatch and there are many fine examples still in the Conservation Area. However, more commonly, roofs are made of local or Swithland Slate laid in diminishing courses. The local slate ceased to be quarried in the late 1800's and was superseded by cheaper, lighter Welsh slate. There are some examples of this in the Area but a more common alternative is soft red plain clay tile.

Examples of thatch are at No 7 Main Street, No 28 Main Street, No 35 Main Street, No 64 Main Street and No 75 Main Street. There is thatch also on the relatively new buildings of No 96 and No 98 Main Street. There is a mix of thatch, swithland slate, other slate and tile at No 43 Main Street. The Linford Club is roofed with plain red clay tile. A softer red tile is used at No 86 Main Street - to note are the fine red ridge tiles at 86a Main Street and its adjoining garage. Swithland slate is seen at No 534 Bradgate Road, No 41 Main Street, Nos 68 & 70 Main Street, No 93 Main Street, Lenthill Farm and No 124 Main Street.

Less successful is the use of artificial, re-composed Swithland slate for the new houses and bungalows on Stamford Rise and Bracken Hill.

Chimneys are simple, fairly unadorned stacks in red brick. There are some nicely decorated pots on the Victorian buildings and some chunky stacks of brick and stone.

Doors and Windows

There is an excellent survival of timber windows in many of the properties. They are typically two or three light, six pane (or eight pane) casements - in the older buildings they are flush casements, in the newer they may be storm casements. Occasionally there are Yorkshire horizontal sliding sashes. Windows generally have bowed lintels.

Good examples of the traditional vernacular windows are at No 534 Bradgate Road; No 7 Main Street; Jasmine Cottage, No 15 Main Street; Nos 68 & 70 Main Street; No 87 Main Street; No 114 Main Street; Lenthill Farm and No 124 Main Street.

Many of the thatched roofed houses have dormer windows or eyebrow windows, with the thatch curling around the window frames. Examples are at No 28 Main Street, No 45 Main Street, No 75 Main Street and Nos 96 & 98 Main Street.

The slate roof houses may have small hipped dormer windows. No 2 Main Street has three fine flat roof dormers which complement the symmetry of the façade. No 93 Main Street has a delightful eyebrow dormer window created within the Swithland slate roof. Lenthill Farm has a large vertical dormer at one end of the building.

Doors are, in general, simple, sometimes set in a porch or under a simple canopy of slate. Examples are the charming porch-like canopy on the side of No 19 Main Street; the tiny canopy at No 79 Main Street and the porch next door at No 81 Main Street and the canopy at No 124 Main Street.

The new houses at Johncliffe Close have been built with lead roofed bay windows which are rather too sophisticated for the character of the Conservation Area.

Boundary Features

Because nearly all the buildings in the Conservation Area are sited well back from the road, the boundary features form an important part of the character. The tradition in Newtown Linford is to build medium height dry stone walls of granite field stones. Occasionally the walls are bedded with mortar. An alternative to the walls are substantial hedges of privet or holly. Examples of dry stone walls may be seen at the edge of Bradgate Park beside the picnic meadows near Marions Cottage, the Country Park Shop and Information Centre; at Nos 68 & 70 Main Street; No 59 Main Street and at No 124 Main Street. At No 81 Main Street, the wall is low and topped by a hedge.

Besides the dry stone walls there are a few properties with simple low picket fences at the boundary. Examples are at the Sunday School and No 9 Main Street.

When the traditional dry stone walls, hedges or picket fences are not observed, the effect can be jarring, such as the close boarded fence at the junction of Main Street with Grey Crescent.

Details

The Parish Council has taken great care to make the centre of the village attractive. There are appropriate litter bins and planters in the central area, for instance by the wall along the churchyard. The County Council has addressed the issue of traffic by installing speed humps, narrowing the carriageway in places, and providing a number of parking places for casual use. Local businesses are well aware of the tourism. Eric's Ice Cream kiosk, the Post Office and Village Shop with its display case created out of a porch are small details which add to the value of the Conservation Area. At the entrance to the Park is a fine blue Police Box. Signs and notices are appropriate.

On Main Street there are the village pump and a red K6 Telephone kiosk, both listed Grade II. The verge by the Primary School is graced by a trio of birch trees.

An important detail is the use of small granite kerbstones along the roads.

Grey Crescent

Grey Crescent is included in the Conservation Area. It is an example of development, based on national guidance in the 1950s. The houses were designed by John Nixon, an architect resident in the village. It is in two distinct parts.

Nos 1-27 and 2-24 is composed of individual bungalows and detached houses set in open gardens with shrubs, pine, birch and cherry trees and without boundary features. The buildings use a common palette of Charnwood Forest granite with buff coloured brick, partly rendered and painted white, with Swithland slate roofs. Sadly, all the original timber windows have been replaced with a motley variety of uPVC and other double glazed windows.

Nos 26-36 and 29-47 is a more enclosed street of terraces of semi-detached houses set behind privet hedges on low rendered walls. The houses are all of buff brick with tile roofs. The original timber windows have all been replaced with various uPVC.

Bradgate Park

Part of Bradgate Park is included in the Conservation Area, namely the car park and some grassed areas bordering the river. The asphalt parking area is unregimented and has a relaxed quality, incorporating several grassed areas which are protected by short oak posts. The signage is adequate and restrained and there is no white paint marking out the parking bays.

Parks, Gardens and Trees

Newtown Linford Conservation Area is well endowed with trees and is set within the pleasantly wooded landscape of Charnwood Forest and Bradgate Park. All along the banks of the river Lin there are trees, especially alders. There are fine groups of trees at the junctions of both Groby Lane and Markfield Lane and these make a soft transition between the different characters of the two sections of Main Street and of Bradgate Road.

The principal open green space in the village is undoubtedly Bradgate Park which, however, is mostly beyond the Conservation Area and is designated as a Historic Country Park in its own right. Within the Area the most important space is the Cricket Ground, a well cared for and beautiful green space beside the road and the river.

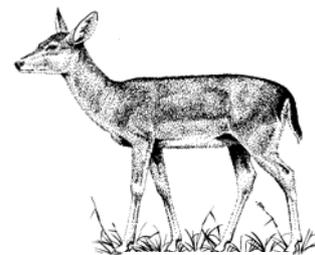
The whole of the linear village has an open and green character: there are grass verges for much of the length, many boundary features are privet or holly hedges, there are many trees in the gardens, the gardens themselves, especially where they are uphill enhance the green feeling. In places the gardens have been left open without a hedge or wall. Particularly this is seen at No 86 Main Street where there is a broad sweep of grass and individual trees going down to the river.

In the centre of the village the churchyard is a place of quiet, containing many tall Swithland slate gravestones. The entrance to Bradgate Park is particularly attractive with several pieces of open grass land beside the river which is bounded by tall alder trees. Less attractive are the cypress trees in this parkland setting.

On either side of Marions Cottage (now the Country Park Shop) there are grass paddocks.

Biodiversity & Geodiversity

The Conservation Area abuts Bradgate Park & Cropston Reservoir Site of Special Scientific Interest¹. Bradgate Park is one of the finest remaining examples of ancient parkland managed as a deer park in Leicestershire. It contains some of the last remaining fragments of wet heathland and dry acidic grassland in the County. Several nationally important geological features are located in the Park with rocky outcrops supporting rich lichen communities. The southern part of the Park is dominated by bracken



Fallow deer

¹ Sites of Special Scientific Interest are statutorily protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. Further information can be found on Natural England's website at <http://www.english-nature.org.uk/Special/sssi/>.

Pteridium aquilinum, whilst copses of ancient oak trees *Quercus spp* support a range of invertebrates including some nationally rare species.

A number of Local Wildlife Sites, which have been notified for their grassland plant communities and mature trees, are adjacent or in close proximity to the Conservation Area. Local Wildlife Sites are non-statutory sites of ecological interest and often the best examples of important habitats which sustain species of conservation



Lady's bedstraw

importance. Grassland species include plants which have markedly declined in the countryside at large, such as betony *Stachys sylvatica*, lady's bedstraw *Galium verum*, devil's-bit scabious *Succisa pratensis*, pignut *Conopodium majus*, lady's mantle *Alchemilla sp*, sneezewort *Achillea ptarmica*, pepper saxifrage *Silaum silaus* and yellow rattle *Rhinanthus minor*. Mature trees, often found within field hedgerow boundaries are predominantly pedunculate oaks *Quercus robur*.

The River Lin is one of the highest quality watercourses in Charnwood Forest. Upstream of the Conservation Area, the river has been notified as a Local Wildlife Site, and it is highly likely that the section of river flowing through the Conservation Area also meets the requirements for LWS designation. The river has a gravel substrate and riffle and pool systems. Wet-loving mature alder *Alnus glutinosa* trees fringe the banks of the watercourse.

The River Lin is known to support a population of white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*,⁽¹⁾ the only crayfish native to Britain. Other species of note found within the Conservation Area are bats such as the common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* ⁽²⁾ and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* ⁽²⁾. There are plenty of high quality habitats in close proximity to the Conservation Area for bats to forage and commute, whilst a number of dwellings within the Conservation Area are used as bat roosts. The Conservation Area also holds populations of slow worm *Anguis fragilis* ⁽¹⁾ and adder *Vipera berus* ⁽¹⁾. These species reflect the location of Newtown Linford within the heart of Charnwood Forest and the proximity of the Conservation Area to Bradgate Park. Badgers *Meles meles* ⁽³⁾ also make use of the extensive foraging grounds adjacent to the Conservation Area.



Alder

The Conservation Area comprises excellent links with the extensive local biodiversity network in the immediate countryside, which is particularly noteworthy for its rich biodiversity and geodiversity.

Detrimental Features

The central area is gradually losing some of its commercial emphasis as it becomes replaced with housing. A small area of hard standing remains at the front of No 532 Bradgate Road. The use of high railings to denote the privacy of the new cul-de-sac of Stamford Rise does not respect the traditional use of dry stone walling and hedges and thus detracts from the historic character.

Of concern to the village is the traffic, much of it brought in by the visitors to Bradgate Park. The roads are broad and easy so that traffic is tempted to go faster than is appropriate. Much of this concern has been addressed by the creation of pinch points and speed humps but there may be opportunities to further reduce traffic speed by creating a much stronger definition of the entrances to the Conservation Area both at the foot of Sharpley Hill and where Bradgate Road meets the exit to Bradgate Park. Car parking is also of concern to the residents, especially as one gets closer to the entrance to the Park.

1 These species are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are also listed as Section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 species of principal importance. The white-clawed crayfish is also a priority species in the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan.

2 All bat species and their roosts are legally protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. Advice must be sought from Natural England for any work which may affect bats and their roosts. See www.naturalengland.org.uk/conservation/wildlife-management-licensing/default.htm for Further information. Most bats are also listed as Section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 species of principal importance. All bat species are also priority species in the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan.

3 Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Further information can be found on Natural England's website at www.naturalengland.org.uk/conservation/wildlife-management-licensing/default.htm.

Line drawings by courtesy of Natural England

DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST

- The connection to the landscape of Charnwood Forest;
- The historic, physical and economic association with Bradgate Park and the Grey family;
- Common use of a limited palette of materials: Charnwood Forest granite, soft red brick, Swithland slate and thatch, six pane casement windows;
- Dry stone boundary walls and hedges or simple picket fences;
- The open nature of the linear village: grass verges, boundary features, front gardens with trees, substantial spaces between houses;
- The setting beside the river Lin, with many trees, especially alders;
- The commercial centre for visitors with many traditional reminders such as Eric's Ice Cream Kiosk, the Post Office and the blue Police Box.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

General Principles

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

Within the Conservation Area, where the quality of the general environment is already considered to be high, the Council will insist on good quality schemes which respond positively to their historic setting, this extends to small buildings such as garages and even boundary walls and fences. Minor alterations need to be carefully considered as incremental change can have a significant detrimental effect on the character of an area over a period of time.

Central government guidance contained in PPS1 and PPG 15, Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, Leading in Design and other SPD, and Village Design Statements will be used to assess the quality of proposal for new development.

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

1. The Conservation Area has a distinct "grain" or pattern of built form and spaces which are part of its historic development. This gives the Conservation Area great individuality, characterised by the pattern of historic buildings, ancient footpaths and highways and clearly defined boundaries. This "grain" is an important part of the character of the Conservation Area and will be protected.
2. The emphasis for new proposals will be on high quality of design. There may be opportunity for innovative modern design. However a dramatic contemporary statement is unlikely to be appropriate. Good modern design can be used to create positive changes in historic settlements.
3. Scale is the combination of a building's height and bulk when related to its surroundings. Proposed new development must take into account the scale of the existing buildings, and must not dominate or overwhelm them.
4. Alterations and extensions must respect the form of the original building and its locality. The use of high quality materials and detailing, whether modern or traditional is essential. Roof lines, roof shape, eaves details, verge details and the creation of new chimneys are important considerations.
5. Windows and doors of a traditional design respect the historic nature of the buildings to which they belong and make a very important contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The use of upvc and standardised high speed joinery techniques nearly always leads to unsuitably detailed windows which will be generally unacceptable in the conservation area. In most cases the building regulation requirements can be met without the need to use clumsy and awkwardly detailed windows.

6. The appraisal has identified the types of materials that characterise the Conservation Area and where possible this should be used to help alterations respect that established character.
7. Applicants for planning permission must provide a meaningful “Design & Access Statement”, to explain the design decisions that have been made and to show how proposed alterations relate to their context. A detailed analysis of the locality should demonstrate that there is a full appreciation of the local streetscape and how it has developed, including prevailing building forms, materials and plot ratios.

Procedures to Ensure Consistent Decision-Making

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

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

Enforcement Strategy

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

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

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

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

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

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

Article 4 Direction

The quality of a conservation area is often threatened by the cumulative impact of numerous small changes to many buildings. Terraces that once displayed integrity of design through the use of matching features such as doors, window, chimneys and porches, have been unbalanced by various alterations and additions. On the whole such changes do not require planning permission.

In order to preserve and enhance the character of conservation areas, many planning authorities use Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights on groups of buildings or areas. Restrictions normally relate to particular elements such as replacement windows and doors, or roofing.

General Condition

Newtown Linford Conservation Area is in good condition. The Parish Council and local residents are clearly proud of their village. But, within the new developments, infills, extensions and refurbishments or improvements, there is a tendency to become over-sophisticated for the historic and vernacular character of the Conservation Area. New houses are larger than is traditional, a small cottage may be overwhelmed by extensions, features such as doors and windows may be over-sized, building shapes may be more complex than the traditional simple rectangular forms, materials may be more suited to a suburban area. The

undoubted appeal of the traditional historic village is slowly being eroded and needs to be balanced against the desires of 21st Century affluent living.

The village also attracts large numbers of visitors to Bradgate Park. Many residents may resent the intrusion but they also recognise that these same visitors inspire good maintenance. The commercial centre of the village is relatively healthy.

The village has recently published a Village Design Statement which has been adopted by the Council. This document together with this Character Appraisal should help developers and residents to maintain the character of Newtown Linford.

Especially important is to maintain the tradition, established in medieval times and reinforced after the Sale of the Estate in 1925 of using a limited palette of materials: local Charnwood Granite, soft red brick, thatch or local Swithland slate, with multi-pane timber casement windows. In view of the increasingly restricted supply of local slate consideration may be given to artificial Swithland slate but this is not always as successful as might be wished. The development of the tradition may be better served by using another natural material.

It is equally important to maintain the tradition of dry stone walling of granite field stones for the boundary walls, and not to confuse it, for instance, with the dry slate walling in other nearby villages.

Buildings at Risk

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

The thatch roof of Jasmine Cottage, which is attached to the Old Blacksmiths Shop, is of great concern. From the outside it seems that damp is likely to be affecting the interior of this lovely old cottage which is listed Grade II.

Review of the Conservation Area Boundary

The present boundaries of the existing Conservation Area incorporate the principal areas of special historic and architectural interest within the village. The appraisal has not identified any need to change the boundary. Suggestions have been made that Groby Lane and part of Bradgate Hill be included but initial inspection shows that while these areas undoubtedly have a character it is considered that they do not warrant conservation area status.

Possible Buildings for Spot Listing

In carrying out the Appraisal none of the buildings within the Conservation Area were identified for spot listing, i.e. considered for inclusion on the list of statutory listed buildings.

Enhancement Opportunities

The appraisal has identified the entrances to the Conservation Area at the foot of Sharpley Hill and where Bradgate Road meets the exit from Bradgate Park as places where a stronger definition of the entrance could help to alter the traffic behaviour along these well used roads.

Proposals for Economic Development and Regeneration

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

Management and Protection of Biodiversity

The management of SSSI should adhere to the site's citation which lists potentially damaging operations that can only be carried out with Natural England's prior consent. Threatened species and habitats which are not protected through designated sites can be protected by wildlife legislation. Where protected species may be present, appropriate surveys and assessments should be carried out to ensure that development or management proposals will not have a detrimental effect.

The Local Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the Borough Council's priorities for conservation of a variety of habitats and species within Charnwood and details the actions required to bring about a reversal in their

decline. Not only should habitats and species of principal importance be retained and protected, but opportunities maximised to restore or enhance such habitats and populations.

Monitoring Change

It is planned to review the conservation area character appraisal and its management plan every five years, although the management plan may under certain circumstances need to be reviewed over a shorter time period. A photographic record of the Conservation Area has been made and will be used to help identify the need to review how changes within the Conservation Area are managed. A greater degree of protection will be accomplished if the local community help monitor any changes.

Consideration of Resources

This management plan sets out the commitment of the Borough Council to protecting the character and appearance of Charnwood’s conservation areas and how it will use its resources to achieve these aims.

Summary of Issues and Proposed Actions

Conservation Area Issue	Proposed Action	Lead Partner	Other Partners
Buildings at Risk	Encourage and advise on appropriate repair.	CBC	
Entry to Conservation Area at eastern end.	Consider an appropriate “gateway” feature.	CBC	Leics CC, Newtown Linford PC

Developing Management Proposals

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

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

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

Community Involvement

This document was made available as a draft via the website prior to submission to Cabinet for adoption. A public meeting was held in Newtown Linford so that local residents could contribute their ideas for enhancement and preservation of the Conservation Area. All comments and responses have been considered and appropriate amendments made to the document prior to submission to Cabinet.

Advice and Guidance

The Borough Council Development Department can advise on the need for Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent and can provide guidance on matters such as appropriate methods of maintenance/repairs, changes to shopfronts, alterations and extensions and suitable materials.

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Development Control
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Tel. 01509 634722
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Bibliography

Joan Stevenson, Newtown Linford - The Old Buildings and their Occupants, Kairos Press, 1998

Internet Resources

www.leicestershirevillages.com/newtownlinford/timeline1221to2000.html (accessed 21 November 2008)

<http://newtownlinford.leicestershireparishcouncils.org/24326.html> (accessed 21 November 2008)

www.online.church123.com/bradgateteam/allsaintschurchhistory.htm (accessed 21 November 2008)

www.leicestershirevillages.com/newtownlinford/shopsandrestaurants.html (accessed 21 November 2008)

Statutory Listed Buildings within Newtown Linford Conservation Area

All Grade II Listed except All Saints Church which is Grade II*.

Church of All Saints, Bradgate Road
Marions Cottage, 501 Bradgate Road
Old Sunday School, Bradgate Road
Rose Cottage, 534 Bradgate Road
The Vicarage, Bradgate Road
552 Bradgate Road
Vine Cottage, 9 Main Street
Thatched Roofs, 45 Main Street
51 Main Street
57-59 Main Street
Lilac Cottage, 81 Main Street
87 Main Street
68-70 Main Street
60 & 64 Main Street
Gable Cottage, 32 Main Street
Village Pump between 8 & 10 Main Street
41 Main Street
124 Main Street
92-94 Main Street
78 Main Street
72 Main Street
K6 Telephone Kiosk, Main Street
31 Main Street
75 & 79 Main Street
11-13 Main Street
Lenthill Farmhouse, 95 Main Street
28-30 Main Street
114 Main Street
36 Main Street
15 Main Street & Shop
43 Main Street
2 Main Street