

# South Croxton

## Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Adopted November 2005

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## INTRODUCTION

South Croxton is a small rural village within the Borough of Charnwood. It is referred to by Mee 1966 as “ ... standing pleasantly on a hillside road”. It is crowned by a fine church.



The Conservation Area was designated in September 1975 and it covers an area of about 15.4 ha (38.1 acres). The Area extends the length of the village, between North Manor Farm and St John the Baptist's Church at the upper end of the village and South Manor Farm and The Grange at the lower end. In between, the land falls dramatically from the ridgeline at the northern end of the village to the Queniborough Brook at the southern end. The Conservation Area includes a broad range of built development, with more recent development of the late twentieth century interspersed between the surviving buildings from the end of the nineteenth century.

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

### Planning Policy Context

The protection of Conservation Areas is enshrined in national, regional and local planning policy.

A conservation area is defined as ‘*an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*’ (Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). In making decisions on future development within a conservation area, the Council is expected to ‘*pay attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area*’ (Section 72 of the Act). This should ensure that change that harms the Conservation Area is not allowed.

Planning Policy Guidance note 15: *Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG15) notes the requirement that special attention should be paid to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. The conservation area's special interest and its character and appearance should be reflected in the assessment of the area and is a factor which is taken into account in considering appeals against refusals of planning permission and of conservation area consent for demolition.

The **Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands (RSS)** (published March 2005) advises local authorities to develop strategies that avoid damage to the region's cultural assets (which by definition includes conservation areas) (**Policy 27: Protecting and Enhancing The Region's Natural and Cultural Assets**).

The Leicestershire Structure Plan 1991 - 2006 (approved 1994) seeks to identify, protect, preserve and enhance areas, sites, buildings and settings of historic or architectural interest or archaeological importance and to ensure that development within conservation areas preserves or enhances the character and/or appearance of the area. **(Environment Policy 2: Sites and Buildings of Historic Architectural and Archaeological Interest).** This is repeated in the proposed to be adopted Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1996 to 2016 (published December 2004) **(Environment Policy 1: Historic Environment).**

The adopted Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 1991 – 2006 (adopted January 2004) seeks to ensure that new development in conservation areas preserves or enhances the character and/or appearance of the area **(Policy EV/10).**

This appraisal has been prepared in the light of these policies to aid better understanding the conservation area and to inform the consideration of development proposals within the Conservation Area.

## LOCATION AND SETTING

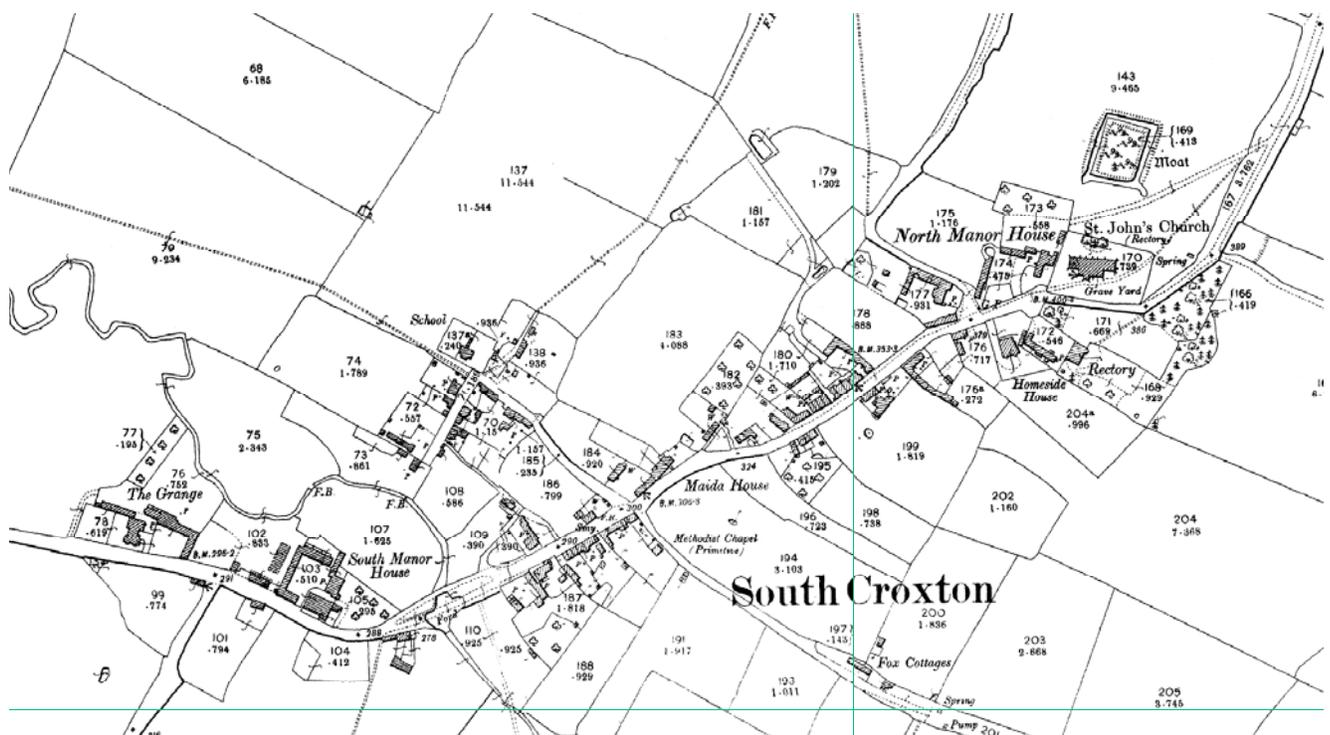
### Location and Population

South Croxton is a small rural village, located about 10 miles south east of Loughborough within the Queniborough ward.

The population of South Croxton has varied over time. The parish profile published by Leicestershire County Council shows there that were 234 people residing in the parish of South Croxton at the time of the 2001 Census. The various census returns recorded in the Victoria County History of Leicestershire (Reynolds, 1955) show that between 1801 and 1851 the population rose rapidly from 221 people in 1801 to 324 in 1851 (the highest population over the period) before falling to 222 in 1901 and then to 153 by 1951 (the lowest population). Since then, new development in the village has seen the population rise to its present level.

### General Character and Plan Form

The historical and physical development of South Croxton has been strongly influenced by the local topography and its relative isolation. It lies outside of the principal corridors established along the Soar and Wreake valleys and to the south of the main ridgeway route running east out of Queniborough towards the uplands of High Leicestershire.



The 1886 Ordnance Survey (OS) plan shows a small settlement made up of several clusters of development strung out along Main Street. The highest part of the village, clustered around the junction between Main Street and Three Turns Lane, was dominated by St John's Church and North Manor Farm. Moving down the hill, there was a small cluster cottages on either side of Main Street, with a further group on the southern side of the junction of Main Street with King's Lane and School Lane. The final group lay on the southern side of the Queniborough Brook around South Manor Farm and The Grange. In addition to this linear pattern, there was a further cluster of cottages off the Main Street at the end of what is now School Lane.

This pattern of development, flowing down the hillside, has given South Croxton a distinctive linear form, broken in places by the intrusion of the open fields into the settlement, such as to the north of Kings Lane and in the valley bottom.

*Within the historic core, most of the principal surviving domestic buildings date from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and, since the end of the nineteenth century, this core of buildings has survived reasonably well, with very few losses as a result of demolition. The most significant change has been the extent of the infill development from the late twentieth century, much of which has not respected the prevailing built form or materials of the older buildings.*

### **Landscape Setting**

South Croxton is situated on the edge of the Leicestershire uplands, an area to the east of the Soar Valley that rises to over 175 metres (600 feet), which is drained by a number of small streams. South Croxton is situated on the south-facing slope of the valley of one such stream, the Queniborough Brook. St John's Church stands on the 120 metre (400 feet) contour, the highest point in the village, from where the land falls steeply into the valley of the Queniborough Brook at 85 metres (278 feet spot height).

As a result of this localised topography, South Croxton is screened from views from the north but appears as a prominent and distinctly linear settlement when viewed on the approach from the south from Beeby. The topography also provides extensive panoramic views over the village to the open countryside beyond, particularly to the south and east across the valley of the Queniborough Brook.



## **ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

### **Archaeological Significance and Potential of the Area**

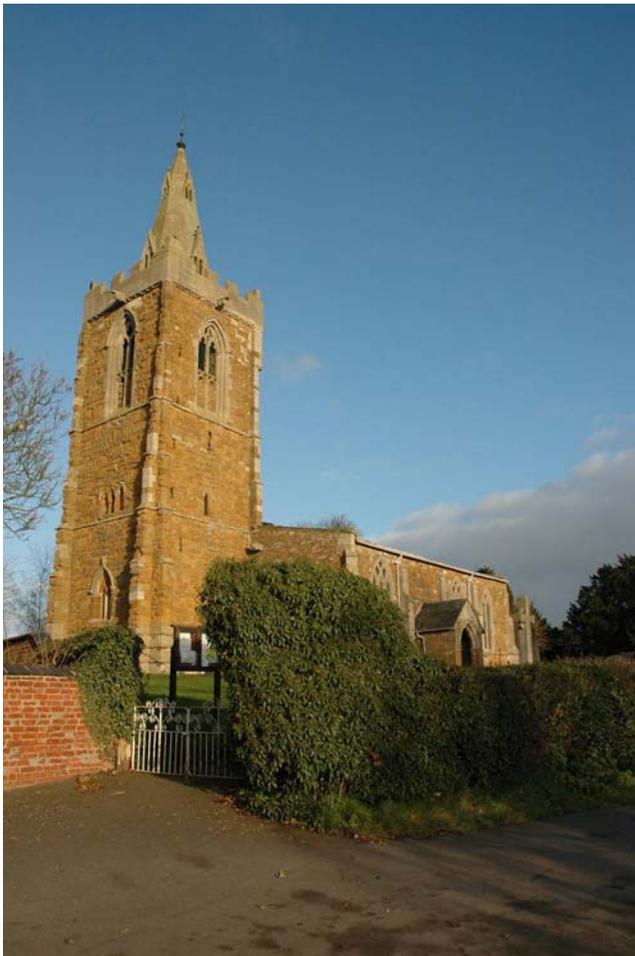
The moated site to the north of the Church once formed part of the medieval manorial enclosures and gardens (Liddle, 1982) and this has been designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The area surrounding the moat is the site of the only Saxon occupation finds in the county. 'Only South Croxton has produced evidence from well conducted excavations of settlement of the period' (Liddle 1982).

In addition to this feature, there is archaeological interest within the fields surrounding the Conservation Area, where there is evidence of medieval ridge and furrow field patterns which have been identified in the fields to the north of the moated site (Liddle, 1982) and more ridge and furrows can be seen in the field to the north of The Grange (field no. 5033).

### **Origins and Development**

South Croxton has its origins as a Saxon settlement predating the Norman Conquest. The Domesday Survey of 1086 refers to the settlement of Crochestone as a small manorial holding to the Bishop of Lincoln with a second settlement to the Honour of Belvoir (Pearce & Mellor, 1986). Sudcroxtun is then referred to in the Coroner's Rolls of 1212 (Leicester Advertiser, 1957).

A church is first mentioned in South Croxton in a Croxton Abbey Charter of about 1190-1205 (Pearce & Mellor, 1986), although the present church of St John the Baptist, which is the oldest standing building in the village, dates from the fourteenth century. The siting of the Church at the highest point in the village ensures that it is a focal point for views from several directions. These views of the church are important and principal views should be fully protected. Glimpsed views of the church need to be protected from other public areas. Consideration should be given in new development to framing views of the church.



The village has historically been split between two manors, the Upper End and the Nether End, located on opposite sides of the Queniborough Brook. The influence of this division continued from medieval times through to the eighteenth century, when the enclosure of the open fields took place at two separate times. Prior to enclosure, farming was organised by an open fields system, rotating the crops between three fields, the Upper field, Middle (east) field and Nether (west) field. The evidence of the medieval ridge and furrows still survive in the fields around South Croxton. These fields were enclosed in the eighteenth century, first in the Nether (Lower) Lordship where 611 acres were enclosed in 1757, followed by the Upper Lordship, where 111 acres were enclosed in 1794 (Leicester Advertiser, 1957).

Evidence would suggest that the land, which has underlying boulder clay, was used principally for grazing. The crop returns for 1801 show that out of 700 acres in South Croxton, 326 acres were used for arable farming (Hoskins, 1948). The nineteenth century trade directories provide further evidence of the village's agricultural economy. The principal occupations in South Croxton are listed as farmers and graziers and the entry in the 1908 Kelly's Directory notes that the land is chiefly used for grazing.

By the end of the eighteenth century, framework knitting had also been introduced into the village to supplement the agricultural economy, although this appears to have been a relatively short lived economic activity. Framework knitting developed from the eighteenth century in the rural centres along the Soar and Wreake valleys before moving out into the surrounding, outlying villages. It is recorded in South Croxton at the turn of the nineteenth century and by 1844, there were 35 frames in the village (Parker, 1955). However this activity declined in the second half of the nineteenth century as the hosiery business moved into factories in Leicester and the main rural centres in the Soar and Wreake valleys where transport was easier. This period of economic activity in South Croxton is reflected in the growth of population in the first half of the nineteenth century and its subsequent fall in the second half. However there is no obvious evidence of this cottage industry in the standing buildings in the village.

South Croxton continues to have an agricultural economy but its importance is much reduced. At the 2001 Census, 70% of the local population were employed in service industries and commuting into the surrounding towns for employment, travelling on average some 18 km to work.

## **CHARACTER ANALYSIS**

### **Architectural and Historic Qualities**

The surviving historic buildings now provide a broad uniformity in the style and appearance that gives South Croxton a distinctive grain, scale and appearance.

The early OS Plan of 1886 shows that the predominant form of housing within South Croxton was relatively small cottages, sitting in small plots and located either on the back edge of the pavement or slightly back from it, with their long frontage parallel to the road. The surviving buildings show that the majority of these cottages were two storeys and built in a vernacular style but usually with an ordered arrangement of window and door in the main street façade. This form of development provides a sense of enclosure and a relatively intimate human scale compared with the open space of the surrounding countryside.

The design and appearance of many of these houses has been influenced by the fall in levels across the individual plots. This is expressed externally by a continuous ridge line but with an exposed raised plinth at the lower end of each building and steps leading to the main entrance door.

There are also examples of more distinguished houses from the late Georgian and early Victorian periods. These are detached properties, built in a more polite style and standing in their own grounds.

These domestic buildings were built using similar materials, typically red brick with slate roofs with timber windows, either casements or sliding sash, with timber panel doors.

### **Listed Buildings in South Croxton**

There are four listed buildings in South Croxton and all are included within the Conservation Area.

The most important listed building is the Church of St John the Baptist, which is listed Grade II\*. This is a medieval Church dating back to the fourteenth century and it is built in the local Ironstone in both Early and Late Decorated style. The Church, which is built on an east-west alignment, consists of a chancel at its eastern end, a nave with a southern aisle and porch and a west tower with a spire.

To the south of the Church is North Manor Farm, listed Grade II. This house dates from the seventeenth century and is built in red brick with Swithland slate roofs. There is also evidence of earlier timber framing, such as in the gable overlooking the Church, and a stone plinth, indicating that this likely to be a medieval timber framed building that has subsequently been refaced and extended.

To the south of North Manor Farm, at the junction of Three Turns Lane with Main Street, lies Hill Top Farm, listed Grade II. This is a two storey brick farmhouse built in red brick with a Welsh slate roof.

At the opposite end of the village on Syston Road is South Manor Farm, listed Grade II. This is a double pile house, with a two story front section to the main road and a three storey section attached to the rear. It is built

in red brick, and roofed in Welsh slate. The front building has a rubble plinth suggesting that it may have originally been a timber frame building.

Attached to the South Manor Farm is an attractive group of farm buildings, with a brick threshing barn on the road frontage and a range of single storey, animal stables and byres to the rear arranged around a cobbled yard.

### **Key Unlisted Buildings in South Croxton**

Government policy as set out in PPG15 states that there should be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Within South Croxton a considerable number of buildings have survived relatively unchanged over the last hundred years, these buildings now form a spine through the village that effectively define and make a positive contribution to its character and appearance.

To the south of the church are two large detached properties built on relatively flat land to the east side of Main Street. These differ from the typical vernacular cottages of the village in that they are built in a polite architectural style of the early nineteenth century. The former Rectory (no. 21 Main Street) is a large, early Victorian house that stands in its own mature grounds and is built of red brick with a steeply pitched slate roof. To the south of it stands Homeside House (no. 23 Main Street). This is built in a Regency style, finished in white render with shallow pitched slate roof and delicate multi-pane sliding sash windows.

These together with the Church and North Manor Farm, form an open area at the top of the village that contrasts with the form of development elsewhere on Main Street. From this upper plateau, Main Street falls steeply down the hillside and this change in levels is reflected in many of the properties that front Main Street. Although the views into and through the village are restricted by the sinuous nature of Main Street and the buildings at the back edge of the pavement, that define the linear form of development that characterises South Croxton.



The descent down the hill is defined by the pair of cottages that stand either side of Main Street at its junction with Three Turns Lane. The most prominent is no. 4 Main Street which has an exposed gable end onto the junction. This appears to have been originally a farm building attached to Hill Top Farm but has now been converted into a dwellinghouse. It is built in red brick and is typical of the properties along Main Street in that it is built as a single unit across the

slope of the land with a continuous ridge line and an exposed plinth at the lowest end of the building. On the opposite (east) side is no. 27 Main Street, the Old Stables. This building has a continuous roof line and an exposed plinth at its lower end but it has undergone a number of alterations, such as replacement windows and the painting of its brickwork. However it is part of the original form of development and serves to enclose the street scene.

To the rear of the Old Stables is a small development of new houses that are set back from road frontage. Whilst these houses do not intrude into the Conservation Area, their steep roofs and gables add visual interest to the street scene, although views across the open countryside have been lost.

Moving down the slope, the neighbouring property is Woodbine Cottage. This is built at back edge of the verge in red brick with three light casements windows. This again has a continuous ridge line along the length of the building. Although the alignment of the windows changes in the lower bay, which appears to be a later addition, suggesting a break in the internal floor levels as the building adapts to the slope. Woodbine Cottage also has an attractive timber door surround with a timber hood supported by brackets.

On the opposite side of Main Street is a small development of modern detached houses (nos. 24 – 30 Main Street). Whilst their scale is larger than the neighbouring traditional development, their plan form has had regard to the traditional layout of the village in a more sympathetic way than many of the other twentieth century developments. This small development is built close to the roadside and the long street elevation is broken up by a series of gables, as it adjusts to the change in levels across the site, reflecting the more traditional buildings immediately to the north.

Beyond Woodbine Cottage is no. 39 Main Street (the Old Malt Shovel Cottage), a two storey cottage, built at the back of the verge. Again the ridge line is continued across the length of the building and there is an exposed plinth at the lower end with a short flight of steps leading to the front door.



On the west side of the street, the relatively tight knit linear form of development is continued by nos. 36 (Gothic Farm) and 38 Main Street (Rivendell). Gothic Farm has a distinct appearance in that it has elements of a Gothic style blended into the vernacular style. It is built at the back edge of the pavement and retains the street's linear form but in design it has a steeply pitched roof (now re-roofed in concrete tiles) between a pair of raised gables and unusual (for South Croxton) features such as gablets over the first floor windows, a decorative string course in contrasting blue and cream bricks above the ground floor windows and a steeply pitched porch, supported on timber brackets, over the main entrance door, which itself is a very fine timber panel door. This Gothic style contrasts with the simpler vernacular of the other historic buildings.

Adjoining Gothic Farm, the building style reverts back to the typical vernacular. No. 38 Main Street (Rivendell) is a two storey property with a continuous roof line across the length of the building but with a noticeable break in the brick plinth on either side of the central door as the building steps down the hill. There are also steps leading to the front door and the windows on either side of it are at different levels, suggesting an internal change in floor levels.

Beyond is a row of four terraced properties (nos. 40 – 46 Main Street) that are built up to the back edge of the footpath. Whilst there is a continuous ridge line across the terrace, the upper cottage, no. 40, is built at a slightly higher level than the other three. This is reflected in the different alignment of the windows between it and its immediate neighbour. The three remaining cottages appear to retain the same floor levels, so that the cottages at the lower end have steps to the front door to compensate for the slope across the site.

The next group of traditional properties that maintain the strong linear form lie on the east side on Main Street to the south side of its junction with Kings Lane. Immediately to the south of the junction is the Golden Fleece public house (no. 77 Main Street). The 1886 OS plans indicate a public house in this location, although from the evidence of the number and arrangement of doors and windows in the front elevation and the physical break in the roof line between the upper and lower bays, it would appear that this was originally a terrace of properties that have now been combined into a single unit.

To the south of the Golden Fleece is a pair of properties (nos. 81 and 85 Main Street) that have been much altered. However they are built at the back edge of the footpath and maintain the linear form along this part of Main Street. Both properties also have an exposed plinth and steps leading to the front door.

Beyond this group and set slightly back from the road behind a shallow front garden, that is enclosed by attractive iron railings, is no. 91 Main Street. This is a two storey cottage with rough, painted brick work, sitting on a deep



Ironstone and brick plinth, that perhaps indicates that this was an earlier timber framed cottage. The property also has distinctive three-light horizontal sliding sash windows and a shaped (convex) brick eaves detail.

On the opposite side is no. 82 Main Street. This is an example of a more polite style of house. This is built in red brick, and stands close to the back edge of the footpath and it has vertical sliding sash windows with stuccoed lintels. However the entrance has obviously been altered,

a boot scraper survives to the side of the door but the pedimented door frame is clearly a later addition since it sits uncomfortably over the original lintel.

At the southern end of the village, fronting Syston Road, which is a continuation of Main Street south of the Queniborough Brook, is The Grange and Millbank Barn. Millbank Barn is a recent conversion of a large threshing barn that stands back from the road with an attractive and original cobbled courtyard to the front.

The Grange is a Victorian farmhouse in red brick with a steep Swithland slate roof and attractive canted bay windows on the main elevation to Syston Road. Whilst these windows have been replaced, there is an attractive surviving sash window with margin panes on the side elevation.

The Conservation Area also spreads out along School Street. Whilst this is predominantly made up of modern houses there is a small group of historic houses at its eastern end. These originally formed a separate settlement, named West Thorpe, that was separated from the main village by open land. This historic separation has now been lost as a result of the new ribbon development along School Street.

At the head of the street is no. 32 School Street (Brook Cottage), a detached house in a traditional style but with modern upvc windows in a relatively sympathetic vernacular style. To the north lies the charming, late Victorian, Village Hall, which was originally the village Board School erected in 1884. This is a one room building with a projecting entrance lobby flanked by flat roof toilets and built in red brick with a slate roof.

To the south is no. 35 School Street. This is built in a polite architectural style with small pane, sliding sash windows with gauged brick arches. The main door is centrally placed and there is a timber panelled door with a timber surround.

At the southern end of the street is no. 42 School Street, a detached building in its own grounds. This is externally rendered with a steep pitched slate roof sitting on an exposed timber frame. The building also has a distinctive stone plinth, typical of timber framed buildings.

### **Prevalent and Traditional Building Materials**

The principal building material in the Conservation Area is red brick, which is used for most of the domestic buildings, surviving farm buildings and boundary walls. This provides a uniformity of building materials and appearance throughout the village. In some cases the brickwork has been painted, such as no. 91 Main Street where it appears to disguise rough brickwork, but this does not appear to be a traditional finish.



The brickwork is predominantly laid in a Flemish bond, with variations in the colours of the headers and stretchers used to emphasise the bonding pattern. This can be seen in many properties in the village but is most distinct at South Manor Farm and no. 82 Main Street.

To respect the character of the village, any new development should use of red brick and be laid in a Flemish bond. Extensions to existing buildings should attempt to match as closely as possible the original materials and follow the prevailing bonding pattern. Care should be taken in specifying reclaimed brick to avoid significant variations in the colour of the brick and which can give a mottled finished appearance.

The Church is the only building in the village built entirely of stone. In domestic buildings stone is used either to form a rubble plinth, to support timber framing; or, as ashlar dressings to windows and doors.



The roofs of several of the older buildings, such as North Manor Farm and The Grange, are covered in Swithland slate, which is laid in diminishing courses. There is also a widespread use of Welsh slate, particularly in the later nineteenth century cottages, such as at nos. 40 - 46 Main Street and The Golden Fleece public house. Given the difficulties in obtaining Swithland slate, Welsh slate should be used in any new development. Imported or reconstituted slates or roof tiles (either clay or concrete) are not part of the historic palette of materials and are not wholly appropriate for new development in the village.

In many cases, houses have retained their original windows. Timber sliding sash windows, with white or off-white paint finish, are the predominant window type in the more distinguished houses. These provide a strong vertical emphasis to these properties. There are a number of variations in style, with multi-pane sliding sash windows typical of the Georgian and Regency style, such as at no. 23 Main Street; to single or half pane sash windows typical of the

later Victorian houses, such as the former rectory (no. 21 Main street) or in the canted bay of North Manor Farm. One unusual example of a sliding sash window with margin frames can be seen in the side elevation of The Grange. This style of window was almost exclusively used in the first half of the nineteenth century.

The more traditional vernacular cottages tend to have casement windows or Yorkshire, (horizontal) sliding sash windows, which provide a strong horizontal emphasis to these properties. Examples of both of these types of windows can be seen at Hill Top Farm, where casements are used on the main front elevation and Yorkshire sliding sash windows are used on the side elevation.

A number of traditional properties, such as the Old Post Office and nos. 71 - 75 Main Street have lost their original windows and this has diminished their overall appearance. The more modern twentieth century houses tend to have large picture windows with side casements and top opening lights, which are at variance with the windows of the more traditional buildings.

Window openings are typically defined by distinctive lintels and pronounced cills and this is a design feature that should be incorporated within any new development. There are a variety of styles. Lintels can either be gauged brick arches, as at 37 School Lane; flat stone lintels, as at The Grange; or, segmental arches in brick, as at Woodbine Cottage or Gothic Farm (where stone is used alongside brick). Cills also vary, from stone cills, at The Grange, to chamfered brick cills, at Hill Top Farm.



As well as timber windows, there are also good examples of timber panel doors, many with fanlights above. Some of the best examples can be seen at 37 - 39 School Lane, Gothic Farm, Woodbine Cottage and North Manor Farm.

Chimney stacks are also distinctive surviving features and these are particularly important in skyline views across the village where they are often seen in silhouette, enhancing the visual skyline interest.

### Public Realm



Apart from the churchyard there are no public spaces within the conservation area. The public realm is restricted to the footpaths and verges alongside the main roads in the village, save for a number of public footpaths that extend out into the open countryside and the Westhorpe Jitty.

Most of the pavements have been surfaced in tarmac and edged with concrete kerbs. These are of no particular historic interest. There are however some surviving granite kerbs alongside North Manor Farm and the Church and these add some additional colour and texture in the street scene.

Of interest also are the cobbled yards to the farm buildings at South Manor Farm and Millbrook Barn. Whilst these are not strictly in the public domain, they are clearly visible from the road and the use of cobbles as a surfacing material demonstrates the use of a vernacular material that provides colour and texture in the Conservation Area.



Street furniture is minimal, although the telephone services are supplied by overhead wires that are supported on wooden poles. These can be quite obtrusive in the street scene and it would be in the long-term interest of the conservation area for the wires to be placed underground.

At the southern end of Main Street, the road used to cross the Queniborough Brook by means of a ford with a footbridge to the side for pedestrian traffic. These have been replaced by the construction of a modern bridge but the iron beams and handrails of the old footbridge still survive as rusting relics of the previous footbridge.

### Contribution made by Green Spaces, Trees and Hedges

Open space within the street scene and mature trees are extremely limited in the village. The prevailing frontage development along Main Street restricts the open space, providing little opportunity for significant tree planting or semi-public front gardens. The exception tends to be found in the more recent housing development, where houses are set back behind front gardens, very often to accommodate car parking areas, with ornamental planting schemes. One of the key examples is at 68 Main Street, where a group of five silver birch trees have been planted

within the lawns to the front of the house.

The churchyard is the principal public open space within the Conservation Area. It is screened from the road by a tall hedge and contains many mature yew trees. As a result it provides an attractive setting for the listed Church and makes a valuable contribution to the open and verdant character at the upper part of the village. This green tree cover is repeated on the opposite side of Main Street within the grounds to the former Rectory, where the house stands in its own grounds surrounded by mature trees.

The open agricultural fields that surround the village also cut through it, most notably to the north of Kings Lane and in the valley bottom. These fields provide distinctive open breaks through the centre of the village and the contrast between enclosure and openness contributes significantly towards its character.

### **Townscape and Setting of the Conservation Area** **Relationship to the Countryside**

South Croxton lies within an established agricultural landscape, largely in pastoral use, with fields extending into the heart of the village, such as to the north of Kings Lane and in the valley bottom.

The views into and out of the Conservation Area are largely dictated by the local topography. Distant views to the north beyond the Church are restricted by the ridgeline. There are glimpsed views of the fields on the west side of the village between the houses fronting Main Street, but these views are limited in extent.

The most extensive views, often across rooftops and between buildings, are those to the south and east over the valley of the Queniborough Brook. These reveal the dramatic topography of the area and the exposed position of the village. Views into the village are also restricted to the southern approaches. The view from the Beeby road, on the opposite side of the valley, offers a panoramic view of the village. From here the village's linear form can be clearly seen flowing down the hillside, with the properties on School Street providing a strong visual edge, cutting across the hillside at right angles to Main Street.

This localised topography has given South Croxton its distinctive linear form, which is evident along Main Street. St John's Church, is the major landmark building in the village, and the area around it forms a relatively level plateau at the top of the village. The views from the north along Main Street only begin to open up after the Three Turns Lane junction as the land falls steeply into the valley bottom. Moving through the village, the views along Main Street are channelled by the predominant frontage development, which provides a sense of enclosure and a relatively intimate human scale compared with the open space of the surrounding countryside. From the Three Turns Lane, Main Street follows a meandering course down the hillside that serves to restrict forward views, providing a series of sequential views as it winds its way down the hillside.

At the southern end of the village Main Street continues across the Queniborough Brook where it turns sharply to the west to give a long vista along Syston Road, across the front of the farm buildings at South Manor Farm, Millbank Barn and The Grange.

The approach from the south offers an equally dramatic journey through the village as Main Street climbs steeply up the hillside. The first section from the Queniborough Brook to School Lane, starts as a gentle climb along a relatively straight section of road. Only after School Lane does Main Street begin to climb more steeply and its course begins to meander. Again the views along the street are relatively short and follow in sequence with the Church clearly framed within the changing street scene as a prominent landmark at the top of the hill. The Church also provides an equally prominent landmark when viewed from different vantage points along Kings Lane across the open field.

### **Negative Factors**

The open storage of disused plant, lorry bodies and vehicle parts at the entrance to the Conservation Area, is unrelated to any other obvious land use. This is an untidy piece of land that detracts from the special historic and architectural interest of the Conservation Area.

More generally, the extensive development of modern houses in the Conservation Area, particularly along School Street and at its junction with Main Street, detract from prevailing form and grain of the Conservation Area. These buildings are typically modern, detached houses set back behind front gardens and dominated by garages

and car parking. They do not respect the scale, materials and form of the more traditional buildings within the hamlet. In particular, in the use of concrete tiles and upvc picture windows. These houses have no special historic or architectural interest and make no contribution to the character or appearance of the area.

A further threat to the character of the conservation area comes from minor alterations to historic buildings, such as the replacement of original windows with upvc. There are a number of buildings where alterations have been made, and the cumulative effect of such changes will have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### **Boundary Treatments**



There is not a strong tradition of boundary treatments in the village as many properties are built close to the back edge of the road. Although brick walls with saddleback coping are commonly used to define the boundaries around the larger detached domestic properties, such as North Manor Farm and Old Rectory and South Manor Farm and The Grange. There is also an attractive use of iron railings to the front of no. 91 Main Street.

Hedgerows as field boundaries also feature in the street scene particularly the lower part of the Conservation Area where fields cut through the valley bottom.

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