

Victoria Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- 2 INTRODUCTION**
Summary of the Character of the Conservation Area
Planning Policies
- 4 LOCATION AND SETTING**
General Character and Plan Form
- 5 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**
Origins
The Schools and The Convent
Housing in Victoria Street and Burton Street
Development of Park Road and Herrick Road
Castledine Street
Development Completed
- 10 MATERIALS AND DETAILS**
Prevalent and Traditional Materials
Local Details
Trees, Plantings and Green Spaces
Views
- 14 GENERAL CONDITION**
- 15 NEGATIVE FACTORS**
Traffic, Traffic Calming and Lighting
- 16 MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**
Boundary, Forest Road, Windows & Roofs, Traffic & Traffic Calming, Maintenance
- 18 GUIDELINES**
Alterations and New Development

INTRODUCTION

SUMMARY

Victoria Street Conservation Area was designated in October 1975. It covers an area of 24.3 ha.

The essential character of the Area is a quiet residential area south west of and within walking distance from the town centre. It is traversed by the sometimes busy feeder road of Park Road.

The area was originally fields and orchards and was developed when the town began to expand in the mid nineteenth century. Development was initially scattered and as a result there were several gaps between the houses or terraces.

There is a mixture of housing from terraces of small dwellings to larger terraced villas and some exceptionally fine gentlemen's detached residences. Most of the houses date from the late Victorian and Edwardian period with twentieth century additions. Nothing of archeological interest has been identified. The Area contains the Boys Grammar School, the Girls High School and the Convent and three other listed buildings: a pair of houses at nos. 1 & 2 Burton Street and the detached house at no. 6 Burton Walks.

There is a wealth of trees but little public green space. Opportunities for further development are limited.

There is an opportunity to ensure the preservation of the Conservation Area by controlling the replacement of windows and roofs of traditional materials.

There is also an opportunity to recognise the historic development of Loughborough by including both sides of Park Road and Herrick Road in the Conservation Area.

PLANNING POLICIES

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.

Planning Policy Statement 9: Requires 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 Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands published in March 2005 advises local authorities to develop strategies that avoid damage to the region's cultural assets. *Policy 26: Protecting and Enhancing The Region's Natural and Cultural Assets.*

The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1996 to 2016 published in December 2004 seeks to identify, protect, preserve and enhance areas, sites, buildings and settings of historic or architectural interest or archaeological importance. Development within conservation areas should

preserve or enhance their character and appearance. *Environment Policy 2: Sites and Buildings of Historic Architectural and Archaeological Interest.*

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

Leading in Design SPD aims to ensure effective approaches to securing good design. It provides a set of principles to inform development. Other relevant SPDs are Backland and Tandem Development, House Extensions, Shopfronts and Signs and Student Housing.

LOCATION AND SETTING

The Victoria Street Conservation Area is located to the south west of the town centre. It forms an integral part of Loughborough's inner urban area being inside the Epinal Way.

GENERAL CHARACTER AND PLAN FORM

The Conservation Area occupies an area of relatively flat land that until the mid-1800s was open land used for nursery gardens, orchards and small fields.

The part based on Victoria Street and Burton Street contains a variety of domestic housing ranging from fine detached and semi detached houses to substantial terraced villas and terraces of smaller houses. It incorporates the Convent which, largely protected from the area by its brick walls, is essential to the character. Leading directly off the corner of Victoria Street and Burton Street is the land occupied by the Endowed Schools, the Boys Grammar School and the Girls High School. Burton Walks is a private avenue of lime trees bordered by Late Victorian and Edwardian gentlemen's residences of exceptional character.

The part bounded by Park Road and Herrick Road contains some very large houses, many of them now converted into flats. There are also terraced villas with later detached and semi-detached houses and bungalows. The centre of the triangle bounded by Park Road and Herrick Road still shows remnants of the orchards. Development has not been on the scale of the terraces and the space is predominantly used for rows of black stained timber garages.

Between Park Road and the Endowed Schools lie Stanley Street and Castledine Street, two very quiet almost private streets of detached and semi-detached dwellings with many fine trees and gardens.

Park Road is a feeder road between the outer parts of Loughborough and the centre of town. It is a bus route and very busy in term time at the beginning and end of the school day and it is used late at night when the pubs and clubs have closed. The other streets are quietly domestic and residential though there are some businesses and some of the larger houses are used as homes for the elderly and disabled.

All the buildings in the Area are on a modest scale, not more than three storeys. The larger institutional buildings have a presence in the street scene but they are modest in scale and do not dominate the surrounding buildings.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

ORIGINS

The origins of the Conservation Area can be traced back to the expansion of Loughborough in the later half of the nineteenth century with its substantial completion by the early years of the twentieth century. The Area was effectively developed in two phases, with the first phase concentrated around Victoria Street, Albert Street, Burton Street and Park Street and a second stage along Park Road and Herrick Road.

In the 1830s, immediately prior to the encroachment of any significant built development, the land contained by the principal roads of Leicester Road, Southfield Lane and Park Lane (now Park Road) was sub-divided into a number of open parcels of orchards and paddocks principally in the ownership of William Toon, Joseph Paget and the Loughborough Feoffes, trustees of the Thomas Burton Charity; there was a large nursery garden on the corner of Park Lane. The two most prominent buildings within this general area, all located outside the Conservation Area, were Southfields House belonging to William Paget and now part of the Council offices, and a similar large house belonging to William White on Leicester Road called Fairfield on the later Ordnance Survey plans and now part of the Endowed Schools.

In 1877 White's Directory described Loughborough as a thriving and rapidly expanding market and manufacturing town with new streets and building operations. The Area was radically transformed. The culmination of this growth was the granting of a town charter in September 1888 creating the Borough of Loughborough and the introduction of municipal government.

THE SCHOOLS AND THE CONVENT

The first phase of development was the building of the institutional buildings that provide the framework of the Area and which still exert a strong influence on its character and appearance.

The first significant building in the Area was the new Boys Grammar School built on land owned by the Thomas Burton Charities on the edge of the town. Work on the new school started in 1850 when the foundation stone was laid in August by George Davys, Bishop of Peterborough. The school was opened in August 1852. The original building which stands at the centre of a range of more modern buildings was designed by Charles Hobson and John Morris and was built in a distinctive Tudor Gothic style in red bricks with Caen stone dressings. A caretaker's lodge was built at the entrance to the school on Leicester Road and the land to the side was laid out as an ornamental garden now converted to a car park.

The avenue of Burton Walks was laid out at the same time as the school following a petition by the residents of the town. Originally the avenue was planted with elm trees, which were replaced with lime trees following Dutch Elm Disease. It ran in a broad U-shape from Victoria Street returning in a broad curve across what is now the school playing field and through the ornamental garden to the caretakers' lodge. The Emmanuel Infants School was built in 1852 on the corner of Victoria Street and Albert Place in a distinctive Tudor Gothic style. The building now serves as a double community centre for the elderly and for people with mental health difficulties.

At the same time as the schools, the Convent of the Sisters of Providence was built in 1850 on land that was shown on the 1834 street map as being in the ownership of Joseph Paget. The building, which was built in an Early English style, stands within a beautiful, calm garden surrounded by high brick walls to its frontages on Park Road, Burton Street and Gray Street. Much of the convent is used as a girls school, with some modern additional buildings. An infants school was also built

within the grounds of the Convent on the north side of Gray Street. The Convent is currently being expanded at its Garton Road frontage to create a new chapel and homes for the sisters.

In 1879 the Girls High School was built on the corner of Burton Walks and Burton Street. It was designed by Stevenson, a Nottingham architect, in a relatively plain Early English style. For many years the Girls High School and the Boys Grammar School were the grammar schools for the children of the town. They are now private schools, known as Loughborough Endowed Schools, and they include Fairfield Preparatory School and the new Music School which though outside the Conservation Area boundary are features of the Area along with the playing fields which border Burton Walks.

HOUSING IN VICTORIA STREET AND BURTON STREET

Alongside the building of the schools the land was gradually developed for housing. Victoria Street, Albert Street, Albert Place and Park Street (first recorded by White's Directory in 1863) and Burton Street (added to White's Directory in 1877) are particularly significant as the first streets to be developed outside the tight-knit medieval and Georgian town. Development was initially scattered and included the laying out of and building on Herrick Road, Park Road and Middleton Place.

The different styles and patterns of these early houses is noticeable for its reduction in the density of buildings away from the town. The most intensive development occurred along Albert Street, Albert Place and Victoria Street, terraced properties on relatively small plots. These properties differ from the later byelaw terraced streets and terraced villas more associated with the later Victorian and Edwardian town. The introduction of byelaws after 1875 which established new rules for room sizes and ventilation, and the introduction of more mass produced items resulted in the development of the tighter grids of terraces more commonly associated with Loughborough, with their central jitties and flamboyant design based on prominent bays and gables.

The early terraces in the Conservation Area pre-date these changes. They do not sit in a back-to-back arrangement and the houses are relatively small two-up & two-down cottages, relatively plain and unadorned in their overall appearance. A large number of the terraced properties on Victoria Street had and still do have relatively deep plots that extended back onto Albert Street, although, a terrace of houses, nos. 27-33 Albert Street, was squeezed into the rear of the properties fronting Victoria Street. There is also evidence of early workshops squeezed between nos. 28 & 29 Albert Street, buildings that still survive today with garage doors at the street level and deep sliding sash windows in first floor, as well as a coach house at the rear of no. 3 Victoria Street. The 1903 map shows a block of four houses to the rear of nos. 4-7 Victoria Street, fronting Albert Street. A modern bungalow stands in their place. A continuous row of terraced properties was built on the west side of Albert Street and these originally backed onto the nursery, although that land was developed after 1903 for Bampton Street and Garton Road. Similar terraced housing was built along the south side of Albert Place between Park Street and Victoria Street.

At first glance these properties read as uniform terraces but there are many small variations in their appearance, detailing and roof-lines, which demonstrate that the land was developed by different builders each having their own parcel of land. Further evidence can be seen in the use of a variety of decorative features such as door and window lintels.

Victoria Street, beyond Albert Place, continues in a rather disjointed manner with a range of building types and styles, reinforcing the incremental approach to the development of the Area. At the corner with Albert Place is a pair of semi-detached properties, the end unit being one-bay wide with a double fronted property attached. Then sitting alongside, and extending for a considerable distance along Princess Street, is a much grander villa called Belford House. Behind Belford House,

and squeezed into the remaining corner plot between Princess Street and Park Street is a pair of semi detached properties. On the opposite side of Princess Street, the Victoria Chapel and Sunday School was built of stone in a Gothic style in 1864. It was used as a Unitarian Church until the 1960s and is now converted to apartments.

The final surviving group of properties on Victoria Street from this first phase of development is a uniquely designed terrace of three houses, with two single width units either side of a double fronted unit and all having distinctive angular bay windows and balconies.

Albert Place and Park Street mark a noticeable change between the smaller terraced housing and more sizeable villas. The upper end of Albert Place is dominated by Clifton House and Myrtle Villa, two large villas built in a Regency style at either end of the street and separated by smaller semi-detached and detached properties. On the north-eastern side of Park Street, between Princess Street and Burton Street, the incremental pattern of development continued, the first block of properties is an attractive row of four large terraced houses, in a Classical style with prominent bay windows and a front garden, alongside a neat pair of semi-detached properties, nos. 8a and 9 Park Street. These are built on the back edge of the footpath and from the street they look like a single villa as the side door to one unit is tucked around the side elevation – a remarkably common feature throughout the Conservation Area.

A similar conceit is displayed in the larger properties on the opposite side of Park Street, where in two terraces of four and three properties, only the central house has a front door onto the street, the end houses have their doors located to the side – so that they appear to be grander villas and not terraced units. Nevertheless, they are all endowed with good quality decorative features.

The architectural style and prestige of the housing increased further on Burton Street, where the detached properties were built with their gardens to the side of the house, which is another common feature of the Area though it is now hard to appreciate since the gardens have all been built on in the twentieth century. A pair of Regency-style semi-detached properties was built between Park Street and Victoria Street, the corner pair to Park Street being three storey, nos. 3 & 4 Burton Street, and enjoying a much larger garden than the adjoining two storey pair on the corner to Victoria Street, nos. 1 & 2 Burton Street. However whilst these were squeezed onto a smaller plot they did overlook the attractive tree lined square that marked the junction between Burton Street and Victoria Street. This square still exists but the present road geometry, fencing and layout of planting beds gives little sense of a more spacious landscaped square.

A further pair of Regency style villas was built close to the corner with Gray Street, with their gardens extending the full depth of the plot onto the Gray Street frontage, nos. 13-16 Burton Street. However, by splitting the depth of this block an isolated terrace of four houses in a Classical style, Victoria Terrace, nos. 2-8 Gray Street, was erected opposite the infant school. The front part of the plot to Burton Street was developed by 1903 with a pair of semi-detached properties with prominent bay windows and gabled roofs, nos. 5-8 Burton Street.

On the opposite side of Burton Street the main properties were situated at the upper end towards Park Road. Holly Bank, no. 26 Burton Street, a Gothic lodge, makes an imposing statement at the end of Gray Street. Further along is a mixed terrace of two and three storey properties, nos. 19-25 Burton Street, many with raised ground floors accessed by a flight of steps over semi-basements.

By 1884 the north west side of Burton Walks had been sub-divided into a number of plots, of which three had been developed for large detached gentleman's residences in a Classical style, nos. 1 & 2

and Red House at no. 5, and by 1921 nos. 3, 6 & 7 had been added but in more distinctly Edwardian and Arts and Crafts styles.

By the early 1900s the development of the Schools and Burton Walks and the housing in Victoria Street-Burton Street was virtually complete.

DEVELOPMENT OF PARK ROAD AND HERRICK ROAD

Most of this part of the Conservation Area was conceived as an entity in 1881 as the Park Lane Estate. Edward Chatterton Middleton of Shelthorpe, a banker, had died in 1878 with debts of £10,000. The Court of Chancery determined that the estate would avoid bankruptcy if the debts were cleared by selling assets. Thus Herrick Road, Middle Park Place, now renamed Middleton Place, and Charnwood Road were laid out to the west of Park Road. The sale was conducted by Mr John German in the Town Hall in 1880. The estate consisted of several fields, some 17 acres with fruit trees and hovels (presumably agricultural sheds), lying between Far Park Lane and Middle Park Lane, now Park Road and Beacon Road. It was divided into 50 plots of about a third of an acre each.

The first properties were scattered along Park Road. There were two large semi detached houses, nos. 55 & 57 Park Road and nos. 75 & 77 Park Road. These buildings turned their backs onto the street to take advantage of the south-west aspect. They were built to the cheapest possible standard as accommodation for apprentices, though they had very long gardens which have both now been built on.

There was a terrace of three houses made up of a double fronted house, Gladstone House, attached to a pair of semi-detached terraced houses, nos. 111-115 Park Road and a pair of semi-detached properties built at the entrance into Charnwood Road, nos. 1-3. On the east side of Park Road, a fine pair of semi-detached houses, Park Villas, now nos. 86 & 88 Park Road, were built and on the south side of Herrick Road there was a detached house, no. 92, and the first of a terrace, nos. 12-20 Herrick Road.

By 1903 further development had taken place along both sides of Park Road and in the triangle. The most significant was the large terrace of villas extending south from Beacon Road, nos. 25-45 Park Road, and two sets of smaller terraces, nos. 87-109 and 111-139 Park Road, with a corresponding terrace on the east side of the road, nos. 98-130 Park Road. A pair of semi-detached houses, Havergal and The Poplars, had also been built opposite the junction with Stanley Road.

Along Middleton Place a block of smaller terraced properties was built on the east side of the street, nos. 15- 23, and two further blocks of larger, villa style, terraced properties were built along the north side of the street, nos. 53-69 and 77-87. Variations in their design and detailing of each terrace suggest the work of different builders. A pair of substantial semi-detached houses in a distinctive Art and Crafts style, nos. 103-5 Herrick Road, was built on the corner of Middleton Place and Herrick Road. A date of 1899 is carried in the rainwater hoppers and on a beam under the gable. There was incremental development along Charnwood Road with the addition of a pair of ornate classical styled semi-detached houses on the corner to Herrick Road, nos. 23 & 25, Parkside and Southernhay, which were in contrast to the Arts and Crafts influenced properties built at nos. 4 & 6 Charnwood Road. Oliver Road was laid out and the first houses, nos. 1 and 3, appeared some time after 1903.

There was extensive development on both sides of Herrick Road, mostly terraces, some smaller houses, some villas, with some semi-detached and detached houses, and notably the gateway house, no. 2, which makes a prominent statement at the corner of Herrick Road and Park Road.

CASTLEDINE STREET

Prior to 1903 the earliest development in this area was a long linear property now known as The Nook on Castledine Street (referred to as Caseldine Street in White's 1894 Directory). However by 1903 a row of terraced and semi-detached properties had been put up on Stanley Street, nos. 25 – 33, with some isolated semidetached houses at either end of Castledine Street, nos. 59 - 61 and nos. 93 - 95. By 1921 five pairs of semi-detached properties had been added to the west side of Castledine Street, nos. 62 – 72, these properties having their rear elevations built against the street frontage to take advantage of the west facing aspect of the site.

DEVELOPMENT COMPLETED

By 1921 the structure of the Conservation Area had been developed. However, throughout the Area, since the plots were built piecemeal by different builders, there were several gaps and it is not until after the First World War that these gaps were filled in. Interwar semis were built in many of the gap sites, such as at 22a & 22b Albert Street and along Oliver Road into Middleton Place.

The last phase of development which occurred in the later half of the twentieth century has been mixed, often due to restrictions imposed by Highway and parking requirements, but also out of respect for the side facing windows of the properties in whose gardens the new houses were built.

The effect on the street scene has been to spoil the harmony and rhythm of the Victorian and Edwardian terraces. Extensions to the Grammar School have generally been sensitively carried out, as have some flat conversions of the larger properties but, by way of example, the new flats and housing along Burton Street and Park Road lack the traditional proportions and detailing of the neighbouring properties.

MATERIALS AND DETAILING

PREVALENT AND TRADITIONAL BUILDING MATERIALS

Building materials in the Area are drawn from a relatively small palette of materials, principally smooth red brick and plain clay tile or Welsh slate. This results in a pleasing, consistent appearance within the Conservation Area and contributes to the sense of place. The brick is typically laid in Flemish bond, often with contrasting headers, as is particularly evident within the earlier houses. There are good examples at nos. 8a & 9 Park Street, nos. 9-12 Albert Place and nos. 4-12 Victoria Street. The red brick is frequently paired with white stone dressings to provide decorative window and door surrounds.

Shaped bricks and terracotta were used to provide decorative detailing, particularly to window sills, string courses and dentil courses, which are common to many houses, and there are more extravagant features such as pediments found in a number of properties along Burton Walks. Moulded terracotta panels provide decorative features such as the panels in the apex of the gables at nos. 23-25 Charnwood Road and the sunflower tiles used under the eaves of nos. 15-23 Middleton Place.

Welsh slate is the most common roofing material and this has been used throughout the Conservation Area on all types of buildings. However, not all roofs were covered in slate and plain clay tiles were also widely used. These are particularly noticeable on the long catslide roofs associated with the later Arts and Crafts style properties, such as no. 103 Herrick Road. A notable exception is the use of Swithland slates, laid in diminishing courses, on The Nook on Castledine Street.

Other external finishes include stucco render on a number of Regency style dwellings, nos. 1 & 2 and nos. 3 & 4 Burton Street for example, or roughcast render particularly on the Arts and Crafts properties. This render can be used to face the whole elevation such as at nos. 4 & 6 Burton Walk or at first floor level over a brick ground floor such as nos. 59 & 61 Castledine Street.

Stone is used as a decorative rather than principal building material. The only stone-built building is the Victoria Chapel and Sunday School on Princess Street which is constructed of granite rubble with stone dressings. However, there is a widespread use of stone for mullions in the construction of the bay windows and for sills and lintels such as at no. 29 Stanley Road and nos. 25-35 Park Road.

Timber was traditionally used for windows and doors and there is whole range of surviving timber sash and casement windows and panelled doors throughout the Area. The proportions of these windows, sash windows having a distinctly vertical emphasis and casement windows having a horizontal emphasis, are an important factor in the overall design and appearance of the houses.

Timber has been used to provide decorative bargeboards to prominent gables, such as nos. 23-25 Charnwood Road and no. 81 Park Road, and many of the Arts and Crafts buildings have prominent decorative black and white timber framing within their gables, nos. 4 & 6 Charnwood Road and nos. 103-105 Herrick Road for example.

LOCAL DETAILS

The buildings within the Area have a wealth and variety of surviving architectural details that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. These details often display the individuality of the builder or developer.

Details to note are the variety of door and window lintels, chimneys, roof finials, dormer windows, brick detailing, roofing tiles. The architecture and detailing of the properties reflect their original quality and status, much of which was only made possible by the advent of mass production in building materials, and in most cases typify an architectural style, be that Regency, Victorian Gothic or Arts and Crafts.

The early terraces along Victoria Street, Albert Place and Albert Street are relatively simple in their form with an ordered front elevation originally of sash windows and panelled doors. Some of the best surviving examples are the panelled door and overlight at no. 5 Albert Place and the sash windows at nos. 10 & 12 Victoria Street and nos. 7 & 9 Albert Street.

Beyond these early terraces the houses take on a more flamboyant appearance and bay windows are a particularly prominent feature of many of these houses, although they display a whole range of designs and details. The bay windows take two basic shapes, either box-bays as at nos. 37-45 Park Road or canted bays as seen at nos. 25-35 Park Road. Individuality can be seen at Middleton Place, where there are surviving examples of a decorative wrought iron rail around the edge of the roof. The bays can be either flat roofed or have a pitched roof and rise through to the second floor. There are some interesting styles such as the hybrid bays at nos. 15-23 Middleton Place where the ground floor has a canted bay with a smaller box bay on the first floor and the series of unique angular bays with casement windows and skirted pediments at nos. 19-21 Victoria Street.

The bays can be constructed of brick and stone such as at no. 29 Stanley Road and nos. 93-95 Castledine Street as well as timber. It is the timber bays, due to the nature of the material, that are more at risk of change but which also have the greater decorative quality with their Classical inspired mullions and cornices supported by a series of dentils or modillions as seen in the range of bay windows in Middleton Place.

Most properties in the Area originally had sash windows and the surviving ones display a whole range of types. There are multi pane sashes at no. 5 Burton Walks and no. 14 Victoria Street; split pane sashes at nos. 23 & 25 Charnwood Road and nos. 31 & 33 Stanley Road and single pane sashes separated by a mullion at no. 29 Stanley Road and nos. 53-61 Middleton Place; there is a hybrid type combining a single pane sash in the lower half with a multi pane sash above at nos. 25-35 Park Road and there are tripartite sash windows in the upper floors of no. 29 Burton Street and in a number of terraced properties of nos. 111-125 Park Road and margin pane sash windows in no. 8a Park Street, no. 4 Burton Street and no. 8 Albert Place, Myrtle Cottage. Whilst not the predominant window type, there are some examples of good quality casement windows at nos. 19-21 Victoria Street, nos. 103 & 105 Herrick Road and no. 6 Burton Walks.

A number of properties retain distinctive Classical detailing with timber door surrounds and hoods, nos. 2- 8 Gray Street and no. 8 Albert Place, Myrtle Cottage for example, and moulded pediments over windows and window sills supported by cornice brackets as at nos. 125-135 Park Road and nos. 13-16 Burton Street.

Dormer windows are a particular feature of many of the larger and later properties. These dormers are generally well designed and detailed and in proportion to the building. The variety of types can be seen along Park Road where nos. 25-35 Park Road have gabled dormers with decorative barge boards and two pairs of casement windows, while the adjoining terrace, nos. 37-45 Park Road, has a series of simpler hipped dormers. Of particular note is the ornate dormer at no. 135 Park Road, which has a pair of casement windows, glazed side walls and timber scrolls and pediments to the front.

Most of the properties retain their original chimney stacks, which range from quite simple stacks in the terraced houses along Victoria Street and Albert Street, larger stacks with moulded brickwork and dentil courses such as nos. 111-145 Park Road, to quite elaborate individual structures such as at nos. 103 & 105 Herrick Road, nos. 4 & 6 Charnwood Road and nos. 93 & 95 Castledine Street. In addition many original chimney pots survive and they show a great variety of styles with crown pots, fluted pots, round tapered pots and square pots.

TREES, PLANTINGS AND GREEN SPACES

A particular feature of the Conservation Area is the wealth of trees. There are the formal avenues, such as the lime trees of Burton Walks and chestnut trees along the east side of Victoria Street. And there are many trees in the corners of gardens, at the roadside and in the rear gardens. Some of these are particularly fine, mature trees, such as pines, beeches, chestnuts, limes and sycamores. There are many smaller trees such as acacias, hollies, rowans, birches and yews.

To note are the pines at the junction of Stanley Street with Castledine Street; the cedar towards the rear of 55 Park Road; the limes and chestnut at the bend on Park Road; the group of three beech trees just outside the Conservation Area in front of the flats on Park Road; the trees in the Convent gardens, especially the great beech tree on Gray Street; the trees which provide a rich screen to the houses on Burton Walks; the pines on Charnwood Road and the cedar on Herrick Road.

The formal garden of the Grammar School which is now a car park is still well planted with trees. There is also a good screen of trees between the playing fields and the main road. The playing fields themselves, with the quadrangle and the playing fields of the preparatory school, provide the principal green space. The only public green space is the grass in front of the flats in Victoria Street. An important though less visible contribution to the green lungs of the Area are the rear gardens. Some of these, as in Burton Walks and the centre of the Middleton Place triangle, are substantial.

It should not be assumed because a tree is not listed here that it does not contribute to the character of the Area. Loughborough is not particularly noted for being well endowed with trees but Victoria Street Conservation Area derives much of its character from the random plantings of trees and shrubs large and small as well as the two formal avenues. Perhaps less pleasing are the dense hedges of leyland cypress which adorn the garages in the middle of the triangle at Middleton Place.

BIODIVERSITY

The Conservation Area offers a range of urban wildlife habitats, including buildings and managed green spaces consisting of tree-lined streets, private gardens, small pockets of amenity grassland, playing fields and planted shrubberies. This variety of habitats gives some species the combination of breeding sites, foraging resource and shelter they need within relatively small spaces.

The tree-lined avenues create invaluable green networks and form linear routes which function as wildlife corridors enabling the movement and dispersal of species. Private gardens create a fine resource of habitat mosaics: individual gardens may be small, but together they form a patchwork linking urban green spaces. Many residents also seek to bring wildlife into their gardens by providing nest boxes and food and by recreating small pockets of semi-natural habitats.

Some bat species are closely associated with urban habitats and have been recorded within the Area. With their complex life cycle, bats need warm summer breeding roosts and cold, secure hibernation sites, both usually found in buildings. A few species may also rely on mature trees for roosts throughout the year. Some bird species, such as the swift and house sparrow, are also dependent on buildings for nesting.

The green spaces and associated wildlife of the area give residents a daily contact with nature which contributes to a sense of well-being and quality of life.

VIEWS AND VISTAS

The Conservation Area lies in an area of flat land which has been almost fully developed with housing. There are no vistas as such but there are many glimpses through gaps in the housing. These glimpses are into rear gardens, into the Convent garden, into the gardens of the houses on Burton Walks, across the hedge into the Grammar School playing fields. Occasionally one may see to the rear of the houses on a neighbouring street, such as at Stanley Street looking through to Burton Street or from Herrick Road to Middleton Place.

There are places where one is reminded of the proximity to the town centre: the distant view of the University Towers at the end of Herrick Road; the glimpse of the green copper roof of the Carillion from Park Street. The red letter box at the corner of Burton Street and Park Street is a familiar accent.

The most important formal view is into the quadrangle of the Grammar School where the broad path leading between lawns into the enclosure of Tudor Gothic buildings gives a feeling of relaxed formality.

Some of the minor views are worth noting: the statement of Holly Lodge, no. 26 Burton Street, at the end of Gray Street; the closure of Park Street by the house and its front garden of no.13 Albert Place and the more distant closure of Albert Street by the terrace of nos. 1 - 4 Albert Place.

GENERAL CONDITION

The Conservation Area is well settled with very few opportunities for further development. Most properties, their boundary features and gardens are well maintained.

A number of buildings are of concern through lack of maintenance: the warehouse buildings between nos. 29 and 28 and adjacent to no. 27 Albert Street; no. 9 Herrick Road, which has been unoccupied for many years; the terrace of four houses on Gray Street, particularly no. 6 and the large semi-detached pair of houses on Park Road, nos. 55 & 57 and their derelict outbuildings fronting the street. The latter is an important part of the Conservation Area in terms of its history, its scale, its siting with its back to the road and its architectural details. In addition to these buildings, the surroundings of no. 75 Park Road are very untidy and the front garden and especially the front garden wall in Spanish style of no. 23 Stanley Street is out of character with the rest of the Area.

In the terraces of Victoria Street and Albert Street nearly all the windows have been replaced with uPVC. There are very few of the original timber sashes left and the replaced windows are a hodge-podge of design which certainly spoils the character. Elsewhere, in the terraced villas, there has been a similar loss of original windows but in the more expensive properties the value of the traditional windows has, for the most part, been recognised.

There has been a significant use of concrete roof tiles to re-roof many properties. These tiles look out of place, particularly where they disrupt the coherence of terraced and semi-detached properties or where they conflict with the detailing of brick dentils.

There are two small triangles of public space, planted with trees and shrubs, along Herrick Road which are poorly maintained.

The front garden space of the Primary School is inaccessible, so that it is un-maintained. As a consequence there is often an unpleasant smell of rotting vegetation.

The garden at the corner of Burton Street and Park Road at the back of the Girls Convent School has been converted to a patch of gravel with a high close boarded fence. This is out of keeping with the Area.

NEGATIVE FACTORS

TRAFFIC

Of concern to many residents are the social aspects of parents delivering and collecting their children from the four private schools in the Area. Although, the disturbance is short lived, amounting to half an hour in the morning and afternoon, it causes severe congestion with the risk that emergency vehicles would not be able to get through.

The presence of the schools creates a pressure on parking space in the local streets when there are events in the evenings and at weekends when the normal provisions of the residents preference parking scheme are not in operation.

Another concern of a social aspect is the use of the Area's streets as a walking route home after the pubs and clubs in the town centre have closed, which results in noise and occasional vandalism.

The delineation of the Victoria Street residents preference parking scheme has displaced the problem of commuter parking to Oliver Road and further out of town.

TRAFFIC CALMING

The speed humps and the high lighting columns on Park Road emphasise the nature of the street as a feeder road instead of its character as a street where people live in a conservation area.

LIGHTING

There is an inconsistency in the quality of the lighting in the area. Some streets are very well lit, such as Park Road, in other streets the lighting levels are very low, such as Albert Street. There are also areas where private lighting, such as at Hodson Court and the floodlighting of the all-weather pitches on Burton Walks are out of character.

MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

BOUNDARY

The Conservation Area boundary was originally drawn to include only the inner parts of Herrick Road and Park Road. However, from the beginning, development took place on both sides of these roads. Therefore, this Appraisal describes the complete development of Herrick Road and Park Road. It is recommended that the boundary be re-drawn to include the Victorian and Edwardian properties on both sides of these streets. At the time of consulting on this boundary change consideration will also be given to incorporating into the Area the allotments, cricket field, tennis courts and bowling green behind Park Road in terms of their contribution to the green space and history.

FOREST ROAD

The area of Forest Road from Browns Lane to Emmanuel Church was identified as an area of architectural and historic importance in the process of designating Queens Park Conservation Area. It includes some important buildings: the Frameworkers building at the corner of Albert Street, the ex Garton Inn at the corner of Victoria Street, the Blacksmiths Arms, the Deaf Church and Emmanuel Church. It also includes domestic buildings of importance. The inclusion of this area into the Victoria Street Conservation Area will be considered as part of the review of the boundaries.

TURNER AVENUE

Turner Avenue is an intact inter-war development. Consideration will be given to incorporating this street into the Area.

In assessing any extensions to the Area, consideration will be given to how other streets may alter or dilute the character of the existing area.

WINDOWS AND ROOFS

It is proposed that an Article 4.2 Direction be investigated to remove permitted development rights of property owners to replace windows without obtaining consent. The aim would be to ensure that replaced windows follow as closely as possible the style of the original timber frames, whether these are sash or casement. The Council's Historic Buildings Grant will be available as before to encourage owners to use traditional materials. The direction would apply to streets or blocks of properties within streets where not more than 10% of the windows have been inappropriately replaced.

The same Article 4.2 Direction should be used to control the replacement of the slate and clay tile roofs.

TRAFFIC AND TRAFFIC CALMING

The social issues of traffic and parking generated by the schools during term-time are beyond the scope of this Appraisal and Management Plan.

Opportunities will be taken to work in partnership with Leicestershire County Council Highways to ensure that any traffic schemes which affect conservation areas and the quality and level of lighting take account of the character of the area.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

There is a possibility of enhancing the area by providing more robust and more frequent litter bins which may encourage a more responsible attitude to one part of the behaviour.

POORLY MAINTAINED BUILDINGS AND GARDENS

The re-use of the buildings on Park Road will be actively encouraged.

Better maintenance of the houses on Gray Street and the properties on Albert Street will be encouraged through promotion of the Council's Historic Buildings Grant. The empty house on Herrick Road will be referred to the Council's Housing Standards Team.

The Conservation and Design Team will work in partnership with the Council's Leisure Services and Leicestershire County Council Highways to promote better management of the open spaces on Herrick Road; and the improvement of the gardens belonging to the Convent. In doing so, the needs of wildlife and biodiversity will be respected.

GUIDELINES

ALTERATIONS AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

Part of the purpose of this Appraisal is to inform and guide development control decisions about the Area. Any proposed changes should be sensitive to and take into account the character as described in this Appraisal. New development, including extensions and alterations, must respond to the context and environment, the scale, form, materials and detailing of the existing buildings and the grain and pattern of the built form and the urban spaces of the Area.

Roof lines, roof shape, eaves details, verge details and the creation of new chimneys are important considerations.

Windows and doors of traditional design make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Area. The use of upvc and standardised high speed joinery techniques nearly always leads to unsuitably detailed windows which will generally be unacceptable in the Area.

The Council will insist on good quality schemes which respond positively to the historic setting of the Area. This extends to small buildings such as garages and also to boundary walls and fences. Minor alterations need to be carefully considered as incremental change can have a significant detrimental effect on the character of the Area over a period of time.

There may be opportunities for innovative modern design. Good modern design could create positive changes in the Area.

Many species of wildlife are protected by legislation. Prior to any proposals for development a survey of the wildlife should be carried out where there is a likelihood of a legally protected species or a priority Biodiversity Action Plan species being present and at risk of impact from the development or other management. This may often be the case where it is proposed to use previously unused attic and roof spaces.

Applicants for planning permission must provide a Design Statement to explain the decisions that have been made and to show how proposals relate to the context. It should demonstrate a full appreciation of the local streetscape, how it has developed, including prevailing building forms, materials and plot ratios.

Proposals will be assessed against the Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, Leading in Design and other Supplementary Planning Documents and government guidance contained in PPS1 and PPG15.