The village contains a mixture of building styles, either domestic or agricultural in nature and including cottages, detached and semi-detached dwellings and converted farm buildings. A number of houses have attractive architectural detailing to the facades, gables and roofs.

The Manor House at Lychgate Lane/ Burbage Lane marks the centre of the settlement and dates from the late 16th century. It is constructed from brick with plain tile and a mixture of red and brown shades of brick with dark roof tiles, which is complementary to the existing colour palette. Boundary treatments are varied. Properties tend to be enclosed by low red brick walls. The front gardens of some houses are marked by timber garden fences and/or ornamental planting. More modern houses tend to lack brick walls and have planting to the boundaries. Vegetated boundaries, mature hedgerows, trees within gardens and belts of woodland contribute to the well vegetated character of the village.

Housing is constructed from brick with plain tile and a mixture of red and brown shades of brick with dark roof tiles, which is complementary to the existing colour palette. Boundary treatments are varied. Properties tend to be enclosed by low red brick walls. The front gardens of some houses are marked by timber garden fences and/or ornamental planting. More modern houses tend to lack brick walls and have planting to the boundaries. Vegetated boundaries, mature hedgerows, trees within gardens and belts of woodland contribute to the well vegetated character of the village.

Further houses to the rear are accessed via a road between the two frontage buildings. Although these modern houses lack some of the architectural detailing which can be seen in the facades of the adjoining buildings, they are constructed of a mixture of red and brown shades of brick with dark roof tiles, which is complementary to the existing colour palette. Boundary treatments are varied. Properties tend to be enclosed by low red brick walls. The front gardens of some houses are marked by timber garden fences and/or ornamental planting. More modern houses tend to lack brick walls and have planting to the boundaries. Vegetated boundaries, mature hedgerows, trees within gardens and belts of woodland contribute to the well vegetated character of the village.

Buildings are predominantly constructed from red brick with dark slate or tiled roofs. Woodwork and timber detailing is often painted white. There is one thatched building in the village which is rendered and painted cream. St. Peter’s church is constructed from local granite. This material is not a common feature of building construction in this village.

The majority of buildings in the village form the historic core. The village has developed around the central Manor House opposite the village church. Many of the surrounding houses are substantial cottages, farmhouses and converted farm buildings within courtyards, indicative of an historic association with agriculture. Modern development is relatively unintrusive within the village and has respected its small rural character although of a typical modern architectural style.

A brick pigeoncote stands alone within an open field opposite the Manor House forming a significant landscape feature and historical reference within the context of the village. The structure is marked with the date 1715 giving an indication of the minimum age of settlement around The Manor.

Generally the roofline of the settlement is not prominent within the surrounding landscape due to the presence of tall mature vegetation. Buildings are low in height, two storeys or lower, with the church tower being the tallest structure. The church also is enclosed by substantial trees and is not visually prominent beyond the village.

The roofline of the contemporary dwellings to the southern fringe of the settlement is fairly uniform. The buildings are situated slightly higher than the road although the view from this direction is broken by surrounding vegetation.
The village contains no specifically allocated public open space, play facilities or recreation ground. However, residents have easy access to the immediate countryside via a number of public rights of way. The village benefits from views onto open countryside from various locations along public roads.

The village roads are fairly narrow, only Sharnford Road adjacent to Church Farm has a roadside footpath. The majority of roadsides are bounded by well-maintained grass verges.

Aston Flamville is distinctive within Blaby District as it contains a largely intact rural village character throughout. Its small scale linear street pattern is retained and almost all buildings have a strong presence from the public realm. Any development should be required to reflect this character through a close association to the street with low boundaries and parking hidden behind properties.

Expansion of this village in any direction could detrimentally alter and erode the strong historic linear pattern of this settlement. Any changes within this settlement and Conservation Area must have regard to the character of the setting.

**Public realm and green space**

Houses should front on the road and have minimal front garden space. Where driveways are required these should be designed to give the impression of a small farm courtyard or archway into a central hidden courtyard to retain the active frontage which exists at present.

The village edges are sensitive to change, particularly to the south and east where it is very desirable to retain open views and minimise any impact of built form on the wider landscape.

**Capacity for change along the urban edge**

**Gateway features**

The entrance to the village is denoted by dense overhanging vegetation along Sharnford Road. Mature trees and vegetation cover the roadside on both sides restricting views, creating visual narrowing, and a leafy shaded enclosure to this part of the village. This approach increases the perception of a remote and rural location.

The thatched building, which comprises three cottages, is a very distinctive property and the first to be seen on entering the village through the vegetated enclosed entrance on Sharnford Road. One of the cottages has a thatched garden gate facing onto the roadside.

A line of large modern detached properties denote the entrance to the village from a westerly direction. These properties occupy a very desirable location overlooking Mickie Hill Spinney and the wider the countryside of Aston Flamville Wooded Farmland landscape character area.

The village contains a red painted and glazed panel telephone kiosk which stands outside the church at the junction of Lychgate Lane and Hinckley Road. This kiosk is a Grade II listed Type K6 designed 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. Its position at this junction is within an open grass verge and is visually prominent opposite the thatched cottages forming a further gateway feature on entering the village.

**Strong distinction from the settlement edge to farmland due to mature wooded boundaries**

**Recommendations**

- Preserve the rural characteristics of this village through limiting expansion and careful design and siting of any new buildings to retain the small linear nature and strong association with farming.
- Protect the heavily vegetated entrance into the village along Sharnford Road. Enclosed land and mature trees provide an important visual entrance to the village.
- Conserve and protect the historical landscape and built features of the village such as the pigeoncote and thatched cottage.
- Conserve the strong roadside presence of buildings through maintaining low boundary walls and small front gardens and resisting taller timber fences and walls from being constructed.
- Conserve and protect the open aspect and wide views of rolling countryside to the south and east of the village.
**Location and context**

The town centre is situated around a large intersection between Enderby Road, Leicester Road, Sycamore Street and Welford Road.

The settlement originally developed as a result of its links to industry, hosiery and more recently the manufacture of shoes. The most significant expansion occurred during the early 1960-70s and today the town is largely residential.

**Key Characteristics**

- Varied roofline created through a mix of flat and pitched roofs.
- Modern town centre characterised by flat roofed 2-3 storey buildings and small paved precincts.
- Residential areas characterised by semi-detached buildings often set within mature landscape surroundings.
- No definitive building materials or boundary treatments.
- Historic parkland present along eastern boundary - Bouskell Park.
- Older historic core characterised by narrow walled streets isolated from the main town.
- Historic core mix of artisan cottages interspersed with large town houses and villas.

**Architectural style**

The town centre is characterised by a well defined retail centre including a mix of terraced two storey properties with shops on the ground floor and private flats above having dormer windows. The predominant shop building style is flat roofed 1960-70s development arranged along the main roads and set within small precincts.

Buildings to the east of the town centre tend to be small terraces of varying styles, some have brick detailing and others are simpler. To the north and west buildings tend to be semi-detached with a few larger detached properties all set within front gardens capable of accommodating car parking. Mature vegetation and trees lining their boundaries with the roads create a vegetated character within residential parts of the town.

The older part of the village is characterised by artisan cottages interspersed with large town houses and villas and some timber framed thatched cottages such as the Olde Bakers Arms pub.

There is also evidence of barns and old farms which have been converted to private houses. Newer development is of simple architecture style which relates little to the existing building styles although where it is constructed in red brick with grey roofs it integrates well.

There are no overriding common building materials present within the town. Modern development has not reflected local building styles or materials. Older terraced buildings around the town centre are almost all constructed out of red brick with windows generally painted white and are relatively large in size. Some buildings have sandstone lintels although the majority are arched brick lintels over windows. Roofs are generally dark grey although within the town centre the colours are a slightly paler shade of grey.

There are a few buildings painted or rendered white which provides some slight variation. Older buildings are characterised by their construction with pink red coloured granite rubble and dark slate roofs. There is no common boundary treatment within the town.

**Built form and settlement pattern**

There is little overriding urban form within the town due to the extent of expansion around its centre. The town centre has an open character created by wide pavements and buildings set back from the road. Newer infill development provides variety within the architectural style although the variation in shop frontage style, age and condition has a fragmented character.

Some of the streets leading off the main centre are quite narrow in comparison and characterised by smaller terraced shops and houses fronting directly onto narrow pavements.

The residential roads are generally wide with the majority of properties set behind small front gardens which become larger to accommodate cars towards the edges of the town.

The older part of the town located to the east of the main centre has a more distinctive village character created through small walled roads with buildings fronting directly onto the road. This area of Blaby is a designated Conservation Area. Individual properties are linked by boundary walls. Properties are much older around these roads than the remainder of the town, although modern infill has fragmented this character slightly. This area feels relatively unconnected with the town centre although located immediately adjacent to it.

The roofline within the town is relatively varied due to the mix of building heights; however it tends to have localised areas of uniformity. The main variation is the range of roof styles present. This ranges from flat roofs to shallow and more steeply pitched roofs, some new buildings incorporate a gentle curve to the roof.

**Location and context**

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The settlement originally developed as a result of its links to industry, hosiery and more recently the manufacture of shoes. The most significant expansion occurred during the early 1960-70s and today the town is largely residential.

**Key Characteristics**

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- Modern town centre characterised by flat roofed 2-3 storey buildings and small paved precincts.
- Residential areas characterised by semi-detached buildings often set within mature landscape surroundings.
- No definitive building materials or boundary treatments.
- Historic parkland present along eastern boundary - Bouskell Park.
- Older historic core characterised by narrow walled streets isolated from the main town.
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The roofline within the town is relatively varied due to the mix of building heights; however it tends to have localised areas of uniformity. The main variation is the range of roof styles present. This ranges from flat roofs to shallow and more steeply pitched roofs, some new buildings incorporate a gentle curve to the roof.
Public realm and green space

There are a number of open spaces throughout Blaby which serve the adjoining residential areas, however the area of greatest note within the town is Bouskell Park. This is the location of a medieval village and the outlines of plots, raised ground of the old manor house and ridge and furrow field patterns are evident within the park. The park has a strong parkland character created when it was part of the grounds of Blaby Hall. The park has mature wooded boundaries which screen the majority of urban development from view although the church spire and roofline of Blaby Hall are visible above vegetation. The park is an important feature of the town although the connections between the park, old core and the main centre are not clearly defined or promoted.

Capacity for change along the urban edge

The urban edges of Blaby are relatively well defined by roads and the railway along the northern boundary. The railway provides a defined vegetated edge to its boundary with the Sence and Soar Floodplain landscape character area. This development along the north connects Whetstone and Blaby and the individual settlements would benefit from improved gateways to reinforce their separate distinctiveness. Expansion beyond the railway would need to retain an elevated vegetated edge and would need to respect the characteristics of the Sence and Soar Floodplain landscape character area. In addition it would need to reinforce the distinction between Blaby and Whetstone.

The western edge of Blaby is particularly sensitive to expansion. This area has limited open land between the settlements of Whetstone and Blaby. Although the A426 is relatively well vegetated there is little scope for expansion along this edge. Infill development in this area would require sensitive placement to ensure the roadline was totally obscured from the road. This area is an important buffer to ensure the individual settlements of Whetstone and Bouskell are protected.

The southern fringe of Blaby is relatively well defined although urban fringe uses such as Blaby Golf Course are expanding further south. Small individual houses are scattered along this road and reduce the land’s effectiveness as a buffer between Blaby and Countesthorpe.

The eastern boundary of Blaby is formed by Bouskell Park and land around Blaby Hall which provide a very well vegetated and relatively rural setting to the edge of the town. The evergreen woodland of Long Wood provides a strong linear feature to the edge. Expansion beyond this point should be resisted. Any small scale development would require the replication of the mature woodland edge to ensure that no roofline could be seen within the wider landscape of Blaby, Countesthorpe and Whetstone Fringe landscape character area. Where any roofline may be visible they should appear as farm buildings characteristic of the landscape character area. Future changes in development or land management would also need to respect the rural parkland character of Bouskell Park to retain its perceived connection with the wider countryside.

The south eastern edge of the town is more urban in character and prominent within the wider landscape. New linear planting Blaby Oaks by the Woodland Trust will over time screen this edge from the wider countryside. Expansion along the urban edge would need to respect the key characteristics of the Blaby, Countesthorpe and Whetstone Fringe landscape character area such as linear strips of prominent woodland and meandering streams. However it could reinforce the rural-urban boundary and improve the rural characteristics of the surrounding landscape.

Recommendations

- Restore the connection between the town centre, older core and Bouskell Park through appropriate signage, improved public realm and defined pedestrian links between the areas.
- Enhance the town entrances through appropriate development, landscape treatments and signage. This is particularly important from entrance off the A426 to reinforce the boundary between Whetstone and Blaby.
- Enhance public realm and shop frontages within the town centre to create a distinctive character for the town through a consistent design theme to the public realm along the main roads through the town.
- Conserve the mature groups of trees within residential areas and encourage replacement planting and tree planting within new development schemes.
- Protect and enhance the setting of Bouskell Park to retain its rural parkland character and perceived connection to the surrounding countryside through the retention of its strong vegetated boundaries and preventing views of the roofline of surrounding housing development.
**BLABY DISTRICT SETTLEMENT CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**

**BRAUNSTONE TOWN**

**Location and context**
Braunstone Town is a large residential suburb to the west of Leicester city centre. The area developed as a substantial but separate extension to Braunstone during the mid 20th century.

**Built form and settlement pattern**
The area is uniform in character with roads generally being relatively wide with semi-detached housing set behind front gardens and driveways. There is subtle variation between roads and built form where development has been undertaken by different housing developers and at different times.

The settlement is bisected by Lubbesthorpe Way beyond which is a large area of new housing at Thorpe Astley and industrial warehouse development, this industrial estate is self contained and appears separate to the settlement, however the buildings are prominent within the wider landscape to the west.

The most prominent feature of Braunstone Town is the wide grass verge through the centre with roads either side. This provides an expansive boulevard through the suburb and provides a landmark feature to enable orientation which other residential roads in the suburb lack.

Small local shopping facilities are dispersed throughout the area. Some form a small line of shops near a road junction and others are formed as a small triangle at a road junction; however the area lacks a defined central core.

Braunstone Town is on slightly higher ground than the surrounding landscape, providing a slightly rising roofline. However there are no distinctive features resulting in a relatively uniform skyline.

**KEY URBAN CHARACTERISTICS**
- Predominantly a residential suburb with no definitive boundaries between this and other areas on the western fringes of Leicester.
- Large boulevard with groups of mature trees is a distinctive landmark and green corridor through the centre of the settlement.
- Uniform rising skyline with no distinctive tall features.
- Corner buildings are features at road junctions.
- No retail core present, facilities dispersed throughout the area.

**Architectural style**
Semi-detached properties are the most common style of buildings within this area although they vary greatly depending on their age. In the southwest of Braunstone Town there are a few streets which are characterised by short rows of four to six terraced properties. Shops tend to match the style of the surrounding buildings and where these are two storeys often have retail on the ground floor and private flats above.

At road junctions along the central boulevard and other road junctions throughout the area, corner buildings front onto the junction and are a distinctive feature. Although built in the same style as other buildings along each street they create the more defined road entrance due to a slight variation in their orientation so that they front both roads.

There is limited vegetation apart from within open space, and along the central boulevard verge as front gardens tend to be relatively small to allow off road parking.

Boundary treatments vary considerably from brick walls to ornamental hedgerows and in places no boundaries or timber fencing.

Timber fenced boundaries are a common feature. Where present they often prevent intervisibility between the buildings and the roads due to their height. This reduces the relatively continuous built frontage created along the roads.

St Crispin’s Church provides a localised landmark. Although of modern construction the church has a different architectural style to any other building within the area and is in a prominent location on a road intersection.

The most common building material is brick in light and dark brown colours. Some houses have white or beige render which provides localised variation. Roof colour is predominantly a dark brown tile. Red tiles are present in some areas, however they are prominent and contrast with surrounding building materials.

A number of properties have corner detailing in brick. This generally uses a slightly darker colour of brick although in rendered properties the brick colouring is of a lighter colour.
Public realm and green space

There is a lack of greenspace within the settlement, the grass verge along Kingsway is the most prominent piece of open space. It provides a green setting to housing through a swathe of mature tree planting which filters views to either side of the road.

Mossdale Meadows provides a small area of informal open space and nature conservation with easy access from the residential area.

Franklin Park is located within the centre of Braunstone Town. This open space feels fairly secluded with relatively few buildings fronting onto it. In addition allotments are located adjacent to the open space although there is little integration between the two.

Open space is mostly situated on the eastern and western boundaries of the settlement and tends to be informal and managed for nature conservation.

Braunstone Park is a large area of open space comprising open playing fields, sports ground, play facilities and an area of more formal parkland. This lies on the eastern edge of Braunstone within the neighbouring district of Leicester City.

Capacity for change along the urban edge

There is no distinct northern boundary to Braunstone Town within Blaby District. Development extends continuously to the north and east.

To the south the boundary is formed by Fosse Park which is a large retail centre consisting of large retail buildings and expansive car parking. This south eastern boundary extends into the Sence and Soar floodplain landscape character area which is defined by its floodplain characteristics of a mix of open meadows and small clumps of woodland. Development is sparse in this area due to the proximity of the River Sence and its flood plain. Any expansion beyond the edge would need to respect this mosaic of habitats and the flooding characteristics of this landscape character area.

The western boundary extends to Lubbesthorpe Brook which is fairly indistinct and has the appearance of a large ditch at the edge of fields. To the southwest the edge is constrained by industrial development which is separated from housing by the A563 and The Osiers Nature Area. The urban edge would benefit from new wooded boundaries particularly along the fringes of the A563.

Gateway features

The most prominent gateway feature is the wide central boulevard which is vegetated by mature trees and provides informal recreational space and a strong entrance to the area from Narborough Road South.

Other gateways are far less defined and the edges of Braunstone Town are difficult to distinguish from other surrounding suburbs.

Recommendations

- Conserve and enhance the boulevard through the centre of the settlement as an important green corridor and landscape setting.
- Enhance signage for the area to identify it as a different suburb to adjacent areas.
- Enhance the interaction between open spaces and surrounding residential areas through sensitive management of vegetation and improving entrances and approaches into open spaces.
- Protect the corner building characteristics of the area and promote new distinctive corner buildings within new developments.
Cosby Land Settlement

**Key Urban Characteristics**

- Large properties set within large mature landscaped grounds.
- Uniform grid layout and character across the whole area.
- Residential area with no retail provision.
- Boundaries to properties are predominantly formed by mature evergreen hedgerows.
- Detached houses with distinct steeply pitched roofs.

**Location and Context**

This is a small sub area on the western edge of Cosby. The area is screened and with its distinctive architecture appears as a separate area within Cosby.

This area was originally set up by the Land Settlement Association to provide smallholdings to enable workers to start a rural life and be self sufficient working off their land. The first land settlement associations were set up in the early 1930's, however the outbreak of the war affected their success. Today this part of Cosby is a sought-after area due to the size of properties and gardens on each plot.

**Settlement Pattern**

Although all the properties are now privately owned; the style and space of the settlement has been well maintained. The area has a strong regular form with properties uniformly fronting onto the road and set within mature landscaped gardens.

There is a relatively open character created by wide grass verges and space between properties. The character is relatively simple and uniform throughout the area.

**Gateway Features**

There is only one entrance into the area from Croft Road. The buildings are relatively well screened by mature vegetation within the grass verge. The entrance has wide grass verges with small concrete boulders to prevent parking; this creates the impression of a private drive to a small number of properties.

**Capacity for Change**

This area is particularly sensitive to development which would change its uniform character. Smaller houses of a different architectural style would seem out of place and would strongly fragment the character which exists. The area is sensitive to development, and redevelopment of plots within the area should reflect the principles of land settlement association housing such as large grounds, houses with strongly pitched roofs set within mature trees and hedgerows.

**Architectural Style**

This area has a strong unified architectural character although some subtle variations in render and buildings colour provide variety. All buildings are large detached properties which have a distinctive steeply pitched roof often with protruding gable ends.

The materials used for the construction are generally orange/red brick and red clay tile roofs. Most properties have had modifications and extensions and are of slightly different materials such as darker grey roof, render and wood panelling.

Windows are generally large although recent modifications have resulted in a great variety of window styles. The majority of windows are set within the steeply sloping roofs.

Render on the buildings and installation of PVC windows has had a minor impact on the architectural characteristics by simplifying the built form character, however this has not had a strong impact on the character of the area.

Boundary treatments are ornamental and evergreen hedges which obscure the lower storey windows and provide a green appearance to each street. Some boundaries have been removed and replaced by brick walls, fencing or left open. Where this occurs it alters the uniform character of the road. Further removal of hedgerow boundaries would alter the green landscaped character significantly and provide a more suburban and less consistent ambience.

**Recommendations**

- Protect and conserve the strong characteristics of the Land Settlement buildings such as their layout and building characteristics.
- Protect and enhance the mature vegetation surrounding and containing the area. The mature trees and vegetation are important characteristics of the area creating an attractive green and leafy appearance.
- Conserve the hedgerow boundaries within the area and resist their replacement with metal and timber fencing.
Cosby is a clustered village which extends north from the central core. The core of the village extends along a small brook which is a dominant feature within the village.

Due to the village’s location close to Leicester, it has been subject to development pressure and has expanded gradually northwards over the 20th century. One area of the village is important for its particularly distinctive character; this is Cosby Land Settlement which is described on a separate Settlement Character Sheet.

**Built form and settlement pattern**

Cosby has developed around a brook which flows along the main route through the village and this gives the village its distinctive character. The stream forms the central spine with a wide road which gives the area an ‘open’ character. The centre of the village which includes a central green with the watercourse flowing through it is designated as a Conservation Area.

Signage and business names which make reference to the village name throughout the village help to integrate the newer development with the older historic core and reinforce identity.

The street pattern is relatively sinuous, created by the close association between the houses, roads and the stream. Views through the settlement are enclosed and restricted by the mature trees which are located within private gardens and along the brook.

The urban form varies throughout the village. Development along the majority of roads is of high density and fairly uniform, although the central core includes a mix of small cottage terraces, shops and small courtyards set behind arched entrances which provides variation.

There is a wide mix of architectural styles and densities present within the village with the oldest of these dispersed around the central core of the village to the south. However the presence of the brook provides a unifying influence and creates a subtle transition from the older historic core to more modern development.

The village has a varied roofline created through a combination of larger townhouses, agricultural buildings and smaller terraces and cottages. The church is a localised dominant feature within the village and this is Cosby Land Settlement which is described on a separate Settlement Character Sheet.

**Location and context**

Located to the south of Leicester, Cosby forms a large clustered village which extends north from the central core. The core of the village extends along a small brook which is a dominant feature within the village.

Due to the village’s location close to Leicester, it has been subject to development pressure and has expanded gradually northwards over the 20th century. One area of the village is important for its particularly distinctive character; this is Cosby Land Settlement which is described on a separate Settlement Character Sheet.

**Architectural style**

There is a variety of architectural styles present within the village. There are examples of 18th and 19th and 20th century development.

The oldest buildings are characterised by red brick with older properties such as Cosby House having detail provided by granite walling at the base of the building and sandstone on the corners, doors and windows. The church is constructed of granite and there are two thatched properties within the village.

The majority of the remaining buildings are characterised by their simple cottage appearance and are constructed mainly of red brick with very simple detailing around their window frames. Many of the windows are painted white although a few are black.

Many of the buildings in the central part of the village have either been painted or rendered white. The details around the doors and windows have been retained. The mix of red brick and white paint or render is a characteristic of the village. Buildings of similar style are typically in small groups of three to four.

There are a few larger buildings present within the village which are three storeys in height and provide interest within the roofline. These are not visually intrusive as they are set within mature garden boundaries or adjacent to mature vegetation along the stream.

Boundaries to some properties are formed by the stream flowing through the village. These gardens tend to be well maintained and contribute to the mature vegetated character of the village. Boundaries to properties along roads are generally formed by low brick walls and a small amount of granite. Cottages often front directly onto the street or have a very small front garden. Larger properties frequently have small courtyards which are screened from view by brick walls and mature vegetation is visible above. A few properties have granite boundary walls. A metal handrail (painted white) protects pedestrians from the steep drop to the stream and some properties have similar metal fencing.

Some small scale industry is present within the village. However the buildings are set back from the main street frontage, and have the character of barns and are not visually intrusive elements in the village. There are a number of agricultural barns within the village which help reinforce the village’s rural location and connection with the agricultural landscape.

Away from the brook the character changes dramatically with newer development becoming much more urban in nature with narrower roads and relatively little vegetation.
Cosby’s character is formed by the distinctive canalised stream set within a wide verge which flows through most of the village. Mature trees are present along the length of the stream and provide a vegetated setting to buildings within the village.

Small amounts of other public open space are present within housing estates and Victory Park is located on the outskirts of the central part of the village.

The eastern side of the village is set on slightly lower topography which quickly rises away from the village. It is well defined by the wooded embankments of the former railway line. Expansion on this edge could potentially increase the village’s influence within the surrounding landscape the Blaby, Countesthorpe and Whetstone Fringe landscape character area.

The stream and associated vegetation are particularly important to retain as these are features that ensure modern development and the older historic core integrate successfully. The vegetated stream is a prominent and attractive feature and wildlife corridor through the village.

Protect and enhance the gateways into the village.

Preserve the varied architectural form within the village including the reference to agricultural barns and farm buildings and cottage terraces. These references should be reflected in any new development within the village.

Enhance the vegetation along existing streets off the main routes through the village through planting of new street trees where space allows and active management of existing stock.

Encourage the use of swales within new development to reflect the green corridor present through the village.

The northern edge is particularly sensitive to future change or expansion as it forms an important defining space between Littlethorpe and Cosby. There is a relatively sharp transition from the urban edge of Cosby to agricultural fields, however there are already a number of individual properties which are dispersed along Cosby Road which threaten to blur the distinction between the two villages.

To the south, the boundary is relatively well defined and heavily vegetated by Cosby Golf Course and thick vegetation around Cosby Land Settlement. The ground rises slightly away from the urban edge and expansion on higher ground could increase the influence of the village within the surrounding landscape. Any future development would need to respect the key characteristics of the Cosby Agricultural Parkland landscape character area which includes blocks of woodland on high ground, agricultural parkland and the presence of scattered country houses and estates.

At each road entrance to the village there is an ornate village sign which reinforces the entrances into the village and emphasises identity.
**COUNTESTHORPE**

**KEY URBAN CHARACTERISTICS**
- Historic core centred on a small road intersection with a block of older buildings within the centre.
- A high proportion of street trees provides a green setting to development and helps to link the older and more modern development.
- Visually important road junctions at either end of the village.
- Skyline relatively uniform punctuated by woodland vegetation. The church is a localised feature.
- Tight urban form within the centre enhanced by walled lanes leading off main roads.
- Landmark buildings within older core provide focal points and vistas.
- Red brick and white painted buildings with black windows and doors are a feature of the village centre.

**Architectural style**

There is a mix of architectural styles within the village. The centre contains mostly small terraces and cottages (both residential properties and small shops) and a number of feature half-timbered buildings providing local variations in the street character. Further from the centre the buildings are almost all semi-detached and further towards the west they become predominantly detached and set within large grounds, often set back from the main roads. Mature vegetation in these locations retains a strong sense of enclosure.

Materials used are predominantly red brick in a Flemish bond although there is evidence of the use of English or Suffolk bond in some of the older buildings. The colour and texture of the brick contributes to the settlement’s distinctiveness. Some of the older buildings are characterised by render which is generally white and have window frames painted black. Some timber-framed and mudstone buildings are evident within the village centre.

The church is the only example of a stone building which is predominantly limestone and granite. Welsh slate is the predominant roof material although some older buildings use Leicestershire Swithland slate. The replacement of these materials with more modern materials is detracting from the character of the village. Wide and busy roads dominate the village centre and are a detracting feature.

Boundaries to properties are quite varied through the village although to be small brick walls within the village centre with granite stone used around the church. In more residential areas the boundaries are a mix of brick and hedgerows. Some modern development has metal fencing, where this is a combination of small brick walls with metal above it integrates well.

Some new developments have attempted to reflect the built style within the historic core. These are small red brick terraces with white windows which integrate well with surrounding buildings. Interest is created around the doorways which reflect the style of the adjacent terraced buildings.

The roofline within the village is relatively uniform although the church is a localised feature. When viewing the village from the west, buildings and conifer vegetation within the cemetery is a prominent feature.

**Location and context**

Coutesthorpe is located six miles to the south of Leicester and is a relatively clustered settlement which has expanded along the four roads which enter from each corner of the village: Willoughby Road, Winchester Road, Leicester Road and Peatling Road. The built form around the junction of Peatling Road and Leicester Road is within a Conservation Area.

This is a relatively large village, with expansion first taking place as a result of the knitting industry. At one point there were over twenty frame knitting shops, however few of the buildings remain. Over the 20th century the village has expanded rapidly from the historic core and today is a large residential commuter village.

**Built form and settlement pattern**

The urban form of the village differs between the old core and more modern 20th century development within the western part. The historic core is centred around the church, adjacent village green and a number of small narrow roads bordered by a number of older properties. A key feature of the centre is a block of buildings located within the junctions of intersecting roads and a number of individual buildings which provide focal points and localised vistas.

The centre of the village contains a mix of older and more modern infill buildings. Older buildings tend to front directly on to the street creating a narrow enclosed character. The enclosure is further enhanced within some of the other streets through high boundary walls around properties. Variety is created through the irregular and contrasting nature of the built form and spaces between. There is a tight knit urban form and continuous street frontages around Central Street, Church Street, Main Street and Peatling Street. A more open character is apparent around larger houses and outbuildings of the former farmsteads on Station Road and urban development throughout much of the modern areas particularly in the western part of the village.

The character within the centre is partially diluted through modern commercial development, in particular car parks and low-rise single storey development which have created a more open character and reduced the sense of enclosure.

Residential development throughout the village is characterised by wide grass verges containing hedgerows and groups of mature trees. Smaller residential roads are often lined with trees which creates a green setting to the village. This is further enhanced by the disused railway which the village bisects and strong vegetation around its fringes. This vegetated setting provides some linkage between the older core and more modern urban extensions.

**BLABY DISTRICT SETTLEMENT CHARACTER ASSESSMENT**
Public realm and green space

Important open spaces include the Paddock, St Andrews Churchyard and the Square. Trees are important in defining the space and providing interest in the skyline; they contribute to the rural character of Green Lane and help to screen modern development along Station Road and Green Lane. An area of open space is present on The Leyslands which is a modern estate within the north of the village.

A number of wide verges are present within the more modern eastern areas of the village, these are well vegetated with a mixture of hedgerows and mature trees which create a green setting for development and integrate the well vegetated dismantled railway which bisects the village.

Some of the streets within the central part of the village are lined with avenue trees which adds to the green setting.

Some of the streets within the central part of the village are lined with avenue trees which adds to the green setting. The eastern boundary is located on slightly higher topography and is therefore more prominent. The edge is currently relatively urban although its influence within the wider landscape is limited by mature vegetation along a watercourse and along the cemetery edge. Future changes in land management or development along this edge could be accommodated provided they did not increase the visual prominence of the village within the wider countryside.

Infill development within the older core would need to be sensitively designed to reinforce the tight urban form and maintain a close association with the street. It could potentially strengthen the character of the village provided it was of a similar scale and height to existing built development and used appropriate brick materials in its construction.

Development to the north would need to reinforce the distinction between the countryside and village that exists at present. In addition it would need to reflect the key characteristics of linear woodlands, protect the individual identity of Countesthorpe and reinforce the entrance into the village along Winchester Road.

Recommendations

- Improve the connectivity between the eastern and western parts of the village by sensitive placement of development and consistent landscape and public realm treatment along all main roads through the village.
- Protect the existing historic core from further change which fragments the tight urban form of the village and promote development which would respect the village’s architectural characteristics.
- Enhance the village entrances through bespoke village signage, improved urban form and landscaping to provide a distinctive entrance into the village from all directions.
- Protect the existing wooded character and tree lined avenues along streets through maintenance and replacement of street trees and planting of new street trees along roads within new developments throughout the village.
- Explore the potential to improve linkages to use of the disused railway to improve recreational links from Countesthorpe to the wider countryside and provide a long distance green infrastructure route through the district.
BLABY DISTRICT SETTLEMENT CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

CROFT

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Prominence of granite used in local building materials within the older core.
- High granite walls along roads provide a strong sense of enclosure.
- Distinctive separation between the older core and modern development which have little relationship to each other.
- Strong association with the granite quarry.
- Limited retail core within the older part of the village, remainder dispersed throughout the settlement.
- Sense of enclosure created by rising topography and dense urban development.
- Numerous open spaces associated with the River Soar, Croft Hill, Glebe Woods which link into the wider countryside.

Architectural style

The older historic buildings such as the church, old rectory and a private house are characterised by the use of granite stone within their construction. These buildings tend to be detached and relatively large with detail provided around windows including sandstone lintels and cornerstones. They are set behind high granite walls with mature trees and vegetation surrounding them.

Other buildings to the north of the river are characterised by their combined use of granite with brick detailing on the edges and around windows. Cottages and terraces closer to the quarry are mainly of brick construction and tend to front either straight onto the street or are set back slightly with a small front garden bordered by a low stone wall. Some of the windows within these terraces have been designed to reflect the window style of both the church and old rectory and contribute strongly to their architectural style. Other properties have a simpler design and show evidence of the loss of window features through the installation of PVC windows and doors.

Location and context

The village is located within the central part of the district around Croft Hill and adjacent to Croft Quarry. This is the largest quarry in the district and has a strong relationship with the village both in its physical presence and the use of building materials. The settlement retains a distinctive core of historic buildings, however the majority of the settlement has expanded to the south east over the 20th century. These two areas are separated by the River Soar and the railway.

Built form and settlement pattern

The core of the settlement is characterised by its sharp rise in topography towards the Quarry and Croft Hill and the relatively narrow street pattern created by high granite stone walls, often up to 2m in height, which border the roads. The buildings are visible above the stone walls due to the sharp rise in topography.

The village centre is perceived to be the historic core and is located on the intersection of Station Road, Huncote Road and Hill Street which links to the edge of the quarry. However, this centre is predominantly residential with the only commercial property being the Heathcote Arms which is located on high ground at this intersection.

The majority of the village to the south is suburban in character with wide roads and houses set behind front gardens designed to accommodate car parking. This area does not reflect the character present within the historic core of the village.

The street pattern to the north of the village tends to be relatively narrow with the sense of enclosure created by a mixture of mature vegetation within private gardens and properties on high ground which front almost directly onto the road.

The roofline is relatively uniform within the majority of the village, however the ground rises sharply towards the church and buildings are set within a wooded backdrop. The church is visible above this vegetation and is a localised feature on the horizon.
**Public realm and green space**

Within the historic part of the village a grassy bank and war memorial form the focal point within the centre. The River Soar forms a wooded low lying green finger which separates the historic core from newer 20th century development.

Croft Hill is accessible from the village and the open grassland at its summit enables panoramic views across the district and beyond.

Glebe Wood, a Woodland Trust site, is adjacent to the cemetery and has a parkland character. This links strongly to the woodland present on the slopes of Croft Hill and within the larger properties such as old rectory and also provides a linkage into the wider countryside.

Croft Meadow Nature Reserve is located within the central part of the village although access to the area is relatively limited from the main roads through the village.

The northern edges of the village are largely restricted by the quarry which prevents expansion beyond the existing edge.

Scattered development exists along Croft Hill Road, however the land beyond this falls sharply and the surrounding landscape is relatively open. Existing development is dispersed within wooded vegetation which links into the wooded slopes of Croft Hill and is not prominent within the landscape. The road has glimpsed views out towards the surrounding countryside. Expansion along this edge would need to respect the existing built characteristics of this section of Croft such as the use of granite in construction. It would need to ensure that it does not make this area of the village more prominent in the landscape and that views out to the surrounding countryside are retained.

The southern edge of the village is well defined; however a general lack of vegetation results in the urban edge appearing prominent within the landscape and from Coventry Road in particular. The scale, visibility and uniform nature of the edge reduces the perception of Croft being a small village. Future land management or development should integrate landscaping and mature field boundary vegetation into the urban edge to provide variety to the skyline and to improve the perception of the gateways into the village from the south and east.

**Recommendations**

- Enhance the gateways into the village from the south and east off Coventry Road. Development or landscape treatment along these entrances could provide focal features to reinforce village character along these gateways into the village.

- Integrate the newer area of Croft with the older historic core through appropriate public realm treatment and the use of similar building materials such as granite within boundary walls and signage on prominent roads through the village.

- Protect the unique characteristics of the older core of Croft and ensure new development, reflects the building materials and characteristics that are present.

- Enhance the connectivity of the residential areas to the south of the River Soar to Croft Pasture Nature Reserve and Glebe Woods and improve their integration within the village by improving the linking green infrastructure access routes such as cycle tracks and footpaths.

**Gateway Features**

There is a strong gateway into the village from Huncote created by high granite boundary walls which edge the road and which is reinforced by entering the village from higher ground.

From Coventry Road to the east, the village lacks a defined entrance; the two routes appear suburban and industrial in character and do not reflect the character of the older core of the village. However, within the centre of Croft, the bridge over both the railway and river in combination with a the public house on higher ground provide a strong gateway into the historic core of the village.
Elmesthorpe is a small settlement situated to the western edge of the district, south of Earl Shilton. It is predominantly a residential village, with a strongly linear form. The settlement has been expanded and developed largely by the Land Settlement Association during the 1930s to provide smallholdings to enable workers to start a rural life and be self-sufficient working off their land. Today these properties are much sought-after due to the size of the buildings and the substantial gardens with each plot.

**Location and context**

Elmesthorpe has a strong unified architectural character due to the dense roadside vegetation. The majority of houses in the village are arranged along the main road, Station Road. Few examples of the original Land Settlement houses remain. The majority of these properties have had modern extensions which has created large detached properties uniformly fronting onto the road, set within extensive mature landscaped gardens.

A pocket of modern housing has been developed towards the northeast edge of the village creating a compact group. New development has occurred off the main road in the areas of The Roundhills and Leighton Crescent, is also linear in form.

Topography within the village is gently sloping, rising from a lower area and watercourse to the south west of the village to higher ground in a north easterly direction towards Earl Shilton.

Further large detached dwellings and smallholdings are situated to the south of Station Road along Billington Road East and West running parallel. These properties are situated on lower ground adjacent to a small watercourse which also runs parallel repeating the strong linear pattern which is evident throughout Elmesthorpe.

There are very few views in and out of the village. Existing mature dense vegetation together with regular, well spaced buildings and large private gardens limit public vantage points and restrict views. The village has an enclosed character due to the dense roadside vegetation.

The village does not have a defined core partially due to its strong linear pattern. The oldest building in the village is the parish church of St Mary dating from the 13th century situated at the junction of Elmesthorpe Lane and Station Road.

Rooflines are generally only visible from longer distances including that within large gardens. The roofline of modern development respects distinctive pitched roofs and varied steeply pitched roofs.

Detached properties with wide facades/frontages and mature vegetation and varied steeply pitched roofs.

Buildings often not visible due to dense vegetation.

No retail centre within the village resulting in no clearly defined village core.

Limited public open space and amenity space present within the village.

**Architectural style**

The village has a strong unified architectural character typical of Land Settlement Association estates. A degree of variation is created through subtle differences within the arrangement of building materials. The dominant materials within these buildings are red brick, white and cream painted render and dark red/brown clay roof tiles.

Buildings tend to be of a similar age being relatively modern and constructed during the 20th century. Building materials are similar throughout the village, generally a mixture of red brick and render. Roofs have a steep pitch covered with dark coloured tiles. Larger dwellings typically have two or more protruding gables to the façades.

Home Farmhouse, a brick built and rendered Grade II listed building situated on Station Road, dates from the mid 18th century, indicating a long standing association with agriculture in the area.

The public house Wentworth Arms and adjoining stables are some of the older buildings in the village built in 1896 to the designs of Charles Voysey, an Arts and Crafts designer and architect for Lord Lovelace of Kirkby Mallory. Around the same time Charles Voysey designed Nos.1-6 Worton Cottages also on Station Road. The cottages are built from brick with white rendered façades with leaded windows.

Property boundaries comprise a mixture of treatments including fences, hedges and brick walls. Many boundaries have relatively high walls and are well vegetated. Vegetation includes large trees which give glimpsed views of the buildings beyond. Some larger properties enclosed by walls are gated and have long sweeping driveways.

Most properties have had modifications and extensions and are of slightly different materials such as lighter and yellower shades of brick and wood panelling.

Windows are generally large within Land Settlement buildings; curved bays and dormer windows are often present. Recent modifications have resulted in a great variety of window styles in UPVC which detracts from the original character.

**Built form and settlement pattern**

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The village does not have a defined core partially due to its strong linear pattern. The oldest building in the village is the parish church of St Mary dating from the 13th century situated at the junction of Elmesthorpe Lane and Station Road.

Rooflines are generally only visible from longer distances including that within large gardens. The roofline of modern housing to the north eastern edge of the settlement is fairly uniform. Glimpsed views are seen broken by vegetation. Buildings are low-rise, and predominantly single or two storey.
Public realm and green space

The village hall is located on the northern edge of the village, near to the school and church. Public realm within the village is generally restricted to roadside verges and paths. Often dwellings do not have a strong visual presence from the main road as they are surrounded by large gardens and mature vegetation.

Roadside footpaths are often very narrow. The main road is busy and creates an intimidating environment for pedestrians. There is one recreation ground within the village at the Roundhills.

Housing around the Roundhills is set within mature gardens.

Newer development is set on smaller plots than the Land Settlement buildings.

Capacity for change along the urban edge

This area is particularly sensitive to development which would change the uniform character of the area; smaller houses of a different architectural style would seem out of place and would erode the strong character.

Localised subdivision of large land plots surrounding land settlement buildings has occurred in outskirts of the village. This has resulted in alteration of the character as new buildings are constructed at greater densities and often do not reflect characteristics such as the steeply pitched roofs. New development has also introduced smaller semi-detached dwellings in contrast with the existing large detached buildings.

Redevelopment of existing land within the village which reflected the principles of Land Settlement housing such as large grounds, houses with strongly pitched roofs set within mature trees and hedgerows could be assimilated provided it retained the geometric road pattern which exists at present.

The proposed Earl Shilton bypass could had a marked influence on the character of the western fringes of the village. The new road would be an urbanising influence in a fairly rural landscape. New linear woodland planting should be implemented along the road to reduce its visual influence.

Gateway features

The fringes of Station Road are heavily vegetated through the village and form an attractive green and leafy approach to the village. The vegetation consists of hedges, ornamental planting and numerous large mature trees situated within large private gardens. The coverage is fairly consistent, through the length of the village, although more notably to the south side of the road adjacent to the Land Settlement properties.

A group of mature pine trees forms an attractive landscape feature when entering the village from the south east. The trees are located within private gardens of Worton Cottages at the junction of Burbage Common Road and Station Road; the cottages themselves are attractive and significant landmarks.

The Village Hall forms a prominent landmark at the entrance to the village from the direction of Earl Shilton. It is a relatively modern structure situated within an open car parking area just off the main road to the northern fringe.

The only village pub, the Wentworth Arms forms a significant landmark to the southern entrance to the village.

Cottages and trees are a significant landmark.

Hedgerow boundaries

Mature trees and hedgerows border the roads through the village.

Public house designed by Charles Voysey

Roadside footpaths are often very narrow. The main road is busy and creates an intimidating environment for pedestrians.

There is one recreation ground within the village at the Roundhills.

Recommendations

- Protect and conserve the linear settlement pattern of the village and the strong characteristics of the Land Settlement buildings such as its layout and building characteristics.
- Protect and enhance the mature vegetation surrounding and contained within the village. The mature trees and vegetation are important characteristics of the village. It creates an attractive green and leafy appearance within the village and ensures that the village buildings nestle well into the rising landform when viewed from the surrounding area.
- Encourage woodland planting along new infrastructure routes to ensure the wooded enclosed nature of the village fringes is maintained and enhanced.
Architectural style
The older historic buildings such as the church and a private house which front onto Hall Walk and Blaby Road are characterised by the use of granite stone within their construction. These buildings are located in prominent positions and have ornate detailing around windows, doorways and along the roofline. Shop frontages within this older core generally integrate well with their buildings and have ornate detailing around windows and doors. The old bank still retains its ornamental detailing around large ground floor windows and a simple painted archway over the door.

The majority of buildings within the village are small brick terraced cottages and some larger townhouses at the intersection of High Street, Cross Street and Chapel Street. There are a number of thatched properties within the village, the most prominent being Barclays Bank within the village centre. These buildings tend to have steeply pitched rooflines and contrasting black and white colouring. Smaller cottages are more varied in character, and front directly onto the street. Many owners have erected small window boxes which provide seasonal colour.

Windows in older buildings tend to have architectural highlights provided either by a brick detailing, such as a simple arch over small windows, arched windows or wider lintels and changes in materials used. The most common building materials are red brick and slate or dark grey tiles. Granite is restricted to the eastern periphery of the village adjacent to the church. A small amount of white render or paint is used on buildings but this is not a prominent feature within the village.

Boundaries between properties are often constructed using granite with brick pillars. Evergreen and ornamental hedgerows are located behind these boundaries and partially enclose the fronts of houses, however buildings still retain a strong association with the street.

Modern development which has been successfully integrated into the village includes a three storey townhouse development which fronts onto a key road junction and provides an active street frontage. Within the older core a larger detached property has reflected a farm courtyard with garages centred within the courtyard as outbuildings. Although set back from the road, this development has granite and brick walls with metal gates along the main street and integrates well with the surrounding buildings.

The historic core of the village contains some commercial and retail development, however the contemporary village centre is located slightly further south. There have been modern infill developments and shops which have partly fragmented the character creating a wider more open street pattern with more buildings set back from the road frontage. Terraced housing development is located adjacent to the centre and the dense nature of this style of built form retains the tight character.

Although the village has no formal village green or square, the orientation of the buildings at the junction of High Street and The Cross create the character of a square with buildings facing onto it on all sides. This area is now mostly used for car parking which is a detracting feature.

Enderby has a varied roofline created by the rising topography and range of building types and heights within each street. Towards the south the skyline becomes more uniform where the built form becomes predominantly terraced.

Small walled footpaths which lead off the main streets linking roads together are a characteristic feature and further enhance the tight enclosed character within the older part of the village. The historic core of the village, designated as a Conservation Area, is on the north-eastern side of the village where the land rises in a north-westerly direction towards a series of former quarries. Granite quarrying and local granite outcrops have a localised effect on the landform adjacent to the settlement and also the building materials used within it.

Built form and settlement pattern
The core of the settlement is characterised by its sharp rise in topography towards a former quarry within the northern part of the settlement. Towards the south development merges with Narborough and is typical of late 19th century and 20th century suburban residential development with wide verges, houses set back from the road and a fairly uniform architectural style.

The village centre is defined by its tight enclosed street pattern which winds around the rising topography. This provides a continuous frontage and variety along the street with buildings such as the New Inn pub providing focal vistas along the street. The majority of buildings are two storeys in height, however each building is of a slightly differing height and roofline. This results in each street having a slightly different character which is unified by its close relationship to the street and general cottage terrace style of buildings.

The historic core contains some commercial and retail development, however the contemporary village centre is located slightly further south. There have been modern infill developments and shops which have partly fragmented the character creating a wider more open street pattern with more buildings set back from the road frontage. Terraced housing development is located adjacent to the centre and the dense nature of this style of built form retains the tight character.

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**Public realm and green space**

Open space is located outside the historic core on the eastern and southern edges of Enderby. This includes a golf course bowling green and recreation area and cricket ground.

A large area of open space is located within the eastern edge of the village associated with the school and has some recreational facilities such as a cricket pitch. The ground is well overlooked by properties and provides a central focus within this part of the village.

Parkland around Enderby Hall is an area of private formal parkland which has a strong influence on the character of the approach into Enderby from the east.

**Gateway features**

There is a strong gateway to the village from the junction of Blaby Road and Leicester Lane. The church is located to the east of this junction and a granite building to the west. These buildings combined with the tight urban pattern along the street create a strong entrance feature into the village.

**Capacity for change along the urban edge**

The village centre has limited capacity for infill development. Any development within this area should reflect the distinctive winding street pattern and mix of building styles which compliment the scale and form of terraces present within the village centre. Buildings should front directly on to the street or be set behind small front gardens. Feature buildings which reflect the characteristics of black and white thatched properties should be included within any proposals. Change within the village centre has the opportunity to restore an enclosed street pattern and reconnect the Conservation Area with the contemporary village centre.

The eastern edge of the village is defined by Parkland around Enderby Hall which lies to the north of Leicester Lane. This parkland provides an attractive rural approach to the village. Expansion of the village to the east would need to respect this open agricultural character and retain the rural approach to the village.

The southern boundary of the village is difficult to determine. There is little distinction between where Enderby stops and Narborough begins as there is no break in development. Infill development along this boundary may present the opportunity to reinforce distinction between the two settlements.

The western boundary is defined by a disused railway which forms a mature wooded boundary to the settlement and provides a strong separation between the village and the wider countryside. From the wider landscape the village appears contained by this vegetated strip. Expansion beyond this edge would need to retain the key characteristics of the village which include the rising roofline and sharp distinction between the rural and urban environment. A strong mature wooded buffer between the landscape and the urban edge would need to be retained to ensure the village does not become more prominent within the surrounding landscape.

**Recommendations**

- Protect the strong entrance to the village created by the church and other buildings at the junction of Desford Road and Leicester Lane by protecting these landmark buildings and their setting.
- Conserve the rural character of the approach to the village from Leicester Lane by ensuring that views of the roofline of Enderby are prevented and the setting of the Hall conserved.
- Conserve and in places restore small walled footpaths and connecting routes through the village centre and encourage their inclusion within new development.
- Enhance the southern gateways to the village to improve the distinction between Enderby and Narborough through improved signage. Future changes and new development may present the opportunity to create focal points and entrance features along this boundary.
- Protect the varied rising roofline and winding street pattern through appropriate orientation of infill development and reflect this pattern in new areas of development.
- Restore the tight urban form within the southern part of the village centre through careful placement of new infill development and sensitive and integrated public realm treatment.
Architectural style

This area contains a mix of 20th century residential buildings including terraces, bungalows, semi-detached and detached accommodation. There is limited variation in styles of buildings although some variation occurs between housing of different ages. The prevailing house type is semi-detached which all have front gardens. Houses are often set back from the road within reasonably sized front gardens and driveways tend to be located to the side of properties. There is no single boundary treatment which characterises this area. Along main roads boundaries tend to be more often enclosed by brick walls sometimes with hedging behind. In other locations timber fencing, hedges and open plan gardens with no boundaries are common.

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Location and context

Glen Parva is a small fragmented settlement situated east of Enderby and north of Blaby within the north eastern edge of the district.

The settlement is constrained on all boundaries: by a disused railway corridor to the west; an operational railway running northeast to southwest through the settlement; the Rivers Sence and Soar and Grand Union Canal to the south and west respectively; and by existing built up areas to the north and east.

The village forms part of a wider suburb of south Leicester. Its boundaries adjoining other areas are often indistinguishable due to post-war urban expansion and amalgamation of settlements.

Built form and settlement pattern

The area has a fairly geometric grid pattern although this is fragmented slightly along the fringes which are characterised by sinuous cul-de-sac layout.

Unity in the built form is restricted to adjacent streets and tends to provide a relatively enclosed character. Open views are channelled along roads to the Sence and Soar Floodplain although this is on lower ground and development in Braunstone Town is visible on rising topography.

The character of this area is typical of many suburbs throughout Leicester and within other cities and has few distinguishing features. Shopping and community facilities are dispersed across the area with no defined centre.

The roofline appears slightly undulating on the skyline due to the nature of the landform and uniform height and style of roofs across the area.

Views are enclosed by built form except along the south western fringe. This is situated on slightly elevated ground overlooking the River Sence valley and allowing medium to long distance views in a southerly direction over Whetstone and to the fringes of Enderby. Sloping land immediately beyond the urban fringe is visually prominent due to its elevated position. Field boundary hedgerows and trees currently provide good screening to the edge of the settlement.
Public realm and green space

A central open space and play area includes large open mown fields with woodland/thicket planting belts to the boundaries.

Public realm consists of residential streets and verges. A limited ‘green’ setting is created where development overlooks the canal.

The Grand Union Canal along the southern boundary of the settlement provides an attractive recreational resource easily accessible from residential areas. It provides visual interest, activity and a physical break between adjacent built up areas. It also creates a significant linear strip of vegetation and trees along its course, providing habitats and a significant wildlife corridor through the urban areas.

The former Great Central Railway on the western boundary is a Sustrans route and provides a long distance route both out to the countryside to the south and Leicester to the north.

Capacity for change along the urban edge

There is relatively limited capacity to the fringes of Glen Parva for urban expansion due to its constrained boundaries.

Proposed changes adjacent to the canal side could be sensitive, for example if these lead to the loss of trees and waterside vegetation.

The former railway corridor with its linear wooded corridor creates a strong physical barrier and effective screen to the western edge of Glen Parva. This is a substantial landscape feature where it runs through the district roughly north - south. It is characterised by its mature linear wooded strips along its embankments which increase its visual prominence as a landscape feature. Expansion beyond this edge would need to respect the prominence of this feature and replicate its character along built from edges.

Landform dips down from Glen Parva to the River Sence to the south. An operational railway line cuts across the Sence floodplain in this area and through the eastern section of Glen Parva. The lower fringes of Glen Parva are relatively well screened by field boundary trees, hedgerows and natural vegetation associated with the floodplain area. Expansion into this landscape would need to respect and reflect this vegetation cover and should retain the key characteristics of the Soar and Sence Floodplain.

These characteristics are defined vegetated boundaries adjacent to urban areas, channelled views along the floodplain, and a natural pattern of waterside trees within a mosaic of open wetland meadows and woodlands.

Proposed changes in such locations should seek to conserve and enhance the canal corridors as attractive and safe recreation routes. Any development or change within areas closely associated with the Grand Union Canal, a designated Conservation Area, should have regard to its vegetated character and heritage value and these may be utilised as design reference. To the south the Scheduled Ancient Monument is sensitive to any development which may affect its landscape setting.

Changes within the urban areas may result in less disruption and loss of key characteristics due to its lack of distinctive features. The area has a reasonable capacity to accommodate changes successfully given adequate space and opportunities, particularly where this would help to reinforce local distinctiveness.

Recommendations

- Conserve and enhance the canal corridor and canalside environments. The corridor provides opportunity to create an informal recreation route leading to other parts of the district north and south. The canal also provides wildlife habitats and encourages movement into and through urban areas.

- Conserve and enhance views along the watercourse corridors. Key view points and vistas should be enhanced where possible. Changes or development within fringe locations may impact upon the characteristics of the surrounding Sence and Soar Floodplain Landscape Character Area.

- Protect and enhance the floodplain characteristics of the land between the fringes of Glen Parva and Blaby. This area forms an important separation between the two settlements. Any changes should seek to retain and enhance this area and extend the natural pattern of waterside trees and meadow where possible.

- Create gateway features and promote local distinctiveness. Future changes and development may present opportunities to create or enhance key focal points and entrances to the settlement.

- Retain and protect the former railway corridor as a landscape feature and informal recreational resource. The mature vegetation of this corridor provides screening and separation from the surrounding urban development and also creates an important wildlife corridor in a predominantly urban environment.
BLABY DISTRICT SETTLEMENT CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

**GLENFIELD**

**Location and context**
Glenfield is situated on the northern tip of Blaby District consisting mainly of a mixture of 20th century housing estate developments with a small historic village centre.

The original settlement was established before AD800, close to the old Leicester Forest. The village was primarily associated with agriculture and the framework knitting industry. After the First World War an area to the east of the centre was set up as smallholdings for the poor and became known as Bacon Box Housing. These houses have since been replaced, however the long gardens are evidence of this history. Significant expansion occurred after the Second World War and Glenfield’s separation from Leicester is becoming less distinct.

Significant expansion of Glenfield has taken place to the north east, east and south east of the village centre. The edges of the urban area are defined by the A50 to the north, A563 to the east, industry and a golf course to the south and the Rothley Brook to the north west.

**Built form and settlement pattern**
An historic village core is present towards the north western edge of the Glenfield area with The Square containing a number of older buildings surrounding the junction between three roads entering the village: Kirby Road B5380, Station Road and Stamford Street. The centre has retained some of the character of a village. It has two churches and a ruined church, a small village green which is a central focus to a number of cottages and farm buildings.

The central part of the settlement beyond the historic core is laid out on a formal grid pattern. There are focal point squares with greenspace leading off and shops/ facilities located at main road junctions although there is a lack of local distinctiveness.

The built form across much of the area is relatively enclosed with a general lack of greenspace. However it becomes more open along main roads, within the northern section and around the central village green, although maintains a strong relationship to the street. Modern development is set back considerably from the main road which has been detrimental to the enclosed character of the village along Station Road.

Shopping facilities are primarily located close to the historic core reinforcing it as the village centre. Smaller local shops are dispersed frequently throughout the wider residential areas.

Pockets of industrial warehouse development are scattered along northern fringes, but are not prominent features of the village. The A46(T) is also present to the north, however its set on lower ground which reduces its visual influence.

The roofline across the area is gently rising and predominantly characterised by fairly uniform pitched roofs. This becomes more dispersed by vegetation to the north, is punctuated by church spires in the older core and has industrial features towards the north west.

**Architectural style**
The type of housing distributed throughout the Glenfield area is predominantly semi-detached housing. There is a notable change in housing type however in the north west section of Glenfield where housing is characterised by large detached early 20th century dwellings set back from the roadside within substantial mature gardens.

Buildings within the village centre are more varied than surrounding residential roads and include a mix of small cottages, small semi-detached houses, large detached houses including Glenfield Mills, Old Rectory and Glenfield House, and barn and farm conversions. These can vary between two and four storeys in height which creates a varied roof line, enclosure and street pattern.

Building materials vary across the area but are characterised by red brick and render within the centre. Some stone, local granite and sandstone detailing is used on older properties such as churches and within the village centre. Roofs tend to be fairly dark grey in colour at the core of the village although browner tones are utilised further beyond.

Boundary treatments are varied. There is no common form of enclosure though at the village core. Many buildings face onto the road and have either very short or no front gardens. A degree of unity tends to occur along roads with some properties having predominantly hedgerow boundaries and others brick walls or fencing.

Glenfield Moat, a Scheduled Ancient Monument is location on the north western fringes of the settlement. Its surrounded by dense vegetation and is only visible from the railway.

**KEY URBAN CHARACTERISTICS**
- Distinctive village character within the historic core.
- Lacks distinctive features outside the centre.
- Largely a residential area.
- Strong focal points at village centre, including a village green and a number of landmark buildings.
- Mixture of architectural styles, varied in the village centre with more uniform styles elsewhere.
- Industrial character to the western fringe.
- Settlement edge constrained by the Rothley Brook corridor to the north.
- Contains a small number of local shops at the village centre.
Public realm and green space

The majority of public realm spaces within the settlement consist of through roads, residential streets, roadside footpaths and grass verges. The centre of the village tends to have a narrow informal street pattern with lanes and alleyways while later development has a stronger geometric layout with wider roads and a more open appearance.

The former railway lie to the north of Station Road provides a wooded recreational route from Glenfield to Ratby.

Ellis Park and associated allotment gardens are located to the south of the historic core and provide a large area of formal open space including playing fields, play area, bowling green and tennis courts. It is an expansive grassed area with its edges softened by mature tree planting.

The south west settlement fringes may have limited capacity to accommodate small scale expansion provided that this has regard to the characteristics of the surrounding Rothley Fringe landscape character area and needs to ensure that visual and physical coalescence with Kirby Muxloe is prevented.

The fringes to the north are generally well vegetated adjacent to the Rothley Brook corridor. In addition these areas are situated on lower lying slopes of the watercourse corridor and are not prominent within the wider landscape. These areas may have capacity to accommodate changes due to the well vegetated appearance and visual containment. However, these areas may be prone to flooding and sensitive to some changes to wetland habitats and natural drainage systems. Also the characteristics of the wider landscape character area of the Rothley Brook Fringes would need to be taken into account.

The northern fringe of Glenfield adjoins the A50, it has the appearance of a leafy suburb, having a considerable amount of tree cover mostly through street trees and vegetation in gardens. This area has limited capacity to accommodate change or expansion due to constraints of existing tree cover which is important to the character of the area and the existing built form being characterised by well spaced large detached properties.

Gateway Features

The central village green forms a significant feature of the historic village core. It contains a feature tree, ornamental planting and a bespoke village sign. It is an attractive focal point of the village centre, with most of the surrounding buildings looking directly onto the green. The green is at the centre of the main road junction within the village. The scale of the road is fairly small reflecting the narrow enclosed nature of the surrounding streets and lanes. Noise and traffic movement creates disruption.

The entrance to the village from the west, Kirby Road is denoted by a row of cottages and Glenfield Mill buildings. These are notable at the roadside on entering the village.

Capacity for change along the urban edge

The southern part of Glenfield adjoins the A50, it has the appearance of a leafy suburb, having a considerable amount of tree cover mostly through street trees and vegetation in gardens. This area has limited capacity to accommodate change or expansion due to constraints of existing tree cover which is important to the character of the area and the existing built form being characterised by well spaced large detached properties.

The entrance to the village from the west, Kirby Road is denoted by a row of cottages and Glenfield Mill buildings. These are notable at the roadside on entering the village.

Recommendations

- Protect and conserve the village character of the historic centre of Glenfield. The village green and surrounding buildings are key components of the village core which should be protected.
- Retention and augmentation of vegetated boundaries to the northern fringes adjacent to the Rothley Brook.
- Restore gateway features and promote local distinctiveness. Future changes and development may present opportunities to create or enhance key focal points and entrances to the settlement.
- Restore and enhance urban fringes through increased woodland coverage and strategically placed planting to improve views particularly on rising ground towards settlement edges. Changes to the landscape which could incorporate improvements such as ‘wet woodland’ planting with public access would be beneficial.
KEY URBAN CHARACTERISTICS

- Red brick terraced cottages forming the historic core.
- Convergence of three roads in the centre of the village around a central island of small red brick cottages.
- Terraced dwellings running down the steep slope towards the historic core.
- Vegetated line of the stream forming the southern boundary.
- Stone bridge over the stream forms a strong and characteristic gateway feature on the southern approach.
- Rising hill of Croft Quarry to the north.
- Linear open space along a tributary of the River Soar.

**Location and context**

The village of Huncote is a small clustered settlement with a small historic core located on low topography with more recent development rising up the hillside to the north. The sloping topography gives open views out to the hill of Croft Quarry and the surrounding countryside, helping the village to retain a strong character and relationship to the surrounding landscape.

The village has a strong relationship with both Croft Hill and Croft Quarry which lie to the south of the village.

**Built form and settlement pattern**

The village has a defined centre. All the streets lead downhill to this area of low ground where the stream flows along the village edge and the church, shop and other older buildings are located. Views tend to be channelled along the streets and down the hill to the central core. From higher ground in the settlement there are clear views out to the surrounding countryside which strengthen the rural village characteristics.

The settlement has winding narrow streets around the historic core of the village and enclosure is created by continuous building frontages. The layout is dominated by a cluster of small cottages on a road island surrounded by a triangle of streets; Main Street, Forest Road and Narborough Road. Terraced brick cottages line the other side of the road and are sometimes painted or rendered, making an attractive centre to the village. The character is continued away from the historic core as the street winds up the hill to the north and is lined with terraced houses, in keeping with the village style.

Newer developments off this main street relate little to the individual village characteristics, and comprise modern semi-detached houses in small housing estates and cul-de-sacs. Roads become wider and there is a more open character.

The stream running along the southern boundary is an important feature in the settlement. The bridge is a clear gateway feature and the winding stream and associated vegetation provide an area of recreational space along the edge of the village.

The roofline of the village is created by rising topography and predominantly pitched roofs. The church is a localised feature within the skyline and built development is interspersed by mature vegetation.

This is a small, calm and contained village with a simple style and pockets of interest.

**Architectural style**

The historic core is mainly terraced brick cottages and houses, sometimes painted or rendered. The cluster of old brick cottages on a triangular road island at the centre of the village creates a distinctive feature.

Windows are generally smartly painted with a design feature such as shutters or lintels. These are often set close below the roofline.

As the village rises up the hill, red brick and painted terraces are predominant along Forest Road. These tend to be set slightly back from the road and raised slightly from the street with boundaries formed by retaining walls, steeply sloping driveways and steps leading up to properties.

New development is less characteristic with semi-detached properties arranged along cul-de-sacs and uncharacteristic building materials such as dark concrete panelling and red roofs.

Larger properties are often converted farms. New development along Brook Street has reflected this rural character and is successfully integrated into the village. Cottages tend to be joined in short terraces and often have a slight step to their roofline where located on slightly sloping ground.

The village has a small granite and brick church with no tower but a bell gable which has a localised influence on the skyline. There is a Methodist Chapel with some dark blue brick design features which provides interest along the road.

The palette is predominantly red brick cottages and terraces, some with brightly painted door and window frames. There are numerous white and cream painted and rendered buildings.
**Public realm and green space**

The village has numerous areas of informal green space throughout. A recreation ground, a play area and sports field adjacent to the school, several green areas in the centre of the newer cul-de-sacs and a cemetery contribute to the strong public realm. A small parkland area alongside the stream provides attractive open green space.

**Gateway features**

From the south the small stone bridge over the stream forms a defined gateway feature after which the road curves round to reveal the cluster of houses. From the north the road slopes down the hill and into the village creating a good entrance to the village, although the edge is well vegetated and used for recreation.

**Capacity for change along the urban edge**

The village is quite visible in the wider landscape due to its location on a hill. The uniform relatively low height of buildings means that the village has little capacity for tall buildings. Anything over two storeys in height would have a large influence on the skyline of the village.

It is a well maintained and tidy village with a small street scale. It has well vegetated edges and the steep rising hill formed by the quarry to the south is a distinct feature of the southern fringes.

The well vegetated northern edge screens views of the settlement from northern approaches and also reduces Huncote’s influence in the wider landscape. Any development along this edge would need to retain the soft vegetated edge characteristics to remain in keeping with the village character.

The eastern boundary is a relatively hard line of modern development and change here has potential to soften and improve the edge and aid integration into the landscape. However, this would need to respect the key characteristics of Landscape Character Area: Croft Elevated Hills which includes wooded planting on slopes, woodland linear strips along roads and streams, and development on rising ground. It would also need to enhance this approach to the village and retain the key rural traits of the village.

A stream and its associated vegetation defines the southern boundary, beyond which the land is gently rolling. The area between the stream and the village forms a small linear park. Despite being set low in the landscape this is a sensitive boundary which, if changed would alter the character of the village. Expansion along this edge would need to respect its proximity to wetland habitats and retain this strong vegetated buffer along the edge of the village.

The western boundary lies close to the historic core of the settlement. Although it is not easily visible from approach roads, this boundary retains its small rural village character, important to the settlement as a whole. Further up the slope a single row of terraces run down the hill to form the western edge and are a key village characteristic. Expansion along this edge would need to reflect the characteristics of terraced properties on sloping ground, retain a strong relationship with the historic centre of the village and ensure that the village does not become more prominent in the wider landscape.

**Recommendations**

- Protect and enhance the vegetated linear stream which is a key characteristic of the village and which defines the southern boundary.
- Restore a soft edge to the eastern boundary of Huncote to align it with the character of the village edge from other approaches.
- Conserve the distinct architectural style of stepped red brick terrace cottages stretching down the slope towards and in the historic core of the settlement. This should be done by ensuring new development in the area follows a similar pattern and uses materials in keeping with the traditional style and colour.
- Improve the character and quality of new development by ensuring enclosure remains similar to the existing small scale enclosure defined by houses built close to the road line and narrow streets. This has been lost in some newly developed areas of the village with consequent dilution of character.
KEY URBAN CHARACTERISTICS

- Small rural village with a strong association with agriculture.
- Set within low ground and well screened from the surrounding landscape.
- Distinctive gated entrances to the village.
- Linear character with strong street pattern and enclosure.
- Small brick terraced cottages with small front gardens and strong association with the street.
- Slightly sprawling agricultural buildings along village fringes.

Location and context

Located within the eastern part of the district, Kilby is a relatively small rural settlement with a strong association to farming. The village was originally part of the Wistow Estate. Many of the villagers worked either in agriculture, as house staff in Wistow Hall, or in the knitting industry.

Built form and settlement pattern

The village retains a strong linear village character along Main Street and Fleckney Road. Where new development has taken place along the main street it has retained the small village character although development along Wistow Road is less characteristic of the village because of lower density bungalows and a more suburban street pattern.

The village is relatively enclosed by its built form which provides an almost continuous frontage. A degree of variation is created through the orientation of buildings with some being 'end on' to the road and others fronting on to it. Slight variations in enclosure are created by narrow driveways, small front gardens and the orientation of the pub and school.

A strong connection to agriculture is retained within the village through the presence of farms on the village fringes. Small lanes and driveways lead off the main street into small courtyards characteristic of farmyards, with buildings centred around stables. Although some of these have now become residential properties their rural character is still retained.

The village sits comfortably within the surrounding countryside with the eastern edge appearing nestled into the landscape and generally screened. The western edges are slightly less defined. Farmyards are located on these fringes and views towards the village comprise farm outbuildings, yard and storage areas. Although this appears slightly untidy it has a rural character and reinforces the village’s connection to surrounding agricultural uses.

Architectural style

The village retains a relatively enclosed character through buildings fronting directly on to the street. Some properties have small front gardens but retain an active connection to the street through low boundary walls and doors and windows facing out onto the street.

In places newer development has fragmented this character slightly with higher boundary walls screening lower storey windows and providing large expanses of blank facade. Other new development which is set off the main road has little relationship to the main road through the village and alters the enclosed street pattern.

The majority of the buildings within the village are small terraced cottages of two storeys in height. There are a few larger three storey buildings within the village associated with the old forge and the school and these form prominent landmark buildings due to their relative height.

Buildings are generally constructed with red brick and with small arch details over windows. There are a few rendered buildings which look slightly out of place within the village particularly where the render has hidden window and door features and simplified the architectural character of buildings.

Many of the doorways into properties have either a small overhang over the door or have their door set slightly into the buildings. Although there is no defining style of doorway arch these subtle variations create interest along the street.

The design of newer semi-detached and detached development along a small cul-de-sac in the central part of the village and on the eastern edge have little relationship to the main village architecture and appear more suburban in style.
Public realm and green space

There are very few public open spaces within the village with vegetation restricted to within private gardens and along the periphery of the village.

One small area of grass verge containing a number of large mature trees is located on the eastern edge of the village. It provides screening and softens the urban edge from agricultural fields to the north.

The largest piece of open space is associated with the church on the western edge of the village and is enclosed by numerous mature specimen trees around the edges of the churchyard.

Kilby is almost unique in the district in containing an intact rural village character throughout the village. The small scale enclosed street pattern is retained. Any new development should reflect this character through a close association to the street, low boundaries and parking hidden behind properties.

Built development should be confined to a scale and form consistent with small brick cottage terraces which use red brick or painted brick and dark grey materials on roofs such as slate. The brick pattern should not be uniform but contain minor details such as end on bricks and variation around windows. Walls fronting Main Street should aim to use Flemish bond brickwork to integrate with older properties on the street.

Houses should front on to the road and have minimal front garden space. Where driveways are required these should be designed to give the impression of a small farm courtyard or archway into a central hidden courtyard to retain the active frontage which exists at present.

The village edges are sensitive to change, particularly to the east where the ground rises rapidly from the settlement. New development along this edge would have to reflect the key characteristics of the edge of the settlement which includes providing an appearance of being nestled on low ground and therefore screened from the wider landscape. Change along any other edge would need to reflect the farm building character which currently exists. Careful treatment of building orientation and style would need to reflect this to provide a slightly sprawling agricultural edge character which is closely integrated with the farmland beyond.

Capacity for change along the urban edge

The village has strong entrance gateways created by small gates either side of the road. The strongest entrance is from the west where gates are on a slight narrowing of the road with terraced cottages. This emphasises enclosure and creates a defined entrance to the village.

To the east the gateway is created by mature vegetation within a large grass verge; this in combination with the gates at the edges of the village reinforces the identity of a rural village character.

Recommendations

- Preserve the rural characteristics of this village through limiting its expansion and careful design and siting of new buildings to retain the small linear nature and strong association with farming.
- Protect the gated entrances into the village.
- Conserve and restore the interaction between houses and the roads through maintaining low boundary walls and small front gardens.
- Enhance the entrance towards the church to integrate it better with the village.
- Preserve and where appropriate promote the narrowing of built form at village entrances.
- Conserve the association with agricultural buildings within the village fringe.
Architectural style

The building style is extremely varied within the village although the buildings relate well to each other. Buildings within the village centre are generally small clusters of terracing and individual cottages which front directly onto the street. These are punctuated by larger townhouses and semi-detached properties which provide localised variations in street frontage and roofline.

Recent development within the centre of the village has maintained the relationship to the street and varied street frontage through interesting skylines. These have been created through steeply pitched rooflines and entrances to further development provided as arched gateways between buildings.

The majority of the shops within the village relate well to each other. Although the building styles differ from old buildings to more modern 1960s development, shop frontage retain an older style with small canopies over their windows and ornate displays within their windows and on the street.

Building materials are predominantly red brick with dark roofs using both slate and newer concrete tiles. A number of the older properties have brick detailing which reflects red and dark blue/grey brick detailing within the 16th century Kirby Muxloe Castle. Some newer development uses a browner colour of brick although this is less common within the village. Larger properties within Kirby Fields show greater variety of materials and colours ranging from white render and red brick through to darker coloured bricks and combinations of both including imitation half-timbered panelling.

Boundaries are a mix of brick and stone walls within the village centre. Some boundaries include timber fencing which is less sympathetic and tends to look out of place. Newer properties have, in places, used metal fencing which is of a simple style and maintains the relationship between the buildings and the street. Within the edges of the village particularly the western edge and Kirby Fields, the boundaries become predominantly mature well maintained hedges often evergreen, which contribute to very green and wooded roads. Front gardens within the village centre tend to be small whereas along the outskirts large winding driveways and houses set back some distance from the road become characteristic.

Location and context

The village is located to the north west of Leicester and there is recorded evidence of a settlement here since prehistoric times. Its name was established in the 18th century and enabled it to be distinguished from nearby Kirby Mallory.

The settlement is formed along Main Road and Desford Road although development over the 20th century has expanded the village beyond these roads to the east, west and south. The village now connects to a small estate known as Kirby Fields which is designated as a Conservation Area for its large detached properties set in extensive grounds.

Built form and settlement pattern

The village retains a strong linear form along Main Road through the village and Desford Road which forms the northern extent of development within the village. This form has become more varied and indistinct along other parts of the village as new development has expanded the village. To the west and south at Kirby Fields the areas are characterised by large detached properties set within large gardens with a mature landscape structure creating a wooded character.

The village is set on high ground which slopes down towards watercourses to the north and east. This provides a varied roof line with the church being a prominent feature of the skyline when viewed from the north. The castle, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, is located on lower ground within a mature wooded setting and is therefore screened from view.

The street character is relatively varied with buildings orientated both to front onto the street and in places side onto the street. Larger properties are set back from the road within mature gardens. Vegetation in private gardens, in combination with groups of street trees, creates a wooded and well vegetated character to the village. Newer semi-detached properties are often raised slightly from the road and set back behind a small front garden.

The core retains a strong village centre character although the buildings are a mix of ages as a result of substantial bomb damage during the Second World War. However, the various built developments within the village relate well to each other through the choice of similar building materials and the orientation and scale of buildings along the main streets.

Views are typically restricted to along roads. Glimpsed views out to surrounding countryside are possible to the north and south along smaller residential roads and lanes.

The A46 (T) Leicester Weston Bypass is separated from the older core of settlement by intervening large residential properties and the wooded embankments of the railway and is not a prominent feature. A section of the M1 is slightly elevated and has a localised influence on the eastern fringes of the village.
Public realm and green space

There is almost no public open space within the village although mature vegetation within private gardens and in small groups along the roads provide a green setting to built development.

The castle provides a small area of open space around the most which links into footpaths out to the wider countryside.

A large piece of open space is situated between Kirby Muxloe and the sub area Kirby Fields.

Other smaller open spaces are including Kirby Muxloe Sports and Social Club grounds are located to the north of Desford Road and comprises a cemetery and allotments which are well vegetated and fit within the existing field pattern of the Rothley Brook Fringe landscape character area.

Capacity for change along the urban edge

The northern edge of the village is well defined by Desford Road. All development is to the south of this road although the cemetery and allotments are located to the north. This road is relatively well vegetated including a mature hedgerow and many mature trees providing a relatively wooded character. Future expansion beyond this road would need to respect this wooded character along its edge. Any new development should maintain the characteristics of this floodplain landscape and ensure that the village retains its separate identity from Ratby to the north.

The western urban edge is well defined by the railway although a small group of large detached properties have been built beyond. This edge is well vegetated through a combination of mature garden vegetation and a strong wooded belt provided along the railway. Any future expansion would need to respect this, ensure that the roadline did not become more prominent within the landscape and ensure that the distinction between Kirby Muxloe and Leicester Forest East was maintained.

Currently the villages of Kirby Muxloe and Leicester Forest East are physically separated by the railway. However, buildings either side of the railway are of similar architectural style and it is difficult to determine the definite boundary between settlements.

To the east of the settlement the land notably rises at Blood Hill towards the M1. The edge of Kirby Fields is partially visible, however, due to the style of the properties and the extent of mature vegetation this edge has the impression of being part of a country estate. The setting of the castle is particularly sensitive. The castle is relatively well screened from existing development within the village, however future expansion on higher ground could influence the landscape and historic setting of the castle. In addition, development would need to ensure that the separate identity of Kirby Muxloe is retained and protected from the urban fringes and industry along the western edge of Leicester.

Kirby Fields

This is a relatively large residential area to the immediate south of Kirby Muxloe and is designated as a Conservation Area. The area was created in 1877 when land was sold off individually for development and has resulted in a wide range of individual housing styles set within large grounds. Properties are generally only partially visible above extensive mature vegetation and roads are all characterised by mature high hedgerows, large gateway entrances with winding driveways and glimpses of very large detached houses. In the 1960-70s development pressure lead to some subdivision of plots. Where this has happened there is a marked change in character with buildings being closer together and more apparent along roads and gardens becoming smaller with less vegetation surrounding the properties.

Recommendations

- Conserve the uniform shop frontage to retain this unique village core character.
- Protect the varied street frontage through careful placement of new development to retain a varied roofline and maintain a close association with the street.
- Protect and in places restore tree planting to ensure the village maintains its green setting.
- Enhance the village entrances from the west and south through signage and appropriate landscape treatment.
- Protect the castle as a valued resource and ensure its historic and landscape setting are preserved.
- Protect the spacious layout of detached houses set within a mature landscape framework of Kirby Fields.
KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Predominantly 20th century housing development.
- Local amenities and facilities dispersed throughout the settlement.
- Mixture of modern building styles and materials.
- No defined settlement core.
- Lacking in focal points and landscape features.
- Sinuous road plan of new development.
- Presence of street trees along Hinckley Road.

Location and context

This is a spreading settlement located towards the north of the district. It contains predominantly 20th century residential development. Leicester Forest East has evolved to follow the route of the A47 through the settlement.

The settlement today spreads in a roughly east to west block, partially bisected by the M1 motorway.

Built form and settlement pattern

Housing is largely post-war construction. A large area of contemporary housing estate development can be seen to the southwest fringe adjacent to Warren Farm.

Each area within the settlement varies slightly in size of property, density and building orientation. This gives sub-areas within the settlement differentiation but there is no overriding unique character, with housing patterns being similar to many of the suburban estates across the country.

Houses are usually set back from the road in large front gardens which have space to accommodate car parking. All housing is of a similar scale and almost entirely two storey housing located very close together.

There is slight variation to this form along Hinckley Road which includes a number of larger detached properties and small apartment buildings. This provides a localised variation in the relatively uniform roofline within the settlement although this change is softened by mature landscaped boundaries to properties.

The settlement is dominated by residential housing with no obvious centre. Where 'neighbourhood centres' exist they are generally of modern construction and contain a few shops with extensive car parking.

The junction of Hinckley Road and Kirby Lane has groupings of buildings of various styles. This is reminiscent of the character of historic centres of other settlements within the district, but the car parking and layout of the junctions dilutes this character.

The settlement generally has few distinguishing features and relates little to the surrounding environment. Roads tend to be relatively uniform with limited vistas or landmarks to assist orientation.

The roofline is fairly uniform throughout the settlement due the similar building style. Roofs are prominent adjacent to open countryside particularly where boundary vegetation is lacking. There are no prominent buildings within the skyline. Due to the built-up nature of Leicester Forest East views are generally over short distances. Although from the community centre on the southern fringe there are localised open views towards the M1 and M1 services.

Architectural style

Housing built within estate developments of similar ages is largely uniform in scale and style. Buildings tend to have minor variations in style, however regularity occurs within the housing layout through the repetition of a number of different house types throughout estates.

Within modern developments a mixture of classical, traditional, modern and faux architectural details are employed such as columns, timber frame cladding and faux sandstone lintels.

Some house types reflect the steep pitched roofs which characteristic throughout the district, although these are an infrequent style within housing estates.

A varied collection of buildings is arranged around and close to the junction and traffic lights at the turning off A47 into Kirby Fields/ Kirby Muxloe. The most prominent is a public house with thatched roof, The Red Cow and half black and white timbered dwelling to the triangle of land northwest of the road junction.

Boundaries are primarily formed through ornamental planting or are open grassed areas. The use of built enclosures to property boundaries tends to be fairly localised and is not a significant characteristic of this settlement.

A mixed range of colours are present throughout the settlement. There is no distinctive colour palette to typify this area, although buildings tend to be constructed from varying shades of brick. Roof materials are predominantly dark coloured tiles, occasionally slate.

Colours are used within modern houses which are not generally typical of the district and surroundings and include bricks of pale buff/ beige shades with yellow/orange tones.

LEICESTER FOREST EAST

Modern housing using orange and yellow colours

Combination of red brick and timber facade

Thatched building provides a local landmark at A47, Kirby Lane junction

Modern shopping facilities dispersed throughout settlement

BLABY DISTRICT SETTLEMENT CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
Public realm and green space

There is easy access to the adjoining countryside from the urban fringes via public footpaths primarily into countryside to the south of the settlement.

Pockets of open space and play facilities are present within the settlement. These are modern, arranged with buildings fronting onto them for reasons of clear visibility and supervision. Open spaces tend to contain a number of young specimen trees.

Public realm predominantly consists of roadside verges, residential streets and main roads such as Hinckley Road which is characterised by mature street trees and hedgerow boundaries.

Capacity for change along the urban edge

The southern and western fringes of the settlement adjoin countryside. Expansion along these edges would need to respect the key characteristics of the Thurlaston Rolling Farmland and Lubbesthorpe Agricultural Parkland landscape character areas.

The northwest through southeast fringes fall into Thurlaston Rolling Farmland landscape character area. Expansion of the settlement in this direction would need to reflect the key landscape characteristics which are open rolling farmland with the fundamental character dependent upon the openness and undeveloped nature. Built form in the surrounding landscape is limited to scattered farms and distant glimpses of urban fringes. Any change or development in these areas should ensure that these should have regard to these characteristics.

Fringes to the north are constrained by Kirby Fields Conservation Area and built development of Kirby Muxloe. Expansion would need to preserve the wooded estate character of Kirby Fields and protect the open undeveloped character of the adjacent countryside.

Eastern fringes are bounded predominantly by existing development and motorway corridor.

A sinuous southern boundary to the settlement follows the field pattern and landform, visually softening the urban edge. Rising and gently rolling landform provides some screening of this edge of the settlement in this direction although glimpses are visible from public roads and footpaths. Expansion to this edge of the settlement would need to respect the woodland coverage and contrast with the regular pattern of open farmland. Large blocks of mature woodland provide an important backdrop within the landscape and frame views. Although seemingly well spaced apart on plan, the blocks of woodland are visually prominent throughout the character area and together with field boundary hedgerows and trees create the appearance of a well wooded landscape. Future change or development should seek to preserve and enhance the woodland as a principle of design.

Gateway features

Generally gateways into the settlement are indistinct due to the immediate continuation of built form of adjoining settlements.

There is no physical separation between Kirby Muxloe and Leicester Forest East although the gateway to each is marked by the junction of Kirby Lane and Hinckley Road and a small number of landmark buildings such as the Red Cow public house and black and white timbered building.

The approach to the settlement from the southwest is denoted by the edge of modern housing and includes manicured verges with ornamental trees. There is little distinction between building styles to denote this entrance.

A major crossroads is situated at the junction of the A47 and B5380. It is bounded by Meynell’s Gorse woodland. It forms a landmark at this busy road junction although it appears to belong to a suburban environment rather than adding strong definition to a separate area or settlement.

Churches where present tend to be of modern construction and do not greatly influence the skyline or general character of the surroundings. They are often set within mature landscaped grounds which provide separation and screening, such as the Church of St Andrew on the A47.

BLABY DISTRICT SETTLEMENT CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Recommendations

- Preserve and enhance the wooded character surrounding the urban fringes of the settlement. Within the adjoining landscape character area woodland blocks are a significant feature which should be retained and increased. Continue to encourage the retention and good management of existing woodlands.
- Restore and enhance a sinuous vegetated and irregular edge to the urban fringes where this would sympathetically follow landform and soften the appearance of built form. Existing hedgerows and woodland planting following an irregular field boundary pattern can create a softer and more natural appearance than regular and geometric shapes in the landscape.
- Protect, conserve and enhance distinctive buildings and gateway features where they exist and establish gateway features where they do not exist to help define the settlement boundaries.
- Restore and enhance focal points and landscape features where practical to create local distinctiveness within the settlement.
- Protect and enhance street trees and trees within verges. Encourage a programme of new planting, management and replacement to ensure the longevity of these features within the public realm.
**Architectural style**

Cosby Road retains a fairly enclosed character with small terraced cottages providing a continuous urban frontage. Properties have little or no front gardens and generally front straight on to the street. Larger properties such as Old Farmhouse Court are set slightly back from the road and the garden extends round the property bounded by high brick walls which provides a degree of enclosure.

Littlethorpe House is set back from The Square and although relatively large in size is almost totally screened by a high brick wall and mature vegetation within its grounds. Glimpsed views are possible from its gateway but these are relatively constrained.

Buildings are all constructed out of red brick with slate roofs although in places this has been replaced by dark coloured tiles. Paint and render on buildings along Cosby Road creates variety.

A large proportion of painted buildings are characterised by black and white colouring with many windows being painted black. Some window shutters are present on buildings and these are also painted black. The majority of properties have retained their original windows and where replaced the windows have respected the buildings’ character. In all properties windows are relatively large although divided by smaller glass panes.

Where doors to properties front straight out onto the street, they tend to be recessed slightly into the property with a single step up to the door. Some properties have decorated windows with small flower boxes which provides seasonal colour and individuality to the largely uniform building style.

Modern 20th century development is primarily semi-detached two storey buildings. These are constructed from a range of brick colours which often contrast with the materials on older properties.

**Location and context**

Located to the immediate south of Narborough and immediate west of the M1, Littlethorpe is a relatively small village. The original settlement pattern is still evident as ribbon development along Cosby Road. However the village has gradually been expanded during the 20th century to its current size and more clustered form.

**Built form and settlement pattern**

Littlethorpe retains a linear character along Cosby Road, however the development beyond this is of more modern construction and relates little to the older core. The character of the village changes dramatically once off Cosby Road.

Development along Cosby Road has a close association with the street. The majority of properties front straight on to the street and small lanes and alleys lead off the street to further housing behind. This creates a relatively enclosed character in the core, however this changes off the main street and roads become wider and more open in character.

The built form is predominantly small cottage terracing with the exception of The Plough public house and Old Farmhouse Court which are both thatched detached buildings and landmark features of the village.

Short sections of Cosby Road are bounded by high brick walls with a few gated entrances surrounding private gardens. These retain the continuous frontage along the village.

The village centre is largely residential with commercial development extremely limited and dispersed throughout the village. The village does not contain a church and the most prominent feature, particularly from the north is The Plough public house. The village has no defined commercial centre the only shop is located at the high point in the village with modern housing development. The main road through the village has become a relatively busy route.

The roofline is rises slightly with the highest point at the intersection of Cosby Road and Cosby Road. There are no prominent buildings within the skyline which comprises two storey residential properties.

**LITTLETHORPE**

**KEY CHARACTERISTICS**

- Small clustered form with evidence of the older linear settlement along Cosby Road.
- 20th century expansion has reduced the strength of the pattern and built form character of the village.
- Rising uniform roofline with no distinguishing features.
- Small terraces and detached thatched properties characteristic along Cosby Road.
- Enclosed character of Cosby Road contrasts with the more open character of 20th century residential expansion.
- Landscape setting along the northern boundary created by proximity to the River Soar.
Open space within Littlethorpe is primarily restricted to the edges of the village. A large informal open space is located on the northern boundary and provides a green setting to the village. This open space links with the River Soar corridor which forms a buffer between Narborough and Littlethorpe.

The village does not have a strong single overriding character. The most distinctive features remains along its oldest core on Cosby Road. Development beyond this does not respect the built form characteristics of the village. The scale of newer development to the historic core the village results in a lack of identity and the village would benefit from new public realm treatment, coordination of boundary treatments and infill development to provide a defined identity to the settlement. This should take reference from the features present along Cosby Road such as narrow roads, continuous street frontage and a mixture of prominent black and white buildings and short rows of cottage terraces. Buildings should be of a similar scale to those present within the village and be two storey in height.

The northern urban edge is particularly sensitive to development. It borders a small stretch of floodplain which provides an important piece of land between Narborough and Littlethorpe and prevents them merging. There is little opportunity for expansion. Any future development would need to respect the mosaic of open grasslands, small clumps of woodland and defined urban edge which are present within the Sence and Soar Floodplain landscape character area.

Along other village edges the urban to rural transition is relatively defined and there are few urban fringe land uses. The southern edge between Littlethorpe and Cosby is the least defined with scattered housing sprawled along Cosby Road which reduces the distinction between the settlements. The land rises slightly from the southern edge of the village. Further development along this edge could potentially increase the perception that Cosby and Littlethorpe are one settlement. Any expansion along this edge would need to reinforce the identity of Littlethorpe.

The village has a strong entrance gateway from Narborough to the north where the public house forms a prominent feature of the view and the park and river situated at edge of the village provide a green structure to the village. However, the car park around the public house is a detracting feature because it dilutes the enclosed character along Cosby Road and is an unattractive feature at this entrance to the village.

To the south the entrance to the village is poorly defined with scattered housing along Cosby Road. This reduces the distinction between Cosby and Littlethorpe.

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**Public realm and green space**

Open space provides landscape setting to northern village fringe

Contrasting black and white buildings landmark features in the village

**Capacity for change along the urban edge**

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**Gateway features**

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**Recommendations**

- Protect and where possible enhance the characteristics, features and built form present along Cosby Road to retain the historic and distinctive built form along the road and reinforce this character within new development in other parts of the village.
- Conserve and enhance the existing entrance to the village from Narborough through the retention of the landscape setting and new landscape treatment along the car park edge to reduce its prominence whilst retaining views of The Plough public house.
- Protect the open land between Littlethorpe and Cosby and Narborough to retain the separate identities of these villages.
- Establish a strong entrance gateway into the village from Cosby to the south.
Red brick building in prominent location in village

Granite walling used at the base of the building

Brick detail above door

Shop frontage integrates well with character of the building

Buildings vary in orientation along road

Perceived narrowing at road entrance

Semi-detached properties interspersed with townhouses

Location and context

Narborough is located to the south west of Leicester on the western side of the M1. The extent of the village is largely determined by the existing railway line and a disused line forms the western boundary. The eastern boundary is generally formed by the M1 although a small amount of mid 20th century development extends to the east of the M1 along the B4114.

Built form and settlement pattern

Although the settlement of Narborough extends north beyond the B4114, the historic centre is located to the south of the road. North of the B4114 the village character is that of modern suburban development.

The historic core has a small linear form centred along Coventry Road and Leicester Road and is within a Conservation Area. Shops are dispersed between residential properties which creates an elongated village centre. A continuous frontage is created through terraced cottages and houses linked together with high brick walls. Building orientation is however not uniform, with the sides of many properties or associated outbuildings bordering roads.

The majority of the streets are characterised by their enclosure and narrow width. Streets leading off the main road tend to be winding and enclosed by surrounding buildings. The orientation of buildings along the road limits distant views. Many streets narrow at their entrance through a combination of boundary walls and built form.

There is a strong distinction between the older core of the village and modern development. More modern development along the periphery of the historic core has reduced the sense of enclosure through the presence of grass verges and housing set back from the road by large front gardens.

The village is on slightly rising ground although this is not evident whilst within village centre. This topography and range of building heights and orientations provides a varied roofline which rises to the north towards the church. The church forms a prominent feature of the skyline when approaching the village from the south.

Building heights varies within the centre, there are a number of three/four storey larger buildings on Leicester Road which add variety to the street frontage and form prominent landmark features. The majority of buildings are however, two storey cottages and terraces, although these also vary slightly in height due to the angle of pitch on their roofs.

An industrial estate is located along the south western outskirts of the village and is characterised by large warehouse buildings and car parking.

Architectural style

The use of stone within building construction within the village is restricted to the oldest and most important buildings such as Narborough Hall. Other feature buildings use a stone rubble in a 1-2m height strip at the base with brick construction above.

The majority of properties are small cottages often in groups of two or four properties and larger terraces interspersed with a number of townhouses which are a feature of the village. Many of the slightly larger properties have smaller outbuildings and extensions which on a smaller scale are similar in appearance to some of the oldest cottages.

Boundaries are almost all defined by high brick walls, some with granite rubble walling at their base. These walls provide continuous definition between buildings where private gardens extend round the side of properties. Where walls are orientated along the main village roads they often contain a small arched gated entrance into the property. These are generally of simple functional construction with a painted solid timber gate. Older properties have some more ornate detail with corner stones of sandstone being used in the arch and metal work integrated into the timber gates.

Many properties within the central part of the village have simple brick detailing above their windows. Doors tend to have a small arch or porch with many having a few steps up to the front door. Windows in older buildings tend to be larger in size.

The majority of shops within the village have retained a characteristic shop frontage with small windows and doors and painted signs above. Shop signage on a number of properties within the village have recently been upgraded through grant funding, these relate well to each other and give the village distinction.

Red brick, with some mid to dark grey brick, comprises the characteristic building material. There is very limited use of timber within construction. Two properties show evidence of cruck trusses but former thatched roofs have been replaced with dark tiles.

Render and painted brick provide highlights along the street between the red brick buildings. A number of prominent buildings are faced with render on the main street but the render is not evident on the sides or rear of these buildings. Roofing materials are both Swithland and welsh slate on older properties and darker grey tiles on newer buildings.

Feature buildings such as Narborough Hall. Other feature buildings

KEY URBAN CHARACTERISTICS

- Strongly linear historic core with an enclosed street pattern.
- Narborough Station is a key feature of the southern entrance to the village.
- Large expanse of 20th century development in northern part of the village linking Narborough to Enderby relates little to the historic core.
- Village fringes strongly defined by vegetated railways and roads.
- Perceived narrowing of road entrances through orientation of buildings and boundary walls.
- Rising skyline with the church a prominent feature on the horizon.
- Terraces interspersed with larger townhouses provides localised variety within the village.
- Predominance of red brick buildings within village centre.
- Small arched gated entrances into gardens.

NARBOROUGH

BLABY DISTRICT SETTLEMENT CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
Public realm and green space

Open space in the village includes the churchyard within the village centre and a small area of informal open space to the immediate south of the village adjacent to the River Soar and Six Acre Field which is within the pastures area of Narborough.

The largest and most prominent piece of open space is Narborough Park which is a landmark to the village from King Edward’s Avenue. The park comprises a large area of open grassland with evidence of ridge and furrow, a large play area and mature trees around the park boundaries.

Informal open space on the southern fringe of the village

The most prominent gateway into the village is from the south where the railway building and associated rail infrastructure provides a strong entrance into the village. This is enhanced further by the roofline of the village which rises up towards the church.

Other gateways into the village lack a sense of arrival. This is particularly evident between Enderby and Narborough. Suburban residential development extends between each of the two historic cores and each village’s edges are indistinguishable.

Mature trees around the periphery of Narborough Park provide a landmark feature when entering the historic core of the village from King Edward’s Avenue along Desford Road.

Capacity for change along the urban edge

The settlement is on a slight rise and at present the roofline gives a layered appearance rising up towards the church. Development which would interfere with this and potentially block the views of the church from the south would alter the village character.

The edges of the settlement are largely restricted by urban features such as roads and railways which contain the built form. Any development/ change over these boundaries, particularly to the west would need to respect this strong vegetated urban edge and the key characteristics of Croft Hill landscape character area which are small woodlands and villages on rising ground.

Any new development, particularly within the historic centre of the village, should respect the tight urban form and aim to replicate this through buildings fronting on to the street. If residential roads/cul-de-sacs are created to serve a number of properties, buildings on the corners should provide some frontage on to the main street and potentially provide a slight narrowing at the road entrance. Roads should be relatively narrow and properties should have small front gardens with parking provided on the street or to the rear.

There may be limited potential for infill development within the northern part of Narborough where it joins Enderby. Development may present the opportunity to reinforce distinction between the two settlements.

The southern boundary of Narborough has little capacity to accommodate future expansion due to its close proximity to Littlethorpe. At present the effective separation is provided by the railway. Within the open land between settlements both urban edges are apparent. Expansion along this edge would need to retain settlement individuality and respect the floodplain characteristics of this landscape.

The western boundary is strongly defined by the disused railway. Quarrying and landfill operations on this edge have an influence on the landscape. However localised landform variations created by this disturbance protect the identities of Narborough and Huncote. Development further to the west of Narborough could reduce the perception of the settlements being separate and increase the village’s influence within the wider landscape.

Gateway features

Church visible on the skyline

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BLABY DISTRICT SETTLEMENT CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Recommendations

- Protect and enhance areas of open space. These areas are particularly valuable as the majority of the settlement is relatively urban in character and public open space is fairly limited.
- Protect the separation between Littlethorpe and Huncote through appropriate landscape treatments e.g through strengthening woodland planting along the River Soar.
- Enhance the entrances to the settlement from the east, west and north. Future changes and development may present opportunities to create focal points and reinforce the village distinctiveness along main roads into the village.
- Preserve the tight urban form within the historic core of the village through ensuring development respects the close association of buildings to the road.
- Conserve the narrow built form at road junctions and encourage its replication within any future developments.
- Protect the church’s prominence within the skyline through appropriate control of new developments which may introduce tall buildings or structures.
- Conserve the use of red brick materials and varied orientation of buildings to ensure that character of built form along roads within the village centre is retained.
Sapcote is a medium-sized clustered settlement in the southwestern region of Blaby District, adjacent to Stoney Stanton and the well-known inland diving site of Stoney Cove.

The historic core is located on the southern fringe of the settlement and the village has some strong historic links, with evidence the area has been inhabited by Druids, Saxons, Romans and Normans. From the 12th-14th century the village was the home of the powerful Basset family who founded Sapcote Castle, a Norman earthen motte and bailey fortress which is now discernable as earthworks in the grass.

**Built form and settlement pattern**

The historic core of the settlement and the present centre are not located in the same place in this village. The historic core, including the church, the rectory, site of the castle and older housing along an enclosed street, is located on the southern fringe. There are thatched cottages located on winding back roads in this part of the village.

The contemporary centre lies on the B4669 which passes through the village. It is a small centre with several small shops including a local store and a post office. Buildings tend to front straight on to the road creating a strong street scene but the greater width of the road means the character is less enclosed than in the historic area of the settlement.

The street pattern is generally sinuous as the village is built around a semi-circular road which curves to the south off the main B4669 road at one end of the village and links back in at the other end. Newer residential development tends to be in a more geometric street pattern and is generally located to the north of the B4669. Development extends a similar distance on either side of the B4669 giving the village a circular, clustered dimension.

The development to the north of the main road is where the village has extended through post-war development and has a weaker connection with the historic core of the village. These housing estates have a harder urban edge which is emphasised by road running along the settlement boundary and by a lack of vegetation. This urban edge is visible from northern and eastern approach roads.

The roof line is varied. The church spire is clearly visible from outside the settlement. The unusually designed chimney feature of the Homestead House Nursing Home is a prominent feature in the roofline, although not visible from outside the settlement. Elsewhere the roofline is a mixture of flat and pitched roofs, generally no greater than two storeys, and is slightly rising in the south towards higher ground.

**Location and context**

Sapcote has a mixed architectural style with no single defining character.

The core of the village consists of small-scale domestic cottages and houses, interspersed with occasional larger houses and focal buildings. Buildings are not tall and only occasionally important buildings such as churches and chapel are taller than two storeys. Larger houses are enclosed within garden walls and mature vegetation, often not visually prominent. The older buildings in the historic core tend to be cottages or small terraces. There are several thatched cottages, often with white rendering, which are maintained in good condition.

Never development is varied and includes terraced housing along the busier roads and semi-detached properties in the residential areas in the north of Sapcote. There is also a number of flat roofed modern buildings in the centre of the settlement.

Building materials tend to be red brick, with occasional white rendering, and clay tile roofs. Some buildings have dark slate roofs, which look particularly striking on newer buildings with white rendered walls and large dark dominant roofs. This is well demonstrated on the Homestead House Nursing Home development. The church is granite and because of the close association with Stoney Stanton and its quarrying, some of the older buildings have granite stone walls too.

There is a mixture of boundary treatments throughout the village. Rubble stone walling is a significant feature, especially around properties near the church. Red brick walls are common in the centre. In the newer developments ornamental hedgerows and garden vegetation form strong boundary features.

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Views from the south of the settlement are long over the Soar Floodplain and surrounding landscape. From the north it is possible to see Stoney Stanton rising on the opposite hillside with the lower vegetated landscape of the stream in the foreground.
Public realm and green space

The most significant area of greenspace is the site of the motte and bailey castle in the centre of the settlement. This is a wide expanse of grassland with the archaeologically significant remains of the castle earth works visible in the centre. It is bounded on one side by tall scrub vegetation. It is an important site for the heritage of the settlement and contributes to the settlement’s individual character and in forming its sense of place. Around the outskirts there are various recreational facilities including numerous benches and a children’s play area.

The war memorial located opposite the castle site is a small and well maintained public square with floral planting including rose beds. It is raised from street level and bounded by hedges creating a peaceful enclosed space which fronts on to the street.

The churchyard and cemetery form a small area of open space on the fringes of the settlement. The churchyard and large private houses around the church contain numerous tall and mature trees which contribute to the green setting. Elsewhere ornamental garden planting, some wide verges and private garden trees increase the general impression of green space, although there are few other formal areas in the public realm in the settlement.

The most significant area of greenspace is the site of the castle. It is bounded on one side by tall scrub vegetation. It is an important site for the heritage of the settlement and contributes to the settlement’s individual character and in forming its sense of place.

Capacity for change along the urban edge

Sapcote has already extended considerably to the north bringing it closer to Stoney Stanton. Any further development in this direction would lead to the loss of distinct settlement boundaries and the two settlements would become merged. This gap between the settlements mean there is little capacity for additional development on the northern fringes.

The northern fringe of the settlement has a hard urban edge which is emphasised by a road following the urban boundary. Development in this area could be designed to integrate the urban edge more successfully into the landscape and soften the boundary. This could also be successfully applied to the south eastern fringe, although this edge is less obvious in the landscape and further development in this direction would conflict with the circular form of the present settlement.

The southern fringe is contained by a semi-circular road which forms the boundary of the settlement. This southern area forms the historic core and any development in this area would need to reflect the historic nature and style of existing development. At present there is very little development beyond the road and developing in that direction would be uncharacteristic. It is a well vegetated edge with long views over the surrounding landscape from public areas such as the church and school. It is a sensitive edge with little capacity for development.

The western fringe is mostly post-war development with now well established vegetation meaning the edge is well integrated into the landscape. Any new development would need to reflect this characteristic. The north western corner between the brook and the existing settlement is undeveloped and as such forms the only break in the circular settlement shape. This area is important in defining separation between Sapcote and Stoney Stanton consequently there is very little capacity for any development in this area.

Gateway features

The approach from Stoney Stanton in the north is dominated by Stoney Cove National Diving Centre. This flooded disused quarry forms a striking feature between the two settlements, although views are only glimpsed from the road. A small stream is a vegetated linear feature through a dip in the landscape between Stoney Stanton and Sapcote which also forms a gateway feature. Without these, there would be a lack of distinctive boundary between the two settlements as they are located in close proximity to one another.

Other approaches have less significant gateway features. The north eastern fringe is a harsh line of modern development and consequently the approach from the east is dominated by residential development. The western gateway is also residential, although is softer as it is slightly more vegetated with a gentler transition from rural to urban.

Recommendations

- Protect open land between the two villages of Sapcote and Stoney Stanton to safeguard the distinct boundaries of each settlement.
- Creation of new community woodland between the two settlements would help to secure long-term definition to the village edges, also restricting views directly in and out of each to reinforce the separation of village edges.
- Ensure that new development is carefully designed to reflect the intrinsic character and traditional distinctive building style of any development in the historic core. Development should incorporate features such as narrow street pattern, buildings fronting onto the street and varied mix of building styles, predominantly using red brick.
- Establish gateway features to reinforce the sense of separation from Stoney Stanton to the north and improve the gateway features on other approaches to the settlement, which are presently weak, through landmark buildings and bespoke signage.
- Enhance the quality of the hard north eastern urban edges through well planned change and increased vegetation planting.
- Protect Sapcote Castle (Scheduled Ancient Monument) and the area of greenspace surrounding it to preserve and promote the settlement’s heritage through appropriate interpretation signage.
KEY URBAN CHARACTERISTICS

- Village church on highest part of the village.
- Focussed around busy junction of B4114 and Aston Road.
- Large central road island containing houses.
- The Soar Brook bisects the village but is an inconspicuous feature.
- Low rise buildings and cottages.
- Dispersed built form.
- Traditional building materials found within historic centre.
- Limited local amenities.
- Weeping willows lining Aston Road.

Location and context

The village is situated within the south western tip of the district within a narrow valley which slopes down to the Soar Brook at the centre. The name is derived from the Anglo-Saxon ‘Scarn’ which means division. Until the construction of a foot and horse bridge the two halves of the village were divided by a ford.

Built form and settlement pattern

Built form is slightly dispersed although roughly circular in plan and is centred around the Soar Brook and main road pattern.

The village has developed with three noticeable areas. The first is on higher ground to the northeast where important community buildings such as St Helen’s Church, the Methodist chapel and public house are situated.

The second is a more modern extension to the north, consisting predominantly of post-war housing on a geometric layout.

The Soar Brook creates a visual break to the south and is joined by further part of the settlement in a generally linear pattern. This part of the village is focussed around the junction of two roads, (Coventry Road and Aston Lane/Hinckley Road) and contains a number of older cottages and farmhouses.

Older buildings which are located to the north and south of the Soar Brook give the impression of two small historic centres: one around the two churches to the north east of the village; and the other at the junction between the B4114 and Aston Lane.

The roofline of the village is generally set within significant mature vegetation and is relatively indistinct in the landscape. Housing on a ridge with limited vegetation is the most prominent built element of the sky line particularly on the approach from Coventry Road.

The village contains predominantly small-scale low-rise buildings rarely above two storeys. Only significant buildings such as the church, chapel and large farmhouses are of greater heights.
Public realm and green space

Sharnford is closely associated with the low lying areas alongside the Soar Brook.

The brook runs approximately northwest to southeast bisecting the village. The brook corridor is well vegetated and creates visual separation between adjoining parts of the village.

The Soar Brook is an important feature of the village contributing to its vegetated and enclosed nature. However, this is not an integral part of the main street scene and may be easily missed by those passing by car through the village. The B4114 passes over a bridge at the centre of the village and the watercourse runs inconspicuously beneath road level. On one side the watercourse is heavily vegetated enclosed by large trees and so views are not permitted, to the other side the brook corridor is restricted to a narrow vegetated channel, visible for a short distance from the main road.

The village contains public open spaces and play facilities. These are located centrally and close to the brook corridor, creating a strong green linear space through the village.

Village fringes are generally well vegetated which provides effective screening to the majority of public view points. The roof lines and geometric layout of modern housing to the western fringe of the settlement are visible on approaching from Aston Lane. In summer houses are reasonably well screened by vegetation but this edge of the village may be more exposed during winter months. There is potential for the incorporation of sensitively designed infill development.

In general the majority of buildings in the village are low-rise and of small or domestic scale. Any tall or large structures would be in strong contrast and potentially very prominent within the existing built form. The village has very limited capacity to accommodate such proposals. Village fringes have little or no capacity to accommodate large scale structures particularly those on higher ground and where there is a lack of vegetation for screening.

There are opportunities for landscape improvements and capacity to accommodate positive changes to northern urban fringes of the village adjacent to modern housing development. Small scale exception site expansion in this part of the village could be visually contained by careful siting and incorporation of additional new woodland and hedgerow planting.

Capacity for change along the urban edge

- Continue to protect and enhance the Soar Brook at the centre of the village together with associated public open spaces to ensure its retention as a key feature of the village.
- Enhance views along the Soar Brook from public vantage points, where opportunities arise, to raise its profile as an attractive feature of the village.
- Protect and enhance the character of the Soar Brook. New development in waterside locations should seek to enhance the natural waterside environment making this a key design priority. Any development or change which could adversely impact upon or urbanise the Soar Brook corridor should be restricted as this would be detrimental to the character of the village.
- Protect the village from further traffic intrusion. Heavy traffic has been highlighted by local people as a problem through the Parish Plan. Slowing traffic through the centre would allow greater pedestrian priority, reduce noise and intimidation. Due to existing perceived traffic problems this village is sensitive to any development which could exert greater pressure on existing roads.
- A visually prominent row of semi-detached houses located on a ridge are seen on approach to the village from Coventry Road presenting a visually harsh built edge from this direction. Future expansion/development on exposed prominent village fringes to the north east should be restricted in order to prevent undesirable visual impact. Where practical seek to improve the integration of the village fringe into the landscape in these locations.
- Protect and conserve the mature tree-lined entrance feature at Aston Lane through appropriate management and replacement planting of weeping willows as these age.
Location and context
Stoney Stanton is located within the south west of Blaby District to the north of Sapcote.

Stoney Stanton and Sapcote are in close proximity, physically separated by a narrow piece of land. This open land is fairly flat and forms the floodplain to a small watercourse which flows through the area. It is characterised by a shallow valley landform, rough grassland and lush vegetation following the watercourse.

Built form and settlement pattern
Stoney Stanton has a defined centre and associated historic buildings, such as a parish church, former school, rectory, manor house and public house. The village shops are also concentrated within this area. The village has a modern purpose built row of retail units situated immediately adjacent to the parish church.

The village fringes have expanded in various directions although primarily in northern and south westerly directions where estates of modern housing (1970’s to current) have been built. These are laid out in a geometric road pattern and give clearly defined straight edges to south west, north and north east fringes.

The centre of the village contains a small roundabout and wide road layout. The surrounding street pattern at the core of the village is compact and streets are fairly narrow. The road layout at the centre is wide, busy and contains a high number of road markings and signs. As a result it is a prominent feature which detracts from the rural character of this part of the village.

Framed views of Croft Hill and quarry are often seen between buildings from within the Broughton Road area of the village.

Views of the northern fringes of Sapcote are prominent from the public open space area and vice versa.

The core of the village consists of small scale cottages and houses, interspersed with occasional larger houses and focal buildings. Buildings are not tall and only occasionally important buildings such as the church and chapel are taller than two storeys. Larger houses are enclosed within garden walls and mature vegetation, often not visually prominent.

New development introduces three storey dwellings to the village skyline. As buildings of this height are not characteristic of the village, this creates a prominent contrast with the surroundings.

The former quarries at Carey Hill and Clint Hill. These form distinctive vegetated breaks in the built form within the village centre. Both have relatively well vegetated boundaries, particularly Clint Hill which is a large waterfilled quarry. Vegetation around its boundary screens the water from the surrounding roads.

Architectural style
The buildings within the village are of mixed style and age. These are predominantly residential properties and include terraces, cottages, semi and detached dwellings. The older landmark buildings are located within the village core. Buildings often create a continuous built up frontage to roadsides with varied roof height between separate buildings.

Many streets and lanes are of a small scale and are fairly enclosed due to buildings facing immediately onto the roadside. This characteristic of the village core is not reflected within modern housing areas which are more suburban in nature characterised by wider roads, footpaths, verges and buildings set back from the road with front gardens.

Post-war and more recent housing estates largely comprise semi-detached dwellings. Though they have slightly differing building styles they lack distinctiveness.

A sharp contrast in building style and materials exists between the character of the parish church area, constructed from natural stone in a traditional style and the modern row of shops immediately adjacent, a low rise development with flat roof, painted cladding, railings and light coloured bricks.

The village contains pockets of industrial and commercial buildings. The largest area is Foxbank Industrial Estate on the north eastern fringe of the settlement, although this is well screened by mature vegetation to boundaries.

Red brick is the most common building material within the village as a whole. Natural granite forms a key component of the building materials within the historic core area of the village. Roofs are generally dark in colour and are a mixture of materials including slate, concrete and clay tiles. New development has introduced red tiles to roofs and lighter yellow tones of brick, which are not characteristic of the village and create a prominent contrast.

Building frontages are often enclosed by natural stone walling and a typical style is random granite rubble construction. Many buildings, particularly those within the centre of the village, have no front gardens and are situated immediately to the back of roadside footpaths.

A small number of shops are located at village centre.

Busy through routes, number of roads converge at village centre.

Predominantly residential/domestic buildings.

Small scale industrial and business sites are present.

Church constructed from local granite.

The presence of rubble granite walls concentrated within the historic village core.

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The village contains a large area of open space with play facilities. This is located to the southern fringes and within the area of separation between this village and Sapcote.

The public realm generally comprises roadside footpaths and verges, residential streets, lanes and alleyways.

There is a seating/commemorative area situated at the centre of the village overlooking the central roundabout and road junction.

The former quarries of Clint Hill and Carey Hill form important landscape areas within the village. However public access is prevented from Clint Hill and restricted to the edges of Carey Hill.

The village has some capacity to accommodate well sited and carefully designed changes such as "infill" development. Recent development has tended to have its own characteristics and building style rather than incorporating features of the existing village core such as the tight urban form. This has resulted in a sense of detachment from the village centre and a lack of distinctiveness in these areas. Any future development should seek to maintain the character of a rural village and unify areas by the incorporation of some of these characteristics.

The area of separation between the southern fringes of the village and Sapcote has little or no capacity to accommodate change or expansion. This area is very restricted and largely "natural" in character, it would be sensitive to any changes or expansion into this area.

The settlement fringes of Stoney Stanton have already been extended to the north and south west giving rise to a sprawling nature to the village in these directions with little reference or connection to the historic centre of the village.

Recommendations
- Restore and unify key characteristics of the village. Ensure that future change or development is carefully designed to reflect the intrinsic character of traditional distinctive building styles. Seek to check further sprawl and unify built form characteristics where possible.
- Protect the open land between the Stoney Stanton and Sapcote to safeguard the distinct boundaries of each settlement. Creation of new community woodland towards the urban edges in this area between would help to secure long-term definition, also restricting views directly in and out of either to further safeguard the separation between villages.
- Restore and enhance gateway features and focal points to enhance the distinct identities of the two villages. Promote the recognition of distinct boundaries at each edge.
- Preserve the tight urban form within the historic core of the village through ensuring development respects the close association of buildings to the road.
- Conserve the narrowing of built form at road junctions and encourage its replication within future developments.
- Protect the church’s prominence within the skyline through appropriate control of new developments which may reduce its prominence.
- Conserve the use of red brick materials and varied orientation of buildings to ensure that the variety of built-form style along roads within the village is retained.
The majority of domestic buildings are constructed from red brick, slate and dark coloured roof tiles. A mixture of architectural styles is present throughout the village including cottages and converted farm and agricultural buildings. Materials include red/brown brick, granite and occasionally black and white timber facades.

All Saints Church at the village core is of Norman origin. It is constructed from granite rubble, has a modest tower and is accessed via a cobbled entrance with a lych gate off Earl Shilton Road. The churchyard is enclosed by a granite rubble wall.

The Holt, a former rector’s house, was built in 1845. It is a strong feature of the northern approach to village characterised by its brick walls, outbuildings and adjoining cottages.

A modern development at Hollies Close, a central location, reflects and integrates into the village pattern. Although new buildings are larger than some of the surrounding cottages, they face onto Main Street with a courtyard entrance to access properties behind, boundaries area enclosed by brick walls. All are typical features of properties within the village.

The use of red shades of brick and darker reds and greys of roof tiles is complementary to the existing buildings and colour palette.

The presence of local granite stone is prevalent within the buildings at historic village centre. The colours associated with this material are fairly muted shades of grey to warm reddish-brown.

The Poachers public house (c.1670) and the church dating from the 13th century indicates that this has been an historic meeting place and important community focus. A second public house, The Elephant and Castle, and Thurlaston Chapel are also located at the cross roads of Earl Shilton Road and Croft Road reinforcing this as the central focus of the village.

The church tower is visible from various locations in and around the village however it is most prominent when viewed from the south above the surrounding lower level rooftiles. Buildings throughout the village are of a domestic scale, generally low-rise and rarely above two storey. Only significant landmark buildings such as the church, the Rectory and large farm houses are taller. Buildings are fairly low and sit within rolling landform. Generally the rooftop of Thurlaston is not visually prominent within the surrounding landscape.

THURLASTON

Enclosed narrow roads

Red roof tiles

Timber and red brick

Granite and red brick used for boundaries

Mixture of building styles creates variation along the street

Walled enclosure along property boundaries

Half timbered cottages with gated access to small courtyards

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Thurlaston is located towards the western edge of the district, west of Enderby and north west of Croft and Huncote. It is a small compact rural village centred around the village church and the junction of three roads. Expansion of the village has taken place at various times around all fringes.

The village was associated in the past with the textile industry. Prior to the Second World War it contained a small factory which manufactured hosiery. Today the village comprises primarily a residential settlement with few amenities; there are two public houses, a church, and a plant nursery and a general store.

The settlement is reasonably well screened from the surrounding areas by vegetation and rolling landform. Rising ground towards The Holt provides visual containment to the edge of the village from the surrounding area. Existing well spaced single storey buildings with soft landscaping and field boundary vegetation blend the village fringe well into the landscape.

North and north eastern fringes of the village are largely enclosed by higher ground and field boundary vegetation. A disused saw mill is clearly visible situated alongside the Enderby Road on approach to the village. It is not an attractive entrance feature although is slightly detached from the village core and is screened by vegetation from public viewpoints within the village.

Land to the south and east of the settlement falls away slightly before rising again in the middle distance. This creates a degree of openness in this area and makes this settlement fringe fairly prominent.

The core of the village has developed around an important road junction. This junction is of three incoming roads; Croft Road/Enderby Road north to south, Desford Road from the northwest and Earl Shilton Road from the southwest.

The presence of the oldest buildings in the village such as The Poachers public house (c.1670) and the church dating from the 13th century indicates that this has been an historic meeting place and important community focus. A second public house, The Elephant and Castle, and Thurlaston Chapel are also located at the cross roads of Earl Shilton Road and Croft Road reinforcing this as the central focus of the village.

Built form and settlement pattern

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KEY URBAN CHARACTERISTICS

- Small rural village.
- Residential settlement with very limited local facilities.
- Mixture of small scale buildings and streets.
- Converted farm buildings present throughout the settlement.
- Courtyards off main streets to access properties.
- Rising landform with church a prominent feature of the skyline.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE

A mixture of architectural styles is present throughout the village including cottages and converted farm and agricultural buildings. Materials include red/brown brick, granite and occasionally black and white timber facades.
Public realm and green space

A central recreation ground or ‘green’ is located at the village core to the rear of the churchyard. It contains an open well maintained field and a play area, and it provides a valuable green setting and important focal point at the predominantly built up centre of the village. The open space also provides physical separation and a pleasant outlook between buildings along Desford Road and Earl Shilton Road.

The site is bounded by a public footpath along its length overlooking the rear of the churchyard. It provides an important pedestrian link between the two roads. Churchyard walls are low and so from the footpath open views are possible into churchyard over the recreation ground. This gives an open feel to this part of the village.

Many lanes within the historic core of the village are small scale with narrow footpaths, buildings immediately abutting the roadside paths. There is no footway alongside the boundary wall of All Saints Church which creates a narrow and intimate scale to the space. Hedgerows lining the incoming country lanes create enclosure, restrict views and help to screen settlement fringes from various public viewpoints.

Capacity for change along the urban edge

Thurlaston is located within the Landscape Character Areas of Normanton Parkland and Thurlaston Rolling Farmland. Both are strongly characterised by their undeveloped rural nature and by their rolling topography. The simple land use pattern and wide views beyond localised enclosure around Thurlaston village are significant elements within the surrounding landscape character area identified for protection.

The overriding characteristics of this area, as above, mean that the potential to accommodate changes is limited within these landscapes. Changes proposing new built development could be conspicuous. The village fringes may only be capable of effectively accommodating well designed, small changes within carefully chosen locations.

Settlement pattern is vulnerable to change and the key character of a small tightly formed village around the hub of the churches and pubs could be adversely affected by future expansion. The village core has little or no capacity to accommodate future change or development without altering its existing compact form and attractive character.

Small scale changes such as infill development may be possible to incorporate in other areas of the village provided that these are well designed, carefully sited, reflect the characteristics of the village setting and do not impinge on the key components of the wider landscape character area.

Proposed changes and development to the area surrounding the disused saw mill could offer opportunities for improvement of this prominent location. Any changes should respect the rural setting and exploit the site’s position as a gateway to the village.

The southern fringe is open in character and visually prominent. Residential properties are visible along this settlement boundary, as is the church which is located on slightly higher ground and a key feature of the skyline. Expansion of the village boundaries in this location would need to reflect the tight village form, retain the church as a main focal point and ensure that the village does not become more visually prominent within the wider landscape.

BLABY DISTRICT SETTLEMENT CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

Recommendations

- Protect and conserve the character of the historic core of the village. The narrow lanes, irregular style of buildings and the concentration of older buildings all contribute to the character of the village core. All Saints Church is a Grade II listed building.
- Protect the rural character and compact form of the village. Further expansion of the village away from its historic core would alter its small scale intimate character.
- Protect and conserve the central green public open space. The site is easily accessible from the surroundings and its openness is a strong characteristic which should be retained.
- Restore and enhance the approach to the village from Enderby Road. The saw mill creates an unkempt and neglected appearance which is not reflective of the attractive and well maintained village.
KEY URBAN CHARACTERISTICS

A large industrial area present on the western fringe is evidence of the village’s long association with industry both knitting and jet engines.

Fragmented and dispersed village centre.

Predominantly a 20th century commuter village.

Southern part of the village is strongly associated with Whetstone Brook which forms a green corridor through the village.

Constrained village fringes through the proximity to the M1, A426 and disused railway.

Slight variation in skyline created by landmark buildings.

WHETSTONE

Located five miles to the south of Leicester and immediately to the west of Blaby, Whetstone is a large village which has expanded southwards during the 20th century. The village centre is located within the north and is centred around the church.

The village was originally strongly associated with agriculture, and in the 18th century the framework knitting industry, although to a much smaller extent than other villages in the district. However, the greatest influence on the village was from industrial development. The village produced the first jet aeroengine. The expansion of the village began primarily in the 1960s and continued into the 1990s expanding the village considerably from its original linear core around High Street and Victoria Road.

Built form and settlement pattern

The original settlement pattern is partially visible along Victoria Road and High Street; however newer infill development and associated car parking has influenced and altered the character of the village. The extent of new residential development has changed the village character and today it is a large suburban commuter village, with small local shops dispersed throughout and a large area of industry on its western edge.

The centre of the village is defined by the post office and public house, although the dispersed nature of retail development and high proportion of residential properties reduce the strength of the character of the commercial core. The majority of roads are relatively wide with houses set behind small front gardens; in the more modern development the buildings are set further away from the road with driveways designed to accommodate cars. Numerous car parks associated with buildings within the centre reduce the continuous building frontage and give the centre a slightly fragmented appearance.

The road up to the church is relatively narrow in comparison with other roads in Whetstone. However, built development is set back from the road behind timber fencing and mature hedgerows and the street appears relatively secluded. Although located relatively centrally within the older part of the village, the church is tucked away and not integrated with the centre.

The building heights are generally fairly uniform at two storeys high although there are a number of larger buildings such as the Old Baptist Chapel, Whetstone Baptist Chapel and the church spire which provide a slight variation to the generally uniform skyline.

Architectural Style

There is no overriding common architectural style to the buildings within Whetstone. Within the central core there are a number of small terraces with larger detached and semi-detached properties interspersed throughout. Semi-detached and detached properties are characteristic of the newer modern developments.

The majority of buildings within the centre are small two storey terraces which have fairly uniform large windows and doors which front directly on to the street or are set behind a small front garden. Further from the centre, buildings become larger semi-detached with larger front gardens and wide grass verges increasing the width and openness of the roads considerably.

The buildings present include a mixture of red brick and brick buildings which have been painted shades of white and cream. Roof materials are generally clay tile both red and dark brown with a smaller proportion of slate and grey coloured tiles. There is no uniform boundary treatment to buildings, although the most common form brick walling and timber fencing.

Feature buildings where present are often set back from the road with car parking or hard standing in front of them. The boundaries to these properties are a mixture of brick walls, metal fencing and in places no boundaries are present.

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The building heights are generally fairly uniform at two storeys high although there are a number of larger buildings such as the Old Baptist Chapel, Whetstone Baptist Chapel and the church spire which provide a slight variation to the generally uniform skyline.
**Public realm and green space**

Whetstone Brook flows through the centre of the village and provides a strong green corridor through the southern half of the village. In places however, this has an engineered appearance and there is little opportunity to walk down and interact with the water’s edge. The brook provides footpath links from the centre of the village out towards the surrounding countryside.

There are a number of mature trees within the green verge adjacent to the river and these provide a strong vegetated character along Brook Street.

Open space within the village is generally associated with Whetstone Brook and at main road junctions. There is a small square on the southern outskirts of the village centre which is characterised by hard surfacing, seating and a large flower bed of annual flowers.

There is relatively little opportunity to expand Whetstone due to its constrained urban fringes. Its eastern edge is defined by the A426 and its northern and western edges by the disused railway.

The southern edge borders countryside and is relatively well defined. The edge is relatively urban and would benefit from some improvement through woodland planting to screen the edge. There is limited potential for infill development as the land rises from the edge of the village and new development could potentially become more apparent in the wider countryside. It would need to respect the key characteristics of the Blaby, Countesthorpe and Whetstone Fringe landscape character area.

The village lacks a definite character to the built form, orientation and pattern. The area has suffered from past infill development which has related poorly to older development within the village centre. Modern development to the south is larger than the village core and is a suburban extension which relates little to its surroundings and does not contribute to local distinctiveness in the village.

**Capacity for change along the urban edge**

There is little opportunity for any large scale development as the village is in a relatively sensitive location; it is located very close to Blaby, Cosby and Littlethorpe. Any development on the periphery has the potential to merge these settlements threatening the aim that the village identities are maintained and enhanced.

**Gateway features**

The entrances to the village from roundabouts off the A426 are residential in character and often weakly defined. The entrance along Wychwood Road has a number of terraced buildings and a slightly tighter urban form which creates a more defined entrance than other roads off the A426.

The village lacks any distinctive entrances. Road signage is generally the only reference, however this is often inconspicuous. Former edges of settlements forming gateways have been altered through expansion of residential development. From the west the entrance to Whetstone is through an industrial estate comprising mainly large scale buildings set within mounding and mature landscaping.

**Recommendations**

- Prepare a community led village design statement to identify the elements of the village of most value to the community and of importance to protect and enhance.
- Protect the existing heritage and listed buildings and encourage any new infill development in these locations to reflect this style to provide a stronger urban grain within the centre of the village.
- Improve the linkage between the church and the main high street by opening up the access route and making a feature of the approach to provide a more defined central focus to the village.
- Enhance the gateways between Blaby and Whetstone by introducing or improving features which create a sense of arrival to provide distinction between the two settlements.
- Ensure that future development around Whetstone aims to provide a sense of place to the village which uses the styles present in some of the feature buildings in the centre as design references.
- Enhance the industrial entrance to the village from Littlethorpe to improve its integration with the residential areas by improving visual appearance and augmentation of native planting along the Cambridge Road.
- Enhance the Whetstone Brook corridor and associated open space to establish it as a key feature of the village improving access along the watercourse and through better landscape management to increase its aesthetic and wildlife value.
**WIGSTON PARVA**

**KEY URBAN CHARACTERISTICS**
- Small collection of individual buildings set around a central green.
- Very small hamlet set within a mature wooded setting.
- Barns, stables and courtyards a frequent presence throughout the village.
- Village is nestled and appears indistinct in views from the wider landscape.
- The small church is a feature along the urban edge.

**Location and context**
This is a small hamlet on the outskirts of the district close to the district boundary. It lies within the Aston Flamville Wooded Farmland character area.

The village has a very rural character despite its close proximity to the A5. It is set on relatively flat ground which rises up to the south and west helping to nestle the hamlet in the wider landscape.

**Settlement pattern**
The houses within the hamlet are almost all set around a central green. There are selective views between properties into the wider countryside; however, due to the rising topography these views are only over a short distance and always have woodland as a component of the view.

The hamlet feels remote and private in character due to its small size and entire focus set around the small green within the centre.

**Gateway features**
The hamlet is accessed by one small lane which then splits around a central green to individual properties’ drives. These access roads have the appearance of long drives to private residences rather than roads. This entrance into the hamlet is enclosed and wooded in character which mostly screens the buildings until entering the central green where the hamlet opens up slightly. From the B4114 the hamlet is totally screened by mature vegetation and has the appearance of a small block of woodland with ornamental species within it.

**Architectural style**
The properties are all detached and of individual style. Some are constructed of red brick and others are finished with pale coloured render. The majority of the roofs are a mix of dull red tiles and grey slate which provides a distinctive pattern to the roofline as well as being steeply sloping. The only building to be constructed from granite is the church which is relatively modest in appearance and reflects the small size and nature of this settlement. Some of the brick work has simple detailing which provides variation.

Some properties have small paved courtyards which are visible through gated archways.

Property boundaries vary between open well-managed front gardens to small brick walls and informal driveways. The hamlet has a strong connection to its rural surrounding with a high proportion of barns and stables present, some of which have been converted into private residences.

The church is set on slightly higher ground than the properties and provides a slight vista from the eastern corner of the green.

**Capacity for change**
This hamlet is very small and focused around a central green which makes it very distinctive in the district. Although there has been individual infill within the hamlet which has reinforced it’s intimate nature.

The hamlet is not prominent in the wider landscape due to the presence of mature woodland along the majority of its boundaries. The most open boundary is the western boundary with the church visible in the local landscape. However, as the land rises to the west outside the settlement, this influence is only over a short distance. The remainder of the built form is broken up by mature trees and woodland within private gardens. The church has no tower or spire and therefore does not punctuate the wooded roofline of the hamlet.

This hamlet is highly sensitive to change, particularly any infill or redevelopment that would extend the hamlet beyond its focus on the central green and dilute its intimate and private character. In addition, the woodland along the fringes is important in assimilating the hamlet into the landscape.

**Recommendations**
- Protect the focus on the central green.
- Protect and where possible enhance the woodland vegetation around the periphery of the hamlet.
- Promote the use of red and grey tiles in any redevelopment of buildings within the hamlet.
- Preserve the views out to the wider countryside from the hamlet.