Sapcote Heritage Area Proposal

Sapcote Parish Council is anxious to protect the special historic character and appearance of the centre of the village. It considers that the character of this area is worthy of preservation and enhancement and is safeguarded both in terms of the buildings and the ambient environment. Whilst its ultimate aim is to achieve Conservation Area status for the centre of the village, it is recognised that this cannot be designated by the neighbourhood plan. Instead this plan identifies a Local Heritage Area for Sapcote which will protect the character of the historic core of the village until a Conservation Area is designated. Whilst we accept that the Local Heritage Area does not benefit from the level of protection offered by Conservation Area status, it does nevertheless, set out clearly our intention to protect our heritage and move to Conservation Area status as soon as possible.

Sapcote is a small village is located approximately 4 miles east of Hinckley and is surrounded by open countryside which is substantially agricultural land. The population recorded at the 2011 census was 2,442 but this has been increasing over recent years by in excess of 1,000 with the present housing developments in the village.

While the village does have a number of older properties, the majority of the residential properties were constructed post 1950. There is an Area of Separation to the north between Sapcote and Stoney Stanton. A large part of the Parish is rural supporting a number of farms. There are a small number of commercial outlets in the village including a garden centre, on the edge of the village. There are four disused quarries within close proximity of Sapcote the most well known of which houses the Stoney Cove diving centre. Sapcote is a village with a long history, Iron Age pottery having been unearthed here. There is also evidence of Bronze Age occupation and a Roman villa and bath house dating from 1st Century AD. The former castle and manorial site was located on the Recreation Ground site and this site is now a scheduled ancient monument.

The War Memorial is a listed monument erected together with comrades wreath and dedicated 17 September 1921. Railed enclosure and granite wall to front. Red Lion public house dates back to the eighteenth century and is a feature of Church Street that requires preserving.

Library and Church Hall sited on open green space with Copper Beech affording a good view of the 13th century All Saints Collegiate Church which is Grade 2 listed with tower and spire. Mass dial on exterior wall and interesting heads on the windows of the former chantry chapel (now the North aisle) together with adjacent churchyard surrounded by attractive granite wall. Lychgate located at Church Street entrance. It was erected in 1947 as a war memorial. Coats of arms to the outside, inscriptions in the interior and interesting masons marks.

The Old Rectory was built in 1876 on the site of a Rectory (originally the College of Chantry Priests dating to the 14th century and added to over the years). The windows and front door have attractive stone surrounds. The outbuildings contain 17th century timbers are built of brick with a substantial granite and timber elevation to the rear. The building is surrounded with a granite wall which complements the churchyard wall. This attractive corner of the street could be at risk from developers and therefore the imperative is that it is preserved and the building listed.

To the rear of the Old Rectory is a fine granite wall which has been described as one of the finest stretches in the county. It dates from the 16th–17th century and forms part of the stone building in the Old Rectory grounds. It is essential that this is listed to prevent deterioration. There is an attractive view of the building set in its substantial grounds from Bassett Lane.

Group of three terraced cottages adjacent to the Old Rectory built circa 1840 as a cottage plus workshop the brickwork now painted and with modern fittings to the front. The centre cottage (home of a master hosier) still retains its attractive Flemish Bond façade with stone window sills and lintels and original windows with crown glass. The heavy wooden front door has a coloured glass fanlight above) The heavy wooden side gate leading to the rear of the property is original and still retains its wooden lock
and hand forged hinges. The garden consists of the original croft with the remains of a medieval moat running along the bottom. The moat was excavated in 1999 and was dated to 1160-80. The building still has its slate roof and chimneys. It is not listed. The third cottage (once the two workers cottages) has been extensively altered over the years but has been sympathetically restored at the front with multipane windows and a cottage style door with porch over. The façade once matching the centre building has been rendered. Two semi-detached houses built in the 1960s and set back from the original street line unfortunately do not conform to the other buildings on this side of the street.

The first of a group of two cottages next to the modern semis has the remains of a stone wall within its South elevation indicating that these cottages replaced an earlier one in the early Victorian period. Next door a three storey cottage (originally two) dating from the late Georgian period. They have a rendered frontage covering the original brickwork. The large end house adjacent to the Playing Fields has a stone foundation. It dates back to the late Georgian early Victorian period. It has a rendered façade and the windows have been replaced and enlarged.

Blacksmith’s Cottage: Once the original forge and later ironmongers’ shop has been sympathetically restored and provides an attractive entrance to Church Street as well as a focal point to the area known as The Cross. There has probably been a building here since the time of the Bassets in the 12th to 14th centuries and there is a granite built cellar under the building. Outside on the pavement is a mounting stone now rather smaller than at the turn of the 20th century because of the raising of the footpath over the intervening years. The cottages opposite built in the early 1900s are also worthy of preservation. Also at the village Cross is the Sapcote Club built in 1906 in the Arts and Crafts style is a good building of the period and is worthy of preservation as are the terraced cottage from the Club to the Cross.

The Playing Fields houses a scheduled Ancient Monument and the site of Sapcote Castle and Manorial site which was the home of the powerful Basset family from 1160 to 1376. Excavations in the late 1960s and early 1970s revealed the foundations of substantial buildings including a hearth, oven and a turret together with a cobbled road and a well. There were three moats on the site with excavations taking place in the 1950s, 60s and in 1999.

New Walk boasts a restored Grade 2 listed thatched cottage dating to the 18th century plus period cottages and a farmhouse of circa 1874. It also has early 20th century cottages forming an attractive block. Also, in New Walk is the old abattoir in the garden of a house. It is well preserved and contains the original pulley wheel for lifting carcasses. Could be in danger at some future time with another owner and therefore should be listed.

Stanton Road has Old Park House Farm which has been well restored and converted into a housing complex. This road also has Park Farm dating back to 1683 and is the oldest building in the village and noteworthy among the buildings in Leicestershire. This building represents the transition from timber-framed building to the period of brick building which did away with the necessity for such a frame. It is not a listed building.

Also in Stanton Road is the Bath House which is the remaining part of the buildings erected in 1806 when Sapcote became a Spa. The bath was demolished but the historic Bath House remains. It was illustrated in Nichols History of the County of Leicester. It is essential that this historic building is listed.

An early 19th century cast iron milestone, a relic of the turnpike era is located on the corner of Grace Road and Leicester Road. It is the only remaining milestone on the old Narborough to Hinckley stretch of the turnpike. Other milestones elsewhere in the county have preservation orders on them so this should be listed also.

The Gravel Pit was once the area where gravel was extracted for the upkeep of the village roads. Bronze Age artefacts and Roman skeletons have been found in this area.
The village Washpit is located in a field behind the houses on Hinckley Road. This stretch of water dates back to at least the 17th century or earlier.

Sapcote Playing Fields house the site of Sapcote Castle and Manorial Site the former home of the prominent Basset family from 1160 to 1376. The site was partially excavated in the 1950s and 1960s and now has Scheduled Ancient Monument status.

Church Walk comprises a number of medieval footpaths or back lanes which should be conserved as a feature of the village.

A number of properties in Leicester Road are worthy of protection. These include: The Old School built by the village squire John Frewen Turner in 1819 as verified by the date stone on the building’s exterior. It is now a Grade 2 listed building it has been converted into apartments. The Methodist Church built in 1804 in the Arts and Crafts style is now a Grade 2 listed building. There are three thatched cottages at the side of the Grade 2 listed Methodist Church which were originally part of the village workhouse and date to the 18th century. They should be listed in their own right or as part of a group with the Church. Granitethorpe Cottages are an attractive group of quarry workers cottages built in 1875. They require listing or preserving as a relic of Sapcote’s quarrying period. Both Granitethorpe Quarry and Leicester Quarry have been undergoing unauthorised change. Both of these quarries are worthy of protection as part of Sapcote’s industrial heritage.

In Cooks Lane we have the Almshouses which are Grade 2 listed properties adjacent to the church and built in 1847. Also in Cooks Lane is South View Farmhouse, a Grade 2 listed property opposite the Almshouses.

There are a number of properties located in Sharnford Road. Mosse Cottage, a Grade 2 listed thatched cottage forms an attractive view on the bend in Sharnford Road. Also, we have Dairy Cottage, an attractive Grade 2 listed building with extensive gardens and Calver Hill Cottages which are granite fronted former quarry workers cottages. This is an attractive group of cottages requiring preservation as they could be spoilt by inappropriate modernisation.

There are a number of properties in Church Street which require protection. The Old Rectory was built in 1875 on the site of a college of Chantry priests dating to 1367, it is the third building on the site. The Old Rectory stands in extensive grounds but unfortunately it is not a listed building. The Stable and Coach House within the Old Rectory grounds, possibly a onetime barn, mainly stone built with some brick in-filling and the interior has ancient timbers. Also, there is a fine stone wall on the boundary wall to the Old Rectory. The wall is approximately 200ft long and has been described by experts as the finest stretch of stone wall in Leicestershire.

The detailed description above demonstrates the wide variety of buildings and styles located within the village. There is clearly a need to protect these buildings and sites for future generations. It is the intention of Sapcote Parish Council to apply for Conservation Area status at the earliest opportunity.