PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA ~ WIGSTON PARVA
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THE BACKGROUND

At their meeting on 6th May, 1975, the Planning, Development and Conservation Committee of the Blaby District Council resolved to approve further study of a possible Conservation Area in part of Wigston Parva.

Under Section 277 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971, every Local Planning Authority has a duty to determine whether it has any areas which are worthy of preservation and enhancement because of special character or appearance.

METHODS OF PROCEDURE

The purpose of this brief report is to outline the reasons why Wigston Parva has been selected for further study and the effects and implications that formal designation will have. Hopefully, it will provide a basis for discussion at a special parish meeting to be called in the near future. The Council is most anxious to obtain the views of residents to both the concept and the details of the proposals.

It should be emphasised that at this stage this report and maps contain only suggestions and that modifications will almost certainly be made after consultations have been made.

After the special parish meeting the procedure, briefly, would be as follows:

The comments of residents will be reported to the Planning, Development and Conservation Committee which will then decide whether to proceed. If the proposal is approved it will then be forwarded to the County Council for its observations. The next step would be to arrange for advertisements and notification to the Secretary of State for the Environment. Formal designation could then follow.

THE CONCEPT OF CONSERVATION

The concept of Conservation should not be confused with preservation in that it does not mean a complete halt to any further building within the area. The main principle being that following designation the Local Planning Authority will have the necessary powers to insist that future building is sympathetic to and harmonises with the existing village. Specifically, this would relate to design, use of materials, scale and size of buildings etc. Within a Conservation Area approval must be sought for the demolition of any structure or building of more than a certain minimum size. All trees gain the protection of a Tree Preservation Order. There would be, in addition, certain other controls over such things as street furniture, traffic signs and advertisements.

Having designated a Conservation Area the Local Planning Authority has a duty to prepare a scheme of enhancement. The results of this scheme should not be expected immediately nor in one single operation.
THE VILLAGE

Since the mid-sixties the planning policy for the village has allowed for new development for "essential roads only" and no new industrial or commercial uses have been approved. This policy, linked with the comparative remoteness of the settlement and its general lack of communal facilities has safeguarded this village against large scale expansion and erosion of its character. Neither the submitted Structure Plan for Leicester and Leicestershire, submitted in 1973 and now awaiting the Secretary of State's confirmation, nor the proposed Conservation Area will vary those existing planning policies.

Within the district Wigston Parva is unique not only in terms of its size but in the way in which the historic pattern of the village has survived intact. Surrounded as it is by rising ground the houses are grouped round a completely enclosed village green which forms the main feature. Immediately surrounding the village are a large number of fine mature trees.

Three maps are attached to this report. The first shows a suggested boundary to the Conservation Area whilst the second map highlights some of the important features and some items which might benefit from enhancement. The third and final map indicates the scope of a possible scheme of enhancement and remedial work.

HISTORIC RECORD

Written records of the village are very brief but that information which is known set out below for general interest and information purposes.

The original name of Wigston Parva was Wiceston. It later became known as Little Wigston or Wigston Parva (parva meaning little, magna meaning great). John Nichols wrote, Little Wigston "lies on the edge of Warwickshire, about half a mile beyond High Cross, on the right hand side of the road to Hinckley. This town did antiently belong to William Le Almoner. Before the time of the Conqueror, Ulfric Spot gave a hide of land to Burton Abbey."

"In the itinerary of 1280, Little Wigston, Sharnford, Sutton cheney juxta Bosworth and Auberne, answered collectively as one will."

"In 1296 it was again found that the village of Little Wigston was held in fee of the Abbot of Reading. The abbot had sixteen virgates of land and a windmill there, of the King, in villanage. He had also the royalty and paid no scutage."

"In 1322 the following complaint was laid before the Parliament, by William le Messenger, then sherriff of the Counties of Warwick and Leicester, against Daniz Piers prior of Monks Kyrkeby, and divers others, for obstructing him in his official duty of providing horses and carriages for the Kings service in Scotland; and violently assaulting him on the Fosse Road."
HISTORIC RECORD (continued)

In 1595 a legal injustic by one Henry Turville the lessee of the memorial rights infuriated the villagers, they set upon him "all armed and arrayed in warlike manner, that is to say with long-picked staves, swords, daggers and other unlawful weapons, and beat him thoroughly. (H.J.Francis, History of Hinckley).

'The village is about a quarter of a mile to the East of Smockington, and lies so very low as to be scarcely discernible till one is close at it, it contains three substantial farm houses and five labourer's cottages, and exhibits the appearance of a neat rural square."

In his "History of the County of Leicester" by the Rev. J. Curtis (1831) he states:- "Hamlet of Claybrook, contains 500 acres, 79, inhabitants, 17 houses. The principal proprietors are the Earl of Denbigh, Henry Dickenson, Esq., who is Lord of the Manor, William Clarke, Esq., and Joshua Grundy, Esq., who has a seat called Wigston Hall.

The village (Little Wigston) formerly belonging to Reading Abbey Berkshire."

THE CHURCH

"The chapel is dedicated to the Assumption of Our Lady, where divine service is performed every other Sunday."

"On a flat stone in the chapel is inscribed, William Musson, gent, died September 15th 1749 aged 73. Thomas Musson, gent, brother of the said William, died April 22nd 1738." (J.Nichols).

Nikolous Pevsner writes "A tiny church of nave and chancel in one, with a modest open timber bell-turret. The masonry is Norman - see the simple North doorway. The East window has a Y-tracery, i.e. dates from later Cl3 or early Cl4."

"Giant angle pilasters are introduced very occasionally cl710-30 a reflection no doubt of the contemporary giant pilasters of the bigger houses (Wigston Parva 1727, Stoney Stanton and also the remarkably large, though architecturally quite bare, Almshouses at Ravenstone).

HALL FARMS

Dated 1727, although this is almost certainly the date of alterations to an existing house. Brick with two projecting gabled wings. Giant angle pilasters. One window has still the original close leading.

There was until a few years ago a semi-circular headed door on the North side with the usual Normal label on the arch.

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22nd October, 1975.
THE CONSERVATION AREA
THE VISUAL QUALITY OF THE ENTRANCE TO THE VILLAGE IS GOOD WITH MATURE HIGH HEDGES, BUT IS SPOILT TO SOME EXTENT BY THE OVERGROWN VERGES.

THE MANOR FARM AND BARN ARE EXCELLENT BUILDINGS IN GOOD REPAIR. THE BARN MAKES A PLEASANT FEATURE, TOGETHER WITH THE RENDERED WALL, TO THE ENTRANCE TO THE VILLAGE.

THE TREES TOGETHER WITH THE RED BRICK WALL, ALTHOUGH IN NEED OF POINTING, MAKE A PLEASANT FEATURE.

THE CHURCH IS SMALL AND NEAT AND IN GOOD CONDITION.

HEDGEROW AND TREES IN NEED OF TIDYING UP.

HALL FARM AND BARN ARE BOTH EXCELLENT BUILDINGS, BUT ARE IN NEED OF REPAIR.

GRASS VERGE BADLY WORN UP AND OVER GARAGE DOOR IS OUT OF SCALE WITH REST OF COTTAGE.

THE BUILDINGS TOGETHER WITH THE GRASSED AREA AND THE MATURE TREES NEXT TO HALL FARM FORM A VERY PLEASANT ENCLOSED ATMOSPHERE TO THE VILLAGE. THE TRACKS AND GRASS EDGES ARE IN POOR CONDITION THOUGH.

DETAILED APPRAISAL