

South Wigston Conservation Area Development Control Guidance

Adopted 6 June 2006

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document has been produced in tandem with the Conservation Area Appraisal written for South Wigston. Its purpose is to provide guidance to prospective developers by clearly setting out the key issues which will influence the Local Planning Authority's decision on any planning or other application submitted in the area.
- 1.2 Conservation Area designation is not intended to 'pickle' an area by preventing all new development. South Wigston has evolved over more than 100 years and this guidance therefore seeks to ensure that the area continues to thrive, but without prejudicing the key features which define the character and appearance of the area.
- 1.3 This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Conservation Area Appraisal for the area and the supporting policies in the Oadby and Wigston Adopted Local Plan 1999.
- 1.4 In addition to general policies relating to developments in Conservation Areas, shopping etc., the Local Plan has policies that specifically relate to the South Wigston Conservation Area. These include:

Policy C3 – regarding development within or adjoining the Grand Union Canal
Policy Em10 – regarding the redevelopment of land adjoining Station Street
Policy Sh15 – regarding the provision of rear accesses to shops on Blaby Road

2.0 Consultation

- 2.1 This guidance was adopted by Oadby & Wigston Borough Council on 6 June 2006 as a policy statement.
- 2.2 This document was subject to public consultation before being considered by the Full Council of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council on 6th June 2006.
- 2.3 A 'Statement of Consultation' has been produced by the Borough Council which summarises all the representatives received during the public consultation exercise which accompanied the production of this document.

3.0 Submission of applications

3.1 ***Outline planning applications***

Outline applications for development within the Conservation Area will not be accepted unless they contain sufficient supporting information by which the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area can be judged.

3.2 ***Full planning applications for new buildings***

These will need to include sufficient detail by which the full impact of the proposals on the character and appearance of the area can be judged. This will need to include consideration of the issues raised in the Conservation Area Appraisal (especially the 'Key Characteristics' Section) and a design statement which clearly sets out how the proposal is felt to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area.

3.3 ***Listed Building Consent***

This is required for any works which affect the architectural or historic interest of the interior or exterior of any listed building and any building constructed before 1 July 1948 which stands within its curtilage. Applications must include a statement which demonstrates an understanding of the aspects of the building to be affected, describes why the work is needed, explains why any alternative options were discounted and considers how the damage to any historic fabric will be minimised.

3.4 ***Conservation Area Consent***

This is required for the demolition of any unlisted building within the Conservation Area. In order to justify the works, a statement will need to be provided which considers the issues in Section 4 of this guidance. Where a building is to be replaced by a new structure, consideration of how the building will contribute to the character and appearance of the area will need to be included in a Design Statement to accompany any planning application.

4.0 Demolition of buildings

4.1 Listed Buildings (including their outbuildings), Significant Local Buildings and Terraces of Townscape Value which are identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal will enjoy a general presumption against demolition.

4.2 The demolition of such buildings will only be approved where it can be demonstrated that:-

- The building is structurally unsound and repairs would involve the significant loss or alteration of the original structure and any elements of particular historic interest; or
- It cannot continue in its current use, and it is not capable of being converted to a suitable new use in its current form; and
- The building has been offered for sale on the open market at the market price for at least six months and that no reasonable offer has been received; and
- Any proposed replacement building will make an equal or greater contribution to the character and appearance of the area;
- Demolition would not result in a long term cleared site to the detriment of adjacent listed buildings or the Conservation area; and
- Proposals for the careful salvage and reuse of building materials are provided.

4.3 The demolition of other buildings in the area will be approved provided that:-

- The building(s) is/are identified as making either a negative or insignificant contribution to the character or appearance of the area
- Any replacement building or feature will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Any application for a replacement building must be accompanied by a design statement which describes how the new building respects the 'Key Characteristics' of the area as defined in the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- To avoid unsightly gaps in the Conservation Area, a condition will be imposed on any grant of Conservation Area Consent which prevents the demolition taking place until a contract has been let for the redevelopment of the site.

5.0 Development of large / sensitive sites

5.1 The following sites have long term potential for enhancing the character of the Conservation Area. For the larger sites a 'planning brief' may be prepared by the Borough Council to guide or promote development and summarise the local authority's aspirations and detailed requirements.

5.2 In line with good practice, these briefs will be drawn up in consultation with the land owner and local people prior to formal public consultation and, where appropriate, adoption as Supplementary Planning Guidance. For the smaller sites informal planning guidance may be sufficient to describe the constraints and opportunities and assist potential developers in preparing proposals.

5.3 ***Blaby Road/Canal St***

Planning brief has already been prepared

Site currently for sale.

Major site with potential for significant enhancement to appearance of the Conservation Area

Significant opportunity to improve aspect to park

Active frontages to Canal Street and Blaby Road

See DC Guidance paragraph 7.1

5.4 ***Blaby Road – Rear of Marquis of Queensbury***

Significant Local Building

Repair, and reuse of outbuildings to the rear of the pub

See DC Guidance paragraph 8.1

5.5 ***Station Street – Bus garage***

Allocated for employment use in adopted Local Plan

Main vehicle access for any development should be via Bennett Way

Potential for more intensive use – possible mixed use with residential onto Station Street.

Retention and reuse of 1930s building – identified as 'Significant Local Building'

Improved aspect to Station Street

See DC Guidance paragraph 7.1

- 5.6 ***Park Road***
Large single storey industrial building with residential uses on both east and west boundaries
Opportunity for new building to terminate a long view down Orange Street and also to address the canal
Potential for residential use
See DC Guidance paragraph 6.1
- 5.7 ***Park Rd (Adkins and Sons)***
Part of this site has planning permission for conversion to residential use subject to signing of S106 agreement
Retain and refurbish building
Opportunity to address canal
Potential conversion to residential use
See DC Guidance paragraph 8.1
- 5.8 ***Countesthorpe Road – Alpha House***
Currently an office block
Site addresses both Orange Street and Countesthorpe Road
Potential for redevelopment with a building that respects the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
See DC Guidance paragraph 6.1
- 5.9 ***Countesthorpe Road – vacant site***
Small site currently used for car parking surrounded by housing.
Potential housing infill site - two storey
Improve boundary treatments with adjoining properties and onto Countesthorpe Road
See DC Guidance para 6.2
- 5.10 ***Countesthorpe Road – tyre depot***
Small site currently occupied by car park and single storey building.
Associated with car spares sales in adjoining building
Opportunity to re-establish building line
Two storey residential
See DC Guidance 6.2

- 5.11 ***Canal Street – car sales yard***
Small infill plot – currently with planning permission for residential use, subject to signing of a S106 agreement
Adjoining buildings to north and south both identified as ‘Significant Local Building’
Possible site for housing or small commercial use
Two storey with main entrance off Canal St
See DC Guidance paragraph 6.2
- 5.12 ***Canal St – Oldershaw Brothers yard***
Main building identified as ‘Significant Local Building’
Removal of ‘shed’ structure from street frontage
Refurbishment of office/workshop
Improvements to boundary
See DC Guidance paragraph 8.1
- 5.13 ***Canal Street – ‘Stamford Shoe Works’***
Significant local building – currently has permission for conversion to residential use subject to signing of S106 agreement
Retain and refurbish
Future use to ensure the external appearance and detailing remains intact
See DC Guidance paragraph 7.1
- 5.14 ***Canal St – building immediately south of Healy St***
Significant local building
Retain and refurbish
Future use to ensure the external appearance and detailing remains intact
See DC Guidance paragraph 7.1

6.0 Design of new buildings

6.1 To be acceptable, the design of any new building will need to respect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area by:-

- Being of an appropriate mass and scale to avoid dominating the small two-storey residential terraces and/or, in the case of mixed small commercial and residential streets, to maintain an appropriate juxtaposition of scales.
- Being of an appropriate form to sit comfortably with the mix of residential, industrial and commercial styles of the buildings in the area
- Respecting any well-defined building lines.
- Having interesting roof forms and producing an interesting skyline silhouette.
- Using materials which either reflect those found on the traditional buildings in the area or produce an acceptable and exciting contrast.
- Respecting prevalent architectural detailing such as bay windows, window and door surrounds and decorative eaves and responding to the differences in detailing between terraces where a development covers more than one street.
- Creating positive street corners with active frontages on all elevations.
- Providing a Design Statement as part of a Planning Application which sets out the rationale behind the design of the buildings.

6.2 Infill development (defined as the insertion of one or more new buildings within a continuous street façade or frontage) will be permitted as long as its design has regard to the prevailing character and quality of the surrounding townscape. The design of this type of development should respond to:

- established building and boundary lines and the local scale of development
- prevailing overall heights, storey heights and the massing of adjacent buildings
- characteristic frontage or plot widths
- roof profiles and silhouettes of adjoining buildings
- colour, type, source and texture of facing, roofing and paving materials
- distinctive forms or architectural detailing prevalent in the immediate area
- average dwelling size and net residential densities
- existence of set piece or otherwise unified architectural compositions or significant building groups

7.0 Extensions

7.1 Alterations and extensions should normally be confined to the rear or least important elevations unless the result would improve the architectural character of the building in its setting. Planning permission will be granted for proposals which:-

- Respect the prominent building line
- Do not destroy the symmetry of balanced elevations or groups
- Do not interfere with key architectural features of the composition.
- Are subordinate and appropriate to the form of the main building and either of the same materials as the main building or provide an appropriate contrast.
- Serve to reinstate missing traditional features, such as doors, windows, front porches and other decorative features
- Use traditional and, where appropriate, reclaimed or recycled building materials
- Do not break the established rhythm of residential streets
- Adequately conceal any unsightly services or plant

8.0 Changes of use

8.1 The conversion of former industrial or commercial buildings of townscape value to residential or appropriate commercial use will be actively encouraged provided that:-

- The appearance of the building will be maintained without the need for disfiguring extensions or alterations.
- Where the property was purpose-built as a shop and elements of an original or appropriate shopfront survive, these will be retained in any conversion unless they are completely beyond repair.
- The amenity of adjoining residents will not be significantly affected.
- Adequate car and cycle parking and refuse storage can be provided and suitably screened from public view.
- Existing vehicle accesses are adequate, or appropriately sized accesses can be provided without affecting the overall townscape quality of the area, the setting of the building or involving the loss of any important tree or boundary.
- Any important 'lost', altered or dilapidated architectural details will be restored.

8.2 The current Local Plan seeks to retain commercial uses along Blaby Road. However it is recognised that shopping patterns are changing in the area. Many of the properties, especially at the western end and the terrace of buildings with Gothic detailing were built as houses and were converted to shops later. Where retail uses are no longer commercially viable in these buildings, conversion back to residential use will be supported when:

- The architectural character and detailing of the original houses will be restored.
- Front gardens with appropriate boundaries will be reinstated
- Adequate car and cycle parking and refuse storage can be provided and suitably screened from public view.
- The living accommodation is of an adequate standard and the occupants have an acceptable level of amenity.

8.3 Where retail uses remain viable on only the ground floors of properties, 'Living over the Shop' will be actively encouraged to bring vacant upper floors back into use and generate activity at different times of the day. Such uses will be supported provided that:

- Appropriate noise insulation between the living accommodation and the shop below can be provided.
 - Where the living accommodation is to be accessed separately from the shop, an appropriate separate entrance can be provided without damaging the character of the building and any original or appropriately-designed shopfront.
 - Adequate waste storage and car and cycle parking can be provided for the occupants.
- 8.4 Permission for short-term/temporary uses of vacant buildings and land will only be granted when it can be demonstrated that the proposals will not:
- Adversely affect the amenity of adjacent residents
 - Jeopardise the potential for an appropriate long-term use of the land or building.
 - Weaken the character of the area through the provision of poor quality buildings
 - Attract a proliferation of signage
- 8.5 The change of use of residential dwellings to non residential uses will not normally be permitted.
- 8.6 Planning permission for proposals, such as restaurants and cafes, drinking establishments or hot food takeaways (Use Classes A3, A4 and A5 respectively) will only be approved when it can be demonstrated that there will be no harm to residential amenity or local environmental quality as a result of smells, noise, increased late-night activity and disturbance, or increased parking and traffic.
- 8.7 The sub-division of single residential properties into self-contained dwellings will only be permitted if:
- The appearance of the building will be maintained without the need for disfiguring extensions or alterations;
 - The amenity of adjoining residents will not be significantly affected;
 - Satisfactory car and cycle parking, and refuse bin storage for the occupants can be adequately accommodated and appropriately screened;
 - The location of the property or the nature of nearby land uses will not affect the quality of the occupants' residential amenity;
 - The living accommodation created will be satisfactory;
 - Where separate accesses are required, these entrances are adequate and safe, and can be provided without damaging the character of the building; and

- Appropriate noise insulation between dwellings can be provided.

9.0 Shopfronts, signage, blinds and security measures

Introduction

- 9.1 The provision of shops was an important element of the original foundation of South Wigston. Blaby Road developed as the main shopping street, but shops were also found on the ends of many of the residential streets to the north and south. Although some old shopfronts survive, many others have been lost or disfigured by modern alterations or the addition of clumsy signage.
- 9.2 The Borough Council is seeking to improve the quality of the shopfronts in the Conservation Area and will apply the following policies to achieve this aim. If necessary, a Shopfronts Design Guide will be produced in the future to provide further guidance.
- 9.3 The restoration of original shopfronts in South Wigston is not a difficult task. Many shopfronts were of consistent design within terraces and good photographic records of the area also survive .

Shopfronts

- 9.4 Several good quality late C19 and early C20 shopfronts survive in South Wigston. Planning Permission will not be approved to remove such shopfronts or any elements of them unless they are beyond repair.
- 9.5 Where some elements of an original shopfront survive, the existing elements should be retained and used as the basis for the restoration of the original frontage or incorporated into an appropriate new shopfront design. Removal of original features will only be permitted if they are completely rotten or are incapable of being successfully incorporated into a new shopfront.
- 9.6 The replacement of inappropriate shopfronts will be encouraged provided that the replacement respects the character of the building, adjacent buildings if part of a group or terrace or the area as a whole. To be acceptable, new designs should:-
- Have a clear structural logic with a clearly defined frame of pilasters, fascia and, where appropriate, stallrisers.
 - Relate to the character and proportions of the original building
 - Maintain or improve the ease of access to the building for those with disabilities.

- Be of appropriate materials.
- Not stretch across the frontage of more than one building.
- Provide an appropriately designed separate access where separate living accommodation is to be provided within the upper storeys.

9.7 Where change of use is sought for the conversion of an original shop back to residential use and elements of an original or appropriate shopfront survive, these will be retained in any conversion unless they are completely beyond repair

Signage

9.7 Several buildings in South Wigston have been disfigured by inappropriate and clumsy signage. In future to be acceptable, new signage must:-

- Not obliterate, hide or destroy the proportions of the building or any of its architectural features.
- Have lettering of appropriate size, materials and font type for the building.
- Be clear and simple to read and not incorporate garish or unsuitable colours.
- Have only one appropriately designed and located hanging sign for each shop frontage.

Illumination

9.8 Advertisement Consent is required for most forms of illuminated signage in the Conservation Area. Clumsy, internally illuminated 'box' signs will not be permitted. To be acceptable, illuminated signs must:-

- Have a discrete light source which does not interfere with the proportions of the building or frontage or damage any architectural features.
- Not affect the amenity of nearby residential uses.
- Have a subdued and consistent light level.

Blinds and Canopies

9.9 Blinds and awnings will only be permitted in the Conservation Area when there is a historical precedent and the existing blind box survives, where they can be accommodated without damaging the character of the building or shop frontage and will relate successfully to existing features and detailing of the building.

Shopfront Security

9.10 When designing a new shopfront, consider the likely security needs of the occupier. It is much easier to design in suitable security measures at the outset than attempt to add them to existing frontages.

- 9.11 Solid external shutters will only be permitted in the Conservation Area where it can be clearly demonstrated that they are the only viable means of security to enable the shopkeeper to retain his livelihood.
- 9.12 External shutters, of the solid or grille type, will only be permitted when they respect the features and proportions of the shopfront, do not cover the pilasters and fascia and are of an appropriate colour and finish.