



Wigston The Lanes Conservation Area Development Control Guidance

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document has been produced in tandem with the Conservation Area Appraisal written for Wigston The Lanes. 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 application.
- 1.2 Conservation Area designation is not intended to 'pickle' an area by preventing all new development. 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 adopted Local Plan / Local Development Framework.

2.0 Consultation

- 2.1 This document was subject to public consultation before being considered by the Full Council of the Borough Council on 18 December 2006. Following an appraisal of the Conservation Area, changes were made to the boundary, which come into effect on 15 January 2007.
- 2.2 A 'Report of Consultation' has been produced by the Borough Council which summarises all the representations 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 may need to include consideration of: the importance or otherwise of the building to the character and appearance of the area; the structural condition of the building and the works necessary to repair or convert the building; details of why the building is incapable of beneficial reuse; and details of the recording of the building to be demolished. 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 the Design Statement which accompanies any planning application.

4.0 Demolition

4.1 Listed Buildings (including their outbuildings and lodges) and Significant Local Buildings will enjoy a general presumption against their demolition.

4.2 The demolition of such buildings will only be approved where it can be proved 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 a sensible 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

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

- The building makes 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.
- The building is carefully dismantled so that the building materials are either salvaged for re-use or recycled (in line with RWS Policy 7).

5.0 Protection of open space

5.1 Few towns possess such an intricate system of footpaths as Wigston. These "Lanes" link across the town centre extending from Junction Road to the Little Hill Estate and provide a series of quiet routes across the town centre away from traffic. Improvements to enhance the footpath network have been carried out by the Local Planning Authority and further schemes will be carried out as funding is available.

- The Local Planning Authority will preserve and enhance The Lanes system of footpaths and use development control powers to ensure the character and appearance of the area is not prejudiced by unsympathetic development on land adjoining the footpaths.

5.2 Outside 'The Lanes' proper, at the western boundary of the Conservation Area is The Black Pad which links Central Avenue to Bushloe End. This public footpath has an informal, semi-rural feel similar to that of 'The Lanes'. This character is largely due to the vegetation that lines The Black Pad, and it is, therefore, important that the key vegetation is retained and maintained.

- The Local Planning Authority will work with statutory undertakers and the Highways Authority to ensure that the vegetation is retained during, and reinstated (if necessary) after, any works undertaken along The Black Pad. Where appropriate, sustainable drainage methods and materials should be used, provided that these do not have an adverse visual impact on the historic environment.

5.3 The informal nature of The Lanes is a key component of the quiet character of this green space in the heart of the town centre. The Lanes are well used by the local community and it is, therefore, important that these footpaths are adequately maintained and appropriately surfaced.

- The Local Planning Authority will work with and encourage the Highways Authority and statutory undertakers to ensure the adequate maintenance of The Lanes and that appropriate surfacing materials are used in the area. Where appropriate, sustainable drainage methods and materials should be used, provided that these do not have an adverse visual impact on the historic environment.

5.4 The survival of the Manchester Gardens as an area of open space at the heart of "The Lanes" Conservation Area is of great value in creating a feeling of a quiet backwater in the town centre. The Borough Council has been concerned to increase the ecological diversity of hedges and verges in the vicinity of the Gardens in order to enhance the quality of the environment. Subject to public funding, the Council will consider the purchase of plots which fall vacant in order to ensure their retention as open space.

- The Local Planning Authority will resist proposals for the development of the Manchester Gardens, which form a significant urban open space within "The Lanes" Conservation Area. **(See Landscape Proposal 9 in the Local Plan).**

5.5 Although the Manchester Gardens are surrounded by built development, except on the Chapel Lane frontage where they adjoin the Memorial Park, these buildings are largely set back from the Gardens' boundary, to which they turn their backs. This factor also contributes to the sense of space felt by people who use The Lanes.

- The special character of the Manchester Gardens urban open space will comprise a material consideration when the Local Planning Authority determines planning applications on adjacent land within "The Lanes" Conservation Area. **(See Landscape Proposal 9).**

6.0 Change of use

6.1 The conversion of former industrial or commercial buildings of townscape value will be considered if the site would make an important contribution towards improving the environment and where their conversion would not result in an unacceptable loss of employment land. A mixed use scheme, which retains employment use on the site, will be 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 trees or boundaries.
- Any important 'lost', altered or dilapidated architectural details will be restored.

6.2 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.

6.3 The change of use of residential dwellings to non residential uses will not normally be permitted.

6.4 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. Adequate parking must be provided and considered as part of the overall design. Unsightly plant such as air conditioning units, ducting, flues, etc. should be appropriately screened.

7.0 The design of new buildings

- 7.1 In order 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 mainly two-storey residential properties 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 silhouette.
 - Using materials which either reflect those found on the traditional buildings in the area or producing an acceptable and exciting contrast.
 - Providing a Design Statement as part of a Planning Application which sets out the rationale behind the design of the building.
 - Respecting prevalent architectural detailing.

- 7.2 High standards of energy efficiency will also be encouraged in new buildings and the possibility of on-site generation of energy from renewable sources should be explored. The visual impacts on the Conservation Area, however, must be carefully considered and any energy efficiency/generation measures must not adversely affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

8.0 Alterations and extensions

- 8.1 Alterations and extensions should normally be confined to the rear or least important elevations unless the result would sustain or 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 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
 - Explore the opportunity to implement energy efficiency measures

8.2 **Rear extensions** – These are the most common type of extension as they usually offer the greatest degree of flexibility and privacy. Care is needed, however, to ensure that the effect upon neighbouring properties is kept to a minimum. Particular care should be taken in the design of rear extensions to the terraces along Central Avenue as these are visible from public footpaths.

- An extension should not dominate the neighbour's house or garden or affect their light quality
- Two storey extensions on common boundaries are unlikely to be approved.
- The eaves level of a rear extension should be kept as low as possible and particular care should be taken to ensure the ridgeline of the new roof does not interfere with the existing roof
- It should not be visible from the front of the building.

8.3 **Roof extensions** - These are a popular way of extending houses, but can pose considerable challenges in order to avoid damaging alterations to the character of the property. On terraces and groups of similar properties such as those along Central Avenue and Paddock Street, they can also be highly intrusive because of the relative uniformity of the houses and so their impact on the street must be carefully considered.

- Roof extensions should relate well to the local roof form and should reflect or complement the character of the property and the area.
- Ridgelines and chimneystacks, in particular, are often a key part of a building's character and they should not be altered unless it can be demonstrated that this would create a positive feature.
- The potential for overlooking should be addressed in the design.
- The size and number of dormer windows should be kept to a minimum and they should generally not be placed on the front elevation (or the elevation most visible from the public realm) unless it is appropriate to the design.
- The style of windows should be influenced by the design, proportion and arrangement of existing windows in the building.
- Rooflights should be of the traditional 'Conservation' type which lies flush with the roof slope and should also be kept off the front roof slope, particularly on formal buildings.

9.0 Shopfronts, signage, blinds and security measures

Introduction

- 9.1 Leicester Road and the northern end of Long Street fall within Wigston's primary shopping area, whilst the southern end of Long Street falls within the secondary shopping area. The shopping proposals in section 8 of the Local Plan are therefore applicable.
- 9.2 Although many of the retail units in these shopping areas are housed in older C19/early C20 properties, most appear to have lost their traditional shopfronts and have been much altered in the later C20. The following guidance aims to enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area by providing detailed design principles for designers to follow to ensure that new and refurbished shopfronts fit into their context.

Shopfronts

- 9.3 No.2 Leicester Road, a Significant Local Building, retains a good quality 1940s shopfront. Planning Permission will not be approved to remove this shopfront or any element of it.
- 9.4 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 beyond repair or are incapable of being successfully incorporated into a new shopfront.
- 9.5 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.

9.6 Planning permission for change of use of existing retail premises to other non-retail uses will be refused where non-retail uses are over-represented. Where change of use is not thought to be detrimental to the area and elements of a good shopfront survive, these will be retained in any conversion unless they are completely beyond repair.

Signage

9.7 Several buildings in 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.

10.0 Street furniture

- 10.1 The traditional lampposts found throughout The Lanes are noted as positive details on the Townscape Appraisal Map of The Lanes Conservation Area Appraisal. The traditional style of these lampposts contributes to the character of the historic 'Lanes' footpath system as well as providing lighting and safety after dark.
- The Local Planning Authority will encourage the appropriate maintenance of the lampposts within The Lanes area. Where a traditional lamppost is incapable of repair, its replacement should match the existing traditional lampposts. Similarly, the opportunity to remove any modern lampposts within The Lanes area should be taken; these should be replaced with traditional lampposts to match the existing.

11.0 Works to Listed Buildings

- 11.1 Works which affect the special architectural or historic interest of a Listed Building require Listed Building Consent. This applies to works to the main building, any outbuildings or boundaries (built before 1 July 1948) and the interior of any building. The acceptability of works to Listed Buildings is governed by relevant local and national planning policy.

12.0 Significant Local Buildings

12.1 The residential buildings identified as Significant Local Buildings in the Oadby and Wigston Local Plan and in the Conservation Area Appraisal make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. In order to protect these properties and their boundaries from unsympathetic alterations, the Borough Council will consider making Directions under article 4(2) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995.

12.2 'Article 4 Directions' effectively remove householders' permitted development rights. The types of development which might be controlled would include:-

- painting, cladding or rendering of building facades
- insertion or replacement of doors and windows
- removal or replacement of boundary walls and fences
- alteration of roof profiles and replacement of roofing materials

12.3 Non-residential properties do not have permitted development rights and planning permission must be sought for many of the types of development listed above. Development which will adversely affect the building's character / appearance or its setting will not be permitted.

13.0 Proposals affecting the setting of the Conservation Area

- 13.1 Development will not be permitted which, although not within the conservation area, will have an adverse effect upon the area's special character or appearance, including intruding into any significant vista or view into, out of, within or across the area which is identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.
- 13.2 Any future redevelopment of sites adjacent to the Conservation Area should have regard to the special character identified in The Lanes Conservation Area Appraisal. Particular attention should be given to the design, layout and massing of new buildings, their relationship to 'The Lanes', the impact of car parking and landscaping proposals.