

4. Local Property Market

Introduction

- 4.1. This section considers the following additional property market sectors, in terms of Oadby town centre:
- Office
 - Leisure
 - Public/Community
 - Residential
- 4.2. It also addresses key site opportunities and is supported by land and property ownerships as detailed in Appendix One.

Office Sector

- 4.3. In terms of the office market, Oadby is seen as being in the shadow of Leicester. The Oadby and Wigston Employment Land Study (2006) highlighted that most office demand for this area is met in Leicester City Centre and in office parks around junction 21A of the M1. The remaining demand is primarily for smaller local firms looking for serviced offices of between 50 and 185sqm.

Supply

- 4.4. Most of the town centre supply is focused on three multi-storey office blocks either above shops on The Parade (and dominating views on that street) or on London Road. Lyn House (above the Co-Op supermarket and Three Bells Pub, The Parade) is the main scheme, with nine suites on three floors. Suites range in size 127 sqm to 230 sqm. All but one is occupied, with one unit currently on the market. Rents achieved equate to £9.00 per sqft.
- 4.5. On the adjacent side of The Parade, Eastern Shires House (above and to the rear of shops at 78 to 82 The Parade) was purpose built for Eastern Shires and DeMontfort Housing Associations. This three-storey office building is 1130 sqm in size.
- 4.6. On London Road, Regent House is a two-story office with basement parking. It contains three office suites (one on each floor), which range in size from 166 to 182 sqm. The second floor office is currently on the market, at a rent of £7.60 per sqft.
- 4.7. By far the most substantial office building in Oadby is at the junction of New Street and Harborough Road, and is occupied by Vantis Accountants. It is five storeys high (floorspace not known) and forms part of a larger mixed office/industrial unit with Invicta Plastics, and has shared parking.
- 4.8. The town centre has a significant number of smaller purpose built office properties. On London Road, Chapel Street and Church Street these consist of nine, one to two storey, buildings of 60 sqm or less. Those on London Road are stand-alone structures,

converted from retail/residential premises. Those on Chapel Street and Church Street are purpose built and located in small groups. On The Parade, and to a more limited extent on London Road, are seven offices above shops, primarily occupied by solicitors. The limited amount of transaction information available indicates that they are attracting rents of around £9.30 per sqft.

- 4.9. As the table below shows, there are currently only two offices for rent in the town centre. These are small suites (less than 176sqm) in the larger blocks.

Address	Rent (per sqft)	Lease Terms	Size (sqm)	Length of Time on Market
Suite 1.1, Lyn House, The Parade	£9.00	5 year lease with annual rent reviews	127	3 months
Second Floor, Regent House, London Road	£7.60	New lease, terms to be agreed	176	2 months

Office Properties to Let

Demand

- 4.10. Those consulted indicated that the market for offices in Oadby is limited, but that demand may grow in the future for a number of reasons. These include spin-offs from regeneration efforts in Leicester, increasing service sector growth and a national trend for out-of-town offices. Generally there is felt to be a shortage of offices, particularly properties of less than 185 sqm and freeholds.
- 4.11. Enquiry data held by Leicestershire County Council for the Oadby and Wigston Borough Council area has been examined. This is summarized in the table below.

	0 – 9999 sqft	10000 – 24999 sqft	25000 – 49999 sqft	50000 – 69999 sqft	70000+ sqft	Total Enquiries
Offices	143	20	10	7	6	186
Serviced Offices	76	16	7	6	6	111
Total	219	36	17	13	12	297

Office Enquiries for Oadby (2005-2007)

- 4.12. The data is Borough wide, only covers the last two years, and is divided into a limited number of large size bands. The data does indicate a clear preference for properties of less than 10,000sqft. Based on the Employment Land Study, the preference is actually likely to be for properties of less than 2000sqft. Around 12% of the enquiries are for properties exceeding 25,000sqft, suggesting a degree of demand from larger companies. The data suggests that 3% of demand is for serviced offices, although the figure should be treated with great caution; enquiries relate to requirements in excess of 10,000sqft. Occupants of serviced offices rarely take more than 1000 sqft.

- 4.13. Research into town centre office transactions has identified a small number of recent lettings. These are set out below.

Address	Rent (per sqft)	Size (sqm)	Comments
49 London Road	£9.20	59	First floor let December 2006
51-53 The Parade	£7.00	66	First floor let December 2005
Third Floor Suite, Lyn House, The Parade	£7.74	127	Let October 2005

Recent Town Centre Offices Transactions

Leisure Sector

- 4.14. The nearest cinema, bowling centre and health and fitness centres are all in Leicester (with three cinemas in the south east of the City, adjacent to Oadby) and at Fosse Park. All are within six miles of Oadby.
- 4.15. The key leisure attractions of Oadby are two large chain pub/restaurants, which anchor each end of The Parade (Wetherspoon to the north, Barracuda to the south) and provide food and drink both during the day and in the evening. Clustered around each are significant groups of restaurants and takeaways, including large Thai and Indian restaurants above shops. A substantial grouping of pubs and takeaways is also found at the eastern end of London Road. The main attractions in this case are two large Indian restaurants and one bar/restaurant and nightclub (The Signature Bar and Restaurant). The evidence suggests that Oadby has a large and established nighttime economy, relative to its size, albeit one that is dispersed along the length of the town centre.
- 4.16. The catchment population is insufficient to attract volume space users such as cinemas and bowling. Further development of what appears an established and successful group of restaurants, bars and clubs (which require lower numbers of clientele, and where reputation will draw customers from further afield) presents a more realistic opportunity to develop a quality nighttime economy.
- 4.17. There are a number of larger retail units, which could potentially house further café/bar operations, subject to current planning policy, including 10 The Parade which is currently on the market. However, it should also be noted that there are no additional pub/restaurant providers recorded as having requirements in Oadby. This raises the question of whether there is sufficient demand for any further large food and drink developments.

Public/Community Sector

- 4.18. Oadby does not have a significant number of public or community sector facilities, with most of the Borough's facilities in Wigston. The only facility of note is the public library west of The Parade at the end of Sandhurst Street. The library is a small-prefabricated building in extremely poor condition and there are plans for its replacement. As indicated in the previous chapter, Leicestershire County Council is considering relocating the library to 10 The Parade, currently a large retail unit. A change of use planning application is currently under consideration by the Borough Council (March 2007).
- 4.19. There are also a number of private members clubs and meeting halls linked to religious and secular organisations such as the British Legion, as well as the Baptist Church and St Peter's Church. These are clustered around the junction of London Road and Wigston Road and provide a range of meeting spaces (some with bars) for community events and private functions.
- 4.20. Other public buildings include a Citizen's advice centre at 11B The Parade and a depot at the end of Chapel Street, used for storage by Leicestershire County Council Education Department. There is also a NHS clinic to the rear of the Old Library Pub, at 18 The Parade.

Residential Sector

- 4.21. Living over shops is not a significant element of Oadby's residential market, with only eight such flats on London Road and one on The Parade. Five of these are linked to pubs as landlord accommodation and none have been on the market as individual properties in recent years.
- 4.22. However, the town centre boundary includes significant areas of residential accommodation, east of The Parade. These consist of established estates of semi-detached properties on streets off London Road, and terraced housing on London Road itself.
- 4.23. These properties sell at levels approximately £30,000 below the national average, but are in line with the wider Oadby area averages, as Table 7 illustrates.

Location	Terrace	Semi Detached
Oadby Town Centre	£134,100	£162,500
Oadby	£134,300	£163,178
England and Wales	£166,566	£188,480

Residential Values

- 4.24. Property agents consulted consider the town centre residential market to be a broadly buoyant and successful area. Access to town centre shops is of value, but town centre residential areas are not seen as being significantly distinctive from other areas of Oadby, with most housing following the same suburban pattern. Ease of access to

Leicester is also a strong selling point, but one that can also be applied to many other areas of the Borough.

4.25. Relevant factors to the town centre are:

- Area of around 200 dwellings, in which there have been between 7 and 10 transactions every quarter since 2001 (annual churn of up to 20%)
- Provides smaller terraced and semi-detached properties, slightly outside the price range of first time buyers but in demand for young families.
- Significant proportion of older residents.

4.26. In the south of the town centre there is extensive modern housing, off Wigston Road. This consists of three recent developments (constructed or redeveloped since 2005) of which by far the largest is Hermitage Court. This consists of three, interconnected four story blocks of flats, with 71 flats in total. All are two bedroom apartments. These have sold well, mainly to young professionals who work in Leicester. Ten properties remain unsold, with prices ranging from £184,000 to £205,000 for apartments and £245,000 for a penthouse. Three more properties have recently come on the market as repossessions, with prices ranging from £135,000 to £145,950.

4.27. On the same site is The Hermitage, a conversion of a Grade II listed coaching house into seven, one bedroom, apartments. Two are still on the market, both for £154,950.

4.28. East of Hermitage Court is Rosebrook Gardens, a development of 28 semi-detached, two bedroom, retirement bungalows, with on-site care and assistance. These are aimed at providing high quality accommodation to attract retiring couples from across the Leicester conurbation. When sold in 2005 they achieved built prices around £175,000. It is over twelve months since any have been for sale.

Summary

4.29. The town centre offers a reasonable range of offices relative to its size, including small offices of less than 60 sqm, offices above shops, and several large office blocks providing multiple suites of 92 to 232 sqm. There are also two very large office blocks (based around single occupiers) of 1114 sqm or more. Demand, however, is seen as being limited by the close proximity of Leicester City Centre and by the office parks around junction 21A, M1. The remaining demand is primarily for smaller local firms looking for serviced offices of between 50 and 185 sqm.

4.30. There are limited commercial leisure opportunities. The primary reason for this is the proximity to Leicester, with all the major investment being focused in the City Centre or Fosse Park. Oadby does, however, have a strong nighttime economy anchored around a number of major restaurants and pub/restaurants. It is not clear if there is further scope for expanding this sector.

4.31. Public and community facilities are limited. The most significant facility is Oadby library, which is the subject of proposals to be relocated to alternative premises, still in the town centre.

4.32. The town centre includes significant areas of residential property. The market is seen as buoyant with high demand evidenced by several large recent developments in the south of town centre. However, discussions with agents suggest that buyers are less attracted by the town centre offer (although that is valued) than by the proximity of Oadby as a whole to Leicester. This emphasises Oadby’s role as a commuter town.

SWOT Analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <p>Key service centre for Leicester’s southeast conurbation</p> <p>Diverse supply of office properties relative to the size of the town</p> <p>Buoyant residential market based around new families and older buyers</p> <p>Considerable recent residential development, broadening the range of housing on offer</p> <p>Easily accessible location by motorway</p> <p>Established night time economy, attracting several national bar/restaurant providers</p>	<p>Opportunities</p> <p>Changing trends in the office market may encourage relocation to peripheral towns such as Oadby</p> <p>Established night time economy may have scope for further development</p>
<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>Catchment area insufficient to attract volume users such as cinemas and bowling</p> <p>The small size of most properties means that large upper floors which would be suited to leisure do not exist</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>Office demand is limited by the close proximity to Leicester City Centre and the office associated with junction 21A of the M1.</p>

5. Townscape and Landscape

- 5.1. Our approach to Masterplanning focuses on strengthening and improving places through contextually responsive design. Central to this is developing a thorough understanding of the place, its context, character, the way it functions and how it could be improved. A site survey was undertaken in early March by Taylor Young's urban designer and landscape architect.
- 5.2. The analysis covers the built form, fabric and public realm, with particular reference to urban design, streetscape, open space and pedestrian movement. For ease of reference the Town Centre analysis has been described using the nine character areas identified in Figure 5.1. These are **Sandhurst Street, The Parade, Brooksby Drive, Chapel Street, Industrial Quarter, the Village, Honeywell Close, Harborough Road London Road East.**
- 5.3. In reading the analysis , reference should also be made to the following associated plans;
- Figure 5.1 – Character Areas
 - Figure 5.2 – Building Heights
 - Figure 5.3 – Land Use
 - Figure 5.4 – Townscape and Legibility
- 5.4. A summary SWOT analysis is provided at the end of this section for the whole town centre.

Character Area: Sandhurst Street



Leicester Road : Streetscape

- 5.5. This character area is located to the far north west of the study area and centred around a major road junction. The lighted cross roads acts as the northern link between Oadby's main retail street and the A6, a main vehicular route to Leicester.
- 5.6. The primary land use within this area is residential, with the majority of such property located to the western side of Sandhurst Street. Housing along this street comprises mainly terraced rows and some semi detached housing. Backing on to the rear of Sandhurst Street properties, a large factory building towers over the terracing. The

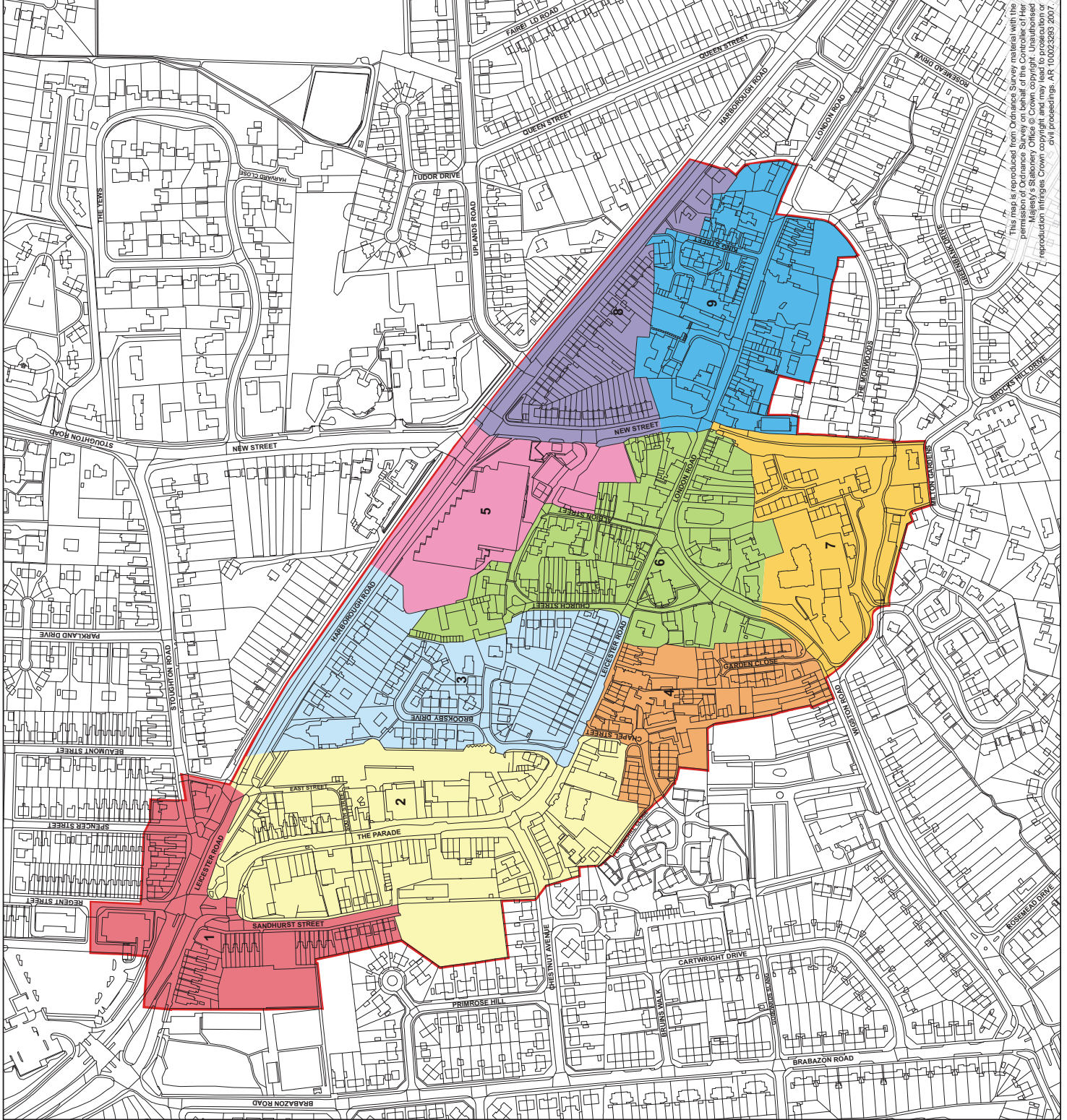
Figure 5.1

Oadby Study Area Boundary



Character Areas

- 1 Sandhurst Street
- 2 The Parade
- 3 Brooksby Drive
- 4 Chapel Street
- 5 Industrial Quarter
- 6 The Village
- 7 Honeywell Close
- 8 Harborough Road
- 9 London Road East



Oadby & Wigston	
Character Areas Oadby	
1:3,500	
job	drawing
3496	0.00
 taylor young chadsworth house 100 High Street Chester CH1 3BP Tel: 01625 542 200 urban@tayloryoung.co.uk residential graphics healthcare planning interior design landscape architecture town planning urban design 3D visualisation	



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. AH 100023283 2007.

associated delivery forecourt divides the row of terraced housing. To the opposing side of Sandhurst Street, within the adjoining character area, are further delivery yards for buildings facing onto The Parade. The street itself is wide enough to incorporate designated on-street parking and culminates at a public car park, situated within the next character area.

- 5.7. To the head of Sandhurst Street is a hardware store and to the northern side of Leicester Road are a number of small retail units including grocers, estate agents and fast food outlets. A BP filling station is situated on the corner of Stoughton Road and Leicester Road.

Character Area: The Parade



Public Art in Oadby



Public car park and back of the properties to the Parade

- 5.8. This character area takes in The Parade and associated public car parks which serve this predominantly retail zone. To the head of The Parade, at its junction with Leicester Road, a small area of greenspace is located. The site incorporates an area of mown grass, ornamental shrub planting, seating and a bespoke sculpture. This provides a gateway feature to the town and an area to sit, albeit beside a busy road.
- 5.9. Passing north-south, The Parade is served on both sides by a wide range of shops ranging from local amenity bakers and green grocers to more specialised travel agents, banks and charity shops. Among this retail provision are a number of public houses and office buildings which due to their scale dominate the streetscape's built form.
- 5.10. Pedestrian access is via roadside pavements of variable widths surfaced with black bitmac. Following trenching for utilities access, excavation for tree pits and general wear and tear repair, the footway surface is "patched up" and untidy. Despite the unkempt appearance of the pavement, legibility of this main high street is good. A number of specimen trees have been introduced to the street giving a welcome green element to this otherwise built environment. In conjunction with the trees, benches and litter bins have been introduced.
- 5.11. In addition to on-street parking to both sides of The Parade, two large car parks enable public parking in close proximity to the shops. For users of public transport, a series of bus stops and shelters are located along The Parade.

- 5.12. East Street/Brooksby Drive Car Park is situated to the east of The Parade. Although the facility is well used, the car park and its environs are lacking character, mainly due to its "backwater" location. Because the car park faces the rear of most shops, the building façade is unappealing and fails to interact with pedestrians. Legibility for the first time visitor is difficult as access to shops is via a number of narrow alleyways between retail outlets. To further complicate matters, some shops incorporate a secondary entrance directly off the car park. In addition, the main entrance to The Thai Orchid Restaurant is via a raised level car park accessed from the main car park.
- 5.13. Sandhurst Street Car Park is situated to the far west of the character area. This facility is conveniently positioned for the library, a single storey building of little architectural merit. Pedestrian access to The Parade is through delivery yards to the rear the main retail frontage. The route is denoted with yellow paint and pedestrian symbols to the floorscape. Legibility for pedestrians is some what challenging between this car park and The Parade.
- 5.14. To the south of this character area, Chestnut Avenue approaches from the west and joins The Parade at a lighted junction. Opposing this junction is The Oadby Centre, a small, outdated shopping area which provides another means of access to the Brooksby Drive Car Park. The pedestrian forecourt is surfaced with a combination of hexagonal concrete slabs and red bitmac. Incorporated within the forecourt is a poor quality cycle rack and timber planter.
- 5.15. Beyond Chestnut Avenue, retail use continues south to the adjoining character areas.

Character Area: Brooksby Drive



Tired public realm along Leicester Road

- 5.16. This area encompasses residential areas to Harborough Road and sections of Brooksby Drive and Leicester Road.
- 5.17. Houses to Leicester Road are at an elevated level from the road and are set back from the pedestrian footway by approximately six metres. Well vegetated front gardens either slope towards the pavement and are fronted by close board timber fencing or are retained by 1.5 metre high stone walling. Both boundary treatments dominate the

northern side of the street for pedestrians utilising the pavement.

- 5.18. Harborough Road is fronted to the south by semi detached housing and Trinity Methodist Church. Access to this church is also possible from East Street/Brooksby Drive Car Park. Although housing is located to a busy dual carriageway, art deco style bay windows instil character to each property.
- 5.19. Brooksby Road is a small 1970's residential development which fills land between Harborough Road and Leicester Road. Properties have large front and back gardens and some have private garages.

Character Area: Chapel Street



Oadby Baptist Church



Leicester Road

- 5.20. The Leicester Road frontage to the north of this character area combines retail and residential uses. The frontage is divided by Oadby Baptist Church which comprises a traditional church building and somewhat insensitive modern extension.
- 5.21. Chapel Street links Leicester Road with the cemetery and the residential Churchill Close, just beyond the study area boundary.
- 5.22. Wigston Road enters the study area to the south of this character area and follows a sweeping bend towards the church. Garden Close, a small cul-de-sac of brick built bungalows, adjoins Wigston Close. A public bench is sited within a small area of mown grass where the cul-de-sac meets Wigston Road. The spire of St Peter's Church is evident as a focal point beyond bungalow roof tops and comes into full view as progression is made up Wigston Road.

Character Area: Industrial Quarter



Invicta Plastics

- 5.23. This small character area encompasses the industrial buildings and environs associated with Invicta Plastics Limited.

Character Area: Oadby Village



Albion Street Terrace Housing



Leicester Road

- 5.24. Centered on St Peter's Church, this character area encompasses what was historically the village centre. As a result the area has a greater sense of place and more intimate character. The whole of this area falls within the boundary of the conservation area.
- 5.25. The church itself is located on an island surrounded by roads. On approach from the south, Wigston Road follows a smooth bend and uphill gradient. To the western edge of the road is the Walter Charles Community Centre and the British Legion buildings. Church Mews passes by the church on the east and rectory on the corner of Leicester Road.
- 5.26. To the eastern side of Wigston Road are number of locally significant buildings including the church hall and residential properties of The Hermitage and The Nook.
- 5.27. To the north west edge of this character area is Church Street. A narrow residential street framed on the east by a terraced row of red brick housing. To the top of the street is a row of larger cottages and a small triangular area of grass and single

specimen tree. Beyond these cottages, Church Street continues to include a number of single storey buildings and garage lock ups. More modern properties to Albion Street are located to the north east extent of this road.

- 5.28. There is minimal vehicular and foot traffic along this road as it is not a through road. As a result the street has a quiet, village character.
- 5.29. The road widens at a round-about junction to the top of Wigston Road. The yellow finish to The Black Dog public house, dominates views from all approaching roads. A second pub, The Fox provides further architectural interest to this road junction. Other surrounding land uses are retail and residential. Views along Albion Street are unattractive due to industrial factory buildings at the northern end and Oadby Tyre Centre to the south. To the southern half of the street, housing has more character. A modern red brick housing development to the top of Albion Street and the presence of industrial buildings lessens character to the northern half of this street.

Character Area: Honeywell Close



New Street



Lawyers Lane

- 5.30. Character area 7 covers an area of housing to the far south of the study area. To the eastern half of the area, to the end of Honeywell Close, is a complex of modern red brick built retirement bungalows. Views into the site are possible from a public footpath, Lawyer's Lane which passes north-south to the east of the bungalows, linking London Road and Milton Gardens. The footpath has a resin bound aggregate surface which has begun to erode. Even so the path has good lighting provision and runs between a mature avenue of trees.
- 5.31. A new housing development by Bryant Homes dominates the remainder of land to Honeywell Close. This development incorporates two large blocks of two storey converted apartments. A small watercourse runs through the south of this area but is fenced off from housing development by low railings. Mature trees partially screen this new development from the existing residences of Beech Road and Garden Close.
- 5.32. Pedestrian movement through this residential area is limited due to both complexes being fenced off. Access to Oadby's main retail area is likely to follow the existing road network.

Character Area: Harborough Road

- 5.33. This small character area includes residential properties which front onto Harborough Road and New Street. Houses to New Street are semi detached, brick built properties raised above the pavement level, with terraced front gardens. The road is wide and accommodates on-street parking to both carriageways. Housing to Harborough Road is larger, level with the road and include double storey bay windows. Many of these properties also have private off road parking. The large back gardens of housing to both these roads back onto each other. The character of this area is more suburban but the presence of the busy A6, Harborough Road creates a quite hectic environment.

Character Area: London Road East



Leicester Road



Leicester Road

- 5.34. Most of this character area falls within the conservation area.
- 5.35. The most eastern part of London Road comprises a mix of uses predominantly residential and retail. The road acts as a shopping street in its own right and continues the village feel of character area 6. Buildings to the south of this road, front directly onto the pavement and with the exception of 'Swatlands' Indian restaurant, are two storey. Retail outlets include a barbers, hairdressers, bakery and cobbler. On street parking outside these shops, narrows the street but eases access to the shops.
- 5.36. The building frontage opens out to make way for a large car park to The New Inn public house. Beyond the pub, residential properties continue to The Moorwoods and the edge of the study area.
- 5.37. The northern side of London Road is mainly of residential use with some properties being listed or of local importance. These include The Old Schoolhouse, a recently renovated three storey, Tudor gothic red brick building. Although this property is set back from the road, its scale and design stands out. Further eastwards, numbers 67-89 London Road are slightly raised above the road upon a low stone retaining wall. This row of properties is well kept with number 67 being listed. Beyond King Street is The Wheel Inn public house.
- 5.38. Pedestrian access within this character follows the highway footpath which although narrow in places, links directly to Leicester Road and The Parade.

- 5.39. King Street is a narrow no through road to the north of London Road. The junction of King Street is framed by a fish and chip shop to the west and antiques dealership to the east. The east side façade of the street comprises a modern brick built housing development fronting directly onto the pavement. A vehicular archway permits access to a residential courtyard behind. Adjacent to this housing is Freeway Vehicle Rental. To the opposing side of King Street and continuing around the corner are a number of modern two storey, brick built blocks of flats.

Building Heights (figure 5.2)

- 5.40. The majority of the built form within Oadby town centre is two storey. Brooksby Drive and Honeywell Close contain some bungalows which are 1 storey and there are a few areas where there are three storey buildings, for example the 'Library' public house on Leicester Road. The office buildings on The Parade and the refurbished residential building on Wigston Road are all 4 storey in height. The 7 storey Invicta tower and the church spire are the tallest buildings, however because of the natural topography and the curve to Leicester Road they cannot be seen throughout the town centre.

Land Use (figure 5.3)

- 5.41. The Town Centre is predominantly residential and there is only one area of open space, Lawyers Lane. The main shopping street is located in the north along The Parade with on street car parking on either side of the road. Behind the shops there are car parks. There are a number of public houses which are located along The Parade, Leicester Road and London Road. The majority of office space within the town centre is situated within two office blocks situated on The Parade. Other areas of office space are located within refurbished residential accommodation throughout the town centre.
- 5.42. The Invicta Plastics site occupies a large site within the Town Centre and there are a few other pockets of industrial uses interspersed within the residential, causing issues with noise, pollution and access.



Townscape and Legibility (figure 5.4)

- 5.43. The town centre core is located on The Parade. There are a few local landmarks within the Town Centre. St Peter's Church, Oadby Baptist Church, The Library public house and the Invicta Tower. There are four gateways into the town centre three on Harborough Road where it intersects with, The Paddock, Wigston Road and London Road.