

BRAUNSTONE TOWN COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – 16th MAY 2024

Item 4 – Braunstone Village Conservation Area – proposed character appraisal, consultation and review

Purpose

To comment and make recommendations to Blaby District Council (21st May 2024) concerning a draft Conservation Area appraisal and Management Plan for an area of Braunstone Village to the South of Braunstone Lane, along with the merits of holding a public consultation.

Background

On 18th April 2024, the Committee received an update on the process to consider whether there is a case to designate an area of Braunstone Village to the South of Braunstone Lane as a Conservation Area, including revised timescales for the review. (minute 86).

The Committee resolved:

1. that the approach to the *Review Process*, as set out in the report, be endorsed;
2. that an additional meeting of the Committee be scheduled for Thursday 16th May 2024 to consider the published report and recommendations being submitted to a meeting of Blaby District Council on 21st May 2024 on whether to undertake a public consultation;
3. that the *Outline Work Programme*, as set out in the report, and assuming that the full length of time would be needed to assess consultation responses, be endorsed; and
4. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Planning & Environment Committee, to:
 - (a) approve specific dates and milestones, including consultations and review, within the framework set out in the *Outline Work Programme* section of the report,
 - (b) approve revised milestones and timescales, subject to consideration by the Planning & Environment Committee at the next scheduled meeting,
 - (c) to call additional meetings and/or reschedule meetings of Planning & Environment Committee to facilitate the *Review Process* and *Outline Work Programme*,
 - (d) support the process using the Council's existing resources, including communications channels and premises, and
 - (e) engage residents, stakeholders, partners and professional advisers, as appropriate.

Review Process

Leicester City Council's conservation team provided technical support to facilitate the evidence gathering and appraisal process. The team have the technical knowledge to undertake the work in relation to the process and legislation.

The evidence gathering, which also involved reviewing existing evidence and work (including the appraisal undertaken by the Town's Heritage Warden in 2021 and the responses to the initial survey undertaken by the Town Council in December 2021/January 2022), to inform the process is complete.

The draft documents, which consist of a Character Appraisal and a Management Plan are enclosed at Appendix A and Appendix B respectively to the report being considered by Blaby District Council on 21st May 2024 (attached as an Annexe to this report).

Public Consultation

The next stage in the process is for Blaby District Council's full Council to consider a recommendation to consult on the draft proposals.

The Blaby District Council meeting originally scheduled for 16th April was cancelled due to a lack of items and the Town Council was informed that the proposed Conservation Area consultation report would be considered by Blaby District Council on Tuesday 21st May.

The report and supporting documentation have been published and are attached as an Annexe to this report.

The Planning & Environment Committee are invited to consider the published report and recommendations due to be considered by Blaby District Council on 21st May 2024.

The public consultation, if approved, will be a statutory consultation carried out by Blaby District Council and supported by Braunstone Town Council. The Town Council will support the consultation process using its communications channels, premises, and the Citizens' Advisory Panel.

The public consultation is expected to be open for six weeks. The meeting of the Committee on Thursday 6th June will receive an update along with proposals for a further meeting to potentially consider and respond to the public consultation.

The next meeting of Citizens' Advisory Panel is scheduled for Thursday 23rd May, which will be prior to the consultation period commencing. Therefore, the Panel will be asked whether it wishes to call an additional meeting during the consultation period to consider and respond to the public consultation.

Assessing Consultation Responses

Following the consultation period, the results will be assessed. This part of the process can take four to eight weeks depending on the number, depth, and complexity of the consultation responses.

If there is a case to designate a conservation area then the proposed Character Appraisal and associated policy documents will be updated accordingly.

Either way, a recommendation, based on the evidence gathered, the appraisal, and the consultation results, will be made to Blaby District Council.

Similarly, it is recommended that a meeting of Planning & Environment Committee be scheduled prior to the District Council meeting to consider the proposals and recommendations. A date will be proposed to Committee once timescales are known.

Recommendations

1. That the recommendation “to proceed to a public consultation on the potential designation of the Braunstone Village Conservation Area”, as detailed in the report to Blaby District Council on 21st May 2024, be supported; and
2. that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive & Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of Planning & Environment Committee, to:
 - (a) support the consultation process using the Council’s existing resources, including communications channels and premises, and
 - (b) engage residents, stakeholders, partners, and professional advisers, as appropriate.

Reasons

1. The evidence presented supported the recommendations to proceed to the statutory public consultation stage of the process to fully consider the merits of designating the area of Braunstone Village to the south of Main Street/Braunstone Lane as a Conservation Area.
2. To progress and support the review process and proposed public consultation for a potential new Conservation Area in Braunstone Village.

**Blaby District Council
Council**

Date of Meeting	21 May 2024
Title of Report	A proposed public consultation for a potential new Conservation Area in Braunstone Village. This is not a Key Decision and is on the Forward Plan
Lead Member	Cllr. Ben Taylor - Planning Delivery and Enforcement & Corporate Transformation
Report Author	Planning & Strategic Growth Group Manager
Strategic Themes	Enhancing and maintaining our natural and built environment

1. What is this report about?

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the potential of creating a new Conservation Area covering the historic village core of Braunstone, and to seek approval to proceed a public consultation.

2. Recommendation(s) to Council

- 2.1 To proceed to a public consultation on the potential designation of the Braunstone Village Conservation Area.

3. Reason for Decisions Recommended

- 3.1 To progress the motion made by Council in November 2021 to consider the merits of a Conservation Area in this location.

4. Matters to consider

- 4.1 Background

Context and History

On 23rd November 2021, following interest and research by local residents, a motion was passed by Council to consider the merits of a Conservation Area in this location and to work in partnership with Braunstone Town Council to assist with a public consultation and the preparation of a character appraisal.

Blaby District Council has since engaged in discussions with Braunstone Town Council and has enlisted the services of Leicester City Council's Historic Environment team to assess the potential for designation and advise on the necessary procedural matters. A Character Appraisal has been prepared along with a draft Management Plan to aid with the future upkeep and improvement of the area (Appendices A and B).

Evaluation of the proposed conservation area

Local authorities have the power to designate new conservation areas under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This requires that from time to time they determine which parts of their areas are of special or historic interest and should be designated.

As detailed in the Character Appraisal (Appendix A), there is considered to be a critical mass of surviving historic townscape, and that there is sufficient heritage significance to justify additional planning controls. The proposed boundary has been drawn in such a way to minimise the inclusion of properties that are of lower heritage significance, such as more modern or architecturally unremarkable buildings, however some of these are included to ensure that development in critical locations will be considered properly in terms of the broader townscape qualities of the area.

There is evidence of incremental change in this area, with the loss of more traditional building features and materials, as well as small scale developments that are more visually harmful. The area can be seen as being close to a tipping point in terms of this change, with the expanded permitted development rights for non-conservation area properties providing a heightened risk. Potential new planning controls that would come with conservation area designation are detailed in the draft Management Plan (Appendix B).

A new conservation area would help ensure new development was sensitive to the historic character of the area, but it would come with costs. An additional workload for the Planning Department would be created from planning applications relating to work that would otherwise have been permitted development, as well as conservation area guidance and potential planning enforcement on works that have become unauthorised. In addition, property owners will have additional costs relating to potentially preparing planning applications and/or potentially more expensive sourcing of higher quality materials for building repairs. However, research by Historic England has concluded that conservation area status can increase the value of properties.

To achieve broader efficiencies, the draft Management Plan proposes joint working with Leicester City. The existing Braunstone Village Conservation Area is located within the administrative boundary of Leicester City Council. The two areas are adjacent to each other and combine to cover the totality of the historic village.

Consultation

Although not strictly required by the relevant Planning Act, it is considered best practice to carry out public consultation on a potential designation. A 6-week consultation period is proposed, in line with comparable timeframes for similar projects. The Council would send letters and emails to local properties in the area and to other groups with an interest, and the Character Appraisal and draft Management Plan would be made publicly available. A public drop-in within the locality (venue tbc) will take place during the period. This will be facilitated by Braunstone Town Council.

It is expected that the consultation will be run to coincide with a consultation carried out by Leicester for a new character appraisal on the existing Conservation Area in Braunstone. This will allow improved and more efficient communications with the public, for example through the issuing of press notices.

4.2 Proposal(s)

That Council agree to proceed to a public consultation for a 6-week period (dates tbc).

Following the consultation and consideration of feedback, a further report will be prepared to go to Council to seek designation of the area, and will include a list of consultation responses with any actions taken as a result.

4.3 Relevant Consultations

None.

4.4 Significant Issues

In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate and there are no areas of concern.

Consideration has been given to issues relating to Equalities. An Equality Impact & Needs Assessment has been completed for the proposal.

5. What will it cost and are there opportunities for savings?

- 5.1 There has been a fee of £5,427 to procure the services of Leicester City Council's Historic Environment Team to provide technical support including the preparation of the Character Appraisal and Management Plan.

No further significant costs are expected, only for the printing and posting of letters and press notices that will be required as part of the consultation process and associated notifications.

6. What are the risks and how can they be reduced?

6.1

Current Risk	Actions to reduce the risks
Consultation is carried out incorrectly or is incomplete	Close working with Leicester's Historic Environment team to ensure proposals are properly publicised and processes are followed. Continued liaison with Braunstone Town Council to raise awareness and facilitate consultation.

7. Other options considered

To not proceed to a public consultation

This could be considered contrary to the motion passed by Council to consider the merits of a conservation area in this location, as all views would not be fully taken into account. A decision would need to be made whether or not to continue work on the potential to designate, however the information informing this may be incomplete without community feedback.

7.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local and there are no areas of concern.

8. Environmental impact

8.1 The proposal may help preserve or enhance the historic environment in this area. No other significant environmental impacts identified.

9. Other significant issues

9.1 In preparing this report, the author has considered issues related to Human Rights, Legal Matters, Human Resources, Equalities, Public Health Inequalities, and Climate Local and there are no areas of concern.

9.2 An Equality Impacts Needs Assessment has been completed for this report and is included as a background paper.



Braunstone Village Conservation Area
CHARACTER APPRAISAL
2024



VILLAGE STREET, BRANLITON
J.W. & CO. (31)

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Braunstone Village, Blaby Conservation Area



Blaby District Council

- Braunstone Village Conservation Area
- Nationally Listed Buildings

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 It is the duty of local planning authorities from time to time to prepare and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas, commonly referred to as Character Appraisals.
- 1.2 The Braunstone Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal aims to set out the area's special architectural and historic interest, the character and appearance of which is desirable to preserve and enhance.
- 1.3 This appraisal will be used to help inform the design of any future development proposals in the area. It is not the purpose of a conservation area to prevent change, but to manage it in ways that maintain and strengthen an area's special qualities.
- 1.4 It is important to note that no appraisal can ever be completely comprehensive and that the omission of a particular feature, building or open space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

2 Background, Designation, and Structure

- 2.1 The District of Blaby currently contains 11 conservation areas, the oldest of which were designated in 1972. Braunstone Village would be the district's twelfth conservation area if approved.
- 2.2 The section of the historic village of Braunstone north of Braunstone Lane, falling within the jurisdiction of Leicester City Council, was designated as a conservation area in 1974.
- 2.3 This Character Appraisal was prepared to support the designation of a conservation area for the historic village of Braunstone on the southern side of Braunstone Lane, which lies within the jurisdiction of Blaby District Council.
- 2.4 This appraisal is structured to include:
 - A summary of designation,
 - Policy Background,
 - A definition of the special interest of the area via a spatial and character analysis, historical development, and important features.

3 Planning Policy Framework

- 3.1 The concept of ‘conservation areas’ was first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act (1967) which defined a conservation area as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.’
- 3.2 The definition remains unchanged in current legislation, set out in the **Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990**. The Act places duties on local planning authorities:
- To identify those parts of their area that are of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as conservation areas,
 - To review past designations from time to time,
 - To prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas,
 - To pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas when determining planning applications for sites within such areas.
- 3.3 The effect of designation means that planning permission is required for the demolition of buildings, with some minor

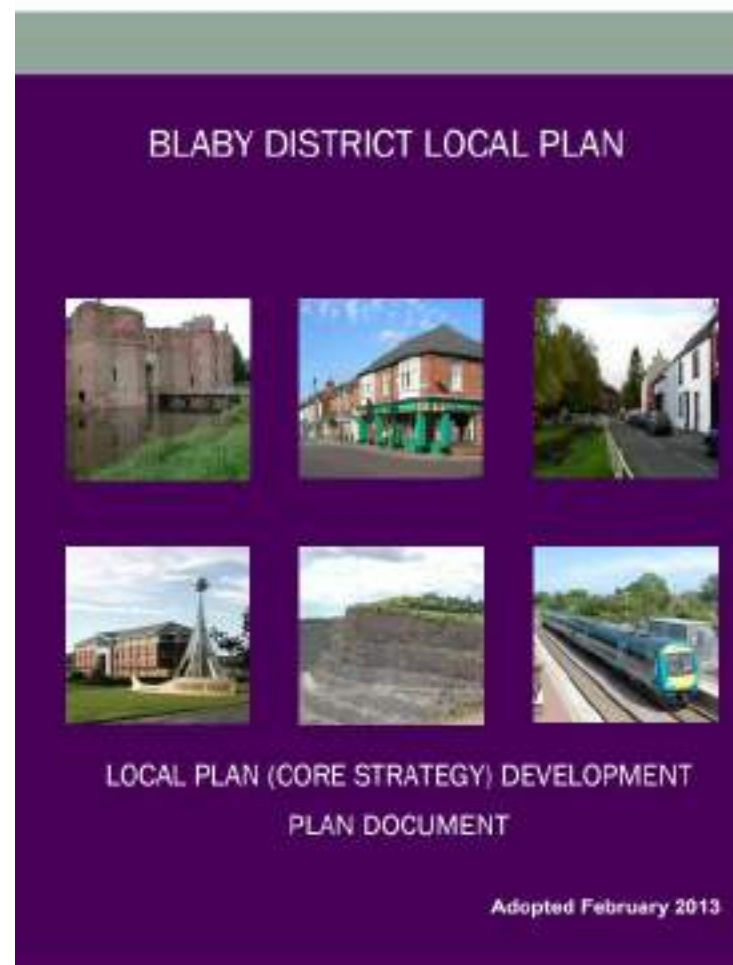


Image 1: Blaby District Core Strategy (2013).

exceptions. There are also stricter controls on changes that can be made to buildings and land, and protection for trees.

- 3.4 Government policy is provided in the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**. It requires the significance of heritage assets – both historic buildings and historic areas – to be understood by local authorities and by those who propose change. Changes that cause harm to significance will only be permitted where the harm is outweighed by public benefits. Further guidance on the use of the NPPF is provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance and in guidance published by Historic England.
- 3.5 The protection and positive use of the historic environment within new development is a theme which runs through the **Blaby District Core Strategy**. It is mentioned as a key component in Policies CS2, CS12, CS14, and CS16 and is the subject of a comprehensive policy on the Historic Environment and Culture CS20 and in the Blaby District Local Plan Delivery DPD in Development Management Policy 12 (Designated and Non-designated Heritage Assets).
- 3.6 There is a general presumption against the demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, and the policy expects new developments and conservation-led regeneration to reflect the character and value of the historic environment.

- 3.7 Both local and national policy puts the emphasis on the enhancement of heritage assets and positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of an area that should be made through new development.

4 Summary of Special Interest

- 4.1 The Conservation Area preserves the southern core of the ancient settlement of Braunstone which was first recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086.
- 4.2 It contains arguably the oldest surviving domestic buildings of the original village, several of which can be dated to the 17th century.
- 4.3 Although no longer in agricultural use, several former farmsteads are preserved within the built form of the village as physical reminders of the once rural nature of the settlement. Demonstrating the changing character of the area as suburban development grew.
- 4.4 Although modern development has taken place within the historic core, it manages to retain a sense of its village origins, principally due to the natural meanders of Braunstone Lane.
- 4.5 Although some 20th century development has caused harm and detracts from the area, there are examples of high-quality inter-war architecture which add their own contribution to the understand and appreciation of Braunstone.



Image 2: View looking south-east along Braunstone Lane.

5 Location and Setting

- 5.1 Braunstone Village is one of six former villages located outside the historic core of Leicester, which became enveloped by suburban expansion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- 5.2 The village is likely Saxon in origin and was founded on section of glacial sands and gravels less than a mile west of Fosse Way and on the southern verge of the once extensive Leicester Forest. The superficial geology of the area is mostly boulder clay, with small areas of gravel and light sand to the east. The land is undulating, gradually rising westwards to a height of about 90 meters (300 feet) above sea level.
- 5.3 The area was historically associated with Braunstone Park and Braunstone Hall, located to the immediate north-east, albeit physically divided by modern development. Historically, the entire village settlement formed part of the parish of Braunstone, which lay within the jurisdiction of Blaby Rural District Council. In 1935 the city boundaries were amended and the part of Braunstone which had formed the Winstanley Estate was incorporated into the city administration boundary. The remaining parts of the village, principally the land south-west of Braunstone Lane, remained within the District Council.
- 5.4 The open space around the historic village was heavily developed during the post-war period. The land to the

north-west, south-west and south-east is occupied by twentieth century housing laid out in a loose grid pattern which encloses the conservation area of three sides.

- 5.5 The conservation area is located on the north-eastern edge of Blaby District covering an area of approximately 5 hectares (just less than 12.5 acres). It is bounded by Braunstone Lane and Main Street to the north, Shakespeare Drive to the south-east, and Avon Road and Evelyn Road to the south and west.



Image 3: Gibbons Map (1903) showing village in context with Braunstone Hall and Park.

6 Historic Development

- 6.1 The settlement of Braunstone is most likely Saxon in origin, established around the late 8th or early 9th century AD as a ‘daughter’ settlement of Glenfield. Archaeological evidence suggests this early medieval settlement was possibly located on land immediately south of St Peter’s Church in an area now known as Church Field.
- 6.2 The first recorded mention is in the Domesday Survey, where it was referred to as “*Brantestone*” meaning the place where Brant settled. At this time, it was held by Robert Burdet under Hugh de Grandmesnil, comprised of eight households, and considered to be worth 60 shillings. De Grandmesnil was a proven companion of William the Conqueror who fought in the Battle of Hastings and went on to be a great landowner in England. The mention of “*socmen*” as part of the entry indicates the presence of Scandinavian serfs in the village.ⁱ
- 6.3 The village sat on the edge of what was once the ancient Leicester Forest, which covered extensive lands to the north. Timber from the forest would have been a valuable resource and primary construction material for the local building stock. The woodlands were gradually converted to pastures and Leicester Forest was fully enclosed by 1628. Bendbow Spinney remains the only surviving remnant of this former natural asset.ⁱⁱ
- 6.4 Between the 13th and 16th centuries the Harcourt, or Horecut, family held an over-riding interest in the Braunstone Estate. A survey taken in 1299 documented 24 households in the village. A Manor House, first mentioned in documentary sources the same year, and defined as “*the capital messuage with herbage and fruit garden*” is thought to have originally stood between the Church and Braunstone Lane. It was demolished around the turn of the 17th century and a new Manor House was built by Henry Hastings on Braunstone Lane, close to the site of Old Hall Farm (now demolished).
- 6.5 What is now the Church of St Peter was purpose-built in the twelfth century as a private chapel for The Lord of the Manor and referred to as the Chapel of Ease for the Manor and Parish of Glenfield.ⁱⁱⁱ The close physical connection of the ecclesiastical facility to the former Manor House physically demonstrated its ‘private’ function.
- 6.6 Until the late 16th century, Braunstone was a village dominated by open-field cultivation, with the core of the settlement formed along Coalpit Lane (now Braunstone Lane). It was given this name “due to the packhorses bringing coal to Leicester from the Swannington coalfield”.^{iv} In the late 16th century the old agricultural routine of the village was broken up by the widespread conversion of arable land to pasture, followed in the early 17th century by the inclosure of Leicester Forest.^v

6.7 By 1483, The Manor was held by the well-known Yorkist William Hastings, who likely received the land as a grant from Edward IV. He and his son Henry were the main actors responsible for the inclosure of the village fields, which totalled over 97 hectares (240 acres) of land. Although no data documenting the exact number of people displaced by the widespread inclosure was recorded, an estimated 40 people left the village, an episode of major depopulation for a village of this size causing vacancy in several properties.^{vi} Henry Hastings contributed personally to further deforestation of Leicester Forest, commissioning the felling of up to 500 acres of tree cover to convert the land into pasture.

6.8 Due to the loss of a substantial amount of money as a result of the Civil War, the Hastings family were forced to sell the estate. In the mid-17th century, it was acquired by the Winstanley family from Lancashire for the total sum of £6,000. They had a significant impact on the broader area of Braunstone for the next three centuries, defining the economic and social history of the wider locality.^{vii}

6.9 In 1670, there appears to have been 28 households in Braunstone, a comparable number to a century earlier, meaning that some recovery had taken place since the depopulation episode.^{viii} The 18th century was a period of relative prosperity. At the time, Braunstone became a fashionable spot for foxhunting; the remnants of wide ditches and deer leaps designed to control stags for hunting still survive on Cressida Place.



Image 4: 17th century map of the county.

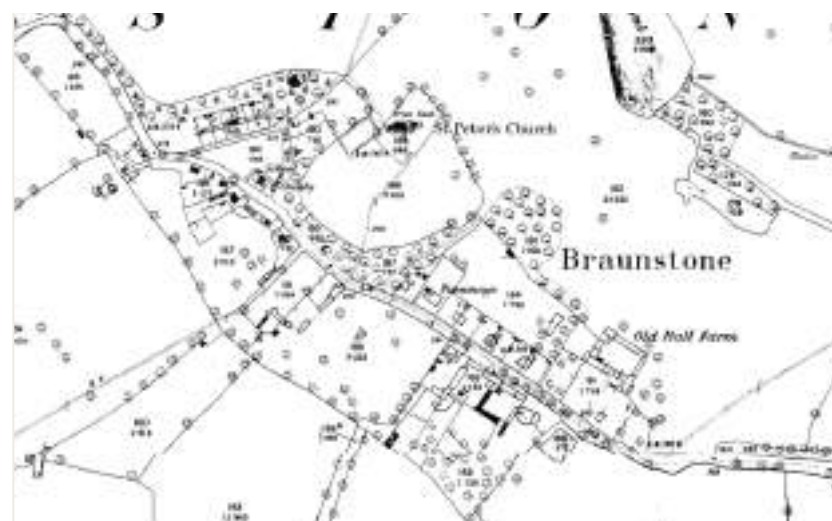


Image 5: OS Map of the village from 1884.

6.10 In 1775, Clement Winstanley, High Sheriff of Leicestershire in 1774, commissioned a new Manor House to be set within 40 hectares (100 acres) of parkland, now known as Braunstone Park. Braunstone Hall was constructed to the designs of the local builder and politician James Oldham, who later became the Lord Mayor of Leicester.^{ix} The new hall marked the centre of a sizeable country estate, its immediate surroundings comprising of a well wooded park, featuring a lake and a series of ornamental gardens.

6.11 The prosperity of what remained a small agricultural village continued up to the 19th century. Beside some localised home-based framework-knitting and few tradesmen active in the area, Braunstone remained largely unaffected by the rapid industrial growth of the adjacent town of Leicester, which would engulf the villages of Aylestone, Belgrave, Humberstone, Evington and Knighton throughout the century.^x

6.12 In early 1800s, the local population barely exceeded 200, with only around 20 people employed in trade and the manufacturing industry.^{xi} The Winstanley's commissioned several amenities within the village throughout the 19th century for the benefit of the village inhabitants, including the row of six workers cottages at Cressida Place, the Parsonage and the small National School.

6.13 In 1877 Braunstone was described as a “pleasant and picturesque village”.^{xii} By this point “it still had to rely on a



Image 6: 1890s image of The Manor and Braunstone Lane.



Image 7: 1890s image of The Manor and Braunstone Lane.

passing carrier for its main external contact”.^{xiii} As of 1871 it had 39 houses and 215 inhabitants across 1,783 acres of land, bounded by River Soar to the east and the borough of Leicester to the north, crossed by the Roman Fosse Way.^{xiv}

- 6.14 The rural character of the village and surrounding area remained until the early 20th century; the OS map of 1903-4 shows the relatively undeveloped character of the village. In 1924, a guide to the county described Braunstone as a “curiously remote and isolated little village” with a “quaint, old-world character”.^{xv}
- 6.15 In 1925 the Leicester Corporation purchased the bulk of the Winstanley estate to provide for expanded housing provisions in the area. A major housing estate was subsequently built immediately north of the old village core, with further construction south of Braunstone Lane. As a result, the local population grew dramatically from 238 in 1921 to nearly 7,000 in 1931.^{xvi} Braunstone Hall was vacated in 1926 and on 29th of August 1932 it opened as Hall Junior School, after the National School had closed two years previously.
- 6.16 In 1935 the part of the parish, which had been within the Winstanley Estate was detached from Blaby Rural District and incorporated into the City of Leicester, creating the current split between Braunstone Village (Leicester City Council) and Braunstone Town (Blaby District Council).

- 6.17 By the mid-1950s, large areas of former agricultural land around Braunstone were extensively developed and some older buildings within the village were demolished. The direct physical connection between the village and Braunstone Hall was lost and small infill developed appeared along the south side of Braunstone Lane. The need for social housing led to the demolition of Old Hall Farm in 1967 and the redevelopment of the land for the housing development on Herle Avenue and Odam Close in 1973.
- 6.18 In addition to the larger scale development of new housing estates during the 20th century at its margins, the core of the village also saw incremental change. For example, the village shop at 266 Braunstone Lane, dominated by a former house dating to the 17th century, was extended with a larger residential unit in the 1960s. The most recent addition to the Conservation Area has been a new terrace of houses to the west of the older property at 208 Braunstone Lane, completed in 2023.
- 6.19 In the 21st Century, some work has been undertaken to help improve the legibility of the historic village core with various pieces of new signage put up. The pathway network within Church Fields was extended and a large heritage panel was installed on Braunstone Lane detailing the historic development of the village.

7 Architectural Character

- 7.1 The architectural character of the conservation area is a mixture of the original village buildings and later 20th century infill development.
- 7.2 Regarding the former, these original village buildings fall within two distinct character groups based on their original purpose and use, they are either domestic or agricultural/ancillary in nature. This has informed their differing appearance, design, form, material, construction, and siting.
- 7.3 These domestic buildings are all typically sited to the front of their plots, adjacent to or immediately abutting the pavement. They were built utilising traditional techniques and materials, such as timber frame construction, which can still be seen in their external elevations to this day. They are typically two storeys in height, likely to have one or more chimney stacks and contain multiple openings in their façades, suggesting the subdivision of internal space which require heating and natural light.
- 7.4 The historic agricultural and ancillary building are instead found to the rear of plots, typically along boundary lines. They are usually single storey in height with random or asymmetric openings, sometimes with large single openings to allow for the access of machinery. Their roofs are devoid of any projecting chimney stacks, reflecting their utilitarian purpose.

- 7.5 The 20th century development is principally domestic in nature, however there are also some of examples of ground floor commercial units.
- 7.6 The dwelling houses are a mixture of semi-detached and detached and are typically sited deeper within their plots than their more historic neighbours, allowing for generous front gardens or car parking space. For the most part they maintain the prevailing domestic building height of two storeys, although the roof forms differ as the hipped roof becomes more common in this later architectural style. They do utilise modern versions of traditional materials such as brick and timber framing, as well as incorporating traditional features such as chimneys, bow and bay windows for articulation to their primary elevations.
- 7.7 At the south-eastern end of the conservation is a complex of buildings, formally known as Ashleigh Farm, it is now called **The Shakespeare**. To the front of the plot, running parallel to the highway is the former farmhouse, the oldest sections of which is timber frame construction dating to the mid-17th century, with later alterations and extensions. The porch has the year “1655” recorded on its moulded lintel. The timber framed section contains brick infill in a mix of stretcher bond and herringbone patterns, and the building has been extended south in brick. The roof is thatched with a scalloped ridge and several thatched dormers. The Shakespeare and its curtilage are Grade II listed, designated in 1987.



Image 8: The Shakespeare.



Image 9: The courtyard to the rear of The Shakespeare.

- 7.8 The buildings to the rear of The Shakespeare form a courtyard of ancillary structures, formally part of a traditional farmstead. The original agricultural buildings have been altered and added to in recent years due to their change of use. The simple design and high-quality materials used have ensured the character of the former farmyard remains discernible. Worth noting is the stepped ridges of the south-west range which reflects the cumulative nature of the buildings and adds positively to roofscape in this area (Image 8).
- 7.9 The properties at **228 and 230 Braunstone Lane** are likely older and of more historic interest than their external appearance suggests. There is evidence of a building in this location on the historic mapping and in old photographs, taking on its current form in early 20th century but with a potentially older core. Unfortunately, many of its original features have been lost or replaced, and the exterior has been full enveloped in a modern render which detracts from its character and limits its contribution to the area.
- 7.10 The linear range of building to the rear are also of note and would have once formed part of a traditional farmyard. Similarly, they have been altered as their agricultural use fell away, the site has been subject to partial demolition and the original roof coverings have been replaced with modern alternatives. However enough material remains, including the stepped ridges, which allows for this original character to be read and appreciated.

7.11 There are two groups consisting of a pair of inter-war semi-detached properties on either side of Balmoral Drive. Nos. 236 – 242 Braunstone Lane are the plainer of the two groups, with a simple double height bay, decorated with render and a single diamond detail, to each property. They have also undergone a greater degree of external alterations, such as porch and side extensions, which compromise their integrity as a group.

7.12 Nos **244 – 250 Braunstone Lane** are of a higher architectural quality than the other pair, with sophisticated oriel windows, faux timber framed gables, and double height tile hung bow windows. Almost all the properties retain their original timber joinery which makes an important and positive contribution to their appearance and group value.

7.13 **The Manor** is a 17th century timber frame and brick farmhouse, which has been much altered and extended in several stages and over subsequent centuries. The inscription “16 WPM 89” survives on a timber rail. Sited perpendicular to the highway, its principal range is characterised by a prominent gable under a Swithland Slate roof, jettied first floor and later cantered bay window inserted to the ground floor. A secondary range extends north containing an 18th century flush panelled door and moulded architrave crudely cut into the beam above it. A 19th century brick and Welsh slate extension has been added to the rear with a set of four linked chimney shafts. The brink infill is a variety of stretcher bond and herringbone



Image 10: 248 & 250 Braunstone Lane.

pattern and there is a mix of window styles throughout the property including both vertical and horizontal slides sashes. The Manor and its curtilage are Grade II listed, designated in 1952.

7.14 As with the other former farmsteads in the village, The Manor once had a large courtyard of agricultural buildings to the rear. However much of this has been cleared and the area is now a small industrial estate containing modern office buildings and only the remnants of the two agricultural buildings. One 19th century structure survives relatively intact with modern cement roof tiles and



Image 11: Grade II Listed Former Shop with Storage Loft at 266 Braunstone Lane.

area is not as successful in retaining its former farmstead character.

- 7.15 **266 Braunstone Lane** is part of a 17th century much altered timber framed structure, originally built as a cottage which likely extended further north. It was turned into the village shop in the 20th century, a poor-quality shop extension was added to the south gable and a brick house was added to the rear, both of which are of no historic interest. It has painted brick infill, in a mix of stretcher bond and herringbone pattern under a Swithland slate roof. It retains some interesting historic features, such as the ledge and brace door and ground floor shuttered window. It is Grade II listed, designated in 1987.
- 7.16 **268 Braunstone Lane** is a 19th century brick house, with a simple rectilinear footprint, three half dormers in a plain clay tile roof and an attractive brick boundary wall. Unfortunately, recent alterations have impacted its character and limits its contribution to the area, including modern uPVC windows and a tall timber close-boarded fence.
- 7.17 **270 – 272 Braunstone Lane** is another example of a building which is likely older than it first appears although it has been much altered. Unfortunately, many of its original features have been lost or replaced, and the exterior has been full enveloped in a modern render which detracts from its character and limits its contribution to the area.



Image 12: Holly Tree Cottage, 278 Braunstone Lane

- 7.18 **April Cottage, 276 Braunstone Lane** is an attractive cottage which has been altered and extended in several distinct phases. Although it is now externally clad in brick, this appears to represent a 19th century phase of re-fronting work to an earlier timber frame building, the core of which may survive internally. A single section of frame is preserved within the external brick skin to the left of the bow window. The character of April Cottage is eclectic, with a variety of window style, roof material and ad hoc additions which result in a charming addition to the character of the area.
- 7.19 **Holly Tree Cottage, 278 Braunstone Lane**, similar to April Cottage, likely represents an older timber framed cottage which was re-fronted and extended in brick. Evidence of the previous catslide roof is discernible in the northern elevation. Unfortunately, its original openings have been enlarged and modern uPVC windows installed. However, its traditional proportions and construction remain clearly evident, and it retains sufficient historic material to add positively to the character of the area.

8 Townscape

- 8.1 The naturally meandering character of Braunstone Lane helps recall the village character of the area. As the road bends, differing views and focal points come to attention. Despite some of the more intrusive 20th century development, and the general loss its historic rural setting, its character as a village remains discernible in the surviving townscape.
- 8.2 This character is reinforced by the green and leafy appearance of the Conservation Area. Where they are present, mature trees, natural boundary treatments and soft verges make a positive contribution to the significance of the area.

Views and Vista

- 8.3 The principal views of the Conservation Area are the two gateway points into the historic village core. At the south-eastern edge, the distinctive gable of The Shakespeare containing dovecot openings is an important focal point. It marks the entrance to old Braunstone and has captured the attention of generations of visitors; this view has been represented in paintings and postcards of the village from the 19th century.
- 8.4 The northern gateway is a similarly important view into the Conservation Area. The curve of the road at this point introduces its village character and allows for a clear view

of Holly Tree Cottage, 278 Braunstone Lane, showcasing its traditional cottage proportions. Although historically Holly Tree Cottage sat just shy of the edge of the village core, it is now the oldest surviving building at this important transition point. The low scale, generous set back and green character of the bungalows at 278A and 280 Braunstone Lane help protect the rural feel of this entry to the historic village core.

- 8.5 Another view of note is the view eastwards from within Shakespeare Park. The open space of the park allows for clear views of the cluster of former agricultural buildings to the rear of The Shakespeare and nos. 228 and 230 Braunstone Lane. This dynamic roofscape demonstrates the variety of roofing material found within the Conservation Area as well as physical remnants of the traditional farmsteads which would have once defined the character of the area.

Landmarks and Corners

- 8.6 The loose urban grain of the Conservation Area means many of the buildings have a landmark quality without being tall or imposing and without forming prominent corners.
- 8.7 A good example is The Manor, which is prominent in the street scene based on the spacious character of its curtilage, its position abutting the highway and the distinctive jettied gable.



Image 13: "Entrance to Braunstone Village, near Leicester". A post card sent to Miss W Lewis on the 24th of March 1908, from the oil painting by Geo. S. Ramsey.

Lighting and Street Furniture

- 8.8 The majority of the street lighting within the Conservation Area is of a standard design and does not contribute to the character of the area.
- 8.9 Street furniture in the area is mostly found within Shakespeare Park, which contains some simple wood benches and litter bins. As the park is a relatively recent amenity space gifted to the local council in the mid-20th century, these items are modern in character, and of no special historic interest.

Activity

- 8.10 Despite the somewhat ‘rural’ character of the Conservation Area and its peripheral urban setting, Braunstone Lane is a busy thoroughfare, with high levels of vehicular activity. This is to the detriment of the pedestrian movement and cyclists’ safety; especially as limited facilities are provided for both.

Signage

- 8.11 Although many properties within the Conservation Area are dwelling houses with clearly domestic appearances, there are some commercial units within the boundary. These properties are distinguishable by the presence of advertisements and signage.
- 8.12 The Shakespeare, which was formally a public house and is now in use by funeral directors has an attractive and

cohesive signage scheme which allows for the advertisement of the business while respecting the sensitive heritage setting. They have utilised a combination of contemporary and traditional painted techniques which balances well the needs of the business and the appearance of the building (Image 13). Notably, the former pub sign has been retained and sensitively amended, preserving this element of the building’s history.



Image 14: Painted signage advertising Paul Pender & Sons Funeral Directors.

9 Building Materials

Facing Materials

- 9.1 The most widely used building material within the Conservation Area is brick, both painted and unpainted. The oldest properties, such as The Shakespeare, The Manor and the former village shop utilise a combination of structural timber framing and brick infill, sometimes laid in a chevron or herringbone pattern (Image 14). There is some variety in the tone and size of bricks corresponding with the age of the buildings. Red brick is the prevailing material throughout; however, some of the mid-20th century infill development utilises lighter, buff coloured brick.
- 9.2 Render is also found in the area, mainly as a decorative motif of the early-mid 20th century semi-detached dwellings, i.e. to embellish gables and bay windows. One exception is 228-230 Braunstone Lane where it is used as the principal surface material. However, based on the smooth texture and tell-tale indications around openings, this is a modern alteration and not a historic or original finish on the building.

Roof

- 9.3 Roof coverings vary significantly throughout the Conservation Area. Traditional materials such as thatch, Swithland slate laid in diminishing courses and Welsh slates are common on the oldest properties in the village. Red clay tiles are prevalent mostly in the 1930s semi-



Image 15: The Manor, detail showing herringbone brick pattern, later inserted door and surround and vertical sliding sash window.

detached houses. Modern cement tiles are used mainly in the later 20th century development, or as a replacement material on older buildings. There is one instance of a corrugated metal roof on an outbuilding in the grounds occupied by the 4th Leicester Scout Group (Image 15).

- 9.4 Chimneys have a significant visual impact on the townscape of the conservation area, piercing the local skyline. The difference of massing, form, and design between individual examples, and adds considerably to the architectural merit of these historic properties. All are constructed in red brickwork, with many clay chimney pots in place. The most decorative chimneys are found on The Manor, 252 Braunstone Lane, which add great interest to the building and Conservation Area.

Boundary Treatments

- 9.5 Boundary treatments throughout the Conservation Area vary and range in type, scale, and material, meaning there is a lack of overall consistency and cohesion.
- 9.6 Where present, front boundary treatments in the form of brick boundaries, timber fencing and trimmed hedges, provide a clear definition between the public realm and private property, creating a sense of enclosure and positively contributing to the local townscape. Decorative metal railings and gates are rare within the Conservation Area, with some examples found along Braunstone Lane; however, there are instances of modern security fencing used in the vicinity of Shakespeare Park.



Image 16: View from Shakespeare Park looking east.

Road Surfaces

- 9.7 Road surfaces in the Conservation Area are dominated by dark tarmac and grey concrete, which defines the highway and pedestrian pavements along Braunstone Lane. Few granite kerbstones survive, the overwhelming majority being modern concrete examples. The path leading from Braunstone Lane to Shakespeare Park is unsurfaced. Additionally, the private curtilages of properties feature a wealth of additional surface treatments, including gravel, grass, cobbles, red tiles, brick and stone paving, and concrete slabs.

Windows and Doors

- 9.8 There is a variety and range of window type and material within the Conservation Area. Where they survive, original and historic timber windows make an important and positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Worth noting is the relatively rare Yorkshire (horizontal) sliding sashes present in The Manor (Image 14) and the survival of the original timber casements with stain glass top lights in nos. 244-250 Braunstone Lane typical of the Arts and Crafts movement.
- 9.9 The Shakespeare is the only property in the Conservation Area to contain metal frame casements with lattice patterned leaded lights. Although they are a later alteration to the building, dating to the 20th century, they are an increasingly rare feature with historic interest and make a

positive contribution to the character of the building and wider area.

- 9.10 There are several examples of historic timber doors and original metal fittings within the Conservation Area, of differing styles and construction. The former village shop retains a traditional ledge and brace door with a latch, while The Manor has been retrofitted with a flush panelled door and ornate knocker set within a moulded architrave which cuts through the beam above it (Image 14).
- 9.11 Several buildings in the Conservation Area have installed replacement uPVC windows and doors. Although attempts have been made to replicate glazing patterns and decorative detailing in some examples, it has resulted in inconsistency within groups of buildings and the fine detail of the originals have been lost.

Other Materials

- 9.12 Timber is used for other features of contribution to the local streetscene, such as soffits and bargeboards and the faux timber framing of the inter-war houses.
- 9.13 Some of the oldest properties in the Conservation Area retain original cast-iron or replacement metal rainwater goods, compete with thin gutter brackets.



Image 17: Mixture of more and less traditional boundary treatments.



Image 18: More natural vegetation dominates along the public footpaths with more utilitarian fencing.



Image 19: Traditional materials dominate on the building with less cohesive floorscape materials below the plinth.

10 Open Spaces

- 10.1 The Conservation Area boundary line is intentionally drawn as a tight perimeter around the historic built core of the village. The open space and field system which once defined the setting of old Braunstone has mostly been lost.
- 10.2 Shakespeare Park is the principal area of open space which appears within the Conservation Area boundary. Although this is a relatively recent element of the village's character, it is considered to make a positive contribution to the appreciation and appearance of the area.
- 10.3 The park was gifted to the local council by Everards Brewery in the mid-20th century when The Shakespeare (formally known as Ashleigh Farm) was converted into a public house. Historically, this land was subdivided into various smaller fields and orchards associated with the agricultural use of the farmstead. Although the park does not retain this agricultural use or character, it does replicate the sense of openness which once would have defined the village setting. Evidence of historic field boundaries can also be found within the grassed area and in parts, the perimeter of the park loosely follows the line of these original boundaries.



Images 20 & 21: Shakespeare Park playing fields and clubhouse.



11 Historic Routes

- 11.1 Interestingly, two historic routes originating within the Conservation Area have been preserved within the modern plan of the wider Braunstone area. Evidence of at least one of these routes can be found as early as the 17th century. By the 19th century they are clearly recorded and labelled on maps of the village and wider area.
- 11.2 On the 1884 OS Map, a footpath simply marked “F.P” is shown extending from Braunstone Lane, approximately 60m north of The Manor, in a south-westerly direction.
- 11.3 In the mid-20th century, it appears this footpath formed the basis of a new road. At the section closest to Braunstone Lane, new housing was constructed along the recently widened and paved street, now named Bidford Road. This new road retained the natural meanders of the original footpath evident on the historic mapping, whereas elsewhere other new roads such as Balmoral Drive were built on a straighter axis. Bidford Road runs in a south-westerly direction until it meets Kingsway North. After this point it continues in the form of a paved footpath, now aptly named *The Old Bridal Lane*, reinforcing the historic origin of this route.
- 11.4 The second route marked “B.R” for Bridle Road, evident on the historic mapping further south on Braunstone Lane. It appears to originate immediately north of 228 and 230 Braunstone Lane, pass through the courtyard of buildings,

skirt the corner of a field boundary and continue in a general southerly direction.

- 11.5 This historic route is preserved as the path leading from Braunstone Lane to Shakespeare Park. It can be traced through the park, crossing Avon Road, and continuing along the public bridleway and Lubbesthorpe Bridle Road through Mossdale Meadows. Again, continuation of the term “bridleway” and “bridle road” confirms its historic origins.



Image 22: View looking south from Avon Road down the public footpath below Shakespeare Park

12 Intrusive or Harmful Factors

Building Alterations

- 12.1 As outlined in the appraisal, uPVC windows and PVC rainwater goods have had an adverse impact on some of the non-designated historic structures in the Conservation Area.
- 12.2 Satellite dishes and antennas have been installed on several buildings adding clutter and making a negative contribution to the streetscene along Braunstone Lane.
- 12.3 Where non-designated historic properties have been externally clad in modern render, it stands in stark contrast with the prevailing use of both traditional and modern brick in the area.

Boundary Treatments

- 12.4 The inconsistent boundary treatments throughout the Conservation Area have already been noted but are worth highlighting as negative factors affecting the character of the area. Despite its compact size, the disparity of front boundaries is prominent, especially along the main thoroughfare of Braunstone Lane. Not only are the boundaries different in height, design, materials, and finish, but they are often incomplete, with notable 'gaps' punctuating the streetscene. This has caused visual disconnection between properties and obscured the definition of the private and public domain.



Images 23 & 24: Issues with boundary treatments and hard landscaping, as well as traffic on Braunstone Lane.



Traffic and the Public Realm

- 12.5 Traffic can dominate Braunstone Lane and make the experience for pedestrians and cyclists less comfortable. Sections of public pavement and highway along Braunstone Lane are in poor condition. In particular, the junction of Bidford Road, and the parking and forecourt area associated with 266 Braunstone Lane is dominated by mixed quality hardstanding. There is poor integration between different sections of hardstanding here, made worse by poor quality boundary treatments.
- 12.6 Commercial signage in this area is also of a more standard quality and does not reflect the sensitivity of its historic setting.

Infill Development and Setting

- 12.7 Some of the later 20th century infill and surrounding development has a big impact on the character and setting of the Conservation Area. The bulk and scale of 12 – 16 Bidford Road is out of keeping with the prevailing character of the area, its largely blank gable fronting Braunstone Lane is particularly harmful and incongruous.
- 12.8 While many houses further north along Braunstone Lane are well maintained, there are some unsympathetic alterations which detract from the setting of the Conservation Area.

13 Capacity for Change

- 13.1 The only larger scale undeveloped area within the Conservation Area is Shakespeare Park, which benefits from its own status as public open space. As such, there is limited scope for new development here.
- 13.2 As outlined in previous sections, some buildings within the Conservation Area boundary make a neutral or negative contribution to the character and appearance of the area. These sites represent a potential opportunity for enhancement in the future. The frontage to 266 Braunstone Lane is a notable example of a more visible space that has clear capacity to be enhanced.
- 13.3 The land to the rear of the Manor has been subject to a series of development proposals. If further proposals were to be submitted, these should be carefully considered in terms of the historic development of the site and the setting of heritage assets close by.
- 13.4 Change must not come at the expense of the character that makes the area special, and alterations to properties need to be sympathetic to their context. Any new development should aim to preserve or enhance the character and streetscene of the locality, be compatible with the existing building stock and the local townscape.

14 Conservation Area Boundary

- 14.1 The Conservation Area boundary line is intentionally drawn as a tight perimeter around the historic built core of the village, based on historic maps of the area.
- 14.2 At the northern edge of the boundary, nos. 278A and 280 Braunstone Lane were included as it was felt their low-scale, generous set back and green character contributed to the character of the area and act as an effective “buffer” at this important transitional point.
- 14.3 At the south-eastern edge, the newly completed terraced row was included within the designated boundary. Historically this site was associated with The Shakespeare (formally Ashleigh Farm), during its operation as a public house and traditional farmstead. The new properties are considered to be of sufficient quality to warrant inclusion and add cohesion to the Conservation Area.
- 14.4 The boundary extends to Avon Road at two points. It is good practice for Conservation Area boundaries to follow physical features and avoid bisecting properties.

15 Local Consultation

- 15.1 This draft Character Appraisal is being published for public consultation. The final version will be produced with the benefit of the comments received during this exercise.

16 Management Proposal

- 16.1 A separate Conservation Area Management Plan has been produced. This management plan sets out proposals and actions to preserve and enhance the special character of the Conservation Area.

17 Additional Planning Controls

- 17.1 The District Council is consulting on an option to potentially introduce a bespoke Article 4 Direction for unlisted properties within the area to remove certain permitted development rights. This would mean most works affecting the external appearance of properties within the Conservation Area would now require planning permission or listed building consent.

18 Contact

- 18.1 For further information on this, or other, conservation areas you can contact the Council's Planning Development & Strategy Team by phone, letter or via the contact form available on the Council's website:

Planning Development & Strategy
Blaby District Council
Council Offices
Desford Road
Narborough
Leicester
LE19 2EP

Tel: 01162 272 7710

Contact Form: www.blaby.gov.uk/contact-us/

Information on all conservation areas is available on the Council's website:

www.blaby.gov.uk/planning-and-building/conservation/conservation-areas/

Appendix 1: Map



Appendix 2: Endnotes

- ⁱ J. E. Wiltshire (1983). Old Braunstone, p.5.
- ⁱⁱ East Midland Oral History Archive (2016). Braunstone. Available at: <<https://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/resources/braunstone/village.html>> [Accessed 26 February 2019].
- ⁱⁱⁱ G. E. England (1970). The story of Braunstone Parish Church, p.3
- ^{iv} East Midland Oral History Archive (2016).
- ^v A. McKinley, ed. (1958). "Parishes added since 1892: Braunstone". A History of the County of Leicester: Volume 4, the City of Leicester. British History Online. Victoria County History. London. pp. 428–433.
- ^{vi} Ibid
- ^{vii} M. Burch (2019). "History". *St Peter's Church – Braunstone park, Leicester, UK*. Available at: <http://www.stpetersbraunstone.org.uk/?page_id=16> [Accessed 3 March 2019].
- ^{viii} McKinley, ed. (1958), pp.428-433
- ^{ix} England (1970), p.29
- ^x England (1970), p.16.
- ^{xi} Ibid.
- ^{xii} W. White (1877). "History, Gazetteer & Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland".
- ^{xiii} England (1970), p.17
- ^{xiv} Ibid
- ^{xv} East Midland Oral History Archive (2016).
- ^{xvi} McKinley, ed. (1958), pp.428-433.



Braunstone Village Conservation Area

Management Plan

May 2024



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Management Plan sets out Blaby District Council's and Leicester City Council's approach for preserving and enhancing the two designated areas known as Braunstone Village Conservation Area.
- 1.2 Conservation areas make a significant contribution towards the urban fabric of the city and county. These historic areas are important to the area's cultural inheritance, economic wellbeing, and quality of life. It is important to recognise that these places are not static and are subject to change. The aim of the Management Plan is to ensure that change is managed in a way that maintains and enhances the special qualities of the conservation areas.
- 1.3 This document sits alongside the two character appraisals for the Braunstone Village Conservation Area on either side of the administrative border. The character appraisal documents provides detailed analysis of what is positive and negative in the areas under consideration and identifies opportunities for beneficial change or the need for additional protection.

2. Planning Policy Background

2.1 National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework details the importance of identifying and managing heritage assets. It details that local planning authorities should set out a strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring; and
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

2.2 Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 details that:

- It shall be the duty of a local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.
- Proposals under this section shall be submitted for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate.

- The local planning authority shall have regard to any views concerning the proposals expressed by persons attending the meeting.

2.3 Government policy is provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It requires the significance of heritage assets – both its historic buildings and historic areas – to be understood by local authorities and by those who propose change. Changes that cause harm to significance will only be permitted where the harm is outweighed by public benefits. Further guidance on the use of the NPPF is provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance and in advice published by Historic England.

2.4 Local Policy

The protection and positive use of the historic environment within new development is a theme which runs through the **Blaby District Core Strategy**. It is mentioned as a key component in Policies CS2, CS12, CS14, and CS16 and is the subject of a comprehensive policy on the Historic Environment and Culture CS20 and in the Blaby District Local Plan Delivery DPD in Development Management Policy 12 (Designated and Non-designated Heritage Assets). Within the administrative boundary of Leicester City Council, the protection and positive use of the historic environment within new development is a theme which runs through the **City of Leicester Core Strategy**. It is identified as a key component in spatial objectives 7 and 9. This is further strengthened in a number of policies. The Core Strategy also makes an explicit commitment to the preservation and enhancement of Leicester's heritage in Spatial Objective 10. This is amplified in a wide-ranging policy (CS18) for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment.

2.5 There is a general presumption against the demolition of buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, and the policy expects new developments and conservation-led regeneration to reflect the character and value of the historic environment. Both local and national policy puts the emphasis on the enhancement of heritage assets and positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness that should be made through new development.

3 Local Consultation

3.1 There is a requirement under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 for the local authority to consult the local community about any management proposals for conservation areas.

3.2 A draft version of this document is published for public consultation. The Council seeks to consult those with an interest in the subjects covered by the

document. Details of the consultation will be sent to all local heritage and community groups and efforts will be made to reach a wider audience through local media and the respective councils' websites. Partnership working with Braunstone Town Council will be a key focus. A public display relating to the draft Management Plan will be arranged. Responses received will help to shape the final version. Following adoption of the Management Plan, the local authorities will endeavour to consult on any relevant changes in their respective administrative areas with each other.

4 Publicity and Information

- 4.1 Public consultation relating to conservation areas in Blaby and Leicester has revealed that many property owners and occupiers are unaware of the extent and implications of conservation area coverage. Ambiguity about restrictions increases the likelihood of inappropriate development occurring and damages the integrity of the conservation area designations.
- 4.2 Given the complexity of legislation relating to heritage designations, such as conservation areas, the two councils will look to work with Braunstone Town Council on producing guidance detailing both the rights and responsibilities of living in such areas for property owners and occupiers. As national legislation on restrictions relating to conservation areas is liable to change, the best medium for guidance is on the respective councils' website, which have the capacity to be easily updated.
- 4.3 Another potential issue is the turnover in residency and ownership of properties in the conservation areas. To ensure that all property owners and occupiers are aware of both the conservation area designation and any significant changes to related planning controls, a 'conservation area guidance leaflet' will be sent to all properties in the conservation areas.

ACTION G1

Guidance and Information

Each council has produced a Conservation Area Character Appraisal and will make guidance available on its website.

- 4.4 A number of cast-iron conservation area signage roundels are attached to lampposts in the area. To provide greater clarity over the boundaries of the conservation areas, these signs should potentially be installed at the various entry points and renovated/replaced where appropriate.
- 4.5 Heritage interpretation panels have been located within the conservation areas. If appropriate, additional panels should be installed making the history

of the areas more legible. New technology may also present opportunities for improving the accessibility of information regarding conservation areas.

ACTION G2

Raising the profile of the conservation areas

Each council will look to raise the profile of conservation area by potentially installing new street signs, working with local community groups and exploring the potential of media/technology.

- 4.6 Local heritage groups may arrange events to promote the heritage of the areas, including walking tours, seminars, and expert talks. Such work should be supported, such as through additional publicity.

5 Development Management

- 5.1 Demand for new housing, residential extensions and alterations can impact on the character of conservation areas through unsympathetic or poor design. The role of each councils' development management function in overseeing future changes to conservation areas is therefore crucial.

ACTION G3

Delivering effective development management

Each council will use strategic policy and guidance documents to ensure that development respects the character of the conservation area as outlined in the character appraisal.

- 5.2 As detailed in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, all development within each conservation area should preserve or enhance its character or appearance. Development within conservation areas should be in keeping with local character and this is summarised in the character appraisals.

6 Setting and Views

- 6.1 Some sites, which are outside the boundary of the conservation areas, have an impact on its character through setting and framing. Should development on these sites come forward the impact on the conservation areas will be a material consideration.

ACTION G4

Setting and views

Each council will ensure that development, which affects the setting of the conservation area, respects its character and that important views are protected.

- 6.2 As detailed in the character appraisals, there are also important views which are part of the significance of the conservation areas. The impact on these identified views will be a material consideration of any planning application. Care must be taken at an early stage to prevent harm to these key views through new development. Opportunities should be sought to enhance the setting of the conservation areas through appropriate and attractive development.

7 Building uses

- 7.1 As detailed in the character appraisal for the conservation area in the City Council administrative area, the buildings in that conservation area, with the exception of the church, are residential in character, being largely consistent with their historic uses. The surviving commercial elements of the former village are located within the boundary of the conservation area in Blaby District, which also has a significant residential element.
- 7.2 Where a change of use is proposed, this should be appropriate to the architectural character of the property. Conversion or excessive subdivision of a property can harm the amenity of the conservation areas through structural alterations and associated developments, such as large bin and cycle stores. Each council will not support changes of use that harm the character of the conservation areas.

ACTION G5

Building uses

Each council will seek to protect the residential character of their conservation area and ensure any new uses are consistent with this.

- 7.3 Should a property become long-term vacant each council will pursue appropriate steps to ensure the condition of the building is maintained and to encourage re-use. In exceptional circumstances, the use of enforcement powers will be considered. Long-term vacancy will not be a justifiable reason to allow for demolition unless it can be demonstrated that all options for re-use have been investigated.

8 Building features

- 8.1 Within the conservation areas there are examples of unsympathetic alterations to the external fabric of buildings. This includes the removal of original chimneys, windows, doors, and other features/detailing, as well as the addition of rooflights and satellite dishes. External painting, cladding, and rendering of brick elevations, while limited has also had a detrimental effect on the conservation area.
- 8.2 A notable problem is the replacement of timber windows with poorly suited plastic or composite units. Such alterations may now be restricted, through the introduction of an Article 4 Direction.
- 8.3 In general, the councils advocate for the refurbishment of historic features, particularly windows and doors, with replacement considered as an option of last resort. Where original features have already been inappropriately altered or lost, any new development should aim to respond meaningfully to the architectural composition, design, and proportionality of the building under consideration, as well as to the wider streetscene within the conservation area. For example, poorly suited uPVC windows should be replaced with alternative windows that are more in keeping with the original building.
- 8.4 Historic England has carried out research which shows that replacing windows with uPVC in an appropriate style is not significantly cheaper than timber equivalents. Moreover, it should also be recognised that property values are generally higher where properties retain their original features. Enhancing the energy efficiency of properties can be delivered in a way that is sympathetic to building character through the repair of windows and/or additional measures, such as secondary glazing or draught proofing.

ACTION G6

Traditional materials

Traditional external materials and finishes will be expected in all new development in the conservation areas.

Each council will seek to encourage the use of traditional, contextual materials through pre-application advice, as well as in information in relevant planning documents and on the councils' websites.

- 8.5 The councils will work with property owners to encourage the use of traditional materials that preserve or enhance the historic environment. The use of 'mock' or synthetic materials will be resisted, as these do not adequately replicate the natural materials in finish, quality and weathering. In addition, such materials are not historically appropriate to the conservation areas. This is especially important to elevations and roof slopes fronting public highway and open public spaces.

9 Boundaries

- 9.1 The loss of original front boundaries is a particular issue within the conservation areas. As noted in the character appraisals, garden walls, railings and hedges make an important contribution to the character of the conservation areas. Where they have been removed the distinction between the public and private domain and the visual edge to highway is weakened or lost to the detriment of the local townscape.

ACTION G7

Boundary Treatments

Each council will seek opportunities to retain existing boundaries and support the reinstatement of traditional front boundaries where they have been lost.

- 9.2 Where front boundaries remain these should be protected. Opportunities should be sought to reinstate historic boundaries where these have been lost or removed.

10 Highways and Footpaths

- 10.1 A number of issues in the Conservation Area relate to accommodating vehicular traffic, as well as measures required for traffic safety, control and calming. Given that the conservation areas were largely developed before cars were invented, there are longstanding issues within them over how car parking and traffic flow can be accommodated within restricted streetscapes.
- 10.2 In certain parts of the conservation areas surfaces are tired and in need of upgrading and where repairs have been carried out to the pathways these have not always been applied in materials to match the existing, resulting in an array of forms that are visually detracting.
- 10.3 The public realm should be carefully designed and improved to provide an uncluttered environment that sustains or enhances the special significance of the conservation areas. The core principles of the *Leicester Street Design Guide* will guide all future development in that administrative area. Its directives on place making, distinctness and creation of healthy and sustainable cities in particular will be a material consideration in all management and planning decisions.
- 10.4 As public realm projects develop, each council will pursue a policy of early engagement with stakeholders to help identify traffic management designs that are sympathetic to the historic environment. Where appropriate, traffic management measures should be integrated into the historic environment effectively by retaining features such as walls, trees, hedges and railings, as well as traditional floorspace materials. Where new features are introduced, the observance of existing design principles and use of local traditional materials should be considered to ensure they are in keeping with the existing townscape and character of the area.
- 10.5 Statutory undertakers are responsible for carrying out the permanent reinstatement of the highway, where they disturb it, with the existing materials. Where existing materials cannot be re-used, new materials should be the closest possible match.

ACTION G8

Highway Works

Utilising national and regional best practice guidance, each Council will seek to ensure that any future highways works will bring a positive improvement to the character and appearance of the conservation areas.

- 10.6 Each council will advocate the principles established by Historic England in *Streets for All: East Midlands*, as well as the two *Manual for Streets* documents to all those involved in highways works.
- 10.9 A detailed audit of the public realm will be undertaken to identify the best way to minimise street clutter and better integrate street furniture in the conservation areas. The street audit should be developed with officers from the local councils and other interested parties to ensure they are accurate and the findings feasible. Proposals to remove street clutter will be actioned within 12 months of the adoption of this document.
- 10.10 Street furniture including bollards, bins, bike stands, electricity cabinets, information panels and other freestanding features within the highway should co-ordinate with each other and tie-in with similar features elsewhere in the area. An appropriate and sensitive colour palette should be chosen to achieve this. All new street furniture should be kept to a minimum and carefully positioned to avoid hindrance to pedestrian and sustainable transport flow.

ACTION G10

Street clutter audit

An audit of the public realm to identify the best way to minimise street clutter and better integrate street furniture in the conservation areas will be undertaken. An Action Plan for reducing street clutter will be prepared and taken forward with the relevant highways authorities.

- 10.11 The highway on Braunstone Lane and Main Street has a significant impact on the setting of the conservation areas. Requests will be made to Leicestershire County Council, as the relevant Highway Authority, should any aesthetic improvements be identified.

11 Green infrastructure

- 11.1 Blaby and Leicester's green infrastructure network helps to support wildlife and delivers multiple environmental and health benefits. This includes improving air and water quality, storing carbon, providing opportunities for biodiversity net gain, facilitating urban cooling, and providing spaces for people to enjoy for leisure and recreation.
- 11.2 To help support local ambition to deliver an overall environmental net gain, each council will expect new development to achieve biodiversity net gain and improvements to the existing green infrastructure, wherever appropriate.

ACTION G11

Green Infrastructure

Each council will ensure biodiversity value is preserved or enhanced when considering development proposals in the area.

12 Trees and Green Spaces

- 12.1 There are many trees within the conservation areas which make an important contribution to the character of the local environment. These are located on public and private land, in open public spaces and private gardens. Every effort should be made to retain these trees in a healthy condition.
- 12.2 The value that trees make to the overall composition of conservation areas is acknowledged by the additional controls on tree works following conservation area designation. Mature trees in the Conservation Area are protected by the statutory designation of the areas, subject to management in line with each council's procedures.
- 12.3 Trees which are subject to preservation orders have been identified in each conservation area character appraisal and are marked on publicly accessible mapping through each council's website.

ACTION G12

Trees

There is a presumption in favour of retaining trees which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Each council will monitor trees in conservation areas that have notable amenity value. Where appropriate, opportunities for additional tree planting will be explored.

- 12.4 Where trees are lost through death, disease, highway works or other development, they should be replaced with suitable substitutes wherever feasible. Opportunities for more tree planting and enhanced green infrastructure will be explored by the each council, in line with the principles and aspirations of their respective Green Infrastructure Strategy. New green infrastructure will be carefully considered in the context of the existing character of the area and views into, within and out of the conservation areas.

- 12.5 The conservation areas includes areas of green space that are managed by the District Council and City Council. A collaborative approach to management should be undertaken between the relevant departments to ensure that opportunities to enhance the conservation aspects of these spaces are maximised.

ACTION G13

Open Spaces

Each council will seek opportunities to protect and enhance the open and historic character of each conservation area's open green spaces.

- 12.6 Specific enhancement opportunities for some of these spaces are presented in the City Council's [Green Infrastructure Strategy](#).

13 New Development

- 13.1 There are limited opportunities for larger scale infill development within the conservation areas, but sensitive enhancement schemes that sustain or enhance the local distinctiveness may come forward which can help to improve the quality of the local environment.
- 13.2 If the special interest of the conservation areas is to be protected in the future, development should only be allowed where it will fit in with the existing historic form of development; where it does not impinge on the setting of historic buildings; and where it does not result in the loss of important green open space.

14 Grant Funding

- 14.1 Leicester City Council will streamline the available funding into areas and buildings considered to be at risk or of considerable enhancement potential.
- 14.2 Each Council will also seek to support and assist, where practicable, groups or individuals seeking grant funding from alternative sources to carry out necessary works to historic buildings within the conservation areas.
- 14.3 Properties within the administrative boundary of Leicester City Council are eligible for the Historic Building Grant fund for the repair of original architectural features or the restoration of missing features. Details of this can be found on the City Council's website.

15 Local Community

- 15.1 Each council recognises that emphasis needs to be given to involving the local community in decisions about both the designation and the management of conservation areas. What is valued by the community may add a new perspective to what is considered as ‘special’ and worthy of preservation by the local authority. Local communities have a vital role to play in the development and implementation of management plans for proposals to succeed.

ACTION G14

Community Groups

Each council should work actively with local community groups and elected councillors to improve the management and monitoring of each Conservation Area.

- 15.2 There are a range of existing community groups operating in the conservation areas whose local knowledge should be prioritised in the ongoing management of the area and provide opportunities for more proactive processes for enhancement and enforcement. The latter issue could potentially involve heritage wardens, who help to monitor change in the conservation areas.

16 Enforcement Strategy

- 16.1 Monitoring and enforcement are important to the success of any management plan. Ensuring that permitted works have been executed as approved and that any unauthorised works are investigated and dealt with appropriately is important in maintaining the character and special significance of conservation areas. Part of this work is pro-active monitoring of the area to identify any breaches and to gather baseline evidence which can be used as evidence in any action.
- 16.2 Changes in the appearance and condition of the conservation areas should be monitored regularly by the Council to ensure that enforcement action can be taken promptly to deal with problems as they arise. A dated photographic record of the area should be regularly updated to ensure that there is the requisite level of evidence available to the Council. Street elevations would need to be photographed at least once every four years to ensure that enforcement action can be taken forward.
- 16.3 Where works have been done without the relevant permission(s), the Council will investigate if these breaches harm the amenity and significance of the local environment. If harm is found to have been caused, action will be taken. Where appropriate, the Council will pursue the use of additional enforcement powers

to tackle issues within the Conservation Area, including Section 215 Notices, Urgent Works Notices, Planning and Listed Building Enforcement Notices and Building Preservation Notices.

ACTION G15

Enforcement and Monitoring

Each council will take steps to deal with the unauthorised development where it causes harm to the character and appearance of each conservation area. A record of the conservation areas should be regularly maintained to ensure that enforcement action can be successfully taken forward.

17 Article 4 Directions

- 17.1 Minor development, such as domestic alterations and extensions, can normally be carried out without planning permission under the provisions of the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO).
- 17.2 Article 4 of the GPDO gives local planning authorities the power to restrict these 'permitted development rights', including where they have the potential to undermine protection for the historic environment. Using the provisions of Article 4 of the GPDO brings certain types of development under the control of a local planning authority, which allows them to be considered on a case-by-case basis through planning applications.
- 17.3 Designation of a conservation area restricts certain permitted development rights but many works, such as replacing front doors and windows, remains outside the control of the local planning authority.
- 17.4 To help protect the character and appearance of the conservation areas, both are consulting on proposals to potentially introduce focussed Article 4 Directions for non-listed properties in the areas. This would mean most external works to properties within the conservation areas will require planning permission including:
- Removal, alteration or installation of windows and doors;
 - Extensions or additions including porches;
 - Roof alterations such as dormer windows, rooflights and changing the roofing materials or removal or alteration of a chimney;
 - Painting the exterior of the property;
 - Paving over a front garden;
 - Removal of existing and installation of new boundary treatments.

ACTION G16

Article 4 Direction

Each council will explore the potential for a new Article 4 Direction to restrict external alterations for relevant properties within each Braunstone Village Conservation Area.

If made, each council will monitor the properties affected and provide adequate levels of publicity to ensure its successful application.

18 Links with Braunstone Park

18.1 As set out in the accompanying appraisal, the land which comprises the conservation area was formerly part of the wider Braunstone Estate. While there is some visibility between the park and the former village, the two were largely severed with the development of the housing estate in the 1930s.

ACTION G17

Links with Braunstone Park

Leicester City Council will explore opportunities to create a more direct pedestrian route between the conservation areas and Braunstone Park and improve signage in both areas.

18.2 There is now no direct route between the park and church, which is regrettable given their historic association. There is an opportunity to create a more direct link between the park and village through footpath improvement and better wayfinding, place marking and interpretation.

19 Monitoring

19.1 To assess the effectiveness of measures included in the Conservation Area Management Plan it is important that effective monitoring measures are put in place by the two local authorities. The Historic Environment Team at Leicester City Council will do a bi-annual inspection of the two conservation areas and detail actions for remedying identified issues. In addition, the following procedures will take place.

19.2 Document updates

In line with best practice guidance from Historic England, the two local authorities will review the two Conservation Area Character Appraisal

documents every five years and where necessary, update the documents. This process will help to monitor change and ensure that the documents remain an accurate representation of the area in question. The councils will also review the Conservation Area Management Plan every five years.

19.3 Local Communities

The input of other stakeholders, such as local history groups, residents' associations and ward councillors, in helping to monitor the management of the conservation areas will be welcomed.

Bibliography

English Historic Towns Forum. 1998. Conservation Area Management: A Practical Guide.

Historic England. 2016. Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management.

Historic England. 2018. Streets For All: East Midlands.

Department for Communities and Local Government & Department for Transport. 2007. Manual for Streets.

Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation. 2010. Manual for Streets 2: Wider Applications of the Principles.

- Historic England

<https://historicengland.org.uk/>

- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)

<http://www.spab.org.uk>

- Historic Environment Record

<https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/>

Appendix 1



Appendix 2

Proposed Article 4 Direction within Blaby District Council administrative boundary:

The proposed Article 4(1) Direction for 228, 230, 230a, 236, 238, 240, 242, 244, 246, 248, 250, 256, 268, 270, 272, 274, 276, 278 Braunstone Lane is as follows:

The Direction restricts permitted development rights as set out in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 with regards to:

Development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse comprised within the following classes of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the said Order:

- Class A – enlargement, improvement, or other alteration;
- Class C – alterations to the roof;
- Class D – the erection or construction of a porch outside any door;
- Class F – hard surfaces incidental to the use of a house.

Minor development comprised within the following classes of Part 2 of Schedule 2 to the said Order:

- Class A – Erection of fences and gates;
- Class C – the painting of the exterior of any building or work.

Appendix 3

Proposed Article 4 Direction within Leicester City Council administrative boundary:

The proposed Article 4(1) Direction for St Peters Vicarage, Main Street and 7-9 Main Street is as follows:

The Direction restricts permitted development rights as set out in The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 with regards to:

Development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse comprised within the following classes of Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the said Order:

- Class A – enlargement, improvement, or other alteration;
- Class C – alterations to the roof;
- Class D – the erection or construction of a porch outside any door;
- Class F – hard surfaces incidental to the use of a house.

Minor development comprised within the following classes of Part 2 of Schedule 2 to the said Order:

- Class A – Erection of fences and gates;
- Class C – the painting of the exterior of any building or work.