

WILSON CONSERVATION AREA

APPRAISAL AND STUDY



SEPTEMBER 2003

PREFACE

The District Council has a duty under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to determine which parts of the District are of special architectural or historical interest which it is desirable to preserve and enhance and to designate such areas as Conservation Areas. Having regard to these requirements and the advice contained in the English Heritage guidance notes 'Conservation Area Practice' and 'Conservation Area Appraisals', in February 2003 the District Council produced an appraisal document proposing the designation of a conservation area at Wilson.

The document 'Wilson : An Appraisal For Conservation Area Designation' was the subject of consultation and publicity over a six week period between 10 February 2003 and 24 March 2003. Having considered the various representations and recommended amendments the District Council's Executive Board of 9 September 2003 resolved the following :-

- (1) to approve the designation of a Conservation Area at Wilson.
- (2) to adopt (subject to amendments) the consultation document 'Wilson. : An Appraisal For Conservation Area Designation' as the Wilson. Conservation Area Appraisal/Study as supplementary planning guidance to the policies of the North West Leicestershire Local Plan.

As supplementary planning guidance the Conservation Area Appraisal/Study document whilst not having the same status as an adopted plan policy may be taken into account as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 place a duty on local planning authorities to determine which parts of their administrative area are "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which is it desirable to preserve or enhance" and to "designate these areas as conservation areas" (Section 69(1)(a)). The Wilson Conservation Area was designated by North West Leicestershire District Council on 9 September 2003 and the boundaries are shown on Map 1.
- 1.2 This Appraisal/Study document aims to fulfil two key roles. The Appraisal outlines the historical development of the settlement and defines the special interest, character and appearance of the built and natural environment within and surrounding the Conservation Area boundaries. The Study identifies future opportunities for the preservation and enhancement of the Area. (The numbers **in bold** in the text refer to an associated plate/photograph).

2. LOCATION, POPULATION AND TOPOGRAPHY OF WILSON

2.1 Wilson is a hamlet with a population of 161 people* located some 2 km to the north of Breedon on the Hill and 2 km to the east of Melbourne. The settlement is situated on the border of Leicestershire with Derbyshire; indeed the properties on the western side of Main Street between Cornerways and Nursery Cottages, along with field area to the north of Nursery Cottages, were located within Derbyshire prior to late twentieth century administrative boundary changes. Wilson is within the parish and manor of Breedon on the Hill, which also includes the hamlet of Tonge (177 people*). The parish church of St Marys and St Hardulphs is situated on Breedon Hill within the Breedon on the Hill Conservation Area.

2.2 Wilson occupies a position on the north-western side of a shallow valley created by the tributary stream which flows through the settlement towards its confluence with Ramsley Brook. Built development is largely concentrated along the principal roads of the settlement: Main Street, Short Hill and Slade Lane. Dog Lane – for much of its length a (private) unmade track - runs to the rear properties along Main Street linking Short Hill to Pingle Hill. Park Drive heads north-westwards towards Melbourne from the junction of Main Street/Short Hill.

* Mid-1998 Estimate - Source : Leicestershire County Council

3. ORIGINS AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF WILSON

3.1 Wilson - as Wifel's Torp - had been established by 972 (Bourne, 1981, p60) and developed with an essentially agricultural based economy until the second half of the twentieth century. The principal farms in the hamlet were Wilson Hall (Farm) **(1)**, Hill Top Farm **(2)**, Wilson House Farm, Grange Farm and Brook Farm.

3.2 The agricultural lands around Wilson were enclosed by an Act of 1759, prior to which the landscape was dominated by three large fields divided into strips which would have been cultivated on a rotational basis; Hamborough Field to the north-east, Middle Field to the south-east and Westwood Field to the south-west (Hartley, 1984). Along Main Street, however, small crofts and closes had been created prior to enclosure (Hartley, 1984). At the enclosure; indeed from at least 1641; the Earls of Stamford were the principal landholders and lords of Breedon manor (Nichols, 1804, p730). In 1874, the lands of the 7th Earl of Stamford (and Warrington) were purchased by Charles Abney Hastings (1822 - 1895); later Lord Donington; along with the title of lord of the manor (Broughton, 1984, p14). The Hastings' estate was sold in 1901 and by the late 1920s had passed to J.G. Shields. The Shields' family retain lands within and around Wilson.

3.3 As the twentieth century progressed agriculture declined – no working farms now remain - and redundant farm outbuildings were converted to dwellings at Hill Top Farm, Grange Farm and Wilson Hall (Farm). Infill housing was also undertaken, particularly along Main Street. Nos. 1-8 Wilson Rise and Ashcroft/The Orchard/Green Finches/Poplars represent a concentrated area of post war development (on the site of Nos. 1-4 The Bank and the hamlet's pinfold).



Plate 1 : Wilson Hall (Farm), Short Hill



Plate 2 : Hill Top Farm, Short Hill

4. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING POSITIVELY TOWARDS THE CHARACTER OF THE STUDY AREA

Character Statement

- 4.1 The Area essentially relates to the physical extent of the hamlet at the Second World War and reflects its development with a predominantly agricultural based economy. The special character of the Area is largely derived from the informal grouping of (former) farmhouses, outbuildings and farmworker's dwellings together with the relatively open form of settlement pattern that remains as a result of the survival of paddock areas and closes within the hamlet.
- 4.2 The hamlet has buildings displaying vernacular traditions of the immediate post-medieval period as well as later buildings in the polite architecture style of the Georgian and Victorian periods. The individual factors considered to have a positive impact on the character of the Area are shown on Map 2.

Building Materials and Local Details

- 4.3 The Area contains buildings with much evidence of timber framed construction; including Nos. 1-6 Bull's Head Row on Main Street, Wilson House Farm **(3)** and Brook House **(4)** on Short Hill, The Thatched Cottage on Slade Lane and Hill View on Dog Lane. The panels to timber framed buildings were originally of wattle and daub, although these have been largely subsequently infilled with brickwork. A number of buildings have a whitewash or render finish to their external elevations.



Plate 3 : Wilson House Farm, Short Hill



Plate 4 : Brook House, Short Hill

- 4.4 There is also visible evidence of local sandstone within the Area. Substantial elements of stone construction are evident in (former) outbuildings to farmsteads, including those to Grange Farm on Main Street, to Brook House and Hill Top Farm on Short Hill **(5)** and to Brook Farm on Dog Lane. Stone was also used to provide plinths to timber framed properties; for example to Brook House and The Thatched Cottage; and in the construction of boundary walls.
- 4.5 The original roof covering to timber framed buildings was of locally grown long straw and The Thatched Cottage, Slade Lane **(6)**; as its name indicates; retains a thatched roof. Other properties were subsequently re-roofed in the dark clay plain tiles which predominate and which were used into the twentieth century. There was some limited introduction of Welsh slate in the nineteenth century.
- 4.6 The predominant window type to vernacular buildings was the Yorkshire horizontal sliding sash (Figure 1). In the polite architecture of the late Georgian/Victorian period vertical sliding sashes were typically installed (Figure 2). Vertical sliding sash units are set within openings having either stone or plaster lintels. Other window openings typically have shallow segmental brick arches above. Window units largely have a white or off-white paint finish.
- 4.7 The timber doors to many older properties are of a simple vertically boarded ledged and braced construction (Figure 3). Buildings in the polite architectural style typically have a panelled design (Figure 4); with that to Wilson Hall having a rectangular fanlight above. The main entrance doors to Brook Farm and Hill Top Farmhouse **(7)** also have fanlights. The fine porches to Hill Top Farmhouse and Hill View **(8)** are late nineteenth century additions to earlier buildings.



Plate 5 : (Former) Outbuildings to Hill Top Farm, Short Hill



Plate 6 : The Thatched Cottage, Slade Lane

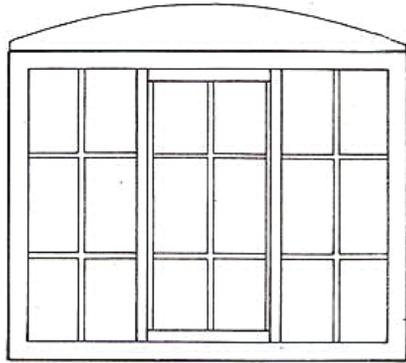


Figure 1 : Yorkshire Horizontal Sliding Sash Window Unit

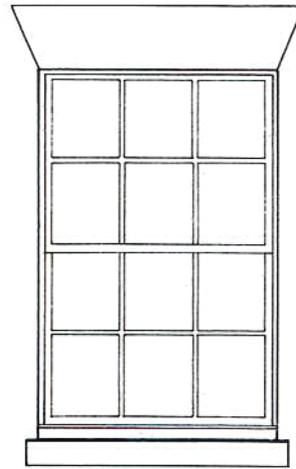


Figure 2 : Vertical Sliding Sash Window Unit

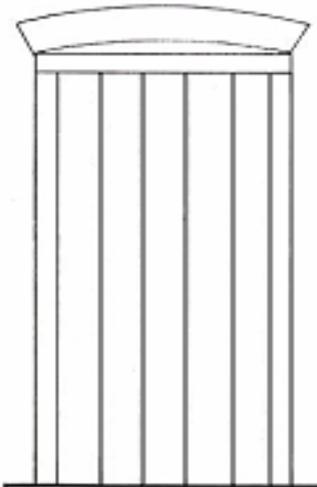


Figure 3 : Ledged and Braced Vertically Boarded Door

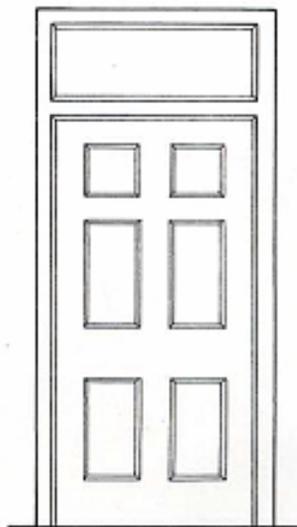


Figure 4 : Panelled Door



Plate 7 : Hill Top Farmhouse, Short Hill



Plate 8 : Hill View, Dog Lane

Architectural and Historic Quality of Listed and Unlisted Buildings

- 4.8 There are three buildings in the Area included on the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest, all listed at Grade II; Wilson House and Brook House on Short Hill and The Thatched Cottage on Slade Lane.
- 4.9 Wilson House is a late sixteenth century/early seventeenth century cottage constructed of timber-framing with curved braces with a flanking brick built nineteenth century extension. Brook House, which has a date of 1636 on a rear collar, is timber-framed with diagonal braces and square panels. Brook House was formerly a miller's house and within its curtilage incorporates mill outbuildings (DoE, 1989). The Thatched Cottage, although altered and now having a roughcast finish to its exterior, is of the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century in origin.
- 4.10 There are also a number of unlisted buildings or structures of some architectural or historic merit which are considered to make a positive contribution to the Area (Appendix B). Some of these buildings also include elements of timber framed construction; including the Bulls Head Public House (previously The Fox and Hounds Inn) **(9)**, Nos. 1 - 6 Bull's Head Row **(10)** and Hill View; thus reflecting likely seventeenth/early eighteenth century origins, although the buildings exhibit much visual evidence of late eighteenth/nineteenth century (and indeed later) rebuilding works. Of the later brick built buildings Park View, Field Cottage and Wilson Hall (Farmhouse) are examples of the polite architectural style; the latter with a fine stone portico to its main entrance.



Plate 9 : Bulls Head Public House, Main Street (formerly the Fox and Hounds Inn)



Plate 10 : Nos. 1 – 6 Bulls Head Row, Main Street

4.11 Other buildings of historic merit include the farmhouses and their (former) outbuildings at Hilltop Farm and Brook Farm **(11)**. Grange Farm **(12)** on Main Street has a plaque recording its date of construction and for whom it was built (TN). The nineteenth century built Loudoun House on Short Hill **(13)** was formerly a public house, originally called the Rat and Ferret but later re-named The Loudoun Arms (The Countess of Loudoun was married to Lord Donington and it is likely the name change occurred following the addition of the Wilson lands to the Donington Estate in 1874). With the revocation of its liquor licence in the early 1920s the property became a shop (Dow's) before being converted to a dwellinghouse. The twentieth century is represented by the Type K6 telephone kiosk on Main Street; a 1935 design by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott **(14)**.

Boundary Treatments

4.12 Boundary treatments of merit include the stone and brick walls to the frontage of Twin Gables; a post war built house on the lands of Hill Top Farm; and the low brick wall with rounded copings to the paddock to the north-west of Wilson Hall.

The Archaeological Significance and Potential of the Area

4.13 In the open area between Main Street and Dog Lane evidence remains of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing patterns (Hartley, 1984). Elsewhere in the Area are sites of former buildings/structures including the cottage(s) which formerly stood on the land which now forms the frontage of The Dog House on Dog Lane and the Welsleyan Chapel which stood to the east of Brook Farm on Dog Lane until its demolition in the 1980s.



Plate 11 : Brook Farm, Dog Lane



Plate 12 : Grange Farm (The Grange), Main Street



Plate 13 : Loudoun House, Short Hill



Plate 14 : Type K6 Telephone Kiosk, Main Street

The Contribution of Green Spaces and Natural Elements

- 4.14 The surviving closes between Main Street and Dog Lane contribute significantly towards the character of the Area. Within these closes there are a number of mature tree specimens including Ash and Willow - particularly along the line of the tributary stream. Surviving mature hedgerows define the elongated plots as they run eastwards away from Main Street down to Dog Lane.
- 4.15 The field area to the north-east of Rose Cottage and the paddock area to the east of Brook House are significant open spaces at the entries into the hamlet along Park Drive and Slade Lane, respectively. The paddock area to the east of Brook House - alongside the brook - also contains trees the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (Willow and Ash) as does the paddock area to the north-east of Wilson Hall (Farm) on Short Hill (Poplars).

The Relationship Between The Area and the Surrounding Landscape

- 4.16 Wilson largely remains within an agricultural landscape; the principal exception being the lands to the south of Pingle Hill now forming part of the Breedon Priory Golf Club. Although individual fields with their regular boundaries reflect a post Enclosure landscape, evidence of Medieval ridge and furrow ploughing remains visible in the fields retained in pastoral use; for example on lands to the east of Dog Lane.

- 4.17 The former Ambro Mill (also known as Wilson Mill) lies to the east of settlement on the Ramsley Brook and is accessed by a short track southwards off Slade Lane. A footpath also leads towards the Mill site from Short Hill.
- 4.18 Between Ramsley Brook and the main body of the settlement, the Midland Railway's Derby to Ashby de la Zouch line - opened in stages between 1868 and 1874 - formerly passed beneath the stone overbridge on Slade Lane. Limestone traffic continued to be carried from Cloud Hill Quarry to Derby along the line until 1982, although passenger services had ceased by 1930 and the line between Cloud Hill Quarry and Ashby de la Zouch had been closed and lifted by 1955 (Hillier, 1994). Wilson itself had a station for less than two years; between October 1879 and June 1881; and thereafter was served by the stations either in Melbourne or at Tonge and Breedon (Cooper et al, 1990, p31). The route of the former railway now forms the Derby to Worthington cycle path.

5. FACTORS HAVING A DETRIMENTAL IMPACT ON THE CHARACTER OF THE AREA

Permitted Development Rights

- 5.1 A detrimental impact on the character of the Area has occurred as a result of the alterations undertaken to unlisted residential properties of architectural or historic merit under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 and its predecessors. The permitted works have included the removal of traditional timber window and door units and their replacement with modern units of pvcU construction. Some replacement window units, whether of modern materials or timber, have also resulted in the introduction of window types which do not reflect traditional fenestration detailing to properties within the Area (for example top opening casements).
- 5.2 Other works detrimental to the architectural and historic character of the Area include the capping or removal of chimney stacks and the replacement of black cast iron rainwater goods with grey pvcU products. The application of modern cement based renders to the facades of properties undermines the visual contribution of the original brick built construction to buildings where it has occurred.

6. FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

6.1 The historic environment of the Area contributes towards the attractiveness of the hamlet. Most properties within the hamlet are generally in good repair and the pressures for change on historic built fabric are largely being generated by restoration and modernisation works to existing buildings.

New Development/Planning Policies

6.2 Any proposals for new development in a conservation area would be considered against the policies of the Local Plan (Policies E10, E11 and E12). In this respect it should be emphasised that the omission of any particular feature or space in the Area Appraisal should not be taken to mean that it is of no interest. Separate policies in the Local Plan relate to proposals affecting listed buildings (Policies E13, E14, E15 and E16) and sites of archaeological interest (Policy E19). The relevant Local Plan policies are outlined in Appendix C.

6.3 Policy E1 of the Local Plan applies to the open area between Main Street and Dog Lane and the paddock area to the east of Brook Cottage and indicates that development will not be permitted on these sites which would adversely affect or diminish the present open character of the area and the contribution it makes to the character, form and setting of the settlement, the streetscape generally or the relationship with the adjoining countryside. Where land within the Area is located outside the Limits to Development as defined in the Local Plan any development proposals on this land will also be subject to countryside policies (primarily Policy S3).

Permitted Development Rights

6.4 The designation of a Conservation Area brings with it some restrictions on permitted development rights for residential properties within an Area. Nevertheless, a number of works including some extensions and alterations can be undertaken without the need to submit an application for planning permission to the District Council. As a mechanism to increase local planning authority controls in respect of such works, an Article 4(2) Direction under the provisions of the Town and Country (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 allows authorities (without any referral to the Secretary of State) to withdraw certain categories of permitted development rights in respect of alterations and extensions to residential properties in Conservation Areas.

6.5 The District Council has generally resolved not to serve such Article 4(2) Directions, but rather to provide advice and education on the use of appropriate materials to properties in Conservation Areas (available from the Planning and Environment Division). This is the position the Council has taken in respect of Wilson.

Environmental Enhancements and Repairs to Historic Building Fabric

6.6 Where resources become available the Local Authority endeavours to undertake works on public land to enhance the character of its conservation areas. Such works could include the repair or replacement of street furniture. The District Council will also endeavour where practicable to work with other bodies such as

statutory undertakers in relation to encouraging the sensitive siting of services, road signage etc.

6.7 With regard to the repair of existing historic building fabric, the District Council operates a discretionary historic buildings grant scheme which makes available grant aid for private individuals in relation to the repair of listed buildings and unlisted buildings which are considered to contribute positively to the character of a Conservation Area. Full details of the scheme (which has a limited budget) are available from the Planning and Environment Division. A similar scheme is operated by the Historic Buildings Section in the Environmental Management Department at Leicestershire County Council.

6.8 Where buildings are the subject of long term vacancy or neglect, the District Council will attempt to work with owners/prospective purchasers to secure the long term future of any building. The District Council does, however, have more formal powers in the form of Urgent Works Notices and Repairs Notices to require that repairs be undertaken to listed buildings and other buildings of architectural or historic merit in Conservation Areas.

7. APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A : BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC
INTEREST IN THE AREA**

Grade II

Wilson House Farm, Short Hill (late 16th Century/early 17th Century with 19th Century
extension)

Brook House, Short Hill (1636)

Thatched Cottage, Slade Lane (late 17th Century/early 18th Century)

Source : DoE, 1989

**APPENDIX B : PRINCIPAL UNLISTED BUILDINGS OF ARCHITECTURAL OR
HISTORIC INTEREST WHICH MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION
TO THE STREETScape OF THE AREA**

Brook Farm and outbuildings, Dog Lane
The Fold Yard, Dog Lane
Field Cottage, Dog Lane
Orchard Cottage and outbuilding, Dog Lane
Hill View, Dog Lane
Park View, Main Street
Grange Farm, Main Street (formerly The Grange)
The Barn, Main Street (formerly to Grange Farm/The Grange)
Bull's Head Public House, Main Street (formerly Fox and Hounds Inn)
Nos. 1-6 Bull's Head Row, Main Street
Rose Cottage, Main Street
Type K6 Telephone Kiosk, Main Street
Barn Cottage, Main Street
Nos. 1 and 2 Nursery Cottages, Main Street
Loudoun House, Short Hill (formerly Dow's shop/Loudoun Arms/Rat and Ferret P.H)
Hill Top Farm, Short Hill
The Long House, Hill Top Farm, Short Hill
Wilson Hall (Farm), Short Hill
Casa Chiquita, Wilson Hall (Farm), Short Hill

List prepared in the line with the criteria set out in the Appendix to the English Heritage advise note 'Conservation Area Appraisals' (English Heritage, 1997)

UNLISTED BUILDINGS : ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

In assessing whether or not unlisted buildings make a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of a conservation area, the following questions should be asked:

- Is the building the work of a particular architect of regional or local note?
- Has its qualities of age, style, materials or any other characteristics which reflect those of at least a substantial number of the buildings in the conservation area?
- Does it relate by age, materials or in any other historically significant way to adjacent listed buildings, and contribute positively to their setting?
- Does it, individually or as part of a group, serve as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement in which it stands, or of an earlier phase of growth?
- Does it have a significant historic association with established features such as the road layout, burgage plots, a town park, or landscape feature?
- Does the building have landmark quality, or contribute to the quality of recognisable spaces?
- Does it reflect the traditional functional character of, or former uses within, the area?
- Has it significant historic associations with local people or past events?
- If a public building, does its function or enclosed public space contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area?
- If a structure associated with a designed landscape within the conservation area, such as walls, terracing or a minor garden building, is it of identifiable importance to the historic design?

In English Heritage's view, any one of these characteristics could provide the basis for considering that a building makes a positive contribution to the special interest of a conservation area, provided that its historic form and qualities have not been seriously eroded by unsympathetic alteration.

Source: English Heritage, 1997, p11.

APPENDIX C : NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL PLAN POLICIES IN RESPECT OF THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

POLICY E10

Development will not be permitted within Conservation Areas, or where it would affect the setting of such areas, which would:

- (a) Be detrimental to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area in terms of:
 - (i) scale, proportions and massing;
 - (ii) layout, grouping and setting;
 - (iii) detailing and materials of construction.
- (b) Be detrimental to the setting of buildings which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- (c) Result in the loss of open spaces or important views within, into and out of the Conservation Area.
- (d) Result in the loss of particular features which contribute positively to character and appearance of the Conservation Area, including:-
 - (i) Walls and other means of enclosure;
 - (ii) Ground surfaces;
 - (iii) Natural features (such as trees and hedgerows); and
 - (iv) Features of archaeological interest.
- (e) Be detrimental to environmental quality in terms of:-
 - (i) Traffic generation;
 - (ii) Noise and other forms of environmental intrusion.

POLICY E11

Consent for the demolition of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation Area will not be granted unless:-

- (a) It can be demonstrated that the condition of the building makes it impracticable to repair, renovate or adapt to any reasonably beneficial use for which planning permission would be given; and
- (b) There is clear and convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use of the building, or to find a viable and acceptable new use or uses.

In the case of buildings which make little or no contribution to the character and appearance of their conservation area, demolition will not be permitted unless redevelopment of the site or the creation of an open space would make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area concerned.

POLICY E12

Replacement or alteration of existing shop fronts within Conservation Areas, or where they would affect the setting of such areas, will only be permitted where:-

- (a) The existing shop front is of insufficient quality to warrant its retention; and
- (b) The replacement or alteration is of a design which is appropriate to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

POLICY E13

Consent for the demolition of a listed building will not be granted unless:-

- (a) It can be demonstrated that the condition of the building makes it impracticable to repair, renovate or adapt to any reasonably beneficial use for which planning permission would be granted; and
- (b) There is clear and convincing evidence that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use of the building, or to find a viable and acceptable new use or uses.

POLICY E14

Change of use of a Listed Building will only be permitted where no detrimental effect is likely to arise from the proposed use on the character or appearance of the building or its setting.

POLICY E15

Alterations or extensions to Listed Buildings will not be permitted which are detrimental to the special architectural or historic interest of the building or to its character or setting.

POLICY E16

Development will not be permitted which would adversely affect the setting of a Listed Building, in terms of scale, massing, form, siting, design or materials of construction.

POLICY E19

Development will not be permitted which would affect a scheduled ancient monument or other nationally important archaeological site, as shown on the Proposals Map, or subsequently recognised, or its setting or amenity value. Where known sites of county or local significance are affected, planning permission may be granted in terms which would allow preservation in situ, or, where this is impractical, by investigation and recording.

In areas of archaeological potential, planning permission will not be granted without proper evaluation of the archaeological implications of the proposed development.

POLICY E43

Outdoor advertisement consent will be granted where the proposed advertisement respects the interests of amenity and public safety.

In assessing the likely effect of proposed advertisements on such interests, regard will be had to all material factors, and in particular :-

- (a) In the case of amenity, to the general characteristics of the locality, including (where relevant) the presence of any feature of historic, architectural, cultural or similar interest; and
- (b) In the case of public safety, to the effect of the proposal on all aspects of pedestrian or vehicular safety.

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Map 2 : The Individual Factors Considered To Have A Positive Impact On The Character Of The Conservation Area.

Scale 1:2500

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT DIVISION

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KEY

-  CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY
-  PRINCIPAL LISTED BUILDINGS
-  UNLISTED BUILDINGS OF INTEREST
-  AREA OF GREEN SPACE
-  AREA OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST