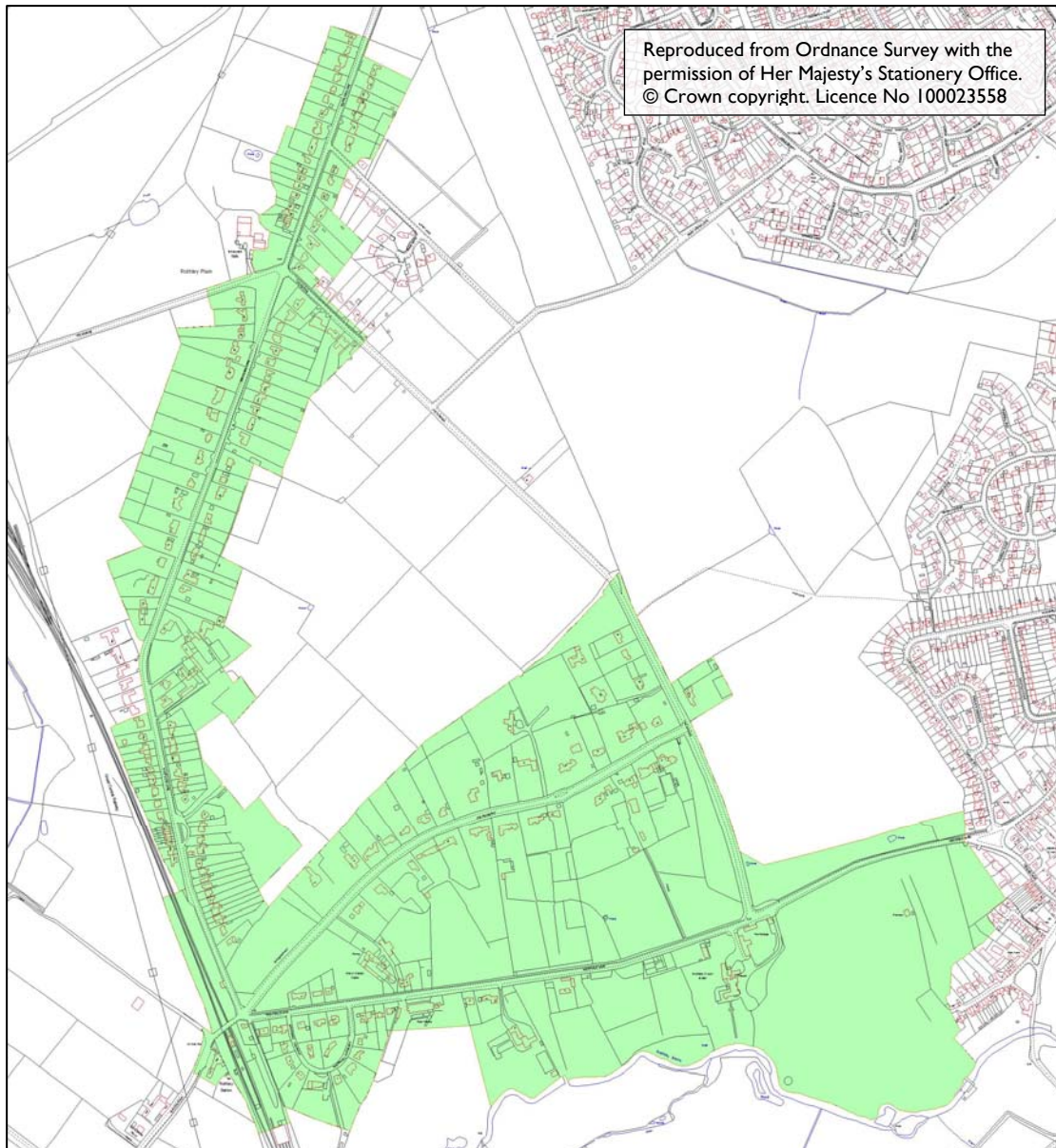


## **Rothley Ridgeway Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
Planning policy context	
<b>ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST</b>	<b>5</b>
Location and setting	
Boundary of the Conservation Area	
Historic development	
Archaeological interest	
<b>SPATIAL ANALYSIS</b>	<b>8</b>
Plan form, Townscape, Inter-relationship of spaces	
Key views and vistas, Landmarks	
<b>CHARACTER ANALYSIS</b>	<b>10</b>
Building uses, types and layouts	
Key listed buildings and structures, Key unlisted buildings, Coherent groups	
Building materials and architectural details, Local details	
Parks, gardens and trees, Biodiversity	
Detrimental features	
<b>DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>	<b>17</b>
General principles, Procedures to ensure consistent decision-making	
Enforcement strategy, Article 4 Direction	
General condition, Possible buildings for spot listing, Enhancement	
Proposals for economic development and regeneration	
Management and protection of important trees, greenery and green spaces	
Monitoring change, Consideration of resources	
Summary of issues and proposed actions, Developing management proposals	
Community involvement, Advice and guidance	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, LISTED BUILDINGS</b>	<b>22</b>

# Rothley Ridgeway Conservation Area



*Map showing the Conservation Area*

## **Introduction**

This document describes the special character of the garden suburb development which began following the opening of the Great Central Railway to the west of Rothley. The appraisal examines the historical development of the garden suburb and describes its present appearance in order to assess its special architectural and historic interest. The appraisal is then used to inform the consideration of management and development proposals within the Area.

The document begins by setting out the planning policy context and how this appraisal relates to national, regional and local planning policies.

The main part of the document focuses on the assessment of the special interest of the potential conservation area, describing:

- Location and setting, how the conservation area relates to the surrounding area.
- Historic development and archaeology, sets out how architecture and archaeology are related to the social and economic growth of the area.
- Spatial analysis describes the plan form of the area and how this has changed, the interrelationship of streets and spaces and identifies key views and landmarks.
- Character analysis, identifies the uses, types and layouts of buildings, key listed and unlisted buildings, coherent groups of buildings, distinctive building material and architectural details, significant green spaces and trees, and detrimental features.

These elements are brought together in a summary of the overall special interest of the potential conservation area. An assessment of the general condition of the buildings and spaces within the area is included.

Proposals are made for management actions and recommendations for developing longer term management proposals for the area are suggested.

### **Planning Policy Context**

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance should be preserved or enhanced. In making decisions on potential development within a conservation area, the Council is required to 'pay attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area'. Permission will not be granted for proposals that are likely to harm the character or appearance of a conservation area. Sections 69 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment says that special attention should be paid when considering proposals for development in a conservation area.

The key principles of Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation require that planning policies and decisions not only avoid, mitigate or compensate for harm but also seek ways to enhance, restore and add to biodiversity and geodiversity.

The Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands published in March 2009 advises local authorities that the historic environment should be understood, conserved and enhanced, in recognition of its own intrinsic value.. Policy 27: Regional Priorities for the Historic Environment.

The Borough of Charnwood Local Plan 1991 – 2006 adopted in January 2004 seeks to ensure a high standard design of all new development and that the design should be compatible with the locality and utilises materials appropriate to the locality. Policy EV/1.

Policies in respect of Rothley Ridgeway are set out in the 'Charnwood Borough Council Local Plan 2004'. Local Plan Policy CT/5 recognises that the Ridgeway area is quite unique in Charnwood deriving its spacious and dignified character in a mature landscape setting from the concepts of the Garden City movement of the early C20. The area covered by this policy comprises three distinct residential enclaves which are contained by defined limits separated by open land from one another and from nearby settlements. Development proposals within these limits are determined against Policy H/20. This applies to all development proposals requiring planning permission such as houses, large garages and other buildings and structures. Supporting text indicates that tandem development proposals would not be in keeping with the unique character of the area, and are unlikely to be permitted.

The Council's adopted supplementary Planning Document 'Leading in Design' builds on the design policies set out in the Charnwood Local Plan and will contribute to the development of more effective approaches to securing good design in the emerging Local Development Framework. The guide is also intended to support the implementation of the community strategy, Charnwood Together, by providing a set of principles that will inform the physical development implicit in the initiatives and actions of all partners in the local strategic partnership.

Other SPG/SPD guidance.

- Backland and Tandem Development.
- House Extensions

## **Assessment of Special Interest**

### **LOCATION AND SETTING**

The conservation area is an area of high quality housing to the west of Rothley village. The area is the result of a vision for a garden suburb which followed from the opening on 15 March 1899 of Rothley Station on the Great Central Railway. The area covers about 89.1 Hectares of fairly level higher ground between the valleys of Rothley Brook and Swithland Reservoir. It is about 5 miles equidistant from Loughborough and Leicester.

To the south-east is Rothley Temple, now Rothley Court, which sits in an area of parkland about half a mile from the centre of Rothley Village. To the north and east separated by barely a quarter mile of farmland is the late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing on the edge of Mountsorrel. To the west are the linear villages of Swithland and Cropston with the hills of Charnwood Forest rising above.

The roads covered by this appraisal are The Ridgeway, Westfield Lane from the Temple to the Station, Swithland Lane from the Station to the boundary with Mountsorrel, The Ridings, and Brownhill Crescent.

### **BOUNDARY OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

The development that took place resulting from the original vision was ultimately not limited to a closely defined area, but was in places scattered throughout the area. In addition, most of the development that took place after World War I respected the character of the original vision and some development that has taken place in more recent times also respects the character. Throughout the whole area development has taken place that does not respect the character.

The Conservation Area incorporates:

- The development on The Ridgeway, Swithland Lane, Westfield Lane, The Ridings and Brownhill Crescent;
- The site of the Roman villa;
- The Golf Club clubhouse;
- The Railway Station as far as the metal clad shed;
- The railway cutting up to No 20 Swithland Lane;
- Rothley Court Hotel, the Chapel and the curtilage of these Listed Buildings;
- The whole of the parkland associated with the Hotel;
- The cricket pitch and paddocks;
- The fields between Westfield Lane and The Ridgeway.

## HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Great Central Railway was completed in 1899 and the opening of Rothley Station offered opportunities for businessmen and their families to move away from the crowded, dirty centres of Loughborough and Leicester, yet remain within easy reach of both. At the same time the garden city ideas of Ebenezer Howard were spreading. His idea was “to combine all the advantages of the town by way of accessibility and all the advantages of the country by way of environment without any of the disadvantages of either”.

Frederick Merrttens, a Manchester cotton merchant, was attracted by the idea of living in the countryside and being able to work in Manchester. He bought the Rothley Temple Estate and set about planning a new development. It is ironic that the idea of a garden suburb should have been the idea which took hold for “the suburb” did not contain a mix of living in the country with the amenities of the city. This is precisely what has happened in The Ridgeway where there are few amenities and no local opportunities for employment or shopping.

The term 'Garden Suburb' was loosely applied to developments such as Bedford Park (Chiswick) formed in 1875, where high architectural and amenity values were promoted through the use of restrictive covenants. Many such were founded in the late Victorian Era. Merrttens appears to have proposed this type of development at Rothley.

At Hampstead Garden Suburb, Henrietta Barnett attempted to apply inclusive social criteria to a high amenity Garden Suburb, which, however, fell short of the self-contained concept advanced by Ebenezer Howard and his supporters. Indeed, the Garden City Association was very sceptical of the worth of HGS, which was master-planned by Raymond Unwin, who had transformed Howard's mechanistic diagrams with Arts and Crafts values at Letchworth Garden City. Unwin's initial plan for HGS appeared in 1905, when Mrs Barnett also wrote an essay on her objectives for the Suburb in the *Contemporary Review*. The plan was refined prior to foundation and Edwin Lutyens was appointed as architect for the Central Square, with its churches and institute. The formal foundation on 7 May received high profile publicity, and Unwin's masterpiece, the 'Artisans' Quarter' was built between 1907-09, together with a number of middle-class developments. Illustrated prospectives showing the development (with photographs as well as drawings) were published in 1908 and 1909. In the latter year, Raymond Unwin's seminal book *Town Planning in Practice* appeared, and included many drawings, diagrams and photographs of Hampstead Garden Suburb, which provided a record of its significance in a worldwide context. In the hope of emulating its success, Merrttens referred to Hampstead Garden Suburb as an exemplar, when publicising his development.

It is likely that the example of Bedford Park which was developed at Chiswick in the 1870s was also used in the development at Rothley.

The historic map of 1903 shows that The Ridgeway must have been constructed at the same time as the railway. And four large houses are shown on this map, Uplands, The Coppice, No 33 and No 39. However, a brochure for Rothley Garden Suburb was first published in February 1909, suggesting that the idea of the garden suburb took some time to gain ground. It was a very ambitious scheme, to create

individualised houses set in good garden spaces both front and rear. In 1910 a plan was published which shows a comprehensive network of streets covering nearly 220 Hectares taking the suburb from Swithland Reservoir and the then Mountsorrel Mineral Railway in the west to Mountsorrel Lane in the east on the edge of Rothley Village itself. Many of the houses would be laid out around village greens. A golf course was also suggested but only if finance became available. Almost none of this materialised - by 1929 no more roads had been constructed and not much more than 30 Hectares had actually been developed. Of the promised facilities there was one tennis court and an area of allotments. However, there was a golf course, opened in 1912, just beyond the area of the 1910 plan, running south from Westfield Lane across the brook.

The current built area comprises about 55 Hectares. The situation today is changing rapidly. There is pressure to extend existing houses.

Before the idea of a garden suburb the area was farmland. There were three farms and a few cottages. West Fields, Rothley Plain Farm which is now The Homestead and the group around the Brick Yard at the crossroads of The Ridings and Swithland Lane. Linford Cottage had been built on The Ridings, the terrace of Newtown Cottages on Swithland Lane and the pair of semi-detached cottages at 77-79 Swithland Lane.

### **Archaeological Interest**

Prehistoric flint dating from the Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age has been recovered from this area, and there is evidence for burials, one of which, a cremation, lies just south of The Ridgeway, suggesting that there was a settlement here during the Bronze Age.

There are a significant number of Roman sites in the vicinity, most notably the Scheduled Ancient Monument, a Roman villa, which was discovered close to the road junction of The Ridgeway and Swithland Lane. As well as this, burials and various finds such as coins have been recorded.

Though initial finds had already been recovered in the 18th century, an Anglo-Saxon cemetery was discovered during the construction of the railway cutting. This was an extensive inhumation cemetery with numerous grave goods and burials.

During the medieval period the Templar Preceptory was constructed. It became a manor house after the dissolution.

A broad area of The Ridgeway has a potential for archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric to the medieval period. Any below ground works may, therefore, affect burial archaeological remains and archaeological investigation is likely to be required.

## **SPATIAL ANALYSIS**

### **Plan Form**

The area as it exists today is based on three roads which radiate out like a loose fan from the railway station: Swithland Lane, The Ridgeway and Westfield Lane. Connecting these at the rear is The Ridings which for most of its length from Swithland Reservoir to Rothley Temple is still a country road.

### **Townscape**

The most important aspect of the townscape of the whole area is the setting of each house in its plot so that a feeling of spaciousness is created both for the house itself in relation to its garden and for the house in relation to the street. Any building line in itself is not necessarily the guiding principle. Some of this pattern is disturbed by large outbuildings for double and triple garages which have been built in front of the houses, occupying too great a proportion of the front garden.

The principal street in the area is The Ridgeway, which now appears as if it were an independent estate, more or less unconnected to the other roads. Partly this is because the completion of the garden suburb with its crossing network of streets did not happen and partly because vehicle access to and from the station has been blocked.

The Ridgeway is a quiet street, intended to be an avenue. It has verges on either side and there is a strong growth of trees, shrubs and hedges which give it a rather secluded character, through which the large houses are seen and occasionally hidden. There is an island with an oak tree part way along. The last 200 meters to the station passes between open fields, on the left meadows of Westfields Farm and on the right, the site of a Roman Villa which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument though nothing is visible except for the roughness of the ground left after the excavations.

Swithland Lane has the character of ribbon development. A long straight road, made pleasant by grass verges, many trees and the fine gardens and houses which in general are set well back from the road. In keeping with the garden suburb ideal most of the houses are set spaciouly within their plot and the planting is maintained to give views and glimpses of each house. The focus of Swithland Lane is the area of open grass and individual trees at the crossroads with The Ridings.

Westfield Lane is also a ribbon of development but with less coherence. Only a small section, less than a third of the potential, was developed and much of the lane still has a rural nature, passing between wooded strips on either side. The plan of 1910 suggests that it was not possible to purchase all the fields of Westfield Farm which remain as grassland.

Opposite Westfields Farm is Brownhill Crescent which was not in the original vision for the suburb. The group of houses on the crescent, including those on Westfield Lane forms a pleasant small scale version of the garden suburb. The crescent is almost a private drive, a very narrow lane without kerbs and with narrow verges bounded by hedges beyond which the individual houses sit within their own plots.



The Ridings is a rather smaller road than Swithland Lane. The houses are set back from the road which is bounded by grass verges and trees, shrubs and hedges, planted to create a feeling of an avenue of spaciousness with views of each house.

### **Interrelationship of spaces**

The original intention was to create a network of crossing streets with culs-de-sac and loops based on village greens at the centre of groups of houses. None of this happened and in only two places is there any semblance of a green: at the crossroads of Swithland Lane and The Ridings and at the junction of the three roads by the railway station. The roads themselves are long stretches. Swithland Lane and Westfield Lane are well used by traffic moving through the area which has an impact on what would otherwise be suburban streets. The Ridgeway is much quieter being a cul-de-sac.

### **Key views and vistas**

The Area is well planted with trees and shrubs so that in general there are no open vistas either into or out of the area. There are excellent developing views in both directions along Swithland Lane, down The Ridings towards the reservoir and along The Ridgeway. Along all the roads there are views and glimpses of the houses in their gardens. From Westfield Lane there are glimpses and views between the trees across the fields to the rear of some of the fine houses on The Ridgeway.

On leaving Rothley village along Westfield Lane there are superb vistas across the parkland of the cricket pitch and Rothley Court down to the valley of Rothley Brook.

### **Landmarks**

At the junction of Swithland Lane, The Ridgeway and Westfield Lane is the railway and entrance to the station with the distinctive blue brick parapets of the bridge. The triangle of land at the road junction is pleasantly grassed. There is a rural finger post, a red pillar box and a village notice board.

## **CHARACTER ANALYSIS**

### **Building uses, types and layouts**

The Area is almost exclusively residential. Westfields Farm and Brickyard Farm remain but Rothley Plain Farm is converted to domestic use. The exceptions are Rothley Court Hotel, Rothley Station and Rothley Golf Course. While there were initial proposals to create public buildings, businesses and shops, none of this happened apart from a few areas set aside for recreation such as the golf course. Almost all the houses have an individual detached style, with a few pairs of semi-detached houses or pairs of detached houses of the same design. There are some older terraces.

Along The Ridgeway most of the houses are large and even very large, though surprisingly, since this is the principal street of the garden suburb less than half are in the Domestic Revival style. Even more surprisingly there are several houses which do not respect the character of the Domestic Revival. Two properties are currently being rebuilt; the plans indicate an appropriate development and it will be interesting to see whether the reality respects the character.

The greatest proportion of the Domestic Revival style houses are along the lower part of Swithland Lane, from No 1 up to the bend, where nearly two thirds are modest vernacular style houses, often called cottages in the 1910 brochure.

### **Key listed buildings and structures**

The Area does not have a recognisable centre. To the south west is the complex of Rothley Railway Station, listed Grade II. From Westfield Lane the station is rather unremarkable, being a small entrance porch within the parapet of the bridge which is also part of the listing. The station offices, waiting rooms and platform are very well preserved and managed. The yard is rather rough standing for parking. There is a café created in an old coal store and there is a miniature railway at the base of the bank. To the south of the Conservation Area the railway land reverts to a rather shabby industrial heritage with a large metal clad shed and cypress trees lining the track.

At the south east of the Area is Rothley Temple, now Rothley Court Hotel. The original 13<sup>th</sup> Century Knights Templar Chapel is listed Grade I and the listing covers the whole of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Century hotel and its associated buildings. The temple was a preceptory of the Knights Templar, to whom the manor was given by Henry III. After their suppression it was given to the Knights Hospitallers of St John of Jerusalem. At the dissolution it became a private house and the seat of the Babington family. Lord Macaulay was born here on 25th October, 1800. It is also recognised as the place where William Wilberforce drafted the legislation which eventually abolished slavery. The hotel is set in delightful parkland.

Almost hidden behind trees and shrubs off Swithland Lane is the 18<sup>th</sup> Century farmhouse now known as The Homestead which is Grade II Listed. The three storey red brick farmhouse with a Swithland slate roof forms a group with four cottages, Nos 57-63 Swithland Lane, separately Listed Grade II and some outbuildings which

are also separately Listed Grade II. The whole complex was modified at the time of the building of the garden suburb by the resident architect George Clare.

### **Key unlisted buildings**

The finest Domestic Revival style houses of the garden suburb are set on The Ridgeway. Four of these are locally listed: Nos 33, 54, 60 and 62.

No 33 was once owned by Cecil Gee, a local hosiery manufacturer. It is a Wrenaissance\* style of mellow red brick with projecting terra cotta string courses and expressed brick quoins. It has a stone clad projecting centre bay containing the entrance door surmounted by an Italianate pediment. Above the door is a segmental arched pediment containing a tympanum embellished with relief decoration. The hipped Swithland slate roofs have terra cotta ridges and deep dentilated eaves. A Serliana style dormer is centred above the entrance bay with hipped dormers on either side. It has a tall rectangular gable and chimney stacks with corbelled heads and terracotta pots. The windows are a mix of casement and tall sash windows.

No 54 is of mellow red brick to the ground floor with a rendered upper façade and projecting gable. It has a Swithland slate pitched roof with a blind dormer and chimney stack on the front elevation. The chimneys are rectangular stacks with terra cotta pots. It has horizontal casement windows.

No 60 is of mellow red brick to the ground floor with the upper façade rendered with a half timbered gable to the front elevation. It has steeply pitched clay tile roofs, oversailing eaves and tall 'Tudor' style eaves and gable chimney stacks. At the first floor an oriel window projects under a half timbered gable carried on timber corbel brackets. It has horizontal casement windows.

No 62 is of mellow red brick with rendered and half timbered gables with multi-gabled red clay tile pitched roofs. The eaves are deep and it has massive 'Tudor Revival' chimney stacks. The gable bay of the attic storey is carried on timber corbel brackets above a first floor oriel window which is also carried on timber brackets. Generally, it has simple casement windows.

Three properties within the Area have been given Charnwood Borough Council Design Awards in previous years: An addition to Newtown Cottages, the Victorian terrace on Swithland Lane, were commended for conservation in 1996. The extensions to either side of Nos 52 and 54 Swithland Lane were commended for new build in 1994. No 93 Swithland Lane was a winner in the new build category in 1992.

### **Coherent groups**

Nos 96, 100 and 104 Swithland Lane form a good enclosure to the green space at the crossroads.

---

\* Wrenaissance: a style of the 1880s derived from the Queen Anne revival.

## **Building materials and architectural details**

The original vision of the garden suburb was for houses built in the Domestic Revival style. The Conservation Area is based on these houses of which there is a fair proportion, about 40% of the total. Some of the later houses have also followed the traditions of the Domestic Revival, using similar forms, materials and elements so that these houses are in harmony with the existing ones.

The style creates informal compositions of elements and materials. In general, the houses have complex asymmetrical shapes, of two storeys or one and a half storeys with steeply pitched generally hipped roofs which may slope to below the first floor. There are gables and bay windows, or bays extending the full height. Large expanses of steeply sloping roof are broken up with dormer windows. There are oriel windows, oculars, small oval windows and large multipane windows to staircases. Eaves may overhang deeply, being supported on brackets or on projecting bay windows. Doors are set in porches or in openings formed under the slope of the roof. Tall corbelled brick chimney stacks, which may be rectangular, octagonal or with triangular projections, are a feature of many houses.

While most of the houses are quite modest there are also large houses, extending to two and a half storeys. The 1910 brochure advertised some of these larger houses as cottages.

In general the walls are of a mellow red brick, though darker and more bluish brick is also used. Many walls especially at upper levels are rendered and gables may be tile hung or half timbered. Where the whole wall is rendered it is set on a brick plinth. In general the roofs are of plain red clay tile, though darker red tiles are also seen. Roofs may also be of Welsh slate and there is some Swithland slate. Windows are of white painted timber, casements or mullioned and transomed with small panes but there are also sash windows with the upper sash divided in small panes over a single pane lower sash.

Below is a list of the elements and materials of the houses, generally the ones that are easiest to observe from the public realm, which form the principal character of the Conservation Area. Each entry describes the combination of elements and materials of one house.

- Red brick, timbered gable, timbered porch, plain clay tile, small pane casement windows, oval window to staircase, ridge stacks;
- Rendered, plain clay tile, casement windows with timber mullion and transom, dormers, gable;
- Rendered, new concrete tile roof, bay windows, casements, semi-circular arched window to staircase, classical porch, timbered gables;
- Red brick, rendered at first floor with red brick quoins, white painted timber gable, bay window, fanlight over door, porch, ocular to hall;
- Rendered over brick plinth, plain clay tile, bay, semicircular arch door under sloping roof porch, hoodmould over window, casements, tall plain stack;
- New, red brick, half hipped series of slate roofs, bay, casements, door within sloping roof forming porch;
- Red brick, white painted timber gable with deep overhang above projecting bay window on brackets, square bay at ground floor, plain clay tile;

Multi colour brick, bay windows, leaded light casements, triangular oriel, small window to attic in timbered, rendered gable;

Rendered, Dutch gable with tall oriel window and small oval window below, long slate roof with dormers in two attic storeys, door set into porch with stone quoins, casement windows, tall chimney stacks with angular projections - open aspect to front garden with large specimen conifer;

Red brick with render above, long sloping roof of plain clay tile, large flat roof dormer, door in porch beneath overhang of roof with brick pillars, casements either side;

Red brick, rendered first floor, tile hung gable, plain clay tile roof, oval window to staircase, flat roof dormer (rather too close to eaves);

Rendered on buff brick plinth, casement windows with half dormers above, plain clay tile roof, door set into semicircular arched opening;

New build - red brick plinth with grey render above, central bay in brick, plain clay tile, casement windows with leaded lights and with red brick separations, simple hood moulds, dormer, projecting rectangular oriel on brackets, oak door in brick semicircular arched opening;

Red brick with plain clay tile, gables with large Diocletian semicircular casement windows and rectangular lucarne slits in apex above, house sensitively extended to create third gable, dormers, door in porch under overhanging roof slope;

Pair of semi detached - Red brick and render, plain clay tile, bay window supporting gable, red painted door in semicircular opening, long casement window to staircase, small rectangular window to entrance closet, tall chimney stacks;

Red brick, timbered with timbered and rendered gable projecting over ground floor with projecting bay window, plain clay tile roof with dormers, door set into rectangular opening;

Bluish red brick on slate plinth, Swithland slate mansard roof, large central gable, large timber mullion and transom windows with small panes, door set into deep opening, broad chimney stacks;

Dark red brick with tile hung gable above, plain clay tile sloping to ground floor, rather poorly proportioned dormer with tile hung cheeks, wide casement in gable and smaller casement in apex, door set in classical style porch;

Pair of semi detached, sensitively extended to match on both sides, red brick with rendered projecting bay and overhanging gable above with Serliana casement windows, plain clay tile roof, projecting bay window supporting half hipped roof;

Modest semi detached, red brick and hipped slate roof, large flat roofed circular bay window to ground floor with projecting bay window on brackets supporting eaves above, door set in hipped slate roof porch;

Render on brick plinth, plain clay tile, gable with casement window, timbered apex, door set in timbered apex porch, tiled roof to projecting ground floor;

Render on red brick plinth, slate roof, semicircular bay at ground floor, projecting bay window supporting hipped roof with deep eaves, casement windows, door set in semicircular arched porch;

Pair of semi-detached, render with white quoin blocks, string course, slate roof, timbered gable, flat roof bay with three light sash window (small panes in upper sash, large panes in lower sash) and three light sash window above;

Semi detached, red brick with blue brick string courses, slate roof with ridge tiles, flat roof bay with three light sash window (small panes in upper sash, large

panes in lower sash) and three light sash window projecting slightly on brackets above, garage protruding in front of house;

Render on dark red brick plinth, plain clay tile, circular bay, tile hung below projecting hipped roof, gable above door projecting slightly on brackets, timber mullion and transom windows;

Red brick with render to first floor above corbelled string course, flat roof bay with four light sash window (small panes in upper sash, large panes in lower sash) with two light sash window above with arched brick head, flat canopy on brackets;

Red brick with render above first floor sill level, plain clay tile, full height bay, timber mullion and transom windows, gable above door set in modern porch;

Red brick with render above, slate roof, gable with flat roofed projecting bay window below and Serliana window above - replacement uPVC windows, tall octagonal chimneys;

Red brick with Swithland slate roofs with shallow hipped bays, casement windows, door under Swithland slate canopied porch;

Red brick, plain clay tile roofs with deep eaves, casement windows, door beneath brick parapet porch;

Mellow red brick, rendered and white painted half timbered gables, red clay tile roof, deep eaves, octagonal chimney stacks, casement windows;

Cream painted render, red brick, part tile hung, plain red clay tile;

Red brick with render to first floor, red clay tile, massive chimney stacks, timber mullion and transom windows;

Queen Anne style, mellow red brick, terra cotta string courses and brick quoins, Swithland slate hipped roof with terracotta ridge tiles, deep eaves, entrance door in gable with classical pediment, Serliana style dormer and hipped dormers, chimney stacks joined by three arched wall, mullion and transom casement and tall sash windows;

Dark red brick, plain clay tile, hipped and gabled, with deep eaves, tall chimney stacks, casement windows;

Pale red brick, render to first floor, red clay tile, tall chimney stacks with triangular relief, casement windows, small casement in apex of gable;

Red brick, tile hung gable, plain clay tile roof sloping to form canopy over door, bay with casement windows under rendered gable with deep overhanging eaves, flat roof dormer;

White painted render on brick plinth, plain clay tile roof, door in semi-circular brick arched porch under tiled roof with flat roofed dormer over, rendered gable over brick corbel string, tall chimney stacks;

White render on red brick plinth with terracotta string, plain clay tile hipped roof sloping to ground floor, two gables of unequal size with small tile filled apex, double stacked hipped dormer, tile hung, large chimneys, casement windows, door in brick gable.

### **Parks, gardens and trees**

Before the development of the garden suburb the land was fairly open with coppices and small areas of broadleaved woodland. There were hedgerows along the roads. The original landscape can still be seen outside the Area, along The Ridings and West Cross Lane from where there are views out across to the Forest and to the Soar Valley.

However, as a result of the vision the Area was planted with a wealth of trees, shrubs and hedges. Much of this planting followed the popular romantic Victorian ideal of specimen trees. The planting is now fully matured. In general, the planting was designed to enhance the feeling of spaciousness, providing views of each house only partly shielded. Today in places, trees and shrubs have been allowed to grow to a density which effectively shields the house from the road. In several places the romantic evergreen planting has been supplemented with Leyland Cypress, now considered to be unfriendly though most of the cypress hedges are very well managed, clipped and restrained in height.

All the original areas of woodland and most of the later planting of avenues along the roads and of trees within the properties are already protected.

Essential to the character of the Area are the grass verges and lack of pavements.

The Conservation Area includes the parkland of Rothley Court and the cricket pitch. This is a beautiful stretch of open grassland, some of it used for grazing. It is bounded by park-style railings and planted with some magnificent oak trees, lime trees and other trees. There is a broad footpath running through it from Westfield Lane to Town Green Street. The parkland spreads across to the north side of Westfield Lane. The resulting strip is ungrazed and bordering the road the undergrowth has been allowed to grow to form a rather straggly hedge.

### **Biodiversity**

The southern boundary of the Conservation Area is defined by a stretch of Rothley Brook. The brook has been notified as a Local Wildlife Site: it comprises earth cliffs, riffle and pool systems, as well as mature trees with overhanging branches and exposed roots which are all of great value to biodiversity. The brook is lined by trees such as crack willow *Salix fragilis*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and alder *Alnus glutinosa*, and a couple of veteran pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* trees. Local Wildlife Sites are non-statutory sites of high ecological interest and often the best examples of important habitats which sustain species of conservation interest.

Species of principal importance for biodiversity, such as the white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*, have been recorded along this section of the Brook, whilst the otter *Lutra lutra* has been recorded further downstream but is likely to venture this far along the Brook.

The Conservation Area is characterised by a high level of tree cover, either in the forms of small spinneys, within private gardens and the wood pasture of Rothley Park. The private gardens are large enough to accommodate trees, including mature trees, and many have retained their boundary hedgerows. A number of small mature spinneys, such as Long Spinney, Hicklings Spinney, Riding Spinney have previously been identified for their ecological interest. The whole area, with its network of spinneys, trees within gardens and hedgerows provides a mosaic of linked-up habitats. Habitat connectivity is of high value to a wide range of species which can travel and commute within the area and beyond into the surrounding countryside.



Of particular note is the presence of a high number of bat roosts within the Conservation Area. This includes brown long-eared bats *Plecotus auritus*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and whiskered bats *Myotis mystacinus*. Daubenton's bats *Myotis daubentonii* are known to feed along Rothley Brook, scooping insects from the water surface. Brown long-eared bats require the spacious lofts which are typical of large dwellings, together with adequate tree cover in close proximity to their roosts. They use hedgerow and tree cover to commute to their feeding grounds in open woodland and parkland.

The barn owl *Tyto alba* has also been recorded within the area close by, and is an indicator of the availability of good quality agricultural habitats nearby.



One record for the Conservation Area is of the common lizard *Lacerta vivipara*. This is a reminder of the proximity of the Area to Charnwood Forest, which is a stronghold for this species.

### **Detrimental features**

Most unfortunate is the proximity of the high tension pylon line which runs along the west side of the railway.

Within the area there are some properties that do not respect the character of the garden suburb ideal and its Domestic Revival style. Original architectural treatments for new developments may be appropriate but they need to draw on the architectural vocabulary and proportions of the original houses in the suburb.

The spaciousness in some parts of the suburb has been compromised by infill: new properties, large garages in front of the property, or extensions that fill the width of the site.

Some of the Lawson Cypress trees and hedges have been allowed to become too large.

There is a tendency to enclose properties with large security gates.

### **DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST**

- Development based on the vision of the Garden Suburb;
- A wealth of mature trees, shrubs and hedges;
- Houses built in Domestic Revival style;
- Rothley Court Hotel, its Knights Templar Chapel, Listed Grade I;
- The parkland and cricket pitch associated with Rothley Court;
- The tourist attraction of the well preserved and Grade II Listed Rothley Station;



## **MANAGEMENT PLAN**

### **General Principles**

Any proposed changes should be carried out in a sensitive manner, taking into account the established character. New development must respond to its immediate environment i.e. its context, in terms of scale, form, materials and detailing. Otherwise, alterations will have a detrimental effect on the historic and locally distinctive form of the Area.

Within the Area the Council will insist on good quality schemes which respond positively to their historic setting, this extends to small buildings such as garages and even boundary walls and fences. Minor alterations need to be carefully considered as incremental change can have a significant detrimental affect on the character of an area over a period of time.

Central government guidance contained in PPS1 and PPG 15, Borough of Charnwood Local Plan, Leading in Design and other SPD, and Village Design Statements will be used to assess the quality of proposal for new development.

The character of the conservation area identified in the appraisal document is such that the following general principles should be noted when considering any development in all parts of the conservation area:

1. The conservation area has a distinct “grain” or pattern of built form and spaces which are part of its historic development. This gives the area great individuality, characterised by the pattern of historic buildings, ancient footpaths and highways and clearly defined boundaries. This “grain” is an important part of the character of the conservation area and will be protected.
2. The emphasis for new proposals will be on high quality of design. There may be opportunity for innovative modern design. However a dramatic contemporary statement is unlikely to be appropriate.
3. Scale is the combination of a building’s height and bulk when related to its surroundings. Proposed new development must take into account the scale of the existing buildings, and must not dominate or overwhelm them.
4. Alterations and extensions must respect the form of the original building and its locality. The use of high quality materials and detailing, whether modern or traditional is essential. Roof lines, roof shape, eaves details, verge details and the creation of new chimneys are important considerations.
5. Windows and doors of a traditional design respect the historic nature of the buildings to which they belong and make a very important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The use of upvc and standardised high speed joinery techniques nearly always leads to unsuitably detailed windows which will be generally unacceptable in the conservation area. In most cases the building regulation requirements can be met without the need to use clumsy and awkwardly detailed windows.
6. The appraisal has identified the types of materials that characterise the conservation area and where possible this should be used to help alterations respect that established character.

7. Applicants for planning permission must provide a meaningful “Design and Access Statement”, to explain the design decisions that have been made and to show how proposed alterations relate to their context. A detailed analysis of the locality should demonstrate that there is a full appreciation of the local streetscape and how it has developed, including prevailing building forms, materials and plot ratios.
8. Safeguarding of protected species must be taken on board when considering planning proposals such as conversion, tree felling, housing development and other changes which may affect their roosting places, commuting routes and feeding areas.

### **Procedures to ensure consistent decision-making**

The purpose of the character appraisal is to inform and guide development control decisions. A consistent approach to this decision making will be aided by providing:

- Conservation and design surgeries to help development control officers to make informed decisions, no matter how minor the proposed changes.
- Opportunities for pre-application discussion regarding significant alterations.
- Opportunities to review decisions and assess the impact of approved alterations through post development site visits.

### **Enforcement strategy**

Effective enforcement is vital to make sure there is public confidence in the planning system to protect the special character of the area. Unauthorised development can often be damaging to that character.

Taking proactive action can improve the appearance and character of the area, making it more attractive and in some instances increasing the potential for investment. Effective monitoring of building work to make sure it is carried out in accordance with the approved details and with planning conditions ensures new development makes the positive contribution envisaged when permission was granted.

In order to protect the character of the conservation area the Borough Council will seek to:

- use enforcement powers in cases where unauthorised development unacceptably affects the character of the conservation area.
- take proactive action to improve or enhance the appearance of the area.
- monitor development under way to make sure it fully complies with the terms of any planning permission or listed building consent.

Carrying out unauthorised work to a listed building or to protected trees and hedgerows and the unauthorised demolition a building within a conservation area is an offence. In such cases, the Council will consider prosecution of anyone responsible and any necessary remedial action.

The powers set out in Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will be used where sites are identified as detracting from the character of the conservation area by being eyesores or untidy.

#### **Article 4 Direction proposals**

The quality of the conservation area is often threatened by the cumulative impact of numerous small changes to many buildings. Terraces that once displayed integrity of design through the use of matching features such as doors, window, chimneys and porches, have been unbalanced by various alterations and additions. On the whole such changes do not require planning permission.

In order to preserve and enhance the character of conservation areas, many planning authorities use Article 4 Directions to restrict permitted development rights on groups of buildings or areas. Restrictions normally relate to particular elements such as replacement windows and doors, or roofing.

#### **General condition**

The general condition of the Conservation Area is very good. Properties and gardens are well maintained.

It is intent of the Borough Council to take necessary action to secure repair and full use of any buildings at risk. At the moment none of the listed buildings are at risk of decay and all appear to be in a good state of repair. The locally listed buildings are also in good condition.

#### **Possible buildings for spot listing**

None of the buildings within the Conservation Area were identified for “spot listing”, i.e. considered for inclusion on the list of statutory listed buildings.

#### **Enhancement opportunities**

No particular sites or issues have been identified.

#### **Proposals for developing an economic development and regeneration strategy for the area**

Historic building repair grants are available from both Charnwood Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council. Repair and reinstatement works to historic buildings, that make a vital contribution to maintaining and improving the character of the conservation area are likely to be eligible for grant assistance.

#### **Strategy for the management and protection of important trees, greenery and green spaces**

The Borough Council supports the priorities set out in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan for the conservation of a variety of wildlife and their habitats within Charnwood. The Council will collaborate with its partners

when the plan is reviewed and modified to ensure that the necessary actions are being taken by the appropriate agencies.

General management guidelines for biodiversity are:

- Retention and protection of mature trees.
- Replacement planting to provide the next generation of trees to retain the landscape character of the area and its biodiversity interest.

### **Management Recommendations for Biodiversity Gain**

The watercourse needs to be clean and free of pollution to support abundant species such as the white-clawed crayfish and otter.

Many individual wildlife species receive statutory protection under a range of legislative provisions. Prior surveys are particularly critical where there is a reasonable likelihood of legally protected species or priority Biodiversity Action Plan species being present and at risk of impact from development or management. Bat species such as the brown long-eared bat require large loft spaces: loft conversions and work within roof spaces may have a detrimental impact on this species.

### **Monitoring change arrangements**

It is planned to review the conservation area character appraisal and its management plan every five year, although the management plan may under certain circumstances need to be reviewed over a shorter time period. A photographic record of the conservation area has been made and will be used to help identify the need to review how changes within the conservation area are managed. A greater degree of protection will be accomplished if the local community help monitor any changes.

### **Consideration of resources**

This management plan sets out the commitment of the Borough Council to protecting the character and appearance of Charnwood's conservation areas and how it will use its resources to achieve these aims. Pursuing all actions may be seen as desirable but continued monitoring and review will help focus the use of available resources in the most effective way.

### **Summary of issues and proposed actions**

<b>Conservation Area Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Action</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>Other Partners</b>

### **Developing management proposals**

Various forces, historical, cultural and commercial, have shaped the development of the conservation area, creating a sense of place and individual identity. The character and appearance of the conservation area is vitally important, both in

attracting investment in the area itself, and in the encouragement of initiatives to the benefit of the wider community.

Based on the issues that have been identified the following objectives will have a positive impact in both protecting and enhancing the character of the conservation area, and provide the basis of a long term management plan:

### **Community involvement**

This document was made available as a draft via the website for 4 weeks prior to submission to Cabinet. A public meeting was held in Rothley so that local residents could contribute their ideas about the proposed Conservation Area. All comments and responses were considered and appropriate amendments were made to the document before submission to Cabinet.

### **Advice and Guidance**

The Borough Council Development Department can advise on the need for Planning Permission or Listed Building Consent and can provide guidance on matters such as appropriate methods of maintenance/repairs, changes to shopfronts, alterations and extensions and suitable materials.

Contacts: Conservation and Landscape Design Team  
Tel. 01509 634748  
[built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:built.heritage@charnwood.gov.uk)

Development Control  
Tel. 01509 634691  
[Development.control@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:Development.control@charnwood.gov.uk)

Planning Enforcement  
Tel. 01509 634722

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Suburban Style by Helena Barrett and John Phillips, 1987 Macdonald and Co.  
The English House by Hermann Muthesius, Crosby Lockwood Staples, London 1979  
Prospectus for Rothley Garden Suburb by The Garden Suburb Estate Office, 1909  
Proposals for The Gallops by David Wilson Estates Ltd for Rothley Temple Estates, ca 1990

### ***Internet Resources***

[www.rothleypark.co.uk](http://www.rothleypark.co.uk) (accessed 26th August 2009) for the history of Rothley Park Golf Club.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

John Wright for allowing us to see his collection of original plans and drawings;  
Dr Mervyn Miller for his helpful comments about the Garden City;  
Terry Sheppard for his knowledge of the history of Rothley.

## **LISTED BUILDINGS IN THE PROPOSED ROTHLEY RIDGEWAY CONSERVATION AREA**

### **Statutory Grade I Listed Building**

Rothley Court Hotel and Knights Templar Chapel

### **Statutory Grade II Listed Buildings**

The Homestead, No 65 Swithland Lane

Nos 57-63 Swithland Lane

Outbuilding between No 57 and No 65 Swithland Lane

Rothley Station

### **Locally Listed Buildings**

No 33 The Ridgeway

No 54 The Ridgeway

No 60 The Ridgeway

No 62 The Ridgeway