



Knighton Village Conservation Area

Management Plan

October 2024



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Management Plan sets out Leicester City Council's approach for preserving and enhancing the Knighton Village Conservation Area.
- 1.2 Conservation areas make a significant contribution towards the urban fabric of the city. These historic areas are important to the city's cultural inheritance, economic wellbeing, and quality of life. It is important to recognise that these areas 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 character appraisal for the Knighton Village Conservation Area. The character appraisal document 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 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 was published for public consultation in January 2024. The Council sought to consult those with an interest in the subjects covered by the document. Details of the consultation were sent to all local heritage and community groups and efforts will be made to reach a wider audience through local media and the Council’s website. A public meeting regarding the proposals took place and responses received helped to shape the final version.

4 Publicity and Information

- 4.1 Public consultation relating to conservation areas in 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 Council will produce 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 the Council's website, which has the capacity to be easily updated.
- 4.3 Another potential issue is the turnover in residency and ownership of properties in the conservation area. 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 Area.

ACTION G1

Guidance and Information

The 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 plates are attached to lampposts throughout the area. To provide greater clarity over the boundaries of the Conservation Area, these signs should be installed at the various entry points.
- 4.5 Heritage interpretation panels have been located within the conservation area. 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.

- 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.

ACTION G2

Raising the profile of the conservation area

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

5 Development Management

- 5.1 Demand for new housing, residential extensions and alterations can impact on the character of the conservation area through unsympathetic or poor design. The role of the Council's development management function in overseeing future changes to conservation areas is therefore crucial.
- 5.2 As detailed in Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, all development within the 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 appraisal.

ACTION G3

Delivering effective development management

The 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.

6 Setting and Views

- 6.1 Outside the boundary of the conservation areas, there are a number of sites which have an impact on its character through the role they play in their setting and framing. In particular, the open land around few of the conservation areas are part of their character and reflect the village's agricultural background, with few sites being of archaeological importance. Should development on these sites come forward the impact on the conservation area will be a material consideration.

- 6.2 As detailed in the character appraisal, there are also a number of views that are important to the significance of the conservation area. 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.

ACTION G4

Setting and views

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

7 Building uses

- 7.1 As detailed in the character appraisal, one of the defining characteristics of the conservation areas is the variety of uses, including flats, houses, community facilities, social clubs, pubs, churches, halls and other commercial premises. This vibrancy and diversity will be supported and encouraged into the future, hoped to ensure viability, vitality, and sustainability of the conservation area.
- 7.2 Where a change of use is proposed, this should be appropriate to the architectural character of the property. Where conversion or excessive subdivision of a property is proposed, this can harm the amenity of the conservation areas through structural alterations and associated developments, such as large bin and cycle stores. The Council will not support changes of use that harm the character of the conservation areas.
- 7.3 Where properties are long-term vacant the 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

ACTION G5

Building uses

The Council will seek to protect the vitality and diversity of the conservation area through the development of strategic policy and design guidance in the Local Plan.

demolition unless it can be demonstrated that all options for re-use have been investigated.

8 Building features

- 8.1 Within the conservation area there are examples of unsympathetic alterations to the external fabric of buildings. This includes the removal of original chimneys, windows, doors, shopfronts and other features/detailing, as well as the addition of new porches, dormers and satellite dishes. External painting, cladding and rendering of brick elevations has also had an accumulative and detrimental effect on the conservation areas.
- 8.2 A notable problem is the replacement of wooden doors and timber windows with poorly suited plastic or composite units. Although such alterations may now be restricted, such as through the introduction of the Article 4 Directions, a number of properties have already been altered.
- 8.3 In general, the Council advocates 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 of 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.

- 8.5 The Council should work with property owners to encourage them to use 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 Area. This is especially important to elevations and roof slopes fronting public highway and open public spaces.

ACTION G6

Traditional materials

Appropriate external materials and finishes will be expected in all new development in the conservation area.

The 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 Council’s website.

9 Boundaries

- 9.1 The loss of original front boundaries is a particular issue within the conservation area. As noted in the appraisal, garden walls, railings and hedges make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. 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.
- 9.2 Where front boundaries remain these should be protected. Opportunities should be sought to reinstate historic boundaries where these have been lost/ removed.

ACTION G7

Boundary Treatments

The Council will seek opportunities to retain existing boundaries and support the reinstatement of front boundaries where they have been lost.

10 Street and Traffic Management Plans

- 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 pavements 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 the 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, the 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.

- 10.6 The 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.

ACTION G8

Highway Works

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

- 10.7 Yellow no waiting markings can be visually intrusive. Within the conservation area, a more sensitive approach is preferable to reduce the visual impact of these markings.

ACTION G9

No Waiting Markings

Where yellow lines are necessary within Conservation Area, these should preferably be 50mm wide, with a line colour of BS 381C No. 310 (primrose). Any additional signage relating to parking/loading restrictions should be kept to a minimum.

- 10.8 In certain part of the conservation area, street furniture is cluttered and crowded. The lack of co-ordination in terms of design and format of street furniture has further detracted from the character of the conservation areas.
- 10.9 A detailed audit of the public realm has been undertaken by the Council 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 Leicester City Council 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 city. 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.

- 10.11 The traffic direction and regulation signs should be kept to the minimum needed in line with current highway regulations. The need for such signs as well as their total number and size, should be reviewed as the regulations change.

ACTION G10

Street clutter audit

The Council will carry out an audit of the public realm to identify the best way to minimise street clutter and better integrate street furniture in the Conservation Area. An Action Plan for reducing street clutter will be prepared and taken forward.

11 Green infrastructure

- 11.1 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.

ACTION G11

Green Infrastructure

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

- 11.2 To help support the city's ambition to deliver an overall environmental net gain, the Council will expect new development to achieve biodiversity net gain and improvements to the existing green infrastructure, wherever appropriate.

12 Trees and Green Spaces

- 12.1 There are many trees within the conservation area 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 All trees in the Conservation Area are protected by its designation and no works should be done to trees within the Conservation Area without first contacting the City Council. Details of how to do this can be found on the City Councils website.

- 12.3 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. As well as being protected by the statutory designation, trees in the Conservation Area are subject to management in line with Leicester City Council Tree Strategy (2018) and monitored by the Council's Trees and Woodlands Team.

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.

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

- 12.4 Trees which are subject to preservation orders have been identified in the conservation area character appraisal, but an up-to-date record is kept on publicly accessible mapping through the council's website.
- 12.5 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 Council, in line with the principles and aspirations of the *Leicester 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 Area.
- 12.6 The conservation area includes areas of green space that are managed by Leicester 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.
- 12.7 Specific enhancement opportunities for some of these spaces are presented in the Council's [Green Infrastructure Strategy](#).

ACTION G13

Open Spaces

The Council will seek opportunities to protect and enhance the open character conservation area's open green spaces.

13 New development

- 13.1 There are no specifically identified sites for development within the conservation area, but sensitive enhancement schemes that sustain or enhance the local distinctiveness can help to improve the quality of the local environment.
- 13.2 If the special interest of the conservation area 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 Local Community

- 14.1 The 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.
- 14.2 There are a range of existing community groups operating in the conservation area 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 Area.

ACTION G14

Community Groups

The Council should work actively with local community groups and elected councillors to improve the management and monitoring of Conservation Area.

15 Enforcement Strategy

- 15.1 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 the special significance of conservation areas. Part of this work is pro-active monitoring of the area to identify any breaches and also to gather baseline evidence which can be used as evidence in any action.
- 15.2 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.
- 15.3 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

Council will take steps to deal with the unauthorised development where it causes harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. A record of the Conservation Area should be regularly maintained to ensure that enforcement action can be successfully taken forward.

16 Article 4 Direction

- 16.1 Minor works, such as domestic alterations and extensions, can normally be carried out without the need for planning permission as 'permitted development' under the provisions of the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO).
- 16.2 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.
- 16.3 Article 4 of the GPDO gives local planning authorities the power to restrict permitted development rights, including where they have the potential to undermine protection for the historic environment. Using these provisions brings certain works under the control of a local planning authority allowing them to be considered on a case-by-case basis through planning applications.
- 16.4 To help protect the character and appearance of the conservation area, the Council proposes to introduce comprehensive Article 4 Direction for all properties within the area. This will mean most external works to properties within the conservation area will require planning permission including:

For residential properties:

- 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
- Any external works which affect the character of the property

For all properties (including residential):

- Painting the exterior of the property
- Removal of existing and installation of new boundary treatments

ACTION G16

Article 4 Direction

The Council will introduce an Article 4 Direction to cover all properties within the Knighton Village Conservation Area.

The Council will monitor the properties affected and provide adequate levels of publicity to ensure its successful application.

17 Monitoring

17.1 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 City Council. The Conservation Team will do a bi-annual inspection of the whole Conservation Area and detail actions for remedying identified issues. In addition, the following procedures will take place.

17.2 Document updates

In line with best practice guidance from Historic England, Leicester City Council will review the Conservation Area Character Appraisal document every five years and where necessary, update the document. This process will help to monitor change and ensure that the document remains an accurate representation of the area in question. The Council will also review the Conservation Area Management Plan every five years.

17.3 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 Area will be welcomed.

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

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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/herdetail.aspx?crit=&ctid=94&id=4751>

Appendix 1

Proposed Article 4 Direction:

The proposed Article 4(1) Direction for the whole Conservation Area 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 G – installation, alterations or removal of chimneys and flues

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.

Heritage and Demolition development comprised within the following class of Part 11 of Schedule 2

- Class C – Demolition of a wall, gate, fence, or other means of enclosure

Knighton Village Conservation Area: Management Plan

Appendix 2

