

Character Appraisal



Loughborough Road Conservation Area

Planning Policy and Design
Approved 20 April 2009



Leicester
City Council

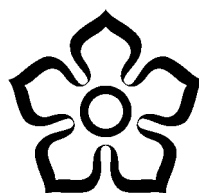
Cover images, from the top:

- *Shaftesbury Avenue, detail of first floor canted bay window.*
- *Number 131 Loughborough Road.*
- *Freemen's Cottages, Loughborough Road.*
- *Doorway, Shaftesbury Avenue.*

Loughborough Road Conservation Area

character appraisal

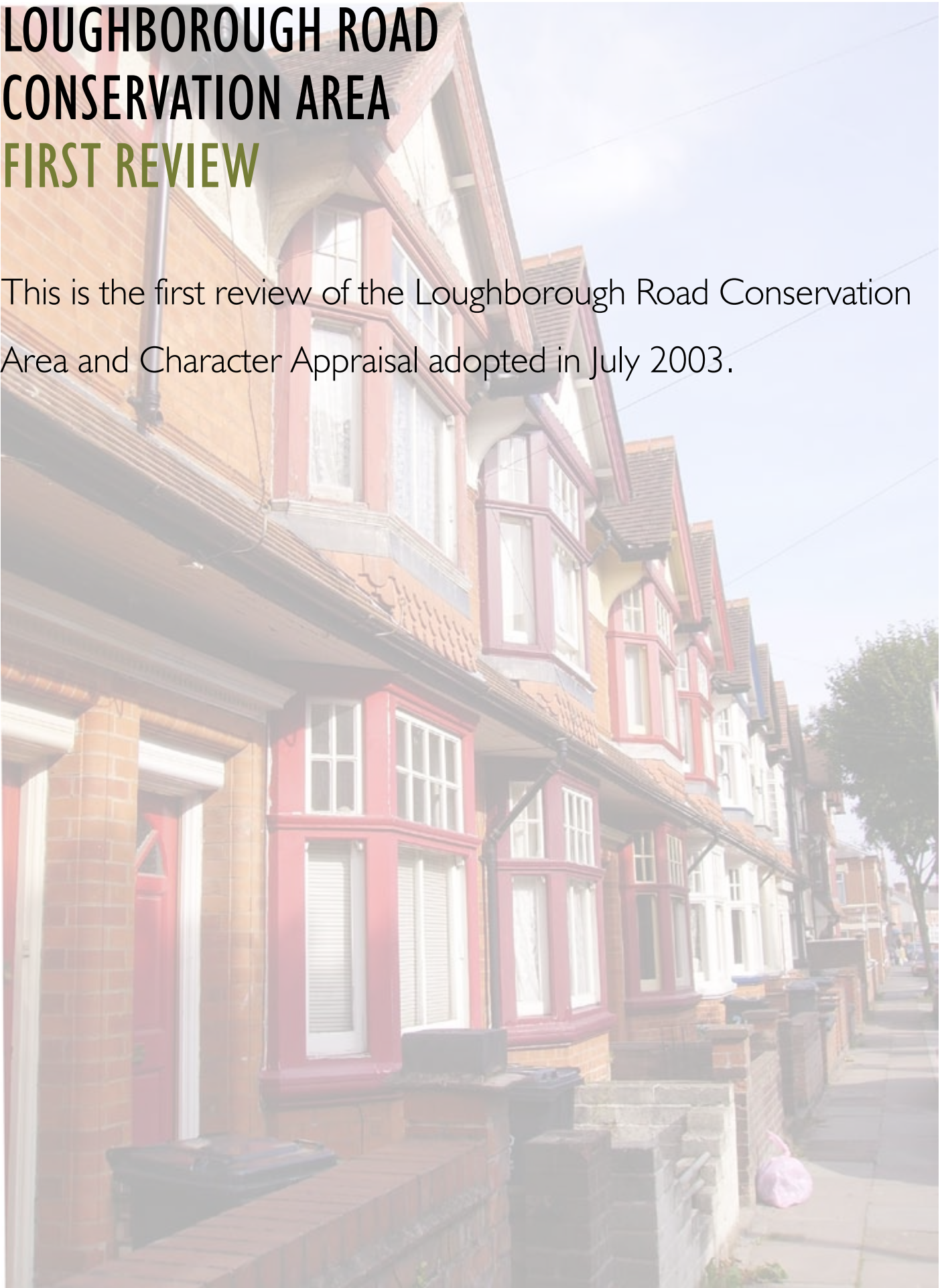
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LOUGHBOROUGH ROAD CONSERVATION AREA FIRST REVIEW

This is the first review of the Loughborough Road Conservation Area and Character Appraisal adopted in July 2003.



contents

	page
1.0 Background to the Conservation Area Review	6
2.0 Planning Policy Framework	6
3.0 Changes since 2003	7
4.0 Conclusions	8
5.0 Confirmation of special interest	8
6.0 Recommendations	8
7.0 Contacts and appendices	9

appendices

Appendix A	Addendum to the Loughborough Road Character Appraisal July 2003	9
Appendix B	Management Strategy	14
	Additional map: Character Appraisal	15
Appendix C	Consultation Responses	16
Appendix D	Loughborough Road Conservation Area Character Statement July 2003	18

1.0 Background to the Conservation Area review

1.1 Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The power to designate conservation areas is given to local planning authorities under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This imposes upon Councils the following duties :

- (a) to determine which parts of their areas should be conservation areas;
- (b) to designate them accordingly [s.69(1) of the Act];
- (c) to review all such designations from time to time [s.69(2)]; and
- (d) to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas (s.71)



Shaftesbury Avenue, photographed September 2010.

1.2 The over-riding requirement is that all development must preserve or enhance the conservation area in which it is located. Thus, all proposed changes, whether in the form of an application for planning permission or other works that would affect the area's buildings, land or trees, have to be considered in terms of the impact that they would have (whether positive or negative) on the character or appearance of the conservation area.

1.3 Leicester City Council is fulfilling its duties under sections 69 and 71 of the 1990 Act by undertaking reviews of the city's 24 conservation areas with a view to publishing up-to-date appraisals and management strategies for each by 2010. Where appraisals have already been adopted, the review will re-visit these so that an addendum can be added to up-date the appraisal. Accurate photographic records for each appraisal or review will be made for later comparisons. Future reviews and their associated addendum reports will be carried out on a 4-5 yearly cycle to ensure that they are as up-to date as necessary for the proper management of each area.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 This is the first review of the Loughborough Road Conservation Area since the adoption of its Character Appraisal as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the City of Leicester Local Plan in July 2003. The review will highlight changes in national legislation and guidance that affect conservation areas, as well as changes that have taken place in the conservation area since 2003.

2.2 The area was revisited and re-photographed during August/September 2008 and a comparison made with information gathered during the preparation of the 2003 Character Appraisal. Appendices A to D comprise amendments and additions that are needed to bring the 2003 Appraisal up to date and have been approved and adopted by the Council and form the formal Addendum to the 2003 document.

3.0 Changes since 2003

3.1 The survey of the area in August/September 2008 showed that there have been few material changes in the conservation area since the appraisal in July 2003. The Council's proposal to make an Article 4 Direction covering the Victorian terraced houses on either side of Shaftesbury Avenue was confirmed in August 2003 and has been successful in helping to maintain the character and appearance of this attractive street of houses.

3.2 There have been changes to national planning legislation and to the format of conservation area appraisals since the Loughborough Road appraisal was approved and adopted in 2003. These are set out in paragraph 1.0 in Appendix A, together with additional text that will bring this appraisal into compliance with the format suggested by English Heritage in 2006 (Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals) and that has formed the basis for all appraisals carried out by the Council since 2005/6. The additional text should therefore be read in conjunction with the original Loughborough Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal of July 2003, (Appendix E).

3.2 It has also become standard practice to include a Management Strategy for each conservation area appraisal, as well as an explanatory Character Appraisal map. The latter shows, in a clear and concise way, the factors that contribute to creating, or detracting from, the character of a conservation area. However, as no appraisal plan was included in the original 2003 appraisal, it has been included in the Review at Appendix B. The Management Strategy can be found at Appendix C and Appendix D shows Consultation Responses.



View south along Loughborough Road, 9/2010.



The Shree Swaminarayan Temple at 139 Loughborough Road. Since the original appraisal of 2003 the attractive brightly painted wooden porch has unfortunately been re-painted in a dark brown colour.

4.0 Conclusions

4.1 There have been some changes in the conservation area but these are not of such a scale that they detract from the character or appearance of the area. Indeed the refurbishment currently under way at 115 Loughborough Road is a positive feature, particularly if the original windows and doors remain unchanged. However, the continued vacancy of the former police station at 176-180 Loughborough Road, the disused petrol filling station site at the corner of Windsor Avenue and the vacant building at 127 Loughborough Road (formerly used as a mosque) are of some concern. The condition of the original woodwork at 119 Loughborough Road is also of concern.



4.2 Lack of funding for conservation projects remains an issue at the time of this review and, while a small Historic Buildings Grant fund is available to help owners undertake conservation-standard repairs to individual buildings, this fund is not sufficient to carry out wider improvements such as front wall replacement projects or public realm improvements.

4.3 Nevertheless, it is important to set out a 'shopping list' of improvements that could be made to the area so that, were funding to become available, these could be addressed over the longer term. These suggestions are set out in the Management Strategy in Appendix C.

4.4 The 2003 Character Appraisal therefore remains sound.

5.0 Confirmation of special interest

5.1 While there are some issues that still need to be addressed, the Council considers that the special interest of the conservation area, as set out in the 2003 appraisal, remains and that the area deserves to retain its conservation area status.

6.0 Recommendations

6.1 The conservation area review, as set out in Appendices A, B, C and D below, was approved and adopted on 20th April 2009 as an Addendum to the original Loughborough Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal, July 2003.



Above and top: Shaftesbury Avenue

7.0 Contacts and appendices

For further information on this review, or any other conservation area in Leicester, you can contact the Council's Conservation Team as :

- Conservation & Nature Team
Planning Policy & Design
Regeneration & Culture
Leicester City Council
New walk centre
Welford Place
Leicester
LE1 6ZG
- Fax Leicester (0116) 2471149
- e-mail conservation@leicester.gov.uk
- or the Council website www.leicester.gov.uk/conservation



The former Belgrave Road Police Station near to the corner of Holden Street.



Number 131 Loughborough Road is one of the large two-storey Victorian properties in a restrained Classical style.

APPENDIX A

Addendum to Conservation Area Character Appraisal July 2003

References in italics in the sections below refer to paragraph numbers in the original 2003 appraisal text.

1.0 Planning Policy Framework

1.1 The main change to planning legislation since the Loughborough Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal was adopted in 2003 is the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which instituted major reforms to the planning system, replacing local plans with a Local Development Framework (LDF) and a portfolio of Local Development Documents (LDDs). The Supplementary Planning Guidance documents that set out the detailed interpretation of the Local Plan (and of which the Loughborough Road appraisal of 2003 is one) have therefore been superseded.

1.2 At the time of writing this Conservation Area Review the Council is preparing the first of its LDDs, the Core Strategy that will, amongst other matters, include an overarching policy for the preservation and enhancement of the city's built heritage. A further LDD, a Conservation Area Supplementary Planning Document, may follow in the future and would set out in more detail the way in which the city's conservation areas would be managed. In the meantime the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 *Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG

1.5) remain the key pieces of legislation and government guidance on the management of conservation areas. Both recognise and reinforce the importance of conservation area appraisals as material considerations in the determination of planning applications and appeals.

1.3 New guidance on how to undertake conservation area appraisals was also published by English Heritage in 2006 and is now used as a basic format for all the Council's appraisals. Where appropriate, therefore, additional sections have been included in this review to bring the appraisal into line with the 2006 format.

1.4 Another legislative change that has implications for the character and appearance of the conservation area is the 2008 Building Regulations relating to replacement of windows. While there are exemptions for historic buildings (Regulation F paras. 3.21 and 3.22), these are not always adequately explained to property owners with the result that original windows could be lost when they could be repaired and refurbished. It is important that this information is added to the Council's leaflets on conservation area and the historic environment.

2.0 Summary of special interest

2.1 The conservation area is an important element in the story of how Leicester grew from a small market town into a wealthy 19th century industrial city. From the earliest houses on Loughborough Road to the smaller, but equally well-designed homes on Shaftesbury Avenue, the conservation area provides a visible record of some of the best buildings that the city produced during that time.

2.2 The large villas in the northern half of the conservation area were the first to be built in the first quarter of the century and provided homes for the town's growing numbers of prosperous business and professional people. These families preferred to live outside the Borough in rural locations (in this case on the edge of Belgrave village) and were able to build substantial homes for themselves in the fashionable architectural styles of the day. Most of these houses can be still seen today on the east side of Loughborough Road and, despite the loss of their large front gardens to car parking, remain largely as they would have appeared at that time, screened behind mature trees that themselves contribute substantially to the still-extant, semi-rural aspect of this main road.

2.3 Later, as the town continued to grow and the advent of the new electric tram made the edges of the Borough more accessible, the middle classes followed their 'betters' out to Loughborough Road and to the neat but substantial terraced houses of Shaftesbury Avenue in the late 1880-90s. These houses retain most of their original architectural details and, having been built as one development, appear as a unified architectural 'set piece' of particular note. Their value to the character and appearance of the conservation area is therefore of utmost importance.

3.0 Assessment of special interest

The paragraphs references and text below should be read as an addendum to the 2003 Appraisal document and are added to ensure that the format follows that suggested by English Heritage in their 2006 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals'.

3.1 Location and setting

See paragraph 2.0

3.2 Historic development & archaeology

See paragraphs 3.1 to 3.6

3.3 Spatial analysis

3.3.1 *Character and interrelationship of spaces*

See section 7.0

3.3.2 *Key views and vistas*

See paragraphs 7.2, 7.3

3.4 Character analysis

3.4.1 *Character areas*

See paragraph 5.2

3.4.2 *Influence of activity or former uses on the plan form*

See paragraph 3.2

3.4.3 *Quality and contribution of buildings to the area*

See sections 5.0 and 7.0

3.4.4 *Unlisted buildings*

See section 6.0

3.4.5 *Local details*

See paragraph 8.1. There are also many examples of the locally sourced pink diorite kerb stones along Loughborough Road and Shaftesbury Avenue that are a feature of many Leicester streets. Some original cast iron street name plates also remain.

3.4.6 *Prevalent building materials and the public realm*

See section 8

3.4.7 *Green spaces and biodiversity*

See section 9.

Private back and front gardens enhance biodiversity value in the area, albeit on the small scale. The variations in vegetation type and cover attract many of the typical (and popular) garden animal species (hedgehog, fox, woodpeckers, owls, bats etc), all of which can add to local people's quality of life. The large garden and street trees in the area provide habitats for other species and add further to the area's biodiversity. Gardens are also important for some of the UK's declining species (house sparrow, bullfinch, starling and song thrush) and any further loss of garden space in the area could accelerate this decline.

3.4.8 *Intrusion or damage*

See section 11.0. There is no further evidence of development that has damaged the character or appearance of the conservation area.

3.4.9 *Problems, pressures and capacity for change*

The conservation area is under little pressure for change and physical problems tend to be those typical of other parts of the city – wheelie bins on pavements, car parking, increasing traffic volumes, building maintenance etc. The most obvious problems in the area are the two vacant buildings on Loughborough Road (numbers 176 to 180 and 127) and the vacant petrol filling station on a very prominent site on the corner of Windsor Avenue.

The re-use of the vacant buildings should be a priority for the owners, not least to prevent deterioration in the condition of their fabric, an issue of particular relevance at 176-180 Loughborough Road, which has been vacant for more than five years and has been boarded up to prevent vandalism. The development of the Windsor Avenue site is more problematic, however, not least because of the decontamination cost, the small size of the site and the location of the whole site forward of the existing strong building line on Loughborough Road.

4.0 Community involvement

4.1 To ensure that as many views as possible were obtained, the Council consulted widely on the proposed Management Strategy. Invitation letters and explanatory leaflets were sent to all local residents and other interested parties (local amenity societies, other Council departments etc) to ask them for their views about the conservation area – what the problems are, what could be done to improve the area, whether the boundaries are appropriate etc. Local Councillors were also contacted by letter or e-mail and a report was placed before the Planning and Development Control Committee for their views on September 29th 2008. An evening meeting was held in the conservation area in the Belgrave Union Church hall on December 1st and an exhibition was placed in the nearest accessible and secure venue (Belgrave Library). A copy of the Appraisal and its amendments were placed on the Council's Consultations website. The views that were received are set out, together with the Council's response, in Appendix C to this review and have been placed on the Feedback pages of the Council's Consultations webpages. Where suggestions for improvements are made these have been incorporated where appropriate in the Management Strategy.

5.0 Conservation area boundary

5.1 The Council has considered the existing boundaries of the conservation area to see if any extensions or exclusions are appropriate. As the areas beyond the conservation area boundary are either modern housing developments or suburban and terraced properties of no special architectural or historic interest the Council considers that no extensions are necessary or justifiable.

6.0 Management and enhancement proposals

6.1 The Council is under a duty to prepare proposals for the preservation or enhancement of each conservation area in Leicester. Such proposals can be described as a 'Management Strategy' and would highlight the important issues in each area, how these should be addressed or resolved and give an indication of the timescale over which it would be hoped to deliver each proposal.

6.2 Management and enhancement proposals have to be subject to consideration at a public meeting and an evening consultation meeting was held in the area in the hall adjoining the Belgrave Union Church on December 1st. The views received are set out in Appendix C below.

6.3 There are few issues that need to be addressed in the conservation area. Any action that is considered necessary or improvements that could be made are set out in Appendix B below - 'Management Strategy'

Appendix B Management Strategy

Location	Management proposal
<p>Short term – 1-3 years, Medium term – 3-5 Years, Long term – 5 years plus</p>	
<p>Conservation area generally</p>	<p>1. Ensure that all development preserves or enhances the conservation area; Timescale : On-going</p> <p>2. Publish on a regular basis, and distribute to all properties in the are, an explanatory leaflet about conservation areas and Article 4 Directions including Council and owners' responsibilities; Timescale : short term</p> <p>3. Maintain an up-to-date photographic record of all buildings for comparison purposes; Timescale : medium term</p> <p>4. Design appropriate bin storage areas where wheelie bins on streets are a problem and seek funding to undertake the improvements identified; Timescale : long term</p> <p>5. Seek resources for repairs to important features of historic properties, subject to agreed eligibility criteria; Timescale : On-going</p>
<p>Shaftesbury Avenue</p>	<p>1. Seek funds and agreement of owners to rebuild front boundary walls and railings Timescale : On-going</p>
<p>Loughborough Road</p>	<p>1. Seek the early repair and re-use of the former police station at number 176 to 180; Timescale : On-going</p> <p>2. Where possible, encourage the owners of the large front gardens on Loughborough Road that are used as car parks to provide more appropriate landscaping and/or surface treatments to maximise water supply to the frontage trees; Timescale : long term</p>



map 6. Loughborough Road Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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Not to scale

Appendix C Consultation Responses

Consultation responses	Council response
Improvements planned to school on Loughborough Road. Can the Council assist with grants?	Depending on the works involved, Historic Building Grants can be made available, subject to funding being approved on a year on year basis. Contact will be maintained with the school to see what help can be offered.
Are there any grants for replacement windows?	See above
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rebuild front boundary walls to Shaftesbury Avenue so that they all match. 2. Give owners grants to maintain their homes. 3. Remove old furniture etc from front gardens as quickly as possible. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. See Appendix B 2. It is not possible to give grants for work that would be classed as 'normal maintenance'. However, repainting etc can be included if the work includes such elements as repairs to, or restoration of, original timber windows. See Appendix B. 3. Belgrave Ward now has a City Warden who will be able to take such matters up with the property owners/occupiers. The Warden has been informed of the respondent's concern.
Rebuild front boundary walls re-using old bricks wherever possible	See Appendix B above. If funds become available for this work the recycling of existing bricks will be considered.

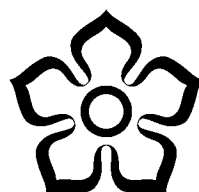
Appendix D

Supplementary Planning Guidance

LOUGHBOROUGH ROAD CONSERVATION AREA

Character Statement

(Adopted: July 2003)



Leicester
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contents

	page
1.0 Introduction	21
2.0 Location of landform	21
3.0 Archaeology, history and development	21
4.0 Prevailing and former uses	26
5.0 Architectural character	26
6.0 Key unlisted buildings	30
7.0 Townscape	30
8.0 Building materials	32
9.0 Open space and trees	32
10.0 Lighting and street furniture	34
11.0 Loss of character	34
12.0 Preserving the character	35
13.0 Conservation Area boundary	37

list of maps

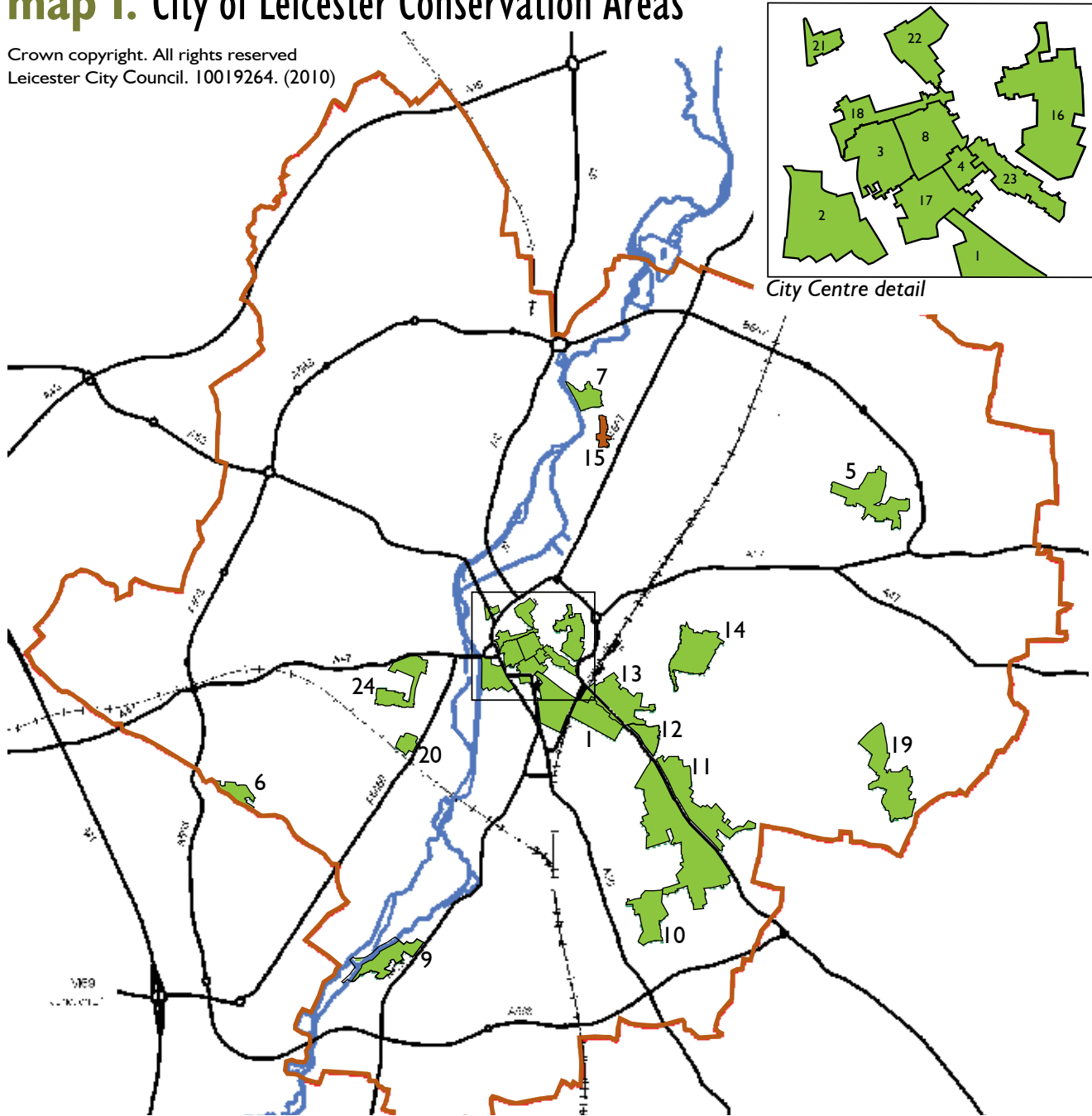
Map 1	City of Leicester Conservation Areas	20
Map 2	Loughborough Road Conservation Area today	22
Map 3	Map of 1887	24
Map 4	Map of 1920	25
Map 5	Map of 1938	27

appendices

Appendix 1	List of buildings within the Loughborough Road Conservation area	38
Appendix 2	List of Tree Preservation Orders	38
Appendix 3	Glossary of architectural terms	38

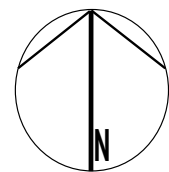
map I. City of Leicester Conservation Areas

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- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. New Walk | 10. Knighton Village | 19. Evington Village |
| 2. Castle Gardens | 11. Stonegate | 20. Ashleigh Road |
| 3. Cathedral/Guildhall | 12. Evington Footpath | 21. All Saints' |
| 4. Town Hall Square | 13. South Highfields | 22. Church Gate |
| 5. Old Humberstone | 14. Spinney Hill Park | 23. Granby Street |
| 6. Braunstone Village | 15. <u>Loughborough Road</u> | 24. West End |
| 7. Belgrave Hall | 16. St. George's | |
| 8. Market Place | 17. Market Street | |
| 9. Aylestone Village | 18. High Street | |

Listed chronologically



Not to scale

1.0 Introduction

1.1 A conservation area is defined as an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.¹ Leicester has 23 conservation areas (**map 1**) which contain the best of the older parts of the city but which also serve the needs of the city today. However it is not the purpose of a conservation area to prevent change but to manage change in the light of the existing character of the area. Each conservation area is distinctive and contains qualities that help to give the city an overall character of its own. The City Council designates conservation areas, after consulting local people, under powers contained in national planning legislation and in accordance with advice from central government.

1.2 The Council has a duty to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas and the purpose of this statement is to identify the factors which make the Loughborough Road Conservation Area of special architectural and historic interest. The statement will enable the planning authority to ensure that, when considering planning applications within the conservation area, the development will help to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area.

1.3 Looking after and improving the quality of conservation areas can bring real benefits to the people who live and work there. An attractive environment also helps to maintain property values. However, for a conservation area to be successful, both residents and property owners must play their part. The Council will, on its part, continue to strive to improve the environment of conservation areas whenever the opportunity presents itself and when resources are available, and will encourage others to do likewise.

1.4 The Loughborough Road Conservation Area was designated in March 1983 (**Map 2**).

2.0 Location and Landform

The Conservation Area is sited on a low plateau, 58 metres above sea level, and about 3 kilometres north of the Clock Tower. The site is on the margin between the glacial sand and gravel river terraces on the east-side of the River Soar flood plain and the underlying red marls. It covers an area of approximately 3 hectares.

3.0 Archaeology, History and Development

3.1 By the nineteenth century, Belgrave village had grown to be the largest of the satellite villages around the former Borough of Leicester. This growth was largely the result of the excellent communications provided by the main Leicester to Loughborough turnpike road, which ran through the village.


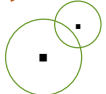
3.2 Loughborough Road developed in the early nineteenth century as an exclusive area to the south of Belgrave village, with substantial detached villas for wealthy professional and businessmen from Leicester. The new residences were sited on the

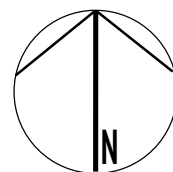


One of the decorative cast metal plaques that help to advertise Loughborough Road Conservation Area.



map 2. Loughborough Road Conservation Area

-  Boundary of conservation area
-  Tree Preservation Orders



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flatter, eastern side of the road set well back within large gardens, giving them a sunny western aspect overlooking the river valley. The earliest surviving house in the Conservation Area is Penn House (previously known as 'The Beeches') at 119 Loughborough Road. Over the next 50 years or so more large detached and semi-detached houses and villas were built and, in keeping, with their important size and exteriors, sported names such as 'The Hollies', 'The Grange', 'Acacia Villas', 'Albert House', 'Norman Villa', 'The Ferns' and 'Prospect House'.



Loughborough Road photographed close to Ellis Avenue in around 1900.

3.2 The significant increase in Leicester's population in the middle years of the nineteenth century (a 40% rise was recorded between 1861 and 1871) was largely contained within the boundaries of the Borough and expansion outside of the Borough was generally restricted to large detached residences for the well-off families of Leicester. However, the role of Loughborough Road as an exclusive suburb outside of Leicester ended in 1892 when the boundaries of the Borough were extended to take in the Parish of Belgrave. As the demand for housing rose and when horse (and later electric) tram services began in 1874, development of the outer



An early view of 'The Ferns,' 117½ Loughborough Road, taken during the Edwardian era of c1900.


suburbs such as Loughborough Road became increasingly attractive. Thus, streets of terraced houses were built on the west side of Loughborough Road in the late 1880s or early 1890s, while the house and grounds of 'The Hollies' were sold and a new street of speculative middle-class terraced housing built (Shaftesbury Avenue). Public buildings such as a church and a police station were built to cater for the needs of the growing local population (**Map 3**).

3.3 By 1904, the large grounds, tree-lined drive and entrance lodge of 'The Grange' had also disappeared to be replaced with more speculative housing plots on the newly created Windsor Avenue (**Map 4**). 'The Grange' itself was not demolished until the 1930s.

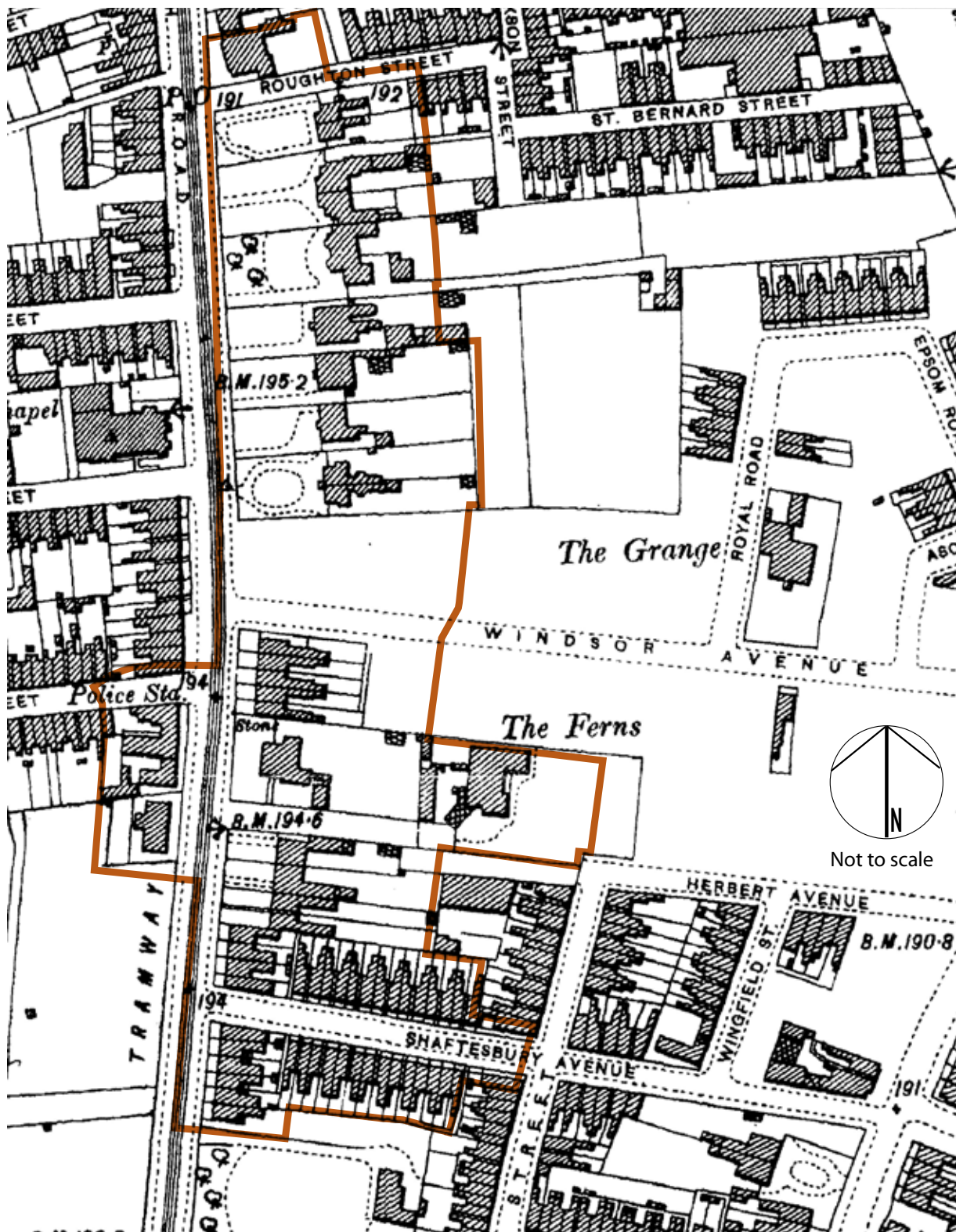
3.4 By 1938 development in the Conservation Area was effectively complete (Map 5). Since then, the terrace of large houses on the opposite corner of Windsor Avenue were demolished in the 1970s and replaced by offices (now used as part of a school).



map 3. Location of the Conservation Area superimposed on the 1887 map

 Boundary of conservation area

The Ordnance Survey map of 1887: the modern boundary of West End Conservation Area is shown superimposed. ©Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited. All rights reserved 2010.



map 4. Location of the Conservation Area superimposed on the 1920 map

 Boundary of conservation area

The Ordnance Survey map of 1920: the modern boundary of West End Conservation Area is shown superimposed. ©Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited. All rights reserved 2010.

3.5 Between 1990 and 1991, Shaftesbury Avenue was included in a repair programme under the City Council's Housing Renewal Strategy. Care was taken to ensure that much of the existing good quality joinery was left intact and repaired as necessary. The programme also provided funding for a front wall re-building scheme at 93 to 109 Loughborough Road.

4.0 Prevailing and former uses

4.1 Until about the middle of the twentieth century, the larger houses facing Loughborough Road remained in residential use. However, as the occupiers moved out and because the houses were expensive to maintain, large houses such as these became less attractive as family homes. From about the 1940s, therefore, most of the properties between 123 and 141 Loughborough Road have been converted to other uses, primarily offices. The large front gardens have been laid out for car parking. More recently, two former houses have become places of worship (a Hindu Temple and a Mosque), reflecting the changes in cultural identity that have taken place in the area, and one has been converted for use as a school.

4.2 Most of the properties in the southern half of the Conservation Area remain in residential use but some of the larger ones have also become offices or, more recently, an Islamic educational institution. The former police station, after many years in use as warehousing, has recently been acquired as an extension to the education institute opposite.



Penn House, 119 Loughborough Road is the earliest building within the Conservation Area.



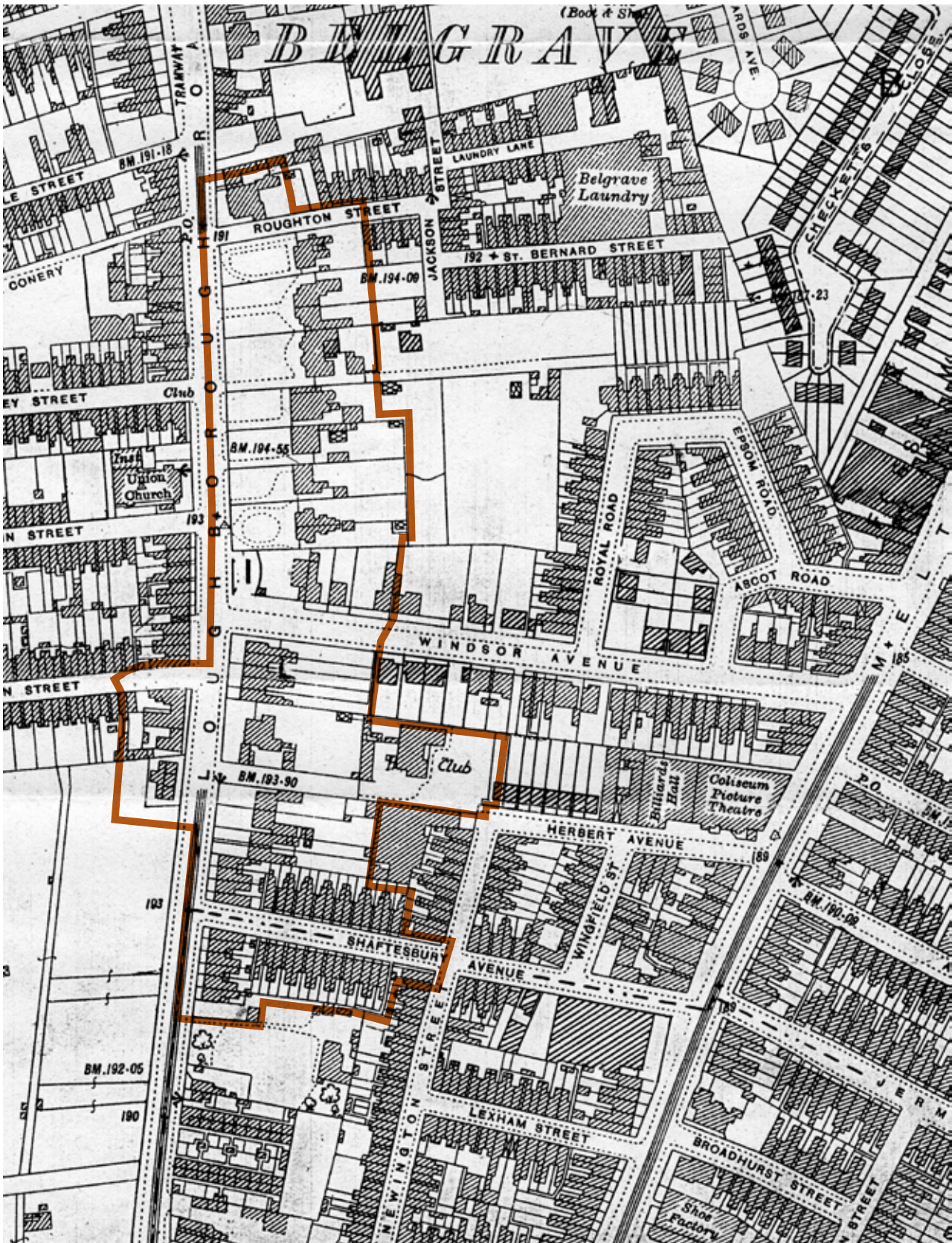
The conversion of 139 Loughborough Road into a Hindu temple in 1991 has transformed this late 19th century building and adds elements of traditional Hindu architecture to the Conservation Area.

5.0 Architectural character

The inclusion of buildings in this section is selective and is intended to illustrate the range of building types, styles and materials in the conservation area. If a building is not included, this should not be taken to indicate that it does not make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area.

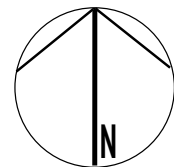
5.1 The northern and southern halves of the Conservation Area express different architectural characters reflecting the different periods of their development.

5.2 Apart from the few inter-war houses on Windsor Avenue, the northern part is dominated by large, two storey Victorian houses built in red or cream brick with slate roofs and stone detailing. Canted bay windows feature prominently and ornamentation is restrained and mainly in the Classical style. Stone window surrounds, string courses, simple porches with Tuscan or Ionic columns (at **131 and 133 Loughborough Road** respectively), eaves brackets and stone quoins are common themes. The paired wrought iron eaves brackets at **129 Loughborough Road** are particularly noteworthy, as is the design of its ground floor bay windows with their curved leaded roofs. At **135-137**



map 5. Location of the Conservation Area superimposed on the 1938 map

 Boundary of conservation



Not to scale

Loughborough Road there is more detail - moulded stone lintels supported by curved brackets, quatrefoil pierced parapets and shouldered window openings to the ground floor bays. Nearby, the pale brickwork, large wide bay windows and timber balustrading at **133 Loughborough Road** create a heavier, more robust appearance. However, its fine Ionic column porch and Georgian style fanlight offset this. In complete contrast to its neighbours the original façade at **139 Loughborough Road** has been replaced completely by the sikhara, domes and ornately carved and painted porch of the Hindu temple. On the opposite side of Roughton Street there is a very fine carved brick floral panel on the side wall of **143 Loughborough Road**, dating that building to 1883.



Many of the grander properties such as 131 Loughborough Road have elaborate windows and door surrounds constructed from stone.

5.3 South of Windsor Avenue the buildings and plots are smaller but there is generally increased use of ornamentation, reflecting the changing architectural tastes and fashions towards the end of the 19th century. The exception to this is **119 Loughborough Road**, a very plain symmetrical early 19th century house of two storeys with original six-pane sliding sash windows and moulded timber doorcase. The front wall to the Loughborough Road contains panels of the original cast iron railings. The building also still retains its original wooden sun-blind fascias. However the modern extensions to this building are of no architectural value either to the original house or to the conservation area generally.



An ornately carved house name plaque to be found on a number of larger properties in the Conservation Area.



Front garden to one of the properties along Shaftesbury Avenue showing the decorative tiling to the Aathway.

5.4 The houses in **Shaftesbury Avenue** were constructed in the 1880s in the Domestic (or Vernacular) Revival style with big gables and prominent and simply decorated chimneys, tile-hanging, double height bay windows and decorative timberwork. Red brick is combined with roughcast render on upper storeys, and clay tiles for roofs. The houses are also linked together by a continuous red clay tiled canopy between the ground and first floors. In most cases, the original sliding sash windows and front doors remain intact. The side elevation of number **2 Shaftesbury Avenue** is given further importance in



A detail of the side elevation to 2 Shaftesbury Avenue showing the Romanesque style arch above the front door.

keeping with its prominent site by the addition of more detailing in a mix of styles typical of the late Victorian era. In this case it takes the form of projecting brick string courses, a projecting chimney with a fine corbelled base and a 'Romanesque' style arch over the front door with 'Early English' style lancet windows on either side. House names are also important in this group and are provided as either carved lettering in stone lintels or in carving in the brick arch spandrels over the front doors.

5.5 There is an interesting pair of red brick houses at numbers **115-117 Loughborough Road**, probably dating from around the 1870s. These have matching Dutch-style gables complete with a ball finial at number 115. Both have double height stone bay windows with shouldered window heads and pierced parapets. The round arched doorcases have ornate carved keystones and the pilasters have been decorated with simplified 'Jacobean' strapwork, a design reflected in the decoration above the second floor windows. The first floor windows also have a touch of the Gothic Revival style in their use of pilasters and stiff-leaf carved capitals.

5.6 On the west-side of Loughborough Road, the former **Belgrave Police Station** stands on the corner of Holden Street. Its pleasing form derives from its symmetrical design consisting of a single storey central section with a pedimented gable over the main entrance door and two storey 'wings' at each end, each having a pavilion-style slate roof and four-pane sash windows. The chimney-stacks are particularly prominent and attractive. There is a very poorly designed extension along the Holden Street frontage but otherwise the building facades remain in almost their original condition. Designed in a simple style, it is an attractive building on a prominent corner.

5.7 Next to the former police station are the **Freemen's Cottages**. These are pleasant two storey flats in the Arts and Crafts style featuring white rendered walls, multi-



The former Police Station, 176-180 Loughborough Road, is one of the few buildings constructed from cream bricks. The frontage consists of a single storey central section and two corner blocks with pavilion style roofs.



The delightful Freeman's Cottages, (174 Loughborough Road) are in the 'Arts and Crafts' architectural style and together with the adjoining former Police Station form a distinguished architectural presence to the western side of the Conservation Area.



Looking south along Loughborough Road from the junction of Windsor Avenue, towards the Humberstone Road telephone tower. The fine copper beech tree (to the left of the picture) is a major focal point.

paned windows and a hipped Swithland slate roof. The principal elevation to Loughborough Road is decorated with a pedimented gable containing Leicester's coat of arms and on the front wall a commemorative plaque dates the building to '1900'.

6.0 Key unlisted buildings

6.1 There are no buildings within the Conservation Area that are statutorily listed as being of architectural or historical importance. However, there are a number of buildings which, although unlisted, make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.2 The following buildings are of particular value:

Nos. 105, 107, 109, 111, 113, 115, 117, 119, 123, 125, 129, 131, 133, 135, 137 & 43 Loughborough Road;

Freemen's Cottages, 174 Loughborough Road;

Former police station, 176-180 Loughborough Road;

1-29 and 2-32 Shaftesbury Avenue.



These two properties at 115 and 117 Loughborough Road have impressive Dutch-style gables and date from the 1870s. The original windows and doors are encased in stone in a style known as 'Gothic Revival'.



A view of the National Space Centre Rocket Tower from the junction of Holden Street and Loughborough Road.

7.0 Townscape

7.1 The term townscape refers to the ways in which views open and close through an area, to changes in level, visual contrasts and linkages, to the textural qualities of a space or a location, and to the rhythms and pattern in the street scene. These elements give an area its individuality and character.

7.2 The Loughborough Road Conservation Area has a distinctly 'linear' composition reflecting its historical development. The quality of the townscape is significantly enhanced by the size and position of the many trees that line Loughborough Road and Shaftesbury Avenue. These serve to soften the hard urban space by enclosing and reducing the scale of this busy highway. At the northern end of the conservation area buildings are seen through trees and trees create a feeling of shadowed seclusion on Shaftesbury Avenue.

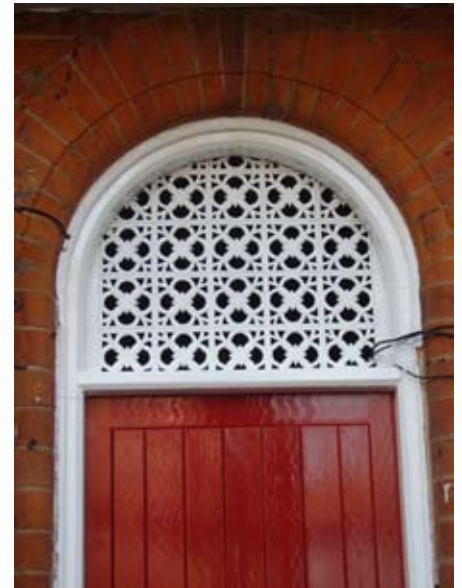


These houses in Shaftesbury Avenue with their heavy gables and fine original canted two-storey bays in a simple 'Cottage' or 'Vernacular Revival' style of architecture help to give much distinction to the Conservation Area.

7.3 Although on plan Loughborough Road appears straight a subtle change of direction can be discerned on the ground. This leads the eye through the conservation area and increases the visual significance of the trees. A fine mature copper beech tree is both a focal point and a visual stop at the north end of Loughborough Road. Looking south towards the city a distant view of the Humberstone Road telephone exchange tower is surprisingly revealed and views west along Holden Street offer glimpses of the rocket tower of the National Space Centre.

7.4 The buildings of the Conservation Area add other qualities to the townscape, not least the patterns and rhythms created by triangular and curved gables and the outlines of chimneys along the skyline. Front garden walls form a continuous building line, defining the public and private spaces. However, the lack of a solid edge to the petrol filling station has a negative effect on the corner of Windsor Avenue.

7.5 Shaftesbury Avenue has its own particular identity, being a quiet enclave sheltered from the noise and busyness of Loughborough Road. It is also of particular townscape merit, being an attractive architectural set piece with matching terraces on either side of the road. Bay windows and their fenestration create regular vertical rhythms while a strong horizontal is formed by the canopy which connects all the houses in a continuous line. The first floor gables and chimneys add interest to the skyline and the mouldings on window frames, doors and canopy brackets provide visual interest at the smaller scale. The decorative pierced wrought iron screens above the passageway gates reinforce the patterns made by the fish-scale tiling and the mock half-timbering on the upper floors and gables.



Original decorative items on Shaftesbury Avenue; above, pierced decorative cast iron panel above an access door and below, a five panelled original front door.



A close-up of the decorative detailing to one of the properties on Shaftesbury Avenue.

8.0 Building materials

8.1 As with much of Leicester the dominant material used in the Conservation Area is orange/red brick, although some cream bricks are used on the larger buildings. Roofs tend to be of Welsh slate with red clay used to some effect on the canopy roofs in Shaftesbury Avenue and for the ridge tiles at 93-103 Loughborough Road where they are of a pierced pattern. Swithland slate appears on the earliest building (119 Loughborough Road). Some brickwork has been painted or rendered, generally to the detriment of a building's appearance.



A part of the decorative brick wall at 123 and 125 Loughborough Road.

8.2 Bay windows on the grander properties are made of stone while those on terraced houses are generally timber. The usual windows are sliding sash. A few original doors remain on Loughborough Road but the majority are to be found on Shaftesbury Avenue. These have five fielded panels and have been well copied where replacements were made during the 1991 envelope scheme. Many original number-plates and name plaques also remain. Where they are not missing altogether, garden gates come in a variety of styles and materials, from traditional timber gates to decorative wrought iron.

8.3 In the northern part of Loughborough Road, most of the front garden walls have been lost. A short section remains at numbers 123 and 125 and a number of brick piers with decorative limestone caps survive, such as at number 133. Cast iron decorative panels have been incorporated into the rebuilt front boundary wall 119 Loughborough Road. South of Windsor Avenue, many of the residential garden walls and railings have been rebuilt. Elsewhere there is a mix of concrete blocks and rendered bricks that are generally out of character with the area. Road surfaces are of black tarmac with a red tarmac bus lane on the southbound carriageway. Pavements are of concrete slabs with granite kerbs. Grey and red clay paviors have been used for speed humps in Shaftesbury Avenue and Windsor Avenue.



Sections of the original cast iron railings have been incorporated into the modern boundary wall at 119 Loughborough Road.

9.0 Open spaces and trees

9.1 There are no formal open spaces in this small conservation area, green space being entirely provided by private gardens. Unfortunately, virtually all of the original landscaped domestic gardens in the northern part of the conservation area have been replaced with the tarmac surfaces of car parks. These car parks are extremely prominent in the street scene and there is a need to encourage landscaping of the front of these properties to screen the car parking areas. Some informally planted beds have been made



Individual features such as the original slate boundary marker to be found outside 119 Loughborough Road and the cast iron street nameplate (below), all contribute to the character of the street scene.



At 123 and 125 Loughborough Road both the mature trees and some of the garden landscaping have survived and help to soften the impact of car parking within the grounds.



Many of the trees to be found in the Conservation area are subject to Tree Preservation Orders including here at 133 Loughborough Road.

along the front boundaries or close to buildings but generally all that remains of the original gardens are the trees along the front and side boundaries. Parts of the

original front boundary wall and garden remain at 123-5 Loughborough Road in the form of an oval driveway around a large central bed planted with hedging and trees, but this is not readily visible from the street. In Shaftesbury Avenue, front gardens are little more than 1.5m deep forecourts behind 1m high walls and few are cultivated, being generally concreted over and used as dustbin storage areas.

9.2 Therefore, the contribution made to the quality and character of the Conservation Area by its many mature trees (both on private land and on the street) is not to be underestimated. These are significant amenity features, a fact recognised by the designation of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) which cover most of the trees along Loughborough Road (see Appendix 2). Almost all the trees are broadleaf species such as lime, horse chestnut, copper beech and birch. The leaf colour (particularly that of the copper beeches) is also an important amenity feature and complements the building materials used in the area as well as contrasting with the green of other trees.

9.3 Since the first TPO was made in the late 1970s, some trees have died or become diseased or, as at 139 Loughborough Road, been removed as a result of approved building works. Some other trees have been subject to unauthorised pruning or lopping. The few English elms in the area when the Conservation Area was declared have been lost to Dutch Elm disease. The street trees have been crown-lifted.

9.4 The trees in private car parks are under considerable pressure from parked cars and impermeable surfaces, suggesting the need for better design and layout of these parking areas to protect the existing trees. The close proximity of trees to one another and the narrow planting spaces which they occupy means that there is little opportunity to plant new trees.

9.5 Responsibility for street trees lies with the City Council and management and replacement programmes are essential elements in conserving the character of the area. Strategies and management plans are being developed for street trees throughout the city and this will help to maintain the distinctive character of the area by ensuring that street trees are kept in good condition and any diseased or dying trees are replaced at the earliest opportunity. Until such plans are completed the Council will carry out all works to street trees on the basis of its EMAS (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme) policies.



The filling-station at the corner of Windsor Avenue and Loughborough Road has resulted in an unfortunate break to the building line and a subsequent loss of character.



The flat-roofed 1970s extension to 119 Loughborough Road is of poor architectural quality and detrimental to this part of the Conservation Area.

10.0 Lighting and street furniture

10.1 The street lighting is carried on modern steel columns. A traffic light-controlled junction with pedestrian crossing facilities was recently installed at Loughborough Road/ Holden Street/Windsor Avenue while, just outside the Conservation Area boundary, a prominent and intrusive traffic camera, mounted on a large column, has been erected on the corner of Holden Street. A modern cantilever bus shelter is located outside 129 Loughborough Road.

11.0 Loss of character

11.1 Before the Conservation Area was declared, the demolition of the terrace of houses at the corner of Loughborough Road and Windsor Avenue in the 1970s and their replacement with a flat-roofed office block had a seriously detrimental effect on the appearance and character of the area. The open aspect of the petrol filling station on the opposite corner has a further negative effect on a prominent location within the Conservation Area.

11.2 Although not widespread, there has been some loss of original features such as timber sash windows and doors. This has damaged the character of the conservation area because the replacements generally do not reflect the fine detail and proportions of the originals (see paragraph 12.4). Where brickwork has been painted or rendered, this has obscured the attractive brick colour as well as incurring higher maintenance costs.

11.3 The greatest loss of character has been the removal of front boundary walls and gardens, particularly on Loughborough Road. However, lack of boundary wall maintenance on Shaftesbury Avenue has led to these formerly matching features displaying a mixed variety of heights, designs and colours to the detriment of the street scene.

11.4 High levels of traffic and associated noise, pollution and roadside equipment are an unfortunate feature of Loughborough Road and are detrimental to both the visual and aural qualities of the Conservation Area.

12.0 Preserving the character

12.1 The previous sections have described how the setting, the relationship of buildings and open spaces and architectural details have contributed to the special character and appearance of the Loughborough Road Conservation Area. It is important that these qualities are preserved and policies in the City of Leicester Local Plan (currently under review) are designed to protect the area's character, for example by ensuring that new development takes account of the scale, form, materials and details of its surroundings.

12.2 Conservation Area Consent must be obtained for the demolition of all but the smallest buildings (such as outbuildings) within the area. There are also tighter restrictions on advertisements and on the installation of satellite dishes than elsewhere. The Council accepts, however, that it would be unreasonable to oppose the installation of satellite dishes altogether, but normally requires that dishes and antennae are placed on the rear of buildings so as to have the least possible effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

12.3 The details of individual properties are also important in forming the character of the area, for example, the decorative use of timber for windows, porches and doors and the external detailing of houses built in the 19th century.

12.4 Repair and restoration work should always try to retain the original appearance of the building and be in materials to match the originals. In particular, the use of upvc to replace original timber windows is not normally acceptable, particularly on elevations facing the street. Not only is upvc an alien material in the area, but the proportion, detail and thickness of glazing bars seldom replicate the intricacy and fine detail of the original windows. Similarly, the use of outward opening "mock-sash" windows, even when made of timber, are rarely a satisfactory substitute for sash windows. Not only are the traditional sash boxes lost, but the outward-opening of the window, can visually disrupt the rhythm of a terrace. Wherever possible, therefore, existing window frames should be repaired rather than replaced.



Unauthorised and insensitive replacement uPVC windows and doors result in the loss of much of the architectural character of a property.

12.5 Equally important is the retention of original roofing materials, such as Welsh slates and tiles. Wherever possible, original slates should be re-used, supplemented if necessary with second-hand ones, rather than be replaced with alternative types. Artificial slates, in particular, have a shiny, regular appearance not in keeping with the appearance of a natural slate roof. Cast-iron gutters and down pipes are also important. Chimney-stacks are important to the appearance of a property and contribute skyline interest and should be retained and, if necessary re-built or re-pointed, rather than capped.

12.6 Conservation area designation alone does not prevent minor alterations to houses which could spoil the character and appearance of the whole area. For instance, original timber sash windows and doors can be replaced in upvc and houses can be rendered and re-roofed in modern materials without the need for planning permission. Alterations such as these are “permitted development” under the Town and Country Planning General Development Order.

12.7 In order to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, the City Council is to declare an Article 4(2) Direction on Nos. 1-29 and 4-32 Shaftesbury Avenue. This will remove permitted development rights so that planning permission will be required for any external alterations likely to affect the appearance of the property when viewed from the street, such as:

- extensions
- replacement windows and doors
- re-roofing or alterations to chimneys and ridge tiles
- erection of porches
- removal of front garden walls or fences
- erection of gates, walls or fences
- covering walls by rendering, painting the brickwork or cladding walls in stone, artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles.

12.8 The Direction will not apply to properties in use as flats in the Conservation Area since flats do not enjoy permitted development rights and planning permission is already required for the types of alterations listed above.

12.9 Trees in conservation areas, with a few exceptions, are protected by law and anyone intending to carry out works to a tree must give the City Council notice of their intentions. The Council then has six weeks to consider the proposal.

12.10 Some trees in the area are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (see Appendix 2), which makes it an offence to cut-down, top, lop, uproot or wilfully destroy a protected tree without the City Council’s permission. Any such proposal must be submitted as a formal application and include details of, and justification for, the work proposed.

13.0 Conservation Area boundary

13.1 The Council is required to periodically review the boundaries of conservation areas and to consider cancellation of designation where part of an area is no longer considered to possess the special interest which justified the original designation.

13.2 As part of this assessment, the boundaries of the Loughborough Road Conservation Area have been re-assessed. It is proposed to revise the boundaries by removing 89 Loughborough Road and the land to the front of the Royal Mail sorting office from the Conservation Area (Map 1). Other than this minor change, it is considered that the special architectural and historic interest of the remainder of the area continues to justify its special status.

APPENDIX I List of Buildings within the Loughborough Road Conservation Area

Loughborough Road	Nos. 93-117 (odd), 117 ½, 119, 121-141 (odd), 174 (Freemen's Cottages), 176-180 (even) (No. 89 to be removed from the Conservation Area)
Shaftesbury Avenue	Nos. 1-29 (odd), 2-32 (even)
Windsor Avenue	Nos. 1, 12-14, 20

There are no listed buildings in the Conservation Area.

APPENDIX 2 Tree Preservation Orders (see map 2)

111-143 Loughborough Road

123 Loughborough Road

APPENDIX 3 Glossary of architectural terms

bracket	a small supporting piece of stone or other material to carry a supporting weight
canted	having splayed sides
capital	the head or crowning feature of a column
corbelled	courses of bricks each built out slightly above the one below
dentil	a small square block, usually one of a series, creating a tooth-like pattern
doorcase	decorative timber or stone framing a doorway
Early English	one of the historical divisions of English architecture of the period 1190 -1250 and characterised by the use of the simple pointed arch
fanlight	a window over a door
finial	a formal ornament at the top of a gable or pinnacle
fishscale	the pattern created by overlapping the semi-circular edges of decorative slates or tiles
fluted	shallow concave groove pattern which runs vertically down a column shaft

hipped roof	a roof which has sloped instead of vertical ends
Ionic	used to describe a column with a fluted shaft and a capital formed by a double scroll
Jacobean	one of the historical divisions of English architecture of the period 1603-25
keystone	the central wedge-shaped stone at the top of an arch
lintel	a horizontal beam bridging an opening
moulding	a continuous groove or projection used decoratively to throw shadow on, or water away from, a wall
parapet	a low wall along the outer edge of a roof
pavilion roof	a roof where each of the four sides slopes equally
pediment	a low pitched gable shape over a door or window
pilaster	a shallow rectangular column which projects only slightly from a wall
quatrefoil	a decoration formed by combining parts of four circles to create a flower shape
quoin	dressed stones laid at the corners of buildings, usually in alternating large and small sizes
Romanesque	used to describe buildings or architectural features in the 'Roman' style (such as round arches etc)
shouldered	a method of decorating the top corners of a door or window frame by curving the vertical member before continuing it vertically to meet the lintel
sikhara	the spire or tower of a Hindu temple, over the sanctuary
spandrel	the triangular space which is created between a horizontal line from the apex of an arch and a vertical line from the point from which the arch springs
strapwork	ornamentation consisting of interlaced flat bands which look like straps
string course	a continuous decorative horizontal band projecting from a wall and usually moulded
tile-hanging	a covering of over-lapping rows of tiles on a vertical surface
Tuscan	used to describe a column with a plain shaft and simple cushion-like capital

