



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

BARWELL CONSERVATION AREAS APPRAISAL

AREA A - HIGH STREET

AREA B - ARTHUR STREET

September 2010

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Conservation Areas in Barwell were declared in July 2001. The principle purpose of the designation was to protect those parts of the village, which are closely associated with the village's industrial past.
- 1.2 The majority of historical industrial buildings in Barwell are concentrated in two small areas. The first area (Area A) is along the High Street where factories are scattered along the North west side of the road. The second (Area B) is around Arthur Street and King Street to the north of the main Leicester to Hinckley Road and developed after area A.
- 1.3 The Conservation Areas have been subdivided according to areas of different character. Each area is analysed in terms of its buildings of townscape merit, distinctive details and features of interest, green spaces and vegetation.

2 Historical Development

- 2.1 The earliest record of the village is in a document drawn up in 1042 which records that Leofric, Earl of Mercia, gave the Manor of Barewelle to the Abbey of Coventry. This is confirmed nearly 50 years later in the Domesday Book of 1086 where it is referred to as Berryall. In later years it became Bearwell which it is thought to refer to a Boar and a stream, the name meaning boar stream. This is thought to be the stream which crosses Mill Street to the west of the Conservation Area and is now called the Tweed. Early in the 12th century the Manor was given to Hugh de Hastings by King Henry I. It remained in the Hastings family until 1353 when it passed by marriage to Robert Grey. The Grey family held the Manor until 1596 when it came in to the possession of John Harrington although it was subsequently sold to John Culverwell in 1600. In 1620 there were about 500 people living in Barwell and the Shentons became the Lords of the Manor.

2.2 Farming

Until the 19th century the main occupation of villagers was farming and the settlement was concentrated around the junction of Barwell Lane, the High Street and Mill Lane. It was in this area that the most important buildings were to be found, the Church of St Mary, the Rectory and the Manor House.

2.3 Framework Knitting

By the 1840's, however, the principal trade in Barwell and the neighbouring village of Earl Shilton was framework knitting, manufacturing stockings on hand frames in the home or in small back workshops. Since all its 400 frames were narrow ones employed on

fashioned hose, poverty was rife. At that time its population was only 1300 persons which suggest there was probably one frame in every house. When the Civil War broke out in America in 1861 the northern states blockaded southern ports and exports of cotton dried up. The stocking frame trade in this part of Leicestershire was hit hard. Despite something of a recovery in the years between 1865 and 1875, steam power was starting to be applied to the hosiery work and employment based on hand frames at home was coming to an end.

2.4 Boot and Shoe

2.4.1 In the 1860's the Leicester boot and shoe manufacturers moved part of their production process to the area. Leather uppers were cut and closed in Leicester factories with village outworkers making and finishing the shoes in their homes, an arrangement known locally as "basket work". From the late 1880's the process was centralised within new factories built within the village. By 1896 there were 11 shoe manufactures in Barwell and 12 in the neighbouring village of Earl Shilton. This industry prospered in the early part of the 20th Century, supplying boots to the military during the 1914-18 war. At their peak in the early 1950's, the factories of Barwell, Earl Shilton and Hinckley produced over 7 million pairs of shoes per year. Subsequently however the industry declined in the face of foreign competition and the factory buildings were put to other uses or demolished.

2.4.2 The boot and shoe industry, however, has left a built legacy in the town, largely in the form of old factories and smaller associated workshops. Most of these were situated in the areas of Victorian development close to the High Street and there are some surviving former factories within this part of the Conservation Area, notably in Goose Lane, Argyle Terrace and The Barracks. Later period factories also have survived particularly adjacent to Arthur Street in the northern part of the village that lies in the second designated Area. Redevelopment pressures in the village have undoubtedly resulted in the loss of other buildings associated with the industry. Surviving buildings within the study area, which are known or suspected as having had associations with Barwell's industrial past, are indicated on the map.

2.5 The Barwell and District Co-operative Society

2.5.1 In parallel with the rise of the boot and shoe industry and reacting to the general poverty in the settlement, villagers set up the independent Barwell Co-operative Society in 1871 in a double fronted house opposite Church Lane on the High Street in what was then a central location in the village. Business expanded and in 1883 the land along Argyle Terrace was purchased and in 1884 the factory complex was constructed. In

1890 the Penny Bank was started and the following year a bakery, drapery and the Hall was opened and it entered the coal trade. The Society also set up an education department in 1896, which established a free library for the village and ran classes in social, literary and political subjects and provided free collective life assurance facilities for its members. Several cottages in Queen Street were built for members in 1906 followed by a scheme in Townend Road. These properties included bathrooms and electric light which was far in advance of others in the locality. In 1902 the Society expanded into other villages in the area including Stapleton, Kirby Mallory, Peckleton and Elmsthorpe and in 1904 took over the Earl Shilton Society. In 1905 a field was purchased on Common Lane and divided up into allotments for members. The Penny Bank continued to expand lending funds to members to purchase their houses and land to grow food. In 1915 Crabtree farm was purchased followed in 1920 by the purchase of Barwell Fields Farm giving 210 acres in total. Further expansion saw the opening of second shop premises at the corner of Shilton Road and Chapel Street.

2.5.2 With the decline in local employment and the commercial centre of the village gravitating to Top Town, the Society went into decline and sold the Argyle Terrace complex in the late 1960's. It was bought by an engineering company and then divided into the small units, which eventually closed. It is currently being converted into residential apartments.

2.5.3 Today, as a result of its history, village development is disjointed, but the remnants of farming, framework knitting and several phases of the boot and shoe industry can be detected. These include Ivens Farm on Barwell Lane, a terrace of framework knitter's cottages on Kirby Lane, and several rows of garden wall workshops. Remnants of the earlier phase of the boot and shoe industry can be seen at the Mill Lane and Goose Lane corner where there are 2 storey brick factories with loading doors. Of further interest is the early 20th Century development of elaborate office blocks fronting extensive north light workshops on Arthur Street and Kirby Road.

3 Character of the Conservation Areas

3.1 Despite recent major changes to the nature of the population of the village, the legacy of the boot and shoe industry still ensures that the prevailing image is that of an industrial settlement. The retention of the former factories, their associated buildings and yards are essential to the preservation of the character of both Conservation Areas.

AREA A
THE HIGH STREET CONSERVATION AREA

General description and comment

A1 Townscape

A1.1 Although a ridge top village, the topography of the Conservation Area, generally, slopes gently to the south-west. This has the effect of exaggerating the sense of height in uphill views, despite the modest scale of the streets. The High Street, itself, is not straight. It consists of a very subtle curve which gently descends in a south-western direction from Top Town towards its intersection with Mill Street and Barwell Lane. This slight bend is reinforced by the long Victorian terraces and key buildings which line its edges. Thus a sense of enclosure and progression is experienced as the visitor passes along a series of spaces interrupted at intervals by street junctions, occasional building setbacks and planting.

A1.2 Landmark features are limited. The chimney stack and the former Co-operative Society buildings are prominent when viewed from the Blackburn Road junction and the intersection of St Mary's Close with Church Lane. Views of St Mary's Church are restricted to Argyle Terrace and from the Church of England school yard. There are however other important feature buildings within the street that dominate their local area including the primary school, the Queens Head public house and the former bank. These are identified on the Conservation Area map.

A2 Gateways

A2.1 Gateways mark points of transition between the predominantly 20th Century residential areas surrounding the Conservation Area and the designated Area itself. These gateways are defined by changes in the built form, scale and the nature of spaces between buildings. These points of transition can be gradual as in the case of Church Lane where the road passes from one of a predominantly residential character to one of mixed uses and larger scale buildings. Others are more pronounced and recognisable as gateways, such as the Top Town triangle, which provides a clear change in character from the High Street. Top Town is now the village centre and is formed from the space around the intersection of several roads. The gateway into The Barracks is a narrow footpath which links it to the modern residential area of Jersey Way. At the southern end of The High Street the entrance into the Conservation Area is marked by the Red Lion public house and Ivens Farm while on the opposite side of Mill Street, it is the former boot and shoe factory of Arguile, Grewcock and Ward.

Building style, scale and detail

A3 The Historical Development of the Boot and Shoe Building Style

A3.1 The Early Workshops

- A3.1.1 A particular feature of the early boot and shoe industry was the comparatively unmechanised nature of much of the work. This meant that work could be undertaken in almost any space with reasonable lighting, either in purpose-built workshops or even at home, and it resulted in a high proportion of work being undertaken off factory premises as outwork.
- A3.1.2 In addition to which there were many bespoke shoemakers. Shoe-making workshops could take the form of small collective workshops either single-storey buildings or two-storey buildings often with the workshop on a well-lit first floor with other accommodation below. Alternatively, private individuals might work at home either in small buildings at the rear of terraced houses or even within the house itself, often a first floor room. In some cases an older building was adapted to allow the creation of a workshop, and one such has been identified at the rear of Liverpool House, 22 High Street,
- A3.1.3 Domestic work began to decline towards the end of the 19th century this led to the creation of some larger workshops where up to about 30 workers might work together in a single space. However there are many houses, sheds and small workshops within the area that will have connections to the industry. In particular, small brick sheds in back gardens are likely to have a connection to the shoe-making industry and they will therefore have an added historical value and interest.
- A3.1.4 The next stage in the development of the footwear industry in the area was by small local firms and resulted in the erection of relatively small factory buildings. These are, typically, functional buildings whose basic form and appearance was influenced by the sub divisions of the footwear manufacturing process. Decoration and ornamentation of the early buildings was rare and where it did occur was restricted to the front of the building in a bid to impress customers. The design of the buildings was influenced by the need to provide adequate natural light across the factory floor at tabletop level and a rectangular two-storey building was found to be the most satisfactory. The buildings were of brick construction with gabled, slate covered roofs. To ensure an even spread of natural light, elevations have regular arched window openings with simple cast iron frames of thin section to allow the maximum amount of light. The cast iron windows are an essential element of the character of these buildings and must

be retained in any change of use of these factories. Apart from the requirement for good natural light, ventilation was a particularly important aspect of the manufacturing process with careful control of the temperature and humidity necessary for the process. Vents along the ridges of buildings are also a common feature of boot and shoe factories. Another common feature of these factories was a large squat stack on one corner of the gable end. An example can be seen on the Bennett & company works of 1885 on the Barracks. This simple style of building influenced other buildings in the local area and examples have survived.

A3.1.5 The 2 storey factory was later superseded from about 1900 by the 'American system' factories that retained all manufacturing operations within a large single level open space illuminated by north lights above. These early 20th Century factories are a feature of the other Conservation Area in the village centred on Arthur Street. The offices were contained in street frontage buildings which were also normally single storey. A range of decoration and detail was incorporated into the office street elevations, with decorative brick detailing, oriel windows and interesting oculus windows to gable walls. Neoclassical references are also present through various features, including the brick pilasters on the Garner factory on the Arthur Street, Kingsfield Road junction and gables with brick detailed verges in the style of Classical pediments.

A4 Domestic Buildings

A4.1 Roofing Materials

Welsh slates or occasionally plain clay tiles are the common roofing materials. Many have survived although some have been replaced with concrete interlocking tiles. These generally have an unsatisfactory appearance on traditional buildings due to their depth and profiles resulting in a comparatively clumsy finish.

A4.2 Chimneys

There are many examples of brick chimneys in a range of styles, appearing as tall or stout structures on the skyline, often with decorative brickwork and red or pale yellow clay pots. Some buildings have suffered from the removal of these features which has a detrimental effect on the appearance of the roofscape.

A4.3 Windows

Generally, vertical rectangular timber sliding sash windows have been replaced with modern designs of insensitive modern plastic that appear clumsy and incongruous. Despite this most original stone lintels

(sometimes decorated) and cills (sometimes painted over) remain. Brick arches and headers are a common alternative to the stone lintels. Canted bay windows with stone or timber mullions are also prevalent on some terraces towards the south-west end of the High Street. Closer to the village centre the street elevations are flat.

A4.4 Commercial buildings associated with the town centre display examples of upper floor windows of great variety and include oriel windows, large windows with stone quoins, surrounds, mullions and transoms. Decorative brick arches and keystones are also notable on some buildings.

A4.5 **Doors**

Many doors have been replaced and original examples are few in number. Door surrounds are still common and comprise a great variety of styles, from a simple recess to modest stone surrounds, timber canopies and brackets.

A4.6 **Detailing**

Use of simple brick ornamentation is common and appears in a wide variety of forms including dental courses and saw tooth detailing to eaves and chimneys. Terracotta mouldings and plaques also appear on a number of buildings of status within the village and are commonly associated with the former Bank. Such ornament adds to the richness and interest of the streetscape.

A4.7 **Rhythm and Roofscape**

The presence of common features such as, pitched roofs, chimneys, and windows results in a pleasing rhythm of rise and fall and a richness of townscape and architectural detail. Accordingly, the associated roofscape is often visually interesting, punctuated with a varied range of chimneys, dormers heights or other details.

A4.8 **Other Features of Interest**

Long lengths of granite historic kerbs remain exposed in along the High Street with an occasional pavement cast iron rainwater channel bearing the manufacturers name. These are a very interesting feature and an important reference to the village's industrial heritage. Other features of interest include decorative tile thresholds to shops and stone or brick entrance steps.

A4.9 **Trees**

The Conservation Areas are generally a hard landscaped environment and most streets contain little or no vegetation. Where trees occur, either as street trees or trees within the grounds of private property,

they make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. They form an important soft backdrop to the skyline where they are visible in longer views. Their contribution to the character of such places is therefore very important.

A5 Appearance

A5.1 Church Lane

A5.1.1 This Character Area includes the parish church of St Mary, the churchyard and the frontage to Council retirement bungalows. The church is the most important historic building in the village and is a fine stone structure dating principally from the 14th to the late 15th Centuries with later elements. However apart from the church's focal location on this street and occasional views of it from the High Street, the church does not make a very significant impact on other areas because it is rather screened by trees, other buildings and walls.

Within this street, it is complemented by several other historic structures including the 1920 stone War Memorial in Neo-Gothic style and the brick boundary wall of the former Rectory.

A5.1.2 The churchyard is fronted by an old brick wall which links with the former Rectory boundary wall to extend almost to the High Street forming a hard south-western edge to the street. The graveyard is a steeply sloping grassed site surrounded by brick walls on its northern and western sides, an old stone wall to the east and a high hedge and timber fencing to the south. At its entrance stands a fine pair of brick gate piers topped with stone copings. Within this boundary are many stone headstones and monuments set in well-planted grounds. The churchyard is well maintained, although some vandalism of headstones has taken place, and it makes a very quiet haven on the edge of the village centre. It also contains several fine mature trees that together with the trees around the open frontages of the bungalows opposite enhance Church Lane giving it a very distinctive suburban character. The planting in front of the bungalows extends out onto the High Street where several mature trees and the grassed area provide a punctuation mark in the streetscene.

A5.2 The High Street

A5.2.1 This busy street contrasts strongly with the quietness of the churchyard and the suburban Church Lane. The street is generally traditional in character, with consistent frontages, scale, a good sense of enclosure and an interesting rhythm of buildings that harmonise well together. However it is unfortunately clear that some insensitive and low quality

modern facades have been introduced and the detailing on traditional buildings is being progressively lost notably windows, chimney stacks and pots.

A5.2.2 Buildings are normally two stories which give added emphasis to the substantial bulk of the stone and brick frontage of the former Co-operative building and the brick gable of London House. The period of the properties represented on the street are for the most part, Victorian terraces. The blocks are orientated parallel to the street behind short front gardens which are defined by low blue brick walls. Stone steps or blue bricks mainly form the entrance to residential properties which are often raised above the general road level on distinctive blue brick plinths. They are plain fronted but often with a decorative dentil course, string course or occasionally ground floor bay windows. Roofs are slate covered with decorative ridge tiles and high, wide chimney stacks with several pots. These terraces are occasionally broken by larger, rather more decorative late Victorian or Edwardian properties. Whilst there are some common themes, such as the predominance of sash window openings, details are often particular to each terrace

A5.2.3 The shops are concentrated towards Top Town and the commercial frontages themselves vary considerably. Many original ground floor fronts have been removed or substantially altered and, together with oversized and otherwise inappropriate signs, they undermine the quality of building facades and the streetscape at large. However some original and more sensitive examples are to be found in the street. In addition to the rather brash signage, a number of satellite dishes, security cameras and at least one external ventilation unit add distraction to the overall streetscene and they create a general sense of untidiness. The use of external steel security shutters has a very damaging visual and perceptual effect on the area out of opening hours.

A5.3 Top Town

A5.3.1 Although not in the Conservation Area, Top Town plays an important role in understanding the character of the designated area. Its image is that of vacant buildings, blocked up windows, and service yards which mostly dominate. Despite some relatively recent enhancements there is much visual clutter across the space including a varied assortment of street furniture. The bleak skyline of more recent development is very apparent in views around Top Town in particular, the modern Co-operative store which makes a singularly unattractive feature building. The adjacent buildings are of little or no architectural value with poor frontage designs. Three specimen trees make an attractive central focus to the space in an area

that is largely treeless. However the amount of street furniture and other features in the area undermines the full potential of the space. The delineation of roads by different paving materials also detracts from the overall visual coherence of the space.

A5.4 The Barracks

A5.4.1 This street suffers from poorly designed modern housing schemes which have left a large gap in the street frontage. The entrance from the High Street is defined by an over dominant modern apartment building which has introduced large dormer window features which are alien to the general streetscape. Beyond this, an open car park allows the edge of the street to leak away into Shoemith Close. The opposite side, although suffering inappropriate changes including blocked up windows and loss of detail, has retained a traditional terrace frontage which terminates in the gable of the former Victorian boot and shoe factory of Bennett & Company. This was extended on the 1930's with a concrete framed structure which still supports a lifting crane at first floor, probably the last remaining crane in Barwell. Beyond this the streetscene is again dominated by a vast car park behind galvanised security fencing before it narrows to become a footpath which leads into a further modern housing estate. This street urgently requires a careful repair scheme to redefine its original character and the modern concrete kerbs should be returned to granite.

A5.5 Argyle Terrace

A5.5.1 The former Co-operative Society building was constructed in 1884 as a factory. Its appearance is characteristic of the early boot and shoe factories in the village and was originally a two-storey brick structure with a simple rectangular plan although this has been added to over time. The pitched roof is gabled with a slate roof finish and the walls have regular window openings with cast iron frames. Its orientation, at right angles to the High Street, is consistent with other similar shoe factories in this part of the Conservation Area. Although subsequently extended northwards a few years after construction, to increase its width, the new north elevation has similar cast iron window frames and very much in keeping with the original style. There have been minor changes to some opening lights, the south elevation has been rendered, and additional openings formed in the east gable. These changes have had very limited impact and do not detract from the building's appearance.

- A5.5.2 To the original building was added the north south cross wing which was constructed as the Society's butchery department around 1887. It also borrows from the boot and shoe factories of the period, with the same features as the north-south building but with the addition of a projecting full height brick chimney which is a landmark feature in the area.
- A5.5.3 Attached to the cross wing is a single storey structure which was the Co-operative Society's bakery. This building has a simple rectangular plan, pitched roof of steel truss construction with a slate covered pitched roof. The ridge is broken by large raised ventilation grilles. The bakery is believed to have been constructed around 1912. It has a very distinctive appearance and is prominently located near the junction of the public footpath, which defined the edge of the settlement at that time, and the footpath into the High Street along Argyle Terrace.
- A5.5.4 Adjacent to this building is the privies block which is an interesting historical feature. This large complex of buildings is currently being converted into apartments as part of a large residential development which improves this part of the Conservation Area. Although this street currently has no defined edges, the new scheme will rectify this by forming defined pavements with kerbs.

A5.6 Barwell Lane

- A5.6.1 This was the original route which linked Barwell to the town of Hinckley. Although now a footpath for most of its length, within the Conservation Area it has been surfaced with tarmac to provide vehicular access to the new residential properties which form part of the Ivens Farm complex. The farmhouse and its associated agricultural buildings have been sympathetically converted into residential use. Both the former farmyard and its barns are easily recognisable and together with the public house opposite have retained a very distinctive rural character which is unique in the settlement. The Red Lion Inn stands at its junction with the High Street and Mill Lane and its unusual frontage with its central feature window forms a visual stop to the end of the High Street. Opposite is an abandoned rendered two story property which also helps to define the transition from the High Street to Mill Street.

A5.7 Mill Street

- A5.7.1 The Conservation Area extends a short distance along Mill Street up to the entrance into Goose Lane. This part of the street has Arguile Villas, a late 19th Century two storey terrace (constructed 1890) on its northern side which terminates in a former boot and shoe factory orientated at right angles to the

street. This two storey brick structure has been unsympathetically modified. Its pitched roof has been replaced with a flat roof and a modern aluminium shop front has been inserted into its street elevation. Several of its cast iron windows have been lost or blocked up. A second two storey factory of similar proportions stands at the Goose Lane junction.

A5.8 Goose Lane

A5.8.1 This is a weak, undefined area of hard standing backed by modern sheds of no architectural or townscape value. These buildings consist of low level brickwork, steel cladding and asbestos roofs. They present an image of poor frontages and streetscape clutter which contrasts starkly with the early twentieth century two storey brick boot and shoe factory which forms the northern edge. Although the street elevations of this building has been much altered with a large roller shutter door inserted, several original cast iron windows blocked up with rendered panels and inappropriate signage added, the rear facade has retained most of their original character.

AREA B
ARTHUR STREET CONSERVATION AREA

B1 Historical development

B1.1 At the end of the 19th century, the village was concentrated between Top Town and Mill Lane. North of this along Kirby Lane was a terrace of framework knitting cottages and open fields of Goose Green. To the south along Shilton Lane was an occasional residential property but nothing else. It was along Kirby Road on the flatter south side land that the first of the new boot and shoe factories was built. The Barwell Productive Society moved there into a new factory at the turn of the next century and the adjacent terrace was constructed for their workers. This factory later becomes known as the Sperope. It was followed by the Moulds and Moore Factory on Shilton Road opposite the entrance into King Street. The area quickly developed into the new centre for the boot and Shoe industry in Barwell with many factories based on single storey production under multi north light units with narrow office buildings of simple design fronting the street.

B2 Character Statement

B2.1 This area represents the true industrial landscape in the village as it existed at the highpoint of the boot and shoe industry. Walking down Arthur Street and King Street, despite the recent unfortunate alterations to the frontages, it is still possible to appreciate the atmosphere of this important bygone era. Cast iron windows in simple brick elevations beneath slate covered roofs; the saw-tooth profiles of massive north light bays punctuated by occasional brick chimney stacks; granite kerbstones with four set gutters, decorative entrance doors and raised loading docks are key features which have given residents and visitors a very precious environment which must be valued and protected for its own sake.

B2.2 These buildings unfortunately have become simply cheap space to be exploited for maximum returns for minimal investment. They are worth much more than this because they represent a period when Barwell was one of the most important centres of industrial production in the county, if not the country.

B3 Setting

B3.1 The designated Area is surrounded by residential properties which are two stories high. To the west and closer to the historic heart of the village they are generally Victorian or Edwardian terraces and beyond, to the east they are short terraces semi detached dwellings dating from the 1930's or 1950's All are brick or rendered properties, two storeys high, with either slate or tiled roofs. Typical features include bay windows, chimneys and bargeboards. Gardens fronting the streets are short and generally edged with low blue brick boundary walls.

B4 Townscape

- B4.1 Buildings in the Conservation Area stand on land which rises towards a high point at the intersection of George Street and Arthur Street. The Grewcock Factory, which is constructed on its steepest section, has introduced an undercroft and stepped factory space to overcome this difficulty.
- B4.2 Roads within the Conservation Area were set out in the early part of the last century for the purpose of providing easy vehicular access to the factories. They are made up of short straight sections which link the various factory frontages. As such they reinforce the industrial character of the buildings themselves and are an integral part of the areas character.
- B4.3 With the exception of the modern office at the intersection with King Street, the buildings are either single or two stories in height which is in keeping with the residential properties around the area. These were built very close to or tight up to the back edge of its pavements.

B5 Gateways

- B5.1 At the western entrance into Arthur Street is a fine Edwardian residential terrace which incorporates a fine Victorian shop front at the entrance to the Conservation Area. This two storey brick terrace conceals two rows of rare boot and shoe outworker's workshops which stand beyond the end of their long gardens separated by a jitty also gives direct access onto Arthur Street and the boot and shoe factories. These small brick structures, in some cases still retain the tools, vice and work bench of their former occupants. Immediately to the south of this terrace is a short row of framework knitter's cottages. These are recognisable because of their smaller scale and the distinctive five light windows at ground floor.
- B5.2 The eastern entrance is defined by the former Moulds and Moore boot and shoe factory which stands opposite the entrance into King Street. This impressive three storey brick building has been sympathetically converted into apartments and it still retains recognisable industrial features such as the former loading bay. It is a key landmark building on Shilton Road. To the west of this building is the former Baptist chapel, currently being converted into apartments. This building also stands as a reminder of the strong none conformist religious legacy of the Victorian period.

B6 Building Style, Scale and Detail

- B6.1 Within this designated area there are three distinct types of building, each representing the industry from different periods.

- B6.2 The earliest factories are two storey blocks with flat elevations beneath slate covered pitched roofs. The Konfidence Works on Arthur Street and the Harvey, Harvey Factory on George Street are surviving examples. These buildings stand parallel to the road frontage at the back edge of pavement. Their elevations are broken only by a regular pattern of cast iron windows and an occasional timber door. The windows themselves are constructed in a simple rectangular grid of glazing bars within which the central four sections form a horizontally pivoted opening light. Thin steel escape staircases, often a later addition, decorate their gables and provide access from the first floors down into the factory service yards. These are vast areas of land sometimes hard surfaced and sometimes not, usually interrupted by long concrete loading docks and bounded by steel fencing onto the street.
- B6.3 Factories developed in the 1930's followed the earlier American style of narrow brick single storey office buildings beneath slate roof coverings which conceal continuous bays of north light factory units. The Garner and the Grewcock Factories on Arthur Street are typical examples in the Conservation Area. These single storey units revolutionised the industry by making it much more efficient. The new style factories provided a large, almost clear, space with an even distribution of natural light directly from above which was in sharp contrast to the earlier side lit factories. Again factories stand on the back edge of the pavement to make maximum use of their site area. Only the George Ward Factory is set a short distance back to permit a narrow area of planting along the Arthur Street frontage. Their elevations are simple although not as plain as the earlier factories. Their frontages, in the main, are broken by brick piers at regular intervals which reflected the internal column spacing of the north-light units. Decoration, in the form of concrete canopies or herringbone brickwork, is usually restricted to office entrances. Large factory yards, now always hard surfaced, link the north lights to the street providing access for motorised vehicles and workers alike.
- B6.4 The most recent development has introduced a large modern office building onto the former Harvey, Harvey factory site. The appearance of this building is in complete contrast to all others in this Conservation Area. It has a flat roof, long horizontal continuous windows and a large glazed entrance off Arthur Street. It dominates the street and it is unfortunate that its design has ignored all the features and character of the surrounding area.
- B6.5 Residential properties in the Conservation Area are restricted to a detached property Street and a recent development of apartments on King Street. These apartments have been designed to reflect an early two storey brick factory which to a degree they have done.

B7 Boundary Treatments

B7.1 Modern galvanised security fencing is the principle treatment of the street edges of service yards. This is out of character with the traditional appearance of the area. They should be replaced with metal fencing of a more sympathetic design or a combination of low brick walls and fencing.

B7.2 Contribution of Spaces and Natural Elements

This is an industrial area and all spaces are hard surfaced. Planting is restricted to low shrubs along a narrow strip in front of the George Ward Factory. Because this greenery is unique, it is important that it is well maintained.

Appearance

B8 Important Factory Buildings

Kirby Road

B8.1 Sperope Factory

The Barwell Productive Society was founded as a co-operative in 1890 in a small yard off the High Street also known as Piccadilly. Each worker invested £5 to start up the firm which was run as a co-operative. In 1895 the company was renamed the Sperope Boot Manufacturing Company and it relocated to Kirby Road. It was taken over in the 1950's by the George Ward Company, eventually closing. The rear north light factory buildings have been demolished although the principle office building has been successfully incorporated into an apartment building known as Twyford Court, which stands as a landmark on the street.

B8.2 The Hall and Geary Factory

This company specialised in the manufacture of boys and girl's boots and shoes. The owner, Mr Hall, lived opposite the factory in a house called Baveno. Unfortunately the company went into bankruptcy in the 1950's although it was subsequently bought by George Ward and used as offices for several years. The factory eventually closed and the building remained empty for several years. Although the rear factory units have been demolished, the offices on Kirby Road have been incorporated into a social housing scheme and stand as a reminder of this former industry on the street frontage.

B8.3 Arthur Street

B8.3.1 Arthur Street was the main centre for the boot and shoe industry in the village during the early part of the last century when production was at its height. Important factories which illustrate this period include:

B8.4 The Grewcock Factory

This company was founded by Harry Grewcock, nicknamed Nazy. The factory specialised in boys and girls' boots and shoes. The company became part of the George Ward shoe empire in the 1930's when its founder became a 'clicker' for the new owner taking leather home in a wheelbarrow and returned the finished work to the factory.

B8.5 The Garner Factory

This simple single storey brick building conceals a large single storey range of north light factory units. The company was founded by Harry Garner but had a short life going into bankruptcy in the 1930's when it was also taken over by the George Ward Shoe Company.

B8.6 The Hodgkin's and Powers Factory

Also known as the Konfidence Works, this factory stands opposite the Garner factory and is a two storey brick structure. Again this company specialised in boys and girls boots and shoes although it was sold in the 1960s. Its design has elegant simplicity which is visually attractive. Unfortunately the inappropriate signage and current poor maintenance regime is having a detrimental impact on its appearance.

B8.7 The George Ward Factory

George Ward set up business in 1894 with John Arguile and William Grewcock. His business expanded in the depression when he took over four Barwell factories and he eventually became one of the country's largest footwear manufacturers. In his view this was because of his skill and knowledge of leather, paying his bills within a week and gaining good discounts. This was the first factory to manufacture trainers although he turned down a contract to make Doc Martens boots. The factory closed in 1989. It is now used for storage by a bed importing company.

George Street

B8.8 The Harvey, Harvey Company Factory

This is a brick two storey factory on George Street which again is suffering from poor maintenance and inappropriate changes. Brothers William and Enos Harvey began manufacturing boys and girls' shoes

around 1900 moving to George Street in 1930. The company had many famous clients including Petula Clark, Tony Alcock and they made the coloured suede shoes for the pop group Showaddywaddy.

B8.9 The Amos Moore and Company Factory

This factory on King Street is one of the earliest shoe manufacturers. Bought by Harvey, Harvey and Company in the 1930's it is now owned by David Spencer and is in mixed use.

Shilton Road

B8.10 Moulds and Moore Factory

Standing on Shilton Road is the three storey former factory of Moulds and Moore. This company was established in 1920 and made boys, girls and ladies shoes. It has recently been converted into an apartment building.

FACTORS HAVING A NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREAS.

C1 Poorly Maintained Buildings

C1.1 The proposed Area contains examples of buildings where maintenance of the fabric is poor. Only examples that are visible from the street have been observed but other, less accessible areas such as roofs and the rear of buildings may also harbour unseen maintenance problems. Maintenance issues include blocked gutters, leaking roofs, and unmaintained paintwork. In addition, broken windows afford access to pests such as pigeons, which can cause damage over the long term. Poor maintenance can be a particular problem in town centre areas where access to roofs, upper floors and the rear of buildings can be restricted and landlords may be absent. If left unchecked relatively minor maintenance problems will eventually result in more significant issues, damage to historic fabric and even threaten the future of the building in question. It is particularly important that listed buildings and buildings of townscape merit are appropriately maintained in order to ensure their long term survival and ongoing contribution to the Conservation Area. Various buildings have also been modified through the application of a render coat over the top of an original exterior wall of stone or brick, often resulting in an unsatisfactory appearance.

C2 Loss of Architectural Features

C2.1 The quality of some buildings has been diminished due to alterations and changes that have resulted in the loss of important architectural features and historic fabric. Particularly notable has been the replacement of period windows with modern replacements, mostly plastic, which generally appear clumsy and crude in period buildings and detract from their visual appeal and character. Front doors have also been replaced in many instances, again usually with poor modern designs which appear incongruous in their context.

C2.2 Other changes and potential threats include the replacement of original roofing materials, such as Welsh slates or clay tiles, with cheaper modern alternatives such as concrete interlocking tiles. These modern tiles have a deep section and bold profile that give a heavy appearance to the roof and lack the elegance and simplicity of historic roofing materials. Concrete tiles can also fade over time in contrast to natural materials which often develop an attractive mellow quality and patina of age.

C2.3 Chimneys are prominent architectural features of many period buildings and make an important contribution to the roofscape of various streetscenes. However, alternative methods of heating and the challenges associated with maintaining chimneys, particularly within a town centre environment, could threaten the retention of these features in the long term, with owners seeking to remove rather than maintain

them. Many good examples remain, and these make an important contribution to the character and appearance of many parts of the Conservation Area. However, chimneys have been removed in a number of instances and where this has occurred the quality of the townscape has been degraded.

C2.4 The loss of architectural features and historic fabric has occurred over time and is the result of many individual decisions regarding property maintenance. The degree of change is almost imperceptible, taking place over a period of years. However, the collective impacts of what often appear to be many relatively minor changes add up to a cumulative degradation of the quality of the townscape by process of gradual erosion.

C3 The Quality of the Public Realm and General Streetscape

C3.1 The High Street is a key street within the town although its narrow pavements are surfaced with macadam, its early granite kerb stones have almost throughout its length have been retained. The surface treatment continues along Church Lane although to a much lesser degree and along The Barracks. Recent interventions by the Highway Authority, however, have seen the unfortunate introduction of concrete kerbs particularly adjacent to the church and war memorial. This streetscape contrasts strongly with the intervening streets and spaces which incorporate concrete edgings to define the pavements or where there are no pavements or surfacing at all such as Argyle terrace. The pedestrian areas of Top Town, at the northern end of this Conservation Area, have been surfaced with predominantly dated block pavior materials of indifferent quality. Street clutter is also problematic in some locations.

C4 Legacy of Poorly Designed Development

C4.1 Both Conservation Areas contains several modern developments, which appear out of context with the historic streetscape of Barwell. The characteristics of these areas include buildings with a large scale, mass and bulky rectangular forms which jar with the more fine grain of the historic townscape. Buildings are frequently set within their site rather than situated on the outside edges of the plot, resulting in poor levels of enclosure and weakly defined streetscape. The new housing on The Barracks and the retirement bungalows on Church Lane are examples where the streetscape is adversely affected by development of this nature. The apartments at the junction of the High Street and The Barracks is also a detrimental form which creates an imposing but visually impoverished building in a key central location.

C5 Gaps and Areas of Weak Streetscape

C5.1 Weakly defined streetscape and gap sites are present in a number of locations. These are sometimes associated with modern developments

which are out of context with the prevailing character of the area; however, others represent vacant land, car parks and gaps in street frontages resulting in poorly defined and enclosed streets and spaces. These gaps should be filled with new development, in the form of traditional terraces, structural planting or an occasional feature building set behind low blue brick boundary walls on the back edge of the pavement.

C6 Threatened Industrial Heritage

C6.1 Within the village centre area remnants of Barwell's industrial heritage survives in a number of locations. The best examples of factories associated with the boot and shoe industry within this Conservation Area are on Mill Lane, the Barracks and Arguile Terrace. Smaller scale workshops are also present elsewhere, although they are often discretely sited at the rear of plots and less easily seen. Many retain original features such as their distinctive cast iron windows and chimneys although they also appear to be in a deteriorating state of repair and their future seems uncertain. Where buildings have been converted to alternative uses important features, like their windows are often replaced with crude plastic alternatives or boarded up, to the detriment of their industrial character and appearance. These buildings are an important legacy of the industrial heritage of the village and their retention, sensitive conversion and appropriate reuse is highly desirable.

GENERAL CONSERVATION AREA GUIDANCE, PLANNING CONTROLS AND POLICIES

- D.1 To maintain the distinctive character and appearance of the Barwell Conservation Areas it will be necessary to:
- Retain listed buildings and buildings of local interest.
 - Ensure new development contributes positively to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area regarding siting, scale, design and materials used.
 - Ensure house extensions satisfy the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance.
 - Resist development proposals in key areas, which have been identified.
 - Ensure the consistent application of positive, sensitive and detailed development control over proposals to alter the boot and shoe factories, their associated buildings and their settings.
 - Ensure important views of the church, and the boot and shoe factories are protected.
- D2 Special attention is given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the appearance of the Conservation Areas. Planning Applications in Conservation Areas are separately advertised. The principal effects of the designation of a Conservation Area are summarised as follows:
- Consent is required for the total or substantial demolition of any building exceeding 115 cu metres.
 - Applications for Outline Planning permission are not normally acceptable. Full planning applications are likely to be required.
- D3 Planning permission is required for:
- The external cladding of any building with stone, artificial stone timber, plastic or tiles.
 - Alteration of the roof which results in its enlargement.
 - A satellite dish on chimney, wall or roof fronting a highway.
- D4 The design of all new shop fronts, advertisements and security grilles should be in accordance with the Council's Shopping and Shop Front Design Guide.
- D5 Anyone proposing works to a tree in a Conservation Area must give six weeks written notice to the local planning authority.

D6 These requirements do not cover all aspects of control in Conservation Areas and you are advised to contact the Local Planning Authority.

/BW

20 September 2010