



Hinckley & Bosworth  
Borough Council

*A Borough to be proud of*

Adopted February 2011

Local Development Framework

# Ratby Village Design Statement

Supplementary Planning Document



<b>CONTENTS</b>	page
<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2.0 THE VILLAGE CONTEXT</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>3.0 SETTLEMENT PATTERN</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>3.1 Zone A: The Conservation Area</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3.2 Zone B: Station Road, Park Road, Desford Lane, Mill Drive, Taverner Drive, Brook Drive</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>3.3 Zone C: Markfield Road, Charnwood &amp; Stamford Street</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>3.4 Zone D: Church Farm Development</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>4.0 LANDSCAPE SETTING &amp; WILDLIFE</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>5.0 GREEN SPACES HEDGES, WALLS &amp; FENCES</b>	<b>54</b>
<b>6.0 HIGHWAYS, TRAFFIC AND FOOTPATHS</b>	<b>56</b>





## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Ratby Village Design Statement (VDS) sets out the principles, design features and quality standards that should be adopted by those wishing to build, modify or extend property in the settlement of Ratby.

Residents of Ratby and the Parish Council have developed the Village Design Statement with support from officers of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council and the Leicestershire and Rutland Rural Community Council. The Village Design Statement forms part of the planning policy framework used by the Borough Council in making decisions on planning applications.

The aim of the VDS is to support various local planning policy and associated legislation, and once adopted will become a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to be used in the day to day assessment of planning applications for Ratby. This SPD provides local guidance for planning officers, developers, parish councils and the public and supplements and expands on adopted design policies of the current Local Plan and emerging Local Development Framework.

### Who the Statement is for?

The Ratby Design Statement has been developed for:

- The Parish and Borough Councils' Planning Committees as a Supplementary Planning Document to the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan.
- Developers, their architects and designers, to explain what the community of Ratby expect to see in new and modified buildings.
- Local residents, to help them keep alterations and extensions in sympathy with the character of Ratby.

### How should the Statement be used?

The Ratby Village Design Statement should be used to inform the formulation of designs to build, modify or extend property in the settlement regardless of scale.

The Village Design Statement is intended to promote the following design process:

- A survey of the relationship between the site / property and its surroundings, working with and respecting what is already there;
- Identification of the design opportunities presented by existing views, landscaping, built form, materials and details;
- Confirmation, in plan form, that this design process has been fully observed.

The Ratby Village Design Statement does not attempt to provide design solutions but rather to highlight the distinctive elements and characteristics of Ratby that should be considered in any new design. In addition, the VDS does not determine the location of development, nor prevent allocation which is the duty of the Local Plan and the Local Development Framework. Instead it aims to help manage change and development if and when it occurs.

Ratby village is a living entity and the design characteristics that are now so important to the community have evolved over time. New development cannot and should not be disguised but with thought and a sympathetic approach, the new can complement and even enhance the old.

## Location

Ratby's administrative base is; Ratby Parish Council (RPC), Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) and Leicestershire County Council (LCC).



*VDS display at Crow Pie Carnival*



## 2.0 THE VILLAGE CONTEXT

### 2.1 Geographical and Historical Background

#### 2.1.1

##### Geographical Location

Ratby is a village of circa 4100 population, situated 5 miles to the west of Leicester, on the southern edge of Charnwood Forest and is separated from adjacent settlements by open countryside which gives it distinctiveness and individuality.

The settlement boundary is very clearly demarcated from the surrounding countryside, most of which comprises farmland and woodland, especially to the west. Burroughs Road brings a valuable corridor of this countryside right into the heart of the village.

Ancient Charnian rocks outcrop in Martinshaw Wood but the predominant rocks are clays, marlstones and red sandstones of the Mercian

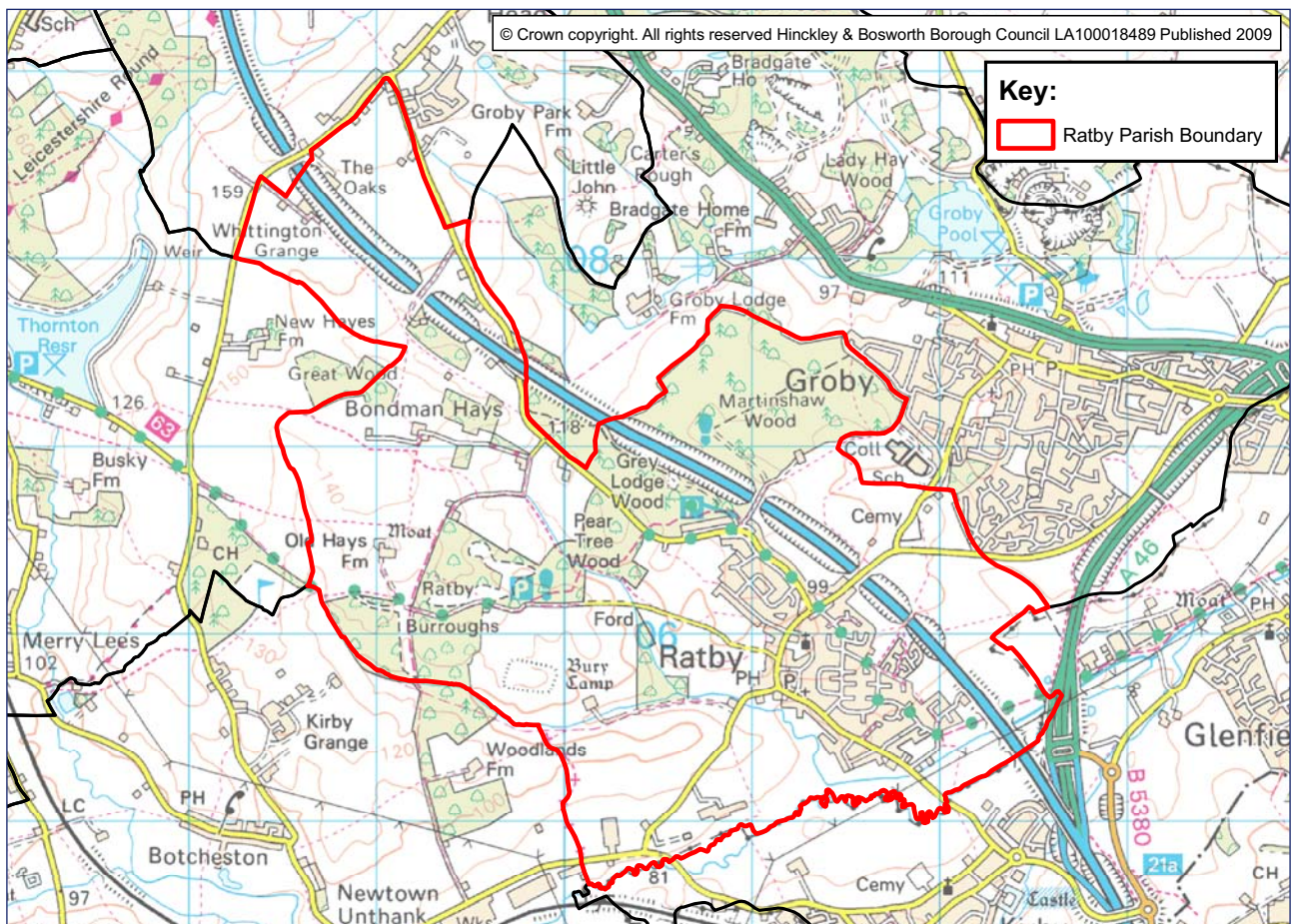


*Ratby from the south-west*

Mudstone series. These are overlain by glacial deposits such as boulder clay, sands and gravels. Many walls in the village are built of Charnwood stones and slates. Local clays gave rise to 19th century brickworks in Ratby and neighbouring villages so that brick is a common building material.

The highest ground in Ratby is c.160 metres above sea level near to the NW boundary with Markfield, from where there are excellent views back towards Ratby Church and into East Leicestershire.

**Map 1**



## 2.1.2 History

### Origins

Ratby was first mentioned as "Rotebie" in the Domesday Book of 1086. However, the present nucleated village dates back to Anglo-Saxon times (700-800 AD) when the first dwellings were built alongside a church sited on a hill overlooking the Rothley Brook. It is thought that Ratby was probably a "Royal Vil" controlling a large Anglo-Saxon estate stretching from the west of Leicester to Desford and Markfield.

There has been settlement within the present parish boundary from even earlier times. There are Celtic/Romano ramparts at Bury Camp, approximately 1 mile west of the centre of Ratby. It is thought that the name "Ratby" was derived from the Celtic "rath" meaning "earthen ramparts" or "fort" and the Danish "bie" meaning "farmstead" or "village", i.e. "the village next to the fort".

### Mediaeval

During mediaeval times Ratby was an agricultural village with an economy based upon the three-field system.

The Parish Church of St. Philip and St. James was built in 1230 with additions in the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It occupies a prominent site, clearly visible from all the surrounding area.

The "figure-of-8" street pattern of the mediaeval village is still clearly evident in the landscape.

Within the parish there is evidence of a 13<sup>th</sup> century moated farm at Old Hays, the mediaeval Burgh deer park, the manorial boundaries between Whitwick/Groby and Bagworth Manors, the site of a holy well at Holywell Farm, a deserted village at Whittington and well preserved 13<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century enclosures. These, together with the Celtic-Romano Bury Camp make the area west of Ratby a most valuable local heritage site.

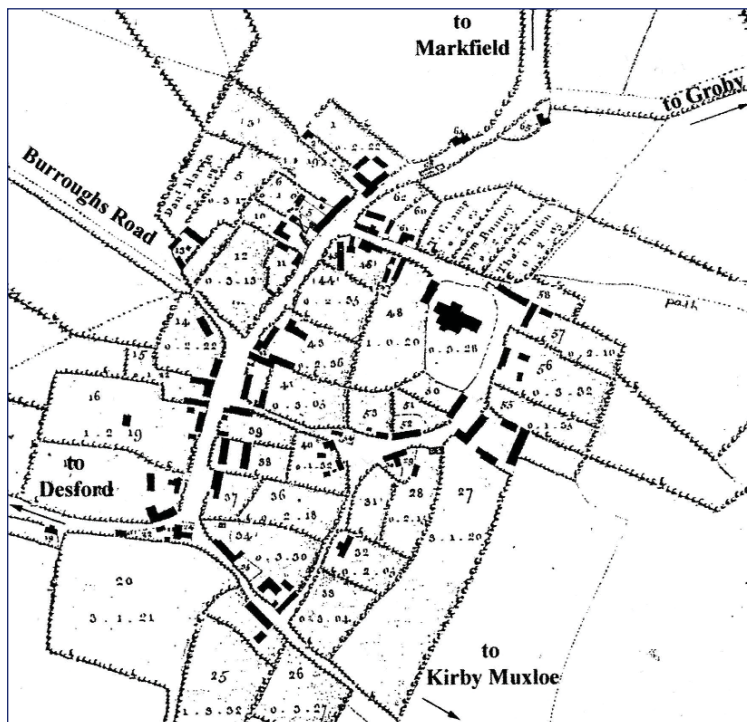
### 18<sup>th</sup> Century

The Enclosure Act of 1770 led to the establishment of many of the field boundaries, roads and footpaths in the present landscape. Farming and wealth were concentrated in fewer families and alternative sources of income such as framework knitting began to expand.



Ratby Parish Church

Map 2 - Enclosure map 1773





## 19<sup>th</sup> Century

The coming of the Leicester & Swannington Railway in 1832 encouraged the further establishment of hosiery and boot and shoe industries in the village. The settlement area expanded along Station Road between the old core of the village and the station and wharf to the south. In 1904 the parish boundary was redrawn to include the station area.

The first small hosiery factory was built in 1861 at the junction of Stamford Street and Main Street. This still survives, albeit recently converted to residences. The enclosure awarded to Josiah Grudgeon by the Enclosure Act of 1770 was sold in 1845. Housing and a large factory were built there between 1883 and 1909 to create Stamford Street.

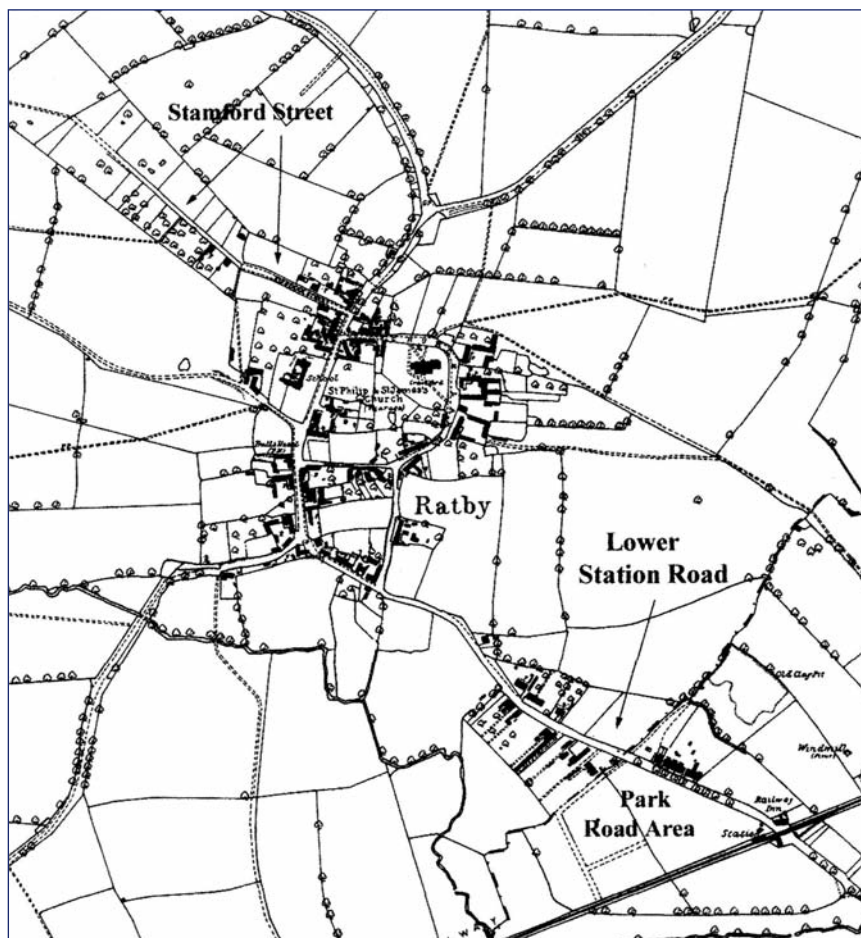
In the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century, quarries were expanded at Groby and coalmines were sunk in the Desford area.

As a result of all these developments, population tripled between 1801 and 1901. In the early-middle 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were few opportunities for building new houses outside the existing settlement area. Therefore additional homes were created by the construction of small cottages for workers inside existing gardens and yards. An example of high building density caused by the shortage of land can be seen outside Sills Yard, opposite the War Memorial on Main Street. Some of the original yards can still be recognised in the village.



Sills Yard - High building density

**Map 3** - OS map 1886



## 1900 - 1945

Ratby continued to be a relatively self-sufficient village before World War 2. The Trade Directories for 1936 show that there were still plentiful opportunities for local employment even for an expanding population of approximately 2000 people.

Despite the population growth, there was still very little building encroachment onto farmland before 1945 and people were still living in the small "yard" cottages until after World War Two.

Between the wars, new detached and semi-detached houses with large gardens began to infill the remaining spaces along the main roads, e.g. on Station Road between Chapel Lane and today's Dane Hill and in what is now the Conservation Area.

The first dwelling on Markfield Road was a bungalow, no. 82, built in 1929/30. This was followed in the late 1930s by the Sunshine

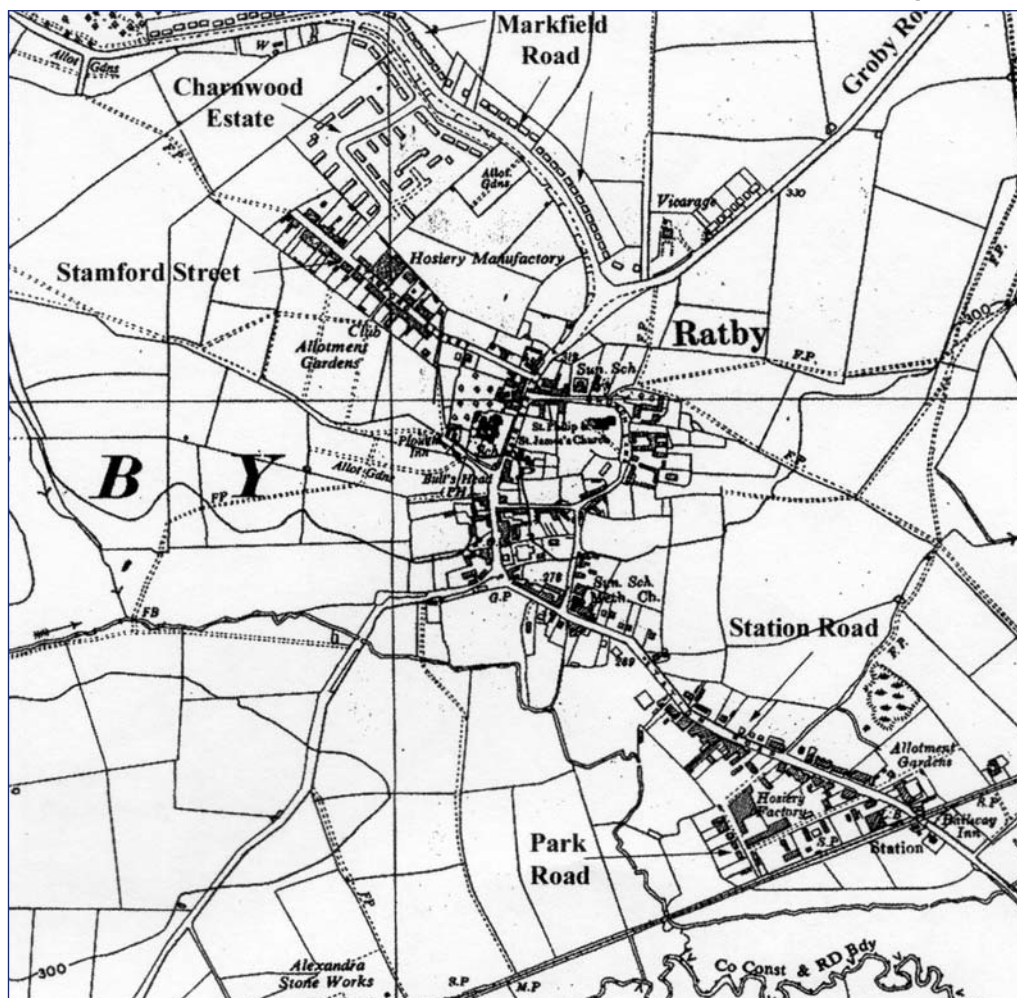
Houses and then by semi-detached council houses on the north side of Markfield Road. The first house on Groby Road was the Vicarage (1904), a large detached building in Charnwood Stone. A brick cottage was built for Holywell Farm on Desford Lane in the mid-1930s.

## 1945 - 1980

The period since 1945 has seen great changes. Immediately after 1945 the urgent need to re-house people from unsanitary premises coincided with the beginnings of the demise of farming in the area. The first land to be sold off in the late 1940s was Hollybush Farm on Main Street, so that the Charnwood Estate, a mixture of council and private houses, could be built on land between Stamford Street and Markfield Road.

In 1958, Box Tree Farm on Main Street was sold and although most of this land is still agricultural, new detached and semi-detached houses were built on the north side of Desford Lane in the

**Map 4** - OS 1955





1960s. The next catalyst was the construction of the M1 through the eastern half of the village in the early 1960s. This led to the sale of all three farms on Church Lane and the beginnings of the development of the Church Farm Estate in 1968. By the 1970s, Pear Tree Farm on Main Street was the only working farm located in the centre of the village.

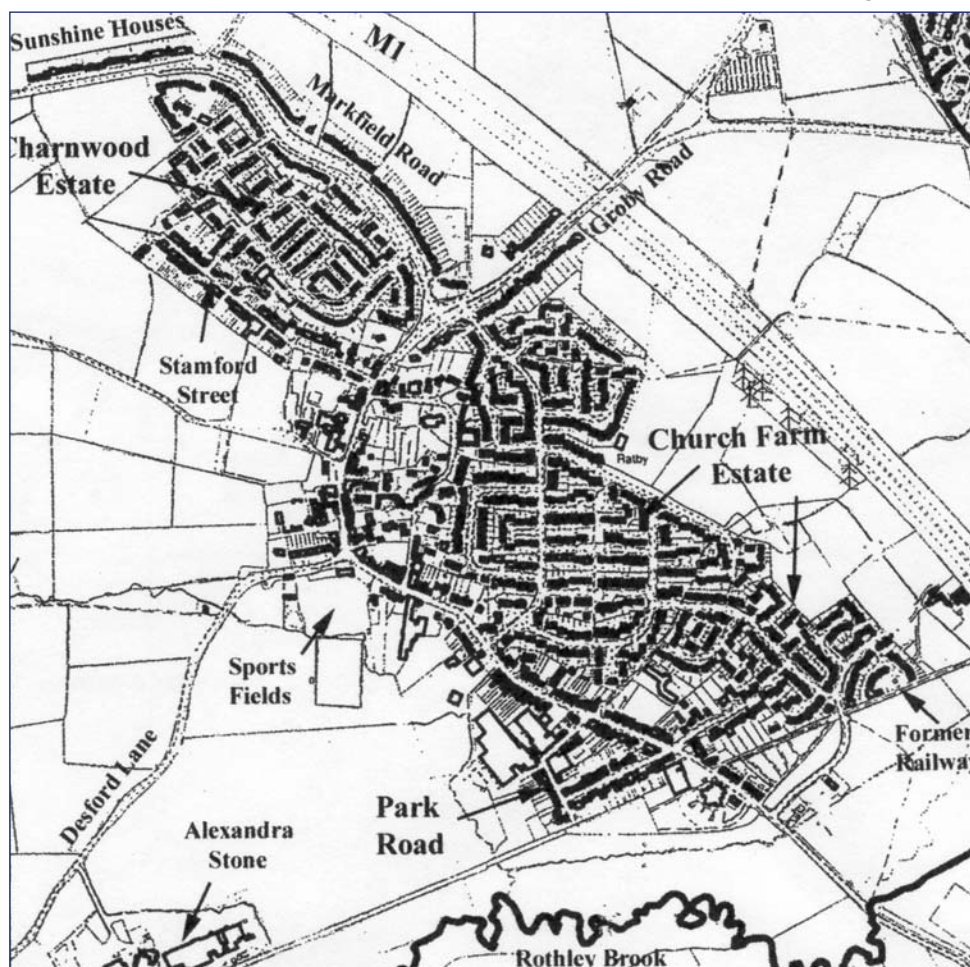
### 1980 - 2008

The period 1980-2008 has seen the most profound changes. These include an increase in population to over 4000 and significant expansion of the settlement area. The earlier demise of farming continued with the closure and sale of Pear Tree Farm on Main Street to Cawrey Homes in the mid-1990s. Even outlying farms, such as Old Hays have been sold, partly for a small residential development and partly to the Woodland Trust. Most surviving farmland is now managed from outside the village. Other former agricultural land has been converted to woodlands as part of the National Forest.

Despite Ratby's proximity to good communications, economies of scale have meant that old factories, such as the Wolsey (c.1980) and Matrix (c.2000) have closed down and their sites have been redeveloped as housing. In 2008 all that was left of the once dominant Wolsey was a small storage unit for Trafalgar Workwear. The main employers in the village were Geary's the Bakers, Cawrey Homes and Benlowe Windows. The large storage unit on Station Road, formally occupied by Sleepmaster, now lies empty. Most new businesses in Ratby are now home-based.

Meanwhile the expansion of housing has continued apace. The original Church Farm Estate now covers most of the land between the M1 and the former eastern boundary of the settlement area as far south as the former railway line. The former premises of Astill and Jordan's Bus Company were demolished and replaced by housing. Other brownfield sites in Park Road, Stamford Street and Whittington Drive have been redeveloped to provide housing.

**Map 5** - OS 2001



## 2.2 The Village Today

The combination of good communications, proximity to Leicester and the electronic revolution means that, over the last 50 years, Ratby has changed from being a relatively independent, self-sufficient village to a mainly commuter settlement for Leicester and further afield. These qualities and the desirability of its countryside and heritage make Ratby a

convenient and attractive place to live. However, this in turn creates pressure for residential development both within and along the settlement boundary. This threatens to overrun its current infrastructure and creates concern in the general public about the potential loss of the rural landscape to the west. It is against this background that positive alternatives for any future developments have to be evaluated.

The Village Context - Guidelines	
<b>1</b>	Much of the area west of Ratby is a uniquely valuable local heritage site. It includes: the Celtic-Romano Bury Camp, a 13th century moated farm site at Old Hays, the mediaeval Burgh Deer Park, the site of a holy well at Holywell Farm, the deserted village at Whittington, the mediaeval boundary at Dumble Dykes and well preserved 13th century enclosures (Bondman Hays and Old Hays), 16th century enclosures (Ratby Burroughs) and 18th century enclosures (e.g. between Burroughs Road and Desford Lane). These features should be given special design consideration in any future developments.
<b>2</b>	A few impressive examples of mediaeval strip farming are preserved in the form of ridge and furrow to the south of Burroughs Road and the Holywell bridle way. These should be given special design consideration in any future development.
<b>3</b>	The Parish Church is perhaps the most impressive and emblematic feature of Ratby's landscape. Every effort should be made to enhance the site and preserve views of the church from within the village and the surrounding area.
<b>4</b>	Burroughs Road's unique history of ownership means that open countryside has been preserved along its full length right into the centre of the village. It provides a rare and much valued recreational and therapeutic amenity for Ratby and the surrounding area. It should be preserved as a "green corridor" into the countryside for its full length.
<b>5</b>	Many footpaths created by the 1770 Enclosure Act still provide public access into Ratby's rural hinterland. They should be protected in any future developments beyond the present settlement boundary of the village. In selected cases (e.g. the field paths to Groby, Glenfield and Kirby Muxloe), they could be enhanced to form safe, dry walking/cycling routes from the centre of the village to these neighbouring settlements. Much-valued examples have already been developed elsewhere by Cawrey Homes.
<b>6</b>	The few remaining survivals of Ratby's 18/19th century textile and railway industries should be protected from inappropriate development, e.g. former workshops at the junction of Main Street and Stamford Street, in Chapel Lane and the Railway Inn on Station Road.





General Guidelines for the Design of Buildings	
	Whilst some building design guidelines will be specific to different areas of the village in accordance with their period of construction, the following guidance represents more general principles that could apply to all areas:
<b>7</b>	Planning applications should demonstrate how the proposal would relate to the character of its site and its context in the adjacent area in line with the guidance set out in this Supplementary Planning Document.
<b>8</b>	The size of the proposed building plot should be consistent with the general size of other plots in the immediate area.
<b>9</b>	The width of frontage, depth and height of the proposed building should be in keeping with other buildings in the area so that substantial three-storey apartment block should not usually be built where all other houses are two-storey or less (see Zone C: Whittington Drive).
<b>10</b>	The new building should respect the general building line/set-backs from highways and the spacing of buildings which characterise the area.
<b>11</b>	The materials used when building either a new house, an extension or when rebuilding an older property should be complementary with the materials most commonly used in the adjacent area.
<b>12</b>	Where there is general uniformity, new building designs should match the style of other buildings in the area e.g. types of doors/windows, proportions of solids and voids, roof features etc. (e.g. Stamford Street). Where there is already a variety of buildings of different age and styles (e.g. Park Road) then a more flexible approach can be acceptable, providing they conform to local guidelines of scale, separation and materials.
<b>13</b>	Secondary buildings such as garages and extensions should be subordinate in scale, whilst matching the style of the main building.
<b>14</b>	Building conversions (e.g. to commercial use) should continue to reflect the design and character of other properties in the area.
<b>15</b>	New boundaries and landscaping should be consistent with the general character of the area and be appropriate to their location in the village e.g. hedges, wooden fencing and trees at the rural edge of the village, hard boundaries e.g. stone and brick walls in more central areas.
<b>16</b>	Significant visual aspects of the landscape e.g. large gardens, mature trees and hedge lines should usually be retained.
<b>17</b>	In the past, Ratby has seen many innovations in building style reflecting advances in design, technology and materials (e.g. from Mediaeval to Victorian to late-20th Century). It is important that the village remains open to innovative, contemporary and environmentally sustainable designs.
<b>18</b>	In future, different sizes of houses will be needed to cater for families of all sizes and needs. In the past, the growth of the village has been characterised mainly by separate small developments, each with three - six houses of similar type/size.
<b>19</b>	Developers should be required to incorporate appropriate anti-crime/vandalism design features in terms of materials, layout, lighting and boundaries.



## 3.1 ZONE A: THE CONSERVATION AREA

### 3.1.1 Introduction

The Conservation Area corresponds to the oldest part of the village. It includes the highest point in the village centred around the Parish Church from where there are attractive views of the surrounding countryside, especially to the south and west.



*View from Church tower towards Rothley Brook flood plain*

### 3.1.2 Roads and Streets

The streets comprising Church Lane, Chapel Lane, Berry's Lane, Upper Station Road, Main Street and the beginnings of Burroughs Road form a 'figure of 8' pattern which dates back to at least the early mediaeval times. Walls built of Charnwood stone border most of these narrow streets.

### 3.1.3 Gateways

- a) The gateway into the Conservation Area from the north is clearly demarcated on Main Street by the narrowing of the streetline and use of stone and brick walls.



*Narrow entrance to 'Conservation Area' from the North*

- b) The southern entrance on Station Road is marked by a similar narrowing of the streetline created by Geary's Bakery (1894) and the stone wall boundaries of the detached houses (1893) opposite. Many residents would like to see these late Victorian buildings included in the Conservation Area should the opportunity arise.



*Victorian houses at entrance to 'Conservation Area' from Station Road*

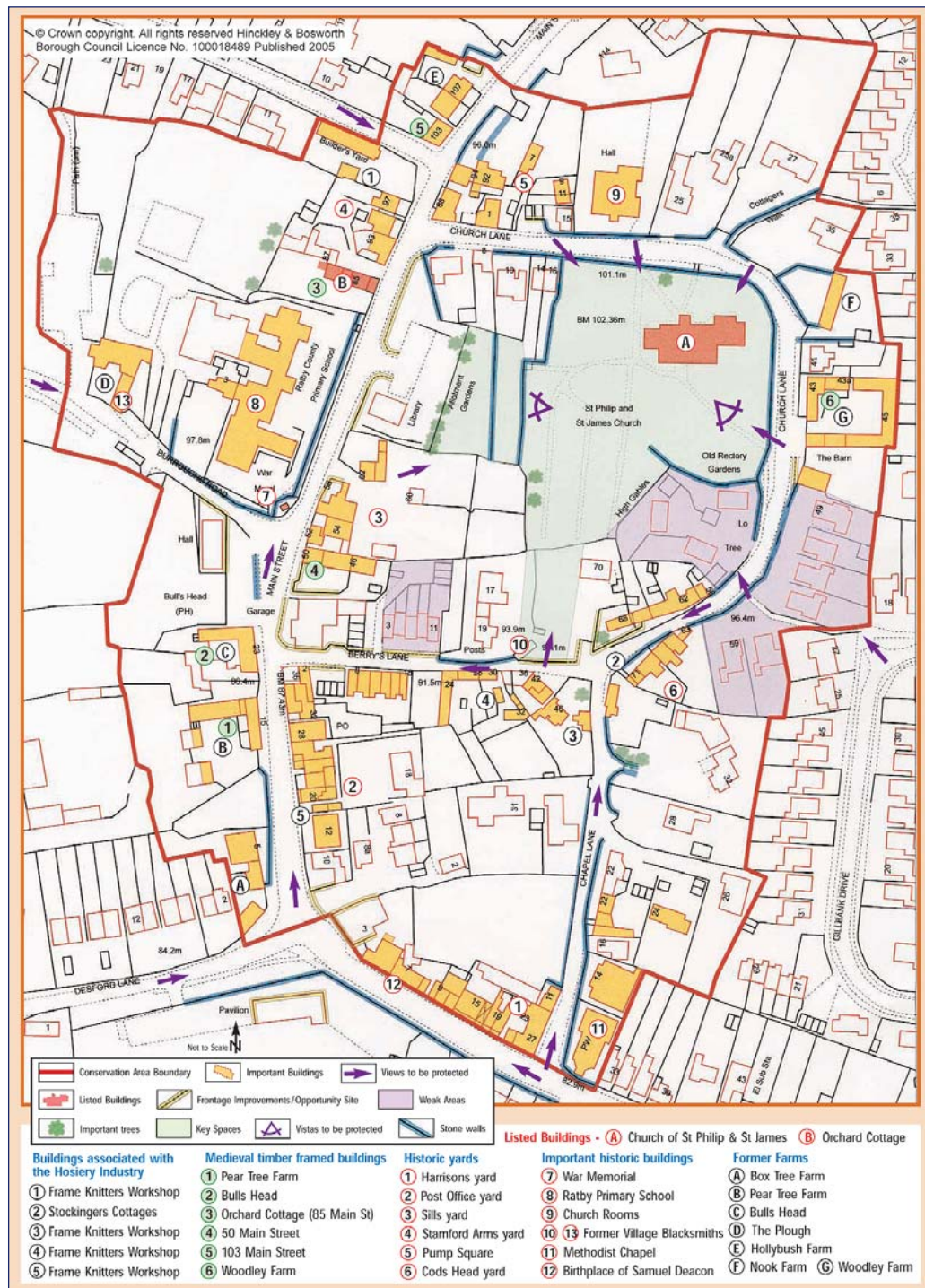
- c) The entrance into old Ratby via Desford Lane from the west is characterised by the absence of housing to the south and long gardens to the north. This allows the countryside to penetrate right into the built area.
- d) Between Stamford Street and Desford Lane, the western boundary of the settlement area has remained unchanged since early mediaeval times. Burroughs Road is an ancient trackway, originally established during Anglo-Saxon times as the most direct route between Ratby and its neighbour, Thornton. The narrow trackway brings the countryside right into the heart of Ratby's Conservation Area.



*Narrow stone wall entrance to Burroughs Road*

- e) Narrow footpaths (e.g. Cottagers Walk) provide an important link from the Conservation Area to the Church Farm Estate to the east.



**Map 7** – The Conservation Area, with annotation (from H&BBC Document designated 1987)

### 3.1.4 Farmhouses

A number of old farmhouses still exist on the boundary between Main Street /Church Lane and the former open fields e.g. Nook Farm (F) and Woodley Farm (G) on Church Lane; Box Tree Farm (A), Pear Tree Farm (B) and Hollybush Farm (E) on Main Street (see Map 7). Both the Plough Inn (D) and Bull's Head (C) were originally farms as well as alehouses. As late as the 1960s, Orchard

Cottage (85, Main Street) was a small farmstead with shelter for the animals built as part of the main house in the style of a longhouse. Of these early farms, only Church Farm on Church Lane has been completely demolished. These surviving farmhouses are an important architectural link with the history of Ratby.





Two-stage construction; 17<sup>th</sup> C Nook Farm



Modernised frontage of 17<sup>th</sup> C 'Ale House' on Main Street

With the exception of the former Box Tree Farm, these farm buildings were originally single storey, perhaps with a loft in the roof space. The main axis was mainly parallel to the road. The houses were built on a stone base. The original timber framing has usually been replaced by small two inch bricks (e.g. Woodley Farm) and/or rendering on the outside (e.g. Nook Farm), although it may still be present in the roof areas and interior walls. Windows and doors are always flat to the walls rather than bayed out. In most cases the houses have been increased to their present size by adding an extension either alongside, e.g. Nook Farm (F) and Hollybush Farm (E) or at right angles



Early 19<sup>th</sup> C former farmhouse on Main Street. NB Stone wall frontage and attic window in gable

e.g. Woodley Farm, where the addition of a large barn and other buildings has created a "courtyard" style of farm which has been carefully restored recently. Extra living space was also gained by raising the roof to create a genuine second floor. Usually the original thatch was replaced by local Charnwood slate and the roofs surmounted by strong brick chimneys. Small gardens with a stone or brick boundary wall separate these former farmhouses from the road, except in the case of Pear Tree Farm, which was built immediately adjacent to the footway.

Unlike some Leicestershire villages, Ratby does not possess elegant three or four-storey buildings, possibly because a high proportion of the occupants were tenants of the Earls of Stamford rather than owner-occupiers. However, many have an attic with traditional small, gable-end windows in the roof space, originally for storage or servant quarters. (photos on the left)

A further distinctive feature is the mounting stone outside the gate of Woodley Farm.

The occasional use of concrete roofing tiles on these former farmhouses is usually detrimental to the appearance of the roofline.

### 3.1.5 17<sup>th</sup> Century Cottages

There are many attractive examples of 17 -18<sup>th</sup> Century cottages in the Conservation Area. They are sometimes detached e.g. on Main Street both opposite the school and near to the junction of Main Street with Stamford Street and Church Lane. Occasionally groups of cottages form terraces e.g. near the junction between Church Lane and Chapel Lane, in Berry's Lane and on Upper Station Road.

These houses are usually built upon a stone base and are characterised by slate roofs, brick chimneys and the rendering of the external walls in attractive pastel colours. Windows are flat to the wall with segmental arches and stone ledges on the ground floor. Good examples of Yorkshire Sash windows have survived in Church Lane. Many of these older cottages front directly on to the footway or have very narrow front gardens.



*Much modified 17<sup>th</sup> C Cottage Chapel Lane*

There are a few examples of porches over front doors which, whilst adding variety to the street scene, can sometimes interrupt the uniformity of the building line. A particularly attractive assemblage of cottages occurs at the junction of Church Lane, Chapel Lane and Berry's Lane.

Another distinctive feature is the raised pavement above the road in Church Lane.



*Terrace of old cottages on Church Lane above raised pavement*

### 3.1.6 19<sup>th</sup> Century Yards

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century because of the shortage of land many small cottages and workshops were built in back gardens and yards. Where they have survived, they form an important part of the



*Former farm buildings converted into cottages alongside double-fronted Victorian house, Chapel Lane*

historic village landscape e.g. in Sills' Yard opposite the school. An interesting early 19<sup>th</sup> Century example of the conversion of old farm buildings into a terrace of small dwellings can be seen at the junction of Chapel Lane and Upper Station Road, in what was once Harrison's Yard.

### 3.1.7 Retailing

Ratby has retained a good range of shops on the east side of Main Street between Sills' Yard and Desford Lane Corner. The original building line was set back from the road behind small front gardens, two of which have survived. Building extensions have moved this line forward to the edge of the pavement. Whilst this adds some variety and interest to the street front, it leaves little space for pedestrians. The blank brick wall of the upper storey of the Hairdresser's Salon and some shop front decorative features do little to enhance this part of the Conservation Area.



*Cars parked outside shops on Main Street (original building-line behind present frontage)*

### 3.1.8 Open Spaces

In old documents there are references to villagers' rights to keep livestock on the 'green'. In mediaeval times, the green would have been located on the high ground in the centre of the 'figure of 8' street pattern. A large part of this open ground belongs to the church and forms the extensive raised graveyard. By 1770, all of the remaining 'green' had been enclosed and allocated to individuals. However, despite some infilling, a significant part of this green space still survives. This helps to provide a sense of openness on the hill top area and preserves views of the church as a focal point.





Part of former village green, now privately owned, as seen from Berry's Lane

Similarly, the sports fields at Desford Lane corner provides a significant break in the building line on Main Street even though the Sports Club social building (circa 1984) obscures part of the view.

### 3.1.9 Nodal Points

There are three places in the Conservation Area where important routes meet. These are:

- i) Junction of Church Lane, Chapel Lane and Berry's Lane (see 3.1.5), which was probably the main meeting place in the early mediaeval hill top village. It is enclosed by an attractive assemblage of 17/18<sup>th</sup> century cottages, which are consistent in scale and style, whilst still possessing subtle differences in the details of line, roof levels and boundary features.
- ii) The open space where the road widens at the junction of Main Street, Burroughs Road and Berry's Lane used to be called 'the Gravel' and the village fair took place there



Traffic congestion on Main Street. (cars, cyclists and horse-riders)

as recently as the late 1930s. This important location is enhanced by the presence of the War Memorial, the Bull's Head public house, the Primary School and the complex interlocking assemblage of old cottages on Main Street. Although they are important to the history of this location, the Service Garage (1920s) and the Village Hall, which was built following the accession of Elizabeth II to the throne in 1952, have a more temporary feel.

- iii) The point where Main Street, Desford Lane and Upper Station Road meet has become today's busy nodal point for pedestrians and traffic. Here, the brick-built 19<sup>th</sup> C Box Tree Farm (photo page 15) makes a strong visual contribution to the entrance into Main Street, which is not replicated in scale or style by the other buildings: the Co-operative Store (see 3.2.2) the Newsagent's Shop or the Sports Social Club.



Survival of a farming background, junction of Station Road and Desford Lane

### 3.1.10 Late 19<sup>th</sup>/Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century In-fills

Important buildings continued to be built in the Conservation Area during the 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century and add quality and interest to the landscape:

- i) Hosiery Factory (1861) - James Richardson built the first small hosiery factory in the village at the junction of Stamford Street and Main Street. This has since been converted into residences but still retains its basic original form.



*Converted 19<sup>th</sup> C hosiery workshop, Weavers Court, Stamford Street*

- ii) Ratby School (1873) (see photo page 51) - was a major 19<sup>th</sup> century addition to Ratby's Main Street landscape. It was built in the Gothic style with arched windows, tracery, an attractive bell tower and mock-Tudor gables. A substantial house, also in the Tudor style, was built next door for the headmaster.
- iii) The Church Rooms (1894) on Church Lane is a modest single-storey building with attractive brickwork patterns. It has metal window frames and a well-proportioned entrance porch with barge boards. The name and date of the building are attractively portrayed.



*Patterned 19<sup>th</sup> C brickwork and porch, Church Rooms (with stone wall and iron railings)*

- iv) The Primitive Methodist Church (1911) and Rooms (1891) - are interesting examples of late Victorian/Edwardian religious architecture on a village scale. The original symmetrical building, comprising red brick walls and gothic windows mounted on blue brick damp course, was tastefully restored in the late 1990s. These buildings help to give definition to the entrance to Chapel Lane

from Upper Station Road and form part of the gateway from Station Road into the Conservation Area.



*Highly decorated symmetrical frontage of Ratby Methodist Church 1911 after modernisation*

### 3.1.11 20th Century In-fills

A number of 20<sup>th</sup> century detached houses, usually with large gardens have in-filled spaces in the Conservation Area, especially on Church Lane and Chapel Lane. They were built in a variety of different styles with examples from each of the decades since the 1920s. Where they have been constructed away from the older farmhouses and cottages on a scale consonant with neighbouring buildings and with suitable materials, they have added variety without loss of quality to the area. They help retain a sense of space and openness in pleasing contrast to the narrow streets and older cottages elsewhere in the Conservation Area.

### 3.1.12 Viewpoints

A number of 'vistas' and 'views to be protected' have been identified on the map of the Conservation Area in the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council document 'Ratby Conservation Area, February 2007' (see map 7). The view into the Conservation Area from Groby Road/Main Street could be added (photo page 13).



<b>Zone A - The Conservation Area: Guidelines</b>	
<b>BUILDINGS</b>	
<b>20</b>	The oldest buildings and walls in the Conservation Area are constructed of Charnwood stone and/or small-size bricks. There are also many examples of rough white rendering which help to give the area its special character. These materials should be matched in any new developments and/or extensions built in the vicinity of these older properties. Consent should be sought from Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council before the demolition of properties built of these materials can go ahead. External cladding with artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles should be avoided.
<b>21</b>	Windows of the older properties are almost always flat to the wall and topped with segmental arches. These should be retained where they exist in older properties and matched in the case of new houses next to such buildings. Where sash or casement windows still exist, they should be retained and it is preferable that secondary double-glazing is used for insulation rather than PVC. There are few examples of dormer windows in the Conservation Area and flat to the wall windows will be the preferred approach.
<b>22</b>	It is rare for there to be porches over doors in the older properties. However, if used sparingly, porches can add variety to the street line. The Conservation Officer should always be consulted before house-owners add new porches to their doorways.
<b>23</b>	Traditional roofing materials must be retained or re-established on older houses in the conservation area. Chimneys are present on almost all houses in the conservation area and should be regarded as an essential feature.
<b>24</b>	The construction of three-storey buildings should be avoided in the Conservation Area.
<b>25</b>	There should be positive, sensitive and detailed development control over any proposals to alter former farm buildings, hosiery workshops, yards and jitties. New name plaques should be introduced to indicate the location of former yards.
<b>26</b>	Locally important Victorian buildings add interest and quality to the Conservation Area. Any plans to develop these properties should take full account of their traditional form and historic value.
<b>ROADS AND PATHS</b>	
<b>27</b>	The mediaeval road layout of the village, comprising Church Lane, Main Street, Berry's Lane, Chapel Lane and Burroughs Road, is important to the structure and character of the old village and should be retained in its present form.
<b>28</b>	Footpaths connecting the Conservation Area to adjacent developments should be protected and enhanced by the addition of name plaques.
<b>OPEN SPACES</b>	
<b>29</b>	The open space created by the churchyard helps to preserve important views of the 13th century church of St. Philip and St. James from different parts of the parish and should be protected and enhanced. Similarly, views from the churchyard into the countryside should be preserved.
<b>30</b>	Gaps between buildings in the conservation area which provide much appreciated views of the church are indicated on Map 7 and should be respected.
<b>31</b>	Any future development which affects the quality of public spaces should be subject to detailed and sensitive control.

<b>Zone A - The Conservation Area: Guidelines cont'd</b>	
<b>BOUNDARIES</b>	
<b>32</b>	Ratby's last remaining section of mediaeval settlement boundary has survived between Stamford Street and Desford Lane because the adjoining fields are used for recreational purposes. The small but unique piece of landscape history should be respected in any future design policies.
<b>GATEWAYS</b>	
<b>33</b>	The presence of visual "gateways" into the Conservation Area is important to the character of old Ratby and these should be protected and enhanced. The frontage to Geary's bakery and the Victorian houses and chapel opposite would be a welcome addition, if the opportunity arises, to the Conservation Area.
<b>STREET SCENE</b>	
<b>34</b>	The use of inappropriate materials, design and location of street lighting and signage can have a detrimental effect upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. There should be careful liaison with the Highways Authority to ensure that negative additions to the street scene are avoided.
<b>35</b>	Where roads, pavements and guttering are constructed of traditional materials e.g. granite kerbstones, cobbles and tile guttering, these should be either retained or replaced with the same materials.
<b>36</b>	There should be sensitive monitoring of future designs of shop fronts, advertisements and security grills, to ensure that they are appropriate to their location within the Conservation Area.

## **3.2 ZONE B: Station Road, Park Road, Desford Lane, Mill Drive, Taverner Drive and Brook Drive**

### **3.2.1 Introduction**

Zone B is centred around Station Road which was built piecemeal as ribbon development from the 1830's to 1915 between the old village and the Leicester & Swannington Railway. Further development began to take place as land became available behind the line of Station Road e.g. Park Road (initially 1898 – 1915), Mill Drive (1960 – 70's) and Brook Drive (2001). Development of housing on the north side of Desford Lane took place after the sale of Box Tree Farm in 1959

### **3.2.2 Desford Lane**

This is one of the main entrances to the village. The fields and mature trees alongside the road, including the cricket field, the white rendered 18<sup>th</sup> C Box Tree Cottage to the south and the long gardens in front of the late 1960s chalet houses

to the north, help to preserve an open, rural approach. The junction with Station Road is the focal point of the village. The Co-operative Store forms a visual "end stop" from Desford Lane. The Sports Club performs a similar function from Main Street. In neither case are they entirely successful. The blanked out windows of the Co-op, notwithstanding refurbishment in the 1990s, do not present an attractive appearance.



*Co-op Village Store forming visual end stop from Desford Lane*



### 3.2.3 Upper Station Road: from Desford Lane to Chapel Lane

The 17/18<sup>th</sup> Century terrace cottages in the centre of the eastern side of Upper Station Road are in the Conservation Area (see 3.1.5). The line of some of the walls fronting the street are slightly offset and their mainly slate roofs with brick chimneys are at different heights which gives variety and interest to the assemblage. Windows are flat to the wall. A few segmental arches have survived above the windows. Walls have been rendered and are attractive where they have been painted white. Some of the doorway developments are not so pleasing to the eye. At each end of the street the original cottages have been demolished and rebuilt in red brick. Particularly striking are the Shipman Houses (c.1900), a red brick terrace comprising one double-fronted and two single-fronted, two-storey houses, separated by a broad gated entrance to the former builder's yard behind. They have strong brick chimneys, ridge tiles and a decorated brick fascia below the eaves. The double-fronted house has a particularly attractive extension, including barge boards over the front porch and attractively moulded brickwork. The original iron railings have been partly restored to form the front boundary.



17th c white-rendered cottages, Upper Station Road

### 3.2.4 Upper Station Road: Chapel Lane to Dane Hill

- i) On the east side at the corner of Chapel Lane, the Methodist Church (1911) and Rooms (1891) are distinctive buildings (see 3.1.10 iv). Alongside the church are four detached,

two-storey houses (1893) behind a strong wall of Charnwood stone and small front gardens. They are built on a blue brick base and, like the Shipman Houses, have brick chimneys, dentil eaves brick courses and decorative ridge tiles on the roofs. Upper windows are flat to the wall, whilst ground floor windows are bayed. There are matching decorative lintels over doors and windows. Closer inspection shows that the group is not consistently uniform. Bourne House is double-fronted without bay windows, whilst only three of the houses have white rendering.



Late 19<sup>th</sup> C decorative features on Shipman House with entrance to former builder's yard

- ii) Opposite is Geary's Bakery (1894), an important vernacular building and a rare example of a complete late-Victorian combined house, shop and bakery. A comparison of photographs dated 1906 and 2008 show that its basic structure has remained unchanged for over 100 years. It is a two-storey brick building comprising a tall central section with two slightly lower extensions to the north and south. The roof has three good chimneys and terracotta ridge tiles. The south-facing gable has six windows arranged symmetrically, each with a keystone and segmental arch. There are attractive string courses in terracotta and blue brick on the front and south sides of the house.

The street front has retained its original line which is offset slightly in the case of the south wing. Four of the 1894 windows at the front have survived, each with segmental

arch and keystone. The shop front is in its original position, although in a slightly modified style. Some relatively minor changes have been made to this central section since 1894. The lower floor has lost a door and the original wooden sash windows have been replaced by either PVC or wooden frames.

The front of the northern extension, which housed the original bakery, has retained its two entrances from the street to the storage area on the upper floor. These are surmounted by projecting dormers which offer a pleasing contrast to the south wing of the house. To balance the top storey, there are original sash windows with wooden frames below each of these upper entrances. Where there was once a wide door for access to the rear of the house, there is now a single door and window which have unfortunately altered the original symmetry.



*Late Victorian integrated 'house, shop and bakery' with decorative features, Station Road*

Together with the Methodist Church and the 1893 houses opposite, these buildings form a unified assemblage and act as a gateway from Station Road into the adjacent "Conservation Area" (Hinckley & Bosworth Document, "Ratby Conservation Area", 2007, p.3). These historic buildings are highly valued by the community of Ratby who would like to see this area absorbed into the Conservation Area in the future. To the rear of this building, Geary's Bakery, an important feature of the village is a cluttered and visually unattractive conglomeration of

buildings but fortunately set well back from the road. Plans to move the bakery out of the village will release a large area for development. Such development should be sympathetic to the scale of the village - as is the housing development on the adjacent site of the former bus garage and petrol filling station (i.e. Brook Drive).

- iii) In the rest of this sector, there are detached brick-built houses with large gardens on both sides of the road. No. 61 Station Road, was built in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. It is almost square-shaped with a central door and four symmetrically arranged ground floor rooms. Upstairs there are five bedrooms beneath a hipped roof, which is rare in Station Road. The classical porch at the front is a very recent addition. The other detached houses and bungalows were built in the period between 1920 and 1960. Each one has been individually designed and together they contribute a sense of space and openness to this part of the village. This contrasts positively with the more densely concentrated Victorian houses immediately to the north and south.

### 3.2.5 Lower Station Road from Dane Hill to Park Road

This section was developed piecemeal as land became available alongside the road from the railway station (1832) to the old core of the village.

- i) On the western side of Station Road, there is a series of single-fronted detached and semi-detached houses built between 1879 and 1909 on plots with long, parallel back gardens. The small front gardens are separated from the footpath by low brick walls or hedges. The houses are of red brick with pitched slate roofs which terminate in gables which are staggered so as to face NE (see photo page 23). This feature alongside subtle changes in brick colour, occasional white rendering and fluctuating roof levels helps to create an interesting street scene.



Windows are mainly flat to the wall with stone or concrete lintels but with the occasional bay. Some houses e.g. Rosebery (1898) are embellished by decorated terracotta string courses, ridge tiles and toothed brick string courses beneath the fascias. An important feature is the frequent addition of nameplates and dates. Consistency of form is sustained until the Benlowe Car Park where the narrow corner house of the former 'Terrace' or 'Sunny Row' has survived. The Benlowe car park interrupts the continuity of housing and has a negative effect upon the appearance of this approach into the village. Suitable screening would help ameliorate this effect.



*Closely spaced detached Victorian houses showing individual variation*

- ii) On the eastern side of the street, the pattern is more varied. The oldest building is No. 103 Station Road (c.1838), a detached house in the same style as No. 61 (see 3.2.4iii). On some of the wider plots, there are terrace houses in blocks of six, built between 1875 and c.1900 (dates are rare on this side). In amongst these 19<sup>th</sup> Century properties are post-1945 semi-detached houses in brick. Unlike the west side, the houses are aligned parallel to the road and their front gardens are separated from the footpath by a mixture of low brick walls, hedges and iron fences. All the properties have large back gardens. Walls fronting the street are usually red brick or white render, but in some cases distinctive late 19<sup>th</sup> Century qualities have been lost behind inappropriate extensions and more modern forms of wall cladding.



*Detached house (1830's) with hipped roof, 103 Station Road*

### 3.2.6 Lower Station Road: Park Road to Taverner Drive

This section was part of Kirby Muxloe until 1904.

- i) On the western side, there is a mixture of semi detached and terrace houses built on former allotment gardens between 1900 and 1910. Some front walls are aligned parallel to the line of Station Road, whilst others are staggered so as to face east-northeast. The majority have been changed little since they were built. They have steeply-pitched slate roofs and brick chimneys. Their walls are either red brick or white render. There are stone lintels over doors and windows. Sparkenhoe Villa has a decorated string course and has retained the original coloured window panes in the door. Numbers 138 and 140 form a unique, symmetrical, double-fronted semi-detached dwelling, with Tudor-style gables at the corners and long bay windows.

On the site of the former railway station is an unoccupied modern warehouse that makes a conspicuously unsightly entrance to the village. The unobtrusive and secluded buildings of the Knighton Trust complete the built environment on the western side of Station Road.

ii) On the eastern side there are a number of locally notable buildings:

a) **Nos. 141 - 151 Station Road:** although they would benefit from some restorative work, this uniform terrace of six, two storey, red brick cottages exhibits many of the best qualities of late Victorian village architecture e.g. slate pitched roofs, bold brick chimneys, dentil eaves brick course, patterned white surrounds to both windows and doors and a coloured brick string course separating the upper and lower floors. Unfortunately, the boundary between the small front gardens and the footpath has been removed.



*Terrace of Victorian cottages, 141-151 Station Road*

b) **Nos. 153 - 159 Station Road ("The slate cottages"):** this fine terrace of four two-storey cottages is a rare example of houses built of Charnwood slate in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century. There is excellent detail on the front of the building e.g. stone lintels above the doors and windows which also have attractive brick surrounds, segmental arches of red brick above the ground floor windows and a red brick string course beneath the upper windows. The pitched roofs are of slate, surmounted by two strong brick chimneys. Below the eaves there is a dentil brick string course. Unfortunately, only three of the original slate gate posts remain. The loss of a front boundary wall or fence is detrimental to the street scene.



*Slate Cottages (1860's), 153-159 Station Road*

c) **Nos. 161 - 171 Station Road:** a block of seven white painted terrace houses built c.1900 with bay windows, unusually on both the ground and upper floors.

d) **Nos. 179 - 189 (Laburnum Houses) Station Road:** a terrace of seven two-storey houses with slate roofs and brick chimneys, built in 1908. An attractive feature is the contrast between the red brick lower storey with bay windows and the white stucco upper storey with windows flat to the wall.

e) **The Glass House:** a distinctive house on the corner of Mill Drive which has a two-storey round turret, surmounted by a bright red tiled conical roof above a large hexagonal window.



*Glass House, Mill Drive*



- f) Railway Inn:** built in two stages between 1832-4 for the Leicester & Swannington Railway, the first railway to be built in the Midlands. First was the ticket office, a single-storey building with a low angle hipped roof above a bow-front. The two-storey addition with Charnwood slate roof was built soon afterwards. Its two ground floor rooms are arranged symmetrically around a central front door. Shutters have been added to its three upper windows. The walls have been white rendered. The building is an important part of Ratby's heritage and forms an attractive entrance to the village. It should be preserved.



*The Railway Inn (1830's) with later modifications*

- g) Nos. 195 - 221 Station Road:** this block of 14 terrace houses, separated by an entrance to a car park at the rear, was built in the 1990s. Whilst continuing the tradition of terrace housing in Station Road, it differs in having gable-ends which face the road at 90 degrees, in the uniform dark red colour of its brickwork and in its concrete roof tiles. Each front door has its own porch leading to a small front garden which is separated from the footpath by a low brick wall. It appears that originally each house had a separate entry gate through this wall. Unfortunately, these have been bricked-up, thus depriving the terrace of its original individuality.

### 3.2.7 Park Road

Park Road consists of two parallel streets at right angles to Station Road, connected by a link road to form a U-shape. It began to be developed piecemeal from 1898 when former allotment plots were sold-off. It is mainly notable for its complex mix of buildings dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century through to 21<sup>st</sup> Century apartments. The oldest properties include a number of standard late Victorian two-storey detached, semi-detached dwellings and a terrace of four houses, each with slate roofs, brick chimneys, simple ridge tiles, stone lintels and bay lower windows. They have small front gardens facing the street but large gardens at the rear. During the 1920-30s, a number of semi-detached houses with traditional bay windows were built on smaller sub-divided plots. In all these older properties, lack of garage or off-street parking facilities, as in so much of Ratby, is a problem. Post-1960, there has been more infilling of the larger gardens, usually with detached houses and bungalows in a variety of individual styles and materials. Traditionally, this area also included a bakery and factories, one of which, Benlowe Windows still exists. The former Coventry Gauge factory was demolished c.2001 and replaced by apartments. Evidence of the former bakery still exists.



*Former Bakery, 20 Park Road (NB lifting gear above the gable window)*

### 3.2.8 Mill Drive

Another development built upon former allotments, this area consists of individually designed detached houses and bungalows with large gardens, built between 1960 and 1990.

### 3.2.9 Brook Drive and The Pinfold

This is a small estate of modern town houses and flats built on the site of a former bus garage and petrol filling station in July 2001. The variety of small dwellings in a mainly rustic style, including dormer windows and a mixture of red brick and white render, lends a pleasing character to the development, as does the open space with trees, wetland meadow and Little Brook which was given by the developers to the Parish Council as a wildlife haven.



*Modern housing in Brook Drive with wetland meadow beyond*

### 3.2.10 Commercial Buildings

Since the late 19th century Ratby has been a village of small-scale businesses located within residential areas e.g. Wolsey in Stamford Street; Benlowe and Coventry Gauge in Park Road; Geary's Bakery, Astill and Jordan's Bus Company and, until recently Sleepmaster's in Station Road; and Cawrey Homes in Taverner Drive. Of these, only Geary's Bakery, Benlowe Windows and Cawrey Homes are still operational. These commercial buildings have usually occupied small, discrete locations within the village and been built in a functional style at the same scale as the houses alongside. Ratby has never had a separate, purpose-built industrial estate and this has helped the village to retain its rural character.



*Industrial units (Benlowe), Park Road*



<b>Zone B - Station Road etc: Guidelines</b>	
<b>BUILDINGS</b>	
<b>37</b>	Any application to change the frontage of the small group of 17/18 <sup>th</sup> Century buildings opposite the cricket field should ensure that the proposed alterations blend with the traditional materials, style and appearance of these properties.
<b>38</b>	The 19 <sup>th</sup> Century houses on Station Road exhibit many of the different types of village architecture from the period 1830 - 1908 in terrace, detached and semi-detached forms. Also present are good examples of Victorian decorative features: roof tiles, dentil eaves, string courses, stone lintels, brick windows and door surrounds, etc. All these features are visually appealing and should be retained, carefully maintained and, if damaged, replaced with their equivalents. External cladding with artificial stone, timber, plastic or tiles should be avoided. Extensions should blend carefully with the main building by using similar materials and style.
<b>39</b>	The character and frontage of Geary's shop and former bakery should be retained and enhanced, if and when development takes place on the general bakery site. This, together with the detached Victorian houses and Chapel opposite, would be a welcome inclusion to the Conservation Area if the opportunity should arise.
<b>ROADS AND PATHS</b>	
<b>40</b>	Station Road is a very busy main road in which the flow of traffic is regularly impeded by parked vehicles. Traffic speed has been reduced by mini-roundabouts, speed cushions and tables. However, these have been criticised by many villagers who would prefer to see them replaced by illuminated speed restriction signs. Any future development in the area should include off-street parking facilities.
<b>41</b>	Centurion Walk, which connects Station Road with Church Farm Estate, is an important historical feature following the line of the pre-1904 parish boundary with Kirby Muxloe. A name plaque should be designed to communicate this fact to the general public.
<b>42</b>	In any possible future development the former rail track between Park Road and Alexandra Stone should be restored to public footpath status. It would be a valuable extension of the footpath network and provide a new, safe and environmentally friendly walking route from Station Road to the Baron's Park area of Kirby Muxloe.
<b>OPEN SPACES</b>	
<b>43</b>	Jubilee Green on the north side of Taverner Drive was created in the 1990s and, with the Orchard, is a valuable recreational open space. The pond and allotments on the south side help create a valuable green entrance to the village at this location and should be retained and/or enhanced in the event of any future development.
<b>44</b>	Benlowe's car park on Station Road disrupts the continuity of the street line and is visually unattractive. The site may be allocated for residential development at some future stage, in which case the frontage of the new houses should be in line with adjacent properties and their design should complement rather than contrast with other houses in the area.
<b>45</b>	The warehouse site, until recently occupied by Sleepmasters, is in a prominent location at the entrance to the village. It creates a negative first impression for visitors. Consideration should be given to plant screening in the style of neighbouring properties e.g. The Conifers Mobile Home Park. If it is eventually sold for residential development, the same building guidelines as suggested for Benlowe's (see guideline 44 above) should apply.

Zone B - Station Road etc: Guidelines cont'd	
BOUNDARIES	
46	Station Road stretches from the centre of the village to the rural settlement boundary. Ideally, the nature of boundaries between the houses and the main road should change accordingly, i.e. from stone or brick walls - sometimes with iron railings near to the centre - to hedges, trees and wooden fences near to the edge of the settlement.
47	The main design problem has been the complete loss of a clear boundary in front of many of the houses, usually to accommodate cars. Partial replacement of such a boundary still allowing for some off-road parking, should be encouraged.
GATEWAYS	
48	The lack of residential development along Desford Lane has helped to bring the countryside right into the busy heart of the village. Any future development on this road should be designed to preserve this effect by the provision of front gardens with hedged and tree-lined boundaries.
49	The entrance to Ratby from Kirby Muxloe has been somewhat urbanised on the east side by hard brick boundary fronting Nos. 195 - 221 Station Road. Small trees and bushes could be selectively planted at the front to soften the appearance. A similar provision of screening would greatly improve the appearance of the Severn-Trent Sewerage installation on the same approach to the village.
STREET SCENE	
50	There should be liaison with Highways Authority to review the design of road signage on the approach from Kirby Muxloe.
51	In light of public criticism of the unappealing nature of the front of the largest shop in the village, the Co-operative Store, applications to change the design of a shop front should be sensitively monitored.
INDUSTRY	
52	Following the previous pattern of industrial location in Ratby, any industrial/employment developments should blend with their surroundings and be in keeping with existing premises where possible.

### 3.3 ZONE C **Stamford Street, Markfield Road, Groby Road Charnwood Estate**

#### 3.3.1 Introduction

Zone C comprises 4 phases of residential expansion onto former farmland to the NW of the old village. These are:

- i) Stamford Street in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century on the enclosure awarded to Josiah Grudgeon by the 1770 Enclosure Act.
- ii) Ribbon development on the north side of Markfield Road between 1930 and 1950s and along Groby Road after 1945.
- iii) Post-war council houses (1945-60) on land previously belonging to Hollybush Farm.
- iv) Private housing developments (1970-90) on land belonging to the former Nook Farm to the south of Markfield Road. Together iii and iv comprise the Charnwood Estate.



### 3.3.2 Stamford Street

Two contrasting zones can be identified: Lower and Upper Stamford Street.

**A) Lower Stamford Street:** from the Main Street junction to the bend in the street at Nos. 29/31 The area began to be developed in 1861 when the first two small hosiery factories in the village were built near to the junction with Main Street. These were long, narrow buildings with white rendered walls, pitched roofs parallel to the street and traditional elongated upper floor windows. The buildings still exist, but have been converted into residences, "Weaver's Court". Unfortunately the traditional upper floor windows were removed in the process.

The rest of Lower Stamford Street has witnessed slow, incremental development over the last 120 years from 1884 to 2006, such that today, a variety of houses and bungalows of different ages occupy the area. Between 1884 and 1930, four houses with large gardens were built for the Richardson family, who owned the land. Stamford Cottages (1884), initially a large semi-detached, red brick building with a slate roof, was converted into a detached house in the 1970s and is now separated from the footpath by the recent addition of a brick wall and gate posts. In contrast, the two 1920s detached houses on the south side have rendered walls, tiled roofs and small decorative gables over the main upstairs window.



Lower Stamford Street

After 1960, the large gardens and enclosures were gradually sold and a mixture of detached, semi-detached houses and bungalows were built, most with substantial gardens. The small gable over the main upper floor window has become a recurring feature in this section of the street. It mirrors the c.1884 house (No. 31), which provides an attractive end-stop to Lower Stamford Street (see photo below left).

**B) Upper Stamford Street:** was developed in 1879 when the land was divided into equal plots on each side of the central road and sold off to developers. Houses and a factory were built between 1883 and 1909. Each plot was developed separately, so that the street is a mixture of terrace, semi-detached and, more rarely, detached two-storey houses, characteristic of the late Victorian and Edwardian ages. Some houses are immediately adjacent to the footpath. Others have small front gardens behind a low wall or fence. Gladstone Cottages (1889) are the exception in having very long front gardens with enough space for cars between the garden fence and the road. Unfortunately, the boundary between the garden and the footpath has been removed in a minority of cases.

Most of the houses have attractive red brick walls, which give an overall unity to the street. A few are white rendered, which adds variety. Less authentic are the one or two examples of stone cladding. Roofs were originally of local slate, but many have been replaced with concrete tiles. Chimneys are always solid looking in red brick.

The most attractive feature of the late-Victorian houses is their decorative detail. This is well illustrated by the 1884 Hillside Cottages (Nos. 38 - 52 Stamford Street), a terrace of eight two-storey houses. Their walls are red brick with flat windows. All windows and doors have stone lintels with decorative carving. The slate roofs have



*Hillside Cottages (1884), Stamford Street*

brick chimneys with ceramic pots. Along the full length of the terrace there is a finely detailed terracotta string course below the eaves. A low brick wall separates the small front garden from the footpath. The terrace is a uniform assemblage apart from No. 52 which belonged to the Richardson family and has a bay window at the front, its own separate entry to the back and its original tiled porch.

Hawarden Cottages (1896) have a finely decorated and scripted terracotta name and date plaque, as well as red ridge tiles and a terracotta string course with flower decoration across the full width of the terrace, below the upper windows. The low blue brick wall separating the small front garden from the footpath is capped by iron railings.



*Close-up of Victorian terracotta Hawarden Cottages, Stamford Street*

A variation on the above themes can be seen at Warrington Cottages (87-95 Stamford Street), where the second storey is

part white-rendered with patterned red brickwork around the windows. They also have brick arches over doors and windows and attractive sloping brick windowsills. Wooden fencing separates the front garden from the footpath.



*Warrington Cottages (1906), Stamford Street*

Stamford Street is therefore mainly a late Victorian/Edwardian development. However, there have been a small number of late 20<sup>th</sup> Century infills. Stamford Close comprises a mixture of terrace and semi-detached houses on the site of the former Wolsey Hosiery factory which closed in 1981. Despite being brick-built, the design of the houses does not replicate any of the features of the neighbouring Victorian houses and instead attempts more rustic design with small gables over one of the bedrooms. The Working Men's Club closed in c.1990 and has been replaced by four blocks of semi-detached houses. The very generous parking area at the front is separated from the footpath by a low brick wall which has a plaque marking the site of the former Working Men's Club (1898).



*In-fill of former Working Men's Club (1898), Stamford Street*



At the western end of Stamford Street, a 1920s house and a group of new dwellings enjoy good views over the countryside towards The Burroughs and Martinshaw Wood. (See 3.5.1)



*Field path from Stamford Street to Markfield Road via Motty's stile*

- C) Roads and Streets:** Stamford Street is a densely populated area which generates considerable local traffic, despite its narrow thoroughfare. Most houses have no facilities for off-street parking which leads to congestion.

Wolsey Drive gives access to the Charnwood Estate (see 3.3.5) and Markfield Road (3.3.3). The area has good footpath links with Burroughs Road via field paths; and with the Plough Inn, the Recreation Ground and Main Street via "The Stattie".

- D) Open Spaces:** Stamford Street and the Charnwood Estate are a long way from Ratby's main play area at Ferndale Park. The "Reccy", the recreation ground between Stamford Street and Burroughs Road is therefore an important amenity for the children of the area. Recently, there has been an upgrading of the play facilities. The lowering of the section of hedge bordering the infant play area would help to provide much needed surveillance from the neighbouring footpath. The temporary provision of a BMX cycle amenity became associated with anti-social behaviour and has been abandoned. An enclosed, asphalted area at "The Reccy", suitable for ball games, would be a very welcome addition to the facilities.



*Children's recreation ground 'The Reccy'*

### 3.3.3: Markfield Road

Development along this former country lane began in 1929.

- A) To the north and east:** the building of a mixture of semi-detached council houses and private detached and semi-detached dwellings took place mainly between 1930 and the 1950s when the re-housing of families from sub-standard properties in the village was a priority. The semi-detached, single-fronted houses are of good size and well spaced, with sizeable front and back gardens. They are uniformly brick-built with a mixture of hipped and pitched roofs and centrally-placed tall chimneys with ceramic pots.

White stucco has been added to some walls. Front boundaries are hedged or fenced which is appropriate for their semi-rural location. Facilities were improved in the 1970/80s by the addition of bridge bathrooms which straddle the gap between each pair of semi-detached council houses. Some have been painted to blend with the pastel coloured rendering of adjacent walls.



*Semi-detached houses showing 'bridge' bathrooms matching adjacent rendered walls, Markfield Road*

Those that have not been so treated are visually unappealing. The building line follows the gentle curvature of the road, so that front and side views of the houses can be seen simultaneously, alongside an attractive green area of mown grass and trees (see "Open Spaces" 3.3.3 E below).

- B) The Sunshine Houses:** the last houses to be seen on leaving the village are known locally as the "Sunshine Houses" (see photo page 48). They are a group of 30 very generously spaced, uniform, single-fronted semi-detached houses built in the 1930s. They are accessed by a service road which is separated from the main road by a hedge and grass verge. These, together with the background of Martinshaw Wood, help to create a gentle transition into the countryside beyond. The lower floors are red brick whilst the upper floors are white stucco. They have hipped roofs of bright red tile with brick chimneys in the centre. As the name suggests, the "Sunshine Houses" enjoy good views across open fields to the south.



View across open countryside from Stamford Street towards Martinshaw Wood and 'Sunshine Houses' (see page 48)

- C) The South and West:** development of council and private housing took place between 1945 and c.1970. They are a mixture of semi-detached bungalows and terrace houses, again with generous gardens, bordered by fencing or hedges. The earliest buildings have brick chimneys on pitched roofs, hipped at the end of each terrace, whilst the last to be built have low angled pitched roofs, without chimneys. On

leaving the village, the private detached houses and bungalows on this side have individual designs with large gardens.



Chimney-less late 20<sup>th</sup> C terrace, Markfield Road

- D) Roads and Streets:** Markfield Road is the main route from Ratby to the NW, including the M1 North. Its junction with Main Street and Groby Road is very busy at peak times. The main road curves gently downhill into the village which can encourage speeding. The properties alongside the road have very little off-road parking space. This results in some on-street parking which, on the positive side, can act as a traffic calming measure. To provide alternative parking spaces, some fences have been removed and front gardens either paved or covered with gravel, which is often detrimental to the appearance of the area.

On the south side, the service road is used for parking and there is a car park set aside from the houses. Unfortunately, responsibility for maintaining these sites is unclear and they can become unsightly.



Much valued green space, Markfield Road



**E) Open Spaces:** there is an unusually generous space between the buildings on opposite sides of Markfield Road provided by the main road, a service road, wide verges and a broad central section of grass, hedge and trees. These help to conserve a open, rural landscape on this route out of the village (see page 48).

**3.3.4: Groby Road:** begins at the junction between Markfield Road and Danehill. It was a hedge-lined country lane without footpaths before 1945 when only one house existed, the Vicarage (1904).



*"The Croft" (1950) a distinctive three gabled house, corner of Markfield Road and Groby Road*

**A) The Vicarage:** this is a substantial detached, two-storey house in a large garden with many mature trees. The latter form the background to two neighbouring bungalows and together they create a picturesque rural scene for pedestrians and motorists leaving the village in the direction of Groby. The walls are built of irregular-shaped, grey and green Charnwood stones held together by a light-coloured mortar. The overall dark effect is lightened at the corners by red brick quoins. The slightly offset NE wing with its separate gable adds interest to the southeast front of the house, which has six windows opening onto a large sunken lawn. The lower three windows have segmental arches and all six are enhanced by patterned surrounds of red brick. The hipped roof is made of red tile, capped at the apex by larger red ridge tiles. There are three tall brick chimneys with red

ceramic pots. This fine house is a valuable amenity to the community as the venue for garden fetes and musical events.



*The Vicarage*

**B) The North Side of Groby Road:**

development began in 1945 when a mixture of detached and semi-detached, single-fronted houses began to be built. The first group (Nos. 25-33 Groby Road) consists of two sets of semi-detached, single-fronted houses with hipped slate roofs and brick chimneys. Both lower and upper rooms have rounded bay windows, separated by attractively patterned brickwork. Between these two houses is one detached, double-fronted house with a pitched slate roof. It has two rounded bay windows on the lower floor. Each of these five houses is enhanced by a semi-circular pattern of brickwork over the front door. Together they form an interesting symmetrical group.



*Symmetrically arranged mid-20th c houses, Groby Road*

The second group (Nos. 35-41 Groby Road) comprises a line of two detached buildings, separated by one semi-detached two-storey house. Together they form a straight line,

parallel to the road, though very slightly set back from the first group. Each house has its own individual style with different types of brick, roof materials and window type.

Both groups are separated from the road by small front gardens, usually bordered by low hedges, except for the front boundary of the final house which has a low Charnwood stone wall. Together these help to conserve the rural appearance of the village edge.

- C) The South Side of Groby Road:** detached bungalows and houses are set well back from the main road behind large front gardens. Each building has its own individual architecture which makes for a very varied landscape. One often repeated feature is the presence of extensions with their gable-ends projecting towards the main road. This produces an uneven building-line. However, this does not usually have a detrimental effect because of the large size of the front gardens. The gardens are separated from the road by a mixture of low hedges, stone walls, wooden fences and a wide grass verge enhanced by a line of mature trees. This helps to create a gradual transition from the countryside into the built-up area of the village.



Tree-lined approach, Groby Road

- D) 113 Main Street:** in 2007-8 a new development of 11 terraced and one detached dwelling was built in this location, adjacent to the Conservation Area. In an attempt to make the buildings transitional with the old 17<sup>th</sup> Century farmhouse next

door, the new houses have been given artificial slate roofs, dummy chimneys and segmental arches over the windows. However, there are no other examples of brick-built, terraced housing on this route out of the village. Unfortunately the detached house does not match the adjacent 17<sup>th</sup> Century farmhouse.



Contrasting styles – a 17<sup>th</sup> C former farmhouse (Hollybush Farm) alongside a 2008 build, Main Street

- E) Roads and Streets:** Groby Road is the main road from Ratby to the A46 trunk road and the A50 into Leicester. As such it attracts considerable traffic at peak times. Recent traffic calming measures have helped to reduce speeding along this narrow road. Some houses on the north side lack garage and car parking space. This has led to garden fencing being removed which has detracted from the general appearance of the road.
- F) Open Spaces:** At the junction of Groby Road, Danehill and Markfield Road, there is a large open space of grass and mature trees which help to soften the surrounding built landscape. This openness also helps provide views of the church tower.



Important green space, junction of Dane Hill, Groby Road and Markfield Road



### 3.3.5: Charnwood Estate Development:

began after 1945 when land belonging to Hollybush Farm and later Nook Farm was sold.

**A) Whittington Drive:** was built along similar lines to Markfield Road. It follows a long curved line with spacious, single-fronted semi-detached houses to the south and semi-detached bungalows to the north. Both types have brick walls with flat windows and uniform concrete-tiled roofs. However, the roofs of the houses are hipped with brick chimneys, whereas they are pitched in the case of the bungalows. Both sides have moderately sized front gardens which are mostly bordered by the original wooden fences. In some cases these have been replaced by stone walls or hedges. Initially Whittington Drive included the industrial extensions at the rear of the Wolsey Hosiery factory on Stamford Street. Of these, only one unit has survived, i.e. Trafalgar Workwear, which is single-storey with a low-angled pitched roof orientated at 90 degrees to the road. In 2004-5, the other industrial unit was demolished and replaced by residences centred around Whittington Court, a three-storey block of apartments with rear car park. This is wholly out of scale with the rest of Whittington Drive.



Three storey apartments, Whittington Drive

**B) Bradgate Drive/Charnwood Drive:** have a similar pattern of semi-detached houses and bungalows to Whittington Drive. They were developed approximately during the same period 1950-60s. One innovation was the

inclusion of houses served only by narrow walkways e.g. South Walk and East Walk.



East Walk, Charnwood Estate



Generously spaced dwellings, Ash Close

Beyond the junction with Wolsey Drive and Bradgate Drive, the style of the post-1970 buildings changes. Terrace houses and bungalows become more common (e.g. Ash Close and Bevington Close), along with roofs without chimneys and porches over the front doors. The properties are even more spaciouly laid out, sometimes opening onto a central grassed area (e.g. Ash Close). Mostly the front gardens have wooden fenced boundaries and a wide grass verge



New car park Bradgate Drive

separating them from the road. Despite the spaciousness of the layout, there has been very little attempt to create car parking space adjacent to the homes. Instead special parking areas, sometimes with garages, have been developed for groups of houses. There is little evidence of these being utilised. Usually cars are parked on the street and the car parks look abandoned and poorly maintained.

- C) The Poplars:** is an exception. Here, the latest expansion of the Charnwood Estate consists of detached bungalows with garages and carefully maintained, open-plan frontages accessed by a block-paved entrance drive.



*Block-paved entrance to The Poplars*

- D) Roads and Streets:** Charnwood Estate is served by relatively wide roads which provide good accessibility to most homes. The exceptions are the narrow "walks" which were probably introduced to improve intimacy and neighbourliness but, in retrospect, have proved to be inconvenient in the context of today's preferred form of transport, the motor car. The area has good footpath access to both Markfield Road and Stamford Street.

- E) Open Spaces:** a feature of the estate is the generous provision of open spaces especially at road junctions (e.g. between Whittington Drive, Wolsey Drive and Bradgate Drive). However, none of these make any provision for the needs of children, as symbolised by the ubiquitous notice: "No Ball Games".



*A sign reinforcing the need for a play space in this area*



<b>Zone C</b> - Stamford Street, Markfield Road, Groby Road, Charnwood Estate: Guidelines	
<b>STAMFORD STREET</b>	
<b>BUILDINGS</b>	
<b>53</b>	Lower Stamford Street: most houses have front gardens and a straight building line, especially on the north side. Major extensions from the building line towards the road should be avoided.
<b>54</b>	Upper Stamford Street: there are many good examples of Victorian decorative features eg roof tiles, dentil eaves, string courses, stone lintels, brick window and door surrounds, name and date plaques etc. which are visually appealing and should be retained, carefully maintained and, if damaged, replaced with their equivalents.
<b>55</b>	External cladding with artificial stone and plastic has disturbed the main theme of red brick and occasional white render. Similarly concrete roof tiles have sometimes replaced slate or its equivalent. Such changes in appearance should be avoided in future. Extensions should blend carefully with the main building by using similar materials and style.
<b>ROADS AND PATHS</b>	
<b>56</b>	Stamford Street is well provided with footpath links to the Charnwood Estate (via Wolsey Road), to Markfield Road via the ancient footpath to Motty's Stile which pre-dates the 1770 Enclosure Act (see page 31), to Main Street (via The Stattie) and Burroughs Road (via a field path established in 1770). All these paths should be retained and/or enhanced should future development occur.
<b>OPEN SPACES</b>	
<b>57</b>	There is important recreational space in the field alongside The Stattie, between Stamford Street and Burroughs Road. This should be protected from future building development. The current play equipment should be further enhanced by the provision of dry play facilities for ball games (see Charnwood Estate, 3.3.2 D).
<b>BOUNDARIES</b>	
<b>58</b>	Front garden walls are important to the appearance of the street and should be retained. Owners should be encouraged to rebuild them where they are missing.
<b>MARKFIELD ROAD</b>	
<b>BUILDINGS</b> (see page 12 for General Guidelines for the Design of Buildings)	
<b>59</b>	Houses on Markfield Road have a regular curved building line and roof level. The arrangement of windows, chimneys etc. also brings a broad uniformity to the assemblage. This should not be disturbed by future building extensions either upwards or towards the main road.
<b>60</b>	Facilities were improved by the construction of bridge bathrooms between neighbouring houses in the 1970s. Painting which blends well with neighbouring walls is to be encouraged.
<b>ROADS AND PATHS</b>	
<b>61</b>	Illuminated repeater speed restriction signs should be introduced on Markfield Road.
<b>62</b>	The footpath linking the Upper Markfield Road/Charnwood Estate area with the Groby College and Brookvale School via the edge of Martinshaw Wood should be enhanced to provide a safe, dry walking/cycling route.

<b>Zone C</b> - Stamford Street, Markfield Road, Groby Road, Charnwood Estate: Guidelines	
<b>STAMFORD STREET cont'd</b>	
<b>OPEN SPACES</b>	
<b>63</b>	The unusually generous distance between the building lines on each side of Markfield Road preserves the rural nature of this entrance to the village and should be retained.
<b>BOUNDARIES</b>	
<b>64</b>	The landscape at the junction of Markfield Road and Main Street has been improved by the low Charnwood stone wall, built to stabilise the grassy embankment. To be consistent, the same type of wall should be used to stabilise the other embankments at this junction.
<b>65</b>	Lack of off-street parking facilities is a real problem on Markfield Road. Property owners should be encouraged to retain at least part of the front garden boundary when opening-up a new drive for their vehicles.
<b>GATEWAYS</b>	
<b>66</b>	It is important to retain the roadside hedges, native trees and front gardens to preserve the rural appearance of the entrance to Ratby via Markfield Road.
<b>GROBY ROAD</b>	
<b>BUILDINGS</b>	
<b>67</b>	The Vicarage with its large garden is a great asset to the village both visually and as an amenity to the community. Any attempt to replace the house and garden with multiple residences should be resisted.
<b>68</b>	Front gardens on each side of Groby Road help to preserve the rural nature of the entrance to Ratby from Groby. Further encroachment of the building line towards the road should be avoided.
<b>OPEN SPACES</b>	
<b>69</b>	The generous grassy open space and trees at the junction of Groby Road, Markfield Road and Dane Hill help to soften the built landscape and should be protected and/or enhanced.
<b>BOUNDARIES</b>	
<b>70</b>	On the south side, most boundaries between the garden and pavement help to preserve the rural nature of this entrance to the village. Where limited space for off-street parking has meant that fences have been removed (e.g. on the north-side), owners should be encouraged to retain at least part of their front boundary.
<b>CHARNWOOD ESTATE</b>	
<b>BUILDINGS</b>	
<b>71</b>	The uniform design of much of the Charnwood Estate would not be benefitted by inappropriate extensions either upwards or towards the road.
<b>72</b>	The modest scale of the two storey houses and bungalows on the Charnwood Estate should not be overshadowed by large three storey blocks as has, unfortunately, happened in the recent past.



<b>Zone C</b> - Stamford Street, Markfield Road, Groby Road, Charnwood Estate: Guidelines	
<b>CHARNWOOD ESTATE cont'd</b>	
<b>ROADS AND PATHS</b>	
<b>73</b>	Special areas designated for off-street parking and garaging are not well used or maintained and most have become unsightly. Refurbishment and improved security devices are needed. (photo page 35)
<b>OPEN SPACES</b>	
<b>74</b>	"No Ball Games" signs mean that children on the Charnwood Estate are poorly served for recreational space. Further enhancement of the facilities on the Recreation Ground between Stamford Street and Burroughs Road is urgently required.

### 3.4 Zone D: Church Farm Development

The building of the Church Farm Estate by Cawrey Homes begun in 1968 on land formerly belonging to the three farms on Church Lane is still work in progress. Accordingly perceived strengths and weaknesses of this Zone are summarised in table form.

#### 3.4.1 The beginnings of Development (1968-70)

Work began simultaneously on Groby Road/Main Street and Lower Dane Hill, quickly followed by the replacement of Church Farm by bungalows on Church Lane.

Each development was characterised by a repetition of the same uniform architectural style. For example, at Nos. 4 - 14 Groby Road and 120 - 128 Main Street, an identical group of 11 detached, two-storey, four bedroom houses were built of red facing brick with concrete roof tiles and chimneys. The assemblage has a tidy, even roofline at 90 degrees to the road. Their gable ends face the road and each house is slightly offset to give variation to the frontage. Otherwise the houses were given little individuality. Each has the same pattern of doors and windows, a small open-plan garden at the front and a flat-roofed garage at the side of the house. There are no decorative features apart from wooden barge boards below the eaves and the use of pebbledash to break up the appearance of the front. The houses lie behind a hedge and mature trees which give this entrance to the village a rural atmosphere.

At Lower Dane Hill, the development began with the building of three uniform semi-detached brick-built bungalows with concrete roof tiles and brick chimneys. They are characterised by a generous allocation of space in the form of separate garages, front gardens and a wide, semi-circular grassy area, which separates them from the main road. Regrettably one bungalow is in very poor condition, having remained unoccupied for approximately 25 years.

On Church Lane, in 1969-70 the former timber framed building of Church Farm was replaced by six bungalows of the same design as Dane Hill. They have generously-sized front gardens, appropriately bordered by walls built of re-used Charnwood stones from the demolished farm buildings. An external decorative chimney stack, built of the same Charnwood material, breaks up the uniformity of the gable-end. It is pleasing that these low bungalows do not impede the view towards Kirby Muxloe and Leicester Forest East from the churchyard opposite.



View from the Churchyard towards Leicester Forest East

### 3.4.2. The Period of Functional Uniformity (1970-81)

During the 1970s Dane Hill was gradually lengthened to connect the Lower Dane Hill with the Groby Road developments. New housing expanded on each side of this central artery. The layout is mainly rectilinear with subsidiary roads branching off Dane Hill at right angles, e.g. Gillbank Drive, Wesley Close, Ingle Drive and Woodley Road to the west; Calverton Close, Cardinal Close, Bell Close to the east.



*Modern bungalows against an ancient background, Woodley Road*

The lines of Nicholas Drive and Ferndale Drive are not rectilinear but follow the line of former field boundaries. Houses were designed to cater for different sizes and incomes of families e.g. three-bedroom dwellings in both detached and semi-detached forms, two-bedroom and single bedroom bungalows and blocks of four or five town houses. The four-bedroom detached house was rarely built during this phase.

A limited number of designs were then created e.g. one for detached, one for semi-detached, two for bungalows and one for town houses. The same type of house was then built in linear blocks of 8 - 12 dwellings. For example, in 1971-2, eight identical semi-detached buildings were built in Wesley Close. They are uniform in scale, built of the same red facing brick, with concrete roof tiles and chimneys and the same symmetrical window and door arrangement. The original timber window frames have usually been replaced with double-glazed PVC. This has now become general practice throughout the estate. All front gardens are open-plan.

In 1972-4, eight identical detached bungalows were built on the south side of Bell Close with their gable-end facing the road. Each has an external brick chimneybreast. Every wall is rough rendered and painted in pastel colours. In 1975-6, 15 bungalows of the same design were built in Gillbank Drive and seven in neighbouring Ingle Drive, this time all in red brick.

To give variety a contrasting linear block was built on the opposite side of the road. For example, 10 identical three-bedroom detached houses were built on the opposite side of Ingle Drive to the bungalows. Similarly, in Upper Ferndale Drive, eight identical detached houses to the north, face a linear block of eight detached bungalows to the south.

In 1977-8, 28 red brick bungalows were built to the same design on Woodley Road with another 10 adjacent to them on Dane Hill. These are smaller, single bedroom detached dwellings. The pitched roof is at right angles to the road and there are no chimneys. One side of the front of the house is slightly offset to accommodate the front door. The street scene is uniform in each of the above cases, with no extensions towards the road. Originally a carport was provided alongside each bungalow. Some have been converted into garages which provide the only variation in the street scene. The adjacent Nook Close (1977-8) comprises a row of uniform detached houses on one side, faced by a line of similar semi-detached dwellings opposite.

In 1979-81, similar design was used in the area comprising Grange Close, Lee Rise, Meadow Close and Lower Ferndale Drive. Grange Close has a linear block of eight identical detached bungalows on one side and a mixture of both semi-detached houses and detached bungalows opposite. Similarly, Lower Ferndale Drive has a line of detached red brick houses, angled to the road on its south side. Light brown bricks are sometimes introduced to provide variation, as is the part white-rendered finish of some of the properties. Similarly, white plastic or wooden cladding was also introduced, especially when alternatives were in short supply. Wooden barge



boards below the eaves and occasional pebbledash are the only other decorative features.



*A row of uniform bungalows 1979-81, Grange Close*

Town houses are the only properties without adjacent garages. Instead they are served by separate concrete garage blocks, fronted by tarmaced open spaces. These areas do not blend well with the mainly red brick houses nearby. They are often not used, are poorly maintained and too often deteriorate into eyesores.

A recurring characteristic of this phase is the generous use of space. All houses have gardens at front and back. Garages, often with front drives within the curtilage, are alongside rather than part of the structure of the house. Roads (e.g. Dane Hill, Nicholas Drive and Ferndale Drive) are wide with grass verges and ornamental trees next to an open plan front boundary. Individual streets are often separated from each other by open green spaces. However, these grassy spaces are difficult to maintain and can become a nuisance to adjoining owners. The main area of open space is Ferndale Park, which has play equipment and informal recreation areas. Unfortunately, during this phase of development, the old field hedgerows were often removed and no longer provide wildlife routes between the buildings. The green spaces are connected by footpaths which offer the walker safe routes through the estate. Footpaths also link the area to Church Lane and Station Road and provide access to shops and the school.

Phases 3.4.1 and 3.4.2	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Simple design and consistent scale</li> <li>2. Clean, uncomplicated building lines.</li> <li>3. Wide roads with grass verges and trees.</li> <li>4. Generous space between and around houses.</li> <li>5. Open areas of grass and decorative trees.</li> <li>6. Chimneys as decorative features</li> <li>7. Use of different brick colours and painted rendering to give variety.</li> <li>8. Good footpath links within the estate and to other parts of the village.</li> <li>9. Major recreational area.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Buildings too plain - lack of decorative detail.</li> <li>2. Too much uniformity. No individuality in linear blocks of houses.</li> <li>3. Concrete garages serving townhouses have become eyesores.</li> <li>4. Loss of hedgerows as wildlife corridors.</li> </ol>

### 3.4.3. A Period of Transition: (1981 - 1986)

During the early 1980s, Church Farm Estate continued to expand to the north (Cottage Close and Overfield Close, 1981-83) and to the south (Spring Close, Heathbrook Drive, Lower Ferndale and Tyler Road (1984-86). A number of changes can be identified. The layout of roads has changed from rectilinear to a more sinuous line. This has introduced a sense of deliberate uncertainty and anticipation, which makes the streetscene more interesting. Gradually, new designs were added to the old, including new four-bedroom houses (e.g. Heathbrook Drive). Apart from one line of detached houses in Cottage Close, buildings of the same type were now constructed in either pairs or threes, thus introducing more variety into the landscape (e.g. Overfield Close).

On a more negative note, there was less space available during the 1980s. Land was becoming more expensive and the authorised density of

development was gradually increased from 8 to 12 houses per acre. Houses had to be built on smaller, narrower plots, so that gardens became smaller and the garage, rather than being alongside or even separate from the house, had to be incorporated into the building. For example, in Cottage Close the garages project from the front of the house. Some owners have extended the upper floor above this garage to create an extra bedroom. Others have extended the whole of the ground floor forward to further expand their living space, necessitating the construction of a projecting roof above the ground floor across the full width of the house. This has produced a very uneven frontage line to the street. The street scene can appear crowded where there have been other extensions to the properties.



*Multiple Extensions 1981-83, Overfield Close*

On a positive side, the sinuosity of the roads and the increased variety of house types, including many of the later extensions have added interest to the streetscene. However, there is a general absence of green spaces within the street layout. Although all properties have off-street parking facilities including garages and open plan frontages, the same sense of openness which characterised the first two phases is missing.

### Phase 3.4.3

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sinuous layout of roads and houses creates interest.</li> <li>2. Slightly greater variety of house types.</li> <li>3. No longer linear blocks of 8 - 12 houses leads to a more varied streetscene.</li> <li>4. Use of different brick colours and painted rendering to give variety</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Space more limited around and between houses leads to more crowded street line.</li> <li>2. Extensions above garages which project can lead to an uneven street line.</li> <li>3. Lack of decorative detail.</li> <li>4. Loss of chimneys as decorative features.</li> <li>5. Extensions of different types sometimes create a too complex streetscene.</li> </ol>

### 3.4.4. The Arrival of Individuality and Innovation: (1986 - 2002)

Building during this period was concentrated in the areas to the east of Tyler Road (1987-89), the south of Ferndale Drive (1990-1992) and alongside Taverner Drive (1993-2002). Houses were built alongside the two main arteries, Tyler Road and Taverner Drive, and also in small cul-de-sacs (e.g. Spring Close, Heathbrook Drive, Freeman's Court, Robin's Field, Jordan Court, Martin Square, Windmill Close and Barton Close, Lockley Close and Astill Close).

An early development on Taverner Drive was the Ratby Co-operative Band Room, appropriately located away from residential areas with a wildlife area on one side, allotments on the other and the Community Orchard opposite. The Band Room is a substantial, red brick, functional building with a pitched roof which incorporates roof-lights. A garage-type door at the side, allows for easy movement of large musical instruments. The suite of rooms inside caters for practice facilities required by over one hundred members that play in the various bands. A car park is accessed through gates in an eight-foot high metal security fence. Proposed plans to enlarge the band room should complement the existing building (see photo page 43).





*Ratby Co-operative Band Room, Taverner Drive*

During this period, the simpler and more functional designs of the earlier stages were replaced by more varied and innovative styles. It becomes rare for adjacent houses to be of the same size or appearance. In Freeman's Court, there is a mixture of bungalows, a four-bedroom detached house and a symmetrical semi-detached building with projecting wings. In Jordan Court, a more rustic design features detached houses with the upper floor in the roof space, including dormer windows. In Martin Square, to add interest, the frontage line is deliberately uneven. In Barton Close, some houses have roofs over the garage with dormer windows. Some bungalows are L-shaped. In Taverner Drive there is a cat-slide roof. In Geary Close, two houses have hipped roofs and in



*Three storey Tower House, Preston Close*

Preston Close there is a three-storey tower house with a brick stair turret that adds considerably to the interest of the street scene. To further add variety, most of the semi-detached properties during this period were designed to be asymmetrical. Throughout the development there are subtle variations in the colour of bricks, the types of roof materials and the arrangement and design of porches and windows.

Many houses still have open front gardens, although there has been a gradual move towards landscaped frontages and trees in garden areas. The exceptions are some corner plots where high brick walls protect the gardens behind and give clear definition to the street line. On Preston Close, these walls follow a curved plan to match the round tower feature mentioned above.



*High boundary brick walls, corner of Jordan Court and Tyler Road (1993-2002)*

As time progressed through the 1990s, the average size of the new houses gradually increased after the relative austerities of the 1980s. More four-bedroom detached houses and large bungalows were built to increasingly innovative designs. As the demands of the population increased thanks to rising prosperity and the heady influence of certain television programmes, designs became more adventurous and ambitious and the streetscene more interesting and varied. At the same time, the space available remained much the same following government guidelines. Consequently gardens have remained small and sometimes out of scale relative to the size of the buildings.

The importance of retaining hedgerows as wildlife corridors has been increasingly recognised. Those originally retained in private

gardens (e.g. Overfield Walk) have usually been removed by the owners. Recent designs have protected the hedges as part of the streetscene (e.g. Ferndale Drive and Lockley Close). This allows the old field pattern to be recognised in the new built landscape. It is important that these features are in public ownership to ensure their survival and long-term maintenance.



*Preserved hedge lines off Ferndale Drive*

### 3.4.5. The “Baroque” Period: (2002 - 2008)

Building during this period returned to the Ferndale Drive area where it is still progressing at the present time (2009). Until 2008, the same positive climate for house building continued, so that the trends described in the previous section continued to apply. The layout of the roads off Ferndale Drive mainly follow a curved line and are generously spaced. In the cul-de-sacs they are made with block-paved finishes rather than black tarmac. Houses are separated from these roads mainly by open front gardens or wooden fencing.

There is great variety in the types of house available. In Fielding Lane seven out of eight houses have been built to a different individual design. Roof pitches have increased to add variety to the street scene, but ever since the late 1980s, chimneys have become redundant because of energy losses. Different design features (e.g. a catslide roof on the corner house)



*Individual roof styles (2002-2008), Fielding Lane*

and materials (e.g. shining grey slates, duller concrete tiles and red clay tiles) are involved in the construction of these roofs. The main gables are embellished with decorative brick features. Small gables with dormer windows add variety to the house fronts.

Butler Close has five different designs in six houses, including another tower house. Bands of different brick colour relieve the monotony of the standard brick wall. For example, the tower house has red bricks for the top two-thirds and pale brown bricks for the lower third. Decorative bricks form lintels over the windows. There are different door and porch designs for each house.

In Church Ponds Close there is another adventurous design in the form of four three-storey semi-detached houses, which are unique to the village. The three-storey frontages overlook a circular green space, enclosed on the far side by differently designed two-storey detached houses. The front wall is highly decorated by brick lintels and window sills and different coloured brick string courses. The rear of these tenement-type blocks appears to be two-storey with the third floor served by lights set into a sloping slate roof. One possible disadvantage of these three storey buildings is the shadow they cast over the other buildings at sunset.



*Three storey semi detached houses, Church Ponds Close (2006)*



*Rear of three semi detached houses, Church Ponds Close*



Finally, local authority guidelines demand that each development should include some “affordable homes” and therefore basic semi-detached houses of the standard design are still being built (e.g. Geary Close and Fielding Drive).

As part of the storm overflow system a new pond and reed bed has been created. This can be accessed by a footpath that also connects with Ferndale Drive recreation area. Noise bunds protect the Church Farm Estate from sound pollution caused by the nearby M1 and provide an additional wildlife corridor.

Taken overall, the Church Farm Estate illustrates clearly many of the positive changes in house design of the last 40 years from the clean, uncomplicated and relatively spacious lines of the 1970s to the more varied, innovative and individualistic styles of the 2000s.

Phase 3.4.4 and 3.4.5	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Innovative designs create interesting and varied street scene.</li> <li>2. Greater variety of decorative detail.</li> <li>3. Variety of materials used adds interest to the appearance of buildings.</li> <li>4. Clear boundaries give greater definition to street line.</li> <li>5. Preservation of hedgerows as wildlife corridors helps to mark position of former field</li> <li>6. Block paving road surface material gives more intimate feel to cul-de-sacs.</li> <li>7. Presence of affordable homes helps to create a balanced social mix.</li> <li>8. Good mix of small intimate cul-de-sacs and wide gently curving through-routes with grass verges.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Less space available for housing means small gardens, houses closely spaced and a more crowded street scene.</li> <li>2. Loss of chimneys as decorative features.</li> <li>3. Lack of open green spaces and trees within and between built areas.</li> <li>4. Three storey buildings dominate the scene when built adjacent to or across from two storey buildings.</li> </ol>

<b>Zone D - Church Farm Development: Guidelines</b>	
	The design of new houses is dependent upon variables such as the financial climate, the space available, the nature of the terrain, changing technologies and architectural innovation. It is therefore difficult to be prescriptive. However some principles can be identified in the specific context of the Church Farm Estate and are to be encouraged, e.g:
<b>75</b>	A curved layout of roads and houses usually produces a more interesting streetscene. However, occasional short uniform linear developments can provide a pleasing contrast.
<b>76</b>	Small quiet cul-de-sacs offer intimacy in contrast with the busier through routes.
<b>77</b>	Minor deviations in roof height and frontage line are better than rigid straight lines. However, too dramatic a change can have a negative effect on the appearance of the street.
<b>78</b>	The size of houses needs to match the size of plot to avoid the crowding together of buildings.
<b>79</b>	A variety of styles is better than too much uniformity. Small linear blocks of two or three similar buildings can offer a good compromise.
<b>80</b>	Minor decorative features including the use of different brick and roof colours create a more interesting built landscape
<b>81</b>	Innovative designs can add significant points of interest to the street scene.
<b>82</b>	Extensions are better located at the rear of properties rather than the front. Additions to the front of the house should not extend too far towards the road, especially when the front garden is small. They should use materials which blend well with the main building. Extensions leading to multiple minor gables and roof levels should be avoided. Extensions at the side should leave sufficient space for easy access between houses. It is important to avoid producing an overcrowded street scene.
<b>83</b>	The retention of footpaths which provide safe access across the development and to shops, school and services is very important.
<b>84</b>	Hedgerows in residential areas provide corridors for wildlife movement and survival and should be retained.
<b>85</b>	Noise bunds which protect properties adjacent to the M1 are an important feature and should be maintained.

## 4.0 LANDSCAPE SETTING AND WILDLIFE

### 4.1 The visual character of the surrounding countryside

Ratby occupies an important position on the South East boundary of The National Forest which runs along Groby Road, Main Street and Desford Lane.



*Ford and undulating landscape - Burroughs Road*

Three streams drain water from the high NW to the Rothley Brook (known locally as Big Brook) in the SE. These have produced an undulating landscape of deeply cut valleys separated by watersheds which offer excellent views to the east.

Rothley Brook and Burrough Brook (known locally as Little Brook) skirt the southern edge of the village, meandering towards the River Soar. Much of this low-lying ground is flood plain with farmland towards Kirby Muxloe.



*Open countryside and woodland from Burroughs Road*

To the north and west of the village undulating countryside rises gently towards Ratby Burroughs. Here a network of footpaths and

bridleways leads out of the village towards an area of farmland, meadows and recently planted woodland, through Burroughs Wood towards the villages of Thornton and Markfield. The legacy of ridge and furrow farming is a much-valued feature of the landscape in this area.

To the east of the village, farmland within the flood plains forming Rothley Brook Meadows continues to provide a green space beyond the built-up area towards the M1 motorway and the disused railway line.

### 4.2 The relationship between the surrounding countryside and the village edges

Ratby's identity as a village is defined by clear boundaries between the built-up area and the surrounding countryside. This emphasises that it is an individual settlement, distinct and separate from neighbouring villages.



*Clear settlement boundary to the South West*

The approach to the village from Groby via Sacheverell Way passes over the motorway: the M1 motorway bridge marks the limits of the built-up area to the north-east. Martinshaw Wood and the footbridge are just visible to the north.



*Approach from Groby over the M1 Bridge*



In the south, the road from Kirby Muxloe crosses the flood plain of two brooks giving views of water meadows on either side. It then passes the area of Ratby Jubilee Green which includes the Community Orchard. The entrance to the village from this direction crosses the line of the (now disused) railway track from Glenfield, next to the Railway Inn on Station Road.

The Desford Lane approach from the west passes through farmland with high hedges and very little housing, giving this area a rural feel. The road crosses Burrough Brook close to the village then passes the sports field before joining Main Street near the centre of the village.

The road from the north leaves the village of Markfield to pass through farmland, under the M1 and through woodland countryside close to Martinshaw Wood. The entrance to the village is clearly defined by the 'Sunshine houses' set back on the northern side of the road with Martinshaw Wood behind making it an attractive entrance to the village.



*'The Sunshine Houses' on Markfield Road*

Burroughs Road, a single-track no through road, links the heart of the village to the open countryside on the northwest. This area is a cherished amenity and valued by the community for the opportunities it provides for healthy recreation, using footpaths, bridleways and cycle paths. The recreation ground and school playing field are on either side of this road, creating an open feel to this area. The road then passes through farmland and an undulating landscape before crossing a ford. A car park near the end of this road provides the community with access to

Woodland Trust land and Burroughs Wood, an extensive area of mature woodland and open spaces that is a haven for wildlife. Its proximity makes it a significant amenity for Ratby.



*The Parish Church and the Plough Inn from Burroughs Road*

## 4.3 The relationship between the village and any special landscape features

### 4.3.1 Woodlands

Ratby is fortunate in having a number of old established, mature woods. Of these, Ratby Burroughs, Martinshaw Wood and Change Spinney can be enjoyed by the public via a network of permissive rights of way. Similar freedoms of access have been granted to Pear Tree Wood, Wirlybones Wood, Whittington Grange Wood and Grey Lodge Wood, which were planted on former farmland between 1996 and 2002 by the National Forest Company and the Woodland Trust. There are no such rights of way in Great Wood, Choyces Rough and Whittington Rough which are privately owned. Nevertheless all these areas of woodland and other new plantations are valuable havens for wildlife and add variety and quality to the rural landscape of Ratby.



*Bluebell time in Burroughs Wood*

### 4.3.2 Brooks

Brooks to the west and south of the village provide different habitats for wildlife. In the past they have been prone to flooding but the problem has been successfully overcome so that access to the village is normally maintained. (Evidence of a 'watery past' can be seen in the raised pavement and flood sign along the Ratby Road from Kirby Muxloe).

Little Burrough Brook crosses Burroughs Road at the ford where a footbridge is provided for pedestrians. Access to the brook is provided by permissive rights of way.



*The ford and footbridge on Burroughs Road*

### 4.3.3 Nature Conservation Areas

Several nature conservation areas have been established

- a. Ratby Community Orchard, a wildlife area on Taverner Drive at the southern edge of the village with a pond, woodland edge, wildflower areas as well as a variety of native apple trees,
- b. A reed bed occupies a storm overflow basin adjacent to the motorway and Ferndale Park,
- c. A wild flower area on northern edge of Ferndale Park, and
- d. A wetland meadow off Brook Drive.



*Ratby Community Orchard*



*Ferndale Park reed bed*

## 4.4 Wildlife and Biodiversity

The countryside is accessible from the heart of Ratby via Burroughs Road; there is virtually no built development between Ratby and Thornton, a distance of some three miles. This large area of open countryside, for the most part without vehicular traffic, allows birds, mammals and insects to live undisturbed.

Wildflowers are important to biodiversity because their seeds provide food for birds and small mammals. Ratby Burroughs has areas of mainly permanent grassland. The recent management of these meadows, whereby grass is left to produce seeds before being cut, is ensuring the distribution of a greater variety and number of wild flowers. These indicator flowers have been observed: daisy, red clover, white clover, tufted vetch, black medick, buttercup, rosebay willowherb and bindweed.



In 2006, The Woodland Trust received a £3,000 grant from Waste Recycling Environmental Limited (WREN) for a two-year project to improve Burroughs Wood and Pear Tree Wood.

New plantings by the Woodland Trust have encouraged an increased variety of bird life. Birds observed include bullfinches, long-tailed tits, goldcrests, goldfinches, buzzards, kestrels, some common garden species and seasonal migrants: cuckoos, swallows, house martins, fieldfares, waxwings and yellowhammers.

Hares, rabbits, foxes and muntjac deer are to be seen.

In addition, the following species can be observed in the areas listed below:

#### **Wild Flower Meadow, Ferndale Park**

Meadowsweet  
Great Willowherb  
Daisy  
Common Knapweed  
Cow Parsley  
Buttercup  
Scarlet Pimpernel  
Birds-foot Trefoil  
Red Clover  
Ragwort  
Great Burnet  
Meadow Cranes-bill  
Water Mint

#### **Leicester Swannington Railway Line**

White Clover  
White Dead-Nettle  
Rosebay Willowherb  
Great Willowherb  
Herb-Robert  
Cow Parsley  
Nipplewort  
Ragwort  
Cowslips

#### **Rothley Brook (Big Brook)**

Buttercup  
Common Knapweed  
White Clover  
Great Willowherb  
Birdsfoot Trefoil  
Bittersweet  
Meadowsweet  
Stinging Nettle  
Cow Parsley  
Creeping Thistle  
Red Campion  
Herb-Robert  
Tufted Vetch  
Fungi

#### **Wirlybones Wood**

Deciduous trees planted include:

Ash  
Cherry  
Silver Birch  
Elder

Butterflies observed have been:

Large White  
Red Admiral  
Meadow Brown  
Peacock  
Small Blue

#### **Pond and Orchard, Taverner Drive**

Many species of flora and fauna were observed and noted in the Summary Report 2003 for the Ratby Community Orchard by Robert Hollyman



## 4.5 Important Viewpoints

### 4.5.1 From the village towards the countryside

- **To the West:** The best public views over the surrounding countryside can be seen from the top of the first hill out of the village on Burroughs Road and from the top of Stamford Street. From these points, an undulating landscape of gradually rising hills traversed by the winding Burroughs Road can be seen forming a broad arc from NW to SW. The view culminates in the dark wooded summit of Burroughs Wood about a mile from the village.

In the immediate foreground are the surviving fields and hedges first laid out by the 1770 Enclosure Act. To the south of Burroughs Road, these fields are grass-covered throughout the year and grazed by cattle and sheep. Immediately next to the road and also to the south of the Holywell bridleway, years of permanent grass-cover have preserved the best examples of mediaeval ridge and furrow in the parish. These can be seen especially clearly in the low sun of summer evenings or winter mornings.

To the north of Burroughs Road, the cultivation of the fields introduces a variety of colours throughout the year from the dark brown/black of the ploughed fields in winter, to the fresh greens of emerging crops during spring and early summer, followed by the golden yellows of ripening crops in late summer and the ochres of field stubble in the autumn. In winter, the dark skeletal structures of the hedges and isolated ash and oak trees border the fields and Burroughs Road. In early summer these are replaced by dense white may flowers and the cow parsley of the grass verges set against a background of fresh green foliage. By high summer/autumn this variety of seasonal colours is enriched by the oranges and browns of decaying leaves, the red and purple fruits of elderflower, hawthorn, dog rose and crab apple, the pinks of rosebay willowherb and mallow and the bright yellows of buttercups. The whole assemblage creates a rich visual environment.

- **From the Churchyard:** The open spaces of the churchyard occupy the highest point in the village. To the south and east, the low level of the bungalow roof tops on Church Lane allow extensive views past Kirby Muxloe towards Glenfield and the rising ground of Leicester Forest East. From the western boundary of the churchyard, the steeply falling ground towards Main Street provides a fine prospect across the roof of the school towards the fields and woods of The Burroughs.



View from the Parish Church tower west to the Burroughs – School in foreground

### 4.5.2 From the countryside towards the village

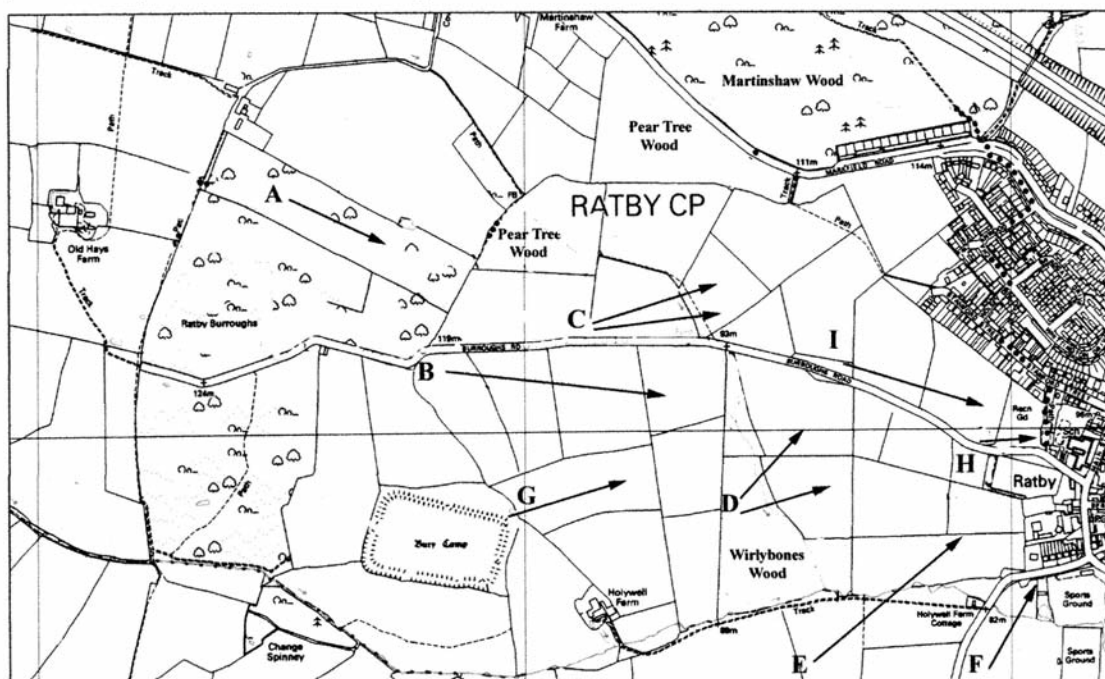
The location of Ratby, centred around its church on the hill, means that attractive views of the old village can be seen from almost every direction.



View of Ratby Parish Church from west

- **From the high ground to the west:** Land slopes down towards the village across a series of gradually descending ridges. Each of these offers a new view of the village as it emerges from the rural countryside (map 8). First there are the low lying grey roof tops of the houses and then the solidly impressive stonework of the massive church tower on its hill, all against a foreground of open fields and hedges.

Map 8: Viewpoints towards Ratby Church from the west



A = Pear Tree Wood, B = Burroughs Road (1), C = Burroughs Road (2), D = Wirlybones Wood, E = Holywell Track, F = Woodman's Hill, G = Bury Camp, H = Burroughs Road (3), I = Burroughs Road (4).

- **From Rothley Brook:** The low, flat grassy flood plain of Rothley Brook is in the immediate foreground. On rare occasions it is covered by floodwaters. It is separated from the first houses of Station Road and Park Road by the tree-lined footpath which follows the former Leicester-Swannington railway line. From there, the series of roofs and chimney pots on Station Road can be seen gradually rising towards the church, which is prominent on its hilltop and often sunlit from this southerly aspect.



View of Ratby across Rothley Brook meadows

- **From the East:** Good views of the Parish Church from the east are impeded by the tall trees alongside the M1. However, in winter the ghostly dark shape of the church tower can be seen through the leafless trees from the ancient field path to Glenfield. There are better views of the church as one comes closer to the centre of the village, especially from the eastern edge of Cottage Close.

	Landscape Setting: Guidelines
<b>86</b>	In order to retain its landscape character as a village in a rural setting, it is important that Ratby should continue to be separated from neighbouring villages by open countryside. According to the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council document: "Directions for Growth" (September 2007), Phase 2: Detailed Assessment of Key Rural Centres, Ratby (p. 28): "Land to the south and east of Ratby is designated as green wedge. Development in these areas should be avoided to ensure that Ratby retains its separate identity".
<b>87</b>	It follows from the above that the development of brownfield sites should take precedence over greenfield sites; as supported by the Council's adopted Core Strategy (December 2009).
<b>88</b>	New developments alongside roads entering Ratby should be built to a scale and design with appropriate boundary treatments and road signage, so as to preserve and enhance the essentially rural nature of the village.
<b>89</b>	Ratby Parish church is an important unifying feature in the village. It is important that views to and from it are protected, especially those from the high ground to the NW of the village (see Map 8) and from Rothley Brook.
<b>90</b>	Green wildlife corridors such as Burroughs Road, Burrough Brook and the former railway tracks in the south and east of the parish should be retained, enhanced and remain accessible to the general public. They help to sustain natural habitats and aid the movement of wildlife.
<b>91</b>	The parish is fortunate in having large areas of woodland and hedge-lined pasture especially to the north and west of the village. Many of these features have been carefully surveyed. They are important recreational, heritage and environmental amenities which need to be protected. Most can be accessed either by public footpaths or "permissive rights of way", generously awarded by Cawrey Homes and the Woodland Trust.
<b>92</b>	Small streams such as Burrough Brook drain water from the high ground in the NW towards Rothley Brook. These watercourses, as well as a number of ponds, some of mediaeval origin, are important to the landscape character of the village and help to sustain a rich biosphere. It follows that they should be retained and enhanced in the case of future developments.
<b>93</b>	<p>The following extracts from the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Supplementary Planning document, "Sustainable Development", Adopted April 2008 are particularly relevant in the context of Points 90, 91 and 92 above:</p> <p><i>"Sustainable Design should have regard to the natural world and its positive physiological, environmental and aesthetic benefits. A healthier population with a greater understanding of the environment and who have access to natural spaces, can help promote environmentally conscious behaviour` and, in turn, preserve surrounds which will be of benefit to the population for generations to come".</i></p>



## 5.0 GREEN SPACES, HEDGES, WALLS AND FENCES

### 5.1 Green Spaces

#### 5.1.1 The Burroughs

The Burroughs area stretches approximately one and a half miles from the heart of the village through part of the National Forest to the parish boundary. It is a recreational 'breathing space' favoured by walkers, horse riders and cyclists (cycle way 63).

#### 5.1.2 Within the village

Green spaces within the village vary in size and are important recreational and landscaping features.

#### Recreation and sports:

Ferndale Drive Recreation ground - the largest public recreation and sports area in the village.

Burroughs Road recreation ground, Taverner Drive; Jubilee Green and the Community Orchard to the north; and to the south, a wild life area with pond and allotments, Desford Lane/Station Road – private football and cricket club sports grounds, and Brook Drive – a public open space, water meadow and wild life area.



*Ferndale Drive Recreation Ground*



*Playing field of Ratby Sports Club*

#### Landscaping features:

Markfield Road - a central open space running parallel between it and the Charnwood Estate.

The Charnwood Estate - several open spaces which give it an airy and open feel.

Markfield Road/Groby Road junction – wide grass verges with trees.

Church Farm Estate – open spaces with trees incorporated into its layout.

Gardens - large mature gardens give a softening feel and a sense of openness to the village

In the quest for sustainability within the village, and in response to the issue of future flooding, Cawrey Homes have implemented a sustainable urban drainage system (SUDS) in the form of overflow ponds. Various wildflower/wildlife areas have been incorporated into the area to encourage biodiversity and aesthetic appeal. New technological solutions to future threats of climate change should complement the village environment.

### 5.2 Hedges

Some private gardens still retain the ancient hedgerow boundaries consisting of hawthorn, holly, elder and honeysuckle. Jitties or pathways around the village are very often softened with planting and hedgerows. Hedges and bunds used for screening noise from traffic on busy main roads also have the benefit of bringing a pleasant and calming rural nature to the area.

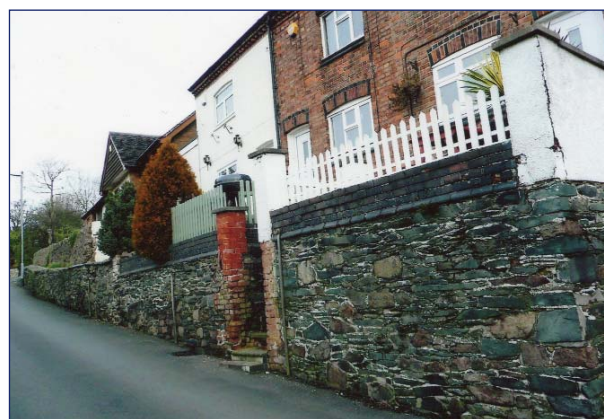
Several important commemorative trees of oak, chestnut and birch have been planted in the village and many mature and established gardens contain specimen trees and planting which greatly enhance the area.

### 5.3 Walls and fences

A distinctive feature of Ratby are the many stone built walls, occasionally with brick or slate copings, which form a pleasing boundary finish. For example several gardens on Woodley Road still retain the stone walls from the original yard layout of Woodley Farm. Stone walls enhance both sides of the entrance to Burroughs Road as

well as giving definition to the war memorial, the Bulls Head car park and the Village Hall. At the corner of Main Street and Markfield Road there is a good example of local stone walling. However, when a new mini traffic island was formed at this point, concrete slabs were used to shore up the banking on the opposite side thus missing the opportunity to enhance one of the main entrances to the village. There is an almost continuous line of stone walling on the west side of Main Street/Station Road from the cricket field to the school. Stone walling also forms the boundary of the churchyard, the Church Rooms and the relatively new builds of Rectory Gardens on Church Lane. Stone walling is also a feature on both sides of Chapel Lane. New stone walls were built around the library and close to the Co-op in 2007 and these sit very well on the street scene.

Brick walls are an equally distinctive boundary feature, notably in Stamford Street, part of Main Street, Station Road and Church Farm Estate.



*Victorian cottages above a Charnwood stone wall*

Wooden or panel fencing is used throughout the village. The use of iron railings as a boundary feature has increased greatly in recent years and these can blend well with both the older properties and with the 19<sup>th</sup>C and some of the 20<sup>th</sup>C properties.

Green Spaces - Guidelines	
<b>94</b>	Public recreational spaces (see 5.1.2 above) should be protected or sufficiently replaced from development and remain open to all; and the practice of providing well maintained open spaces within developments should continue.
<b>95</b>	In response to the future threat of climate change Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) will be welcomed when design appropriately complements the village landscape.
<b>96</b>	Where they are integral to the original design of the area, boundaries between front gardens and the public pavement should be retained and well maintained. Where space is required for off-street parking, at least part of the boundary should be retained.
<b>97</b>	Recreational and children's play areas should be highly visible during daylight, secured and well-lit at night, to counteract vandalism and anti social behaviour.

## 6.0 HIGHWAYS, TRAFFIC AND FOOTPATHS

### 6.1 Main Roads

The most heavily used road in Ratby is Station Road/ Main Street. It is a relatively narrow road so that parked cars impede the flow of traffic - for better or worse. Most village retail outlets are sited here e.g. the Post Office, the Pharmacy, the Co-op, a newsagent, a general store, the Bakery shop, a Chinese Restaurant, a Fish and Chip shop, a plumbers and a carpet shop. So too, are two public houses (The Railway Inn and The Bull's Head), the village Primary School, the Village Hall, the County Library and three hairdressers. There is a poorly used public car park at the Sports Club opposite the Co-op (available when the sports fields are not in use) and a small car park at the Library (nominally for Library users only). The two public houses have car parks for the use of patrons. As a result most shoppers with cars, park on the street. Furthermore, the domestic properties on Station Road, with few exceptions, do not have garage space and cars are parked on the roadside. This leads to traffic build up, especially at peak times. Any future development should not exacerbate this problem.



*Narrow road, Main Street*

Some vehicles, including school buses, by-pass Main Street by using Dane Hill through the western part of the Church Farm Estate, albeit the junction with Groby Road can be difficult and slow at peak travel times.



*Traffic junction, Station Road and Dane Hill*

There are two main feeder roads, both from the west: Markfield Road on to Main Street where it becomes Groby Road; and Desford Lane on to Station Road. The traffic flow on both is relatively unimpeded. However the junctions can be hazardous.

### 6.2 Other Roads

Church Lane and Chapel Lane in the Conservation Area are one-way. Chapel Lane is the narrower and on-street parking can be a problem, particularly if vehicles are parked inconsiderately. The exit from Chapel Lane on to Station Road is blind at times, especially when parking restrictions on Station Road have been ignored.



*Car Parking problems on Church Lane /Chapel Lane*

Stamford Street and Park Road were laid out before car ownership was common. They are narrow and given that few properties have private drives or garage space, on-street parking leads to congestion.



Burroughs Road leads from the village centre past The Plough Inn to open countryside within a matter of yards. It is popular with many villagers (and outsiders) for its therapeutic qualities. It is not a through road but it leads to the Woodland Trust car park, the paint ball venue and the isolated settlement at Old Hays, some 1.5 miles away. Occasionally, some cars driven inconsiderately can pose a hazard to walkers, cyclists and horse riders.

The roads on Charnwood Estate were laid out post World War Two. They are mostly of adequate width and provide acceptable access. At the time when most of the houses were built (1950's & 1960's) it was not thought necessary to include garage or forecourt parking. Thus on-street parking is the norm.

A network of roads, some through, some cul-de-sac, service Church Farm Estate. The later development in particular was planned imaginatively so that there are few 'dead straight' roads. The gentle curves are pleasing to the eye and avoid the feeling of a heavily built-up urban area. Such has been the growth of car ownership that some on-street parking, particularly in cul-de-sacs, takes place. This is a source of concern should emergency services (ambulances and, particularly, large fire engines) need access. The most recent new small development is Brook Drive, off Station Road. Off-street parking is provided but some householders choose not to use it.

### 6.3 Traffic Calming

Traffic calming measures were undertaken in February 2005 – speed tables and cushions are located at strategic points on Main Street, Station Road, Dane Hill, Ferndale Drive, Nicholas Drive, Tyler Road and Taverner Drive. There are off-set mini roundabouts at the junctions of Taverner Drive, Park Road, and Markfield Road and a "table" with a pedestrian crossing at the Primary School.

### 6.4 Footpaths

There are footpaths on both sides of Main Street and Station Road apart from a short section

opposite Stamford Street. Some are barely wide enough for two-abreast; and the camber towards the kerb is alarming for those who have to use mobility vehicles.

There is no footpath at the junction of Church Lane and Chapel Lane. The one in Chapel Lane is very narrow and not continuous.

There are examples of the original granite kerbstones on Main Street adjacent to the shops and a granite gutter at the top of Berry's Lane.



*The 'Stattie' footpath linking Stamford Street and Burroughs Road*

Footpaths on the Charnwood and the Church Farm Estates are wider but such has been the growth of car ownership that some residents run cars on to grass verges which results in ruts, unsightliness and problems for grass-cutting contractors. There is a network of 'jitties' between roads, some of them old e.g. the "Stattie" between Burroughs Road and Stamford Street. On the Charnwood and Church Farm Estates, too, connecting footpaths have been laid out, some of them illuminated. This encourages their use by cyclists and pedestrians, not least those going to the Primary School, Brookvale High School and Groby Community College. Apart from Cottagers Walk, Overfield Walk, East Walk and South Walk, they are, as yet, unnamed.



*Cottagers Walk: important urban footpath*

## 6.5 Street Furniture

- Throughout the village, litter bins, dog waste bins, seats and direction signs are in a variety of styles and materials. This gives a rather haphazard appearance. Some litterbins and seats would benefit from replacements of a standard design more in keeping with the surrounding area, particularly in the Conservation Area.
- Standard road signs are unnecessarily repetitive on the entrances to Ratby from Kirby Muxloe and Groby. They are sometimes seen as too large and intrusive for the size of road and bring an inappropriate urban character to narrow village streets.



*Multiple road signs approaching Station Road*



*Inappropriately placed sign on Heritage lamp-post*

- Heritage lamp-posts have recently been installed in the Conservation Zone and bring a traditional feel to this area. Care should be taken not to use these lampposts for inappropriate signage e.g. 'No through road' on Burroughs Road.
- Planters bring colour and interest at the War Memorial, Desford Road corner, Markfield Road junction and the entrances to the village. Flower baskets have recently been installed near the centre of Ratby. Commemorative stones are placed at Markfield Road corner and in the community orchard.
- Examples of public art include wood sculptures by the Wildlife Pond, the Ratby Village sign at Desford Road corner and the Village Heritage Map on Main Street.

<b>Highways, Traffic and Footpaths - Guidelines</b> It is recognised that the majority of these guidelines would have to be agreed with Highways	
<b>98</b>	Road signs should be sited with regard to their setting and, where possible, have regard to the size and character of the village.
<b>99</b>	Street furniture, where appropriate, should be consistent with the character of its setting.
<b>100</b>	On-Street parking is a problem almost everywhere in Ratby. Provision for off-street parking would be a welcome feature in any new development. Restrictions should be implemented where parking would cause problems for emergency vehicles.
<b>101</b>	There should be liaison with Leicestershire Highways Department over appropriate traffic calming measures. It is generally felt that 'repeater speed restriction signs' are preferable to the euphemistic 'speed cushion'. They would be especially helpful on the entrances to the village and on approaches to the school, where a 20 mph limit should be implemented.
<b>102</b>	There should be liaison with Leicestershire Highways Department over the current road signs on the approaches to the village which are generally thought to be unnecessarily numerous and intrusive for the size of the roads.
<b>103</b>	It is important that footpaths are well maintained, especially in areas of greatest use, such as the Main Street shopping area.
<b>104</b>	The planning of safe, well-lit pedestrian/cycling routes to schools and shops should be a priority in all new developments and, where already provided, they should be well maintained.
<b>105</b>	Footpaths linking Ratby with neighbouring villages should be protected and in some cases enhanced to provide safe walking and cycling routes.
<b>106</b>	Unnecessary signs and clutter in the streets should be avoided. Essential street furniture should always be of good quality and vandal-proof to a design appropriate to its location (e.g. In the Conservation Area) and sited discretely.
<b>107</b>	In the interests of maintaining a tidy street scene, parking on grass verges should be discouraged.