



Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

A Borough to be proud of

**Hinckley Town Centre
Conservation Area Appraisal**

February 2013

Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Area

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The historic centre of Hinckley including Argents Mead, the Parish Church, the Market Place and The Borough was designated a Conservation Area in 1986 and the area extended in February 1998.

Historical Development

The early period

- 1.2 Discoveries such as the villa site at the local golf course and the Hinckley Bust discovered in 1930 which was the largest bust to be found in Leicestershire, indicates that a settlement existed in Hinckley during Roman times. However Hinckley is thought by many to have been originally a Saxon settlement and was probably called Hınca's leah (a leah was a clearing in a wood). By the time of the Domesday Book (1086) Hinckley was a large village with a population around 300. A Motte and Bailey Castle was constructed around 1150 by the Normans overlooking the village but was abandoned and it eventually fell into ruins. At the same time a priory (small abbey) was also founded. By the 13th century the village had grown into a small town with a market which was first recorded in 1311 but is thought to have existed before then.
- 1.3 From medieval times several fairs were also held in the town. These were similar to markets but were held only once a year. They attracted people from throughout Leicestershire and Warwickshire to buy and sell produce at the fair. At this time the population of the town was relatively small at about several hundred inhabitants.
- 1.4 During the 16th century and 17th centuries, Hinckley prospered and its population continued to grow despite outbreaks of the plague in the 1620's, the worst outbreak being in 1626. By the early 17th century Hinckley's population is thought to have been about 1,000 and by 1700 it had reached 2,000.
- 1.5 In 1640 William Iliffe brought the first stocking frame to Hinckley and it was during this century that the town developed a hosiery industry, producing stockings and similar items.

19th Century

- 1.6 At the time of the first national census in 1801, Hinckley had a population of 5,158: twenty years later it had increased by about a thousand. The largest industry in the early 19th century was the making of hosiery and only Leicester had a larger output of stockings. In the district, it was estimated ca. 1830 that 6,000 persons were employed in this work.
- 1.7 In the first half of the 19th century Hinckley grew little. Industry was still dominated by hand weavers and in the early 19th century there was a great deal of poverty and hardship in Hinckley. In 1862 the railway came to the town which encouraged the development of the hosiery industry. Joseph Hansom also built the first Hansom Cab in Hinckley in 1835.
- 1.8 Later in the 19th century the hand frames were replaced by steam powered frames in factories and Hinckley boomed. The population grew to over 11,000 by 1900.
- 1.9 This period saw the erection of many large Victorian buildings such as the Congregational Church which replaced two and a half storied timbered dwellings in The Borough. Wealthy industrialist families such as the Atkins' built factories in the grand manner as in Lower Bond Street and contributed towards new public buildings such as the Free library in Station Road.
- 1.10 Victorian buildings did contrast with earlier styles but they did not have the brash uncompromising bulk of much of the twentieth century development. The Borough, Regent Street and Castle Street while still retaining many 19th century and a few 18th century narrow fronted shops and houses have suffered from the intrusion of much unsympathetic development.
- 1.11 In 1936 the boundaries of the urban district of Hinckley were extended to include Burbage, Stoke Golding, Earl Shilton and Barwell. A new police station was built in 1937.
- 1.12 In 1948 Argents Mead was given to the council as a gift. A new bus station was built in 1960 and the Edwards Centre was built in 1962.
- 1.13 In the late 20th century industry in Hinckley diversified. Industrial estates were built at Harrowbrook, Dodwells Bridge, Sketchley Lane and Hinckley Fields.

1.14 Concordia Theatre opened in 1972. In 1974 Hinckley urban district was made into a borough. A new library was built in 1975. A new leisure centre was built in Hinckley in 1977. The Health Centre in Hill Street opened in 1978 and The Britannia Centre opened in 1981.

1.15 Today much of the older fabric requires considerable improvement. The older character is in real danger of being smothered while urban spaces are being made increasingly unattractive by the use of heavy vehicles and the provision of more open car parking. It is of the utmost importance that new urban development enhances and does not destroy the better features of the town.

2.0 Special Interest

2.1 The special interest that justifies designation of the Town Centre.

2.2 Hinckley Conservation Area derives from the following features:

- Its significance as part of the mid 18th to early 20th century development of the Borough.
- The group value of surviving buildings and spaces related to the development of the commercial centre.
- The value of civic and public buildings reflecting the development of the community.
- The survival of buildings relating to the borough's industrial past.
- Its importance as an historic record of the economic development of the Borough.
- The architectural and historic interest of the area's historic buildings, both locally and nationally.
- Local details that collectively and individually give the conservation area a distinctive identity, such as the strong sense of enclosure, the quality of the surviving historic buildings, the survival of original architectural detailing, the commercial and civic uses, and the relationship of closed and open spaces.
- The emergence of a local character achieved through repeated use of locally distinctive materials and detailing.
- The historical importance of four major local hosiery employers (the Atkins, the Davenports, Davis and the Bennetts) and their influence on the community and built environment in and around the town centre.
- Streetscapes typified by a uniformity of building line, roofscape, fenestration and materials. All of which give a consistency of character.

- The importance of framed views within streets and the vistas to St Mary's Church from a number of viewpoints from around the town.
- Overall there is a vibrant urban character defined by its built form, mix of uses, mixed tenure and independent businesses.
- A medieval street pattern, including long, gently winding main streets with narrow lanes, jitties and yards running off.
- High quality public green spaces in the form of the park, the church and vicarage grounds and the chapel grounds with a high degree of visual and physical access which enforces the impression of spaciousness and is part of the community's identity.
- The semi-mature vegetation along Regent Street which softens the hard architecture and contributes to the skyline and streetscape.

3.0 Spatial Analysis

3.1 Character Areas

3.2 The conservation area contains a busy town centre, set along two long road corridors (Regent Street/Lower Bond Street and Castle Street) with a number of separate spaces of strongly different character defined by their surrounding buildings, trees, land form and uses.

3.3 These character areas are:

1. Castle Street, Wood Street, Hill Street and New Buildings.
2. Regent Street, The Borough, Market Place, and Lower Bond Street, and Trinity Lane frontage.
3. Argents Mead, Castle Hill, St Mary's Church, Church Walk and St Mary's Road.
4. Stockwell Head, Council Road and Baines Lane.
5. Station Road and Horsefair.

3.4 The boundaries of these character areas are shown on Figure 3. Although they represent areas with individual and definable Character, there are many similarities between them, which create the overall sense of place that justifies their inclusion within a single conservation area.

Character Area 1

4.0 Castle Street

- 4.1 Castle Street climbs fairly steeply from the Market Place to the junction with New Buildings where it levels off and continues past The Lawns and out of the Conservation Area. The street has an attractive pedestrian scale despite new building lines which have eaten into its original gently meandering form. It is important that there must be no further increases in width.
- 4.2 The character of the street owes much to the continuity of the core buildings which are of good proportions. It is important that all new infill development should integrate sympathetically with adjoining buildings in terms of height, roof form, window proportions and materials. This does not preclude contemporary design of a high standard.
- 4.3 The continuous form of the street is broken on the south side by the Church Walk entrance which provides an important link with the green space of Argents Mead and St Mary's church yard. Any new building which is proposed to face onto the church or the Mead must be designed with special regard to the setting of the listed church, the scheduled monument and the park.
- 4.4 Redevelopment of a large area of back-land to the north of Castle Street will considerably increase the existing shopping area and will form an extension of the pedestrianised Castle Street. However it should ensure the retention of the existing footpath routes and provide a large number of additional car parking spaces.
- 4.5 The eastern end of Castle Street around the entrance to New Buildings, while being well contained with a majority of older buildings is wider than the rest of the street. This section of the street between New Buildings and The Lawns ranks with the best in the Conservation Area. Its three storey buildings with its subtle changes of direction, interesting traditional shop fronts and jitty entrances, reinforce the historic character of the area. The recent loss of part of the frontage on the south side of the street has destroyed the original tight urban form of this street and it is important that there are no further losses. The replacement scheme should repair the street scene with similar built fabric. The residential use of space above shops as flats is to be encouraged.

4.6 Beyond the Conservation Area the street has a significantly less urban feel about it and the buildings are of a smaller residential scale. There are several attractive buildings in the street which should be retained and sensitively renovated to make use of empty upper floors.

4.7 **Special Interest**

- The large green space close to the town centre.
- The mature trees and planting.
- The link to the green space around the church
- The link to the Castle Mound.
- The historic connections.
- The moat.
- The listed memorials.
- The low brick walls around the church yard.
- The Victorian gates and gate piers.
- The link between Mount Road and the town centre.
- The link between Hill Street and the church and St Mary's School and Station Road.

5.0 **Wood Street**

5.1 This street is in effect a back lane to the upper part of Castle Street and only the south side is within the conservation area. Several important jitties link it and the factories directly to Castle Street. It is important that these are retained. Wood Street was the site of a number of hosiery factories, some of which have been demolished including the site of the first steam powered factory in Hinckley built by Thomas Payne in 1853 (Lawrence House). During the mid 1890s Ginns, Son and Moore took occupancy of these premises and subsequently traded as Castle Street Works' (Bill Partridge, Hosiery Trail).

5.2 The street remains an important remnant of the town's industrial past having three large linked factory units sited on the back of the pavement at its eastern end. Together, because of their total length, these buildings retain an important flavour of the hosiery industry for the modern observer.

5.3 The first is a mid C20 two storey brick building with characteristic metal framed windows and a large ground floor rear yard entry bay and was constructed in two phases possibly as separate buildings. Attached is an early C20 two storey block with a T shaped plan. This building is in English bond brickwork with small paned metal casements in segmental headed openings. These buildings are

very important industrial heritage assets. Within the yard the back of the properties on Castle Street reveal the remnants of the three storey framework windows at 124 Castle Street.

5.4 Recent development along the western end of the street, by continuing its construction along the back edge of the pavement, has, to a degree extended the same building form although in a more fragmented way.

5.5 **Special Interest**

- The factory units and their extent along the street.
- The metal framed windows.
- The natural slated roofs.
- The covered yard entrance.
- The service yard and views of the former frameworkers dwelling on the rear of Castle Street.
- The jitties linking Wood Street with Castle Street.
- The mature tree at midpoint in the street.

5.6 **Detrimental Impact**

- Open frontages of houses at east end of Wood Street.
- The high brick wall to the rear car park of the B & Q building.

6.0 **Hill Street**

6.1 The northern end of this street as far as The Narrows falls within the Conservation Area. The eastern side of the street is particularly attractive with a continuous development which includes a very fine former hosiery factory, recently converted into apartments, a terrace of late Victorian houses and the side elevation of a Victorian office building. The two storey factory was constructed in periods both of which have distinctive lancet window openings which add significant character to the streetscene.

6.2 The street building returns along The Narrows and includes the former brick chimney which is a strong architectural landmark in the area.

6.3 On the opposite side of Hill Street with the exception of the three properties which front the Mead, the frontage has no historical or architectural interest.

Character Area 2

7.0 Lower Bond Street.

7.1 Approaching the conservation area from the north, one enters down a fairly steep slope into a tight junction at the intersection of The Borough and Lower Bond Street. Here the older street form and 18th century scale has remained reasonable intact.

7.2 Bond Street once formed part of the town core but today little remains of the old pattern of building. Lower Bond Street is dominated by the former Atkins, Grade II listed factory, now a Council owned mixed use building which is a fine example of late 19C industrial architecture and an important heritage asset. Above this stands the new college building which unfortunately completely ignores its setting.

7.3 Opposite these buildings stands the Hinckley and District Museum, a fine half timbered 17thC Grade 2 listed building and another heritage asset. It is unfortunate that the area around this building is taken up by a large car park which adds nothing to the street scene or the setting of the museum. To the south of this where the road divides into King Street, the road is lined with a terraces of two and three storey brick buildings of outstanding character. It is unfortunate that where they have been converted into shops, the retail frontages are often inappropriate with overlarge fascias and lettering.

7.4 Special Interest

- The proliferation of listed buildings.
- Contrasting building construction from different historic periods.
- Finely detailed elevations

7.5 Detrimental Impact

- The open frontage car park areas
- The inappropriate shop fronts
- The impact of traffic
- Areas of poorly maintained public realm
- Close boarded fencing to rear of Union Public House

8.0 King Street

8.1 This is a very narrow gently curving street bounded by some fine Victorian shop fronts on the north side and the partly rebuilt Union

Inn on the south side. Narrow access-ways lead through to yards around which are several historic buildings.

8.2 **Special Interest**

- The Victorian shop fronts.
- The yards behind the street frontage buildings.

8.3 **Detrimental Impact**

- Uneven surface of Brooks Yard
- The poor quality buildings around Brooks Yard
- The amount of traffic using the route as a short cut
- The overly large shop fascia, stick-a-bricks and the aggressive colour scheme of the kebab shop and others.
- The inappropriate replacement windows at first floor.
- The shop front roller shutters and window grills.
- Concrete tiles which have replaced natural slate roof coverings.
- The lost chimney stacks.
- The close boarded fencing forming the yard of the Union Inn.

9.0 **Regent Street and the Borough**

9.1 The island block now contains only the rebuilt Union Hotel which visually closes the end of the wide space of The Borough although its impact is reduced by the close-boarded fence at the rear of the plot fronting Mansion Street.

9.2 At the west end of Castle Street at its junction with Regent Street, is another island block. The branch of The Borough to the east is narrow, surfaced with modern block sets and is of human scale. The Market Place slopes down towards Regent Street and is the most attractive urban space in the town centre. It is enclosed on three sides by buildings which are attached and have a uniformity of scale, proportion and materials. Any new building must pay the highest attention to the established character of the surroundings.

9.3 Almost the whole length of the west side of Regent Street is taken up by two and three storey buildings while the east side consists of two self contained 1980s blocks which rise above and dominate the older buildings opposite.

9.4 Between Regent Street and Trinity Lane is an area of semi-derelict courtyards surrounded by tightly packed sheds, workshops and outbuildings. The future redevelopment of this area should retain an

in depth shopping use on Regent Street, provide for rear servicing of Trinity Lane and retain the pedestrian jitties.

9.5 Special Interest - Regent Street

- Jitty entrances.
- The extensive continuity of the historic buildings.
- The chimneys.
- The welsh slate roofs.
- The original window openings.
- The minor variation in roof heights and pitches.
- The traditional shop fronts although many have been replaced by modern materials and have over large fascias and lettering.
- The recessed entrance doors.
- Granite sett and Victorian paver floor finishes in the jitties.
- The narrow shop units.

9.6 Detrimental Impact

- The street clutter, including traffic lights, pedestrian barriers and directional signs.
- The proliferation of signage above shop front fascia level
- The roller shutters.
- Poor and lack of maintenance.
- Modern block paving.
- Lack of a co-ordinated approach to street furniture.
- Poor quality modern buildings which ignore traditional proportions, materials and features.
- Aluminium street nameplates.
- Satellite dishes on street frontages.
- Exposed blockwork, unfinished rendering and steel plated doors.
- Ventilation ducts in jitties.
- Flat roofs.
- Fluorescent lights over shop front fascias.
- Concrete roof tiles.
- Temporary metal grilles left permanently over windows.

10.0 The Borough

- 10.1 This short length of street links the Market Place with Mansion Street and Regent Street. It is partly pedestrianised and has been surfaced with modern block paving. The street is dominated by the adjacent buildings, several of which are nationally listed. It is unfortunate that the former green grocers, the key building, which

defines the entrance into The Borough and the central part of the Conservation Area, although recently renovated, is in a very poor condition and urgently needs to be improved. In sharp contrast, the Dog and Gun public house opposite, is a quality heritage asset which successfully defines the entrance to this part of the Conservation Area. It has retained its original sash windows and the arched entrance doorway which adds significantly to its character. Beyond this point, the buildings, although losing some traditional details, have retained their traditional form. Of particular concern are missing chimneys and the generally poor quality shop fronts. Several buildings in this part of The Borough are in need of refurbishment but if redevelopment is proposed this should not be allowed to dominate or contrast unsympathetically with the remaining core buildings. Of particular concern is the form of the Nationwide Building Society building.

10.2 The Nationwide Building Society offices loom high over rooftops and are incongruous in scale and appearance. Although the design is of its time, it stands out as a building which completely ignores its setting and which has had a major detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the street. Next to it stands a feature building of great quality, the Grade II listed United Reformed Church. This stone fronted building, although very different in detail, is in scale with its surrounding and adds significantly to the character of the street and is an important heritage asset. Beyond this, the street continues with a block of 4 shops, the first 2 of which are good examples of buildings from the 1970s. The frontage consists of an exposed concrete frame in-filled with coloured glass at first floor above simple shop fronts. Unfortunately the double shop front adjacent has not retained this building's simplicity.

10.3 Between the 2 wings of the Borough stands Borough island. This group of buildings defines the image of the town centre conservation area. Within the eastern side of the block stands the outstanding Barclays Bank building which is grade II listed. It is unfortunate that plastic windows have been substituted for the original timber sash windows at first floor and signage is beginning to complicate the elevations. Next to this is a 3 storey Georgian building which links the block to the former Lloyds Bank building on the corner. The western frontage is occupied by the modern Yorkshire Bank building, an anonymous brick structure.

10.4 **Special Interest**

- Many quality timber sash windows at first and second floors.
- Prevalence of listed buildings.

- Feature corner buildings.

10.5 **Detrimental Impact**

- Modern block paving.
- Satellite dishes on street frontages.
- Poor quality modern shop fronts.
- Inappropriate timber windows.
- Lack of maintenance.
- Plastic windows on the Barclays Bank building.
- The very poor visual quality of the former greengrocers at the junction of the Borough and Stockwell Head.
- The Nationwide Building Society Building.

11.0 **The Market Place**

11.1 Although this space is the focal point of the town and the Conservation Area, its appearance fails to match this importance. It is an irregular shaped area which continues the slope of Castle Street down to Regent Street and is bounded by a mixture of 2 and 3 storey buildings.

11.2 Relatively recent additions to the Borough island have reduced the area of this space considerably. However the market place is now cluttered with street furniture, signs, brick planting troughs and cast iron bollards. Its floorscape is a mixture of modern block pavers, concrete paving flags and tree grills.

11.3 Together with Castle Street, this space is in urgent need of major refurbishment. Several of the buildings both old and new which form its boundaries are of good quality. However some are not and some require refurbishment having inappropriate windows, shop fronts and roller shutters.

11.4 **Special Interest**

- Its sloping streetscape.
- Several fine historic buildings.
- Its tight well defined boundaries,
- Views of St Mary's Church spire.
- Western orientation.

11.5 **Detrimental Impact**

- Poor quality shop fronts

- Concrete roof tiles
- Plastic windows
- Roller shutters
- Poor quality signage
- Street clutter
- Truncated and missing chimneys.

12.0 Trinity Lane and Mansion Street

12.1 Until the C19 Trinity Lane marked the western limit of the town but has since developed into a mixed use area of residential and industrial uses with red brick terrace houses closely associated with factories.

12.2 Although the northern half of Trinity Lane has retained something of its original character, the southern half, due to its incorporation with Mansion Street into the Regent Street bypass Scheme now suffers from traffic and from heavy lorries serving the factories and workshops. The eastern side of Trinity Lane until the 1950s was compact with buildings lining both sides of the road at or near the edge of the pavement.

12.3 The widening of Mansion Street led to the demolition of buildings on its southern side which unfortunately have never been replaced but left as an area very poor in terms of environmental and building quality. To the south of this along Trinity Lane, the two storey terraces have been replaced by open car parks, single storey buildings and an ugly post-war former factory, now a furniture store and even a metal storage container. There is a great need for revitalization, particularly in the semi-derelict parts used as car parks and storage areas.

12.4 Opportunity exists for a comprehensive scheme which could add quality to the area without destroying its scale and character. Special regard must be had to the existing pedestrian routes and building heights.

12.5 Special Interest

- The jitties and their traditional diamond pattern blue brick or granite surfaces.
- The intricate grain of small scale traditional buildings which line the jitties.
- The cast iron heritage street lamps.

12.6 Detrimental Impact

- The open frontage car parks which line Trinity Lane and Mansion Street.
- The views of the Nationwide Building Society Building.
- The proliferation of street signs, traffic lights and traffic islands.
- The lack of traditional details and scale on modern infill buildings.
- Dull modern materials replacing natural materials on two storey terrace housing.

Character Area 3

13.0 Argents Mead

13.1 Open space within the town centre is concentrated to the south of the shopping Centre and consists of the Memorial Gardens, Argents Mead, the land around the Council Offices and St Mary's Churchyard.

13.2 These areas are very well located in relation to the use of the rest of the centre being only a few minutes walk from the main shops. Although very close to the hustle of the centre, these open spaces provide contrasting peace within attractive surroundings and must be retained.

13.3 St Mary's churchyard itself is a considerable green space with tombstones dating back to the late 17th century in local swithland slate.

13.4 There are no other areas of public open space. It is a most important asset to the centre. The castle mound provides magnificent views over the town and the church. There is a well used network of pedestrian routes feeding Castle Street from the southern housing area.

13.5 Special Interest

- The large green space close to the town centre.
- The mature trees and planting.
- The link to the green space around the church.
- The link to the Castle Mound.
- The historic connections.
- The moat.
- The listed memorials.
- The low brick walls around the church yard.

- The Victorian gates and gate piers.
- The link between Mount Road and the town centre.
- The link between Hill Street and the church and St Mary's School and Station Road.
- The relative peaceful atmosphere which contrasts with the bustle of Castle Street and the town centre.
- The wildlife.
- The excellent distant views.
- The medieval church and its spire which is a landmark in the town.

13.6 **Detrimental Impact**

- The unofficial pathways.
- The blank uninteresting walls of the Co-operative building.
- The inappropriate planting.
- The security fencing.
- The vast areas of car parking.

14.0 **St Mary's Road**

14.1 This runs behind this car park and lacks any buildings of architectural quality but has a backdrop of magnificent trees which surround the church. The parish hall is a mediocre single storey structure on an important site which deserves a more fitting building. Florence House, a relatively new office building that also lacks interest although the Masonic Hall on the eastern corner is of note.

14.2 **Special Interest**

- The view of the church.
- The brick walls which surround the churchyard.
- The entrance to the Masonic Hall.
- The views across the car park of the former grade II listed public library, the attached building and St Mary's school.
- The views of the mature trees around the church and the vicarage.

14.3 **Detrimental Impact**

- The vast area of car parking which dominates every view from the street.
- The poor architectural quality of the buildings which line the street.
- The lack of planting which could break up the parking area.

15.0 **Church Walk**

15.1 This gently curving road climbs slowly up hill from Station Road towards its intersection with Castle Street. During the 1970s Church Walk was upgraded into a walk into a road. Along its southern boundary stands the church yard whose grassed surface is raised above the general level of the street with its edges lined by a series of mature trees. At its junction with Station Road behind a continuous run of iron railings, are St Mary's school and its yard.

15.2 To the north are the rear yards and elevations of the Castle Street properties. Unfortunately, the recent flat roofed extensions, the poor surfacing, car parking and storage areas that are visible have a severely detrimental impact on the street scene. Bell Entry links Castle Street to the Church Yard and the Argents Mead open space.

15.3 Only at its eastern end does the street appearance improve where a former small factory, its attached buildings and a tall chimney occupy the frontage, all important heritage assets. At the entrance onto Castle Street, the street flares out into a large car park which also provides two pedestrian access points into Argents Mead

15.4 **Special Interest**

- The sweeping curves of the road.
- The views of the church.
- The mature trees.
- Bell Entry which gives access directly to Castle Street.
- The brick boundary walls to the church yard.

15.5 **Detrimental Impact**

- The pedestrian barriers along the edge of the road.
- The open service yards and the flat roofed extensions to the Castle Street shops.
- The car park which restricts access into Argents Mead.

Character Area 4

16.0 Stockwell Head

- 16.1 This street is a steep, winding road characterised by a mixture of building types and uses. The eastern end is narrow and formed as an opening between two undistinguished office buildings. Any new building at this point should pay regard to the established town character than the insensitive office block.
- 16.2 The group of partly vacant former factory buildings to the west of the office buildings are visually poor and create an unpleasant environment for nearby houses along Baptist Walk. This is a very old, well used footpath connecting the residential areas north of Holliers Walk with Castle Street. Opposite, a large car park formed by the demolition of several C19 properties has created a gap in the street frontage which should be repaired.
- 16.3 Standing on the south side at the mid point of the street are two fine Victorian shops and part of the former Wesleyan chapel, now a photographer's studio. Constructed in 1782 it is where John Wesley preached to the local population, although it is now much altered and it has been rendered and its window openings changed, its original form is still recognisable. It is unfortunate that these buildings are isolated by large car parks which have had a major detrimental impact on the street.
- 16.4 Towards the western end of Stockwell Head a large C19th former factory has been converted into Hinckley's Concordia theatre which visually closes the street. Recent changes to the appearance of the building including rendering elevations, and the sheet metal extension, have come close to destroying a very fine nineteenth century façade. The adjoining car park has a magnificent avenue of mature trees. These should be retained and could form part of an improved landscaped area incorporating car parking and other public facilities.
- 16.5 The open area in front of the former Hall could also be incorporated into the scheme. The club building was built in 1790 by one of the Shipman family, possibly Benjamin who was a hosier and a dissenter, living in Spring Gardens.

16.6 Opposite the theatre are the bland rear brick walls of the Britannia centre multi-storey car park. This late twentieth century building has had a major detrimental impact on the appearance of Stockwell Head. It is a nondescript featureless building which lacks scale and interest.

16.7 An important yard near the junction with The Borough is Brooks Yard where the original Brooks saddles were made. It is unfortunate that the metalled surfacing is very uneven and worn and the surrounding buildings are very poor in quality.

16.8 Special Interest

- The jitties which link Stockwell Head with Castle Street.
- The former Wesleyan Chapel and the two adjacent Victorian shops.
- The steeply falling winding road.
- The rows of mature trees fronting the Working Men's Club.

16.9 Detrimental Impact

- The extensive car parks with open frontages
- The ageing and subsequent loss of trees.
- New development that does not respond to the established street pattern.

Character Area 5

17.0 Station Road and The Horsefair

17.1 This street developed between the late 19th and early 20th centuries with the expansion of the southern part of the town. It is considered to be one of the best in the Conservation Area which needs special protection. The street owes its identity to the many large Victorian and Edwardian buildings which line both sides of the street notably the Free Library built in 1888 and now part of St Mary's C of E school. Other street buildings have eye-catching details and, unusually for this town, an interesting roofscape, with many exceptional roof and corner features.

17.2 The northern end of the street is visually closed by the former United Counties Bank at the corner of Castle Street. The southern aspect presents a long view eventually closed by trees in the residential area south of Mount Road. The part of the street adjoining the Market Place is closely associated with the church in

addition to the town centre because of the long frontages of the Church of England School and views of the church itself.

17.3 The east side of the street opposite the junction with Lancaster Road is a large car park on the site of the former public baths. This open space although providing parking close to the town centre, has destroyed the previous sense of enclosure in this part of the street. A new building which closed the gap in the street frontage should be encouraged.

17.4 **Special Interest**

- The large number of late Victorian and Edwardian buildings which have seen limited changes.
- The listed buildings.
- The extent of traditional high quality architecture on the street.
- The long lengths of granite kerbs
- The retention of natural materials including metal, and timber for windows, doors, fascias and shop fronts and the very limited use of replacement plastic.
- The consistent relationship to the back edge of pavement.
- The lack of modern interventions.

17.5 **Detrimental impact**

- The open frontage left by the demolition of the swimming pool complex, now St Mary's car park.
- The architectural form of the public toilets which is out of scale with buildings on the rest of the street.
- The use of modern block paving which conflicts with the character of the street.

18.0 **The Horsefair**

18.1 This street was named after the town's horse sales which regularly took place in Regent Street on 26th August until the 1930's. Today, the Horsefair is a narrow street with poor quality single storey buildings on the south side which contrast sharply with the bland but very high elevations of the Club.

18.2 This is a very dull street fronted by several mediocre buildings which lack any visual interest. It lacks any street facing buildings with only gables or the rear of buildings facing the street. Consequently it suffers from limited investment and poor maintenance. It is fortunate that only the street entrances are included within the designated area.

18.3 **Special Interest**

- Its association with the regular horse sales in Regent Street.

18.4 **Detrimental Impact**

- Featureless facades.
- Uncomfortable contrasting scales.
- Character Area 3.
- Argents Mead, Castle Hill, St Mary's Church and surrounding street frontages.

19.0 **Setting of the Conservation Area**

19.1 The eastern side of Station Road beyond Lancaster Road becomes an area of large detached houses some of which have been converted into offices.

19.2 Many of the narrow frontages of these properties have become car parks crammed with cars which have resulted in a very unsatisfactory environment. This can only be improved by reducing the number of cars and providing landscaping.

20.0 **George Street**

20.1 This short street links Lancaster Road with Regent Street. On the western side stands the rear of the Atkins High Cross building, a former hosiery factory, now in mixed use. This impressive three storey brick built structure dominates the street.

20.2 Opposite are the former garages of a coach company, now a menswear shop. Only the street entrance into Regent Street falls within the designated area.

20.3 **Special Interest**

- Its link to Hinckley's industrial past.

21.0 **Brunel Road/ and Waterloo Road**

21.1 Despite its proximity to the town centre this area lacks any quality of urban form or spatial pattern. The bus station and car park beyond create a huge loosely contained space poorly detailed and lacking any attractive feature.

21.2 With the exception of the former cinema, now Flutters Bingo Hall complex, the Salvation Army offices and the buildings on the west side of Rugby Road, none of the buildings along Waterloo Road or Lancaster Road, are of any architectural merit. Planning permission has been granted for a major shopping development and multi-storey car park in this area and which will improve the general environment.

22.0 Lancaster Road

22.1 The western entrance to this road is defined by the rotunda of the former Regent cinema, now Flutters Bingo and the feature corner of the former High Cross Works. These two buildings define the entrance to the town centre from the south west. Being of a similar period (1930), they work together to reinforce the image and define the most important and busiest entrance into the town centre. The Regent cinema was designed by Horace G Bradley, one of the most eminent theatre architects in the country and shortly after its opening was the first to introduce sound.

22.2 The High Cross factory was designed by Henry Langton Goddard, first as a two storey building with shops set back behind an arcade on the ground floor and with an additional second floor added in the 1950s. Unfortunately the shops were recently converted into public houses and the arcade set back has been lost.

22.3 On the south side beyond the bingo hall stands the library, formerly a hosiery factory. Beyond this is a gap in the frontage which forms the bus station and the entrance to a large car park. On the north side is a car repair company, the entrance to George Street and finally the Royal Mail sorting office.

22.4 Special Interest

- The prevalence of buildings from the early 1930s, when the wealth of the town was at its height.

22.5 Detrimental Impact

- The open frontages of the car park.
- The bus station.

23.0 Green Spaces, Trees and other Natural Elements

23.1 The conservation area provides two key areas of green open space, each of which has its own character based on its appearance, use and historic development. In each case, it is desirable that these should be both preserved or enhanced.

(i) Argents Mead/Castle Hill

This town centre park provides a quiet and secluded area of public open space with the potential for recreational use for games. The historic relevance of the site as the former priory gardens, site of the Norman Castle and the survival of planting and topography related to these activities have potential for informing experiences of its historical development. The atmosphere of an early 20th century public park is also, to some extent retained, and is of value in providing a link to the town's past. The park is in need of some investment, particularly for the replacement of the tired and outdated Council building orientated east west which dominates the park.

(ii) The Great Meeting Chapel Yard

This secluded former churchyard has been cleared of headstones to become a delightful green space with some magnificent mature trees which line the entrance path.

23.2 Trees make a very important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The planting of street trees such as the pollarded limes already used along Regent Street could introduce a necessary element of greenery at the northern end of Castle Street at the entrance to the town centre.

24.0 Key Views & Vistas

24.1 Views

24.2 The conservation area benefits from a number of views, which have been identified within this appraisal and illustrated on the Townscape Appraisal Map at Figure 1. These include views of significant and focal buildings, views into and across the conservation area including roofscapes, as well as views out of the conservation area. These views make a very positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Their protection should be taken into consideration when determining

planning applications for new development in the conservation area.

- 24.3 Some views have a particular resonance with the historic development of the settlement, whilst others have been identified for purely aesthetic reasons. They are all marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map (Figure 1)
- 24.4 View 1: The Market Place from Station Road/Lancaster Road. Looking northwards from this focal point in the conservation area, this view takes in the historic buildings on both sides of Station Road. Those on the west side form a consistent building line with each building demonstrating a variety of highly characteristic architectural details. They therefore represent the best surviving elements of the late 19th and early 20th century commercial core of the town.
- 24.5 View 2: Along Regent Street looking north. This view represents a moment of arrival in the historic town centre. Emerging from the Coventry Road/Rugby Road junction are a number of significant historic buildings and the dramatic frontage of the former High Cross hosiery works, one of the most striking buildings in the conservation area.
- 24.6 View 3: South down Lower Bond Street. This view is framed by the enclosing buildings of Mansion Street, including the former Atkins factory with the rear of the Union Inn, a former coaching inn, as an end stop to the vista.
- 24.7 View 4: Down Council Road looking south-west towards the Great Meeting Chapel. This view takes in the well maintained open green space in the angle between Baines Lane and Council Road. It also takes in the rear bland brick wall of the car park of the Britannia Centre.
- 24.8 View 5: Down Castle Street from The Lawns junction looking west. This takes in the most important group of Victorian shop fronts in the town centre. It also includes the semi derelict site of the former snooker centre which is in urgent need of redevelopment.
- 24.9 View 6: View of St Mary's Church from Bell Entry southwards is framed by the mature trees from this important partly covered jitty.
- 24.10 View 7: Across Castle Hill from the church footpath looking eastwards. This takes in the mature trees of Argents Mead and the modern concrete façade of the Council Offices

24.11 View 8: This view takes on the southwest elevations of St Mary's Church from the Mount Road car park including the prominent spire. The surrounding churchyard, gravestones and tombs and the red brick churchyard walls all add to the amenity of this view with trees framing it all round and creating a backdrop to the building.

25.0 Public Realm

25.1 The 'public realm' includes the spaces between the buildings, such as pavements and roadways, and other fixtures such as street lighting and street furniture (seats, litter bins, bollards etc). Due to its town centre location, the public realm in the town centre is designed to complement an area with significant pedestrian activity, and recent investment in the public realm within the conservation area, particularly along the jitties, is both evident and welcome. Street lighting for the length of Regent Street is provided by high painted metal lighting columns of good quality and a design in keeping with the character of the conservation area. The painting of the railings which provide a barrier between the highway and roadside pavement along Regent Street in a similar colour scheme adds to the impression of a comprehensive, planned scheme, enhancing the character of the conservation area.

25.2 Most of the pavements in the conservation area are surfaced with black tarmac or concrete pavers although some small areas have dark grey concrete block setts. These are edged in many places with granite kerbs and three deep sets forming the drainage channel. Where areas of tarmac paving have been replaced due to trenching by the statutory undertakers, the varied colours and surface treatments create a poor impression. Important focal points within the conservation areas, such as along Castle Street through to upper Castle Street, might be enhanced through the use of higher quality paving materials, such as flags of local stone.

25.3 As mentioned within the description of each character area, trees make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area in a number of places and must be protected. The semi-mature trees recently planted as street trees along Regent Street make a particularly important contribution to the character of the area by adding greenery to this densely developed urban space. The trees in and around St. Mary's Church Churchyard, in Argents Mead and along the edges of the Council car park on Stockwell Head also make a very significant contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

- 25.4 Areas of formal planting, including the raised floral beds in Argents Mead and the Market Place, the decorative planting of evergreen shrubs on the slopes of Castle Hill make a similarly important positive contribution to the character of these key spaces.

26.0 The Buildings of the Conservation Area

26.1 Architectural and historic character

- 26.2 The historical development of Hinckley town centre along the historic route of the A5 to Leicester turnpike from the mid 18th century onwards resulted in a long ribbon of buildings along the current Regent Street and Castle Street in very mixed uses which, since the decline in local industries, have tended to become primarily commercial. The conservation area now provides a mixture of typically 'town centre' buildings - shops, offices, community and religious buildings, with a scattering of residential properties on the edges of the designated area. Many of these make use of locally produced materials with details and architectural forms which reflect the age of their construction.

- 26.3 To maximise the use of the central commercial frontage, the buildings are three storeys and closely packed with narrow frontages and regular vertical divisions. Some larger blocks, constructed as speculative commercial developments in the early to mid 20th century, provide wider, more consistent frontages, although these are often subdivided. A further, and regrettable change of scale, resulted in the two storey redevelopments of the mid to late 20th century, which amalgamated plots yet again, providing much bigger buildings which contrast unfavorably with the smaller scale of the 19th and early 20th century buildings.

- 26.4 While many of the older commercial properties included residential accommodation or storage over ground floor shops, the 20th century buildings are more likely to have office space over, reflecting a general move towards specialisation of the town centre for commercial activity.

- 26.5 Despite the industrial character of the wider town, only a small number of historic industrial buildings survive within the conservation area, although these make an important contribution to its character and should be protected. The town's rapid growth during the nineteenth century brought in a population of various Christian denominations resulting in the construction of a number of churches, the architecture of which reflects differences in ideological and architectural thought. The working population also

required entertainment and the conservation area is notable for including a high number of 19th century public houses, most of which retain their original function. The large Flutters former cinema on the southern edge of the Conservation Area and the Club on the Horsefair represent venues for other forms of entertainment built during the 20th century.

- 26.6 Civic buildings, reflecting the town centre's administrative role in addition to its commercial focus, are of a large scale, mostly constructed in the mid and later 20th century, replacing earlier structures that have been demolished.
- 26.7 Many of the buildings are run down and in a poor state of repair. This is partly because of economic difficulty in the town centre through loss of trade to other areas, including Fosse Park and the Rope Walk centre in Nuneaton as well as the decline in use of space above shops for residential accommodation.

27.0 Building materials, colours and textures

- 27.1 Locally produced red bricks are used in the construction of many of the buildings in the conservation area, whilst those of better quality have stone or terracotta detailing, such as window lintels or string courses, which provides a good contrast with the brickwork. The bricks do vary in tone, with the highest quality bricks being a very dark shade of red.
- 27.2 These are used on prominent structures such as the HSBC Bank on Station Road, the former Atkins factory on Lower Bond Street and 2 Church Walk. Staffordshire blue brick is used only very occasionally in buildings but more often as a coping for boundary walls. Examples around the church are stamped with the maker's names identifying them as products from former brickworks.
- 27.3 Use of painted render is notable on several of the commercial buildings and public houses along Regent Street, although in many cases it is poorly maintained. Nos.1 Lancaster Road and the Dog and Gun at 28 The Borough represent a good use of such render.
- 27.4 Traditional pitched roofs are of Welsh slate although many have been replaced with unattractive concrete tiles. Examples of synthetic slate roofs are notable for their lighter colour and reflective qualities, although these are considered to be marginally more sympathetic than concrete tiles. The Union Inn, the Old Library and St Mary's School have comparatively rare clay tile roofs. Several of the buildings have traditional timber framed sash

windows, which are painted in a range of colours, but most commonly white. The remainder have, unfortunately, been changed to plastic.

- 27.5 The surviving early industrial buildings identified in the conservation area are generally simple rectangular brick structures with slate covered pitched roofs. Of particular interest are the interesting cast iron window frames in rectangular openings and the occasional projecting bay at first floor which make an important contribution to their historic character.
- 27.6 Many of the historic shop buildings within the conservation area have unfortunately had modern shop fronts inserted, resulting in the loss of some of the area's historic character. Surviving examples of historic shop fronts are recorded at 53-55 Castle Street, 100 Castle Street and 124 Castle Street. Several other buildings, particularly Nos 1-8 King Street and including the row of shops at Nos. 6a - 14 Station Road retain original components of an historic shopfront. More often however, these have been removed or covered by modern fascias and advertising. No.21 Castle Street includes an early shop awning box above the modern fascia.

28.0 Key Positive Buildings

- 28.1 The conservation area contains 28 statutory listed buildings. These, and other buildings which make a positive contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of the conservation area, are noted on the accompanying schedule.
- 28.2 Townscape Appraisal map at Figure 1. These buildings and structures are considered to be good, relatively unaltered examples, of their type where original materials and details and the basic historic form of the building has survived. Where a building has been adversely affected by modern changes and restoration is either impractical or indeed not possible, they are excluded. There is a general presumption in favour of retaining such buildings

29.0 Key Issues

29.1 Negative Buildings

- 29.2 Most of the buildings judged to make a negative contribution to the special architectural or historic interest of the Town Centre Conservation Area were constructed in the mid 20th century or later and do not use the local materials that are characteristic of the

conservation area. Several of them intrude into the setting of existing listed buildings. The principal 'negative' buildings are:

- 29.3 Nos. 1 – 9 Castle Street, an unattractive mid 20th century building that intrudes into the setting of the listed buildings around the Market Place and creates an eyesore at the entrance to Castle Street;
- 29.4 Intrusive mid and late 20th century commercial buildings of poor quality design and materials along Regent Street such as Nos. 7–11 The Borough and 15-17 The Borough, the rear of the post office, Lancaster Road, 1-3 and 10-12 Coventry Road and 59-63 Castle Street (the Co-operative Store);
- 29.5 The large modern commercial buildings of the Nationwide Building Society are out of scale with the structures along the The Borough/Regent Street and fail to adequately address the Street frontage, resulting in a lack of vitality in the area at the northern end of Regent Street.

30.0 Other Negative Features

- Intrusion of garish modern shop fronts and advertising.
- The loss of traditional shop fronts.
- The vacant site with exposed basement between Nos. 99 and 109 Castle Street.
- The domination of the junction of Trinity Lane and Coventry Road by the very broad area of highways with traffic islands, traffic lights and heavy traffic.
- The lack of public access to the green space adjoining the Great Meeting Chapel.
- Poor maintenance and deterioration of many buildings within the conservation area.
- The erosion of detailing and the potential loss of streetscape features of interest.
- Deterioration and loss of historic industrial buildings and public houses.
- The domination of the junction of Castle Street with New Buildings by traffic and severance of the pedestrianised section of Castle Street with Upper Castle Street which is emphasised by the prevalence of street clutter.
- A large area of derelict and overgrown gardens lies behind The Borough and the western end of Castle Street. The difficulty of access to the gardens and the rear of the properties along these sections, in addition to the poor condition of the gardens, must have an adverse impact on the feasibility of providing accommodation over the commercial properties along Castle Street.

31.0 Buildings in need of Repair and/or Maintenance

- 31.1 A relatively high number of the historic buildings within the conservation area are in need of repair and maintenance to ensure their long term preservation and continued positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. This is partly as a result of the currently low economic vitality of Regent Street, as well as the high levels of vacancy in the upper floors above the shops.
- 31.2 Some of these properties require quite significant repair, particularly at 74-76 Castle Street, Nos. 3, 5 and 27 The Borough. Repairs will need to include repointing brickwork, the repair and in places replacement of window frames and the repair of guttering and cornices. Several of these properties are currently completely unoccupied. Finding new uses for them to ensure their continued maintenance should be a priority.
- 31.3 Use of upper storeys, as mentioned above, for residential accommodation or commercial use should also be promoted. Several buildings have had staircases to upper storeys removed, rendering them unsuitable for residential uses. Reinstating this access to upper floors should be promoted, potentially through a 'Living over the shop' campaign, as well as the provision of grant aid. Improved access to the rear of these buildings might also improve their economic viability.
- 31.4 Additionally, the condition of a number of more recent buildings is also a cause for concern, especially where basic maintenance appears to have been neglected. Several of the later 20th century buildings, which are currently considered to make a negative or, at best, neutral contribution to the conservation area, could be improved through some basic maintenance, such as repainting or cleaning of concrete or render, the replacement of facade panels and an improvement in signage. However some of the buildings, particularly Nos. 2-4 The Borough and 14 The Borough provide opportunities for the enhancement of the conservation area through demolition and redevelopment.

32.0 Loss of Key Historic Buildings

- 32.1 The conservation area has lost a number of key historic buildings as a result of highways improvements and other works. This has had a significantly negative impact on the conservation area's character and appearance.

- 32.2 There should be a presumption against the demolition of all buildings that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area unless it can be demonstrated that repair and restoration could not provide an economically viable use of the structure.
- 32.3 Buildings designated as listed buildings or buildings which make a positive contribution should receive even greater protection from unsympathetic development, including developments that would harm their setting.

33.0 The Loss of Historic Shopfronts

- 33.1 Many buildings within the conservation area have lost traditional shop fronts and have had modern shopfronts inserted. In other cases modern fascias have been placed over traditional ones. In both cases there has been a significant erosion of the area's historic character and appearance. In determining applications for changes to shopfronts and advertising the Council should take into consideration the importance of maintaining or enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. Particular attention should be given to the choice of materials, colours, lighting and the best use of surviving elements of historic shopfronts. Garish shop fronts should be avoided. Schemes that are sympathetic to the colours and tones of the buildings and make use of traditional, locally produced materials are preferred.

34.0 Opportunities for replacement of mid to late 20th century buildings

- 34.1 A number of buildings constructed in the mid and late 20th centuries have been identified as intrusive to the character and appearance of the conservation area as a result of their use of unsympathetic materials, including design and lack of detailing.
- 34.2 These buildings should be regarded as opportunity sites for redevelopment, which could be more in keeping with the conservation area's historic character and appearance. Applications for new development should include consideration of the use of appropriate materials, scale and massing, vertical division of frontages and detailing such as sympathetically designed windows, doors, shopfronts and cornicing.

35.0 Traffic

- 35.1 The conservation area is currently affected by heavy traffic loads, with particular problems at the focal points of the junctions of New Buildings and Castle Street and Coventry Road and Trinity Lane.
- 35.2 The Council will need to develop a strategy for managing the traffic within and around the conservation area that takes into regard the desirability of maintaining its character and appearance as well as supporting a regenerated Regent Street and Castle Street with the needs for servicing and the protection of pedestrians being considered.
- 35.3 Ideally a reduction in traffic should allow the removal of railings along the pavements on Trinity Lane and Mansion Street creating a better focal space in the town centre.

36.0 Street Surfacing

- 36.1 Tarmacadam is used as a street surfacing material throughout the conservation area and is considered an adequate but uninspiring material, although where it has been poorly reinstated following trenching works this creates a negative impact on the overall appearance of the conservation area.
- 36.2 Use of traditional, better quality materials such as paving flags or granite setts at the conservation area's main focal points would help to enhance the appearance of the conservation area.

37.0 Vulnerabilities

- The threat to green space from infill development.
- Loss of mature trees impacting on the green and leafy character of parts of the town.
- Poor maintenance of the original built fabric threatens the area's heritage value and attractiveness of the town centre for commercial uses. It leads to the loss of historic architectural features and detailing, such as traditional doors and windows, roofing materials and features, or locally distinctive construction materials. This can lead to their replacement with unsympathetic styles and materials.
- Insensitive alterations to existing buildings, especially on street facing elevations.
- Traffic management proposals for Regent Street which will increase the visual dominance of traffic and the highway.
- Deterioration and replacement of traditional streetscape features by poor quality street furniture and materials in the streets, loss of

traditional materials and details e.g. the loss of stone kerbing and loss of traditional cobbled gulleys running along side the roads.

- The Conservation Area is an area of intricate narrow jitties running between main streets and picturesque groupings of former industrial buildings and the remnants of historically interesting garden plots which could easily be destroyed by large scale redevelopment.
- The further loss of predominantly 3 storey 19th century terraces.
- Loss of important archaeology relating to the former Priory which is buried beneath Argents Mead and the vicarage.
- The character is vulnerable to the cumulative impact of alterations to; windows, doors, roofs, painting of brickwork and loss of chimneys.
- Deterioration of the condition the original fabric, materials and detailing.
- Inappropriate proportions of fenestration and architectural details to new development.
- Threat of demolition of remnant industrial buildings and the loss of character that represents.
- The loss of historic shop frontages.

Victorian architecture is now more highly valued and steps have been taken to preserve its integrity. All new development should seek to enforce this integrity rather than reduce it.

Where infill projects are permitted, they should respond to the existing architectural scale, predominant building materials and character of the original buildings.

38.0 Opportunities

38.1 The richness and diversity in architectural detailing should be conserved through the repair and, where necessary, reinstatement of traditional elements such as timber sash windows, appropriate doors, correct roofing materials, boundary walls etc. These changes not only harm the character and appearance of the property itself but the cumulative effect impacts on the visual continuity and integrity of a street and inappropriate replacements should be avoided.

38.2 Rationalisation of street furniture would greatly enhance the street scene. There is a tendency towards cluttering with signposts, road signs, bollards, lights, and bus stops etc that are visually detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. An audit of street furniture should be considered to determine whether all existing signs etc are necessary and that some of the clutter on the pavements can be reduced.

- 38.3 Road and pavement surfaces are patchy in places and would benefit from being resurfaced, from both a visual and safety point of view. Any remaining historic road surface should be retained. Kerbs are generally of stone and should be repaired on a like-for-like basis rather than introducing concrete kerb stones.
- 38.4 Where infill projects are permitted, they should respond to the existing architectural scale, predominant building materials and character of the original buildings.
- 38.5 Where planting has been removed or trees have died, they should be replaced with appropriate species to maintain the leafy character that is so strongly associated with parts of the town centre. Additional planting may also add to the streetscape in some places, especially where there has been new development.
- 38.6 Encourage the reinstatement of architecturally appropriate railings. Railings were generally removed during WWII and in the majority of instances, have not been replaced. Where they have, they are often of an incorrect design and height.
- 38.7 Refurbishment and re-use of remaining industrial buildings in order to maintain architectural and historic diversity.
- 38.8 Repair and reinstatement of historic shop fronts.

39.0 Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest

- 39.1 Castle Mound is protected as a Scheduled ancient monument.
- 39.2 The Great Meeting, Unitarian Chapel, Baines Lane. Grade II* Dated 1722. Two storey red brick with black brick plinth and 2 parallel hipped plain tiled roofs.
- 39.3 St Mary's Church, Grade II, is a large symmetrical building with a big west tower dating from the early 14th century. The spire was built in 1788. The church interior was largely restored during the 19th century and contains the Hinckley Towne Chest dated 1613.
- 39.4 No. 3 The Borough. Grade II. House, now shop. Late C18 with C20 alterations. Two storey red brick with slate roof with brick end stack to left.
- 39.5 No. 5 The Borough. Grade II (The Castle Restaurant) House now restaurant. Late C18 with later additions. Plastered walls, slate roof and brick end stacks.

- 39.6 No. 8 The Borough. Grade II. House now office. Late C18. Roughcast walls, slate roof and brick end stack to left in front of the ridge. Three storey 3 window front. Late C20 shop front to ground floor.
- 39.7 No. 6a The Borough Barclays Bank. Grade II. Constructed circa 1805 as the Town Assembly Rooms now A bank. Late C18 with later alterations. Two storey red brick, stuccoed to ground floor with hipped slate roof.
- 39.8 United Reformed Church. Grade II. 1866-68 by F Drake of Leicester in a Ruskinian Venetian Gothic style. Red brick with ashlar front and hipped slate roof.
- 39.9 War Memorial, The Castle, Argents Mead Walk. Grade II. Circa 1920. Stone with copper statue above octagonal shaft on 3 steps with moulded base and inscription.
- 39.10 War Memorial Wall, The Castle, Argent's Mead Walk. Grade II. Stone wall with lower balustrade topped wings. Central entablatured wall on bolection moulded base reached by a wide flight of steps.
- 39.11 Nos. 2 and 2A Castle Street. (north side) Grade II. Shop row early C19. Red brick with stuccoed dressings including projecting cornice as parapet to slate roof. Four storeys to the two left hand bays of the south front with reduced proportions to the third floor and three storeys to the rest of the building.
- 39.12 No 4 Castle Street. (north side) Grade II. House now shop. Late C18 with C19 and C20 alterations. Red brick with front painted and partly rendered, plain tiled roof. Three storeys with parapet band to plain coped parapet.
- 39.13 No. 64 Castle Street. (north side) Grade II. House now shop. C17 with later alterations. Timber framed with plaster infill panels to front and exposed left hand side elevation. Plain tiled roof and C20 brick central stack.
- 39.14 No.11 Castle Street (south side) Grade II. House now shop. Late C18. Rendered front wall and plain tiled roof with brick end stack to right. Three storeys with coved eaves and blocking course.
- 39.15 No 19 Castle Street. (south side) Grade II. House now shop. Late C18. Red brick with concrete tiled roof and brick end stack to left. Three storeys with moulded eaves cornice.

- 39.16 No.23 Castle Street. (south side) Grade II. House now shop. Early to mid C19 with C20 shop front. Painted brick with plain tiled roof and painted brick end stack to right. Three storeys with moulded brick eaves cornice.
- 39.17 No.25 Castle Street (south side) Grade II. House now shop. Early C18 with later C19 and C20 shop front. Rough cast brickwork and concrete tiled roof. Three storeys with band over first floor and pilasters to left and right to eaves course.
- 39.18 Nos. 27, 29 and 31 Castle Street. (south side) Grade II. Pair of houses now shops. No 29 to the right is early C18 altered in the C19. Three storeys with painted brick frontage with plain tiled roof. No 31 to the left is early C18 with later C 20 shop front extending in to no 29. Three storeys, red brick with moulded and dentilled eaves cornice.
- 39.19 Nos. 35 and 37 Castle Street. (south side) Grade II. House now shop and office. Late C18 with later C20 alterations. Red brick with plain tiled roof. Hipped to left and brick end stack to right.
- 39.21 Nos 53 and 55 Castle Street (south side) House now shop. Early to mid C19 with later C19 shop front. Painted brick with plain tiled roof and brick end stacks. Three storeys with stuccoed cornice and boxed eaves.
- 39.22 No 2 Church Walk (north side). Grade II. House now office. Early C19. Red brick, stuccoed to ground floor with channel rustication. Plain tiled roof, hipped to the left and two brick end stacks.
- 39.23 No 30 Lower Bond Street. (west side). Grade II. C17 restored C20. Timber framed with high brick plinth and brick infill panels. Thatched roof stepped down to left at centre with one storey knitting shop to left.
- 39.24 Nos. 3 and 5 Station Road.(east side). Former library of 1888 built to the designs of Isaac Barradale of Leicester and combining Arts and Crafts details with elements of William and Mary. The adjoining offices former Council offices were added in 1903 by the Town Surveyor F C Cook in sympathetic but less original style.

40.0 Development Guidance

- 40.1 Any new development must take account of the established character of the area by being of appropriate scale and density and

utilising appropriate materials so that the buildings will make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

40.2 The policies relating to conservation areas are contained within national guidance and will form the basis for determining planning applications. This appraisal should be considered in conjunction with those policies. The following checkpoints are to be taken into account when submitting development proposals:

- To be of a high standard of design that respects the established character and appearance of the conservation area.
- Materials to be of a quality and type appropriate to the development and its surroundings.
- Retain and protect important landscape and ecological features.
- Preserve or enhance the special character and setting of listed buildings, conservation areas and Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- The re-use of redundant buildings is encouraged for uses compatible with their character and setting.
- Historic buildings identified on the appraisal map and areas of open space between buildings are to be retained.

41.0 General Conservation Area Guidance, Planning Controls and Policies

41.1 To maintain the distinctive character and appearance of the Hinckley Town Centre Conservation Areas it will be necessary to:

- Retain the listed building and buildings of local interest.
- Ensure new development contributes positively to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area regarding siting, scale, design and materials used.
- Ensure house extensions satisfy the Borough Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- Resist development proposals in key areas, which have been identified.
- Ensure the consistent application of positive, sensitive and detailed development control.
- Ensure important views are protected.

41.2 Special attention is given to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the appearance of the Conservation Area. Planning Applications in Conservation Areas are separately advertised. The principal effects of the designation of a Conservation Area are summarised as follows:

- 41.3 Consent is required for the total or substantial demolition of any building exceeding 115 cu metres or any wall, fence, gate or railing over 1 metre adjacent to a highway or 2 metres elsewhere.
- 41.4 Applications for Outline Planning permission are not normally acceptable. Full planning applications are likely to be required.
- 41.5 Planning permission is required for:
- The external cladding of any building with stone, artificial stone, pebbledash, render, timber, plastic or tiles.
 - Alteration of the roof which results in its enlargement.
 - A satellite dish on a chimney, wall or roof fronting a highway.
 - The enlarged part of the dwelling house that would extend beyond the wall forming a side elevation of the original dwelling house, or:
 - The enlarged part of the dwelling house that would be more than one storey and extend beyond the rear wall of the original dwelling house.
- 41.6 The design of all new shop front, advertisements and security grilles should be in accordance with the Council's Shopping and Shop Front Design Guide.
- 41.7 Anyone proposing works to a tree in a Conservation Area must give six weeks written notice to the local planning authority.
- 41.8 These requirements do not cover all aspects of control in Conservation Areas and you are advised to contact the Local Planning Authority.

/BW
February 2013