

Supplementary Guidance



Aylestone Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Planning Policy and Design
Adopted March 2008



Leicester
City Council

Cover images, from the top:

Aylestone Hall and gardens.

Detail of bay window Croft Avenue.

Middleton Street and spire of St.

Andrew's Parish Church.

The Packhorse Bridge.

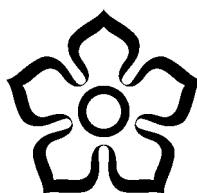
AYLESTONE VILLAGE CONSERVATION AREA

character appraisal

(Adopted: March 2008)



Old Church Street



Leicester
City Council

contents		page
1.0	Introduction	6
2.0	Planning Policy Framework	6
3.0	Definition of Special Interest	8
4.0	Assessment of Special Interest	10
4.1	Location and setting	10
4.4	Historic development and archaeology	11
4.21	Prevailing and former uses	17
	<u>Architectural character and key buildings</u>	
4.25	Townscape and character areas	19
4.34	Architectural character and key buildings	22
	<u>Buildings materials and the public realm</u>	
4.50	Building materials	28
4.56	The public realm	30
4.58	Greenery and green spaces	30
4.64	Negative factors	32
4.67	Problems and pressures	33
4.69	Capacity for change	33
5.0	Community involvement	34
6.0	Conservation Area boundary	34
7.0	Management and enhancement proposals	34
8.0	Contacts, and appendices	35

list of maps

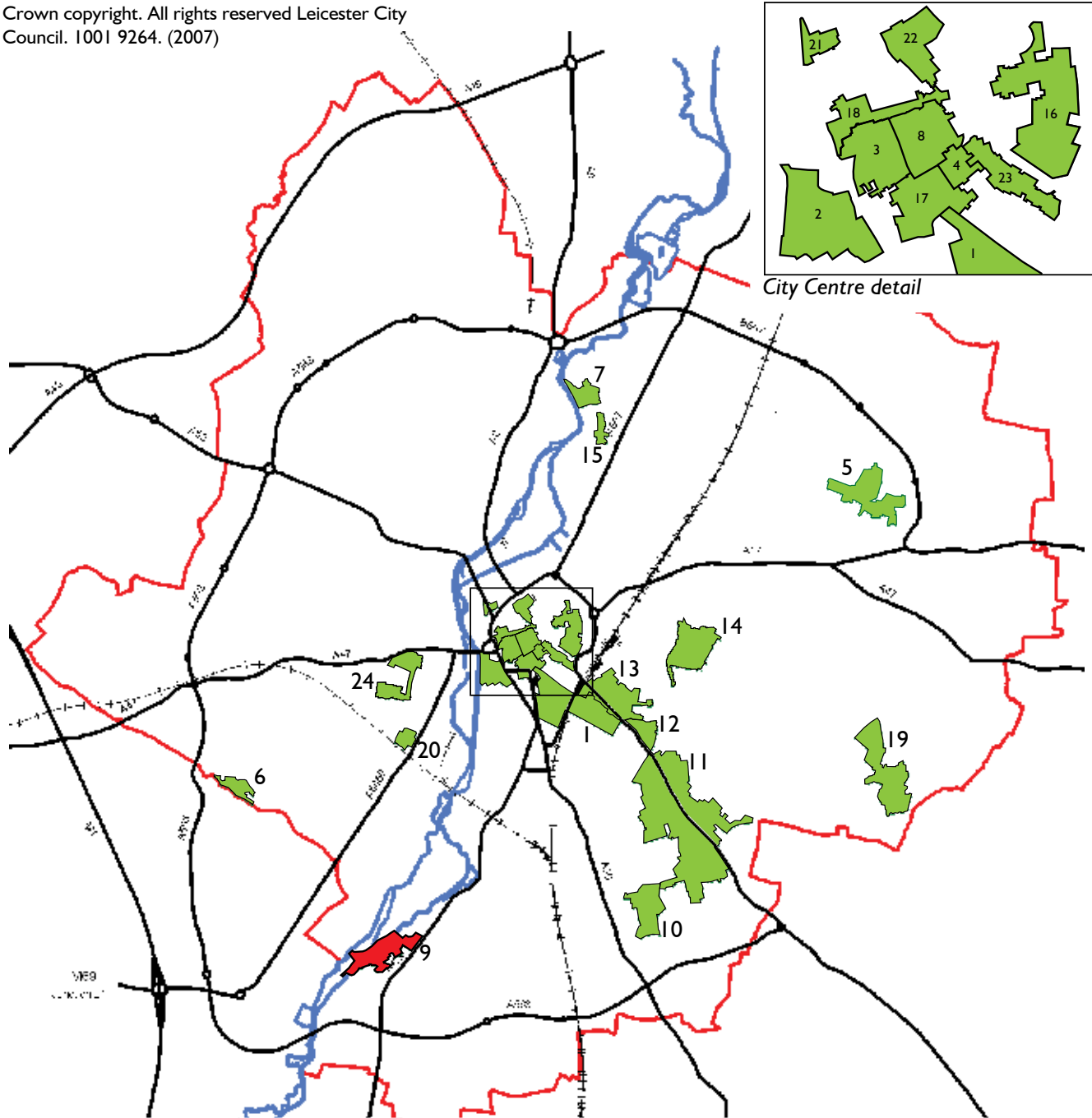
Map 1	City of Leicester Conservation Areas	5
Map 2	Boundary of Aylestone Village Conservation Area	7
Map 3	Land sale 'lots' 1869	12
Map 4	Ordnance Survey map extract 1886	13
Map 5	Ordnance Survey map extract 1914/1915	16
Map 6	Ordnance Survey map extract 1930	17
Map 7	Character Appraisal	41

appendices

Appendix 1	List of buildings in the Aylestone Village Conservation Area	35
Appendix 2	List of listed buildings in the Conservation Area	36
Appendix 3	Relevant Local Plan and other Policies	36
Appendix 4	Responses to consultations	37
Appendix 5	Management and Enhancement Proposals	40
Appendix 6	Glossary of architectural terms	40

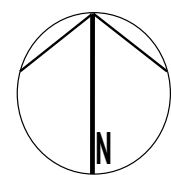
map I. City of Leicester Conservation Areas

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

Listed chronologically



Not to scale

1.0 Introduction

1.1 A character appraisal is the first step in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas. It defines and records the factors that make conservation areas special, thereby providing a baseline for decisions about an area's future. It also identifies features and problems that detract from this special quality and suggests, by means of management and enhancement proposals, the ways in which the special interest could be safeguarded or improved. An appraisal also provides the opportunity to review the boundaries of conservation areas and, where appropriate, to propose amendments. In the case of the Aylestone Village Conservation Area the proposed boundary amendments are set out in section 6 and shown on Map 2.

1.2 The Aylestone Village Conservation Area was designated in 1975 and covers an area of 15.5 hectares (38.5 acres). It lies about 4km south west of the city centre on a ridge of river gravels above the damp marshland of the floodplain of the River Soar. There are five Tree Preservation Orders in force and one Article 4 Direction covering a pair of cottages on Old Church Street.

1.3 The survey and Appraisal were carried out during 2007 following the methodology suggested by English Heritage. To ensure that a complete picture is built up about the value and character of the area the Council asked people who live, work and visit the area for their views, including what they like or dislike about the area and their ideas about how the area could be preserved or enhanced.

2.0 Planning Policy Framework

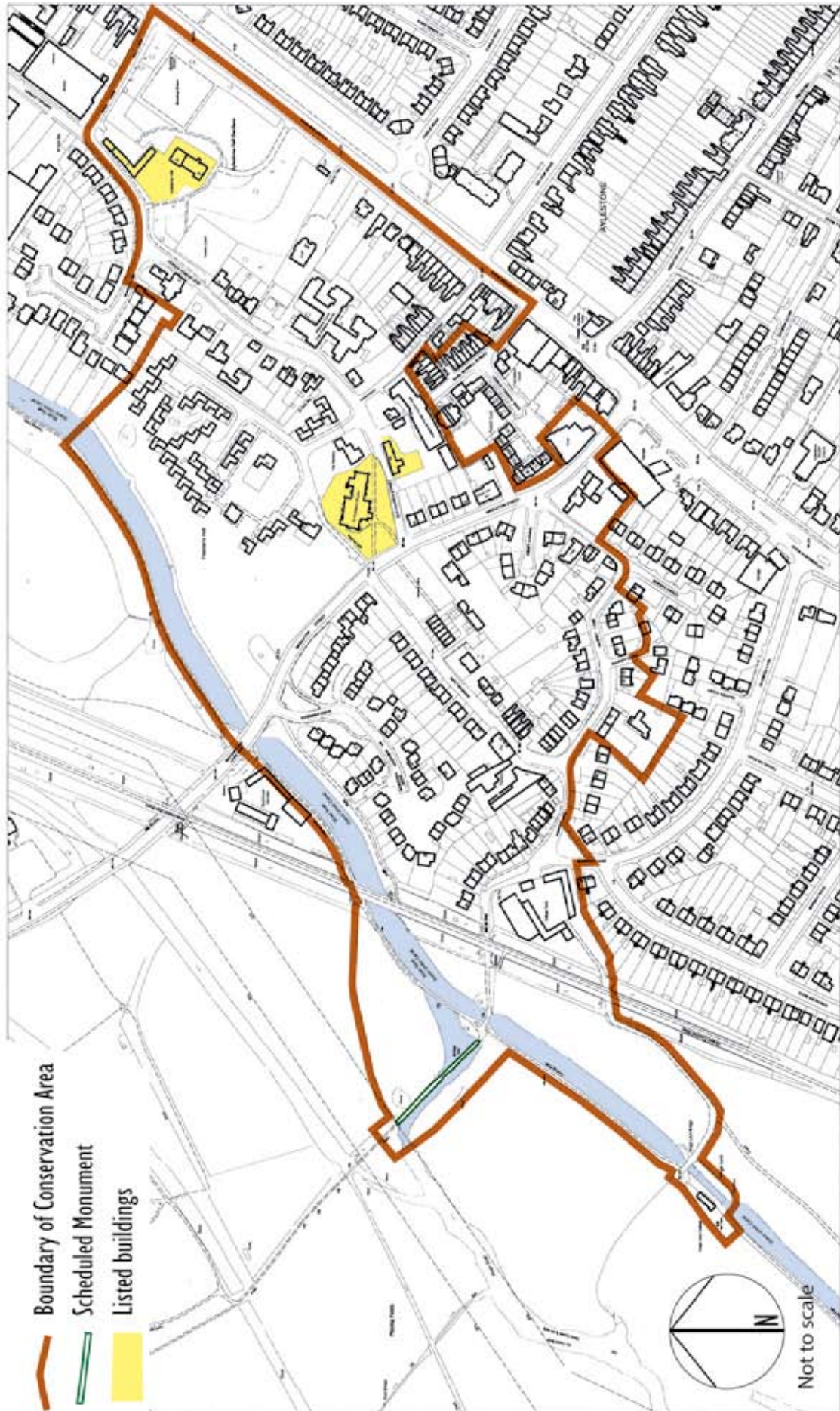
2.1 The protection and preservation of historic environments are now extensively recognised for the contribution they make to the country's cultural and historic heritage, its economic well-being and quality of life. Public support for conservation – both in the built and natural environments – is likewise well established. National and regional governmental guidance reflects this.

2.2 The concept of conservation areas was first introduced into national legislation in 1967 in the Civic Amenities Act which defined conservation areas as areas “of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It is not the purpose of conservation areas to prevent change but to manage change in such a way as to maintain and, if possible, strengthen an area's special qualities.

2.3 Current legislation is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This places a duty on the Council to declare as conservation areas those parts of their area that they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest [s.69(1)]. It also imposes on the Council to review past designations from time to time [s.69(2)]. Conservation area status also means that there are stricter controls on changes that can be made to buildings and land including the need for consent to demolish

map 2. Boundary of Aylestone Village Conservation Area

Map 2
Aylestone Village Conservation Area





Aerial view of Aylestone Village and surrounding area from the 2005 survey.

any building, strengthened controls over some minor forms of development and the automatic protection of all trees in the conservation area.

2.4 The Council has a further duty to formulate and prepare from time to time proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas [s.71(1)] and these are set out in Appendix 4). The Council must also pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas when determining planning applications for sites within such areas [s.72(1)].

2.5 The City of Leicester Local Plan is the over-arching policy document for land use in the city and contains policies against which the appropriateness and design of development proposals can be measured. Some of these policies relate directly to the historic environment, including conservation areas, listed buildings and archaeology, and are designed to help ensure that new developments or conservation-led regeneration reflect the character and value of that environment. These are listed in Appendix 3. There is, however, a general presumption against the demolition of any building in a conservation area where that building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

3.0 Definition of special interest

3.1 Although a great deal of development has taken place in Aylestone during the 20th century much of the character of the old village remains, including the original

street pattern of narrow winding lanes, the listed buildings and some 18th and 19th century cottages. The scale of the built fabric of the area remains small and essentially suburban, with most buildings being no more than two storeys in height. This allows interesting views to be had of the church spire from most locations within the conservation area. Building density has remained relatively low, leaving space for gardens, green space and trees. Trees are one of the most important features of the conservation area, particularly north of Middleton Street, and contribute greatly to its character as they change across the seasons. The nearby flood plain of the River Soar and watermeadows add to the conservation area's green character and the canal towpath and Great Central Way create a distinctive boundary. These green spaces provide attractive routes into and out of both the conservation area and the city. They also provide a visible link between the village and the development of Leicester as an important industrial city during the late 18th and 19th centuries.

3.2 Aylestone's links with a single family for over 750 years is also one of its most important historic features. That family was responsible not only for keeping the village very much as a rural backwater during the time of Leicester's greatest expansion during the 19th century but also for the construction of Aylestone Hall, one of Leicester's most important historic buildings.

3.3 The conservation area also retains evidence of Aylestone's ancient and medieval history, with Old Church Street, Middleton Street and Sanvey Lane all dating from at least medieval times. This is particularly obvious in the latter two, where centuries of use have resulted in the roads cutting quite deeply below their surroundings as they follow typically winding routes.

3.4 The agricultural origins of the village are also still evident at various points. There is still one working farm on an old site at the foot of Sanvey Lane and the remnants of three other farms still exist at 12 Middleton Street, 21 Old Church Street and 60-62 Sanvey Lane. The conservation area's three listed buildings add architectural value to the area – Aylestone Hall, St Andrew's Church and 90 Old Church Street. The Hall and church both date from the 12th century and are the physical evidence of the close



Kings Lock photographed in the early years of the 20th century.



The old Middleton Street canal bridge in the early 1950s. The bridge was replaced by the present structure in 1958.

relationship that would then have existed between the secular and religious parts of society. 90 Old Church Street also has close links with the church, having been residence of its curate.

4.0 Assessment of special interest

Location and setting

4.1 Aylestone Village Conservation Area is located on the south west side of the city, approximately 4 kilometres (2.5 miles) from the Clock Tower. It lies between the 60m (195ft) and 65m (215ft) contours east of the River Soar, above the river's floodplain and the damp marshland around the Packhorse Bridge. The village site is a river gravel terrace providing well-drained building plots. The conservation area is about 15½ hectares (38½ acres) in size. The boundary is shown on Map 2.

4.2 The land rises by about 3m (10ft) between the canal and the Black Horse pub on Narrow Lane reaching a maximum height of about 4.5m (13ft) above river level at the Aylestone Road/ Middleton Street junction. The area to the north of Middleton Street lies along the 60m (195ft) contour and is relatively flat compared to the area around Sanvey Lane where the sandstone and Mercia Mudstones create a steep slope down to what was known as 'The Hollow'.

4.3 The River Soar is canalised at this point and is known as the Leicester branch of the Grand Union Canal. It forms the conservation area's north-western boundary along the back of the Freeman's Holt development to the railway bridge adjacent to the Boathouse Kennels. The boundary then follows a field boundary westwards to the Packhorse Bridge, then returns along the south side of the bridge to the canal and west to King's Lock.



A late 19th century view of the River Soar near to Sanvey Lane canal bridge.



The River Soar close to Packhorse Bridge.

Historic development and archaeology

4.4 There has probably been a settlement at Aylestone for many centuries although it is only known in written records from the 11th century. Its name is thought to derive from the Anglo-Saxon 'Aegel's tun' which translates to 'Aegel's settlement' ('tun' means a thick fence around a settlement). The manor of 'Ailestone' appears in the Domesday Survey of 1089 and another spelling, 'Ayleston', appears in the Merchant Guild Roll of Leicester in the 12th century. Records show that the Manor of Aylestone was passed down in a continuous family line from at least 1107 until the middle of the 19th century. This continuity of ownership is an important aspect of Aylestone's history. The manor of Aylestone was originally large and wealthy but documentary evidence suggests that by the 12th century it was in decline, a decline that continued into the 14th century and probably beyond (perhaps even leading to Cobbett's comment about the village in the 19th century – paragraph 4.10 below).

4.5 The medieval settlement would have centred around the 13th century St Andrew's Church on the corner of Old Church Street and Middleton Street. The church tower is the only part of the building that survives from this time, although there may be, as yet undiscovered, remains from an earlier, Saxon date beneath the present building. The church underwent much alteration and enlargement in the 14th and 15th centuries, perhaps in response to a growth in population and/or wealth in the area.

4.6 Nearby is another medieval building, Aylestone Hall. The earliest part of this building has been dated to 1339 and other additions and alterations have been dated to the second half of the 15th and the early years of the 16th centuries. It came into the possession of the Vernon family in 1409. Its age and associations with the medieval history of the Midlands (through the Vernon and the Manners families) mean that it is probably one of the most important historic houses in Leicester. By the 16th century it was one of 50 manors in the possession of Sir George Vernon (known as "The King of the Peak") and



The Packhorse Bridge is a Scheduled Monument.

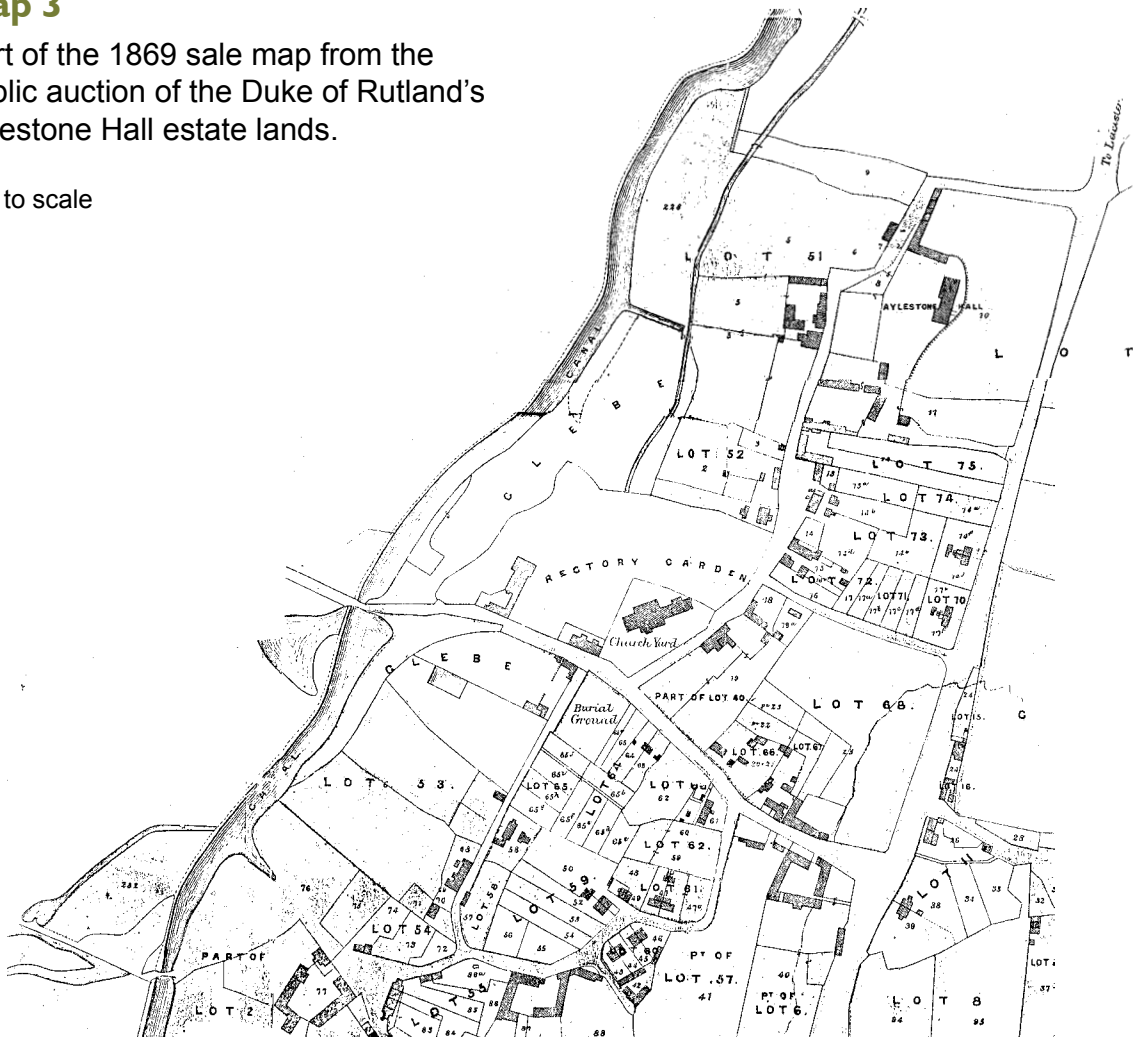


Aylestone Hall from the south.

map 3

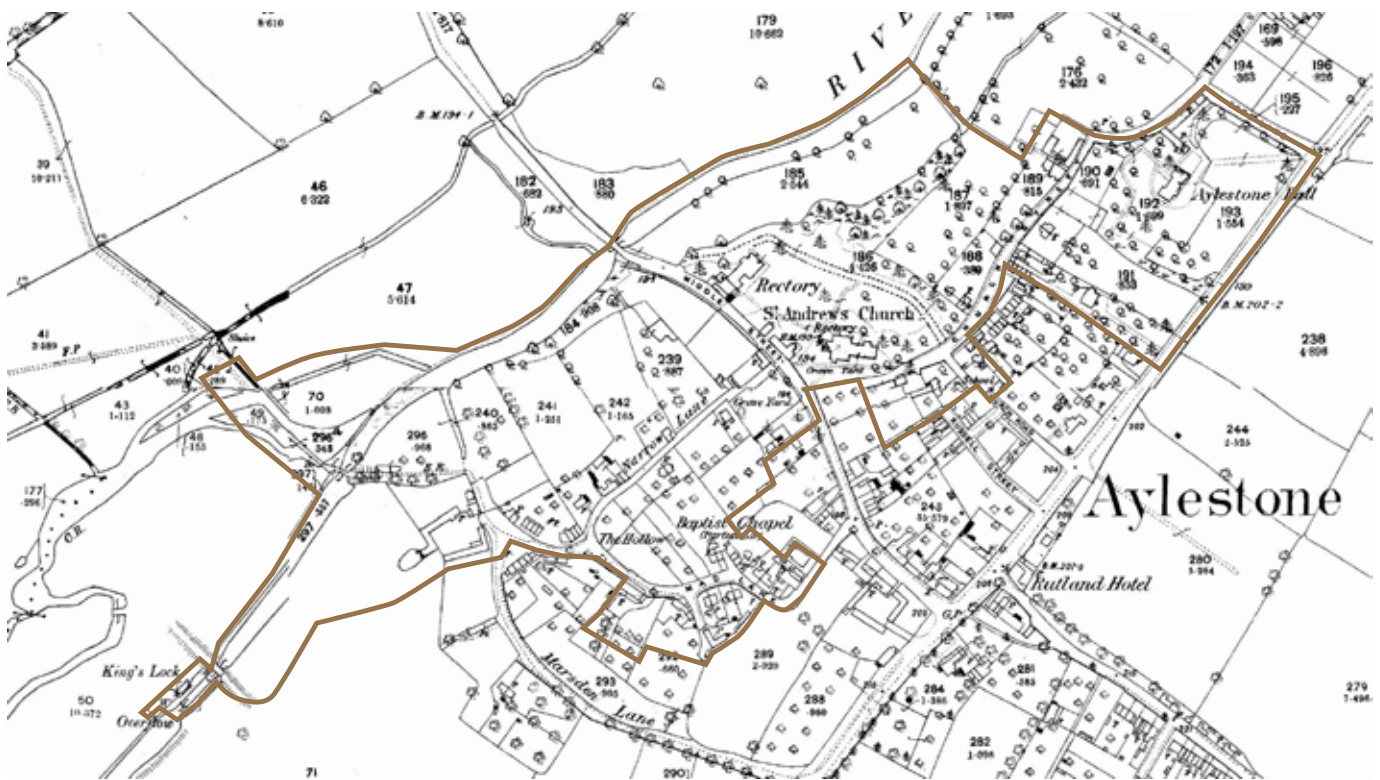
Part of the 1869 sale map from the public auction of the Duke of Rutland's Aylestone Hall estate lands.

Not to scale



whose ancestral home lay at Haddon Hall in Derbyshire. It came into the possession of the Manners family through marriage in 1565, and that family lived there until it passed, through succession, to the Dukes of Rutland. The building was much altered in the 16th and 17th centuries following its inheritance by the Earls (then, after 1703, the Dukes) of Rutland but was unlikely to have been the family home after 1641. The greatest change to its appearance took place in 1850 when the present grey roughcast rendering was applied, hiding what would have been its earlier, and more appropriate, lime render.

4.7 Beyond the west end of the village is the Packhorse Bridge. This dates from around the 15th century and was built to provide a dry route for packhorses (the main means of transporting goods in Britain before the road improvements of the 18th century and the establishment of the canal network) across the damp ground of the river floodplain. This route appears to have been of great commercial importance in medieval times and its winding course can still be followed along Sanvey Lane. This ancient street is also reputed to have been part of a pilgrim's way which led to a Holy Well just south of Wigston Lane ['sanvey' being an old word meaning 'holy', a word that is also remembered in the name of the farm that lay on the east side of Lutterworth Road (Holywell Farm)]. Another trading route passed through Aylestone village along Middleton Street and its primary function may be reflected in one of its former names, Coalpit Lane (it was also known as Union Street, after which the Union Inn is presumably named).



The Ordnance Survey Map of 1886; the existing boundary of the Aylestone Village Conservation Area is shown superimposed.
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map 4



Not to scale

4.8 The river and its floodplain have always prevented any westwards expansion of the village and it appears to have remained very small up until the 19th century. Even the coming of the canal in the late 18th century and the construction of the Great Central Railway at the end of the 19th century affected the village and the conservation area very little. Although the latter created a very prominent feature on the west side of the village, cutting the views west across the river valley, neither development attracted new housing or industry, although for entirely different reasons (see 4.9 and 4.15 below).

4.9 The canalisation of the River Soar began in 1776 when the Soar Navigation Company started to build their canal from the Soar's junction with the Trent. The canal reached Leicester near the West Bridge in 1796 and the city was thus opened up to a supply of cheaper coal from Derbyshire, a market that played a large part in the industrialisation of the city. The stretch of canal through Aylestone was opened in 1794. As elsewhere across the country canal barges replaced the packhorse trains as the preferred method of transportation of raw materials and finished goods; Aylestone was thus left with the winding lanes and the Packhorse Bridge as the sole reminders of this ancient trade. Although the canal attracted industry and wharves in other parts of the city this did not happen in Aylestone. The possible reason for this is that the owners of most of the land around the canal (the Duke of Rutland and the Church of England) neither needed, nor wanted, to develop their interests.

4.10 By the end of the first quarter of the 19th century the village appeared to be in very poor condition. William Cobbett, the well-known traveller and writer, passed through the Aylestone on his Midland tours during the 1830s. Referring to it as 'Hailstone', Cobbett writes that the agricultural workers' cottages were 'deplorable dwellings' and

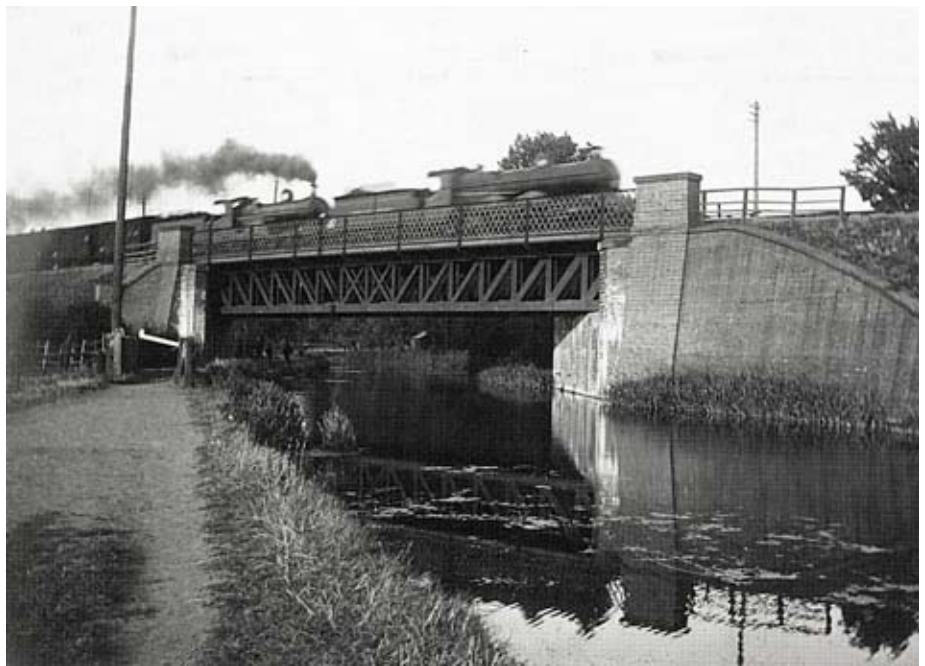
'worse than the cowsheds of Hampshire'.

He was also drawn to reflect on the discrepancy between the wealth of the town (indicated by the spires of Leicester on the horizon) and the squalor of the living conditions of the villagers.

4.11 Cobbett also makes a typically acerbic comment on the contrast between the villagers' homes and the much more salubrious parsonage. This building, which shared with Aylestone Hall the reputation for having sheltered King Charles I before the Siege of Leicester in 1645, was replaced in 1839 with a new rectory. Known as 'The Holt' it was designed in Elizabethan style by William Parsons, one of Leicester's well known 19th century architects. It stood on Middleton Street in an extensive garden (which is now part of the grounds around Freeman's Holt). The village itself, however, continued to suffer from lack of investment in its housing, a fact sufficiently important to be reported in the Leicester Chronicle in 1848.

4.12 Nevertheless, the middle of the 19th century seems to have been a time of at least some investment in the village by the Duke of Rutland. In 1844 he contributed liberally towards the building of a new school (the National School) in Pole's Lane (now Church Road). This now forms part of the Parish Church Hall. In 1859 he gave the land on the south side of Middleton Street for use as the extension to the graveyard. And some time in the 1860s he had some old cottages pulled down and replaced with "more convenient ones". Some of these houses were apparently built without front doors because, it is said, the Duke "disliked seeing his tenants gossiping in front of their houses".

4.13 As has been stated earlier, the Duke of Rutland owned all the land and buildings in Aylestone village, including Aylestone Hall which had had a number of different tenants over the years (in 1846 part of it was in use as a Ladies' Boarding School). However, despite his recent investments in his property, the Duke put the whole Manor of Aylestone up for sale. The public auction was held on June 24th 1869 and comprised many lots of widely varying sizes. The sale advertisement listed such particulars as "the whole of the beautiful village of Aylestone" and many houses as "Model Cottages recently built". The village itself was described as "truly English and rural in character". The Parish



A doubled-headed express crossing the Great Central Railway bridge over the River Soar/Grand Union Canal during the 1960s.



Middleton Street boating station in the 1930s.



Sanvey Lane: the former Baptist Chapel of 1871 was built in a simple Gothic style and still retains all of its architectural features.

Church records (the Church Rate Books) show that many of the Duke's tenants were able to buy their farms and cottages.

4.14 The plan produced for the sale shows Aylestone to be a village of widely scattered cottages and farms (Map 3), not very much different in size from that shown twenty years later in the 1885 Ordnance Survey (Map 4). However, the breaking of the Duke's monopoly ownership of the village was the catalyst for future growth. One of the first new buildings was the Baptist Chapel on Sanvey Lane (formerly Mad Lane) which was built in 1871. The new chapel provided purpose-built accommodation and ended 16 years of temporary meetings in the houses of various members of the congregation. The purchase of their farms or homes by many of the Duke's tenants did much to retain the village character. Some time after 1885 Middle Street became known as Middleton Street. The name Old Church Street appears some time between 1885 and 1925, replacing the original name, Church Street.

4.15 In 1892 most of the Parish of Aylestone was incorporated within the Borough of Leicester boundary and in 1898 the Great Central Railway began operations nearby. However, this had little physical effect on the village other than the creation of a high embankment on its western edge that blocked access to, and views across, the river and watermeadows. The Borough Council, somewhat belatedly, had requested a railway station, but the request had not been acted upon. Without a station the village did not attract commuters and so it remained isolated and unaffected by new housing developments of the kind that were springing up beyond its northern boundary where jobs and housing were more easily available.

4.16 In the early part of the 20th century the village's continuing rural quality combined with its accessibility by horse-tram gave rise to its development as a 'pleasure resort' for city people. In 1911 a boating centre was founded on the south bank of the canal off Middleton Street (now part of the Riverside Drive development). A boathouse and tennis courts, and subsequently a ballroom and restaurant, were built to cater for this leisure trade and Aylestone became "known to fame and to visitors by the laudatory notices in guidebooks of the excellent boating to be had there". Another attraction was

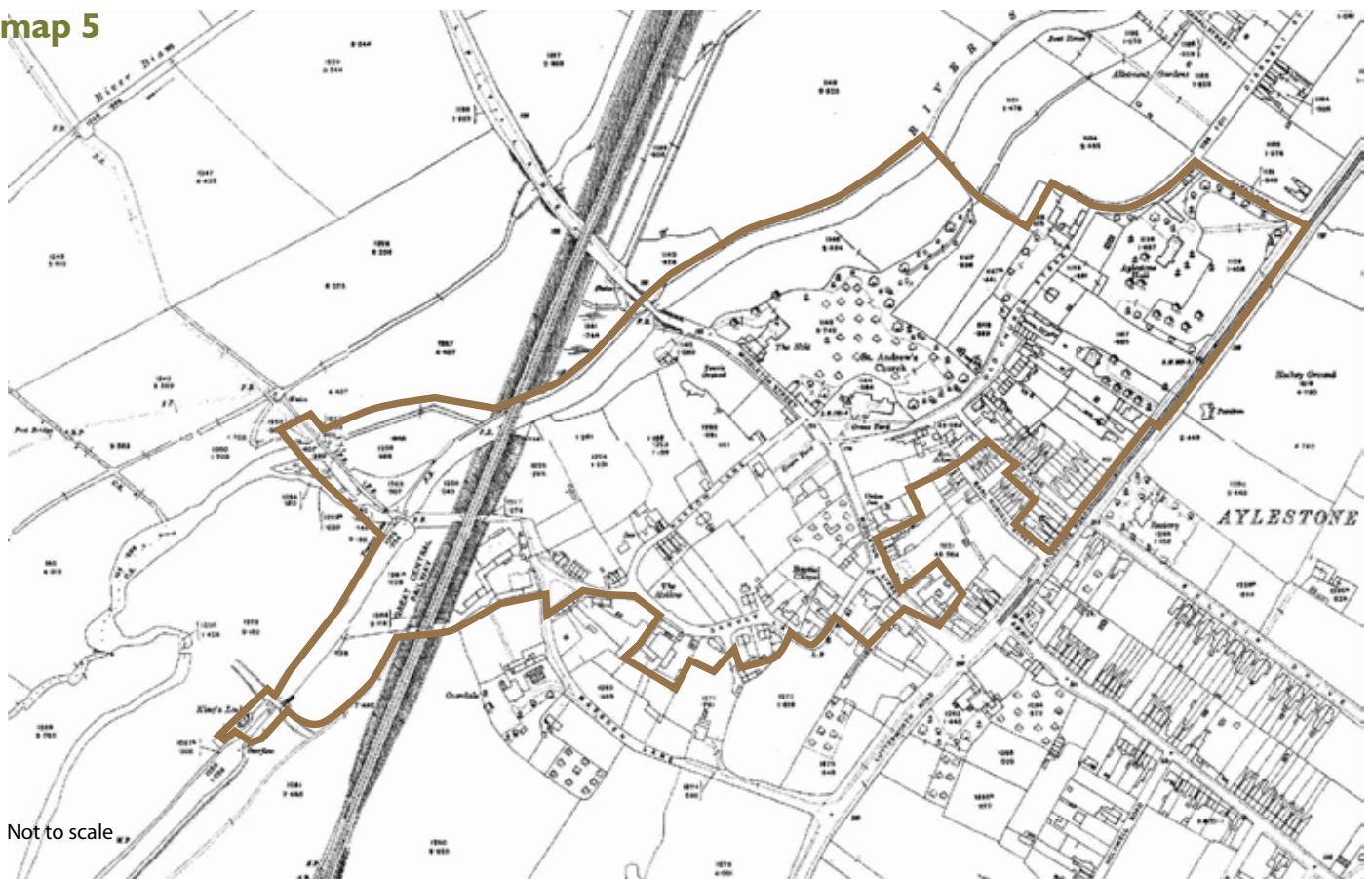


A view of Old Church Street in the 1960s.



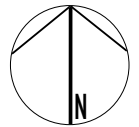
Above and left: Several of the properties in Croft Avenue retain their original attractive windows and doors and applied timber decoration to the gables.

map 5



Not to scale

The Ordnance Survey Map of 1914 & 1916: the existing boundary of the Aylestone Village Conservation Area is shown superimposed. © Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited. All rights reserved. 2009.

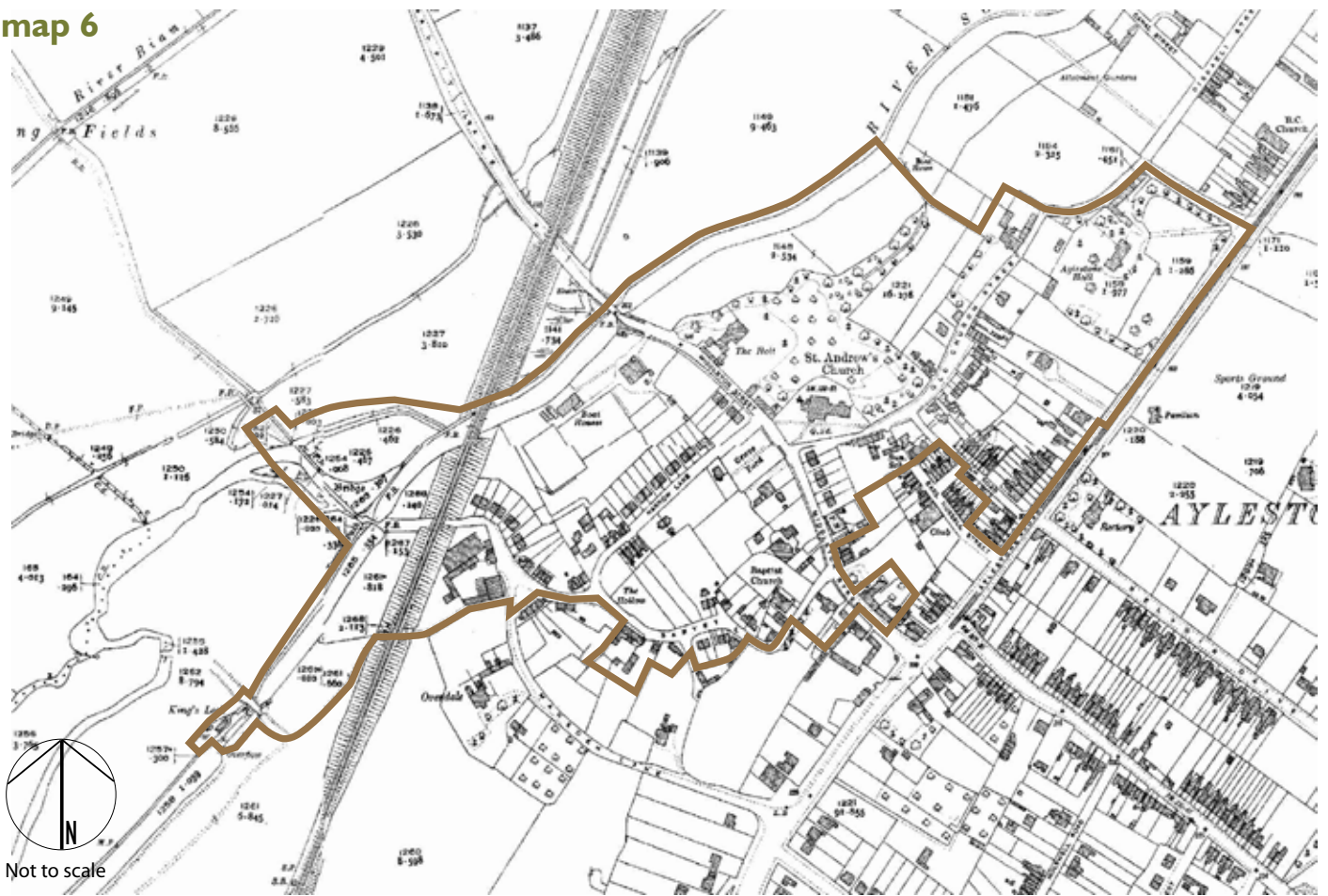


the 'Japanese Pleasure Grounds' between what is now Croft Avenue and the burial ground. Founded by the Rossa ice cream family around the 1920s it survived until 1935. Local people often combined a visit to 'the Japs' with a boating excursion in the summer months.

4.17 The first major changes to the built environment of the conservation area began in earnest in the 1920s, nearly twenty years after the electrified and extended tram system reached Wigston Lane in 1904. A number of new semi-detached houses were built on Narrow Lane, Sanvey Lane and Middleton Street (Map 5). In 1931 Cats Lane became Hall Lane. In 1952 Aylestone Hall and its adjoining gardens were bought by the then Corporation of Leicester and opened to the public in 1954. In the late 1950s, and much to the detriment of village townscape, the houses at 46 to 84 Old Church Street were demolished as part of the city's slum clearance programme, as was a group of small houses at 81-89 Sanvey Lane.

4.18 The next phase of development activity involved the construction of the Meadow Court residential home and a new detached bungalow on Old Church Street in the 1960s. The largest development in the conservation area, however, followed the sale of the former rectory and its garden ('The Holt') in 1967. The vicarage, which had been used as flats since the 1920s, was demolished in 1968 and the site redeveloped a secure gated housing development for Freemen of Leicester. A small plot had been set aside for a new vicarage which was built in 1973.

map 6



The Ordnance Survey Map of 1930: the existing boundary of the Aylestone Village Conservation Area is shown superimposed. © Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited. All rights reserved. 2009.

4.19 At around this time there were also a series of controversial proposals for the garden and house at 21 Old Church Street ('The Lawn') which were finally resolved by the construction of the houses now numbered 21a to 21d and the restoration of number 21 itself. It was as a response to the impact that such changes were making, and could further make, on the sensitive environment of Aylestone village that the Council designated the Aylestone Village Conservation Area in February 1975.

4.20 Further small pieces of infill development followed at Narrow Lane and Sanvey Lane, before the redevelopment in the 1980s of the Aylestone boathouse site created the Riverside Drive estate. The construction of new houses in the 1990s on the small industrial site at the junction of Narrow Lane and Sanvey Lane and a new house off Narrow Lane are the most recent changes in the conservation area.

Prevailing and former uses

4.21 The sale of the Aylestone estate in the mid-19th century began the changes that turned the conservation area from an agricultural settlement into a residential suburb by the middle 20th century. Before then, the village had been entirely rural with at least four working farms in the 19th century - The Hollow (now Village) Farm on Sanvey Lane, the cottages now known as 60-62 Sanvey Lane, 21 Old Church Street (a 18th century glebe farmhouse) and 12 Middleton Street (now a car sales business). Only the first-named of these now survives as an agricultural holding.



The delightful well kept gardens surrounding Aylestone Hall.

4.22 Industry has played only a small part in the life of the village other than such farming-related businesses as blacksmithing. There may have been a number of framework knitters in the 19th century although by 1878 there were few remaining. By the end of the 19th century the village was described as having few farmers, the inhabitants being mostly businessmen and that “consequently several of the ordinary features of village life are wanting here”. Today the conservation area has only one industrial property, the leather products firm on Narrow Lane.

4.23 The village shopping centre was originally located around The Hollow on Sanvey Lane with a few shops scattered on Middleton Street and Old Church Street. However, with the coming of the trams to Wigston Lane, Aylestone Road took on the local centre role around 1911. The former village shops have been replaced by, or converted to, housing as have the pleasure grounds of Aylestone Boathouse and the Japanese Gardens (although remnants of the latter’s water features are still to be seen in the back garden of a house on Middleton Street).



Aylestone Hall from the north east.

4.24 Elsewhere, the church glebe lands and most of the former rectory gardens to the north and west of the church have been redeveloped for housing (with some ancillary informal private open space and allotments). The original rectory, following its use as flats from the 1920s until its demolition in 1967, has been replaced with a modern house on Old Church Street. There has also been a quite substantial provision of accommodation for elderly people in the northern half of the conservation area (Freemen's Holt and Meadow Court). The canal, river and former railway line are now part of the Riverside Park (which was created in 1974) and is 'a unique urban development, combining ecological, historical and recreational interests'.



A general view looking south along Old Church Street with on the right, 'The Lawns', a restored 18th century Glebe Farmhouse.

Architectural character and key unlisted buildings

Map 7 provides a comprehensive assessment of all the buildings in the conservation area and the contribution that they make to the character and appearance of the area. Some of those that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area are highlighted below.

Townscape and character areas

4.25 The unique character of conservation areas is largely a product of the quality of their townscapes – good townscape can make an area interesting or pleasant to visit, bad townscape can be unsightly or confusing, making a visitor feel exposed, uncomfortable or vulnerable. Different townscapes are made up of different elements, and it is the combination of these elements - landform, buildings, architectural styles, building materials, streets and spaces - that create the individuality and character of each area, their particular 'sense of place'. For the visitor, each will have its own series of views, changes in level, visual contrasts, textures, rhythms and patterns that set it apart from its surroundings. Townscape can also provide a sense of an area's age and history or create feelings of safety and comfort. The presence of buildings or sites that ignore the design or architectural quality of their surroundings can damage or disrupt townscape, making it less attractive to the people who use it.



Old Church Street has several original cottages including this delightful well-maintained property at number 23.

4.26 The Aylestone Village conservation area has a varied townscape and can be separated into five main 'character areas', each centred around one of the area's streets



Number 90 Old Church Street is listed Grade II.

- Old Church Street, Middleton Street, Riverside Drive, Narrow Lane, and Sarvey Lane/Marsden Lane. A sixth 'character area' is made by the public open spaces that form the western boundaries of the conservation area. Generally the character is one of low density, suburban development with most buildings set behind small front gardens on narrow winding streets.

4.27 Old Church Street is the core of the original village, having grown up around the church. Here are to be found the area's oldest buildings, St Andrew's Church, 21, 23 and 90 Old Church Street and Aylestone Hall. It has a quiet, almost rural, feeling, enhanced by the mature trees that soften the built form and give seasonal interest. The built form is one of two storey houses, generally in red brick, strung out along a gently curving street. Tall chimneys add interest to the skyline. Building density is low, giving a fairly 'open' feel to the area. Some original garden walls remain to enclose and define the boundaries between the public and the private spaces. The high boundary wall to Aylestone Hall Gardens is an important physical and visual edge, enclosing the gardens, the Hall and its stables but offering glimpses of them through trees, gateways and railings. The articulation of the wall, and the blind arch, narrow buttresses and corbelled brick eaves that decorate it, create more visual interest. The trees in Aylestone Hall gardens form a strong green edge to the northern boundary of the conservation area. More mature trees and a sharp curve at the north end of the street 'stop' views northwards while the spire and churchyard of St Andrew's church are important landmarks at the southern end.

4.28 The Meadow Court care home is an intrusive element in the streetscape. At a point where buildings once enclosed the view northwards (see Map 5) this building

20



Decorative arched entrance to Aylestone Hall Gardens.

has been set back on its site, opening up the space and destroying the sense of enclosure created by the original houses. It is a large building compared to its neighbours and its light buff brick introduces a discordant element into the village colour theme of red brick. The potential for the development to add value to the townscape by addressing its historic context was missed when the home was built in the early 1960s. On the opposite side of the road lies the Freeman's Holt development. Its mature trees add considerably to the quality of the townscape but it is a 'gated community' and therefore closed off to the general public. This 'separateness' is confirmed both physically and visually by its large locked gates. At the north end of Old Church Street new houses are set back from the road behind the mature trees that line the west side of the street, thus minimising their impact and reducing their apparent scale.



Middleton Street with the Union Inn and the spire of St. Andrew's Church just visible to the left of the picture.

4.29 The townscape quality of the southern part of the conservation area is not of the same merit as that of Old Church Street. It is cut off from the rest of the village by Middleton Street. This very busy road is part of the city's main outer circle route but is also an important feature of Aylestone's character and history. Although somewhat softened by the street trees in Croft Avenue, it is a harsh environment which does not encourage the visitor to linger and effectively splits the conservation area in half. The buildings that line either side of the road are built above the level of the highway and this slight elevation helps to create a quite strong sense of enclosure. This is enhanced by views of sloping gardens and privet hedges rising above garden walls and by the sharp turn to the left at the canal bridge that stops the view beyond. With a scattering of late 19th century headstones and a variety of mature trees, the small open space of the burial ground complements the well-treed churchyard and provides a quiet green oasis where the traffic noise of Middleton Street appears muted. These trees soften the otherwise hard urban environment around them, adding a sense of enclosure and emphasizing the changing ground levels as the visitor approaches the low lying river flood plain. Middleton Street also has subtle changes of width and direction creating a series of 'open' or 'closed' views. The most important features are the churchyard, with its trees and headstones, the old burial ground opposite, enclosed by granite walls, and the bays and gables of the Union Inn.



The Black Horse public house 63-65 Narrow Lane.

4.30 Riverside Drive occupies the former site of the Aylestone Boathouse and other buildings associated with the early twentieth century leisure trade. It is a residential development from the mid-1980s that provides a pleasant living environment. With

no historical development on the site to provide a reference for the architecture, its appearance is therefore suburban and unremarkable. However, its open plan layout creates a quiet green enclave beside the river and the sinuous form of its access road echoes the winding routes of the village's oldest streets.

4.31 Narrow Lane has existed since before 1869 (Map 3) and probably for many years before that, so it has an important link to village history. The plan that accompanied the 1869 land sale shows a 'glebe' (church-owned farmland) on its north side so the road could have originally been a farm track and boundary mark. Most of its buildings date from the twentieth century and are a mix of inter-war semis, a few Edwardian terraced houses, a Victorian pub, a 1930s factory and a group of modern flat-roofed terraced homes. Towards the north end there is little 'sense of place' or visual stimulation, but the view of the church set behind its trees and the prominent tall black pine in the burial ground rising above the houses at numbers 2-12 Narrow Lane, are noteworthy.

4.32 Sanvey Lane/Marsden Lane. Sanvey Lane is a narrow winding street, most of whose buildings date from the twentieth century. The ground rises quite sharply from west to east where there is a series of tight bends leading towards Middleton Street. These bends serve to frame and enclose views of some of the most interesting buildings in this part of the conservation area, such as 60-62 and 27-31 Sanvey Lane. The house at 25 Sanvey Lane is an important corner around which this interesting townscape pivots. At the western end Sanvey Lane becomes Marsden Lane, and views open up to street trees and the original farm buildings and farmyard of the Village Farm. Views further west are terminated by the high embankment of the Great Central Way, a dominant feature of the townscape at this point. The onward route of Marsden Lane is obscured by the sharp bend in the road and this creates a sense of surprise as the tunnel under the embankment is revealed to the visitor as well as contrasts between open and enclosed spaces, light and dark, urban and rural. The trees opposite 81-89 Marsden Lane are of particular townscape importance.

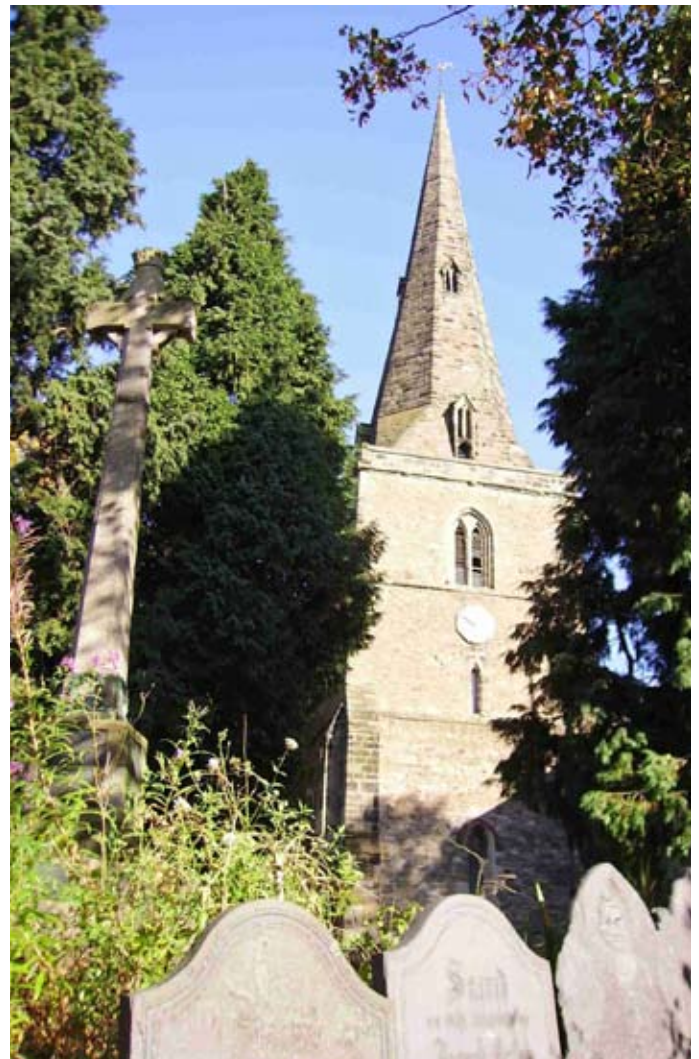
4.33 The sixth character area comprises the high green embankments of the old Great Central Railway, now part of the extensive linear park, the Great Central Way, and the wide watermeadows of the Riverside Park. The former provides a safe, green environment for pedestrians, cyclists and leisure use, while the latter offers much wildlife interest and nature trails. Both areas are actively managed as public open space by the Council.

Architectural character and key buildings

4.34 The majority of the architecturally important buildings in the conservation area are to be found north of Middleton Street. The most important one in terms of history, architecture and townscape value is **St Andrews Church**. This



The corner property at 25 Sanvey Lane.



The 13th century tower and broach spire to St. Andrew's Church.

small limestone Grade II listed building dates from at least the 13th century, with additions and alterations of the 14th and 15th centuries. Its east-west alignment places it at an angle to Old Church Street, opening up attractive views of the tracery in its large east window. The 13th century tower is surmounted by a broach spire rising above, but complemented by, the softer form of the trees that line the edges of the churchyard. The churchyard has been cleared of its slate gravestones, most of which have been re-sited along the north boundary and the churchyard paths, but their designs and inscriptions are of historic interest. The church is one of only two stone buildings in the conservation area and has historic associations with the other, nearby Aylestone Hall. It is the architectural highlight of the village and its paths provide a convenient pedestrian route to the crossing on Middleton Street. At the southwest corner of the churchyard there is a small war memorial.

4.35 **Aylestone Hall** (Grade II*) lies at the northern end of the conservation area but is hidden behind trees and high brick boundary walls. It is the most important, and the most substantial, building in the conservation area and remains a very important feature of the Gardens. Much of its timber-framed and panelled interiors remain, although now lost to public view since the building was converted into three private dwellings. As a result of that conversion, the Hall has also been separated from its original grounds by an evergreen laurel hedge. On its north side are the old stables set around two sides of a yard. The pointed arched windows and doors, cast iron ventilation grills and an ornate vent pipe on the north elevation are of particular note.

4.36 Another old building of note is the former curate's house at **90 Old Church Street**. Sited at the narrowest part of the street behind a very narrow front yard, it is an important visual 'stop' to views westwards along the street. The house is one of the most



'The White House' 88 Old Church Street



'Vine Cottage', 23 Old Church Street, is unique within the conservation area in having a red pantile roof.

interesting surviving houses of the old village and is of historic value, being Grade II listed. It dates from the 18th century (as evidenced by timber framing at its western end) and its former close relationship with the church is an important part of its history. It was extended eastwards and refaced in brick in 1723, a date marked in blue brick on the front elevation. It has small widely-spaced casement windows on the street frontage with glazing bars and shutters, a steeply pitched slate roof and a red brick façade with a dentil eaves course. The doorcase is simply moulded with a rectangular fanlight above.



Part of the Parish Church Hall in Church Road.

4.37 Although its brickwork has been painted, the neatly detailed brick stringcourses and eaves cornices of the nearby former school-house, 'The White House' at **88 Old Church Street**, can be seen against the small Victorian brick gable and porch of what is now the **Parish Church Hall** in **Church Road**. This was originally the village school, built in 1844, and the continuing relationship between these two buildings is therefore of some historic significance. Just beyond the parish hall is a small group of late Victorian terraced houses at **1-15 and 2-4 Church Road**. Although only two houses retain their original windows they all nevertheless contribute to the architectural and historic character of the area.

4.38 Further north there are several 19th century cottages. The first group, at **27-29 Old Church Street**, is built in Flemish Bond with moulded brick Tudor-style hood moulds to the first floor windows, corbelled eaves and tall chimneys. The slate roofed brick porch at number 27 has a finely detailed gable to the street while the porch at number 29, extended in the 19th century to create a small shop, still retains its Victorian shopfront surround and blind box. Fifty metres northwards is **23 Old Church Street**, also known as Vine Cottage. Originally much smaller, evidence of its extension on the north side can be seen in the unmatched brickwork in the centre of the front facade, the larger windows on the right and the change in roof pitch. The ground floor left-hand window has also been enlarged but generally glazing bars have been retained, adding much to the character of the building. The shutters are a modern addition although there is evidence of shutters on the ground floor window in earlier photographs. Uniquely in the conservation area it is roofed in red pantiles.



Number 29 Old Church Street was extended in the 19th century to form a small shop.



Doorcase and rectangular fanlight to 90 Old Church Street.



The former factory premises at 71 Narrow Lane has a curved façade; the original metal casement window frames still survive intact and are important architectural features to this pleasing building.

4.39 On the other side of the road **40-42 Old Church Street** is a symmetrical pair of mid-Victorian houses with projecting gables, simply ornamented bargeboards and segmental brick window arches with stone keystones and terminal voussoirs. The importance of these architectural details to the street scene and the conservation area is recognised by the Article 4 Direction on the properties that prevents any alterations being made without planning permission. A short distance beyond is the gable of the former glebe farmhouse at **21 Old Church Street**. Projecting forward of its 20th century neighbour, this large structure, broken only by two small windows and two tall chimneys, is nevertheless an important architectural statement at the entrance to the conservation area.

4.40 The rest of the buildings are of little architectural merit, being either 20th century infill on former garden plots or, in the case of the late 1960s Freeman's Holt bungalow development, in the extensive grounds of the former St Andrew's vicarage. Most are hidden behind boundary walls and trees, particularly the latter which contributes little to the architectural quality of the area but does offer intriguing views into the well-kept grounds through its gates and boundary railings. The design of the semi-detached house at 38 Old Church Street attempts to echo its Victorian neighbour using gables with bargeboards and shallow segmental arches over the windows but is not carried out with any conviction or real understanding of its sources.

4.41 The modern houses at 21a-21d Old Church Street are perhaps more honest in that their design is unashamedly 1970s, although the use of pale buff bricks is perhaps less than appropriate. The building that detracts most from the quality of Old Church Street is the Meadow Court development. Its prominent position at the centre of Old Church



This pair of cottages at 27-29 Sanvey Lane incorporates some fine blue brick hood moulds above the window and the windows and sills.

Street makes it visible from all points. It has been designed with no references to the historic or architectural character of the village and makes no attempt to address the curve of the street at this point. The vacant site to its north is another element that detracts from the character of the conservation area. About 80m to the west the access roads into the parish hall site behind 90 Old Church Street expose unsightly brick and concrete extensions set at the back of a graveled yard area.



4.42 The terrace at **38-46 Narrow Lane**, although substantially altered, stands forward of the other properties on the south side of the lane and, with The Black Horse opposite, creates an interesting 'pinch point' at the entrance to the lane. The curved frontage of the factory at **71 Narrow Lane** with its double horizontal lines of metal windows sweeps the eye into the lane from the south. The **Black Horse at 63-65 Narrow Lane** is a very plain building but it retains its large regularly spaced windows; its gable end that emphasises the narrowness of the lane at this point.

These houses at 60-62 Sanvey Lane were originally used as Powdrill's Farmhouse; one of the four farms in the village that would have given employment to local people.



A detail of the old barn to Aylestone Farm, Sanvey Lane.

4.43 Middleton Street is an important feature of the conservation area, helping to create its character and forming an integral part of its development and history. The **Old Aylestone Social Club** at the south end, although badly altered, nevertheless retains some interesting Italianate architectural details and brickwork. The **Union Inn, 27 Middleton Street** probably dates from some time around the turn of the 20th century and its paired gables, false timber-framing and regularly spaced sash windows add much to the visual quality of the street. The former farmhouse at **12 Middleton Street**, now much altered, retains its early 19th century doorcase and canopy and is an important part of the village's history.

4.44 South of Middleton Street there are few buildings of architectural interest, and of those, most have been altered by the installation of plastic windows. However, the former **Baptist Chapel** (1871) adjacent to **21 Sanvey Lane** is still virtually as built. It is designed in a simple 'Gothic' style with two small red brick gables on the street frontage. A large window with simplified Decorated-style tracery breaks the street façade and the entrance porch to the right interprets the Early English style with a pointed arch which is repeated in the small lancet window to its left. Topped by wrought iron and terracotta gable finials, a Welsh slate roof, red clay ridge tiles and stone detailing in stringcourse and eaves, this little building is an important architectural feature of the area.

4.45 A small early 19th century house, **25 Sanvey Lane**, sits on the corner opposite Logan Avenue. Its angled brick façade has been painted but a wide stone stringcourse is still visible and the corbelled eaves brackets have been picked out in black. Immediately to the west is **27-29 Sanvey Lane**.

This pair of semi-detached cottages is built in Flemish bond with blue brick sills and hood moulds to the ground floor windows and door, blue brick window sills with flat arches above the first floor windows and three tall symmetrically placed and corbelled chimneys. The Welsh slate roofs project over a dentil patterned eaves course, a decorative feature which is repeated around the end

gables. The lack of proper glazing bars at number 29 is regrettable. The neighbouring house at **31-33 Sanvey Lane** is built in the same style but much of the detailing is lost under the painted facades.



A winter scene showing the flooded meadows at Packhorse Bridge taken c1960s.

4.46 The house at **40 Sanvey Lane** is a simple late Victorian building but, being built on an awkward corner plot, it adds interest to the street scene in its use of articulated facades and gables. Further downhill is the former farmhouse of Powdrill's Farm, now two houses, **60-62 Sanvey Lane**. Of a plain design they have some interesting details such as small symmetrically arranged windows and a corbelled eaves course. They make an important contribution to the area's architectural and social history.

4.47 At the end of Sanvey Lane lies **Aylestone Farm**, one of the original four farms that would have employed most of the villagers before the Industrial Revolution. Many of its original buildings still stand and form the three sides of the farm yard. Beyond the railway is the **Packhorse Bridge**, a Grade II* listed granite structure dating from at least the 15th century.

4.48 The terraced houses at **Church Road** date from the 1880s and although all but numbers 2 and 4 have lost their original windows and doors much of their other Victorian detailing can still be seen. Set along a very narrow street the stone window heads and bands at first floor level, the decorative brick eaves courses and the continuous canopy linking the ground floor bays and doors at numbers 3-15 create interesting townscape. The facades of numbers 2 and 4 are intact. The villas at **705-717 Aylestone Road** are an interesting contrast in scale and design. Their most prominent features are the stone built double height bay windows surmounted by big dormers with curved Dutch-style gables, and the segmental arch details over the ground floor windows and paired

doors. Here also, regrettably, original windows have been largely replaced with modern plastic and some roofs have been re-laid with concrete tiles.

4.49 The rest of the conservation area is made up of a mix of inter-war semis and more recent housing of varying but ordinary designs, none of which is of particular architectural or historic interest.

Building materials and the public realm

Building materials

Clay

4.50 Clay as a building material is most commonly seen as brick. Local red brick is the predominant building material in the conservation area, although more modern colours have been introduced – such as pale red and buff. Many properties have brick boundary walls, sometimes topped with railings or timber fences. Visual texture has been introduced by laying brick façades with pale headers and contrasting dark stretchers to create a checkered pattern (27-29 Sanvey Lane and 27-29 Old Church Street). Buildings from the 20th century introduce other clay-based materials such as tiles hung vertically for decorative purposes (tile-hanging). At the vicarage on Old Church Street they are green while the more traditional red is used on the modern terrace on Narrow Lane. Red pantiles are an unusual feature of the roof at 23 Old Church Street. A few blue bricks have been used as decoration (such as the date on the east wing of 90 Old Church Street and the hoodmoulds and window heads at 27-29 Sanvey Lane) but their most robust appearance is as blue engineering bricks for the bridge carrying the old railway over the footpath to the water meadows.

Stone

4.51 St Andrew's Church is the only stone building in the conservation area where local limestone is laid in a random rubble pattern with smooth ashlar buttresses and window tracery. The Packhorse Bridge is another stone structure, but it is built of granite, a material that also appears along Old Church Street as boundary walls around the churchyard and the Middleton Street burial ground and at 21-21d Old Church Street (where the wall has been reduced in size and capped with courses of red brick). It is also commonly used throughout the conservation area, as it is across the whole of the city, as kerb stones. Limestone can be seen as stone slates on the roof of 21 Old Church Street and as pier caps carved in the Gothic style on either side of the entrance to the burial ground. Another form of stone is the Welsh slates that are common on many of the older buildings in the conservation area. Stone is also



A section of the original high red brick wall, Middleton Street, that originally formed part of the boundary to the Rectory Gardens.



Carved figure of St. Andrew to gable above the south porch of St. Andrew's Church.

used for gravestones, many of which are of slate and have been re-sited to line the paths around the churchyard. There are a few carved limestone headstones in the burial ground. A few houses use limestone for decoration, notably the stone lintels and band on the façades of 32-40 Narrow Lane.

Timber

4.52 The use of timber tends to be confined to windows, doors and boundary fences, although plastic has replaced many of the timber windows and doors in the conservation area. The most attractive examples of timber are to be found at the Aylestone Hall stable block where the original windows and doors are designed with simple pointed arches and the timber windows at the church hall appear intact. There are one or two bargeboards but these tend not to be prominent features. There are, however, many timber fences – close-boarded, picket etc – not all in good condition.

Metal

4.53 Metal, which is not a common material in the conservation area, tends to be used to define boundaries. Around Aylestone Hall Gardens there are modern mild steel railings along the Hall Lane frontage, with steel bow-topped railings along Old Church Street. Bow topped railings have also been used along the frontages of the recent housing development at 49-59 Sanvey Lane. The Hall's stables have some cast iron features such as ventilation grilles and a very decorative vent pipe in the Hall Lane elevation. Some wrought iron is left at the churchyard in the form of a decorative gate and gateposts, the design being repeated on Church Road around the Church Hall. Several houses have modern fancy wrought iron gates or boundary fences. Mild steel railings and gates form the boundary of Freeman's Holt with Old Church Street. The girder railway bridge is the largest example of the use of steel in the conservation area.

Stucco/render

4.54 Aylestone Hall is the more obvious use of render in the conservation area. It was first applied in the mid-19th century and is decorated in a very dull grey colour which does little to enhance either the building or its surroundings. Elsewhere, render is used sparingly as decoration, usually on mid 20th century houses.

Others

4.55 In several cases façades have been painted, obscuring the original brickwork and removing colour from the environment. There are some red or grey concrete roof tiles and a large number of domestic timber windows and doors have been replaced with plastic.



Detail of the stone carving to the War Memorial, St. Andrew's churchyard.



Gothic-style windows to the former stable-block at Aylestone Hall.

The public realm

4.56 Street lighting in the conservation area is of the city's standard type - modern steel columns with high pressure lanterns. There are also several telegraph poles and their associated overhead wiring in various locations.

4.57 Roads and footpaths are generally black tarmac and most kerbs are concrete although, on Old Church Street particularly, the original red granite kerbs remain. The two short concrete bollards that have been installed in the pavement at the entrance to Freemans' Holt are of an inappropriate material and scale. The fibreglass litterbin at the north end of Narrow Lane does little to enhance the quality of the conservation area and is poorly sited in relation to the adjoining blue brick planter. The planter, the cast iron bollards and the line of granite setts are, however, more valuable in the street scene. The planted area at the junction of Riverside Drive and Middleton Street is set behind a low timber railing.

Greenery and green spaces

4.58 Greenery and green spaces are important features of the conservation area. Their presence adds visual texture and seasonal colour and helps to create the 'rural' quality to the environment. They provide space for wildlife and offer different opportunities for recreation. Greenery, in the form of trees and domestic gardens, is one element of the green landscape; the other is the area's parkland – both formal and informal. The northern part of the conservation area has the greater number of trees and open spaces, while the character of the southern part depends for the most part on private gardens, the high green edge formed by the embankment of the Great Central Way and the Riverside Park.

Greenery

4.59 The conservation area supports a highly diverse tree population. The well kept gardens around Aylestone Hall contain a collection of fine, mature specimen trees, both broad leaf and coniferous, which are accessible for the public to enjoy. The spacious grounds of Freeman's Holt also support fine large trees but these are seen over high walls and behind buildings. There are some traditional yews in the churchyard as well as mature



Mature trees and planting to St. Andrew's churchyard provide an additional area of greenspace within the conservation area.



Old granite setts combined with original blue paviors provide texture and character to Old Church Street and other areas of the public realm within the conservation area.

limes, although the cypresses are not an appropriate species for this location. The 'village' feel of the conservation area on Old Church Street is enhanced by the presence of mature oaks, horse chestnuts and limes while along the canal and the embankments of the Great Central Way can be found willows, ash and hawthorns that provide valuable wildlife habitat. Field boundaries beyond the canal are defined by hedges.

4.60 The domestic gardens of Aylestone are generally well-maintained and contribute significantly to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Most houses still have their front gardens intact and their flowers and shrubs provide seasonal interest and colour for residents and passers-by alike. They add to the 'green' feel of the area and are havens for wildlife. Garden walls and fences are important 'edges' that help to define the boundaries between the 'private' and the 'public' domains. Where they have been removed, for example to provide car parking space, this edge is weakened or lost to the detriment of both the visual environment and to the sense of enclosure to which they would previously have contributed.

4.61 There are some fine mature trees in front gardens, such as the horse chestnuts, limes and sycamore at 21 a-c Old Church Street and two mature walnuts at The Firs Social Club on Aylestone Road, while well tended front gardens such as that at 28 Middleton Street add magnolia, cherry and birch to the diverse tree cover of the conservation area.

Green spaces

4.61 Aylestone Hall Gardens is laid out in a semi-formal manner with large grassed areas that are interspersed with flower beds and feature borders, winding paths, a bowling green and tennis courts. There are some fine mature trees, including a Blue Atlas cedar, black pines (a particular feature of the Hall Lane boundary), limes, magnolia and ginkgo. A tall laurel hedge now separates the new private homes in Aylestone Hall from the rest of the gardens, which are themselves surrounded by tall brick walls and modern black-painted steel railings. The Gardens are a highly valued local green space.

4.62 At Freemans' Holt there are allotments and informal tree-shaded grounds along the riverside. There are many fine trees within the site and each small bungalow also has its own private courtyard. A mature oak and two limes on the Old Church Street frontage make the greatest impact on the street scene and contribute significantly to the 'green' aspect of this part of the conservation area. The trees within the grounds of the Holt are an important backdrop to the conservation area. Close by, the churchyard and graveyard both provide additional green space, the former now laid largely to grass following the relocation of the 18th century slate gravestones to the edges of the paths. However, mature trees line the boundaries, adding much to the green character of this part of the conservation area, screening and framing the church and softening the otherwise harsh environment of Middleton Street. The street trees in Croft Avenue are also very valuable, for the same reason.



Granite boundary wall to St. Andrew's churchyard

4.63 The south end of the conservation area benefits from the proximity of the Riverside Park and the Great Central Way. These informal 'countryside' spaces have watermeadows, canalside walks and direct pedestrian and cycle access down the old railway line into the heart of the city. These parks are maintained by the Council as public open space but are managed to maintain a wide biodiversity.

Negative factors

4.64 The greatest loss of character in the conservation area is on Old Church Street. The massing, design and layout of the elderly persons' home at Meadow Court makes no concessions to the street, to neighbouring buildings or to the character of the original development on the site. In particular, the sense of enclosure created by the layout of the original houses relative to the street has not been recreated, to the detriment of the townscape. In addition the loss of the triangle of green space in front of it has increased the perceived width of the street and created an unsightly car park. The recent addition of a front boundary wall with railings has improved its relationship with the street but the railings could be more robust. The vacant plot between Meadow Court and 44 Old Church Street is somewhat of an eyesore.



The recently introduced herd of native Longhorn cows are helping to manage the flood meadows with their unique range of wildflowers and other species.



King's Lock and cottage takes its name from George King who was lock keeper from 1900 to 1922.

4.65 There are very few original buildings in the village that retain their original windows. Most have been replaced in white or timber-effect uPVC and, while some styles include mock glazing bars, none successfully reproduce the original forms, to the detriment of the buildings concerned. Here and there brickwork has been painted and this has not only obscured the texture and colour of the natural brick surfaces but also added to owners' maintenance liabilities. In some cases alterations to the elevations of late 18th/early 19th century cottages have changed their appearance to such an extent that evidence of their age has been completely lost (for example the large windows and mock bays at 35-37 Sanvey Lane).

4.66 Traffic also has a negative effect on the character of the conservation area with Middleton Street carrying high volumes, particularly at peak times. Non-essential vehicles also use Old Church Street and Sanvey Lane as a 'rat-run' to avoid the Aylestone Road/Middleton Street traffic light-controlled junction, detracting from the rural quality of these areas.

Problems and pressures

4.67 The conservation area, being almost fully developed, is under minimal pressure for development. Important open spaces are already well maintained and developed and there is very little vacant land suitable for development. The majority of the houses are modern and extensions or alterations (such as plastic windows) have little impact on their architectural quality and character. The vacant site adjacent to Meadow Court on Old Church Street is, however, unsightly and detrimental to the appearance of the conservation area.

4.68 There is a demand for solutions to the problems caused by 'rat-running' and the condition of the steel girder bridge that carries the Great Central Way over the canal is also a cause of some concern.



This view of the Riverside Park near to Packhorse Bridge has a rural appearance despite being only a short walk from the centre of the village.

Capacity for change

4.69 Other than the vacant plot on Old Church Street, there are no sites awaiting, or requiring, redevelopment. There are currently no major development pressures in the area other than proposed extensions to the Meadow Court home which have generated a number of objections. The resolution of the traffic problems in the area would, however, improve the character of the conservation area.

5.0 Community involvement

5.1 There was no accessible local venue where an unsupervised exhibition could be left for a two week consultation and the exhibition was therefore displayed in the Aylestone Library about 1.4km (¾ mile) from the conservation area between the 12th November and the 18th January. All residents and businesses in the conservation area were informed individually by letter of the venue and dates. Copies of the appraisal document and Comments Forms were made available at the exhibition. A drop-in session was held in the church hall on Church Road on November 29th to discuss the draft management and enhancement proposals, although other planning issues were also raised by the 30 visitors. The draft appraisal was placed on the Council's consultation website from November 12th to January 18th. All comments received are included at Appendix 4 below, together with the Council's responses to them.

6.0 Conservation Area boundary

6.1 The Council has reviewed the boundaries of the conservation area. Most of the suggestions put forward by local people have been accepted as shown below. The proposed amendments are as follows :

Proposed amendment	Justification
Include 58 and 60-62 Sanvey Lane	The bungalow at no.58 is vacant and any redevelopment would have an impact on the appearance of the conservation area at this point. The houses at 60-62 are what is left of one of the original village farms and, although altered, are therefore important to the history and architecture of old Aylestone. They make an important contribution to the townscape value of the street.
Include 2-4 and 1-15 Church Road	These are high quality terraced houses dating from the 1880s. They make a positive contribution to the character of the area and date from the when the village began to change following its sale in 1869.
Include 1, 27-39, 12 Middleton Street, 1 Sanvey Lane, 1-8 Croft Avenue	Middleton Street has been associated with the village for centuries and numbers 1, 12 and 27 are of some architectural and historic interest. They have been included for that reason. However, to make the boundary more logical at this point the houses on Croft Avenue have also been included as they also add to the character of the village and help create Middleton Street's particular 'sense of place'.
Include Meadow Court, Old Church Street and 691-727 Aylestone Road	The inclusion of the shopping centre was suggested by several local people. Following investigation the Council proposes to include only those buildings that link Church Road with Aylestone Hall Gardens. These are mostly contemporary with the small Church Road terraces that the Council also propose to include in the conservation area. They are of some architectural and historic interest and it would therefore be logical to include them. Although the four early 20th century detached houses at 691-703 are not of great architectural merits they, and the Meadow Court complex, are included to make the boundary more logical.

6.2 The proposed new boundary is shown on Map 2.

7.0 Management and enhancement proposals

7.1 The City of Leicester Local Plan contains policies specific to the preservation of the historic environment (see Appendix 3). Most importantly, there is a general presumption against the demolition of buildings in conservation areas. However, the Council also has a duty 'to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area that are conservation areas [s.71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990] and to submit such proposals 'for consideration to a public meeting in the area to which they relate' [s.71(2)].

7.2 The management and enhancement proposals set out in Appendix 5 are based on the appraisal of the conservation area as set out above and will be a specific matter for consultation with local residents, business people, visitors and other interested parties. Where considered reasonable or appropriate any suggestions for future management and enhancement resulting from these consultations will be incorporated in the final report.

8.0 Contacts and appendices

8.1 For further information on this, or any other conservation area or listed building, you can contact the Council's conservation officers as follows :

- Conservation & Nature Team, Planning Policy & Design, Regeneration & Culture, Leicester City Council, New Walk Centre, Welford Place, Leicester, LE1 6ZG;
- Phone Leicester 2527281
- Fax Leicester 2471149
- e-mail conservation@leicester.gov.uk
- On the Council's website at [www.leicester.gov.uk/conservation areas](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/conservation%20areas)

Appendix I : List of buildings in the conservation area

Aylestone Road	Aylestone Hall, 689-727 (odd)
Church Road	Aylestone Parish Church Hall, 2-4 (even), 1-15 (odd)
Croft Avenue	1-8 (incl)
Earl Russell Street	1
Hall Lane	Aylestone Hall stables
Marsden Lane	Aylestone Village Farm, 81-95
Middleton Street	12, 20-26 (even), 26a, 28, burial ground, 30-36 (even), 1 (Old Aylestone Social Club), 27 (Union Inn), 29-39 (odd)
Narrow Lane	2-12 (even), 12a, 16 (The Crofters), 26-30 (even), 38-46 (even), 37-59, 63-65 (Black Horse PH), 71, 75
Old Church Street	38-44, Meadow Court Care Home, 86-88, 90, 21, 21a-d, 23-25, 25a-b, 27-29, St Andrew's Church rectory, St Andrew's Church
Riverside Drive	1-30 (incl)
Sanvey Lane	40-48 (even), 52-56, 58, 60-62, 1, the Apostolic Church, 21-59 (odd), 95-109 (odd)
	Article 4 Directions in force
Old Church Street	40, 42

Appendix 2 : List of listed buildings and tree preservation orders in the conservation area

Listed Buildings

Aylestone	Aylestone Old Bridge (Pack horse bridge)	Grade II*
Aylestone Road	Aylestone Hall & stables	Grade II*
Old Church Street	Parish Church of St Andrew	Grade II
Old Church Street	90, St Andrew's Church	Grade II

Tree Preservation Orders

N4.019	21,21b, 21c Old Church Street
N4.073	Middleton Street Boathouse
N4.113	12 Middleton Street
N4.384	The Rectory, Old Church Street
N4.469	Marsden Lane

Appendix 3 Relevant local plan and other policies

Subject	Policy No.	Details
The Plan Strategy	PS01	b) conservation and enhancement of the city's buildings
Built Environment		
Archaeology	BE01	Preservation of the city's archaeological heritage
Listed Buildings	BE02	Alterations & extensions
	BE03	Changes of use
	BE04	Setting
	BE05	Demolition of ...
Conservation Areas	BE06	New development & changes of use in...
	BE07	Demolition in ...
Buildings of local interest	BE08	Impact of development on...
Green Environment		
Nature conservation	GE02	Development and sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
Biodiversity	GE03	Maintaining Biodiversity Enhancement Sites
Protected species	GE04	Development and protected species
Wildlife	GE05	Development and wildlife habitats
Green Wedges	GE06	Protection of Green Wedges
	GE07	Unacceptable land uses in Green Wedges
	GE08	Acceptable land uses in Green Wedges

Appendix 4 : Results of consultations

Issues raised	Council Response
40 visitors to evening meeting	
<p>1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Meadow Court care home – object to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) proposed development on adjacent site including loss of trees (2) existing building (3) proposed extensions (4) lack of off street parking • B Rat-running down Marsden Lane to avoid Aylestone Rd traffic lights, traffic levels on Old Church Street, traffic noise • C New house at rear of Narrow Lane – complaint about lack of notification/out of scale character 	<p>A (1) The site is currently vacant and does not make a positive contribution to the conservation area. Redevelopment is the best option and a planning permission for flats has been granted (ref. 20011275). As the original buildings on the site have been demolished it is considered that development has legally ‘commenced’ in respect of that planning permission, although there has been no further building work. Revocation of this planning permission would be very costly and could not be justified on planning grounds. (2) The care home pre-dates the designation of the conservation area and, although it is of no architectural merit, this does not preclude its inclusion within the conservation area. However, the Council cannot take steps to have the building replaced with one of better design or require the owners to make any improvements to the existing building. (3 & 4) The Conservation Area Panel consider that the first floor extension proposed at the front of the building in the current planning application (ref. 20072242) would help to improve the building’s present appearance on the street side. Negotiations are also under way with the applicant to reduce the scale of the other proposed extensions and to secure more off-street parking.</p> <p>B The rat-running problem has been referred to the appropriate officers in Highways and Traffic with a request that they investigate ways to resolve this problem and/or reduce traffic levels on Old Church Street. The complainants will be informed of their response at a future date.</p> <p>C This issue was not strictly the purpose of the public meeting and is primarily a development control matter. The bungalow has planning permission (Feb 2004) and has been built. The Conservation Area Panel had no objections to the proposal and did not consider that the development would have a serious impact on the conservation area. Neighbour notification was carried out according to standard protocols but Croft Avenue houses appear to have been wrongly addressed so were not notified of the application. Complainants were advised to take the matter up with Planning Management officers and the Planning Ombudsman if appropriate.</p>
18 comments forms – similar issues have been grouped together for convenience	
<p>2</p> <p>Include the Aylestone Road shops in the area (mentioned 4 times)</p>	<p>There are several properties of architectural interest between Earl Russell Street and the current north-west boundary of the conservation area. The boundary will be extended to include these. The shops between Middleton Street and Earl Russell Street, however, are not worthy of inclusion having been considerably altered in the past and being of little architectural merit.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Object to existing Meadow Court residential home, its boiler house extension/bin storage on forecourt/removal of trees on north side/all night lights and all plans to extend it or develop the vacant site on the north side (variously mentioned by 8 respondents)</p>	<p>See 1A (3 & 4) above. The boiler house has planning permission and matches the existing building. Officers are seeking improvements to the bin storage facility to ensure it is screened. The removal of the trees was approved as part of the 2001 planning permission for flats, a permission that has been ‘commenced’ [see 1A(1) above]. The redevelopment of the adjacent vacant site will remove an eyesore and there is an extant planning permission.</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Include Meadow Court in the conservation area (mentioned twice)</p>	<p>This building is of no architectural or historic merit and would not normally warrant inclusion in the conservation area. However, as it is proposed to include the shops and houses on Aylestone Road and the houses on Church Road that abut the care home on its east and south sides it would be logical to include Meadow Court.</p>
<p>5</p> <p>Do not use s.106 contribution from Bloors (Hall Lane flat development) for play equipment in Aylestone Hall Gardens (mentioned 3 times)</p>	<p>These concerns have been passed to, and acknowledged by, the appropriate officers in the Council’s Parks Service who are responsible for allocating of the s.106 contribution from Bloors.</p>

<p>6 Traffic rat-running on Marsden Lane & Old Church Street, speeds, volume and illegal manoeuvring are all a problem. Need a 20 mph zone/one way system in area; traffic calming on road to Marsden Lane car park (traffic issues mentioned 7 times). Problem will get worse when new housing on Hall Lane & Disraeli Street is built</p>	<p>Traffic volumes are an issue in the area and there is much congestion at peak times and when Middleton Street floods. See also 1B above. The 20 mph zone and one way ideas have been forwarded to Highways & Traffic.</p>
<p>7 Towpath trees and shrubs at Riverside Drive/Packhorse bridge are not maintained properly</p>	<p>The trees are willows and are appropriate to their location. They are not causing problems for the Navigation (canal). They also pre-date the houses by many years. They are in good condition and receive appropriate maintenance (cutting back low branches/suckers etc).</p> <p>Repairs are planned to the parapet of the Packhorse bridge. The Council will continue to seek funding to carry out restoration of the whole parapet to its original form</p>
<p>8 Need better signage to sites of interest eg lock-keeper's cottage</p>	<p>Visitor Information Signs are due to be installed by March 2008.</p>
<p>9 Object to works to the horse chestnut trees on Marsden Lane (there are few enough trees in the conservation area) - local people were not consulted. No more should be done.</p>	<p>These trees are both owned by the Council and subject to a Tree Preservation Order. Many residents have expressed concern about previous works that have been in response to complaints from occupiers of nearby houses. Local Authorities do not need consent to carry out works to their own trees, hence there have been no applications and no resident notifications.</p>
<p>10 24-28 Narrow Lane should be marked as being a positive contribution to the area. Important view past 51-53 Sanvey Lane to the church spire should be added also.</p>	<p>Although badly altered and extended, the age of these houses is clear. The plan has been amended.</p>
<p>11 Tidy up site on north side of Meadows Court home, object to illegal removal of trees (latter mentioned 4 times)</p>	<p>See 1A(3 & 4) and 3 above</p>
<p>12 2 responses from Conservation Area Panel</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend age information to reflect new information on age of Aylestone Hall • Various dates clarified for textual accuracy • Additional historical information provided • Suggest more reference to effect of canal/railway on village form & layout. Concerned about quality of repairs to Packhorse Bridge • Concern about deteriorating condition of the railway girder bridge over the canal. Should be mentioned in 'materials' section • Need to ensure the brick wall at the farm is restored to its original form • Various typing errors pointed out 	<p>Suggested text amendments have been incorporated in the report</p> <p>Restoration of the Packhorse Bridge parapets to their original form in original materials is expensive as are the repairs to the girder bridge. Both need to be encouraged over the long term.</p>
<p>8 Letters</p>	
<p>14 6 copies of a standard format letter of objection to planning application no. 20072242 for extensions to the Meadow Court home make references to the text of the draft character appraisal such as :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed development is in the conservation area and would adversely affect its character • The existing building is an intrusive element, of poor design, scale, massing, potential for adding value to the townscape has been missed etc • Expansion of building will increase parking needs in an already congested area 	<p>The site is not currently within the conservation area but adjoins it. The effect of the proposed extensions on the character of the conservation area is, however, a matter that will be taken into account when determining the application (see also 1A (2), (3) & (4) and 3 above).</p> <p>The references in the character appraisal to the impact of the present building and its environs on the conservation area are matters of fact and not, of themselves, reasons for refusing any other alterations or extensions to the care home. Indeed, the proposed alterations to the front elevation will improve the appearance of the street frontage. It has to be accepted that nothing other than complete redevelopment would remedy the impact of the building on the townscape. Negotiations are under way to provide the number of off street parking spaces to meet the requirements of the Council's approved standards for care homes (1 space per 4 bedspaces)</p>

<p>15 Letter 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintenance of public areas leaves a lot to be desired esp. the trees that are in danger of falling into the canal Anti-social behaviour Need more conservation area information signs Church should be floodlit Traffic is a problem on Middleton Street and does not enhance the conservation area. Street should be blocked off. All changes to houses in the conservation area should be required to get planning permission 	<p>The canal towpath and its green edges are maintained to a natural state – more formal standards are inappropriate. The trees are not in a dangerous state.</p> <p>Anti-social behaviour is an issue that requires police intervention. Surveillance of the footpath was unfortunately not addressed in the design of the adjacent housing development.</p> <p>The provision of more conservation area signs will be included in the 2008/9 amenity budget, funding permitting, and conservation information leaflets for Aylestone will be included in the next distribution phase planned for the coming months</p> <p>Floodlighting will be investigated</p> <p>Removal of traffic from Middleton Street would greatly improve the conservation area but may not be possible in view of its function as a local distributor road. The idea has however been passed to Transport Development for investigation and comment.</p> <p>A requirement that all alterations to houses be subject to planning permission requires an Article 4 Direction. More than 50% of the houses in the conservation area (most of which are post 1930) have already replaced original windows etc and an Article 4 Direction could not therefore be justified.</p>
<p>Letter 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All proposals to develop the site adjoining the care home should be considered in terms of their impact on the village as regards parking, character, scale, type (family homes not flats), doctors/dentists/schools, wildlife & trees 	<p>Letter 2</p> <p>Councils are under a statutory duty to consider the effect of development proposals on the character and appearance of conservation areas, hence the involvement of the Conservation Area Panel. They have been consulted on the current application affecting the care home and their views will be taken into account. The issues that have been raised and that can be considered as part of the planning process will be taken into account when recommendations are made to Committee.</p>
<p>1 e-mail</p>	
<p>16</p> <p>Area has deteriorated because of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graffiti on Great Central Way & Meadows Abandoned cars in Marsden Lane car park Dog fouling Anti-social behaviour Barking dogs Noise & traffic associated with tree surgeon's business at the farm Poor condition of farm buildings Lack of bulbs and hanging baskets <p>Also tree outside family home is not wanted as it causes damage to cars and neighbour disputes</p>	<p>Most of these issues are not directly related to the status of the area as a conservation area. They do however impact upon its character and appearance and the perceptions that people have of the conservation area. They have been passed to the various responsible officers/police with a request for action wherever possible and direct reply to the complainant. The tree surgeon's business did not, in the view of enforcement officers, need planning permission (it was considered to be ancillary to the use as a farm). The maintenance of the farm buildings is the tenant's responsibility. As it is owned by the Council the Council's Historic Building Grant eligibility rules dictate that grant aid could not be given for repairs.</p> <p>This complaint highlights the raised expectations that residents of conservation areas have as regards conservation area status, equating it with the delivery of better Council services such as graffiti removal, parks maintenance, street cleaning etc. While prioritising conservation areas over the rest of the city may not be possible the proposed Ward Committee budgets may offer some scope for addressing these kinds of issues. These issues have therefore been raised with Ward Councillors.</p>












Appendix 5 : Management and enhancement proposals

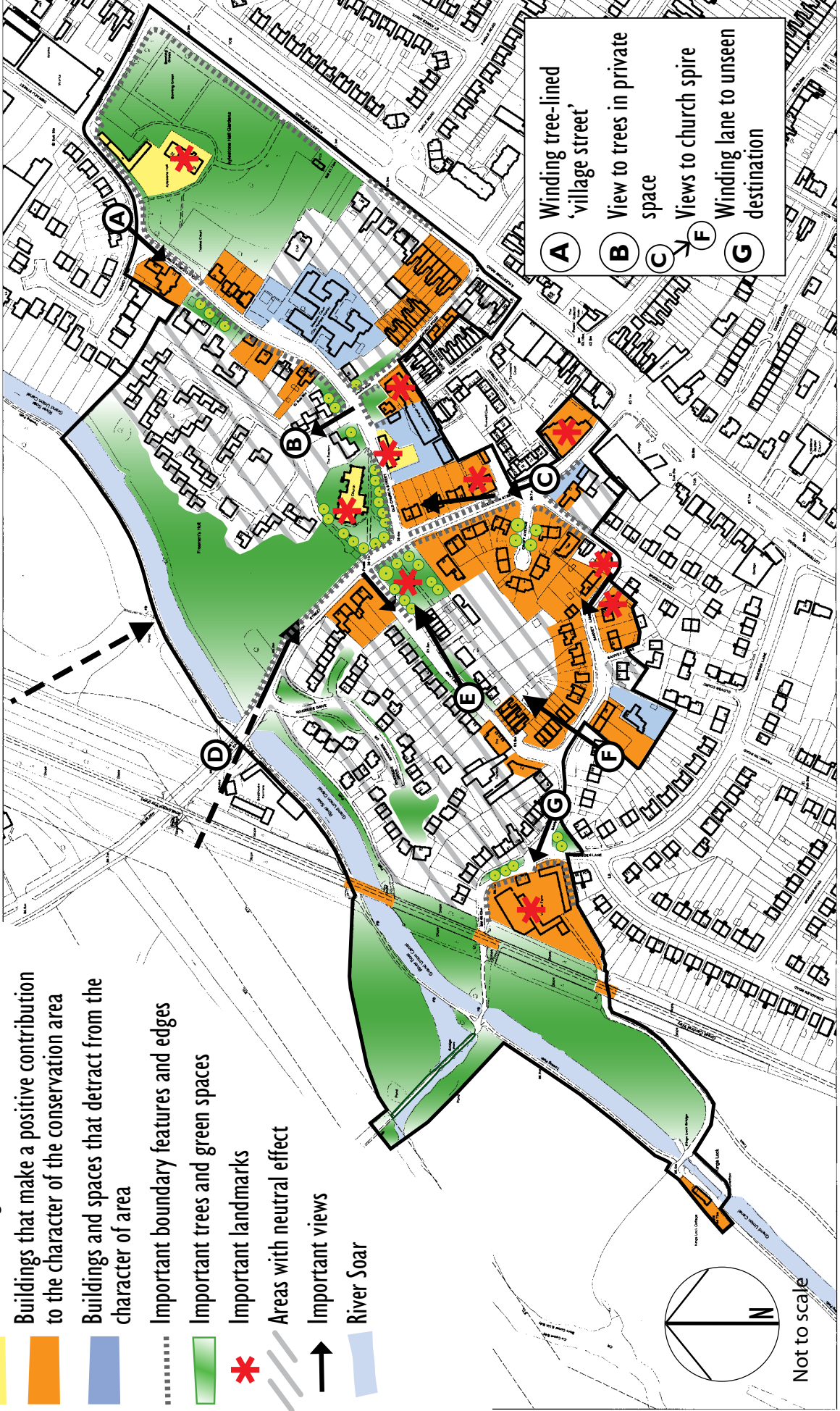
Location	Management/enhancement proposal
Short term = up to 3 years, medium term = 3-5 years, long term = 5+ years	
1 Conservation Area generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply the policies set out in the Local Plan and relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance to ensure that all development proposals preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area; <p>Delivery : ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish and distribute an explanatory leaflet about the conservation area and the implications of designation; <p>Delivery : short term and every 2-3 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek resources to provide grants for the repair and restoration of architectural details such as timber sash windows <p>Delivery : short to medium term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a photographic survey to provide a baseline for monitoring change in the conservation area and update regularly <p>Delivery : ongoing and every 3-4 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the retention of local construction materials in the public realm such as kerb stones etc <p>Delivery : ongoing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate solutions to the problem of rat-running through the conservation area <p>Delivery : short to medium term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install additional conservation area plaques as necessary <p>Delivery : short term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate potential for floodlighting church <p>Delivery : short term</p>





Appendix 6 Glossary of architectural terms

ashlar	smooth faced masonry blocks laid horizontally
balustrade	a series of short posts or pillars supporting a rail
bargeboard	projecting board placed against the outside incline of the roof of a building, often used decoratively
corbel	a method of laying bricks or stone so that each course projects slightly forward of the one below
cornice	horizontal projecting section at the top of a building or wall
dentildoorcase	decorative timber or stone framing a doorway
fanlight	a window over a door
finial	a formal ornament at the apex of a gable or spire
fishscale	a pattern created by overlapping the semi-circular cut edges of roof tiles or slates
flèche	slender spire rising from the ridge of a roof
keystone	the central wedge-shaped stone at the top of an arch that locks the arch structure in place
hoodmould	a projecting moulding over a door or window designed to throw rain off the face of a building
lancet	a slender window with a pointed arch
modillion	a small bracket, usually one of a series
pediment	a low pitched gable shape over a door or window
rusticated	chamfered edge masonry blocks laid with very deep joints
segmental arch	a very shallow arch [of a bay window – a very shallow curved bay]
sham timber framing	pieces of timber applied externally to create the impression of timber frame structure beneath
stringcourse	a continuous decorative horizontal band projecting from a wall and usually moulded
stucco	a cement-type render used for facing external walls
swag	decoration carved to resemble a draped flower garland or fabric
tracery	ornamental stone or metal openwork in a window opening
vousoir	one of the wedge-shaped stones that form a round arch

Map 7 Aylestone Village Conservation Area Character Appraisal

-  Boundary of conservation area
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Listed buildings
-  Buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area
-  Buildings and spaces that detract from the character of area
-  Important boundary features and edges
-  Important trees and green spaces
-  Important landmarks
-  Areas with neutral effect
-  Important views
-  River Soar



-  Winding tree-lined 'village street'
-  View to trees in private space
-  Views to church spire
-  Winding lane to unseen destination
- 