

Supplementary Guidance



Belgrave Hall Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Planning Policy and Design
Adopted January 2008



Leicester
City Council

Cover images, from the top:

Former stables, Belgrave House.

Terraced properties, Vicarage Lane.

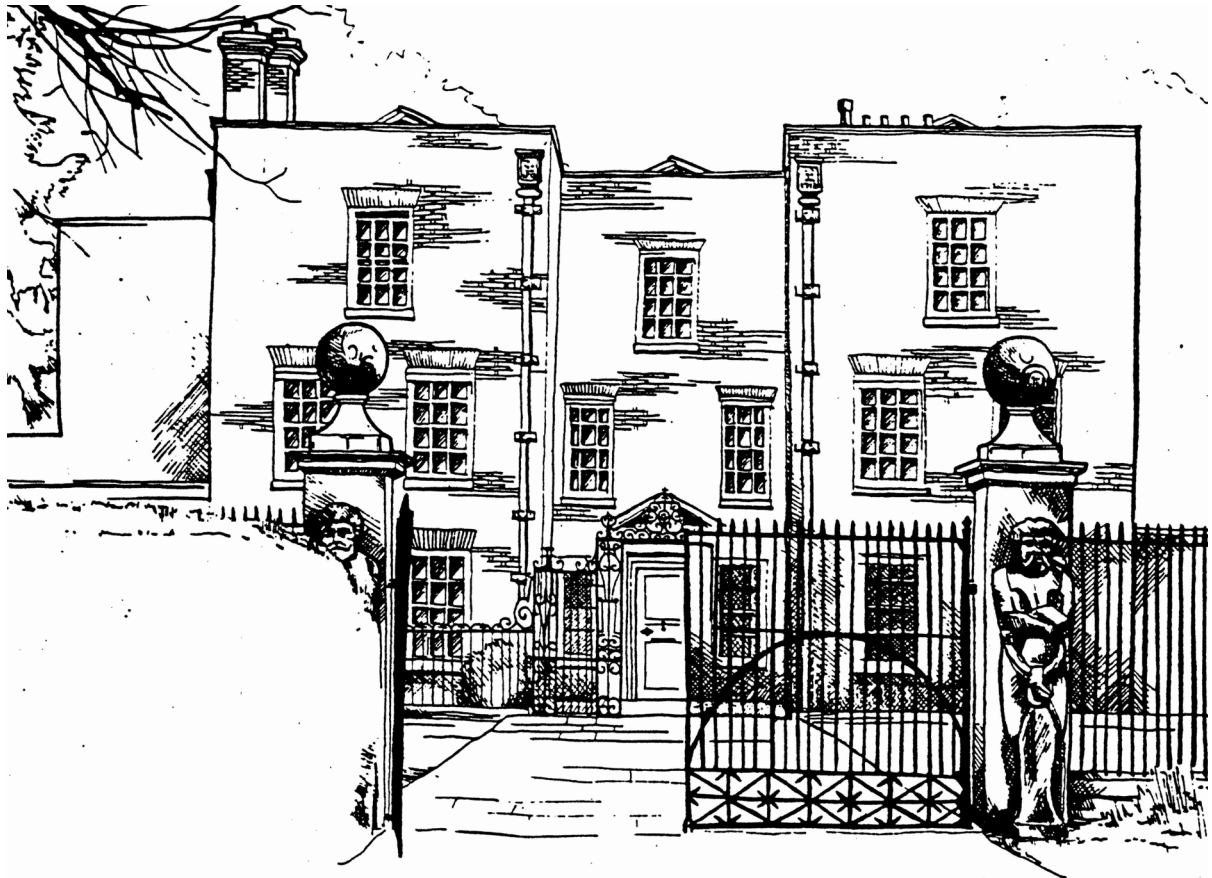
Belgrave House.

St. Peter's Church.

BELGRAVE HALL CONSERVATION AREA

character appraisal

(Adopted: January 2008)



Belgrave Hall



Leicester
City Council

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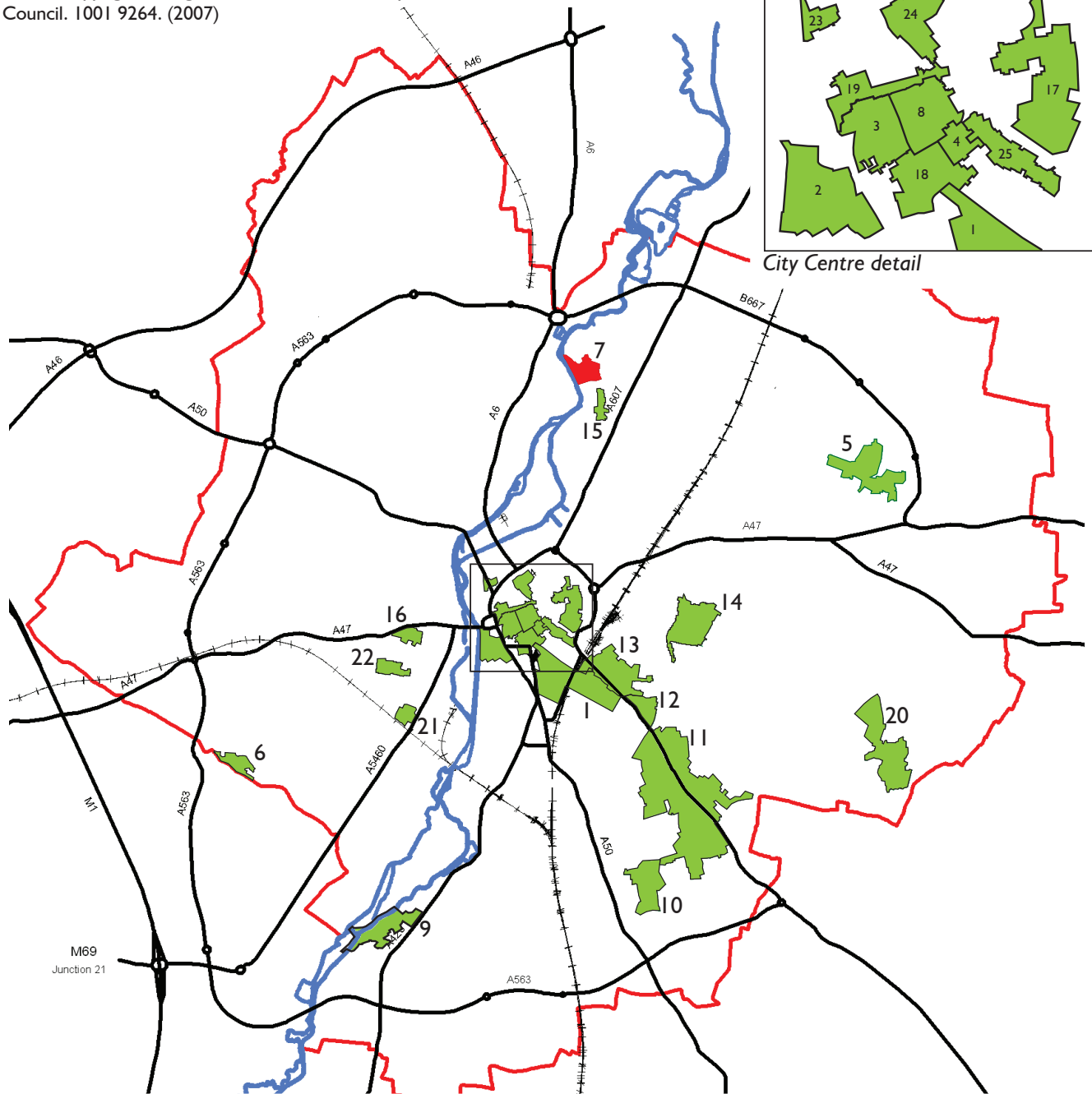
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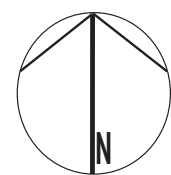
map I. City of Leicester Conservation Areas

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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. <u>Belgrave Hall</u> | 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 each conservation area. 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 existing conservation areas and, where appropriate, to propose amendments. In the case of the Belgrave Hall Conservation Area no boundary amendments are proposed.

1.2 The Belgrave Hall Conservation Area was designated in 1974 although the boundary was extended in 1983 (see Map 2). It now covers an area of 8 hectares (19.5 acres).

1.3 The survey and appraisal were carried out during 2006 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 will ask 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.

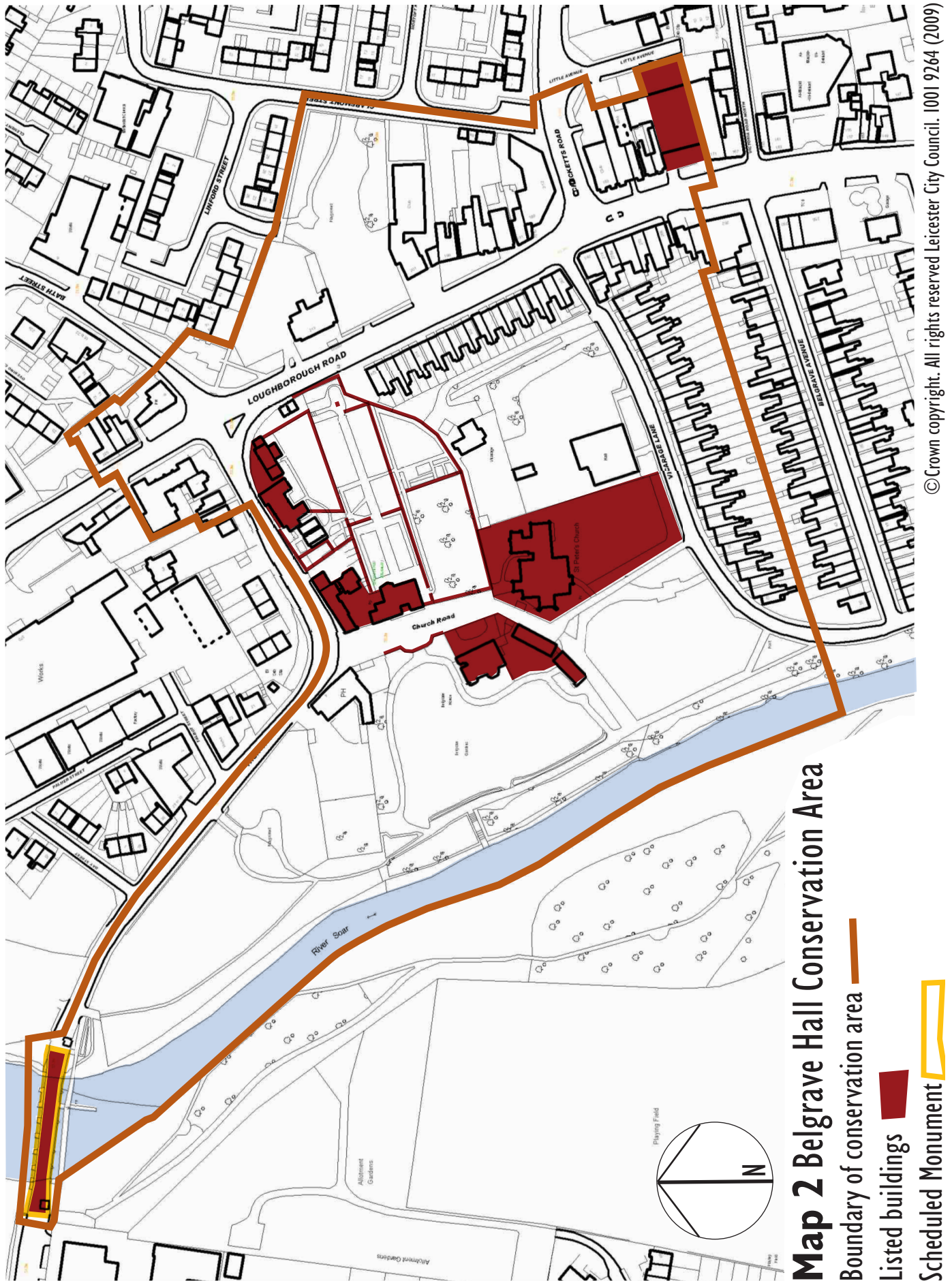
2.3 Current legislation is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This places a duty on the Council to declare as conservation areas those parts of their area that they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest [s.69(1)]. It also imposes on the 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 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



One of the cast metal signs that help to advertise the conservation area.

map 2. Boundary of Belgrave Hall Conservation Area





Aerial view of the conservation area from the 2005 survey

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 In support of the 1990 Act, government advice on conservation areas is set out in the 1994 Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) 'Planning and the Historic Environment'.

2.6 The City of Leicester Local Plan (adopted January 2006) 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 The special interest of the Belgrave Hall Conservation Area is a product of two main factors - its core around Church Road, an area that has remained largely unchanged



map 3 Coffyn's map of 1657 showing the Manor and Parish of Belgrave. The approximate location of Belgrave Hall Conservation Area is shown circled in brown and the site of the hall and gardens coloured yellow.

since the late 18th century, and the large areas of green space and their associated trees. The conservation area is a unique blend of listed buildings, garden history and landscape that combine to create a high quality townscape. The area's history and the large areas of undeveloped land suggest that the archaeological potential is also likely to be high. The richness of the architecture and building materials, the area's quietness and greenness and its vehicle-free environment have all combined to create a unique 'sense of place'.

3.2 The setting of the conservation area on the north edge of the city, on the riverside and overlooking a large green space that is one of the city's 'green wedges' is also a major contribution to its special interest. The views into and out of the conservation area at this point add to the quiet ambience of the area. Its large number of mature trees and green spaces set the conservation area apart from the hard urban environment on its east side. The numerous trees contribute interesting patterns of light and shade as well as a variety of seasonal colours, while the park provides opportunities for rest and recreation and gives access to the water and wildlife of the canal.

3.4 Linked to Church Road by a winding green pathway that allows interesting views of the park, St Peter's Church and churchyard, the sinuous form of the Vicarage Lane terrace adds to the townscape value of the area. The strong edge of the continuous building facade creates a sense of enclosure and contrasts with the softer green edge of the park and



Nicholl's drawing of c1790 showing the old Hall and the eastern section of the garden.

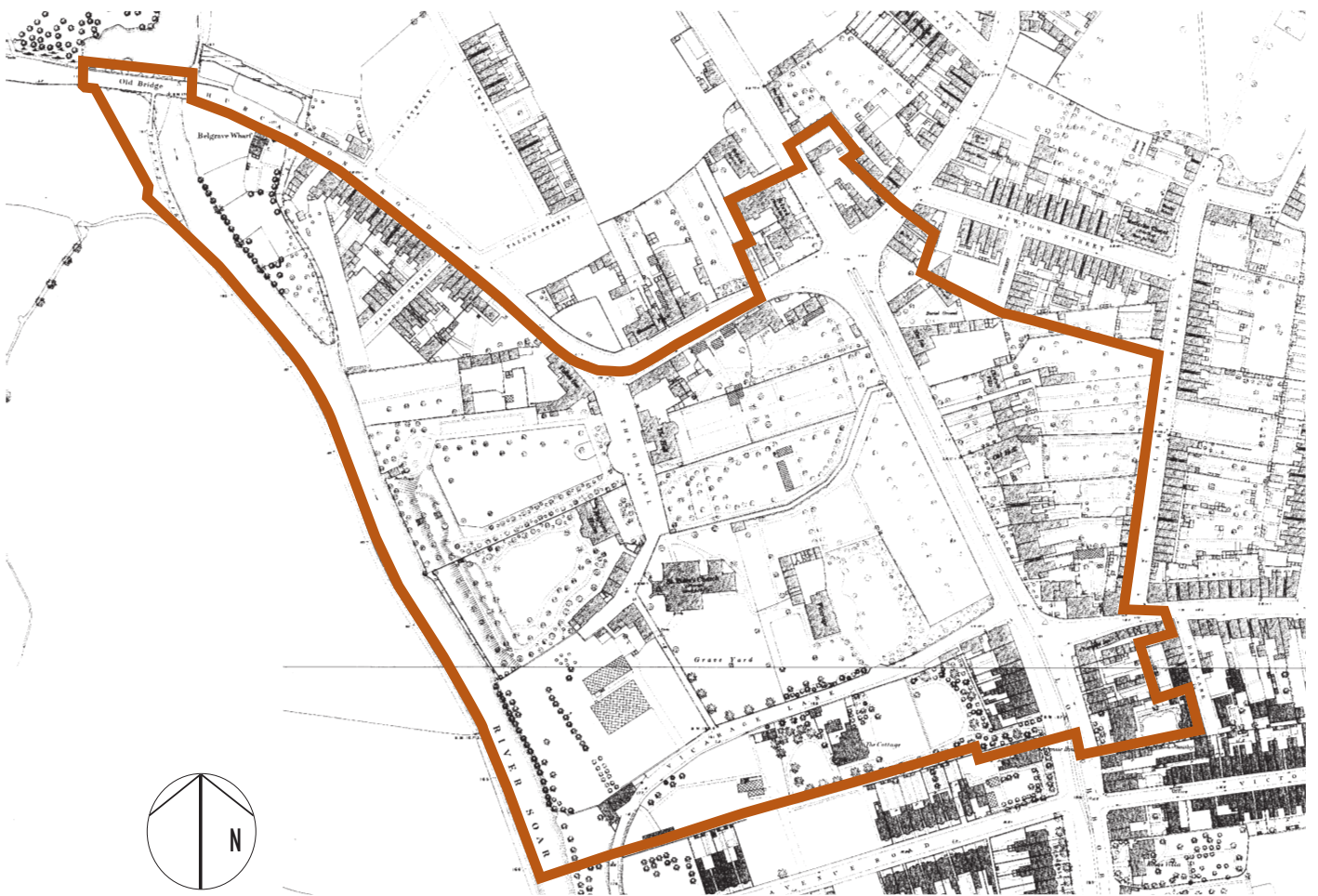
churchyard opposite. The curving layout of the houses and the rising ground on which it is built emphasise and vary the vertical patterns created by the double height bay windows adding dynamism to the townscape.

3.5 Both Loughborough Road and Thurcaston Road are important parts of the history of Belgrave village. They contain an early example of suburban residential development (the late 18th century Cross Corners) as well as several buildings of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that are of townscape value that define and enhance the approach to the conservation area and the important road junction at its north east corner.

4.0 Assessment of special interest

Location and setting

4.1 To most Leicester people the name "Belgrave" means that large part of the city lying north of Dysart Way, but to many older local people it still means the small area of the original village on Loughborough Road and Thurcaston Road and around Belgrave Hall, Belgrave House and St Peter's Church. The conservation area is based around this original core, which lies about 2km to the north west of Leicester city centre on a spur of river gravel overlying Mercia mudstones. The topography is generally flat but there is a slight northward slope on Loughborough Road and a distinct rise in levels from the western (canal) end to



map 4 The Ordnance Survey map of 1886: the modern boundary of Belgrave Hall Conservation Area is shown superimposed. ©Crown copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited. All rights reserved 2009.

the eastern end of Vicarage Lane. The area adjoins one of the city's large 'green wedges' that provide access to the River Soar and the countryside and Watermead Park to the north. The boundaries of the conservation area are shown on Map 2.

Historic development and archaeology

4.2 There are references to a settlement at Belgrave in the Domesday survey of 1086, so Belgrave village is at least 900 years old. Belgrave's original name was Merdegrave, which means 'the grove in the meadows' but that had changed by 1135 to become 'Belgrave', a Norman-French word that means 'fine' (bel) 'wood' (grave). This woodland was gradually replaced as land was cleared for farming so that by the 16th century Belgrave was surrounded by a wide area of open fields, many of which were owned by Leicester Abbey. However, following the



An early postcard view of St. Peter's Church and riverside cottages.



Belgrave Hall and St. Peter's Church c1904.

dissolution of the monasteries in the mid 16th century much of the land was sold but it was not until a century later that drastic change was made to the agricultural life of the village. The change was brought about by the inclosure of 1654. The open field farming system disappeared as fields were amalgamated and sold off (the new fields thus created are shown on Map 3).

4.3 The oldest building in the conservation area is St Peter's Church, parts of which date from the 12th century when the church was much smaller than the present building. Evidence of this earlier building can be seen in the South transept where there is a group of three finely carved seats (sedilia). Archaeologists believe that there may be the remains of an earlier Saxon church beneath the present structure. The church was enlarged by a Roger de Belgrave around the beginning of the 13th century, when the tower was built. Until 1824, the church had a timber spire but a gale in that year made it unsafe and it was removed some time after. Very little building has taken place around the church and some areas have not been built on at all (particularly the former vicarage gardens) so this area has great archaeological potential.

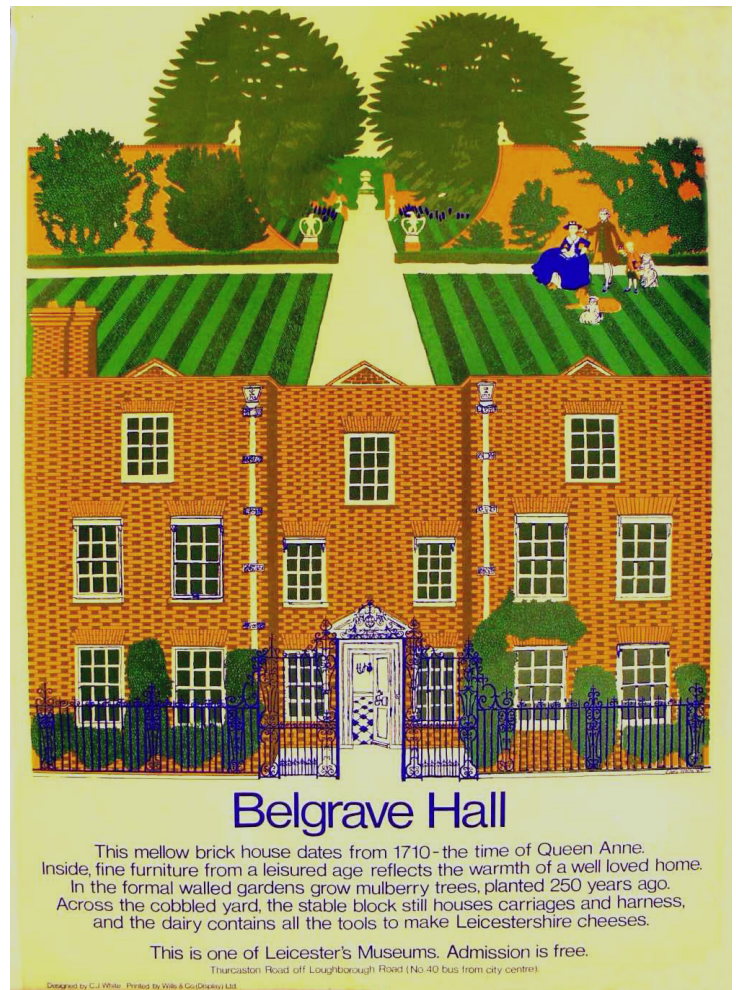
4.4 Thurcaston Road and its bridge are also very old. The bridge dates from the 15th century but there is reference to a bridge at Belgrave in 1357 when Thurcaston Road was already one of the country's most important roads. On John Ogilby's 'strip maps' of 1675 it is shown as part of the great road from London to Manchester and Carlisle and its importance was further recognized when it became a turnpike in 1784. It is possible that the Talbot Inn dates from this time. Built as a coaching inn, it is referred to in the parish records of 1784

as then being 'new built'. It originally had three storeys, each with three typical 18th century small paned windows. Belgrave is also shown as a small village on John Speeds' 1710 map of Leicestershire.

4.5 Thurstaston Road remained the main route through Belgrave to the north until 1834 when the County Surveyor, William Parsons (the builder of the now demolished Theatre Royal in Horsefair Street and of Leicester prison on Welford Road), organised the diversion of the turnpike away from Belgrave to avoid the awkward turn through the village. A new straight extension to Loughborough Road was built leading north from the Checkett's Road junction and across a new bridge over the Soar (a bridge that is still known as New Bridge today). This road became the A6 and remained the main road north until the 1960s when it lost its status to the M1.

4.6 Until the eighteenth century the village of Belgrave was a rural and agricultural community. The village houses were clustered around the church, along Thurstaston Road and on the right hand side of Loughborough Road along Bath Street where the village green was to be found (known, unsurprisingly, as 'The Green', but a feature that has long since disappeared). Coffyn's map of the Manor and Parish of Belgrave in 1657 (map 3) shows a small group of houses amongst fields on either side of Loughborough Road as well as a building that stands alone on the east side of the road, the site of which is identified as 'Old Hall' on the 1886 map (Map 4). This building was possibly the original Belgrave manor house, known as the Hall of Belgrave from at least the 17th century. It was largely demolished in the 1830s for road widening, although parts of it may have been incorporated into a new building on the site. This new building became known as Belgrave Old Hall. Virtually nothing now survives of the rebuilt hall, the site of which could be 201 Loughborough Road. Old photographs show many thatched and timber-framed buildings clustering around The Green.

4.7 Belgrave's role as a residential suburb for the wealthier Leicester tradespeople began in the early 18th century when Edmund Cradock bought



Leicester Museum poster from the late 1960s.



Church Road and Belgrave Hall in the early 1970s.

BELGRAVE HALL CONSERVATION AREA: character appraisal

some land south of Thurcaston Road. Here he built Belgrave Hall between 1709 and 1713, complete with a walled garden. He died in 1715 shortly after the building was completed, after which it may have been rented out. It was bought by a John Simons in 1721 who also owned the land on the opposite side of Church Road (then called The Gravel). This became the Hall's extensive front garden. Simons died in 1749 leaving the Hall to his eldest son, although his widow continued to occupy the property until her death in 1760. The next owner was William Southwell, a Nottingham linen draper who bought the house and its grounds in 1767. On his death in 1772 it passed to his nephews, William and Richard Vann, who belonged to a family of prosperous Wigston hosiers. The estate was divided in 1777 and William moved into the newly built Belgrave House while another brother, James, built Cross Corners in 1784 (the front garden and substantial west boundary wall of which are now the site of the bungalow and garden at 5a Thurcaston Road). The Vann's business moved from their rented property in Evington to Belgrave, where they employed many of the local people as framework knitters. In 1847 John Ellis, Chairman of the Midland Counties Railway and prominent Quaker, became the new owner of Belgrave Hall it remained in the ownership of that family until 1923. Ellis's daughters bought the Hall from their brother in 1868, bought back the old park opposite the Hall in 1889, changed the name of the road to 'Church Road' and were responsible for the naming the house, Belgrave Hall.



The Talbot Inn: a picture from the 1950s, just prior to the removal of the second storey in 1958 and the subsequent rendering of the façade as can be seen in from the modern picture below.



4.8 Another important influence on the village was the construction, beginning in 1791, of the canal. At Belgrave the canal was diverted from the main channel of the river to follow a backwater that was improved to create a canalised waterway. The western arch of the medieval bridge was widened to allow barges to pass through. The completion of the canal from the Trent to Leicester was one of the most important factors in the development of industry in the city, bringing much needed coal, limestone, slate, wool and other raw materials into the city and taking hosiery and other finished goods out. The wharf in Belgrave village just south of the old bridge was the off-loading point for Mountsorrel granite whose quarries provided Leicester with its distinctive granite kerb stones and setts. The owner of the quarry, realising that the offcuts and chips from the quarrying process would make ideal

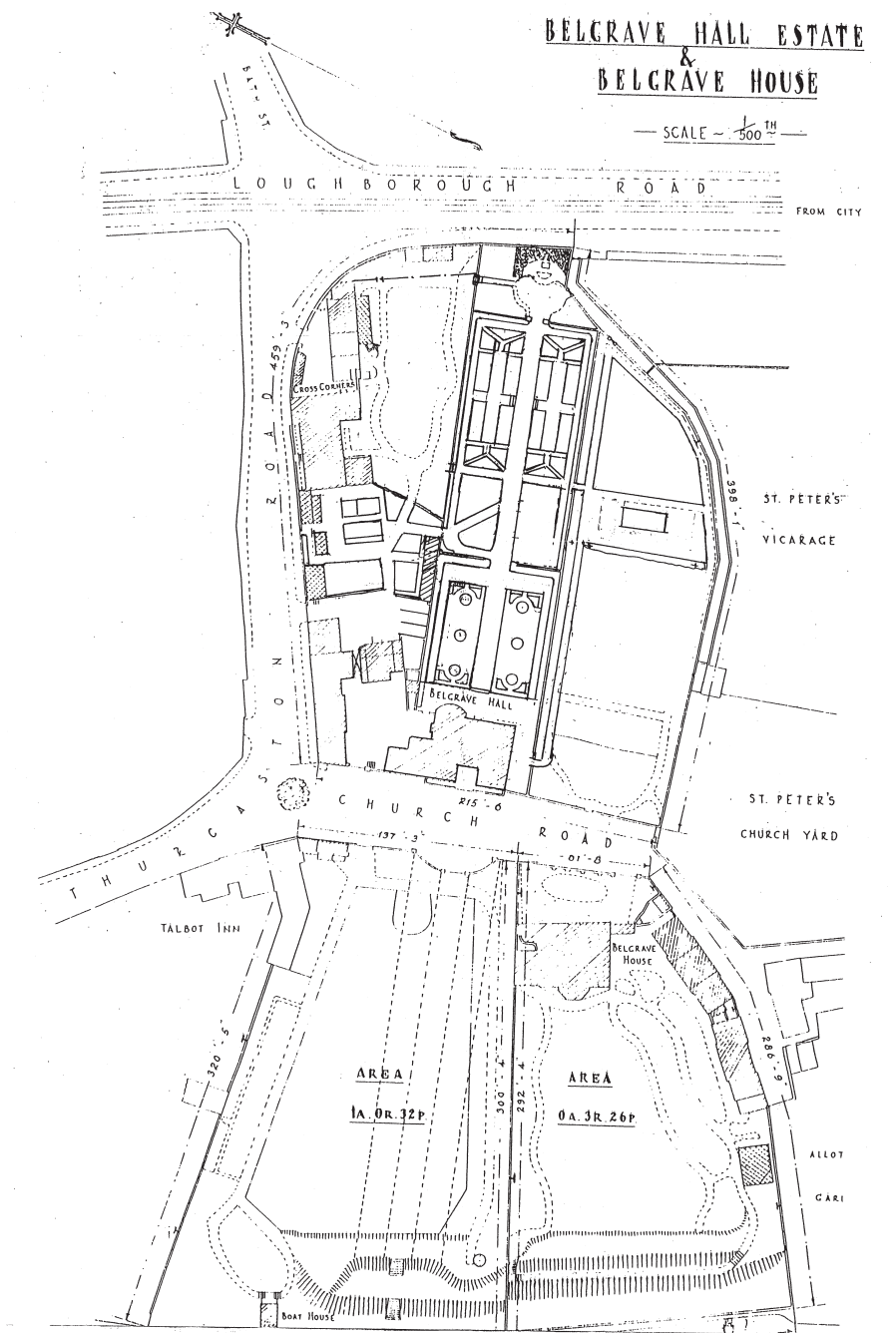
road stone, started selling this by-product to the Corporation in 1787.

4.9 By the 1830s framework knitting had replaced agriculture in the village economy and many local knitters were employed as outworkers by the Vanns at Belgrave Hall. Knitting was done at home; the finished work was stored in part of the stables to Belgrave Hall and in other purpose-built warehouses on the north side of what is now Belgrave Gardens (behind the Talbot Inn). It was from here that the knitters collected their yarn for the week's work on Monday, returning with the finished stockings for weighing and checking on the following Saturday. In 1831, it was said that almost all of the working population of the village was employed in framework knitting.

4.10 During the second half of the 19th century, Leicester was becoming a very important manufacturing town and its population was expanding rapidly. Demand for housing increased and land was needed for development. In 1877 the old manor of Belgrave passed out of the ownership of the Harrison family and this may have been the stimulus for the subsequent development of the conservation area between the 1880s and 1900 when the houses on Loughborough Road and Vicarage Lane were built.

4.11 The area was populous enough for it to be linked to Leicester by horse tram in the mid-19th century, the route terminating at the junction of Loughborough Road and Thurcaston Road. The tramway was electrified in 1904. The 'National Schools' at the corner of Loughborough Road and Thurcaston Road opened in 1887. The school was built in Mountsorrel granite and came complete with a clock bought to commemorate Queen Victoria's jubilee that year. Belgrave village, as part of the wider Belgrave area centered on the Belgrave and Melton Roads, was incorporated into the city boundary in 1892.

4.12 Belgrave Hall and gardens, Belgrave House and Cross Corners were acquired by Leicester Corporation in 1936. The hall and gardens opened as a period house museum that year, and Belgrave House became a day nursery. The second storey of the Talbot Inn



map 5 The Estate Map of 1936 showing property boundaries.

was removed in 1958, when the bricks were rendered in roughcast and the windows were replaced. Checketts Road was widened in 1961. A new vicarage for St Peter's Church was built in 1964 to replace the original, the site of which was redeveloped in 1974 when the hall (now a Hindu community hall) was built. The original village houses on Bath Street and The Green were swept away in the 1970s when the new Council housing was built.

4.13 Belgrave Village Conservation Area was designated in June 1974 and was extended to include the Vicarage Lane houses and Loughborough Road in March 1983.

Prevailing and former uses

4.14 The diversion of the main road through the village in the second quarter of the 19th century served to protect the core of the conservation area around Church Road. Consequently, it remains a quiet backwater looking much as it did in the 18th century. However, the uses of Belgrave Hall, Cross Corners and Belgrave House have changed; in the case of the first two from 'gentleman's residences' to a museum and community arts centre respectively and, in the case of the latter, to a nursery and then museums stores (currently, however, with planning permission for conversion to offices (the main building) and live/work units (in the stables)).

4.15 Much of the conservation area is now laid out as open space, either in the form of public gardens or as period and botanical gardens attached to Belgrave Hall museum. However, these were originally private gardens attached to the Hall and Belgrave House. The north part of Belgrave Gardens that faces Thurcaston Road was once occupied by houses until these were demolished and the site used as allotments for many years. Belgrave House and stables have been vacant for a number of years and rear windows have been boarded up because of vandalism. The Council is selling the properties for conversion to offices (the house) and live/work units (the stables) with provision for limited parking. However, its continuing vacancy is a cause for concern.



Belgrave Hall gardens: a photograph from the 1970s showing the monument to Edward Holdsworth that was originally sited at Gopsall Hall.



An early image of the former Church of England Primary School at the corner of Loughborough Road/Thurcaston Road. It was constructed in 1887 using local Mountsorrel granite.

4.16 Over the years many of the houses on Loughborough Road have been turned into shops and the original vicarage has been replaced by a Hindu community centre, the vicarage being rebuilt towards the north end of its original garden. Some small houses and workshops on the east side of Loughborough Road have been replaced by Claremont Street Gardens and the New Inn is being converted and extended to provide apartments. While new Council housing has replaced the old houses around Bath Street, the properties on the south side of Vicarage Lane remain residential.



Belgrave Hall gardens: looking east to the rear elevation of Belgrave House.

Architectural character and key buildings

*Map 9 provides an assessment of buildings and land that the Council considers make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Where these are mentioned in the text below they are highlighted in **bold**.*

Townscape

4.17 The conservation area has four distinct 'character areas' – Loughborough Road, Thurcaston Road, Church Road and Vicarage Lane. In each the architectural styles and scale of buildings is different, as are the levels of activity and sound, the amount of green space, the condition of the buildings, how open or closed the spaces feel, the way people and traffic move around the area etc. The way in which these elements combine determines the quality of the townscape, for good or bad, and this in turn influences the way in which the visitor experiences it. Each of the four character areas is considered separately below.

Loughborough Road

4.18 Loughborough Road is a very harsh environment. Being one of Leicester's main arterial roads, it is noisy and busy with traffic for most of the time. The scale of the buildings on either side is dwarfed by the width of the road and its associated traffic management arrangements. There is little greenery to soften the environment and it is not a welcoming place for pedestrians or casual visitors. Most of the buildings are small, generally two storeys, and the west side of the road is lined by much altered terraced houses that are typical examples of Leicester's Victorian terraces. Road widening and slum clearance in the 1960s and 70s has produced a more open and greener urban form around the Bath Street junction and Claremont Street Gardens. The scale of the junction with Checketts Road dominates the two storey buildings around it. Nevertheless, there are several 'landmark' buildings fronting Loughborough Road, notably numbers 173 (Grade II listed), 183 (the Flamingo Bar and Restaurant), 201 (the Tuition Centre), 213 (the former Belgrave Hotel), the former National Schools (on the corner with Thurcaston Road) and the Bull's Head pub (on the corner of Bath Street).

Thurcaston Road

4.19 Thurcaston Road marks the northern edge of the conservation area. The entrance from Loughborough Road is marked by the high brick boundary walls of Belgrave Hall gardens on the left and the buildings, neat hedges and fences of the old National Schools on the right. The large sycamore that stands in the corner of the school grounds forms an important landscape feature on this prominent corner site. The adjacent paired 19th century brick cottages add further visual interest and the south side of the street is tightly built up to the footway by Cross Corners, its outbuildings and the walls and stables of Belgrave Hall (all listed buildings). The built form is small scale.

4.20 Unfortunately the townscape somewhat falls apart as a result of the modern housing development on the north side of the street. Having been set back from the road the houses do nothing to enhance the setting of the listed buildings opposite and the character and sense of enclosure that would have existed as far as the Talbot Inn corner at the turn of the 19th century has been lost. However, the Talbot Inn makes a fine visual stop to the view from the east and its setting is enhanced by the sycamore at the junction with Church Road. From the east end of the street the views of trees rising over the rooftops and lining the road beyond the Talbot are important structural elements in the environment and soften and enhance an otherwise ordinary space. The greenery forms a visual link with Church Road. A slight curve in the road deflects views to the old river bridge, adding interest to the townscape. However, the ugly modern footbridge on the south side of the bridge detracts significantly from the appearance of the original bridge.

Church Road

4.21 Church Road, by contrast, provides an oasis of peace and quiet in a setting that has changed little since the 18th century. Trees are a dominant feature of the space, the entrance to which is marked by a large sycamore in the centre of the road. There is a feeling of seclusion, greenness and a strong sense of the division between 'public' and 'private' spaces. The diagonal placement of Belgrave Hall with Belgrave House, and the relative positions of



View of the Talbot Inn from the east.



Cross Corners, Thurcaston Road.

the church and the Talbot Inn, has created a series of open and closed 'edges' that is one of the essential defining features of this part of the conservation area.

4.22 Belgrave Hall and its outbuildings form a solid edge on the east side of Church Road, while Belgrave House is more open to view being set well back on its plot behind ornamental railings. St Peter's Church closes the view southwards where the road suddenly turns into a footpath that sets off at a tangent to an unseen destination. Further exploration down the path reveals the quiet enclaves of the church yard and the southern extension of the park while, beyond another bend, the path narrows further and leads towards Vicarage Lane. This series of unfolding views creates a feeling of both mystery and surprise.



Belgrave Hall

4.23 From Church Road, views open into the park, which is laid out as a series of different gardens – semi-formal in the centre, more open informal recreation space to the north and a quiet enclosed retreat on the south side. Views are contained within each garden but offer glimpses to the canal and the playing fields beyond.

Vicarage Lane

4.24 The terrace of houses on Vicarage Lane forms a strong visual edge to the conservation area. The curving form of the terrace, the staggered gable ends at numbers 40-62 and the regularly spaced double-height bays from 2a-40 create strong vertical patterns that contrast with the softer 'green' edge of the park and church yard opposite. At the top and bottom of the Vicarage Lane hill the road sweeps round, alternately opening and closing the visitor's onward views, adding further to the visual quality of the street. Well defined edges and boundaries separate the public and private realms, the former offering glimpses into the park or down the footpath between the park and the church yard. The result is an environment of interest, surprise and high visual quality. The sense of enclosure is, however, damaged by the open front and the uninspired design of the community hall half way along the north side.

Architectural character and key buildings

4.25 The architectural character of the conservation area is very varied, from the 18th century styles around Church Road to the Victorian terraces of Vicarage Lane and



Belgrave House, Church Road.

Loughborough Road. Character of the highest quality is to be found in the complex of historic buildings around Church Road - Belgrave Hall, Belgrave House, St Peter's Church, Cross Corners and their associated stables, boundary walls, railings and monuments. These comprise all but one of the conservation area's listed buildings which are also listed for their value as a group, a measure of the architectural, historic and townscape importance of this area. Elsewhere, there are only a few buildings of architectural, historic or townscape significance and, with the exception of Vicarage Lane, there are only a few Victorian terraced houses that contribute positively to the architectural character of conservation area. This is also true of the commercial properties along Loughborough Road, only one of which (183 Loughborough Road – the Flamingo Club) has any architectural merit.

4.26 **Belgrave Hall** (1709) is a Grade II* listed building in a very plain Classical style set slightly back from the road behind original ornamental wrought iron gates (with overthrow) and railings. Its three storey façade is symmetrical around a central



Entrance gates and decorative gate piers to Belgrave Gardens, Church Road.

recess with high flat parapets obscuring the pitched roofs. There is a moulded stone doorcase with a triangular pediment and original lead rainwater goods dated 1709 and 1713. The red brick walls have a pronounced chequer pattern created by the use of burnt 'headers' (bricks laid with their short end exposed) and are pierced by typically 18th century six-over-six paned windows. Linking the Hall to St Peter's Church is a low boundary wall topped with **wrought iron railings**. Originally offering an open view from Belgrave House into what was then one of its gardens, views into the site are now stopped by a modern solid timber fence. On the north side of the Hall is its original red brick **stables** (1710) that form the 'hinge' that turns the corner of Church Road into Thurcaston Road. Presenting an almost blank façade to the street, visual interest is nevertheless provided in the form of a small off-set gable with a feature oval window with brick mouldings, moulded brick eaves, a steeply pitched stone slate roof and tall chimney stacks.



The northern elevation of the former stable block to Belgrave House.

4.27 On the west side of Church Road, and built diagonally to Belgrave Hall to ensure an uninterrupted view from the Hall across 'The Gravel' to its original garden, **Belgrave House** was built about 70 years later than Belgrave Hall in the fashionable Queen Anne style. Its red brick façade has a different proportion of solid to void compared with Belgrave Hall and the centre portion is slightly recessed to emphasise the main entrance. Decoration is restrained, consisting of paired horizontal stucco bands, a simple eaves cornice with modillions and flat window arches picked out with contrasting mortar. Visual interest is concentrated around the centrally placed doorcase which has half-columns, a fanlight and open pediment, and the 19th century side wings with their painted balustrades, urns and window traceries. Along the frontage to Church Road, slender decorative **railings** that are contemporary with the house afford an unrestricted view of the front of the house. The frontage to the west side of Church Road is completed by the Grade II listed **gateway and railings of Belgrave Gardens**. The gate piers add extra visual interest with cornices and ball finials and the curved flanking railings terminate in tall stucco piers topped with urns and torches.

4.28 On the south side of the house, and forming one edge of the public footpath that leads to Vicarage Lane, is a pair of two storey **stable blocks**. These are also built in the simple Queen Anne style but the design of each is subtly different so that there is as much visual interest at the back as there is at the front. The pedimented gable on the front elevation of the stable block closest to the house is found on the back elevation of the smaller block. The projecting centre section of the former is transposed into a recessed central feature in the latter. A flat arched window becomes a quatrefoil and so on. Round arched doorways and 'blind' windows, however, are common to both.

4.29 The backs of both Belgrave House and its stables are open to Belgrave Gardens and all are important features in the landscape of the park. From a distance they appear to be part of the park, an illusion further fostered by the position of the brightly planted island flower beds in the lawn and the flower bed curving round the house. The boundary



St. Peter's Church dates from the 12th century and features a striking Norman doorway at the west end.

with the stables is marked by some slender contemporary **railings**.

4.30 At the end of the cul-de-sac **St Peter's Church** stands close to the north end of its surrounding church yard, largely hidden by several big mature trees. This small church is a very simply decorated structure and offers a complete contrast to its brick-built neighbours, being built in the local Mountsorrel granite with local limestone dressings around the windows. The west tower is rather squat. It dates from the 12th century and has many important architectural features such as a 12th century Norman doorway, late 13th century arcades and 14th century window tracery. The church yard retains many old gravestones, mainly on the western and southern sides, the rest of the site being more open and allowing good views of the church. One metre high random rubble **Mountsorrel granite walls** with granite piers and limestone coping stones form the boundary of the church yard.



Part of the Mountsorrel granite wall forming the boundary to St. Peter's Churchyard on Vicarage Lane.

4.31 **Cross Corners**

on Thurcaston Road is contemporary with Belgrave House. It presents a plain symmetrical brick 5-bay façade to Thurcaston Road in which the original sliding sash windows, door and pedimented doorcase provide interest and texture. It is set back from the street behind a low wall with (modern) railings and is further detached from the life of the street by a projecting 19th century east wing and high boundary wall to the east and the tall glasshouse walls to the west. A modern steel gate provides access on the east side into the original cobbled stable yard but views are restricted through its laser-cut decoration adding further to the overall feeling of 'separateness' of the property.

4.32 The corner of Thurcaston Road and Loughborough Road is marked on its northern corners by two buildings, each different in style and date. On the west side is the former **National Schools, 1 Thurcaston Road** (now in use as offices). Single storied and neatly gabled with ecclesiastical styled windows in the prominent gabled ends, this small school is built in Mountsorrel granite with limestone dressings around the windows and doors. Complete with small mock buttresses, clock and topped with a bell tower in the form of a flèche with fishscale patterned lead roof, this is an important and prominent landmark at the entrance to the conservation area.



The Loughborough Road elevation of the former National School.



Cross Corners: modern steel gate giving access to the former stable yard.



The bell tower 'fish-scale' lead-work in the form of a flèche to the roof of the former Belgrave School.

4.33 Immediately to the west of the school building is a pair of cottages, **3-5 Thurcaston Road**, dating from around 1860, whose big front gables echo similar design features on their bigger neighbour. Although these are only small houses they have natural stone slate roofs and other thoughtful design features. Their facades are decorated with pierced and moulded timber bargeboards, projecting brick stringcourses creating a 'toothed' effect at first floor level and alternating red and blue brick segmental window arches with burnt headers that are laid in a chequer pattern to line through both properties at first floor level. The pale red brick front facades are also laid so as to create a chequer pattern, the brick colour again echoing the pink granite of the school.



4.34 The **Talbot Inn, 4 Thurcaston Road**, has been much altered and now presents a two storey façade to the corner rather than the three storey elevation it had possessed since the late 18th century and lost in 1958. However, its historic associations with Belgrave village and the turnpike roads, its prominent location, and the manner in which it closes the view westwards from the A6 junction, make this an important landmark.

4.35 The east corner is occupied by the **Bull's Head** pub at **6 Bath Street**, which dates from the early 19th century. It is a three storey building on the local list of buildings of architectural interest that was remodelled in the 20th century with a simple decorative treatment comprising segmental arched windows with moulded surrounds, plain bands at first and second floor levels and tall chimney stacks. Despite a colour scheme that obscures the window surround details and previous alterations that have resulted in the loss of its original tall pale terracotta chimney pots (only one survives) and slate roof (now concrete tiles), the building is nevertheless an important landmark and an interesting visual contrast to the National Schools opposite.



The south-facing gable to 221 Loughborough Road showing remnants of a former painted advertisement.

4.36 On the north side of the Bull's Head is a group of three late Victorian houses (c. 1880) at **221-225 Loughborough Road**, with interesting Gothic details. While not of particular architectural merit, they are nevertheless important townscape features because of the way in which they project forward of the Bull's Head to create a visual 'pinch point'. Visual interest is added by a big south-facing gable wall with a fading painted advertisement,

two tall chimney stacks, a rhythmic line of ground floor bay windows and a gabled attic storey terminating the group at its north end. The remaining terraced houses at 264-324 Loughborough Road have no particular merit and do not make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area.

4.37 Two buildings south of Bath Street are of some interest. The first, currently undergoing conversion and extension for use as flats is the **former Belgrave Hotel, 213 Loughborough Road**. This is a 20th century 'Queen Anne' style building with a symmetrical façade, stone window heads, six first floor sliding sashes and four dormer windows each with casement openings and a triangular pediment. It is an important punctuation mark in the streetscape, and its Leicester red brick elevations contrast with the greenery that spills over the boundary of the Claremont Street Gardens. On the south

side of the Gardens is **201 Loughborough Road**, a two storey stucco-faced Italianate style property. Previously a house built on the site of what was known as 'Old Hall' (and reputed to contain the remnants of that earlier medieval building), it has an unflattering colour scheme but retains many decorative features, such as moulded window surrounds with flat pediments supported on scrolled brackets, a moulded doorcase with another flat pediment around a recessed front door, a deep plain parapet with a cornice supported on plain brackets



Vicarage Lane: a high proportion of the front walls survive and help to give much character to this charming road.



The staggered, curving nature of this row of terraced houses on Vicarage Lane provides a particularly fine piece of townscape within the conservation area.

(modillions) beneath. There is a modern flat-roofed side extension that detracts from its appearance, as does the bare untidy front yard. The small group of Victorian houses at **191-199 Loughborough Road** (c. 1850) retain some original Italianate details that are unusual for such small homes. Despite the loss of most front boundary walls and the unfortunate render and fake stone treatment of the façade at 197, these make a positive contribution to the character of the area.

4.38 Of the remaining buildings on Loughborough Road, only **183** and **173 Loughborough Road** can be said to have any townscape or architectural merit. The former is an Edwardian pub (now the Flamingo Restaurant) with many decorative features such as a balustraded parapet, rusticated quoins, projecting cornice mouldings with swags beneath, a big square bay and a feature entrance porch supported on columns. The building makes a strong visual statement at this busy corner and is something of a local landmark. The latter is an early 19th century stucco house in the classical style (Grade II listed) and consists of two storeys originally with carriage arches in wings on either side. It has sash windows (restored to match where missing) and a porch supported on two plain columns. The north carriage arch has been replaced with a sash window.

4.39 The south edge of the conservation area is defined by the staggered and curving row of houses at **2a-62 Vicarage Lane**. These were built at the very end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th and the continuous terrace rising up the hill from the canal in a gently sweeping double curve creates a particularly fine townscape. Although many properties have lost their original sash windows or front doors (or both) the mock timber framing between the double-height bays is generally intact. Where these have been picked out in contrasting colours as intended by the original builders they add another positive element to the vertical rhythms set up by the bay windows. Front boundary treatments are varied but are still sufficiently intact to provide an important visual edge and examples of original front garden walls can be seen at numbers 20 and 32. At the eastern end of the street there is a small early 19th century brick cottage at **2 Vicarage Lane**, with a moulded doorcase and segmental arches above the ground floor windows. The loss of its original windows and the painted brickwork is unfortunate. The buff brick community hall and vicarage on the north side of the road are architecturally undistinguished and do not contribute positively to the character of the area.

Building materials and the public realm

Building materials

Clay

4.40 All but two of the buildings in the conservation area are built of red brick but not the same kind of brick. Flemish Bond (alternate 'headers' and 'stretchers') is common to all but there is a distinct difference between the type of bricks used to construct the houses around Church Road and those used to build the Vicarage Lane terrace. In the case of the former, the bricks are softer in colour, slightly smaller and handmade while, in the latter, they are much brighter in colour, standardised and machine made, reflecting the change to industrial production in the 19th century. Brick is also used for the boundary walls around and within the sites of Belgrave Hall and Cross Corners and are these are Grade II listed



King Edward VII wall-mounted post box set within a brick boundary wall, Loughborough Road.



Stone headstone, St. Peter's Churchyard.



Original cast street sign and wrought iron railings forming the boundary to Belgrave Hall.

structures in their own right because of their age and townscape value. Bricks have, rather inappropriately, been used to repair the cutwaters and two complete arches of Belgrave Bridge.

4.41 Bricks are also used decoratively, such as in window arches or projecting stringcourses (3-5 Thurstaston Road, Vicarage Lane), Clay in other forms is used for chimneypots (The Bull's Head, Cross Corners, Vicarage Lane), the ridge tiles on domestic roofs (Vicarage Lane) and the blue brick gully on Church Road. Clay tiles laid on edge between stone blocks are used to decorate the pointed arches over the windows of the National School. Sometimes bricks are painted and, while this can give some individuality to a house in a terrace, for example, it is unnecessary, obscures the colour and texture of the bricks and creates an ongoing maintenance liability for the owner.



Wrought iron railing details to Belgrave House.

Stone

4.42 Two buildings (St Peter's Church and the former National School, Thurstaston Road) and the Belgrave Bridge are built in stone and they act as visual links that bind the different parts of the conservation area together. The church is constructed in random coursed limestone with limestone window tracery while the school derives its appearance from the local pink Mountsorrel granite with contrasting limestone window surrounds and tracery, quoins and bands. Mountsorrel granite, laid randomly, is also used for the walls around the church yard and the footpath to Vicarage Lane and can also be seen in the form of square cobbles in the old stableyards of Cross Corners and Belgrave Hall and roadside kerbstones. Limestone is also used for decorating even the most ordinary of buildings, such as the carved stone window heads of houses along Loughborough Road and Vicarage Lane, for name plaques (Vicarage Lane) and as coping stones on boundary walls (St Peter's church yard, Vicarage Lane). Stone is also used for many of the gravestones in the churchyard.

4.43 Stone, in the form of slate or stone roofing tiles, is the other common feature in the conservation area. Generally it is the older buildings that are roofed in stone slates, probably sourced locally from the Swithland area (Cross Corners, 3-5 Thurstaston Road). The Victorian buildings tend to have Welsh slate roofs, except where these have been replaced by modern materials.

Timber

4.44 Other than the remnants of some original shopfronts the use of timber is generally restricted to windows, doors, garden gates and fences. Where original timber sash windows, doors and gates remain these help to maintain the character, and enhance the appearance



Detail of the "Talbot" an extinct breed of hunting dog that forms such a distinctive sign to the Talbot Inn.

of, the conservation area. This is particularly evident in Vicarage Lane where original doors and windows can be seen at numbers 4, 8, 10, 26 and 28. Also in Vicarage Lane the sham half-timber decoration on the double height bays is an important element of the townscape. The impact that the loss of this decorative element can have can be clearly seen at numbers 34 and 36. Timber is also used for fencing behind the railings at Belgrave Hall and in Belgrave Gardens along the top of the canal bank.

Metal

4.45 Metal in various forms can be found across the conservation area. Steel and iron is commonly seen in the form of railings and gates – wrought iron in front of Belgrave Hall and Belgrave House, 19th century cast iron railings around the National School and at the entrance to Belgrave Gardens and mild steel at Cross Corners. Lead forms the roof of the church, the original rainwater goods and water butts of Belgrave Hall and is laid in an elongated fishscale pattern on the rooftop flèche at the National School, which also has iron glazing bars in the windows. Steel is used extensively for street lighting and CCTV columns, traffic signals and signs, park railings, bollards, park benches and pedestrian barriers.

Stucco, render and paint

4.46 These materials are not seen much in the conservation area. Only 173 and 201 Loughborough Road and the Belgrave Gardens gate piers have stucco finishes (number 201 in a rather unflattering green paint scheme), while a few building façades have been rendered (the Talbot Inn, the Bull's Head and several properties on Loughborough Road).

The public realm

4.47 Loughborough Road is the eastern edge of the conservation area. It is a very busy road surfaced in tarmac with both tarmac and concrete slab pavements and a large number of road signs, traffic lights and associated white and yellow road markings, pedestrian guard rails, bollards, red blister paving and pedestrian crossing points laid in buff-coloured pavers. Thurstaston Road and Vicarage Lane are also laid to tarmac with blacktop pavements but are enhanced by many typical Mountsorrel granite kerbstones. Across most of the conservation area street lighting is provided by standard Council grey steel lighting columns and lanterns. The poor design and appearance of the modern footbridge to the south of Thurstaston Bridge has already been noted.

4.48 Church Road, however, is not public highway, so there are no road markings and the area is laid out without separate pavements, in order to reflect its original function as a wide private carriage drive and turning space. A continuous surface of tarmac with pink granite chippings has been laid to create a unified appearance with pale concrete pavers laid to form a visual link between the entrances to Belgrave Hall and Belgrave Gardens. The area



Some of the well-maintained properties in Vicarage Lane with original doors and wooden sliding sashes to the bay windows.



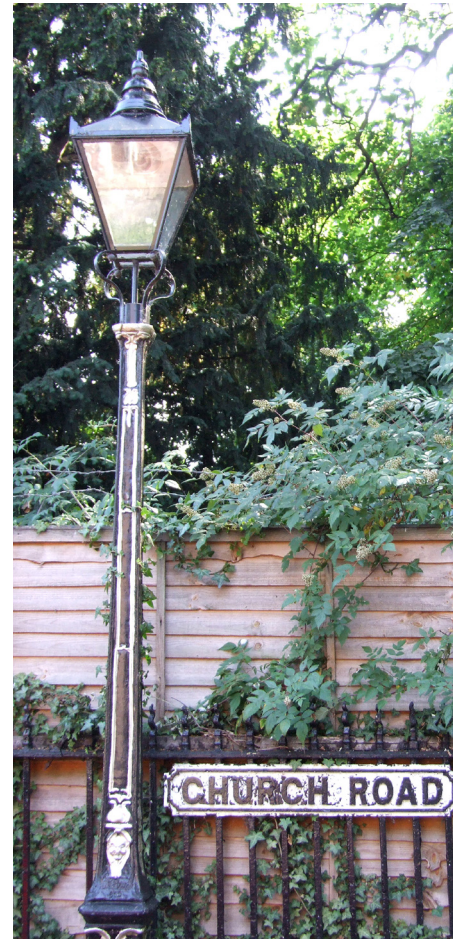
This aerial view from the west shows the significant contribution that trees make to the character of the Conservation Area.

immediately in front of the gates to the Garden is laid in York stone. Drainage channels on either side are laid in blue brick. However, the surface shows evidence of previous trenches and repairs, and the visual unity has been damaged, much to the detriment of the street. Street lighting is also different here – two traditional ‘Victorian’ styles in black and gold plus a modern lamp column on the west side.

4.49 The footpath from Church Road to Vicarage Lane is laid in tarmac with pink granite chippings but large parts of it are in uneven, patched or damaged. Weeds or mud obscure original surface features such as the blue brick edges adjacent to the Belgrave House stables and the pink granite setts and cobbles that form the edges at the base of the park and churchyard walls. Street lighting is provided by more ‘Victorian’ style lampposts but, because of the overhanging trees, the high brick and granite boundary walls and the dark appearance of the surface material, the path is rather dark and uninviting.

Greenery and green spaces

4.50 The designation of a conservation area confers automatic protection on all trees within its boundaries. Belgrave Hall Conservation Area is well endowed with trees that, individually and generally, make a significant contribution to its character. The trees provide continually changing patterns of shade, colour and texture that contrast with the hard built surfaces of buildings and roads. Many of the trees have a high amenity value in the townscape (see Map 5). The canalised River Soar, with its water plants and wildlife, adds a further dimension to the natural environment of the area.



Decorative lamp column near to Belgrave Hall.

4.51 The trees and green spaces around Church Road are the fortuitous result of decisions made in the 18th and 19th centuries. A mid age sycamore marks the entrance to Church Road and replaces a large mature English elm that succumbed to Dutch Elm disease in the 1980s. The elm was originally protected by bow topped railings but those were removed some years ago. Belgrave Gardens (including the site of Belgrave House) were originally laid out as a park-like private garden and pleasure grounds Map 4 shows the relationships of the houses and their gardens in 1887.

4.52 The east gardens are all enclosed by high brick walls (Grade II listed) which are contemporary with Belgrave Hall. The gardens are divided into formal compartments by internal 18th century walls and thus, while the planting has altered, their original framework survives. There are lawns, planting beds, box hedges, long 19th century herbaceous borders, an informal pool and rock garden, as well as Grade II listed garden features such as the Holsworth monument. Of particular interest are two ancient yews and mulberry trees while a Chusan Palm and Tree of Heaven represent the early 20th century development of the botanical interest into the garden. The woodland garden to the south of the Hall continues the character that was established in the 19th century - mature trees such as yews and medlar, and glasshouses.

4.53 The west gardens (now Belgrave Gardens park) are mainly laid to lawn. The central part is well provided with many fine mature horse chestnut, copper beech, yew, lime and maple trees while there are younger pine, Indian bean, maple, beech, lime and birch trees in the southern part. Large trees frame both the Church Road entrance and Belgrave House or are set in the lawns as specimens or commemorative features, such as the maple planted to mark the Golden Jubilee of the 4th Leicester Girls' Brigade. There are some interesting and unusual specimens such as Indian Bean and Paulownia (the Foxglove tree). Island beds set in the lawns are planted with colourful annuals. Clipped yews were originally a feature of the garden frontage to the river framing the view but the trees have long since been left to grow freely, closing the views into and out of the park. Clipped yews were also used decoratively in the front garden of Belgrave House but these have now been replaced by grass. The north section of the park provides informal recreation space with play space and play equipment. Both the east and west gardens are included on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens (Grade II).

4.54 The church yard has many notable trees such as large horse chestnuts, sycamores, yew and oak, particularly on the Church Road, footpath and Vicarage Lane frontages. There are also a number of Victorian gravestones in stone and slate, many finely carved, set in two groups around a central grassy area. The combination of trees, gravestones and grass enhance the setting of the church and the houses on Vicarage Lane. To the south and east eighteen trees and one group of trees on the site of the Hindu community centre on Vicarage Lane make a positive contribution to the character of the area and are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Mature trees such as these are also important wildlife features, providing a habitat for many species of invertebrates, birds and bats.

4.55 The gardens, church yard and the River Soar are also important for wildlife, having been identified as a 'Biodiversity Enhancement Site' and a 'Site of Importance for Nature Conservation' respectively. The colony of Daubenton's Bats (a protected species) under

the Thurcaston Road bridge is of particular note. The River Soar and Grand Union Canal together make up a regionally important strategic wildlife corridor through Leicester, literally bringing life in to the former industrial core of the city. Part is open to navigation, and it is intertwined with Grand Union Canal throughout Leicester. To the north at Watermead there is a wedge of natural green space alongside the river which penetrates right into the urban area; Belgrave Gardens are at the southern end of this Green Wedge. The riverside Gardens are one of the 'stepping stones' of green space along the river and canal that add value to the wildlife corridor, providing habitats and foraging areas for birds, bats, invertebrates and other animals.

4.56 Elsewhere in the conservation area Claremont Street Gardens has no notable trees and, indeed, there are many poor and damaged specimens. Nonetheless this small park adds 'greenness' to the conservation area. On Thurcaston Road, the large mature sycamore in the Talbot Inn car park is a good feature in the street scene as are the young rowan, lime and whitebeams on the south east corner of the Bath Street/Loughborough Road junction. The mid age oak on the north east corner of Thurcaston Road (in the ground of the old National School) is of high amenity value in the townscape. A mid age to mature oak tree on the north side of 225 Loughborough Road is also of high amenity value.

Negative factors

4.57 The environment of Loughborough Road is perhaps the most negative feature of the area. The high volume of traffic and the cumulative effect of alterations to the majority of the houses and commercial buildings along it have created a generally low quality visual environment that detracts substantially from the character and appearance of the conservation area. While there are some buildings (identified on Map 5) that make positive contributions to the character of the area, most of the others have little or nothing to contribute to its architectural or townscape value.

4.58 On Vicarage Lane the gradual loss of important townscape and architectural such as original windows, front doors and other decorative timber elements is a cause for some concern. Although just under 50% of the houses retain their original sliding sash windows and 35% their original doors, the majority still have timber in some form for their doors and windows. Only 2 out of the 31 properties have lost the mock timber frame detail between the double height bays. There are still two original brick and tile front boundary walls. On the north side of the street the single storey community centre building in buff brick is bland and detracts from the character of the conservation area. The modern vicarage towards the back of the site is unoccupied and boarded up.

4.59 The uneven and patched appearance of Church Road and the generally poor condition of the footpath to Vicarage Lane detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area. The presence of a close boarded fence behind the railings at Belgrave Hall is not an appropriate structure for such a sensitive site.

4.60 The legacy of lack of maintenance of the park in previous years is evident in its somewhat run-down appearance. Paths are uneven in places and have lost their 'crisp' edges, planting beds are untidy with many over-mature shrubs, seats are poor quality, old and

uncoordinated, the south garden is dull with little colour or visual interest and the boundary with Vicarage Lane is ill-defined. The loss of clear views from the Gardens to the canal and the view to Belgrave House from the west through the original clipped yews is regrettable.

Problems and pressures

4.61 Conservation area designation does not mean that an area should be preserved 'in aspic' but it is rather a recognition that its architectural and historic value is such that it requires special management measures. The aim is always to ensure that any changes made to the physical environment preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area. However, it is not only buildings or structures that combine to create character or appearance but also smaller features such as architectural details, the wholesale loss of which can contribute as much to loss of character as the construction of a badly designed new building. The condition of the buildings and spaces in an area also contribute to its character. If they are well maintained they can add value to the visitor's experience of the place, but if they are deteriorating because they are unoccupied or in poor physical condition or have been unsympathetically altered this can lower the value of a street or space.

4.62 There are no redevelopment pressures affecting the Belgrave Hall Conservation Area but there are a number of problems relating to empty buildings, the conservation value of certain buildings and changes that are threatening the architectural value and integrity of others. Firstly, the continuing vacancy of the Grade II listed Belgrave House and stables are a matter of concern. Secondly, this appraisal has suggested that many of the properties on Loughborough Road may not be of sufficient architectural or historic value to warrant their inclusion. Thirdly, there is evidence of a slow accumulation of changes to the houses on Vicarage Lane as a result of existing permitted development rights and it is clear that these could, if the trend continues, damage the character and appearance of the street.

Capacity for change

4.63 The Council recognised that Belgrave Gardens had a number of problems – over-mature shrubs, poor seating etc - and prepared a Management Plan in 2003 that identified a range of works that would improve the park, including regenerating the planting and extending the range of seasonal interest, providing interpretation signage, better seating, litter bins etc, restoring the rock garden and pool and improving access to the canal.

4.64 As most of the conservation area is occupied by a public park and a large number of listed buildings, there is little capacity for change in the form of redevelopment. However, the re-use of Belgrave House and stables following their recent sale offers considerable opportunity for restoration and the injection of new life into the area. However, both the buildings and their setting are particularly sensitive to change so the work needs to be carried out in a sympathetic manner. The Council as vendor has therefore imposed certain conditions on the sale in respect of car parking (including a parking ban in Church Road), physical alterations etc. in order to protect their integrity as listed buildings. The details of the restoration and conversion will be resolved as part of the planning application process.

4.66 The architectural details of the houses on Vicarage Lane are important factors in the positive contribution that this street makes to the character of the conservation area. It follows therefore that their loss would erode that character. However, the houses enjoy 'permitted development rights' so that such changes can be made without planning permission. There is some evidence to suggest that such changes are beginning to happen – the recent replacement in plastic of two sets of timber sash windows at numbers 14 and 30 for example and the previous loss of several front doors.

5.0 Community involvement

5.1 An exhibition was set up in Belgrave Hall museum in October 2007 with copies of the document available for consultation. A public meeting was also held there to discuss, and add to, the draft management and enhancement proposals. A Press Release notified local people of the exhibition and public meeting and individual invitations were sent to all businesses and residents in the conservation area. Posters were put up around the area giving the locations, dates and times of the exhibition and public meeting. The draft appraisal was also placed on the Council's website. All comments received are included at Appendix 4, together with the Council's responses to them.

6.0 Conservation Area boundary

6.1 The Council is required by s.69(2) to review the boundaries of Leicester's conservation areas from time to time. This has been done as part of this appraisal and a proposal to exclude 2-12 Checketts Road, and 173-183 and 264-326 Loughborough Road was presented to local people for discussion at the public meeting. The consensus of local opinion was that these properties are an essential part of the area's history and should remain part of the conservation area. However, in view of their appearance, people considered that grants could be offered to help improve the appearance of the commercial buildings.

6.2 The Council agrees that the properties should not be excluded and the boundaries will therefore remain unchanged.

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 were 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 have been incorporated in the appraisal.

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 Team, Planning Policy & Design, Regeneration & Culture, Leicester City Council, New Walk Centre, Welford Place, Leicester, LE1 6ZG;
- Phone Leicester 2527217
- 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

Bath Street	No. 6 (Bull's Head public house)
Checketts Road	2-12 (even)
Church Road	Belgrave Hall & Stables, Church of St Peter, Belgrave House & Stables
Claremont Street	No. 8a, Claremont Street Gardens
Loughborough Road	Nos. 173-183 (odd), 189-201 (odd), 213, 221-225 (odd), 264-326 (even)
Thurcaston Road	Nos. 1-5 (odd), Cross Corners, 4 (Talbot Inn), Thurcaston Bridge
Vicarage Lane	St Peter's Church vicarage, Shree Darii Gnati Mandal Community Centre, 2, 2a, 4-62 (even)

APPENDIX 2: List of listed buildings in the conservation area

Church Road	Belgrave Gardens (Grade II on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens)
Church Road	Belgrave Hall, railings and gates in front of Hall (Grade II*), Monument to Edward Holdsworth, inner garden walls east of Hall, garden boundary walls south & east of Hall, stables (all Grade II); gateway & railings to Belgrave Gardens; Belgrave House & railings (Grade II*), Stables south and south west of House (all Grade II); Church of St Peter (Grade II)
Thurcaston Road	Cross Corners & wall to east, Belgrave Bridge (both Grade II)

Tree Preservation Order

TPO 279	St Peter's Church Hall & Vicarage Lane
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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...
Special Policy Areas	SPA09	Riverside Development
Built Environment		
Archaeology	BE01	Preservation of the city's archaeological heritage
Listed Buildings	BE02	Alterations and extensions
	BE03	Changes of use
	BE04	Setting of..
	BE05	Demolition of..
Conservation Areas	BE06	New development and changes of use in...
	BE07	Demolition in...
Buildings of local interest	BE08	Impact of development on...
	BE19	Floodplain protection and enhancement
Green Environment		
Nature Conservation	GE02	Development and sites on Importance for Nature Conservation
Biodiversity	GE03	Maintaining Biodiversity Enhancement Sites
Protected species	GE04	Development and protected species
Wildlife	GE02	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
Parks and gardens of historic interest	GE11	Protection of character
Play areas	GE14	Protection of play areas

APPENDIX 4 Results of consultations

Comments received	Council response
Visitors to public meeting and exhibition	
Tiny bedsits at 280 Loughborough. Also poor elevation treatment. Can this be improved?	Enforcement officers will investigate to see if the elevation is as approved. If no action is possible contact will be made with the owner to try to improve the elevational treatment
Support Article 4 for Vicarage Lane + front walls scheme	An Article 4 will be made early in 2008 A front wall scheme would need capital programme funding and will be put forward for future funding whenever possible
Churchyard trees need thinning of crowns etc	Council tree managers are investigating to see if any works are needed.
Disagree with exclusion of Loughborough Road properties	This is the general view. The boundary will therefore remain unchanged and para. 6.2 of the Character Appraisal has been amended accordingly.
What can be done to stop removal of front boundary walls in Vicarage Lane?	An Article 4 Direction is the only solution and is being pursued.
Church Road needs footpaths	This is a private road and is designed to reflect its original function as an open carriage drive and turning space. Making it look like a standard highway would damage the character – however, use of different colour surfacing materials to define walking and driving areas might be a solution. The potential for improvements will be investigated.
Vicarage Lane has parking problems. Need a Residents’ Parking Scheme	A survey for such a scheme is programmed for Spring 2008
Vacant vicarage should be used	Housing officers are already investigating to bring the property back into use. However, the owners have also applied for planning permission to use it for community purposes.
282 Loughborough Road is dangerous.	Building Control is aware of the crack in the back addition and have served a notice on the owner to make it safe. Owner now also aware that he needs a structural survey and to carry out full repairs to prevent this happening again. This is not an issue that can be resolved by reason of conservation area status.
By letter	
Use Belgrave House as accommodation for elderly people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council Departments were consulted on service needs for which the building could be used. There were none, including from providers of elderly persons’ accommodation. Conversion to provide accommodation for elderly people would have had too great an impact on the Grade II* interior and would not have been good conservation practice. The building was therefore sold (being surplus to LCC requirements) for offices. Letter sent to respondent to explain the Council’s decision for not keeping and converting the building.
<p>Investment needed by the Council to enhance the area as it looks drab, un-kept and uncared for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need a conservation area plaque at the Thurstaston Road junction • Exclude the houses etc on Loughborough Road • Church Walk needs to be resurfaced and lit in suitable materials and designs • Church Road and the riverside need more seating and better lighting for the former • To prevent parking, the future tenants of Belgrave House should arrange offsite parking at the back of the Talbot Inn • The pedestrian bridge at the north end needs to be replaced with one of much better design 	<p>Disagree that the area looks drab, etc. Some properties are not well looked-after and there are several properties and areas where improvements could be made. These are included for action in Appendix 5. However, if the Council is to actively encourage such improvements then grant funding would be real incentive. A funding bid for Conservation Area Enhancement could also be submitted in the next capital bidding round.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plaque will be installed shortly. • The consensus of local opinion is that the houses should remain part of the conservation area. • Seating and lighting have been added to Management & Enhancement Proposals. • The Talbot is privately owned and the Council has no power to require such an arrangement. However, the idea will be passed on to the new owner for further investigation. • A well designed new bridge would be an asset to the area but would require substantial capital investment. Its replacement is not included currently in the Council’s bridges programme.

Comments received	Council response
<p>Disagree with taking Loughborough Road out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Support all recommendations in Appendix 5 •Use grants to get houses improved especially nos. 191-197 •Need policies to prevent unsightly conversions, shutters etc 	<p>The Council will investigate potential for Historic Building grants with owners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The Local Plan already includes such policies and they are applied when planning applications are considered as well as for enforcement action (such as action against the unauthorised shutters at 282 Loughborough Road)
<p>On Comments Forms</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Listed building at 173 not shown •221-225 not given a colour on the map •Disagree with exclusion of Loughborough Road 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Replied by letter - Map amend •Boundary will remain unchanged
<p>Natural history conservationist should be involved in all planning issues in the area as there may be bats & other wildlife in the old vicarage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Street drinkers along side of Flamingo on Checketts Road side a real problem as are vandalism and youths hanging around the area at night and in school holidays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Concerns passed to Nature Conservation Officer •Second issue passed on to police.
<p>Vacant vicarage is a disgrace. If re-used as a home it would stop the vandalism. Otherwise demolish it and re-use the land</p>	<p>See above</p>
<p>The litter bin on Church Road should be re-sited nearer to the seat. Not only would it be closer to the point where litter is dropped but it would no longer be visible along the vista from the east end of Belgrave Hall garden through the house and outwards to the trees and river.</p>	<p>This has been passed on to Waste Management with a recommendation that the bin be moved as soon as practical.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Events like this should be published in the Link magazine •There should be more events in the park •The Loughborough Road houses should remain part of the conservation area •The modern life theme in Belgrave Hall is not appropriate. Such features should be displayed elsewhere. •The old path from Loughborough Road between the church and the Hall should be reinstated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •It is not always possible to coordinate the publishing of a draft appraisal with the copy deadlines for the Link. This is what happened in this case. However, the 2008 appraisal programme will be the subject of an article for the April/May issue next year. •The events idea has been passed to Parks Services •Council policy is to make services more relevant to and reflective of today's communities. It is Belgrave's only museum and Belgrave is now 70% non-white and non-Christian. Its function as a focus for the local community by reflecting that change is quite legitimate and, indeed, the changes have increased visitor footfall. There is a lot of information on the history of the building and the family that built it in the free 'acoustiguides' available at the museum. •Whilst this is a historic link (possibly for the use of the lord of the manor between his hall on Loughborough Road and the church) the Council does not consider that the restoration of the path would be advisable. It would be narrow and winding, with no direct surveillance. It would probably not be safe to use and could attract anti-social elements. This suggestion will not be included in the management and enhancement proposals.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The Loughborough Road houses should stay in the conservation area •The room sets in the Hall no longer reflect the history of the Hall. Too much emphasis on Belgrave today. 	<p>See above (for both points)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Agree with Article 4 proposal •Resurface Church Road in appropriate materials & ensure it does not become a car park •Take shops out of conservation area 	<p>See above</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The appearance of the shops is somewhat detrimental to the area and grant will be offered to try to secure improvements. If this is unsuccessful, the issue will be re-examined at the next five year review of the conservation area.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Agree with management and enhancement proposals •Problems with litter and bins on the street •Buildings out of character •Overgrown areas near community centre •Keep Loughborough Road buildings in the conservation area •Community centre building and 280/282 Loughborough Road need to be improved •Parking and rat-running problems •Concern about consultation dates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Concerns about litter and bins have been passed to Waste Management as these are not issues that can be resolved by conservation legislation. •The building that is 'out of character' is not identified but if it is the community centre this has had planning permission and the Council cannot require changes to be made. •If the land being complained about is in private ownership the Council can only take action if it becomes sufficiently detrimental that action under s.215 of the Planning Act 1990 (untidy land) can be justified. The situation will be monitored. •Building Control is pursuing the structural problem at 282 with the owner. The appearance of the frontage at 280 is being investigated to see if improvements can be made. The community centre has planning permission. •Parking – see above. The rat-running issue has been passed to Transport Development for investigation •The respondent had misinterpreted the consultation dates – this has been resolved direct.

Comments received	Council response
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Residents need to be reminded they live in a conservation area and the implications•Do not change the boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•An updated leaflet with this information will be distributed early in 2008.•See above

APPENDIX 5

Management and enhancement proposals

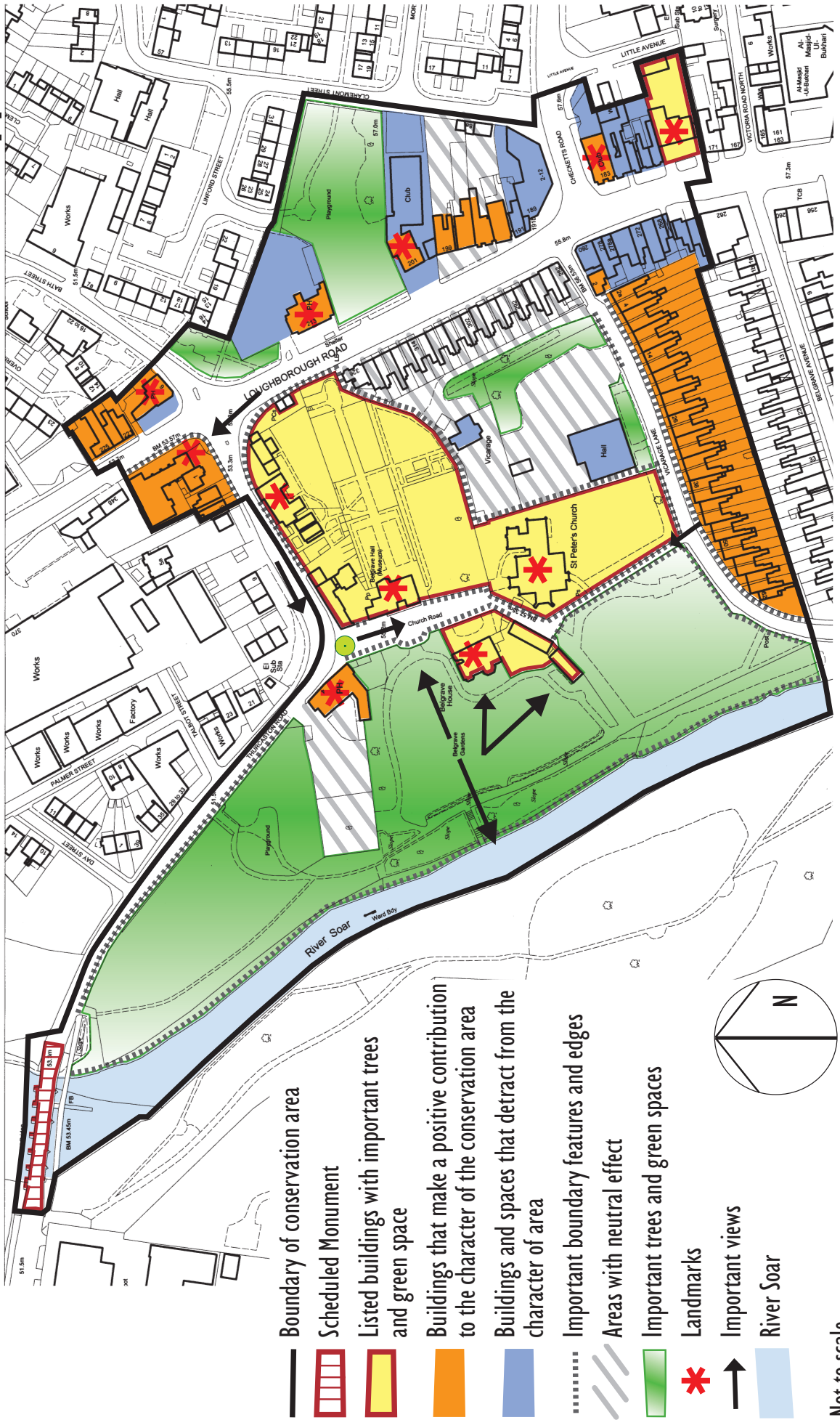
Location	Management/enhancement Proposal
1. Conservation Area generally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply the policies set out in the Local Plan and relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance to ensure that all development proposals preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area; Delivery: on-going • Publish and distribute an explanatory leaflet about the conservation area and the implications of designation; Delivery: short term and annually • The Council will seek funds for grant to repair and restoration of architectural details such as timber sash windows; Delivery: short term • The Council will identify commercial buildings on Loughborough Road in order to inform a future bid for grant aid; Delivery: short term • The Council will seek funds for a grant scheme to provide improvements to commercial properties on Loughborough Road; Delivery: short to medium term • Undertake a photographic survey to provide a baseline for monitoring change in the conservation area; Delivery: ongoing
2. Belgrave Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement improvements identified in the Park Management Plan, particularly coordinated design of seats, bins etc, provision of interpretation panels, reinvigorate herbaceous borders, open up views from Belgrave House to the canal and from the west side of the canal to the House and install appropriate design of railings along canal edge; Delivery: long term • Replace concrete bollards on boundary with Vicarage Lane with a more appropriate design and material such as low boundary wall with railings. Provide a more positive entrance to the south garden from the footpath; Delivery: short to medium term
3. Footpath from Church Road to Vicarage lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relay surface in appropriate pale colour and textured material to reflect more light and increase security including original granite setts and blue paver surfaces; Delivery: long term • Ensure overhanging branches are pruned back regularly to maximise effect of street lighting; Delivery: ongoing
4. Church Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relay surface to restore 'gravel' effect including relaying blue paver drainage gulleys; provide seating and improved lighting as appropriate; Delivery: long term • Restore railings to original design around tree at north end; Delivery: medium term • Remove timber fence behind railings south of Belgrave Hall and replace with appropriate design in metal; Delivery: short term
5. Vicarage Lane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw up Article 4(2) Direction to prevent the further erosion of the character of the houses at 2, 2a-62 Vicarage Lane; Delivery: within 6 months • Seek funding for front boundary wall restoration scheme; Delivery: medium to long term
	<p>Short term - up to 3 years, Medium term - 3-5 years, Long term - 5 years +</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
cornice	horizontal projecting section at the top of a building or wall
doorcase	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
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

Map 5 Belgrave Hall Conservation Area Character Appraisal



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