



Rothwell is a place of special character and historic interest.

This appraisal and management plan sets out the features that contribute to its distinctiveness and identifies opportunities for its protection and enhancement



# Rothwell

## CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

# Summary

## Summary of special interest

Rothwell conservation area includes the historic core of the town, centred on Commercial Street, the earlier medieval focus of the church and manor complex to the north of the beck and the surrounding residential suburbs.

Today's town has been shaped by a long and interesting history. The medieval significance of the fortified manor complex and royal hunting park was waning by the 15th century as Rothwell developed as a small market town with a largely agricultural economy. The mining importance of the area defined the 19th century but the town did not experience the rapid expansion and industrialisation seen in many neighbouring settlements. The last mine in the area closed in 1983 but there is little visible evidence of this former industry.

Rothwell's present-day character includes the village-like character of some areas of the historic town, the new commercial development of Morrisons and the adjacent shopping parade and the surrounding leafy historic suburbs.

Key characteristics:

- Rothwell's settlement form has been influenced by the valley topography of the Haigh / Oulton Beck and the medieval layout of the principal roads and reused strip-field boundaries.

- The church and Town Hall are the principal landmark structures and the focus of important views.
- The historic built environment is dominated by residential, civic and commercial buildings of late 19th and early 20th century date. Common building materials are sandstone and brick. Early buildings dating to the 16th and 17th century show evidence of a timber-frame tradition and 18th century buildings often feature symmetrical facades. Villas and impressive terraces of the late 19th and early 20th century are significant to the special character of the town as are early 20th century suburban semi-detached developments.
- Boundary walls and hedges are important in some areas of the town.
- Greenscape features are important to the character of the town. The parks, pocket parks and semi-natural green spaces are essential elements to Rothwell's character. Trees, *Rothwell in Bloom* displays

## Summary of issues and opportunities

The protection and enhancement of the special character of the conservation area depends on the positive conservation management of Rothwell. In addition to the existing national statutory legislation and local planning policy controls the following opportunities for protection and enhancement have been identified:

- Repair damage to the settlement form when opportunities arise.
- Ensure new development responds sensitively and creatively to the historic environment.
- Surviving historic features should be retained and sympathetically repaired. The replacement of inappropriate fixtures, fittings and adaptations is encouraged.
- Historic shopfronts should be retained and maintained. New shopfronts should preserve or enhance the special character of the area.
- Ensure that future public realm and traffic management measures respect and enhance the special character of the conservation area.
- Protect the important contribution trees make to the special character of the conservation area.
- Development should have regard to the archaeological record and where necessary include an element of archaeological investigation and mitigation.
- Promote and celebrate the special architectural and historic interest in the conservation area.
- Ensure that the setting of the conservation area is considered as a material consideration within the planning process.



Holy Trinity forms one of the principal landmarks of the town



Commercial Street is the principal street of the town and dates to the medieval period

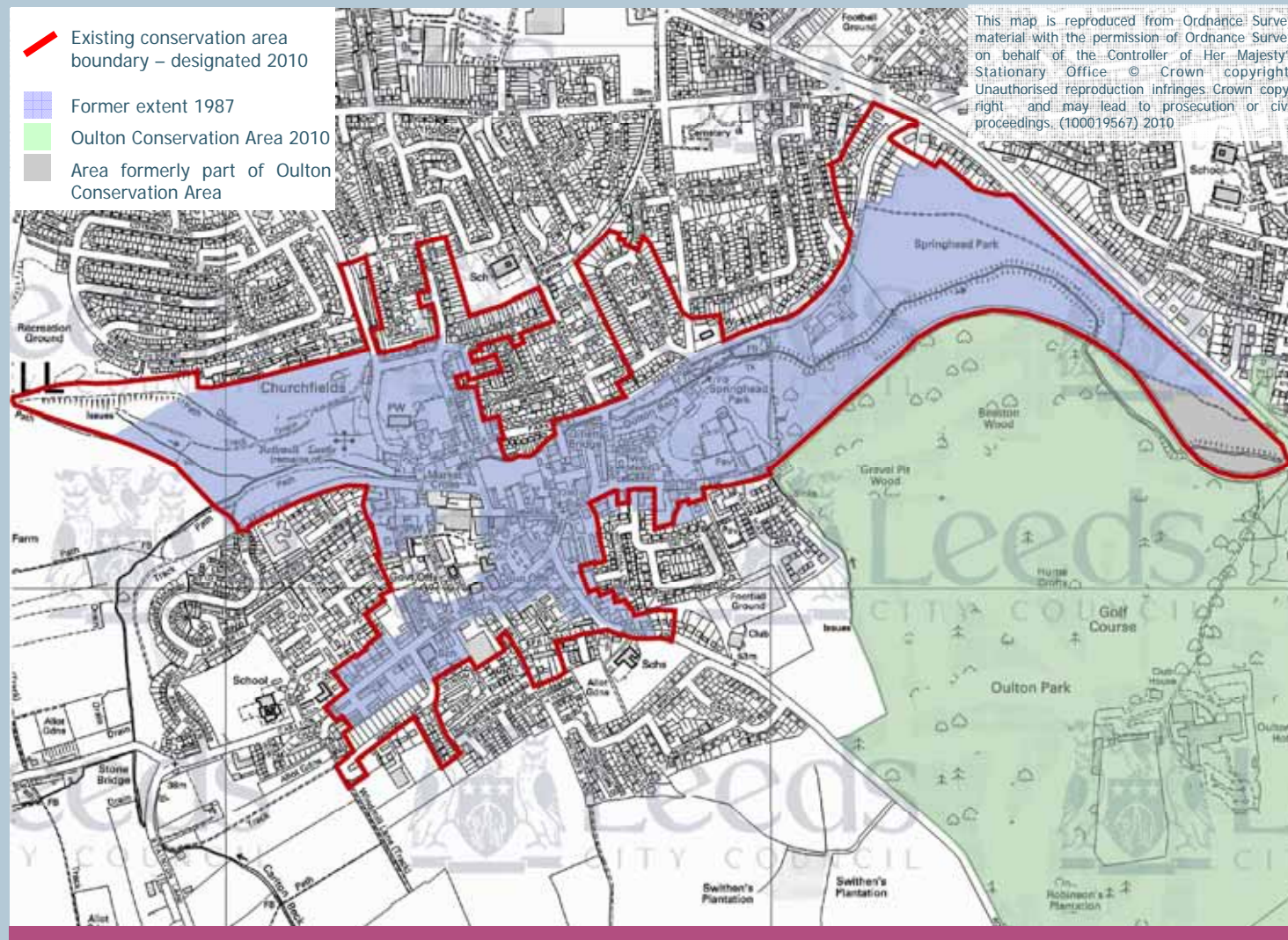


The former Town Hall, now council offices, recalls the 19th century civic pride of Rothwell

## Extent of the conservation area

Rothwell was first designated as a conservation area in 1976. The initial designation focused tightly around the church and site of Rothwell Castle taking in The Paddock, Meynell Avenue and the area of the market cross. In 1987 the boundary was extended to include more of the wider town (see blue shaded area on the map). In 2010 as part of the appraisal process the boundary was reviewed and the following modifications were made:

- A rationalisation at Church Fields and Springhead Park to follow plot boundaries.
- Extensions at Wood Lane, Churchfield Lane, Churchfield Road and Glanville Terrace to include residential development of special interest.
- An extension to include the early 20th century residential development of Sandybank Avenue and related houses and the Catholic church on Park Lane. A further area of early 20th century residential development is also recommended at the northern end of Park Lane.
- An extension to include a number of dwellings on Royds Lane. Rationalisation of the boundary to exclude a number of recent residential developments at Oulton Lane and Whitehall Croft.



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- An extension to include residential development on Springfield Street, Swithen's Street, Smithson Street and the former industrial site, now garage, at Marsh Street.
- An extension to include allotment gardens and residences at

Perseverance Terrace, Windmill Lane and Windmill Field Road.

- An extension to include residential, commercial and business premises at Butcher Lane, Cross Street and Commercial Street. Although much

altered this is part of the historic core of Rothwell.

## Location and context

Rothwell is located 8 km (5 miles) to the south east of Leeds on the A639. The town has excellent communication links with easy access to the M1, M621 and M62. The nearest railway station is at Woodlesford, 2.5 km (1.5 miles) to the north east. The line of the railway closely follows the river Aire and the parallel Aire and Calder navigation.

Rothwell is a small local town, sometimes referred to as a village. It has a small town centre featuring a range of national chains, independent local businesses and a large, recently redeveloped, supermarket. Large areas of estate-based residential development surround the town centre with a number of industrial estates on the outskirts.

### Geology, topography and landscape setting

Rothwell is located on a geology of sandstone surrounded by Lower and Middle Coal Measures. Extraction of coal, gravel, sand and stone has been historically important to the area. A number of substantial collieries were located close to the town. Rose Pit was the closest, set to the immediate west of the church. Slightly further a field, to the north east, was Rothwell Colliery. This mine closed in 1983 and the site has been reclaimed as Rothwell Country Park.



The historic core of Rothwell straddles the west-east running beck. The proximity of the surrounding countryside and parkland landscape of Oulton Park is important to the character of the town

Rothwell is set within the valley of the Haigh and Oulton Beck that runs west-east through the town, and is sometimes called the River Dolphin.

The town's numerous wells, fed by natural springs, were an important feature in the settlement's origins and development.

The valley sides rise gently, loosely enclosing the historic core of the town. To the north, the natural ridge of Rothwell Haigh was a separate settlement focus and features surviving historic buildings including the surviving clock tower from the former workhouse, later St George's Hospital.

The immediate setting of the conservation area is a mixture of 20th and 21st century residential estates, parkland and countryside. To the east the boundary abuts Oulton Conservation Area and the parkland of Oulton Park. To the west the boundary includes Churchfields and abuts the agricultural land beyond which is protected by its greenbelt designation. These landscape breaks between settlements are important in defining Rothwell as a separate place from its neighbours Oulton, Woodlesford, Carlton and Robin Hood.



Rothwell in its wider setting



The valley topography of Haigh / Oulton Beck dominates the terrain of the town



Rothwell is located on a geology of sandstone (yellow) with lower and middle coal measures to the south (green)

## Historic development

### Early activity

Evidence of prehistoric activity in the area comes from the discovery of two Bronze Age cremation urns at Wood Lane 1km north west of Holy Trinity Church.

Chance finds dating to the Romano-British period include a bronze coin dating to c 69-70 AD and various pottery sherds. During 19th century excavations at Carlton Bridge, a possibly Roman horse shoe was recovered along with what was described at the time as the Roman Road from Lingwell to Rothwell. An enclosure dating to the 4th century AD is known 1km to the north west of the church at Rothwell Haigh.

### The medieval manor

By the late Saxon period Rothwell was a township and is first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. *Rothwell* is an Old English place name meaning *well by the clearing* and is probably a reference to the Church Well. The late Saxon settlement is thought to have been centred on a church and a manorial hall on the high ground near Holy Trinity Church and Church Fields. The discovery of an Anglo Saxon cross head in the churchyard and a number of late Saxon or Norman carvings incorporated within the church walls may be remains from this earlier church.

The Domesday entry records that the value of the township as a whole was severely reduced after the Conquest from £8 to 40s. This likely reflects the

destruction caused during the 'Harrying of the North' and the reprisals and subjugation of the local rebellion against the Norman Conquest.

Following the Conquest, Rothwell came under the control of Ilbert de Lacey and in the 11th century it became the demesne manor in the Honour of Pontefract, that is the home or main manor of the Lord. Rothwell functioned as an important administrative centre, strategically located on the main route connecting the two great de Lacey estates of Pontefract and Clitheroe.

A survey of 1341 provides a detailed description of the manor complex:

*There is there a certain Manor House, hall, chapel, chambers, kitchen, bakehouse, brewery, barns, oxstalls, stables and other houses necessary for the residence of the lord, built and enclosed with stone walls, the site of which, with easements to the house, the herbage, garden fruit, together with the mill pond under the manor house, two fishponds within the manor .....*

*Also, the herbage of the Park, the palisading of which contains in length of circuit 7 miles*

The description depicts a largely self-sufficient complex with the prestigious manor house and associated farm and service buildings enclosed by a stone wall and set above a mill with gardens, nearby fishponds, rabbit warrens and a hunting park.

During the early part of the medieval period, Rothwell was an important manorial centre, with royal connections. The high status gradually waned, finally

being lost during the power plays of the Wars of the Roses (1455-1487).

In 1399 the manor passed to the Duchy of Lancaster and formed part of the Crown Lands. The park at Rothwell Haigh, which possibly originated as a smaller Saxon park, became a royal hunting park and the manor house was used as a royal hunting lodge playing host to a succession of kings during this period. It was also the sometime home of John of Gaunt who is said to have killed the last wild boar in England in the park in 1398.

By the mid 15th century the prestige and status of the manor was in decline. Already in 1361 the main house, garden and demesne lands were let to tenants and in 1440 the manor was described as being in a ruinous condition. When Roger Hopton took over the lease in 1487 it was on the condition that he carried out specific rebuilding works. In 1530 Henry VIII 'de-parked' the royal hunting park and it reverted to pasture, another indication of the declining status of the manor.

The site of the medieval manor complex lies to the west of the church, in Church Fields, and part of the area is protected as a scheduled monument. The only standing remains of the complex is a pier of masonry rubble thought to be the remains of the chapel described in the 1341 survey. The remains are known as *Rothwell Castle* and there has been debate as to whether the site ever included a defensive castle or should simply be regarded as a fortified manor house. A 14th century document refers to a building on a mound or mound



Standing remains of the medieval manor now consist of a masonry pier thought to represent the corner of the chapel



Church and manor house in 1955. The surviving chapel pier is visible to the left and the millpond to the foreground (copyright Leodis)



Undated view of the mill prior to its demolition in 1967 (copyright Leodis)

which may be a reference to an earlier hall set on a motte. It has been suggested that the mound may have been lost under 19th century mine spoil deposited on the site by Rose Pit. Future archaeological investigation may be able to resolve this question.

The medieval manor house survived until 1977 when Manor Farm Buildings were demolished. This complex included elements of a medieval timber-framed building thought to represent the Hopton rebuild of 1487. The timbers of this structure were carefully recorded by the West Yorkshire Archaeology Service during the demolition and are said to be in Leeds City Council storage.

The medieval corn mill, set below the church on the Haigh Beck and referred to in the 1341 survey, may have Saxon origins. The building was demolished in 1967. Excavations undertaken on the site in 1985/6 by the West Yorkshire Archaeology Service found evidence of several phases of mill construction and at least three phases of dam construction. The former mill pond has been infilled but substantial remains of two medieval fish ponds survive to the west on Haigh Beck.

### The medieval town

Batty, in his 1877 history of the town, states that Edmund De Lacy, the Lord of the Manor, gained the right to hold a weekly market and two annual fairs in 1250. However, there is no record of this charter in the Public Record Office and Rothwell's earliest surviving market and fair charter dates to 1408.

Gaining market and fair rights often formed part of an attempt to establish a town and may suggest ambitions to develop Rothwell. The 15th century charter may be a reconfirmation of existing rights or may represent a concerted effort to develop the town at this time.

The market place and main street, known originally as Town Street, now Commercial Street, were developed on the southern side of the beck. This development was connected to the older, north bank manorial and religious focus by a fording point at the mill. The ford was replaced by a new bridge at Church Street, built as late as 1772.

If the charter represents an attempt to establish a new market town it seems to have been of limited success. There is no indication that the main street was ever laid out in the distinctive long, thin plots known as burgage strips that define many medieval new towns. The regular grain of the plots recorded on the historic map sequence relates instead to a medieval strip field system that was overlain by the urban development.

Today, a replica of the market cross survives close to the Doctors Surgery at the northern end of Cross Street. This is thought to be close to the position of the original medieval cross which would have stood in the market place. However, the context of the cross, and its status marking the centre of the commercial town, has until recently been compromised by the insensitive severance of the main street by the former supermarket building

constructed in the 1970s. The recent demolition of this building and the reopening of the line of the main street is a welcome development.

### Post Medieval Industrial Rothwell

During the medieval period Rothwell was strategically positioned on the main road network of the region. However, the 18th century turnpike improvements bypassed the town, contributing to its declining regional importance.

The character of Rothwell and its surrounding area changed with the impact of the industrial revolution. During the late 18th and 19th centuries the largely agricultural, medieval economy was transformed with the development of deep mining and industrialised manufacturing. However, Rothwell did not experience the massive population influx and intense urbanisation that resulted in some other neighbouring settlements.

Fostered by the local supply of raw materials and the proximity of the Aire and Calder navigation, a number of ancillary craft industries developed in the town. Glass and pottery manufacture began in the 18th century with a glass works in operation from 1726 to the end of the century, and Samuel Shaw's Pottery and Rothwell Pottery (established 1767) operating from within the town. A match works was established in 1840 by the mill goit and ran until 1902 despite several fires.

During the 19th century a tanning industry developed with Aire Tannery located to the northwest of Rothwell



Modern replica of the medieval market cross



Undated view of Rose Pit, sunk in 1850 to the immediate north of the medieval manor. Site now cleared (copyright Leodis)



Prospect House was built as the Parish Poor House in 1772 on reclaimed marshland



Extract from the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of c1908, 1: 2,500

*Castle* and another tannery located to the east of the town centre.

A domestic woollen industry had operated in Rothwell but the town never became the focus for industrialised mills unlike neighbouring settlements. A cloth factory was, however, built in 1806 near the beck at Spring Head, Woodlesford Lane. It went through a number of owners and was in operation until 1845-6 when John Blayds of Oulton Hall purchased the site and demolished the factory to stop its smoke polluting his parkland.

By far the greatest impact on the town came from the intensification of coal mining. Small-scale mining had taken

place in the area during the medieval period and up to the beginning of the 18th century using shallow works and bell pits. The onset of industrialisation created a new level of demand for coal and technical innovations enabled deep shaft mining that changed the region dramatically and made mining the area's principal industry.

Rose Pit on the north of Churchfields was sunk in 1850 and ceased coal winding in 1925. To the north of the conservation area at Rothwell Colliery shafts were sunk in 1867 and 1911. The colliery worked until its closure in 1983 when 650 jobs were lost. Mining also took place at Rothwell Haigh with the first shaft sunk in 1760. Today, these

sites have been cleared and the land reclaimed leaving little physical evidence of this important industry.

Other local extractive industries included stone quarrying, gravel and sand extraction. Local quarries provided much of the building stone for the town.

### Post Medieval Rothwell - Civic pride

The town expanded during the 18th and 19th centuries with marshland to the south of Commercial Street reclaimed for development and remembered in the name *Marsh Street*.

One of the earliest developments in this area was the brick-built Poor House built in 1772 which survives today in residential use as Prospect House, Springfield Street.

The marshy ground known as the *Waste of Rothwell* was enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1809, opening the way for its subsequent development. A plan of the township of Rothwell of 1816 shows plots developed along Swithen's Street and the west side of Royds Lane with Springfield Street connecting the two. The area between these routes is still marked as *Marsh* (WYAS WYL333 6).

Although Rothwell changed substantially during the 19th century it did not experience the same intensity of industrialisation as other neighbouring settlements. There seems to have been a deliberate policy and choice by the town's landholders and civic groups to resist the full-blown industrialisation

experienced in other places. In 1838 the Derby to Leeds Railway Company proposed a new rail-route and station at Rothwell. However, the Rothwell Traders Association opposed this on the grounds that it would take trade out of the town and their objections led to the re-routing of the line and the creation of the station at Woodlesford instead. Rothwell Station was eventually built in 1903 to the north of the church with a passenger service to Leeds established in 1904. However, this was short-lived with the service ending in the same year to avoid bankruptcy.

In 1873 Rothwell Local Board was established, later superseded by Rothwell Urban District Council (UDC) in 1894. These bodies provided local governance during a period of civic improvement. The public gas works were established in 1856 with the town lit by gas street lights from 1873. Between 1879 and 1881 mains water, drainage and sewerage systems were installed. The prestigious Town Hall, now council offices, in Marsh Street was built to house the UDC in 1895. Although impressive, the offices have a modesty and conservatism of scale and design that perfectly represents the nature of the town and its leaders through this period of unprecedented flux and change.

During the Victorian period the town was shaped by the spirit of self improvement and religious devotion. In 1864 Holy Trinity schools were built on glebe land on the south side of Commercial Street. The distinctive 'T'-form plan created separate playgrounds

for 'Girls' and 'Boys'. The building was demolished as part of the redevelopment of the main street during the 1970s. In 1872 the Board Schools at Carlton Lane opened and the buildings survive today.

The Mechanics Institute, Marsh Street dates to 1869, although the society was formed earlier in 1853. It provided education to working men, lectures, evening classes, a library and games. The building was later used as a dance hall, picture house and is now home to the Windmill Youth Club.

Rothwell had one of the first Methodist preaching houses in Yorkshire dating to 1766. Initially the congregation met in a converted stable in Butcher Lane but later built their own dedicated chapel. The site of a Primitive Methodist Chapel in Marsh Street is now the Joseph Priestly College. The manse for the chapel survives and is now converted as a surgery.

The development of back-to-back terraces, typically built to house the new industrial workforce, was limited in the town. Historic maps show a number of back-to-back terraces on Chapel Street and Holme Street. These streets ran between Commercial Street and Marsh Street and were cleared in the 'slum' clearances of the early 20th century.

More typically in Rothwell, 19th century workers and artisan housing took the form of short rows of through-terraces, sometimes fronting onto streets but often forming court-type developments. Hargreaves Street and Clayton Street at

the east end of Marsh Street are good surviving examples of this type of development. Elsewhere, such as at the west end of Carlton Lane and Butcher Lane, these brick terraces have been cleared.

### 20th century to the present

The early 20th century saw a continuation of the UDC's programme of civic improvements. Areas of 'slum' dwellings were swept away including the area known as *Shore Ditch* which was cleared during the 1920s and '30s.

Rothwell became popular with middle-class commuters due to its good communication links to Leeds. As well as its proximity by road and the short-lived train service, a tram also ran between the two during the early 20th century. Residential development of the pre-war period saw the construction of Edwardian red brick villas and substantial terraces.

Inter-war suburban residential development also forms part of the special character of the town with developments such as Sandybank Avenue and houses along Park Lane. Rothwell Public Park, now Springhead Park, was created between 1935 and 1937. The western end was created with a grant from the West Yorkshire Joint District Miners Welfare Committee and opened in 1935. It provided tennis courts, a children's play ground and a bowling green from 1936. The eastern end of the park was funded by the Yorkshire Miners Union and opened in 1937.

The 1950s saw the development of large-scale council estates to the north of the town centre. From the 1970s onwards there was an intensification of private estate-based residential development on the outskirts of the historic town.

In 1974 local governance of the area was transferred from Rothwell Urban District Council to Leeds City Council.

The late 20th century saw the decline of mining in the area and Rothwell Colliery, the last operational mine in the area, finally closed in 1983.

### Historic associations

Rothwell has a number of celebrated historic associations including its medieval connections with John of Gaunt. His reputed slaying of the last wild boar in England inspired the crest of the Rothwell Urban District Council which featuring a boar's severed head.

The innovative engineer, John Blenkinsop (1783-1831), was born and died at Rothwell and is commemorated by a listed gravestone at Holy Trinity. He was a steam locomotive engineer and invented the rack-and-pinion railway in 1811. His gravestone records that this system was used on the line between Middleton Colliery and Leeds Bridge, with four Matthew Murray locomotives between 1812-1835. It was also adopted at Newcastle upon Tyne in 1813 and Wigan in 1814. These railways were the first time that steam locomotion was a commercial success.



Civic pride and self-governance, Rothwell Urban District Council offices, 1895



Spirit of self-improvement and education. The Mechanics Institute, Marsh Lane, 1869



Red brick Edwardian villas are a distinctive feature of the town; this example at Royds Lane



## Character Analysis: *Spatial Analysis*

### Settlement form

Rothwell has been shaped by the **valley topography** of the Haigh and Oulton Beck. The valley sides rise gently to the north and south and loosely enclose the town centre. Many of the main streets, such as Commercial Street and Marsh Street, mirror the alignment of the beck, following the contour to create level-lying streets. Approach routes from the north and south, cut across the terrain, forming gentle descents into the town centre that add to the sense of arrival.

The legacy of the **medieval layout** of Rothwell continues to shape today's town. Many of the principal roads date to this period and the grain of development reflects earlier boundaries that have been reused and fossilised within later phases of development. The long thin strips of the medieval field system can still be made out in boundaries to the south of the beck. To the north, a later field pattern has informed the layout of 20th century housing estates, and historic tracks and footpaths that formerly ran along field boundaries survive as a network of footpaths. The sweeping curve of the former railway is also retained in the settlement form.

During the course of its history Rothwell has had a **sequence of focal points and centres**. The early focus was the church and manor on the north bank,

with Commercial Street and the market place forming the later medieval focus. The late 19th century civic focus moved to the Town Hall on Marsh Street and today the recently completed supermarket and shopping precinct to the north of Commercial Street forms a new commercial focus.

Areas of clearance, targeted demolition and insensitive development have led to **a loss of legibility and integrity** in some areas of the settlement's form. The demolition of the remains of the medieval mill and manorial complex in the 1970s weakened the early focus on the north bank of the beck. The church is, to some extent, isolated from the rest of the town, set on the far side of a number of busy roads. However, its elevated, prominent site makes it the focus of some impressive townscape views that serve to tie the two areas together.

The **severance of Commercial Street** and its loss as a through-route by the pre-1974 construction of a supermarket built across the street, compromised the hierarchy and flow of the settlement form. The building has now been demolished and the line of the principal street reinstated.

**Clearance in the back-land area between Commercial Street and Marsh Street** has resulted in a loss of historic grain with the creation of a large under-enclosed car park. The former grain, or pattern of plots, was of historic interest, reflecting the medieval strip field system, but also provided a strong structural framework in the

settlement form, linking Commercial Street and Marsh Street together.

**The town's settlement form has been compromised at Butcher Lane** with a loss of enclosure due to the clearance of a number of terraces and the redevelopment of the site with a poorly enclosed car park.

One of the biggest challenges for Rothwell today is to successfully **integrate the new shopping precinct with the historic town centre** to the north of Commercial Street. A number of critical pedestrian connections and 'cut throughs' provide links and encourage movement between the two areas.

**Buildings are generally sited to directly address the street front.** Some front hard on to the pavement edge while other streets are characterised by properties set back behind front gardens, enclosed by boundary walls or hedges. In this way, **streets are generally continuously lined with buildings and tightly enclosed.**

Little sense of the former market place survives but the pedestrianised part of **Commercial Street provides a popular and well presented informal public space.**

A number of **key junctions form focal points within the townscape** and positively contribute to the sense of place. The area and junctions below the church and the junction of Gillet Road and Oulton Road form more significant '**gateways**' to the town centre.



The valley topography of the Haigh / Oulton Beck has shaped the development of the town



Integrating the new development with the historic town is one of Rothwell's biggest challenges

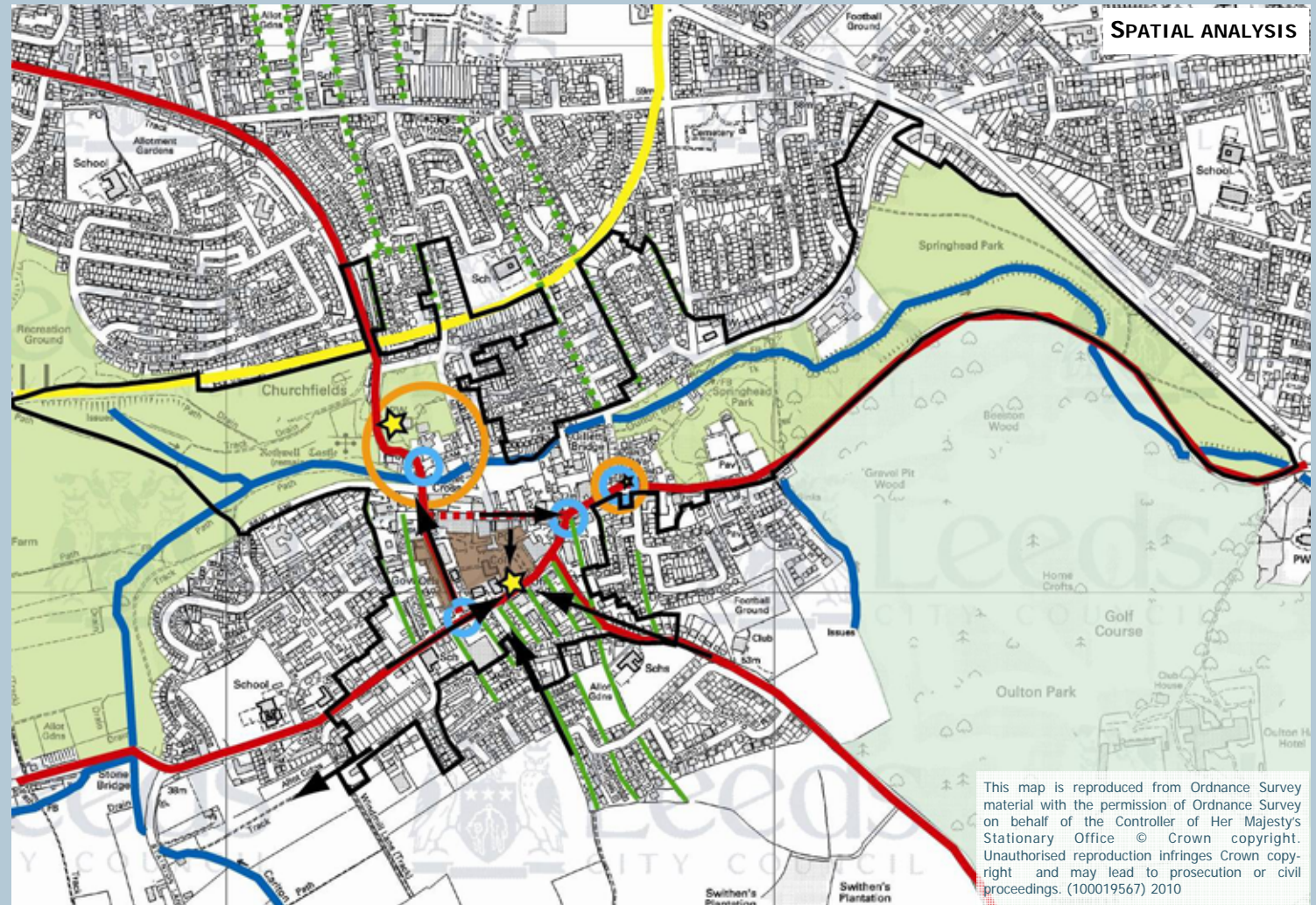


Butcher Lane currently suffers from a loss of enclosure

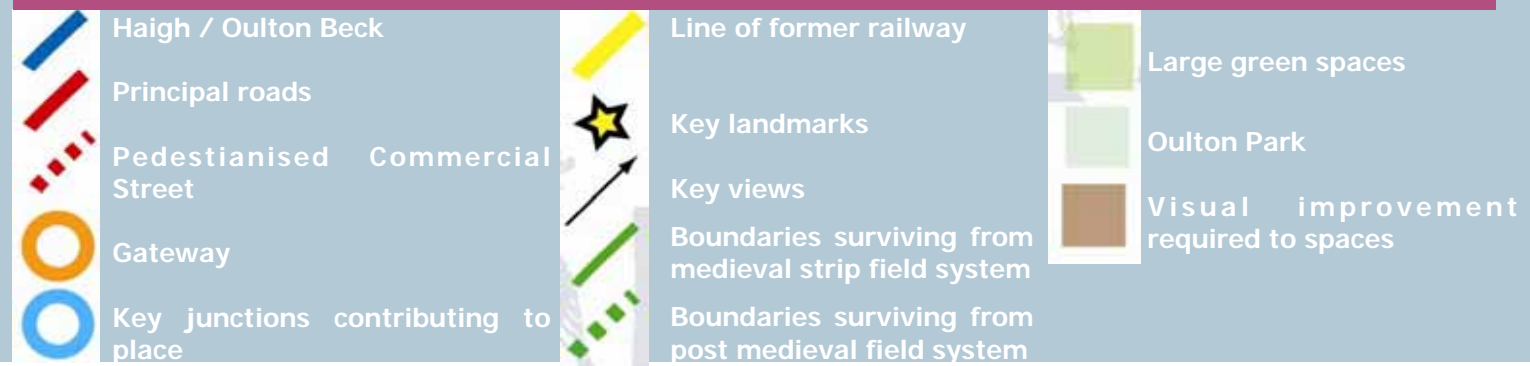
The **large green spaces** of Churchfields to the west, and Springhead Park to the east are spatially important to the town. They provide a contrast to the tight urban grain of the townscape and strong links to the surrounding countryside.

### Key views and landmarks

- The church and former Town Hall are Rothwell's principal landmark buildings. The church, set on an elevated site, is visually prominent from parts of the town centre, such as Butcher Lane and Swithen's Street.
- Roofscape views of the town centre are important from the upper valley sides to the north and south. The church tower and the leaded gothic clock tower of the former Town Hall form the focus of these skyline views.
- Contained streetscape views are a feature of the flat topography of many of the east-west running streets and the tight enclosure of the flanking buildings. The curving line of streets such as Marsh Street, Royds Lane and even Commercial Street, add to this containment, producing a series of unfolding views.
- The listed war memorial at the junction of Gillet Lane and Oulton Lane forms a landmark at this important road junction.
- Trees behind the church form a green backdrop to the town centre and are a feature on the horizon formed by the rising ground to the north.



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## Built environment

### Architectural characteristics

- Rothwell's built environment is dominated by late 19th and early 20th century residential, civic and institutional buildings constructed of stone and red brick.
- There are important groups of earlier buildings including a group of timber-framed 16th and 17th century structures and a number of prestigious 18th century buildings featuring symmetrical facades and the early, high status use of handmade brown brick.
- The loss of a number of significant historic buildings and areas of wider clearance have had a negative impact on the town's historic environment and general townscape integrity. Particularly significant is the loss of the medieval manor house and mill.
- There are 10 listed buildings of 'special architectural and historic interest' within the conservation area. A number of these refer to more than one property and the designations may also include curtilage structures and boundary treatments. The listings are all Grade II with the exception of 32, 34 and 36 Commercial Street which is listed Grade II\*, denoting its particular importance and 'more than special interest'.
- In addition, there are many unlisted properties that make a positive

contribution to the character of the town. These buildings are mapped in the Character Areas section of this appraisal.

- Rothwell's buildings are predominantly of two storeys in height, with occasional two and a half and three storey properties. Buildings generally directly address the street on which they are set, built hard to the pavement edge or set back behind front garden plots.
- Significant local architectural details include the common use of gable details within the roofscape. This detailing is seen in buildings of different status and date; above dormer windows, bay windows or simply as an architectural device. Chimneys are also important roofscape features with stacks of brick or stone featuring tall ceramic pots often with a decorative element, such as a serrated rim. Stone and brick gutter brackets are common in all building forms and dates.
- A good group of traditional shopfronts survives, principally in Commercial Street.

### Materials

- Rothwell's common building materials are sandstone and red brick. There is evidence of an early timber-framed tradition. White or cream painted render or rough cast is often used with brick in the early 20th century suburban development.

- Sandstone is generally used as coursed, regularly shaped and faced masonry.
- Handmade brown brick is used in a number of 18th century high status buildings. The mottled appearance and porous, irregular texture of these bricks has a very different character from the more uniform and better-fired 19th and 20th century red brick.
- Welsh slate replaced the earlier use of stone slate roofing during the 19th century.

### Important architectural groups

*Medieval and early post-medieval buildings :*

- Medieval fabric is retained in Holy Trinity Church, particularly the 15th century tower. A pier of masonry is the only standing remains of the fortified manor complex and is thought to be part of a medieval chapel.
- 32, 34 & 36 Commercial Street date to the late 16th or early 17th century and are of timber-framed construction faced with scored stucco. The building complex is reputed to be a former manor house and features unusually fine moulded plaster ceilings on the ground and first floors.
- There is high potential for the survival of early fabric behind later frontages in buildings along Commercial Street. During the demolition of a number of cottages that appeared to be of 18th century



Typical late 19th century development that characterises the town, Commercial Street



Hazelwood Cottages is one of the oldest buildings in Rothwell, dating to the early 17th century



Prestigious stone-built listed building, 2 Marsh Street



Long Acre, Oulton Lane. Early 18th century building incorporating an earlier stone building



Arts and Crafts inspired detached residence dated 1900, Royds Lane



Blackburn Hall, a notable early 20th century building

brick construction, 16th century decorative pargeting (decorated stucco) was revealed on an earlier encased timber-framed building.

- An early 17th century timber-framed former farmhouse and associated stone barn survive at Oulton Lane. Hazelwood Cottages is originally thought to have been an open hall house with ceiled parlour and chamber above at one end.

#### *18th century buildings:*

- A number of notable 18th century buildings form part of Rothwell's special architectural interest. Prestigious residences featuring symmetrical facades with sash windows and panelled doors are typical of this group. The early and high-status use of brick is a defining feature and high-quality masonry is another common material.

- Long Acre, Oulton Lane, dates to the early 18th century and forms part of an important group with Hazelwood Cottages. Its use of handmade brown brick adds to the richness and variety of the colours and textures of the conservation area. The building also retains elements of an earlier, 17th century stone-built structure, with the remains of a sandstone wall with stone mullioned windows incorporated in the western elevation.

- Prospect Place, Springfield Street, dates to 1772 and was originally the Parish Poor House, later converted to residential use. The symmetrical façade features a central pediment

and the brick is similar to that at Long Acre.

- 2 Marsh Street is a stone-built 18th century residence with long and short quoin detail, storey band and raised window and door surrounds with keystone details.
- More modest 18th century properties include the symmetrically fronted 8 The Paddock, a three bay brick-built house with stone storey band and 1 Churchfield Road with its plainly detailed, fine-jointed high-quality masonry.

#### *Late 19th - early 20th century buildings:*

- Buildings from this period dominate the character of the town and include a mixture of substantial villas and impressive terraces, institutional and civic structures, places of worship, commercial premises, back-to-back and through-terraces.
- The stone-built Town Hall of 1895 and the red brick Board School of 1872 are in a gothic-revival style. The Late Victorian and Edwardian villas and grand terraces are of both brick and stone construction and have a mixture of classical and gothic-revival derived detail. Bay windows, porch hoods, door casements, roof turrets, decorative ridge tiles and barge boards and large chimneys are typical features. Early 20th century examples show the influence of the Arts and Crafts movement in half-timbered details, leaded lights and stained glass to doors and windows.

- Late 19th century brick and stone back-to-back and through-terraces are significant to Rothwell's character. Detailing includes painted stone dressings to lintels and sills, cornices of brick or stone gutter brackets, fanlights over panelled doors, vertically hung sashes (where surviving), mid-slope chimneys on front and back roof slopes of the back-to-backs and painted or terracotta ornate grills to grate or coal holes. Some of the terraces retain lavatory outbuildings.

#### *20th century buildings:*

- Rothwell features some distinctive early 20th century suburban semi-detached developments such as Sandy Bank Avenue built in the 1930s. Buildings here are characterised by the use of red brick teamed with crisp white render, half-timbered black and white painted gable details, porches and bay windows. The planned urban form and integral soft landscaping and street trees add to the special character of the area.
- Blackburn Hall retains its original clean-lined, art-deco inspired design. A similar style is seen in the later block of flats at the eastern end of Marsh Street with their distinctive pier and panel construction and balcony railing detail.



Low level stone walls with copings, iron railings and gates are important to the character of The Paddock



Brick boundary walls and hedges are important boundary treatments, Royds Lane



High stone walls are more unusual but significant where they occur, Royds Lane

## Streetscape

Historic streetscape features contribute to Rothwell's special character.

- Boundary treatments are important in some areas of the town, particularly in residential properties - stone and brick boundary walls are common, with stone copings and gateposts with capstone details. Low-level walls are teamed with iron railings and gates. There is evidence that iron railings were traditionally more prevalent and were likely removed as part of the war effort during the Second World War. There are a number of higher level masonry walls to side boundaries that add to the quality of the conservation area. Hedges are also important boundary treatments.
- Survival of historic surfaces is generally very limited. Where York Stone pavements and kerbs do survive, such as by the church, they add to the richness of texture, details and quality of materials of the streetscape.
- The public realm treatment of Commercial Street dates largely to a scheme undertaken for its pedestrianisation in 1998 and the recent works related to Jail Yard Parade. The use of high quality materials is a good investment and the scheme is successful in minimising clutter. The distinctive blue colour of the painted street furniture unifies the streetscape and



The public realm scheme in Commercial Street enhances the special character of the conservation area

marks the hierarchy of the street in the wider townscape. The heritage-style of the fittings is suitable for this location. CCTV cameras on dominant poles are less appropriate but, overall, the scheme enhances the special character of the street.

- Elsewhere some areas of public realm treatment currently underplay important places within the townscape and offers scope for enhancement. Disparate, uncoordinated and redundant street furniture, roads signage and markings add clutter that obscures and detracts from the qualities and

special character of the conservation area.



Some public realm treatments detract from the quality of the conservation area and offer an opportunity for enhancement, Marsh Street



Churchfields is a semi-natural greenspace with high archaeological potential



Holy Trinity churchyard forms an important greenspace with potential for biodiversity enhancement



Springfield Park and Oulton Beck, a popular public amenity

## Greenscape

Parks, gardens, green spaces, trees and hedges form an essential element of Rothwell's special character.

- Churchfields, to the west of the church, provides a semi-natural greenspace close to the town centre. Its archaeological significance as the site of the medieval manor complex provides scope for further enhancement through interpretation and raising the profile of the site.
- The churchyard is an important greenspace. Its mature trees are significant within the wider townscape, forming an attractive backdrop to important views of the church. The cleared area of the graveyard to the front of the church adds to the green surroundings of this landmark building. The churchyard to the rear has a more natural character which could be enhanced with future management designed to encourage the biodiversity of the site whilst ensuring the maintenance of the monuments.
- Springfield Park provides a well-used public amenity and is a key asset of the town. It includes popular recreational facilities and areas further afield offering quiet seclusion. Tennis courts, public gardens, aviary, café, mature trees, grassland, seasonal planting and becksides walks are all on offer in this attractive public park.

- The town benefits from a number of 'pocket parks' and public greenspaces including Margaret Gardens by Blackburn Hall, the Garden of Remembrance at the junction of Gillet Lane and Oulton Lane, and a small informal area with planters and seating at the eastern end of Commercial Street. These spaces provide attractive, publicly-valued amenity areas.
- Public realm landscaping throughout the town enhances the conservation area. Street trees and planting form an important part of the public realm treatment of the pedestrianised Commercial Street and its important links to the new development to the north. The planting helps to successfully integrate these spaces. Rothwell in Bloom fill the town centre with seasonal planters enhancing its 'village-like' character.
- Private gardens and hedges are important features of some areas of the town. Mature trees in private gardens are often positive features and have a wider townscape value.
- The Beck is, perhaps, a somewhat undervalued asset of the town. It has a variety of characters along its course; from the semi-natural planting to the west, the gabionned flood defence revetments by the new commercial development of the town centre to its course through the park eastwards.



Garden of Remembrance featuring the listed war memorial



Margaret Gardens is an attractive pocket park



Street trees and planting play an important part in the transition between Commercial Street and the new shopping parade

# Character Areas

In addition to identifying broad elements of settlement character that define Rothwell as a whole, townscape analysis has identified 4 distinct character areas:

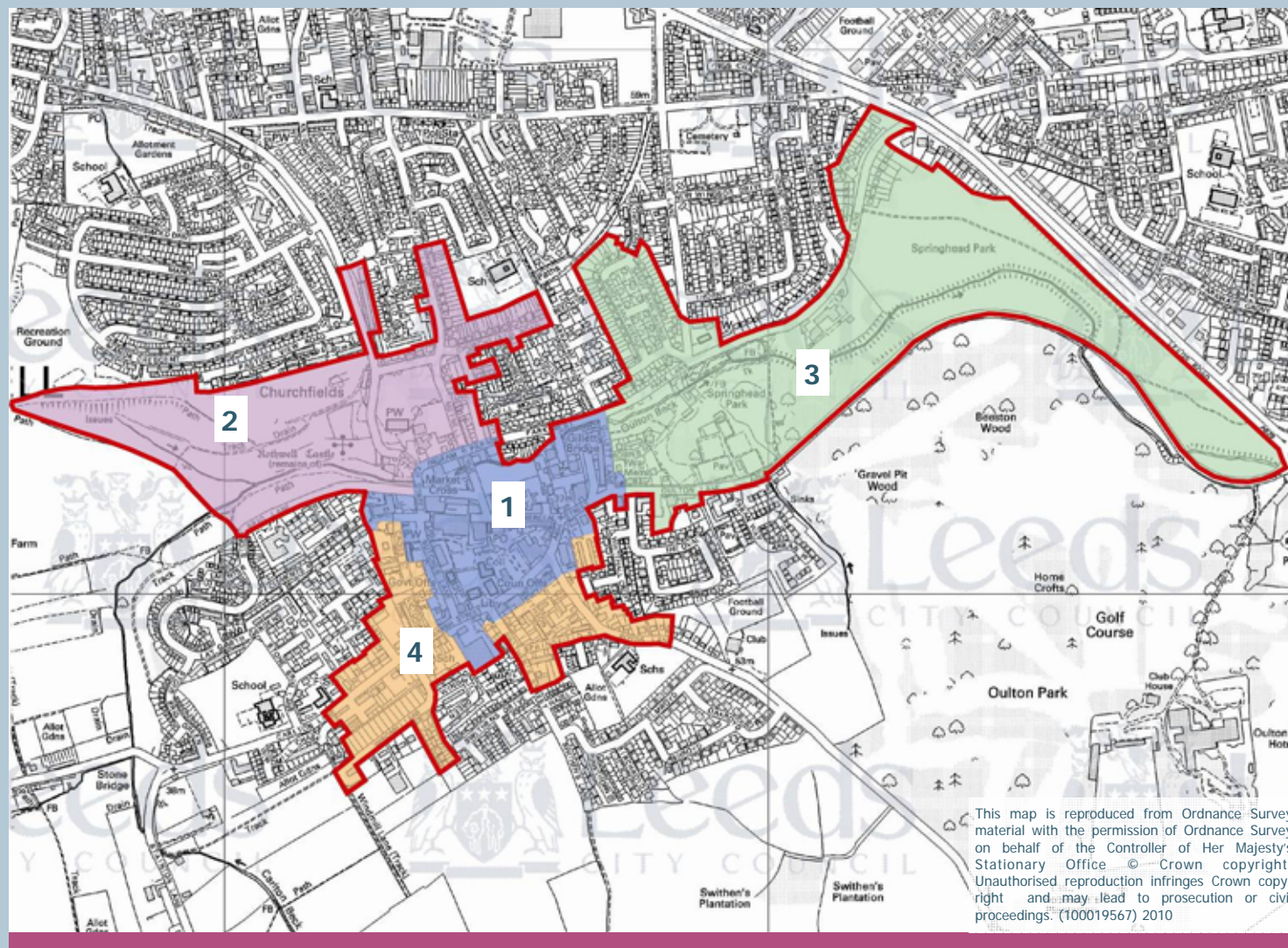
1. Town Centre - covering the central core of the town and including the commercial focus of Commercial Street, Jail Yard Parade and Marsh Lane.
2. Churchfields - area to the north of the Beck, centred on the church with the site of the medieval manor to the west.
3. The Park - Springfield Park and surrounding residential development.
4. Southern suburbs - residential development to the south of the town centre

## Positive buildings

The character area maps show listed buildings shaded green with a bold black outline. Unlisted structures that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area are shaded green. The contribution may be in one or more of the following ways:

- Landmark buildings
- Buildings that provide evidence of the area's history and development
- Buildings of architectural merit
- Buildings with local historical associations
- Buildings which exemplify local vernacular styles
- Groups of buildings which together make a positive contribution to the streetscape.

There should be a presumption in favour of the retention of positive buildings in all but exceptional circumstances.



## Character Area 1: Town Centre

This area covers the town centre of Rothwell and includes a number of sub-character areas:

**Commercial Street** - the principal street of the town has a village-like character, lined by domestic-scaled 2-storey buildings.

**Jail Yard Parade and Morrisons** - the recent commercial extension to the town centre has a distinct character. The transition between old and new offers good pedestrian connections linking the two areas.

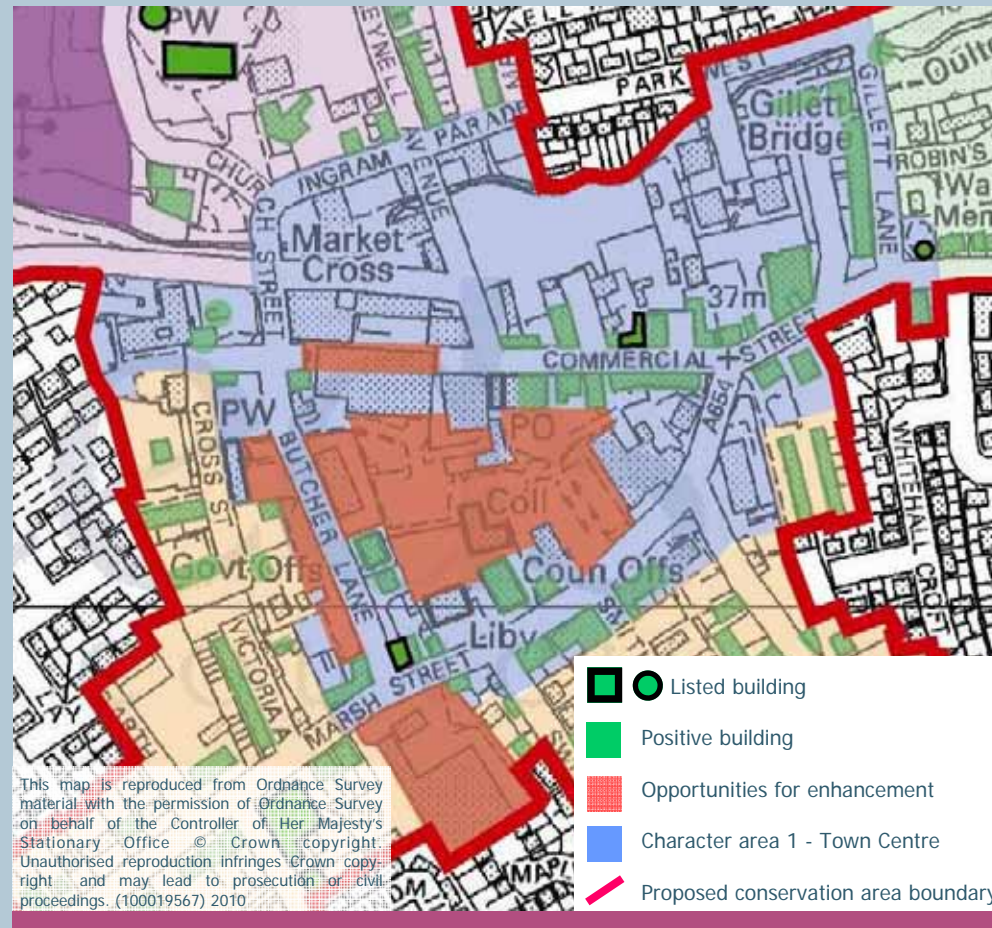
**Marsh Street** - remains the focus of the civic and institutional functions of the town with the landmark late 19th century Town Hall, recent library and Joseph Priestly College.

**Butcher Lane and the back land area between Commercial Street and Marsh Street** - this area has suffered extensive clearance and is currently somewhat environmentally impoverished.

**Gillet Lane and flats** - residential area of back-to-back, through-terraces and mid-late 20th century flats.

Key characteristics:

- **Commercial Street is the principal street of the town.** The recent demolition of the 1970s supermarket, that severed the line of the street, is a major enhancement to the conservation area.



- Commercial Street has a **village-like character** fostered by the domestic scale of the low two-storey buildings that line the pedestrianised street. Many buildings originated as domestic properties and were later converted to commercial use.
- Commercial Street retains a number of **early buildings** with plain facades and small windows. Most notable is the Grade II\* timber-framed 32, 34 &

36 Commercial Street that dates to the late 16th century and features ornate plaster ceilings. There is potential for other early survivals hidden behind later refronted facades.

- A number of **mid and late 19th century and early 20th century buildings** form an important group in Commercial Street and dominate the character of the later developed

Marsh Street. These structures are of a larger scale and feature more architectural ornamentation such as restrained gothic-revival detailing such as stone mullioned windows teamed with ornate barge boards to gable details. They have a more urban character, many having been purpose-built as banks, shops, offices and institutes.

- **Common building materials** include stone and red brick, however painted render is the dominant surface finish in Commercial Street. Early surviving roofs are of stone slate, with Welsh slate to later buildings. Although generally of two storeys there is variation in roof and eaves heights, with gables and cross-gabled forms creating a mixed roofscape. Chimneys are an important feature.
- There are a number of good surviving traditional **shopfronts** dating to the late 19th and early 20th century with typically elaborate details to pilasters, fascias and stall riser details. Other very simple shop windows have been inserted into converted residential properties. Recent shopfronts are of mixed success with some paying little regard to the historic building in which they are set. More appropriate for Rothwell's character are the examples of modern, traditionally designed shopfronts that enhance the conservation area.
- **Marsh Street** is the main route through the town centre and its





Commercial Street has a village-like character, lined with domestic scale two-storey buildings



Some later buildings are less domestic in character and include purpose-built banks and shops



The transition between old and new offers good pedestrian connections

traffic levels contrast with the pedestrianised Commercial Street and add to its more urban character.

- This area includes a number of **important junctions that form arrival points to the town centre and contribute to Rothwell's sense of place**. The junction at the foot of Church Street forms an important gateway to the north, with the listed war memorial acting as a landmark at the east and the junction of Marsh Street and Butcher Lane defining the western extent. The corner development of brick houses and corner shop with round headed doors and windows forms a strong end-stop to views to the west.
- The town centre has seen some **extensive redevelopment during the 20th and 21st century** including Jail Yard Parade, the new supermarket, the library, Joseph Priestly College, Rothwell Working Men's Club and a number of blocks of flats. Some redevelopments have successfully managed to sit well within their historic setting while being strongly of their time, such as Blackburn Hall. However, others are less successful, often due to poor quality of design and/or materials.
- **Connections between Commercial Street and the new development of Jail Yard Parade are good**. The two areas have distinctly different characters but the transition between the two offers good pedestrian links.

- **Butcher Lane and the car parks between Commercial Street and Marsh Street** have suffered a loss of enclosure and grain due to widespread clearance. Butcher Lane is poorly enclosed with piecemeal redevelopment that fails to form a comprehensive streetscape. The car park areas have lost the sense of the historic grain that originally tied Commercial Street and Marsh Street together. This amorphous area currently lacks a sense of place and legibility.

- **Greenscape** - a number of pocket parks and landscaped areas provide popular amenity space in the town centre. Rothwell in Bloom fill the area with attractive seasonal displays and street trees and planting form an important part of the public realm treatment of Commercial Street.

Opportunities for management and enhancement:

- Strengthen Commercial Street as the principal street of the town and re-establish the sense of continuity between the recently reunited east and west ends.
- Enhance the pocket park at the west end of Commercial Street, featuring the market cross, maypole and excellent church views. This site can help in re-establishing the line of Commercial Street and in strengthening the links between the church and the town centre.

- Repair tears in the urban fabric - re-establish a sense of enclosure along Butcher Lane through improved boundary treatments or redevelopment. Reinstatate the historic grain of the back lands between Commercial Street and Marsh Street, for example through its public realm treatment and soft landscaping.
- Promote the reuse of 7 Barraclough Yard, currently a positive historic building at risk.



Marsh Street has a more urban character than Commercial Street.



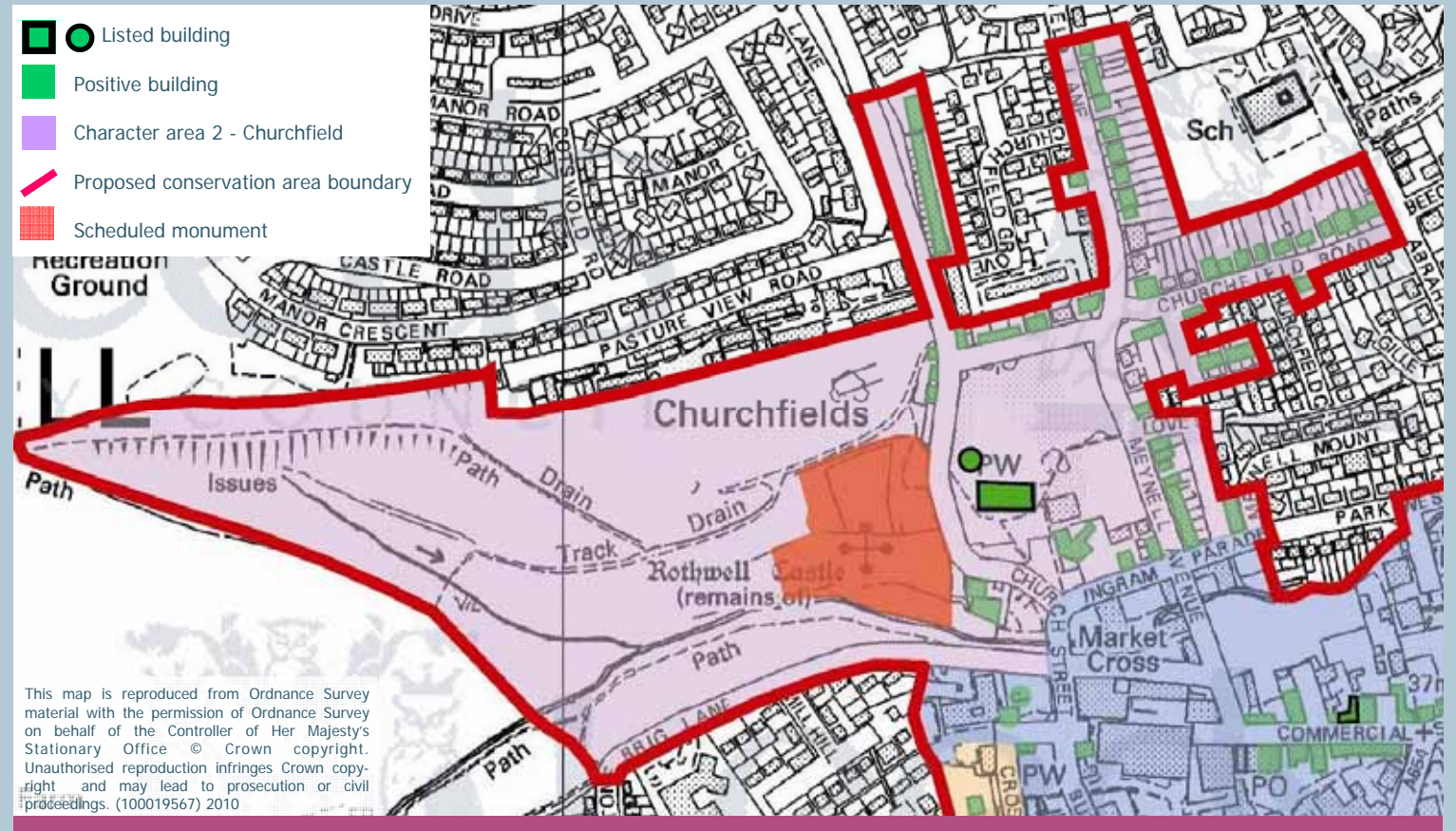
Landscape works, especially tree planting could do much to improve this barren car park

## Character Area 2: Churchfields

This area is centred on the church and includes the archaeological remains of the medieval manor complex at Churchfields and surrounding residential development.

Key characteristics:

- Holy Trinity Church** forms the central focus of this character area, set on a prominent elevated site overlooking the town. Views to the church are framed by the lych gate of 1889 and a cleared area of graveyard laid to grass to the south front. The mature trees in the graveyard to the north of the church form a green backdrop. Here gravestones and monuments remain in place and include the listed gravestone of 19th century railway engineer John Blenkinsop. Stone boundary walls, ironwork, York stone pavements and worn sandstone steps add to the special character of the area.
- The archaeological remains of the medieval manor complex and Rose Pit are to the west of the church in at **Churchfields**. The rubble pier of a former chapel is the only standing remains of the scheduled monument. This area is an important green space for the town providing easy access to the surrounding countryside.
- The area to the south of the church forms an **important gateway** to the town. The curving descent of



Holy Trinity church forms the central focus of the character area



Stone steps, paths and boundary walls add to the sense of quality



Promoting the historic significance of the site of the medieval manor, Churchfields



Churchfields provides a semi-natural greenspace with easy links to the surrounding countryside



Church Street descends to the valley floor providing a strong sense of arrival to the town



Stone-built terrace overlooking the churchyard, The Paddock

Church Street, as it reaches the valley floor, emphasises this sense of arrival. The White Swan public house and the red brick villa at the foot of the hill have survived the clearance in this area. The newly developed supermarket is visually prominent here and turns its back on this important gateway.

- The **settlement form** of the residential development in the area is of linear ribbon development. Detached, semi-detached and terraced houses follow strict build lines, directly addressing the street frontage and forming a fine grain of regular building plots.
- The architecturally varied group at **The Paddock and Meynell Avenue** directly address the churchyard, creating the character of an **informal secluded square** with a distinctive sense of place. The buildings include stone terraces and semi-detached pairs with bay windows and red brick villas.
- **Late 19th brick terraces have a more urban character**, such as Meynell Avenue and Churchfield Lane. The brick terrace at Wood Lane was originally built for railway workers with a larger house at the end of the row for the superintendent. This was later extended to form the Liberal Club and subsequently Rothwell Parish Hall.
- **Early 20th century suburban development** of semi-detached

pairs and detached properties along Churchfield Road form a distinctive element of the area's special character. Red brick teamed with white render and mock-timber framed details characterise this group. Bay windows and panelled doors often feature leaded lights and stained glass panels. Porch hoods and chimneys with decorative detailing are also typical.

- **Boundary treatments** and small front **garden plots** are important to the character of the area. Low level stone or brick walls are often teamed with iron railings and gates. Privet hedges are a distinctive boundary treatment to the early 20th century suburban developments.

Opportunities for management and enhancement:

- Enhance the important gateway area at the foot of Church Street.
- Manage the churchyard as an important green space and encourage its biodiversity. Make its historic interest more accessible, for example through a heritage trail of the monuments, and strengthen connections with the town centre.
- Continue work to make the historic significance of the manor site more accessible in terms of further research, presentation and interpretation. Encourage the owners to consolidate the standing rubble pier, currently on the English Heritage register of Heritage at Risk.



Late 18th century, symmetrically fronted villa, The Paddock



Late 19th century brick terrace with a dense, urban character, Meynell Avenue



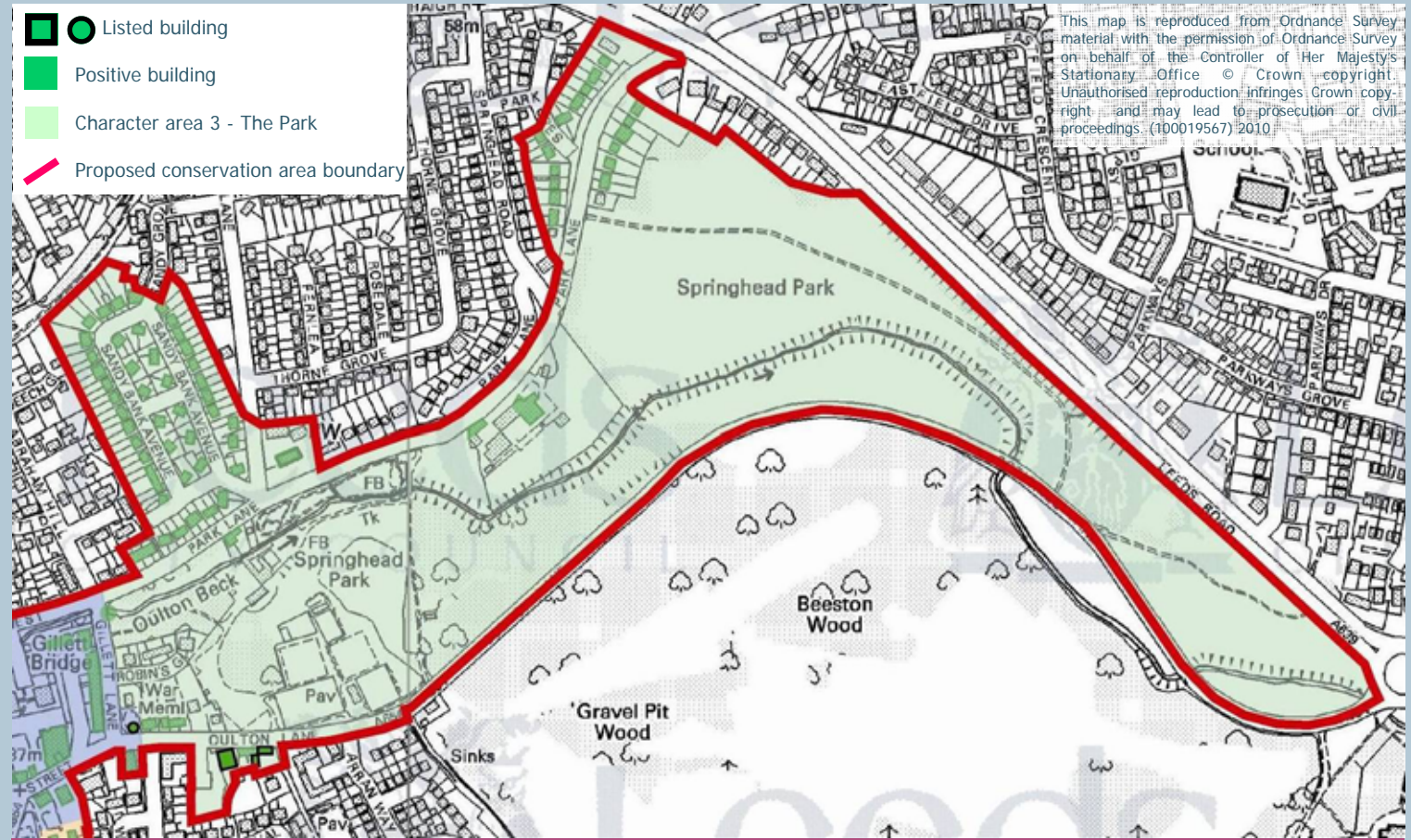
Distinctive early 20th century suburban development, Churchfield Road

### Character Area 3: The Park

This area is dominated by Springhead Park and includes areas of residential development on its edges, including a group of some of the earliest surviving buildings in Rothwell and some distinctive early 20th century suburban developments.

Key characteristics:

- The area is dominated by Springhead Park an **attractive public park offering a range of amenity uses** including sports and playground facilities, an aviary, ornamental gardens and open parkland.
- **Mature trees** are an important feature, including boundary-belt planting and a formal lime avenue lining the drive to the east.
- **Commemorative gates** at the Park Lane entrance record the opening of the eastern section of the park in 1937.
- Tennis courts, bowling greens, skate park and playground facilities are clustered close to the Oulton Lane entrance and car park. The ornamental gardens include remains of the walled kitchen garden of Springhead, the former vicarage. **Springhead Park House** itself is now in business use and includes extensive modern additions adjacent to the surviving positive historic buildings of the vicarage of 1871/2. The complex is largely screened from view by trees on the park side and



Ornamental gardens and mature trees are important elements of the character of the park



Commemorative gates at the Park Lane entrance record the 1937 opening of the eastern area



Visually intrusive 'bolder' boundary treatment, Oulton Lane

high sandstone boundary walls along the roadside.

- **Oulton Beck** displays a number of characters along its course through the park. To the west it forms part of the ornamental gardens and runs in a stone-sided culvert crossed by footbridges. To the east, the beck has a more natural character with vegetation growing along its banks.
- Good views in the eastern part of the park focus on the spire of St John's church, Oulton.
- The area includes an **important group of some of the earliest surviving buildings in Rothwell** set along Oulton Lane. The low, one and a half storey Hazelwood Cottages, 9 Oulton Lane dates to the early 17th century (or earlier) and originated as an open hall, timber-framed farmhouse. A listed stone-built barn, also dating to the 17th century, survives to the rear.
- **Long Acre, 3 Oulton Lane** dates to the early 18th century but incorporates elements of an earlier 17th century structure. The façade of handmade brown bricks with rusticated stone quoins, features coved eaves under a stone-slate roof and a number of blocked windows. The western side elevation incorporates elements of an earlier sandstone building. This building appears to have been of high status judging from the quality of the masonry and architectural detailing. Stone mullioned windows of two and

three lights survive and a drip mould runs the length of the wall.

- On the opposite side of the road, **historic stone boundary walls** are all that survives of Chatham House marked on historic maps.
- **Early 20th century suburban** development also makes a positive contribution to the special character of the area, including development along Park lane, Sandy Bank Avenue and a group on Oulton Lane.
- **Common materials** for this group of the detached and semi-detached properties include red brick, crisp white render, mock timber-framing and tiled details.
- Leaded lights and stained glass panels to doors and windows are typical details. The varied roof-forms, with gabled bays set forward in facades, are a defining feature and chimneys are important.
- The **soft landscaping** of front gardens, enclosed by stone and brick boundary walls and hedges, add greenery to the streetscene. Grass verges and mature trees are particularly significant to the character of the northern end of Park Lane, merging the area with the park. Gated driveways are also typical to the area.
- The early 20th century Roman Catholic church at the junction of Park Lane and Styebank Lane is a local landmark building.

Opportunities for management and enhancement:

- The placing of boulders along the boundary of the park along some lengths of Leeds Road and Oulton Lane is incongruous. Consideration should be given to a more appropriate boundary treatment, that would prevent access by vehicles whilst being less visually intrusive, such as an intermittent ditch.



A group of early buildings dating from the early 17th century survive at Oulton Lane



Long Acre incorporates the remains of a 17th century building in its western side elevation



Early 20th century suburban development is an important part of the character of this area



Half-timbered details teamed with crisp white render and brick are typical of the semi-detached pairs



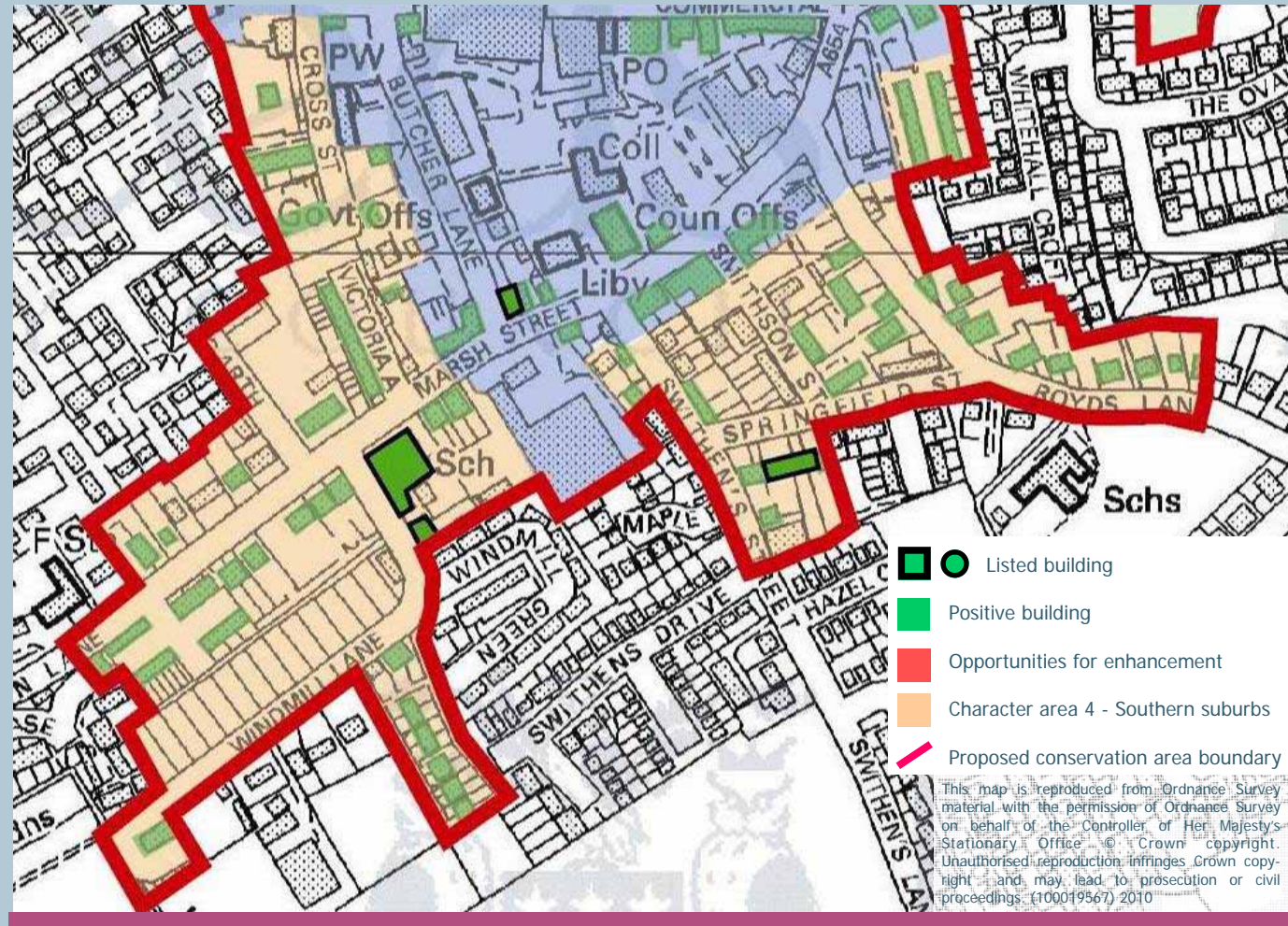
St Mary's Catholic Church is a local landmark building

## Character Area 4: Southern suburbs

This is a residential area to the south and west of the town centre featuring stone and brick-built Victorian and Edwardian villas and terraces.

Key characteristics:

- Topography and settlement form contribute to the character of the area. The **rising topography** of Royds Lane and its curving line add interest to the streetscape and emphasise the sense of arrival or departure from the town centre.
- **Building siting and orientation** is varied along Royds Lane in contrast to the rest of the character area which is defined by linear patterns of residential development following strict build lines, directly addressing the street frontage.
- Plot size varies between the substantial villa plots and the fine grain of the terrace rows. The **planned regularity of the settlement form** of the area unifies these variations. Plots along Royds Lane have a less uniform character.
- **Key views** in this area include views to the church, Town Hall clock tower and the tower of the fire station on Carlton Lane.
- Architecturally the area is defined by the **large villa properties** concentrated along Royds Lane and



Carlton Lane and the adjacent terrace developments.

- The **villas** are predominantly of red brick with stone dressings, although there are a number of stone built examples. Mock timber-framed detailing to upper gables is a common detail, as are bay windows, porch hoods, door casements, decorated stone lintels, sash



19th century stone-built villa, Royds Lane



Early 20th century brick villa, Royds Lane



Prospect Place, 1772, originally built as the Parish Poor House, Springfield Street



Gothic revival architecture of the former Board School, 1872, Carlton Lane



Impressive Arts and Crafts inspired residence, Carlton Lane

windows and stone sills. Varied roof forms are common with blue slate coverings. Red brick chimneys with tall and often decorated stacks are distinctive roofscape features. Decorative barge boards are also a feature of some properties.

- The former **Board School** and attached school house, Carlton Lane shares the scale, materials and detailing of the surrounding villa development. Built in a gothic revival style the building dates from 1872 and is grade II listed.
- **Prospect Place** is perhaps the earliest surviving building in the area and is also grade II listed. It was built in 1772 as the parish poorhouse. The early materials of brown brick and stone slate roof add richness to the colours and textures of the conservation area.
- **Patterns of terraced development** include small areas of grid-form development set off main streets, such as at Cross Street, Hargreaves Street and Clayton Street. The common use of red brick with stone detailing, and the importance of chimneys to the roofscape, unify the terraces with the neighbouring villas and substantial semi-detached villa-pairs. Victoria Avenue, a stone built terrace, shares the prestigious character of the surrounding villas with ornate porch canopy and date stone to the gable end façade.

- Public realm and greenscape features add to the special character of the area. **Boundary walls and gateways** are important. Low lying brick and stone walls are common sometimes teamed with hedges or iron railings.
- A **red post box** on Windmill Lane is a notable feature.
- **Mature trees** in private gardens are important to the wider streetscape.
- **Garden plots** are important from the small front gardens of the terraces to the large grounds of the villas.
- The **allotment gardens** off Windmill Lane are an attractive feature of the area.

Opportunities for management and enhancement:

- Resist the further loss of boundary walls and front gardens for off-street parking areas.
- Retain the uniformity of terraces by resisting piecemeal rendering, painting of brickwork and insertion of inappropriate dormer windows.
- Promote the sensitive reuse of the former Board School, Carlton Lane, currently a vacant listed building.



Victoria Avenue, 1905



Brick terrace with stone detailing, Clayton Street



Common materials unify different architectural forms, Royds Lane

## Management Plan: Opportunities for management and enhancement

There are a number of features and issues that currently detract from the special character of Rothwell. Addressing these issues offers the opportunity to enhance the conservation area, while positive conservation management measures will ensure the ongoing protection of the area's special character.

### Repairing damage to the settlement form and character

Clearance, piecemeal demolition and inappropriate development have damaged the integrity of the settlement form in a number of places. This not only spoils appreciation and the sense of quality of the conservation area but also affects how legible, or understandable the townscape is, how easy it is to find your way around and have a sense of where you are. It is possible to repair this damage with future sympathetic redevelopment and environmental improvements. As and when opportunities arise it will be beneficial to:

- Strengthen Commercial Street as a clear axis within the townscape by linking the recently reunited east and west ends. Recognise and promote it as Rothwell's main street.

- Repair areas where the grain of the settlement form has been lost by reintroducing a sense of enclosure and structure to the townscape. For example, Butcher Lane would benefit from improved boundary treatments to reinstate a sense of enclosure. The car parking area between Commercial Street and Marsh Street would benefit from environmental improvements that could reflect the former grain of the medieval field strips. This could be achieved through introduction of tree belts or in the layout of the car parking bays. By reflecting the lost settlement form the area could once more tie Commercial Street and Marsh Street together rather than acting as a void in the townscape that is difficult to understand.

- Reconnect the church and the site of the manor with the town centre. The church is currently somewhat disconnected from the town centre. Improving pedestrian connections and providing a draw to encourage people to visit the church and the historic remains of the site of the manor would strengthen the perception of Rothwell as a place of historic importance and quality.

- Encourage links between the historic town and the new commercial development. It is important that these areas work together rather than in competition.

**Action: Repair damage to the settlement form when opportunities arise.**



Improved boundary treatments could reinstate a better sense of enclosure at Butcher Lane

### Sensitive new development in the conservation area

Successful new development in historic areas will:

- *Relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land*
- *Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it*
- *Respect important views*
- *Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings*
- *Use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings*
- *Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of their setting.*

*Cabe and English Heritage, 2001, 'Building in Context: New development in historic areas'*

To be successful, any future development within the conservation area needs to be mindful of the local character of the town, while being distinctly of its time and addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability. Poorly designed and detailed pastiche development can be as eroding to special character as development that shows no regard for its setting. New buildings need to respond to their setting in terms of urban design - eg layout, density and spatial separation, and architectural design - eg scale, form, quality of materials and building methods.

**Action: New development must respond sensitively and creatively to the historic environment.**

### Protecting surviving historic architectural details and promoting the replacement of inappropriate fixtures and fittings

Incremental loss of traditional architectural detailing and inappropriate alterations to historic buildings are issues and ongoing threats to the character of the conservation area. The replacement of windows, doors, traditional wall surface treatments, roof coverings and boundary treatments with inappropriate materials and designs negatively affects both the individual buildings and the wider streetscape and can affect house prices.

Surviving historic features should be maintained and sympathetically repaired. Where historic fenestration and features have been lost in the





Reclaiming the line of Commercial Street following the demolition of the 1970's supermarket is an opportunity to enhance the town

identified positive buildings, reinstatement of appropriate traditionally detailed fittings is encouraged.

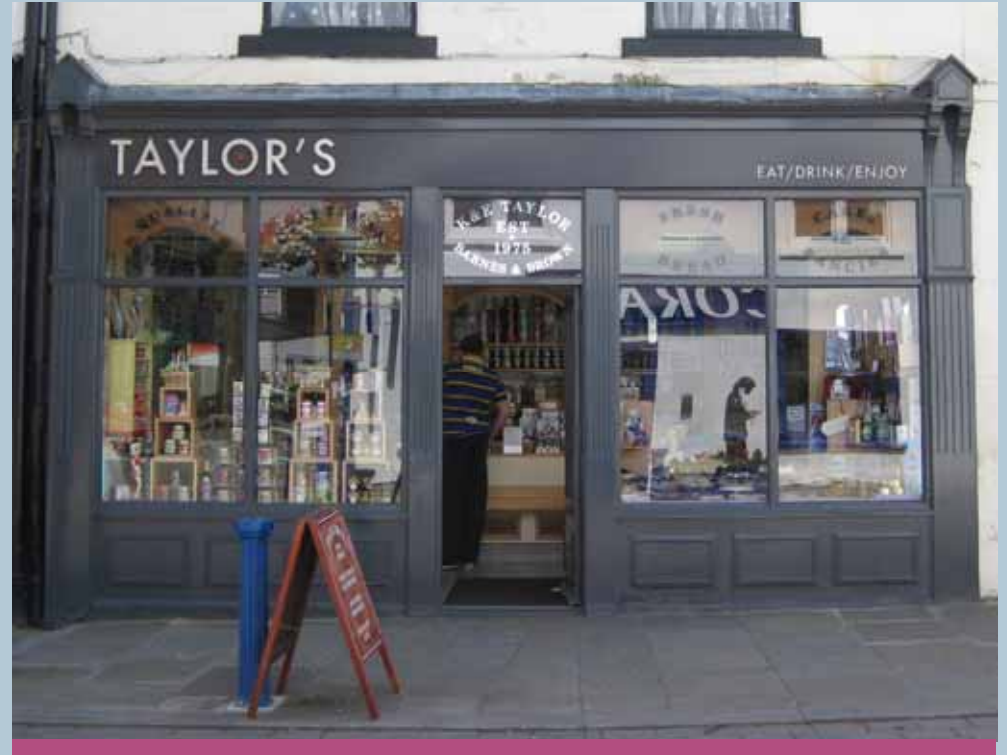
Alterations and extensions should be sensitive to the building in which they are set.

**Action: Surviving historic features should be retained and sympathetically repaired. The replacement of inappropriate fixtures, fittings and adaptations is encouraged.**

### Shopfronts

Rothwell has a good collection of historic shopfronts that form part of its special character and should be retained and sensitively repaired as necessary. The loss of historic shopfronts should be resisted.

A number of late 20th and early 21st century shopfronts are poorly designed and detract from the architectural integrity of the historic buildings in which they are set. Poor shopfronts form a negative feature in the wider street scene and as opportunities arise



This well-designed traditional style modern shopfront at Commercial Street enhances the special character of the conservation area

should be replaced with sensitive, well designed and detailed replacements.

The design of new shopfronts should respect the period and proportions of the building in which they are set and should use high-quality materials. Internally illuminated fascias and projecting signs are generally not acceptable in the conservation area.

External security shutters have a negative impact on the character of streets and should be resisted. Internally fitted systems offer more suitable alternatives.

**Action: Historic shopfronts should be retained and maintained. New shopfronts should preserve or enhance the special character of the area.**

### Public realm

In some locations the public realm treatment negatively affects the special character of the conservation area.

A streetscape audit and rationalisation of existing signage, road markings and street furniture would provide the opportunity to clear the streetscape of unnecessary clutter. Redundant and

duplicate items could be removed and consideration given to the reduction and sensitive design, siting, scale and grouping of fixtures, fittings and markings.

The Commercial Street scheme shows how beneficial well designed public realm treatments can be. The special character of other parts of the town should be respected in the provision of street furniture and road management measures.

Regard should be had to the current 'Streets for All' guidance jointly published by the Department for Transport and English Heritage.

**Action: Ensure that future public realm and traffic management measures respect and enhance the special character of the conservation area.**

### **Parks, gardens and tree management**

Parks, gardens and green spaces form an important element of Rothwell's distinctive character and the work of the Rothwell In Bloom makes a significant contribution to the town.

The churchyard offers an opportunity for enhancement and could play a role in better connecting the town centre to the historic sites to the north of the beck. A heritage trail of the churchyard could open up the stories of those buried here and encourage the appreciation of the monuments. The churchyard could be managed as an important greenspace with a regime in

place to encourage wildlife and biodiversity while also ensuring the repair and accessibility of the monuments.

Trees form an important part of the character of the area. Conservation area designation affords some degree of protection. However, to ensure that this element of Rothwell's special character is protected and enhanced a tree strategy should be formulated, as and when resources permit, to assess the need for the designation of more Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), replanting strategies and other general tree management issues.

Trees provide an important source of urban cooling and help fight the impact of global warming. Their protection and planting is going to be an increasingly important element of the Council's approach to climate change adaptation.

**Action: Develop a tree strategy to guide future positive management.**

### **Protect archaeological remains**

Archaeological deposits and building archaeology have the potential to provide further evidence of Rothwell's origins, development and evolution. There is potential for evidence relating to the early medieval origins of the settlement and the later medieval development of the manor and royal hunting park.

Development that may disturb archaeological deposits and buildings archaeology may require an element of archaeological investigation in order to

ensure preservation (in situ or by record) of archaeological evidence.

The scheduled masonry pier on the site of Rothwell Castle is currently on Heritage at Risk list of English Heritage. It is considered to be in a poor condition and in need of urgent consolidation. The rest of the site has a proven high archaeological potential. The scheduled area is not thought to include the full extent of the archaeological importance of the site. A research project could usefully inform a review of the scheduled area to ensure the protection of the important archaeological remains of the medieval manorial complex.

**Action: Development should have regard to the archaeological record and where necessary include an element of archaeological investigation and mitigation.**

### **Promote historic Rothwell**

Rothwell's history and surviving historic environment can be used as a positive asset for the town today. There are opportunities to celebrate, promote and make this special character and historic interest more accessible. Rothwell's heritage can be used to positively promote the town for residents and visitors alike.

Rothwell and District Historical Society are an active group working on a number of projects that will help bring the area's past to life. The Society has a history of successful projects such as the Heritage Lottery Funded Rothwell Castle project. The interpretation panels

on this site are vital in interpreting its medieval importance.

**Action: Promote and celebrate the special architectural and historic interest in the conservation area.**

### **Setting of the conservation area**

It is important that development around the conservation area does not spoil its setting. Views towards and away from a conservation area can be spoiled by inappropriately placed buildings or groups of buildings, at key locations. Appropriate design and materials should still be used when considering development adjacent to the conservation area, as well as consideration given to the impact it may have on views towards and away from the conservation area.

**Action: Ensure that the setting of the conservation area is considered as a material consideration within the planning process.**

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Historic Ordnance Survey maps - [www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk)

Leeds City Council online historic photograph archive - [www.leodis.net](http://www.leodis.net)

Secret Leeds - [www.secretleeds.com](http://www.secretleeds.com)

## Sources of further information

Central Library (Local & Family History Section), The Headrow, Leeds LS1. Tel 0113 247 8290 email: [localstudies@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:localstudies@leeds.gov.uk) website: [www.leeds.gov.uk/library](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/library)

Leeds Civic Trust, Leeds Heritage & Design Centre, 17-19 Wharf Street, Leeds LS2 7EQ Tel: 0113 243 9594

Email: [office@leedscivictrust.org.uk](mailto:office@leedscivictrust.org.uk) website: [www.leedscivictrust.org.uk](http://www.leedscivictrust.org.uk)

Victorian Society (West Yorkshire Group), Claremont, 23 Clarendon Road Leeds LS2 9NZ (postal address only)

West Yorkshire Archaeology Service, Newstead Road, Wakefield WF1 2DE Tel 01924 306810 email: [wysmr@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:wysmr@wyjs.org.uk) website: [www.arch.wyjs.org.uk](http://www.arch.wyjs.org.uk)

West Yorkshire Archive Service, Chapeltown Road, Sheepscar, Leeds LS7 3AP. Tel 0113 214 5814 email: [leeds@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:leeds@wyjs.org.uk) website: [www.archives.wyjs.org.uk](http://www.archives.wyjs.org.uk)

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## What is a conservation area?

A conservation area is '*an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*'.

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

## What does conservation area status mean?

Conservation area status provides the opportunity to promote the protection and enhancement of the special character of the defined area. Designation confers a general control over development that could damage the area's character. The details are complex but can be summarised as:

- Most demolition requires permission and will be resisted if the building makes a positive contribution to the area.
- Some minor works to houses is no longer "permitted development" and will require planning permission. Examples are rear dormer windows, external cladding and most satellite dishes on front elevations.
- Advertisement controls are tighter
- Most work to trees has to be notified to the Council who has six weeks in which to decide to impose restrictions.
- Generally, higher standards of design apply for new buildings and alterations to existing ones.

Change is inevitable in most conservation areas and it is not the intention of the designation to prevent the continued evolution of places. The challenge within conservation areas is to manage change in a way that maintains, reinforces and enhances the special qualities of the area.

## What is the purpose of this appraisal?

This appraisal provides the basis for making informed, sustainable decisions in the positive management, protection and enhancement of the conservation area.

It provides a clear understanding of the special interest of Rothwell by:

- assessing how the settlement has developed
- analysing its present day character and
- identifying opportunities for enhancement

This appraisal follows the current guidance set out by English Heritage in the 2006 publication 'Guidance on conservation area appraisals'.

The appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

## Planning policy context

This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the wider national,

regional and local planning policy and guidance. Relevant documents include:

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment and the supporting Practice Guide
- The Yorkshire and Humber Plan (The Regional Spatial Strategy) May 2008, particularly Policy ENV9 Historic Environment
- Leeds City Council, Unitary Development Plan Review 2006, particularly Chapter 5 Environment and Appendices A3 Building Design, Conservation and Landscape Design and A4 Archaeological Policies
- Leeds City Council, Local Development Framework, emerging framework that will ultimately replace the Unitary Development Plan.

## Community involvement and adoption

A draft version of this appraisal went through a public consultation period. A six week consultation period ran from 25 January to 5 March 2010 and included:

- Pre-public consultation meetings and discussion with ward members, the Town Centre Manager and Rothwell Historical Society.
- A six week exhibition at the local library, with handout information leaflets and access to a paper copy of the appraisal.

- A public meeting at the Rothwell One Stop Centre, Marsh Street on Wednesday 24 February. An informal 'Drop-in' session took place between 3-6.30pm with a presentation and question and answer session at 7pm.
- Identified stakeholders and interested parties were directly notified.
- The appraisal and relevant response forms were available on the Council's website.
- The consultation was advertised with posters in the town, local press coverage and a leaflet drop to all residences affected by the proposed changes to the conservation area boundary.

All consultation responses were evaluated and the appraisal was amended where appropriate. The Open Panel report to the Planning Board sets out the comments received and the actions taken as a result. This appraisal was formally adopted following approval at the Planning Board meeting of 19 April 2010 and became operational as non statutory planning guidance from 17 May 2010. It is a material consideration in the planning process.

**This document is available to view and download on the Council's website - [www.leeds.gov.uk/conservation](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/conservation)**