



Broxtowe  
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# Cottage Grove Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Consideration of Proposal to Designate  
Grove Avenue and Park Road Chilwell as a  
Conservation Area.  
2008



Nottinghamshire  
County Council

Planning

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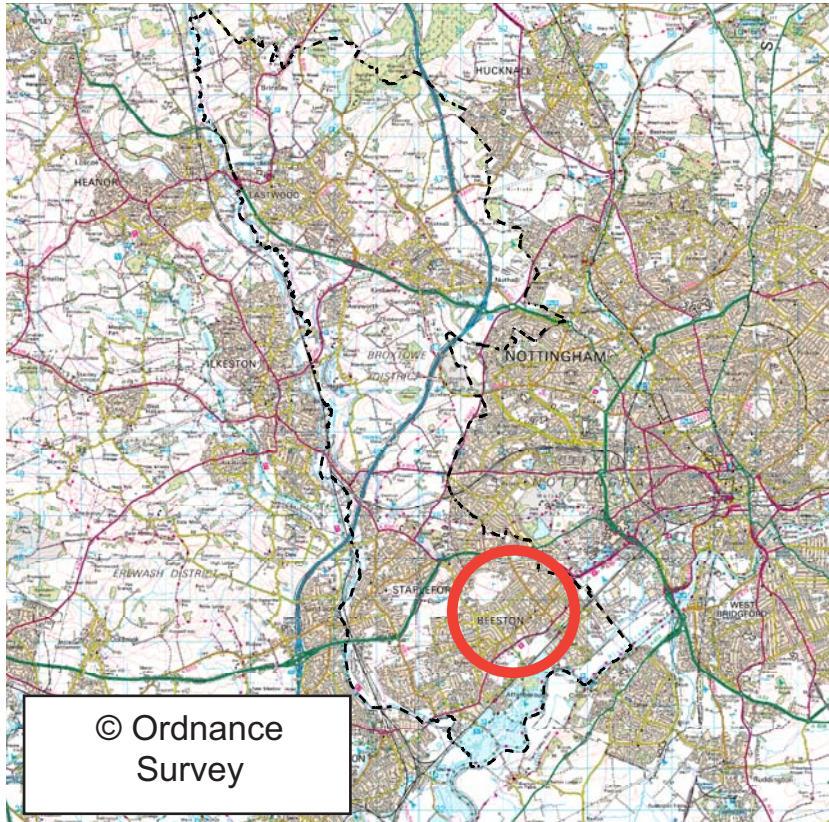
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# 1.0 Introduction

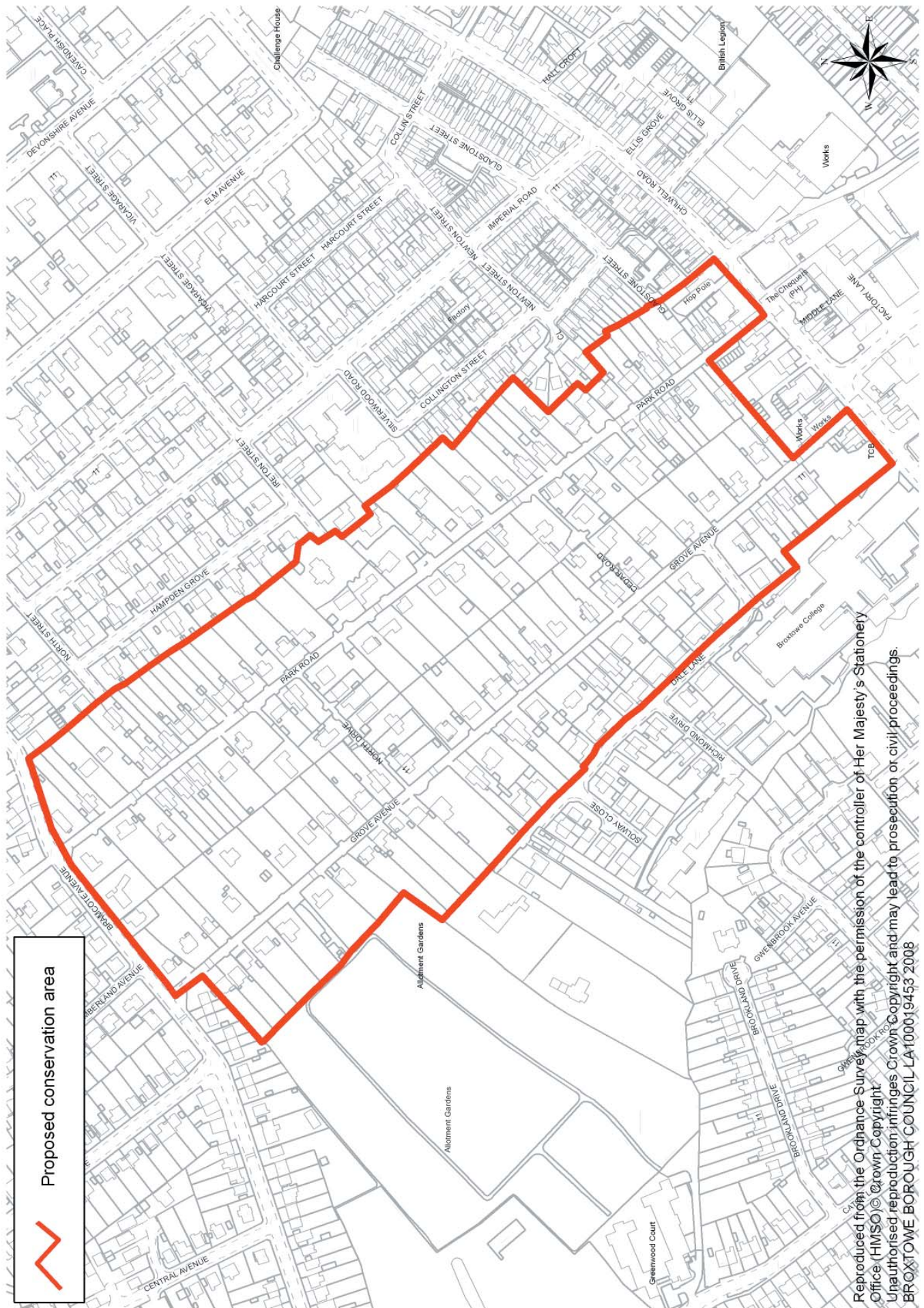
Grove Avenue lies to the west of central Beeston, just inside Chilwell parish, and runs north-west from the Beeston to Chilwell High Road, up to Bramcote Avenue. It is approximately 600 metres in length. Running roughly parallel with Grove Avenue is Park Road, 100 metres to the east. The two roads are linked by North Drive and Cedar Road, which divide the enclosed area into three rectangular blocks of approximately similar area. The topography is flat and there are no far-reaching views.

The area today is residential, comprising housing of various dates, from Victorian detached and semi-detached villas to modern detached properties. The oldest building appears to be the Hop Pole Inn (b. 1847), which is at the edge of the proposed conservation area. A few cottages of dark brown local brick, dating from about 1850, are apparent but the majority of the properties fall within the period 1870's to 1930's. There are a few bungalows and one three storey house but most of the properties are of two storeys. Almost all of the buildings are set back from the road in leafy gardens. Tall, mature trees, some pollarded, line both sides of the street for much of its length. There are two commercial premises to the top of the avenue, a car garage and a plate glass window fitting company.

*Location of the Conservation Area*









## 2.0 Historical Development & Significance

The area appears as undeveloped land on the parliamentary enclosure map of 1809 and seems to have remained undeveloped until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the Nottingham Enclosure Act of 1845, the area was acquired by the Labourers' Friend Society under the agency of Rev. James Orange.<sup>1</sup>

Rev. Orange was an energetic local campaigner on behalf of the poor. He published the pamphlet *A Plea for the Poor* in 1841, in which he put forward a 'Cottage Garden Plan' to help provide an additional source of food and income for textile workers in Nottinghamshire. Planned originally in 1846 as an allotment scheme for working men, much in line with other similar schemes in the 1840s, The Cottage Grove Estate was laid out in 1848.<sup>2</sup>

Orange's plan was to acquire land that could provide each working family with an allotment of a quarter of an acre, which would contain a two storey cottage with four rooms and a front and back door. A quarter of an acre, Orange calculated, was the best size for supplementing industrial occupation, and should "...support a small family for about thirteen weeks".<sup>3</sup>

The financial backing for the Cottage Grove Estate came from nonconformist Nottingham businessmen. At a very late stage the scheme was changed from rented allotments to freehold land plots, which gave working men the vote in county elections. The first such Freehold Land Society was formed in Birmingham in September 1847, and the Cottage Grove was the first in Nottingham, and probably one of the first half dozen in England. It fed naturally into the building society movement, and working men who bought a plot and then wanted to build a house turned to the Nottingham Benefit Building Society formed in January 1849, also with backing from James Orange. The scheme was only partially

successful in its original inception, but the area continues to exhibit a 'garden-like' appearance, and the Cottage Grove represents an important heritage site within Broxtowe and Nottinghamshire more generally.<sup>2</sup>

When viewed on a map the "Cottage Grove" area has a distinct character which differs from the surrounding developments. It has a clear linear grain, and its piecemeal architectural development and form contrasts quite strongly with the neighbouring regimented scale and layout of Imperial Road, Cumberland Avenue and Gladstone Street.

On the OS 25" 1<sup>st</sup> edition map (sheet 41.12), dated 1885, the area is marked as "Cottage Grove" and none of the roads are named. There is development no further than North Drive and very few buildings to the west of Grove Avenue, which appears as enclosed agricultural land with a complex of greenhouses at the High Road end. The plot sizes appear very regular and might be of the quarter of an acre stipulated by Orange. The buildings within the plots vary in their positioning and orientation however, and no obvious pattern of planned development is apparent.

The OS 25" 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, dated 1901, has the area still marked as "Cottage Grove". The four roads of the grove are called West Gate (Grove Avenue), East Gate (Park Road), North Gate (North Drive) and South Gate (Cedar Road). Development has begun to the west of Grove Avenue and already many of the plots have been sub-divided, so the planned "allotment garden" character was already being lost by the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>1</sup> Church, 1960, p. 79

<sup>2</sup> Prof. Beckett

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 76-7

# 3.0 Character Appraisal

The predominant character is of intimate enclosure and separation from the surrounding area. The main factors which contribute to this feeling are: a large number of tall, mature trees; narrow streets with no footpaths; and leafy gardens with tall and thick privet hedging at the road side.



Although there is no greatly dominant architectural style or continuity to the housing, the majority of the houses are late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century in date, many with fine detailing. The second most dominant housing is of the inter-war period. These buildings sit well with the older dwellings and share their scale and layout, being set back from the road within leafy gardens.

The overriding feeling when walking the street is of being in a quiet garden suburb or large linear village. There are a few older dwellings, perhaps of the 1850s or 60s which have a very village-like quality to them. Number 24 in particular illustrates the way the Grove might have looked if James Orange's Cottage Garden Plan had come to fruition.



A village-like character is evident also in the two very narrow "back lanes" that link Grove Avenue to Park Road. These are Cedar Road and North Drive, and they contribute greatly to the distinctive character of the area, despite the haphazard and largely unsympathetic development which has occurred along them.



The low level of road markings and traffic signage has further helped to engender a more village-like, rather than urban character to the area. The appearance of the narrow roads is however harmed by the presence of many parked vehicles, particularly to the southern end of the street.

## New Development

Two examples of new build illustrate that an attempt has been made by residents to retain the character of Grove Avenue, despite it not being a conservation area. Number 48 is a Victorian building which has had two large extensions. Unfortunately the proportions for the windows are wrong, and the tile hanging



uncharacteristic for the area, but work of some quality has been done. A completely new build nearby has referenced many of the characteristic features of the 19<sup>th</sup> century housing, but again the proportions are not quite right.



These examples illustrate that there is an appreciation of the historic character and appearance of the area by the residents and gives weight to it being potentially successful as a conservation area.

### Entrances to the Street



The leafy, residential character of Grove Avenue has been eroded greatly at its southern entrance, off the High Road, by commercial developments and unsympathetic border

treatments. The first fifty metres or so has become very urbanised. The northern entrance, off Bramcote Avenue, however, is largely in-keeping with the character of the area. Only some tall, close-boarded fencing disrupts the view.



### Erosive factors

In addition to the commercial developments at the southern end of the street, and the car-parking and traffic use, there are a few other issues that have eroded the historic character and appearance of Grove Avenue.

#### Front boundary treatments

Many of the front boundaries, which were probably of privet hedging originally, have been replaced with a variety of uncharacteristic materials, or have been removed altogether.

#### Hard Landscaping

Many of the properties have had their front gardens replaced with hard standing, often in the form of block-paving, to accommodate car parking. This has tended to change the character of the area to a more urban appearance, and has gone hand in hand with front boundary loss.





#### Replacement doors, windows, and roof coverings

Some of the properties have had their doors and windows replaced with UPVC, aluminium or stained timber items which have harmed the character of the historic buildings. Also, concrete tiles have been used to replace the characteristic plain tile or slate on some of the houses.

#### Street lamps and telephone posts

The concrete or steel street lamp posts used throughout the area do not enhance the character or appearance, although their impact is mitigated substantially by the presence of the tall trees. A galvanised telephone post, however, erodes the historic quality of the street at the entrance to Dale Lane.



## Conclusion

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that conservation areas should be any “*areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”. Planning Policy Guidance note 15 further states: “*It is the quality and interest of areas, rather than of individual buildings, which should be the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas*”<sup>4</sup>

“Cottage Grove” fulfils these broad criteria and more specifically the particular elements highlighted below, which are described in PPG 15 paragraphs 4.2 & 4.4 and repeated in guidance given by English Heritage<sup>5</sup>:-

- historic layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares
- characteristic materials
- hard and soft surfaces
- vistas along streets and between buildings
- historical development
- relationship of buildings, trees and other green features

<sup>4</sup> Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, para 4.2

<sup>5</sup> Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas 2006



# 4.0 The Implications of Designation

English Heritage states that: *“It is essential ... for all the departments within the local authority to understand the significance of designation and to work corporately to ensure that development control decisions are appropriate to the historic context and that street management does not damage the historic fabric or appearance of conservation areas.”*<sup>6</sup>

## Management Issues

Much of what makes up the special character of Grove Avenue is the “green-ness” of the streetscape. Trees can be given Tree Preservation Orders and are protected under conservation area designation. Hedges are not, however. An article 4 direction may be necessary to conserve the privet hedging border treatments to the street frontages which contribute greatly to the particular character of the area. Such a direction would also preserve the intimate nature of the street by preventing the “opening up” caused by front boundary loss to allow for wider property access.

Vehicular use and extensive on-street parking, particularly at the High Road end, is having a negative effect on the character of the narrow streets. Pedestrian and cycle access is hampered and hazardous. The issue of managing access and vehicular use will likely become a high priority in conserving the character and appearance of the area.

## Further work

As part of a more thorough character appraisal, the following work should be undertaken before or closely following designation, in order to inform management priorities:

- A photographic record of each building within the designated area to act as a benchmark for assessing rate of change and enforcement issues. This should be repeated at regular intervals (e.g. every 5 years).

- An analysis of the buildings to clarify which make a positive, negative or neutral contribution to the special interest of the area.
- A photographic survey of the quality and extent of survival of historic boundary treatments within the designated area.
- A survey of potential enforcement issues and enhancement opportunities.

## **The Proposed Conservation Area Boundary**

The most logical and manageable route for the conservation area boundary to take, would be that described below and illustrated in Map 1

To follow the rear boundaries of the properties of both Grove Avenue and Park Road and some of the frontages of High Road (to include the Hop Pole Inn) and Bramcote Avenue. The whole area within this boundary should be designated as Cottage Grove Conservation area.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., para 3.6

# 5.0 Details

## Character Details and Appearance

- A distinctive linear layout of roads and settlement plots.
- Important local history value.
- Narrow roads with minimal road-markings and signage.
- Mature trees bordering the roads.
- Privet hedging bordering the roads.
- Restricted views provide an intimate feeling of enclosure.
- Medium to large mature gardens with tall trees and shrubs.
- Garden suburb/village-like appearance.
- One and two storey semi-detached or detached properties.
- Approximately 60% of the housing is late Victorian to early Edwardian.
- Approximately 25% of the housing is interwar (c. 1930's).
- Approximately 15% of the housing is late 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Historic Architectural Details

- Red plain tile or slate roof coverings.
- Decorative ridge tiles.
- Predominant red machine-cut facing brick, some local brown brick.
- Blue brick or stone banding to walls.
- Ornate brick and terracotta eave details, string courses and chimney details.
- Buff coloured "crown" chimney pots.
- Stone lintels, cills and bay windows, some ornate.
- Round-arched door and window openings with keystone details.
- Rubbed brick to window and door openings.
- Variety of box-sash timber window designs, predominantly two over two.
- Stained glass details.
- Decorative painted railings.
- Sandstone boundary walling.
- Gravel driveways.



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Cossons, A. 1962 Beeston and Stapleford in the Past, *Beeston and Stapleford Official Guide*. Beeston and Stapleford Urban District Council

Professor John Beckett (pers comm)

## Maps consulted

1809 Parliamentary Enclosure Map

1885 OS 25" 1<sup>st</sup> edition, sheet 41.12

1901 OS 25" 2nd edition, sheet 41.12

1914 OS 25", sheet 41.12

1938 OS 25", sheet 41.12



**This report has been produced by Broxtowe Borough Council Planning Department and Nottinghamshire County Council Building Conservation Team**

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