

## 5. Character Areas

### E. High Street

5.64 Character Area E contains the properties fronting High Street, from Bridge Street to the northern boundary of the Co-Op supermarket. It also contains Western Avenue, William St, The Sidings, Railway Court, Poachers Court, Canal Court, West Bank and a number of properties along Sykes Lane.

5.65 The two most defining characteristics of this area are the quality of the built fabric and the land use activity.

5.66 It plays a strategic role within Saxilby, as the social and commercial hub of the settlement. Its wide variety of well frequented businesses and service are commensurate with its centrality within Saxilby. It is the central spine from which all activity occurs.

5.67 It has been so since the Saxilby developed northwards from Bridge Street in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

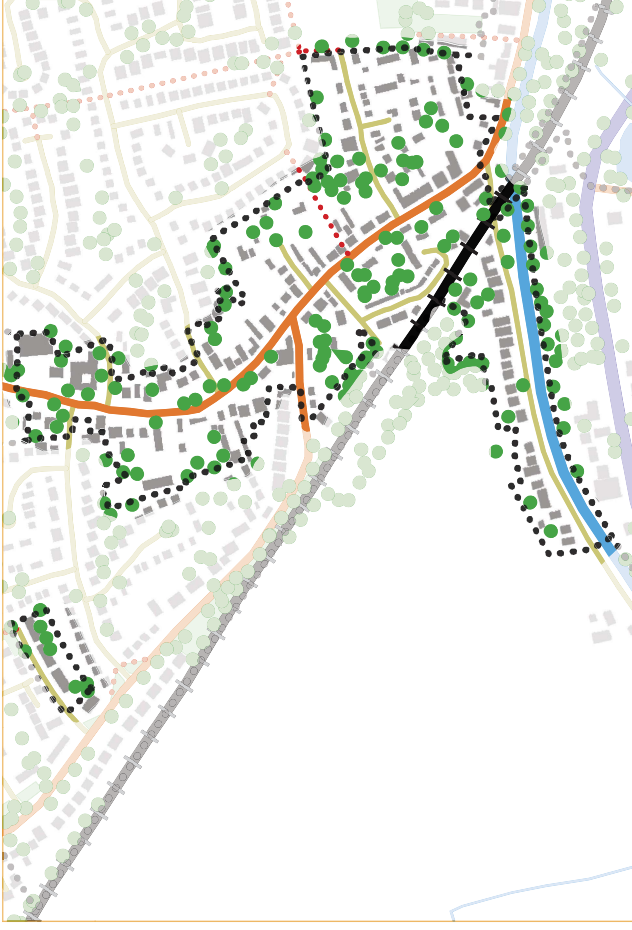


Figure 5.24: Feature Map of Character Area E.



Figure 5.23: The former Post Office building (which operated from 1905-1959) before being converted to a dwelling.



Figure 5.25: The Anglers pub is an integral part of the social fabric of Saxilby.



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- 5.68 The majority of buildings are two storeys in height, and either detached or terraced. Traditional red clay brick is the predominant building material, with the occasional yellow brick or rendered building. Roofs are constructed using either slate, tiles or pantiles and mostly either black or brown in colour.
- 5.69 Most roofs are side gabled, however, front gabled, cross gabled and hipped roofs are also common. The vast majority of buildings are orientated towards the street, however a number are orientated perpendicularly to the street.
- 5.70 Many of the buildings still use the traditional timber windows, however, quite a lot have replaced these with the white PVC variety. Many of the buildings along High Street date back to mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century, with only minor modifications to the original structures, while others have replaced the original buildings.
- 5.71 A number of key historic buildings line High Street, contributing to its heritage and architectural prominence. These include the former St Andrew's Church, the Village Hall, the former Post Office, the former Infants School.



Figure 5.26: The former Infant School (which operated from 1872-1973) fronting onto High Street, now in use as a residential dwelling.



Figure 5.27: The former St Andrew's Church building, which has been converted into residential use.



Figure 5.28: Saxilby Village Hall.

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5.72 Other buildings possess a significance from a land-use perspective, generating a movement of people and forming intrinsic parts of the social infrastructure.

5.73 The Co-Op supermarket, The Anglers pub, the row of shops (and cafe) south of William St and the Methodist Church could all be considered for this category. Most of the properties along the High Street section of this character area have minor setbacks, with most buildings constructed to within 3m of the front boundary, with some even built to the boundary, giving the street a more urban feel.

5.74 However, those that were originally constructed as dwellings and many of the properties in other parts of the character area have more substantial setbacks, often incorporating front gardens, up to 8m in depth.



Figure 5.29: The row of red brick buildings containing two shops and a cafe acts as a mini retail hub towards the southern end of High Street.



Figure 5.30: Row of single storey dwellings along West Bank facing the canal, with (approximately ) 1m high hedges, which offer a reasonable amount of privacy to the front gardens while also facilitating visual interaction between the properties and the street outside.

5.75 The dwellings along West Bank generally have more generous front gardens from the wider character area, being on the periphery of the settlement and availing of the wonderful setting, fronting onto the canal.

5.76 Therefore there is not a consistent building line within the character area.

5.77 Vegetation and greenery is relatively sparse in supply in this character area, most certainly in terms of visibility from the street. There is no public open space. However, given the more urban nature of this character area, this is not unreasonable.



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Figure 5.31: A row of properties along High Street offering fine examples of the arched entrances popular at the time.

5.82 The mixture of the primary qualities of the street, its high quality architecture and the flow of activity into its buildings contribute to a pedestrian experience that is vibrant and relatively rich in terms of visual interest. The quality of the footpaths, the level of connectivity and the relatively controlled vehicular speeds allied to the above makes for a reasonably good pedestrian environment.



Figure 5.32: The Old Forge, an example of a tastefully restored old building which had previously fallen into disuse.

- 5.78 The majority of the buildings date from the mid 1800's to the early 1900's and is typical of the Victorian era. A number of the buildings have arched pedestrian and vehicular entrances through the structures to the back yards.
- 5.79 The broader entrances were possibly constructed to allow horse carriages access to rear yards.
- 5.80 The Old Forge building is a decent example of a tasteful modernisation of an old building using sympathetic materials like treated timber.
- 5.81 On the other hand, the row of dwellings to the north of the Fire Station could be said to be pastiche in design - seeking to replicate traditional architectural vernacular of the street but by using lesser materials, such as non-clay brick and PVC windows and doors.



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### F. 1960's Development

5.83 Character Area F comprises the large batches of development either side of High Street that occurred from the early 1960's. These are generally clustered in two main areas:

- East of High St bounded by the properties fronting Mill Lane, Church Road, Bridge Street and High Street; and
- West of High Street bounded by the properties fronting Church Road, High Street, St Andrew's Drive and those backing onto the railway line.

5.84 Character Area F is almost exclusively residential in land use. In terms of structure, the area has strong east-west road connectivity, with roads like Torksey Avenue, Manor Road and Highfield Road traversing the area to the arterial routes at the peripheries. However, north-south connectivity is weaker with houses generally arranged in cul-de-sac style arrangements, often with a landscaped turning circle in front of the last houses.



Figure 5.34: Attractive grouping of trees on a turning circle at the end of Woodhall Crescent.

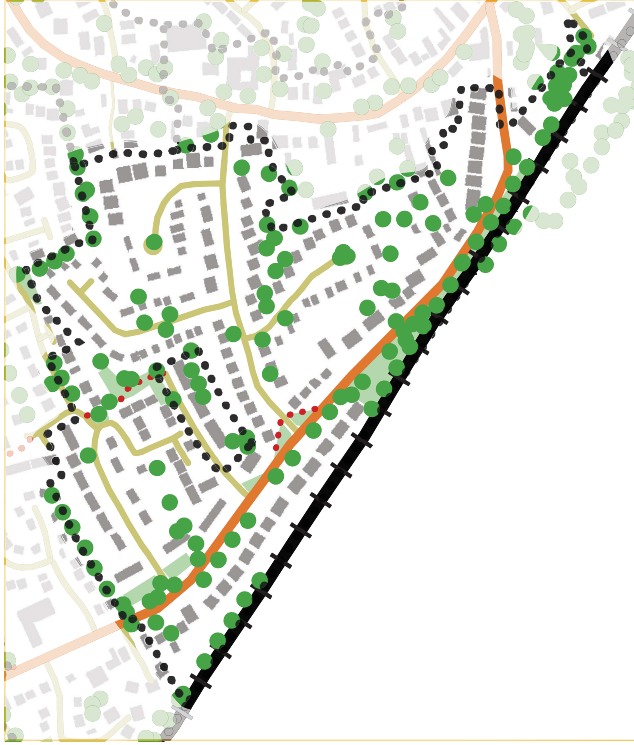


Figure 5.33: Feature Map of Character Area F West.



Figure 5.35: Feature Map of Character Area F East.



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- 5.85 The cul-de-sacs, combined with the meandering nature of the connecting routes, serve to make the areas less attractive to those seeking to avail of the area as a 'rat-run'.
- 5.86 There is a level of consistency regarding the plot sizes and building siting in this area. Whereas the buildings in Character Areas D and E are often built to the front boundary which creates a more urban feel to the respective streets, the dwellings in Character Area F are predominantly set back from the footpath allowing a front garden of approximately 7-10m in depth. This contributes to a more suburban character setting.
- 5.87 While the front boundary treatments vary between picket fencing, low hedgerows and open frontage, they are predominantly less than 1m in height. This allows for passive surveillance of the street and promotes opportunities for social interaction.



Figure 5.36: Examples of the low front fences and open boundary treatment that is common throughout Character Area F.



Figure 5.37: A variety of material types are found throughout the Character Area, with red brick, yellow brick and render all visible in this photo.

- 5.88 There are a variety of building types in this character area.
- 5.89 While the majority are detached dwellings, semi-detached and terraced housing are also present. This varies from street to street and also within streets. So too, building height. Again, while the majority are two storeys in height, there are also pockets of single storey dwellings across the area.
- 5.90 The predominant building material in the area is brick (red, brown or yellow) with occasional use of render and timber panelling. All of the dwellings are gable roofed, some to the side, others to the front.



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Figure 5.38: An example of two quite different housing typologies located adjacent one another on Woodhall Crescent.

- 5.91 Properties in this character area are well landscaped with a range of small trees, bushes and hedges in both front gardens and back gardens. Along the grass verges and pockets of open space, occasional tree planting serves to frame the streets. However, in some parts concrete and tarmac predominate.
- 5.92 These measures combined provide an attractive context for the streets and ameliorate the pedestrian experience of the area.
- 5.93 The quality of the open space in this area is mixed. While the large Recreation Ground offers an excellent amenity for residents of Saxilby, as does the open space for students adjoining the primary school, the remainder of the area's open space is limited in size and usability. Its primary contribution is aesthetic.
- 5.94 As outlined previously the road network does not provide for strong north-south permeability within this area. However, this is offset by the impressive extent of purpose made pedestrian paths that knit many of the cul-de-sacs and roads together.



Figure 5.39 and 5.40: Two examples of the excellent network of pedestrian walkways that navigate through Character Area F.



Figure 5.41: An example of an area of public open space that is low on usability yet still offers positive visual and environmental benefits to the residents of the area.



5.95 The condition of the footpaths throughout the area vary in quality.

5.96 A number of areas (including Bridge Place and Fossdyke Gardens) have a separate designated area for garages which are allocated to different properties for car parking purposes.

5.97 While the absence of driveways serves to not interrupt the continuity of the footpath and therefore the pedestrian experience, it also increases the likelihood of on-street car parking, which on occasion can lead to cars being parked on the footpath which can prove an impediment to the less physically-abled and those with young children in buggies or prams.

5.98 This issue aside, the pedestrian environment of Character Area F is generally of a high quality.



Figure 5.43: An example of the potential impacts of not providing on-site car parking for residents.

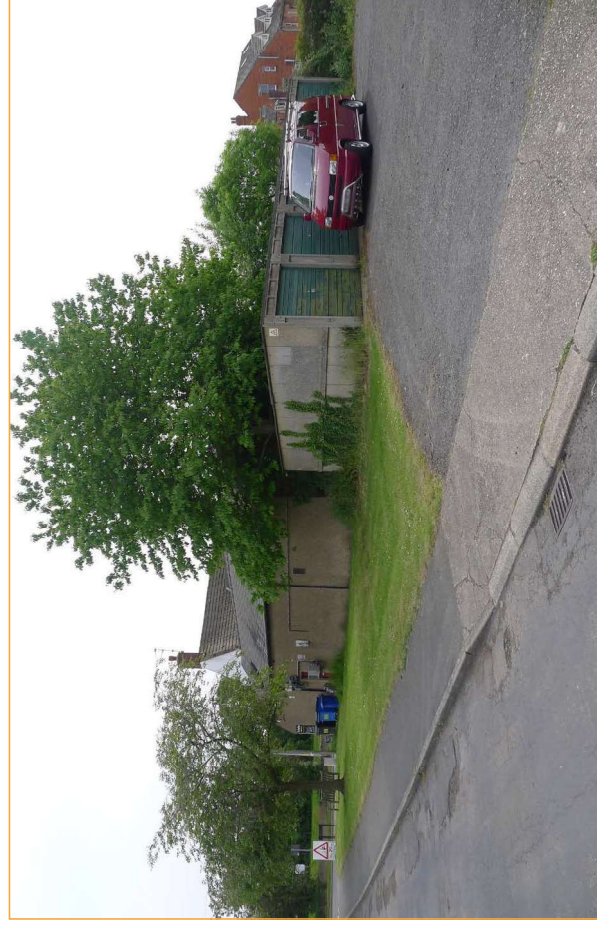


Figure 5.42: Off-site garages provided for residents in Bridge Place.



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### G. Church Road, St. Botolph's Church + Mill Lane

5.99 Character Area G includes Church Road, Church Lane, Mill Lane and the east stretch of the A57 road fronting the canal, as well as a number of short streets that spread out from them.

5.100 The area is almost exclusively residential in land-use terms.

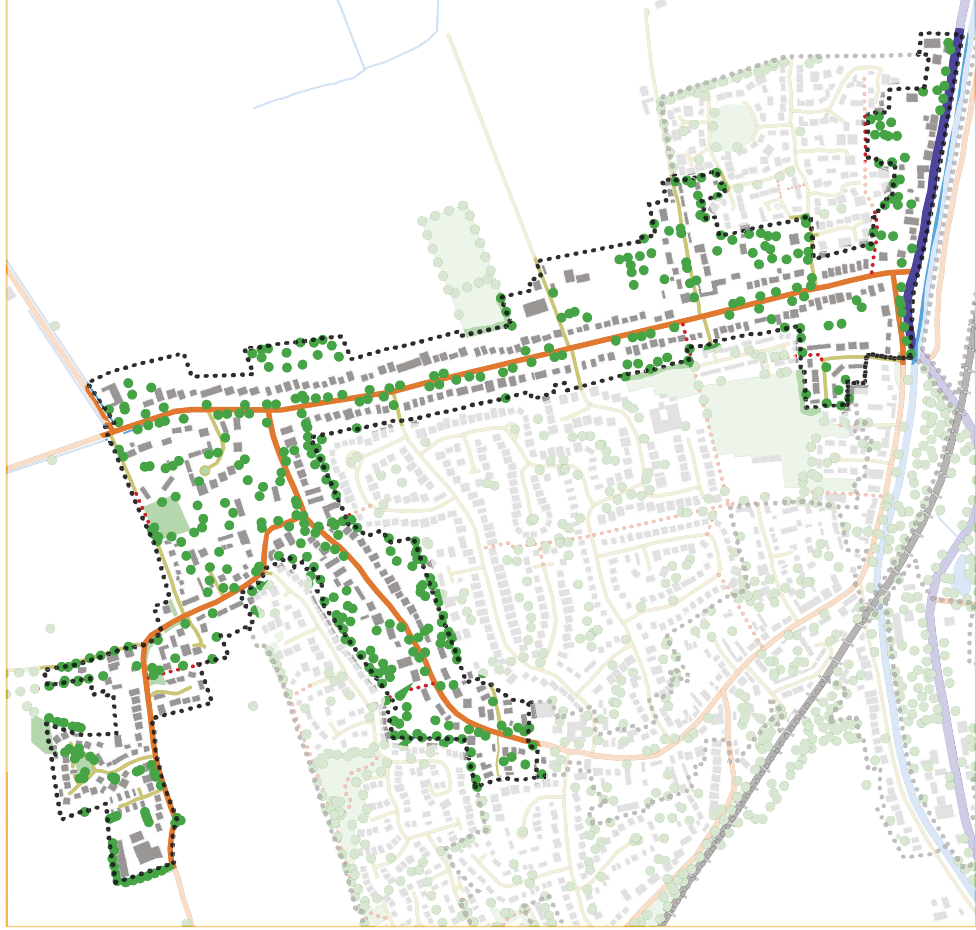


Figure 5.44: Feature Map of Character Area G.



Figure 5.45: Single storey hipped-roofed cottages fronting Mill Lane adjacent to the pedestrian walkway.

- 5.101 The majority of the dwellings in this character area are detached and two storeys in height. However, along most of the west side of Mill Lane and much of east side, the houses are single storey. Dwellings on the east side have distant cathedral views and long gardens.
- 5.102 Red brick is the predominant material choice, with render and painted brick occasionally evident.
- 5.103 Roofing forms come in a variety of styles - side gabled, cross gabled and hipped.
- 5.104 Set-backs vary in size in the character area. Many of the properties on have generous front setbacks, with most measuring at least 9m in depth. Many of the dwellings along the east side of Mill Lane and Sturton Road are set back up to 20m front their front boundaries.
- 5.105 Dwellings in more modern developments, such as St Botolph's Gate are generally built much closer to the street. So too were the row of 1930's cottages at the southern end of Mill Lane (as seen in Figure 5.45).



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Figure 5.46: Single storey cottages with low front boundaries fronting a small yet attractive piece of public open space.

- 5.106 Others, such as the terraced row of cottages along the east side of Queensway have been designed with shallow front gardens and a small area of open space in front of them (Figure 5.46).
- 5.107 Front boundaries are generally either fully open or defined by low walls or picket fences.
- 5.108 The dwellings in St. Botolph's Gate are a contemporary interpretation of the vernacular style traditional to the area and also typical of the variety of dwelling type in Saxilby, utilising a range of roof forms, heights, finishes and setbacks sometimes with even adjoining houses. This has been done in a cohesive manner and has successfully avoided the homogeneity that sometimes defines modern housing developments.



Figure 5.47: The winding nature of St Botolph's Gate and the staggered siting of dwellings provides increased visual interest than more traditional layouts.



Figure 5.48: An example of how architectural expression can provide elements of variety without detracting from the overall coherency of architectural language. Eg, different porch types, upper level windows and painting of brick etc.



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Figure 5.49: St Botolph's Gate: again, a variety in building height, material choice and articulation of facade while also maintaining a level of consistency of character.



Figure 5.51: Victorian dwelling fronting Church Road, with typical set back and low front wall providing an attractive presence for pedestrian passers-by.



Figure 5.50: St Botolph's Gate: One building's bricks painted, taller roof height and five windows abreast, the other with unpainted brick, a front gable and three windows across yet a consistency of character.

- 5.109 A range of architectural eras are present in Character Area G. Victorian dwellings line the Church Road spine of the area, while along Mill Lane the majority of the buildings were built in the 1960's yet embrace a more traditional vernacular. So too do many of the recently constructed dwellings along Church Lane, including those in St Botolph's Gate, which echo much of the traditional style found along Church Road.
- 5.110 A number of buildings of historic significance are located within this character area, most notably St. Botolph's Church. Also, the former Manor Farmhouse on the corner of Church Road and Church Lane as well as the building previously known as The Hollies which now accommodates Wispington House.
- 5.111 Apart from in St. Botolph's Gate there is little usable public open space in the character area. This is most likely to do with the linear nature of the main roads in the character area and the fact that they were developed at a time where public space was not seen as a high priority piece of infrastructure.



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- 5.112 There are a number of private or small areas of greenery (grass verges, 'pocket parks' etc) that provide aesthetic and natural value to the area.
- 5.113 A diversity of tree species are present contributing to a vitality and colour that greatly benefits the character of the area.



Figure 5.52: Wonderful view of St. Botolph's Church from Westcroft Drive



Figure 5.53: Wispington House with an area of open space providing an attractive setting and a welcome break in the building line of an otherwise very long and linear Mill Lane

5.114 Church Road, Church Lane and Mill Lane act as spinal routes through this character area, from which shorter lanes spread outwards mostly serving a small number of houses and do not connect to other routes.

5.115 St. Botolph's Church is well surrounded by trees and therefore is shielded from view to but a few locations. Church Lane/Westcroft Drive and St. Botolph's Close being two.

5.116 There are some very pleasant views outwards towards the wider countryside. As per the other character areas, this area has strong pedestrian permeability, with pedestrian through routes provided where the roads do not access.

5.117 The pedestrian environment along Church Road is relatively pleasant due to the visual interest provided by low front walls, well vegetated gardens and attractive buildings.



Figure 5.54: An area of open space in St. Botolph's Gate - superior in size, usability and attractiveness to many of the areas of open space in older developments. Most of the dwellings are orientated towards it providing activation and passive surveillance of the space.



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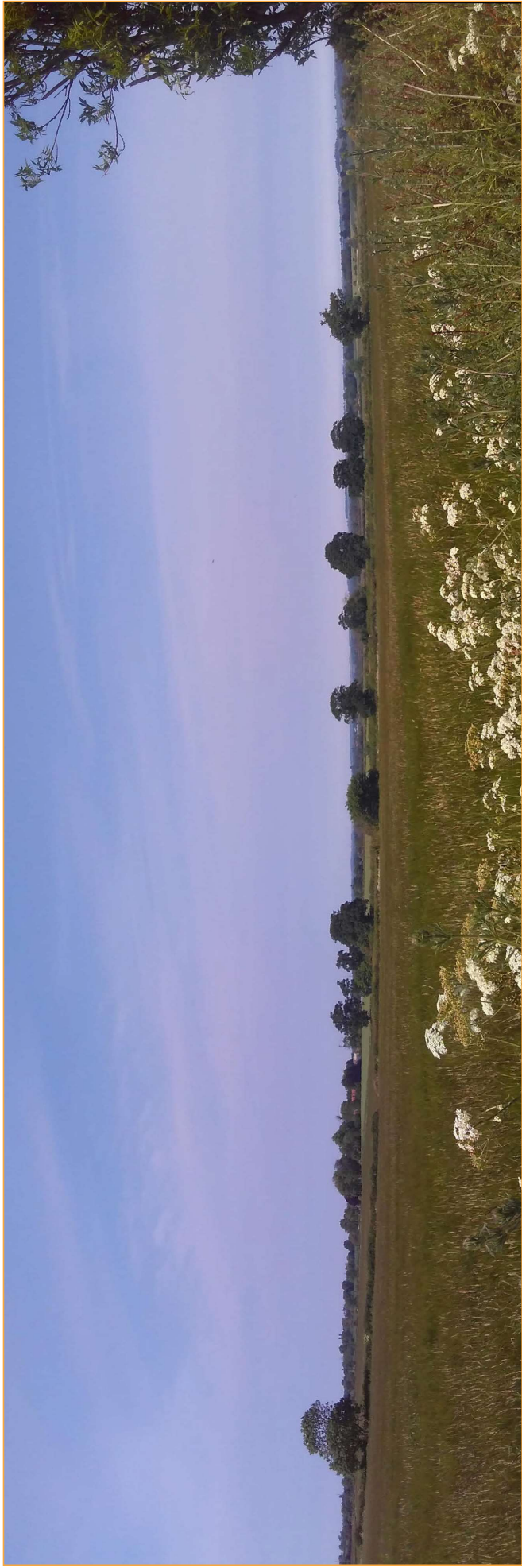
5.118

Along Mill Lane, being long and straight and an arterial route linking Sturton with Lincoln, vehicular traffic can be more inclined to move at a faster speed than on other roads, which can serve to lessen the amenity enjoyed by pedestrians. The existence of a pedestrian crossing midway along Mill Lane helps to reduce this potential reduction of amenity.



Figure 5.56: While not a public area of open space and not having a footpath alongside it, this field, on the corner of Mill Lane and Church Road, provides a very attractive visual amenity for passers-by and a very valuable piece of nature in an otherwise urban setting.

Figure 5.55: A panoramic photo viewing northeast from Church Lane highlighting some of the exquisite views available of the wonderful expanse of countryside that surrounds Saxilby.





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Figure 5.57: South westerly view along Church Road highlighting the abundance of vegetation present in the older properties which provides for a pleasant pedestrian experience.



Figure 5.59: As per Figure 5.56, this rusty fence provides a pleasant reminder of a different era when much of Saxilby had yet to be developed.



Figure 5.58: North easterly view along Church Road again very rich in foliage with mostly low boundary walls fronting the road, both of which enhance the pedestrian environment.

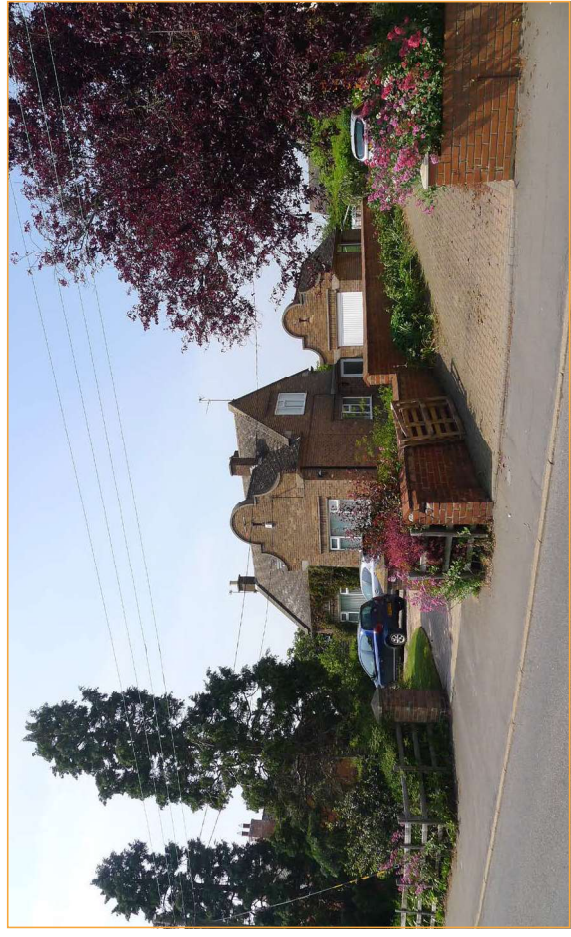


Figure 5.60: A rare example of a Dutch Gable present on Church Road.



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### H. Post 1990's Development

5.119 Character Area H includes two swathes of development that occurred since the 1990's, at the north-western and south-eastern extremes of the settlement, as per images on this page.

5.120 With the exception of the medical centre on the old brickworks site, this character area is residential in land-use.

5.121 There is a strong predominance of two storey dwellings but dormers and the occasional three storey dwelling also in evidence. There is also a pair of single storey dwellings in Maiden Court.

5.122 While the majority are detached dwellings, semi-detached and terraced housing are also present. Houses are mostly built using red or yellow brick, with some timber panelling also common.

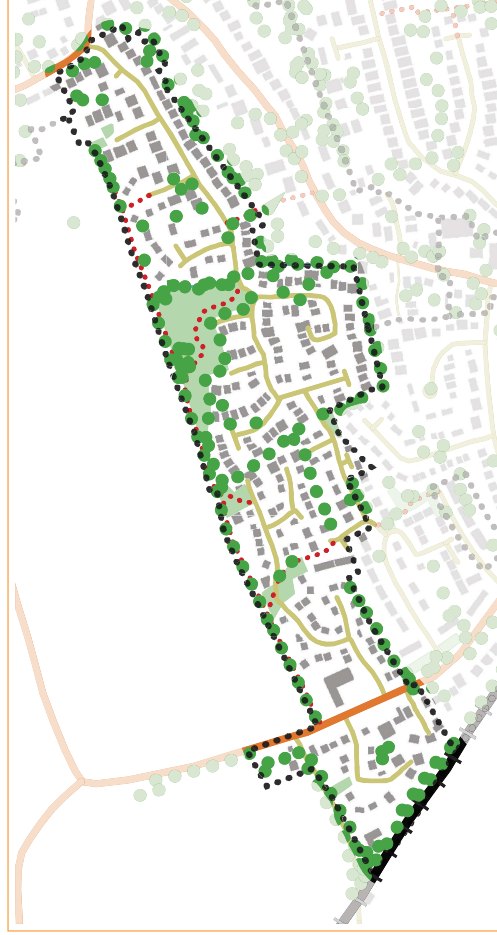


Figure 5.61: Feature Map of Character Area H Northwest.



Figure 5.62: Feature Map of Character Area H Southeast.

5.123 One of the distinctive features of Character Area H, as a common trait with most development of this era, is a growing influence of the private car on the design and layout of the streets and buildings in the character area.



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- 5.124 The road layouts of both land parcels are similar. In the north-western section, St Andrew's Drive and Westcroft Drive act as a spinal route, from which the various streets stem, in cul-de-sac type designs.
- 5.125 A similar arrangement is found in the south-eastern section, where Daubeney Avenue and Hotchin Avenue are east-west aligned roads from which the other streets spread.
- 5.126 In some parts the road alignment and staggering of houses provides more visual interest and variety in comparison to a traditional grid layout.
- 5.127 However, despite the extensive network of pedestrian paths in the area, the cul-de-sac layout inhibits pedestrian permeability and also the ability of future developments to knit into the existing urban structure.



Figure 5.64: Examples along Westcroft Drive of the reduction in front garden space in typical post 1990's housing developments in Saxilby in order to accommodate the increase in car ownership and requirement for concrete or paved surfaces.



Figure 5.63: Despite the presence of blank gables along St Andrews Drive, its meandering form and staggering of houses reduces the monotony that can sometimes be present in large housing developments.

- 5.128 There is a significant reduction in the amount of grassed front gardens in this character area, compared to many of the others, due to more space being allocated for car parking and an actual reduction in the front setback of the dwellings from the property boundary.
- 5.129 Generally, there seems to be a greater ratio of concrete to greenery than in other character areas, perhaps with less grass verges present. However, there is a reasonable frequency, size and usability of open space.
- 5.130 Vegetation and planting is more prominent within private gardens than it is on the particular streets. Generally, the vegetation in the area is yet to fully mature and therefore its contribution to character is not as great as it will be in future years.



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Figure 5.65: As per Figure 5.54 previously, a very generous piece of public open space located to the south of Hotchkin Avenue, overlooked by the surrounding dwellings.



Figure 5.66: High front hedges along parts of Westcroft Drive, which serve to lessen the opportunities for social and visual interaction between residents and passers-by.

5.131 There is also a higher frequency of tall front hedgerows (approx 2m), which contrasts with the front boundary treatment of properties in other parts of Saxilby. This treatment is often done to achieve greater privacy for individual residencies. This can have the effect of reducing opportunities for social interaction and passive surveillance of the street (or 'eyes on the street').

5.132 If it occurs in clusters or in areas with high side fencing (above 1.4m) or blank gable walls, it can contribute to a 'tunnel' effect where visual interest and a sense of security is reduced for the pedestrian. In these types of situations, the factors that can contribute to traffic calming in an area are also lessened.

5.133 This is quite prevalent along the north side of Westcroft Drive, where many of the dwellings are orientated onto the adjoining streets, creating larger stretches of blank frontages and gable ends orientated towards Westcroft Drive. In comparison to this, the majority of dwellings on the south side of Westcroft Drive have open frontages and are orientated towards the street.

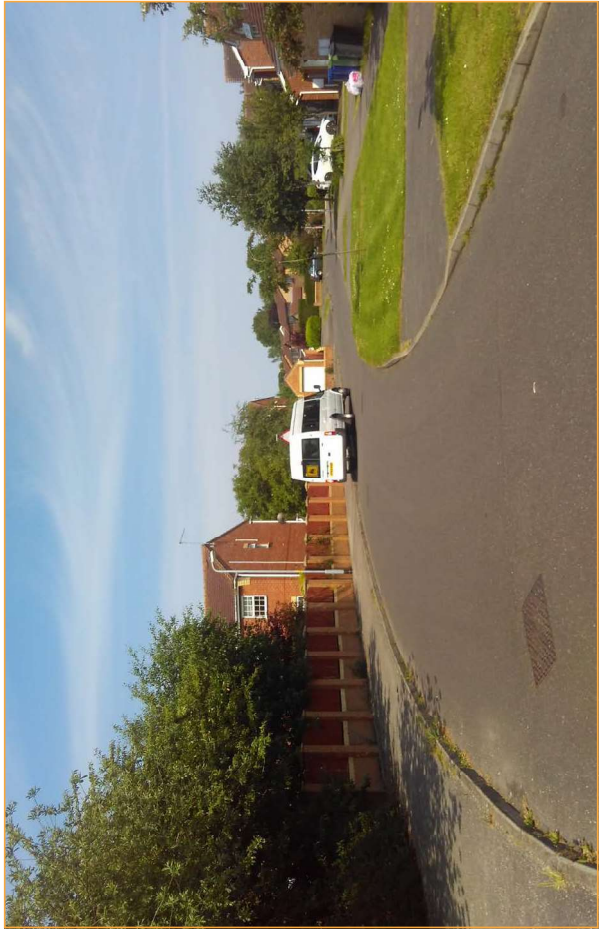


Figure 5.67: View northeasterly along Westcroft Drive, with a very noticeable contrast in boundary treatments on either side of the road, created by the orientation of the respective dwellings.



- 5.134 There is a higher prevalence of double garages in this character area. Garages flush with the building line of the house, or even contained within the building, provide a less attractive visual presence when viewed from the street.
- 5.135 On the other hand, garages that are recessed from the house do not detract from the visual primacy of the dwelling and the blank frontage that garage doors present.
- 5.136 Wonderful views are on offer along Westcroft Drive towards the iconic St Botolph's Church. This was an important design consideration in the creation of Westcroft Drive.
- 5.137 Some excellent views outwards towards the wider countryside are on offer from the extremes of the character area.



Figure 5.68: Excellent views northeasterly along Westcroft Drive towards St. Botolph's Church. Low front hedges or open boundaries contribute to the quality of the pedestrian experience.

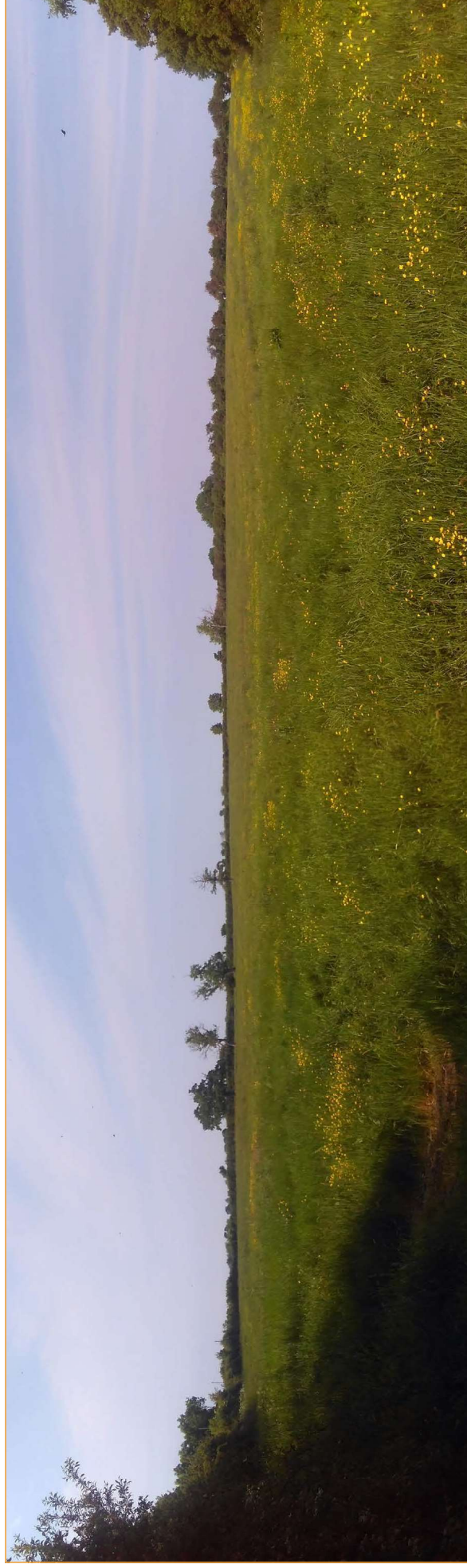


Figure 5.69: Panoramic view northeasterly from Sykes Lane towards the proposed area of Designated Local Green Space (as per the Draft Neighbourhood Plan document).



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Figure 5.70: Access from Westcroft Drive to area of open space to which it has been proposed to enlarge as part of a proposal to develop the Church Lane site to the north.

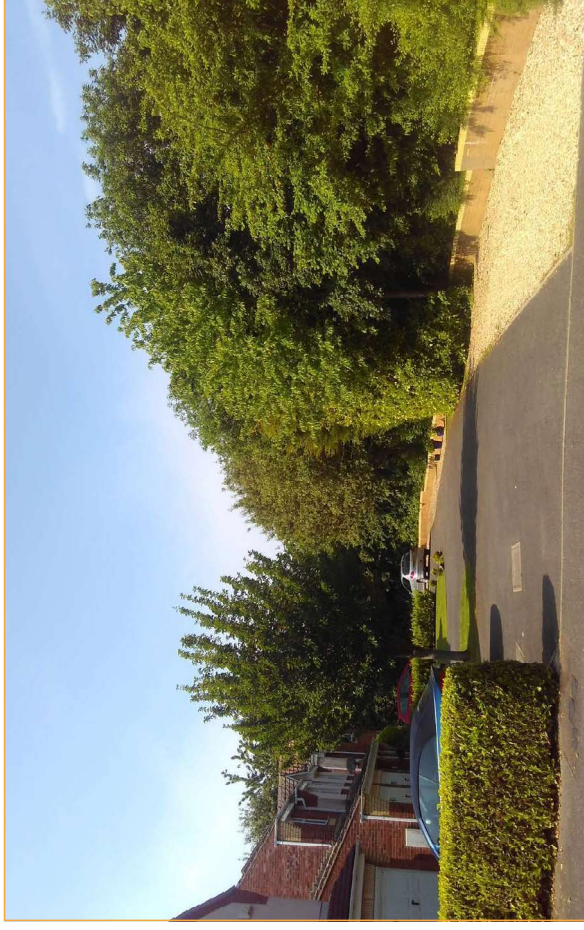


Figure 5.71: An example of one of the many shared surface accessways leading to small clusters of houses in Character Area H.

5.138 There is a greater occurrence of shared-surface access ways into smaller streets and clusters of houses.

5.139 Within this character area, there is a continuation of the impressive practice of an expansive pedestrian pathway network found elsewhere in Saxilby.

5.140 The walkway that traverses the area between Daubney Avenue and the A57 is a very valuable piece of pedestrian infrastructure. However much of it is bordered by the rear fences of properties which are generally tall in size.

5.141 Again, an extended area with such high blank elevations could be slightly intimidating to pedestrians at night-time. This is not helped by an absence of windows in the side gables of some dwellings, which could have offered valuable overlooking and passive surveillance of the walkway.



Figure 5.72: An excellent piece of pedestrian infrastructure serving Vassey Close and Ingamells Drive. However the provision of windows in the gable walls of dwellings such as this one, would serve to provide passive surveillance of an otherwise dark laneway and improve the sense of safety to the user.



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Figure 5.73: A profusion of blank gable walls like those at Ingamells Drive should be avoided where possible. Small windows or great articulation of the facades would serve to greatly improve this issue.

- 5.142 There seems to be a greater prevalence of exposed blank gable walls than in other parts of Saxilby. This can reduce the visual amenity and pedestrian experience of residents.
- 5.143 Generally, the dwellings appear larger than in other 'modern' developments, notably Character Area F, without a noticeable increase in plot sizes.
- 5.144 Rooks Close is atypical of the wider character area. A cluster of housing that appears to have been designed as an age friendly development. It's design is unique in the area, containing a shared communal space around which dwellings are orientated.



Figure 5.74: Rooks Close, with pedestrian only access to the dwellings that all front onto an attractive piece of open space.



Figure 5.75: Very visually pleasant row of terraced houses in Rooks Close.



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- 5.145 The dwellings in this character area are generally designed with more elaboration and variety of architectural expression and typology than in other character areas. This has had both positive and negative outcomes in visual terms.
- 5.146 Ashfield Grange and The Rowans contain some examples of nicely designed contemporary interpretations of traditional housing styles found in the wider area.
- 5.147 The quality and choice of the materials used is of a higher range than in other parts of the character area.
- 5.148 Better proportioned and often more rational in their architectural expression, their use of more 'natural' materials such as timber and clay brick (for example) lend a more considered aesthetic that is responsive to the context in which it sits.



Figure 5.77: An example of a dwelling with a well articulated front facade, with three different vertical elements which help break up any horizontality of the building. Also a variety in materials contributes towards this.



Figure 5.76: Dwellings in Ashfield Grange more attractive windows and doors than the PVC variety used in many other parts of the Character Area.



Figure 5.78: Dwelling in Woodcroft Drive an example of a house designed with the simplicity and style associated with traditional buildings in the region, with good quality materials.



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- 5.149 In other parts of the character area, houses have included elements such as front portico's, PVC windows, doors and false mullions and also exaggerated window arches that can deter from the architectural coherence and proportionality of the design and are less responsive to the character of a rural village setting.
- 5.150 A variety of roof designs exist, including gabled, cross gabled and hipped roofs.