Irchester, Little Irchester and Knuston

Character Appraisal

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1 **Introduction**

There are no Conservation Areas within the Parish of Irchester and there has been no previous complete character appraisal undertaken.

The parish of Irchester encompasses Little Irchester to the west, Irchester to the centre, with Knuston to the east, dissected by the A45, A509 and River Nene to the west, running west to east.

To the north of the A45 is the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Chester Farm. This contains remnants of a Roman town, Iron Age settlement, deserted Medieval village and Grade II* Chester House and associated Grade II farm buildings. This site is currently being developed by Northamptonshire County Council into a heritage attraction.

Adjacent to Chester Farm is a modern business park known as Victoria Business Park. Victoria Mills owned and operated by Whitworth lies beside the River Nene close to Little Irchester.

In terms of settlements, the parish comprises a small linear village (Little Irchester) to the lower slopes of the Nene valley, with the main parish centre, Irchester located at the top of the valley slopes, with Knuston a small linear village to the east with undulating open arable fields between.

The land pattern to the north of the A45, is dominated by the market town of Wellingborough, with the land to the south comprising of a scattering of farms and isolated dwellings, with the main feature to the west being the River Nene, and run off lakes to the valley bottom, surrounded with small enclosed fields.

Irchester parish, common fields were enclosed in 1773, including those surrounding Little Irchester, with those to Knuston being enclosed a little earlier in 1769.

This document identifies the specific characteristics of the settlements of Irchester, Little Irchester and Knuston, that contribute to the character and shape the built form of each settlement. This will help to define the local character and heritage assets, to support policy 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan and Policies 2, 3 and 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy.
A  Irchester

2  Origins and Development

The Roman town of Irchester, beside the present Chester Farm, owes its existence to its strategic location at a crossing of the Nene Valley, near the confluence of the Rivers Nene and Ise. With associations to the major long distance route between Kettering and Magiovinium (Fenny Stratford, Milton Keynes).

There is no clear evidence as to why the modern village, with its medieval origins developed approximately one mile south east of its Roman ancestor, with there being no evidence of occupation beyond the 5th Century.

Irchester is a cruciform village, with its medieval core centred around the parish church, the former Manor Farm and the rectorial tithe barn.

3  Key Elements of structure

The key element of the village structure is the natural topography of the parish, with the village of Little Irchester being located at the western end with Knuston to the eastern end head. Little Irchester is located to the east of the River Nene valley on the rising ground. This further rises up to Irchester and then drops down the river valley to the east, before rising again into Knuston.

The parish is dissected by the A45, A509, River Nene and railway, with the A509, river and railway running with the valley bottoms, with the A45, running west to east largely on the upper valley slopes.

The parish is clearly separated into three distinct settlements, with arable land surrounding, on undulating fields, with the country park, originally an ironstone quarry, forming the natural/manmade boundary between Irchester and Little Irchester.

Irchester is a cruciform village, formed around the junction of the main through roads west to east, Farndish Road and High Street and north to south, Wollaston Road and Station Road. The result being a controlled expansion of the earliest settlement pattern along the west east corridor.

Irchester was subject to enclosure in 1773.
The parish church of St Katharine’s is situated to the west of High Street, with the spire clearly visible across the open fields further both to the east and west and above the residential houses to both the north and south, with the churchyard to the west.

The parish was subject to the Enclosure Act between 1769 to 1773, which has largely defined the present arrangement, with clearly defined settlements and open fields surrounding the villages.

4 Architectural and Historic quality of buildings

Listed Buildings’ Overview

Apart from the Grade I listed Church of St Katharine’s dating mainly from the 13th/14th centuries, the listed fabric in the study area generally comprises Grade II post-medieval domestic or remnant agricultural buildings of 18th century date, with one example each of the mid-16th and mid-17th centuries.

Typical fabric details and characteristics of the Grade II examples are as follows:

- Mainly 2-storey form (one 2 storey-with-attic, one 1 storey-with-attic); occasional dormers.
- Regular or square-coursed (and banded) limestone and ironstone.
- Roofing – mainly slate, some thatch and plain tile.
- Ashlar gable parapets and kneelers.
- Rendered or painted stone.
- Chimney stacks in brick and/or stone, or ashlar, located at ridge and/or gable end;
- Mainly casement windows, some leaded.
- Moulded wood surround to front doors.

The listed buildings in Irchester are largely focussed along the central core, running north to south, along High Street.

Church of St Katharine’s, is situated to the north of the core of the current settlement, on the High Street, in an elevated position. The church and its spire dominate the immediate surroundings and roof scape, but the wider landscape and open fields, to the valley slopes to the east and west. The church and spire being viewed across the mix of open fields and scattered houses and farm houses and barns to the north. The views of the church are more disrupted and glimpsed from the south, as the more urban centre of the village spreads across the landscape before the church.
Other Buildings of Note

There is a large number of buildings in and around the historic village centre which, although perhaps not capable of statutory listing, make a positive contribution to the settings of the various listed buildings and to the character and appearance of the study area as a whole.

These are described as “Other Buildings of Note” and are shown in blue colouration on the Character Appraisal Map. These notable buildings in fact form the backbone of the remnant historic village built form and, unlike listed buildings, remain vulnerable to arbitrary alteration and demolition. The majority date from the 19th century, with several examples from the mid-18th century and early 20th century. They are all 2-storey, except 115 High Street which appears to have been altered historically to create a third storey.

Appendix 1 attached to this study comprises a (non-exhaustive) list of Other Buildings of Note with estimated dates and references to the elevational and architectural elements which make them locally characteristic.

5 Spacing – Townscape enclosure and green space

Townscape enclosure, indicated on the appraisal map by the “Building line” (black line) notation to the property frontages, is clearly defined and continuous throughout the settlement, defined by the property frontages and the boundary walling, with many of the properties built directly onto the pavement, thus creating a clearly defined sense of physical and visual enclosure to this linear settlement, notably the High Street, Irchester.

The significant publicly accessible open and green spaces within the study area are the Churchyard of St Katharine’s, Irchester, the recreation ground to Wollaston Road and the country park, between Little Irchester and Irchester.

The recreational ground to Wollaston Road to the north west of the village, is accessible to the public, it contains some deciduous trees to its boundaries, contributing with the trees situated along the road edge, to the visual amenity, softening the built form of the village, naturally forming breaks in the streetscape and the roof lines.

The settlement is surrounded and bounded by open fields, following the natural undulations of the valley slopes, notably to Station Road Irchester, towards Knuston, which are a significant contribution to the semi rural and historic character. The open fields create strong boundary features, to the settlement, ensuring each is visually isolated from its neighbour.

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The open fields running along the natural undulating topography of Station Road, bounded by low local stone walls are an integral part to the village’s semi rural character, with important views across the valley slopes back into Irchester and the A45 in the distance.

**Visual and spatial connections between Irchester and Little Irchester**

The country park, site of former iron ore workings quarry, forms a natural boundary between the two settlements. The park is heavily wooded with a mix of both deciduous and coniferous trees, across the undulations of the quarry workings, with the clearly defined scar edge adjacent to the western boundary of Irchester.

This is a well used asset to the villages, establishing the character of the simple working houses and partly the rationale for the expansion throughout the late 19th and early 20th Century.

**Visual and spatial connections between Irchester and Knuston**

The open fields, to either side of the B569 form a natural break between the settlements of Irchester and Knuston, which on exiting Station Road, open up onto the parkland surrounding Knuston Hall, upon entry to Knuston.

6 **Building materials**

Common materials and features of special architectural or historic interest visible from the street include the following, with typical examples highlighted in brackets.

**Walling**

Ashlar quoins; coursed limestone rubble; rendered or painted brick or stone; brick, variously red-brown, red stock, smooth red, with Peterborough buff dressings or with limestone dressings to window surrounds, quoins and banding; limestone gables with brick dressings; buff brick banding on red-brown bricks (seen on the 16 School Hill); ironstone decorative banding on limestone; stone string coursing on smooth red brick.
Roofing

Roof covering is mainly slate, but plain tile and double Roman clay tiles also appear. Roof form almost entirely gabled (very occasionally hipped). Mostly eaves-on to the road, but significant proportion is verge-on. Occasional right-angle projecting full gables or dormers.

Windows and Doors

Timber sashes; flush-closing casements; timber door with fan-light; plank and muntin door.

Miscellaneous Features

Moulded door surround (in plaster or limestone); dentilled brick pediment; moulded timber gable pediment; gables with finials; round heads to windows, with keystones; crested roof ridge; carved/moulded window heads; feature gable verges and pediments; moulded frieze and other brick detail at eaves; Victorian door canopy.

Free standing Walling

Mainly coursed rubble limestone or ironstone, or a mix of both; occasional old stock red or smooth red. Coping variously blue engineering brick, limestone, pantile/clay roll tile, half-round mortar or limestone cock-and-hen.

Important Walls

All the notable walling is built of stone except two short stretches of brick wall at the library and between 62 High Street (former St John Ambulance building) and 64 High Street (the Old Vicarage).

Some stretches of walling are relatively long, such as the continuous run from St Katharine's Way to Manor Farm Cottage, Station Road and to the rear of the church and some are only a few metres long, as at the 16 School Hill or 126 High Street.

Shops

Green-glazed painted tiles; projecting fascia canopy; stall-risers; timber fascias.
7 Extent of intrusion or damage to built environment

Historic map coverage of the village up to 1926 shows a built form characterized by continuous terraced cottages and shops directly fronting the highway along the High Street and around the junctions of Cattle Lane (now St Katharine’s Way), School Hill, Townwell Lane, New Street and Station Road.

This architectural form and layout is considered to be locally distinctive. However, as a result of three separate waves of “slum clearance” in 1938, the mid-to-late 1950s and 1973, many of the buildings were demolished.

The resultant loss of vernacular fabric in mid-20th century to the following locations:

- St Katharine’s Way;
- opposite the church;
- north and south of the junction of School Hill and High Street - sites between 54 and 60, 39 and 49, 5 and 19

The replacement housing has invariably failed to reinstate the traditional terraced configuration opening onto the footpath. The result tending to push back the building lines, causing fragmentation of the original sense of enclosure.

This damage to the built environment has been compounded by a loss of craftsman-like architectural detailing on the new houses and a tendency to replace stone and slate with lower quality, non-traditional mass-produced facing brick and concrete roofing tiles.

This type of infill housing estate development can be damaging to a small village such as Irchester, as it dilutes the historic and local distinctiveness and is damaging to the historic character of the settlement.

8 Character summary

The following seeks to summarise the character of the settlement, complete with important views and vistas, followed by recommendations for the way forward.

Irchester village’s vernacular form and character survived more-or-less intact until 1938. From this point, in the manner described above, substantial pockets of traditional cottages, shops and other business premises were gradually and apparently arbitrarily removed and replaced by built form which was not locally distinctive.
The character of Irchester is more typical of an expanding village, with dedicated areas/cores of historically and locally significant buildings, views and landmarks. On the High Street, the characteristic of houses fronting onto the road, is similar to Wollaston Road, yet the properties are dating from an earlier time and are largely constructed from different materials.

This more “piecemeal” development has resulted in pockets of locally distinctive and locally historically significant properties, interspersed with modern infill development, extensions and demolitions.

There is clearly sufficient evidence from map and photographic sources, as well as the surviving historic buildings themselves, to paint a detailed picture of how things once were and, more importantly, to consider the preparation of design briefs to inform future (re)development schemes in an attempt to reinstate the earlier authentic built form.

There are notable pinch points in two locations at the north end of the village to record the built form closing in to frame a view. The first example at Lower Farm is of a view, framed by the farmhouse and the adjacent stone wall, down the High Street as far as the yew trees outside the parish church. The second example on the higher land towards the top of St Katharine’s Way, shows a long-distance viewpoint of the landscape to the east.

Station Road, largely defined by its sense of “openness” owing to the unfettered views across the open fields to the north.

**Views and Vistas**

Irchester village is situated on the slopes of the Nene valley, largely surrounded with open fields, with open views into and out of the village, from the following points:-

The significant views are those across the undulating open fields, into and out of the village from Station Road and the surrounding public footpaths to the east and west of the High Street.

Views in to and out of the village focus on St Katharine’s church and its spire, from the street scene within the village to the North along High Street and School Hill, to the east from High Street as it approaches the A45, to the west from Station Road and across the open fields surrounding the village.
The “eye” symbol indicates viewing points for important views into and out of the settlement, including the parish church, which should be given consideration in light of planning applications for new development within or immediately surrounding the village.

9 Recommendations

It is the “piecemeal” development that has resulted in the village not meeting the standard required by Historic England to be designated as a conservation area, however the quality of the remains, should not be left uncontrolled.

This type of uncontrolled development in the settlement has resulted in the dilution of the historic local distinctiveness, which if left unchecked will result in the loss of the historic core and character.

Currently there is no statutory control over development within the subject area, as a result protection afforded to Buildings of Note, is minimal, which will have a compounding impact on the statutorily protected Listed Buildings if left unchecked.

It is the recommendation of this appraisal that the settlement does not meet the required standards for the designation of a conservation area, however further protection should be put in place to prevent any further dilution of the historic core and character.

Recommendations for increased protection and environmental improvements in the public domain within the historic village core are to consider the following:

- Traffic management schemes designed to improve the pedestrian environment, Irchester.

- Hard and soft landscaping schemes to Irchester, Station Road/High Street corner.

- All new buildings and development respect the historic character of the village, being typical of the existing built form.
Irchester

This shows the view South along Irchester High Street, note the local stone terrace houses and cottages opening directly onto the footpath, creating a pinch point, and sense of enclosure.
This shows the view to the North of Irchester High Street, with its junction onto Station Road, with the clearly defined character of High Street visible.

This shows the small frontage terrace house character of Wolfaston Road, towards the village centre.

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This shows Irchester library, on the High Street, one of the buildings of note of the village, red stock brickwork and local limestone banding and decoration.

This shows the parish church of St Katharine’s, a prominent landmark in High Street and within the surrounding landscape.
This shows the view from Wollaston Road into the High Street, with the prominent Co-operative building to the right and the Irchester Working Mens Club building to the left an important node within the centre of the village.

This shows a view from Station Road to the north west, with the High Street and St Katharine’s church.
B Little Irchester

2 Origins and Development

Little Irchester is a small linear village situated on the edge of Wellingborough and approximately 14 miles from Northampton, to the north of the A45 and the River Nene, both running west to east, with the main through road the A509, running north south, with the village largely located to the east of the A509.

Grid Reference SP8967.

The village was established owing to the convergence of the river, with a crossing point and the two roads, to the west leading to Northampton, to the east to Higham Ferrers, to the north to Wellingborough and to the south to Olney.

Little Irchester village, located to the east of the A509, rises up the slopes of the Nene valley.

The village is characterized by the two storey houses on the main through road, with access roads running perpendicular up the valley slopes, terminating at the main railway line embankment and the periphery of the country park, (originally Iron ore workings).

Irchester parish, common fields were enclosed in 1773, including those surrounding Little Irchester.

3 Key Elements of structure

Little Irchester is a simple linear village to the east of the A509, with limited expansion further to the east up the valley slopes, terminating in the country park.

The lands of Little Irchester were subject to enclosure in 1773.

The village comprises of largely rows of semi detached and terrace houses, fronting onto the road edge, with a mix of narrow front gardens, to Milton Road and long front gardens, such as London Road.

This clearly defines the simple character of a working community, based around local industry, in the form of the iron ore workings and Whitworth’s Mill.
4 **Architectural and Historic quality of buildings**

**Listed Buildings Overview**

There are no listed buildings in Little Irchester.

**Other buildings of note**

The built up form of the village consists of typical examples of late 19\textsuperscript{th} and early 20\textsuperscript{th} Century brick terrace houses.

On entry to the village, adjacent to the A45 flyover there is a prominent building, Whitworths Mill, which dominates the low lying river valley landscape. The building is a largely four storey factory building, built alongside the River Nene, dating from the late 19\textsuperscript{th} Century. The building remains as a part of the Whitworths flour company and forms part of the company site. The building is constructed of red brickwork, with symmetrical fenestration and vertical emphasis to the recessed brick panels, terminating with parapet walls to the gable ends.

On Milton Road close to the junction with London Road there is a small red brick chapel, set back from the road edge, with a projecting brick porch, behind a low brick wall, complete with cast iron railings and entrance gates, a simple example of a building built for worship for a small village community.

These buildings although not currently capable of being considered for statutory listing, are considered as examples of good quality vernacular architecture, which when considered with the remaining sense of place of the village, help to mould the character of Little Irchester, as that of a strong sense of community within the street scene of 19\textsuperscript{th} Century terrace house built for the local working people.

5 **Spaces – Townscape enclosure and green space**

Townscape enclosure, indicated on the appraisal map by the “Building line” (black line) notation to the property frontages, is clearly defined and continuous throughout the settlement, defined by the property frontages and the boundary walling, with many of the properties built directly onto the pavement, thus creating a clearly defined sense of physical and visual enclosure to this linear settlement, notably Milton Road.
This shows the typical character of the small frontage terrace houses of Little Irchester.

The sense of enclosure to Little Irchester is similarly defined by the narrow streets of the terrace houses, rising up the valley slopes from the open fields of the valley bottom.

**Visual and spatial connections between Irchester and Little Irchester**

The country park, site of former iron ore workings quarry, forms a natural boundary between the two settlements. The park is heavily wooded with a mix of both deciduous and coniferous trees, across the undulations of the quarry workings, with the clearly defined scar edge adjacent to the western boundary of Irchester.

This is a well used asset to the villages, establishing the character of the simple working houses and partly the rationale for the expansion throughout the late 19th and early 20th Century.
The open fields to the valley slopes to the west of the A509 contribute along with their mature trees and hedging to the semi rural character of the village, clearly defining the settlement from its natural surroundings, creating a visual amenity and a clear exit from the built environment into the natural environment.

6 Building materials

Common materials and features of special architectural or historic interest are visible from the street include the following, with typical examples highlighted in brackets.

Walling

Red and buff brickwork; part rendered and painted brick, variously red-brown, red stock, smooth red, with Peterborough buff dressings or with limestone dressings brickwork with limestone detailing, heads and cills (Livingstone Cottages). Dentil brick detail to eaves. Horizontal banding of red and buff bricks.

Chimneys

Predominantly the chimneys are ridge chimneys, constructed in brick, largely plain, some with multiple projecting upper courses. Clay chimney pots.

Roofing

Roof covering is mainly slate, but many with concrete interlocking tiles. Roof form almost entirely gabled (very occasionally hipped). Mostly in terrace rows, eaves-on to the road.

Windows and Doors

Mix of timber sashes; flush-closing casements; but many with modern replacements, timber part glazed door with fan-light over. Many with feature projecting ground floor bay windows, with hipped roofs.

Miscellaneous Features

Dentil brick course to eaves. Occasional double height projecting bay window.
Free standing Walling

Low red brick boundary walls to front garden elevation, onto footpath. Coping comprising of brick on edge, blue engineering or precast concrete. Boundary walling to village service roads, not to main London Road A509.

7 Extent of intrusion or damage to built environment

The village in its current form dates largely from the mid 19th Century, onwards, with an expanding population creating the demand for new houses, which led to the development of the village with the Iron ore quarry at its core.

The rows of terrace housing to Milton Road/Newtown Road and to London Road (A509) in the early 20th Century forming the current layout of the village, and therefore defining its character.

Milton Road/Newtown Road being typical of the terrace house located set slightly back from the road edge, opening onto a small garden frontage leading onto the footpath.

The layout and location of London Road, differs, with the street scene comprising of a mix of terrace houses and semi detached houses with a long front gardens, with the houses set well back from the footpath edge, giving a more open character to the street.

There are no shops within the village, with the last remaining shop located on the corner of Milton Road, closing in the late 20th Century.

The population in 1851 was 55 people, expanding to 330 people by 1901, largely owing to the opening of the Iron ore quarry in 1872.

The village has resulted in little expansion since the early 20th Century, with modern two storey flat blocks originally built as social housing to the north end of the village on Daniels Road, with further modern 21st Century development Riverside Close situated at the junction of Daniels Road and London Road.

The village has a clearly defined strong character of two storey terrace houses.
8 **Character summary**

The character of Little Irchester is of rows of simple working terrace houses, complete with small frontage onto the road edge, originally creating a strong sense of community with the iron ore quarry workings.

The iron ore quarry workings, Whitworth’s Mill, the corner shop (now closed) and the Non conformist chapel, giving the village a sense of unity. Typical of the late 19th and early 20th Centuries semi industrial/semi rural areas.

**Views and Vistas**

Views into and out of Little Irchester are restricted by the man made and natural land forms, with the views of the village, along the A509, with glimpsed views up the valley slopes to the east, forming the overall community. With unfettered views to the west over the river valley.

Views to the north dominated negatively by the A45 flyover, with the positive views of Whitworth’s Mill, beyond.

The “eye” symbol indicates viewing points for important views into and out of the conservation area, including the parish church, which should be given consideration in light of planning applications for new development within or immediately surrounding the villages.

9 **Recommendations**

Recommendations for increased protection and environmental improvements in the public domain within the historic village core are to consider the following:

- Hard and soft landscaping schemes to Little Irchester, A509.
- All new buildings and development respect the historic character of the village, being typical of the existing built form.
Little Irchester

This shows the Whitworth’s Mill and the River Nene, on the periphery of the village.
This shows a view of the typical character of the terrace street scene of the village, with small frontages onto the footpath. Note the decorative brick banding.

This shows the Chapel in Milton Road. A good example of 19th Century community based Non-Conformist architecture.
This shows the view to the north along the A509, with the terrace houses and semi-detached houses set back from the road edge with long front gardens, with mature hedging and open fields to the left running down to the river valley.

C Knuston

2 Origins and Development

Knuston is a small linear village to the east of the main parish centre (Irchester), with undulating open arable fields between.

Knuston has been occupied since the Iron Age, with the name having Danish origins, Cnut’s place, possibly indicating a Viking settlement.

However, the first records of the manor of Knuston date from 1325, when it was owned by Ralph de Normanville.
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The original hamlet was lost through the Inclosure Act in 1769, with the associated land being laid out as Parkland to the Hall, which was further extended in the later 1780s.

The original Hall dates from the late 17th Century, with remains forming the existing dining room and bedroom 11.

3 **Key Elements of structure**

Knuston is a simple linear village, following the undulations of the valley slopes, with limited infill expansion, thereby maintaining the simple one property deep settlement.

Knuston was subject to enclosure in 1769.

The village flows simply along the B569, east to west, with properties set back from the road edge, in substantial plots, largely individually designed.

The built form of the settlement is dominated by Knuston Hall and Home Farm, which are situated in the approximate centre of the settlement to the east of the railway line.

The settlement is of rural character and proportions, with tracts of open fields and parkland surrounding the houses. There are no commercial buildings or shops within the settlement, with the functional Victorian railway buildings being somewhat detached from the centre.
4 Architectural and Historic quality of buildings

Listed Buildings Overview

The listed buildings in Knuston are focussed along the central core, running west to east, along B569.

Listed Buildings in the village commonly feature:

- Squared and regular coursed lias, limestone, some with ironstone detailing.
- Ashlar gable parapets.
- Timber flush casement windows, multi pane lights.
- Natural slate and clay plain tiles to roofs.

Knuston Hall, is a Grade II listed building dating from the late 17th Century, with a series of alterations and extensions during the 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries. The house is constructed of local limestone, rubble and ashlar, set under a mix of slate and plain tile roof, with parapet walling. The Hall is two and three storey, in the Jacobean style, with stone mullioned windows. To the north front of the Hall there are an extensive series of outbuildings.

The original adjacent farm land was laid out as formal parkland at the time of the Inclosure Act of 1769, which changed the immediate character of the landscape.

The Hall was in private hands through to the mid 20th Century when it was brought by Northamptonshire County Council and converted into a College of Further Education.

Other buildings of note

The majority of the settlement of Knuston consists of listed buildings, with a number of modern large single properties on substantial plots, adding to the overall character of the village, which although not currently capable of being considered for statutory listing add to the character, by maintaining the open feel, by being set back from the road edge in substantial plots, largely bounded by soft landscaping and mature trees.

On the rising slope towards Irchester as the road crosses above the railway line there is a small complex of railway buildings, with two houses on the through road and further goods sheds and storage buildings off a private drive.
These buildings are typical of 19th Century Midland Railway architecture, functional buildings, of local red brickwork, with decoration equal of their status as a fundamental part of the railway movement.

5 **Spaces – Townscape enclosure and green space**

Townscape enclosure, indicated on the appraisal map by the “Building line” (black line) notation to the property frontages, is clearly defined and continuous throughout the settlement, defined by the property frontages and the boundary walling, with many of the properties built directly onto the pavement, thus creating a clearly defined sense of physical and visual enclosure to this linear settlement.

The sense of enclosure to Knuston is clearly defined, with the village enclosed by the mature hedging and soft landscaping of the property boundaries along the road and those of the surrounding open fields. This sense of enclosure is only removed when in close proximity to the Hall and Home Farm both of which are located set well back from the road edge, with open post and rail fencing and low stone boundary walls to the road edge.

The settlement is surrounded and bounded by open fields, clearly forming strong boundaries to the west, with the Parkland of Knuston Hall rolling into the undulating open fields of the valley slopes, towards Station Road Irchester.

**Visual and spatial connections between Irchester and Knuston**

The open fields running along the natural undulating topography of Station Road, bounded by low local stone walls are an integral part to the village’s semi rural character, with important views across the valley slopes back into Irchester and the A45 in the distance.

The fields form a natural break between Irchester and Knuston, which open up onto the parkland surrounding Knuston Hall.

The immediate area around Knuston Hall comprises of open parkland and fields, with mature trees, hedges and post and rail fencing as boundary screening and further areas of woodland to the south and east, although not accessible to the public, make a significant contribution to the visual amenity.

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6 Building materials

Common materials and features of special architectural or historic interest visible from the street include the following, with typical examples highlighted in brackets.

Walling

Coursed limestone and iron stone rubble; with complimentary stone detailing or brickwork detailing. Red stock smooth brickwork with buff brickwork window surround detailing (as Keepers Cottage).

Chimneys

Largely ridge chimneys, constructed in brickwork, some decorative although not an over dominate feature of this village.

Roofing

Roof covering is mainly plain tile, slate and occasional concrete interlocking tiles. Clay pan tiles to agricultural buildings, (Knutson Home Farm). Roof form, steep dual pitched with largely gable ends, with feature gables and gablets. Mix of both verge and eaves-on to the road.

Windows and Doors

Predominantly timber flush casements, simple, vertical emphasis, occasional decorative lattice work multi panes.

Miscellaneous Features

A dominant feature of village, is the large individual properties set back from the road edge, with notable buildings, such as Knuston Hall, Home Farm and Keepers Cottage, impacting upon the street scene, along with Victorian red brick railway buildings.
Free standing Walling

Property boundaries largely comprise of timber open fences, post and rail or mature hedging and tree screening, not a dominant feature of the street scene.

7 Extent of intrusion or damage to built environment

The character or the village is a simple linear village, largely with large properties within large plots set back from the road edge, each having limited impact or relationship with another.

There are notable buildings within the village, all constructed in local limestone and iron stone, adding to the overall character.

There has been limited development in the village resulting in infilling gaps in the street scene rather than expansion of the village itself, which has had a detrimental impact on the village at large with larger plot sizes being reduced to accommodate multiple properties, therefore reducing the overall plot size and property sizes and the visual impact on the street scene.

8 Character summary

The character of Knuston is one of substantial properties, residential and agricultural set within substantial grounds, surrounded with mature soft landscaping.

There are no shops within this linear settlement.

The sense of enclosure continues throughout Knuston and only reduces with the opening up of the street scene at the entrance to both Knuston Hall and Home Farm, where the soft landscaping is reduced with the Listed Buildings set back some distance from the road edge.

Views and Vistas

Views into and out of Knuston are restricted by the natural topography of the land as it rises and falls along the through road, across the valley slopes, largely providing only glimpsed views of the notable properties within the village.
The settlement does afford significant views across the Parkland and open fields to the west towards Irchester and the spire of the parish church on the top of the valley slopes, further to the west.

The “eye” symbol indicates viewing points for important views into and out of the conservation area, including the parish church, which should be given consideration in light of planning applications for new development within or immediately surrounding the villages.

9 **Recommendations**

Recommendations for increased protection and environmental improvements in the public domain within the historic village core are to consider the following:

- Hard and soft landscaping schemes to Knuston B569
- Restrict infill development.
- All new buildings and development respect the historic character of the village, being typical of the existing built form.
Knuston

This shows a view to the north west across the open fields between Knuston and Irchester, with the spire of St Katharine’s church dominating the skyline.

This shows the typical character of the street scene of the linear village, mature hedging and trees, flanking a through road with narrow footpaths either side.
This shows the view to the north west with the decorative cottage, amongst the soft landscaping characteristic of the village. Note the view in the distance with the sense of enclosure reducing with the grounds of Knuston Hall and Home Farm approaching.
Appendix

Appendix 1.
Irchester “Other buildings of Note”

High Street

1-3, Working Mens Club 1899, Rendered/painted brick; decorative moulded door surround.

4-6, Co-operative 1914, Gables with finials-New Street frontage: former Co-op bakers; brick 1st floor, green glazed tiles to (part) ground floor; slate roof; “AD 1914” date stone; stone dressings; original shop-fascia to New Street.

8/8a, Bakery/coffee shop, 1870s, Former boot factory (1870s), coffee tavern (1890s) and post office (1901-1947).

10, Hot food takeaway, c1910, Original sash windows on 1st floor; slate roof; projecting canopy to fascia; original door and fanlight to left of frontage. Original glazed tiling (painted over) at ground floor exists as remnant of former butcher’s shop use.

12, Hot food takeaway, c1910

29, c1800, Slate roof. Formerly thatched.

31, C18th, Slate roof; ironstone decorative banding on limestone walling.

Methodist Chapel, 1869-1871, Red brick with Peterborough buff dressings; dentilled pediment; round heads to windows, with keystones; return-frontages rendered; “Wesleyan Chapel 1871” date-stone. Added to in 1883 and 1899 to provide Chapel hall at the rear.

38 and 40, c1750, clay plain tiles.

49, 1899, Moulded timber pediment to gable; date-stone on frontage: "AD 1899" with decorative surround; all original sash windows and some front casements. Remodelled in 1990s when shop front removed from left side of building.
42, c1750, Formerly thatched; some original windows; double-Roman clay tiles and decorative crested ridge; plank and muntin door on south gable.

46 and 48, Hair and Beauty salon and Pharmacy, c1891, Sooth red bricks with stone stringing; original timber sash windows.

53, Early C19th, Tyrolean verge weather-boarding with finial. Used as the first village Post Office in the 1840s.

55, Old Forge, Late 1700s, Stone with Peterborough buff brick details; timber cart entrance doors with decorative hinges.

52, Insurance office, c1891

54, 19th Hole public house, Re-built c1870, Original sash windows; plain tiles; painted brick and decorative window heads to ground floor; red-brown stock brick to upper floor; decorative gable verges and pediments.

Library, 1909, Smooth red brick with limestone banding and dressings; plain tiles; leaded cupola; original sash windows; semi-circular pedimented door canopy; matching front brick wall.

62, St John Ambulance, Irchester Branch HQ, c1870, Frontage smooth red brick; north gable in limestone with narrow coursed ironstone banding; moulded frieze at eaves. Built as a shop.

Carpenters Arms public house, C18th, Slate roof (originally thatched); south gable (thought to date from the C13th) with traditional ironstone/limestone banding; painted rendered frontage.

103 and 109, Early C19th, Formerly 4 cottages and remodelled into 2 cottages in the 1960s. Buttressed terrace, white-painted/rendered frontage with some original windows; limestone gables with brick dressings.

111 and 113, 1840, Stone gable with rendered frontage featuring painted quoins and window heads; shallow hipped slate roof.

115, C18th/C19th, Limestone with partial ironstone banding to right frontage and north gable. Unusual three-storey form.
128 Keepers Cottage, c1840, Decorative Victorian timber door canopy.

**Farndish Road**

War Memorial/Cenotaph, 1920, Dressed Weldon stone.

2-8, terrace, c1880, Decorative buff banding on red-brown brick, including eaves detail. No. 4 has original sash windows.

1-7 Former Co-op department store and arcade, 1938, original stall risers, fascia and red brick parapet.

**New Street**

1, c1890, Oculus, gable finials in special bricks; timber gable pediment; smooth red brick; slate roof.

12, c1890, Original windows.

16, c1890, Decorative door surround-classical broken pediment in ashlar limestone.

**School Lane**

School, 1908, Plain tiles; smooth red bricks; decorative window heads and buttresses with stone dressings.

**School Hill**

3 and 5, 1870s, Red-brown stock brick with blue engineering details; unusual triple-gable form with oculi; plain tiles. Built as model agricultural cottages for farm workers at Manor House Farm.

14, Former school house (Old National School residential), 1848, Victorian revivalist style; coursed limestone rubble, ashlar quoins, parapets and kneelers, decorative bell-tower.
16, Old Infants’ School, 1873 with additions in 1880s, 1890s and 1915, Red-brown stock brick with limestone dressings and Peterborough buff “banding” detail to south gable; remnant Welsh slate on gable projections, remainder replaced in modern (probably Spanish) slate.

**School Road**

29-35, terrace, c1890, Smooth red bricks with limestone dressings to bays, window/door heads and string course. Frontage iron railings removed?

57, c1890, Stone gables; decorative (special) bricks to eaves.

**Sharwood Terrace**

1-11, late 1880s, North elevation and west gable; stone built. South elevation: mixed painted render and brick.

**St Katherines Way**

27-31, terrace, 1700s, Ironstone kneelers and large random blocks as detail to east elevation. Thought to have been originally built as a barn, but converted to cottages by 1841.