

## **Grantham Southern Quadrant**

### **Summary of Townscape Character Study – December 2010**

#### **1 Background**

The study is part of the Grantham Urban Design Framework. The assessment was tasked with establishing a baseline for analysis of the townscape character of the town.

The Grantham Townscape Character Study has identified and defined in detail 17 character areas. 16 of these are what could be considered urban in form and a single character area defines and evaluates the open spaces to the edges of the town included in the study area.

These areas have in most cases been further divided into sub-areas to provide some of the finer grain analysis and important but often subtle changes to the way a place functions and is locally defined. The Southern Quadrant falls within character area 17(e).

#### **2 Current Situation**

Character Area 17 comprises a series of generally open green spaces given over to mostly agricultural uses and divided into fields with some hedge and tree boundaries. The topography of these spaces is very distinctive and the relationship of the town to these green spaces throughout this character area is a crucial part of the character of both the town and the landscape fringes.

These areas make up the important landscape setting to Grantham (and in particular some of its heritage assets of outstanding national significance, for example the Grade I listed Church of St Wulfram) and are generally very sensitive to change. It should be noted however that character area 17(e) has been identified for future development as part of the growth point status of the town.

The Southern Quadrant has been the subject of extensive studies by both the landowner, South Kesteven District Council and Lincolnshire County Council. The area is to be the subject of a masterplan Supplementary Planning Document which is currently being prepared by South Kesteven District Council. The area has been identified for mixed use development (but predominantly housing) and is also the location of a planned relief road which is intended to relieve traffic congestion in the town centre.

CA17e: Southern Quadrant (Land to the east of B1174 and south of Somerby Hill)

- Form: large open arable fields, wooded valley floor (River Witham)
- Structure: Small-scale hedged fields with occasional hedgerow trees, River Witham valley runs north-south, mainline railway cuts across the valley

- Topography: Land falls steadily and in places sharply to the wooded valley floor
- Boundaries: Well trimmed hedges, occasional trees, developed hedgerow to lanes
- Views: Long open views across the valley from the B1174 looking east and the A52 (Somerby Hill) looking south, views to the south-east edge of town
- Trees and green edges: Well-wooded valley floor to River Witham, otherwise only occasional trees to hedgerows, and well defined hedge boundaries to road and lane sides
- Watercourses: River Witham runs through the sub-area in wooded valley

The topography is a key characteristic of the landscape fringe as it collectively forms a green rim of open countryside to the skyline around the town and in places comes right up to the edges.

Views from the landscape fringe are dominated almost entirely by the spire of St Wulfram's. It towers above the relatively modest and consistently scaled town with the only other competing structures being those of the tower of St John's, Station Road, the spire of the cemetery chapel to Harrowby Road and the modern maltings to Harlaxton Road.

Given the green backdrop provided by the character area, the important heritage assets within the town, principally that of the spire of St Wulfram's and the tower of St John's are often seen against a green backdrop of open fields and/or trees. This is an important characteristic of the role played by this character area and needs careful consideration when promoting change within the character area

Views across the town are strategically important with the best views had from the Somerby Hill area of the Southern Quadrant. Much of the land to the character area is Agricultural Grade 2 and 3, providing high quality agricultural land. The river corridor in particular is a high quality natural environment mainly wooded providing complex habitats for wildlife which are linked to the wider landscape and urban green spaces.

### **Negative qualities of the area**

A significant negative quality which is the case throughout the character area is the way in which the urban areas border the landscape fringes. These are often abrupt and poorly considered boundaries with very little opportunity for the landscape to permeate into the urban structure of the town.

## **2 Future Development Considerations**

- Protect and enhance woodlands, field boundaries, hedgerow trees and where found watercourses

- Soften harsh urban edges with new broad leafed woodland planting or use new development, and associated structural landscape, to soften existing harsh urban edges
- Avoid built development encroaching on the higher scarp slopes, or along a ridgeline
- Maintain a varied urban edge with fringes of the landscape setting extending into proposed developments
- Consider opportunities for enhanced access to the countryside around the edge of town
- Care needs to be taken in handling the potential significant level changes on the Southern Quadrant. Buildings should be built into sites. Plans for buildings should take advantage of level changes (with split level plans and garaging integrated into the slopes)
- There should be a soft edge to the outer perimeter of the Southern Quadrant.
- Existing lanes, hedgerows and trees should be retained in all proposed development
- Proposed district centre to the Southern Quadrant should be located on or adjacent to Somerby Hill
- Encourage the use of locally distinctive materials – red brick and stone, even as panels accompanying other materials
- Promote the use of clay pantiles – for principal buildings and outbuildings
- Use the colour palette recommendations to reinforce local identity and create themes within developments
- Promote street trees to accentuate principal routes and reinforce green corridors to the river valley and existing footpaths, lanes and roads
- Given the topography and prominence of proposed urban extensions, houses or flat blocks should not exceed three storey's, for most of the character area's allocated sites two storey will be sufficient and should not be exceeded.

The Southern Quadrant should free development from the sterile cul-de-sacs of pastiche and promote contemporary architecture derived from a sense of place but addressing current cultural and technological issues.

Colour and materials palette can reinforce local identity; strong positive identity leads generally to civic pride and an engaged community. The colours proposed for the urban extensions take the predominant brick and pantile range with the landscape colours of the rural edge to which is introduced the colour blue. Blue pubs were the symbol of Whig support in the town, and the colour endures in street names.

The palette develops the blue range as a response to the indigenous colours to create an integrated scheme, which will sit well in the landscape and at the junction with the existing townscape.

The colours may be realised through render, preformed panels, glazed brick and glass block, amongst others. Within each new development the modulation of colour intensity and scale of use will add legibility and form to the environment.

**Colour Palette:**

COLOUR SOURCE	INTEGRATION COLOURS	GREYS AND NEUTRALS	COMPLEMENTARY	HARMONISING	ARTICULATION AND ACCENT
	 2020 Y30R 2030 Y30R 3040 Y30R	 2002 Y 2002 R 3502 Y	 2030 B30 G	 2030 B 2030 R90B	 2040 B10G 2050 B10G
	 3040 Y40R 3040 Y50R 3040 Y60R	 3502 Y 3502 Y 3502 R	 3040 B50G	 3040 B 3040 R90B	 3050 B10G 3060 B10G
	 6020 Y60R 3030 Y70R 3040 Y70R	 6502 R 3502 R 3502 R	 3030 B70G	 3030 B 3030 R90B	 3050 R90B 3060 R90B
	 2010 G80Y 2030 G80Y 4040 G80Y	 2002 Y 2502 Y 2502 G	 2030 R80B	 2030 B70G 2040 B80G	 2050 R80B 2565 R80B
	 1005 G70Y 3020 G70Y 2030 G70Y	 1002 Y 3502 Y 2502 Y	 3020 R70B	 3020 B70G 3030 B70G	 3040 R70B 3050 R70B