



# Great Easton Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

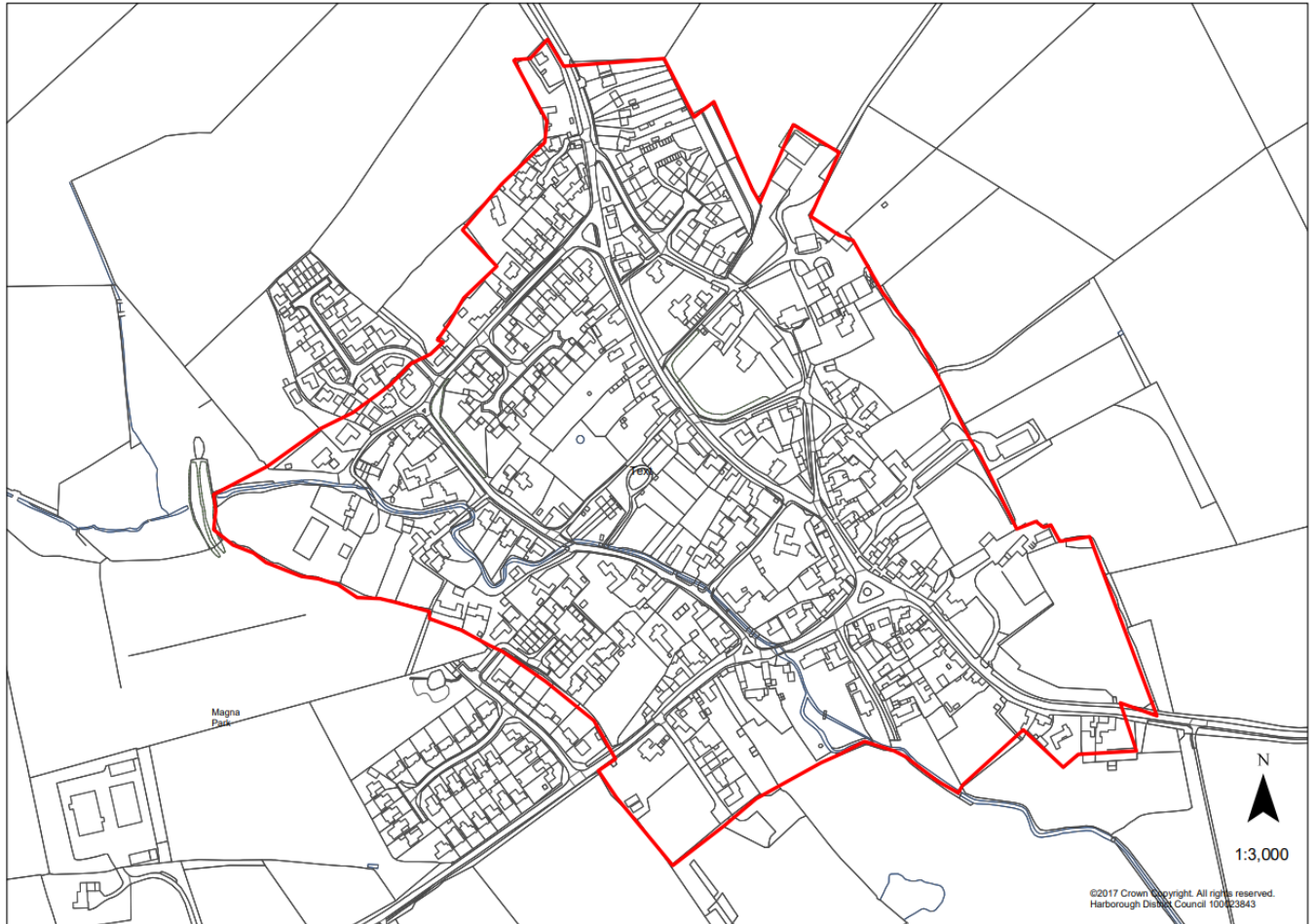


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## Map of Great Easton Conservation Area



## 1.0 Summary of Special Interest

1.1 The settlement pattern of Great Easton was formed in medieval times, although there is evidence of settlement in the area since prehistoric times. There is also a long history of agricultural land use and the development of Great Easton is intertwined with the farmland that surrounds it

1.2 The special interest of the Great Easton Conservation Area is derived from the following key characteristics:

- The medieval settlement pattern.
- The strong agricultural character of the village, with a working farm at its heart, and the relationship of the fields and farms to the traditional housing and other buildings.
- The use of ironstone, limestone, thatch and slate for buildings.
- The brook running through the village.
- The jitties that link roads within the village.
- The relationship between the built environment of the settlement and the natural environment both within it and surrounding it.

## 2.0 Introduction

2.1 Great Easton was awarded Conservation Area designation in 1974. A boundary amendment was made in 2004. This appraisal has been undertaken from the Spring to the Autumn of 2023.

2.2 Conservation area status must be justified on the grounds of the special architectural or historic interest of the area. The purpose of this appraisal is to define and record the factors that give Great Easton conservation area its special interest and justify its designation. This will help improve understanding of the historic importance of the area, how this has shaped its unique character and how it can guide its future development.

2.3 There are no proposals to make any changes to the current boundary of the Great Easton conservation area.



## 3.0 Policy and Legislation

3.1 Conservation areas contain features and characteristics that make them unique, locally distinctive, historic places. Protection of the historic environment is widely recognised for the contribution it makes to the country's quality of life, cultural capital and economic well-being. Public support for conservation areas as distinctive places that give identity to people and communities is well established. Conservation areas protect the nation's unique, local heritage. Legislation and policy guidance reflects this.

3.2 The concept of 'conservation areas' was first introduced by the Civic Amenities Act 1967 which defined a conservation area as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Conservation area designation is not intended to prevent change but to manage change in ways that maintain and strengthen an area's special qualities. The definition remains unchanged in current legislation, set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) act 1990. The Act places duties on local planning authorities to:

- Identify those parts of their area that are of special architectural or historic interest and to designate them as conservation areas;
- Review past designations from time to time;
- Prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas;
- Pay special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of conservation areas when determining planning applications for sites within such areas.

3.3 Designation of a conservation area recognises the character of an area worthy of preservation and enhancement and ensures the safeguarding of the best of our local heritage as represented by both the buildings and the ambient environment, ie: the spaces between and around buildings when viewed as a whole. Each area contains a number and variety of elements which combine to create its significance. Within the District of Harborough Great Easton is one of 63 conservation areas. Details of all the conservation areas can be found at [https://www.harborough.gov.uk/directory/20/conservation\\_areas\\_in\\_harborough\\_district](https://www.harborough.gov.uk/directory/20/conservation_areas_in_harborough_district)

3.4 Government policy is provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). It requires the significance of heritage assets – both its historic buildings and historic areas – to be understood by local authorities and by

those who propose change. Changes that cause harm to significance will only be permitted where the harm is outweighed by wider public benefits. Further guidance on the use of the NPPF is provided in the National Planning Practice Guidance and in guidance published by Historic England.

## 4.0 Living and Working in a Conservation Area

4.1 Living or working in a conservation area does mean some extra planning considerations but it does not mean that everything must stay the same. The protections given to conservation areas help to manage change in such a way that it conserves and enhances their special character and significance. The effect of designation means that planning permission is required for the demolition of buildings, with some minor exceptions; there are also stricter controls on changes that can be made to buildings and land, and there is automatic protection for trees. These controls are most likely to affect owners who wish to undertake works to the outside of their building or trees on their property.

4.2 For more detailed information on the alterations that require planning permission in a conservation area please see <https://www.harborough.gov.uk/conservation-areas>

## 5.0 Character Location and Uses

5.1 Great Easton is located amid attractive countryside in the south east of Leicestershire, close to the borders of Rutland and Northamptonshire. It lies in the Welland Valley and is 22 miles south east of Leicester and 9 miles north east of Market Harborough. The Eyebrook Reservoir is a mile north of the village. Great Easton is one of the larger villages of the Welland Valley. It is compact in shape around a rectangle of roads, linked through by jitties (alleyways). In addition, there are three roads to adjacent villages with lanes or jitties leading outwards. The Conservation Area embraces all these roads with the exception of Clarkes Dale and Barnsdale Close, the 1960s housing development at the southern entrance to the village, and Stokes Rise, which leads off Broadgate in the north west of the conservation area.

5.2 From a distance the size of the village is obscured, as most of it lies in the low flat land of the Welland Valley. The spire of the Grade II\* Church of St. Andrews stands up above the village trees and glimpses of it can be seen at points throughout the conservation area. The ironstone Church itself is on an eminence some 15 metres higher than the nodes at either end of Cross Bank. This is in keeping with the High Leicestershire

settlement pattern of 'buildings clustered around prominent spired churches of limestone or ironstone'.<sup>1</sup>

- 5.3 Great Easton is a traditional farming village with a working farm (Rectory Farm) still at the heart of the village. Much of its historic character comes from the relationship of farms and fields to the housing and other buildings which form the settlement. The farmsteads and former farmsteads are characteristic of the village with many former outbuildings now re-purposed for residential use. Some of the street names in the village also reflect the integral role of farming, with Musk Close being named after the Musk family, upon whose paddock it was built, and Mould's Lane which refers to the Mould family who farmed in Great Easton and built Mould's Cottages for their workers in 1913. The tranquil nature of the village is periodically disturbed by farm traffic, which is to be expected with a working farm just behind the church.

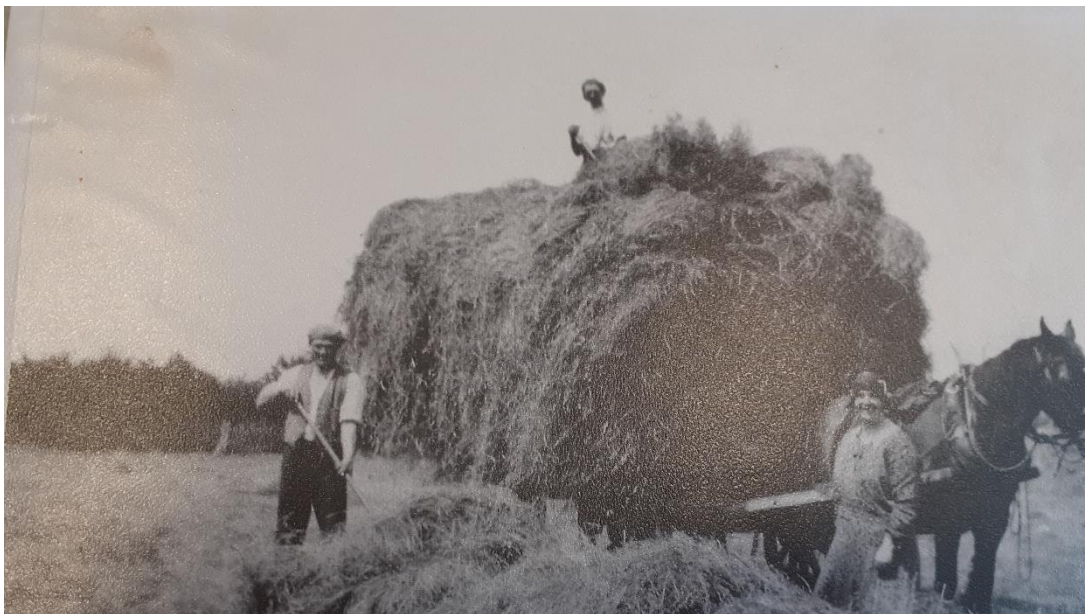


Fig. 1. Mr Mould's farm workers circa 1930 (Great Easton & District Local History Society Archive)

- 5.4 The prominent building material of Great Easton is ironstone with roof materials of thatch, or of Collyweston slate, or of Welsh slate. Chimneys are also a prominent feature in the conservation area. Some buildings show a characteristic local feature of the Welland Valley of striped stonework in alternating bands of brown ironstone and Weldon stone. Some subsidiary outbuildings within the village retain pink corrugated pantiles. This combination of materials led the historian W.G. Hoskins to describe Great Easton as 'the most attractive village in Leicestershire to look at, with its groups of fine ironstone farm-houses, manor-houses and cottages nearly all built in the first half of the seventeenth century'.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> Natural England, *National Character Area Profile 93: High Leicestershire*, (2013), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> W. G. Hoskins, *Touring Leicestershire*, (1948), p. 22.

quality of the historic built environment in Great Easton is recognized with 47 nationally listed assets (see Appendix A). Larger houses and cottages are located away from the principal roads up smaller lanes such as Banbury Lane, Deepdale or Little London.

- 5.5 The varied walls of Great Easton are an interesting feature adding much to the village scene and character; they are of mud, stone or red brick. They have a great variety of copings including stone, pantiles, rounded terra cotta and blue saddle copings. Walking down the jitty of Mould's Lane (which links High Street and Brook Lane) it is possible to see walls in all these materials.
- 5.6 Referred to as 'the village field' during the Time Team excavations (also known as Brook Lane Paddock), the open space between High Street and Brook Lane makes a positive contribution to the conservation area and is recognised as local green space within the Neighbourhood Plan. This has been open space to the rear of the street frontage since medieval times. The field contains a fine ash tree which is one of the oldest in the village. As the number of open spaces between and behind the roads and jitties has reduced, (see comparison figs. 4 and 5) that which remains has great value to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 5.7 In September 2023 the village shop and post office closed and a farm shop opened at Rectory Farm. The shop on High Street was near to the bus stop and it attracted vehicular and pedestrian traffic bringing life to the village. It is too early to see the impact of the location of the new farm shop. The Sun Inn on Cross Bank also attracts residents and visitors during the lunchtime and evenings as do regular meetings and events in the village hall.
- 5.8 Entering the conservation area from the north west on Stockerston Lane, the open countryside gives way to twentieth-century ribbon development. Lounts Crescent forks to the left and Broadgate turns to the right. A small number of pairs of Council houses were built in Stockerston Lane, Broadgate and Lounts Crescent between the 1920s and the 1950s. The north western end of the Conservation Area has infill of various closes or of ribbon development within the village pattern. Otherwise the settlement pattern is of sporadic lining of the principal roads by farm buildings, cottages or larger houses with large gardens. The road continues into High Street which contains a number of fine ironstone buildings, many of which front the road.
- 5.9 The number of roads and jitties together with the numerous traditional stone buildings gives rise to many attractive groupings and vistas. These include Barnsdale, with the triangular junction of Barnsdale, Brook Lane



with a stream running alongside, and Cross Bank; the two triangles in the High Street, one with the small green and War Memorial at the south, the other at the bifurcation of High Street and Church Bank having a Grade II listed K6 red telephone box at the apex. The vista up Church Bank to the church with its spire is especially fine. Between the telephone box and the church is an intimate enclosed green on Church Bank which opens out upwards to the church and churchyard. On this green is a water pump next to a bench where it is possible to rest and take in the rural tranquillity. A little further up the hill, just outside the entrance to the churchyard, is another bench from which there is a panoramic view across open countryside towards Rockingham Castle.



Fig. 2. View from the top of Church Bank out to the surrounding countryside.

5.10 Entering the Conservation Area from each of the two southern roads is marked by a notable early nineteenth century building, facing outwards along the road, rather than fronting the road. On Barnsdale, Barnsdale House looking towards Brighthurst, and on Caldecott Road No. 28 Caldecott Road looking towards Caldecott.

## 6.0 Definition of Special Interest

- 6.1 White's Directory of Leicestershire in 1846 described Easton Magna (Great Easton) as 'a neat and well-built village, on the banks of a rivulet...' <sup>3</sup> A century later the quality of this 'neat and well-built village' was recognised by historian W.G. Hoskins who described it as a 'good village for stone building' in his 1957 work, *Making of the English Landscape*.<sup>4</sup> This special architectural and historic interest of Great Easton was formally recognised through designation as a conservation area in 1974.
- 6.2 The development of Great Easton is intertwined with the farmland surrounding it. This is evident in the relationship between the farms, fields and traditional housing and farm buildings and from the working farm at the heart of the village. Vehicular access into the village is via country lanes lined with hedgerows. The relationship between the built environment of the settlement and the natural environment both within it and surrounding it are integral to its rural character (as evidenced above in Fig. 2).
- 6.3 Great Easton conforms to Natural England's description of villages in High Leicestershire where traditional churches act as distinctive features in settlements and in villages to the east 'ironstone becomes prominent for all buildings' so that 'cores of settlements are dominated by its tawny colours'.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of the modern developments from the 1960s onwards, Great Easton has retained a quiet, remote and rural character.

## 7.0 Historic Development of the Area

- 7.1 The discovery of Iron Age pottery in an area just off Clarkes Dale is evidence of Great Easton's long history. A Romano-British site in Lounts Crescent and around St Andrew's church developed into the village of Great Easton. Archaeological work (including that undertaken as part of the Time Team television programme in 2003) shows that around 800 AD farmers had started to leave their scattered farmsteads and were living more communally, to form villages. In Great Easton the settlement spread down the hill from the church to the area of the present village, which they called Estone – the east tūn or settlement. This may have referred to its geographical position east of Medbourne (an important early site), or east of Bringhurst, the earliest church. Present-day footpaths pass close to Roman sites, suggesting that these paths may date from Roman times, or possibly even earlier. The name is recorded as Eston in the

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<sup>3</sup> *Whites Leicestershire* (1846), p. 188.

<sup>4</sup> W. G. Hoskins, *Making of the English Landscape* (1957), p. 65.

<sup>5</sup> Natural England, *National Character Area Profile 93: High Leicestershire* (2013), p. 10.

Domesday Book of 1086, which showed it to be in the possession of Peterborough Abbey. Church ownership continues with several local farmers still renting land from the Church Commissioners. From the sixteenth century, the village is called Easton-juxta-Welland, Easton by Welland, Easton Magna, and finally Great Easton.

- 7.2 The parish church, dedicated to St Andrew the Apostle, dates mainly from the thirteenth century and is constructed of local ironstone. However, herring-bone masonry in the west wall provides evidence of an earlier building of either Anglo-Saxon or Norman origin on the site. The church only gained a burial ground in 1349 as it was a chapelry of Bringhurst until 1865 when it became a separate parish church. All interments were previously at Bringhurst, but during the Black Death of the 1340s the Bringhurst graveyard began to fill so the Bishop of Lincoln granted a licence to Great Easton to open a graveyard in 1349.
- 7.3 The Time Team Big Dig of 2003 discovered a significant concentration of Saxo-Norman pottery in the open green space to the south-west of the Village Hall, known as Brook Lane Paddock. This revealed that this land was open space containing plot boundaries to the rear of the street frontage and indicates that the village was already well established by the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest surviving houses in Great Easton are from around 1500. They were built with crucks – pairs of large, curving timbers which reached from near ground level right up to the apex of the roof. Such houses were common in the locality from 1450-1550. Detailed research on village houses in recent decades has found evidence of nine cruck houses, although they often only survive in a fragmentary state. Evidence of these early houses is distributed throughout the village which indicates that the street layout was fully established by the late medieval period. In 1563 there were 70 households in Great Easton.
- 7.4 From around 1620, rising prosperity and confidence led to a steady transformation of village houses. Often referred to as the ‘Great Rebuilding’, this saw the whole of the village gradually rebuilt in stone. By 1670 Hearth Tax records show there were 106 households in Great Easton. This seventeenth century period brought the development of a rich tradition of local vernacular architecture. Most houses were built of the local ironstone, but limestone from Weldon was often used for the quoins, windows and doorways. Sometimes, alternating courses of ironstone and limestone were used, giving a striped effect. Chimney stacks were built of fine moulded stone and the most typical feature of the period was the mullioned window. The strong character and quality of craftsmanship, particularly the

stonemasonry, of local houses of this period is reflected in the number of nationally listed buildings in Great Easton (see Appendix A).

- 7.5 Following the building of so many good houses in the seventeenth century, relatively few new houses were constructed in the eighteenth century. However, many alterations took place to existing houses and smaller houses and cottages began to survive. Ironstone remained in general use until the nineteenth century when it was gradually replaced by brick. A local brickyard was established about a mile and half north of the village on the Caldecott Road and the first brick was produced in 1850. Around the same time the Rugby to Stamford railway was opened and this enabled the transportation of Welsh slate to the area for use as an alternative roofing material to thatch or Collyweston slate.
- 7.6 Although the church of St Andrew was dominant in the village skyline, there were non-conformists in the village from the late seventeenth century. By 1730 two dwelling houses in Great Easton were licensed as meeting-places for non-conformists. In 1798 a new Independent Chapel building was licensed. This was rebuilt in 1830 on the road to Caldecott and the small burial ground of this Congregational Chapel remains today. By 1900 the chapel was no longer in use. It was sold in 1919 and demolished soon afterwards. The stones were incorporated into the garden wall of the former manor house, Greylands, (now 1 Caldecott Road). As early as 1807 houses in the village were licensed as meeting-places for Wesleyans. One of their number opened a Reading Room on Banbury Lane in the first half of the nineteenth century to encourage adults into a more worthwhile activity than the alehouse; of which there were 6 in Great Easton in the mid-nineteenth century. In 1857 a Wesleyan Chapel was built, using Great Easton bricks, adjacent to the village pound in High Street. It was used for worship until the last service took place on 31 August 1986. After its closure it was sold and is now a private house.
- 7.7 The enclosure of open and common fields and pastures brought to an end the open strip-field farming system and divided the open fields into the patchwork of fields and hedges we recognise today. The Enclosure Act was enforced between 1806 and 1810 in Great Easton. Evidence of the medieval open field arable farming system used prior to enclosure no longer remains within the conservation area boundary but can still be found just outside the boundary in the ridge and furrow earthworks in fields surrounding the settlement. The Enclosure Map of 1810 gives a very detailed plan of the village at that date, with every house and outbuilding plotted.





Fig.3. 1810 Enclosure Map of Great Easton (Great Easton & District Local History Society Archive)

7.8 The village expanded in the 1800s from 543 inhabitants in 1801 to 600 inhabitants by 1846. Although agriculture was the main source of employment, *White's Directory of Leicestershire (1846)*, shows that there were 4 inns/taverns in the village and residents were employed in a range of occupations. These included 2 blacksmiths, 2 wheelwrights, 2 tailors, a surgeon, a stonemason, 5 shoemakers, 4 bakers, a butcher, 2 shopkeepers, a cooper, a ketchup maker and a stay maker. Mushroom ketchup was made by the Ashby family at Bybrook house from the 1840s to around 1900. Mr Moore, the stay



maker listed, founded the Moore and Haddon corset manufacturers. By the 1851 census return a further 14 people were recorded as employed in the production of corsets and by the 1861 census William Haddon is shown as a corset and staymaker employing 1 man, 1 boy and 40 women. Moore and Haddon converted a farm building into a factory on Cross Bank in 1908. This work was undertaken by Mr Brown the wheelwright and carpenter whose workshop was adjacent to his cottage at 6 Caldecott Road. From 1850 generations of the Brown family were the village wheelwrights, carpenters and undertakers for around a hundred years. The firm of Moore and Haddon manufactured corsets in Great Easton for around 120 years until the Corset Factory closed in 1963. It is now a private dwelling. In addition to the former shops, other evidence of commerce in the village can be seen at the 1881 Clock House on Church Bank. The building still retains the clock, set to the left of the building, that advertised this as the home of the village clockmaker. The original workshop still adjoins the house. From here Tom Fox made grandfather clocks and undertook clock repairs and his brother worked as a blacksmith in the forge that was behind the house.

- 7.9 The twentieth century was a period of change for Great Easton. Between 1909 and 1914 three of the village pubs closed, two of which had operated for over 150 years. Men from Great Easton lost their lives in both World Wars. In October 1920 a cross of Clipsham stone was erected on the village green at Cross Bank as a memorial to the men of the parish who fell in the First World War. Some of the homes these men left behind to go to war carry commemorative plaques which were erected as part of the First World War centenary commemorations in 2014-2018. Other changes to daily life came when most properties were connected to a mains sewerage system in the 1930s, electricity was supplied for domestic use in 1936 and mains water was brought to the village in 1957. The arrival of a regular bus service made it easier to travel to employers such as Symingtons in Market Harborough or to the steelworks in Corby. In 1933 the local lodge of the Ancient Order of Oddfellows purchased a hay wagon shed, on High Street, from the farmer Tom Mould and converted it into a meeting place for the Lodge. In 1954 it was leased, and subsequently purchased, from the Oddfellows by the Parish Council and has served as the Village Hall to this day.
- 7.10 The first new housing of the twentieth century was a row of cottages off Mould's Lane that Mr Mould built for his workers in 1913. This was followed by three pairs of council houses in Stockerston Lane in 1922/3. Following the Second World War four pairs council houses were built in Broadgate and five pairs were built in Lounts Crescent in 1952. In 1931 the population of Great Easton was 349 and this rose

to 398 by 1951. Much of the of the development of Great Easton was unplanned until the 1960s when the development of Clarkes Dale and Barnsdale Close took place just outside the conservation area boundary. This was followed in the 1970s by the development of Musk Close off Broadgate.

- 7.11 The image below (Fig. 4) was taken in the 1960s at the time that Clarkes Dale was in development (bottom left of the image). Not only does it show the setting of Great Easton within the rural landscape it also shows the extent of open space within the conservation area boundary, especially behind Barnsdale and between High Street and Brook Lane.



Fig. 4. Aerial view taken in the 1960s from outside the southern boundary of the conservation area on Barnsdale (Great Easton & District Local History Society Archive).

With the new housing developments of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century the population grew from 398 in 1951 to 671 in 2011. The image below (Fig. 5) was taken in 2011 (image is taken from Stockerston Lane - the Clarkes Dale development is now top right of image) and clearly illustrates the increased density of buildings within the village. Although the rural setting in open countryside remains unchanged, the image shows the reduction in open green space within the conservation area. Whilst some of the new developments have attempted to use materials to fit with the village

vernacular, they have also brought a more suburban feel to parts of the conservation area.



Fig. 5. Aerial view taken in 2011 from the just inside the conservation area boundary on Stockerston Lane. (Great Easton & District Local History Society Archive).

## 8.0 Assessment of Special Interest

8.1 Great Easton has a wide variety of buildings. The older houses are mostly on the lower ground to the south and west of the church. There are two triangular greens, one immediately south of the churchyard and one further south where the three principal roads meet and the War Memorial is situated. The majority of the older ironstone houses occur round the two greens, in Barnsdale, and in the lanes near the stream on the west side of the village.

8.2 Much of the special architectural interest in Great Easton has been nationally recognised through the Grade II\* listing of St Andrew's Church and the Grade II listing awarded to 46 other heritage assets within the conservation area boundary (see Appendix A for full details).



- 8.3 Special interest in a conservation area is not only formed by the buildings but also the spaces between them and other features of interest. These can include the settlement layout, green infrastructure, open spaces, views and public realm.
- 8.4 Entering the conservation area from Stockerston Lane the open countryside gives way to twentieth-century ribbon development. Lounts Crescent forks to the left and Broadgate turns to the right. Three pairs of Council houses were built in Stockerston Lane soon after the First World War and four pairs in Broadgate after the Second World War. Five pairs in Lounts Crescent were completed in 1952. They are all typical examples of type for the date of construction and show the development of the village in the first half of the twentieth century. In general, the front gardens have been retained and the vegetation within them contributes to the natural environment within the conservation area.
- 8.5 At the junction with Broadgate there is a small triangular green, behind which is 48 High Street, a double-fronted Victorian house. Overlooking the green and facing down Broadgate it makes a positive contribution to this part of the conservation area which has a more twentieth century suburban character. The thatched mud and wattle cottages in the image below, from around 1910, have now all been replaced with twentieth century brick houses and bungalows and the road is to modern standards with pavements, but the prominence of 48 High Street in the street scene remains.



Fig. 6 Circa 1910 view up Broadgate to the junction with High Street where 48 High Street overlooks the green. (Great Easton & District Local History Society Archive).

- 8.6 In general roads in Great Easton do not have continuous pavement on both sides of the road. Where pavements do exist, they are often only on one side of the road. This is particularly true of High Street where there is pavement on one side with a strip of the village green extending down the other side of the road. High Street contains a number of ironstone buildings (many of which are nationally listed) which front

directly on to the road so the combination of the honey-coloured stone and neat green with its shrubs and trees contribute to the rural character of High Street.

8.7 The Grade II listed buildings in High Street include Holme Leigh House which is built in a manner characteristic of the Welland Valley using alternate bands of ironstone and limestone. It is the largest surviving seventeenth century house in the conservation area. Like several of the older houses, the gable end of Holme Leigh House is set onto the street, suggesting that the street front was already crowded. Located behind the green on High Street and standing in its own grounds is the Old Rectory. This is a Grade II listed building which was originally a seventeenth century farmhouse that was enlarged in the eighteenth century when it became the Vicarage. Opposite on the other side of the road is the Grade II Granby House. The current building dates from the late nineteenth century although the building was first licensed as a public house in 1753. It was the Marquis of Granby public house until 1914. One of the larger outbuildings was even used for village dances and similar events prior to the village hall, so it has played an important part in village life.



Fig. 7. View down the High Street showing the green and variety of properties fronting the opposite side of the street. The image also shows how chimneys feature strongly throughout the conservation area.

8.8 The current Village Hall is further along High Street. It not only makes a positive contribution to the conservation area but it has contributed to village life for many years. In keeping with the agricultural history of Great Easton the building's origins are agricultural and it would have originally been thatched. It was sold by local farmer, Tom Mould, in 1933 to provide a meeting place for the local lodge of the Ancient Order of Oddfellows. It was used for village events and celebrations even before it was purchased by the Parish Council in 1954. The building



was extended in 1982/3 and the corrugated roof replaced in 1987. This is where residents have celebrated local and national events including Royal Jubilees and Coronations. The building and the field behind it were the hub for the archaeological team of during the 2003 Time Team television programme.

8.9 Further along High Street sees the introduction of Victorian brick buildings. Opposite the Old Bake House (Grade II listed as Stone Walls) and the listed K6 telephone kiosk is the former Wesleyan Chapel. It was built, adjacent to the village pound, using Great Easton bricks and the date stone in the gable shows 1857. The chapel closed in 1986 and was turned into residential use, the pound became the parking area for the property. The gable of the chapel is distinctive in the street scene on the descent into the village down High Street and Church Bank. The former chapel and the pound both played an important role in village life and they are a positive contribution to the conservation area.

8.10 Church Bank leads off High Street and up towards St Andrew's Church. It provides a fine vista up to the church and its spire. The Clock House on Church Bank is a double-fronted brick building with a date stone showing 1881. The clock set between the upper and lower windows to the left of the house gives the house its name. Adjoining the left side of the house is the original clockmaker's workshop. The building makes a positive contribution to the conservation area and shows an aspect of the nineteenth century industrial history of the village.



Fig. 8. Clock House on Church Hill with the workshop attached.

8.11 A little further up the hill is an intimate enclosed green on Church Bank which opens out upwards to the church and churchyard. From the far corner of the green a road leads behind the church down to the farmhouse of Rectory Farm, a working farm at the heart of the village. There are several listed buildings clustered around the green, including 6 Church Bank which dates from the 1500s and is one of the buildings in the conservation area still to contain evidence of its original cruck structure. It was the Crown Inn from 1753 to 1909. At the centre of the green is one of the former village water pumps along with seating where it is possible to sit and take in the rural tranquillity of Great Easton and its wider countryside setting (see Fig. 2 on page 8).



Fig. 9. View of the green on Church Bank with the water pump and seating area. 6 Church Bank can be seen behind the green to the right of the image.

8.12 Between the former Wesleyan Chapel on High Street and the Grade II former Post Office is a stretch of mud wall running along the High Street. The varied walls of Great Easton add much to the village character and with its location on the High Street this stretch is a good example of the positive contribution the walls make to the conservation area.





Fig.10. Stretch of mud wall on High Street.

8.13 Two other Victorian brick buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area are located at 12 and 13 Cross Bank, overlooking the War Memorial. They are both built with the gable end onto the street and have a polychromatic detail at the top of the gable. They are solid examples of their building type, more often found in urban settings, and unusual to find in the local area. Polychromatic brick also features on the former butcher's shop (Grade II listed as LC Ellingworth, Butcher) on the opposite side of the road at 16 Cross Bank. Hidden behind 16 Cross bank, and now in residential use, is the former slaughterhouse to the butchers which is another building that once played an important part in village life.

8.14 There are several listed buildings situated around the junction of the War Memorial, including The Sun Inn. This is now a gastro pub which attracts custom from a wide area, many of whom travel by car. The first recorded landlord of the premises was in 1753, although the present building has had nineteenth and twentieth century additions. Opposite The Sun Inn on the north side of Cross Bank is an attractive terrace of two-storey ironstone cottages. In this terrace is 9 Cross Bank, which has a wide archway with double gates leading to the rear of the property. This archway may be evidence that the building was originally built as an alehouse. From the late 1700s until 1958 it was The Shoulder of Mutton public house. It did not have a cellar or a bar, so the beer was kept on tap in barrels at the rear of the building and customers were served from there.

8.15 Cross Bank leads into Caldecott Road where the conservation area boundary ends just after number 28 and the road extends into open countryside. The road contains predominantly stone houses, cottages and outbuildings with some later additions towards the edge of the

village. Behind a stone wall on the south side of Caldecott Road is a small burial ground which makes a positive contribution to the conservation area and is recognised as local green space within the Neighbourhood Plan. The burial ground, containing five graves, was originally next to an Independent (Congregational) chapel. This was demolished around 1919 but remaining stones from the building are visible adjacent to the gate post. Although close to the passing traffic on the Caldecott Road it is a quiet, well maintained, place for people to sit on the bench and enjoy the rural surroundings. Stones from the demolished chapel were incorporated into the garden wall of the former manor house, Greylands, (now 1 Caldecott Road) on the opposite side of the road. This is a large ironstone house, dated 1615, set in large grounds. Although considerably altered prior to the First World War, it remains a fine building which contributes to the character of the conservation area. The side elevation fronts Caldecott Road and the front elevation looks to the conservation area boundary and out to the open countryside beyond.



Fig. 11. Front elevation of 1 Caldecott Road which looks out of the conservation area towards Caldecott.

8.16 Next to The Sun Inn on Cross Bank is a detached brick 1960s house and garage, set back behind a small hedge and mature front garden. It was built by Mr Wallace, who it is said later regretted his actions. However, it is a good example of this age and style of housing and confidently takes its places amongst the ironstone buildings and Victorian brick buildings, situated around the War Memorial junction, which illustrate the changes in building over the centuries as Great Easton developed. Opposite is the former Moore and Haddon corset factory, now in residential use. The building was converted from agricultural use in 1908 and produced corsets until it closed in 1963, so it was an important part of the industrial life of Great Easton.

8.17 Leading off Cross Bank is Banbury Lane, formerly School Lane. The houses on Banbury Lane closest to Cross Bank are stone built but there is modern infill development of brick houses and bungalows further down the lane. Although they do not reflect the materials generally used in the conservation area, these buildings are well set back and do not impact on the view down Banbury Lane towards the large house at number 11 (Grade II listed) that marks the end of the lane and the conservation area boundary. 11 Banbury Lane is one of several properties in the conservation area that contain a blank wall tablet, the reason for which is unknown. 2 Banbury Lane is a two-storey ironstone cottage of seventeenth century origins with later additions in brick. Prior to the opening of the Board School at Bringhurst in 1874, village children were taught at 2 Banbury Lane. When the building was sold in 1924 the walls were built up in brick and the roof raised as the building was then used as a Reading Room until around 1945.

8.18 The junction of Barnsdale and Brook Lane is a particularly attractive vista. With the grouping of its ironstone barns and cottages the view along Barnsdale to the conservation area boundary is particularly picturesque. This is reflected in the number of listed buildings in Barnsdale, some of which contain evidence of the early use of crucks in their construction. The first thatched ironstone building is 8 Barnsdale (Grade II listed), which is now in residential use but served as the Kings Head Inn from 1818 to 1914 when it then became a shop. The ironstone cottages front the road, which is in contrast to Barnsdale house which is set back from the road in its garden. Barnsdale House (Grade II listed) on the southern side of Barnsdale is the last property before the conservation area boundary. It is a distinctive early nineteenth-century square building, with a fine ashlar frontage facing outwards along the road, looking towards Bringhurst, rather than fronting on to Barnsdale. It was the home of the local doctor for over 100 years.





Fig. 12 View along Barnsdale from the junction with Brook Lane.

8.19 Just prior to Barnsdale House is the modern development of Castle Lane. Although local materials have been used for the development, it has more of a modern suburban character to the lane. However, the properties do not front Barnsdale and are set back so do not significantly impact the vista along Barnsdale or detract from the quality of the conservation area. The land behind Barnsdale that was clearly open space in the 1960s aerial photograph of Great Easton (see Fig. 4. on page.14) was developed in the early 2000s. Local materials have been used in the construction of the properties, but they still have more of a modern suburban character. Although they are located within the conservation area boundary, access is via Clarkes Dale and they are largely hidden behind Barnsdale so they do not detract from the character of the conservation area.



Fig. 13. Castle Lane has a more suburban character with hardstanding separated by hedging.

8.20 Opposite Castle Lane is Furleigh Cottage (Grade II listed). It is a fifteenth century thatched cottage which carries a small plaque marking the impact of twentieth century history on Great Easton. The plaque remembers Joseph Craythorne who lived at Furleigh cottage prior to his death in France during the First World War. Although the names of all the men of Great Easton who died in the two World Wars are on the War Memorial, recognition of their former homes highlights how small agricultural communities were touched by international events. This is especially so in Barnsdale as the adjacent cottage has a plaque remembering Harold Baker who died in 1917.

8.21 The triangular green at the junction of Barnsdale and Brook Lane is planted with spring bulbs and contains a village sign erected for the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth the Second. Overlooking the green is 2 Barnsdale, one of the former bakehouses in the village. It was once two cottages, but one was demolished, and a taller Victorian stone addition was built onto the existing cottage. The datestone to this addition is 1879. The stone also contains the initials JC for John Culpin the baker. The property is located at a prominent junction and makes a positive contribution to the conservation area.



Fig. 14. The former bakehouse at the triangular green at the junction of Barnsdale and Brook Lane.

8.22 Brook Lane is a mixture of old houses (a number of which are listed at Grade II) intermingled with more modern properties which generally do not reflect the local materials and rural character of the conservation area. The properties closest to the junction with Barnsdale are stone built larger properties like the Grade II listed Westbrook House. The brook and the stretch of grass and vegetation running alongside Brook Lane contributes to the tranquil rural character of the conservation area. With the brook running alongside the road it is necessary for properties to be set further back and consequently the vegetation of the front



gardens contributes to the natural environment within the conservation area. Brook Lane Paddock (the open space between High Street and Brook Lane) also makes a positive contribution to the conservation area, although the metal fencing used to sub-divide this land is of a more industrial nature which is not in keeping with the rural character of the conservation area and detracts from the openness of space.

8.23 On the corner of Brook Lane and Mould's Lane is 24 Brook Lane which is one of the smaller listed buildings in the lane. It is a modest dwelling which would have been home to a farm labourer rather than an employer. It would have originally been thatched, but it currently has a corrugated roof which was a common material to use when owners were unable to afford to replace the thatch. Beyond this point the rest of Brook Lane is late twentieth century bungalows and more modern housing. The properties are set back from the road with front gardens which contribute to the natural environment within the conservation area, however, their material palette is not in keeping with the rest of Brook Lane and they are much more suburban in character.



Fig. 15. View along Brook Lane to the junction with Barnsdale where the canted bay window of 1 Barnsdale is visible.

- 8.24 Brook Lane runs into Pitchers Lane, which is again a combination of old and more modern buildings of the type in Brook Lane. Number 4 Pitchers Lane is a typical seventeenth century cross passage house. During restoration work in 1989 fragments of a cruck were found which may indicate the building has sixteenth century origins. At the end of Pitchers Lane is the junction with Deepdale to the left and Broadgate to the right.
- 8.25 Entering Deepdale the properties are of a modern construction in a range of materials. Further into Deepdale, towards the brook at the end, the suburban character gives way to a rural character more fitting of the conservation area. There is a row of Victorian Cottages built using Great Easton brick in 1860. Along from the cottages is a sensitively designed twenty-first century home which fits well in the setting. Across the brook is the Grade II listed Brook House which is a large seventeenth century house set in grounds which extend to the boundary of the conservation area.
- 8.26 Broadgate is largely suburban in character with the houses and bungalows being of late twentieth century design and layout. The exception is the two Grade II listed buildings at 16 and 22 Broadgate. Number 16 Broadgate is a small seventeenth century house while Broadgate House at number 22 is a large house dating from around 1720-1750. Being one of the older houses in the village it is unusual that one chimney is on the rear elevation of the house rather than the normal gable stack. For a period during the nineteenth century part of this building was The Bell public house.
- 8.27 Opposite Broadgate House is the 1970s development of Musk Close. The houses in Musk Close are typical of the design and layout used in such developments at the time and there is no attempt to reflect local materials. Although it has a very suburban feel, it is possible to see the surrounding trees and to glimpse the church spire from Musk Close as a reminder of its village location. The cul-de-sac is a well-kept and good example of its type for the period. It nestles behind Broadgate and the houses and bungalows are all set back behind open plan front gardens. The gardens now contain mature trees and shrubs which help soften the hard landscaping of the cul-de-sac.



Fig. 16. The design and layout of Musk Close with the surrounding trees of the conservation area.

8.28 Although the design and materials used for the twentieth century additions in the north-western side of the conservation area have not generally reflected the rural character of the conservation area the integrity for the conservation area remains intact.

## 9.0 Opportunities for Enhancement

9.1 Great Easton conservation area is generally well cared for. The verges and greens within the village are well managed and maintained and there are no obvious problems with litter. They provide pleasant environments in which to sit, and they contribute to the rural tranquillity and proximity to nature that is characteristic of Great Easton. A similar level of respect for the conservation area is evident in the individual properties which are generally in good order. Although many properties front directly on to the road they incorporate plants and shrubs where possible and in others boundary treatments, the planting of trees, shrubs and flowers in gardens, or in tubs and hanging baskets all contribute to quality of the conservation area.

9.2 There is opportunity to further enhance the conservation area. The finger posts on High Street at the junction with Church Bank and at the junction with Cross Bank make a positive contribution to the conservation area. They show the importance of connectivity with other settlements and are of an age and style that reflects the rural location. They are also in keeping with the simple low-level white metal railings used along the edge of the brook in Brook Lane. However, in a village



with such a high number of listed buildings the care and attention to the maintenance for the fingerposts and railing could be improved to reflect the quality of their wider environment.



Fig. 17. Finger post at the junction of High Street and Church Bank

## 10.0 Management Plan

10.1 Local planning authorities have a duty placed upon them under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. Conservation area appraisals help to identify threats to the character of the conservation area and opportunities for enhancement. Potential threats to the character and appearance of the conservation area arise from the loss of traditional features of value. Such threats can range from the loss of historic fabric to unsympathetic public realm and the impact of highway works.

- 10.2 The character and appearance of both the conservation area and of individual buildings and structures are at risk from the loss of historic fabric and traditional features. Regular ongoing maintenance limits deterioration to buildings of any age or materials. Efforts should be made to repair or replace historic fabric with appropriate materials. Generally, UPVC is not an appropriate replacement for historic timber windows and doors. It is difficult to achieve the necessary standards in design and the use of UPVC can lead to environmental problems due to reduced breathability in materials. More information of materials for historic building repairs can be found on the Historic England website <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/building-materials-for-historic-buildings/>
- 10.3 The treatment of the public realm impacts on the character and appearance of a conservation area. The loss of features of value or the introduction of unsympathetic street furniture poses a threat to the character and appearance of a conservation area. Great Easton conservation area generally has an uncluttered public realm with features such as the finger posts and the K6 telephone kiosk making a positive contribution to the conservation area. These features should be maintained and retained wherever possible. Applications for development should ensure that any alterations to the public realm preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 10.4 The character and appearance of a conservation area can also be threatened by unsympathetic highway works and by traffic and car parking, especially where grass directly edges most roads in the conservation area. Site visits to Great Easton during the spring to autumn of 2023 indicated that the demand for on-street parking is very high at times, especially around Cross Bank and the junction with Caldecott Road. However, most drivers appeared to park responsibly and there was no evidence of damage caused to verges, greens or paths from inconsiderate parking and both the farm traffic and the local bus service was able to move through the village relatively unhindered.
- 10.5 The roads within the Great Easton conservation area are often lined with hedgerows greens and verges, many planted with spring bulbs. Works to highways and footways risk the loss of historic traditional materials such as kerbstones, setts and pavements or the introduction of modern surfacing and boundary treatments and signage, all of which pose a threat to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Loss of such historic fabric should be discouraged. The Highways Authority should, as far as possible, seek to ensure that works to highways and footways makes good any historic surfaces and that

completed work does not detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 10.6 Any proposals for new development should consider the impact of alterations to highways and footways and the introduction of modern surfacing and boundary treatments and signage. With the existing high demand for on-street parking careful consideration should be given to the effect of increased traffic and parking provision on the character and appearance of the Great Easton conservation area.
- 10.7 As a result of the historical development of the settlement there is a mix of building styles and materials, although chimneys feature strongly throughout the conservation area. Ironstone and limestone have been used for much of the village in the honey-coloured buildings which are distinctive to the character of the conservation area. This is complemented by use of mellow local red brick. Thatch and slate are the predominant roof materials with some pink corrugated pantiles (introduced in the nineteenth century), traditionally used on subsidiary out buildings. Where used on new buildings they can be quite conspicuous and take considerable time to weather and age. The varied walls of Great Easton add much to the village character and are of mud, stone or red brick. They have a great variety of copings including stone, pantiles, rounded terra cotta and blue saddle copings. Proposals for development should reflect the use of consistent materials in the area. Given the high level of skill deployed in the seventeenth century rebuilding in Great Easton, development which uses high-quality materials and high-level craft in their application will help to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

## 11.0 Council Contact Details

If you need to discuss this document please contact the Conservation Team.

By email: [planningpolicy@Harborough.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@Harborough.gov.uk)



## Sources

This document was produced with reference to:

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**Websites:**

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[www.greateaston.org](http://www.greateaston.org)

[www.historicengland.org.uk](http://www.historicengland.org.uk)

Thanks to the Chair and Secretary of the Great Easton & District Local History Society who were generous with their time and knowledge and facilitated access to the resources and archive of the Society.

## Appendix A: Listed Buildings

### **Church of St Andrew – Grade II\***

List Entry Number: 1360666 [CHURCH OF ST ANDREW, Great Easton - 1360666 | Historic England](#)

### **14 Barnsdale – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061631 [14, BARNSDALE, Great Easton - 1061631 | Historic England](#)

### **K6 Kiosk at the junction with Church Bank – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1249514 [K6 KIOSK AT THE JUNCTION WITH CHURCH BANK, Great Easton - 1249514 | Historic England](#)

### **Wignell Tomb at the Chuchyard of St Andrew – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1188174 [WIGNELL TOMB AT CHURCHYARD OF ST ANDREW CIRCA 1 METRE SOUTH OF SOUTH PORCH OF CHURCH, Great Easton - 1188174 | Historic England](#)

### **Stable to rear and circa 5 metres south west of Holme Leigh House – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1294888 [STABLE TO REAR AND CIRCA 5 METRES SOUTH WEST OF HOLME LEIGH HOUSE, Great Easton - 1294888 | Historic England](#)

### **10 Barnsdale – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1360664 [10, BARNSDALE, Great Easton - 1360664 | Historic England](#)

### **16 Broadgate – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1187995 [16, BROADGATE, Great Easton - 1187995 | Historic England](#)

### **21 High Street – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1188191 [21, HIGH STREET, Great Easton - 1188191 | Historic England](#)

### **Woodbine Cottage – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061629 [WOODBINE COTTAGE, Great Easton - 1061629 | Historic England](#)

### **Furleigh Cottage – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061632 [FURLEIGH COTTAGE, Great Easton - 1061632 | Historic England](#)



### **9 Barnsdale – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061635 [9, BARNSDALE, Great Easton - 1061635 | Historic England](#)

### **Well Head to Manor Farm – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1188234 [WELL HEAD TO MANOR FARM, CIRCA 250 METRES NORTH EAST OF CHURCH OF ST ANDREW, Great Easton - 1188234 | Historic England](#)

### **Barn to left side and circa 15 metres south east of Holme Leigh – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1360670 [BARN TO LEFT SIDE AND CIRCA 15 METRES SOUTH EAST OF HOLME LEIGH HOUSE, Great Easton - 1360670 | Historic England](#)

### **The Thatch – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1187994 [THE THATCH, Great Easton - 1187994 | Historic England](#)

### **8 Barnsdale – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061630 [8, BARNSDALE, Great Easton - 1061630 | Historic England](#)

### **Broadgate House – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061637 [BROADGATE HOUSE, Great Easton - 1061637 | Historic England](#)

### **The Sun Public House – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061642 [THE SUN PUBLIC HOUSE, Great Easton - 1061642 | Historic England](#)

### **Barn and adjoining range of outbuildings at number 3 Barnsdale – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1187991 [BARN AND ADJOINING RANGE OF OUTBUILDINGS AT NUMBER 3, Great Easton - 1187991 | Historic England](#)

### **Barnsdale Cottage – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1294952 [BARNSDALE COTTAGE, Great Easton - 1294952 | Historic England](#)

### **Bybrook House – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1188185 [BYBROOK HOUSE, Great Easton - 1188185 | Historic England](#)

### **Garden Wall at the Old Rectory and the Vicarage – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1188189 [GARDEN WALL AT THE OLD RECTORY AND THE VICARAGE, Great Easton - 1188189 | Historic England](#)

**3 Barnsdale – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061634 [3, BARNSDALE, Great Easton - 1061634 | Historic England](#)

**10 Cross Bank – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061641 [10, CROSS BANK, Great Easton - 1061641 | Historic England](#)

**Brookside House – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1294962 [BROOKSIDE HOUSE, Great Easton - 1294962 | Historic England](#)

**11 Banbury Lane – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1360663 [11, BANBURY LANE, Great Easton - 1360663 | Historic England](#)

**24 Brook Lane – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1187999 [24, BROOK LANE, Great Easton - 1187999 | Historic England](#)

**Brookside Cottage – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061638 [BROOKSIDE COTTAGE, Great Easton - 1061638 | Historic England](#)

**The Thatched House – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061640 [THE THATCHED HOUSE, Great Easton - 1061640 | Historic England](#)

**39 High Street – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1188229 [39, HIGH STREET, Great Easton - 1188229 | Historic England](#)

**Barnsdale House – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061636 [BARNSDALE HOUSE, Great Easton - 1061636 | Historic England](#)

**Brook House – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061643 [BROOK HOUSE, Great Easton - 1061643 | Historic England](#)

**The Old Post Office – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1360669 [THE OLD POST OFFICE, Great Easton - 1360669 | Historic England](#)

**Stone Walls – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1188188 [STONE WALLS, Great Easton - 1188188 | Historic England](#)

**Deepdale Cottage – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1188240 [DEEPDALE COTTAGE, Great Easton - 1188240 | Historic England](#)

**19 Brook Lane – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061639 [19, Brook Lane, Great Easton - 1061639 | Historic England](#)

**The Old Rectory – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061644 [THE OLD RECTORY, Great Easton - 1061644 | Historic England](#)

**47 High Street – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061646 [47, HIGH STREET, Great Easton - 1061646 | Historic England](#)

**LC Ellingworth, Butcher – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1360667 [LC ELLINGWORTH, BUTCHER, Great Easton - 1360667 | Historic England](#)

**2 Little London – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061647 [2, LITTLE LONDON, Great Easton - 1061647 | Historic England](#)

**1 Barnsdale – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061633 [1, BARNSDALE, Great Easton - 1061633 | Historic England](#)

**Westbrook House – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1360665 [WESTBROOK HOUSE, Great Easton - 1360665 | Historic England](#)

**War Memorial Cross – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1188176 [WAR MEMORIAL CROSS, Great Easton - 1188176 | Historic England](#)

**12 and 13 Church Bank – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1188016 [12 AND 13, CHURCH BANK, Great Easton - 1188016 | Historic England](#)



**Home Leigh House – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1061645 [HOLME LEIGH HOUSE, Great Easton - 1061645 | Historic England](#)

**8 and 10 High Street – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1360668 [8 AND 10, HIGH STREET, Great Easton - 1360668 | Historic England](#)

**Linden House together with wall and barn – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1187997 [LINDEN HOUSE TOGETHER WITH WALL AND BARN, Great Easton - 1187997 | Historic England](#)

**17 and 18 Cross Bank – Grade II**

List Entry Number: 1188181 [17 AND 18, CROSS BANK, Great Easton - 1188181 | Historic England](#)