

Coalville Conservation Area

**Character Appraisal
and
Management Plan
May 2014**



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1. Introduction

This appraisal has been prepared in accordance with guidance produced by English Heritage (2012). Its purpose is to examine the historical development of the Coalville Conservation Area and to describe its present form and appearance in order to assess its special architectural and historic interest, particularly for the consideration of planning applications to ensure that any new development preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Under the heritage guidance of the National Planning Policy Framework, 'heritage assets' are defined as 'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)'. While architectural quality and interest are important criteria for asset status, cultural, social and economic considerations may also qualify buildings for inclusion. To some extent the survival of acknowledged heritage assets will influence and even dictate the extent of a conservation area and the following assessment is made with this in mind. Under the National Planning Policy Framework conservation areas are 'designated heritage assets' and as such there is a national presumption in favour of their protection.

1.1 Summary of Special Interest

Coalville represents a significant example of Victorian industrialisation. The town was established in the mid-1820s with its origins attributed to mine engineer William Stenson who developed Coalville's first mine into previously unexploited coal measures. Stenson is also credited for arranging for one of the world's earliest railways to be built to carry the coal. These endeavours sparked the evolution of the Victorian town of Coalville on an area of land comprised of the four distant corners of the adjoining parishes of Whitwick, Hugglescote, Snibston and Swannington. These were separated by two ancient road tracks: Long Lane (or more descriptively Ditching Lane), gave its name initially to Stenson's mine and to the emerging settlement.

In contrast to the town's original industrial premises, the principal elements of Coalville's historic commercial centre remain largely intact, albeit with some notable losses and modern intrusions. Both High Street/Hotel Street and Belvoir

Road maintain their linear retail form, the principal loss being the railway station and adjoining buildings along the north side of High Street. The Belvoir Centre involved the demolition of short ranges of historic buildings along High Street and Belvoir Road but has otherwise been remarkably kind to the historic fabric of the town centre, to which it has, to some extent, been economically complementary. Beyond the core commercial streets Mantle Lane, the railway overbridge and blue brick retaining walls, Midland Railway signal box and former premises of Stableford Wagon Works remain the most tangible structures of railway heritage. The evidence of the coal mining industry is manifested in the Scheduled Monument and museum at the erstwhile Snibston Pit, a short distance to the west of the Conservation Area.

1.2 Location and Setting

Coalville is situated in North West Leicestershire, just south of the A511. It is within easy reach of the region's three cities Leicester, Derby and Nottingham through strong road connections afforded by the M1 and A42. In 1974 Coalville became the seat of North West Leicestershire District Council.

Coalville is surrounded by Swannington and New Swannington to the north-west and north respectively; Whitwick to the north-east; Bardon to the south-east; Hugglescote and Donington le Heath to the south and Ravenstone to the west. The population of this 'Greater Coalville' area is over 33,000.

2. The Origins and Historic Development of the Area¹

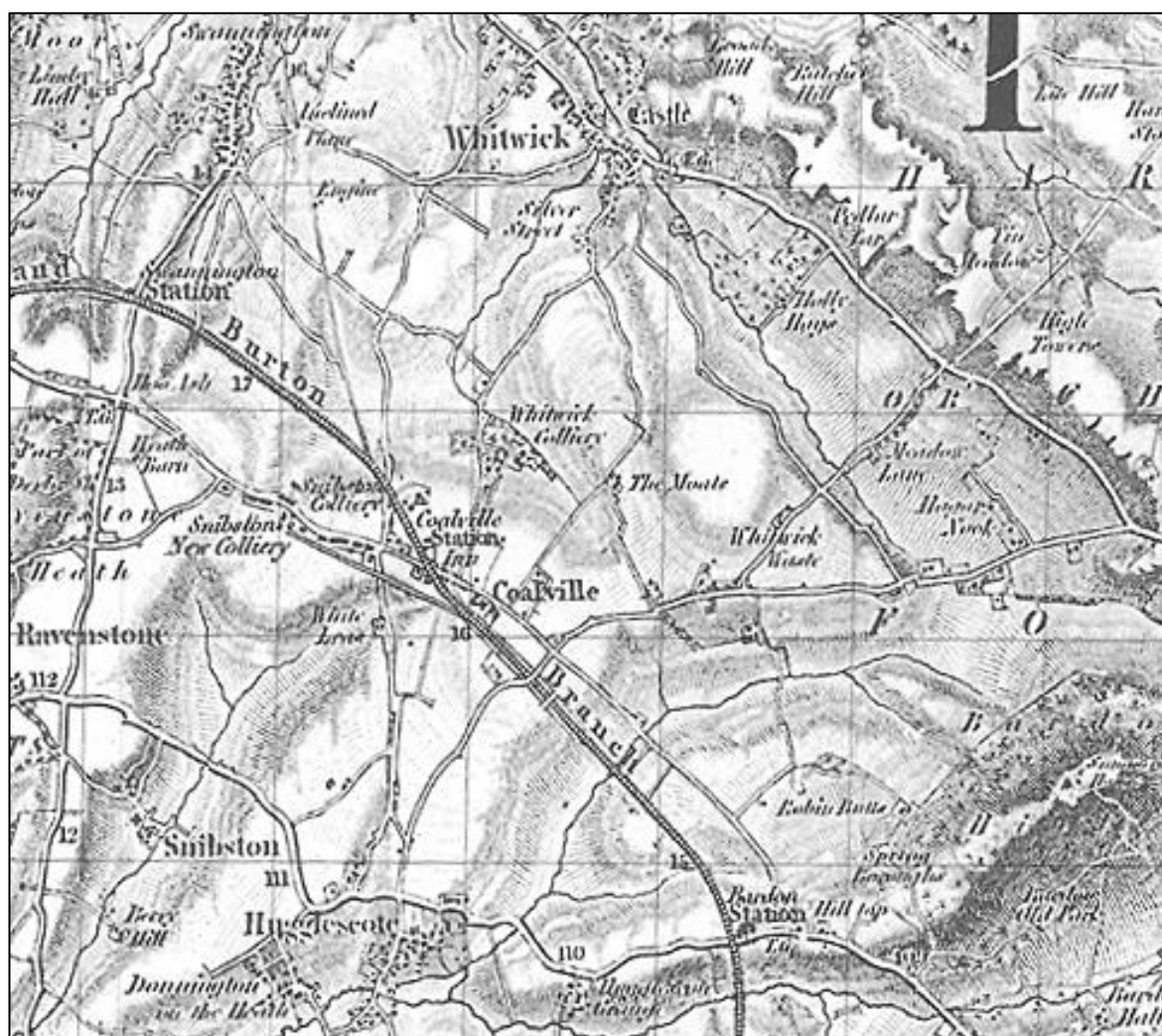
The original pits, Snibston and Whitwick, sunk in conjunction with the construction of the Leicester and Swannington Railway in the 1830's, comprised separate nuclei of the new town, with housing and ancillary facilities around them, but the historic commercial core of Coalville grew along the roads linking the pits and around the railway station, taking the epithets High Street and Hotel Street (a direct reference to premises developed with the coming of the railway). The earliest of these premises were originally cottages, but were soon converted to shops and other businesses at ground floor, with accommodation above. As the town developed, purpose built commercial properties appeared, including banks and public houses. In the hinterlands of this core, other industries developed

¹ This section is a summary of Denis Baker's *Coalville: The first seventy-five years* (1983).

complementing the main economic activities, including brick yards, railway wagon manufacture and elastic web manufacture.

2.1 William Stenson

Coalville as it stands today is essentially the product of the development of the coal mining and railway industries dating from the first half of the 19th century. No significant settlement existed on the site of the present town prior to these industries: the area was open countryside, with a few farm buildings and a track called Long Lane. The only earlier commercial property was the 'Red House', now adjoining the Memorial Square, which marked the road junction of thoroughfares linking the settlements of Hugglescote, Whitwick and Swannington, now at the edges of Coalville.



Map 1: 1st edition 1" Ordnance Survey map, 1835

William Stenson, a native of Coleorton, sank Whitwick Colliery on a relative's farm land in the 1820s. In doing so, Stenson ignored an old miner's dictum of the day, "No coal below stone", and sank his shaft through a layer of 'Greenstone' or 'Whinstone' to the coal below. This effectively opened up the 'concealed coalfield.' Stenson needed to get his coal to the market in Leicester and he visited Northumberland and Durham in 1828 to observe transport developments there including the Stockton – Darlington Railway. Upon his return he surveyed a line from Leicester to Swannington which he proposed should be built. Stenson's planned route was reviewed by George Stephenson and his son, Robert, who approved it with a few amendments. In June 1829, the plans for a railway or tramroad from West Bridge in Leicester to Swannington with branches to North Bridge Leicester, Bagworth, Ibstock and Long Lane Collieries were approved and an Act of Parliament was gained on 29th May 1830.

Robert Stephenson was appointed Engineer to the railway, which was built between 1830 and 1833. He persuaded his father to buy the Snibston Estate in 1831 and he sank his first colliery (Snibston No 1) on the opposite side of the road to Whitwick Colliery. Snibston No 2 Colliery followed in 1833 and a second Act of Parliament was obtained in June of that year allowing expansion of the railway, including a branch to the new colliery.

2.2 Growth of Coalville

In 1838 William Stenson built his new house, Coalville House, on the site of current Council Offices car park. The community was growing around the two pits and the railway, and the name 'Coalville' was fully adopted by 1848. The town started to develop facilities including the 1835 Baptist Chapel which stood where the Council Offices are now, the Church of England, built in 1840, and Stephenson's church and school for the 'Dissenters'- the building at the rear of the present Ebenezer Baptist Chapel. In 1820 the population was circa 100, but this rose to 1,200 by 1841. Rows of new houses were constructed to accommodate the mine workers, for example: Snibston Rows, Hotel Street and High Street. The front rooms were often converted into shops with a wide variety of merchandise. White's Directory of 1846 shows 14 providers of food and drink and four for clothing. By 1846 there were seven pubs in town: Snibstone New Inn, the Engine, the Bluebell, the Fox and Goose, the Railway, the Red House, and the Queen. Whitwick Colliery Company set up a brick and tile factory in 1828 and in 1835 a

steam flour mill was built on the opposite side of the railway line to the Railway Hotel.

George Smith managed the tile and brick factory, and went on to become an important figure in improving working conditions in the brick and tile yards. He wrote a book in 1871 called "The Cry of the Children from the Brickyards of England", which eventually led to The Factories Act (Brick and Tile Yards) Extension Bill in 1871 "providing for the regulation of the labour of young persons and women in Brick and Tile Yards".

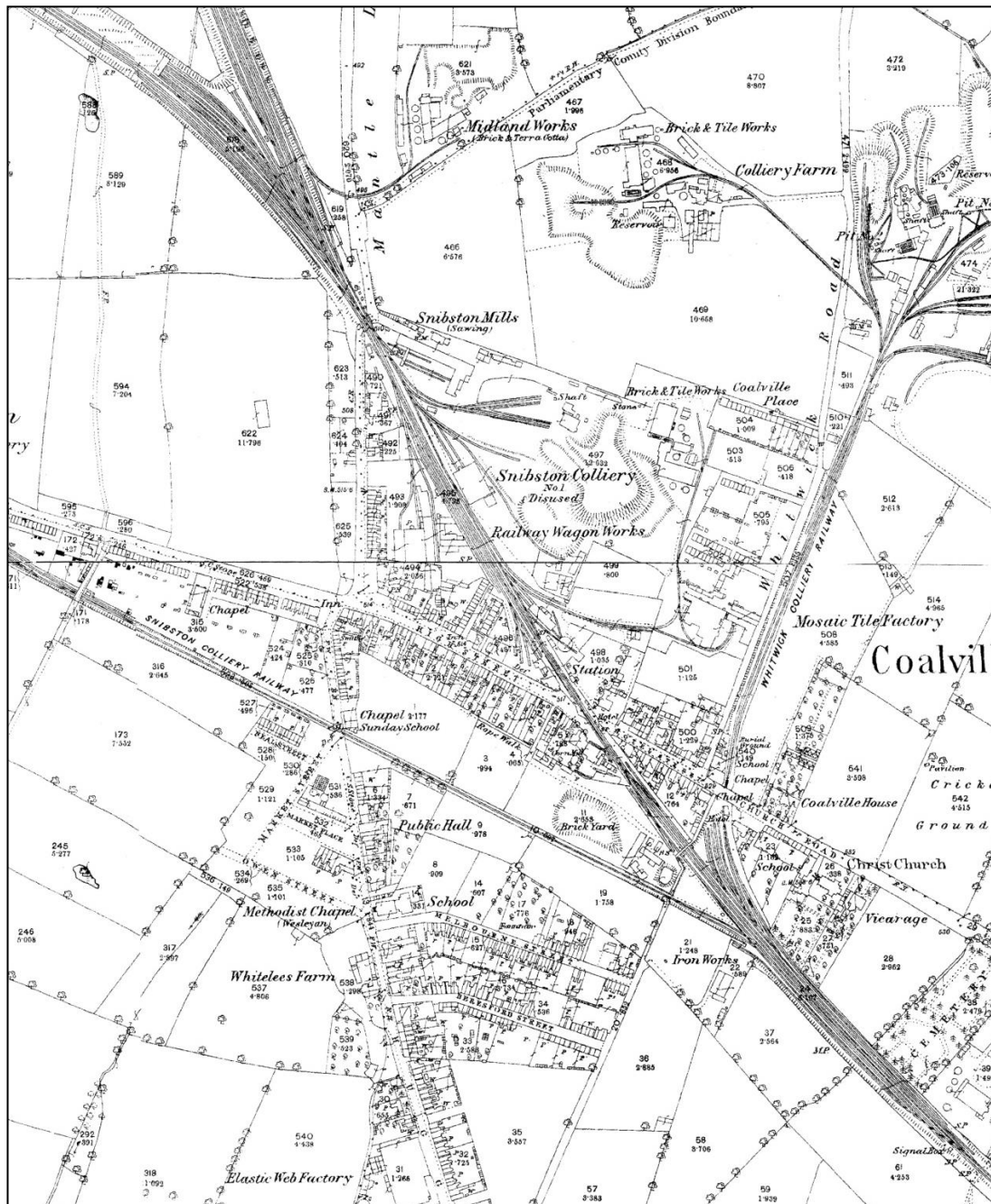
The Midland Railway took over the Leicester to Swannington Railway in 1846. Coalville's first station was built in 1848, but a new station was built on the same site in 1894. In 1851 a footbridge was built over the level crossing adjacent to the Railway Hotel. This was prompted by the increase in traffic in the town, and the congestion caused by closing the crossing gates. This was followed by the installation of a ground level signal box in 1856, which was elevated above the bridge in 1907.

Infilling of the town centre began in the 1860s when William Stenson's Estates were sold. The 1871 Census reported that the increase in population (which rose from 1,540 in 1861 to 2,081 in 1871) was due to the sale of large quantities of land in small building allotments and the erection of buildings for colliers. This development was largely along Hugglescote Lane and Berresford and Melbourne Streets. In 1884 a few houses were built in Neal Street (now Margaret Street) and plans were in hand for the construction of Owen Street and Market Street (now Jackson Street), some shops having been built in the Market Place (now Marlborough Square).

The population increase was also fuelled by the growth of the brick and tile industry and other commercial enterprises. In 1876 William, John and Albert Wootton set up Wootton Brothers Ltd, a small foundry to make castings for the pits. By the 1890s they were designing one of the earliest machines to make brick in England, and also made stone crushing machinery and steam engines. In 1865 J.W. Stableford set up an engineering works and brick manufactory alongside railway on Mantle Lane. The company enlarged in 1884, made carriages and wagons and employed about a thousand men and boys by 1900.

Women were prohibited from working in brick and tile manufacture, and so found employment in other industries, for example: in 1872 T. & J. Jones set up a factory on Hugglescote Lane, manufacturing elastic web; Walter Brown set up Boot and Shoe factory in 1877, and several hosiery factories had been established by 1906.

Governance was split over four parishes until 1892, and in 1894 the Urban District of Coalville was established. In the early years of the 20th century, Coalville was a boom town with good rail connections and a diverse industrial base.



Map 2: Ordnance Survey map, 1883

2.3 Coalville in the 20th century

The commercial heart of Coalville created in the 19th century was essentially linear, comprising High Street/Hotel Street, running east-west and Belvoir Road, with its Jackson Street offshoot, running south, the two meeting at the Market Place. As the town prospered in the early 20th century commercial and cultural confidence encouraged further development of the Belvoir Road artery with contemporary buildings including the Co Operative premises at 75-81, the Lloyds Bank at the corner of Marlborough Square and the Rex Cinema. In the same period the iconic War Memorial was erected at the site of the market, a structure which dominates views from the town's major thoroughfares and is accorded listed status as befits its architectural and cultural significance. The Council Offices at London Road were a further manifestation of civic pride in this period.



Map 3: 1903 Ordnance Survey map



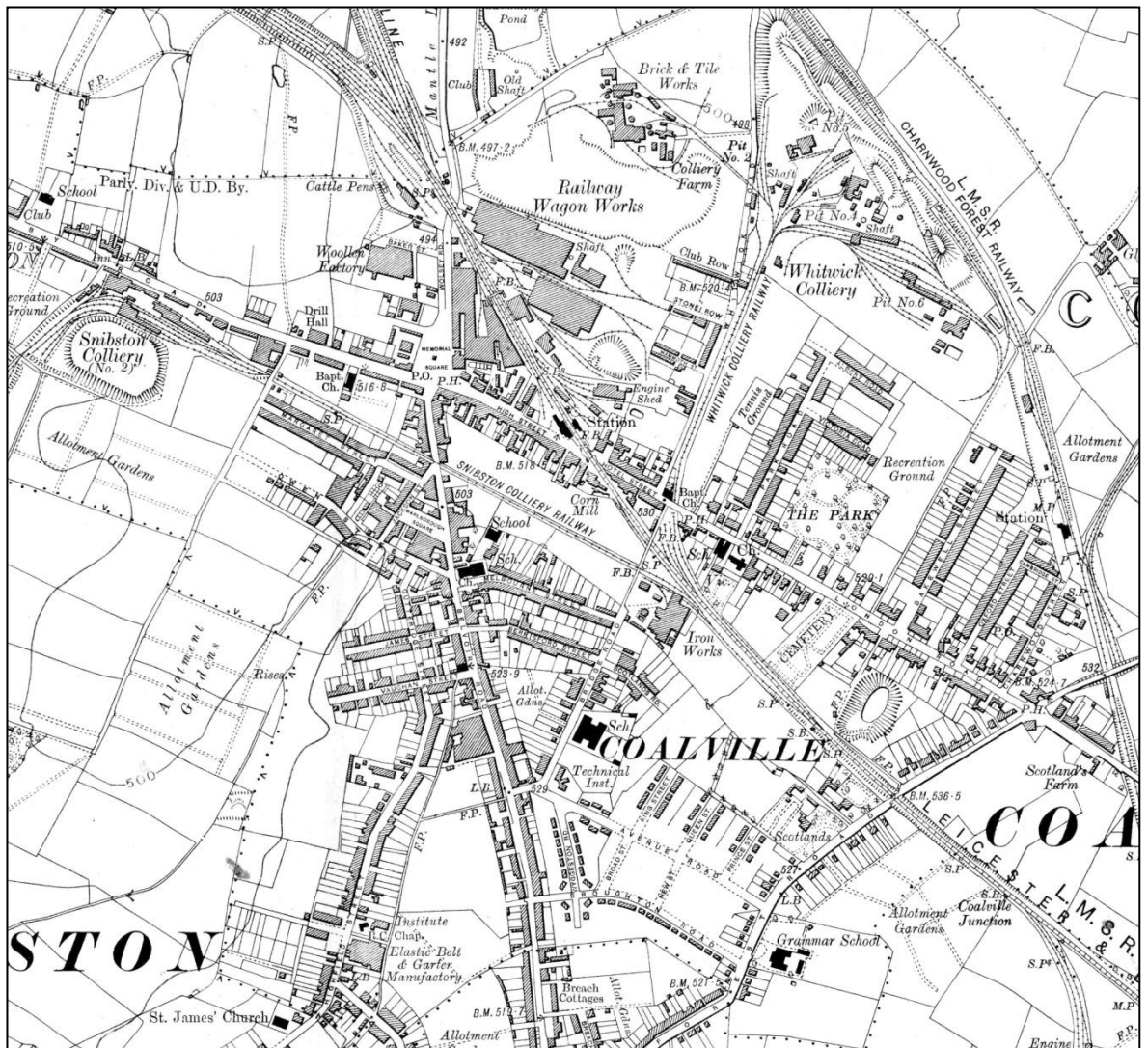
Image 1 and Image 2: Aerial views of Coalville in the 1920s





Image 3 and Image 4: Aerial views of Coalville in the 1920s and 1930s





Map 4: 1929 Ordnance Survey map

The mid-20th century saw the decline of the historic industrial backbone of the town with both mining and railway industries effectively abandoned. However the development of new modern replacement industries compensated and engendered sufficient economic confidence to sustain the development of the Belvoir Shopping Centre which radically changed the historic form of the town's commercial heart. Despite its introduction, the older retail streets survived and only changing cultural trends, particularly affecting entertainment and social life, and very recent difficult economic circumstances, have put some of the town's key historic buildings at risk.

3. Character of Spaces within the Conservation Area

The boundary of the proposed Conservation Area includes the principal historic retail streets of the commercial centre. The priority in establishing the protection and enhancement of existing historic assets must lie in the commercial heart of the town which defines the identity of Coalville and presents the parts most vulnerable to damaging change.

3.1 Character Area: High Street/Hotel Street

High Street and Hotel Street are the earliest commercial components of the town centre. The principal building stock comprises two lines of mid-19th century terraced houses converted to shops along the south side of the street, separated by the level crossing and the entrance to the Belvoir Centre.

The Hotel Street block is two storeys of brick construction with pitched roofs. There is some survival of chimney stacks and original shopfronts but many original features have been lost. Buildings of particular interest include no. 32, originally a chapel, now converted to a shop (the inscription 'CAVE ADULLAM' is just visible on the wall behind the shopfront addition), and no 2a, which has a distinctive wedge form responding to the adjacent railway line and crossing.



Image 5: 32 Hotel Street

At the west end of Hotel Street, standing in splendid isolation above the railway crossing, is the former Railway Hotel, a Grade II listed building, dated 1833 and originally the first railway station for the Leicester-Swannington line, now a day nursery. Over the junction of Whitwick Road and Hotel Street, and marking the crest of the former Whitwick Colliery railway bridge below London Road, is the Council Offices building, Stenson House, designed by H. Langman and completed in 1934, a fine interwar neo-classical style edifice.



Image 6: South side of Hotel Street



Image 7: Stenson House, London Road



Image 8: Rail Crossing between Hotel Street and High Street

On **High Street**, west of the rail crossing, heritage assets are confined to the **south side** of the street. These comprise: nos. 14 to 52, a terrace of two-storey mid-19th century houses converted to shops. Few of these have many original features, the loss of chimney stacks being particularly striking. No. 52 has retained original moulded panels between its first floor windows but overall the architectural quality of this terrace is disappointing. However the street is uplifted at its **east end** by the Coalville Constitutional Club, red brick, two-storey, of 1897 with stone and terracotta detailing, and the Stamford and Warrington Hotel, stripped classical style with a faience front facade. These buildings are separated from the rest of High Street by modern buildings and the entrance to the Belvoir Centre. At its **west end** are no. 10, a tall three-storey red brick shop of late 19th century with first floor fascia and three transverse gables over timber bays, and nos. 2-8, the erstwhile Royal Oak Inn and Greyhound Inn, latterly conjoined as 'The Pick and Shovel' but now closed. These buildings predate 1850 and turn the corner into Belvoir Road, complementing the small scale of the Snibstone New Inn on the opposite corner. They typify the original domestic scale of Coalville's historic centre at its most focal point, opposite the War Memorial and the former market place, now Memorial Square.

The only historic building surviving on the **north side** of High Street is 'The Red House', a three-storey hostelry of high significance as predating the foundation of the town itself, and built at the junction of historic routes linking Hugglescote, Swannington and Whitwick. It finds itself located incongruously between the 1926 War Memorial and the modern library but has always maintained a 'stand alone' presence which is not diminished by its current surroundings.

3.2 Character Area: Memorial Square and Mantle Lane

Memorial Square, formed on the site of the market with the construction of the impressive Grade II listed War Memorial Clock Tower in 1926, marks the junction of Coalville's principal shopping streets and is a major public space, albeit compromised by traffic along its west side. It can be considered the single visual focal point of the town and links the High Street and Belvoir Road character areas of the wider Conservation Area, the tower being clearly visible along both thoroughfares. It is also within viewing range of the town's principal industrial heritage asset, Snibston Colliery No. 2 Mine, and provides a foil to the surviving artefacts of railway heritage as viewed northwards along Mantle Lane.



Image 9: Memorial Clock Tower

Mantle Lane's historic buildings include the cottages known as Stableford Row on the east side of the square, built to house workers in the railway wagon workshops, the remaining building of the Stableford Wagon Works adjacent, of substantial brick construction with northlight (transverse ridged) roofing, the blue brick walled underpass and steel rail overbridge above Mantle Lane and the erstwhile Midland Railway signal box north of the bridge. All these contribute to the railway heritage of Coalville. In addition, the public toilets (dated 1928) and the 1930 Co-op Bakery building contribute the Coalville's 20th century heritage. The Bakery is a large three storey stone and brick building, built by the Coalville and District Working Mens' Co-operative Society to provide bread and confectionery to the local district.



Image 10: Mantle Lane and the Midland Railway signal box



Image 11: Public toilets and Co-op Bakery

3.3 Character Area: Belvoir Road and Marlborough Square

Belvoir Road is the southern arm of the town's commercial core and differs from High Street in being a more varied mix of building styles and ages, with a number of individual good quality architectural compositions mixed with more ordinary commercial premises, many of which date from the early 20th century. Some more recent infill redevelopment has displaced older premises but generally the historic character has been preserved.

Running south from Memorial Square nos. 1 to 13 on the east side of Belvoir Road continue the domestic scale of the Royal Oak pub round from High Street in a series of mid-19th century shops converted from cottages. This terrace was truncated by the Belvoir Centre and the remaining buildings are in generally poor condition with modern alterations. On the west side of the street is a series of later purpose built commercial premises, crowned by the Snibstone New Inn of 1836 which occupies the corner of Ashby Road. Attached to this is Deputies' Row (1-9 Ashby Road), a terrace of houses built for the colliery's mine supervisory staff and converted to shops. The range running south from the New Inn is interspersed with poor modern development but is 'book ended' with a tall three-storey early 20th century shop immediately adjoining the Snibston Colliery railway crossing. The crossing features original track set in the road, metal gates and gate posts and forms the end of the museum line from the colliery complex. It is a tangible reminder of the town's mining and railway heritage and the formation of the line east of the crossing (now a footway) marks the edge of the Belvoir Centre.

South of the crossing **Jackson Street** (originally Market Street) forks to the west and original buildings in the apex with Belvoir Road have been replaced by reasonably sympathetic modern premises. However the **west side** of Jackson Street carries a series of late 19th century domestic scale shops and commercial premises, serving contemporaneous houses on Margaret Street. Intermixed with these and facing Marlborough Square are two former cinemas: the Rex, dating from 1938 in a distinctive Art Deco style, now a shop, and the Regal of Egyptian Art Deco style, opened in 1933, now a bingo hall. Between the two, a polite pair of late Victorian houses (22-24) and the Marlborough Club maintain their red brickwork, chimney stacks and bay windows.



Image 12: The former Rex Cinema

Marlborough Square was originally the site of the town's cattle market (the Newmarket) but residential development at its edges obliged its relocation to High Street before the turn of the century and the east end of the square became a focus for prestigious commercial development at the junction with Belvoir Road. Surviving heritage assets include nos. 4-6 at the southern corner of Belvoir Road, a range of two-storey shops and offices, but with many original features missing, no. 8, a similar but less elaborate range adjacent, both from late 19th century, and the 1901 Lloyds Bank building on the opposite corner, of distinctive Arts and Crafts style, now the Monkey Walk public house. At the south west corner of the square is the 1902 Primitive Methodist Church, red brick with stone dressings, a building of cultural significance in an area latterly dominated by more hedonistic establishments.

Moving back to **Belvoir Road**, south from the level crossing, the **east side** contains a series of heritage assets with little modern infill. The Nat West Bank at no. 47 is a nicely finished stand alone Arts and Crafts building, but beyond, nos.

49-59 a terrace of late 19th century brick shops from houses with gabled fronts has been poorly treated, nos. 53-59 having lost their first floor windows to opaque cladding and the whole rendered.



Image 13: 37-43 (odds inclusive) Belvoir Road

The Engine pub at no. 61 (formerly The Engineer) is a mid-19th century brick structure, remodelled, rendered and extended at the turn of the century but keeping its historic proportions and is well maintained. It has an historic link to the adjacent Emporium nightclub (no. 67), once the Coalville Public Hall (1876) and later converted to the Coalville Electric Theatre (1910) then The Grand (1920), at which point all its windows facing the street were removed and the current blank gable end was created, to the overall detriment of its appearance and the wider street scene. The club also incorporates an adjoining three-storey house/shop, the frontage rendered and fenestration lost, again to the detriment of the street scene. Nos. 69-73 were a neat row of two-storey shops featuring half-timbered transverse gables, grafted onto mid-19th century houses in the early 20th century, but modern alterations to fenestration and Shop fronts have seriously degraded their facade and historic integrity. At nos. 75-81, the three-storey Co Operative store is an expression of interwar social and economic confidence in the town, being the organisation's fourth town centre premises, opened in 1916. Despite alterations to

its ground floor and a modern addition at its southern end, the building maintains a significant presence in the street scene with its brick and faience triple gabled frontage. South of this and marking the limit of the Conservation Area is the ornately embellished Wesleyan Methodist Chapel of 1881, now the Marlene Reid Community Centre, constructed to serve the housing developed on both sides of Belvoir Road in the mid-19th century.



Image 14: Co Operative store, Belvoir Road



Image 15: Marlene Reid Centre, Belvoir Road

On the **west side** of Belvoir Road, heritage assets **north of Marlborough Square** include the 3 storey Regent Buildings of Art Deco style with three bays of metal framed windows interspersed with metal panels, and an adjacent two-storey Edwardian shop with a half-timbered gabled frontage over original first floor bays with timber sash windows. **South of Marlborough Square**, nos. 1-3 Marlborough Square (but fronting Belvoir Road) are polite two-storey red brick shops, late 19th century, with curved first floor window heads, but missing their chimney stacks. Finally, on the south side of Owen Street junction, are nos. 22-26, a range of late 19th century purpose built shops in red brick with Dutch gabled dormers but missing all original windows, attached to which is a similar but older building at no. 28. Adjoining no. 22, a two-storey red brick office/house with ornate doorway carries round the corner into Owen Street.

4. Key Views

Key views, both within, and beyond the boundaries of the Conservation Area, focus principally upon the Clock Tower, which can be seen from each of the main roads leading into the town centre. The sheer height of the structure ensures that it dominates views from each of these important axes.

More immediate views of significance include that of Snibston No 2 mine, as seen from Memorial Square along Ashby Road, and along the old railway line from Belvoir Road. The collection of railway structures, as viewed looking northwards from the Square, also constitute a significant view.

5. Local Details – Traditional Finishes

Nikolaus Pevsner considered the local brick, composed of tough Carboniferous clays and shales from the area, to be 'hideously insensitive and frighteningly durable' (1992, p. 57). Despite Pevsner's distaste, the buildings in Coalville are characterised principally by this red brick, and their embellishment with fine terracotta detailing. This is most apparent on late Victorian domestic properties.

Stone (usually Bromsgrove Sandstone and Millstone Grit) is commonly found finishing door and window openings, and is used to articulate shopfront pilasters, cornices and pediments. Roofs are finished with either Welsh slate or plain tiles.

Surviving traditional windows are composed of timber, and some early 20th century windows are composed of metal.

6. Heritage Assets

6.1 Grade II listed buildings, with list descriptions:

Railway Hotel, listed in 1983. Hotel, c.1833, rendered and painted cream and brown. Slate roof, rendered end stacks. 3 storeys, 3 window range, quoins. Central entrance, plain stone doorcase with cornice moulding above (painted), 20th century double doors. Lamp on bracket above. Sash windows with glazing bars to the upper parts, in shouldered and elbowed architraves. 2 rectangular bay window projections to ground floor, possibly later. Gabled wing and stabling to rear. Originally served as the station for Stephenson's Leicester-Swannington railway, the stabling at the rear was used by carriers for the Midland Railway who acquired the railway in 1848.

Memorial Clock Tower, listed in 2010. The memorial clock tower at Coalville, built in 1925. The memorial clock tower is an imposing, proud and architecturally distinctive tribute to The Fallen of the First and Second World Wars. It is an important reminder of nationally and internationally significant events. Its special historic interest is enhanced by the memorial stone erected specifically to mark the end of the Second World War.

6.2 Non-Designated Heritage Assets

The following buildings are considered to make a Positive Contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area:

Hotel Street: nos. 2A-32 evens included.

London Road: Stenson House (Council Offices), The Leicester Inn.

High Street: The Red House, nos. 2-16 evens inclusive, Coalville Constitutional Club, Stamford and Warrington Hotel.

Memorial Square/Mantle Lane: nos. 2-30 evens inclusive (Stableford Row), Stableford Wagon Works, public convenience fronting Wolsey Road, blue brick retaining walls to Mantle Lane rail overbridge, Midland Railway signal box at Mantle Lane.

Ashby Road: nos. 1-9 odds inclusive (Deputies' Row).

Belvoir Road: Snibstone New Inn, nos. 2-6 evens inclusive, nos. 12, 12a, 12b, 18, Regent Buildings, The Monkey Walk, 1-3 Marlborough Square, 22-28 evens inclusive. Nos. 1-7 odds inclusive, nos. 37-43 odds inclusive, Snibston Colliery railway crossing gates, no. 47, no. 61 (The Engine public house), nos. 69-73 odds inclusive, 75-81 (Co Operative store), Marlene Reid Centre.

Jackson Street: nos. 2-6A evens, 8-12 evens, no. 18, no. 20 (former Rex Cinema), nos. 22/24, 26 (Marlborough Club), no. 28 (former Regal Cinema).

Margaret Street: no. 1.

Marlborough Square: Methodist Church, no. 6.

7. Contribution made by trees

The majority of trees within the Conservation Area are in public ownership. Those which are the responsibility of the District Council and trees on the public highway would be exempt from the need for formal notification to the Local Planning Authority of works affecting them (as outlined in the Management Plan). They include trees at the Council Offices, the Bridges open space, High Street open space, Needham's Walk, and the High Street, Memorial Square and Marlborough Square highway trees.

Mature trees in private ownership to the rear of 47-51 Belvoir Road are worthy of protection and contribute significantly to the amenity of the area. Trees at The Red House and those to the east of the Constitutional Club also contribute significantly to the amenity of the area and are worthy of protection.

Trees in the grounds of the Coalville Children's Centre, High Street and in front of Coalville Library make a significant contribution to the street scene, and at present both are under Leicestershire County Council management.

8. Problems, pressures and capacity for change

As the retail offer increased around the edge of Coalville, along with car usage, the town began to struggle as a result of decreasing footfall and increased congestion. The town's original High Street still features many independent businesses; however increased levels of traffic have resulted in an unpleasant shopping environment. The lack of street parking provision makes it harder for people to do 'quick' visits to the town centre which would have significant benefit to High Street traders.

The rebuilding of the northern side of High Street and the creation of a stand-alone library building has not only weakened the enclosure of the street but created a High Street with a 'one sided' retail offer. Over the years, more space has been afforded to the car, with spaces such as Memorial Square becoming dominated by traffic despite efforts to part pedestrianise the space.

Memorial Square was once a bustling market place which hosted a wide variety of activities including concerts by the town's brass bands, an open air market, and other events which celebrated the town's civic pride. Unfortunately, the square has suffered as a result of the loss of the town's industries and has also struggled with properly regulating increased traffic flows into town. The pedestrianisation of one side of the square has been useful in creating a safe shelter for people on foot, however it has not been properly designed for people who wish to use the space for leisure. The square lacks proper enclosure and has no active frontages or uses on the north and west sides.

In the current economic climate, and with the associated decline of high streets in general, Coalville is suffering from high shop vacancy rates. The lack of economic vitality in previous decades has resulted in the loss of architectural features, such as traditional shop fronts and windows, only to be replaced with cheaper and less sensitive alternatives. However, Coalville retains enough of its historic and architectural quality to form the basis for heritage-led regeneration.

8.1 Regeneration Strategy

The **Regeneration Strategy** developed by the Prince's Foundation in 2008 sets out a number of ambitious proposals, some of which would impact directly upon the proposed Conservation Area to its advantage. In particular, redevelopment of poor modern buildings along the north of High Street, along Ashby Road west of Memorial Square and on the west and north sides of the Square with buildings of a scale and form more sympathetic to the historic town would have a major uplifting effect upon the setting of the Conservation Area and could encourage the retention and repair of the older parts. However, there is no doubt that this is a very long term vision and that in present economic circumstances smaller scale enhancements are likely to be more realistically achievable.

A key aspect of Coalville's historic building stock is the degree to which **modern alterations** have degraded its historic integrity. Many buildings have lost their original windows, doors, shop fronts, chimneys and roof claddings and had their external facades rendered or painted. Many of these are buildings which fall into the category of making a neutral contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, as identified in the index below. Reinstatement of such features on a building by building basis would improve the appearance and quality of the area, and in other towns such a strategy has been shown to support the economic and social regeneration of affected areas. Reinstatement works of this nature will therefore be actively encouraged by the Council and advice made freely available on the appropriate details of such works to property owners and occupiers. Should any form of grant assistance become available from external sources in future, this is an area to which it could be directed.

Other opportunities for enhancement would be upgrading public spaces as more attractive communal and social venues, in particular Memorial Square and Marlborough Square. Despite its focal centrality in the town, **Memorial Square** has a rather bleak windswept feel about it and deserves better as a point for the celebration of memory. Soft landscaping and improved paving and seating, relating better to the venues on the edge of the space, could enhance this critical location in the Conservation Area.

Marlborough Square has a more intimate sense of enclosure and is well placed in relation to social venues but is dominated by traffic and parking. Rationalisation of vehicle use and provision of greater space for pedestrians with appropriate hard and soft landscaping and seating could procure an urban space of high quality, as was originally intended when it served as a foil to new commercial enterprises.

8.2 Buildings which make a Neutral Contribution

The following buildings make a neutral contribution to the Conservation Area:

High Street: nos. 18-52 evens inclusive, Coalville Cane Centre

Belvoir Road: nos. 16/16A, no. 20, nos. 9-13 odds inclusive, nos. 49-51 (Emporium).

Jackson Street: nos. 34-42 evens inclusive.

Marlborough Square: nos. 4-5, Marlborough Centre, shops on north side between Monkey Walk and Jackson Street.

8.3 Buildings which make a Negative Contribution

High Street: nos. 54-56, Coalville Library, Family Centre.

Memorial Square: Post Office, Health Centre, offices at corner of Market Street and Wolsey Road.

Belvoir Road: nos. 8-10, no. 14, nos. 53-59 odds inclusive, 81 (extension to Co Operative).

9. Coalville Conservation Area - Management Plan

9.1 Introduction

The proposed management plan is a tool for managing change in the Conservation Area to the effect that the character of the area is not weakened or destroyed by new development in the context of applications for planning permission within and at the edges of the designated area.

Local Authorities are required by SS72 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas when drawing up plans or considering development proposals both within the designated area and outside it if they would affect the setting or views into or out of it.

A wide range of minor works are permitted to commercial, residential and other properties without the need for formal planning permission. These are known as 'Permitted Development' (PD) rights and are granted by the Secretary of State nationally through the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order. In conservation areas these rights are restricted where development might be visible from the public realm.

9.2 Development Management

All applications for planning permission relating to buildings and sites within and adjoining the conservation area will be considered in respect of their impact upon the character and appearance of the conservation area. There will be a presumption against proposals which fail to preserve or enhance the character of the area unless it can be shown that there are significant benefits which would justify damage to the historic character of the area.

In this respect, applications for the demolition of buildings which are identified in the appraisal as making a positive contribution to the appearance and character of the area will normally be rejected.

Applications for the demolition of buildings identified as making a neutral contribution to the character of the area will be considered only where the quality

and nature of replacement buildings is appropriate to the character of the area and will enhance the character and appearance of the area.

Applications for the demolition of buildings identified as making a negative contribution to the area will be encouraged, provided the quality and nature of the replacement is appropriate to and will enhance the character of the area.

Applications for planning permission entailing alterations to buildings will be considered with regard to their impact in the wider conservation area. Alterations which will be detrimental to the historic character and appearance of the building and conservation area will be rejected. Such changes might include extensions, partial demolition, changes to shop fronts, signage, windows and wall and roof claddings.

Applications for planning permission outside the conservation area but affecting its setting will be rejected if they are harmful to the setting of the area, unless it can be shown that there are significant benefits which would justify damage to that setting.

Planning Permission is required to demolish a building or structure in a conservation area with some exemptions set out in paragraph 31 of Circular 1/01.

9.2.1 Archaeology

Where demolition of historically significant structures is considered acceptable, provision for their prior survey may be deemed appropriate in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework, which notes:

141. Local planning authorities should make information about the significance of the historic environment gathered as part of plan-making or development management publicly accessible. They should also require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

Similarly, development within the Conservation Area, which may impact upon significant buried archaeological remains contributing to the historical significance of the town, may warrant the completion of a suitable programme of archaeological investigation and recording. Of note in this latter context is evidence of Coalville's mining, railway and industrial heritage.

9.2.2 Trees

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 makes special provision for trees in conservation areas which are not the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. Under section 211 anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work on a tree in a conservation area is required to give the Local Planning Authority 6 weeks' prior notice (a 'section 211 notice'). The purpose of this requirement is to give the Local Planning Authority an opportunity to consider whether a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) should be made in respect of the tree.

There are however exemptions from the requirement to give a section 211 notice. You do not have to give the Local Planning Authority six weeks' notice:

- For cutting down or carrying out work on trees if required to implement a full planning permission;
- If a fruit tree is cultivated in the course of a business;
- Work is undertaken on behalf of statutory undertakers and some other bodies;
- For work carried out by, or on behalf of, the Local Planning Authority (i.e. the Council as a whole and not just its planning department);
- For work on a tree with a diameter not exceeding 75 millimetres (or 100 millimetres if cutting down trees to improve the growth of other trees, i.e. thinning operations);
- If trees are causing an actionable nuisance.

9.2.3 Advertisements

Certain categories of advertisement which have 'deemed consent' under the Advertisement Regulations are restricted within conservation areas. These include illuminated advertisements on business premises and advertisements on hoardings around development sites. In addition balloons with advertisements are not exempt from the need for advertisement consent in conservation areas.

Further reading

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