

Location and Context

The settlement is close to the eastern edge of Bradgate Country Park and on the northern fringes of Leicester City. The settlement is similar to Thurcaston in its position on the side of the gently rising slopes of the Rothley Brook valley. The village is constrained to the south-east by the presence of Rothley Brook and to the north-west by Cropston Reservoir.

Built Form and Settlement Pattern

The settlement form is linear following Station Road from the village crossroads north-east towards Rothley. The oldest buildings centre around the crossroads of Reservoir Road, Cropston Road, Causeway Lane and Station Road which is designated as a Conservation Area. Expansion of the village has followed Station Road and Cropston Road. Twentieth century housing development includes the creation of narrow lanes/roads/cul-de-sacs off Station Road to the southern side increasing the overall width of the settlement although maintaining the linear settlement pattern.

Buildings throughout the village are mixed in style, size, age and materials. Buildings within the Conservation Area

include small detached cottages, converted farm buildings and small rows of terraces. Houses on Station Road and Cropston Road are typically large and detached. They are generally set back from the road within large gardens and are of individual design. Front gardens are often long and enclosed by mature vegetation. Properties within the remainder of the village include bungalows, semi-detached and detached properties. Large trees are a feature of Station Road.

Red brick and white and black buildings are most common throughout, although older buildings are often constructed from a mixture of granite and brick. Granite is frequently noted as a foundation material forming a contrasting band at the base of external walls. Roofs have dark coloured tiles; occasional red tiles contrast with the surrounding roofs. There are a small number of buildings with thatched roofs concentrated in the old village core, including one very prominent black and white half-timbered cottage.

Within the historic core, gardens are generally small with property boundaries a mixture of hedgerows and granite and slate walls. Within the eastern parts of the village, gardens are larger and enclosed by ornamental hedges.

Sense of Place

Gateway Features

The northern approaches to Cropston along Reservoir Road and Bradgate Road are characterised by the stone dam top walls of Cropston Reservoir and mature evergreen woodland around the edge of the waterbody. Along Bradgate Road the village appears on a ridgeline. The orientation of buildings on higher ground along this road defines the village entrance.

The Rothley Brook and its floodplain are important features of the approaches from Thurcaston. This land provides rural views and visual separation between Cropston and Thurcaston. Footpath routes through this valley provide links to Thurcaston, Bradgate Country Park and the wider countryside.

The approach from Anstey along Cropston Road lacks distinctive entrance features. The southern fringe of the village includes modern single storey buildings overlooking open fields. A line of mature trees, predominantly sycamore, to the eastern side of Cropston Road forms an attractive entrance feature within the village and frames views of the thatched black and white building at the village centre.

Landmark Features

Thatched black and white property: is a prominent feature on entering the village from the north along Reservoir Road.

Black and white timbered and thatched cottage: overlooking the crossroads, this is a prominent building when viewed from Cropston Road.

Badger's Sett public house: a large cream painted rendered building set back from the road. The pub signage, car park and wide driveway are prominent from the roadside.

History and Heritage

The village's history can be traced back to the 13th century when an area of land was enclosed and named Cropston Fields and later renamed Cropston Chapelry. Until the 20th century the village remained relatively small, with only thirty properties but has expanded considerably since.

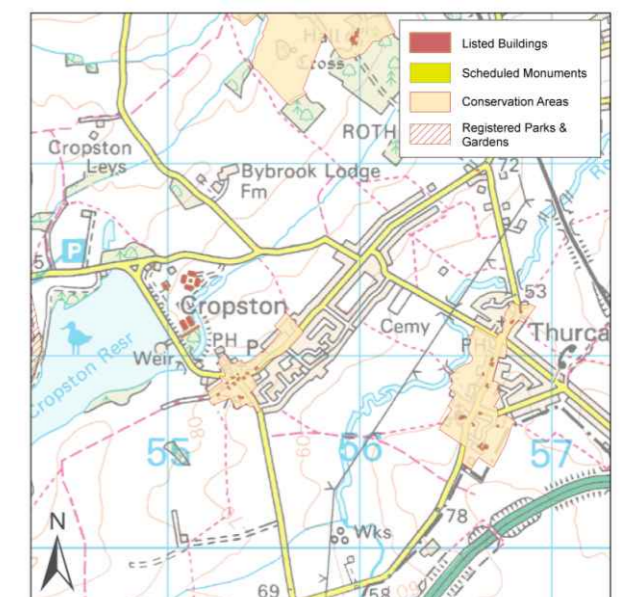
Cropston Reservoir and pumping station were constructed in 1866, flooding a large area of countryside.



CROPSTON

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- A small settlement on the rising slopes of the Rothley Brook valley
- The settlement is linear in form; modern additions have extended the village along Station Road
- The historic core is small and focused around a cross-roads on the south-western edge of the village
- Rising roofline with woodland and high ground elsewhere within Charnwood Forest visible on the skyline
- Large detached properties and smaller cottages and terraces common within the village centre and Station Road
- Granite, slate, red brick and black and white panelling are common building materials. Some thatch is present
- Overhead lines, Cropston Reservoir and Bradgate Country Park are prominent features



Setting in the Landscape

Topography

The settlement occupies a relatively level site part way up the northern side of the Rothley Brook valley. To the north-west of the village the land rises, levelling slightly at Cropston Reservoir and continuing to rise into the hills within Charnwood Forest around Bradgate Park and Beacon Hill.

Land immediately to the south and south-east of the village is the broad valley of the Rothley Brook. Thurcaston is on rising ground on the opposite side of this valley.

Roofline

When viewed from the south the village has a rising roofline with woodland around the village fringes and Cropston Reservoir visible on the skyline. The roofs are softened by mature vegetation within the settlement and are set slightly below the skyline.

When viewed from the north the village appears on a ridgeline and is relatively uniform in height; trees soften and filter views to the development on this edge. The roofline comprises mostly one and two storey housing with no tall buildings or church spires present.

Key Views

The longest views towards Cropston are northwards across the valley from Thurcaston village and Anstey Lane. These include views across Rothley Brook towards the rising edge of the village with woodland around Cropston Reservoir visible beyond. High ground within Charnwood Forest, including heathland and woodland within Bradgate Park and rocky outcrops at Beacon Hill, provides a distinctive backdrop to Cropston.

Views from the north are localised and only over short distances. The properties are on a local, well vegetated ridgeline. Views within the settlement are limited by mature vegetation and built development and tend to be channelled along internal roads.

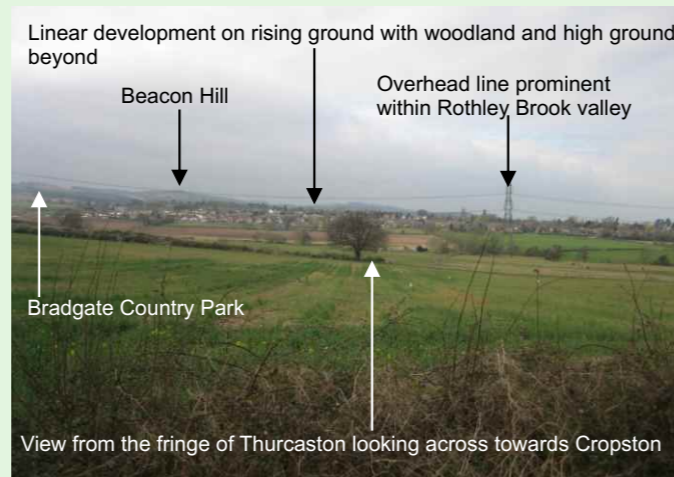
Urban Edge

The northern fringe is on a small ridgeline. There is a sharp transition from the village to small rough grazing fields and the land falls towards a small watercourse. Evergreen woodland around Cropston Reservoir is a prominent feature.

There is a sharp transition from the village to the countryside along the southern edge. Garden boundary vegetation is relatively limited and the settlement edge is prominent within views from Anstey Lane and Cropston Road.

A single large agricultural type building set back from the road amongst landscaped grounds and with a pool is the first building noted at the southern entrance to the village. The building is a simple structure covered in a pale green cladding. The building is surrounded by substantial blocks of young woodland planting which once mature will obscure views of the building and partly screen the southern edge of the village within wider views.

Along both the eastern and western fringes building density becomes slightly lower and vegetation softens the urban edge often screening it from view. A wooded track along the western edge reinforces this screening. Farmland extends up to the village fringes.



Recommendations

- Retain the rural and waterside character of roads linking with Thurcaston
- Protect the farmland and wetland areas between Cropston and Thurcaston to prevent coalescence of the two settlements. No future changes or development should be permitted which would compromise the character of this space
- Conserve and protect mature trees throughout the village which assimilate the settlement into the wider landscape and where possible encourage additional tree planting
- Conserve footpath links through the Rothley Brook valley linking Cropston and Thurcaston to the wider area and valuable resources such as Bradgate Country Park
- Conserve the character of the linear settlement form and enhance the character of the village through ensuring, where possible, that new development uses a mixture of stone, brick and slate building materials
- Enhance the southern settlement fringe through roadside tree planting and blocks of native wet-woodland planting to filter views of this settlement edge

