

**HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT  
OF MEASHAM**

**DRAFT  
JANUARY 2025**

## **1. Location and setting**

- 1.1. Measham is a parish in NW Leicestershire District. Measham is about 3½ miles SW of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and 8½ miles W of Coalville. It is about 19 miles W of Leicester.
- 1.2. The amended NW Leicestershire Local Plan (NWLDC, 2021) recognises Measham as a ‘local service centre’, i.e. a settlement that provides “some services and facilities primarily of a local nature meeting day-to-day needs and where a reasonable amount of new development will take place”. Measham is expected to provide between 520 and 550 new dwellings by 2031.
- 1.3. For statistical purposes, neighbourhoods are divided into Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). The greater part of the conservation area is in “NW Leicestershire 12D”. The level of deprivation in this LSOA is greater than the national median<sup>1</sup>. The NE part of the conservation area is in “NW Leicestershire 12C”. This LSOA is among the 40% least deprived areas in England and Wales<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.4. The settlement core is situated on the Moira Formation, a narrow band of Permian rock that runs along the SW edge of the Coal Measures. The settlement core is situated about 1km NE of the River Mease, a tributary of the River Trent.
- 1.5. The Church of St Laurence is situated on a plateau at about 105m AOD. To the NW the ground slopes down more steeply; 300m NW of the church, an unnamed stream is situated at 90m AOD. To the SW the ground slopes down less steeply; 400m SW of the church, the former railway station is situated at 90m AOD.

## **2. Historic development**

- 2.1. Map 1 indicates the historic development of Measham. The numbers in square brackets in the following paragraphs refer to the labels on this map.

### **Sources**

- 2.2. Section 4 contains a bibliography of sources. In addition, the following sources have been consulted:

- Kelly’s Directories from 1891 to 1925;
- Ordnance Survey 1:2500 maps including the maps of 1923 and 1976;
- Ashby Rural District Council’s planning registers from 1948 to 1974;
- NW Leicestershire District Council’s planning registers from 1974 to present.

- 2.3. The Leicestershire Record Office has a copy of a map (1750) showing the “newly enclosed fields” at Measham (ROLLR reference DE5373)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> NW Leicestershire 012D ranks 7719 out of 34378 LSOAs in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. The national median is 17189. Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015).

<sup>2</sup> NW Leicestershire 012C ranks 24989 out of 34378 LSOAs in England and Wales, with 1 being the most deprived. Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2015).

<sup>3</sup> The Record Office also has an estate map of Measham and Oakthorpe (1836) showing selected properties in ‘Measham Town’ (ROLLR reference DG30/MA/217/1).

### **Manorial and administrative history**

- 2.4. At the time of Domesday, the manor of Measham was held by the king. The de Measham family held the manor in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. William Beresford purchased the manor in 1309 and his family held the manor throughout the fourteenth century (Elliott, 1997)<sup>4</sup>.
- 2.5. In 1777 the entrepreneur Joseph Wilkes (d.1805) purchased the manor from William Wollaston esq. Following Wilkes' death the manor was purchased by the Rev Thomas Fisher, who was still the lord of the manor in 1817 (Lyson, 1817).
- 2.6. In 1829 the lord of the manor was George Rawdon-Hastings (d.1844), the second Marquess of Hastings (Glover, 1829). The manor passed to his second son, Henry Rawdon-Hastings (d.1868), the fourth Marquess of Hastings. Henry died without issue; the manor passed to his brother-in-law Charles Frederick Abney-Hastings, who was created Lord Donington in 1880. He died in 1895; in 1912 and 1922 the "trustees of the late Lord Donington" were the lords of the manor (Kelly, 1912; Kelly, 1922). Kelly (1925) makes no reference to the lord of the manor, but notes that "Lady Abney is the chief landowner".
- 2.7. Under the Counties of Derby and Leicester Order 1897, Measham was transferred from Derbyshire to Leicestershire (Kelly, 1899). Measham was administered from 1897 to 1974 by the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Rural District Council. It has been administered since that date by North West Leicestershire District Council.

### **Medieval before c.1750**

- 2.8. Measham appears in the Domesday Book of 1086 as *Messeham*. A market charter was granted to William de Beresford in 1310; the 1750 map depicts a market cross at the junction of High Street and Queen's Street<sup>5</sup>. The nave and aisles of the parish church (pictured) date to the early fourteenth century.
- 2.9. From 1760 Measham was at the confluence of a network of turnpike roads. High Street formed part of the Tamworth to Sawley Ferry turnpike road. Bosworth Road formed part of the Burton to Market Bosworth turnpike road<sup>6</sup>. Grassy Lane (now a track) formed part of the Hinckley to Measham turnpike road; this road was diverted along Leicester Road in the early nineteenth century (Cossons, 2003).



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<sup>4</sup> In 1605 Sir Edmund Anderson of Eyeworth died seized of the manor. In 1616 his son Sir Francis Anderson died seized of the manor. His son Edmund (d.1638) was heir. Inquisitions post mortem (DRO reference D8068/1/49). The Anderson family may have held the manor until the family became 'extinct' in 1773.

<sup>5</sup> Queen's Street was known as Cross Street into the 1960s. Current road names are used throughout this document for the sake of clarity and consistency.

<sup>6</sup> The two turnpike roads from Burton to Atherstone and Burton to Market Bosworth were closed in 1872. A milestone from the Burton to Atherstone turnpike road survives *ex-situ* in St Lawrence's churchyard.

2.10. Map 1 indicates the extent of the settlement in about 1750.

### **Georgian Measham (c.1750 to c.1829)**

2.11. In 1777 the entrepreneur Joseph Wilkes (d.1805) purchased the manor from William Wollaston esq. According to Nichols (1804), Wilkes built a market house<sup>7</sup> at the junction of High Street and Queen's Street [1]<sup>8</sup>. Wilkes also built the so-called Manor House – opposite the junction of High Street and Leicester Road – and the vicarage house at the N corner of the parish church yard (Elliott, 1992).

2.12. Wilkes established brickworks on the NE side of Bosworth Road. Following the imposition of a brick tax in 1785, Wilkes began production of double-sized bricks to halve his tax liability. The advantage was lost in 1803, when a double tax was imposed on double-sized bricks (Smith, 1965; Palmer, 1992). The former brick drying sheds [2] were built using Wilkes' double-sized bricks. They are now known as Brickyard Cottages.

2.13. In the village centre, listed buildings that were built using Wilkes' double sized bricks include 89 and 91 High Street, 101 to 105 High Street (pictured), 1 and 3 Navigation Street and 2 Saracen's Row.



2.14. The Ashby Canal was authorised by an Act of Parliament in May 1794. It was a level canal, thirty miles long, linking the Ashby Woulds to the Coventry Canal. Its supporters included the Earl Ferrers and the Earl of Stamford, who owned lime works at Staunton Harold and Breedon-on-the-Hill respectively.

2.15. The canal passed by the south-west of the village centre [3]. Navigation Street was laid out in 1796 (NWLDC, 2001) and by March 1798 the canal was open from Ashby Woulds to Market Bosworth. The canal finally opened in April 1804; "it was not a joyous occasion" (Hadfield, 1970).

2.16. Stevens' map (1814) indicates development on the east side of the High Street flanking the canal [4 to 6]. Joseph Wilkes built a pair of warehouses on either side of the High Street, adjoining the NE side of the canal bridge.

2.17. Stevens' map (1821) indicates development between the Ashby Canal and Chapel Street [7]. In 1885 the site was in use as a boiler works<sup>9</sup>. Stevens' map also indicates two parallel rows of dwellings<sup>10</sup> at the Wood Yard [8].

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<sup>7</sup> There was no regular market at the time (Nichols, 1804). By 1817 the arches of the market house had been walled up and the property converted to a dwelling (Lyson, 1817).

<sup>8</sup> The 1836 estate map indicates a 'lock up house' behind the market house.

<sup>9</sup> The 1836 estate map indicates land belonging to William Boss. The Burton Chronicle (2 January 1868) referred to an explosion "at the boiler works of Mr Michael Boss of Measham".

<sup>10</sup> 'Cottages' are indicated on the 1836 estate map.

### Victorian and Edwardian Measham (c.1829 to c.1910)

- 2.18. A national school was built on Queen's Street in 1829 (Kelly, 1891). The parish church was restored 1841-42 (Pevsner, 1984) and a Temperance Hall was built on the High Street in 1852 (Wright, 1874).
- 2.19. Several non-conformist chapels were built during the nineteenth century. The General Baptist Chapel on Chapel Street was rebuilt in 1841; the architect was Mr Salisbury<sup>11</sup>. A Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was opened on Bosworth Road in 1854 (Stell, 1986). A Primitive Methodist Chapel was opened on Leicester Road in 1859. A Wesleyan Reform Chapel was built on Navigation Street in 1870 but had closed by the turn of the century (Elliott, 1992).
- 2.20. The Ashby & Nuneaton Joint Railway [9] was authorised by an Act of Parliament in November 1865; deviations to the line were authorised in November 1867 (ROLLR references QS73/169 and QS73/177). The railway was a joint enterprise between the London & North Western Railway and the Midland Railway.
- 2.21. Construction of the railway, like that of the canal, was protracted. The Union Inn [10] was completed c.1869 (Elliott, 1997) and a station at Measham was 'just completed' in 1870 (Harrod, 1870), but the railway did not open to goods services until August 1873 (Franks, 1975). By 1885 land on the SW side of Bosworth Road and the SE side of Peggs Close had been developed for housing<sup>12</sup> [11].
- 2.22. Following the Public Health Act 1875, local authorities introduced byelaws for the regulation of housing. 'Post-byelaw' housing development took place beyond the settlement core – principally along Bosworth Road and Leicester Road. It is not indicated on map 1.



### Below ground remains

- 2.23. Map 3 indicates eight archaeological alert areas. Within these areas, it is likely that evidence of medieval and post-medieval settlement will survive below ground.
- 2.24. Archaeological investigation was carried out prior to the redevelopment of land at the corner of High Street and Chapel Street (see paragraph 3.13). As part of the scheme to reinstate the Ashby Canal, a brief for archaeological investigation has been agreed<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Probably John Salisbury senior, a builder and brickmaker of Ashby-de-la-Zouch. The minutes of the Measham General Baptist Chapel 1840-76 are held at the Leicestershire Record Office (DE8521/1).

<sup>12</sup> In 1876 George Lilley offered for sale "a close of land called Peggs Close Garden" (Derby Mercury, 22 March). Lots 1 to 5 "fronting the public road leading ... to Market Bosworth" (frontage about 45m; area about 1800m<sup>2</sup>) seems to correspond to 27 to 45 Bosworth Road. Lots 6 to 18 "fronting the Navigation Lane" (frontage about 120m; area about 4600m<sup>2</sup>) seems to correspond to 1 to 33 Peggs Close.

<sup>13</sup> Under the Leicestershire County Council (Ashby de la Zouch Canal Extension) Order 2005.

### 3. Redevelopment (c.1910 to present)

3.1. Map 2 indicates the extent of demolition and infill in the historic settlement core during the twentieth century. The letters in square brackets in the following paragraphs refer to the labels on this map.

#### Measham in the early twentieth century (c.1910 to c.1944)

3.2. A number of properties within the historic settlement core were demolished before the Second World War, including:

- Properties at the corner of High Street and Chapel Street were demolished piecemeal in the 1910s and 1930s [a]. The site has been redeveloped (see paragraph 3.13).
- Properties at the corner of High Street and Leicester Road were demolished in 1932 for road widening.
- Cottages at the Wood Yard were demolished in 1936 [b]. The site has been redeveloped.
- Properties on the SW side of Queen's Street were demolished in the 1930s [c]. The site has been redeveloped.

#### Measham after the Second World War (c.1944 to 1991)

3.3. In 1944 two-and-a-half miles of the Ashby Canal between Moira and Donisthorpe were abandoned; the area had been "increasingly affected by subsidence" (Hadfield, 1970). In 1957 almost five miles of the canal between Donisthorpe and Ilott's Wharf, including the section through Measham village centre, were closed under a British Transport Commission Act<sup>14</sup>. In 1960 permission was granted to fill in the bed of the canal (our reference AR/1552).

3.4. SE of the settlement core, a modern cul-de-sac (Buckley Close) has been built over part of the canal route [12]. NW of the settlement core, a detached dwelling [d] was built on the canal route in 2006 (our references 05/01681/OUT and 06/00809/REM).

3.5. In 1953, the Rural District Council was granted permission to build Wilkes Avenue [13], an estate of 103 houses including a police house (our reference AR/534). By 1971 a council depot [14] had been built at the corner of Navigation Street and Peggs Close. The site has been redeveloped.



<sup>14</sup> Ilott's Wharf was at the junction of Bosworth Road and the Gilwiskaw Brook, about 1.75km E of Measham village centre.

- 3.6. Land between the canal and the railway was developed in the 1960s for community uses **[15]** including a miners' welfare (c.1958-63)<sup>15</sup> and a medical unit (pictured; c.1966-69)<sup>16</sup>.
- 3.7. Housing development on the edge of the settlement core included a house on the SW side of Chapel Street **[16]**, houses on the SW side of Navigation Street **[17]** and houses on the SE side of Peggs Close **[18]**. Measham C-of-E Primary School was built in the 1970s **[19]**.
- 3.8. Regular goods services on the Ashby & Nuneaton Joint Railway ceased in July 1964. After that date the railway was used only to move coal from Measham Colliery toward Burton-on-Trent. The railway bridge over the High Street was removed in 1985 (Elliott, 1992)<sup>17</sup>.
- 3.9. Between 1944 and 1991 a number of infill developments took place within the historic settlement core including:
- Piecemeal development of about thirty detached and semi-detached dwellings on land to the SW of Leicester Road **[e]**;
  - Six detached dwellings erected piecemeal on land to the NW of the High Street **[f and g]**;
  - In about 1963, a detached dwelling erected on former orchard land (our reference AR/2450) **[h]**.
- 3.10. Between 1944 and 1991 a number of properties within the historic settlement core were demolished including:
- Properties on the NE side of Queen's Street were demolished piecemeal in the 1930s and 1950s **[j]**. The site has been redeveloped.
  - Pinfold Cottages were demolished in 1957 **[k]**. The site is now a surface car park.
  - Rose Bank<sup>18</sup> was demolished in 1957 **[l]**. The site has been landscaped.
  - A new vicarage house was erected c.1955-57. The old vicarage house was demolished in 1963; the site has been landscaped.
  - Properties at the corner of High Street and Bosworth Road were demolished c.1963 for a "road improvement scheme"<sup>19</sup>.
  - A late Victorian terrace on the SW side of Leicester Road was demolished at some time between 1959 and 1976 **[m]**.
  - The Primitive Methodist Chapel was closed<sup>20</sup> in 1963 (Elliott, 1992) and had been demolished by 1976 **[n]**. The site has been redeveloped.

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<sup>15</sup> In 1958 the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation (CISWO) was granted permission for a sports pavilion. In 1963 permission was granted for a community hall. Our references AR/1198 and AR/2302.

<sup>16</sup> In 1966 Dr Corkey et al were granted permission for a medical unit (our reference AR/3108). *Group practice medical unit, Measham; Architect CJ Allsopp*. Architecture East Midlands, March/April 1969.

<sup>17</sup> The original railway bridge had been replaced in 1922 with a metal bridge. Elliott (1997). The Burton Daily Mail (15 January 1985) refers to "proposals to demolish Measham's railway bridge".

<sup>18</sup> Indicated on the 1836 map as 'Pearce's house'.

<sup>19</sup> Permission for a new vicarage house was granted in 1955 (our reference AR/733). The Leicester Evening Mail (25 January 1963) refers to the demolition of the old vicarage house and "premises at the corner of Bosworth Road and High Street ... occupied by the Star Tea Company for many years".

<sup>20</sup> Leicester Daily Mercury (26 August 1963).

- Iveagh House was demolished c.1967-68 [p]. The site has been redeveloped as Iveagh Close<sup>21</sup>.f
  - The so-called Manor House and adjoining properties were demolished in 1969 [q]. The site has been redeveloped.
  - Saddington's Yard<sup>22</sup> was demolished in 1972 [r]. The site has been redeveloped.
  - Properties between the Empire Cinema and Oddfellows Row were demolished piecemeal in the 1970s and later [s]. The site remains undeveloped.
  - According to Elliott (1992) the former Wesleyan Reform Chapel was demolished in 1981 [t]. The site is now a surface car park.
  - Ordnance Survey maps indicate the demolition of the Boiler Works at some time between 1923 and 1976 [u]. The site has been redeveloped as York Close.
- 3.11. Properties at the former tanyard were demolished in two phases, the first phase in 1957 and the second phase c.1998-2004 [v]. The site has been redeveloped with an office, a terrace of five dwellings and a terrace of three dwellings, the latter known as Saddlers Court (our references 98/00156/FUL, 98/00194/FUL, 00/00750/FUL and 04/01094/FUL).

#### **Conservation and development (1991 to present)**

- 3.12. The Measham conservation area was designated in October 1991. Between 1991 and 1995 the District Council operated a home improvement grant scheme in the conservation area. Plaques were affixed to properties that received grants; plaques survive at 10 Bosworth Road, 21 High Street, 56 High Street and 101 High Street.
- 3.13. Since 1991 development in the historic settlement core has included:

- In 1994, twenty houses at Hazel Close and Oak Close as part of a wider development of 400 houses [w and x] (our reference 94/00425/FUL).
- In 1994-95, a terrace of six dwellings at "Doctor's Walk" [y], toward the SW end of the High Street (pictured; our reference 94/01009/FUL);
- In 1999, a semi-detached pair of dwellings to the rear of Mannings Terrace [z] (our reference 99/00670/FUL);
- In 2003, a parade of three retail units including a food store at the corner of High Street and Chapel Street (our reference 03/01608/FUL).



<sup>21</sup> March 1968: Permission granted "in principle" for the erection of dwellings. AR/3360. Land "near the site of Iveagh House" was advertised for sale in the Burton Observer (11 April 1968).

<sup>22</sup> Indicated on the 1836 map as 'Mason's farm house'.



- 3.14. Between 1996 and 2001 the County Council restored land and buildings at the Ashby & Nuneaton Joint Railway, including the formation of an access road, the creation of a medical garden and the conversion of the former railway station to a museum and office (our references 96/00850/COM, 99/00729/COM and 01/00547/COM).

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