



Wyre Forest District Council



Areley Kings Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Areley Kings Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Revised December 2014

	Page
1 Introduction	1
2 Legislative and Policy Framework	2
3 Analysis of Character	
3.1 Setting and topography	3
3.2 Historic evolution	4
3.3 Land uses	6
3.4 Colours	6
3.5 Climate	7
3.6 Green spaces	7
3.7 Water Courses	8
3.8 Historic pattern and movement	9
3.9 Illumination and night-time appearance	9
3.10 Views	10
3.11 Pattern and density of buildings	15
3.12 Type of buildings	16
3.13 Style of buildings	16
3.14 Size and morphology of buildings	19
3.15 Materials and construction	20
3.16 Survival of architectural features	27
3.17 Landmarks, focal points and special features	28
3.18 Ground surfaces	31
3.19 Hard landscaping/street furniture	32
3.20 Tranquil areas and active areas	34
3.21 Noise	34
3.22 Paths	35
3.23 Alien features	35
3.24 Areas that would benefit from enhancement	36
3.25 Neutral Areas	37
4 Concluding Statement	38

Appendix 1 Adopted Wyre Forest District Council Local Plan Policies
Appendix 2 Boundary of Areley Kings Conservation Area (Map insert)



Introduction

1 Introduction

Areley Kings Conservation Area (the Area) was designated by Wyre Forest District Council in 1993. It is based upon two groups of buildings and several open spaces, in a semi-rural location on the south-west edge of Stourport-on-Severn, in the County of Worcestershire.

The Conservation Area is predominantly residential, although part of the Area includes the historic Church and churchyard, and covers 10.4 hectares (25.8 acres).

This document aims to set out the special architectural and historic characteristics of the Conservation Area. The character appraisal will be of interest and use to those involved with development and use of the area, and that adjoining it, and will help to preserve and enhance the character of the Area.

The Adopted Wyre Forest Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and the Adopted Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan include policies linked to the Historic Environment. For Areley Kings Conservation Area Policy SAL.UP6 of the Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan, which is called 'Safeguarding the Historic Environment', is particularly relevant. This Policy ensures that future development within, or adjacent to the Conservation Area, will need to protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the Area.

2 Legislative and Policy Framework

The first Conservation Areas were designated under the Civic Amenities Act (1967). This Act was superseded by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 69 of this later Act imposes a duty on Local Planning Authorities to identify areas that are of special architectural or historic interest, where it is desirable to preserve and enhance the character and appearance, and to designate them as Conservation Areas.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced previous Government guidance which was detailed in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The NPPF does, however, maintain the importance placed on conserving and enhancing the Historic Environment as well as providing specific advice for Conservation Areas, most notably in Paragraphs 127, 137 and 138.

The General Permitted Development Order 1995 (GPDO) classes a Conservation Area as being “Article 1(5) land”. Whilst planning permission is not required for many types of works outside such areas, control is given to Local Authorities for works being undertaken within Conservation Areas, including, but not exclusively, the enlargement of a dwelling-house, the rendering of such properties, and the installation of antennae and satellite dishes.

The Adopted Wyre Forest Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and the Adopted Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan contain various policies describing the aims and objectives of the Local Authority in relation to the wider historic environment, and in particular to the preservation and enhancement of the conservation areas within the District. These policies are contained within Appendix 1 of this Appraisal.

It should be noted here that it is not only buildings that are protected when a Conservation Area is designated – trees are also given some protection.



Legislative and Policy Framework

2 Legislative and Policy Framework

The first Conservation Areas were designated under the Civic Amenities Act (1967). This Act was superseded by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 69 of this later Act imposes a duty on Local Planning Authorities to identify areas that are of special architectural or historic interest, where it is desirable to preserve and enhance the character and appearance, and to designate them as Conservation Areas.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has replaced previous Government guidance which was detailed in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The NPPF does, however, maintain the importance placed on conserving and enhancing the Historic Environment as well as providing specific advice for Conservation Areas, most notably in Paragraphs 127, 137 and 138.

The General Permitted Development Order 1995 (GPDO) classes a Conservation Area as being “Article 1(5) land”. Whilst planning permission is not required for many types of works outside such areas, control is given to Local Authorities for works being undertaken within Conservation Areas, including, but not exclusively, the enlargement of a dwelling-house, the rendering of such properties, and the installation of antennae and satellite dishes.

The Adopted Wyre Forest Site Allocations and Policies Local Plan and the Adopted Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan contain various policies describing the aims and objectives of the Local Authority in relation to the wider historic environment, and in particular to the preservation and enhancement of the conservation areas within the District. These policies are contained within Appendix 1 of this Appraisal.

It should be noted here that it is not only buildings that are protected when a Conservation Area is designated – trees are also given some protection.



Analysis of Character

3 Analysis of Character

3.1 Setting and topography

Areley Kings Conservation Area is set around the historic hamlet of Areley Kings, to the south-west edge of Stourport-on-Severn, distinct from the more modern settlement of the village of Areley Kings, which has developed around the settlement of Areley Common. Split between two groups of buildings, the Conservation Area is divided between steeply rising high ground to the west at about the 40m contour, overlooking the lower ground to the east at about the 25m contour, and the River Severn at the 20m contour. The underlying geology of the area is a Triassic Sandstone, forming part of the Wildmoor Sandstone Formation. The soil is loam, producing crops of wheat and barley.

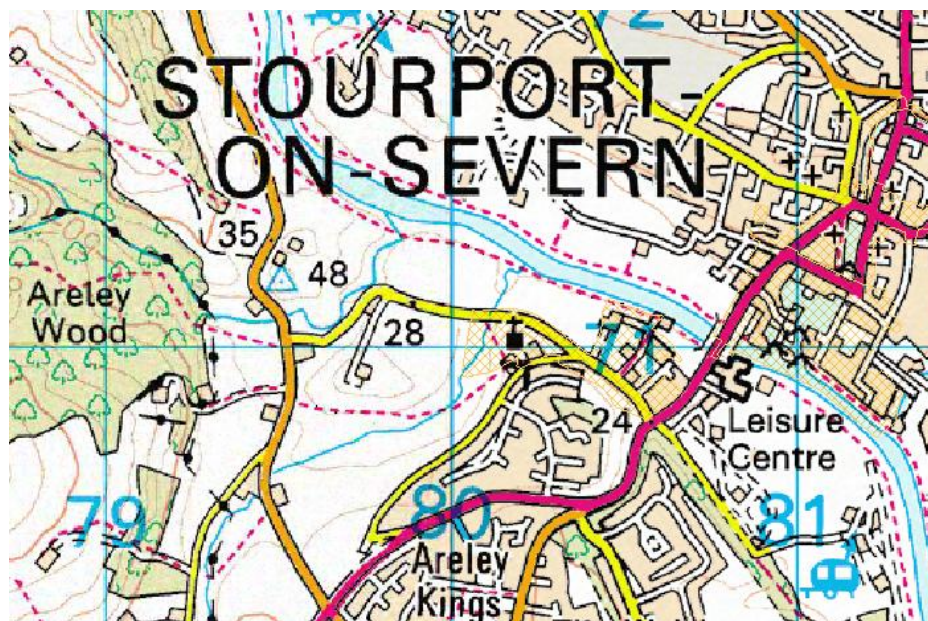
The Conservation Area sits within a number of larger areas, designated by various agencies including:

Natural England Landscape Area:	Mid Severn Sandstone Plateau
Natural England Natural Area:	Midlands Plateau

Landscape Character Assessment:	Sandstone Estatelands
---------------------------------	-----------------------

Regional Character Area:	Kinver Sandlands
--------------------------	------------------

The eastern parts, together with a small part of the north-western area of the Conservation Area lie within the SFRA Level1 Flood Plain. A flood event was recorded in parts of Cedar Close in June 2007. The 2012 Flood Maps show large areas of the eastern part of the Conservation Area as being susceptible to flooding. Isolated areas susceptible to flooding include land to the south of Mucklowe House and land between The Lower House and Layamon House.



3.2 Historic evolution

Little evidence has been uncovered relating to the pre-medieval settlement of Areley Kings, save for a few recorded artefacts discovered through archaeological field-walking and watching briefs. These include fragments of pre-historic stone-workings and Romano-British pottery, together with several Bronze Age artefacts from near-by. These give an indication of settlement around the area, but no definitive settlements have been identified as yet.

The name Areley Kings is the subject of some debate, but it is probable that it is a derivative and corruption of Ernleye, an Anglo-Saxon word meaning a clearing where eagles are present. The “Kings” element arises from the area being within a Royal Manor, owned by Edith, the wife of Edward the Confessor, and subsequently by William I. The Domesday Book mentioned Ernleye as being within the King’s ownership. Recorded variations of the name include Ernel', Hernelia (xii cent.); Erneleie, Arleia, Armleg (xiii cent.); Arleye Kyng (xiv cent.); Kyngys Areley, Neather Arley (xvi cent.); Lower Areley, Areley Kings (xviii cent.).

The estate at Areley Kings originated in a fishery on the River Severn, which was granted by Empress Matilda, heir and daughter of Henry I, to Bordesley Abbey near Redditch on its foundation in 1136. This gift was confirmed by subsequent monarchs and was held by the crown under a feudal tenure known as frankalmoign (tenure in free alms). On the dissolution of Bordesley Abbey the estates were granted in 1544 to John Pakington of Hampton Lovett.

Areley Kings was home to the early 13th century priest and poet, Layamon, whose most notable work is Brut, the first English language work to discuss the legends of Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. This work provided the inspiration for many later writers including Sir Thomas Mallory.



Layamon

Although Layamon refers to the “noble church upon the Severn’s bank at Ernleie” it was, in fact, a dependent chapel of Martley and referred to as the “chapel of Arleia” in 1291. The church remained as a dependent chapel of Martley until the middle of the 17th century, although somewhat confusingly it returned a separate rectory in 1535.

Areley Kings formed part of the manor of Martley until 1654, when the latter was sold by the Mucklowe family, who retained Areley Kings. Descendents of this family were still in residence at Areley Hall well into the 20th century.

The parish was enclosed under an Act of 1846, the award being dated 16 December 1848.

Up until the late-1960's, the area abutting the south-eastern boundary of the Conservation Area was open land, forming part of the estate of Areley Court. However, the early 1970's saw this land largely developed with a new housing estate, and the principal house demolished. Only remnants of the original estate survive, including the lodge at the entrance to Dunley Road.

Notable dates:

1200's Layamon, a priest at Areley Kings, writes *Brut*, the first great book to be written in the English language, discussing King Arthur.

1500's South Tower of St Bartholomew's church constructed.

1536 Church House Constructed.

1780 Areley House constructed whilst Areley Hall was being restored for Sampson Lloyd, of the banking family, and Sarah Zachary.

1848 Parish Award for Areley Common, leading to the Enclosure of the Common and surrounding land.

1869 First reaping machine used, at Red House Farm, Stourport.

1875 Areley Hall extended to the west in brick, a third gable added and the structure rendered.

1885 St Bartholomew's Church is restored.

1930's Portions of Areley Kings incorporated into Stourport Urban District.

Late 1930's Areley Court destroyed by fire

1940's Walshes Farm purchased by Stourport Urban District Council, and developed as a major housing scheme, with an estimated population of 10,000.

Early 1970's Construction of new housing estate on site of Areley Court.

3.3 Land-uses

Land uses in the Area are as follows:

- a) The predominant land-use is residential, the majority of which is in historic properties; some modern development occurs abutting the Area, both to the north-east and the south-west.
- b) The Church, Rectory and Church House form an important group of buildings and dominate the western half of the Area. It is from here that fine views of the surrounding area can be obtained.
- c) There are small fields within the Area to the west, north and east of the Churchyard and Rectory, and along the south side of Areley Lane. These fields are steeply sloping, and managed as unploughed pasture for grazing; which adds to the rural character and gives them something of an old and unchanging quality. The sloping land to the south of Areley Lane marks the historic boundary of Areley Court (now demolished) and helps to provide a green buffer against the modern residential development in Bower Bank further to the south, as well as enclosing the vicinity.

There is a large flat area to the south and east of Areley Hall and Mucklowe House. In addition to domestic gardens close to the houses, this may include the remnants of a small park, with specimen planted trees and lightly mown grass. It forms an important component of the settings to Areley Hall and Mucklowe House.

- d) The agricultural land within the Conservation Area, lying to the west of the church, is Grade 3

3.4 Colours

The principal colours within the Area are as follows:

- White of timber-framed infill panels
- White, and off-white of painted and rendered Georgian buildings;
- Reddish-brown brickwork and creamy white mortar of Georgian and later buildings;
- Yellow-white of ashlar of Georgian buildings;
- Lighter reddish-brown and brown of cement of modern buildings;
- Dark blue of blue engineering bricks used for copings and boundary walls;
- Dark blue-grey of roofing slate
- White paint-work of window and door frames;
- Dark red of roof-tiles;
- Black of tarmacadam;
- Greens and reds of trees and shrubs;
- Black of railings and rainwater goods.
- Brown and black of timber framing

Outside the Area, the dominant colours are the range of greens and reds of trees and grass, black of tarmacadam, and red of bricks of buildings, and brown of timber framing, together with the brown-blue-green of the River Severn.



The Conservation Area is particularly colourful in autumn. All the colours found within and adjacent to the Area are typical of rural and semi-rural areas, and contribute to the Area's character.

3.5 Climate

Climate exerts a number of influences over the Area, including design of buildings, and views within, into and out of the Area.

The more historic roofs within the Area are quite steeply pitched, between 30 and 40 degrees, and shed water easily. Shallower hipped roofs have been employed on some buildings, with pitches of about 20 degrees. Wall copings are rounded, chamfered, or angled, allowing the discharge of water away from the structures.

Much of the area has substantial tree-cover and hedgerows, which alter through the seasons, in colour, texture and depth. During the autumn and winter, these allow glimpses through, expanding the depth of vision within and outside the Area.

The surrounding countryside, creating the setting for the Area, and giving rural views out of the Area is heavily influenced by the climate, changing scenery, colours and views with the seasons. The River Severn, whilst not within the Area, does impact on its character and appearance, depending on the seasons and time of year. Flooding has been known to come up to the edge of the Area, along the line of Burnthorn Brook.

3.6 Green Spaces

Trees and hedgerows are well represented within the Area and add a considerable value to the rural nature of Areley Kings. Located adjacent to the urbanised area of Stourport-on-Severn, the Area is situated on the edge of a sizeable rural area comprising agricultural fields and woodlands. A large part of the character of the Area is derived from its green and open spaces.



This aerial view of Areley Kings Conservation Area illustrates the predominance of green spaces

There is a mixture of broadleaved trees that include beech, oak, chestnut alder and sycamore as well as coniferous trees including yew, pine, cedar and Douglas fir, which give all-year interest, ranging from autumn leaves, flowers and nuts, to seeds and attractive bark.

The churchyard has some fine specimens including a mature Siberian elm, an ancient yew and a fine walnut tree.

Hedgerows along Rectory Lane include mixed holly, hawthorn interspersed with a planned row of mature deciduous trees to the north side and mixed sycamore and ash to the south.



This hedgerow of laurel, holly and hawthorn has started to encroach upon the northern side of Areley Lane

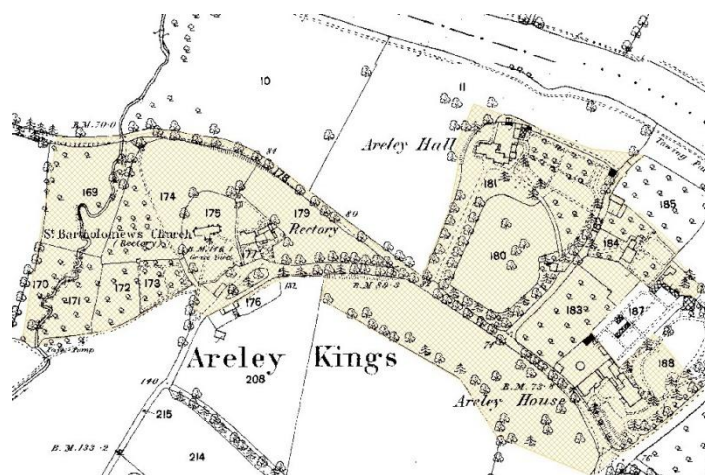
3.7 Watercourses

The only watercourse within the Conservation Area is Burnthorn Brook, which runs roughly south-north through a small valley in the fields to the west of the Church. The channel has a meandering course, natural banks and is lined

predominantly with Alder trees. At its northern end, the Brook passes beneath Areley Lane onto which it can overflow during periods of heavy rainfall. Parts of the Brook and in particular the trees, are highly visible when looking west from the elevated Churchyard and adjoining hillside, and south where they meet Areley Lane.

3.8 Historic pattern and movement

The layout of the area and movement pattern remained little changed from the medieval period up to the early 20th century. The church has been constructed on the most prominent location within the settlement, on the highest ground, with the settlement adjacent to it, also on higher ground. Further settlement adjacent to the river may have been associated with the mediaeval fisheries and lands of Bordesley Abbey.



Historic map of Areley Kings 1884

Areley Lane remains the principal artery through the Area, giving access to the historic settlement and, via Rectory Lane, to the church. Whilst modern development on the site of Areley Court has impacted on the setting of the Area to the south, it has had little impact on the pattern and movement within the Area, remaining relatively self-contained and creating a definite separate settlement to the historic core of Areley Kings.

3.9 Illumination and night-time appearance

There are six standard sodium street lights within the Area, giving a warm orange-yellow lighting to the Area during hours of darkness. The street-lamps are standard highway types, mostly with galvanised steel shafts and brackets and are centred round the more residential part (eastern) of the Area, with a single lamp opposite the turning for Rectory Lane.

Although in isolation they could be considered to detract from the appearance of the conservation area, they are generally sited adjacent to hedgerows and tree cover which reduces their impact considerably. There is, what appears to be the remains of an old gas lamp post near Areley House, which lends some character to the area. It is thought that this lamp may have been the property of Areley House. There is no other evidence for gas lighting in the area

although there may have been oil lamps at the entrances to the principal buildings, and there is a decorative lamp above the gate to the churchyard.



Examples of surviving historic light fittings

3.10 Views

Important views into, out of and within the Area are as follows:

Within the Conservation Area



Views of Areley Lane close to Dunley Road junction

Many of the views within the Conservation Area are limited due to the tree cover, narrow lanes and differences in altitude. The heavily wooded entrance to the Conservation Area at the corner of Areley Lane and Dunley Road soon offers glimpses to the north of Areley House, set back behind a brick boundary wall. The stable block of Areley House is a prominent historic feature to the north whilst to the south the land rises steeply behind a mature hedgerow.

The junction of Areley Lane and Cedar Close gives good views to the modern housing built in the former grounds of Areley House and to more modern properties located opposite Areley Hall.



Views from junction of Areley Lane and Cedar Close

Further along Areley Lane there is a long view down the private driveway leading to The Lower House, although the river cannot be seen behind the trees. The modern housing is perhaps unexpected. Although of mid-20th century design it sits quite comfortably behind neat railings.



From the private driveway can be seen glimpses of the timber-framed Mucklowe House which originally formed part of Areley Hall until the property was subdivided in the 1970's.

Looking back along Areley Lane towards Dunley Road the scene is a little more suburban with neatly clipped hedges to the gardens to the north, with glimpses of Areley House in the distance.

The view up Areley Lane westwards is restricted by the dense hedgerows on both sides up to the entrance to Areley Hall. This provides expansive views of the Hall down a drive lined with beech trees.



Areley Hall as seen from Areley Lane

Continuing along Areley Lane the views become entirely rural and one is aware of the steep hill to the south on which stands the centre of the historic settlement. Tall hedgerows and the curvature of the road restrict all but fairly short-distance views.



From the western-most boundary of the Conservation Area there is a more generally open view towards St. Bartholomew's church on the hill but this is soon lost as the lane winds around the base of the hill. It is not until one returns to the junction with Rectory Lane and turns to climb towards the church that the river is seen.

The view up Rectory Lane is much restricted by the overhanging branches of mature trees, but they are quite widely spaced and a climb up the bank is rewarded with far-reaching views over the fields adjacent to the River Severn and towards Stourport beyond.



Views of and around Rectory Lane

On passing Church House and turning round one is presented with a view of the church, Church House, its modern extension and the former Rectory behind, and modern housing opposite. This is perhaps the best view wholly within the Conservation Area, encapsulating many periods of development from 1200 to the present day, and emphasising the setting and importance of the church and its related buildings. Other views in this vicinity include those of the Rectory seen from various points within the churchyard.



A footpath runs from the entrance of the churchyard to Areley Lane which affords good views of the western part of the Conservation Area including the tree-lined valley of the Burnthorn Brook.



Looking into the Conservation Area

The group of buildings around St Bartholomew's church is prominent in views from the south-west, at the junction of Rectory Lane and Church Walk, and the church itself is also a landmark when viewed from the north – along the river, but mainly in winter when tree cover is reduced. Views across the area from Bower Bank, a row of large modern bungalows to the south are largely restricted to glimpses of buildings through the tree cover. From the Dunley Road the tree cover provides a very effective visual screen.



Looking out from the Conservation Area

Due to the number of trees and high roadside banks and hedges there are few opportunities to achieve far reaching views out of the conservation area. Those that are available are largely restricted to the gateways along the lanes, particularly that opposite the church, and footpaths to the rear of the church in winter. Views from the churchyard to the north-west are particularly good in winter. Occasionally boats can be seen on the river, however vegetation restricts the views somewhat in the summer months.

The visual impact of houses fronting and backing onto Rectory Lane along the crest of the valley in the views to the south-west from the Churchyard and adjoining hillside, and from the car park to the fore of the Churchyard, has been lessened by many houses being single storey and the presence of hedgerows and trees along the lane and in the private domestic gardens.

There are views of fields to the west of Areley Hall and its driveway which are visible from the entrance gateway to Areley Hall; the top of the roadside bank where Rectory Lane rises above its eastern junction with Areley Lane; and over hedgerows along the north side of Areley Lane.

The view from the south-east end of Areley Lane, across the Dunley Road, is closed by a well-wooded hillside opposite. To the south the view follows the

curve of Dunley Road, lined with a continuation of the wooded hillside on the far side and an undeveloped grassy hillside used for grazing continuous with that in Areley Lane on the near side. To the north the view across the Dunley Road includes a former orchard, barn and the gable of a listed former farmhouse (now the Old Beams Pubic House). Although this vicinity is within the urban boundary of Stourport-on-Severn, the views feel semi-rural in character”.



3.11 Pattern and density of buildings

The pattern and density of building within the Area has remained largely unaltered since the late medieval period, if not prior to this. The church stands in its own grounds, with the adjacent rectory, gardens and graveyard. The construction of the Church House during the sixteenth century maintained the relationship of these buildings.

Although there is evidence of charitable trusts providing labourers’ cottages in Areley Kings in the late 18th century it is probably that these were erected on common land and not within the present Conservation Area.

The other historic properties within the Area are generally large in size, detached, built within their own grounds, set well back from the road. Areley House appears to be the exception to this rule being built close to the Dunley Road.

Development of the historic plots has included the construction of new buildings within them including Areley Hall Cottages, a pair of semi-detached properties constructed during the mid-Twentieth Century to the north of Areley Lane.

Whilst areas of modern development abutting the Area have impinged on the historic landscape, buffer zones separate these developments from the historic core of Areley Kings.

3.12 Type of buildings

The majority of the buildings in the Area are residential or are related to residential uses, for example the stables at Areley House. Several buildings with ecclesiastical associations cluster around the hilltop settlement.

One set of agricultural barns lies within the Area to the north of The Lower House, but these have been converted into residential units in recent years.



Former agricultural barns, now dwelling, Lower House Barn

3.13 Style of buildings

No single architectural style is predominant within the area which reflects the very gradual and piecemeal development over many hundreds of years.

Timber-framing is present in many buildings reflecting the preference for locally available timber as a building material up to the 17th century.

The 16th century Church House with its jettied first floor was used for the holding of Church Ales (celebrations and festivals) after such functions had been banned from being held in the parish church. Pevsner suggests that it may have accommodated the priest before the Rectory was built in the 17th century.

The Rectory is timber framed although now largely encased in brick, and timber framing is also evident in Areley Hall and its annexe Mucklowe House, Lower House Barn and Church House.

This timber framing has been covered in render (Areley Hall, 16th century, rebuilt 19th century) or re-cased in brick (Rectory, 18th century) although certain exposed elements remain. Where covered, elements of design such as paired gables hint at the frame behind.

Alterations and additions to both Areley Hall and the Rectory have been constructed in a soft red brick, typical of the locality.

Brick vernacular exists with The Lower House, a fine example of Queen Anne architecture, commonly found in farm-houses throughout Worcestershire. Lower House Barn, whilst constructed in timber-framing, has brick nogging rather than rendered infill panels, possibly indicating a later date than other timber-framed buildings within the Area although probably not as late as the 1759 date on the gable end, which may reflect a later construction phase. Other brick vernacular can be seen with the stable-block for Areley House, constructed in a similar warm red soft brick, and creamy white lime mortar, although cement repointing has been undertaken during the latter part of the Twentieth Century.



The Lower House

Areley House, at the eastern end of Areley Lane near its junction with Dunley Road, is a rectangular ashlar-faced three-storied brick house. It dates from around 1820 and is an example of polite architecture. On the south front is a central portico with fluted Ionic columns whilst an oval drawing room on the north elevation partly projects in the form of a curved bay window.



Areley House

St Bartholomew's church was entirely rebuilt in 1885-6 with the exception of the medieval chancel and 14th century tower. The medieval nave was replaced with a decorated style nave and north aisle by Frederick Preedy. Several isolated elements illustrate the antiquity of the building, however. These include the chancel which is partly Norman with a 12th century window, 13th century priest's doorway, 14th century porch and century brickwork in the east wall c.1800. The building thus provides evidence of the continual habitation of the area over the past millennium.



Church of St. Bartholomew



The Rectory

The Rectory lies to the east of the church and is a timber framed structure of 17th century origin, with three gables, which Pevsner thought looked a little stunted due to the Georgian brick parapet. The south elevation is of Jacobean style brickwork however the west elevation to the churchyard is a Georgian four-bay facade. The rectory garden contains the “Outstout”, a three-storey building constructed by the then Rector in 1782 as a retreat and study. A shell shaped gazebo nearby dates from the same time.



The Outstout

Several modern buildings exist within the Area, including Areley Hall cottages and the modern, detached, Georgian-inspired Layamon House; several more exist adjacent to the boundary by Areley House and south of Areley Lane.



Layamon House

3.14 Size and morphology of buildings

The buildings within the Area can be divided into three categories, relating to their age and their use. The more historic residential buildings tend to be larger, and set in their own ground, whilst the more modern residential properties are smaller, and set within the historic grounds of the larger buildings.

The older residential buildings, dating from the fifteenth century onward, tend to be large manorial-size buildings, reflecting the wealth of the Area historically. Most are of either 2 storeys with attic or 3-storeys, and show their period of construction, and additions, through the building materials used, ranging from the timber-framing of Mucklowe House (once part of Areley Hall), to the soft red brick and lime mortar of The Lower House, its associated barns, and the Rectory, through to the ashlar with fine lime mortar joints of Areley House. Roofs tend to be covered in hand-made red plain clay roof-tiles, giving character to the roofs, although both Areley House and its associated stables are roofed in Welsh slate, another indication of wealth at the time, and a traditional covering for such designed properties.

Whilst some modern buildings reflect the design styles and materials fashionable when they were constructed others such as Layamon House have employed historic-influenced designs and materials. All the buildings within the Area contribute to its overall character, although some more modern materials perhaps contribute less positively to the historic setting than others.

The third, ecclesiastical element of architecture plays an important part in creating the setting of the Area. Here, the church shows the use of a variety of stones and architectural styles, reflecting the different ages of construction of the church, from the 12th Century through to the 19th Century. The church is the largest building within the Area, and retains its dominance over the settlement through its size and height, in comparison to the other buildings. Its status is confirmed by its dominant location at the highest point within the Area.



3.15 Materials and construction

There is a variety of types of materials and styles of construction throughout the Area, showing the evolution of the settlement through time.

a) Walls and construction methods

Red brick is the most common building material within the Area. The brick colour in the more historic properties is a mix of dark orange/red and a more burnt plum-colour. Sizes vary from narrow post-tudor bricks to Victorian standard imperial (9").



Red brick wall, former stables, Areley House

The mortar used in the jointing is a traditional lime mortar, with a creamy white colour, although a substantial amount of re-pointing with a red-brown cementitious mix has been undertaken on many of the properties. Layamon House is constructed of red brick however other modern properties within the Area, and those abutting the Area use a more yellow/red brick, including the bungalows at Cedar Close and the modern extension joining Areley House with the stables.



Bungalows within the Conservation Area: Cedar Close

Timber framing is quite extensively employed on the more historic buildings and is most evident on Church House and Areley Hall (Mucklowe House). The design of the square framing on each of these properties is similar, although Church House has more diagonal bracing visible. Both brick nogging and rendered infill panels are present. Church House has square timber framing to all elevations with diagonal bracings and a jettied upper storey whilst Mucklowe House has square framing, some vertical studding and cruck posts.



Church House

Areley House is the only residential property within the Area which is ashlar-faced: an indicator of the wealth of those for whom it was built. The fine joints are in a creamy lime mortar.

The church is constructed in sandstone, although due to the different ages of construction, the type of sandstone differs throughout the building. The base of the tower is constructed in greeny-white sandstone, possibly originally from Highley.

The 18th century elements of the building are in a redder sandstone, probably sourced more locally, although blocks of white sandstone are also present throughout. The coursing of the sandstone again differs dependant on the age of the element of building.



Church of St. Bartholomew

With the tower, the stone is laid in a regular bond, whereas a random coursing is used more for the main body of the building. All joints are fine and in a creamy-white lime mortar.



The church exhibits several phases of construction

Some rendered and painted brickwork is present within the Area.

b) Windows

Windows are generally rectangular in shape, mainly vertically orientated. A variety of materials are used, mainly timber, but also upvc and aluminium profile.

The more polite buildings of the Georgian and Victorian periods incorporate vertically-sliding, 3/4 light, sash windows with timber glazing bars and are often present on all elevations of the buildings.

Some older properties such as The Rectory have sliding sash windows which replaced the original casements when the buildings were rebuilt.



A selection of sash windows from the Conservation Area

Church House has modern replacement timber mullioned windows, stained light brown in contrast to the dark stained timber-framing, and more in keeping with the contemporary extension. Some historic windows also survive.



Modern timber casements and historic metal casements at Church House

Areley Hall (and its annexe Mucklowe House) retain a cruciform style of window to their principal elevations, but the on the former building “Georgian” style glazing has been introduced into the cruciform window.



Windows of varying styles at St. Bartholomew's Church

The church reflects the style of the more modern element of building, utilising a simple decorated window, reflecting the Gothic Revival style of ecclesiastical architecture of the Nineteenth Century, whilst a smaller vertical rectangular leaded light can clearly be seen on the earlier element of the tower.



On Lower House Barn simple timber casements are employed.



Replacement casement on ancillary historic building

Some more modern properties within the Area feature UPVC windows. Whilst these are not generally permitted on listed buildings there is currently no control on the alteration of windows on unlisted buildings within the Area. Such control could be achieved in future by the imposition of an Article 4(2) Direction, which would have the effect of removing permitted development rights, the operation of replacing windows then requiring planning permission.

UPVC windows have generally, since their introduction some 30 years ago, featured simple, often heavy, frame designs and this is reflected in the styles of frames currently employed. Nowadays, however, a much wider range of styles with finer detailing is available so it is anticipated, as these windows reach the end of their useful life replacements may be obtained which sit more comfortably amongst the various historic designs within the Conservation Area.

c) Doors

Many historic properties within the Area retain original or replica replacement Georgian raised-and-fielded 6-panel doors, including the Rectory, Areley House and The Lower House. The door surrounds of these are also generally retained, and tend to be elegant, simple canopied timber door surrounds, with some fluting on the pilasters.



Two 18th century door cases contrasted with a modern interpretation



Areley House has a rather grander entrance with Ionic columns creating a portico covering the paired panelled doors and fanlight over.

d) Roofs

Roofing materials vary, but plain red clay tiles are most evident. Originally, these tiles would have been hand-made, resulting in a double cambered tile, giving the roof a rustic appearance. Properties which have these original tiles retain more character whilst those which have been re-roofed in more modern machine made tiles have a more uniform appearance.

Welsh blue slate is used within the Area, in particular on Areley House and the associated stables, and natural slate has also been used on the modern Layamon House.

Roof slopes are generally quite steeply pitched gables; however those at Areley House, the former stables and Layamon House at the Dunley Road end of the Area are shallower and hipped.



Clay roof tiles on the church and The Lower House

Chimneys have generally survived on historic buildings and feature on the modern buildings too. They are of varied designs and several feature multiple flues. The loss of traditional historic pots is noticeable, with many either with no pots or more modern roll-top pots. Castellated pots are still present on some buildings.

e) Rainwater goods

Rainwater goods are traditionally in cast iron, predominantly in half-round profile for guttering. Where non-metal upvc guttering has been used this is prone to deflection and fading which can detract from the appearance of more traditional properties.

f) Boundary walls, copings and railings

Due to the rural surroundings boundary walls tend to be low key, and less dominant than perhaps in a more urban settlement. They tend to demarcate the entrances and front driveways of properties. Originally, as at Areley House, they surrounded the boundary of the property, but since some walls have been partially removed to permit access to modern housing their impact on the Area is reduced considerably.

The more historic walls also tend to have interesting and characterful piers and entrance gates. The Rectory has narrow brick pillars surmounted by stone acorns, and utilises a pair of ledged and braced panelled and decorated foot-gates, and Areley House has an historic dwarf brick wall, capped with sandstone copings.



Brick wall to the rear of Areley Hall

The modern walls and railings surrounding the gates at the entrance to Areley Hall have been constructed to improve sight-lines and whilst constructed using traditional materials their design is more modern and has perhaps a suburban character.

Boundary walls are a feature of some properties within the Area, and assist in defining, both physically and visually, the boundary of the individual property. The materials tend to reflect the period of property, with most bricks being of either a Georgian deep red, smooth-faced, regular coloured brick, with creamy white lime mortar, or a more irregular coloured brick, similar to those of the buildings.

There is an old red sandstone wall-like structure of two courses said to be a memorial to Sir Henry Coningsby (died 1701) adjoining the south-west corner of the churchyard.



Railings are also found within the Area, again in varying types and sizes. Wrought iron is mostly used, some of which is historic, and traditional in style, whilst other types are of a more modern “off-the-shelf” design.

Other elements of enclosure include timber fencing, ranging from the more historic three-bar fencing to the more modern feather-edged fencing panels.

Other boundaries within the Area demark historic and modern land ownership, field systems, and edges of sites, and are often in a mixed hedgerow. Many of these hedges are historic in their character, and in their age, reflecting the lack of development and rural character of the Area.

3.16 Survival of architectural features

The area has retained many original architectural features. This is almost certainly due to the high number of listed buildings, the controls over which have regulated indiscriminate losses, together with the care and attention to details by local residents. Important surviving features include:

- Railings, gates and boundary walls – various types are present throughout the Area, including estate fencing, decorative wrought iron railings, brick walls, and timber bar fencing;
- Outbuildings, some of which are used as garaging or stores;
- Traditional windows and doors – both in traditional materials and designs;
- Traditional roofs and dormers –traditional clay tiles, and Welsh blue slate.
- Non-painted or rendered brickwork – showing the dark red of the local brick, with the fine jointed, creamy white mortar joints;
- Wrought iron lych-gate entrance to St Bartholomew’s church;
- Pointing – a mix of fine, narrow jointing and wider jointing is present. The majority of the pointing is in a creamy-white lime mortar;
- Traditional steps – due to many of the houses being constructed slightly higher than the principal road, steps were often incorporated into the front entrance of the property;

Noticeable losses of, or damage to, original architectural features include the following:

- The installation of UPVC in some properties, for windows/doors and/or rainwater goods;
- The use of cement in pointing and render, together with inappropriate pointing techniques;
- Front doors of a style alien to the building they serve.

3.17 Landmarks, focal points and special features

a) Landmarks

Landmarks are buildings, structures, or other features that are important because of their size, design or position makes them particularly noticeable. Special care is needed in the treatment of landmarks.

Landmarks in the Area are as follows:

- Areley Hall. Perhaps the oldest residential building in the Area, and being set deep within its own grounds, Areley Hall can be seen from several points around the Area, and due to its historical associations, and age, should be considered as a vital landmark of the Area. Mucklowe House adjoins Areley Hall (and was indeed part of it) and forms part of the built massing that constitutes this landmark feature.
- Areley House. This is a landmark building, by virtue of its location, size and distinctive design. Its stable block is perhaps the most prominent building on Areley Lane and is something of a landmark in its own right, although its historic interest has been somewhat compromised by later additions and alterations.



Entrance portico Areley House

- St Bartholomew's Church. This is a landmark due to its size and prominent location at the top of the hill at the centre of the original settlement. Whilst it is set back from the road, and from other buildings, it is none-the-less imposing, and another vital element of the Area.
- The Church House. Due to its position, and its purpose, this building is noted as a landmark, especially with its historic, and modern, relationship to the church. It is set close to Rectory Lane and is highly visible from the west.
- The War Memorial. This is an important landmark within the Area, serving also as a focal point for services of remembrance.

b) Focal points

Focal points are buildings, structures or areas, that are important because of their position in view lines, or because they are the centre of well-frequented public activity. Special care is needed in the treatment of focal points because they are particularly noticeable to the public. Due to the extent of trees and green cover within the Area, together with several of the larger buildings set in their own grounds and set back from the main routes, there are few visual focal points in the Area. However, the following are considered as both visual and/or social focal points

- St Bartholomew's Church and curtilage, including Church House - the church is a prime social focal point within the Area. It also forms a strong visual focal point from outside its own curtilage, although this is somewhat seasonal due to the foliage and tree cover.
- War Memorial - the focus of attention for services of remembrance.



c) Special Features

There are thirteen Statutory List Entries within the Area, equating to 13 Listed Buildings and structures; there are also several other buildings, that whilst not included in the Statutory List, are of local architectural and historic interest.

The Worcestershire Historic Environment Record contains information on these buildings as well as other heritage assets including the site of a World War II road block and a Medieval Fishery.



Areley Kings Conservation Area (hatched). Red dots indicate listed buildings.

Particular special features include the following:

- The range, ages and variety of period architectural detailing and period construction techniques;
- The historic pattern of roads and lanes in the Area;
- Railings and walls to the front of many of the properties;
- Views out to the open countryside;
- Trees and hedges;
- Burnthorn Brook

Many of these are vitally important in retaining the character of the Area, and should ideally remain undeveloped, thereby maintaining the character and appearance of the Area.

3.18 Ground surfaces

Standard black-top tarmacadam, is used both for the principal roads running through the Area, and for the small amount of pavement at the Dunley Road end of Areley Lane. It is the dominant ground material within the Area. This is a non-traditional material, but has been in use for 100 years and due to the layout of the Area, and the traffic volumes using the roads this is now accepted as being appropriate.



Road surface typical of the Conservation Area

Most road verges comprise grass and low ground-covering plants. Formal pavements are restricted to the Dunley Road end of Areley Lane:- wild verges being more common throughout the Area. This retains the semi-rural character and appearance of the Area, and reduces the roads impact on the historic character and appearance.

The steeper eastern end of Rectory Lane and parts of the western end of Areley Lane briefly take the form of hollow lanes with hedgerows and

vegetation banked up on either side. Elsewhere, parts of Areley Lane are banked particularly along the up-hill side to the south, and there is banking at the northern end (western side) of the lane leading off Areley Lane towards Lower House Barn.

Gravel is used in some areas, including the church car-park, and the Rectory. This creates a softer treatment and setting to the buildings, and there is a more natural integration between the tarmac and the grassed verges and hedges.



Driveway at The Old Rectory

Some entrance driveways may have originally been gravelled and a return to this material or other appropriate permeable surfaces should be encouraged.

Pebbles and cobbles have been set firmly into the ground along the south east side of Church House.

Where kerbing is used within the Area, this tends to be of a modern concrete kerb, which is considered as being unsympathetic and detracting from the rural character and appearance of the Area. However, square blue granite sets have been used as kerbing to the church car-park, which creates a more visually acceptable solution.

3.19 Hard landscaping/ street furniture

There are few elements of street furniture within the Area, and this helps to preserve its character and appearance. Apart from the six lamp-posts within the Area, the only elements of highways furniture are road signs, each of which are of the smaller type, indicating speed limits and junctions. Whilst these are not generally seen as being sympathetic to the character or appearance of Conservation Areas, being minimal, un-illuminated, and small in size it is felt that there is a good balance between requirements of highways safety and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

There are three Council-maintained road name signs within the Area, the first at the junction of Areley Lane and Dunley Road, the second at the junction of Areley Lane and Cedar Close and the third at the junction of Areley Lane and

Rectory Lane. These are traditional in character and appearance and in the fonts used.

Various other signs appear to have been erected over the years including a yellow sign on the wall by Areley House Stables, a red “residents parking only” sign at the entrance to Cedar Close, a large white sign at the turn for Mucklowe House, Layamon House and The Lower House, and other “private” signs. These display less consistency in terms of size, lettering font and materials. Signs in garish colours have been employed to denote disabled parking spaces at the church and whilst these may be effective they also have a somewhat detrimental impact on the character of the conservation area.



Three other elements of street furniture are present within the Area: a post-box near to the junction of Dunley Road, and a timber bench on the opposite side of the road. Both of these are traditional in character and appearance and compliment the character and appearance of the Area. The yellow grit bin adjacent to the War Memorial is a more intrusive feature, but is necessary owing to the steep hill being prone to ice in winter.



Post box near junction of Dunley Road

3.20 Tranquil areas and active areas

Tranquillity is the peace of a place where the noises and views of human mechanical activity do not intrude to a noticeable degree. It is particularly important to retain the tranquil character of such areas. Most of the Conservation Area is such an area. Save for abutting the Dunley Road (A451), the majority of the Area lies within a semi-rural edge-of-urban area, separated from the main town by the River Severn, and from the modern developments by a buffer zone of trees and woodland to the west/ south-west.



Those areas considered to be particularly tranquil include the churchyard and the grounds of Areley Hall.

The entrance to the Area from the south, turning onto Areley Lane from Dunley Road is considered as an active area. Whilst footfall is less common here, the traffic arising from the road, using the crossing of the River Severn, creates a busy and active approach to the Area.

Socially, there are two main other areas of activity, although this has to be taken relatively. Neither area would normally be considered as active areas, but due to the otherwise tranquil nature of the Area, these are considered as the busiest locations within the Area. The church, at times, is one of the principal active areas, being a socio-religious focal point. The use of the Church House as a meeting room/ conference room also brings activity and human movement into the locality. The other main area of activity is the junction of Areley Lane and Cedar Close, where the traffic, both pedestrian and vehicular, access and egress the bungalows and other properties in the Area.

3.21 Noise

There is generally a low level of background noise experienced within the Conservation Area. Towards the Dunley Road there is an almost continual hum of road traffic during the day which becomes more sporadic at night. Depending on the wind direction the Conservation Area is also sometimes affected by noise from activities from across the river, mainly amplified music.

At other times it is possible to hear agricultural operations (tractors etc). The noise from motorsports on the hills nearby has been cited as an occasional nuisance.

Within the conservation area itself there is very little noise generated. Natural noises include wind in the trees, grazing animals and running water in the Burnthorn Brook. Other noises include the occasional passing car, birdsong, the conversation of pedestrians and church bells.

3.22 Paths

There is one pavement running along Areley Lane from its junction with Dunley Road to its junction with the lane leading to The Lower House.

One public footpath exists in the Area, starting adjacent to Church House, and leading down the hill linking to Areley Lane. This is unmade, and retains its natural appearance and character, sometimes being extremely muddy. The lane past The Lower House provides pedestrian access to the footpath running along the west bank of the River Severn.

The paths across the churchyard are paved although rustic in character and lack formal kerbs or edging stones.

The lane past The Lower House towards the river, although a private road, is classed as a public bridleway.



Path surfaces range from asphalt to mud

3.23 Alien features

Whilst the Area is predominantly “traditional” in character, there are elements that are alien to the character and detract from the appearance of the Area.

Highways signage is of the standard type utilising modern reflective materials and is thus alien to the character of the Area. The limited use of this signage results in a minimal impact on the Area. Locations appear to have been

considered quite carefully, to benefit both the road users and reduce the impact on the Conservation Area.

Similarly the highways lack intrusive road markings, whilst the lack of hard edges to the road, with limited kerbings, helps to reduce the impact of the blacktop on the Area and retain a more rural character.

Traditional treated timber telegraph poles are used to support the cabling belonging to various utilities in the Area. Whilst buried cabling would be less intrusive, the use of timber poles has lessened the impact of cabling on the surroundings.

The small electricity sub-station to the side of Cedar Close is a purely utilitarian structure, and although hidden behind a timber fence this appears quite tired and in need of replacement. The provision of a brick wall around the entire site would help it become assimilated into the area instead of standing out.



The Area is bordered by modern housing to the north in Cedar Close, to the south at Bower Bank and opposite Church House. The bungalows in Cedar Close impact perhaps more on the curtilage of the listed Areley House than the Conservation Area itself, although the suburban approach along Cedar Close could benefit from more planting to better integrate this into the Conservation Area.

Where they have been introduced Solar PV panels, satellite antennae and upvc doors and windows generally impact on the conservation area, but currently not to such a degree that the fundamental character of the area is seriously compromised.

The bright yellow plastic salt bins do detract from the character of the Area, however they are required to treat icy roads in winter, and they need to be readily identified in poor weather and in the hours of darkness. It is not within the jurisdiction of the Council to seek their removal.

3.24 Areas that would benefit from enhancement

The boundary between Areley House and Dunley Road is currently unfenced, the vegetation has been broken down and there is some evidence of fly-

tipping. The lack of fencing could encourage anti-social behaviour in and around the dense vegetation. The erection of a railing or simple fence could deter casual access.



The road surface on Rectory Lane is another aspect of the conservation area that could be improved as it is currently rough and rutted due to frost damage.

Many of the bricks on the walls along Areley Lane in particular, are in need of attention, as they are badly perished – caused by inappropriate pointing, however some areas of lime pointing remain and here the bricks have survived in a much better state.

The electricity substation would benefit from a new brick boundary wall which would enhance security and serve to camouflage the facility.

3.25 Neutral areas

A neutral site is defined as a small part of an area whose character does not conform with that of its immediate surroundings. These sites do not necessarily detract from an area, but should development proposals be forthcoming, then they should improve the site, in terms of visual and/or social impact on the Area, and relate well to the surroundings, *or* be designed that the development is confined to spaces within the neutral area that are not visible to the public gaze.

Cedar Close may be considered to be a neutral area, as this is a relatively recent development.



Concluding Statement

4 Concluding Statement

Areley Kings Conservation Area covers an historic hamlet which has remained largely unchanged during the past 1000 years, with the principal focus being the church and immediate vicinity. With its semi-rural setting, variety and number of trees and hedges, its historic buildings and predominantly undeveloped character, in contrast to the developments to the south and west, the hamlet is widely recognised as having a special character and appearance.

Whilst there are some elements within the Conservation Area that detract from the special character and appearance, they are sufficiently few in number to prevent the area from being at risk of losing its special interest.



Appendices

Adopted Wyre Forest Local Plan Policies

Policy SAL.UP6

Safeguarding the Historic Environment

1. Heritage Assets

Any development proposal affecting the District's heritage assets, including their setting, should demonstrate how these assets will be protected, conserved and, where appropriate, enhanced. The District's heritage assets include:

- Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments.
- Building and Structures on the Local Heritage List.
- Landscape features including ancient woodlands and veteran trees, field patterns, watercourses, and hedgerows of visual, historic or nature conservation value.
- Archaeological remains and non-designated historic structures recorded on the County Historic Environment Record.
- Historic parks and gardens.

Developments that relate to a Heritage Asset should be accompanied by a Heritage Statement. Where proposals are likely to affect the significance of a heritage asset, including its setting, the Heritage Statement should demonstrate an understanding of such significance and in sufficient detail to assess any potential impacts. This should be informed by currently available evidence.

When considering a development proposal which may affect a Heritage Asset, or when preparing a Heritage Statement, applicants should have regard to the following points:

- i. To ensure that proposals would not have a detrimental impact on the significance of a Heritage Asset or its setting and to identify how proposals make a positive contribution to the character and local distinctiveness of the area.
- ii. Any harm or loss of significance will require clear and convincing justification.
- iii. The re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where this is consistent with the conservation of the specific heritage asset.
- iv. Proposals which secure the long-term future of a heritage asset at risk will specifically be encouraged.
- v. That repairs, alterations, extensions and conversions of heritage assets take into account the materials, styles and techniques to be used and the period in which the asset was built.
- vi. The installations of fixtures and fittings should not have a detrimental impact on a heritage asset, should be inconspicuously sited and proportioned and be designed sympathetically.
- vii. In considering new development that may affect a heritage asset, proposals will need to identify how the scale, height and massing of new development in relation to the particular feature, and the materials and design utilised, does not detrimentally affect the asset or its setting.

Development proposals that would have an adverse impact on a heritage asset and/or its setting, or which will result in a reduction or loss of significance, will not be permitted, unless it is clearly demonstrated the following criteria are met:

- a. There are no reasonable alternative means of meeting the need for development appropriate to the level of significance of the Heritage Asset.
- b. The reasons for the development outweigh the individual significance of the Heritage Asset, its importance as part of a group and to the local scene, and the need to safeguard the wider stock of such Heritage Assets.
- c. In the case of demolitions, that the substantial public benefits of the development outweigh the loss of the building or structure; or the nature of the asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; or the loss of the heritage asset is outweighed by the benefits of bringing the site back into use. Redevelopment proposals should provide design which mitigates appropriately against the loss of the heritage asset in proportion to its significance at a national or local level.

Where material change to a heritage asset has been agreed, recording and interpretation should be undertaken to document and understand the asset's archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic significance. The scope of the recording should be proportionate to the asset's significance and the impact of the development on the asset. The information and understanding gained should be made publicly available, as a minimum, through the relevant Historic Environment Record.

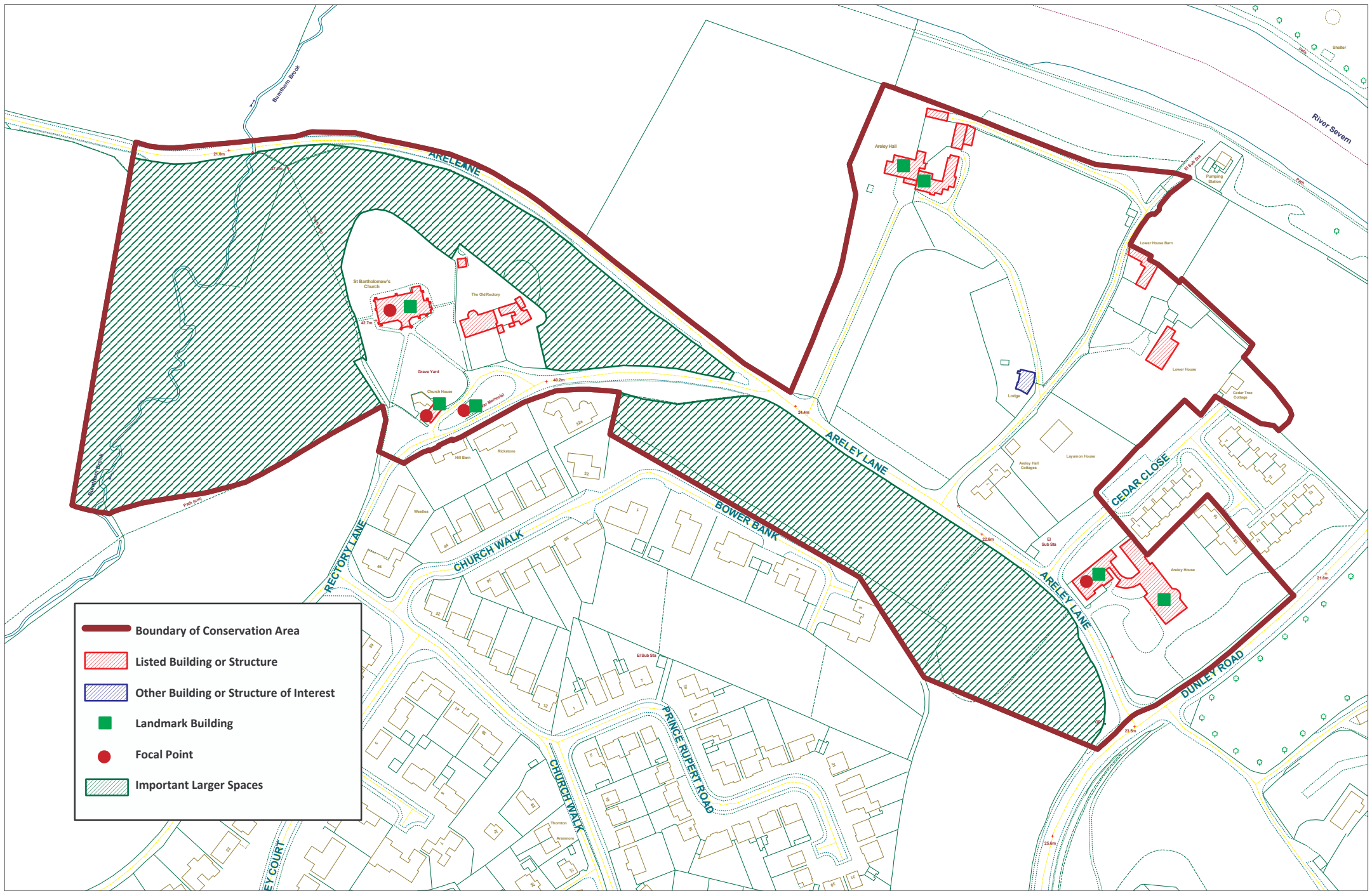
2. Conservation Areas

When development is proposed in, or adjacent to, a Conservation Area, proposals should accord with the existing (or draft) Conservation Area Character Appraisal and seek to enhance or better reveal the significance of the area. Development should not adversely affect views into, within, or out of the Conservation Area.

Proposals for the demolition of a building or structure in a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it has been clearly demonstrated that:

- i. It has no significance in itself or by association, and no value to the significance of the Conservation Area.
- ii. Its demolition or replacement would benefit the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- iii. Proposals include detailed and appropriate proposals for redevelopment, together with clear evidence redevelopment will proceed.

Proposals that affect shop fronts within a Conservation Area should have regard to the Council's Shop Front Design Guidance.



	Boundary of Conservation Area
	Listed Building or Structure
	Other Building or Structure of Interest
	Landmark Building
	Focal Point
	Important Larger Spaces

