

**DRAFT**

**Keele Conservation  
Area Appraisal and  
Management Plan**

**December 2017**

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This appraisal has been modified from the Rapid Appraisal produced for the Hawthorns Appeal Public Inquiry (2014) by John Hinchliffe (by kind permission).

## Community Engagement

### Consultation Statement

This document has been written involving the Parish Council and with consideration of the Keele Heritage and Character Assessment as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Draft Appraisal and Management Plan will be discussed with the wider community in a consultation for 6 weeks. Following this consultation the documents will be adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Documents to the Local Plan

If you have any queries about this document, would like further information please visit the Council website at

[www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/conservation](http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/conservation)

Tel. 01782 742408 or email the Conservation Officer at [planningconservation@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:planningconservation@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)

## 1. Introduction

### Keele Conservation Area

This appraisal is part of a rolling programme of appraisals of Conservation Areas in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough. The Borough Council has an obligation under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to review, from time to time, its Conservation Area designations, & under Section 71 of this Act to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas. Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development within a Conservation Area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

The Keele Conservation Area was designated in 1989. The boundary at this time was chosen to exclude most of the more recent development with less historic interest such as the Hawthorns (student accommodation) and to include the historic core of the village. A leaflet produced for the consultation in 1988 summarises the reasons for designation, "Keele is an historic village which dates back to the Norman period with long association to the crusading knights. The Parish Church is named after St John the Baptist, the patron saint of the Knights Hospitallers. The village contains a number of attractive and historical buildings".

The omission of any particular feature in either the Character Appraisal or the Management Proposals does not imply that it is of no interest.

#### Location and Setting

The village is located west of Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire. Keele Park (now Keele University) is located adjacent to the village and the area around Keele Hall and its pleasure garden is designated as another Conservation Area. The wider parkland is also designated as a Grade II Historic Park and Garden.

#### Setting of Conservation Area

Today the village is predominantly residential. Some of the less historic areas have affected the rural setting of the village Conservation Area. These are:

- West side of Highway Lane, a handful of late 20<sup>th</sup> Century detached houses in large gardens
- East side of Quarry Bank Road, Knights Croft, a cul de sac of late 20<sup>th</sup> Century bungalows in terraces and pairs of semi-detached buildings.
- Church Fields, a small cul de sac of five detached late 20<sup>th</sup> Century houses
- West side of Quarry Bank Road, a car park to the university buildings at the Hawthorns.
- North of Hawthorn House, phases of university halls of residences, built since the 1950s, eroding the rural setting of the historic village, however the grounds are spacious and have mature trees and shrubs which significantly contribute to the character of the Area.

Other areas outside the Conservation Area boundary significantly contribute to the rural village scene, namely the fields to the rear of Highway Lane and The Village, visible from the Keele Centre; the area south of Keele Drive within the parkland landscape; and the open countryside north of the village.

#### Summary of key characteristics and issues

This Character Appraisal concludes that the key positive characteristics of the Keele Conservation Area are:

- An historic village in a largely rural setting and an informal organic layout, nucleated around a road junction.
- An historic village with a small dense historic core and larger areas of open space on the edges
- An ancient village substantially remodeled and rebuilt as an estate village by the owner of an adjacent country house mansion
- An ancient village, dominated by an adjacent mansion and subsequently by the educational institution which took it over in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century
- A village with a range of distinctive architectural features creating a unique village vernacular
- A village with predominantly low buildings partially hidden behind vegetation, except for a few prominent showpiece buildings
- A landscape where the hedges, shrubs and trees make a significant contribution to the character and appearance.

The Character Appraisal concludes that the key issues in Keele village are:

- Retaining the landscape character of the village and high density of mature trees and hedgerows.
- Protecting architectural features on buildings and preventing incremental residential alterations to houses.
- Maintaining a vibrant village life once the students leave the Hawthorns campus
- Maintaining the historic sandstone walls along the roads within the village
- Congestion in the village through parking.

#### Conservation Area boundary

- The key historic areas of the village are recognised within the current boundary but it is considered that there is merit in considering a change to the Conservation Area boundary at The Hawthorns, subject to the housing proposal being implemented. This is discussed in further detail within the management proposals.

#### Planning Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out and recognises that a core role of the planning system is to conserve heritage so it can be enjoyed by future generations and sets out the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage. Conservation Areas are termed designated heritage assets in the Framework. Consequently their importance is elevated by this designation.

Section 12 of the NPPF sets out the main policies in respect of the historic environment. The key messages are:

- Local planning authorities should set out in the Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment
- The value of the historic environment in creating sustainable and viable communities, including the benefits to the local economy
- When considering the designation of Conservation Areas, the area's special architectural or historic interest should justify designation, otherwise the concept is de-valued

- When considering the impact of proposals on a designated heritage asset great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Substantial harm should be exceptional, whilst less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the development
- In Conservation Areas and within their setting, there are opportunities for new development to enhance or better reveal their significance (such as by replacing inappropriate development or enhancing key spaces and views)
- Not all parts of the Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. However, loss of a building or structure that contributes to the significance of the Conservation Area will amount to substantial or less than substantial harm, taking into account the impact upon the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole.

These documents will provide a firm basis on which applications for development within the Keele Conservation Area can be assessed.

Keele Village is within the Green Belt as indicated on the current Local Development Framework Proposals Map so Green Belt policies also apply.

#### Local Policy Framework

This Character Appraisal, with its associated Management Proposals, should be read in conjunction with the wider policy framework as set out in various policy documents, particularly the NPPF. The Development Plan for the Borough currently consists of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy and saved Local Plan Policies and the emerging Joint Local Plan with Stoke on Trent City Council. More information about the planning system can be found on the Borough Council's website: [www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/planning](http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/planning)

#### Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents

##### Design Guide

The Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) focuses on principles of creating better places and emphasises the importance of how a development should relate to its context. It is

a practical tool and can be viewed on the Council's website [Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document](#) (2010)

#### Register of Locally Important Buildings

The Council produced a Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures which describes the process by which buildings are added to the list and the criteria which is applied. Information about the Register and the current list is available to view online at [www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/localregister](http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/localregister). The list is generally updated every two years.

## **2. Location and activities**

Keele is a village in northern Staffordshire, approximately three miles west of Newcastle-under-Lyme. It was on the A525 road between Newcastle and Whitchurch although a by-pass has been built to the north of the village and has reduced the volume of through traffic. It lies at the junction of the former Newcastle-Whitchurch road (Station Road/The Village and Keele Road) and the local road (Three Mile Lane) to Whitmore. A local service road (Quarry Bank Road) and the road into the main Keele University campus also converge at this junction.

The M6 motorway runs approximately a mile and a half away to the south. Keele Parish has a population of approximately 3,600, although most of these are students who do not live in the village permanently. Keele University is a significant presence, with its main campus immediately to the east of the village. A road and footpath directly links the village and the university. The university also has a strong presence within the village, with the residential accommodation, social/service facilities and Management Centre at the Hawthorns - the only shop is part of the University Campus. This part of the university is set to close and vacate this site in the near future as the University is developing the site around the Hawthorns for residential development.

Also in the village is a church, a village hall, a school, a public house and a small business centre of converted farm buildings, known as Keele Centre.

### **Topography and Geology**

The landscape around Keele is formed by undulating low mounds covered by large irregular-shaped fields divided by hedges and interspersed with farms building, a few marl pits, groups of trees and some larger areas of mature woodland. The village lies at the top of a gradual rise when approached from the north west and itself occupies undulating land, with the church on the highpoint at the top of Church Bank.

Station Road, Keele Road, and Three Mile Lane all follow gentle curves which restrict long distance views.

### **Relationship of the Conservation Area to its surroundings**

Keele Village lies within an agricultural landscape to the north, east and south and its slightly elevated location provides some expansive views out from some locations especially from the western edge of the Hawthorns development and views south across the parkland landscape to the motorway.

The west extremity of Keele Hall (now Keele University) is a wedge-shaped tract of landscaped parkland characterized by woodland areas and grassland. The park has a stone entrance lodge that lies at the east end of the village. The village is linked into its surroundings by the roads and tracks/footpaths. Immediately beyond the Conservation Area to the east is an area of primarily deciduous woodland (Church Plantation) which forms a barrier to views of the university itself and its playing fields.

Green Belt washes over the village and the surrounding area of Keele which restricts the type and amount of development that can take place within the village.

### 3. Historic development and archaeology

Keele is an historic village, with origins dating back to the Norman period. Its name is believed to derive from the Anglo-Saxon Cy-hyll meaning "Cow-hill", strongly suggesting that it was a village which has long practiced cattle farming. The first written records of Keele are King Henry II granting the manor of Keele to the crusading Order of Knights Templar between 1155 and 1163. The Templars were exempt from ecclesiastical taxation and penalties and also received privileges from the Crown. This made the Manor attractive to tenants and the village began to develop.

In 1308 the Templars were suppressed in England and the manor of Keele passed into the hands of the Knights Hospitaller, who subsequently had its property, including the village, seized by the Crown when the order was dissolved in 1540 by Henry VIII. Although no buildings remain above ground from this early period, its memory is perpetuated by the name of Knights Croft (a road off Quarry Bank Road) and by the parish church, named after St John the Baptist, and some stained glass within the church.

In 1544, the manor of Keele was bought from the Crown for £334 by William Sneyd, who came from a family which was long-established in the region, whose main interests were in Cheshire. His father, (also William) had been Mayor of Chester and thus they were a family of wealth and influence. He and his son (the first Ralph) built the first of the Sneyd houses at Keele in about 1580. Keele Hall was built to the east and centre of the village but its creation significantly changed village life as it was the first time there was a great house with an influential resident lord. This undoubtedly marked a radical change in the fortunes of Keele and its people, as they lost many of their former privileges but they also gained an alternative source of employment and a changed social order.

The Sneyd family made their money from farming, both arable and dairy, but they also vigorously exploited iron and coal, both of which were found on the estate, and many of the villagers worked in the mines and quarries. Other crafts and trades which were practiced in the village including blacksmiths, thatcher's, wheelwrights and a frying pan maker.

The Sneyd family did not at this stage own the whole village but they steadily increased their

control by buying land as it became available and they came to dominate the village economically and socially over the next 400 years.

Another Ralph Sneyd inherited the estate in 1829 and embarked on a programme of landscaping and tree planting in the grounds of the hall during the 1830's. He then turned his attention to the village and the hall itself. By 1841 Ralph Sneyd had bought all the land in Keele and this enabled him to remodel the village. He embarked on a rebuilding programme that created the village much as it remains today. The Sneyd Arms, the old school, Keele Farm, and 5 lodges were all built during the mid and late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The distinctive RS monogram can be seen on all these buildings and many also incorporate other trademark features of distinctively patterned brickwork and elaborate chimneys. The old Keele Hall was demolished and the current Sneyd Hall, designed by Anthony Salvin, was built in red sandstone quarried on the estate. Building began in 1856 and was completed in 1861.

As sole owner Ralph Sneyd was able to physically change the village and control its social life. The villagers relied to a great extent upon the estate for housing and work, and the Sneyds owned the inn and the school and appointed the clergy, so it was a truly estate village dominated by the family and its institution to the south.

In 1888, the estate was inherited by a nephew, also Ralph, and he was commonly known as Sporting Ralph, as his main interests were horses, shooting and fishing. He built a stud farm on the site, now Paddocks Farm and had a racetrack built so he could host horse racing meets. The straight mile of the track was evident until the M6 was built on it in the 1960s. He also developed the lakes for trout fishing, and game birds were introduced for shooting parties. One of the stone built lodges was used as a gamekeeper's lodge. Despite this investment Ralph never spent much time at Keele, and leased it to various tenants, including Grand Duke Michael of Russia from 1901 to 1910. The social highlight of this period was a weekend visit from Edward VII in 1901. After 1910 a succession of tenants occupied the house and its condition and that of the estate started to decline. Although Ralph Sneyd was not often present, the estate was run by the agent in his absence, so life in the village continued as usual with the villagers still working on the land, or in the business of



the estate, as this generated the revenue Ralph needed to support his “sporting” life.

Even before WWII, some esteemed educationalists, led by A D Linsay had been exploring opportunities for establishing a university college “on new lines” but after the war began in earnest to secure funding, support and a suitable site. Eventually they settled on Keele Hall and in 1949 the newly created University College of North Staffordshire became the new owners of 150 acres of the Keele estate, which include the rather dilapidated Keele Hall and 5 stone lodges.

Ralph Sneyd died in December 1949 and within a year the nephew who succeeded him also died. The remainder of the estate, which at that time comprised of 4,407 acres, was sold by auction in 1951 to pay the Estate Duties. Most of the properties in the village were sold to the tenants. The University College took the opportunity to enlarge the campus by buying the house and area known as The Hawthorns, within the Village. The Halls of Residence which has evolved on this site since the 1950s still retains this name. The first components of the institution on the site were the conversion and extension of the Hawthorns itself to accommodation and the construction of five two storey residential units in a cul de sac at the rear of the Hawthorns. The University’s buildings on the site have been developed in at least five subsequent phases with the construction of a further three phase of residential units, a social/services unit and the Management Centre, which is part new build and part conversion of The Villa, a 19<sup>th</sup> Century estate house.

In 1962 when the University College of North Staffordshire was granted a new charter and became a university in its own right, it chose to take the name of the village, became Keele University and it remains the only university in the UK to be named after a village.

A few infill developments of individual or small groups of houses and a school have been built in and around Keele since 1962 but it remains a rural village with a large educational institution appended to the south of the village and partially integrated within it at the Hawthorns.

#### **4. Spatial and Character analysis**

An analysis in plan form is given on the Townscape Appraisal Map.

##### **Layout and street pattern**

The Conservation Area is nucleated around the junction of Keele Road, the driveway to Keele Hall, Three Mile Lane, The Village and Quarry Bank Road. The Old School, church and pub are all around this junction but the dwellings (except Keele Lodge) in the village are off-set from this junction to the north and west, as the church yard occupies the area north east of the junction.

The short narrow lanes of Church Bank, Church Fields, Highway Lane and Pump Lane lead off the through roads at varying angles and create an intimate feeling. Two short terraces at approximately 45 degrees to Quarry Bank Road form Holly Mews at the rear of The Sneyd Arms. The terrace at 16-32 The Village is in on an L plan so also has arms approximately 45 degrees to the road. The village is relatively enclosed and outside the village the landscape is open and has a feeling of spaciousness.

The dwellings within the Conservation Area include a range of building forms. They include large detached houses in large grounds, small cottages with small gardens, semi-detached houses, semi-detached cottages and short terraces. The overall pattern of growth of most of the historic village is organic and incremental.

The plot sizes, shapes and length of frontages in the village centre also vary a great deal, with no over-riding pattern other than the plots are small and irregular in the centre and the dwellings and their plots tend to be larger around the edges, as at Amakoccha House, Keele Farmhouse and The Hawthorns. The large open churchyard around the church and the open parkland of the entrance to Keele Hall reinforces this tendency for more open character around the edges of the village. To a large extent the low density and landscaped grounds of the halls of residence at The Hawthorns follows this pattern.

An element of formal planning of the village was introduced by the Sneyds in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century and super-imposed onto the informal pattern through the creation of the entrance to the parkland by the formal landscaping, the

construction of Keele Lodge and its gate piers, and the siting of The Old School directly opposite the approach from Three Mile Lane and the siting of The Sneyd Arms in an imposing location at the front and in the centre of its own large plot.

The layout of the Conservation Area is thus a collection of randomly developed dwellings for villagers in the approximate centre of the village surrounding by larger buildings in large grounds.

##### **Approaches to the village**

The approach to the village from the north-west along Station Road is a journey through open countryside up a shallow rise, with boundaries to the fields beyond the road formed by randomly coursed sandstone walls topped by mostly hawthorn hedges. The current NW boundary of the Conservation Area is at the approximate brow of the hill and is effectively identified by the trees in the grounds of the Hawthorns (but these trees are currently outside the Conservation Area). Approaching nearer to the village at the brow of the hill, the feeling of open character on the left hand (north) side is maintained by the deep building lines of the halls of residence and The Hawthorns Farmhouse which enable the gardens and the trees and shrubs within them to dominate the view. Even on the right hand side (south) the role of the buildings in informing the viewer that a village is being entered is gradually felt as the village hall is a low building and the buildings are set back and largely screen by vegetation. The journey into the village is one of seeing a gradual intensification of development and it is only when the viewer gets to The Villa that the impression of entering a small village is fully appreciated. That said with properties often set at angles to the road behind long gardens and below road level, the character is informal and spacious.

The approach to the village from the east along Keele Road also has a randomly coursed sandstone wall on each side but it is a slightly different experience as the road bends more and the land on both sides is wooded, creating a more enclosed feeling and focusing the view ahead. Approaching near to the entrance to the Conservation Area, the dense woodland on the left hand (south) side gives way to enable views across the open parkland with occasional specimen trees. Approaching even closer the viewer comes around the bend and arrives more suddenly at the village centre

with the sight of Keele Lodge, its gate piers, The Old School House and the Sneyd Arms. The village is also approached from the the parkland landscape, now the university, past the lodge, through an avenue of lime trees.

The approach to the village from the south along Three Mile Lane is through fields along both sides of the road again with boundaries of low randomly coursed sandstone walls, hedges and occasional tree on each side. The foretaste of an approaching village is provided by clear sign of the Old School House straight ahead and partial sign of Keele Lodge on the right. The Keele business centre on the left is barely seen as it is a group of low former farm buildings set back on a deep building line behind vegetation.

The characteristics stone walls on the approaches to the village are in poor condition in some cases especially on the edge of the parkland estate opposite the churchyard.

### **Open spaces, trees and landscape**

Keele is a rural Conservation Area with no planned public open space as such but the private and semi-private open spaces are crucial to creating the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting.

The open fields around the village are crucial to creating the agricultural setting for the village and views into and out of it. Similarly the open parkland at the east end of Keele Hall provides views into and out of the village over a visually pleasing terrace and creates the impression of a settlement within an unbuilt environment, albeit that the parkland is managed differently from the agricultural land.

The church yard around the Church of St John the Baptist is substantially enclosed by woodland and tall hedges so that it is not fully appreciated from outside but once inside the churchyard, the low gravestones, memorials and occasional planting enable mid-range views across the churchyard to the impressive church, lychgate and surrounding vegetation and it is an important visual component of the Conservation Area. Some of the trees and shrubs create framed views of the church, especially when approaching up the main entrance path.

Immediately to the north of the church is Amakaohia House, a large former farmhouse

which is effectively screened from public view by surrounding vegetation but it has extensive private grounds which create a feeling of spaciousness from within the site.

Keele Farmhouse is set back in a large garden on a deep building line of approximately 25m from both The Village and Three Mile Lane. The garden is private but glimpses of it through the vegetation enable sight of the building beyond and it contributes to the feeling of spaciousness within the village.

The Hawthorns Farmhouse is set back approximately 75m from The Village behind a garden of a low lawn, many mature trees and a thick boundary to the road of shrubs and a hedge. The effectively solid boundary to the Village prevents any direct full views to the Hawthorns from The Village. Even from the entrance to the site, the oblique view towards the Hawthorns Farmhouse past the west end of the hedge and shrubs is essentially of open land with several mature specimen trees and only a glimpse of the building can be seen. The unbuilt-upon nature of the land in front of The Hawthorns Farmhouse and the trees on it are therefore essential to the feeling of arcadian spaciousness and openness in the Conservation Area. The deep building line of approximately 25m of the westernmost of the hall of residence (outside the current Conservation Area) also enables the open grounds between the halls and the road to combine with the area in front of the Hawthorns Farmhouse to create an even larger open space. Although this latter space is outside the Conservation Area, it provides an open setting for it and enables views from the road, which is within the boundary, across towards The Hawthorns.

To the west end is Keele Park which is within the Conservation Area is privately owned by the University but in effect public access is allowed through it on Keele Drive and the footpath and so as a designed park landscape it has much special interest. It consists of well-maintained lawns and mature specimen trees in groups and in lines along the road creating a tree-lined avenue. Keele Park is on English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens and therefore of significance in its own right, it is also a visually valuable component of the Conservation Area. Extensive views from Keele Drive south over the fields as grazing land provide an attractive setting for this part of the Conservation Area.

Trees and Hedges

Trees hedges and vegetation play an important role in Keele Village Conservation Area in defining boundaries, screening and softening views, allowing glimpses of properties which all contribute to the character creating an appearance of a few buildings set within a predominantly agricultural, parkland and garden environment.

Some trees are significant as specimen trees which are valuable elements of the village scene in their own right and others have group value where their significance to the Conservation Area is when they combine with other trees vegetation and buildings to create visually pleasing compositions. In particular:

- The trees on each side of the drive to Keele Hall within Keele Park combine to form a tree-lined boulevard.
- The distinctive sculptural shaped yew trees in the churchyard combine with the church, Lychgate and memorials to create the impression of a quintessential English churchyard
- The trees along the driveway at the entrance to the Hawthorns side create the effect of a dramatic entrance
- The trees throughout the Hawthorns site and especially those between the Hawthorns House and The Village create the impression of a major house within an arcadian parkland setting.
- Trees along Station Road lined with mature trees

Many of the front boundaries of the properties in the Conservation Area are hedges up to two metres in height, in species dominated by hawthorn. On the main approaches into the village, the hedges are often elevated even higher on top of, or just behind randomly coursed rubble sandstone walls. These hedges, when combined with the generally low building forms and many of the dwellings being set back from the road, result in a village scene where the vegetation tends to dominate the view and where the full sight of the buildings is restricted to the roofs, upper gables and chimneys, other than the views down driveways.

#### Other frontage boundaries

Although hedges are the predominant front boundaries, the Conservation Area is characterised by a few examples of other

boundary treatments which affect the overall character in different ways.

The use of local red and buff rubble sandstone, random courses for the front boundaries along Keele Road and Station Road is a traditional and vernacular boundary treatment which helps to root the village to its locality. Mostly, these are dry stone walls although some are bonded by mortar. The copings include half-round saddle-back flat and cheese wedge. Within the village, a few properties have brick boundary walls up to approximately 1.2m high built of similar bricks to those used for the house.

Very few unsuitable new front boundaries have been erected in the Conservation Area but the one which most jars with the rural village character is that on Highway Lane consisting of concrete posts, low concrete panels and bow-topped close-boarded fences approximately 1.4m high which appears overly suburban in character. The modern materials, colours, hard lines and regularity are a stark contrast to the soft, green and vegetated verge on the opposite side of the lane.

#### Gate piers

In line with the prevailing understated rural character of the Conservation Area, few of the properties within it have dramatic gates or gate piers at the entrances to the properties. The key exceptions are the formal sandstone gate piers at Keele Lodge; the more restrained and rusticated piers at the Old School House (rebuilt) and; a pair of brick piers with a chamfered plinth and stone pyramidal cap.

#### **Focal points, focal buildings, views and vistas**

The initial organic growth of the village for purely functional purposes up until the mid-19th Century has resulted in few consciously created focal points in the Conservation Area from that early phase of development. Most of the purpose of designed "eye-catching" buildings date from the rebuilding of parts of the village by Ralph Sneyd in the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

The most obvious focal point of the village is the Church of St John the Baptist with its 130ft high spire catching the eye from many directions. It is sited on the high-point of the village to emphasis its dominance even more. The vegetation around the churchyard partially screens the view of the church from Keele

Road but some framed views are created by the gaps and it dominates the skyline from within the west end of Keele park. Interestingly, the limited view of the church from Keele Road and the Park is frustrating, as there is no obvious route to get to the church from there: access is either via the unmade back drive or a pedestrian-only route via Church Bank (from where it is still largely screened by vegetation), past the War Memorial, the Lych-gate and the dramatic right-angle bend to the left which dramatically reveals the SW frontage looming high above at the top of the path.

The Lychgate is itself a focal point when approached or viewed from the bottom of Church Bank. In this view, the Lychgate is viewed in conjunction with the war memorial which was strategically located to form a focal point.

Another focal point is the Old School House, consciously located opposite the end of Three Mile Lane to close off the view on approaching the village from the south.

Keele Lodge and the adjacent gate piers were designed to guard and mark the west entrance to the grounds of Keele hall as a foretaste of the grandeur of the hall itself, out of sight further into the park. It acts as a piper at the gates of dawn!

The Sneyd Arms although not a large building is sited at the end of a viewpoint, it sits at the front of and in the centre of a wide plot which has no hedge and dominates views westwards from the road junction and its five front-facing gables demand attention.

The tree in the centre of the village is a key focal point at the centre of where the roads converge.

Smithy House, 4 Highway Lane is visible at the road junction due to its orientation. A Sneyd estate house, it is prominently located along the lane and its rear elevation is also visible from across the fields from the Keele Centre.

Views tend to be restricted due to the topography, trees and vegetation, and orientation of the built form creating an enclosed feeling and character within the village.

## 5. The Buildings of the Conservation Area

The buildings within Keele Conservation Area which are of the highest architectural or historic interest are on the statutory list of buildings of architectural or historic interest. They are all listed at Grade II except the Church of St John which is Grade II\*. They are:

The Church of St John the Baptist, Church Bank. The Parish church is on a medieval site, but entirely re-built by J. Lewis of Newcastle-under-Lyme between 1868 and 1870. Pink sandstone, rough-faced coursed rubble, graded slate roofs all with raised verges on kneelers and crosses to the gables. In decorated gothic style having a nave, chancel, south-west tower with spire, south aisle and chapel, north aisle with vestry, south and west porches. The south-west tower is in 3 stages with angle buttresses, crowned by rather coarse corner pinnacles. Inside is a good iron screen (c. 1870) across the chancel arch. All the other fittings and furnishings are on this (or later) date except for some re-assembled fragments of C14 stained glass in the west window of the tower, which may relate to the Knights Templar and the C18 coat-of-arms over the chancel arch. Originally held by the Knights Templars, Keele was a chapel of ease of Wolstanton in the Middle Ages. The Victorian re-building was paid for by Ralph Sneyd of Keele Hall. Graded II\* on account of the completeness of the Victorian interior especially the stained glass by Clayton and Bell. It is a church whose interior is better than its exterior, both aspects reflecting High Victorian piety.

Memorials and features in the Churchyard  
Sundial approx. 9m south west of the south porch of the Church  
Cooper Headstone about 7m south east of south porch of the Church  
Haywood Memorial about 4m south of the south porch of the Church  
Jane Downing Headstone about 16m south of south porch of the Church  
Peake Memorial about 22m south west of south porch of the Church  
Dean Memorial about 7m south of south west corner of tower of Church  
Poole Memorial about 3m north of north east corner of north aisle of the Church.

36, Keele Village, Keele Village  
Cottage, 17 Century, altered and extended Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Timber framed on chamfered brick plinth with plastered infill, clay tile roof

with fishscale bands to front. One storey with attic probably 3 bays. Brick ridge stack and Integral end stack to right. Framing extensively renewed to front with characteristic 17<sup>th</sup> Century roof construction on left hand side end. Internally there are two chamfered beams with chamfer stops to room on ground floor, infilled inglenook fireplaces.

Milepost, NGR SJ 8062 4542, Station Road

Keele Lodge and Gate Piers, Keele Drive  
c. 1850 Lodge, coursed yellow sandstone with ashlar dressings, plain tiled roof with fishscale banks, parapet and raised verges on kneelers. Cruciform in plan with late 19<sup>th</sup> Century additions to rear (now 21<sup>st</sup> extension). 2 storeys; 3 bays with projecting full-height gabled porch to centre. Moulded bands to first floor and below parapet. Includes Sneyd family coat-of-arms displayed above. Gate piers are ashlar sandstone, with square section and chamfered corners terminating in stepped stops, moulded capping and finials.

War Memorial, adjacent to the Lychgate at St John the Baptist Church. 1920 Sandstone ashlar. Cross set on a square base with shields set over offset buttresses framing inscription panels; stopped octagonal plinth.

Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest

The Council has produced a Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures. The list was last updated in 2016 and can be viewed at [www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/conservation](http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/conservation). Those in the Keele village Conservation Area are:

The Villa, 11 The Village, Keele  
Sneyd Arms PH, 1 The Village, Keele  
The Cottages, 5-9 The Village, Keele  
6-12 The Village, Keele  
The Middle House, 14 The Village, Keele  
Keele Farm House, 2 & 4 The Village, Keele  
Stone walls adj and opposite the churchyard, Keele Road, Newcastle  
Smithy House, 4 Highway Lane, Keele  
4-6 Church Bank, Keele  
Old School, Church Bank, Keele  
Hawthorn House, Keele University

Other buildings can be added to the list during a review of the local register.

## **Building Analysis - Details materials and colours**

### Building styles

As in most areas, the buildings have a hierarchy of visual importance, dependent upon a range of factors, including their size, location and orientation, prominence, materials, design and function. It is also the combined effect of the buildings and their relationship with their layout, the landscaping, topography and vegetation which creates the character appearance and significance of the village.

### Principal Sneyd Buildings

The principal buildings within the Conservation Area which create the dominant part of its character and appearance are those built under the instruction of Ralph Sneyd in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, including: the Church of St John the Baptist, Keele Lodge, the Sneyd Arms, the Old School House, Keele Farmhouse and The Villa. The architecture of these buildings is distinctive with elaborate chimneys, patterned fish-scale roof tiles, dormer gables mainly of red brick and often with diaper pattern blue bricks. These buildings also have the RS monogram usually in the gable.

The first three of these were built of ashlar sandstone and were intended to make a bold statement at the west entrance to the Keele Hall estate.

Church of St John the Baptist with its great size, its religious/community use and its large spire, is the single most dominant and important building in the village, although it has a curiously understated access. It was built in the popular gothic revival style of the time and as a showpiece building it is built of ashlar stone.

The Sneyd Arms, has a social/community use and is another prominent building. It is a two storey structure with five bays: four dormer gables and an off-set projecting two-storey porch creating the fifth front-facing gable. It is slightly elevated and sits at the front of and in the middle of its plot with a range of low ancillary stabling/storage buildings around the side and back. Its randomly coursed rubble sandstone gives it a rustic appearance. It has three (rebuilt?) chimneys and heavy stone copings on all gables producing an active roof and skyline.

Keele Lodge is a two storey building. As its function was to relate more to Keele Hall than the village, its style is more Italianate and different from other buildings in the village. It has round arched windows in singles, pairs, triples and even rows of four and five. It has a central projecting gable bay with the Sneyd monogram plaque and a parapet to emphasise its height. It too has heavy stone copings on all gables. Although the chimneys are at the rear, the appearance of the roof is enlivened by bands of fish-scale tiles.

The Old School House (now a dwelling) was another community facility in an imposing building. It is built primarily in red brick with impressive diamond patterned blue bricks and sandstone dressings for quoins, window surrounds, mullions, transoms and copings on all gables. The frontage to the road has two asymmetrical end gables and a large central dormer gable with the Sneyd monogram. Its roof is ornamented with large chimneys in pairs with plinths, shafts and capitals; half-round ventilation dormers and: banks of plain and fish-scale tiles.

Keele Farmhouse is a detached farmhouse set back from the road but clearly visible from it. It is now two dwellings divided down the middle with one house looking towards the road, the other to the rear. It is built entirely of brickwork, predominantly red brick with striking patterns of bands, straps and diamonds in blue bricks. Further decoration is introduced by a dentilled string course and dentilled eaves, gables and some window heads. It has two storeys but use of a low roof emphasises the three asymmetrical front gables into highly prominent features. The widest and most-forward gable on the right-hand side has the Sneyd monogram plaque and a single storey bay window. The central gable is a dormer gable rising directly up from the front wall. Tall broached chimneys add further interest to the roof-line of this remarkably decorative farmhouse.

The Villa is a smaller and more restrained building commissioned by Ralph Sneyd. It is built of red/brown brick but without any decorative patterns created by the use of blue bricks. It too has a low roof, emphasising the two asymmetrical gables on the front, the single gable on the right-hand side and the dormer gable and chimney on the left-hand side. It has heavy stone copings on all gables, stone window dressings and the Sneyd monogram in a stone plaque. It has a single

storey bay window on the left-hand front bay. Again, the roof is given added interest by the use of tall decorative chimneys. The barn at the rear of The Villa appears to be contemporary with the Villa and although it displays no obvious “Sneyd” architectural features it has significance as mid-19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular curtilage building.

#### Positive Buildings in the Conservation Area

It is notable that many of the smaller houses which make up the building stock of the village use architectural features and material used in the more prominent show-piece buildings to varying degrees. However, a consistent feature of the other historic buildings in the Conservation Area are their low roofs, either because they are small and simple vernacular cottages or because they follow the lead established by the Sneyd showpiece buildings where the use of dormer gables and chimneys dominates the skyline. Most of the houses have decorative fish-scale roof tile banding.

A few buildings within the Conservation Area display no, or only minimal, influences of Ralph Sneyd. In the absence of detailed research, it is assumed that those buildings escaped the direct influence as they were pre-existing and not altered. One such building is the vernacular Clematis Cottage on Church Bank which could be a late 18<sup>th</sup> early 19<sup>th</sup> Century cottage, although its slightly enlarged chimneys are taller and more decorative than the simple form of the rest of the building would suggest. Another is Amakaohia House (the former rectory), which appears to be a large late 18<sup>th</sup> early 19<sup>th</sup> Century farmhouse, although it has some Sneyd alterations with its dentilled gables, enlarged chimneys and enlarged eaves which are not entirely consistent with a simple vernacular farmhouse.

Hawthorn House is an elegant vernacular farmhouse of the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century which has been altered and extended a number of times with a refined central porch and subsequently altered by the University. The hipped roof, projecting stone cills stone wedge lintels and is over six vertically sliding sash windows are not unusual for buildings of this period but they are atypical within Keele Village. The parapetted porch with stone pilasters and Flemish bond brickwork is also atypical in Keele, although the half round doorway is similar to that in Keele Lodge and the dentilled gable and eaves of the rear building is also similar to those found elsewhere in Keele. The building complex was much altered by the University at

the rear in the 1950s. The Hawthorns is also of interest as it has the remains of what would appear to be the only walled garden in the Conservation Area. The area to the SE of the house is enclosed by a wall which has been lowered to approximately 1m and rebuilt in parts but it retains some historic bricks on two sides, a displaced/discarded stone cap and is still clearly recognisable as a walled garden.

Smithy House is a notable Sneyd dwelling with fine brickwork and chimney details.

1 & 2 Pump Bank also showing Sneyd influences with gables, dormers and prominent chimney.

#### Other Buildings in the Conservation Area

The Conservation Area also includes two late 20<sup>th</sup> Century buildings of the University within the grounds of The Hawthorns, including the Management Centre. One has flat roof and large window/spandrel features its overall appearance is alien to the prevailing character of the Conservation Area. It also has two parabolic brick archways which although equally out of keeping with the area are strong architectural and visual features which elevate the quality of the complex. The Management Centre is a large three storey building and whilst clear attempts have been made in its design to harmonise with the adjacent The Villa, it is not an entirely successful component of the Conservation Area.

#### Details including materials and colours

Many historic buildings have been rendered, part-rendered or painted so that the appearance of the basic building material of the buildings in the Conservation Area is stone, brick, polychromatic brick, render and painted brick.

Roofs tend to have Staffordshire small plain clay tiles with some apex dormers. Roofs have exposed rafters, few have fascia boards and some have gable overhangs with exposed chamfered purlins. Many buildings have patterned roofs with fish-scale tiles.



## 6. Summary of Issues

Since the Conservation Area was designated in 1989 there have been changes, but for the most part these have been infill developments which have not harmed the overall character of the Conservation Area either because they are set back from the road frontage and key views or they are relatively minor to spoil the overall appearance.

The general arrangement of the roads and layout of the individual plots and the size and form of its buildings contribute towards the feeling of spaciousness and openness and maintain a connection to Keele's wider setting and rural surroundings. This is supplemented by the presence of many mature trees, as well as landscape features. Together these aspects combine to make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.

Keele has generally retained its distinct historical character and appearance. The presence of the University in the village has an impact on both the physical appearance of the building and the character with much activity and brings no doubt some vitality into the village. The University has chosen to move all students onto the nearby campus in Keele Park and applied for permission for residential housing development within the village for 92 dwellings on the area known as The Hawthorns. This was the subject of a public inquiry in 2015/16 and whilst it was refused, the issues discussed meant that the principle of residential development was generally agreed subject to changes which respected the landscaped area in front of the Hawthorn House near the road and retention of more trees. A revised submission has since been approved by the council (15/01004/FUL) for 83 dwellings (76 new ones and 7 units as a result of the conversion of buildings to be retained on the site). If this development is implemented the current Conservation Area boundary will not make sense because it will run through the middle of houses and gardens. The boundary has been reviewed as part of this process and the management proposals suggests a new boundary subject to the new development being implemented.

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# **Draft Management proposals for Keele Conservation Area**

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## **1. Introduction**

### **The Purpose of the Management Proposals**

The purpose is to provide a framework for further actions which although primarily the responsibility of the Borough Council, will also depend on the cooperation and enthusiasm of local people and local organisations, those involved in village life and the Parish Council.

Change within historic areas is inevitable and this is also true within Conservation Areas which cannot be left to stagnate or be frozen in time. Living in a Conservation Area does not mean that alterations cannot be made, but it does mean extra care must be taken when considering what changes can be made.

The Council has a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to assess proposals for change and whether these would meet the requirement to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The guidance below provides further detail on how new development in Keele can be designed to make a positive contribution and complement the area's character.

## 2. Legislative Background

### The implications of Conservation Area designation.

Designation as a Conservation Area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the “preservation and/or enhancement” of the area:-

- The local authority is under a general duty to review designations ‘from time to time’ and to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area. There is a particular duty to prepare proposals (such as Conservation Area appraisals or grants schemes) to that end.
- In the exercise of any powers under the Planning Acts, in respect of land or buildings in a Conservation Area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
- Extra publicity must be given to planning applications affecting Conservation Areas. This is done through a site notice and an advertisement in the local newspaper.
- Planning permission is required for the demolition of any unlisted building in a Conservation Area and the local authority may take enforcement action or consider criminal prosecution if consent is not obtained.
- Written notice must be given to the Borough Council before works are carried out to any tree in the area to give the Council the opportunity to include the tree within a Tree Preservation Order.
- The display of advertisements may be more restricted than other areas.
- The Borough Council may take steps to ensure that a building in a Conservation Area is kept in good repair through the use of Urgent Works Notices and Amenity Notices.
- The energy conservation expectations of the Building Regulations (Part L) do not necessarily apply to buildings within a Conservation Area.
- Powers exist for local authorities, Historic England or the Heritage Lottery Fund to provide financial grant schemes to help with the upkeep of buildings in Conservation Areas, if the area is economically deprived.
- The Council has a Historic Building Grant Fund for the repair and reinstatement of buildings and structures which are considered as heritage assets, namely Listed Buildings, positive historic buildings in Conservation Areas and those on the Council’s Register of Locally Important Buildings.

## 3. The management of development and change in the historic environment

It is important that local people should understand the significance of their surroundings if they are to play their part. Some degree of change is inevitable in Conservation Areas and the issue is often not so much whether change should happen, but how it is undertaken. Owners and residents can minimise the negative effects of change by employing skilled advice when preparing development proposals and by avoiding unrealistic aspirations.

Community involvement is an integral part of the Local Plan process. The Parish Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

It is always a good idea to check with the Planning Service before carrying out any work and if you need any advice on any planning issues.

- Planning permission is needed for extensions to houses in Conservation Areas if they extend beyond the side wall or if they have more than one storey to the rear and if they exceed certain length and height restrictions.
- Planning permission is needed for external cladding to houses using stone, artificial stone, pebble dash, render, timber, plastic or tiles.
- Planning permission is needed for any alteration to the roof of a house in a Conservation Area.
- Planning permission is needed for the erection of any structure within the garden of a house in a Conservation Area if the structure proposed would be on land to the side or front of the house. This is especially important for sheds, garages and other outbuildings in gardens.
- With commercial properties, such as shops and pubs, planning permission is generally required for alterations to these buildings.

Where a building is statutorily listed separate legislation applies to all internal and external alterations which affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building and will require Listed Building Consent. Planning permission is also needed for all proposed buildings in the garden of a domestic listed building including gas/oil containers.

## New development and guidelines

High quality and carefully considered design of new development in Conservation Areas is crucial. This does not mean that it should simply copy surrounding properties, but it should always be sensitive to its context. Some principles are that:

On the whole new development should be 'of its time' rather than resorting to simply mimicking the design of the original houses in the Conservation Area. This can involve re-interpreting architectural styles and detailing in a contemporary manner.

There should be a strong logic in the choice of materials made, especially where changes in material are proposed. New buildings should always utilise high quality and robust materials and workmanship throughout.

### Extensions

An extension will permanently alter the character and appearance of a property. There will be cases where carefully designed minor extensions can be added without harm to the individual house or its setting, however in some cases it may not be possible to extend at all. In all cases, proposals for new additions must demonstrate an understanding of the site and its context. This means it is important to consider:

- The original building itself - extensions should be subordinate to and be inspired by the original form and character of the house, rather than dominating or obscuring it and its original design. In most cases roof forms, building materials and architectural details should reflect those of the original building, but it is also important that a new extension can be clearly read as a new addition. Achieving this is a careful balance.
- Neighbouring buildings – maintaining the space between houses is important. Side extensions (even single-storey ones) which close up the gaps between properties or between common boundaries, or result in a loss or reduction of mature landscaping, that would detract from the character and appearance of the street scene, should be avoided.
- The impact of the extension on the wider plot and landscaping. The

landscaped areas (particularly at the front and side) of individual plots on the whole make a recognised contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Any development in these areas must be carefully designed and be of an appropriate size in order to preserve the setting of the building and its relationship with others.

### Windows and Doors

With regards to any original windows - which make a significant contribution to the character of a building - the following principles should be followed:

- Windows should be repaired rather than replaced where possible.
- If the original frames, casements and glass are beyond repair then any replacements should be of the same material, replicate the original sub-division, profile and style of the window. On the whole this will involve the use of appropriate timber replacements.
- Care is needed if considering the use of double glazing as this can greatly alter the appearance of windows.
- Any important historical or architectural detailing to windows (e.g. leaded lights) should be retained.

### Building materials and details

Retaining original decorative features and using traditional materials preserves a building's character. Removal of building detail can spoil the appearance of individual buildings as it is often the quality and combination of the decorative features of the individual houses that contribute to their character. To ensure that this is preserved, the following principles should be followed:

- Good quality, matching materials should be used, with close attention paid to detailing.
- Any new walls or repairs should be built in matching brick or rendering.
- With regards to roofs - often it is the fixings rather than the tiles themselves that need replacing. However, if replacement is necessary, care must be taken to match the colour, texture, size and materials of the original

slates or clay tiles as they can come in a variety of shapes and sizes.

- Original chimney stacks and pots are considered important architectural features and should be retained.
- Any replacement rainwater goods should replicate historical profiles, materials and designs.

Repair rather than replacement is the preferred option, and upvc or aluminium for windows or doors are not generally suitable materials for use in an historic context.

The alteration of doors and windows are permitted development but may be withdrawn under an Article 4 Direction (see below). This additional control will seek to retain original and historic and architectural features which combine to create the Area character.

### Roofs and Chimneys

There is a presumption against the removal of chimneys even if not in use, since this is likely to adversely affect the special character and appearance of the Area. Slate or clay should be used in replacement of concrete or artificial slate.

Proposals to extend or alter roof spaces should consider the following general principles:

- Dormer windows should not be oversized but in proportion to the size of the roof and be of a design which harmonises with the architectural style and appearance of the property.
- Rooflights should be placed in discreet locations (preferably on rear roof slopes, away from the road side), be modest in size and of a slim-framed, traditional design (i.e. conservation type), fitting flush with the slope of the roof.

### Satellite dishes

Satellite dishes and antennas in Conservation Areas are not permitted without planning permission if they are mounted on a chimney, wall or roof slope which faces onto and is visible from a highway or a building which exceeds 15 metres in height. In these cases, planning permission would not normally be approved.

Generally for listed buildings, Listed Building Consent is practically always required for the installation of `antennas` and if the Borough Council considers that the installation will have an adverse effect of the special interest of the building, consent will usually be refused.

Conventional TV aerials and their mountings and poles are not considered to be `development` and therefore planning permission is not required.

### Micro-generation and green energy

The government has relaxed the rules for the installation of solar PV or thermal equipment on houses, but in Conservation Areas, equipment needs planning permission if it is to be located on a wall or roof slope of the main elevation of the main house or outbuilding or on a Listed Building or a building in its garden.

Solar panels should be placed in discrete locations - preferably on the rear roof slope of the property and should sit as flush as possible with the roof slope.

### Trees and Landscape

The contribution of trees (particularly mature trees and established planting) both along the roadside and in the gardens of many properties is important to the character of Keele Conservation Area and is identified within the Conservation Area Appraisal and should be retained.

Anyone wishing to remove or prune a tree within a Conservation Area must notify the Local Authority which has 6 weeks to consider the proposal and respond. Work cannot proceed until the Council has responded or the 6 week period has expired. The purpose of this requirement is also to give the Local Planning Authority an opportunity to consider whether a Tree Preservation Order should be made in respect of the tree.

### Boundary treatments

In the case of the original properties which retain boundary walls or hedges, their removal would have a detrimental effect upon the character of the historic building and they should be retained where possible.

When providing new boundary treatments high, solid boundary treatments should be

avoided since they obscure the glimpsed views of the properties which contribute to the streetscene. Effective security should be provided through more subtle means which respect the area's semi-rural and 'open' character.

#### Demolition

Permission is needed for demolition all buildings in the Conservation Area (over 115 cubic metres). Demolition of historically significant buildings within the Conservation Area will not be permitted unless the building to be demolished can be proven to have a harmful or negative effect. Partial demolition does not require permission, but some control could be exercised through an Article 4 Direction, particularly in relation to boundary walls.

Single dwelling houses have considerable permitted development rights that enable some alterations to be carried out without the need for planning permission. These can include changes to windows and doors, roofs materials or construction of minor extensions. Although they may be minimal in each case, such alterations can have a cumulative effect that is damaging to historic areas. Where this kind of development is considered to be harming the character of an area, an Article 4 Direction can be considered.

#### Article 4 Directions

Permitted development rights are withdrawn if the Borough Council imposes an Article 4 Direction. This does not mean that development will not be possible. It does however mean that planning permission has to be sought and this allows for the merits of the proposal to be considered against the conservation interests of the area.

It has to be considered whether the exercise of permitted development rights would undermine the general aims and objectives for the historic environment in Keele and its local distinctiveness.

An Article 4 Direction, which does not require the consent of the Secretary of State, is accompanied by a Schedule that specifies the various changes to single houses which will as a result of the Direction require planning permission

For example under an Article 4 Direction planning permission might then be required for

- All extensions whatever the size including porches on the front of the building
- Changing roof materials and insertion of rooflights on front-facing roofslope
- Replacing windows or doors on the front elevation
- Painting a house, and the removal or partial demolition of a chimney.
- The erection, alteration or removal of a wall, gate or fence at the front of a building can also be controlled as well as demolition.

Such permitted developments will be considered for an Article 4 Direction within the current Conservation Area, mainly on the elevations which front a road or open space. Further consultation in this regard will be undertaken with affected residents and property owners. Permitted development rights have already been removed for the houses proposed on the Hawthorns planning approval.

#### **Positive buildings and buildings on the Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures**

There are buildings of local significance which, although not statutorily listed, are nonetheless important to the history and character and cultural value of the Borough. The Appraisal has identified buildings that made a positive contribution to this character of the Conservation Area. In general, all listed buildings and those on the Council's local Register in a Conservation Area will be regarded as 'positive'. However, there are often many more that, together, underpin the special interest of a place.

#### **4. The Conservation Area Boundary Review**

Local authorities are required by law to review their boundaries of existing Conservation Areas. This is to ensure that they still retain special architectural or historic interest. As part of the Appraisal process the whole Conservation Area was inspected and the robustness of the present boundary assessed.

The Keele Conservation Area contains buildings and features which are of different architectural styles and periods. It is fairly compact around the convergence of the main streets and the historic church, and is relatively built up along the road edges and main routes. The topography affects the experience one has of the area and the entrances into the village do have a significant impact on the character. Trees and the natural landscape also play a role in defining the area and its boundary.

The boundary of the existing Conservation Area is considered appropriate and relevant and no areas are proposed to be taken out of the area. The original boundary left out the modern Halls of Residence at the Hawthorns and this was the right approach at the time. However the council has granted permission for 76 new dwellings on this site and it is worth considering if this area is appropriate to be included in the boundary.

The current boundary will not reflect what will be built if the permission is implemented because it will arbitrarily cut through a number of houses and gardens. The site currently is very much a part of the village and has a feeling of spaciousness which will be retained once the permission has been implemented through the retention of the open spaces particularly at the front of the site. The quality of the permitted development is such that it justifies inclusion within the Conservation Area

The site contains many mature trees and landscaping which will be retained because they have Tree Preservation Orders imposed on them. Conservation Area status will protect all other trees. It thus makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Subject to the implementation and commensurate start of this development, the boundary is proposed to be amended to include the wedge shaped development site, continuing along Station Road, Quarry Bank

Road and western boundary adjacent to the field.

Should the development not be implemented, the boundary will remain unchanged.

#### **5. The setting of the Conservation Area**

Keele Conservation Area has a large number of trees, both within and on the edges of the Conservation Area. The combined effect of the trees, shrubs, gardens contribute towards the character of the rural village Conservation Area. These features are cherished by the local community and are well cared for including private gardens and the area in front of the Hawthorns, making a valuable contribution to the special character of the Conservation Area. The rural landscape and open countryside plays a large part in enhancing the special character of Keele village and the Conservation Area.



## **6. Implementation**

It is important that the Keele Conservation Area should be as self-sustaining as possible if it is to remain in its present state. Achieving this requires management to control any necessary changes so that its special character and appearance is not adversely affected. Success will require commitment by all Borough Council departments and their partners such as building control and the Highways Authority to ensure the sensitive exercise of controls, in the best interests of the Keele Conservation Area, and the sensitive deployment of any resources which may become available. Success depends on the part played by other stakeholders: property owners, residents, businesses, and amenity groups.

Those who live and work in the Conservation Area are expected to recognise the collective benefits they enjoy. For this they must understand the need to take a contextual view of proposals rather than acting in isolation. Change is inevitable in Conservation Areas but it is how rather than if it is undertaken.

### **Priorities for action**

- Formal adoption of the new Conservation Area boundary if the development of the Hawthorns is started.
- Encourage community involvement to select buildings for the Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures.
- Investigate potential breaches of development control with a view to seeking changes or enforcement.
- Monitoring change – updating photographic records.
- Consideration of the implementation of an Article 4 Direction.