

# **Draft Audley Conservation Area Appraisal**

**February 2013**

## **Contents**

### **1. Introduction**

The Audley Conservation Area  
Summary of Characteristics and issues  
Planning Policy context  
Local Policy framework

### **2. Location and activities**

Topography and Geology  
Relationship of the Conservation Area to its surroundings  
Biodiversity

### **3. Historic development and Archaeology**

Historic Development  
Archaeology

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

Layout and Street pattern  
Open spaces, trees and landscape  
Focal points, focal buildings, views and vistas  
Boundaries  
Public realm

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

Listed Buildings  
Buildings of local architectural or historic interest  
Positive buildings  
Buildings styles – Details materials and colours  
Shop Fronts

### **6. Summary of issues**

Character of Audley Conservation Area - Positives issues  
Negative issues and features that detract from the special character

## **Appendices**

Townscape Appraisal Map (provided here as Appendix 1)

## Community Engagement

### Consultation Statement

This document has been written in close partnership with the Community of Audley, namely representatives from the Parish Council, the Millennium Green Trust, and Audley Locality Action Partnership.

Once agreed by the Planning Committee of the Borough Council, the Draft Appraisal and Management Plan will be discussed with the wider community. The consultation will last for up to 6 weeks.

The nature of the community consultation will be reported and when any amendments have been made to the documents, they will be formally adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Documents to the Local Development Framework.

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

## **1. Introduction**

The concept of Conservation Areas was first introduced in the Civic Amenities Act 1967, and is now an established and valued element of the planning process. A Conservation Area is an “area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It is a combination of features, including, buildings, street patterns, spaces, vistas, landmarks and other features that give a Conservation Area its special and distinctive character.

### **The Audley Conservation Area**

Audley Conservation Area was first designated in January 1976, some considerable time ago. It is a statutory duty that the Borough Council reviews all of its Conservation Areas, to ensure that the special character which once defined the Area, still exists today.

The village is located north of Newcastle under Lyme in Staffordshire.

Today the village is predominantly residential and has many amenities, shops, public houses and community facilities. There are some fairly large new developments such as the health centre and hall, close to the Church.

There is some pressure for development, mainly from infill plots. There are some properties with substantial gardens which may be subject to pressure for further residential development. Any dense suburban developments could be harmful to the overall character of the Conservation Area.

### **Summary of key characteristics and issues**

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

- Attractive setting at the top of the plateau, allowing for distinctive views across the countryside.
- Topography of the village, set on the plateau with streets rising up to the centre forming an attractive streetscape.
- Castle Motte, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument which marks the northern section of the Conservation Area and entrance to the village.
- The wildlife area of Leddy's field of dense woodland and footpath networks.
- Strong banks of trees on Nantwich Road.
- St James's Church (Grade II\*) dates back to 14<sup>th</sup> Century, but rebuilt in 19<sup>th</sup> Century by the architect Scott.
- Distinctive arcaded terrace of shops and houses (Grade 2). Although the arcade has been filled in on all but one of the properties, these are distinctive Victorian properties that add character to the streetscene.
- Mixture of uses within the village, predominantly residential but a number of commercial uses including the Bougheys Arms and Butchers Arms public houses, climbing centre, health centre, care home, library, some other small shops and businesses.
- Materials in the area are predominantly brick with some blue polychromatic patterning to the Church Street terraces. The church is built from local sandstone and boundary walls are stone and brick.
- Some brickwork is painted and some rendered over.
- Boundary walls are a strong feature within the Conservation Area, both dry stone walls and brick with coping stones.
- Roof coverings are predominantly natural clay tiles.

The Character Appraisal concludes that the key issues in Audley are:

- Protection of the rural landscape around the village especially to the north and east.
- Better interpretation of the Castle Motte and the history of the village required.

- Protection of the landscape and built features of the Conservation Area including the trees and hedgerows and stone walls.
- Use of modern materials on historic buildings, such as upvc windows and doors and inappropriate changes to historic buildings.
- Need for more suggestions for the Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures.

#### Conservation Area boundary

- Some proposed amendments to the Conservation Area boundary are required and this is set out in the Management Plan.

### **Planning Policy Context**

Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these Conservation Areas. Section 72 also 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.

In response to these statutory requirements, this document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the Audley Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. It is in conformity with English Heritage guidance as set out in Guidance on the management of Conservation Areas (2005 and 2011).

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (March 2012) reinforces the need to ensure that the concept of conservation is not devalued by the designation of assets which lack special interest.

The NPPF sets out how the Government intends to deliver sustainable development. It expressly states that sustainable development is about achieving positive growth, by balancing economic, environmental and social considerations. There is little doubt that the NPPF is pro development, with a strong presumption in favour of sustainable development, however, the Framework also recognises the finite nature and value of our built heritage and the need for this to be properly assessed and where appropriate protected in a manner commensurate with the sensitivity of the heritage asset. 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 to 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 significance of the conservation area as a whole

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

The omission of any particular feature in either the Character Appraisal or the Management Proposals does not imply that it is of no interest, and because both will be subject to review, it will be possible to amend any future documents accordingly.

### **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. The Development Plan for the Borough currently consists of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy and saved Local and Structure Plan Policies. 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)

In the Local Plan Audley is classed as a rural village and part of the Conservation Area is within the Green Belt. The Green Belt boundary is drawn around the village envelope where most of the housing is in the village in and everything outside is Green Belt. The allotment gardens to the north of the village, the Castle Motte and Leddy's Field are all in the Green Belt, helping to prevent outward expansion of the village and preserve the rural character of the area.

### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

The Council produced a Register of Locally Important Building and Structures Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) 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)

## **2. Location and activities**

Audley Rural Parish comprises a number of components which make up the parish namely Miles Green, Halmerend, Alsagers Bank, Wood Lane and Bignall End. References to Audley within this Appraisal mean to the main village centre and the existing Conservation Area rather than the wider parish.

The Conservation Area includes much of the village centre but omits the principal commercial parts of the village along Church Street. Audley Conservation Area lies 10 miles from Newcastle. The A500 runs close to the northern part of the settlement making it a highly commutable village into surrounding conurbations like Stoke and into Cheshire.

Audley is a thriving village and has many services to maintain its viability and vitality. It is classified as a Rural Service Centre in the Newcastle and Stoke on Trent Core Spatial Strategy which means that development should ensure the sustainability of the centre is maintained.

### **Topography and Geology**

The landscape of Audley is dominated by the motte on Castle Hill which is situated on a natural plateau, the sloping sides forming the defences for the castle to the west and south. New Road cuts through this hill creating steep embankments as it rises up from Bignall Hill to Church Street which almost forms the ridge from which the ground slopes down the hill westwards from the Church.

The topography is a distinctive feature of the Conservation Area creating an interesting streetscape full of varied character. A stream runs in the valley to the east through the Conservation Area boundary across New Road and through Leddys field wildlife area to a pond created along the stream which provides recreational space.

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

Audley village lies within a semi-rural landscape particularly to the north and east. It is relatively built up to the west and south with twentieth century housing beyond the Conservation Area boundary. The nature of the environment and land uses appears to have helped to retain the character of the village and the entrances into the village up New Road and from Alsager Road have remained similar for a long time in terms of where development has taken place.

### **Biodiversity**

The area directly to the east of the Castle motte and northwards is a Site of Biological Importance (SBI). Known as Audley Castle Banks, this is a County wide designation where the sites are considered of local importance as they contain some of the best remaining areas of semi-natural habitat in the County. They are graded into two categories, Grade 1 and Grade 2. The Castle Motte is Grade 1.

### **3. Historic development and archaeology**

At the heart of the present Audley Conservation Area are the two remaining visible sites which have a direct link to the medieval origins of the parish: the church and the Castle motte (mound), a key part of the village centre that has evolved over the centuries. The first documentary evidence of this long evolution is an entry in the Domesday Survey of 1086 which refers to Audley by its Saxon name of Aldidelege. The prominent Norman family that came to be Lords of the manor, the Audleys, took their name from the settlement. It was the Audleys who were responsible for building both the church and the castle along the ridge where the village developed.

The castle site, excavated in 1914, was probably a wooden stockaded keep built on the motte (mound) that still marks its position. This is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument and protected site as well as a central feature of the Audley Millennium Green. The castle site was on a continuous ridge with the church to the south. That ridge was later cut through by a main road. The parish church of St James is an impressive red sandstone building. A document of 1223 establishes the origins of the church in the thirteenth century. Some of the stonework indicates this period. The tower and other features show development of the Church in the fourteenth century. Under the notable nineteenth century vicar, Charles Philip Wilbraham, the church was thoroughly "restored" by Sir George Gilbert Scott.

Numbers 26-38 Church Street probably contain the group described as "the four houses called Tuttel Street" described in the seventeenth century account of Audley by Richard Parrott.

The expansion of Audley parish in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was largely the result of industrial developments. Up until then, the chief occupation of the parish was largely agriculture and its related trades. The First Edition Ordnance Survey 1843 map does reveal that the area around Church Bank and fronting Church Street was more densely populated with houses and public houses clustering on the road frontage and up on the bank.

The former vicarage, now Wilbraham House, and the former Methodist manse in Wilbraham Walk are visible evidence of the nineteenth century development of the village. There is the very fine Victorian group of buildings designed by the architect William White at the entrance to Church Street.

The industrial expansion took force in the early nineteenth century with the exploitation of the coal resources in the parish: by 1800 there were already six collieries at work in Audley parish. Demands for coal grew from a variety of industries in North Staffs and Cheshire, and from further afield as the century wore on. The coal mines brought railways to the parish. The roads, some of which had been turnpiked in the eighteenth century, were also developed. The coal mines and the railway were sited mainly in Bignall End and Halmerend, although the whole parish was affected by the rise in population: a great deal of housing was built in the nineteenth and twentieth century throughout the parish. There is still a strong impression of the early housing in stretches of nineteenth/early twentieth century terraced housing.

#### **Archaeology**

The Staffordshire Historic Environment Record confirms the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the Castle Motte and the Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area. Some archaeological investigation has been undertaken around the motte and this is reported on the Historic Environment Record showing that the motte is a good survival and more investigation would be likely to reveal further information about the castle construction and activities of its inhabitants.



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

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

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

The Conservation Area covers a large area of the village particularly around its historic core, at the convergence of the principal road junctions of Church Street, Nantwich Road and New Street close to the Castle Motte.

New Road, cuts through the bank rising up from the east to a plateau where Church Street begins and extends southwards rising up again beyond the edge of the Conservation Area. At the junction of Church Street and New Road, Nantwich Road falls steeply away westwards and turns south joining with Alsager Road which heads northwards. Church Bank also leads from this junction up to the church. Dean Hollow, previously known as Old Hollow, slopes gently away westwards from Church Street, set behind the commercial part of the village.

As one would expect the outskirts and approaches to the Conservation Area tend to be more rural in character, leading into the village centre where the buildings become more densely concentrated. The buildings are concentrated along the main streets and routes principally on the western side of the Church Street, and the Conservation Area. The eastern side is dominated by the castle motte in the north, churchyard and Leddy's field in the south of the Area, and is much more open and less densely populated.

Within the Conservation Area very little has changed in terms of the grain and pattern of development in the village. The built up part of the village largely remains the same with buildings clustering around the Church and where Church Street meets with Nantwich Road along this main route.

Wilbrahams Walk was developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century at right angles to Nantwich Road and completely straight as expected in a newly laid out road. In the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century considerable development is undertaken here and also on Nantwich Road.

Around the Church, the largest building in the Conservation Area is a considerable churchyard. This provides green open space which runs behind the church north to south and links up with Leddys field although a brick boundary wall separates the two and there are significant differences in levels as the land slopes away quite steeply eastwards.

The centre of the village where the roads meet is the older historic heart of Audley and has a strong visual identity. The older buildings are close to the roadside, with no regular patterns and modest in scale. Those set slightly back in larger plots are later villas. As the village grows there are semi-detached villas and later still terraces with a more regular and more uniform appearance, with small front gardens.

The Conservation Area extends eastwards to include a large area of open space known as Leddys Field, half way up the hill where a main footpath runs parallel with Church Street and links up with Hall Street in the commercial part of the village. Other more informal footpaths run through the wildlife area creating attractive spaces for the local community.

Church Street gently curves in a southerly direction and rises down and then up away from the Church into the commercial part of the village and the library generally forms the southerly edge of the Conservation Area boundary.

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

In general terms trees play an important part in defining boundaries and shaping views and Audley Conservation Area is no exception.

Audley was a semi-rural Conservation Area when it was designated in 1976 and it currently remains as such. There is still a considerable amount of recreational green space which includes the Castle Motte, the landscape which surrounds it, known as the Millennium Green (covering approximately 12 acres) and Leddy's Field wildlife area.

As one approaches Audley from the east the trees play an important part in defining the edge of the Conservation Area boundary from Leddy's field to the Churchyard and the trees surrounding the Motte.

Aside from the large number of trees around the Castle Motte and Leddy's Field, and the Churchyard, there are some distinctive banks of large trees located within the gardens of properties. 22, 24 and 26 Nantwich Road frontage have some mature trees and landscaping which play an important part in the defining the character and softening the edges of this part of the conservation area. Many of the boundaries have dry stone walls topped with hedges (holly and hawthorn), especially the more historic properties. Later properties often have brick walls with hedges.

Another key location for trees is around the mini roundabout junction with Alsager Road, set behind the distinctive stone boundary walls, this vegetation is a key part of the character of this principal gateway into the village.

The western side of Church Road is predominantly built up although there are some significant trees in the forecourt of Wilbraham House, the former vicarage and in the adjacent car park and around Springfield House.

The management of the areas of trees in the Conservation Area and the Churchyard are included in the Management Proposals.

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

The Conservation Area has been formed incrementally over many centuries and this means that there are no planned views. That said the prominent location of the former Castle was strategically placed upon the hill.

The key historic building in the Conservation Area is St James's Church a significant focal building standing elevated on the top of the ridge. The former Castle Hill Farm, now known as Peak Pursuits is also highly prominent at the end of Church Street facing out towards Church Street, marking a full stop and enclosing the edge of the Conservation Area.

Other visually prominent focal buildings are the Church Hall and the Victorian shops and houses opposite the Church, as they all cluster around the pinch point on Church Street. The Boughey Arms is a key historic building in the Conservation Area and adjacent former hall, now climbing centre, which are both prominent and distinctive buildings on this strategic junction within the village. There were many public houses around this junction. The Red Lion and the King's Head on Church Bank and the former Bulls Head pub next door to the Boughey Arms. Nantwich Road is characterised by many large properties, including current and former pubs and large domestic villas. The property, now 24 & 26 Nantwich Road, was originally one property.

The former Vicarage, now Wilbraham House, the care home and the war memorial are also visually prominent when viewed from Church Street. There are a number of other focal buildings, the library on Church Street is a relatively large building at the southern edge of the Conservation Area boundary but it is not considered to be distinctive architecture which contributes to the setting of the Conservation Area.

Other buildings are still important but tend to form part of the cohesive whole and backdrop which makes up what is special about the Conservation Area rather than standing out individually.

Views and vistas

There are many views within, into and out of the village which are important for Audley Conservation Area. The key long distance views out of the Conservation Area are from the top of the Castle Motte and the field just to the west and north. There are excellent views eastwards of the Wedgwood monument, more distant views of Mow Cop folly and Jodrell Bank to the north are also visible. The Wedgwood Monument is also visible from the churchyard as a long distance view, but the elevated position of the churchyard gives interesting views of the streetscape in the Conservation Area, particularly along Church Street.

A key vista which marks the entrance into the historic area is along Nantwich Road from the roundabout, and the combination of buildings, trees, shrubs, and stone walls are all key to defining the character of the area.

### **Boundaries**

There are a variety of boundaries in the Conservation Area, both natural and man-made. From the stone faced cutting on New Street to the stone boundary walls principally around the Church and along Nantwich Road this is by far the dominant boundary feature in the Conservation Area. The second most common boundary is brick walling, but there are a significant number of hedges, trees, metal railings and timber fences which make up other boundary features.

The Church has a historic stone wall surrounding part of the frontage, and Wilbraham House opposite also has a stone wall, but the rest of the walls around the Church and Churchyard are a blue/red brick with a variety of different copings.

Dry stone walls dominate Nantwich Road property frontages often topped with hedges. These walls are also located around the roundabout junction as a distinctive entrance feature to the village and westwards, but this junction is outside the Conservation Area boundary.

The later properties, late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, often have brick boundary walls to the end of the property and by far the most attractive are the ones outside 23 – 29 Nantwich Road terraces, with the patterned capping stones.

Replacement of softer or historic boundaries with inappropriate or less sensitive boundary treatments can have a damaging effect on the character and appearance of the area by small incremental changes and often a little more thought or research can stop this from happening.

### **Public Realm**

There are few examples of historic features in Audley although this is probably due to the fact that it has evolved over time. All forms of street furniture are modern. One distinctive feature within the Conservation Area is a stretch of pavement of blue brick paviors which can be found outside the historic shop fronts on the west side of Church Street and on the steps off Church Street leading to Church Bank. Some of the paviors have a distinctive crisscross pattern. They also exist in other parts of the village pavements but these are located outside the Conservation Area boundary.

Large areas of stone setts are located in front of the Boughey Arms. This is a distinctive piece of floorscape and contributes towards the character of the Conservation Area and should be retained although it is within private ownership as part of the curtilage of the buildings.

## 5. The Buildings of the Conservation Area

There is a large variety of historic buildings in Audley Conservation Area.

### Listed Buildings

The Conservation Area contains 3 statutory Listed Buildings, one Scheduled Ancient Monument and one building that has been included on a Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures. The Church is Grade 2\* listed, the others are Grade 2.

The Church of St James's (Grade 2\*) is the local parish church dating back to 1300 although was partially rebuilt and restored by Scott in 1846. It is built from sandstone with a tile roof and heavily decorated. The churchyard surrounding the church was probably established when the church was constructed.

To the north of the Conservation Area sits the motte and bailey castle remains, which are designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The feature is described as a low lying mound overlooking the road from Newcastle. It is suggested that this Castle was probably the site of the Audley family before they moved to Heighley, near Madeley in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. It sits nine metres above the road and is 2.4 metres high and 12 metres wide. Excavations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century have revealed some features and items of interest.

The area south of the motte has been disturbed by the development of the New Road which cuts through the topography.

4 -12 Church Street (Grade 2) is a terraced row of shops and houses built in 1855 by William White in the Gothic style. Originally the ground floor shops had an open arcaded passage and only the arches remain at either side of the terrace, which is a detriment to their character. The brick patterning is distinctive however and these buildings are still an attractive group of buildings in the Conservation Area.

No 14 and Church Hall (Grade 2)

Also in the gothic style, there is a 19<sup>th</sup> Century house and a church hall. Both are constructed from brick with a plain tile roof and fish scale pattern bands.

### Buildings of Local Architectural or Historic Interest

The Council has produced a Supplementary Planning Document on its Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures and this sets out the process by which buildings are added to the Register. The current Register and information about this process can be seen at [www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/conservation](http://www.newcastle-staffs.gov.uk/conservation).

The only building presently included on the Register in Audley is the former Castle Hill Farm, now occupied by Peak Pursuits. Built in 1870 the building is a significant historic building in a highly prominent position in the village and Conservation Area. The double fronted brick building has a central projecting double height porch, doorway recessed, with datestone in a cruciform window feature. Dated 1870 the windows are distinctive with metal inserts with moulded surrounds.

The appraisal identifies other positive buildings which should be considered for inclusion on the Register during the next review.

In addition to listed buildings and locally important buildings, there are number of buildings which have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal map as being positive buildings of townscape merit. Buildings here will vary in quality but will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, materials and detailing provides the Conservation Area with interest and variety. Importantly they are considered to make a positive contribution to the special interest of the Area. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impractical, they are excluded.

1 & 3 Church Bank

Peak Pursuits (Former Castle Hill Farmhouse), Nantwich Road  
22 Nantwich Road  
24 & 26 Nantwich Road  
23-29 Nantwich Road  
31 Nantwich Road  
Turnpike Cottage, Nantwich Road  
Boughey Arms, Nantwich Road  
Hall adjacent to Boughey Arms, Nantwich Road  
Black Horse Cottage, Nantwich Road  
Butchers Arms, Church Street  
War memorial (1923), corner of Church Street/Wilbrahams Walk  
32-40 Wilbraham's Walk  
Wilbraham House, Church Street  
19-27 Alsager Road  
30-42 Church Street shops  
Audley theatre, Hall Street  
Old Rectory, Wilbrahams Walk

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

### Building styles

There are a variety of building styles within the Conservation Area, most of the buildings are domestic in scale and were built for that purpose. Audley does however have exceptions, such as the Church, public houses, various halls, health centre and library which are greater in scale. Many of the older buildings were built close to the street boundary and have their frontages to the pavement. For example, the terraces on Church Street and properties along the north side of Nantwich Road.

#### Brick houses

These include the majority of buildings, both residential and commercial, although some have been painted or rendered like the former public house on Nantwich Road. Turnpike Cottage, Wilbraham's House and 1 and 3 Church Street are rendered although on the former property the render is covering an interesting mix of stone at ground floor and brickwork at first floor which implies an early building that deserves further investigation. There are different kinds of brick, obviously some brick buildings are earlier than others and have more of a darker hand made appearance. The later houses are built from a brighter smooth red, more regular in size and appearance.

There are a number of buildings in the Conservation Area and just outside, built slightly later or altered and have a half timbered effect applied to half gables and in some cases are rendered to the upper floors. Often built as a group of semi detached houses or terraces this produces an attractive streetscene, especially since as a group these properties have retained their historic features such as sash windows, historic timber doors and boundary walls.

### Details

Many of the domestic properties in Audley have a variety of details. Many windows are casement windows but of different styles. Some are simple cottage style and some are tall three light casements with stone surrounds, particularly in the larger houses or pubs. There are a large number of later 19<sup>th</sup> and/or early 20<sup>th</sup> Century which have vertically sliding sash windows.

Clay-tiled roofs are characteristic and red brick chimneys stand out with the changing gradient in the Conservation Area.

A drip mould course above the windows is a common feature on three buildings all in close proximity to one another, namely Boughey Arms, 28 & 30 Nantwich Road, 24 & 26 Nantwich Road and Wilbraham House. This feature may imply that all of the buildings were built by the same owner. Further research may bear this out.

Some windows and doors have been replaced, in some circumstances by timber but on a many occasions with upvc to the detriment of the character of the area.

#### Materials and colours

Audley is primarily a brick village and whilst there were timber framed buildings in Audley, (Audley Old Hall was located by the mini roundabout and demolished in probably in the early twentieth century) there is no evidence of vernacular buildings currently although Turnpike cottage shows evidence of part of an earlier stone building. The brickwork and some walling is characteristically red brick with some darker blue brick coursing in diaper patterning later during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

Roofs are covered in clay tiles varying from red to blue.

#### Shop fronts

There is a terrace of 6 shops on Church Street which are modest in scale and character, they are brick built and finished in stucco blockwork. Some of the shop fronts appear to have been altered, and whilst they are all historic, one in the centre appears as though it may be Georgian. Earlier photographs of the shops, as compiled by Tony Lancaster in his book; Audley through time (2009), show that this row has been altered considerably over the years by the addition and removal of the upper floor windows, shop fronts and addition of gables but they still retain considerable character. These are not protected from change or loss.

## **6. Summary of Issues**

Since the last Conservation Area Appraisal in 1976 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.

Audley is fortunate in having retained a centre with a distinct historical character. That centre has been protected to some extent by the development of the Millennium Green and Leddy's Field, along with the retention of the allotment areas and the recreation ground. These open areas provide buffers against encroaching development.

This desirable state must be continued, and improved when practicable, and this can only be achieved by continual vigilance by concerned local inhabitants, informed decisions by planning officers and positive action by enforcement officers, all acting in liaison for the common benefit.

### **Character of Audley Conservation Area - Positives**

- Historic main streets, lined with variety of historic buildings
- Tight grain of ribbon development fronting the main streets providing character and interest.
- Connections to important architects, Scott and William White
- Many interconnecting footpaths
- Large areas of attractive open space and wildlife area
- Church of St James and churchyard acts as a focal point
- Variety of unlisted 'positive' buildings such as the former council offices and variety of Victorian villas set in large plots.
- Stone walls marking key gateways and defining edges into the village.
- Extensive views out to the surrounding countryside especially to the north from the Castle Motte over the Cheshire Plain and to Mow Cop.
- Linkages to the countryside through public footpaths especially at Leddys field, asset providing a backdrop from the rear of the Church to the south on the eastern side of Conservation Area.
- Historic surfaces, cobbles and blue brick pavements and steps.

### **Key negatives**

- Ill thought designed modern buildings, library, St James Court and garaging, village hall, Safex House, 18 & 20 Dean Hollow, Sheltered housing on Dean Hollow.
- Inappropriate shop fronts in historic buildings on Church Street.
- Unsympathetic alterations to historic properties including changing the shape of window and door openings and removing architectural features.
- Highway markings - yellow cross hatch markings on road, adjacent to ancient church.
- Galvanised steel railings on Church Street.

# Draft Management Plan for Audley Conservation Area

## Contents

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of the Management Proposals  
The Audley Conservation Area Appraisal

### **2. Legislative Background**

The implications of conservation area designation  
The management of development and change  
National policy guidance

### **3. The Management of the Historic Environment**

Article 4 Directions  
Enforcement Strategy  
Role of Historic Environment Champions  
Promotion and awareness  
The control of historic buildings  
Register of locally important buildings and structures  
Positive Buildings  
Control and management of the natural environment

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

Proposed changes – Additions and Deletions

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

The control of new development  
Demolition  
Specific recommendations  
Register of Locally Important Buildings

### **6. Implementation**

Priorities for action

## Appendices

Proposals Map (provided here as Appendix 2)



## **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.

The Conservation Area in Audley has been existence for over 35 years and the effectiveness of the designation depends on the way it has been managed in the past by the Borough Council, the Parish Council, local businesses residents and community groups.

Government policy has made it clear that Conservation Areas are not areas of preservation and that change is an inevitable fact of modern life. The challenge is therefore to manage that change in a manner which respects the special historic and architectural qualities of a place.

Local authorities are required by law to review their Conservation Areas and the preparation of management plans and conservation area appraisals form part of this obligation. The involvement of the local community in the formulation and delivery of these documents helps to strengthen their status and impact.

The Appraisal has been completed in conjunction with the Audley Rural Parish Council, Audley Millennium Green Trust and the Audley Locality Action Partnership and a full period of consultation will take place with the documents to provide opportunities from the local community to input further into the documents.

Both documents will be of use to the Borough Council when determining planning applications for change within or on the edges of the Conservation Area, and for property owners and their agents when considering schemes for alteration or new development.

There are many local groups in Audley which are active. They should be encouraged to work with relevant bodies to enhance the local heritage of the borough, whether that is to work with English Heritage to manage the Scheduled Ancient Monument, or to see if any funding is available to improve the shop frontages in the centre of the village and promote appropriate alterations.

### **The Audley Conservation Area Appraisal**

The Character Appraisal which has been prepared has identified the principal positive and negative features of the Conservation Area and provided an outline of the main issues (see Appraisal document).

## **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.
- Conservation Area Consent 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, English Heritage 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, buildings in Conservation Areas and on the Council's Register of Locally Important Buildings.

### **The management of development and change**

Certain works to houses within a Conservation Area are considered "permitted development". In summary:

- Planning permission is needed for extensions to houses in Conservation Areas if it extends the side wall of the house or if it has more than one storey to the rear and if it exceeds 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 curtilage 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.

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.

Where a building is 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.

### 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.

### Trees and Landscape

Within Conservation Areas, lopping or felling a tree greater than 75 mm. diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground requires six weeks' notice to be given to the Borough Council before starting the work. This provides the Borough Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, in which case a Tree Preservation Order may be served. This protects the tree from felling or inappropriate lopping.

The trees and the area at Leddys Field including the footpaths, tree and pond management are owned and managed by Audley Rural Parish Council and more particularly the Leddys Field Supporters Group.

### **National Policy and Guidance**

Government policy guidance on Conservation Areas is contained in National Planning Policy Framework, where the government is still promoting informed and evidenced based conservation. It considers that parts of the environment which have significance due to their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are called heritage assets. These assets promote a sense of place and contribute towards the aims of sustainability. The context for these policies is provided by the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the Core Spatial Strategy.

### **3. The Management of the Historic Environment**

Alterations to the external appearance of a property often require planning permission.

A common complaint is that planning decisions are inconsistent. While each application has to be determined on its own merits, much can be achieved by having a clear interpretation of statutes, detailed policy and guidance and training to help elected Councillors and officers to work within these constraints. Development proposals can have an effect on a Conservation Area even when they are some distance outside it. In such cases, the duty to pay special attention to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area still applies.

***Action 1 The Borough Council will adopt a consistent interpretation of what it considers to be a 'material' change in the external appearance of a building.***

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 Audley and its local distinctiveness.

An Article 4(2) 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(2) 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 the house can also be controlled as well as demolition (front means facing a public highway or road).

***Action 2 The Borough Council will consider making an Article (2) Direction within Audley Conservation Area for certain and relevant types of development.***

#### **Enforcement Strategy.**

As well as following the Cabinet Office Enforcement Concordat, which sets out best practice principles for enforcement like openness, consistency and proportionality, the Borough Council has its own local Planning Enforcement Policy and within this historic building and conservation matters are given a greater priority.

#### **Role of Historic Environment Champions**

English Heritage is keen to see Historic Environment champions to promote conservation issues in each local authority. Their role is to

- Help unlock the untapped potential of the local historic environment,
- Provide leadership for heritage issues within the authority
- Ensure the historic environment is taken into account in the development of all the authority's policies and forward strategies;
- Identify opportunities for the authority to use the historic environment in the pursuit of its wider corporate objectives.

The Borough has had a Design and Heritage Champion since April 2005 who is an elected member and one of their roles is to raise awareness of conservation issues and to encourage other elected councilors to make full use of the training opportunities offered by English Heritage.

### **Promotion and awareness**

It is important that local people should understand the significance of their surroundings if they are to play their part. There is a clear need to publish information on the history of each Conservation Area and its special qualities. This could be an effective outcome of the character appraisal process. There is also a significant role for amenity societies and other stakeholders to explain what matters, what is possible, what is expected and what has been achieved elsewhere.

***Action 3 The Borough Council will encourage and work with the Parish Council to help them recognise and manage the heritage assets in the Conservation Area for future generations.***

Community involvement is an integral part of the Local Development Framework process. Involvement already happens in Audley through the parish council and other active groups. The Borough Council has already established a Conservation Advisory Working Party, which considers all relevant applications and acts as an important interface between local understanding and council decision making.

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.

***Action 4 The Borough Council has placed information on its website on Listed Buildings and on the Conservation Areas in the Borough and this information should be updated and expanded upon.***

***Action 5 The Borough Council will ensure that information is available to enable communities to understand the significance of their Conservation Areas and the consequences of living and working within them. In addition to the information on the website, this could be achieved by a public exhibition/meeting.***

***Action 6 The Council will continue supporting the Conservation Advisory Working Party and will ensure that the Working Party is given the opportunity of commenting on applications affecting the historic environment in the Borough.***

***Action 7 The Borough Council will consider increasing its offer of guidance and update its range of published guidance to include specific topics such as historic buildings and living in a Conservation Area.***

## **Control of historic buildings**

It is important that this historic environment continues to be recognised and that local policies are included in future policy documents for the future protection of Newcastle-under-Lyme's 20 Conservation Areas and 365 Listed Building entries.

### Listed Buildings

Listed Building Consent is required for the demolition alteration or extension of statutorily listed buildings. There is current guidance for owners of listed building on the Borough Councils website but this must be updated and expanded as necessary.

***Action 8 The Borough Council will continue to assess applications for Listed Building Consent in line with policy and guidance.***

## **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 Council produced a Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures in 2010 and this was reviewed in 2011 and 2012. The process of adding a building to the Register has been adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to the Core Spatial Strategy which will give the Register additional weight in the making of planning decisions. The Register is evolving and it is hoped that the regular reviews will encourage further suggestions from the community for a number of other buildings within the Audley Conservation Area and wider parish which can be considered for the Register.

***Action 9 The Borough Council will ensure that the Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures is continually updated.***

## **Positive buildings**

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.

***Action 10 The Council will publicise the consequences of being in a Conservation Area and the presumption in favour of retaining positive buildings.***

***Action 11 The Council will continue to review its existing Conservation Areas and work with communities to produce Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans.***

## **Control and management of the natural environment**

Millennium Green land in Audley, includes the land around the Castle Motte north of New Road and to the north, covering over twelve acres. Much of this is included in the Conservation Area.

Local people, backed by the Parish Council, convinced the Countryside Agency (since incorporated within Natural England) that Audley should have a Millennium Green as part of a national scheme to celebrate the Millennium. The land, about twelve and a half acres, belonged to Newcastle Borough Council until 2002, when it was handed over to the Trust. The Trust consists of volunteers and is a charitable body, registered with the Charity Commission. Nationally, Natural England is now the organisation that administers the several hundred such Trusts.

The objective of the Trust is to maintain an open space for the benefit of the inhabitants of the parish of Audley in perpetuity. The Green should be maintained to provide an attractive area in

which people can take exercise, enjoy the views and areas of natural beauty; an area that can be used for community events; to protect wildlife and the natural habitat; to protect an English Heritage listed medieval site (a Castle motte).

The Trust has an annual working plan to deal with hedge planting, scrub removal and work on the wildflower area. English heritage has promised some help with maintenance of the motte.

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

Local authorities are required by law to review their boundaries of existing Conservation Areas from time to time. 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 Audley 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 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 is for the most part appropriate especially along the northern and eastern boundaries. It is defined by the Castle motte to the north, the rear of the churchyard and Leddy's field to the east. The southern and western boundaries are less obvious. The boundary has no clear definitive edge, instead circling some of the more historic properties and missing out some key assets and features of the area which help to make it special like the boundary features and natural landscape features. In order to include some of these features some suggestions with explanation have been put forward to include further areas below.

Consideration was given for an extension south along Church Street on both sides, to include other shop frontages and the terraced streets of Hall Street and Hill Terrace. These shops have some character and although they are spoilt by some insensitive shop front alterations could in the future be improved. The terraces have although have some character in their contrasting brickwork, much has been lost through installation of alternative windows and doors.

An area proposed to be deleted from the boundary is proposed at Dean Hollow (Nos. 17 to 29 – sheltered housing). This housing has no architectural character or design merit.

The mini roundabout marks the entrance into the area from the north and is currently not included in the Conservation Area. The view from the south is of a bank of trees on the corner of 33 Nantwich Road and dry stone walls, a feature which is particularly significant in this part of the area and carries on south to Wilbraham Road and on eastwards up Nantwich Road towards Church Street. There is also a plethora of signage and highway paraphernalia, which could be reviewed with the County Highway Authority to see if there is anyway of consolidating any them. No. 2 Alsager Road is a landmark building and is highly prominent. It is an early twentieth century villa like many buildings in parts of Audley. It has significant presence in the Conservation Area with its elevated position at the junction.

There is an attractive terrace of properties, probably early 20<sup>th</sup> Century at 19 to 27 Alsager Road which is proposed to be included. The terrace retains all of its historic sash windows and doors, and most of its front boundary walls and deserves recognising for its quality and character.

Wilbrahams Walk, laid out in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century was initially fairly rural and is now built up on both sides of the road. Some properties have been irrevocably damaged through insensitive alterations and inclusion in the Conservation Area may help to prevent further deterioration. Inclusion of the rest of the even numbered properties along this road will also protect the distinctive terraces at 32 to 44 which provide attractive townscape where the majority of architectural details survive. It is also proposed to extend the boundary slightly on the south side to include a house known as "The Old Rectory" an attractive well proportioned villa from the turn of the century and one of the original buildings from when the street was laid out.

#### **Additions**

##### **1. North and south side of Wilbrahams Walk**

16 to 50 Wilbrahams Walk, to be included principally to help preserve architectural details of the terraces and the boundary walls along the edge of the road.



2. Junction of Alsager and Nantwich Road

Include the area around the mini roundabout at the junction of Nantwich Road, Alsager Road, partly to help control some of the boundary treatments in the future.

3. 19 to 27 Alsager Road

Include the terrace and their front boundaries.

**Deletion**

1. Delete the sheltered housing at 17 to 29 Dean Hollow.

***Action 12 The Council will attempt to liaise with the Highways Authority about consolidating signage within the village.***

***Action 13 The Borough Council will consider amending the Conservation Area boundary, following public consultation, as shown on the Proposals Map.***

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

Audley 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 semi rural Conservation Area. These features are cherished by the local community and are well cared for including private gardens and the public open space around the motte and wildlife area at Leddy's Field where the local community play a large part in caring for these areas, making a valuable contribution to the special character of the Conservation Area.

***Action 12 The Borough Council will continue to protect and enhance the rural qualities of the Conservation Area including refusing applications for new development which would result in the removal or reduction of trees or established planting which enhances the Conservation Area and support where possible the local groups and Parish Council to continue to look after the public spaces.***

### **The control of new development**

New development must respect the historic and architectural context and should 'not necessarily copy existing styles but create sensitive, sympathetic and good quality modern architecture so that the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area is not downgraded or diluted, but reinforced, and enhanced whenever possible.

The pressure for development in Audley is essentially for infill and backland development (usually in the gardens of existing buildings) some of which sit in spacious plots. Development is restricted by the Green Belt in parts of the Conservation Area to the north.

***Action 13 New development must conform to policies within the LDF, saved Local Plan policies and the National Planning Policy Framework.***

***Action 14 Positive buildings, buildings on the Council's local Register and Listed Buildings should be retained and their settings protected from unsympathetic development.***

Applications will be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement when that is required by national legislation and guidance can be obtained from the Planning Service on when heritage statement of significance will also be required. The Borough 's Conservation and Urban Design Officer is happy to advise on the repair and reinstatement of historical and architectural features and help to source appropriate contractors, builders, materials, and so on. It would be advisable to contact this officer in addition to a development management officer if the proposal for development lies in or near the Conservation Area.

### **New development and guidelines**

There will be a presumption against any new building or development which would adversely affect the setting and the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area. New buildings should follow established historic form of development, plot sizes, positioning, density, mass and access. It is important to have a good architect or advisor who understands the issues and context of Conservation Areas. New development should not increase the volume of development on the site and should be sympathetic to surrounding historic buildings in terms of scale materials and details. It should also respect views both within and into and out of the Conservation Area.

### **Windows and Doors**

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(2) Direction. This additional control will seek to retain original and historic and architectural features which combine to create the Areas 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.

### **Demolition**

Conservation Area Consent 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 Conservation Area Consent, but some control could be exercised through an Article 4(2) Direction, particularly in relation to boundary walls.

### **Building Specific Recommendations**

#### **Statutory list**

In Audley there are three entries buildings on the statutory list of buildings of special or architectural interest. This list for Audley was drawn up in 1988 and the criteria since this have changed slightly, because buildings which post-date 1840 are now being added to the statutory list. Additionally earlier buildings which may have been rejected before are also (even if altered) being added. It may be, therefore, that many other buildings in Audley may be eligible for statutory listing. More detailed survey work, particularly of interiors, would be helpful.

#### **Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures**

There is now a local Register within the Borough which includes former Castle Hill Farm building (now Peak Pursuits). The Supplementary Planning Document to the Core Spatial Strategy sets out the criteria and also the process for adding new buildings to the Register.

***Action 15 The Borough and Parish Councils will encourage the local community to suggest buildings that might be eligible for inclusion on the Register.***

## **6. Implementation**

It is important that the Audley Conservation Area should be a 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, the Fire and Rescue Authority, and the Highways Authority to ensure the sensitive exercise of controls, in the best interests of the Audley 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. Employing skilled advice minimises the effects of these changes.

### Communities

It is important that communities are well informed about the qualities of their Conservation Areas and of the opportunities for enhancing them. There is also a role for the Borough Council and other recognised community groups such Audley Millennium Green Trust, Audley Medieval Society, Audley Locality Action Partnership in addition to the Parish Council who have aided and assisted in the production of these documents.

### **Priorities for action**

Immediate tasks – generally those not requiring additional resources.

- Formal adoption of the new Conservation Area boundary
- 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.

Continuous tasks-

- Monitoring change – updating photographic records.
- Review character appraisal
- Review the management plan.

Medium-term tasks

- Consideration of the implementation of an Article 4(2) Direction.