



Gnosall Conservation Area Appraisal



November 2013

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1. Introduction

1.1. Definition

1.1.1. A Conservation Area is defined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Section 69 (1) of the Act imposes a duty on the local planning authority to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest, and to designate those places as conservation areas. Designation helps to ensure that an area identified for its architectural and historic significance is managed and protected appropriately.

1.2. Purpose of Appraisal

1.2.1. Conservation area appraisal is a means of identifying and assessing the special architectural or historic character of a place. Gnosall Conservation Area was designated in 1971 by Staffordshire County Council after an appraisal of the special architectural and historic interest of the area. Under section 69 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it is a requirement of the local planning authority to update conservation area appraisals regularly, and designate further areas as necessary. The purpose of this appraisal is to assess and define the special character and appearance of Gnosall as it stands today, and identify any threats or future threats to the area's character and integrity.

1.2.2. Appraisal ensures that the local authority, developers, property owners and the local community are aware of the area's special character when drawing up and assessing proposals for change.

1.3. Effects of Conservation Area Designation

1.3.1. The conservation area appraisal will be adopted as a "material consideration" in the planning process and will be used by the local planning authority when considering the effects of any proposed development affecting the conservation area, including its setting.

1.4. Certain works in a conservation area require consent:

- 1.4.1. Works to trees: Anyone proposing to cut down, top or lop a tree in a conservation area, even if the tree is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)), must notify the local planning authority and allow six weeks before commencing work. This gives the local planning authority the opportunity to make a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) if the tree is considered to be important.
- 1.4.2. Permitted Development Rights, i.e. those works of alteration or extension that can be carried out without planning permission, are slightly different in conservation areas. Some conservation areas are covered by Article 4 Directions, which restrict certain Permitted Development Rights, for example the installation of uPVC windows or satellite dishes. These are specific to each conservation area, and are in place to ensure the special historic and architectural character is protected.

1.5. Community Involvement

- 1.5.1. Stafford Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement sets out to ensure that all sections of the community and interested parties have a reasonable opportunity to engage with plan-making and planning application processes. A public consultation will take place on this appraisal and interested parties will be invited to comment on the findings of the appraisal.
- 1.5.2. Planning Policy Context: Stafford Borough Council Local Plan Saved Policies and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Policies applicable to Gnosall Conservation Area,
- 1.5.3. The policies relevant to Gnosall Conservation Area are Policies E&D2: Consideration of Landscape or Townscape Setting, E&D 18: Development Likely to Affect Conservation Areas, E&D19: Accommodating New Development within Conservation Areas, E&D20: Demolition of Buildings in Conservation Areas, E&D21: Advertisements in Conservation Areas, E&D22: Proposals for Blinds, Canopies and Shutters, E&D23: Development Proposals Affecting Listed Buildings, E&D24: Demolition/Partial Demolition of Listed Buildings, E&D25: Proposals to Convert or Extend a Listed Building, E&D43: Trees in Conservation Areas and E&D44: Development Affecting Trees and Hedgerows. Relevant historic environment policies within The Plan for Stafford Borough will supersede these Saved Policies after adoption.
- 1.5.4. National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraphs 127 through to 141 are relevant to Gnosall Conservation Area. National conservation guidance to support the NPPF policies is currently in preparation by national government.

2. Summary of Special Interest, Gnosall Conservation Area

2.1. Gnosall Conservation Area was designated by Staffordshire County Council on 24 February 1971 as a means of preserving and enhancing the special architectural and historic interest that has been retained and enriched through its development over the centuries. The key elements of special character are summarised as follows:

- A village of contrasts: a mixture of vernacular and polite architecture, from rectilinear cottages with 16th century origins, to tall, Georgian three storey houses creating a contrast in scale, siting and plan form, and a feel of gradual development over time.
- The ancient church of St Lawrence, its elevated position echoing its architectural grandeur.
- An enclosed, ancient churchyard setting with an array of well-preserved headstones and monuments, and unspoilt views of the church from the churchyard and Sellman Street.
- Extensive green spaces surrounding the church, Church Close and the former vicarage area with mature yew trees creating a sense of enclosure.
- A winding high street that gently rises to the north creating a series of views with progression through the street; glimpses of the church create a visual connection between the linear High Street and the enclosed churchyard area.
- Well-preserved and diverse architectural features: domestic and shop windows with surviving historic glass, and a wealth of wrought and cast iron railings.

2.2. Location and Topography

2.2.1. The village of Gnosall is approximately seven miles west of Stafford and 15 miles northeast of Telford. It stands on ground above the valley of the Doley brook. According to Horovitz' *Place Names of Stafford*, the name may be derived from the Old Welsh *genou* meaning opening, and *halh*, Old English for piece of low-lying land near a river. The name roughly translates to a constricted passage leading to a wide valley, and so directly relates to its topographical character.

2.3. Historical Development and Relationship to Current Layout

2.3.1. Gnosall is first recorded at Domesday (1086) when it is identified as having land held by clerics. The settlement was assessed at two ploughs with four ploughs in lordship. There were eight villagers and four smallholders with two ploughs liable for taxation and a mill valued at 12d. Taking this into consideration, it is likely that Gnosall has Anglo-Saxon origins, although to date the only evidence for such an origin has been found within the Church of St. Lawrence where stonework (originally considered to be Norman) is thought to be Anglo-Saxon in date. The presence of the mill at Domesday points to an agricultural economy heavily influenced by its rural location.

2.3.2. During the medieval period, the settlement was surrounded by large commonly-farmed open field systems with arable fields to the north and east, and meadows for grazing and hay on wetland to the south and west, adjacent to the Doley Brook. By the late 16th century, much of the farmland surrounding Gnosall had been enclosed through informal agreements between local landowners through a process known as piecemeal enclosure. Evidence for ridge and furrow and some 'reverse s-shaped' field boundaries (from aerial photographs and recent maps) close to Gnosall are testament to the settlement's agricultural economy during the medieval and post-medieval periods. The wetland associated with the Doley Brook was transformed into water meadows during the 18th and 19th centuries.

2.3.3. The village itself is typified by a historic linear high street with the Parish Church of St Lawrence to the east in a distinctly contrasting green space. Some of the buildings of the high street date to the 16th century, and it is thought that the church dates at least in part to the Saxon period. There were four prebendaries in Gnosall in the Medieval period. Prebends are posts connected with the Church that have a fixed independent income derived from the church estates (prebendaries), allowing the prebends to be independent of the Bishop.

2.3.4. Today Gnosall is made up of two settlements, Gnosall and Gnosall Heath, which are connected by Station Road (the A518). Gnosall Heath, to the southwest of Gnosall, developed around the construction of the Shropshire Union Canal in 1835, which runs through the southwest of Gnosall Heath. The arrival of the canal, and the railway in 1849, which cuts across Station Road, encouraged development around this area and left Gnosall relatively well preserved. However 20th century development has led to the erosion of the historic linear layout of the village, which was surrounded by fields. Development occurs in dense suburban plots surrounding the high street, and has expanded into a nucleated settlement, with the high street at the centre. However the historic core of the High Street and the churchyard area is well preserved and visibly historic. At the southeast of Gnosall, highway widening and extension works have altered the historic layout of the village roads through the creation of the A518.



Figure 1 Ordnance Survey Map of 1881 illustrating the linear development of the High Street and adjacent Church of St Lawrence and churchyard. Reproduced with permission from Staffordshire Record Office

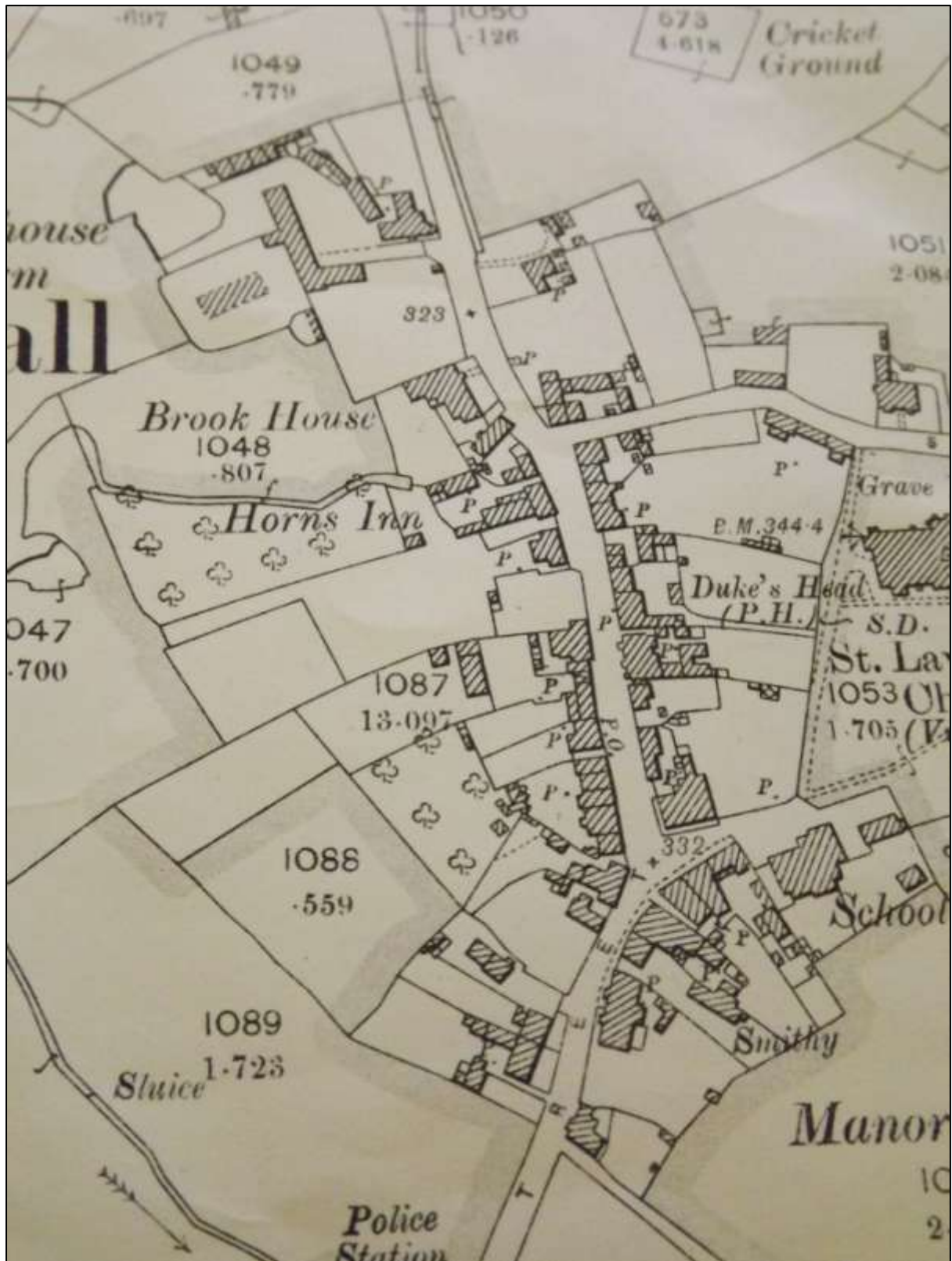




Figure 2 Ordnance Survey Map of 1902. The linear development and field boundaries exist today. Reproduced with permission from: Staffordshire Record Office

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Gnosall Conservation Area Character Appraisal Map
 Character Area 1: Church of St Lawrence, Church Yard, Former Vicarage and Church Close
 Character Area 2: High Street, Stafford Road and Station Road

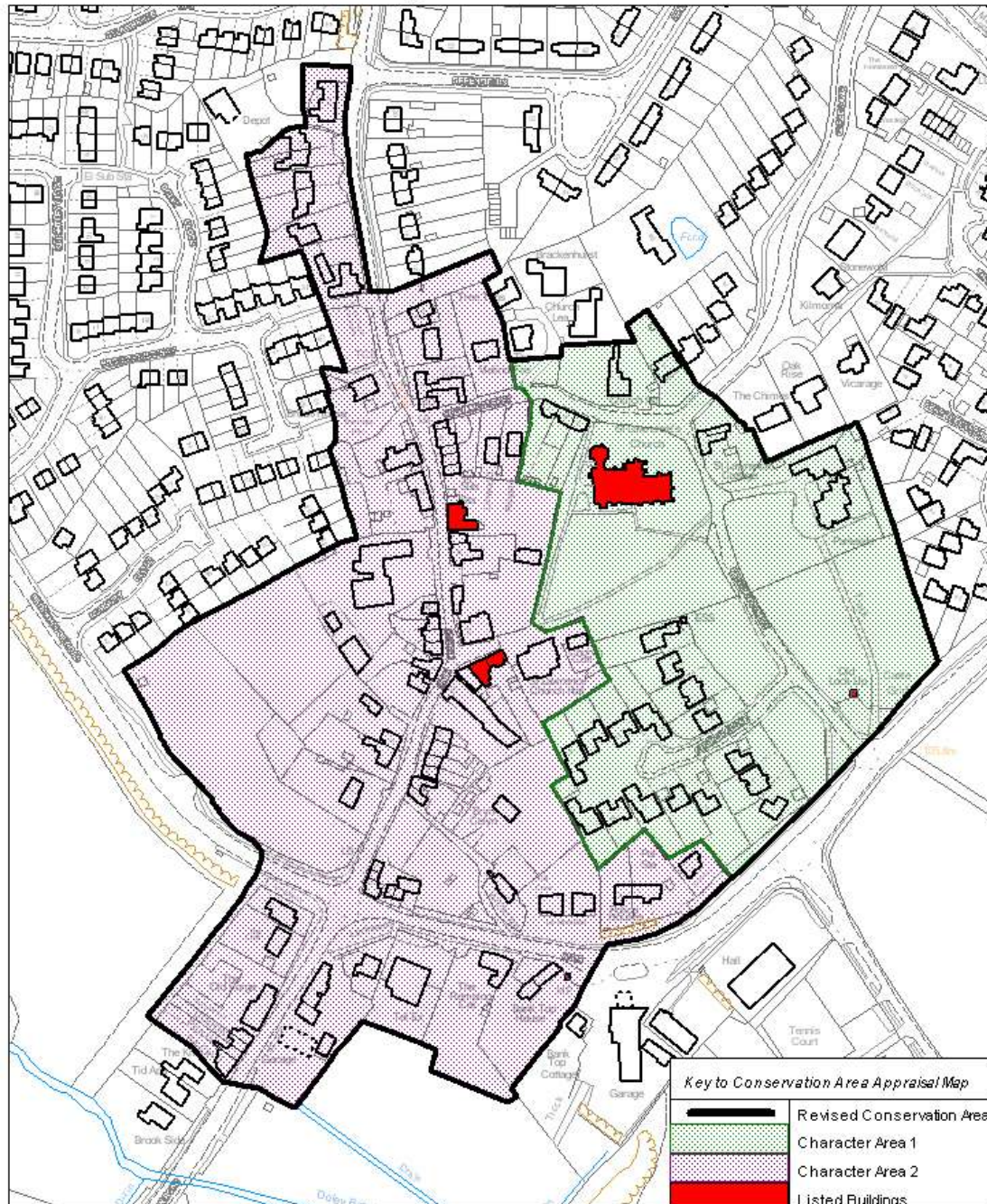


Figure 3 Gnosall Conservation Area showing the two character areas

2.3.5. There are two distinct character areas in Gnosall: area one consists of the ancient church of St Lawrence, surrounding churchyard, Sellman Street and Parkside (former vicarage); area two consists of the High Street, Audmore Road, Station Road and Stafford Road.

2.4. Character Area One: St Lawrence's Church, the churchyard, Sellman Street and Parkside

2.4.1. This area derives its special character from the exceptional Parish Church of St Lawrence, its elevated position above the surrounding historic buildings of Sellman Street, the green space of the churchyard enclosed by several mature yews and stone boundary walls, and the outstanding former vicarage and outbuildings, sited far from the church within an enclosed green space. Church Close is a small late 20th century development on the site of the former Manor Farm, now demolished. It is subservient to the adjacent church in appearance and scale.

2.5. Character Area Two: High Street, Audmore Road, Station Road and Stafford Road

2.5.1. A range of historic buildings line the winding High Street in a well-defined building line, running parallel to the church. Glimpses of the church from High Street remind the viewer of the proximity of the church but the two areas feel distinctly separate. To the north of High Street towards Audmore Road, and to the south towards Stafford Road and Station Road, the plots are less densely arranged and historic buildings become more dispersed. The enclosed space created by the building line of the high street falls away leading out of the high street into this area, giving the feel of leaving the historic high street behind. The presence of traffic creates a less welcoming atmosphere and buildings are dominated by the road layout.

3. **Character area One: St Lawrence’s Church, the churchyard, Sellman Street and Parkside**

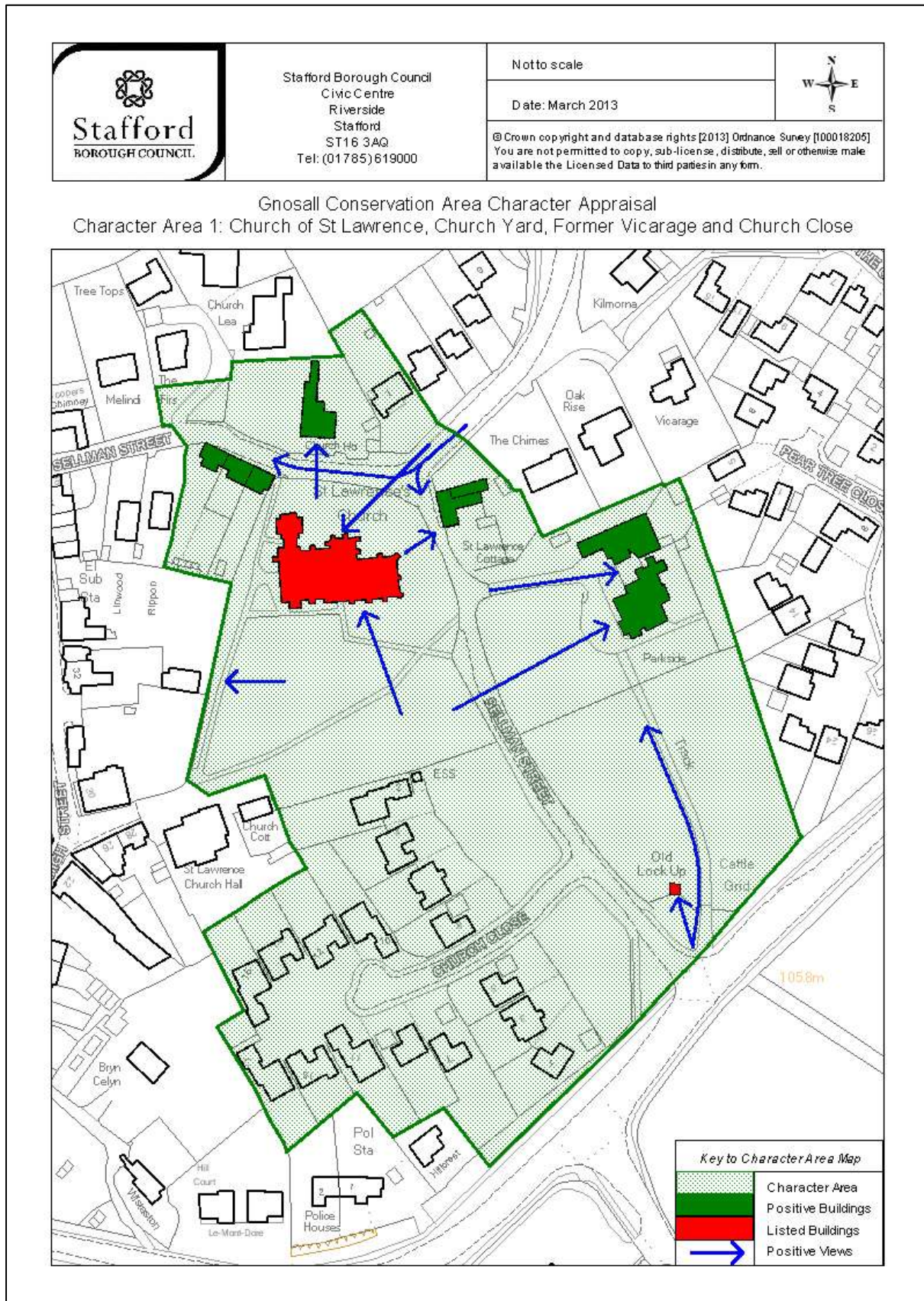


Figure 4 Character Area One

3.1. Built Character, Character Area One

- 3.2. Approaching the conservation area from the northeast (Glebe Lane), the church tower dominates and there is an immediate change in atmosphere created by the presence of historic buildings and mature trees. The spectacular Church of St Lawrence is the focal point of this area; its architectural quality emphasised by its scale and elevated position. Surrounding the church on Sellman Street are a variety of small cottages and larger houses of various ages, providing an interesting contrast to the stone church. All dwellings are positioned inwards to face the church, creating a nucleated site, and emphasising the dominance of the church. Parkside, the former vicarage, stands back from the street in private grounds surrounded by mature holly hedges, creating a distant and detached character, in contrast to the smaller buildings on Sellman Street.



Figure 5 Church of St Lawrence viewed from Sellman Street

3.3. Building Types

- 3.4. Aside from the church, the buildings in this area are dwellings that date to at least the 19th century, and possibly earlier, with some late 20th century houses. Within the grounds of the former vicarage, well-preserved, unconverted agricultural outbuildings survive.



Figure 6 St Lawrence Cottage. The main façade of this cottage faces the church. Historic paving is visible in front of the cottage.

3.5. Scale, Plot Size and Plan Form

- 3.5.1. There is a variety of smaller, one-and-a-half to two storey rectilinear cottages with simple gabled roofs of varying pitches, and a grand two storey Victorian former vicarage (Parkside) and two-and-a-half storey Church House, which contrast with the smaller cottages. The cottages are sited around the church, and appear subservient to the church in scale and positioning. Parkside is positioned away from the church in its own grounds and appears separate from the churchyard area, but is possibly the site of the buildings of one of the four prebendaries thought to have existed in Gnosall during the medieval period. Remnants of earlier building (possibly 16th century) are present within the walls of the agricultural outbuildings, which are two storey with steeply pitched roofs.

3.6. Architectural Styles and Features

- 3.6.1. Parkside and Church House employ brick with stone dressings. Parkside, Victorian Gothic in style, possesses well preserved stone quoins and window surrounds, diagonally set chimneys and casement windows. Church House appears to have been re-faced in the 19th century, the side elevations being of earlier brick. The main façade employs stone for lintels, stone caps on the buttresses and plait bands on the chimneys. The smaller cottages, such as 1-3 Sellman Street, possess keystones and cills that may have been added at a later date to unify the cottages. Brick lintels are also present, and dentilated eaves detailing is prevalent throughout on small outbuildings and cottages alike. The agricultural buildings of Parkside retain their historical openings and their former agricultural functions remain legible.



Figure 7 Parkside (former Vicarage)

3.6.2. Along Sellman Street, numbers 1 and 3 retain three-light, outward opening, vertically hung casements divided into three panes, in pegged timber frames. Some historic glass and external fasteners remain. Church House retains historic crown glass within the two storey square set bay windows. Mathematical tiles are employed in decorative panels. The Vicarage possess vertically hung casements divided vertically by three glazing bars, creating a vertical emphasis, which is emphasised by the stone mullioned frames and rusticated stone surrounds.



Figure 8 Casements at 3 Sellman Street



Figure 9 Historic glass remains in some casements, with simple scratch moulding at the head and pegged frames



Figure 10 Church House with two storey, square set bay windows

3.7. Building Materials

- 3.7.1. Brick with stone detailing is employed at the more 'polite' buildings, at Victorian fronted Church House and Parkside, but the predominant building material is brick. Staffordshire blue tile is the preferred roofing material for all except the church, which employs slate and lead. The Lock Up, resited at the corner of Sellman Street and Stafford Road, is constructed of large stone blocks and heavy sandstone tiles.
- 3.7.2. The strong presence of stone at the church and its boundary walls emphasises the contrast in status of ecclesiastical buildings with the smaller cottages through the use of expensive stone rather than the vernacular soft red brick of the cottages.

3.8. Colour Palette

- 3.8.1. The heavy abundance of stone creates hues of warm pinks and light browns, and contrasts with the reddish-orange brick and grey-blue roofs of the cottages.



Figure 11 The Church of St Lawrence with its pink hued stone walls

4. Listed Buildings, Character Area One

4.1. Church of St Lawrence

- 4.1.1. Leonard (1995, p39) describes St Lawrence as not only a magnificent building, but a building with an outstanding setting. The churchyard, which is accessible on foot from direction creates a fine introduction to this collegiate church. Collegiate churches were claimed by the King as free from the jurisdiction of the diocese, and it is common for Collegiate churches to be built upon the foundation of Saxon minsters. Investigations have attributed some stonework in the crossing, previously thought to be Norman, to the Saxon period.
- 4.1.2. The headstones and monuments of the churchyard are very well preserved and of very high quality; the contrasting shapes and designs adding interest to the churchyard. The large surrounding churchyard, monuments and headstones, and surrounding yew trees make the setting intrinsic to the outstanding architectural quality of the church itself. The church demands a certain amount of space that is respected by the gradual development of smaller subservient buildings, and is not affected by the grand former vicarage, as this is sited within enclosed land so does not to compete visually.



Figure 12 St Lawrence Church, north elevation

4.2. The Lock Up

- 4.2.1. The Grade II Lock Up was constructed in 1832 as a counter to the unrest in Gnosall associated with rising unemployment, poaching and agricultural riots in the south. Built by James Trubshaw, it is square on plan with a pyramidal roof and timber door. It was resited at the corner of Sellman Street and Stafford Road from the junction of Stafford Road and the High Street in 1971 after highway widening works.



Figure 13 The Lock Up. Parkside is to the left

5. Positive Buildings, Character Area One

5.1. St Lawrence's Cottage

- 5.1.1. Situated at the crossroads of Glebe Lane and Sellman Street, St Lawrence's Cottage is a key focal building, adding charm and interest to the street. Paving setts and a stone plinth are visible. The flat roofed dormers rise through the eaves. St Lawrence's Cottage is positioned with main facade facing the church.



Figure 14 St Lawrence's Cottage

5.2. Former Vicarage (Parkside)

- 5.2.1. Built in 1854, this brick gothic vicarage and outbuildings is set within large grounds with mature native trees dotted within the grounds and hedges. The former property boundary wall running east to west appears to be the continuation of the boundary wall at the south of the churchyard. This has been lowered and the property boundary now encompasses land to the south. The coach house is believed to contain 16th century stone walling, heightened and extended in brick at a later date. Buildings front Sellman Street at the site of the current driveway on historic maps, and earlier buildings are incorporated in the existing outbuildings.
- 5.2.2. The agricultural buildings, which retain their functional character, and large open green space, are intrinsic to the setting of the house. The vicarage provides a contrast in scale and grandeur to the smaller cottages at the north of the churchyard.

5.3. 1-3 Sellman Street

- 5.3.1. These rectilinear cottages help lead the eye to the High Street creating an enclosed horizontal emphasis.

5.4. Church House

- 5.4.1. The main façade of this two and a half storey house appears Victorian in style, employing stone dressings to the brick façade. Earlier brick is visible to the side, with plat bands at ceiling level at the first and second floors. The main façade faces the church.



Figure 15 1-3 Sellman Street and Church House

6. Spatial Analysis, Character Area One

6.1. Public Realm

6.1.1. The road surfaces are modern tarmac throughout Sellman Street, although some historic stone paving is visible at St Lawrence Cottage, reflecting the historic nature of the street. The narrow paths throughout the churchyard are also tarmac.

6.2. Circulation

6.2.1. The footpaths through the church run north to south, and east to west, connecting the churchyard to the High Street. There is also a bench sited within the churchyard.



Figure 16 Paths through the Churchyard link the church to the High Street



6.2.2. The church, churchyard and former vicarage area is characterised by extensive green spaces and mature yew trees. The churchyard provides a pleasant and welcoming open green space, and the well-used paths into the churchyard from Sellman Street and the high street link areas of the village together. Although easily accessible and open, the yew tree canopies to the east and the surrounding boundary walls give a sense of enclosure and help to define the space. Archaeological investigations suggest a link between the church and land within Parkside. This land continues the visual appeal of the green space and lack of public access accentuates the isolated atmosphere of Parkside.

6.3. Important Trees and Hedgerows

6.3.1. Several mature yew trees provide a strong sense of enclosure from within the churchyard, and create focal points in views along Sellman Street. The hedges surrounding the churchyard and Vicarage are visually important in creating clearly enclosed areas.



Figure 17 Mature yews create a sense of enclosure in the churchyard

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Gnosall Conservation Area Appraisal
 Character Area 1
 Trees, Boundaries and Spaces

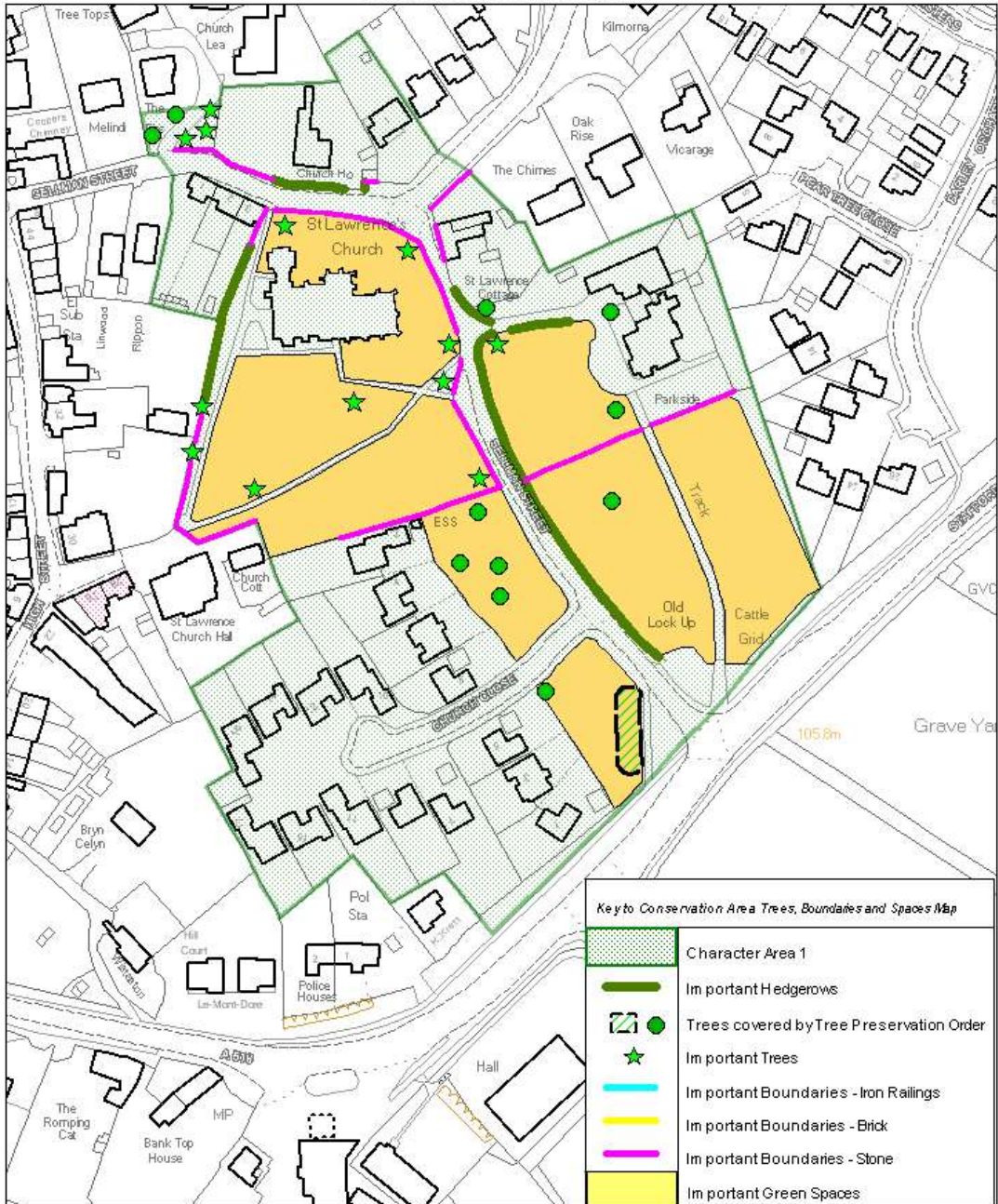


Figure 18 Important Trees and Hedgerows, Character area One

6.4. Boundary Types

- 6.4.1. The stone, brick and hedge boundaries surrounding the church on all sides emphasise its elevated position and create a clear distinction between the church and surrounding houses. At the crossroads at Glebe Lane and Sellman Street, the coursed stone wall with fine joints and chamfered copings creates a striking entrance into this area, the fine chevron tooling acting as directional arrows.
- 6.4.2. The stone and brick combined in the boundary walls of the surrounding houses along Sellman Street emphasise the linear nature of the street. The brick walls are of Flemish bond. Some boundary walls appear to contain reused historic stone, with the presence of tool marks, possibly reused from the medieval and later buildings once sited around the former vicarage and Church Close area. Portions of historic wall are also visible along Sellman Street running between properties at right angles to the road, possibly the remnants of earlier property boundaries.
- 6.4.3. The exceptional wrought iron railings at the southwest of the churchyard retain their graceful, slender design, the irregularity of shape reflecting their handmade quality, although in need of repair in places. This creates a distinctive entrance to the churchyard. The adjacent replacement gates do not replicate the fine, delicate nature of the original work but nevertheless form a distinctive boundary.



Figure 19 Wrought iron railings at the south entrance to the churchyard

6.4.4. At the south of the churchyard is a rough-faced coursed sandstone wall of a more reddish hue than at Sellman Street, separating Church Close development from the churchyard. The coping here is moulded, and the wall appears to be truncated at the south where it meets the adjoining east wall. These are not bonded together and are of differing stone, suggesting the red sandstone wall is a remnant of a boundary wall associated with medieval buildings occupying the site of Parkside. This wall reappears at Parkside as a ha-ha and is present on the map of 1881 as an apparent continuation of the churchyard boundary wall.





Figure 20 Church boundary wall and truncated boundary wall formerly stretching to Parkside

6.5. Church Close

- 6.5.1. This late 20th century development of 16 detached houses is sited on the grounds of demolished Manor Farm, to the south of the churchyard. Each building is two storey, detached and square on plan, with gabled roofs. Built of red brick, dentilation at eaves level reflects the local vernacular but the shallow depth of the dentilation and lack of any other vernacular feature gives a relatively plain appearance to these houses.
- 6.5.2. Their position is key in their neutrality within the conservation area. The two end houses at the north and south of the development face slightly inwards on the rest of the group. This contains the group visually and does not allow them to dominate the green, open space of this area. The cul-de-sac arrangement does not reflect the historic linear layout of the village, but its siting behind the grass bank and screen of mature lime, ash and yew trees makes the development unobtrusive. It does not obstruct any views or form a visual incoherence to any other part of the conservation area due to its siting and enclosure.
- 6.5.3. Church Close is a private cul-de- sac with no public open space. The wall in front of the grass bank is truncated and the area could benefit from a boundary wall which would give a sense of enclosure and connect this space visually to the houses.
- 6.5.4. There are no physical boundaries between the properties, which portrays a modern housing estate feel. Facing southeast, the row of Poplars at the edge of the conservation area also forms a screen against the busy Stafford Road, but the lack of boundary wall in front of the houses causes space to 'fall away' creating an unenclosed character not found elsewhere in the conservation area.



Figure 21 Church Close

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Gnosall Conservation Area Character Appraisal Map
Character Area 2: High Street, Stafford Road and Station Road

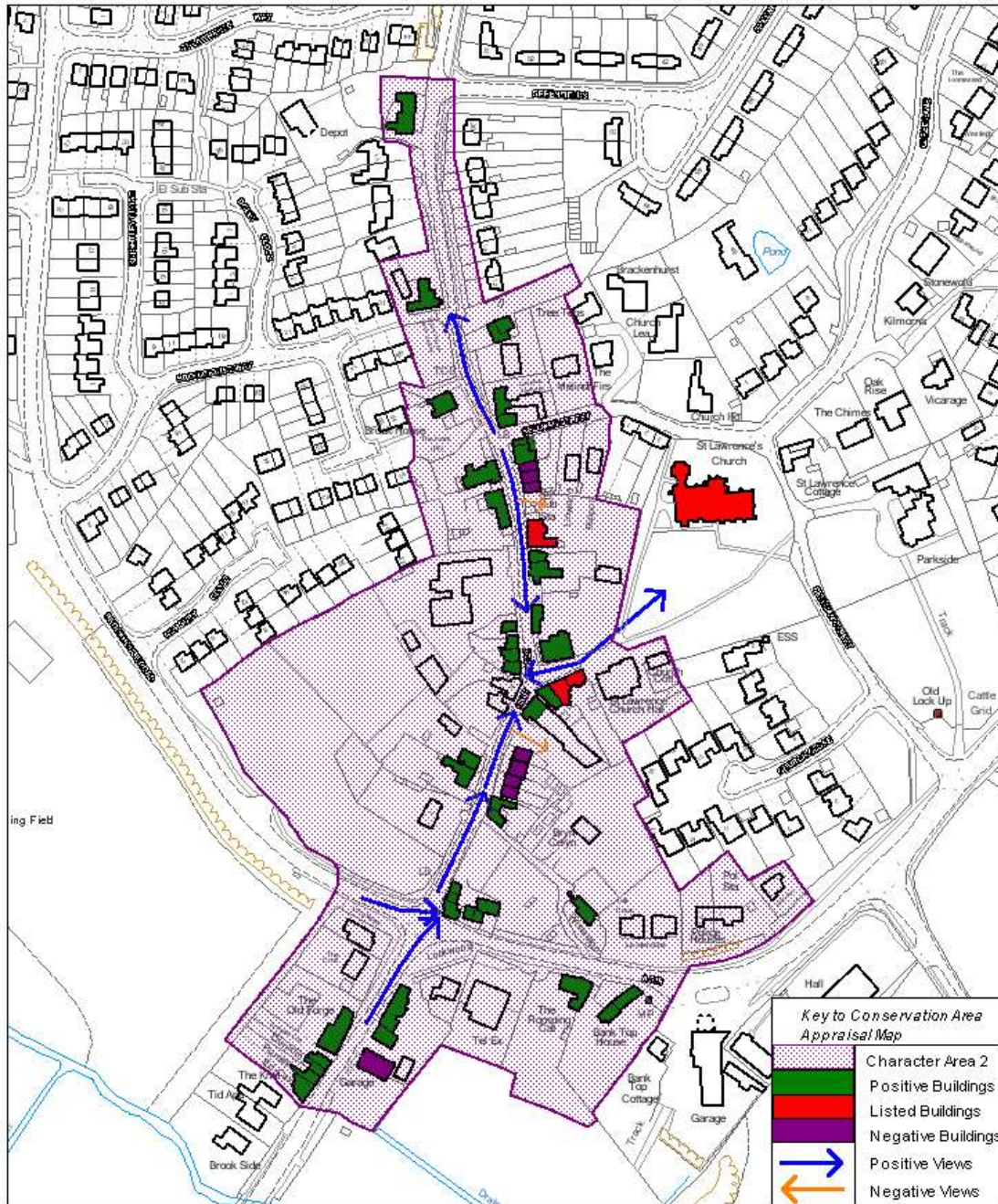


Figure 22 Character Area Two

7. Character Area Two: High Street, Stafford Road and Station Road

7.1. Built Character

7.1.1. The High Street forms a contrast to the nucleated layout of character area one, being linear with densely sited properties fronting the High Street in a continuous building line.

7.2. Building Types

7.2.1. The buildings fronting the high street range from modest, rectilinear, two storey cottages, to grand three storey Georgian and Victorian houses, often with shops on the ground floor and accommodation above. Modest cottages are present at the south of High Street leading to Station Road, and Georgian houses and two storey cottages are found to the north along Audmore Road.

7.3. Scale, Plot Size and Plan Form

7.3.1. The rich variety of historic buildings spanning the centuries in High Street creates a wealth of contrasting shapes and forms. Buildings form a strong building line fronting the street allowing the creation of a series of interesting views, assisted by the fluctuating height and scale of the buildings, and the curve and rise of the street. The relatively narrow street, contrasting taller buildings and established building line, creates a sense of enclosure.

7.3.2. Cottages are usually semidetached or terraced, one bay each, and tend to be two storey, and the Georgian houses are detached and three storey. The Victorian 30 High Street contrasts with the other cottages and taller houses being square on plan and two storeys. Roof pitches vary in steepness but are generally gabled, although 24 High Street is hipped, bringing in variety and contrast at the top of High Street. 44-46 High Street and 1-3 Station Road are double pitched.



Figure 23 The contrasting heights and ages of buildings along High Street add variety and create interesting views.

7.4. Architectural Styles and Features

- 7.4.1. There is a variety of small-scale 16th to 19th century cottages and grander, more consciously styled, Georgian and Victorian buildings. Significant lengths of wrought and cast iron railings are found throughout the High Street with an array of motifs. Brick dentilation at eaves level is prevalent throughout on small cottages and tall Victorian buildings. These features enrich and add interest to the variety of buildings found in Gnosall.
- 7.4.2. Surviving historic doors are rare, although a six-panelled raised and fielded door survives at 13 High Street. The portico entrance to 30 High Street, with unusually moulded capitals, arched two-panelled door, and railings, creates an attractive feature in the street scene.



Figure 24 Architectural embellishments create interest in the street scene

7.4.3. There is high survival rate of historic fenestration and glass. Historic glass is found at 28 High Street. Church Cottage possesses outward opening, vertically hung casements divided vertically by three glazing bars, with stone mullioned frames and rusticated stone surrounds. Numbers 13 and 14 High Street retain outward opening, vertically hung casements with no cill, and some historic glass remains. Numbers 22 and 24 High Street retain vertically sliding sash windows, both with stone cills and lintels. Gauged brick lintels are prevalent in brick at the former Wheelwrights, and in stone at 22, 24, 26 and 28 High Street.



Figure 25 Retention of historic fenestration and decorative lintels add to the built character

7.5. Building Materials

- 7.5.1. The Former Duke's Head is the only thatched building in High Street. Plain clay tiles otherwise dominate. Brick, sometimes painted, is present predominantly in Flemish bond, but is used in Herringbone pattern as an infill to the timber frame of the former Dukes Head. Painted stone and render is also common. Stone is less prevalent as a building material in High Street but is used for detailing, for example the stone quoins on 30 High Street and the lintels of Georgian and Victorian houses.
- 7.5.2. The timber frame of 26 High Street is visible from the east, as is the frame of the former Duke's Head. 11-13 High Street is rendered and painted white but is of timber frame construction, as is 1 Station Road.



Figure 26 Timber, render, brick and stone feature

7.6. Colour Palette

- 7.6.1. A variety of red and brown bricks, and painted brick and render of whitish hues, form the background colour palette, and painted architectural features, such as doors, canopies and lintels, add vitality and richness to the street.

8. Listed Buildings, Character Area Two

8.1. The Former Duke's Head Public House

- 8.1.1. This Grade II 18th century timber framed range with a thatched roof and swept dormers is a focal building leading north along High Street. The herringbone brick panel infill and visible timber frame contrast with the neighbouring white render and brick.



Figure 27 Former Duke's Head

8.2. 26 - 28 High Street

- 8.2.1. Dating to at least the 17th century, this pair of Grade II rectilinear timber framed cottages was refronted in brick in the mid-to-late 18th century. 26-28 High Street are timber framed with a sandstone plinth and a steeply pitched roof. The architectural features, such as fluted stone keystones, mullioned shop front and historic glass, add further historic and aesthetic interest, and its position in the east of the street leads the eye towards the churchyard.

9. Positive Buildings, Character Area Two

9.1. 11-13 and 15-17 High Street

- 9.1.1. Evidence suggests 11-13 is a three-bay timber-framed former hall house once containing an open hall, possibly dating to the 16th century (Shrayne, N.D., p24). Externally, no timber frame is visible and the extent of survival is unknown internally. 11-13 and 15-17 High Street form a visually important group, their rectilinear form following the building line and creating a horizontal emphasis leading up to the cross roads.



Figure 28 11-15 High Street



Figure 29 Stables and Hayloft (left), 22 and 24 High Street (centre) and 11-13 and 15-17 High Street (right).

9.2. 22 and 24 High Street

- 9.2.1. These form an important focus at the top of High Street and contrast to adjacent Grade II listed 26-28 High Street in scale and plan form.

9.3. Former Stables and Hay Loft, High Street

- 9.3.1. This backs directly onto the street providing a bold elevation to the street and a contrast in building type. The characteristic dentilation is observed along with fine quality gauged brickwork. It retains lunette pitching holes that reflect its agricultural use and its simple elongated form and position opposite 17 High Street creates enclosure in the street scene.



Figure 30 Stables with Hayloft above



Figure 31 3-5 High Street

9.4. 3-5 High Street

- 9.5. These rectilinear cottages possess good proportions, sashes and openings with little visible alteration externally from High Street. The horizontal emphasis created by its parallel position to High Street invites views up to the centre of Gnosall.

10. Spatial Analysis, Character Area Two

10.1. Public Realm

- 10.1.1. The linear High Street is used as a circulation route by pedestrians running north and south. Pathways through the churchyard connect the church area to High street.

10.2. Open Spaces and Gardens

- 10.2.1. The buildings of High Street front the road in a clear building line with few spaces in between. As the plots become less dense heading north along Audmore Road, property boundaries increase in size and tend to be set back from the road with front or side gardens. This has a more suburban feel and signifies the movement out of the built-up High Street away from the village centre. Along High Street, gap sites create uninviting spaces that jar with the established building line. Travelling south towards Stafford Road and Station Road, buildings are dispersed but tend to front the pavement, following the building line found at High Street.

10.3. Boundary Types

- 10.3.1. Boundaries along High Street are rare as the buildings are sited close to the street, with no enclosed spaces in front. Moving north, plot sizes become bigger and front gardens are surrounded by stone and brick walls, and there is a rich collection of wrought and cast iron railings with stone footings. Decorative stone gate piers are also present at cottages and houses heading north.



Figure 32 Surviving railings, gate and gatepiers





Figure 33 Surviving railings



Figure 34 Surviving railings



Figure 35 Historic railings represent a rare surviving feature

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Gnosall Conservation Area Appraisal
Character Area 2
Boundaries and Spaces

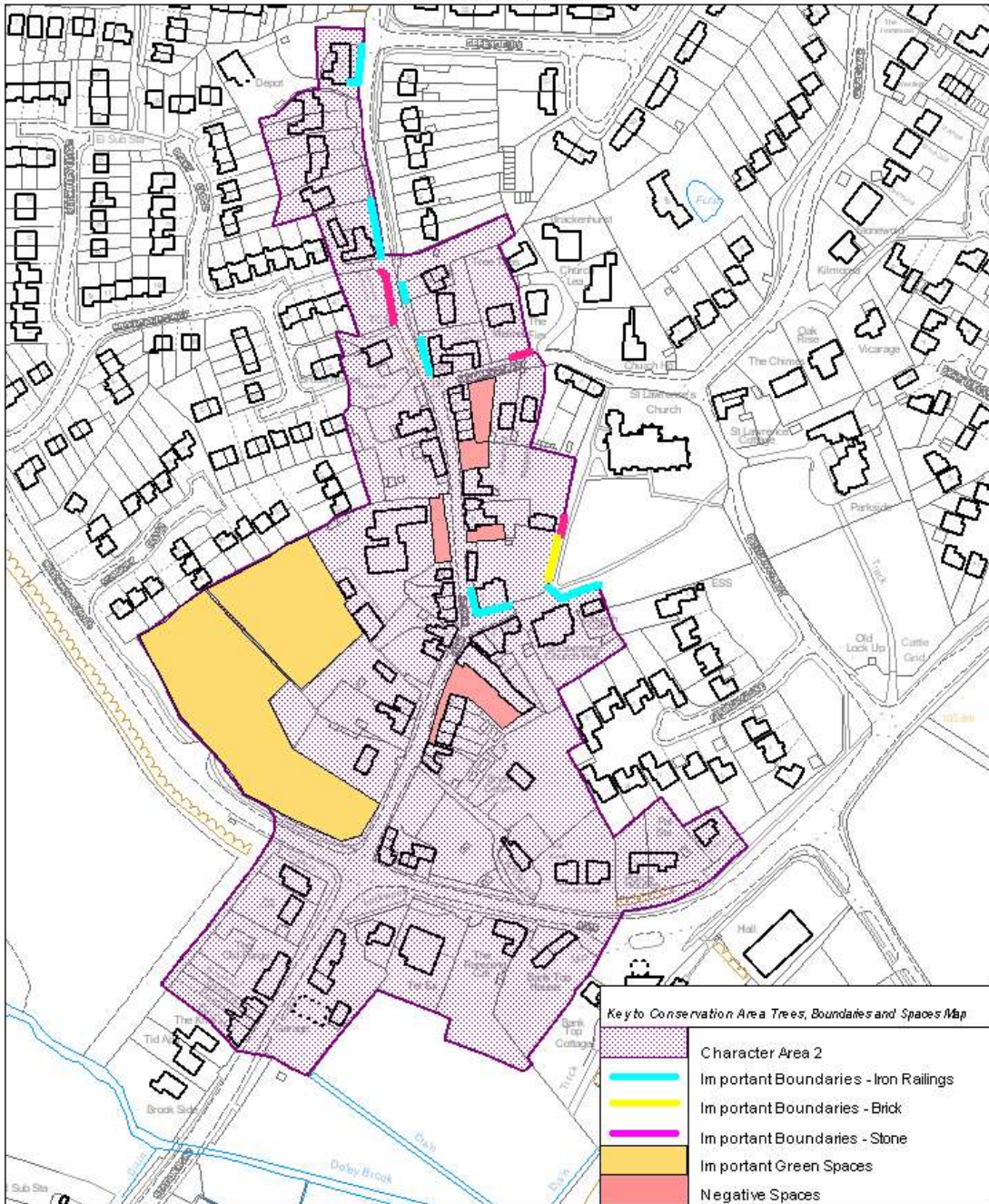


Figure 36 Character Area Two: Trees, Boundaries and Spaces

11. Important Views

11.1. The Churchyard

- 11.1.1. The churchyard provides positive views of the church, and Parkside to the east. To the northwest of the churchyard, views of gables, roofscapes and chimneys invite exploration into the High Street.



Figure 37 Churchyard facing southwest

11.2. Sellman Street

- 11.3. Approaching the conservation area from the east, St Lawrence's Cottage, the church and Church House create an enclosed group, emphasised by the church boundary walls and mature yew canopies, creating an inviting view into the conservation area. Facing west, the contrasting scales of the church, Church House and 1-3 Sellman Street invite interest and lead towards High Street. High Street
- 11.4. Looking north along High Street, the contrast in scale, height and roof pitches between earlier buildings and later Victorian buildings creates interest. The curve of the street and the dense plots create welcoming views. Contrast in scale is again observed with the horizontal emphasis created by the former Dukes Head and the quoins of the adjacent building creating strong vertical emphasis. Shallow pitched roofs contrast with steeper pitches. Wrought iron railings create rhythm and add historical and aesthetic interest throughout the north of High Street.



Figure 38 Approaching the conservation area from the east



Figure 39 Sellman Street



Figure 40 Contrasts in scale add interest along High Street

12. Key Positive Characteristics, Gnosall Conservation Area

Built Character

Building Types

- Dwellings from the 16th century onwards, and shops with accommodation above, possessing variety in age and appearance.

Scale, Plot Size and Plan Form

- Contrasts between rectilinear cottages and grander Victorian houses in the High Street and Churchyard area. Buildings along High Street tend to abut the street in a dense building line, with no front gardens. Heading north and south, front gardens and larger plots are the norm.
- The quiet, enclosed area of Sellman Street surrounding the church has more generous plots, and buildings face towards the church, creating a nucleated site.
- Two storey rectilinear cottages with two or three bays, and taller three storey Victorian buildings, most with simple gabled roofs.

Architectural Styles and Features

- Brick dentilation at eaves, stone or brick detailing at lintels and window surrounds, wrought and cast iron railings.
- A variety of timber sash and casement windows, bay windows and Victorian shop fronts.

Building Materials

- Soft red brick, stone and Staffordshire blue roof tiles.

Colour Palette

- Warm reds, browns and white hues dominate.

Spatial Analysis

Public Realm

- The green open space of the churchyard provides public realm to the village and is well used. The pathways through the churchyard connect this area to the High Street.

Open Spaces and Gardens

- The character of the churchyard is gained from the contrast between the church and smaller surrounding cottages, stone boundary walls, the mature yews and the relatively unspoilt setting.
- The green space surrounding Parkside is visually important in continuing the open green space of the churchyard and creating a sense of separation between the former vicarage and the rest of the village, and is intrinsic to the setting of the house itself.
- The dense plots in the core of the village create a built up character and create attractive views throughout High Street. North and south of the High Street plots are more dispersed, and plots to the north are larger with front gardens.
- Historic plot boundaries survive, despite continued expansion to both sides of High Street. Backland development has occurred at the rear of numbers 38 to 46 High Street.

Boundary Types

- Strong visual boundaries of stone, brick and hedgerows are present in the church area, and a rich selection of railings is found in the north of High Street and Audmore Road.

Summary of Important Views

- Views from Sellman Street and Glebe Lane at the conservation area boundary: the setting of the church is respected by the lower buildings and smaller scale adjacent cottages.
- Views from the north, east and west of the churchyard: adjacent buildings are set back from the churchyard, respecting the setting of the churchyard and church.
- High Street: views north and south encompass a variety of cottages and taller buildings in dense building plots with a strongly established building line.

13. Negative Aspects that Impact on the Character of the Conservation Area

13.1. In order to manage the conservation area's special architectural and historic character and appearance, it is essential to identify and address any features that are diluting its special character. The following issues are identified as having a negative impact on Gnosall Conservation Area, and should be read in conjunction with the Summary of Special Interest and the Key Positive Characteristics Summary in consideration of change or development within the conservation area, or its setting.

13.2. 20th Century Development: Harm to Setting and Historic Layout

13.2.1. Map regression illustrates that Gnosall has developed in a clear linear fashion over time. The High Street plots are dense and the village is surrounded by agricultural land to the east and west on maps from the 19th century to 1924. The nature of 20th century development has led to loss of this rural setting, as development is laid out in plots behind the High Street, whilst the strong linear layout has been diluted where new houses have been set back from the roadside. Subdivision of burgage plots and substantial development to the rear of historic plots have diluted the historic plan form of the village. Highway widening works have altered the historic layout of the village roads to serve 20th century development.

13.3. Void Spaces and Gap Sites

13.4. Negative void spaces and gap sites are emphasised through the distinctly linear nature of the High Street. This weakens the building line that helps to create key views within the street and diminishes the setting of the historic buildings.

13.5. Introduction of Modern Materials

13.5.1. Plastic doors and windows, and stained timber windows create a jarring and anonymous look to some historic buildings and as a result much historic fenestration has been lost. The use of breezeblock and fencing with concrete footings in boundary walls also has a negative impact on the historic and aesthetic character of Gnosall. Historic boundaries and their materials are significant features for the area in contributing to the general character and sense of enclosure found in areas of Gnosall.

13.6. Commercial Signage

13.6.1. 44-48 High Street is an 18th century or earlier building but is currently marred by signage that is inappropriate for the conservation area and building. Its colour, design and materials do not respect the character of the conservation area. This creates a jarring effect in the High Street. The presence of A boards outside forms a visual intrusion which are again jarring in colour. Similar signage, although less visually intrusive, is observed at 1 Station Road. Well thought out and sympathetically designed signage could enhance the character of the conservation area and create an inviting atmosphere.

13.7. Design of 20th Century Development

13.7.1. Some extensions to properties do not take into account the historic plan form or detailing found on buildings in Gnosall. Some 20th century development along High Street does not adhere to the building line. This creates an anonymous feel to some areas and dilutes the character of the conservation area.



Figure 41 The introduction of modern materials has had a negative impact on character

14. Protecting the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

- 14.1. Policies for the protection and management of the historic environment through the development management process are set out within NPPF Paragraphs 127 through to 141, and in Saved Policies of Stafford Borough Local Plan, Policies E&D2: *Consideration of Landscape or Townscape Setting*, E&D 18: *Development Likely to Affect Conservation Areas*, E&D19: *Accommodating New Development within Conservation Areas*, E&D20: *Demolition of Buildings in Conservation Areas*, E&D21: *Advertisements in Conservation Areas*, E&D22: *Proposals for Blinds, Canopies and Shutters*, E&D23: *Development Proposals Affecting Listed Buildings*, E&D24: *Demolition/Partial Demolition of Listed Buildings*, E&D25: *Proposals to Convert or Extend a Listed Building*, E&D43: *Trees in Conservation Areas* and E&D44: *Development Affecting Trees and Hedgerows*.
- 14.2. The draft Plan for Stafford Borough sets out policies for the protection and management of the historic environment through policies N9 and paragraphs 12.27 to 12.58. These should be used in conjunction with this appraisal to guide or assess any future development within the Gnosall conservation area.
- 14.3. Other organisations, such as the County Council Highways Authority, and statutory undertakers also have their own commitments to protect the character and appearance of the conservation area in the exercise of their duties.
- 14.4. To manage and protect the special historic character and appearance of The Gnosall Conservation Area in the exercise of these policies and duties:
- The existing special historic character and appearance of the conservation area and all features identified as Positive should be retained and reinforced.
 - Further works that harm the significance of the area should be avoided.
 - *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, English Heritage, 2010) or its successor should be used for guidance.
 - Existing and emerging design or conservation guidance published by Stafford Borough Council and English Heritage guidance should be consulted where relevant, such as *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice* (English Heritage, 2006), *Living Buildings*

in a Living Landscape (English Heritage, 2006), *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (English Heritage, 2008), *Streets for All* (English Heritage, 2004), *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (English Heritage, 2011).

- 14.5. Some works that could harm the character or appearance of the conservation area can be carried out under “permitted development rights”, which means that home owners do not need to apply for planning permission. Owners are nevertheless encouraged to take heed of the special historic character and appearance of the area when carrying out these works.

15. Recommendations for Future Management

- 15.1. In general terms, any subsequent development in Gnosall should consider the historic buildings and their setting, the historic layout and street pattern, significant spaces, massing, volume and scale of the existing and proposed buildings, and the employment of vernacular details.
- 15.2. Some of the features that contribute to the character of Gnosall Conservation Area are vulnerable to potential damage or could be lost through permitted development rights. In particular there is a high survival rate of historic window joinery and distinctive iron railings which are currently unprotected. It is therefore recommended that an Article 4 Direction is introduced to cover certain properties in the Gnosall Conservation Area. This will protect the special character of the area through the introduction of a planning permission requirement so that the change in question can be considered in light of the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.

16. Boundary Revisions

- 16.1. An area to the northwest of High Street previously included within the conservation area was developed after initial designation of the conservation area took place in 1974. The subsequent development does not reflect the architectural and historical character of the conservation area and thus does not warrant the additional planning controls associated with conservation area status. This area is now deleted from the conservation area.
- 16.2. Across the conservation area, development since designation in 1974 has resulted in some properties being partially within and partially outside the conservation area boundary line, making it confusing for property owners and making the management of the conservation area difficult. Therefore the boundary has been adjusted and rationalised to reflect the historic and architectural significance of the area as it currently stands. There is a similar change to the north of the conservation area, where the conservation area boundary ran through the front gardens to four 20th century houses on Audmore Road (numbers 4 to 11). The properties to either side of numbers 5-11 contribute architectural and historical interest to the conservation area, so these are included within the conservation area boundary to make it clearer for property owners.



Figure 42 Properties at the northwest of the conservation area



Figure 43 Properties at the northwest of the conservation area

- 16.3. The boundary line previously cut across the property boundaries of numbers 12-30 Audmore Road. These properties are excluded as they do not contribute to the architectural and historic character of the area and do not warrant additional planning controls. The conservation area boundary at the north includes the property boundaries of number 10 Audmore Road (within the existing conservation area boundary) as this boundary wall contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 16.4. The green space to the southwest of High Street is historically connected to the village, initially as unenclosed land in the medieval period, farmed communally, and later as enclosed fields. Today the green space to the north is used by the parish, and the southern field is used for grazing. These uses have ensured the green, open space character has been retained, and its use by the village reflects historical communal usage. This space is also visually important in creating an introduction to the historic core of the conservation area from the south. Inclusion within the conservation area will allow this historically important green space the additional controls associated with conservation area status, to ensure any future development is considered in light of its historical connection to the village, the remaining historical field boundaries, and impact on the surrounding historic buildings.



Figure 44 Green space at the southwest of the conservation area. The field boundary hedge is present on historical maps





Figure 45 Properties along Audmore Road with important historic property boundaries



Figure 46 1902 Ordnance Survey Map illustrating the field plots and their association with the village. Reproduced with permission from Staffordshire Record Office

Figure 47 Green space used as meadow, with existing historic field boundary

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**Gnosall Conservation Area
 Revised Boundary - Designated 25 November 2013**

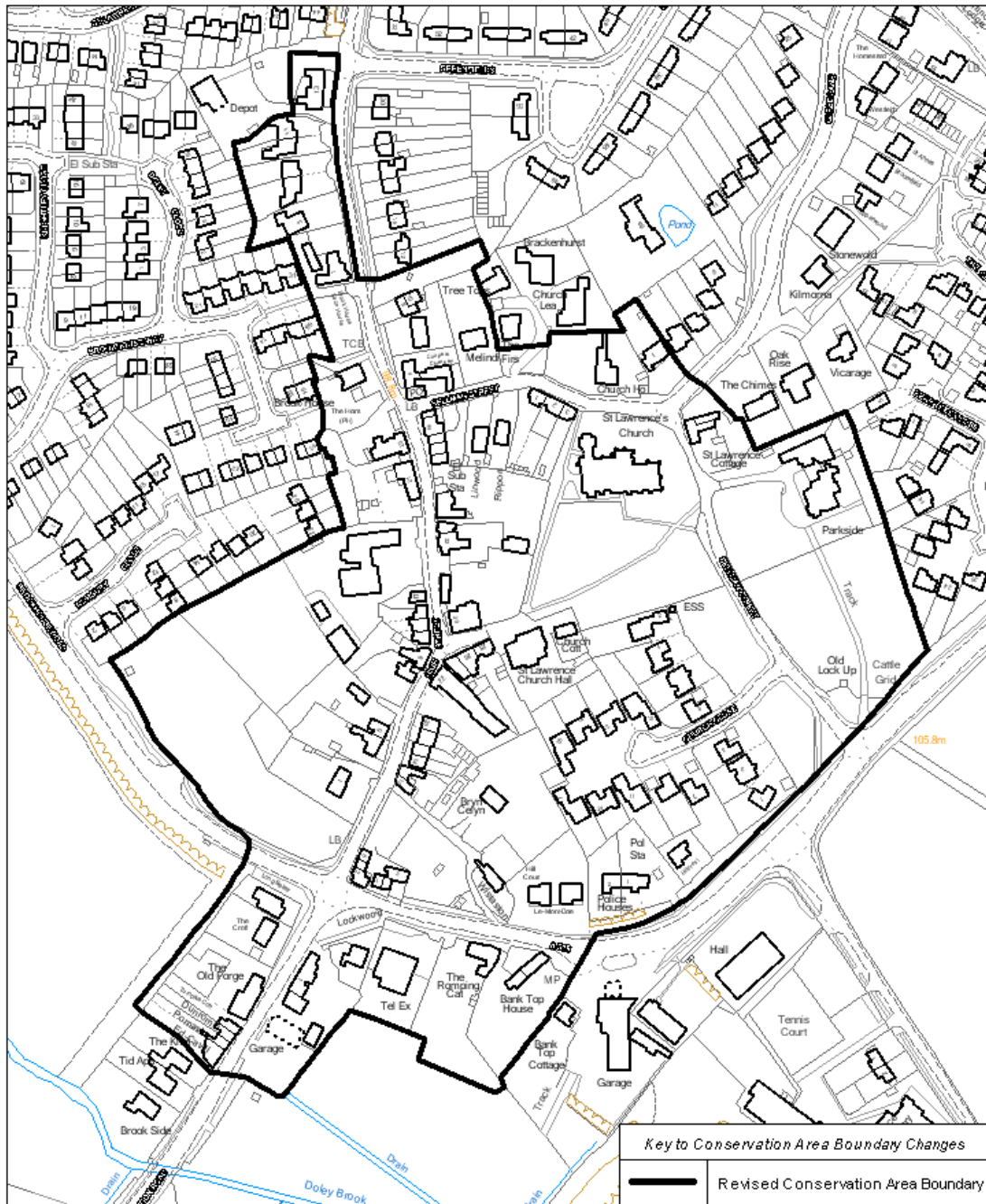


Figure 48 Conservation Area Boundary

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Appendix One
Statutory List Descriptions

List entry Number: 1242645
CHURCH OF ST LAWRENCE

Grade: I
Date first listed: 15-Jan-1968
Date of most recent amendment: 10-Jan-1972

GNOSALL
603/13/1 CHURCH OF ST LAWRENCE 15-JAN-68 (Formerly listed as:
CHURCH OF ST LAURENCE)

GV I

One of the six collegiate churches of Staffordshire. Cruciform with central tower. Core C12 to which belong the crossing arches and much of the walling. Refashioning in C13 and C14. Clerestory of nave and upper part of tower late, mediaeval. The fine C14 East window has good modern painted glass (1922). Mutilated alabaster effigy of knight C15. North aisle roof C16; other roofs modern. C12 triforium in South transept is an interesting and unusual feature. Fittings mostly modern

Name: LOCK UP

List entry Number: 1259930

Grade: II

Date first listed: 10-Jan-1972

Date of most recent amendment: 15-Mar-2013

Summary of Building

A village lock-up of 1830-32, designed and built by James Trubshaw, re-erected on a new site within the village in 1971-2.

Reasons for Designation

Gnosall village lock-up, built in 1830-32 by James Trubshaw, and re-erected on a new site within the village in 1971-2, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

* Architectural interest: it displays a confident, but suitably austere, classical design;

* Intactness: with the exception of the early-C21 door, the building is substantially intact;

* Rarity: as one of only three lock-ups which still survive in Staffordshire;

* Historic interest: as the local response to the confinement of inebriates and miscreants.

History

By the late 1820s, as a result of rising unemployment and low wages, Gnosall was plagued by unrest and poaching. At a meeting of the parish Select Vestry on 10 June 1830, with the threat of the Swing Riots, a widespread uprising by agricultural workers in southern England, spreading northwards, it was decided to build a lock-up. James Trubshaw (1777-1853) was appointed as architect and builder and, although work commenced later in the same year, the lock-up was only completed in 1832 after the Select Vestry agreed to pay Mr Trubshaw an extra ten pounds to finish the job. With the ending of the unrest, the lock-up, which was situated at the junction of High Street, Brookhouse Road and Stafford Street, was little used and by the 1950s it had become a hen house. In 1964 Staffordshire County Council drew up plans to widen the road junction and move the lock-up to the County Museum at Shugborough. Its removal from the village was strongly opposed to by the Gnosall Women's Institute who, as their project to

commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the National Federation of Women's Institutes in 1965, set about raising funds to purchase a piece of land on which it could be re-sited. Although the Institute initially struggled to raise sufficient funds, their plans came to fruition after a piece of land on the south-east side of Sellman Street was gifted to them by a member's husband. Despite the lock-up being partially damaged before it could be moved, after a lorry ran into it, work on its re-erection began in 1971 and was completed the following year.

Details

MATERIALS: the building is constructed from rock-faced sandstone with a sandstone flagged roof.

PLAN: it is square on plan.

EXTERIOR: the lock-up is comprised of five, large, rusticated ashlar courses with an eaves band and a pyramidal roof surmounted by a ball finial. On the south elevation there is a triangular pedimented doorway with a rusticated surround containing an early-C21, nail studded, oak door; the door contains some timbers from the original C19 door. The north, west and east elevations are blind.

List entry Number: 1258841

26 AND 28, HIGH STREET

Grade: II

Date first listed: 15-Apr-1988

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

GNOSALL HIGH STREET 1. 5373 SJ 82 SW 13/2A Nos 26 and 28 II

2. Pair of cottages. C17, refronted mid/late C18, with some mid/late C19 alterations and additions to rear. Timber framed with whitewashed brick infill, refronted in Flemish bond brick with brick dentil cornice, on sandstone plinth. Plain-tile roof; 2 brick ridge stacks. Each cottage has a 2-unit plan; No 26 on right is extended to L-plan to rear. Each is of 2 storeys; 2-window range. Central plank doors. No 26 has hood on shaped brackets. Large C19 canted bay to left of 3 segmental- arched lights with shafts and moulded cornice. No 28 has C19 painted wood door surround of pilaster strips with entablature and shallow pyramid motifs to angles. C19 wood casement to left. Other windows have old wood and iron casements. Ground floor has 3-light casements, with painted stone cambered arches and fluted keystones, and horizontal glazing bars throughout. First floor has 2-light casements with glazing bars. Left return side has timber framed gable. Rear has exposed framing. No 26 has gabled wing of one storey and attic on left. No 28 has small lean-to range on right. Both are of colourwashed brick with dentil cornices. Interior of No 28: room to right has ceiling beam and C19 fireplace. C19 straight flight and winder staircase. On first floor 2 rooms have stud partition. Room to left has Art Nouveau grate. Interior of No 26 not inspected.

National Grid Reference: SJ 82945 20803

Name: FORMER DUKES HEAD PUBLIC HOUSE
List entry Number: 1258548
FORMER DUKES HEAD PUBLIC HOUSE, HIGH STREET

Grade: II

Date first listed: 04-Jun-1981

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

GNOSALL High Street 1. 5373 SJ 82 SW 13/2 Former Dukes Head P.H.

II Circa C18 painted range with thatched roof, possibly with earlier core. Gable and has late C19 ornate bargeboards. Two storey, three window range. Casements. "Eyebrow" eaves over one of the first floor windows. Two moulded doorcases, one with flat hood on brackets. Ground floor C19 canted bay window and small modern shop front. Brick chimney stack at ridge, another later brick stack rising from front wall.

National Grid Reference: SJ 82932 20873

Appendix Two

Glossary of Terms

Conservation Area

Conservation Areas are defined in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as “*areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.*”

Positive Building

A building identified as a contributor to the special character of the conservation area by way of its architectural and/or historical qualities.

Positive Space

An area identified as a contributor to the special character of the conservation area.

Negative Building

A building identified as detrimental to the special character or appearance of the conservation area, and would warrant enhancement or replacement in any future proposals involving this building. The negative effect may be derived from, for example, its siting, plan form, scale, height, massing or materials, and could not be readily reversed by minor alterations.

Negative Space

A space identified as detrimental to the special character and appearance of the conservation area, and would warrant enhancement in any future proposals involving this space.

Neutral Building

A building that does not contribute to, or harm, the special character and appearance of the conservation area. It does not possess qualities that contribute to the architectural or historical character of the conservation area, but does not visually intrude or cause a jarring effect by way of its of its siting, plan form, scale, height, massing, materials or colour palette, for example. The building may warrant enhancement in future proposals.

Neutral Space

A space that does not contribute to, or harm, the special character of the conservation area. It does not possess qualities that contribute to the architectural or historical character of the conservation area, but does not affect the character negatively.

Setting

Setting is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as *“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”*