

## Appendix 1: Draft Areley Kings Conservation Area Character Appraisal

### 1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

The Adopted Wyre Forest District Local Plan (January 2004) contains policies, outlined in Appendix 2 of that document, to assist in preserving and enhancing Conservation Areas within the District: these will be used when considering any development or other proposals within the defined boundaries of this Conservation Area. Appendix 1 of the same document shows the boundary of the District, in map form, together with a number of the features referred to in this document. However, Policy CA5 lapsed in September 2007, as part of the transitional arrangements set out under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Subsequently, the Core Strategy for the District, Adopted in December 2010, contains Policy CP11, referring to design quality and the need for consideration of local distinctiveness.

### 2. LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

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 This Act was superseded by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.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

Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS 5) Planning for the Historic Environment gives further guidance on Conservation Areas, their designation and their assessment, and clarifies the responsibilities of both owners of properties within Conservation Areas, and the Local Authorities whose areas the Conservation Area falls within.

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

The Adopted Wyre Forest District Local Plan (January 2004) contains various policies describing the aims and objectives of the Local Authority with relation to the wider

historic environment, and in particular to the preservation and enhancement of the conservation areas within the District. Furthermore, Policy CP11 of the Adopted Core Strategy refers to local distinctiveness and design quality, especially with developments impacting on the historic environment. These policies are contained within Appendix 1 of this Appraisal.

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

### 3. ANALYSIS OF CHARACTER

#### 3.1 Setting and topography

Areley Kings Conservation Area is set around the historic hamlet of Areley Kings, to the south-west edge of Stourport-on-Severn, distinct from the more modern settlement of the village of Areley Kings, which has developed around the settlement of Areley Common. Split between two groups of buildings, the Conservation Area is split between high ground to the west, overlooking the River Severn and lower ground to the east. The underlying geology of the area is a Triassic Sandstone, forming part of the Wildmoor Sandstone Formation. The eastern parts, together with a small part of the north-western area of the Conservation Area lie within the SFRA Level1 Flood Plain.

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




## 3.2 Historic evolution

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

The name Areley Kings is subject of some debate, but it is probable that it is a derivative and corruption of Ernleye, an Anglo-Saxon word meaning a clearing where eagles are present. The “Kings” element arises from the area being within a Royal Manor, owned by Edith, the wife of Edward the Confessor, and subsequently by William I. The Domesday Book mentioned Ernleye as being within the King’s ownership.

During the Medieval Period, little altered within the hamlet, except the changes in ownership. Areley Manor saw the creation of a fishery on the River Severn, which is alleged to be founded by Queen Matilda in 1136 who owned the site at the time, prior her brief rule of England in 1141.

Notable dates:

1200’s	Layamon, a priest at Areley Kings, writes Brut, the first great book to be written in the English language, rather than the more common French or Latin, describing King Lear and Arthur.	
1500’s	South Tower of St Bartholomew’s church constructed.	
1780	Areley House constructed whilst Areley Hall was being restored for Sampson Lloyd, of the banking family, and Sarah Zachary;	
1848	Parish Award for Areley Common, leading to the Enclosure of the Common and surrounding land.	
1869	First reaping machine used, at Red House Farm, Stourport.	
1885	St Bartholomew’s Church is restored.	
1930’s	Portions of Areley Kings incorporated in Stourport Urban District.	
1940’s	Walshes Farm purchased by Stourport Urban District Council, and developed as a major housing scheme, with an estimated population of 10,000.	

*Layamon, author of Brut*

### 3.3 Land-uses

Land uses in the Area are as follows:

- a) The predominant land-use is residential, the majority of which is in historic properties; some modern development occurs abutting the Area, both to the north-east and the south-west.
- b) The Church, Rectory and Church House form an important element to the Area, and dominate the western half of the Area;
- c) The land to the west and north-west of the church, and the land to the south of Areley Lane, both provide important open spaces in the Area, retaining the rural character and feel of the hamlet. The latter area is also important, creating a vital buffer zone between the modern housing development and the Area, as well as marking the historic boundary of Areley Court.

### 3.4 Colours

The principal colours within the Areas are as follows:

- White of timber-framed inset panels
- White, and off-white of painted and rendered Georgian buildings;
- Reddish-brown brickwork and creamy white mortar of Georgian and later buildings;
- Yellow-white of ashlar of Georgian buildings;
- Lighter reddish-brown and brown of cement of modern buildings;
- Dark blue of blue engineering bricks used for copings and boundary walls;
- Dark blue-grey of roofing slate



- White paint-work of window and door frames;
- Dark red of roof-tiles;
- Black of tarmacadam;
- Greens and reds of trees and shrubs;
- Black of railings and rainwater goods.
- Brown and black of timber framing

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

### 3.5 Climate

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

Most of the roofs within the Area are either pitched or hipped, between 30 and 40 degrees, giving good ability to shed rainwater. Similarly, wall copings are rounded, chamfered, or angled, allowing the discharge of water away from the structures.

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

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



### 3.7 Historic pattern and movement

Although there have been some alterations and additions to the Area, and abutting the Area during the last century, the layout and movement pattern has not changed since the early medieval period, if not before. The church has been constructed in one of the classical positions within the settlement, on the highest ground, with the large houses adjacent to it, also on higher ground, and/or abutting the river.

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

### 3.8 Illumination and night-time appearance

There are occasional standard sodium street lights within the Area, giving a warm orange-yellow lighting to the Area during hours of darkness. However, the street-lamps are standard highway luminaires, mostly with galvanised steel shafts and brackets. Whilst there are only a few of these, they are not seen as sympathetic to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, and detract from its quality as an Area of Special Architectural and/or Historic Interest.



The street-lights are centred round the more residential part (eastern) of the Area, with a single lamp opposite the turning for Church Drive.

### 3.9 Views

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

#### Within the Conservation Area

Many of the views within the Conservation Area are limited, due to the tree cover, narrow lanes, and differences in land height. However, one of the first views within the Area, entering from Dunley Road, is the partial view of the Areley House stable-block

creating an important introduction to the historic character of the Area. This is emphasised by the presence of the boundary wall of Areley House, which draws the eye

towards the stable block. However, this is soon overcome by the intrusion of the modern Areley Hall Cottages, which serve as a diametric view to the previous. The junction of Cedar Close gives a good view of both the rear of Layamon House and the rear of the stable block, with the view of the Cottages limited from the tree cover. However, this view also gives a clear sight-line down Cedar Close, and the unsympathetic character of the modern bungalows on the edge of the Area.



The other side of the lane helps to retain the rural character and feel of the area, as well as assisting in creating the “closed-in” sense of place for the Area at this point, with the topography of the land, rising up in fields and tree cover.



Views from Areley Lane down the access road to Muxlowe House and Areley Hall are important, retaining the grandeur approach of the buildings. These views are somewhat limited though due to the presence of trees forming the approach avenue down the drive.

The approach to the church and its environs opens up from the more closed-in road, with the foliage and tree cover widening out, and the sense of open space is brought through here. The church itself

is limited in views, due to the topography and the siting of the Church House. However, the church appears as one travels past the Church House, and the vista opens up across the graveyard.

#### Looking into the Conservation area

Again, due to the topography and cover, there are limited views into the Conservation Area. The view from Dunley Road is limited, although giving some idea of the character of the Area, with much of the view being of trees and road-side banks. The view looking north-east along Rectory Lane is one of the most important of the views in, giving good views, and emphasising the setting and importance of the church and its related buildings.

#### Looking out of the Conservation Area

Due to the topography and the quantity of trees, and high roadside banks and hedges, there are few views looking out of the Area. One of the few is across the footpath from the churchyard, and from the churchyard itself, where views across the country-

side from north to west. Limited views of the River Severn can also be gained here, with glimpses of boats and water snaking through the countryside. Views from the car-park at the church also look out across the same countryside, although this is limited due to the height of the hedgerow.



### 3.10 Pattern and density of building

The pattern and density of building within the Area has remained unaltered since the late Medieval period, if not prior to this. The church stands in its own grounds, with the adjacent rectory, gardens and graveyard. The construction of the Church House during the sixteenth century still followed the pattern of building, retaining the relationship of these buildings, although strictly, the bier house was outside the curtilage of the churchyard.

The other properties within the Area are generally built within their own grounds, set back from the road, although Areley House is closer to the road than others. Historic development of these plots has included the construction of buildings and properties associated with them, including the stables at Areley House, and Mucklowe House.

The buildings are generally large in size, and detached, although Areley Hall and Mucklowe House sit alongside each other, due to their historic relationship.

The exceptions to this are Areley Hall Cottages, constructed during the mid to late Twentieth Century as a pair of semi-detached properties abutting Areley Lane.

Whilst both areas of modern development abutting the Area have impinged on the historic landscape, buffer zones have been left separating both developments from the historic core of Areley Kings.

### 3.11 Type of building

The majority of the buildings in the area are residential. Several civic buildings are present within the Area, relating to each other, including the St Bartholomew's Church, the Rectory and the associated bier house.

One set of barns lie within the Area to the north of Lower House, but these have been converted into residential units during the last Century.

### 3.12 Style of buildings

There are no dominant architectural styles within the Conservation Area, reflecting the minimal historical evolution of the hamlet.

Timber-framing is present, in some of the older properties, reflecting the historical evolution of the Area. Whilst not of the early Medieval origins of the Area, both the bier house and Areley Hall, together with the adjoining Muxlowe House and the nearby barns originally associated with Lower House, are predominantly timber-framed, and date from the Sixteenth Century. Whilst the both Areley Hall and Muxlowe House have been largely covered in rough-cast render during the Nineteenth Century, elements of timber-framing can still be seen, especially on the front gables of both properties, and to the rear of Muxlowe House. Al



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



Brick vernacular exists with Lower House, a fine example of Queen Ann architecture, commonly found in farm-houses throughout Worcestershire. The associated barns of Lower House Farm, whilst constructed in timber-framing, have brick nogging rather than rendered infill panels, indicating a later date than other timber-framed buildings within the Area. Other brick vernacular can be seen with the stable-block for Areley House, constructed in a similar warm red soft brick, and creamy white lime mortar, although cement re-pointing has been undertaken during the latter part of the Twentieth Century.

Polite architecture exists within the Area, with Areley House. Constructed largely in brick, the building is faced in ashlar, reflecting the architectural period of its construction, the importance of the building in the Area, and the wealth of the original owners. The curtilage buildings, however, have been treated with a render, impinging on their historic character and appearance.



St Bartholomew's church is constructed in a range of styles, reflecting the differing ages of elements of the building. With the Norman base to the central tower, showing elements of Romanesque architecture, through to the Eighteenth Century construction of the west end of the church, with some elements of Gothick, the building gives some

indication to the continual habitation of the area over the past millennium through this variation of the architecture within the same building. The Rectory for the church is predominantly constructed in red brick, in Jacobean-style, but with later Eighteenth Century additions, including the parapet to the front (north) elevation, and the elevation facing into the churchyard (east).

### 3.13 Size and morphology of buildings

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

The older residential buildings, dating from the fifteenth century onward, tend to be large manorial-size buildings, reflecting the wealth of the Area historically. Most are either 2 ½ or 3-storey buildings, and show their period of construction, and additions, through the building materials used, ranging from the timber-framing of Muxlowe House and Areley Hall, to the soft red brick and lime mortar of Lower House, the associated barns, and the Rectory, through to the ashlar with fine lime joints of Areley House. Roofs tend to be covered in hand-made red plain clay roof-tiles, giving character to the roofs, although both Areley House and its associated stables are roofed in Welsh slate, another indication of wealth at the time, and a traditional covering for such designed properties.

The more modern buildings tend to be built in modern materials, not reflecting the architectural style of the Area, nor utilising materials which would compliment the Area. Such materials include modern stock facing bricks, and timber cladding. Concrete roof-tiles are present together with man-made fibrous cement slates.

The third element of architecture within the Area is ecclesiastical, which plays an important element in creating the setting of the Area. Here, the church shows the use of a variety of stones, and architectural styles, reflecting the different ages of construction of the church, from the 14th Century through to the Nineteenth Century. The church is the largest building within the Area, and retains its dominance over the settlement through its size and height, in comparison to the other buildings. Set in its graveyard, and sited above the rest of the buildings, its setting helps to emphasise its status and its size.

### 3.14 Materials and construction

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

#### a) Walls and construction methods

Red brick is the most common building material within the Area. The brick colour in the more historic properties is a mix of dark orange/red and a more burnt plum-colour, of imperial size (9"). The mortar used in the jointing is a traditional lime mortar, with

a creamy white colour, although a substantial amount of re-pointing with a brown cement has been undertaken on many of the properties.



More modern properties within the Area, and abutting the Area use a more yellow/red brick, including the bungalows at Cedar Drive and the modern extension joining Areley House with the stables.

More modern red brick is also used, but only on one of properties, Layamon House. This is a more sympathetic brick than the yellow/red brick described above, but due to the historic character of the Area, does still present an unsympathetic material.



Timber framing is present within the Area, in particular on the Church House, and Areley Hall/ Muxlowe House. The design of the framing on each of these properties is similar with close studded sections, although Church House has more diagonal bracing visible than the other two. Both brick nogging and rendered infill panels are present.



Areley Hall is the only property within the Area which uses ashlar as its main construction material, indicating its age and status when constructed. The joints are again in a creamy lime mortar, and are very fine in width.



The church is constructed in sandstone, although due to the different ages of construction, the type of sandstone differs throughout the building. The base of the tower is constructed in a green/ white sandstone, possibly originally from Highley, whereas the C18th elements of the building are in a more red sandstone, probably sourced more locally, although blocks of white sandstone are also present throughout. The coursing of the sandstone again differs dependant on the age of the element of building. With the tower, the stone is laid in a regular bond, whereas a random coursing is used more for the main body of the building. All joints are again narrow in width, and in a creamy white lime mortar.



Some rendered and painted brickwork is present within the Area, but due to the positioning of the buildings, and the limited quantity of render and paint, this does not have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the buildings, nor on the Area. This treatment occurs both on historic properties, such as the lodge house, through to the more modern properties, including Lower House Cottages, and the contemporary extension to Church House. The latter two examples also show the differences in such treatment over the twentieth century, and the different impacts that such treatment has.



## b) Windows

Windows are generally rectangular in shape, varying with the emphasis between the horizontal and the vertical. There is a mix of materials, including timber and aluminium profile.

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



The older properties follow the traditional style of windows for their age, although some of these have been altered in recent times. Church House has modern replacement timber mullioned windows, stained light brown in contrast to the dark stained timber-framing, and more in keeping with the contemporary extension. Both Muxlowe House and Areley Hall retain a cruciform style of window to their front elevations, but the former has included modern “Georgian” style glazing into the cruciform window.



The barn conversion have simple profiled and designed stained timber casements, reflecting the character adopted for many such conversions.

Some Upvc windows are present on the more modern buildings within the Area. These are not characteristic of the Area, and detract from its character and appearance, through the inappropriate material, the finish, and the general appearance. It is also unfortunate that they are highly visible on both the rear and the front elevations of the buildings, are of a low quality in design, have wide sections and profiles, and as such present a more detrimental impact than perhaps would do otherwise, through a more sympathetic and higher quality design of window.



## c) Doors

Most historic properties within the Area retain their original Georgian raised-and-fielded 6-panel doors, including Areley House and Lower Farm. The door surrounds of these are also generally retained, and tend to be elegant, simple canopied timber door surrounds, with some fluting on the pilasters or alternatively Doric columns creating a portico.

Areley House has the most grandiose entrance, with a pair of panelled doors, with



detailed fanlight over, and surrounded by a stone quad-pillared porch. The barn conversion has a simple stained timber fully glazed door, again reflecting the character adopted for such residential conversion of such buildings.

#### d) Roofs

Roofing materials vary, but red tiles are most evident. Originally, the red tiles would have been hand-made, resulting in a slightly curved tile, giving the roof an almost dishevelled appearance, adding to the historic character of the property. More modern replacements have been used on some properties, resulting in a more flat and uniform appearance.

Welsh blue slate is used within the Area, in particular on Areley House and the associated stables. Reconstituted slate and cement fibrous slates are used on some of the more modern properties, including Leamon House.

Most of the roofs are gabled, with the exception of the hipped roof at Layamon House. The gabled roofs are generally of double pitch, the pitch of which are generally steep, varying between 40 and 55 degrees.

Chimneys are mostly mounted on rear roofs and several are multi-flued. The loss of traditional historic pots is noticeable, with many either with no pots or more modern roll-top pots. Castellated pots are still present on some buildings.

#### e) Rainwater goods

Rainwater goods are traditionally in cast iron, predominantly in half-round profile for guttering. However, less sympathetic and lower quality Upvc has been used in some areas, where, especially on the more historic properties, does little to preserve or enhance either the property or the Area.

#### f) Boundary walls, copings and railings

Due to the rural surroundings and road edgings within the Area, boundary walls tend to be low key, and less dominant than perhaps in a more urban settlement. They tend to demarcate the entrances and front driveways of properties, rather than surround the boundaries, and hence their impact on the Area is reduced considerably.

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



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



Other elements of enclosure include timber fencing, ranging from the more historic five-bar fencing to the more modern feather-edged fencing panels. Other boundaries within the Area demark historic and modern land ownership, field systems, and edges of sites, and are often in a mixed hedgerow. Many of these hedges are historic in their character, and in their age, reflecting the lack of development and rural character of the Area



The more historic walls also tend to have interesting and characterful piers and entrance gates. The Rectory has narrow brick pillars surmounted by stone acorns, and utilising a pair of ledged and braced panelled and decorated gates, and Areley House has an historic dwarf brick wall, capped with sandstone copings. Areley Hall, however, has a low level brick wall, curved in toward the site, and separated by a pair of electronic wrought iron gates. These are not characterful, and present a low quality modern intrusion into the Area, creating a poor entrance for one of the most important buildings of the Area.

### 3.15 Survival of architectural features

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

- Railings, gates and boundary walls – various types are present throughout the Area, including estate fencing, decorative wrought iron railings, brick walls, and timber bar fencing;
- Outbuildings, some of which are used as garaging or stores;
- Traditional windows and doors – both in traditional materials and designs;

- Traditional roofs and dormers –traditional clay tiles, and Welsh blue slate.
- Non-painted or rendered brickwork – showing the dark red of the local brick, with the fine jointed, creamy white mortar joints; Wrought iron lych-gate entrance to St Bartholomew’s church;
- Pointing – a mix of fine, narrow jointing, and wider jointing is present. The majority of the pointing is in a creamy-white lime mortar;
- Hedges – some hedging is present within the Area;
- Traditional steps – due to many of the houses being constructed slightly higher than the principal road, steps were often incorporated into the front entrance of the property;

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

- The installation of Upvc in some properties, for windows and rainwater goods;
- The use of cement in pointing and render, together with inappropriate pointing techniques;
- Inappropriate front doors.



### 3.16 Landmarks, focal points and special features

#### a) Landmarks

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

Landmarks in the Area are as follows:



- Areley Hall. The oldest residential building, at least in part, within the Area, and being set deep within its own grounds, Areley Hall can be seen from several points around the Area, and due to its historical associations, and age, should be considered as a vital landmark of the Area.

- Areley House & Stable block. This is a landmark building, by virtue of its large size, grandiose design, and position within the Area, as the first buildings when approached from Stourport Bridge.



- St Bartholomew’s Church. This is a landmark due to its position at the top of the hamlet, and its size at this location. Whilst it is set back from the road, and from other buildings, it is none-the-less imposing, and another vital element of the Area.

- The Church House. Due to its position, and its purpose, this building is noted as a landmark,

especially with its historic, and modern, relationship to the church.

- The War Memorial. Whilst the War Memorial is slightly hidden under foliage, the memorial should be considered as an important landmark within the Area.

#### b) Focal points

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

- St Bartholomew's Church and curtilage, including Church House - due to its principal and other uses, the church is a prime social focal point within the village. It also forms a strong visual focal point from outside its own curtilage, although this is largely masked from other areas due to the foliage and tree cover.
- Stables at Areley House – due to their position in the Area, they form an important element in the entrance to the Area, and give some depth to the view lines into the Area from Dunley Road.

#### c) Special Features

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

Particular special features include the following:

- The range, ages and variety of period architectural detailing and period construction techniques;
- The historic street pattern of the Area
- Railings and walls to the front of many of the properties;

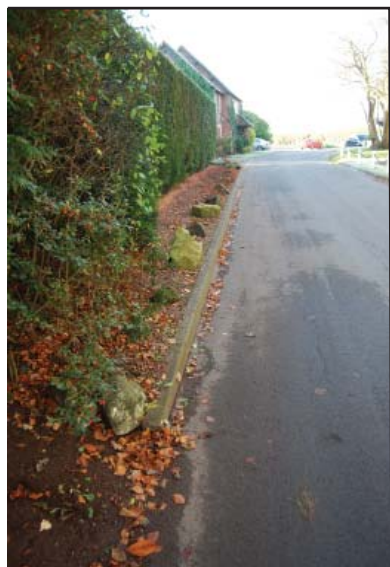


Many of these are vitally important in retaining the character of the Area, and should ideally remain undeveloped, through providing important settings to both the Area. These are mostly protected both through being within the Conservation Area, and through being registered Heritage Assets.

#### 3.17 Ground surfaces

Standard black-top tarmacadam, is used both for the principal roads running through

the Area, and for the pavement is the dominant ground material within the Area. This is a non-traditional material, but due to the layout of the Area, and the traffic that uses this road, this is accepted as being appropriate. This is also used for some of the entrances and drives within the Area. When used with some of the historic properties, this is seen as being uncharacteristic of the Area, and not sympathetic to the character or appearance of either the Area or the buildings.



Grass and low ground-covering plants are the other dominant form of ground cover, including the majority of the churchyard and road sidings. As the pavement is limited in distance, the wild verge is more common through the Area than the creation of a pavement. This helps to retain the rural character and appearance of the Area, and reduces the impact the road would have on the historic character and appearance.

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



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

which creates a more traditional setting and finish to the Area.

### 3.18 Hard landscaping/ street furniture

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

There are two road name signs within the Area, at the beginning of Cedar Close and at the junction of Areley Lane and Dunley Road. Whilst both of these are traditional in character and appearance, they are different from each other, and do not give a unified approach to signage within the Area. Furthermore, there is also a sign under the Cedar Close sign, indicating “Residents Parking Only” – this is one of the largest signs in the Area, and through its size, and dominating



colour , is seen as a detracting element from the historic character of the Area. Whilst it is appreciated that parking may be an issue within the Area, this sign is seen as being over-dominant and erected without thought to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Similarly, a large white “Private” sign at the end of the drive to Mucklowe House and Lower House is also detracting from the Area, and has also been erected with little consideration of the effect of such signage on the character of the Special Area.

Two other elements of street furniture are present within the Area: a post-box near to the junction of Dunley Road, and a timber bench on the opposite side of the road. Both of these are traditional in character and appearance and compliment the character and appearance of the Area.

### 3.19 Tranquil areas and active areas

Tranquillity is the peace of a place where the noises and views of human mechanical activity do not intrude to a noticeable degree. It is particularly important to retain the tranquil character of such areas.

Most of the Conservation Area is such an area. Save for abutting the Dunley Road (A451), the majority of the Area lies within a semi-rural edge-of-urban area, separated from the main town by the River Severn, and from the modern developments by a buffer zone of trees and woodland to the west/ south-west.

Particular areas are noticeable as tranquil areas, including the area surrounding the church and related buildings, and the area surrounding Areley Hall and its associated buildings.

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

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

### 3.20 Noise

The busiest area of the Conservation Area is the entrance from Dunley Road, where the most sound also occurs. This mainly arises from the passing traffic, both entering and existing Stourport-on-Severn over the river Bridge. This noise is often accompanied by the sound of human voice, by passing pedestrians.

However, neither of these noises pierces far into the Conservation Area, due to the presence of so many trees, and the nature of the topography acting as an audio-buffer.

Traffic noise is also heard elsewhere throughout the Area, but this is generally limited and sporadic, due to the character of the Area.

Following on from this, the church bells can be heard regularly during the week, on Thursday evenings, and on Sunday mornings.

Birdsong is another common noise during the day, largely influenced by the rural character of the Area, and its surroundings.

### 3.21 Paths

There is one pavement from the entrance to the Area at Dunley Road, leading around to the modern development of Cedar Close, and on to the entrance of Areley Hall, Muxlowe House and Lower House.

One public footpath exists in the Area, starting adjacent to Church House, and leading down the hill linking to Areley Lane, although this is unmade, and retains its natural appearance and character.



### 3.22 Alien features

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

Highways and signage are alien to the character of the Area. They are generally modern and often in unsympathetic materials. However, these have minimal impact upon the Area, due to their limited amount, and evident consideration over their locations, to benefit both the road users and reduce the impact on the Conservation Area. This includes the lack of road markings, and a minimal quantity of speed signs. It should also be noted here that the lack of hard edges to the road, with limited kerbings, helps to reduce the impact of the blacktop on the Area.

The presence of a small electricity sub-station to the side of Cedar Close presents a modern scruffy intrusion to the Area, and shows its utilitarian usage by virtue of its lack of integration into the Area.

The two areas of modern housing, although both outside the Area, have a definite impact on the character and appearance of the Area. The mid-Twentieth Century housing to the north, around Cedar Close present an alien and starkly contrasting view with that of the Area, and is more in view than that of the housing estate to the south and south-west.

Two other areas of modern development are also considered as alien to the Area. The modern housing on the corner of Areley Lane and the access drive to Lower House Farm and Lower House Barn are in a design which does not present unity with the historic and architectural quality or character of the Area. However, these are partially obscured by hedging and are also side-on to the Area, reducing their impact further. The final area is the modern gates and gate piers to Areley Hall. A dwarf wall constructed in a modern red brick, with tile crease and blue engineering brick, with modern spiked railings on top all present a poor quality boundary definition to the most historic property within the Area, and do not enhance or protect the historic and architectural character of the approach to this house, or to this part of the Area.

### 3.23 Areas that would benefit from enhancement

One important property which is considered as one which would benefit from enhancement is Areley Hall. Whilst this has had considerable repair and redecoration internally, the external areas of the site, together with the modern treatment of the extensions, do little to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the principal building or its setting. Furthermore, the use of blacktop for the driveway also is considered as an area which would benefit from enhancement.



The other elements where improvement to the buildings would benefit and enhance the Conservation Area, the heart of which they lie in, are the modern cottages of Lower House Cottages, which through their design, materials, extensions and general appearance detract considerably from the historic character and appearance of the Area.

### 3.24 Neutral areas

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

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It is not considered that there are any neutral sites within the Area. This is partially due to the general lack of modern development and alterations within the Area, and also that the areas which would otherwise be considered neutral, such as Cedar Close, are considered to have more of a negative impact on the Area than a neutral one.

## 4.0 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

Areley Kings Conservation Area covers an historic hamlet, which has changed little during its history, with its historic core still having a strong presence. With its rural setting, variety and number of trees and hedges, its historic buildings, and predominantly undeveloped character, the hamlet is widely recognised for its character and appearance.

There are elements within the Conservation Area that detract from this character, but they do not have an over-powering impact. However, these should be addressed, and more appropriate detailing and finishes should be used where possible.