

~~Interim~~ Planning Guidance

Amington Hall Estate Conservation Area
Statement of Designation
& Reasoned Justification

INTERIM PLANNING GUIDANCE

As part of the Local Plan process, supplementary planning guidance was prepared to supplement policies and proposals in the Local Plan. The Borough Council consulted the public on the guidance at the draft deposit and revised draft deposit stages of the Local Plan preparation process. Some of the comments on the Draft Deposit Guidance were taken into account in formulating the Revised Draft Guidance.

It was not appropriate for the Borough Council to adopt the guidance as supplementary planning guidance because this can only supplement an adopted local plan and the Tamworth Local Plan 2001-2011 will not be adopted until 2006. Furthermore, under the new development plan system, supplementary planning guidance has been replaced with supplementary planning documents.

This guidance was approved as interim planning guidance by the Borough Council's Cabinet on 15th August 2005. It contains information about the special character of the Amington Hall Estate Conservation Area and a justification for its designation. Appropriate guidance will be replaced with supplementary planning documents in due course. This is in accordance with the Council's Local Development Scheme that came into effect in March 2005.

August 2005

Index

1. Introduction
2. The Need for Conservation
3. Conservation Area Boundaries
4. Reasoned Justification
5. Historical Perspective
6. Existing Character of Amington Hall Estate
7. Existing Land Use Character

1. INTRODUCTION

A conservation area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is important to preserve or enhance. Tamworth Borough Council has a duty to decide which areas are special and fall into this category, and these are then designated as conservation areas. It is not only the individual buildings but also the way in which they are situated and the surrounding land that gives an area its special character.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides the legislative backing for such designations stating that:

'Every local planning authority should from time to time, determine which parts of their area are of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and shall designate those areas as conservation areas.'

The requirements of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 place a duty on local planning authorities to decide which areas are of special architectural or historic interest, and then designate them as conservation areas. The possibility of developing a rural conservation area at Amington Hall Estate had been discussed

for a number of years. A survey of the Amington Hall Estate was therefore undertaken with a view to the formal designation of a conservation area.

The Conservation Area boundary and associated statement of designation were presented to and approved by the Borough Council's Programme and Monitoring Committee on 22nd September 1998.

2. THE NEED FOR CONSERVATION

Development has existed in the Amington Hall Estate since medieval times, and crop marks discovered in 1965 bear witness to this. Since then it has remained an important agricultural area with houses showing the extreme affluence of landowners throughout its history.

The Amington Hall Estate retains much of its original agricultural character. Many landscape features remain which although not listed as a historic landscape in their own right, are an important record of both the original medieval village and the later estate. Features include avenues of trees, a decoy and fox coverts. Whilst the primary use of the area remains agricultural, the protection of this distinct character is important if the area is to avoid losing this individuality.

The aims of conservation are not confined to keeping areas and buildings pleasant to look at, or as a record of some aspect of

history. They must also involve the continuing life and function of the area as a working landscape. Much of the intrinsic quality of the area is the product of this agricultural use and its prosperity is reflected in the palatial Amington Hall. To interrupt this process by curtailing agricultural activity or insisting on rigid limitations would call into question the future validity of such rural areas.

In designating Amington Hall Estate a conservation area, the Borough Council has therefore recognised the demands of progress and preservation. Conservation to be effective requires the commitment of a wide range of interests in the community. In this respect the enthusiastic works of both the Tamworth Civic Society and the Conservation Area Advisory Committee are welcomed by the Borough Council.

3. CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES

The Conservation Area of Amington Hall Estate is located approximately 4 miles to the north east of Tamworth Town Centre, and is centred on the buildings of Amington Hall and Amington Old Hall.

It is based on the 1927 estate boundary and includes the site of the deserted medieval village of Amington with ridge and furrow landscaping. Also a medieval fishpond system remains in part as does a tree avenue, fox coverts, duck decoy and landscaped parkland.

4. REASONED JUSTIFICATION

Amington Hall Estate Conservation Area as the name suggests, is based around the estate associated with the hall. The boundary has been designated to preserve this estate, the important buildings within it and the setting in which they stand. The area provides the only remaining record of such estate farming and landscape development in the Borough.

The boundary is based on the 1927 estate that provides a logical area of study for features of historic and architectural interest. The extent of the estate has diminished gradually over the centuries. However the use of historic boundaries is a way of preserving the integrity of an estate whose character can ultimately be destroyed through sub-division and perhaps, piecemeal redevelopment. The use of this boundary also leads to clarity when dealing with owners after designation.

A number of areas within the original estate have however been excluded. The area to the west is visually separated from the main features in the valley by a defined brow. As a result, with the exception of the immediate access to the Hall, this area has been excluded.

Also, to the northeast two ridges further detach these fields from the overall character and have therefore been excluded.

Conservation area status emphasises the importance of this area both in terms of its medieval development and its later redevelopment as a 19th century parkland and estate. It also illustrates the acceptance of the individual character of the area within the Borough. It is intended to protect its special architectural and landscape features and their setting and goes some way to promoting the area as a separate entity from the surrounding agricultural land.

The designation gives a positive context to the preservation of this important area of parkland and also encourages owners to confidently repair and restore their properties within it.

Conservation area designation also justifies the formulation of stricter policies to control the design and form of any development. It protects the original field boundaries and layout of buildings, which is of utmost importance when considering the original development of the area.

5. HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE

Amington is recorded in the Domesday Book as Ermendone and is therefore a site with a long history of habitation. In 1965 crop marks adjacent to Amington Old Hall, and the fishponds clearly visible from the air, indicated what is most likely a deserted medieval village.

The current landscape was created primarily from the 16th century onwards when Amington Old Hall was erected as a large timber framed baffle entry dwelling. It remains one of the most historically important buildings in the Borough. The surrounding land became increasingly manicured and by the early 19th century Amington Hall was built as the palatial residence of the Repington family.

Associated with the Hall, a number of landscape features were created, including two fox coverts, duck decoy and formal parkland. Much of this remains with original field boundaries still in evidence. Research shows these fields with their historic names still serving as the agricultural base for the farm centred at Amington Old Hall. It is this layout which adds much to the overall character of the conservation area.

Historically the area was characterised by agricultural development and estate parkland. As much of this remains it is this that is considered important to preserve and enhance.

6. EXISTING CHARACTER OF THE AREA

The Amington Hall estate has changed little in the past 100 years, the main changes being the use to which the buildings are put.

As with many rural areas close to towns and cities, it has experienced pressure for

subdivision to allow increased numbers of residential units.

Today Amington Hall has been subdivided into a number of separate flats, although most of the original features of the building have been retained. The rear brick wing previously providing domestic accommodation and ancillary rooms has been converted to form 4 houses. Later additions and new development also exist in this area. The original character as a grand gentleman's home has however been retained.

Amington Old hall has recently been the subject of many renovation works. The farmhouse itself has been refurbished and the timber framing repaired. The adjacent barns and out buildings have been converted to residential accommodation. The scheme has however been done in sympathy with the original character and the overall ambience remains that of a working farm.

7. EXISTING LAND USES AND CHARACTER

There are two main land uses within the Amington Hall Estate Conservation Area.

Residential Uses

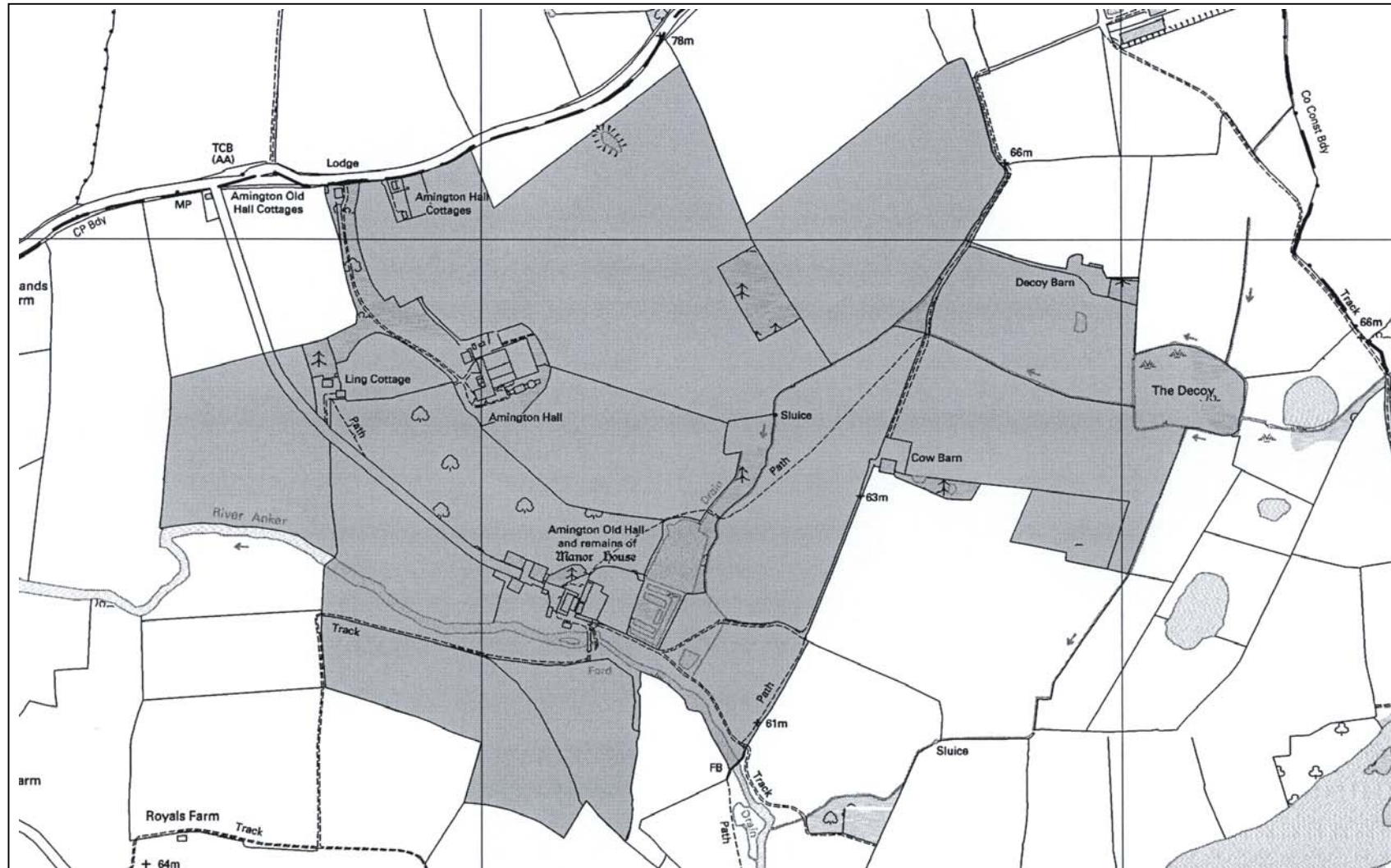
The existing dwellings within the area were built as, or serving, gentleman's residences dating from a variety of periods. The principal buildings are listed and those unlisted were all included in the original estate as workers cottages. Whilst

no one style predominates, all are typical of the period and reflect the affluence of the landowner.

Agricultural/Open Land

The remainder of the conservation area comprises a mixture of open space associated with the hall, and agricultural land operated by Amington Old Hall. The preservation and enhancement of these areas including specific landscape features within them is important to the overall character of the conservation area.

Amington Hall Estate Conservation Area



Boundary of Amington Hall Estate Conservation Area