

# Interim Planning Guidance

Wilnecote  
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 Some of the comments on the Draft Deposit Guidance were taken into account in formulating the Revised Draft Guidance.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 15<sup>th</sup> August 2005. It contains information about the special character of the Wilnecote Conservation Area, a justification for its designation and guidelines for development. 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 the Area
7. Land Uses & Character
  - Ecclesiastical Uses
  - Residential Uses
  - Commercial Uses
8. Development Guidelines
  - New Development
  - Refurbishment & Conversion
    - New Materials
  - Commercial Fronts
  - Tree Protection

## 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 areas that give an area its 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 and enhance, and shall designate those areas as conservation areas.'*

It also imposes a duty on Local Authorities to review their areas from time to time.

The possibility of designating a conservation area at Wilnecote had been discussed for several years. It was felt that the quality of the buildings and their settings both in terms of their historic and architectural quality should be formally recognised through the designation of a

conservation area. A survey of the Wilnecote area was 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 B Committee on 30 March 1999.

## 2. THE NEED FOR CONSERVATION

Wilnecote's development began as a result of Watling Street, which acted as a major thoroughfare through the area and evidence exists of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century development, although this remains in a much altered state.

The main period of growth however related to the valuable deposits of clay worked for bricks and pottery, and a large colliery. To service the growing population settling in the area a variety of community facilities were developed including churches, chapels and meeting halls.

The primary use of the area remains residential with a mixture of facilities to serve the community. The protection of this distinct character is important if the area is to avoid losing its individuality.

The area surrounding Wilnecote Parish church retains much of its historic and

architectural character. Many buildings remain which although not listed in their own right, are an important record of both the important of the area in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and the later 19<sup>th</sup> century development associated with mining.

The area's special setting and its important church give it an individual character. This ambience is contrasted by the development of Watling Street.

The aims of the conservation area 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, and be receptive to change.

In designating Wilnecote 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 Conservation Area Advisory Committee are welcomed by the Borough Council.

### **3. CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARIES**

The conservation area of Wilnecote is located approximately 3 miles to the south east of Tamworth town centre and is centred on Wilnecote Parish Church.

To the north the boundary includes the cemetery and the arts and crafts buildings along Glascote Lane. Crossing Watling Street it includes the terrace of dwellings to the west and also the previous Sunday School. To the east it includes the properties to the north of Watling Street including the Queen's Head Public House dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and Wilnecote Hall which although not listed in its own right is an important 18<sup>th</sup> century property.

### **4. REASONED JUSTIFICATION**

The Wilnecote Conservation Area is based around the Holy Trinity Parish Church and the areas of development around it that reflect its historical growth. The church dates from 1821 and architecturally comprises 5 bays with tall windows with Y tracery. The Gothic revival style is complimented internally by King and Queen post roof and an open traceried screen.

Other important historic and architecturally valuable buildings include the Queen's head public house which is listed Grade II, and dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The boundary has therefore been designated to include the principle historic buildings that form the focus of interest, while excluding the more recent development on the south side of Watling

Street, and to the rear of the properties facing the north side of Watling Street.

Conservation area status emphasises the importance of the historic development of the area, and illustrates the acceptance of the individual character of this area by the Borough Council. It is intended to protect the special architectural and historic character of the buildings and their settings, and goes some way to promoting the area as a separate entity from the development along Watling Street.

The designation gives a more positive context to the restoration of older properties of character and owners and occupiers should be more confident that retention, repair and restoration of the original buildings and their appearance is worthwhile.

Conservation Area status also justifies the formulation of stricter policies to control the design and form of any development. It protects the original pattern of development and sets the scene for the area's future.

## **5. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Although Wilnecote and its associations with Watling Street are historically quite ancient, it seems to have remained a small development until the 19<sup>th</sup> century when its growth began as a result of the mining in the area.

The most important buildings in the area are the Holy Trinity Church dating from 1811, which is listed Grade II, and the Queen's head public house from the 17<sup>th</sup> century also listed Grade II. The area also contains a number of other important buildings and although not listed individually add much to the overall character and appearance of the area.

More recently modern residential development has almost surrounded the area, although its origins remain clear. The road pattern is also of interest and remains in an altered state, comprising Ninefoot and Glascote Lane leading to Watling Street.

## **6. EXISTING CHARACTER OF THE AREA**

The conservation area of Wilnecote is focused on Holy Trinity Church and includes the residential properties along Glascote Lane which add much to its setting.

The mixed use of properties on Watling Street leading to the Queen's Head public house and Wilnecote Hall illustrate the earlier development of the area as a stopping place on this important thoroughfare.

The area as a whole illustrates how the area's importance has remained and grown from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries through the 19<sup>th</sup> century mining operations to the development of the

surrounding land to accommodate the growing demands for residential properties.

The eclectic nature of development is what gives this part of Wilnecote its special character and is what is considered important to preserve and enhance.

## **7. EXISTING LAND USES & CHARACTER**

There are three main land uses within the Wilnecote Conservation Area:

### **1. Ecclesiastical Uses**

Holy Trinity Church forms the focus of the conservation area and dates from 1811. The arts and crafts buildings to the east were then built to serve both the church and the growing community, and included a Sunday school, congregational chapel and police station. The area retains much of its important architectural and historic character and forms an important part of the conservation area.

### **2. Residential Uses**

The properties facing Watling Street, while much altered reflect the linear development of the area. Although many of the turn of the century terraces have now gone, the properties included reflect Wilnecote's expansion as a result of its mining importance, and are an important historical reference.

### **3. Commercial Uses**

The properties along Watling Street are mixed in use with commercial uses reflecting the changing needs of the ever-expanding population. Most of these properties however have been converted to accommodate their commercial uses and the underlying character remains domestic.

## **8. DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES**

The need to appreciate and conserve the existing built environment does not preclude new development. Potential exists to develop some sites within the conservation area and the intention is therefore to provide guidance that will accommodate flexibility in design while maintaining the essential character of the conservation area.

### **1. New Development**

It is not practical here to give design guidance relating to each situation that might arise. However the broad principle can be established that new development should seek to compliment the domestic scale prominent throughout the area and the existing properties in terms of scale, form, proportion, massing and elevational treatment.

### **2. Refurbishment/Conversion**

The refurbishment and conversion of existing properties is becoming increasingly important as properties age and essential repairs become necessary.

The Borough Council would seek to encourage the retention of the historical characteristics that are important within the conservation area. There should be a presumption against the removal of boundary walls that add much to the overall feeling of enclosure in certain parts of the conservation area. Emphasis should therefore be placed on the retention and restoration of individual architectural features that give each building its individual character.

### **3. New Materials**

The use of new materials and elevational treatments can have an interesting effect on building elevations and often determine whether alterations will be acceptable or not.

The colour, pattern and texture of materials in many cases make the difference between success and failure. The uses of brightly coloured or strongly moulded modern materials are rarely successful and should be avoided. Materials which contrast with traditional materials used in older buildings should also be avoided.

The principle should also be employed when looking at roadway and footway surfacing. Although tarmac seems the only option for the road surface, the retention of original materials on footways should be encouraged wherever possible, and where original materials have been removed in the past, new works or repair

works should seek to replace original materials wherever possible.

### **4. Commercial Fronts**

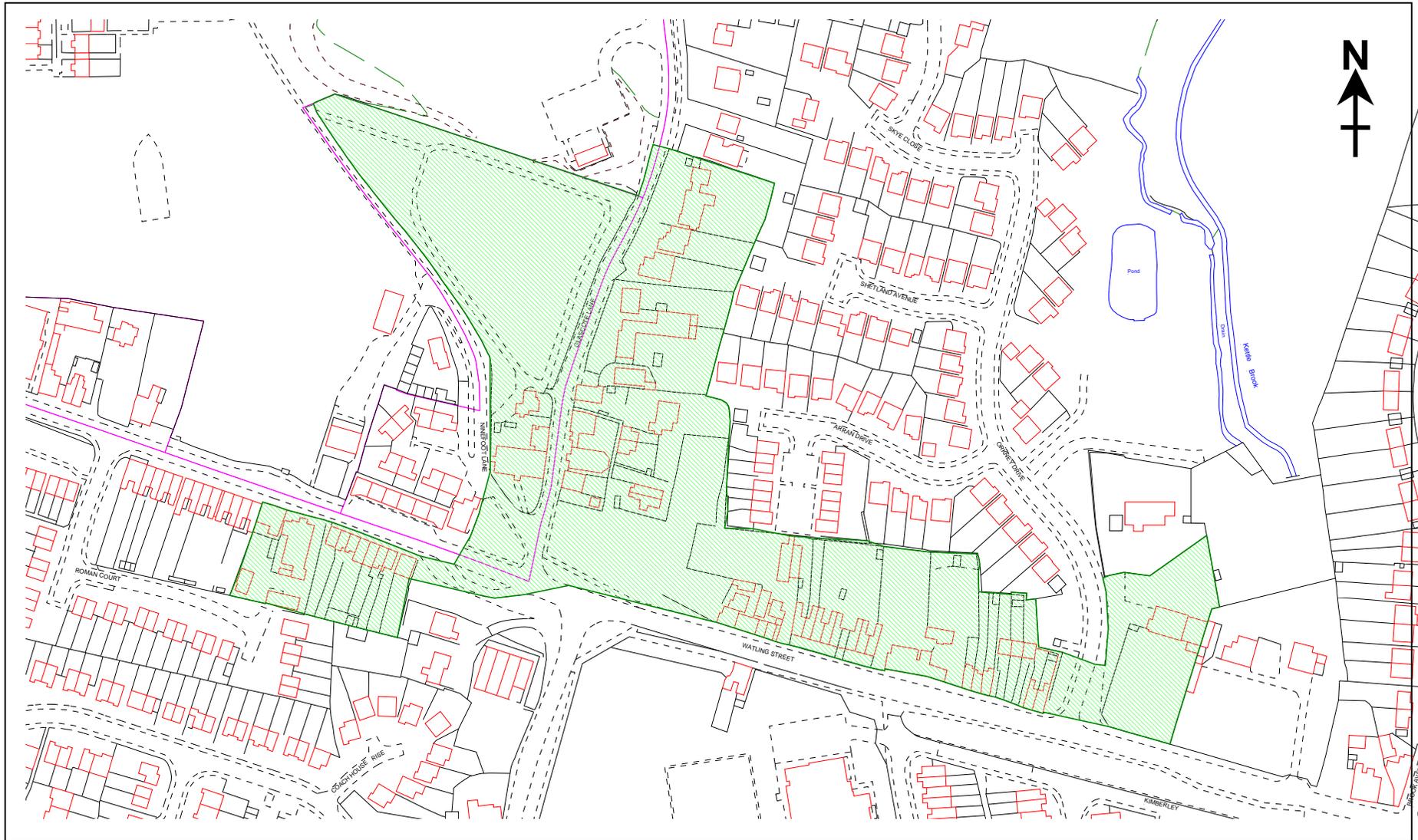
Attractive building facades and shop fronts are an important advertisement for the area and can enhance its overall character. In its consideration of commercial frontages, the Borough Council will seek to promote the individual character of buildings. Every effort will be made to achieve a proper balance between the visual amenity of the area and the commercial needs of businesses to advertise effectively.

The Borough Council will seek to ensure that the design of commercial fronts and fascias do not obscure any noteworthy structural or architectural elements. The new elements should compliment the existing elevation in terms of materials, their quality and in the use of colour.

### **5. Tree Protection**

The retention of existing mature trees throughout the conservation area should be considered as primarily important when looking at any proposed works. Existing trees add much to the character of the area and any application to remove them should be discouraged as a matter of priority.

# Wilnecote Conservation Area



 Boundary of Wilnecote Conservation Area