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# **AWSWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

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## **Historic Core Local Area of Special Character SUPPORTING EVIDENCE REPORT**

**OCTOBER 2019**

# AWSWORTH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

## Awsworth Historic Core Local Area of Special Character

### Purpose and Approach

The purpose of this **supporting evidence report** is to succinctly assess and describe the development and key characteristics of the Awsworth Historic Core Local Area of Special Character (AHCLA), the character and appearance of which the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to conserve and enhance especially through **Policy BED 2** in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Using recognised methodology, it summarises the distinct appearance and history of the area, illustrating key physical features and characteristics which gives the area its special identity. Through preparing a character assessment document, the existing character of the area can be documented and described.

It has two main roles:

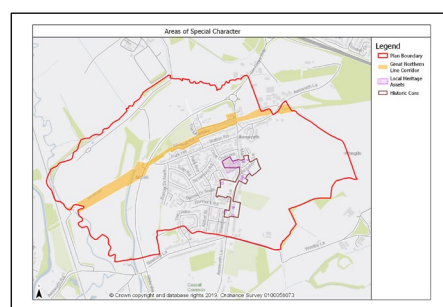
1. Support policies in the Plan and
2. To be used by developers and architects to help them understand the local character, which will contribute to creating sensitively designed proposals to preserve the area's feel and appearance.

### Methodology Used

It has been carried out according to guidance from Planning Aid which has produced a pro forma and guidance specifically aimed at groups preparing a character assessment to support design policy within a neighbourhood plan. This provides a recognised and structured approach to identifying and classifying the distinctive character of a settlement or neighbourhood area. A copy of this best practice pro forma and guidance can be found at [https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1271765/how\\_to\\_prepare\\_a\\_character\\_assessment.pdf](https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1271765/how_to_prepare_a_character_assessment.pdf)

The proforma breaks character down into the following 9 distinct categories:

- Layout and Topography
- Spaces
- Roads, Streets. Routes
- Green and Natural Features
- Landmarks
- Buildings and details
- Streetscape
- Land Use
- Views



Illustrative photos are also provided. A larger map showing the location of the AHCLA can be found below & at Figure 10 - Local Areas of Special Character - in the Submission Draft Plan.

## Layout and Topography - Relationship of road, space and buildings. Landscape gradient

Although Awsworth has expanded significantly, the historic core, principally off Main Street, and to a lesser extent south along The Lane, is still clear and legible, with many attractive and historic buildings that retain much of their original form and detailing as well as street pattern.

It is the oldest part of the Parish. Much of the built form and street form of the historic core has changed little since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and is recognisably the same as that shown on the 1880 OS map.

It is an irregular elongated essentially linear area focused along the main village street where The Lane and Main Street meet at the top of the hill. Comprises 3 distinct linked parts.

At the northern end, a nucleus cluster of buildings mostly to the east side of the road historically centred on the old Manor House, also the nearby parish church and large churchyard to the west side of Main Street.

At the southern end is a small cluster, mostly houses located close along the east side of The Lane, including an old Methodist Church at its southern limit. These were built between 1880 and the early 1900s. Whereas houses to the west side of The Lane and south of Bonners Lane are already shown on the 1880 OS map.

The northern and southern clusters are linked by a central area, largely comprising green space west of The Lane, made up of the open school playing field and to its north side the sizeable wooded grounds of the old vicarage marked by mature trees (their importance recognised by being the village's only Tree Preservation Order).

The heart of the historic core is located on a spur of land at the highest point of village c310 feet where The Lane meets Main Street. This would originally have commanded extensive views across the Erewash Valley west into Derbyshire and south down the valley into Leicestershire. These views are now closed off.



View north along The Lane from southern edge of AHCLA with pre-1880 buildings on left



View south along school frontage on The Lane showing houses built 1880 - 1900



View north down Main Street to Gilt Brook and Gilt Hill / Newthorpe area

## Village Spaces - Recreation, amenity and village greens

There are few but important green spaces (some historic) at its northern end that make a strong contribution to the character and appearance of the AHCLA .

West of Main Street the large churchyard is particularly notable as it provides an accessible green space to the north-west of the area. Also of special importance to the west of The Lane is the expansive school playing field which forms a visual green link between the buildings found in the clusters to the north and south of the wider character area. This area was historically known as Tinkers Close.

A smaller grassy area lies immediately south of the churchyard wall outside the historic core. Now used by the church as a car park this was originally the site of the Mission Hall.



St Peter's Parish Church (1746) and churchyard



View from The Lane across school playing field towards old vicarage



View from of churchyard from adjacent site of the former Mission Hall & Sunday School (1894)



## Roads, Streets, Routes - Roads, pavements, footpaths, cycleways, bridleways etc.

The medieval historic core of the village centred on the Manor House at the top of the hill. The present Manor House, rebuilt or refurbished in 1777, is believed to stand close to the site of the original manor. Timbers have been dated to 1570 although these may have been re-used. Broadly across the road from the Manor House a short way down the hill can be found the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Parish Church (St Peters)

The development of the village has since mainly followed a linear piecemeal fashion pattern roughly in a north south direction along The Lane towards Four Lanes End and north down the hill along Main Street.

Main Street / The Lane is the historic main route through the village. It descends steeply to the north from its junction with The Lane which falls rather less steeply to the south towards Cossall. This road was the original route between Ilkeston to the south west and Kimberley to the north east (and thereafter Nuthall and Nottingham).

Bridleway No 5 and Public Footpath No 2 give easy access from the northern end of the historic core to open countryside immediately east of the village.

Before Awsworth had its own church parishioners had to travel to Nuthall St Patrick's Church for worship where pews were set aside for their use. The local footpaths east of the village would have provided the shortest route.



View north towards start of roadside trees along The Lane



View north down Main Street including old Junior School (1878) originally the Board School for all local children before the new Infant School was built (1887)



The boundary of the Awsworth Historic Core is shown in pink. Core buildings are shown in blue.

St Peter's Church, the old Junior School and School House are lined close along the northern edge. South of which is the Manor House, old Co-op and former Infant School.

The old Vicarage stands alone close to the western boundary.

In the southern part of the area are 'The Limes' and 'The Laurels', 'Haddon's House' and the old Methodist Church.

All of these buildings are identified in Policy BED 1 – 'Awsworth Character Buildings and Structures of Local Heritage Interest'



## Green and Natural Features - Trees, woods hedges, ponds etc

In contrast to the rest of the village, the character area contains a good number of mature trees found in several groups and rows. These are highly visible being prominently located along or close to the main village street.

Older large mature trees are located in the grounds of the old vicarage, including the impressive tree-lined access drive (all planted c1843 when the house was built). The most prominent group is located at the very top of the hill east of Main Street in front of the old Manor House. West of Main Street a single row of trees marks the southern edge of the churchyard.

Perhaps the most evident green feature is the double row or avenue of trees found close along the west side of The Lane outside the school and playing field, which extends from Bonners Lane in the south as far north as the vicarage access drive (about half the length of the character area). This feature physically links the 2 clusters of buildings at either end of the area. The school playing field lies to the west.



Trees along south side of St Peter's churchyard viewed from site of former Mission Hall



Trees at the top of the hill on Main Street



Southern end of the double row of roadside trees along The Lane outside Awsworth School



Northern end of the double row of roadside trees along west side of The Lane.



Trees along The Lane outside Awsworth School looking north from Bonner's Lane



Avenue of trees lining the driveway to the old vicarage - part of the area covered by a Tree Preservation Order



## Landmarks - Recognisable local features

The main village street is the heart of the historic core along which the majority of the oldest and most noteworthy buildings in the AHCLA and wider Awsworth Parish are located at or close to.

Particularly the old Manor House (1777 or earlier); St Peter's Parish Church (c1746) and War Memorial (1920 – Listed Grade II); former Junior School (old Board School 1878) and School House; former Infant School (1887 – Listed Grade II) former Aldercar & Langley Mill Co-operative Society building (1903); old Vicarage (1843); former United Methodist Free Church known as 'top chapel' (1884).



Old Methodist Church (1884) east side  
The Lane (before being converted to a dwelling)



Old  
vicarage  
(1843)



Old Manor House (1777)



Old  
Methodist  
Church  
(1884)  
converted  
to  
dwelling  
(2018)



Old Junior School, Main Street (1878)



Awsworth War  
Memorial (1920)  
Grade II Listed

Old Infant School (1887)  
Grade II Listed - note  
ornate walls & railings



## Buildings and Details - Type, storeys, age, materials

Although the AHCLA has some 20<sup>th</sup> Century housing development it does not have extensive suburbs and essentially consists of linear development, often not more than a single house deep.

It incorporates a variety of buildings that reflect its development into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The buildings are largely two and three storeys and closely line the roads.

At the northern end, the buildings tend to be larger, often historic detached properties set in their own spacious grounds.

To the southern end, there are several, relatively unaltered, attractive two-storey short terraces of housing mostly along the east side of The Lane. Many retain their original late 19<sup>th</sup> / early 20<sup>th</sup> Century detailing.

The vast majority of buildings are constructed using traditional building materials. Some have interesting detailing. Red brick walls and slate roofs predominate. Chimneys are common.



Remnant original cast iron railings The Lane



A good example of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century uses along The Lane (The Limes & The Laurels)



Original brick detailing (1878)



Original brick detailing - The Lane (c1900)

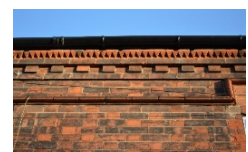
Original brick detailing to chimney stack along The Lane



Original brick & arch detailing to frontage along The Lane



Original brick detailing along The Lane



Appropriate modern brick detailing in keeping with local style (1998)



## Streetscape - Lamp posts, benches, signage, boundaries

This primarily comprises street lighting and street signs. Roadside railings are mainly modern. A number of Victorian-style black and gold metal bollards are located opposite the Nisa store and in front of the old Methodist Church. In addition, seating for use by the public is limited to a single bench situated outside the school playing field. This is opposite the Village Hall which has 2 benches at the frontage although these are not in the AHCLA .



View north along The Lane from end of Bonner's Lane (dwellings c1900)



View north down Main Street with church to left and old school to right (note walls & railings)



View south up Main Street towards former Co-op building (1903) at the top of the hill

**Land use - Residential, leisure, commercial, retail, community etc**

The AHCLA is primarily residential with several other land uses. It provides some limited community (including a primary school, 2 nurseries and church) and shopping facilities for the area and the wider Parish. It has traditionally acted as the focus for shopping and community activity for the Parish.

A number of the older buildings have been put to new uses which effectively help preserve them. The old Junior School now provides business premises with 2 flats above. The old Infant School is now a private day nursery. The old vicarage, former Methodist church and old schoolhouse are now in residential use.



NISA small convenience store - Former Co-operative building The Lane (1903) now includes the Post Office



Old Schoolhouse (1884)



St Peter's Church (1746) from Main Street



**Views** - Important views into and out of the area

Most of the immediate views are those obtained along the main village street. Views of the various buildings are mostly restricted to close views from along the street, with the exception of the former Infant School and Co-op buildings which stand prominently at the top of the hill. The more important and expansive views out of the area are looking east from Bridleway No 5 and Public Footpath No 2 across pastoral fields and hedgerows. Similarly, more distant views into the area are possible looking back from this open countryside towards the village’s eastern built edge and the character area especially its larger individual buildings. Other important views are along the main street itself, both The Lane and Main Street, particularly down Main Street across the Gilt Brook valley.



View west back to Awsworth from countryside east of village and AHCLA



View east from Bridleway No 5



View east from Public Footpath No 2



View west back to Awsworth and AHCLA from Bridleway No 5

## Key detracting features

That the grain and legibility of the historic core will be further eroded or indeed lost by unsympathetic development.

The loss of original materials and details. Mainly damage through inappropriate alterations to traditional residential buildings. By removal and replacement of doors but more particularly windows, which frequently uses different sized frames involving removal of original lintels, sills and surrounding brickwork, consequent unsympathetic brick infilling, often with the loss of good architectural brickwork detail. Use of rendering also masks good architectural brick and other detail, particularly at eaves level.

Likewise, loss of traditional slate roofing materials and unsympathetic replacement materials. Also, loss of traditional brick chimney stacks which often means loss of good architectural detail.

The erosion or loss of significant views and vistas into, out of and through the area.

Its role as the social and community hub of the parish has changed over time and been somewhat eroded albeit more in physical terms and appearance. New uses occupy the older civic buildings and help preserve and protect them. Traditional uses such as schooling have moved but remain close to the historic core. The Village Hall (1976) is also located next to the core and reinforces the social and community focus.



Inappropriate brick rendering masks original brick detailing



Unsympathetic window alterations



Unsympathetic window alterations



Unsympathetic window alterations that contrast markedly with original window surrounds