

**Wolverhampton Borough Council**



**VICARAGE ROAD & THE WOODLANDS CONSERVATION AREAS  
PENN**

## **TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1971**

The Town Planning Committee of Wolverhampton County Borough Council on 7th September 1972 formally designated the Vicarage Road, Penn, Conservation Area under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 as one of several Conservation Areas in the Borough. An enlarged area was jointly designated in 1976 by Wolverhampton Borough Council and South Staffordshire District Council, including land within both Districts.

The Woodlands, Penn, Conservation Area was designated on 17th June 1976 by Wolverhampton Borough Council.

The Conservation Areas are defined herein, together with the proposed policies of Wolverhampton Borough Council, and suggestions from the general public and other interested organisations are welcomed. It is emphasised that these policies are not applicable within the South Staffordshire District Council Area, and all enquiries should be made to the appropriate Local Planning Authority:

Director of Environmental and Technical Services  
Wolverhampton Borough Council  
Civic Centre  
St. Peter's Square  
Wolverhampton WV1 1RP

Chief Planning Officer  
South Staffordshire District Council  
Council Offices  
Codsall  
Wolverhampton WV8 1PX

## GUIDE TO CONSERVATION

### What is a Conservation Area?

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The area may be of any size and usually centres on a number of old buildings which, because of their style or siting, or their situation in groups, reflect the history and vernacular architecture of the town or district. Open spaces, trees, a green, or features of archaeological interest may also contribute to the special character of the area. Many Conservation Areas contain listed buildings.

### Listed Buildings

These are buildings listed by the Department of the Environment with a view to their preservation because of their special architectural or historic interest. All buildings included in the statutory list are legally subject to the listed building provisions later described in this booklet.

### Designation of Conservation Areas

The statutory procedure for designation is simple and is as follows:-

- 1) The Local Authority by resolution 'designates' each area, after consultations with any other Local Authority in whose district the area lies.
- ii) Notices defining the area are published in the London Gazette and one or more local newspapers. Notices include particulars of the effects of designation and information on the control of development.
- iii) The Secretary of State is notified. No subsequent confirmation from the Department of the Environment is required.
- iv) The designation of an area as a Conservation Area is registered in the Local Land Charges Register.

### How This Affects You

The designation of a Conservation Area is only a preliminary to a positive action policy for each area. Conservation is not concerned

solely with preservation, but also with improvement and the continuity of the historic fabric of an area. The emphasis is on careful control of the physical changes which may be necessary to ensure that the area remains alive and prosperous in social and economic terms. There will be many opportunities for the public to make their views known.

To help property owners and residents, the following summary of the planning law affecting Conservation Areas and buildings and trees within the areas is set out for guidance:-

- (1) Local Authorities are required to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their Conservation Areas and submit them for consideration to a local public meeting.
- (2) Demolition control applies to most buildings (which includes any building or erection or any part of a building) in Conservation Areas. Anyone wishing to demolish a building must first apply for demolition or, in the case of a listed building, listed building consent to the Borough Council. Consent to demolish will normally only be given where there are acceptable and detailed plans for redevelopment on the site. There are heavy penalties for unauthorised work.
- (3) Where listed buildings fall into disrepair, the Council may notify the owners and occupiers of the works considered necessary for the proper preservation of the building. In default the Council may compulsorily acquire the building and can apply to the Secretary of State for the Environment for minimum compensation to be paid to reflect any deliberate neglect which may have occurred.
- (4) Where an unoccupied listed building is in urgent need of remedial work which the owner refuses to or does not carry out, the Council can do the necessary works and recover the expenses incurred from the owner.
- (5) Where an unoccupied unlisted building in a Conservation Area is seriously neglected, and the Secretary of State for the Environment confirms that action is necessary in order to maintain the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, the Council can carry out work urgently

necessary for the preservation of the building and can recover the costs incurred from the owner.

- (6) Where there is a special need to have control over the original features of unlisted buildings and their surroundings, the Council can make a Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1974 which requires a planning application for minor works which are otherwise exempt. These include small house extensions, porches, the alteration of windows and doors, external painting, garages, the construction of hard standings and pavement crossings, and the erection of gates, fences or walls. Listed building consent will, however, be required where such works would be an extension or alteration to a listed building and would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.
- (7) The Council may seek special powers to control advertisements.
- (8) Protection of trees - trees can contribute to the quality of an area almost as much as the buildings. All trees in excess of 75mm diameter, in Conservation Areas, are now protected as if in a tree preservation order. Six weeks' notice of any proposal to lop, top, fell or root prune should be given to the Council.

#### Development in Conservation Areas

- (1) Redevelopment will normally only be permitted if the new building is likely to make an acceptable contribution to the character and design of the area.
- (2) Detailed plans of any proposed development will normally be required, including all elevations which show the new development in its setting, together with a tree survey where appropriate. Outline planning applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances.
- (3) The Local Planning Authority will advertise in the local press the receipt of an application for demolition or for development which will affect the character of a Conservation Area. It will also notify the Civic Society of such an application.

- (4) In the case of applications to demolish or alter a listed building, the Local Planning Authority must also notify interested amenity societies, e.g. the Georgian Group, Victorian Society, etc.

As a guide to required standards of work where this is necessary, the following points may be of some help:-

- (a) In deciding whether or not to allow new building, careful consideration will be given to its relation to the **physical characteristics** which contribute to the visual composition of an area, such as proportions, roof lines, detailing, texture and colour.
- (b) The **design** of new buildings or additions should be in harmony with the character of existing buildings or groupings of buildings.
- (c) **Siting** - attention will be paid to building lines, the relationship between buildings and their general proportions, height and alignment.
- (d) **Materials** - those which represent a clear departure from the texture and colour of traditional materials used in existing buildings in the area may not be allowed in new buildings. As a general guide, the number of different materials on a building should be kept to a minimum.
- (e) **Extensions** - buildings will normally require pitched roofs. Where extensions are permitted the existing sill and lintel levels should, wherever possible, be carried through and, in any event, the additions must be designed to harmonise both with the original building and with the Conservation Area.
- (f) **Dormers**- should be small and unobtrusive, relative to the scale of the dwelling
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- (g) **Other features** - the treatment of landscaping, paved surfaces, boundary walls, street furniture, signs, etc. associated with new buildings should, in terms of design and use



of materials, fit in with the character of the area.

- (h) Development near to a Conservation Area and visually related to it should be suitable in terms of size, form and materials to harmonise with buildings in the Conservation Area.

### **Grants**

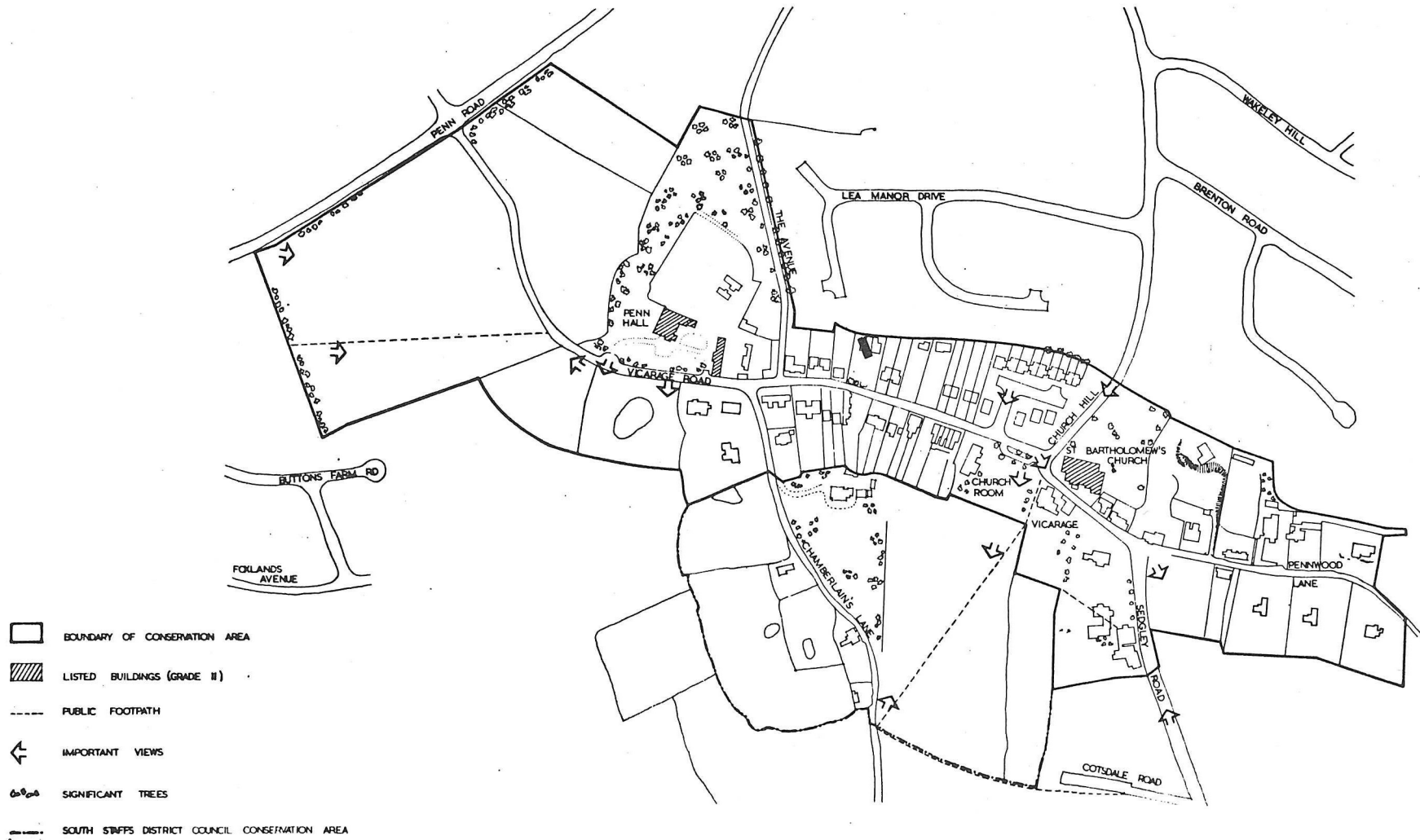
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### **Grants**

There are legal provisions for making grants and loans to owners for the repair and maintenance of buildings of architectural or historic interest. Due to the present economic circumstances, however, such funds are extremely limited. House improvement grants are also available to help to provide modern living conditions in certain older houses which may lack them.

### **What you can do**

Conservation Areas must in the end be self-conserving. Conservation is not restricted to any specialised group of people but involves everyone. A pleasing environment satisfies by its richness, its diversity and its practical soundness. To create such an environment and ensure its continuity it is hoped that owners and occupiers of property in Conservation Areas will be encouraged to maintain existing buildings and promote proposals for the enhancement of the area. The Planning Division will be pleased to give advice on any such proposals.



# VICARAGE ROAD PENN; CONSERVATION AREA.

## VICARAGE ROAD, PENN, CONSERVATION AREA

The Vicarage Road area of Penn has largely retained the quiet rural atmosphere, which must have typified the ancient village of Penn. It is this atmosphere and the sense of the countryside being close at hand, which it is intended to maintain by designating this area as a Conservation Area.

### Historical Background

According to written records, Penn seems to have been in existence as a settlement longer than Wolverhampton. The road between Penn and Bushbury on its way to Stafford probably passed through what later became the centre of Wolverhampton. Both Upper and Lower Penn were owned by the Mercian Earls. It is known that before the Norman Conquest parts of Bushbury and Lower Penn were owned by the Lady Godiva and Upper Penn by her son Aelfgar. Lady Godiva's cross can still be seen in St. Bartholomew's Churchyard. After the Conquest the manors are believed to have been part of the fief of the Lord of Dudley and this "de Bushburie" family probably built the original Penn Church.

Shaw's history of Staffordshire, written in 1801, includes the following description ... "Upper Penn stands upon a hill, and, though now a small town, yet was once of far greater extent and power; for, many of the neighbouring villages owe suit and service to this court and come here to chuse their constables yearly". Its importance is confirmed by early records. In the 1660 hearth money records, a form of taxation, the constablewick of Over Penne paid for 54 hearths. This indicates the existence of a good number of fairly wealthy inhabitants, as in that time it was rare for an average family to have more than one "hearth" or fireplace. However, we know of no Manor House as such in Upper Penn during the period 1534 to 1955, during which time the Lord of the Manor in both Upper and Lower Penn was a member of the Leveson family. In 1955, manorial land was taken over by Penn Golf Club.

### Analysis of Character

The name "Penn" possibly originated in the Welsh word for summit, for the village was built on the ridge of land extending

west from the Colton Hills. This hilltop aspect of the village is still evident from the south. From Gospel End the cluster of houses on the skyline and the Church tower are half hidden by trees which extend down the slope to the edge of Penn Common. To the west the open grassland of the Common runs into open fields which swing around the end of the ridge to Penn Road itself. The village is therefore a visually detached element in the landscape when seen from this approach.

Climbing up to the village along Sedgley Road from the open country to the south the sharp bend at the Old Stag's Head introduces the Conservation Area with a view which still retains strong rural elements. From the old stone-built schoolhouse a stone wall continues around the corner as far as the brick barn in the Vicarage grounds. This stands right on the road at a point where it narrows considerably and allows only a glimpse of the nearby Church tower of St. Bartholomew's over the ancient yews. To the east of the whitewashed cottages opposite and the Old Stag's Head Inn with its newly landscaped gardens runs the narrow Pennwood Lane. A little way along this lane is a block of almshouses built in 1761, as a plaque in the central gable testifies, for the poor persons of the parish. The cottages have been extensively modernised, unfortunately to the detriment of their historical value. They were originally built to house five poor persons who also received an annuity of five pounds each per annum through the charity of Dr Raphael Sedgwick, the owner of Penn Hall at that time, in memory of his daughter Ann. Development along Pennwood Lane is of low density, although mixed in age, and the tall hedges along the footpathless road reinforce the rural character which becomes even more marked as the lane plunges downhill towards Penn Common.

Continuing along Sedgley Road itself the view widens considerably when the west front of St. Bartholomew's is reached. The Church is built at a high point in the Borough, and has excellent views of the countryside to the south. Although part dates from 1200, the majority was restored in 1765 and the red brick tower, which is a dominant landmark, dates from this time. This traditional churchyard with ancient yews and other mature trees extends up the slope of the ridge and from the top there are good views of the town behind as well as of the open countryside beyond. The Church Hill approach to the Conservation Area provides perhaps the most unexpected introduction, as from the suburban develop-

ment on the town side of the ridge only the bulk of St. Bartholomew's can be seen, so that the rural character of the area around the Vicarage and the Church Room is a visual "surprise".

Both these buildings are in the traditional red brick of Staffordshire, and the Vicarage is in a rather rambling style having been much enlarged over the years from the ancient pair of cottages which was the original dwellinghouse. The extensive deep coalmining activity of the countryside beyond, which in the past has threatened this Vicarage building with subsidence, is fortunately now not apparent in the surrounding landscape. Between the Vicarage and the Edwardian Church Room with its wooden bell turret is a small parking area set behind fine old trees, and beyond it a public open space reminiscent of a village green. The outlook from here over Church Meadow includes the tree-clad ridge of Gospel Oak and the agricultural land on its slopes. A footpath leads from this green to Penn Common across which there is an extensive footpath system leading to Gospel End and the countryside beyond. The grouping of the Vicarage and Church Room set below the Church in immediate contact with the countryside is of great importance in contributing towards the rural atmosphere which is dominant in this part of the Conservation Area.

To the west of this area, Vicarage Road is lined with houses which are mixed in age and style, varying from three-storey houses set high above the road near the crest of the ridge through Victorian terraces to rural cottages and modern bungalows on the lower slope which take advantage of views out to the south.

Despite the presence of standard design modern housing there remains a distinctive atmosphere along Vicarage Road thanks to the informal road layout and the several simple brick buildings standing right on the road which date from the period when agricultural activity dominated the local economy.

This atmosphere is particularly strong at the bend in Vicarage Road by Laburnam Cottages. These three-storey cottages with gabled porches are built at right angles to Vicarage Road at a point where it narrows considerably, and to the west only "Pennover" cottage is visible. From the other direction the view is similarly cut off by the barnlike windowless rear wall of Laburnum Cottages. These and other nearby brick or simple rendered cottages are set behind narrow footpaths or abut the carriageway and it is obvious that any

necessary improvements will have to be very carefully carried out, to avoid damaging the local character.

A low, whitewashed cottage called Pennover stands at one corner of "The Avenue" a sunken tree-lined lane skirting the grounds of Penn Hall, and several red brick farm buildings face it on the other, in the 'U' shape arrangement traditional in Staffordshire. The stable block of Penn Hall, itself a grade II listed building, is linked to the outbuildings by the red brick walling which is a prominent feature in this part of the Conservation Area. In addition to the wall, Penn Hall and its grounds are well screened by thick hedges and trees. The main building, predominantly 18th century although earlier interiors remain, is a particularly fine Queen Anne house of mellow red brick with a high parapet to the west garden front. An equally impressive south front incorporates the more recent entrance bay, and the main gates and access drive have been restored as part of a European Architectural Heritage Year Scheme. Much of the building dates from the early 18th century, when Dr. Raphael Sedgwick of Penn Hall began building works for an intended hospital around a mediaeval core. After his death in 1767 Thomas Bradney, who inherited the estate, completed Penn Hall and several panelled rooms of the early period still survive. An early description of the house mentioned that it "commands a fine view of Tettenhall, Wrottesley and the Wrekin" and the vistas to the south remain uninterrupted even today. The stretch of Vicarage Road leading from the Hall to Penn Road still runs through open fields, but at the main road one reaches suburban Wolverhampton, which extended along Penn Road during the Victorian era.

To the south the village is connected to Penn Common by Chamberlain's Lane, a curving tree lined land with occasional simple cottages which add to the rural atmosphere. A second link exists in the footpath from Church Meadow which leads across the sloping fields below the village towards the open countryside. Penn Common is a traditionally popular and extensive recreational area which is included within the West Midlands Green Belt. Thus the open views outwards from Penn Village are to be retained, and its detached hill top setting will be protected.





VICARAGE ROAD

## Policy

### a) EXISTING BUILDINGS

The statutorily listed buildings within this Conservation Area are:

St. Bartholomew's Church  
Penn Hall and Coach House – Grade II

These are protected buildings in the sense that any alterations which would affect their character require listed building consent. Any planning applications which are received for such works must be publicly advertised. However all buildings within the Conservation Area (whether listed or unlisted) are subject to demolition control. In addition the Council proposes to adopt powers under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1974 to require the submission of planning applications for all works which are likely to affect the character of the buildings within the Conservation Area. This is because even small details can be vital elements in terms of their contribution to local character, e.g. brick boundary walls, old barns, etc. The classes of work which will be controlled in this way in Vicarage Road are:

- i) the enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse where such works affect any elevation of a building visible from a highway.
- ii) the construction of a porch on the street frontage.
- iii) the erection or alteration of gates, fences or walls and other means of enclosure on plot frontages.

### b) NEW DEVELOPMENT

All proposals for new development must be submitted in detailed form, including drawings showing any proposed new building in its setting so that its likely impact on the Conservation Area environment may be assessed. Special attention will be given to layout, where new building might threaten open views or existing attractive groupings, and also to detailed design. It is important that materials which are traditional in the area be used so that new work will complement the old. Brickwork should therefore be dark in tone - Staffordshire red or deeper russet - or alternatively simple rendered finishes could be used.

Roofing materials should be either slates or traditional tiles and be selected from the red or dark grey colour ranges. Restraint in the use of different materials is advisable. The use of "foreign" cladding materials such as timber boarding or multi-coloured stone will be discouraged.

Boundary treatment and site landscaping are considered to be particularly important in this area and the Council hopes to influence higher standards in this field by encouraging a high quality treatment of frontages and the regular maintenance of boundary walls or fences. Boundary walls should be in brick or local Staffordshire stone where possible, in preference to fencing. New brick walls will normally only be permitted in red or deep russet colour brickwork and be simple in detail. Where fences are allowed, the Council's policy will favour the use of dark-stained timber rather than a white finish. The use of imitation materials or features will be discouraged.

Where extensions are permitted the existing sill and lintel levels should be carried through and the additions designed to harmonise both with the original building and with the Conservation Area. The Council will also be concerned with external decoration schemes in order to ensure reasonable harmony in the street scene. Although some measure of individuality is desirable, it is advisable, for the benefit of the area as a whole, to keep large areas of paintwork within a given range of recommended colours, for example in the case of rendered walls which are to be colour washed, or extensive areas of existing timber cladding. The Council hope to secure the co-operation of owners in pursuing this policy, although it may be necessary to use the powers under Article 4 referred to earlier.

It is hoped that the above guidelines will be useful to residents and developers. Any measures of control which are adopted are taken in order to encourage a higher standard of appearance in the Conservation Area and the preservation of its semi-rural character.

### c) LANDSCAPE

It is the Council's policy to encourage the retention of existing agricultural land uses, whilst retaining the option of partial development for public open space purposes should the need arise. All efforts will be made to retain the rural elements which are still

apparent in the area, such as old field boundary walls and agricultural buildings; the informal road pattern, the views out over the agricultural countryside, remaining woodland etc. Thus for example no building will be allowed on Church Meadow. Views which will particularly require protection are:

- a) South from the "green" adjoining St. Bartholomew's Church.
- b) North from Gospel End towards Upper Penn.
- c) South-west from Vicarage Road, outside Penn Hall.
- d) North-west from Vicarage Road, outside Penn Hall.
- e) From Penn Road, towards Penn Hall and the ridge.
- f) From the footpath between Holden Road and Vicarage Road.
- g) From the footpaths leading from Vicarage Road to Penn Common.
- h) From Sedgley Road.

In this Conservation Area continuity is largely established by the fine forest trees rather than any close relationship between buildings which are of dissimilar scale and style. All existing trees within the Conservation Area are now protected by law to inhibit indiscriminate felling or lopping. Six weeks' notice of such proposed work must be given to the Director of Environmental and Technical Services, and the Council will decide whether to grant or withhold consent. In addition, it is the Council's policy to positively encourage the new planting of forest and ornamental trees to ensure continuity of growth. Details of landscaping will be required as part of any planning application for new development. Additional planting could be carried out with advantage in several areas, for example replacement of damaged trees on the Green by the Church Room; strengthening of tree planting on the lower slopes of the ridge; and skyline planting along the Colton Hills to the east of the Conservation Area. Forest trees would be most appropriate and would complement existing woodland groups and boundary planting. The Council would also wish to encourage the reinstatement of the hedgerow on the west side of Vicarage Road to enhance the approach from Penn Road.

This booklet outlines planning policy in this area and it will be used as a basis of discussion between the Local Authority, building owners, and other interested organisations. It is hoped that residents will put forward suggestions and schemes for the further enhancement of the area.



Penn Hall





- Boundary of Conservation Area
- Listed Buildings
- Mature Trees ○●○●○●○●○

# THE WOODLANDS CONSERVATION AREA.



## THE WOODLANDS, PENN, CONSERVATION AREA

### Character

The Conservation Area is centred on the heart of the former old village of Penn. It is a well defined compact unit; the most notable building being the Woodlands, once a private house but now used as an old persons home.

The Woodlands Cottages, situated in the south-east section of the Conservation Area, form a secluded grouping of one and two storey vernacular buildings and are a pleasant contrast to the surrounding modern development. Three of the dwellings date from the seventeenth century and were built to house the workers from the extensive Woodlands estate. One of these dwellings, namely 'Rose Cottage', bears a brick dated 1671 and although the exterior has been plastered it is possible to see evidence of the original structure on the right hand side of the front door.

Opposite the Rose Cottage is the 'Woodlands Smithy', which is thought to have been constructed over the original foundations of the blacksmiths'. Although little of the original building remains, the house has been reconstructed with care and attention, incorporating beams, panelling, floors, balconies and coalbrookdale windows from local buildings demolished in recent years.

Woodlands Grange, a red brick house built towards the end of the seventeenth century, is situated at the end of the cul-de-sac. It was originally two separate cottages built to serve Penn Villa, which stood nearby. The three remaining dwellings within this group were built at the turn of the century.

To the west of the cul-de-sac a footpath leads through a group of deciduous trees towards the 'Woodlands'. This extensive red brick Victorian house was built during the 1890's. The main entrance door is approached through a double arched entrance porch on the south east elevation. To the north and south of the building are many fine deciduous and evergreen trees, which support wild life and add to the privacy of the gardens. To the east of the Woodlands is Woodlands Walk, a memorial park in Corporation ownership, dedicated to the memory of those who died in both World Wars.

### Policy

#### a) Existing Buildings

There are no statutory listed buildings within the Conservation Area. As in Vicarage Road Conservation Area, the Council will seek powers, under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1974, to require the submission of planning applications for all works which are likely to affect the character of the buildings within the Conservation Area.

The type of work which may be controlled in this way is as follows:-

- i) The enlargement, improvement, or other alteration of a dwellinghouse, where such works affect any elevation of a building visible from a highway.
- ii) The construction of a porch on the street frontage.
- iii) The erection or alteration of gates, fences or walls and other means of enclosure on plot frontages.

#### b) New Development

All proposals for new development must be submitted in detailed form, including drawings showing any proposed new building in its setting, so that its impact on the area may be assessed. It is expected that there may be some development within the grounds of the Woodlands and it is important that here and elsewhere in the Conservation Area the massing of the buildings, the scale and architectural detailing, together with materials used, will complement the existing buildings.

#### c) Landscape

All trees within the Conservation Area are protected by law. They are a major environmental feature within this area and should not be endangered by any form of new development.

While the Council recognises the importance of this area within the context of the Wolverhampton townscape, its future enhancement will depend on the commitment of the local residents, It is hoped that the local community will come forward with suggestions for further improvements within the area.



WOODLANDS WALK.



