



**Tamworth Borough Council
Amington Hall Draft
Conservation Area
Management Plan
March 2017**

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Background

What is a management plan and why are we preparing it?

- 1.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty on all local planning authorities to 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. Such areas can then be designated as conservation areas. The Act also states that local planning authorities should formulate and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement.
- 1.2 Tamworth has seven conservation areas, which were designated between 1976 and 1999. In 2007-2008 the Council undertook a programme of conservation area appraisals to define the special interest of the conservation areas, to ensure that the boundaries remained relevant and defensible and to identify potential areas for future attention. A number of recommendations from the appraisals have been implemented, including boundary amendments, addition of buildings to the local list and a number of Article 4 Directions.
- 1.3 Incremental changes over time can alter the character and appearance of a conservation area and the appraisals should be reviewed on a regular basis to identify opportunities and threats. The management plan provides the opportunity to review the appraisals and to set out a medium to long term management strategy to guide future change in a positive way that respects the historic environment. It is important to note that this management plan does not entirely supersede the Amington Hall Conservation Area Appraisal 2008, and should be read in conjunction with this document.
- 1.4 The preparation of the management plan has been guided by the Historic England document ‘Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management’ 2016. This section sets out the purpose of the management plan and the issues it will cover, the consultation strategy and review of relevant Local Plan policies and evidence.
- 1.5 The management plan will consider the following issues:
 - changes to the conservation area
 - positive and negative features
 - actions to secure the repair and full use of buildings
 - priority schemes
 - archaeology
 - green space management
 - new development
 - resources
 - monitoring
- 1.6 It is anticipated that the management plan will last for a period of five years. Although the plan contains details of proposals and initiatives it is acknowledged that some will have a longer timeframe. The management plan is not a statutory document and does not form part of the development plan, however, it will be a material consideration in decision making.

What did we do to involve people?

- 1.7 The Council is required by the 1990 Act to consult the local community on any management proposals for the conservation area. The Council’s Statement of Community Involvement specifically covers the preparation of local plans and planning applications and although the management plan is not a statutory document, the intention was that the Council will broadly follow the procedure for the preparation of a supplementary planning document, which will involve a public consultation event.
- 1.8 During November 2016 – January 2017, the Council undertook an 8 week consultation period in order to publicise the draft management plans and to invite views from the community, local heritage groups and statutory consultees. The consultation event was publicised by the following methods:-
- Emails and letters to interested parties on the Planning Policy Mailing list;
 - Emails to Statutory consultees and neighbouring authorities;
 - Letters and emails to local heritage groups;
 - Copies of conservation area appraisals and questionnaires which were made available to each of the Tamworth Borough Libraries;
 - Flyers posted on Local parish Church notice boards;
 - Details of the consultation and letters posted on the Council Website, including on the Council Launch Page;
 - Use of Council’s social media platforms to publicise the consultation.
- 1.9 Details of the feedback received during the consultation period and how the Council has responded to those views are detailed in a separate spreadsheet which is published on the Conservation Area Review pages of the website.

Tamworth Local Plan 2006-2031

- 1.10 The new Local Plan covers the period 2006-2031. The Vision for the Local Plan builds on the identified issues and challenges and sets the spatial direction for Tamworth. The relevant parts of the Vision for heritage are the vibrant town centre and distinctive identity related to the town’s history and heritage assets. The Local Plan then goes on to set spatial priorities to deliver the vision and in the context of the Amington Hall Conservation Area, the following are considered relevant:

| | |
|------|--|
| SP3 | Working in partnership with economic stakeholders to create a diverse local economy, including regeneration of employment areas and provide appropriate education and training that will provide local job opportunities that will reduce the need for residents to travel outside of the Borough. |
| SP5 | To provide a range of affordable, adaptable and high quality housing that meets the needs of Tamworth residents. |
| SP7 | To encourage active and healthier lifestyles by providing a network of high quality, accessible green and blue linkages and open spaces and formal indoor and outdoor recreation facilities that meet identified needs and link neighbourhoods to each other and the wider countryside. |
| SP9 | To protect and enhance heritage assets by ensuring that proposals for change respect the historic character of the Borough including street layout, surviving historic buildings, street furniture, archaeology and open spaces. |
| SP10 | To create safe, high quality places that deliver sustainable neighbourhoods and reflect Tamworth’s small scale and domestic |

| |
|--|
| character using a blend of traditional and innovative design techniques. |
|--|

1.11 The Local Plan contains policies that support heritage assets including conservation areas and locally listed buildings. It prioritises designated Conservation Areas for safeguarding and enhancing to better reveal their significance. The Local Plan also gives non-designated heritage assets, such as locally listed buildings, due acknowledgement when dealing with development that affects them.

1.12 Development of any scale must relate to the historic context. The following policies are considered to be relevant and the management plan will be in accordance with and complement these policies:

EC5 Culture and tourism

- Promote, protect and enhance Tamworth’s landscape and heritage
- Support appropriate re-use of historic buildings
- Promote existing tourism attractions and support additional tourism attractions linked to heritage
- Promote awareness and interest in heritage
- Improve physical links around and beyond the town centre

EN5 Design of new development

- Buildings and places to be high quality and well designed, particularly to support enhancement of the town centre and conservation areas
- Respect existing architectural and historic character but allow innovation where appropriate
- Take into account impact on significance of heritage assets
- Scale, form, massing, materials and design to conserve or enhance context
- Development to be legible and outward facing with active frontages
- Incorporate landscaping and open space

EN6 Protecting the historic environment

- Development affecting historic assets required to assess impact and clearly demonstrate how assets will be conserved and enhanced (heritage statement and statement of significance)
- Reference to Extensive Urban Survey to identify potential for archaeology (need for archaeological desk based assessment)
- Development to address issues in evidence base (detailed below)
- Support enhancement of negative features and “vulnerable” and “at risk” buildings
- Support public realm improvements and use of vacant and under used historic buildings

1.13 The Local Plan recognises the Character Appraisals and other evidence base, including the Extensive Urban Survey (2011)¹, Heritage at Risk Survey (2013) and Heritage Impact Assessments (2014); development is required to address the issues identified in these, The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies the following proposals which are relevant to the Amington Hall Conservation Area:

- Improvements to the public realm at gateways, and along corridors
- Physical improvements to heritage at risk

¹ See <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/eLand/planners-developers/HistoricEnvironment/Extensive-Urban-Survey/Tamworth-EUS-Report-Final.pdf>

- 1.14 A Design supplementary planning document (SPD) is being prepared to support the Local Plan which will provide further detailed guidance on design including specific issues for historic contexts.

Review of Relevant Evidence

- 1.15 The Tamworth Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) considers the historic and archaeological character of the Borough. Tamworth's urban area was divided into 37 historic urban character areas (HUCAs). HECZ 1: Ashlands and Amington Old Hall covers the Amington Hall Conservation Area. Amington Hall Conservation Area is considered to be of high overall heritage significance.
- 1.16 The Heritage at Risk Survey (2013) assessed Conservation Areas and Listed buildings with the aim of assigning a risk category for each building by combining occupancy with physical condition. Of the nine buildings, structures or designated areas in Tamworth classed as "at risk" or vulnerable", none are located in the Amington Hall Conservation Area. The national Heritage At Risk survey carried out by Historic England annually does not identify any heritage assets at risk within the Conservation Area.
- 1.17 The map on Page 7 shows the heritage assets in the conservation area. Sites within or in the setting of the conservation area are very sensitive to change and there is an overriding need for caution because development will inevitably impact on assets visually and there is high potential for below ground archaeology to be affected. An important point to emerge from the impact assessment was that development should not be regarded as negative as it offers the opportunity to improve the physical condition of assets, their setting and reinforce historic fabric.

Amington Hall Conservation Area and Historic Assets

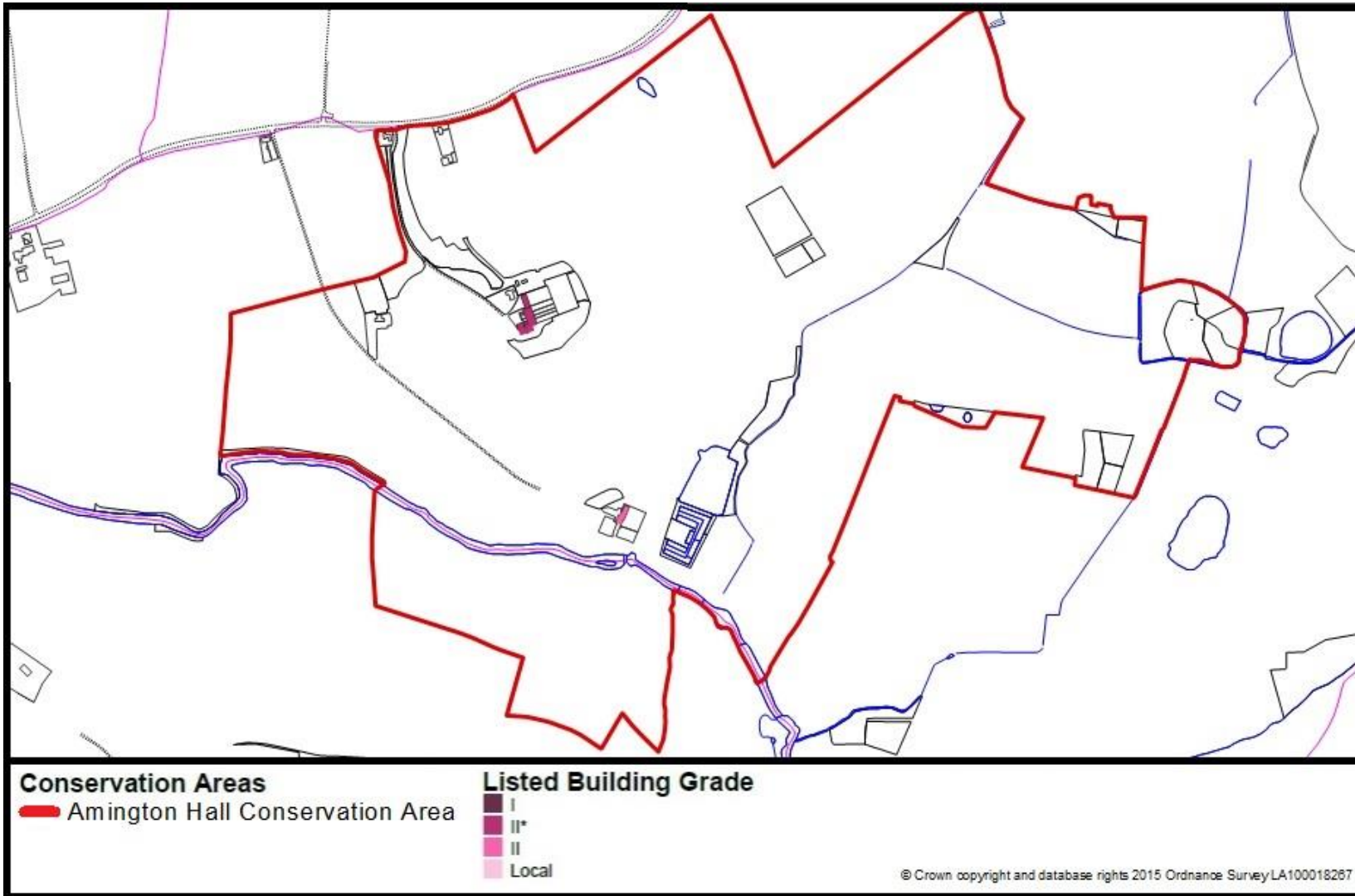


Figure 1: Amington Hall Conservation Area

Section 2: Review of the Conservation Area

- 2.1 The Appraisal in 2008 divided the Conservation Area into three character zones: Amington Hall; Amington Old Hall; and The Parkland. It identified positive and negative buildings, structures and opportunities for change. Using the information in the appraisal and the photographic record as a baseline, the character zones were re-examined to identify which aspects have changed since 2008. Appendix 1 contains a summary of change, positive and negative features and opportunities for each of the zones.

Changes to the conservation area

- 2.2 There has been very limited change to the conservation area since 2008. The area is predominantly rural and situated within open countryside which limits the amount of development such as new dwellings and extensions.
- 2.3 There has been the installation of solar panels to the front façade of one of the mid-late 20th Century dwellings along the drive to the Amington Old Hall, which although the dwelling is of neutral value the placement of the solar panels does cause some detriment to the experience of the drive to the Old Hall.



Figure 2: Solar Panels installed along the Amington Old Hall Drive

- 2.4 Historic England has conducted an annual conservation area survey since 2009 which considers condition, vulnerability and expected changes. Based on the 2015 update the Amington Hall Conservation Area is classed as being in fair condition, highly vulnerable, but not at risk overall. This is based on feedback from the Council that loss of historic detail, lack of maintenance and the condition of the public realm are all minor problems. It is important to continue to participate in the survey to monitor change and to ensure that the conservation area does not become ‘at risk.’

Archaeology

- 2.5 The Amington Hall Conservation Area contains assets of considerable heritage significance. There is high potential for above and below ground archaeology to survive across the conservation area and although sporadic archaeological work over time has revealed evidence of archaeology which is recorded in the Historic Environment Record, the full extent of the resource is unknown. The Heritage Impact Assessment recommends that a desk based archaeological assessment is undertaken for all allocated sites, which is reflected in Policy EN6 however none of these sites are within the Conservation Area or its setting. This would also extend to any windfall sites that come forward within the conservation area.

Historic environment

- 2.6 Most of the buildings in the conservation area are in good structural condition and the main issue is the loss of individual detailing and historical elements, the cumulative effects of which have the potential to erode the character of the conservation area. The Amington Hall Conservation Area does not contain any Article 4 directions, however the main buildings are listed with the remaining buildings restricted from extending or new windfall development as a result of the sites being situated within the open countryside where the development of dwellings is more restrictive.

As highlighted in the 2008 Appraisal, the modern farm buildings around the site of the Amington Old Hall are detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area, however the buildings are agricultural and are not as damaging to the rural character as these types of buildings are expected in working farms and is somewhat hidden from long range views from the traditional brick barn and tree coverage.



Figure 3: Modern Agricultural sheds amongst traditional brick buildings

- 2.7 Other modern buildings such as the garage to the front of Amington Hall are constructed using concrete block work and an almost flat roof which is unsympathetic to the character and appearance of the Hall, a Grade II* listed building.



Figure 4: Garage block to the front of Amington Hall

- 2.8 To the rear of the Amington Hall, the grounds are suffering from a lack of maintenance as are the timber outbuildings. These are not visible from the public realm, however would be beneficial to the conservation area and the setting of the listed building is properly maintained.



Figure 5: Outbuildings to the rear of Amington Hall

Assessment of Conservation Area Boundary

- 2.9 The conservation area boundaries generally follow the lines of the historic Amington Old Hall Estate, and as current, the boundary fulfils the role of designation for a conservation area. As such, it is recommended that the Conservation Area boundary is retained in its current form.

Public realm

- 2.10 The public realm in this Conservation Area is quite different in that the accessible public paths are walking tracks through the countryside. There are tracks which give vehicular access to the brook, The Old Hall and Amington Hall Barn and buildings.
- 2.11 Some of the walking tracks behind Amington Old Hall Barns and the site of the disused fishponds are very over-grown and disused with broken stiles evident. The improvement of these walking tracks across the countryside can have positive benefits to the conservation area, particularly in care, interpretation and maintenance.
- 2.12 The fish ponds which were part of the Amington Old Hall continue to be overgrown and disused. There is a real opportunity to reinstate the fishponds which will add to the historic interpretation of the Amington Old Hall.



Figure 6: Overgrown Fishponds to the rear of Amington Old Hall

Section 3: Managing the future of the conservation area

3.1 This section sets out proposals for managing the conservation area, including projects and initiatives which have arisen from the issues identified in the conservation area appraisal and review. It also sets out guidance for new development, although this will be provided in greater detail in the Design Supplementary Planning Document. Section 2 identified the following issues as being of particular concern for the Amington Hall Conservation Area:

- Retention of character and historic detailing
- Reinstatement of lost features, such as the fishing ponds
- Maintenance of public rights of way

Integrating new development

3.2 Although there are no allocated sites within the conservation area and there are limited opportunities for windfall development, there are opportunities for expansion and alterations to existing buildings which will be a challenge to integrate new development in a way that respects historic character and does not cause unacceptable harm. The sensitivity of the location will require a specific design solution to respond to the historic buildings and streetscape and potential below ground archaeological remains. Broad principles that would apply to all sites are:

- Specific design solution for each site to include careful use of materials and detailing;
- Development to reflect existing rural environment and architecture;
- Maintain important views of listed buildings and open spaces;
- Foundations to take into account potential for below ground remains, to be informed by desk based archaeological assessment and fieldwork if necessary
- Take the opportunity to restore and enhance heritage assets, and their grounds

3.3 The Council will be preparing a Design supplementary planning document (SPD) to provide further detail to the Local Plan policies. The intention is to have guidance which will cover shop fronts, signage and advertisements and materials. Other relevant topics include new residential and commercial development.

Management action 1: Guide new development

- Produce Design SPD to guide new development, including heritage contexts

Condition of historic buildings

3.4 Although the condition of most buildings in the conservation area is reasonable and there has been some investment, there are individual buildings and their settings that have been neglected or have been subjected to inappropriate changes.

3.5 There is also an issue regarding lack of knowledge with regards to the maintenance and works required to historic assets. Guidance showing appropriate levels of maintenance and care of listed buildings can be beneficial to raising awareness and care for heritage assets.

- 3.6 The council will continue to undertake reviews and assessments of the Conservation Area and heritage assets within the Conservation Area to ensure that preventative measures can be employed to avoid buildings becoming ‘at risk.’ Where communications with owners has been ineffective, the Council will utilise its legal powers to ensure that necessary works are undertaken to safeguard the future of heritage assets.
- 3.7 The buildings listed in Appendix 3 are identified for enhancement. This will include general improvements to improving the condition of building and more specialised works. The recommended works for each building are set out in Appendix 3.

Management action 2: Enhance the condition of historic buildings

- Engage with owners and tenants to encourage regular building maintenance, with a particular focus on priority buildings
- Promote the retention and reinstatement of original features including timber windows and front boundary walls and hedges
- Engage with owners to ensure occupancy and appropriate and viable use of vacant buildings
- Undertake a number of guidance notes that promote the preventative maintenance and proper care of historic assets.
- Review the buildings at risk survey on a regular basis (every 5 years)
- Where appropriate, the Council will utilise its legal powers to ensure necessary works are carried out to ensure the safeguarding of heritage assets.

Local List

- 3.8 The heritage impact assessment highlighted the potential for additions to the local list, although the appraisal process in 2008 resulted in a fairly comprehensive review of the local list, however no additions were made to the Amington Hall Conservation Area as the majority of the buildings are listed as of national importance. Along with the public consultation of the Conservation Area Appraisal reviews, the Council will be undertaking a review of the Local List. This will involve inviting nominations from local heritage groups and the general public against criteria set out by the Council. The final decision on local list additions will be subject to Cabinet approval.

Management action 3: Maintain and review Local List

- Review the Local List in consultation with the public

Safeguarding archaeology

- 3.9 Development within the conservation area could result in loss or fragmentation of surviving archaeological remains and for this reason, early discussion with the

Country Council Historic Environment Team is recommended. The Local Plan requires a desk based archaeological assessment to accompany planning applications to identify the potential for archaeology and guide discussions about the scope and scale of any preservation and mitigation.

Management action 4: Safeguard archaeology

- Engage with the Staffordshire County Council Environmental Advice Team and Historic Environment Record at an early stage to enable the production of up to date desk based assessments
- Record any archaeological structures revealed through assessments and development on the Historic Environment Record and consider opportunities to interpret discoveries

Enhancing the public realm

- 3.10 Responsibility for provision and maintenance of the public realm is split between the Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council. Renewal of the public realm would enable the area to be redesigned with a unified character and identify. Works other than routine maintenance can be partly funded through Section 106 contributions but larger projects will require funding applications to various sources including the local enterprise partnerships and Heritage Lottery Fund. It will be necessary to work with the County Council to identify opportunities for funding as projects are identified and agreed.

Management action 5: Enhance the public realm

- Work with Staffordshire County Council to identify opportunities for public realm improvements which could be included in the CIL 123 project list
- Undertake street clutter audit in line with Historic England guidance
- Work with statutory undertakers to agree an approach to highway reinstatement
- The Council will work with all the stakeholders to work towards achieving high quality and coherent style of public realm which will enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Funding and resources

- 3.11 The Borough Council has a number of officers whose remit includes heritage and the town centre. The Council will work with partners and engage with businesses and building owners to enhance the conservation area. This may take the form of advice, identifying funding opportunities and promoting the town centre. Project teams could also be formed to co-ordinate and manage specific projects when needed.
- 3.12 The Council operates a modest conservation grant scheme which is used as match funding to support building owners and tenants undertaking structural repairs and restoration of original features. This is available to all statutorily and locally listed buildings throughout the Borough and historic unlisted buildings within conservation areas. It could be used to part fund the projects identified in the management plan, however, demand already exceeds availability and with competition from projects in other conservation areas, progress will be limited to a small number of projects every year. There is scope to review the way the grant scheme operates to target priority schemes in the conservation areas.
- 3.13 There is also the potential to include heritage projects as part of the project list to be funded as part of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions. Predominantly consisting of streetscape improvements the levy charged on new build housing, retail and commercial developments can assist with funding towards improvements. Any potential projects will be required to be added to the Regulation 123 list.

Management action 6: Resourcing Improvements

- Review operation of grant scheme to target priority schemes in the conservation areas arising from management plans
- Develop a list of streetscape improvement projects which can be added to the CIL Regulation 123 list.

Section 4: Monitoring and Review

- 4.1 The intention is to monitor changes to the conservation area to assess the effectiveness of the management plan. A dated photographic record is produced to show the changes to the conservation area since the appraisal was undertaken in 2008, using the original photos for comparison. A formal review will be carried out on a five yearly basis.
- 4.2 The Council will continue to participate in the Historic England annual conservation area survey and take appropriate advice and action if the conservation area is revealed as being at risk.
- 4.3 These monitoring actions will need to be set up alongside the Local Plan monitoring framework.

Management action 7: Monitor and review changes

- Produce a dated photographic record to monitor changes to the conservation area
- Continue to participate in the annual conservation area survey produced by Historic England
- Monitor changes in the conservation area and modify the management actions where necessary to secure positive change

Appendices

Appendix 1: Review of the conservation area by character zone

| Character Zone 1 – Amington Hall | |
|---|--|
| Change since 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/a |
| Positive features | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic rural character is still mostly intact; Development centred around converted barn buildings and farmstead which is largely intact; Long distance views over landscape |
| Negative features | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern Agricultural sheds |
| Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage retention of historic features and linkages of the farmstead buildings |
| Character Zone 2 – Amington Old Hall | |
| Change since 2008 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solar panels installed to front roof plane of dwelling along the drive to Amington Hall |
| Positive features | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic rural character is still mostly intact; Soft landscaping to dwellings along driveway to Amington Hall which reinforces character to the conservation area. |
| Negative features | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of maintenance to the grounds and outbuildings to the rear of Amington Hall Poor siting of garage to the front of Amington Hall |
| Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to reinforce appropriate materials and treatments and the positive contribution the development makes to the conservation area |
| Character Zone 3 – The Parkland | |
| Change since 2008 | N/a |
| Positive features | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large areas of parkland which reinforce the rural character and appearance of the conservation area Majority of buildings are in keeping with the rural feel of the conservation area |
| Negative features | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of maintenance to public rights of way, with paths overgrown and stiles broken Lack of maintenance to former fishponds which are now overgrown and derelict. |
| Opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reinstatement of fish ponds The maintenance of public rights of way so that walkers can appreciate the historic character and environment of the Amington Old Hall Estate. |

Appendix 2: Heritage assets in the Amington Hall Conservation Area

| | Listed Buildings | Grade |
|---|-------------------|-------|
| 1 | Amington Hall | II* |
| 2 | Amington Old Hall | II |



Appendix 3: Recommended works

This section describes potential problems and recommendations for alleviating the identified problems. Some of the works to rectify problems may require planning and/or listed building consent, so please check with the Development Management Team or Conservation Officer at Tamworth Borough Council before undertaking any works described in this plan.

| The Parkland | | | |
|--|---|-----------------------|--|
| Roof chimney | | Windows | |
| Chimney | | Doors | |
| Rainwater goods | | Shopfront/signage | |
| Brick or stonework | | Architectural details | |
| Other? | x | Wall, gate & railings | |
| Works required: Reinstate stiles and maintain public rights of way within parkland | | | |

| Former Fishing Ponds | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------|--|
| Roof chimney | | Windows | |
| Chimney | | Doors | |
| Rainwater goods | | Shopfront/signage | |
| Brick or stonework | | Architectural details | |
| Other? | x | Wall, gate & railings | |
| Works required: Reinstate fishing ponds so that they can be experienced by people utilising the public rights of way. | | | |