



Management Plan March 2019

St Michael's Church Conservation Area



Knowsley Council

Foreword

The St Michaels Church Conservation Area Management Plan should be read in conjunction with the following documents or their successors:

St Michael's Church Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2018);

The National Planning Policy Framework (2018);

Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy (2016) including saved policies from the Knowsley Unitary Development Plan (2006).

Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Any building, site or feature within the St Michael's Church Conservation Area not referred to in this document, may nevertheless be of historical and/or architectural interest. It is strongly recommended that discussions are held with Knowsley Council at an early stage and before any works to a building, site or feature within the conservation area are undertaken

This document has been written and prepared by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council.

Planning Services,
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Yorkon Building,
Archway Road,
Huyton, Knowsley
Merseyside L36 9FB
Telephone: 0151 443 2781

www.knowsley.gov.uk

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1. Introduction

1.1. The Purpose of the Management Plan

St Michael's Church Conservation Area Management Plan has been prepared in association with the production of the St Michael's Church Conservation Area Character Appraisal. It provides a framework for future actions, which are primarily the responsibility of Knowsley Council, although their successful implementation will also depend on the co-operation and enthusiasm of local people and local organisations.

The primary purpose of this document is to provide planning guidance to owners, occupiers and their agents developing schemes for refurbishment, alteration or new development in respect of:

- a) The planning policies and procedures to be followed;
- b) The design standards expected when making alterations to existing properties and for new development in the conservation area or affecting its setting; and
- c) The design standards expected for repairs and general maintenance work to land or premises in the conservation area.

Together, the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and this Management Plan will clarify how planning policies will be applied, which will assist the Council in making informed and robust planning decisions that support the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area. Local Authorities have the duty to review periodically their conservation areas and to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their conservation areas. The Character Appraisal, published in association with this Management Plan, identifies the key characteristics of the area and provides an outline of the main issues that affect its character and appearance.

1.2 Summary of Key Characteristics of the Conservation Area

- It is the surviving core of an historically rural village.
- Prominent focal features set at nodal points include the Grade II* Listed Church and its churchyard walls, the Grade II Village Cross and green, the Barker's Brewery Pub and 112-118 Bluebell Lane. All contribute to several important views.
- Mature planting, planted front gardens and areas of tree cover enhance the 'rural village' character of the area
- Housing of differing styles; ranging from early 19th Century cottage terraces to later semi-detached villas chart the historic development of the area.
- St Michael's Cemetery Extension is a quiet green space that contains features of cultural and historical value, it also forms a backdrop to the area, is a place for quiet reflection, and helps create a sense of divide from the adjoining suburban area.

- Semi-detached Victorian villa housing provides visual and historical links with the other conservation areas in Huyton.
- Use of locally distinctive materials specifically red sandstones, local brick and Welsh slate.

1.3 Summary of Principle Issues

The Conservation Appraisal identified the following as the main issues affecting the character and appearance of the conservation area, and its management.

Policy and Guidance

- Potential for buildings to be added to the proposed local list of heritage assets.
- Additional planning guidance would be helpful to owners, agents and planning officers and assist in the preservation and enhancement of the character of the area.
- Review of Article 4 Direction to reflect current planning rules.
- Potential for use of statutory powers e.g. Urgent Works Notice, Amenity Notices, Repairs Notices.
- Potential for specific householder guidance e.g. listed buildings, living in a conservation area
- Review official name of conservation area, to correspond with common usage

Physical and Spatial

- Conservation Area boundary revisions required if to adequately identify the area of architectural and historical interest.
- Protection and enhancement of the setting of the conservation area, with consideration to historical and visual connections, and views through, into and out of the conservation area.
- Unsympathetic alterations and poorer quality replacements to joinery and boundary treatments have been identified.
- Improvements to the public realm including improved connections between the conservation area and the commercial centre. Enhancements to the quality of surfacing and reducing the visual impact of highway features are desirable.
- Protection of individual plot characteristics to preserve the historically significant layout of the area.
- Protection of landscaped areas, front gardens and trees.
- A general need for improvement in maintenance of buildings, greenspaces and boundary treatments has been identified, e.g. periodic painting of joinery, repair of rainwater goods and pointing.

Site Specific

- St Michael's Church and Churchyard - four listed buildings and their settings are negatively affected by graffiti, areas of unkempt landscaping and missing/broken elements of some structures.
- The Old Hearse House/Fire station – This is an overgrown and boarded up site where suitable re-use and appropriate development would be desirable.

2. Planning Regulations

In order to protect the character and appearance of the conservation area, new development, demolition and works to trees are subject to tighter restrictions through the planning system.

2.1 Article 4 Direction

St Michael's Church Conservation Area is subject to an Article 4 Direction, meaning that most external changes will first require planning permission.

In light of the Article 4 Direction in place, property owners and developers considering undertaking work to a property in the conservation area should seek advice from the Council regarding planning permission. A fee is required for planning applications.

2.2 Listed buildings

At the time of writing there are 5 listed buildings in the St Michael's Church Huyton Conservation Area.

- The Church of St Michael (Grade II*)
- Monument to the East of the Church (Grade II)
- Gateway to the South of the Church (Grade II)
- Gateway to the North-East of the Church (Grade II)
- The Village Cross (Grade II)

Listed buildings are protected under the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. Where a building is statutorily listed, all internal and external alterations, which affect the special architectural or historic interest of the building, require Listed Building Consent. **It is a criminal offence to undertake works of demolition, or alteration to a listed building, without first gaining consent.** Works to listed ecclesiastical buildings used by certain denominations are however exempt from the Listed Building Consent process, as there are separate systems in place operated by the relevant church authorities.

2.3 Trees

Trees are protected from unauthorised alteration by section 211 of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990*. Anyone intending to carry out works to a tree must give the Council six weeks formal written notice before starting the work. 'Work' is defined as pruning, topping or felling. This provision gives the Council the opportunity to assess the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the amenity of the area. Where the proposed works are considered unacceptable, the Council may make a Tree Preservation Order to prevent harm to amenity.

3. Action Plan – Planning policy

The Council’s planning policies are set out in the Local Plan and in supporting guidance, these are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. These policies and supporting guidance are used to ensure that conservation areas are preserved, help improve the appearance of conservation areas and to drive up the quality of new development.

3.1 Locally Listed Buildings

Currently, Knowsley Council does not have a Local List; however, the Council is committed to producing one.

‘Locally Listed’ buildings are buildings of local significance which, although not statutorily listed are important in their local context and merit consideration within the planning process. Action A2 in the Historic Environment Strategy for Knowsley sets out the proposed action to compile a comprehensive list of important local historic buildings; the Knowsley Local Plan, adopted January 2016 confirms this intent (at paragraph 9.19). Once completed, the local list will be published and periodically reviewed.

Key Action 1 – Local List

- The Council will prepare a Local List for the borough including consideration of buildings within the St Michael’s Church Conservation Area.

3.2 Article 4 Directions

Article 4 Directions are made under the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, (as amended)*, and can be used by the Council to remove or limit permitted development rights, where the excise of these is threatening the character of a conservation area.

St Michael’s Church Conservation Area already has an Article 4 Direction in place, meaning that planning permission has to be sought for most works in the area. This enables the merits of the proposals to be properly considered.

When the Direction was made in 1981 it reflected the planning rules of that time. Since then, there have been changes to those rules and therefore the Direction in place does not relate well to the current regulations. In addition, if the boundaries of the conservation area were to be extended, then any buildings in the newly incorporated areas would not be part of the existing Article 4 Direction. This means that these newly added areas would be subject to different planning rules. This inconsistency in the level of protection across the conservation area would lead to confusion and so it would be desirable to review the Article 4 Direction.

Key Action 2 – Article 4 Directions

- The Council will review the Article 4 Direction

3.3 Enforcement Powers

The Council has experience of using its planning enforcement powers and is prepared to use them where co-operation cannot be secured by other means. Knowsley Council's approach to enforcement is guided by Good Practice Guidance and is available on the Council website. The principle enforcement powers available to a local planning authority, to (proactively) tackle issues affecting the historic environment, include:

- **Section 215 Notices** – Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 can be used to achieve improvements to the quality of the historic environment, where it is adversely affected by untidy land. This can be used as an alternative or complementary action to Urgent Works Notices or Repairs Notices.
- **Urgent Works Notices** – Section 54 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 enables local authorities to serve notice that they intend to execute any works which appear to be urgently necessary for the preservation of a listed building in their area. This can also be applied to an unlisted building in a conservation area, if its preservation is important for maintaining the character and appearance of the area. The cost of works can be reclaimed from the owner.
- **Repairs Notices and Compulsory Purchase Orders** – Sections 47 & 48 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 enable local authorities to serve a Repairs Notice on the owner of a listed building specifying works that it considers reasonably necessary for the proper preservation of the building. If the building is not repaired within two months, the local authority may then serve a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). If the Order is confirmed by the Secretary of State the Local Authority may proceed to acquire the building.
- **Planning Enforcement Notices** - A breach of planning control is defined in section 171A of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990* as the carrying out of development without the required planning permission; or failing to comply with any condition or limitation subject to which planning permission has been granted. Additionally, any contravention of the limitations on, or conditions belonging to permitted development rights as defined under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 constitutes a breach of planning control against which enforcement action may be taken.

Key Action 3 – Use of Enforcement Powers

- The Council will periodically monitor conservation areas for breaches of planning controls, and consider the use of statutory enforcement powers.

3.4 Condition Surveys

There are a number of methods that Knowsley Council use to monitor the condition of conservation areas within the borough.

Knowsley Council maintains a local '*Buildings at Risk*' (BAR) register, which assesses the condition of listed buildings within the borough. There are currently no listed buildings at risk in the conservation area; however all are vulnerable to vandalism and a general lack of maintenance as evidenced by damage to elements of the church and churchyard.

Additionally, an annual assessment is undertaken to determine whether any of the borough's conservation areas are 'At Risk' which informs the Historic England 'Heritage at Risk Register'.

Regular photographic surveys should be undertaken as a baseline record for measuring change, monitoring building condition, and to provide evidence for enforcement action if required.

Key Action 4 – Buildings at Risk Survey

- Subject to funding and availability of resources, the Council will periodically review the condition of listed buildings through a 'Building at Risk' survey as part of a borough-wide survey.

Key Action 5 – Historic England Survey

- The Council will continue to contribute to the annual Historic England condition survey of conservation areas.

Key Action 6 – Further Survey Work

- The Council will carry out further reviews and survey work to monitor change within the conservation area.

3.5 Provision of Information

It is important that communities are well informed about the qualities of their conservation areas and the opportunities for their enhancement. The adoption and publication of planning guidance, specifically targeted at the local area, is a positive way to encourage residents to take an interest in the history and character of the area and provide them with greater knowledge of their statutory obligations in relation to the planning system. The adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal and the Management Plan and their publication on the Council website would form part of this planning guidance.

Generally, the buildings in the conservation areas are in a fair condition. However improved maintenance and appropriate repairs to a number of buildings would significantly enhance the condition and appearance of the conservation area. Improvements such as repainting joinery and repointing masonry walls would be of benefit. It is vital that historically correct materials and details are used for any repairs, such as using lime mortar as opposed to cement, as this will extend the life of the masonry, as well as enhancing the character and appearance of buildings.

Improved management and maintenance of the trees and greenspaces would also be beneficial

Subject to resources, opportunities should be taken to regularly update planning guidance and provide residents with additional information about the history and value of the conservation area.

Key Action 7 – Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

- The Council will seek to keep the Character Area Appraisal and Management Plan up to date, in accordance with the Historic Environment Strategy for Knowsley.

Key Action 8 – General Maintenance

- The Council will encourage general maintenance and repairs to buildings within the conservation areas, as well as promote the use of traditional materials.
- The Council will take opportunities to seek enhanced maintenance of greenspaces and trees

Key Action 9 – Provision of Further Guidance and Information

- Subject to funding and availability of resources, the Council will consider the provision of further guidance and information for residents living in the conservation area.

4. Action Plan – Guidance for Planning Decisions

With the commitment to producing a Conservation Area Management Plan, comes the recognition that it is possible to raise standards in the design and implementation of development. There are several measures that can be taken to improve design quality and maintenance standards in the St Michael's Church Conservation Area.

To help guide building owners, occupiers, and planning decisions, a series of recommendations have been established. These recommendations set out the standards of design that are expected and necessary to achieve the preservation and enhancement of the special character of St Michael's Church Conservation Area. Additionally, the recommendations look to address a number of issues raised in the Conservation Area Appraisal as negatively affecting the area.

4.1 Setting of the Conservation Area

The character of the St Michael's Church Conservation Area is vulnerable to actions taken outside its boundaries. This is why national and local policies confirm that the effect of development on the setting of a conservation area is a "material consideration" in planning decisions. This consideration applies in several scenarios including where sites are just outside the boundary of the conservation area, or where a significant view into, or out of the area may be affected; setting is not capable of being mapped as it does not have a geographical extent.

Historic England Good Practice Advice Note 3 (2017) sets out guidance on managing change within the setting of heritage assets, including historic buildings, sites, areas and landscapes. Currently, the setting to the north and east and west of the St Michael's Church Conservation Area includes several 20th century suburban developments, which have a neutral impact on the character of the area. However, it does also contain several Victorian properties, which variously share similarities of form, architectural detail and age with properties in the area. The arrangement of properties along Stanley Road and elements of 19th Century development on Blue Bell Lane and Archway Road complement the character and appearance of the conservation area due to their similar age, architectural qualities and historic links.

South of the conservation area the nine storey DWP Tower is visually harmful, and the busy dual carriageway that separates the modern core of Huyton Village from the conservation area disrupts the connection between the old village and the new.

Spatial Action 1 - Effect of Development on Key Views and/or Setting**Policy**

Ensure that all new development within the conservation area and development affecting its setting complies with the National Planning Policy Framework; Planning Policy Guidance; Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy Policy in CS2, CS19, CS20, CS21; and Saved Knowsley Unitary Development Plan: Policy DQ5.

Recommendation

- Development within the conservation area or affecting its setting must not impinge on the features that contribute to the conservation area, adversely affect views which contribute to the significance of the area, or otherwise harm its setting;
- Opportunities should be taken to improve the contribution made by the setting of the conservation area.

Action

The Council will carefully monitor applications on the outskirts or edges of the conservation area, and may refuse those which would adversely affect the conservation area due to the proposed scale, height, massing or detailing; or the loss or harm to important views in to or out of the conservation area; unless the scale of public benefits arising from the proposal outweighs the scale of harm.

4.2 New Development

There is little opportunity for new development in the area. Redevelopment of later 20th Century buildings, which do not add to the significance of the area, would generally be acceptable provided the development is in keeping with the grain and positive architectural qualities of the conservation area, and the detailing and materials used are good quality and match locally distinctive materials.

More recent developments vary in their success in preserving the character of the conservation area. When designing new structures it is important to retain the original scale and proportions, layout, general form and positioning of development upon historic plots. Any proposals for divisions of historic plots should be avoided, unless exceptional circumstances exist and are evidenced.

Spatial Action 2 – Design Quality of New Buildings

Policy

Ensure that all new development within the conservation area and its setting complies with the National Planning Policy Framework; Planning Policy Guidance; Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy: Policy CS2, CS17, CS19, CS20, CS21; Saved Knowsley Unitary Development Plan Policy DQ5; relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) - Design Quality in New Development SPD and New Residential Development SPD; and Historic England guidance.

Recommendation

- The architectural character of new development should relate to the architecture of buildings that contribute to the historic character of the conservation area.
- Development should ensure maintenance of the suburban layout, and new development should repeat and maintain those characteristics.
- New Cul-de-sacs and back land forms of development will not be supported.
- New development should not dominate historic buildings in the conservation area by virtue of its scale, height, massing or siting.
- New development within the conservation area should reflect the existing palette of materials, namely brick, natural slate, strong front boundaries built of brick or local stone.
- Where contemporary materials are appropriate they should be high quality and it should be demonstrated that they harmonise with the materials of existing buildings and features. The use of low quality or imitation materials e.g. reconstituted slate and uPVC, should be avoided.

Action

In determining planning applications the Council will assess whether new development is sympathetic to the conservation areas' character and appearance, with particular consideration given to materials, orientation, building lines, plot size, height, proportions of features, plot boundaries; proximity to existing buildings and the amounts of development relative to areas of landscaping.

4.3 Changes to Use of Existing Buildings

The St Michael's Church Conservation Area is a largely residential area that has retained this character for many decades, resisting the redevelopment pressures evident in the rest of Huyton. In instances where there has been a change of use, this is generally achieved in a sympathetic manner. Nonetheless, further changes to the use of existing buildings can significantly impact on the conservation area's character. The Council will seek to ensure that any proposals for new uses avoid harm the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Spatial Action 3 – Change of Use

Policy

Ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework; Planning Practice Guidance; Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy: Policy CS16, CS19 and CS20; and Saved Knowsley Unitary Development Plan: Policy DQ5.

Recommendation

- Changes of use should not undermine the general residential character of the conservation area. The introduction of features such as signage, lighting and parking should be well designed and sensitive to the low key residential character of the conservation area.
- In considering planning applications for changes of use, the Council will require information about the design of refuse storage, waste pipes, satellite dishes, signage, car parking, new boundaries and hard surfaces. Any such additions should be discreet in their design and positioning.

Action

In determining planning applications for changes of use, the Council will:

- Consider whether any proposal preserves or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- Use stringent design criteria (as outlined above).

4.4 Extensions to Existing Buildings

A number of buildings within the St Michael's Church Conservation Area have been extended. Whilst some extensions are designed and sited sympathetically, in other cases extensions, particularly two storey side extensions, disrupt the regularity of the appearance and layout of buildings, which detracts from the more generous suburban layout and character of the overall area. Repetition of poorer forms of extensions will result in an over-intensification of the individual plot and will, over time, have a cumulative detrimental effect on the conservation area.

Spatial Action 4 – Extensions to Buildings

Policy

Ensure that all new development within the conservation area and its setting complies with the National Planning Policy Framework; Planning Practice Guidance; Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy: Policy CS2, CS19, CS20, CS21; Saved Knowsley Unitary Development Plan: Policy DQ5; and Householder Development SPD (2016).

Recommendations

- Dormers will only be considered acceptable in limited circumstances where the architecture of the host property lends itself to the addition.
- The use of roof lights should be minimised. If unavoidable, they should be carefully located, set flush with the plane of the roof and restricted to non-prominent elevations.
- Extensions should not be prominently sited and should be of a subordinate scale and design that does not compete with, or visually dominate, the host property.
- Extensions should flow from the original design of the property. Inappropriate side extensions, that undermine the symmetry or unity of semi-detached compositions, or diminish the sense of spacing and rhythm between buildings within the conservation area, should be avoided.
- Materials used should harmonise with the original building in terms of coursing, colour and texture. Extensions should reflect the existing historic palette of materials, namely red/brown brick, sandstone, timber, natural slate.

Action

In determining planning applications the Council will aim to ensure that extensions are suitably located and of a subordinate size and scale so that they do not negatively impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

4.5 Demolition within a Conservation Area

The demolition of any historic buildings within the conservation area would erode and dilute the existing character of the conservation area and adversely affect its appearance, this includes the demolition of outbuildings.

Spatial Action 5 – Demolition within the Conservation Area

Policy

Ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework; Planning Practice Guidance; Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy: Policy CS16, CS19 and CS20; and Saved Knowsley Unitary Development Plan: Policy DQ5.

Recommendation

- There will be a presumption that historic buildings and outbuildings within the conservation area will be retained. Their demolition will only be supported if it can be clearly demonstrated that demolition is unavoidable.
- The demolition of modern developments will be supported where it does not contribute to the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- Redevelopment proposals should avoid creating gap sites and replacement development should aim to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Action

In determining planning applications, the Council will not support the demolition of historic buildings – unless exceptional circumstances are demonstrated.

Where the building does not make a positive contribution to the conservation area the Council will support demolition; provided that overall the proposal will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

4.6 Alterations to Historic Fabric and New Installations

A number of buildings within the conservation areas have been harmed by inappropriate replacement features, materials and repairs. Alterations to buildings should be carried out using historically accurate materials and details; and where possible any existing unsympathetic alterations should be reversed. This particularly refers to windows (where traditional styles and moulded timber frames rather than uPVC should be specified) and roof materials (where slate should be used, rather than concrete or artificial slate).

Spatial Action 6 – Alteration to Historic Fabric or Features

Policy

Ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework; Planning Practice Guidance; Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy: Policy CS16, CS19 and CS20; and Saved Knowsley Unitary Development Plan: Policy DQ5.

Recommendation

- Historically or architecturally significant features should be retained. Where replacement is necessary this should be on a replica basis.
- Where previous losses have undermined the value of a building or feature, the opportunity to reinstate a more traditional design should be taken.
- Where alterations can be justified, impacts should be limited to less 'significant' areas of the building, such as existing extensions.
- Any changes to primary features, such as windows, doors, chimneys and boundary walls should be carefully considered. Where replacement of existing original or early fabric proves necessary, work should be carried out in replica, not exchanging traditional materials or details for modern alternatives.
- New materials should be aesthetically and technically compatible with the surrounding fabric of the building.

Action

In determining planning applications, the Council will expect that changes to the historic fabric of buildings use matching and technically compatible materials and details, to continue to preserve and/or enhance the conservation area.

4.7 New Fixtures and Fittings

The presence of fixtures and fittings to buildings within the conservation area often clutters the front elevation and detracts from the aesthetic value of the conservation area. The installation of new fixtures such as roof lights, aerials or satellite dishes, or micro-generation equipment such as solar panels can detract from the character of the individual building and the St Michaels Church Conservation Area as a whole.

Spatial Action 7 – Installation of New Fixtures

Policy

Compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework; Planning Practice Guidance; Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy: Policy CS19, CS20 and CS21 Saved Knowsley Unitary Development Plan: Policy DQ5.

Recommendation

- New fixtures should be discreetly designed and located.
- The visual impact of micro-generation equipment on buildings and their settings should be minimised by choosing the appropriate type of equipment and positioning above ground elements so as not to be publically visible.
- Satellite dishes and aerials should only be installed in less prominent positions.
- The use of CCTV cameras should generally be avoided. Where there is a demonstrable need, cameras should be small, discreetly positioned, and limited to the least number necessary.
- Any installation of new fixtures to chimneys should be avoided.
- Electric charging points should be discreetly located.
- Wiring associated with new fixtures should be minimised and its visual impacts minimised.

Action

The Council will encourage new fixtures to be installed appropriately in discreet locations to minimise their visual impacts.

4.8 Boundaries and Front Gardens

In the St Michael's Church Conservation Area there have been losses to the cohesive streetscape through demolition or unsympathetic alterations to boundary walls. The remaining original stone and/or brick boundary walls and associated gate piers are critically important features in the conservation area. This is particularly true of the stone-slab walls, which are a distinctive attribute of the area's character.

The decline in condition, loss of, or alteration of these features would further adversely affect the character of the conservation area. In areas where modern developments have resulted in the loss of boundary walls and replacement with features of a different design, this had a significant impact on the streetscape. Opportunities to replace inappropriately designed boundaries with more appropriate alternatives should be taken. There is particular scope for improvement to the boundaries around the more recent part of the cemetery by standardising fencing and improving the quality of materials used.

Spatial Action 8 – Loss or Alteration to Boundary Walls

Policy

Ensure proposed alterations comply with the National Planning Policy Framework; Planning Practice Guidance; Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy: Policy CS19 and CS20; Saved Knowsley Unitary Development Plan: Policy DQ5 and Householder Development SPD (2016).

Recommendation

- All historic boundary walls and gate piers should be retained and appropriately repaired.
- Additions of railings or fencing, or raising the height of historic boundaries, will be considered inappropriate; boundaries should retain their original design detailing.
- Repairs to boundary walls should be undertaken using appropriate materials. For example, the use of lime mortar for repointing is essential in combination with soft brick or sandstone. Cement should be avoided as this can hasten decay.
- Timber fencing to frontages should not be permitted.
- Where an historic boundary wall has been lost, opportunities to reconstruct a traditional style boundary on the historic alignment should be taken.
- Open plan frontages should be avoided.
- The soft planted character to gardens should be retained.
- The creation of large hardstanding areas on site frontages should be avoided.

Action

In determining planning applications the Council will not support the demolition or significant alterations to historic boundary walls. In other cases, the Council will expect any changes to preserve and/or enhance the conservation area.

4.9 Highways and Public Realm

The public realm is a major contributor to the character of the conservation areas, yet the management of the public realm takes place largely outside the planning system. There are localised areas of original cobbles at the base of the church wall, and the footpaths and grassed areas in the burial grounds include several elements of historic interest. The preservation and maintenance of historic features in the public realm is important in order to preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

St Michael's Church Conservation Area includes the intersection of two major roads and as such roads and highway features have a considerable impact on the appearance of the conservation area. The considerable width of the dual-carriageway of Archway Road creates a physical and psychological barrier between the conservation area and the modern Huyton Village commercial area, disrupting a historic connection.

The conservation area's character can be detrimentally affected by installations such as unsympathetic lighting, railings, road markings and signage. In replacing or installing such features, consideration should be given to designing the scheme such that visual impacts on the character and appearance of the conservation area are avoided or minimised.

Spatial Action 9 – Highways and Public Realm

Policy

Ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework; Planning Practice Guidance; Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy; Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy Policy CS19, CS20 and CS21; Saved Knowsley Unitary Development Plan: Policy DQ7; and Streets for All: North West, Historic England.

Recommendation

- Street light columns and other street furniture should be of consistent designs and painted in a dark colour to be sympathetic to the conservation area. They are currently black and this should be maintained for consistency.
- The metal guard railings at the junction of Blue Bell Lane/Archway Road should be reduced in extent and/or their appearance improved if and when the opportunity arises.
- If the opportunity arises, double yellow lines should be repainted using narrow lines of a primrose or deep cream colour, in recognition of the sensitive nature of the area.
- Any alterations or replacement of pavements should use high quality materials. Where historic paving materials are existing, these should be retained.
- New additions to the highway network and the creation of cul-de-sacs should be avoided. New (or upgraded) entrances should aim to use small junction radii.
- Road signs should be of the minimum size and number allowable to prevent clutter and maintained regularly.
- Redundant signage and highway features should be removed.
- When the opportunity arises, speed cushions on Stanley Road should be revised to a more sympathetic appearance.
- Any new or altered highways features, such as speed control measures, railings, widening of footpaths, new signs and lines, should be of an appropriate, sympathetic design which takes account of the sensitive nature of the area.

Action

The Conservation Officer should be consulted when any new work is proposed that would affect the public realm in the conservation area.

4.10 Trees

Trees make a very important contribution to the character of the St Michael's Church Conservation Area, its setting and the views in and out of the conservation areas. Some of the trees are likely to have been planted before the area was urbanised and as such provide evidence of earlier layouts and underline the rural character of the area. Open areas such as the churchyard contain trees that add a maturity to the townscape.

The trees within the village green obscure views of the pleasant square to some extent and selective removal, together with suitable replacement planting, would be supported.

Spatial Action 10 – Protection, Retention and Provision of Trees

Policy

Ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework; Planning Practice Guidance; Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy: Policy CS19, CS20 and CS21; and Saved Knowsley Unitary Development Plan: Policy DQ4.

Recommendation

- Trees that contribute to the character of the conservation area should normally be retained. Where removal for reasons of disease or health and safety etc. is justified, these should be replaced by trees of appropriate species and girth.
- Selective removal of trees may be supported where appropriate to enhance the character of the conservation area.
- Any replanting or new plantings should use native species.

Action

In determining planning applications, the Council will require that applications be accompanied by a full landscaping scheme. Schemes should normally incorporate the retention of trees and show any new or replacement planting.

5 Action Plan – Site Specific Actions

5.1 The Old Hearse House/Fire station

The restoration and conversion of the Old Hearse House/ Fire station building to a viable use would be supported providing any conversion work is undertaken sympathetically and that the use is compatible with the adjacent area.

Site Specific Action 1 – The Old Hearse House/Fire station

- The Council will encourage improvements to the appearance of the Old Hearse House/Fire station site.
- The Council will consider using its formal planning enforcement powers, if necessary, where considered appropriate.
- The Council will support sensitive development proposals that maximise the historic interest of the site and reflect the area's historic grain, character and appearance.

5.2 St Michael's Churchyard

The site is the setting for four Listed Buildings, including the Grade II* Church of St Michael.

There is evidence of historic and ongoing issues with vandalism throughout the churchyard but it is particularly prevalent to the north of the church where there is a large amount of graffiti and security features present.

It is also notable that church windows have polycarbonate sheets applied externally, presumably as a form of protection from vandalism.

Damage has been sustained to the Grade II listed gateposts, through lack of maintenance and in the loss of ball-finials. Modern replacements are currently in storage in the church.

Grave markers are in a poor condition, some showing signs of vandalism and the sundial that was once a prominent feature in the graveyard is now deconstructed and unrecognisable. Pieces of architectural masonry, some of which are of clear historical interest, are scattered around the church grounds, seemingly without context.

Furthermore, there is excessive plant growth on the edges of the churchyard, pavements and steps are broken and uneven. Handrails, where provided, are mismatched and show signs of deterioration.

Site Specific Action 2 – St. Michael's Churchyard

- The Council will monitor the condition of St Michaels Churchyard.
- The Council will support initiatives to reduce anti-social behaviour provided these are sensitive to the historic fabric and character of the churchyard.
- The Council will support sensitive restoration and improvement proposals.

6. Monitoring and Review

The efficient delivery of a conservation service requires regular monitoring of change and the agents of change. The Council is expected to undertake:

- Reviews of the St Michael's Church Conservation Area Character Area Appraisal on a five yearly basis;
- Periodic review and updating of the St Michael's Church Conservation Area Management Plan.

Reviews will consist of the following:

- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailing in this Management Plan have been acted upon and if so, how successfully;
- Identification of any new issues which need to be addressed including enhancement or action; and
- Updating of the baseline photographic survey.

9. Glossary

Article 4 Direction

A direction placed by the council, which withdraws automatic planning permission granted by the General Permitted Development Order.

Conservation (for heritage policy)

The process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains and, where appropriate enhances its significance.

Gap Site

A gap site is usually a site or piece of land where demolition of a building has occurred and has not been re-developed. This leaves a vacant site on the streetscape, breaking the flow of urban fabric.

Heritage Asset

A building, monument, site place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

Historic environment

All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.

Listed Building

A building that has been placed on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. There are three types of listed status for buildings in England and Wales; Grade I, Grade II*, Grade II.

Local Development Plan

A development plan is an aspect of town and country planning in the United Kingdom comprising a set of documents that set out the local authority's policies and proposals for the development and use of land in their area. The development plan guides and informs day-to-day decisions as to whether or not planning permission should be granted, under the system known as development control. In order to ensure that these decisions are rational and consistent, they must be considered against the development plan adopted by the authority, after public consultation and having proper regard for other material factors.

Locally Listed Buildings

Locally listed buildings do not have the statutory protection of listed buildings, but do receive some protection through being in a Conservation Area and/or through planning policy.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It sets out the Government's requirements for the planning system only to the extent that is relevant, proportionate and necessary to do so. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

Victorian period

(1837 – 1901) The Victorian era of British history takes its name from, and is normally defined as spanning the reign of Queen Victoria. However, some date the beginning of the period to the passage of the Reform Act 1832. This period is most closely associated with neo-gothic and neo-classical styles of architecture. The period is also a time of great social change and prosperity within the country.

10. Further Reading

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Manual for Historic Streets English Historic Towns Forum (2008).

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). DCLG (Department for Communities and Local Government) (2012).

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Planning Services
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Ground Floor Yorkon Building
Archway Road
Huyton
Knowsley
Merseyside
L36 9FB
Telephone: 0151 443 2380



Knowsley Council