

AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL

Copy response to consultation (dated 30th April 1998)

Head of Planning & Policy
Crewe & Nantwich Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
Earle Street
CREWE

Attn: Mr P J Booth

Dear Mr Booth

CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL – AUDLEM
REPORT APPROVED FOR CONSULTATION PURPOSES BY
PLANNING COMMITTEE AT ITS MEETING ON 5TH MARCH 1998

The Parish Council considered the above document at its April meeting. Some sections were specifically agreed, many sections attracted no comment, and some were vehemently opposed. Comments are given below.

- 1.6 Members support that the document is a starting point for discussion, and consider that the next stage should be a face to face between the Parish Council and an officer from the Planning Division, together with, possibly, the Chairman of the Planning Committee.
- 3.4 Agreed
- 4.4.2 Disagreed. Members consider that the fenestration is not regular.
- 4.8.2 Agreed. The Parish Council consider that having acknowledged the traffic problems, the Local Authority ought to “take this on board” and attempt to solve the problems, possibly in conjunction with its County Council colleagues.
- 4.8.3 Members commented that this particular area has always been the working heart of the village, and many years ago was a cattle market employing some 50 people. It has always been a source of employment, and members feel that it has improved in appearance over the years, rather than deteriorated.
- 4.8.4 Members would like specific examples of the “...new buildings and residential extensions [which] have not always resulted in development which is compatible with the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.”
- 4.8.5 Telephone Exchange – agreed that this ought to be demolished.
- 5.2.1 “Permitted development can have a significant visual impact...”. Members would like specific examples.
- 5.3.1 Detailed plans for traffic-calming have been drawn up by the County Council, and members commented that it may be helpful if the Planning Authority discussed these direct with the County Council.

Plan 1 No objection.

Plan 2 No objection.

Plan 3 No objection.

APPENDIX

There was very strong opposition to the Article 4[II] restrictions, which members feel is draconian and will give the Planning Authority "carte blanche" on planning decisions.

GENERAL

a) Consultation process

Parish Councillors have discussed the proposals informally with residents of Audlem and have commented that there are many who have not received a consultation document, for example, several shopkeepers on Shropshire Street.

b) Audlem Conservation Area has evolved without planning controls for 650 of the 700 years of settlement. During the period of conservation status, above-average density has been allowed on the former Vicarage site (off Shropshire Street). This has resulted in the lifting of TPOs on safety grounds.

Members referred to the consultation document as "jargonaut" and commented that it is very generalistic. There is no theme or overall style in Audlem and the allowable developments are subject to the taste, whim and opinion of the officer who deals with a particular planning application.

Further, Members feel that the opinions of the Parish Council and the District Amenities Society are not taken into consideration despite the greater local knowledge of the Members, and the wealth of expertise of the professional Members of both the Parish Council and the Amenities Society.

Members have commented on previous occasions that the Cox Bank Area was designated a conservation area with minimal consultation, and the policy adopted appears to be haphazard and contradictory. Minor alterations are treated very harshly and at great cost to the applicant, whilst larger changes appear to be passed with little problem.

Although Audlem is a Conservation Area, it cannot be "frozen in time" and new development should be considered on their merit. Should the Planning Authority wish to apply specific styles, fenestration or paint controls, these ought to be easily obtained and widely publicized. Members felt that if the Planning Authority was intending to impose a higher standard than would normally be expected, for work carried out in the Conservation Area, it ought to be prepared to make grants available to meet the difference in cost.

Members feel generally that the regulations for the Conservation Area may eventually lead to disquiet amongst the residents, possibly leading to a demand for the lifting of the Conservation Area status.

Members hope that you will note their comments and would be interested to know if an Officer and/or the Chairman of the Planning Committee would be able to attend a Parish Council meeting to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely

CMJ - Clerk