

Summary Statements

BETLEY CONSERVATION AREA

Betley Conservation Area was designated in 1970 and reviewed in 2008 with a full Appraisal and Management Plan. The following brief statement identifies the environmental qualities which merit designation and which the Borough Council consider should be preserved or enhanced.

Betley is a rural parish located north-west of Newcastle and the Conservation Area covers the central core of the village. Main Road is lined with varied houses and cottages which create a high quality environment. Many of the buildings are listed or on the Council's Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures. Historically the village has grown due to the influences of the two competing estates. Betley Court owned by the Fletcher-Twemlows and the Tollet estate based around Betley Old and New Hall (now demolished). Associated landscaping and pleasure grounds are a legacy of these estates and provide an attractive setting to much of the village and later housing. The village remains a vibrant centre with the busy local shop and post office and community run pub as well as other businesses.

All of this was set out in the last review and the biggest threats to the village were identified as backland development and incremental changes. This continues to be an issue in the village. So what have been the changes in the last 12 years - Betley Model Farm buildings which were identified at risk have been gradually restored for the most part with the most southerly barn still being repaired. A viable use is needed but this is a positive change of circumstances. The dovecote still remains vulnerable. A disastrous fire in summer 2019 saw Betley Court the Grade II* listed manor destroyed. Negotiations are ongoing with the owners and their specialists to reinstate the building but for the time being the building has been made safe from collapse. The owners of this estate are committed to restoring the Hall.

A number of the historic walls to both estates have collapsed and some have been repaired with grants from the Borough Council's Historic Building Grant Fund. The historic walls to the east of Main Road are more extensive than shown on the Townscape Appraisal Map so consideration should be given to amending this appraisal plan to show all of the walls and including them on the Register of Locally Important Buildings.

Other changes include the conversion and granting of permission to convert agricultural buildings to holiday lets at Betley Court Farm. This is an economic use which helps to retain the buildings. An Article 4 Direction was made and confirmed in 2010 and some Permitted Development rights and some properties along Main Road. This was to help protect the character of the Area from harmful incremental changes.

Despite the changes which have occurred within the Conservation Area, the special character identified by the Appraisal still remains important when considering what is significant about the Conservation Area as a Heritage Asset (including its setting) and how the individual components contribute to make the area special.