

NEENTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

The Neenton Conservation Area was designated on 9th March 1981.

LOCATION

A small roadside settlement, Neenton is situated on the Rea Brook approximately 6¼ miles south-west of Bridgnorth. The B4364 from Bridgnorth crosses a bridge over the Rea at this point and snakes through the settlement towards Ludlow, 12 ½ miles away.

The Conservation Area boundary begins a few hundred yards west of the bridge, and then turns at right angles to the main road to run north-west, parallel with the river in one direction and east behind the Pheasant Inn in the other. The boundary then follows the rear elevations of the properties lining both sides of the B4364 before closing at a point north-west of the Old School House. At this point it crosses the B4364, skirting the road's northern edge immediately to the front of a row of houses, Meadow View, before turning at right angles to the road and down the side elevation of No. 1 Meadow View and towards the river again, leaving the Meadow View houses outside the Conservation Area.

LANDSCAPE

The B4364 Ludlow road from the direction of Bridgnorth descends down to the River Rea and the small stone bridge that carries the road over it, before rising again as it enters the settlement. Groups of mature trees and hedgerows line the road into and out of the village, obscuring the views beyond. In the distance however, the higher aspects of the rolling Shropshire countryside are discernable above the hedge line.



To the north of the Conservation Area the fields and water meadows descend towards the Rea and, for the main part, the buildings fronting the main road close the view. The road north of the river and bridge rises and bends at right angles to close the view towards Bridgnorth. The Pheasant Inn, formerly the New Inn, obscures the view to the east and the farmland lying outside the settlement to the east. The Churchyard Farm complex, formerly Church Farm, together with the adjacent dwellings lining the

roadside, close the views to the west. The B4364 rises and bends at an acute right angle at the Old School House, closing the view in the direction of Ludlow. Opposite the Old School House a minor road, running due north, affords the only uninterrupted views of the river valley and the undulating landscape in the distance.

HISTORY

The origins of the name Neenton have become obscure with time. One theory suggests that the name derives from '**River Neen** and '**farm/settlement**', **Neen** being an old name for the River Rea, on which the settlement stands, and '**tun**' Saxon for settlement or farmstead. Another suggestion is that it originates from an Anglo-Saxon word '**Neowene – tun**' meaning new town or new farm. In the Domesday Book of 1086 Neenton is known as Newentone.

At the time of the Norman Conquest of 1066 Azor held the manor, but by 1086 the Domesday Book records that it had passed to Ralph de Mortimer. The Domesday entry suggests that there was sufficient labour and capital in Neenton at that time for the proper cultivation of the land.

In 1138 the Lord of Neenton (possibly Roger de Mortimer) gave two-thirds of his tithe to Shrewsbury Abbey and it is supposed that the remaining third went towards a building fund for the erection of the church, which existed in the thirteenth century.

The earliest indication of the church's existence is an undated Deed, thought to pre-date 1246, which refers to William, parson of the church at Neuton. In 1253 records show a lawsuit, brought by Nicholas, parson of the church of Nekyneton, against persons who forcibly entered his house to assault his people. The manor passed to the D'arraz family in 1240 that held it for Roger de Mortimer.

In the nineteenth century, the Lyster family owned 900 acres and by this time the village measured 1132 acres. The Lysters were patrons of the church and Sir Arthur W. Blomfield built a new church on the foundations of the late medieval timber-framed church in 1871. The estate was sold in 1915, the nephew keeping the patronage until it passed to the University of Cambridge in 1986.

BUILDINGS



All Saints' Church stands on an ancient mound on an acute right-angled bend of the B4364. Of brown coursed sandstone with green hued ashlar dressings, the existing church was constructed on the foundations of a late medieval timber-framed church, between 1870-1, by Sir Arthur W. Blomfield. It is built to a 14th

century design, and its circular plain font is probably 12th century.

To the south of the All Saints' Church on the opposite side of the main road, is the Grade II Listed Church Farm, now known as Churchyard Farm. Predominately an early 17th century, timber box-framed house of two-storeys plus cellar, Churchyard Farm house, along with its farm buildings, occupies a prominent roadside position on a right angled bend in the main road and closes the views to those



travelling from both the Bridgnorth and Ludlow directions. The timber-framed house contrasts dramatically with the stone cottages and brick houses that dominate the village. The farmhouse, standing on a limestone base, exists in a rather dilapidated condition as do the farm's stone and brick constructed outbuildings and barns, which are all now, sadly, redundant and in various states of disrepair. The east end of the house is of stone as is the large chimneystack and part of the north elevation facing the road. The core of the building, however, is of exposed timber framing with yellow colour-washed, lime-plastered infill panels, apart from the first storey to the west elevation, which is covered in white painted, hard concrete render over expanded metal lathing fixed to the timber frame. A corner section of the render on this first floor level has been removed, exposing the brick nogging infill between the timber framing. The corresponding section immediately below it at ground level is unfilled, exposing the structural timbers and the back face of the lathe and plaster internal wall finish. A mixture of wooden fixed, casement and sash windows occupy the window openings in the same faces to all elevations. An ancient, vertically ribbed faced timber front door in a plain oak frame with stop moulded jambs and four-centred head is located on the west elevation. A large window opening to the right of the front entrance door, stretching from sole plate to door head level has been infilled with temporary boards. Metal props underpin the main oak bressumer beam at this point, supporting the upper levels of the structure. Plain, handmade, red clay roof tiles cover the slopes of the farmhouse's pitched roofs.

In the former farmyard and hidden from public view is a 20th century, large brick, single storey industrial unit used commercially for the restoration of antique motor vehicles.

Adjoining the farm is the 19th century Rectory. Formerly a vicarage, it is now a substantial residence with large later additions and outbuildings. Of coursed local sandstone construction under red clay tiled roof slopes, its window openings are occupied by flush fitted, dark brown coloured, modern timber casements. Large metal





green coloured timber window frames fitted. The slated roof of another low structure can barely be seen between the single storey building to the property's front boundary and the north range. A number of sandstone and later brick chimney stacks adorn the Rectory's many roofs.

The Pheasant public house, formerly the New Inn, is situated to the east of Churchyard Farm house, facing the main road and the church opposite. This 19th century former hostelry of white colour washed brick external walls supporting a pitched roof of plain, red, clay tiles has a small central gable to the front elevation into which has been inserted a round-headed, small paned window at high level. Timber casements fill the remaining window openings except for one large bay window at ground level.



North-east of the church and hard against the churchyard's boundary are numbers 1 and 2 Southside, two small 19th century stone cottages, alongside which and set back from the road is a rather incongruous modern brick bungalow. The Conservation Area terminates on the bungalow's northern boundary facing the River Rea.



attached garages beside the cottages reflect today's modern motorised requirements.

To the west of the churchyard and hard against the main roadside is a pair of small, detached, sandstone cottages. Grey Cottage, nearest to the church, has been colour washed in an off white hue while its neighbour and much extended Church Cottage retains its natural stonework finish. Plain handmade clay tiles cover the pitched roof slopes and flush mounted modern timber casements fill the window openings. Modern

Diagonally opposite the stone cottages, slightly set back from the main road, is the Parish Hall. This is an early 20th century single storey building, with a pitched roof and corrugated iron and timber walls, that faces end on to the roadway. The hall is now unused and in a state of disrepair, being only just discernible amongst the undergrowth in which it sits.



Immediately beside the Hall, towards its south east elevation and set back from the main road, is Domus, a brick constructed house partly obscured from view by planting. Plain clay tiles cover the slopes of its dormer windows and main roof and timber casements are flush fitted to its window openings. To the other side of the hall are four two-storey, dark brown brick built modern houses. The properties front

the main road and are serviced by a small, purpose built access road running parallel to it. A landscaped strip between the access road and the B4364, which includes trees, partly screens the development from view.

A number of other residences lining the west side of the B4364 are screened from view by trees and garden walls. The Old School House and the neighbouring Ty Newydd (New House) are two such properties that lie hidden behind security gates, walls and hedging.

CHARACTERISTICS

Local sandstone and plain clay roof tiles characterise the local building materials of the pre-20th century buildings, while brown brick predominates in the construction of modern structures. Timber casement window frames terminating flush with external walls in both full and small paned varieties appear in structures from all periods. Dry stonewalls using local stone mark many property boundaries.

DEVELOPMENT

An incongruous row of eight 1950s Council dwellings is situated immediately outside the north western edge of the Conservation Area while two other housing developments occur randomly within the Conservation Area as infill developments.

COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL USES

There are no shops or other commercial premises in Neenton since the public house ceased trading. The only industrial activity occurs in the form of an antique vehicle restoration workshop to the rear of the Churchyard House farmyard. A lack of buildings that provide opportunities for social activity, apart from the Church, is exacerbated by the fact that the only public house in the village has ceased trading and the Parish Hall is derelict.

Shropshire Council
Historic Environment Team
Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
Shrewsbury
Shropshire
SY2 6ND

01743 252586

historic.environment@shropshire.gov.uk