

# Keele Heritage and Character Assessment

November 2017



## Quality information

### Prepared by

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**Hans Bedey**  
Assistant Landscape Architect,  
AECOM

**Katerina Koukouthaki**  
Built Heritage Consultant,  
AECOM

---

### Checked by

---

**Jon Rooney**  
Associate Landscape Architect,  
AECOM

### Approved by

---

**Mary Kucharska**  
Senior Consultant,  
AECOM

---

## Revision History

| Revision | Revision date | Details         | Name           | Position                               |
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| 0        | 13/11/2017    | Review Draft    | Graham Bibby   | Paris Councillor, Keele Parish Council |
| 1        | 22/11/2017    | Finalise Draft  | Hans Bedey     | Assistant Landscape Architect, AECOM   |
| 1        | 24/11/2017    | Final Proofread | Mary Kucharska | Senior Consultant, AECOM               |

## Prepared for:

Locality

## Prepared by:

AECOM Infrastructure & Environment UK Limited  
36 Storey's Way  
Cambridgeshire  
Cambridge CB3 0DT  
United Kingdom

T: +44 1223 488 000  
aecom.com

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## 1. Introduction

This report presents a summary of the history and character of Keele, which lies within Staffordshire. It has been prepared by consultants at AECOM on behalf of Locality, working closely with Keele Parish Council and is based on a detailed appraisal of the area carried out through desk study and fieldwork.

Landscape character assessment is a process used to describe and articulate what is special and distinctive about a particular place by identifying recognisable patterns of elements or characteristics that make one landscape different from another. Landscape is defined by the European Landscape Convention as “..... *an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.*” This definition is broad and encompasses natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas.

The information generated through the process of characterisation can be used as evidence to support the planning and design process. This approach is supported by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states that neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies based on an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics (DCLG, 2012). In doing so, policies can ensure that development responds to local character and history, and reflects the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.

## 2. Approach

The approach of this study follows well-established landscape character assessment techniques. The detailed desk study and fieldwork carried out to inform this assessment underpins the classification and description of character areas and broadly follows the process set out in the “Approach to Landscape Character Assessment” (Natural England, 2014). This approach has been tailored to meet the specific needs of the neighbourhood planning process and draws on further best practice guidance including:

- Using Historic Landscape Characterisation (Historic England 2004);
- Character and identity Townscape and heritage appraisals in housing market renewal areas (Historic England and CABE 2008); and
- Understanding Place Historic Area Assessments: Principles and Practice (Historic England 2010).

Historic England, previously English Heritage has issued a number of guidance and best practice notes covering a range of issues in relation to the conservation and management of historic places and heritage assets all of which are available on the Historic England website (<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/>).

This study builds upon previous work carried out by the Keele Neighbourhood Plan Group including analysis of results from a residents’ questionnaire. The questionnaire asked households within nineteen Neighbourhood Areas to answer questions regarding the good and bad aspects of living in Keele and their concerns and aspirations about its future development. To ascertain the representativeness of interviewees, their age was recorded along with their reasons for living in Keele.

## 3. Context

This section of the report describes the location and context of the Keele area and summarises current planning policies which are relevant to the study.

### 3.1 Location

The parish of Keele is located within the Borough of Newcastle–under-Lyme in the West Midlands region, as shown on Figure 1.

Keele adjoins the parishes of Audley to the north, Silverdale to the north-west, Whitmore to the south and Madeley to the west. It lies approximately 5km west of the market town of Newcastle-under-Lyme, on the western edge of the Stoke-on-Trent conurbation (See Figure 1 Location and Context).

The parish covers an area of approximately 775 ha, and the boundary runs from the village of Scot Hay in the north, along the southern edge of Silverdale in the north-west to follow the western edges of Rosemary Hill Wood, Barkers Wood and Brickkiln Plantation in the east. The southern boundary follows the M6 from Springpool Wood in the east past Birch Wood and Keele Services to a disused rail embankment south west of Highway Farm. From here it follows the disused Market Drayton railway line north to Honeywell Farm where it turns to follow the edge of Dunge Wood until Station Road. The western boundary then runs to Finney Green and Leycett, past Station Cottages and Pool End farm to Scott Hay.

The 2011 Census recorded 409 households with a nominal population of 4,129 in Keele. The very high average of 10 people per dwelling is explained by the influence of Keele University. Over 60% of the population is in the 15-30 age group and reflects the high student population within the parish. Excluding the student population of Keele University identifies a normalised population of 1,026 for Keele with a demographic range similar to national averages and higher than expected numbers in the 25-30 and 45-50 age groups.

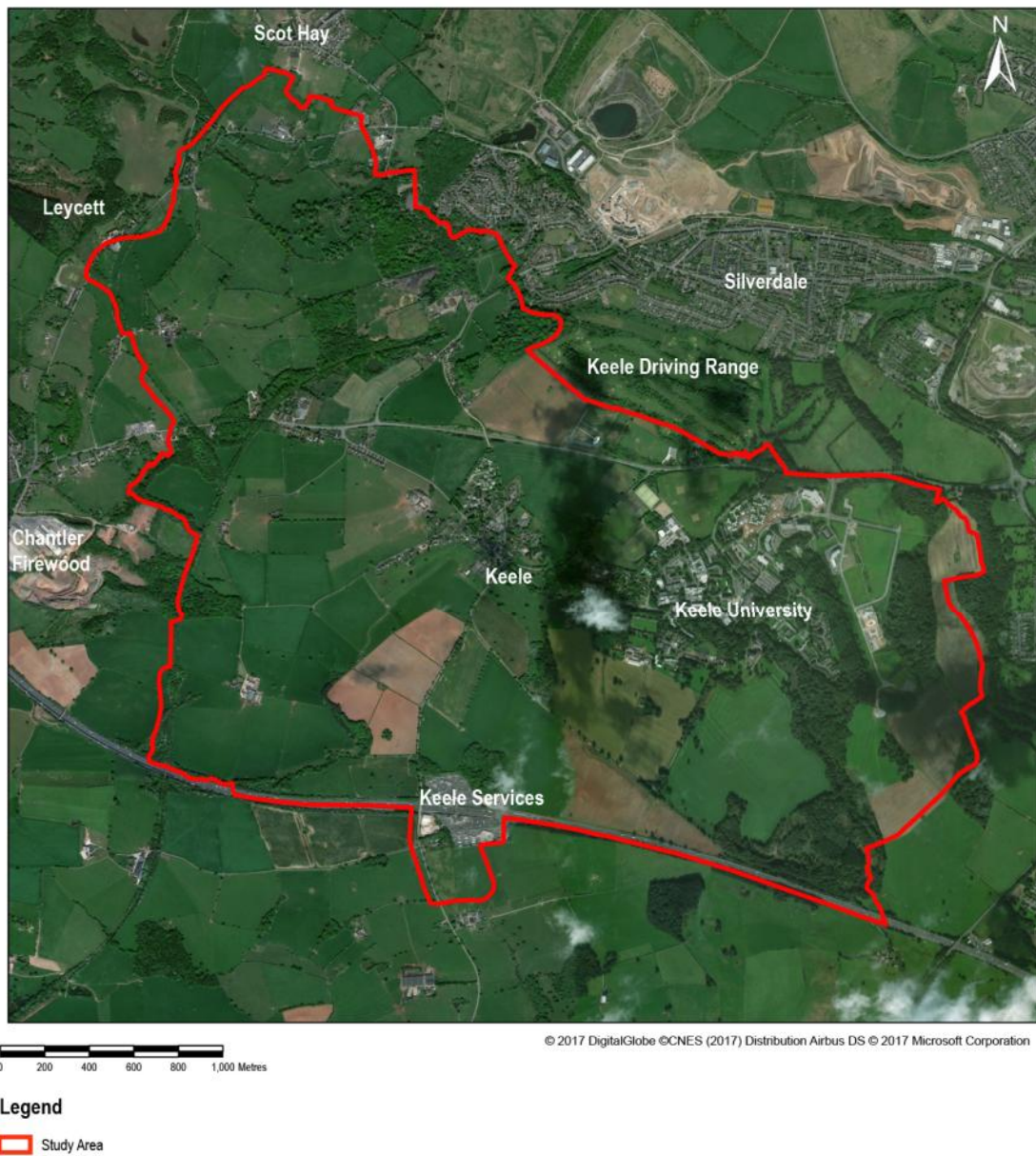
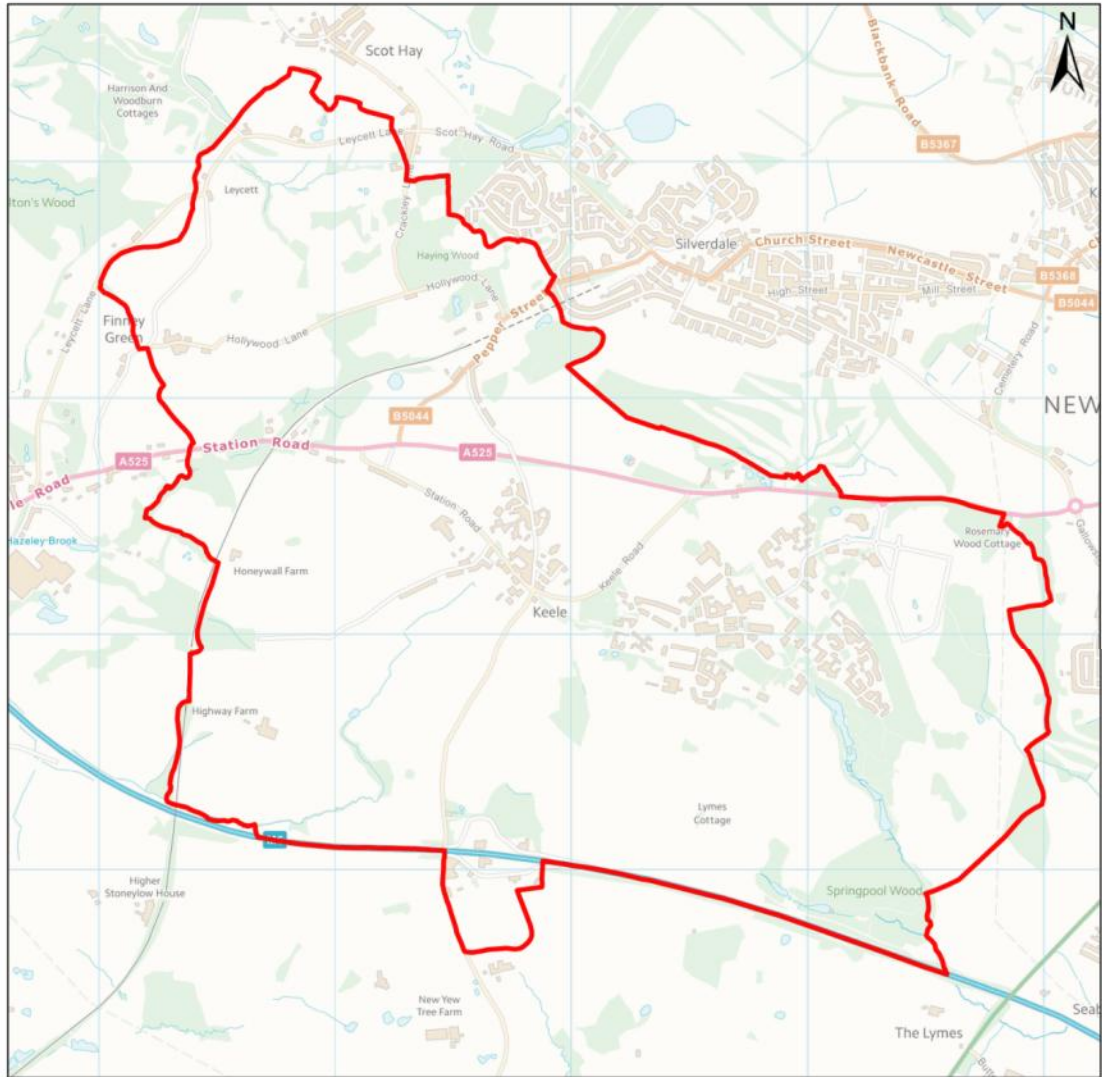


Figure 1 Location and context





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**Legend**  
Study Area

Figure 2 Street plan

## 3.2 Planning Policy Context

### 3.2.1 National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012

The NPPF requires local authorities to set out in their Local Plan a positive vision for the enhancement and enjoyment of heritage assets (DCLG, 2012). Part 12 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment clearly states that local authorities should recognise “*the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness*” and should seek “*opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place*”. An understanding of history and heritage is therefore important in developing neighbourhood plans, but to the extent that it informs future development and the contribution this makes to local distinctiveness. These points are reinforced by a number of specific policies in the NPPF.

Paragraph 58 states that neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area, which are based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics.

Paragraph 60 is clear that promoting and reinforcing local distinctiveness is important, but that neighbourhood plans should not attempt to “*impose architectural styles or particular tastes*” or “*stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms or styles*”. Paragraph 61 goes further, stating that “*although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations*”. It stresses that planning policies should “*address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.*”

The NPPF also includes guidance on developing policies to provide special protection for green areas through Local Green Space designations. Criteria for such designations are provided in paragraph 77.

Planning Practice Guidance, 2014

Planning Practice Guidance was reviewed, catalogued and published on the internet by the government in 2014 (DCLG, 2014). The section on design includes guidance on promoting landscape character (Paragraph: 007Reference ID: 26-007-20140306). It states that “*development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development*” and that the “*successful integration of new development with their surrounding context is an important design objective*”.

### 3.2.2 Local Planning Policy

#### Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011 Saved Policies

The Development Plan for the Borough of Newcastle under Lyme currently consists of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006 – 2026 (adopted October 2009) and policies saved from the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011 (adopted October 2003).

The following policies, which are saved from the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan 2011, are considered to be most relevant to future development in the area and continue to form part of the Development Plan for Newcastle-under-Lyme.

#### *Policy S15: The Design of Development*

- Encourages new development or extensions and alterations in visual harmony with the character of the area in which it is situated
- Promotes varied space between buildings and imaginative landscape treatment to create notable architectural compositions adding distinction to their surroundings and maintaining local distinctiveness.

#### *Policy S16 Written Design Statements for ‘Significant Development Proposals’*

- Requires written design statements describing how the proposed development responds to Policy S15.

#### *Policy H2 Placement of Dwellings in the Open Countryside*

- *Requires that any replacement dwelling should be well designed and sympathetic to its immediate environment.*

- *Requires that scale, location, materials and design of any acceptable replacement dwelling should fit in with, and not detract materially from, the character of the surrounding rural landscape and any other dwellings in the vicinity.*

**Policy N17: Landscape Character – General Considerations**

- Encourages development informed by and sympathetic to landscape character and quality.

**Policy N19: Landscape Maintenance Areas**

- Seeks to maintain the high quality and characteristic landscapes in Landscape Maintenance Areas where development is expected to contribute to this and demonstrate that development will not erode the character or harm the quality of the landscape.

**Policy N4: Development and Nature Conservation – Use of Local Species**

- Requires the use of native species characteristic of the locality where development includes landscaping or planting except where special requirements of purpose or location dictate otherwise.

**Policy N10: New Woodland - Considerations**

- Encourages the establishment of new woodland in all appropriate development.

**Policy N12: Development and the Protection of Trees**

- Resists development involving removal of any visually significant tree, shrub or hedge, whether mature or not, unless the need for the development is sufficient to warrant the tree loss

**Policy N14: Protection of Landscape Features of Importance to Flora and Fauna.**

- Restricts development that may harm, directly or indirectly, landscape features of major importance for wild fauna and flora;
- Promotes development that minimises, restores and/or compensates for any loss of, or deterioration in, the nature conservation value of a landscape feature.

**Policy N21: Areas of Landscape Restoration**

- Supports proposals that will help to restore the character and improve the quality of the landscape;
- Promotes developments that do not further erode the character or quality of the landscape.

**Policy B4: Demolition of Listed Buildings**

- Resists total or substantial demolition listed buildings, unless the Council is convinced that it is not practicable to continue to use the building for its existing purpose and there is no other viable use.

**Policy B5: Control of Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building**

- Resists development proposals that would adversely affect the setting of a listed building.

**Policy B6: Extension or alteration of Listed Buildings**

- Resists alterations or additions to a listed building that would adversely affect its character or its architectural or historic features.

**B7: Listed Buildings – Change of Use**

- Permits change of use of a listed building only if its character or appearance would be preserved or enhanced.

**Policy B8: Other Buildings of Historic or Architectural Interest**

- Encourages the retention, maintenance, appropriate use, restoration and conservation of locally important buildings and structures.

**Policy B9: Prevention of Harm to Conservation Areas**

- Resists development that would harm the special architectural or historic character or appearance of Conservation Areas.

**Policy B10: The Requirement to Preserve or Enhance the Character or Appearance of a Conservation Area**

- Requires that the proposed external appearance or use of any building within a Conservation Area will preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

*Policy B11: Demolition in Conservation Areas*

- Prevents demolition of any part of or the whole of a building in a Conservation Area unless certain provisions are met.

*Policy B12: Provision of Service in Conservation Areas*

- All new utility services in Conservation Areas must be laid underground and ducted within buildings. Opportunities should be taken wherever appropriate to relocate existing services underground. External features of utility services such as junction boxes, lighting etc. shall be designed, located and coloured so as to be as unobtrusive as possible.

*Policy B15: Trees and Landscape in Conservation Areas*

- Promotes retention of trees and landscape features which contribute to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area.
- Requires appropriate replacement trees for those removed within the Conservation Area.

*Policies B16-20*

- Promote design of shop frontages that respect the appearance of existing and nearby buildings within Conservation Areas.

*Policy E8: Keele University and Keele Science Park*

- Requires retention of the farm buildings within Home Farm;
- Encourages non-vehicular access.

*Policy E12: The Conversion of Rural Buildings*

- Promotes designs that conserve or enhance local countryside character and distinctiveness;
- Ensures that the historic character and setting of traditional rural buildings is maintained.

*Policy C4: Open Space in New Housing Areas*

- Requires provision of publicly accessible open space in new housing developments.

**Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006 – 2026**

The following policies of the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006 – 2026 are relevant to the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Policy SP1 Spatial Principles of Targeted Regeneration**



- Continues the focus for high value business growth in a range of knowledge based industries at Keele University and Science Park.

**Policy SP2 Spatial Principles of Economic Development**

- Seeks to develop high value business growth, in particular investment in Keele University and Keele Science Park.

**Policy CSP1 – Design Quality**

- Seeks to ensure that development regards design principles in support of a strategic spatial vision.
- Promotes development that respects the character, identity and context of the townscape and landscape, the built heritage, historic environment, rural setting and settlement pattern created by the hierarchy of the area.
- Recognises the importance of spaces within which the development sits, the quality of the relationships between the development and surrounding areas, the appropriateness of the function of the building in its context and the stewardship of the historic environment.

*Policy CSP2 – Historic Environment*

- Seeks to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the historic heritage of the Borough including buildings, monuments, sites and areas of special archaeological, architectural or historic interest.

#### *Policy CSP4 – Natural Assets*

- Aims to protect, maintain and enhance the quality and quantity of the plan area's natural assets;
- Ensure the location, scale and nature of all development avoids and mitigates adverse impacts;
- Enhances, the plan area's distinctive natural assets, landscape character, waterways and network of urban green corridors.

#### *Policy CSP5 - Open Space/Sport/Recreation*

- Aims to protect, maintain and enhance the plan area's open space, sports and leisure assets by ensuring that all new residential development will be linked to existing and new open spaces and sport and recreation facilities through a series of well-defined safe routes/streets, incorporating pedestrian friendly routes and cycle ways.

#### *Policy ASP3 – Stoke-on-Trent Outer Urban Area Spatial Policy*

- Seeks improved connectivity between the various communities by introduction of further bus priority measures on the Fenton – Stoke – Newcastle – Keele route.

#### *Policy ASP6 – Rural Area Spatial Policy*

- Seeks opportunities to encourage a positive contribution towards enhancing local landscape and biodiversity and the preservation and enhanced quality of village conservation areas.

This report is also informed by a number of other studies relevant to the local area as follows:

#### *Keele Village – Rapid Conservation Area Appraisal, Newcastle-under-Lyme Council*

Prepared as a background document to support appeals against the refusal of planning applications, this defines the special interest of Keele Village Conservation Area in lieu of the detailed character appraisal unwritten at the time of production.

### 3.2.3 Historical Development

#### **Timeline**

**1155 – 1163:** Keele was first mentioned in 1169<sup>1</sup>. Henry II granted the manor of Keele to the military order of Knights Templars. At the time, Keele was almost covered by woodland.

**1544:** William Sneyd bought the manor of Keele from the Crown. The Sneyds were a well-established family from north Staffordshire. They were wealthy and of high status and this marked the start of an important era in the history and development of the village.

**1580:** William Sneyd died in 1572 and his son Ralph Sneyd moved to Keele and built the first Keele Hall. The Hall was set away from the village. The village at the time comprised around 40 households.

**1747-1793:** In 1747 the Sneyds decided to refurbish the house and enhance its grounds. The park was landscaped by William Emes.

**1811:** The population in Keele at this time was 944 and made up of 176 households.

**1821<sup>2</sup>:** The Keele estate passed to Ralph Sneyd (the 6<sup>th</sup> Ralph of the family to inherit the estate) who, in the 1830s, initiated a programme of landscape works and tree planting in the grounds of the hall before rebuilding the house. This marked the beginning of an era that transformed the village and resulted largely in its layout and appearance today.

**1829:** Landscape designer William Sawrey Gilpin added elements to the estate including: a viaduct at the head of the enlarged lake 1; conifer and North American species planting; and a fernery at the quarry.

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<sup>1</sup> Paffard, M., Keele, An Introduction to the Parish and the University, p. 32

<sup>2</sup> Paffard, M., Keele, An Introduction to the Parish and the University, p. 39

**1837-1847:** Whitmore station on the Grand Junction Railway opened and in 1847 the turnpike route from Newcastle to Nantwich was re-routed through the village.

**1842:** Landscape designer William Andrew Nesfield added the estate parkland: producing plans for an arboretum on the ridge near the old Quarry; building an Italianate Garden on the old bowling green.

**1845:** Nesfield added elements to the estate including a sunken parterre and Fountain.

**1855-1861:** Keele Hall (NHLE 137761, Grade II\*) was redesigned by Anthony Salvin using local red sandstone with contrasted stone dressings.

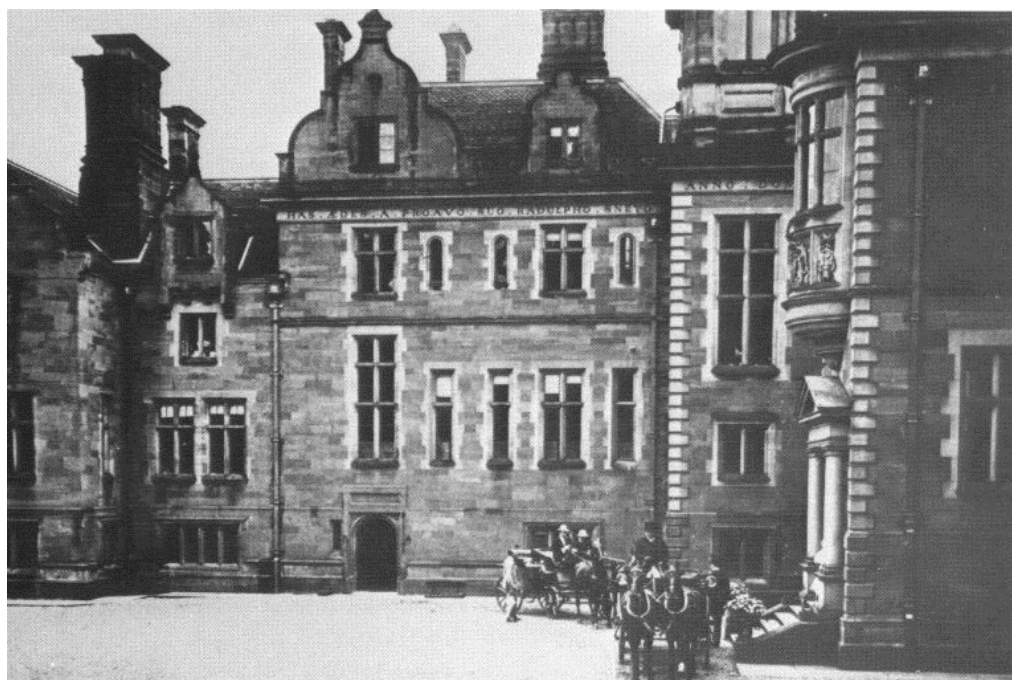
**1841:** Ralph Sneyd had bought all the land in Keele and remodelled the village. The works included rerouting the roads and replacing timber and thatched cottages with brick and tiled ones.

**1851-1861:** At this time Hawthorns Farm was used as the Agent's house and Office. Additional buildings were also built; this included The Villa (1851), The Sneyd Arms (1848), and a new school (1856-1860). A post office and reading room were housed at Middle House. Keele Farmhouse was rebuilt in 1861. Historic maps (19<sup>th</sup> century) show the transformation of the village on the sides of The Village road.

**1868-70:** The Church of St John the Baptist (Grade II\*) was rebuilt using pink sandstone and rough-faced coursed rubble under a graded slate roof.

**1878:** The Keele Hall Pump Wheel (SJ 821438), a water wheel driven ram pump situated in a small stone and brick building below Springpool was constructed. This is still in evidence, directly adjacent to the M6.

**1863-1949:** Ralph Sneyd (nephew of Ralph Sneyd the 6<sup>th</sup>) inherited the estate although he lived elsewhere. His sporting interests were reflected in additions of gun and billiards rooms, as well as a fish hatchery and golf course in the grounds.



**Above:** Keele Hall c1901-1910

**1914-18:** Ralph Sneyd was appointed Colonel of the Staffordshire Yeomanry in the First World War.

**1920s:** Economic problems led to a period of decline and a series of sales of estate assets in the 1920s as well as the stripping of Keele Hall leaving it empty.

**1939-45:** The house remained empty until 1939 when the War Department requisitioned it and built an army camp on its grounds.

**1949:** University College of North Staffordshire acquired 150 acres of the Keele estate including the dilapidated Keele Hall.

**1951:** Following the death of all the Sneyd heirs, the rest of the estate (4,407 acres) was sold by auction to pay the Estate Duties. The University College bought the house and area known as The Hawthorns. Most properties in the village were sold to the tenants.

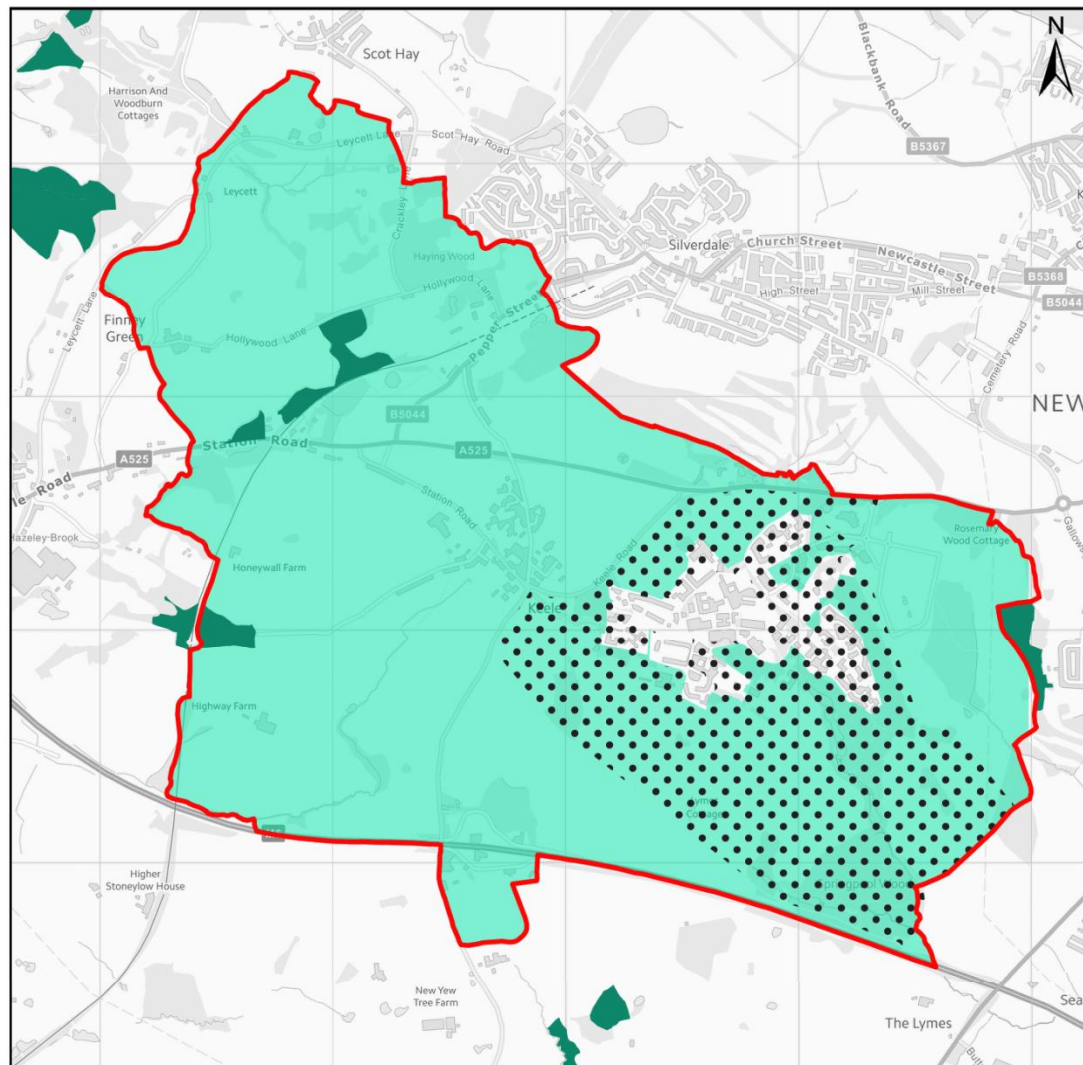
**1962:** The University College of North Staffordshire became Keele University.

In recent years, the village has expanded towards the north of the original historic settlement. New development has taken place at the Campus to accommodate the growing needs of Keele Hall University.

### 3.2.4 Landscape Designations

Statutory and non-statutory landscape designations have been reviewed to determine the levels of protection currently given to the landscape within the study area:

- The parkland surrounding Keele Hall is a Grade II listed Registered Park and Garden. It lies within the east of the parish, occupying 218 ha, approximately 25.35% of the parish's total area;
- Ancient woodland, a non-statutory designation, occurs in several areas throughout the parish; and
- The study area lies within land designated as green belt, a non-statutory designation.



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Figure 3 Landscape designations



### 3.2.5 Existing Landscape Character Assessment

Existing character assessments have been reviewed to provide some context to this more detailed assessment. The study area lies at the point of transition between two National Character Areas, as defined by Natural England (Natural England, 2013):

- (NCA) 61 Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain (NE556); and
- (NCA) 64 Potteries and Churnet Valley (NE509).

These NCA are broad but provide some context to the character of the study area. Key characteristics of these NCA which are relevant to this assessment outlined below.

(NCA) 61 Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain (NE556)

- Prominent discontinuous sandstone ridges of Triassic age, characterised by steep sides and freely draining, generally infertile soil that supports broadleaved and mixed woodland;
- Parklands and gardens associated with estates; country houses and fortified manor houses.

The key characteristics of (NCA) 64 Potteries and Churnet Valley (NE509) which are of particular relevance to this assessment are:

- Prominent ridges in the landform are predominantly between SW-N and NNW-ESE;
- Predominant agricultural land use with pasture for grazing, stock rearing and some dairying with flatter areas used for silage production and some arable cropping;
- Rare surviving examples of rural-industrial landscapes;
- Historic parklands characterised by woodland belts enclosing grassland with parkland trees and avenues with vistas; and
- Red brick manufactured from the local Etruria Marl and sandstone from the Coal Measures used as building materials in lowland areas in farmhouses and drystone walls while roofing comprises plain clay and Staffordshire blue tiles or Welsh slate.

At a local level, the study area falls within the Ancient Redlands and Ancient slope and valley farmlands landscape character types (LCT) as defined within Planning for Landscape Change: Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 1996 – 2011.

#### **Ancient Redlands**

Mixed arable and pastoral farmland, with scale determined by the interaction of rolling landform and numerous woodlands. These enclose views and give the area a well wooded character due to interlock and relative position on the higher ground and in valleys. Mature hedgerow trees coalesce visually in places reinforcing this. Open smoothly textured landscape elsewhere contains sporadic small-scale woodlands associated with stream corridors, ridge tops and farm buildings. Scattered houses, farms and hamlets are linked by winding lanes. Field pattern intact in areas where it continues its stock control function,

*Characteristic landscape features:*

- Hedgerow field pattern with mature hedgerow oaks and some ash;
- Broadleaved woodland;
- Pronounced rolling landform; well treed stream corridors; and
- Parkland and pasture farming;

#### **Ancient slope and valley farmlands LCT**

A strongly undulating and sloping landscape with steep-sided stream valleys, valleys ranging from small and intimate to large with extensive views from the higher ground. Field pattern is generally intact with small to medium sized fields with broken hedgerows and hedgerow trees comprising ash, oak and sycamore. Sheep and cattle farming predominate.

Broadleaved woodlands exert a strong visual influence due to their interlocking nature and prominence on higher ground.

*Characteristic landscape features:*

- Strong ridge and valley landform;
- Low intensity pasture farming;
- Intact hedgerow pattern;
- Drystone walls and stone buildings;
- Hedgerow trees; and
- Many isolated properties.

## 4. Character Assessment

### 4.1 Key Characteristics

Natural England defines key characteristics as “*those combinations of elements which help to give an area its distinctive sense of place*” that would result in significant consequences for the current character if they were changed or lost. As a result, they form important evidence to support the development of planning and management policies and a reference point against which to monitor change. The key characteristics of Keele are as follows:

- Predominantly pastoral farmland setting with mature field trees, fields bound by hedgerows, and areas of woodland;
- Nucleic development of settlement with a clear defined settlement edge and centre at Keele village;
- High quantities of hedgerows and lack of hard boundary treatments to residential properties within Keele village centre;
- Distinctive stone walls on the main roads into Keele village;
- The distinctive architecture of properties along The Village with characteristic elements including fish-scale tiles, elaborate chimneys, dormer gables, and red/brown brick construction with blue brick detailing;
- Buildings displaying architectural influence of the Sneyd family (the RS monogram being the most distinctive);
- Prominent use of distinctive architectural elements including tiles, brick patterns etc.;
- Keele village’s historic location at the entrance to the Sneyd estate revealed by the tree-lined avenue, open space and clustering of listed buildings at the east end of the village; and
- Keele Parish Church, which forms a local landmark.

As set out above, the character of the landscape is the result of the action and interaction of a range of natural and/or human factors. These are considered in turn below in relation to the neighbourhood plan area.

### 4.2 Natural Factors

The underlying geology of an area is often largely hidden from view but has a strong influence on its character, having been shaped over by natural processes including erosion and sedimentation over millions of years. These processes help to define the landform, soils, vegetation, drainage and building materials which are common in an area.

#### 4.2.1 Geology and Soils

The outcropping bedrock in the area comprises three stratigraphic units of Upper Carboniferous age which form clearly differentiated landforms:

- 1) The north western part of the parish (Leycett and Finney Green area) is formed of outcrops of the Middle and Upper Coal Measures, occurring in the Western anticlinal fold of the Potteries Coalfield. The Coal Measures comprise a succession of shales containing thick coal seams and minor beds of iron ore, and include some beds of hard sandstone. The sandstone beds, and the generally steep dips of the

rocks, give rise to the pronounced elevation of this area. The coals and iron ores have formerly been subject to small-scale exploitation within the parish (19<sup>th</sup> Century coal and ironstone mines at Hollywood and Haying Wood; small 20<sup>th</sup> Century private mines at Leycett and Crackley Gate). Larger scale exploitation of these resources occurred in the immediately adjacent area of Silverdale parish over a long period between the 18<sup>th</sup> and late 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries;

- 2) To the south-east of Finney Green, a belt of lower land marks the outcrop of the Etruria Formation. This unit is dominated by soft red mudstones, which have been worked for brick and tile making at the Silverdale Tileries site, which is located within the parish. Sporadic sandstone beds within the Etruria Formation form ridge features, most notably that running between Hollywood and Finney Green. Etruria Marl clays form a unique raw material for the manufacture of Staffordshire blue bricks and tiles and areas of hitherto unexploited clay within the parish are covered by mineral safeguard areas in the Staffordshire County minerals plan; and
- 3) The undulating plateau forming the remainder of the parish is underlain by the Halesowen Formation, a succession of mainly red sandstones and mudstones, with subordinate grey shales, sandstones and minor coal beds near the base. These grey sediments outcrop to the north-east of the University around Job's Wood, where they have been quarried for the grey building stone employed in some of the Sneyd estate buildings. To the west the grey beds pass into the red lithologies that typify the campus and village area, and which are informally named the "Keele Beds". Red sandstones form the principal ridges running through the campus area, and have been quarried at several locations to provide building stone for St John's Church, Keele Hall, the Clock House and the many dry stone retaining walls that are a characteristic feature of the Parish.


Soil quality is slightly acid loamy and clayey soils with impeded drainage. Texture is loamy and occasionally clayey with slightly impeded drainage. Fertility is regarded as moderate to high, supporting a wide range of pasture and woodland type habitats.

#### *Topography and Hydrology*

Keele parish straddles a dissected ridge separating the valley occupied by Newcastle-under-Lyme (town centre c. 120m AOD) and the eastern edge of the Cheshire Plain (c. 60 – 90 m AOD). It occupies some of the highest land on the western side of the Potteries conurbation, forming a dominant visual feature over much of the surrounding area.

The village and university campus are situated on a relative high point (See Figure 3 Topography and Hydrology).

In terms of hydrology, the parish is notably devoid of waterbodies or rivers. The dissected ridge forms the watershed between the Weaver and Trent river catchments. There are several significant streams that rise in the parish:

- un-named stream rising at c. 380000/346000;
- un-named stream rising at c. 379600/344900; these combine just outside the parish boundary to form Hazeley Brook (Weaver catchment);
-  named stream rising at c. 380600/345200 which eventually becomes Checkley Brook (Weaver catchment) to the NW of Madeley; and
- 3 un-named streams rising within the University grounds at c. 382000/344800, 381800/343900, and 382800/345000 – which combine to the south east to form Park Brook.

Ornamental ponds are evident within designed landscapes with the most noticeable within the grounds of Keele University.

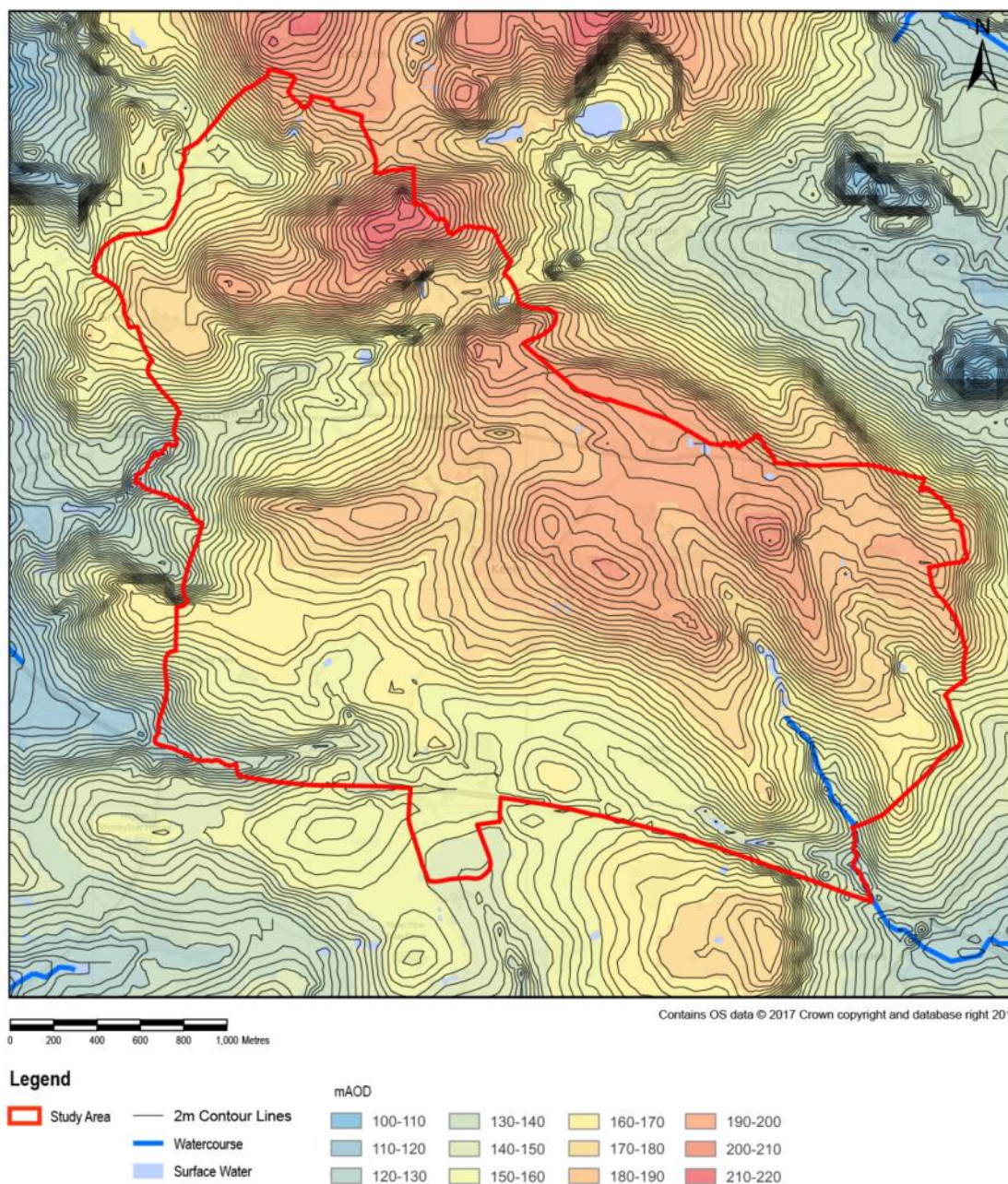


Figure 4 Topography and hydrology

### 4.3 Cultural Factors

#### 4.3.1 Land use and land cover

Land use within the study area is principally arable agriculture. North of the village, pasture comprising medium-large enclosed fields predominate with lesser areas of recreational green space comprising Keele Golf Range and Keele Driving Range. Keele Cemetery is located in this area with the village of Silverdale to the north-east, outside the study area (See Figure 4 Selected Land use).

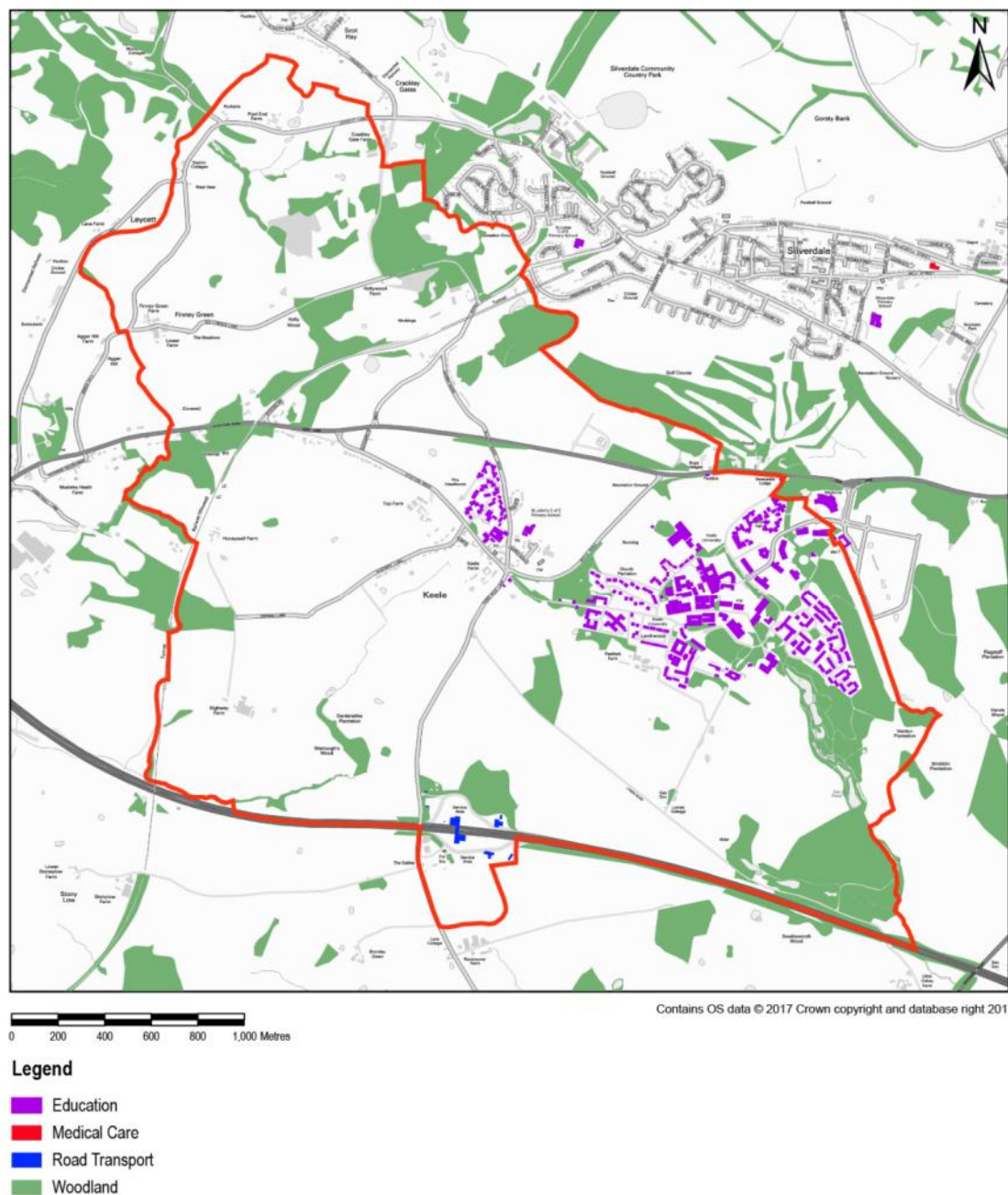


Figure 5 Selected land use

Land cover is predominantly arable and grassland with drained farmland that is vulnerable to pollution run-off and rapid through-flow to streams. In terms of general cropping, the area is reasonably flexible but more suited to autumn sown crops and grassland with soil conditions limiting safe groundwork and grazing, particularly in spring. Farmland lies to the south of the village extending to the southern boundary of the ward and Keele Services adjacent to the M6, continuing westwards to Top Farm . To the north-west this farmland is dominated by adjoining woodland to the west. This continues to the A525 and Keele Christmas Tree Farm, just north of residential ribbon development on Station Road.

North of the A525, the ward generally comprises farmland bound by hedgerows. Tree cover is moderate in level with hedgerows trees and areas of woodland along the disused railway line and north of Hollywood Lane near the Silverdale Tileries site, a contaminated landfill and brownfield site with associated degraded woodland site. Haying Wood comprises 19<sup>th</sup> Century colliery tips.

The village itself is small and is located in the centre of the parish. Keele University and associated playing fields occupies a large proportion of the parish to the east within the former estate associated with Keele Hall. Within the university grounds, the north-west quadrant is predominantly given over to sports fields, including Keele Sports Centre. The university occupies the centre of the grounds, extending from Keele Road to the eastern boundary of the parish. The university buildings cover approximately half of the entire grounds, with the remaining southern area comprising open parkland retaining the historic character of the estate with hedged boundaries and mature field trees. The eastern edge of the campus is dominated by Springpool Wood. A pedestrianised open space between Keele Chapel, the library and the student union building, with a car park abutting to the north provides the focal point of the university campus. A sculpture, The Forest of Light, provides a distinctive landmark to the space. Renovated in 2012, shops here and the central location make this a busy hub for the university.

#### 4.3.2 Movement and Connectivity

North of the village, the A525 provides the primary route through the parish extending from Newcastle-under-Lyme in the east to Madeley Heath in the west. The M6 motorway extends from Hanchurch Crossroads in the south-east, forming the southern boundary of the parish before turning north to pass to Madeley Heath, west of Keele.

Keele village centre is clustered around the junction of The Village, Quarry Bank Road and Three Mile Lane (See Figure 2 Street Plan). This junction functions as the focal point, despite lack of active uses in the area. From here, the roads radiate outwards. Keele Road runs north east along the edge of sports fields within the university grounds to join the A525, Three Mile Lane runs south eventually crossing a flyover over the M6 to the village of Whitmore, and The Village runs north-west, turning into Station Road before joining the A525 which continues to Madeley Heath where it joins the A525 (See Figure 5 Movement and Connectivity).

The now disused Market Drayton railway line extends from the southern boundary of the parish, curving to the north east leaving the parish at Silverdale. The railway line forms the eastern boundary to Milvus House the western most house on Station Road.



**Above:** the junction of The Village, Quarry Bank Road and Three Mile Lane

Leading off from the A525, Leycett Lane connects to the village of Leycett north of the parish while the B5044/Pepper Street connects to Silverdale to the north east, eventually reaching Newcastle-under-Lyme. These narrow, hedgerow lined roads through open countryside are rural in character. Keele Road runs directly to Newcastle-under-Lyme with Cemetery Road and Sneyd Avenue leading off to the north and south, respectively. Broader than rural roads in the parish, this road becomes more open with less roadside trees and more roadside hedgerows further east. Keele University influences the character of the road with regularly spaced tree planting and sandstone walling to its perimeter along Keele Road.

Highway Lane runs south from Station Road/The Village to Highway Farm. Initially a two lane residential road with clipped hedges adjacent, it narrows to the south becoming increasingly rural in character with fewer houses alongside and more enclosed fields abutting its southern end.



**Above:** Three Mile Lane runs south from the east end of the village. A rural road between hedgerows and fields, it extends into Keele with little built form on its approach to the village.

Red sandstone walls along Keele Road with woodland areas behind restrict public access to the university campus. An access point on Keele Road leads to a network of access roads within the University campus. from a roundabout connecting Keele Road. The section of Keele Road from this junction to the village is narrower than the section leading to the A525, and enclosed by a sandstone wall along the campus perimeter, hedgerow trees and woodland within the east of the campus. Nearer the village, a sandstone retaining wall to the perimeter of the churchyard of the Church of St John the Baptist lines the road.



**Above:** The sandstone wall on the perimeter of the churchyard of the Church of St John the Baptist.



An entrance from the west on Three Mile Lane near the junction with Keele Road provides the only direct road link between the university and the village of Keele, and is part of the local bus route. This is an avenue lined by lime trees with mown grass adjacent to the narrow, enclosed road. A narrow pedestrian route with lighting runs through mown grass area to the north of the vehicular route. There is also a footpath running through the 'hole-in-the-wall'.

Several Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are present within the parish and tend to radiate from the historic part of the village (See Figure 5 Movement and Connectivity). Byways Open to All Traffic (BOAT) follow Quarry Bank Road north to Pepper Street, with another joining from Station Road; extending southwards from Station Road along Highway Lane, and along Lymes Lane. Further BOATs within the north west of the parish extend from Finney Green north west to Leycett and east along Hollywood Lane.

Public footpaths run along a track running southwards from the west end of Station Road eventually meeting Highway Lane; and linking Church Bank with The Old School. Two further footpaths extend to Hollywood Lane from Station Road; north west from Agger Hill Farm; north west from Finney Green to Lane Farm and north east from Finney Green to Crackley Gate Farm outside of the parish. Signage for PRoW is generally lacking, with the sign for the PRoW leading to the Old School leaning against hedgerow behind.



**Above:** The footpath between The Village and Pump Bank



**Left:** A fingerpost for the PRoW leading to the Old School House

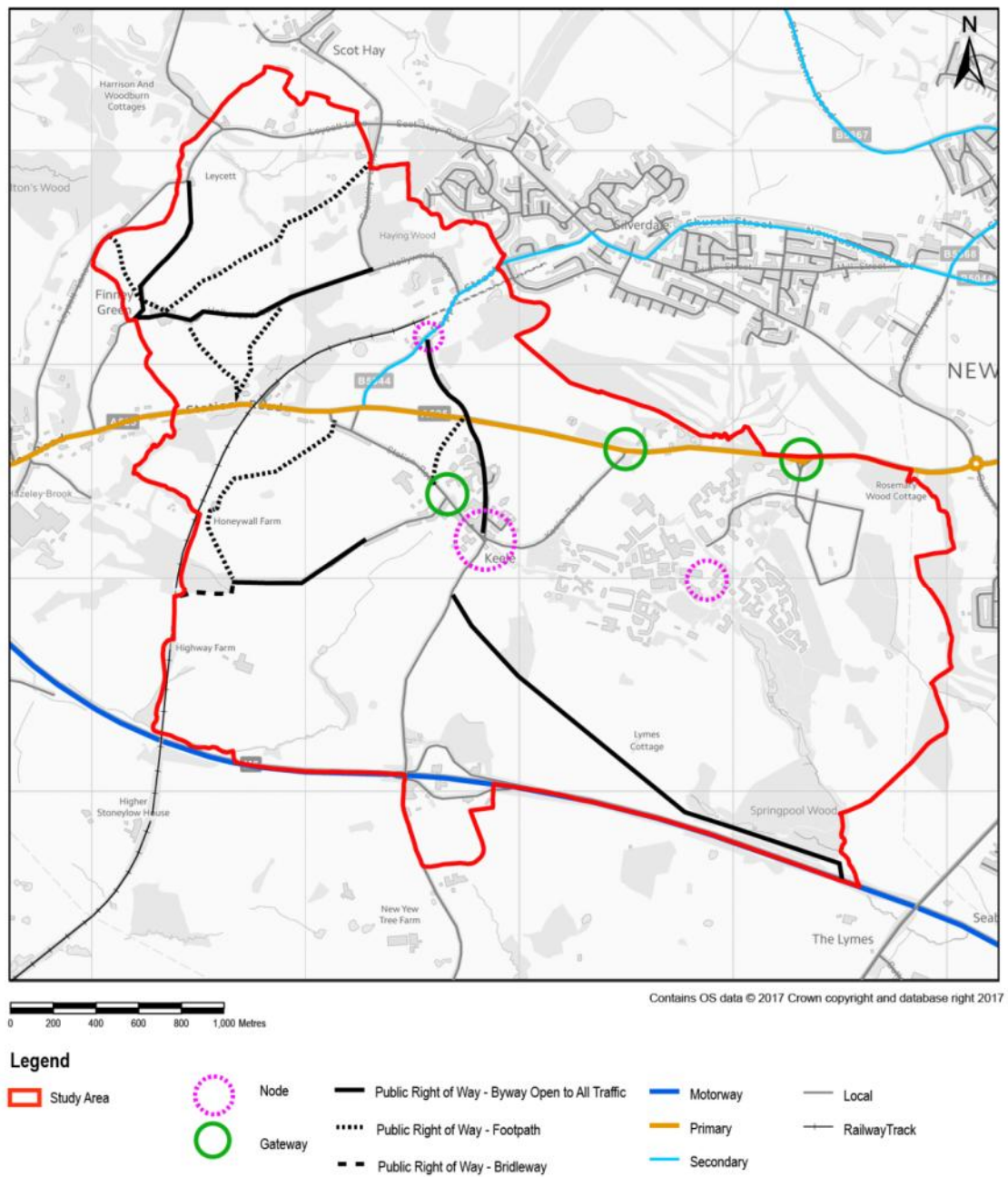


Figure 6 Movement and connectivity

### 4.3.3 Urban structure and built form

Built form within the parish has a number of distinct nuclei: the main nucleus is Keele village, a 19<sup>th</sup> Century estate village with 20<sup>th</sup> century development along Highway Lane. Another nucleus comprises 1930s – 60s ribbon development along Station Road, isolated older properties and a cluster around the former railway station. A further nucleus comprises 1930s – 60s ribbon development on Pepper Street / Quarry Bank. Here, a Victorian Lodge with fish-scale tiles and red brick construction at the end of Quarry Bank provides a landmark at the minor node formed by the junction while opposite, distinctive flat-roofed pre-war houses of concrete are set back within hedged plots. Nearby, Red Heath House (c1860) is a substantial red brick building rivalling those within the village centre. Satellite hamlets lie at Finney Green and Leycett.

The village of Keele exhibits an organic and incremental pattern of growth with some formal planning evident at the east end of the village at the entrance to the university grounds. Buildings and plot size vary, both tending to be larger towards the edges of the village. Similarly, plot shape tends to be more regular away from the village centre, reflecting the age of development. The range of building form varies with a mixture of detached and semi-detached houses, small cottages, semi-detached cottages and short terraces present.

In the northern part of the village, Hawthorns Hall comprises student accommodation in red brick buildings with minimal detailing up to four storeys tall, which is of notably different scale to the other residential development. The buildings are dispersed within grassed area with relatively high tree cover and generally oriented north-west/south-east, also contrasting with development along The Village. This complex is due for demolition in the next 12 months.

Street-facing terraced bungalows of red brick are located on Knights Croft to the north east, with playing fields associated with St John's CE(C) Primary School immediately to the south. This area is more closely related to the surrounding countryside due to the low level of the buildings and lack of built form or vegetation obscuring views between the area and the countryside to the north. These buildings are further set back from the road and do not reflect distinctive architectural features of older buildings within the village.



**Above:** Knights Croft

Piecemeal development occupies the area to the north of Keele Road extending to Keele Parish church to the east on a prominent hill. Buildings in this area are well-spaced and variably oriented within large plots containing large rear gardens. In combination with the raised landform, short narrow lanes and level of tree cover it has an intimate feel with views out to surrounding countryside restricted. The church is separated from the road by the churchyard with trees surrounding it on three sides.



**Above:** Church Fields

This part of the village was built / rebuilt in its present form as a planned development in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century that survives largely intact. Along The Village, older short terraces sit within small plots near the boundary to the road and without hard boundary treatments. Development to the west is further set back from the road and loses this alignment to it. Ribbon development stretches southwards along Highway Lane, the earlier buildings at the north end continuing the pattern established to the west of The Village with detached and semi-detached properties set back from the road and not aligned to it. The scale of buildings decreases towards the south, with more detached properties and larger plots becoming more dominant. Along Highway Lane dwellings are large and detached with large private gardens. Relative lack of tree cover and the adjacent open countryside gives this area a clear rural feel.

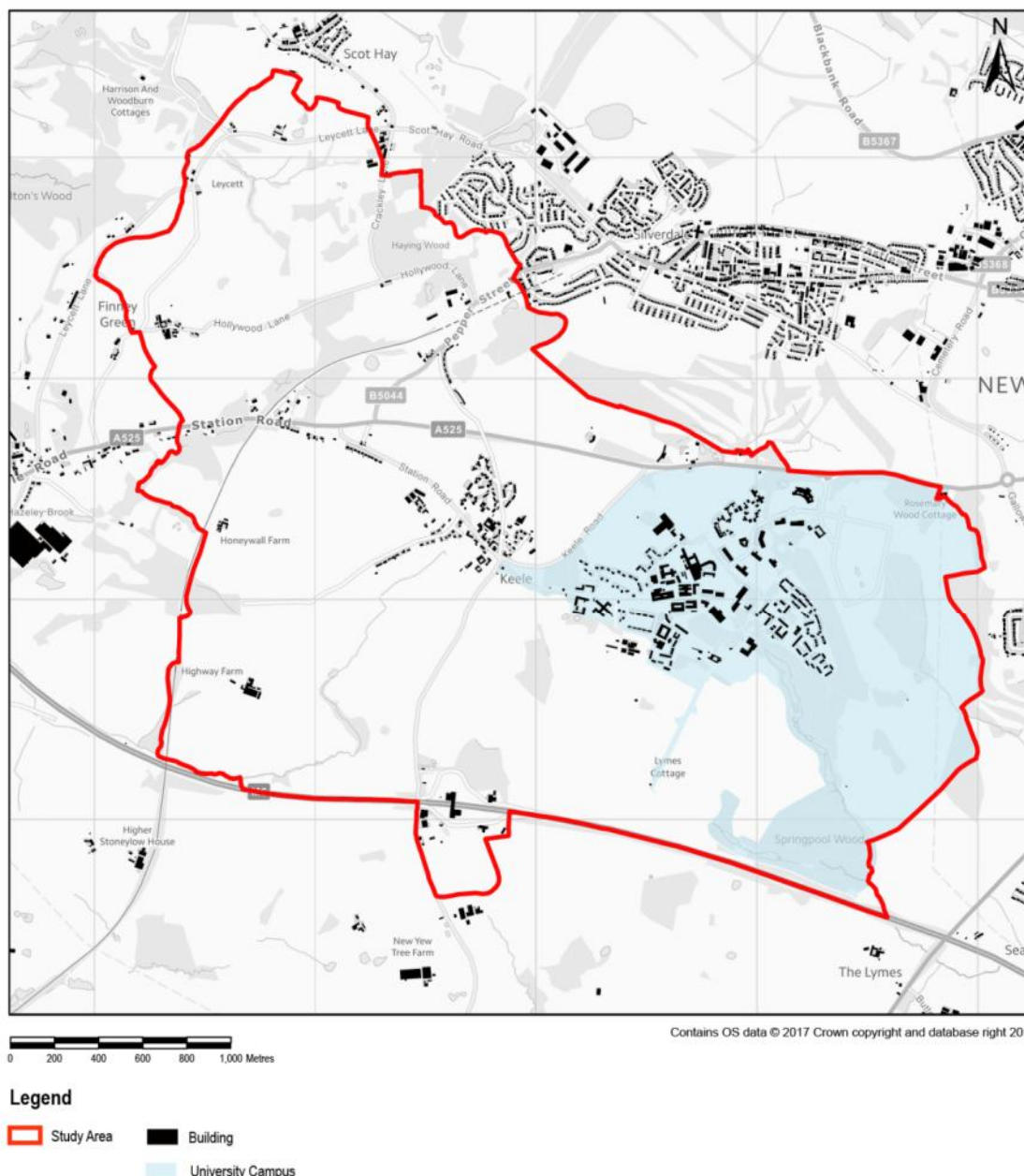


Figure 7 Built form

Keele University generally comprises mid- twentieth century development. Buildings here are predominantly built of red brick with flat roofs and minimal detailing, generating a sense of unity within the campus. Buildings occur in a variety of layouts. To the north, four storey residences are orientated north-west to south-east. Buildings within Keele University Science and Innovation Park to the north-east are greater in scale and mass, fewer and more loosely aligned to University Drive. Further generally three storey residences occupy the south east quadrant.

Recent development including the Caudwell Building, IC5 and Barnes student accommodation in combination with approved new housing at Hawthorns, MCIL building at the New Development Site: student accommodation at Barnes, Horwood and Lindsay Halls add variety of built form to the campus.

Towards the centre of the university, a central open space is defined by several buildings: Keele University Chapel, designed by George G. Pace and constructed of blue Staffordshire brick; the Students' Union building, a reinforced concrete building with brick detailing by Stillman & Eastwick Field and the Library, designed by Sir Howard Robertson.



**Above:** Keele University Chapel



**Above:** Keele University Students' Union Building



**Above:** Keele University Library

The western part of the university comprises the Colin Reeves, Chancellors, Dorothy Hodgkin, Lennard Jones and Huxley Buildings. Along with other buildings, these form a loose grid aligned east-west in contrast to the south-east quadrant which is loosely orientated north-east to south-west.



**Above:** Colin Reeves Building



**Above:** Dorothy Hodgkin Building



**Above:** Huxley Building

More two-storey brick residences lie to the west amongst plots bound by hedges and containing mature trees with The Oaks and Holly Cross buildings being larger brick buildings south of the access road from Three Mile Lane.

Keele Hall occupies a prominent position within designed parkland to the west of the southeast quadrant.

#### 4.3.4 Heritage Assets

The Keele Neighbourhood Plan Area contains 28 listed buildings, two conservation areas, Keele and Keele Hall Conservation Areas and Keele Hall Registered Park and Garden (RPG). Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council has also adopted a number of locally listed buildings that, although not statutorily designated, contribute positively to the character and appearance of the area.



## Listed buildings

Of the 28 listed buildings, two are considered to be of more than special interest and are designated grade II\* listed buildings. These comprise the Parish Church of St John the Baptist (NHLE 1377612) to the north-east of the village and Keele Hall (NHLE 1377615), a country house of 16<sup>th</sup> century origins that is now part of the university.



**Above:** The Parish Church of St John the Baptist

The listed buildings can be divided into groups according to their location and/or association with the village and its institutions. There are 12 listed buildings within the main core of the village, all of which are located within the Keele Conservation Area and nine of them are associated with the Church of St John the Baptist. Most of these are small structures such as graves, sundials and garden buildings. The rest of the buildings are associated with Keele Hall Park and Keele University which, aside from three assets, are located within the Keele Hall Conservation Area.

Further information regarding listed buildings can be found on Historic England's National Heritage List for England website.

There are two Conservation Areas within the Study Area. The Keele Conservation Area covers the historic core of the village and the Keele Hall Conservation Area covers Keele Hall and associated buildings, within the campus of Keele University.

### Keele Conservation Area

Keele Village Conservation Area was designated based on the interest derived from its historic character as an ancient village that was substantially remodelled and rebuilt as a 19<sup>th</sup> century estate village in a polite style by the

Sneyd family. Other interests derive from its association with Keele Hall, and its rural setting and open spaces. The majority of the buildings within Keele Conservation Area stand around the junction of Keele Road, The Village, Quarry Bank Road and Three Mile Lane. The Church of St John the Baptist with its tall spire is the most prominent building within the conservation area (and the village) featuring in picturesque views from a distance and openings within the village.



**Above:** 6-12 The Village, Keele, a good example of front doors being replaced with modern alternatives

There are 12 listed buildings and structures within Keele Conservation Area and the historic core of the village. These include a 17<sup>th</sup> century cottage, altered and extended mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (formerly known as Cottage Farmhouse) at no 36, Keele Village (NHLE 1029838, Grade II), a milepost (NHLE 1205511, Grade II) to the north-west part of the village, and a war memorial adjacent to Lych Gate at the Church of St John (NHLE 1061409, Grade II). Nine listed buildings are associated with the church, including the church itself and memorials and headstones within the churchyard. Additionally, there are Keele Lodge and gate piers (NHLE 1205372, Grade II) that are situated both within the Keele Conservation Area and Keele Hall RPG



**Above:** The Lych Gate (Grade II listed) and church yard of Keele Parish church, the Church of St John

A conservation area appraisal of Keele Village has not been prepared by Newcastle-under-Lyme Council. However, a rapid conservation area appraisal was prepared on behalf of the council to support an appeal following a refusal for student accommodation and residential development. The rapid conservation area appraisal discusses the historical development of the area and how this is reflected on the buildings in the area.



**Above:** Keele Lodge at the western entrance to the university grounds is one of the listed buildings at the eastern end of the village and displays the influence of the Sneyd family.

**Below:** Ralph Sneyd's monogram is a distinctive architectural feature that adorns several buildings within Keele.



### **Keele Hall Conservation Area and Registered Park and Garden**

Keele Hall is a Grade II Registered Park and Garden. It is a mid-18<sup>th</sup> century landscape designed by William Emes with later additions and improvements. Whilst the park is now part of the University of Keele, many elements of the historic landscape remain intact and have been incorporated into the university grounds.

There are 15 listed buildings within the Keele Hall RPG plus two buildings outside the park that are also part of Keele University. There are three approaches to the park, each one of them marked by an imposing lodge. Keele Lodge (NHLE 1205372, Grade II) marks the entrance of the park from the village, Newcastle Lodge (NHLE 1029833, Grade II) marks the north approach off Keele Road while Lymes Lodge (NHLE 1205383, Grade II) provides access from the south.



**Above:** Keele Hall

The most important building in the park is Keele Hall (NHLE 1377615, Grade II\*) which has 16<sup>th</sup> century origins although it was substantially remodelled between 1855 and 1861 with later alterations c1880. The building is Jacobean in style and has a prominent appearance due its mass, scale and setting. It is mainly three storeys over cellars with attics. It is constructed of red and yellow sandstone ashlar with chamfered rusticated quoins under a tiled roof. Another important building to the south-west of the Hall is the Clock House (NHLE 1029836, Grade II), a former stable block and coach house in mixed Tudor and early Renaissance style.



**Above:** The Clock House

The group of buildings consisting of Keele Hall (NHLE 1377615, Grade II\*), Clock House (NHLE 1029836, Grade II), Lymes Lodge (NHLE 1205383, Grade II) as well as associated buildings around them, in conjunction with surrounding gardens and pleasure grounds including a series of fishponds to the south-east of the Hall comprise Keele Hall Conservation Area. Historic England provides a description of the historic development of the park as well as a description of the park and its buildings. [<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001165>]

### **Locally listed buildings**

Local lists form a vital element in the reinforcement of a sense of local character and distinctiveness in the historic environment. By identifying significant local heritage assets, they play an essential role in informing the development of local plans. Newcastle-upon-Lyme Council has adopted a list of locally important buildings and structures. This comprises 20 buildings that represent the rebuilding of the village according to the guidance of Ralph Sneyd in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century with some surviving vernacular examples. The buildings have both architectural and historic interest.

### **Register of Locally Important Buildings and Structures**

The Villa, The Village, Keele.  
Sneyd Arms, The Village, Keele.  
The Cottages, 3-9 The Village, Keele.  
6-12 The Village, Keele.  
The Middle House, 14 The Village, Keele.  
Keele Farm House, The Village, Keele.  
Station House, 3 Station Drive, Keele.  
Stone Walls, Keele Road, Newcastle.  
Wrought iron sculptures, A525 Keele.  
Two war-time prefabricated units (rear of Westminster Theatre), Keele University.  
Station House, Leycett, Keele.  
Smithy House, 4 Highway Lane, Keele.  
The Old Vicarage, Keele.  
3-4 Church Bank, Keele.  
Old Keele School, Church Bank, Keele.  
Hawthorn House, Keele University.

Examples of note include:

- A - Old School House, which is constructed of red brick with distinctive diapering in blue brick with sandstone dressings, and is located on a prominent corner plot to the south-east end of the village;
- B - Keele Farm House is set back from the road and is of a distinctive appearance. It is also constructed of red brick with a pattern of bands, straps and diapering in blue bricks and additional decorative features;
- C - Sneyd Arms, constructed of rubble sandstone and located on the main village road, The Village, with imposing gables and chimneys;
- D - The Villa, constructed of red/brown brick, two storeys high with a low roof but tall gables with apparent Sneyd influences (the rapid conservation area appraisal includes the barn at the rear of The Villa); and
- E - Hawthorns House, a late 18<sup>th</sup> /early 19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular farmhouse.

The list was updated in November 2016 and can be found in full on the council's website.

The rapid conservation area appraisal identifies additional buildings of significance within the conservation area. These are vernacular buildings that pre-date the remodelling of the village by Sneyd.

- Clematis Cottage sits to the south-west of the Church of St John the Baptist and is a late 18<sup>th</sup> / early 19<sup>th</sup> century cottage of a vernacular style; and
- Amakaohia House (former rectory) to the north-west of the church also dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to early 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is a farmhouse with some vernacular features with later Sneyd alterations.

Additional buildings of local importance that have been identified as part of this assessment include:

- F - Holly Mews (Honeysuckle Cottage) to the rear of Sneyd Arms off Quarry Bank Road. This is a complex of one to two storeys above half basements consisting of long rectangular buildings arranged around a courtyard. While the four houses fronting Quarry Bank Road are all new build, the remaining houses around the courtyard are conversions of the old assembly rooms recently renovated and converted for housing. The complex appears on historic maps from the 1870s. The buildings are constructed of red brick with tiled roofs. The mews are considered of some architectural and historic interest due to their vernacular appearance characterised by low roofs. They are notable as they do not reflect the style favoured by Sneyd i.e. dormer gables and chimneys dominating the skyline; and
- G and H - 1 and 2 Pump Bank. The building appears on historic maps from the 1870s. It is constructed of red brick under tiled roof although there have been later additions to the south-west corner. It appears to be double-piled attached to a gabled range to the north-east with rear one-bay gable addition (south-west corner). The building has many Sneyd influences with gabled elevations, dormer gables and a large chimney stack. The building belongs to an important period of the village defined by Sneyd's instructions and influence in the area and contributes to the local character and distinctiveness.



A: The Old School House



B: Keele Farm House



C: The Sneyd Arms



D: The Villa





E: Hawthorns House



F: Holly Mews and Honeysuckle Cottage



**G:** Building on the corner of Highway Lane and Pump Bank View 1



**H:** Building on the corner of Highway Lane and Pump Bank View 2



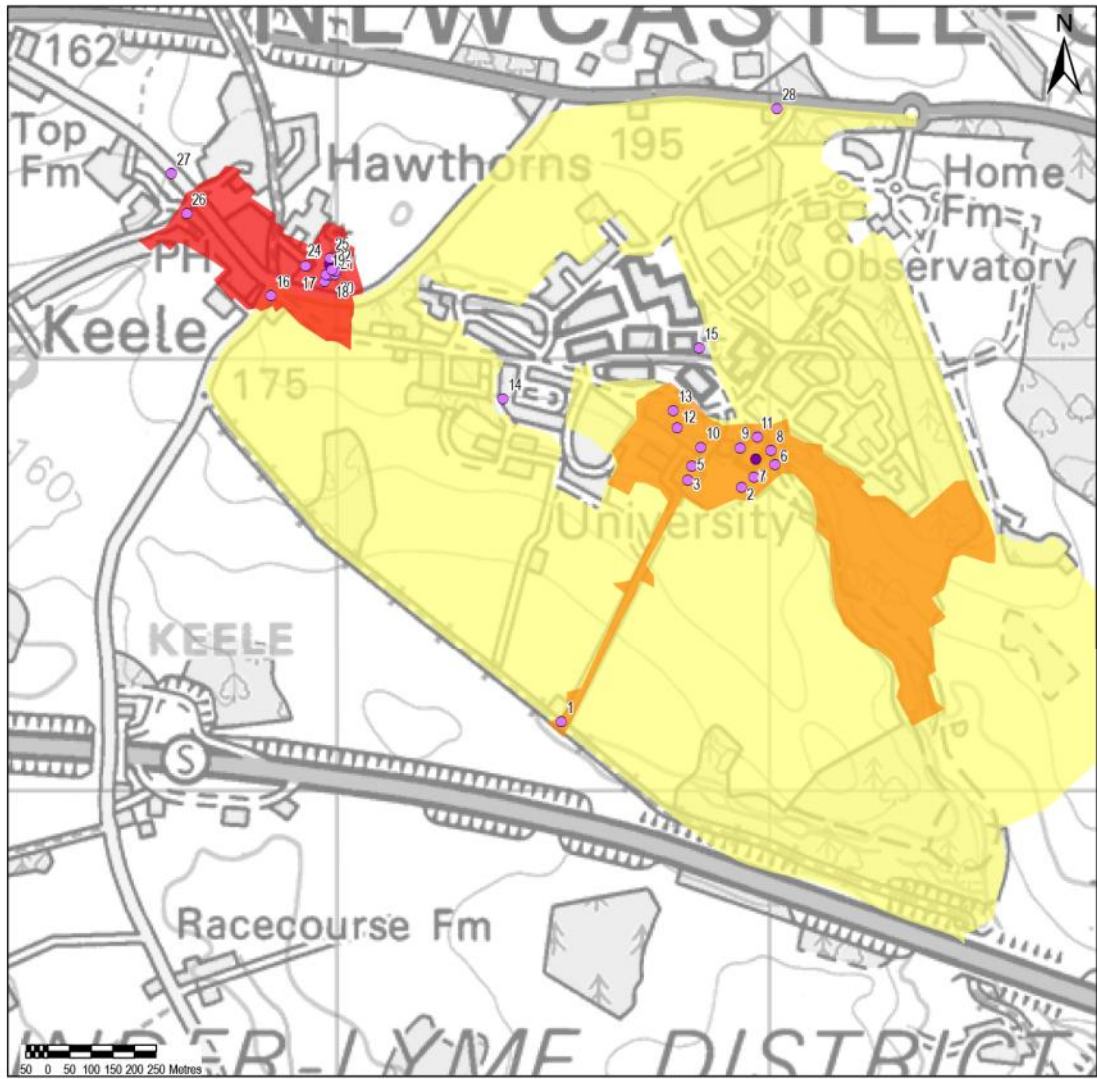
**Above:** The Middle House, 14 The Village, Keele



**Above:** Smithy House, 4 Highway Lane, Keele



**Above:** The Cottages, 3-9 The Village, Keele. Well-clipped hedges are a strong characteristic of the village. This also reflects the pattern of development, complementing the alignment to the road that many properties have with the historic core.



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- Legend**
- Listed building- Grade II
  - Listed building- Grade II\*
  - Registered Parks and Garden
  - Keele Conservation Area
  - Keele Hall Conservation Area

Figure 8 Heritage assets

### 4.3.5 Green space and public realm

Open farmland abuts the village boundaries with notable green space in the churchyard at Keele Parish Church, between Keele Road and the university access road including the Church Plantation woodland between the Church Plantation houses and the green which runs down to the centre of the village; and at Hawthorn Residences.

In general the Keele retains the leafiness of a typical village. No planned public green space is provided within the village. An area of publicly accessible open grass adjacent to the tree lined access to the university is located next to the nodal point at the Sneyd Arms and within the Conservation Area.



**Above:** Looking east into the campus of Keele University with the Lodge out of shot to the right. The tree lined avenue is protected by the Keele Conservation Area and in combination with the grassed area provides a public accessible green space. This entrance provides the only direct link between the village and the university and includes a bus route and pedestrian route visible to the left.




**Above:** Looking south from within the Hawthorn Hall area towards the junction of Station Road, The Village and Highway Lane.

At the western end of the village, the Hawthorn Hall area provides further green space. Not part of the former parkland like the green space at the east end of the village, this publicly accessible area is Arcadian in nature with a high level of mature trees. Both areas have a parkland character towards the village due to the mix of mature trees and grassed areas, becoming weaker away from the village due to increasing amounts of built form.

Within the village, Keele Road, The Village and Station Road are lined with mature trees with less regularity and density than along the access road to the Keele University campus. While roadside trees dwindle further west on Station Road, tree cover along Keele Road becomes denser just east of the village also dwindling by the university sports fields.



**AI** : Boundary treatments are predominantly well-clipped evergreen hedges of a moderate height with some wooden fencing evident. Few properties have boundary walls, these being more recent developments and varying in material.

Woodland between the university campus and the village, and around the disused Keele Railway Station to the north west of the village provide visual amenity with lower levels of tree cover between the two.

Within the university campus, much of the historic parkland is retained. A significant proportion of the grounds to the south are arable farmland with a large open field pattern derived from parkland use prior to the Second World War extending from the university buildings and Keele Hall in the north to Lymes Road in the south. To the north-west of the campus, sports fields which are associated with Keele Sports Centre occupy much of the quadrant. Along the eastern boundary of the campus Springpool Wood extends from Keele Hall to the south eastern corner, forming a large wood. Between these three general areas the university buildings occupy an area with informal grassed areas, hedges and high levels of mature trees, often along access roads.

The majority of green space within Keele is provided by private front gardens which are generally small along roads, with semi-detached properties on Station Road having larger front gardens. Similarly, vegetation and trees are reasonably plentiful within the larger part of the village but less so with respect to the semi-detached properties on Station Road and Highway Lane.

Private space and related elements of the streetscape are generally dominant with limited public space. This provides a distinctive characteristic to the village of Keele.



**Above:** Looking south along Highway Lane where newer properties have differing boundary treatments in contrast to the general prevalence of soft boundary treatments within the historic core.

Although generally infrequent within the village, hard boundary treatments become more evident to the outer parts of the village. In some instances where open fencing is used, these boundary treatments are disguised by ornamental planting. Elsewhere, this variation erodes an otherwise unified characteristic which contributes much to the appeal of the village.





**Above:** Perhaps the most distinctive property on Highway Lane, The Smithy shows typical lack of hard boundary treatments

### 4.3.6 Views

Due to the historic development of the village and its location at the entrance to the historic Sneyd estate, the primary views within the village are along The Village. Church Plantation woodland is an important landscape feature and visual backdrop to the central village scene within these and other views.

For example, on entering from the west and entering from the east, where less dramatic and shorter views are available around the nodal point at the Sneyd Arms and towards historic buildings clustered in the area.



**Above:** Within the village views are generally limited by built form, and an abundance of mature trees and other vegetation within gardens. In combination with topography and distance from major roads, trees within neighbouring fields and along roads create filtered views, contribute to the open character of the village and its strong sense of place.



**Above:** A typical view looking west along The Village, with the Sneyd Arms in the foreground to the right and distinctive cottages in the middle distance to the left.



**Above:** At various points around the village and from both Three Mile Lane to the south and the A525 to the north, the spire of the Church of St John the Baptist is prominent. Otherwise obscured by landform and tree cover, this forms the main landmark of the village within the wider landscape.

The wooded ridge and St John's Church spire provide a focal point in wider views of the landscape from the south and west. This ridge provides the wooded backdrop to many views within Newcastle-under-Lyme. Notable views outwards from within the parish include extensive views towards the Cheshire plain available from Finney Green and Leycett Lane. Properties on the edge of the village generally obtain wide, long distance views to surrounding farmland partially screened by mature trees within abutting farmland.

Views northwards are shorter due to the sloping topography and this serves to obscure the A525. Similarly, the screening effect of vegetation combined with landform obscures the M6 on the southern boundary of the parish. With the lack of an active railway line in the parish, transport infrastructure is largely absent from views around the village. Similarly, pylons are not evident within most views.

High levels of tree cover within and to the boundary of Keele University's campus effectively screen university buildings from views within the village and vice versa. This screening is also evident at the Hawthorn Hall university residences. Woodland filters views of the buildings of Keele University from Keele Road along the northern and western boundaries, with only the sports fields visible from the west. The university is effectively screened from views from the east by large areas of woodland to the eastern boundary of the campus. The open, gentle southward slope in the south of the university grounds enables long, panoramic views north to the university from Lymes Road. Tree cover and sloping landform within the campus screens the university from views from the west along Three Mile Lane and the village of Keele with views severely curtailed and largely restricted to the campus.

Sloping landform and high tree cover lends an enclosed feel within the campus that generally isolates it from surrounding landscape. Views are severely curtailed and largely restricted to those within the campus. Longer views are available outwards to surrounding landscape in the south from the area around Keele Hall, the area around Lindsay Hall and from the pedestrian route leading to the village.

The Hawthorns Hall area has an enclosed feel with views out to surrounding countryside available from the northern and eastern edges, while views into the adjacent village to the south are screened by vegetation. Views within the area curtailed by vegetation and built form.

### 4.3.7 Cultural Associations

Keele has associations with the Knights Templar and also the Knights Hospitallers due to its location on an historic route between the North-West and London. The Knights Templar and Knights Hospitaller supplemented rental income from farming tenants with charges from incoming traffic passing through their lands.



Today, little remains today of the heritage of either the Knights Templar or Hospitaller. An iron sculpture erected after construction of the 1992 bypass between Newcastle-under Lyme and Madeley celebrates the arrival of the Knights Templar at Keele, while a University hall of residence, Holly Cross, located on the estate and shaped in a Templar Cross, also commemorates their presence. Following the dissolution of the Templars in 1311, their possessions were annexed by the Knights Hospitaller until their dissolution by Henry VIII. Keele parish church is named after the patron saint of the Hospitallers, St John the Baptist.

Keele University lies within the estate originally given by Henry II to the Knights Templars in 1180 and subsequently bought by the Sneyd family. Medieval glass in the Church of St John the Baptist relates to the presence of the Templars. The long presence of the Sneyd family within Keele shaped the village over a 400 year period extending from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. This influence remains from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Sneyds implemented a programme of landscaping and tree planting in the grounds of Keele Hall, the remodelling of the village and a rebuilding programme that created the village much as it remains today. The distinctive RS (Ralph Sneyd) monogram is notable on the old school, Keele Farm and the lodge the scythe and fleur-de-lys of the Sneyd coat of arms can also be seen on buildings in the parish, notably on the war memorial.



**Above:** Ralph Sneyd's monogram on the Old School House

## 5. Managing Change

The character of Keele described above is the result of a range of interactions between natural and human processes. This evolution is supported by the section on historical development, which describes how the structure and character of the area have changed over time. Together this provides a baseline against which change can be monitored and managed.

The evolution of the landscape will continue and therefore the management of change is essential to ensure that sustainable social, environmental and economic outcomes are achieved. This section, therefore, considers various factors which may influence change and inform the policies set out in the Keele Neighbourhood Plan.

### 5.1 Positive aspects of character

There are a number of positive aspects of character which should be sustained, reinforced or enhanced. These relate to the prominence of historic buildings within the village of Keele, the extensive parkland within the campus of Keele University and the markedly 20<sup>th</sup> century character of buildings comprising the university.

- Surrounding sparsely populated agricultural landscape and parkland within the university grounds which provide a setting to both the village and the university;
- Limited transport infrastructure, with traffic largely confined to the M6 and A525 which increases the tranquillity generated by the rural setting;
- Distinctive sandstone walls along the roads into the village that contribute to local distinctiveness;
- The largely intact historic form and village character which has a clear sense of arrival and retains many characteristic buildings set back from the pavement edge;
- The architectural features, regular height and roofline of older buildings in both the village and university and the distinct architectural influence of the Sneyd family;
- The Church of St John the Baptist, which provides both a link to the Knights Templar and the primary landmark identifying the location of the village in the surrounding landscape;
- Well-trimmed hedges to property boundaries and abundance of mature trees along roads, within gardens in the village and within the university campus, which maintains contributes to a verdant character; and
- Generally consistent building height to much of the buildings within the village and university campus with those of greater scale and mass located within defined areas with screening provided by tree planting.

### 5.2 Issues to be addressed

The following issues have been identified which could be addressed through new development or active management. These are principally related to the contrasting characteristics of the village and the university and include:

- Unsympathetic alterations and extensions to historic buildings such as PVC windows, doors etc. notable at 6-12 The Village;
- Limited public green space within the village with existing publicly accessible green space generally being part of the university grounds;
- Use of hard boundary treatments in newer development, which does not reflect the existing condition of many boundary treatments within the village;
- Lack of off-street parking that has led to high levels of parking within the Conservation Area along The Village detracting from the character of the village; and
- Limited connectivity between the village and university, which is currently limited to the access road and adjacent pedestrian route.

### 5.3 Sensitivity to change

There are also some elements which are particularly sensitive to change. These relate to the distinctive character of the village generated by the combination of historic buildings and high tree cover, the general lack of hard

boundaries and the distinctive character of the university which is generated by the parkland and campus setting and the uniformity of buildings within.

- Heritage assets and their landscape settings are particularly sensitive to poorly designed boundary treatments, paving and the proliferation of visual clutter such as inappropriate seating, advertising and other signage in the public realm that can detract from the setting of a listed building;
- Settlement pattern which is largely maintained within the village is vulnerable to erosion by the development that increases density or does not acknowledge existing plot sizes and building footprints;
- Building form and roofline height which is largely consistent within the village is sensitive to the introduction of buildings that exhibit a marked difference in height and/or form than those already existing;
- High levels of mature tree and hedges are maintained throughout the village and the university campus and are vulnerable to their reduction as a requirement for further development;
- Visual distinction between university grounds and village, which relies on trees and hedges screening one from the other, which is sensitive to the loss or reduction of vegetation with residential plots and university grounds; and
- Building form, materials and roofline height within the university, which is largely consistent, is sensitive to the introduction of buildings that do not acknowledge the scale and limited palette of materials or provision of screening to separate differing style of building.



## 5.4 Character Management Principles

*Keele Parish Council and the University are working in partnership on the development of the Keele Neighbourhood Plan. The University's developing masterplan will form part of the Neighbourhood Plan and will set out appropriate design policies for the campus whilst the Parish Council will develop policies for the remainder of the parish. The following suggestions principally refer to that area of the Parish outside the University campus.*

New development should seek to conserve and enhance the distinctive character of Keele. New development should take a considered and appropriate approach to design. Contemporary architecture may be appropriate if it is sympathetic to the historic fabric and landscape of the village. Therefore new builds which employ the imitation of historic architectural styles, using cheaper modern materials and a lack of consideration to proportion and massing of local historic buildings, should be considered less appropriate.

In order to address the issues highlighted above, principles for managing change in this area should focus on sustaining, reinforcing or enhancing those aspects which are key to the distinctive character and separate identities of the village and the university; the contribution that trees and hedges make to the character of both areas and the visual separation of both from each other. The following principles should be considered when defining policies with respect to heritage and character:


- The rural, wooded character of the area should be protected and conserved by ensuring development is well-sited and integrated with the landscape, particularly where new development may affect sensitive views, such as views of the church, views of The Village and views of the Sneyd influenced buildings at the eastern end of the village;
- Proposals to alter existing buildings should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the history and design qualities of the buildings and provide a clear rationale for how this is taken account of in the design of the alterations proposed;
- New development should conserve and enhance Keele's distinctive local village character. The density and pattern of new development should take account of its rural setting and the density and pattern of existing development;
- New development should be of a high quality design incorporating appropriate architectural detailing to provide interest and diversity. Developments of a homogenous housing typology are less likely to be appropriate;
- Designs for new buildings, within or adjacent to the conservation area should respond to local architectural vernacular building materials, height, scale and massing;

- New development should provide hedgerows to plot boundaries facing the road and should seek to provide off-road parking as far as possible;
- Innovative and high quality design should be encouraged; 
- The local list of heritage assets, as identified by the Neighbourhood Plan Group, should be taken into consideration in the production of any formally adopted Local List by Newcastle-Under-Lyme Borough Council. 

In addition to policy protection, this assessment has identified projects or initiatives which could be financed through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 (S106) contributions, or if the project is not eligible for these mechanisms, through other means of funding or delivery. CIL is a tool for local authorities to levy contributions from developers to help deliver infrastructure projects which benefit the local community – for more information, see <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/blog/guidance/> community-infrastructure-levy/.

Section 106 agreements are site-specific and put in place to make it possible to approve a planning application that might not otherwise be acceptable in planning terms – for example, the provision of new green space. It is recommended to seek advice from the Local Planning Authority on what types of project can be funded through CIL and S106.

Projects and initiatives identified as having the potential to be brought forward by CIL, S106 or other means include:

- Design: A policy regarding the layout, scale and character of development should be developed taking into account the qualities of existing development and the relationship between new buildings and the rural setting of the village;
- Provision of public space: A policy seeking to protect existing space of public amenity value for the residents should be developed to ensure its continued availability;
- Green infrastructure: Consideration should be given to the protection and extension of existing green infrastructure by linking existing green corridors; and
- Improving connectivity: Consideration should be given to creation of improved pedestrian and cycle access between the village and the university. 

## 6. Next steps and sources of further information

This study is intended to provide evidence to support the development of policies with respect to heritage and character for the Keele Neighbourhood Plan. As such, it does not provide a comprehensive overview of the contribution of individual buildings, streets or spaces to the character of the area. It should be considered alongside other evidence gathered through the plan making process, such as detailed policy reviews, consultation responses and site options assessments and the evidence base of the Newcastle-Under-Lyme Local Plan.

Other work which would strengthen the evidence base and provide a basis to monitor and manage future change includes:

- Work with Newcastle-Under-Lyme District Council to prepare detailed assessments of the buildings identified within section 4 of this report which are considered to be of local interest in line with Historic England Guidance;
- <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/heag018-local-heritage-listing.pdf/>;
- Design guidelines, to take forward the character management principles set out in this assessment, particularly to define the scale, siting and expectations with respect to design quality of future development. Such guidelines may be differentiated to reflect the diverse needs of both the University and wider parish. Guidelines covering development on the University campus are likely to be developed in consultation with stakeholders and appear in the Master Plan. Those of the wider parish should be developed as part of the Neighbourhood Plan process; and
- An audit to record the size, function, quality and value of local green space, to determine which land is of particular importance and may warrant special protection through a Local Green Space designation.



A wealth of further information and support is available to assist Keele Neighbourhood Plan Group in applying the principles set out in this assessment. The Locality website is a useful starting point and is updated regularly. Current guidance which may be of interest includes:

- Community Rights and Heritage, July 2016: <http://mycommunity.org.uk/resources/community-rights-and-heritage/>
- Heritage in Neighbourhood Plans, July 2016: <http://mycommunity.org.uk/news/heritage-in-neighbourhood-plans/>
- Design in Neighbourhood Planning, February 2016: <http://mycommunity.org.uk/resources/design-in-neighbourhood-planning/>

Further technical support is also available to priority neighbourhood planning groups and forums through Locality, funded by DCLG. The other packages of support currently available are:

- Establishing a Neighbourhood Forum
- Housing Advice and Assessment
- Site options and assessment
- Urban Design and Master planning, including Design Codes
- Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
- Viability of proposals
- Evidence Base and Policy Reviews
- Facilitation Support
- Technical Facilitation
- Health check prior to examination

Further information is available in the Neighbourhood Planning Grant Guidance Notes produced by Locality: <http://mycommunity.org.uk/resources/guidance-notes-neighbourhood-planning/>

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## Appendix A - Historic maps

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**Site Details:**

1952-A3PDF-10000,

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**Report Ref:** CMAPS-CM-666933-39015-021117  
**Grid Ref:** 381343, 344890

**Map Name:** Provisional

**Map date:** 1952-1954

**Scale:** 1:10,560

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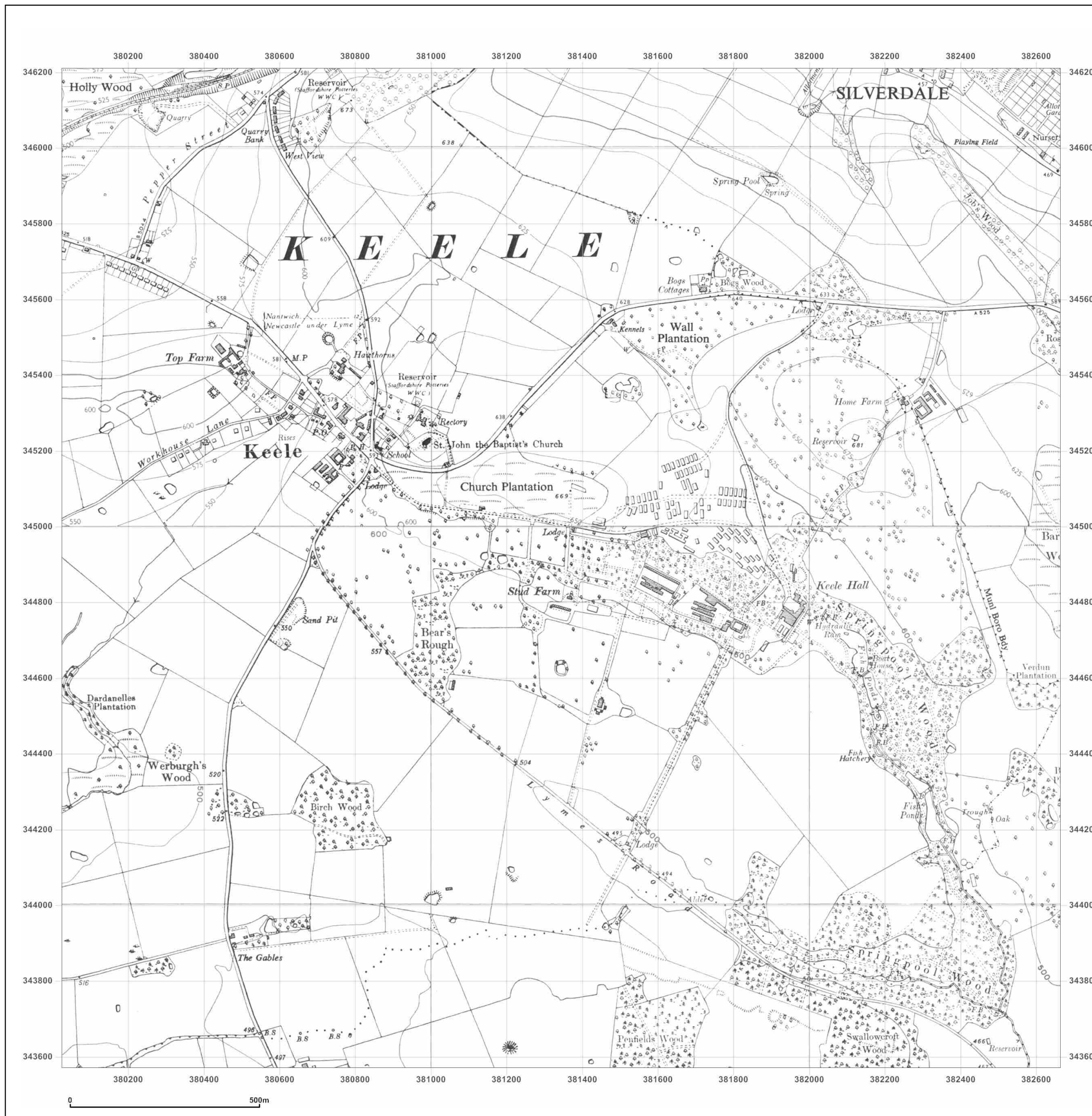


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**Site Details:**

1878-A3PDF-10000,

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**Map Name:** County Series

**Map date:** 1877-1878

**Scale:** 1:10,560

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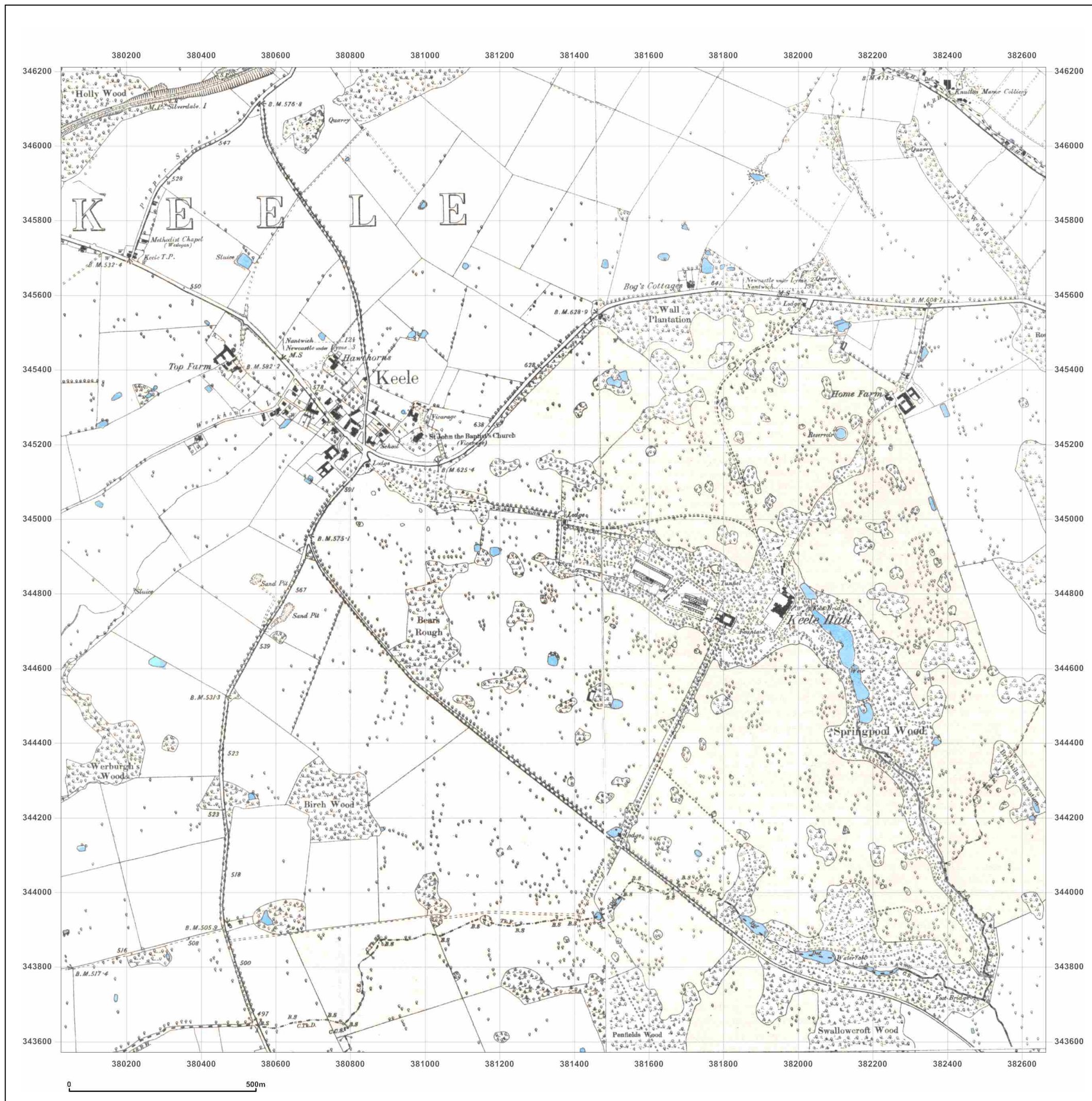


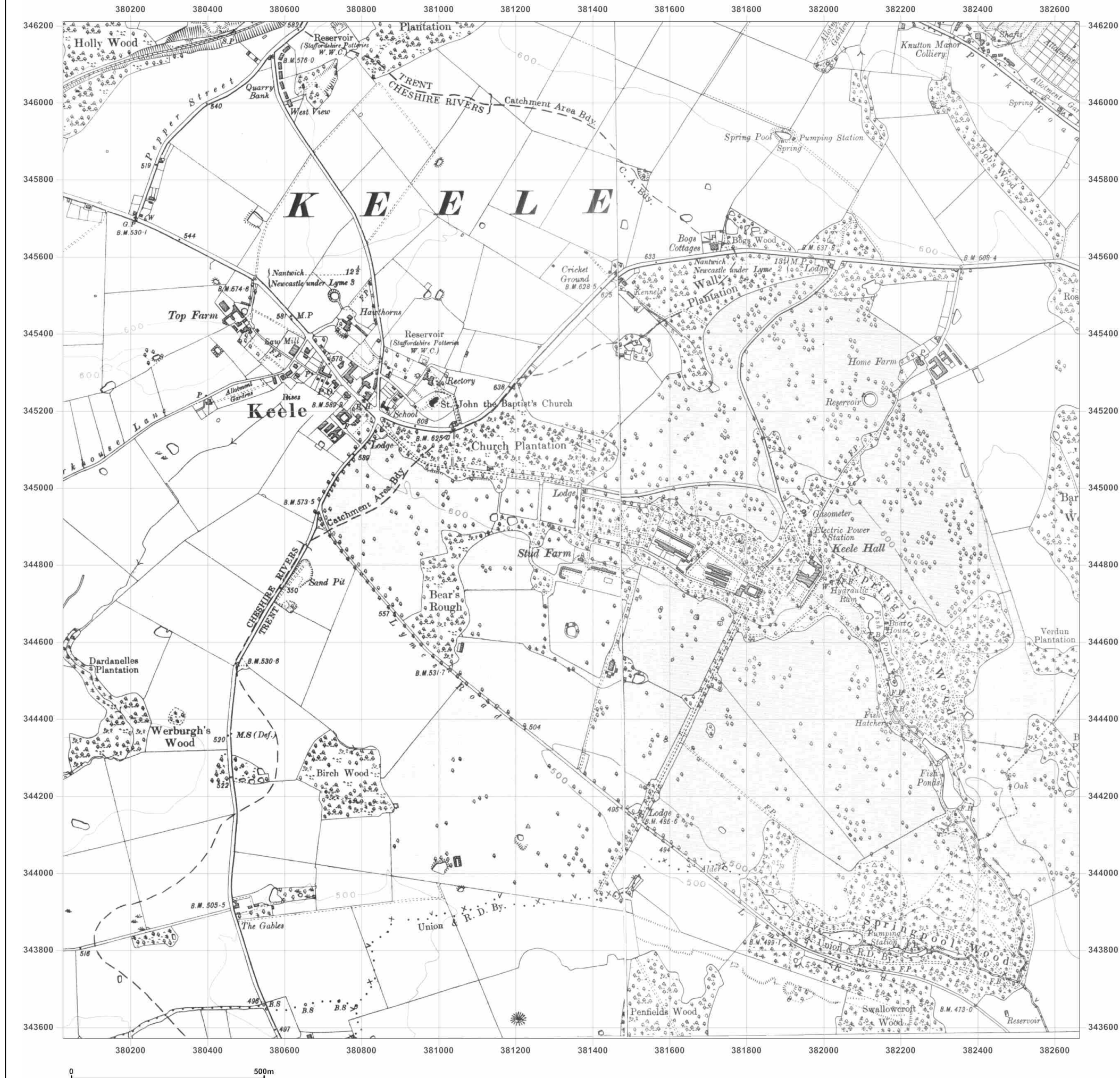
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**Site Details:**

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**Map Name:** County Series

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## Appendix B - Schedule of heritage assets

| ID | LIST ENTRY | NAME  | GRADE | EASTING | NORTHING | LIST DATE  |
|----|------------|---|-------|---------|----------|------------|
| 1  | 1205383    | LYMES LODGE   | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 2  | 1029834    | GARDEN SEAT AND FLANKING URNS AT SOUTH END OF TERRACE IN FRONT OF EAST SIDE OF KEELE HALL         | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 3  | 1029836    | THE CLOCK HOUSE   | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 4  | 1029835    | STEPS AND FLANKING URNS ON TERRACE IN FRONT OF EAST SIDE OF KEELE HALL                            | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 5  | 1377617    | PAIR OF BALL CAPPED PIERS APPROXIMATELY 25 METRES NORTH OF THE CLOCK HOUSE                        | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 6  | 1205458    | WELL HOUSE ABOUT 70 METRES SOUTH EAST OF KEELE HALL   | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 7  | 1377615    | KEELE HALL  | II*   |         |          | 02/12/1952 |
| 8  | 1205421    | GARDEN SEAT AND FLANKING URNS AT NORTH END OF TERRACE IN FRONT OF EAST SIDE OF KEELE HALL         | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 9  | 1205433    | GATE PIERS AND COURTYARD WALL TO KEELE HALL   | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 10 | 1280689    | BRIDGE APPROXIMATELY 90 METRES NORTH EAST OF THE CLOCK HOUSE                                      | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 11 | 1377616    | THE BREWHOUSE   | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 12 | 1205506    | TUNNEL APPROXIMATELY 110 METRES NORTH WEST OF THE CLOCK TOWER                                     | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 13 | 1029837    | ARCHED VIADUCT APPROXIMATELY 130 METRES NORTH WEST OF THE CLOCK HOUSE                             | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 14 | 1354784    | GARDEN HOUSE TO REAR OF 21 LARCHWOOD  | II    |         |          | 21/07/1993 |
| 15 | 1376612    | KEELE UNIVERSITY CHAPEL   | II    |         |          | 25/09/1998 |
| 16 | 1205372    | KEELE LODGE AND GATE PIERS  | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 17 | 1280777    | PEAKE MEMORIAL ABOUT 22 METRES SOUTH WEST OF SOUTH PORCH OF CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST         | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 18 | 1029830    | SUNDIAL APPROXIMATELY 9 METRES SOUTH WEST OF THE SOUTH PORCH OF THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 19 | 1377613    | DEAN MEMORIAL ABOUT 7 METRES SOUTH OF SOUTH WEST CORNER OF TOWER OF CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |
| 20 | 1205336    | JANE DOWNING HEADSTONE ABOUT 16 METRES SOUTH OF SOUTH PORCH OF THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST  | II    |         |          | 14/05/1985 |



|    |         |  |     |            |
|----|---------|--|-----|------------|
| 21 | 1029831 | COOPER HEADSTONE ABOUT 7 METRES SOUTH EAST OF SOUTH PORCH OF THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST               | II  | 14/05/1985 |
| 22 | 1029832 | HAYWOOD MEMORIAL ABOUT 4 METRES SOUTH OF SOUTH PORCH OF THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST                    | II  | 14/05/1985 |
| 23 | 1061409 | WAR MEMORIAL ADJACENT TO LYCH GATE AT ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH   | II  | 30/07/2002 |
| 24 | 1377612 | CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST  | II* | 17/11/1966 |
| 25 | 1377614 | POOLE MEMORIAL ABOUT 3 METRES NORTH OF NORTH EAST CORNER OF NORTH AISLE OF THE CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST | II  | 14/05/1985 |
| 26 | 1029838 | 36, KEELE VILLAGE  | II  | 14/05/1985 |
| 27 | 1205511 | MILEPOST AT NGR SJ 8062 4542   | II  | 14/05/1985 |
| 28 | 1029833 | NEWCASTLE LODGE  | II  | 14/05/1985 |

