INTRODUCTION

This guidance offers information and advice to occupants and owners who wish to make alterations or extensions to a property or to build or rebuild in, adjacent to or overlooking the hamlet and Conservation Area known as Mushroom Green.

Mushroom Green was designated a Conservation Area in April 1970. The boundary of the Conservation Area is shown on plan 1.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF MUSHROOM GREEN

Mushroom Green began with the settling of nailmakers in the 18th century on common land which was part of Pensnett Chase. Under the enclosures Act of the 18th century the land was awarded to the Viscount of Dudley and Ward, to whom an annual cottage rent was then due even by the earliest nailors who had been squatters.

The building material used was cheap and easily obtained locally: clay to build ‘mud’ houses (these have all gone), blast furnace slag, later rendered, and local brick. The siting of new dwellings was often based on kinship between neighbours. Small workshop buildings accompanied most of the dwellings and the occupants were poor and exploited by a series of middlemen who delivered the raw material and collected the end-product: nails. In many cases the women folk would have made the nails while their husbands and fathers went to other employment in the mines and furnaces such as at Saltwells or Cradley Forge.

Towards the end of the 18th century many manufacturing processes were being mechanised nationally and by 1830 mechanised nail making had begun in Birmingham. By 1810 a chain making workshop appears in records of Mushroom Green and the nailors adapted their hearths to making chain, the new product of Mushroom Green.

Chain making was more communal and the workshops larger but it used similar skills. By the end of the 19th century most properties in the settlement had a chainshop close to them. Several chainshops survived into the twentieth century but only one remains in anything like its original form having been restored by the local authority and the Black Country Society in the 1970s.

In 1852 a branch of the Pensnett railway opened to serve Saltwells Colliery passing through Mushroom Green. A platelayer’s hut shows up on maps from 1884 adjacent to the Griff Chains chainshop established in 1865. Although demolished in the 1980s it was carefully rebuilt in an adapted form in 1992 and has a use as a garage and outbuilding.

While it is inaccurate to state that the fabric of Mushroom Green has remained unaltered when dwellings and workshops have been built and demolished without emotion through the decades, Mushroom Green’s character survives.

THE CHARACTER OF MUSHROOM GREEN

Mushroom Green is an amalgam of terraced houses and individual cottages set alongside paths and lanes and accompanied by open spaces.

The hamlet is less crowded than in former days because of the demolition of unfit houses in the 1960’s. Mushroom Green derives its character from the juxtaposition of its dwellings, outbuildings, workshops, trees and hedges and from the shapes, styles and materials of the individual elements.

The buildings reflect the haphazard layout of the early settlement and hint at the unstructured fashion in which it evolved.
MUSHROOM GREEN, HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

1  Harry Court’s Map of the Parish of Dudley, 1787,
2  Dudley Wood Enclosure Map of the Parish of Dudley, 1819.
3  Undated Map of the Parish of Dudley, Mid 19th century?.
4  Ordnance Survey Map 1903
5  Ordnance Survey Map 1939
MUSHROOM GREEN CONSERVATION AREA & ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION

Conservation Area Boundary

Article 4 Direction Boundary

ORDNANCE SURVEY MAPPING IS BASED UPON THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP WITH THE SANCTION OF THE CONTROLLER OF H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE. LICENCE NUMBER LA 079171
PLANNING AND POLICY IN MUSHROOM GREEN

NEW DEVELOPMENT

“The rural character of Mushroom Green is set and should be preserved through the maintenance of the current balance between the built and the unbuilt environment. Therefore, there should be a presumption against the development of existing open space.

However, vacant buildings within the conservation area may have potential for conversion to residential use and indeed other appropriate use. Proposals for such development will be considered favourably where they meet the following criteria:

(i) there will be no loss of significant areas of open space;
(ii) there will be no significant loss of trees, shrub cover or specimen trees;
(iii) there will be no detrimental impact on the character of the conservation area as a result of ancillary development such as accesses, fences, garden sheds, garages, formal lawns and clothes lines;
(iv) there will be no detrimental effect on the character of the conservation area as a result of the changed relationship of development with existing buildings and spaces;
(v) there will be a clear benefit to the conservation area by enhancement of existing buildings or spaces.

PLANNING AND HIGHWAY STANDARDS

Strict adherence to the current standards usually expected for development is not always possible or desirable in Mushroom Green. Overlooking, garden spaces and parking standards may have to be modified and compromises made in order that the character of the conservation area is preserved though due regard will be paid to the need to protect the amenity of residents.

PROVISION OF SERVICES

It is recommended that early discussion with the Local Planning Authority is entered into to ensure that both the method and route for provision are discrete and in keeping with the character of the area.

The companies which have a charter to provide electricity, mains gas, water and drainage or telecommunications (telephone and television) will be advised that underground routes for telephone have been successfully used in parts of the Conservation Area and that this will be an expected standard with the proviso that damage to standing structures and trees is avoided.

THE ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION

Extensions and alterations which are normally permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 are controlled in Mushroom Green by what is known as an Article 4 Direction. This removes the permitted development rights for extensions and requires that a planning application be made for any material change to the external elevations of buildings or their surroundings. Please note that no planning fee will be required for any application required as a result of the Article 4 Direction.

(Win the boundary of the area affected by the Article 4 Direction is not identical to the boundary of the Conservation Area and is also shown on plan 1.)

WINDOW AND DOOR REPLACEMENT

Applications for alteration or extension to existing buildings which include PVC-u or anodised aluminium in the windows or doors will be refused.

TREES IN CONSERVATION AREAS

Trees in conservation areas are protected. Six weeks written notification to the Planning & Leisure Department of intention to ‘lop, top or fell’ any tree in a conservation area is required. Permission may be withheld or alternative advice given by the Tree Preservation Officer.

MAKING A PLANNING APPLICATION IN MUSHROOM GREEN

Before making an application, applicants or their agents should look carefully at the buildings around the one which they wish to alter, extend or replace and note the salient points of architectural detail and construction.
Applicants will be expected to:-

- discuss their ideas with the appropriate development control and conservation officers of the Council in advance of submitting an application.

- provide plans and elevations at 1:50 scale and drawings showing architectural details at 1:20 scale. Prior discussion will identify what details will be required at this scale.

  Window designs will need to be drawn, as trade catalogue details often do not accurately represent the appearance of the fitted window.

- provide accurate existing and proposed site levels for the ground and adjacent ground in many cases.

Choice and samples of materials for walls, roofs, windows and decorative detail will be required to be submitted at the time of application. In most cases this will require specific details of the mortar mix and pointing intended to be used.

Once included as a condition of the approval any variation will require an amended application.

The appropriate planning application forms are available from the Planning and Leisure Department. It may be necessary to ensure that proposals meet building regulation requirements after discussion with a planning or conservation officer and before submitting the application.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR ALTERATIONS EXTENSIONS AND REPLACEMENT BUILDINGS

The external appearance of extensions, alterations or replacements and their proportions and sizes will be important factors to consider.

Early builders used traditional vernacular techniques to produce functional buildings. Most are built of brick and roofed with clay tiles and they have chimneys. The choice of brick varies: some brick is rendered later in the building’s history and some of the brick conceals other construction methods such as timber framing at no.9 or rubble walls.

SETTING OF BUILDINGS

Most changes to buildings in the Conservation Area can be softened by the treatment of the surroundings. Boundary walls and traditional hedges can help tie new elements in with the old. The planting of trees and shrubs of the right species in the right place and at the right time in the progress of the building works can help the new structure mellow with its setting.

Accesses to the property can be finished simply in dark gravel or traditional Staffordshire blue brick used in yard areas.

Extensions will need to be in scale with and relate to the design of the original building. The height, wall area and roof area should be in proportions similar to the existing traditional buildings and roof pitches in the same plane should be the same.

Window openings should be similarly proportioned and lined through with the original ones. The style of windows, materials and glazing pattern, sill and lintel treatment should be in keeping. Door positions also need to be carefully considered.

Outbuildings should pay attention to and respect the size and shape of other buildings around them but need not copy them. Roofs should complement the wall material in the same building and remain simple in ridge detail.

ROOFS

Careful attention should be given to roofing material. The majority of properties have clay tile roofs which have weathered and darkened with age and earlier atmospheric conditions.

No 52 Mushroom Green
pollution. Roofs on extensions should not differ significantly from the main building although some allowance can be given for darkening through weathering.

Roof replacement on existing properties should allow for the reuse of all serviceable tiles, any deficiency being made up by the use of reclaimed or darkened tiles randomly mixed with the originals. If sarking felt is incorporated in this operation, where previously not used, provision must be made for ventilating the roof space and timbers. Detailing the means of ventilation requires careful consideration so as not to be too conspicuous.

WALLS

Wall materials vary in Mushroom Green but brick walls and rendered walls are commonly used. Attention to the colour, texture and durability are important considerations in the choice of material.

VENTING TO THE EXTERIOR

It is important that consideration be given to methods of heating and ventilating new rooms and spaces. Central heating chimney flues and balanced flues on external walls or through roofs can mar the appearance of the building. Trickle vents on windows are also unsightly.

There is nearly always an alternative method of ventilation such as ridge vents, gable air bricks, below eaves air bricks and the use of original or new brick chimneys to house ventilation or flue pipes. The solution will be specific to each building.

DETAILED DESIGN AND MATERIALS FOR ALTERATIONS, EXTENSIONS AND REPLACEMENT BUILDINGS

Details of buildings contribute to their visual interest and therefore to the character of the conservation area.

WALLS

A range of brick bonds is used in traditional properties. Extensions should copy the bond used in the original building.

Most of the old brick in the conservation area is one of a series of strong reds. The base or plinth of walls is often a different shade of brick which should be copied, proportionately, in any extension.

Special attention should be given to the type of pointing used in order that the composition and style are in keeping with that on the main building.
Render has been applied to many of the buildings late in their history. In many cases it obscures interesting brick detail such as window arches. Some extensions to buildings which are now rendered could successfully be left as bare brick. Others will need to be rendered but leaving brick detail exposed.

Beneath the eaves extensions, outbuildings and replacement buildings may be expected to have some form of decorative brick corbelling, such as a dentil course, if the original or adjacent building has one.

**ROOFS**

The roofing material used in Mushroom Green is mainly clay tile. The tiles are usually laid out simply and the ridge capped with plain ridge tiles. The roofs generally have a steep pitch and this is a tradition which should be continued. The treatment of the roof verge, at the gable end of the building, should be similar to that of the original building.

Most of the dwellings have chimneys some of which have been reduced in height and lost their pots. Chimneys tend to top the gables and be completely internal. They are usually simple rectangles but some have a brick detail over a single or two courses. There are few remaining pots in the conservation area but those that exist are very straightforward.

There will be a flexible approach to the type of chimney provided especially when they are to be used for ventilation.

**WINDOWS**

There are several window types and, depending on their size and shape, include side-hung casement windows and vertically sliding sash windows. The arrangement, number and detail of the glazing bars differs between dwellings.

Windows were generally painted softwood but some were and are metal. Most are set back into the wall to create a reveal and an external sill which is finished in a variety of different ways.

Window heads should be treated either as a simple row of stretcher bricks or a curved row of headers in a single or double row in either matching red or contrasting blue brick. The position of the window on the building will also influence the choice of head style.
DOORS

There is great variation in the type of door. Four panel doors are traditional in the Victorian terrace style houses at the front and simple vertically planked doors at the back.

The treatment of the arch above a new door, the door head, should match the existing doors or windows probably using either simple stretchers or a single or double, straight or curved row of headers depending on each individual building.

![Thresholds](image)

The threshold should usually incorporate a blue brick step but the need for this will be considered in individual cases.

RAINWATER GOODS

Cast iron is the traditional material for rainwater goods: gutters and downpipes. The surface texture is always slightly uneven as a result of the casting methods used and it was painted either in a colour to match other paintwork on the house or, commonly, black.

Replacement of damaged stretches should be in matching cast iron.

Replacement or new rainwater disposal systems should be in cast iron or in some cases an aluminium equivalent will be acceptable provided it is painted appropriately.

Plastic rainwater goods are shiny and modern in shape. They should be avoided on extensions to traditional buildings in Mushroom Green.

GARDEN WALLS AND SPACES

Boundary walls are functionally important as well as giving visual interest. Garden walls should be of traditional brick, capped in blue coping bricks or using a tile below the first course to throw the water.

Spaces should be treated in a traditional manner, either as a lawn and garden, a dark gritted area or, close to the building, traditional blue brick. A herringbone pattern in particular is not traditional.

TREES AND HEDGES

Some species of trees and shrubs are more appropriate for hedge making and provide an appropriate scale at maturity.

A list of traditional native hedge species and tree varieties is provided below to help selection at the outset.

- Blackthorn
- Common Privet
- Dog Rose
- Dogwood (Cornus)
- Field Maple
- Guelder Rose (Vibernum)
- Hawthorn
- Hazel
- Holly
- Ash
- Beech
- Oak
CONSERVATORIES

Conservatories are not a traditional feature in Mushroom Green. On traditional buildings a rectangular style might be acceptable with a brick plinth with painted softwood above, supporting the glass.

Some brick or timber detail might be expected depending on the individual building.

MORTARS

Traditional mortars contain a high proportion of lime putty along with a variety of aggregates and, in some cases, no cement. Care is also required to match the colour of the mortar with the existing.

REPAIRS TO BUILDINGS IN MUSHROOM GREEN

Repair and maintenance is often the key to survival of buildings. It is important to realise that there can be a natural conflict in staying warm and dry inside without causing damage to the material of the building.

Brick breathes. It is not impermeable to rain, it gets wet and dries again on the first few millimetres of its exposed surface. Cleaning brick can damage the brick’s resilience to water penetration. Sealants are not a wise solution for old brickwork as they also affect this wet/dry process. Trapped water will find an easier route such as through the interior surface.

Repointing is often not necessary and hard mortar should never be removed with angle grinders as they always damage the arises (corners) of the brick.

Hard cement mortars must be avoided as they can result in damage to brickwork. Ask builders to use a lime based mortar that is not harder than the brick.

Buildings in Dudley with its mining history often need to be flexible so it is better for the pointing to move a little rather than for the brickwork to crack.

Rendering is not often a solution to failing brickwork. Get good advice independent of the builder who wants the work.

Do not seal clay tiles or slates onto their battens. The roof space must have some air circulation to prevent condensation being trapped in the rafters and setting off rot. Ridge vents can be inserted if insulation is being carried out.

Do not seal roof tiles or slates from the outside for the same reason. If you have a problem at a later date you may have a roof replacement to pay for instead of a repair as the sealant will not come off.

When pvc-u and other unsatisfactory wooden windows have reached the end of their serviceable life, consideration should be given to their replacement with traditional window types.

Replacement windows may be acceptable with double glazing providing they are based on a traditional style. It is strongly recommended that you discuss the type of replacement windows with a Planning Officer before approaching a joiner or manufacturer.

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This Planning Guidance Note was approved by Planning Committee on 25th July 1996, and is one of a series of Planning Guidance Notes produced by the Local Authority. Copies of other Guidance Notes can be obtained from the Planning and Leisure reception at 3 St. James’s Road, Dudley.