

RAMSGILL

Conservation Area Character Appraisal



Working for you

Approved 4 February 2009

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Conservation Area Appraisals aim to define and analyse the special interest which constitutes the character and appearance of a place. It is these qualities which warrant the designation of a Conservation Area. This Appraisal has been adopted by Harrogate Borough Council and forms an evidence base for the Local Development Framework (LDF). It is, therefore, a material consideration when determining applications for development, defending appeals or proposing works for the preservation or enhancement of the area. It can also form the basis for a subsequent Management Strategy, which will contain issues, proposals and policies for the conservation and enhancement of the area.
- 1.2 The Appraisal provides information and guidance to those wishing to carry out works in the Conservation Area whether or not they require planning approval. So, it is a useful source of information for property owners, agents, applicants and members of the public who live or work in Ramsgill.
- 1.3 The main function of the Conservation Area Appraisal is to ensure that any works in the Conservation Area have regard to the special qualities of the area and to devise a strategy to protect these qualities. The Appraisal will help us understand the impact that development proposals would have on the Conservation Area and whether these are acceptable and/or appropriate.

- 1.4 Defining the character of an area is not a straightforward exercise and it is impossible to reach a truly objective view. The statement of character and appearance in this appraisal is based on various detailed methods of analysis recommended by English Heritage. Various different qualities are looked at including: historical development, building materials, and relationships between built and open spaces. Although this Appraisal aims to be comprehensive the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.
- 1.5 Ramsgill Conservation Area was originally designated in January 1994. This Appraisal aims to describe Ramsgill as it is today and identify the special character

and distinctiveness of its setting, buildings and open spaces. Having identified those special qualities, the Appraisal will examine whether opportunities exist to protect and enhance its character.

- 1.6 By identifying what makes Ramsgill special or distinctive, it is suggested that any future change, whether to individual buildings, building groups or the village as a whole, will be based on this understanding of the past and present character of the village. In this way, we can manage future change to ensure it makes a positive contribution towards preserving or enhancing its special character.



Objectives

The principal objectives of the Appraisal are:

- to define and record the special character and interest of Ramsgill;
- to raise public awareness of the aims and objectives of the Conservation Area designation and stimulate their involvement in the protection of its character;
- to identify what is worthy of preservation to aid understanding;
- to assess the action that may be necessary to safeguard this special interest;
- to identify opportunities for enhancement.

2. Planning policy context

- 2.1 Local authorities have a duty to designate 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' as conservation areas under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The same Act also requires local planning authorities to periodically review conservation areas.
- 2.2 Government guidance on all development affecting conservation areas is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). PPG15 advises local authorities to define the elements that make the special character or appearance of conservation areas in order to provide a sound basis on which to develop local planning policies, preservation or enhancement strategies and to make development control decisions.
- 2.3 In determining planning applications for development within conservation areas and applications for conservation area consent, the Council will give considerable weight to the content of conservation area character appraisals. The consideration of proposals in the context of the description contained in these appraisals will be an important factor in deciding whether a proposal has an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area, and therefore, whether it is contrary to saved Local Plan Policy HD3, which is the key policy for the control of development in conservation areas.

The scope of Policy HD3 also covers development proposals outside conservation areas which would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.

- 2.4 Ramsgill is in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In 1994, in recognition of the quality of its landscape the Countryside Commission designated the Nidderdale AONB. Saved Policy C1 from the Harrogate District Local Plan, provides that priority will be given to the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and any development should reflect the local distinctiveness of the area.
- 2.5 The Nidderdale AONB Management Plan (2009-14) is a spatial strategy that addresses the need to manage change. The Nidderdale AONB Heritage Strategy, approved April 2009, identifies the objectives, policies and actions required for the sustainable management of heritage in the AONB.
- 2.6 Involving the community and raising public awareness is an integral part of the Appraisal process and needs to be approached in a pro-active and innovative way. Community involvement helps to bring valuable public understanding and 'ownership' to proposals for the area. A report included in the Appendix details how the local community has been involved and the contribution it has made to this Appraisal.

3. Historic development & archaeology

- 3.1 The name Ramsgill may derive from the twelfth century, meaning a “gill of valley, grove, wood, hope or valley where wild garlic grew”. These descriptions certainly relate well with the present village setting. The Byland Abbey monks had a grange here and a small chapel. The remains of St Mary’s Chapel, of medieval origin, can be seen in the Courtyard of the present Church. The monks had pasturage for 80 mares and their foals at Colthouse, south-west of the village. Ramsgill was, indeed, the principal grange of the Byland Estates having a favoured location suitable for both pastoral and arable use.



The remains of the medieval chapel.

- 3.2 The economy of Ramsgill has been based principally on agriculture throughout the centuries and the population has always been modest. Most of the cottages were built in mid-nineteenth Century to replace thatched ones. Today there are around 20 dwellings in Ramsgill.

- 3.3 The notorious Eugene Aram was born in Ramsgill in 1704. Aram was eventually hanged for the murder of Daniel Clark in Knaresborough some 13 years after the crime. The affair was well publicised, in fact, over-romanticised in prose and song by such as Sir Bulwer Lytton.
- 3.4 The village lies at the head of Gouthwaite Reservoirs, built around 100 years ago. Several grouse moors surround the Upper Nidderdale area and the management of these provides local employment, with sheep farming and dairy produce giving other income. Tourism is now helping the local economy, with the Nidderdale Way firmly established, and bird-watching on the “ings” at the head of the Reservoir a popular pastime.



Gouthwaite Reservoir in the Nidderdale Valley.



4. Location & setting

- 4.1 Ramsgill is in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is approximately 5 miles north of Pateley Bridge. The designation of the AONB, which was made in 1994, formally recognises the national importance of the landscape and the primary objective of the designation is to conserve the natural beauty of the area, which is derived from its geology, physiography, flora, fauna and historical and cultural components. Ramsgill lies on the valley floor of the River Nidd where Lul Beck and Ramsgill Beck join the river. The village lies at the head of Gouthwaite Reservoir.



- 4.2 The river Nidd bounds the village to the East and North. The hamlet of Bouthwaite is north of the village just on the other side of the river, this was a former grange of Fountains Abbey. The main road from Pateley Bridge to Lofthouse and Middlesmoor runs in a mainly northerly direction and the hills on the west side rise steeply, giving a strong feeling of enclosure when entering the village from the south. Ramsgill Beck actually bisects the village running in an east-west direction separating two areas of greens.

- 4.3 The village sits on Millstone Grit solid geology, moraines are also present. Soils are mainly brown with surface water gley Cambic Stagnohumic in areas.

5. Landscape analysis

- 5.1 The village lies in the U-shaped valley of the Nidd, which flows southeast. This part of the Nidd Valley has wooded gills and becks incising the valley sides. The flat valley bottom is narrow here resulting in the compact form of village. The valley form gives a partially enclosed feel in the village, but the valley sides widen out at Gouthwaite. The settlement of Ramsgill nestles quite unobtrusively in the valley bottom.



View towards the reservoir.

- 5.2 Above the valley sides is a vast open upland landscape of gently undulating moorland at above 300m AOD. Here the dominant vegetation is heather and cotton grass. The colour changes with the seasons and gives rise to dark hilltops which contrast with the green of the valley. The high hills are the first to be covered with snow, which changes their character particularly because the light reflected changes the quality of light in the valley, particularly to the north.
- 5.3 The wild heather moors are managed for grouse shooting and occasionally shots can be heard in the village. Few public roads provide access to the upland



View showing trees alongside the watercourse and plantations on the hills beyond.

giving a remote feel to the landscape. It is, however, an important resource for walkers who can appreciate the invigorating landscape of the moorland plateau in contrast with the enclosed green valley.

Historic Landscape Character

- 5.4 A Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) has recently been completed for the Nidderdale AONB. The HLC provides an overview of the area surrounding Ramsgill including the valley sides from the reservoir to halfway up to Lofthouse. The data has certain limitations as the following criteria have been applied:

- The historic characteristics are visible in the modern landscape;
- They have been recognised on modern Ordnance Survey mapping;
- They are larger than 1 hectare.

- 5.5 This data therefore has strong limitations, and can only be used as a guide to understanding the general surviving historic character of the area.

- 5.6 The HLC indicates that the historic landscape surrounding Ramsgill takes the character of a classic English settled valley. The valley floor and valley sides have all been enclosed into a series of fields of differing ages, shapes and sizes, leading up to open moorland on the tops of the hills on either sides of the valley. These fields can be characterised by their shape, size and known history, revealing a story that is mostly typical for this type of landscape. The dominant historic character of the landscape is post-medieval in date, with some significant mid to late-nineteenth century alterations.

- 5.7 The valley floor itself is characterised by the piecemeal enclosure fields that surround the main settlements. These are the result of historic negotiations between landowners, who have, through time, coalesced their parcels of land into larger holdings. This type of enclosure tends to result in fields with irregular boundaries and of irregular parcel size and in this instance dry-stone walls define the field boundaries. Around Ramsgill it is thought that these fields are post-medieval in date. The woodlands scattered across the valley floor and leading up the gills to the moorland are a combination of post-medieval plantation, which is more regular in size and mirrors the shapes of the fields within

which it is located, and more sinuous gill woodland, which is generally ancient semi-natural woodland.

- 5.8 Interspersed within this broad valley floor enclosure pattern are a few notable exceptions: one is an area of piecemeal enclosure to the south of Bouthwaite. In this area the fields are S-curve in form and are defined by hedges. The shape is indicative of the ploughing of strips, which results in an S-shape curve due to the turning of the plough, and which may therefore represent the enclosure of an open field. Two other exceptions are the parcels of privately planned enclosure to the north of Ramsgill, which is characterised by medium-size regular fields with straight dry stone wall boundaries, and to the west of Ramsgill, which represents the rationalisation of an area of previously more irregular piecemeal enclosure. Both of these changes were implemented between 1850 and 1899. Finally, the most visible exception to the general character of the valley floor, and the intervention which makes this story different from the average settled valley floor landscape is Gouthwaite reservoir, built between 1893 and 1901, and its associated railway (now disused).
- 5.9 Leading up the valley sides away from the settlement, the field enclosure pattern becomes much more regular in shape and comprises both small and medium-sized fields defined by dry stone walls. These fields are the result of several episodes of planned enclosure, probably dating to the later post-medieval period.
- 5.10 Reaching towards the tops of the valley sides the landscape story becomes

distinctly different for the west side and the east side. To the east the fields are the result of an uncharacteristically late phase of Parliamentary Enclosure, with the associated surveying in and laying out of entirely new fields. As a result of this phase of activity, these fields are large and regular in shape, with straight dry stone walls. Again, this activity occurred between 1850 and 1899, and in the case of the enclosure of Fountains Earth Moor can accurately be dated to 1856. To the west of the valley, the enclosure of the moorland has been of a more modest scale, intaking land into a series of discrete enclosures.

- 5.11 On the tops of the hills, unenclosed moorland provides the dominant historic landscape character. To the west, this moorland contains some indication of the area's industrial past, with possible mine shafts being identifiable on modern aerial photographs.

The village

- 5.12 The village has a well-defined and compact form at the head of Gouthwaite Reservoir, and so is generally level in formation. Other than the views out at either end along the valley, there are no long distance vistas from within Ramsgill due to the bends of the road, the trees, the setting and orientation of buildings and particularly the valley sides. The overall impression of the village is that of an inwards looking grouping of buildings, focusing on the greens. However due to the fact that few buildings are set close to or even parallel with the main road, the village has an open feel.

- 5.13 The four well-kept small, but distinct, greens act as focal points. The northern green is at the junction of a private track known as Broad Carr Road with the main road, just north of which is Green Farm on the edge of the village.
- 5.14 One of Ramsgill's most important buildings that is a focus to the village, The Yorke Arms, fronts onto two of the greens, which are separated by the private access drive to the Hotel. Each of these greens has a feature, the War Memorial to the east and the drinking fountain (or trough) to the west. This area is the most important landscape feature of the village and provides an attractive setting for the Yorke Arms.



The Yorke Arms beyond the green.



Heys Barn beyond War Memorial.



Trough and column feature in front of Yorke Arms.

- 5.15 The Village Hall opposite the public house sits on the edge of the fourth green. The combination of this green and the two across the road is very important to the spatial character of the village.
- 5.16 The capacity of the settlement to absorb new development is limited because of the restricted areas of relatively flat land within the village.

Main approaches to the village

- 5.17 The natural topography contributes to the special character of Ramsgill, however the man-made reservoir creates a distinctive approach to the village from the south. The reservoir is seen over the stone wall running alongside the road on the east, whilst the hills rise up quite sharply to the west of the road. The valley is wider south of Ramsgill and the sky reflected in the water particularly contributes to the open character of the approach to the settlement. The road bends following natural contours and hence little is seen of the village until the former vicarage is passed and St Marys Church comes into view seen against the trees along the river and the backdrop of Lofthouse moor in the distance.



Approach through Green Farm

- 5.18 The road approach from the north is very different, whilst the valley is very narrow here, the high hedges and trees along the river create a strong sense of immediate enclosure and views over are limited by the hills on either side. As the bridge is approached, the view across the meadow to Green Farm provides a very attractive rural entrance to the village.



View down valley from end of Long Row

- 5.19 The Nidderdale Way approach from the north is not as enclosed as the road because the walk is at a higher level, hence views are limited by trees, but not hedges. The entrance through the hard surfaced farm yard is a welcome sheltered approach to the village, which exist onto the north green.

Key Views

- 5.20 Keys views from the approaches are to St Mary's Church from the south and across the field to the bridge and to Green Farm from the north.
- 5.21 In the village centre due to the topography one is always aware of the eastern valley sides beyond the river. Views looking back down the valley are available from the end of Low Row and from the churchyard. These views down to the reservoir are



Dry Stone wall to foreground, field patterns on far hillside.

unfortunately marred by the overhead cables and particularly the supporting poles. Views up the valley are to be had near Green Farm.

Significant field boundaries

- 5.22 Generally fields are small in size (see section on Historic Landscape on enclosure types in existence). The dominant land use in the valley is for grazing. Field boundaries are dry stone walls generally, however hedges are a feature in the valley bottom. The field boundaries are important to the landscape setting of the village and are a valuable resource in providing physical and visual connectivity to the countryside.
- 5.23 The tall hedge along the road to Lofthouse is a particular feature of the approach to the village. Other hedges can be seen in the valley bottom, whilst the small irregular fields on the hills are bounded by dry-stone walls. The wall along the reservoir is particularly important to the approach.

Prominent woodland

- 5.24 Individual trees in the valley tend to be associated with the river and the valley bottom. There are few higher up the valley sides. There are areas of Ancient semi-natural woodland in the valley, many too small to be registered. Large conifer plantations elsewhere detract from the character of the native woodlands. Woodland is mostly found higher up the valley side and is generally confined to the northern facing slopes. Other slopes are characterised by scattered groups of vegetation rather than prominent woodland groups
- 5.25 The woodland above Bouthwaite and the treed bank called Yew Bank is significant to the setting of Ramsgill. The majority of the trees on Yew Bank are outgrown



The copper beech with tree on northern green beyond.

hawthorns, there are no yews where they would pose a danger to grazing animals, although the house owner has some planted in his garden.



Tree on green adjacent Green farmhouse

Landmark trees

- 5.26 There are few large trees within the village core, which are shown on the Landscape Analysis map. The character of the village changes with the seasons as the trees grow and shed their leaves because of



Front wall to Churchyard.



Steps over churchyard wall.

their impact on key views and landscape setting. Two substantial trees of note are north of Ramsgill beck, one, copper beech, is next to the beck and the other is located on the green in front of Green Farmhouse. Others include those on the greens in the vicinity of the village hall and Hey's Cottage.

- 5.27 The trees at either side of the path to the church door are not landmark trees, however they frame the church door and contribute to the attractive churchyard.
- 5.28 Trees along the river banks enclose the northeast part of the village and beyond that form a strong visual clue to the meandering line of the river.



Beck showing low retaining wall to north side.

Boundaries within the village

- 5.29 Generally the dwellings have well defined stone boundary walls, so expressing a clear-cut division of private and "public" spaces. Most boundary walls are dry-stone however those that differ include that to the base of Yew Bank, which contains a water feature, Yorke Arms, the majority of which is low with a trimmed hedge over, and St Mary's Church, all of which are coursed with differing coping sections. The steps over one of the church walls are a unique feature.

Landscape features

- 5.30 The River Nidd is a strong landscape feature enclosing the village to the north and east. The beck divides the village into two parts, visually more due to the trees alongside than the water. Both bridges are attractive features in the village and the bridge over the Nidd presents an important entrance to the village. That over the beck is not very prominent and as one approaches it is the sound of the water alerts one to the beck, not the



bridge balustrade wall. For most of the year the flowing water provides a soothing and constant sound in the village, whilst floodwaters have a distinctive sound of their own.

- 5.31 The four greens form the nucleus of the village and are key to the character of the village. Features on the green area before referred to in text or by photograph.



Pinfold gate and interior.



Pinfold near village hall.

The northern green is at the junction of Broad Carr Road and the main road. Whilst providing a small open green space enhanced by the tree, it does not have quite the same character as the two greens in front of the public house, which serve to provide a setting for the Yorke Arms giving it even greater prominence. The green north of the village hall is not as prominent as the others and almost appears as a continuum of the countryside setting, the visitor's eye is drawn out over the adjacent small field and towards the hillside beyond.

- 5.32 A feature of the central greens is the perimeter ring of large stones placed to discourage parking. Private parking signs are dominant on the entrance to the Yorke Arms.

- 5.34 A key historic feature is the pinfold next to the village hall. It is constructed of dry stone walling and has a narrow timber picket gate. The walls are covered with moss so it is quite disguised from many views, so the removal of the moss from the walls would enhance the feature. Also the removal of vegetation within the pinfold is needed at regular intervals to maintain its original character.

- 5.35 The village features a K6 telephone box and early post box, which is set in a stone wall. Their bright red colour provides strong contrast in this predominantly green village.

Strategic pedestrian routes

- 5.36 Ramsgill is a popular place for walkers particularly because the Nidderdale Way, a well signposted and not too rigorous a walk, runs through the village, on the road from the south past the reservoir, but deviating to a path through Green Farm yard.
- 5.37 Broad Carr Road, a narrow track leads up the hillside to the west and affords views across the valley. This track does not give access to the moor.

- 5.38 Just across the Nidd, the road east to Bouthwaite provides an alternative and attractive route back to Wath down the valley.
- 5.39 Yew Bank is a private road up to the property known as Raygill, however it affords views of Ramsgill from above and, from close to the boundary wall, over the reservoir.

Wildlife & nature conservation

- 5.40 The area is rich in biodiversity, Gouthwaite Reservoir is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The harsher cries of some of the water birds can be heard quite clearly at times above the softer chirruping of more common local species. The moorland is also a SSSI and Special Area of Conservation.

6. Village analysis

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| <p>6.1 This section examines the buildings and spaces within the conservation area in greater detail to identify the special character of the village and to describe the details and features that help define the special “sense of place” of Ramsgill, which is an unspoiled peaceful village whose character enhances the beauty of the dale.</p> | <p>6.4 The greens, which contribute so positively to the village are discussed before in Section 4. The open spaces, grass and trees provide a tranquil setting to the robust stone buildings of the village, which results in such an attractive scene.</p> | <p>Smithy and The Police House. The Police House has a forecourt in front of a low stone wall with railings and, particularly because its windows are large and wide, it does not reflect the vernacular. The dwellings north of the police house are bungalows, which do not reflect the vernacular, but are barely visible and do not impact on the streetscene.</p> |
| <p>6.2 The village is very small and unlike other conservation areas does not readily lend itself into sub-division into smaller areas of different character. There are however discreet areas of particular character, for example the farmstead, the greens and the churchyard, but all are set within this compact area of the Nidd valley, which presents the whole with its strong sense of place.</p> | <p>6.5 At the north of the village, Green Farm and Mill Farm link the village with its agricultural roots. Green farmhouse faces the northern green and is set behind a small front garden. The farm buildings behind create a yard through which runs the Nidderdale Way. From the north one approaches the village over the bridge and due to the trees along the river, the first buildings seen on this approach are those of Green Farm.</p> | <p>6.9 High Row is a formal terrace attached to one larger house, whilst Low Row is a group of attached houses forming an informal row. Other than these and the farms, the buildings of Ramsgill are set quite well away from one another allowing views across the small fields to the valley sides beyond.</p> |
| <p>6.3 The general character of the village of Ramsgill is one of a “natural-grown” village. The buildings are all set down in the valley, with the exception of Yew Tree House which is set up the hillside and to a lesser extent Thorn Hill which is at a higher level than the road. The older houses of the village face in a southerly direction and therefore do not front the main road, which runs approximately North/South. The buildings have little studied relationship to each other being arranged in groups or as individual units rather than continuous enclosure to the street.</p> | <p>6.6 The older buildings of Mill Farm are in a row parallel to the hill behind having a yard enclosed with a wall at the rear of High Row. The rear access to High Row is an intimate space because of the numerous small rear extensions and outbuildings to the houses and the enclosing farmyard wall opposite.</p> <p>6.7 The former corn mill north of the beck is quite well hidden and hence does not feature strongly from public view. The mill dam, lead and sluice have been disused for some time. It is however an important part of the history of the village.</p> <p>6.8 There are few twentieth century houses in Ramsgill. Two are prominent; The Old</p> | <p>6.10 The house at the end of High Row is one of the more polite buildings of the village. It is generous in height and has symmetrically arranged small paned vertically sash windows. The front elevation stands proud of the adjoining terrace. The terrace of four houses is the only formal terrace in Ramsgill and its architectural style is unique. Each house has a tripartite window next to a front door, which has a fanlight over. There is a small window above the door. Above the tripartite window is a generous vertical sliding sash, the head of which projects above eaves level and is surmounted by an ornate shaped gable with finial on top. The houses have southerly facing private front</p> |



High Row

gardens with stone boundary wall, which front onto a small treed area north of the back. The houses are therefore quite private and secluded.

- 6.11 In contrast Low Row is a row of houses, three are attached and two are detached houses linked by garages, the west end one being the former school house. The two at the east end are a pair of three storey houses of simple form and fenestration.



School House

ration. The row faces south and has small walled gardens fronting immediately onto the narrow road. The aspect of those at the east end is of the view down the valley.

- 6.12 Directly opposite is a converted outbuilding, the Ramsgill Studio, which is tucked behind the listed Hey's Barn. The building is two parts and whilst the west part is designed to appear agricultural in character, its timber cladding is alien to the village. The juxtaposition creates an intimate space in contrast with the central green space of the village through which it is accessed.



Coal Yard/Old Smithy

- 6.13 The green is entered from the south past a late twentieth century building on the site of the former smithy. This house, set very close to the main road, forms a visual stop to the short length of road in front of Thorn Hill. The house does not reflect the vernacular because it is over-fenestrated and particularly because of its central projecting front gable.

- 6.14 In contrast the elevation of Thorn Hill is barely visible from the road behind a high hedge despite its elevated position. Recent extensions to the northern side have changed its character, however due to the hedge this has little impact on the streetscene.

- 6.15 The Church is the first building to be seen when approaching from the south and is very prominent across the reservoir wetlands, however it is less apparent from within the village core due to high walls and trees.

- 6.16 The churchyard is a discreet small character area, whilst the whole village is peaceful and disturbed only by occasional through traffic, the churchyard is serene. The front wall and path are symmetrically arranged on the axis of the door within the tower, and trees on either side of the path emphasise the axis. Grave stones are set around, typical of a small rural church. However the hidden treasures at the rear are the romantic remains of the medieval Chapel and the view across low lying land



Green Farm building as seen from Nidderdale Way.

to the reservoir. The area just in front of the Church wall although relieved by a small bank of daffodils is unsightly and warrants enhancement.

- 6.17 From the north one approaches the village over the bridge and because of the trees along the river, the first buildings seen on this approach are those of Green Farm. The buildings do not appear to be fully utilised. They, and the yard area that is next to the road, could benefit from maintenance and some repair.



Car Parking around the greens.

- 6.18 A major problem in Ramsgill at weekends and holidays is that of car parking on the greens and private drives. There are no spaces laid out or allocated for public parking, and presently the greens are “defended” by lines of limestone rocks, which, by and large, appear to serve their purpose.

7. The form & character of buildings

Listed Buildings

7.1 There are 3 buildings in Ramsgill that are included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. However, there are a number of unlisted historic buildings, which make a *positive* contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and are of particular interest locally. These buildings have been identified during the public consultation and, as recommended in PPG15, are recorded on the concept map. There is a general presumption that buildings of local interest within the conservation area will be protected from demolition and the Borough Council will be especially vigilant when considering applications for alteration or extension.

7.2 The three listed buildings in Ramsgill are all Grade II:

- Church of St Mary the Virgin
- Remains of St Mary's Chapel
- Hey's Cottage and attached barn

7.3 The Church, dated 1843, is of ashlar with a graduated stone roof. The west tower has offset diagonal buttresses up to the bell stage, there are lancet windows on the south and north sides and at the base of the tower is the double board west door in a pointed arched surround. The nave is of three bays, all windows are lancets with hoodmoulds and the buttresses at the corner are angled with pinnacles above.



St Mary's Church

7.4 The remains on the east boundary of the churchyard are of a medieval chapel. It was part of a chapelry built by the monks of Byland Abbey. The remains are a coped gable wall built of coursed rubblestone and ashlar, and two lancet openings and a larger similar opening above.

7.5 Heys Cottage, now on maps as Hays Cottage, is of ashlar with a graduated stone roof. A date stone within a basket-arched lintel above a board door with chamfered stone surround is inscribed "RSVS 1695". The windows are double chamfered four-light mullioned windows. There is a quoined central door and slit ventilation holes to the barn.

Buildings of local interest & merit

7.6 There are a number of unlisted historic buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of

the conservation area and are of particular interest locally. These buildings have been identified during the public consultation and, as recommended in PPG15, are recorded on the concept map. (There were others that were put forward by local residents, but which do not meet the criteria for buildings of interest and merit, which are not shown on the map). There is a general presumption that buildings of local interest within the conservation area will be protected from demolition and the Borough Council will be especially vigilant when considering applications for alteration or extension.

7.7 Of the buildings identified as having particular interest are the village hall and the public house. Others include the terrace of houses known as High Row and also farm buildings are of particular interest. The village hall has apparent historic origins as illustrated by its mullioned windows. It is however and is of domestic scale having a low-key nature.



Landmark Buildings

- 7.8 There are buildings that by virtue of their size or due to their design and prominent location form landmarks, which act as strong focal points and immediately identifies one's location. These buildings may not necessarily be listed, but they all stand out in the memory. Such buildings include St Mary's Church, which can be seen from a distance, and the Yorke Arms because of its style and prominent location.
- 7.9 Whilst for similar reasons the Police House and the house on Yew Bank are prominent they are not worthy of particular protection, which would usually be ascribed to landmark buildings. The Police House does not reflect the vernacular in terms of its orientation, form, external treatment, nor its location relative to the road. The relatively new house on Yew Bank was intended to emulate an agricultural building, however due to its position high up on the bank, contrary to the norm in Ramsgill and eclectic fenestration has created a local land-mark but not one of national value.



The Police House, prominent but not reflective of the vernacular.

- 7.10 The Yorke Arms has a long frontage with three distinct sections, lower wings on either side of the taller central block. The east wing has a pair of carved, circular chimney stacks at its gable end, these looking rather alien to their host structure. The east and west wings were barns prior to conversion. The main central block dominates due to its symmetry about a centrally projecting gable, its height and steeply pitched roof, though it is only two storeys but of later date than most of Ramsgill's buildings. The hotel has a high frontage gable at its entrance, like the east wing has mullioned windows, and is typical of many hostelryes of its period.



The Yorke Arms seen across the Green.

Terraces/farm buildings

- 7.11 The majority of buildings in the village are functional rather than decorative. This is not to suggest that they are without quality and charm, having distinctive style very much based on local traditions. In architectural terms this is known as the "vernacular". The key characteristics of the local architectural style, based on the principle elements of the buildings (and not recent extensions or alterations) are:

General form

- 7.12 Most of the buildings in Ramsgill are of simple form derived from the local vernacular. Houses are generally two storey in height, with the exception of the three storey houses of Low Row. Outbuildings and agricultural building heights and sizes vary with their function. Many buildings are linked together to form rows, however there are a few detached houses. All buildings have a basic rectangular floor plan with a pitched roof, these are generally symmetrical dual pitched roofs except to small outbuildings and lean-tos that have a mono pitched roof. Chimneys dominate the skyline, set at the centre of gables or on ridge lines. Fortunately there have been few front porch extensions. The ratio of window opening to solid walling is low, the buildings thus having a robust character.

Materials

- 7.13 Stone is the dominant walling material, there are some examples of rendered elements, however its use is extremely low key. Roofs of natural slate both sandstone and Welsh slates.



Rear of Green Farmhouse.

Architectural detailing

7.14 The majority of buildings in Ramsgill are not richly decorated, yet there is a distinctive style with detailing typical of vernacular architecture. There are buildings, for example the Yorke Arms and to a lesser extent the smaller houses on High Row, which have different style referred to in the earlier section on character and hence have certain decorative features that others do not, but still retain the overall character of the vernacular.

Roof detailing

7.15 Generally those buildings with stone slates have lower pitches than those constructed with Welsh Slate. There are a number of houses that have stone tabling to the gable and kneelers at the corner where tabling meets the eaves. Otherwise gable verges are pointed. Gutters are supported on rise and fall brackets and hence deep eaves fascias or overhangs are not common in the village.



7.16 Most domestic properties have chimney stacks situated at the apex either at the gable or part way along the ridge. These in general are of medium height and of robust appearance. There are notable examples such as those on the east end of Yorke Arms.



Chimneys including those to the Yorke Arms.

7.17 An unusual feature of High Row is the small gables above the first floor windows. There is a dormer on Green Cottage, attached to the village hall, which is an uncommon feature in the conservation area, where roofs are of simple uncluttered planes.



High Row showing ornate gables to front.

External walls

7.18 Quoins (large corner stones) are a common feature though they rarely project beyond the face of the adjacent walling. Most window openings are of simple rectangular form with flush heavy stone lintels and projecting cills except on barns, which rarely have projecting cills. Full stone surrounds that incorporate jamb stones do not particular feature in the village. Door heads are as those to the windows. A feature of particular interest is the built-in feeder on the barn to Mill Farm.



Quoins and window heads.



Windows

- 7.19 Four basic traditional window types dominate vernacular building being vertically sliding sashes (of Victorian and Georgian style), mullioned, Yorkshire (horizontally) sliding sashes and casements. There are slightly more vertical sliding sashes in the village, however no window type predominates. The Yorkshire sashes and their replacement casements are not wide, this is due to the fact that stone lintels are limited in width for practical reasons and whereas in other areas window frames can support the load of external brickwork without a lintel, they cannot support the load of external stonework.
- 7.20 Mullioned windows can be seen on the village hall, the Yorke Arms and on the more recent house "Coal Yard".



Vertical sliding sash.

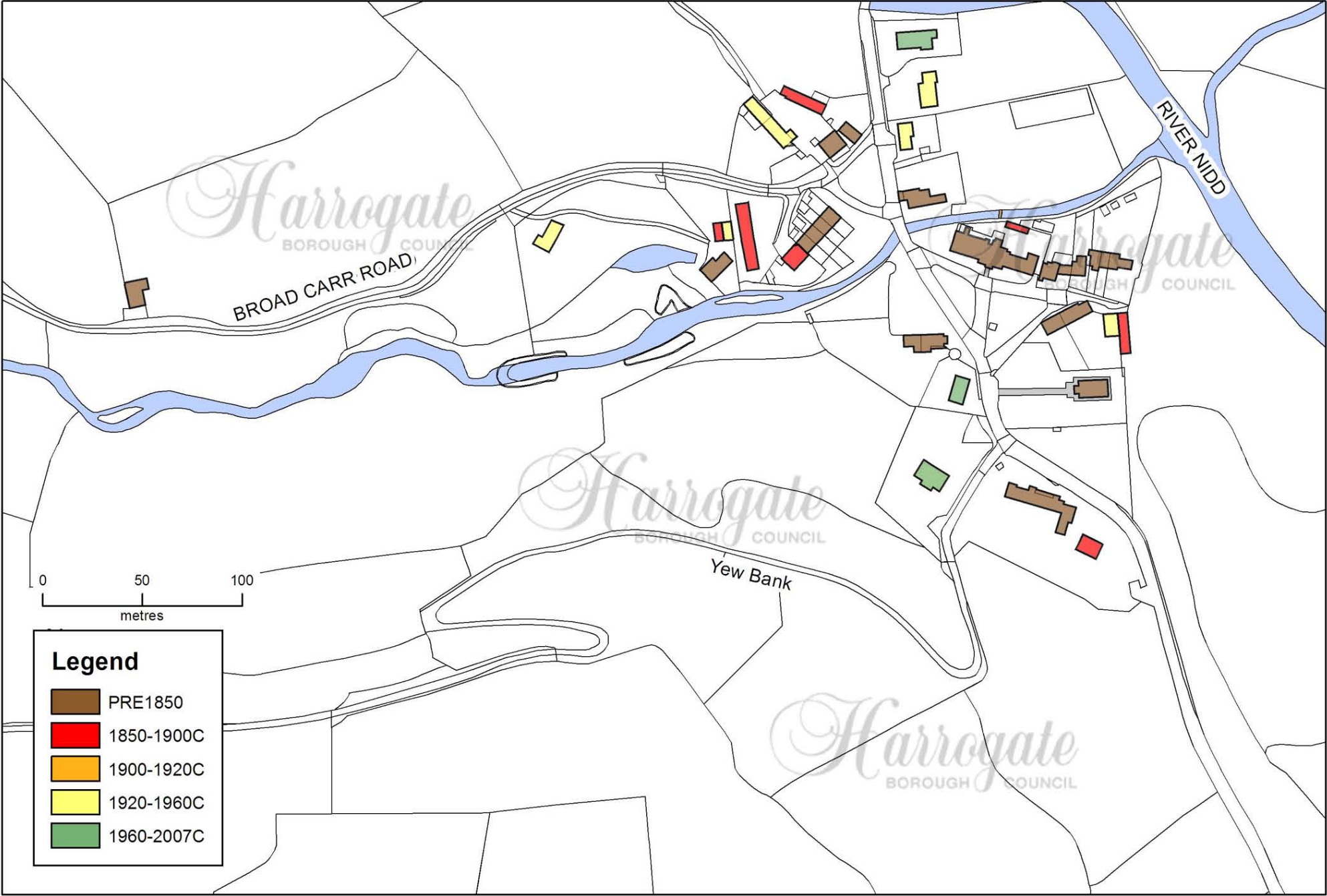
- 7.21 There are a few places where window types have been changed and often to the detriment of the overall character of the buildings concerned, especially where



Stone mullioned windows.

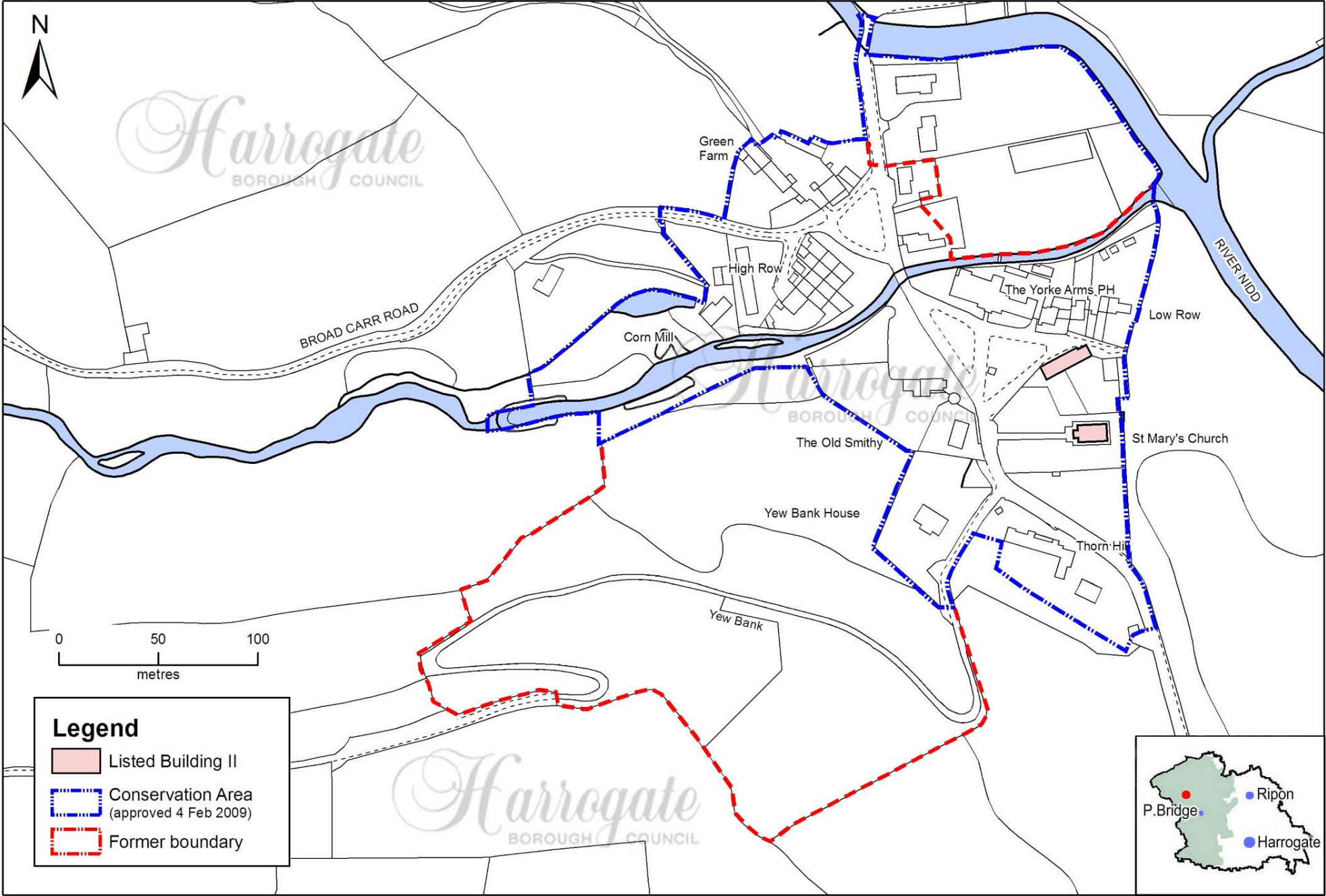
PVCu windows have been inserted with little understanding of the historic style they purport to emulate. As there are few original Yorkshire sliding sash windows left, they should be retained wherever possible. Consideration should be given to installing traditional windows and doors once more as part of a sympathetic enhancement project.

Map 1: Historical development of Ramsgill



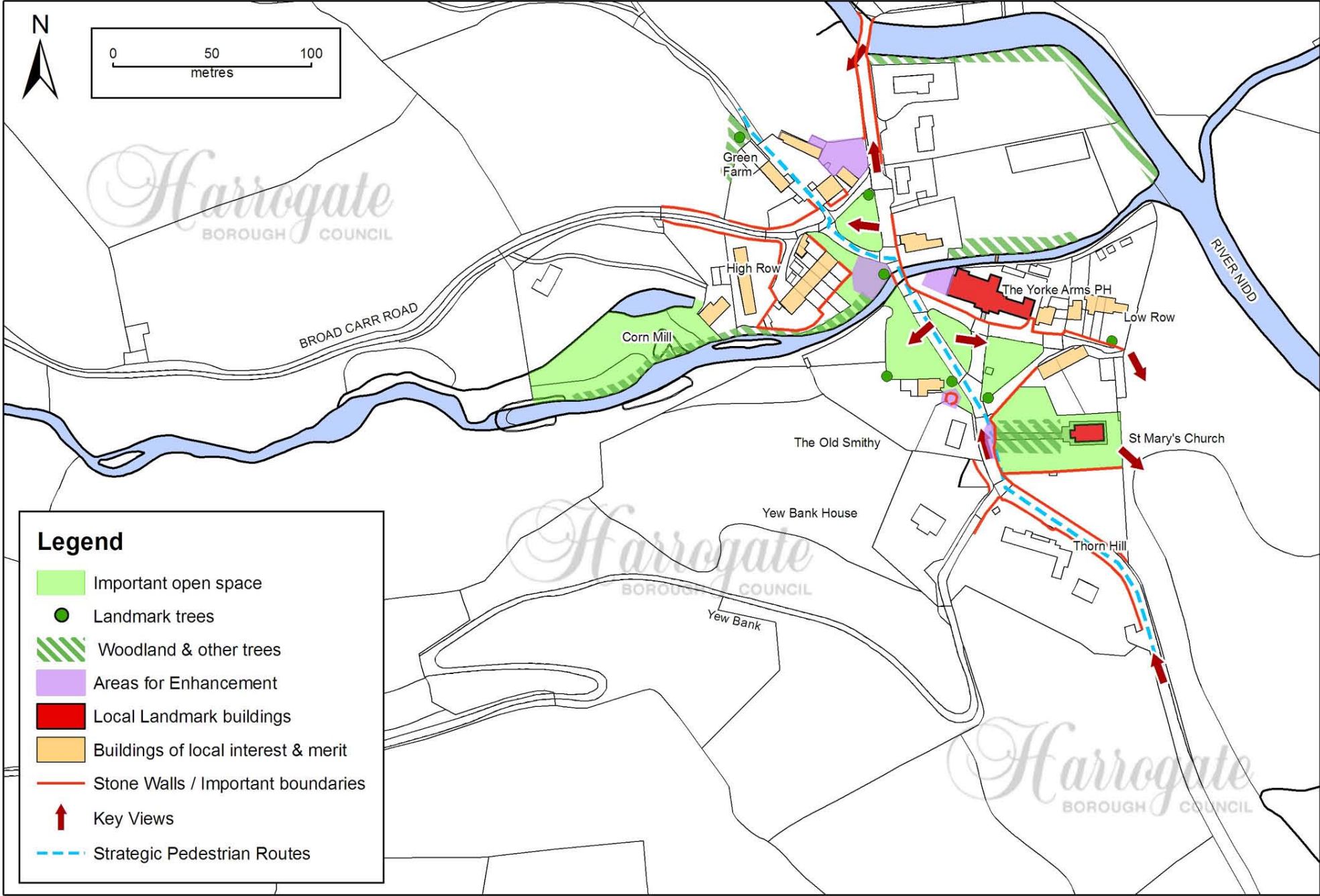
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Map 2: Ramsgill Conservation Area boundary



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Map 3: Analysis, concepts and landscape



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Appendix A

1. Management strategy

The purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy is to provide a clear and structured approach to development and alterations which impact on the Ramsgill Conservation Area. The special qualities, which “it is desirable to preserve or enhance”, have been identified in the Appraisal.

Although Ramsgill is an attractive village, it does not follow that all buildings and spaces within the Conservation Area necessarily contribute to that attractiveness. Ultimately the aim is to:

- (a) explore whether there are any buildings or areas which are at odds with or spoil the character of the Conservation Area and
- (b) to consider how the special character or distinctiveness, as defined in earlier sections of this document, might be best preserved or enhanced.

Clearly some of the ideas or suggestions will relate to buildings or land in private ownership. It is important to note that individual owners and/or the local community will not be under any obligation to make the changes or improvements suggested. However, they may be encouraged to think about suggestions made, and once the Appraisal has been adopted, the findings and recommendations will be considered by the Borough Council in response to any applications for planning permission, listed building consent, Conservation Area consent or requests for grant aid.

2. Monitoring & review

The Borough Council is required to review its Conservation Areas on a regular basis, this may involve the designation of new conservation areas, the de-designation of areas that have lost their special character, or the extension of existing conservation areas. The special character of Ramsgill has been re-evaluated as part of the process of preparing the character appraisal and this contributes to the overall review.

Part of the review process involves the maintenance of a comprehensive and up to date photographic record to establish a visual survey of buildings of local interest in the conservation area. This record was compiled with involvement of the community at the public consultation event.

3. Maintaining Quality

To maintain the recognisable quality of the Ramsgill Conservation Area and to ensure the highest quality of design, the Council will:

- From time to time review the character appraisal and management strategy, which will act as a basis for development control decisions and the preparation of design briefs;
- Require all planning applications to include appropriate written information and legible, accurate and up to date, fully annotated scale drawings;
- Keep under review a list of buildings of local interest that positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- Where appropriate prepare supplementary planning documents including design guidance and development briefs;
- Expect the historic elements that are an essential part of the special architectural character of the Conservation Area to be preserved, repaired and reinstated where appropriate.

4. Conservation Area boundary review

As part of the process of producing the appraisal, the existing Conservation Area boundary was reviewed. The outcome of the public consultation event identified adjoining areas as being of positive interest in ways that directly relate to the special character of the existing Conservation Area and also identified an area currently within the conservation area that is important to the setting of the village, but not of such special interest that it warrants its inclusion. The future inclusion of some areas and exclusion of another will be determined on the basis of whether they have special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.

The designation of Nidderdale as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty provides a greater level of protection to the immediate surroundings of the village than would otherwise be the case and the residents who attended the workshop made no requests to include Greenfield areas affecting the setting of the village. To the contrary, it was proposed that Yew Bank, which

is not open to the public, should be excluded from the Conservation Area. Yew Bank is important to the setting of the village, but is no more important than the hillside further north. The yews, from which it took its name, are long gone because they are poisonous (and the bank has been used for grazing). The majority of the trees on the site are outgrown hawthorn and although there is a fine ash tree up on the bank, there is no special landscape interest on the bank to warrant it being in the Conservation Area. If considered of sufficient quality, the ash could be protected by a preservation order. There is no important historic connection and therefore it was decided that the area of Yew Bank should be excluded from the Conservation Area.

All residents considered the bridge over the River Nidd is an important feature of the village, similarly the trees alongside the river are important to the setting of the village. Whilst the dwellings north of the Police House are of no historic or architectural merit, because of the high hedge, they do not detract from the streetscene. The Conservation Area was therefore extended to include the bridge and the trees on the river bank.

It was proposed that the Conservation Area boundary be extended to encompass Bouthwaite. Clearly the two settlements are connected and in the past the railway station was in Bouthwaite. However, due to the trees along the riverbank, the houses of Bouthwaite are isolated from the inward looking village. The two houses which can be seen from the bridge are contemporary with many of the houses of Ramsgill, but have been altered and extended, neither are of any particular architectural merit. It was concluded that the Conservation Area should not be extended over the river.

Also some residents suggested that the Conservation Area be extended to include the former vicarage, however although it is passed on the route into the Conservation Area, it is otherwise visually isolated from the village because of distance and the bends in the road. It was considered that an extension of this size to include an isolated dwelling was not justified.

5. Management of change

The special character and appearance of Ramsgill Conservation Area is vulnerable to erosion and significant harm through often well intentioned, but misguided alterations and inappropriate change.

6. Opportunities for Enhancement

Ramsgill is an attractive village, and most of the buildings are in good condition. There are, however, a number of opportunities for the enhancement of some areas as follows:

- The pinfold wall to be cleared of moss and timber gate replaced.
- The open yard to Green Farm to be repaved in cobbles and deteriorating farm buildings that have no historic interest removed. Other buildings to be repaired and maintained.
- Area containing plant and fuel for Yorke Arms to be better screened by vegetation, if it cannot be repositioned.
- Area at entrance to the Church to be repaved in traditional materials.
- Greater effort should be made to place the overhead cables, particularly those which pass across the road and interrupt the views of the reservoir from the churchyard, underground.
- Replace items of street furniture, including seats, bins and lighting, with ones of more appropriate design.
- Trees that make a particular contribution to the Conservation Area should be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (trees in conservation areas have a degree of protection).
- Grass and greens to be retained without kerbing wherever possible.
- Gabions retaining the sides of the beck should be replaced with coursed stone walls.
- Reinstate windows to their former pattern and detail where new windows of inappropriate style or material have undermined the character of historic buildings.
- Historic features, notably those associated with the Mill should be restored, such as the sluice gate.

Existing buildings

The survey of the existing buildings within Ramsgill clearly identified that a distinctive character exists, although to some extent this has been eroded

by subsequent alterations, which have not always recognised that distinctiveness. Over the past 30 years, public awareness and expectation of the planning system to protect the 'familiar and cherished scene' has increased substantially. Additionally, there now exists a greater understanding of the impact which incremental change can have upon the distinctive character of historic areas. Options to safeguard and enhance the architectural character of Ramsgill could include some or all of the following:

- Additional design guidance, which is more specific to Ramsgill, could be considered for future alterations to direct change towards materials and design detailing which complements the defined local architectural character. This would be in the form of non-statutory planning guidance. If adopted, this guidance would act as a yardstick against which proposals could be assessed and could assist both existing and future residents in understanding what is desirable.
- Formal control over future alterations of buildings could be introduced through what is known as an Article 4 Direction, which removes permitted development rights. These are legal rights to alter dwellings without the need for planning permission within strict limitations. Article 4 Directions can be designed to be specific to particular types of development relating, for example, only to roof covering or front elevations. It cannot place an embargo on change, but rather brings certain types of development within the scope of planning control. Article 4 Directions are made by the Borough Council, and in some cases, would need confirmation by the Secretary of State. Article 4 Directions could be introduced throughout the Conservation Area or just to individual buildings whose special interest is considered to be at risk from incremental change.
- Promotion of schemes that seek to restore the architectural character of altered buildings. A few buildings have been altered, which has changed their architectural form in a way which conflicts with the distinctive character of Ramsgill. The introduction of standardised twentieth century door and windows has undermined the character of many historic buildings. The use of non-traditional finishes such as staining for joinery is detrimental to the character and appearance of the village and controls or

guidance to encourage painted timber and traditional details and materials should be introduced. Non-sympathetic alterations should be resisted.

- The character and appearance of buildings in the Conservation Area is harmed by the use of inappropriate materials. For example, insensitive re-pointing or inappropriate render will harm the long-term durability of stonework.
- In all cases, the Borough Council will expect original historic features and detailing to be retained, preserved and refurbished in the appropriate manner and only replaced where it can be demonstrated that it is beyond repair. From time to time the Borough Council operates grant schemes to help maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Roof alterations & extensions

The Conservation Area contains many historic rooflines, which it is important to preserve. Fundamental changes to the roofline, insensitive alterations, poor materials, intrusive dormers, or inappropriate roof windows can all harm the character of the historic roofscape and will not be acceptable.

Gardens & front boundary treatments

Front and rear gardens make an important contribution to the streetscape and character of the area. The Borough Council will resist the loss of soft landscaping and original boundary walls. For example, the construction of new openings and the consequent breaking up of the stone walls in the village would be detrimental to the character and appearance of Conservation Area.

Telecommunications equipment, satellite & cable dishes

External telecommunications apparatus including cable runs can harm the appearance of historic buildings. The Borough Council can provide guidance on the installation of telecommunication equipment including satellite dishes.

Overhead Wires are intrusive throughout the Conservation Area and undergrounding of cables would considerably enhance the character of the village. This should be a long term aim in the interests of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Floorscape

It is unlikely that in past times street surfaces in Ramsgill were formalised with setts, paving or cobbles and it is considered that modern tarmac is a natural successor to the rammed earth and stone that would have preceded it. There are areas, particularly around the central greens, finished in stone chippings that have not stood up to the traffic and require some remedial work. It would not be inappropriate to resurface these in resin bound gravel over an improved base. Fortunately, because there has been little recent development, there is little evidence of concrete kerbings, but any should be replaced with more traditional stone kerbings in the interests of the visual amenity of the Conservation Area. Areas that would benefit from being paved or repaved with traditional materials are included in the first paragraph of this chapter (above).

Important trees

The existing mature trees throughout the Conservation Area, add to its charm and character. The loss, for example, of trees on the green or alongside the beck, would significantly erode the character. In accordance with the Council's Landscape Design Guide, the existing pattern of hedges, trees and shrubs should be preserved and repaired through managed planting and maintenance. In considering both of these areas, guidance should be geared towards tree/shrub planting and management methods that improve wildlife habitats.

Outdoor advertisements & street furniture

The design and appearance of street advertisements in the village adds to street clutter. The street furniture is in general of inappropriate design and should be replaced with those of traditional rural design in order to visually enhance the character and appearance of the area.

New Development

A key consideration is the impact that future development proposals (whether in the form of new buildings or through the extension of existing buildings) might have on the distinctive form and character of the Conservation Area.

The Council will encourage new development that complements the establish grain or settlement pattern, whilst representing the time in which it is built and the culture it accommodates. New buildings will only be permitted where they respect, rather than compete with the historic skyline, respect landform and landscape pattern and are accompanied by a comprehensive landscape scheme that is integral to the design. New development must be of a suitable quality of design and execution and should relate to its context and respect the established values identified in the appraisal. New development should respect and not impact on the pattern of existing spaces between buildings.

A further key consideration for new development is the appropriateness of the overall mass or volume of the building and its scale. A new building should be in harmony with, or complementary to, its neighbours. It is important that the materials generally match those that are historically dominant in the area. Within the above criteria, new development should aim to achieve creative design solutions, whether contemporary or traditional in style.

Employment, commercial activity & schools

Commercial activity can provide a focus for the community and contribute to the character of the village as a working village, rather than a dormitory town. Over the years the school and a couple of the farms of the village have closed down or ceased and the function of these buildings have subsequently been turned into homes. Ramsgill is not a quiet dormitory village like some others on the District because of the impact of tourism. Nidderdale is a walkers' paradise and it is rare to see the village empty of walkers and tourists. Whilst this provides activity, it does come at a price and the parking of visitor's cars in the village is often a nuisance to local

residents, is visually unattractive and damaging to the verges. Ramsgill Studio and particularly The Yorke Arms attracts visitors to the village. Efforts should be made to encourage and support businesses and to protect and enhance existing commercial activity and local services

Neutral buildings & spaces

Neutral elements or buildings may have no special historic or architectural quality in their own right, but nonetheless provide a setting for listed buildings and unlisted building of special character or interest. This backcloth is important and needs careful management as a setting for the special elements.

7. Landscape projects

These project area guidelines have been developed in recognition of the landscape sensitivities and pressures, which exist within and around the Conservation Area:

The landscape provides both the visual and historic setting for Ramsgill and its conservation is therefore of importance. This type of agricultural landscape is vulnerable to incremental change caused by field boundary loss and modification of field boundaries should be discouraged.

The replanting and repair of hedge boundaries is important to the character at the edge of the village,

Examine ways of improving the condition of the footpath network in the area and maintain footpaths appropriately. Any new stiles and gateways should be constructed to be sensitive to the existing landscape features to retain the local characteristics continuity of the vernacular in the these landscape structures and footpath surfaces should also be kept in a natural state, but improved drainage to minimise erosion and flooding in wet conditions in keeping with the historical considered surfaces of the footpath network around the village and improving linkages across the landscape. The condition of the existing footpath network in the area should be investigated and maintained.

Checklist

In managing future change in the Conservation Area, the following will be important:

- Development should not impinge on the form and character of Ramsgill.
- The repair and reuse of older buildings should be encouraged in the first instance rather than redevelopment
- Buildings should be constructed of materials that match local traditional materials.
- In general new buildings should follow the established tradition, which is that they are set at the lower levels not on the hillside and should have a southerly aspect.
- Design should respect the distinctive local architectural style both in terms of overall form and detailed design as appropriate to the context.
- New development should not adversely impact on the historic skyline, respecting important features such as the church tower.
- Retain important gaps between buildings to ensure glimpses of trees and views are maintained.
- Development should not impact upon tree cover.
- Positive management of the ageing stock of mature trees.
- Repair and retention of boundary walling
- Maintain the softness of roadside verges by avoiding the introduction of kerbs where none existed historically.

Appendix B

Public Consultation

The Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the requirements for public consultation. To meet these requirements, and to inform a review of the Ramsgill Conservation Area, a public consultation event was held on the Tuesday 5 June 2007 at the Village Hall. This consultation took the format of an evening public meeting and included a walkabout and a workshop session. Prior to the event all residents of the village were notified via a leaflet and the Parish, District Councillor and the County Heritage Champion, who was chair of the (Nidderdale AONB) Joint Advisory Committee were invited to attend.

The format of the workshop included a short presentation on why the Conservation Area is being reviewed, the purpose of the Appraisal and Management Plans and a brief résumé on the changes that have happened since the original designation.

The main activity was a walkabout, which involved dividing into groups walking around part of the Conservation Area. The groups were encouraged to make notes and take photographs to identify what makes Ramsgill special to them. On returning to the Village Hall, the workshop session enabled the groups to share the information gathered on the walkabout by annotating large maps of the village with text, symbols and photographs. The maps then facilitated a feedback session, mainly focusing on identifying potential alterations to the boundary and areas within the Conservation Area in need of enhancement.

The outcome of the consultation event and the information gathered directly contributed to producing this Appraisal.

Key issues raised at the event included:

- The preservation of important views;
- Identifying buildings of local interest;
- Suggestions for changes to the extent of the Conservation Area;
- The retention of important boundary walls;

- The retention and management of trees;
- The protection of verges;
- Future development should not be detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area;
- Historical open spaces should be retained in the Conservation Area;
- Street furniture should be appropriate to the rural character of the Conservation Area;
- The problems caused by visitor car parking.

Every effort has been made to take into account and give due consideration to the views of the local residents and to represent those views in this Appraisal document.

Local involvement is an essential aspect of the consultation process and local residents were encouraged to comment on the draft document during the consultation period from 25 April - 6 June 2008. Further, minimal, amendments to the text were made following this consultation and the Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted by Harrogate Borough Council on 4 February 2009.



Appendix C

Further reading

English Nature: <http://www.english-nature.org.uk>

Jennings (1967) History of Nidderdale, Advertiser Price

Mrs Irene Crabtree's notes on Ramsgill, which are held in the museum at Pateley Bridge.

NYCC - Historic Landscape Characterisation