

# WATH (Nidderdale)

## Conservation Area Character Appraisal



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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 was approved by the Cabinet member for Planning, Transport and Economic Development on 30 November 2011 and forms an “evidence base” for the Local Development Framework (LDF). Consequently, it is a material consideration when determining applications for development, considering planning appeals or proposing works for the preservation or enhancement of the area. It also forms the basis for a subsequent management strategy, which will contain 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 Wath (Nidderdale).
- 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 The assessment of the area's special architectural or historic interest is based on a careful and objective analysis of the area, using a method of analysis recommended by English Heritage. Various qualities are looked at including: historical development, building materials, and relationships between buildings and open spaces. Appraisals aim to be comprehensive but the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.
- 1.5 Wath (Nidderdale) Conservation Area was originally designated on 1 September 1994 and was amended on 30 November 2011. This Appraisal aims to describe Wath 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 Wath 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 the present character of the settlement. 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 the settlement;
- to raise public awareness of the aims and objectives of Conservation Area designation and to stimulate 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; and
- to identify opportunities for enhancement.

## 2 Planning policy framework

- 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 periodically to review conservation areas.
- 2.2 Government guidance on all development affecting conservation areas is set out in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5) and the accompanying PPS5 Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide. The Practice Guide advises local authorities to compile conservation area character appraisals as a means of gaining a better understanding of the significance of their Conservation Areas. PPS5 advises that these character appraisals should in turn be consulted in determining planning applications which affect conservation areas or their setting.
- 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 affect on the character and appearance of a 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 a conservation area which would affect its setting or views into or out of the conservation area.
- 2.4 Wath 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 was involved and the contribution it has made to this Appraisal.

### 3 Historic development and archaeology

- 3.1 The name “Wath” probably derives from the Scandinavian meaning “ford”, and it is likely that this refers to the crossing over the Nidd at the site of the present bridge. There was a bridge here by the sixteenth century, although the present structure is reputedly of early nineteenth century origin.



Wath Bridge (or ‘new’ bridge) altered in the nineteenth century.

- 3.2 The settlement grew up at the boundary between two manorial estates - the Liberty of Ripon and the Honour of Kirkby Malzeard. This division remains today, with Dauber Gill forming the parish boundary between Fountains Earth and High and Low Bishopside parishes to the south.
- 3.3 Much of Nidderdale was recorded as “waste” in the Domesday Book (1086), and from the 1130s, the Cistercian monks of Fountains Abbey were actively converting the waste land to form granges, agrarian estates. In upper Nidderdale, Bouthwaite Grange and Lofthouse Lodge controlled

huge areas of grazing land on Dallow Moor and Fountains Earth Moor. To the south lay the grange at Dacre and the monastic lodges at Brimham, Bewerley and Heyshaw. These holdings formed a strategic chain of stock rearing farms linking Fountains Abbey with its outlying estates in Nidderdale.

- 3.4 After the Dissolution of the Monasteries (from 1536), the former monastic grange keepers and lessees were often able to acquire the freeholds of these lands, and thus establish yeoman dynasties lasting several centuries. This resulted in the construction of scattered farmsteads and hamlets in upper Nidderdale. There is evidence from standing buildings of large scale rebuilding of stone houses in Nidderdale from the seventeenth century into the eighteenth century.
- 3.4 Settlement in the valley bottom in the former Archbishop’s Liberty of Ripon is characterised by small hamlets and farmsteads or clusters of buildings along roadsides or on areas of former moorland enclosed during the medieval period or later, as at Pie Gill Green, to the south of Wath. This pattern of piecemeal enclosure or “assarting” began well before the Dissolution, by small farmers who were customary tenants of the Archbishop. Wath itself, with its separate clusters of houses and barns appears to follow this pattern of development. There are records of enclosure by agreement in Bishopside in the seventeenth century.



Fields enclosed by walls east of Wath.

- 3.5 From the 1770s, Nidderdale was a major centre of flax spinning, and a flax mill, the New Bridge Mill, operated at Wath until around 1840. The present mill building was used as a corn mill, fed by the large pond to the north east. It was rebuilt in 1880, but no longer operates. There are records of a corn mill at Wath around 1500.
- 3.6 Wath saw little development in the nineteenth century; the tiny and unusual Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was built in 1859, and the large barn opposite is inscribed EB 1861. By 1910, Sigsworth Grange had been extended and renamed “The Sportsman’s Arms” (PH).
- 3.7 The major change to the landscape of upper Nidderdale from the late nineteenth century was the building of the reservoirs, and the construction of the Nidd Valley



Houses in Back Lane.

Light Railway by Bradford Corporation between 1904 and 1908. A station with a goods shed and sidings was built at Wath, but passenger services ended in 1929, with the track being removed in 1936. The station building is now a dwelling known as Rhylstone House.

## 4 Location and landscape setting

- 4.1 Wath lies about one and a half miles north of Pateley Bridge, and approximately half a mile south of the dam that impounds Gouthwaite Reservoir. It lies on the valley floor just to the east of the River Nidd and the road from Pateley Bridge to Middlesmoor. The road passing through Wath to Pateley Bridge, via Pie Hill Green to the east and steeper side of the valley, is very narrow in parts and hence the village has little through traffic.
- 4.2 To the east, High Bishopside rises quite sharply towards the moors, the slopes being clothed by the woodlands of Spring Wood and Birkenhaw Wood which wrap around the village. These woodlands give way to the open moorland tops, while to the west of the village, the valley rises sharply to the moorland plateau, creating a strong sense of enclosure.
- 4.3 Dauber Gill flows through these woods to bisect Wath into two distinct parts, separated by the beck and open fields. Within the two halves of Wath three or four separate clusters of buildings can be defined, this being a characteristic feature of the area. Trees alongside Dauber Gill, the River Nidd and part of the old railway track bed restrict views south and west out of the village, but from the eastern edge of Wath, the steep western side of the river valley can be seen.
- 4.4 The underlying solid geology is formed by millstone grit sandstones, with overlying glacial moraines creating undulating landforms in the valley bottom. The soils are mainly brown soils with surface water gley Cambic Stagnohumic soils in places.



Valley bottom setting.



## 5. Landscape character

- 5.1 This chapter identifies and describes the main elements which contribute towards the distinctive landscape character in and around Wath. The Conservation Area does not have a single historic core, but comprises a number of clusters of buildings within a loosely defined settlement.
- 5.2 A Historic Landscape Characterisation Study (HLC) has been undertaken for the Nidderdale AONB. This provides an overview of the area, but is limited in scope by a number of criteria:
- It uses those historic characteristics that are visible in the modern landscape;
  - It is based on features shown on modern OS maps;
  - It ignores small features below one hectare in area.
- 5.3 The glaciated 'U' shaped upper Nidd valley rises up to a vast open upland landscape of gently undulating moorland at above 300 metres above ordnance datum (AOD). Here the dominant vegetation comprises heather and cotton grass. The vegetation colour changes with the seasons, giving rise to dark hill tops which contrast with the green of the valley.
- 5.4 The upper Nidd valley bottom was covered in a pattern of small irregularly shaped fields, enclosed over a long period in a piecemeal fashion. The earliest Ordnance Survey large scale map of the area, dating



The River Nidd from Wath bridge.

from the 1850s, shows this pattern of small irregular fields, with intakes of higher ground to the east of Wath enclosed by ring walls and subdivided into smaller fields, with isolated intakes further into the moor as at Tub Houses and Bartles.

- 5.5 Above the valley floor, this pattern gives way to a more geometric landscape of rectangular fields, enclosed from the



View along the former railway route.

nineteenth century, with open moorland on the upper slopes of the valley. These later enclosures have created a landscape of regular field boundaries and straight roads, as on the former moorland fringe east of Pie Gill Green, south of Wath. The wild heather moors are managed for grouse shooting and few public roads provide access to the upland, giving a remote feel to the landscape.

- 5.6 The building of Gouthwaite Reservoir and the light railway between 1893 and 1908 saw extensive reorganisation of fields in the valley bottom, particularly on the west side of the valley, but also south of Wath near to the river and railway. These altered stone boundary walls were built from gritstone rubble, presumably reusing the material from the earlier walls.

### The village

- 5.7 The most notable feature of the village layout is that of its open and dispersed nature, with buildings fronting the road or linked to it by sandstone walls. The road through the village links together four groups of buildings: the Sportsman's Arms and Mill Cottages; Sigsworth Lodge; the houses clustered in Back Lane; and Chapel Terrace. This pattern of small clusters of buildings along roadsides is typical of the settlement pattern within the Liberty of Ripon and within the Forest of Knaresborough to the south.





Looking south from Back Lane towards Chapel Terrace with Broomfield in the distance.

- 5.8 The other notable feature of Wath is the almost total absence of modern building, apart from the corrugated steel Dutch barn near Chapel Terrace. The Sportsman's Arms and the former Station House (Rhyllstone House) predate the First World War, and apart from some limited alteration and extension to existing buildings, there has been no modern development.

### Main approaches to the village

- 5.9 The main road from Pateley Bridge to upper Nidderdale along the west bank of the River Nidd bypasses the village



The approach from Wath Bridge.

entirely, but gives access to the village via Wath Bridge, which provides a gateway to the village. The single span hump-backed bridge, edged with stone parapets topped by iron railings forms an awkward junction with the village street, which runs eastwards in a straight line past The Sportsman's Arms towards Mill Cottages, before bending towards Sigsworth Lodge.

- 5.9 The other approach to the village from Pateley Bridge is along Wath Road, running along the east side of the valley past Silver Hill and dropping down past Pie Hill Green to Sigsworth Lodge.

### Key views

- 5.10 Within the village, a key view is to be had eastwards from Wath Bridge past clumps of trees and between stone walls bounding the road, with Mill Cottages closing the view. A good view of the mill and adjacent buildings can be had from Wath Road, looking north west across the fields.



Looking south along Wath Road with Chapel Terrace and Broomfield.

- 5.11 Views south along Wath Road are closed by the groups of buildings at Back Lane and Chapel Terrace, with rising ground and clumps of trees framing more distant views southwards.

- 5.12 Views westwards beyond the village are framed by the steep slopes up onto the open moors above Heathfield, while views eastwards are closed by dense woodland to the northeast and scattered trees on the ground to the east, rising towards the moors at High Bishopside.

### Significant field boundaries



Houses in Back Lane with enclosed fields beyond.

- 5.13 The stone boundary walls along the edges of Wath Road and the road to the bridge are significant features in the Conservation Area. The group of small fields enclosed by stone walls east of Wath Road and south of Back Lane, which straddle the Conservation Area boundary, are historically significant, being early enclosures of the valley bottom lands which have survived in a largely unaltered form.

- 5.14 West of Wath Road, the building of the reservoirs and the railway lead to the large scale alteration of the field pattern each side of the River Nidd, with irregularly shaped fields giving way to a more geometric pattern of rectangular fields, with stone walled boundaries.

- 5.15 Within the village, the enclosed paddock and garden area between Woodsman's Cottage and Chapel Terrace are worthy of note. These areas are enclosed by stone rubble walls, the wall dividing the garden area from the paddock being of split rubble stone laid in narrow courses, compared to the squarer blocks and rounded cobbles used in other field walls.



Walled garden area at Back Lane.

- 5.16 The approaches to Wath Bridge are flanked by iron railings on dwarf walls, and these may be nineteenth century improvements to the entrance to the village. The front gardens to Mill Cottages are bounded by tall stone walls, with swept up end copings, probably another nineteenth century improvement.

### Prominent woodland

- 5.17 The banks of the River Nidd and Dauber Gill are lined with fairly continuous tree

cover, with other trees fringing the mill pond. Roadside trees frame the view eastwards from the bridge towards Mill Cottages and from Sigsworth Lodge southwards towards Wath Methodist Chapel. These trees are the surviving fragment of an avenue of trees which has largely disappeared.



Woodland east of Wath.

- 5.18 Extensive areas of mixed woodland clothe the slopes to the east of the village, giving way to scattered trees within the walled fields to the south. The woodlands provide an attractive backdrop to the buildings of the village.

### Landmark trees

- 5.19 There are a small number of prominent field trees including an oak tree east of Rhylstone House and a large sycamore west of Wath Road. The mixed group of trees at the entrance to The Sportsman's Arms including scots pine and larch - a species favoured by nineteenth century planters - is worthy of note, as is the fragmented remains of an avenue of horse chestnut trees south of Sigsworth Lodge.

### Landscape features

- 5.20 The River Nidd clips the western edge of the Conservation Area, and is the defining feature of the dale. However, the largest body of water within the Conservation Area is the mill pond, held back behind a grassed embankment and fringed by trees to the rear of the mill. Elevated above the road as it is, and without any public access, the mill pond is hidden from view and makes little visible impact on the Conservation Area.

### Strategic footpaths

- 5.21 The Nidderdale Way runs north-south along the east side of the River Nidd, just clipping the Conservation Area at Wath Bridge. This is the major recreational footpath in the area, but a bridleway from Sigsworth Lodge via Spring Wood to Gouthwaite Reservoir links with the Nidderdale Way and provides a circular route back to Wath.
- 5.22 There is a field path from Wath Bridge south of Dauber Beck to Back Lane, although Back Lane is gated beyond Keeper's Cottage, and offers no public access to the moors beyond.

### Wildlife and nature conservation

- 5.23 While there are no statutory sites of nature conservation interest within the Conservation Area, the river and the nearby woodlands will offer much of interest. The Gouthwaite Reservoir Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is an important site for waterbirds, while the moorlands to the north are an SSSI and a Special Area of Conservation.



## 6. Village analysis

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 Wath, an unspoiled village in upper Nidderdale.

6.2 The village is very small and unlike other conservation areas does not readily lend itself to subdivision into small areas of different character. However, there are discrete areas of particular character around the former corn mill and at Back Lane and Chapel Terrace which, together, form the centre of this rather dispersed village.



Barn and Chapel Terrace looking south from Back Lane.

6.3 The buildings at the northwest end of the Conservation Area form a late nineteenth or early twentieth century enclave, comprising the former station house (Rhyllstone House), the much extended Sportsman's Arms and the rebuilt cornmill and attached row of cottages. The nineteenth century character is reinforced by the bridge with



Nineteenth century enclave around the mill.

its iron railings to the parapets and railings lining the approach road to the east for a short distance.

6.4 Both the Sportsman's Arms and the mill are set back from the road, with the former concealed to some extent by the tree cover within its grounds and edging the roadside, while the mill is partly hidden behind the pub.



Sigsworth Cottage seen through trees from the south.

6.5 To the east, where Wath Road crosses Dauber Gill, is another small group of roadside houses, comprising the late nineteenth century Sigsworth Lodge and the seventeenth century Sigsworth Cottage. These houses are built tight up to the edge of the road with narrow planted verges fronting them. From these buildings, a view southwards across the field to the backs of the houses in Back Lane can be had.

6.6 The houses along Back Lane form a distinct group, and with their sash windows and rustic timber porches appear to have a Victorian “Picturesque Cottage” character. However, the rear parts of these houses appear to be older, particularly Woodman's Cottage with its stone mullioned rear windows, described in section 7.



Woodman's Cottage, Wath Farm and Keeper's Cottage, Back Lane.

6.7 These houses create a terrace like effect as they are linked by stone outbuildings and with detached outbuildings and outbuildings strung out along the north side of Back Lane in a broken ribbon. The three quite large houses have narrow



- strips of gardens to the front, edged with large stone slabs with rounded top edges.
- 6.8 Contained within the angle formed by Wath Road and Back Lane, immediately south of Woodman's Cottage is a triangular shaped walled enclosure, sub-divided by a later wall of split rubble stones laid in courses enclosing a garden area to the north and a grass paddock to the south.
- 6.9 Away to the southeast of Back Lane near Wath Road is Chapel Terrace, a group of buildings offset at an angle to Wath Road. Although named as a terrace, this group of buildings has been extended over a period of time, with the tiny Wesleyan Chapel dated 1859 being squeezed onto an irregularly shaped plot at the lane end, hard against the roadside.



Chapel Terrace from the north.



Contrasting farm buildings - barn dated 1861 behind a more modern Dutch barn.

- 6.10 At the other end of the group, a large barn with a first floor hay loft and rear catslide roof stands next to No. 3, a double fronted house which early maps show to have been subdivided into two properties. The remainder of the group comprises two nineteenth century houses, No. 2 jammed up between its larger neighbours, and both being set back a couple of metres behind narrow front gardens.
- 6.11 The two groups of buildings in Back Lane and at Chapel Terrace facing each other across a walled paddock and garden are the nearest thing to a historic core in Wath.
- 6.12 Opposite Chapel Terrace close to the roadside are a couple of farm buildings, one being a black painted corrugated steel Dutch barn of a type once widely found, but becoming less common with changes in farming practice. Behind the Dutch barn is a much altered stone barn with a stone slate roof and finely shaped kneelers, and with an inscribed stone 'EB 1861' in the front elevation. This building has a blocked cart entrance towards each gable, and has been greatly altered with the insertion of windows and ridgetop ventilator cowls, but even in its altered state, stands as a reminder of the brief period of "High Farming" in the mid nineteenth century.

## 7. The form and character of buildings

- 7.1 There are only two buildings in Wath included on the statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest as follows:

**Wath Bridge** **Grade II**

**Barn to Sigsworth Lodge** **Grade II**

- 7.2 However, there are also 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 are recorded on the Concept Map in this Appraisal. 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 their alteration or extension.

- 7.3 **Wath Bridge** is described in the listed buildings list as “early 19th century”. However, early Ordnance Survey maps describe the bridge variously as “packhorse bridge” or “New Bridge”. The New Bridge at Wath is recorded from the 16th century and the existing bridge in its present form, with its iron railings to the parapets which continue eastwards along the road for a short distance, may be a nineteenth century alteration to an older bridge rather than a new bridge of nineteenth century date.

- 7.4 There is evidence under the arch of widening, and the section of road from the bridge as far as the corn mill may be a nineteenth century improvement as well, as the road makes an awkward connection with the bridge. The early maps show a footpath running from the bridge south of Dauber Beck to Back Lane, and the straight road from the bridge may have replaced this route which survives as a public footpath.



Sigsworth Cottage.

- 7.5 **The Barn to Sigsworth Lodge** is described as an outbuilding or barn in the listed buildings list, but it has been returned to domestic use in recent years, and is now named Sigsworth Cottage. It is a symmetrically fronted house of seventeenth century date, built of coursed rubble with flush squared punch tooled quoins.

- 7.6 The central entrance door is set under a heavy stone lintel, with chamfering to lintel and jambs. The door is flanked by four-light double chamfered mullioned windows, with similar three light mullioned windows above. Two single light segmental headed chamfered windows flank the doorway at first floor level. At the west end is an attached barn with an external stone staircase.

- 7.7 The house belongs to a type known as the lobby entry house, where the main doorway opens into a lobby against the central chimney stack, with access to a heated room to the left, and to the right into a parlour with a gable end fire. The stair to the upper floor would originally have run across the back of the chimneystack.

- 7.8 Nidderdale has a large number of surviving two and three “cell” (room) houses, many



The Sportsman's Arms.



The Corn Mill, rebuilt 1880.

of this lobby entry type, and Sigsworth Cottage is a good example of this locally significant type of house.

- 7.9 A small number of unlisted buildings in Wath are worthy of special mention. One of the largest and most visible is The Sportsman's Arms. The pub comprises three distinct but linked blocks, the lower (possibly oldest) central section being flanked by higher buildings. The eastern block is of late Victorian appearance, with timbered and barge boarded roof dormers flanking a central entrance.



Rhylstone House, the former Station building.

- 7.10 Almost opposite on the south side of the road is Rhylstone House, the former Wath Station House, dating from 1904. This house, built of coursed sandstone, is the most recently built house in the village, but in materials and general form, it keeps to the local vernacular style.

- 7.11 Behind The Sportsman's Arms is the disused corn mill, the largest building in Wath, of two storeys plus an attic and five bays long. The steeply pitched Welsh slate roof has a small ridgetop cupola and a bellcote with bell on the gable end facing the road. A cast iron beam above the gable end doorway carries the inscription "Rebuilt 1880". Attached to the mill is a lower two storey wing with an external stair, and attached to this building is a terrace of cottages, Mill Cottages.



Mill Cottages.

- 7.12 At first glance, Mill Cottages appears to be a uniform terrace, but No. 2 towards the end of the row is much larger than the other cottages, and has prominent quoin stones indicating the size of this house which was presumably built as a freestanding house and is now part of



Woodman's Cottage.

a larger terrace. Most of the terrace is bounded along the roadside by a high stone wall, swept up at each end and finished with a half round stone coping.

- 7.13 Woodman's Cottage, next to Wath Farm, with its ground floor small paned sash windows and rustic timber porch appears to be of eighteenth or early nineteenth century date. However, the rear elevation retains two three light double chamfered mullioned windows, similar to those at Sigsworth Cottage, possibly dating to the seventeenth century. The positions of the chimney stacks suggests that, like Sigsworth Cottage, this house was originally a lobby entry house of the type associated with Nidderdale.

## General form

- 7.14 There is a strong unity of form, massing and colour in Wath's buildings which, together with the sandstone field walls, help to integrate them into the local landscape in an attractive manner.



- 7.15 The buildings are simple in form, generally of two storeys and mostly terraced, with walls of sandstone and roofs of either stone slate or purple slate. Roofs have gable ends, sometimes with stone verge tabling, and chimney stacks are prominent at gables or on ridge lines.
- 7.16 Window openings are small in comparison with larger areas of walling, giving the buildings a robust character. The windows are mostly vertical sliding sashes, often set within flush stone architraves and lintels, with slightly projecting sills. Windows are mostly painted the same off-white throughout the village and the doors and rainwater goods of the estate buildings (including the mill) are painted pink, giving a unity between different groups of buildings.

## Materials

- 7.17 Stone is the dominant material for buildings and boundary walls. The main type of stone is a grey or brown sandstone, either roughly dressed to form rectangular blocks or more accurately squared blocks with pecked tooling. A mixture of sandstone rubble and rounded small boulders with roughly dressed stones set on end to form copings is used for boundary walls.
- 7.18 Many buildings feature substantial smooth sawn stone lintels and in some cases, sandstone door jambs. Roofs are covered in stone slates or in Welsh slate, other types of roofing material being absent.



Details to rear of Woodman's Cottage, including mullioned windows.

## Architectural detailing

- 7.19 The majority of buildings in Wath are not richly decorated, and are of simple form and design. However, Sigsworth Cottage displays seventeenth century mullioned windows and doorway in a symmetrical manner to the front elevation, showing a degree of architectural sophistication. Likewise, the rear elevation of Woodman's Cottage is of similar character, with fine quality stone mullioned windows.
- 7.20 A few buildings show evidence of the Victorian taste for picturesque, "Old English" or rustic adornment, as with the rustic timber porches used at Woodman's and Keeper's Cottages, and the timber framing and bargeboards applied to the roof dormers at The Sportsman's Arms. The glazed timber loggia on the western elevation of Sigsworth Lodge is noteworthy.
- 7.21 The only industrial building in Wath is the mill, which retains a bellcote with a bell on the gable end facing the road, and a neat louvred timber cupola on the roof ridge.

## Roof detailing

- 7.22 Generally those buildings using stone slates have roofs with a shallower pitch than those clad in Welsh slate. A number of houses have stone tabling to the gable ends, usually finished with stone kneelers of various design.
- 7.23 Most houses have ridge top or gable end chimneys; those with both a ridge chimney and a gable end chimney at one end are examples of the lobby entry house, characteristic of Nidderdale. Otherwise, roofs are plain double pitched, and dormers and roof lights are largely absent.

## External walls

- 7.24 Quoins (large corner stones) are a characteristic feature of many older houses. These are always laid flush to the walling using well dressed squared blocks framing walls of more roughly dressed stone, as at Sigsworth Cottage.



Detail of mullioned window and doorway at Sigsworth Cottage.

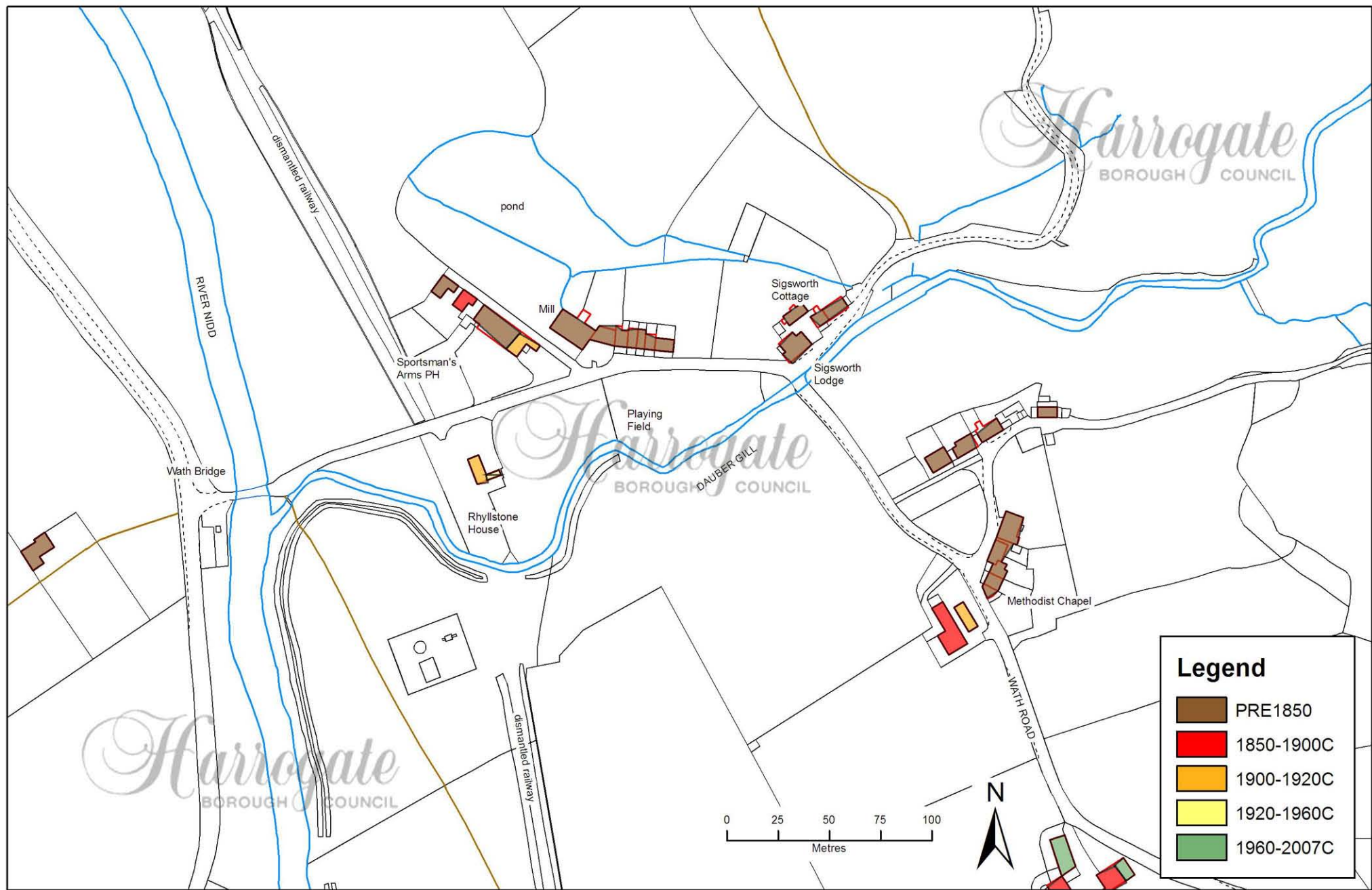


Wath Methodist Chapel (1859).

## Windows

- 7.25 More regular stonework cut in squared blocks but without quoins is used at the Wesleyan Chapel and at the easternmost end of The Sportsman's Arms, while rock faced stonework is used at Rhylstone House, the former station house.
- 7.26 The front door at Sigsworth Cottage is framed by quoined jambs carrying a massive lintel with a "basket" arched head and with a deep chamfer. By contrast, the doorway at Wath Farm is framed by narrow sawn stone jambs carrying a narrow sawn stone lintel.
- 7.27 Most window openings are of simple rectangular shape with heavy flush lintels and projecting sills of sawn stone. The main types of traditional window in Wath are either sash windows or hinged casement windows.
- 7.28 Sash windows are of the vertical sliding type, either multi-paned in the earlier style, or with two or four panes. The traditional cottage style window, the Yorkshire horizontal sliding window, appears to be absent in Wath.
- 7.29 A number of houses in Back Lane and Mill Cottages have late nineteenth or early twentieth century timber casement windows, with small panes to the upper part of the windows.
- 7.30 At least two houses, Sigsworth Cottage and Woodman's Cottage, retain finely detailed double chamfered stone mullioned windows, while the Chapel has several distinctive arch headed windows with projecting keystones that are noteworthy.
- 7.31 As in other conservation areas, there are a number of buildings where window styles have been changed in recent years, often to the detriment of the buildings concerned. This is especially the case where PVCu windows have been used with little understanding of the historic window style they purport to copy. In such cases, consideration should be given to the reinstatement of windows of more traditional and appropriate character.

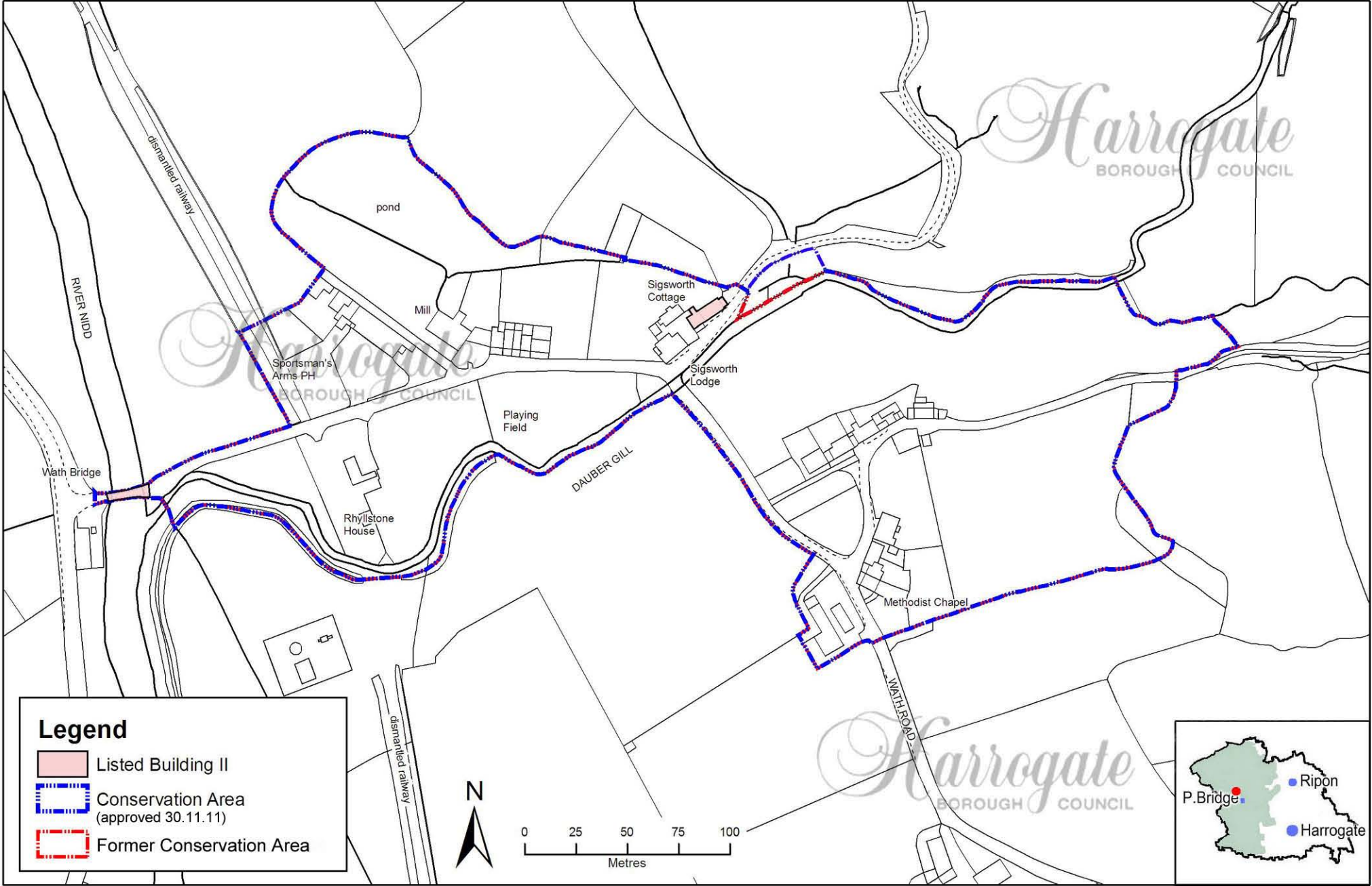
Map 1: Historical development of Wath (Nidderdale)



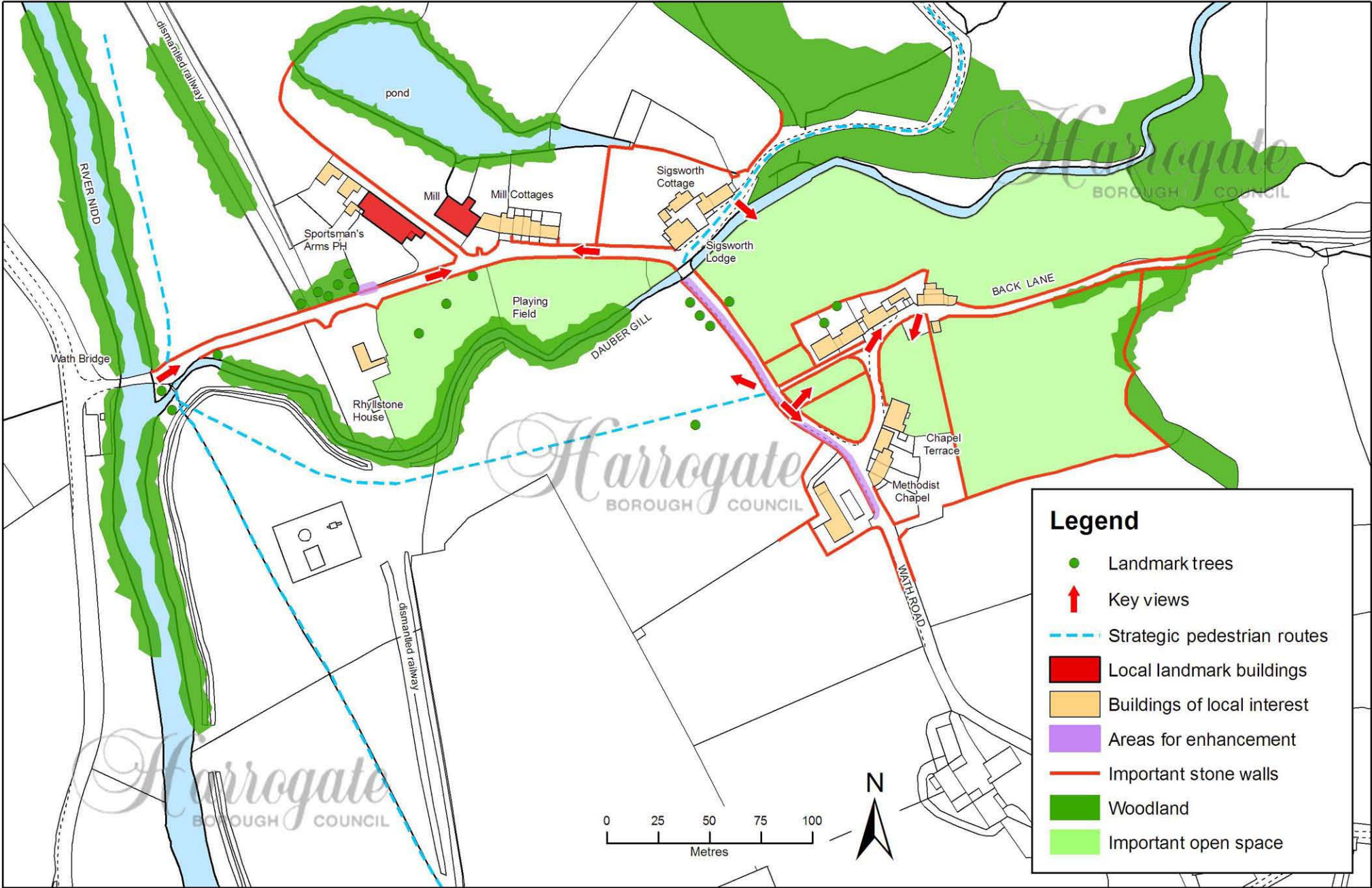
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Map 2: Wath (Nidderdale) Conservation Area boundary



Map 3: Landscape, analysis and concepts





# 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 Wath (Nidderdale) Conservation Area. The special qualities, which “it is desirable to preserve or enhance”, have been identified in the Appraisal.

Although Wath 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) 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 the findings and recommendations in the Appraisal 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 and 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 Wath has been re-evaluated as part of the process of preparing the 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 the involvement of the community at the public consultation event.

## 3. Maintaining quality

To maintain the recognisable quality of the Wath 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;
- 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 a small adjoining area as being of positive interest in ways that directly relate to the special character of the existing Conservation Area. A much larger area of fields to the east of Wath that is currently within the Conservation Area was identified for exclusion. The inclusion or exclusion of these areas was 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. However, the residents who attended the workshop requested the inclusion of a small area of woodland beyond Sigsworth Cottage at the edge of Spring Wood. This small area



contains a number of trees and the leat, which feeds water from Dauber Gill into the mill pond. The mill pond is already included within the Conservation Area and the boundary has been amended to include all of the historic water supply to the mill within the Conservation Area.

The workshop also sought that the boundary be redrawn to exclude field No. 9072 east of Chapel Terrace, and the eastern part of field No. 8579 to the east of Keeper's Cottage, with a revised boundary drawn in a somewhat arbitrary way from Dauber Gill across the open field to run tightly around the outbuildings at Keeper's Cottage then along the wall bounding the west side of field No. 9072 to rejoin the current boundary.



View east across field No. 8579.

It was considered that these fields bounded by a sharp rising slope covered with mature trees provide an important element in the setting of the village, and that they should be retained within the Conservation Area. These fields are a surviving part of the pattern of early enclosed fields and are thus of some historic interest, play an important part in the evolution of the local landscape, and remain in the Conservation Area.

## 5. The management of change

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

Whilst there is scope for enhancement, there are no sites in the Conservation Area that could be considered to have a wholly negative impact on its character of the Conservation Area.

## 6. Opportunities for enhancement

Wath 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 path and stone kerbing along the west side of Wath Road from Sigsworth Lodge to the Chapel should be repaired and relaid;
- The entrance into the car park at The Sportsman's Arms should be improved with a channel section to provide an effective edge to the highway;
- Greater effort should be made to place the overhead cables, which are a prominent feature throughout the village, underground;
- Windows should be reinstated to their former pattern and detail where new windows of inappropriate style or material have undermined the character of historic buildings;
- Trees that make a particular contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area should be protected by tree preservation orders (TPOs); (trees in conservation areas have a degree of protection);



Trees along Dauber Gill.



Kerb repairs needed.

- Some selective remedial pruning and felling should be undertaken to the trees along Dauber Gill, and to the chestnut trees in Wath Road;
- Areas of grass verge should be retained in their informal unkerbed style wherever possible; however, where traditional stone kerbing has been used, it should be retained and repaired where necessary.

## Existing buildings

The survey of the existing buildings within Wath 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 Wath could include some or all of the following:

- Additional design guidance, which is more specific to the Wath Conservation Area, 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. Some buildings have been altered, which has changed their architectural form in a way which conflicts with the distinctive character of Wath. The introduction of standardised twentieth century doors and windows has undermined the character of many historic buildings. The use of non-traditional finishes such as staining for joinery would be 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 could be harmed by the use of inappropriate materials. For example, insensitive repointing 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 and extensions

Rooflines are an important element of historic buildings 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 and front boundary treatments

Front and rear gardens make a modest contribution to the streetscape and character of Wath. However, the stone walls which delineate field, road and property boundaries are an important element in the Conservation Area, one which helps to link the scattered building groups together in a visually satisfying manner. 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 the Conservation Area.

### Telecommunications equipment, satellite and 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 the 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.



Overhead wires impact on the village setting.

### Floorscape

It is unlikely that in past times street surfaces in Wath 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 a few areas where some repair or enhancement is required; the gravelled entrance to The Sportsman's Arms car park could be improved with a channel section to provide an effective edge to the highway, and there are some stretches of stone kerbing along Wath Road that are in need of repair. However, the village is free of modern concrete kerbing and it is to be hoped that the informal character of the unkerbed road edges and grass verges can be retained.

### Important trees

The existing mature trees throughout the Conservation Area add to its charm and character. The loss of the isolated field trees off Wath Road would diminish the character of the Conservation Area. However, it is the groups of trees along the banks of the Nidd and Dauber Gill and the woodlands to the east of Wath which help to provide the village with a green



backdrop which frames and contains the village in its valley bottom setting. There may be a need to carry out some selective pruning or felling to the trees along Dauber Gill to prevent the damage that is occurring to the banks of the beck. In accordance with the Council's Landscape Design Guide, the existing pattern of tree cover should be maintained through managed planting and maintenance, which should also improve wildlife habitats.

### Outdoor advertisements and street furniture

Wath has largely avoided the clutter of street furniture, traffic signs and advertising signage which disfigures many other places. The introduction of outdoor advertisements, street furniture and highway signage will be strongly resisted in the interests of retaining the character of this unspoiled village.



## 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 character of Wath is defined by several separate clusters of buildings scattered along the valley floor, and linked together by stone walls.

The council will encourage new development that complements the established grain or settlement pattern, while 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 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 and commercial activity

Commercial activity can provide a focus for a community, and contribute to the character of the village as a working village rather than a dormitory settlement. Wath lies on the Nidderdale Way and it attracts a steady flow of walkers throughout the year. The Sportsman's 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.

## 7. Landscape issues

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

There is a need to examine ways of improving the condition of the footpath network in the area and to maintain footpaths appropriately. Any new stiles and gateways should be constructed to designs that respect both the existing landscape and the local vernacular tradition. Footpath surfaces should be retained in a natural state with improved drainage to minimize erosion and flooding during wet conditions. Where stone pavings exist, these should be retained and repaired where necessary. The condition of the existing footpath network in the area should be monitored, and the scope for improved footpath links investigated.

# Checklist to manage change

In managing change in the Conservation Area, regard should be paid to the following:

- Development should not impinge on the form and character of Wath.
- 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 local materials.
- In general, new buildings should follow the established tradition and be sited within existing groups of buildings.
- Design should respect the distinctive local architectural style both in terms of overall form and detailed design as appropriate to the context.
- Important gaps between buildings and building groups should be retained, to ensure that glimpses of trees and views are maintained.
- Development should not impact upon tree cover.
- Positive management should be undertaken of the ageing stock of mature trees.
- Repair and retention should be undertaken of boundary walling.
- The softness of roadside verges should be maintained by resisting the introduction of kerbs where none existed historically.



View east from Wath Road showing the effect of tree cover.

## 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 Conservation Area, a public consultation event was held on Tuesday 8 June 2010. This consultation took the form of a public meeting including a walkabout and a workshop session. Prior to the event residents were notified via a leaflet.

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 resumé on the changes that have taken place 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 Wath special to them. On return to the venue (The Sportsman's Arms) the workshop session enabled the groups to share the information gathered on the walkabout by annotating large scale maps of the village with text, symbols and photographs. The maps then facilitated a feedback session, mainly focusing on identifying potential areas in need of enhancement within the Conservation Area .

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.

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 31 May to 13 July 2011. Following consultation, minor amendments were made to the text and Conservation Area boundary. The Cabinet member for Planning, Transport and Economic Development approved the Appraisal on 30 November 2011 and it is published on the council's website.

## Appendix C

### Further Reading

R.A Butlin (ed)(2004) Historical Atlas of North Yorkshire.

C.Giles and I.H.Goodall (1992) Yorkshire Textile Mills 1770-1930.

B.Harrison and B.Hutton (1984) Vernacular Houses in North Yorkshire and Cleveland.

B.Jennings (1983) A History of Nidderdale.