



LITTLEBOROUGH
CIVIC
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LITTLEBOROUGH HISTORICAL
AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Littleborough



LITTLEBOROUGH TOWN DESIGN STATEMENT

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LITTLEBOROUGH TOWN DESIGN STATEMENT



LITTLEBOROUGH TOWN DESIGN STATEMENT

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LITTLEBOROUGH TOWN DESIGN STATEMENT

INCORPORATING
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING
GUIDANCE TO THE ROCHDALE
UNITARY DEVELOPMENT
PLAN

LITTLEBOROUGH TOWN DESIGN STATEMENT

Published by Littleborough Civic Trust on behalf of the Littleborough Community in conjunction with Littleborough Historical & Archeological Society and with the assistance of Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

First published 2005

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FOREWORD

I am told that Littleborough is not “the Village” but is a Town. It was an Urban District until 1974 when the economics of size merged the village into the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale, which is now a bigger town. However we are still the Littleborough Community.

I have lived here all my life. Some Littleborough families such as the Molesworths and Newalls go back generations. This Town Design Statement has been produced by the Littleborough Community, to express our views about what we have and how we should like to see it evolve. Follow its guidance and the Littleborough Community will embrace you. Ignore its advice at your peril!

I am a lawyer by profession. My firm has supported Littleborough people with an office here for over 100 years. I have brought up a family here and have no thoughts of moving elsewhere. So much for my commitment and I look for no more from the citizens of Littleborough.

In the past, that commitment came from Stephenson with his construction of the Railway and Summit Tunnel; Gordon Harvey with his development of his business and workforce and now those involved with the development of the Rochdale Canal, Hollingworth Lake Country Park and all the other exciting opportunities which have evolved in the village. We have lost some employment but there is much room for local enterprise alongside the heritage, the hills and the attractive stone buildings that make Littleborough a jewel in the Rochdale Crown.

It is an honour to write this foreword and to have chaired the Steering Group of the Town Design Statement Committee. It is a true community project. We want everyone to share the privileges that we experience in living and working here. We want to preserve what is good, whilst guiding the natural evolution and development of a living community.

In conclusion we fully adopt the Rochdale Community Strategy Vision which is:

*“Our vision is of a thriving place where people want to live, work, visit and do business
– a place in which we can all take pride.”*

John F. Kay

Chairman, Steering Committee
Littleborough Town Design Statement

PENNINES TOWNSHIP

Pennines Township is reasonably affluent, with a low level of unemployment: therefore it does not benefit from the major regeneration funding spent by the Council elsewhere in the Borough of Rochdale. It is characterised by a wealth of community and voluntary activity, however, which has flowered into many notable projects in Littleborough in the past. The latest manifestation of this community effort is the Town Design Statement.

Unlike many of the contributors to this document, I did not have the good fortune to be born and bred in Littleborough or even in Lancashire. I can hardly be blamed for that. It does mean, however, that I choose to live here and count myself extremely fortunate to be the first Pennines Township Manager. In a number of ways the job has proved to be a challenging one but is also the best job I have had so far. This is partly because I get to work alongside this varied, skilled, hardworking and selfless community to try and make a difference in the quality of life for local people.

Community support has been gratifyingly and abundantly forthcoming for the latest Pennines initiative – setting up a community development trust, known as the MoorEnd Trust, for the Township. The idea behind the move is to provide an umbrella structure that will allow community groups, agencies, businesses, individuals and Rochdale Council to work in partnership on priority projects. The trust is owned by its members and thereby embraces principles of openness, accountability and democracy. Many of the members have also participated in compiling the Town Design Statement.

Sue Thornton

Pennines Township Manager
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

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PART A: LANDSCAPE AND SETTING



The bandstand in Hare Hill Park, refurbished 2004

1 Introduction

Intro

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These were set out in an agenda paper: Report by the Director of Environment, to the Pennine Township Committee at their meeting on 26 October 2000, as follows:

“The report is presented to Committee to outline the process, content and objectives of a Town Design Statement for Littleborough proposed by Littleborough Civic Trust. Members are asked to support the production of this document and to agree to give consideration on its completion to its use by the Council in an appropriate way to assist Township development control and regeneration project decision making.”

Based on the existing Village Design Statement criteria, the scope of the Town Design Statement and process for assembling it were set out in paragraph 3.2:

“The purpose of Design Statements is to influence the management of change whether it is due to major new development or cumulative, small scale additions and alterations to settlements and their landscape setting. If it is to have any influence, the Statement must be recognised by the local planning authority in some appropriate way, for example as a form of supplementary planning guidance. The objectives of design statements are primarily:

- to describe the distinctive character of the settlement and surrounding landscape;
- to identify character in terms of landscape, setting, settlement structure and the nature of buildings, structures and open spaces;
- to draw up design principles based on local character;
- to work in partnership with the local planning authority in respect of the application of existing planning policy and to influence future policies.

It is important to note that the Council should not lead or influence the production of a design statement but should only support the process by providing appropriate technical advice and assistance where required. An effective design statement should also:

- be researched, written and edited by local people;
- represent the views of the community as a whole and involve a wide cross section of interests in its production;
- be compatible with the statutory planning system and established national and local planning policy;
- be suitable for approval as supplementary planning guidance;
- be concerned with managing change, not preventing it i.e. ensuring that new development respects and contributes to local character and identity, not further eroding it.”

The report was adopted at the meeting of the Pennines Township Committee, 25 March 2004.

Following the approval given by the Local Authority, The Countryside Agency in turn gave its approval and made funding available for the preparation of a Littleborough Town Design Statement. The production of the Town Design Statement for Littleborough was co-ordinated by Littleborough Civic Trust.

THE PROCESS

Following the aims set out for the Town Design Statement at the Pennine Township meeting 26 October 2000, members of the Littleborough community with the support of Littleborough Civic Trust and The Littleborough Historical and Archeological Society undertook survey and research between January 2002 and the summer of 2003. Most of the “field work” took place during the summer months of 2002.

The programme started with a seminar. A workshop was held later in the year to review progress and to check that the basic aims of the Design Statement were being achieved. Press releases and two public meetings held during the year, one to launch the project and the other to report back on the main findings of study groups, were used to publicise this information. Approximately one hundred members of the community were involved in the research undertaken by eight different study groups. Initially these covered:

- **Canal regeneration;**
- **Landscape and the Environment;**
- **Education;**
- **Recreation, Leisure and Tourism;**
- **Littleborough’s Conservation areas;**
- **Housing and Shopping;**
- **Employment;**
- **Transport.**

Subsequently these groups were merged so that the Town Design Statement would be presented under three main headings:

- **Landscape and People;**
- **The Built Environment, Settlements and Planning Guidance;**
- **Regeneration.**

Under Regeneration, the Town Design Statement makes specific recommendations for Durn and Eales as key elements for success in future economic growth in the area. In the wider context our statement acknowledges the overall thrust of the “Pride of Place” Community Strategy for Rochdale Borough 2003-7 and more locally the Rochdale Canal Regeneration Strategy prepared by consultants for the Rochdale and Oldham Boroughs.

We welcome the opportunity to share the experience that we have enjoyed during the past three-and-a-half years in assembling this Design Statement. In tracing and recording our “heritage” in Littleborough, the experience - one of focussing attention and raising awareness - has been a voyage of discovery for all of us, “natives” and “incomers” alike. Getting involved in this exercise has given us an appreciation of the significant conditions and events that shaped the past, and how these may provide us with a signpost to the future.

In a number of respects our Town Design statement provides a snapshot of Littleborough in 2002-2004. We set out to identify Littleborough’s enduring characteristics, its heritage (and by inference, the intangibles that lie behind it), the dedication, skill and hard work of local people responding to the challenge of their environment and the stimulus of inspired leadership which was prepared to invest both in a business and in the community. We have tried to demonstrate how the dynamics of Littleborough’s more recent history were determined by the opportunities presented by its location and by the enterprise of engineers and industrialists who exploited them.

Looking to the future we have been encouraged by the “Pride Of Place” Community Strategy for the Rochdale Borough and more recently by the MoorEnd Development Trust, which was set up to take forward community projects in the Pennine Township. We are confident that each, in its own way, will seek to build on existing assets. We know that the recommendations for Regeneration in our Town Design Statement are practical, positive and what is of particular importance for our community, achievable in Littleborough.

THE UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND THE TOWN DESIGN STATEMENT

Rochdale's Unitary Development Plan, adopted in March 1999 and currently under review, will be replaced by a Deposit Plan. When adopted this will be effective from 2004 to 2016. Both the Adopted Plan and the Replacement Plan, provide strong guidance on the design of new developments.

The Government encourages Planning Authorities to adopt design guidance for specific forms of development or for specific sites/areas to supplement UDP policies. Supplementary Planning Guidance is therefore provided by the Local Planning Authority to help builders and developers interpret policy and to give detailed design advice, framed to help retain and enhance character and local distinctiveness.

Supplementary Planning Guidance must be consistent with UDP policy and must be prepared and adopted by the Local Planning Authority following thorough consultation with interested parties.

As stated in "Guiding Principles" above, for Town and Village Design Statements to have any influence on physical change, they must be recognised by the Local Planning Authority in some appropriate way, for example as a form of Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Littleborough Town Design Statement has been prepared by the local community, with the assistance of the Local Authority: the final draft of the document has been the subject of extensive consultation with all affected/interested parties. The final version takes account of the responses made by those parties.

It is the intention that the Supplementary Planning Guidance incorporated in the full version of the Town Design Statement will be supplied by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council as a separate document to provide a clear guide to all those involved in the development process. The main body of the Town Design Statement gives an extensive description of Littleborough's character, indicating the heritage background from which the detailed design advice is derived. Looking beyond the current Development Plan, the Town Design Statement sets out a number of the community's ideas for the future development of the area. Not all of these are currently endorsed by the Local Authority but some may be developed further through, or in the context of, the Borough Masterplan, the review of the Community Strategy and the Local Authority's 'Local Development Framework'.

2

Aims

Aims

TOWN DESIGN STATEMENT AIMS

This Town Design Statement sets out to describe the character of Littleborough in relation to its setting, its surrounding countryside and the distinctive features of its built environment. Further, it seeks to define the design principles that should be applied in retaining its character and in enhancing its future development as a community. It seeks to:

- **Take into account what people value and would like to see improved locally to meet community needs, to ensure that the town develops in ways that maintain its attractiveness and protect its heritage;**
- **Encourage good quality physical regeneration;**
- **Promote Littleborough's potential for tourism as a 'gateway' to the South Pennines;**
- **Support improvements to the town centre and its retail environment;**
- **Support the provision of attractive leisure and recreational facilities;**
- **Ensure Littleborough is an attractive place in which to work, live and play;**
- **Provide a context for assessing the impact of rural developments, including farm diversification;**
- **Supplement the policies of the Development Plan by providing consistent but more detailed design guidance for developers, builders and individuals so that the design and layout of new development is sensitive to the special needs, character and distinctiveness of Littleborough.**

The Littleborough Town Design Statement is sponsored by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Nationwide Building Society through the support of the Local Heritage Initiative and the Countryside Agency. The support and involvement of the people of Littleborough and of the officers of the Local Authority is also gratefully acknowledged.

3

Scope and contents

SCOPE AND CONTENTS

The Design Statement applies to the area covered by the former Urban District of Littleborough.

Part (A)

This deals with Littleborough's context, describing its overall geographical setting with a brief reference to its history and containing comments from the local community on some aspects of Unitary Development Plan Policies. For a more detailed review of Littleborough's history, we refer the reader to the separate Heritage Statement, published alongside this Design Statement.

Part (B)

This focuses on Littleborough's Built Environment, with particular reference to its Settlements and Conservation Areas. In describing local characteristic features and the use of materials, this section seeks to identify Littleborough's distinctive heritage.

It is this material which provides the basis for setting down criteria for Supplementary Planning Guidelines, to encourage care for and sympathetic treatment of the essential heritage.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

This section contains planning guidelines for new development consistent with the policies of the Unitary Development Plan and will help to ensure those policies are applied having regard to the local context.

Part (C)

The final section deals with issues raised by members of the Littleborough community about day-to-day life concerning work, education, shopping, leisure and transport.

As noted, Sections 1 and 3 express public concern about particular issues. Most are beyond the scope of the Unitary Development Plan - or directly challenge it. They do not represent Council policy, therefore are not put forward for Council approval. We make no apologies for this: such issues are matters of "Public Consultation". We feel that it is always possible to change policy and improve processes - pressure for change has to start somewhere!

Note:

The Design Statement for Littleborough encloses an area of approximately 12 square miles. It might therefore be expected that writing the statement would be a relatively simple task and that a brief document would be the outcome.

The district covered has a small, populated area in comparison to the large tracts of open moorland that border the town to the west, north and east. However so much has happened in Littleborough - particularly during the past 250 years - that it is difficult to do justice to everything that has contributed to its special character and the heritage that underlies it.

The preparation of a Heritage Statement published separately was a condition of a Town Design Statement for Littleborough being accepted by the Countryside Agency. It contains a substantial amount of historical detail that could have overburdened the Design Statement, so while giving due weight to important developments and how these have impacted on the community, we have tried here to keep the focus sharp.

Assembled with the help of the Littleborough Community both the Design Statement and its supporting Heritage Statement will, we hope, show how closely the character of the area is defined by four essential elements:

- the geological evolution;
- the exploitation of all its natural resources;
- the introduction of technological innovation;
- the need to adapt to change.

The 1851 Map:

A valuable historical document in its own right, the 1851 6" to 1 mile Ordnance Survey map was surveyed less than ten years after the Manchester to Leeds railway through Littleborough was opened and before the cotton spinning and weaving industry was established throughout East Lancashire. Providing a point of access immediately available for studying the history of the Littleborough area, we hope that others may be prompted to undertake some research of their own with the help of this map.

4 Setting

Setting

LANDSCAPE AND SETTING

LANDSCAPE AND PEOPLE

The view from Blackstone Edge, the rocky gritstone outcrop that dominates the western scene, reveals our own portion of the South Pennines landscape. Moorland and a steep-sided valley, namely the Summit Gorge, which leads north into Yorkshire, predominates - a legacy of the last great ice age that sculpted the land in these parts. It is only to the southwest that the landscape flattens out towards Manchester and the Cheshire Plain.

Widespread evidence exists of the settlements that grew up in and around Littleborough before Roman times. Littleborough's future development was a result of its unique position as a natural gateway through the Pennines between Manchester and Yorkshire and from the exploitation of its natural resources: stone, water, wool, coal, iron and clay. Clearly its access to Manchester and the Cheshire Plain was also an important natural asset.

As far back as 7,500BC, we have evidence of human occupation of the higher ground from the stone tools man shaped in his struggle to survive. The Romans in their occupation of Britain left their mark locally taking a roadway straight up a steep but not precipitous route over Blackstone Edge, parts of which are still visible today. Saxon and Norse influences can be seen in some place names but it was the Norman regime following the conquest and the Domesday inventory, that gave us our first written records and established the family houses that grew up among the scattered hamlets.



Blackstone Edge

The Pennine landscape and the Archeological evidence of its early settlers are dealt with in greater detail in section three of the Heritage Statement, entitled “Natural Heritage.”

With the advent of the canal, improved roads and the railway, activities like weaving, quarrying and mining, iron smelting and brickmaking received a boost. The spinning and weaving of cotton took precedence over wool in the second half of the 19th Century. The development of man-made fibres and of artificial finishes from the 1950s onwards, was a significant factor in the continuation of Littleborough’s textile industry in the latter half of the 20th Century.

OPEN MOORLAND

The harsh undulating moorland surrounding the lower-lying settlement areas is geographically part of the South Pennine uplands. Blackstone Edge Moor is part of the South Pennine Moor Special Protection Area, which is of national and European importance for breeding birds. Above Littleborough, at over 390 metres or 1,270 feet above sea level, lies Blackstone Edge Reservoir, which plays host to a variety of wildfowl, birds and animals.

The moorland area has a fragile and finely balanced eco-system that should be conserved.

The moorland hilltops are used for grazing livestock and are also popular recreation areas. The attraction of remoteness and isolation, peace and tranquillity and escape from surrounding conurbations all contribute to making this an ideal area for outdoor recreational activities. The experience of “wilderness” is something to be treasured.



‘Roman’ road

ENCLOSED UPLAND

Farmland below the open moorland was once heavily dominated by hay meadows, known as in-bye land. Some former hay meadows have reverted to moorland as farming methods and land use have changed. Dropping down to 600 feet (183 metres) above sea level, there are many brooks and streams that tumble steeply to join the River Roch. Because of the particular importance of its ecology, based on peat, a large portion of the unenclosed moorland is also within the Special Protection Area. Development proposals should respect the open character and tranquillity of the moorland and moorland fringes through their scale, location and activities, impact on views, landscape features and ecological interest (see Replacement UDP Proposal **NE/6**).

Proposed development that may impinge on the moorland and moorland fringe areas should be prevented, to conserve local habitats and ecology. Nor should any development be allowed that would cause detrimental visual impact (as defined in **UDP EM/15**).

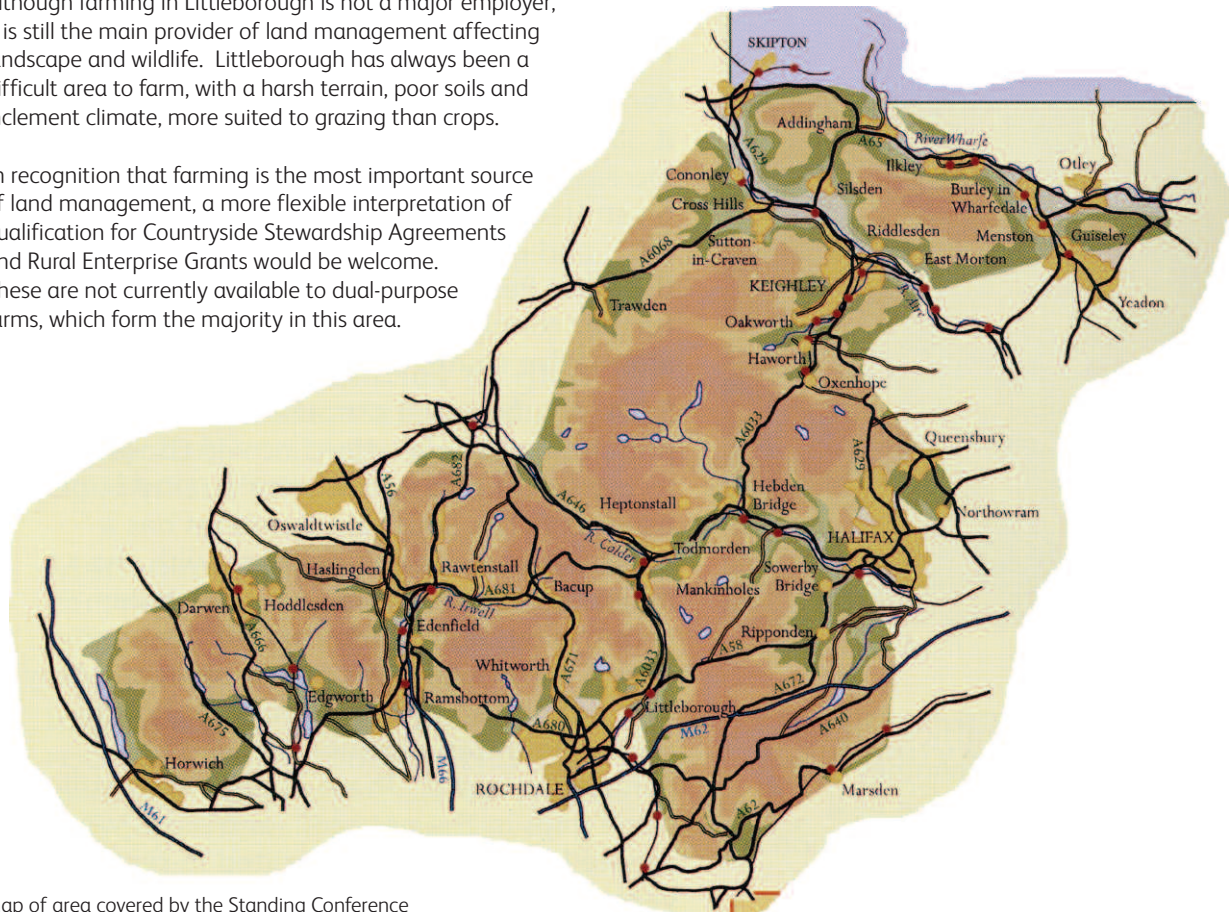
In accordance with **UDP RE/4**, this Town Design Statement seeks to support and encourage diversification for farmers, for example:

- Encourage tourism, bed & breakfast, farm shops and outdoor/wildlife pursuits. Our support for diversification is based primarily on the adapting of assets of sites and buildings with modifications where appropriate. It is expected that development will be sensitive to the character of the existing setting in its design, location, choice of materials and style;
- Farming, part of the area's historical development, needs to be encouraged. The number of full - time farmers has declined and dual income farmers increased, due to financial constraints. We need to support farmers in looking after the countryside;
- Farmers, landowners and/or managers should be encouraged to support wildlife by, for instance, installing owl nesting boxes on the outside of any new or replacement outbuildings.

FARMS AND FARMING IN LITTLEBOROUGH

Although farming in Littleborough is not a major employer, it is still the main provider of land management affecting landscape and wildlife. Littleborough has always been a difficult area to farm, with a harsh terrain, poor soils and inclement climate, more suited to grazing than crops.

In recognition that farming is the most important source of land management, a more flexible interpretation of qualification for Countryside Stewardship Agreements and Rural Enterprise Grants would be welcome. These are not currently available to dual-purpose farms, which form the majority in this area.



Map of area covered by the Standing Conference of South Pennine Authorities (S.C.O.S.P.A.)

DRY STONE WALLS

Littleborough's dry stone walls are an important part of its landscape character. 'The Condition of England's Dry Stone Walls', published by the Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency) in 1996 states that:

"field boundaries are often the strongest features in landscapes ... After hedgerows, stone walls are arguably our most notable traditional field boundary."

By 1998, 'The Protection of Field Boundaries' had been published by the Environment Committee. The Dry Stone Walling Association noted that maintenance was relatively inexpensive when compared with restoration. We quote from section (f) in full, as we believe it states our situation exactly:

"We believe that the variety of traditional field boundaries represents local and regional character and distinctiveness. In an increasingly mobile society that is so subject to global pressures and trends, the continuing existence of these traditional features helps to foster local craft skills and employment, local pride and a sense of place. For these reasons, and for their agricultural, landscape, amenity, ecological and Archeological value we believe that they should, without exception, be protected in law."

The Local Community believes that grants should be made available to all farms, including dual income farms, for the maintenance and upkeep of dry stone walls.



Dry stone wall



Stone slab bridge



Syke Farm

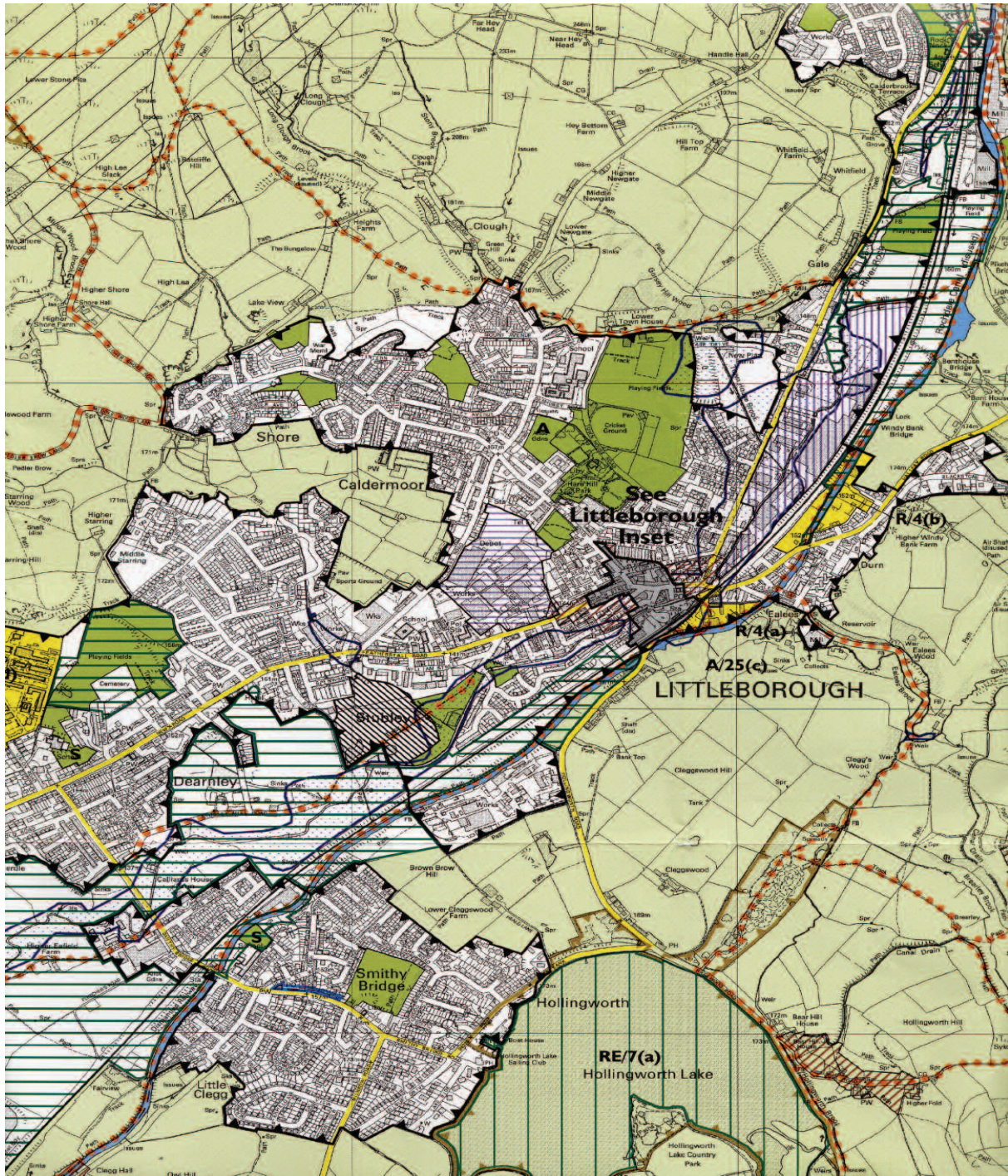
5

Green environment



LITTLEBOROUGH'S GREEN ENVIRONMENT

In addition to the large tracts of open moorland which border Littleborough on three sides, green spaces within, or running through the town are a vitally important element shaping its overall character.



Extracted from Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council's Unitary Development Plan showing extent of Green Belt

GREEN BELT

Its purpose is to prevent urban sprawl and to retain the framework of open land separating and surrounding urban developments. Within the Green Belt the Council will not normally permit new buildings. The Unitary Development Plan sets out what limited forms of development are appropriate (e.g., development in connection with agriculture and forestry or an outdoor facility of a recreational nature). The proposals should not conflict with Unitary Development Plan Green Belt policies and other countryside policies dealing with agricultural land, landscape protection, nature conservation, heritage conservation and countryside management.

Locally the Green Belt protects the Pennine background against which the town is set. Much of the Green Belt is moorland, valued for its open, remote landscape with large areas protected also as Designated Sites of Ecological Importance. The Design Statement supports policies in the Development Plan for retaining and protecting areas which in particular provide an experience of wilderness and which support a distinctive variety of wildlife and plant life.

GREENSPACE CORRIDORS

These make a natural buffer between settlements and developments. The main corridor follows the line of the River Roch and the canal from Littleborough to the Rochdale Town boundary providing a habitat for wildlife and plant life and a source of recreational enjoyment for walkers and other users of the canal and its towpath.

URBAN GREENSPACE

Areas of Designated Urban Green Space comprise parks, allotments, and playing fields donated to the community, privately owned or relating to a local school. Some sites have been reclaimed from former industrial uses. Hare Hill Park, the bowling club, Littleborough cricket club, the recreational grounds and the school playing fields near Town House are sometimes referred to as "Littleborough's Green Heart". Its areas of Urban Green Space make an essential contribution to the character of Littleborough.

All these areas serve to reduce the impact of urban development and preserve a skyline open to the surrounding moorland. In the extensive green space referred to, the impression of a predominantly rural character is retained.

HOLLINGWORTH LAKE COUNTRY PARK AND ADJOINING WOODLANDS

Hollingworth Lake itself is a most important stretch of open water for both resident birds and visiting species. The southeast end of the lake is "managed wetland" with access to a public bird hide. The surrounding open areas under Country Park Management offer a wide variety of walks ranging from a short gentle stroll around part of the lake's boundary to the more challenging walks provided by a footpath system which links ultimately with The Pennine Way. The Eales Valley linking Littleborough to Hollingworth Lake contains native woodland species of birch, beech, holly, hazel, oak and rowan. The sheltered nature of the valley makes a very attractive walk enjoyed by local residents and visitors alike.



Central Recreation Ground

The recreational potential of Hollingworth Lake was recognised in the 19th Century. Today existing water-based activities at the lake will be supplemented by those associated with the re-opened Rochdale Canal; the latter will give Littleborough a timely opportunity to carry forward a process of regenerating the local economy. There is heavy recreational use of the area, including water sports, walking, angling and horse riding. Development within this area should be handled with care to ensure that the landscape character is not lost. This is acknowledged in Policies of the Replacement UDP (**RE/7** 'Recreational Management Areas' and **NE/2** 'Designated Site of Ecological Importance').



Great Crested Grebe on Hollingworth Lake

AMENITY OPEN SPACE

There are many pockets of open space that contribute to the relief of the built-up areas and provide a setting for buildings. These contribute greatly to the environmental quality of the area.

WOODLAND AREAS

Woodland areas, typically mixed deciduous, are confined mainly to lower lying and valley sites. Whittaker Wood below the golf course is relatively mature woodland supporting a number of wild bird species.

Further to **UDP EN/35**, we support the policy of retaining and enhancing wooded areas. Similarly we support policies aimed at supporting wildlife habitats, further to **UDP G/C/3** and **C/3/8**.

SOFT LANDSCAPING

Members of the community put forward the suggestion for planting a belt of woodland on the southeast side of Canal Street around the flank of Cleggswood Hill, through the Woodland Grant scheme, further to **UDP G/NE/5**.

PENNINE EDGE FOREST

The Pennine Edge Forest Partnership has now been established to promote community forestry and encourage new planting and good woodland management with support from sectors of the community. Woodland planting is welcomed where it helps to conserve and enhance local landscape character, ecological features and recreational opportunity. It should not dominate the open moorland skyline or result in the loss of fragile upland habitats or wilderness landscapes valued for quiet recreation.



Visitors at Hollingworth Lake

PART B: THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT, SETTLEMENTS AND PLANNING

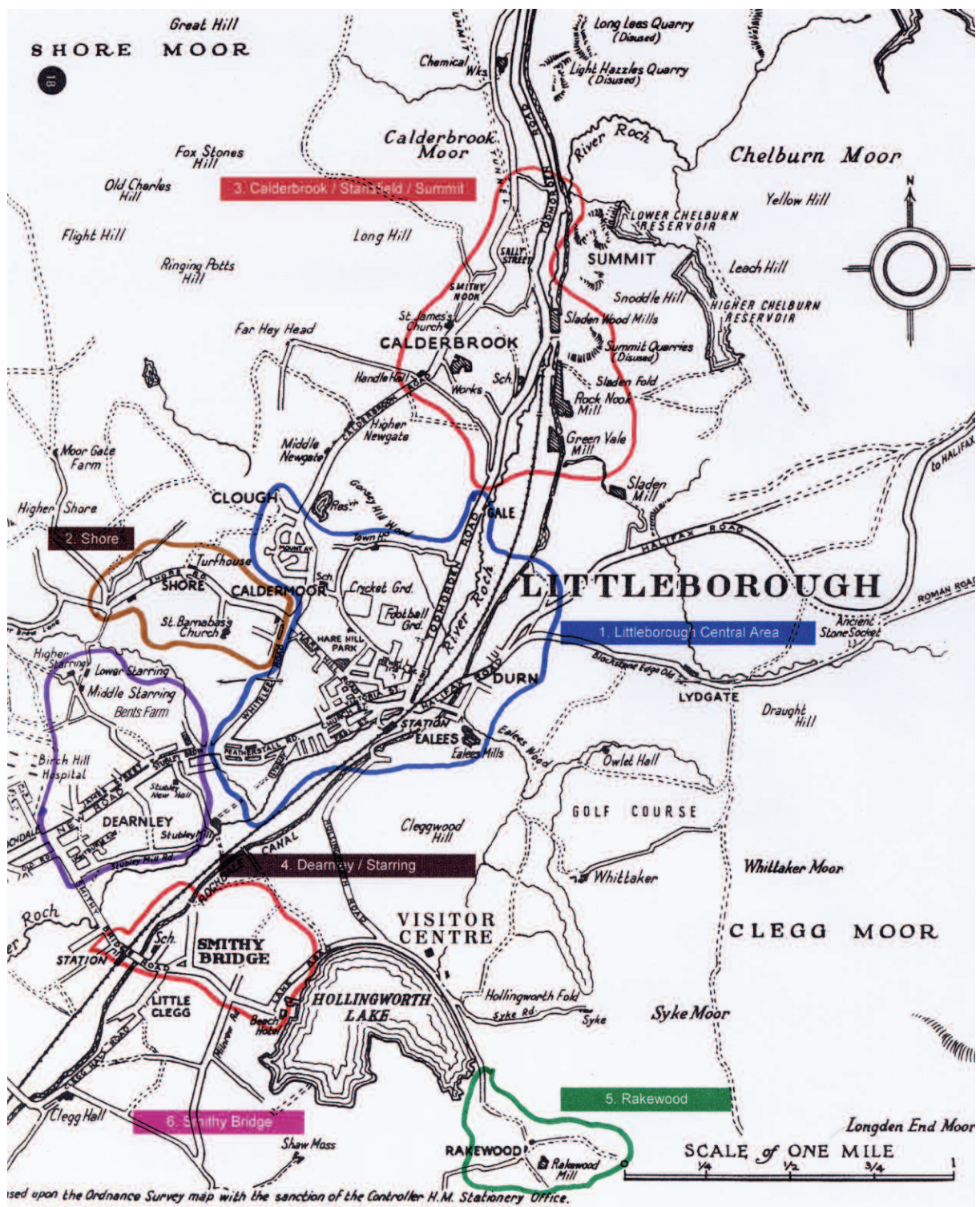


Old Bent House

6

Settlement character

PART B: BUILT ENVIRONMENT, SETTLEMENTS AND PLANNING GUIDANCE



Settlement Map

THE PENNINE LOCATION

Littleborough's South Pennine location gives it a heritage of building design shared with adjoining areas of Yorkshire and Lancashire. A Trans-Pennine vernacular style seems to have evolved during the 17th and 18th Centuries. Both climate and the availability of local building materials were significant influences.

In addition its unique setting and the special impact made by the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th Centuries have ensured that Littleborough's built heritage is a remarkably rich one. The term "moorland and mill town" comes to mind - a place where an informal mix of farming, industry and housing evolved in a natural organic pattern. This survived almost intact in Littleborough until the 1970s.

During the 19th Century, the vernacular style was modified, but again one in character with the South Pennine area can be traced: still simple and practical but with a sharper rectangular treatment of elevations and details arising from a more standardised approach to the preparation of materials and construction methods. The introduction of Welsh blue slate as a roofing material became widespread from the mid-19th Century onwards.

The earliest surviving buildings in the area are sturdy and practical, designed to withstand the Pennine weather. The elevations are in the main of gritstone and roofing is of stone "grey" slates of irregular size and thickness.



Lightowers

A DISTINCTIVE FEATURE - EVOLUTION OF DESIGN

An evolution of house design can sometimes be seen in the same building. With increasing affluence a house might extend outwards from its humble beginnings. A 16th Century cottage might acquire extra rooms and an extra storey at subsequent stages of development, perhaps typically being “gentrified” by a Victorian facade.

The outward signs consist of:

- **An interestingly varied roof line;**
- **A variety of elevations;**
- **Different finishes and window treatments.**

Inside can be found:

- **Doorways and window openings still visible, where not required, might be adapted, concealed or filled-in;**
- **A kitchen/living room would be the oldest part of the house, often retaining its original stone floor.**



Calder Cottage



Calder Cottage showing former external window, now inside



Calder Cottage showing former external window, now inside

INFLUENCE OF TRANSPORT ROUTES

Much of Littleborough's 18th- and 19th Century built environment is bounded and defined by its canal, roads and railway.

The M62 motorway spanning Longden End Valley demonstrates how transport routes continue to have a formative effect in defining both Littleborough's character and its heritage.



Rakewood - contrast of old settlement with M62 viaduct

ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

The essential character of Littleborough's built environment is based on stone. This character prevails with some exceptions until the early years of the 20th Century. At that time the use of red brick for some terraces and individual houses made a distinctive contribution to the local scene, but throughout, stone was the predominant building material. This testament of stone contains the message that defines a large part of Littleborough's heritage.

The confidence with which previous generations handled the material is easily taken for granted but quite breathtaking, given a few moments study. Consider the massive dressed stone slabs of the canal locks and the robust grace of the canal's bridges, many of which have listed building status. Look too at the gritstone retaining wall bounding the Parish Church on three sides and the powerful stone construction of Stephenson's railway viaduct. The lines are boldly drawn, solidly geometrical – making that confident statement of the pioneer railway engineers that they could bridge ravines and drive a tunnel through Pennine rock, if there was no room for their iron road in the valley.

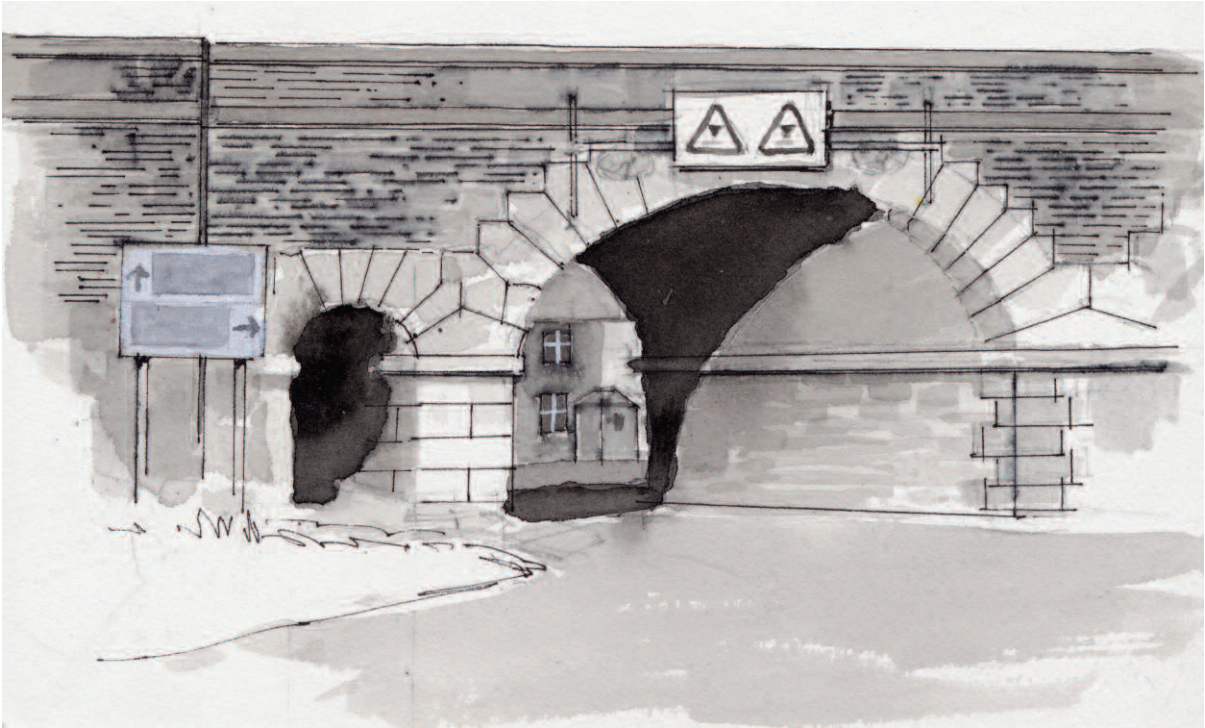
Consider also a unique Victorian structure, the Wheatsheaf "Round House" building, one which manages to combine a bold solidity with elegance. It makes full use of a curved elevation that is balanced by its intricate Gothic detail and topped by a tiara of perforated sandstone.



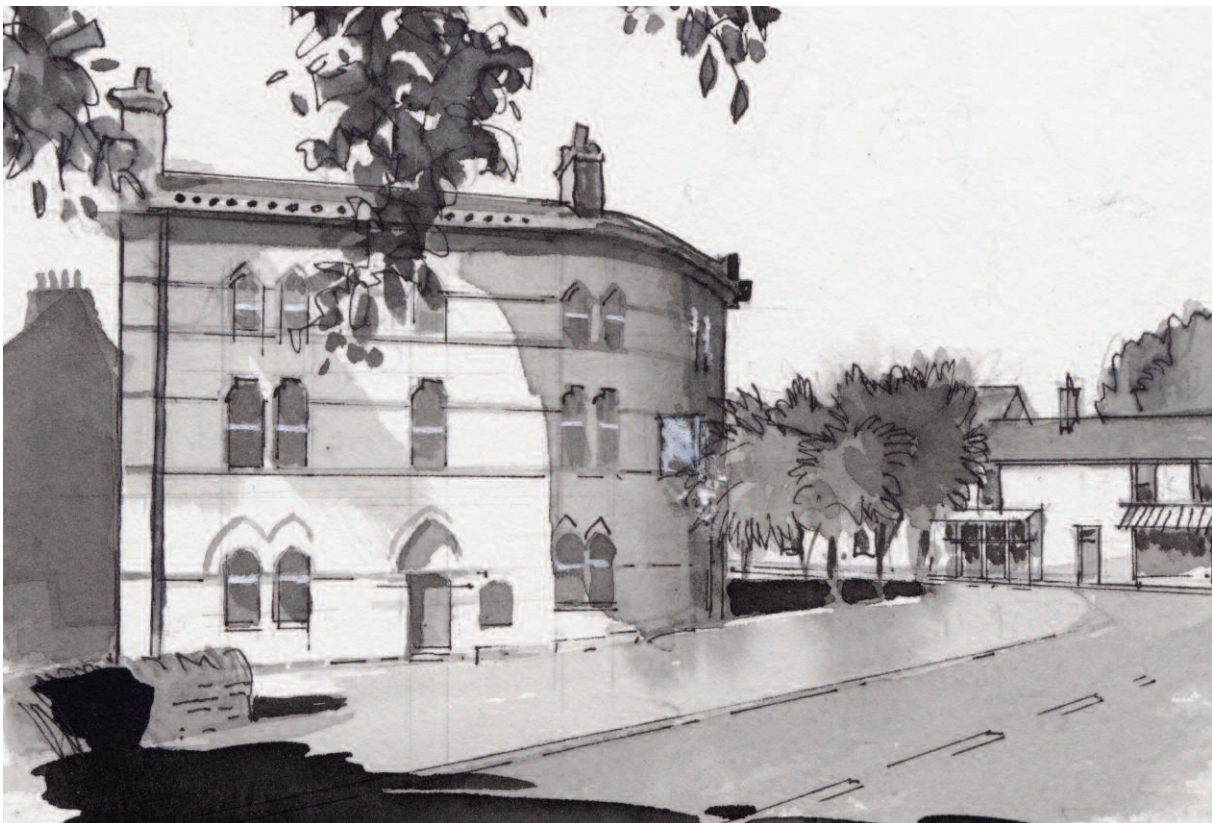
Parish Church wall



Lock wall at Sladen Lock



Stephenson Viaduct



The Roundhouse Building

From the 18th Century onwards, canal builders, railway engineers and architects of the Victorian era demonstrated by their skill in handling it, their confidence that stone would serve almost all their needs.



Bent House Bridge



Railway Viaduct Buttress

URBAN DEVELOPMENT - POST 1950

The urban area of Littleborough has been contained both by a tight Green Belt, and local geography. The Roch Valley runs north south through the centre, whilst the railway and canal and the landform to the east effectively define the eastern limit, except for limited development off Halifax Road (A58). To the north, development has grown alongside the canal and railway as far as Summit. To the west, there has been considerable housing expansion over the last 50 years, constrained by topography, and since 1984 by the Green Belt.

Development Plan policies seek to guide new development to previously used (brownfield) sites whilst further outward expansion is discouraged.

Littleborough's employment areas have dwindled significantly over past years; opportunities to support the economic base through canal related uses and tourism are being explored. The restoration of the canal and regeneration of the Rochdale Canal corridor will open up new opportunities for individual sites, e.g. Ealees, Durn and for Littleborough in general, but this will bring its own pressures and opportunities (i.e. demand for more development and tourism facilities).

SETTLEMENTS WITHIN THE LITTLEBOROUGH TOWNSHIP

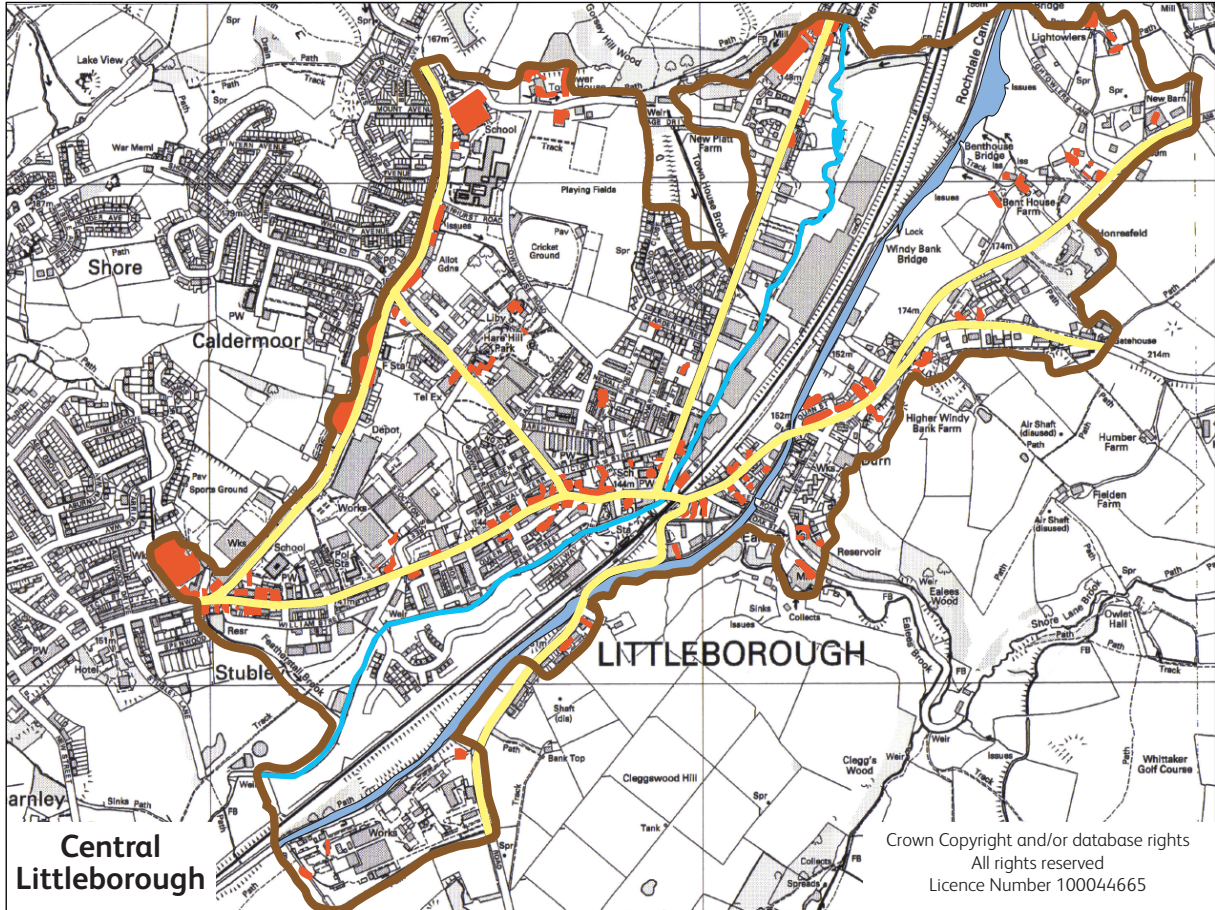
Overall, Littleborough enjoys a sense of openness in balance with its built areas.

In its settlements, open space - whether publicly designated or privately owned - plays an essential part in establishing distinctive character. Further, it is how these spaces integrate with the built environment to create an organic whole that really matters. Garden plots, courtyards, street furniture in scale with its surroundings, hard surfaces used in the floorscape and stone boundary walls all provide the fine detail which characterises this distinctiveness at close quarters. The only way to fully appreciate Littleborough's distinctive character is to walk its streets.

The six main "Settlements" which constitute Littleborough within the administrative area of the Pennine Township (see Settlements Map) are identified as:

- 1. Central Littleborough**
- 2. Shore**
- 3. Summit, Barnes Meadows, Calderbrook, Dean Head and Timbercliffe**
- 4. Starring, Stubley and Bents Farm**
- 5. Rakewood**
- 6. Smithy Bridge**

These areas are described in detail in the following pages.



Central Littleborough Settlement map (earlier development shown in red)



Phoenix Street neighbourhood garden

CENTRAL LITTLEBOROUGH

By the time the 1851, 6 inch Ordnance Survey of Blatchinworth and Calderbrook (Littleborough sheet) was surveyed in 1847 & 1848, the main lines of communication as we know them: road, canal and rail, had been clearly laid down. From the map evidence, the centre of Littleborough was sparsely populated. Apart from the public buildings and private buildings fronting the road in the village centre and clustered around road junctions there is no sign of the terrace developments that would come a few years later. These would follow the growing use of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway and the industrial and business activity it would promote.

Much of Littleborough's retail development came about as part of Victorian in-fill on the main Rochdale to Halifax Road, a process which can be traced along the A58 all the way to Town Head and along Yorkshire Street in Rochdale.

The growth of the centre of Littleborough, apparently haphazard, developed to an organic pattern. Houses, clusters of cottages, terraces as well as its public buildings, canal, bridges and rail viaduct grew up as demand occurred and as land became available.

Though there is variety in the building mass, the different elements relate well to one another. Stone boundary walls, small garden oases and footpaths running between and behind terraces combine to make a blend rather than just a mix of urban "streetscape."

It is this remarkable mix that gives the town its individual character. For example, the western end of Phoenix Street has an informal open garden area and ginnel running alongside the boundary wall of Wellington Lodge. This is itself an attractive enclave comprising two stone terraces and another imposing terrace in Accrington brick - both are set off by planting of shrubbery and border flowers. Spring Vale Terrace, off Church Street, has an attractive open area shared by the various properties fronting and adjoining it.

At the northern end of Lodge Street the terrace on the eastern side is bounded by a flag wall and paved with both setts and a stone slab track leading to Chapel Hill. These provide examples of the use of materials that contribute a distinctive element to Littleborough's character.

Two of the more successful recent developments deserve mention. Ballard Close, off Calderbrook Road and built in the 1980s, making imaginative use of space, demonstrates what a

thoughtfully designed complex of buildings, though untypical of the area, can achieve: a development fitted in to an enclosed site of a distinctive style and making good use of the land available. Variety of design and differences in mass and profile have produced a pleasing effect.



Ballard Close

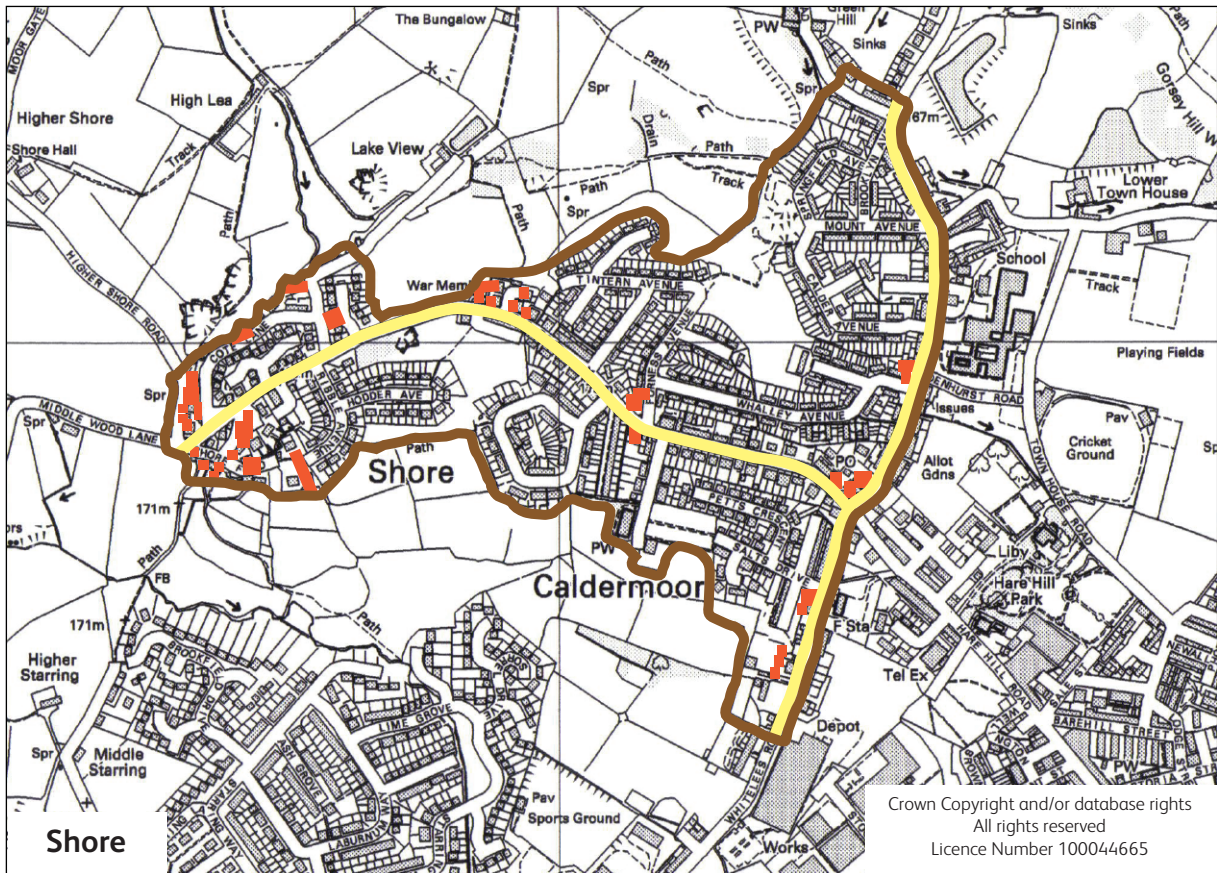


Wellington Lodge

Houses at Park View opposite the terrace on Townhouse Road gain from simplicity of design and the use of traditional materials. Both developments sit comfortably in the Pennine setting.



Park View



Shore Settlement Map (earlier development shown in red)



Higher Shore Road

SHORE

Shore Hall, at the head of the valley, and the settlement which developed lower down, lie at the moorland edge on the packhorse route which is now part of the Pennine Bridleway and which linked Littleborough with Rochdale, Bacup and Todmorden. This route radiates from Shore and other settlements on the western side of the valley. Middlewood Lane / Peddlar Brow is part of the network which links Shore to Wardle village. Once an early centre of spinning and weaving, the village retains its peaceful rural setting. A large residential development now occupies the site of the former Shore Mills.

Examples of Victorian terrace and early 20th Century social housing are to be found on the west side of Shore Road and local authority housing, running through to Calderbrook Road, to the east. Shore Hall, a fine 17th Century yeoman's house with its stone sundial shaft, and Lower Shore Farm, are listed. The barn immediately west of Shore Hall, and the Higher Shore Farmhouse and its adjoining barn are also listed.

The older buildings, including a stone terrace marking the line of Shore Road, and the group of buildings around the King William IV public house, once an important hostelry for those using the pack horse routes, are further evidence of the importance of stone as the basic material. Cote Lane, an old track bypassing Shore Road has a number of substantial Victorian houses in local stone, standing back from and above the lane. Most have gardens and are evidence of developing Nineteenth Century business and industrial activity and of its managers in Littleborough and in the Shore locality. Cottages of an earlier period cluster around Shore Fold and Calf Hey, two other tracks that subdivide the original Shore settlement.



Cote Lane



Settlement map of Summit, Barnes Meadows, Calderbrook, Dean Head and Timbercliffe (earlier development in red)

SUMMIT, BARNES MEADOWS, CALDERBROOK, DEAN HEAD AND TIMBERCLIFFE

This settlement follows the main lines of communication. Constricted by canal, river, road, rail and steep valleys, buildings follow the original routes. Apart from a few more recent residential projects, like Fothergill and Harvey’s Timbercliffe estate and the Dean Head development between the canal and Todmorden Road, there is little room for more buildings of any kind. A Local Authority estate at Barnes Meadows, built in the 1950s, is located on a site, rising between Todmorden Road and Calderbrook Road. Grove Village, a recently completed private development, is built on the site of the former Grove Mill.

Barnes Meadows and Calderbrook constitute a more densely populated urban area between Todmorden Road and Calderbrook Road. Until the opening in 1824 of the improved Turnpike Road through Summit, the only reliable route to Todmorden was from Featherstall to Steanor Bottom via Caldermoor, Newgate, Calderbrook, Smithy Nook and Salley Street, small hamlets following a linear pattern. Calderbrook Terrace, comprising double-fronted substantial three storey houses in sandstone with blue slate roofing follows the road rising from the A6033. Opposite and a little further up Barnes Meadows is Stansfield Hall School, itself an attractive stone structure built into the hillside and dating from the late 1890s.

The Barnes Meadows estate built in the 1950s, a Local Authority development, was constructed originally with the use of pre-fabricated concrete units. Problems arising from the reinforced concrete required the estate to be rebuilt in the 1980s in conventional brick cavity wall construction. Its distinctive use of red/mauve brick gives it an untypical, non-Pennine character.

As with other medium to large scale zoned developments, large packages applied to the landscape by their nature, lack the organic character to be found in settlements which have grown up over a period of time as a result of a variety of social and economic pressures.

St James Church and Churchyard at the junction of Calderbrook and Higher Calderbrook Roads overlook a terrace of stone cottages (Lower Calderbrook) located on the 1851 Ordnance Survey map.

The importance of Summit derives from the part it played in the development of the transport network of road, canal and rail and its association with a once thriving textile industry centred on Rock Nook Mill. Much of Summit, demonstrating the stone heritage with its terraces, courtyards and ginnels of the 18th and 19th Centuries lies hidden between the road and the canal. The pattern of the built environment in this area emphasises the distinction between linear organic growth following the



Summit - cast-iron aqueduct carrying the River Roch over the railway



Grove 'Village'



St Jame's Calderbrook

road and canal system and later development based on uniform house designs.

The building of the Summit Tunnel and the later choice of Summit as the site for cotton textile mills provided a powerful stimulus to growth. Because of its restricted topography, the overall character of Summit village is little changed since the late 19th Century.

The pattern of development being determined by the site and the availability of land has produced variety in the profile of the building mass, spacing and an overall balance of scale. Differences in height, overall size, roof treatment and the use of building materials and detail make the visual interest of the settlement immediately apparent and invite further exploration. Three former Methodist chapels, two fronting Todmorden Road, have been well adapted to residential use. Buildings and house types range from late 18th Century to Victorian and include 19th Century terraces mainly in stone, one distinctively in red brick, and double-fronted stone houses combining to make one stone terrace. Slight variations in detail give each property an individual character.

A powerful industrial statement is made by the mill buildings at the roadside and in particular by Rock Nook Mill on the eastern side of the Rochdale Canal.



Cottages at Lower Calderbrook

Design features include string courses, which occur frequently and emphasise scale. Much use is made of corbelling to support rainwater troughs. Several buildings have integral troughing concealed in cornice mouldings. Cantilevered stone canopies are to be found over some front doors. Door and window openings on nearly all buildings are well proportioned and framed by simple but distinctive sandstone or gritstone features.

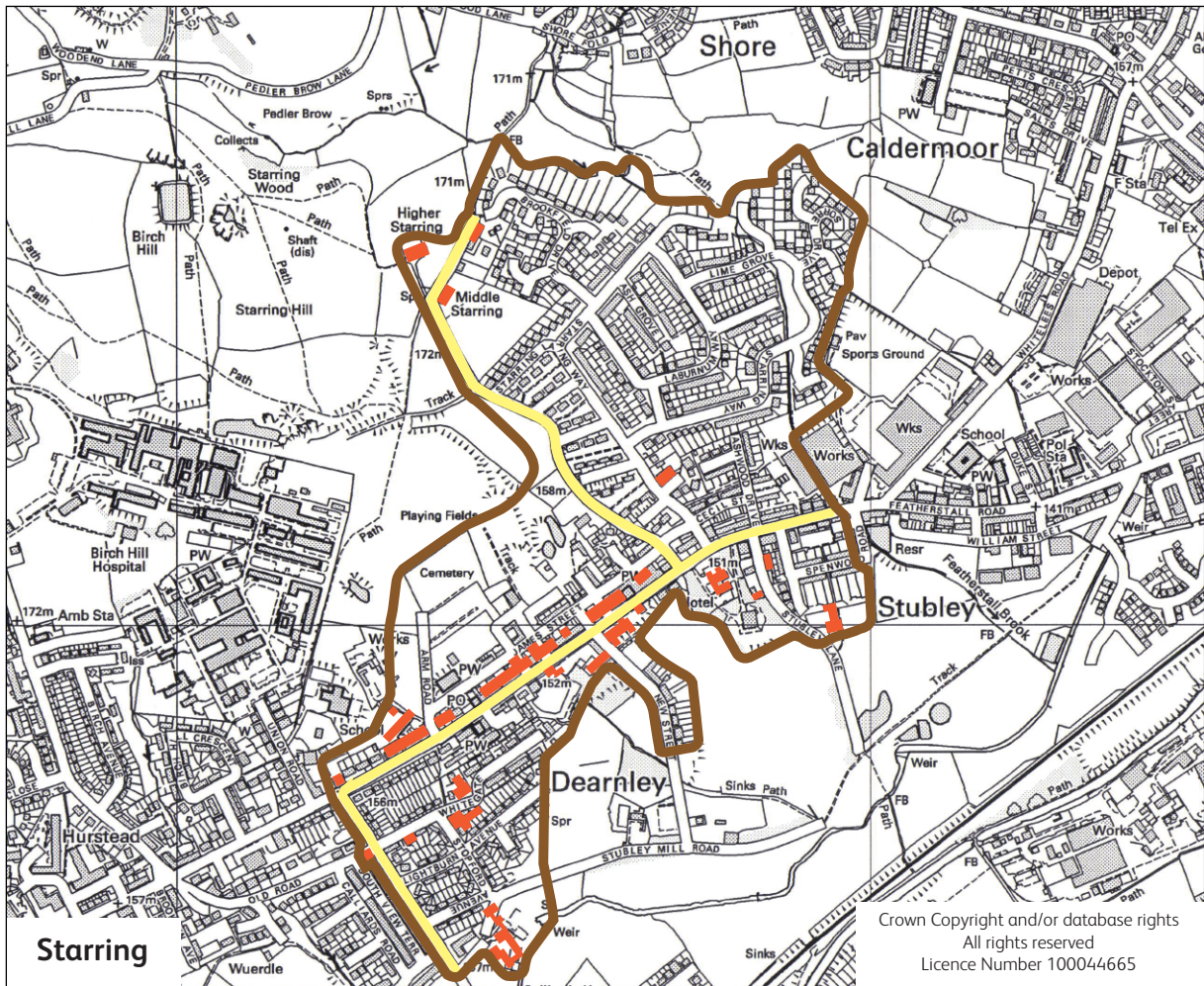
The line of Whitelees/Calderbrook Road, running from the Royal Exchange public house to Steanor Bottom Toll House, is perhaps the clearest and most interesting example locally of the stone trail following what was once one of the most important roads in the area linking Rochdale to West Yorkshire. Newgate, Handle Hall, Lower Calderbrook, Smithy Nook and Salley Street each one a small settlement in its own right, little changed in appearance since they were first built.



Barnes Meadows



Houses at Summit



Starring, Stubley and Bents Farm Settlement map (earlier development in red)

STARRING, STUBLEY AND BENTS FARM

Split by the main Littleborough to Rochdale Road (A58) this area shows a mix of old and new buildings. The older stone terraces line the main road with side roads leading to more modern developments. Starring Way/Bents Farm estate is a large, modern but well-established estate with a mix of house types and a mixed age range, from young family homes to retired family homes.

With open aspects, including wide views of the countryside and the moors, it is a well-planned, well-cared-for area. It has no retail amenities of its own, although shops, public houses, churches and a restaurant are found along the main road.

A new small-scale provision of shopping facilities might be welcome, where location and design are sensitive to the character of the area.

The Rochdale/Halifax Road is lined with stone-built properties again emphasising the linear or “ribbon” nature of early developments. An in-fill of newer buildings for the most part blends in well. There are, however, other properties whose style and material is in no way typical of the area.

The three oldest buildings in this settlement are Stubley Old Hall, Dearnley Old Hall and Bents Farm farmhouse. Stubley Old Hall, on the southern side of the A58, has

records going back to the 13th Century. Dearnley Old Hall on the northern side of the A58 is a more modest 17th Century dwelling, the drip mouldings framing the windows being a distinctive feature of its character.

Bents Farm farmhouse, also on the northern side of the A58 stands in a prominent position well back from the main road. Its once rural setting is now the site of the 1970s residential development referred to. On the south side of the A58, Stubley New Hall, a handsome Victorian house now converted into apartments overlooking the Roch Valley, lies concealed behind the Old Hall.



Bents Farm Estate



Stubley New Hall

STARRING COMMUNITY WOODLAND

Barker's Wood was set up in 1993 on land gifted for recreational and educational purposes to the benefit of the local community by Mrs Marjory Barker. It is a significant recreational Urban Green Space. Ten years on, the planting is well established on the site of the former Starring Coal and Fireclay works.

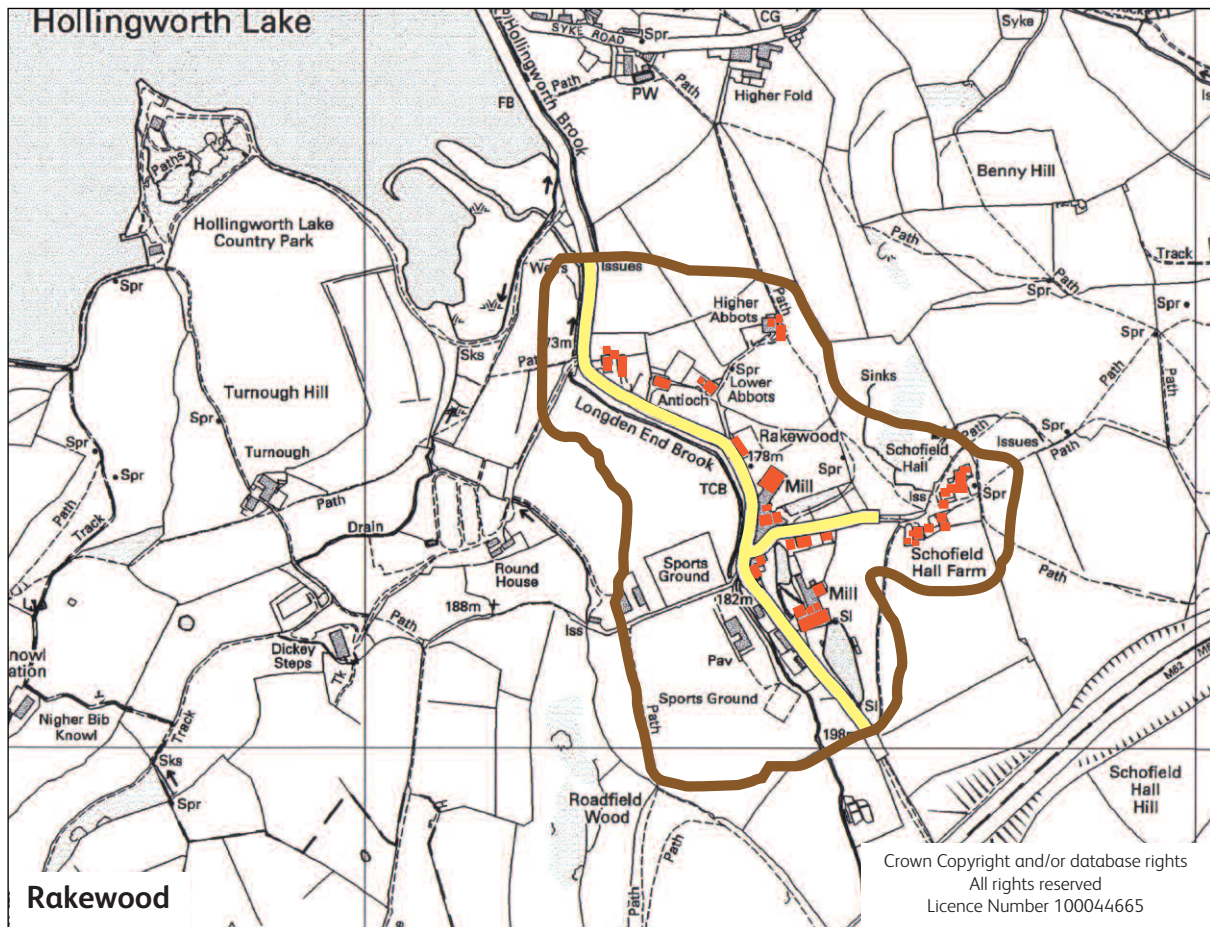
The stone trail leading out of Littleborough to Dearnley is very clearly defined. Imposing stone terraces of generous proportions, double fronted with gardens front and rear, line the rise to Stubley on both sides of the road. Of the Victorian era, these speak of an increasing growth of affluence and respectability. Clearly not workers' cottages, these are the homes of a rising middle class.



Stubley Old Hall



Dearnley Hall

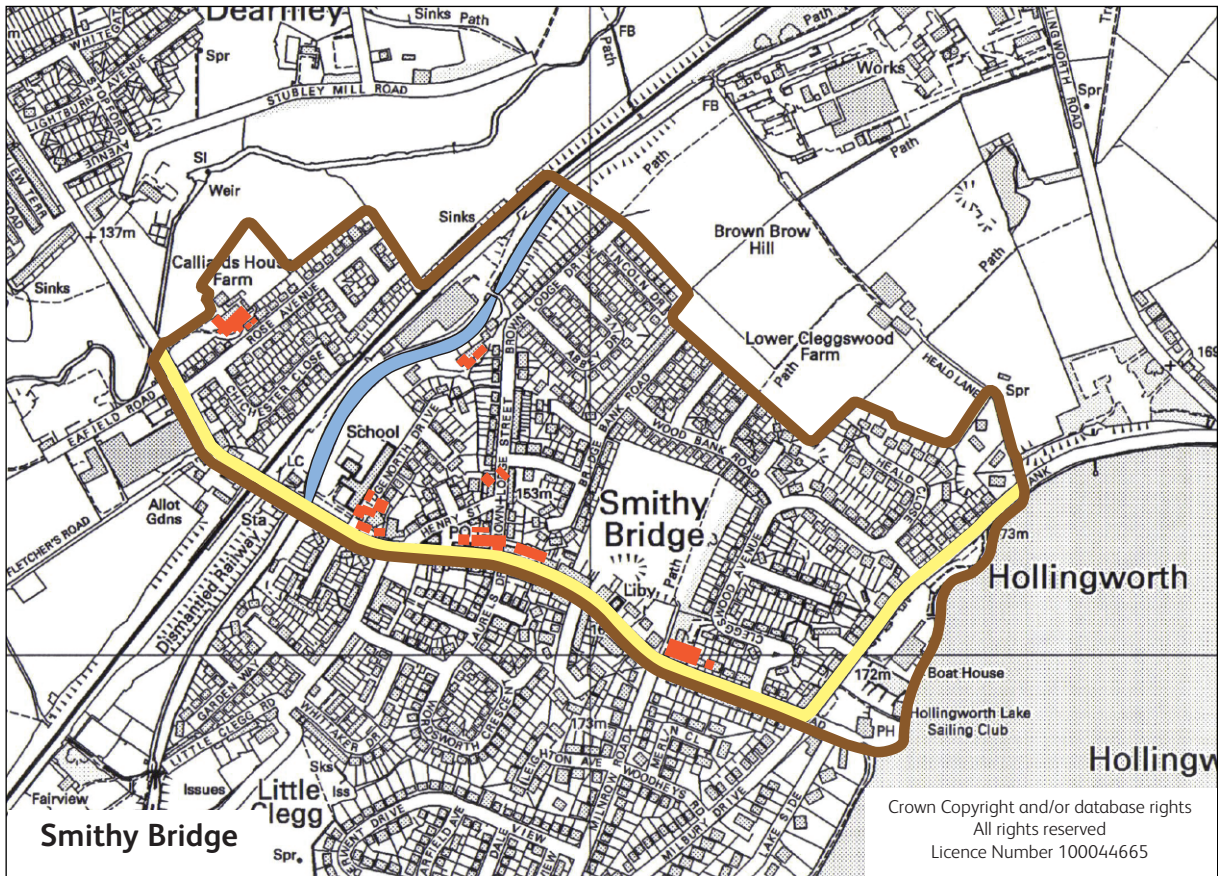


Rakewood Settlement map (earlier development shown in red)

RAKEWOOD

Rakewood, a collection of buildings situated on Rakewood Road, on the southeast side of Hollingworth Lake, comprises 23 cottages, houses and bungalows, 2 small mills (one of which is derelict), Schofield Hall Farm and the ruins of Schofield Hall. Most dwellings are of local stone and date back to the 18th Century. The M62 viaduct at Rakewood provides a dramatic backdrop to this otherwise rural and remote settlement, one nevertheless self-sufficient in most things until the 1960s.

Most of the more important buildings in Rakewood are part of a Conservation Area. The prominence of traditional design and the use of stone are immediately apparent.



Smithy Bridge Settlement map (earlier development shown in red)

SMITHY BRIDGE

Smithy Bridge is mainly a post-1960s residential settlement that covers substantially the land between Hollingworth Lake and the railway line. Its buildings are therefore predominantly of brick with tiled roofing in common with other housing of this era. Both the canal and railway cut through, running parallel with the A58. A wildlife/green corridor is designated alongside the Rochdale Canal.

Services in the area include some small/medium-sized shops, a primary school, library, several public houses and some light industry. Its proximity to Hollingworth Lake Country Park and the Equestrian Centre have helped to make it a popular residential area. The Rochdale Canal and its Green Space Corridor while constraining the future development of Smithy Bridge potentially provides a further recreational resource for its residents.

At certain peak times of traffic movement there can be congestion from vehicles using roads through Smithy Bridge to visit the lake and as a commuter route.

Once again, the few older buildings clustered around the end of Brown Lodge Street at its junction with Smithy Bridge Road indicate an original settlement of stone cottages as a nodal point on an important line of communication. Proposals to make more intensive use of Hollingworth Lake and its visitor facilities at the Country Park, will lead to increased traffic movement on the access routes B6225, A6033 and A58, particularly at weekends and holidays.



Former weavers cottages at Smithy Bridge

OPEN SPACES, RECREATION GROUNDS AND URBAN GREENSPACE

Urban open spaces are important in breaking up the built environment and they contribute to the character of the area and may provide an important recreational amenity. The key areas of Urban Green Space are protected in the Unitary Development Plan under Policy **UG/3**. The playing field areas at Barnes Meadows and Calderbrook, the open space enclosed by Lakebank and Smithy Bridge Road at Smithy Bridge and the Urban Green Space between Brown Street and Hare Hill Road are examples of open spaces relieving the landscape of the built environment. Effort to establish a flower meadow on the latter, land reclaimed from the polluted former gasworks site, shows how open space may be transformed and enhanced.

The flood plain of the Roch Valley reaching into the heart of Littleborough is an asset providing an opportunity for further informal use and access by way of the Green Corridor.

LISTED STRUCTURES

(Full list available from Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council)

Structures of particular note identified in the index of Principal Buildings, Department of the Environment List 1986 are:

Structures (Grade II listed)

- Railway Arches

Places of Worship (Grade II listed)

- St James, Calderbrook
- Holy Trinity Church, Littleborough

Secular Buildings (Grade II* listed)

- Dearnley Old Hall
- Old Bent House
- Shore Hall
- Stubley Old Hall
- Windy Bank

Secular Buildings (Grade II listed)

- The Coach House, Lodge Street
- The Wheatsheaf Buildings

Scheduled Ancient Monument

- The Roman Road - one of the area's most important historic structures



Cottages at Smithy Bridge

7

Planning

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN - SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE FOR LITTLEBOROUGH

INTRODUCTION

This part of the Town Design Statement (TDS) has the status of Supplementary Planning Guidance and was adopted by the Council as Local Planning Authority in November 2004. It accords with and supplements those policies of the UDP that relate to the design and layout of new developments, including open spaces and the protection of the built heritage. It should be read with existing and future approved supplementary planning guidance.

It applies to the area shown in the current Unitary Development Plan and is intended as a guide for all those involved in the development process. It will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and regeneration initiatives and applicants are therefore advised to take full account of the guidance in this document when drawing up proposals. It will help developers/applicants to understand how the policies of the UDP should be interpreted in the Littleborough context having regard to the need for development to reflect the best of the town's character and to maintain its vitality and distinctiveness. The guidance follows the principles set out in UDP Policy **G/BE/1**, i.e. that:

"New development (both buildings and their settings) will be required to contribute to the provision of an attractive, safe and accessible built environment, and in particular contribute to the quality of the townscape and landscape, and accord with the best of its surroundings. Developments that engender local distinctiveness will be encouraged."

Government advice encourages initiatives and guidance aimed at improving the quality of new developments, through innovation and respect for character. The bulk of Government guidance on design is set out in:

PPG 1
PPG 15
PPG 16

The Borough Council as Local Planning Authority is keen to make dramatic improvements in the design of new developments and open space to improve image and quality of life. A number of initiatives are planned and the preparation of more Supplementary Planning Guidance for specific types of development or areas is planned. This document should be read in conjunction with any existing SPG.

The guidance has been prepared following detailed research and analysis of the character of the built environment, the built heritage, open spaces and rural areas set out in Parts A and B of the TDS. The TDS has also examined trends in new developments and the issues and the opportunities for future development and regeneration initiatives that need to be addressed. Further background information placing the development of Littleborough's older buildings in a historical context may be found in the Heritage Statement.

The mixed nature of much of Littleborough's built environment and the varied character of settlements make these elements of its heritage vulnerable to the effects of inappropriate repair, alteration or further development. This guidance will help to ensure that development relates to the local character and distinctiveness of its surroundings.

It is important that architects, designers, builders, utility companies and individuals should read this document before drawing up proposals. It will help to ensure that the design and layout of development or alterations are compatible with the Council's policies and acceptable to the Council. It will also help to ensure that planning applications are less likely to require revision and therefore be dealt with more speedily. It is acknowledged that some building or alteration works do not, on their own, require planning permission and in such cases, the Council will not have control over them. However, the good practice set out in the guidance is commended to those carrying out such works.

The UDP policies referred to in this SPG Note are those of the Revised Deposit Replacement Plan as these are likely to be carried through into the Adopted Replacement Plan. In most cases these are similar to the equivalent policies of the UDP Adopted in 1999. This SPG is expected to remain valid whilst the Replacement UDP is in operation. However, it will be monitored and reviewed as necessary.

(Users of this document may also wish to refer to the many useful illustrations and photographs in Parts A and C).

Local Consultation

During the research stage of the Town Design Statement members of the Littleborough community formed the groups studying the area's landscape setting and the essential features of its built environment. Their findings and the views of other members of the public consulted in the process, have been taken into account in putting forward planning guidance relevant to Littleborough's special characteristics. These characteristics are set out in the following section, The Built Heritage – Distinctive Local Features and Materials.

DESIGN CRITERIA

Though difficult to define, good design character, which includes siting and scale, is something most of us rarely comment on. With individual buildings and with groups or clusters of buildings what is immediately acceptable seems to be achieved by a combination of essential elements. We are almost always aware only when it is absent and the overall design does not work.



House at Summit illustrating string courses

Balance and proportion and the scale and relationship of vertical and horizontal features are basic elements essential to good design. These may be apparent in differences in roof heights and differences in distance from the main building line of some sections of the overall mass of the building. Again, individual buildings vary in this respect as they relate to one another; the spaces between and around buildings and groups of buildings are a vitally important part of good design. As with a successful marriage, it is the nature of the spaces in between, which makes for a harmonious relationship.

These more visually significant features are complemented by the use made of materials and finishes, roof pitch, the design of window and door openings, the choice of design of window frames and doors. These features, together with interesting decorative details, contribute to the recognisable personality of the street scene, providing the essential quality that enables a variety of buildings to live comfortably together.

Sensitivity to the place of these elements is apparent locally in the design features of the Nineteenth Century and earlier built environment and was achieved largely without applied planning conditions. Today planning guidance may be helpful in encouraging an informed approach to the design of new developments and of individual properties and of small-scale changes to existing buildings.

Additionally in an urban location, street furniture should be in keeping with its setting to enhance local character, and shop fronts should be in scale with their surroundings and their host buildings. The design, scale and colour of shop fronts and street furniture are factors that can easily detract from, or completely overturn, the character of an area if applied insensitively.

For example, a study of the Littleborough Central Conservation Area indicates signs of neglect and some alteration to the detail of individual properties, which are not in keeping with their original design or with the overall character of the area. Good design criteria are applicable to all locations – not exclusively to Conservation Areas.

THE BUILT HERITAGE – DISTINCTIVE LOCAL FEATURES AND MATERIALS

While the following list of valuable features which need to be retained and protected is not exhaustive, it contains in our view the most significant. A close study of materials, construction methods and individual items designed for a particular building will reveal the elements that give it a distinctive identity.

On an elevation are some of the characteristics that denote Pennine family links or which make an individual structure unique.



Original flag walling, setts and cast-iron bollards on Lodge Street

Flagstone Walls and Pavements

The stone surfaces of Littleborough's floorscape are an essential part of its Pennine heritage. Flagstones, setts and stone trackways are still clearly in evidence. The trackways, which once serviced farms and the mills and mine workings of an earlier phase of Littleborough's industrial development, may still be seen in the Ealees Valley and on Lightowlers Lane.

The upright flagstones in the village, marking the boundaries or curtilage of rows of terraces, are as much a part of our "urban landscape" as are the dry stone walls of the rural landscape. In recognition of their special contribution to the local heritage of the South Pennine area some of them have been listed.



Typical owl hole



Falcon Cottages illustrating typical door frames



Shore Hall illustrating drip mouldings



House at Summit illustrating distinctive door frame



Bents Farm Farmhouse illustrating drip mouldings & mullions

**Loss of Traditional Artefacts and Materials
- The Need for Consultation**

Recently the removal of flagstone paving from Littleborough station platform (both in 2003 and 2004) has reminded us how vulnerable important elements of our heritage are to “improvement”. The demolition in March 2004 of original wharf-side buildings at Ealees represented another significant loss of Littleborough’s built heritage. Action by some builders, developers, and contractors working for Statutory Authorities and for Utilities (gas, water and electricity) to simplify or modify the streetscape by replacing traditional materials with artificial, should be resisted where possible. Consultation with Planners and the Community before work is carried out could help to avoid the loss of characteristic natural materials.

Street Furniture

In addition to using existing planning advice and regulation we urge that “unregulated” signs, structures, decorative features and permanent traffic works are subject to a consultation process.



Slate Gable

Watershot Masonry

Considerable use was made of this traditional method of building in stone and is particularly apparent in some of the older gritstone buildings. Each stone block is angled so that the top of the face overhangs the bottom: in this way rainwater penetration is reduced as the water will drip vertically from the top of each block. Before the introduction of cavity walling it was important to try to minimise rainwater penetration. The fact that this was not always successful in coping with wind-driven rain can be deduced from the other traditional building method, the use of externally slated elevations.



Watershot Masonry

Slate Clad Elevations and Gable Ends

It was a practice locally to clad elevations particularly gable ends of buildings exposed directly to prevailing westerlies, in blue slate. This treatment provides an extra layer of protection, a vertical damp-proof course against wind-driven rain.

Chimneys

Many of the older stone buildings across the South Pennines share a common design of simple gritstone chimneys topped by a projecting course of flanged stones that throw rainwater clear of the chimney base. Water penetration affecting stonework is kept to a minimum.



Gritstone Chimneys

Venetian Windows

Another common design feature of buildings across the South Pennines is the use of so-called “Venetian” windows. This feature is divided into three glazed surfaces the middle of which is topped with an arched window. Used in the first storey elevation sometimes above a doorway and under the gable end the “Venetian” window gives at the same time a modest degree of variety and decoration and a sense of balance to the whole elevation. Examples are to be found in the north elevation of the cottage opposite the Old School House at the bottom of Ealees and in the Northwest facing gable end of the Fisherman’s Inn. Their use indicates a growing affluence and sense of style apparent in the early 19th Century.

Integral Troughing in Cornice Mouldings

Several Victorian buildings in the Central Conservation Area of Littleborough have lead lined troughing or guttering to collect roof rainwater and convey it directly into down pipes dispensing with external troughing; this arrangement makes for a neater more elegant elevation and the mouldings add to the attractiveness of the elevation. The drawback to this arrangement is water damage to the masonry if the lead lining is cracked or perforated or if downpipe outlets become blocked.



“Venetian” window at Fisherman’s Inn



“Venetian” window in cottage at Ealees



Integral troughing on Seed Hill Buildings



Integral troughing on Church Street shops



Locally produced glazed brick



Prospect Street

Bricks and Earthenware Pipes, Tiles and Troughs

Readily accessible deposits of coal and fire-clay led to brick and pipe manufacture locally in the 19th Century. The Summit Brickworks, finally closed in 1971, Hall and Rogers at Smithy Bridge and Starring Coal and Fire clay works, later known as Starring Pottery, were three of the local firms. Bricks produced at the Summit works were very dense like Accrington Brick; others appear to be the by-product of the salt glaze pipe manufacturing process, themselves glazed and showing the circular marks of the pipes which they supported in the firing process.

DESIGN CHECKLIST: A) BUILDING MATERIALS AND FINISHES

Retention of Original Materials

Building materials and finishes used in new development should be sensitive to the heritage of the area and to surrounding buildings. In areas where there is a predominance of traditional stone buildings, proposals for new buildings, extensions and alterations will normally be expected to avoid the use of alien or poor artificial materials. In areas where there is scope to employ stone as a material in the construction of new buildings in order to create identity (where appropriate in the context of the wider area) or reinforce the character of an area where stone buildings prevail, opportunities should be taken. The use of natural materials will usually be required for new development in Conservation Areas.

Removal of Original Materials

Removal of original materials may only be allowed as a temporary expedient on condition that they are safely retained and put back after work has been completed to restore a building or area to its former condition. Stone setts, flags, stone slab pavements, granite kerbs should not be replaced with artificial materials. These create a character totally out of keeping with that of local historical significance.

New Properties

In-fill between existing buildings should be compatible with its neighbours. Its overall proportions, design, "footprint", building line, skyline and ridge pattern, and the materials used should be sympathetic to the prevailing streetscape.

Roofscape

Most of Littleborough's older buildings are roofed in blue slate or grey stone/slate. With listed buildings or in Conservation Areas re-roofing should be carried out in the same materials. Both blue slate and grey stone/slate should be re-used or where necessary replaced by the same material. Elsewhere planning permission and building regulation approval are not required but in this case the use or re-use of traditional materials in keeping with the original character of the building would be encouraged.

Chimneys and Chimney Pots

These make a distinctive contribution to the character of a property and in particular to an older building. They should not be removed or substantially modified.

Concrete Roofing Tiles

With stone buildings the use of concrete roofing slates should be avoided as they are out of character with the rest of the building and probably with their neighbours.



Summit Brickworks, May 1968

Artificial Finishes

Only in exceptional circumstances should artificial stone or artificial blue slate be used and then very carefully as it is often easily distinguishable from natural materials when mixed with them.

DESIGN CHECKLIST: B) BUILDING FEATURES

Windows and Doorways

Their contribution to the overall presentation of a building of whatever vintage is of fundamental importance. Proportion is the essential element and with alterations or conversions should not be changed unless the proposed design enhances the overall balance of the elevation. Cills, jambs, heads and lintels should reflect the original style and where appropriate be of natural materials. Window frames should be compatible with the originals and fit comfortably with those of adjoining properties.

With listed buildings and in Conservation Areas the original style of window opening may have to be retained and original materials used. Advice should be sought about the availability of traditional glazing systems.

Dormer Windows

If dormer windows are acceptable they should have a vertical rather than horizontal emphasis and be in keeping with the host building. Cladding should be of the same material as the main roof. Dormers should be constructed so as not to damage the integrity of a building's elevation or structural details, such as corbels, cornices and string courses used to support gutterings and troughings; neither should they extend above the ridge.

Conservatories

Wherever sited should not be out of scale with the main building or of a style, material and design which clashes with the property or its neighbours.

Porches

These will often detract from the original character of a building if constructed in unsympathetic materials or in an untypical design. As extensions to stone or brick buildings they should be of matching material with a pitched roof of the appropriate matching natural material.

Rainwater Goods

Gutters, troughing and down pipes should be suitable in colour and style for the design of the building. Acceptable products in plastic or aluminium can be found to replace traditional timber or cast iron.

Stone Cleaning

This should not be carried out by methods that can seriously damage the patina of the stonework and possibly some of its finer detail.



Honour Matthews Clay Pipe

DESIGN CHECKLIST: C) Other Structures, Street Furniture & Landscaping

Satellite Dishes

These should be sited away from the main elevation of the building and below the roofline fronting a road. Their use on listed buildings and in Conservation Areas will be subject to planning control. Planning advice should be sought and reference made to Review Plan Policy UDP **CF/7**, Telecommunications. A booklet is also available from RMBC.

External Meter Cupboards

These should be located away from the main elevation and finished in muted colours.

Street Furniture and Hard Landscaping

In areas intended for public use and for leisure and relaxation or for pedestrian circulation it is expected that street furniture and hard landscaping will be user-friendly by providing, where appropriate, seating, shelter, cycle parking and play facilities. Whether on new developments or in an existing setting, the needs of each location will differ but all should be sympathetically handled to contribute to the successful functioning of the area. The value of interesting open spaces should be respected and clutter avoided. In new developments the provision of skateboarding runs should be considered among the play facilities. See UDP **BE/8** 'Street Furniture and the Public Realm'.

DESIGN CHECKLIST: D) Shop Fronts, Signs and Advertisements

Refer also to Rochdale MBC Supplementary Planning Guidance Document 'Design Guidelines for Shop Fronts and Associated Advertisements'.

In a town or village, the part played by shop fronts in conveying a sense of friendly welcome to the shopper or visitor is an extremely important one. The scale of shop front signs, the colours chosen and the materials in which they are finished used sympathetically are the most important factors determining the success of this message. These essential details enhance the building and the quality of the whole area, something easily spoilt or compromised by signs that are inappropriate to the overall setting. Size and garishness do not compensate for a lack of quality.

The use of plastics should be avoided. Internally illuminated plastic troughs with company logos are inappropriate in size and finish to most traditional buildings. Canopies and blinds made from shiny plastic materials look out of place and external illumination of shop fronts requires very careful design if the frontage is not to acquire a set of lighting accessories out of keeping with its character.

Policy **BE/6** of the Replacement UDP sets out the key requirements for new shop fronts. This stresses that they should not detract from frontages of historic value or architectural quality, should be compatible with the style of the building into which they are being inserted, should be sympathetic to the character of the street scene, and should provide safe and convenient access for people with physical or sensory disabilities.

DESIGN CHECKLIST: E) Landscaping and Trees

Landscaping in new development is important to enhance the character and amenity of the area in general and it should be designed as an integral feature of the development. Policy **BE/9** 'Landscaping in new development' provides detailed criteria on where landscaping will be required and what matters should be addressed in the design of schemes. Policy **NE/8** deals with development affecting trees and woodlands.

DESIGN CHECKLIST: F) Accessibility, Pedestrians, Cycling and Parking

Traffic and car parking will continue to be a sensitive issue in Littleborough. If more housing is built and more visitors are attracted to Littleborough and the attractions nearby, traffic pressure will grow and has the potential to affect local highway safety and residential amenity. New development must provide adequate parking but should also encourage access by other modes, including public transport, cycling and walking through careful design and the provision of infrastructure. Relevant UDP policies are:

Policy A/3 **New Development**
- Access for pedestrians and disabled people

Policy A/10 **New Development**
- Provision of parking

Policy A/4 **New Development**
- Access for Cyclists

DESIGN CHECKLIST: G) Crime, Safety and Security

Reducing crime and the fear of crime is a vital element in creating a pleasant and sustainable community and all development and regeneration proposals will be carefully considered to determine their impact on crime in the area. "Designing out crime" is an important aspect of design in Littleborough as it is anywhere, but care must be taken to ensure that this does not lead to the creation of secured 'no-go areas' or detract from the aim of a lively community with an inclusive sense of place and individual character. Those contemplating development proposals should consult with the Police Architectural Liaison Unit at the earliest stage of the development process. The advice of the Unit will be considered by the Council as local planning authority when considering formal planning applications.

DESIGN CHECKLIST: H) Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency in new development should be an important consideration in the design and construction of new development (including the adaptation of existing buildings) and should be reflected in the use of materials. The maximum use of local and recycled building materials for construction is encouraged where this would not affect the quality, character, and setting of the development. Landscaping and the layout of development should also take account of opportunities to conserve and assist the efficient use of energy. Policy **EM/14** of the UDP should be referred to.

Proposals aimed at energy efficiency and the use of sustainable power generation systems/energy sources are encouraged (e.g. biofuels, hydro power, wind power and solar power). It is important that all proposals respect landscape character and the character and setting of buildings. Any proposals will need to satisfy UDP Policies:

**EM/17 'Sustainable Energy Sources' and
EM/15 'Wind Power Developments'**

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN LITTLEBOROUGH

House Types in Littleborough

The variety of distinctive house types to be found in Littleborough ranges from 17th and early 18th Century gritstone buildings to post 1960 residential estates, the latter being mainly of brick with concrete tile roofing. Between these two styles three others have been identified. Victorian housing, mostly post 1850, represented by terrace housing and some individual properties of a grander style was followed in the early part of the twentieth century by housing in Accrington-type red brick while Local authority and company/social housing in the 1920s and 1930s also makes use of this material.

Today, large-scale housing developments are built to tight cost limits presenting a challenge to those seeking to influence design and layout in terms of materials and quality features. In some instances developers have been responsive to encouragement to use local materials and to keep designs simple and free from applied decorative features which are uncharacteristic and serve no practical purpose.

It is important that design and layout of all new proposed housing developments or individual premises and extensions wherever situated are in conformity with adjacent buildings of the local area. New architecture should in turn relate to its context. A convincing case will need to be made for design proposals which differ from this requirement. Within the whole of the Littleborough area there are few spaces available for in-fill. Apart from potential "brownfield" sites, currently in industrial use, there is little unallocated land for residential development.

It is recognised that issues of security and crime reduction should be a material consideration in the design of future developments and regeneration projects.



Springfield Avenue



Bare Hill Street

Traffic Management

In taking account of the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance 13, the Local Authority, as the Highways Authority, will wish to ensure that development proposals are acceptable in terms of pedestrian and highway safety.

In some cases on- or off-site, highway improvements or contributions towards public transport, pedestrian or cycling infrastructure may be required. The developer may be required to carry out a Transport Assessment to evaluate impact and possible mitigation measures.



Riverstone Bridge



Wellington Lodge



Wellington Terrace

Relevant UDP Policies

Design criteria for new housing proposals and other developments are contained in a number of UDP Policies in the Review UDP. These include:

- G/BE/1** Design Quality
- BE/2** Design Criteria for New Development
- H/4** Backland Sites
- H/5** Residential Density
- H/6** Provision of Recreational Open Spaces in New Housing Development
- H/10** Residential Homes, Group Homes and Sheltered Housing
- H/11** Residential Extensions
- H/12** Flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation
- BE/8** Street Furniture and the Public Realm
- BE/9** Landscaping in New Development
- EM/14** Energy Efficiency and New Development
- NE/8** Development Affecting Trees and Woodlands
- A/3** New Development – Access for Pedestrians and Disabled People
- A/10** New Development – Provision of Parking
- A/4** New Development – Access for Cyclists

Examples of Good Practice

Durnlaw Close, the former site of the Alfred Law Woollen Mill provides a good example of the use made of the features referred to above. In addition it demonstrates

how the variety of accommodation on one site makes a practical response to the request in PPG1, section 24 and in PPG3, to provide a mix of house types.

The use of a terrace development on the site of the former Coop Woollen Mill on Whitelees Road shows how a sensitive approach to design can contribute to maintaining the character of the area.

These developments, together with others such as Ballard Close, off Calderbrook Road, demonstrate how a variety of house types may be provided on one site. This mix of accommodation reflects a social mix as well as providing an interesting aesthetic appearance.

GUIDELINES FOR CONSERVATION AREAS

Though it should be no part of the planning system to stifle originality and innovation, guidelines are of special importance in a Conservation Area. Design of a high quality and the use of materials that are compatible with their surroundings should be requirements basic to the construction of any new or refurbished building.



Durnlaw Close



Whitelees Mews

Conserving Character

The treatment of open spaces and the location and design of street furniture and the design of shop fronts, can all be crucial to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Similarly the treatment of significant detail if handled insensitively will detract from a Conservation Area's unique appearance.

Clearly in the contemporary urban setting this detail will make a powerful statement to residents and to visitors about a Conservation Area's character. In addition to respecting the use of characteristic building materials and the design features referred to in Supplementary Planning Guidance (APPENDED), the handling of the following features will constitute one of the most influential factors in determining the essential quality of the Littleborough area.

Shop Front Signage

Shop front signs play a particularly important role within the town centre conservation area. The overall size and scale of these, their shape, colour, style of lettering and the materials of which the sign is made are essential factors, each contributing to the quality of the overall design. Used sympathetically these in turn will enhance the building and the relationship to its neighbours.

Proposals should have regard to 'UDP SPG Note: Design Guidelines for Shopfronts and Associated Advertisements.'



Rif Raf



Royal Oak

Shutters and Security Grilles

Shutters and security grilles preferably should be internal and sympathetic to the building, an open lattice design being preferred. Boxes for roller shutters if used should be recessed. Demountable shuttering which leaves the shop front otherwise unchanged may also be preferred for ease of use.

Floorscape

Consistent use of paving materials should be made. Historic flooring should be retained where possible. If introduced new materials should be sympathetic to the character of the surrounding buildings and the area. Where alterations to the existing floorscape are proposed, modifications should be carried out in sympathy with the setting.

There is a need to guard against a steady accretion of a variety of decorations and adornments. Trees, shrubs, period lamp stands, bollards, inappropriate shop signs and stone plinths may be introduced into open space with the intention of giving added authenticity to a Conservation Area. Work of this kind may alter the special architectural character of a Conservation Area by obscuring important details or by breaking up the visual impact of an outstanding elevation or a unique structure.



Falcon Inn

To quote from the English Heritage document “Save Our Streets”:

“Roads To Ruin: Throughout England, the beauty and distinctiveness of our historic settlements and landscapes is disappearing under a blizzard of traffic signs, discordant paving schemes, obtrusive road markings and ugly street furniture. The resulting visual chaos diminishes the quality of all our lives.”

Perhaps the most conspicuous adverse impact, is that made by ‘clutter’ imposed on the streetscape by operations or projects not subject to formal planning regulations. These criteria apply in all locations not just in Conservation Areas.

Relevant UDP policies

Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Archeological Sites and Ancient Monuments are contained in the Design and Built Environment Chapter:

- **Developments Affecting Archeological Sites and Monuments**
- **Archaeology and Ancient Monuments**
- **Protection of Locally Important Buildings and Features of Architectural and Historic Interest**
- **Demolition of Listed Buildings**
- **Changes of Use to Listed Buildings**
- **Alterations and Extensions to Listed Buildings**
- **New Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building**

- **New Development Affecting Conservation Areas**
- **Changes of Use to Buildings in Conservation Areas**
- **Enhancement of Conservation Areas.**

DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

The nature, quality, and relationship between the countryside around Littleborough and the built up area itself is explained in detail in the Town Design Statement and Heritage Statement. The TDS and the Borough Masterplan are keen to promote Littleborough as an excellent outdoor leisure destination with good linkages between its town centre, the Canal, the Pennine Hills and Hollingworth Lake and to protect and enhance the visual and ecological value of the countryside. There is also a wider aim to ensure that development helps to sustain or regenerate the economic vitality and environmental quality of the countryside around Littleborough. This is reflected in UDP Policy **RE/2** ‘Countryside around towns’. Policy **RE/4** encourages proposals for the diversification of farm enterprises and small-scale business development where this meets certain criteria. Green Belt policy will prevent many forms of new built development but there will nevertheless be scope for ancillary buildings that support outdoor uses, farm buildings, conversions to rural buildings and other land use activities. Development proposals will be expected to be of a high quality of design and layout and should respect landscape and building character, ecological features, and adjoining uses. Policy **BE/2** ‘Design criteria for new development’ will be applied equally in urban and rural areas.

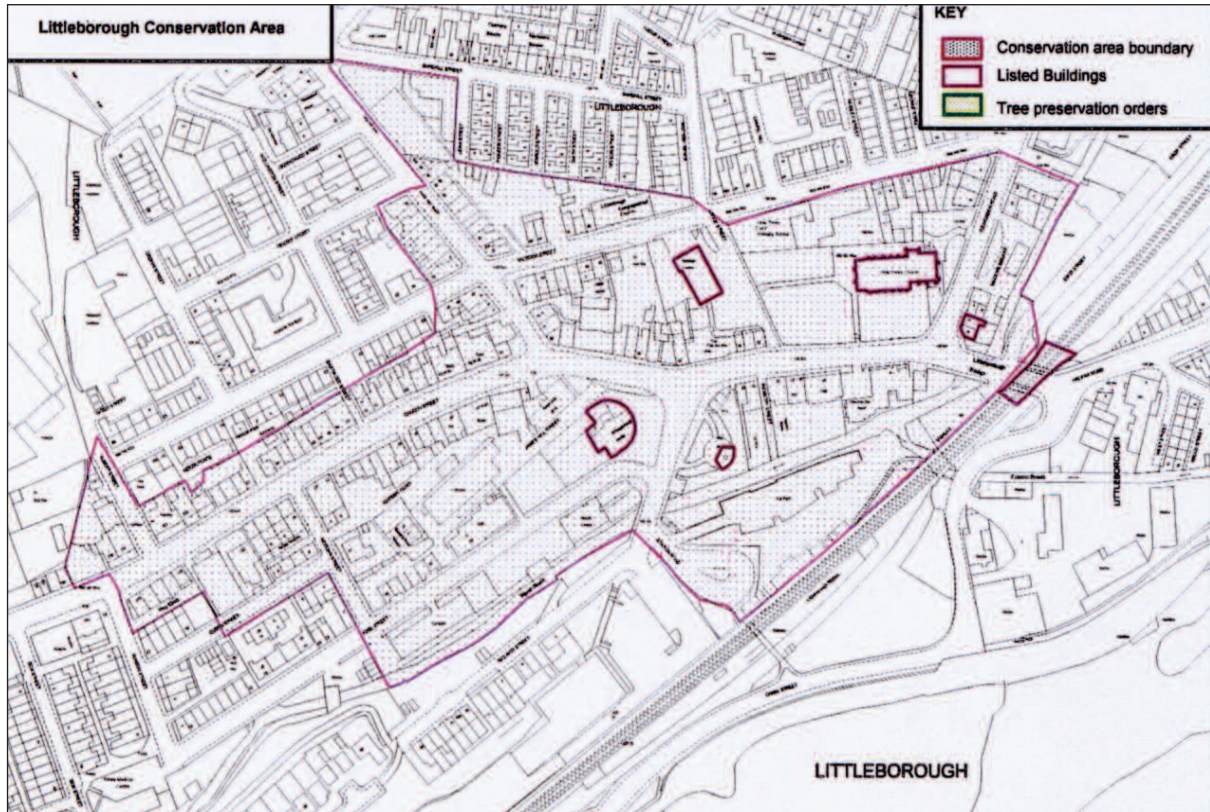


Roundhouse Building

8

CONSERVATION AREAS

CONSERVATION AREAS IN LITTLEBOROUGH



Littleborough Conservation Area

“A conservation area is not a museum, but a living community, which must be allowed to change, but in such a way as to encourage the enhancement of the existing character.”

Chris Makepeace - *Draft Conservation Area Proposals for Littleborough (1978)*

Conservation Areas are designated because of their distinctive character or historic interest. The emphasis in Conservation Areas is on the area as a whole as well as its individual buildings. The relationship of their open spaces and street patterns to their buildings will be an essential element contributing to the overall impact and character of a Conservation Area.

In reviewing the salient features of Littleborough’s four Conservation Areas the Town Design Statement seeks to focus on those elements which give each area its distinctive character and in so doing to promote a recognition of their value and a commitment to retain and where possible to enhance them.

The involvement of people who live and work in a Conservation Area in improving and enhancing its appearance can provide the most effective means of maintaining its distinctive character.

The richness of Littleborough’s built heritage is well displayed in its Conservation Areas. Rakewood, Whittaker and Hollingworth Fold are clearly in a rural setting and retain a rural character. The Central Conservation Area and some of its nearest neighbouring structures reveal how existing buildings, some of them agricultural, were adapted to new uses. Based on its increasing importance as a focal point of transport systems, Littleborough’s growth received a further stimulus in the 19th Century. The development of the town, commercial, industrial and residential followed closely the completion of the Lancashire & Yorkshire Railway.

CENTRAL CONSERVATION AREA - LITTLEBOROUGH AS A NATURAL GATEWAY

The history of Littleborough’s development as a Gateway through the Pennines can be read in its buildings and in the structures and transport network of road, canal and railway that define its eastern boundary.

Within a radius of 100 metres from the junction of the A58, A6033 and the B6225, is tangible evidence of Littleborough’s unique role in the development of transport systems in the 18th and 19th Centuries.

The dramatic impact of the railway is immediately apparent. Stephenson’s viaduct of 1841 is a bold statement of the arrival of the railway age. A closer view reveals on each side buildings and structures that the Manchester to Leeds railway either supplemented or supplanted. On the eastern side are the remnants of warehouses and workshops of the former Littleborough canal wharf, buildings at the time of writing awaited a new lease of life from the regeneration of the Rochdale Canal. Regrettably, the best preserved of these, and another of particular interest, were demolished in March 2004. Attempts to prevent demolition failed, as the structures were not listed.



Canal Wharf

To the west are the Falcon Inn and its Coach House. This formerly serviced the stagecoach routes from Manchester to Burnley, to Halifax and the route of the Halifax Toll Road over Blackstone Edge. Both the Coach House and Lodge Street have benefited from restoration work carried out in the 1980s to convert the Coach House from a derelict workshop to a Community and Heritage Centre.



The Coach House

A notable structure dominating the eastern side of the junction of Church Street and Hare Hill Road is Seed Hill Buildings. Its curved sandstone façade reflects the curved elevation of the Wheatsheaf Roundhouse.

Maintaining The Character

In identifying characteristic materials, design features and their application, which give Littleborough its distinctive personality, we draw particular attention to the following structures and features:

Structures:

- Stephenson’s Railway Viaduct;** **Grade II Listed**
- Falcon Inn and adjacent stone buildings;**
- Falcon Inn Coach House;** **Grade II Listed**
- Railway station buildings;**
- ‘Roundhouse’ buildings;** **Grade II Listed**
- Royal Oak public house;**
- Holy Trinity Parish Church;**
- Zion Chapel;**
- War Memorial;**

Features:

- Flag stone walls;**
- Slate clad gable ends;**
- Flanged gritstone chimneys;**
- Venetian windows;**
- Integral troughing in cornice mouldings;**
- Shop front details and externally applied bay windows (first floor);**
- Mullion windows;**
- Door openings with stone lintels and jambs**

Successful protection and enhancement of the Conservation Area and of listed buildings and structures follows from active planning regulation and enforcement and the commitment of the local community in support of this, and on occasion, from the active concern of individual owners.



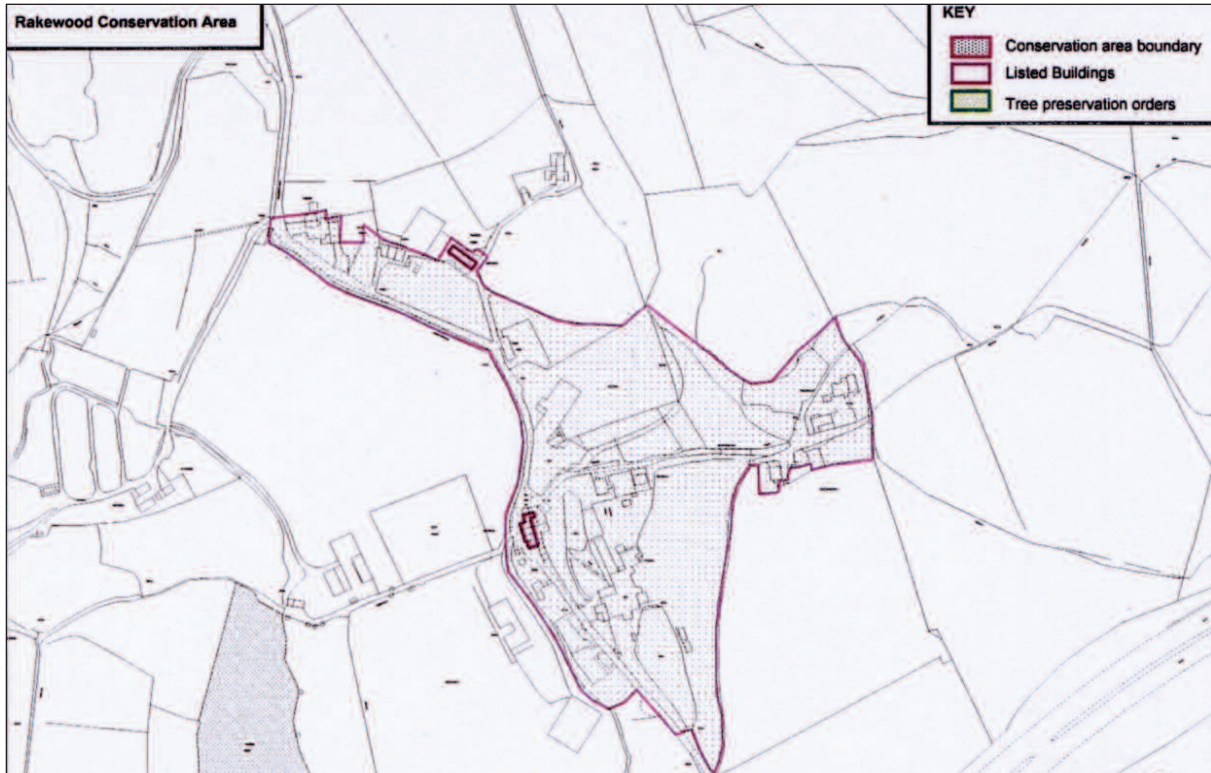
Seed Hill Buildings



The Roundhouse in the 1970s without street clutter



Street clutter



Rakewood Conservation Area

RAKEWOOD CONSERVATION AREA

A small settlement adjoining Hollingworth Fold and accessible to it by footpath, following mainly the line of Rakewood Road and Schofield Hall Road, linked to other scattered hamlets by Deep Lane. It includes two former mills and associated cottages, and the separate dwellings of Antioch, Gilead and the terrace Lower Abbots. The ‘religious’ connotations suggested by these led local people to refer ironically to the area as ‘The Holy City’. Rakewood’s stone buildings, modest in style, display the variety of simple design to be found in small South Pennine settlements. Though apparently remote by contemporary standards, Rakewood demonstrates how manufacturing activity was to be found across the whole Littleborough area.



Antioch

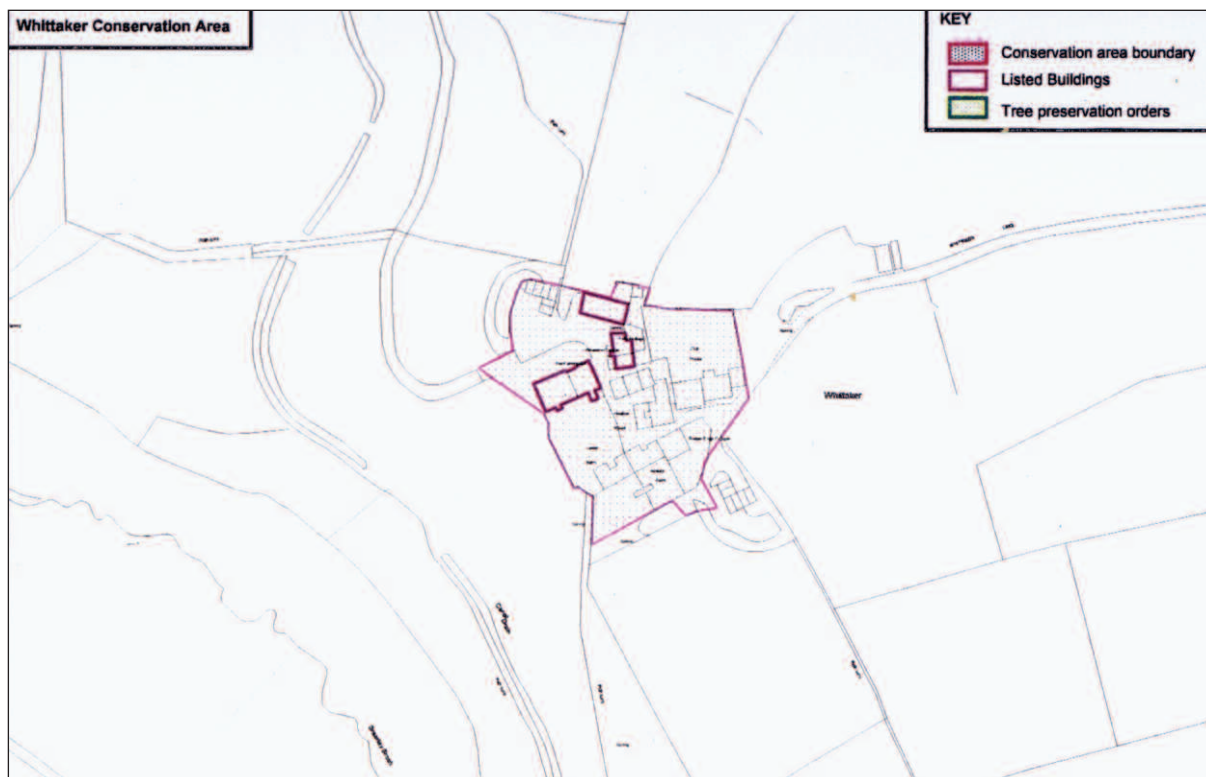
Listed Buildings:

- **Schofield Hall Road - Number 2 (Brook Cottage) – Grade II Listed.**
- **Rakewood Road – Number 63, 65, 67 & 69 (End View Cottage) – Grade II Listed.**
- **Freshwater Cottage – Grade II Listed.**
- **Longden End Clough, New Nook – Grade II Listed.**



Lower Abbots

The M62 Motorway Viaduct spanning Longden End Clough beyond the Conservation Area provides a dramatic backdrop to the scattered clusters of buildings.



Whittaker Conservation Area

WHITTAKER CONSERVATION AREA

Situated on ground rising above the Ealees valley and Hollingworth Lake, Whittaker was well served by springs, four being located in the immediate area.

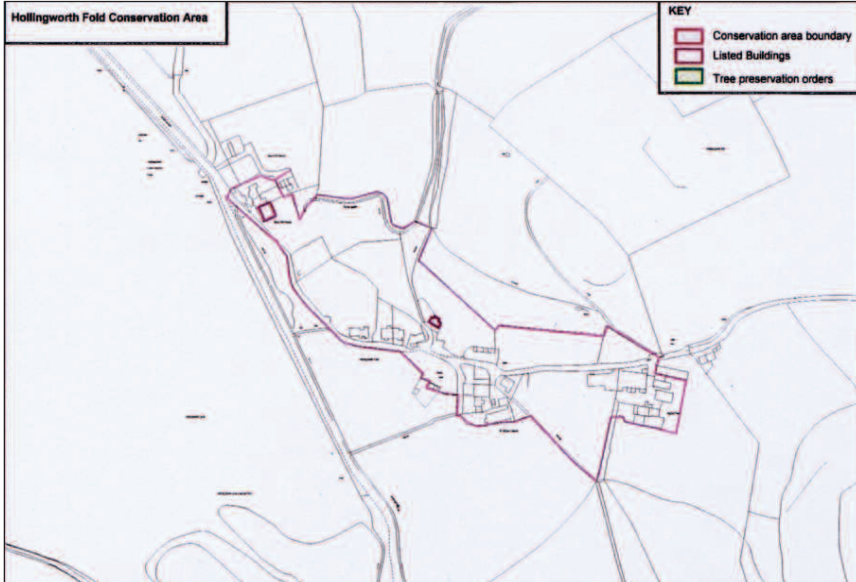
It comprises a cluster of substantial stone houses and barns, recently refurbished, dominating the rising ground immediately above the opening of the Ealees valley. This remarkable collection of handsome buildings set out around a paved courtyard constitutes a distinctive isolated South Pennine Settlement. All its sandstone buildings, some of the older having gritstone cills, lintels and mullions are strong in character as befit their exposed location. There is evidence of Victorian development adding to the original pattern.

Listed Buildings:

- **Numbers 1 & 3 – Grade II Listed.**
- **Barn immediately north of Numbers 1 & 3 – Grade II Listed.**
- **Former farmhouse, west of Whittaker Farmhouse – Grade II Listed.**



Whittaker



Hollingworth Fold Conservation Area

HOLLINGWORTH FOLD CONSERVATION AREA

In this area are included properties along Syke Lane from Bear Hill to Higher Fold including Hollingworth Fold Cottage, St. Hilda’s Church and the former school building.

Here the pattern of growth is linear, following the lane on the north side. The lane, still clearly stone-tracked further along its route, leads to Syke, Benny Hill, Sheep Bank and Whittaker.

From there it continues to its junction with Blackstone Edge Old Road, at Rough. Syke House itself, though not in the Conservation Area is a fine example of early 19th Century domestic architecture, impressive yet modest in scale and detail.

Listed Buildings:

- **Number 13, Hollingworth Fold Cottage – Grade II Listed.**
- **Bear Hill, Number 3 – Grade II Listed.**



Farm track leading to Syke

The three Conservation Areas, Rakewood, Whittaker and Hollingworth Fold, like other rural settlements, indicate a pattern associated particularly with their development in a mixed economy of farming, quarrying, mining and mills.

Evidence of coal pit waste is to be found along the Eales Valley on the north side and is very obvious in front of Syke House. At that time shippens and barns were readily adapted to new uses as workshops and housing.

The former Schofield Hall, its farm and a more recently constructed mill were all within a few hundred yards of each other and lay along tracks that led to the Tunshill Tramway and the

former coke ovens and the Britannia Pit now separated from Rakewood by the M62 Motorway.

REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF CONSERVATION AREAS

The compiling of a list of local buildings and structures and their features of special character is recommended. Such an inventory would provide the community with an accessible record for future guidance.

An opportunity exists to raise awareness of the special characteristics of a Conservation Area and to promote good design aims by involving local business and volunteer interest groups. Provision for setting up Planning and the Historic Environment advisory committee for Conservation Areas is set out in Planning Guidance Policy PPG15. The Town Design Statement group recommends the setting up of such an advisory committee for the Central Conservation Area.

At the next review of the Unitary Development Plan we would like the Local Authority to consider bringing Stephenson’s Railway Viaduct and Wellington Lodge within the Central Conservation Area.

**ROCHDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
ADOPTION DOCUMENT**

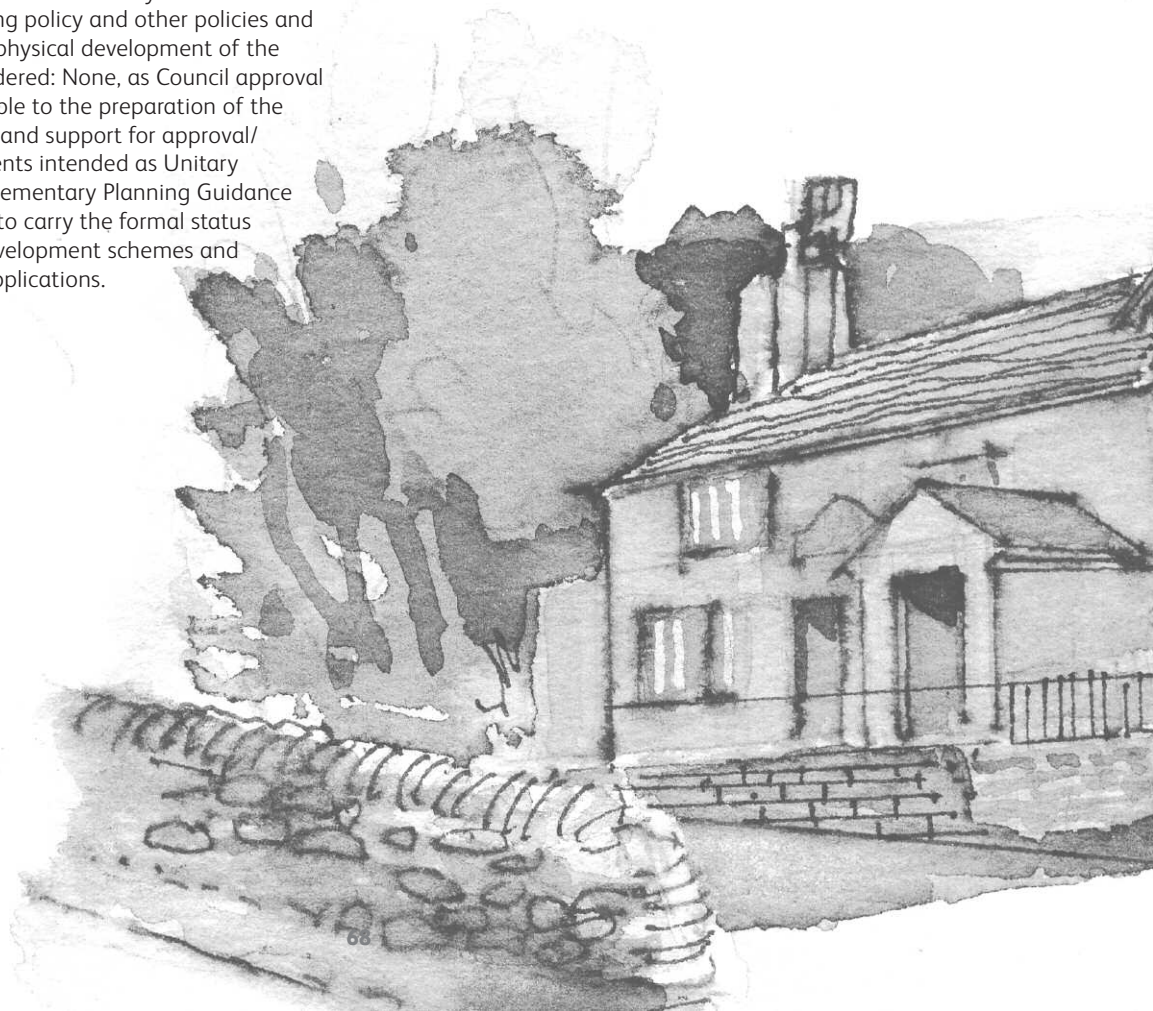
11th October 2004 : Extract

***Littleborough Town Design Statement and
Supplementary Planning Guidance***

The Head of Policy, Partnerships & Regeneration Service (CAB.282/04) sought approval for the publication of the Littleborough Town Design Statement and for the approval and adoption of the Town Design Statement as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Unitary Development Plan. The recommendations were presented as Council support was necessary before funding from the Countryside Agency could be made available for the publication and printing of the Town Design Statement, incorporating the submitted Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Cabinet, on behalf of the Council, needed to be satisfied that the factual and descriptive context upon which the planning guidelines were based was sound. Approval was also required to enable the planning guidance contained within the Town Design Statement to have formal status of Unitary Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance, as defined by the Government, to enable its use as a tool to enable better quality design and as a material consideration when determining planning applications. Further, there was a recognition that the views, issues and suggestions raised by the local community through the process to manage future change should be taken into account by the Council when it reviewed planning policy and other policies and strategies affecting the physical development of the area. Alternatives considered: None, as Council approval had been given in principle to the preparation of the Town Design Statement and support for approval/ adoption of those elements intended as Unitary Development Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance was necessary for them to carry the formal status required to influence development schemes and decisions on planning applications.

Decided that

- The publication of the Littleborough Town Design Statement be supported;
- Part B of the Town Design Statement be approved as a description of the character of the Littleborough area as recorded by the local community and as providing a context for the Supplementary Planning Guidance element;
- The Supplementary Planning Guidance for Littleborough, as contained in the Town Design Statement at Chapter 8, be approved and adopted for development control purposes;
- Part C of the Town Design Statement be noted as the community's agenda/recommendations for the management of change in Littleborough in the future;
- Officers be authorised to make further minor editorial and presentational changes that do not materially affect the content of the Town Design Statement/ Supplementary Planning Guidance as approved.



OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

The following documents should be read with this Supplementary Planning Guidance:

- The Rochdale Unitary Development Plan (the Plan adopted in March 1999)
- The Replacement Unitary Development Plan (currently at Revised Deposit stage and which will be adopted in 2005)
- Supplementary Planning Guidance for Shop Fronts and Advertisements
- Supplementary Planning Guidance for Residential Developments
- Supplementary Planning Guidance for Wind Power Developments

The following Documents are also relevant and provide additional context:

- Rochdale Borough Community Strategy
- Rochdale Canal Corridor Regeneration Strategy
- The Borough Masterplan

FURTHER ASSISTANCE AND ADVICE

- **For information about planning policy (e.g. the UDP)**

Strategic Planning and Research Team, R.M.B.C.,
Telegraph House, Baillie Street, Rochdale

(t) 01706 864369

(e) strategic.planning@rochdale.gov.uk

- **For information about development proposals, advertisements, the planning application process, design, and enforcement**

Planning Officer, Development Control Team, R.M.B.C.,
Telegraph House, Baillie Street, Rochdale

(t) 01706 864314

(e) development.control@rochdale.gov.uk

- **For information about Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Archaeology and Ancient Monuments and Design.**

Conservation and Design Officer, R.M.B.C.,
Telegraph House, Baillie Street, Rochdale

(t) 01706 864312

(e) development.control@rochdale.gov.uk

- **For information about Highway and Traffic matters**

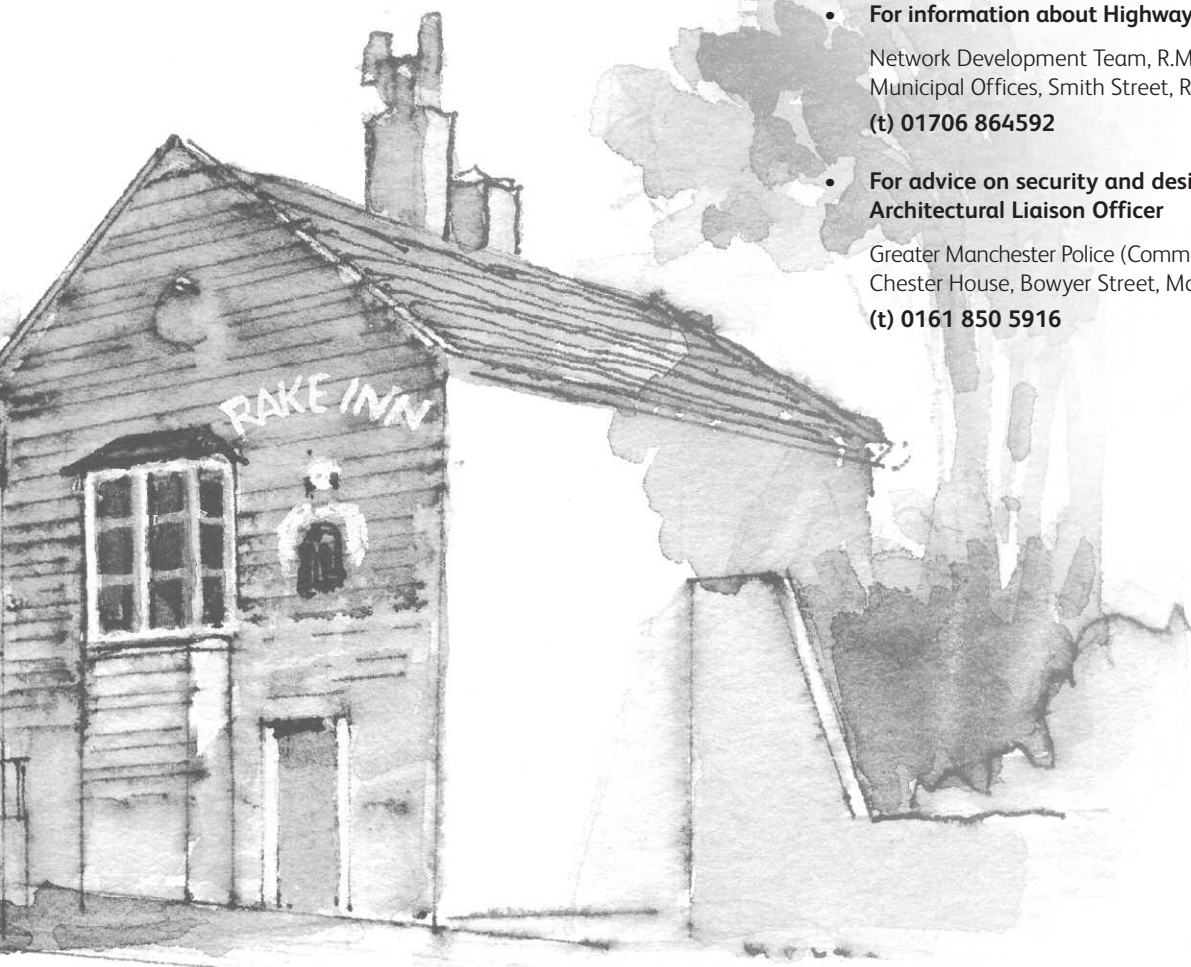
Network Development Team, R.M.B.C.,
Municipal Offices, Smith Street, Rochdale

(t) 01706 864592

- **For advice on security and designing out crime. Architectural Liaison Officer**

Greater Manchester Police (Community Affairs Branch)
Chester House, Bowyer Street, Manchester M16 0RE

(t) 0161 850 5916



PART C: REGENERATION



Horseshoe Inn (now Littleborough Trades Club)

9

Regeneration

REGENERATION

EMPLOYMENT & THE LOCAL ECONOMY – THE DECLINE IN MANUFACTURING

Apart from farming, an enduring industry, Littleborough's economy went through particularly important changes during the 19th Century. Quarrying and coal mining were followed by foundry work and brick and earthenware pipe manufacture. The mills of the woollen industry gave place to cotton in the second half of the century. The manufacturing of basic chemicals, of viscose for artificial silk (rayon), and leather tanning followed in the 20th Century.

The spinning and weaving of natural fibres continued until the 1960s. By the 1970s it had all but died out. One notable exception to the steady closure of textile mills was Fothergill and Harvey. Their prudent introduction in the 1950s and 1960s of specialised man-made fibres and coatings not only kept the mills at Summit and Eales in business but also enabled them to pioneer new products and processes, recognised world-wide for their quality.

The break up of the company in the early 1990s, after its sale to Courtaulds signalled the end of an important chapter in the history of Littleborough's industrial heritage.

Some small pockets of industry remain offering specialised products. Most other business activity is now centred on providing commercial services. An obvious consequence of the slimming down of Littleborough's industrial base has been a decline in local job opportunities.

The number of Littleborough residents working in local industries has declined as manufacturing has declined.

Fourteen local companies were surveyed in January 2003. The breakdown of businesses within that survey was:

- **Retail (4)**
- **Manufacturing (5)**
- **Service (4)**
- **Construction (1)**

They perceived as the greatest threats to continued operation/expansion:

- **high council tax base;**
- **traffic congestion during peak times.**

On the positive side, the lower cost of buildings and land, combined with the close proximity of a major transport artery were cited as distinct advantages to operating from Littleborough. Although slow-moving traffic at peak times is cited by some as a disincentive, it is probably no worse here than throughout the conurbation. However, continued residential development in Littleborough will make traffic conditions increasingly difficult in future.

A concern was also expressed by one company that new residential development adjacent to some existing industrial use might result in pressure to close factories using processes considered 'un-neighbourly'.

REGENERATION OF LOCAL BUSINESS

The aspiration to base a significant aspect of economic regeneration on Tourism is noted and welcomed, however this Town Design Statement recognises an underlying concern for a commitment to retaining existing business locally and to encouraging new businesses to set up in Littleborough. Littleborough has a number of former industrial buildings, some of which are used for other industrial purposes or for commercial purposes; some, we hope, await new uses, which will retain employment opportunities locally.

The clearing and developing of disused sites would have two beneficial outcomes:

- **the site would be tidy and more attractive;**
- **it would possibly contribute to the regeneration process of the whole area through suitable redevelopment.**

Any regeneration strategy must take account of the infrastructure including traffic movement, access and parking.

Until recently there did not appear to be any effort to provide guidance, funds or long term planning to address the regeneration needs. The use of lottery funds to open up the canal to leisure craft plus the recent publication of the Rochdale Canal Corridor Regeneration Strategy Draft Report show what has already been accomplished and what might be further achieved when funding is available.

There is potential for the local economy to develop growth but this will depend on the right incentives.

REGENERATION – THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In promoting regeneration in all its forms we are conscious that we are promoting Littleborough as an attractive place to live, work and play; in so doing we must in turn promote an infrastructure capable of supporting these.

The Town Design Statement requires that regeneration is managed in ways that respect both the natural and built heritage and through the use of sensitive location and design, handled in a manner that ensures their long-term viability. Therefore stone slab, sett and cobbled pavements and roads and flagstone walls should be officially listed and protected.

We would also urge that, in addition to the use of existing planning regulations, and planning advice, ‘unregulated’ signs, structures and decorated features and permanent traffic works are subject to a consultation process before being imposed on the existing area. Untidy or derelict sites within or adjoining the Conservation Area should be cleared and tidied.

ROCHDALE CANAL REGENERATION STRATEGY

There is strong support for projects such as a marina, a boatyard and canal side attractions. We welcome the overall strategy for developing canal-side assets in the area stretching from Clegg Hall to Summit.

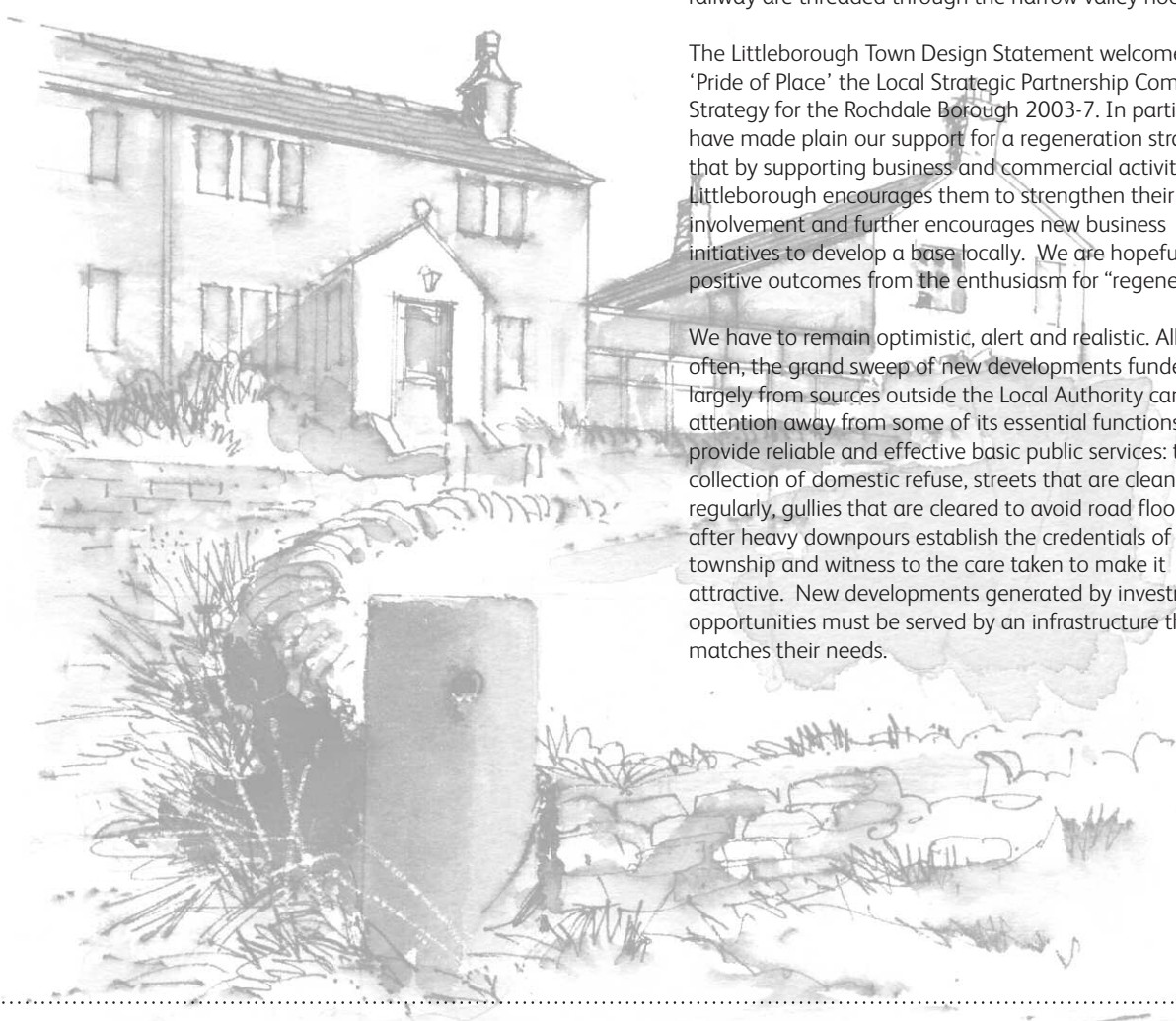
A project development brief for the Durn site has been prepared by the Design Statement Group taking into account development opportunities at Ealees and Durn. This is submitted as a supplementary document to the Town Design Statement and entitled ‘Durn Development Site’.

An overall review of both Durn and Ealees and their regeneration potential for the Rochdale Canal indicates the need for the facilities offered on each site not to compete with, but complement one another and that the developments on each site should contribute to a coherent package of commercial assets.

In addition we urge that suitable “new” uses be considered as a priority for the former Rock Nook Mill building. It comprises 54,000 square feet of space, has its own car park and is set alongside one of the most interesting sections of the Summit Gorge where canal, road, river and railway are threaded through the narrow valley floor.

The Littleborough Town Design Statement welcomes ‘Pride of Place’ the Local Strategic Partnership Community Strategy for the Rochdale Borough 2003-7. In particular we have made plain our support for a regeneration strategy that by supporting business and commercial activities in Littleborough encourages them to strengthen their present involvement and further encourages new business initiatives to develop a base locally. We are hopeful of positive outcomes from the enthusiasm for “regeneration”.

We have to remain optimistic, alert and realistic. All too often, the grand sweep of new developments funded largely from sources outside the Local Authority can divert attention away from some of its essential functions to provide reliable and effective basic public services: the collection of domestic refuse, streets that are cleaned regularly, gullies that are cleared to avoid road flooding after heavy downpours establish the credentials of a township and witness to the care taken to make it attractive. New developments generated by investment opportunities must be served by an infrastructure that matches their needs.



RECOMMENDATIONS

There is need for a Regeneration Strategy that addresses all regeneration needs in the area:

- Existing buildings should be refurbished and any new structures should blend in with their surroundings;
- Sites not mentioned in the Draft Regeneration Strategy e.g. Rock Nook Mill, should be actively promoted for mixed use re-development including business or industrial use;
- Employment related to regeneration schemes that can be developed through re-opening the Rochdale Canal e.g. marina, floating market / restaurant, boat repair facility, weekly street market should be encouraged.



Rock Nook Mill

10 Recreation

RECREATION, LEISURE, TOURISM & ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE

ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE

Littleborough, according to the narrator in “the South Pennine Canal Ring” video, is ‘an unremarkable small town’. We are confident that this Town Design Statement demonstrates how inaccurate this is. What is irrefutable is the fact that the town is set in stunning countryside. One of Littleborough’s greatest assets is its access to open country and all that it has to offer. The recreational value of “wilderness” has already been alluded to.

FOOTPATHS AND BRIDLEWAYS

One of Littleborough’s most valued recreational assets is the network of tracks and footpaths, the traditional links with its neighbouring settlements.

This countryside is criss-crossed by miles of designated public footpaths and bridleways, many of which have developed from the old pack-horse routes used by early travellers, peddlers and traders. These historic transport routes formed the basis of the economic development of the area, enabling the products of domestic textile workers to be traded on a much wider scale.

Walkers, horse riders and cyclists are today able to make good use of this network of paths/bridleways to explore the local countryside. In less than 30 minutes the walker can experience a genuine sense of remoteness and a walk presenting physical challenges.

Three main ‘leisure routes’ cross this area, the Pennine Way – taking the walker much further afield, the Pennine Bridleway – a more recent development for horse riders, cyclists and walkers, and the Rochdale Way – a circular route following the boundaries of the Rochdale area. Very recently The Mary Townley Loop, as part of the Pennine Bridleway has been opened.

Establishing a Pennine Bridleway marks a significant achievement in opening up a valued recreational asset. Much still needs to be done yet. Funding for improvements, clearing obstacles and replacing bridges has become difficult to obtain from central government and the EU. The encouragement of the most robust use of the Bridleway through ‘Challenge Events’ may indicate a lack of awareness of the needs and interests of other users. There is a clear need for representative bodies of all user groups to co-ordinate policies that define common interest and respect the needs of each. The interests of walkers and rambles must also be protected.

As both a focus of interest and a start point, Hollingworth Lake is enduringly popular. Considering its unique location, it is not difficult to appreciate this popularity. It is readily accessible to local people and to visitors from Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire for a variety of informal, low-impact recreational activities as well as providing a base for more challenging endeavour on land or water.



Blackstone Edge

Local Heritage Trails – leaflets for which are available from the Coach House – need to be updated to link with these routes and to provide more detailed information for visitors to Littleborough. Nature trails radiate from the Visitor Centre at Hollingworth Lake enabling visitors to explore the countryside around the Lake and over towards Blackstone Edge.

The Rochdale Canal towpath forms an important part of the footpath/cycleway network, linking local footpaths with the wider-ranging footpaths and bridleways.

Close contact should be maintained with Waterways Trust, owners of the Rochdale Canal, to ensure that the towpaths are kept in good repair so they may be used by all sectors of the community.

Being at the hub of major road, rail and canal routes Littleborough provides ready access to countryside at all points of the compass for those unable, or disinclined, to walk or cycle. It is particularly important that our network of footpaths is improved and maintained to provide safer and easier access for the disabled.

LEISURE AND RECREATION

Littleborough has access to a wide range of leisure and recreation opportunities. We have identified:

- **Camping and caravanning at Hollingworth Lake;**
- **Bird watching and wildlife study;**
- **Water activities – sailing, windsurfing and rowing at Hollingworth Lake;**
- **Walking / rambling;**
- **Cycling;**

- **Coarse fishing – at Hollingworth lake, on the Rochdale Canal, at several local lodges and at a local fishery;**
- **Fly fishing at a local fishery;**
- **Horse/pony events at a local equestrian centre;**
- **Horse riding at a local equestrian centre, from one of several private stables and on the public bridleways;**
- **Football, cricket, rugby and golf;**
- **Crown green bowls;**
- **Fitness gyms, squash, karate and sauna;**
- **Rock climbing on the gritstone edges and in some of the old quarries;**
- **Road and fell running.**

In addition, various interest groups meet at and use the local community school facilities and Heritage Centre facilities.



A leisurely cruise on the Rochdale Canal

TOURISM

Tourism was identified as a possible growth industry available to Littleborough. The re-opening of the Rochdale Canal and the proposed canal side developments at Ealees and Durn offer an opportunity for achieving this. The Town Design Statement is seen as an effective means of pressing for the launch of a tourist initiative.

As so many sources of primary employment have gone, or are about to go, the view that Tourism might be the only hope for substantial economic regeneration was forcefully expressed by some members of the Design Statement Team.

The appointment of a Tourist Officer for Littleborough would be an essential part of any new initiative and the provision of tourist information at the Coach House, the railway station and at other key points in the areas would need to be upgraded, well advertised and funded.

The following activities were suggested:

- **Establishment of a “Viking” settlement in the former Summit Brickworks site;**
- **A ride on a narrow boat for visitors, from Clegg Hall to the garden centre at Kingsway and return to Ealees. This section has no locks so a reliable timetable could be used. Perhaps car parking could be negotiated with Talk of the North (equestrian centre) with a Landau or pony trap ride to Clegg Hall. A narrow boat could also serve as a floating restaurant;**
- **The Pennine Bridleway and The Mary Townley Loop offer opportunities to attract horse riders to the area.**

One of the more flamboyant suggestions put forward to encourage tourism was the linking of Hollingworth Lake Visitor Centre to Littleborough by cable car.

It would not be our intention to promote the Littleborough Area as an Extended Theme Park but rather to capitalise on the tourism potential of the area, without detracting from the existing natural attributes of the Gateway to the Pennines. For example craft, cycling and camping shops, expansion of cycling paths and public footpaths and walkers/cyclists’ hostelryes/inns, could all contribute to a more focussed approach to recreation and leisure.

PUBLICITY

Better publicity for Littleborough events of special interest could improve its profile as a leisure/tourist destination. Special local activities like Rushbearing and water-based events and competitions, part of an annual programme, would benefit from being co-ordinated and well advertised additionally to the “What’s On” guide for the Pennine Township.

Whilst off-road cycling is widely pursued in the area, many of the routes are disjointed and riders are required to use main roads to link with other routes. Opportunities to cycle along safe routes are few. Little consideration seems to be given to providing separate cycle lanes even where roads are re-routed, such as Canal Street/Hollingworth Road, or with new housing developments, such as Hollingworth Park/Stubley Mill Road. These have presented the local authority with an opportunity to open up a ‘green’ commuter route towards central Rochdale, or a ‘Safe Cycle Route to School’.

Members of the Town Design Statement Group as a whole were ambivalent about recommending road cycling as a safe exercise. Cycling on the main roads in the built up area was seen as distinctly hazardous. Off-road cycling was judged to be altogether healthier and safer.

11

Shopping

SHOPPING

Littleborough town centre should be promoted as a principal location for shopping, commercial uses, entertainment, leisure, cultural and community facilities in the UDP so that its viability and vitality can be protected.

The character of Littleborough should not be lost in the process of new developments and regeneration. The aim of regeneration should be to enhance its character and to ensure that the image of a friendly town is retained, at the same time as promoting a vibrant retail economy.



Church Street shops

Over the years Littleborough has provided a variety of small shops for local people and visitors, the Co-operative Movement in the late 19th and early 20th Century playing a leading role in meeting local shopping needs. We wish to see provision of retail outlets of this kind retained and the variety of further shopping opportunities increased. The pressure of costs to meet rents and business rates has acted as a deterrent to potential shopkeepers with the result that a number of premises have become offices or derelict. Though offices provide useful services and employment in their own right, they can make a shopping area increasingly sterile. We urge that retail businesses be encouraged to improve premises, through grants, and Urban Regeneration initiatives.

The results of a survey carried out during the production of this Design Statement demonstrated that people want to be able to use the centre for shopping but lack of choice and facilities is a deterrent. The possibility of reinstating the occasional market held in Lodge Street pre-World War Two, should be explored.

To accommodate the needs of shoppers and visitors there should be the provision of more, and accessible, public toilets.

Two mini-supermarkets in Littleborough are well used and clearly provide more than convenience store service to shoppers. The Roundhouse, including the Wheatsheaf pub, is a fine building dating back to 1859. At present it houses a public house and a newsagent with space for more shops while some parts of the building are in need of restoration/refurbishment. The building is fronted by a large paved pedestrian area. It may be considered that the trees and Victorian lamp standard, relatively recent additions to the area, give it an attractive appearance. It may on the other hand be held that the trees obscure the appearance of the building and may in the future cause problems for the paving and affect underground services.

Church Street, the A58, is a busy thoroughfare connecting Rochdale and Halifax. The shops along this route are mainly of a traditional appearance and as this is one of the first impressions visitors gain, it is essential that this character be maintained and enhanced. The Conservation Area Status of its most significant buildings and immediate surroundings should serve as a stimulus to retaining its attractiveness.

SHOPS ON CHURCH STREET

An ambience, appropriate to the area, should be reflected in the nature of street furniture such as litter bins, bollards, lamp standards, signposts, gratings, shelters and seating. Design quality and appropriate scale are the elements essential for this to be achieved. It should be noted that an accumulation of "period" street furniture detracts from the overall impact of the principal features of the streetscape.

The survey also showed a desire for:

Disabled Access. The least mobile in our community will be more reliant on the centre for shopping. Our research has shown that for a greater access to a wider range of goods and services we all have to visit nearby towns. This shows that there is an opportunity for Littleborough to broaden its retail base and strengthen its viability for the future.

Design Quality. Alterations or refurbishment to shops should take into account guidelines proposed for the Central Conservation Area.

12

Community development

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT – EDUCATION & YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Littleborough developed as a close-knit community in the 19th and early 20th Centuries, eventually becoming an Urban District Council in the County of Lancashire. Losing its UDC status in 1974 as a result of the re-organisation of local government, Littleborough became part of the newly formed Rochdale Metropolitan Borough within a Greater Manchester County.

The community suffered a severe blow when its secondary school, which had been re-located in the 1960s from Sale Street to new premises on Calderbrook Road, was closed in 1990. The County Primary School then moved from Sale Street to the vacated High School premises; shortly afterwards the Sale Street building was demolished.

Opened in 1903 with the powerful help of Gordon Harvey, the Central Board School at Sale Street was at the cutting edge of enlightened educational practice for the time. Co-educational, with a practical as well as an academic curriculum offering a complete education on its premises from the age of five up to leaving age, it provided a route to a grammar or technical education for those pupils who developed the aptitude to take their studies to a further level and beyond.

Holy Trinity Parish School also took children from age 4 – 15.

The loss of the Central School building in Littleborough was the loss of a landmark in more ways than one. Its demolition, before celebrating its centenary, coupled with the closure of the Community School on Calderbrook Road, reinforced the sense of loss of access to secondary education in the town and with it a significant part of the community's identity.

Any further loss of schools through "rationalisation" will only intensify the sense that Littleborough is losing its character, and confirm the view that it is changing from being a distinctive Pennine community to a dormitory: a place where you have increasingly to seek basic services elsewhere rather than enjoying them locally.

At a meeting in June 2003, held to consider possible school closures in Littleborough, concern was expressed that the Local Authority's intended closure programme was "building led". Whilst a lack of funds may be given as the reason for not providing a new Secondary School in the town, it should be considered that not all costs are primarily financial. It is accepted that old buildings unsuitable for school use may require replacing but those which are substantial, spacious, well maintained and valued by those who work in them, must surely be retained for use well into the future.

Following a study of the Local Authority School Organisation Plan for 2002-2007, in conjunction with plans for further housing developments in the town, and the poor recreational facilities available for teenage children in the area, it was concluded that the lack of a senior school in Littleborough presented a number of serious problems for the town.

The young people of Littleborough will be responsible for its future and for maintaining its community identity. It is therefore essential that the sense of belonging to a community is fostered from early childhood through the teenage years.

When young people attend a local school, with access to its attendant recreation facilities, they can be encouraged to



Former Central Board School now demolished

take part in the development of the community through club and team activities, and also in caring for the local environment. A school therefore provides a recognisable centre of authority and guidance to which the youngsters can relate, with consequent benefits to the community.

A developing sense of community does not take place in the same way when young people have to attend a senior school outside the town. The community becomes fragmented whatever other educational benefits may be put forward for schools elsewhere and for a system based on economies of scale.

It has to be recognised that opportunities for young people to become valued members of the local community have seriously diminished. There are now fewer employment structures that can shape a young person's future by providing significant career aims. With the loss of local employment and the consequent weakening of a sense of local identity, educational provision up to the age of 16 becomes even more important.

The large number of schoolchildren travelling out of Littleborough each weekday (229 left the primary schools of Littleborough in July 2002), added to the number of people who travel out of town to work, contributes to congestion on the A58 to Rochdale and on the B6225 to Milnrow at peak times.

Family-sized houses still being planned and built in the area will mean that the availability of places at Wardle and Hollingworth High Schools is likely to remain a serious issue. Problems may also be experienced by the primary schools, particularly the County Primary School, which was operating at almost full capacity in September 2002.

The absence of a High School in Littleborough means that the town lacks a variety of school-based recreational facilities for teenagers. Opportunities for taking up football, cricket and rugby are largely provided by local volunteers at private clubs.

Attempts have been made to provide Youth Club facilities and currently a variety of activities are being introduced on a 'taster' basis to find out which particularly appeal to the young people. These should be given much wider publicity in order to encourage as many youngsters as possible to participate. More investment in leisure activities for teenagers would help to reduce boredom and the vandalism that often follows from it.

There is a wide variety of community activities available in Littleborough for adults, but these are not always well advertised. A guide to adult community learning courses for the autumn is published in the preceding summer and available from Littleborough Community School, Library and Hare Hill House. Courses cover a range of Art and Craft activities, various Computer Skills and English and Mathematics. Psychology, Machine Knitting, French for holidays, Sign Language and Lip Reading are among some of the other courses being offered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. The provision of secondary education in Littleborough to restore a sense of identity amongst its young people should be considered. The Springthyme site, formerly Whittles Bakery, might have offered the only area other than the Community School Campus available for accommodating a secondary school building;
- B. The good work recently done for Stansfield young people should be extended, by carrying out similar projects in other parts of Littleborough. For example, a 'drop in' centre/internet café could be provided in or near the town centre;
- C. The monthly digest of community activities, "What's On In Pennines", could be supplemented by a Littleborough newsletter of current developments, council decisions and other matters concerning the community;
- D. Littleborough should promote the publication of a guide to schools/nurseries, clubs, classes, amenities, and general activities for all members of the community, which could be distributed by builders of new properties, estate agents and other public services such as local surgeries, council offices and the Coach House;
- E. Community facilities offered by the Coach House and its role as an Information and Heritage Centre, are assets that need to be maintained and enhanced;
- F. Adult Education. There should be opportunities for adults to be integrated into courses provided at High Schools at post-sixteen age;
- G. A "skateboard run" in the Hare Hill Park recreation area would be a positive attraction for some young people.

SPORTS ACTIVITIES

Opportunities for young people to participate in outdoor team sports though plentiful are almost exclusively male only. It has to be recognised that these are all male teams. The need to develop female teams and possibly mixed teams should be addressed.

Littleborough Sports Club, Rakewood:

- **Rugby Union. Senior - 4 teams over eighteen. Junior - under 15s, under 14s, under 11s, under 9s and under 8s;**
- **Soccer. One senior team;**
- **Cricket. Two senior teams.**

Littleborough Cricket Club:

- **Cricket. Seniors -1st, 2nd and 3rd teams. Others - under 18s, under 15s, under 13s and under 11s.**
- **Soccer. Open age (over 16) - 1st and 2nd teams. Others - under 15s, under 14s, under 13s, under 12s, under 11s, 2 x under 10s and 2 x under 9s.**

13

Transport

TRANSPORT, ROADS, PATHS AND PARKING

TRANSPORT MOVEMENT

Perhaps one of the most remarkable locations anywhere for viewing the various ways man has travelled by road is from a vantage point above the Summit Gorge. Here on the ground, a living museum of the history of communications can be experienced.

Standing on Calderbrook Road (the 1783 turnpike), near to the site of the former Toll House at Dog Hills one can see the 1824 Todmorden Turnpike (A6033), the first canal to cross the Pennines, the first railway linking Lancashire and Yorkshire and an old pack horse track improved to take wheeled vehicles (Reddyshore Scout Gate).



Steanor Bottom Toll House



Pennine Bridleway signpost with ventilation shaft for Summit Tunnel in the background

This in turn leads to two paved packhorse tracks, Limer's Gate and Salter Rake Gate. In the distance the Roman Road, the turnpike to Halifax (now A58) and the M62 bringing the history nearer our own time can be seen, away to the south east.

Where else is such a complete picture of the history of transport set out in one place?

Littleborough's proximity to Junction 21 of the M62 motorway has become one of the major influences on its development during the last thirty years. Early gains for local traffic movement following the shifting of trunk route traffic from the A58 to the motorway were soon offset by two factors: growth in the use of personal and commercial transport, and from the 1970s an upsurge in residential development located both in Greater Manchester and in West Yorkshire to take advantage of access to the motorway.

Concern was expressed about the greatly increased pressure this has placed on the A58 and adjoining routes. It was noted that access to the A58 from Smithy Bridge Road is severely restricted by the short time allowed by traffic signals. The issue of traffic signal timing is likely to become more sensitive since proposals to develop the former Whittles Bakery site were approved, with traffic management conditions required at the junction of the A58 with Whitelees Road.

Taking into account the pressure on infrastructure, transport, and particularly on education and health, the local authority is urged to restrict further residential development to small sites. The powerful and understandable pressure arising nationally to develop Brownfield sites for residential development before releasing Greenfield sites does not always fit comfortably with the need locally to revive small industries.

The importance of the M62 as a strategic route which has been given formal recognition through its classification as part of the European Union Trans-European Road Network, only serves to put greater strain on the local infrastructure by encouraging further development in the M62 corridor.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Littleborough is well served by a network of private and Greater Manchester Transport Executive bus routes. Access to Manchester and Trans-Pennine rail links to Bradford, Leeds and beyond with regular services to these cities make for stress-free travel, an attractive alternative to motorway driving.

With journey times of 25 minutes to and from Manchester every half hour for most of the day and with Bradford 45 minutes and Leeds just over an hour away, Littleborough continues to benefit from George Stephenson's railway engineering achievements of over 160 years ago. At present however the reliability of these services throughout the year leaves a great deal to be desired.

In encouraging visitors to Littleborough, it is clear that facilities need to be improved. The feeling of welcome is generated not only by clear, informative signs but decent toilet and waiting facilities are of basic importance in making visitors feel welcome and comfortable.

ROADS IN BUILT-UP AREAS

Some parts of our settlements have no pavements or pavements on one side only. Where such arrangements are traditional and historic they should be left if possible. Introduction of concrete kerbs is inappropriate and drab. Road marking is contentious; it is hardly needed and should be kept to a minimum, if used at all. More use should be made of different surface materials such as blocks and setts to indicate different use priorities.

COUNTRY ROADS

Rakewood Road is a particular problem. Walkers are placed at a considerable disadvantage by the lack of traffic control measures. These need to be subtle yet effective. Bollards placed appropriately behind which walkers can comfortably shelter when vehicles appear are one possible solution.



Station Plaque



Old stone track at Eales

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AND PARKING

Residential on-street parking is now commonplace and in areas where there is no provision for off-street parking on driveways or in garages, some conflict over parking space has arisen. Since the 1970s several plans for traffic management circulation and parking have been put forward. Most were too radical to be realistic, as they would have seriously affected access to shops in the centre of Littleborough.

A recent scheme for regulated parking on Church Street has provided permanent parking bays. The added physical constraint these impose on the free flow of traffic on the A58 at peak times is a factor, which led to concern being expressed about the congestion this might cause.

On occasions when the M62 is closed for an emergency, much of the traffic is diverted through Littleborough via the A58 and B6225: it is essential that traffic flow locally is unimpeded.

At present the main cause of congestion at "peak" times is traffic light controlled junctions at the top of Smithy Bridge Road and at Birch Road.

Schemes for making more space available for parking in Littleborough were put forward during the Town Design Studies. These included a call for creating parking space on the former Gas Works site off Hare Hill Road and for secure parking at Littleborough Station possibly within a two-storey development with disabled access. It is clear that these proposals would not meet with universal approval. It is noted that the former Gas Works site is now classified as Urban Green Space within the adopted Unitary Development Plan and the existing railway car park, in scale with its setting, fits naturally into what is elsewhere described as a riverside Green Enclave close to the centre of Littleborough and within its Central Conservation Area.

Out of town parking is available for visitors both to the Lake Bank area of Hollingworth Lake and for visitors to Littleborough, off the western side of the B6225 on the approach to the junction of Rakewood Road and Lake Bank. Generous provision of parking space has been made at the Visitor Centre at Hollingworth Lake.

Provided that an appropriate agreement could be reached car parking for visitors to Littleborough at times of greatest pressure might be made available at the cricket club site off Calderbrook Road and Denhurst Road.

Visitors could be encouraged to use these out of town sites if they were linked by a mini bus ('Little Gem' style) service to the centre of Littleborough and return; the price of the round trip to be included in the parking fee.

All-day and long-term parking in the town centre should be discouraged.

The issue of finding increased parking space if more visitors are to be encouraged to visit Littleborough leads to serious consideration being given to providing different

types of parking catering for the requirements of different types of visitor.

THE GREATER MANCHESTER LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP) 2001/02 TO 2005/06 - "INVESTING IN EXCELLENCE" AND LTP 2

The Littleborough community should be aware of the proposals which will come out of the review of the LTP, which addresses transport needs and priorities across Greater Manchester. The community needs to be able to contribute actively to the review in order to influence its outcome, in particular where this will affect local traffic movement and the provision of public transport.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is important that the community is briefed regularly when Traffic Consultants' proposals are presented locally so that there is opportunity for local people to contribute to the review;

The introduction of a Yellow Bus System locally for schoolchildren should be considered;

The lack of a clearly defined footpath between the main road and the cobbled area in front of the Royal Oak, is a matter of concern for the safety of pedestrians. A set of bollards one-and-a-half metres in from the road edge would give sufficient space for pedestrians including those with prams or wheelchairs.



Cobbled track, Higher Shore

14

Positive outcomes

POSITIVE OUTCOMES – PRACTICAL ACTION

As a result of the research being undertaken and the increased awareness generated in focussing attention on local issues, the Town Design Statement team has been able to contribute to the consultative process, with particular reference to the Rochdale Strategic Partnership 'Vision For The Future'. It has strongly supported retaining primary schools at the heart of the communities they serve, put forward an outline scheme for a marina at Durn and set out a scheme for cleaning up the railway viaduct.

Having noted the care people in the community have taken with pieces of spare ground by turning them into gardens, others have been prompted to develop this initiative and set up a Littleborough in Bloom Group. Its work has already made a positive impact on the local environment and received recognition and strong public support.

A timely coincidence is the formation of The Friends of Hare Hill Park dedicated to caring for this centrally important Urban Greenspace and to restoring its Victorian Bandstand. The group is to be congratulated on the challenge it has accepted and on its progress in accessing funding to undertake the work.

FURTHER MATERIAL

The Heritage Statement gives further information about aspects of Littleborough's history, referred to in parts of this Town Design Statement.

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Postscript

POSTSCRIPT

A design statement, in setting out to identify and define a community's distinctive character, has to make a realistic appraisal of its current situation.

While the experience of compiling the Design Statement has been challenging and at times of fascinating interest, it has not been a reassuring one. In terms of the overall quality of life available to the community, the sense of loss outweighs the awareness of what has been added.

During the last thirty years, since the time that it ceased to be an Urban District within the administrative county of Lancashire, Littleborough like many other communities has experienced fundamental change.

The balance among the elements of farming, industry and housing, once an essential characteristic of the area has been substantially altered.

Industry has all but disappeared and successive housing developments have confirmed the status Littleborough has acquired during that time as a dormitory to Rochdale, Greater Manchester and West Yorkshire. *As if to emphasise the speed of change, since the Town Design Project was launched in 2002, the two largest remaining employers have ceased working in Littleborough and transferred their activities elsewhere. In turn, the industrial sites vacated will almost certainly join others to be designated "brownfield" sites and become housing developments. This incidentally, would fly in the face of any logical interpretation of the Government's professed desire for sustainable communities.*

We are hopeful, if not fully confident, that canal restoration may lift the economy and lead to the creation of new job opportunities to compensate for the losses.

In a twist of fate, particularly wounding to the community, a post "bulge" slimming of pupil numbers in the 1980s lead to the closure of the High School. No longer able to provide secondary education for its young people, the community notes with deep regret how it was deprived of a basic asset which would have been sustained by the burgeoning numbers of children from new residential development in Littleborough.

Noting the accelerating pace of change, the study of Littleborough demonstrates how the process of evolution has given place to rapid change; how in particular the majority of its population, once sustained by local "services", employment, shopping and schooling, must now perform a daily mass-migration to access the basic essentials of daily life in an urban setting.

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Acknowledgements

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The study group was recruited from members of the public who had not previously been involved in local amenity work. With some existing members of Littleborough Civic Trust they volunteered to visit sites, carry out research, take photographs and help compile reports by each separate study group. The exercise has been every bit as demanding as envisaged. Though Littleborough's has not been the first Town Design Statement produced in the United Kingdom, it is the first to have been approved and funded through the Local Heritage Initiative.

It is difficult to put a price on the immense amount of voluntary work put in by groups and individuals; it has nevertheless been counted as the community's contribution "in kind" to the cost of the whole project. We are grateful for the advice and encouragement of the Ilkley Design Statement Team who produced their own document in 2002. Relying on a variety of funding including their own fund-raising efforts locally they deserve credit for having the courage to be trailblazers and to do it their way.

Finally we must record our recognition of the help given by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council in producing our Design Statement. The advice and support given by officers of the Local Authority in drafting sections of the Design Statement relating directly to planning matters has been crucial in getting appropriate sections of the document accepted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

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