

LOFTHOUSE

Conservation Area Character Appraisal - draft for consultation



Working for you

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1 Introduction

1.1 Conservation Area Appraisals aim to define and analyse the special interest which constitutes the character and appearance of a place. It is these qualities which warrant the designation of a Conservation Area. Once this Appraisal has been approved by Harrogate Borough Council, it will form an “evidence base” for the Local Development Framework (LDF). Consequently, it will be a material consideration when determining applications for development, considering planning appeals or proposing works for the preservation or enhancement of the area. It will also form the basis for a subsequent Management Strategy, which will contain proposals and policies for the conservation and enhancement of the area.

1.2 The Appraisal provides information and guidance to those wishing to carry out works in the Conservation Area whether or not they require planning approval. So, it is a useful source of information for property owners, agents, applicants and members of the public who live or work in Lofthouse.

1.3 The main function of the Conservation Area Appraisal is to ensure that any works in the Conservation Area have regard to the special qualities of the area and to devise a strategy to protect these qualities. The Appraisal will help us understand

the impact that development proposals would have on the Conservation Area and whether these are acceptable and/or appropriate.

1.4 The assessment of the area’s special architectural or historic interest is based on a careful and objective analysis of the area, using a method of analysis recommended by English Heritage. Various qualities are looked at including: historical development, building materials, and relationships between buildings and open spaces. Appraisals aim to be comprehensive but the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

1.5 Lofthouse Conservation Area was originally designated in 1994. This Appraisal aims to describe Lofthouse as it is today and identify the special character and distinctiveness of its setting, buildings and open spaces. Having identified those special qualities, the Appraisal will examine whether opportunities exist to protect and enhance its character.

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



Entrance to village from Lofthouse Moor

Objectives

The principal objectives of the Appraisal are:

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

2 Planning policy framework

2.1 Local authorities have a duty to designate “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” as conservation areas under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The same Act also requires local planning authorities to periodically review conservation areas.

2.2 Government guidance on all development affecting conservation areas is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). PPG 15 advises local authorities to define the elements that make the special character or appearance of conservation areas in order to provide a sound basis on which to develop local planning policies, preservation or enhancement strategies and to make development control decisions.

2.3 In determining planning applications for development within conservation areas and applications for Conservation Area consent, the Council will give considerable weight to the content of Conservation Area character appraisals. The consideration of proposals in the context of the description contained in these appraisals will be

an important factor in deciding whether a proposal has an adverse affect on the character and appearance of a Conservation Area and, therefore, whether it is contrary to saved Local Plan Policy HD3 (which is the key policy for the control of development in conservation areas). The scope of Policy HD3 also covers development proposals outside a Conservation Area which would affect its setting or views into or out of the Conservation Area.

2.4 Involving the community and raising public awareness is an integral part of the appraisal process and needs to be approached in a pro-active and innovative way. Community involvement helps to bring valuable public understanding and ‘ownership’ to proposals for the area. A report, included in the appendix, details how the local community was involved and the contribution it has made to this Appraisal.

3 Historic development & archaeology

3.1 The first building in Lofthouse was a grange established on the site of Holme Farm by Fountains Abbey, which is where the name of the local parish, Fountains Earth, comes from. The Abbey was given land on the southern slopes of the valley in 1251. This land would have been farmed by monks and the grange would have been the principal building on the Abbey's lands in this part of Nidderdale. The monks also quarried ironstone through a series of bell pits, the remains of which are still visible on the hills. Nearby are the "Baal" hills, sites of early iron smelting. Other likely activity which began at Lofthouse during the medieval period includes lead mining and limestone quarrying, with numerous limekilns erected in the vicinity of Lofthouse.

3.2 The fields to the west and north of the village appear to have been enclosures associated with the older hilltop settlement of Middlesmoor. The fields to the east and south are probably associated with the establishment of new farms in Lofthouse during the towards the end of the late medieval period. The grange for Fountains Abbey passed to the Rayner family in 1446. The Rayners occupied Holme Farm until 1900. The present farmhouse is the oldest building in the village and is dated 1653. Lofthouse probably began to take its present form during the post-medieval period as a straggle of farmsteads built along the track leading away from the valley floor. A survey of the existing

buildings in the village suggests that there were as many as six or seven farms clustered in Lofthouse.



Dated 1653, Holme Farm is the oldest building in Lofthouse Conservation Area

3.3 Over the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries most of the farmsteads in the village were rebuilt or enlarged. Most of Lofthouse's buildings date from this era. It appears that small-scale lead mining continued to the southwest of the village on the slopes of Stock Ridge. Limestone quarries and less commonly sandstone quarries existed to the northwest and northeast of the village respectively. It is probable that some of the miners and quarrymen lived in Lofthouse.

3.4 By the mid-nineteenth century the village's population and importance was such that it was served by a pub (The Crown), a school and a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. Nidderdale was a stronghold for Methodism and worship in Lofthouse began to be held regularly in a barn in 1758. The Barn Chapel as it was known was registered as a chapel in 1778 and served this function until its demolition in 1875. The present chapel was built on the site of the old barn in 1882. Close to Rose Cottage was the Sunday school to the Chapel, but appears to have previously been a chapel itself (denomination unknown).



Lofthouse Post Office

3.5 Between 1904 and 1908 the Bradford Corporation built the Nidd Valley Light Railway from Pateley Bridge to Angram to facilitate the construction of Scar House and Angram Reservoirs. A station was built at Lofthouse and consequently the Crown Inn was remodelled and extended

to its present form. The Crown was originally a farmhouse with a public bar, but with the construction of the railway the facilities were upgraded to a hotel in 1906-7. With the completion of the reservoirs, the running of the railway became uneconomical and what was Britain's first municipally owned passenger railway closed in 1929. The railway is now gone, but has left its mark on Lofthouse: the present road bridge was built over the Nidd for the railway near the ancient ford. The former station building has been converted to a dwelling.

- 3.6 The twentieth century saw the village mature further with a post office opening in a cottage c.1900 and a Memorial Hall (now the Village Hall) opening in 1927. However, in the second half of the twentieth century the village was in

economic decline and many buildings became vacant and neglected. About eleven cottages were demolished in the heart of the village in front of the Memorial Hall in the mid-twentieth century creating a large gap (used as a car park, and for a brief time a filling station) in the built form. Other buildings were saved by the advent of increased tourism and second homes. Today, farming and sporting interests coupled with the many recreational visitors help drive the local economy of this area of outstanding natural beauty.



Car park adjacent Lofthouse Memorial Institute.

4 Location & landscape setting

- 4.1 Lofthouse is in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is approximately seven miles north of Pateley Bridge. The designation of the AONB, which was made in 1994, formally recognises the national importance of the landscape and the primary objective of the designation is to conserve the natural beauty of the area, which is derived from its geology, physiography, flora, fauna and historical and cultural components.



Lofthouse as seen from the edge of Lofthouse Moor to the northeast of the village

- 4.2 Lofthouse lies slightly over the valley floor of Nidderdale, just above the confluence of the Nidd with How Stean Beck, Blayshaw Gill, and, slightly further downstream, Backstone Gill. The village sits at the threshold of the relatively flat and open valley floor which extends to

Ramsgill to the southeast, and the more steeply sided, V-shaped upper reaches of Nidderdale to the north. The foot of the village stands at about 170m above sea level (AOD) with the settlement standing on gently rising land on the edge of the valley floor, with the northern end of the village being its highest point at c.180m AOD.

- 4.3 Beyond the northern edge of the village the valley side rises steeply reaching a height of 358m AOD barely one kilometre northeast of the village. The same is true on the opposite side of Nidderdale, where Middlesmoor is only a kilometre to the northwest of Lofthouse but is c.290m AOD - roughly 110m higher than Lofthouse.
- 4.4 In terms of the road network, Lofthouse is unusual in its location. Rather than being sited on the main valley road linking Pateley Bridge with Stean and Middlesmoor, or at a crossing point over the Nidd, the historic core of the village is hidden away on the secondary road linking Nidderdale with Masham and the Vale of York. This gives the village a tranquil, self-contained feel, particularly as the layout of the village creates significant twists and bottlenecks in the road. This 'unusual' siting of the village is perhaps explained



The older village of Middlesmoor occupies an elevated position to the northwest of Lofthouse

by the requirements of its original settlers: south facing gently sloping well-drained land above the floodplain and that the existing road bridge is a relatively recent addition to the village, being a through route for motorists since the mid-twentieth century.

5. Landscape character

- 5.1 Lofthouse is situated on a slightly elevated shoulder of land at the edge of the flood-plain of the River Nidd. This location is at the threshold of the wide glacial stretch of U-shaped valley which extends to the southeast, and the more enclosed, V-shaped stretch of Nidderdale to the north. The result is that from within the village there are significant views over the open valley to the west and south, but views to the north and east are far more enclosed by the topography.



The southern side of Nidderdale forms a backcloth to views downhill in Lofthouse

- 5.2 The location of Lofthouse just above the valley floor means that when looking along Nidderdale from the south and across the valley from the west, the site of Middlesmoor and its church tower are much more prominent in the landscape than Lofthouse. From the north and east, the topography of the valley and higher slopes of the valley are such that Lofthouse is largely hidden from view. All in all, Lofthouse sits unobtrusively in the

landscape, with its extent limited by the narrowness of the shoulder of land on which it stands.

- 5.3 With the exception of the small village of Middlesmoor, the landscape surrounding Lofthouse is pastoral fields bounded by dry stone walls. The narrow valley floors of Nidderdale to the north of Lofthouse and its tributaries in the vicinity are the most significant areas of trees, along with small isolated areas of plantation. The fields and walls form a consistent backcloth to the village and give the area its distinctive Pennine dale character.

Historic Landscape Character

- 5.4 A Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) has recently been completed for the Nidderdale AONB. The HLC provides an overview of the area surrounding Lofthouse. The data on the historic characteristics has certain limitations as the following criteria have been applied:

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

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

- 5.6 The settlement of Lofthouse lies in the valley floor in the upper reaches

of Nidderdale. It is set alongside the confluence of the river Nidd, How Stean Beck and Backstone Gill. The dominant historic landscape character is that of a rural upland valley floor, with pasture fields defined by dry stone walls and gill woodland leading up to the moors.

- 5.7 The immediate environs of the settlement comprise a series of small and medium sized pasture fields defined by dry stone walls. Those fields to the west and south of the village are irregular in shape, whilst those to the east are more regular. It is thought that the fields to the west and north of the village represent the enclosure of open fields associated with Middlesmoor, whilst those to the south are associated with the early post-medieval outward expansion of arable, outside of the open fields.

- 5.8 Further away from the settlement, leading up the valley sides, the moorland edge has also been enclosed. The northern moorland edge, leading onto High Ash Head Moor, is characterised by a particularly late period of enclosure resulting from a Parliamentary award. The pasture fields are exceptionally large in size with regular dry stone walls.

- 5.9 The southern moorland edge, leading onto Stean Moor, is characterised by medium and large pasture fields, again with regular dry stone wall boundaries. These fields are the result of enclosure of unknown date, and do not appear to

have a Parliamentary award associated with them. Within this area are areas of medieval and post medieval industrial workings, of stone, lead and iron ore, with visible remains of features such as bell pits, mine shafts and spoil heaps. Quarries are also a feature of this area, which contains the contentious Blayshaw Marble Quarries, a marble mine and limestone quarries. Monastic industry is a key feature of the medieval landscape of the area, with Byland Abbey known to have been mining iron ore in the area, and with the Blayshaw Marble Quarry as the possible source of the Nidderdale Marble used at Fountains Abbey.



A view over Lofthouse towards Blayshaw Gill

- 5.10 Gills are a distinctive feature of the local historic landscape character, linking the valley floor with the moors. Blayshaw Gill to the south-west appears to consist of plantation, planted between 1600 and 1850. How Stean Beck woodland to the north-west is apparently largely pre-1600 and is therefore classified as ancient semi-natural woodland. Within this woodland are a series of limekilns, presumably processing lime from the nearby limestone quarries. Finally, to the southeast lies Backstone Gill. Backstone Gill contains ancient semi-natural woodland that dates

back to at least 1600 if not earlier. Beside it lies an interesting enclosure feature: an area of intake enclosure defined by curvilinear dry stone walls. There is very little internal division in this area, and it is thought that the area may be medieval in date and used for stock enclosure.

The village

- 5.11 Lofthouse has a compact, well-defined form due to the limited extent of the elevated shoulder of land it is built upon. This natural limit to the extent of the village was reached by the first half of the nineteenth century. Since then most new build has occurred on the valley floor and is slightly separated from the envelope of the historic core of the village by the sloping topography. The result is that the heart of the village contains predominantly eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings and spaces, giving a strongly cohesive character.



The enclosed village street has an intimate feel

- 5.12 With the exception of the relatively open car parks in the village centre, the built form of Lofthouse is compact and inward facing. The heart of the village is a hard, enclosed

space which forms a strong contrast with the surrounding pastoral landscape. The built form and street plan mean that views of the surrounding landscape from within the village are limited to glimpses through the few tight gaps between buildings.

- 5.13 In keeping with the man made character of the village core the key landscape features are created by the built form and street furniture. The pinchpoints in the road created by buildings at Green Gate and at the Crown Hotel form emphatic gateways to the village as they reduce the road to a narrow width and close off views. Within the village the drinking fountain/war memorial, Victory Memorial, K6 telephone kiosk and village pump are all highly prominent features of the street scene which form focal points and assist wayfinding.
- 5.14 There are few trees or green spaces in the village core, but where trees, gardens and grass verges exist, they enhance the settlement's rural character and relieve the hard character of the street space.

Main approaches to the village

- 5.15 The principal approaches to Lofthouse are along the main valley road running between Pateley Bridge and Middlesmoor. Approaching from the southeast, there is little evidence of the village beyond the school and the twentieth century houses on the valley floor, with only glimpses of the roofs and chimneys of the core of the village visible through the trees. Views up the lane leading into the village core are truncated by the twisting course of the

lane, the tree canopy and the masses of The Crown Hotel and Holme Farm. From the northwest the topography allows views over Lofthouse when descending from Middlesmoor, but once on the valley floor very little of the old village can be seen. The trees along the banks of the Nidd provide a consistent screen.

- 5.16 By contrast from the direction of Leighton, the topography and lack of tree buffer to the northern edge of the village means that Lofthouse is visible as a tight cluster of buildings nestled in the landscape. Descending the valley side, the irregular layout of the buildings is evident due to the jumble of roofs and chimneys. However, in terms of views into the village proper, the proximity of Bell Farm and Green Gate means that little can be seen until the threshold of the built up area is reached.



The approach to Lofthouse from Lofthouse Bridge feels akin to entering a house through its back door

- 5.17 The approach from the west via Lofthouse Bridge is along a footpath. The canopy of the trees along the banks of the River Nidd form a screen which obscures much of the village from view. Crossing the bridge there are superb views up the Nidd to the north. It is not until the bridge is crossed that views of the rear block of buildings at Fountains Farm can be had. From there the path is funnelled in by a high stone wall and the gable end of Fountains Cottage before emerging in the heart of the village through what feels like a back door.



View into the village through Green Gate

Key Views

- 5.18 The incremental growth of Lofthouse, with buildings sited to maximise sunlight or create sheltered, enclosed spaces, has created a rugged, organic group of buildings which is highly attractive. Two spaces are of particular importance: the area around the drinking fountain and the area around the Victory Memorial. The growth of the village has deliberately created these two enclosed and interlinked spaces. These are characteristics of most Dales villages, which are typified by interesting views and vistas. Unfortunately some views are marred by features such

as telegraph poles, overhead wires or signage. A list of key views in Lofthouse Conservation Area (which is by no means exhaustive) is as follows:

- Views over the village and its pastoral valley setting from the northeast descending from the moor.
- Views framed by the pinch point in the road at Green Gate
- Vistas channelled by the buildings along the village street towards landmark features or buildings such as the drinking fountain / war memorial, Gladstone House or Holme Farm.
- Vistas where the irregular form of the building has defined the street space, such as the 'fold' of buildings which includes the Post Office, the 'square' of buildings by the Methodist Chapel or the 'sweep' of buildings at the top of the village.
- Vistas through narrow breaks in the built form to the open fields beyond such as at The Crown Hotel, Holme Farm, Rose Cottage, Chapel Cottage and Green Gate.



View out of the village through a narrow gap by Rose Cottage

- Views north and south along the River Nidd from Lofthouse Bridge.
- Views of the sides of Lofthouse Bridge and the former railway bridge (now the road bridge)
- Views into and out from the tight bend between The Crown Hotel and the barn to Holme Farm



The River Nidd north of Lofthouse Bridge

Trees

- 5.19 There are few trees within the village core, which are shown in the Landscape Analysis map. Generally, the tightly packed built form of the village means that trees tend not to be features of the street scene and are more prominent in views into and out of the village. The one exception to this is the approach from the valley road up to the Crown Hotel where the mature specimen trees in the garden to the Hotel and the line of trees along the edge of the field opposite contrive to give this stretch of lane an enclosed, tunnel-like character.
- 5.20 The key areas of self-sown trees are along the banks of the River Nidd, where the canopies of the trees along the banks screen the village from view from the south



The tunnel-like approach to the Crown Hotel

- and west. Inside the settlement, these trees help to give Lofthouse its enclosed, self-contained character.
- 5.21 Other trees in the village are isolated individual trees, but these contribute to the overall scene where the trees help to enclose the street space and are native or traditionally found in the area. The planting of some coniferous and evergreen trees and shrubs has introduced a discordant component of suburbia in what is an archetypal small Dales village.

Landscape features

- 5.22 The Nidd is a substantial landscape feature, defining the western and southern extent of the village. However, its presence within the village is not particularly evident due to the short but steep drop from the village core to the river, and the screening off of the river by buildings, walls and vegetation. It is only from Lofthouse Bridge and the road bridge that the Nidd can be appreciated. The views north from Lofthouse Bridge are particularly attractive, with the river stepping down a series of bedding

planes. At the road bridge the riverbed is virtually dry for parts of the year due to the change in the underlying geology. Further downstream, near Station House, the settled old ford is the earliest river crossing at Lofthouse. A track still links it with the road to Middlesmoor.

- 5.23 Within the village there are few green open spaces of note with man made features such as the drinking fountain, troughs and K6 phone box acting as landmarks in the built form. However, by looking carefully, the remnants of an important space can be discerned. At the head of the village there is the remains of a small village green which is now split up by the village street and access routes to Gladstone House, The Cottage and The Nook.
- 5.24 Village greens were important spaces, being used to corral livestock, particularly in the late medieval period when Scottish raids were a fact of life in northern England. Nearby Ramsgill has substantial greens, but at Lofthouse it appears that the topography has resulted in there being only a small, constrained space



Deep verges or the remains of a village green? It could be speculated that this space at the top of the village was once a green

for a green, accessed from the north by Green Gate at the edge of the village. The survival of the drinking trough for livestock is another hint at the former function of this space. The former green remains an open, informal area of grass verges which forms a pleasant contrast with the harder space around the drinking fountain and provides a rugged, rural setting for the surrounding buildings.

Grass verges

5.25 Apart from the verges which are remnants of the village green described in the previous paragraph, the presence of verges in the Conservation Area is intermittent, but where grassed verges exist they provide a soft edge to the road and enhance the rural character of the place. The most significant grass verges run alongside Holme Farm along the valley road and the stretch of lane between Station House and The Crown Hotel. The hard character of the street space around the drinking fountain is largely due to there being virtually no grass verges between Hill View and the Methodist Chapel.



The grass verges at Holme Farm soften the street scene

Significant boundary features & boundary walls

5.26 The predominant boundary features used in and around Lofthouse are traditional dry stone walls, which form field boundaries as well as boundaries to private curtilages. Boundary walls help to define 'public' and



The dry stone boundary at Fountains Farm incorporates a boot scraper

'private' space and provide a clear, defined edge to street spaces. Fortunately there are very few instances where boundary walls have been demolished or part demolished, causing the street space to 'bleed' into private space, particularly where garden space is paved over.

5.27 In the heart of the village a handful of houses have more formal domestic boundary walls with squared, coursed stone and copings shaped to give a triangular or hexagonal profile. Dale Cottage and Gladstone House incorporate railings on top of their boundaries, those to the latter being particularly ornate. However, the most significant exception to the prevailing use of dry stone walls is the boundary between Station House and Blythe House. The low stone wall with rock-faced copings is topped by iron post and rail fencing with ball finials. This was originally the boundary to the platform of

Lofthouse Station and ran along the back of the platform.

Strategic pedestrian routes

5.28 Lofthouse stands on the popular Nidderdale Way, which links the village directly with Bouthwaite to the southeast and Scar House Reservoir to the north. This path loops around to the opposite side of the valley and links Scar House Reservoir with Middlesmoor, Stean, passing close to Lofthouse before continuing to Ramsgill. The Nidderdale Way incorporates many of the old and possibly ancient routes through the valley, which provide as level access as possible whilst avoiding the floodplain on the valley floor. In terms of Lofthouse, the Nidderdale Way runs through the heart of the village, entering by Memorial Institute and exiting the village via Green Gate.

5.29 A secondary route is the pathway which runs from the drinking fountain to Lofthouse Bridge. Before the construction of the railway bridge, this would have been a more important crossing point than it is today. The unsurfaced pathway provides a more direct pedestrian route to Middlesmoor and Stean.

Wildlife & nature conservation

5.30 The area is rich in biodiversity with How Stean Beck valley, the hillside between Lofthouse and High Lofthouse, and the slope below Blayshaw Crag all designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's). This places additional protection on areas which feature prominently as a backcloth to Lofthouse.

6. The form & character of buildings

6.1 There are five buildings in Lofthouse included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. However, there are also a number of un-listed historic buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and are of particular interest locally. These buildings have been identified during the public consultation and, as recommended in PPG15, are recorded on the Concept Map in this Appraisal. There is a general presumption that buildings of local interest within the Conservation Area will be protected from demolition and the Borough Council will be especially vigilant when considering applications for alteration or extension.

6.2 The Listed Buildings in Lofthouse are all Grade II and can be located on Map 2:

Holme Farm

Lofthouse Pump

Dale Cottage

The Victory Memorial

Lofthouse Drinking Fountain

6.3 Holme Farm is the oldest building in the village and is itself a replacement of the first building in Lofthouse: the grange built



Holme Farm: seventeenth century vernacular

by Fountains Abbey sometime after 1251. The present building is dated 1653 and is a good example of a yeoman farmhouse of this era. Unusually for Lofthouse, the rear elevation of this building faces directly onto the street. The ground floor rear doorway has composite jambs and a chamfered segmental arch lintel which is inscribed with the date 1653. Holme Farm is constructed of coursed rubble with irregular quoined corners, and a graduated stone slate roof which terminates in tabled gables. The building is orientated so that its principal elevation faces south and is lit by rows of fixed and casement windows set in chamfered reveals and separated by double chamfer mullions. By contrast, openings to the north facing rear elevation and gables are much fewer in number and smaller in size. This arrangement lends itself well to textile manufacture, with upper floor workshops well lit by the sun



Dale Cottage is an unusually grand cottage-workshop

6.4 Dale Cottage is in some respects a late-eighteenth-to-early-nineteenth century successor to Holme Farm. It was built as

a cottage with integral first floor workshop, though the building faces east-west and the original function of the workshop is unknown. The access to the workshop was up the external stone staircase and through a first floor door. Both the workshop and cottage were heated by fireplaces and it appears that there have always been internal doorways between the cottage and workshop.

6.5 Unusually for such a modest, workaday building Dale Cottage incorporates polite architecture to its street frontage, which is faced with squared, smoothed stone rather than the less regular, rougher stone used for the side and rear elevations. The front door and windows to the cottage are set in deep-cut quoined jambs with similarly treated voussoir lintels. The first floor windows are linked by a projecting square cill band. The openings to the workshop are less stylised, but the sash windows match those of the cottage. Dale Cottage has a graduated stone slate roof with three corniced stone chimneys emerging through the ridge.

6.6 The Listed items of street furniture in Lofthouse outnumber the Listed habitable buildings, with a drinking fountain, trough and village pump all Listed Grade II. Of these, two double as memorials to the Great War and are complemented by the Memorial Institute (1927), suggesting that the loss of members of this close-knit community was particularly keenly felt.



The Drinking Fountain is a landmark and focal point within the village

6.7 The most prominent of the three is the drinking fountain which stands in front of Fountains Farm. Prior to its remodelling in 1920 by Duncan Drummond, a local stonemason, there was an earlier eighteenth or nineteenth century fountain. This was comprised of the existing octagonal stone trough around a plain central square monolith with a pyramidal cap which was topped by a gas light. Drummond's remodelling introduced a larger, more elaborately decorated monolith with chamfered edges and stone tablets set in chamfered arched openings with decoratively carved keystones. The tablet facing down the village street is inscribed with a war memorial and the

north and south tablets are inscribed with slogans which promote drinking water. The monolith is topped by a moulded cap from which a stone cross with chamfered edges rises.

6.8 The Victory Memorial is dated 1919 and is also the work of Duncan Drummond. Unusually, this memorial commemorates the end of the Great War and the declaration of peace, rather than locals who



The Victory Memorial is the centerpiece of the green at the top of Lofthouse.

died in the conflict. It is a remodelling of an earlier trough. The rectangular trough has a central raised panel inscribed 'VICTORY'. Behind the trough is a block of coursed, squared rusticated stone which is topped by a pediment inscribed with the commemoration of the Armistice in November 1918.



The finely jointed ashlar stonework of the village pump contrasts strongly with the dry stone walls to either side of it.

6.9 On the main valley road Lofthouse village pump dates from the mid-nineteenth century. It is Classical in style with the rectangular stone trough set between ashlar pilasters topped by projecting square impostes. These carry a vousoired semi circular arch above which is a pediment. This arrangement creates a recessed niche under the arch which shelters the trough. The fine ashlar stonework and Classical vocabulary of the pump are far removed from the rugged, vernacular character of the village in general.

- 6.10 The key characteristics of the local architectural style based on the principal elevations of the historic buildings are:

General form

- 6.11 Much of Lofthouse's visual interest is derived from the organic, higgledy-piggledy way the village has developed over time with each building responding to the constraints provided by the topography, the roadway or the proximity and orientation of its neighbour rather than a pre-conceived layout or set rules.
- 6.12 This has resulted in a street scene where some buildings have ridges and front elevations which run parallel to the street, others are gable on or away from the street. Where gables face on to the street, they usually feature openings, but in some cases are blind. Some buildings are set at irregular angles to the street and there are frequently slight variations in angle or set back between neighbouring buildings giving a wayward charm to the layout of the village.



Gable on, sideways on, angled, parallel, matching, wayward, terraced, clustered, detached, hard against the street, set back from the street, boundary wall, no boundary wall – the layout and orientation of the built form of Lofthouse follows no rules.



The built form of Lofthouse is so tightly packed that in places the road seems to disappear, as it does here in front of the Crown Hotel

- 6.13 This irregular layout creates a mixture of pinch points and more open spaces along the village street. Examples of enclosed spaces includes the space in front of the Methodist Church and along the path behind the Post Office. Examples of pinch points include Green Gate at the top of the village, and between The Crown Hotel and Holme Farm barn. The more open street spaces are the 'square' around the drinking fountain and the former green around the Victory Memorial at the top of the village.
- 6.14 There is a mixture of detached, paired and terraced buildings, with no one particular form of development dominating. The larger groups of buildings show signs that they have been built incrementally with different components added or rebuilt over time.
- 6.15 Whilst buildings are predominantly two storeys in height, there are variations in ridge and eaves height and roof angle between neighbouring buildings. In addition the presence of single storey offshuts, lean-tos and outbuildings enriches the grain of buildings and adds interest to the street scene.

- 6.16 Buildings which face directly onto the street are interspersed with those which are fronted by small enclosed front gardens which more often than not face in a southerly direction. Other buildings are fronted by open grassed verges. Regardless of age and type, there is little space between buildings and a highway.
- 6.17 A common attribute is that all buildings have pitched, gabled roofs. There are, however, variations in pitch and a significant minority of buildings have asymmetrical gables, with the rear eaves level set below the front eaves level. The width of gables is always less than the width of the elevations with eaves. This means that the pitches of the roof always span the shortest distance.

Materials

- 6.18 Sandstone is the predominant walling and boundary wall material in Lofthouse, reflecting the availability of this material locally. The Memorial Institute is the only rendered building in the Conservation Area. There are roughly equal numbers of stone slate roofs and blue Welsh slate roofs. Stone slate is the traditional locally available material and it would have not been until the late nineteenth century that the cheaper, lighter Welsh slate would be available to property owners in Lofthouse. Indeed, a number of older buildings have been re-roofed in Welsh slate instead of stone. In a few cases artificial roof cladding has been used and this creates an unwanted contrast with the natural materials. Traditionally, windows and doors would have been painted timber, though this material is now in the minority.



The consistent use of traditional natural materials unifies buildings regardless of their size, mass, style, original function or age.

Architectural detailing

- 6.19 The predominant architectural style, regardless of the age or type of building, is the vernacular, which gives the village its distinctive Pennine dale character. The ratio of wall to openings is high, giving the buildings a sturdy, robust appearance. The buildings have a rugged and unpretentious look which heightens the visual cohesion. Even the Methodist Church, which incorporates a Venetian window and symmetrical elevations, is restrained and does not use intricacy or boldness to distinguish itself from the surrounding buildings.
- 6.20 The few stylised buildings in the Conservation Area include the Arts and Crafts style extension to The Crown Hotel, the quoined openings at smooth stonework of Dale House and the Classical detailing given to Lofthouse pump and the war memorials.

Roof detailing

- 6.21 The roof pitches vary slightly but are generally moderate, with Gladstone House, the Methodist Church and Holme

Farm the only buildings with significantly steeper roofs. The former two are because roofs built for Welsh slates are frequently steeply pitched, while the latter may be so because the roof was originally thatched. Approximately half of the buildings have stone tabling at the gables and kneelers at the corner where the tabling meets the eaves. Tabling and kneelers can be found on buildings with stone slate roofs and buildings with Welsh slate roofs.



Roofs in Lofthouse are consistently ridged and gabled and retain traditional stone chimneys

- 6.22 Roof pitches are simple and are not interrupted by dormers or rooflights. The gables to the extension of The Crown Hotel and Fountains Farm are the only examples of the roof pitches being significantly interrupted. A proliferation of rooflights and the introduction of dormer windows would be significantly detrimental to the roovescape of the Conservation Area, which is highly prominent when seen from further uphill. The Crown Hotel and Fountains Farm are the only examples of significantly oversailing roofs and the use of bargeboards.
- 6.23 Chimneys are situated at ridge level emerging at the apex of a gable or part way along the ridge. Chimneys are stone built, are robust in appearance and feature a cornice. Chimneystacks are always expressed within the thickness of the wall and hence do not stand proud of the external wall.

External walls

- 6.24 The stonework varies with building age, with the earliest stone walls (and some side and rear elevations to later buildings) being faced with coursed rubble or roughly squared stone in courses of varying depth. From the late eighteenth century the stonework to the principal elevations of buildings was much more regular in terms of the evenness of the courses, the squareness of the stones and the smoothness of the wall face. Regardless of age, the buildings in Lofthouse typically have uncluttered flat elevations uninterrupted by significant projections like porches or other front extensions. There is always a large wall to window ratio giving the buildings a hardy, permanent appearance. This is particularly the case on elevations without a southerly aspect. In these cases the ratio of wall to window is much higher. Holme Farm is a good example of this.



Watershot masonry is a Pennine detail

6.25 An unusual detail found on some of the buildings is the use of watershot masonry. This is where the stone in a wall is shaped and coursed such that the top edge of the stone projects from the wall and the top face of the stone (i.e. the bedding plane) is exposed and slopes gently away from the face of the wall. Although this might appear to be inviting moisture to penetrate the wall, the function of watershot masonry was to throw water clear of the wall in exposed locations, and particularly on gables. Watershot masonry is only found in the Pennines and as a building tradition it appears to have ceased c.1830. An easy to find example of watershot masonry in Lofthouse is to the gable of the Band Room.

6.26 Quoins (large corner stones) are a common feature of buildings of all ages in Lofthouse, varying from the irregular sizes and shapes in earlier buildings such as Holme Farm, The Nook and Fountains Barn through to the regular, identically sized quoins of later buildings such as the Methodist Church and Bell Farm. Quoined doorways appear in a minority of buildings, including barns. Dale Cottage and the Methodist Church area the only buildings where the jambs to the windows are quoined.

6.27 Window openings are rectangular in shape and are always taller than they are wide, giving a vertical emphasis. Windows are well recessed in the masonry openings to protect them from the elements. Windows typically have slightly projecting stone sills and stone lintels which are deeper than the sills. There is a significant minority of buildings where there is a shallow projecting hood

over lintels. There are equal numbers of buildings where the jambs are monolithic and where coursing of the walls continues right up against the window openings. Door openings are treated similarly.

6.28 The eaves details to most buildings are unadorned, with most gutters being carried on discrete metal brackets. A few of the more decorative buildings like the Crown Hotel and Gladstone House have simple squared dentils carrying the gutters. A similar number of buildings have timber bargeboard details at the wall head, where the roof overhangs. Unfortunately some of the vernacular style modern dwellings in the Conservation Area have inappropriate bargeboard details.

Windows

6.29 In Lofthouse, two traditional window types can be found. The most common is the vertically sliding sash window. This detail varies across the Conservation Area with building age, with Dale Cottage featuring Georgian eight-over-eight-pane windows, Hill View featuring Victorian two-over-two pane sash windows and The Crown Hotel featuring Edwardian style eight-over-one sashes. These variations add interest to the street scene and are testament to the historic development and redevelopment of the village. The second vernacular window type, side hung casement windows, are far less common, as this window detail is typically only found on buildings erected before the mid-to-late eighteenth century. Examples of this earlier window type can be found in the mullioned openings at Holme Farm and The Nook.



Sash windows through the ages: a Georgian-type sash (top right), a later Victorian sash (top left) and stylish Edwardian sashes (lower windows).

6.30 Unfortunately a significant number of traditional sash and casement windows have been replaced with PVCu or standard factory made timber windows, which is often to the detriment to the overall character of the buildings concerned. Each inappropriate window installed erodes the character of the Conservation Area and the contribution the fenestration of buildings makes to the street scene.

6.31 Very few dormer windows and rooflights are evident in Lofthouse. A proliferation of these features would be detrimental to the roofscape, which is particularly visible from further uphill.

7. Character area analysis

7.1 This section examines the buildings and spaces within the Conservation Area in greater detail looking at sub areas. The aim is to identify the special character of the area that provides Lofthouse with its particular 'sense of place' and to summarise the details and features that are important. The sub areas can be defined according to historical development, building form and uses and location. These areas are:

1: The village core

2: The riverside

1. The village core

7.2 The core of Lofthouse is set along an elongated S-bend of lane which runs through the middle of a narrow shoulder of gently sloping south facing land which is sheltered by the valley side to the north and east and is elevated from the floodplain to the south. The village street is the principal route through the area with a path to Lofthouse Bridge, a back lane which runs behind the post office and in front of the Memorial Hall and a footpath to the east the only alternative routes through the village.

7.3 The extent of the village core is emphatically defined by two points where the roadway is constrained by the buildings to either side producing significant local landmarks. The first is Green Gate at the head of the village which effectively closes the village off from the open hillside to the north and frames high quality vistas

into and out of the village. The second is the tight bend at the foot of the old village where the long mass of Holme Farm barn stands only a short distance away from both The Crown Hotel and Lund Cottage across the street.

7.4 In the village core there are only a few narrow gaps between buildings which allow views of the surrounding countryside, though there area views to be had of the southern side of Nidderdale from within the village. This tight packing of the built form and the narrow entrances to the village were a product of the topography but it is also likely that the village street, particularly before it was ever surfaced, functioned as a village green – a communal corral for the livestock of the farms based in the village. Indeed the grassed area around the Victory Memorial looks like the remnants of a green, the place name (and gate) of Green Gate survives.

7.5 The physical constraints to the built form of the village has helped to create a place where buildings are afforded little space and there is little or no opportunity for any one building to dominate or make itself distinct from its neighbours. Instead of competing for attention the buildings in the village core form an attractive, unified group. Buildings of different masses, height, age and function stand side by side but are sufficiently consistent with each other. The one weak point is the gap in the built form created by the two car parks in the heart of the village, forming

an unwanted contrast with the close-knit form of the village. Virtually all of the buildings and outbuildings in the village core contribute to the character of the area making it difficult to pick out any individual buildings which make a particular contribution above any other.

7.6 Approaching the village core from the valley floor, the sinuous stretch of lane leading to the southern 'gateway' to the village is closely bounded by dry stone walls and towering trees. On the right the two phases of construction of The Crown Hotel can be discerned. The taller side wing with tapered chimneys, oversailing roof, bargeboards and jettied mock timber framing to the gable dates from the 1906-7 extension, built to capitalise on the additional trade generated by the nearby railway station and workers constructing the reservoirs upstream.

7.7 The lower mass of the original pub faces onto the street and has a Georgian grid-like layout of rectangular openings, with the front door emphasised by its quoined surround. The ground floor windows were replaced with Edwardian sashes to match the extension and the pub was probably re-roofed in slate at this time. To the left of the old pub are its former toilets, a leaning jumble of rubble walls which help to enclose the bend of the road and add to the grain of buildings in the area. The Crown has substantial grounds containing mature trees. The Hotel car park to the north is an open, gravelled space in

need of enhancement. The central tree contributes positively to the street scene and its canopy helps to close off the space.

- 7.8 Also at the bend Lund Cottage is a small detached building which has been chopped and changed over the years with quoins on some but not all corners and one set of quoins terminating halfway up the wall. Possibly built as a cottage-workshop/store a first floor doorway is accessed by external stone stairs and on the opposite gable there is evidence of a blocked first floor doorway. There is an irregular fenestration with the larger roadside window possibly once a shop window.



Holme Farm barn and Lund Cottage

- 7.9 Opposite, Holme Farm barn is a long mass, built in three phases with the oldest element closest to the farmhouse. The barn presents a largely blank elevation to the street but does feature traditional openings such as ventilators and pitching holes, with a boot scraper opposite the front door to the Crown. Long stone slate roofs and the use of coursed rubble unify the different builds. The adjacent farmhouse is described in paragraph 6.3. Its mass and materials complement

that of the barn and help to channel vistas along the road. The presence of grass verges in front of Holme Farm and its barn contributes to the rural character of the village street.

- 7.10 The adjacent Stoneywalls and Hill View were built as a house and cottage or cottage-store respectively. Unusually, Stoneywalls faces away from the street and is obscured from view by a garage and a sympathetic lean-to extension. The house has a stone slate roof, a three bay front elevation (from which a large single storey extension projects) and tabled gables with kneelers and stone chimneys to the apexes. Hill View looks to have had some status due to the formal wall with triangular copings around the front garden, plus the well-proportioned front elevation. The purpose of the additional doorway is uncertain.



Hill View and Stoneywalls

- 7.11 Across the street, the village car park is built on the site of cleared cottages of which the Band Room is the only remnant. The car park is bounded by dry stone walls, which at least offer some form of enclosure to the street space, unlike the adjacent pub car park. The Band Room was built as the mission room to the Church of St Chad in Middlesmoor, but since the 1950s has been the practice room of the Middlesmoor

and Lofthouse Band. The building retains vernacular detailing and stonework. Behind this the Memorial Hall of 1927 contrasts with the rest of the village due to its long low mass, rendered walls, and red clay tile roof. The long side elevation faces the street and is in need of enhancement.

- 7.12 The drinking fountain forms a focal point to vistas along the village street once Holme Farm is reached. The groups of buildings at Fountains Farm, Fountains Cottages the Post Office and Bracken Cottage and Fern Cottage form a discernible 'square' around the fountain, though the street space is triangular in form, as it is closely defined by the boundary walls fronting the buildings.



A view into the 'square' around the drinking fountain. Fountains Farm is in the background.

- 7.13 The Fountains Cottages group to the west side appears to have been built as a pair of cottage-workshops, possibly from an older house or barn. It appears as though the cottages were in the centre of the group, with paired hooded doorways with quoined reveals in the centre and symmetrical fenestration. At either end were bays providing access to the upstairs workshops. Little Fountains Cottage retains its external stone steps and first

floor doorway, but at the other end of the row the stairs have been removed and the doorway partially blocked and made into a window.

- 7.14 On the other side of the 'square' the cottages adjoining Fountains Farm are similarly detailed to the pair of cottage-workshops just described. The attached Fountains Farm appears to have been remodelled with a new roof, dormers and larger windows about the time The Crown was extended and remodelled. The oversailing roof and small Scottish-style gablets are features also found on the Crown. The attached barn has a blank front elevation in front of which is a K6 phone box, a key piece of street furniture. The barn gable curiously has a blocked arched cart entrance with rock faced voussoirs, but in front of this are later stone steps which lead to a first floor doorway which is also blocked. The adjacent Fountains Barn, if it was ever a barn, is very domestic in appearance and might well have been substantially rebuilt during conversion.



Holme Farm Cottage, Nidcot and Wayside Cottage

- 7.15 Along the stretch of village street the western side of the street is defined by the long row of cottages and barns fronted

by enclosed front gardens, but on the western side there is a splay of different buildings which face gable-on to the street at different angles, giving a distinctive character. Principal among these buildings is the Methodist Church, a simple, barn like edifice with tall Victorian proportions. The Church is relatively modest in appearance with an elongated hooded Venetian window to its gable, and tall paired lights in chamfered reveals elsewhere. The principal entrance is via a gabled porch with round-headed windows set into its sides. This entrance faces onto



The tight stone flagged courtyard or square in front of the Methodist Church. Chapel Cottage is to the right.

a small flagged courtyard or square, which is tightly defined by the masses of the Church, Chapel Cottage and the back of Honeysuckle Cottage. The asymmetrical gable and unevenly sized and distributed windows of Chapel Cottage creates a pleasing contrast to the ordered elevation of the Church. Honeysuckle Cottage has a blocked taking-in door at first floor suggesting a former use as a cottage-workshop.



The asymmetrical gable of The Nook with The Cottage visible in the background

- 7.16 Near the head of the village, Bell Farm, Gladstone House, The Cottage and The Nook form a disparate but attractive array of buildings standing at the edge of the green in the centre of which the Victory Memorial forms an important landmark. The Nook is the oldest of the group and faces gable-on to the green. This allows its principal elevation (not visible from the street) to face almost due south. It appears to have been a farmhouse and is perhaps one of the oldest buildings in the village. This is suggested by its quoined asymmetrical gable, mullioned window and blocked first floor taking-in door. Next door to the vernacular style but altered former pair of cottages which is now a house called The Cottage, Gladstone House is a landmark building in the Conservation Area due to its prominent location and architecture. The house was built c.1900 and has a formal, symmetrical front dominated by canted bay windows either side of a veranda style porch. The

decorative timberwork to the porch and Edwardian sash windows have been removed, but the property does retain its stylish railings to the front wall.



Bell Farm and Gladstone House

7.17 At the head of the village Bell Farm is a c.1900 rebuild of an earlier farmhouse, reusing older stonework including quoins and some of the stone roof slates. The farmhouse is modestly detailed and has a symmetrical frontage. The rubble-built outbuilding across the road is a landmark building due to the narrow gateway it forms at the entrance to the village.

2. The Riverside

7.18 In contrast to the densely built up village core, the lower part of the village



Vista by Allenby Cottage



Vista along the valley road by Station House

alongside the River Nidd is much less intensively developed. The northern side of the valley road is dominated by the grassland and trees on the short but steep slope between the village core and the valley floor. This greenery screens the village core from view and make the valley road feel like a linear space. The buildings along the road are vernacular in style and are much more regular in form than the rest of the village, with front elevations and ridges running parallel to the road. Stone boundary walls and the railings to the former station platform are important features of the street space. The Nidd itself is only visible at its crossing points.

7.19 The road bridge dates from c.1905-10 and was built by the Bradford Corporation to carry its railway between Pateley Bridge and Angram to facilitate the construction of the reservoirs at the head of Nidderdale. It is made of squared sandstone and exhibits the typical snecked coursing and pitch-faced stonework typical of Yorkshire railway structures. The bridge is carried by a single segmental arch with voussoirs which diminish in size towards the crown of the arch. The solid parapets are coped and

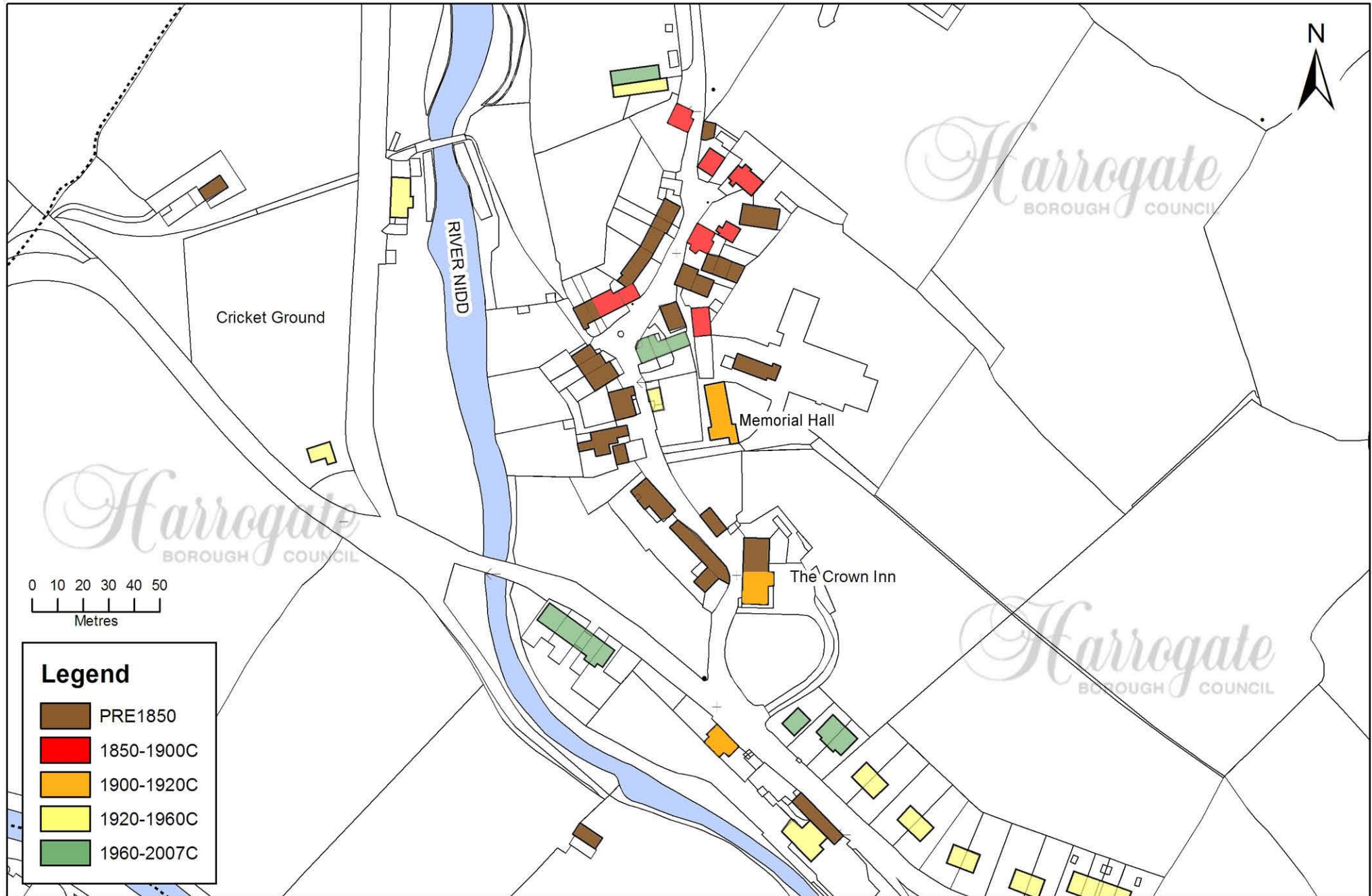
are constructed in diminishing courses. At this crossing the riverbed is virtually dry for parts of the year due to the change in the underlying geology. Further downstream, near Station House, the settled old ford is the earliest river crossing at Lofthouse. A track still links it with the road to Middlesmoor.

7.20 Lofthouse Bridge is historically an older crossing than the railway bridge, but looks to have been significantly altered. It is carried over the Nidd by a single round arch. Its southern side exhibits coursed stonework and the remains of a hood over the voussoirs, but the underside and northern side are clad in cement render. The parapets consist of low, deeply coped stone wall topped by traditional post and rail railings. Curiously the northern parapet is carried on a steel beam which spans the crossing. It is only from Lofthouse Bridge and the road bridge that the Nidd can be appreciated. The views north from Lofthouse Bridge are particularly attractive, with the river stepping down a series of bedding planes.



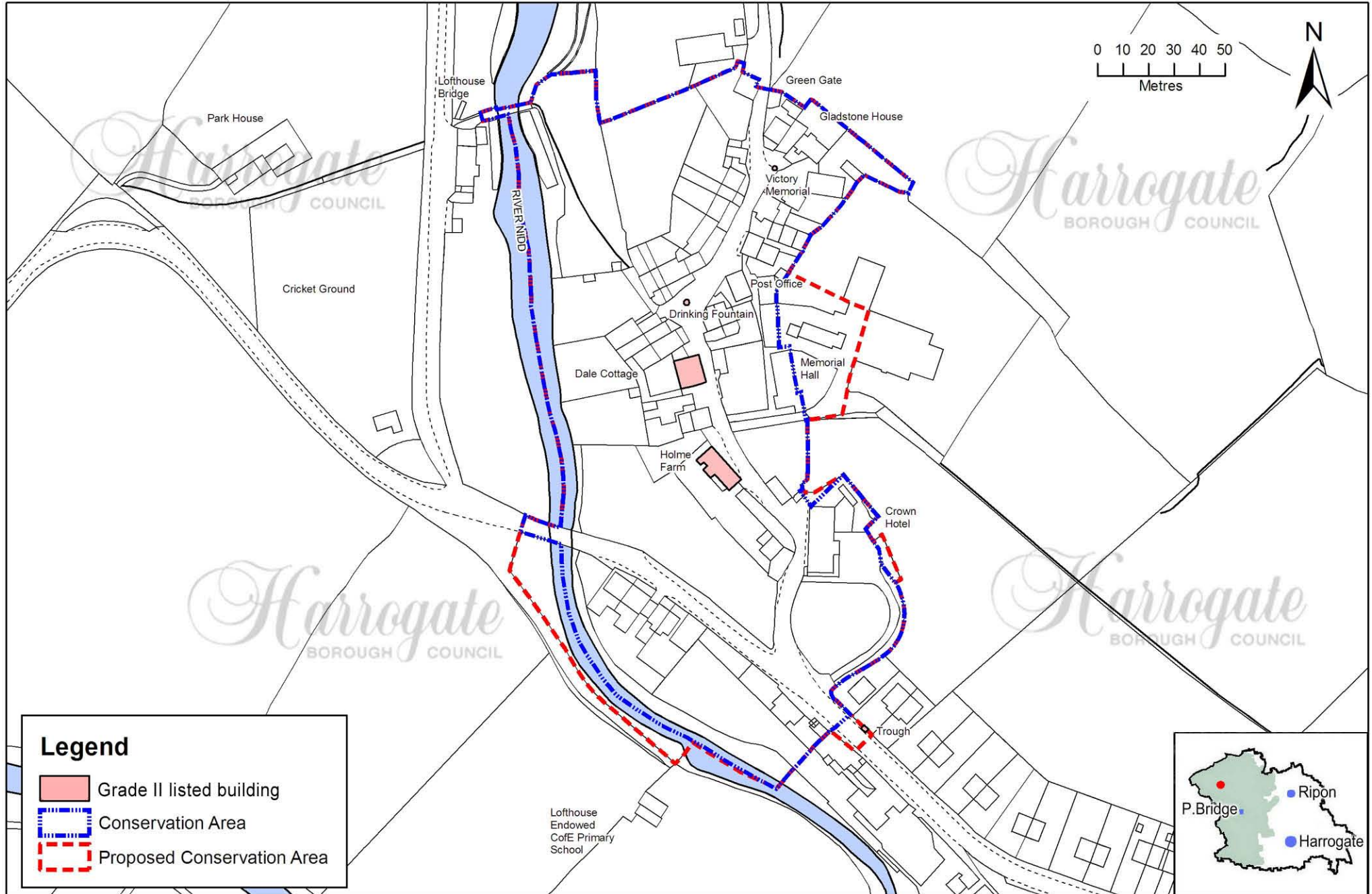
Lofthouse Bridge. Note the steel beam supporting the parapet.

Map 1: Historical development of Lofthouse.



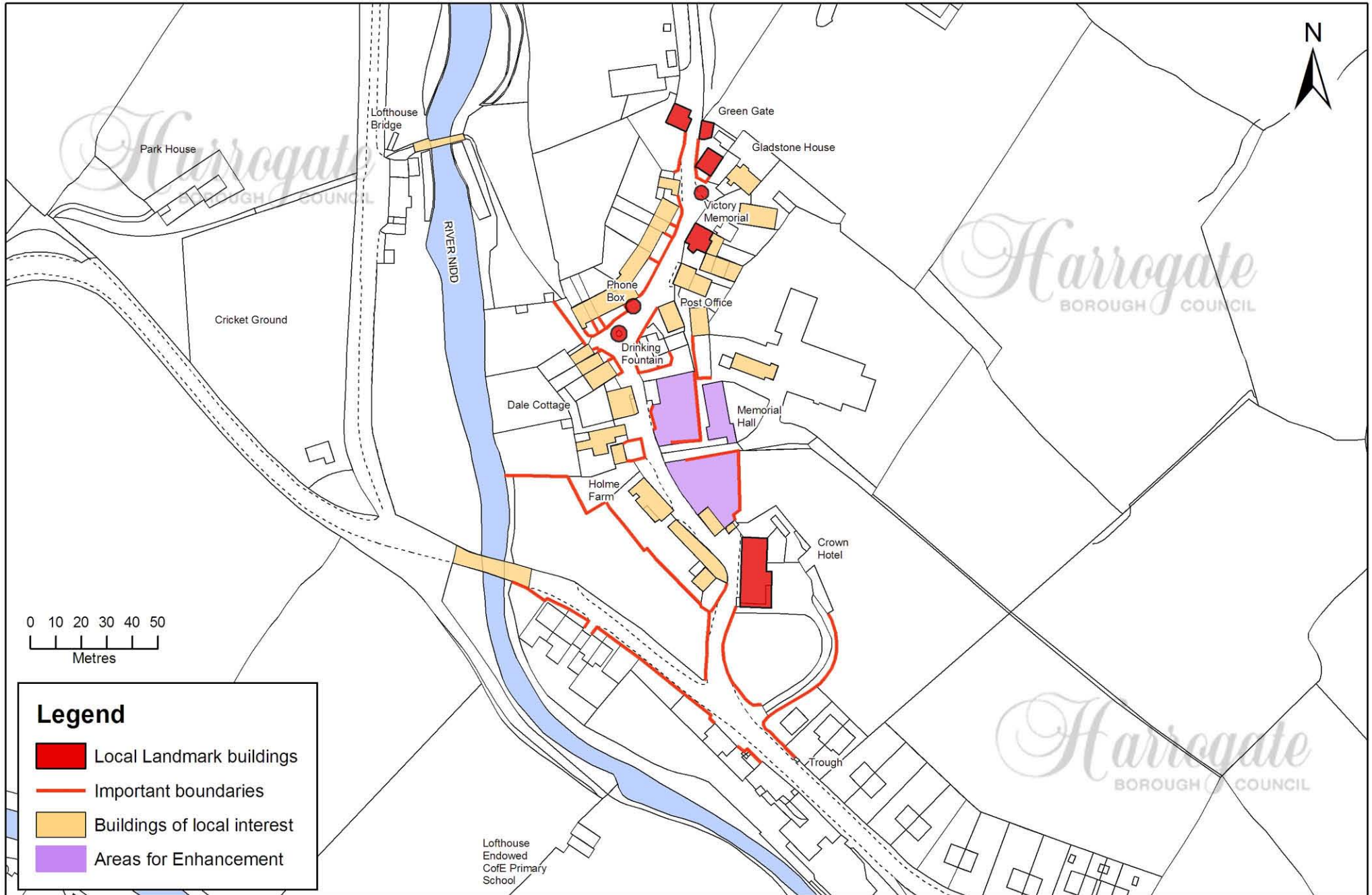
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Map 2: Lofthouse Conservation Area boundary

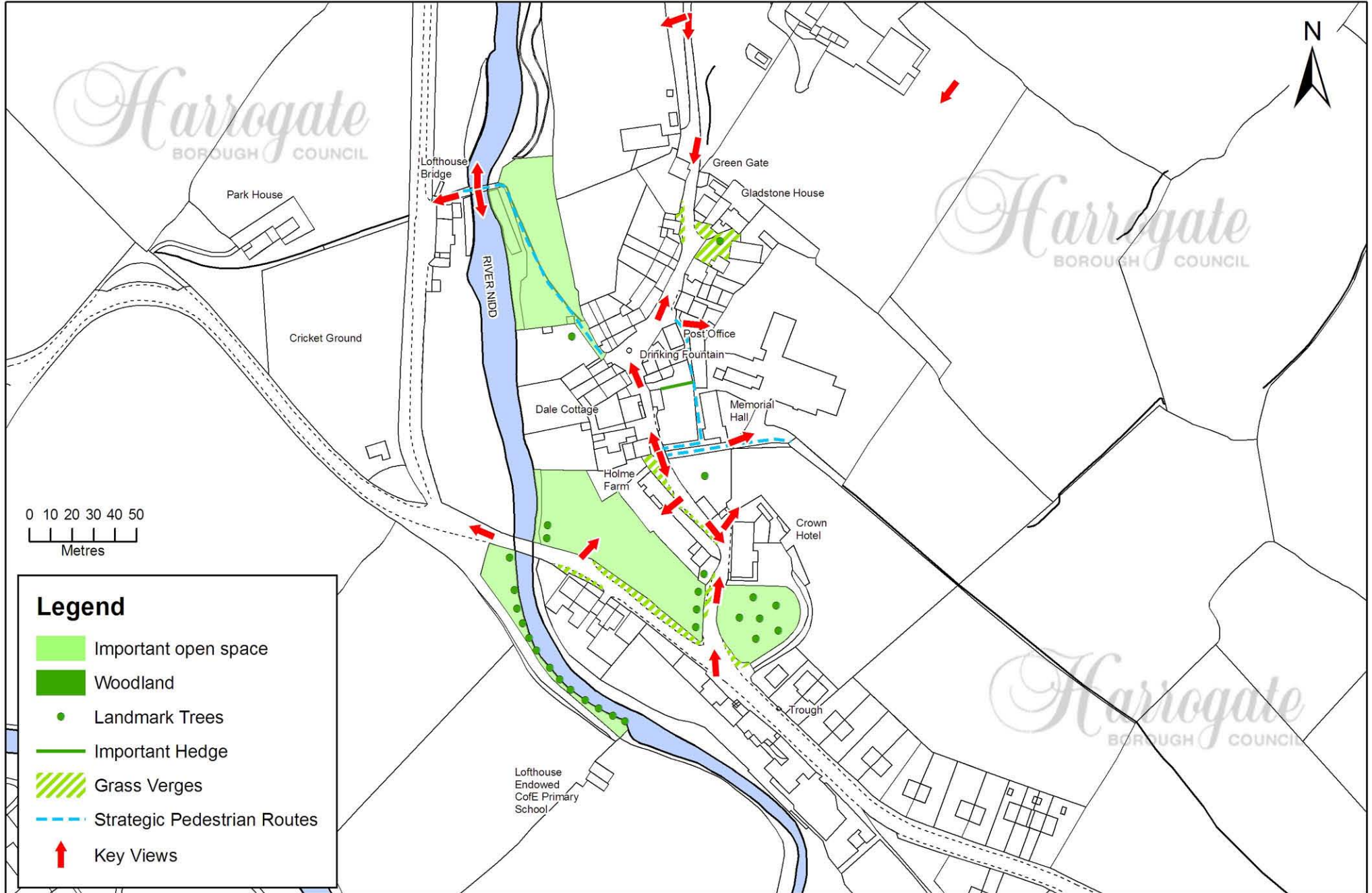


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Map 3: Analysis & concepts



Map 4: Landscape analysis



Legend

- Important open space
- Woodland
- Landmark Trees
- Important Hedge
- Grass Verges
- Strategic Pedestrian Routes
- Key Views

Appendix A

1. Management strategy

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

Although Lofthouse is an attractive village, it does not follow that all buildings, extensions, alterations and spaces within the Conservation Area necessarily contribute to that attractiveness. Ultimately the aim is to (a) explore whether there are any buildings or areas which are at odds with or spoil the character of the Conservation Area, and (b) to consider how the special character or distinctiveness, as defined in earlier sections of this document, might best be preserved or enhanced.

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

2. Monitoring & review

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

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

3. Maintaining quality

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

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

4. Conservation Area boundary review

As part of the process of producing the Appraisal, the existing Conservation Area boundary was reviewed. The outcome of the public consultation event is that most people were happy with the Conservation Area as existing, but a boundary amendment was suggested to make the Conservation Area smaller. The possible inclusion of this area was determined on the basis of their “special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

At the consultation event, it was suggested to include the trees on the southern bank of the Nidd, opposite the cottages and houses on the valley road. The reason for this suggestion is that the trees on the southern bank contribute to the street scene and help to enclose the village. A survey of the boundary confirmed that the trees along the outside of the bend do

contribute positively to the village scene. Moreover, these trees also line the old track which leads to the settled ford and stepping stones across the Nidd. This was the earliest crossing point in the vicinity of Lofthouse. It is therefore proposed to include the trees on the southern bank of the Nidd up to and including the ford, stepping stones and the pathway leading to them.



The old ford across the Nidd is part of the village's history

The re-survey of the Conservation Area boundary has resulted in two extensions to the Conservation Area boundary being proposed by officers. The first is to include the recently converted barn called The Byre and its curtilage within the Conservation Area. When the Conservation Area was designated in 1994 this site contained modern agricultural sheds and a large slurry tank which dominated the site, making the barn a secondary, concealed building on the site. The site has since been redeveloped with the modern agricultural buildings and structures demolished and the barn sensitively converted, retaining its former character, which is complementary to that of the built form of the village. It would therefore be logical to include The Byre and its curtilage within the Conservation Area.

The second addition proposed by officers is the slight extension of the Conservation Area boundary along the valley road to include the village pump which stands in front of 10 Nidd View. This historic piece of street furniture complements the drinking fountain and trough found elsewhere in the village and would form a clearer bound-



The Byre contributes positively to the village scene

ary to this edge of the Conservation Area. The inclusion of the pump would mean that the high boundary wall leading to it would be included, but not the houses or gardens behind, which are of no special architectural or historic interest.

It would be inconsistent to leave the village pump (*right*) out of the Conservation Area when the drinking fountains and troughs are so important to the street scene



Other alterations to the Conservation Area are slight and are intended to ensure that the boundary follows boundary walls and is readable on the ground. The proposed boundary alterations are indicated on Map 2.

5. The Management of change

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

There is scope for the enhancement of the car parks in the heart of the village which provide a poor contrast to the surrounding densely built townscape. The improved enclosure of these sites with dry stone walls would be a start. Similarly, the Memorial Institute is beginning to look tired and would benefit from sympathetic enhancement.

6. Opportunities for enhancement

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

- The removal of inappropriate planting from the grass verges and former green to give a traditional rural appearance.
- The re-use and repair of vacant or underused farm buildings and outbuildings, particularly the former Methodist Sunday school.

- The protection of front gardens and a presumption against creating hard areas in front of houses and the demolition of front boundary walls.
- The clearing of potentially damaging vegetation from the village pump, drinking fountain and Victory Memorial and the sensitive upkeep of these structures. Consideration should be given to restoring the flow to these structures.
- Rationalisation of road signage
- Consider repositioning telegraph poles and placing overhead cables underground.
- The reinstatement of appropriate traditional timber windows.
- The reinstatement of traditional natural roofing materials to buildings where inappropriate synthetic materials have been used.
- Safeguarding and supporting the public and commercial uses which exist in the Conservation Area.

Existing buildings

The survey of the existing buildings within Lofthouse clearly identified that a distinctive character exists, although to some extent this has been eroded by subsequent alterations, which have not always recognised that distinctiveness. Over the past thirty years, public awareness and expectation of the planning system to protect the “familiar and cherished scene” has increased substantially. Additionally, there now exists a greater understanding of the impact which incremental change can have upon the distinctive character of historic areas. Options to safeguard and enhance the architectural character of Lofthouse could include some or all of the following:



Well maintained, but seemingly vacant, the former Sunday school could be re-used.

Design Guidance

Additional design guidance, which is more specific to the Conservation Area, could be considered for future alterations to direct change towards materials and design detailing which complements the defined local architectural character. This would be in the form of non-statutory planning guidance. If adopted, this guidance would act as a yardstick against which proposals could be assessed and could assist both existing and future residents in understanding what is desirable.

Article 4 Directions

Formal control over future alterations of buildings could be introduced through what is known as an Article 4 Direction which removes permitted development rights. These are rights granted by Statute, within strict limitations, to alter dwellings without the need for planning permission. Article 4 Directions can be designed to be specific to particular types of development relating, for example, only to roof covering or front elevations. It cannot place an embargo on change, but rather brings certain types of development within the scope of planning control. Article 4 Directions are made by the Borough Council, and in some cases, would need confirmation by the Secretary of State. Article 4 Directions could be introduced throughout the Conservation Area or just to individual buildings whose special interest is considered to be at risk from incremental change.

Reinstatement of architectural detail

Some buildings have been altered, which has changed their architectural form in a way which conflicts with the settlement’s distinctive character. The introduction of standardised 20th century door patterns and PVCu windows and porches has undermined the character of many historic areas. The use of non-traditional finishes such as staining for joinery is detrimental to the character and appearance of the village and controls or guidance to encourage painted timber and traditional details and materials should be introduced. Non-sympathetic alterations should be resisted.

Grant schemes

From time to time the Borough Council operates grant schemes to help maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Quality erosion & loss of architectural detail

The character and appearance of buildings in the Conservation Area is harmed by the removal or loss of original architectural features and the

use of inappropriate materials. For example, the loss of traditional joinery, sash windows, front doors and roofing materials can have a considerable negative impact on the appearance of a historic building and the area.

Insensitive re-pointing, painting or inappropriate render will harm the long-term durability of stonework.

In all cases, the Borough Council will expect original historic features and detailing to be retained, preserved and refurbished in the appropriate manner, and only replaced where it can be demonstrated that it is beyond repair.

Roof alterations & extensions

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

Gardens & front boundary treatments

Front and rear gardens make an important contribution to the streetscape and overall character of the area. The Borough Council will resist the loss of soft landscaping and traditional boundary walls and railings. For example, the construction of new openings and the consequent breaking up of the continuous boundaries to the village street would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. In certain locations traditional boundary features should be reinstated.

Telecommunications equipment, cable & satellite dishes

Attaching external communications apparatus, including cable runs, to historic buildings can harm the appearance of the buildings. The Borough Council can provide guidance on the installation of telecommunication equipment including satellite dishes.

Overhead wires are intrusive in parts of the Conservation Area and the burying of cables would enhance the character of the village. This should be a long-term aim in the interests of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Floorscape

It is unlikely that in past times the street surfaces in Lofthouse were formalised with setts, paving or cobbles and it is considered that modern tarmac is the natural successor to the rammed earth and stone that would have preceded it. However, small pockets of stone surfacing survive and there should be a presumption in favour of retaining these. Similarly, existing unsurfaced paths and tracks should remain as such unless there is a compelling reason to alter them. Any new surfaces should respect the prevailing character of the village.

Important trees

The existing mature trees throughout the Conservation Area add to its charm and character. In accordance with the Council's Landscape Design Guide, the existing pattern of trees should be preserved and repaired through managed planting and maintenance. In considering both of these areas, guidance should be geared towards tree and shrub planting and management methods that improve wildlife habitats.

Outdoor advertisements & street furniture

The design and appearance of some of the street furniture and advertisements in the village adds to the street clutter and needs improvement in order to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

New development

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

New buildings will only be permitted where they respect, rather than compete with the historic skyline, respect landform and landscape pattern and are accompanied by a comprehensive landscape scheme that is integral to the design. New development must be of a suitable quality of design and execution and should relate to its context and respect the established values identified in the Appraisal. The Council will encourage new development that complements the established grain or settlement

pattern, whilst representing the time in which it is built and the culture it accommodates. New development should respect and not adversely impact upon the pattern of existing spaces between buildings.

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

Neutral buildings & spaces

Neutral elements or buildings may have no special historic or architectural quality in their own right, but nonetheless provide the setting for buildings or spaces of special character and interest or may simply conform to the general grain and settlement pattern of the area. This backcloth helps the area to retain its cohesiveness and therefore need special management.

7. Landscape issues

The following guidelines have been developed in recognition of the landscape sensitivities and pressures which exist within the Conservation Area:

Village edges

The visual and spatial relationship between Lofthouse and the surrounding countryside is an important facet of the Conservation Area. At present there is a balance between the buildings, trees and walls creating a sense of enclosure at the heart of the village, and the opportunity to see pastoral fields through gaps in the built form and vegetation. The planting of high hedges of any species or the erection of high fences behind or between buildings would cut vital visual links between the village and its setting.

Similarly the treatment of gardens that adjoin agricultural fields should not assume a suburban character by virtue of their landscaping, boundary features or outbuildings such as sheds. Instead, the focus should be on using native deciduous planting to give traditional garden spaces which relate to their context. There should be a presumption in favour of retaining traditional dry stone walls as the boundaries to gardens and fields.

Tree planting

Lofthouse contains few areas of trees, which are largely limited to the river banks and the gardens of houses. These trees would all benefit from management to ensure that the existing amenity and habitats they offer are maintained or enhanced. In the longer term, the need to plant new trees to succeed existing new planting should be addressed in order that the eventual loss of individual mature trees does not create unwanted holes in the canopy or townscape.

Footpaths

The location Lofthouse in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which is popular with walkers makes its footpaths of particular importance in terms of connecting the village with other settlements and destinations. Ways of improving the footpath network in and around the village and providing more links with the surrounding landscape should be examined. The condition of the existing footpath network in the area could be improved without changing its character.

Wildlife & nature conservation

The village lies close to three Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's). Possibilities exist for the creation of wildlife corridors, particularly along the river corridor improve diversity and enhance the landscape pattern around the village.

Checklist to manage change

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

- Development should not impinge on the form and character of Lofthouse.
- New development and landscaping should not divorce the conservation area from its rural setting. Links and views between the two should be retained or enhanced.
- The regular maintenance of older buildings is encouraged, together with the restoration of traditional features where these are absent.
- The repair and re-use of older buildings should be encouraged in the first instance rather than demolition and redevelopment.
- New development and repairs should be constructed of materials which match or complement traditional natural materials.
- Design should reflect the distinctive local architectural style both in terms of overall form and detailed design, as appropriate to the context.
- In general new buildings should complement the form and layout of the existing settlement. In general the principal elevations of buildings should face onto the street.
- New development should not adversely impact upon the historic skyline.
- Maintain the softness of roadside verges by avoiding the introduction of kerbs where none existed historically.
- The positive management of the stock of mature trees should be undertaken.
- Retain important gaps and the general space about buildings to ensure glimpses of trees and views are maintained.
- Minimise the clutter of signage, street furniture, lighting and road markings.
- Repair and retention of boundary walling.

Appendix B

Public Consultation

The Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the requirements for public consultation. To meet these requirements, and to inform a review of the Conservation Area, a public consultation event was held on Wednesday, 30th July 2008 at Lofthouse Memorial Hall. This consultation took the form of a public meeting including a walkabout and a workshop session. Prior to the event residents were notified via a posted leaflet that the consultation event was taking place.

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

The main activity was a walkabout which involved the group of those attending the workshop in a visual survey of the Conservation Area. The community was encouraged to make notes and take photographs to identify what makes Lofthouse special to them. On return to the Hall, the workshop session enabled the group to share their views on the information gathered on the walkabout.

Those who attended the workshop were concerned that not all residents were present and wanted more time to survey the village and gain the input of residents not at the workshop. It was therefore agreed that residents would be given more time to complete the work and that the group's

feedback would be posted to the Conservation and Design Team. This feedback was received and comprised:

- additional photos of Lofthouse,
- a suggested boundary alteration,
- landmark buildings, structures and walls,
- key views,
- areas in need of enhancement; and ,
- descriptions of Lofthouse in a single sentence

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

Local involvement is an essential aspect of the consultation process and local residents are encouraged to comment on the draft documents. When all comments have been received, any appropriate revisions will be made before the Conservation Area Appraisal is adopted by the Council and published on the Council's website. This Appendix will be updated after the full public consultation has been completed.

Appendix C

Further reading

Upper Nidderdale History Group (2008) 'People and Places: Memories of Upper Nidderdale'