

Middlesmoor Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Contents

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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 Middlesmoor.
- 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 Middlesmoor Conservation Area was originally designated in January 1994. This Appraisal aims to describe Middlesmoor 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 Middlesmoor special or distinctive it is suggested that any future change, whether to individual buildings, building groups or the village as a whole, will be based on this understanding of the past and the present character of the settlement. In this way, we can manage future change to ensure it makes a positive contribution towards preserving or enhancing its special character.

Objectives

The principal objectives of the Appraisal are:

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

2. Planning policy context

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.

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.

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.

Middlesmoor is in the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). In 1994, in recognition of the quality of its landscape, the Countryside Commission designated the Nidderdale AONB. Saved Policy C1 from the Harrogate District Local Plan, provides that priority will be given to the conservation of the natural beauty of the landscape and any development should reflect the local distinctiveness of the area.

The Nidderdale AONB Management Plan (2009-14) is a spatial strategy that addresses the need to manage change. The Nidderdale AONB Heritage Strategy, approved April 2009, identifies the objectives, policies and actions required for the sustainable management of heritage in the AONB.

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

There is little known recorded history as to the origins of Middlesmoor, though it is probable that there was a Bronze Age settlement just north of the existing village. A number of flint implements were found in the area and the site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, which in part is covered by a builders yard. There is a ditch to the northeast side and a bank on the southwest side, however the other sides of the site cannot be clearly seen.

The Church of St Chad contains an early (Anglo-Saxon) preaching cross with the inscription "Cross of St Ceadda" (Chad). There is little doubt that a church has existed here since very early times, the cross marking a holy site. The Church of St Chad was consecrated in 1484, but the present building dates only from 1866. Inside however, part of the massive font is believed to be of Anglo-Saxon or Norman origin. In 1866 the church was presented with a peal of six bells, each individually inscribed, and which were refurbished in 2000.

Much of the village is thought to date from the eighteenth century, with few older buildings. The economy was based on agriculture though some villagers were employed in lead mining. Also during this period, the practice of spreading lime on upland pasture to improve grazing became commonplace. Limestone was quarried from nearby scars and burnt with peat and coal to produce quicklime that was slaked with water before spreading to reduce the acidity of the soil. Hundreds of field kilns were built, one of which still exists at the entrance to the village.

The end of the eighteenth century saw the enclosure of most of the remaining common land following an Act of Parliament. These enclosures can often be picked out by ruler straight walls, as compared to the earlier irregular shaped fields.

The Victorian period saw a flourishing non-conformist movement, evidenced in Middlesmoor by the Wensleyan Chapel (now in residential use). The population has steadily declined, however, from over 100 late in the nineteenth century to around a third of that number today.

Farming has continued to be the backbone of the economy, but the early twentieth century saw the beginnings of tourism in the Yorkshire Dales. Tourism is important to the area, particularly assisted by the establishment of the Nidderdale Way.

4. Location & setting

Middlesmoor is situated at the head of Upper Nidderdale, 8 miles north of Pateley Bridge. The designation of the AONB formally recognises the national importance of the landscape and the primary objection 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.

The village is set high above the valley floor of the River Nidd. At just over 900ft (300m) above sea level, it is one of Yorkshire's highest settlements. The land falls away steeply from the village to the south and east. The land rises further to the northeast up to the high point at Rain Stang at 453m.

The village sits on Millstone Grit solid geology with fluvio-glacial drift deposits. Soils are slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged mixture of fine to coarse loamy soils over clay with acidic peaty topsoil.

5. LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

The situation of Middlesmoor is spectacular, one approaches the village on the road from Pateley Bridge via Lofthouse through the 'U' shaped valley of the Nidd, which has an enclosed feel due to the steep sides and narrow valley bottom. The Nidd Valley has wooded gills and becks incising the valley sides.

Nearer to Middlesmoor, the small scale valley systems of Blayshaw Gill and How Stean Beck converge with the Nidd Valley and many tributaries drain the surrounding moorland into the River Nidd.

Beyond How Stean, the road rises up to Middlesmoor, and the character of the landscape changes from an enclosed valley, gradually opening up to the vast open upland landscape of undulating moorland, where the dominant vegetation is heather and cotton grass. The colour changes with the seasons and gives rise to darker hilltops contrasting with the lush green of the valley. The hills are the first to be covered with snow which reflects the light and further enhances the quality of the light here above the valley bottom.

The heather moors are managed for grouse shooting. Few public roads provide access to the upland giving a remote feel to the landscape. It is however an important resource for walkers who can appreciate the invigorating landscape of the moorland plateau after rising up the hill from the enclosed green valley

Historic Landscape Character

A Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) has recently been completed for the Nidderdale AONB. The HLC provides an overview of the area surrounding Middlesmoor. Note this study concerns itself with only the immediate environs of the village, and not with the extensive views available from this vantage point. The data has certain limitations as the following criteria have been applied:

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

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

The settlement of Middlesmoor is located on a promontory at the confluence of the river Nidd and How Stean Beck. Its dominant character is of a hill-top village, with steep topography and extensive views over the river valley with its enclosed fields bounded by dry stone walls, and towards the unenclosed moorland on the hilltops. Woodland is also a feature, with ancient semi-natural woodland in How Stean Beck to the south and west, and with field trees visible in the wider landscape.

Middlesmoor's immediate environs comprise a series of medium sized pasture fields defined by dry stone walls, reaching down towards Lofthouse in the valley below. These fields may represent the post medieval piecemeal enclosure of Middlesmoor's medieval open fields. These areas of fields are then flanked to the northwest and southeast by small irregular fields, again bounded by dry stone walls, that may in turn represent the early post-medieval outward expansion of arable, outside of the open fields.

Behind the village to the northwest, the land slopes upwards toward the moor. The slope of the moor between the village and the moor's top is covered with fields enclosed by regular and straight dry stone walls. These fields are documented as being subject to a Parliamentary enclosure award in 1825 as part of the wider enclosure of Stonebeck Up, and probably represent the rationalisation of an area of earlier moorland intake.

The village's promontory is flanked to the south and west by the valley of How Stean Beck. The lower edges of the valley are clothed in ancient semi-natural woodland. 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 lime kilns, presumably processing lime from the nearby limestone quarries.

The Village

The village has a well defined and compact form on plan, however the steep hill on which it is situated results in winding main street and lanes. From the north one can look across the roofs of houses downhill. The spectacular topography presents the Church as an iconic landmark so often photographed from the lower lying land to the south.

The village consists of a tight cluster of buildings randomly planned in and around narrow ginnels, courts and small greens. Most of the earlier houses face in a southerly direction and others face east so that the rising ground to the north and west offers protection to their backs.

Of all Nidderdale's villages, Middlesmoor is one apart, both geographically and in character. This unique character is discussed further in Section 7.

Main Approaches

The principal approach to the village, as before described, is along the Nidderdale Valley floor. The Church of St Chad can be seen from the main road over two miles away near Ramsgill, because of its elevation. Emerging from the enclosed valley after crossing the Nidd at Lofthouse, the land starts to rise steeply and the Church is a prominent feature enticing the visitor up to the village.

On the road, on rising further up the hill, one becomes more aware of the other buildings of Middlesmoor. As the field barn just outside the village, known as Barker Barn, is passed, the old chapel and the secular buildings dominate in the scene.

The alternative pedestrian route from the Nidd Valley bottom was the original road into Middlesmoor. It passes Park House and the aptly named Halfway House, continuing into the village right past the church and directly into the tight knit area of housing.

The Nidderdale Way passes through the village along the main street. The southern approach from the hamlet of Stean crosses over How Stean Gorge rising up as a track and joining the road at the disused lime kiln. The northern approach from Scar House Reservoir via In Moor drops down the ridge between the Nidd and How Stean Valleys and passes by the converted Cockpit Barn and the car park before entering the protective enclosure of the village street.

The footpaths from Ruscoe and Low Riggs merge west of Middlesmoor and enter Middlesmoor at Ivy House Farm. This entrance to the village runs across the hillside and is not as spectacular on arrival as from the other approaches. Two other footpaths converge at Middlesmoor, these rise from the River Nidd north east of the village entering the village at the top end.

Key Views

The spectacular and iconic views of Middlesmoor from outside the village are of the church from the southern approaches.

As Middlesmoor is situated at the apex of the ridge between the Nidd Valley and the How Stean Beck Valley, it has extensive views across both valleys. The key views are from the south and south eastern edges of the village, such as from the road south of Ivy House Farm, the churchyard and the lane at Dovener House. From the approach to the church the view through the attractive iron gates of Middlesmoor House is a delightful taster of the better and more open views to come. Additionally views can be had between houses and over rooftops of lower houses to the southeast.

There are also a number of minor focal points and vistas due to the random nature of the village layout and the landfall. For example, from the lanes towards Blacksmiths Cottage, and from the bend in the main road down to Sandholme. Curiously, whilst St Chads is visible for miles from outside Middlesmoor, it is difficult to locate from the main road within the village being set at a lower level at the fringe of the village, screened by dwellings and accessed only by tracks and ginnels. Hence a key vista is one to the west front of the church from the corner of the lane north of Middlesmoor House.

A view welcome to walkers is up across the main open space at the centre of the village to the Crown public house beyond the red telephone kiosk.

Significant Field Boundaries

Generally fields near the village are small and irregular particularly at lower elevations, which contrast with the larger rectilinear enclosures on higher land. The dominant use in the valley is for grazing. Generally field boundaries are of drystone walls, however hedges feature in the valley bottom. The road boundary of the field between Barker Barn and the village is unusually a post and wire fence.

The drystone wall field boundaries are important to the landscape setting of the village and are a valuable resource. These field boundaries should be maintained to ensure the fine grain of the landscape is not lost through the extensive amalgamation of fields.

Prominent Woodland

Individual trees in the valleys tend to be associated with the river, becks and valley bottom. There are few higher up the valley sides. There are areas of ancient semi-natural woodland in the valley, many too small to be registered. Large conifer plantations elsewhere detract from the character of the native woodlands, however although they can be seen within the expansive scene, these do not detract from the setting of Middlesmoor.

Landmark Trees

There are few trees within Middlesmoor and those that are important to the village are shown on the Concepts map. The two trees north of the church provide an attractive backdrop, although the one on the west is not in itself a particularly good specimen. Other trees that contribute to the scene as seen from the south are those outside the boundary to Middlesmoor House and those west of the main road from the bend.

Trees important to views within the village are those in the field north of Ivy House Farm, which provide an attractive backdrop to the farmhouse, Blacksmiths Cottage and the Crown Inn.

Boundaries within the Village

With the exception of the buildings that are right against the highways, properties have well defined boundary walls. Most boundary walls are drystone, however coursed dressed stone walls are also evident. Due to the topography some retain the earth, for example the wall next to Blacksmiths Cottage. The Old Chapel and 2 West View have ornamental railings let in to the stone copings. Similarly the small area of garden in the central space of the village is bounded by traditional cast iron railings which have unfortunately been damaged. The iron gates to Middlesmoor House, which are hinged on stone gateposts each topped with a raised ball finial, provide security whilst still allowing views across the valley.

Landscape Features

The village has little green space within its core. The grassed area west of the church provides some relief to the hard surfaces and the small sheltered gardens of the houses are planted with ornamental plants, which give colour in summer.

The larger green spaces of Middlesmoor Conservation Area are all at the fringes of the village, they consist of the fields north of Ivy House Farm, the playing field behind Dovener Cottage, the generous garden of Middlesmoor House and the churchyard. Of these, the churchyard is the most important green space of the village, not only because it contributes to the setting of the church and provides tranquil space, but because it affords such spectacular views down the Nidd Valley.

The street lights are standard utilitarian fittings, which detract from their setting and to the historic buildings to which they are attached. Local residents are applying for funding to change them with more attractive fittings of a style more appropriate to their setting.

Particular features within Middlesmoor are the cherished type K6 red telephone box, which is in the centre of the village, and the water trough fed by a continuous small stream of water, which provides a gentle musical note in the street. The disused lime kiln at the entrance to the village provides interest to walkers passing by and is an important physical link to farming methods of the past.

A particular feature of Middlesmoor is the surface treatment of the narrow lanes and ginnels. Where there are pavements as such, they are of large York slabs, but elsewhere the tightly laid cobbles and stone setts give an interesting texture and provide better grip underfoot than slabs. The main route to the church is of stone setts, which were relaid in the last few years. However the lane that passes Bunny Cottage to the Church, which was the historic route in to the village, and the lane past Martinsgate to Dovener House are in a bad condition.

Strategic Pedestrian Routes

Middlesmoor is a popular place for walkers, particularly because of its spectacular setting and its position on the Nidderdale Way, a well signposted and not too vigorous a walk, which passes along the main street. The Nidderdale Way and other footpaths are marked as strategic routes on the Concepts Plan.

The path from the village, alongside the churchyard and down to Park House outside Lofthouse is an important pedestrian route and is the historic route into Middlesmoor before the winding main road was constructed.

Two other footpaths converge at Middlesmoor, one rises from the River Nidd north east of the village up towards the church through the narrow woodland alongside Intake Gill. The other path approaches from the north again from the Nidd and rises up to How Gill Plantation then cutting across the hillside, entering the village at the top end.

Wildlife and Conservation

The area is rich in biodiversity, the sheltered valley with its ancient woodland and pasture, which contrasts with the heather of the exposed moorland. The upland heathland is a site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation. Further information on the upland heathland can be found in the Harrogate District Biodiversity Action Plan.

6. FORM AND CHARACTER OF BUILDINGS

Listed Buildings

There are only three listed buildings in Middlesmoor that are included in the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

These three listed buildings are all Grade II:-

- Church of St Chad
- Crown Inn and Post Office
- House to left of Crown Inn

The Church, dated 1864 and designed by Crossland, is of coursed squared stone with ashlar dressings and has a Welsh slate roof. The predominant feature is the tower at the west, which has offset angle buttresses up to the bell stage and an embattled parapet. The lower windows are flat-headed two light cusped windows with a hood mould. The windows above are two light chamfered "basket arched", and then above the clock the belfry windows are a particularly attractive feature. These are of three lights cusped with a circle within the top of the pointed arch, which has a hood mould. The church has a north aisle, a chancel with north vestry and a porch on the south front, which is gabled with a moulded chamfered pointed arched doorway.

The Crown Inn forms a terrace with the former post office. These early nineteenth century two-storey houses are of coursed squared stone and have graduated stone slate roofs. There is tabling at the verges with shaped kneelers. The doors have plain quoined surrounds and the windows that have unequally hung three pane sashes have plain surrounds.

The listed building known as House to left of Crown Inn is now part of the public house. It is dated 1818 and is, similar to the Crown, of coursed squared stone and has a graduated stone slate roof.

Buildings of Local Interest and Merit

Whilst there are no historic buildings that detract from the village, there are a number of unlisted historic buildings, which particularly contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area and are of particular local interest. These buildings have been identified during public consultation and, as recommended in PPG15, are recorded on the Concept map. There is a general presumption that buildings of local interest within the conservation area will be protected from demolition and the Borough Council will be especially vigilant when considering applications for alteration or extension. Certain buildings have been excluded from

this designation purely because they do not have features of particular interest, for example kneelers, and have inappropriate window replacements.

The buildings identified as having particular interest include buildings of different type, which illustrate how the village was part of the thriving area. The following buildings are now in residential use, but their former uses can be recognised; the blacksmiths cottage, the Wesleyan Chapel, and the Kings Head. Also included is Ivy House Farmhouse and the adjacent traditional farm building, which continue the important links with agriculture.

The Old Chapel, former Wesleyan chapel now in residential use, was constructed in the late nineteenth century. It is of simple plan form, its eaves are equivalent in height to a cottage on the downhill side, however its overall plan dimensions and steep pitched roof result in a building of considerable greater mass than other buildings of Middlesmoor, with the exception of St Chad's Church. The walls are of dressed stone and are buttressed on either side of openings and at the corner. The tabling to the gables terminates in decorative kneelers, and at the top of the west front is a small cross-shaped finial. There is now a chimney at the east gable. The door is relatively small in scale under an imposing pointed arched large window divided into four light cusped windows with tracery over. The south elevation features four paired cusped windows. The roof is of Welsh slate and is dominated by two later hipped roofed dormers, which give a strong visual clue to its current use.

The Blacksmiths cottage is a building typical of the vernacular, buy one that is visually dominated by the steps up to a high level door.

The (former) Kings Head does not at first sight appear to be a public house, nor even particularly old, but is a robust stone building punctuated by small windows. The door has quite a low head with a heavy stone lintel resting on generous quoin stones forming the jambs. To the south end is attached an interesting building, which has an arched head to the door. This part of the property is not in use and its restoration would benefit the street scene. Both roofs are in stone slate the main part having simple tabling to the gables and chimney stacks at the ridge.

Ivy House Farmhouse is set back from the road at a higher level. It is a later building than some of those within the central core. The door that has an oblong fanlight over and the windows, which were once vertical sliding sashes, have simple stone surrounds that fractionally project beyond the main stone wall face. The roof is finished in Welsh slate, and the gutters are supported with timber brackets. Similar to the Kings Head, the farmhouse has tabling to the gables.

Middlesmoor Village Hall is of two linked buildings, the northern end was the school and over the door is a date stone of 1869. This door is not in use. The entrance door with a shaped head is in the southern part next to a mullioned window, an unusual feature in the village.

A building of local historic interest, which would benefit from traditional windows, particularly on the south elevation, is Prospect House, which was a Temperance Hotel. This building has bay windows, which are uncommon in the conservation area, but its principal feature of interest is a porch with heavily incised quoin blocks surmounted in stone blocks, which have small sockets carved at their base, supporting a low broken pediment. The porch appears to be a later

addition and it is likely the stone has been salvaged from elsewhere.

Landmark Buildings

There are buildings that by virtue of their size or due to their design and prominent location form landmarks, which act as strong focal points and immediately identifies one's location. These include the Old Chapel and the Blacksmiths Cottage. There are a number of buildings that provide small landmarks within the village, particularly at junctions and bends in the road.

St Chads is barely visible from the centre of Middlesmoor, however it is so positioned, in the wider landscape and having greater scale than the domestic buildings behind and with its distinctive tower, it is an iconic landmark.

Building Characteristics

The majority of buildings in the village are functional rather than decorative. This is not to suggest they are without quality and charm, they have a distinctive style very much based on local traditions. In architectural terms this is known as the "vernacular". The key characteristics of the local architectural style, based on the principle elements of building are:-

General Form

Houses are generally two storey in height. The height and size of outbuildings and agricultural building vary with their function. Many buildings are linked together to form short rows, however there are also detached houses. All buildings have a basic rectangular plan form with a pitched roof, generally symmetrical dual pitched to dwellings and other larger buildings, but small outbuildings often have mono-pitched (or lean-to) roofs. Chimneys dominate the skyline and are set at the centre of gables or on ridge lines. Later additions to dwellings commonly have dual pitched roofs set at right angles at the rear, or lean against the main gables or rear wall.

Materials

Walling material is stone, render can rarely be seen amongst the cluster of stone buildings. Roofs are of natural slate, sandstone predominantly however Welsh slate is common.

Architectural Detailing

The majority of buildings in Middlesmoor are not richly decorated, yet have a distinctive style. There are buildings for example that have a different style, these include the Old Chapel and Church, but others despite some minor alteration the others still retain the overall character of the vernacular.

Roof Detailing

Generally those buildings with stone slates have lower pitches than those constructed for Welsh slate, which in general were built in the second half of the nineteenth century. There are a number of houses that have stone tabling to the gables and a few of these have kneelers at the corners where the tabling meets the eaves. Otherwise gables are pointed. Gutters are

supported on rise and fall brackets, or occasionally on timber gutter bearers, and hence deep eaves fascias or overhangs are not common in the village.

Most domestic properties have chimney stacks either at the centre of the gable or part way along the ridge. The chimneys are in general of modest height, of substantial thickness and are of robust appearance.

There are few dormers in Middlesmoor, the most notable are on the Wesleyan Chapel which feature hipped roofs and decorative arched window bars to respect the flat headed two light cusped windows below. Also there are a few rooflights that can be seen elsewhere, but generally the roofs of Middlesmoor buildings are uncluttered.

External Walls

Quoins (large corner stones) are a common feature though they rarely project beyond the face of adjacent walling. Most window openings are of simple rectangular form with flush heavy stone lintels and projecting cills. (Note barn openings rarely have projecting cills). Full stone surrounds that incorporate jamb stones are quite common in the village, and also plain quoined surrounds can be seen. Door heads and surrounds are as those of windows.

Some of the older buildings display a method of laying the stone blocks that is particular to this area. The block is laid at a slight angle so that a tiny projecting ledge at the top slopes outwards and the face is protected a little from this leading edge.

Windows

Four basic traditional types can be seen, these are: vertically sliding sashes, mullioned, Yorkshire (horizontally) sliding sashes and casements. Most openings were constructed for vertical sliding sash windows, although many such windows have been replaced. There is only one mullioned window visible from the highway, which is at the Village Hall, but Yorkshire Sash windows are relatively common. Compared to similar windows in areas further east, the Yorkshire sashes are not wide because stone lintels are limited in width for practical reasons. Whereas stout timber frames of Yorkshire sashes can support the load of external brickwork without a lintel, they cannot support the load of external stonework.

Many of the windows have been changed, and some to the detriment of the overall character of buildings, especially where PVCu windows have been inserted with little understanding of the historic style they purport to emulate, or even no attempt to replace the historic proportions. As there are few original vertical and Yorkshire sliding sash windows left they should be retained wherever possible.

7. VILLAGE ANALYSIS

This section examines the buildings and spaces within the conservation area in greater detail to identify the special character of the village, and to describe the features that help define the special "sense of place" of Middlesmoor. The special characteristics of the village are derived

from its location, the topography and the tight and in parts apparent random nature of the tightly spaced buildings. The enclosed nature of Middlesmoor, which is in such an exposed location, gives a strong feeling of protection. There is a strong sense of community here and still a close link with agriculture, as can be seen when sheep are driven through the main street. Although quite small, the conservation area is not wholly of the same character and is divided into sub areas having particular characteristics. These areas are:-

- Central Area
- Village Core
- Area of St Chads Church
- Farmstead/Southern Fringe
- Northern Fringe

Central Area

Excepting the Church of St Chad, the central area of the village presents the public face of Middlesmoor. The main road passes through pinch points at the Kings Head from the south and next to the Village Hall from the north, into the central open area. This space draws any activity in the village.

The central area also contains the public conveniences, telephone box and entrance to the village hall, which together with the Crown provide all the secular community facilities of Middlesmoor.

Unlike most village squares, the area is far from level thus giving prominence to central buildings, particularly the Crown Inn and the former post office, which are along the northern side. The forecourt to the Crown is more level at the northwest corner, but falls sharply to the main road particularly towards the southeast. In the centre of the space is a small garden surrounded by railings. It is not a prominent feature in the space, but it softens the visual impact of the stone setts, and prevents parked cars filling the space.

The south of the space is formed by a building that was formerly three cottages (now knocked through to create one unit) and an attached smaller building that features external stone steps giving access to first floor (loft) level.

The boundary walls east and west of the road here contribute strongly to the character of the space, particularly because of the gardens behind.

Village Core

This part of the Conservation Area is not pristine, however it has a unique and attractive character. Despite the steepness of the hillside, the buildings are close to each other resulting in enclosed protected spaces. There were two farmsteads within this tight core area, Dovener and Church farms. The former, at the edge of the core, is now fully in residential use.

There are five ways into the core; the footpath past the playing field; a lane between the Old Chapel and Prospect House; the wider lane to the church, and; both ends of the historic route

from alongside the church up through the core to the main road near the Crown.

The historic route being the steepest of these and unfortunately its cobbles are in poor condition. The route passes between the houses of Church View and Martinsgate in a small enclosure bounded to the north by the small Bunny Cottage. There is alternative footpath to this space from the south, which passes the yard of Church Farm and the front of Ridgeholme. Beyond Bunny Cottage, as the land rises the historic route opens out into a larger space with a small green area in front of the properties of Joan Lear and West View. Joan Lear has a small walled garden to its west end, which is entered by some step stone steps surmounted by a low iron gate. The eastern part of Joan Lear has been altered considerably within recent years. West View is of two cottages, both with alterations, but the southern one retains attractive front boundary railings.

The lane to the church has recently been relaid in stone setts and consequently is the main route for strangers because the historic route appears private. One passes down from the main road between the side of Kings Head and the modest buildings of Church Farm. The northwest corner building of the farmstead is ruinous. Middlesmoor House stops the vista, but as one reaches the bend, the lane opens out to a pleasant green space with the church to the east and trees to the south.

The path to the playing field passes the gardens of Martinsgate and Blythe Cottage before entering the edge of the former (Dovener) farm yard. The barn was converted a few years ago into a dwelling. The path is poorly surfaced and becomes quite a muddy track around the corner of Dovener Cottage. The playing field is far from level and is quite uneven, other than featuring a swing, it could easily be taken for a small field used only for grazing. West View at a higher level enjoys an open aspect over the playing field.

Area of St Chad's Church

The church of St Chad is the largest and most important building of the village. However it is not just the building that gives this part of Middlesmoor its particular character, but the space and its relationship with the open countryside.

The area, which includes the churchyard, the footpath to its south, the green area just west of the churchyard and the garden of Middlesmoor House, is dominated by the spectacular views to the south, east and particularly southeast down the Nidd Valley.

The upper part of the footpath to Lofthouse passes between high walls, however otherwise this character area is very open. The elevation and the open aspect here provide high levels of daylight, which contribute as much to one's well being as the tranquillity of the place.

Within the churchyard the gravestones, that tell of local history, are bunched closely together particularly south of the church. Nearer the boundary is the war memorial topped by a simple cross, which contributes to the scene when viewed from the area east of the church. Next to the platform around the memorial are steps from the upper level down to the lower level of the churchyard, with stone walls either side that culminate in piers with large low pyramidal cappings. The eastern boundary of the churchyard is marked with railings, except at its

southern corner where there is a timber gate and short length of post and rail fence. Otherwise the churchyard walls are of stone.

The large trees north of Middlesmoor House garden and northeast of the church provide an attractive backdrop, but do not fully screen the houses behind.

Farmstead/Southern Fringe

Ivy House farmhouse is set well back from the road and its elevated position tends to separate it a little from the other housing on the main street. The farmhouse is closer to the traditional barn than the other buildings of Middlesmoor. The more modern agricultural buildings, which are of no architectural or historic merit, are excluded from the Conservation Area.

As the road from Middlesmoor dips down, so the banking south of the farm increases in height and prominence. The trees alongside the drystone wall (which in part is tumbling down) are important to the approach to the village. Just at the end of the wall the arch of the disused limekiln provides a feature of interest before the stone stoops either side of the gate lead to the Nidderdale Way.

This area is outside the village, but presents an important approach to the village and provides the rural setting to the conservation area. The openness and the views across the fields south of Middlesmoor are an important characteristic of this area.

Northern Fringe

The conservation area boundary is tight about the buildings, which are north of the former post office and the village hall. The area is small and includes the short section of road between the open public space of the central area and the open countryside north of the village.

The houses west of the road form a small terrace, two were built in the nineteenth century and the northernmost built quite recently. Whilst the fenestration differs a little from the older houses, the basic form and materials reflect the vernacular and hence the new house harmonises with its neighbours.

To the east of the road is a traditional house next to the Village Hall. North of this house are traditional farm buildings, one set back to create a small yard. The south barn has been converted into residential use and an extension, which cuts across a cart opening of the north barn, has all but camouflaged the southern barn. The northern barn however provides an appropriate end stop to the village street before the open countryside beyond.

The road continues uphill between drystone walls past the public car park and Cockpit Barn, which is now in residential use. To the west of the road the ancient monument (see Section 3) has boundaries that are not contiguous with field boundaries and hence is not visible. There are twentieth century builders yard workshops over the area of the monument near to the village street, which detract from the scene. The demolition of these buildings would enhance the setting of the village.

Appendix A

1. Management strategy

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

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

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

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

2. Monitoring & review

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

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

3. Maintaining quality

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

- From time to time review the 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 that are an essential part of the special architectural character of the Conservation Area to be preserved, repaired and reinstated where appropriate.

4. Conservation Area boundary review

As part of the process of producing the Appraisal, the existing Conservation Area boundary was reviewed. The outcome of the public consultation event identified adjoining areas as being of positive interest in ways that directly relate to the special character of the existing Conservation Area. The future inclusion of these areas has been determined on the basis of whether they have special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.

Three extensions were proposed by residents, these are: the area to the northwest that includes the public car park, Cockpit Barn and the Scheduled Ancient Monument; the churchyard beyond the existing boundary at the southeast, and; the area to the southwest that includes Barker Barn, the limekiln, the banking west of the road and the remainder of the farmstead of Ivy House Farm.

The proposal to extend the conservation area to the northwest is not supported for several reasons. Cockpit Barn is quite divorced from the tight knit buildings of the village and its character and appearance has been altered when it was converted for residential use, hence it would not contribute positively to the conservation area. The car park, despite its boundary of dry stone walls, is not attractive, it may benefit from good views to the east, but that is not a reason that would justify inclusion in the conservation area. To extend the conservation area to include the whole of the Scheduled Monument would be to include buildings that detract from the appearance of the village. The boundary of the Monument is not fully evident, and the available information is not conclusive. The fact that it may have been a Bronze Age settlement does not add to the reason for the designation of the conservation area. A large tree, opposite Cockpit Barn, could be protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). To conclude, the conservation area should not be extended to the northwest.

The conservation area boundary as designated in 1994 follows the line of the upper part of the churchyard. It is agreed that a more logical boundary would be to follow the railings at the east side of the churchyard and hence an extension to the conservation area here would be supported.

The third extension proposed is in part supported. The banking and trees west of the road are important to the approach to Middlesmoor, and whilst the trees could be protected by means of a TPO, the bank provides a physical link between the limekiln and the town. The limekiln is an interesting historic feature, and together with the trees contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Whereas the unattractive twentieth century agricultural buildings of Ivy House Farm do not contribute to the historic and architectural interest of Middlesmoor. Barker Barn is visually detached from the tight-knit buildings of the village because of the topography it is set considerably lower than the village. As with most field barns, it contributes to the landscape character and is seen within some views of Middlesmoor, however because it is physically detached, it is not considered that its inclusion would not contribute to the character of the village conservation area. Overall, it is considered that the conservation area should be extended only to include the road and banking down to the Nidderdale Way encompassing the limekiln and stone stoops to the gateway.

Two minor alterations are proposed to rationalize the boundary if the boundary is amended; the small area north of Joan Lear, which is excluded, but is bounded by the continuation of the wall east of the Village Hall, and; the addition of a small triangle of land at the north to better follow physical boundaries that can be seen.

5. Management of change

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

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

6. Opportunities for enhancement:

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

- The replacement of the timber rail gate and short length of post and rail fence in the churchyard with a new gate and railings to match the existing railings;
- Resurfacing in traditional materials the lanes and paths west, northwest and north of the church, and up to the playing field;
- Replacing the street lamps with lights, brackets and columns with new fittings more appropriate to the character and appearance of the conservation area;
- Repair of the railings in the forecourt of the Crown Inn;
- Restore the agricultural building at the northwest corner of Church Farm;
- Repair the dry stone walls, particularly those northeast of the bank on the approach to the village;
- Undergrounding of overhead wires that detract from the street scene;
- Dissuading householders from the installation of PVCu windows and doors in place of traditional timber ones;
- Reinstate windows to their former pattern and detail where use of standardised factory made joinery and PVCu windows has undermined the character of the historic areas;
- Modern street furniture and signs should be minimized, replaced or removed where style is inappropriate;

Existing buildings

The survey of the existing buildings within Middlesmoor clearly identified that a distinctive character exists, although to some extent this has been eroded by subsequent alterations, which have not always recognised that distinctiveness. Over the past 30 years, public awareness and expectation of the planning system to protect the “familiar and cherished scene” has increased substantially. Additionally, there now exists a greater understanding of the impact which incremental change can have upon the distinctive character of historic areas. Options to safeguard and enhance the architectural character of Middlesmoor could include some or all of the following:

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 twentieth 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 surfaces in Middlesmoor were all 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, considerable areas of stone surfacing survive and there should be a presumption in favour of retaining and repairing these. Similarly, existing unsurfaced paths and tracks into the village 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 in 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 planting and management methods that improve wildlife habitats.

Outdoor advertisements & street furniture

The design and appearance of some of the street furniture 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, or whether in or affecting the setting of the conservation area) 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 Middlesmoor 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. 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 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

Middlesmoor contains few areas of trees, which are largely limited to the area of the church, behind Ivy House Farm and the bank on the approach to the village. 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 Middlesmoor 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.

Checklist to manage change

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

- Development should not impinge on the form and character of Middlesmoor.
- 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. Conversion of buildings should not result in change to character or appearance.
- 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 at the edge of the village 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 22nd September 2009. This consultation took the form of a public meeting including a walkabout and a workshop session. Prior to the event residents were notified via a leaflet.

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

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

The outcome of the consultation event and the information gathered directly contributed to producing this Appraisal. Key issues raised at the event included:

- the preservation of Important views;
- identifying buildings of local interest;
- suggestions for changes to the extent of the Conservation Area;
- the retention of important boundary walls;

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

Jennings (1967) – History of Nidderdale, Advertiser Price