



Woodhall Hills is a place of special character and historic interest.

This appraisal and management plan sets out the features that contribute to its distinctiveness and identifies opportunities for its protection and enhancement.



Woodhall Hills

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Approved as a material consideration in the determination of planning decisions - 22nd March 2010.

Introduction

Summary of Special Interest

Woodhall Hills is a small village set to the very western edge of the Leeds District and close to the Bradford border. The settlement has a long history but has not altered significantly from the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1848. This means that its original plan form is largely intact, although the arrangement of buildings continues to alter over time.

The locally quarried sandstone remains the dominant building material and most roofs are constructed of stone slate. The strong, geometric forms of the buildings give the village a sense of unity and, in its core, its original character remains strongly in evidence.

The village remains a quiet, rural settlement little touched by the hand of time.

Summary of Issues

Whilst the core of the village remains largely intact there have been notable changes in recent times which have affected the character of the conservation area. To the northern end of the area the old Ravenscliffe Farm is now Woodhall Golf Course. Landscaping which has taken place over a number of years has gradually obscured the historic plan form of this section of the conservation area. The cottages which front onto Woodhall Road remain an attractive feature and their shape, form and details should be actively safeguarded.

The village itself is washed over by the greenbelt, is set within a special landscape area, is a designated conservation area and has a great number of protected trees. As such there is a strong presumption against large quantities of new development and further threats to the village's historic plan form are unlikely. The largest threat to this section of the village will be the continued loss of traditional detailing to windows and doors on unlisted properties.

The conservation area is bisected by Woodhall Lane and this busy, well used road has impacted upon the flow and feel of the settlement by creating three isolated enclaves.



An aerial view of Woodhall Hills; the village lies within a narrow strip of greenbelt which separates Leeds and Bradford.

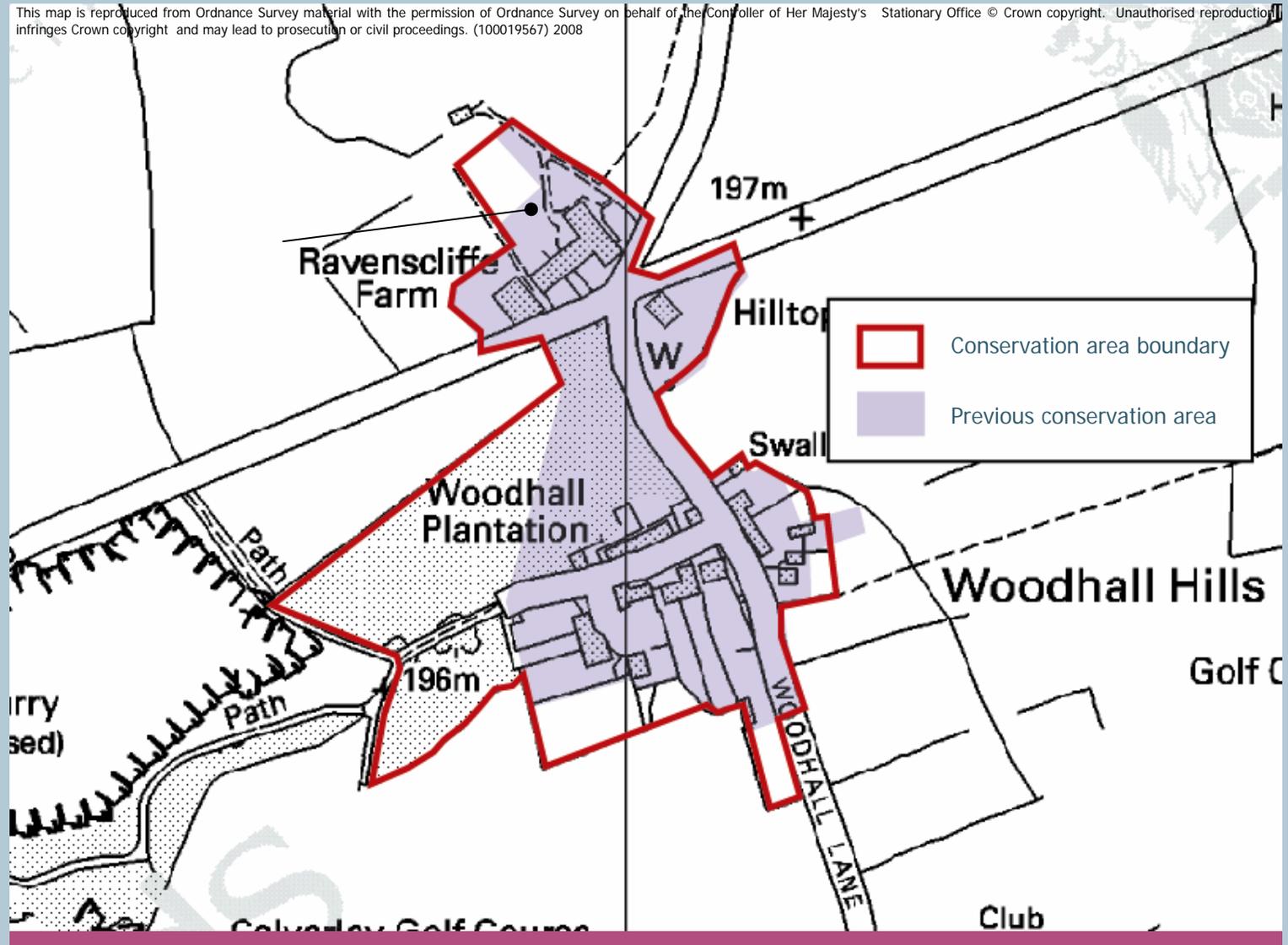
Extent of the conservation area

Woodhall Hills conservation area was designated in 1984 and included the historic core of the village, the old Ravenscliffe Farm and Hilltop Farm House as well as part of the woodland to the west of the village. The boundary was reviewed in 2010 and changes were made.

The conservation area was mostly enlarged though there was a small reduction to the eastern side. The greatest area of enlargement was to the west where the old quarry site of Woodhall Plantation is now included within the conservation area.

To the north the extension includes the old burgage plots associated with the cottages and follows historical land boundaries.

To the south and east the changes made to reflect current plot boundaries and thereby rationalise the boundary.



Assessing the Special Interest

Location and setting

Woodhall Hills is a hamlet set toward the western edge of Leeds and close to the Bradford boundary. It lies approximately 1.0 mile (1.6 kilometres) south of Calverley.

The village is set within a small strip of Green Belt land which separates the urban conurbations of Bradford and Leeds. The village occupies a commanding position at the peak of a hill which offers views of Leeds to south-east and Bradford to the West.

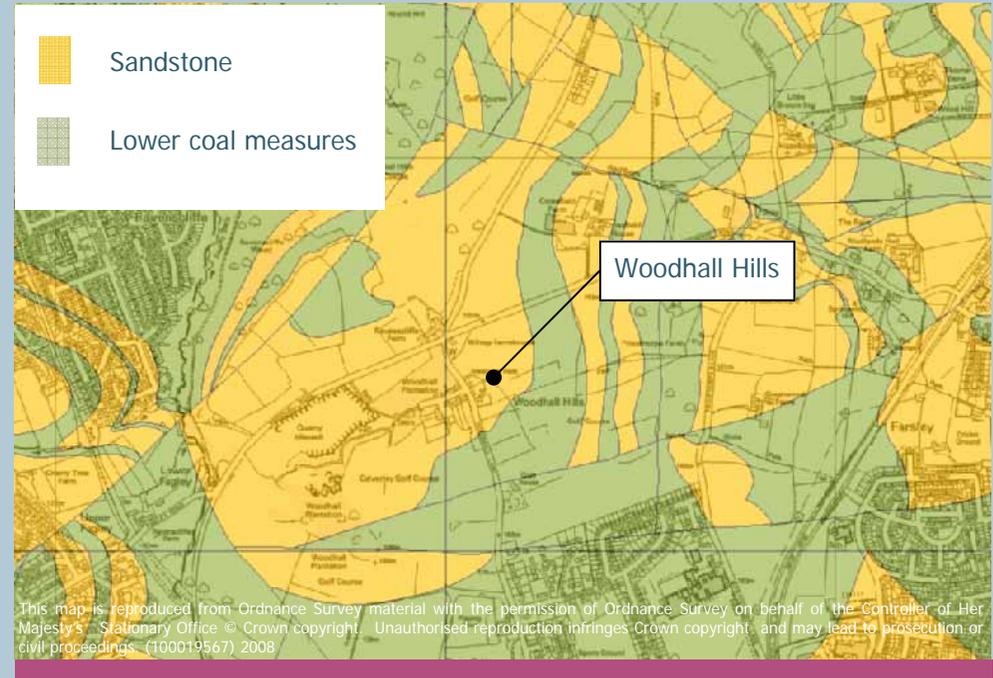
General character and plan form

Woodhall Hills conservation area is centred around the small, nucleated settlement of Woodhall Hills Hamlet, which was originally a collection of workers cottages around Old Hall Farmhouse. A small, central village green still survives. The more recent extension to the west of the conservation area repeats this pattern with a small, central grassed area within the courtyard. To the north of the conservation area is the old Ravenscliffe Farm which is now part of Woodhall Hills Golf course.

The character of the conservation area is influenced by the near universal use of sandstone. Vernacular forms shape the built environment.



Location of Woodhall Hills to the South of Calverley.



Solid Geology of Woodhall Hills

Geology, topography and landscape setting

Woodhall Hills largely lies atop a bed of sandstone, though millstone grit and lower coal measures are present to the south and west of the settlement. This is largely typical of the Aire Valley in which sandstone and millstone grit are overlain by drifts of clay and other materials.

Sandstone is typically resistant to weathering and is also an easy material to work. This makes it a common building material and almost all the buildings within the

conservation area are constructed of locally quarried stone. The remains of quarrying activity can be seen in the woods to the west of the village.

Much of the landscape around Woodhall Hills has a gently rolling character although there are steeper slopes to the north-west. To the west is Woodhall Plantation which provides the hamlet with a heavily wooded backcloth. The two golf courses give the immediate surrounding land a manicured appearance.

Origins and Evolution

Prehistoric and Roman

Archaeological finds in the area around Woodhall Hills point to activity as early as the Neolithic period, (3500 BC - 2000 BC). The butt end of a stone axe was found wedged between the roots of a tree to the south-east of the conservation area and could be of Lake District origin. Activity appears to have continued through to the bronze age (2000 - 800 BC); a flint arrowhead has been excavated from the disused quarry site to the west of the village and a leaf-shaped arrowhead flint has also been found nearby. It is possible that the elevation of Woodhall Hills made it an attractive site for settlement, being defensible and affording good views of the surrounding countryside.

Medieval

By the medieval era there appears to have been a small community in the area. The current village is the probable site of the documented medieval settlement of Wood Hall. This is reference as 'wudehalle' in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries where the name appears as a surname. Wudehalle is thought to have Old English origins and translates as 'the hall in the wood'. There are several areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland in the area; Round Wood and Bill Wood to the North and also Ravenscliffe Wood to the north-west. Any of these could be the site of



Earthworks within Woodhall Plantation are the result of quarrying.

the referenced wood though Ravenscliffe Wood appears to be the most likely. A medieval iron working site is probably also located within the wood; the site is evidenced by documentary references, nearby field names on eighteenth and nineteenth century maps and the presence of a large earthenware dam with a stone core.

A possible medieval field system is visible on aerial photographs within the area not occupied by Calverley Golf Course.

Post-medieval

There are several buildings which contain elements which appear to date from the early modern era. To the north end of the conservation area is Ravenscliffe Farm Barn, one of the two listed buildings within the village. This structure incorporates mid seventeenth century roof trusses although its external structure is from the mid eighteenth century. Towards the south of the conservation area is Woodhall Old Hall Farmhouse (now 14, 15a and 15b Woodhall Hills), the second listed structure. Two doorways of this building have shaped lintels of a seventeenth century character, though these may have been reused from an earlier structure. The building has an enclosed timber frame which is thought to date



Decorative doorway and window detail to 14 Woodhall Hills

from the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

Beyond the south of the conservation area is Woodhall, a property which was built in the latter half of the eighteenth century. In 1787 it shared the highest valuation in the Calverley-cum-Farsley Township with Wadlands Farmhouse and was occupied by John Gott. Gott's son Benjamin later became famous for his development of Leeds' first textile factory at Bean Ings near the site of Leeds City Station.

Nineteenth and twentieth century

The nineteenth and twentieth century have not seen significant change within the conservation area. The expansion of housing and industry seen within much of Leeds has not occurred and the size and layout of buildings are similar to those on the 1848 Ordnance Survey map. Several farm buildings have been converted into residential dwellings and this domestication has undoubtedly shaped the character and appearance of the village.

The largest change has been to the setting of the conservation area. The two golf courses have impacted upon the landscape surrounding the village and the addition of Priesthorpe Road and Woodhall Road have changed the relationship of the village to its surroundings.

Character Analysis

Spatial Analysis

Settlement form

Woodhall Hills' settlement form is typical of a rural hamlet. It has collections of buildings grouped around farmhouses and little supporting infrastructure. The toft and croft form of the earliest buildings is still evident in one or two locations. Old Hall Farmhouse shows some evidence of its original burgage plot form in the long rear gardens of the houses. The terraces close to the listed Ravenscliffe Barn show strong evidence of burgage plots on historical maps and although this detail is now obscured, the upper extent of the conservation area traces their limit.

The nucleated nature of the settlement has been fragmented by Woodhall Road



Woodhall Road dividing the conservation area. The buildings on the right which front the pavement edge show the traditional siting of structures within the settlement.



A row of back to back terraces showing the fine grain form of much of the village's buildings; again the dwellings front the pavement.

with three distinct islands of buildings to the north, east and west of the village. The speed of this road and narrow pavements makes pedestrian crossing difficult and creates further isolation.

Activity and grain

Woodhall Hills conservation area's built environment is largely fine grain. Many properties are terraces or semi-detached and detached dwellings are rare. Plots are usually small. Most dwellings front the pavement edge and this is a key part of the character and appearance of the settlement. Recent development has tended to set buildings away from the pavement edge and this is uncharacteristic of the settlement.

Activity levels within the village are low, though there is much fast moving through traffic.

Character of spaces and green space

The semi-rural context of Woodhall Hills conservation area means that the area has a very green feel. Views of the surrounding green belt, golf courses and wooded areas are possible from almost all points within the conservation area and no part of the village feels enclosed. The small village green to the front of Old Hall Farmhouse is an important feature which should be preserved.

There are few front gardens within the conservation area, though where these do occur the definition between public and private areas is usually formed by low stone walls.



Front gardens are uncommon but where they do occur are important green areas. Delineation is usually by low stone walls; fences are unusual and out of character additions.

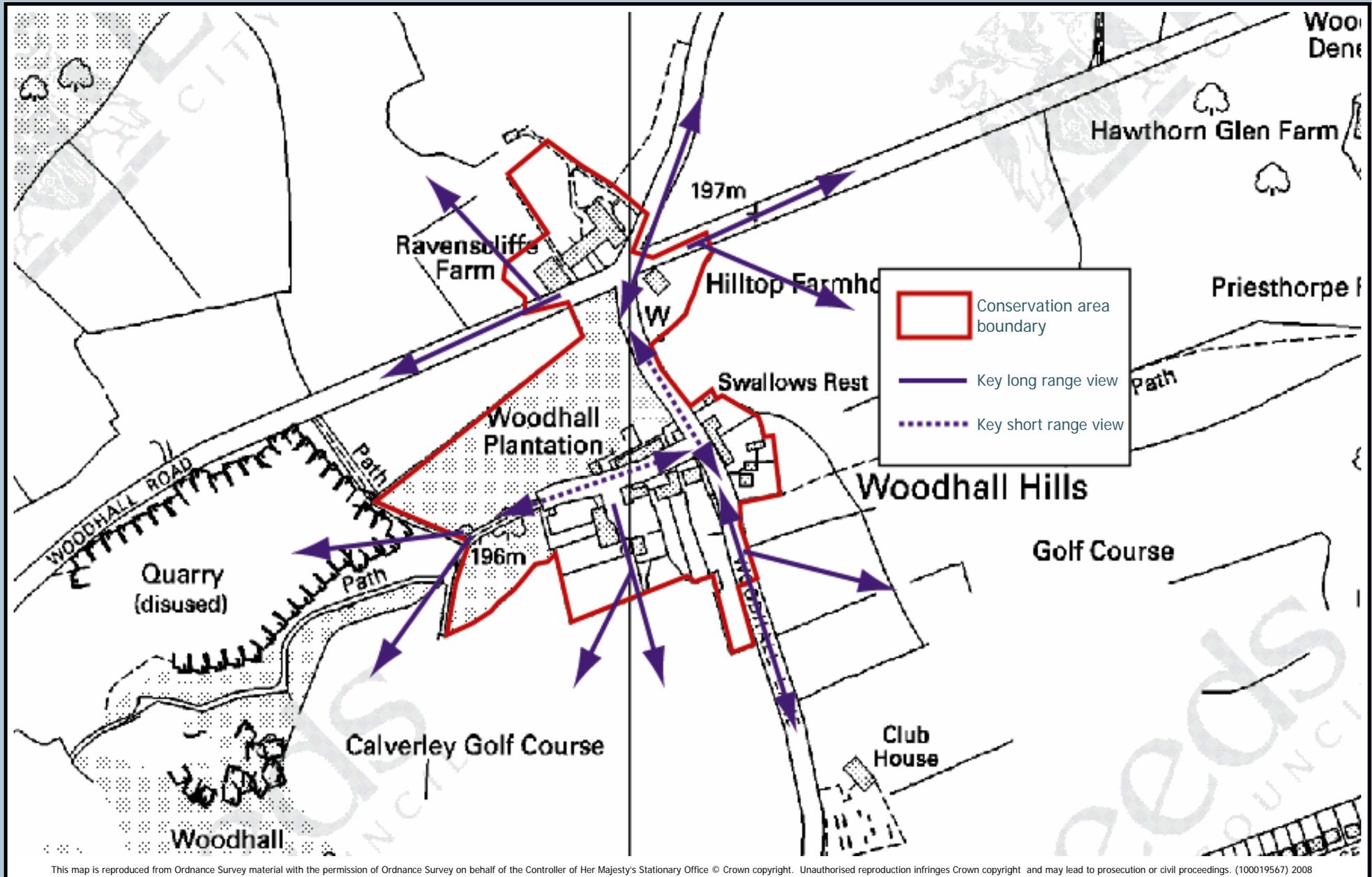


Top: looking south-east towards Leeds.
Bottom: looking west along Priesthorpe Road toward Bradford.

Key Views

There is no significant landmark within the village and the contours of Woodhall Road mean that there is no one key view. To the north of the conservation area the junction of Priesthorpe Road and Woodhall Road affords excellent views out of the settlement. To the south west the occasional views of the golf course are important and should be safeguarded.

Spatial Analysis Map



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Character Analysis

Built Environment

Architectural Characteristics

Development in Woodhall Hills has a fairly unified form; it is now primarily a residential settlement and its houses are two storeys in height and reflect the simple shapes and forms of vernacular architecture from the 17th century onward. Dwellings are gabled and roof pitches vary in shape and form.

Window openings are often small in scale there are a mix of styles in evidence. Hung sash windows appear to have been the norm through some properties could have accommodated Yorkshire sliders. Few houses have retained their traditional windows or



Newer casements often replace sash windows. Where attempts have been made to respect pane detail the windows have a greater sense of historical integrity. The small opening to the right is an unusual detail.



Locally quarried sandstone sits beneath a stone slate roof. Older properties display narrow coursing.

doors and this is an unfortunate aspect of the current conservation area which has a negative impact upon the integrity of its character.

Materials

Woodhall Hills has a relatively unified palate of materials; external walling materials are predominately narrow, regularly-coursed local sandstone and roofs are stone slate. Render is an unusual feature although it is present on some dwellings. Wooden windows are rare and the majority are plastic. This has an impact upon the character and appearance of the village.

Local Details

Although the properties within the village display a unified general form the details between buildings can vary significantly. Architectural mouldings are unusual but are present on Woodhall Old Hall Farmhouse; most of the houses have simple stone heads, cills, jambs and lintels. Unfortunately few buildings display obvious links to their agricultural past; wagon arches have been long lost and open farm yards are now enclosed. Interestingly cattle grids remain in two locations.



Hill Top Farm House to the north end of the conservation area; the cattle grid links the property to its past as a working farm. Note the stone gate posts and wall; the small horizontally emphasised stones are typical of locally quarried sandstone. Modern additions to traditional boundary walls are not always successful as decorative features such as railings with inlay detail and finials are alien to the rural vernacular.



Simple, decorative mouldings around mullioned windows.

Boundary Treatments

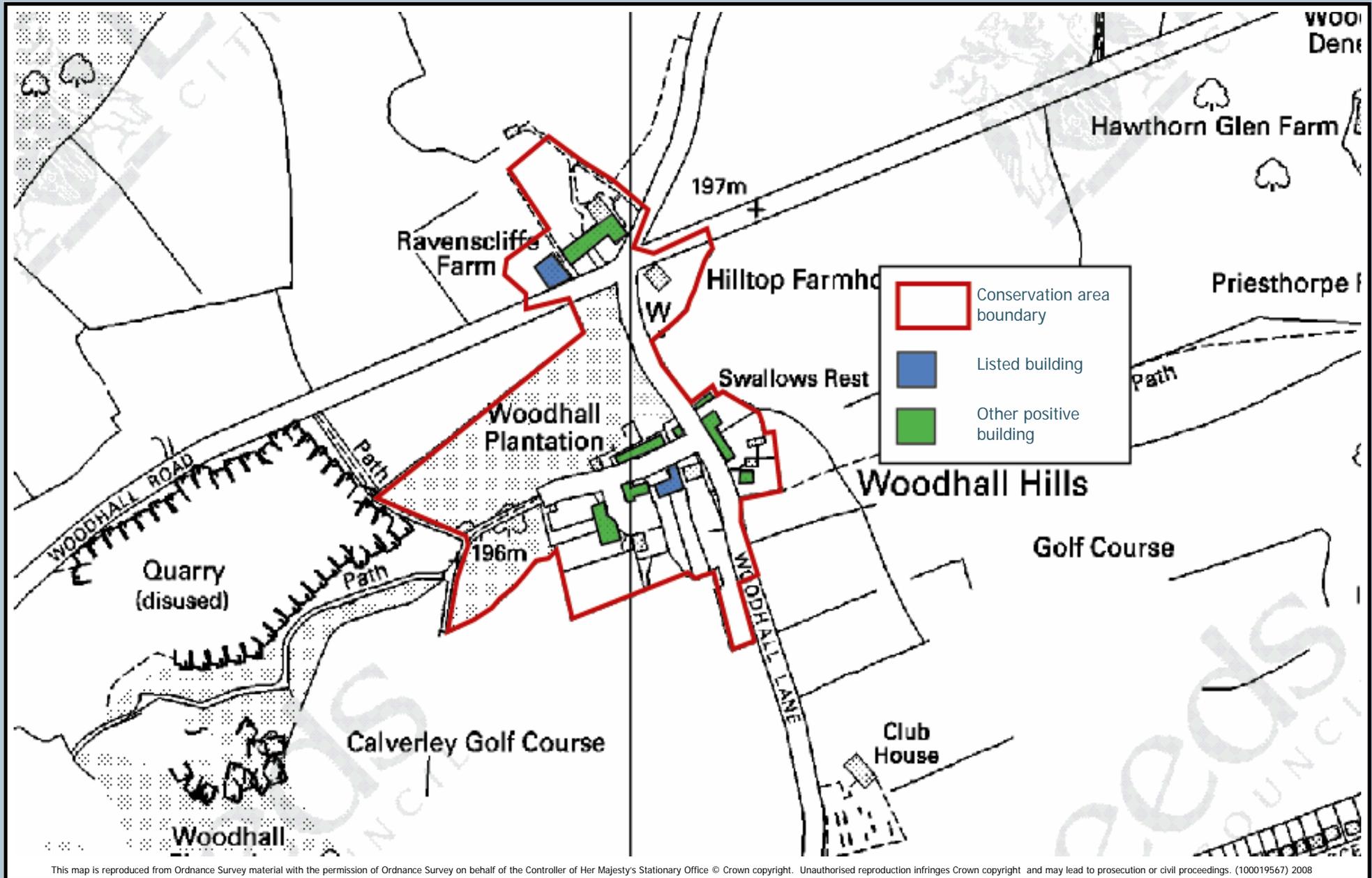
The type and style of boundary treatments are important in defining the character of the village. Where stone walls are present they are frequently low in stature and do not exceed 1.0m.

Lower walls give views of buildings and their front gardens and contribute to the open and spacious feel of the village. Higher walls can provide definition but can also produce a sense of unwelcome enclosure.

Walls are constructed of coursed stone with simple coping. Hedging is present to the front of some properties though both railings and fences are unusual and often unwelcome additions.

Care should be taken when planting hedges or trees as inappropriate or alien species can be dominating and harm the character of the conservation area.

Built Environment Map



Management Plan

Opportunities for management and enhancement

Woodhall Hills is an attractive village which retains its historic character. This management plan sets out a number of principles to guide any future changes in the conservation area. Positive conservation management will ensure the ongoing protection of the village's special character.

Sensitive new development in the conservation area

Woodhall Hills is washed over by the Greenbelt. As such there is a presumption against development as outlined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Greenbelts; "limited extension, alteration or replacement of existing dwellings" (UDP policy N33) may be considered appropriate.



Houses with a simple shape and form and little ornamentation are typical of the village. Care should be taken to ensure extensions are of an appropriate size and scale.

To be successful, any future development within the conservation area needs to be mindful of the local character of the village, while at the same time being distinctly of the 21st century and addressing contemporary issues such as sustainability.

Successful new development in historic areas should:

- Relate well to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land
- Sit happily in the pattern of existing development and routes through and around it
- Respect important views
- Respect the scale of neighbouring buildings
- Respect historic boundary walls and retain historic garden plots
- Use materials and building methods which are as high in quality as those used in existing buildings
- Create new views and juxtapositions which add to the variety and texture of their setting.

(CABE and English Heritage)

Action:
New development must respond sensitively and creatively to the historic environment.



Looking north from Woodhall Plantation. The open, green belt land surrounding the village is important to its setting.

Protect surviving historic architectural forms

As a result of the limited listed building coverage in the settlement, there has been some incremental loss of traditional architectural detailing in the conservation area. Replacement of windows and doors with inappropriate materials and designs is a negative feature that affects both individual buildings and the wider streetscape. Retention of chimneys and original painted timber windows is particularly important in retaining the historic character of the area.

Action:
Surviving historic features should be retained and where necessary sympathetically repaired. Opportunities to reinstate lost features should be taken.

Protect archaeological remains

Woodhall Hills has been inhabited for over 1000 years and buried evidence of past occupation is likely to survive. Development which may disturb archaeological remains may require a watching brief to ensure the preservation of archaeological finds. In particular the medieval Old Hall Farmhouse is of interest.

Action:
Development which involves below-ground excavation must have regard to the potential for archaeological finds.



Hill Top Farmhouse to the north end of the conservation area. A wagon arch has been obscured by later additions to the rear. The unbalanced windows are unlikely to be original

Infill and backland development

There is a presumption against infill and backland development within the conservation area. New development which would disrupt the relationship between buildings, or would harm the spatial setting of existing buildings should be strongly resisted. The subdivision of surviving historical plots will also be strongly resisted. Strengthening the traditional plan form of the village and ensuring that the scale, massing, proportion and siting new development is appropriate are essential to ensure the character of the conservation area is retained.

As Woodhall Hills is washed over by the greenbelt policy GB2 of the Unitary Development Plan is applicable. This



The spaces around and between buildings, though not necessarily expansive, allow important view through to surrounding trees and fields. Green spaces contained within the conservation area should be considered important and protected from inappropriate forms of development.

notes infill will only be permitted where: the site has a frontage to the road; the site is a small gap bounded by existing development; the proposal is in scale and character with the surrounding area and does not consolidate ribbon development

Action:
Any development proposing the infill of a site or the subdivision of a plot should respond to the scale, massing, layout and distribution of positive structures within the conservation area. The historic toft-and-croft plan should be respected.

Development affecting the setting of the conservation area

Woodhall Hills's rural setting makes a significant contribution to its character. Any future development affecting the setting of the conservation area should have regard to views into and out of the conservation area, the setting of positive buildings and the character of the landscape. Appropriate design, materials and layout should be used in any development adjacent to the conservation area.

Action:
The impact of development on the character and appearance of the conservation area should be considered. This applies equally to development outside the conservation area if it is likely to

affect the setting of the conservation area.

Tree management

Trees make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area. The City Council must be notified of any proposal to fell or lop a mature tree in the conservation area. Consideration should be given to ensuring continued tree cover in the future by planning for the succession of over-mature trees. Native species should be favoured.

Action:
Mature trees which make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area should be retained whenever possible. Opportunities should be taken as appropriate to plant young trees to ensure continued existence tree cover in the future.

Boundary Treatments

Sandstone boundary are a positive feature of Woodhall Hills. Existing walls above 1 metre next to a road, or 2 metres elsewhere, are protected from demolition in the conservation area. Any new boundary walls in the conservation area should be constructed of local materials and be of appropriate height and coursing to fit well with existing walls. Fencing is atypical of the village and should be resisted.

Action:
Stone boundary walls which make a positive contribution to the conservation area will be retained. New boundary treatments should fit with the character of existing boundary walls and should be constructed from matching limestone.

Public realm

The character of Woodhall Hills as a rural village should be respected. In the provision of any future public realm enhancements. The design of items of street furniture such as litter bins, benches and bus shelters should be appropriate for the character of the conservation area. The design and siting of road signs should not detract from the character of the conservation area and the use of high-visibility backing boards is not generally appropriate in the conservation area. As at present, road lining should be kept to a minimum. Regard should be had to current "Streets for All" guidance jointly published by English Heritage and the Department for Transport.

Action:
The siting and design of road signs and street furniture and the use of surfacing materials should have regard to current "Streets for All" guidance.

References

Publications:

- Cobe and English Heritage, *Building in Context: New development in historic areas* 2001

Acknowledgements

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Where to find out more

Pudsey Civic Society is active and has a long history of study of local historic buildings and people. A wide range of original documents, public records and books can also be found in the following locations:

- *Pudsey Library (Local History Section)*
- *Central Library (Local & Family History Section). Their website is: www.leeds.gov.uk/library*
- *West Yorkshire Archive Service, Chapeltown Road, Sheepscar, Leeds. Their website is: www.archives.wyjs.org.uk*
- *West Yorkshire Archaeological Advisory Service, Wakefield. Their website is: www.archaeology.wyjs.org.uk*

In addition, much information is available on other websites:

- *www.heritagegateway.org.uk includes all listed building descriptions and some photos*
- *www.leodis.net has archive photos of the Leeds district*
- *www.old-maps.co.uk has early Ordnance Survey maps.*

How to find out more about historic buildings

Leeds Central Library has a large architecture collection which includes books on historic buildings. A useful general book on understanding historic houses is *How Old is Your House?* By Pamela Cunnington (most recent publication 2002). Shire Books also publish a range of excellent short books on historic buildings.

There are a wide range of national societies devoted to the study and conservation of historic buildings. Many of these national bodies have regional groups in Yorkshire.

- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) www.spab.org.uk. A good source of practical information about looking after buildings of all periods.
- Ancient Monuments Society www.ams.org.uk. Devoted to the study and conservation of ancient monuments, historic building and fine old craftsmanship, with a particular interest in church buildings.
- Georgian Group www.georgiangroup.org.uk Interested in the study and conservation of 18th- and early 19th-century buildings.

- Victorian Society www.victoriansociety.org.uk Interested in the appreciation and conservation of 19th and early 20th century buildings of all types.
- 20th Century Society www.c20century.org.uk Active in promoting appreciation and protection of 20th century architecture.

Adult education courses on historic buildings and/ or local history are sometimes run in the Leeds area. Check with your local provider for current information.

Finding Out More

What is a conservation area?

A conservation area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

What does conservation area status mean?

Conservation area status provides the opportunity to promote the protection and enhancement of the special character of the defined area. Designation confers a general control over development that could damage the area's character. The details are complex but can be summarised as:

- Most demolition requires permission and will be resisted if the building makes a positive contribution to the area.
- Some minor works to houses is no longer "permitted development" and will require planning permission. Examples are rear dormer windows, external cladding and most satellite dishes on front elevations.
- Advertisement controls are tighter
- Most work to trees has to be notified to the Council which has six weeks in which to decide to impose restrictions.

- Generally, higher standards of design apply for new buildings and alterations to existing ones.

Change is inevitable in most conservation areas and it is not the intention of the designation to prevent the continued evolution of places. The challenge within conservation areas is to manage change in a way that maintains, reinforces and enhances the special qualities of the area.

What is the purpose of this appraisal?

This appraisal provides the basis for making informed, sustainable decisions in the positive management, protection and enhancement of the conservation area.

It provides a clear understanding of the special interest of Woodhall Hills by:

- accessing how the settlement has developed
- analysing its present day character and
- identifying opportunities for enhancement

This appraisal follows the current guidance set out by English Heritage in the 2006 publication *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*.

The appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Planning policy context

This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the wider national, regional and local planning policy and guidance. Relevant documents include:

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment
- Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning
- The Yorkshire and Humber Plan (The Regional Spatial Strategy) May 2008, particularly Policy ENV9 Historic Environment
- Leeds City Council, Unitary Development Plan Review 2006, particularly Chapter 5 Environment and Appendices A3 Building Design, Conservation and Landscape Design and A4 Archaeological Policies
- Leeds City Council, Local Development Framework, emerging document that will ultimately replace the Local Plan.

Community involvement and adoption

A draft version of this appraisal went through a four week public consultation process, which included;

- The appraisal and response form being made available through the Council's website;
- The consultation being advertised with a leaflet drop to all residences within the conservation area;
- Posters placed around the conservation area advertising the public meeting which took place on 6th February in 'The Barn', Calverley;
- Details of the consultation placed on Leeds City Council's 'Talking Point' public consultation system;
- The distribution of a press release;
- The holding of a public meeting and drop-in session on 6th February The Barn', Calverley.

The consultation responses were evaluated and the appraisal was amended in light of comments received if it was deemed appropriate. This document was approved at the Leeds City Council Planning Board meeting in February 2010, with the document becoming a material consideration when applications for change within the conservation area or its setting are considered by the Council from 22nd March 2010

