

# GLEDHOW VALLEY CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



## ASSESSING AND PROTECTING THE SPECIAL CHARACTER OF GLEDHOW VALLEY

Gledhow Valley Conservation Area was designated on the 12th December 2006 following public consultation. On the same day, the Gledhow Valley Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted by the City Council as non-statutory planning guidance following public consultation. This appraisal is additional and complementary to policies N14-22 volume 1 and BC1-9 (Appendix 3) in volume 2 of the Leeds Unitary Development Plan.

## ABOUT THIS APPRAISAL

This appraisal shows why Gledhow Valley has a special character and appearance meriting designation as a conservation area. It sets out which features make the area special in order to encourage their retention. It also shows where there are opportunities to enhance the area.

### SIGNIFICANCE

Gledhow Valley is a green finger cutting through the urban area of north east Leeds. On the sides of the valley are the small settlements of Gledhow and Allerton Park which grew up from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the former around the much older nucleus of Gledhow Hall. Crossing the wooded valley is Gledhow Lane, an ancient monastic route between Allerton Grange and Kirkstall Abbey.

The significance of Gledhow Valley can be summarised as follows:

- Gledhow Woods is a designed landscape of regional significance laid out for Gledhow Hall in the English landscape tradition.



View of  
Gledhow Hall from  
south east by  
J M W Turner  
c1816

- Gledhow and Allerton Park are areas of late Victorian and Edwardian middle-class housing surviving relatively unaltered.
  - There are outstanding individual large houses in addition to Gledhow Hall.
  - There are strong associations with the important Arts and Crafts architects Bedford and Kitson who designed several houses in the area.
  - There are associations with the Barran, Beckett and Kitson families who were important to the civic and cultural life of Leeds and who had houses in the area.
- Other districts possess similar qualities, but the particular relationship of landscape to buildings makes Gledhow Valley a very distinctive place and a valued part of Leeds' heritage worthy of protection.

# HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT



(1) Webton Court (left) and (2) Gledhow Manor (right) were some of the first houses built in Allerton Park (1903 and 1904 respectively), both to the designs of the celebrated Arts and Crafts architectural practice, Bedford and Kitson. Both houses are now listed.



(3) After an illustrious history, Gledhow Hall came into the possession of Liberal MP, James Kitson in 1878, the first Lord Mayor of Leeds and head of Monkbridge Iron & Steel Company.



(4) John Barran, clothing manufacturer and Mayor and subsequently MP for Leeds, bought the Chapel Allerton Hall estate in 1871 from the Nicholson family of Roundhay.

## KEY EVENTS

- The name GLEDHOW is either derived from the Saxon words signifying the Hill of Burning Coals or more probably from two words meaning The Hill of the Kite.
- In the twelfth century, monks of Kirkstall Abbey opened their farm at nearby Allerton Grange. In the following century the Abbey became a major landowner in the Allerton area.
- 1539, the monastic land was seized by the Crown following the dissolution of Kirkstall Abbey.
- John Thwaites purchased land for Gledhow Hall from Elizabeth I in 1601.
- Edward Waddington, son in law of John Thwaites, inherited the Gledhow Estate and built the open air spa bath in Gledhow Valley in 1671 (now a grade II listed building).
- 1764-67, Gledhow Hall was remodelled by John Carr on the instruction of the owner, Jeremiah Dixon. He introduced specimen trees and added extensive plantations to the valley.
- 1880s and 1890s, Roundhay and Chapel Allerton developed rapidly as suburbs of Leeds. Gledhow also developed but retained its semi-rural character.
- 1904, Allerton Park was created by John James Cousins through various purchases and exchanges of parcels of land. On his death, it was sold at auction to the highest bidders for development.
- 1926, Gledhow Valley Road was opened.
- 1944, Gledhow Valley Woods was presented to Leeds Corporation by Hon Hilda Kitson, wife of Frederick James Kitson.

# CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

The Gledhow Valley Conservation Area can be divided into three interrelated but distinct character areas. These are shown on the map below and described in detail on the following pages and appraisal maps. Underlying these character areas are generic characteristics which unify the area and give it a distinct identity.

## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Uses are almost exclusively residential as befits a district which grew up in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a retreat for the middle class.
- Planting in the verges and the gardens and mature plantations in the valley provide an almost continuous canopy of trees.



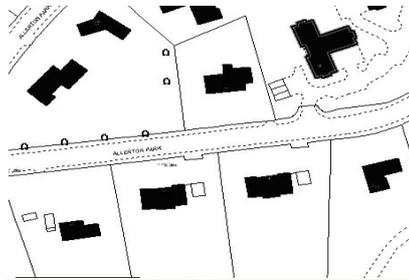
Trees are the dominant feature of the Conservation Area on entering Gledhow from the east.

- Curved roads, hairpins and softer s-bends structure the built environment.
- Tall stone walls behind the pavement, sometimes backed by hedges, accentuate the curvature of the roads and, by restricting forward views, cause the streetscene to be a series of unfolding views.



Hand-hewn local stone is the main building material.

- Buildings front directly onto the principal roads set back by a distance at least equivalent to the depth of the house and separated by spaces at least equivalent to their width.
- Houses are large by modern standards. The largest, Gledhow Hall and Chapel Allerton Hall, are small stately homes. The detached Victorian and Edwardian houses are more compact but still impressive.
- Facades are regular with a dominance of wall over window areas. Roofs are parallel to the street sometimes broken with gables.



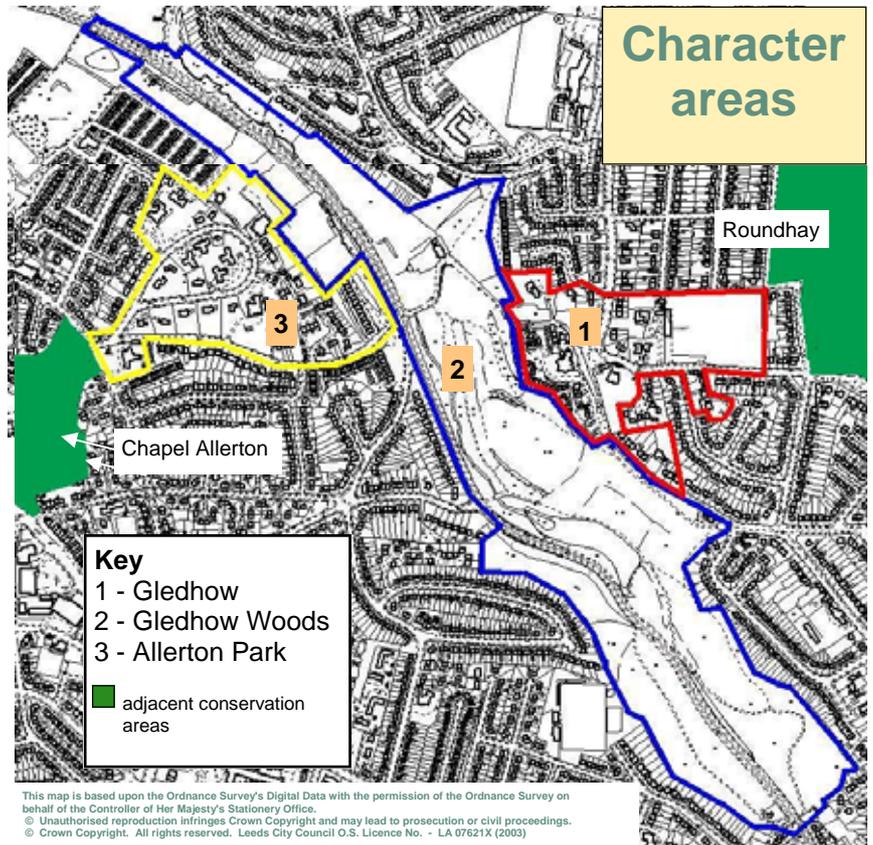
Houses are set back from the road by a distance at least equivalent to their depth and separated by spaces at least equivalent to their width.



A bespoke design in Allerton Park.

- Windows are vertically proportioned, often diminishing in size towards the top floor. Within openings, timber sliding sash and side-hung casements are the predominant window forms.
- The main walling material is the local fine-grained sandstone. This is laid in regular courses of squared blocks with pecked surfaces

Notwithstanding these unifying features, there is great variation in the architectural expression. The positive buildings are bespoke designs and any new development should be similarly custom-designed.



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## (1) GLEDHOW

### Pattern of development

- Roads predate any existing buildings, originally serving as long lines of communication between dispersed rural communities. They meet at a cross roads which is the original focus of development.
- A formal and built up edge to Lidgett Lane and Gledhow Lane east of Gledhow Hall contrasts with the narrow winding spaces along Gledhow Lane west of the Hall and also along Gledhow Wood Road.
- The houses which fill in this network of original roads and old property boundaries range from the stately precincts of Gledhow Hall, split into two parcels of land linked by the listed 1768 bridge over Gledhow Lane, to the tighter 20<sup>th</sup> century patterns on the north side of Gledhow Wood Road and Lidgett Lane.

**Gledhow Hall is the nucleus of the settlement.**



**The small green opposite Gledhow House is the focus of Gledhow.**



### Landscape

- The major open space is the Gledhow Sports and Social Club recreation ground which is a visual spacer between Gledhow and Roundhay. Several of the large houses such as Gledhow House retain large

grounds which although diminished contribute significantly to the spaciousness of the area.

- Parallel tall 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century stone walls enclosing the Gledhow Hall and Gledhow House estates provide the distinctive enclosed spaces of Gledhow Lane and Gledhow Wood Road. The combination of high stone walls, mature trees and steep gradient gave rise to the folk name "Little Switzerland".
- Stone kerbs, either sandstone or granite, and stone flagged footpaths to Gledhow Lane and Gledhow Hall are important features of the conservation area, unifying the floorscape with the boundary walls and buildings.

### Materials and details

- Squared, coursed, fine-grained, tooled local sandstone is the predominant walling material and blue or stone slate covers most of the roofs.
- There is a great variety in architectural form and scale ranging from the grand houses to the outbuildings and cottages within their grounds and the later private houses lining the roads.



**Parallel walls provide the distinctive enclosed spaces in Gledhow.**

### Notable buildings

- Gledhow Hall, Gledhow Lane (grade II\*)
- Garage and outbuildings at Gledhow Hall (grade II)
- Stables and Constable Cottage at Gledhow Hall with wall and gatepiers (grade II)
- Bridge over Gledhow Lane (grade II)
- Gledhow House, Gledhow Lane
- Greycourt, Gledhow Lane
- The Homestead, 136 Gledhow Wood Road

## (2) GLEDHOW WOODS

### Pattern of development

- Gledhow Valley Road bisects the woodland in the valley bottom for its entire span. The generous length and breadth of the road combined with the closeness of forest trees, absence of walls and fences and lack of encroachment of buildings on the valley sides offer an incomparable sylvan journey for pedestrian and passenger alike.

**Gledhow Woods is a semi-ancient, mixed broad-leaved woodland with mature remnants of a designed landscape and more recent areas of natural regeneration.**





Carriage drive gates to Gledhow Hall.

- Gledhow Lane, with its combination of hairpin bends, narrowness, steep gradient and high stone walls is a contrasting and no less singular spatial experience.

### Landscape

- Gledhow woods south of Gledhow Lane is a semi-ancient, mixed broad-leaved woodland with mature remnants of a designed landscape and more recent areas of natural regeneration. At the northern end area are lime, beech and sycamores from the 19<sup>th</sup> century plantations. East of the lake is an area of beech with some natural regeneration. To the south, the woods change to predominantly semi-ancient birch/oak with some natural regeneration.
- North of Gledhow Lane, the woods are mostly self-sown post-dating the laying out of the road in the valley bottom.
- The area is served by a network of casual footpaths, based largely on the original circulation pattern of the old park.

### Notable buildings

- Gipton Spa, Gledhow Valley Road (grade II)
- The Lodge, Gledhow Wood Road (grade II)
- 'Hillside', Gledhow Lane.



'Hillside', former home of architect Sidney Kitson.

## (3) ALLERTON PARK

### Pattern of development

- The distinctive tear-shaped loop of Allerton Park forms a secluded enclave of residential development. Its shape is reminiscent of the road layout of Roundhay Park designed by George Corson, although no direct connection has been proved
- The houses date mainly from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century when the land was sold off for individual villas. They are set well back from the road in generous plots, a pattern which could have been continued with recent flat developments.



Continuous walls follow the curvature of the road in Allerton Park.

- The contrasting masses of Chapel Allerton Hall and the former lodge to a long demolished mansion mark the entrance to Allerton Park and the western extent of the conservation area. The extensive grounds of the Hall set a tone of commodious living for the rest of the proposed conservation area .

### Landscape

- Planted trees within the deep gardens and within the verge of Allerton Park provide the dominant feature of the area. Gledhow Manor and Webton Court exist as small private

estates, almost completely obscured from view by planting which has reached maturity.

- Low boundary walls are another consistent element, the materials matching the house, each with its distinct gate piers and enclosing extensive front garden planting of hedges, shrubs and trees.
- Many of the footways are stone flagged with original stone kerbs. Aprons of stone setts between the highway and gates add another nuance of status and exclusivity to the largest houses .

### Materials and details

- There is more diversity of materials and design than in the

rest of the conservation area. Red brick, stone, tile hanging and half timbering are all featured in the area. Details on outbuildings are more restrained.



Allerton Park was developed in a variety of Arts and Crafts styles.

**Notable buildings**

- Gledhow Manor, Gledhow Lane (grade II)
- Stables and cottage to Gledhow Manor (grade II)
- Webton Court, Allerton Park (grade II)
- Stables to Chapel Allerton Hall, King George Avenue (Grade II)
- Chapel Allerton Hall, King George Avenue
- Oriel House, 27 Allerton Park

**ENHANCEMENT**

Within the Conservation Area there are features which detract from the Conservation Area which it would be desirable to remove or improve. There are also elements which have been removed which it would be desirable to reinstate. Over time, these enhancements can be achieved by the planning system through development control, future grant-aid regimes or the voluntary efforts of property owners or local groups.

**Gledhow Valley Close**

- The 1960s/70s housing development of Gledhow Wood Close immediately west of Gledhow Hall was laid out with little regard to the special qualities of the area. The redevelopment of the housing in a more sympathetic form would be a great improvement to the conservation area and Gledhow Hall. Such mistakes should be avoided in the future.



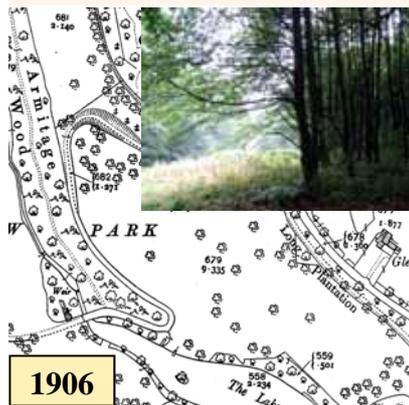
Gledhow Wood Close was designed with little regard for its context.

**“The Green”**

- The important green space at the junction of Gledhow Lane, Lidgett Lane and Gledhow

Wood Road has been harmed by highway works which have added clutter and introduced standard materials such as concrete kerbs. Enhancements could include removing surplus street furniture and restoring materials which are in keeping with the area. “The Green” would be a good location for information boards on the area.

Self-sown trees have encroached on the parkland and obscured the original layout of the Gledhow Hall estate.



**Gledhow Woods**

- The lack of a management plan and appropriate funding have caused the 18th and 19th century design of the Gledhow Hall estate to be obscured. Clearing some of the naturally-regenerated trees from the former open parkland to open up vistas of the lake and Gledhow Hall should be considered as one of the long term objectives for the area.
- The woods are well used and, despite the constant



This important green space at the heart of Gledhow has been harmed by visually unsympathetic highway works.



The Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods repair the paths in the woods on a voluntary basis.

efforts of The Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods, suffer from damage. Greater civic investment is required in the upkeep of the network of paths and structures such as bridges and gateposts to sustain the value of the woods as a public amenity, designed landscape and site of ecological significance.

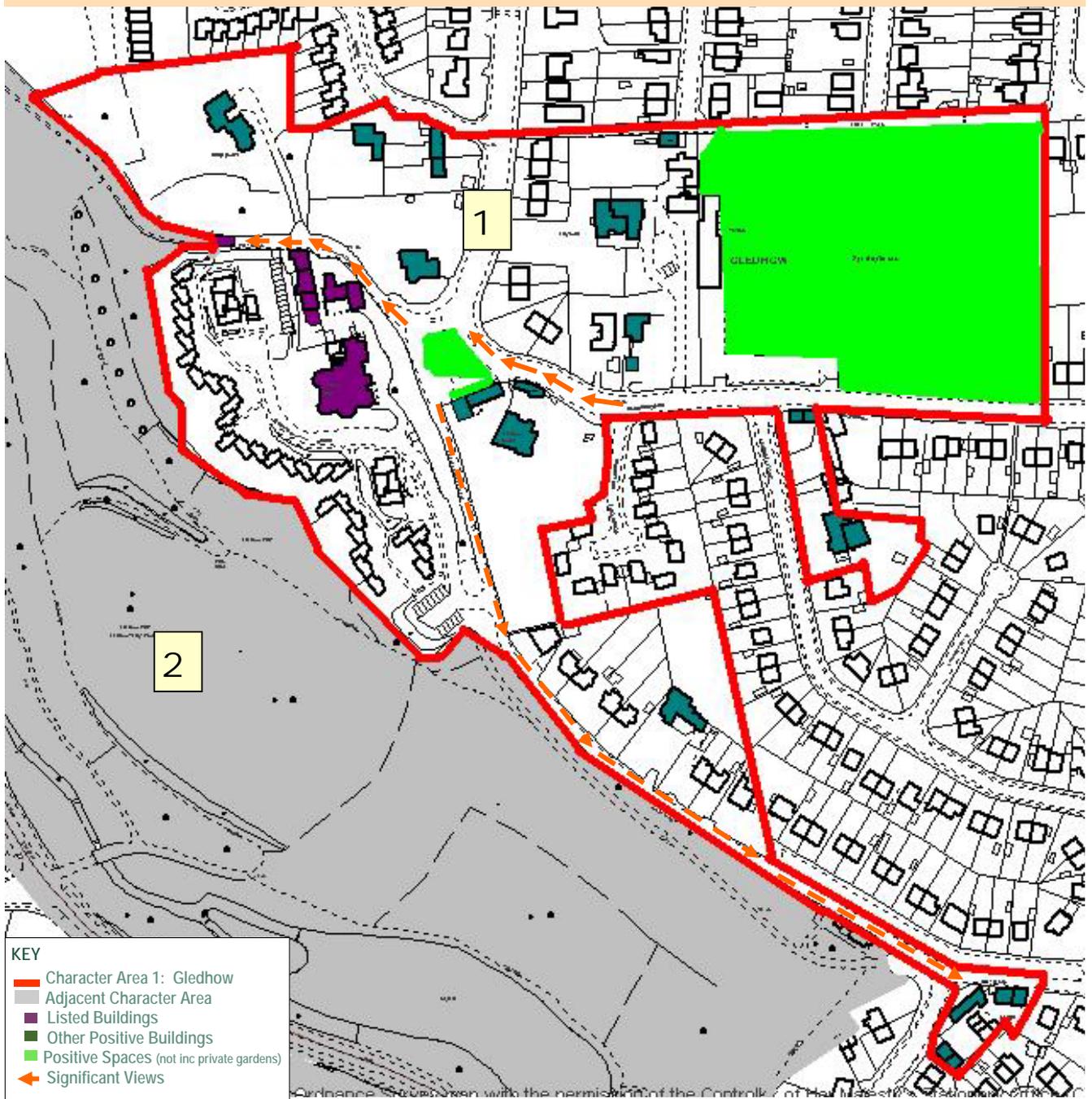


Gipton Spa needs repairs.

**Listed Buildings and walls**

- Gledhow Hall, the listed footbridge over Gledhow Lane, and Gipton Spa are in poor repair and require investment to halt their decline. Many boundary walls have been neglected by public and private owners alike.

# APPRAISAL PLAN CHARACTER AREA 1: GLEDHOW

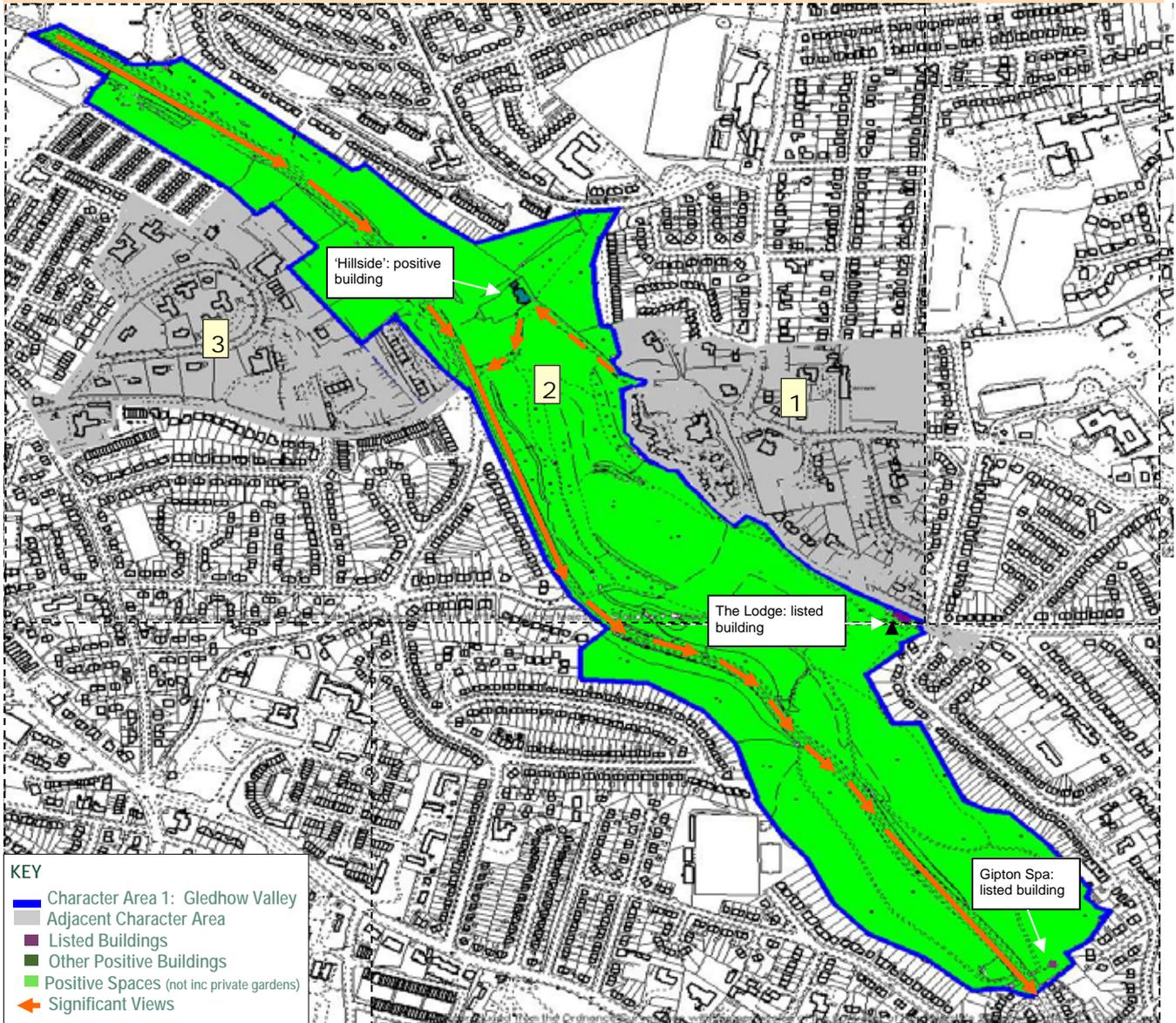


**KEY**

- Character Area 1: Gledhow
- Adjacent Character Area
- Listed Buildings
- Other Positive Buildings
- Positive Spaces (not inc private gardens)
- Significant Views

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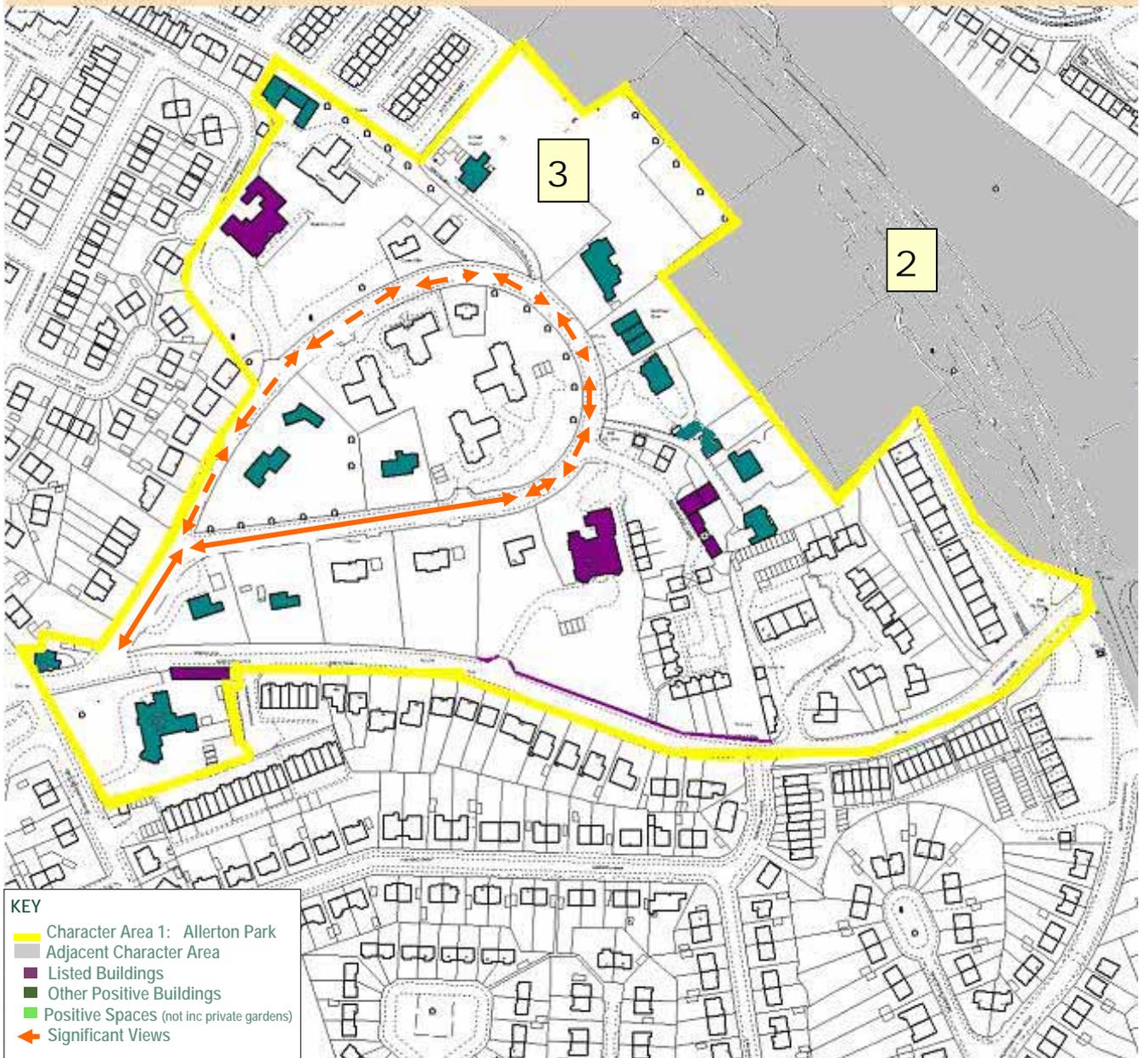
# APPRAISAL PLAN CHARACTER AREA 2: GLEDHOW VALLEY



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# APPRAISAL PLAN

## CHARACTER AREA 3: ALLERTON PARK



### KEY

- █ Character Area 1: Allerton Park
- █ Adjacent Character Area
- █ Listed Buildings
- █ Other Positive Buildings
- █ Positive Spaces (not inc private gardens)
- ↔ Significant Views

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## POLICY AND INFORMATION

The power to designate Conservation areas rests with local authorities and in exceptional cases the Secretary of State. The statutory definition of 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." Policies for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas are contained in central government guidance and local development plans adopted by local authorities.

### CONSERVATION AREAS IN LEEDS

There are currently 63 conservation areas in Leeds, each with its own unique character. They vary greatly in size and population, from the expanse of Roundhay Park and its surrounding housing or the extensive development of Headingley to the tiny hamlet of Woodhall Hills or the cluster of buildings at Stank Hall on the Dewsbury Road.

In all cases though the aim is the same: to recognise those characteristics that make the place special and to try to protect it from harmful change. The City Council has to give special attention in dealing with all planning matters in a conservation area to "preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area". Everyone is encouraged to do the same, from residents to government departments.

For a property within a conservation area planning controls are stronger than elsewhere. 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 are 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 who has six weeks in which to decide to impose restrictions.
- Generally, higher standards of design apply for new buildings and alterations to existing ones.

Further information is available on the conservation section of the Department's website:  
[www.leeds.gov.uk/conservation](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/conservation)

### ABOUT PLANNING POLICY

National planning policy for conservation areas is in PPG15 'Planning and the Historic Environment' and local policies for all aspects of planning are brought together in the Leeds Unitary Development Plan (UDP). In addition, English Heritage have published guidance on the management of conservation areas. Copies are available through the Central Library or Development Department and can also be inspected at English Heritage, Yorkshire Region, 37 Tanner Row, York YO1 6WP, Tel 01004 601901.

### HOW TO GET INVOLVED WITH CONSERVING GLEDHOW

Two local organisations are:

**Friends of Gledhow Valley Woods**

email:[oriolus.oriolus@ntlworld.com](mailto:oriolus.oriolus@ntlworld.com)

website:

[www.fgvw.co.uk](http://www.fgvw.co.uk)

**Leeds Civic Trust**, Leeds Heritage & Design Centre, 17-19 Wharf Street, Leeds LS2 7EQ, Tel: 0113 243 9594.

email:

[office@leedscivictrust.org.uk](mailto:office@leedscivictrust.org.uk)

website:

[www.leedscivictrust.org.uk](http://www.leedscivictrust.org.uk)

Victorian Society (West Yorkshire Group), Claremont, 23 Clarendon Road Leeds LS2 9NZ

### WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE

Local sources include:

**Central Reference Library (Local Studies)**, The Headrow, Leeds LS1. Tel 0113 247 8290

email:

[localstudies@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:localstudies@leeds.gov.uk)

website:

[www.leeds.gov.uk/library](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/library)

**West Yorkshire Archive Service**, Chapeltown Road, Sheepscar, Leeds LS7 3AP. Tel 0113 214 5814;

email: [leeds@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:leeds@wyjs.org.uk)

website:

[www.archives.wyjs.org.uk](http://www.archives.wyjs.org.uk)

**West Yorkshire Archaeology Service**, Newstead Road, Wakefield WF1 2DE.

Tel 01924 306810;

email: [wysmr@wyjs.org.uk](mailto:wysmr@wyjs.org.uk)

website: [www.arch.wyjs.org.uk](http://www.arch.wyjs.org.uk)

In addition, a great deal of information is available on other websites including:  
listed building descriptions - [www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk)  
early Ordnance Survey maps - [www.old-maps.co.uk](http://www.old-maps.co.uk)  
and archive photographs - [www.leodis.net](http://www.leodis.net)

#### Acknowledgement

Special thanks to Lynn Aspinall, Betty Bertrand, David Heaton and Christine Osborne who initiated the Gledhow Conservation Area and steered this appraisal to adoption.

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Published in December 2006 by the Development Department, Leeds City Council,  
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website: [www.leeds.gov.uk/conservation](http://www.leeds.gov.uk/conservation)

