

THORNTON STEWARD

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN



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guidance on 24th February
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Introduction

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 Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Thornton Steward was designated a Conservation Area in 1995.

Local Planning Authorities are required to “formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area, which are conservation areas” (Section 71 of the Act). This Character Appraisal and Management Plan fulfils this duty.

In making a decision on an application for development in a Conservation Area, “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area” (Section 72 of the Act). Whilst this should ensure that harmful change is not allowed, some changes, not normally requiring planning permission (known as permitted development) could still damage the special qualities of the area. Local Authorities have special powers to issue directions removing certain permitted development rights from properties if it can be shown that it is necessary.

This Appraisal and Management Plan should be read in conjunction with the following documents

- Richmondshire Local Plan
- The emerging Local Development Framework
- The Yorkshire and Humber Plan Regional Spatial Strategy
- National Planning Policy Guidance especially Planning Policy Guidance 15 (PPG15) – Planning and the Historic Environment.
- National Planning Policy Statements

Location and Setting

Thornton Steward is a small village set on the north bank of the river Ure approximately 7km east of Leyburn and 8km west of Bedale. To the north the valley side rises to Arklow Hill at 160m above sea level, whilst to the south the land falls steadily to the wide valley floor, beyond which lies Jervaulx Abbey and its associated parkland (photo 1). The main road bypasses the village to the north leaving the settlement as a quiet cul-de-sac in a rural setting.



The village is set on the slope of the valley side, with the main street following the prevailing contours of the land, with the result that properties on the north side of the village green stand higher than this public space (photo 2) whilst those to the south tend to be oriented with their back to the Green to benefit from the view across the valley (photo 3).



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5

The whole village benefits from spectacular views to the south over Wensleydale (photo 4), taking in the wide landscape setting of Jervaulx Abbey and its parkland as well as the parkland associated with Danby Hall further to the west (photo 5). The majority of the properties in the village are oriented to benefit from both the southerly aspect of the natural slope and the long open views to both east and west encompassing the wide valley floor and the rolling rich countryside of Yorkshire.

Historic Development and Archaeology

The earliest record of the village appears to be a land charter of 1041, predating the Domesday Book by over 40 years and referring to the village manor as being held by Gospatric, The Dane. This Saxon document records the name as “Tornetone”, amended to “Tornenton” in the Domesday book of 1086 and gaining the “Steward” suffix by the 12th century when the village was the property of one Wymar, the steward to the Earl of Richmond. Ownership of the village passed through various

hands, including a significant part being owned by the nearby Jervaulx Abbey, ultimately being sold by the Bishop of Norwich to the Scrope family from nearby Bolton.

The village does not appear to have a particularly well documented written history despite sitting in landscape rich with notable settlements nearby. Middleham is well documented as a royal town and the nearby Cistercian monastery of Jervaulx Abbey is known to date from 1156. The mansion of Danby Hall to the west of the village has a recorded history as the seat of the Scrope family, owners of the village from 1371. Notwithstanding this the village has continued to develop over the years with the oldest surviving properties dating probably from the 16th century. In the middle of this century The Great Plague was rife throughout the country and it is known to have affected the nearby villages of Wensley and East Witton. It is believed that Thornton Steward was significantly affected and that prior to this date the medieval settlement may have been centred further to the west towards the church. The church itself possesses both Anglo Saxon and Norman work, although subsequent rebuilding of the structure has disguised its ancient roots somewhat. The church register for the parish dates from 1562. Archaeological work around the church has dated this as an occupation site from at least the 7th century AD and medieval field systems and fishponds of the 13th and 14th century are evident in the landscape to the immediate south of the current village.

Within the village itself archaeological works have yielded no finds and nothing worthy of mention in report form. Site investigations and watching briefs have been undertaken for many of the most recent developments in the village, however the only mentions in the NYCC monuments record are of the fishponds that lie to the south of the village and outside the current extent of the Conservation Area. At one time the 'fish ponds' to the south of Manor Farm were thought to have been evidence of a Roman encampment but nothing to substantiate this has come to light, the nearest evidence of the Roman occupation being found to the south east at Kilgram Bridge where pottery of that date has been uncovered. The earthworks are generally thought to be of medieval date but have not been archaeologically investigated.

Historic buildings in the village date from the 16th century with the construction of the Old Hall in its present form (photo 6).

This may be built on an older site reputedly dating to the early Norman period. Later stages of development in the village saw the construction



Photo 7



of Manor Farm house in the 17th century (photo 7) and the Manse at the start of the 18th century . These large properties may have been supported by a village of smaller cottages and workshops however the low status buildings were often poorly constructed and few survive; none in Thornton Steward have been identified. It is likely that any small pre-Georgian buildings that existed in the village will have been either cleared or heavily rebuilt during the 18th and

19th centuries. This was a period of great change in agriculture during which land ownerships were consolidated, fields had recently been enclosed, farm production became concentrated in fewer larger holdings and, during the 19th century, mechanisation changed the face of the industry. Linked to these changes was a period known nationally as the 'great rebuilding' during which many small medieval farms disappeared and were replaced by the robust larger structures and planned farmsteads.

Photo 8



In Thornton Steward this would be represented by the surviving and now converted farmyard at Old Hall Farm (photo 8), but the ultimate consequences of this phase of investment are far wider, resulting in investment in the reconstruction of many of the

Photo 9



farm workers homes. By the end of the 19th century the improved living conditions for rented properties would have resulted in an appearance little altered to this day.

Fort Horn (photo 9) is an anomaly in the vernacular development of the village. It is interesting that the Napoleonic wars left such an impressive mark on this quiet corner of Yorkshire but indicative of the political

Photo 10



and social turbulence of the time. Development since this period has been sporadic and limited. There is little evidence of planned investment until the 1950's with the construction of the Field Side houses (photo 10), instead the properties that had been constructed by the mid 19th century remained in use and were subject to repairs and overhaul throughout the next 150 years. Investment in the village increased steadily in the

1970's and 80's and again recently it has become viable to construct new properties here.

Architectural Features and Building Materials

Architectural style of village buildings

Thornton Steward has a wide range of building types, styles, and sizes reflecting the historic development of the village. Buildings can be divided by type into houses, barns and former barns, and incidental ancillary structures. The houses within the village can be further identified as grander large properties, modest dwellings or later additions dating from the 20th century. The larger grander houses represent the first phase of surviving development in the village whilst smaller properties date from the mid 18th century onwards. Of particular note is the similar scale of many of the houses in the village. The detailing and construction may vary significantly but most properties are of two storeys and approximately 10 to 12m wide and 6m deep. Where properties are larger than this they are often combinations of two or more of this sized block. This is an important element of the character of village properties as it establishes a common scale, which defines the buildings of the village. New build houses particularly in sensitive locations should try to reflect this scale in their design to help assimilate them into the conservation area. Barns and former barns mostly date from after about 1800 but these can be difficult to ascribe precise periods to as their form and means of construction changed little over many years.

Photo 11



The large number of smaller incidental structures, sheds, workshops and garages vary hugely in quality and character but their diversity contributes greatly to the texture and grain of the village. This type of structure is almost impossible to date as they often include reused material from a range of sources and dates and may be designed to be temporary in nature. They are nevertheless important to the character of the village.

The oldest surviving property in the village is the listed Old Hall (photo 11) dating from the 16th century but possibly on a much earlier site dating from the 12th century. Although much altered and extended over the centuries the huge projecting chimney stack with weathered corbelling (photo 12) and the mullioned windows set in moulded stone surrounds (photo 13) provide a clear indication of the antiquity of



Photo 12



Photo 13

the building. Manor Farmhouse at the extreme west end of the village provides the next phase of surviving development in the village (photo 14). Dating mostly from the 17th century it retains many of the older features of post medieval architecture such as the mullioned and transomed windows, the shaped kneelers and raised copings to the



Photo 15



Photo 14



Photo 16

eaves (photo 15) and the carved finials to the peak of the roof (photo 16). It is possible the house was originally built with an E shaped plan form, as it was a popular style in Elizabethan England however the passing years took their toll on the property and one wing of the building was lost. The careful restoration in the later part of the 20th century recreated the original layout with a newly built wing to the right hand side.

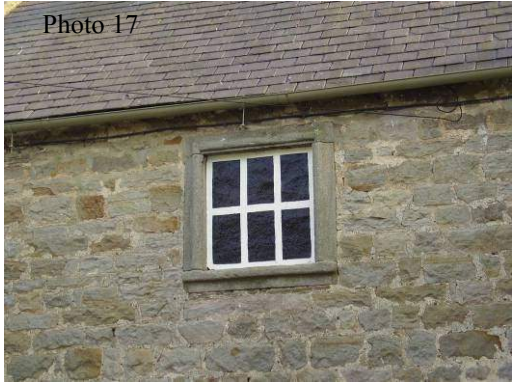


Photo 17

Dating from the first quarter of the 18th century The Manse is the nearest neighbour to Manor Farmhouse. Typical early Georgian features survive here too with bolection mouldings to door cases and windows and the inclusion of a carefully detailed blind window on the very public rear elevation (photo 17). Much well detailed historic timber is also reputed to survive inside the house. The oldest of the modest

cottages in the village are possibly contemporary with this building and of particular note is the original phase of Pear Tree Cottage (photo 18), reputed to be one of the oldest houses in the village. Although the rear extension is of a later date the well-proportioned front elevation is a good example of a vernacular Georgian building.



Photo 18

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries the village grew and the majority of the cottages and smaller houses date from the period 1750 to 1850. Although this is a lengthy time-span the majority of the village buildings are of vernacular style that changed little throughout this



Photo 19



Photo 20



Photo 21



Photo 22

Photo 23



period. Good examples of the vernacular style through the Georgian and Victorian period include Smithy Cottage (photo 19), Hill View, Villa Cottage (photo 20), Cherry Cottage (photo 21) and Holly Cottage (photo 22). Smaller houses catered for the less wealthy families and The Old Post Office (photo 23) would originally have fallen into this category. The architectural detailing of most of



Photo 24

these buildings is broadly similar however each has its own peculiarities and individual identity as illustrated at Cherry Cottage where a circular first floor window marks the house as different from its neighbours (photo 24).

There are two individual properties that do not fit into the vernacular style of the period first of which is the idiosyncratic Fort Horn (photo 25). Built by the prominent local

eccentric Captain Horn of the Loyal Dales Volunteers, possibly as a barracks for the local militia in which he held a commission, it is thought to date from the early part of the 19th century and carries several of the popular architectural devices of the late Georgian period. This type of militia mustering point or barracks proliferated during the Napoleonic wars when there was considered to be a real threat of invasion by France. Of note are the three storey canted bay window, the flanking Venetian windows both popular at the time and the castellated parapet to provide a hint of military pretence. The Villa sitting away from the Green in a secluded corner of the village is a substantial late Georgian property dating from the 1830's (photo 26). It differs from the more numerous cottages in the village in its scale and its rendered finish, a

Photo 25



Photo 26





Photo 27

popular material in regency architecture perhaps alluding to the prevalent style of fashionable resorts such as Royal Leamington Spa, Brighton and Cheltenham where 'Villas' were very much the 'in thing'.

A further phase of building took place in the late 19th century with the construction of the school in 1866 (photos 27 and 28), a replacement for another of Captain Horns' buildings. This well detailed but modest

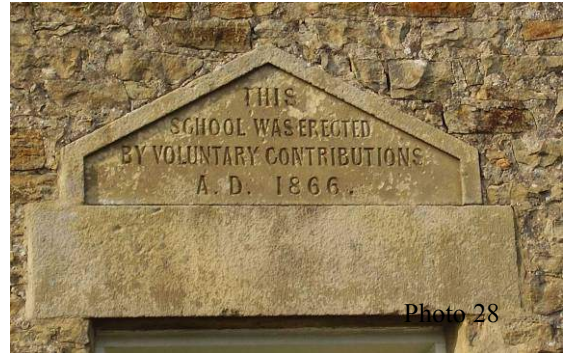


Photo 28



Photo 29

building illustrates one of the important changes in society of the time, providing education to the wider population. At the end of the 19th century the postal service arrived in the village and the former School Cottage became the Post Office (now the Old Post Office) in 1892 (photo 23). This closed in 1962 having remained in the same family throughout its working life. Dale View (photo 29), a large prominent property on the north side of the Green, represents private houses of this period. Its tall proportions and large windows, probably originally sliding sashes, differ markedly from its neighbouring

vernacular counterparts. The Institute building (photo 30) dates from 1925 but stylistically is compatible with the vernacular construction of the previous 100 years.

The use of large windows is a Victorian influence but comparable with the school building of sixty years previous. Another building illustrating the reluctance to embrace changing fashions is Stonefold (photo 31). Extended with a substantial two storey gable to the front in 1937 its style is firmly rooted in the past being comparable again with the work to the school. At the time Art Deco style was prevalent with long horizontal windows,



Photo 30

Photo 31



Photo 32



curved concrete walls and glistening white painted render. Perhaps there is much to be gained from taking the conservative approach to altering old houses.

Photo 33



The 20th century has added much to the village, some features being more

Photo 34



appropriate than others. The original Woodcote adjacent to the Manse is thought to have been a timber inter-war bungalow but this has now been replaced with a more substantial masonry home (photo 32). The 1950's and 60's saw the construction of Field Side by the local authority (photo 10). An uncompromising style, typical of housing constructed across the country to ease the shortage of property, these buildings show the confidence the council had in the village and are an important part of Thornton Stewards recent history. Dale Side (photo 33), Woodcote (the bungalow adjacent to Pear Tree Cottage) (photo 34), The Lodge (photo 35), and Sungarth (photo 36) all represent different styles of bungalows dating from the 1950's to the 1970's.

Photo 35



Photo 36



Photo 37



Photo 38



The latter being built by a retired Colonel with his Gratuity for £1000 as a second home with specific use as a fishing lodge. More recent constructions at Ash Tree House (photo 37), Thornberry, Anvil Cottage (photo 38), Lower Garth (photo 39) and Maple Lodge (photo 40) have incorporated natural stone walling and appropriate roofing materials to blend more convincingly into the village. In some instances, for example Anvil Cottage, the scale and proportion of the historic vernacular houses has been carefully interpreted to ensure the building fits well into its surroundings whilst the detailing of the house reflects a contemporary style.

Photo 39



Photo 40



Materials.

Stone

The dominant walling material in Thornton Steward is stone. This is used for the majority of buildings throughout the village and takes several forms although all buildings appear to use locally sourced sandstone.

The three principle older buildings within the village share a common form of construction, at least in part, throughout their structure. The Manse, The Manor House and Old Hall Farm are principally constructed of random rubble with dressed stone detailing although later refurbishments of these houses have brought variations to their current appearance. Of these buildings Old Hall Farm is thought to be the oldest with parts of the structure possibly dating from the 16th century



Photo 41

although many later additions and alterations have been made. The earliest lower courses of the building comprise large river boulders from which the random rubble walling rises (photo 41). A massive chimney to the west elevation is of random rubble with dressed stone detailing (photo 12). At The Manse the prevailing rubble stone is part rendered to some of the rear elevation (photo 42) and rusticated quoins

frame the southeast corner of the building. Moulded masonry detail includes detailed stone surrounds to doors and windows, ashlar raised water table copings to the gables with shaped kneelers (photo 42) and bolection surrounds to the doorframe and rear blind window on the north elevation (photo 17). The chimneys here are of brick and whilst on the main house they may date from the properties early 18th century date it is thought that the rear chimney has been rebuilt in the 20th century. The Manor House is of two principle phases the first in the later 17th



Photo 42



Photo 43



Photo 44

century and the second a careful enlargement in the mid 20th century.

Random rubble, typified in the construction of Plane Tree Cottage is widely used throughout the conservation area for both more modest houses and barns. At Plane Tree Cottage the quoins are of random widths and dressed only to the two exposed faces whilst the coursing of the stonework is extremely random (photo 43). At the Round House (photo 44) a similar form of walling is used however the sills and lintels for doors and windows are slimmer and formed of slabs of sandstone laid on the bedding plane rather than being the more prominent deep sawn heads found on Plane Tree Cottage. The barn to the Round House has well-proportioned regular

Photo 45



quoins and this treatment is continued throughout this former farm group to the Old Stables (photo 45), now converted to residential use. School Cottage (photo 46) has smaller quoins and a segmental

headed arched head to a rear window formed of rubble stone set on edge.

Although random rubble dominates the masonry style it is finished in some examples with high quality dressed stone for quoins and window reveals.

Photo 46



Photo 47



Examples of this are the sawn stone dressings at Stone Fold (photo 31) and at The Old Post Office, where the quoins are tooled with a herringbone finish (photo 47). Sawn ashlar stone has been used for inscription tablets in both the school building (photo 28) and at the Institute building (photo 30).

In some cases the rubble stone has been brought more to course and is less random an example being the front of Pear Tree

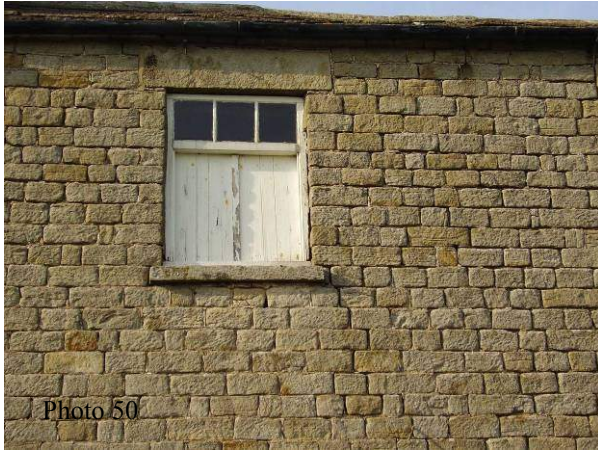
Cottage (photo 48), where the stonework contrasts with that to the side and rear extension. Also worthy of note are Cherry Cottage and Smithy Cottage to the north of the Green (photo 49). These two similar properties demonstrate the range of stonework techniques well with random rubble to the first, incorporating large stone heads, slender sills and a sawn stone door case. The second property, Smithy Cottage features splayed stone heads throughout the front elevation and the walling is more regularly coursed. A further contrast is the attached barn to Smithy Cottage

Photo 48



Photo 49





where the simple dressed stone heads to the first floor openings compliment the well squared and coursed stonework of the walls in one of the most distinctive sections of walling in the village (photo 50).

There have been several new properties built in the village in recent years and the majority of these have used stonework as a principle walling material. In most cases this has been well executed and the stone is weathering well to achieve an

acceptable match with the more established properties in the village. With modern construction methods the structure of the wall is very different to incorporate cavity insulation and modern materials. This can result in a new style of masonry with a more sharply squared character to the stones and a more regular coursing than much of that in the village. Initially this can appear harsh and discordant however over time the crisp edges and bright colours of the fresh masonry will weather and with careful stone selection the building materials will assimilate well into the conservation area.

Render

The second most used walling finish is render. In older properties this may have been employed as a facing for poorer quality random rubble stonework however in some cases and particularly during the 20th century render achieved acceptance as a finish in its own right. There are two main forms taken by this finish, a smooth hard float finish which sometimes has a textured pebble dash applied on top, and the traditional roughcast finish.

The first form has no place on an historic building as it is almost exclusively formed from a cement rich mortar and skimmed on to create a hard impervious skin. This will not work in harmony with traditional buildings as there is no flexibility in the material and trapped moisture cannot escape through the dense cement. All traditional buildings need to breathe to allow moisture to escape and avoid the build up of damp in the structure. Although not appropriate on traditional buildings this form of render can be successful in blending modern buildings into an historic setting. Care needs to be taken however to ensure that colours are not strident or dominating and details of corners and window reveals must be softened to avoid sharp edges and help assimilate the building into its context. The texture of the finish plays a large part in the success of the scheme and coarse building sand usually provides a good aggregate for inclusion to help soften the finish of the building.

The traditional roughcast render was formed of a lime-based mortar with a large gauge aggregate included for bulk. It created a distinctive rough texture and remains very successful at sheltering poor quality stonework from weathering. Where a building was designed to have a rendered or plastered finish and this has been removed the revealed stonework may be of a poorer quality. In other cases render has been applied to harmonise a group of buildings or to disguise alterations.

Photo 51



Examples of render in the village include The Villa (photo 26), dating from the 1830s when lined out stucco and render were popular finishes for buildings reflecting the stylish grand Regency buildings of the time. The nearby Old Vicarage (photo 51) is similarly rendered in appearance however here the finish is a more modern. Historic render can be seen in places on the older sections of the Manse (photo 42) however it is extremely weathered and degraded. In this form render has a distinct attractive aged character that is impossible to recreate in repair, but work will be required in the future to maintain the

weather tight integrity of the wall. This is an instance where the render has fulfilled its purpose of providing a shelter coat to the underlying stonework thus lengthening its lifespan. The most prominent example of render is at Dale View (photo 29). This 19th century house has been completely rendered and painted. The colour is not unduly harsh in the village however the smooth finish of the walls contrasts markedly with the rougher

Photo 52



appearance of the neighbouring stonework. The combination of the finish to the walls and the position of the building make this property one of the most striking in the village, even being visible in views across the valley (photo 52). A less obtrusive use of render on an historic building has been at the cottage where a modern first floor extension over an old random rubble wall has been rendered and painted a complimentary colour to the stone (photo 53). Although this form of honest approach to alterations can

Photo 53



work well it is important to ensure that the final result blend two phases of build together acceptably and does not leave a jarring contrast. The final use of render of note in the village is to the 1950's properties at Field Side (photo 10). Here the pebbledash render has weathered to a grey colour over the intervening 50 years and gives the properties a stark appearance belying their quality of design.

Brick

There is almost no brick used within the village with the exception of the chimneys to The Manse (photo 54), some small, patched repairs to South View Cottage and one of the older garages to the rear of Pear Tree Cottage (photo 55). This reflects the abundance of good quality building stone in the area and possibly the lack of readily accessible clay for brick making. Prior to the 20th century buildings would reflect the locally available



materials and traditions, i.e. have a vernacular character, transport was difficult and expensive and thus bricks would not have found favour with those constructing properties in the village. The use of bricks at The Manse shows the status of the building and the occupier and the prominent chimneys clearly show off this expensive imported material to the residents of the village. At the Manse two different phases of brick are evident, the older narrower 2" bricks typical of the 18th



century and some well matched 20th century bricks employed to repair the rear chimneys. The older bricks will be hand-made and of relatively local origin demonstrating irregularities, fractures and a wide range of colours. The fire-skin of these bricks is not well developed as they were fired for longer periods at lower temperatures. The garages to the east of the village are a very different

case. Here, in the mid 20th century, the cost of transporting bricks has fallen and the cheapness and convenience of using brick outweighs the availability of stone for such a low status building. It is interesting to note that the use of brick at different periods in history denotes very different characteristics for the same material; in the 18th century it is a high quality material and used in prominent places on the best houses whereas by the late 20th century it has been relegated to building outhouses and sheds.

Photo 56



Other Building Materials

Whilst the majority of buildings are constructed of stone, sometimes with a rendered finish there is a limited range of other materials used occasionally through the village that should be mentioned. Principle of these is the use of metal sheeting mostly for the larger agricultural barns. Although not normally a part of most villages the recent barn to the south of Plane Tree Cottage is prominent in

views of the village from the east (photo 56). Similarly at the west of the village the entry to the conservation area is flanked to the north by the corrugated sheet barns of Manor House Farm (photo 57). This type of large agricultural building is also important within the fields to the north of the village (photo 58). In most cases the buildings also incorporate blockwork into their structure. These



Photo 57

Photo 58



buildings are essential to the functioning of the village and, although not complimentary to the character of the conservation area, they have a distinct identity that is appropriate within the rural area. Within the heart of the conservation area the building to the west of Dale Side is the most prominent structure that

uses sheet materials (photo 59). At Woodcote the 1970's style bungalow uses timber cladding to its front gable (photo 34) and several of the garages, small barns and other ancillary buildings throughout the village employ either timber or corrugated sheeting in their construction (photos 60 and 61). These are



Photo 59

Photo 60



important to the character of the village as they add to the range of colours, textures and materials that go to make up the scenery. Whilst they may not be necessarily considered worthy of preservation in their own right the complete loss of these small modest sheds and

buildings would result in a loss to the character of the conservation area as a whole.



Photo 61

Roofing Materials

Stone Slates

This is historically the traditional material for domestic roofing in the area and has been used widely on a range of buildings throughout the village. Stone slate was locally sourced and is laid in diminishing courses, narrowing from large slates at the eaves to small slates at the ridge and is often finished with a dressed stone ridge piece. Good examples of stone slate roofing in the village include Holme Farm (photo 62), where the gable verge is finished with a raised water table detail, and

Photo 62



Cherry Cottage (photo 49) which has a flush pointed verge to the gable. The out building adjacent to Manor House Farm retains this form of roof covering albeit in need of attention on some of the outbuildings (photo 63) and at the Old Stables barn conversion the roof has been repaired for the buildings new use (photo 45). The new property at Maple Lodge appears to have continued the tradition of using stone slates (photo 40) but the slates may no longer be sourced locally.

Slate

Grey slate has been brought into the village from the 19th century as an alternative to the local stone slates. Welsh slate has several advantages over the historically used local material; it is lighter, can be produced more rapidly and efficiently and is very long lasting and weather resistant. Coming in standard sizes it can be more easily handled, cut and laid without the need for sorting different gauged slates to produce the diminished coursing of stone

Photo 63



Photo 64



slates. As a material the earliest use of slate will date from the latter half of the 19th century when transport systems, particularly the railways, were sufficiently developed to allow slate to be imported to the area. The larger properties of The Manse and Old Hall Farm (photo 6) have both had their original roof coverings replaced with Welsh grey slate and other prominent buildings with this type of roof include the Old School (photo 66), South View Cottage (photo 64), the Old Post

Photo 65



Photo 66



Office (photo 65) and Pear Tree Cottage.

Pan tile

Pan tiles are used as a roof covering on a few buildings in the village. They vary greatly in age and character and their different ages and sources combine to produce a richly textured roofscape to the village when viewed from a distance. At The Cottage on the Green there is an eaves courses of stone slates (photo 66), a traditional vernacular feature occurring more widely further to the north. The eaves course can vary in width from a simple single course to three or four courses of stone slate. Whilst it is important to maintain sound roof coverings to buildings and the use of modern pan tiles is appropriate in the conservation area it is also important to recognise older pan tile coverings and to record and preserve them where they exist. Pan tiles were often local products that would vary in shape, size and texture from one producer to another and surviving historic roofs may provide examples of tiles from small local companies now long gone. A variation of natural clay tile has been used at Plane Tree Cottage (photo 49) where a modern style single rolled tile covers the roof.

Other Roofing Materials

Within Thornton Steward the range of traditional roofing materials has been supplemented with modern alternatives including modern concrete tiles that have been used extensively on properties through the 20th century to replace older roof coverings. Although not ideal for the building due to the added weight and characteristics of the material itself these tiles have usually mellowed with weathering to blend into the street scene. Ideally these will be replaced with more traditional alternatives as they become life expired. Examples of concrete tiles are found on the house at Smithy Cottage (photo 49), and at the property adjacent to Stone Fold (photo 67) where the house has concrete tiles and the garage is covered with a lightweight asbestos cement tile. There are several examples of tin sheeting coverings to barns and ancillary buildings and these do have a

Photo 67





Photo 68

bearing on the character of parts of the conservation area. Particular examples include the agricultural barns to the rear of Urebank (photo 68) and those to the north of Manor House Farm. Most prominent in the conservation area are the outbuildings to South View Cottage (photo 60) and the single storey timber framed building to the west of Dale Side (photo 59).

Walls and Enclosures

Around Thornton Steward there are a good variety of boundary treatments that make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area. The first sight of the village is enhanced by the use of steel estate railings around the eastern field (photo 69).



Photo 69

These railings are an effective boundary but still allow a clear view through to the field and village beyond. The most widespread and important form of boundary treatment in the village is the stone wall. This takes many forms from the formal, mortared wall present in front of Fort Horn (photo 70) through to the beautifully constructed and coursed dry stone walls to



Photo 70



Photo 71



Photo 72



Photo 73



Photo 74



Photo 75

the north of the village (photos 71, 72 and 73). The substantial masonry walls lining the west side of the road opposite School Cottage (photo 74) are important in defining the character of this part of the conservation area. To the south side of the Green a short length of birds-mouth timber fencing guards the drop to the lane (photo 75) but this is out of character with much of its surroundings. There are very few examples of domestic timber fences although timber post and rail fencing has been used to divide up and maintain the boundaries of the paddocks to the north of the village (photo 76). Gates within the village are predominantly timber and vary in design. Although there is a significant amount of hedgerow around the village little exists within the conservation area.



Photo 76



Photo 77

Floorscape

The floorscape of the village is dominated by modern tarmac and there are almost no surviving areas of older traditional materials and forms of road surfacing. Exceptions to the tarmac finish tend to be



Photo 79



Photo 78



Photo 80



Photo 81

private drives which retain the informal earth “wheeler” tracks leading to houses or garages (photos 77). An exception is the area in front of School Cottage (photo 78) where a small section of stone flags and cobbles survive hinting at the possible past surfacing employed more widely through the village. The village pump (photo 79) has been set in a concrete base when it was restored although perhaps here a stone surface would have been more traditional. In recent times rolled gravel has



Photo 82

been used elsewhere in the village, particularly around new developments (photo 80). Typical of many smaller villages footpaths are relatively rare and street lighting is very limited. There are few formal kerbs or street edging and in most cases this is unnecessary as the high grass banks



Photo 83

lining the street serve perfectly well as a deterrent to vehicles (photo 81). However there are areas where over-running is causing the erosion of the village green. Particularly at the extreme western end of the village. Footpaths and rights of way link the village well to the surrounding countryside and the styles, signposts and routes between the houses make an important contribution to the character of the village (photos 82 and 83).



Photo 85

Street Furniture and Monuments
The village pump is an important focal point within the central green and although not an ancient structure its position and presence is important in the conservation area (photo 84). The retention of the remains of the wash stone at its foot is to be welcomed.



Photo 84

To the rear of the pump a litter bin has been fixed and painted to a similar colour to the pump (photo 79). It appears to be well maintained and an appropriate addition to the village green. Another historic water supply is to be found adjacent to the Manse (photo 85) where a large stone cistern built into an angle in the north wall would have served as a water supply or possibly as a horse trough but is now dry. Set on the Green is a modern commemorative bench (photos 3) placed in memory of a local lady of character who lived at The Villa. The village notice board and an informative history display are affixed to the front of the stone built bus stop.

Of less merit is much of the current street furniture. The street lighting within the village is provided by a poor selection of old street lamps that bear little reference to the village setting . There is an abundance of grey steel poles to carry signage and overhead wires are carried on obtrusive timber telegraph poles (photo 95). The necessary clearance for the wires has caused the Electric Board to cut back trees which are important features of the village. The area to the right hand side of the bus stop contains the phone box, grit bin and two hydrant signs. These are not of a quality appropriate to the conservation area.

Character

Functions/Uses.

Thornton Steward today serves two primary purposes, providing homes for agricultural workers and for commuters to larger nearby towns. Leyburn and Bedale are closest with Richmond, Catterick, Northallerton Thirsk and Ripon within commuting distance. With changing agricultural methods there has been a significant decline in both the number of farms and employment prospects within the industry however Thornton Steward has retained three farms within the village itself and serves as a base for several others nearby. With the current trend to homeworking it is likely that there may be several small businesses established within the village.

Thornton Steward has a very limited range of services for residents. There is no village shop, post office or public house. The village school has long been closed. There is a limited bus service to the village but it is often impractical and little used. The Institute building serves as the village hall which provides a base for local interest groups such as the local History Group.



Photo 86

Views of and Approaches to the Conservation Area

Wider Views Of Thornton Steward.

The raised position of Thornton Steward on the valley side allows the village to be seen from a wide range of viewpoints to the south. The uninterrupted view from Lane House Farm looking north west reveals almost the entire village (photos 86) and from here the linear form of the settlement is very apparent. The Village appears to sit in a very shallow saddle at the crest of the valley side almost on the skyline. The rising land to the right is Arklow Hill, which sits beyond the village to the north, whilst to the left the land rises up to Dolly Bog Wood which appears on the horizon. The small stand of trees directly behind the village are those at Glebe Farm and are an important landscape feature in views from the south.

Further west, on the A6108, the ruined remains of Jervaulx Abbey seen across its surrounding parkland dominate views of the village (photo 1 and 52). The village provides a backdrop to this important monument and it is in these views that the choice of materials and colours for buildings in the village has an impact on the wide landscape.



Photo 87



Photo 88

From the north the village is more discrete as it lies below the crest of the valley side and a limited number of buildings appear in distant views (photo 87). Views of the village from the west are completely screened by the belt of woodland to the west of Manor House Farm (photo 88) and this important group of trees makes an important contribution to the landscape and character of the village at its west end.

Approaches to the Village.

There are two principle road approaches to the village, from the east and the north, however a well-developed footpath network ensures that the village may be accessed from almost any compass point on foot.

The Northern Approach from Arklow Hill and the Reservoir.

This approach to the village is down a long sweeping hill, set between high hedges in a sunken lane (photo 89). The impression is of an old



Photo 89

Photo 90



route or track way that has been long established in the landscape. The village is seen in glimpsed views between these hedges and over gates but from the north in general it is the roofs of the village that provide a point of foreground interest in the wider setting of the Wensleydale landscape (photo 87). The individually

identifiable properties are limited to some of the modern agricultural barns to the north side of the village and the properties 1-4 Field Side. Open rolling countryside dominates the view with settlements and individual farmsteads dotted across the wide sweep of the land. Individual trees within the fields are important in these views and a number of large trees within the village are also apparent (photo 90). In approaching the village from the north there is an important mix of hedges and stone walls creating boundaries, and estate railings are an important visual element at the junction entrance to the east end of the village.

The Approach from the East.

From the east the village remains hidden until barely ½ mile from the junction with Moor Lane, the road up Arklow Hill. When the village comes into view the first buildings are the barns sited to the rear of Plane Tree Cottage (photo 91). These large modern structures dominate the view as they appear at the point the road changes direction and are not screened from view. Notwithstanding this they are appropriate as they give a clear message that Thornton Steward is a



Photo 91

working agricultural settlement and not a dormitory village. The changing requirements of the agricultural industry have made this type of building necessary and as such they have become part of the landscape. Their appearance may be out of keeping with the wider conservation area but they nevertheless form an



Photo 92

important and intrinsic part of the village itself. The first residential properties to be identified are 1-4 Field Side, which stand almost in isolation at the east of the village (photo 92). Other buildings are seen in the distance, but from this vantage point they are lower set and screened behind trees and hedges for the most part. Their roofs do however hint at the more historic character of the village that is to come. Of interest in this approach is the amount of undulations and

markings in the fields particularly to the south of the road. It is possible that archaeological investigation here could yield much of relevance to the early development of the village.

Approaches from the West.
 Thornton Steward remains hidden in approaches from the west almost until the village has been passed. From the road there is an awareness of a settlement in that some of the paddocks and barns to the south of the road appear tended differently from purely agricultural land. Silver Street terrace (photo 93) sits alone as an outlier of the village in the rural landscape but the first signs of the main part of the village are at the road junction where the modern bungalow,



Photo 93

Urebank and, further on, Plane Tree Cottage flank the road (photo 94). Then the village is passed and the opportunity to return to Thornton Steward must be taken at the main junction at the east of the settlement.



Photo 94

The other western approach to the village is on foot from the church. This more leisurely approach does not reveal the village at all until the modern barns of Manor House Farm have been passed. Prior to this the village remains hidden behind the belt of woodland that rises up the hill screening all views from the west. This woodland is a relatively recent feature prior to its planting a great view could be

enjoyed of the village sitting majestically on the hillside. The first encounter with the village from this approach is over the gate adjacent to Manor House Farm where a long view down the Green takes in much of the character and sense of place that defines the Conservation Area (photo 95).



Photo 95

Approaches from the south are limited as access is restricted however footpaths in this area provide wide



Photo 96



Photo 97

views of the village. Prominent in these views are some of the more modern properties (photo 96), which have taken advantage of the south facing topography with large glazed openings to benefit from the spectacular views. As the village lies more than 20 meters above the flood plain of the river Ure a steep climb is necessary up ancient sunken track ways (photo 97) flanked by archaeological evidence of the former purposes of the village including the fish ponds and the village pound.

Character Areas

In considering the character of the village it will be divided into four areas, 1 - The East End, 2 - The Old Vicarage to The Old School, 3 – The Green and Manor House Farm, and 4 – The road running North from the Old School. These divisions are closely related and it is not appropriate to consider sharp boundaries between them, rather to consider a gradual change of character flowing from one distinct area to another.

Area 1 – The East End

The visitor to Thornton Steward is most likely to approach the village through this area. It is characterised by an open approach visually dominated by hedges and open fields (photo 91). The estate railings (photo 98) play a significant part in this as they allow a clear view through to the field that sits slightly elevated above the road. Beyond this important open field glimpses of the village roofs and backs of some of the properties can be gained however the most prominent buildings are the modern barns that curtail the view across the field and delineate the extent of the working farm. As the village is approached the railings give way to stone



Photo 98

Photo 99



walls producing a more enclosed and intimate feel to the road as the carriageway becomes narrower and buildings encroach to each side.

To the south the first buildings of the village are 1-4 Field Side (photo 10), modern properties that bear little regard to the local vernacular having been constructed as Local Authority housing in the 1950's. Following the curve of the street these houses are set back behind stone walls and

their scale helps provide a positive introduction to the village without dominating the immediate area. Although of a very different style to the prevailing village houses they demonstrate an important recent phase in the historic development of Thornton Steward and show that the local authority saw a future for the village and invested in it in the mid 20th century. Thorn Hill Cottage and Hill View (photo 99) provide a more typical introduction to the village proper, both being positioned close to the street edge and set down from the road. The two houses begin to close the view to the west, something that is further reinforced with the Old Vicarage that sits directly on the roadside (photo 51). These buildings back onto the road and the open field beyond although the sloping topography of the village results in the field being almost at eaves height across the road. The houses at the east end of the village significantly restrict the views of the dale to the south, however an important view is gained from the field entry adjacent to 4 Field Side (photo 100). This is the first of several such glimpsed views throughout the village that are very important in establishing the character of the conservation area.



Photo 100

Within this eastern area of the village trees play an important part in established views. The first trees noted lie outside the village and the conservation area in the field directly to the east of Field Side but these are particularly fine specimens (photo 101). This field has a number of interesting undulations and could yield some important



Photo 101

archaeological evidence relating to the growth of the village. The field at the entrance to the village has two further important trees set at each western corner, one of which appears to be an evergreen. These trees begin to establish the pattern for the large individual specimen trees that appear throughout the village. It is only at the west end where groups of trees or copses have an impact on the appearance of the area.

Area 2 - The Old Vicarage to The Old School

Moving further into the village the character of the street changes as buildings close in on both sides. This is the narrowest part of the street and views are contained by substantial stone retaining walls to the gardens of The Steps and Anvil Cottage on the north side (photo 38) and by the backs of The Old Vicarage and the ancillary buildings to the rear of Pear Tree Cottage to the south (photos 102 and 55). There is an important gap in the southern frontage where an access has been created to



Photo 102

serve a new property, Maple Lodge, which is both set back from the road and below the level of the highway (photo 40). Although a substantial opening has been created here its impact on the enclosed character of the street is limited by the high stone wall to the Vicarage on the east and the assorted garage blocks of Pear Tree Cottage to the west. The scale of the house also helps maintain the enclosed view whilst allowing a glimpsed view to the wider scenery beyond (photo 103). Although this view

includes the wide expanse of the dale it is dominated in the foreground by the landscape treatment to Maple Lodge and by the view of the roofs of the recently built property beyond to the south. This new house is accessed from further along the village at the southern edge of The Green, sharing access arrangements with The Villa and Villa Cottage. Although currently rather intrusive in the landscape these buildings are very recent additions to the village and have not had time to weather into the scenery. They are very different in scale and form to many of the village houses however their quality of construction and selection of materials should result in them settling well into the character of the village in due course. The loss of possible open views across the site is perhaps less readily resolved however the driveway to Maple Lodge does allow a significant view to the south which should be safeguarded.



Photo 103

Adjacent to this opening lies one of the visually least satisfactory buildings in the village (photo 55). The brick built garage with the shallow pitched roof contrasts

markedly with all the surrounding structures and is in a very prominent position. It is accepted that the building represents part of the evolving history of the village and that it is a functional building, where cost of materials would have been a greater consideration than appearance. The adjoining stone built garage is far more appropriate to this location (photo 104). Its materials and form combine to produce an unobtrusive structure, which compliments the street scene and maintains the restricted view without visually jarring in its setting.



Photo 104



Photo 105

This building leads to the rear of Pear Tree Cottage, which is architecturally undistinguished (photo 105). The flat roofed, rendered extension to the building is located in a very prominent position in several views and does not do justice to the attractive and character-full building to which it is attached. The southern elevation of Pear Tree Cottage is a fine example of the local vernacular tradition retaining its earlier form of windows, its garden wall and slate roof (photo 18).

The Cottage also has a prominent gable to the west end, which forms an important termination feature in views across the Green (photo 106). Directly to the south of Pear Tree Cottage is a small group of very varied properties (photo 34), Woodcote, Villa Cottage, The Villa and The Lodge. Stylistically Woodcote dates from the 1970's and is a compact bungalow with a prominent timber clad gable. In style, form and material it is completely at different from its neighbours. Notwithstanding this its presence is discrete and the surrounding stone wall and fine gates do much to help it assimilate to its setting. Villa Cottage (photo 20) is of the local vernacular being similar in form to several of the more modest older established properties that line the Green. The Villa (photo 26) is a substantial house built in the late Georgian style but thought to date from the 1830's. Although a building of importance it makes little contribution to the character of the conservation area due to its secluded position, indeed the main view of the house from the village is of the rendered west gable sitting above the surrounding hedge (photo 106). Also discrete in its presence is The



Photo 106

Lodge, a substantial bungalow of a similar period to Woodcote but built with a stone facing and a tiled roof. The substantial garden planting and low set position of this house reduces the impact of this modern building in the conservation area (photo 35).

The footpath to the south of these properties is well used being the start of the local Heritage Trail and commands outstanding views across Wensleydale.

Returning to the main road into the village the properties flanking the street to the north rise above the road level and dominate the approach to the village. They compliment each other well although it is thought that they are of very different periods of construction. The Steps is a traditional two storey, pitched roof stone built house with an extended wing to the rear. It presents an important east gable to the approach to the village, which provides a gateway building on the north side of the road. The adjacent building, Anvil Cottage (photo 38) is a modern house which has clearly been the subject of much careful design. It respects the simple form, materials and scale of its neighbour however the treatment of window openings differentiates it from a historic building and gives it a modern identity.

The key building on an important corner plot in the village is the Old School (photo 27). This use of the site dates from 1815 when local dignitary George Horn had a school built to commemorate

Wellington's victory at Waterloo. The current structure dates from a rebuilding in 1866 and is readily identified as a school by its form. Its simple structure and large windows to maximise light are typical of small village schools of the Victorian period and the choice of local stone in its construction



Photo 107

ties it to the immediate area, making it truly a "local" school. Between the school and Anvil Cottage is an area of open land (photo 107).

Area 3 - The Green and Manor House Farm

This is the principle section of the village and the part that defines the character of Thornton Steward as a whole. The linear village green is a recognised form throughout the north of England that dates to pre medieval times and can be identified at the core of many villages and a number of larger towns. The properties along each side of the green would have had a strip of land running back from the house in which to provide for the immediate needs of the household. Sometimes called burgage plots these were often lost in later developments, extensions and changes in land ownership.

Photo 108



In Thornton Steward the Green has the individual character of being set on a marked slope in the land making the properties on the north side of the green substantially higher than those on the south (photo 108). The result is that whilst the houses to the north face out over the public space from a commanding position, most of those to the south turn their backs to the space to benefit from the spectacular views over Wensleydale. The extent of The Green is defined at

each end by substantial properties, the gable and garden wall of Pear Tree Cottage to the east (photo 18) and the Manor House complex to the west. The green itself tapers from a substantial 40m at the east end to a single road width by the time the Manor House is reached. These two attributes, the narrowing of the space and the slope and changing levels combine to create a unique asset to the village and an individual character not shared by other settlements set on greens.

Photo 109



Looking in detail to the north side first, the properties between Fort Horn and Birch Gill Manor represent an excellent group of varied vernacular properties (photos 49, 62, 67 and 109). The cottages and incidental buildings are almost exclusively stone built with the exception of Dale View, which is rendered. There is a variety of size and style within these buildings, however they are all constructed to a similar scale, larger buildings being created by the extension of a single

property. In this part of the village the smaller sheds and outbuildings make an important contribution to the character of the village (photos 61, 109 and 111), as do the numerous accesses and tracks across

Photo 110



Photo 111





Photo 112

the green (photo 77) and the views into back land areas (photo 110). The well-developed footpath network is also important as it allows access to the rear of many of these properties and views over the long linear field network to the immediate north of the settlement. Holme Farm (photo 62) is a significant property here as it is the only outlier, sitting well back from the edge of the Green almost behind Dale View. Its

group of buildings retain much of their traditional character.

The two buildings that define the ends of the north side of the Green differ from the established pattern. At the west end the 20th century Birch Gill Manor is a well proportioned substantial house set back privately in its own grounds (photo 112). An architecturally polite building it does not contribute greatly to the character of the conservation area, as it is set well back from the front of its site and thus does not feature in most views through the village. The surrounding trees and stone wall provide a secluded setting and contribute more to the character of the conservation area than the house itself. At the east end of the Green Fort Horn (photo 9) is a complete contrast to Birch Gill and to all other buildings in the village. Although it stands well back from the Green across its raised garden the scale of the central tower makes a marked contribution to the appearance of the village and provides a punctuation to the established roof lines. The height of the tower is exacerbated by the use of single storey wings to flank it and by the strong vertical emphasis of the canted bays and tripartite Venetian windows. The modern bungalow to the left hand side rather diminishes the visual impact of the historic building but to some extent balances the older ancillary buildings to the right.

To the south of The Green there is a very different character. Here the backs of properties are set hard against the roadside and several of the buildings sit much below the level of the public space, putting the visitor at a level above the ground floor and in some cases almost at roof height. At the west end of the village the substantial properties of The



Photo 113

Photo 114



Manor House (photo 63) and The Manse (photo 54) define the line of the view (photo 113), although the back of the Manor House is rather detached from the main part of the village and the house itself contributes little to the wider character of the conservation area (photo 114). The Manse is seen as the terminating building in most views along the Green, its substantial bulk being set against a backdrop of trees and broken up to some extent by its surrounding outbuildings and walls (photo

115). It is understood that Wood Cott (photo 32) was built many years ago as a single storey timber building and has since been rebuilt in masonry as a two-storey house. In executing the rebuild great care has been taken here to maintain a low roofline and to reduce the degree to which the ridge obstructs the view of the dale from the Green. This approach is worthy of note and should be considered when assessing new proposals elsewhere in the village.

Photo 115



Smaller cottages form the boundary along the next section of the Green (photos 66 and 53). These properties, Woodcott, Primrose Cottage, Rose Cottage and The Cottage vary much in appearance but produce a harmonious result of great character, which contributes

greatly to the quality of the conservation area. Lower Garth is another new property that exhibits much care in its siting and design (photo 39). Although in a prominent location on the Green at the point where the lane runs down to the village pound, careful use of levels and materials has resulted in a property that does not contrast with the character of this part of the conservation area. The boundary wall, gateway and established planting go far to root the building in the village and the use of natural stone ties it to its neighbours. Changing levels here add an extra dimension to the Green and the birds-mouth fencing that protects the drop to the head of the lane is an appropriate low key solution in this location.

The final properties to the south side of the Green are those at Roker, Dale Side and South View Cottage. Roker (photo 59) is a tin sheet clad timber building in need of some repair. It has a prominent position in the conservation area and its appearance is a little different from the traditional character of the rest of the village. Dale Side (photo 33) is a late 20th Century bungalow with an attached flat roofed garage, very different from the prevailing character of the village but again

occupying an important and prominent site in the conservation area. South View Cottage (photo 60) is a very different case. A traditional vernacular building with a range of attached sheds and small barns it turns its back on the village preferring the wider views of Wensleydale to the south, as its name would suggest. The absence of many windows on the north elevation helps define the character of this building and its contribution to the street-scape.

Area 4 - The road running north from the Old School to Back Lane

This small street provides a link from the Green to Back Lane and a second vehicular access to the village. As such it makes an important contribution to the traffic flow but is a discrete part of the conservation area without a strong identity of its own. Despite this it is the location of several of the more historically important buildings in the village including Fort Horn, The Old School and Old Hall Farm.

The prevailing character of this part of the village is one of a linear route from Back Lane to the Green. The most notable aspect of this route is the view gained as the street begins to descend toward to the south where a wide vista is gradually revealed



flanked by the garden wall to Fort Horn and the Old School building (photo 116). Travelling towards this view the open dale is gradually revealed, the vista punctuated by the mature specimen trees sited on the Green. Heading north along the street the view (photo 117) is dominated by rising land, which culminates in Arklow Hill and the ridge retaining the Thornton Reservoir.

In detail the street reveals several contrasts and much of interest. Fort Horn itself does not impact greatly on this area as it is set back from the road and faces south with no great presence here, however its garden wall of up to 2m in height defines the southern section of the street. This large wall of coursed rubble (photo 74) results in a very private and blank character to the road, which is continued along the front



of Old Hall Farm (photo 118). Here the building, of great interest in its own right, makes very little contribution to the character of the conservation area being shut away privately behind a high masonry wall and substantial gates. Facing Fort Horn's garden wall are the Old School (photo 64) and School Cottage (photo 46). In this context these two properties appear huddled together with several smaller incidental buildings but retaining glimpsed views through to the wider village. Their small scale helps create an intimate feel to this part of the village. Ash Tree House and Thornberry directly to the north of School Cottage are modern houses completed in 2005 in a natural stone finish (photo 37). Their scale and proportion differentiate them from local vernacular buildings and from new construction in the local tradition such as Anvil Cottage (photo 38). They are uncompromisingly modern properties however the use of natural materials helps assimilate them in the conservation area and their careful positioning, back from the road side behind traditional low stone walls reduces their impact in wider views.



Photo 119

Adjacent to Thornberry but outside of the conservation area boundary is the active farmyard that dominates some views of the conservation area (photo 119). The scale of its buildings and the wide access to the open yard are very much out of character with the smaller scale and more intimate spaces of the village. Despite this the farm buildings make a contribution to the setting of the conservation area in that they often provide

a backdrop to open spaces or smaller buildings and are often present in views of the village. The late 20th century bungalow on Back Lane, Urebank (photo 94), lies outside the current extent of the conservation area along with much of the active farm yard and is of a very different character to the traditional buildings in the heart of the village.

On the west side of the street several of the buildings that formed the historic farm yard have now been converted to residential use, in all cases successfully. The Old Stables (photo 45) do not impact greatly on the conservation area being set behind a smaller outbuilding on the road edge, but The Round House (photo 44 and its attached barn (photo 120) continue the back of pavement





Photo 121



Photo 122



Photo 123

development of solid masonry walls established with Fort Horn and The Old Hall. There are limited openings to the wall on the road side and glimpses through the gate to the Old Stables reveals a traditionally proportioned farmyard (photo 121) . Of note is the barn running at right angles to the road (photo 122), which exhibits clear evidence of a number of changes in use possibly having started life as a coach house to the Old Hall. The final property on this side of the street (photo 123) creates

a well formed group with adjacent barns and The Round House and although it lies outside the conservation area it contributes much to the approach to the village.

Open Spaces and Trees

Open Spaces

Within the conservation area there are two principal open spaces of note, the village Green (photo 124) and the field at the east end of the village . The village Green is clearly the more important of the two and providing a focus for events, monuments and village life. Visually it is defined by the range of properties that flank it to the north and south, but an important characteristic is its sloping topography and the relative heights of the buildings around it. Crossed



Photo 124



by many tracks and the main village road there are a variety of routes through it of differing degrees of formality and the existence of several rough tracks and unmetalled accesses add to the rural informality of the space. The trees within the Green are of great importance as they punctuate the wider views and provide a contrast to the built features that surround the space (photos 125 and 126). Views out from the Green are very important particularly to the south (photos 3) but equally so the restriction of views to provide glimpses between features and buildings contribute to the quality of the space and provide a sense of anticipation as to what may be revealed.

The large open field at the east end of the village provides a setting to the village and an important entrance to Thornton Steward. Its open character has more in common with the surrounding countryside but it does function as a gateway into the village. In achieving this it also provides a setting for several of the buildings at the east end of the village (photo 92). Its contribution to the conservation area is less well defined than that of the Green however it plays an important part in the character of the approach to the village.

Trees

Trees play an important part in establishing the character of the conservation area. Key to the approach to the village are the two trees in field to the east of Field Side . A number of trees then contribute to the skyline above and around the village when viewed across the field north of the Old Vicarage (photo 127). Amongst these is the large Yew tree within the field, which is reputed to have been near the site of a long lost Methodist chapel. The large tree adjacent to the east of Plane Tree Cottage is also important in this view .



Moving into the village the Green is host to some of the most important trees in the area. Three large specimens occupy a prominent location on the main part of the Green whilst adjacent to Pear Tree Cottage a pair of ornamental trees,

Photo 128



Photo 129



possibly cherry's, make an important contribution to the setting of the buildings (photo 18). Of importance in views to the south is the tree in the garden of The Lodge (photo 35). The planned planting at Fort Horn may need a little attention but the five large trees set on top of the retaining wall and returning on the west boundary are important elements in the character of the conservation area and the setting of the building. The solitary willow near to the village pump is a key marker point for the top of the lane (photo 108); whilst at Holly Cottage and Holme farm the group of imposing sycamore trees are an important element in the scenery of this part of the village (photos 128 and 129). These trees are protected by a tree preservation order.

Photo 130



At the far west end of the village the importance of tree cover is gained through the density and variety of species employed in some of the ornamental planting, particularly around Birch Gill Manor (photo 130), rather than the specimen trees themselves. The exception is the large singular tree reaching over from the walled garden at the Manor House (photo 131), which is important in approaches to the village from the church. The most dominant feature in this area lies outside the conservation area and this is the belt of trees known as The Strip. These trees screen the village from the west (photo 88) and provide a green backdrop to views through the village

Photo 131



in this direction.

The final selection of trees worthy of note lie along the street from The Green to Back Lane. Here the Ash tree in the garden of Thornberry (photo 37) and the large specimen to the west of Urebank (photo 132) are important elements in views down this lane whilst the small tree in the hedge at the top of the lane provides an important termination point to views up hill (photo 117). The first of these trees is protected by a



Photo 132

tree preservation order whilst the others lie just outside the boundary of the conservation area. Other trees that contribute to the setting of the conservation area are those that are contained within the hedgerows and fields to the north of the village but south of Back Lane. A group of trees is also protected in the garden of The Villa.

Conclusions

Thornton Steward is a quiet discrete village in a stunning setting, which reveals its links to the past through its buildings and the landscape in which it sits. Many of the houses have long histories of occupation by successive generations of the same family and farming and agriculture have occupied the inhabitants since the area was first settled. This constancy and stability is under threat in the modern world where commuting to well paid jobs and shopping in distant towns can lead to the loss of a community spirit and changes in the tenure and occupation of the village. These changes will impact on the appearance of the village as less people live their day-to-day existence around the Green and there is less opportunity to shop or obtain services locally. Personal residential aspirations have made an impact on the village seen in the increasing size of new houses and a greater demand for extensions to older properties. It is crucial to keep the rural character of the village in mind when seeking change for to fail to do so will inevitably undermine the qualities of the village that identify it as special.

Thornton Steward is however a robust settlement. Well designed alterations have taken place to older cottages and new buildings have been successfully incorporated within the historic village boundary. The increased demands of the car has not had the same impact here as in many settlements where front gardens have been sacrificed for parking and garage doors dominate the ground floor of properties. The spacious open character of the village has allowed all this to be accommodated without too much detriment in most cases. Some of the alterations towards the end of the last century do little for the character of the village and there are sites which could benefit from investment of time and money if not in new development then in improving their public appearance, nevertheless the village is generally well cared for with well-maintained houses and good quality landscaping

and these qualities have been recognised through the designation of it as a conservation area. This has been established to protect the important qualities and historic value of the village and in most respects it has been very successful. Development pressures have increased across the country and attractive villages such as Thornton Steward attract a premium thus increasing the pressure for development. If this is allowed to go unchecked the very values and qualities that make the village attractive will be compromised and the essence of the conservation area will be undermined. This appraisal aims to pinpoint opportunity sites and areas that require attention to maintain the high quality environment that is so rightly protected within the conservation area.

The village has a special character and to ensure the continued protection of the quality of the conservation area consideration should be given to extending the boundary in two areas.

1. The area to the north of the village to include Silver Street, Urebank and the farm buildings returning to the original boundary at Cherry Cottage. The inclusion of the farm buildings is not to restrict their use or the operational viability of the farm, rather it is to ensure that any future development here is appropriate to the quality of the village and to allow an easily identifiable and defensible boundary to be created. Silver Street is a characterfull and historic development that deserves the same protection as the rest of the village. The fields that would be covered in this extension may become subject to pressure for development and their inclusion in the conservation area protects both the openness of this side of the village and field layouts and plot boundaries of historic importance.
2. The fields to the south of the village have clear links to the historic development of the settlement. Those suggested for inclusion take in the two sets of earthworks described as fishponds and the area of the village pound. Goose Park would be included as a natural termination to the important lane leading south from the Green and the protection of this area would enhance the protection of views from and of the village.

The possibility of including the church has been examined and it is considered that the area is too distant from the existing village conservation area to justify its inclusion. To achieve an attachment between the two features would require the inclusion of significant areas of open land which whilst visually important do not have the characteristics special to the village or the church area. These areas are better protected through established countryside policies. The inclusion of the area between the village and the reservoir is not considered appropriate for similar considerations. It should be remembered that the church itself already benefits from the protection of listed building status.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

Preservation and Enhancement

In exercising its planning powers when assessing individual applications and proposals, the District Council is required to consider the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Thornton Steward Conservation Area. The appraisal has identified those aspects of the village that contribute towards its character and appearance and the aim is that through the management of change these features will be conserved.

Planning permission is required for the demolition of certain buildings in a Conservation Area and where buildings have specifically been identified by this document as contributing towards the character or appearance of the area, permission is most likely to be refused.

The open spaces and trees have been identified as being crucial to the character of the village and should be preserved. A management plan for the trees in the public domain is advisable.

Further research should be undertaken to determine whether the Conservation Area should be enlarged in the areas identified above.

Design Guidance

Conservation areas can accommodate change and providing it is sensitively designed, it can complement the existing grain of Thornton Steward without having to slavishly follow the pattern of previous generations. The designation of a Conservation Area is not intended to prevent change but rather to manage it. In many instances it should be possible to enhance the character of the area and ensure Thornton Steward's continued vitality. The general design guidance for any work requiring planning permission in the Conservation Area is that the character and appearance of the area should be "preserved or enhanced". In particular :

- The design and materials should accord with those traditionally used.
- New buildings should reflect the simple forms and scale of the existing historic buildings in the village.
- The siting of new developments should be carefully considered to ensure that it compliments the existing grain of the Conservation Area.
- No new developments should obstruct identified views of importance.
- The immediate and long term impact of any new development on existing trees must be carefully considered. New planting should respect important views through the Conservation Area.
- Parking and access requirements should be carefully considered to ensure there is no detrimental impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

Listed Buildings

Some historic buildings are 'listed' by the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport on the recommendation of English Heritage because of their exceptional interest. Listed Building Consent is required for any work that would affect the special interest of a Listed Building, whether inside or outside. More information about Listed Buildings is available from the District Council.

There are four structures in the Thornton Steward Conservation Area that are listed and thus merit the tightest controls over any changes to them. Whilst the aim of Listed Building legislation is to preserve them for their own sake, any changes affecting them should also be considered in terms of the effect on the Conservation Area and the design guidance already referred to.

There are no Scheduled Monuments within the Conservation Area.

The Protection of Other Buildings

There are buildings and features in the Conservation Area which are not listed, but which contribute to its character and appearance. Whilst residential properties are subject to some increased planning controls brought about by the designation of the Conservation Area, changes could still take place to them that would damage the character of the area.

There are many unlisted buildings that have retained much of their historic character through the survival of original (or appropriate installation of replacement) window and door designs. Facades, roofs and other features such as walls have generally been retained unspoilt by modern inappropriate materials. This is a credit to the owners of these properties. Normally on dwellings many such changes could be made without the need for planning permission.

It is important that appropriate repairs and alterations continue to be encouraged as this is essential to maintaining the quality of the Conservation Area.

Opportunities

There are some aspects of Thornton Steward which are either out of keeping with the character of the Conservation Area or which could be enhanced to create a more positive contribution.

Parking

Parking is an issue within Thornton Steward despite the open character and spaciousness of the village. This will need to be carefully considered as pressure for development grows and numbers of cars increase whilst available space decreases. The impact of vehicles on green spaces within the village and the over-running of grass verges (particularly at the extreme western end of the village) may need addressing in the near future. Possible solutions include using a granite sett in the limited areas of particular problems.

Wirescape

There is scope to improve the situation here as wires cross the village green and are quite prominent. In particular the intrusion of telegraph poles into views is more of a problem than the wires themselves. The removal of the wires would also benefit the longevity of the trees identified previously as being important as in the past they have been pruned to prevent interference. There are particular examples of poles and wires around the Green, the removal of which would significantly improve the character of this important public space.

Development

The opportunity for development within the Conservation Area is fairly restricted. There appear to be some sites where development may help to improve the character of the village, however care would need to be taken to ensure that new development either preserved or enhanced the quality of the Conservation Area. New buildings should respect local vernacular styles but could look to innovative design making individualistic buildings which contribute to the special qualities of the village for the future. Some open sites would be inappropriate for development as any construction would impact on identified views of importance.

Sustainability

The increasing high profile of achieving a sustainable environment and life style are likely to present further challenges on the historic environment. The use of alternative energy in the form of solar panels, wind turbines, etc. all have the potential to detrimentally effect the historic environment and ground heat pumps have the potential to impact on archaeology. As proposals come forward, each case will have to be considered on its merits. The introduction of differing refuse collections also has to be sensitively considered so as not to have a detrimental effect on the character of the Conservation Area.

Action Points

The character appraisal should be taken into account when considering applications through the planning process.

The open spaces, trees and enclosed spaces (all indicated on the map) have been identified as being crucial to the character of the village and should be preserved.

A dialogue should take place with statutory groups to :

- a) Review the range of features in the 'public domain', including signs, grit bins etc.; and,
- b) Pursue the undergrounding of the various wires and removal of the then redundant poles.

Care and special attention needs to be give to proposals with sustainable credentials to ensure the character of the Conservation Area is not detrimentally

effected.

Explore the opportunities to develop an enhancement/repair budget for heritage assets in the Conservation Area.

Amendments to the boundary of the Conservation Area be investigated to include :

- a) the area north of the village including Silver Street, Urbank and associated farm buildings; and,
- b) the fields to the south of the village showing the earth works and fish ponds.

Community Involvement

Local residents were approached from the outset of the study and invited to contribute to the document. Feedback was received at the initial draft stage and the document amended before a consultation draft was produced. A summary document of the draft appraisal was circulated in Thornton Steward and to the various interested bodies (English Heritage, North Yorkshire County Council, etc.) A conservation character discussion open day will be held and comments invited. The full document is available on the Council's web site, or on request. All comments will be considered and taken into account in the production of the final Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan document. The document will be considered by the Strategy Board of the District Council prior to being formally adopted.

Useful Information

Scheduled Monuments

There are no Scheduled Monuments in Thornton Steward.

Listed Buildings

Listed Buildings within the Parish of Thornton Steward

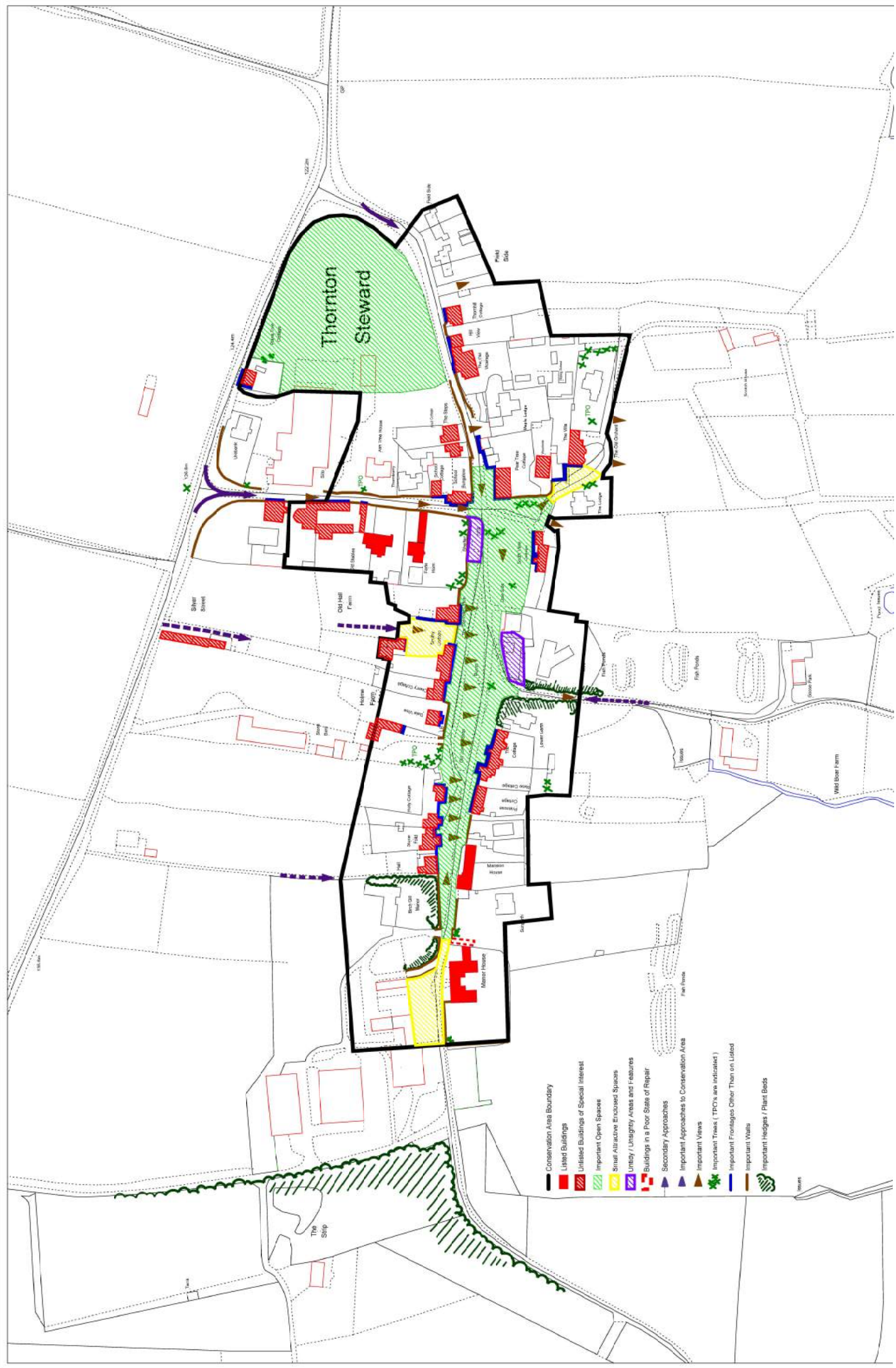
Ref No	Listed Building	Grade
129	Manor Farmhouse	II
130	The Manse	II
131	Fort Horn	II
132	The Old Hall	II

Important local vernacular buildings which contribute towards the character of the village.

These are shown on the accompanying map.

Tree preservation orders
TPO 10/02 The Villa

TPO 1/02 Holly Cottage
TPO 1/98 Ash Tree House



- Conservation Area Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Unlisted Buildings of Special Interest
- Important Open Spaces
- Small Attractive Enclosed Spaces
- Unity / Uniquely Areas and Features
- Buildings in a Poor State of Repair
- Secondary Approaches
- Important Approaches to Conservation Area
- Important Views
- Important Trees (TPO's are indicated)
- Important Frontages Other Than on Listed
- Important Walls
- Important Hedges / Plant Beds

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Richmondshire District Council

