



WHALEY BRIDGE CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
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SUMMARY

Whaley Bridge lies on the crossing of the River Goyt in the base of the Goyt Valley. The Eastern slopes of the valley were part of the royal forest.

Disafforestation promoted the exploit of the areas natural resources and by the 18th century Whaley Bridge had developed as an important centre for transport routes, development of textile mills and its supply of coal. This was transported on the Whaley branch of the Peak Forest Canal (1805). The Cromford and High Peak Railway expanded Whaley's importance as a transhipment point.

Most of the early development within Whaley Bridge centres around the canal basin and the White Hart. Development then began to spread along Market Street and Old Road in the mid 19th century. More widespread development of the area occurred in the late 19th century.

In summary the main characteristics can be described as follows:

- Historical development associated with transport and coal industry and still evidenced within the canal basin.
- Relationship of the canal basin and the town centre.
- Existence of the River Goyt flowing through the centre of the town.
- Topography across the valley providing important long distance views.
- Close relationship between buildings and surrounding countryside and on the eastern side a backdrop of Bings Wood.
- High survival of traditional surface materials and street furniture.
- High survival of 19th century development within the town.
- Key focal and architecturally prominent buildings along Market Street.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The High Peak area (excluding the Peak District National park) has 32 designated conservation areas. These are defined¹ as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which its is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

¹ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Each conservation area has a distinct character which can be derived from a number of factors such as; topography; historical development; townscape value; open spaces; traditional street furniture and surfaces.

Planning Policy Guidance 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment stresses the need for local planning authorities to define and record the special characteristics of each conservation area. The existence of a clear definition of an area's character helps reduce uncertainty for owners and developers and provides a sound basis, defensible on appeal for local plan policies and development control decisions.

A local authority's performance in conservation area designation, appraisal and management proposals is currently the subject of a heritage "Best Value performance Indicator" (BV219). The formal requirements of BV219b expects local authorities to publish character appraisals for new and existing conservation areas.

The Whaley Bridge Conservation Area was designated in 1987 and its original boundary subsequently extended in 1994 and 2000. The Council completed a detailed character appraisal for the area in May 2000. It is considered good practice to regularly review appraisals to keep them up to date². As such, this document has been updated in accordance with the published English Heritage Guidance entitled 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisal'.

The final document will be prepared subject to full public consultation as set out in the Council's 'Statement of Community Involvement'.

PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Act imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate conservation areas. Conservation area designation is the main instrument available to authorities to promote and deliver conservation policies for a particular area. Designation introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings and provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance all the aspects of character or appearance that define an area's special interest.

Planning Policy Guidance 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment provides a full statement of Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas, and other elements of the historic environment.

The Council's local policies for conservation areas are contained within Chapter 5 – Conservation and Enhancement of the Built Environment of the High Peak Local Plan – Adopted March 2005 and relate to the following policies:

² English Heritage Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals

BC5 – Conservation Area and their Setting

BC6 – Demolition in Conservation Areas

In the future policies for the enhancement and protection of conservation areas and the built environment will be formulated through the emerging Local Development Framework scheduled for adoption in 2011.

The Whaley Bridge Conservation Area was designated in 1987 and since that date it has been extended a number of times. The current boundary is shown on Map 1. This map also identifies other statutory designation within the area, namely; listed buildings; scheduled monuments and tree preservation orders. Further details on these designations can be obtained from the Borough Council offices at Municipal Buildings, Glossop.

LOCATION AND CONTEXT

Whaley Bridge is situated on the edge of the historic Peak District and lies on an ancient crossing of the River Goyt. The town settles comfortably at the base of the Goyt Valley on a rock bed formed of coarse sandstone (locally known as Millstone Grit) The Council's Landscape Character document³ describes the wider New Mills area as being nestled between two landscape character types – Settled Valley Pastures and Riverside Meadows. Its development has been linked with its position in relation to various transport routes and its mining and textile activities.

Coal mining has been taking place since the late 16th century. However, it was the increased demand for coal and the town's importance as a transshipment point, between the Peak Forest Canal and the Cromford and High Peak Railway, which significantly contributed to its growth and pattern of development. Later the town developed a number of railway activities with the development of the Stockport, Disley and Whaley Bridge Railway, which joined the Cromford and High Peak Railway in the town.

By the early 20th century farming, coal and cotton were the main industries in Whaley Bridge. Today, the town's industrial image has receded as pleasure boats now preside in the canal basin. **PHOTO** However, a walk around the town centre will reveal evidence of Whaley Bridge's industrial heritage.

In order to preserve this heritage, the Borough Council designated the town centre as a Conservation Area in April 1987 and subsequently extended it in September 1994. The Conservation Area boundary takes in the canal basin and surrounding area, the town centre, linear development along Old Road to Horwich End and the small residential area of Reservoir Road and Whaley Lane.

The following character appraisal is not exhaustive and therefore any building, feature or site not mentioned should not be taken to mean that it is of no

³ High Peak Borough Council Landscape Character 2006 SPD 5

interest or, does not contribute positively to the character of the Conservation Area.

ORIGINS AND HISTORY

Whaley Bridge is an administrative construct of the late 1930s created out of the former Yeadsley-cum-Whaley Urban District Council and parts of the townships and parishes of Chapel-en-le-Frith, Fernilee, Disley, Taxal and Kettleshulme. This union recognised the integrity of the community that had grown up on both sides of the valley of the River Goyt.

For centuries the valley had provided a highway for travellers between the dry uplands to the south and east and the populous lowlands to the north and west. The succession of (...lee, ...ley) place names along this route; Fernilee; Whaley; Hockerley; Yeadsley, speak of the grazing grounds that were available to sustain travellers' animals.

Following the Norman Conquest, the eastern slopes of the valley were part of the Royal Forest of High Peak while, to the west, lay the Royal Forest of Macclesfield.

Undoubtedly both forests were settled, with such areas, where possible, were used to grow subsistence crops of roots, grain and greens, while sheep, cattle, pigs and geese were raised on marginal land. Timbers for building and wood for fuel and charcoal were further products of the forest. In medieval times, these were strictly managed for the benefit of the Crown under a traditional body of 'Forest Law'.

The 'disafforestation' of these two Royal Forests, after the restoration of Charles II, freed private enterprise to exploit the natural resources of the area. These were principally; well drained routes for transport; abundant clean water; coal and sandstone. In turn, this led to coalmines; the building of textile mills (powered initially by water and then coal); the first turnpike in Derbyshire (1724); the Peak Forest Canal (1794 – 1805); the Cromford and High Peak Railway (1831) and the Stockport, Disley and Whaley Bridge Railway (1857) and its extension to Buxton.

The growth of Whaley Bridge as a mining town was caused by two factors – a hugely increased demand for coal, associated with the growing lime burning industry, and its advantageous position with respect to the improved rail and canal transport links. Of lesser importance, fireclay was also extracted at Furness Vale.

The application of lime to pastures and fields, the advent of the industrial revolution, developments in the chemical trade and the demand for lime building mortars all caused a phenomenal demand for lime. This was in a plentiful supply in the area around Buxton. Part of the production process involved the burning of limestone to extract the lime. Lime burning, therefore, became a major consumer of the coal produced in the Whaley Bridge mines

as they increased their output for lime burning at Bugsworth, Buxton, Harpur Hill and as far away as Cromford.

The expansion of the Coal industry was, however, heavily reliant on an efficient transport system, which up until the late 18th Century had existed of packhorse routes and turnpike roads. The first Derbyshire turnpike, dated 1724, was the Buxton to Manchester road that passed through the town to Whaley Lane and Laneside.

On 28 March 1794 the Peak Forest Canal Act was passed. This allowed the Peak Forest Canal Company to construct a canal and tramway for the transportation of lime and limestone from the Peak Forest area to industries throughout Lancashire and Cheshire. The 14 miles of the canal was completed in 1805 and ran from Ashton through Dukinfield, Hyde, Romiley, Marple, Disley, Newtown and Furness Vale to the twin termini at Whaley Bridge and Bugsworth. At Bugsworth, the canal met the Peak Forest Tramway which ran onto Loads Knowle. The Whaley branch of the canal was used for the carriage of coal that was utilised for the burning of the lime. It was also used to bring in the raw materials associated with the textile industries.

Although it was always secondary to mining and transport, the Whaley Bridge area also saw a number of textile mills and related industries develop. Weaving took place in the town as early as 1800 but reached its peak towards the late 19th century with the construction of the largest single room mill in England – Goyt Mill (1865). [Goyt Mill photo](#) has subsequently been redeveloped as housing. Alongside the weaving industry, associated trades thrived such as bleaching process (Botany Bleach Works, 1830) and Calico printing.

In 1825 it was proposed to link the Peak Forest Canal and the Cromford Canal so that these regions could be opened up to each other. Originally the link was to be a canal but problems ensuring an adequate water supply resulted in a tortuous rail link of 33 miles – the Cromford and High Peak Railway. The line ran through a number of Derbyshire quarry sites however, its traffic also involved grain and coal (its promoters were largely textile magnates concerned with feeding workers and the supply of raw materials). It was constructed in two sections with the 17 ¹/₂ miles from Hurdlow to Whaley Bridge opening in 1831.

The Cromford and High Peak Railway, with its link to the Peak Forest Canal, expanded Whaley Bridge's importance as a transshipment point. However, the main line railways quickly reduced canal traffic and the need for the canal/rail interchange at Whaley Bridge. A line was constructed which linked the Cromford and High Peak to the Stockport, Disley and Whaley Bridge Railway in 1857. After this date, the most likely use of the Canal Basin would have been limestone and local coal bound for Bugsworth and the Furness Vale Brickworks.

For most of the 19th and 20th centuries, economic development has depended on increased mobility for goods. Today's network of motorways has restricted

the prospects of future physical economic development of the Goyt Valley area. The Cromford and High Peak Railway from the bottom of the Shallcross incline to Ladmanlow closed in 1892. The canal closed in 1923 followed by the Whaley Bridge incline of the Cromford and High Peak Railway line in 1952. In 1974 the canal re-opened following extensive restoration works.

It was the development of the canal and rail network, and the changes to the route of the Manchester to Buxton turnpike road, that dictated the pattern of development that has largely been retained today. Much of the earlier development centres on the canal basin area and the original 'Whaley Bridge' at the end of Bridge Street (although most of the latter has now been obliterated by later developments). The White Hart Public House became central with the building of the new bridge around 1783. **photo** By the mid 1850's development was beginning to creep along Market Street and Old Road. But it wasn't until the late 19th Century that development occurred along Market Street, Buxton Road and Horwich End (junction area).

Maps 2 to 6 illustrate the historical development of Whaley Bridge from 1835 through to 1898. The later date map of 1898 is somewhat more familiar to the town as it is today.

BUILDING TYPES, TRADITIONAL DETAILS AND MATERIALS

The period of development within the Whaley Bridge Conservation Area varies greatly from the School House on Whaley Lane (dated 1630) to a modern small housing development, known as Goyt Place, located off the south east corner of Bridge Street. Most residential and commercial buildings were constructed during the mid to late 19th century.

Locally quarried coursed, squared and pitched-faced gritstone is the predominant material used for walls and chimney stacks with boundary walls constructed both in coursed gritstone and random rubble. Dressed gritstone, ornately carved in some instances, has been used for window and door surrounds, sills and heads. Welsh blue slate is the most common roofing material, but a number of stone roofs still survive along Reservoir Road, Chapel Street, Johnson Street, Bridge Street, New Horwich Road and Old Road. **PHOTOS**

Although gritstone is the predominant building material, different styles have been used throughout the area to differentiate the period of development or importance of the building. The Mechanics Institute, the Royal Bank of Scotland and former bank building at Horwich End have front facades of ashlar stonework **PHOTO**. The Mechanics Institute, in particular, has decorative door and window surrounds. The Railway Inn, at the junction of Market Street and Reservoir Road has decorative ashlar stonework to columns, door and window surrounds. An unusual building is the former bank, located at the corner of Market Street and Wharf Road. Here the stonework has been laid to produce decorative fan heads to the door and

windows. In addition, the colour of the local gritstone is unusually pink in colour. **PHOTOS**

Unfortunately, many of the original joinery details to windows and doors within the Conservation Area have been lost. Although this is not a particularly major issue concerning the commercial buildings, only a handful of residential properties still retain original details. Sliding sash windows would have been predominant with the glazing bar subdivision reflecting the age of development. Regrettably some of these details have been replaced with modern style timber windows, stained timber windows and in some instances PVC-U. It is these historic details that greatly contribute to the character of an area. The retention of those which remain must be encouraged in order to preserve or enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area. **PHOTOS**

Several traditional Victorian shopfronts within the commercial core have also been lost and replaced with badly designed shopfronts and signs. These unsympathetic alterations are out of character with the buildings and general streetscene and are generally far inferior to their original 19th century Victorian shopfronts. Fortunately, a number of surviving traditional shopfronts still exist and planning controls have, where possible, encouraged good new design.

Photos

The building materials, traditional details and styles together with historic paving materials and street furniture, have a great effect upon the appearance of an area. Within a Conservation Area this is even more so. It is important therefore, that such local details are retained or, where lost, reinstated in order to maintain the character of the Conservation Area. Any change or development occurring should be sensitively managed to reflect and contribute to its character. This can be achieved by incorporating traditional building materials, styles and details along with a general understanding of the character of such an area.

TOWNSCAPE, LANDSCAPE AND SUB AREAS (SEE MAPS 7 – 13)

The boundary of the Whaley Bridge Conservation Area has been drawn to include primarily linear development from the Canal Wharf in the north through to Horwich End in the south (see Map 1). The boundary also takes in the commercial town centre, early and late 18th century residential development, along Old Road and areas of open land and Bings Wood. Due to the topography of the Conservation Area views within it and views to the surrounding countryside contribute immensely to its character.

This mixture of building types and landscapes are quite dramatically different in character and appearance. These give rise to a number of sub-areas within the Conservation Area. Each of these merit separate assessment in terms of townscape quality and character. Although their edges overlap they are generally defined as shown on Map 7. Maps 8 – 13 have been included to illustrate the notable townscape and landscape features of each area.

Sub area 1 – Canal basin area (see Map 8)

This sub-area concentrates primarily on the canal basin and its surrounds and is characterised by a relatively level topography. This area lies to the north of the Conservation Area and is contained by the Jodrell Arms and station car park on the western side, and the River Goyt to the east. The focus of this area is the canal basin and canal warehouse. Surrounding this is mid to late 19th century residential development along Bingswood Avenue and George Street, and earlier commercial and residential mixed development along Canal Street, Johnson Street, Chapel Street and Bridge Street.

Predominantly the buildings within this area are constructed from coursed gritstone with a mixture of slate and stone roofs. With the exception of the land given over to the canal basin and Borough Council car park, the area is a mixture of high density, two storey commercial and residential buildings. Primarily, the residential areas are contained within several small terraced streets namely; Bingswood Avenue, Bingswood Road and George Street whilst properties located along Canal Street, Johnson Street, Chapel Street and Bridge Street are a mixture of commercial and residential uses. **PHOTOS**

Canal Street, the western boundary, leads down to a lower level, from its junction with the busy Buxton Road, to the quieter canal basin area (although blighted by the access to the Bingswood Industrial Estate). Buildings to the right and a high retaining stone wall to the left focus views on the canal basin and warehouse. On entering this area the landscape changes dramatically to give open views of the warehouse, wharf area and Bingswood Avenue. An important view of the frontage of Canal Street is obtained when looking down from along the A6. This represents one of the first impressions of Whaley Bridge on entering the town centre. **PHOTO**

The canal warehouse is grade II* listed. It clearly illustrates the historical importance of this area and the role it has played in shaping development within the town centre. It is dated 1832 and constructed from coursed gritstone with a Welsh blue slate roof. The large openings on the basin side have rusticated reveals with keystones. Railway tracks to the front of the warehouse are still in existence (although now covered by tarmac) and provide evidence of the links to the Cromford and High Peak Railway. These tracks also run down Bingswood industrial estate. There is also a railway bridge over the River Goyt from the Canal Basin to the industrial estate. This was built to take coal to the power station on the estate and adds to the industrial archaeology of the area. As such, these should be preserved where possible and incorporated into any future enhancement schemes. **PHOTOS**

Across from the canal warehouse sit the associated canal cottages and adjacent stable block. These two buildings are constructed in random coursed gritstone rubble with a painted finish and Welsh blue slate roofs. The cottages display early 19th century features in terms of their surviving window style (sliding sash with each sash subdivided into 8 panes) and framed four panelled doors. The stable building (Outram House dated 1832) has been

significantly altered to the ground floor. This building was once associated with the Cromford & High Peak Railway. [Photos](#)

These buildings display and provide evidence of the historical industrial development within Whaley Bridge. Together they make a positive and significant contribution to the character of the conservation area and this sub-area in particular.

The canal itself leads from the canal warehouse northwards up to the weir where the boundary of the Conservation Area stops. Land surrounding the canal area has been grassed and landscaped with informal tree planting. A setted area to the west of the warehouse exists but suffers from informal parking. [PHOTOS](#)

A major negative aspect to this sub-area is the through route used by heavy goods traffic to Bingswood Industrial Estate. This access goes through Bingswood Avenue, an attractive late 19th Century row of terraced cottages. The terrace is constructed in coursed gritstone with slate roofs. The roofline to this terrace is important due to the retention of all the surviving stone chimney stacks which unusually are square and positioned forward of the ridge. The terrace is fortunate in retaining original joinery details to a significant number of properties. Each property retains a small forecourt garden, contained by a neat privet hedge, with flagged footpaths leading to a stone threshold at the front door. Originally a setted road would have run the length of the terrace. This has now been covered in macadam but the condition of the road surface is very poor. [PHOTOS](#)

The redirection of traffic to the industrial estate away from this area would significantly enhance the area and surrounds.

Walking back along the route of the old railway line towards the bow string girder bridge, the area offers rear views of development along Chapel Street, Johnson Street and Bridge Street. [PHOTO](#) Here you can see earlier forms of development mixed in with late 19th Century small terraced cottages shops and public houses [photos](#). A notable shopfront is the dry cleaners along Bridge Street [PHOTO](#) (sub-area 2) where a surviving Edwardian shopfront exists intact. Another fine example of a surviving shopfront is that located on the end of the George Street terrace facing up Bridge Street [photo](#). There appears to be no consistency in the style of door surrounds within this sub-area. Notable examples of elaborate stone arched surrounds are found on Chapel Street and Bridge Street [photos](#).

Both Johnson Street and Chapel Street have the potential to be significantly enhanced by reinstating natural surface materials. The current condition of the tarmaced surface here is poor [photo](#).

Buildings along George Street and Bingswood Road are again built in the local style and materials. However, few retain traditional joinery details. The George Street terrace was developed in two phases with the earlier development being that located at the eastern end. Much smaller and simple

stone door surrounds and uncoursed random gritstone give evidence to this. **PHOTO** Both terraces open onto the back of the pavement and onto a small road. A high stone wall with half round coping stones runs the entire length of George Street. The unadopted road surface here, originally in setts, but now tarmac, is in a very poor condition. The terrace overlooks the former site of Goyt Mill (now residential development). **Photo** Bingswood Road is a mid 19th century terrace with splayed stone lintels to doors and windows. The terrace also contains a central passageway to the rear yards. A larger property is located at the western end of Bingswood Road with an unusual rolled stone lintel over the entrance door **PHOTO**. It is probable that this property was once a shop, as a previous larger window opening can be seen in the pattern and appearance of the stonework.

Canal Street, as its name suggests leads to the canal basin from Buxton Road. Properties along this route are in mixed use of residential and commercial. Again the properties are in the local building materials and are of a similar size and proportions to buildings nearby. The exception is No. 7 and 8 (Loyalty Place) **PHOTO** - a rather grander property constructed from ashlar stone with a parapet, projecting string courses and larger openings. To the front there is a small stone boundary wall with railings. Adjacent to this property is 9 Canal Street a large double fronted property in coursed gritstone. The property is now somewhat neglected but could, with sympathetic repairs and reinstatement, make a significant contribution to this area **PHOTO**.

Unfortunately the visual appearance of this area is somewhat blighted by the Borough Council car park, located between Bingswood Avenue and George Street, on the eastern edge of the Conservation Area.

The Jodrell Arms public house and railway station mark the western boundary of the sub-area. Together, they are its highest point. The station, whilst in need of some repair, retains a number of original joinery features including its sash windows. There is also a good cast-iron footbridge that is particularly valuable as it is part of a sequence with identical examples at Furness Vale and New Mills Newtown stations. **PHOTOS**

The Jodrell Arms public house (1800 Grade II listed) **photo** forms an impressive and important focal point within the town. By virtue of its scale and height it provides an impressive entrance into the town centre as well as being a vantage point for views towards the Bings and New Horwich escarpments. Formerly known as the Cock Hotel, it was marked on the 1870 Ordnance Survey map as the site of the Mechanics Institute. Some local people suggest that the imposing entrance facing the exit from the railway station was once the Mechanics Institute entrance. Others suggest that it was provided for those substantial locals who could afford to travel regularly to Manchester. The building is of an irregular plan of coursed gritstone with a render finish and three gables to the front. The forecourt, whilst used for parking, has been enhanced with natural surface materials and provides an attractive and appropriate setting for the buildings.

Sub-area 2 – Market Street (see Map 9)

Sub-area 2 is located to the north of the conservation area and predominantly follows a linear route encompassing development along Market Street and Buxton Road until reaching the Whaley Bridge Uniting Church and Sunday School. This area, like Sub-area 1, is relatively flat and contains the commercial centre of Whaley Bridge.

Development within the sub-area is characteristically high density with a mixture of uses usually associated with town centres – commercial, public, leisure and few residential cottages. Predominately, the shops are small independent retailers. Although most development is of two storeys, there are several large two storey and three storey buildings located along the central area of Market Street.

The Market Street area primarily developed during the late 19th Century, along the main route through Whaley Bridge. However, there are a few exceptions – the White Hart Public House dated 1734 and part of the Whaley Bridge Uniting Church dated 1821. **PHOTOS**

As with the other sub-areas building materials are of gritstone with slate roofs. It is also worth noting that there are areas of surviving stone flags to one or two of the private forecourts along Market Street. These should be protected and repaired wherever possible **PHOTOS** .

It is this sub-area where there are differences in the detailing to the stonework and roofscapes of the buildings. Examples of this are seen on the elevation of the Railway Hotel – tooled gritstone with neo classical columns and door surrounds; **PHOTO**, the Mechanics Institute – constructed in ashlar stone with decorative window heads and door panels and a small slate turret to the front hipped roof **photo** ; the former bank premises which turns the corner of Market Street and Wharf Road – constructed from pink gritstone with decorative ashlar stonework around the entrance and stone detailed arched window openings **PHOTO** and Vernon House – with ashlar neo classical columns and distinctively designed stone parapet wall **photo** .

Significant buildings within this sub-area are as follows:

Railway Hotel – This is a large two storey building erected in 1857 in decorative gritstone with traditional joinery details. The building occupies a prominent location being at the junction of Market Street and Reservoir Road. It has a large projecting timber gutter resting on stone corbels with dentils.

Mechanics Institute – Large imposing two storey building reflecting its importance to the public with its ashlar decorative frontage and turreted roofline. Dated from the late 19th century, the building is now home to the Whaley Bridge Town Council which rents some of the space from the Institute. Because of its use by the Town Council, the local library and as public meeting space, it forms the focal point of the Whaley Bridge community.

The Former Bank Building – This is a large and prominent two storey building with a splayed frontage and hipped roofline. It stands out due to its construction from unusually pink coloured gritstone. Originally built as the Post Office.

The Village Store – This occupies a prominent position sitting at the curve where Market Street meets Buxton Road and the crossing point of the Goyt. Built originally as the Co-operative Store.

The Whaley Bridge Uniting Church and Sunday School – This is a large imposing complex dated from the early 19th Century and is constructed of coursed gritstone with slate roof. More recently it has had a number of modern additions.

32 – 38 Market Street – This building is three storeys high and one of the tallest along Market Street marking the entrance to the commercial centre. It contains a fine example of an original Victorian shopfront. **PHOTO**

The White Hart – Dating from 1734 and constructed from gritstone and it now has an incised render façade. Some of its traditional joinery details are retained and it occupies a significant position on the bend of Market Street. **PHOTO**

Vernon House – It occupies a prominent position across from the White Hart and is constructed from ashlar gritstone in neo-classical style with an unusual roofline. This was built as an annex to the Co-operative shop as the millinery and drapery department in the early part of the century. **Photo**

Most of the buildings within the sub-area make a positive contribution to the conservation area, some more than others, as identified above. There are few areas which are detrimental to the character of the conservation area and take the form of unsympathetic shopfronts and signage along Market Street. A reasonably buoyant economic market ensures that there are still a number of well maintained surviving shopfronts. **Photos**

Behind the eastern side of Market Street is located the fire station. This area, although well screened from view, detracts from the character of the Conservation Area.

Sub area 3 – Whaley Lane & Reservoir Road (see Map 10)

Sub-area 3 forms the north west section of the Conservation Area. It is contained by Reservoir Road to the south and Whaley Lane to the north. This sub-area is entered from under the Railway Bridge, which forms the eastern boundary. It is a purely residential area with pockets of medium to high density development. Primarily the buildings are constructed in the local building materials of coursed gritstone with slate, and in some instances stone roofs. Predominantly the buildings are constructed in two storey terraces, but there are a number of large individual properties located at the lower end of Whaley Lane and the eastern end of Reservoir Road.

The topography of this area is quite dramatic with Reservoir Road at the lower level and the western end of Whaley Lane significantly higher. This topography lends itself to intriguing views within the conservation area and also quite dramatic long distant views to the Bings and New Horwich escarpment. These views and vantage points have been illustrated on Map 10. [PHOTOS](#)

On entering sub-area 3 the eye is led immediately along Reservoir Road. This road, as named, leads to the reservoir and consists of terraced properties and two large detached buildings on its northern side. There is no development to the south. The buildings occupy an elevated position enjoying long distant views across the valley and over the rooftops of the commercial properties along Market Street. [PHOTOS](#)

The first two properties date from the mid 19th century and are similar in size and style. They are well preserved, double fronted, two storey buildings in coursed gritstone with stone roofs. They are both fortunate in retaining traditional joinery details and decoratively carved door heads and surrounds. They both have small forecourt gardens contained within stone and brick walls. [PHOTOS](#)

Numbers 5 – 19 are small mid 19th Century, two storey terraced cottages occupying an elevated position. They are set back from the road frontage behind small forecourt gardens. Steps at either end of the terrace lead to the front entrances. With one exception, each cottage retains its original stone roof and stack with timber guttering on stone corbels and decorative stone door surrounds. Only one property still retains traditional joinery details in the form of 8 over 8 sliding sash windows. [PHOTOS](#)

A significant and particularly well preserved terrace is that abutting the edge of the Conservation Area. It was built in 1896 by local architect Charles W Johnstone, using materials recovered from houses lower down Reservoir Road, which were demolished to make way for the new road. The terrace is made up of three well preserved large double fronted properties, each contained behind small boundary walls with railings and forecourt gardens. With gables fronting the street, they are of an unusual style. [PHOTOS](#) They possess original joinery details along with quite intricately detailed timber eaves and gutter details. The roofs are of blue slate to the front with clay decorative ridge tiles and stone slates to the rear elevation. Reservoir Road is also fortunate in retaining stone kerbs and several steep stone and setted footpaths that lead up to the higher level of Orchard Road and Whaley Lane. [Photos](#)

Further along Reservoir Road the conservation area comes to an end. Here a small footpath leads up to Orchard Road and Whaley Lane in turn. This footpath, once setted, has now been covered in macadam and slopes gently up behind the terraces on Reservoir Road. From this area there are views of the surrounding countryside, along with glimpses of the back of Reservoir Road, where the properties have almost been constructed into the hill.

Photos Further along, the footpath leads past a small row of terraced properties (Orchard Road) and several larger properties to meet Whaley Lane. To the front of Orchard Road is a small area of overgrown landscaping, which in its present form detracts from the character of this part of the conservation area.

Whaley Lane was the original route through Whaley Bridge and over the River Goyt. When the railway was constructed in 1857 the level of the road was dramatically lowered. This has resulted in high stone retaining boundary walls on either side of the road. This lends a great sense of enclosure and privacy to Whaley Lane which is helped by mature tree cover **PHOTOS**. An alternative explanation for the origins of Whaley Lane's present appearance is that it is an ancient hollow way which used to lead smoothly down the hill to the bridge at the bottom of Bridge Street. This ancient feature was disrupted by the construction of the railway and the turnpike road (A5004).

Predominantly, the buildings along Whaley Lane consist of several groups of terraced houses dated 1894 and 1896, occupying elevated positions. The southern side has a few larger detached dwellings in their own grounds heavily treed and hidden from view. There are a few surviving joinery details on the terraces and in places the prominent rooflines have been altered by the insensitive introduction of large dormer windows. **photos**

Significant properties within this area are the Old School House dating from 1630 and the Bulls Head dating from 1550. The Bulls Head has now been much altered and modernised and, as a result, is located just outside of the conservation area boundary.

Sub-area 4 – Old Road (see Map 11)

Sub-area 4 forms the central section of the Whaley Bridge conservation area. This sub-area boundary follows a linear route along Old Road, taking in development either side, and off-shoots of development along Bings Road, New Horwich Road and Rock Bank. Older residents of the town know the section of Old Road, from the mine ventilation shaft to the New Inn (now Nimbus Antiques) as “Top Level”, a title associated with the mining industry.

Old Road forms the western boundary and its raised level gives dramatic views over the Conservation Area and towards the Memorial Park, Toddbrook Reservoir, Black Knob Hill and Taxal Edge. **PHOTOS** The eastern boundary is primarily built development flanked by rising open countryside. The topography of this area is one that gently slopes and curves along Old Road and rises more dramatically up Bings Road and New Horwich Road. In fact, the steepness of the first section of Rock Bank required stone tracks to assist traction for the horse drawn carts. These survive and should be kept wherever possible as a remnant of this earlier means of transport.

The area is characterised by medium to high density residential properties, primarily contained on the eastern side of Old Road with several commercial properties located at the base of Old Road (including several fine examples of

surviving Victorian shopfronts). The building types are a mixture of late 19th century terraced cottages interspersed with older terraces developed directly on the road frontage. The later properties tend to be located at the northern end of Old Road. [Photos](#)

Again the materials of development are the same as the rest of the conservation area – i.e. coursed gritstone with slate and stone roofs. Unfortunately, few original joinery details survive although the use of PVC-U has been kept to a minimum.

The changing topography of this area results in terraced development running up the hills and being positioned in an elevated position, behind small forecourt gardens and contained by high stone boundary walls. Even though development within the sub area is primarily of two storeys these elevated positions give the sense of much larger development flanking the eastern boundary. [PHOTOS](#)

All the buildings contained within this sub area make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and there is a number of well preserved listed buildings clustered together near the junction of Old Road and Bings Road:

19 – 23 Old Road – These buildings were formerly late 18th century farmhouse and outbuildings, now dwellings, in two storeys with large quoin stones. These buildings are constructed from gritstone with slate roofs. [PHOTOS](#)

40 Old Road – This building is an 18th century weaver's cottage. It is constructed from coursed gritstone, now painted, and is of three storeys with a slate roof and small windows (mullions now removed). [photos](#)

42 Old Road – This house of two storeys is dated 1746 on the door lintel and constructed from gritstone. [photo](#)

Disused Colliery Air Shaft Tower – Bings Road – This disused tower dates from the mid 19th century and is constructed in red sandstone and provides a prominent local landmark reflecting Whaley Bridge's links with the coal industry. [photo](#)

There is little in the way of landscaped open areas. But the distant views of the open countryside, and the area's close proximity to it, give this area a more rural open feel, acting in a transitional role from the town centre to the open countryside beyond. This area also provides views of the Linear Park.

Features of the area consist of lengths of stone boundary walls and small pockets of stone kerbs and setted areas, located along Old Road, Bings Road and New Horwich Road. It is the relationship of the built form and the countryside that forms an integral part of the character of this part of the conservation area.

Sub area 5 – Horwich End (see Map 12)

This sub-area is located at the southern end of the conservation area and contains the southern section of Old Road, and Buxton Road, at its junction with Lower Macclesfield Road. This area also contains the dismantled Cromford and High Peak railway line, now a linear footpath (Linear Park). The Linear Park runs parallel with Market Street and Buxton Road on the east side of the town centre. This area is relatively flat with the exception of Old Road, as it slopes gently down to meet the junction with Chapel Road. Old Road offers distant views across the conservation area, whilst the Buxton Road junction, at the lower level, offers short views within the conservation area.

There is a mixture of building uses within this area including residential commercial and leisure. These are predominantly two storey and constructed from the local building materials. Although mainly medium density, lower density development surrounds the southern section of Old Road. A notable group of buildings is The Carrs – grade II listed and the smaller terraced cottages located at Old Road's junction with Chapel Road – also listed.

PHOTOS

The building types surrounding the junction are predominantly commercial with several well preserved shopfronts dating from the late 19th century. Along Buxton Road and opposite Carrs Field several earlier cottages are located dating back to the early 19th century evidenced by the small and simple door surrounds. Holy Trinity Church has recently been included upon the statutory list of listed buildings on account of its architectural quality (Free Gothic Revival style by Currey and Thompson, 1903 - 05). **photos**

This area contains an area of open land known as Carrs field. This site is a relatively small area of rough open land with informal tree planting. It lies to the west of the Linear Park and the immediate east of Buxton Road. The site is relatively flat but located at a lower level to Old Road and Chapel Road. This site, by virtue of its appearance and nature, contrasts with the surrounding development contributing positively to the character of this sub area. **PHOTO.**

This sub-area also includes a section of the dismantled railway line (Linear Park), now a footpath leading from the canal to Horwich End. This footpath skirts the town centre at a higher level and in some places gives magnificent views of the surrounding hills. It is also important in providing evidence of the historical development and links with Whaley Bridge's industrial origins.

Sub area 6 - Bings Wood (see Map 13)

This sub area contains the ancient woodland known as Bings Wood. It is already protected by a Tree Preservation Order and plays an important part as a backdrop to the setting of the town centre. **Photo**

CONCLUSION

Whaley Bridge, like most other historic settlements has its problem buildings and sites. Neglect and unsympathetic alterations have eroded the character and appearance of the town and the conservation area. However, most of the buildings have a beneficial and positive role to play in preserving the character of the area.

Whaley Bridge is fortunate in retaining a number of prominent and significant buildings along Market Street and the commercial centre appears relatively buoyant. Subject to addressing the access issues to the Bingswood Industrial Estate, there is great potential to develop the canal basin area as a focus for the community and attraction for visitors.

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Also, notes kindly supplied by William Eyre and the Whaley Bridge Amenity Society