

Hawkshead Conservation Area Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



The Conservation Studio
1 Querns Lane
Cirencester
Glos GL7 1RL

The Ordnance Survey Mapping included in this document is provided by the LDNPA under licence from the Ordnance Survey in order to make available townscape appraisal information. Persons viewing the mapping should contact Ordnance Survey copyright for advice where they wish to licence Ordnance Survey mapping for their own use.

© Crown Copyright All Rights Reserved LDNPA 100021698 2008

HAWKSHEAD CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Part 1 CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Summary of special interest

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Location and setting**
 - Location
 - Boundary
 - Topography and landscape setting
 - Geology
 - Archaeology
- 3 The historical development of the village**
- 4 The character and appearance of the conservation area**
 - Street pattern and building plots
 - Townscape analysis
 - Summary of townscape features
 - Focal points, views and vistas
 - Current activities and uses
 - Open spaces, landscape and trees
 - Boundaries
 - Public realm
- 5 The buildings of the conservation area**
 - Architectural styles, materials and detailing
 - Listed buildings
 - Significant unlisted buildings
- 6 Negative features and issues**

Part 2 CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Part 3 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Summary of special interest

The special interest that justifies the designation of Hawkshead Conservation Area can be summarised as follows:

- Small historic town of exceptional character, with few parallels in the UK, deserving to be considered one of the country's top conservation areas;
- A historic core that is largely untouched by 20th-century development, resulting from informal organic growth and plot infilling as well as from formal town planning;
- A tangle of narrow streets, squares, yards and alleys (ginnels) that thread between a closely packed jumble of houses, inns, shops, outhouses and civic buildings;
- Some upper storeys that form bridges across the street, some built so closely together that the footpaths are only just wide enough for humans and pack animals to pass;
- Many archways to the street that lead to long cobbled yards with back buildings of a kind that many other towns once had but that have now been lost to redevelopment;
- Resulting in a town that is built to a human scale, both in terms of buildings and the spaces in between, with little motorised traffic;
- Tucked into the side of a steep hill on whose crown sits the parish church of St Michael and All Angels, set in a large churchyard with many historic tombs and headstones, and sweeping views over the rooftops of the town to some of the highest fells in the Lake District;
- Several buildings of exceptional historic character, ranging in date from medieval to late 19th century, including the 12th-century church, the Grammar School (founded 1588) and the Town Hall (1790);
- Surrounded by green fields that serve as a buffer, protecting the town from intrusive modern development; but with some good examples of modern design (King's Yard) that take their architectural theme from the town's older buildings;
- A tourism, hospitality and retail sector that successfully co-exist with the historic town.

1 Introduction

The Hawkshead Conservation Area consists of a compact town of exceptional character and much visited by tourists as a result, located at the northern end of the broad valley that contains Esthwaite Water, which lies less than 1km to the south of the town. The town is situated to the north of its hilltop church, and consists of a cluster of tightly packed buildings linked by narrow pedestrian streets, by-passed by traffic, but with substantial car parking and retail area on the eastern side of the town.



Fig. 1: The hilltop church overlooks a town largely built in the flat valley bottom at the northern end of Esthwaite Water.

The Hawkshead Conservation Area was designated on 6 June 1988 by the Lake District National Park Authority. Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development within a conservation area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

In response to these statutory requirements, this document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. These features are noted, described and marked on the Townscape Appraisal Map along with written commentary on how they contribute to the special interest of the conservation area. While the descriptions go into some detail, a reader should not assume that the omission of any characteristic, such as a building, view or open space, from this Appraisal means that it is not of interest.

The document conforms with English Heritage guidance as set out in *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* (August 2005) and *Guidance on the management of conservation areas* (August 2005). Additional government guidance regarding the management of historic buildings and conservation areas is set out within *Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG15).

This document seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the conservation area and identify the issues which threaten the special qualities of the conservation area (in the form of the Appraisal);
- Provide guidelines to prevent harm and achieve enhancement (in the form of the Management Plan).

This document therefore provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the Hawkshead Conservation Area can be assessed. It should be read in conjunction with the wider policy framework which applies to the area. These documents include:

(i) *The Lake District National Park Local Plan (adopted 1998)*: chapter 3 addresses the conservation of the built environment;

(ii) *The Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 2001–2016* (adopted 2006): chapter 6 provides strategic guidance for the environment for the period to 2016. Policy E38 covers the historic environment.

(iii) *The Regional Spatial Strategy 2008*: Policies EM1, EM2, DP1, DP4 and DP7

2 Location and setting

Location

Hawkshead is located centrally within the Lake District National Park. This part of the Lake District lies within the administrative county of Cumbria, in that part which comprised the historic county of Lancashire.

The town lies at the head of a broad valley now largely filled by Esthwaite Water, surrounded by gently rolling and heavily forested hills that separate this valley from its neighbours, the Windermere valley to the east and the Coniston valley, with Coniston Water, to the west.

Many roads, tracks and bridle paths converge on Hawkshead, which were used historically for the transport of raw wool to the town and finished woollen products from the town. The B5285 connects Hawkshead to Coniston, some 8km (5 miles) to the west and the ferry across Lake Windermere, a similar distance to the south east, while a similar distance to the north lies Ambleside, via the B5286.

Numerous minor roads link Hawkshead to settlements in the southern Lake District, notably to Barrow in Furness, some 40km (25 miles) south, with which Hawkshead has historic links as a property of Furness Abbey.

Boundary

The historic town of Hawkshead is well defined by the B5285 road which surrounds the eastern part of the town, and by open countryside to the west of the town, and the boundary is thus in many ways self-defining: it is tightly drawn around the historic settlement (see map below). It also includes the large car park and retail area on the south-eastern sector of the town, the site of the school and the fields to the south west of the town, all of which are sensitive areas that are important to the setting of the conservation area.



Fig. 2: Expansive views eastwards from the churchyard across to Colthouse Plantation and beyond to the high fells that rise on the eastern side of Lake Windermere.

Topography and landscape setting

Hawkshead lies at the junction between flat land at the head of Esthwaite Water and the gently hilly landscape which lies between Coniston Water and Windermere; as a result, part of the town is level and part has steep paths and steps that climb up to the parish church. This sits on a platform high above the town, surrounded by an extensive churchyard that climbs west of the church to a viewpoint from which all the surrounding fells can be seen for a distance of many miles when the weather is clear.

These dramatic open views from the upper part of the town contrast with the close-packed urban grain of the lower town, where the surrounding landscape is only glimpsed occasionally at the ends of alleys or in gaps between buildings at the edges of the town. Largely flat, the immediate hinterland to the north, east and south of the town has been used for camping sites and mobile holiday homes, screen by hedges and trees, so that the more open hilly landscape that typifies the Lake District is mainly experienced to the west of the town.

Here, the landscape is pastoral, consisting of a patchwork of irregularly shaped fields, many of which have typical Lake District sheep fences (made from large sheets of slate), or slate-stone and rubble walls.



Fig. 3: The old school of 1873 shows the use of slate-stone with hidden mortar for the walls and green-grey Lakeland slate for the roof, while the boundary wall is a mix of water-eroded rubble from field clearance and quarried stone.

Geology

The underlying geology of this part of the Lake District comprises limestone and slate-stone. The carboniferous limestone is light grey in colour while the slate-stone is a darker grey to purple and near black. It is used for the construction of many of the buildings in the area, but in some instances the building stone is concealed behind a render coat. Slate-stone is also quarried locally and used as a roofing material and for the construction of 'stone hedges'.

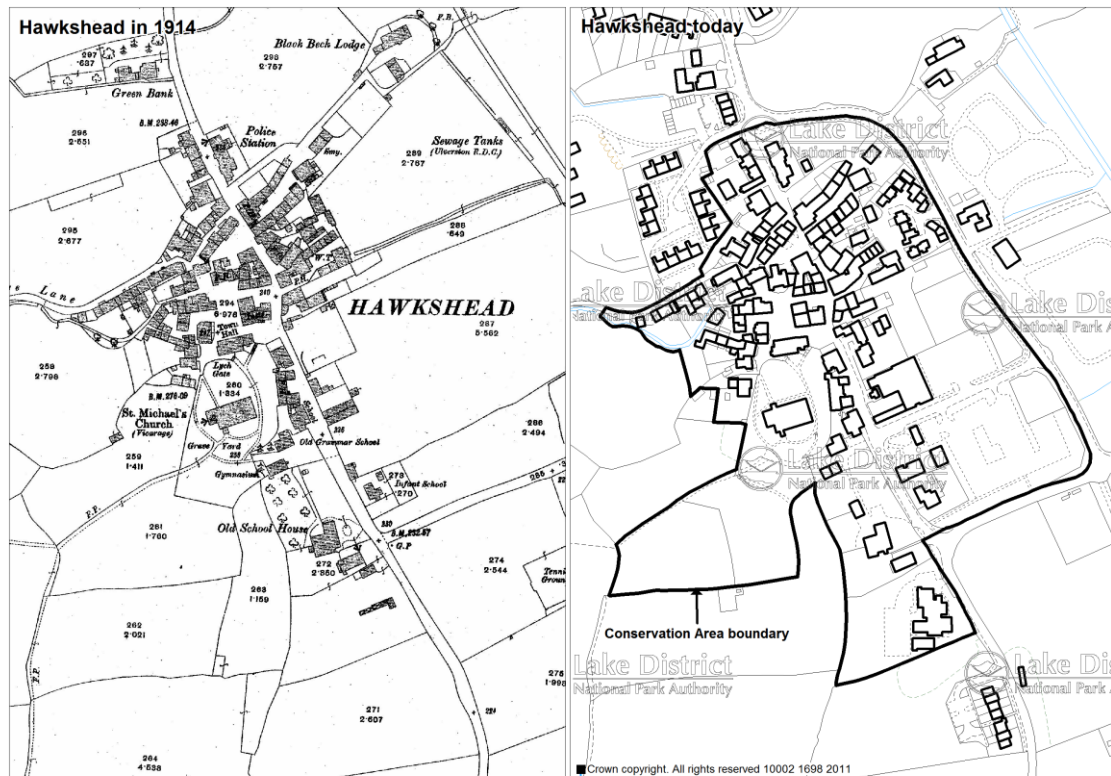
Archaeology

There are no archaeological sites or monuments recorded within the Hawkshead conservation area, although clearly a town of this age and complexity is likely to have much evidence of medieval and historic industrial, commercial and domestic activity, so the lack of scheduled sites is no guide to the degree of survival of archaeological remains below ground.

3 The historical development of the village

The *Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names* defines Hawkshead as being of Old Norse (Viking) derivation, meaning 'Hauk's saetre'; that is to say, hill pasture or sheep folds associated with an individual named Hauk or Hawk, or with his family, followers and descendants. The town is called Aukesite and Houkesete in 12th-century charters.

The early history of the town is tied up with that of Furness Abbey, the Cistercian Abbey founded in 1123 by Stephen, Count of Blois, which became the second richest and most powerful Cistercian abbey in the UK, behind Fountains Abbey. Hawkshead served as the administrative centre for the northern part of the extensive estate owned by Furness Abbey, with manorial administration and justice being dispensed by a bailiff from the Courthouse at Hawkshead Hall, parts of which survive about 1.6km (1 mile) north of the conservation area. Colthouse, about 1km (0.6 miles) east of the town, derives its name



from the stables owned by the abbey. Abbey cartularies record that the people of Hawkshead petitioned for their own chapel in 1219, and were granted a chaplain and a burial ground, so it is likely that the forerunner of the parish church was built at this time.

Furness Abbey's wealth was built on iron smelting and wool production, and Hawkshead grew to be an important centre for both. Smelting was however banned by royal decree in 1537 because of the destructive effect it was having on the local forests, whose timber was used for charcoal production.

Wool processing then became Hawkshead's major industry after the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The manufacture of woollen cloth was already one of the Lake District's major industries, but now that this was no longer a monastic monopoly, the wealth was spread more evenly and many Lake District towns like Hawkshead begin to grow from the 16th century. The region's fast-flowing streams were harnessed to drive the hammers of fulling mills, used to beat and thicken the cloth, replacing manual techniques such as treading the cloth or beating with wooden clubs. Spinning and weaving was a domestic activity and spinners (mainly women) were employed in large numbers all round the Lake District, Hawkshead included, to supply the Kendal-based linsey wolsey industry, with raw wool arriving by pack horse and spun wool leaving by the same means.

The wealthiest member of the Hawkshead community at this time was the Archbishop of York, Edwin Sandys, whose family owned large estates around Hawkshead and who made significant investments in the town's public buildings. Edwin was born at Esthwaite Hall, some 5km (3 miles) south of Hawkshead, in 1519, and was probably educated at Furness Abbey before going up to St John's, Cambridge, graduating in 1539, being elected master of Catherine Hall in 1549, and Vice Chancellor of the University in 1553,

before seeking exile in Zurich during the reign of Queen Mary, and returning under Elizabeth to be successively Bishop of Worcester, Bishop of London and Archbishop of York.

He made Hawkshead into a parish (previously it had been a chapel of ease, in the huge parish of Dalton-in-Furness) and probably contributed much of the money that was used to rebuild Hawkshead's parish church at this time. He paid for the tomb of his parents, William and Margaret Sandys, who are buried under a tomb chest of 1578 carved with their recumbent figures, in an aisle whose entrance door, on the northern side of the church, is carved with the Sandys coat of arms. He subsequently founded Hawkshead Grammar School in 1585, the building that now houses a museum at the foot of the path to the church, and established the Sun Inn, alongside, as part of the school's endowment.



Fig. 4: Founded in 1585, the Old Grammar School was rebuilt in its present form in 1675.

Further investment in the church took place in 1633 (a date carved in the north clerestory) after the town was granted its first official market charter by King James I in 1608, though the market by this stage was probably of some long standing, so that the charter was simply an official licence for an existing activity. Many of the buildings that form today's conservation area were constructed as the market grew in importance, from the late 17th century.

William Wordsworth attended the local Grammar School in 1777 to 1783 and he describes the town in his autobiographical poem, 'The Prelude', including his lodgings at Dame Ann Tyson's (today's Grandy Nook Tea Shop). By then, Hawkshead was rapidly developing as a town of important local stature, with numerous inns and a fine town hall, built in 1790, with market arcades below and assembly room above (which Wordsworth describes as having 'usurped the ground that had once been ours', because it occupied the place where he and his school friends once had their playground).

Partly as a result of Wordsworth's eloquent descriptions of the Lake District's landscapes, but also as a consequence of the ease of access brought about by the

railway that reached Windermere in 1847, tourism grew in importance during the 19th century, though an 1849 trade directory published by Mannex & Co said that the town had yet to be discovered by tourists, despite 'some comfortable inns' and the 'conveyances [that] are always in readiness for visitors and tourists'.



Fig. 5: The Town Hall was built in 1790, enlarged in 1887 and housed a market (The Shambles) in the arches below the meeting room, now filled in.

Hawkshead's relatively isolated position, away from major roads, meant that it escaped the development pressures of nearby towns such as Windermere and Ambleside and its population has stayed relatively stable over the last two centuries (829 people in 1821; 513 in 1981). 19th and 20th century developments include the primary school (1863) and Infants School (1873), the Institute (1882; the neo-Tudor building opposite the Town Hall), the Police Station (1883; now converted to apartments) the extensions to the Town Hall (1887).

The village relief road was constructed during the 1970s, along with the new school and the park in the south eastern sector of the conservation area, with its large retail outlets, including the large flagship store of the Hawkshead clothing company. Today, year-round tourism dominates the town, though it has not entirely eclipsed the traditional hill farming still practised around the margins of the town.

Surviving historical features within the conservation area

Summary of surviving historical features:

- The medieval church with many important 17th-century features and its churchyard set on a hill high above the town's rooftops;
- An exceptional number of listed buildings (some 42 in all), comprising almost all of the buildings within the conservation area;
- Including such outstanding buildings as Hawkshead Grammar School and Hawkshead Town Hall;
- A pattern of streets and housing plots that represent the organic growth of the town over many centuries;
- The rare survival of backplots and historic pavement and street surfaces.

4 The character and appearance of the conservation area

Street pattern and building plots

The first impression that many visitors gain of Hawkshead is of a maze-like town, with a warren of narrow alleys, with tightly packed cluster of houses, built without benefit of formal town plan. In fact, for all its apparent randomness, Hawkshead is like many other English planned towns in having a long Main Street that runs roughly north to south through the centre of the town, with plots running back from this main street to a back lane.



Fig. 6: Properties crowd against each other in the centre of Hawkshead.

There are, however, marked differences between one side of the Main Street and the other. On the eastern side of the Main Street, inns and hotels dominate the street scene, but their frontages hide long back plots, such as Red Lion Yard, that stretch all the way down the hill on which the town is built to the relief road that marks the eastern edge of the town and conservation area.

On the western side of the Main Street, Wordsworth Street has a similar linear form, but south of this are two squares that are irregular in shape and that are linked by a stretch of road that passes beneath an archway, lending this part of Hawkshead the special

character that draws so many visitors. Further west, dwellings set at many different angles and alignments, threaded by narrow alleys, cluster around the foot of Church Hill.

Hawkshead is a very densely built up settlement, in which maximum use is made of the plots that line the streets, squares, yards and alleys of the town. Again there are two distinct differences between the two sides of the town. To the east, plots fronting Main Street have generous backlands, with properties built facing each other across a cobbled yard and consisting of a mix of former stables, warehouses, byres, barns and dwellings. On the western side, where once yards or gardens might have existed, they have long since been infilled. The housing plots, never large, are almost wholly built upon, with the result that properties crowd against each other and in some cases overhang the street at first floor level. The variety of building height and roof pitch and of the angle of the roof ridge in respect to the road and to neighbouring properties, all add to the sense of picturesque irregularity.

Townscape analysis

Hawkshead more resembles a Tuscan hilltown than a typical English village, with a church at the highest point, and dwellings clustered around church and hill, linked by narrow alleys and steps, and with a civic heart consisting of town hall and public square. Again, like a Tuscan town, Hawkshead is densely grained, but also permeable, with



Fig. 7 & 8: The town (left) is experienced as a series of enclosed spaces and of views framed by buildings or arches. Red Lion Yard (right) with its backlands intact.

many an archway cutting through from one alley to another, or from one square to another. Yet beneath this apparent irregularity is the Main Street typical of English villages from the 10th century, with plots running from this main artery to a back lane: in the case of Hawkshead, the back lane is now the village relief road.

The town thus has a linear aspect and a concentric one, which is in part a result of its topography, with buildings set around the hilltop church. In recent centuries, the linear aspect of the town has been emphasised, with the construction at the northern end of Main Street of the Police Station and at the southern end of the County Primary School, by contrast with which the newly built houses of Croftside on backlands east of Victoria Street pleasingly recreate the more organic form of the oldest part of the town.

Black Beck flows under the village and largely culverted, in Flag Street by huge paving slabs. Old photos of the street show the culvert open and the stream being used to obtain water. Where the stream is visible at the top end of Flag Street it makes a highly attractive feature tightly enclosed between buildings with the space animated by the sound of running water.

One effect of this topography is to create a very varied townscape, because the close proximity of buildings to each other, and the absence of long straight vistas means that the view constantly changes; from no point is the whole of Hawkshead or even a substantial part of it, visible in one view – instead, the town is experienced as a series of enclosed spaces and of views framed by buildings, with the sense that another view entirely awaits around the bend.



Fig. 9: Picturesque irregularity to (right) Wordsworth Street (formerly Leather, Rag and Putty Street, left) has properties facing each other across a cobbled yard and consisting of a mix of former stables, warehouses, byres, barns and dwellings.

This pattern of density and variety is especially true of the northern half of the conservation area; in the southern half, much larger plots result from a setting aside a large part of the town's south-eastern quarter to car parking and retail outlets and the south-western sector to the modern school. In the immediate environs of the church, the character changes yet again: here, the hilly topography of the churchyard and of its several extensions to the south of the church, mirrors the irregularity of the town below, with its slate rooftops mixed up at different angles and raised to different elevations, while to the west of the church, the landscape is open and green, with sweeping views over field and rooftop to the fells beyond.

Summary of townscape features

- Compact settlement with both linear aspects, anchored by the Main Street, and a concentric form, focussed around the topography of Church Hill;
- Buildings to the east of Main Street and along Wordsworth Street forming backlands, of linear plots running down both sides of a courtyard from the principle street frontage;
- Buildings around the two main squares densely packed as a result of plot infilling;
- Open green fields and long views from the churchyard
- More recent buildings & car parks emphasising the linear aspects of the town.



Fig.10: Black Beck which runs beneath the village within a culvert

Focal points, views and vistas

These are shown on the Townscape Appraisal Map, and consist largely of views through arches or along alleys within the town or open views to the town's hinterland from the churchyard.

- A – panoramic views from the uppermost point of the churchyard;
- B – views over the rooftops of Hawkshead from the eastern terrace of the churchyard;
- C – views towards Main Street from the car parks from where most visitors arrive;
- D – Views into The Square;
- E – Views into Flag Street;
- F – Views into The Square and Flag Street towards the Red Lion;
- G – Views of The Square glimpsed through the archway between The Kings Arms and Relish;
- H – Views down Red Lion Yard.

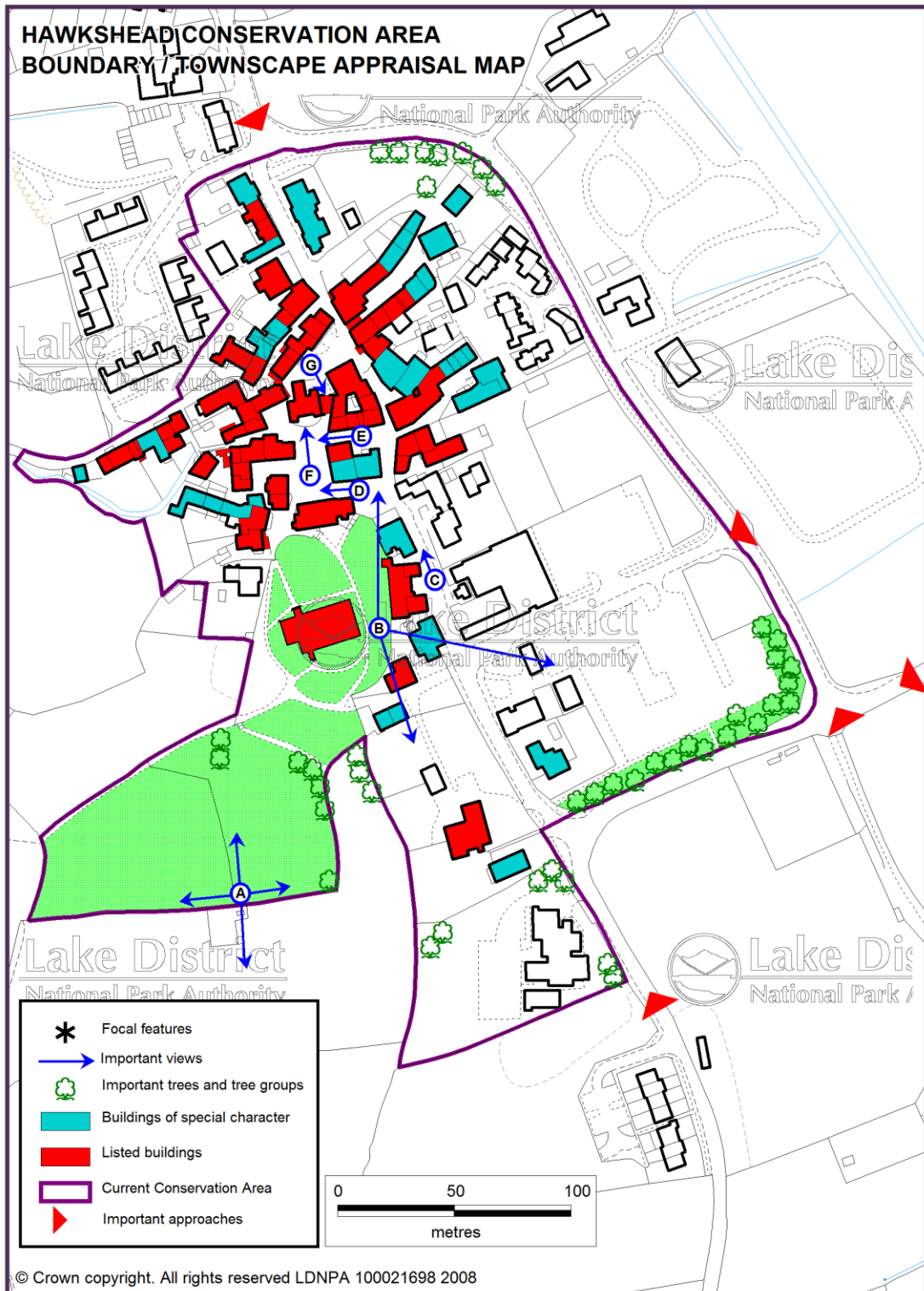


Fig. 11 Some of the significant views in to, within, and out from the conservation area.



North-easterly views from the churchyard.



The view SE from the churchyard across the car parks with Colthouse Heights beyond.



From The Square into Red Lion Square Yard



Looking into The Square from Church Hill.



The Square.



The Main Street

Current activities and uses

Hawkshead has a thriving economy based on the large numbers of people who visit the town year round to enjoy its picturesque character. There are formal heritage attractions in the form of the Grammar School Museum and the National Trust's Beatrix Potter Gallery, but many visitors also come to shop in the Hawkshead clothing store and other retail outlets that are mainly concentrated in and round The Square and Main Street. There are numerous pubs, teashops and restaurants, as well as hotel, bed and breakfast and self-catering accommodation. The town has several small general stores and a post office, and the County Primary School brings children into the town from a large area around Hawkshead and Esthwaite.

Open spaces, landscape and trees

Hawkshead is a town of contrast between the dense urban grain of the town centre and the open green spaces that are a short step away along Vicarage Lane and the paths that pass through the churchyard to the green meadows and woodland to the west of the town. The churchyard is renowned for its panoramic views and Wordsworth records in his biographical poem *The Prelude* that the old men of the town would gather here in his day to enjoy the views and talk. Today this is a popular spot for townspeople and visitors to walk with or without dogs to enjoy spectacular views and sunsets; any development in and around the churchyard and the fields immediately adjacent to the churchyard would dramatically impact on the setting of the church and the views over the rooftops of Hawkshead below, and for that reason they are included in the conservation area.

Vicarage Lane follow the course of Vicarage Beck, a brook that descends from Hawkshead Moor, to the west of the town. The brook is largely hidden, but it runs beneath Flag Street (so named from the flagstones that once covered the brook, and once formed an important part of the town's water supply, with running water still emerging from a spout in the porch of The Spout House, to the south west of The Square.

An area of open ground that fills the south-eastern quarter of the conservation area is devoted in part to the car and coach park. This is planted with trees that act as an effective screen to hide the car park from view and to soften the landscape of the car park and retail area. Four large areas of wasteland also exist to the north and east of the car park, and it is unclear whether these are intended to be developed for further parking or for housing or commercial use, but they are sited in a very prominent part of the town where development would have an impact on the setting of the conservation area and so need to be developed sympathetically.



Fig. 12: Hawkshead's open spaces lie principally to the west of the churchyard.

Boundaries

In many of Hawkshead's streets there are no separate property boundaries as the buildings of the town centre are built up to the edge of the road without gardens. This results in a blurring of the public and private realms: it is not always clear when walking round Hawkshead whether one is following a public path or intruding into a private yard. In response to this lack of formal boundary, some of the older houses on the western side of the town have front doors that are set at the back of a large and deeply recessed porch. Other houses have a slightly raised area paved in flagstones or cobbles to delineate the front of their property or grow container plants to maintain a degree of separation between house and highway.

Further away from the centre of the town, the boundary between town and country is marked by the increasing number of small gardens and these have rubble walls, sometimes supplemented by hedges growing behind the wall and adding further height to the boundary, or more formal iron railings set on top of a low wall.

Hedges rather than stone walls form the eastern boundary of the conservation area, with hawthorn planting along the relief road and along the car park margins. The boundaries of the churchyard are very varied: the older part of the churchyard has functional spiked iron railings set on low coped stone walls, but these give way to attractive 'stone hedges' where the churchyard gives way to sheep pasture to the west of the conservation area, formed by setting large rectangular sheets of slate-stone in edge to form a continuous barrier. As the churchyard gives way to farmland, these fences are replaced by high walls of slate stone, with a marked batter, and gates posts of tall monolithic slate-stones.



Fig. 13: Most gardens, where they exist at all, are tiny and are bounded by little more than iron railings set on a low wall.

Public realm: floorscape, street lighting and street furniture

Hawkshead's floor surfaces are very varied, with modern metalled pavements and roads around the car park and southern entrances to the town giving way to a patchwork of flagstones and cobbles in the town centre. New developments, including the Hawkshead clothing store, have used natural slate for paving and steps, and where historic paving has been replaced in the town centre, natural materials have been used, including slate flags for pavements and cobbled gutters. Some of the paving, however, is in poor condition and has been intrusively repaired with tarmac. The use of concrete curbs and their curving alignment, emphasised by yellow lining, gives the roads and footways an over-engineered appearance.

Street lighting is unintrusive and includes attractive lanterns suspended from brackets on the front of the Town Hall and other buildings around The Square. Simple columnar steel poles are used in the car park area. The litter bins are of grey plastic.

Several of Hawkshead's streets have cast iron nameplates. Many houses have attractive slate name plates. Overhead wiring is kept to a minimum, but tall TV aerials on numerous chimneys suggest that TV reception is a problem in Hawkshead and this is a form of modern intrusion not easily resolved. Similarly, the lack of gardens and yards means that many houses and shops have visible refuse bins and large containers placed on the street, creating a visual intrusion into the townscape.

Signage in a town that attracts so many visitors can be a problem as businesses naturally wish to draw attention to their premises, but most of the signage in Hawkshead is modest and appropriate, with good painted lettering on black or red boards or on shop

fronts of traditional design. Occasionally this discrete colour palette is ignored and multiple signs in yellow or vibrant blue create a discordant note.



Fig 14 & 15: Historic cobbled surfaces at the entrance to Red Lion Yard (left) and columnar steel lamppost (right).



Fig 16: Wall mounted lanterns on the front of the Town Hall.

5 The buildings of the conservation area

Architectural styles, materials and detailing

The buildings within the Hawkshead conservation area are very varied. Most of the listed buildings in the town date from the late 17th century and early 18th century and are of slate-stone laid in courses with large quoin stones. Many are protected from the weathering of their vulnerable lime mortar joints by an exterior coating of roughcast render, painted white or cream; unrendered buildings often have deeply recessed mortar beds, so that the walls appear to be dry; they have deep shadows between the courses as a result, which adds to the textured appearance of the wall. Sometime building stones are also laid at a slight angle to shed water, tilting downwards to the outer face, a technique known as 'watershot' masonry. This attractive form of walling has been successfully mimicked by some of Hawkshead's modern buildings, including the Hawkshead clothing store.



Fig 17: Post-medieval timber-mullioned window in Wordsworth Street

Most roofs are of slate and much of this is locally quarried; as it weathers and attracts lichens it acquires an attractive silvery hue, by contrast with the black of the Welsh Slate on more recent buildings. Roofs of local slate are especially prominent in views over the town from the eastern end of the churchyard. A handful of buildings, including the Sun Inn (rear elevations), and houses in Church Hill and Flag Street, also have slate-hung walls, which might be disguising a timber frame. Slabs of slate stone are also used as drip courses around chimneys and above windows, and in some cases to create small gabled canopies over front doors.

Typical of many of Hawkshead's older houses are features that help them accommodate to an irregularly shaped plot or to the constraints of a property that fronts a narrow alley. Some have cut-away corners and several have a deeply recessed porch occupying the width of a bay (these deeply recessed porches were also used as places for drying cloth and as shops where spun wool was displayed for sale on market days) or a porch in unexpected places, such as the corner of the house rather than the main or side

elevation. Several have external staircases or staircases set in a covered recess at the side of the house. Some have lean-to extensions for storage that are set at an irregular angle to the main building, and a number have responded to the constraints on space by means of projections at first floor level – either projecting windows or jettied upper storeys. Others sail across roads or footpaths to create a covered passage leading to an adjacent alley or a carriage entrance leading to a yard.



Fig 18: Cellar hatch in Red Lion Yard

Most chimneys in Hawkshead are rectangular and located at the gable end; the only buildings to have the columnar chimneys typical of Lake District vernacular are the towns' Edwardian buildings, such as the vernacular revival building opposite the Town Hall (Summitreks Outdoor Clothing).

Windows are mainly the typical Lakeland tall triple-paned sashes, though some larger houses with wider front elevations have rectangular sashes that are four or five panes wide or sash windows embellished with narrow side panes. Occasionally older windows survive in the form of wood-mullioned windows, small-paned pivoted casements or diamond-paned casements. Round headed and Venetian windows appear on the Town Hall, Methodist Chapel and the Beatrix Potter Gallery.

With the exception of the Grammar School, Hawkshead lacks the flamboyant stone carved door cases of some Lake District towns, and has instead mainly Regency timber door cases with round or triangular pediments on grander houses, or, more often, no door surround at all, but a simple planked door set in a deep recess, sheltered by timber lattice-sided porch or one of slate.

In and among the residential buildings are various agricultural buildings and those used for stabling and storage, including some, in Flag Street, Wordsworth Street, at the end of Red Lion Yard and alongside the Old School House, that are in their original condition, not yet converted into dwellings, with lofts above and external stone or timber staircases.



Fig 19: Modern buildings in King's Yard mirror Hawkshead's historic architecture with cutaway corners,, cobbled surfaces and buildings set at irregular angles to each other.

Listed buildings

A listed building is one that is included on the Government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. These buildings are protected by law and consent is required from the Lake District National Park Authority before any works of alteration, extension or demolition can be carried out. Listed buildings are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map. These are:

- | | | |
|---|----------|-----------|
| 1. Church of St Michael and All Saints | | grade I; |
| 2. Sundial north of church and south of Town Hall | | grade II; |
| 3. Sun Inn and Sun Cottage | | grade II; |
| 4. Hawkshead Grammar School | | grade II* |
| 5. The Old School House | | grade II |
| 6. The Town Hall | | grade I |
| 7. Town Hall Cottage | | grade I |
| 8. K6 telephone kiosk | | grade II |
| 9. Pillar Cottage, Church Hill | | grade II |
| 10. Wordsworth House, Church Hill | | grade II |
| 11. Bank House, The Square | | grade II |
| 12. Lantern Cottage and Ross Cottage, The Square | | grade II |
| 13. Flag Cottage, Rose Cottage, The Square | grade II | |
| 14. Fern Cottage, Slater's Yard | | grade II |
| 15. No 1 Flag Street and Chapel Cottage | | grade II |
| 16. Hawkshead Methodist Church | | grade II |
| 17. The Minstrel's Gallery | | grade II |
| 18. Grandy Nook, Vicarage Lane | grade II | |

19. Jasmine Cottage, Vicarage Lane	grade II
20. Green Howe Cottage (aka Little Force Cottage)	grade II
21. Wee Cottage, Vicarage Lane	grade II
22. Ann Tyson's Cottage	grade II*
23. Tarragon and adjoining house, Wordsworth Street	grade II
24. Barclay's Bank (now Beatrix Potter Gallery)	grade II
25. Lile Teashop, Main Street	grade II
26. Ivy House Hotel, Main Street	grade II
27. Helm Lea and Barn Syke House	grade II
28. Red Lion Hotel, Main Street	grade II
29. Former Solicitor's Office, Main Street	grade II
30. No 1, Red Lion Yard	grade II
31. Rose (Old) Cottage, Red Lion Yard	grade II
32. Jessamine Cottage, Red Lion Yard	grade II
33. Fern Cottage, Red Lion Yard	grade I
34. Former Information Centre / Bend or Bump, Main Street	grade II
35. Co-Op / Judith's hair salon	grade II
36. Thimble Hall, Main Street	grade II
37. Corner Shop (National Trust Shop)	grade II
38. Queen's Head Public House	grade II
39. Brown Cow Cottages and Brown Cow Laithe	grade II
40. Relish and Bank Cottage	grade II
41. Kings Arms Public House	grade I
42. Laburnum House	grade I



Fig 20: Barn and loft in Red Lion Yard

Significant unlisted buildings

A number of unlisted buildings have been identified on the Townscape Appraisal map as being "Buildings of Special Character". These buildings vary, but commonly they will be good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials provides the streetscape with interest and variety. Most importantly, they make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. Where a building has been heavily altered, and restoration would be impractical, they are excluded.

6 Negative features and issues

Inappropriate alterations to buildings

Some of the buildings within the conservation area are suffering from an incremental loss of architectural detail. The use of inappropriate modern materials, such as the replacement of original leaded lights or timber windows with uPVC is adversely affecting both the listed and the unlisted buildings in the conservation area. There have also been alterations to door and window openings. There are also instances where buildings have been extended in a manner which neither reflects nor harmonises with the traditional design of the buildings in the village, nor utilises a palette of traditional construction materials.

Modern installations: satellite dishes, rooflights, alarm boxes, extracts

There are a number of instances where accretions such as satellite dishes, extractor vents and alarm boxes have been made on the elevations or chimney stacks of the historic buildings. Such additions are highly visible, particularly given the pattern of development within the village where back lanes allow clear views of the rear elevations of many buildings, and detract from the character of the historic environment. A number of historic buildings have had rooflights inserted into the principal roofslope and these detract from the appearance of the village.

The use of stains and varnishes on timber doors and windows

A number of the historic buildings within the conservation area display timber door and window joinery which has been stained and/or varnished in a bright orange or dark brown colour. This non-traditional treatment severely erodes the appearance and character of these original features, to the detriment of the special interest of the conservation area. There are also examples of such a treatment used for new windows which have been inserted into historic buildings and on the joinery of converted barns where it also detracts from the character of the village.

Semi-permanent outbuildings

Some of the gardens and yards within Hawkshead accommodate outbuildings and sheds. Some of these sheds have been treated with an orange varnish, which makes the structures highly visible against the subtly coloured backdrop of stone buildings and vegetation. Given the location of Hawkshead, close to the valley floor, clear views are obtainable of the village from the surrounding high ground, and visual clutter, such as poorly designed or located outbuildings detract from the character of this historic village.

Loss and alteration of traditional stone boundary walls

The stone rubble boundary walls are an attractive feature of the conservation area and are generally well maintained throughout the village. There is an occasional loss of sections of walling through lack of maintenance and the loss of these traditional stone walls detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area. Brathay Flags boundaries are a feature of the local area and are in particularly poor condition. There are instances where the boundary has been increased in height through the use of timber stakes and wire mesh fencing. This is a practical solution where taller fences are required, but the resultant reduction on the need for maintaining the stone walls could result in the loss of these important landscape features.

Signage

Most of the signage in Hawkshead is modest and appropriate, with good painted lettering on black or red boards or on shop fronts of traditional design. Occasionally this discrete colour palette is ignored and multiple signs in yellow or vibrant blue create a discordant note.

Car parking, bins and clutter

Despite the pedestrianisation of the village there remain some areas of parking and vehicle deliveries which, though no doubt functionally necessary, is nevertheless intrusive mainly because of the absence of vehicles elsewhere, the lack of apparent curtilages for it be contained and because of the tightly enclosed and intimate character of the area. Similarly other functional problems occur with bins, pallets and other clutter within the footway, particularly associated with hotels, pubs and restaurants but also with domestic properties. Again, the lack of curtilages for its containment is the main cause of the problem. To some extent this has probably always been an issue in the village and is part of its vibrant character, though there is a point at which the problem becomes intrusive and harmful to the conservation area.

Paving

The condition of some of the flagstones used within the paving scheme is poor, no doubt due to vehicular parking and construction and maintenance issues. Many of the larger flags are cracked and some cases they have been removed and infilled with tarmacadam which results in an extremely poor appearance. The boundary of the flagged pavements and tarmac roads is often defined by ugly concrete curbs and their curving alignment, emphasised by double yellow lines, is also intrusive and over-engineered.

Fig. 21: Examples of problems in Hawkshead.



Clutter in a prominent part of the town.



Intrusive extractor vents, gas canisters, refuse containers and fire escapes on a grade-II listed building.



Lack of storage space for bins.



Varnished replacement windows.



Intrusive pipework.



Prominently sited bins & containers.



Building at risk from lack of maintenance.



The Old School House is a vacant unlisted building. Permission exists for its conversion.



Intrusive motor vehicles.



One of several large areas of unused land around the car park.

PART 2 CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims of the management plan

The designation of a conservation area is a means to safeguard and enhance the sense of place, character and appearance of our most valued historic assets and places. However, we also recognise that conservation areas are living environments that will continue to evolve and adapt. Designating a conservation area does not prohibit change or new development. However, it does involve carefully managing changes to ensure that the character and appearance of these areas is safeguarded and enhanced for the benefit of present and future generations.

The local community has a vital role to play. We appreciate that the special character of an area is often the reason why people chose to stay and live in the area in the first place. The area cannot be managed without a shared understanding of what is important and what needs to be done. Conservation Area status actually brings very few additional legal controls and the involvement of residents and businesses is essential to realise the benefits of designation. Maintaining the character of the area is, therefore, a joint endeavour between ourselves and anyone who is responsible for proposing new development or undertaking repairs, maintenance, enhancement and minor alterations. This includes the highway authority (Cumbria County Council), the district council, parish council, civic societies, local businesses and residents.

1.2 The benefits of designation

Conservation Area designation brings the potential for significant benefits by protecting the interests of the whole community. The benefits of designation can be summarised as follows:

- the potential to identify and protect existing features or buildings to retain an area's unique and special character.
- the more sensitive design of new development and protection from unsympathetic and damaging change
- ensuring that important historic buildings are protected from demolition
- preventing the loss or damage to trees which contribute positively towards the area's special character
- the promotion and co-ordination of desirable enhancements
- encouraging an understanding of an area's history
- ensuring that an area's sense of place is conserved, particularly the significance, memories and associations it has for local people,
- promoting the use of local and traditional craft skills
- encouraging the use of local and traditional building materials. These are often more environmentally friendly and sustainable than modern products.

The purpose of the management plan is to help deliver these benefits. It presents proposals to achieve the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area's special character, informed by the appraisal and forms the basis to involve the local community in these proposals.

1.3 Legislative background

The special qualities of the area have been identified as part of the appraisal process. The management plan seeks to preserve and enhance these special qualities and realise improvements and resolve the negative features and issues, which are identified



Fig. 22: Hawkshead church overlooking the village with superb views

in Section 7 of the appraisal. The document satisfies the statutory requirement of section 71(1) of the *Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990* namely:

“It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.”

Section 69 [2] also states:

“It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to review the past exercise of functions... and determine whether any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas”

The management plan reflects Government guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15 *‘Planning and the Historic Environment’*, English Heritage guidance titled *‘Guidance on the management of conservation areas’* (August 2005), Best Practice guidelines, policies within the Lake District National Park Local Plan (1998) and any policies which supersede this in the Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 2001-2016 (2006) the Regional Spatial Strategy 2008 and the emerging Local Development

Framework together with guidance leaflets including '*Converting an old building?*' and '*Outdoor advertisements and signs*'.

In implementing this policy framework, our development management service aims to preserve and enhance the special character of the conservation area. We recognise that any such improvements do not have to be initiated and co-ordinated by us. The valuable contribution of local environmental and community groups to positive enhancement works and the role of the Parish Plan are also essential to enhancement. Other agencies and funding bodies also have a vital role to play.

1.4 Public consultation

The Hawkshead Conservation Area and Management Plan has been created by collaborative working between heritage consultants, The Conservation Studio, the Lake District National Park Authority and the local community. The appraisal and management plan has been subject to a 4 week period of public consultation commencing in December 2009. This included sending consultation letters to 184 residents and businesses, placing the document on the Authority's website and the provision of a public exhibition at the Market Hall. The document has subsequently been amended to incorporate relevant suggestions and comments.

1.5 Designation and extension

The appraisal has examined the conservation area boundaries and has identified that the conservation area boundary was tightly drawn to include only the area identified as being of significant value. The appraisal has examined the conservation area boundaries and has identified that the conservation area boundary should be redrawn as follows:

i) A minor change to the boundary is proposed to rationalise the boundary at the Roost, adjacent to St. Michael's Church which currently cuts across the corner of the garden. This change will ensure that the conservation area is defined by a physical feature.

1.6 Effects of designation

Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the "*preservation and enhancement*" of the area. These include requiring Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of any unlisted building, restrictions on advertisements, and requiring notice for proposed tree works. We will seek to ensure that all development within the conservation area preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area.

1.7 Listed Buildings

Listed buildings are protected by law as set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The listing covers both the inside and outside of the building, and any structure or building within its curtilage which was built before 1947. Listed Building Consent is required from the Authority for any work which affects the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. There are currently twelve listed buildings within the conservation area.

Extensions and alterations to listed buildings should conform with the policy context outlined in section 1.3 above and should generally:

- Take into account the prevailing forms of development;
- Complement the form and character of the original building;
- Be subordinate in bulk and scale to the principal building;
- Use high quality materials and detailing;
- Pay particular attention to roof lines, roof shape, eaves details, verge details and chimneys.

We will seek to ensure that all works to a listed building have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.



Fig. 23: Store on Main St. owned by National Trust – a very fine and distinctive listed building

1.8 Significant Unlisted Buildings

In addition to the listed buildings, there are many individual and groups of buildings and associated features which are of considerable local interest and make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area and these are shown as '*Significant Unlisted Buildings*' on the Townscape Appraisal Map. A high proportion of the buildings within the conservation area were identified by the townscape appraisal to be Significant Unlisted Buildings. There is a presumption that all such buildings will be retained, in accordance with Policy BE12 of the Lake District National Park Local Plan (1998). We will ensure that the contribution that they make to the character and appearance of the conservation area is carefully considered in relation to all applications for extension, alteration and demolition of these buildings.

1.9 Enhancing and protecting the local character and historic features within the conservation area

There is an opportunity to maintain and improve the character and appearance of the conservation area simply by ensuring that day to day improvements, alterations and maintenance of properties, however minor, are carried out sympathetically using good quality materials and details. The local community has a big part to play in this and, over time, the benefit to the conservation area can be very significant.

The appraisal identified that the following alterations can, cumulatively, seriously affect the special character of the area and therefore need to be considered very carefully:

- loss of timber windows and doors ;
- alterations to window/door openings;
- the erection of porches;
- minor installations and alteration of materials;
- loss and alteration of boundary walls.

To help retain and conserve traditional features and to prevent harm to single family dwelling houses through alteration and extension we will consider introducing an Article 4 Direction. This would remove permitted development rights which allow unsympathetic alterations to be made without planning permission. Such a Direction would require consultation with the local community.



Fig. 24: Retaining traditional shopfronts and paving and sensitive new signage

1.10 Trees

Within conservation areas, anyone intending lopping or felling a tree greater than 75mm. diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground must give us six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides us with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, in which case we may decide to serve a Tree Preservation Order. The appraisal identifies a

number of significant trees and groups of trees on verges or within areas of public open space and within private gardens. We will seek to consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders in appropriate circumstances where a tree has significant amenity value and is considered to be potentially under threat.

1.11 Enhancing and protection views & the setting of the conservation area

The setting of the conservation area and views within, into and from the area are essential elements to its character and appearance. It is important that development, enhancement and public realm work takes account of the setting of the conservation area and important viewpoints and that these are preserved or enhanced so that the special character of the conservation area is retained. Important views are identified on the Townscape Appraisal map in the character appraisal.

1.12 Enhancement through new development, alterations and extensions

While there are few opportunities for large-scale redevelopment within the conservation area, some improvement or enlargement of the existing buildings may be possible subject to sensitive design and good quality materials and details. There may occasionally be sites where completely new development is acceptable. As the quality of the general environment within the conservation area is already acknowledged by designation, we will encourage well designed schemes using appropriate materials that respond positively to their historic setting. This includes the encouragement of high quality contemporary and sustainable design and materials.

1.13 Retaining and enhancing boundary treatments

Traditionally, most boundaries in the conservation area are defined by stone rubble walls, with Brathay flag boundaries also a local feature. There is a small loss of these walls where routine maintenance and rebuilding of fallen sections has not taken place. We will encourage the maintenance of traditional stone walls and seek their retention rather than their replacement with new non- traditional boundary treatments.

1.10 Enhancing the public realm

The appraisal has identified that areas of historic cobbled and flagged floorscape within the conservation area merit protection and some parts of late 20th century enhancement schemes are in need of upgrading. There is significant potential to enhance and upgrade the quality and consistency of paving materials and design, ideally within a comprehensive scheme which deals with the whole of the historic core. Street lighting can usually be addressed during such enhancement. Alternatively an appropriate specification and standard of materials and detailing, that is sympathetic to the character of the conservation area, should guide improvements that are more incremental in nature. We will therefore work with Cumbria County Council and other relevant agencies to ensure that any public realm and highway works should bring a positive improvement to the area.

1.11 Advertisements/signs

The appraisal has noted that some shopfront signage is garish and out of character with the historic environment. Temporary signage such as A boards and banners can be

hazardous and unsightly. The use of such signs needs to be carefully monitored and controlled with regard to size, design and materials to ensure that any negative impact is kept to a minimum. We will seek to resist proposals for advertisement signage of a scale, design or materials which fail to respect the character of the conservation area.

2 MONITORING AND REVIEW

2.1 Boundary review

We will seek to review the boundary of the conservation area in accordance with Best Practice and guidance on the management of the historic environment.

2.2 Document review

The appraisal and management plan will be reviewed every ten years. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the conservation area and boundaries;
- An assessment of whether the detailed management plans in this document have been acted upon, including proposed enhancements;
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and proposed actions and amendments;
- Public consultation on the review findings, any proposed changes and input into the final review.

3 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brunskill R W	<i>Traditional Buildings in Cumbria</i>	2002
Cowper, H S	<i>Hawkshead: a visitor's guide</i>	1928
Denyer S	<i>Traditional Buildings and Life in the Lake District</i>	1991
LDNPA	<i>Landscape Character Assessment</i>	2007/8
	<i>The Lake District National Park Local Plan</i>	1998
	<i>The Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan 2001–2016</i>	2006
Mannix & Whellan	<i>History, Gazetteer and Directory of Cumberland</i>	1847
Pevsner N	<i>The Buildings of England: North Lancashire</i>	1969
Shackleton E H	<i>Lakeland Geology</i>	1973
Toothill J	<i>Hawkshead Conservation Area: proposals for consultations</i>	1988