

Helton Conservation Area

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

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HELTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Summary of special interest

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

- Small historic hamlet set on the Askham to Bampton road;
- Developed as a 'spring line' settlement, probably during the Anglo-Saxon period;
- Historic route from Helton extends up to Heltonhead and Askham Fell;
- Rural location on the western side of the Lowther Valley, surrounded by open fields to the east and with the fell fringe to the west;
- Significant long views eastwards to the River Lowther, Knipe Scar and Burtree Scar;
- Tightly clustered linear settlement of farms and houses arranged around a triangular village green;
- Two lanes of houses which follow the contours of the hillside;
- Pattern of 'toft' development and back lanes and driftways;
- Evidence of strip field farming survives, forming an important part of the landscape setting of the hamlet;
- Many buildings with architectural and historic quality, six of which are grade II listed buildings, and many others which make a positive contribution to the area's historic character and appearance;
- Buildings predominantly date from the 17th and 18th centuries and are good examples of the vernacular tradition;
- Buildings typically set directly onto the lane and arranged as detached houses or short terraces;
- Palette of building materials reflects the underlying geology, carboniferous limestone;
- Limestone rubble, typically with a render coat, used for domestic buildings;
- Farm buildings and boundary walls of exposed limestone, with many examples of structural 'throughstones';
- Surviving stretches of traditional cobbled street surfaces;
- Central village green, wide grass verges and fields enhance the relationship between Helton and the surrounding landscape;
- Important areas of native hedgerow, individual trees and tree groups;
- Network of public footpaths link the village to the surrounding countryside.

1 Introduction

The Helton Conservation Area is a compact rural settlement located on the historic Askham to Bampton road. The village is arranged on a historic plot pattern around a village green and contains a number of buildings which are of architectural and historic interest.

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 building, feature 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 appraisal and management plan 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 Helton 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 addresses provides strategic guidance for the environment for the period to 2016. Policy E38 covers the historic environment.

2 Location and setting

Location

Helton is located within the east of the Lake District National Park. This part of the Lake District lies within the county of Cumbria, in that part which comprised the historic county of Westmorland. The village sits on the western slopes of the valley of the River Lowther. It lies on the Askham to Bampton road, approximately 1.5km south of Askham and approximately 3.5km north of Bampton. The village is part of Askham Parish, bounded by the parishes of Barton, Lowther and Bampton. Heltondale lies 2km south-west of the village; Heltondale Beck flows into the River Lowther.

Boundary

The conservation area is small and the boundary is tightly drawn around the historic settlement. It includes the length of near-continuous development bordering the eastern side of the lower lane, which runs parallel to the Askham to Bampton road, and further scattered development along an upper lane on the hillside to the west. The Askham to Bampton road provides a clearly defined eastern boundary. A rural lane denotes the north-western boundary.



Fig. 1: There are expansive views eastwards from the village green across the lower village and the Lowther Valley to Burtree Scar.

Topography and landscape setting

Helton lies within the Lowther Valley. This broad, gentle, upland limestone valley is characterised by pastoral farmland, interspersed with woodland and moorland on the higher ground. Helton is a linear settlement which follows the contours of the western valley side. The lower part of the village has a direct relationship with the grassy fields of the valley floor on either side of the River Lowther, while the upper part of the village links to the wilder expanses of the fell fringe visible to the north of Fell Gate Farm, of

Helton and Askham Fells. Askham Fell is the location of an important series of earthworks at Moor Divock.

Helton is surrounded by fields which reveal the ancient strip field system; the fields are divided into neat geometric patterns by a system of limestone walls. Views eastwards across the valley encompass this patchwork of fields, with further visual interest provided by the two-storey limestone field barns.

The rugged limestone outcrops of Knipe Scar and Burtree Scar to the east are in contrast to the gently rolling fields of the valley.

Geology

The underlying geology of the Lowther Valley is carboniferous limestone. This is reflected in the use of the material for the construction of the buildings and walls in the village. There are pockets of numerous minerals found in the area, such as on Knipe Scar, created by the proximity to the heat from the Borrowdale volcanic flows. A band of Skiddaw slate runs south-east from Helton to Keld.

Archaeology

There are no archaeological sites or monuments recorded within Helton. Approximately 1.5km to the west of the conservation area lie an important group of Scheduled Ancient Monuments at Moor Divock on Askham Fell, which are a group of ring cairns and standing stones. These are on an alignment with other prehistoric funerary monuments along the communication route between the Lowther and Ullswater valleys.

1km to the south of Helton lies a Scheduled Ancient Monument: 'moated site and annexe east of Setterahpark Wood.' This is a rare example in Cumbria of a moated site associated with a medieval deer park.



Fig. 2: The southern approach to the village is rural in character and encompasses views of fields both within and surrounding the

conservation area.

3 The historical development of the village

Helton is marked on a number of early maps of Westmorland. Christopher Saxton's map of 1576 depicts the lakes and the principal rivers and marks Helton, with Heltondale to the south-west, together with two watercourses recognisable as the River Lowther and Heltondale Beck. These two settlements are also shown on John Speed's map of 1610. Helton, together with Setterah Castle immediately to the south, pre-date the now larger nearby settlements of Askham and Lowther.

Little is recorded of the early history of the village of Helton. The village evolved as a spring-line settlement and is thought to date from the Anglo-Saxon period; the neighbouring settlements of Whale and Knipe also have names of Anglo-Saxon origin. The settlement was originally called Helton Fleckchen, meaning in Anglo-Saxon and old German, "Helton, nice little spot".

The high density of funerary monuments on Askham Fell indicates the prehistoric importance of this area. The Lowther Valley was also of importance during the medieval period, with Setterahpark and its deer park.



Fig. 3: This barn at Low Side Farm is one of the many agricultural buildings scattered throughout the settlement. The building is constructed from limestone rubble with 'throughstones' on the gable wall.

The manor of Helton descended through the Morvills, Wessingtons, and Englishes, to the Sandfords of Askham Hall. The Sandfords sold the manor to Sir John Lowther in 1680, ancestor of the present possessor, the Earl of Lonsdale. The seat of the Earls of Lonsdale was Lowther Hall, of which the first castellated house dated from the 14th or 15th century, lay approximately 1km east of Askham. Through the subsequent centuries, the great and the good of the architectural establishment were consulted on schemes for

rebuilding and remodelling of the house and grounds; those consulted included, 'Capability' Brown and James and Robert Adam, George Dance and Robert Smirke. The hall was renamed 'Lowther Castle' in the early 19th century and now stands as a roofless shell, at the centre of an estate of some 40,000 acres.

The village has sometimes been described as Helton-Flecket, to distinguish it from Helton Beacon, now Hilton, near Appleby. The 'Flecket' had ceased to be used in the name by the early 20th century. The township, rather than the parochial village was the unit of settlement. As parishes were large there were few chapels and churches; there was no building with a specific religious use in the village until the erection of the Wesleyan Chapel in 1857.



Fig. 4: The pattern of strip fields visible around Helton developed from the mid-16th century.

Helton developed as a farming hamlet. The large number of wells in the area, for example as shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1863, suggest that this readily available source of water was a catalyst for settlement on this part of the western valley slope. The pattern of farming evidenced by today's Lakeland landscape was originated by the Norman settlers from the 11th century, who introduced a feudal system of rights, and a system of utilising both the upland and lowland areas.

4 Surviving historical features within the conservation area

Summary of surviving historical features:

- Historic route between Askham and Bampton;
- Historic secondary route from Helton up to Heltonhead and the fells to the west;
- Tightly clustered linear settlement of farms and dwellings dating principally from the 17th and early 18th century;
- Pattern of ‘toft’ development and back lanes and driftways;
- The village green;
- Location of historic wells, such as ‘Mark’s Well’;
- Remnants of strip field system of farming;
- Two farms, Fell Gate Farm and Lowside Farm, each listed grade II, and other houses with associated barns;
- Helton Methodist Chapel, 1857, grade II;
- The Hall, the former school house, a Significant Unlisted Building.

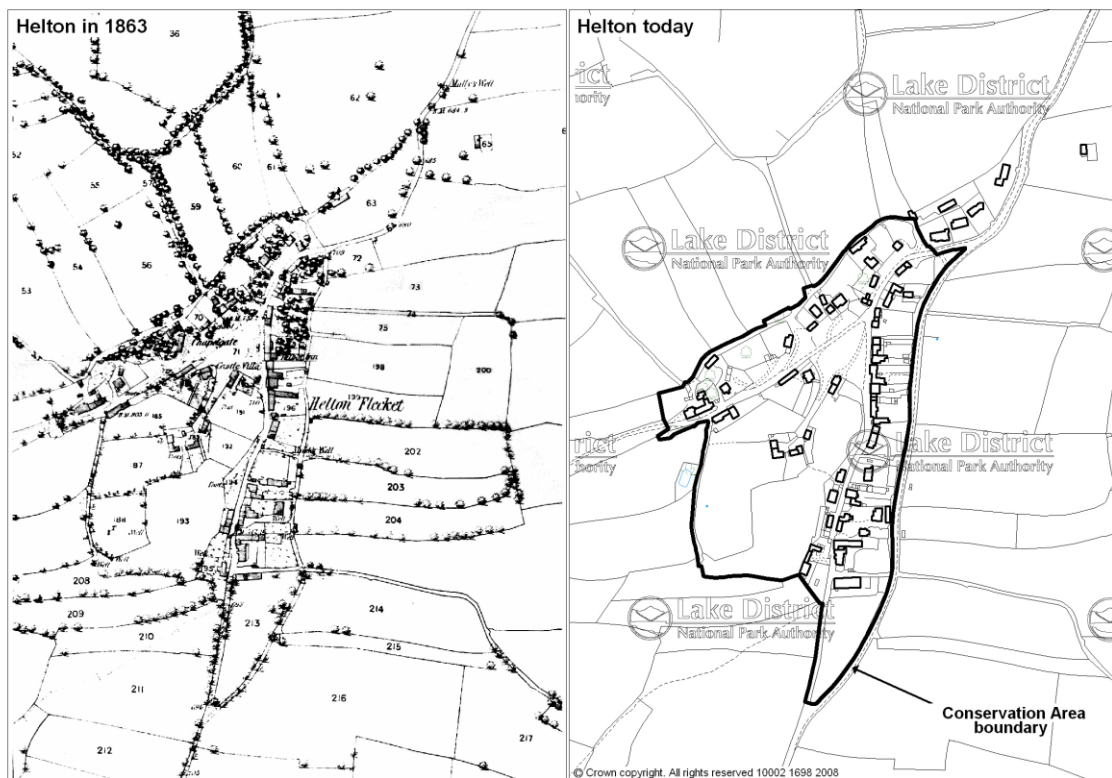


Fig. 5: The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1863 reveals how little has changed in the settlement of Helton today.

5 The character and appearance of the conservation area

Street pattern and building plots

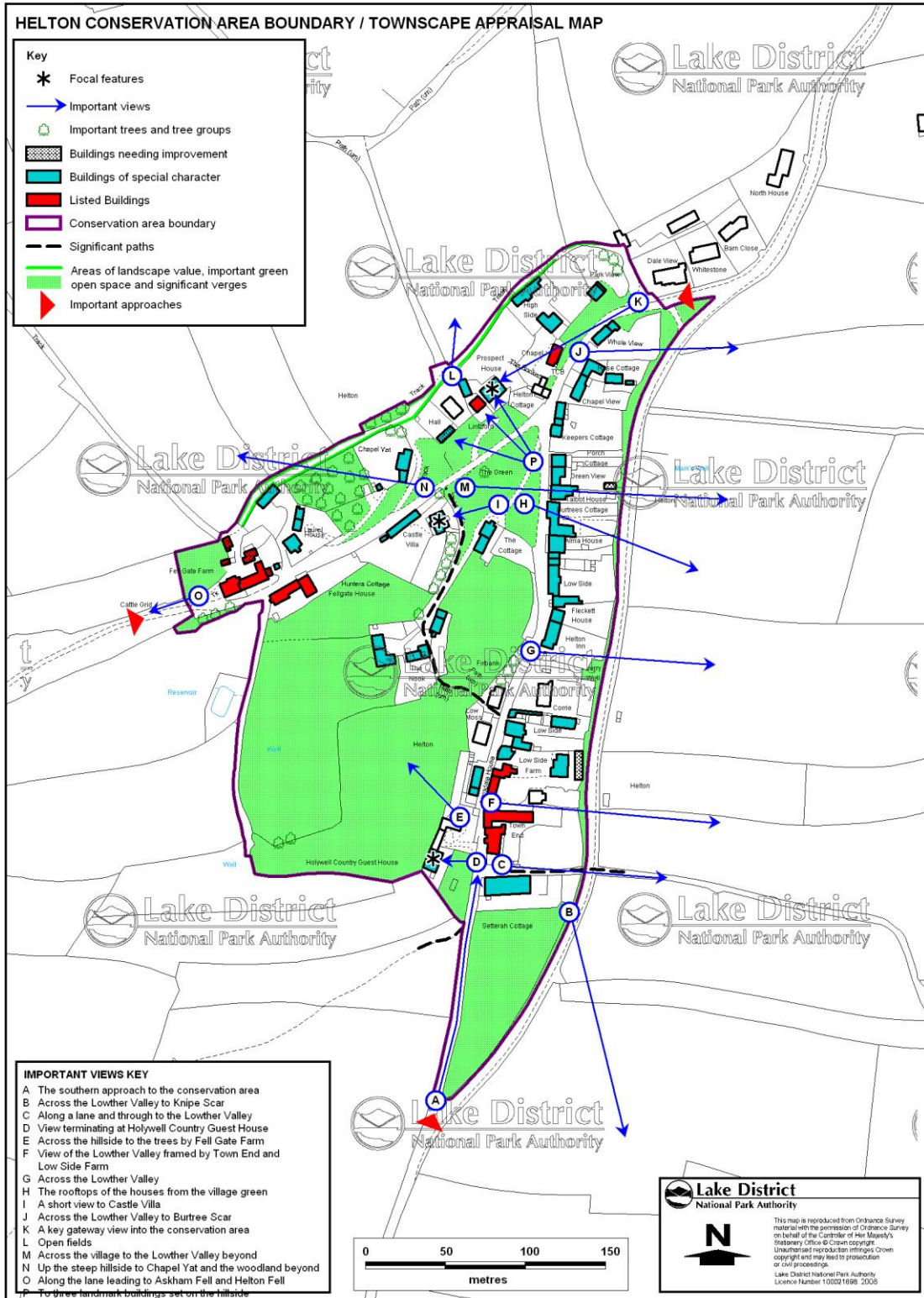
The pattern of development within Helton reflects the growth of the settlement along the historic route between Askham and Bampton, and the connecting track up to Heltonhead and the fells.

The densest development tightly encloses the eastern side of a lower lane which branches in an arc from the Askham to Bampton road, rejoining the main road to the south of the village. Generously sized building plots run between this lane and the main road to the east, and a series of narrow grassy tracks permeate between some of the plots. These tracks introduce breaks into what is otherwise a near-continuous building line on the eastern side of the lane. Such a settlement pattern is the result of toft development; these long, narrow plots extended from the village green to a back lane, with the 'townfields' beyond. The pattern of strip fields of the 'townfield' is clearly visible to the east of the conservation area; the fields were cultivated by individual farmers on a non-rotation basis, and were served by a system of field barns.

On the toft was the farmstead and a garden. Helton is characterised as a single-row settlement, with the tofts set out alongside of each other on one side of the lane, facing west across the village green. This green did not become a formal village green until after the 17th century, prior to this the land would have been meadow or pasture. However, some more scattered development on the western side of the village gives partial enclosure to that side of the triangular green. Gardens and outbuildings lie to the rear of the dwellings. However, there is a symbiotic relationship between the dwelling houses and the associated agricultural buildings. Houses and barns are tightly grouped to produce a harmonious arrangement, and houses present a formal face to the farmyard as well as to the lane, and some barns are set directly on the lane amongst the terraces of cottages. Arched entrances to the cartshed are a common feature. Such planned villages and townships developed as part of a system of communal farming and manorial administration.

Where there were gaps in the rows, these 'driftways' gave common access to the townfields and ultimately to the waste or fell. A back lane ran along the end of the tofts, giving common access to the tofts or driftways. One such historic lane extending through past Town End into the fields to the east is Millkeld Sike; the lane survives. The two back lanes are shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1863: one of the back lanes is now the Askham to Bampton road; the other is the back lane which forms the north-western boundary of the conservation area.

Fig 6 Townscape appraisal Map



Immediately to the west of the principal linear development the land climbs sharply up the hillside, across the public open space of the village green. Perhaps as a result of this topography the west side of the lane has historically been relatively free from development, with only a couple of buildings located opposite Low Side Farm and Town End. Between the production of the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1863 and the subsequent edition of 1899, Holywell was constructed on a plot cleared of an earlier building which was set immediately onto the lane. Holywell was constructed at the rear of the plot, thereby setting it on higher ground, presumably to afford clear views across the Lowther Valley.



Fig.7: The back lane forming the north-western boundary of the conservation area is overgrown and impassible in places.

A scattered distribution of buildings characterise the hillside which rises to the west of the lane. These typically face eastwards across the village green. There is some regularity of development, with tofts and a back lane, and the buildings are typically large detached houses, dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, set out to take advantage of the expansive views. A good linear pattern is formed where the plots follow the contours of the hillside. The principal access to these was historically from a lane which enclosed the north-west side of the village; this lane is now an overgrown rear lane, impassible in places, and a new more formal lane leads out to Heltonhead.

With the exception of a few late 20th century houses, the street pattern and buildings within Helton stand as they were represented on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1863.

Townscape analysis

The conservation area comprises a small rural hamlet. The built form of Helton is the product of a combination of early scattered farmsteads which have been incorporated into a more formal pattern of development based on the toft system of plot arrangement, with the settlement focused around a central triangular village green. The built development is principally ranged along two routes, with buildings set directly onto the lane, and with plots extending to a back lane. One of these back lanes now forms the Askham to Bampton road. The other back lane is an under utilised trackway and it is the front lane that is the principal route out to Heltonhead and Askham Fell.



Fig. 8: The buildings ranged along the upper level of the village framing the green are of various dates and styles, but follow a linear pattern expressed by the historic lane.

The most cohesive stretch of townscape is the near-continuous range of buildings which run along the eastern side of the hamlet. These buildings are set on the lower lane of this hillside settlement, to the west of which the hillside climbs to an upper lane and more scattered development. The lower lane meanders along its course; views open up as the lane twists and turns in direction, contributing to subtle shifts in the orientation of the buildings which front the lane. The buildings on the lower lane are predominantly 17th and 18th century in date. They are of two storeys in height, and typically take the three-bay, single room deep, cottage plan. As the lane climbs gently along a ridge on the hillside from south to north, so the buildings step up the slope; this stepped roofline is an attractive feature when viewed from the village green and the upper lane. On the narrow lane itself, a strong sense of enclosure is created by the strong building line on the east side and by the steep grass bank of the village green which rises to the west. Breaks in the building line created by the historic tracks of the 'driftways' permit views through to rear gardens and eastwards across the Lowther Valley. These views are attractively framed by the buildings on either side of the opening, such as that between the barns of Town End and Low Side Farm.

The upper lane has a less cohesive character than the lower lane. Dispersed early 18th century buildings and 19th century infill border the north-west side of the lane as it climbs steeply from the foot of the village up toward the fells. The lane itself is sketchily defined in places, where houses are set back from the track on the edge of the extensive village green. There is a spacious open character on this upper hillside part of the village; the village green falls steeply away to the east providing far-reaching views across the rooftops of the lower village and the Lowther Valley beyond. The houses on the upper lane are typically detached and set in defined garden plots, and views extend westwards to the areas of woodland within the fields to the rear.



Fig. 9: The lower lane of the village is tightly enclosed by continuous built development on the east side and the steep bank of the village green on the west side.

Summary of townscape features

- Pattern of toft development ranged along a lower lane and an upper lane, with plots running through from these lanes to back lanes;
- Lanes meander along ridges of the hillside;
- Small tracks, 'driftways' link the front and back lanes;
- The two lanes diverge to encompass two sides of a triangular village green;
- Near-continuous built development of cottages and farm buildings ranged on the east side of the lower lane;
- Scattered development ranged along the north-west side of the upper lane;
- Expansive views eastwards across the Lowther Valley.

Focal points, views and vistas

These are shown on the Townscape Appraisal Map, as follows:

- A – To the north, from the southern approach to the conservation area, along a hedge-lined lane toward Town End;
- B – To the south-east, along the shallow Lowther Valley, and beyond as the land rises toward Knipe Scar;
- C – To the east, along a narrow lane, through to the shallow Lowther Valley;
- D – Short westwards view terminating at the east front of Holywell Country Guest;
- E – To the south-west, up across the hillside which rises to the west, and the trees ranged along lane at Fell Gate Farm;
- F – To the east, the view of the Lowther Valley framed by the buildings of Town End and Low Side Farm;
- G – To the east, across the Lowther Valley;
- H – To the south-east from the village green, over the rooftops of the houses;
- I – To the west, a short view to Castle Villa;
- J – To the east, across the Lowther Valley, to Burtree Scar;
- K – To the south-west, a key entrance view into the conservation area and encompassing views of Whale View, High Side, Prospect House, Rose Cottage, Chapel View and Chapel Yat;
- L – To the north, across fields;
- M – Far-reaching views eastwards over the village green, the rooftops of the houses and to the Lowther Valley beyond;
- N – To the west, looking up the steep hillside to Chapel Yat and the woodland beyond;
- O – To the west, across fields and along the lane leading to Askham and Helton Fells;
- P – To the north-west, to three landmark buildings set in a prominent location on the hillside: Prospect House, Lintzford, and the Hall.

Fig. 10: Some of the significant views in to, within, and out from the conservation area.



The view north into the conservation area takes in rural fields and one of the lanes.



Many of the historic 'driftways' survive, including this one which connects across the valley to Millkeld Sike.



The view westwards up the slope of the village green is terminated by the row of buildings on the upper lane. The mature oak tree is an important local landmark.



Views southwards across the village green encompass The Cottage and Castle Villa.



Some of the most scenic views within the village are gained from the upper levels of the village green looking across the Lowther Valley.



Views from the village green extend across the valley to Burtree Scar.



The lower lane is characterised by breaks in the building line which allow clear views through to the valley beyond.



The northern entrance to the village provides a picturesque scene, with 'layers' of buildings stepping up the hillside.



Beyond Fell Gate Farm the village ends and there is a view across fields to outlying farm buildings.



The track which leads to Heltonhead Farm is bordered by fields contained by limestone rubble walls.



The back lane, now the Askham to Bampton Road, is bordered by the gardens of the lower lane.



From the Askham to Bampton road there are good views of the western elevations of houses and the farm buildings which are located on the rear plots.

Current activities and uses

Helton developed as an agricultural settlement and there continue to be two farms within the village, Low Side Farm and Fell Gate Farm, and the surrounding land shows clear evidence of the pattern of strip fields. The village is currently principally in residential use, with a number of former agricultural buildings converted to this use or are used for storage. Further buildings which have been converted to residential include the former Methodist Chapel and the Helton Inn.

A network of public footpaths and bridleways traverse the village, linking the settlement with the surrounding countryside, of the Lowther Valley to the east, and climbing to Askham Fell in the west.

Open spaces, landscape and trees

The triangular village green forms the single-most important public open space within the conservation area. The green is set on the hillside, and while historically the buildings have been positioned to look 'inward' across the green, thereby enclosing the space on three sides, the underlying topography has contributed to a lower tier of buildings on the eastern side of the green, with an upper tier of buildings hugging the hillside to the north-west. A single imposing oak tree is a distinctive feature of the green.

Since the 19th century, the village green has been increasingly segmented by formal lanes and driveway approaches to houses, thereby creating the appearance of wide grass verges from parts of the green along the north-west side. Verges are an important feature of the conservation area, contributing to the rural character

Boundaries

Walls constructed from roughly hewn limestone are the prevalent boundary treatment throughout the conservation area, both for field boundaries and to border domestic plots. This consistent use of stone walls reinforces the visual and functional relationship



Fig. 11: Limestone rubble boundary walls are a distinctive feature of the conservation area.

between the village and the surrounding landscape of farmsteads and fields. The walls are capped with stones laid vertically on edge, creating a jagged profile. There are select instances of the use of large boulder cobbles to cap a wall and this creates a softer profile.

There is some limited use of estate railings to border fields in the conservation area, and occasional use of native species hedgerows. The Methodist Chapel is contained by a dwarf wall surmounted by cast iron railings.

Public realm: floorscape, street lighting and street furniture

The floorscape of the conservation area is prevalently rural in character, with a combination of tarmac and unsurfaced lanes. There are no road markings or pavements, and instead grass verges border the lanes and soften the edges of the hard surfaces. Fragmentary stretches of historic surfaces survive and these cobbled areas add textural



Fig. 12: Stretches of historic cobbled floorscape add textural interest and definition to tarmac roadways.

interest and definition to the conservation area. An area of cobbles survive to the west of Town End; the cobbles are laid to border the lane and are edged by larger boulders. The east side of the lane running from the former Helton Inn to Alma House is cobbled. A further area of cobbles defines the entrance to the cartshed at Fell Gate Farm. The cobbles, rounded by water or glacial action, would have been collected from fields and rivers.

Street lighting within the public realm is minimal, with an intermittent dispersal of fluorescent lights mounted onto buildings. An ER post box stands on the village green

and a red telephone box sits immediately on the verge to the north of The Rockery. A wooden bench and a picnic table are been arranged at the top of the village green to provide a resting place for those wishing to take in the far reaching views from this vantage point. A timber and cast-iron bench at the northern end of the conservation area serves as seating for those awaiting the bus service.

6 The buildings of the conservation area

Architectural styles, materials and detailing

The buildings within the Helton Conservation Area date from the 17th to the 20th centuries. The prevalent types of buildings in Helton are two-storey houses, of a single room deep, and set under a pitched roof, with a large chimney stack at either end. Many of the houses are accompanied by outbuildings set on the rear plot, either in attached or detached form. There are two larger farmsteads, Low Side Farm (grade II) and Fell Gate Farm (grade II). These buildings are predominantly 17th, 18th, and 19th century in date. There are a number of good examples of 17th century datestones, although some of these are ex-situ. The datestone at Town End (grade II) reads W & AL/1667, and that at Low Side Farm, ex-situ on the barn, reads I & EL/1642. A further datestone can be found above an infilled doorway at Whale View: IF/ 1696.



Fig. 13: Park View is an example of the vernacular cottages prevalent in the village.

Houses in the village are typically characterised by the use of roughcast render over rubble stone; this render is a particular feature where limestone is the walling stone. Articulation is provided by stone window and door surrounds, which are often painted to

contrast with the render. In Helton, it is likely that these were fashioned from an easily workable imported sandstone; the worked stone dressings provided by a mason, and the remainder of the building raised by a waller. The use of stone window and door surrounds is a vernacular tradition; it is the variances in the proportions of the openings and the method of glazing which suggest the period of construction. Some of the earliest domestic buildings in the village display square windows with chamfered surrounds, in combination with mullion windows. Town End provides good examples of each type, although the original fixed leaded lights have been replaced with multi-paned timber fixed lights or vertically sliding sash windows. Such squat window proportions reflect the low floor-to-ceiling heights of the internal spaces. Buildings of 18th and 19th century date

typically have a symmetrical fenestration arrangement typical of the Georgian period, with vertical windows set in square-cut surrounds. The more recent the building, the larger the window opening tends to be, and the fewer panes used in the sliding sashes, such as the late 19th century Holywell.

There are many farm buildings within the conservation area. These are recognisable through the use of various design details associated with the specific function of the structure and the use of unrendered stone for construction of the walls. There are a few stone houses within the village, free from a render coat, such as Fell Gate Farm, Burtrees Cottage and Whale View, but typically it is the agricultural buildings which are of stone. The grade II listed barn at Low Side Farm displays the use of 'through' stones; these are a notable feature of limestone construction. Stone for construction purposes would have been quarried locally; the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1899 marks 'Old Quarry' immediately to the west of the village. Barns display features such as cartshed openings, ventilation slits; nesting boxes and loft level doors.

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:

- Helton Methodist Chapel – Grade II;
- Lintzford – Grade II;
- Fell Gate Farmhouse and former barn adjoining – Grade II;
- Hunters Cottage – Grade II;
- Lowside Farmhouse and attached barn – Grade II;
- Town End House and attached barn – Grade II.

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.

Fig. 14: Some features of the agricultural buildings in Helton.



The barn at Low Side Farm has been converted but retains the former cartshed entrance. It also provides a good example of the use of 'throughstones'.



Nesting boxes in a gable wall of a barn at Low Side Farm.



The small field barns are a distinctive feature within the strip fields which surround the conservation area.



A large barn at Low Side Farm displays square ventilation holes.



Limestone rubble walls are the predominant boundary treatment for fields.



This single storey barn has a large cartshed entrance and vertical slit ventilation holes.

Fig. 15: Some features of the domestic buildings of Helton.



A 17th century doorway at Town End.



A blocked 17th century doorway at Whale View.



Square windows at Town End House display a mixture of flat mullions and chamfered reveals.



The farmhouse at Fell Gate Farm is a rare example of an un-rendered domestic building.



The red sandstone for these steps would have been imported from the Penrith area.



Early 19th century Rose Cottage shows a departure from the vernacular tradition.

7 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, and the introduction of timber top-hung 'mock' sash windows 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 a number of instances where porches have been erected on the entrance fronts of historic buildings, which in some cases has had a negative impact on the appearance and character of the building.

Inappropriate additions to buildings

There are a number of instances where accretions such as satellite dishes and extractor vents have been made on the elevations or chimney stacks of the historic buildings. Such additions are highly visible, particularly given the topography of the area which enables clear views of the roofscape from the upper slopes of the village green, and detract from the character of the historic environment.

Uncoordinated public realm

There is a cluster of street furniture and signage located at the northern end of the village green. One of the strengths of the conservation area is the rural appearance of the lanes and open green spaces, however this part of the village green could be enhanced through a rationalisation of the design and placement of the objects and signage. The wirescape of telephone and electricity supply wires is also prominent in the village and would benefit from improvement.

Building maintenance and repair

Buildings in the conservation area are generally in a good state of repair. One building, The Hall, is considered to be in serious risk of rapid decay; the building is located on the highly visible north-west side of the village green and as an important focal building, its repair and retention would be a significant improvement to that part of the conservation area. Some of the stone farm buildings and outbuildings within the conservation area are also in a poor state of repair.

Design of new development

There has been little 20th century development within Helton. However, some of the recent buildings, houses and garages, fail to preserve or enhance the established character of 17th to 19th century cottages and farm buildings prevalent throughout the conservation area. The 20th century development has generally not reflected the traditional details or palette of materials of the historic buildings nor is it high quality yet compatible contemporary architecture.

Loss and alteration of traditional stone boundary walls

The limestone rubble boundary walls are an attractive feature of the conservation area and are generally maintained throughout the village. There is an occasional loss of sections of walling through lack of maintenance, such as along the overgrown lane which forms the north-western boundary of the conservation area. The loss of these traditional stone walls detracts from the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Fig. 16: Examples of negative features and issues in Helton.



Replacement windows which do not follow a traditional glazing pattern are detrimental to the character of a historic building.



Top-hung 'mock sash' windows.



UPVC windows at Castle Villa are detrimental to the character and appearance of historic buildings.



Some 20th century infill development does not preserve or enhance the character of the area.



Modern garages which do not reflect the local building traditions or construction materials.



Modern garages which do not reflect the local building traditions or construction materials.



Some areas of the public realm could benefit from an enhancement scheme.



Modern farm buildings detract from the setting of historic agricultural structures.



The former school house fronting the green is in poor condition.



Some structures in the conservation area are in poor condition.



Some historic buildings have had porches added in the 20th century.



Satellite dishes in visible locations are an inappropriate addition on historic buildings.

PART 2 CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Legislative background

The designation and appraisal of any conservation area is not an end in itself. The purpose of this document is to present proposals to achieve the preservation and enhancement of the conservation area's special character, informed by the appraisal, and to consult the local community about these proposals. The special qualities of the area have been identified as part of the appraisal process in the first section of this document and both will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a regular basis.

This guidance draws upon the themes identified in Section 7 of the conservation area appraisal 'Negative features and issues'. 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 document 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) and the Regional Spatial Strategy 2008, together with guidance leaflets including 'Converting an old building?' and 'Outdoor advertisements and signs'.

It is important that the development control process ensures the preservation of special character and that opportunities are taken to identify and implement enhancements. However, it is recognised that any such improvements may have to be initiated and co-ordinated by the Lake District National Park Authority, working with the Authority's partners and other funding bodies.

1.2 Designation and extension

As part of the appraisal process to identify the special architectural and historic interest of Helton and to designate the village as a conservation area, the boundary was tightly drawn to include only the area identified as being of significant value.

1.3 Statutory controls

Designation as a conservation area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the "preservation and enhancement" of the area. These controls

include requiring Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of any unlisted building, restrictions on advertisements, and requiring notice for proposed tree works.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The Authority will seek to ensure that all development within the conservation area seeks to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area in accordance with local, county and regional policies and other guidance.

1.4 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 presently six listed buildings within the conservation area.

Extensions and alterations to listed buildings should conform with policies outlined in section 1.1 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The Authority will seek to ensure that all works to listed buildings seek to preserve the building together with its setting and any features of architectural or historic interest which it may possess in accordance with local, county and regional policies and other guidance.

1.5 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). The Authority will encourage all applications for extensions and alterations to these buildings to be particularly carefully considered and will use its powers where appropriate to ensure that owners do not allow buildings or sites to fall into disrepair or poor condition so that they harm the character and appearance of the conservation area.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The Authority will ensure that all Significant Unlisted Buildings (as identified on the Townscape Appraisal map) are protected from inappropriate forms of development or unjustified demolition.

1.6 Erosion of character and additional planning control

The appraisal identified that the following alterations pose a threat to the special character of the area:

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

The National Park is a 'designated area' and as such there are restrictions on minor development such as the installation of a satellite dish, for all dwellings within the National Park, regardless of whether they are within a conservation area or not. Minor alterations can cumulatively have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of a conservation area.

The Authority could seek to avoid the loss of traditional features by introducing a further level of control via an Article 4 Direction, to manage alterations to single family dwelling houses, such as putting up porches, changing roofing material or changing distinctive doors and windows.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The Authority will seek to consider the need for Article 4 Directions, on a case by case basis, to ensure that the special qualities of Significant Unlisted Buildings are protected.

1.7 Trees

Within conservation areas, anyone intending lopping or felling a tree greater than 75mm diameter at 1.5 metres above the ground must give the Authority six weeks written notice before starting the work. This provides the Authority 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 a Tree Preservation Order may be served. 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. There is also the need to replace and manage trees on an ongoing basis and the Authority will work with District and Parish Councils and other stakeholders to achieve appropriate enhancements.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The Authority 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.

1.8 Setting and views

The setting of the conservation area is very important and development which impacts in a detrimental way upon the immediate setting and longer views into and from the conservation area will be resisted. The important views are identified on the Townscape Appraisal map in the character appraisal. The Authority will seek to ensure that all development serves to respect these important views.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The Authority will seek to ensure that all development respects the important views within, into and from the conservation area, as identified in the appraisal. The Authority will seek to ensure that these remain protected from inappropriate forms of development and that due regard is paid to these views in the formulation of public realm works or enhancement schemes.

1.9 New development, re-development, alterations and extensions

There are few opportunities for large-scale redevelopment within the conservation area, although some improvement or enlargement of the existing buildings may be possible subject to very rigorous controls, and there may occasionally be sites where completely new development is acceptable. However, in the conservation area, where the quality of the general environment is already acknowledged by designation, the Authority will encourage good quality schemes that respond positively to their historic setting. This includes the encouragement of high quality contemporary design and materials. Applications will be determined in relation to the policies outlined in section 1.1 above and other published guidance.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The Authority will determine applications with regard to the local, county and regional policies and other published guidance and seek to encourage good quality design and materials.

1.10 Boundary treatments

Traditionally, most boundaries in the conservation area are defined by limestone rubble walls. There is a small loss of these walls where routine maintenance and rebuilding of fallen sections has been neglected.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The Authority will seek to resist proposals to remove traditional boundary walls or for new boundary treatments which fail to respect the form and materials of traditional boundary treatments in the area.

1.11 The public realm and enhancement

The appraisal has identified limited stretches of historic cobbled floorscape within the conservation area. The present road layout reflects the historic street pattern and this is unlikely to be vulnerable to future change, although highway signage and other structures can serve to detract from the quality of the public realm and character of the area. The rationalization and improvement of overhead cables would also benefit the conservation area.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The Authority will work with the County, District and Parish Council, utility companies and other stakeholders to ensure that any highway and public realm works bring a positive improvement to the conservation area and to ensure that surviving areas of historic floorscape are retained.

2 MONITORING AND REVIEW

The following actions are recommended to ensure that this appraisal and management proposals are accepted and acted upon by the local community:

2.1 Boundary review

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The Authority will seek to continue to review the boundary of the conservation area in accordance with Best Practice and guidance on the management of the historic environment.

2.2 Public consultation

The Proposed Helton 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 on the 15 February. This included placing the document on the Authority's website and the provision of a public exhibition at Askham Parish Hall. The document has subsequently been amended to incorporate relevant suggestions and comments.

2.3 Document review

This document should be reviewed every five 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.

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