

**Ravenglass Conservation Area**  
Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan  
February 2013



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## **RAVENGLASS CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN**

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## Summary of special interest

The special interest that justifies designation of the Ravenglass Conservation Area derives from the following features:

- Distinctive estuarine setting nestled at the confluence of the Rivers Esk, Mite and Irt;
- Sea-side location between the Irish sea and the Lakeland fells;
- Medieval street pattern of main street with side lanes to ancient field system and the shore;
- Historic layout of medieval market place comprising open space enclosed by buildings with narrow pinchpoints at either end to restrain animals or for defensive purposes;
- The prevalent use of local building stone for walls and roofs, notably local cobblestone, sandstone, slate and granite, reflecting the underlying geology of the area;
- Common use of roughcast render;
- Almost all buildings have architectural and historic interest, including two listed buildings (Pennington House and The Bay Horse) and many others which make a positive contribution to the area's historic character and appearance;
- Good examples of 18th and early 19<sup>th</sup> century provincial dwellings together with a few vernacular farm buildings;
- Characteristic Victorian dwellings (e.g. Wells Cottages) and municipal buildings (e.g. Parish Hall) built in the Arts and Crafts style;
- Stone-built mid/late 19<sup>th</sup> century railway buildings, notably goods and engine sheds, stations and signal box, associated with both the Whitehaven and Furness Junction Railway and the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway;
- Buildings developed by the Muncaster Estate at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, e.g. Parish Hall and adjoining buildings, Clifton Terrace, Wells Cottages;
- Seaward views across the estuary from the edge of the conservation area which give the area a strong maritime feel;
- Trees and greenery that soften the streetscene, most notably beside the approach road before the mainline railway bridge;
- The Green, a public open space overlooking the estuary, and Millennium Garden, a small square with seating and pebble mosaic both of which are registered Village Greens;
- Small items that add to Ravenglass's local identity and recognisable sense of place, e.g. datestones, GR post box, cobbled surfaces.

## 1 Introduction

Ravenglass Conservation Area includes the historic medieval core and an area of late 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the village of Ravenglass on the west coast of Cumbria. It is one of 21 designated conservation areas in the Lake District National Park.

In brief, the special architectural and historic character of Ravenglass Conservation Area derives from its very pleasant historic village street of mainly 18<sup>th</sup> century and early 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings (two of which are grade II listed) together with adjoining developments associated with the coming of railways, mainline and narrow-gauge, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The village has a fine estuarine location at the confluence of the Rivers Mite, Irt and Esk.

The special historic character and appearance of the village reflects its former role as a port, market place and railway junction. The miniature Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway is a major attraction. The village retains a simple form with a continuous street frontage and intimate grouping of houses. This give a visual unity of style and character to the village as well as being functional in providing shelter in this exposed coastal position.



*Fig 1 Sea wall that forms part of Ravenglass flood defences at The Green.*



*Fig 2 The Parish Hall was built at the expense of Lord Muncaster in 1878.*

The Ravenglass Conservation Area was designated on 7 April 1981 by the Lake District National Park Authority and re-designated on 22 May 2001, at which time the boundary was extended beyond Main Street to include railway-associated buildings and late 19<sup>th</sup> century houses (Railway Terrace, Wells Cottages) on the east side of the mainline railway. 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 *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (March 2011). Additional government guidance regarding the management of historic assets and conservation areas is set out within the *National Planning Policy Framework* (March 2012).



Fig 3 Datestone on Clifton Terrace, rebuilt by the Muncaster Estate.



Fig 4 Pebble mosaic made by Maggie Howarth at The Millennium Garden off Main Street.

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 Ravenglass Conservation Area can be assessed. It should be read in conjunction with the wider adopted development plan policy framework produced by the Lake District National Park Authority. These documents include:

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

(ii) *The Lake District National Park Core Strategy (adopted 2010)*: Policy CS27 “The acclaimed historic environment”.

Survey work for this document and the accompanying townscape appraisal map was carried out during September 2010. The omission of any building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is not of interest.

## 2 Location and setting

### Location

Ravenglass is situated on the west coast of Cumbria at the end of a spur road off the main A595, without through traffic. It lies within the Parish of Muncaster and is the only coastal village within the Lake District National Park.

The nearby A595 runs north-south near to the coast. Minor roads link the area to the Lake District fells and some nearby settlements. The location is remote from many of the other main Lake District settlements and, indeed, from many other principal Cumbrian towns. Broughton in Furness is the nearest Lake District settlement of any notable size, some 19 miles away, reached by the circuitous coast road or a more direct but minor road over Corney Fell. Whitehaven and Barrow are 17 miles and 36 miles to the north and south respectively. The smaller coastal settlements of Seascale and Sellafield are much closer and more easily reached.



*Fig 5 Late afternoon sun on the estuary of the River Esk close to Ravenglass.*



*Fig 6 Rear of Main Street viewed from the shore.*

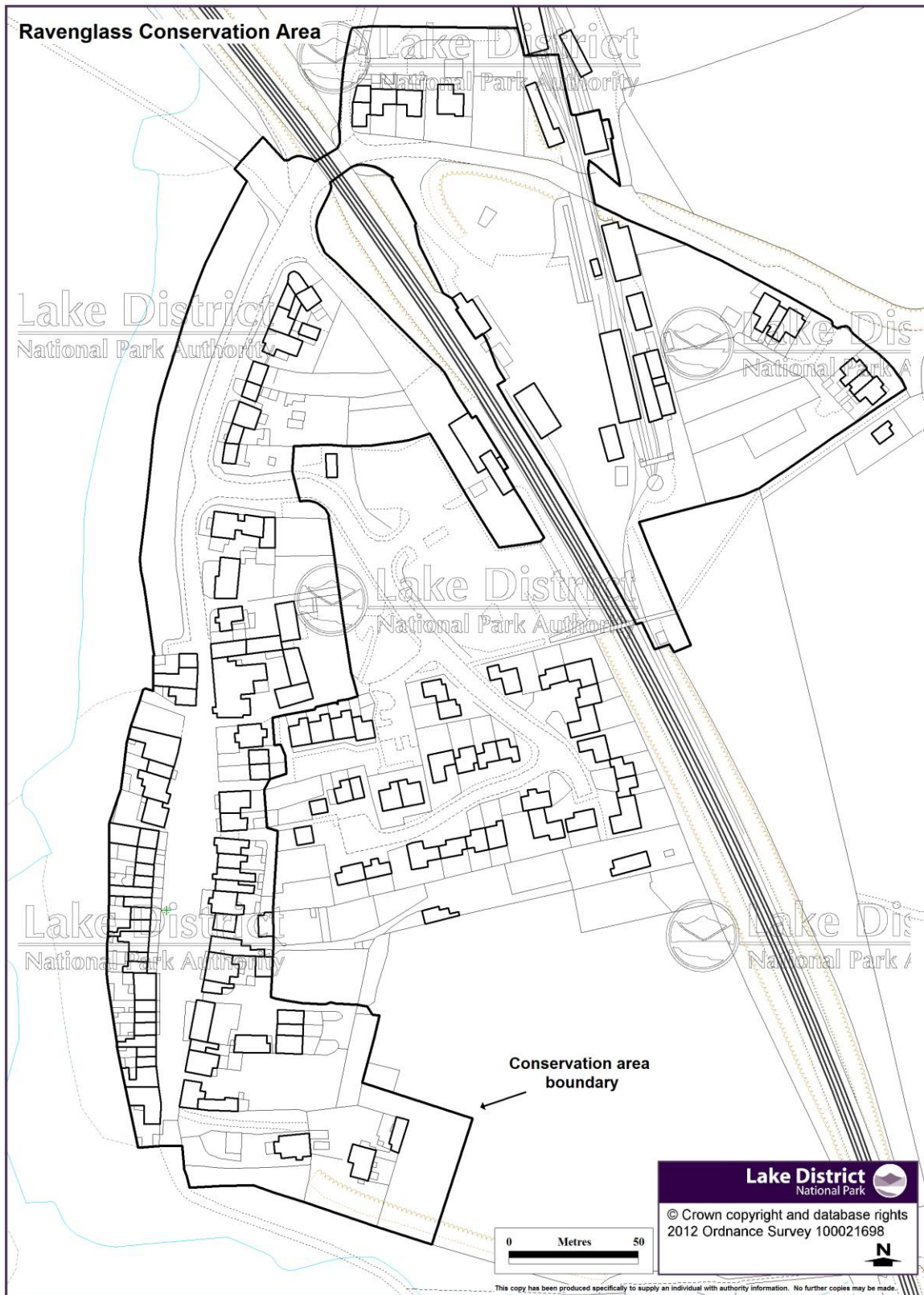
Ravenglass is served by the Cumbrian Coast railway line running from Lancaster to Carlisle via Barrow in Furness. It is also home to the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, a scenic narrow-gauge steam railway which provides services to and from Eskdale. The village is on Cycle Route 72 which links to Hadrian's Wall cycle route and the Cumbrian Coast footpath which links with the Coast to coast path at St Bees.

The extensive sands at Ravenglass attract many seabirds and waders. To the west of the village is the Ravenglass Nature Reserve which is famous for its colony of black-headed gulls and terns. To the south-west is the Eskmeals Dunes Nature Reserve.

### Boundary

The boundaries of Ravenglass Conservation Area have been drawn to enclose almost the entire village from its coastal western edge, containing the historic medieval core of the settlement (Main Street), to railway-associated development east of the mainline railway.

The sea wall and defences define the coastal western edge of the village and delineate the conservation area boundary west of Main Street. This runs from the village's southern tip past the southern flood gate to the mainline railway bridge (beside the site of the old ford across the River Mite).



To the east of Main Street, the boundary follows the rear of historic property boundaries but omits the public car park and modern residential area (Croftlands Drive, Townfield Close and Murrayfield Terrace) between the rear of Main Street and the mainline railway. This area has a late 20<sup>th</sup> century appearance which does not contribute to the otherwise historic character of the conservation area. However, the boundary detours to encompass Station Hill and the former railway station building (built in 1873 and converted to Ratty Arms Public House in 1974) which is an important element of the 19<sup>th</sup> century development of the village.



*Fig 7 The mainline railway embankment and bridge divides the village. To the left is a ford across the River Mite.*



*Fig 8 Signal box at Ravenglass Station.*

The mainline railway embankment forms a very dominant physical division in the village which effectively creates two groupings of properties, east and west. The area west of the mainline has been identified immediately above and is notable for the presence of Main Street, the linear medieval core of the village. East of the mainline railway, the conservation area boundary is notable for developments during 1850-1910 associated with the coming of the railways (1849 onwards) and development of the Muncaster Estate at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Here the boundary tightly encloses 19<sup>th</sup> century villas built for railway employees (The Beeches, Springfield), houses built by the Muncaster Estate (Wells Cottages) and railway buildings (e.g. engine sheds, station and signal box) associated with the former Furness Railway and the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway.

### **Topography and landscape setting**

Ravenglass is situated on a promontory of reclaimed salt marsh within an estuary at the confluence of three rivers – the Esk, the Irt and the Mite. Its situation is low lying with a gentle incline up to the east towards the railway line and the slopes of the Muncaster Estate. The promontory is effectively the end of Muncaster Fell, a narrow craggy outlying ridge 6km (4miles) long, reaching 231metres (758 feet) in height, aligned south-west/north-east and dividing the Mite and Esk flood plains.

The estuary and sand dunes to the east provide a degree of shelter but the situation is nevertheless exposed to the prevailing winds. To the east there is a belt of woodland which separates the coast fringe from the Estate parkland and fields.

The low-lying situation, just a few feet above high tide mark makes the town susceptible to flooding. Sea walls, a berm and gate were built after floods of 1967 and 1978 to

protect the village. At low tide the estuary sands slope gently away from the town's sea defences to create and an attractive inter-tidal foreshore.

The conservation area is situated directly on the estuary edge with woodland plantation and railway to the rear. The boundary with the estuary is sharply defined and the surrounding inter-tidal zone of sand, shingle and mud is a flat beach-like area at low tide. At high tide this area is covered with water, though it is usually possible to walk beside the water's edge or clamber over rocks.



Fig 9 The west side of Main Street directly abuts the estuary.



Fig 10 The Green, a public open space, was Wells Cottage once the site of a row of cottages.

### Geology

The Lake District comprises a mass of ancient rocks in three major bands running north-east to south-west. In the north, forming Skiddaw, Saddleback and Grassmoor is the *Skiddaw Group* (Skiddaw Slates). South of this is the central area of the *Borrowdale Volcanic Group*. The southernmost third of the Lake District is composed of sedimentary rocks known as the *Windermere Group*.

Ravenglass lies at the mouth of an estuary on a band of sandstone running along the western margin of the Lake District mass, just west of the central Borrowdale Volcanic Group which provides much of the mineral wealth of the area and contains the rugged peaks of Coniston Old Man and Scafell Pike. The sandstone intrusion runs from below Ravenglass to St Bees. Immediately to the east lies an area of granite (hence the use of the narrow gauge railway to transport granite from a mine at Beckfoot). To the west lies the offshore area of the East Irish Sea basin of younger sedimentary rocks.

### Archaeology

In a settlement such as Ravenglass, which may have origins that are Roman or earlier, origins, it is very probable that archaeological deposits may be found within the conservation area. The railway area may contain interesting features of industrial archaeology. Most of the buildings within the conservation area are themselves of archaeological interest, and are likely to retain evidence of their age, use and construction that is only likely to be uncovered during building work.

### 3 The historical development of the hamlet

Ravenglass' location by an estuary formed by three rivers is critical to its historical development. Access to the sea and a safe harbour were essential for trading, transportation and fishing.

The earliest evidence of human occupation in the area is flint-working in the sand dunes. Later the River Esk was used to transport stone axes made in Scafell and Langdale. Also important to the development of the area was the settlement's location within a relatively level coastal zone between enclosing hills to the east and sea to the west. The coastal zone was used for cultivation and formed part of the main north-south route for trade and commerce.

The construction of the Roman fort (established circa 100 AD and occupied well into the 4<sup>th</sup> century) on land nearby to the south was also significant to the development of a settlement. The presence of a Roman fort points to the strong defensive qualities of the location with rivers and estuary protecting one side. The harbour once commanded the coastline and, allied with the forts at Hardnott and Ambleside, helped to protect Hadrian's western frontier. The remains of the fort's bath-house (outside the conservation area) are known locally as Walls Castle, now in the care of English Heritage.



Fig 11 Ravenglass was an active port from the Middle Ages until the Industrial Revolution.



Fig 12 The earliest datestone in the village at No 1 Clifton Terrace, once the Robin Hood Inn.

It is not clear whether the village existed during the Roman occupation. The Latin name attributed by historians to the fort of "Glannoventa" derives from Celtic origins and may be formed from the words glan/glenn (bank, shore or landing) and venta (market, trading-station). This might suggest that the Romans landed by an existing settlement on the riverbank. The fort would clearly have attracted more people to the area and would have bolstered any nearby settlement.

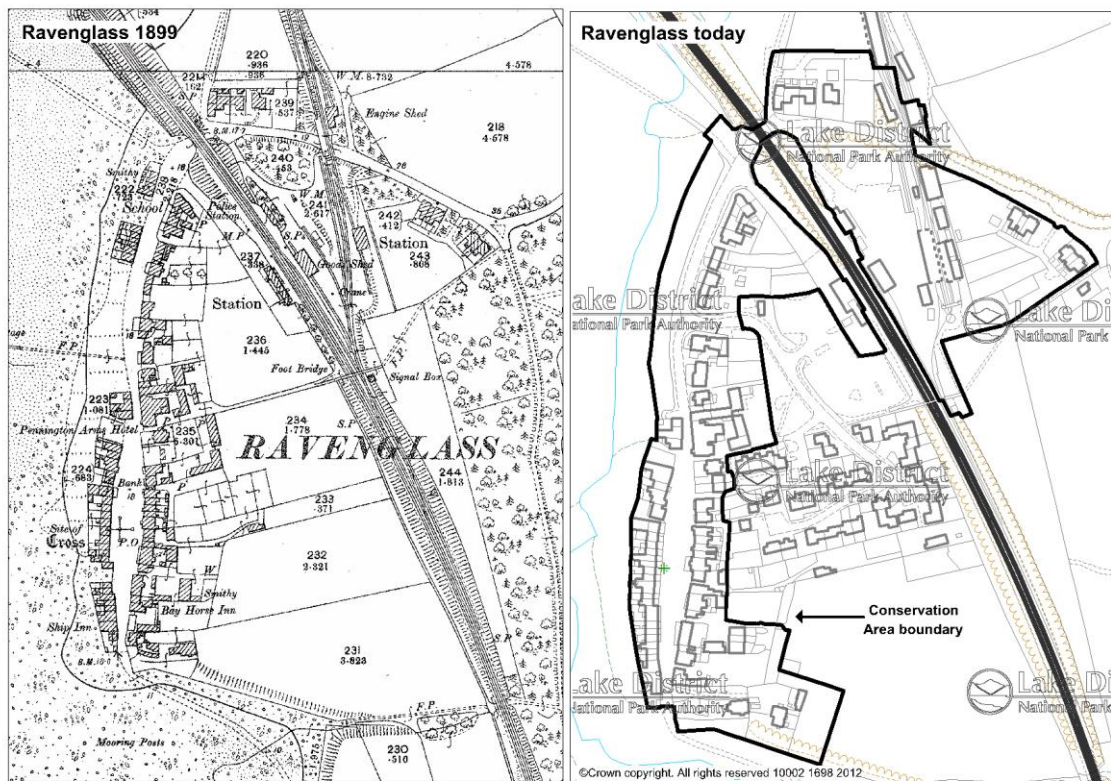
Following the Romans' departure, Anglian and Norse settlers came to the area and it is probable that the natural harbour of Ravenglass was their first point of arrival.

The first written record of *R'englas* was a gift of land for a hospital in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Following the Norman Conquest a castle and parish church were established at Muncaster. In 1208 King John gave a charter to Richard de Luci, Earl of Egremont to hold a weekly market and annual fair at Ravenglass - thereafter the village and port grew

and flourished for 500 years, until first the silting up of the estuary and then the coming of the railway put an end to commercial trade in the port.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, the port was the only natural west coast harbour between the Rivers Dee and Solway. In 1675 the annual fair was described as “a grand fair of three days long for all sorts of cattle especially and other commodities...” The town prospered up to the 18<sup>th</sup> century mainly due to trade, legal and illegal, with Ireland, the Isle of Man and Scotland. By 1738 Ravenglass had its own Mayor and Town Crier.

A market cross stood at the widest part of the street until 1774, when it was moved to the west side of the street. It was completely removed in 1885. Its approximate original position is now marked with a plaque.



With its safe harbour, market and fair, Ravenglass was at this time the busiest and principal port in the old county of Cumberland. The town was also well located on the north-south overland route along the coast and was a stopping point where travellers waited to cross nearby fords of its three rivers. A turnpike was built from 1750 through Ravenglass from Calder Bridge to Duddon Bridge.

However, the town went into decline as a port in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century due in part to the silting up of the estuary. The narrowness and depth of channel at Ravenglass led to its being unfavourably compared to the expanding port of Whitehaven, the latter also being well located in relation to the coal fields and the shipping routes to/from the Americas.

Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the fair had ceased to prosper. Sir John Pennington obtained a charter in 1775 for a weekly market and three fairs of one day each but they received little support. William Daniell's 'A Voyage Around Great Britain', published in the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, describes "a dirty ragged, forlorn looking town which...may be pronounced the most miserable place in the kingdom..."

The opening of the Whitehaven and Furness Junction Railway to Ravenglass in 1849 (with connections to a main line by 1857), and the gradual growth of tourism in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century, helped the local economy but failed to arrest the decline of the village as market and port. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Lord Muncaster funded the construction of Wells Cottages and municipal buildings by Station Hill (Infant and Church School, Police House and a Public Hall). The Beeches and Springfield were built between the two railway bridges c. 1885 but plans for further houses and to expand the village as a resort came to nothing.



Fig 13 The Pennington family 'wildcat' emblem on the wall of the Pennington Hotel.



Fig 14 Plaque marking the site of the Market Cross removed in 1885. (copyright M Harrington)

From 1873-75 the narrow-gauge Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway (R & ER), known affectionately as 'La'al Ratty', was built for shipping iron ore from Eskdale and for passenger traffic. The iron ore transportation did not prosper but passenger operation continued. In 1915, after two years of closure, the line was relaid with a new and narrower 15 inch gauge track, ¼ scale model engines were introduced and a more profitable period for the railway commenced.

Although granite hauled from nearby quarries for road improvements kept the railway in operation during the 1920s, it was ultimately the growth of tourism which sustained the revival of the R & ER. Today, trains still run into the Lakeland mountains on a scenic narrow gauge railway started 135 years ago.



*Fig 15 The Ratty Arms was once Ravenglass Station designed in 1873 by Paley & Austin.*



*Fig 16 Former school and police station, Main Street.*

Gibraltar Row, a row of cottages beside the old ford across the River Mite (roughly opposite today's Parish Hall), was demolished at the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Only two properties were built around the village between the wars despite a building boom occurring elsewhere in the country. It is notable that almost all the buildings within the conservation date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier.

In view of its coastal situation Ravenglass has been susceptible to flooding. After serious floods in 1967 and 1978, a flood prevention scheme including sea-walls, new drains and a storm gate were built to protect the village. In the 1980s a small modern housing estate was built on the old Town Fields between Main Street and the curve of the railway. Today the village has a population of about 200 residents.

#### **4 The character and appearance of the conservation area**

##### **Historic layout and street pattern**

Ravenglass has a typical and distinctive historic medieval street plan and, although buildings have no doubt been re-built, the basic layout has probably changed little since the granting of a market charter in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The wide market place of the Main Street, lined with buildings, was laid out, evolved or adapted principally to facilitate a weekly market. While the narrow defensible entries to Main Street were possibly defensive, especially given the proximity of the turbulent border, it is also likely that the pinchpoints at either end of the street would have enabled livestock to be penned while allowing room for market trading.

The north-south orientation of the street and the close-knit arrangement of buildings to the west also would have provided shelter to the market place from the weather, particularly given the exposed location in relation to the prevailing wind. It is notable that the dwellings to the exposed west side are more humble than those on the more sheltered (and, before modern heating, probably more desirable) east side. The main street is a cul de sac road, although this was not always so, as the old coastal road went through Ravenglass via a number of fords and ramshackle bridges.

To the east side of Main Street, buildings were once at the head of long narrow plots, which were probably laid out following the foundation of the market. Once part of an open field cultivation system these fields were enclosed by 1842, and this is still visible on the earliest maps of the area. Side streets and rear lanes gave access to the fields. Former barns to the rear at the southern end of Main Street are indicative of the agricultural use. By 1899, however, the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map shows that the historic field pattern had all but disappeared.

The arrival of the railways in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century represents the most significant building phase for the town after the middle ages. Initially the new track only bisected historic field patterns but later new sidings and buildings swept them away. A new transportation hub to the north-east of the town was established, including station buildings, goods shed and signal box by 1873. Roadside dwellings soon followed. Later, in the interwar period, the success of the Ravenglass and Eskdale miniature railway led to the old trainshed being cleared and a new open platform and shelter built to the east of the mainline station.



*Fig 17 Narrow entrance to Main Street that may have originally been for defence, or enclosure of animals.*



*Fig 18 Side lane from Main Street to former open field system.*

Victorian philanthropy and paternalism also left its mark. In 1873 the Muncaster Estate became more influential and sought to re-cast Ravenglass as a model village in a similar way to other large estates. This saw the start of building work within the northern part of the village. Today's Parish Hall (1878) and adjoining buildings were built around this time together with Walls Cottages beside the village approach road and Clifton Terrace (1884) in Main Street.

The northern end of Main Street was once more enclosed in places than at present with dwellings on the coastal side of the road, although this was by no means continuous. The result of the demolition of these cottages ('Gibraltar Row') in the interwar period is that the dwellings and buildings on the eastern side of the road between the railway bridge and the Pennington Hotel now face the sea along their entire length.

### **Townscape analysis – character areas**

The Ravenglass Conservation Area can be divided into two distinctly different character areas, one on each side of the mainline railway: the medieval core west of the mainline railway (Main Street) and the mid/late 19<sup>th</sup> century post-railway development east of the railway. The distinctiveness of each character area derives from its formative period of development, topographical location and layout.

In addition to the road, the two distinctive parts of the village are connected by a footpath leading from the railway area to Main Street via a footbridge over the mainline railway.



*Fig 19 Development on the west side of Main Street is generally smaller in scale than the east side.*



*Fig 20 Contrasting styles of architecture on the west side of Main Street.*

#### **□ 1. The medieval core (Main Street)**

The core of Ravenglass is a relatively compact linear settlement with a simple medieval plan. Houses are closely arranged along Main Street typically in terraces on small plots. At the core of the village, the houses are grouped along the east and west to fully enclose the former market place, a cigar-shaped linear space and street providing the only means of vehicular access to the houses.

To the north, only the eastern side of the street retains buildings and is therefore open to the estuary, the west side being instead defined by a flood barrier or berm. The latter is an attractive grassy area which historically has been more open and more strongly related to the estuary.

The exposed character at the northern end of Main Street is in stark contrast to the sheltered and defined character of the market place. The difference is accentuated at the pinch point between the areas where the street narrows at the Pennington Hotel. Both the enclosed and open areas of the street have distinctive, if contrasting spatial character which is important to the special interest of the area.

The density and grain is relatively uniform within Main Street, although the western coastal side is slightly more intensive in its layout, with smaller dwellings than the east. The plan form of buildings is generally narrow frontage with deep plans. The density is also lower at the northern end of the street with larger properties with generally more space around them and with generally less deep plan forms.

Buildings hold to a strong and continuous building line and are generally two storeys though with some variety in building height. The earlier 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages are generally low and arranged in terraces with a relatively shallow roof pitch. Exceptions are Pennington House and the Pennington Arms. There are many varied outbuildings to the rear of properties which add to the historic interest and character of the conservation area.



*Fig 21 Springfield (1884) overlooks the railway junction.*



*Fig 22 Former goods shed (c.1873) of the Furness Railway.*

## □ 2. Area of mid/late 19<sup>th</sup> century development east of the mainline railway

At first, as can be seen on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1860, the railway made little impact on the original form of the village. The embanked railway cut through an old field system to the rear of Main Street. Station Hill was created as an access road to the railway station. The approach road to the village was unchanged, except for a railway bridge across the road just beyond the northern extent of the village.

By the time of the Second Edition Ordnance Survey of 1899, the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway (opened in 1875) was well-established and additional roadside and railway-side buildings have been built on the east side of the railway embankment, creating a loosely-knit group of buildings out of sight of the core of the village and with a separate identity. This sense of detachment from the main village remains today.

This character area may be sub-divided into two inter-locking areas defined by association with road or railway.

The railway area between the junction of the mainline and narrow-gauge railways is quite spacious with railway buildings, e.g. engine sheds, platforms and turntable located beside, and directly relating to, the railway tracks. The former station (now The Ratty Arms) forms the focus of this area. Most of the open space between the two tracks is dedicated to parking for visitors to the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway and nearby museum. It is the character and appearance of the mainly stone-built 19<sup>th</sup> century railway buildings that adds to the historic interest of this part of the conservation area.

The Beeches, Springfield (1861) and Wells Cottages (c.1890) relate to the road rather than the railway. The former were built by a local builder, the latter by the Muncaster Estate. Building and plot size is noticeably greater here than in the medieval core, and

some houses have substantial gardens. This area is enhanced by trees, hedges, grassy banks and other greenery. It has a rural atmosphere which contrasts with the estuary-side character of Main Street, a short distance away on the other side of the mainline railway bridge.

The Parish Hall grouping at the top of Main Street was built by the Muncaster Estate during the same period at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Historically and architecturally this ensemble of buildings is more closely connected to the other (east) side of the railway than to Main Street. Clifton Terrace (rebuilt, datestone M 1894), at the lower end of Main Street, has a similar connection.



*Fig 23 View from the southern end of Main Street towards Black Combe.*

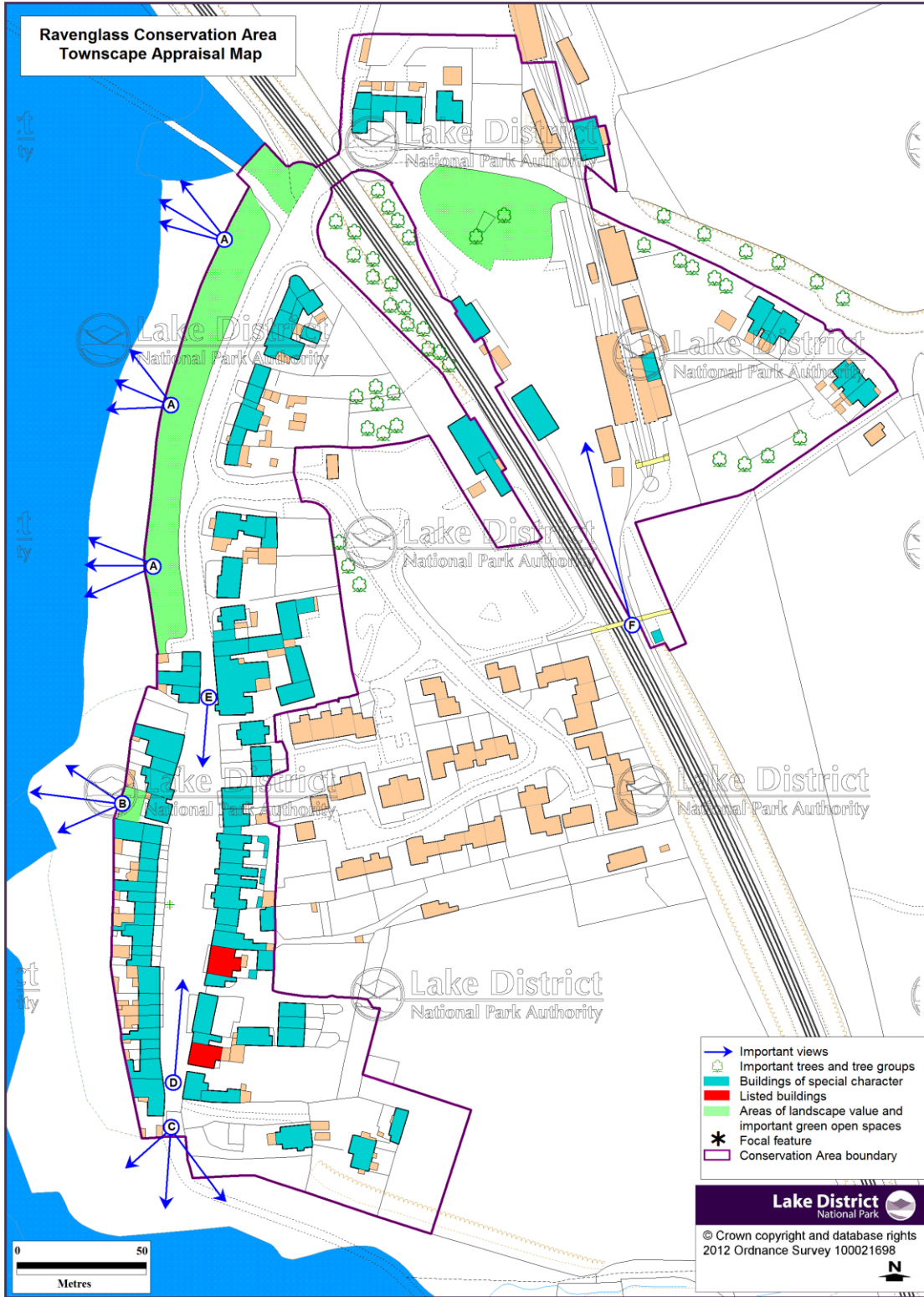


*Fig 24 Looking southwards along the enclosed length of Main Street.*

### **Focal points, views and vistas**

There are no outstanding focal points within the conservation area. The views from the estuary to the village at low tide give a strong impression of the situation of the low-lying village hugging the shore with the gently rising hills and woodland of the Muncaster Estate beyond. One sees a long row of low two-storey buildings with regular building heights. The only element that stands out and draws the eye is the frontage of the group containing the Parish Hall set back from the sea walls behind an apron of grassy green. Notably these buildings overlook the estuary whilst the east side of Main Street turns its back.

From the landward side there are few public views of the village, other than those from the coastal footpath to the south, where the southern tip can be viewed, and from the north across the estuary near to Saltcoats. Oblique views into the Ravenglass Conservation Area can be gained as one approaches by the mainline train.



The notable views outwards from the conservation area are those of the estuary, sea and dunes from a number of points along Main Street, particularly from the southern flood gate, The Green and The Millennium Garden. These views are characterised by large skies and a strong horizon line. Sunsets can be particularly fine. Seaward views are essential visual elements in the character of the conservation area, linking the village to its coastal setting. However, it is a peculiar and characteristic feature of the southern (enclosed) end of Main Street that the estuary *cannot* be seen, being obscured by the row of estuary-side cottages.

Within the conservation area there are impressive views of historic buildings up and down the southern end of Main Street. The view of the railway stations from the railway footbridge is also of interest.

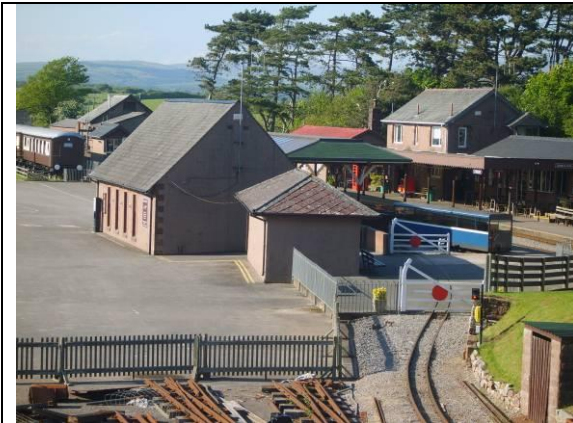


Fig 25 Old and new railway buildings of the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway.



Fig 26 Former agricultural building to the rear of Main Street.

Significant views are shown as follows on the Townscape Appraisal Map:

- A Panoramic view from The Green across the estuary towards Saltcoats;
- B Panoramic view from Millennium Garden across the estuary to Nature Reserve;
- C Panoramic view from south end of Main Street to Eskmeal Dunes and Black Combe;
- D From the southern end of Main Street northwards;
- E From the northern end of Main Street southwards;
- F From the railway footbridge northwards to railway buildings and distant fells;

### **Current activities and uses**

Historically Ravenglass was a typical coastal market town with the usual range of activities associated with fishing, sea-trading and agriculture. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Ravenglass supported four inns, eight shops, three milliners, a baker, bank, blacksmith, cobbler, ironmonger, joiner, laundry, post office and slaughter house.

Whilst small-scale fishing and sailing activity survives, the village's primary role today is as a residential settlement and local tourist centre, being close to Muncaster Castle and the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway.

Tourists and local people are serviced by a small Post Office and shop in Main Street. Accommodation is available at two small hotels, a B & B., self-catering cottages and a guest house (with seasonal tea rooms). There are two pubs.

The village is generally a quiet place. Its atmosphere depends on the season, time of the week and weather. During fine weather, weekend and holiday periods, the village can be host to a large number of visitors but Ravenglass is not as busy as many Lake District villages due to its remoteness. The sea air, breeze and characteristic sounds and smells of the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway are important components of the village's character.



*Fig 27 Site of the market place in Main Street. The street narrows at the southern end where it gives access to the beach.*



*Fig 28 The Green is bounded by a terrace of houses to the east but open to the estuary on its west side.*

### **Open spaces, landscape and trees**

Main Street contains two open spaces with a contrastingly different sense of enclosure. The narrowing of Main Street between Post Office and The Pennington Hotel marks the transition between the two.

The former market place at the southern end of Main Street (south of the Post Office) is the principal open space within the conservation area and one the village's defining features. On either side of the street, two building lines with a slight curvature and narrow pinchpoint at either end create an intimate, enclosed space, created as a market place. Historically, enclosure of the market place reflected a need to contain animals and provide protection from the weather.

In contrast, north of the former market place (north of the Post Office) lies The Green, the conservation area's only public open space, enclosed to the east by a line of buildings but wide open to the estuary to the west. In effect, The Green is a band of grass between road and foreshore and registered as a Village Green. It is a raised embankment with an engineered appearance (it forms part of the flood defences) and has no planting other than grass but it is a well used space from where there are expansive views across the estuary and dunes.

A small but significant open space along Main Street is The Millennium Garden, formerly an open cartway from Main Street to the shore, now a small, attractively landscaped area overlooking the estuary and registered as a Village Green.

On the other (eastern) side of the mainline railway the estuary does not play a part in landscape character. The museum/station car park is an open space that is strongly defined by buildings but it is dominated by cars and parking spaces and makes little contribution to the special character of the area, although appropriate for its past and current use.



*Fig 29 Well-tended gardens add colour to the streetscene.*



*Fig 30 Trees are mainly found in the western part of the conservation area, east of the mainline railway.*

A number of private gardens make an important contribution to the greenery of the conservation area. Although there are no large gardens or trees in Main Street, there are many well-planted forecourts, potted plants and climbers that provide welcome greenery. Unfortunately the volume of parking means that much of the greenery is often obscured.

There are few trees or tree groups within the conservation area apart from beside the route into the village where there is, in particular, a very fine group of Scots pines. The roadside hedges and grassy verges (especially the grassed bank between railway/museum car park and road) soften this part of the conservation area and give it a very rural feel.

Trees and greenery west of the railway are uncommon. At the southern tip of the conservation area there are trees and shrubs within the gardens of nearby properties and these have a low, rugged, windswept appearance. Seen from the estuary the village has a green back-drop of trees on the Muncaster Estate.

#### **Public realm: floorscape, street lighting, street furniture, boundary walls**

The public realm of Ravenglass underwent a programme of enhancement in 2000. Works included the removal of telegraph poles and the placing underground of unsightly overhead wires, installation of well-designed street lamps and benches, a sett rumble strip to discourage unnecessary traffic from driving down Main Street and the creation of The Millennium Garden in a formerly untidy, landlocked piece of village green behind the Old Reading Room.

Road surfaces are predominantly tarmac. In Main Street, where some forecourts and pavements are in private ownership, there are instances of cobbles or pebbles worked into decorative patterns, notably outside Pennington House. Some granite kerbstones are in evidence but modern concrete kerbs and channels have become the norm.

Where they still exist, local surfacing materials, e.g. stone kerbs and cobbles, are important and distinctive historical details which contribute to the special interest of the area.



*Fig 31 Pebbles laid in a decorative pattern in Main Street.*



*Fig 32 One of a number of benches installed as part of village enhancement in 2000.*

There is a wide variety in the materials and details of boundary walls. Boundary walls are generally low to roadside. They include rendered and cobblestone walls with and without railings; rendered stone walls with stone copings or rendered castellations; stone walls with limestone paving or dressed sandstone coping stones; cast concrete panels and engineering brick. Some houses in Main Street have boundaries attractively defined by flower and plant pots. The walls to the Arts and Crafts style Wells Cottages are particularly fine being stepped masonry with dressed red sandstone copings and robust gate pillars.

## **5 The buildings of the conservation area**

### **Architectural styles, materials and detailing**

Buildings within the Ravenglass Conservation area are varied. They date primarily from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the former with a debased Georgian architectural appearance, the latter typically Victorian Gothic or Arts and Crafts in style. Despite its medieval, and earlier, origins there are few intact examples of vernacular architecture in the village. It is probable that many older vernacular buildings were re-fronted in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and late 20<sup>th</sup> century conversions and refurbishments have substantially altered former cottages and farm buildings. To the rear of Main Street there is significantly more variety of historic form and layout.

The village's oldest building may be No. 1 Main Street (within Clifton Terrace), formerly a public house, dated 1689. However it is possible that earlier structures exist and many of these have been integrated into new houses rebuilt during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Certainly, building fabric will have been re-used over the centuries – it is possible that the masonry of some buildings was robbed from the Roman fort.



*Fig 33 Roof of slates laid in diminishing courses, i.e. large ones at eaves, small ones at ridge.*



*Fig 34 Typical architectural details on a late 19<sup>th</sup> century Arts and Crafts style house in Main Street.*

Most of the current buildings are dwellings, though many of these will have had other uses in the recent past, including shops, chapel, smithy, pubs, banks and other business uses. There are a number of converted former agricultural buildings to the west of Main Street. Buildings are generally two storeys.

The Georgian-influenced buildings within the conservation area, found exclusively in Main Street, are humble and simple in character, form and detailing. They have a pleasingly robust, solid and regular appearance best exemplified by the west side of Main Street, especially Pennington House and the Pennington Hotel.

Georgian buildings in the village tend to be very balanced and symmetrical in design with a regular rhythm in the disposition of architectural elements such as doors and windows. They are generally free of excessive ornament and decoration, other than wide sandstone surrounds to windows. Many of the houses of this type in Main Street have cart entrances which are integral to their design.

In contrast, Victorian buildings delight in breaking Georgian 'rules', with great asymmetry, verticality and decoration expressed in either the Gothic or Arts and Crafts styles, the former characterised by pointed arches and an ecclesiastical tenor, the latter typified by a Victorian interpretation of vernacular features and craftsmanship, e.g. dormers, tile-hanging, steeply pitched roofs. These buildings and some of the railway buildings have greater height, more complex forms and steeper roof pitches than the 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings that predominate in Main Street.

For example, Pennington House (17<sup>th</sup> century origins, re-fronted in the 18<sup>th</sup> century) has a well-proportioned symmetrical two-storey façade with five bays and a central panelled front door under a moulded canopy. At the northern end of Main Street the Parish Hall group has a varied mix of chimneys, gables, dormers, decorative barge boards and hexagonal roof. Wells Cottages and, for example The Beeches, are all 19<sup>th</sup> century have similar qualities.



*Fig 35 Ravenglass still has a mainline station on the line between Lancaster and Carlisle.*



*Fig 36 Former agricultural building now a dwelling in Main Street.*

Despite some uniformity in materials, e.g. render and green slate roofs, Ravenglass displays a mix of building materials which, together with varied painting of render, gives variety in appearance.

The prevalent building material is local natural stone – cobblestone, sandstone and granite. Roof material is commonly locally quarried green slate laid in diminishing courses in random widths. Stone masonry frequently comprises cobblestone walls, either exposed or rendered with a coarse textured lime render, with exposed sandstone quoins and other dressing to hold the cobblestones in place.

Cobbles are usually split when used on dwellings but left whole on lower status buildings and walls. Many sandstone window surrounds, heads and cills were traditionally painted a contrasting colour to walls. Rendered walls are occasionally painted, in recent years increasingly with bright and varied colours.

Some early brick has been found beneath a house in Main Street but prior to the coming of the railway in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the use of clay brick or clay tile is uncommon reflecting the absence of a local source of clay. Red brick and clay tile hanging can however be found in the Arts and Crafts houses of c.1900 (e.g. Wells Cottages and Clifton Terrace).

Historic windows were originally timber sliding-sash or side-opening casements recessed within surrounding masonry and set within broad sandstone window surrounds. Sometimes there is no surround and window openings are rendered and gloss painted. Some of the later Victorian houses have quoins to surrounds. Arts and Crafts style windows have chamfered timber casement windows.

Historic timber joinery was painted. Bright blue painted joinery is traditional to buildings within the Muncaster Estate.



*Fig 37 Pennington House, grade II, was re-fronted in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.*



*Fig 38 The Bay Horse (1764) is a former coaching inn, listed grade II.*



*Fig 39 Wells Cottages built by the Muncaster Estate beside the entrance to the village.*



*Fig 40 Grassy bank adds to the rural feel of the village east of the railway.*

### 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. Pennington House | grade II |
| 2. Bay Horse        | 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.

### Local details

The distinctive local identity of the area is enhanced by a number of small features and historic elements that cumulatively help to give the conservation area a sense of place,

e.g. datestones, GR post box, cobbled pavements and stone kerbs. These items should be preserved.

## **6 Negative features and issues**

### **❑ Loss of historic interest**

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 timber windows with uPVC is particularly regrettable but perhaps not surprising given the village's exposed location.

### **❑ Inappropriate extensions and alterations**

There are 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. For example there are a number of flat roof extensions and dormers to the rear of properties on Main Street, particularly on the estuary side, which appear out of character with the traditional pitched roofs nearby.

### **❑ Intrusive additions: inappropriate window and door openings, porches.**

There have occasionally also been alterations to door and window openings, notably large horizontal 'picture windows' that have upset architectural composition. Original doors, dormers and porches complement buildings but poorly designed modern porches and dormers on a historic building can, if not carefully considered, severely detract from a building's character and appearance particularly if they do not match the host building in scale, design and materials.

### **❑ Parking and turning in Main Street**

As vehicle ownership has increased over the years, parked vehicles have become more intrusive in Main Street. The arrangement of parking is problematical as it is commonly within private forecourt areas at right angles to the highway. This tends to be more visually intrusive compared to the more conventional end-to-end parking. Large vehicles stick out into the road and attractive front gardens are obscured. Visitors who cannot, or will not, turn their vehicles on the beach at the end of Main Street cause disruption and occasional damage to buildings by turning on the road.

### **❑ Boundary walls**

The simplicity of boundary walls in Main Street has been marred by the use in some cases of modern and inappropriate materials such as concrete blocks.

### **❑ Loss of cobbles and highway design and materials**

Loss of cobbled road surfaces and natural stone kerbs adversely affects the area's special historic character. The engineered design of the junction of Main Street with Croftlands is very poor in the use of an inappropriate bend in the road and contemporary highway radii, harming the visual continuity of Main Street and pavement on the estuary frontage.

## **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 on 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 *National Planning Policy Framework* (March 2012), English Heritage guidance titled, *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (March 2011) best practice guidelines, policies within the Lake District National Park Local Plan (1998) and adopted Core Strategy 2010, together with such guidance leaflets as '*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 Ravenglass Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is created by collaborative working between heritage consultants, the Lake District National Park Authority and the local community. The appraisal and management plan was subject to a 10 week period of public consultation commencing in the July 2012. This included sending consultation letters to residents and businesses placing the document on the Authority's website and the provision of a public exhibition in the town. The document was subsequently be 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 existing conservation area boundary is satisfactory.

## 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.



*Fig MP1 This house has modern windows and the lower right-hand window opening has been enlarged.*



*Fig MP2 The forecourt of this property has been designated entirely for parking.*

## 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 2 listed buildings within the conservation area.

Extensions and alterations to listed buildings should conform with policy context outlined in section 1.3 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.

### 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.



*Fig MP3 Stone walls and gate piers add to the area's historic interest.*



*Fig MP4 Care should be taken to ensure that a porch harmonises with the host building.*

### 1.9 Enhancing and protecting the local character and 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 to uPVC alternatives
- the replacement of traditional windows and doors with non-traditional and anachronistic designs;
- alterations to window/door openings;
- the erection of porches;
- minor installations and alteration of materials;
- loss and alteration of boundary walls;
- aerials, satellite dishes, alarms, downpipes and wires in prominent or highly visible positions;
- the use of non-traditional building materials, mortars and roofing materials.

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.

### 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.



*Fig. MP5 Flat roofs, dormers and 'picture' windows can look out of character.*

*Fig MP6 Modern windows in a historic building.*

### 1.11 Enhancing and protecting views & the setting of the conservation area

The setting of the conservation area and views within, into and from the area are very 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 very few opportunities for 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 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 historic boundary treatments and surfaces

Traditionally, most boundaries in the conservation area are defined by low stone walls. We will encourage the maintenance of traditional stone walls and seek their retention rather than their replacement with new non-traditional boundary treatments. Similarly the

retention of historic stone road surfaces, paving, cobbles and curbs will be strongly resisted where possible, while ensuring that design of traditional paving and surfaces is also fully accessible.



*Fig. MP7 Low front boundary walls are the norm.*



*Fig. MP8 Parking in Main Street can be problematic.*

## **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.

### **2.3 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.

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