

Rydal Conservation Area

Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan



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RYDAL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

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Summary of special interest

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

- Dispersed historic settlement on the route between Grasmere and Ambleside
- Picturesque location on the River Rothay where the valley narrows between Nab Scar and Loughrigg
- Village and landscape setting that are largely a legacy of the 18th and 19th centuries;
- Development of village influenced by relict medieval deer park and later large listed house, Rydal Hall with its estate, 17th-century Picturesque gardens and Edwardian formal gardens;
- Good examples of listed Lakeland vernacular farmhouses, cottages and barns including 15 grade listed buildings, including one grade I and four grade II*.
- Relict packhorse track, now a bridlepath linking village to Grasmere and Ambleside;
- Later turnpike route stimulated further development which now hugs the main road
- Wooded river banks, bridges and lake margins that are an important component of the area's scenic landscapes;
- Extensive areas of mixed woodland;
- A mix of stone and rendered historic buildings with a wealth of traditional local details
- Significant survival of historic cobbled floorscape
- Numerous good boundary walls of local boulder stones;
- Views and vistas that are celebrated in the poetry of Wordsworth and the paintings of Constable and Wright;
- Further Wordsworth heritage in the form of Rydal Mount, the poet's home from 1813 to 1850, and its designated garden and Dora's Field, planted with daffodils by Wordsworth, and the church where he worshipped.
- Network of public footpaths link the village to the surrounding countryside

1 Introduction

The Rydal Conservation Area consists of a small rural settlement located on the historic trade route between Grasmere and Keswick. It sits on the north bank of the River Rothay, with further settlement running up the side valley of the Rydal Beck. The village has seen little change in the last 100 years and it contains a number of buildings of exceptional architectural and historic interest, including Rydal Hall, built by the de Fleming family, with its listed Picturesque garden, and Rydal Mount, home of the poet William Wordsworth, who was a tenant during the first half of the 19th century.

Rydal Conservation Area was designated on 11 September 1984 by the Lake District National Park Authority. Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as '*an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*'.

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

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

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

This document seeks to:

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

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

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

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

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

2 Location and setting

Location

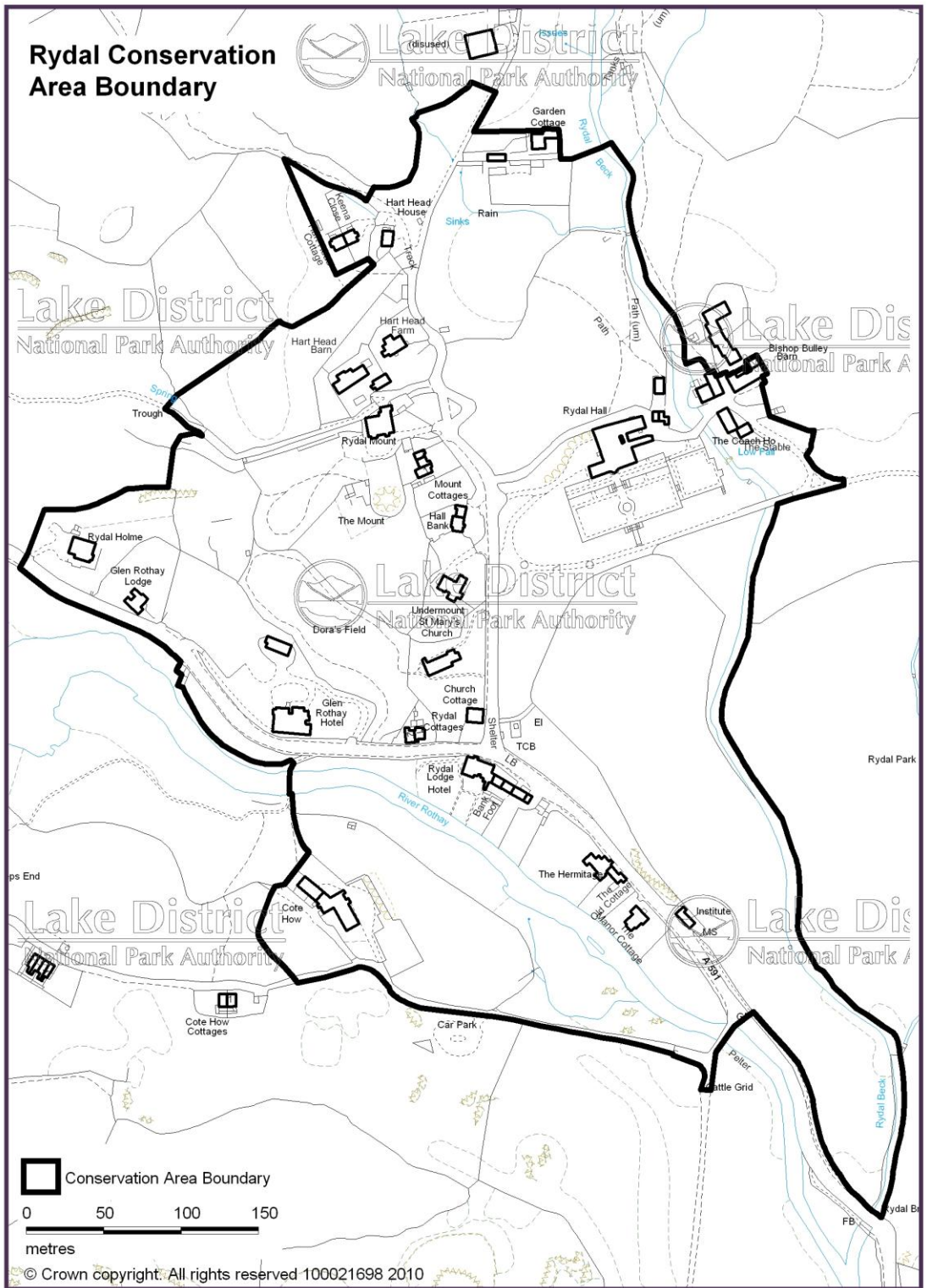
Rydal is located at the centre of the Lake District National Park. This part of the Lake District lies within the county of Cumbria, in that part which comprised the historic county of Westmorland. The village sits on the north bank of the River Rothay, at the point where the river flows into Rydal Water. The A591 runs through the lower part of the village, which lies between Ambleside (approximately 2.5km to the south east) and Grasmere (approximately 4km to the north west). The village is within Rydal Parish and contains the parish church of St Mary's.

Boundary

The conservation area is small in terms of the number of properties, but the boundary is drawn widely so as to encompass the landscape setting of the village, including the gardens of Rydal Park and important views into and out of the park. The conservation area includes all the buildings of historical and architectural interest in the village, most of which lie along the busy through-road, the A591, or along the lane that climbs northwards from the main road, running up the hillside to Hart Head Farm, with St Mary's church and a number of dwellings on the western side of the lane and Rydal Hall and its grounds on the eastern side. The boundary is defined by lanes, field boundary walls, property boundaries and, on the eastern side, by Rydal Beck, a tributary of the River Rothay.



Fig. 1: Looking north west into the conservation area, the views take in the listed Pelter Bridge across the River Rothay, the Rydal Institute and the southern flank of Nab Scar.



Topography and landscape setting

Rydal lies at the point in the valley of the River Rothay where the broad flat open landscape between Ambleside and Rydal closes in to form a narrow pass between wooded slopes, before broadening out again to provide panoramic views across Rydal Water (formerly known as Rothaymere and Rothay Water due to its being fed by the River Rothay). This constriction in the landscape has been compared appropriately to the constriction between the two chambers of an egg timer.

With its combination of tumbling river, wildflower meadows, lakeside banks fringed with willow and alder trees and gently rising wooded slopes, Rydal's setting is one of the most attractive in the Lake District. This setting has more than a local significance in that the Grasmere-Rydal corridor features in many of Wordsworth's poems and writings and thus both inspired and helps to define the English Romantic movement in art, literature and landscape appreciation.

Though surrounded by fells, Rydal's topography is domesticated and homely. Where the wilder uplands of Rydal Fell make a contribution to the topography of the conservation area is in the form of the fast-flowing Rydal Beck, which originates in the 5km-long upland valley north of Rydal, gathering water from numerous springs and streams. The beck passes through the grounds of Rydal Hall and forms a key component of the hall's Picturesque gardens, which feature in late-18th and early 19th-century art, notably in the paintings of John Constable and Joseph Wright.

These gardens give way to naturalistic parkland and open fields south of Rydal Hall, with expansive southward views. By contrast, the wooded banks of the River Rothay form a more enclosed landscape on the southern side of the A591. Woodland generally forms an important component of the conservation area's landscape setting, with mature deciduous trees forming the backdrop to most of the conservation area's buildings.

Geology

Rydal lies within the heart of the Lake District in an area characterised by the complexity and variety of its geology, which combines rocks of volcanic origin with the products of glacial erosion and deposition. For walls and buildings, much use is made of slate stone, which varies greatly in colour and texture, but is valued as a building stone because it is easy to split along natural cleavage lines that result from the way that the minerals making up the stone were laid down and compressed in parallel planes. Also used, especially for field walls, are cobblestones, of the same geological origin, but rounded into boulders by glacial and river erosion. Many of these lie on the surface of fields, and in the case of Rydal, one or two massive examples have been incorporated in situ in their entirety into boundary walls (for example, the wall opposite the entrance to the church).

Archaeology

There are no scheduled monuments within the conservation area and no known archaeological sites. However, there is documentary evidence for the existence of fulling and corn mills in Rydal, and it is likely that the remains of medieval mills and dwellings survive below ground along the banks of the River in locations that are not yet known. Within the grounds of Rydal Mount (English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England Grade II Reference GD1663) there are the remains of the mount or mound after which the property is named. It is possible that this is a viewing mound associated with the medieval deer park, and that it dates from some time

prior to the late 16th development of the deer park as the site for William Fleming's Rydal Hall.



Fig. 2: One of the most attractive views out of the conservation area is from Steps End looking westwards across Rydal Water, framed by Nab Scar to the north and Loughrigg Fell to the south.

3 The historical development of the village

Rydal (meaning 'the valley where the rye was grown') is first mentioned by name in documents dating from 1240. The ancient manor boundary was described in 1274 and a deer park was created in 1277.

The formation of the deer park restricted the growth of the village to the east of the track climbing north to Rydal Fell, so the village developed along the western side of this track and to the south of the packhorse track (now a footpath and bridleway) linking Grasmere, Ambleside and Keswick that is shown on Robert Morden's map of Westmorland of 1695. That route was superseded by today's busy A591, first built as a turnpike road in the late 18th century along the valley floor. That road stimulated construction of the hotels and houses that are now located at intervals along the main road, filling in plots of land and small fields that lay between the scattered inns, farmhouses and cottages of the 16th and 17th century hamlet.

The manor of Rydal came into the ownership of the Fleming family in 1409 when Sir Thomas Fleming married Isobel de Lancaster, who inherited the feudal lordship of the manor. Originally the family lived at Coniston Hall. In 1575 they moved to Rydal Old Hall (already described as 'old' at that date) built on a knoll in fields bordering the River Rothay just under 1km south of the conservation area, and described as 'now in ruins' in 1681.



Fig. 3: The Thomas Mawson gardens at Rydal Hall are arranged as formal terraces, or architecture and planting, allowing views out across the wider landscape.

William Fleming moved the family from the Old Hall to the site of the present Rydal Hall in the late 16th century. In the mid-17th century, Sir Daniel Fleming (1633–1701) transformed the estate, developing the landscape as an early Picturesque garden incorporating Rydal Beck and its natural waterfalls. The ‘Grott-House’ that Sir Daniel Fleming built in 1668–9 as a summerhouse from which to view the waterfall, lined with old panelling from the hall, became a major attraction for a succession of visiting artists and writers in the 18th and 19th century; it is described in Wordsworth’s poem, ‘An Evening Walk’, and features in paintings by Joseph Wright of Derby and John Constable.

In 1910 Thomas Mawson supplemented this Picturesque garden with a series of formal gardens to the south of the mansion. Mawson, who had founded the Lakeland Nursery in Windermere in the 1880s, was a prolific and influential landscape architect, working both nationally and internationally who published two volumes on *The Art and Craft of Garden Making* in 1901. As at Rydal Hall, his gardens are often architectural in their use of plants to create room-like spaces defined by evergreen hedges.

Rydal Hall remained in the ownership of the Fleming family until 1970, when the Diocese of Carlisle purchased the buildings to create a retreat, conference and youth centre. The gardens were restored in the 1990s and are open to the public.

Rydal is known internationally for its association with the poet William Wordsworth, who lived at Rydal Mount from 1813 until his death in 1850. The house continued to be rented by the family until 1859 when Wordsworth’s widow, Mary, died. Wordsworth extended and altered the house, and landscaped the gardens (now listed: English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England Grade II Reference GD1663) which survive in the form that he left them. Wordsworth’s other legacies to the village include St Mary’s Church, in whose siting and design he played a part, and the woodland known as Dora’s Field (to the west of the church and to the south of Rydal Mount), purchased by Wordsworth as the site for a house that was never built

and planted by the poet himself with wild daffodils in 1847 as a memorial to his daughter Dora (now owned by the National Trust). Rydal Mount continues to attract many visitors to the village, and is open to the public on guided tours. Other poets associated with the area include de Quincey and Hartley Coleridge. Historian, naturalist and folksong collector Mary L Armit (died 1911), author of *Rydal, The Secrets of Nature, The Church of Grasmere: a history* and *Studies of Lakeland Birds*, lived at the Manor Cottage (formerly Rydal Cottage) at the south-eastern end of the conservation area.

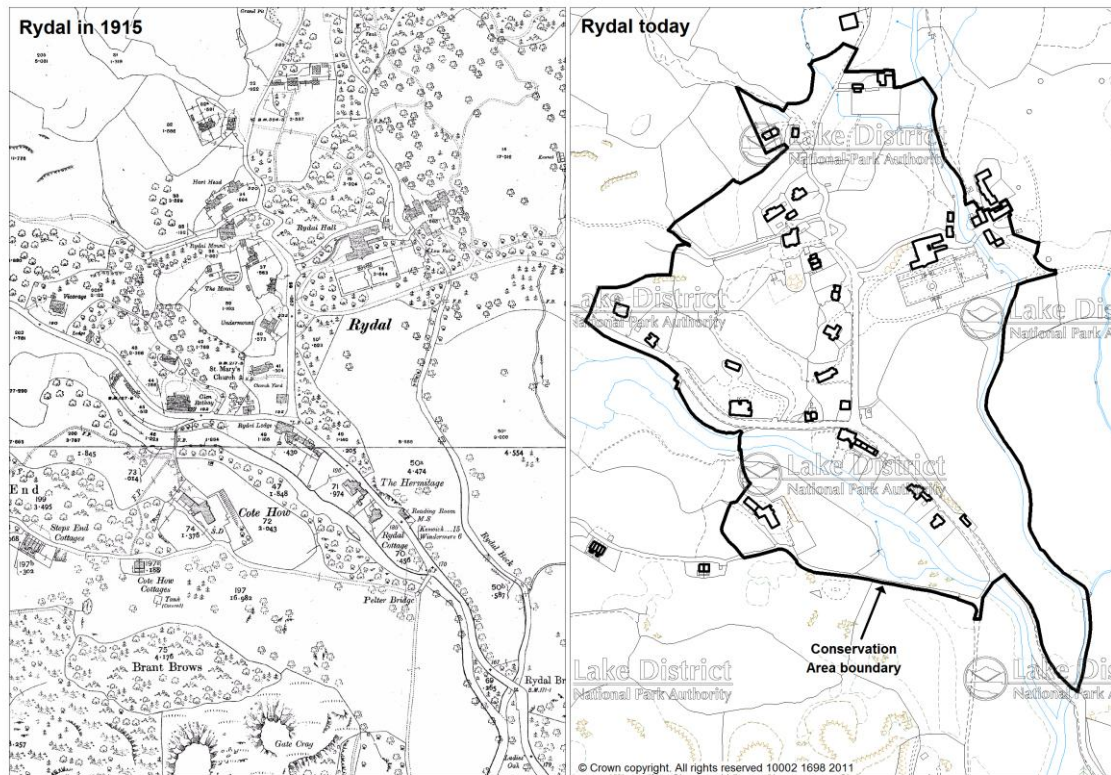
Rydal's inhabitants worshipped at the parish church in Grasmere until 1824, when a chapel-of-ease, built at a cost of £1,500 by Lady le Fleming, opened for use; in 1826, Rydal gained its own parish status, and the chapel became the parish church.

Rydal has seen remarkably little change in the last 100 years or so, and the only buildings to have been constructed within the conservation area since the first edition of the OS map in 1859 are Hart Head Cottages and the Vicarage (now Rydal Holme), both dating from the end of the 19th century. The village and its landscape setting are thus largely a legacy of the 18th and 19th centuries.



Fig. 4: Rydal Mount, home to William Wordsworth from 1813 until 1850, is a major tourist attraction.

Fig. 5: The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1859 compared with today's map shows how little has since changed in the Rydal Conservation Area



4 Surviving historical features within the conservation area

Summary of surviving historical features:

- The packhorse track (now a bridleway) from Ambleside to Town End, which passes through the grounds of Rydal Hall and to the south of Rydal Mount;
- A scattering of listed 16th and 17th century cottages, inns, farmhouses and barns surviving from the older village;
- Larger listed 18th and 19th century villas and hotels built after the construction of the turnpike road;
- Rydal Hall, its relict deer park, pioneering Picturesque landscape and Edwardian formal gardens, and its historic bridges, barns, stables, 'Grott-House', game larder and ice house;
- Rydal Mount, home of William Wordsworth, with a listed garden that reflects his design and planting;
- Dora's Field, planted with wild daffodils by William Wordsworth as a memorial to his daughter in 1847;
- St Mary's church, built in 1823–4 in neo-Gothic style;
- Pelter Bridge.

5 The character and appearance of the conservation area

Street pattern and building plots

Rydal has a very simple street pattern, which reflects the growth of the settlement from a scattering of farmhouses at the junction of the River Rothay and the Rydal Beck. The main road through the village is a comparatively late arrival, built in the late 18th century as a turnpike road on a terrace above the river in the valley floor. The older route, in the form of a packhorse track running from Kendal to Grasmere, runs parallel to the turnpike road but higher up the valley side. Linking the packhorse track and the turnpike road is a lane that runs uphill to Rydal Fell. The older houses of the village are set to the western side of this lane, with newer (post-turnpike) buildings along the valley floor, including purpose built hotels constructed to cater for the tourist trade stimulated by the Lakeland poets and artists.

Rydal's larger farmhouses and hotels all have generous plots and generally sit back from the road or lane that they face, with gardens to the front, sides and rear. Plot boundaries are largely defined by stone walls, whose height reflects the status of the property: the boundary wall to Rydal Hall, for example, is some 3m in height, while those surrounding farmhouses, cottages and church are less than half that height. Meadows and woodland line both sides of the main road, alternating with large houses and gardens, by contrast with the upper part of the village where the housing plots are more numerous and dense.



Fig.7: The pre-turnpike road packhorse track that links Kendal to Grasmere and beyond via Rydal is now a popular footpath and bridleway.

Townscape analysis

The townscape of the Rydal Conservation Area reflects the fact that it comprises a large high-status house – Rydal Hall – with all the accouterments of gardens, park, stables and carriage houses, servant’s accommodation, kitchen gardens and home farm, set cheek by jowl with a rural hamlet that in parts resembles an estate village (with church and cottages built under the patronage of the Hall) and in parts reflects the aggrandizement that resulted from the growing popularity of the Lake District as a tourist destination (large purpose-built hotels) and as a desirable place to live (hence houses like Wordsworth’s own Rydal Mount that have been extended and turned into gentlemen’s residences from humbler working farmhouses).

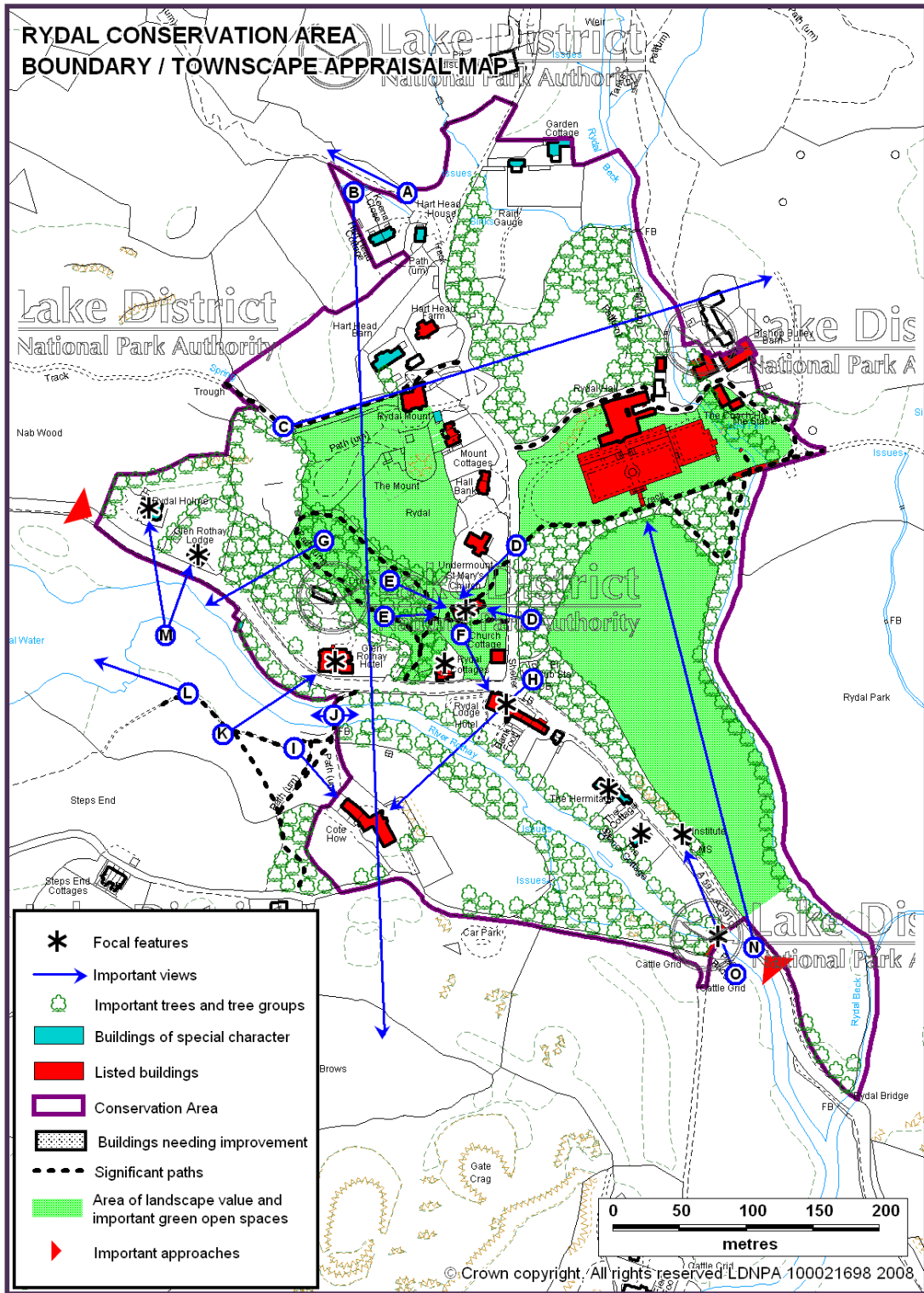


Fig. 8: The three-tier tower of St Mary's church viewed from Dora's Field, planted by Wordsworth with wild daffodils as a memorial to his daughter.

The main road through the village is a sinuous one, and its changes of direction (left and right and up and down) are reflected by the stone walls that line both sides. Some properties front directly onto the road – notably the village Institute at the southern entrance to the village and the Glen Rothay and Rydal Lodge hotels. All of the buildings along this main road are important components of the townscape by virtue of their prominent roadside positions and hence the need to protect and enhance their historic and architectural character. The influence of the tight valley pinch point location between Nab Scar and Loughrigg is important to the enclosed village character and the tight relationship of buildings to the road.

The remaining properties, located along the lane up to the top of the village, are charmingly irregular in the alignment; positioned according to the lie of the land on the

Fig. 6: Rydal Townscape Appraisal map (see key to important views below)



undulating hillside and to the views to be had from these houses across Rydal Water. Here the inter-relationship with the hilly topography and tree backdrop are important to the area's character. St Mary's Church is an important landmark in this part of the village.



Fig. 9: Defining the south-eastern entrance to the village is the Rydal Institute, built like a Lakeland barn (note the large quoins made of slatestone set on edge) with an external staircase to the rear. Note too the park landscape beyond the Institute, the stone boundary wall, and the white milestone set into the wall.

Focal points, views and vistas

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

- A – To the north-west along a stony track to Nab Scar;
- B – Long view to the south across the rooftops of Rydal to the distant northern end of Lake Windermere;
- C – Long view to the north-east along the packhorse track (now a narrow bridleway) toward the wooded slopes of High Park and Sweden Crag;
- D – Short views to the south-west across the churchyard to St Mary's Church;
- E – Views south-east from Dora's Field to St Mary's Church;
- F – View south-east across Dora's Field to Rydal Lodge Hotel;
- G – Long view south-west through the trees on Dora's Field to Rydal Water;
- H – View south-west across the valley to Cote How;
- I – South-east up the grassy valley slopes to Cote How and the woodland beyond;
- J – Looking east and west from the footbridge along the River Rothay;
- K – Looking north-east across the valley of the River Rothay to the Glen Rothay Hotel;
- L – Long view west across Rydal Water, taking in the islands and surrounding hills;
- M – View into the conservation area from the south, looking north across the mouth of the River Rothay to Rydal Holme and Glen Rothay Hotel;

- N – Long view north across Rydal Park to Rydal Hall;
- O – View into the conservation area looking north west past Rydal Bridge to the Institute;
- P – View south down the Rydal Beck to the 17th century stone bridge;
- Q – Picturesque view from the 17th century stone bridge at Rydal Hall, taking in the summer house and waterfall;
- R – Long view south across the formal terraced gardens of Rydal Hall, across the parkland and to the countryside beyond.

In addition there are many significant views from and into the conservation area given the nature of the surrounding topography and these are too numerous to mention within the appraisal.

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



Views south from the northern boundary of the conservation area extend across the rooftops of the village to the distant Lake Windermere.



From the churchyard of St Mary's Church there are good views of the Rydal Lodge Hotel.



From the A591, the old turnpike road, there are views through the conservation area including to nos. 1-2 Rydal Cottages.



Through a break in the tree line St Mary's Church can be glimpsed past no. 1 Rydal Cottages.



Clear views along the River Rothay and its tree-lined river banks are obtained from the footbridge south of the Glen Rothay hotel



From Steps End views northwards extend across the River Rothay to the Glen Rothay hotel.



From Steps End views out of the conservation area extend westwards across Rydal Water to the surrounding hills.



Views into the conservation area from where the River Rothay flows into Rydal Water take in Rydal Holme and Glen Rothay Lodge.



The eastern entrance to the conservation area provides a clear view along the main road, with Nab Scar forming a distinctive feature on the skyline.



Pelter Bridge is an attractive historic feature within the village, spanning the River Rothay and providing access to the southern bank.



From the formal terraces of the Thomas Mawson designed gardens at Rydal Hall, views south extend to the parkland beyond and the wider countryside.



The 17th century summerhouse and waterfall at Rydal Hall comprise part of a famous Picturesque landscape.

Current activities and uses

The village of Rydal is very busy for its size because it receives a large number of visitors who stay on retreat or who attend conferences and youth camps at Rydal Hall, (which has extensive camping and leisure facilities as well as dormitory accommodation) or at the hotels and bed and breakfast establishments in the village. Coach-borne visitors (many from overseas) in search of Wordsworth's heritage come to see Rydal Mount and St Mary's Church. Many walkers use Rydal as a base, parking along the wide village street alongside the churchyard wall, or in the car park on the southern side of the River Rothay, which lies just outside the conservation area but that is linked to it by footpaths and a footbridge.

The village thus has a thriving economy based on hospitality and catering for tourists, walkers, conference and retreat visitors and young people on adventure holidays.

Open spaces, landscape and trees

There are a number of areas of distinct and varied landscape character within the conservation area. This is the result of the variances in the underlying topography, and differing ownership and management regimes.

The single largest area of open space within Rydal are the gardens and parkland of Rydal Hall, the significance of which is recognised through designation at grade II* on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens. Only part of the extensive parkland is contained within the boundary of the conservation area - that contained on the east by the Rydal Beck. This gently sloping area of parkland meadow, interspersed with trees, forms an important part of the character of the conservation area when approached from the east along the A591 and allows clear views up to the principal front of Rydal Hall.

Thomas Mawson's formal gardens of 1909, lying immediately to the south of the hall have quite a different character, featuring balustraded terraces, topiary yews, statuary and urns. The eastern end of the formal gardens adjoins the bridges, woodland paths and water gardens of the 17th century Picturesque garden with its gazebo sited so as to hide the tumbling waterfalls of the Rydal Beck as you approach: the drama of the falls is heightened by their revelation to the viewer when the summerhouse doors are opened, and the falls are seen framed by the window on the opposite side to the entrance.

Another important area of open space within the conservation area is St Mary's churchyard, with its mown grass, flowerbeds, benches and rockeries scattered among large glacier-smoothed boulders and outcrops of more rugged rock. Dora's Field is entered from the western end of the churchyard and lies between Rydal Mount to the north and the A591 to the south. A circular footpath threads through what was once an open field (Rash Field), originally purchased by William Wordsworth as the site for a home for his daughter Dora, but planted with wild daffodils and left to revert to woodland after her death and now owned by the National Trust.

Dora's Field forms part of a continuous belt of woodland made up of mature deciduous trees running along the valley bottom on both sides of the A591, forming the backdrop to large houses and hotels on the northern side, and lining both banks of the River Rothay on the southern side. The woodland on the southern side is broken up by small open fields of rough grassland bounded by stone walls, which gives way to marshy lakeside margins where the river flows into Rydal Water and where the beech, sycamore, oak and

ash of the river banks gives way to the willow and alder of the wetter ground around the lake.

Boundaries

Walls constructed from roughly hewn slatestone are the prevalent form of boundary throughout the conservation area. These walls border domestic gardens and fields, and the widespread use of this local stone reinforces the harmonious visual relationship between the built development of the village and its rural setting. Gate posts are often single large pieces of stone set vertically into the ground. Many of the walls are capped with stones laid vertically on edge, creating a jagged profile. However, part of the boundary wall to the upper part of the estate of Rydal Hall features large slabs of stone laid horizontally, creating a more formal wall. The boundary walls surrounding the Hall garden feature more regularly split horizontal stones laid in random courses, and an imposing set of ashlar gateposts with banded rustication.

The Mawson designed gardens at Rydal Hall feature balustraded terraces created from cast stone. These sit on walls of local stone, providing an attractive contrast between the rugged vernacular walling tradition and the formal designed features.



Fig. 11: Slatestone walls are the prevalent form of boundary treatment; here they have been unusually capped using Lake District slate.

Public realm: floorscape, street lighting and street furniture

The floorscape of the conservation area predominantly features hard urban materials. The busy traffic through-route, the A591, has tarmac pavements on either side, with stone kerbs. Cats-eyes highlight the centre of the road. The village lane which extends north from the A591 is slightly more rural in character, with cobbled gutters to either side. Grass verges border the unkerbed tarmac roadway in places, softening the appearance of the lane. However, there is limited parking within this busy tourist destination, and the lower lane by St Mary's Church is frequently heavily parked with cars, even in low season. The upper part of the lane, by Hart Head Farm, is surfaced with concrete, which

has been ridged to provide grip to vehicles; the material appears particularly harsh in the context of the immediate rural surroundings.

The rural character of the lane is maintained by the lack of street lighting. Street furniture is neatly grouped at the junction of the lane and the A591 and comprises a bus shelter concealed in a recess in the stone boundary wall, a post box and a modern phone box.

There is a variety of signage within the conservation area, including timber fingerposts for footpaths and bridleways and for a permitted 'Access Area' across the Rydal Estate. A traditional black and white cast iron fingerpost forms a distinctive landmark by Pelter Bridge. Within the grounds of Rydal Hall large illustrated panels prepared when the gardens were restored, help to outline the history and significance of the Hall and the its landscape.



Fig. 12: Substantial stretches of historic cobbled floorscape survive, making an important contribution to the character of the village.

6 The buildings of the conservation area

Architectural styles, materials and detailing

The buildings within the Rydal Conservation Area date from the 16th to the 19th centuries, with a few 20th century outbuildings and conversions. Building types include cottages, farmhouses (mostly now private homes that have been substantially extended), farm buildings, church, purpose built hotels, a large country house and a village Institute. The oldest buildings in the village, all of which preserve 16th-century fabric are Rydal Mount, Cote How and Rydal Hall, although the later is now characterised by the early 19th century principal front.

The earliest domestic buildings in the conservation area are 16th and 17th century cottages and farmhouses. These buildings are typically two storied and detached, though there are exceptions, such as the pairs of cottages at Rydal Cottages, Mount Cottages and Hart Head Cottages. These early houses are constructed of slatestone and rubblestone beneath a coat of limewash or roughcast and with roofs traditionally of Lake District slate arranged in diminishing courses. Several have circular chimneys stacks.



Fig. 13: Mount Cottages are a good example of vernacular building in Rydal, with distinctive circular chimneystacks and slatestone drip moulds.

Hart Head has unusual stepped gables created from large pieces of slate and a porch constructed from four large slate slabs. Hart Head is also characteristic of one of the traditional building forms within the village, the two-unit house. Such buildings typically have two principal rooms at ground-floor level: the general living room, which contained the principal or only hearth, and the parlour, which was the principal bedroom and in superior or later examples had a fireplace built against the gable wall. In some cases a small fire window lit the deep inglenook of the hearth of the general living room. Large gable-end chimneystacks indicate the position of the principal hearth, as at Cote Howe. These early vernacular buildings typically feature square windows, which now contain

timber casements, and these are protected by projecting labels moulds formed from large pieces of slate.

A number of buildings were constructed or extensively remodeled during the 18th and 19th century. The Glen Rothay Hotel, originally built as David's Inn beside the new turnpike road, was considerably enlarged and aggrandized when it became the home of Theodore Fry (1803–1886), scion of the Fry's chocolate family, in the mid-19th century. Rydal Lodge Cottage and its attached barn (now the Rydal Lodge Hotel) dates from the early 18th century, and displays a number of recognisably Georgian features, rather than the vernacular devices common to the earlier buildings of the village. This includes a double-depth plan set beneath a shallow hipped roof, and a north (entrance) front with paneled door and traceried fanlight and large multi-paned sliding sash windows.

A building in a similar Classical style, albeit on a much larger scale is Rydal Hall. While the Hall has a core dating from the 16th century, the visible external envelope is 18th and 19th century. The principal front has a symmetrical arrangement of multi-paned sliding sash windows, a projecting central bowed bay, and a shallow roof concealed behind a balustraded parapet.

Other 19th century domestic buildings in the village reflect the eclectic tastes of the period, and include neo-Tudor door and window detailing at the Glen Rothay Hotel and at Undermount.

St Mary's Church was built in neo-Gothic style with a three-stage tower in 1823–4 at a cost of £1,500 by Lady le Fleming of Rydal Hall. It was originally built as a chapel, but became the parish church when Rydal was split from the parish of Grasmere in 1826. The more ornate Perpendicular-style tracery of the nave and chancel dates from 1884. Wordsworth helped to choose the site, originally an orchard, and composed two poems to thank Lady Fleming for her generosity in building it.

Rydal's former farmsteads include Hart Head Farm (17th century), Rydal Mount (16th to 19th), Hall Bank (17th) and Cote How (1535, with remnants of an earlier watch tower). Associated farm buildings are either attached to the domestic building (as at Hart Head, where a wide doorway, in addition to the front entrance door, indicates the probable former entrance to the cow house) or as detached farm buildings (as can be seen to the east of Hart Head Cottage and in the grounds of Rydal Hall). All the farm buildings are characterised by the use of exposed rubblestone for the walls, and their distinctively functional features: a good example is the bank barn at Hart Head, with cow house at the lower level and a winnowing door at the upper level.

Sixteenth-century Cote How, which stands alone on the southern bank of the River Rothay, has retained an attached barn with a timber pentice (an open gallery projecting out from the upper floor of the barn, covered by the deeply overhanging eaves of the barn roof); once a feature typical of Lake District barns, surviving pentices are increasingly rare.

Also worthy of special mention is the village Institute, or Old Reading Room, at the south-eastern exit from the village, a fine early 20th-century two-storey property in original condition, in Lakeland vernacular style, with external stone staircase, that currently appears to be unused, and is therefore potentially at risk.

There are a number of bridges within the conservation area, both historic and modern. Two of the bridges are listed structures: Pelter Bridge (grade II) and the 17th century bridge at Rydal Hall (grade II*). Pelter Bridge, over the River Rothay, is a narrow humped bridge with a three centred arch and a small flood arch. The bridge at Rydal Hall spans the steep gorge created by the Rydal Beck and features a single segmental arch.

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:

- Rydal Hall – Grade II*;
- Terraces to the south of Rydal Hall – Grade II*;
- Bridge over Rydal Beck in grounds of Rydal Hall – Grade II*;
- Summer house in grounds of Rydal Hall – grade II*;
- Nos. 1-2 Rydal Cottages – Grade II;
- Pelter Bridge – Grade II;
- Rydal Lodge Cottage and attached barn – Grade II;
- Rydal Mount – Grade I;
- The Mount – Grade II;
- Church Cottage – Grade II;
- Church of St Mary – Grade B;
- Cote How – Grade II;
- Glen Rothay Hotel – Grade II;
- Hall Bank – Grade II;
- Hart Head – Grade II.

Designated gardens

The following gardens in Rydal are included in the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England:

- Rydal Hall – Grade II (ref GD1662).
- Rydal Mount – Grade II (reference GD1663)

Although inclusion in the register currently grants no statutory protection (this is under review as part of the Heritage Protection Bill that will come before Parliament in autumn 2008), it is used in influencing planning and management decisions, to improve public awareness of important parks and elements within them and to encourage their owners to preserve and maintain them.

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. 15: Some features of the domestic buildings of Rydal.



The converted barn at Hart Head displays features such as the ground-floor entrance to the cow house and the upper winnowing door.



Vernacular features at Hart Head include the polygonal chimneystack and the stepped gables created from large slates.



A large circular chimneystack at Mount Cottages.



Undermount is a 19th century fusion of vernacular and neo Tudor features and displays these attractive leaded lights.



The Glen Rothay Hotel was substantially remodelled in the 19th century to give it a neo-Tudor appearance when it served as the home of Liberal MP, Theodore Fry.



The Hermitage and The Old Cottage form an attractive grouping on the south side of the A591. The roofscape, with many chimneystacks, is visually varied.



The 19th century principal front of Rydal Hall belies the earlier core of the building and makes a grand statement in the Classical manner.



The 17th century summerhouse, or 'Grott-House', on the banks of the Rydal Beck, was built to hide the waterfall until the doors were flung open and the visitor invited to enter.



Rydal Holme, one of Rydal's largest houses, was originally built as the Vicarage at the end of the 19th century; its size indicates the social status of the Anglican clergy at that time.



The Rydal Lodge Hotel was greatly enlarged after the turnpike road was built to create a hotel from an older farmstead.

7 Negative features and issues

Inappropriate alterations to buildings

The historic buildings within the Rydal Conservation Area are generally in a good state of repair and retain a significant amount of architectural detail. However, a few of the buildings are suffering from an incremental loss of architectural detail, including alterations to door and window openings. The use of inappropriate modern materials, such as the replacement of original leaded lights or timber windows with uPVC, the introduction of dormer windows and rooflights into prominent roofslopes, and the replacement of timber doors with modern timber examples, is adversely affecting both the listed and the unlisted buildings in the conservation area.

The use of stains and varnishes on timber doors and windows

A number of the historic buildings within the conservation area display timber door and window joinery which has been stained and/or varnished in a bright orange or dark brown colour. This non-traditional treatment erodes the appearance and character of these features, to the detriment of the special interest of the conservation area.

Signage

The popularity of Rydal and the surrounding area as a tourist destination, particularly with regard to the cultural legacy of Wordsworth, has meant that a degree of signage is required to direct visitors to attractions such as Rydal Mount, and to advertise accommodation and available refreshments. While it is recognised that some signage is necessary, some of the display boards are large. Such advertisements must be carefully monitored to ensure that the number, size and design do not intrude to a detrimental degree on the rural character of the village. There are a number of timber fingerposts in the village marking the footpaths and bridleways. Some of these are in poor condition and the lettering has become illegible.

Traffic management

The A591, which passes through Rydal, is one of the Lake District's busiest roads. Along the road itself, traffic noise and pollution are a problem, and pedestrians can feel threatened by speeding traffic. Away from the main road, the noise is diminished, partly because of the sound-proofing effect of extensive woodland.

The road up to Rydal Mount is not easy to see when driving along the A591, and through traffic does not always make allowances for traffic turning up this road, nor turning into and out of the lane that crosses narrow Pelter Bridge. The sinuosity of the road has a tendency to slow traffic down, but the case could be made for more formal speed limits through the village.

The lane up to Rydal Mount is often lined with parked cars that have a detrimental impact on the rural character of the settlement. However, signage controlling the parking arrangements is kept to a minimum, and the lane does have a tranquil rural appearance outside of busy holiday periods.

Building maintenance and repair

Buildings in the conservation area are generally in a good state of repair. Some of the stone farm buildings and outbuildings within the conservation area require some maintenance and repair. There are examples where inappropriate repair methods, such as poorly executed pointing, has damaged the appearance and character of important historic buildings.

Loss and alteration of traditional stone boundary walls and the introduction of modern fencing materials

The 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. 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 Rydal.



While the general condition of structures within the conservation is good, there are some features that require repair and maintenance.



Modern wood stains and varnishes on joinery undermines the character and appearance of some of the traditional buildings.



The insertion of this modern garage door in a historic building has partially eroded the character of the building.



Car parking can be a problem in this busy tourist attraction; however signage and street clutter is not an issue at present.



Large advertising signs can detract from the rural appearance of the village if they are not in character or adequately controlled.



Alterations to historic buildings, such as the insertion of a box dormer, can threaten the historic character of an important building.

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 entitled *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 us, working with our partners and other funding bodies. 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.

1.2 Designation and extension

As part of the appraisal process to identify the special architectural and historic interest of Rydal, 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. The appraisal has examined the conservation area boundaries and has identified that the conservation area boundary should be redrawn as follows:

- a. The walled kitchen garden and gardener's cottage are attractive historic structures closely associated with other buildings within the conservation area and integral elements of the original historic estate. The boundary has been re-drawn to include these features.
- b. The boundary enclosing the land and outbuildings to the east of the hall is unclear and has been rationalized so that it follows the edge of the buildings themselves and existing boundary features on the ground
- c. The boundary to the west of Cote Howe is unclear being defined by a footpath which has been moved. It is proposed to relocate the boundary so that it is well related to field boundaries.

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

RECOMMENDED ACTION: We 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 fifteen listed structures within the conservation area and two designated gardens.

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: 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 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 that are of considerable local interest and that 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 encourage all applications for extensions and alterations to these buildings to be particularly carefully considered

RECOMMENDED ACTION: We will ensure that the qualities of all Significant Unlisted Buildings (as identified on the Townscape Appraisal map) and the contribution they make to the character and appearance of the conservation area are carefully considered in relation to their proposed development or demolition.

1.6 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;
- alterations to window/door openings;
- the erection of porches;
- minor installations and alteration of materials;
- loss and alteration of boundary walls.

Following consultation and working with the local community, we could seek to retain and conserve those traditional features which are important to the area's character by introducing an Article 4 Direction, to help manage alterations to single family dwelling houses, such as putting up porches, changing roofing material or changing distinctive doors and windows.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: We 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 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 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: We will seek to consider the use of Tree Preservation Orders in appropriate circumstances where a tree has significant amenity value and is considered to be potentially under threat.

1.8 Setting and views

The setting of the conservation area and views within, into and from the area are very important to its character and appearance. It is important that development, enhancement and public realm work takes account of 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.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: We will seek to ensure that development, enhancement and public realm work preserve or enhance important views within, into and from the conservation area, as identified in the appraisal.

1.9 New development, re-development, alterations and extensions

While there are few opportunities for large-scale redevelopment within the conservation area, some improvement or enlargement of the existing buildings may be possible subject to sensitive design and good quality materials and details. There may occasionally be sites where completely new development is acceptable. As the quality of the general environment within the conservation area is already acknowledged by designation, 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: We will determine applications with regard to 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 stone walls. There is a small loss of these walls where routine maintenance and rebuilding of fallen sections has been neglected.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: We will encourage the maintenance of traditional stone walls and seek their retention rather than their replacement with new non-traditional boundary treatments.

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: We 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 Rydal 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 in December to January 2008-9. This included placing the document on the Authority's website and the provision of a public exhibition at Grasmere Village 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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