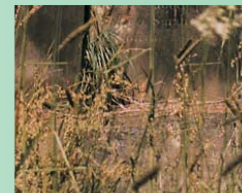


*Midhopstones*

**CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

*Final Draft October 2007*



A P P R A I S A L

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After a period of public consultation Sheffield City Council adopted this Conservation Area Appraisal and accompanying management proposals for Midhopstones on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2007, which means that they are now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the area.

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## MIDHOPESTONES CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

### 1.0 Introduction

#### **Purpose of the appraisal**

1.1 This appraisal seeks to record and analyse the various features that give the Midhopestones Conservation Area its special architectural and historic interest. The area's buildings and spaces are noted and described, and marked on the Townscape Appraisal map along with listed buildings, buildings of townscape merit, significant trees and spaces, and important views into and out of the conservation area. There is a presumption that all of these features should be "preserved or enhanced", as required by the legislation.

1.2 This appraisal builds upon national policy, as set out in PPG15, and local policy (see para.2.3-2.6). It provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the Midhopestones Conservation Area can be assessed.

1.3 To be concise and readable, the appraisal does not record all features. The omission of any feature from the text or accompanying maps does not, therefore, mean that it is not of interest or value.

#### **Summary of special interest**

1.4 The Midhopestones Conservation Area, designated in October 1976, is a farming hamlet located between Sheffield and the Peak District with a high proportion of listed manorial, ecclesiastical and agricultural buildings.

1.5 Midhopestones is probably on the verge of the first radical changes in its 800-year history, as the former agricultural hamlet is transformed into a dormitory settlement for Sheffield and other nearby centres of employment.

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

- The open rural character and the setting on terraces on sloping land within a sheltered valley above the River Porter, with extensive views eastwards and westwards along that valley;
  - The low settlement density, consisting of farmhouses and barns set amongst a tapestry of green fields (used for grazing) of similar shape and size surrounded by one metre-high drystone walls built of gritstone boulders;
  - The homogeneity of the buildings, mostly of squared gritstone or gritstone rubble with stone slates for the principal roofs and Welsh slate for lesser roofs;
  - Substantial trees that in some cases help to screen and hide the larger and less attractive modern farm buildings;
  - The small scale of the church and its setting, within a churchyard full of finely lettered headstones, surrounded by a coped gritstone wall, and its interior furnishings, which are a rare survival from the early 18th century;
  - The survival of buildings from the early manorial centre;
  - The footpaths and green lanes, including the reservoir bankside paths, all of which support a rich diversity of wildlife;
  - The historical interest of the settlement and the role of its pottery in supplying basic commodities to the South Yorkshire area before the arrival of mass ceramic production.
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## 2.0 The planning policy context

2.1 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”. It is the quality and interest of an area, rather than that of individual buildings, which is the prime consideration in identifying a conservation area. Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas. Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

2.2 This document should be read in conjunction with national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) – Planning and the Historic Environment. The layout and content follows guidance produced by English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the English Historic Towns Forum.

### Local planning policy

2.3 This appraisal provides a firm basis on which applications for development within Sheffield City can be assessed. It should be read in conjunction with the wider development plan policy framework produced by Sheffield City Council. That framework is set out in a number of documents, notably:

2.4 *The Unitary Development Plan (UDP)* which is the statutory development plan for Sheffield, adopted in March 1998.

2.5 *The Sheffield Development Framework (SDF)* will be the City’s portfolio of local development documents, collectively delivering the spatial planning strategy for the whole of the Sheffield District except for the area in the Peak Park. Once adopted, the SDF will replace the Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

2.6 The *Sheffield Urban Design Compendium*, a design guide primarily for the City Centre, although much of the design guidance is relevant throughout the rest of the city. The compendium provides information for designers, and sets out strategic information at a city wide level. It provides guidance relating to the specific parts of the city, for both the built form and public realm.



Location of Midhoptstones in Sheffield

## 3.0 Location and setting

### Location and context

3.1 The Midhopestones Conservation Area is located at the north western edge of the Sheffield city boundary. It lies 17.5km from the city centre, just south of the A616 trunk road (the Manchester Road), which forms the major east–west link between the Sheffield/Rotherham/Barnsley conurbation and Manchester, via the Peak District National Park. The road forms the boundary between Sheffield City and Barnsley District and runs alongside the River Porter (or Little Don), whose valley is enclosed by slopes that rise by some 200 to 300 metres to moorland ridges to the north and the south.

3.2 Midhopestones is approached from the busy Manchester Road by turning south and descending along Mortimer Road to the river, crossing a listed bridge and then climbing up to the centre of the hamlet, which consists of some 20 dwellings and farms widely dispersed along two terraces standing



*The approach to the village from Manchester Road.*

above the southern bank of the river. Beyond Midhopestones, Mortimer Road continues south to Burnside Moor, where the road forms the eastern boundary of the Peak District National Park, which begins 1.25 km south of the hamlet.

3.3 Midhopestones lies at the western end of the Underbank Reservoir, one of three reservoirs in this valley (along with Midhope Reservoir to the south west and Langsett Reservoir to the west) constructed early in the 20th century to supply Sheffield and Barnsley with water. The reservoir also serves to separate Midhopestones from the extensive (but well-hidden) steel works and 20th-century housing estates of Stocksbridge, 1.6km to the east, and prevents any westward encroachment by Stocksbridge along the Porter valley.

### Roads, lanes and paths

3.4 Midhopestones does not receive much through traffic. Mortimer Road forms the main route through Midhopestones, and along this main axial route most of the smaller houses are located. The centre of the hamlet is defined by the terrace on which the former school and public house sit, with its crossroads formed by Miller Lane and Chapel Lane. Mortimer Road continues uphill to another terrace where the road divides, the right fork being the continuation of Mortimer Road, which leads up to the open moorland of the Peak District National Park and eventually to west Sheffield, while the left fork (Oaks Lane) is a narrow minor lane leading to Brooks Bank Bridge sailing club and Stocksbridge.

3.5 Chapel Lane leads to Midhope Reservoir and Upper Midhope. The lane forms two right-angled bends as it skirts the boundary of the medieval manorial complex of Midhope Hall Farm, with the church of St James sitting on a low rise in the first angle. Despite the dilapidation of the farm buildings that line the lane from the church to Midhope Hall Farm, this is an attractive lane because of the church, the cart sheds that help to define the lane edge, the sunken character of the lane between Stoneycroft House and Midhope Hall Farm and the trees and walls that line the route. In summer the walls sprout numerous white and red foxgloves.

3.6 There are several more attractive lanes and footpaths in the hamlet. From the gate beside Pothouse, a public footpath follows the bank of the reservoir beneath pines and cypress trees. This meets a green lane at the eastern edge of the conservation area boundary, which leads between drystone walls up to Oaks Lane. The green lane is lined with rowan and ash trees and there is a solitary (and incongruous) walnut tree growing in the arable field to the east, which stands on the line of the conservation area boundary. Oaks Lane leads south to a triangular green and the former Smithy, which together make a potentially attractive entrance to the village from the moors. Behind the Smithy, a public footpath runs through fields to emerge just west of the former school. Parts of this route (especially the reservoir path) are used by local schoolchildren for nature walks and by bird watchers. Finally, there is a bridleway, called Stoney Croft Lane that starts opposite Stoneycroft House and runs south for a short distance, before turning east to join Mortimer Road, some 0.5 km south of the village.



*Cart sheds help to define the edge of the sunken lane between Stoneycroft House and Midhope Hall Farm.*



*There are several attractive lanes and footpaths in the hamlet, including this green lane, forming the eastern edge of the conservation area boundary, which passes between drystone walls and mature rowan and ash trees as well as (on the right) a walnut tree growing in the arable field to the east.*

## 4.0 Landscape setting

### Topography and relationship of conservation area to surroundings

4.1 The boundaries of the Midhopstones Conservation Area have been drawn in such a way as to take in all of the buildings and monuments in the hamlet that lie south of the River Porter.

4.2 The boundary to the north of the conservation area stops at the road bridge over the Porter. The following structures are excluded from the conservation area, though they form part of the parish and are an integral part of the history and visual character of Midhopstones:

- the bridge itself (listed grade II);
- a modern house north-west of the bridge (with a large rock garden rising from the river bank to support a platform on which the house and garage sit);
- the adjacent former toll house (listed grade II);
- a listed farmhouse and barn complex called Midhope Lodge on the south side of the A616, west of the Toll House.
- Holme Cottage on the north-eastern side of the bridge which appears to date from the construction of the reservoir, perhaps built by the water board, but which has an older single storey forge or workshop in its grounds;
- a listed milepost to the north of Holme Cottage on the pavement beside the bus shelter;
- Lower Hand Bank Farm (listed Grade II and described in Pevsner as ‘early 19th ... curious effect ... both homely and Palladian’) on the north side of the A616 (in Barnsley District), possibly built as a coaching inn (named as the Rose and Crown Inn on the 1850 Ordnance Survey map), whose main house and extensive outbuildings have recently been converted to apartments.



Possible forge or metal workshop currently just outside the Conservation Area Boundary.

4.3 The boundary also takes in some 24 fields and their drystone boundary walls, which are an integral feature of the village. The fields are all used for grazing cattle and horses; excluded are the arable fields that begin to the east of The Oaks and to the north and east of Hill House Farm.

4.4 To the north east, the conservation area boundary follows the bank of the Underbank Reservoir, taking in two areas of reeds and bog; the northernmost area of bog (east of Pothouse) is potentially of archaeological importance as the site of the 18th century Midhope Pottery.

4.5 To the north west, the boundary takes in one tiny corner of a field north of the church, site of St James's Well, but excludes the rest of this field and three other large fields that run down from the church and manorial complex at Midhope Hall Farm to the River Porter and that are a visually important part of the hamlet and its setting.

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## 5.0 Historic development and archaeology

### Archaeological significance

5.1 Although the Sites and Monuments Record and the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service's Historic Environment Characterisation Study cannot be regarded as definitive or comprehensive, the data from both sources suggests that Midhopestones is a place of considerable archaeological interest for its possible medieval chapel, its medieval courthouse, its altered or demolished medieval cruck-built barns and cottages, and for the site of the Midhope Pottery works and kilns.

5.2 It is likely that further consideration will need to be given to the effect of applications for substantial new development on any potential archaeological remains, and an Archaeological Assessment of the site should be prepared prior to any application being submitted.

### Place names

5.3 Midhopestones and its slightly larger sister hamlet of Upper Midhope, located 1.6 km to the east, are collectively described in historical records as Middop, Middup and Midhope. When a distinction is made between the two hamlets, they are referred to as Upper or Over Midhope and Nether Midhope or (in one very early document) Midhope-in-Waldershelf (the latter being the name of a 13th-century lord of the manor).

5.4 The Oxford Dictionary of English Placenames suggests the name is derived from Old English *mid*, middle and Old English *hop*, enclosed or dry land amid fens. *Hop* can also mean a small enclosed valley or smaller opening from the main dale. All of these would be appropriate as a description of the topography of the hamlet.

5.5 The *stones* element in the name is comparatively recent; the first recorded reference dates from 1678, and it probably refers to the 'leppings', 13 or 14 worn leaping or stepping stones set in the bed of the river (illustrated in Kenworthy, page 173) used to ford the River Porter before the construction of a bridge, but now submerged beneath the Underbank Reservoir.

### Origins and historic development

#### The manorial complex

5.6 From surviving records, it seems likely that Midhopestones had manorial rights exercised by its own resident lord of the manor from the 12th century (though it is not mentioned in Domesday). The earliest record is a charter of 1227 recording an agreement concerning a mill between Hylienus Waldershelf and John Charlton. In a charter of 1284, John Charlton granted the manor of Penisale (modern Penistone, 3.2 km north of Midhopestones) to Elias de Midhope, who was then already in possession of the manor at Midhope. Elias had a number of successors, all called Elias, one of whom died 1337, when the manor passed to the de Barnby family.

5.7 The earliest surviving building in Midhopestones is the 14th-century cowhouse (the former courthouse) in Midhope Hall Farm, which is a survival from the manorial complex (see P Ryder, 'The Old Courthouse, Midhope Hall Farm', *Archaeological Journal* vol 137, 1980, pp460-1).

#### The Chapel and Well of St James

5.8 A near contemporary of the courthouse is the chapel of St James (1368), located on the north-eastern corner of the manorial complex. Midhopestones lies in the parish of Bradfield, which has the distinction of being one of England's largest parishes (14,400 hectares in extent). The parish church at Bradfield is some 8km southeast of Midhopestones, and it is no doubt because of this distance that a structure on the south side of the manorial hall at Midhope Hall Farm was used as a chapel in the 14th century.

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*The chapel (now church) of St James dates from 1368.*

5.9 In 1368, Thomas de Barnby converted that chapel into a granary (no longer in existence: Joseph Kenworthy, in an article published in 1927, says it collapsed 'thirty years ago' – so around 1897). Barnby then provided a new place of worship in the form of the present church (technically a chapel of ease) of St James.

5.10 St James' was restored 'from its ruinous state' by Godfrey 'Justice' Bosville (of Gunthwaite Hall in Pensitone parish), who purchased the manor in 1690. Bosville served as High Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1705, the year in which he gave the church its current porch (dated 1705 in the door lintel, carved with the initials BGB for Godfrey and Bridget Bosville; his coat of arms, cast in lead, is set into the pediment above).



*The coat of arms cast in lead of Godfrey Bosville who restored the chapel (now church) of St James 'from its ruinous state' in 1705, the year he served as High Sheriff of Yorkshire.*

5.11 Apart from the porch and the belfry, the exterior of the church is essentially 14th century, but the interior, with its box pews and west gallery, plus a Jacobean pulpit from the earlier church, owes its appearance to Bosville's work. The eastern wall has a complete king-post truss surviving from the earlier church. Bosville's carpenters sawed through the tie beams of the other three roof trusses, and then had to strap new collar beams to the trusses and erect buttresses to the north wall when the church began to collapse, the leaning walls now contributing further to St James's appearance of romantic antiquity.

Buttresses added to shore up the north wall of the chapel after Bosville's carpenters sawed through the tie beams of the roof trusses, causing the walls to bulge.



Steps leading to St James' Well.



St James's Well is described in *Holy Wells and Spas of South Yorkshire* (1991), by Rob Wilson, as 'South Yorkshire's best preserved holy well'.

5.12 To the north west of the church, just outside the boundary of the manorial centre, is St James's Well, described in *Holy Wells and Spas of South Yorkshire* (1991), by Rob Wilson, as 'South Yorkshire's best preserved holy well'. Popular mythology says that the well is pre-Christian and possibly pre-Roman in origin, though its current appearance owes much to the erection by Bradfield Parish Council in 1971 of iron railings around the small square stone lined well, along with a plaque that reads 'St James's Well at Nether Midhope, in the precincts of the manorial homestead of Midhope-in-Waldershelf, may have been held in superstitious reverence long before Anglo-Saxon, Dane or Norman came on the scene'.

5.13 The existence of court and chapel implies a population living close by. No other early buildings survive, but nineteenth-century antiquarians mention visiting Midhope to see its cruck-built cottages (one of which, Dike Side Farm, described as 'a stout cruck-built farmhouse', is now under the reservoir). There was also a mill (located alongside the weir in the field below Cornmill Cottage and described as still in use in 1861).

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### The Midhope Pottery and Potter's Well

5.14 In 1720, William Gough established the Midhope Pottery at Pothouse Fold to take advantage of the red and black fire clays available here and at Langsett. He eventually expanded the site to include seven dwellings, several potbanks (or kilns) and drying sheds. Four cottages survive (just south of the bridge); the remainder of the site is now under the reservoir. The Midhope Pottery produced earthenware vessels (bottle, porringers, basins, pancheons, cups, saucers, jars, plates and chimney pots) glazed with a characteristic dark brown to black glaze that were sold all over South Yorkshire (Weston Park Museum has a representative collection of these vessels).

5.15 Gough also built Potter's Well, with two stone troughs set side-by-side to harness the waters of a naturally occurring spring on the hillside just south of Pothouse Fold. The troughs were said to have come from the manorial hall; one was for drinking water and the other for use in the pottery. This was the only source of water for the hamlet until 1919, and fetching water meant carrying heavy buckets 100 yards up the steep hill. The pottery struggled to survive because of competition from mass-produced porcelain and china in the 19th century and it closed in 1845, though a trade directory of 1861 records that a firebrick tile and chimney pot manufacturer was still operating in Midhopestones at that time.

### Enclosure, the first school, bridges and toll roads

5.16 The period from the mid-17th to the late-18th centuries was a time of prosperity and growth in Midhopestones when new houses were built (New House, Mortimer Road, mid to late 17th) and new farmhouses established with associated barns and cowhouses (the mid to late 17th century house on the north side of Miller Lane, and its early 18th century barn and cowhouse; the late 17th farmhouse called The Oaks, Oaks Lane, and its late 17th or early 18th century barn and cowhouse). The fact that some fields were enclosed in 1674 might be connected to this period of building.

5.17 There was sufficient of a population in the area by 1732 for the first school to be erected. In 1771, Hans Winthrop Mortimer, Lord of the Manor of Bamford, constructed the Mortimer Road toll road from Penistone Bridge to Grindleford Bridge via Midhope, Bar Dike, Strines and Bamford Moors), thus consolidating what was probably already an existing packhorse track linking the Peak District to the woollen manufacturing districts further north.

5.18 It is possible that the construction of this route included the provision of a packhorse bridge at Midhopestones, which was 'broken down by a heavy flood' (Kenworthy) and replaced by a more substantial bridge in 1788 (the date is inscribed on the south west parapet coping). Also dating from 1788 (the date is inscribed on the front right quoin) is the Smithy (at the junction of Mortimer Road and Oaks Lane), a single storey workshop with shoeing bay, constructed no doubt to take advantage of passing trade on the new toll road.

### Late 18th to 20th centuries

5.19 The late 18th century saw the construction of the farmhouse that was later to become the Club Inn public house. It took over this function some time in the second half of the 19th century from the Barrel Inn, which was located in one of the row of three cottages on Miller Lane (the 1850 Ordnance Survey map names the Barrel Inn, but it is unclear which of the cottages is so named). White Cottage, nearby, was known as The Chapel, and it was here that 'Independents' or non-conformist worshippers, held their meetings in the early 19th century.



Map 2: Extract from OS map from 1854, showing the early development of Midhoptstones

5.20 The Turnpike Enabling Act that led to the construction of the A616 Manchester Road was passed in 1805, and the listed toll house and milepost (outside the conservation area) were built at this time. The Enclosure Act of 1818 led to the creation of the regular rectilinear field pattern evident not just around Midhoptstones, but also along the whole of the valley of the Porter from Langsett to Stocksbridge, along with their characteristic metre-high drystone walls constructed of gritstone boulders. The bridge was enlarged in 1822 and the school rebuilt in 1826.

5.21 The construction by the Barnsley Corporation of the Midhope Reservoir in 1919 led to the loss of the houses along Dike Side, the stepping stones, part of the Midhope Pottery complex, possibly the mill, and a substantial house called Badw Hall (of which only some garden walls remain bordering the reservoir), all of which appear on the 1850 Ordnance Survey map. The school was rebuilt for the third time in 1924 but has since closed.

## 6.0 Spatial analysis

### Key views and vistas

6.1 Midhoptstones does not make a particularly strong impression on travellers driving east or west along the Manchester Road, mainly because the trees that line the River Porter hide the lower part of the village, as do the trees on the upper terraces (in front of Chapel Style Farm, for example). The best views of the hamlet are to be had from the Manchester Road driving east.



Open views are an important part of the hamlet's appeal.

6.2 The views out of the village are extensive, by contrast, and are part of what attracts people to live here. Many houses face north or west, looking across the valley to the moorland ridge on the northern side of the Porter Valley, or west along the valley to the promontory at Gilbert Hill and Browns Edge. Views east out of the hamlet catch glimpses of the reservoir, though this is largely enshrouded in bankside woodland, and extend along the valley to the promontory at Green Moor. Views can extend for some 3 to 5 km in both directions up and down the valley, and only the pylons marching across the northern slope and skyline spoil what is otherwise a rural prospect, with no hint that Sheffield lies so close.

## 7.0 Definition of the special interest of the conservation area

### Activities/uses

7.1 Historically the hamlet was a thriving agricultural community, whose economy became more diverse in the 18th century with the establishment of the Midhope Pottery and a forge. A trade directory of 1861 lists the occupations of the residents as farmers (10 in total, located at Midhope Hall, Lane Hall, Hill House, Midhope Mill, The Oaks, Brookbank and one other farm not named); tailors (2), shopkeeper, schoolmaster, carpenter, carpenter and joiner, firebrick, tile and chimney pot manufacturer, corn miller, barrel maker and bootmaker.

7.2 Three farms within the hamlet continue in agricultural use (Midhope Hall Farm, Chapel Style Farm and Hill House Farm) though perhaps no longer on the scale of former times judging by the number of redundant Dutch barns and cattle byres on all three farms. Two farms (on the Manchester Road, outside the conservation area) were recently converted into homes and apartments and building work has also recently been carried out at Midhope Hall Farm. Several farmhouses have been extended and barns have been converted within the last decade, suggesting that a major shift is taking place in the population from resident agricultural labour force to city commuters, looking for a rural home with a horse paddock.

7.3 Aside from agriculture and development, the public house (known historically as the Club Inn, briefly renamed the Midhopestones Arms, and known since 1991 as Ye Olde Mustard Pot) is the hamlet's other main enterprise. 2005 saw the completion of a major programme of refurbishment, which included the building of new function rooms and a large car park. The inn's website shows that it is being run ambitiously with the aim of consolidating a reputation for good food (it has already featured in guides to England's best gastropubs) and is aiming to attract weddings and other functions.



*2005 saw the completion of a major programme of refurbishment at the Mustard Pot which included the building of new function rooms and a large car park.*

7.4 The parish guide of 1990 says that the school is now in use as a 'City College Outdoor Centre and Community Centre'. Midhope Reservoir attracts walkers and birdwatchers, though most of them gain access from the Stocksbridge end of the reservoir, or come to make use of the sailing club and angling facilities at Brooks Bank Bridge, outside the conservation area, between Midhopestones and Stocksbridge.



*Midhope Smithy, now boarded up and overgrown with ivy.*

7.5 The parish guide of 1990 says that the Midhope Smithy is owned by Bradford Parish Council; an attempt was made to run it as a working forge and craft centre, but it is now boarded up and overgrown with ivy.

7.6 A reminder of the proximity of Sheffield is the ever-present noise of traffic using the Manchester Road; this is not intrusive and after a short time the ear learns to ignore the road noise as part of the background.

### **Architectural and historic character**

7.7 Leaving aside recently constructed barns and cattle parlours, every building in today's Midhopstones Conservation Area is shown on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map (surveyed 1850, published 1851), and 50 per cent are listed (ten of the hamlet's twenty buildings or building groups)

as being of special architectural or historical interest. Most of the houses date from the mid 17th to the late 18th centuries.

7.8 The differences between farmhouses and barns are not greatly marked. Both are of similar proportions and materials, with a similar roof pitch of about 35 degrees. House walls are of squared gritstone set in relatively even courses with recessed lime mortar beds and sandstone tile roofs (though 19th-century extensions have Welsh slate roofs). Barns have more sparsely mortared walls and some use rubble rather than squared stone. Original house windows, where they survive, are of two or three lights separated by chamfered mullions, whereas barns have rectangular or square openings, closed with wooden doors.

7.9 Two houses (New House, and the former barn at the end of Miller Lane) have doors that are harr-hung; that is to say, the hanging-stile, or 'harr-stile', has projections at the top and bottom. The lower projection is iron shod and pivots in a hole in the stone threshold; the longer upper projection passes through a hole in the wooden lintel. In Britain, harr-hung doors are a rare domestic survival (most have been replaced by hinged doors); they are much more common in the Highland zone than elsewhere.

### **Listed buildings**

7.10 The following buildings within the Midhopstones Conservation Area are listed:

- **Church of St James, II\*** (see D Hey and P Ryder, 'St James' Church' Midhope', *Archaeological Journal* vol 137, pp 459-60 and C F Innocent, *The Development of English Building Construction*, 1916; p228 shows porch);
- **Cowhouse (former courthouse) in Midhope Hall Farm, II** (see P Ryder, 'The Old Courthouse, Midhope Hall Farm', *Archaeological Journal* vol 137, 1980, pp460-1);

- **Stonecroft Cottage**, Midhope Hall Lane, II (now called Stoneycroft House): late 18th house of squared gritstone with Welsh slate roof;
- **House on north side of Miller Lane**, II, mid to late 17th century of squared gritstone with stone slate roof;
- **Barn, cowhouse and forge at end of Miller Lane**, II, early 18th, partly converted to forge in 19th, squared gritstone with stone slate roof; barn to right end has early principle rafter truss, tall harr-hung doors to cart entrance;
- **Club Inn, Mortimer Road**, II (public House, renamed Midhopestones Arms in 1992; The Olde Mustard Pot in 2002), late 18th century with 19th-century rear range, squared gritstone with stone slate roof, Welsh slate to rear roofs;
- **New House, Mortimer Road**, II, a small mid to late 17th house, hammer dressed gritstone rubble, roughly coursed, stone slate roof, original main elevation to the south west with two-light double chamfered mullion windows to each floor, and an outshut that encloses an original front door which is oak boarded, ledged and harr-hung (a similar harr-hung door is illustrated in C F Innocent, *The Development of English Building Construction*, 1916, p241);
- **Smithy, Mortimer Road** at junction with Oaks Lane, II, late 18th century, irregularly coursed gritstone rubble, stone slate roof, single storey workshop with shoeing bay to left set back, the date 1788 crudely inscribed on a quoin to the front right;
- **The Oaks, Oaks Lane**, a late 17th farmhouse, probably refaced in the 18th century, of coursed squared gritstone with a stone slate roof;
- **Barn, Oaks Lane**, II, a late 17th or 18th century cowhouse with early 19th century barn attached, of coursed squared gritstone, stone slate roof, with tall threshing barn to left with low cowhouse and hayloft; pigeon ledge; the cowhouse interior has a cruck pair raised high on rough columns.



*The Grade-II Listed Mustard Pot, built as the Club Inn in the 18th century and recently known as the Midhopestones Arms.*



*Looking up Mortimer Road to The Oaks, most of the farmhouses and former barns in this view are listed.*

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### Key unlisted buildings - Buildings of Townscape Merit

7.11 Marked on the Townscape Appraisal map for the Midhopstones Conservation Area are a number of *unlisted* buildings that have been judged as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. This follows advice provided in English Heritage guidance on conservation area character appraisals, and within Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15), both of which stress the importance of identifying and protecting such buildings.

7.12 There is a general presumption in favour of retaining all Buildings of Townscape Merit, as set out in PPG15. The Council will also consider very carefully all applications to alter or extend such buildings.



*The barn opposite St James's church, showing the construction of the cart shed lintel and the adjacent window or pitching hole.*

7.13 Two unlisted buildings are of particular note, both are near-identical cart sheds and haylofts, each with a cart entrance defined by a large flat arched voussoir, formed of large square-cut blocks of gritstone. Their hipped roofs with Welsh slate tiles suggests an early 19th-century date. The first building stands opposite the gate to St James's church, and even in its derelict condition (holed roof, collapsing roof timbers and walls) it adds to the character of the right angled bend in which the church sits. The other is further along the same lane, beyond the Stoneycroft House, where it defines the northern edge of the lane and contributes to the lane's sunken character, helped by the wall and bank and two large ash trees on the opposite side of the lane.



*19th-century barn with blocked cart shed entrance beyond Stoneycroft House.*

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## Trees, gardens and open spaces

7.14 Trees make an important contribution to the conservation area, providing shelter, screening modern barns from view and helping to define lanes and footpaths. Their contribution is particularly marked along the reservoir banks (scented pine and cypress), along the banks of the River Porter (mixed deciduous), and along the green lane from Oaks Lane to the reservoir. Mention has already been made of a fine but solitary walnut tree with a girth that suggests an age of at least 150 years in the field below The Oaks, where it seems to be the sole remaining survivor of a hedge or tree line that was used to mark out the conservation area boundary but that has since been grubbed up.

7.15 One of the most important of the hamlet's open spaces is the churchyard, which is raised several feet above the level of the lane, and which has numerous fine headstones and table tombs made of sandstone and noteworthy for their crisp and florid lettering. The churchyard is managed as a conservation area and not aggressively mown; the long grass and the leaning headstones make an appropriately romantic setting for the small, leaning church, and the modern churchyard extension has been created sympathetically so as not to detract from this timeless setting through the intrusion of modern headstones and grave furniture.

### Boundary treatment

7.16 Many houses in Midhopstones are integrated with the field boundaries by virtue of the continuity between garden walls and property boundaries that are of the same height, materials and construction as the drystone walls that demarcate the boundaries of the adjacent paddocks. Only the school, with its high walls and cast iron railings, departs from this pattern.

7.17 Field and property walls in original condition are laid in neat courses and are about one metre in height. The rubble stones are large and heavy and are thus self-locking. Collapsed and repaired stretches of wall can easily be detected by the discontinuity in the coursing, but even stones laid without skill in higgledy-piggledy fashion seem to stand up. Where walls are backed

by soil banks, they sprout ferns, bracken and foxgloves.

7.18 Even the churchyard shares the same basic style: the wall defining the Chapel Lane boundary of the churchyard consists of squared and mortared gritstone blocks set in seven regular courses and capped by semicircular coping stones, but the walls on the other three sides are well-laid versions of the nearby field boundaries.



*The gritstone walls surrounding the churchyard have a mix of triangular and semicircular coping stones.*

7.19 Few original field gates survive, but quite a few stone gateposts do: they are of the same gritstone as the field walls, 1.2 metres or so in height, of rectangular section with a rounded top, dressed and tooled faces, with right-angled iron pins set into the stone to act as hinges.

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## Floorscape

7.20 A short length of sandstone curbstones survives on both sides of Mortimer Road below the public house. Otherwise the roads and pavements are mettled in tarmac. The path and road forming Chapel Lane are both in a cracked, potholed and patched condition. A private lane running north of the church past St James's Well and up to Midhope Hall Farm has been blocked off, and is no longer used by vehicles.

## Features of local interest

7.21 Of the two wells that have already been mentioned, the Potter's Well is now invisible, its site marked on maps, but the site itself is now overgrown with ash and sycamore trees, making access impossible. This deterioration must be of relatively recent date, since the parish guide (published 1990) says that an annual well-dressing ceremony was inaugurated by the hamlet in October 1972 at Potter's Well and at St James's Well. A notice at St James's Church suggests that the ceremony continues at the latter, but now takes place at Rogationtide, five weeks before Easter, rather than in October. St James's Well itself is not in a good condition: the steps down to the well are broken, the area around the well trodden by cattle, the well itself stagnant and covered in pondweed, while the stone surround is broken and patched with concrete blocks.

## 8.0 Issues

8.1 This section contains a brief summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the Midhopestones Conservation Area together with recommendation, if any, for changes to the current conservation area boundary. Strengths and weaknesses, together with other more specific 'positives' and 'negatives' that were identified during the appraisal process, form the basis of a separate document, known as the *Midhopestones Conservation Area Management Proposals*.

8.2 The *Management Proposals* set objectives for addressing the issues arising from this appraisal and make recommendations for possible improvements and the avoidance of harmful change.

### Strengths

- Midhopestones is a hamlet of great historical integrity, which has not so far suffered from intrusive or insensitive modern development; the only modern house is the one that sits just outside the conservation area boundary on the north western side of the bridge.
  - Midhopestones appears to have a strong community spirit: Midhope Fair, which used to be held on the field opposite the school (now part of the grounds of the pub) every 11th August has recently been revived and now takes place on the first weekend in July every year.
  - Midhopestones has a charming and attractive church, popular already for weddings (though limited in size by the small scale of the church), a well-regarded and expanding pub, an outdoor activity centre and good walks.
  - Midhopestones is not over gentrified and retains the rugged feel of a moorland-edge hamlet that still lives by farming. Godfrey Bosville (1717-84), the local poet, who wrote verse in the style of Wordsworth, described Midhope as 'a garden in the wilderness' (*The Moors*, 1740), which could still stand as an appropriate description of the hamlet today.
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- The continued use of the paddocks as grazing for cattle helps to enhance the green appearance of the hamlet and contributes to its biodiversity: the village has large numbers of swifts and swallows attracted by the flies that feed on the cattle dung. The same food source probably attracts bats. Though they were not seen, it is very likely that the area supports owls, living in the hamlet's disused farm buildings and hunting across the paddocks by night, as well as birds of prey.

### Weaknesses

- Large and intrusive Dutch barns with corrugated asbestos roofs are a feature of all three farms and are out of scale with the historic stone buildings that they dominate. On all three farms, rusting vehicles, abandoned farm machinery, piles of demolition rubble and non-biodegradable waste detract from the appearance of the conservation area.
- Rubbish is not just a problem of the farming landscape; piles of rubbish (including abandoned cars and caravans) are to be found in field corners, at the start of the Stoney Lane bridleway, and beside tracks all round the hamlet, along with builder's rubble that was most likely created during modernisation of buildings in the hamlet.
- Although there are no new houses in the conservation area, there is not one farmhouse or barn that has escaped conversion and improvement within the last twenty years. Often the work is of poor quality, carried out without regard for original materials and historical styles.
- Where paddocks have been used intensively for grazing horses (rather than seasonal cropping for silage and hay and grazing by cattle) the grass sward shows signs of stress and is gradually being replaced by nettles and thistles that thrive on the nitrogen and ammonia rich soil that results from horse urine.
- Several historic farm buildings are at risk through lack of maintenance, including the two previously mentioned farm buildings and the Forge, which is boarded up and overgrown with ivy, and where cement has been liberally applied to the roof slates to seal all gaps.



*Builder's rubble and farm waste detract from the appearance of the conservation area.*



*This modernised farmhouse has lost much of its character through the use of non traditional window materials and the prominent siting of the shed and oil tank, as well as the severe lopping of the tree.*



Broken walls and railings and abandoned temporary classrooms at The Old School.

- The Old School has abandoned terrapin huts (former classrooms) with broken windows to the rear of the stone-built schoolrooms, and the potentially attractive perimeter wall has missing and broken lengths of iron railing, and has lost all of the coping stones from the pillars that divide the wall into sections.

### Midhopestones Conservation Area boundary review

8.3 It is recommended that the boundary of the Midhopestones Conservation Area is extended to include the four fields south of Midhope Hall Farm, and to include the bridge and buildings lying to the north of the river that form an integral part of the hamlet, including Holme Cottage and the adjacent forge, but excluding Lower Hand Bank Farm which is in Barnsley District. The proposed new boundary is shown on the Townscape Appraisal Map.

8.4 Within this area there are three listed buildings: **(1) Midhopestones Bridge, Mortimer Road**, II, with the date 1788 crudely inscribed on SW parapet coping, of coursed gritstone blocks, large voussoired segmental arch flanked by smaller semicircular arches to each side, rounded and dome-headed cutwaters; **(2) Tollbar Cottage, Manchester Road**, II, late 18th century, coursed rubble with ashlar dressings; to the left a canted bay window, which was originally the bay booth to the toll **(3) The milepost and the farmhouse** (called Midhope Lodge on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map) on the south side of the Manchester Road.

### Bibliography

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*Churches the Victorians Forgot*, M Chatfield, 1979, Moorland Publishing

*Yorkshire Churches*, R A Carter, 1976, Yorkshire Arts Association

*Yorkshire Pots and Potteries*, H Lawrence, 1974, David & Charles

This potentially attractive barn occupies a focal position opposite St James's church.



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*The Making of South Yorkshire*, D Hey, 1979, Moorland Publishing

*The Early History of Stocksbridge and District*, J Kenworthy, 1927 (self published)

## List of photographs

Photograph 1: *The approach to the village from the Manchester Road.*

Photograph 2: *Cart sheds help to define the edge of the sunken lane between Stoneycroft House and Midhope Hall Farm.*

Photograph 3: *There are several attractive lanes and footpaths in the hamlet, including this green lane, forming the eastern edge of the conservation area boundary, which passes between drystone walls and mature rowan and ash trees as well as (on the right) a walnut tree growing in the arable field to the east.*

Photograph 4: *Possible forge or metal workshop just outside the Conservation Area Boundary.*

Photograph 5: *The chapel (now church) of St James dates from 1368.*

Photograph 6: *The coat of arms cast in lead of Godfrey Bosville who restored the chapel (now church) of St James 'from its ruinous state' in 1705, the year he served as High Sheriff of Yorkshire.*

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Photograph 8: *Steps leading to St James's Well.*

Photograph 9: *St James's Well is described in *Holy Wells and Spas of South Yorkshire* (1991), by Rob Wilson, as 'South Yorkshire's best preserved holy well'.*

Photograph 10: *Open views are an important part of the hamlet's appeal.*

Photograph 11: *2005 saw the completion of a major programme of refurbishment at the Mustard Pot which included the building of new function rooms and a large car park.*

Photograph 12: *Midhope Smithy, now boarded up and overgrown with ivy.*

Photograph 13: *The Grade-II Listed Mustard Pot, built as the Club Inn in the 18th century and recently known as the Midhopestones Arms.*

Photograph 14: *Looking up Mortimer Road to The Oaks, most of the farmhouses and former barns in this view are listed.*

Photograph 15: *The barn opposite St James's church, showing the construction of the cart shed lintel and the adjacent window or pitching hole.*

Photograph 16: *19th-century barn with blocked cart shed entrance beyond Stoneybrook House.*

Photograph 17: *The gritstone walls surrounding the churchyard have a mix of triangular and semicircular coping stones.*

Photograph 18: *Builder's rubble and farm waste detract from the appearance of the conservation area.*

Photograph 19: *This modernised farmhouse has lost much of its character through the use of non traditional window materials and the prominent siting of the shed and oil tank, as well as the severe lopping of the tree.*

Photograph 20: *Broken walls and railings and abandoned temporary classrooms at The Old School.*

Photograph 21: *This potentially attractive barn occupies a focal position opposite St James's church.*

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## Useful contacts and addresses

### ***For information on listed buildings and conservation areas:***

Urban Design and Conservation Team  
Sheffield City Council,  
Howden House,  
1 Union Street,  
Sheffield S1 2SH.  
Tel: 0114 273 5804

[www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/planning-and-city-development/urban-design--conservation](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/planning-and-city-development/urban-design--conservation)

### ***For information on the status and interpretation of the statutory Development Plan and supplementary planning guidance:***

Forward and Area Planning Team  
Sheffield City Council,  
Howden House,  
1 Union Street,  
Sheffield S1 2SH.  
Tel: 0114 273 4157

### ***For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas:***

English Heritage  
37 Tanner Row  
York  
YO1 6WP  
Tel: 01904 601901

### ***For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets:***

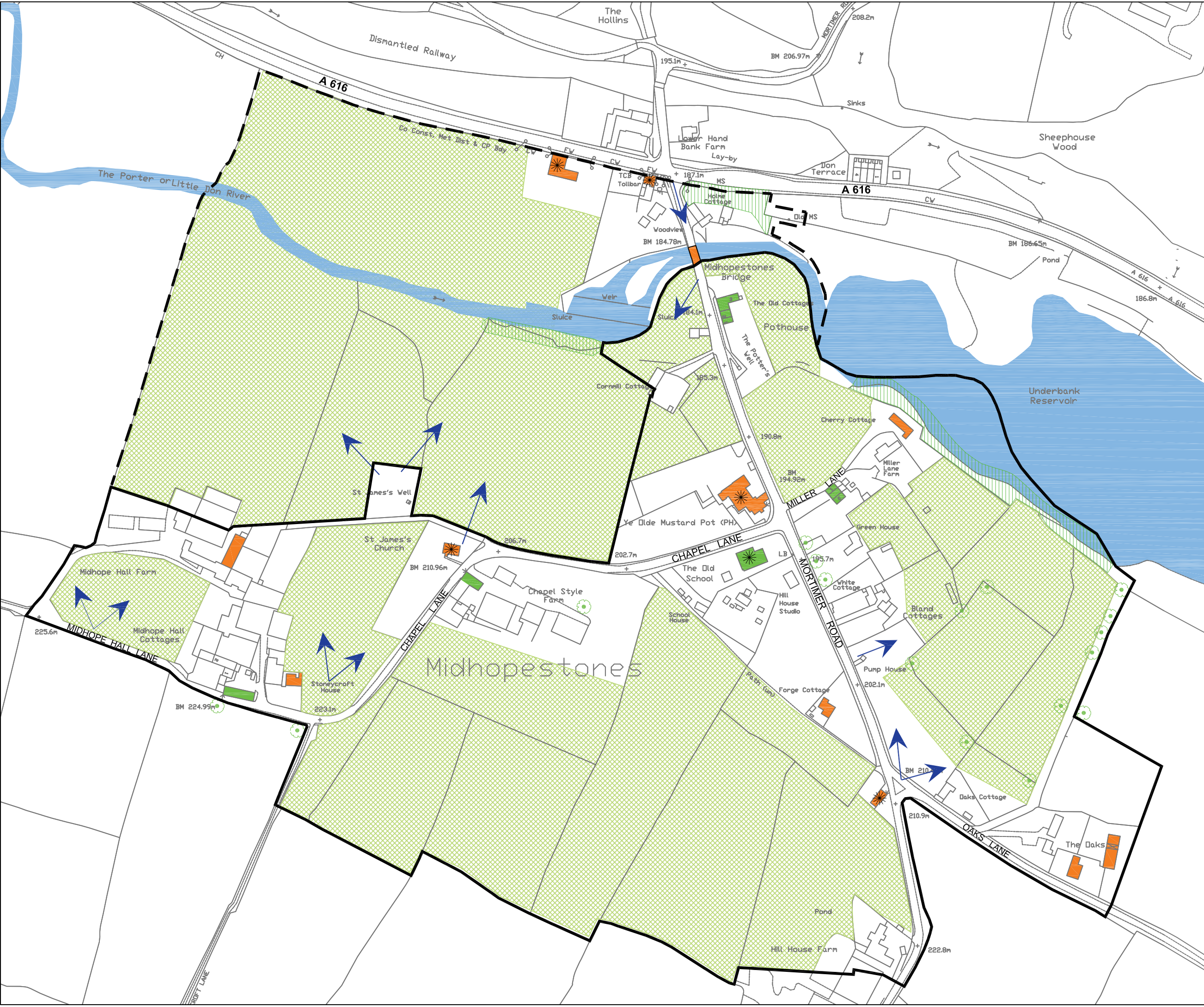
The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB),  
37 Spital Square, LONDON E1 6DY Tel: 020 7377 1644

The Georgian Group,  
6 Fitzroy Square, LONDON W1T 5DX Tel: 0207529 8920

The Victorian Society,  
1 Priory Gardens, Bedford Park, LONDON W4 1TT Tel: 0208994 1019

The Twentieth Century Society,  
70 Cowcross Street, LONDON EC1M 6EJ Tel: 020 7250 3857

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- Current Conservation Area boundary
- Proposed Conservation Area boundary
- Listed building
- Building of Townscape Merit
- Focal building
- Prominent tree
- Prominent tree groups
- Important Open Space
- Significant view
- Water

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL  
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 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: JOHN MOTHERSOLE

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 TITLE:  
**MIDHOPESTONES  
 CONSERVATION AREA**

COMMITTEE:  
 SCALE:  
 DR: TR: CAD: DATE: MICRO:

DRAWING NO:  
 CAD FILE NAME:

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## Summary of Consultation Undertaken

A consultation draft of this document was subject to a period of consultation between 25th June and 20th July 2007. All local residents in the conservation area were sent details of where they could view the document with a survey form asking for their comments. The public were also invited to a half-day workshop at Stocksbridge Library on 13th July where they could discuss the appraisal with officers from the Council's Urban Design and Conservation Team further. Local members and local community groups were also consulted as part of the process.

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