

Midhopestones

CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

Final Draft October 2007



MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 The legislative and policy background

3.0 Issues and recommendations

4.0 Monitoring and review

5.0 Useful contacts and addresses

6.0 Photographs

7.0 Summary of Consultation

After a period of public consultation Sheffield City Council adopted these Conservation Area Management Proposals and accompanying Conservation Area Appraisal for Midhopestones on 23rd October 2007, which means that they are now a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the area.

MIDHOPESTONES CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The recommendations in this document are based upon the findings the *Midhopedstones Conservation Area Appraisal*, which assesses the special interest of the Midhopedstones Conservation Area and identifies negative factors and weaknesses that detract from the conservation area's character and appearance.

1.2 Based upon the appraisal and supported up by a further site survey, this document identifies a number of specific and general issues affecting the Midhopedstones Conservation Area, including enhancement opportunities, negative features and threats. Each issue is accompanied by recommendation(s) for action, sometimes identifying further or more detailed work needed for their implementation.

1.3 The recommendations include proposals for enhancement and policies for the avoidance of harmful change, some of which are the responsibility of the City Council.

1.4 The proposals are written in the awareness that, in managing the City's conservation areas, the Council's resources are limited and therefore need to be prioritised. Financial constraints on the Council mean that proposals for which it is responsible may take longer than is desirable to implement. However, the Council will continue to encourage improvements to the conservation area in co-operation with property owners, groups and local businesses.

1.5 The structure and scope of this document is based on the suggested framework published by English Heritage in *Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas* (2006). Both the Conservation Area Appraisal and the Management Proposals will be subject to monitoring and reviews on a regular basis (see below).

2.0 Legislative background

2.1 This document reflects Government guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15: 'Planning and the Historic Environment' and 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."

2.2 *The Sheffield Unitary Development Plan (UDP)* is the statutory development plan for Sheffield, adopted in March 1998. Policies BE15-22 relate to historic buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and archaeology (pages 76-86).

Other key documents include:

- *The emerging Sheffield Development Framework (SDF).*
- *Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Designing House Extensions.*
- *Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG): Historic Parks and Gardens.*
- *Sheffield Urban Design Compendium (2004).*
- *Sheffield Buildings at Risk Survey (2005) and emerging Buildings at Risk Strategy.*
- *Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology (HMSO)*

2.3 Up-to-date details of current planning policy can be obtained from Sheffield City Council's Development Services or the Council's website at:

www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/planning-and-city-development

2.4 Breaches of planning control that are causing significant harm and are clearly unacceptable will be enforced against. A planning application may be invited where breaches of planning control might be acceptable, possibly with amendment. This will enable the issues to be thoroughly tested, including consulting local people.

2.5 Sheffield City Council has signed up to the 'Enforcement Concordat' (1998), which sets national best practice standards for planning enforcement. The concordat can be viewed and downloaded from:

http://bre.berr.gov.uk/regulation/reform/enforcement_concordat/enforcement_background.asp

2.6 Other specific strategies that will impact upon this management plan either currently being developed or already adopted:

- *Woodland Policy (1987)*
- *Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy (1991)*
- *Forthcoming Tree Strategy (proposed 2007)*

3.0 Issues and recommendations

3.1 Midhopestones is a dispersed village on the edge of the Peak District National Park made up largely of farmsteads with associated barns and byres, plus pub, church and former school. Some of the farms continue to operate as such, but almost all of the older agricultural buildings in the parish have been converted to residential use within the last twenty years.

3.2 Many of the negative features of the Midhopestones Conservation Area stem from this relatively recent change. Among the more obvious problems are the loss of historical and architectural detail resulting from conversion work, the suburbanisation of a formerly rural historic landscape, builders debris dumped in fields and along footpaths, and mature trees cut down to enhance

property owners' views. Several buildings are at risk, including redundant barns and the former forge. The decline of agriculture and craft skills means that the drystone walls that are such a feature of the conservation area are not adequately repaired or maintained.

3.3 Despite all this, Midhopestones remains an attractive village, consisting of farmhouses and converted barns set amongst a tapestry of green fields set on a series of terraces in the sheltered valley of the River Porter, with extensive views eastwards and westwards along that valley.

3.4 Loss of historical and architectural features and poor quality of design

3.4.1 Midhopestones has suffered from the over-restoration of some of its historic stone buildings, which have been converted from agricultural to residential use or 'restored' using inappropriate materials with poorly designed extensions.

3.4.2 No building in Midhopestones retains all of its historical features and many of the buildings affected are grade-II listed structures. Negative features include:

- Replacement of traditional timber windows and doors with aluminium framed, uPVC and treated timber windows, some with leaded diamonds instead of plain glass;
 - Walls rendered with concrete;
 - Repointing carried out in cement based mortar rather than lime based;
 - Roofs with concrete tiles, corrugated iron or asbestos instead of traditional stone or slate;
 - Large rooflights in prominent roof slopes;
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- Ornate gates and drives paved with coloured concrete pavements instead of traditional cobbles or paving;
- Front elevations marred by drainage pipes, wiring, burglar alarms, CCTV (and highly visible yellow warning signs), exterior lighting and satellite dishes;
- Prominently sited Calor gas and oil storage tanks and garden features, including large rockeries, decking and fencing;
- Prominently sited sheds, garage blocks (some almost as large as the houses they serve), dog pens and extensions, such as porches and conservatories;

3.4.3 Where single family dwellings are concerned, many changes can, with certain exceptions, normally be carried out without planning permission from the Council. Development of this kind is called “Permitted Development” and falls into various classes which are listed in the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995*. Powers exist for the Council, known as Article 4(2) directions, to withdraw some of these permitted development rights in the interest of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. This might be considered to prevent the further erosion of historic character of residential properties, particularly where they form a coherent group of well detailed properties.

Recommendations:

- *The Council will consider the need for Article 4(2) Directions to protect buildings that retain original features from inappropriate alteration in particular the stone roofscape. The primary focus will be on dwellinghouses that have been identified in the relevant conservation area appraisal as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.*
- *The Council will encourage property owners to reverse unsympathetic alterations and to reinstate architectural features, notably windows and*

doors, with modern replacements in the style and materials of the originals, perhaps through the production of a design code recommending best practice.

3.5 Buildings at Risk

3.5.1 The following buildings in Midhopestones are at risk from the effects of age, neglect or lack of use:

- The church, which is in need of urgent repairs to the walls and foundations as a result of damp and subsidence; a £100,000 restoration appeal has been launched, but this is a large amount for a small parish to raise;
- Chapel Style Farm, opposite the church, has prominently sited 18th century barns and cartsheds that are in a serious state of deterioration, with large areas of missing roof tile and collapsed rafters;
- Various farm buildings adjacent to Midhope Hall Cottages have broken gable copings, missing roof tiles and holes in the roof and are no longer watertight;
- Though not clearly visible from the public highway, some of the historic buildings at Midhope Hall Farm appear to have missing roof tiles and broken walls;
- Midhope Smithy, which is boarded up and overgrown with ivy, with signs of collapse in the gable end wall furthest from the road;

Recommendation:

- *The council will seek to monitor the condition of all historic buildings and will report findings and advise action, as necessary. Where the condition of a building gives cause for concern, appropriate steps will be sought to secure the future of the building, including the use of statutory powers.*

3.6 Boundary walls, signage and public realm

3.6.1 The *Midhopestones Conservation Area Appraisal* has identified the contribution that traditional drystone walls make to the character of the conservation area.

3.6.2 Some of these walls are, however, in a poor state of repair: having collapsed, they have either been patched with wire or barbed wire fencing or rebuilt to a lower standard than the adjacent walling – for example by being laid in loose random style rather than carefully fitted into regular courses. Particularly noticeable examples include the churchyard wall (especially in north-western corner, where Scots pines planted right up against the wall are undermining the wall and throwing it down), the walls along the northern edge of Chapel Lane and those along the eastern side of Mortimer Road.

3.6.3 Modern metal signage is used at the entrances to the village and for fingerposts. These state prominently that the metal from which they are made has no scrap value, which might indicate problems with the theft of signs in the past. For that reason, it might not be viable to replace these signs with more traditional signage.

3.6.4 Midhopestones' concrete standards for street lighting contribute to the suburban feel of what is essentially a rural landscape, especially when they are placed along rural lanes at the edge of the village (outside Midhope Hall Farm, for example).

3.6.5 Midhopestones has tarmac paving, which is broken and potholed in places, especially along Chapel Lane.

Recommendations:

- *The Council will advise those responsible for boundary walls to keep them in a good state of repair using historic materials and techniques.*
- *The Council will normally resist proposals included within planning applications for the demolition of, or alterations to, boundary walls,*

gate piers, fences and gates that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- *Consideration will be given to replacing modern metal signs with finger posts and village name plates of more traditional design (guidance on this can be found in the joint Department of Transport and English Heritage leaflet, *Traditional Direction Signs*).*
- *Consideration will be given to pavement repairs and removing some of the concrete street lighting columns at the edges of the conservation area.*

3.7 Trees

3.7.1 Large and mature trees (mainly oak, ash and sycamore) make a major contribution to the rural character of the Midhopestones Conservation Area. Some help to screen large modern barns from view, while others (including rowans and pine trees) add to the attractiveness of public footpaths from Oaks Lane to the Underbrook Reservoir and along the banks of the reservoir.

3.7.2 Some of these are under threat: in particular the large walnut tree growing in the field south of then oaks is threatened by ploughing, which is disturbing the roots and will lead to the death of the tree within two to three years if it continues. Mature trees have also been cut down recently that are marked on the August 2005 appraisal map. The banks of the River Porter have been also been denuded of trees in some places.

Recommendations:

- *The preparation of a Tree Management Programme would be welcome, identifying all mature trees within the conservation area (privately as well as publicly owned) and ensuring that priorities are agreed and funding set aside for the costs involved in remedial works or replacement;*
- *The Council will normally resist proposals to cut down a tree in the conservation area.*

3.8 Dumped rubbish

3.8.1 Throughout the conservation area there are areas of abandoned agricultural and builders' rubble and other detritus.

Recommendation:

- *Consideration will be given to auditing the state of rubbish within the conservation area and encouraging the owners to deal with it appropriately. If the Council considers that the amenity of the conservation area is adversely affected by the condition of land they may serve a Notice under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requiring certain steps to be undertaken by the owner of the land to remedy its condition.*

3.9 Opportunities for enhancement

3.9.1 Like many Peak District farming hamlets, Midhopestones retains two traditional wells. Well blessing ceremonies take place in mid September (17 September in 2006). Of the two wells, the Potter's Well, built around 1720 by William Gough when he established the Midhope Pottery at Pothouse Fold, is well maintained, with stone flagged paths leading to a series of stone troughs, all surrounded by flower and shrub filled borders.

3.9.2 By contrast, St James's Well, located in the field to the north of St James's Church, is in need of care. Difficult to access (down a barred farm track, reached via steep and broken steps), it is fenced off from cattle damage, but cattle nevertheless trample the surrounding area, and the trough and stone surround to the well are damaged and patched.

3.9.3 The well forms part of a historically interesting ensemble, with the church and Midhope Hall Farm, which is the site of a grade-I medieval manorial chapel and court house. At present these buildings are not accessible to the public, and the setting of church, well and surrounding farms is messy and uninviting – the important historic assets here are little known and under appreciated.

3.9.4 The Church of St James, the well and the two farmsteads to the east and west of the church deserve a better fate than their current state of neglect and deterioration. If at some future stage, either of the farms is subject to development proposals, an opportunity should be taken to look at the whole of this part of Midhopestones with a view to planned enhancement.

Recommendation:

- *Consideration will be given to work towards the enhancement and access to the area around the well, repair the existing damage and protect the well from future deterioration. Financial assistance for this work might be available from, for example, the Heritage Lottery Fund.*

3.10 Archaeological issues

3.10.1 Midhopestones is a place of considerable archaeological interest for its manorial complex at Midhope Hall Farm, its medieval cruck-built barns and cottages, and the former Midhope Pottery works and kilns. The whole of the conservation area therefore has archaeological potential above and below the ground, and it is likely that further consideration will need to be given to the effect of applications for substantial new development.

Recommendations:

- *An Archaeological Assessment of the site should be prepared prior to any application being submitted. Where below ground archaeological remains are expected, conditions may then be used to secure a detailed scheme for the foundation design and all new ground works, to protect buried remains in situ, and/or a programme of archaeological excavation, recording, analysis and publication. Further information is available from the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service.*
- *Where substantial alteration/demolition of listed buildings or other historic buildings is proposed a more detailed Building Appraisal will also be required. This includes a detailed appraisal of the special architectural or*

historic interest of the buildings on the site. The results will inform the design process and act as supporting information with a planning application. An AABA (Archaeological Assessment and Building Appraisal) should be prepared prior to the application being submitted. Once a satisfactory scheme has been agreed, conditions may then be used to secure a programme of building recording, analysis and publication. Further information is available from Sheffield City Council's conservation section.

3.11 Buildings of Townscape Merit/Positive buildings

3.11.1 Marked on the Townscape Appraisal map for the Midhopestones Conservation Area are a number of *unlisted* buildings, known as Buildings of Townscape Merit, which have been judged as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Recommendation:

- *The Council will only grant conservation area consent for the demolition of a 'building of townscape merit' or 'positive building' (as identified on relevant townscape appraisal map) if demolition is justified against the criteria specified in PPG 15 paragraphs 3.16 – 3.19.*

3.12 New development

3.12.1 There are few opportunities for development in this small conservation area. For minor works, the City Council has produced guidance entitled 'Designing House Extensions'.

3.12.2 New development should aspire to a quality of design and execution, related to its context, which may be valued in the future. This neither implies nor precludes working in traditional or new ways, but will normally involve respecting values established through assessment of the significance of the area.

3.12.3 Development proposals will be judged on their effect on the area's

character and appearance as identified in the Midhopestones Conservation Area Appraisal together with relevant Development Plan policies and any other material considerations.

4.0 Monitoring and review

4.1 As recommended by English Heritage, this document should be reviewed every five years from the date of its formal adoption. It will need to be assessed in the light of the emerging Local Development Framework and government policy generally. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the conservation area including a full photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action;
- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, and how successful this has been;
- The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed, requiring further actions or enhancements;
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;
- Publicity and advertising.

4.2 It is possible that this review could be carried out by the local community under the guidance of a heritage consultant or the City Council. This would enable the local community to become more involved with the process and would raise public consciousness of the issues, including the problems associated with enforcement.

5.0 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

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



6.0 Photographs



The farm track leading to St James's Well.



Replacement doors and windows, and cut down trees.



Ongoing building works and prominently sited oil tank.



Badly repaired walls.



The well basin is damaged and patched with concrete blocks.



Replacement doors and windows, and insensitively sited sheds.



Temporary school buildings, now redundant.



Same building – two different mortars: original lime-based mortar on the left; cement based repointing on the right.



Broken steps leading to the well.



Scope for enhancement: modern metal signs could be replaced by traditional designs.

7.0 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 management proposals 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.

