

Whirlow

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Final Draft March 2007



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Summary of Consultation Undertaken

After a period of public consultation Sheffield City Council adopted this Conservation Area Appraisal and the accompanying Management Proposals for Beauchief Abbey on 19th March 2007, which means that they are now a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications in the area.

WHIRLOW CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1.0 Introduction

Purpose of the appraisal

1.1 This appraisal seeks to record and analyse the various features which give the Whirlow 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 below). It provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the Whirlow Conservation Area can be assessed.



Whirlow Hall farm from the north east

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 Whirlow Conservation Area was designated in November 1977.

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

- Small hamlet of three former historic farmsteads beside an ancient lane;
 - Prevalent use of stone for building;
 - Rural location;
 - Vernacular stone farm buildings;
 - Dry-stone boundary walls;
 - Whirlow Hall, a mid 19th century stone farmhouse with an L-shaped range of traditional farm buildings;
 - Whirlow Hall Cottage, an 18th century three-storey house with a range of traditional stone farm buildings comprising cowshed, cruck barn and bull pen (grade II);
 - Whirlow Farmhouse, a late 18th century farmhouse and adjoining outbuildings (grade II);
 - Whirlow Farm Cottage, a late 18th century stone cottage with later extension and alterations;
 - Rose Cottage, a late 18th century cottage with later extension and alterations; Whirlow Hall Farm Trust.
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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.

2.2 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.

2.3 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.



Looking south along Whirlow Lane



Whirlow Hall Cottage

Local planning policy.

2.4 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:

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

2.6 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).

2.7 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.



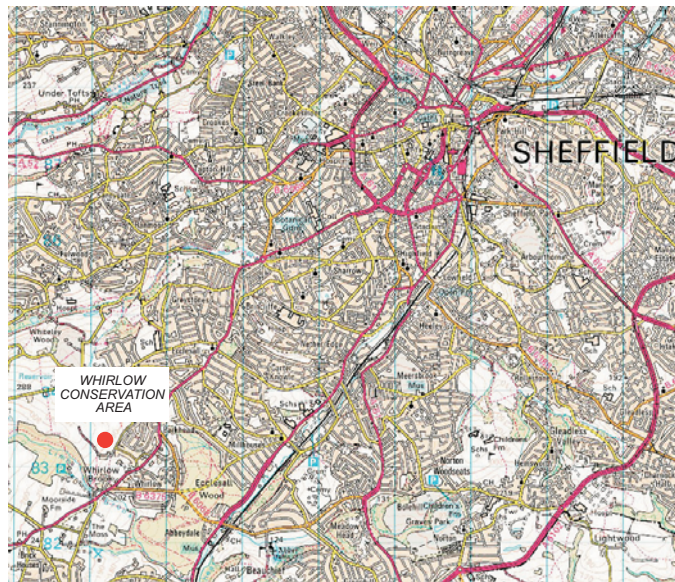
Whirlow Farm Cottage

3.0 Location and setting

Location and context

3.1 The Whirlow Conservation Area, designated in November 1977, is a small rural area containing three former traditional farmsteads and, most notably, the historic buildings of a working farm that is used as an educational resource by the Whirlow Hall Farm Trust.

3.2 The Whirlow Conservation Area is on the outer fringe of Sheffield about 6 km south-west of the city centre just north of the A625. The conservation area is dispersed along the south side of a cul-de-sac lane which branches south-west from the top of Whirlow Lane, a minor road that leads down to the A625. From the same junction, Broad Elms Lane leads north-east to the suburbs of Parkhead and Bents Green. Despite its proximity to Sheffield's suburbs, the conservation area has a distinctive rural atmosphere.



Ordnance Survey map showing location of Whirlow Conservation Area

Sheffield City Council LA076325

3.3 The conservation area is served by two public footpaths, one following a roughly north-south course along the ancient tracks of Fenney Lane and Coit Lane, the other leading directly southwards from a bend in the lane just east of Whirlow Hall Cottage.



Stone wall beside verge, Whirlow Lane

Boundaries

3.4 The boundaries of the conservation area have been drawn to include three groups of historic farm buildings around Whirlow Hall, Whirlow Hall Cottage and Whirlow Farm.

3.5 The three farm groups are on the south side of the lane leading to Whirlow Hall. To the north, the boundary is formed by the dry-stone wall on the north side of the lane beyond which is an area of open fields just west of Sheffield's suburbs. To the south, the boundary is marked by a stone wall. Fenney Lane forms the western boundary and the eastern boundary of the conservation area is formed by the eastern boundary of Whirlow Farm and Rose Cottage. The conservation area also includes part of an open field south of Rose Cottage.

4.0 Landscape setting

Topography and relationship to surroundings

4.1 The conservation area has a rural setting about 250 metres above sea level on a hillside which falls southward to Limb Brook. With the exception of the north-east corner where the narrow tarmac lane joins Broad Elms Lane, the conservation area is surrounded by fields. Those to the north and west are more uneven and open than those immediately to the south which are neatly divided by straight stone walls and post-and-rail fences. The lane running east-west through the area dips to a wide bend where there was once a pond.

5.0 Historic development and archaeology

Archaeological potential

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, there is no date in either source to suggest that Whirlow has significant archaeological potential, other than its listed buildings.

5.2 Even so, 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.



Entrance to public footpath leading south from Whirlow Lane

Origins and historic development

5.3 The early history of the hamlet is not well recorded but a document of 1410 refers to "Horlowe Hall". The name 'whirlow' may mean a boundary mound. Limb Brook, in the valley to the west of the conservation area, once separated Mercia and Northumbria and marked the boundary between Yorkshire and Derbyshire.

5.4 In the early 19th century Whirlow was a small scattered rural community located between high moorland to the west and Ecclesall Woods to the east. The soil in the locality is mostly sandy loam which, together with the high rainfall, produced good grassland suitable for sheep farming. The hamlet's economy was mainly based on agriculture, particularly sheep farming. There were linen weavers living at Whirlow in 1650.

5.5 Within the conservation area, the majority of buildings were built in the period 1750-1850. Whirlow Hall and Whirlow Hall Cottage were the largest farms in the locality.

5.6 Whirlow Hall Cottage dates from the early 18th century. Whirlow Hall, its lands and farms were owned by the Bright family from the 15th century until a virtually bankrupt Henry Bright parted with the estate around 1720. From that time Whirlow Hall was tenanted and its status declined. In 1843 a new house, replacing a 17th house belonging to the Bright family was built. William Furness with his wife took the tenancy and, as well as farming, he began to manufacture scythes. A similar indication of the hamlet's links to Sheffield's steel industry is the record of a file shop added to one of Whirlow Farm Cottages around 1841.

5.7 The area at the other end of the lane from Whirlow Hall, around the junction with Whirlow Lane, was once known as Whirlow Green. Whirlow Farm, Whirlow Farm Cottages and Rose Cottage are 18th century buildings clustered beside the former green where there were two ponds, one beside the junction and another a short way down the hill on the way to Whirlow Hall. Before alteration each property faced away from the road.



Converted outbuildings (offices) adjacent to Whirlow Hall



Yard beside Whirlow Hall

5.8 The construction of a new turnpike road c1820 (part of which is today's Ecclesall Road South, part of the A625) improved communications and encouraged the development of the locality first as the location for pollution-free out-of-town late 19th century residences for the wealthy, then as a site for less prestigious inter-war housing. Today, the conservation area lies at the very point where Sheffield's 20th century suburban development ceases.

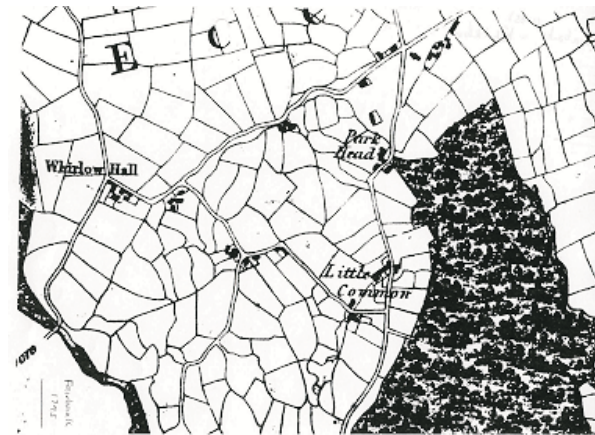
5.9 In the last quarter of the 20th century, as agriculture waned, many former agricultural buildings were sold. Whirlow Farm, Whirlow Farm Cottages and Rose Cottage all appear to have been altered and extended during this period.

5.10 The City Council acquired Whirlow Hall Farm in 1943 and Whirlow Farm in 1949. In 1979 Whirlow Hall became an exemplary working farm for the school children of Sheffield. The project is administered by the Whirlow Hall Farm Trust, a charitable organisation.

Historic roads

5.11 The conservation area is on the line of old footpaths and lanes. The 'backbone' of the conservation area, i.e. the tarmac road from the Whirlow Farm junction to Whirlow Hall, was once part of a main route from Whirlow Bridge to Broad Oak Green.

5.12 Fenney Lane is a hollow lane, now a public footpath, leading down to Whirlow Bridge at Limb Brook. Coit Lane, a continuation of Fenney Lane above Whirlow Hall today leads into fields, now part of a public footpath to the Ringinglow Road beside Castle Dyke. Both are shown on a 1720 map of the Whirlow estate but their high banks and sunken trackway tell of much earlier origins.



Extract from Fairbanks' map (1795)

5.13 Fairbanks' map (1795) shows Fenney Lane and Coit Lane and a clear indication of a road leading from Whirlow Hall to its junction with Whirlow Lane (the backbone of today's conservation area). Broad Oak Lane and Whirlow Lane, though not identified by name, are also shown.



Animal shed from the pedestrian footpath

5.14 The 1788 Enclosure Award proclaimed that a public road called the Whirlow Road had been set out from Whirlow Bridge to Broad Oak Green. This road, encompassing Fenney Lane and the lane past Whirlow Hall, became the main parish road of the district though it soon lost its importance after the construction of a new turnpike road c1820.



Extract from OS map (1895)

5.15 The public footpath leading directly south from the centre of the conservation area appears as a path on the OS map of 1895 but there is no evidence of it being any more than a footway beside field boundaries before then.

6.0 Spatial analysis

Key views and vistas

6.1 The focus of the conservation area is Whirlow Hall and Whirlow Hall Cottage and its outbuildings which form a strong composition of stone farm buildings at the end of a quiet rural lane. Whirlow Hall Cottage stands out from the group being three storeys high with a symmetrical pair of gable-end chimney stacks. Whirlow Hall is concealed behind the buildings of Whirlow Hall Cottage and garden trees.

6.2 As one proceeds along the lane, the right-angle elbow bend provides varying views of the area's main buildings but there is no significant landmark. From the grass verge at the 'elbow' there are good views east to Rose Cottage and Whirlow Farmhouse and west to Whirlow Hall Farm. A distant ridge can be observed to the south.



Rose Cottage from the south east, concealed by trees

The character of spaces within the area

6.3 The most significant open space in the conservation area is the field south of Rose Cottage, to the east of the public footpath, which was apparently part of the 'Tenter Meadows' where, in the 18th century, cloth was hung to be stretched and bleached. Two wide grass verges, one at the Whirlow Road junction, the other at the start of the public footpath, are the sites of two former ponds.



Timber bench in the shape of a dragonfly

7.0 Definition of the special interest of the conservation area

Uses and activities

7.1 This small conservation area is divided between residential uses in the eastern half (Whirlow Farmhouse, Whirlow Farm Cottage and Rose Cottage) and agricultural and educational uses at Whirlow Hall Farm in the western half.

7.2 Whirlow Hall Farm Trust was founded in 1979 as an educational trust working with inner city children and young people with special needs or disabilities. Children may visit the working farm at Whirlow Hall on a daily or residential basis. Whirlow Hall itself has been converted from a Victorian farmhouse to accommodation 12 children and 2 adults. Over 10,000 children a year visit the farm.

7.3 The lane leading to the farm is a cul-de-sac. There is a large parking area, big enough for coaches, beside the bend in the lane, outside the conservation area. Farm vehicles and cars are infrequent. The conservation area is predominantly a pedestrian area. Buildings are in a generally good state of repair. The conservation area comprises three groups of farm buildings. In each group there is a typical pattern of a principal farmhouse and outbuildings enclosing a small yard. To the east, where the buildings have been significantly modernised, the three buildings have lost their original inter-relationship in which Whirlow Farm and Whirlow Farm Cottages faced into a yard and Rose Cottage was approached by a path that led around to its entrance, which was originally facing east. They are now three separate houses with private gardens and access directly off the lane.



Drystone wall with rounded coping stones, Whirlow Lane

7.4 Historic character and appearance is much more apparent in the west of the conservation area. Here there are two farmyards, one in which Whirlow Hall is the principal building and the other in which Whirlow Hall Cottage is the focus. Both buildings face east, turning their backs to the prevailing wind, with outbuildings attached to the north beside the lane.

7.5 Two storeys is the norm for dwellings but there are single storey farm buildings. Whirlow Hall Farm, exceptionally, rises to three storeys.

Architectural and historic character

7.6 The conservation area's buildings, which date primarily from the 18th and 19th century, comprise three farmhouses and their associated outbuildings (Whirlow Hall, Whirlow Hall Farm Cottage and Whirlow Farm) together with two cottages (Whirlow Farm Cottage, formerly a pair, and Rose Cottage, now much enlarged).

7.7 The three farmhouses have some architectural pretension whilst the outbuildings and small cottages are vernacular – built with local building materials in a traditional manner with a minimum of detailing.

7.8 Whirlow Hall Cottage is an early 18th century building, listed grade II, of coursed stone with ashlar stone quoins. Windows on the front have been altered and are modern. Attached to the north is a stone barn with reused pair of crucks with collars, tie beams and ridge, a medieval form of timber roof structure century.

7.9 The barn has a central blocked doorway with chamfered stone surround and, to the left, a wide doorway with a massive stone lintel.



Animal shed from Whirlow Lane



Converted outbuildings at Whirlow Hall Farm

7.10 Whirlow Hall was built in 1843 and, in comparison to Whirlow Farm and Whirlow Hall Cottage, begins to show the influence of formal architectural style with well proportioned symmetrical façade and a central rounded stone doorcase and moulded dripstones above the windows.

7.11 Whirlow Farm is a late 18th century farmhouse, listed grade II. Like Whirlow Hall Cottage, it is built with coursed squared stone with ashlar dressings. Rose Cottage and Whirlow Farm Cottage are 18th century buildings, altered in the 1980s.

7.12 There are a number of late 20th century agricultural buildings in the area which have no architectural merit.

Building materials and details

7.13 The area's predominant building material is local stone which is used both as a walling material and a roofing material – and for boundary walls. Stone slate roofs, characteristic of the locality, are present on Whirlow Farmhouse, Whirlow Hall, Whirlow Hall Cottage and a few of the farm buildings. Slate is used on other buildings. There are two typical 2-light windows with chamfered stone mullions to the rear of Whirlow Farm Cottage but, elsewhere, many windows have been altered.



Fenney Lane in summer

7.14 With listed buildings, Buildings of Townscape Merit help create the conservation area's distinctive and interesting historic townscape. As recommended in Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment, the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Trees

7.15 Trees are a prominent feature of the locality but the boundaries of the conservation area are such that those trees which make an impression on the conservation area are outside its limits. The most important trees are in the gardens of Rose Cottage and Whirlow Hall.

Features of local interest

7.16 The conservation area is especially notable for the presence of stone, particularly dry-stone walls with a variety of stone coping. There are also stone gate piers, stone steps at the start of the public footpath and a stone 'stile' in the wall. The public footpath runs between a stone wall on one side and iron railings on the other.

The iron railings extend along the south boundary of Rose Cottage. These small features enhance the character and appearance of the area and help to give it a sense of identity.

Stone 'stile' in wall, Whirlow Lane





Rose Cottage and wide grass verge, Whirlow Lane



Drystone wall with flat coping stones, Whirlow Lane



Stone retaining wall, Whirlow Lane

8.0 Issues

8.1 This section contains a brief summary of the strengths and weaknesses of the Whirlow 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 *Whirlow 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

- Architectural quality of the conservation area's buildings;
- Historic rural environment;
- Popular 'working farm' educational centre;
- Located on network of public footpaths and farm trails;

Weaknesses

- Loss of architectural detail e.g. stone roof tiles, original windows and front doors replaced by unsympathetic modern equivalents;
- Rendering of stonework e.g. Whirlow Farm Cottage;
- Galvanised hand rail along roadside by Whirlow Hall Cottage;
- Modern agricultural buildings out of character with traditional stone buildings.



Trees overshadowing wall beside Whirlow Lane



Public footpath along top of Fenney Lane

Whirlow Conservation Area boundary review

8.3 It is recommended that the existing conservation area boundary is not altered.

Bibliography

Frost, S., *Whirlow: The story of an ancient Sheffield hamlet* (Northend 1990)

Thirtieth List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest (DNH 1995)

Fairbanks Map of Sheffield 1795

Ordnance Survey 1893, 1905, 1923, 1935.

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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

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

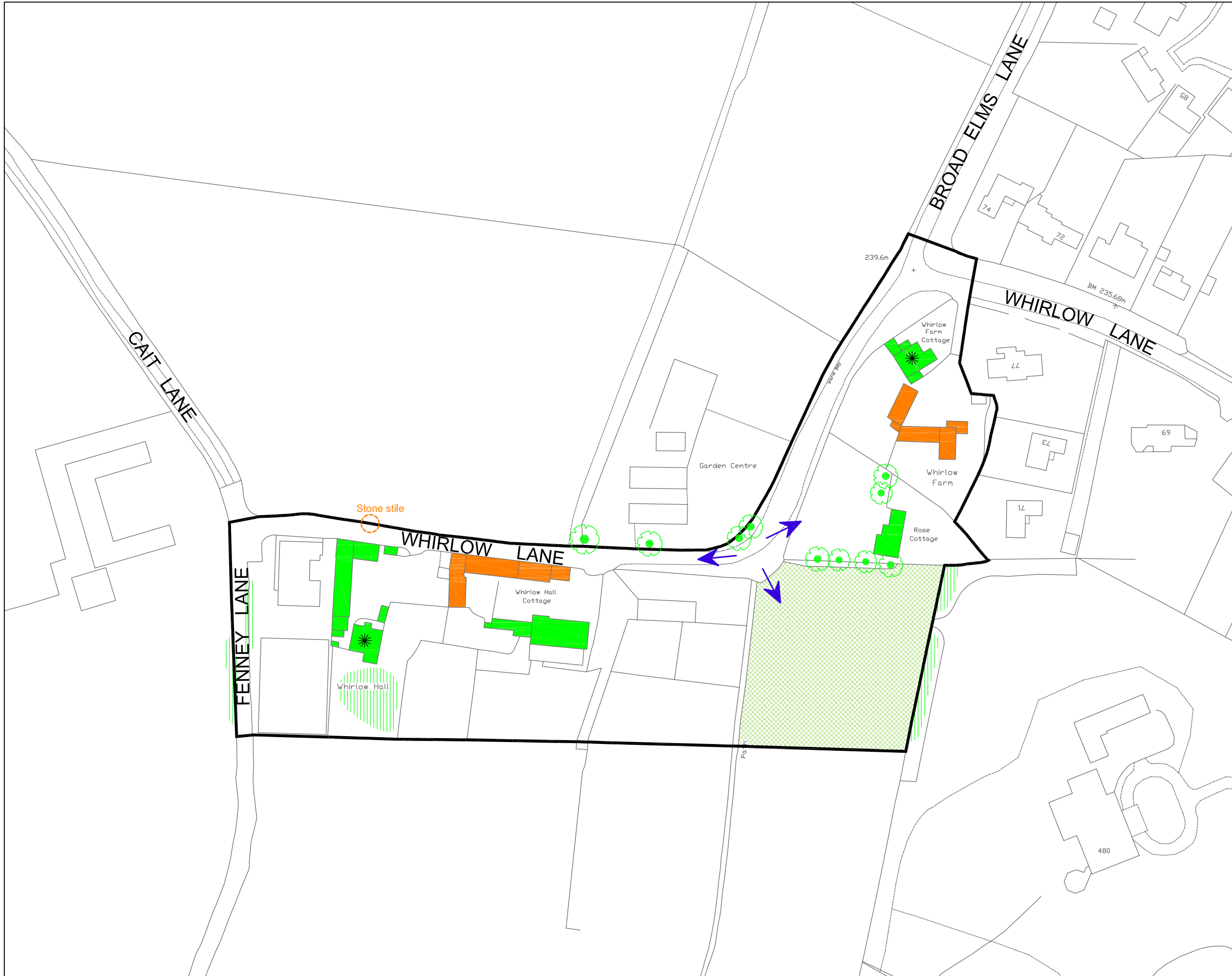
For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets:

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: 020 75298920

The Victorian Society,
1 Priory Gardens,
Bedford Park,
London W4 1TT
Telephone: 020 8994 1019










The Twentieth Century Society
70 Cowcross Street
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-  Current Conservation Area boundary
-  Listed Building
-  Building of Townscape Merit
-  Possible Article 4 Direction
-  Historic Street surface
-  Prominent tree
-  Prominent tree groups
-  Important open space
-  Significant view

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TITLE:
**WHIRLOW
 CONSERVATION AREA**

COMMITTEE:

SCALE:

DR	TR	CAD	DATE:	MICRO:
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DRAWING NO:

CAD FILE NAME:

Summary of Consultation Undertaken

A consultation draft of this document was subject to a period of consultation between 22nd January and 16th February 2007. All local residents in the conservation area were sent copies of the document along with a survey form asking for their comments. Residents were also invited to contact the Urban Design and Conservation Team if they wished to discuss the Appraisal or Management Proposals further. Local members and local community groups were also consulted as part of the process.



