

Conservation and Policy Department
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority



**Conservation Area Review
Arncliffe, Littondale
September 2007**

Conservation and Policy Department
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Introduction

Purpose of Review

Conservation area character appraisals need to be reviewed regularly, not least because of the requirement in BV 219b for them to be up to date. Ideally, existing appraisals should be reviewed every five years. This does not mean starting again from the beginning, especially where there has been little significant change in the area concerned and the existing appraisal is sound.

However some of the YDNPA conservation areas were designated at a time when the requirement for an in-depth appraisal of the character of the area was not required, as it has been since the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and before the provision of guidance such as English Heritage's 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' document. In some cases therefore, the existing appraisal may not be considered as sound by current standards. Therefore the opportunity has been taken to update and / or expand the existing appraisals where considered appropriate so that they accord with the current guidance from English Heritage. This has the added advantage of producing more robust and consistent documents that can be of greater influence in the planning process.

The original appraisal for Arncliffe Conservation Area was prepared in 1977 by Jane Fawcett of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority as a designation statement. During 1991 a further short analysis of the village was commissioned by the Authority, this was carried out by Mike Lamb as part of a Park wide village survey. Both of these appraisals now fall short of the current guidance on content and layout.

These appraisals have been combined and reviewed during 2007 and a number of changes made to the text to reflect the outcome of the review. The review has been carried out in accordance with the requirement to review and update all Conservation Area Character Appraisals so that no appraisal is older than five years.

Unfortunately, only limited photographs of the conservation area have been identified from the period of the original designation and appraisal. Therefore as part of the current review a full photographic survey of the conservation area has been carried out.

The Appraisal

A new appraisal document has been produced in accordance with current guidelines from English Heritage and is attached as an Appendix to this document.

Community Involvement

Past Community Involvement

It is unclear from our records whether there was any community involvement at the time of designation in 1977.

Community Involvement in the Review

The review process has included a public meeting held on the evening of Monday 10 September 2007, to enable the community to view the findings of the review. There is no statutory requirement to consult the local community when carrying out a review of a conservation area. However where a review indicates that changes may be needed to the currently designated boundary, this would involve a new designation process. Again, there is no statutory requirement to consult local communities in this process. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has taken the decision that a substantial local consultation should take place if designation is intended; it is therefore logical that where designation may be altered, a similar consultation process should be considered.

It is felt that the Authority should take a view on whether a boundary should be changed before embarking on a consultation process. Where it is found that the designation should be altered, then a consultation process should then be entered into. Where no changes are required to the designation then it is currently felt that the need for consultation is not necessary. This position will be reviewed during 2007 / 2008 with completion of the Conservation Area Strategy.

Boundary Recommendations

Boundary Changes.

A re assessment of the current boundary and of the areas located within and without the current designated boundary has come to the following conclusions:

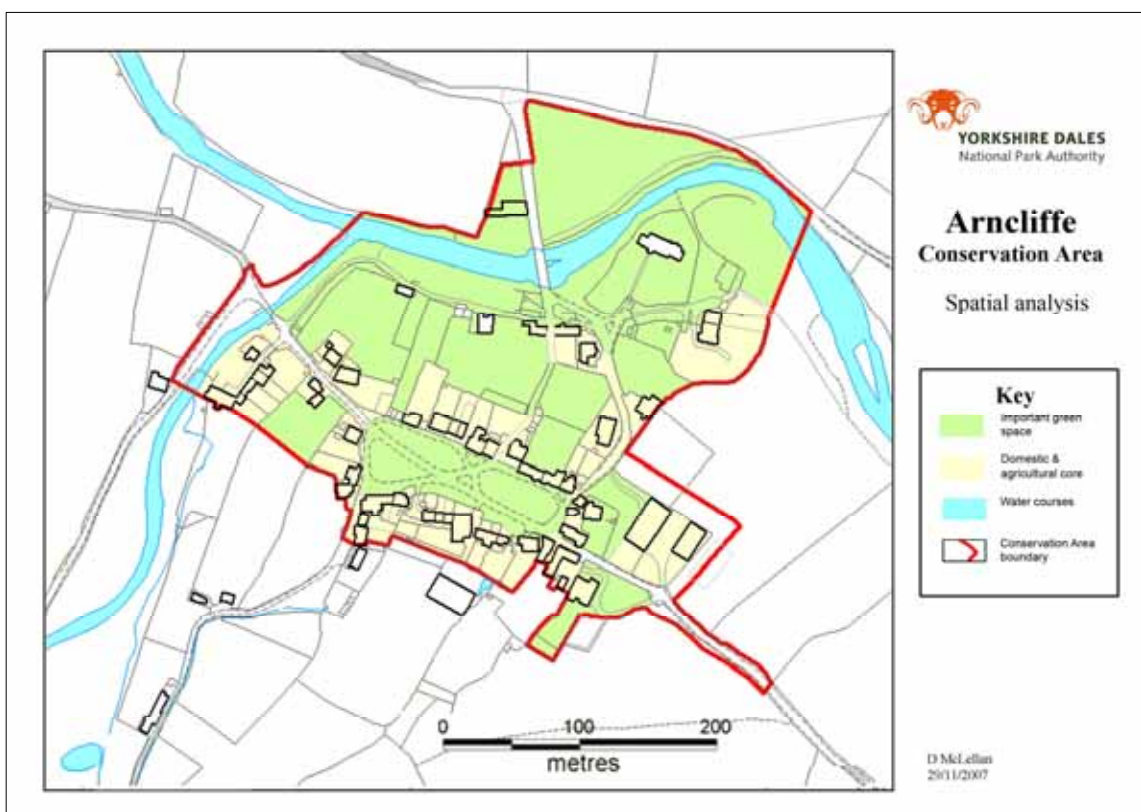
- No area currently located within the boundary has been found to have lost its merit or to have been harmed by development, to such a degree that the conservation area, or any part there in, has lost the architectural or historic merit that warranted its inclusion at the time of designation.
- No area currently located outside the current boundary has been found to have increased in merit to such a degree that any part not previously included within the boundary would now be considered to have sufficient architectural or historic merit to warrant inclusion at the time of this review.
- No changes in legislation or guidance have occurred that have redefined what would or would not have architectural or historic merit since the designation of the conservation area.

Appendix

ARNCLIFFE CONSERVATION AREA

1. Location and context

Arncliffe is the largest village in Littondale, formerly Amerdale; a small narrow dale neighbouring Langstrothdale. Traditionally the connection between the two is strong, and the tracks over the passes – the horse head pass at the northern end from Halton Gill to Hubberholme, and the slit – from Arncliffe itself two and a half miles over to Kettlewell, were always well used. The 'corpse way' went from Buckden over the hill to Litton, it is about three miles in length and rises to 2000ft. It was well used until the 15th century; there was no burial ground at Hubberholme or Buckden and the dead had to be carried over the hill to Litton and down to Arncliffe no matter what the weather.



Littondale does not lead northwards to Wensleydale, although there is a westward road to Malham from Halton Gill which is now a main route; therefore Littondale, more than any other of the Wharfedale tributaries is an isolated place and always has been. Litton and Halton Gill, the other villages in the dale are, like Arncliffe, small farming communities, with very little material evidence of C20th/C21st activities and pressures. Tourism is not a major part of life at Arncliffe, though one can park by the green and walk to the church and river. This lack of visitors and the strong dominance of a traditional farming way of life make Littondale very different and a little unusual, and it is worth considering Arncliffe conservation area a little differently from the other Wharfedale villages.

2. General character and form

With its fine rectangular green surrounded by neighbouring houses and barns, the village is an unsophisticated composition reflecting how closely tied living and farming were in this area. The Green is the focal point of the village, but any sense of an 'estate' formality is dispelled by the angled roads and tracks across the green, as well as the slight variation of the building lines, architecture, and scale of the properties. The buildings are, in the main, focussed inward around the village green, the exception being those at the east end of the village. The buildings on the south side are set back from the track more than those on the north, which generally hug the line of the track. The layout and content of the village make it feel very self sufficient, an identity which is backed up by the number of barns and public buildings, such as church and school. The centre of the village is dominated by views to Yew Cougar Scar and the surrounding fells, and views to the hillside can be captured through gaps in the building line. The exits and entrances to the village are narrow and angled, enhancing the sense of enclosure.

In contrast, the remaining part of the village down to Arncliffe Bridge and along the typical 'back lane' which overlooks the river, consists of relatively few informally arranged barns - some now converted to dwellings - with large areas of intervening undeveloped space. This change in character is enhanced by the heavily treed areas of the river bank and around the church, the latter making a very effective grouping with the bridge, the Vicarage tree lined river and school. Buildings are essentially vernacular, some with 'polite' touches, and are mainly in local materials, and there are 27 listed buildings.

3. The landscape setting

Set part of the way up quiet Littondale, Arncliffe is located on a level delta where Cowside Beck meets with the River Skiffare, dominated on either side by the valley's steep limestone terraces. The open situation gives extensive views up and down the main valley and its tributary.

4. Origins and historic development

While the surrounding area shows evidence of long prehistoric human occupation, the village is a typical Anglian 'green' village, with extensive early field system remains in the vicinity. The place name probably means 'eagle-cliff', from the Scandinavian 'arne', or eagle.

Arncliffe appears in the Domesday Book with Kettlewell, when it belonged to Roger of Poiton. It then went to the Percy's of Northumberland, who subsequently granted rights to Fountains Abbey. Littondale was part of the sheep run for the monastic grange of Fountains Abbey, with important trackways across the fells to Malham and Nidderdale. The Grange of Fountains which was situated to the north west of the village, Cotthouse, has not survived in its older form; the current house is dated 1650. However, there is an old house, now used as an outbuilding, which may have survived from an earlier period.

The Church at Arncliffe, dedicated to St. Oswald, was the mother church for Hubberholme and Halton Gill chapels, and was founded in the reign of Henry I by the Lords of Arncliffe, the De Arches. The present church is on Norman foundations which probably replaced an earlier Saxon building. The tower dates from about 1500, and is the only surviving part of the church from that date. The remainder of that church was demolished in 1796, and was rebuilt in a 'Churchwarden Gothic' style. When Whittaker wrote his history of Craven in 1820 the church still has stained glass of the arms of various families. He describes how;

“the church itself growing ruinous was lately taken down excepting the tower and rebuilt with all the attention to economy and all the neglect both of modern elegance and ancient form which characterises the religious edifices of the present day”

During the C15th, patronage of the Church passed to University College Oxford, and Arncliffe supported three fellows. It was also the birthplace of John Longstrother, famous prior of St.Johns who went to Beaulieu to welcome Queen Margaret. Grafton’s Chronicle records that he fought at the Battle of Tewkesbury, and was beheaded there in 1471. In the reign of Queen Mary, the estates of Litton and Langstrothdale were bought by the Earl of Cumberland, who owned almost all the parish of Arncliffe.

The Arncliffe award (1766) specifically set out the route of Botany Lane/Monks Road as a private road for owners of allotments on Clowder for their sole use with “horses, beasts, cattle, carts and carriages”, but it would seem that this lane has been used as a footpath to Malham for many years. Walled on either side, it would have served as an outgang for livestock to access the fell sides. It appears that the name ‘Monks Road’ was first used by the historian Arthur Raistrick, to suggest an ancient way linking to the monastic connections with Fountains Abbey. However, the early maps all give the name as ‘Botany Lane’, therefore, we shall use that name in this document to avoid confusion.

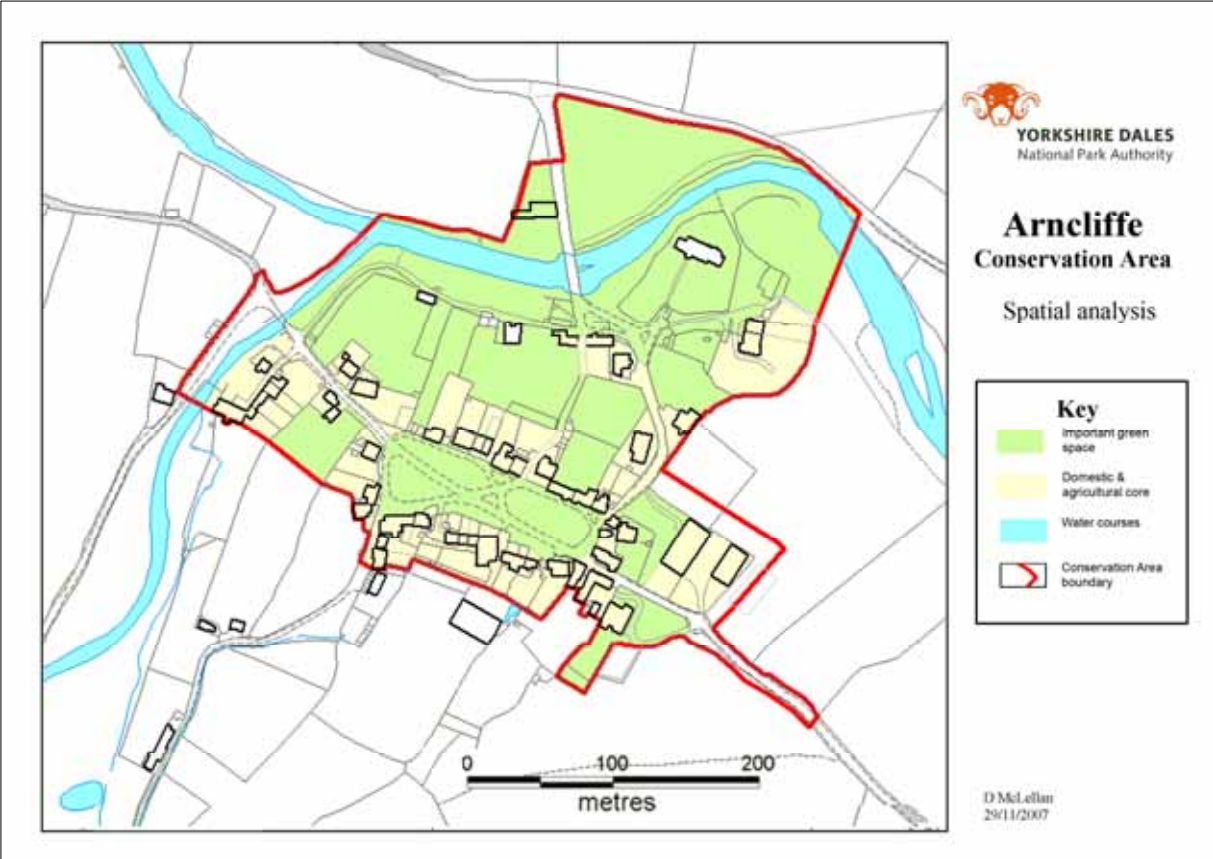
Littondale was virtually unaffected by lead mining activity and it’s only concession to industry was a cotton spinning mill at the west end of the village, on the site of an earlier corn mill going back to at least the C14th.

Arncliffe village has an association with the author Charles Kingsley, who stayed at Bridge End; a large house by the river. It was during this time that he wrote ‘The Water Babies’, using Malham Tarn as his inspiration. In the C20th, the village has also been associated with another creative venture, as it was both the inspiration for, and the early setting of, the television programme ‘Emmerdale Farm’. The name of that program is certainly drawn from the old dale name of Amerdale.

5. The archaeological significance

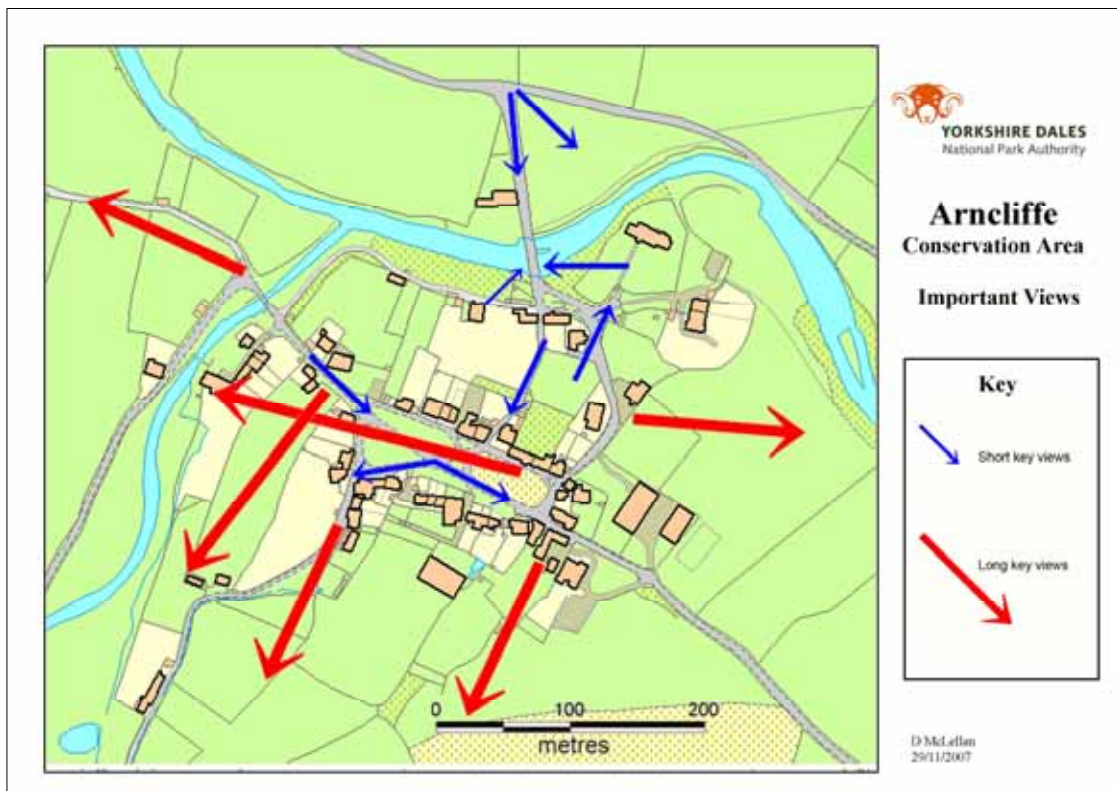
Much of the earlier archaeology lies outside the conservation area, however, it has a significant impact on the setting of the conservation area. An extensive lynchet system exists to the west of the village, which was in use during the medieval period but has origins in the late Prehistoric/Roman era. An Anglo-Saxon double burial was found within the village, and there is also medieval ridge and furrow in existence nearby. The mill pond and mill race are monuments of medieval date. Further information on specific sites is available on the Historic Environment Record.

6. The character and relationship of spaces within the area



7. Key views and vistas

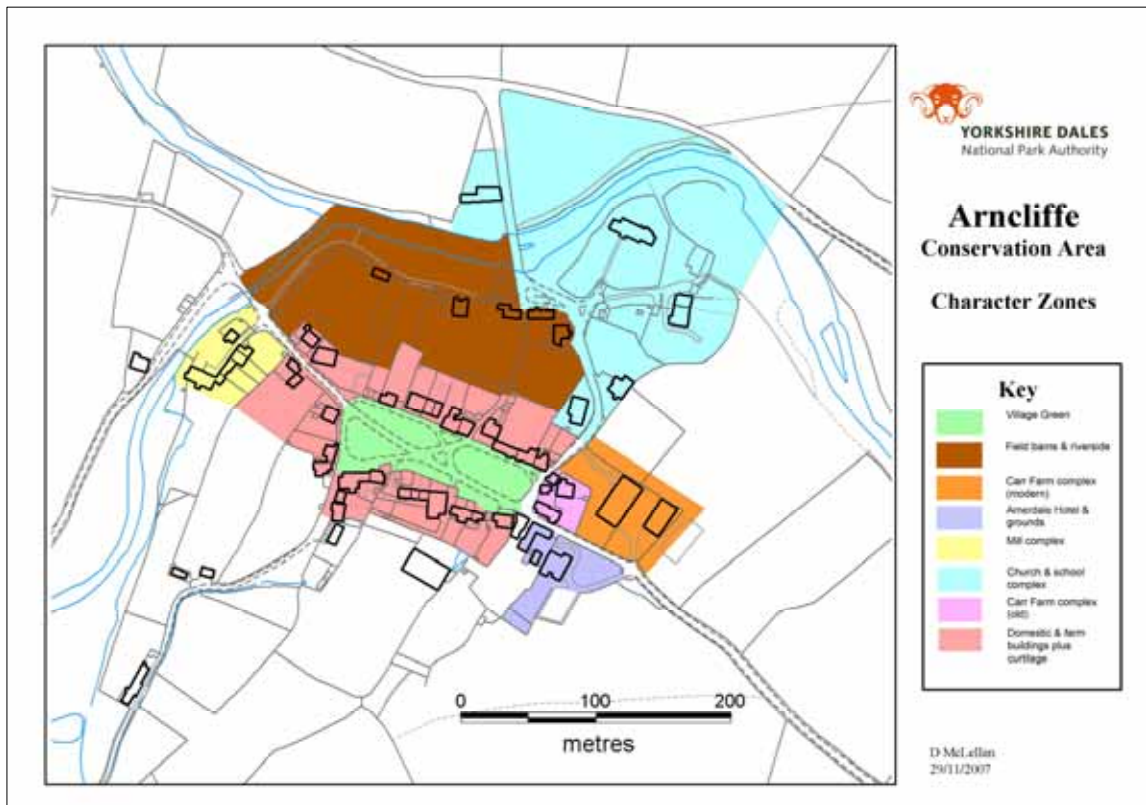
Approaching Arncliffe from Malham, the village is glimpsed between the stark limestone strata of the hills, lying in a green valley. A fairly spread out group of buildings, surrounded by trees; the old curving walls of the village emphasise its medieval past. The wooded Skiffare, which rounds the church in a series of rapids and still pools, contains the village in a broad curve. The squat Norman tower of the church, which is not quite hidden behind trees, dominates the view of Arncliffe from the hills, and from the top of the tower, one can get a feeling of the relationship between village and river side. The back of the churchyard is lined by sycamores along the river side, and the walled road up to the triple arched bridge brings one immediately into the village. The centre of the village is dominated by views to the surrounding fells.



8. Activities and prevailing uses and their influence on the plan form and the buildings.

The simple pattern of village development reflects its long agricultural associations, with roots in the Anglian settlement form. The quality of the buildings themselves is testament to the relative financial comfort which Arncliffe must have enjoyed during the later period.

Arncliffe's green is surrounded by a loose group of uneven houses dating from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries, and has a quiet dignity. A central pump, an inn, two tarmac roads and a unsurfaced road to the north side make up a working green which is the keynote to the village itself.



9. The architectural and historic qualities of the buildings, and the contribution they make to the special interest of the area

Several of the houses are quite grand and evidently some of the barns and sheds attached to the larger houses were formerly houses themselves. On the road from Arncliffe Bridge past the Old Smithy to the green is such a house; a single storey building with central door and chimney, with its own shed and hayloft. This is located at the rear of one of the largest houses on the green, Lane Top Farmhouse, whose importance is emphasised by a segmental pedimented doorway. There are several barns within the village which were probably inhabited previously; one at the east end of the green at Carr Farm is dated 1726, and is unusually located 'gable-on' to the green, as is the large barn opposite. Equally, there are now many converted barns within Arncliffe, though the majority are reasonably neutral in their impact on agricultural character. As well as the grander houses there is one large and regularly detailed nineteenth century barn at Castle Farm, all of which suggest a degree of comfort, if not affluence, within Arncliffe.

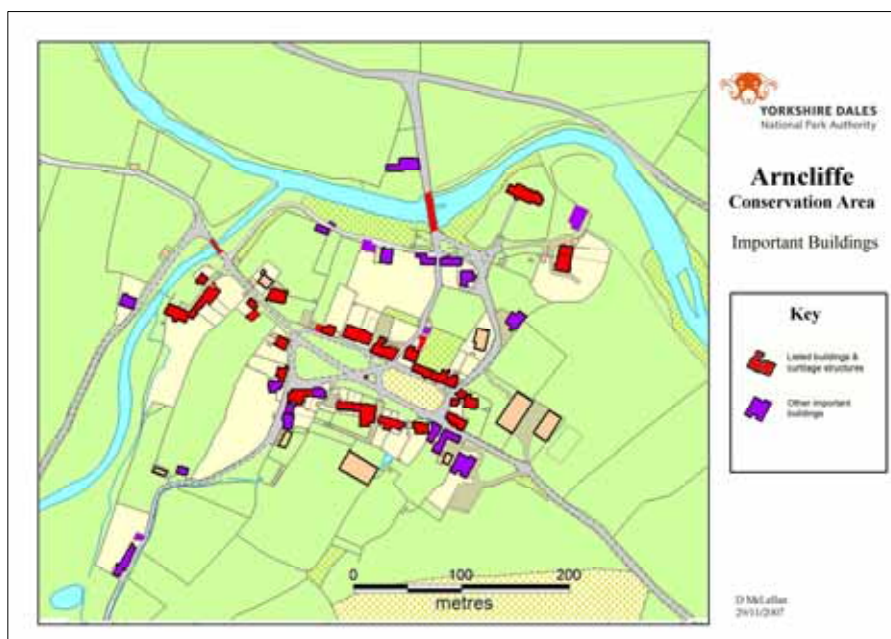
Nearly all of the central houses are listed, many for their group value, which is particularly high. The barns, which are of equal importance in the composition and character of this conservation area, are not listed; with the exception of the two associated with Carr Farm.

From the green one can go out of the village towards Grassington, past an extremely large and well built barn which has a superb porch outshut with curved timber lintel, a main entrance behind well dressed voussoirs, and a stone roof in very good condition. The modern farm buildings at Carr are sensitively sited in relation to the historic farmhouse and barns, and the years of weathering on the timber means that their impact is lessened on the conservation area as a whole.

To the north from the green one passes the Victorian school which stands out in all its welsh slate glory, then the twentieth century Amerdale Hall, and past the old vicarage; from which a walk to Hawkswick takes one along the river bank. Opposite Arncliffe bridge are the old post office and smithy, now converted to a dwelling. From here a track – the typical 'back lane' – passes three barns, the second of which has an outshut with mullioned windows and traces of a former lower roof on the gable wall. Opposite this barn there is a small pinfold which is almost lost in overgrown vegetation.

10. Key buildings or structures

There are 28 listed buildings in Arncliffe as follows. The listing name may cover several houses, and should not therefore be relied upon to refer only to the main building. Please check the map for the full extent of buildings covered by listing. Please also note that other related structures such as boundary walls and gates may also be protected by the listing.



- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Church of St Oswald | Grade II |
| 2. Bridge over Cowside Beck | Grade II |
| 3. Arncliffe Bridge | Grade II |
| 4. Pump House and Trough, Green | Grade II |
| 5. Green Farmhouse | Grade II |
| 6. High Ryelands | Grade II |
| 7. Rose Cottage | Grade II |
| 8. Lower Ryelands Farmhouse | Grade II |
| 9. Lane Top Cottage | Grade II |
| 10. Lane Top Farmhouse | Grade II |
| 11. Barn | Grade II |
| 12. Post Office Cottage | Grade II |
| 13. K6 Telephone | Grade II |
| 14. Plane Tree Cottage | Grade II |
| 15. Carr Farmhouse | Grade II |
| 16. Outbuildings, Carr Farmhouse | Grade II |
| 17. Barn, Carr Farmhouse | Grade II |
| 18. Elm Farmhouse | Grade II |
| 19. Castle Farmhouse | Grade II |
| 20. Nos 1 & 2 Castle Yard | Grade II |
| 21. Falcon Public House | Grade II |
| 22. High Green Cottage | Grade II |
| 23. Prospect House | Grade II |
| 24. Green Cottage | Grade II |

25. The Mill	Grade II
26. The Mill House	Grade II
27. Mill Gate	Grade II
28. The Old Vicarage (now 2 houses)	Grade II

11. Prevalent and traditional buildings materials, textures colours and detailing

The prevalent traditional building materials are local stone, both rubble and dressed, and local stone slate roofs. Walls in buildings consist of a double skin of skin stone with rubble filled core. During the nineteenth century, welsh slate made its way into Arncliffe on the roofs of some of the buildings from this date, notably the School, the old Reading Room and Plane Tree Cottage, at the east end of the village.

Many of the larger houses in Arncliffe have arched doorways into walled gardens, increasing the sense of privacy and enclosure within the village. The houses fronting the green have a mix of walled front gardens, mainly on the south side, and buildings fronting directly onto the road. Many of these buildings have kneeler stones at the eaves.

Most of the houses fronting the green have quoins and window surrounds of varying grandeur. Chimneys are usually traditional in style and of stone construction with a single string course. Windows within the village are of timber in traditional sash or casement style.

Drystone walls contribute largely to the character of the conservation area, both as domestic garden walls, and as agricultural field boundaries. Many of the barns in the village have arched entrances with voussoirs, both rough and well dressed.

12. The contributions made by green spaces, trees, hedges, and other natural or cultivated elements of the character of the area

In addition to the centrally located green, there are four main biodiversity features which contribute to the character of the Arncliffe Conservation Area. These are rivers and streams, hay meadows, their associated yellow wagtails and woodland. The River Skiffare and its tributary Cowside Beck flow through the area. Rivers are now a national biodiversity action plan (BAP) habitat. The Phase 1 botanical survey shows the extent of hay meadows in the area (marked as SNG) and there is a small area of the Craven Limestone Complex SAC in the West of the area which consists of part of the Malham-Arncliffe SSSI management unit 64 with hay meadow habitat (MG5). The whole of the conservation area falls within the YDNPA annual Yellow Wagtail survey area. The Yellow Wagtail is now the subject of a national BAP. There is also an area of semi-natural woodland in the North of the area adjacent to the River Skiffare. Semi-natural woodland is the subject of a local BAP.

13. The extent of loss, intrusion or damage

The concrete kerbing around the village green is unsympathetic in this setting, and it would be beneficial to replace this with a material traditional to the area.

There are a small number of barn conversions which would have benefited from greater attention to preserving agricultural character. Any future conversions of the few remaining redundant barns should be dealt with very carefully in order to minimise damage to the character of the conservation area.

The garages neighbouring the Coach House on Botany Lane, although outside of the current conservation area boundary, have a negative impact on the appearance of the conservation area and could be a good site for redevelopment.

14. The existence of neutral areas

With the exception of Amerdale Hall & Stables Barn, there are no neutral areas within the village.

15. General condition

In general the condition of both houses and barns within the conservation area is good, with some restoration and conversion ongoing within the village as this review takes place. The structural condition of the large ruinous barn on the back lane is cause for concern, and it requires urgent assistance if it is to be saved. The other two barns on this lane would also benefit from some repair work. The large barn next to the Vicarage is also in a serious state of disrepair.

16. Problems, pressures and capacity for change

The major pressure on Arncliffe is likely to be from conversion of agricultural buildings, as there are no redundant dwellings now within the conservation area. The nature of the layout of buildings around the green precludes infill development, and there are few plots within the development boundary where new properties could be built.

17. Community involvement

It is unclear from our records whether there was any community involvement at the time of designation in 1977.

The review process has included a public meeting held on the evening of Monday 10 September 2007, to enable the community to view the findings of the review. This gave an opportunity for the community to make comments which were taken into account in the final draft.

There is no statutory requirement to consult the local community when carrying out a review of the character appraisal for a conservation area. However where a review indicates that changes may be needed to the currently designated boundary, this would essentially involve a new designation process. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority has taken the decision that substantial local consultation should be undertaken where any existing conservation area boundaries may be altered.

It is felt that the Authority should take a view on whether a boundary should be changed before embarking on a consultation process. Where it is found that the designation should be altered, then a consultation process should then be entered into. Where no changes are required to the designation then it is currently felt that the need for consultation is not necessary. This position will be reviewed during 2007 / 2008 with completion of the Conservation Area Strategy.

18. Suggested boundary changes

A re assessment of the current boundary and of the areas located within and without the current designated boundary has come to the following conclusions:

- No area currently located within the boundary has been found to have lost its merit or to have been harmed by development, to such a degree that the conservation area, or any part there in, has lost the architectural or historic merit that warranted its inclusion at the time of designation.
- No area currently located outside the current boundary has been found to have increased in merit to such a degree that any part not previously included within the boundary would now be considered to have sufficient architectural or historic merit to warrant inclusion at the time of this review.
- No changes in legislation or guidance have occurred that have redefined what would or would not have architectural or historic merit since the designation of the conservation area.

19. Summary of Issues

- Inappropriate concrete kerbing around the village green
- Potential unsympathetic agricultural conversions
- Unsympathetic garages on Botany Lane
- Derelict barns next to Vicarage and on Back Lane
- Upkeep of K6 Telephone Box

All these issues have the potential to be resolved and their resolution would benefit / enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

There is no need for additional statutory action.