



DENT CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

FINAL REPORT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

DECEMBER 2009

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This character appraisal for Dent Conservation Area, prepared by Envision consultants with generous contributions from the Parish Council, local residents and business people has been commissioned by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. It provides an assessment of the character of the conservation area based on a clear and objective analysis of the area and reflects views expressed at a series of meetings and walks around the conservation area and at the Open Day held in the Memorial Hall in March 2009.
- 1.2 English Heritage (Conservation Area Appraisals guidance 2005) advises that *“every area has a distinctive character, derived from its topography, historic development, current uses, and features such as streets, hedges, archaeological monuments, buildings and place names. Understanding and appreciating an area’s character, including its social and economic background and the way in which such factors have shaped the urban fabric, should be the starting point for making decisions about both its management and its future.”*
- 1.3 The Yorkshire Dales National Park document 'A Strategy for the Historic Environment of the Yorkshire Dales' explains that *“the historic environment of the National Park is all the physical evidence for past human activity and its associations that can be seen, understood and felt. It is all around us as part of everyday experience and life and is therefore dynamic and continually subject to change”*.
- 1.4 In this character appraisal the approach has been to work with local people and the National Park Authority to examine the evolving role of the conservation area in the life of the communities of Dent. A significant proportion of the project has involved discussion workshops and other consultation events that helped to identify the elements that are of special value to the people who live and work there and to visitors. The appraisal identifies areas of concern and explores how these might be addressed, moving forward from a wholly historical / architectural approach towards one that recognises the needs of the people living in the Dent conservation area.
- 1.5 The Sedbergh and District History Society, with its current offices on Sedbergh Main Street above the Tourist Information office, contains a wealth of information about Dent town including its people, businesses and buildings. The consultants would like to thank the Society for allowing us to have access to their archive. Residents who wish to find out more about the history of Dent will find the archive is a very useful source of information.

2.0 Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 At present, the Yorkshire Dales Development Plan consists of the “saved” policies (March 2009) from the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan 2006, various ‘saved policies’ from the Minerals and Waste Local Plan 1998 and the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy May 2008.
- 2.2 The National Park Authority has started work on the new Yorkshire Dales Development Framework (YDDF) which will form the Local Development Framework (LDF) for the National Park. The YDDF will be used to guide day-to-day decisions on planning applications and will progressively replace the Yorkshire Dales Local Plan 2006. The preparation of a ‘Core Strategy’ together with reviews of other areas of local planning policy will follow the current reviews of housing, minerals and waste.
- 2.3 The designation of the Dent Conservation Area by the then West Riding of Yorkshire County Council in 1969 recognised the importance of the quality of the area as a whole, as well as protecting individual buildings from demolition. The National Park Authority, as local planning authority, has a legal duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate as conservation areas any areas of special architectural or historic interest where it is desirable to preserve or enhance their character or appearance, and to control or manage change. It also has a duty: *“from time to time, to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas in the district and to consult the local community about these proposals”*
- 2.4 The Local Plan includes ‘saved’ policies that support the conservation of the built environment of the area and seek to enhance its local distinctiveness. The aim of Policy B8 is to preserve and enhance the individual character and appearance of conservation areas in the National Park. The Local Plan advises that *“designation of conservation areas gives greater control over the demolition of most buildings and the felling of trees. It also requires wider local publicity for planning applications and ensures that development proposals are subject to wider scrutiny. Designation puts an onus on prospective developers to produce a high standard of design reflecting the particular character of a conservation area.”*
- 2.5 The National Park Authority is now preparing a Local Development Framework (LDF) for the Yorkshire Dales which will, when adopted, supersede the Local Plan. The LDF Core Strategy must be consistent with national and regional policies and strategies, including the emerging Planning Policy Statement (PPS 15) Planning for the Historic Environment (consultation draft DCMS July 2009). The new PPS envisages a proportionate response to change, aligned with English Heritage guidance that *“modern conservation is about continuity not preservation”*. It makes clear that the appraisal should focus on what is significant in heritage terms about a place and not just protect all of it for its own sake. Extracts from the draft guidance are quoted as appropriate in the management plan, Part 2 of this report.

3.0 Outline of Conservation Area Appraisal report

- 3.1 This document is intended to be approachable, understandable and practical. Therefore it is divided into two parts. Part 1, the character appraisal, is a review of the boundaries of the conservation area which considers how the special interest of the area might be vulnerable to change and suggests potential opportunities for enhancement where its character could be reinforced. Part 2 of the report, the management plan, recommends where further analysis, specific action or detailed guidance is required. Appendix B provides a list of the listed buildings.
- 3.2 Consultations with the Parish Council and the local community encouraged discussions about how local people value Dent. The appraisal has taken account of their views about potential problems and pressures for change as expressed at a series of public meetings, “walk-about” and an Open Day, in line with the National Park Authority's Statement of Community Involvement. The National Park Authority and their consultants are very grateful for all their contributions.
- 3.3 The appraisal aims to provide a 'vivid succinct portrait' of Dent as it is today, recognising that it is an evolving place with a vibrant community. Whilst an appraisal aims to identify the essential elements that give an area its character, it can only be a 'snapshot' in time. Elements and details of the conservation area may be important even if they are not specifically referred to in the document.

This conservation area appraisal has now been completed in final draft form and is issued for public consultation prior to its adoption by the National Park Authority.

4.0 Summary of key characteristics, significant features and key views and vistas

- 4.1 Historical detail about the ages and uses of the existing buildings (Part I below) supports the designation of the conservation area in the town of Dent. As a result of the enlargement of the original town in the Victorian period and again in the early 20th century, the character and physical fabric of the conservation area has changed over time. For the most part it retains the special qualities and distinctive features that justify its designation. However, in places, the conservation area boundary does not adequately reflect the heritage value of features on the ground and, where appropriate, amendments to the boundary are proposed.
- 4.2 A description of Dent's historical development and character is found in the following sections; below, a summary of the key characteristics that make up its local distinctiveness is provided.

Key characteristics which deserve recognition, appreciation and enhancement



Photo D01: intricate street patterns, sense of shelter and enclosure

Photo D02: buildings facing in towards narrow cobbled lanes and yards

- compact, intimate and intricate street pattern with narrow cobbled lanes and yards confined by continuous building frontages and/or high stone walls
- strong sense of shelter and enclosure in the centre with buildings facing in towards narrow lanes and paths, which serves to obscure views out



Photo D03: St Andrews Churchyard offers views out into the valley

Photo D04: continuous building frontages, pleasing rows of cottages

- strong visual link between St Andrews churchyard and the wider valley landscape
- relationship of buildings around the former market place and Sedgwick memorial
- pleasing rows of similar but not identical 2 and 3 storey cottages along the cobbled streets, with a variety of roof pitches and fairly consistent eaves heights, well related by age, style and materials to adjoining listed buildings



Photo D05: timber or stone porches at Flintergill **Photo D06: surprise turns into narrow alleys and cobbled yards**

- doorways opening directly onto the street along Main Street and Beech Hill, modest stone or timber porches on cottages at Flintergill
- surprise turns into narrow alleys unexpectedly widening into cobbled and flagged yards, changes of level and unexpected changes of direction to connect small open spaces and tiny private gardens

Significant features of interest within the conservation area



Photo D07: attractive entrance to the churchyard off Main Street **Photo D08: stone wall boundaries, railings and gates, The Green**

- imposing Adam Sedgwick granite memorial fountain, where a market cross once stood
- attractive entrances to the church, with decorative wrought iron gates and railings around the churchyard
- stone wall boundaries around private gardens, wrought iron gates and railings



Photo D09: cobbles edge to edge and mounting block, Main Street **Photo D10: doors opening onto the street and “coal hole” or cellar openings**

- high quality street scene of cobbled road surfaces running edge to edge with no delineated footpaths; symmetrical patterns of cobbles making up the roadside gutters
- mounting blocks; 'coal-holes' and their covers opening into Main Street near the George and Dragon
- last remaining external stone stair to the upper floor of a house at the corner of Main Street
- varied styles of window and door openings, many of which indicate the presence of former shop-fronts along the cobbled streets



Photo D11: remnants of former cart entrances into rear yards near The Sun Inn **Photo D12: last remaining external stone stair at Main Street**

- remnants of cart entrances into former workshops and back yards
- familiar red K6 style telephone box standing outside the Reading Room, Deepdale Road.

Key views and vistas



Photo D13: view from Flintergill across the valley to the north

Photo D14: view from Seeds Gill Bridge up Beech Hill towards St Andrew Church

- views towards the valley slopes to the north from Main Street and the Green
- approach into Dent from Cowgill at Seeds Gill bridge looking up towards the church
- views from the Green towards Flintergill Head (once a small hamlet separated from Dent by a formerly more extensive Green)
- views down from Flintergill and across the valley to the north
- glimpses of Seeds Gill from various points on roadways, bridges and footpaths, tumbling through the town in a deep stone-lined channel alongside the walls and gardens of small cottages and houses



Photo D15: glimpses of Seeds Gill from roadways and paths, Deepdale Road

Photo D16: landscape setting of Dent seen from above Flintergill Head

5.0 PART ONE: CHARACTER APPRAISAL

5.1 This character analysis includes the identification of significant elements that contribute to the special character of the conservation area. It provides an account of the physical context, historic character and local 'distinctiveness' of the conservation area and its setting. The origins and historical development of Dent are described and historic OS maps are appended to show the gradual expansion of the town. Notable features are described below, illustrated as appropriate by photographs.

landscape setting

- 5.2 Dentdale is a secluded valley running east to west from the Pennine moors of Yorkshire into Cumbria, across the Dent Fault, to join the valley of the River Rawthey at Sedbergh. It is smaller in scale and more intimate than Swaledale, Wensleydale and Wharfedale, and differs in that the valley sides are etched by numerous parallel streams. The Norse influence on settlement patterns was strongest in the north west part of the Yorkshire Dales and nucleated settlements are rare, with scattered farmsteads forming a more typical pattern. The scale of development and the volume of traffic in Dentdale have been restricted in recent years by its remoteness from quarrying opportunities and railway routes, and by its relative isolation along winding rural roads with narrow historic bridges over the rivers.
- 5.3 Dent Town has for several centuries been the main settlement in Dentdale. Although it has one main street winding through the centre, Dent is different from all other Dales villages and both its buildings and patterns of development are more typical of Westmorland than Yorkshire. It is located above the river on the south side of the relatively wide part of the valley where the road to Garsdale and Hawes crosses the River Dee. Seeds Gill tumbles down to join the river along a deep stone-lined channel through the town from Flintergill, under Deepdale Road to Seeds Gill Bridge below Beech Hill.
- 5.4 To the west and around Dent the valley landscape has an open gently rolling character, with regular field patterns defined by dry-stone walls and hedgerows, and with bands of broad-leaved woodland and mature trees along the lower slopes. To the east of Dent the valley narrows as it climbs up to Rise Hill, cutting into the a steep incised moorland landscape of isolated farms and tiny hamlets with scattered conifer plantations.



Photo D17: St Andrew's Church around which Dent grew up



Photo D18: narrow cobbled streets open onto The Green

Development of the town

- 5.5 The name Dent may simply denote 'hill'. For centuries Dentedale was an agricultural community with corn mills and relatively short-lived marble and woollen mills. There is evidence of early "ridge and furrow" cultivation in the field adjoining Glebe Fold in Dent.
- 5.6 The 12th Century church of St Andrew in Dent was rebuilt in 1417, and probably came under the care of the monks of Coverham Abbey, near Middleham. Norman features in the Tower, the Nave (including the pillars) and the Norman-arched doorway are now blocked but clearly visible from the outside in the north-facing wall. Further restorations took place in 1590, 1787 and 1889. The church retains a pulpit dated 1614 and some fine Jacobean pews. The tower was built, or rebuilt, in the 18th century. The remainder is late Perpendicular with a large 3 bay interior and some interesting monuments. Considerable restoration took place in the 19th Century. The original iron railings and gates around the churchyard survive.
- 5.7 The box pews in the side aisles are 17th century. Those in the south aisle are the family pews of the '24 Sidesmen,' a body of local landowners dating from 1429. They still exist today, taking turns with the Bishop to appoint the Vicar and meeting annually to distribute ancient charities. The Sill Memorial is a constant reminder of Dent's historical connection with the slave trade. The Sill brothers made their fortunes from West Indian sugar and built Whernside Manor with the proceeds; they also brought slaves to Dent.
- 5.8 The town had an early grammar school founded in 1605 through the generosity of various local benefactors who left the rentals from land and farms for that purpose. There had been a school long before this one, financed from a very old source of funding set up to keep the church repaired or for other "publick and commonwealth causes". Further generosity and the settling through arbitration of a long running dispute over the use of the various funds between Garsdale and Dent, led to the foundation of the 'Free Grammar School of King James, Dent'. It survived for almost three hundred years before finally closing in 1897. The governors could not compete with the cheaper schooling being offered at the 'National' elementary school opened in Dent in 1845. The old Grammar School building was converted into flats for local people to rent on long leases. (*D.Boulton 1997*)
- 5.9 During the 17th and 18th century sheep and cattle farming was the mainstay of the economy, along with some quarrying and mining of lead and coal. Meagre farming incomes were supplemented by hand knitting; virtually the whole population of Dent was engaged in knitting, especially during the Napoleonic Wars when there was a huge demand for knitted gloves, socks, stockings, jerkins and caps for the army. Dent town was famous throughout Yorkshire; many of the houses had knitting galleries attached at first floor level. In the 18th century, knitting became so important in the Dales that knitting schools were set up in the larger farmhouses. In Dent, there were 4 knitting schools of which Cage Farm was one.
- 5.10 In the 18th and 19th century Dent became a prosperous market town ; at one time it was said to be an even more important place than Sedbergh as, until 1863, it was a polling-station to which Sedberghian voters were obliged to travel to record their preferences at the county elections (*Thompson 1892*). By 1822 it reputedly had over 40 businesses, including workshop buildings with galleries to apartments on upper floors.
- 5.11 In 1785 Dent was the birthplace of Adam Sedgwick. The son of the then vicar of Dent, he first attended the tiny Grammar School in the churchyard before moving on to the prestigious Sedbergh School. From there he graduated at Trinity College Cambridge and finally, in 1818, became Woodwardian Professor of Geology and the country's leading expert on the subject. His achievements are commemorated in the impressive Granite memorial standing in Dent market-place.
- 5.12 In Dentedale the High Mill cotton spinning mill, built in 1780, was converted between 1800 and

1810 to cut and polish 'marble' quarried nearby (*Armstrong J 1982*). Low Mill may also have been converted from an older mill; it survived as a stone polishing mill until 1907. The quarrying and carving of Dent marble, a fossiliferous black limestone, flourished after the completion of the Settle-Carlisle Railway allowed its widespread distribution. Stonemasons in Dent carved decorative fire surrounds and ornaments that were fashionable in the early Victorian period and examples can be seen in the chancel floor of St Andrews Church and the Dent Heritage Centre.

Impact of history on form

- 5.13 The general street layout of the town has not changed significantly over the past 150 years, as illustrated on the attached plans dated 1856, 1889 and 1912 (see Appendix A Maps D5, D6 and D7).
- 5.14 The town was constructed on the valley slopes, with the church in the most prominent position overlooking the river. The centre is a cluster of small stone houses and cottages along cobbled streets and narrow 'ginnels' that wind around the main building, St Andrew's Church. Many of the buildings housed workshops, shops and warehouses, some with living accommodation above ground floor business premises. The narrow streets survive today, though the knitting galleries which caused obstruction to traffic do not.
- 5.15 Located in a semi-circle around the churchyard, the majority of buildings tend to face inwards onto the narrow lanes and paths that are a focus for the commercial and social life of the town, and this also serves to obscure views out into the surrounding countryside. The older houses are grouped around Main Street and Beech Hill; an interesting group of early stone cottages runs up Flinter Gill and another along Seeds Gill. The expansion of the southern and western parts of the town in the 19th and early 20th centuries, south of Laning and around Dragon Croft towards Flinter Gill, has led to a more 'suburban' form of built development behind Main Street.
- 5.16 Following the decline in population during the early 20th century many buildings became vacant and started to deteriorate. In 1935 a group of old houses on Main Street were demolished. A second group was removed in 1953. Where these gaps have been redeveloped with cottages that open directly onto the cobbled streets, the continuous building frontages have been maintained. However, adjoining the churchyard at the top of Beech Hill the land formerly occupied by tiny cottages has been left vacant and is used for car parking and a seating area.

Historic character

- 5.17 The special character of Dent is the combination of a compact intimate and intricate street pattern, the many closely built properties set around the focal point of the church precinct, its fine landscape setting and long associated history. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Dent was a thriving town and it still displays features of the former busy working environment that provided a wide range of employment opportunities, shops and services for Dentdale.
- 5.18 The historic centre feels much bigger than it really is, as the early stages of built development were densely packed into a confined area. Dent is a place where pedestrians generally take priority over vehicles and walk freely along the narrow main streets and alleys; most vehicles travel slowly, particularly over the cobbles which run from edge to edge with no delineated footpaths.
- 5.19 There is a strong sense of shelter and enclosure in the centre. Narrow corners, surprise turns, high walls, changes of level and unexpected changes of direction along the streets and paths that connect public and private spaces make walking round Dent an interesting and sometimes disorientating experience. This intimate, domestic-scale townscape is relatively 'hard' in character, with sombre grey limestone building and paving materials and few trees.

Around Main Street, Beech Hill and the paths or 'ginnels', tiny cottage gardens have been planted and some buildings have been painted white to bring colour and light into these closely-confined spaces. By contrast, where tiny cottages have been demolished at the top of Beech Hill adjoining the churchyard, the former sense of enclosure along the main street has been lost. However, this openness reveals attractive views of the church and provides a strong visual link between the densely developed town centre and the open valley landscape to the north.



Photo D19: demolition of cottages at Beech Hill opens out views towards the church

- 5.20 The main road entries and exits are generally well defined and clear cut although the western approach is diminished by a group of more modern semi detached and detached properties. Traffic tends to intrude more, and there are more cars parked, on the secondary roads around the centre of Dent, particularly around The Green where few pedestrian footpaths are provided. Many of the gardens contain mature trees and shrubs that help to soften the appearance of the conservation area, distinguishing these later areas from the densely-packed character of the original settlement.

General character and plan form

- 5.21 The layout of property boundaries and thoroughfares, the past and present mix of land uses, and the characteristic materials seen today all derive from the early development and historical expansion of Dent. The buildings, spaces and connecting routes that have particular historical associations are described below.
- 5.22 For the purposes of the Dent character appraisal, the town centre is treated as the principal "character area". This area displays a tight knit pattern of streets and properties retaining much of its historic core. The continuous building frontages enclosing the winding cobbled roads present a pleasing constantly changing street scene as visitors walk around Main Street.



Photo D20: historic “core” - character area one



Photo D21: later expansion along Vicarage Lane – character area two

- 5.23 The special interest of this first “character area” derives from a combination of the compact, intimate and intricate street pattern, the many closely built properties set around the focal point of the church precinct, its fine landscape setting and its long associated history. The centre is the most distinctive part of Dent, with virtually unbroken frontages of stone and white painted rendered properties. Its domestic scale is one of the key characteristics of this first character area, with narrow buildings opening directly onto the principal streets or secondary yards and alleys, and laid out in informal rows. The curving lines of stone houses enclosing cobbled streets create an intimate townscape that is relatively 'hard' in character, with sombre grey limestone building and paving materials and few trees.
- 5.24 A second “character area” consists of the south western part of Dent, to the south of Laning, which has a more open character. It includes post-war developments of semi detached “suburban” properties with gardens at Laning and at Dragon Croft. Georgian and Victorian houses with well planted gardens behind high stone walls, including properties such as the former Vicarage and Adam Sedgwick's house, are seen as a more spacious form of development around Flintergill and The Green.

Building character and historic features

- 5.25 The majority of older buildings in Dent were constructed using a narrow range of materials, predominantly rough-coursed limestone, and with very little architectural detailing. The most prevalent building type is the 2 or 3 storey house or cottage, either detached, semi-detached or terraced. Stone is consistently used for sandstone roofs, plain gritstone cills and lintels, drystone boundary walls, flagged paths and cobbled parking bays. However, amongst the limestone buildings typical of the Yorkshire Dales, there are others with rendered walls painted white or cream and some Westmorland slate roofs more typical of the Cumbrian fells to the west.
- 5.26 The individuality expressed in the wide range of building styles, with minor variations in sizes, heights and rooflines makes a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. Even the most unremarkable buildings appear to have been specifically designed for their own particular sites, depending on the slope of the land, the changes of level on or around the boundaries, the bend in the road, their proximity to Seeds Gill, their position on the corner of a path or 'ginnel', the extent of their visibility from different directions or the seclusion of the rear yard, their visual relationship to the church and to the wider countryside.
- 5.27 The well-proportioned domestic scale of the long rows of modest cottages and stone houses, incorporating small workshops, pubs and former shops, creates an intimate, richly textured and varied character in the centre of town. A few properties retain original features such as attached barn/stores or shippens for livestock. These add to the interest of the townscape and together provide a link with the past when the town was a busy commercial centre,

which makes Dent an interesting and welcoming place to walk around.

Building details

- 5.28 Traditional building techniques use stone slate roofs, stone building materials and boundary walls (red brick is uncharacteristic), two and three storey buildings with cobbled and stone flag paving materials in courtyards, timber windows with vertical emphasis, stone surrounds or lintels and cills. The more modest properties have timber casement windows with small panes, the larger properties of a later date have taller sash windows, occasionally within square stone bays. A number of historic shop windows that have been retained in properties now converted to residential use, including the former Wool Shop on Main Street, and remnants of cart entrances into former workshops and back yards.



Photo D22: wide range of building heights, rooflines, window and door openings, top of Beech Hill



Photo D23: varying roof heights, buildings facing towards and away from the road, Deepdale Road

- 5.29 Some of the architectural features that are characteristic of the historic centre and worthy of retention in situ include mounting blocks in front of properties on Main Street, an external stone stairway to upper level entrance doorway (corner Main Street opposite the Wool Shop), blocked former warehouse doorways (Old Post Office), low walls with railings and gate posts. Around The Green the late Victorian houses display interesting architectural detailing. At Flintergill, both Flintergill House and the smaller cottages with pitched-roof open timber or stone porches and decorative fascia boards on the eaves, display architectural features that add to the visual interest of this part of the conservation area.

Positive buildings in the conservation area

- 5.30 A listed building is one that is included on the Government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. These buildings are protected by law. Local Plan Policy B13 explains that proposals for the demolition of listed buildings, or alterations in any manner which affect their character, require listed building consent. This applies to external and internal alterations and to demolition. It also applies to buildings and structures attached to or within the curtilage of listed buildings. Listed building consent applications will be considered against national criteria.
- 5.31 In Dent, many of the buildings of special historic interest have been listed (see Appendix B). The Statutory list categorises St Andrews Church as Grade I; other listed buildings in Dent are categorised as Grade II.
- 5.32 In addition to listed buildings, Dent contains many unlisted buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. The English Heritage guidance advises that the contribution made by unlisted buildings to the special interest of a

conservation area relates to qualities of age, style, materials in relation to neighbouring listed buildings, whether it serves as a reminder of the gradual development of the settlement or earlier phases of growth, whether it has significant historic association with established features such as road layout, whether it has landmark quality or contributes to the quality of spaces, whether it reflects former land uses, or has significant historic associations with local people or past events, or if its use contributes to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

- 5.33 The majority of buildings in the Dent conservation area date to the late 17th or 18th centuries. Along Main Street they form pleasing rows of similar but not identical cottages with a fairly consistent ridge line and eaves. They are well related by age, style and materials to adjoining listed buildings or contribute positively to their setting. In the majority of cases their historic form and features have not been significantly eroded by unsympathetic alteration. White or cream painted elevations, with mullioned or casement windows, add to their interest. Elsewhere it is the informal rows and groups of buildings that together serve as a reminder of the historic development of the town and its compact layout and make a significant positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



Photo D24: groups of buildings framing the view towards the church



Photo D25: village shop, former warehouse and smithy at Beech Hill - remnants of Dent's commercial history

- 5.34 Most of the buildings lining the cobbled streets and back lanes of Dent contribute to the local scene, particularly where they form an important visual element in a group or in a view. In the centre of the town, the three way junction of Main Street opens out into the former market place at the entrance to the church. Corner buildings such as the George and Dragon Hotel (listed Grade II) enclose this space and create interesting visual breaks in terms of scale and continuity of the built frontages, focusing views towards the Church and the Sedgwick Memorial which dominates the street scene.
- 5.35 To the north-east, the stepped elevations and rooflines of cottages and workshops on the south side of Beech Hill, from the Village Shop following the curve of the road down towards the river, make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area on the approach from the east. This prominent group includes a former warehouse, now rebuilt, and a smithy (listed Grade II) still in use and set back from the road, which reflects the traditional functional character of Dent.
- 5.36 In looking to identify positive buildings that are of particular local interest, the appraisal concluded that the core of Dent reads as a single harmonious group, a coherent composite, in terms of its architecture and history, encircling St Andrews Church, the most distinguished listed building in the town. Other than those that are listed (Appendix B), no one building stands out as any more important, distinctive or prominent than any other. The appraisal

does not therefore make any recommendations for locally listed buildings. They are all deserving of protection within the conservation area and care should be taken to secure their future survival wherever restoration or development is proposed.

Public realm and boundaries

- 5.37 From a conservation viewpoint, the 'traditional' uses of the main street as a trading place, a meeting place, a place to find out local news and information or just to watch the world go by need to be safeguarded against the tendency to give priority to cars and delivery vehicles. Consultation responses point out the importance of the cobbled surfaces in keeping vehicle speeds to a minimum and encouraging drivers to give way to pedestrians. There are no separate footways as the cobbles run from edge to edge and doorways open directly onto the street. Parking areas are delineated by flagstones or patterns of cobbles; roadside gulleys are laid out with symmetrical patterns of cobbles laid on edge; there are surviving examples of small round iron drain covers set into the cobbled roads. These surfaces, many of which are contemporary with the adjoining cottages, make a significant contribution to the historic character of the town centre and should be properly managed and carefully re-laid where damage occurs.



Photo D26: patterns of cobbles in roadside gulleys, Flintergill



Photo D27: mature trees around Vicarage Lane are important landscape features

- 5.38 Traditional boundary treatments are predominantly stone walls, with examples of low walls with railings in places, and of estate rails or hedgerows around fields and along footpaths. Some of the boundary walls and fences have been damaged, lost and replaced resulting in untidy neglected fences that detract from the visual quality of the majority of the conservation area's boundary. The imposing Adam Sedgwick granite memorial fountain, where a market cross once stood, stands next to the attractive main entrance to the church, with its decorative wrought iron arch, gates and railings. There are a few surviving examples of stone mounting blocks, and of cellar or 'coal-hole' covers opening into the street. A familiar red K6 style telephone box stands outside the Reading Room. All these features are deserving of retention and protection where they are found and it is suggested in the management plan, Part 2, that an audit of historic features would make it possible for the National Park Authority to involve the local community in the task of identifying whether any distinctive building features are at risk because of the modernisation and improvement of older houses.

Open spaces, trees and landscape features

- 5.39 Despite being developed on relatively steep slopes above the river Dee, the early parts of

Dent were built up at very high densities, as described above. Lanes, yards and narrow paths connecting different sections of the looping main road provide interesting pedestrian connections through the heart of the conservation area. These intricate networks of routes are a characteristic element of the Dent 'townscape' and provide spaces and paths that are pedestrian scale and enjoyed at walking pace.

- 5.40 In the centre, the enclosed densely built-up character of the town firmly restricts the views out towards the surrounding hills. There are few green spaces to provide relief from the high density lanes and terraces of the historic centre and very few mature trees within the conservation area. Those trees that survive provide welcome focal features and colour, as well as shelter and wildlife value, though their leaves cause a problem for residents in autumn. Many have reached a mature age and several have been lost through storm damage and neglect. There is little evidence of any new tree planting of appropriate native species to provide replacements.
- 5.41 Small open spaces and gaps between houses that offer views out towards the surrounding hills provide a valuable contrast to the hard domestic environment. Glimpses of Seeds Gill within its winding stone lined channel past houses and under roads, in places defining the eastern boundary of the conservation area, add interest to this compact layout. The open spaces within the built up centre, the churchyard, the school playing field and the play area and open space of The Green, are valued by the community as grassed areas with trees. Apart from the attractive churchyard with a number of interesting gravestones, these are undistinguished spaces, with few features of interest.

Negative and neutral buildings and sites

- 5.42 The design of several large detached properties on the south side of Laning, including bungalows and unsympathetically converted and extended former storage buildings, tends to conflict with the local distinctiveness of the area. The present flat roof of the single storey school building adjoining the Memorial Hall appears as an incongruous feature on the main approach into Dent Town.



Photo D28: inter-war housing developments at Laning



Photo D29: incongruous flat roof of the school is to be replaced

- 5.43 Similarly, inter-war and post-war infill housing developments around Deepdale Road, at Laning on the approach from Sedbergh and semi-detached houses that encroach onto the once more extensive Green are bland and suburban in appearance and do not fit well into the densely built up character of Dent. Glimpses through the gaps between houses at Dragon Croft reveal rear extensions to buildings along Main Street that are out of scale and constructed with unsympathetic modern materials.
- 5.44 In contrast, the recent Housing Association development at Glebe Fold has been well-designed with simple detailing to reflect the modest character of vernacular cottages, and with cobbled rumble strips and parking bays, although the wide tarmac roadway is somewhat

out of scale with the lanes and streets of Dent. The factory extension built for Lyon Equipment at Deepdale Road also uses both traditional and modern materials in a functional and sympathetic industrial building.

Economic and social character

- 5.45 Although many of the former business activities have ceased, Dent still supports a primary school, a blacksmith, a local shop and post office, two pubs, a heritage centre, a meditation centre and several guest houses and tea rooms. Several businesses, notably Lyon Equipment and the crafts/woollens shop, reminiscent of the “terrible knitters of Dent”, are based there and, despite difficulties with broadband and mobile phone connections, several people work from home in Dent. However, the population of Dent has dwindled to approximately 300 with many houses now being only intermittently occupied as holiday cottages or second homes. Farming and tourism alone provide a very fragile economic base and the major employer and the local shop are likely to cease trading in Dent in the near future.



Photo D30: c.1995 housing development at Glebe Fold

Values attributed by local community

- 5.46 Dent is described by residents as a friendly supportive community, attracting newly retired and older people to live and work there. The school, the church and the chapel, the Reading Room and the Memorial Hall provide many events and activities that are actively supported by the Dentdale community. Many people appreciate the peace and unspoilt beauty of this quiet rural location and it has considerable appeal for visitors. However, with reducing numbers of properties being occupied on a full time basis, the town is struggling to survive as a working living place. Local people are looking to the National Park Authority to encourage a more diverse range of businesses to establish in the town and suggest that this will require a more imaginative approach to new development that can support the local community.
- 5.47 There are serious concerns about the high cost of housing and the inability of local families and young single people to continue to live and find work in and around Dent. There are strong feelings that the conservation of Dent is important, but that the community that supports it is more important. Similarly, the positive impacts of tourism are recognised but there is concern about the potential loss of the local shop, post office and other facilities as the population ages. Local residents value the pretty white-washed cottages and cobbled streets but they feel very strongly that they “*do not want their town to be a museum*”.

General condition

- 5.48 Whilst the Dent conservation area contains some 'neutral' areas of 20th century development

that neither enhance nor detract from its character and appearance of the area, the general condition of the buildings and spaces is very pleasing and attractive. Dent has become a desirable place for holiday homes and property prices reflect this, so it is perhaps not surprising that generally the conservation area is well maintained and new buildings and extensions are well designed.

- 5.49 The management plan below suggests that, in order to monitor change in the conservation area, a baseline audit of the key characteristics and features identified in the introduction and described above would be useful. In Dent most of the features identified in this appraisal are of local, that is low, historical significance although they make a valuable contribution to the local distinctiveness of the conservation area. From a conservation point of view, the most effective way to ensure that the conservation area is well maintained in future is to encourage local owners and occupiers to value its special qualities and to care for its characteristic features. English Heritage guidance requires its advisers to be “*precise, objective and consistent*” in their identification of the features, including architectural details, that owners will be encouraged to retain. A baseline audit could identify, locate, photograph and assess the present condition of each type of historic feature. If it is carried out with community involvement and support, this would enable the Parish Council and the National Park Authority to identify whether any distinctive building features are at risk because of the modernisation and improvement of older houses.
- 5.50 Local Plan Policy GP6 explains that “*Where the National Park Authority is aware of a potential threat to the importance of a site or area through the exercise of permitted development rights, it will, when necessary, make a Direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, to withdraw those rights.*” This action would require property owners to apply for planning permission for changes that would normally be permitted development, for example the removal, alteration to or unsympathetic replacement of specified features that make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area. The features that are considered to be significant in Dent are described in the text above and highlighted in the introduction.

Community involvement

- 5.51 The initial stage of this conservation area appraisal involved the Parish Council and other interested parties in a series of fact-finding meetings and 'walk-about's'. Their local knowledge proved to be an invaluable source of information as the draft appraisal report was progressed and the National Park Authority appreciates the positive contributions made by the people who willingly offered their time and experiences to help the consultants to understand the local issues.
- 5.52 Further public consultation events held in March 2009 allowed the consultants to 'test' the suggestions made at the early stages, and to refine the proposals for enhancement and future management that follow. Interested individuals, organisations and community representatives were invited to an exhibition and 'Open Day' in the Memorial Hall, together with a community 'walk-about' on a Sunday. Everyone who attended, and parents at the Primary School, were invited to respond to a questionnaire and asked for their views about any other issues they believe are relevant to the future management of the conservation area.
- 5.53 An informal “feedback” report, prepared for the National Park Authority, helped to identify priorities for action in terms of enhancing the ‘sense of place’ of the conservation area and the significant qualities of each location that are most valued by the communities of Dent.

The conservation area appraisal will now go forward for widespread public consultation prior to adoption by the National Park Authority, incorporating the views of the Parish Council and key stakeholders who have been consulted at each stage.

6.0 PART TWO: DENT CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Introduction

- 6.1 The Yorkshire Dales Management Plan Policy HE9 commits the National Park Authority to producing updated character appraisals for all the conservation areas as a basis for developing management plans and taking action to enhance village environments in collaboration with local communities. English Heritage guidance requires the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority to establish a list of priority actions and to consider available sources of additional funding and resources; the management strategy should be subject to monitoring and review on a five yearly basis.
- 6.2 This section of the report addresses the issues which have been identified in the appraisal above, and provides a series of draft recommendations for the future management of change within the Dent Conservation Area. The boundary of the conservation area is considered and opportunity sites are identified, where practical schemes could be achieved to enhance the conservation area.

Problems, pressures for change

- 6.3 In parallel with their statutory responsibility for the conservation of the landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage of the area, the National Park Authority has a duty to foster the economic and social well-being of the local community.
- 6.4 Concerns were expressed during the consultation process regarding the increasing age of the Dent population and the need to find ways to encourage a diverse, dynamic and mixed community. The popularity of the town for older people, second home owners and retired people has resulted in high property values and up to 40 houses standing empty for most of the year. The potential for tourism is reduced by the inability of older people to continue to provide bed and breakfast accommodation and the inability of younger people to buy the larger properties necessary to continue such businesses.
- 6.5 Consultation responses suggest that there is inherent conflict between the need to conserve a national park for the nation and the need to maintain a place for people to live sustainable lives, and several residents feel that the balance should tip in favour of local people. In particular the Parish Council has identified an acute lack of affordable housing and an urgent need for new families to be encouraged to live in the village, to support the school, the village shop, the church and other local facilities. There are serious concerns about the high cost of housing, the inability of local families and young single people to continue to live and find work in and around Dentdale, and for older people to find suitable accommodation in the town.
- 6.6 The maintenance and repair of historic buildings using traditional materials was also discussed, and some owners and occupiers are concerned that the pressures to conserve older buildings in conservation areas run contrary to the need to modernise their homes and make them energy efficient. In Dent there is an additional concern that the present residents tend to be older, with relatively low incomes, and many feel that the maintenance and repair of historic buildings using traditional materials and techniques and employing skilled craftsmen can be costly. Owners and occupiers also suggest there is little advice available to inform their decisions.
- 6.7 There is general agreement that Dent has changed significantly and grown organically over time, and that there is no “*way that Dent has always looked*”. Consultees offer considerable support for well designed and sympathetic modern buildings in less prominent locations, employing modern methods of construction and modern materials, suggesting that too many

'traditional-style' buildings are often simply 'pastiche'. Narrow pavements and issues of pedestrian safety, particularly for schoolchildren, were discussed and the increasing loss of mature trees through storm damage was noted.

- 6.8 It is clear that in Dent the conservation area is only sustainable in the long term if the local economy can adequately support the maintenance and modernisation of historic buildings and their re-use for purposes that generate an income. Working from home or from business premises in Dent is severely constrained by inadequate or non-existent infrastructure in terms of highway access, public transport – both train and bus services, broadband and mobile phone services.
- 6.9 Whilst the conservation area management plan cannot resolve these complex issues, it can reflect the fundamental shift in attitudes of the local community who express a strong desire to get away from the perceived approach of preserving Dent for the benefit of tourists and towards better ways of achieving future sustainability for the town and its residents. The Parish Council looks to the National Park Authority to actively promote positive change that would help to sustain and maintain a viable community and a viable conservation area in the future.

Capacity for change

- 6.10 In past years new development has been gradually absorbed into the character and physical fabric of the conservation area and for the most part Dent maintains the special qualities and distinctive features that justify its designation. National guidance, provided by English Heritage, explains that modern conservation is about continuity not preservation; helping everyone to manage change, not preventing it. English Heritage's aim is '*to recognise and reinforce the historic significance of places, while accommodating the changes necessary to make sure that people can continue to use and enjoy them*'. (EH July 2009)
- 6.11 Climate change is now a high priority for the Government in all areas, including conservation areas. In parallel with rising costs of fuel and energy, the Government is promoting sustainable forms of construction incorporating energy conservation, building insulation and domestic micro-generation of heat and power. Many home-owners in Dent are beginning to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. However, such measures may include installation of double glazed windows, photo-voltaic and solar roof panels and even domestic wind turbines, which may not be compatible with the character of older buildings in the conservation area.
- 6.12 The adopted Local Plan Policy B13 for listed buildings reflects national guidance in PPG15 where it acknowledges that "*generally the best way of maintaining historic buildings is to keep them in active use ... New and continuing uses will often necessitate some degree of adaptation*". Therefore it is suggested that National Park Authority officers from all the relevant departments should address this sensitive issue, which is not confined to Dent alone.
- 6.13 This relevant extract is taken from "Renewable Heritage: a guide to microgeneration in traditional and historic homes" (Changeworks 2008)
- "For historic properties, building conservation bodies place great importance on retaining the original building fabric; planning departments, local amenity groups and neighbours are often most concerned with visual impact; national environmental targets place a priority on minimising greenhouse gas emissions; meanwhile, the householders themselves may prioritise comfort, low fuel bills or low carbon emissions. Careful negotiation can be needed to find solutions that satisfy all parties"*
- 6.14 The following recommendations for the future management of heritage assets in Dent were developed in conjunction with local stakeholders as the appraisal process advanced.

Suggested boundary changes

- 6.15 The initial “walkabout” surveys of the conservation area led to draft proposals, discussed at the various public consultation events, that a number of amendments should be made to rationalise the existing boundary where it has included land and buildings that are not of special architectural or historic interest. Consultees expressed the view that efforts to enhance the character of the conservation area should be concentrated around the roadside approaches to Dent and within the main streets, where the majority of visitors will appreciate its heritage features. The appraisal also considered the adjoining areas which provide the setting of the conservation area, as recommended by English Heritage.
- 6.16 Proposed changes to the conservation area boundaries are described below and shown on Map 1 attached. These are generally supported by consultation responses.

Proposed boundary change PBC 01:

- 6.17 The conservation area boundary at the Dent car park follows an arbitrary line diagonally between property boundaries. This does not adequately reflect the survival of heritage features on the ground and it is suggested that the boundary should be amended to follow the back boundaries of properties on Main Street, including their curtilages (Photo D31).



Photo D31:
proposed boundary change PBC 01 to follow property boundaries



Photo D32:
proposed boundary change PBC 02 to exclude features that are not of historic interest

Proposed boundary change PBC 02:

- 6.18 At the entrance of the conservation area from Sedbergh, the present line includes a series of modern farm buildings and older buildings at High Laning Farm that have been recently converted; it also excludes the curtilages of houses at Main Street. The line does not adequately reflect the existence of significant heritage features on the ground and it is suggested that the boundary should be drawn more precisely at this location to follow physical features on the ground and to exclude land and buildings that are not of special historic interest (Photo D32).

Proposed boundary change PBC 03:

- 6.19 St Andrews Church at Dent is an imposing listed building that creates an attractive focal feature in the conservation area. Its churchyard and grounds provide a welcome open amenity space in this densely built up town. It is suggested that, for consistency, the conservation area boundary should be extended to include the area of land to the north of

the church, part of Glebe Field, now incorporated into the churchyard and bounded by a stone wall.



Photo D33:
proposed boundary change PBC 03 to
include extended churchyard

Recommendation 01:

- 6.20 The National Park Authority is recommended to consider amending the boundaries of the Dent conservation area to delete those areas specified above and to include those areas which have sufficient historic interest to justify their inclusion within the conservation area.

Negative factors, opportunities for enhancement

- 6.21 Opportunity sites, where enhancement schemes could be progressed, were identified with the help of local people at the initial meetings and “walkabouts”. The following proposed schemes were generally supported by consultation responses.

Approaches into the conservation area

- 6.22 The three main entry points into Dent at Laning, Deepdale Road and Beech Hill give no indication that the visitor is entering the conservation area of a unique historic town. These are insignificant, neglected spaces that detract from the very high quality of the street-scene in Dent. At Laning the feature that greets the visitor from Sedbergh is the row of 1930s semis, that are open to view and on a prominent elevated site; at Beech Hill there is a row of derelict 'piggeries' that present an unsightly focal feature close to the approach into the conservation area.

Opportunity Site 01 Approaches into Dent Conservation Area: Laning

- 6.23 Roadside spaces on the main entrance into Dent at Laning (Photo D34) provide an opportunity for landscape improvements including tree and/or verge planting and for a well designed sign welcoming visitors to Dent Conservation Area, replacing and rationalising the existing clutter of information signage. This entry point from Sedbergh could benefit from tree planting in the corner of the field adjacent to the former Police houses, outside the Conservation area, to soften and screen the approach into Dent.



Photo D34:
approach into Dent from Sedbergh, at Laning



Photo D35:
approach into Dent from Cowgill, at Seeds Gill Bridge

Opportunity Site 02 Approaches into Dent Conservation Area: Beech Hill

- 6.24 Roadside verges on the road from Cowgill at Seeds Gill bridge (Photo D35) provide several opportunities for landscape improvements including tree and/or verge planting and car parking (see below) and for a well designed sign welcoming visitors to Dent Conservation Area, replacing and rationalising the existing clutter of information signage.
- 6.25 The clearance of the former “piggeries” at the bottom of Beech Hill would make a significant improvement to the street scene at this location. This derelict site detracts from one of the main approaches into Dent and its remedial treatment needs to be encouraged, possibly in association with proposals for the future expansion of recreational facilities provided at the adjoining gymnasium site by the Parish Council.

Street scene and car parking

- 6.26 Dent relies very heavily on its ability to attract visitors who will support and sustain its local shops and tea rooms, and one of the key features is the pedestrian friendly environment of cobbled streets and back lanes. The attractive and distinctive cobbled surfaces deter high speeds and ensure drivers give a high priority to pedestrians and cyclists. These are generally well maintained and periodically re-laid by the County Highway Authority.
- 6.27 However, in places parked cars dominate the narrow main road, which is the through route to Sedbergh, and cause difficulties for emergency vehicles, refuse vehicles and pedestrians. There are several roadside locations where residents’ parking spaces are provided, although it seems that there is very little enforcement of these. Around The Green, small signs are placed in arbitrary locations and visitors have been known to park across driveways, service entrances and road junctions in busy periods.
- 6.28 The Parish Council now manages the Dent car park, but there are concerns about the tendency of some visitors to drive on through the town to look for a free space elsewhere; some park on the cobbles outside the holiday homes. It was suggested by the Parish Council that full time residents almost invariably park in the main car park and it is believed that the people parking on the cobbles tend to be day visitors or temporary residents in the holiday homes. It is suggested there is a need for parking restrictions on the cobbled streets, though without painted yellow lines on the road surface. Discrete information signs, attached to walls rather than posts, should be used.

Opportunity Sites 03: On-street car parking

6.29 There are several locations where it may be possible to upgrade the appearance of roadside spaces and grass verges used for car parking, where damage has been caused by over-running tyres and where signage is unhelpful or inappropriate. These locations include:

- the verges and grassed areas around The Green (rationalise residents parking and incorporate improved children's play facilities)
- the gravel areas used for parking and walled sitting areas opposite the Old Smithy (planting beds could be removed and replaced with cobbles to provide a passing/parking area to ease congestion opposite the shop)



Photo D36:
defined parking areas and improved play facilities are needed on The Green



Photo D37:
improved parking and planted areas are needed at Beech Hill

- the roadside verges at the bottom of Beech Hill, below the church (used by visitors and also for parking for football matches on the nearby sports fields)
- improved signage at the entrance into Dent car park to encourage use of the car park and discourage driving into town; a prominent “welcome” sign could be fixed below the window of the bus shelter, which would have good visibility;



Photo D38:
improved “welcome” signs could help to discourage drivers from parking on the cobbles



Photo D39:
verges are damaged and driveways blocked by careless parking

6.30 Plans to extend and upgrade the play area on the Green are generally supported by local residents and children. Care should be taken to secure its future survival and enhancement, possibly by means of dedication as a “village green”. Initial suggestions for The Green include removing some areas of grass verge and surfacing (with cobbles), to improve/increase resident car parking and rationalise roadside parking.

- 6.31 This would allow car parking to be sited off the road and also allow relocation of parking to the opposite side of the road from the green. Providing a clear boundary around the verges, marked by an upstanding stone edge and three rows of cobbles, would reduce damage from over-running tyres, reduce danger to children playing on the green, overcome present problems of driveways being blocked and improve highway safety generally.

Potential sites for new developments

- 6.32 Consultation responses confirm that the community in Dent would welcome new development where it would bring families with children and new employment opportunities into the valley. Existing residents are concerned that there is nowhere affordable for their older family members to live when they are unable to stay in their own homes, nor for their grown up children to live once they leave home.
- 6.33 These concerns are reinforced by a recent statement from the National Housing Federation chief executive David Orr: *"Many villages are now in real danger of losing their unique identity. They are becoming holiday zones preserved for tourists and second home owners, which close down for business in the winter. Affordable housing lies at the centre of the battle to save traditional village life. Unless we build more affordable homes for local people, they will continue to be priced out of rural areas."* (www.planningresource.co.uk/bulletins 22 June 2009)
- 6.34 The Parish Council has identified two sites that may be appropriate for new housing development, to provide social housing for young families. These sites on the edge of the existing town both adjoin recent housing areas at Glebe Fold and adjacent to the Ghyll Side development off Deepdale Road. In January 2009 the National Park Authority issued a "call for sites" for new affordable housing as part of the preparation of a new Housing Development Plan and the Yorkshire Dales Development Framework.

Recommendation 02:

- 6.39 The National Park Authority, with Cumbria County Council, Dent Parish Council, other landowners and agencies as appropriate, are recommended to work together to promote and pursue enhancement schemes for the opportunity sites numbered 01-03 above.

Pedestrian surfaces, paving, street furniture

- 6.40 One of the most characteristic features of Dent conservation area is the cobbled streets which have been generally well maintained by Cumbria County Council as highway authority. The footpaths and yards off Main Street have also been attractively paved with a combination of cobbles and stone slabs to make walking easier. These surfaces, many of which are contemporary with the adjoining cottages, make a significant contribution to the historic character of the town centre and should be properly managed and carefully re-laid where damage occurs.
- 6.41 The County Highways Authority is a major stakeholder in the conservation area and their local representatives have been engaged in discussions as to appropriate hard surfacing treatments and maintenance regimes on highway land. On Main Street there are historic features such as cast iron drain covers that are barely noticed, but which add significant interest to the traditional street scene. The symmetrical lining of roadside gutters with cobbles laid on edge is an attractive feature that has been well maintained by the highways authority. Sensitive maintenance and repair is essential to preserve these distinctive features.
- 6.42 Significant improvements could be achieved by the removal and rationalisation of street "clutter" such as signs, road markings, unsightly poles and obtrusive street furniture and the

County Council proposes to carry out an audit, with the Parish Council, of significant historic features such as the gulleys and drain covers and of potential improvements to highway land along Main Street.

Recommendation 03:

- 6.43 The National Park Authority with Cumbria County Council, Dent Parish Council, other landowners and agencies as appropriate, are recommended to work together to undertake an audit of redundant signs, poles, street furniture and other unsightly highway “clutter” throughout Dent, and to agree a comprehensive programme of highway improvements and routine maintenance. It is suggested that a scheme of on-street parking restrictions with discrete but clearly legible and informative road signs could be adopted throughout the conservation area.

Trees and landscape

- 6.44 Trees in conservation areas are protected by law to the same degree as those subject to Tree Preservation Orders and in Dent the retention of the few existing mature trees that exist around open spaces and in larger gardens, and the planting of new trees wherever possible, are considered to be an important contrast to the “hard” appearance of the densely developed town centre (see Map 2). It is suggested that a comprehensive audit of the amenity value, age and condition of the trees within the conservation area should be undertaken, together with a review of opportunities for the planting of replacement trees before the existing mature trees are all lost.

Recommendation 04:

- 6.45 The National Park Authority with Dent Parish Council, other landowners and agencies as appropriate, are recommended to work together to undertake a ‘Tree Audit’ and survey of the visual quality, age and condition of all mature trees within the conservation area; this could be undertaken as a local environmental project with pupils from the school.
- 6.46 The Authority and the Parish Council could initiate a programme of community tree planting to replace over-mature trees before they are lost and monitor change in the conservation area to ensure that existing trees are both preserved and well maintained;
- 6.47 The Authority should use its statutory powers where appropriate to control planning contraventions in terms of trees in the conservation area and should insist on new/replacement tree planting as a condition of planning permission for all new developments within and around the boundaries of the conservation area.

Listed buildings and structures

- 6.48 A considerable number of historic properties in Dent have been listed either individually or for group value (Appendix B).
- 6.49 If listed buildings are to be properly conserved it is essential that every owner should believe that their property has special architectural and/or historical interest. As part of a series of Heritage Reform measures, the Government wants to make it easier for the owners and tenants of heritage properties to take pride in their conservation and care. One way to do this is to provide better information about what makes their property special and how to keep it in good condition. However, it is clear from the public consultation responses in Dent that local people have very little understanding of the reasons why some of the buildings and not their [apparently similar] neighbours are listed.
- 6.50 From 1 April 2005 English Heritage has been responsible for the administration of the listing system. New notification and consultation procedures for owners and local authorities has

been introduced, as well as clearer documentation for list entries. English Heritage is well aware that the great majority of list descriptions are still brief accounts of external architectural features, and explains on its website that “*it remains the local authority’s responsibility to articulate just where special interest lies*” (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.8833>)

- 6.51 The English Heritage selection guide for domestic properties advises that “*designation will be appropriate where evidence remains of locally distinctive building materials, walls and roof structures, plan form, room function and circulation patterns, fixtures, fittings and decoration such as original fireplaces, doorways, doors and door furniture.*” Further information is available on the English Heritage web-site: www.english-heritage.org.uk
- 6.52 The appraisal has not been able to judge from external views whether the listed buildings in Dent still retain original features that would justify their continued designation. Further assessment may be appropriate in cases where property owners believe there is insufficient historic value to justify their listing.

Recommendation 05:

- 6.53 The Parish Council and concerned owners of existing listed buildings are advised to approach English Heritage for information and assistance in ascertaining whether listed status is both appropriate and necessary for some traditional cottages, in cases where property owners believe there is insufficient historic value to justify their listing, bearing in mind their inclusion within the conservation area.
- 6.54 An audit of historic features, as described above (paragraph 5.49) would make it possible for the National Park Authority to involve the local community in the task of identifying whether any distinctive building features are at risk because of the modernisation and improvement of older houses.
- 6.55 It is acknowledged that listing of buildings of special architectural interest is a DCMS responsibility in the process of being devolved to English Heritage. It is possible that a review could be carried out by the local community under the guidance of a heritage consultant and/or the Sedbergh and District History Society. 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.

Modernisation of older properties

- 6.56 There is a general feeling that designation as a conservation area offers very little benefit to residents and merely imposes an additional layer of control over any form of development or improvement. This is regrettable as it is the residents, property owners and other stakeholders who are being asked to maintain, with their own resources, the historic environment of the conservation area. In Dent there is an additional concern that the present residents tend to be older, with relatively low incomes, and many feel that the maintenance and repair of historic buildings using traditional materials and techniques and employing skilled craftsmen can be too costly for these occupiers to undertake.
- 6.57 However, recent English Heritage research reports that unsympathetic UPVC replacement doors and windows are the main threat to 83% of conservation areas (“*Heritage at Risk*” EH June 2009). English Heritage draft guidance (July 2009) advises that “*in the case of windows, for example, care is required to see that the details of the design, including the overall proportions, the thickness and moulding of glazing bars and the size and arrangement of panes, are appropriate to the date of the building or to the date when the window aperture was made*”.
- 6.58 Consultation responses suggest some residents are frustrated by the lack of available

information and advice about repairs, alterations and extensions to traditional buildings. The current advice note on replacement windows on the National Park Authority's web-site is hard to find and it is suggested that the Authority needs to provide consistent advice, helpful information and practical solutions to property owners who wish to modernise their homes including identification of the features, including architectural details, that they will be encouraged to retain (key characteristics and features as described in the introduction and text above).

Recommendation 06:

- 6.59 The National Park Authority is advised to follow the Conservation Principles adopted by English Heritage:
- to be precise, objective and consistent about what is special about a building and what will need to be kept in order to make sure that the heritage value of that building is not lost;
 - to be specific about the opportunities for adaptation or demolition and clearly show people what their options are;
 - to make sure that advice given to owners is reasonable, knowledgeable and consistent.
- 6.60 The National Park Authority should improve its provision of information and advice about traditional repair techniques for landowners and occupiers of older buildings in conservation areas by producing Conservation Guidance Notes that set out the principles they expect to be followed; English Heritage suggests that guidance notes can usefully include technical information aimed at architects, surveyors and builders.

Adaptation to climate change

- 6.61 Many residents are intending to upgrade the energy efficiency of their homes in line with recently revised Building Regulations and the Government's Code for Sustainable Homes and they suggest that there is little advice available to inform their decisions. They consider that it is not always feasible or practical to "*retain the features which make their buildings special*" such as single glazed windows and draughty old doors. Secondary glazing or thick blinds are not always an acceptable alternative. Without reliable advice and information, there is a tendency for owners to replace traditional timber windows and doors with plastic alternatives that are unsuitable and make no reference to the local vernacular in terms of design and detailing.
- 6.62 The need for adaptation to climate change is recognised on the National Park Authority's Sustainable development website which explains that "*sustainable development is not just about environmental protection; it's about improving quality of life for both current and future generations. The Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) can help communities and individuals across the Yorkshire Dales National Park to achieve just that.*" Local Plan Policy B7 Building Design states that "*wherever possible, sustainability principles will be applied in decisions relating to the choice of materials and building techniques. Approved developments should be designed for long life spans, and should be undertaken in ways that minimise the use of energy and scarce resources, utilise renewable energy sources, and use recycled, or locally supplied, efficiently produced, materials.*"
- 6.63 Consultation responses reflect the views of local residents that energy efficiency measures for older dwellings are essential to ensure that the buildings remain in occupation and are well maintained. Conservation area owners and occupiers suggest that there is a growing need for innovative cost-effective energy-saving schemes for older buildings which is not at present being addressed.

Recommendation 07:

- 6.64 The National Park Authority should consider how to address the growing need for innovative cost-effective energy-saving schemes for older buildings and find ways to align this need with its formal procedures for dealing with listed building consent applications for window and door replacements and other energy saving measures. It is recommended that conservation officers, planning officers and building control officers should work together to revise the current Design Guide where it is applicable to buildings in conservation areas and to agree a corporate approach, bearing in mind the recent and forthcoming changes to national Planning Policy and Building Regulations.
- 6.65 The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority should provide energy saving advice and information about options and possible solutions for landowners and occupiers of older buildings by producing Conservation Guidance Notes and information leaflets. These should explain clearly, with illustrations, what is acceptable in conservation areas and for listed buildings in terms of double glazed windows and doors, effective insulation of stone buildings and stone roofs and domestic energy generation. An example of the type of guidance is found in the Scottish Energy Heritage publication “*A guide to improving energy efficiency in traditional and historic homes*” (Changeworks 2008).
- 6.66 Applicants and their agents should be asked to enter into pre-application discussions based on consistent advice and information and encouraged by careful negotiation to consider possible alternative options for replacement doors and windows and other energy saving measures.
- 6.67 It is suggested that the Authority could investigate, as a matter of urgency, whether the Sustainable Development Fund could be used to fund an energy efficiency project specifically aimed at encouraging local tradespeople to develop, make and install, at reasonable cost, double glazed timber window and door units that are acceptable to the Authority for use in conservation areas for domestic and community buildings and for listed buildings.

Design quality of new development

- 6.68 There is pressure for new development and for alterations to existing buildings throughout the National Park. In the conservation area, all new development will be required to comply with 'saved' Local Plan policies, national guidance, and policies in the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF). The Authority expects a high standard of design that respects the character of the conservation area. Development proposals are required to preserve and enhance, and cause no harm to, the special character and appearance of Dent Conservation Area.
- 6.69 There is a significant difference between the core of Dent along Main Street and Beech Hill, the Victorian/Edwardian villas with front gardens and the modern infill housing at Laning and around the Green – planning design solutions which might be appropriate on the edge of the centre or around the open space areas will not necessarily be suitable for the narrow lanes and yards around Main Street. It is important to ensure that development proposals preserve and enhance, and cause no harm to, the special character and appearance of each section of the Dent Conservation Area.
- 6.70 During the consultation period, several people agreed that modern materials can look better than stone-faced designs and considered that building design should look forward, not back. However, reservations were expressed about introducing new buildings with modern materials into the centre of the town and it was suggested these should be confined to the edges of the conservation area in less prominent locations.
- 6.71 Local people hope that the housing at Glebe Fold will be affordable for local people in

perpetuity, including older people who want to stay in Dent and families with children in school. Plans to alter, modernise and extend the Primary School building by constructing a two storey front section with a pitched roof, which include plans to improve the appearance of the main entrance to the Memorial Hall, are welcomed by local residents.

- 6.72 All planning applications must now be accompanied by a Design and Access Statement that provides a design analysis of the site and its surroundings and information on the history of the site. This statement must explain the design principles adopted for the development and address the constraints that apply, including the potential impacts on the settings of adjoining buildings and on the character of the conservation area. The likelihood is that, in order to address [the shortage of affordable housing, Dent will be required to accommodate some further residential development around its periphery. Any proposed site will need to respond to the established settlement pattern and wider landscape sensitivity. A housing scheme will also need to incorporate a sufficiently high standard of design, layout and landscaping.](#)

Recommendation 08:

- 6.73 Any new development should be seen as an opportunity to achieve a scheme that benefits the community of Dent. Developers should be expected to meet stringent requirements for appropriate high quality design and craftsmanship in terms of both built form and landscape setting. It is recommended that the National Park Authority should provide information and design guidelines, specifically for landowners, developers and occupiers of land and buildings within conservation areas, that set out the principles they expect to be followed.
- 6.74 Where the character of the area derives from its evolution and diversity rather than an ordered pattern of development, as in Dent, the developer should be encouraged to understand and to respond individually to the context of each site. The Design and Access Statement should explain the developer's response in terms of:
- surviving historic street patterns and networks of pedestrian routes,
 - relationship to the road frontage (building line) and to neighbouring buildings
 - orientation of buildings on the site
 - ratio of spaces to buildings on the site (density to reflect historic patterns of development)
 - massing or volume of buildings,
 - scale and size, height of eaves
 - vertical/horizontal emphasis of window openings
 - complementary (not necessarily matching) colours and textures of materials
 - high quality detailing and finishes to complement neighbouring properties
 - high quality landscape treatments, hard paving and soft planting, replacement trees as necessary
 - matching or complementary boundary treatments

7.0 PART THREE: MONITORING AND REVIEW

7.1 As recommended by English Heritage, this conservation area appraisal document should be reviewed every five years from the date of its formal adoption. This is particularly relevant in light of the recent “Heritage at Risk” report (EH 2009) which identifies Dent as one of 3 conservation areas in the Yorkshire Dales that are “at risk”, where their heritage value is believed to have deteriorated over the past 3 years. The appraisal will also need to be assessed in the light of the emerging Local Development Framework and government policy generally. The review should include the following:

- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, and how successful this has been;
- An assessment of the ways in which the identified character of the different parts of the conservation area may have changed, in comparison to the baseline audit described above;
- Identification of any new issues which may need to be addressed, requiring further enhancements or actions (for example, the use by the National Park Authority of Article 4 Directions in vulnerable locations)
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;
- Publicity and consultation with the local community and stakeholders in Dent.

7.2 It is possible that this review could be carried out by the local community under the guidance of a heritage consultant or the National Park Authority. 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.

8.0 Acknowledgements

8.1 This document has followed the framework for Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Proposals, as described in the English Heritage / PAS guidance:

- *Guidance on conservation area appraisals (Feb 2006);*
- *Guidance on the management of conservation areas (Feb 2006).*
- *Planning Policy Statement 15 Consultation (July 2009)*
- *English Heritage PPS Planning for the Historic Environment Practice Guide (July 2009)*

9.0 References

- Whitaker, 1823, ‘History of Richmondshire’ Vol II, London
- Smith AH, 1961, ‘The place-names of the West Riding of Yorkshire’: Part VI, Cambridge
- Thompson W, 1892, ‘Sedbergh, Garsdale and Dent’, Richard Jackson, London
- Bulmer T, 1905, ‘Directory of Westmorland’, T Bulmer and Co, Manchester
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: MAPS

MAP D1: DENT CONSERVATION AREA PROPOSED
BOUNDARY CHANGES AND OPPORTUNITY SITES

MAP D2: SIGNIFICANT OPEN SPACES, TREES AND
WOODLAND

MAP D3: KEY/POSITIVE BUILDINGS

MAP D4: DENT 1856

MAP D5: DENT 1889

MAP D6: DENT 1912

MAP D7: LISTED BUILDINGS IN DENT CONSERVATION AREA
(PROPOSED REVISED BOUNDARY)

APPENDIX B: LISTED BUILDINGS IN DENT

- 1 Listed buildings in Dent (including map reference numbers)
- 2 Listed building descriptions