

# Oxenhope & Leeming

## Conservation Area Assessment



**Draft for Consultation**

### What is a Conservation Area?

A conservation area is an 'area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

They were first introduced into British legislation by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967 and are an attempt to protect the wider historic environment. It is the responsibility of Local Planning Authorities to designate conservation areas. An area may warrant designation if, for example, it has an historic layout of property boundaries and streets or exhibits characteristic materials and landscaping. They may include a mix of ages and uses of buildings, as well as open spaces and landscaping that contribute to the character of the area. The interaction of the buildings and spaces within designated areas create unique environments that constitute irreplaceable components of our local, regional and national heritage.

Conservation area designation confers a general control over the demolition of unlisted properties within their confines, strengthens controls over minor development and makes special provision for the protection of trees. The objective of these measures is to provide for the preservation of the essential character and appearance of the area, in order to maintain or improve its environmental quality and

safeguard local distinctiveness and sense of place, within a framework of controlled and positive management of change. It is recognised that to survive conservation areas must be allowed to evolve to meet changing demands and commercial pressures, and that modern additions can be just as interesting as the existing fabric, if implemented in a complementary manner.





## What is the Purpose of Conservation Area Assessments?

The Conservation Team of the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council is currently undertaking an assessment and review of each of its fifty-six conservation areas. The principal objectives of this exercise are to:

- Clearly define and record the special interest of each conservation area;
- Reassess the current boundaries to ensure that they reflect the areas of special interest;
- Increase public awareness of the aims and objectives of conservation area designation and stimulate their involvement in the protection of their character;
- Assess the action that may be necessary to safeguard and enhance their special interest.

The documents will then form the basis on which future planning decisions concerning the areas are made.

The designation of a conservation area does not in itself provide for the complete protection of its character. The intrusion of modern materials or features, interruption to the building rhythm and the impacts of commercial pressure can all take their toll. Typically, the insensitive alteration of traditional door and window features or the loss of natural roovescape, chimney stacks and boundary walls all have a significant negative impact on the character of an area. With the support of the community, the assessment documents could incorporate policies to control these types of works. Where appropriate it may also provide the basis for the Local Planning Authority to make bids for funding to assist property owners with works to the fabric of their buildings, or to restore derelict properties. English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund are the main sources of funding.

## Special Character

The extensive areas of historic and architectural importance in Oxenhope and Leeming are covered by four distinct yet interlinking Conservation Areas (Leeming, Oxenhope Lower Town, Oxenhope Upper Town and Oxenhope Station Road) which are of interest because:

- They contain scattered pre-industrial agricultural settlement which, to varying degrees, was augmented by industrial buildings and housing constructed between the late eighteenth and early 20th centuries.
- The piecemeal and gradual expansion of the settlements comprising the conservation areas has resulted in a close-knit mixture of farm buildings, mill buildings, mill workers' houses, mill masters' villas, commercial buildings, places of worship, shops, and early suburban dwellings.
- Development is concentrated in cores in each of the conservation areas, but is liberally interspersed with open spaces outside of these cores and as such the structure of the interdependent villages and hamlets which constitute the conservation areas can still be understood.



By 1800 thread would be spun at a small early mill such as Wadsworth Mill (top) and the cloth woven at cottages such as those at Hill House Lane (above).

## Key History

■ Oxenhope was originally an outlying part of Bradford Manor which had no permanent inhabitants. It was probably used for summer grazing by cattle brought over from Bradford, hence the name, Oxenhope, which literally means 'valley of oxen'.

■ Permanent farming settlement occurred in medieval times, the conservation areas lying in the lordship of Far Oxenhope. Settlement was scattered and was exclusively on the high, well-drained land, with no recognisable villages.

■ From as early as the sixteenth century, the manufacture of textiles supplemented earnings from cattle farming and by the eighteenth century became equally, if not more important than farming to the local economy.

■ The 1771 Enclosure Act facilitated the building of small textile mills and the construction of cottages for workers in areas such as Shaw, Upper Town, Bull Hill, Hill House Lane, Wadsworth and Leeming, marking the beginning of the area's industrialisation between 1792 and 1820.

■ The religious 'revival' of Baptism and Methodism led to the building of several places of worship and schools in Oxenhope in the first half of the 19th century. This culminated in the creation of Oxenhope Parish in 1845 with its own Parish Church (1849) and National School (1846).

■ Further advances in textile manufacturing led to the construction of a 'second wave' of textile mills in Oxenhope with associated ponds, chimneys, dwellings between 1830 and 1850, resulting in a higher concentration of buildings being erected on the valley floor, particularly at Lower Town. By 1850 there were almost 20 mills in Oxenhope.

■ Competition forced the smaller mills out of business while the larger concerns expanded and prospered further through the





*Top: Leeming blends seamlessly with its setting;  
Above: Wilton House farm was built as a hunting  
lodge and is one of the oldest buildings in Station  
Road conservation area;  
Far left: Oxenhope parish Church, a Norman  
Romanesque edifice;  
Top left: Whinknowle, a pair of 1870's mill  
master's villas;  
Left: Lowertown Mill and chimney*

opening of the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway in 1867. The railway was the catalyst for the northward expansion of Oxenhope in the form of mill masters' houses and mill workers dwellings.

■ Leeming Reservoir was constructed between 1872-78 to supply Bradford's industry with water. This and other local reservoirs forced a number of farms to close and submerged two mills and a small number of cottages at Leeming.

■ Oxenhope continued to prosper as a mill village well into the 20th century, though economic forces mean the area is presently more favoured by commuters than industry and commerce.

## The Conservation Areas in Oxenhope and Leeming

■ Leeming Conservation Area was designated in 1980 and covers the core linear industrial hamlet of Leeming, its Victorian reservoir and related infrastructure as well as the related scattered clusters of early industrial and agricultural settlement at Back Leeming, Tansy End, Bank, Buttergate Syke, Dol and Horkinstone.

■ Lower Town Conservation Area was designated in 1980 and consists of an older agricultural cluster of buildings alongside a later industrial-era cluster of mill buildings, workers' housing and shops. Outside of this village core are scattered clusters of industrial buildings and large, isolated mill masters' houses.

■ Upper Town Conservation Area was designated in 1980 and covers a linear pattern of development along Hebden Bridge Road and Shaw Lane/West Shaw Lane. The development becomes more scattered as the roads radiate out of the core of Upper Town.

■ Station Road Conservation Area was designated in 2000 and covers the suburban expansion of Oxenhope along Station Road, Hebden Bridge Road, and Keighley Road.

■ The area is overwhelmingly residential in character with only two mills in an industrial or commercial use. The retail function has declined to only a few convenience stores and pubs and only one church and one school within the area covered by the conservation areas remain in their original use. The agricultural use continues in Leeming and Upper Town Conservation Areas.



## Characteristics Common to all four Conservation Areas in Oxenhope and Leeming

■ Virtually all of the buildings in the conservation areas are made of locally quarried sandstone and gritstone. This material is also used for boundary walls which are either dry stone or mortared and coped depending on the type of enclosure.

■ The routes through the conservation areas are a mixture of mill town or village streets and country lanes. The latter are typified by a lack of engineering and signage, dry stone boundaries, a lack of pedestrian surface, narrow width and sporadic roadside development.

■ Buildings dating from before the mid-19th century are roofed with stone slates, while buildings from after the mid 19th century tend to be roofed with Welsh slate. A few exceptional later buildings use Westmorland slate or rosemary red clay tiles.

■ Most buildings tend to be two storeys in height, excepting mill buildings which are often higher. Large villa residences often incorporate an attic floor expressed within the roof and terraced properties incorporate a basement floor where the topography necessitates this.

■ Workers' houses and cottages are built at a high density and hence are afforded a small rear curtilage, and there roughly equal numbers of those with a small front garden and those which face directly onto the road.

■ The older larger houses tend to be built adjoining the road, but facing away from it and instead overlook a large garden. From the mid-19th century on, large houses and villa residences had front and rear gardens (some of which are very large) and generally faced towards the road.

■ Development along the main thoroughfares tends to be linear in character, closely following the line of the road.



*Top: Local stone unifies the diverse structures found in the conservation areas.*

*Middle: Dark Lane derives its character from the treatment of the road and the nature of its surroundings.*

*Bottom: Many houses retain key details such as sash windows, panel doors, mullions, bare stonework and boundary walls. An interesting detail on this cottage is the ashlar pedimented doorway with recessed panels.*

■ There is a fine grain of development with different building types and ages sat side by side and few instances of uniform groups of buildings apart from the terraces of industrial housing.

■ There are a small number of barns in each conservation area which are evidence of the former agricultural function of some of the settlements. They are typified by large central segmental cart entrances, quoined angles and a restraint on the number and size of openings which are typically small windows, ventilators and lunette openings with the occasional Venetian window.

■ Water is an important element in all four conservation areas, ranging from the stream-fed Leeming Reservoir, Leeming Water which bisects Lower Town and Station Road Conservation Areas and waters a number of mill ponds. There are also a significant number of roadside troughs in Oxenhope and Leeming which are watered by nearby springs, ensuring water even features prominently away from the main bodies of water.

■ The grain of the conservation areas is enhanced by the survival of stone outbuildings which are contemporary with the associated cottages, houses and mill sheds. These small buildings help to complete the mill village character of the settlements which constitute Oxenhope.

■ There is a significant number of historic iron railings, gates and balustrades in Oxenhope and Leeming which add to the street scene and overall character. Some of the gates are in the 'Oxenhope style' which is peculiar to the locality.

■ Natural stone setts and flags can be found in small concentrations in each conservation area, in spaces such as farmyards, forecourts, mill access lanes, the pavements of terraced streets, and, in parts of Station Road and Lower Town Conservation Areas, stone kerbing.



# Leeming Conservation Area

## Key Buildings and Spaces

■ Leeming is characterised by an unadorned vernacular style which typifies the cottages and mill workers' houses as well as higher status houses and farmhouses.

■ Leeming Reservoir provides a pleasing contrast to the built up area and the surrounding countryside and allows panoramic views into and out of the conservation area.

■ Leeming follows and intermittent linear pattern of development with the longest and largest cluster of buildings around Waterside Mill, with the funnelled entrance to the track up to Tansy End forming a sort of focal point for the cluster.

■ The few stylised buildings date from the late 19th through early 20th centuries and include symmetrical, Classically influenced villas such as 61 Denholme Road and Smithy House, the Picturesque styling of Rock Lea and Clear View and the ornate timberwork of the valve shaft housing at the reservoir.

■ The pond at the foot of Nan Scar has a natural appearance despite being drained by the stone weir and overflow channel connected with the reservoir. The reservoir dates from the 1870s and all of its original infrastructure remains in place.

■ Horkinstone Burial Ground contains a variety of interesting gothic style gravestone and tombs and adjoins the site of Oxenhope's first Baptist chapel. Other religious buildings include the former Sawood Methodist Chapel/Sunday School with its austere long elevations with round-headed windows; and the former Oxenhope Baptist Church/School, a red brick construction, dated 1927 which features gothic traceried windows.

■ The interspersal of clusters of buildings among pastoral open fields is a defining feature of the conservation area. The spaces

provide the buildings with their original setting and allow the area to be understood as a group of interdependent settlements. The spaces also allow the conservation area to be appreciated as part of the landscape rather than being distinct from it.

■ The scattered clusters of development are connected to each other and Denholme Road by single lane tracks or footpaths which mean that although Leeming is linear in pattern and the reservoir is a large barrier to movement, the conservation area is quite permeable.

■ The plain but massive Waterside Mill and its chimney are at the core of the largest settlement, Leeming, with former shops, such as the Co-op and 16 Denholme Road located nearby, adding interest to the street scene and building up the image of the mill village.



■ The pastoral nature of the green spaces and the lack of large gardens in Leeming means that tree cover only becomes dominant at Back Leeming where the hillside is covered with mature foliage.



*Clockwise from top right: Gothic monument with decorative ironwork at Horkinstone Burial Ground; single cell shop at Leeming with original shop window; Smithy House, a late Victorian three-bay villa; Clear View and Rock Lea, two of the most strongly stylised houses in Leeming.*



# Lower Town Conservation Area

## Key Buildings and Spaces

■ The built up core of Lower Town consists of the original, organic clustered agricultural settlement at Yate Lane alongside the 19th and early 20th century industrial expansion along Lowertown. The built up area is contrasted with the sparse network of lanes and scattered development of the southern half of Lower Town.

■ 11 Yate Lane, Yate House and 13-15 Yate Lane are all Listed Grade II and show how the architecture of houses changed from the vernacular style in the 17th century (with drip moulds, hooded openings and rows of double chamfered lights) to a Classical style in the 18th century which employed regularly spaced, symmetrical façades, sash windows, and central doorcases with columns supporting a triangular pediment.

■ The open spaces around Jew Lane, Wadsworth and Bull Hill preserve the original settlement pattern and give the buildings a secluded, sylvan setting. The greenery ranges from dense woodland and overgrown land to the substantial gardens of the small number of mill masters' dwellings.

■ Lowertown is closely bounded by a mixture of buildings and boundary features with the buildings stood close behind. The various orientations, masses, heights, original functions, detailing and ages of the buildings reinforce that this street was once the hub of a thriving mill village which developed in a piecemeal fashion.

■ The long rows of flat-faced mullioned lights on cottages along Hill House Lane are evidence of home-based textile manufacture which was augmented by early small-scale water powered mills such as Bull Hill, and the original element of Wadsworth Mill in the early 19th century. They feature taking-in doors, plain stone surrounds to openings and timber sash windows.

■ Leeming Water and its wooded banks run through the length of the conservation area and is the only natural feature in the manmade core of Lower Town. The stream waters five mill ponds which were once important to industry but are now of high amenity value.

■ The grid of terraced streets off Lowertown is regularly planned and highly permeable. The rows of houses have roofs pitched parallel to the road, lack ornament and have a regular rhythm of openings along their flat elevations.

■ Charles Mill and Lowertown Mill are examples of how the scale and design of industrial buildings changed in the mid-late 19th century to large, imposing buildings with a regular grid of openings and the appearance of decoration but this remained minimal.

■ The Wesleyan Burial Grounds flanking Denholme Road are the only remnants of the former chapel which adjoined them. They contain a number of gothic style grave-stones, table tombs and monuments.

■ The variations in the orientation of buildings and distances of buildings from the road along the lower portion of Yate Lane is more pronounced than at Lowertown, reflecting its haphazard, organic development. The mixture of houses, cottages and barns mostly face onto the road gable-on. The course of the lane is defined by the extensive flagged pavements and setted surfaces rather than the position of the buildings.

■ The mill masters' houses give insight into the social hierarchy of the mill village and the architectural fashions of the time. Examples include the austere, restrained decoration of earlier houses such as Wadsworth and Holmfield to the symmetrical composition of the Victorian West View, Brookfield and

Lea Mount to the early 20th century Arts and Crafts style of Cragg Royd and Hillcrest.



From the top: Yate House, an impressive 17th century vernacular style dwelling with cruciform windows.

In the 18th century the architectural style of large houses shifted from the vernacular style of 11 Yate Lane (right) to the Classical style of 13-15.

The latest architectural style found in the conservation area is the Arts and Crafts style of buildings like Cragg Royd.

Early vernacular style weaver's cottages at Hill House Lane. These are listed Grade II as they are a good example of their type.



# Station Road Conservation Area

## Key Buildings and Spaces

■ This conservation area has a significant level of tree cover and hence mature trees are an important natural feature due to their ubiquity. The largest area of woodland stretches from beyond the southeastern boundary at Yate Lane to north of Dark Lane and provides an attractive setting for the few houses in this area.

■ There are a number of houses built for local businessmen. The rigid, symmetrical Classical and Italianate façade layouts of Rose Bank, Whinknowle and Thorn Villa made way for more irregular layouts such as those of The Croft and Manorlands.

■ The Arts and Crafts style became popular in the early 20th century and employed features such as overhanging roofs carried on timber sprockets, the use of new materials such as red clay tiles, and adventurous leaded stained glass designs in the upper sash of windows. Examples of the style include The Croft, Ashdene, Thorn Lea and Rose Lea.

■ The main thoroughfares of Hebden Bridge - Keighley Road and Station Road were not established until the 19th century and as a result they are quite broad and open. They are contrasted by the skeletal network of narrow and enclosed country lanes which make up the rest of the ways through the conservation area.

■ Oxenhope Station is virtually unchanged since its extension in 1884. Details such as the setted access, flagged paving and iron lampposts survive. The station and line have been maintained by a trust since the line closed in 1962.

■ Millennium Green is a semi-formal park which is bisected by Leeming Water and a former mill goit. It opened in 2000 and offers high amenity to the conservation area. The Rose Garden, a small



*Above: Oxenhope Station.*

*Top right: Croft House, a stylish Arts and Crafts construction with leaded and stained glazing.*

*Middle right: Traditional shopfronts.*

*Bottom right: Rose Bank, built c1870 for a corn merchant.*

formal park at Muffin Corner which opened in 1974, complements it.

■ Historic street surfaces in the conservation area include the flagged paving along Oak St, Ash St and Elm St, the setted forecourt to the Coach House, the setted and flagged access to Oxenhope Station and stone kerbing along Keighley Road and Station Road.

■ A handful of traditional shopfronts remain in place along Station Road and feature pilasters, stallrisers, narrow fascias, large display windows and wide doorways.

■ The large gardens of the villas ensure that the conservation area retains a low density and a green prospect.

■ Oxenhope First School is now the only school in the village in its original use. It retains much of its vernacular revival detailing, most strikingly the long rows of cruciform windows.





# Upper Town Conservation Area

## Key Buildings and Spaces

■ The linear pattern and intermittent nature of development of Upper Town mean that green open spaces extend into its heart and as a result Upper Town is well integrated with its pastoral setting.

■ The majority of the industrial dwellings date from the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The short rows run closely alongside the road and common details include stone roofs with end tabling and shaped kneelers, corniced chimneys, quoined angles, plain stone surrounds to openings and a fenestration consisting of 2, 3 or 4 flat-faced mullioned lights. The best examples are Listed Grade II.

■ The dry stone boundary walls, lack of pedestrian pavements and narrow width of West Shaw Lane and Shaw Lane combine with the vast green spaces along side them to create a rural backwater ambience.

■ The farmhouses in the conservation area show the evolution of the vernacular style from the recessed double chamfer mullioned rows of lights of Nessfields (a 17th century detail) to the rows of flat-faced mullioned windows and the use of plain stone surrounds at Shaw Farm. From the eighteenth century, the appearance of farmhouses differs from that of industrial housing in scale only.

■ At the core of each scattered cluster of the buildings in the conservation area there is at least one farm, which constituted the original settlement. In places, this has been added to by the construction of industrial buildings in the early 19th century with very little new development since and hence the agricultural and industrial facets of Upper Town and the distinctiveness of the settlements which make it up remain obvious to this day.

■ The conservation area has low permeability due to its tight linear



pattern and a lack of alternative routes through it.

■ There is a small number of Victorian villas in the conservation area including 2-4 Shaw Lane, West Croft and Springfield which are detailed in an austere, Classically influenced manner with a restraint in ornament. This contrasts with the asymmetrical and randomly laid out openings of The Old Vicarage which is in a Picturesque style.

■ The pinfold at the top of Hebden Bridge Road is a unique element from the old farming community, for it was used to pen stray livestock until it was reclaimed.

■ The Church of St Mary the Virgin is an unusual building, executed in a Norman Romanesque style, no doubt a result of the years its architect, Ignatius Bonomi, spent as chief architect at Durham Cathedral and the castle, which are also in this style. Bonomi also designed some of the first railway bridges in the country. His Skerne Bridge, Darlington, can be seen on the £5 note depicting George Stephenson.

■ Brooks Meeting Mill is the only industrial building in the conservation area. It was last rebuilt in 1910 and its detailing includes ball finials and a vernacular revival style main door oversailed by a moulded hood.

*From top: The cricket pitch brings space and greenery into the heart of Upper Town; Nessfields. Its 16th century timber frame makes it the oldest building in the conservation area. The projecting bay on the far right was probably used as a workshop where cloth was made; 2-4 Shaw Lane, a modest 3 bay villa; The Old Vicarage was built for Rev. J Brett Grant, the first vicar of Oxenhope Parish who is immortalised by the character 'Rev. Donne' in Charlotte Brontë's 'Shirley' who was based on him; 10 West Shaw Lane, one of few houses in Upper Town to retain original details.*



## Conservation Area Boundary

For each conservation area there have been slight amendments to the boundary which are very minor and are to ensure that the boundary is readable on the ground and follows property boundaries, rights of way and natural features such as Leeming Water. These are the only types of proposed changes to **Leeming Conservation Area**. The significant changes to the other conservation areas are as follows:

### Lower Town

It is proposed that the row of houses which constitute Honey Pot View are excluded because they are a modern development and lack many of the details and character of the late 19th and early 20th century rows of houses which typify the conservation area.

### Station Road

■ The Arts and Crafts style villa Ashdene on Yate Lane has much in common with other houses of this era already in the conservation area and is a proposed addition.

■ It is proposed to include The Manse, Station Road, which is the only remnant of the Methodist Church which was built next-door c.1890. The Manse is in a Classical style and retains much of its original appearance and detailing.

■ The third proposed addition is 25a Station Road, a small shop built in the early 20th century which is contemporary with shops in the conservation area. The survival of original shopfront details means that it complements the retail character of this area.

■ The largest addition are the houses currently sandwiched between Station Road and Upper Town conservation areas along Hebden Bridge Road, namely Little Holme, Greystones, Thorn Lea, Rose Lea, Field Top and Branwell. Thorn Lea and Rose Lea are in an Arts and Crafts style and feature

the original leaded stained glazing. The neighbouring houses are of little architectural or historic significance, but their location means any changes to them will impact two conservation areas. Their inclusion will allow greater control on changes and will also mean that all four conservation areas in Oxenhope are linked, allowing them to be grouped as one for any improvement schemes.

■ The one exclusion is Brookside Fold. Although it adheres to the advice in the Oxenhope Village Design Statement, it is ultimately a modern development and layout which has little in common architecturally with Station Road conservation area.

### Upper Town

■ The only proposed inclusion is the field alongside Hebden Bridge Road which contains the pinfold. This latter enclosure is of historical significance and is a unique survival in Oxenhope.

■ The largest exclusion by area is the field to the east of Millbrook House which is no different from the other fields which are presently outside of the conservation area. The open and green character of this field, which provides an important immediate setting for the conservation area, is protected by its designation as Green Belt.

■ It is proposed to exclude the long modern shed building behind 9 Uppertown and The Barn, as it is of no relation to the buildings in the conservation area.

■ The range of garage buildings behind Thorn Cottage, plus the modern 43-45 Uppertown are proposed exclusions because of their appearance and character.

*Ashdene retains sufficient original character to warrant its inclusion in Station Road conservation area.*





## Preservation and Enhancement Policies and Proposals

The City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council will use the powers afforded to it by legislation and apply the policies set out in the Bradford Unitary Development Plan to control further change in the conservation areas in Oxenhope and Leeming and protect their heritage value. Crucially, there will be a strong presumption in favour of preserving both listed and unlisted buildings, as well as spaces, that contribute to the special interest of an area. In making decisions on new development in the conservation area, or affecting its setting, special attention will be paid to the desirability of preserving its character and appearance. Certain elements of the conservation area have been identified as specific problem areas that are either detracting from the character and appearance of the conservation area, or could be enhanced to add to its interest; the following are proposed as means of tackling these issues.

■ **The Preservation of Original Features** - Where houses have retained traditional features such as a stone roof, panelled timber door, stone mullions, timber sash windows, or stone boundary walls, it enhances the appearance of the conservation area and maintains a vital element of consistency as well as upholding the integrity and interest of the individual buildings or small groups of buildings. The degree to which some of these details are lacking varies across the conservation areas in Oxenhope. Unfortunately some details such as timber sash and mullioned casement or sash windows are missing, particularly in Leeming and Upper Town, and in some cases external walls have been painted or coated with unsuitable renders. Article 4 (2) directions can be introduced to protect the remaining significant traditional features and details on dwellings that enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas. If introduced, an Article 4 (2) direction would mean that planning permission may be required for all or some of the following:



*Top: Painted timber sash windows are among the original details which are disappearing in Oxenhope. An Article 4(2) Direction could be used to protect these original details.*

*Middle: A handful of vacant sites make a negative contribution to the conservation areas.*

*Bottom: Outbuildings are part of the historic fabric of Oxenhope.*

- Formation of a new window or door opening.
- Removal or replacement of any window or door.
- The replacement of painted finishes with stains on woodwork or joinery.
- The addition of renders or claddings.
- Painting previously unpainted stonework.
- Installation of satellite dish antennae.
- Addition of porches, carports and sheds.
- Changes of roof materials.
- Installation of roof lights.
- Demolition of, or alteration to front boundary walls or railings.

■ **The Reinstatement of Original Features** - Many buildings have had their original features replaced or repaired in a way which compromises the historic qualities and appearance of the building. The effect is particularly detrimental as many buildings form part of a group such as a short row or cluster or part of an attractive vista and this affects the integrity of their group value. In the case of isolated buildings, the removal of the original ornamentation such as timber bargeboards or leaded stained glass can rob the buildings of their individuality and contribution to the area's sense of place. Due to the irreplaceable value of original features and details, it is essential that the owners and occupiers of properties are provided with guidance and advice on the repair, restoration and upkeep of these features and details.

■ **Vacant Land** - there is a handful of vacant plots across the four conservation areas which were formerly built upon. These spaces tend to be hard in character, but are beginning to be colonised by self-sown scrub and provide a poor contrast to the surrounding buildings and green open spaces due to their neglected state. These sites, which include the site of Perseverance Mill, the space next to 2-4 Hebden Bridge Road and the site of Oxenhope Mill pond, should be the priority sites for any new development or other works which would improve their contribution to the conservation areas.



■ **Hard Voids** - There is a small number of spaces, particularly in Upper Town Conservation Area, which run against the prevailing character of Oxenhope as they are relatively large and open and often patchily surfaced with tarmac. Although a few of these spaces, such as the forecourts in front of The Bay Horse, The Lamb and at the centre of Leeming are historically important, their present character does not reflect this. The surfacing makes these spaces seem incongruous with the surrounding buildings. The resurfacing of these spaces with natural stone would be a good way of reinstating the character of these spaces. The visual impact of non-historic hard voids could be reduced through their enclosure with stone boundaries and/or reduction to a minimal area wherever this is practical and practicable, as Oxenhope is not characterised by hard open spaces along the roadside.

#### ■ **Outbuildings and Street Furniture**

- The need to preserve buildings and spaces that contribute to the special interest of the conservation areas should include the stone built outbuildings which are contemporary with the dwellings, farms and industrial complexes they are associated with. There are a fair number of privies, coal stores and other outbuildings which relate to past ways of life which are still in existence across Oxenhope. The majority are in a sound condition and there should be a presumption to ensure these buildings remain in a good state of repair and original appearance as they contribute to the fine grain of development in the conservation areas and subtly help to complete the image of the mill village. Of a similar townscape value are other small details such as stone troughs and iron gates and railings which complement the buildings and contribute to the street scene. The retention, proper maintenance, repair and treatment of these features should be a priority.

■ **Traffic Management** - Much of Oxenhope is served by narrow country lanes which are used by relatively low levels of traffic and hence do not require excessive engineering, traffic control measures

or signage which means they retain much of their original character. This does not become an issue until the built up core of Oxenhope is reached and particularly the engineering, barriers and signage around the junctions of Hebden Bridge-Keighley Road with Station Road and Cross Lane which is complicated further by the need to ensure that children can safely travel to and from the nearby Oxenhope First School. The installation of standard concrete bollards, the brightly painted street surfaces, concrete traffic islands, steel barriers and proliferation of signs are at odds with the general townscape. This area would benefit from a site-specific scheme which would ensure pedestrian and motorist safety while at the same time respect the character of Station Road Conservation Area and could provide the template for any future traffic management schemes in Oxenhope.

#### ■ **The Character of Open Spaces**

- It is considered that the character of some of the open spaces in the conservation areas is an important factor, particularly in Leeming and Upper Town Conservation Areas where the use of the majority of green spaces is pasture rather than domestic gardens, landscaping or particularly dense or substantial planting. The few overgrown and unmaintained spaces make a negative contribution to the conservation areas. Any changes which would compromise the character of the existing green spaces would have an impact on the overall character of the conservation areas, particularly where the spaces are intrinsic to an important view or vista, therefore there should be a presumption in upholding their prevailing pastoral character.

■ **Street Surfaces** - All four conservation areas contain unadopted side streets and lanes which are historically unsurfaced. To cope with vehicle traffic, the streets have been covered with loose gravel or partially tarmaced, while the lanes are also surfaced with gravel or in some instances surfaced with concrete. In some cases the tarmac surfacing is patchy and potholed and the gravel surfaces can be in a poor state. The condition of these surfaces and where the texture,

colour or material used is inappropriate, the street surfaces can cause an unwanted juxtaposition with the texture and colour of the sandstone buildings and boundary walls. The improvement of the appearance of these unadopted streets and lanes should be facilitated. Where historic street surfaces survive, it is unfortunately the case that their state of neglect has implications for pedestrian safety and a negative visual impact. The stone flagged pavements around some of the terraced streets are an example of the pedestrian surface drifting apart and vegetation pushing through the cracks. The latter is also commonly found in many of the settled surfaces around Oxenhope. Measures must be taken to ensure that natural stone surfaces are properly reinstated and are well maintained, as they constitute an important facet of the historic character of Oxenhope. In the interests of authenticity, these surfaces should conform to traditional layouts.

#### ■ **Historic Water Infrastructure**

- The draft assessment identifies the mill ponds and related weirs and sluices in the three Oxenhope Conservation Areas and Leeming Reservoir and its related infrastructure as important water features. The large ponds associated with Lowertown Shed and Oxenhope Mill have already been lost, changing the character of the built-up area, while the pond at Brooks Meeting Mill is somewhat overgrown and one of the ponds at Bull Hill appears to have been drained (though this might be for valid reasons). The ponds at Station Road and Charles Court offer great amenity through their management and maintenance and all of the remaining ponds should offer a similar level of amenity and remain a permanent part of the townscape. The original 1870s stone weirs and overflow channel at Leeming Reservoir are of interest in their own right and form an unusual juxtaposition with the well-established vegetation along the southern side of the reservoir. The weirs and overflow channel are still working elements of the reservoir yet a profuse amount of vegetation is growing between the stones of these channels and is a cause for



concern. This historic fabric should be better maintained. The insertion of a concrete slab bridge with standard steel balustrades bolted on provides a poor contrast high quality work of the gritstone channel and the walls around the reservoir as well as the ornament of the nearby valve shaft housing. Future changes to the reservoir area should take into account the group value of the original stone built elements, which require better maintenance.

■ **Pro-active Planning** - market forces have perpetually determined Oxenhope's character. At present, the village is a much less favourable location for industry and commerce than it once was, yet at the same time there is strong pressure to build houses or convert buildings to dwellings given its location, village spirit and high quality environment. As a result a few mills have been converted to dwellings following a period of redundancy and unfortunately the entire Holme Mill and Lowertown Shed complexes have been demolished and the site used for housing. Two mills remain in industrial use and another is currently vacant. Given their value in terms of the sense of place as well conservation and townscape terms the production of a strategy which identifies



*Overgrown overflow channel at Leeming Reservoir.*

the key buildings on each site and important details and suggests economically viable uses for floor space and the space about buildings which are appropriate to the village of Oxenhope. In the event of a key mill complex becoming vacant, the strategy could be used to give potential occupiers or developers certainty about how they could appropriately use the site, thus minimising the time the buildings stand empty and neglected. In this vain, the pro-active planning of key sites could be seen as a logical progression of the Oxenhope Village Design Statement.

■ **Stone Boundary Walls** - These define public and private spaces, but some dry stone walls, particularly those enclosing the fields along West Shaw Lane and the lower portion of Denholme Road have collapsed in places and are frequently little more than two or three courses in height. This is a symptom of the disuse or under use of these spaces and their rebuilding would ensure they made a positive contribution.

## How You or Your Organisation Can Become Involved

This is a summary of the draft conservation area assessment of the Conservation Areas in Oxenhope and Leeming and both positive and negative comments on its contents are invited, which will be taken into account in the production of the final version of the text. It is important that everyone who uses the space for living, working or leisure has the opportunity to comment on issues that are of concern, as it is they who will be most affected by conservation area designation. Conservation areas are not just about the condition of a roof or the cost of repairs, but what makes an area unique and function effectively. Once the special character of the area has been

clearly defined, the Council will use its powers to maintain what is important and encourage the enhancement of the area's special interest. However, the responsibility also falls on local residents and users to respect the character of the place when carrying out work to properties and spaces within its confines.

## Further Information

This is an abridged version of the full draft conservation area assessment. A copy of the full text is available for inspection at Keighley Library, Denholme Library and Keighley Planning Office as well as the Council's website at:

[http://www.bradford.gov.uk/council/planning/heritage/cons\\_assess.asp](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/council/planning/heritage/cons_assess.asp)

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