

2 Part Two



TOWNSCAPE, LANDSCAPE AND SUB AREAS

2.1 The boundary of the Whaley Bridge Conservation Area has been drawn to include primarily linear development from the Canal Wharf in the north through to Horwich End in the south (see Map 1). The boundary also takes in the commercial town centre, early and later 18th and 19th century residential development, along Old Road, areas of open land and Bings Wood. Due to the topography of the Conservation Area views within it and views to the surrounding countryside contribute immensely to its character.

2.2 This mixture of building types and landscapes are quite dramatically different in character and appearance. These give rise to a number of sub-areas within the Conservation Area. Each of these merit separate assessment in terms of townscape quality and character. Although their edges overlap they are generally defined as shown on map 2. Maps 3 – 8 have been included to illustrate the notable townscape and landscape features of each area.

Area 1 - Canal Basin

2.3 This sub-area concentrates primarily on the canal basin and its surrounds and is characterised by a relatively level topography. This area lies to the north of the conservation area and is contained by the Jodrell Arms and station car park on the western side, and the River Goyt to the east. The focus of this area is the canal basin and canal warehouse. Surrounding this is mid to late 19th century residential development along Bingswood Avenue and George Street, and earlier commercial and residential mixed development along Canal Street, Johnson Street, Chapel Street and Bridge Street.

2.4 Predominantly the buildings within this area are constructed from coursed gritstone with a mixture of slate and stone roofs. With the exception of the land given over to the canal basin and Borough Council car park, the area is a mixture of high density, two storey commercial and residential buildings. Primarily, the residential areas are contained within several small terraced streets namely; Bingswood Avenue, Bingswood Road and George Street whilst properties located along Canal Street, Johnson Street, Chapel Street and Bridge Street are a mixture of commercial and residential uses.

2.5 Canal Street leads down to a lower level, from its junction with the busy Buxton Road, to the quieter canal basin area. Buildings to the right and a high retaining stone wall to the left focus views on the canal basin and warehouse. On entering this area the landscape changes dramatically to give open views of the warehouse, wharf area and Bingswood Avenue. An important view of the frontage of Canal Street is obtained when looking down from Buxton Road. This represents one of the first impressions of Whaley Bridge on entering the town centre.

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Picture 19 Commercial and residential properties along Canal Street



Picture 20 Cottages at the lower end of Canal Street as the area begins to open up to the canal basin

2.6 The canal warehouse is grade II* listed. It clearly illustrates the historical importance of this area and the role it has played in shaping development within the town centre. It is dated 1832 and constructed from coursed gritstone with a Welsh blue slate roof. The large openings on the basin side have rusticated reveals with keystones.



Picture 21 Detail showing stone door surround



Picture 22 Front elevation of the warehouse building

2.7 Railway tracks to the front of the warehouse are still in existence (although now covered by tarmac) and provide evidence of the links to the Cromford and High Peak Railway. These tracks also run down Bingswood Avenue. There is also a railway bridge over the River Goyt from the Canal Basin to the industrial estate. This was built to take coal to the power station on the estate and adds to the industrial archaeology of the area. As such, these should be preserved where possible and incorporated into any future enhancement schemes.

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Picture 23 Visible railway tracks along Bingswood Avenue



Picture 24 Further railway tracks on Bingswood Avenue

2.8 Across from the canal warehouse sit the associated canal cottages and adjacent stable block. These two buildings, both listed, are constructed in random coursed gritstone rubble with a painted finish and Welsh blue slate roofs. The cottages display early 19th century features in terms of their surviving window style (sliding sash with each sash subdivided into 8 panes) and framed four panelled doors. The stable building (Outram House dated 1832) has been significantly altered to the ground floor. This building was once associated with the Cromford & High Peak Railway.



Picture 25 The canal cottages



Picture 26 Outram House

2.9 These buildings display and provide evidence of the historical industrial development within Whaley Bridge. Together they make a positive and significant contribution to the character of the conservation area and this sub-area in particular.

2.10 The canal itself leads from the canal warehouse northwards up to the weir where the boundary of the conservation area stops. The canal is fed by the reservoirs at Combs and Toddbrook through its southern extension and through the transhipment warehouse. Land surrounding the canal area has been grassed and landscaped with informal tree planting. A setted area to the west of the warehouse exists but suffers from informal parking.

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2.11 A major negative aspect to this sub-area is the through route used by heavy goods traffic to Bingswood Industrial Estate. This access goes along Canal Street, the canal basin area and then through Bingswood Avenue, an attractive late 19th Century row of terraced cottages. The terrace is constructed in coursed gritstone with slate roofs. The roofline to this terrace is important due to the retention of all the surviving stone chimney stacks which unusually are square and positioned forward of the ridge. The terrace is fortunate in retaining original joinery details to a significant number of properties. Each property retains a small forecourt garden, originally privy area, contained by a neat privet hedge, with flagged footpaths leading to a stone threshold at the front door. Originally a setted road would have run the length of the terrace. This has now been covered in macadam but the condition of the road surface is very poor. The redirection of traffic to the industrial estate away from this area would significantly enhance the area and surrounds.



Picture 27 well preserved cottages along Bingswood Avenue



Picture 28 Chimney stack on Bingswood Avenue

2.12 Walking back along the route of the old railway line towards the bow string girder bridge, the area offers rear views of development along Chapel Street, Johnson Street and Bridge Street. Here you can see earlier forms of development mixed in with late 19th Century small terraced cottages, shops and public houses. Cottages would have originally shared toilet and washing facilities. A notable shopfront is 1 Bridge Street (sub-area 2) where a surviving Edwardian shopfront exists intact. Another fine example of a surviving shopfront is that located on the end of the George Street terrace facing up Bridge Street. There appears to be no consistency in the style of door surrounds within this sub-area notable examples of elaborate stone arched surrounds are found on Chapel Street and Bridge Street.

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Picture 29 The Navigation Inn located on Johnson Street



Picture 30 View from Chapel Street towards Bridge Street



Picture 31 Shop front at 1 Bridge Street

2.13 Both Johnson Street and Chapel Street have the potential to be significantly enhanced by reinstating natural surface materials. The current condition of the tarmaced surface here is poor.

2.14 Buildings along George Street and Bingswood Road are again built in the local style and materials. However, few retain traditional joinery details. The George Street terrace was developed in two phases with the earlier development located at the eastern end. Much smaller and simple stone door surrounds and uncoursed random gritstone give evidence to this. Both terraces open onto the back of the pavement and onto a small road. A high stone wall with half round coping stones, originally the boundary wall of the Goyt Mill site, runs the entire length of George Street. The unadopted road surface here, originally in setts, but now tarmac, is in a very poor condition. The terrace overlooks the former site of Goyt Mill (now residential development). Bingswood Road is a mid 19th century terrace with splayed stone lintels to doors and windows. The terrace also contains a central passageway to the rear yards. A larger property is located at the western end of Bingswood Road. This has an unusual rolled stone lintel over the entrance door. It is probable that this property was once a shop, as a previous larger window opening can be seen in the pattern and appearance of the stonework.

2.15 Canal Street, as its current name suggests, leads to the canal basin from Buxton Road and used to be part of the turnpike route. Properties along this route are in a mixed use of residential and commercial. Again the properties are in the local building materials and are of a similar size and proportions to buildings nearby. The exception is No. 7 and 8 (Loyalty Place) - a rather grander property constructed from ashlar stone with a parapet, projecting string courses and larger openings. To the front there is a small stone boundary wall with railings. Adjacent to this property is 9 Canal Street a large double fronted property in coursed gritstone. The property is now somewhat neglected but could, with sympathetic repairs and reinstatement, make a significant contribution to this area.

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Picture 32 9 Canal Street



**Picture 33 Loyalty Place,
Canal Street**

2.16 Unfortunately the visual appearance of this area is somewhat blighted by the Borough Council car park, located between Bingswood Avenue and George Street, on the eastern edge of the Conservation Area.

2.17 The Jodrell Arms public house and railway station mark the western boundary of the sub-area. Together, they are its highest point. The 1857 station is situated in the centre of the community, linking together the commercial aspect of the town and the historic area surrounding the canal basin. It retains a number of original joinery features including its surviving sash windows. There is also a good cast-iron footbridge that is particularly valuable as it is part of a sequence with identical examples at Furness Vale and New Mills Newtown stations.



Picture 34 The cast iron footbridge that spans the railtrack

2.18 The Jodrell Arms public house (1800 Grade II listed) forms an impressive and important focal point within the town. By virtue of its scale and height it provides an impressive entrance into the town centre as well as being a vantage point for views towards the Bings and New Horwich escarpments. Formerly known as the Cock Hotel, it was marked on the 1870 Ordnance Survey map as the site of the Mechanics Institute. Some local people suggest that the imposing entrance facing the exit from the railway station was once the Mechanics Institute entrance. Others suggest that it was provided for those locals who could afford to travel regularly to Manchester. The building is of an irregular plan of coursed gritstone with a render finish and three gables to the front. The

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forecourt, whilst used for parking, has been enhanced with natural surface materials and provides an attractive and appropriate setting for the buildings. More recent works on the building confirm that it was constructed and extended around a more earlier structure.



Picture 35 The Jodrell Arms with its setted forecourt



Picture 36 The highly decorative and imposing western entrance to the Jodrell Arms

Area 2 - Market Street

2.19 Sub-area 2 is located to the north of the conservation area and predominantly follows a linear route encompassing development along Market Street and Buxton Road until reaching the Whaley Bridge Uniting Church and Sunday School. This area, like Sub-area 1, is relatively flat and contains the commercial centre of Whaley Bridge.

2.20 Development within the sub-area is characteristically high density with a mixture of uses usually associated with town centres – commercial, public, leisure and few residential cottages. Predominately, the shops are small independent retailers. Although most development is of two storeys, there are several large two storey and three storey buildings located along the central area of Market Street.

2.21 The Market Street area primarily developed during the late 19th Century, along the then main route through Whaley Bridge. However, there are a few exceptions – the White Hart Public House dated 1734 and part of the Whaley Bridge Uniting Church dated 1821 are earlier development and both listed buildings.

2.22 As with the other sub-areas building materials are of gritstone with slate roofs. It is also worth noting that there are areas of surviving stone flags to one or two of the private forecourts along Market Street. These should be protected and repaired wherever possible.

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Picture 37 A stone flagged forecourt fronting 12 Market Street

2.23 It is this sub-area where there are differences in the detailing to the stonework and roofscapes of the buildings. Examples of this are seen on the elevation of the Railway Hotel – tooled gritstone with neo classical columns and door surrounds; the Mechanics Institute – constructed in ashlar stone with decorative window heads and door panels and a small slate turret to the front hipped roof ; the former bank premises which turns the corner of Market Street and Wharf Road – constructed from pink gritstone with decorative ashlar stonework around the entrance and stone detailed arched window openings and Vernon House – with ashlar neo classical columns and distinctively designed stone parapet wall.

2.24 Significant buildings within this sub-area are as follows:

Railway Hotel – This is a large two storey building erected in 1857 in decorative gritstone with traditional joinery details. The building occupies a prominent location being at the junction of Market Street and Reservoir Road. It has a large projecting timber gutter resting on stone corbels with dentils.

Mechanics Institute – Large imposing two storey building reflecting its importance to the public with its ashlar decorative frontage and turreted roofline. Dated from the late 19th century, the building is now home to the Whaley Bridge Town Council which rents some of the space from the Institute. Because of its use by the Town Council, the local library and as public meeting space, it forms the focal point of the Whaley Bridge community.

The Former Bank Building – This is a large and prominent two storey building with a splayed frontage and hipped roofline. It stands out due to its construction from unusually pink coloured gritstone. Originally built as the Post Office.

The Village Store – This occupies a prominent position sitting at the curve where Market Street meets Buxton Road and the crossing point of the Goyt. Built originally as the Co-operative Store.

The Whaley Bridge Uniting Church and Sunday School – This is a large imposing complex dated from the early 19th Century and is constructed of coursed gritstone with slate roof. More recently it has had a number of modern additions.

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Picture 38 Whaley Bridge Uniting Church

32 – 38 Market Street – This building is three storeys high and one of the tallest along Market Street marking the entrance to the commercial centre. It contains a fine example of an original Victorian shopfront.

The White Hart – Dating from 1734, and adjacent to the 1724 turnpike route to the east, is constructed from gritstone and it now has an incised render façade. Some of its traditional joinery details are retained and it occupies a significant position on the bend of Market Street.



Picture 39 The White Hart public house

Vernon House – It occupies a prominent position across from the White Hart and is constructed from ashlar gritstone in neo-classical style with an unusual roofline. This was built as an annex to the Co-operative shop as the millinery and drapery department in the early part of the 20th century.

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Picture 40 The Mechanics Institute



Picture 41 34 Market Street with a surviving traditional shopfront on the ground floor



Picture 42 The former bank building

2.25 Most of the buildings within the sub-area make a positive contribution to the conservation area, some more than others, as identified above. There are few areas which are detrimental to the character of the conservation area and take the form of unsympathetic shopfronts and signage along Market Street. A reasonably buoyant economic market ensures that there are still a number of well maintained surviving shopfronts.

2.26 Behind the eastern side of Market Street is located the fire station. This area, although well screened from view, detracts from the character of the conservation area.

Area 3 - Whaley Lane and Reservoir Road

2.27 Sub-area 3 forms the north west section of the conservation area. It is contained by Reservoir Road to the south and Whaley Lane to the north. This sub-area is entered from under the railway bridge, which forms the eastern boundary. It is a purely residential area with pockets of medium to high density development. Primarily the buildings are constructed in the local building materials of coursed gritstone with slate, and in some instances stone roofs. Predominantly the buildings are constructed in two storey terraces, but there are a number of large individual properties located at the lower end of Whaley Lane and the eastern end of Reservoir Road.

2.28 The topography of this area is quite dramatic with Reservoir Road at the lower level and the western end of Whaley Lane significantly higher. This topography lends itself to intriguing views within the conservation area and also quite dramatic long distant views to the Bings and New Horwich escarpment.

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Picture 43 View from Reservoir Road with surrounding hills in the distance

2.29 On entering sub-area 3 the eye is led immediately along Reservoir Road. This road, as named, leads to Toddbrook reservoir and consists of terraced properties and two large detached buildings on its northern side. There is no development to the south. The buildings occupy an elevated position enjoying long distant views across the valley and over the rooftops of the commercial properties along Market Street.

2.30 The first two properties date from the mid 19th century and are similar in size and style. They are well preserved, double fronted, two storey buildings in coursed gritstone with stone roofs. They are both fortunate in retaining traditional joinery details and decoratively carved door heads and surrounds. They both have small forecourt gardens contained within stone and brick walls.



Picture 44 1 Reservoir Road



Picture 45 3 Reservoir Road



Picture 46 Terraces along Reservoir Road

2.31 Numbers 5 – 19 are small mid 19th Century, two storey terraced cottages occupying an elevated position. They are set back from the road frontage behind small forecourt gardens. Steps at either end of the terrace lead to the front entrances. With one exception, each cottage retains its original stone roof and stack with timber guttering on stone corbels and decorative stone door surrounds. Only one property still retains traditional joinery details in the form of 8 over 8 sliding sash windows.

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2.32 A significant and particularly well preserved terrace is that abutting the edge of the Conservation Area. It was built in 1896 by local architect Charles W Johnstone, using materials recovered from houses lower down Reservoir Road, which were demolished to make way for the new road. The terrace is made up of three well preserved large double fronted properties, each contained behind small boundary walls with railings and forecourt gardens. With gables fronting the street, they are of an unusual style. They possess original joinery details along with quite intricately detailed timber eaves and gutter details. The roofs are of blue slate to the front with clay decorative ridge tiles and stone slates to the rear elevation. Reservoir Road is also fortunate in retaining stone kerbs and several steep stone and setted footpaths that lead up to the higher level of Orchard Road and Whaley Lane.



Picture 47 21 - 25 Reservoir Road - a particularly well preserved row of buildings



Picture 48 Stone steps leading from Reservoir Road up to Orchard Road

2.33 Further along Reservoir Road the conservation area comes to an end. Here a small footpath, Cow Lane, leads up to Orchard Road and Whaley Lane in turn. This footpath, once setted, has now been covered in macadam and slopes gently up behind the terraces on Reservoir Road. From this area there are views of the surrounding countryside, along with glimpses of the back of Reservoir Road, where the properties have almost been constructed into the hill. Further along, the footpath leads past a small row of terraced properties (Orchard Road) and several larger properties to meet Whaley Lane. To the front of Orchard Road is a small area of overgrown landscaping, which in its present form detracts from the character of this part of the conservation area.

2.34 Whaley Lane was the original route through Whaley Bridge and over the River Goyt. When the railway was constructed in 1857 the level of the road was dramatically lowered. This has resulted in high stone retaining boundary walls on either side of the road. This lends a great sense of enclosure and privacy to Whaley Lane which is helped by mature tree cover. An alternative explanation for the origins of Whaley Lane's present appearance is that it is an ancient hollow way which used to lead smoothly down the hill to the south of Bridge Street. This ancient feature was disrupted by the construction of the railway and the turnpike road (A5004).

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Picture 49 A view from the bottom of Whaley Lane showing the high stone boundary walls and mature tree cover

2.35 Predominantly, the buildings along Whaley Lane consist of several groups of terraced houses dated 1894 and 1896, occupying elevated positions. The southern side has a few larger detached dwellings in their own grounds heavily treed and hidden from view. There are a few surviving joinery details on the terraces and in places the prominent rooflines have been altered by the insensitive introduction of large dormer windows.

Area 4 - Old Road

2.36 Sub-area 4 forms the central section of the Whaley Bridge conservation area. This sub-area boundary follows a linear route along Old Road, taking in development either side, and off-shoots of development along Bings Road, New Horwich Road and Rock Bank. Older residents of the town know the section of Old Road, from the mine ventilation shaft to the New Inn (now Nimbus Antiques) as “Top Level”, a title associated with the mining industry.

2.37 Old Road forms the western boundary and its raised level gives dramatic views over the conservation area and towards the Memorial Park, Toddbrook Reservoir, Black Knob Hill and Taxal Edge. The eastern boundary is primarily built development flanked by rising open countryside. The topography of this area is one that gently slopes and curves along Old Road and rises more dramatically up Bings Road and New Horwich Road. In fact, the steepness of the first section of Rock Bank required stone tracks to assist traction for the horse drawn carts. These survive and should be kept wherever possible as a remnant of this earlier means of transport.

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Picture 50 View along Old Road at its western edge



Picture 51 Cart tracks still visible on Rock Bank



Picture 52 Views from Old Road across the valley

2.38 The area is characterised by medium to high density residential properties, primarily contained on the eastern side of Old Road with several commercial properties located at the base of Old Road (including several fine examples of surviving Victorian shopfronts). The building types are a mixture of late 19th century terraced cottages interspersed with older terraces developed directly on the road frontage. The later properties tend to be located at the northern end of Old Road.



Picture 53 Traditional shopfront details



Picture 54 Old Road/Buxton Road junction

2.39 Again the materials of development are the same as the rest of the conservation area – i.e. coursed gritstone with slate and stone roofs. Unfortunately, few original joinery details survive although the use of PVC-U has been kept to a minimum.

2.40 The changing topography of this area results in terraced development running up the hills and being positioned in an elevated position, behind small forecourt gardens and contained by high stone boundary walls. Even though development within the sub area is primarily of two storeys these elevated positions give the sense of much larger development flanking the eastern boundary.

2.41 All the buildings contained within this sub area make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area and there are a number of well preserved listed buildings clustered together near the junction of Old Road and Bings Road, such as;

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19 – 23 Old Road – These buildings were formerly late 18th century farmhouse and outbuildings, now dwellings, in two storeys with large quoin stones. These buildings are constructed from gritstone with slate roofs.

40 Old Road – This building is an 18th century weaver's cottage. It is constructed from coursed gritstone, now painted, and is of three storeys with a slate roof and small windows (mullions now removed).

42 Old Road – This house of two storeys is dated 1746 on the door lintel and constructed from gritstone.

Disused Colliery Air Shaft Tower – Bings Road – This disused tower dates from the mid 19th century and is constructed in red sandstone and provides a prominent local landmark reflecting Whaley Bridge's links with the coal industry.



Picture 55 40 and 42 Old Road



Picture 56 The disused colliery air shaft at the start of Bings Road



Picture 57 19 - 23 Old Road

2.42 There is little in the way of landscaped open areas. But the distant views of the open countryside, and the area's close proximity to it, give this area a more rural open feel, acting in a transitional role from the town centre to the open countryside beyond.

2.43 Features of the area consist of lengths of stone boundary walls and small pockets of stone kerbs and setted areas, located along Old Road, Bings Road and New Horwich Road. It is the relationship of the built form and the countryside that forms an integral part of the character of this part of the conservation area.

Area 5 - Horwich End

2.44 This sub-area is located at the southern end of the conservation area and contains the southern section of Old Road, and Buxton Road, at its junction with Lower Macclesfield Road. This area also contains the dismantled Cromford and High Peak railway line, now a linear footpath (Linear Park). The Linear Park runs parallel with Market Street and Buxton Road on the east side of the town centre. This area is relatively flat with the exception of Old Road, as it slopes gently

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down to meet the junction with Chapel Road. Old Road offers distant views across the conservation area, whilst the Buxton Road junction, at the lower level, offers short views within the conservation area.

2.45 There is a mixture of building uses within this area including residential commercial and leisure. These are predominantly two storey and constructed from the local building materials. Although mainly medium density, lower density development surrounds the southern section of Old Road. A notable group of buildings is The Carrs – grade II listed and the smaller terraced cottages located at Old Road’s junction with Chapel Road – also listed.



Picture 58 55 - 63 Old Road

2.46 The building types surrounding the junction are predominantly commercial with several well preserved shopfronts dating from the late 19th century. Along Buxton Road and opposite Carrs Field several earlier cottages are located dating back to the early 19th century evidenced by the small and simple door surrounds. Holy Trinity Church has recently been included upon the statutory list of listed buildings on account of its architectural quality (Free Gothic Revival style by Currey and Thompson, 1903 - 05).



Picture 59 Development surrounding Horwich End junction



Picture 60 The White Horse pub at Horwich End



Picture 61 Holy Trinity Church on Buxton Road

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2.47 This area contains an area of open land known as Carrs field. This site is a relatively small area of rough open land with informal tree planting. It lies to the west of the Linear Park and the immediate east of Buxton Road. The site is relatively flat but located at a lower level to Old Road and Chapel Road. This site, by virtue of its appearance and nature, contrasts with the surrounding development contributing positively to the character of this sub area.



Picture 62 Carrs Field

2.48 This sub-area also includes a section of the dismantled Cromford and High Peak railway line (Linear Park), now a footpath leading from the canal to Horwich End. This footpath skirts the town centre at a higher level and in some places gives magnificent views of the surrounding hills. It is also important in providing evidence of the historical development and links with Whaley Bridge's industrial origins.

Area 6 - Bings Wood

2.49 This sub area contains the ancient woodland known as Bings Wood. It is already protected by a Tree Preservation Order and plays an important part as a backdrop to the setting of the town centre. It contains a good selection of broad leaf mature trees.



Picture 63 Bings Wood