

BIRSTALL

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL



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1. INTRODUCTION

This document analyses the Birstall Conservation Area. Birstall is a fine example of an early Market Town which has evolved into a small textile town with its own identity, and not under the shadow of another place.

Kirklees is rich in heritage, in recognition of this there are currently 60 conservation areas in Kirklees which help to preserve and enhance the quality of life in the borough. Conservation in Kirklees has acted as a catalyst for regeneration, helping to diversify the economic base and enhance the character and appearance of the areas, ensuring the heritage of Kirklees is both a historic and an economic asset.

The area of Birstall Market Place was originally designated as a conservation area in 1998 in recognition of its *'special architectural or historic interest. The character of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance'* now and for future generations. Conservation areas are recognised for the contribution they make to cultural heritage and economic well being of the country and to the locality. The Conservation Area now extends to the Kirkgate area where listed buildings such as St. Peters Church and the former National School House buildings provide important historic and cultural focal points and up to the Mount which leads to a group of converted farm buildings which date from the 17th Century.

An area with conservation area status imposes a duty on Kirklees Council to preserve and enhance the quality and character of the conservation area and to undertake a Conservation Area Appraisal which this document comprises. English Heritage has produced guidance on preparing conservation area appraisals, which has formed the basis of this document, in conjunction with local criteria and policies contained in PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment.

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'In considering further designations authorities should bear in mind that it is important that conservation areas are seen to justify their status and that the concept is not devalued by the designation of areas lacking any special interest.' (Para. 4.3. PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment)

Designation as a conservation area strengthens existing development policy in the Kirklees Unitary Development Plan (UDP) to preserve and enhance the appearance and character of the conservation area. Supplementary planning guidance will be developed for conservation areas to further preserve and enhance the quality of the environment. The planning system in England is currently undergoing reform where a Local Development Framework will replace the Unitary Development Plan for Kirklees. The LDF will include a core strategy to set out the key elements of the planning framework for the area. This may set criteria for identifying locations and priorities for area action plans to be prepared. Area action plans, covering conservation areas, should set out policies and proposals for action to preserve and enhance the area, including defining areas where specific conservation measures are proposed and areas which will be subject to specific controls over development. This conservation area appraisal should be used as a basis for an action plan in conjunction with the LDF.

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2. LOCATION, SETTING AND POPULATION

2.1 Location and Context

Birstall is located in the north-west of Kirklees. The village lies between the Huddersfield to Leeds Road (A62) and the Bradford to Dewsbury Road (A635). Birstall is approximately 2 miles from the neighbouring town of Batley and is 1 mile from junction 27 of the M62 and roughly 6 miles south west of Leeds.

Birstall is one of four villages which constitute the township of Gomersall; the other three villages are Great Gomersall, Little Gomersall and Birkenshaw.



Map 2: Location of Birstall

The existing Conservation Area is centred at the Market Place in Birstall and is proposed to be extended to the Kirkgate and the Mount area of the village. This can be seen on map 1.

2.2 General Character and Plan Form

The historic street pattern, the origins of which partly date from Roman times, still prevails. This street pattern is an essential component of Birstall conservation area and should be preserved in its present form.

In the early 18th Century Birstall evolved from a linear settlement to a compact nucleus due to the Industrial Revolution. The nucleus was in a triangle formation which was created by the High Street, down into

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Church Street and on to Low Lane. The centre of this triangle was Middlegate.

Birstall also has many snickets which characterise the area and link one street to another.

2.3 Landscape Setting and Topography

Birstall is a settlement located on the foothills of the Pennines lying in the Coal Measure section of the Carboniferous series which are predominantly a shale, mudstone and sandstone series.

As with all settlements the localised topography of the area has had a major influence on how the settlement has formed and evolved over time. In the case of Birstall, the settlement is located within a small subsidiary valley of the Spen Valley, with the vast majority of the settlement including its historical nucleus situated on the steep south west facing slope. On the opposite side, the landscape is not as urban, and is characterised by Green Belt land and small farmsteads. At the base flowing in a southerly direction is a small beck which is regarded to be the stimulus to the growth of Birstall, as it provided the early industries in the area with a much needed power source.

Originally the area around Birstall was covered by forests, moorland and marsh. According to H. C. Craddock, a former vicar of St. Peters Church who researched the history of Birstall Parish, *“the forests contained oaks, ashes, willows, poplars, birches, limes, hazels, elms, thorns and hollies.”*

2.4 Population

The 2001 census places the population of the Birstall and Birkenshaw ward at 17,312 with the age demographic of the area closely resembling that of the Kirklees Metropolitan District, with the majority of residents aged between 20 and 44 (33.99%).

Looking at the ethnic composition of area, Birstall has a dominant white population (97.55%) which is significantly higher than the district figure (85.61%).

The area has an overwhelming number of owner occupiers (75.27% in total) composed from outright owners (30.01%), owners with a mortgage or loan (44.99%) and shared ownership (0.27%).

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3. HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

3.1 Origins, development and archaeology of the Birstall settlement

The origins of Birstall are unclear although a prehistoric trackway is known to have come into Birstall from the direction of Leeds and Drighlington, this track followed the line of Low Lane and past the site of St. Peters Church and towards Cleckheaton. During the Roman times this track way was superimposed upon by the Romans and was used as the main route from York to Chester. Birstall is known to have been a missionary centre in the 7th Century and it is thought that some sort of fort or defensive settlement was built on high ground around the area of the present Parish Church. The area was known as Burg-steall, in Saxon this translates as a protected or fortified area. The Angles then created an early settlement in 450 AD after the Romans left Britain, they cleared areas of forest and fenced off areas to create their homesteads.

Even though it is believed that there was an established settlement at the site of Birstall, the Domesday Book, which was written in 1086, made no reference to it. There are at least two reasons for its omission, the first is that by the time the survey was being conducted the area had not fully recovered from the aftermath of William I's sequestration of the North, and secondly because Birstall was not classified as a township in its own right. Consequently the Domesday Book made no reference to St Peters Church, and therefore it is debatable as to whether a church existed in the Anglo-Saxon period. Local archaeologist Neil Cookson, states that "*whilst a church may have not been present, the area that St Peters occupies may have been a religious site*". This statement is supported by an Anglo-Saxon stone that was found in the church yard, which can now be found in the northern aisle of the new church.

The earliest a church building existed in Birstall has been dated to around the first half of the twelfth century. This building in comparison to the one in present situ was small, constructed from local sandstone and built with a tower, a nave, and a chancel with an apse at the eastern end. A vast amount of the original form of the building has now been lost through successive re-building works, but the first and second stages of the tower still exist, providing the important evidence of the church's early role. Who built the first church has been subject to much debate and discussion. It has been suggested that the De Tilly family were responsible for its construction, as they were the lords of the Manor. Recent research and investigation has uncovered that at the time they may not have been in absolute possession of the Manor. The consensus

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is that whoever was in possession of the Manor of Gomersal was responsible for the construction of St Peter's Church.

A more important and intriguing question is why the location of St Peters Church was so far removed from the Village of Birstall. The location could have been chosen due to the continuous use of the area since pre-Roman times. It had also previously been a religious site before the church was built. There are a number of small streams and gullies in this area which made it an excellent location for creating consecrated grounds.

The area which surrounds St Peters developed into a small settlement, not only as a location for the church, but also a mill pool, small dwellings, inns, a school, a rectory house and rectory farm. And whilst today the area does feel slightly disjointed from the current nucleus of twenty first century Birstall, there is still an essence of community with a distinct identity.

Whilst early proof of the De Tilly ownership remains speculative, it is unquestionable that by the late thirteenth century the family did hold possession of the Manor of Gomersal, and were involved in many of the important dealings of St Peter's. By the late 1280's the De Tillys obtained a royal licence to donate their rights of patronage to the Prior and Convent of Nostell Priory near Wakefield. This was then followed up by granting Nostell all rights in the church and the rectory, permanently.

The fabric of early Birstall and its surrounding areas changed during the 1300s, during the wars of Scottish independence. These conflicts saw the Scots raid as far south as Pontefract, and establish an area of shelter close to Birstall. Their fifteen day temporary settlement within the area had a detrimental effect on the local environment, with Birstall and its surrounding townships ruined, and many of the locals slaughtered.

A further historical event which dramatically contributed towards the shaping of the English landscape on a whole was the dissolution of the monasteries between 1538 and 1541. In the case of Birstall the dissolution had more of an effect on land ownership than the physical environment. The dealings that the De Tillys had negotiated with Nostell Priory regarding granting Nostell all rights in St Peter's and the rectory, subjected the church's lands during the dissolution to be disposed by Henry VIII as he wished. This allowed Birstall Church lands being sold to Trinity College, Cambridge and by the 1540s they were the principal land owners of the area. They still owned land east of the Nova Beck up until the 1830s.



*St. Peters Church 1933 (Source :
H.C. Craddock)*

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By 1577, Birstall had risen in status to warrant an entry on Saxton's map of Yorkshire, and was followed up by an inclusion in Wenceslaus Holler's map in 1644. Its inclusion in Holler's 1644 map is seen to be important because this map, whilst derived from Saxton's, also included roads. In relation to Birstall the importance of this is that this map shows that one of the two roads linking Halifax with York passed via Birstall.

The volatility of war once again had a disruptive effect on Birstall during the Civil War of 1642 -1651. As the settlement had become more established and had risen in status, the effects that the disruption caused were probably more magnified than before. The arrival of the Royalist Army under the Earl of Newcastle placed demands upon both the local population and the environment. The soldiers required shelter and food supplies as did their horses. Consequently the food stocks diminished and the ensuing harvest was threatened with the turmoil of war, and local labour became scarce due to army recruitment.

According to suggestions made from the hearth tax of 1663, the population of Gomersal, which included Birstall, was 650 people, an indication that the area was mainly characterised by agricultural activities with a small cottage industry in woollen cloth making.

Further indication towards Birstall's development came from John Ogilby 1670's survey of roads. In his survey Ogilby describes Birstall as "*a village of two furlongs*" and highlights a road running from the centre of Birstall towards Bradford. Furthermore the entry included what appears to be the settlements first physical description, describing Birstall as being a compact but slightly linear settlement astride the highlighted road.

By 1720 Birstall's status and population was growing, though in relative terms it was still quite small. John Warburton's 1720 map of Yorkshire not only showed Birstall's clear independence from other settlements, but a clear pattern of local settlement hierarchy became more apparent, with Birstall being identifiably one of the main settlements in the area, and notably being much larger than Batley.

Between the publication of Warburton's 1720 map of Yorkshire and the 1772 Yorkshire Map produced by Thomas Jefferys, Birstall had attracted another main route to link Huddersfield with Leeds. Through the comparison between these two maps Birstall's continuing separateness and increase in urban growth is clearly visible, emphasising that the settlement was not evolving as a consequence of another place but was flourishing of its own accord.

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Most of Birstall's growth, like with many other British settlements, occurred from the turn of the nineteenth century. Baines directory published in 1822/3, states the towns population as being 2542. But by 1838, White's directory refers to the population for the entire township rising to 6189. The population growth was catalysed by the onset of the Industrial Revolution and it was during this period that Birstall ceased to be an agricultural and pastoral area and became an integral part of the woollen district and was described as being a large clothing village. Birstall had relatively few formal mills built, instead the domestic textile scene dominated. This prompted some commentators in the late 18th Century to comment, *"It looks strange that Birstall, so well situated as it is, should have so few mills and most of its inhabitants have to go to other places to work."*

The woollen and textile industry grew rapidly between the late eighteenth century and the early twentieth century, this can be seen on map 3 as the village expanded to provide for the growing population. It was during this time that Birstall shed its linear composition and presented a considerable and quite compact nucleus with a couple of offshoots, which can be seen in Thorpe's 1822 map. Also clearly identifiable are places such as Drighlington, Birkenshaw, Gomersal, Heckmondwyke and Batley appearing on the map as almost mere satellites of a growing Birstall.

The main settlement area was triangular in shape, bounded by High Street, Church Street and Low Lane, with the heart of Birstall to the northern apex, centred on an inner triangular plot of land divided by Middlegate. The old retail centre was focused around High Street, rather than Low Lane as it is today. Features such as the town well and the local pinfold for enclosing any stray animals was located behind the Horse and Jockey public house on Middlegate. The open space beside The New Inn public house in High Street housed the local market which sold boots and shoes. The open space in the centre was edged by the odd house, the vast majority being single storey straw thatched cottages. The industrial works centred on the Bradford Road area, and the surrounding streets tended to house the local mill workers. Although they all worked in the mills, their occupations were varied such as cloth dyers, worsted spinners, paver loom weavers, mill hands, wool scourers, fullers and finishers, warpers, winders, cloth printers, rag pickers and mule pieceners. It must be noted that Birstall's industrial function was not limited to textile manufacturing, other industries local to the area included iron and brass foundry, coal mining and stone quarrying.



Map 3: Growth of Birstall from 1852 - 1933

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During the 19th Century Birstall not only consolidated its identity as a textile town and its own localised unity and its degree of self-sufficiency, but it had increasing influence as the centre of a wider cultural influence and activity.

'It is in this cultural sphere – strictly speaking, the religious sphere – that Birstall made its greatest impact. Birstall was the name not only of the chief village but also of the parish, which embraced not only its local township but seven others as well. Hundreds of years of consolidation ... made Birstall ... the heart of an ecclesiastical empire.'

On June 18th 1887 the new Market Place was opened at the south eastern corner of the junction of Low Lane and Chapel Lane. Low Lane and this new Market Place became the township's main street. In acknowledgement to local born scientist Joseph Priestley who among other things discovered oxygen.

The turn of the twentieth century saw a battle to increase the size of Birstall's centre, a result of this was the construction of a number of small number of shops. There were also plans to construct a town hall in Birstall and in 1919 a plan to build the Memorial Town Hall was approved as a tribute to those who had been involved in the First World War, unfortunately this scheme came under a substantial amount of opposition due to the growing need for housing in the area. At this time Birstall was described to be the most overcrowded town in the country, requiring in excess of 300 dwellings, and the pressure for more housing was much greater than the need for a town hall. Therefore the town hall proposal was never followed through and the land, which had been designated for its situation, went to the library in 1961. Further significant development occurred during the early twentieth century, especially in the area which is now seen as the nucleus of present Birstall. In 1919, the Princess Cinema was constructed and the surrounding shops followed during the 1920's and further development in this area occurred in 1928 when the village welcomed the Co-op.

In 1919 Birstall's urban district council made various attempts to purchase land outside its own area, all of which failed. This prompted them to explore other avenues of acquiring land and resulted in the purchase of a 25 acre plot by Church Street. Construction of the Nova Estate began in 1920 and by 1922, seventy dwellings had been constructed, a further sixty nine houses, were erected between 1923 and 1926, all being built by local crafts men. This was the start of mass housing within the Birstall area, with plans being made before the start of the Second World War to build 160 dwellings on Fieldhead Lane, but four times the total were actually built by the end of construction.



Market Place in the late 19th Century



Joseph Priestley Statue

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In addition to an extensive amount of mass housing developments during this period, Birstall was also subjected to a substantial amount of slum clearance which was focused on the Chandler Hill area. In retrospect, the action to clear this area has spoiled the overall landscape of Birstall because the old historical heart, which this area had once been, has been removed along with any historically important buildings that this area once contained.

To conclude, the final thirty years of the twentieth century saw a national decline in the textile industry, with respect to Birstall this meant mass closure of well established textile mills, which have since been subdivided into smaller units. The trend in 21st Century Birstall has been to use the village as a commuter base as most people tend to work outside the area in larger towns such as Batley and Dewsbury or cities such as Leeds and Bradford.

3.2 Historic patronage

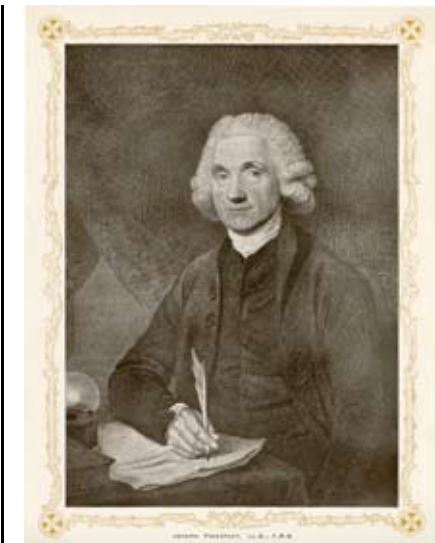
In an article in the 1884 Christmas edition of "The Yorkshireman" about a journey from Birstall to the Isle of Man in 1845, "J.P.F." wrote:

"Birstall was not a small little bit of a place hid away from the rest of the world and known to nobody. For a place that was still called a village, it was populous and well-to-do. Nor was it sleepy. On the contrary, I used to think it was rather more advanced and wide-awake than many of the places surrounding it." (quoted in Clegg, M. A History of Birstall)

Birstall once had the unenviable title of the worst town in the country for the number of people living in overcrowded homes at the time of the 1914-18 war. In 1914, 66 families were living in houses of 2 rooms and had from 6-9 people in each house. Many of these houses have long since disappeared.



Map 4: Birstall in 1854



Joseph Priestley

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Birstall developed as a cohesive community with many local entertainment facilities. *'Once upon a time you could do a pub crawl in Birstall covering 10 pubs in about half a mile. This was over 100 years ago and includes beerhouses as well as fully licensed houses as pubs. Earlier in the 19th Century spare time away from the home led to either church/chapel or the pub, whose attractions might include bowling, quoiting, skittles, glee clubs, fruit, veg and meetings of both friendly (insurance) and trade societies.'*

Many people know of Birstall due to the reputed connection with Charlotte Bronte. Charlotte Bronte was friends with Ellen Nussey, a resident of Birstall. Many believe the book "Shirley" was partly based on events in Birstall, although the evidence to support this claim is somewhat ambiguous.

Birstall also has connections with Joseph Priestley who was born at Fieldhead in Birstall. He was credited for discovering the existence of a number of gases such as oxygen in 1774. He also identified carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide, hydrogen chloride and ammonia. He was known as a chemist and philosopher and his scientific works covered physics, electricity, magnetism and optics. A statue of Priestley was made by Miss Frances Darlington of Harrogate and was erected in 1912 and is located in the Market Place to commemorate his life and work.

The village was also once known as one of the most important centres for Methodism in the north of England. This was thanks to a local stonemason John Nelson who, in the early 18th Century, listened to John Wesley's preaching on the subject in London, and returned to Birstall and preached what he had learnt to the people.



Charlotte Bronte

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4. CHARACTER ANALYSIS

4.1 Identity Area

Within the Conservation Area there are additional identity areas which carry their own character within their environment. There are three identity areas in Birstall, the Market Place, Kirkgate and The Mount. Within each of these areas there are variances within their architectural and historic characteristics.

Market Place

Although buildings generally front directly to the footway, the building line is not consistent. Most of the shops surrounding Market Place sit with two stories directly onto the pavement edge, but others have a single storey frontage with the main building rising behind the living accommodation.

The Market Place is an uneven shape with highways enclosing the central stone sett paved area. A statue of Joseph Priestley has formed the focal point since 1912. A gentle gradient slopes down towards Chapel Lane and Market Street. The size of the space gives a feeling of openness, despite the area being almost entirely surrounded by buildings. The buildings on High Street, being at a higher level, step above the frontage buildings on Low Lane setting the skyline back and adding emphasis to the northern side of the space. Apart from the view down Market Street, views out of the Market Place are restricted by buildings, the narrowness of the streets or by bends in the streets.

The contrast between this large open area and the tightly built nature of Low Lane, Bond Street and Chapel Lane defines the character of Birstall conservation area. Properties along these streets are built right up to the footway. This effect was spoiled where buildings to the south of Low Lane were demolished and the replacement mid twentieth century housing was set back from the roadside. The narrow plots to the North of Low Lane give a strong vertical emphasis that is increased by the buildings on High Street and Bond Street rising above them.

There are a number of snickets in this area which are located between buildings and link one street to another. These pathways were traditionally narrow due to the densely built housing.



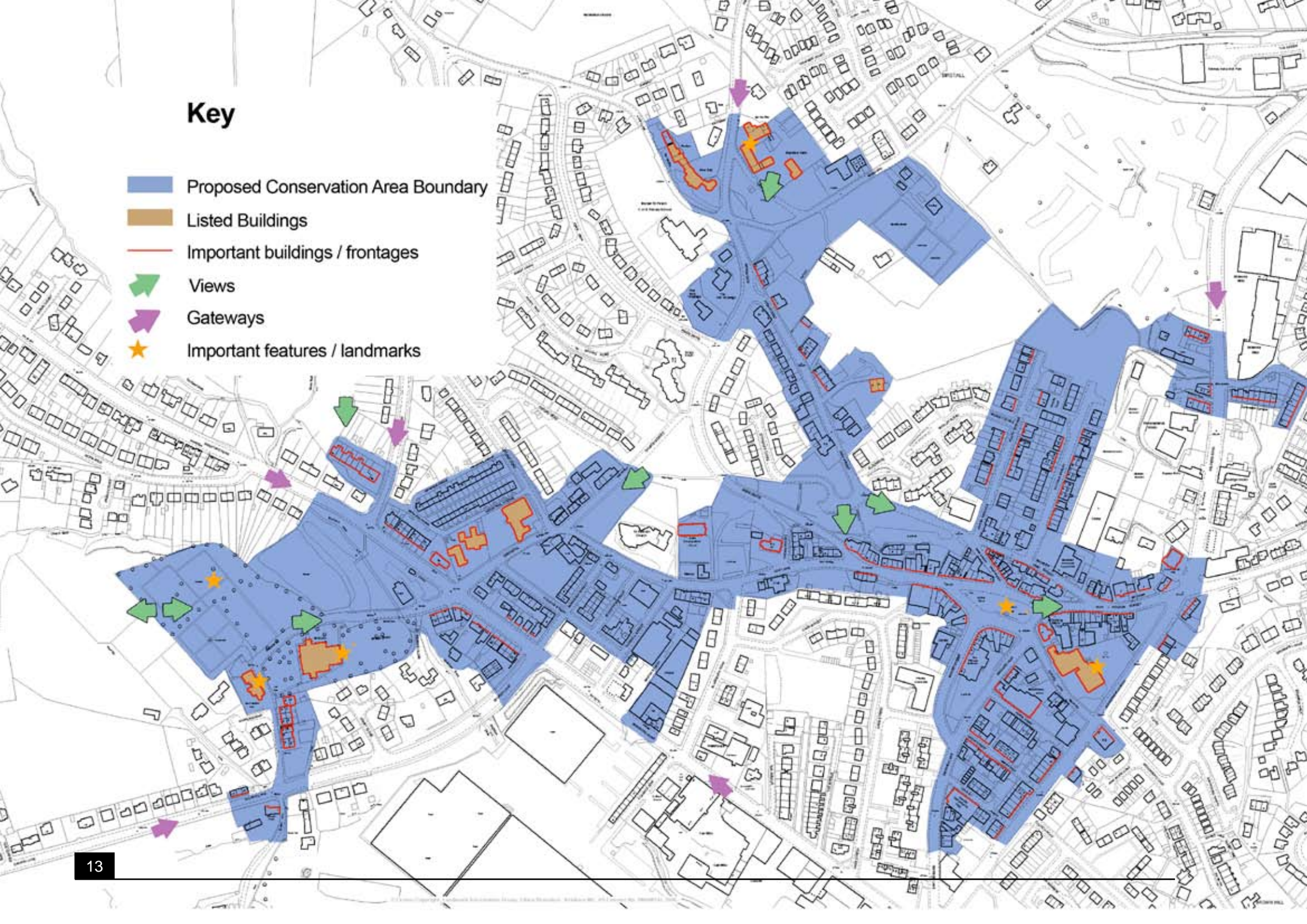
Central island of the market place



The south end of the market place

Key

- Proposed Conservation Area Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Important buildings / frontages
- Views
- Gateways
- Important features / landmarks



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This identity area stretches down towards the Smithies and includes the small streets around the school and the Temperance Hall. The building styles are very similar in this area consisting of stone built terraces and public buildings.

Kirkgate

A striking feature of the proposed revised Birstall conservation area is the lack of uniform roof line. The early settlement pattern is still clearly visible. Early transport routes remain and now form the basis for the existing transport links.

The church area of Kirkgate is dominated by trees and vegetation which is an important element which contributes to the aesthetics and character of the identity area.

The streets in this area are reminiscent of rural villages. They wind between the buildings, are lined with boundary walls and enclosed by trees on either side. Kirkgate meanders past the old dye works reservoir, the church yard and St. Peter's Church, the graveyard and the Black Bull Inn which is the oldest pub in the town.

The Kirkgate identity area is linked to the initial conservation area of Birstall, located around the Market Place, by a number of streets which were created for the housing mill workers. Industrial Avenue is an example of this where the street consists of two rows of terraced back to back properties.



St. Peter's Church, Kirkgate



Kirkgate facing west towards St. Peter's Church

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The Mount

This area is characterised by a concentration of Listed Buildings at the north end of the village. These buildings range from converted farm dwellings to large detached villas at the junction of Nova Lane and Middlegate.

This identity area also includes the top end of High Street, North Terrace and Victoria Street which have many historical and architecturally interesting properties despite the modern additions throughout this area.

The historic walls in this area also add a great deal to the character of the identity area,

Fieldhead is one of the original routes into the village and the buildings here are pre 19th Century. The Mount is a key area of the village as it is located on a hill and gives views of the Birstall parish, and it has a large amount of open space and greenery.

This area is also riddled with snickets such as The Donkey Steps which lead from High Street to land known as Donkey Fold, this is a very narrow snicket with only 12 steps at the base of the pathway. Another pathway in this area is known as Sheards Hill which leads up to the mount. This is an ancient snickleway which has a handrail down the centre of the path and has no steps.



Highfields on The Mount



Donkey Steps

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4.2 Key Listed Buildings

The key listed buildings in Birstall are shown on the Townscape Analysis Map of Birstall Conservation Area.

John Nelson's Study

John Nelson's study is located in the grounds of Wesley House. It is a small single cell building dated 1751 which was built by John Nelson. It is constructed of brick with a stone slate roof. It has a single doorway, two small side windows and a corner chimney. Within the building there is a corner fireplace with mantle and tablet over which is inscribed "JOHN NELSON'S STUDY AD 1751", and two small pews.

St Peter's Church

St Peter's Church was, and still is, an important community focus for Birstall. During the 18th Century Birstall developed as a cultural / religious focal point. St. Peter's Church was a central part of this movement.

The low Norman tower dates from 1100 and is the remaining section of the church constructed by Radulphus de Paganell. The perpendicular top is an addition dating from 1498. The rest of the church dates from the reconstruction that took place between 1863 and 1870 in a late gothic style.

St Peter's Church has experienced many memorable moments in history. In 1851 approximately 6-7,000 folk crammed around St Peter's Church to watch a remarkable procession. *'Consisting of a train of about 30 mounted donkeys led by a brass band and a box organ, it had swelled in numbers as it made its way from the couples Cleckheaton home. Seated on a light cart drawn by 2 donkeys in tandem were John Walker and Mary Kent, who had lived together some years. Friends followed on 28 donkeys ... It was 4o'clock when the procession returned to Cleckheaton. A "great scandal" had been resolved and the public conscience satisfied.'* (p.141. Clegg, M. 'A History of Birstall')



St. Peters Church

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The Blackbull Inn

There has been a public house on this site for over 300 years and it is known that a building was situated here up to 700 years ago.

The Blackbull Inn is a Grade II Listed Building which was built in the late 18th Century but also contains the remains of a 17th Century building which stood on the site. Part of the public house was used as a courthouse for Birstall in the early 19th Century. Other listed buildings in Birstall are listed in the appendix.

Old Hall

The Old Hall is located on High Street and is a Grade II* Listed Building. It is a very fine large detached house dated 1700. It is constructed of hammer dressed stone, and is part rendered with quoins. It has a stone slate roof with hollow chamfered gable copings on carved kneelers. The building is 2 storeys in height and includes an attic.

It has a double pile plan with gabled front and gabled wing to right side and twin-gabled 3-bay symmetrical facade with plinth. The central doorway has a moulded surround and impost supporting moulding. The arched lintel is inscribed:

F
T M
1700

To the left and right is a 12-light mullioned and transomed window with king mullion, to both floors, and 2-light window to each attic gable, all double chamfered.

The right elevation including projecting wing has 2 arched doorways, one small round arched window, various 2 and 3-light windows and one 5-light window, all double chamfered. The Left elevation is plain. The rear elevation is 2-gabled with 2-light window in each. There is a later doorway with tiny blind window to the right and a large cross-window and one 5-light window to the left. There is also one 3-light window to 1st floor of each bay, all double chamfered and some lights with early leaded, diamond glazing. Hood moulds and continuous drip moulding are very badly eroded. There is also a large central ashlar stack to each wing.



The Blackbull Inn

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Highfield Farm House and Cottages

Located on The Mount, the Grade II* Listed property is an excellent large farmhouse which has been divided. The 17th Century bay to left is earliest. The property is of hammer dressed stone with a stone slate roof. It is two storeys in height with an attic and has moulded gable copings on carved kneelers and a plinth. It has a facade of 3 gables, each with ornamental finial, which over left bay inscribed RB 1612 (recut).

The left bay has 12-light ovolo moulded mullioned and transomed window with 6-light window to 1st floor, both with hood moulds and double chamfered. There is a fine example of very early leaded glazing to ground floor. The 2-bays to right have continuous hood moulding over ground floor openings which comprise: chamfered doorway with arched lintel to left, 12-light mullioned and transomed window with king mullion, later doorway enlarged from 2-light window, 5-light window with 2 mullions removed, and recent doorway to right. At 1st floor level is central 2-light and two 5-light windows, one having 2 mullions removed. All windows double chamfered. Left elevation including No. 7 Fieldhead Lane has 19th Century windows.

The right elevation is rendered. The rear elevation: No. 9 to left is slightly projecting gabled wing rendered, with 5-light double chamfered window, with 2 mullions removed, to first floor. Ground floor altered. The central outshut extension has a chamfered doorway with arched head and 2-light double chamfered window. There is also a projecting wing to right, No. 7, has 19th Century openings.

4.3 Unlisted buildings of merit

Within both the current Conservation Area and the proposed extension to the Conservation Area there are many buildings of high architectural and historical importance, some of which are not listed. These buildings add a great deal of character to the conservation area and are shown on the townscape analysis map as good examples of buildings and frontages.

Princess Picture Palace

In the current Conservation Area the Princess Picture Palace (now partly used as a dance studio) on Market Street creates interest in the streetscape through the detailing above the entrance of the building. The building was previously a picture house and was built in 1919 along with the surrounding shops. The



Princess Picture Palace

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building is characterised by the vernacular style and the vertical windows which were the trend of the period.

Market Place Buildings

The buildings surrounding Market Place are of regional importance but are not listed. The design, scale and varied roofscape of this group of buildings intrinsically contribute to the character of Birstall.

Trinity Terrace

They were built on the site next to the former dam where Bradford Road now runs. In 1896 there are 8 substantial terrace houses here which were built for mill owners, managers and the professional classes. The buildings are made of a local ashlar stone (millstone grit) and show a number of archetypal features from the 19th Century period. There are dentils along the top of the façade of the terrace in the bedmoulds of the cornice. All of the buildings have lintels which bridge the windows and doors. The end buildings, nearest Cambridge Road, are the largest and display moulded lintels above the windows and the doors are covered by decorated hood moulds which would have been constructed into the building in order to throw off rainwater.

956 Bradford Road is an interesting replica building constructed in the mid 19th Century in the style of a 17th Century building. It was built by St Peters Church as an institute and has since been converted into a dwelling.

High Street

The property beside 105 High Street is known as the Organ House which was used as a workshop to build organs. The building is simply designed but has a dominating presence and an architectural integrity and uniformity with the buildings which surround it.



Trinity Terrace located off Cambridge Road



Old School House



Vista towards the Black Bull Inn on Kirkgate

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4.4 Key views and vistas

There are a number of key views and vistas in the conservation area and the proposed extension, a few of the significant ones have been mentioned below and are displayed on Map 5.

From High Street, Birstall Market Place can be viewed and is the central nucleus of the village. The site affords tantalising glimpses of the wider conservation area.

From Chapel Lane, due to the steep gradient of Smithies Lane it allows a glimpse into the wider semi-rural setting surrounding Birstall.

There are many views and vistas in the Kirkgate area. Looking north-east from St. Peters Church enables good views over the proposed enlarged area of Birstall conservation area and interesting vistas around the streets of the area.

There are good views out of the conservation area from the Grave Yard at Kirkgate, it shows the agricultural uses of the surrounding countryside. This area is Green Belt and any developments would be restricted due to it being Green Belt land as well as being located next to a conservation area and listed buildings.

From St Peter's Church Graveyard there are good views of the surrounding buildings as well as to the Fishing pond to the North. The fishing pond can also be seen from Cambridge Road.

From Cambridge Road, beside Trinity Terrace, a view of St. Peters church and Kirkgate can be viewed. From this point the area behind Kirkgate can also be seen as the south of Birstall and the surrounding hills.

The conservation area can also be viewed from Church Lane, from this point most of the listed buildings can be seen including the old school house and St Peters Church and graveyard.

From the Mount and Nova Lane the view of the surrounding countryside can be seen. From this point the area to the west of Birstall is visible.



View out of Kirkgate



View from Cambridge Road



Nova Lane, view towards the west

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5. BOUNDARY DEFINITION

The boundary of the current conservation area at Birstall was designated in 1998 after detailed analysis of the area.

The original boundary focused on the Market Place nucleus of Birstall and includes Middlegate, Low Lane, and High Street. Low Lane is included up to the Salem Congregational Church as well as the manse and the planted frontage of its garden and the forecourt to the Horse and Jockey public house.

The boundary now extends to include the part of Gelderd Road and Huddersfield where buildings visually limit the centre as seen from Nelson Street and Chapel Lane. The Old Wine and Spirits Vaults public house is an important feature at the edge of the conservation area due to it stopping the view from the Market Place.

The Kirkgate identity area is located to the south of Birstall, it encompasses Low Lane, Church Street, Oxford Road, Leyland Road, Bradford Road, Cambridge Road, Trinity Terrace, Industrial Avenue, Church Lane, College Street, Garfit Hill and Whewell Street.

The Mount identity area is to the north of Birstall and includes streets such as Middlegate, Nova Lane, The Mount, High Street, North Terrace, Victoria Street, Raikes Lane and Field Head Lane.

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5.1 Gateways

These gateways provide routes into the conservation area and can be viewed on the townscape analysis map.

- A Middlegate enters the existing conservation area from the north west of the village and is one of the main thoroughfares into the commercial area of the village.
- B High Street provides an entrance to the conservation area from the north of the village, the street is on a hill and gives good views of the surrounding area.
- C Nelson Street enters the conservation area from the east and provides a main route through the village as it meets with Low Lane at the Market Place.
The junction of Nelson Street, High Street and Low Lane creates an impressive gateway into the conservation area due to the changes in gradient, the subtle curve of the street and the tightness of the building line which creates a dramatic contrast with the sudden view of the wide space of the Market Place.
- D Smithies Lane enters the conservation area from the south which also meets with the Market Place.
- E Bradford Road (looking NW) is a busy road in the village and was once a main route to Bradford.



High Street Gateway



Smithies Lane and Market Street



Bradford Road Gateway

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- F Kirkgate is the road which travels past the oldest buildings in the village and is used to access St. Peter's Church. This route shows the natural beauty of the village due to the green and open spaces in this corner of the conservation area.
- G Bradford Road (looking SE) is a busy road in the village and passes through Birstall from Batley and on to Bradford.
- H Cambridge Road is a main gateway into the proposed conservation area from the north of the village into a residential area. It is one of the oldest routes in the village as it heads towards St. Peters Church in Kirkgate.
- I Church Street is located to the west of the conservation area, it provides a northern gateway into the proposed extension to the conservation area and contains the majority of the listed buildings in the village such as the old school house, the Black Bull Inn and St. Peter's Church.
- J Nova Lane is located to the north of the conservation area, it is one of the oldest routes in Birstall and leads to Oakwell Hall which was built in approximately 1853. It provides an eastern gateway into the proposed extension to the conservation area located within The Mount identity area.
- K Field Head Lane is located at the top of the conservation area and provides a northern gateway into the historical area of the village.



Kirkgate Gateway



Gateway from Cambridge Road

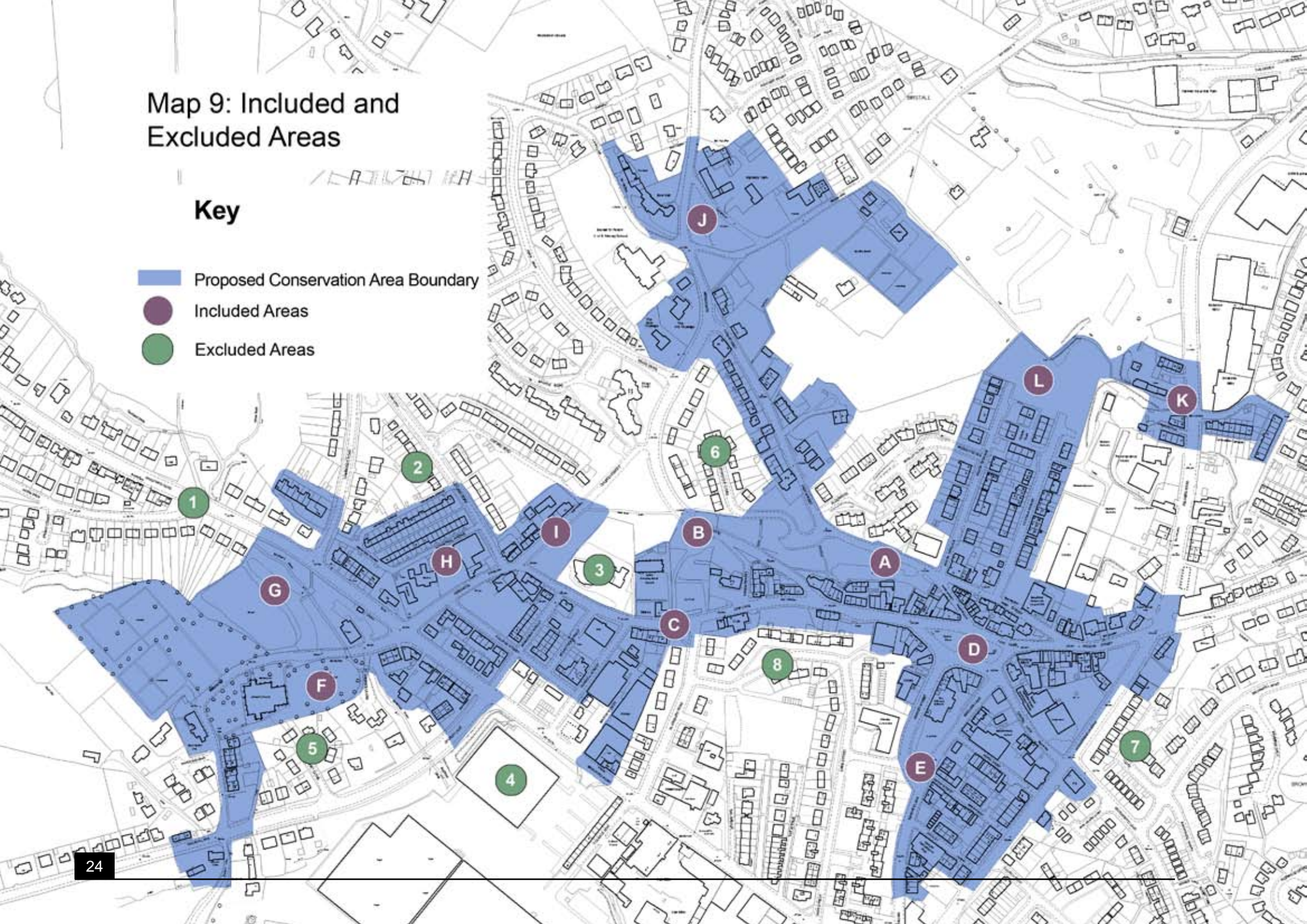


Church Street Gateway

Map 9: Included and Excluded Areas

Key

- Proposed Conservation Area Boundary
- Included Areas
- Excluded Areas



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5.2 Included Areas

These areas have been included into the conservation area due to their contribution to the village, they can be seen on the Included and Excluded Areas Map.

- A **High Street** is included partly because of its historic importance as an earlier street than Low Lane, but mainly because buildings here provide a second tier at the highest level seen from Market Place.
- B **Middlegate**. The lower end of Middlegate has been included in the conservation area as it has provided for the village and it adds a great deal to the character of the conservation area.
- C **Low Lane**: The manse, tight against the road, together with the planted frontage of its garden and the forecourt to the “Horse and Jockey” Public House, create a significant green edge to the centre. The apparent narrowing of the street created by this and the S bends of the road create an attractive gateway to the town.
- D **Birstall Market Place** is the historic focal point of Birstall. The street pattern and surrounding building design are relatively well preserved examples of an early Yorkshire Market Town. The street plan and buildings have remained largely unaltered since the late 19th and early 20th Century. The Market Place is still an important focal point today.
- E **Smithies Lane**: This area is characterised by workers cottages. The steep gradient of Smithies and the historic street pattern of this area acts as gateway into the proposed revised Birstall conservation area.
- F **St Peter’s Church**: The setting and history of the church are of fundamental importance to Birstall. The church and surrounding grounds are an important public focal area.
- G Fishing Area on the junction of **Bradford Road and Kirkgate**. This area is to be included in the conservation area as it is one of the few green spaces in the village and it adds a great deal to the character of the conservation area.
- H **Old School & Old School House**: This group of education origin buildings date from the early 19th Century. The buildings are both historically and architecturally important and are intrinsically important to the character of the proposed revised Birstall conservation area.



High Street



St. Peter's Church and Grave Yard

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- I **Church Street.** The junction of Church Street and Low Lane: Sadly, most of the historic buildings have since been demolished. However, the historic street pattern acting as an entrance into the area is still of importance.
- J **The Mount.** This area is one of the oldest parts of Birstall which has been preserved and enhanced and are built to a high quality and standard which has lasted since the 17th Century.
- K **Gelderd Road.** The properties in this area have high architectural and historical interest and add character to the Conservation Area.
- L **North Terrace and Victoria Street.** These streets have sprinkles of historic buildings throughout and fit in with the characteristics of the Conservation Area. North Terrace in particular exhibits a number of properties which date from the mid 19th Century.



Church Street



Industrial buildings on Bradford Road

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5.3 Excluded Areas

The following areas are not included in the Conservation Area. Even though these areas are not included in the conservation area they still require consideration when proposing development as they are sited adjacent to a conservation area.

1. Bradford Road (West end). These properties were built in the 1960s, they are a series of buildings which are not in keeping with the scale, character and setting of the proposed revised Birstall conservation area.
2. Leyland Road. The buildings in this area were built in the 1930s but do not fit in with the character of the conservation area.
3. St. Patrick's Church. This is a modern church which was built in the mid 1960s. It was not included in the conservation area due to the lack of resemblance to the rest of the conservation area in terms of size, scale, material use, setting or character.



Bradford Road



Leyland Road



St. Patrick's Church, Low Lane

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4. Depot, junction of Bradford Road and Church Lane. This industrial development replaced College Mills post 1970s. It does not fit in with the scale, size, setting, character or use of materials in the conservation area so it has not been included.
5. Denby Close, off Church Lane. This site previously housed a farm but this was demolished in the mid 1960s for the development of Denby Close. These properties do not fit in with the character, setting, materials or scale of the proposed extension to the conservation area.
6. Chandler Close. This area was redeveloped in the early 1960s where the historical buildings were cleared so that the plot sizes could be regulated and for larger dwellings could be constructed. However these developments do not resemble the previous dwellings or the surrounding buildings which are included in the conservation area.
8. Brownhill. This area has been redeveloped since the 1970s and is not in keeping with the scale, form, setting or character of the conservation area.
9. Carr Street. This area is not included in the Conservation Area due to the 1960s buildings not fitting in with the size, scale, materials, setting or character with the conservation area.



Industry on Bradford Road



Denby Close



Chandler Close

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6. URBAN GRAIN

The quality of the buildings in the conservation area and the proposed extension are in a satisfactory condition. However there have been many alterations and additions to historic buildings in the area which negatively affect the character (see Negative Factors).

Birstall is a very built up area with an intricate pattern of roads and streets; the majority of buildings are residential. Few buildings have architectural pretensions. Details are generally simple being limited to stone surrounds to windows and doors or corbels to gutters.

The historic street pattern throughout the village is based on the historical elements of the village. Streets have been planned around the Market Place which has been a central focal point of the village for centuries. The street pattern on Kirkgate is one of the oldest in the village and has been in existence since the Roman times.

There are also many small lanes throughout the village which contribute towards the feeling of rural seclusion in Birstall even though the area is built up and is surrounded by towns such as Batley, Gomersal and Cleckheaton.

6.1 Traditional Building Materials

Buildings in the conservation area are built of local stone. A number of traditional timber shop fronts still survive in the Market Place.

The buildings in the proposed revised Birstall conservation area are almost entirely stone. There are a number of the mill buildings in Birstall which were constructed of red brick; these are located to the south of the conservation area.

Stone slate was used for earlier roofing and can still be found in the conservation area and in the proposed extension. Blue slate was favoured for the later 19th century buildings and can be found widely across the conservation area.

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Boundary Walls

Boundary walls are a very important aspect of the conservation area and should be preserved or enhanced wherever and whenever possible.

Stone is the overriding material for walls which was sourced from the local area. The styles differ across the conservation area and date from the 17th Century. The condition of the walls also differ; some are in need of maintenance. Most walls are regularly coursed with fine joints and are coped with a variety of coping stone. Several would also have had cast iron railings, but these have since been removed.

Boundary walls include 1-2 metre high coursed stone walls with long rectangular, triangular or rounded coping stones, brick walls, concrete walls, dry stone walls with vertical coping stones, rounded block coursed stone walls with close pointing and rounded copings, vernacular walls with gate posts and very regular coursed stone walls with rounded copings.

Floorscape

Much of the paving in Birstall is tarmac, which is a potentially detractive feature.

The northern frontage to Low Lane between Middlegate and Bond Street is broken by a series of part stone paved winding alleys that lead up flights of steps to the car park off High Street, these add to the character of the conservation area.

Most streets and paths are covered with tarmac with concrete kerbs although there are some examples with grass verges between the road and path, and some kerbs fabricated from stone. There are also examples of stone setts, granite setts and cobbles throughout Birstall.



Walls along High Street



Walls behind St. Peters Church



Floorscape on Raikes Lane

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7. BUILDING TYPES

7.1 Dwellings

Birstall has several 19th Century cottages which were built for investment and functioned purely as living accommodation. The buildings were of sound construction to require the minimum of repairs. The mill workers cottages are set slightly back from the highway, creating a small front garden, enclosed by dwarf stone walls and constructed from locally sourced stone. The stone is more regularly coursed, reflecting the changing building techniques.

Windows are increasingly replaced with UPVC windows which are a detractive feature to the conservation area. However there are a number still with the sash windows which retain the character in Birstall.

There are a number of terraced dwellings in the conservation area and the proposed extension which were built at the end of the 19th century.

There are also a number of large detached dwellings which greatly add to the quality of the conservation area and create a varied townscape.

7.2 Domestic Industrial Buildings

Due to the unique development of Birstall there are no large industrial buildings in the central part of Birstall. The industrial buildings are located to the south of the Market Place and are known as the Smithies. These are characterised by larger windows to maximise the amount of light for the workers in the house. The majority of the industrial buildings are located outside the Conservation Area and hold their own character which is different from the designated Conservation Area in Birstall.

7.3 Commercial Properties

The majority of buildings surrounding Market Place were originally purposely designed as commercial properties. Each building has a slightly different style and height which adds further interest to this area. Properties are either two or three storeys. Some properties have arched windows which heighten the sense of drama, although allowing less light into the buildings.



The 'Organ House' on High Street



Dwellings at Industrial Avenue



Industry on Bradford Road

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Decorative features are generally sparse, although several buildings have stone detailing above windows and doors. Facing materials of properties vary; some are ashlar faced stone, whilst others are rock hewn. Sandstone is used throughout creating a unifying feature.

There are a number of timber framed shop fronts which enhance the character of the conservation area although the main shop fronts on Low Lane do not possess these characteristics and instead use modern materials to display their shop name.

7.4 Civic Buildings

The civic buildings in the conservation area are important to the wider historical development of Birstall.

St Peter's Church is built in late Gothic style. The Gothic detailing is more limited than a commercial property of the same period might have been. This was likely because the clergy wanted to direct people's thoughts inside, where enrichment could be consecrated to the glory of God.

The former National School built around 1818 and the Old School House on Bradford Road are architecturally, historically and regionally important buildings. The Gothic detailing of the Old School House on Bradford Road is more lavish than the National School reflecting the less formal nature of the building.

The Princess Picture Palace, which used to be a theatre, is an important civic building in the centre of Birstall as it is now used as a dance studio. The ashlar stonework and decorative masonry creates a grandeur appearance and feeling to the street and to the Conservation Area.

The School is located on School Street and is a dominant building in this area.



St. Peters Church



Former National School

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8. OPEN SPACE AND TREE COVERAGE

There is a large amount of open space in and surrounding the Birstall Conservation Area. This open space is an integral part of the character of the Conservation Area and should be preserved in order to maintain an important attribute of the village.

All trees growing within a Conservation Area boundary which are taller than 1.5 metres and have a stem diameter of more than 7.5cm are deemed to be protected. The planning authority must be given 6 weeks written notice of the intention to cut down, uproot, top or lop trees. These 6 weeks give the Council time to decide whether or not to create a Tree Preservation Order. If no decision is made within 6 weeks the applicant may proceed with the works. However failure to notify will result in penalties which are the same for the contravention of a Tree Preservation Order.

Despite having lost historic interest because of the demolition of buildings, the open green area between High Street and Middlegate is a pleasant approach to the centre before the steep Bond Street suddenly descends to the Market Place. Similarly the open space between Church Street and Middlegate provides important open space and enhances the character of the area.

Open space is integral to the character and setting. Tree coverage in Birstall is mainly located in the St Peter's Church identity area. Tree coverage in this area is an important aspect and is a main contributor to the character in this area. The former mill reservoir, which is also located in this identity area, has been landscaped and is now an important recreational component of the site and accentuates the wider setting of St. Peter's Church.

The identity area surrounding The Mount has a large amount of green open space and tree coverage. This adds a great deal to the character to the area and gives the feeling of being in a rural rather than an urban location. The mature trees and vegetation provide stature and a high quality setting for the properties on the Mount.

The open space and tree coverage is very important to the conservation area and should be protected and taken into account when there are proposals for development in the area.



Open space and tree coverage on Church street



Green space on Kirkgate

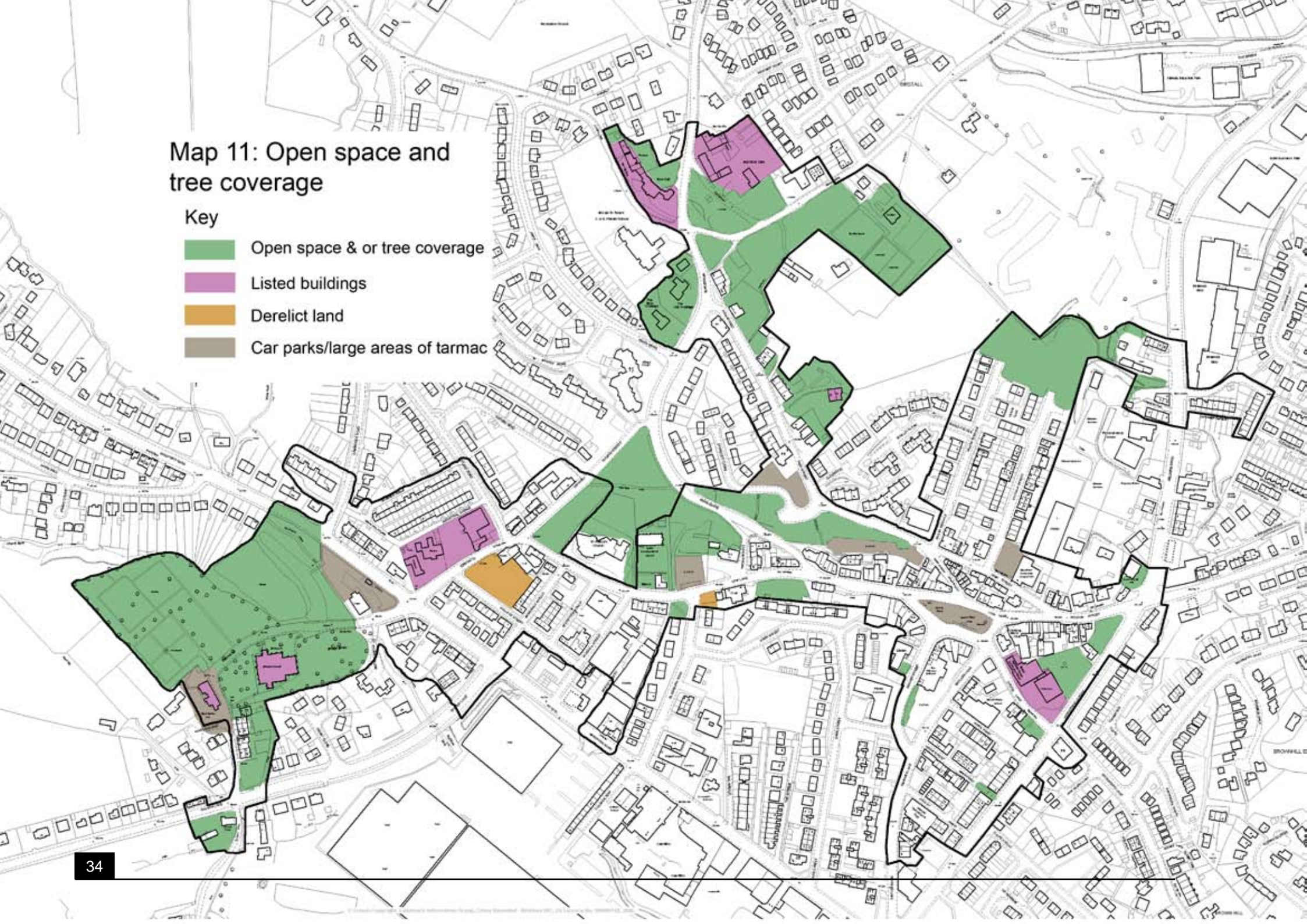


Open space on The Mount

Map 11: Open space and tree coverage

Key

-  Open space & or tree coverage
-  Listed buildings
-  Derelict land
-  Car parks/large areas of tarmac



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9. AREAS OF RISK

9.1 Buildings at Risk

Buildings at risk within the existing conservation area

In 1859 a fire service was established in Birstall. Refreshments allowed were a pint of beer for each fireman “when any work done” and another pint after a two-hour attendance. The Horse and Jockey for several years housed the fire engine in its coach house. Today the coach house is severely dilapidated and is at risk from further deterioration. Efforts should be made to ensure this important historic building does not deteriorate further.

2-8 Huddersfield Road occupies a prominent position at the Nelson Street gateway. The buildings are currently dilapidated and are at risk from further deterioration.

Buildings at risk in the proposed extension to the conservation area

The Church on the junction of Kirkgate and Low Lane is derelict, the windows are covered with wooden boards. This building requires improvements before it dilapidates further.

10. NEGATIVE FACTORS

Negative factors occur as whole buildings and areas as well as incremental change on buildings within the conservation area such as the installation of UPVC windows and doors, large satellite dishes, burglar alarms, security lighting and plastic guttering.

Insensitive developments create a negative appearance in the conservation area such as extensions to buildings, dormer windows and new buildings which detract from the character of the area. The introduction of Article 4 (2) Directions would prevent any further degradation of the environment in the future.



Coach House at the Horse & Jockey



Social Club / Church

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Several of the commercial properties at Market Place suffer from poor shop frontage. At strategic points insensitive advertising boarding is used. Tarmac paving and road surfacing is used through the Birstall conservation area. The high use of tarmac and concrete on the floor surfaces is a negative aspect to the conservation area. Stone setts, cobbles and curbs should be used where possible to enhance the conservation area.

A small number of properties have started to replace the original windows with UPVC and inappropriately designed windows. All these are potentially detractive features which could be rectified in the future through heritage-led regeneration initiatives.

The Kirkgate Medical Practice is a new building which does not fit in with the character of the conservation area or the particular Kirkgate identity area. It is located on the corner of Kirkgate and Bradford Road and is built of artificial materials.



Negative floorspace - The Mount



Negative floorspace



Negative new development at the Medical centre

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11. ECONOMIC NEED

Birstall is located on the periphery of both Leeds and Huddersfield and is an increasingly popular commuter base. The retail area suffers from a strong focus, this strong focus used to be provided by Market Place, however the status of this has eroded over time. The public tend to drive to other shopping areas such as in the nearby town of Batley and the Birstall Retail Park off the M62.

12. POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE

Designation as a conservation area does not mean no change in the future will be allowed. New developments in the revised Birstall conservation area which are sympathetic to the character and setting of Birstall conservation area would be cautiously welcomed.

There are current plans to improve the Market Place in Birstall, the island in the centre is currently used as a car parking area and is not well linked to the surrounding streets. Kirklees Council recognise the character and setting of Birstall could be improved through an enhancement programme, and have identified the following proposals for enhancement:

- Improving paving on the Market Place;
- The creation of a village focus at the Market Place and providing a seating area;
- Enhancement and signage of the car park on the Market Place;
- Improve pedestrian links to the Market Place;
- Addition of trees on the Market Place;
- Restoration of Red BT Phone Box;
- Improvement of infrastructure around the Market Place.

These preservation and enhancement proposals in the process of being finalised and work will begin at the start of 2007.

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Article 4 (2) Directions will be put in place in the future in order to protect and enhance the Birstall conservation area. The Birstall Conservation Area has had problems of character erosion therefore permitted development rights would be removed such as minor works to residential buildings including changes to doors, windows and colours which can normally be carried out without obtaining planning permission from the Council. Therefore specific controls over development, where the important character has been acknowledged in the Conservation Area Appraisal, would be created in order to protect the areas of historic and architectural interest in Birstall.

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13. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

For Conservation Areas to be successful, public support and an understanding of Conservation areas is essential. Kirklees Council undertook a program of public consultation on the draft proposed revised Conservation area proposals. The purpose of this work was to benefit from local knowledge and experience, ensure that the document which was produced is as accurate and comprehensive as possible, increase the understanding of what conservation area designation means and encourage local involvement in conservation and to ensure that everyone has a say on the management of their local area.

The Conservation Area Appraisal was subject to public consultation in January 2007. A leaflet outlining the conservation area proposals, maps of the proposed conservation area boundary and a questionnaire about the proposals was sent out to all householders in the proposed area and beyond. Further information was provided stating the detailed proposals could be viewed at the week long exhibition and further information could be received also by phone and email.

The local councillors were also invited to the exhibition and the meeting. The exhibition presenting the Appraisal document and proposal to extend the conservation area was located at Birstall Library between Thursday 4th January 2007 and Thursday 10th January 2007. The meeting to discuss issues regarding the Appraisal and the proposal to extend the conservation area was held on the evening of Thursday 10th January 2007.

The meeting resulted in many suggestions to extend the boundary further, other comments were received by the returned questionnaires, phone calls and emails. The Conservation and Design Team welcomed all feedback and took on board all of the comments and altered the boundary accordingly. The new proposed boundary was then sent out with a covering letter to inform householders in the conservation area about the revised boundary. Phone calls and emails were received in support of the changes.

From the postal responses 80% agreed with the proposed revised boundary of the conservation area, 65% thought that historical buildings in the conservation area should be preserved, 58% thought that the architectural details found on buildings should be preserved, 42% thought that the landscape, open space and tree coverage should be enhanced in the conservation area. 83% of respondents thought that having an Article 4 (2) Direction in some areas of Birstall will help to protect the special character of the

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conservation area. 82% thought that the loss of architectural features on historical buildings would be harmful to the conservation area, and 64% thought that the demolition of boundary walls would be harmful to the conservation area.

14. CONCLUSION

The proposed revised Birstall conservation area gives greater emphasis on the three main focal points in Birstall – the Market Place, Kirkgate and St. Peter’s Church and the historic buildings around the Mount. By defining the conservation area of Birstall as described in this report the historic qualities of Birstall will be conserved, preserved and improved for further generations.

The economic potential and historic character of Birstall conservation area could be further improved through a combination of initiatives as identified in an Action Plan or a Management Plan for this conservation area.

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APPENDIX 1: LISTED STRUCTURES IN BIRSTALL

TOMB OF ELLEN NUSSEY (Grade II) Located at St Peter's Church, Kirkgate, Birstall. Chest tomb. 1826. Ashlar chest tomb raised on 2 steps. Rectangular. Single panel at either end, with 2 panels to each of the side façades. Top inscribed to John Nussey, died 14th July 1826, George his son died 7th October 1812, daughter Sarah Walker died

TOMB OF JOHN NELSON (Grade II) Located at St Peter's Church, Kirkgate, Birstall. Chest tomb of John Nelson. Dated 1774. Stone with simple panel sides and Inscription to John Nelson and his wife.

Also inscribed is this poem:

While we on Earth had our abode,
We both agre'd to serve the Lord;
And he was pleas'd as you may see,
By Death, not long us parted be,
Then he required the breath he gave
Untill again he us restore
A Life to live and Die no more.

Apparently added later is further inscription:

"John Nelson was the coadjutor of
John Wesley, and the pioneer of
Methodism in Yorkshire".

BLACK BULL INN PUBLIC HOUSE (Grade II) Located at Kirkgate, Birstall. Public House. Late 18th Century which incorporates a building of the 17th Century or early 18th Century. It is constructed of hammer dressed stone with quoins and a recent pan-tiled roof. It has carved kneelers at each gable end. The Black Bull Inn is 2 storeys high. The left end consists of central blocked doorway with slightly arched lintel, 3-light windows to each side and on both floors, with recessed mullions. To the right end it is similar with an arched doorway with altered windows to left and right and later windows to the 1st floor.

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To rear there are two 2-light double chamfered windows with the mullion removed. There is also a central projection over the former doorway with a chamfered light. There has also been a recent single storey extension.

At 1st floor level is former courtroom still retaining the panelled magistrates box and prisoners box, both with painted panel and canopy on turned colonnettes.

ST.PETERS CHURCH (Grade II*) Located at Kirkgate, Birstall.Church. The low Norman tower was built by Radulphus de Paganell in 1100, with Perpendicular top of C. 1490. The rest of the Church was built 1863-70 by W H Crossland in late Gothic style. Ashlar. Stone slate roof. West tower. 4 bay nave, 3 bay chancel, double arcaded aisles with porch to north and south. The tower is diagonally buttressed with 2-light traceried, louvred openings to bell chamber. Fortified upper part has corbelled out castellated parapet, with large crocketed pinnacles, on corbel table resembling machicolation. Reset sundial on South side thought to date from 1660. On west side of lower part are 3 tiny lights. Small west doorway altered 1863-70. The rest of the Church has castellated parapets, and bay divisions are marked by buttresses and slender crocktted pinnacles. 4 bay nave has eight 2-light traceried clerestory windows with hood moulds. Lean-to inner aisles flank chancel to form Lady Chapel to north and vestry to south, with 3-light square headed stained glass windows with arched lights. The 4 bay, pitched roof outer aisles have 4-light similar windows. The east and west windows of inner aisles are 3-light as before. The east and west windows of outer aisles are 4-light stained glass with cusped intersecting tracery. East chancel stained glass window is of 7-lights with geometrical tracery with 3, 4, 5 and 6-folled head. To each side is buttress surmounted by canopied niche with limestone figures of St Wilfred of Ripon and St Hilda of Whitby. Elaborate north and south porches have angle buttresses and gargoyles, and large moulded recessed doorway with engaged colonnettes with foliated capitals and ribbed, vaulted ceilings with carved masks, heads and grotesque beasts and reptiles.

Interior: 2 arcades to north and south on short octagonal columns with double chamfered arches to nave, and short quatrefoil columns with double hollow chamfered arches to outer aisle. Carved oak chancel screen, carved choir stalls with animals and foliage. Well carved Caen stone pulpit and reredos. Altar and communion rail by Thompson of Kilburn. Stained glass to Lady Chapel from Brussels, dated 1872. Vestry stained glass, 1812, from east window of earlier Church. Stained glass windows by Kempe of 1881, 1896 and 1898 and by Capronnier, 1885 (Pevsner). Brass memorial plaque to John Nelson (1707--1774). C.18 and early C-19 wall memorials. Font c.1490 restored 1841.

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Square headed bench ends (not in situ). Some with tracery patterns and tools of trade, sheep shears, carpenters tools etc., many thought to be pre-Reformation, one with 6-petal flower is dated 1616. Memorial brass to Mrs Popeley dated 1632.

(N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England*, 1979.)

FORMER NATIONAL SCHOOL (OLD SCHOOL HOUSE) (Grade II) Located at Kirkgate, Birstall. The former National School is now a workshop and has a date stone which reads 1818. It is constructed of hammer dressed stone with a stone slate roof with roll top parapets and huge square finials on short square bases. It is a single storey building with 5 bays, and a central porch with crenellated parapet with 2 finials as before. There are two small lancet lights to each side of central arched doorway, with a plaque overhead which reads:

NATIONAL SCHOOL

ERECTED BY WILLIAM CHARLESWORTH

ANNO. DOM. MDCCCXVIII

To each side there are two, very tall and slender chamfered stone mullioned windows, each with 3 lights. There are also five similar windows to the rear, the centre one being partly obscured by later extension.

CHURCH OF ST JOHN (Methodist) (Grade II) Located on Huddersfield Road, Birstall. (Formerly listed as Wesleyan Church). Methodist Chapel. Dated 1846. Possibly by James Simpson. Dressed stone with ashlar dressings. Pitched Welsh slate roof. 2 storeys on tall plinth with basement. 6 bay hall with 5 bay plain Classical front, flanked by broad clasping pilasters. 3 bay central break is pedimented with tablet in tympanum with embossed lettering: WESLEYAN CHAPEL

To left and right steps lead to panelled doors with round arched fanlight in doorcase with engaged columns, entablature and blocking course. Round arched windows, with architraves, have keystone and impost blocks and marginal glazing.

Fine interior, it has a gallery to 3 sides on thin Corinthian columns. Pilaster bay divisions to walls. Gallery and ground floor are box pewed throughout to seat 1150. Handsome organ case framed in Corinthian

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order. Tall pulpit up twin flights of stairs. Communion table and ornamental cast iron Communion rail. Cast iron balconies stretch from the organ to the staircase doors and the gallery.

Bust of John Nelson, 1705-1774, founder of the Chapel, over inscribed tablet, under gallery. John Nelson was a pioneer of early Methodism in Yorkshire. Inscribed foundation stone reads. "The original Wesleyan Chapel was built in 1750. Rebuilt and enlarged 1782. This Chapel was built in 1846".

JOHN NELSONS STUDY (Grade II) Located on Huddersfield Road, Birstall. Tiny, single celled building. Dated 1751. Built, by John Nelson, of brick. Stone slate roof with corner chimney. Single doorway and 2 small side windows. Corner fireplace with mantle and tablet over inscribed: JOHN NELSON'S STUDY AD 1751. There are 2 small pews which remain inside. Listed mainly for historical interest as the workplace of John Nelson, whose tombstone describes him as "The coadjutor of John Wesley and a pioneer of Methodism in Yorkshire".

SUNDIAL (Grade II) Located on Huddersfield Road, Birstall. Sundial. Dated 1750. Built by John Nelson. Round pedestal with roll moulding. Square top with clearly incised figures and inscription: John Nelson, 1750. Gnomon is missing.

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY STATUE (Grade II) Located at Market Place, Birstall. Bronze statue. Dated 1912. By Frances Darlington. Founder: A Parlatti, London. Slightly larger than life bronze figure of Joseph Priestly on grey granite tapering square base which is inscribed:

JOSEPH

PRIESTLEY

DISCOVERER OF OXYGEN BORN AT

FIELDHEAD BIRSTALL 1733

ERECTED BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION 1912

Important market place site.

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OLD HALL (Grade II*) Located on High Street, Birstall. Very fine large detached house. Dated 1700. Hammer dressed stone, part rendered. Quoins. Stone slate roof with hollow chamfered gable copings on carved kneelers. 2 storeys and attic. Double pile plan with gabled front and gabled wing to right side. Twin-gabled 3-bay symmetrical facade with plinth. Central doorway with moulded surround and imposts supporting moulded and arched lintel inscribed :

F
T M
1700

To left and right is 12-light mullioned and transomed window with king mullion, to both floors, and 2-light window to each attic gable, all double chamfered.

Right elevation including projecting wing has 2 arched doorways, one small round arched window, various 2 and 3-light windows and one 5-light window, all double chamfered. Left elevation plain. Rear elevation is 2-gabled with 2-light window in each. Later doorway with tiny blind window to right and large cross-window and one 5-light window to left. One 3-light window to 1st floor of each bay, all double chamfered and some lights with early leaded, diamond glazing. Hood moulds and continuous drip moulding are very badly eroded.

Large central ashlar stack to each wing.

Interior said to have contemporary staircase.

Highfield Farm House and Cottage (Grade II*) Located on The Mount, Birstall. Includes Nos. 7 and 9 Fieldhead Lane. Excellent large farmhouse now divided. C-17 the bay to left being earliest. Hammer dressed stone. Stone slate roof. 2 storeys and attic. Moulded gable copings on carved kneelers. Plinth. Facade of 3 gables, each with ornamental finial, that over left bay inscribed RB 1612 (recut). The left bay has 12-light ovolo moulded mullioned and transomed window with 6-light window to 1st floor, both with hood moulds and double chamfered. Very early leaded glazing to ground floor. The 2-bays to right have continuous hood moulding over ground floor openings which comprise: chamfered doorway with arched lintel to left, 12-light mullioned and transomed window with king mullion, later doorway enlarged from 2-light window, 5-light window with 2 mullions removed, and recent doorway to right. At 1st floor level is

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central 2-light and two 5-light windows, one having 2 mullions removed. All windows double chamfered. Left elevation including No. 7 Fieldhead Lane has C.19 windows.

Right elevation is rendered. Rear elevation: No. 9 to left is slightly projecting gabled wing rendered, with 5-light double chamfered window, with 2 mullions removed, to 1st floor. Ground floor altered. Central outshut extension with chamfered doorway with arched head and 2-light double chamfered window. Projecting wing to right, No. 7, has C-19 openings.

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APPENDIX 2: UDP POLICIES (1999)

THE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Strategy

- BE1 ALL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE OF GOOD QUALITY DESIGN SUCH THAT IT CONTRIBUTES TO A BUILT ENVIRONMENT WHICH:
- i CREATES OR RETAINS A SENSE OF LOCAL IDENTITY;
 - ii IS VISUALLY ATTRACTIVE;
 - iii PROMOTES SAFETY, INCLUDING CRIME PREVENTION AND REDUCTION OF HAZARDS TO HIGHWAY USERS;
 - iv PROMOTES A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, INCLUDING SPACE AND LANDSCAPING ABOUT BUILDINGS AND AVOIDANCE OF EXPOSURE TO EXCESSIVE NOISE OR POLLUTION;
 - v IS ENERGY EFFICIENT IN TERMS OF BUILDING DESIGN AND ORIENTATION AND CONDUCTIVE TO ENERGY EFFICIENT MODES OF TRAVEL, IN PARTICULAR WALKING, CYCLING AND USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT.

QUALITY OF DESIGN

- BE2 NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE DESIGNED SO THAT:
- i IT IS IN KEEPING WITH ANY SURROUNDING DEVELOPMENT IN RESPECT OF DESIGN, MATERIALS, SCALE, DENSITY, LAYOUT, BUILDING HEIGHT OR MASS;
 - ii THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE SITE (PARTICULARLY CHANGES IN LEVEL) IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT;
 - iii SATISFACTORY ACCESS TO EXISTING HIGHWAYS CAN BE ACHIEVED; AND
 - iv EXISTING AND PROPOSED LANDSCAPE FEATURES (INCLUDING TREES) ARE INCORPORATED AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PROPOSAL.

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HERITAGE

Listed Buildings

BE3 ANY APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT FOR THE ALTERATION, EXTENSION OR CHANGE OF USE OF A LISTED BUILDING, AND ANY APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION WHICH WOULD AFFECT ITS SETTING SHOULD PAY SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE DESIRABILITY OF PRESERVING THE LISTED BUILDING OR ITS SETTING OR ANY FEATURES OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST WHICH IT POSSESSES.

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Conservation Areas

It is not necessary to preserve every detail of a conservation area, but there should be care in the control of new development to ensure that the appearance of the area is not affected in a way that would diminish its value. Thus not only new buildings, but also changes of use and demolition, must be carefully controlled to ensure that the works do not detract from the character of the area. The Council will continue to assess areas worthy of designation as conservation areas and revise existing boundaries and formulate and publish proposals for their preservation and enhancement.

For an area to be suitable for designation as a conservation area it should display all the characteristics:

- i) be of high architectural or historic merit;
- ii) have a distinctive overall character;
- iii) be representative of the historical, social and economic development of Kirklees; and
- iv) have a largely unspoilt character.

BE5 PROPOSALS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS, INCLUDING EXTENSIONS OR CHANGES OF USE TO EXISTING BUILDINGS, SHOULD RESPECT THE ARCHITECTURAL QUALITIES OF SURROUNDING BUILDINGS AND THEIR MATERIALS OF CONSTRUCTION, AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE PRESERVATION OR ENHANCEMENT OF THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF THE AREA.

BE6 DEVELOPMENT ON INFILL SITES WILL NOT NORMALLY BE PERMITTED WHEN IT WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE CHARACTER OR APPEARANCE OF A CONSERVATION AREA.

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BE11 NEW DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE CONSTRUCTED IN NATURAL STONE OF A SIMILAR COLOUR AND TEXTURE TO THAT PREVAILING IN THE AREA WHERE THE PROPOSAL IS LOCATED:

- i IN AREAS WITHIN WHICH STONE HAS BEEN THE PREDOMINANT MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION;
- ii WITHIN CONSERVATION AREAS; AND
- iii WITHIN TOWNS AND LOCAL CENTRES

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PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 5: PLANNING FOR THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

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BIRSTALL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The historic character, appearance and special interest of the Birstall conservation area has been analysed and assessed in the Appraisal document. This management plan will suggest methods and applicable policies to preserve the character, appearance and what is valuable in the conservation area, assist in managing change and the sympathetic evolution of the conservation area and make proposals for its enhancement.

Relevant UDP Policies

BE1, BE2, BE3, BE5, BE6

Minor Alterations

Any work that materially affects the external appearance of a building requires planning permission, subject to “permitted development” rights. Under normal planning control certain works are classed as “permitted development” and do not require planning permission. This includes small alterations and extensions to dwelling houses, the erection of buildings, enclosures or pools required for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of a dwelling house, the provision of hard surfaces, and the erection of and alterations to boundaries.

Some developments (which are usually “permitted development”) in conservation areas are not classified as “permitted development”. This includes various types of cladding, the insertion of dormer windows, raising the ridge or expanding the size of a roof and the erection of satellite dishes on the walls, roofs and chimneys which front a highway. Also within a conservation area the size of extensions that may be erected without specific planning permission is more restricted. If the extension and any previous extension exceeds in total 50 cubic metres or 10% of the house volume it will require planning permission.

Minor alterations which do not require planning permission can still have an impact on the character of the conservation area. Replacing timber windows and doors with the plastic alternative and knocking down walls to form parking areas have a clear detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the area.

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Extensions

Extensions can be detrimental to the appearance of buildings either because of their location, size or design. Front extensions and extensions on principal elevations are avoided. Extensions should be subordinate to the building, should use similar or complimentary materials and should reflect or compliment its style and appearance.

Original Architectural Features

Reinstatement of features is very important for the conservation area. Some buildings within the Conservation Area have lost their original doors, windows, boundary walls, roof materials and other features. As a result their character is being eroded, therefore when proposals for alterations and extensions are submitted there will be an opportunity to encourage the reinstatement of lost features to reflect their original pattern, style and material.

Public Realm

A vast amount of the historic floorscape has been lost over the years. It is important that when any road works occur that stone flags, setts or kerbs are retained and replaced instead of replacing with modern materials such as tarmac, concrete flags and kerbs.

Signage

Commercial signage sits in prominent positions facing highways which can have a harmful affect on the character of the conservation area. Signage should be designed, sized and styled appropriately for the area and be sympathetic to the historic nature of Birstall.

Open Space and Tree Coverage

Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, requires that anyone proposing to cut down, lop, or top a tree in a conservation area must give six weeks notice to the local planning authority. The purpose of this requirement is to give the authority an opportunity to make a tree preservation order.

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Trees make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and its setting. There are already some tree preservation orders on individual trees and groups of trees in the Birstall Conservation Area.

The open space in the conservation area consists of small and large private gardens, St Peter's Churchyard and graveyard opposite, the fishing pond on Kirkgate and the Market Place. Too much infill development in Birstall will have a serious affect on the character of the conservation area. If too many boundary walls are knocked down, if there is a high loss of trees or if there is an increase in building density it may be harmful to the character of the conservation area.

Article 4 Directions

Local Planning Authorities may remove "permitted development" rights by way of an Article 4 Direction. An Article 4(2) Direction is designed to prevent the special character of the area being spoilt by an accumulation of relatively minor but potentially inappropriate alterations to buildings and their immediate surroundings. Such alterations would usually constitute "permitted development" and would not require express planning permission.

The aim of the controls is to protect the dwelling houses from development likely to detract from the appearance of the conservation area in which your home is situated.

There is scope in Birstall Conservation Area for the creation of Article 4 Directions, particularly on the North side of the upper part of High Street and on Bradford Road. The removal of "permitted development" rights may include controls on changing windows and doors from wood to UPVC, changing the roof materials from natural traditional materials to artificial alternatives, alterations to boundary walls, gate piers, fences and gates, cladding or painting the exterior of the property.

However, the proposal of Article 4 Directions in Birstall will require a further public consultation.