

# BILTON in AINSTY

## Conservation Area Character Appraisal



Working for you

<b>Contents</b>	Page
1. Introduction.....	1
<b>Objectives</b> .....	2
2. Planning policy context.....	2
3. Historic development & archaeology.....	3
4. Location & setting.....	5
5. Landscape analysis .....	6
6. Form & character of buildings .....	10
7. Character area analysis .....	14
Map 1: Historic development .....	18
Map 2: Conservation Area boundary .....	19
Map 3: Analysis & concepts .....	20
Map 4: Landscape character analysis .....	21
<b>Appendix A:</b>	
1. Management strategy .....	22
2. Monitoring & review .....	22
3. Maintaining quality .....	22
4. Conservation Area boundary review .....	22
5. The management of change .....	23
6. Opportunities for enhancement .....	23
7. Landscape issues .....	26
<b>Checklist</b> to manage change .....	28
<b>Appendix B:</b> Public consultation .....	29
<b>Appendix C:</b> Further reading.....	30

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Conservation Area Appraisals aim to define and analyse the special interest which constitutes the character and appearance of a place. It is these qualities, which warrant the designation of a Conservation Area. Once this Appraisal has been approved by Harrogate Borough Council, it will form an evidence base for the Local Development Framework (LDF). It will therefore be a material consideration when determining applications for development, considering planning appeals or proposing works for the preservation or enhancement of the area. It will also form the basis for a subsequent Management Strategy, which will contain proposals and policies for the conservation and enhancement of the area.
- 1.2 The appraisal provides information and guidance to those wishing to carry out works in the Conservation Area whether or not they require planning approval. It is therefore a useful source of information for property owners, agents, applicants and members of the public who live or work in the village of Bilton in Ainsty
- 1.3 The main function of the Conservation Area Appraisal is to ensure that any works in the Conservation Area have regard to the special qualities of the area and to devise a strategy to protect these qualities.

The Appraisal will help us understand the impact that development proposals would have on the Conservation Area and whether these are acceptable and/or appropriate.

- 1.4 Defining the character of an area is not a straightforward exercise and it is impossible to reach a truly objective view. The statement of character and appearance in this Appraisal is based on various detailed methods of analysis recommended by English Heritage. Various different qualities are looked at including: historical development, building materials, and relationships between built and open spaces. Although appraisals aim to be comprehensive the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.
- 1.5 Bilton in Ainsty Conservation Area was originally designated in 1994 and, following consultation on this Appraisal, was amended on 28 October 2009. This Appraisal aims to describe Bilton in Ainsty as it is today and identify the special character and distinctiveness of its setting, buildings and open spaces. Having identified those special qualities,

the Appraisal will examine whether opportunities exist to protect and enhance its character.

- 1.6 By identifying what makes Bilton in Ainsty special or distinctive, it is suggested that any future change, whether to individual buildings, building groups or the village as a whole, will be based on this understanding of the past and present character of the village. In this way, we can manage future change to ensure it makes a positive contribution towards preserving or enhancing its special character.



York Rd – Beech Cottage & Church Walk Cottage

# Objectives

The principal objectives of the Appraisal are:

- to define and record the special character and interest of Bilton in Ainsty;
- to raise public awareness of the aims and objectives of the Conservation Area designation and stimulate their involvement in the protection of its character;
- to identify what is worthy of preservation to aid understanding;
- to assess the action that may be necessary to safeguard this special interest;
- to identify opportunities for enhancement.

## 2. Planning policy context

- 2.1 Local authorities have a duty to designate 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' as conservation areas under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The same Act also requires local planning authorities to periodically review conservation areas.
- 2.2 Government guidance on all development affecting conservation areas is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). PPG 15 advises local authorities to define the elements that make the special character or appearance of conservation areas in order to provide a sound basis on which to develop local planning policies, preservation or enhancement strategies and to make development control decisions.
- 2.3 In determining planning applications for development within conservation areas and applications for conservation area consent, the Council will give considerable weight to the content of conservation area character appraisals. The consideration of

proposals in the context of the description contained in these appraisals will be an important factor in deciding whether a proposal has an adverse affect on the character and appearance of the conservation area, and therefore, whether it is contrary to saved Local Plan Policy HD3, which is the key policy for the control of development in conservation areas. The scope of Policy HD3 also covers development proposals outside conservation areas which would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.

- 2.4 Involving the community and raising public awareness is an integral part of the appraisal process and needs to be approached in a pro-active and innovative way. Community involvement helps to bring valuable public understanding and 'ownership' to proposals for the area. A report included in the appendix details how the local community has been involved and the contribution it has made to this Appraisal.

### 3. Historic development & archaeology

3.1 The name Bilton is Anglo Saxon in origin and refers to the personal name Bila, Billa or Bilo, and 'ton' which means enclosure or farmstead. Hence Bilton means 'Bila's farmstead'. 'Ainsty' is the name of the wapentake located to the west of York bounded by the Rivers Nidd, Wharfe and Ouse which formed part of York's hinterland. Carved stones which form an incomplete Saxon Cross arrangement embedded inside the west wall of St Helen's Church are the only surviving pieces of built fabric dating from the Anglo Saxon era in the village. This said there is evidence of a much earlier settlement in the area, as a Late Bronze Age hoard was discovered on Bilton Moor.

3.2 Following the Norman Conquest, Bilton in Ainsty was recorded in the Domesday Book (1086) as 'Biletone' of the 'Annesti'. It was one of sixty-seven manors owned by Osbern de Arches. In c.1160 Bertram Haget (who was more than likely lord of the manor of Bilton at the time) donated the site of Syningthwaite Priory to the west of Bilton in Ainsty to Cistercian nuns with the approval of Roger de Mowbray, after whose family the Vale of Mowbray is named. The name 'Syningthwaite' is derived from Old Scandinavian meaning 'disputed land'. It could be speculated that the site's disputed ownership led to it being donated to the church as an acceptable

resolution. The Priory was occupied by a prioress and nuns and was closely related to the Church of St Helen which was built or rebuilt when Syningthwaite Priory was established. Gundreda Haget, the daughter of Bertram Haget, donated funds to the Priory so it could pay for the living of a vicar for the Church.



The Church of St Helen.

3.3 In 1293 the prioress made over St Helen's Church to Archbishop Romanus in York who founded the prebend of Bilton in St Peter's. In 1295 the Archbishop ordained a perpetual vicarage of Bilton in the patronage of the prioress and convent. The prebend was centred on what was referred to as a 'mansion house' on the site of Bilton Grange to the north of the village. The establishment of the prebend involved the transfer of church and priory lands to York Diocese which significantly

reduced the income of Syningthwaite Priory, which was substantially in debt by the time it was suppressed in 1535. At the time of the dissolution there were nine nuns, the prioress plus eight servants and labourers resident at Syningthwaite Priory. The surviving part of the Priory complex is believed to have been the prioress' lodging or a refectory.

3.4 From the Norman era onwards Bilton in Ainsty would have been an intensively farmed area. Its occupants would have been tenant farmers paying rent to the lord of the manor of Bilton. Other farmland related to the prebend and priory. The church register goes back to 1571, the year when Parish Registers were first instituted. An entry in 1644 records the burial of a number of soldiers, including two captains, who died at the nearby Battle of Marston Moor. After the battle, the church was used as a prison to hold royalist captives. It is believed that soldiers guarding the prisoners scratched a derogatory portrait of the defeated King Charles I on the wall near the main doorway. By this time the Snawsell family were lords of the manor and the occupiers of Bilton Hall. The Hall and title was sold to a Mr Iveson of Leeds c.1700 before passing to the Plumer family later in the same century. It is likely that the Plumers

rebuilt Bilton Hall, its coach house and stables, and other outbuildings over the course of the eighteenth century. They then turned their attention to the welfare of the manor's inhabitants. Hall Plumer founded a parochial school on Tockwith Lane to serve Bilton in Ainsty, Bickerton and Tockwith in 1801. In the nineteenth century the line of the Plumer family ceased. The manor of Bilton passed to Andrew Fountayne-Wilson-Montagu of Ingmanthorpe Hall, west of Bickerton.

3.5 Over the course of the nineteenth century there were several key changes to the built form of the village. A Wesleyan Chapel with attached Sunday school was built on Church Lane in 1845. Around this time, The Old Vicarage, a late Georgian construction, was superseded by a larger, grander new vicarage (Bilton Brow) next door. In c.1865 Bilton Hall was remodelled and extended with new window openings and bay windows added, plus a new lodge

to York Road, while the Church of St Helen was restored 1869-71 by George Gilbert Scott, one of the pre-eminent Gothic revivalists and church restorers of the Victorian era.

3.6 Despite these additions and improvements, Bilton in Ainsty remained a compact, self-contained farming village. Ainsty Farm, Bilton Grove, Chestnut House Farm, Village Farm and Westlands Farm constituted most of the built up area of the village. Kelly's Directory from the 1890s states that the village's chief crops were wheat, barley, oats, beans and turnips. The same Directory lists ten farmers; a cow keeper; a publican and shopkeeper (at Chequers); a shoe maker; a grocer, shoe maker and letter carrier; and a post master and shoemaker in Bilton in Ainsty. Today the village retains one working farm within its confines, a pub, a cricket club (founded in 1932) and an active church.



## 4. Location & setting

4.1 Bilton in Ainsty is situated approximately six miles west of the outskirts of York and approximately four miles east of Wetherby. The distance from Harrogate is approximately eleven miles.

4.2 The village stands on a slightly elevated area of land near the watershed of river systems which flow into the River Nidd to the north, and the Ouse to the south. The landform itself, however, is gently rolling, allowing long-distance views in all directions. The land around Bilton in Ainsty consists chiefly of intensively farmed arable fields with scattered hedge boundaries and occasionally hedge trees. Built development within view consists of scattered farmsteads. Although the



Much of Bilton in Ainsty's setting is intensively farmed arable land.

landscape is highly uniform, it changes significantly with the seasons and cropping rotations.

4.2 The open arable fields form a constant backcloth to the Conservation Area. The small cluster of dwellings at Moor Lane and distant views of mature woodland at Nova Scotia Wood and The Loft are the only exceptions. From within the village, footpaths provide links to Tockwith to the north, Healaugh to the southeast, Wighill to the south and Syningthwaite to the southwest.

## 5. Landscape analysis

- 5.1 The general landscape character of the village of Bilton in Ainsty contrasts with the surrounding intensively farmed arable which forms most of its setting. The village includes one of two areas of parkland in the locality at Bilton Park (remains of the park at Bickerton Grange still exist). The interaction of the topography, trees and built form create an enclosed central 'village space' with occasional but important views from the centre out to the surrounding countryside. The sense of self-containment with strong links to the countryside is enhanced by the fact that the village is situated on a dead end street and the built up area of the village is set well away from the main thoroughfare, York Road.

### Parkland



The open and wooded landscaped gardens at Bilton Park contribute significantly to the conservation area's character.

- 5.2 Bilton Park accounts for over half of the land within the conservation area. It is a key open space of heritage value. The

general layout and landscaping of the Park as we know it probably dates from the early-to-mid eighteenth century when Bilton Hall was rebuilt. At this time there was a fashion to set halls and country houses in large landscaped grounds which were designed and managed to look like an attractive natural landscape. The principal rooms of Bilton Hall faced south over open parkland and a substantial fishpond. There would also have been long distance views across Wharfedale with woodland at The Loft and Wighill Park important features in the landscape. The land within the Park would have been grazed rather than arable, unlike the surrounding landscape. The Hall was screened from the northwest by trees planted at the Park's northwest entrance. To the north the coach houses and stables hid the Hall from view and to the east an orchard and a walled kitchen garden hid the Hall from view from within the village. The 'Church Walk' seems to have been a key part of the Park. It was a route running from the Hall and around the edge of the open field to the north of Bilton Hall and led via a gate onto Church Street directly opposite one of the gates into St Helen's churchyard. This would have been the route taken by the lord and his family to church. Other features in the Park include an ice house to the east of the stables and an enigmatic building described on maps as a roundhouse. This small thatch-roofed building was either a folly or a game larder. It is located well away from buildings like the coach houses, stables, ice house and

kitchen garden, suggesting it was more than a functional building only used by servants and estate workers. Over the course of the 19th century the eastern perimeter of the Park was planted with trees to screen the Hall and Church Walk from view from Church Street and Bilton Grove Farm. In addition the entrance from York Road was made more formal with a new lodge, gateway and tree planting.



The roundhouse is visible in the centre of this photograph of Bilton Park.

- 5.3 Today much of Bilton Park remains managed parkland with open areas of grass, tree planted areas, ponds and a full complement of ancillary buildings and structures. The most significant changes have been the change of use of the large northeastern and southwestern fields from grazing to arable farmland. While this use retains the general openness of these fields, it reduces the contrast between the Park and the surrounding farmland. Fortunately the perimeter and individual trees survive and help to uphold the Park's

general character. The use of part of the open parkland as a cricket ground since the 1930s has barely impacted the Park's character, whilst the lodge to the Church Street entrance is a neutral addition. The perimeter screen planting remains in place, with the exception of where 50-58 Church Street has been built. The Park remains a private space, but it is one of clear heritage value. The Park can still be understood and appreciated as the park of a country house and makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## Key Views



The grassed verges, hedges and garden trees give the heart of the village a soft, tranquil character.

- 5.4 Within the heart of the village, views along Church Street are enclosed by mature trees and boundary hedges. Boundary walls and hedges give the street a strongly defined edge. Buildings are generally set back from the street behind a verge and front garden. This means the contribution made to the street scene by trees, hedges and boundary features is particularly important. The general character of the village core is a tranquil, self-contained space, but this feeling is offset to a degree by important views of the countryside through the spaces between buildings

and gaps in the vegetation, such as to either side of Ainsty Farm Cottages, to the west of Chestnut House Farm, or to the immediate north of The Old Chapel. At the fringes of the built up area views open up as the environment changes from village to open fields. This is particularly so south of The Chequers and on the footpath to the south of Bilton Grove.



Gaps between buildings and hedges allow important views of Bilton in Ainsty's rural setting

- 5.5 On the stretch of Church Street linking the village with York Road the hedge and tree planted boundaries channel views of the bellcote of St Helen's Church to the north, Chestnut house to the south and the gateway and lodge of Bilton Park. At York Road St Helen's Church is a landmark building and gives a strong edge to the Conservation Area.



Vista along Church Street by Bilton Park

- 5.6 Bilton Hall is largely hidden from view from the public highway in most directions, but crucially there are good views of its formal southern elevation to be had from the footpath which borders the southern edge of Bilton Park. The stables and coach house are largely obscured from view by the Hall itself and later additions to the group.

## Significant boundary features

- 5.7 The intensive arable farming around Bilton in Ainsty has resulted in the merging of fields and the creation of large, rectangular enclosures. This has reduced the overall amount of hedgerows in the area, and where hedgerows exist they are fragmented and undermaintained. Boundary trees and individual trees in fields are few and far between to the north of the village, but more exist to the south, where the land is slightly hillier and the field pattern has been altered less.
- 5.8 Within Bilton in Ainsty the consistent, well-tended hedge boundaries to the north edge of Bilton Park and at St Helen's Church give an immediate contrast with the village's setting. Along Church Street, the plantations within Bilton Park and the mixed species hedge to the east side give the street a tunnel-like character and channel views. Similarly, at the entrance to Bilton Park, boundary walls and tree planting frame vistas.

## Geology

- 5.9 The village stands on Sherwood sandstone solid geology overlain with sandy till and till drift geology. The soils are a mixture of

deep, fine loamy or coarse loamy, slowly permeable and well-drained brown soils.

## Landmark trees & woodland

- 5.10 The presence of tree plantations and garden trees in the conservation area is one of the key characteristics which differentiates the village from its surroundings and contributes to its enclosed character. The most substantial and significant groupings of trees are the planted lines and small clumps of woodland at the eastern, southeastern and northwestern edges of Bilton Park. Other trees within the Park have been planted to line the drives and frame views from the Hall. These plantations are part of the historical landscape and emphasise the private nature of Bilton Park.
- 5.11 Within the heart of the village the tree canopy contributes to the intimate character. A line of trees emphasises the bend of Church Street by Chestnut House and closes off views. The group of trees to the east and south of Bilton Brow performs a similar function on the other key bend of Church Street. Individual garden trees such as those at The Nook, Bilton Brow and The Paddock tower over the buildings and enhance the sense of enclosure.

## Strategic pedestrian routes

- 5.12 While the routes through Bilton in Ainsty for the motorist are limited to east-west via York Road because both Church Street and Moor Lane are dead ends, the local network of footpaths provides important north-south routes for the pedestrian. Church Street is the only route through most of the conservation area. It is not

until the heart of the village is reached that there is a choice of routes, both of which are green lanes. One route is a footpath to the southwest which eventually leads to Syningthwaite Farm. The other provides access to the southeast through the fields to the nearby villages of Wighill and Healaugh.

- 5.13 Both of these paths are well used and give Bilton in Ainsty strong links to its arable setting. They form part of the ancient network or routes through the area, which has changed little over time. This north-south link through Bilton in Ainsty is completed by Moor Lane which leads from the north of the conservation area through to Tockwith. On York Road a footpath by the road leads to Bickerton and provides an alternative route to Tockwith. As it reaches Tockwith the route is named Kirk (i.e Church) Lane suggesting worshippers from Tockwith used it to get to St Helen's Church in Bilton in Ainsty. There is no footpath along York Road to the east towards Long Marston.



This green lane leading to Healaugh is part of the ancient network of routes through the area.

## Boundary walls

- 5.14 Boundary walls are a prominent feature in the heart of the village. On the most part they are red brick with gently pitched sandstone copings, with pyramidal corner copings a recurring detail. The status of some of the buildings within the village is communicated through different boundary features. Examples include the red brick wall to The Old Chapel with pitched clay copings and gothic style machicolated brickwork; the high brick boundary with



Three different boundary walls all on Church Street: The Old Chapel, Chestnut House and Ainsty Cottage respectively.

shallow, moulded copings to Bilton Brow; and the brick piers linked by brick walls which form downward arcs in front of Chestnut House. At the bend of Church Street by The Paddock and Ainsty Cottage old sandstone boundaries and walls which incorporate sandstone, brick and rounded, cobble-like stones survive.

- 5.15 Where there are no boundary walls in front of buildings, neatly trimmed hedges perform the same function and help to delineate the street space. To Bilton Park and the agricultural fields a mixture of timber post and rail fences and hedges define the boundaries.

### Grass verges

- 5.16 Soft green verges are a consistent feature along Church Street and York Road. The verges to Church Street are particularly wide and in the heart of the village they



The wide grassed verges are a constant feature of the street scene of the Conservation Area.

help to form a space which is almost like a village green in character. The verges tend to lack a kerb edge to the road and are open grassed spaces. Where kerbs and garden planting have been introduced, the overall effect detracts from the street scene. The verges soften street spaces and contribute to the rural character of the village.

## 6. Form & character of buildings

6.1 There are ten individual listed buildings in Bilton in Ainsty that are included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest:

**Church of St Helen,  
Church Street .....Grade I**

**Mounting block approx.  
5m west of the Church  
of St Helen .....Grade II**

**War Memorial Cross west  
of the Church of St Helen ...Grade II**

**The Old Vicarage,  
Church Street .....Grade II**

**Bilton Brow,  
Church Street .....Grade II**

**Bilton Hall, Yorkroad .....Grade II**

**Stable block approx.  
50m north of Bilton Hall.....Grade II**

**Folly or game larder  
approx. 200m west of  
Bilton Hall .....Grade II**

**Beech Cottage and  
Church Walk Cottage .....Grade II**

**Milepost approx. 400m  
west of turning to Bilton,  
York Road.....Grade II**

6.2 In addition there are a number of unlisted historic buildings, which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and are of particular interest locally. These buildings have been identified during the public consultation and, as recommended in PPG15, are recorded on the concept

map. There is a general presumption that buildings of local interest within the conservation area will be protected from demolition and the Borough Council will be especially vigilant when considering applications for alteration or extension.



The Church of St Helen; the building as we know it is a mixture of older fabric mixed with later alterations carried out by George Gilbert Scott in the 1860s.

6.3 The Church of St Helen was built in the mid-to-late twelfth century and is the oldest building in the conservation area. Its window openings are a mixture of fifteenth and seventeenth century openings, though the cusp-headed traceried windows on the east elevation are certainly the work of George Gilbert Scott who restored the Church in 1869-71. Scott worked on around one thousand buildings during his long career, many of which were church restorations. A scholar of medieval and in particular Gothic architecture, Scott's general approach was to determine the predominant era or style of a church and to apply this consistently to the building, even if it meant the ruthless removal of features from other eras. It is unclear to

what extent Scott altered the form and mass of the Church but the result is a pleasing arrangement of masses and openings which gives a picturesque quality. The Church is built of irregularly coursed limestone blocks, rubble and cobbles. The depth of coursing generally decreases higher up the walls. The irregularly spaced buttresses are the work of Scott, as is the oversailing red clay tile roof. The gabled bellcote at the apex of the western gable of the Church is a prominent feature of views along Church Street and York Road and was added during the restoration. The porch is on the south elevation and its doorway is set inside a series of three chamfered voussoired round arches, two of which are carried by rounded colonnettes.

6.4 to the immediate west of the Church are two other Listed Buildings. The War Memorial Cross dates from 1920 and is made of Portland stone on a limestone base. Its square plinth is inscribed with the names of the fallen on each side, above which is a carved wreath to each side. The plinth carries a stylised depiction of Christ on the cross, above which is a gabled roof. The limestone mounting block nearby consists of a narrow platform flanked by either side by four steps. The mounting block probably dates from the seventeenth century and is believed to have been part of the base of a freestanding bell tower for the Church. The mounting block is set among gravestones which have been laid flat as part of the reordering of the churchyard or possibly for health and safety reasons.

6.5 Across Church Street Beech Cottage was built as a symmetrical three-bay late Georgian house and Church Walk Cottage was a slightly later addition which disrupts the symmetry. Both houses are built of squared limestone with a slate roof and eight-over-eight sash windows. The building's architecture and position in one corner of Bilton Park mean its original function can be speculated. Perhaps it was the house of the steward to Bilton Park or perhaps some of the rooms were used by the lord and his family before and after attending church.



Beech Cottage and Church Walk Cottage.



Bilton Hall. The later bay windows are just visible on the left, and the coach house is visible beyond the Hall.

6.6 In the centre of Bilton Park, Bilton Hall was built in the early to mid-eighteenth century, but was significantly remodelled and enlarged c.1865. Details like the flat, grid-like elevations with regularly spaced openings and the central Greek Revival style pediment doorcase with fluted Doric columns are from the original early Georgian build. Features like the canted bay windows on the west elevation, the north wing and the one-over-one pane sash windows are all from the later remodelling. It is thought that in order to accommodate the large replacement windows, the original stone surrounds were removed and the surrounding stonework altered. To conceal these scars, the building was rendered. The render is lined to make it look as though the building is faced in ashlar.

6.7 The coach house and stable block to the north is a substantial brick built and slate roofed construction. It dates from the late eighteenth century and its symmetrical elevation and arcade-style ground floor brickwork were all intended to complement the balanced Classical architecture of Bilton Hall. The different masses of the tall, central gabled coach house flanked by three low bay of stabling and terminating in two storey helm-roofed pavilion style buildings give this building a striking appearance.

6.8 Some 200m to the west, the folly or game larder in Bilton Park is a contemporary brick build to the stables. It is 6m in diameter and has a conical thatched roof. Like the stables, this building incorporates brick piers to separate recessed bays of brick. Also within Bilton Park but not Listed are the red brick walls of the kitchen

garden, an ice house, the cricket pavilion and two entrance lodges. The earlier of the lodges is the Gate House on York Road which probably dates from 1865. Like Bilton Hall it is rendered and slate roofed. Its steep gables, overhanging roof and round-headed windows all reflect architectural fashions of the time. The Gate House is fronted by sweeping boundary walls and squat rusticated ashlar gate piers. The other building, The Lodge on Church Street is a recent build, but the quality of the materials and details such as timber sash windows suggest at first glance an early nineteenth century building.



The Gate House, York Road

6.9 In the heart of the village, the pointed arch sash windows of The Old Vicarage make it stand out from its neighbours. The building dates from the late eighteenth century and it is essentially a typical symmetrical Georgian three bay villa, but the window openings and fanlight have been styled to give a 'Gothick' rather than Classical appearance as found at Beech Cottage. The Georgian 'Gothick' was simply the borrowing of Gothic details like arched windows and planting them onto a contemporary building. The later Victorian

Gothic revival was more scholarly and inventive to give more strongly stylised buildings. Next door is the early-to-mid nineteenth century replacement Vicarage, now a house called Bilton Brow. The house is grand, but is of no particular style. Its ground floor windows are set in architrave stone surrounds with projecting sills carried on brackets. The ground floor windows, which are eight-over-sixteen pane sashes are significantly deeper than the first floor eight-over-twelve sashes to the upper floor. The arrangement of the windows on the main elevation is almost Classical Georgian, but the symmetry is disrupted by one of the ground floor windows being a mullioned pair.



The Old Vicarage. The 'Gothick' style of this Georgian era house precedes the frillier Gothic Revival style which was popular during the Victorian era.

- 6.10 The key characteristics of the local architectural style, based on the principal elevations of the remaining unaltered buildings are:

### General form

- 6.11 Buildings are orientated with main frontages to the street. Roofs are gabled and the ridges run parallel to the front elevation. The presence of verges and

front gardens mean that virtually all buildings are set back from the street. A significant number of buildings have hipped roofs. Roof pitches are moderate; there are almost no examples of steeply pitched roofs or shallow roof pitches. The gable ends of buildings are almost always symmetrical with front and rear eaves at the same height. Buildings are predominantly two storeys in height with outbuildings being one or two storeys in height. Buildings tend to be detached and well spaced, with the larger dwellings and farmhouses incorporating outbuildings situated to the side or rear. Chestnut House Farm, Village Farm, Bilton Grove and Bilton Hall all incorporate a courtyard layout of buildings. Post Office Row and Westlands Farm/Village Farm are the only historical examples of different buildings forming rows in the Conservation Area.



Westlands Farm and Village Farm. These buildings are typical of the built form of Bilton in Ainsty.

### Materials

- 6.12 The predominant facing material of buildings in Bilton in Ainsty is red-brown brick, with a minority of buildings having rendered elevations, and a few buildings are made of coursed limestone. There is roughly an even number of buildings with red clay pantile roofs and buildings with

diminishing Welsh slate roofs. Some of the farm buildings have corrugated roofs and the conservation area contains one example each of flat red clay tiles and stone slates. The predominant window and door material is timber. Boundary walls are predominantly red-brown brick with stone copings.



Ainsty Farm is constructed of traditional natural materials which are the most commonly used in the Conservation Area.

### Architectural Detailing

- 6.13 The predominant architectural style is the vernacular, though there are a significant number of larger houses with designs which reflect different Georgian and Victorian fashions. Despite their different ages, these larger houses all have a grid-like layout of openings across three or four bays, minimal decoration and well-proportioned elevations in common. Examples of this type of building include Bilton Hall, Beech Cottage, Church Walk Cottage, Bilton Brow, Bilton Grove Farm, Ainsty Farm and Chestnut House. The

'Gothick' style The Old Vicarage shares many of these characteristics and like the only other Gothic style building in the Conservation Area, The Old Chapel, the decoration is never complex or ostentatious, with Gothic detailing limited to pointed arch windows.



Chestnut House exhibits the grid-like layout of openings typically found on the larger houses in the conservation area. The roof detailing is also typical of the Conservation Area.

## Roof Detailing

6.14 Most buildings have brick chimneystacks situated at the apex of the roof either at the gable or part way along the ridgeline. In a couple of cases buildings have chimneys which rise from eaves level and where buildings have hipped roofs, chimneys emerge partway down the pitch of the roof. The gable flues are generally built within the thickness of the external wall and not expressed on the gable wall. A consistent aspect of the roofs in Bilton in Ainsty is that they are not cluttered by dormer windows or rooflights, giving a strongly traditional roofscape.

## External Walls

6.15 The walls generally lack adornment or elaboration. Eaves details and the surrounds to windows are simple, with elaboration limited to doorcases and fanlights where these exist. The window openings are of simple rectangular form with a vertical emphasis. Lintels are flush with the wall and frequently consist of rubbed brick or stone voussoirs. A minority of windows have cambered heads and a few buildings incorporate pointed arch or semi-circular headed windows. Sills are typically made of stone and are shallow and project slightly from the wall. Regardless of age, the frontages to traditional buildings in Bilton in Ainsty tend to be flat and lack features or details such as porches or bay windows that add complexity or clutter to the elevation.



Village Farm is a good example of the simple, unadorned, but well proportioned building frontages found in Bilton in Ainsty.

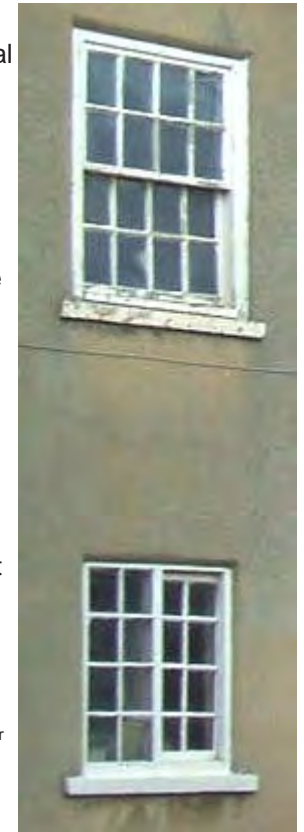
## Windows

6.16 The majority of the buildings in Bilton in Ainsty date from the eighteenth century

onwards and were built to accommodate vertically sliding sash windows. Westlands Farm is one of few examples of the broad window opening made for sideways sliding Yorkshire sash windows. Very few dormer windows and rooflights are evident in the village. A proliferation of these features would be detrimental to the historic roofscape.

6.17 There is also evidence of traditional windows having been replaced by standard factory made PVCu and timber casement windows in some properties. These alterations erode the character and appearance of the village and consideration should be given to installing traditional windows once more as part of a sympathetic enhancement project.

Lower floor sideways sliding Yorkshire sash and upper floor vertical sliding sash at Chestnut House.



## 7. Character area analysis

7.1 This section examines the buildings and spaces within the Conservation Area in greater detail looking at sub areas. The aim is to identify the special character of the area that provides Bilton in Ainsty with its particular 'sense of place' and to summarise the details and features that are important. The sub areas can be defined according to historical development, building form and uses and location. These areas are:

**Area 1: The Village Core**

**Area 2: Bilton Park & Bilton Grove**

**Area 3: St Helen's Church & York Road**

### The Village Core

7.2 The core of Bilton in Ainsty is set around a short, winding stretch of Church Street. At either end of this stretch are the old routes to Tockwith (via Church Street and Moor Lane), Syningthwaite, Wiggill and Healaugh. This stretch of Church Street forms the heart of the village and historically four working farms (Ainsty Farm, Chestnut House Farm, Village Farm and Westlands Farm) were clustered around this stretch of road, with a fifth farm (Bilton Grove) situated just off. Church Street is bounded to either side by broad soft-edged grassed verges and its extent is well defined by boundary walls or hedges. The bends in the street, the buildings and vegetation close off most views from this central space giving it a detached, self contained character. The contribution of hedges, trees and boundaries is such that

some buildings, like The Paddock, Bilton Brow, Ainsty Cottage and The Nook are partially obscured from view, lending the space a tranquil, rural character. The K6 telephone kiosk at one end of the street is an important component of the street scene and is the most prominent piece of street furniture.



This is a vista through the built up core of Bilton in Ainsty, but it is features like boundary hedges and trees which dominate views.

7.3 Because of its location on the outside of the bend, Chestnut House is a landmark building which retains much of its traditional character. Its formal frontage is complemented by that of The Old Vicarage, which is also prominent in the street scene. The well-proportioned, austere frontage of Ainsty Farm provides a further formal house frontage across Church Street. All three of these buildings have outbuildings which are important to Bilton in Ainsty's sense of place. Chestnut House Farm remains a working farm, but crucially retains its old courtyard arrangement of barns, stables, stores and other outbuildings. These red brick

buildings are of high group value and retain many of their original openings including ventilators and what appear to be rows of dove holes. One of the principal outbuildings to Ainsty Farm has been converted to a dwelling (The Nook) and to the rear of the farmhouse a limestone rubble barn and low brick outbuilding survive. The Old Vicarage retains its former coach house, which in terms of its massing is a scaled down version of the central portion of the coach house and stables to Bilton Hall.



The survival of historic farm buildings and outbuildings such as this courtyard at Chestnut Farm is key to the Conservation Area's character.



Outbuildings add to the grain and visual interest of the Conservation Area.

7.4 As Church Street turns to the south and leads out of the village, its character changes. The verges become much narrower and on one side of the street the buildings at Westlands Farm and Village Farm form a continuous hard frontage. On the opposite side of the street boundary walls, tall trees and the large roadside mass of The Chequers add to the feeling of enclosure. On the east side of the street, the sequence of buildings is farmhouse, barn, farmhouse, barn. Each farmhouse is a modest three bay red-brown brick house fronted by a small front garden bounded by stone coped brick boundary walls. To each farmhouse there is a lower side offshut. The barns face away from the street and present blank walls fronted by deeper sections of verge to Church Street. These buildings are of significant group value and the survival of freestanding and detached outbuildings to the rear enhances this value.

7.5 Across the street vernacular style houses at Ainsty Cottage and Pine Trees, which are set back from the street, alternate with buildings that face directly only the street. These latter buildings are the single storey red brick outbuilding, which was possibly formerly part of Westlands Farm, and The Chequers. The Chequers is a substantial rendered building which retains sash windows. It appears that the gable fronted building at the end of the row was the original pub, with a large extension to the south possibly designed to echo the row of three cottages which once stood on this site.



The southern stretch of Church Street is the only part where buildings significantly enclose the street space.

7.6 The back lane off Church Street passes a 1970s bungalow, The Paddock, which is all but hidden from view by hedges and walls. On the north side Ainsty Farm Cottages and Post Office Row form a united but more workaday group of buildings compared to those on Church Street. Ainsty Farm Cottages are a mid-20th century replacement of the original farm cottages. They are in a vernacular style and use traditional materials though their footprint and massing are of modern houses. Post Office Row is the only terrace of houses in the village and is simply detailed. At the end of the lane Grove Cottage is quite modern in appearance, though maps suggest it dates from before 1850. This rendered house has a red clay pantile roof. Its original function is unclear but in recent decades it has been used as the farmhouse to the relatively recently built Grove Cottage Farm located just outside of the village.

7.7 Also off Church Lane, Westlands is a small cul-de-sac of nine detached two-storey dwellings. The overall arrangement of the street is like an open plan suburban housing estate rather than part of a



These fairly recent houses are modelled on the former farm buildings at Bilton Grove.

village. This feeling is enhanced by the landscaping and the proliferation of porches and lean-to offshuts to the fronts of the dwellings. Another recent housing development at 50-56 Church Street is modelled on the farm buildings at Bilton Grove. The result is a less suburban looking development, but the planting up of the grassed verges to Church Street reduces the effect. Across the street Sykebeck House and Forge House are two redbrick suburban style dwellings which adjoin The Old Chapel.

7.8 The Old Chapel was built in 1865 as a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and Sunday school with the chapel occupying the front gabled range and the Sunday school occupying the rear range at a right angle. The chapel closed in the early 1970s and was converted to a dwelling in the late 1970s. The conversion generally retains the building's former character, with the tall windows to the halls being infilled with brick panels to conceal a new floor level.



The former Wesleyan Chapel is evidence of the village's social history.



This footpath links Church Street to Syningthwaite via the southern edge of Bilton Park. It is an important link between the village and countryside.



Bilton Grove Farm (left) and the former farm buildings.

## Bilton Park & Bilton Grove

7.9 Bilton Park has always been a private, inaccessible place with few views of the Hall itself from the public highway. The Park and Hall can feel quite detached from the village, but there is a clear historical relationship and the fringes of the Park make significant contributions to the street scene of the Conservation Area. The best views of the Hall can be had from the footpath which leads out of Bilton in Ainsty between Chestnut House Farm and The Old Granary. This path leads from Church Street past a bench, signpost and bin into an open field. This change helps to integrate Bilton in Ainsty with its rural setting. The field is well screened to the south by a dense boundary hedge.

7.10 From this field it is possible to see the rear elevations of Bilton Grove, The Granary and other converted farm buildings, which are only accessible via a private road. These buildings were all part of what was a working farm. Bilton Grove is an early-to-mid nineteenth century house possibly built with an attached cottage. Its front elevation shares the grid-like layout of sash windows found on similar houses on Church Street. To the immediate east, two of three sides of the former farmyard remain. These red-brown brick, hipped roofed buildings are a mixture of two and three storeys, with the northern range, a low single storey mass with a two storey central bay with an arched cart entrance at ground floor forming the focal point. The artificial pantile roofs, white rainwater goods and domestic style windows give these buildings the look of new builds rather than a conversion. To the east, the Old Granary is another former farm building which is now a dwelling. It is brick built and retains large segmental arch openings at ground floor.

7.11 Continuing along the path out of the village, the character changes when leaving the conservation area, with views of the countryside opening up. It is from this path along the southern edge of Bilton Park that the best views of the Hall and Park can be had though breaks in the boundary planting. The symmetrical five-bay southern front is the key feature of views north. In the central bay the broad doorway with segmental arch fanlight and doorcase is topped by a semi-circular arch window. The row of three bay windows to the west elevation is visible. These were added when the building was extended and remodelled in the 1860s. The fishpond cannot be seen and the use of the field nearest the path for agriculture has changed the character of the Park, but at least the Park's open character is upheld.



Bilton Park and hall as seen from the footpath along its southern edge.

### St Helen's Church & York Road

7.12 The long low mass of the Church of St Helen is typical of the older northern English churches. The nave and its Victorian bellcote are a landmark on York Road and announce the entrance to the village. The rounded and squared limestone walling also makes the Church stand out in an area where brick is the predominant building material. In front of the western gable the smooth white Portland stone and daintiness of the form and carving of the War Memorial Cross creates a pleasing contrast with the rugged, ancient character of the wall behind. Neatly kept hedges bound the churchyard itself. It has been re-ordered, with the old gravestones removed or laid in front of the War Memorial.



The War Memorial and Church of St Helen's are both very much of their time, but the quality of each makes their contrast a positive one.

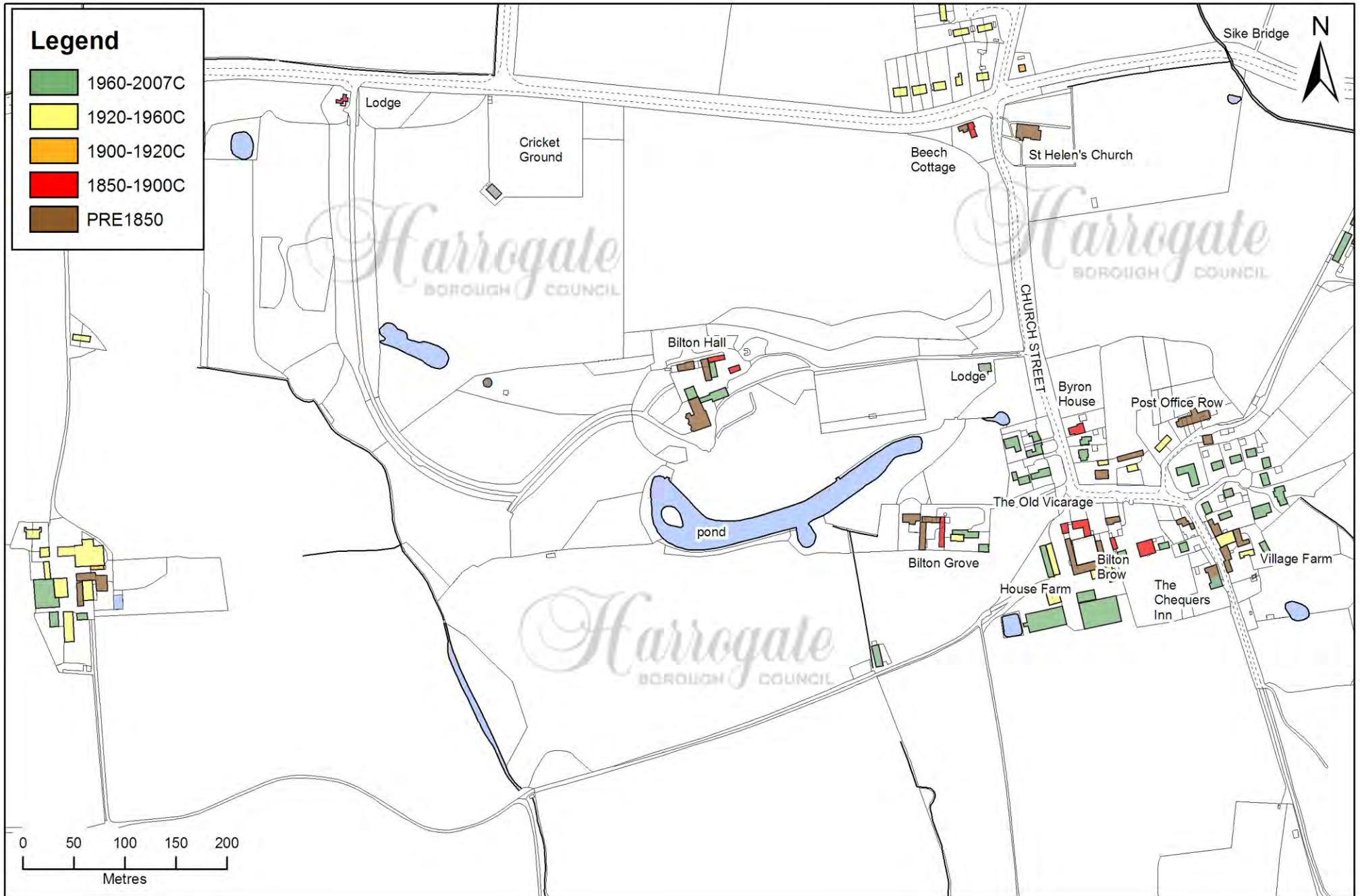
7.13 The lack of buildings along this side of York Road also makes Beech Cottage & Church Walk Cottage and The Gate House at the northern entrance to Bilton Park landmark buildings. These buildings are good examples of their building types: Georgian house and Victorian lodge respectively. The character of York Road is defined by

its verged edge and the continuous hedge boundary to Bilton Park to the south, and open, hedge-lined fields to the north. Unfortunately more recent coniferous planning screens the Hall from view from the road. The large northeastern field is now arable farmland rather than parkland, which keeps the space open, but is markedly different in appearance. An easily overlooked feature of York Road is the small cast iron milepost, which is a Grade II Listed Building. It dates from the late nineteenth century and gives the distances to York, Wetherby, Collingham and Leeds.



The trees in Bilton Park create a decisive boundary between the conservation area and its setting.

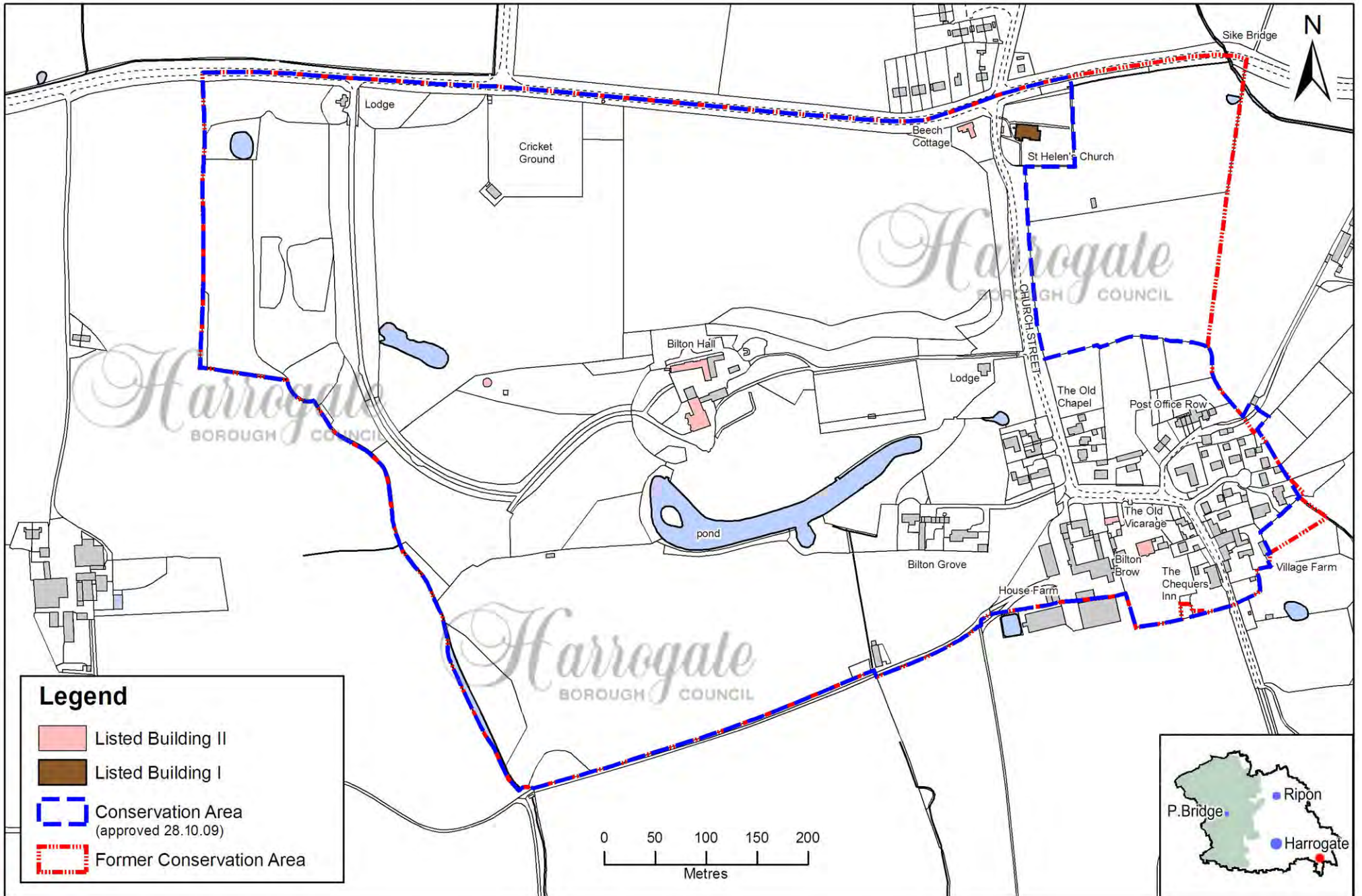
**Map 1: Historical development of Bilton in Ainsty**



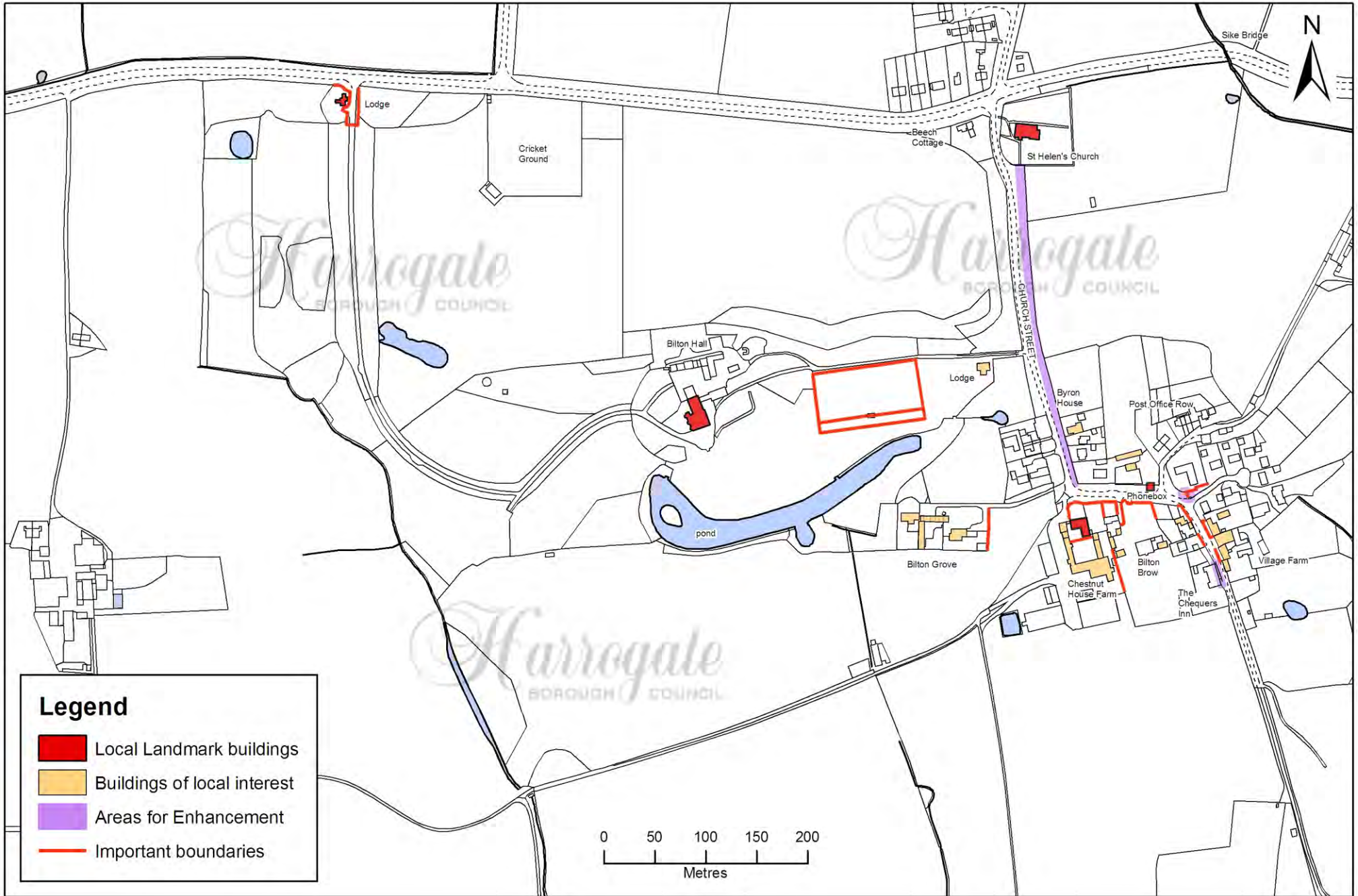
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Map 2: Bilton in Ainsty Conservation Area boundary

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### Map 3: Analysis & concepts



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# Map 4: Landscape character analysis

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# Appendix A

## 1. Management strategy

The purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Strategy is to provide a clear and structured approach to development and alterations which impact on Bilton in Ainsty Conservation Area. The special qualities, which “it is desirable to preserve or enhance”, have been identified in the Appraisal.

Although Bilton in Ainsty is an attractive village, it does not follow that all buildings and spaces within the Conservation Area necessarily contribute to that attractiveness. Ultimately the aim is to (a) explore whether there are any buildings or areas which are at odds with or spoil the character of the Conservation Area, and (b) to consider how the special character or distinctiveness, as defined in earlier sections of this document, might best be preserved or enhanced.

Clearly some of the ideas or suggestions will relate to buildings or land in private ownership. It is important to note that individual owners and/or the local community will not be under any obligation to make the changes or improvements suggested. However, they may be encouraged to think about the suggestions made, and once the Appraisal has been adopted, the findings and recommendations will be considered by the Borough Council in response to any applications for planning permission, listed building consent, conservation area consent and requests for grant aid.

## 2. Monitoring & review

The Borough Council is required to review its Conservation Areas on a regular basis, this may involve the designation of new Conservation Areas, the de-designation of areas that have lost their special character, or the extension of existing conservation areas. The special character of Bilton in Ainsty has been re-evaluated as part of the process of preparing the Character Appraisal and this contributes to the overall review.

Part of the review process involves the maintenance of a comprehensive and up to date photographic record to establish a visual survey of buildings of local interest in the Conservation Area. This record was compiled with the involvement of the community at the public consultation event.

## 3. Maintaining quality

To maintain the recognisable quality of Bilton in Ainsty Conservation Area and to ensure the highest quality of design, the Council will:

- From time to time review the character Appraisal and management strategy, which will act as a basis for development control decisions and the preparation of design briefs;
- Require all applications to include appropriate written information and legible, accurate and up to date, fully annotated scale drawings;
- Keep under review a list of buildings of local interest, that positively contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- Where appropriate prepare supplementary planning documents including design guidance and development briefs;
- Expect the historic elements which are essential parts of the special architectural character of the Conservation Area to be preserved, repaired and reinstated where appropriate.

## 4. Conservation Area boundary review

As part of the process of producing the Appraisal, the existing Conservation Area boundary was reviewed. The outcome of the public consultation event was that most people were happy with the Conservation Area as existing, but boundary amendments were suggested to make it smaller. The possible exclusion of these areas was determined on the basis of their “special architectural or historic interest the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

The first suggested boundary change by residents at the workshop was to exclude the two large arable fields which border the eastern side of Church Street as it runs between the Church and the village core. The reason was that these fields are not parkland and are no different than any other fields adjoining the village. A study of historic maps confirmed that these fields have never formed part of Bilton Park and a site survey

confirmed that these fields are intensively farmed arable land with intermittent hedge boundaries. The exclusion of these fields from the Conservation Area would not harm its special architectural or historic interest and would create a more logical boundary.



The fields to the east of the Church of St Helen are no different than any other fields in the vicinity of the village.

The second boundary change suggested by residents at the workshop involved the exclusion of two different but related sites. The first area was the field bounded by York Road to the north, Church Walk to the east, Bilton Hall, stables and drive to the south and the Cricket Club to the west. The second area was the field to the southwest of the fishpond in Bilton Park which is in the southwestern corner of the Conservation Area and west of Bilton Grove. The reason for these suggestions is that these fields are no longer parkland, but are arable farmland.

These two large fields are historically part of Bilton Park and appear to form part of the Park despite their change of use. Although the managed grassland has now been ploughed up and cultivated, the sense of openness remains and there are still key views to be had across the fields towards the buildings and plantations at Bilton Park. In addition both of these fields retain important groups of trees and hedges planted at their perimeter which are part of the historical landscaping of the Park and contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It would therefore be inappropriate to exclude these fields from the Conservation Area.

During consultation on the draft of this Appraisal, it was suggested to include the fields to the north and south of the village in the CA to prevent development. These agricultural fields are of no architectural or historic interest. It is, therefore, inappropriate to include them in the Conservation Area. Furthermore, the inclusion of these fields would not prevent development.

As part of the boundary review, the existing Conservation Area boundary was scrutinised on map and on site. Slight amendments have been made to ensure that the boundary follows physical property boundaries and does not cut through buildings or gardens. The areas where slight amendments were made are along the southern boundary of Bilton Brow and The Chequers to follow property boundaries; an adjustment so the boundary follows the rear garden boundaries of Village Farm and Nos. 8-9 Westlands; and the inclusion of all of the garden to Grove Cottage so that the boundary does not cut through the middle of it.

## 5. The Management of change

The special character and appearance of Bilton in Ainsty Conservation Area is vulnerable to erosion and significant harm through often well-intentioned but misguided alterations and inappropriate change.

Whilst there is scope for enhancement, there are no sites in the Conservation Area that could be considered to have a wholly negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area.

## 6. Opportunities for enhancement

Bilton in Ainsty is an attractive village, and most of the buildings are occupied and in good condition. There are, however, a number of opportunities for the enhancement of some areas as follows:

- The removal of inappropriate planting from the grass verges to give a traditional rural appearance. In some locations consideration should be given to removing concrete kerbs to reinstate the soft edge.
- Improvement and better maintenance of the footpath linking the village core with the Church in a manner which is appropriate to the Conservation Area.
- The re-use and repair of vacant or underused farm buildings and outbuildings.
- The protection of front gardens and a presumption against creating hard areas in front of houses and the demolition of front boundary walls.

- In some instances the reinstatement of traditional front boundary walls would enhance the street scene
- Removal of inappropriate, non-historical screen planting at Bilton Park
- Rationalisation of road signage and advertisements
- Consider repositioning telegraph poles and placing overhead cables underground.
- The reinstatement of appropriate traditional timber windows.
- Trees which make a particular contribution to the conservation area should be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (trees in conservation areas have a degree of protection).

### Existing buildings

The survey of the existing buildings within Bilton in Ainsty clearly identified that a distinctive character exists, although to some extent this has been eroded by subsequent alterations, which have not always recognised that distinctiveness. Over the past thirty years, public awareness and expectation of the planning system to protect the “familiar and cherished scene” has increased substantially. Additionally, there now exists a greater understanding of the impact which incremental change can have upon the distinctive character of historic areas. Options to safeguard and enhance the architectural character of Bilton in Ainsty could include some or all of the following:

#### Design Guidance

Additional design guidance, which is more specific to the Conservation Area, could be considered for future alterations to direct change towards materials and design detailing which complements the defined local architectural character. This would be in the form of non-statutory planning guidance. If adopted, this guidance would act as a yardstick against which proposals could be assessed and could assist both existing and future residents in understanding what is desirable.

#### Article 4 Directions

Formal control over future alterations of buildings could be introduced

through what is known as an Article 4 Direction which removes permitted development rights. These are rights granted by Statute, within strict limitations, to alter dwellings without the need for planning permission. Article 4 Directions can be designed to be specific to particular types of development relating, for example, only to roof covering or front elevations. It cannot place an embargo on change, but rather brings certain types of development within the scope of planning control. Article 4 Directions are made by the Borough Council, and in some cases, would need confirmation by the Secretary of State. Article 4 Directions could be introduced throughout the Conservation Area or just to individual buildings whose special interest is considered to be at risk from incremental change.

#### Reinstatement of architectural detail

Some buildings have been altered, which has changed their architectural form in a way which conflicts with the settlement’s distinctive character. The introduction of standardised 20th century door patterns and PVCu windows and porches has undermined the character of many historic areas. The use of non-traditional finishes such as staining for joinery is detrimental to the character and appearance of the village and controls or guidance to encourage painted timber and traditional details and materials should be introduced. Non-sympathetic alterations should be resisted.

#### Grant schemes

From time to time the Borough Council operates grant schemes to help maintain and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

#### Quality erosion & loss of architectural detail

The character and appearance of buildings in the Conservation Area is harmed by the removal or loss of original architectural features and the use of inappropriate materials. For example, the loss of traditional joinery, sash windows, front doors and roofing materials can have a considerable negative impact on the appearance of a historic building and the area.

Insensitive re-pointing, painting or inappropriate render will harm the long-term durability of brick and stonework.

In all cases, the Borough Council will expect original historic features and detailing to be retained, preserved and refurbished in the appropriate manner, and only replaced where it can be demonstrated that it is beyond repair.

### Roof Alterations & extensions

The Conservation Area contains many historic rooflines, which it is important to preserve. Fundamental changes to the roofline, insensitive alterations, poor materials, intrusive dormers or inappropriate roof windows can all harm the character of the historic roofscape and will not be acceptable.

### Gardens & front boundary treatments

Front and rear gardens make an important contribution to the streetscape and overall character of the area. The Borough Council will resist the loss of soft landscaping and traditional boundary walls and railings. For example, the construction of new openings and the consequent breaking up of the continuous boundaries Church Street would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. In certain locations traditional boundary features should be reinstated.



The removal of traditional boundary walls has harmed the street scene of Bilton in Ainsty.

### Telecommunications equipment, cable & satellite dishes

Attaching external communications apparatus, including cable runs, to historic buildings can harm the appearance of the buildings. The Borough Council can provide guidance on the installation of telecommunication

equipment including satellite dishes.

Overhead wires are intrusive in parts of the conservation area and the burying of cables would enhance the character of the village. This should be a long-term aim in the interests of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

### Floorscape

It is unlikely that in past times the street surfaces in Bilton in Ainsty were formalised with setts, paving or cobbles and it is considered that modern tarmac is the natural successor to the rammed earth and stone that would have preceded it. However, the introduction of concrete kerbs to the edges of some of the verges on Church Street is harming the street scene. Consideration should be given to either reinstating the soft edge or finding an alternative solution.

### Important Trees

The existing mature trees throughout the Conservation Area add to its charm and character. The survival of key areas of woodland, planted lines and individual specimen trees all contribute positively to Bilton in Ainsty's heritage value. A particular emphasis should be placed on retaining important mature trees within Bilton

Park. In accordance with the Council's Landscape Design Guide, the existing pattern of hedgerows, hedgerow trees, trees and shrubs should be preserved and repaired through managed planting and maintenance. In considering both of these areas, guidance should be geared towards tree and shrub planting and management methods that improve wildlife habitats.



Key trees such as this copper beech should continue to be maintained and managed due to their importance to local character.

## Outdoor advertisements & street furniture

The design and appearance of some of the street furniture and advertisements in the village adds to the street clutter and needs improvement in order to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## New Development

A key consideration is the impact that future development proposals (whether in the form of new buildings or through the extension of existing buildings) might have on the distinctive form and character of the Conservation Area.

New buildings will only be permitted where they respect, rather than compete with the historic skyline, respect landform and landscape pattern and are accompanied by a comprehensive landscape scheme that is integral to the design. New development must be of a suitable quality of design and execution and should relate to its context and respect the established values identified in the Appraisal. The Council will encourage new development that complements the established grain or settlement pattern, whilst representing the time in which it is built and the culture it accommodates. New development should respect and not adversely impact upon the pattern of existing spaces between buildings.

A further key consideration for new development is the appropriateness of the overall mass or volume of the building and its scale. A new building should be in harmony with, or complimentary to its neighbours. It is important that the materials generally match or complement those that are historically dominant in the area. Within the above criteria, new development should achieve creative design solutions, whether contemporary or traditional in style.

## Neutral buildings & spaces

Neutral elements or buildings may have no special historic or architectural quality in their own right, but nonetheless provide the setting for buildings or spaces of special character and interest or may simply conform to the general grain and settlement pattern of the area. This backcloth helps the area to retain its cohesiveness and therefore need special management.

## 7. Landscape issues

The following guidelines have been developed in recognition of the landscape sensitivities and pressures which exist within the Conservation Area:

### Parkland

Bilton Park makes up most of the Conservation Area's land area. The recent land use change of large fields within the Park to arable farmland has changed the overall feel of the place. It is important that any changes made uphold or enhance the parkland character and historic layout of the site and avoid sanitising its rolling, rugged character. A long-term management strategy which takes into account the special character of this heritage asset is needed.

### Village edges

The visual and spatial relationship between Bilton in Ainsty and the surrounding countryside is an important facet of the conservation area. At present there is a balance between the buildings, trees and hedges creating a sense of enclosure at the heart of the village, and the opportunity to see the open fields through gaps in the built form and vegetation. To this end the planting of native trees and hedges is supported, but this should not divorce the village from the surrounding countryside by forming a

continuous or dominant screen. The planting of high hedges of any species or the erection of high fences behind or between buildings would cut vital visual links between the village and its setting. Similarly the treatment of gardens that adjoin agricultural fields should not assume a suburban character by virtue of their landscaping, boundary features or outbuildings such as sheds. Instead, the focus should be on using native deciduous planting to give traditional garden spaces which relate to their context.

### Tree planting

Bilton in Ainsty contains significant areas of trees, principally in Bilton Park and the gardens of houses. These trees would all benefit from management to ensure that the existing amenity and habitats they offer are maintained or enhanced. In the longer term, the need to plant new

trees to succeed existing new planting should be addressed in order that the eventual loss of individual mature trees does not create unwanted holes in the canopy or townscape.

### Footpaths

The lack of roads through Bilton in Ainsty makes its footpaths of particular importance in terms of connecting the village with other settlements. Ways of improving the footpath network in and around the village and providing more links with the surrounding landscape should be examined. The condition of the existing footpath network in the area could be improved without changing its character.

### Wildlife & Nature Conservation

The area has no designated wildlife conservation sites. Possibilities exist for the creation of wildlife corridors, particularly along existing hedgerows through the area to improve diversity and enhance the landscape pattern around the village.

## Checklist to manage change

In managing future change in the Conservation Area, regard should be paid to the following:

- Development should not impinge on the form and character of Bilton in Ainsty.
- New development and landscaping should not divorce the Conservation Area from its rural setting. Links and views between the two should be retained or enhanced.
- The regular maintenance of older buildings is encouraged, together with the restoration of traditional features where these are absent.
- The repair and re-use of older buildings should be encouraged in the first instance rather than demolition and redevelopment.
- New development and repairs should be constructed of materials which match or complement traditional natural materials.
- Design should reflect the distinctive local architectural style both in terms of overall form and detailed design, as appropriate to the context.
- Development should not impact upon tree cover.
- Where a site is within the historic extent of Bilton Park, the open parkland character of the space should be maintained or enhanced.
- In general new buildings should follow the established building lines with buildings set back from the road behind walled or hedged front gardens. In general the principal elevations of buildings should face onto the street.
- New development should not adversely impact upon the historic skyline.
- Maintain the softness of roadside verges by avoiding the introduction of kerbs where none existed historically.
- The positive management of the stock of mature trees should be undertaken.
- Retain important gaps and the general space about buildings to ensure glimpses of trees and views are maintained.
- Minimise the clutter of signage, street furniture, lighting and road markings.
- Repair and retention of boundary walling.

# Appendix B

## Public Consultation

The Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out the requirements for public consultation. To meet these requirements, and to inform a review of the Conservation Area, a public consultation event was held on Wednesday, 2 July 2008 at The Chequers Public House, Bilton in Ainsty. This consultation took the form of a public meeting including a walkabout and a workshop session. Prior to the event residents were notified via a posted leaflet that the consultation event was taking place.

The format of the workshop included a short presentation on why the Conservation Area is being reviewed, the purpose of the Appraisal and management plans and a brief resumé on the changes that have happened since the original designation.

The main activity was a walkabout which involved dividing into groups walking around part of the Conservation Area. The groups were encouraged to make notes and take photographs to identify what makes Bilton in Ainsty special to them. On return to the venue, the workshop session enabled the groups to share the information gathered on the walkabout by annotating large maps of the town with text, symbols and photographs. The maps then facilitated a feedback session, mainly focusing on identifying potential areas within the Conservation Area in need of enhancement.

The outcome of the consultation event and the information gathered directly contributed to producing this Appraisal. Key issues raised at the event included:

- the preservation of important views;
- identifying buildings of local interest;
- suggestions for changes to the extent of the Conservation Area;
- the retention of important boundary walls;
- the retention and management of trees.

Every effort was made to take into account and give due consideration to the views of the local residents (and to represent those views in this Appraisal document).

Consultation on the draft Appraisal took place from 5 May 2009 for 6 weeks. Consultees included local residents, the Parish Council, English Heritage and Natural England.

Local involvement was an essential aspect of the consultation process and local residents were encouraged to comment on the draft documents. When all comments had been received, appropriate revisions were made before the Conservation Area Appraisal and the boundary changes were approved by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport on 28 October 2009 and published on the Council's website.

# Appendix C

## Further reading

Bilton-in-Ainsty with Bickerton Parish Council (n.d.) Bilton in Ainsty with Bickerton Parish Plan.

Crapp, V W (1973) Some Historical Notes on the Parish and Church of St Helen's, Bilton in Ainsty.

Hutchinson, J (1984) Bilton Hall (in York Georgian Society Annual Report, 1984).

Pevsner, N (1959) Buildings of England: Yorkshire West Riding.