LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

Preamble

The natural and man-made landscapes that provide the setting for buildings are important elements affecting any Conservation Area.

Mill Pond on Bentley Brook close to Lumsdale Farm

This appraisal is undertaken as part of the wider study of the Lumsdale Conservation Area. It is based upon an examination of the planning and historical context and a visual assessment of landscape elements, being particularly concerned with the components that most influence the character and quality of the environment.

Planning Context

Conservation Area - Location

Lumsdale Conservation Area is situated between Matlock and Tansley on the northern side of the Alfreton Road. It mainly comprises the valleys of the Bentley and Knabhall Brooks that have long been associated with industrial development in the area. Though the industry has largely gone the remaining structures, artefacts and features associated with it strongly influence the character of the landscape that is now dominant.

Other Planning Designations (see fig 7)

Local Wildlife Sites

This is a non-statutory designation afforded to areas identified as important for nature conservation. The Register of Wildlife Sites is maintained by the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. The designated sites are protected within the land use policies of the statutory Local Plan.

There are three Local Wildlife Sites within the Conservation Area:

DD145 - Lumsdale

This occupies much of the slope on the western side of Bentley Brook. It comprises a range of habitats - ponds, secondary broadleaved woodland, semi-improved neutral grassland and tall herb scrub - which create an intimate mosaic with adjacent residential properties.

The woodland comprises sycamore (Acer pseudoplatanus) and beech (Fagus sylvatica) with oak (Quercus spp. occurring locally). On the lower slopes in damper areas along the brook, alder (Alnus glutinosa) and ash (Fraxinus excelsior) are dominant.

The understorey is, generally, of holly (Ilex aquifolium) and elder (Sambucus nigra).

The field layer composition varies but includes bluebell, bramble, yellow archangel, tufted hair grass, opposite leaved golden saxifrage and various ferns. Wetland areas support fool's watercress, brooklime, meadowsweet, wild angelica, large bittercress and yellow iris. Several areas of semi-improved neutral grassland are present with richer areas supporting a range of associated herbs such as common knapweed, meadow vetchling, oxeye daisy, common bird's foot trefoil and pignut and grasses such as crested dog's tail, and sweet vernal grass.

Water voles are present along the brook.

DD148 - Tansley Knoll Mill Ponds

The area comprises two large ponds, in the south east of the Conservation Area, with some emergent vegetation and secondary broadleaved woodland adjacent. The woodland stands include oak and sycamore with some holly and hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna).

DD152 - Foxholes Pond

This comprises an extensive pond in the north east of the Conservation Area with a margin of emergent vegetation and alder. The inflow and outflow streams are wooded in parts extending to a small area of young woodland in the south east corner of the site. Marshy grassland is also present.

There are two Local Wildlife Sites just outside the Conservation Area at:

DD154 - Foxholes Heath in the north east
DD257 - Baileys Mill Meadows to the south.
Protected Trees (see Fig 8)

The Conservation Area designation provides all trees with a stem diameter of 75 mm and above measured 1 metre above ground level with a measure of protection. No felling, lopping or topping of these trees is permitted without providing six weeks notice to the Council. In addition Tree Preservation Orders (T.P.O.s) have been placed on a number of trees in the Conservation Area:

Individual trees at:
- Birch Grove, Upper Lumsdale - 3 sycamore trees.

Woodland order at:
- Tansley Knoll Wood in the south east of the Conservation area where the mixed deciduous woodland is protected.

Area order at:
- Lumsdale. An area occupying the slope on the eastern side of the road close to its junction with Asker Lane. Trees of whatever species are protected.

Works to trees covered by T.P.O.s can only be undertaken with the written consent of the Council except where they are deemed to be dead, dying or dangerous. It may be a requirement to replace any protected tree that is felled with a tree of appropriate species and size.

Landscape Character

The Conservation Area largely extends across two Landscape Character Areas and Landscape Character types:

- Dark Peak/ Settled Valley Pastures – to the north
- The Derbyshire Peak Fringe and Lower Derwent/ Wooded Slopes and Valleys - extending across the larger part of the Conservation Area to the south.

The landscape is strongly influenced by the underlying geology of sandstone, shale and mudstone which creates an undulating, steep to gently sloping landform occasionally cut through by, sometimes, fast flowing streams. The sandstone is evident in occasional outcrops on the higher ground and is exposed - sometimes spectacularly - within the steep sided stream valleys such as that of the Bentley Brook.

Agricultural soils are generally poor and the dominant landuse is permanent pasture for stock rearing.

Landscape Character Map

Where the landscape is more intensively farmed the improved grassland holds little floristic interest. Where drainage is impeded or the soils are more slowly permeable, patches of wet grassland are colonised with rushes. On thinner well drained soils, which are often associated with the steepest slopes, areas of heathy, acid grassland are characterised by dense growth of bracken, gorse and occasional heather. Bracken is widespread along field boundaries and road verges.

Key wildlife habitat is created by the network of watercourses often linked with belts of woodland and occasional alder carr. The streams within Lumsdale are closely associated with ponds and mill ponds which are important habitat for amphibians.

The widespread presence of trees is characteristic giving the overall impression of a well wooded landscape. Dense belts of trees - particularly alder - which often broaden out into woodland are strongly associated with the stream valleys while small to medium sized areas of semi natural woodland are widespread on the steeper slopes and over the
heavier soils of the valley floors. There are occasional plantations.

The field pattern is variable with both small irregular fields bounded by hedgerows of hawthorn, holly, hazel (Corylus avellana), field maple (Acer campestre) and ash and more regular fields bounded by dry stone walls.

Appraisal

Topography

The Conservation Area is characterised by the valley formations of two streams that flow from the north cutting deeply into the high ground which surrounds the Area on all sides. Bentley Brook is the most dominant of the two carving its way down from Matlock Moor to its confluence with the River Derwent at Old Matlock. Its course, through Lumsdale, is characterised by the steep sided, tightly constricted nature of the channel through which it runs where cascades, waterfalls and vertical cliff faces are regular features. The high, steep slope of its valley on the western side is one of the most dominant and distinctive features of the Conservation Area.

Knabhall Brook descends via Fox Holes Pond and Tansley Knoll Mill Ponds in the north and east to join with Bentley Brook at Tansley Wood Mills. Its course is less spectacular though steep rocky embankments remain occasional features in places where the brook has undercut the bank. More characteristic are the series of mill ponds and other man made drainage features associated with the industrial development of this part of the valley.

Vegetation

The Lumsdale Conservation Area is generally well vegetated. There are substantial belts of woodland associated with the streams, their valleys, open water features and the steeper slopes. Plantation woodland at Tansley Wood occupies a prominent position at the heart of the Conservation Area as does mixed deciduous and coniferous woodland associated with the former Lumsdale and Bentley Brook quarries that occupies high ground to the north and is now beginning to colonise agricultural fields immediately to the south. Scrubland infiltrates some of the woodland on the western slopes and has colonised areas associated with former industry. Field boundary hedgerows, with hedgerow trees characterise much of the agricultural land. There is an area of parkland associated with Tansley Wood House and some fine specimen trees occupy positions within private gardens.

Views

The visual experience offered by the Conservation Area is varied. Many views within the valleys and the woodland are highly restricted or channelled and focussed. Others along some of the lower stretches of Bentley Brook are more open in nature while those from the highest ground in the west and north are wide reaching and expansive. Some of the best examples are:

Views within the woodland along some of the many pathways that criss-cross the western valley slopes. The woodland is highly variable in nature, sometimes dense and visually impermeable, at other times more open beneath the canopy or where glades occur. The paths, some of which are stone paved, serve to focus the view while other artefacts such as walls, gateposts and stairways draw the eye.

The view along Bentley Brook in the north west of the Conservation Area. This is often truncated and restricted by the twisting and deeply cut nature of the water channel and the tight enclosure created by the woodland setting but very exciting with a succession of waterfalls, cascades, rushing water and associated industrial ruins and artefacts.
Views from the top of the western valley slope along the edge of the Hurst Farm estate. From here broad views across the agricultural landscape can be had.

View from the top of the western valley slope looking east.

From the edge of woodland at Lumsdale Quarry on high ground in the extreme north of the Conservation Area where there are magnificent views into the Derwent Valley with Riber Castle in the middle distance, Matlock and the high back drop of the Peak District.

View to Riber and beyond

Views from the more open parkland landscape of the southern central part of the Conservation Area particularly towards the south west where a good impression of the confined and wooded nature of the area can be gained but with partial views to the wider landscape beyond.

Landscape Setting

The landscape setting of the Conservation Area is largely characterised by the streams, the associated valley formations and woodland. It is a setting that benefits from a high degree of tranquillity with comparatively little development and only one important access route for vehicles. The main landscape features are:

Bentley Brook

Bentley Brook is the primary landscape feature in the Conservation Area. It enters the Area in the extreme north and runs southwards through the western side to exit at Hunt Bridge. Along its course it changes from fast flowing “mountain” stream characterised by water falls, cascades and undercut cliff faces in the north to the more sedate water course that traverses the meadows in the south west.

Waterfall on Bentley Brook

The natural power of the stream has been extensively harnessed by a range of industries that established themselves along its banks, thrived, and subsequently fell into disuse. Evidence of this activity and the measures taken to control the water...
flow for industrial purposes is apparent all along the course of the brook but particularly in the upper reaches and at Baileys Mill further to the south.

The whole is enshrouded in dense woodland which at times clings to the vertical rock face and at others spreads across the flood plain and up the valley sides. As a consequence the various dams, bridges, mill ponds, sluices and industrial ruins are assimilated into the natural surroundings to create a cultural landscape that must be one of Matlock’s best kept secrets.

Though the character of the brook is highly attractive and the cultural associations additionally interesting the effect is somewhat harmed by the design/state of repair of some of the associated paraphernalia – particularly protective rails and fencing.

Lumsdale Road

Lumsdale Road closely follows the line of Bentley Brook through the valley. It is narrow, twisting and, in places, steep and is heavily shaded by woodland for much of its length in the same way that the brook is.

Though in many respects it has the character of a country lane it too is very much influenced by the valley’s industrial associations and - in spite of it’s poor state of repair in places - remains the principle method of accessing Bailey Mill, the Tansley Wood Mills complex and a number of industrial and business sites that are still active.

Knabhall Brook

Knabhall Brook is similar in many ways to Bentley Brook if not so steeply cut and, therefore, less spectacular. The brook enters the Conservation Area in the north east and flows along the western edge of Tansley before cutting westwards across the meadows to join with Bentley Brook at Tansley Wood Mills. Mill ponds, dams, leats and other drainage paraphernalia are features along its length and are evidence of its associations with past industrial activity.

It too is well wooded along much of its length with extensive areas of beech being a feature.
Some of the footpath fencing and “furniture” associated with the Scout Camp (on the edge of Tansley) is either of poor design or in state of disrepair and this harms the generally attractive nature of the valley.

Western Slopes

The western slopes which form the steep side of the valley on this side of Bentley Brook are an extensive and highly prominent feature of the Conservation Area. They are characterised by a mix of dense woodland of sycamore, ash and beech that extends across the steepest slopes immediately associated with the brook; more open woodland of oak and silver birch (Betula pendula) occupying the upper, drier slopes;

Dense woodland is a feature of the steep slope

open areas of hawthorn scrub, grasses and bracken; open recreational space close to residential areas at the top of the slope just outside the Conservation Area in the south west and a more domestic landscape characterised by garden trees that impinge on the slopes from private gardens associated with the Hurst Farm estate at the very top of the slope.

Woodland towards the top of the slope is more open in nature with extensive areas of bracken

These highest areas are clearly regarded as valuable recreational open space by local residents with many informal footpaths crossing areas immediately peripheral to the estate. These combine with the principle, often paved, pedestrian routes that traverse the slope to create an extensive footpath network providing access to the whole area.

The stone paved pathways are an attractive and highly distinctive feature of this part of the Conservation Area.

Stone paved pathways traverse the entire slope

Woodland at Lumsdale Quarry

These woods occupy the highest ground on the edge and extending beyond the Conservation Area in the extreme north. They are intimately associated with former quarry workings and are somewhat removed from the other main features of the Area.

Scots pine woodland at Lumsdale quarry

In the north it comprises a mix of oak, Scots pine (Pinus sylvestris) and rowan (Sorbus aucuparia) with an understorey of holly, bramble (Rubus fruticosus) bracken and heather which stretches across a hillside characterised by steep slopes, rocky
outcrops, sandstone boulders and scree to create an intricate, secretive and highly attractive environment from where some magnificent views into the Derwent Valley can be gained. Scots pine appears to be colonising permanent pasture in fields immediately to the west. The southern part of the wood is more open in nature with a more extensive glade structure and being more densely colonised by silver birch.

Fox Holes Pond

The pond is central to another isolated part of the Conservation Area in the extreme north east. Situated along the line of Knabhall Brook it is lined with trees - mainly alder - and set within wet meadows.

Tansley Wood

Tansley Wood occupies a prominent knoll/ridgeline on the eastern side of Tansley Wood House. The wood appears to be a dense plantation with a walled boundary. Mature beech, oak, sycamore and ash trees are dominant with some rowan, holly and field maple and a little hawthorn and rhododendron. There is very little in the way of ground cover or a field layer in the deep shade.

Parkland

Parkland to the south of Tansley Wood House is a feature of this part of the Conservation Area. Set within gently to moderately steeply sloping open grassland it contains some fine individual, mature specimens of oak and beech with some hawthorn.

Brookfield Industrial Estate

Part of the Brookfield Industrial Estate is included within the south eastern corner of the Conservation Area being laid out to either side of Old Coach Road which connects the Alfreton Road to Tansley
across the valley of Tansley Brook. Woodland associated with the line of Knabhall Brook encloses the estate on its northern boundary and remnant woodland has been retained amongst the buildings where slopes have proved too steep for development. The line of the Tansley Brook as it enters the estate from the east and until it joins with Knabhall Brook is densely vegetated and is inaccessible.

The thickly vegetated course of Tansley Brook

The rest of the area has been highly modified. Industrial buildings are dominant with some verge and site entrance planting of ornamental trees, shrubs and grassed areas. Approaches from the north are more attractive along the Old Coach Road which is characterised by stone roadside walls, garden planting, trees to either side, an open drainage ditch and an extensive pond associated with Knabhall Brook.

Extensive lines of mature Leyland cypress (Cupressocyparis x leylandii) are a prominent feature of the estate. Alien in nature they draw the eye instantly in many public viewpoints both within the immediate area and from the north, particularly in the winter months. Though unattractive in themselves they perform some function in screening industrial buildings.

Leyland cypress hedges screen industrial buildings but are alien features in the landscape that immediately draw the eye.

Feature Trees

Trees are a feature throughout the Conservation Area. Many magnificent specimens of mature, oak, beech, sycamore, Scots pine, silver birch and ash in particular are contained within the various belts of woodland that stretch along the valleys and occupy the high ground. Those that feature elsewhere tend to be isolated individual specimens or those contained within the one or two domestic gardens that make a significant positive contribution to the Area. These include:

- Trees at Lumsdale House: The private gardens at Lumsdale House contain some glorious specimen trees such as yew (Taxus baccata), beech, cedar (Cedrus spp) and a range of other coniferous trees.

- Yew trees on the road frontage at Yew Tree Cottage, Asker Lane

- Yew and beech trees at Lumsdale House
- Beech tree on the Lumsdale Road frontage at Baileys Mill

![Beech tree at Baileys Mill](image1)

- A group of three beech trees isolated within an agricultural field on the Conservation Area boundary east of Bentley Brook.

![Beech trees in open fields](image2)

- Beech tree on the Conservation Area boundary between residential properties and Highfield school in the extreme north.
8. **SPATIAL ANALYSIS**

This part of the appraisal comprises a spatial analysis of the whole conservation area, the character and interrelationship of spaces, key views, vistas and landmarks. These are marked on the accompanying plan (Figure 9). In places, the views cross the three different character areas.

**Significant Views & Landmarks**

The conservation area incorporates several deep valleys and large fields between the wooded valleys. From these fields there are views across the conservation area and beyond.

![View from the A615 across the broadleaved canopy towards Tansley Wood House & beyond](image1)

The upper slopes of the Lumsdale Valley and the moors to the north of Tansley are generally more open in character above the broadleaved native tree canopy and from a number of public footpaths, bridleways and lanes that lie at this level there are long distance views to a number of local hills. On the higher slopes of the valleys there are also occasional clearings within the woodland where there are glimpses of high horizons and natural landmarks that lie beyond the conservation area.

The four main natural landmarks are;

- Riber Castle, silhouetted against the sky, on top of Riber Hill
- The wooded summit of Matlock Moor
- The wooded crown of Bentleybrook Quarries
- Masson Hill

The major panoramic views which incorporate these landmarks are illustrated on Figure 9.

![A bove - Riber Castle as seen from Hurst Farm](image2)

![Below - Masson Hill as seen from footpath no. 11](image3)

From the A615 the views to the north take in a large part of the conservation area and are largely uninterrupted. From here, the wooded hillside to the north of Lumsdale is the most prominent natural landmark. Here, conifer plantations have smothered a large part of the former Bentleybrook quarries.
Within the Lower Lumsdale Valley, where the road and brook run alongside each other, the views are confined to the immediate buildings and structures lining the lanes and only occasional glimpses of the brooks.

These watercourses run deep in the valleys below the road level, often hidden by large retaining walls. Dense trees and shrubs and the topography prevent views further afield.

In the Upper Lumsdale Valley and in the valley skirting the west side of Tansley the brook and road divert and the views are more diverse as footpaths and packhorse routes track the brooks. Views are intimate, contained by trees and occasional gritstone outcrops on the slopes on either side of the brooks.

Open Spaces

The conservation area is made up of densely-wooded areas, agricultural land and industrial areas. The central part of the conservation area contains large tracts of open land, mainly fields that have been traditionally grazed. These are divided by rubble gritstone boundary walls. Some of the lower slopes of the fields may have been used in the past for bleaching cotton goods, before the introduction of chemical processes in the nineteenth century. They were also landscaped in part as parkland. Large areas of agricultural land lie outside the
conservation area, although views connect many of the spaces. The views across this agricultural and rural landscape, between the different parts of the conservation area, are very important.

Elsewhere within the upper parts of the conservation area, particularly along the lanes above Tansley & in the upper Lumsdale valley, small fields or paddocks separate groups of buildings or clumps of trees & reinforce the dispersed & rural character of the conservation area, whilst providing contrast and lightness to areas dominated by woodland.
9. CHARACTER AREAS

Preamble

This section of the appraisal looks primarily at the relationships between the structures and the spaces, their historic and current relationships, identifying the main factors that characterise the area.

The conservation area covers a large geographical area with valleys many of which have similar characteristics. For simplicity, the conservation area has been split into three areas;

Area 1 – Upper Lumsdale  
Area 2 – The A615 & the valley to its north  
Area 3 – Tansley

Figure 9 is annotated with a series of symbols that represent the main distinguishing elements of the landscape. These symbols include landmarks and prominent buildings, the most important and defining views and important open spaces. The principal or landmark buildings or structures are also identified in bold type in the text.

The omission of any particular building, feature, view or space within this appraisal should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Area 1 – Upper Lumsdale

This area comprises the ruined mill buildings that follow the course of the Bentley Brook, the buildings that were part of the former Lumsdale Estate, the eastern part of Asker Lane and the fields above the east side of Lumsdale Valley.

At the northern tip of the conservation area, in approaching the area from the north, the pavements disappear and the wide road suddenly narrows to a single carriageway width. The narrow lane and stone boundary walls lining the road form a natural gateway into the conservation area. The entrance to the conservation area is framed by buildings on either side of the road, Ivy Cottage & Woodland View.

To the south of Ivy Cottage the road divides into two; one is the main carriageway, which follows the bottom of the valley, the other is a limestone track (footpath No. 31), an old access road to the mills. The former Bone Mill lies in the undergrowth to the east of this track, its form largely hidden by moss. The site of the upper mill pond lies north of the Bone Mill, the large, stepped dam walls mainly hidden by trees. The trees are less mature here than further down the valley and at this point the Arkwright Society has used the silted up mill pond as a wildlife conservation area. The two lanes follow gently curving alignments before the land falls away steeply, whereupon Lumsdale Road twists and turns in a series of sharp bends.

Lumsdale Road twists & turns as it descends the hill, passing this picturesque gothic style former gardener’s bothy, which once served Lumsdale House

The greater part of the Upper Lumsdale Valley was in single ownership by the time of the 1929 sale but after the sale it was dispersed and the area has been subject to piecemeal development, particularly along its northern fringe. The area still has vestiges of its estate character, with several gothic style cottages, such as Ivy Cottage & Oak Cottage, and in places iron estate-style railings still form the boundary.

In this northern section of the conservation area the land is gentle in gradient and it gradually descends to Pond Cottages and the lower mill pond, which has a tranquil setting and picturesque views incorporating Oaksedge Lane which crosses the pond with a little stone arched bridge.

The brook takes a gentle meandering course as it threads its way past Pond Cottages
The development of the watercourses along the Bentley Brook created a tiered arrangement of mills and other industrial buildings. The road network, however, followed the longer route on the steeper parts, contouring across the steepest slopes up the valley. Across these linear features, brook and roads, run a dense network of footpaths which descend into and across the valley, crossing the brook via narrow bridges or over stepping stones.

To the east of the Lumsdale valley the landscape rises to a conifer plantation which crowns the hillside at the former Bentleybrook quarries. The scree slopes of the quarries and the former Lumsdale Quarry were once prominent in views from across the valley and closer to hand, but they are now masked by the conifer plantation. The plantation is separated from the wooded valley by a series of fields, defined by drystone boundary walls. A narrow packhorse route (Footpath No. 33) winds its way in a deep ditch through the quarry workings and west down the slope of the hill where it diverts into two public footpaths, Footpath No. 33 & Footpath No. 35. From the footpath that contours around the hill above these fields (No. 34) there are spectacular views across Matlock to Riber Hill and Riber Castle, Masson Hill and Matlock Moor.

Below the lower millpond, further down the valley, the rushing water of the Bentley Brook makes its noisy way through the steepest section of the valley where there are several waterfalls. In places the water has worn away deep grooves in the rock, which channels the flow.

Roofless, ruinous mill structures are built into the bedrock & in places parts of the buildings perch on the rock outcrops contributing to the dramatic character of the valley. During the twentieth century trees have become established around the ruined mill complexes and the sinewy trunks of self-set beech wrap around the rock outcrops, with some sycamore also becoming established.

The different buildings, once distinct mills in separate ownerships, are difficult to discern now that they are ruined. The main parts that survive are the substantially built wheelpits and the lower stages of the masonry walls. Lower sections of the wheelhouse structures adjoining the brook have stepped foundations or were built with a pronounced batter to form a buttress. The random
rubble gritstone of the lower parts of the mill buildings is in places surmounted by more regularly shaped gritstone blocks indicating later re-building or adaptation. Many of the upper parts of the walls are clad with ivy, which has in places taken a complete hold.

The stepped nineteenth century dam walls serving two of the millponds (pictured below) are striking features within the woodland, although only visible at close quarters.

The almost complete use of gritstone through this part of the valley creates a homogenous character, where natural outcrops and man-made structures are unified within the landscape. The stone bedrock is worn smooth in places by the action of water over time and the characteristics of the sandstone with its folds of sedimentary layers is very marked.

It is very likely that in places the rock was worked away by localised quarrying to provide space to accommodate structures and to improve the flow of the water to the mills. Launders, timber or metal gutter channels, were historically used to divert water from the brook through the whole complex of mill buildings. These configurations and the old relationship of how water was channelled through the site are no longer evident.

The area is riddled with flues but there is little known about them. There is only one freestanding chimney surviving in the valley (pictured below), which is said to relate to the Bleachworks. This stands within the trees, and could be mistaken for a great tree trunk at first glance - it is no longer a landmark.

On the east side of the brook there are places where the rock overhangs the brook. In sharp contrast, much of the west side of the brook has been built upon, the sheer vertical face of the tall, & largely plain, man-made walls of the mill buildings rise up above the brook, emphasising the