

# Matlock Bank

## Conservation Area Appraisal

December 2007



# MATLOCK BANK

## CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

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Sections 1-5 & 7-10  
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## SUMMARY

Matlock Bank Conservation Area's character is predominantly formed by the steep Derwent Valley hillside topography and resulting dramatic views, coupled with the wealth of architectural heritage of the hydropathic industry. The hillside was mainly open fields with sparse development until the rapid growth in the second half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. This explosion in development was largely triggered by the entrepreneur John Smedley, whose hydropathic establishment, now the headquarters for Derbyshire County Council, still dominates the hillside. Matlock Bank developed to host a concentration of hydros, along with associated development, churches, chapels, shops, schools and houses to serve the growing industry. Today the hydros are in a number of other uses, but they remain an important architectural legacy.

The distinctive characteristics of Matlock Bank can be summarised as follows:

- ... A steep hillside resulting in expansive views across the Derwent Valley from within the conservation area, and long-reaching views into it from the south side of the valley
- ... Dramatic topography viewed from the south side of the Derwent valley resulting in a mosaic of buildings jostling for position
- ... Association with the hydropathic industry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century
- ... Landmark, high quality buildings, the former hydropathic establishments, dominated by County Hall, the former Smedley's Hydro
- ... A variety of buildings associated with the hydropathic industry, most prevalently terraced & semi-detached housing
- ... Linear rows of development aligned on a predominantly east-west axis, generally following the contours of the bank
- ... A number of older vernacular cottages, predating the hydropathic industry
- ... The prevalent use of locally quarried gritstone for buildings of all sizes and for boundary walls
- ... Large garden settings to former hydros and

other large buildings

- ... Lush & mature tree canopy within gardens and screening large buildings
- ... Narrow, steep footpaths and stepped routes linking the roads