Old Matlock
Conservation Area Appraisal

1. Old Matlock in Context
OLD MATLOCK IN CONTEXT

Derbyshire Dales

The Derbyshire Dales are located within the East Midlands and form most of the western side of the County of Derbyshire. The Derbyshire Dales administrative District covers an area of approximately 79,000 hectares (307 sq miles) and comprises some of the most diverse and beautiful scenic areas in Britain. The Peak District National Park covers over half the area of the Derbyshire Dales and is responsible for the planning functions in that area. Outside of the Peak District National Park, Derbyshire Dales covers approximately 33,000 hectares (128 sq miles) of land with a total population of around 45,000. Within the District itself there are 32 Conservation Areas and around 1330 listed buildings.

The majority of the District is rural in character and comprises attractive areas of countryside interspersed with a large number of villages and hamlets. The main settlements within the District are Matlock (population 9500), Wirksworth (population 5200) and Ashbourne (population 7000).

There is a definite contrast in landscape ranging from rugged uplands in the north to the softer fertile agricultural land in the south. Equally there is a diverse range of building materials; from the creamy pink sandstones, buff grit-stone, grey-white limestone and charcoal grey slates found predominantly in the north; to the warm orange-red brick, bluish hues of Staffordshire tiles and crisp brown, sepia thatch, brick and timber framing found further south.

Matlock

The largest settlement within the Derbyshire Dales District is Matlock. It is comprised of a string of smaller settlements running along the River Derwent. Typical of this region is steep sided gorges, underground caves and large caverns. The larger limestone Dales, generally come down to lower levels and have been traditionally well wooded with sheer cliffs or crags of white and grey rock rising abruptly above the trees. Old Matlock (or Matlock Town) was the original settlement and its offshoots Matlock Green, Matlock Bridge, Matlock Bank, Matlock Dale and Matlock Bath, are all now recognized for their contribution to the character and appearance of the area by their Conservation Area status.

Old Matlock Conservation Area

Old Matlock Conservation Area largely encompasses sloping ground, the majority of which rises from the southern side of the A615 (Causeway Lane/ Matlock Green/ Alfreton Road). The Conservation Area extends from Huntbridge Cottage and Hunt Bridge in the east, to the River Derwent, Pic Tor and Hall Leys Park in the west. On the northern side of the A615 the Old Matlock Conservation Area includes an area to the south of Denefields Court, which extends and includes the Almshouses and properties lining the road as far as No. 95 Matlock Green. To the south the Conservation Area boundary extends as far as No. 174 Church Street. The Conservation Area currently covers an area of 18.9 hectares. It is located to the south east of, what is now, the town centre and directly to the south of Matlock Bridge.

Centred on the parish Church of St Giles the area around Old Matlock has a recorded history dating back to 1300, with the Church and the Manor House at its heart. This quiet hill village remained for centuries, the compact centre of a large parish with its outlying farms, large unenclosed common pastures and wastes, small quarries and lead mines and with new hamlets springing up alongside. The development of the area was slow but increased rapidly, following the introduction of the railway and the success of hydropathic establishments in nearby Matlock Bank.

Matlock Green, to the north-east of the Parish Church was the old village green lying under the hill above the flood plain meadows. There was a mediaeval corn mill at Bentley Brook, the forerunner of one of the earliest mill complexes in Derbyshire, running from the Green into Lumsdale. The remaining mills and waterworks are all important survivors of the industrial archaeology of the area.

Statutory Designations

The Statutory Designations - Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings - are shown on Figure 3.

Historic Buildings

Within Old Matlock Conservation Area there are 281 buildings, of which 17 are listed entries. Of these, two are listed Grade II* and which are the Church of St Giles and Wheatsheaf House, 106 Church Street. The remainder are listed Grade II. The listed buildings in Old Matlock range from the Parish Church to Paxton Cottages; from public houses to footbridges. All are recognised for the contribution they make both individually and to the
street-scene. There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Conservation Area.

**Conservation Areas**
The original designation of Old Matlock Conservation Area was in October 1980. No further amendments to the boundary of the Conservation Area have been undertaken since that date.

In 1980 the boundary of Old Matlock Conservation Area, as originally proposed, was similar to the current boundary, apart from the far eastern boundary. In this location several large detached houses, ‘Eaton House’, ‘Bentley Croft’ and ‘The Butts’ and much of its surrounding land extending to Dark Lane in the north, were also identified for inclusion. However, following a public participation exercise in 1980, this latter parcel of land and buildings were excluded from the final designation.

**Matlock Bridge Conservation Area** [designated 1989 and amended in 2008] abuts Old Matlock Conservation Area and Matlock Dale Conservation Area. To the south and east the boundary is formed by the River Derwent and further east lies Hall Leys Park. To the north Matlock Station and its approach is within the confines of the Conservation Area and beyond is the Cawdor Quarry site and the town of Darley Dale. To the west beyond the railway is steeply rising open land, the field boundaries providing the curtilage of the area. The A6 dissects the site, running north towards the Peak District and southwards to Cromford and Derby. The area is predominantly the product of expansion at the end of the 19th century, when commerce was at its height. This expansion was partly the result of the popularity of the nearby hydropathic establishments and the introduction of the railway, increasing accessibility to Matlock.

**Matlock Dale Conservation Area** [designated 1972 amended in 1978] is located directly to the west and abuts the boundary of Old Matlock Conservation Area. It would more accurately be described as a ‘gorge’ as at its widest it is only 600’ wide and on its eastern side it rises steeply, at one point vertically (High Tor) to a height of 620’. On its western side it has a gentle slope and on it stand a few villas and the Chapel of St. John the Baptist designed by Sir Guy Dawber. Matlock Dale’s fame is largely based on its natural beauty, complemented by some boldly situated buildings.

**Lumsdale Conservation Area** [designated 1980, amended in 1995 and 2010]. The area is bounded by the A615 Alfreton Road to the south and almost reaches the A632 Chesterfield Road in the north. To the west, it abuts housing development on the edge of Matlock, close to the boundary with Old Matlock and to the east the Conservation Area abuts the village of Tansley. Lumsdale Conservation Area primarily includes the two intersecting valleys of two tributaries of the River Derwent, the Bentley Brook and the Tansley Brook. The irregular boundaries follow the linear form of the area, following ridges or higher valley slopes. The Conservation Area includes sites linked to industrial activity and industrial archaeology, as mills established themselves along the prevalent water-courses in the valleys. Lumsdale Conservation Area also contains an outstanding natural landscape.

**Other Related Information**
Information below on population, employment/occupation, and tenure, is taken from the 2001 Census and is given for general guidance purposes only.

**Population**
The current resident population of the Derbyshire Dales is circa 69,500, the Parish of Matlock (Matlock Town) is circa 9,500 and the ward of Matlock St Giles has a population of 5417; with 2572 being male and 2845 being female, 98% living in households and 2% living in communal establishments. Around 43% of the population of Matlock St. Giles are aged between 30 and 60.

**Occupation**
Of all residents within Matlock St Giles between ages of 16 and 74 (3,856), 37% are in full-time occupation, 15% in part-time occupation and 17% are retired. Of people aged 16-24 24% are unemployed. The highest occupation rate (as a percentage) is as managers and senior officials at 16%, followed by 13% employed in professional occupations, 13% in skilled trades and a similar percentage in elementary occupations.

**Tenure**
Of 2268 households in Matlock St Giles 35% are owner occupied (owned outright), with a further 31% owner occupied (mortgage or loan) and is similar to the national average. Around 30% of households in the ward are rented and the remainder are in shared ownership.