Old Matlock
Conservation Area Appraisal

4. Architectural & Historic Quality
   • Materials & Details
ARCHITECTURAL & HISTORIC QUALITY

General Characteristics:

The topography of Old Matlock has been a dictating factor on the evolution of development within the settlement. Essentially, this consists of a settlement on two levels – the upper level on top of the limestone ‘cliff’ and the lower settlement around the ‘Green’. Within the lower settlement is the Bentley Brook – the natural water source which was so important to the establishment of any settlement.

The predominant building material is sandstone, however some limestone can be found but this is relatively rare. Brick is also rare but there are a few instances within the Area. Roofs are predominantly laid with Welsh slate or, on a few occasions, clay tile (Staffordshire Blue). Modern roofing and walling materials can be found on most of the later 20th century properties that lie within the Conservation Area. See section on ‘Building Materials and Details’.

Pre 17th century:

The parish church of St Giles displays the earliest, visible, building fabric in the settlement. This is the west tower which dates from the 15th century (perpendicular phase of gothic architecture). The front wall of the 17th century south porch (relocated against the south wall of the tower) was preserved at the late 19th century restoration and this bears the date 1636. In 1760 the south aisle was rebuilt and in 1783 the north aisle was also rebuilt. The result was a box-like nave and aisles with a crenallated parapet.

The chancel was rebuilt in 1859 by G H Stokes (however, a medieval aumbry survived). In 1871 the whole body of the church was taken down (by Benjamin Wilson of Derby), save the tower, and rebuilt to an enlarged size and a more unified (Victorian) appearance. In 1897 the Lady Chapel and South Aisle were reconstructed to the designs of the architect P H Currey.

Apart from the parish church there is a reference to a 15th century corbelled chimney being discovered within the fabric of the Old Vicarage. If this is the case then parts of the old vicarage clearly have pre-17th century origin and make it (or parts of it) the oldest secular building within the settlement.

17th century:

There are a small number of buildings or parts of building fabric which date from the 17th century. The best example is Wheatsheaf House located adjacent to the parish church. This is dated 1681 and has mullioned, and mullioned and transomed windows. The building is not entirely as originally built – the roof has been replaced, probably in the late 19th century with a shallower double-pitched roof. Evidence of the former ‘double-pile’ roof arrangement can be seen in the southwest elevation of the house. Notwithstanding the 19th century alterations it is a fine example of late 17th century architecture. This is recognised in its grade II* listing.
Immediately across the road from the parish church is the former Kings Head Inn (no. 85 Church Street). Reference has been made to a datestone inscribed 1628 which has now disappeared. The property has undergone later alterations but mullioned windows with hood-moulds survive to identify its age and period.

To the east of the church is a row of cottages (86-92 Church Street) which began life as a large 17th century house. In 1927 it was substantially rebuilt and altered to create four terraced houses. Vestiges of the 17th century house survive in the form of mullioned windows. The coped gable to the front elevation and its ball finial may also be (re-used) remnants of the earlier house.

In Matlock Green the property at the western end of Knowleston Place (derelict and un-occupied) has a datestone of 1621. It is believed that the datestone is not in its original position and may have been re-used from an earlier building on this site or from another building in the locality. Nothing externally is identifiable as being of a date of 1621.

To the rear of one of the cottages (No 27 Knowleston Place) there appears to be the mutilated remains of a single-light 17th century window. To the north of this property, No 20 Matlock Green, also has a surviving mullioned window. This may have been re-set during a re-building or re-facing of this particular property.

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It is possible that other 17th century remnants survive within or to the rear of some of the older properties in Old Matlock and Matlock Green.

18th century:

It is most probable that a large number of the cottages that exist today, within the settlement, date from the 18th century. These are, however, difficult to date by virtue of their vernacular character which changed little between centuries.

Of those buildings within the Conservation Area that can be clearly attributed to the 18th century Derwent House (No.5 Knowleston Place) and its adjoining property (No. 3) are dated 1753 and 1772 respectively. Both properties appear identical in terms of their architectural treatment but are separated by 19 years. Derwent House underwent some alteration in the mid-19th century with the addition of the square stone bays to the ground floor and the insertion of 2 over 2 sash windows (instead of what may have been 6 over 6 sashes).
In Old Matlock, the former parsonage house displays some 18th century additions and alterations, however, it is the Duke William PH that is overtly 18th century in appearance. This is dated 1754. In general style it is remarkably similar to Derwent House (prior to the addition of the stone bays) and it is possible that the same designer or builder was responsible for them both. The centrally placed front door with stone canopy and brackets has been filled in to form a window. The original multi-paned sash windows have been replaced with inappropriate style windows.

Duke William PH - 1754

Huntbridge House is a detached, imposing, double-fronted property which dates from the late 18th century. It is of three-storeys with a central doorcase with a semi-circular fanlight. The original multi-paned sash windows have been replaced in the later 19th century with 2 over 2 sash windows. The doorcase is particularly fine with a broken pediment over.

Huntbridge House – late 18th century

To the south west of the church is the former vicarage or parsonage house. This property is believed to have earlier origins than its ‘Georgian’ appearance suggests. This is evident in its general asymmetrical form and configuration as well as the number of identifiable alterations and additions that have been made to the building in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The ‘Venetian’ window to the elevation facing the road is an example of an architectural motif of the later 18th century.
There are a number of cottages within the Conservation Area that have their architectural origins in the 18th century but have been altered in the 19th and 20th centuries. These are:

- 136 Church Street
- 83 Church Street
- 38 Church Street (dated 1752)
- 67 Matlock Green
- 69 Matlock Green

19th century:

A large number of buildings survive from the 19th century. Many display a variety of architectural quality and these are described below. In terms of period the century can be divided into early, mid and late 19th century. The 19th century appears to have been the boom years for the development of Old Matlock and Matlock Green (in particular). This increase in general development is undoubtedly associated with the developments, taking place on Matlock Bank, of the various hydropathic establishments which assisted in the economic growth of 19th century Matlock.

Early 19th century

The pair of stone cottages adjacent to the Mill, known as ‘Swiss Cottages’ have been attributed to a design by Sir Joseph Paxton. Paxton is believed to have had family and land holding interests in Matlock. They are an idiosyncratic design reminiscent of early railway architecture. They date from c.1840. Of particular interest are the overhanging eaves, then a fashionable architectural detail (inspired and motivated by the fashion for ‘Swiss’ style buildings) and the unusual stonework forming the front porch. The prevalent use of semi-circular headed windows also represents a fashionable element.

No. 15 Knowleston Place is a small double-fronted house in the severe ‘Classical’ phase of architecture. It dates from circa. 1830 and in its general plainness presents an austere appearance. The hipped roof, large sash windows (without surrounds) and the ‘Classical’ porch or canopy are reminiscent of this particular period in architecture.
No.s 7-13 Knowleston Place were built about 1850. They are an imposing row of terraced houses, three stories with double-pitched roofs, dormers and tall chimney stacks. They represent a hybrid form of design which fused gothic and classical elements. Whilst having a dominant presence on Knowleston Place they are also very decorative and the majority of their detailing is intact. Of particular interest are the gablets – these have been included for design aesthetics only as they do not contain any windows. Furthermore, the decorative timberwork to the gablets and eaves are also important elements of the building. As a final flourish, the original conception included a decorative stone lamp standard of Gothic design.

The row of stone cottages constructed in the mid-19th century is a row of seven cottages but it is possible that one end may have been used as a malt kiln. No 56 has a blocked doorway on its eastern gable which may indicate a use other than residential. The row of cottages originally had multi-paned sash windows – the majority of which have been replaced.}

The area has a number of smaller, vernacular, buildings of the mid 19th century. The following are two examples which display a ‘Classical’ influence with sash windows forming a double-front with central doorway.

A similar double-fronted cottage on Church Street (No. 73) displays sash windows and an off-centre doorway. This may represent a re-facing of an
earlier building where true symmetry was not achievable. 6 over 6 sash windows survive.

At No.61 Matlock Green a small cottage survives behind a stone wall and hedge. In terms of style and detail it appears to date from the mid 19th century and retains its sash windows.

Brook Cottage, facing onto Matlock Green, has recently been repaired and refurbished (for commercial use). Built as a private residence in the mid 19th century it is double-fronted with coupled windows and a central doorway with 'Classical' stone surround. The current 1 over 1 sash windows are likely to be replacements for 6 over 6 sash windows.

No. 69 Church Street is a mid-nineteenth century property which has remarkable architectural similarities to Brook Cottage on Matlock Green. No. 69 has, however, less detailing (particularly to the central doorcase) but is, proportionally, almost identical. It is probable that the same builder constructed both properties at a similar time.

No. 38 Church Street is a double-fronted cottage with a datestone of 1752. The front elevation is unusual in having mullioned windows to the ground floor and sash sized openings to the first floor. This idiosyncrasy reflects an interesting fusion of vernacular window detailing and the more fashionable sash window. The door head is particularly prominent. The original timber casement and sash windows have been replaced with upvc.

This small double-fronted cottage on Knowleston Place (No. 27) is a symmetrical design with stone coped gables and blue brick chimneystacks (possible rebuilds of the original stone stacks). The cottage is unusual in that the ground floor has sash windows (possibly original) with margin panes, whilst the upper floor has casement windows. The proportion
of the upper window openings does not appear to suggest that they originally had sash windows.

**Late 19th century**

A number of key buildings within the area date from the later 19th century.

The school was erected in 1860 and extended in the 1890s. In terms of its architectural style and form it is typical of the gothic/tudor-bethan buildings being constructed at this time. The use of an asymmetrical composition, stone dormers, mullioned and transomed gothic windows and a decorative spirelet (bellcote) present a building of some presence in this part of the village. The school was closed in the 1990s and was subsequently converted to residential units.

On Matlock Green a development of late 19th century shops (with accommodation over) was built circa. 1875. They are typical of the period in terms of their architectural influence – gothic – and their rather urban scale. Although some modern alterations have taken place the group of buildings retain much of their original character and detailing. The surviving shopfront to No. 79 is a particularly good survival. This row of buildings also retains a contemporary letterbox with the insignia ‘VR’.

On the northern side of Matlock Green is Deanhill House, constructed circa. 1870. This is a large, square, stone villa with a hipped roof and sash windows (replaced with upvc sashes). In general architectural terms it is a Classically inspired design comprising formal quoins and window architraves. To its rear is a plainer carriage house and stable block, contemporary with the house.

Access to the house is via a narrow lane or drive. At the southern end of the drive is a lodge with associated stone gateposts (the original gates have been historically removed). In terms of architectural design this has gothic overtones and is typical of such buildings of this period. Furthermore, the lodge is of interest as it is not detached, due to the available space, but attached to the end of a row of dwellinghouses.
Matlock Green contains the Horseshoe Hotel (dating from the 1860/70s) which is a double-fronted property that retains its original sash windows with margin panes. The Hotel turns the corner of Lime Tree Road beyond which is its former coach house (near the coach house is a former urinal dating from the late 19th century). Slightly further north of the coach house is the former Smithy – an unusual, one-storey building with prominent stone chimneystacks. To the rear of the Hotel further stabling and accommodation survive in a stone built, two-story, range. The whole complex presents a rare survival of a late 19th century coaching inn (or hotel) and its associated ‘offices’.

In 1898 a row of 6 almshouses were constructed adjacent to Causeway Lane on land belonging to Dr William Harrison (owner and builder of Deanhill House). In general architectural terms they reflect a style reminiscent of the Arts & Crafts period coupled with architectural references to the Elizabethan period. They have survived almost intact.

Of the buildings erected during the 20th century only a small number are of notable architectural design. The most iconic and unusual building, or pair of buildings, are the 1930s rendered houses on Matlock Green.
Their architectural style is unmistakable for the 1930s or ‘Art Deco’ period. They are characterised by their rendered finish, their flat roofs, the horizontal windows (originally metal) and the semi-circular stairways. Such a ‘style’ is sometimes referred to as the ‘Ocean Liner style’ for its obvious comparisons.

Other examples of early 20th century housing are illustrated below.

Within Old Matlock, and on Matlock Green, there are a number of houses, and bungalows, constructed during the late 1960s and early 1970s. These occupy ‘infill’ plots. Architecturally they are typical of the period in which they were built and can be identified as such. Their predominant architectural features are large horizontal ‘picture’ windows, elements of weatherboarding and a lack of any chimneystacks.

The following examples are of modern development within the Conservation Area that has taken place in the early 21st century.
A modern property overlooking Bentley Brook

Row of new cottages adjacent to the Bentley Brook