

# DELPH

## CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL



### Delph Conservation Area

Delph Conservation Area was first designated by Saddleworth Urban District Council and West Riding County Council in 1972. It covers 18.6 hectares and was extended to its present size following a review of Conservation Area boundaries in the late 1980s. It is located approximately

5 kms east of Oldham town centre and is based around the confluence of Hull Brook and the river Tame in a typical south Pennines valley. The aim of the designation is to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of this area of special architectural and historic interest.

## What is a Character Appraisal?

All conservation areas have specific architectural or historic interest which was identified when the areas were designated. The Oldham Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which guides development in the Borough, recognises that the aim of conservation area designation is more likely to be fulfilled if there is detailed agreement and understanding of the particular characteristics of an area which contribute to its special identity. The Council has therefore undertaken, as resources permit, to draw up character appraisals for all the conservation areas in the Borough. Character appraisals are of particular importance for development control purposes and will be a key

component of any bid for external funding as well as in the formulation of conservation area enhancement schemes.

An assessment of the character or distinctiveness of an area may come from much more than its appearance. It may draw on other senses and experiences such as sounds, uses, open spaces, historical associations and views. Protecting and enhancing the varied physical elements of a place's character can help promote the activities and uses which occur within it. Even quite small conservation areas may include several overlapping and contrasting characteristics.

## Historic Significance

The name of Delph is derived from "delf", meaning a quarry and referring to the bakestone quarries to the north of the village which provided stone on which food was cooked. The settlement initially grew up as a hamlet around the fording point at the Hull Brook/Tame confluence, close to the current road bridge, where the Roman road linking Chester to York probably crossed the river. By medieval times, Saddleworth was divided into four estates or "meres", and the boundaries of Friarmere, Shawmere and Lordsmere met at Delph. From the 16th century (C16) onwards, this strategic location combined

with the water power provided by Hull Brook and the Tame to make Delph an ideal location for the development of the cottage-based woollen industry.

The building of the Wakefield-Austerlands Turnpike toll road in 1758 and New Delph railway station in 1851 fuelled the growth of Delph as a centre for a factory-based textile industry. Increasing prosperity and population resulted in the development of community facilities such as churches, schools, a bank and library.

# Plan of Delph Conservation Area

metres 50 100 150 200



Existing Listed Buildings

Delph



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## Uses and Layout

The historic mix of uses in Delph has resulted in a variety of building types and gives the village much of its character. Two distinct phases of development have produced two predominant patterns of development, both characteristic of Pennine valley settlements which expanded during the Industrial Revolution.

The central part of Delph is focused on King Street and bounded by the Tame to the north and east. It is the oldest part of the village and, with the exception of King Street, it is a dense grid of streets and alleyways. It includes a mix of shops, houses, workshops and community facilities, and the building types and sizes reflect this variety of uses. The combination of uses, often within the same building, comprise an important element in the character and vitality of the village core and should be encouraged.

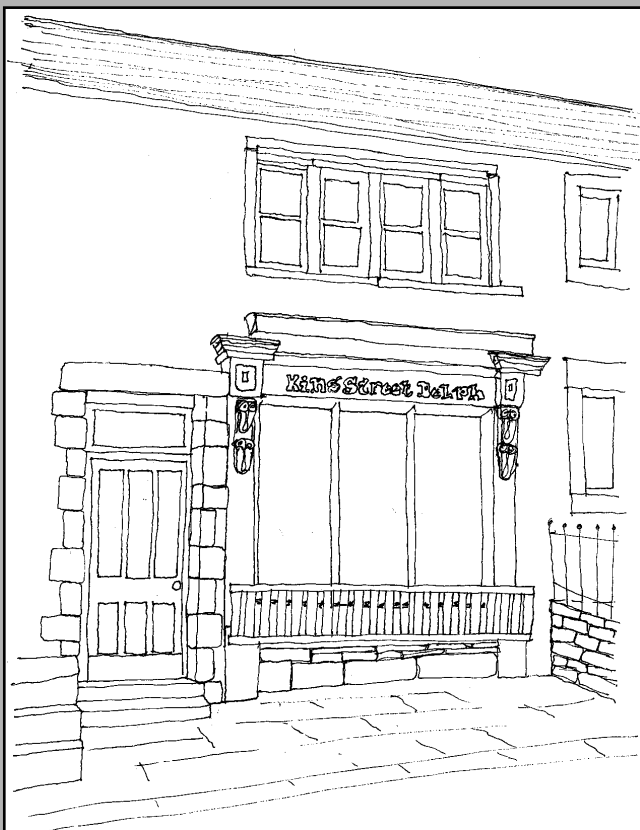


Fig 1 : Shopfront on King Street

The outer part of the conservation area is characterised by linear and predominantly residential terraced development along four of the main roads into the village: Stoneswood Road, Grains Road, Denshaw Road, and Delph Lane. These corridors of development generally date from the C19 and C20 and are separated by areas of open space, which define and preserve the small scale and rural character of the village centre. The exception to this is the Valley Mills complex on Millgate which lies partly within the conservation area, linking it with New Delph. The large-scale character of the complex contrasts with the much smaller scale of development elsewhere in Delph.

## Setting

The conservation area is based around level ground south of the Hull Brook/Tame confluence, where the valley narrows between Delph Hill and Knott Hill. The setting of the village is dominated by Delph Hill to the north-east and Knott Hill to the south-west. Other important views are westwards to Badger Edge and north from King Street towards Heights Chapel, the former view unfortunately marred by pylons along the ridge. The Council has recognised the visual importance of the hills in Saddleworth by designating them as a Special Landscape Area.

Delph is north of the A62 Huddersfield to Oldham road, to which it is connected by The Sound, and is linked to New Delph Conservation Area on its southern boundary. The growth of the village during the C20 has been largely outside the conservation area, involving standard post-war residential developments along Delph Lane and Denshaw Road.

## Architectural Qualities

There are 12 listed buildings in the Conservation Area:

Shore Mill	Grade II*
8 King Street	Grade II
20 King Street	Grade II
25 King Street	Grade II
K6 Telephone Box (20 King St)	Grade II
1,2 & 3 Bridge End	Grade II
Delph Bridge, High Street	Grade II
9 & 11 High Street	Grade II
1 Delph Lane (White Lion PH)	Grade II
Springwood House, Lodge Lane	Grade II
9 Grains Road	Grade II
24,26 & 28 Stoneswood Road	Grade II

There are many buildings in the conservation area which although unlisted are of historic interest and make a significant contribution to the character of the area. Delph Independent Chapel, at the junction of Delph Lane and Hill End Road, is one of the most important unlisted buildings and together with the old Sunday School and adjacent cottages forms a landmark group at the north end of Delph. Other important groups are at either end of King Street, where buildings such as Delph Library and the pubs terminate views along the street and provide local character. The bank building on King Street together with the Victorian terraces of shops are important in defining the commercial core of the village.

Older properties are usually roofed with local stone flags whilst those which have been refurbished or built within the last 150 years generally have Welsh slate roofs. Most of the roofs are pitched and slope quite steeply, though some of the larger buildings on King Street have shallower hipped roofs. Dormer windows are very uncommon. Chimneys are on the ridge and do not project at the gables, which are sometimes capped by a stone coping and

usually punctuated by windows. There are few eaves overhangs, fascias or bargeboards whilst many of the gutters are either stone, or timber which is supported on stone corbels or cast iron brackets. Some ornamentation can be found on the cast iron rainwater heads which often surmount downpipes. Doorways are recessed, some opening directly onto the footway and most with relatively plain stone surrounds. Ornamentation is usually restricted to the lintel and the window above, which may be rectangular or arched.

There are two main types of windows in Delph. Both types are always recessed from the front face of the building with unpainted stone cills and lintels, and timber frames which are normally painted white. The lintels above sash windows are occasionally decorated, either as a carved single block or as an arch, whilst the cills below the windows usually project.

In contrast, many of the windows on older buildings are the characteristic “weavers lights”, in rows of varying length. The cills and lintels of these windows are usually flush with the wall, with stone mullions dividing the windows into two or more lights being either flush or recessed. Windows on the oldest properties may also have secondary cills and lintels. The mullions are often straight sided but many are cut away at an angle, or “chamfered”, in order to maximise light penetration into the room. Weavers lights have been incorporated in new properties on Stoneswood Road to good effect. However, the character of many buildings in Delph has already been detrimentally affected by the replacement of original timber window frames with uPVC.

Most properties in Delph are two or three storey, although some take advantage of the slopes to add additional understoreys.

Outbuildings are normally single storey with simple lean-to roofs. The two most common building types in Delph are traditional south Pennine houses and workshops, typified by mullioned and deeply recessed windows, quoins and relatively little ornamentation, and Victorian terraced houses and shops with sash windows and considerably more decoration around doors or windows. The Victorian shop fronts on King Street make an important contribution to the character and vitality of the village, and should be retained even if the use of the property changes.



Fig 2 : Sash window (upper left) and stone mullion weaver window (upper right)

## Spatial Qualities

The central and outer parts of the conservation area have different characters, although they are closely integrated and have in common the feature of relatively small terraced blocks of properties.

The centre of Delph comprises three parts with different characteristics, namely King Street and the areas to its east and west. King Street forms a single, unified space at the heart of the conservation area. It is the widest street in the village and is terminated at each end by buildings which end views down the road as it bends eastwards to Millgate and Delph Lane. The

open character of the street is its most important feature, and previous improvement schemes have already removed visual clutter such as street lighting columns and overhead wires, as well as improving the paving materials.

The land east of King Street was developed in the late C18 and early C19 as a mixed residential and industrial area. St. Ann's Square and Lawton Square are the only clearly defined streets, as the other spaces in this area are more informal and irregularly shaped. To the west of King Street, plots were developed later in the C19 in a more structured manner. Throughout the core area, a strong sense of enclosure is created by buildings being generally closely spaced and built up against the footpath in a manner which should be followed by any new development.

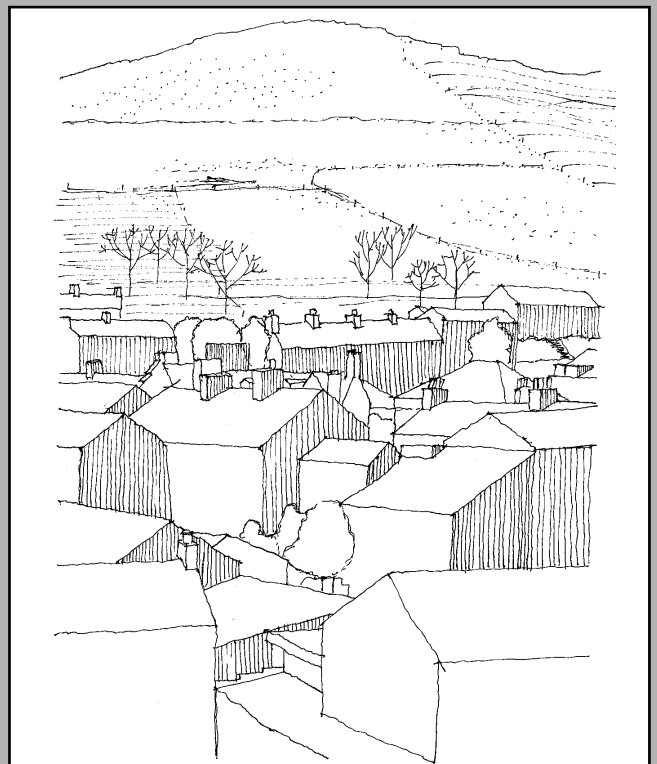


Fig 3 : Roovescape & Knott Hill

Most routes into Delph are characterised by an open aspect, providing varied views into and over the village core. The unspoilt and varied roovescape of the centre is therefore an important characteristic of the conservation area. The roads into the village are lined with development from all

periods which is generally located adjacent to the front of the plots. Only Hill End Road is predominantly undeveloped, providing particularly good views of the village. In contrast, Millgate is very enclosed in character and the south of the village is dominated by Valley Mills which prevents links through to the Tame.

## Hard & Soft Landscape Features

As indicated previously, the fields and hill slopes included within the conservation area form an essential part of its character as a rural settlement, since they extend almost to the village core. Hull Brook and the Tame also provide links to the origin of the village, although subsequent development has largely turned its back on both rivers. The few formal open spaces are all adjacent to the Tame and are well used, namely Swan Meadows, Chapel Gardens and the path beside the Tame. The informal open spaces in the conservation area are of lower quality, some including public seating which is in a poor state of repair.

There are important groups of trees along the river corridors, most notably in and around Chapel Gardens, Hull Brook mill pond and on the slope below Hill End Road. These help to blend the village into the surrounding countryside when viewed from west and north, and contrast with the dense built form of the village core. The group around Delph Chapel is also important, further enhancing the approach into the village from the north. The group along Millgate softens the approach from the south. There are relatively few trees in the core of the village.

Boundary walls are normally constructed of stone, with stone copings either set vertically or horizontally. There are also a number of Victorian iron railings, most of which are relatively simple. Bollards have

been introduced relatively recently, but should be kept to a minimum as they can create unnecessary clutter. The floorscape in much of the conservation area is unremarkable, being generally tarmac although there are places where stone setts remain, as on Lawton Street, or where improvements have been undertaken. Many roads have no footways at all, but most pavements and kerbs in the core of the village are stone. Tarmac is an appropriate footpath treatment outside the conservation area.

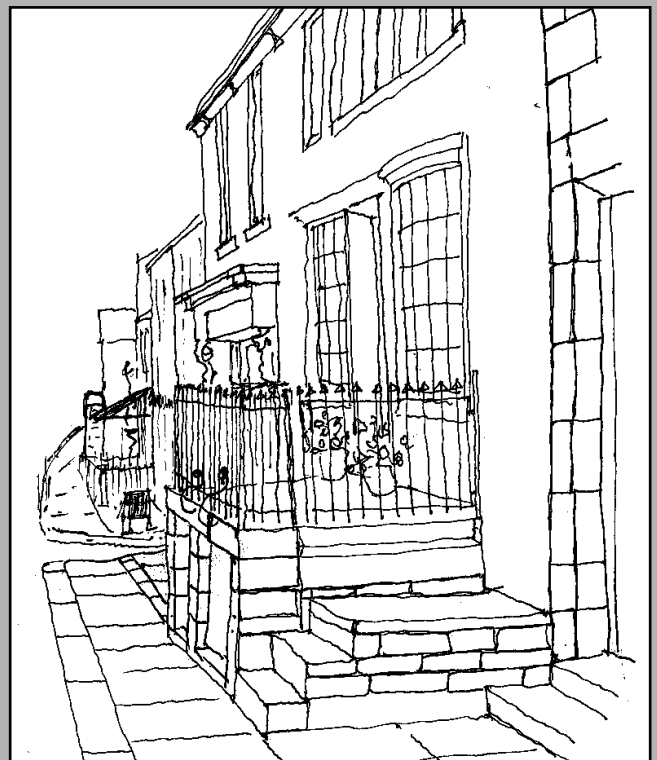


Fig 4 : Victorian railings on King Street

## Objectives

The primary objective is to protect, restore and enhance the character of Delph Conservation Area.

Regard will be given to maintaining the historic and visual relationship between the core of the Delph and the open spaces which surround it. The Council will seek the use of traditional materials, styles and proportions when considering proposals for the restoration or alteration of existing, or the erection of new, buildings in the conservation area.

Landscape features such as walls, trees and traditional floorscape materials which are important to the character of Delph should be retained and the Council will exercise its powers to protect these.

The Council will encourage the location of rooflights and satellite dishes to the rear of buildings and as unobtrusively as possible. The purpose of conservation area designation is not to prevent all change, but to ensure that any alterations occur in a manner which enhances the character of the area. In this context, the Council will continue to fully consider the economic well being and development needs of Delph in managing future change.

It is the intention of the Council to progress these objectives and the identified enhancements in liaison with property owners, the Parish Council, amenity groups, developers, residents and other interested parties. This will be done mainly through the processes of statutory development control and the Council's own maintenance programmes but additional improvements will be encouraged by grants, where these are available.

## Enhancement Opportunities

There are few obvious detractors from the character and appearance of Delph other than the properties on Holland Close, built in the 1970s, which are entirely out of keeping with the style of area. However, the following improvements would help to enhance the Conservation Area:

Rationalisation of signs, and repainting and replacement of street furniture, especially public seating, street lights and litter bins.

Replacement of unsuitable paving materials and review of public area maintenance.

Undergrounding of overhead wires and poles, particularly along Delph Lane and Holland Close.

Refurbishment of Delph Chapel for a suitable use, including retention of trees in this area.

Redevelopment of the vacant sites on St. Ann's Square and Delph Lane.

Upgrading of the unsympathetic public toilet block and its surroundings at the junction of Hill End Road and High Street.

Dissuading householders from the installation of uPVC windows, promoting the use of painted timber frames and other traditional materials. Design guidance leaflets are available from the Council on a range of building features and techniques.

## Planning Policies

The policies which control development within the conservation area are contained in the Oldham UDP (adopted 1996). Copies are held in all local libraries and are also available directly from the Council's Environmental Services Department.

## Further Information

For further information or clarification of any point in this document, please contact:

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## Acknowledgements

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