



## Conservation Area Appraisal

# Ryecroft



This appraisal reviews the Ryecroft Conservation Area Assessment, which was published in September 2005. The Management Proposals included in this appraisal are based on the outcomes and priorities established by the local community during the public consultation process for the Conservation Area Assessment.

The next appraisal of Ryecroft Conservation Area will be undertaken by June 2013

**June 2009**

# What is a Conservation Area Appraisal?

**A Conservation Area Appraisal describes the character of a conservation area. It also describes the changes that have taken place in the conservation area over recent years.**

**The appraisal finishes with management proposals which will help to conserve and enhance the area's special character and improve decision making in the future.**

**The Government requires that all conservation areas have an up-to-date conservation area appraisal.**

**An up-to-date appraisal is one that has been undertaken within the past five years.**

The following work has been done to deliver this conservation area appraisal:

- A photographic survey of the buildings in the conservation area.
  - The assessment of the level of authenticity of most of the historic buildings.
- An assessment of the issues facing the conservation area at present.
- The survey and update of map data relating to the conservation area.
- A review of the appropriateness of the conservation area boundary.
  - An assessment as to whether new development has made a positive, negative or neutral impact on the character of the conservation area.
  - The formulation of management proposals for the area.

# What is a Conservation Area?

**A conservation area is an 'area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance' (Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).**

Ryecroft Conservation Area was originally designated in 1977. A review of the boundary was undertaken in 2003 and then adopted in December 2005.

Conservation area designation brings with it extra controls. These controls cover:

- demolition of unlisted buildings;
- minor developments such as porches, extensions, satellite dishes and boundary walls; and
- works to trees.

The objective of these measures is to help preserve the special character and appearance of the area and maintain or improve its environmental quality. Whilst it is recognised that conservation areas must be allowed to evolve to meet changing demands it is important that this occurs within a framework of controlled and positive management.

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**Listed Buildings:**  
[www.bradford.gov.uk/listedbuildings](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/listedbuildings)



**Ryecroft developed as a small farming and quarrying community located on a plateau of land on the lower slopes of Harden Moor. The earliest surviving buildings date back to the 17th century and though the settlement has evolved over the subsequent two hundred years the hamlet has been little altered by modern development. Surrounding the settlement and included within the boundary of the conservation area are a number of fields associated with the buildings in Ryecroft. These provide a unique setting to the settlement and contribute much to its character.**

### Pre 1330

Documentary evidence shows that a small farming community existed around the site of the current hamlet by the 13th century. In 1330 reference was made to the Midgley family in Ryecroft by the Lord of the Manor in correspondence to King Edward I. From the 13th century onwards the woodlands were systematically cleared in order to cultivate the land and firewood.

### 17th century

The earliest surviving buildings in the conservation area, Ivy House Farm and 13 Ryecroft, were constructed around the end of the 17th century, although rebuilding work was carried out to both in the late 18th century. The malt house attached to Ryecroft Farm may also date back to around the 17th century with some parts of the original malting cellars possibly earlier.

### 18th century

By the late 18th century the hamlet had its own Primitive Methodist chapel, one of the first in the district. The first chapel was a building on the site of Ryecroft Farm, which was replaced in the late 18th century by

a more formal chapel (20 Ryecroft). In 1852 this was replaced again by the chapel on the south side of Ryecroft Road (Chapel House) which had a small graveyard added to it in 1878. The chapel later became a youth holiday centre before becoming a house.

### 19th century

Figures from the Census indicate that by 1841 there were 141 inhabitants in the hamlet in 22 dwellings. The majority of the inhabitants worked in the textile industry though a small number were farmers. By 1871 quarrymen were also living in Ryecroft.

### 20th century

There has been little development in the hamlet during this period. Well House Farm was built in the 1960's. Prior to the national resurvey of listed buildings in the 1980's nearly every building in the hamlet was listed however this was reduced down to just four due to higher criteria for listing. A report submitted at the time stated that the hamlet is an *"interesting survival of a still relatively isolated rural group of dwellings"*.



# Key Characteristics

The following summarises the key elements of the character of Ryecroft conservation area:

- Dramatic topography and isolated rural setting on the slopes on the Harden Moor.
- Panoramic views out of the conservation area towards Harden, Cullingworth and Hewenden Viaduct.
- Local stone used for buildings, roofing materials and boundary walls
- Organic unplanned development
- Characterful rural unpaved road through the hamlet
- Mixture of building types from farmhouses and cottages to barns and former chapels.
- Vernacular structures dating from the 17th and 18th centuries through to the more typical Victorian dwellings of the mid 19th century.



*Top: Impressive views eastwards towards Harden.*

*Middle: 21 Ryecroft, a Grade II listed converted barn.*

*Below: 1-3 Ryecroft make a characterful entrance to the hamlet.*





Interesting vernacular feature on  
Ivy House Farm



Ryecroft Farm was built as a  
Primitive Methodist Chapel



Stone trough by the side of  
the lane



## Summary of Important Features and Details

### Features and details contribute to the essential character of the conservation area:

- Original / traditional architectural detailing reflecting past architectural styles, particularly the local vernacular.
- Painted timber windows and doors
- Dry stone boundary walls to buildings and fields
- Narrow unpaved access road and bridleway through the conservation area linking with footpaths into and out of the conservation area.
- Small areas of stone flag surfacing around the entrance to houses
- Setting of fields and trees providing rural backdrop and facilitating views into and out of the conservation area.
- Small 'green' at the heart of the conservation area provides a focus and centre
- Unique mix of building types and architectural styles
- Predominance of two storey development
- Unifying use of local stone for walls, roofs and boundaries.



*This stone workshop makes a strong contribution to the character and interest of Ryecroft conservation area*

## Current Condition

### AUTHENTICITY 81%

- Each historic building in a conservation area will have originally features and details which contribute to the character of the conservation area.
- The level of authenticity is based on an assessment of each building to ascertain the level of retention of original features.
- Features assessed are: chimneys, roofs, rainwater goods, walls, windows and doors, boundary walls, porches, bargeboards, bay windows and shopfronts. Not all buildings will have all the above features and the scoring is adjusted to take this into account.
- Only residential, commercial and civic buildings built prior to 1956 are scored.
- 21 properties were assessed for the purpose of the study; this is 91% of all properties within the conservation area.
- The listed buildings had an average authenticity rating of 84%.



A breakdown of the authenticity assessment shows which features and details in particular are being retained and/or maintained and where there are the greatest threats.

# Strengths

- The overall authenticity score of 81% is one of the highest in the district so far.
- The street pattern has changed very little and is irregular, characterful and unique.
- The conservation area retains its quiet rural character with some buildings still being used for agricultural purposes.
- All the buildings retain their original stone slates for roofs which maintain uniformity throughout the conservation area.
- Important views and vistas have been retained and make an important contribution to character and sense of place.
- Listed buildings retain an above average number of traditional features and details.

- The large majority of the boundary walls are traditional drystone walls.
- Rural hamlet with definite sense of place.

- The settlement has a distinctive and unique value.

*19th century cottages around the 'green'*



# Weaknesses

- Unlisted buildings retain much fewer traditional features and details than listed buildings.
- Most traditional windows and doors have been lost.
- 20th century development has failed to enhance the sense of place or character of the conservation area (though more recent development in the 21st century has been more successful).





# Opportunities

- Better decisions by all stakeholders (property owners, the Planning Service, Highways) through reference to the Conservation Area Assessment and this review and subsequent workshops and more communication with the Design and Conservation Team.
- Bringing vacant and underused buildings back into full use.
- Enforcement action against unauthorised development and works to trees.

*There is scope to restore traditional features to Chapel House, Ryecroft Road*



- Recently published **Repair and Maintenance Guidance** should help property owners make better informed decisions.



# Threats

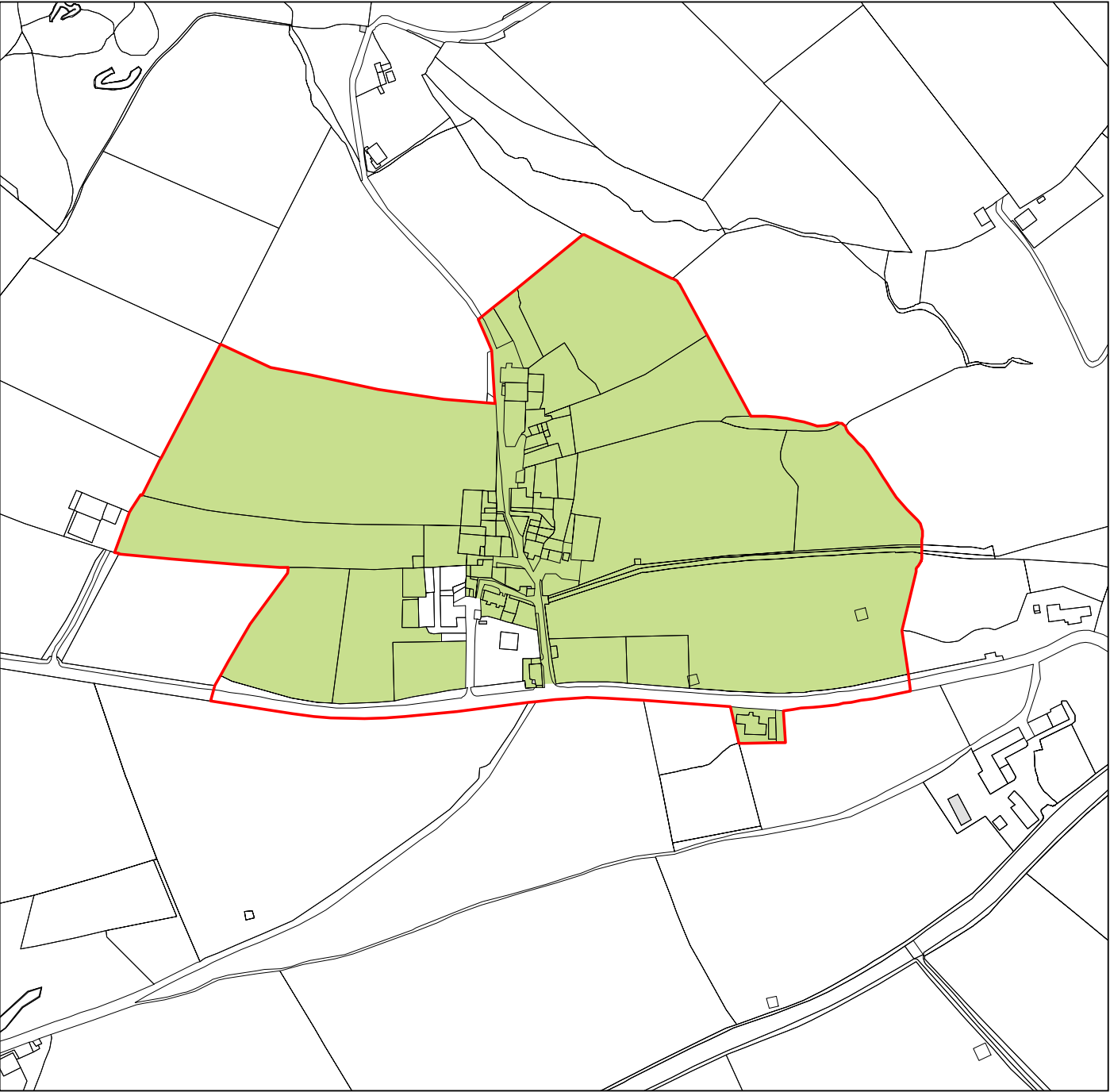
- Continued removal of traditional features and details from buildings.
- Poor decisions concerning planning applications, enforcement cases, listed buildings, highway management, and trees.
- Development of key open spaces (including private gardens) and loss of mature trees.
- Loss of rural character through the suburbanisation of some garden areas or areas of open space.

*Rear elevations of 5 - 9 Ryecroft demonstrate some loss of traditional details*







# Ryecroft Conservation Area

## Character Contributions



### Key

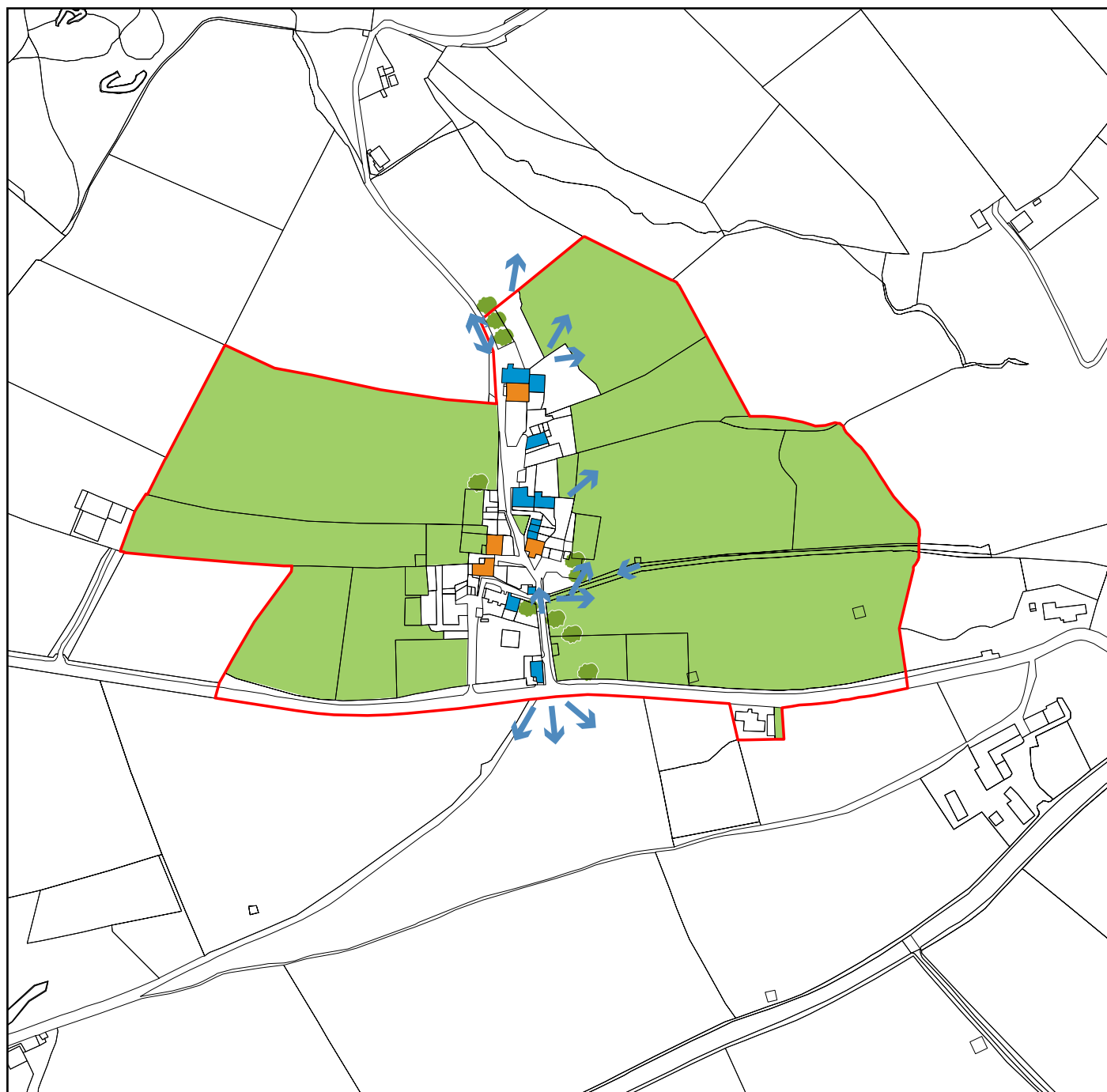
-  Conservation Area Boundary
-  Areas providing a **positive** contribution to character
-  Areas providing a **negative** contribution to character
-  Areas providing a **neutral** contribution to character

NB The 'positive', 'negative' and 'neutral' areas relate to the contribution the site/building currently makes to the character of the Conservation Area. The classification in no way means that the site/building has no special architectural, historic or archaeological interest.



# Ryecroft Conservation Area

## Open Spaces, Trees, Views, Listed and Key Unlisted Buildings



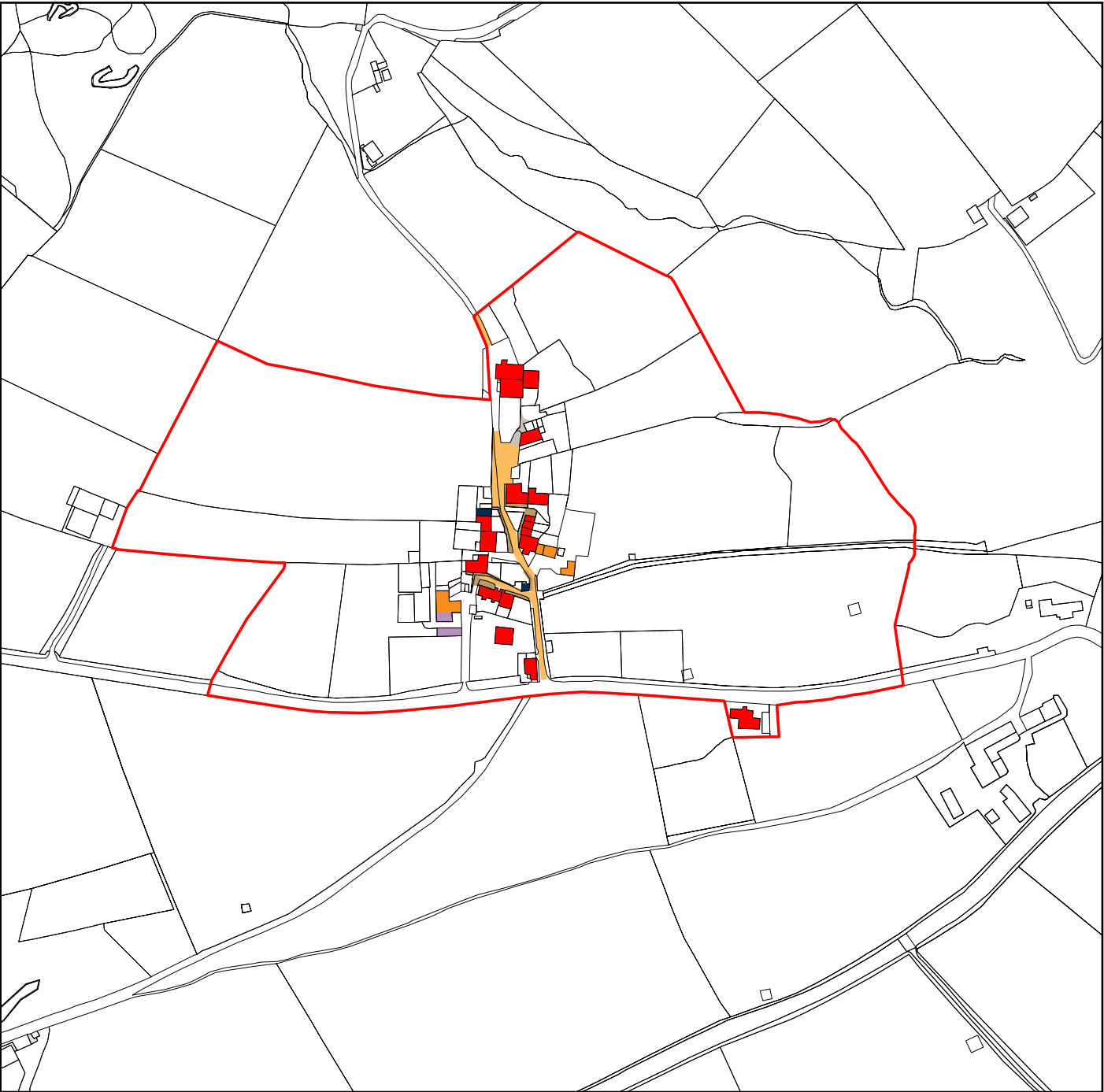
### Key

	Conservation Area Boundary		Listed building
	Key open space		Key unlisted building
	Important tree(s)		
	Key view or vista		

**NB** This map does not identify key trees individually, but merely indicates where there is at least one important tree.

# Ryecroft Conservation Area

## Land Use and Highway Materials



# Key

	Conservation Area Boundary		Demolition		Civic building
	Retail / commercial building		Residential		Stone setts / flags
	Other non residential building		Vacant building / floor space		Un-surfaced / partially surfaced
	Place of worship / religious		New development		Gravel



Any changes that have had a significant impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area since the previous assessment in 2005 are detailed below.

# Changes affecting the Conservation Area

## New Development



The existing single storey stable attached to **Ivy House Farm (Grade II listed)** was subject to an application in 2007 to be converted into part of the dwelling house with the addition of a pitched roof. The previous extension (which may have originally been a cottage attached to the farmhouse) had been altered over the years and the odd arrangement of windows and flat roof failed to enhance the conservation area or the setting of the listed building. The permission has since been implemented and the building compliments the special character of the adjoining listed building.

**POSITIVE CHANGE**



A timber stables and manege have been constructed in the yard of **Ivy House Farm**, a short distance to the southeast of the listed building. The stables are of timber construction and take the form of an 'L' shape. They are set down and away from the building and do not impact on views down the lane towards the farmhouse. The stables are therefore considered to have a neutral impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area.

**NEUTRAL CHANGE**



The former barn at **Well House Farm** has been converted into residential use. The barn had been subject to previous applications for its conversion but has only recently been implemented. The demolition of two modern farm buildings that previously stood in front of the barn has been undertaken to facilitate its conversion. Whilst the removal of the farm buildings was a positive step the conversion has not been particularly sympathetic to the character of the agricultural building and the style of openings are more suburban in character than agricultural.

**NEUTRAL CHANGE**

# Buildings

The following buildings have become vacant since Conservation Area Assessment was written:

- **25 Ryecroft** – however builders appear to be preparing the property for sale and therefore the building is likely to be in use again shortly.
- **The workshop to the north of 5 Ryecroft** is vacant but appears to be used for storage and is in reasonable condition so not of concern at this point in time.
- The characterful **red telephone box** at the entrance to the hamlet has been removed due to vandalism.

NEGATIVE CHANGE

# Trees and Open Space

An application was made in 2008 for the removal of five trees to the front of **Well House Farm**. The application was approved. The trees were not of a species natural to this locality, were overgrown and gave the property a suburban character. The removal is therefore considered to be positive change.

POSITIVE CHANGE

Since the last assessment was written the **graveyard on Ryecroft Road** has been cleared of overgrown vegetation, a seat installed and some of the leaning gravestones set straight. The graveyard makes a more positive impact on the conservation area due to the hard work put into its maintenance.

POSITIVE CHANGE



Graveyard to former Primitive Methodist Chapel, Ryecroft Road

# Works to Highways

There have been no major works to highways or replacement of street lighting or street furniture in the conservation area since 2005.

# Boundary

The boundary of the Ryecroft conservation area is deemed to be appropriate at present. Some minor amendments will be made throughout the next financial year due to the publication of new OS maps. Some minor discrepancies have come to light regarding the boundary that has been followed and the boundaries on the new OS map.



# Negative Impacts

As part of the review of the conservation area a number of properties displaying inappropriate alterations and additions have been noted.

Whilst a minority are considered to have a severely negative impact on the character of the conservation area, there are a number of properties displaying relatively minor visual detractors, such as reduced inappropriate rainwater goods, inappropriately pointed elevations and modern windows and doors. The Council will look to ways of mitigating these works and will actively discourage the occurrence of similar situations arising within the conservation area in the future. Design guidance on the repair and maintenance of historic properties has recently been published and is available on the Council's website at [www.bradford.gov.uk/repairs](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/repairs).



*The large conservatory to the gable end of 13 Ryecroft is dominant feature when approaching the building*

# Management Proposals

**The overall aim of the Conservation Area Management Proposals is to preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area, by ensuring that the Council and the community work together to maintain historic features and details and limit the loss of character.**

The objectives aim to:

- improve service delivery.
- raise awareness and understanding about the special character of the conservation area.
- improve decision making so that all repair, development and alteration result in a positive contribution to the character of the place.

The objectives of the Management Proposals are based on the issues identified in the Ryecroft Conservation Area Assessment and prioritised by members of the community who took part in the Ryecroft Conservation Area Assessment public consultation.

	Objective	Actions	Timescale
1	Design and Conservation Team to maintain contact with the local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yearly newsletter about conservation area issues</li> <li>• Design and Conservation website to be made as informative, user friendly and as up-to-date as possible.</li> </ul>	Yearly 2008-2013
2	Improved communication between Council officers and key partners in the conservation area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formation of a conservation forum</li> <li>• Workshops</li> </ul>	Monthly As required
3	Improve the quality and amenity value of the public realm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closer working relationship between Design and Conservation and other Council departments</li> <li>• Production of design guidance for the enhancement of the public realm</li> </ul>	Continual As resources permit
4	Preserve and enhance features and details that contribute to the character of Ryecroft conservation area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance for the repair and maintenance of historic buildings was published by the Design and Conservation Team in 2007.</li> </ul>	Review guidance periodically
5	Maintenance of footpaths and boundary walls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closer working between the Design and Conservation Team, property owners, Highways and Rights of Way team</li> </ul>	Continual
6	Promote good quality new development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Production of guidance on appropriate sympathetic design to suit the character of the Conservation Area.</li> <li>• Production of design briefs where appropriate and as resources permit</li> </ul>	2009-2015 As resources permit
7	Monitor planning applications to add value to the historic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and Conservation Team to work more effectively within the wider planning service.</li> </ul>	Continual
8	Address any illegal works to listed buildings and unauthorised development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaison between Design and Conservation Team and Planning Enforcement Team</li> </ul>	Continual
9	Monitor Planning Applications to add Value to the historic Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and Conservation Team to work more effectively within the wider planning service.</li> </ul>	Continual
10	Retain important trees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with the tree officer in respect of Works to trees</li> </ul>	Continual
11	Monitor Change loss/gain and feedback to local community and officers working in the conservation area	Design and Conservation Team to review Ryecroft conservation area within five years in line with Best Value indicator 219a.	Review by June 2014





