





## **MIDDLETON BY YOULGREAVE CONSERVATION AREA**

### ***Summary of character***

Middleton is a relatively compact village, very much centred on The Square. Lying in a fold of the hills, just above the point where the dry valley drops steeply to Bradford Dale, there are many mature trees in the village, most of which, both within and without the Conservation Area, are protected by Tree Preservation Orders. Many of the buildings are listed, particularly in the central area though there is one group of modern houses to the south-east of The Square. To the south-west, expansion is limited by the grounds of Middleton Hall. To west and east the valley is narrow. Only to the north, along the main approach road from Youlgreave has there been further infill, on individual plots which have consolidated earlier spasmodic development. Traditionally an agricultural village, many houses are now occupied by older people or those who work outside the immediate area, so that it now has a more residential character than it has in the past.

Most buildings are built of limestone. However, its form varies from random rubble, through coursed rubble to squared, coursed rubble. Any alterations or extensions need to take careful account of the original stone. Likewise roof materials vary from stone slate to Staffordshire blue tiles and Welsh slate. More recently a few concrete tiles have been added and grants should be used to discourage and, where possible, reverse this trend. Gritstone dressings, including several properties with verge copings, are the norm and a few buildings, particularly Middleton Hall (3) and stables (4) are built of gritstone ashlar. The same applies to The Square House in (not surprisingly!), The Square.

### **AREA A - NORTHERN MIDDLETON**

#### ***Summary of character***

This northern approach from Youlgreave is the most open part of Middleton. Buildings are widely spaced, with most lying to the west of the road, looking out over a shallow depression, crossed by earthworks (1) which are the remains of a 15th century fortified manor-house. To the north, the buildings between Castle Farm (2) and Castle Cottages (3) may well indicate the site of the farm associated with the Manor House. In the east, groups of trees limit the views towards Bradford Dale. Spasmodically, mature trees line the road and are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

#### ***Uses***

The traditional character of Middleton as an agricultural community is apparent at Castle & Dale (4) Farms. The open land, both to the east of the road and, seen through smaller gaps between buildings to the west of the road is in use as farmland. The Village Hall (5) and former Congregational Church (6) are evidence of the communal life of the village. The latter's conversion to a house, together with both traditional cottages and later infill building, indicate the increasingly residential character of the village as a whole.

#### ***Spaces & Buildings***

The large open area to the east of the road is the focal point of northern Middleton. Largely open grazing land, there are a few mature trees round the periphery and more extensive woodland to the east. The earthworks of the former manor house are clearly visible and should be retained as a key feature of the area.

To the south, rising ground leads to an abrupt narrowing of the open space as the gable end of one cottage (7) fronts the road opposite two mature trees. Farm buildings (8) to the south continue the line of division between northern Middleton and the village core.

Buildings vary in size and orientation. Castle Farm and Dale Farm present gable ends to the road whereas the large Castle Farm barns run parallel to the carriageway. The Village Hall and former Congregational Church again present their gables to the road, but have their main entrance in that frontage. The house in the extreme south faces north, whilst two cottages to its north have their main frontage parallel to the road set back behind small gardens. Limestone is the predominant building material, but it is presented in its varying forms from random rubble to squared and coursed; gritstone was used for the church. Variety is the keynote and any proposals for change will need careful consideration within their very specific context. Rubble limestone walls, on the other hand are widespread and are the normal method of defining field and property boundaries.

## **AREA B - CENTRAL MIDDLETON**

### ***Summary of character***

Extremely strongly delineated on its northern and eastern sides, The Square opens out to west and south, with small subsidiary spaces in front of King's Croft (9) and between Tor and Green Farms (10 & 11 respectively). Clearly the public centre of the village, nowadays most property is residential, though agriculture is still significant. Many of the listed houses were built by the owner of Middleton Hall for his tenants.

### ***Uses***

This is the core of the village and its main circulation space. Public facilities include a children's play area, public toilets (12) two wells (not now functioning) and the Church (13). A clock-tower on the stable block (14), although not publicly provided or maintained, adds to the sense of a public use. The Square House was once a pub, but now, like most of the buildings, is a private house. Clearly there is a strong residential element in this central core.

### **Spaces & Buildings**

In the north the gable end of the cottage (7) which faces into Area A, together with the trees to the east, are as important in delineating the space as seen from The Square as they are in marking the southern boundary of Area A. Groups of listed cottages and The Square House flank the approaches to this pinch-point. To the west a slight narrowing of the space between stone walls is succeeded by a second opening out in front of King's Croft. The walled enclosure on the small green, with its mature trees, is a key feature in this part of the village. The tight-knit northern side continues across this part of the overall space.

To the south there is much more variety in the buildings and a much less clear-cut boundary. The stables' clock-tower forms a prominent 'stop' to the view southwards from The Square, though this is reached via a subsidiary opening out of the area between Tor and Green Farms which is emphasised by another small grassed 'green'. There are views from The Square to both Green Croft Farm (15) and Green Farm. The trees along the driveway to Middleton Hall form a backdrop to the central area from its eastern flank. There are some modern buildings and outbuildings to Green Croft Farm, creating a much less formal feel to this part of the village centre, a sharp contrast to the other sides of 'The Square', which, in reality, is more of a triangle! Land in the extreme east, behind the buildings, extends to the tree fringe above the cliff which marks the Conservation Area boundary. It is largely private and has minimal public impact.

Buildings, not surprisingly, are similarly varied. Small terraced cottages of squared limestone and gritstone, contrast with substantial detached properties and farms, interspersed with architecturally less significant modern houses and farm outbuildings. Listed Building status ensures careful consideration of any proposals for change to all the most significant buildings. Likewise Tree Preservation Orders protect most of the mature trees. Any not so covered, receive the normal protection offered by Conservation Area designation.

## AREA C - DALE COTTAGE AND TOR FARM BUILDINGS

### Summary of character

This cottage and an extensive grouping of farm buildings lie at the head of the steep valley to Bradford Dale and are separated from the central area basically by the difference in level.

### Uses

This area is agricultural, with residential occupancy of the cottage.

### Spaces and Buildings

Public space is limited to the footpath along the northern edge of the area. Elsewhere there is a somewhat confused grouping of traditional and more recent farm buildings. Dale Cottage is separated from the farm complex by a drystone wall. Similarly, a drystone wall marks the boundary of the Conservation Area on its eastern flank and walls separate this area from the open landscape beyond (Area E).

## AREA D - MIDDLETON HALL

### Summary of character

Middleton Hall and its immediate grounds up to the remains of the ha-ha form the south-western section of the Conservation Area. The early 19th century Hall and stable block are the centrepiece of the estate. Much of the area is private, shielded from public view by stone walls and tree belts. A second stable block in the east and entrance gates to the Hall grounds, however, are clearly visible from the village centre and thus have a role to play in both areas.

### Uses

The Hall remains in private, residential ownership.

### Spaces & Buildings

The grounds of the Hall are private. They impinge on the Conservation Area basically by means of the walls which flank the Estate's northern and eastern boundary. Limited views along the ha-ha and into the parkland can be obtained from the south. Significant gateways are found to the north of the stable block on Weaddow Lane which now gives access to the Garden House, occupied separately, but built as part of the hall complex. A further gateway (16) to the north is now the principal entrance to the Hall. Listed ashlar gate pillars and cast-iron gates give access to the tree-lined drive, which is clearly visible from the road. To the west of this gateway the wall remains high, well above eye-level. Elsewhere the screening effect of lower walls is augmented by stands of mature trees, which ensure privacy for the house and grounds. Hall Cottage (17) and its outbuildings turn their backs on Greencroft Farm and the estate walls separate them from the central area of Middleton.

## AREA E - SOUTHERN FIELDS

### Summary of character

A bend in the road and the solid bulk of the church separates this area from the village centre while the estate wall and trees separate it from Middleton Hall. It consists of a small area of previously developed land in its north-western corner and fields in the south-eastern section of the Conservation Area. These fields act as a foreground to the village and open up views to the hills beyond it.

## Uses

This is an agricultural area. The small site in the north-west corner was formerly occupied by two cottages. These have now been demolished and the site remains as an under-used piece of land on the edge of the village. A substantial group of trees, however, separates it from agricultural land to the south. There is potential in this area for improvement as an important entry point to the village.

## Spaces and Buildings

The main spatial characteristics of this area have been discussed above. The only additional element in Weadow Lane. Given that its western side is bounded by the trees of the Hall, it is visually more closely related to the fields to the east and thus is included in this area. There are no buildings and the only structures are the limestone walls, whose retention as part of the village foreground should be encouraged.

## AREA F - ROCK FARM

The western part of the Conservation Area lies in the dry valley to the west of the village centre. Topography, stone walls and tree belts all combine to create a long and narrow area, with relatively few buildings.

## Uses

The eastern end is wooded, with a substantial area of fairly recent planting. Rock Farm remains a working farm, with grazing land to the west. To the north of the road two widely separated building groups, Rose & Rock Cottages (18 and 19 respectively) add a residential element to the area. The site of the former pinfold (20) is now occupied by a small building, converted for use as a garage.

## Spaces and Buildings

Stone walls bound the road for its whole length. In the east, the high wall to the Middleton Hall Estate and the tree belt to the north of the road give a strong sense of enclosure after the more open space around the Green in front of King's Croft (Area B). Further west, beyond Rock Farm, it is the northern side of the road which is flanked by a high wall and hedge in front of Rock Cottage, an early 19th century Listed Building. Although there is open land to the south of the road this rises to the wall and trees of Middleton Hall so the sense of enclosure is maintained.

All houses have their main facade parallel to the road, as does the main traditional barn at Rock Farm. Styles vary enormously, with Gothic detailing at Rock Cottage contrasting with the traditional 'cottage' style of Rose Cottages, and the vernacular character of the farmhouse and barns.

## **DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

The following considerations will be taken into account by the Board when assessing any proposals for development in the Middleton-by-Youlgrave Conservation Area.

- (a) In accordance with the Structure Plan (Policy C4), development which would not preserve, and where possible, enhance the valued characteristics of the Middleton-by-Youlgrave Conservation Area will not be permitted, other than in exceptional circumstances.
- (b) Alterations and extensions should take into account the building materials and details of the property concerned and be designed appropriately to maintain the character of the original buildings in particular and the Conservation Area in general in accordance with the the Peak Park Design Guide.
- (c) Limestone rubble (of a character appropriate for the building concerned), stone slate, Welsh slate or Staffordshire blue tiles should continue to be used, as appropriate, with a preference for original roof-coverings to be re-instated.
- (d) Redevelopment of barns/outbuildings should, wherever possible, contribute to the viability of the farm concerned, rather than pass into separate ownership, as being the best way of maintaining the character of the building.
- (e) Normal high standards for Listed Building Consent will be maintained, including the impact of any proposal on the appearance of the area as a whole, as well as the individual building concerned.
- (f) Careful management of trees and hedges should be encouraged, especially those identified on Drawing No. A4139/3 as having particular landscape importance
- (g) Stone walls should be retained and where necessary repaired or reconstructed throughout the Middleton-by-Youlgrave Conservation Area.
- (h) Open spaces identified on Drawing No. A4139/3 as being of particular townscape significance should be protected from development. However, failure to indicate land on the drawing should not be interpreted as implying development potential. Intensification of building anywhere within the Conservation Area would need careful consideration and in many places could be inappropriate. All proposals will be assessed on their merits at the time of application and will only be approved if a need is identified which cannot be satisfied else where in the village and is of overall public benefit.
- (i) All features identified on Drawing No. A4139/3 and/or the accompanying notes should be accepted as being of importance and value within the Conservation Area.
- (j) The Peak Park Board's grant-aid scheme should be used to promote/maintain the identified features of the Conservation Area as appropriate and as finances permit.
- (k) Assessment of any development proposals will take place within the context of approved Development Plan policies and this Middleton-by-Youlgrave Conservation Area analysis