

Matlock Bank

Conservation Area Appraisal

3. Archaeological Significance

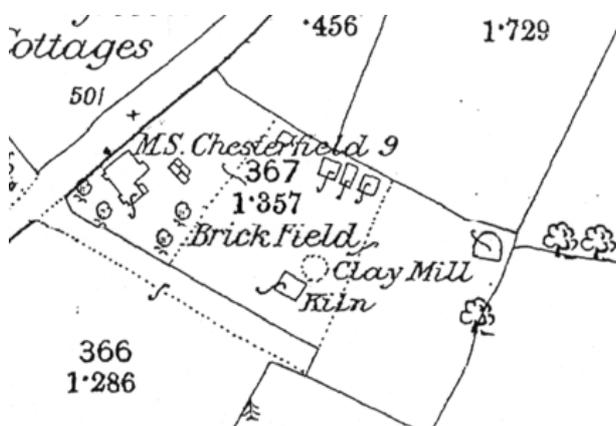


ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Matlock Bank Conservation Area contains no Scheduled Ancient Monuments, and there is very little known archaeology in the area due to the steepness of the terrain and the relatively late and fast development in the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, much of which remains in the wealth of surviving former hydros, houses and other buildings built at that time. The main early settlements were around Matlock Green and Old Matlock, with the Church of St Giles as its focal point, and the ancient river crossing at Matlock Bridge, at the bottom of the hill. These areas were on easier land to develop, with only a small scattering of houses and farms on the bankside up until the development of the hydros. Grade II listed Wellfield Cottage dated 1667, built of coursed rubble stone with a stone tiled roof, is a significant remnant of this earlier development in the area. The seventeenth and eighteenth century Wolds Farmhouse just to the north of the Conservation Area is another significant survival of post medieval enclosure of the moor. The enclosure map clearly shows that this was an early private enclosure.

There is evidence indicating that the lead mining industry in the area dates back to Roman times - several pigs of lead bearing Roman inscriptions have been found in the area, including one on Matlock Bank, and others found on Tansley Moor and Nether Cromford Moor. These could be linked to the existence of a Roman settlement called Lutudarum, which is thought to have existed near Wirksworth.

The first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1876 shows, at the end of School Road, the site of a brickfield with a claymill, a kiln and four tanks or ponds. The site developed as a school in 1896, now Castle View Primary School. The former



Pl. 8 Extract from first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1876

brickwork site also includes the site of an adjacent residential property in School Road, and the school site itself is currently outside the conservation area boundary.

There are remnants of industrial archaeology in the survival of the former Tram Depot at the top of Rutland Street. The tramway from Crown Square up to Rutland Street opened in 1893, financed by Sir George Newnes, M. P., a publisher who had also built the cliff railway linking Lynton and Lynmouth in North Devon, which is still in use today. Matlock became the first municipal authority to own and operate a cable railway. It was a 42-inch gauge single track with passing places, terminating at the bottom in Crown Square. Following its demise, the shelter and clock tower at the lower end were relocated to Hall Leys Park. The cars each seated 13 inside and 18 outside and were hauled by cables and powered by two high pressure horizontal steam engines in the depot at the corner of Rutland Street and Wellington Street. These steam engines were replaced in 1920 by gas suction engines, before the tramway closed in 1927 following rising operating costs.



The Rutland Street Depot designed in 1893 by J. Turner still stands unaltered with the exception the chimney which has been lowered. Derbyshire County Council's Sites and Monument Record notes the survival, at the time of survey, of a car shed with the pits and track, workshop, boiler house and winding house. The site is now a garage and still has prominence on the corner of Rutland Street and Wellington Street.