

Matlock Bank

Conservation Area Appraisal

5. Setting of the Conservation Area



SETTING OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

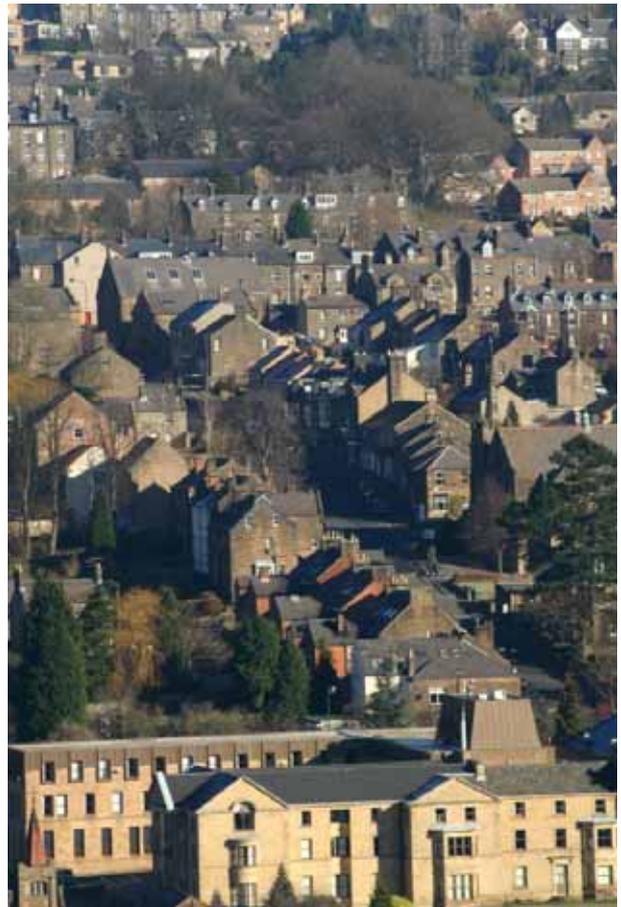
Although the boundary of the conservation area is drawn tightly around the buildings, and it is the buildings that make up the greater part of its character, the wider setting of the conservation area and long distance exchanges of view across the Derwent Valley are critical to its significance.

There are few places on Matlock Bank which are without glimpses of the spectacular views across the Derwent Valley. Undoubtedly the good views, clear air and shelter of the steep slope were factors in Smedley's choice of location establishing the centre for hydropathy, which advocated fresh air and exercise as an essential part of the treatment. An early view taken from 'the High Tor area' (circa 1890 -1900) before much of the infilling of Matlock Bank around the hydros, shows, although a little hazy, the significance of Smedley's Hydro as a landmark on the hillside, with little else other than fields between this and Matlock Bridge below. This photograph was taken at the height of the hydropathic era and views into the conservation area such as this are equally significant today.



Pl. 17 View of Matlock Bank from the High Tor area c.1890-1900

County Hall, the former Smedley's Hydro, can also be clearly seen from Salters Lane, on the south side of the valley. The building clearly dominates the hillside, running horizontally along the contours, with its expansive wings, and a vertical emphasis as well in its great chimney and central tower. At the top of Matlock Bank to the west, the land can be seen to rise up to the moor, with a ridge of trees.



Bank Road rising above the Town Hall



Panoramic view of Matlock Bank from Salters Lane

Steep Turnpike is also clear from this vantage point with the building known as 'the Mount' (now 42 Steep Turnpike and 115 Lime Tree Road) clearly visible at the top on the right hand side. The Limestone Way runs parallel to Salters Lane in part and from here and along Snitterton Road below there are also important viewpoints.

The approach into the conservation area from the south is distinctive. From close to Crown Square, looking up Bank Road, three of the most significant hydros can be seen one above the other with the Town Hall marking the entrance to Bank Road at the bottom, County Hall above and Rockside's turrets as the crowning glory in the distance.



View up the hill of the Town Hall, County Hall and Rockside, three former hydros

Just as views into the conservation area are important, so are views out. High Tor, Masson and Riber Hills can all be viewed from a number of



High Tor and Black Rocks from Jackson Tor

points within the conservation area. From the top of Jackson Tor on Cavendish Road, at the north west corner of the conservation area, the cable cars of the Heights of Abraham can be picked out, as can the results of quarrying into the hillside at Cawdor & Hall Dale Quarry. The new Sainsbury development at the former Cawdor Quarry site will be visible from the high vantage points within the conservation area. High Tor can be seen in profile as an abrupt edge to the hillside, with the limestone face just visible at the edge, with Black Rock beyond it.



High Tor visible from County Hall car park



View of the former Cawdor Quarry site

Riber Castle, dominating Riber Hill, is a highly visible landmark from Matlock Bank, perhaps at one time intended to remind competing hydros of the success of Smedley its creator.

To the north of the conservation area the setting becomes more rural, with the sparse Matlock Moor on the hilltop above. There is also a sense of openness east of the Chesterfield Road boundary, where the land starts to fall away, and the topography tends to hide the development further east, towards Lumsdale.



View from Rockside Steps with Riber Castle on the left horizon

The immediate setting beyond the western and southern boundaries of the conservation area is characterised by large areas of Victorian, Edwardian & post-war housing. Views to the west across the breadth of the bank, on the periphery of the conservation area, are generally “closed” by the presence of this housing development.



View from Bank Road of the wider rural setting south of the conservation area

The key threat to the setting of the conservation area is from development blocking the views both into and out of the conservation area. This could include:

- ... Glimpses of major landmarks, in particular former hydros – County Hall, the former Smedleys Hydro and Rockside former hydro - and All Saints Church.
- ... Views out of the conservation area towards the surrounding hills and key landmarks - Riber Castle and High Tor.

- ... Glimpses between buildings both of landmarks within and views beyond the conservation area. Large unbroken blocks of development within the conservation area would be inappropriate.
- ... Views into Matlock Bank from across and within the Derwent Valley. These could be affected by dominant, large blocks of development in the valley bottom or on the hillside alongside the conservation area, which could compete with and detract from the landmark former hydros, as much as by development actually blocking views.