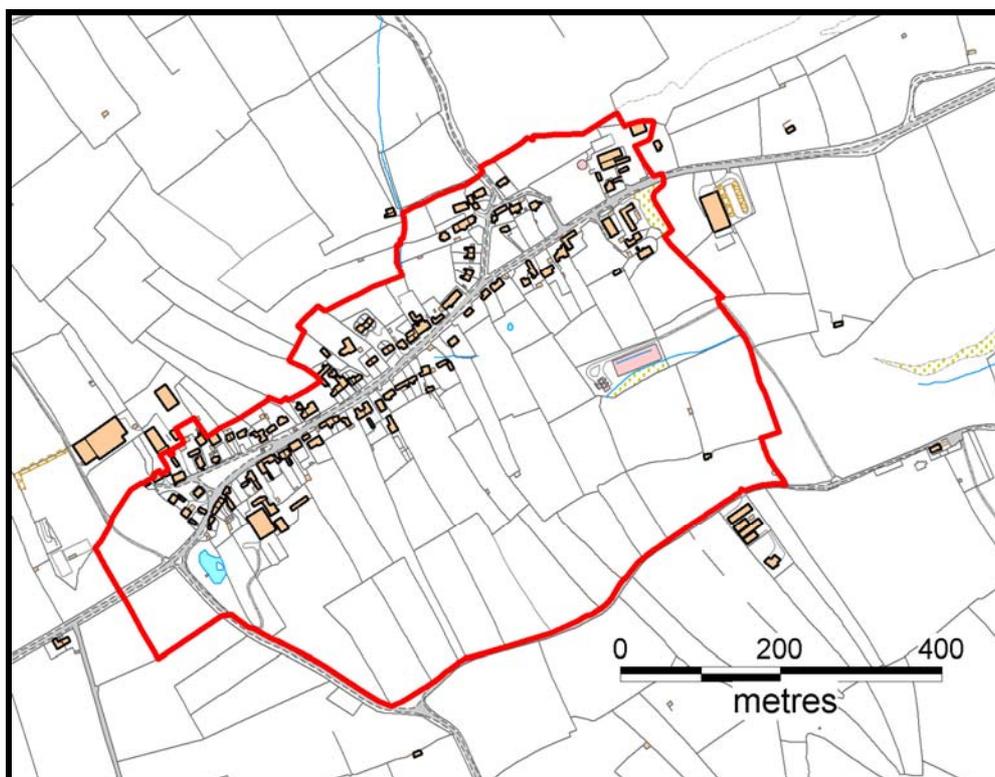


Carperby, Wensleydale – Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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1.0 Introduction

This character appraisal has been prepared as part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's Conservation Area Strategy. It follows on from a Conservation Area Workshop Meeting with the residents of Carperby on the 10th August 2000 and a walk around the village with residents on the 10th September 2000.

2.0 The location and setting of the Village

Carperby is located near to the lower end of Upper Wensleydale on gently rising, but undulating ground a short way to the north of the deep gorge cut by the River Yore which contains the dramatic Aysgarth Falls. Immediately to the north of the village the terrain begins to rise more steeply over shallow scars towards the open moorland of Great Wegber and Carperby Moor. The minor road from Askrigg (6 kilometres to the west) to Redmire passes through the village on it's way to the market town of Leyburn, at the foot of the dale, 10 kilometres to the east.

There are dramatic views outwards from the village, particularly at the east and west ends but also occasionally from gaps between buildings towards Penhill, Bishopdale and Addlebrough to the south west. These have been identified on the attached Character Analysis Map for the village.

3.0 The historic origins and development of the Village

The origins of Carperby as a place name are somewhat obscure and open to various interpretations. The most popular opinion is that the name is Scandinavian in origin, probably dating back to the occupation of the area by Danish Vikings in the 10th Century

with *-by* meaning farmstead or holding, while *-kjarr* is ancient Danish for a bushy bog area. However, an alternative theory is provided in Smith's Book The Place Names of North Riding. He quotes a Professor Ekwall who suggests that, given a Celtic derived spelling Kerperbi is found in the Domesday Book of 1086, it may have a greater association with Scandinavian settlers who travelled into the dales from the west, via earlier settlement in Ireland. He suggests that "Cairpre" and later "Cairbre" is a Celtic or old Irish name for a person who was named after his occupation as a charioteer.

Even if either interpretation is correct this would not necessarily mean that there was a settlement here in the 10th or 11th Century. Such a place name might be simply be a topographical description or refer to the existence of a single farmstead. Neither is entry in the Domesday Book a guarantee of such status.

However, by the late 13th Century there must certainly have been a sizeable community here for in 1305 Carperby receives a Market Charter, one of the earliest in the northern dales, for the holding of a weekly market and two fairs, one on the Saints Day of St. James in July and one on Saint Andrew's day in November. There is some suggestion that this market may have fallen into disuse after 1587 when Askrigg began to acquire the greater focus of commercial activity in the Upper Dale, only to be revived once again in the 17th Century. The surviving market cross, with its date of 1674 may possibly commemorate this re-activity.

Evidence from 18th Century maps of the village, suggests that the east end of the settlement was formerly a more prestigious and important focus for village life than it is today. Significantly, the area which stretches in a wide arc from the Village Institute, northwards towards the bungalow known as Wegber and then eastwards to a point approximately 100 metres beyond East End Farmhouse, formerly contained a whole series of small garths. Before the 18th Century these would almost certainly have contained houses and other buildings, for in the pre-modern age garths were associated more with human activity than with agricultural use.

At that time the area to the south of these garths consisted almost entirely of a large triangular open space which is today occupied by the houses, gardens and small fields of The Bastile House, East End Cottage and, more intriguingly, Chapel House.

The latter is significant because Speight in his Romantic Richmondshire (1897) records that there was formerly an old Chapel of Ease in this area. He indicates that this was a small building with a thatched roof and that remnants of this structure were incorporated into the porch of Chapel House. There is no sign of this material today, although some 17th Century material is clearly visible in the porch of the neighbouring East End Cottage. A small building is revealed on all of the surviving maps up to 1810 in what is today the garden of East End Cottage. Given that this structure had disappeared by the time East End Cottage first appears on a map of 1839, this could well be the structure in question. The historic origins of this Chapel are unknown, but it may well have had the name of St. James as a St. James' Well is located by the roadside a short distance to the north east.

The probable siting of a Chapel in this area of the village lends considerable weight to a view that this area was formerly more central to village life. Additional support for this view can be found in the nearby location of Manor Farm and in adjacent field names such as Hall Croft and Great Close, which could all be interpreted as suggesting a manorial presence at this end of the village.

It is also possible to interpret the large area of open space to the south of the possible Chapel site as having been the location of the mediaeval market place. The location of a small pound or pinfold, for the coralling of wandering farm stock, at the south west corner of this former open space is also suggestive.

However, This area is completely redefined in the period between 1799 and 1810 as new road boundaries are created and the enclosure of the former large open area takes place. These changes were presumably undertaken as part of the re-routing and alterations which were taking place in an effort to improve the Richmond to Lancaster Turnpike route. Prior to this, access to the village from the east was made by Hargill Lane which led up to the moor to connect with Castle Bolton via Bolton Parks and Ellerlands. The present road to Redmire appears on 18th Century maps as little more than a farm track, although it may once have continued, as Low Lane did, towards the formerly important medieval township of Thoresby to the south east.

Following the redesign of this area sometime around 1800, an area of open water develops in front of what is now East End Cottage. This is named on the 1856 6" Ordnance Survey Map as Chapelmire Dub and it may be that this feature was deliberately created as a duck pond or formal washing area for the village.

While the east end of the village has seen quite significant changes over the last 250 years, resulting today in a quite open character, the reverse appears to have happened at the West End of the Village. Map evidence suggests that prior to the 19th Century the arrangement of buildings was somewhat more random than it is today, and that the strong linear aspect of the south row only developed in the second half of the 19th Century. A significant factor in these changes could well be the devastation caused by a major fire which is reputed to have taken place in the early part of the 19th Century and which is said to have caused the destruction of some 12 thatched buildings. (Original documentary source now unknown – this information supplied during the community walk around the village). Significantly, map evidence reveals that some 9 buildings disappear from the north and west sides of the green between 1819 and 1856 suggesting that any such serious conflagration may well have occurred at the north west end of the village.

The other area of the village which demonstrates a notable change in form is that part of the main street between the Wheat-Sheaf Hotel and East End House. These two buildings date from the mid and late 18th Century respectively. They sit within a pair of parallel rows and face each other across what was formerly a wide rectangular open space or green. This space only becomes enclosed shortly after 1800, again probably as a result of road improvements, but the historic significance of this former space is still recognisable today in the way that the building lines of the southern row appear to veer away from today's angled road line.

One other noteworthy historic feature was situated beyond the well defined western boundary of the built up area, to the south west of the house now known as Conifers. Although not visible on the early extant maps of the village, a sizeable large area of open water appears on the 1799 map in the corner of a very large unenclosed piece of land shown as Sleights. By 1810, when this large field has become partly enclosed and its eastern part divided into narrow strip fields for allocation to villagers, the area of water seems to remain unenclosed by boundary walls. By 1856 that area of water, now shown on maps as Deadman's Hole, has grown to fill almost all of this small parcel of land. However, by 1897 this feature water has been drained and the today's field pattern had become established.

Little development seems to have taken place in the first half of the 20th Century. The Village Institute dates from 1926 while the new public housing dates from the 1950s or 1960s. Most of the other modern development dates from the last decades of the 20th Century as various gap sites, particularly along the southern side of the village street, were filled in with modern housing and bungalows. A number of large modern agricultural buildings were also erected in garths and fields to the rear of earlier building lines in more open locations at each end of the village.

4.0 The architectural and historic interest of the villages, buildings and other structures

Surviving buildings in Carperby date predominantly from the late 18th and 19th centuries. Stylistic evidence suggest that only a handful of buildings are likely to have origins before this period and only one building, West Grove, demonstrates the possibility of having been conceived in the 17th century and even this house has been significantly altered subsequently.

As a consequence only five structures have been identified as possessing sufficient national interest to be included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The earliest of these is the Market Cross which dates to 1674, although its pyramidal base may be somewhat later in date. The Friends Meeting House of 1864 is, in architectural terms the most sophisticated building in the village possessing rusticated quoins and window surrounds, and a gabled front surmounted by a heavily moulded closed pediment. West End Farmhouse has a date stone of 1722 although the depth of the building, the character of the stonework and the detailing of the window dressings all cast doubts over the authenticity of this date. The owner of the building has indicated that he believes that the building was given deeper plan-form when a new frontage was added at some later date. West Lea cottage is the former Wesleyan Chapel and dates from 1826 and, like the Quakers Cottages which are associated with the adjacent Friends Meeting House, but date from the early 19th century, is listed in part because of its socio-historic interest.

Only one house, West Grove, possesses a noticeable pre 18th century character. Its relatively low, linear form and the dramatic, large projecting chimney stack to the north gable, suggests 17th century origins. However, as with many houses in the village this has been subject to re-fenestration in the early to mid 19th century, although in architectural terms it remains a handsome building.

One building which still retains some stylistic evidence for an 18th century date of construction is the Wheat-Sheaf Hotel which possesses moulded architraves of Ca 1750 to some of its sash windows. The 1799 map of the village shows this building as having then had a large porch attached to its front elevation. This was probably dismantled during a remodelling of the front in the 1860's or 70's, which created the fine bay window, simple gothic inspired extension and the simple slab porch with decorative supports.

Other buildings which may have 18th century origins include Ivy House Farm, Hallgarth, Top Sawyers, East Garth and Alpine Cottage. Almost all of these buildings have seen some alterations during the 19th or 20th centuries.

Map evidence suggests that houses such as Atkinsons Cottage and West Field, together with the two groups of terraced cottages opposite Ivy House could well date from the late 18th or 19th century. However, most of these cottages have seen significant alterations during the 20th century and this has reduced their historic and architectural interest somewhat, although some 19th century joinery does still survive in Terrace House and Walden View.

Almost all of the other buildings in the village date from the 19th century. These display construction methods and details both from the vernacular tradition and from the increasingly influential Victorian pattern books. A particularly fine example from this period is Cross House. This is a double fronted two storey house with a Welsh true-slate roof. The building possesses good quality stepped chimney stacks with fine moulded copings, cut ashlar window sills and lintels, on central door with monolithic ashlar surrounds and a closed verge with water tabling. A small cottage attached to the rear is an attractive addition and gives complexity to the building's form, although the roof of small synthetic tiles is not original.

Other cottages and houses which demonstrate attractive 19th century detailing include Laburnum House, which also possess fine ashlar door surround, and East End Farmhouse, with its walls constructed from graduated courses of limestone.

Two buildings which front the northern edge of the village green provide attractive contrast to the housing in the area. These are the buildings now known as Greygarth, which is shown on the 1856 OS map as a primitive Methodist Chapel and the now unused former school building. The latter has an attractive form which is further improved by the use of windows with semi-circular heads. These are constructed from cut voussoirs in the main building and dressed ashlar to the moulded door of the later entrance porch. The building probably dates from ca. 1840. It is unfortunate that, due to unoccupation its condition is deteriorating rapidly.

Houses and cottages from the later part of the 19th century reveal more consciously designed elements and construction details which are characteristic of the period. Myrtle Grove Farmhouse is constructed from rock-faced stonework with fine joints and rusticated quoins and possesses an attractive canted stone bay with roof parapet to its gabled, front elevation. This is a companion piece, in terms of its construction details, to the primitive Methodist Chapel, and it may have had a functional relationship with that building. Keld Springs and Wood Springs are a typical pair of semi-detached cottages ca. 1870 – 80. They utilise cut ashlar door and window surrounds, stonework which is typical of the period, and elegant gabled dormers to the front eaves. This pair of cottages demonstrates quite well how modern changes can affect the special character of traditional buildings. While the interest of Water Springs has been somewhat eroded by the insertion of modern PVCu fittings, Keld Springs has been much more carefully maintained and still retains an attractive Victorian character. This effect is further enhanced by the care lavished on the elegant cast iron railings and stone gate piers which enclose the shallow front gardens.

5.0 The contribution made by buildings to the special character of the area

The above section describes the key individual building which possess significant architectural qualities in this local context. These buildings have been identified on the attached Character Analysis Map as making a positive contribution to the special character of the built up area. Other buildings, however, make a more neutral or even negative contribution to the special interest of the village. The reasons for this vary. Sometimes this is a result of poor adaptations which have been carried out in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Such work might include poorly scaled or designed extensions, the introduction of modern, non traditional joinery designs or materials such as PVCu or other synthetic products. These buildings have been identified on the attached Character Analysis Map as making a neutral or negative contribution to the special interest of the area. The latter may, in future, offer, an opportunity for positive improvement, should alternative buildings of high quality design be proposed.

6.0 The form and character of the village and its relationship to the adjacent and wider landscape setting

Although the form of Carperby can be simply characterised as a long linear settlement, it is possible to identify three distinct areas of differing character. The east end of the village, beyond the Institute building, is much broader in plan than any other part of the settlement. It also has a much more open character with numerous trees and small fields being interspersed with a somewhat sporadic development of old and new buildings within plots of differing sizes and shapes. This general randomness and lack of formality is a key aspect of the area today.

The central section, from the Institute to approximately Hall Garth, displays buildings arranged for the most part, in a number of linear or terrace rows with some set quite close

to the road's edge and others set back within private gardens of varying depths. Again, a mixture of earlier and some modern buildings prevails although the effect is generally a harmonious one. Due to the rising ground to the north, the buildings here seem much more elevated and as result of this topography the front boundary walls to these properties seem to be quite tall.

The central area leads almost imperceptibly into the west end of the village which is characterised by an attractive arrangement of buildings round a small triangular village green, with a monumental market cross and an attractive pair of mature trees. There is in fact a noticeable contrast here, between the south side of this open space, with its almost continuous row of two storey houses set either against the road edge or behind very shallow front gardens and the other two sides. The latter are notable for what seems, initially, to be a somewhat haphazard arrangement, but which is, upon closer inspection, composed of alternating alignments of buildings, either gable onto or parallel with the green edge and set at either the front or more deeply back within narrow plot widths. This seemingly accidental arrangement creates a sequence of enclosed spaces which are of real distinction and interest. The fact that a number of these buildings formally had public use such as a school, chapels or meeting house reinforces this area as a modern focal point for the village.

These factors also influence the character of the main entry and exit points to the village. The east end provides an approach through an informal tree lined avenue into a relatively open arrangement of working and former farmsteads and agricultural fields. The village street proper only seems to begin at the Village Institute.

The west end, by contrast, has an extremely well defined boundary to the developed area, which respects the historic margins of the settlement and creates an almost abrupt end to the built up area. This results in very narrow entrance point between a house known Conifers and a former barn, which creates a memorable surprise entry immediately onto the open space of the village green.

This small, narrow wedge shaped green area is almost totally enclosed by buildings of various shapes and sizes and is dominated by a pair of mature trees and by the monumental form of the market cross which terminates the south end of this space as the street begins to narrow again over a slight crest.

The west boundary of the village offers one of the most important viewpoints from the settlement. This vista takes in a foreground containing the low walled enclosure which was formally occupied by the feature known as Dead Man's Hole and a row of dry stone walls which traverse a low ridge beyond. In the background a panorama encompassing Burton Moor, Walden, Forelands Rigg and Bishopdale, is framed between a pair of mature trees. The importance of the avenue of smaller trees which flanks the lane down to Bear Park was also identified by villagers as a key landmark in such views from the settlement.

Viewpoints outwards from the village core are more restricted. The rising ground to the north obstructs views from that direction and so attention is diverted towards the south where glimpses of the surrounding landscape are provided via gaps in the building line. Important examples include the vantage points available on either side of Ivy House Farm; that between Robson Cottage and East End; and also those from the public rights of way adjacent to Beckstones and Laburnum House. Unfortunately, views offered from the footpath which begins at the 'avenue' of parallel buildings at West Grove have been noticeably obstructed by the large mass of the modern farmbuildings in the fields beyond. Other significant vistas include those over the small fields in front of Alpine Cottage and outwards towards the tree lined scar behind East End Farm. The more limited viewpoint provided by the public right of way at the rear of the Chestnut Cottage complex towards the mediaeval earthworks a short way to the north is also important.

Further evidence of earlier land use is visible to the south and west of the village. The partial enclosure of the large field known as Sleights at the beginning of the 19th century was noted earlier. The remnants of much earlier field strips are still in evidence in the area between the garths behind the south row of the street and Low Lane, some 300m to the south. These 'reins' are probably of medieval origin and, while disrupted in the modern era, they are still a valuable reminder of the village's ancient relationship with the surrounding agricultural land.