



SOWERBY BRIDGE

C O N S E R V A T I O N A R E A

CONSERVATION AREAS

Conservation Areas are places that Councils recognise to be of special architectural or historic interest. Designating a Conservation Area is a statement of intent by the Council to protect and, if possible, improve upon its special qualities.

A Conservation Area does not mean that there will be no new developments or alterations to existing buildings. We live in a changing world, and the places where we live must be able to adapt to the demands of present-day life. However, the Council has a duty to make sure that all changes increase the attractiveness of the area and do not harm its special character.

This is important, as once unsympathetic changes to buildings and spaces have started to take place, the character of these historic areas can very quickly disappear. If we don't decide now which areas are important to retain and protect because of their historic significance and character, it could well be too late in years to come.

There are a number of special controls and requirements that apply to Conservation Areas in order to protect their character. For example, consent is required to demolish buildings and other structures, and as a

general rule, this will be resisted. New development must normally be built of natural stone, and all new buildings, along with alterations to existing buildings, must preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the area. If you want to fell or prune a tree, the Council must be notified in advance.

If you are thinking about making any alteration to a property, or undertaking other work, in a Conservation Area, it is advisable to contact the Town Planning Department (tel;Halifax (0422) 357257) to find out if any consents are needed. Practical advice about restoration or alterations and the possible availability of grant-aid can also be obtained from the Department.

The Council hopes that being in a Conservation Area will encourage owners to maintain and restore their buildings in keeping with the area's character. Such action will make an important contribution towards retaining the special character and quality of towns and villages in Calderdale.

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CALDERDALE
COUNCIL
TOWN PLANNING DEPARTMENT

SOWERBY BRIDGE

LOCATION

Sowerby Bridge is located approximately 3 miles south-west of Halifax on the main A58. The town grew up where the River Calder joins the River Ryburn. Flat land on the valley floor allowed the development of industry supported by good transport links by canal, road and rail.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Sowerby Bridge derived its name from the bridge over the river which took the old packhorse route up to Sowerby. Evidence of this bridge can be traced to 1314 but later, in 1517, a stone bridge was built, paid for by subscription from the people who used it most.

By 1700 nearly all the industry had moved into the valley bottom using water power from the rivers. More efficient means of transport were needed and so many new turnpike roads were built, including Wakefield Road, Wharf Street and Rochdale Road. Work started on the Rochdale Canal in 1796 and by 1804 a through route from Liverpool to Hull enabled one barge to transport five hundred times more than one packhorse.

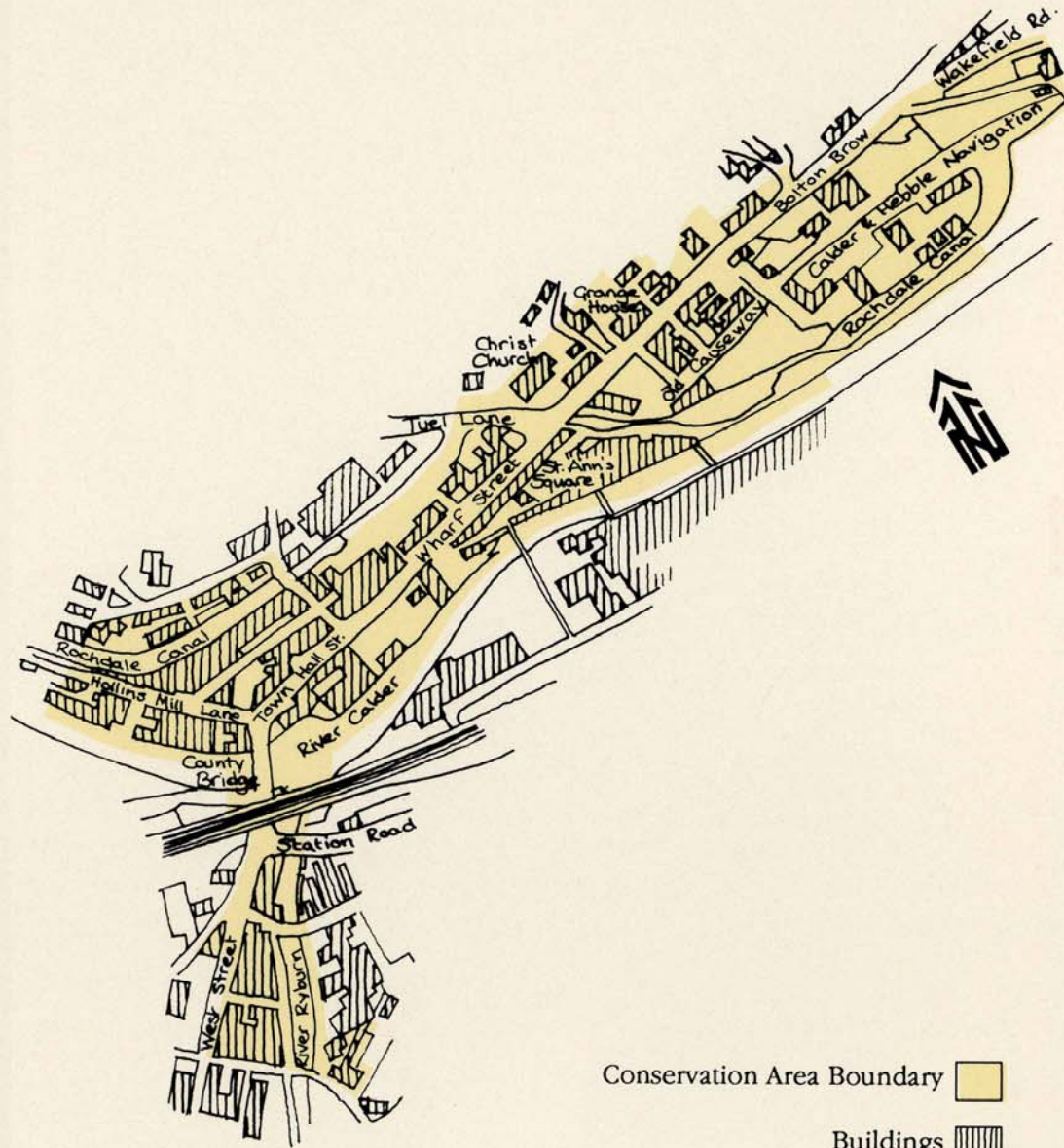
By 1841, as the railways spread, Sowerby Bridge also developed, and in 1852 became an important junction on the main line from Lancashire to Yorkshire.

As the 19th century progressed, the prosperity of the district grew and its importance as a textile and engineering centre was established. Goods manufactured included wool, cotton, carpets, steam engines, engineering parts, and furniture. To meet the needs of an expanding urban population a new church was built in 1819. A dramatic local renewal of religious Non-Conformity in the 19th century also led to a number of impressive chapels being built, such as Bolton Brow Methodist Church.

CHARACTER

Wharf Street and Town Hall Street form the town's main commercial and shopping street, while off the main street there still exist a number of small courtyards and squares, such as at Grange House and St. Ann's. Between the canal and the river is the complex of mills which gave Sowerby Bridge its industrial footing. All are built of materials consistent with the region's character, natural local stone with natural slate roofs. There have been major improvement and refurbishment schemes within the area including the Riverside Project and the Rochdale Canal restoration, and it is likely that these initiatives to upgrade the environment will continue.

The Sowerby Bridge Conservation Area was designated on the 5th of June 1984.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

Great care should be taken in preserving or improving Conservation Areas. New development must be designed in sympathy with the character of the area. Many alterations could harm the character of buildings in Sowerby Bridge and work should be carefully considered before proceeding. The drawing opposite shows some of the characteristics of the Conservation Area that it is important to keep, so that it will remain at its most attractive.

Remember that the simplest form of conservation is regular maintenance, as this will retain the original building fabric and reduce the cost of subsequent repairs and renewals. Roofs are particularly important and should be inspected each autumn. Chimneys should also be inspected, checking the condition of the masonry, pointing and pots. Flues should be swept to prevent fire hazards.

Any cast-iron gutters, downpipes and railings should be inspected annually for corrosion and repainted every 5 years. All gutters should be kept clear of leaves and vegetation. Windows and doors should be repaired at the first sign of ill fit or decay, and any renewal should be in a matching style. Ideally, external paintwork should be renewed every 5 years.

Natural materials and traditional methods should be used for all repairs and restoration work.

