

# DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

## HOLMFIRTH



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## PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

Photographs in Figures 9 and 10, 21, 26(Amiens Memorial), 27 (The Nook) have been supplied by Kirklees Images and the photograph of Dancers in Church Yard in Figure 29 was supplied by Andrew Whittaker

This Holmfirth Conservation Area Appraisal should be read in conjunction with Appendices A to K inclusive.

## Holmfirth Conservation Area Appraisal Executive Summary

The Holmfirth Conservation Area Appraisal has been prepared and written by Holmfirth Conservation Group, a local charity setup to help preserve and enhance the conservation area. It has been produced to help in removing the Holmfirth Conservation Area from Historic England's 'At Risk' register. This appraisal will assist Kirklees to fulfil its statutory duty, to appraise the conservation areas, and help support Kirklees's planning policies, as specified in the Draft Local Plan.

Situated in the valleys of the Rivers Holme and Ribble and surrounded by high moorland, Holmfirth has a very strong character. This is derived from river running through the town, its dramatic rural setting, the views in, out and within the conservation area and the consistent use of the local sandstone as a building material.

Whilst there is no known evidence of any building built prior to the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century there is evidence of the woollen industry existing in Holmfirth as far back as the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The style of buildings we know today in Holmfirth was heavily influenced by the woollen industry. From the weavers' windows to the closely-knit housing, often over and under dwellings, rising up the valley sides, built to accommodate the influx of workers required by the mills. At its height, there were 7 mills operating within the conservation area. Today, there is just one, the remainder either having been demolished or converted to residential premises.

There are 38 listed buildings and monuments within the conservation area along with the identified Key and Positive buildings. It is not just these individual buildings that give Holmfirth its special character, but their setting within their environment and the relationship between these buildings and the environment.

The authenticity and condition survey of the buildings with the conservation area found that most buildings scored well, but that the introduction of modern building materials (uPVC windows and doors, plastic rainwater goods, hard concrete pointing, slate roofs and artificial stone) were starting to have a negative impact on the conservation area.

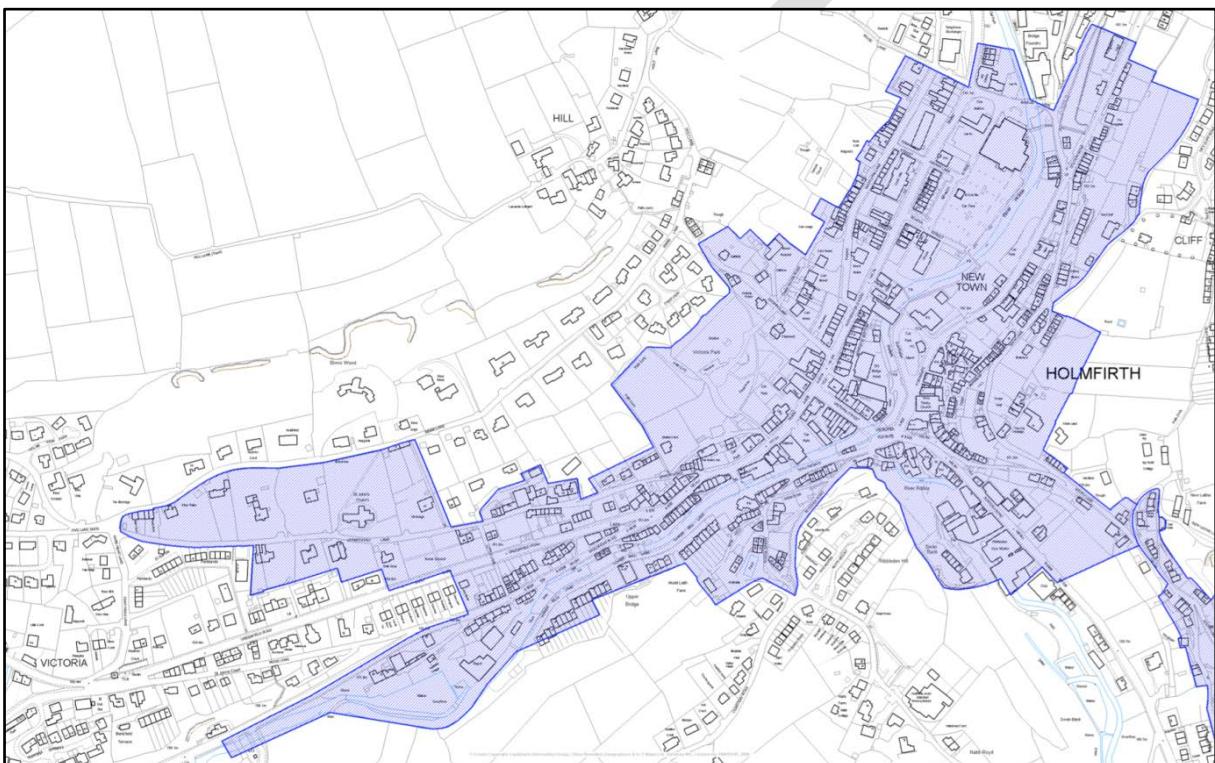
Despite the high density of buildings within the conservation area there are a number of parks and open spaces that, along with the river, provide the opportunity for relaxation, recreation and community events. These open spaces add to the rural feel of the conservation area but a lack of maintenance to walls, paths and vegetation is an issue. Better access to the river and the removal of the general detritus, and removal/hiding of unattractive pipework would make a positive contribution to the conservation area.

The public realm has a negative impact on the conservation area. Inconsistent street furniture, proliferation of signs, street clutter, unattractive bins, street markings and poor maintenance of stone setts and the use of tarmacadam all distract from the heritage assets.

The conservation area boundaries were also reviewed during the appraisal. Two areas have been recommended for inclusion, the major of these being the northern approach to Holmfirth. It has also been recommended that the modern development of Lower Mill Lane is removed from the conservation area and that an area of Cliff should be considered as a separate conservation area.

The adoption of this Conservation Area Appraisal by Kirklees and their production of a Management Plan will:

- Raise the profile of the conservation area within the community
- Provide greater understanding of its character and a policy framework for planning decisions
- Inform those considering investment in the area in guiding the scale and form of development
- Provide a basis for grant funding applications to enhance the conservation area.



**Figure 1      Holmfirth Conservation Area**

## SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

Dramatic river setting in a steep sided valley leading to high desolate moorland.		
Former thriving mill town, now a centre for the arts, culture and tourism.		
Former packhorse routes through the town with historic water troughs.		
Historic river crossings from early fords to stone bridges for horse and carts and motor vehicles.		
Imposing working mills with chimneys still present in the valley bottom. Others are converted to apartments.		
Historic religious buildings and graveyards.		
Distinctive weavers' windows identify former use of houses for weaving cloth.		
Under and over dwellings typical of house building on the steep slopes where level land is at a premium.		
Finely preserved traditional architecture.		
Buildings occupied by the first schools in Holmfirth.		
Parks, one marking Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897.		
Well-worn footpaths, stone setts, steep flights of stone steps and ginnels display activity from industrial times and today.		
Rivers Holme and Ribble, once used for water power, flow through the town.		
Cohesive building materials of natural stone with stone or slate roofs and stone structures, stone setts and stone paving flags.		
38 Listed Buildings, 12 Blue Plaques (11 in the HCA), 'Windows on the Past', Holmfirth's Heritage Trail and guided walks through the town's history.		
Well-preserved Victorian buildings with gables and tall chimneys.		
Historic monuments of the Peace of Amiens and of past floods.		
Location of Last of the Summer Wine TV series, Tour de France and Tour de Yorkshire. Venue for film, music, beer, food and drink, folk and several arts festivals.		

**Figure 2      Table of Significant Features of Holmfirth Conservation Area**

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 What is a Conservation Area?**

A conservation area is defined as an '*area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*'<sup>1</sup>.

Our heritage and sense of place is closely linked to the community in which we live and work. Conservation areas were introduced to protect and enhance this sense of place. Conservation is essentially the management of change while maintaining the special interest that justifies the designation.

The main consequences of conservation area designation are:

- Planning permission is required for the demolition of buildings
- In considering new development, special attention must be paid to preserving or enhancing the character of the area
- Permitted development not requiring planning permission is more restrictive
- All trees above a minimum size are protected

A conservation area designation recognises the unique quality of place. It is not just the contribution of individual buildings and monuments, but also features, such as topography, open spaces, layout of roads and paths, the street furniture and hard and soft landscaping that help define the character and appearance of an area.

*'Most of the buildings in a conservation area will help to shape its character. The extent to which their contribution is considered as positive depends not just on their street elevations but also on their integrity as historic structures and the impact they have in three dimensions, perhaps in an interesting roofscape or skyline. Back elevations can be important, as can side views from alleys and yards'*<sup>2</sup>.

### **1.2 What is a Conservation Area Appraisal?**

A conservation area appraisal describes the conservation area as it is today, identifying the special architectural or historic interest of its buildings, open spaces and its setting that justify the designation. By providing a better understanding of the physical development and significance of the area, it can raise general awareness of what makes the area distinctive.

The appraisal can also be used to inform local planning policies and to guide decisions on planning proposals affecting the area. The appraisal identifies the issues bearing upon the character of the conservation area that should be taken into account in future management enabling all to play their part in preserving and enhancing Holmfirth's special character.

Local authorities have statutory duties to review their conservation area designations, to bring forward proposals for preservation and enhancement, and to involve local

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<sup>1</sup> Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 – Section 69

<sup>2</sup> Historic England (2016), *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*, para.61

communities in those proposals<sup>3</sup>. Appraisals provide an important first step towards discharging those duties.

Matters raised in the appraisal will form the basis for a Management Plan, which will contain proposals and policies for the conservation and enhancement of the area.

*Holmfirth's special character is not only based on individual buildings, but also its setting within its environment and the relationship between the buildings and the environment. This appraisal is not intended to be comprehensive in its scope or content. The omission of any specific building, structure, site, landscape or view within or adjoining the Holmfirth Conservation Area should not be taken to imply that it does not hold significance or positively contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area.*

### **1.3 Who Has Produced the Appraisal and Why?**

This Holmfirth Conservation Area Appraisal has been undertaken by the Holmfirth Conservation Group (HCG), a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) that aims to promote the conservation, protection and improvement of the built, physical and natural environment of the Holmfirth Conservation Area.

HCG was formed in 2015 by a group of local residents investigating why Historic England has included the HCA on its Register of Heritage at Risk, which is due to its poor and deteriorating condition, and need of management. As the number of people involved in the project increased it was felt that a more formal structure was required for the organisation. As a result, in 2017, HCG became incorporated as a charity (Charity No. 1172636). Its membership is made up of local residents, supporters and volunteers, from Holmfirth and surrounding area, who cumulatively have spent thousands of hours gathering and collating information about the conservation area and producing this report. Without their support and effort, this appraisal would not have been possible. Much of the background research is being published separately in Appendices A to K, to provide the evidence on which this appraisal is based.

This report has been produced by the HCG, with the support of Kirklees Council, the local planning authority, so that they can formally adopt the appraisal and can then develop a management plan for the conservation area. The writing of this appraisal and the subsequent management plan will be the start of the process that will, with continued effort by the local community, see Holmfirth removed from Historic England's 'at risk' register.

Once this appraisal and management plan are formally adopted by Kirklees, it will fulfil their statutory duties to review the area and '*to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas*' (1990 Act – Section 71).

In addition, it will help support Kirklees' policies specified in the Draft Local Plan:

- PLP 35.1 - '*Development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset should*

<sup>3</sup> Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 – Sections 69(2) and Section 71

*'conserve those elements which contribute to its significance'*

- PLP 35.3(b) - '*Ensure that proposals within conservation areas conserve those elements which have been identified as contributing to their significance in the relevant Conservation Area Appraisal*'

This appraisal will also provide an evidence base for the development, by Holme Valley Parish Council, of the Neighbourhood Plan.

## **1.4 Public Consultations**

Involving the community and raising public awareness is an integral part of the appraisal process and needs to be approached in a pro-active and innovative way. Community involvement helps to bring valuable public understanding and 'ownership' to proposals for the area. A report, included in Appendix A, details how the local community has been involved, and the contribution it has made to this appraisal through surveys undertaken and questionnaires completed.

Formal public consultation will be undertaken by Kirklees Council before the appraisal can be adopted for planning purposes and this section will be updated in the light of responses made.

## **2 LOCATION AND SETTING**

### **2.1 Location and Topography**

Holmfirth lies at the southern edge of West Yorkshire, within the Kirklees Metropolitan Borough. At an elevation of 130m above Ordnance Datum (OD), it is six miles south of Huddersfield, around two miles from the boundary of the Peak District National Park and at the foot of Holme Moss, one of the highest peaks in the Pennines (524m AOD).

Surrounded by high moorland, Holmfirth is set in the valleys of the Rivers Holme and Ribble, which meet in the centre of the town. Holmfirth is the Holme Valley's principal town with a population of around 12,000. Moorland pasture and a ready supply of soft water contributed to the town's historical growth as a centre for the woollen industry. In addition, Holmfirth lies at the junction of routes from Huddersfield to Glossop (A6024) and from Manchester to Sheffield (A635). Today, the town is easily linked to the M60 and M6 motorways to the west and to the M1 to the east.

### **2.2 Landscape**

Holmfirth is situated on the eastern flank of the Pennines, characterised by high moorland incised by rivulets and cloughs, flowing northwards to form the River Holme that runs through the town. Some rainwater is captured by large reservoirs above the town for distribution within West Yorkshire.

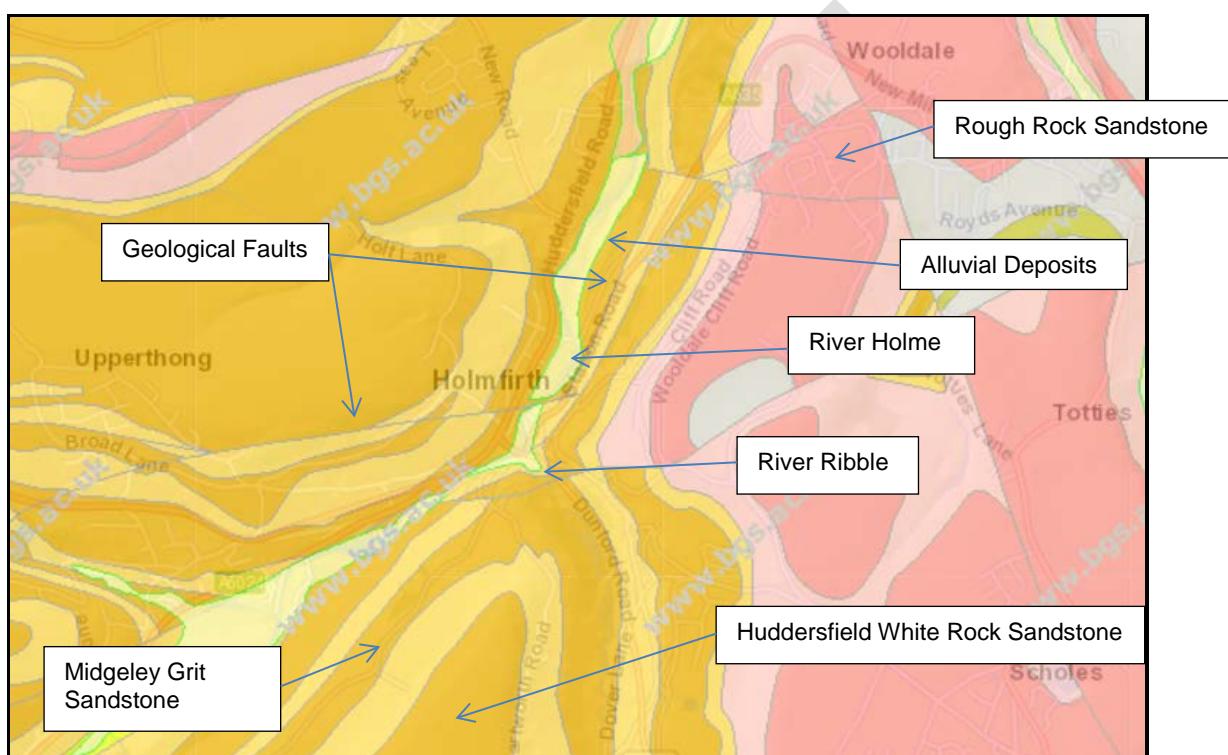
The prominent ridges around Holmfirth are of local sandstone, whilst the shallower slopes are formed by the more easily weathered interbedded mudstone and shale upon which settlements initially developed. The high peat and heather moorland gives way to the pastures for grazing, featuring distinctive field patterns separated by dry stone walling.

The entire HCA area can be seen from the high ground surrounding Holmfirth with dramatic views from all points of the compass. Equally the views from within the HCA

are very distinctive, looking through the narrow streets to the hills beyond. These are considered in more detail in the Character Areas in Section 6.

### 2.3 Geology

The British Geological Survey shows Holmfirth to be underlain by superficial alluvial deposits associated with the Rivers Holme and Ribble. These deposits lie at depths of three to six metres below ground level along the River Holme, with a small area extending up the River Ribble valley. The underlying bedrock comprises siltstones, coarse grained sandstones, shales and mudstones with thin coal seams of the Millstone Grit Group of the Carboniferous Period. Geological faults have determined the routes of the local rivers.



**Figure 3      Geological Map of Holmfirth**

A thin coal seam may have been worked at the surface in Coal Pit Lane, now Cooper Lane. The hillsides around Holmfirth are quarried for the coarse grained Millstone Grit Sandstone as the local building material. The fine grained sandstone, used for smooth ashlar finishes, and the fissile sandstone used for roofing flags are quarried from Coal Measures strata in Elland and Brighouse.

The Millstone Grit Sandstone was named on account of its coarse grained nature that proved ideal to make millstones for grinding corn. The sandstone, with its capacity to hold large volumes of water, encouraged the development of the woollen industry allowing mills to tap the water both by deep wells and by mill ponds.

### 3. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Holmfirth's landscape, grazing land for sheep and soft water gave rise to the textile industry, which has determined the town's development.

The production of textiles began as a small cottage industry with households taking on the various functions of carding, spinning, weaving and fulling. A Willam the Fuller was recorded as early as 1315. The decline in the local workforce following the plague, led to a loosening of ties to the Lord of the Manor, as men could set a new value for their work, and allowed further development of the textile industry.

By 1532 the poll tax suggests that the population of Holmfirth was larger than that of Huddersfield, with two fulling mills using water power to raise heavy wooden hammers to beat the cloth. There is no known remaining evidence of the timber-framed houses of the period, and expansion of Holmfirth took place using local sandstone. As textile production continued to be a domestic industry, many of the houses developed a third floor with the distinctive line of continuous weavers' windows.

Prosperity faltered during the Civil War, when Royalists plundered Holmfirth, and it was only after the Restoration that the textile trade resumed and grew in importance again. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the industry began to be concentrated into mills constructed in the valley, to take advantage of water for washing and dyeing and to power machinery. The invention of the flying shuttle by John Kay in 1733 enabled the weaving of wider cloth and the invention of the spinning jenny, which enabled faster spinning, came to Holmfirth in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, and with it an influx of labour.

Water power was followed by steam power enabling the emergence of further mills, such as Upper Mill, Lower Mill, Newfold Mill, Newtown Mill, Ribbleden Mill, Albert Mill and Tom Mill dating through the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Ribbleden Mill is the sole working mill in the HCA today. Lower Mill has been partly converted into apartments and the rest have been demolished – the only remnant of the former Albert Mill is the pediment located in Crown Bottom car park.



Figure 4 Detail of 1771 Map by Thomas Jefferys

The 1771 map by Thomas Jefferys, presented in Figure 4, illustrates five water wheels for mills at Holmfirth along the River Holme. These may well represent Perserverance Mill, Prickleden Mill, Lower Mill, the Corn Mill in Holmfirth, and Bridge Mill to the immediate north of the HCA. Whilst cleaning and dyeing was undertaken in the mills, there was still an overlap with the cottage-based processes, such as hand-loom weaving.

The map illustrates the presence of Modd Lane and Upporthong Lane joining through Upperbridge and Hollowgate to the roads known today as Station Road and South Lane.

Buildings are shown around the confluence of the two rivers, including the buildings of the Nook, which began brewing beer in Holmfirth in 1754. Further buildings are shown at the base of the road leading to Hill Top, and on both sides of the road, heading south west along the Holme Valley.

A church is illustrated close to the location of the present day Parish Church, with buildings shown along the east side of the present day Station Road from Holmfirth as far as the HCA northern boundary. Jefferys' map also shows buildings behind the church on both sides of Bunkers Hill and along the north and south sides of South Lane.

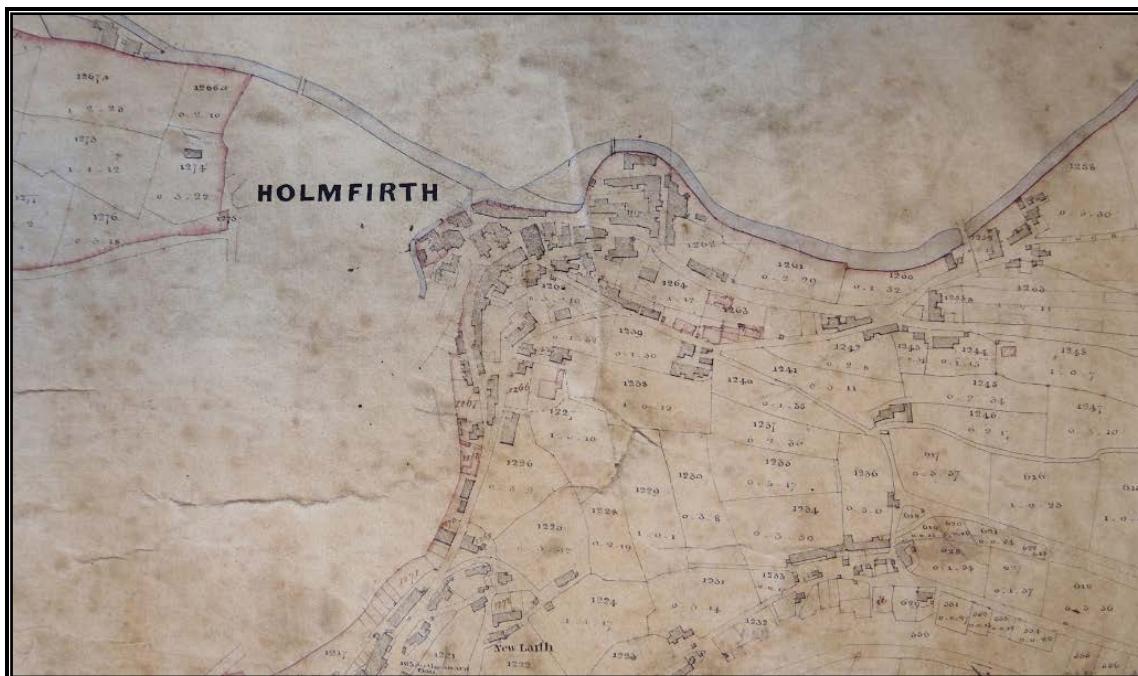


**Figure 5      Detail of 1802 Map of Upporthong Township**

The 1802 map, presented in Figure 5, illustrates part of Upporthong Township within the HCA that lies north of the River Holme. Upperbridge is now annotated with two buildings in Hollowgate plus the Holmfirth Chapel. Huddersfield Road and Upporthong Lane are illustrated, although there is no evidence of Greenfield Road, which was not constructed until 1854. The Chapel and Manse on Upporthong Lane are shown, with a row of houses opposite, which still exist today. At the junction of Upporthong Lane and the Woodhead Road, the buildings are shown extending back to Upporthong Lane as they do today. In addition, buildings are shown, extending to the junction of Woodhead

Road and Upporthong Lane. There are further buildings on the north side of the Woodhead Road adjacent to the present library. Rows of buildings are also shown on the south side of the Woodhead Road.

Land to the east of Upperbridge is annotated on the map as Cuttel Bottom, with several properties on Woodhead Road and Hollowgate, leading to an open area of Great Bottom, known today as Crown Bottom.



**Figure 6** Detail of 1836 Map of Wooldale Township

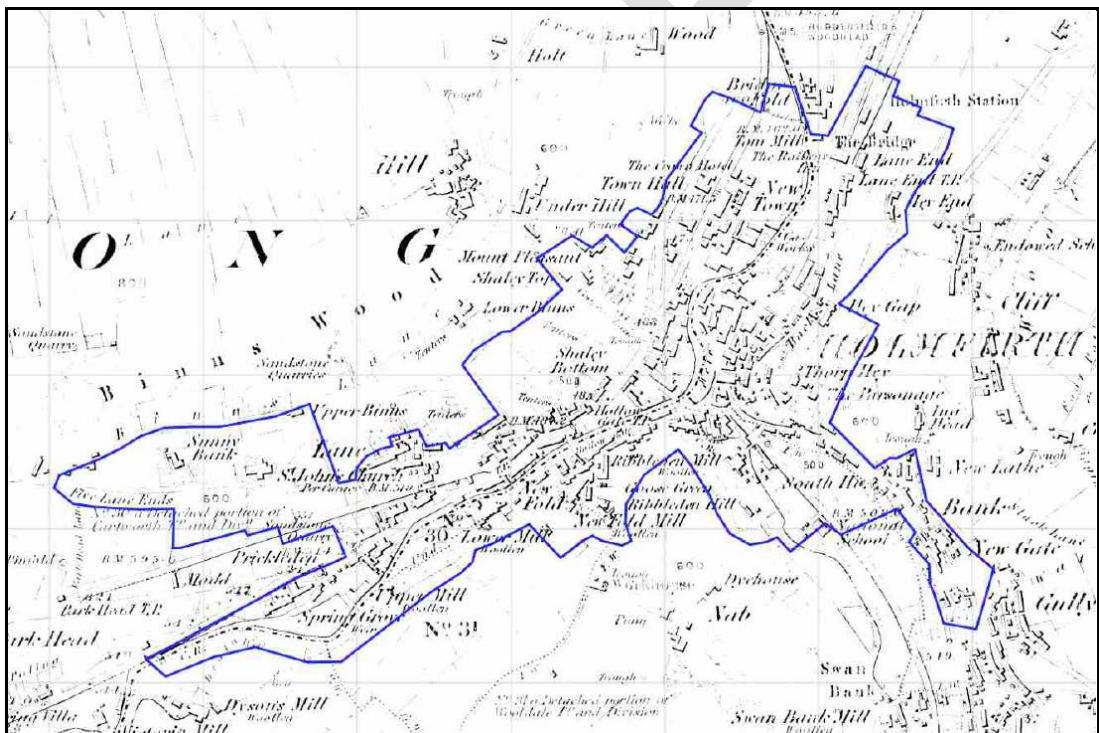
The 1836 Map of Wooldale Township, presented in Figure 6, illustrates the development of the town south of the river. The map shows Upperbridge but nothing between here and west of the River Ribble, as this area lies in the adjacent Township of Cartworth. A second bridge is shown at Bridge Lane on the eastern boundary of the conservation area.

The map illustrates the buildings in Holmfirth at that date including the Parish Church, the ironmonger opposite, buildings in South Lane and two public houses – the Shoulder of Mutton and the Nook. Houses are shown backing onto the river in Towngate and there are several buildings to the east of the church. Behind the church, houses on either side of Bunkers Hill are shown, probably representing Nos.4-44, the Loom Rooms. The area between Towngate and the River Holme is shown to be occupied by a mill, a mill pond and public houses.

*Administratively Holmfirth lay within the Graveship of Holme, part of the Manor of Wakefield. The Graveship was sub-divided into seven townships and parts of Holmfirth lay within three of the townships, namely Wooldale, Cartworth and Upporthong. Holmfirth was eventually declared a town by the High Court in 1851: A publican in Holmfirth was taken to court for being open after permitted hours. The licensing laws granted towns with a population of 2500 or more, later opening hours. None of the three townships had a population of 2500 or more, but the area of Holmfirth which lay within the three townships exceeded 2500. The prosecution lawyer maintained that "Holmfirth was undefined and undefinable." However, the High Court Judge ruled that Holmfirth was indeed a town.*

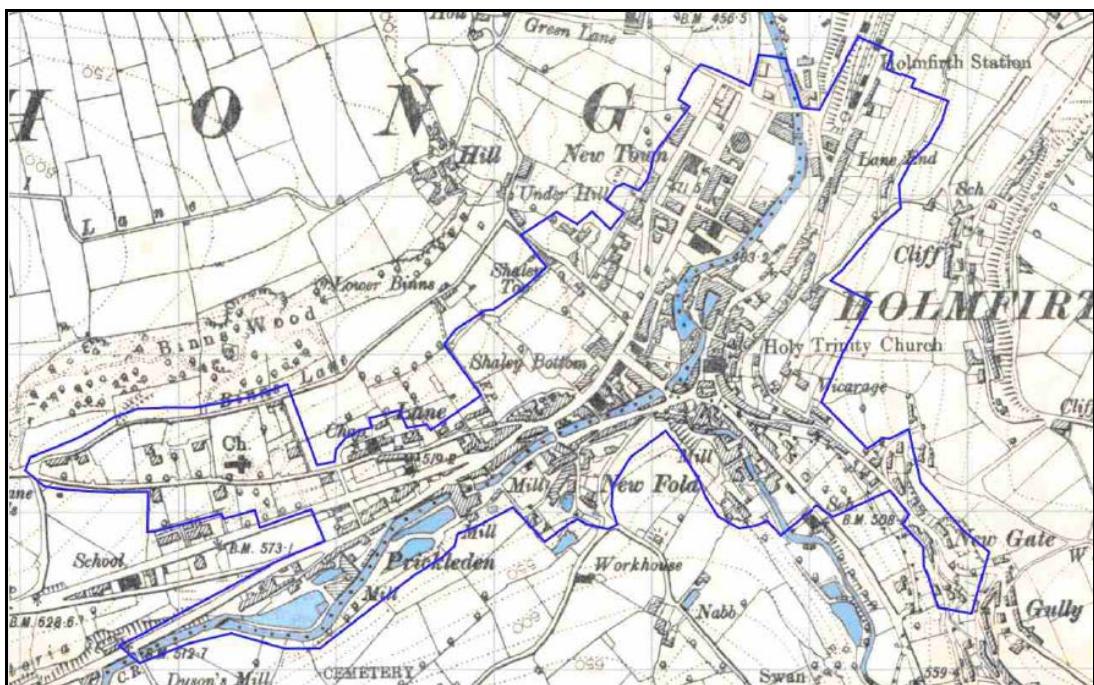
*Holmfirth has been subject to major flooding. In 1476 the parish church was washed away, and high rainfall and dam bursts caused floods in 1738, 1777, 1852 and 1944. The most catastrophic flood was in 1852, when the embankment of Bilberry Reservoir, about four miles south of Holmfirth, burst and 81 people died. Buildings were badly damaged including four mills and 50 houses, mainly in Scar Fold, Upperbridge, Hollowgate and Rotcher. Bodies were washed out of graveyards and the tops of Upperbridge and Victoria Bridge were destroyed. A total of 7088 adults and children lost their jobs as a consequence. The tragedy led to a national outpouring of grief and a flood relief fund raised around £70,000. Considerable damage and three fatalities occurred in 1944 as a result of a massive cloudburst.*

*Markers signifying the level of the flood waters in 1852 are found on the Peace of Amiens Column and on the butcher's shop in Market Walk. The 1944 flood is commemorated with a plaque, indicating the high water level, on the wall of the Elephant and Castle PH in Hollowgate. Nearby a modern tribute to those who lost their lives in the four floods is found on three sculpted panels on the riverside railings in Hollowgate. An official memorial plaque is found on Victoria Street.*



**Figure 7** Detail of the Ordnance Survey Map of 1854

The OS map of 1854 reproduced in Figure 7 with an overlay of the HCA area plus the Underbank Conservation Area adjoining to the southeast, shows the construction of buildings on Victoria Street North leading to Victoria Bridge over the River Holme. Development is shown along the north side of the river with the railway station at the north end of the HCA. Tom Mill is annotated in the north with Ribbleton Mill, New Fold Mill, Lower Mill, Upper Mill and Prickleden Mill in the south of the HCA.



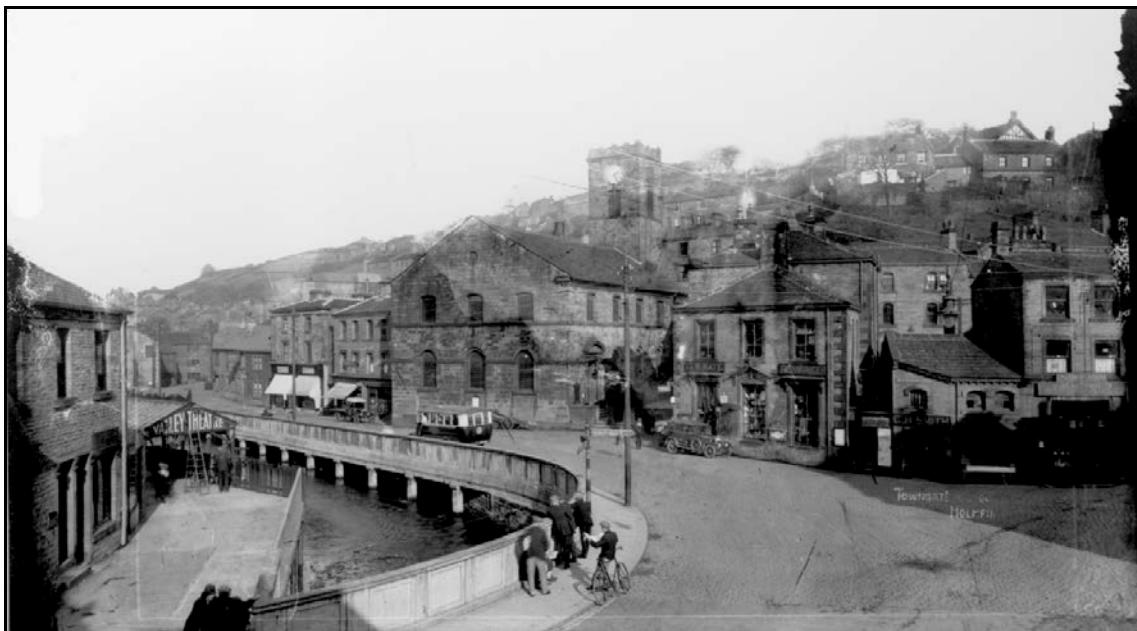
**Figure 8 Detail of the Ordnance Survey Map of 1891**

The OS Map of 1891 is presented in Figure 8. The map shows buildings on the south side of Victoria Street had been constructed by this date. The map indicates the presence of at least six mill ponds in the HCA. The former gas works are illustrated by a circular feature in the north of the HCA. The 1854 and 1891 OS maps indicate the further residential development of Holmfirth and these maps have been used to assist in the dating of individual buildings. By 1900 the majority of the buildings in the HCA were already constructed.

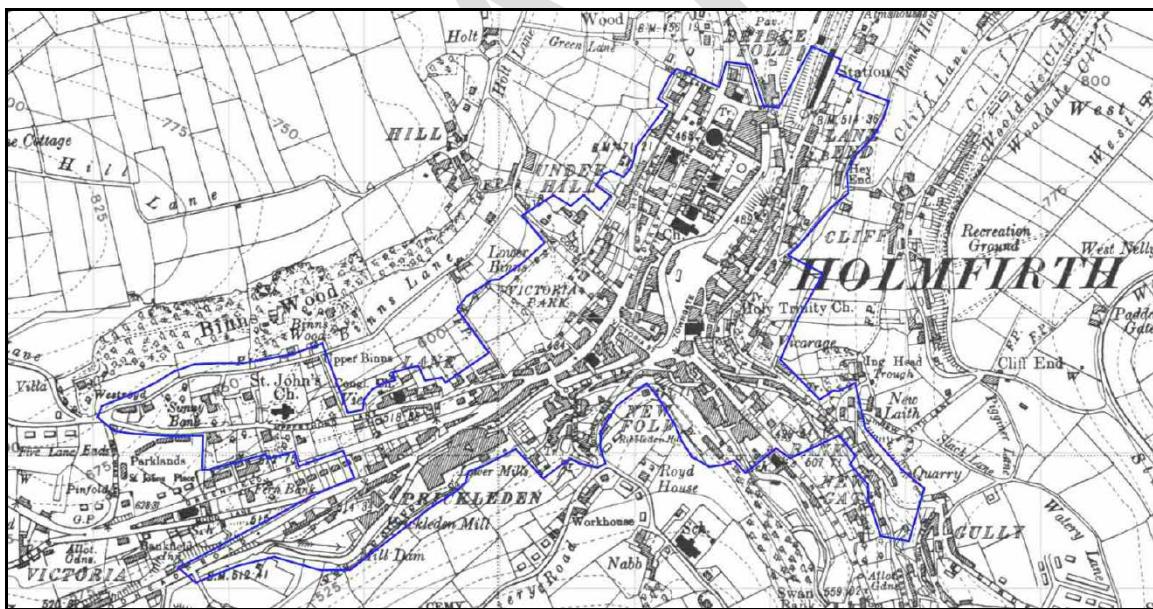
Towngate was widened in 1921 by the demolition of properties on the river side and Victoria Bridge was widened and strengthened. The accidental demolition of a warehouse behind Kaye's ironmongers by a coach in 1947, meant a wider junction was made at Victoria Square.



**Figure 9 Towngate before demolition of shops and houses**



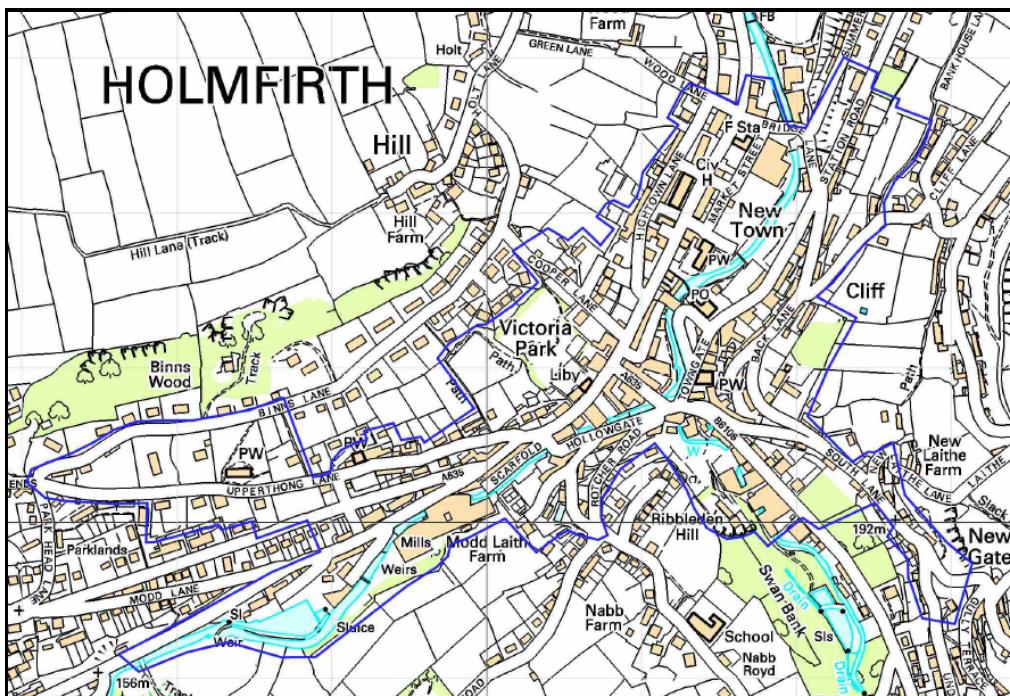
**Figure 10** Towngate after demolition showing widened bridge and Victoria Square



**Figure 11** Detail of Ordnance Survey Map of 1949

The OS map of 1949, presented in Figure 11, shows further development of buildings in Holmfirth, mainly in New Town. The mills and mill race in Towngate are no longer shown.

The layout of streets and buildings did not undergo any significant changes during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the exception of the building of the Picturedrome (1912) and post-war buildings such as the Lower Market Hall, Post Office, Riverside Shopping Centre, Yorkshire Building Society and the Crown Bottom development.



**Figure 12 Detail of Ordnance Survey Map of 2002**

The 2002 map, presented in Figure 12, indicates the removal of the gas works and railway station and track, and the redevelopment of Crown Bottom for a Co-op store and car park. An additional minor road and a Post Office building are shown in Towngate. Only one mill pond is now shown in the HCA.

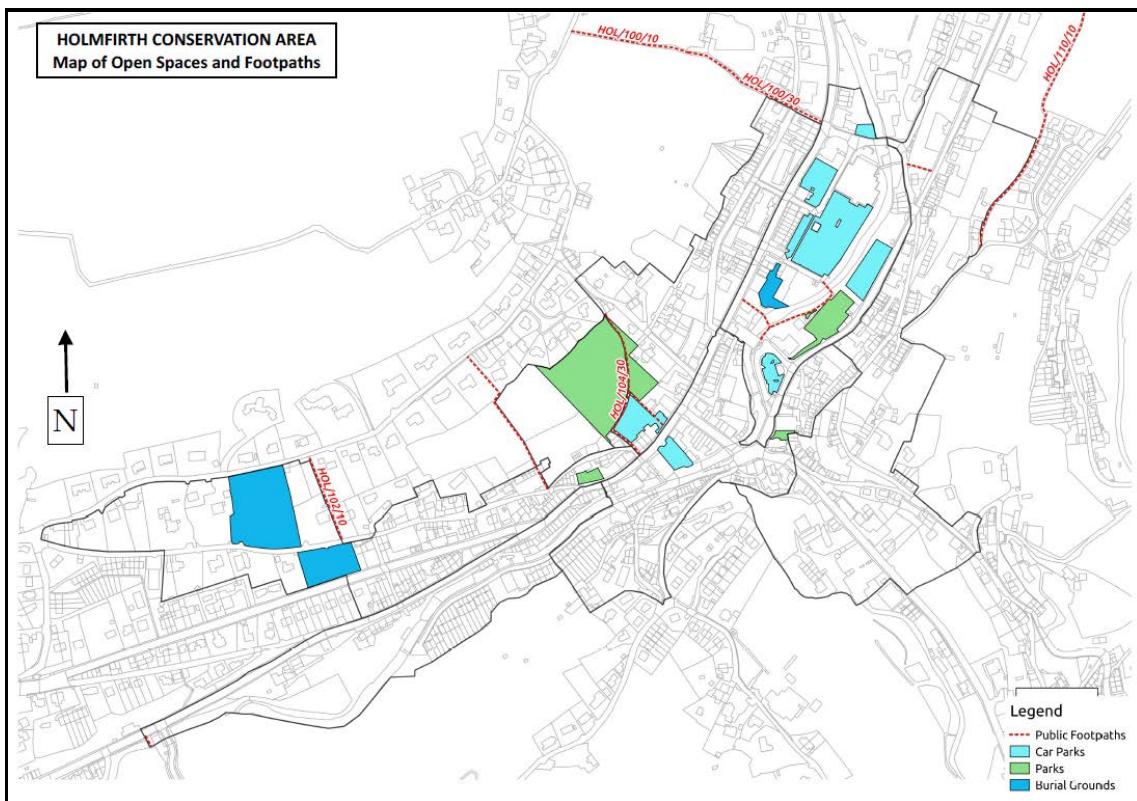
As the textile industry declined in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Holmfirth's heritage provided a context for the growth of tourism.

#### **4. OPEN SPACES AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

##### **4.1 Introduction**

The rural context of the HCA and its development around the River Holme hosts a diverse ecosystem. Due to the woodlands and surrounding moorland, a variety of birds and other wildlife, can be seen in the conservation area.

Parks and open spaces, public footpaths, graveyards, the riverscape, trees and the public realm add to the special character of the conservation area. A map of open spaces and footpaths is presented in Figure 13.



**Figure 13 Map of Open Spaces and Footpaths**

#### 4.2 Parks and Open Spaces

The historic need for domestic housing and shops within walking distance of the local industry, based along the sides of the river, has resulted in a densely built valley with little room for parks and open spaces. Despite this, there are areas of parks and open spaces within the HCA, provided variously by philanthropy, the demolition of buildings or happenstance.

Victoria Park comprises two acres of land known as Burton's Field. It was purchased from John Burton, a local school master, by the town council, aided by public subscription in 1896, "for the use of the public." It was landscaped in 1897 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and became a popular venue for the Whit Sunday Holmfirth Sing, an annual musical festival.

The park lies on a steep slope with stone walls and a level area, formerly the bandstand, used for public events. Pathways are a mix of stone setts, concrete and tarmac. Despite having mature trees on all four sides, the hillside position of the park affords extensive views of the town and the countryside beyond.

A survey of the Victoria Park by young people engaged in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, noted inadequacies such as a lack of signage, poor access, slippery surfaces, and graffiti.

King's Head Gardens, beside Station Road, were formerly the site of the King's Head public house, built in 1702 and demolished in 1969. The gardens were designed to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 and they include a high stone wall inset with ceramic tile murals depicting local life. Carved stone flags at the entrances make reference to the Last of the Summer Wine TV series, Bamforth & Co.

Ltd's seaside postcards, the annual duck race and words from the song "Pratty Flowers", known as the Holmfirth Anthem. Despite their attraction, the gardens are marred by traffic noise.

Holmside Gardens was the burial ground of Holmfirth Parish Church from at least the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century until it closed in 1860. Now a public garden, it is an important quiet space away from the roads. Headstones are laid along two of the perimeter walls or laid flat to form part of the footpath. Adjacent to the graveyard is a sensory garden planted with herbs, shrubs and trees in raised beds with integrated wooden seating. In the stone walls of the raised beds are ceramic sculptures of fish and other creatures created by Holmfirth High School pupils in early 1990's. The garden is used during festivals for small exhibitions.

The Church Yard is a paved urban space between Holy Trinity Church and No.4 Towngate, which includes JW Kaye's ironmongers with a fine bow window and Sid's Café, immortalised in Last of the Summer Wine. The square opens onto Towngate and the riverside while, to the rear, steps lead up the steep hillside. The space has pavement cafes and is used for exhibitions and festivals.



**Figure 14 Church Yard, a popular open space in the town centre**

There are 13 car parks in Holmfirth, and there are opportunities to soften their impact by planting and landscaping. The car park survey is presented in Appendix B.

#### **Issues in Parks and Open Spaces:**

- Maintenance of walls and paths
- Poor access to Victoria Park
- Lack of signage
- Graffiti
- Traffic Noise

#### **4.3 Public Footpaths**

Footpaths are often reminders of routes taken by workers from their homes to the mills and most of the definitive paths within the HCA appear on the 1854 or 1891 Ordnance Survey maps. Accordingly, these routes are an important feature in the historic

townscape of Holmfirth.

The footpaths are generally narrow and are often bounded by drystone walls, but they provide good views and useful connectivity. The Footpaths Survey is presented in Appendix C.

#### **Issues in Footpaths:**

- Maintenance of walls, paths and vegetation
- Poor signage

#### **4.4 Graveyards**

In addition to the former parish graveyard, now Holmside Gardens, there are three graveyards within the HCA boundary at St John's Church Upperthong, Lane Independent Chapel and Holmfirth Methodist Church.

The graveyard at St John's Church, built in 1846, is still in use today. Notable graves include the Shackleton family, some of whom died in the 1852 Holmfirth flood, Thomas Kaye, the famous huntsman who died in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and Eli Collins, founder of the Holmfirth Express newspaper. The actors Bill Owen and Peter Sallis, both from the TV series Last of the Summer Wine, are also buried here.

The entrance from Upperthong Lane is through a tall Gothic stone-arched gateway alongside which is a memorial plaque to those who died in the Second World War. The large graveyard occupies a strategic site on the hillside for views across the town.

The Lane Independent Chapel graveyard straddles Upperthong Lane and Greenfield Road with gateways to both. This attractive open space is largely hidden from view by the screening effect of trees at the perimeter.

The Holmfirth Methodist Church was originally built in 1810, with graves dating back to the 1813, but the current building dates from the 1980s. Although 81 people died in the 1852 flood, there are only two headstones to those that perished. Three plaques on the church wall commemorate those lost in the First World War. The churchyard was overgrown until it was cleared by the Holmepride Community Group in 2017.

#### **Issues in Graveyards:**

- Maintenance of walls, paths and vegetation
- Lack of access to Lane Graveyard

#### **4.5 Riverscape**

The River Holme runs through the conservation area from Perseverance Place in the south-west to Bridge Lane in the north-east. The river is in good biological and chemical condition supporting brown trout and bullhead. The River Ribble, one of the smallest rivers in England, at just 3km in length, originates at the outflow of Holme Styes Reservoir flowing northwards to join the River Holme in Holmfirth centre.

The rivers were fundamental to Holmfirth's emergence as a centre for the wool industry and evidence of this heritage still exists. For example, in the millpond downstream from Perseverance Place, and in built-up river edges and retaining structures.

Whilst water has been essential to Holmfirth's development, the destructive force of water by flooding has shaped the town's history. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, flood management

has resulted in large underground storage tanks being installed by Yorkshire Water at intervals alongside the River Holme.

Access from the Crown Bottom car park leads to a riverside area being enhanced by River Holme Connections, an independent charity with the aims of improving the environment around, and allowing greater accessibility to, the whole length of the River Holme. The River Survey is presented in Appendix D.

#### **Issues in Riverscape:**

- Maintenance of vegetation
- Access and disabled access
- Invasive species
- Detritus in the water
- Unattractive pipework
- Restricted views of the river



**Figure 15      Upperbridge over River Holme**

#### **4.6      Trees**

In contrast with the lack of trees on the surrounding moorland, the HCA includes numerous trees of varying ages and of diverse species presenting a distinctive greening of the town.

Conservation areas provide protection for all trees of more than 75mm measured at 1.5m above ground level. The local authority must be notified of proposed works to such trees and this may result in a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). There are forty-eight TPOs within the HCA. In addition, there are a significant number of trees with TPOs north of Upperthong Lane which, although not in the conservation area, add greatly to its amenity. The List of Kirklees TPOs are presented in Appendix D.

Many of the trees are self-seeded and tree stock is of limited variety with a predominance of sycamore and with oak, silver birch and ash, which make a consistent visual impact. This is apparent in aerial views of Holmfirth.

#### **Issues in Trees:**

- Maintenance of trees
- Limited variety
- No succession tree planting

#### **4.7 Public Realm**

Traffic and parking impacts on the character of the town. Because of the development of Holmfirth before the advent of the motor car, there is limited parking for residents.

The protection and maintenance of the traditional stone sett streets is essential to retain the character of the conservation area.

A survey of the public realm in the town centre revealed an inconsistent standard in the provision of street furniture and signage. Although the town centre is well provided with benches, flower planters and public art, much of this lacks a consistency in style. There is a proliferation of signs and general clutter that detracts from the character of a conservation area.

There is inconsistency in the style of street lighting from heritage style to utilitarian modern styles. The differing styles of litter bins and their poor maintenance, together with the domination of commercial waste bins also significantly detract from the public realm. The increasing level of street clutter, for example, fly posting on railings and fencing, is a negative point.

Maps of traffic management signs, street lighting and benches and litter bins and commercial waste are presented in Appendix E.

##### **Issues in Public Realm:**

- Maintenance of the public realm
- Inconsiderate parking
- Maintenance of stone setts and stone kerbing
- Replacement of setts with tarmacadam
- Road markings are not to conservation standards
- Street clutter and overuse of signage
- Inconsistent street furniture
- Lorries unloading in Victoria Street
- Lack of streetscape manual
- Use of A Boards on pavements
- Unattractive bins restricting pavements

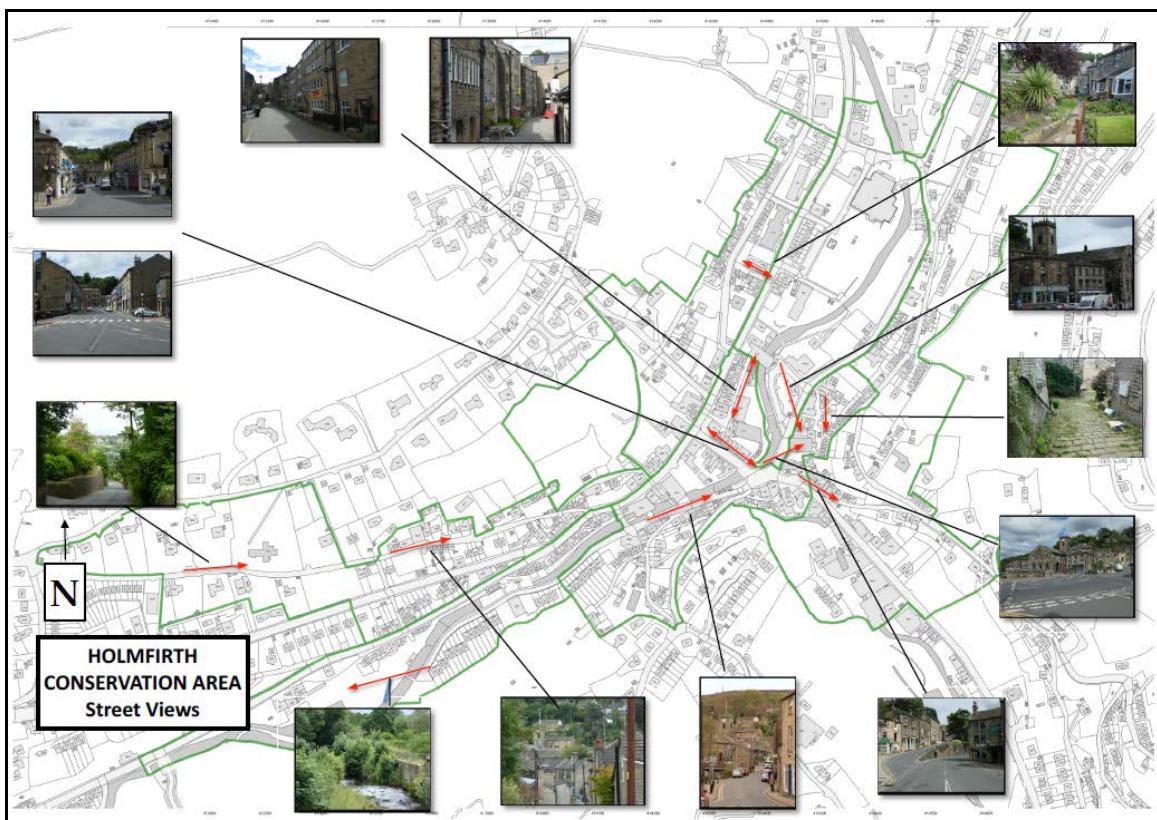
#### **4.8 Views**

Views both into and out of a conservation area make an important contribution to its special character. The views around the conservation area include staggered rooftops up the valley sides framed by the fields, woods and high moors. Within this appraisal the views have not all been detailed as they are too numerous to recount. Key views in Holmfirth include those along the riverside, views to landmark buildings and views of the roofscape from higher ground. It is the cumulative combination of views, and sequential views as one moves through ginnels and spaces, that are particularly important.

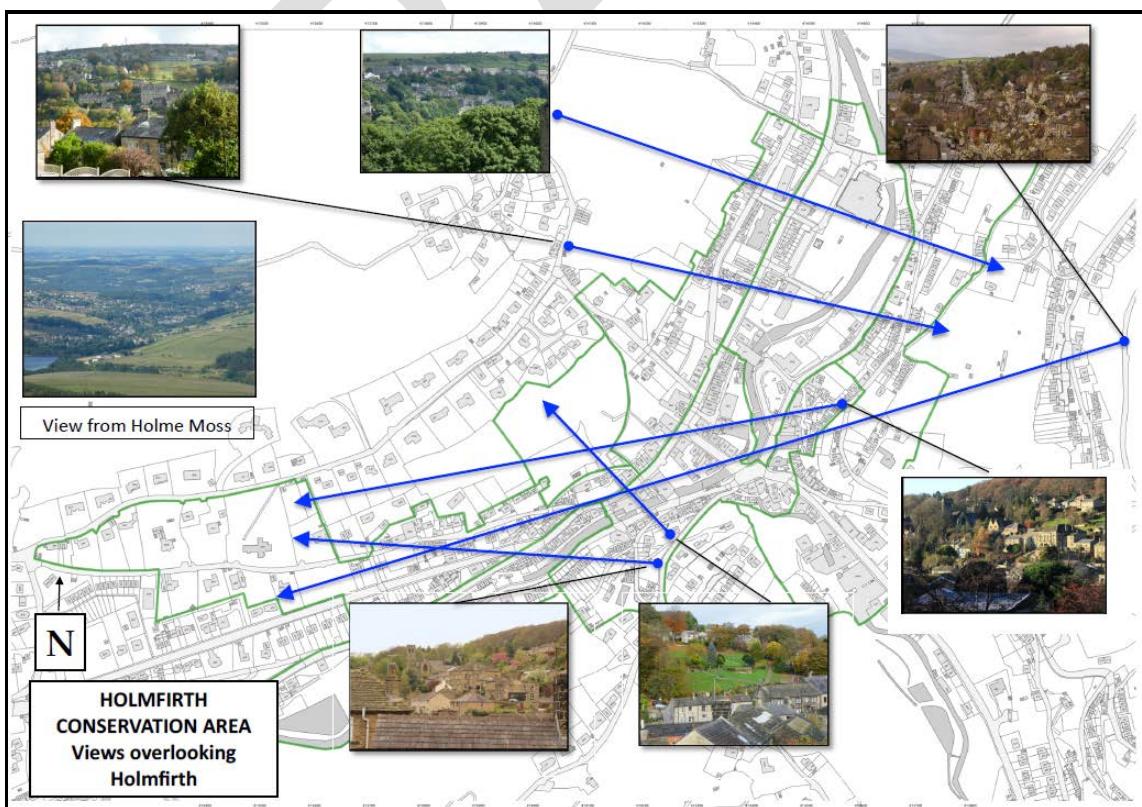
Key views are identified within each of the character areas in Section 6 and some are presented on Figures 16 and 17.

##### **Issues of Views:**

- Maintenance of vegetation to retain views
- Spoiling of roofscape views with modern roof tiles
- Blocking of views with new build



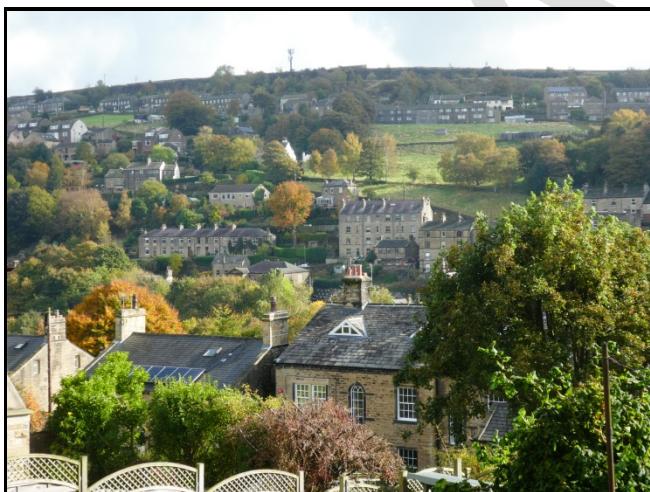
**Figure 16** Street Views



**Figure 17** Views overlooking Holmfirth

### **Summary of Open Spaces, Natural Environment, Public Realm and Views:**

- The natural environment is brought into the centre of the town by the river corridor
- The parks and open spaces provide areas for relaxation, recreation and community events
- Historic public footpaths are generally still in use
- The graveyards add an historical element of importance to the town
- The riverside encourages wildlife for the enjoyment of the community and allows significant views
- Trees make a major contribution to the character of the HCA and add an important feel of well-being
- Views looking out from and into the conservation area contribute to its character
- Unsympathetic development in the conservation area or on the surrounding hills could spoil its character
- Views along the riverside are an important contribution to a sense of well-being and present a potential of the river for public enjoyment
- The Public Realm requires consistency to enhance the conservation area



**Figure 18      Typical View across the HCA of Cliff from Cooper Lane**

## 5. THE BUILDINGS

### 5.1 Understanding

A buildings survey of the 919 structures in the HCA was undertaken by HCG volunteers to gain a better understanding of our built heritage to provide an audit of building condition and the survival of original features. The survey was based on Historic England guidance and is presented in detail in Appendix H. The survey discounted a number of buildings that were inaccessible or of little consequence, such as garages and outbuildings, and this left 622 buildings which were included in the building analysis.

Buildings earlier than the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century are not known to exist anymore in the conservation area, as early buildings were replaced by stone. The style of the buildings has been influenced by the woollen industry.

The movement of workers from the hillside settlements to the mills in the valley, created the need for houses, which were constructed in tight clusters following the steep gradient of the hillsides, giving little room for gardens, but creating a close-knit community and distinctive array of rooflines. Characteristic ‘under and over’ houses were constructed, which comprise a house built against the hillside with another on top accessed from a higher level.

The style of historic buildings in Holmfirth continued to evolve into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and, as prosperity increased, the earlier vernacular gave way to more formal styles and detailing. The buildings are unified by the consistent use of local sandstone, which has determined the appearance of the conservation area.

#### The buildings of Holmfirth Conservation Area

<p>Early buildings were constructed of narrow courses of natural sandstone, decreasing in thickness with height and laid with lime mortar, tall windows with hood mouldings and a stone band course and low pitched stone flag roof.</p> <p>This building is the only one in the HCA with a carved stone cornice beneath the parapet.</p>	
<p>Later Georgian style buildings were constructed with an ashlar block stone façade. This building has retained its sash windows and hood mouldings and stone pilasters.</p>	

<p>A large number of buildings in Victoria Street have a stone parapet, a stone band course beneath the upper floor windows, hood mouldings over the windows, stone pillars and recessed shop windows.</p> <p>This example illustrates the replacement door in the first floor with overhead pulley to raise or lower goods to and from the first floor.</p>	
<p>Steep hillside gradients and the need to house several families on a small plot gave rise to under and over buildings with weavers' windows as a prominent feature.</p> <p>This photograph shows under and over properties fronting onto both the Huddersfield Road and Norridge Bottom.</p>	
<p>Ribbleden Mill, a stone built mill of three floors with typical large mill windows built into the slope of the land with associated tall chimney and mill pond are still a feature of Holmfirth.</p> <p>This mill has retained its stone band courses, arched windows and multiple paned windows.</p>	
<p>High stone buttressed retaining walls, tall buildings and weavers' windows are typical of buildings in Holmfirth.</p>	
<p>Holmfirth has fine examples of Neo-classical style architecture including this building with twelve pane sash windows, shallow pitched stone roof, band course and ashlar façade and with spectacular arched windows constructed when a bank took over the building in the 1920s.</p>	
<p>There are several notable Victorian buildings with gables and two pane sash windows such as the former Police Station.</p>	

<p>The Technical Institute, a late Victorian building, exhibits elaborate tall gables, steep roof with lanterns, tall elaborate windows and fanlights over the doors.</p>		
<p>This building housed evening classes for apprentices from 1894 and became the first secondary school in Holmfirth between 1907 and 1932.</p>		
<p>An early 20<sup>th</sup> century building, the Picturedrome is constructed of brick and render and forms a contrast to the stone buildings in the centre of Holmfirth.</p>		
<p>The survey covered 17 ginnels within the HCA, mostly constructed for owners of terraced houses to reach their rear gardens. The ginnels were all constructed of stone and variously had doors or were open for access.</p>		

**Figure 19 The buildings of Holmfirth Conservation Area**

## 5.2 Condition and Authenticity

The survey of the buildings within the HCA have been scored on authenticity and condition. Authenticity was gauged on the extent to which a building showed respect to its original form and materials. The Survey Methodology, Training Manual and Statistical Analysis to derive the scoring are explained fully in Appendices F, G and H. The total scores for authenticity and condition take into account the individual scores for elements such as walls, roof, windows, chimneys, doors, gutters and rainwater pipes and other features of the buildings.

The volunteers who undertook the building survey and assessed the authenticity and condition of the buildings also assessed the dates of the buildings. It should be noted the authenticity and condition scores do not necessarily reflect an absolute value and should be viewed in the context of their relative value to all the buildings surveyed.

## 5.3 Building Features

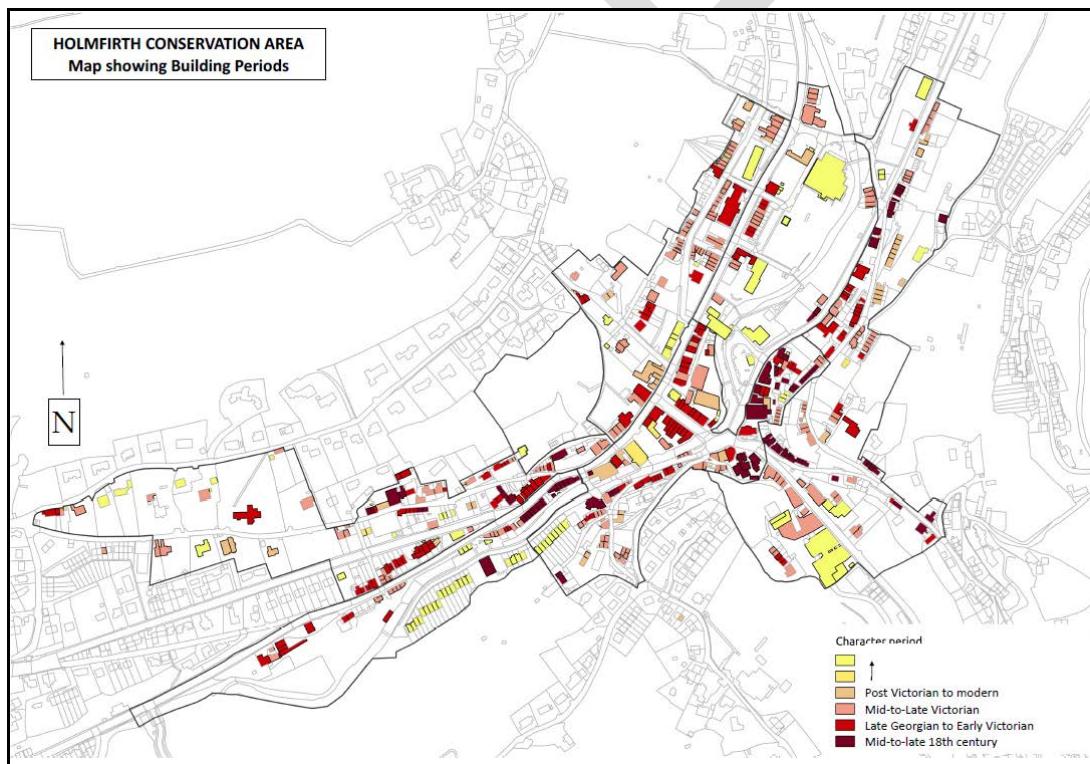
Early stone buildings were of narrow coursed sandstone with larger stones reserved for quoins and lintels. Later buildings were constructed with deeper coursed sandstone dressed by hand, using chisels to form punched or pitched surfaces and lime for mortar. For finer work, stones were sawn to form smooth ashlar faces and was usually restricted to front elevations.

While the local sandstone is known as Millstone Grit, it varies from coarse stone to the fine-grained ashlar used for architectural details. In addition, the area around Elland and Brighouse, produces a fissile Coal Measures Sandstone that can be split to form roofing flags.

Rainwater goods were of square timber sections until they were succeeded by cast-iron, and there is still a foundry in Holmfirth that holds the patterns for local cast-iron architectural details. Chimneys are generally sandstone with clay pots. Doors to vernacular buildings tend to be made of vertical planks, while later buildings have four or six paneled doors that became increasingly ornate with status.

Early windows were limited by the size of glass that could be made. Initially, leaded glazing was bedded directly to the stone work and opening lights had narrow iron frames. Timber windows, from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, were side-hung casements or horizontal sashes particularly for vernacular buildings. Vertically sliding sashes were introduced with Georgian classical architecture and, as glass-making evolved to produce larger sizes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, fewer glazing bars were necessary.

Modern alterations have seen the introduction of plastics for doors, windows and rainwater goods, the use of hard cement mortars for pointing, and non-traditional fenestration including top-hung quarter lights.



**Figure 20 Map showing Building Periods**

#### 5.4 Mid-to-late 18<sup>th</sup> century

There are about 90 buildings in the HCA considered to predate 1800. These buildings are generally in the older part of the town around the Parish Church including, for instance, 8-10 (Age UK) and 16-18 Towngate (Brambles Bar and Cafe), the Shoulder of Mutton and Nook public houses, and some of the houses in Daisy Lane, Back Lane and Bunkers Hill.

They are built of natural hand dressed sandstone with stone flag roofs and tend to have six paneled doors and multi-pane sash windows. The survey scoring indicated that nearly all buildings scored as 50% or above for both authenticity and condition.

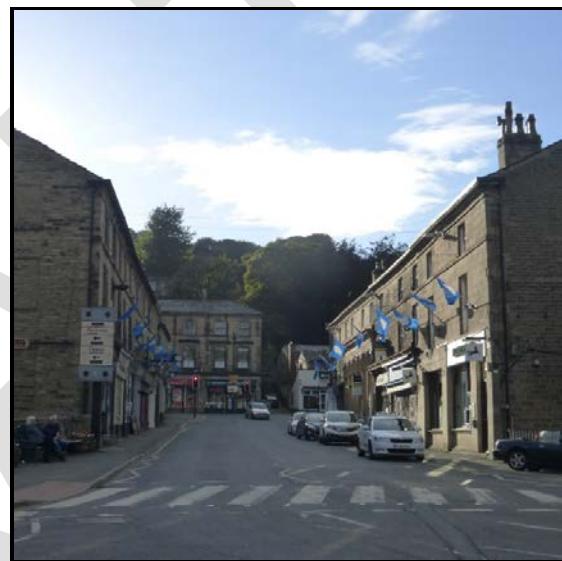
### 5.5 Late Georgian to Early Victorian

About 160 buildings in the HCA date from this period. These include St John's Church, No.86 Huddersfield Road, No.27 Hollowgate and Nos.12-14 Towngate (Almond).

In 1844 a new line of shops with domestic quarters above were constructed on the north side of Victoria Street. These were built to a late Georgian design with the introduction of ashlar facades with projecting cornices and sill-bands. Shops are divided by heavy stone pilasters, although the ground and first floors of the former bank at Nos.28/30 were remodeled in the 1920s or '30s. The south side of Victoria Street was constructed in 1852 to a similar, but less formal, style as the north side.



Figure 21 Victoria Street early 20<sup>th</sup> century Fig 22 Victoria Street almost unchanged in 2017



The bow-fronted gentleman's residence at Nos.2-4 Towngate fronts the square on the south side of the parish church. The wings to either side became shops and it seems there has been an ironmonger here since at least 1840.

The tall townhouses with wide ranges of mullioned weavers' windows also date from this period, for instance, the over and under buildings of the terrace between Huddersfield Road and Norridge Bottom. Of the buildings within this period, three quarters scored 50% or above for both authenticity and condition, with a quarter scoring 75% or above.

### 5.6 Mid-to-Late Victorian

This is the period in which the town centre was consolidated into the form that is recognisable today, with the survival of around 225 Victorian buildings. While the vernacular tradition persisted for humbler dwellings, the scale of size and decoration increased for commercial buildings, such as Nos.57/59 Huddersfield Road, and the introduction of plate glass allowed larger windows.

With local government came civic buildings, such as the Drill Hall, the Civic Hall and the Fire Station along Huddersfield Road. The railway enabled Welsh slate to be imported and, while this is accepted as part of the roofscape character of Holmfirth, it started the erosion of local distinctiveness.

Of these buildings three quarters scored more than 50% for authenticity and more than half scored above 75% for condition.

### **5.7 Post Victorian to Modern**

These buildings include the former Castles Garage with petrol pumps in the Woodhead Road which was converted to Holmfirth Mill shop and the Picturedrome Cinema which was built in 1912/13, of brick and render. This was the second cinema built in Holmfirth and is a legacy of James Bamforth's pioneering film-making in the town.

In contrast, two national banks added impressive fronts to older buildings in the 20<sup>th</sup> century at Victoria Square and Nos.28/30 Victoria Street.

There are around 48 buildings built within this period and the majority of these buildings scored more than 50% for condition and over 70% scored more than 75% for condition. Authenticity of design was difficult to judge and not attempted.

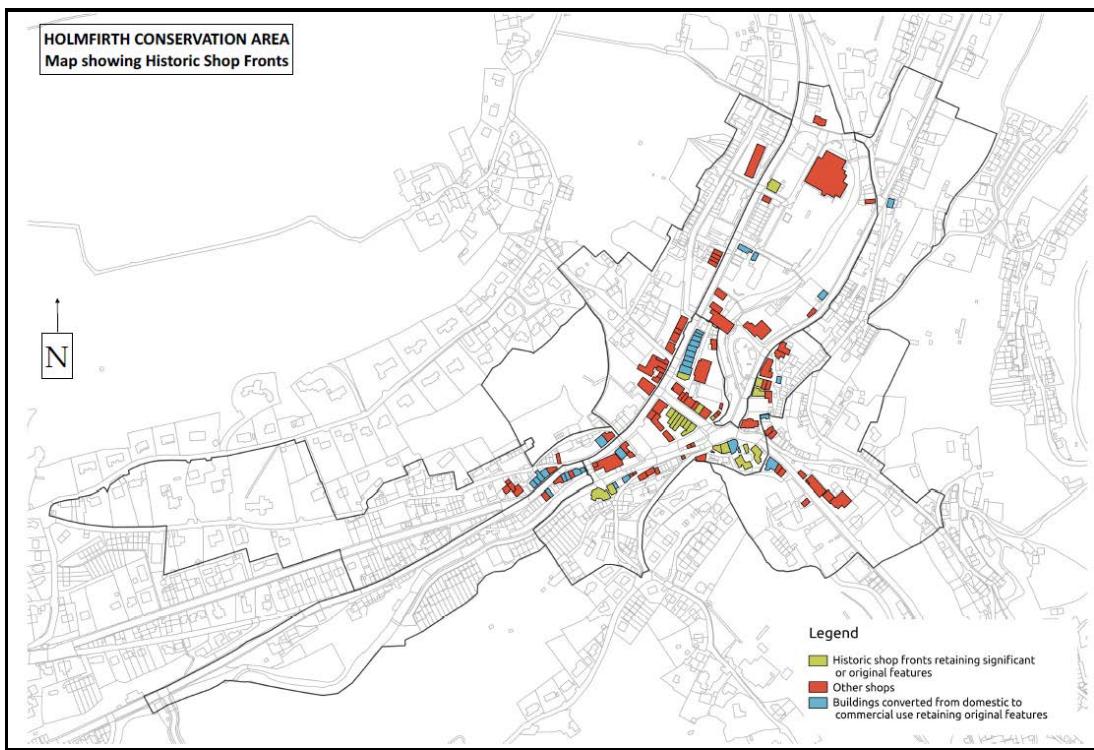
The continuing use of natural stone has been a unifying factor in the townscape of Holmfirth, although the large scale and lack of detailing of mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings has had mixed results. Where artificial stone has been used, which weathers differently from natural stone, buildings do not blend in with the historic feel of the conservation area.

### **5.8 Shops**

Early shops were converted from houses, which is why there is a domestic scale to shops, for instance in Huddersfield Road, whereas shops in Victoria Street were purpose-built in 1844 and 1852. Appraisal of the shops surveyed 154 trading premises, 18 of which are Grade II Listed.

While Holmfirth no longer has some of the trades recorded in 19<sup>th</sup> century census data, such as cordwainers, clog-makers, milliners and umbrella-makers, new businesses have evolved to take their place. Holmfirth prides itself on the high proportion of independent traders which adds vibrancy to the town's character. The small size of retail units, often determined by the constraints of the historic buildings, can be an asset, as their quirkiness contributes to their attraction.

A number of historic shopfronts survive in Towngate, Victoria Street and notably at No.52 Huddersfield Road. However, others are blighted by over-deep fascias and modern materials, advertising that obscures shop windows, and A-boards on pavements.



**Figure 23 Map showing Historic Shop Fronts**

A map of shops by business activity is presented in Appendix E.

#### Issues of Buildings and Shops:

- Maintenance
- Steel security doors
- Painted stone columns
- Overlarge fascia boards on shops
- Over bright colour choices
- Over bright lighting
- Out of scale signage
- A boards blocking pavements

#### Summary of Buildings Survey:

- Closely built houses climbing up the valley sides.
- Weavers' windows in numerous houses.
- Under and over buildings used for housing and shops.
- Busy streets and adjacent quiet backwaters.
- Stone flag pavements and setted tracks up the hills
- Stone houses and stone flag roofs predominate
- Well preserved Georgian style shops and houses
- River Holme flowing through the centre gives it a rural feel
- Narrow stone steps and paths lead to quiet setted squares
- Views of the valley sides and moors beyond
- High percentage of authentic buildings in good condition
- Low percentage of modern uPVC windows and doors
- Variety of shops within authentic buildings of good condition
- Domestic scale and purpose built shops
- Independent shops

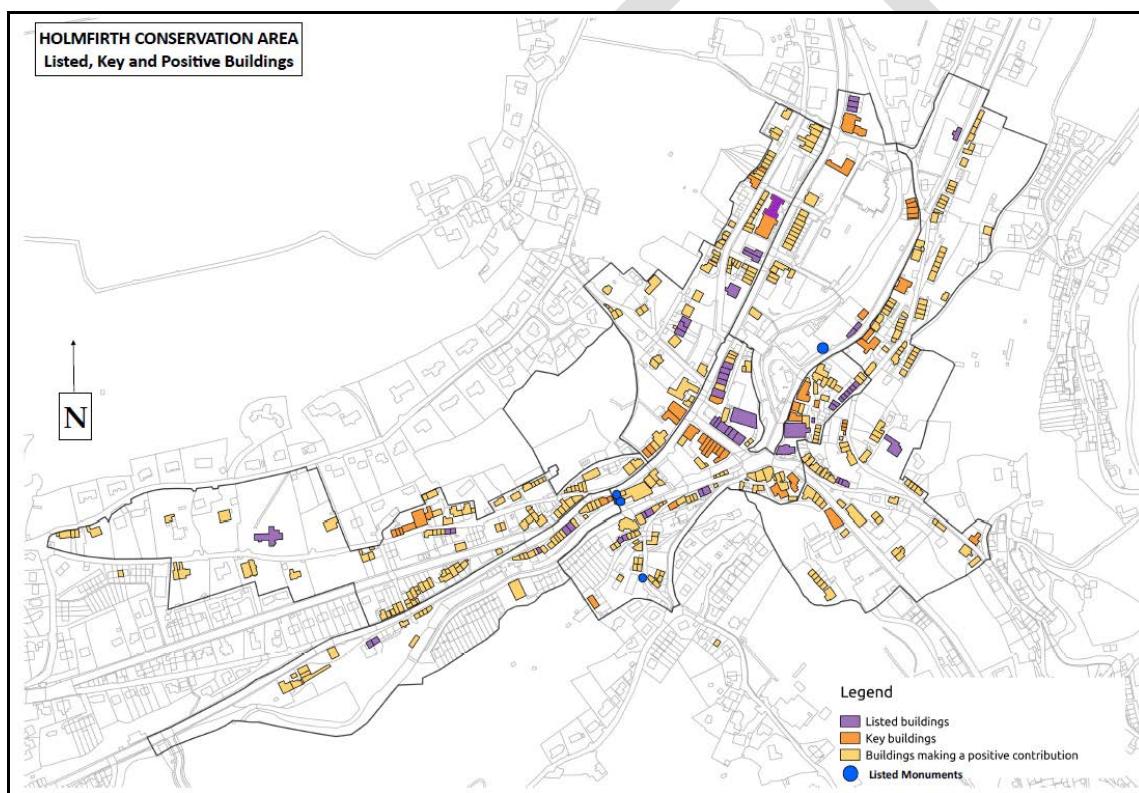
## Shops of Holmfirth Conservation Area

<p>Some shops and businesses have relatively modern shop frontages as they have been converted from domestic houses. For example, Up Country which has been sympathetically converted to a shop.</p> <p>The stone lintels are painted in a colour sympathetic to the stonework, as are the doors and shop window, and the signage enhances the stonework.</p>	
<p>The sign above the Purple Apricot shop extends across the narrow extent of the shop frontage and the sign and doorway are in a colour that enhances rather than detracts from the stonework.</p>	
<p>These signs extend across the width of the building and also occupy the entire two shop windows. They are of vibrant mixed colours and the inclusion of whole window adverts detracts from the historic building.</p>	
<p>The fascia board on this shop is of a larger size than adjacent shops, extending over the top of the shop windows and overwhelms the building and is of a larger scale than adjacent shops in Victoria Street.</p> <p>The colour of the fascia does not detract from the stonework.</p>	

There are some good examples of signage in neutral colours where an avoidance of bright colour enhances the beauty of the stonework. Where fascia boards are not in place, lettering mounted on stonework has a similar effect.



**Figure 24 Shops of the Conservation Area illustrating sympathetic and unsympathetic Shop Fronts and Signage**



**Figure 25 Map of Listed, Key and Positive Buildings**

## 5.9 Listed Buildings

Listing began in 1944 to identify '*buildings of special architectural or historic interest*'. Protection for these buildings was not introduced until 1968. The HCA includes 38 Grade II listed buildings and a schedule is provided in Appendix I. Most are houses and public buildings, but they also include structures, such as the Upperbridge on Hollowgate, the adjacent milepost, the church lockup, Goose Green Trough and the Peace of Amiens Column.

Other notable listed buildings include the Civic Hall, the north side of Victoria Street, buildings between Huddersfield Road and Norridge Bottom and Nos.2-4 Towngate.

A survey of the listed buildings by HCG revealed that only 4 of the 38 remain as recorded in the list description including 27 Hollowgate, the former HSBC bank and 81 to 83 Huddersfield Road. The survey indicated an average authenticity score of 73%, with the lowest level of authenticity of less than 50% only recorded on 18% of the buildings. The condition survey found one building in immaculate condition with the majority falling within 50% to 74% condition range and only 5% falling below 50% score for condition.

It may be that some of the key buildings identified in 5.10 below should also be considered for statutory listing.

<p><b>Th'Owd Towser</b></p> <p>The building with the oldest history in Holmfirth is said to be the Th'Owd Towser, originally dating from 1594 when Justices of the Peace were appointed and were required to provide Houses of Correction. The small building is behind the Parish Church, and is one of only 150 surviving lock ups in England. They fell out of use following the County Police Act of 1839. It has in its lifetime been a lock up, a fire station, an ambulance depot and a mortuary.</p> <p>The existing building dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It is a rectangular building, constructed of dressed hammer stone with a stone flag roof.</p>	
<p><b>Church Yard</b></p> <p>Other early listed buildings include those around the Church Yard, including JW Kayes.</p> <p>The Mitchell building has retained its doors for loading textiles onto carts and the attachment on the roof for the pulley for lowering the goods. One door has been blocked with stone, however the building is original apart from the replacement windows and doors.</p>	

### **The Parish Church, Holy Trinity, Towngate**

The earliest church in Holmfirth was a Chapel of Ease constructed in 1422, and rebuilt several times. The present Holy Trinity Church was constructed on the site to a design by Joseph Jaggar, in 1782 with the tower added later. The church has a stone roof with modillioned eaves cornice and first floor sill band. Houses were constructed behind the church, staggered up the steep hillside, with stone sett alleyways and stone steps leading down to the town.



### **10, 12 and 14 Huddersfield Road**

These buildings are listed due to their early 19<sup>th</sup> century age and authenticity. They are under and over houses fronting onto Huddersfield Road and Scar Fold.



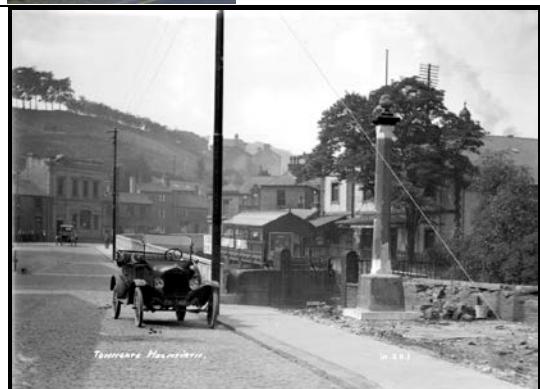
### **27 Hollowgate (Emma's)**

This building is one of the oldest in Holmfirth and has retained weavers' windows, with a high authenticity and condition score.



### **The Peace of Amiens Memorial**

The O'wd Genn or Peace of Amiens Memorial is a column erected in 1802 to commemorate the Peace of Amiens, a brief lull in the Napoleonic wars that offered new hope for the restoration of the textile trade with France.



<p><b>81 and 83 Huddersfield Road</b></p> <p>These listed houses are Georgian style, constructed to house Methodist ministers, with four storeys, stone band courses at each storey, stone fans over the ground floor windows, although the windows may have been reduced in size and are Victorian in style.</p> <p>The buildings have delightful stone steps leading to a pillared entrance with a six paneled door, fanlight and stone hood.</p>	
<p><b>38, 38A Back Lane</b></p> <p>Part of an early 18<sup>th</sup> century terrace, built into the hillside, the eastern elevation is single storey to Back Lane, the western elevation is three storeys with the upper level having a continuous 13 light stone mullioned windows. This was to ensure that the weavers in the Loom Room had maximum light for working.</p>	
<p><b>The Picturedrome</b></p> <p>The Picturedrome is a relatively modern building to be listed, with its internal tin ceiling being the reason for listing. Originally designed as a cinema in 1912, it stood empty for many years and has now been adapted as a venue for live music, films and other functions.</p>	

**Figure 26 Selection of the Listed Buildings**

### 5.10 Key Buildings

Key buildings are those which, although not listed, are considered to make a particularly strong contribution to the character of the conservation area. This may be for a number of reasons, such as age or landmark qualities. These would merit inclusion on Kirklees Local List as they rank as important non-designated heritage assets for planning purposes.

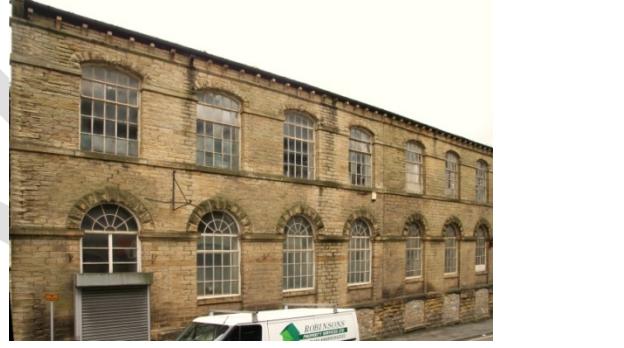
The most significant of which are:

- The Technical Institute, on the corner of Huddersfield Road/Bridge Lane, opened in 1894 offering a technical education for young people. After the 1902 Education Act, it became the first Holmfirth Secondary School
- The Drill Hall, on Huddersfield Road, was built in 1892 for the Holmfirth Rifle Volunteers and it was combined with the Town Hall in 1947 to form the present Holmfirth Civic Hall
- The odd numbered buildings on the south side of Victoria Street, which are slightly later than the listed shops on the north side
- The former Bamforth & Co. Ltd. Premises on Towlgate (1842-1911)
- The Masonic Hall on Station Road

- Ribbleden Mill and Chimney on Dunford Road
- The Old Manse and the Sunday School, Nos.46/48 Upperton Lane
- The Nook Public House
- Modd Laithe Farmhouse
- Nos.12-14 Towngate

A Schedule of Key Buildings is presented in Appendix J. Several of the more significant buildings in Holmfirth have been marked with explanatory blue plaques.

### **Selection of Key Buildings**

<p><b>Druids Hall</b></p> <p>Built by the Order of the Druids Friendly Society in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at a cost of £1800. Used as a Drill Hall, free Methodists and Entertainments Hall, and meeting venue and home of the Masonic Lodge.</p>	
<p><b>Ribbleden Mill</b></p> <p>The date of this mill is circa 1865 and should be preserved as it is the only surviving working mill existing in the HCA.</p> <p>It has retained its Georgian style windows and multi paneled glass, band course and shallow pitched roof. It also has the last mill chimney in the HCA.</p>	
<p><b>The Nook</b></p> <p>The Nook brewed beer in 1754, and possibly earlier, when licensing was required in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Mill workers generally drank beer and although called the Rose and Crown, it has reverted to its nickname of The Nook. The existing building dates from 1818 and brewing was resumed here in 2008.</p> 	

### **Victoria Street, South Side**

Built after the November 1852 Flood, Victoria Street south is a Georgian style terrace of shops, constructed of natural stone with multi paned sash windows, a stone band course and recessed shop windows.

The present day Cooperative travel shop at the north west end has a cement mortar join with the rest of the terrace, and has first floor windows and a band course at higher elevations than the rest of the terrace and has Victorian windows.



**Figure 27 Selection of Key Buildings**

### **5.11 Positive buildings**

Positive buildings are those that make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area without necessarily being 'key'. In their guidance on conservation area appraisal, Historic England provide a series of indicators to identify such buildings. These include, reflecting prevalent elements such as age, style, materials or form, group value with designated assets or contribution to the quality of spaces.

Inevitably, most of the buildings in the conservation area that are not already listed, or key buildings should be considered positive. There are a few remaining buildings that make a neutral or negative contribution to the conservation area. Positive buildings can also include less-conventional structures, such as gravestones or stone boundary walls.

The positive buildings are shown on the Figure 25. Like the key buildings, they are regarded as non-designated heritage assets and their heritage significance should be taken into account in planning considerations.

#### **Issues of Listed, Key and Positive Buildings:**

- Maintenance
- Inensitive adaptions and renovations
- Inappropriate use of materials
- Painting of stonework
- Inappropriate signage, lighting, fascias and advertising

#### **Summary of Listed and Key Buildings:**

- 38 Grade II Listed Buildings
- Authenticity score of 72% for Listed buildings
- Condition score of 50% to 74% for Listed buildings
- Listed buildings reflect the history of Holmfirth from lock ups, weavers' cottages, industrial buildings, churches, banks and a cinema
- Key buildings include all buildings prior to 1850 and a large number of later buildings that add to the architectural significance of Holmfirth
- Positive buildings include the majority of the remaining buildings in the conservation area

## 6. THE CHARACTER OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

### 6.1 Character Areas

Although Holmfirth has a high degree of unity in its built form because of consistent building materials, architecture, scale and design, there are nonetheless subtle differences in the character that this generates. Fieldwork suggests that the conservation area can be divided into seven areas each with a distinct character. Six are discussed below and the seventh, Victoria Park being a major open space, was considered at 4.2 above.



**Figure 28 Map of Character Areas**

The following account of the character areas is based on surveys carried out by the HCG to provide a descriptive analysis of the street character, views and vistas, street furniture, traffic management, road and pavement surfacing and heritage features.

### 6.2 Old Town

The Old Town forms the central core of Holmfirth and is characterised by the oldest buildings, the weavers' cottages, under and over houses and shops, and by the Georgian style buildings of Victoria Street and Victoria Square. The roads are busy with people and traffic, whereas the web of intriguing setted streets, rising invitingly from the town to the hills, lead to quiet squares and narrow, steep winding lanes. The use of local natural stone for buildings, paving and steps gives a unifying character that complements an effective diversity in height and scale of buildings.

Victoria Street is a purpose built shopping development comprising a well-preserved listed 19<sup>th</sup> century terrace of shops, with ashlar facings, on the north side and a further three-storey terrace of shops, of dressed stone, on the south side. Church Yard on the south side of Holy Trinity Church and fronted by Nos.2-4 Towngate is a delightful stone flagged area used for cafes and festivals.

Elsewhere the old town is constructed of three and four storey under and over domestic or combined domestic and retail premises, selling a large variety of goods

and services and a few smaller domestic houses.

The River Holme flows through the centre of the old town and although access is restricted, it is an attraction for locals and visitors, bringing an air of freshness and a feel of the countryside into the town, with regular sightings of heron fishing in its shallow waters.

The narrow streets that rise to the rear of the Holy Trinity Parish Church, include Daisy Lane with its attractive setts and stone steps, where a double canyon effect is created by three storey buildings topped by more towering houses that mount up the hill to the east. Uniquely, this area is enclosed by buildings that block views creating a sense of enclosure where houses, shops and cafes feel unchanged since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Daisy Lane area feels distinctly quiet compared to the town centre.

Hollowgate, radiating south west from Victoria Square, is open to the river on one side and lined with terraces 4-5 storeys high on the other. There are shops, roads curling up steeply around corners to the south and a pedestrian footbridge across the river. However, the predominance of stone buildings with a distinctive skyline, is eroded by the redbrick of the rear of Holmfirth Mills, the unattractive glass and sheet metal of the Lower Market Hall building, and busy traffic.

Rotcher Road, Goose Green and New Row rise as steeply curved roads from Hollowgate, and benefit from stone setts. Snaking paths or snickets with fine stone steps and stone walling give rise to views of the town, and of roofscapes, chimneys and views to Victoria Park. The last farmhouse along this road is at Modd Laithe Farm, the last remaining working farm in the HCA.

Norridge Bottom runs parallel to Huddersfield Road and is making a successful transition into a pedestrianised shopping street. The enclosure of towering four storey shops and ginnels to Huddersfield Road contrast with views to the river, the setted roadway, and uniform streetlamps enhance a sense of place while the rear wall of the Picturedrome is decorated by the Mick Kirkby-Geddes' metalwork sculpture.

#### Views:

From the centre of Holmfirth, in Victoria Square, there are views in most directions: south west along the old buildings and riverscape of Hollowgate, through the wooded river valley, to Victoria Mill and towards the chimney of Bottoms Mill and the hills of Holme Moss. To the north there are views past the historic 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings on Victoria Street through to those on the Huddersfield Road with Victoria Park rising behind and the hills beyond.

To the east the view up Dunford Road is of some of the oldest buildings of Holmfirth with a dramatic roofscape rising up the hillside, including Ribbleden Mill and its chimney. The ginnels and narrow lanes in the Old Town create restricted views of the rear of old buildings opening out into courtyards and back streets.

Views up Rotcher Road, Goose Green and New Fold are enclosed by the closely packed buildings. However, views down these lanes from the boundary of the HCA emphasise the character of Holmfirth.

The view of Holmfirth looking from Hollowgate towards Holy Trinity Parish Church with layered houses rising up the wooded hills behind the church, and the church clock hanging orb-like at night, framed by well-preserved Georgian buildings, is one of the best views of Holmfirth.

### **Issues of Old Town:**

- Maintenance of stone walls
- Restricted access to the river
- Commercial waste bins hindering pedestrians
- Un-coordinated street furniture of varying designs and colours
- Poor regard for stone setts and stone flags
- Road markings not in conservation standard
- Un-coordinated and cluttered street signage
- Un coordinated styles of street lamps
- Painted stone pillars
- Shops painted in unsympathetic colours
- Unattractive advertising and lighting in shop fronts
- Lower Market Hall building and entrance over the river

### **Special Characteristics of Old Town:**

- Forms historic core of Holmfirth with many of the oldest buildings
- Closely built houses climbing up the valley sides
- Weavers' windows in numerous houses
- Under and over buildings used for housing and shops
- Busy streets and adjacent quiet backwaters
- Stone flag pavements and setted tracks up the hills
- Stone houses and stone flag roofs predominate
- Well preserved Georgian style shops and houses
- River Holme flowing through the centre gives it a rural feel
- Narrow stone steps and paths lead to quiet setted squares
- Views of the river
- Views of the valley sides and moors beyond

## **6.3 Hightown**

Hightown Lane is important for its double fronted properties and terraces of stone houses separated by stone arched ginnels allowing access to rear gardens. Victorian civic buildings on Huddersfield Road contrast with a domestic scale of properties in Beech Street. The lane bends and slopes downwards towards its southern end, bounded by high stone walls and hedges, hiding a substantial Georgian town house and garden.

Wood Lane is a steep hill which quickly becomes a narrowing grit lane with bulging hedges and then open walled fields, such is the immediate connection of Holmfirth with its rural setting.

Cooper Lane also rises steeply from the Huddersfield Road, bounded by early high stone walls on both sides for much of its length and short streets either side. A pathway into Victoria Park has a good example of creative new domestic architecture in scale and keeping with the character of the conservation area. Carr House Road, opposite, has imposing detached houses with attractive individual changes of scale.

### Views:

Hightown is mostly elevated above Holmfirth, being on the bank rising westwards from the Huddersfield Road. It affords dramatic views of Holmfirth rooftops over the New Town towards the houses and woods of Cliff.

Some of the best views in Holmfirth are from various points along Cooper Lane looking south east across hedges, stone walls and roofscapes towards the Holy Trinity Parish Church and the wooded hills beyond. These views epitomise the character of Holmfirth.

#### **Issues in Hightown:**

- **Badly maintained garages constructed with out of character materials**
- **Prominent waste bins**
- **Satellite dishes**
- **Modern lampposts**

#### **Special Characteristics of Hightown:**

- **Historic houses along the valley side backing onto fields**
- **Historic Civic Hall and Drill Hall**
- **Substantial Georgian style town houses along Carr Lane**
- **Views across Holmfirth to Cliff and moors beyond**
- **Ginnels accessing rear gardens**
- **Stone pavements and setted tracks up the hills**
- **Stone houses and stone flag roofs predominate**
- **Well preserved Georgian style shops and houses**

#### **6.4 St John's**

Binns Lane, Upperthong Lane and Greenfield Road form a roughly parallel backbone of roads in this area. Binns Lane forms the northern boundary of the HCA hereabouts, where on lower ground to the south and east, low density old and new houses, generally in keeping with the HCA, are found with large gardens.

Upperthong Lane is narrow and rises steeply from the town. There are steep steps rising to narrow public footpaths at intervals, and the many changes of height, levels, styles of building and construction methods add to the Lane's character. Small terraced houses predominate below the former Independent Lane Chapel, which has now been renovated as flats, and there are grander houses in large gardens above.

High dry-stone walls, raised gardens, mature hedging, grand gates, driveways and facades of older properties contrast with the newer houses and apartments higher up. St John's Church and churchyard provide important open space.

By contrast Greenfield and Woodhead Roads are busy arterial roads with splendid views to the east along the valley over the roofscapes and to the south across the valley to Cinderhills, Cliff and Cemetery Road. The predominating pastoral scenes of fields, trees and drystone walls are quintessential Holmfirth.

#### **Views:**

The views along Upperthong Lane are of old buildings, gardens and trees, and the impressive entrance to the church of St John. The views from the higher ground of Binns Lane are spectacular across the valley to the fields and woods south of the River Holme stretching to Cemetery Road and the high moors beyond. Closer to Holmfirth the views are of historic houses jumbled close together with varied roofscapes. Views from Greenfield Road and Woodhead Road are mostly to the southeast across the River Holme to the fields, woods and moors beyond.

### **Issues of St John's**

- **Badly maintained garages constructed with out of character materials.**
- **Badly maintained stone walls.**
- **Obtrusive waste bins.**

### **Special Characteristics of St Johns:**

- **Historic church and graveyards**
- **Imposing houses set within substantial grounds**
- **Historic terraced housing**
- **Narrow lane rising uphill with high retaining walls**
- **Views across Holmfirth and river to fields and the moors beyond**
- **Steep stone footpaths connecting roadways and footpaths**
- **Stone pavements and setted tracks up the hills**
- **Significant cover of gardens and trees**

## **6.5 Riverside**

Woodhead Road is a significant gateway to the town with the Riverside area lying either side of the River Holme to the south. Houses on the south side of the road are predominantly under-and-over domestic properties with some utilised as shops where they front the Woodhead Road. The old historic laundry building is now apartments and the historic former school and former Toll House at the east end of the terrace at Upperbridge are now in commercial use. As Woodhead Road heads out of Holmfirth there are larger 19<sup>th</sup> century houses built over several storeys between the road and the river interspersed with trees, many of which appear to be Victorian specimen planting.

The rear of houses fronting onto the Huddersfield Road are under houses fronting onto Scarfold, which is a semi-rural cul-de-sac. Historic steps lead to upper level doors as the street bends and blends with the river. Trees and shrubs, sometimes overgrown, add to the character together with the sounds of the fast flowing river. In places, there is a high dry-stone retaining wall supporting the houses on Woodhead Road.

Lower Mill Lane on the south side of the river once led to the Lower Mill itself and is now fronted by modern style stone houses and a remaining mill building transformed into flats at right angles to the river. The new three storey town houses have the classic problems of new buildings in a traditional town centre, as they match the scale, materials and style of existing houses, yet have to accommodate cars in integral garages and front driveways, that lend an uninteresting look to the properties. The river here is both in a deep cut and also partly culverted to facilitate parking. The housing site at the far end of New Mill Lane, yet to be developed, presents opportunity for a pedestrian bridge that would invite exploration from both sides of the river and open the river to better access.

The only remaining mill pond in the HCA lies at the west end of Lower Mill Lane. It should be preserved as a heritage asset as well as to encourage wildlife and the rural appeal of the town. The far west end of the HCA is formed by an historic bridge over the River Holme, which once led to several, now demolished mills.

#### Views:

The Riverside area is low lying along the valley bottom of the River Holme. The main views are south west looking to the mill pond of Prickleden or north east along the valley to the old mill building respectively. The views north west are across the houses and gardens of St John's character area with the hills rising steeply beyond and to the

south east are the fields and hills rising to Cemetery Road with the moors beyond.

Views along the Riverside include glimpses of the River Holme around each bend of the lanes, hemmed in by the mill buildings, high retaining walls and under-houses: A rare quiet backwater close to the town centre.

#### **Issues in Riverside:**

- Invasive species including Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam
- Terraced houses requiring maintenance
- Overgrown mill pond
- Lack of river access
- Pipes in the river

#### **Special Characteristics of Riverside:**

- Last remaining mill pond in Holmfirth Conservation Area
- River Holme flowing through the area giving a rural feel to the town
- Converted Victorian buildings
- High stone retaining walls
- Historic Upperbridge over the River Holme
- Tall four storey under-and-over houses and shops
- Historic terraced housing
- Narrow lanes running parallel to the river, leading to the mill pond
- Stone pavements and setted tracks along the river
- Significant cover of trees
- Important views along the river
- Diverse wildlife

#### **6.6 Cliff**

Cliff character area includes part of the settlement of Cliff plus the Dunford Road area of Holmfirth.

Cliff is a large area forming the eastern and south eastern high ground of the town. It has many characteristic steep streets with fine views over the town and beyond. Dunford Road forms a gateway into the town through the valley of the River Ribble. It has the Ribbleton Mill Dye Works, commercial premises and shops on either side as well as the retaining wall to South Lane before emerging at Victoria Square. Hardly noticed and much neglected Pump 'Ole in the retaining wall, a water trough now in poor condition, littered and overgrown.

South Lane has characterful three-storey houses mounting the hill on one side and emerging views over the dyeworks and beyond on the other side. The terraced houses bend with the road in a variety of styles.

The steep climb up South Lane reveals the tall taking-in doors of Henry Mitchells, which is situated on the stone setts at the lower part of the lane. The cat-head hoist for raising wool bales still evident. The former uses of buildings is illustrated by blocked doorways, the mullions of former windows, a fire place and steps rising to nowhere, in the retaining walls. South Lane has fine new houses and an old terrace merging from two storeys to one as the street rises in height. The descent towards Station Road is punctuated by double-storey and single-storey houses, and a terrace on Back Lane of four-storey houses and with original sash windows, all painted the same colour.

Cliff Lane forms part of the eastern boundary of the HCA with large gardens and fields between properties. The important townscape of Bunkers Hill leads from Back Lane into the historic Old Town, pathways built for horses not cars. As the elevation drops, single-storey houses become two storeys emerging onto stone steps, with St Anne's Square, Th'Owd Towser and the Daisy Lane web of passageways behind Holy Trinity Parish Church in the Old Town.

Entering the town from Station Road, notable buildings are the former railway stationmaster's house and goods office, now a residential house, the distinctive Druids Hall and the famous Bamforth & Co Ltd building, now under restoration.

#### Views:

From Dunford Road the view into the town predominates, terminated by the attractive rear of the tall three-storey ironmongers shop and the buildings across the river. Due to the bends in the road and tall buildings, there are only restricted views looking up Dunford Road. From Back Lane the view is of Holmfirth centre and the houses and trees on the valley sides beyond. From Cliff Lane the spectacular view lies across the Newtown and River Holme valley to Hightown and the hills beyond.

On South Lane, views are restricted, but looking back from a height higher than the chimney of the Ribbleden Mill Dyeworks, the view is of rooftops on Dunford Road, and green carpets of treetops with moorland beyond. Back Lane offers views of cottages with small front gardens until tall stone garden walls, driveways and trees hide the houses and afford glimpses over the town between the changing house styles. Here the flagpole on top of the church and the top of Victoria Park on the opposite side of the valley, are at eye level with a mosaic of roofscapes below.

From the short stretch of Cliff Lane within the conservation area, there are dramatic views to the south. The Holme Moss mast is visible on the horizon, bringing moorland, the Holme Valley and the town within the view. The industrial heritage of Bottom's Mill and chimneys, Lower Mill in the town, the river and roofscapes form one of the best views in Holmfirth. A north west view takes in Hightown across the valley with fields and woods beyond, and towards New Mill.

#### Issues:

- Overgrown water troughs
- Derelict buildings
- Poorly maintained buildings
- Badly maintained stone walls
- Overgrown pathways
- Danger of new development spoiling significant views

#### **Special Characteristics of Cliff:**

- Tall under and over houses rising up the hillside
- Historic terraced housing with weavers' windows
- Setted lanes winding up the hillside to quiet setted squares
- High stone retaining walls
- Former railway station building
- Historic Druids Hall
- Historic Bamforth & Co. Ltd. building now being restored
- Houses stacked up the hillside behind the church.
- Intriguing web of passages leading up the hills.
- Spectacular views of Holmfirth.

## **6.7 New Town**

New Town includes two major gateways into Holmfirth, through Station Road and Huddersfield Road. Entrance to the town from Huddersfield passes the Victorian municipal architecture of the former Technical Institute and the Fire Station together with fine Georgian terraced houses and shops, and a former stable yard carefully converted to shops, restaurants and physiotherapy rooms. At the west end of this area is the Riverside Centre complex constructed in the 1970s across the river with a negative impact on the character of the area. This building was voted one of the worst buildings in the UK by the TV programme 'Demolition' in 2005.

Hidden behind the restored terrace of houses west of the Fire Station and the Postcard Public House, is Market Street and the Co-op store, with its large car park planted with trees. Whereas the Co-op has been constructed of stone, it is single storey replacement of the six-storey former Albert Mill. For this reason, it is considered to be out of character with Holmfirth's heritage.

Bridge Lane crosses the River Holme at the northern end of New Town, and apart from Upperbridge, was once the only river crossing taking the traffic from South Lane and Hollowgate, up Berry Bank (now Station Road) and across the bridge to Huddersfield and Halifax. Rear views across Bridge Lane are of the industrial premises of the Bridge Foundry, which will celebrate its centenary in 2019, and which holds moulds for casting cast iron works for the houses in Holmfirth and the UK and is the only business allowed to burn coal in the smokeless zone of Holmfirth.

The entrance to the HCA from Bridge Lane, passes Georgian buildings on the steep access to Station Road and on the location of the former Tom Mill. The land between Station Road and the river is occupied by a car park and trees that restrict views to the west, before the well-preserved building of Wagstaffs shoe shop and a Grade II listed terrace of small houses and shops. Holmside Gardens, to the rear of Wagstaffs, and the walkway along the riverside between the Riverside Centre building and the Co-op store are assets for the conservation area.

### **Views:**

New Town lies in the valley bottom immediately adjacent to the River Holme and views are mainly along the wooded riverside or up the valley sides through the roofscapes to the hills beyond. Views to the north west and south east are of houses and trees with fields and moors beyond. To the north and south views are restricted by the Co-op store and the Methodist Church.

### **Issues:**

- The Riverside Centre building restricting access to the river
- Lack of access to the River Holme
- Footpaths requiring maintenance
- Railings requiring maintenance
- Excessive signage
- Dominance of car parking
- Buildings that make a negative contribution
- No disabled access

### **Special Characteristics of New Town:**

- River flows along the east boundary bringing countryside into town
- Trees dominate the banks of the river

- **Further trees in the car park**
- **Technical Institute and former Police Station on the northern boundary**
- **Holmside Gardens**
- **Riverside Walk to view wildlife, including herons and kingfishers in addition to the mallards**

## 7. POSITIVE, NEUTRAL AND NEGATIVE ASPECTS

### 7.1 Positive Aspects

Holmfirth has a very strong character that derives from the river running through the town, its dramatic rural setting, and its views in and out of the conservation area. The consistent use of local sandstone visually unites a variety of building types.

The most significant buildings are considered in Section 5 above. Listed Buildings are particularly significant because they are selected at the national level. Most of the Key Buildings stand out for their special detailing or landmark qualities. However, they would not alone create the sense of place without the context provided by the Positive Buildings. Together, listed, key and positive buildings include the large majority of property in the conservation area.

Open spaces and trees, considered in Section 4 above are also important to the positive aspect of the conservation area.

#### Positive Aspects to the HCA

<b>Views</b> The views from the hillsides into the HCA and from the town looking up through the zig zag of lanes and buildings to the moorlands are unique and should be preserved.	
<b>River Holme and River Ribble</b> Holmfirth was built around the rivers using water for power and for cleaning the wool for the textile trade. The rivers bring the countryside into the town and herons and a large variety of birds are often spotted on the river in the town centre.	

<p><b>Distinctive Weavers Windows in Under and Over houses</b></p> <p>The weavers' windows in the terraced houses and the distinctive under and over houses to accommodate the steep valley sides give Holmfirth a unique character.</p>	
<p><b>Finely preserved Georgian houses and shop fronts</b></p> <p>Holmfirth has fine examples of Georgian and Victorian houses and shops and is lucky to have missed out on the development of less characterful houses of the post war era.</p>	
<p><b>Parks, open spaces and trees</b></p> <p>There are several parks in the HCA for relaxation or children's play, open spaces for gatherings, fairs, festivals and fetes and large areas of trees extending into the town centre, all giving a feeling of wellbeing to the town.</p>	
<p><b>Listed Buildings and Monuments</b></p> <p>There are 38 listed buildings and a large number and variety of monuments to observe and appreciate in Holmfirth.</p>	
<p><b>Stone flag pavements and stone setts</b></p> <p>Most of the pavements in Holmfirth are of stone flags or stone setts, blending with the stone buildings.</p>	

**Figure 29      Positive Aspects to the HCA**

## **7.2 Neutral Aspects**

The neutral aspects in Holmfirth include the small number of buildings constructed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century of reconstituted stone or other materials, which do not enhance their surroundings and do not form a positive aspect.

These include the single storey Co-op store in Crown Bottom, which replaced a six storey mill building. Although it is constructed of stone, it is isolated from the fabric of the town and does not, therefore contribute to its townscape.

Other neutral buildings include the Post Office, which is constructed of modern materials, the former doctors' surgery in Huddersfield Road, which is incongruous, but well maintained, and the houses in Lower Mill where proportions and lack of detail do not add character to the town despite the use of stone.

The neutral aspects comprise a small number of buildings considering the size of the town. Some may be capable of enhancement in the future.

## **7.3 Negative Aspects**

Negative aspects are those which detract from the historic spatial layout, the style and materials of buildings and the attractiveness of the streetscape, parks and riverside. Often they can equally be seen as development opportunities. Perhaps the most apparent example is the Riverside Shopping Centre constructed over the River Holme.

The negative aspects of Holmfirth include the neglected buildings, some of which have stood empty for many years. The telephone exchange in Huddersfield Road lies outside the HCA adjacent to its northern boundary. However, its poor design spoils the entrance to the HCA from Huddersfield.

Houses in the HCA were mostly constructed before the advent of the car and in the 20th century numerous badly constructed and badly designed garages have been built that are detrimental to the streetscene, although necessary to the owners.

Other negative aspects are the loss of traditional building details.

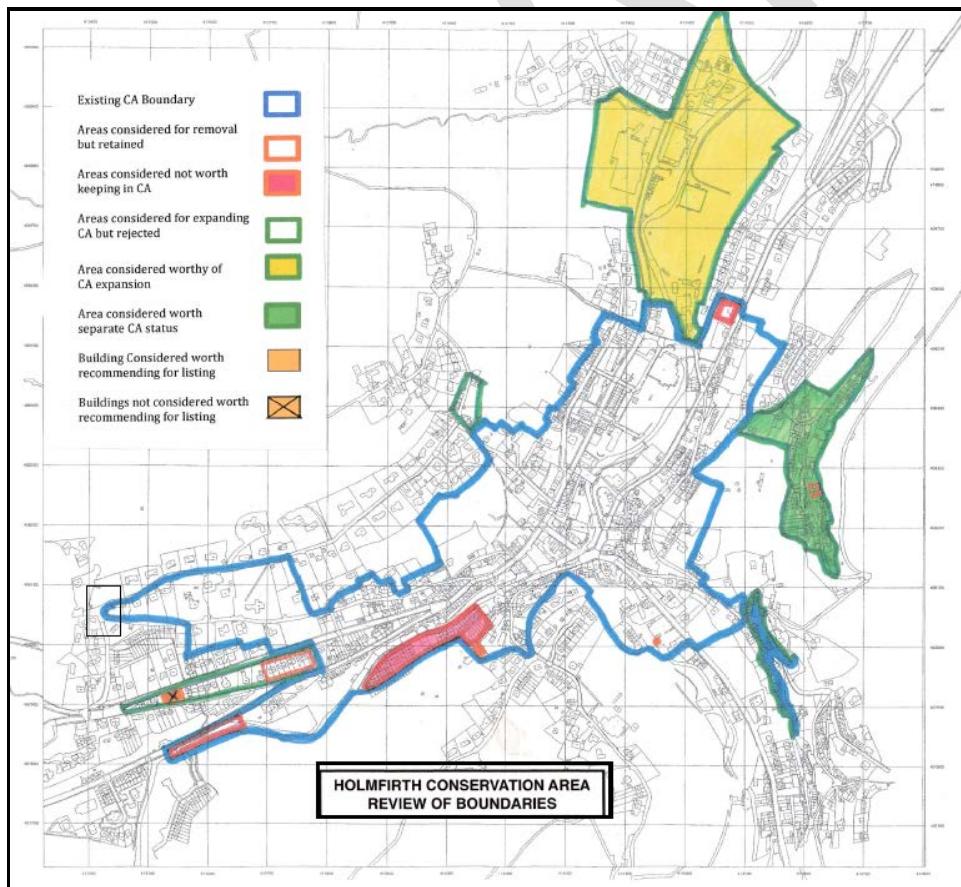
In the public realm, there are concerns about the proliferation and variety of signage, the intrusive commercial waste bins, and street furniture, such as the large number of variously painted litter bins and un-coordinated planters. Cracked stone paving flags, tarmac replacement of stone flags and low maintenance are negative aspects to the visitor experience and economic development of Holmfirth. Additionally, removal of the pipes crossing the river and the eradication of invasive species would enhance the riverscape.

### **Negative Aspects to the HCA**

<p><b>Variety of and Protruding Litter Bins</b></p> <p>The bins in the HCA present a particularly unattractive aspect to the town. The bins are of varying design, size and colour and are placed in locations where they detract significantly from the attractive streetscape.</p>		
<p><b>Garages</b></p> <p>The historic houses of Holmfirth were constructed before the arrival of the motor car. Consequently garages have been constructed of materials out of character with their surroundings, such as corrugated iron, concrete blocks, painted wood, metal doors and in prominent and awkward places.</p>		
<p><b>Cracked paving slabs and setts</b></p> <p>Holmfirth's pavements mainly comprise stone flags and stone flags and setts should be retained to keep the character of the town.</p>		
<p><b>Sewer pipes in the river</b></p> <p>Pipes reaching across the River Holme are not attractive and it would benefit the riverscape to divert these pipes to enhance the river landscape.</p>		
<p><b>Unattractive and uncoordinated street signs and lighting</b></p> <p>The black signage with white writing fits the historic nature of Holmfirth, but is ruined by sign clutter. A-Boards adjacent to the pavement attract visitors to the shops but are unattractive and create a trip hazard for pedestrians.</p>		

<p><b>Invasive Species</b></p> <p>Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan balsam have invaded the River Holme. Knotweed causes damage to retaining walls, pavements and house foundations with its invasive roots.</p> <p>The River Holme Connections are undertaking a three year programme with the Environment Agency to eradicate the invasive species from the river.</p>		
<p><b>Victoria Bridge</b></p> <p>The Victoria Bridge was constructed mainly of concrete following its demise during a flood. The concrete detracts from the delight of the river, river plants and wildlife and the bridge would benefit from an upgrade to stone facing.</p>		

**Figure 30      Negative Aspects to the HCA**



**Figure 31      Review of Boundaries**

## **8. BOUNDARY REVIEW**

### **8.1 Review of HCA Boundary**

As part of the Appraisal process, the boundary to Holmfirth Conservation Area was reviewed for the first time since its designation in 1972 and the extension of 1990.

Proposed Boundary Changes. Three areas for the extension of the Conservation Area are proposed for consideration:

1. The area around the junction of Cooper Lane and Holt Lane. Although containing a small number of historical buildings, it was considered that most have been subject to significant alterations and do not meet the criteria for designation.

There is, however, a case for a small extension to include Nos.6-18 Cooper Lane. These under-and-over houses are very much part of the local character and they provide a gateway to the conservation area for approaches from the north.

2. The area to the east of Back Lane & Cliff Lane: Cliff contains a majority of buildings from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and also a significant number of relatively modern properties, some of which have been well-designed to take account of the constraints of the site. However, the area is detached from Holmfirth and, if designation was to be considered, it should be as a separate conservation area.
3. The northern approach to Holmfirth. This is the area to the north of Bridge Lane, east of Huddersfield Road and west of Summervale, extending to Sands.

The area includes, amongst other uses Bridge Foundry fronting Bridge Lane, which links back directly to the rise of the textile industry in the Holme Valley, and Holmfirth Cricket Club which, was founded on its present site in 1850, and used for races, Holmfirth Sing and agricultural shows for Holmfirth residents.

In the north-west part of the suggested extension is Bridge Mills. Although not listed, it is one of the last mills still active in industrial use and it has a commanding presence on the approach along Huddersfield Road.

#### Rejected Boundary Changes

4. The area between Greenfield Road and Modd Lane: While this area contains a cohesive group of Victorian buildings around the former school at the west they are isolated from the existing conservation area by 20<sup>th</sup> century housing of little architectural merit.

Proposed Exclusion. One area is recommended for deletion from the designated area.

5. The modern development of Lower Mill Lane, to the west of The Elephant and Castle PH on Hollowgate. is not considered to have sufficient architectural interest to meet the criteria for inclusion in the conservation area.

## **9. ISSUES in the CONSERVATION AREA**

Holmfirth has been a conservation area for many years and is now described by Historic England as 'at risk', indicating the town is deteriorating and not improving in appearance. A Management Plan and economic investment is needed to address the issues in the conservation area and to attract new businesses, new residents, shoppers and tourists.

The main issues in Holmfirth, derived from the analysis of this appraisal, lie in the following areas:

### Open Spaces, Natural Environment and Views:

- Maintaining the walls and paths
- Improving access to the parks, graveyards and river
- Ensuring views are not restricted
- Maintenance of trees and increase variety
- Consideration of succession tree planting

### Existing Buildings:

- Maintaining the historic features of heritage assets - Listed Buildings, Key Buildings and other buildings identified as making a positive contribution to the character of the town
- Resisting the erosion of character through the cumulative effect of small-scale changes. Such changes have included the replacement of doors and windows with non-traditional designs and materials, replacement of traditional roofs, removal of chimney stacks, the addition of porches and painting of stonework
- Reviewing the effectiveness of planning control
- Maintaining and enhancing traditional shopfronts
- Strengthening controls over advertising in shop windows, fascia boards, shop lighting, security shutters and A-boards
- Encouraging reinstatement of architectural original design features

### New Development:

- Taking account of the character of the conservation area
- Following the scale and form of neighbouring buildings
- Making use of locally sourced natural sandstone, as reconstituted stone weathers differently
- Not obstructing established views
- Not proposing buildings over the river or hindering access to it

### The Riverside:

- Increasing access to the River Holme
- Removing invasive species and ugly pipework in the river
- Improving the style, materials and painting of the footbridges

### Public Realm:

- Maintaining the stone steps, setts and flags
- Avoiding patch repairs with tarmac
- Reducing and standardising street signage

- Coordinating street furniture, including streetlights, seating, railings and litter bins, lack of streetscape manual
- Maintaining stone retaining walls and boundary walls
- Minimising parking in the main streets and particularly in narrow streets
- Finding a home for unsightly commercial bins
- Removing ugly overhead wires
- Improving provision for community noticeboards
- Preserving the spectacular views and vistas of Holmfirth
- Improving interpretation and access to information
- Preventing inconsiderate parking

It is important that these issues are taken forward into a Conservation Area Management Plan for Holmfirth.

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