

Mirfield Design Statement 2002



St. Mary's Medieval Church Tower



MIRFIELD DESIGN STATEMENT

CONTENTS

- 1) INTRODUCTION; What it is, Who could use it.
- 2) MAP OF MIRFIELD; showing boundaries, sub divisions.
- 3) HISTORY; Brief outline of factors which have affected development.
- 4) ENVIRONMENT; Geology, nature, wildlife, soil and land use.
- 5) WATERWAYS; Development and current ideas.
- 6) LANDMARKS; Protection and preservation of special features of interest.
- 7) INFRASTRUCTURE; Railways, roads, streets (and furniture), footpaths, parking and problems.
- 8) BUILDINGS; Types and materials, include density and scale of buildings.
- 9) SPECIAL MENTIONS; Best indication of character with a view to preserving it.
- 10) IMPORTANT VIEWS.
- 11) INTRUSIVE AND UNDESIRABLE FEATURES.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCING THE DESIGN STATEMENT.

WHAT?

What it is:

A document which describes the town as it is today and highlights the qualities valued by its residents. It incorporates local knowledge, views and ideas, which may then contribute to the growth and prosperity of the town. The aim is to ensure that **further** developments are based on a considered understanding of past and present and thereby contributing to a positive future.

WHY & WHEN?

Why and when we need one:

- 1 There are changes in the landscape and uses of the land.
- 2 There are proposals in the local planning for new developments, including **small-scale** extensions and alterations to properties.
- 3 There is a change in the look of the town and its facilities (**i.e.** shops and services) which affect job opportunities and services.
- 4 There are changes in the town population and families moving in.
- 5 We have lost open spaces.
- 6 There are parking and **traffic** problems.

All of these points indicate that we would benefit from a Design Statement.

WHO?

Who would use it?

The Statement will be addressed to statutory bodies, planners, **developers**, local interest groups, businesses and householders.

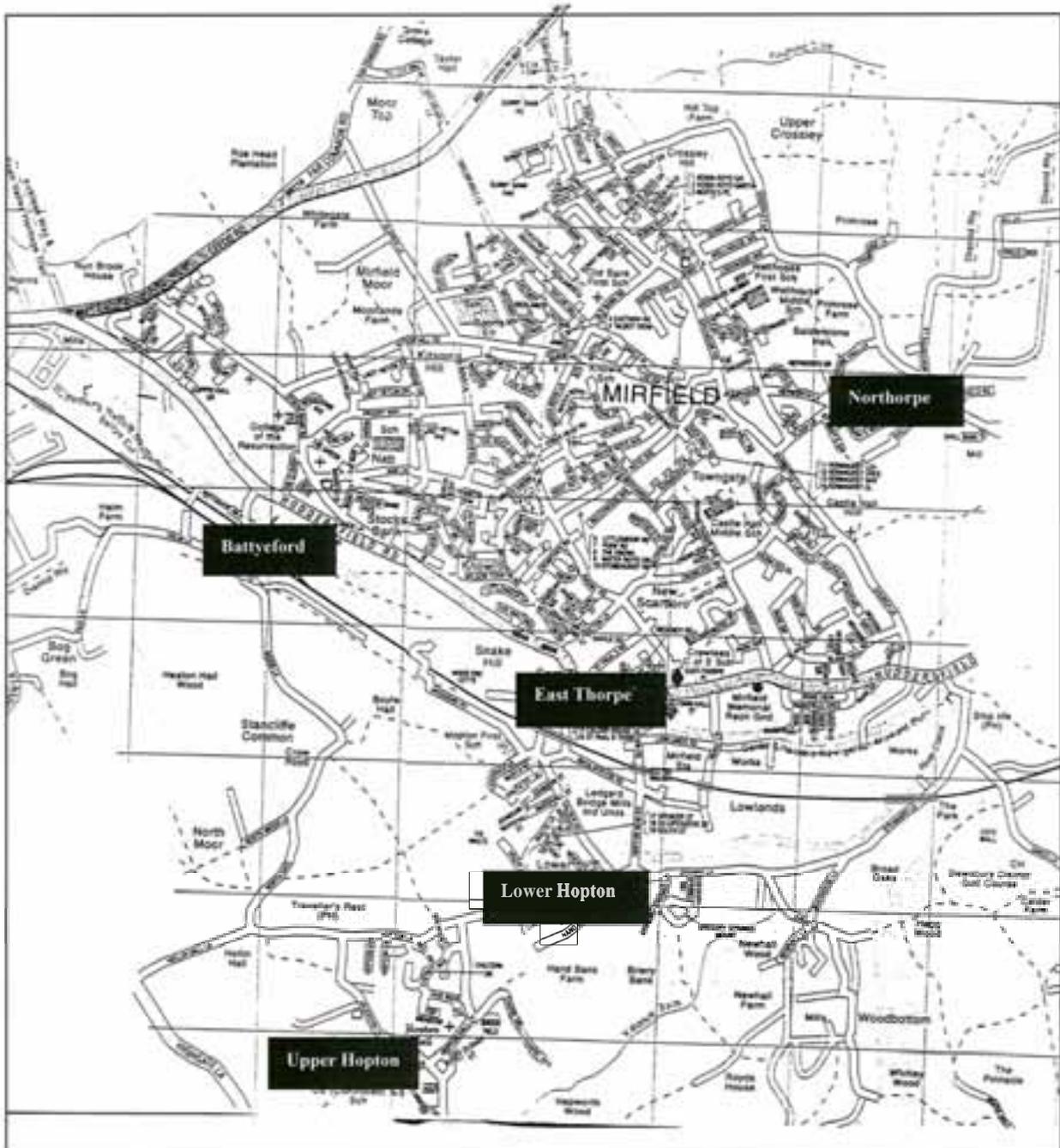
AN EFFECTIVE DESIGN STATEMENT

- 1 Is developed, researched, written and edited by local people.
- 2 Is representative of the views of the community as a whole.
- 3 Has involved a wide section of the community in its production.
- 4 Describes the visual character of the area.
- 5 Demonstrates how local character and distinctiveness can be protected and enhanced in new development.
- 6 Is compatible with the statutory planning system and the local planning context.
- 7 Is suitable for approval as supplementary planning advice.
- 8 Is applicable to all forms and scale of development.
- 9 And is about **MANAGING CHANGE** in the area, **NOT PREVENTING IT**

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Public consultation for this document followed the guidelines set out by the Countryside Commission. Public meetings were held, beginning with the Mirfield Forum, to enlist and inform **Mirfield's** residents. After this, a core committee was formed **from** a cross-section of the community of interested parties, meetings were published in the local paper, and an interview given on radio. The Design Statement was mentioned in the local paper, and a photographic display along with a questionnaire was displayed at selected locations, explaining what a design statement is, and how it could be used to help Mirfield.

MAP OF MIRFIELD



HISTORY

Mirfield and Hopton are ancient settlements. Both are described in the Domesday Book but there is some evidence that there were people living in the area much earlier. Pobjoy in "A History of Mirfield" states that there may have been a Roman outpost on the high ground at Hopton. Then there is the mound at the rear of the Parish Church, which has not been properly excavated, said to be Anglo-Saxon, with later buildings upon the top. Danes and Vikings certainly visited the area leaving names behind (Ravensthorpe). Following this there were the Normans (Domesday) and the Manor Lords of Mirfield and so through the Middle Ages to the present day.

The number of old buildings still standing and in use shows the result of the continual occupation of Mirfield and Hopton today.



Old Rectory



Castle Hall Hill



Grammar School / Thorpe Cottage The Knowl



Yew Tree Cottage



Hopton Hall

Community Origins and Characteristics

Mirfield is located in the Calder Valley on the Calder & Hebble Navigation and dates back to Medieval times. It grew up as an industrial development based around textiles, but later this industrial emphasis shifted towards coal and malting. There have been as many as thirteen malt houses in Mirfield.

The wealth associated with this industrial development resulted in a number of affluent families who resided in manor houses and halls, which are still evident today.

Today people visit Mirfield to walk along the canal and enjoy the **fresh** air, away from traffic. This is reminiscent of the Victorian "constitutional" away from the smog of the industry.

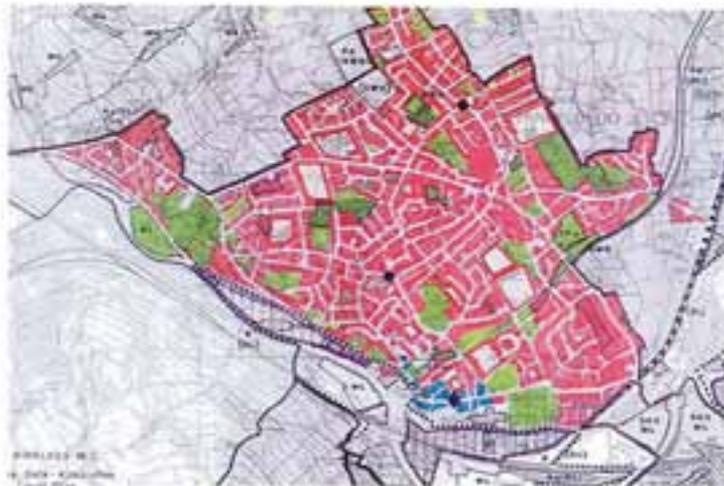
This century the character of Mirfield has changed. There have been positive aspects to this change, in terms of social and economic benefits, but the scale and character of large housing developments has begun to threaten the very character of the area, as can be seen by the maps.



1948



1970



1990

Development Pattern

A glance at a map of Mirfield reveals there are several distinct areas, which make up the settlement as it stands today.

Northorpe

This area grew up along three main lines in a linear pattern based around the coal pits of the area. Away from the major lanes and thoroughfares, there are blocks of housing development based around a cul-de-sac pattern.



Detached House

Mirfield

This is not based around the church, but has shifted to Easthorpe. This is due to the development of the Turnpike Roads, which sandwiched development between the northerly boundary and the Turnpike Road. However this development did not spread further than the opposite side of the valley, separated by the river, railway and the canal.



Trinity Methodist Church

Hopton

Upper **Hopton** is mediaeval in origin and has experienced limited development. It is now clustered around the 19th century church and benefits **from** a panoramic view of Castle Hill. It is considered to be a desirable location for those looking to buy executive homes.

Lower **Hopton fronts** the river and it is here that housing was built to provide accommodation for the local mills and coal mines.



St. Johns Hopton

Still a close knit community with life revolving round the churches, it has its own school and post office.

ENVIRONMENT

Wildlife and Landscape

Mirfield, situated as it is in the valley bottom, is enclosed in green and wooded hills. The area holds a significant proportion of the woodland in North Kirklees. The surrounding landscape lends a rural character to the town and is part of its attraction for development; as people like to have access to the countryside. The landscape also had other characteristics until the recent past which could be recreated where possible; and would help to enhance the rural character of the town.

Woodlands

The majority of the wooded area lies to the south of the town. Much of it is ancient woodland in origin and has degenerated from lack of management. It also suffers from an excess of often-uncontrolled recreational use, although recent works by the Local Authority in Lady Wood indicate that appropriate management can improve sites rapidly.

Recommendations

If additional housing is built on the south side of the valley, it should be linked to the woodlands through the existing footpath network; and where necessary housing development should have ginnels added to ensure people can access the local countryside on foot. Contributions to woodland and access management costs from new developments would help to reduce the impact people have on the woodlands, where sites are too small to have new open space.

Ponds

Mirfield, in common with other valley developments in Yorkshire, had a number of millponds as well as farm ponds. A small number of these survive, one at **Sunnybank** is now a Local Nature Reserve.

Recommendations

Ponds are valuable wildlife habitats and amenity features, which are easy to create. Rainwater run off from new developments could be channelled into retention ponds, enhancing the urban landscape and creating valuable habitat.

Grasslands

Many of the pastures around Mirfield together with wild flower-rich hay meadows have become degraded by alterations in farming practice, or lost through building. There is a significant area of grassland in the open space within the town.

Recommendations

Where possible newly created open spaces should contain meadowland as well as short cut grass. Existing sites should be assessed to see if the management regime could be altered.

Brownfield sites and Wasteland

The **Kirklees** Urban Survey 1989 showed this type of habitat to be the most widespread semi-natural community within urban areas and of great significance as valuable wildlife habitat.

In Mirfield the **river/canal/rail** corridor offers a lot of derelict land and although sometimes unsightly, it provides valuable relatively undisturbed habitat.

Recommendations

Where areas of Brownfield land are built on, or "tidied up", care should be taken to replace the original habitat with something of value, where possible.

Sites, which are landscaped, should be planted with appropriate species for the area. Developers should be encouraged to retain features of importance as part of the open space or new gardens; e.g. Hedgerows should be left.

Embryonic gardens should be planted with native hedgerow species and small trees. Information and advice should be made available to new householders on wildlife gardening issues, e.g. Discouraging the use of peat, slug pellets etc. in the hope that gardens can be made into a valuable habitat.



Ferry Steps at Battyeford



A Typical Garden in Mirfield



Ings Grove Park

Landscape and Wildlife Information

Landscape and Land Use

Geographically, Mirfield lies on the western edge of the Yorkshire Coalfield, the rocks underlying the area are classed as Coal Measures from the Upper Carboniferous period. These consist of sequences of grits, sandstones or flagstones alternating with softer shales, mudstones and thin coal seams. These are usually overlain by fireclay. The Calder Valley bottom has also been overlain with alluvial (river) deposits of sands and gravel, much of which originates from the last ice age. The undulating landscape has been formed from a combination of upfolding of rock which formed the **Pennines** and differential erosion of hard and soft rocks in the geological sequence.

Most of Mirfield's development has been on the south facing (sunniest), north side of the Calder Valley. To the south of the Calder, the land rises steeply to a ridge running east-west at 180 metres above sea level. Not only does this side command excellent views over Mirfield and beyond, but it provides an attractive landscape backdrop to Mirfield. Most of the south side of the Calder is green belt and much of this is classified as High Landscape Value in the Local UDP. This area contains extensive areas of woodland, which together with the amenity landscape of the **Dewsbury District** Golf Club, provides a contrast to the urban development and open agricultural landscape to the north.

The Calder Valley is typical of many of the river valleys of Kirklees, carrying road, rail and canal corridors and because of this, it has been the focus of intensive development over the last 200 years.

Although not designated as such in the UDP, the Calder Valley acts as a "green corridor", due to its many linear features and extensive tracts of water. The presence of a navigable waterway and a history of boat building in Mirfield is an important asset to the landscape, although unfortunately, much of this is hidden from view.

Wildlife and Habitat

Woodland within North **Kirklees** comprises less than 2% of land cover. This is extremely low. It is interesting to note that 66% of this is located on the valley side to the south of the river in Mirfield.

The acidic soils of this area naturally support an upland oak wood, dominated by sessile oak and birch, with rowan, elm, holly, hazel and hawthorn. The ground flora would consist of soft grass, wavy hair grass, bluebells with bracken and brambles. Sycamore and beech are not native to this area, but are frequently present and have naturalised. A high proportion of Mirfield's woodlands are ancient (continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 - possibly even back to the last Ice Age) and most are classed as sites of wildlife significance (SWS) in the UDP.

Grassland and Meadows

This is probably the single largest category of habitat type, although much has been lost to house building over the years. Grassland also forms a significant proportion of **landuse** within the built environment. This is predominantly, frequently cut amenity grassland with little wildlife value, in parks, open spaces and gardens.

Wasteland

This category includes land that is not currently actively managed and is frequently the result of some previously abandoned industrial use. It is characterised by a natural process of colonisation with pioneer species which, if left undisturbed, is eventually succeeded by woodland. The **Kirklees Urban Survey (1989)** showed this type of habitat to be the most widespread semi-natural community within our urban areas and of great significance as valuable wildlife habitat. Even in the green belt, the disused railway lines, shale tips and abandoned workings are also likely to be more valuable to wildlife than modern, intensively managed agricultural land.

Clearly unless these sites are an eyesore, they should be recognised as significant and valuable to wildlife. However in Mirfield particularly, the pressure on land for house building means these sites are frequently the first to be lost. Another danger is the use of unimaginative landscape treatments to tidy these sites up. By clearing and replanting these sites with, perhaps, inappropriate species, their value to wildlife can be significantly reduced.



Mirfield as seen From Hopton

Landscape and Wildlife Issues

- 1 Recognise the value of the Calder Valley as an important transport and wildlife corridor and improve the appearance of the road, rail and canal corridors.
- 2 Maintain the protection of the High Landscape Value landscape to the south of Airfield and encourage active management to enhance its landscape, wildlife and recreation value, particularly within the ancient woodlands.
- 3 The low proportion of woodland to the north of the Calder.
- 4 The lack of survey information on woodland fauna in the area.
- 5 The poor water quality of the river and canal.
- 6 The need for a more comprehensive survey of ponds and wetlands, including garden and school ponds.
- 7 The lack of species rich grassland and the need to protect and sympathetically manage the remaining grassland of ecological value.
- 8 The influence of rising horse ownership on pasture quality.
- 9 The recognition of the ecological value of naturally regenerating wasteland sites and their protection and management.
- 10 The recognition of the value of "wildlife corridors", i.e. linked areas of greenspace, which enable the movement of wildlife through developed areas.
- 11 The recognition of the actual and potential value of private gardens, parks and open space as wildlife habitats/corridors.

Information drawn by Eric Brown from "The Heavy Woollen Countryside Management Strategy" 1994. This was commissioned by the Kirklees Countryside Unit in 1993 to provide information on a number of issues, including landscape and wildlife, for the North Kirklees area in order to develop a more strategically planned work programme for the Heavy Woollen Countryside Management Project.

English Nature's local office is based in Wakefield:-

English Nature
Humber to Pennines Team
Bullring House
Northgate
Wakefield
WF1 3BJ
01924387010

Pollution

Air pollution is a huge problem for both humans and wildlife with the bulk of this pollution coming from cars, which are responsible for more than 80% of carbon monoxide emissions. Mirfield is becoming more susceptible to this factor due to increased development and the number of vehicles passing through it. However, obvious forms of pollution in our rivers and canals have decreased due to the decline in heavy industry. The effect of cleaner water is to encourage the gradual recovery of wildlife. Unfortunately, the water quality is still poor and this has obvious effects on the abundance of fish and local wildlife

Before any development takes place, these factors and solutions to these problems should be considered. Solutions include: -

Grass Swales

Detention Ponds

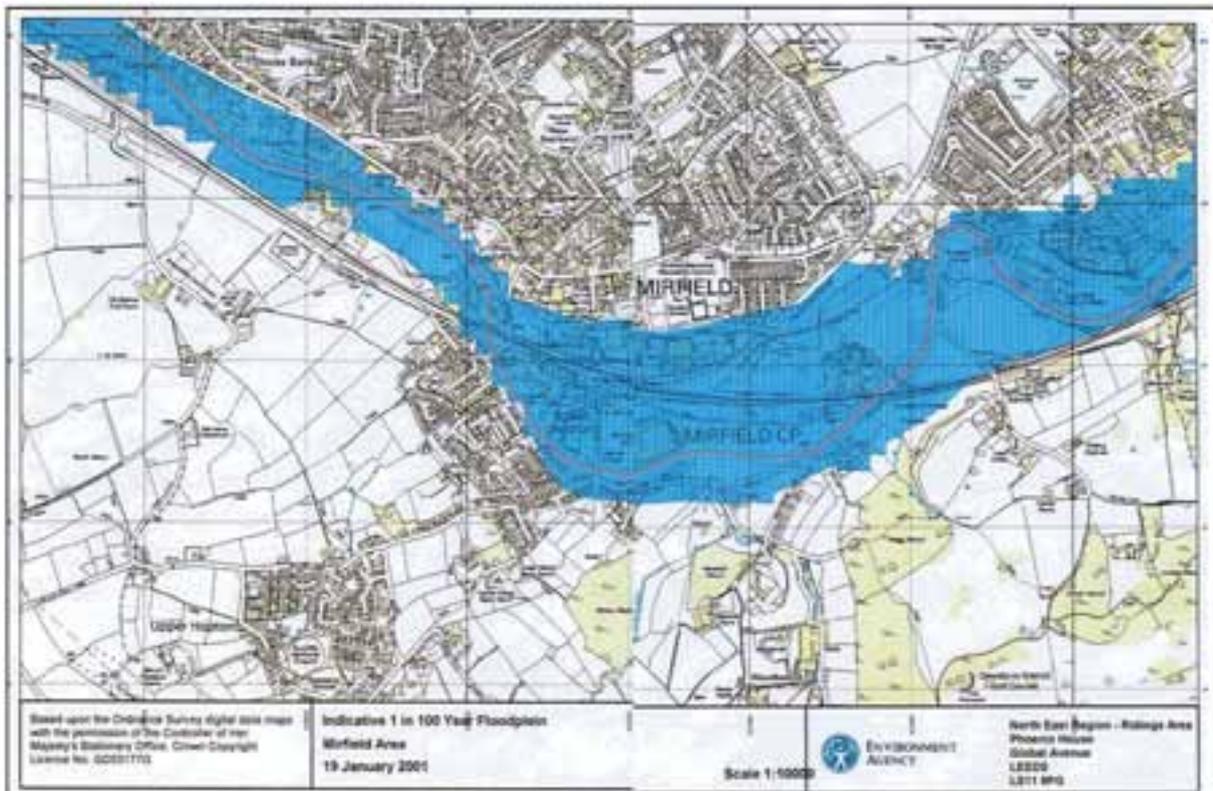
Retention Ponds

Stormwater Wetlands

Porous Pavements

Infiltration Trenches

Under the law, certain species are protected and so must be taken into account before development can take place. Species that may apply to Mirfield are Bats, Great Crested Newts and Barn Owls. If any of these species are found, they can not be moved or killed, nor can their habitat be destroyed, unless in some cases the development is unavoidable and even then certain guidelines must be followed.



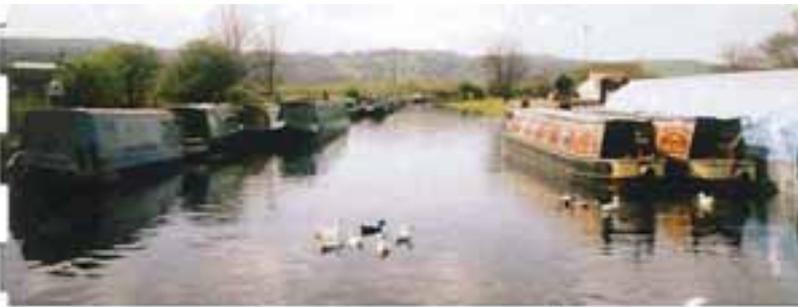
Regarding flooding in the area the above map shows the indicative 1 in 100 year floodplain for the waterways of Mirfield.

WATERWAYS

The River Calder and the Calder & Hebble Navigation

The Calder flows through the centre of the Mirfield area and has several weirs to allow navigation. There was a need for canals where the river was too shallow for boats and the Calder & Hebble Navigation was opened in October 1776. It is in use today by pleasure craft. Commercial usage ceased in the early 1980s. There are locks at Shepley Bridge, Newgate and Battyeford where the river and canal join.

At Shepley Bridge there is a marina and repair facility and two boat builders in the centre of Mirfield. There has been an increasing number of pleasure boats using the navigation in recent years and this is likely to increase dramatically when the through canals to Lancashire are re-opened. The towpaths are being improved along the entire network and there is optimism that the footbridge will be rebuilt, which crosses the river at Newgate.



Shepley Bridge Marina



Shepley Bridge Cottages

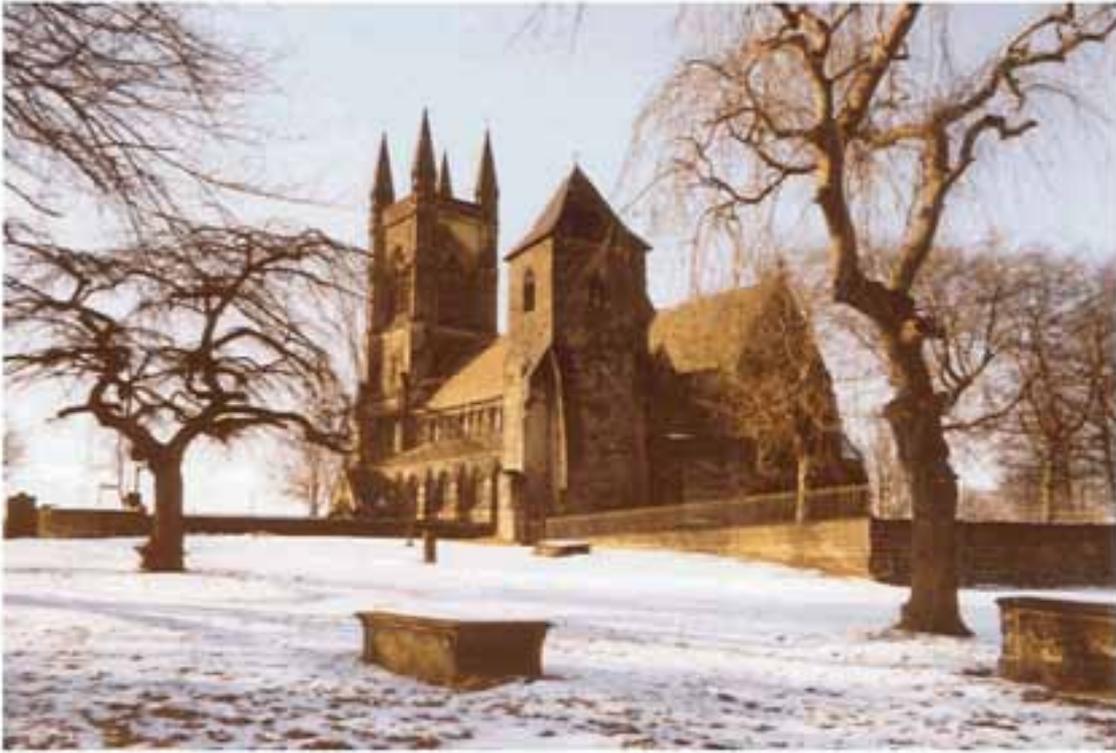


South Pennine Boat Club



Navigation / Boat Yard Station Road

LANDMARKS



St Marys Parish Church

Dumb Steeple



Black Bull / Market Place



INFRASTRUCTURE

Railways

The railway first came to Mirfield in 1840 and a second line was built in 1849 with the station, which was built in 1866, situated in Station Road. Passengers can travel from Mirfield Metro Station to Leeds, Wakefield and Huddersfield.

Roads

Mirfield is bisected by the A644, which carries an enormous amount of traffic. This road connects Huddersfield with **Dewsbury** and beyond. The other main route, the A62, forms the northern boundary of the area and connects Huddersfield to Leeds, but again the volume of traffic is heavy, although this was reduced by the construction of the M62 some years ago.

Both of these roads follow the routes of the turnpike roads.

Footpaths and Bridleways

Mirfield has some 80 footpaths, with a total length of 7km.



Battyeford Canal Footpath



Station Road



Wellhouse Lane

Recommendations

- 1 Road development should be subject to public scrutiny. Measures to reduce the volume of through traffic would be of benefit to the people of Mirfield.
- 2 Speed restrictions and traffic calming measures are needed, but must be unobtrusive. Discussion with townspeople before they are sited would be desirable.
- 3 Wheelchair access should be included in all-public developments and priority given to public accessibility around the town.
- 4 Dog waste bins should be provided in public areas.
- 5 More public telephones and conveniences are needed.
- 6 Litterbins are overflowing and inadequate. Vandal proof bins should be provided.
- 7 Recycling facilities situated behind Mirfield Library should be organised. Bottles and litter should not be visible.
- 8 Bus shelters should be in character with their surroundings, well lit and vandal proof
- 9 Satellite dishes should be sited according to guidelines issued by the Department of the Environment.
- 10 New developments need to be integrated with the surrounding area and form part of a linked overall pattern. Developers should take account of bridleways and existing footpaths to promote access throughout Mirfield. Create vistas into and within the newly developed areas and improve footpath access to the countryside.
- 11 Development patterns should be the key to promoting a sense of village community.
- 12 Limit cul-de-sacs that prevent integration and services to isolated pockets of housing.
- 13 Pressure should be applied to national agencies to site cables underground and to remove poles where possible.
- 14 The Electricity Company should be encouraged to remove existing aerial transformers and **resite** them. Opportunities to **resite** overhead cables underground should be sought.
- 15 Footpaths should be wide enough to promote access throughout Mirfield whilst preventing the creation of narrow ginnels to attract muggers and the like.

BUILDINGS

Mirfield has developed on the floor of the Calder Valley, filling out between the boundaries of Church Lane and the turnpike road, which follows the course of the river. The settlement has always provided for a range of housing and the people of Mirfield are keen to see provision made for a spectrum of different tenures and types of property.

St.Pauls Road is demonstrative of a number of different architectural styles and several buildings have been recognised as hallmarks of their time, which they display. Each generation has contributed to the evolution of the settlement and made its mark. However, if allowed to go unchecked, sprawl will further detract from the essence of Mirfield's character. This section focuses on how the types of materials chosen and the way in which they are used can help retain the distinctive character of the area.



St. Pauls Road

The oldest parts of Mirfield, pre 1850s, are characterised by the use of locally quarried stone and include the classic York Stone Flag roof.



Blake Hall Lodge

The majority of the population lived in traditional terraced stone cottages, clustered around centres of employment such as the mills and collieries. The window designs of the earlier properties display the stone mullions, which later gave way to the sash window design characteristic of the Victorian period. The simple doorways of the cottage developed into more ornate openings, typical of the Victorians.



Marshall Street

As quarrying depleted the stone around the town, brick properties became more common place. In the Victorian era these were sourced from local brickwork's which were set up at this time. Stone flagged roofs were replaced by lightweight slate. The terraced cottage, built in a linear pattern along the lanes and thoroughfares of the town, remained dominant. The scale and layout of development at this time was complimentary, in spite of the sharp contrast of the red brick with the softer tones of the stone.

The Victorians were renowned for their use of ornate ironwork and decorative brickwork, which brought architectural interest, and an air of elegance to the more rustic look of the stone cottages.



Knowl mad Victorian Terraced Houses

A major change came immediately **after** the wars, when pressure resulted in the need to provide spacious homes for the returning war heroes. This was the time of the Garden City design when mass government backed estate building programmes were embarked upon. The layout of the estates was based on a cul-de-sac formation and the designs included spacious gardens with properties often clustered around a green. There was little attempt to integrate these new estates with the character of their host communities and due to the cost and scale of building programmes, the most economical building materials and layouts were chosen, above aesthetic considerations.



London Park Estate

The introduction of the planning system required Local Authorities to **identify** areas of land for different uses and the tracts of land identified for housing have subsequently been developed in a predominantly cul-de-sac pattern. Many of the larger private estates also have a self-contained feel, often being served by schools located at the heart of the estate and their own local shops which reduces opportunities for residents to interact with the wider town community. A wide range of building **types, materials** and designs have been in evidence over the last **fifty** years. The 1960s and 1970s were characterised by the simplistic semi-detached design, with a preference for glazed doors and porches and modern style windows. Panels clad in artificial stone or wood were often incorporated into front elevations alongside brickwork and building lines have been broken up with a mix of dormer bungalows and houses side by side.



Parkfield Way / Semi Detached Bungalow



Huddersfield Road Semi Detached

Building Recommendations

Developments should maintain and strengthen visual cohesion and help to renew the specific architectural traditions of the area. The current developments as listed in the UDP should meet the following guidelines: -

- 1 Refer to local settlement patterns in layout.
- 2 Ideally avoid substantial repetition of one house type.
- 3 Respect good historic local characteristics and context of the particular site.
- 4 Respond to typical setting and garden forms, having regard to surroundings and local vernacular.
- 5 Refer to local buildings and proportion. (There will be a variety of proportions throughout the area and developments must reflect those which are adjacent)
- 6 Refer to local distinctive details and materials and accurately match these to the chosen building form and adjacent buildings.
- 7 Encourage reuse of appropriate building materials.
- 8 Encourage energy efficiency.
- 9 Any new or currently unimplemented planning applications should be discussed in detail with the Town Council, if they are of an unusual nature or give cause for concern.
- 10 Whenever possible, new development should incorporate boundary walls and hedges, and not be laid out in an open plan style, so as to provide a unifying element to the village, in keeping with the style of surrounding properties.
- 11 Existing buildings and features of architectural or historical importance should be retained whenever possible.
- 12 Provision should be made in any new development to renovate existing buildings that contribute to maintaining the character of the area and by working with the original style where possible.
- 13 Buildings should be maintained and extended using original materials and details (or new materials in keeping with the original ones), and in a style and proportion in keeping with the original property.
- 14 Any retail building should have lighting and **signage** of a subdued and discreet nature. They should be non-reflective and not in very bright colours.
- 15 Any housing development should aim to include either garaging or off-street parking. New garages should not obscure houses **from** the road whenever possible.
- 16 Plans of how developments would fit in to their surroundings may be helpful. Developers should be encouraged to do this, providing the maximum amount of information and detail. Also, developers of **infill** sites, those closely neighbored by existing houses, should be prepared to provide additional material such as perspective drawings, to show how their development would appear in relation to their surroundings.
- 17 Future developments should have an engineering survey undertaken.
- 18 New developments must protect and enhance the external view of the town.
- 19 Lateral extensions to buildings should not impede existing views of the local landmarks and should retain gaps between buildings.
- 20 The insensitive choice of masonry paint colours can easily change the character of buildings making them too dominant in the streetscape.
- 21 Resist new advertisement hoardings and seek removal of existing hoardings and fly posting.

QUESTIONNAIRE.

During 1999 a photographic exhibition was set up and sited in Mirfield Library. It was moved to The Community Centre, Croft House Upper Hopton and to the Health Centre.

A large cross section of the community saw it and gave written feedback in the questionnaires issued at the display locations.

The Results of the Questionnaire.

This showed there is a need and wants for accessible and affordable community resources and a better public transport system. There is overwhelming support for the need to preserve our open spaces and to use derelict and unused industrial space before encroaching on green belt land. Some felt that town development should be based on our canal and river facilities. The need for a swimming pool, post office sorting office and a police station manned at all times, was expressed. It was also felt that there was a need to alter traffic flow to allow pedestrians to walk freely around the town centre. More specialist shops were requested with a great deal of comment on Mirfield being "saturated" by "Take Away" shops.

Mirfield is unfortunately following the trend of losing shops and diversity, which in turn decreases employment opportunities.



Post Office Buildings



Huddersfield Road / Halfpenny Bridge



Leeds Road / Three Nunns Filling Station



Vale Buildings

SPECIAL MENTION

The town of Mirfield has grown up around several small settlements, some which are villages in their own right. There are therefore several self-contained centres clustering around the nucleus of the Town-centre at Easthorpe. Many of these areas are of special interest, and may be suitable for consideration as Conservation Areas once certain conditions are met.

The main Town-Centre area is surrounded by streets containing Victorian terraced properties with imposing gables and sash windows. The ironwork, which has been retained on some boundary walls, matches the gates that add to the character of the area. **Knowl Road** and **St.Paul's Road** have some excellent examples, though there are more modern buildings interspersed amongst them. These include many of the detached properties which give Mirfield the reputation for having the largest ratio of such houses in Kirklees.

The village of Lower **Hopton** is of particular interest, as it comprises straight streets of terraced dwellings whose frontages lead straight onto the pavement. When built the workers from the nearby mills occupied them. This area comprises the remains of the industry that grew up around the Railway, River and Canal. Because of the small frontages the houses in this area have been extended only **from** the rear which has helped to retain the character of the terraces. This area has now been built up and allows no leeway for development.

Northorpe Crossley Lane and Wellhouse

As with many areas in Mirfield, Northorpe has some excellent Listed Buildings. Balderstone Hall is in private occupation and its barn has been sympathetically converted to a **dwelling**. Northorpe Hall and its outbuildings are used by the community. These are magnificent properties that enhance the whole of the area, as they are surrounded by trees and attractive gardens. Here are areas of field surrounded by hedges and dry stone walls. Much of the landscape retains features of earlier agricultural systems, which are preserved in the pattern of roads and public footpaths. The hedges are on the whole about three hundred years old and consist mainly of Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Elder and Holly and in some places have been planted in regular sequence.



Crossley Lane before Hedgerow Grubbed Out



Crossley Lane after Hedgerow Grubbed Out

The part of **Crossley Lane** between the White Cottage and Primrose Farm has on its eastern side a hedge, which contains some eight or nine different species in association with a holloway – suggesting greater antiquity. Unfortunately on the west side of the same lane the hedge was grubbed out earlier this year, completely destroying its character (see photographs). The holloway continues in Primrose Lane where there is another old hedgerow and the area supports a variety of bird life. The properties in this area range from tiny back-to-back terraced houses built at the turn of the 20th. Century to the afore-mentioned historic halls.

There are notable old buildings such as **Wellhouse Farm** (the roof of the barn of this listed building has collapsed and no restorative measures appear to have been taken) and Balderstone Hall, but hidden within the built up areas are other interesting examples, such as Madge Croft, the houses at the junction of Hepworth Lane with Wellhouse Lane, the cottages (and other buildings in decay). They make an interesting amalgam, which must not be spoiled by further development.

The hamlet Northorpe retains features, which may reflect its medieval ancestry. Regular plot boundaries fringe a widening of Northorpe Lane into a 'green' area. Northorpe Hall is the best known of the hamlet's historic buildings but others are worthy of note. The cottage known as Northorpe Croft has a date stone of 1701 but its proportions suggest greater antiquity. There are houses built of eighteenth century brick just above Northorpe Hall and adjacent to Northorpe Croft and those above Northorpe Hall have interesting older features in the rear walls. A terrace of houses and the farm at the top of Jill Lane appear to be 'railway' architecture and are interesting as such as well as adding variety to the hamlet. Two stone terraces at right angles to **Crossley Lane** and the one at Primrose add more variety and character.

Towards the upper end of **Crossley Lane** stands a stone gate post which is worthy of note and preservation as, although vandalised, it has carved into it the initials D S and the date 1754. The initials are those of Daniel Shepley the benefactor of the Wellhouse Moravian Settlement.



Northorpe Hall

Lee Green and Greenside

The Lee Green area is interesting because of the small lanes in the vicinity. One of these is Pumphouse Lane; an unmade road bordering a cricket ground and the excellent club house. At the bottom of this lane is Gilder Hall which was given to the Youth of Mirfield for their recreation many years ago. Regrettably it was damaged by fire and is awaiting repair. The adjacent playing field is surrounded by mature trees and is a welcome greenspace. Pump House, the cottage which is now Greenside Fisheries but was formerly the old wash house, Vineyard Cottage on Wellhouse Lane and Greenside House. The houses on Greenside road, which stand at right angles to the fisheries, date **from** the enclosure of the waste in 1796. The site on which the brick bungalow stands, on **Crossley Lane**, is of greater interest than the building itself, surrounded by fields, within a plot of land which had buildings upon it probably two hundred years ago or more. It is also significant that Quarry Fields, Lockwood Avenue and Wellhouse Avenue respect the pattern of a medieval **field**. The old school in Savile Court has been converted to dwellings and many other old properties in the area have been upgraded to make living accommodation that fits in with the needs of today's residents. Householders tend their gardens, adding hanging baskets and pots of plants to enhance an area where greenspace is at a premium.

Battyeford

Stocksbank Road and Nab Lane form the nucleus of Battyeford which is a self-contained village with its own shopping area, schools, pubs and churches. The Community of the Resurrection is an Anglican Monastery and takes up many acres in this area. Its beautiful buildings and carefully tended grounds are a credit to the organisation and the green roof of the Church is a landmark. One of the larger houses in this area has been converted into a Residential Home and is therefore safe as a classic example of buildings of the period. Fieldhead Court, as it is known, is surrounded by Green-Belt fields. There is a mix of other properties all adding to the character of the district.



Warren House Stocks Bank

All these areas of special interest have many properties built from local stone which darkened with the pollution **from** the smoke which was prevalent before The Clean Air Act, but which has mellowed them and added to their attraction. They are roofed with slates and many are bordered by matching stone walls, which enhance them and the area. Green-space has been retained with the added attractiveness of full-grown trees and many of the properties have been sympathetically modernised with new windows and extensions. Whilst there is no specific style of building in these areas of **Mirfield**, the mix has lent a unique character, allowing for a whole **spectrum** of tastes and need to be catered for. However this character will be spoiled if further development is not monitored very closely.

Summary

A variety of historic building types gives Mirfield its essence and character. Each area mentioned is a little settlement in itself.

Mixed developments of different types would be desirable. Future developments should be for the next century and should blend with what has gone before. A move away **from** too many four bedroom detached properties in one area would be desirable.

Builders of single story developments should look to our wealth of historical architecture before they **build**. The trend and demand seems to be for low lying buildings, easily maintainable and cost effective to both residents and builders, with concern to layout and maintenance of gardens.

The use of current buildings for conversion should be addressed and given due consideration.

Development should reflect the enclosure of space by walls and hedges of historic spaces.

Whilst Upper **Hopton** and Battyeford are now incorporated into the Township of Mirfield, each district has continued to maintain its own identity. The characteristics of each are distinctive and the residents are ever anxious to maintain the individuality of these areas as separate villages.

IMPORTANT VIEWS



Mirfield Centre



Parade of Shops Mirfield Centre



Mirfield Town Hall / Salvation Army

INTRUSIVE AND UNDESIRABLE FEATURES

Many intrusive and undesirable features in Mirfield have become in themselves landmarks. What is perceived as attractive, functional and desirable to some is unattractive and undesirable to others.

Perceptions of undesirability are extensions to buildings which do not complement their previous well balanced structure, pre-fabricated industrial units and advertising hoardings which intrude on to the roadside and detract from otherwise interesting surroundings. Characterless buildings which have been erected in place of interesting demolished properties which would have blended into the landscape had they been converted for current usage.



Chemical Works



Marmaville



Co-operative Foodmarket



John Cotton Huddersfield Road



Advertising Hordings

The Mirfield Design Statement Committee wishes to acknowledge the assistance given by the following:
 Committee- Amanda Tyas, Mavis Boothroyd, Hilary Brook, Ron Darnbrough, Lindsey Johnson, A Shilitto, Ann Shilton, Christine Sykes.
 Mirfield Town Council- Cllr. I Harrison, Cllr. H Fearnley, Christine Clayborough.
Kirklees Planning Dept.- S Driver, J Shepherd.
 The Countryside Agency- D Fanaroff.
 The Reporter- S Clifford.
BTCV- J Duffy.
 Colne Valley Trust- J Grundy.
Kirklees Countryside Unit- E Brown.
 Mirfield Library – Mirfield Health Centre – Mirfield Community Centre –
 Croft House Community Centre – Mirfield Civic Society.
 Cover Illustration- J Hudson. Flood Plain Map- The Environment Agency.
 The people of Mirfield who visited the exhibitions and completed questionnaires.