


Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Ravenstonedale



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Eden
District Council

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This document is also available in larger print on request.

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Contents

	page
PART 1 CONTEXT	3
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Planning Policy Context	3
1.2.1 What is a Conservation Area?	3
1.2.2 How does this Appraisal Relate to the National, Regional and Local Planning Context?	3
PART 2 CHARACTER APPRAISAL	5
2.1 History	5
2.2 Layout and Setting	5
2.3 Buildings	7
2.4 Present Character and Appearance of the Village	10
2.5 Key Characteristics of Ravenstonedale	11
Appendix A National, Regional and Local Policies	12
1 National Planning Guidance	12
2 Regional Planning Guidance	12
3 Local Planning Guidance	12
Plan 1 Listed Buildings within Ravenstonedale Area	15

PART 1 CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

Part I of this document describes the planning policy background to conservation areas and how the character appraisal in Part II will be used. Eden District Council prepared a character appraisal of Ravenstonedale prior to declaring the village a conservation area on 16 December 1999. The appraisal includes a description of the historical, architectural and townscape importance of Ravenstonedale which is one of 22 conservation areas in Eden, outside of the Lake District National Park.

1.2 Planning Policy Context

1.2.1 What is a Conservation Area?

Conservation areas are defined in law as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). Legislation to declare conservation areas has been with us for forty years and thousands have been designated across the country. Conservation areas can bring many benefits, including giving greater controls over demolition, minor development and tree felling.

Local planning authorities have a responsibility to consider the quality and interest of a conservation area as whole, rather than individual buildings within it.

1.2.2 How does this Appraisal Relate to the National, Regional and Local Planning Context?

The Government sets out national planning policy in the relevant Acts of Parliament and Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPG) and their ongoing replacements, Planning Policy Statements (PPS) (Appendix A). Of most direct relevance to conservation areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment. This national guidance has a regional dimension in the form of regional planning guidance, Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), prepared by the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) which will eventually replace the Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan.

Local and site specific policies are prepared in accordance with these national and regional policy frameworks. The system for producing local planning policy documents however changed in 2004 with the old district Local Plans being replaced by Local Development Frameworks (LDF) which are expected to be in place in Eden by 2009. At the heart of the LDF is the Core Strategy that sets out the vision, spatial objectives and core policies for the future development of the District. The Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper (Dec 2006) sets out the following principles for the built environment (Policy CS 19):

- Conserve and enhance buildings, landscapes and areas of cultural, historic or archaeological interest including conservation areas, historic

parks and gardens, areas of archaeological interest and listed buildings and their settings

- Promote the enhancement of the built environment through the use of high standards of design and the careful choice of sustainable materials for all development
- Encourage the sympathetic and appropriate re-use of existing buildings, especially those which make a contribution to the special character of their locality
- Promote design that ensures a safe and secure environment
- Promote improvements in accessibility in the built environment for all people regardless of disability, age, gender or ethnicity

One of the key LDF documents will be the Primary Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) which will be prepared in accordance with the overarching objectives of the Core Strategy. Policies relating to development within conservation areas will refer to conservation area appraisals where they exist. This appraisal will be used as supporting evidence when considering planning applications and appeals in Ravenstonedale Conservation Area.

Until the DPD has been adopted the local planning policies in the Eden Local Plan 1996 will be saved and a full list of relevant policies can be found in Appendix A.

Other LDF documents of relevance to Ravenstonedale Conservation Area are Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that provide detailed guidance on specific subjects. Currently these are:

- Shopfront and Advertisement Design (2006);
- An Accessible and Inclusive Environment (2007)

PART 2 CHARACTER APPRAISAL

The following character appraisal of Ravenstonedale was prepared prior to declaring the village a conservation area on 16 December 1999. There have been alterations since that time however they have not affected the fundamental character of the conservation area.

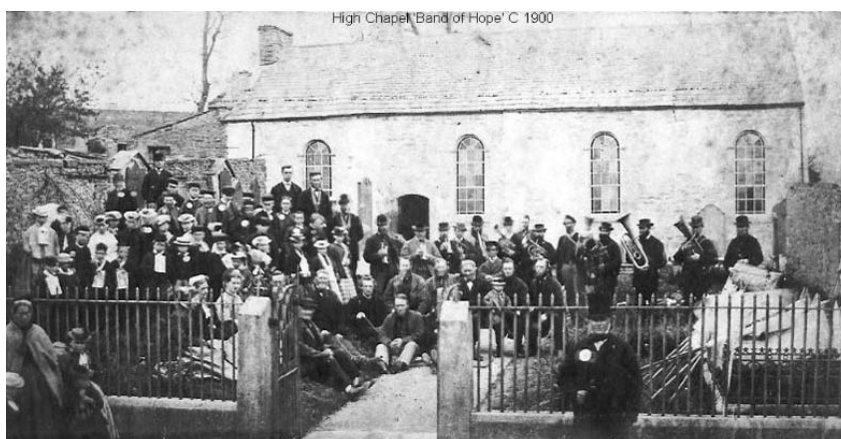
2.1 History

The area around Ravenstonedale, along with much of the Eden valley, was populated in Roman times with many small scattered settlements and farmsteads consisting of stone huts and enclosures, often found on the higher land. Nothing is known of a settlement at Ravenstonedale at this time, but there were numerous such settlements close to the present village on the higher land to the north.

A settlement may have existed prior to the first millennium. What is known is that a church of some size existed at Ravenstonedale in the late thirteenth century. In 1336 the Manor became church property when it was given to Watton Priory in Yorkshire by Torphin de Alverstain. The Gilbertine Canons of Watton established a monastic cell, the remains of which can still be seen adjoining the present parish church.

At the dissolution of the monasteries, the Canons were expelled from the parish and it became the property of the Archbishop of York on whose death it reverted to the Crown. It was then sold to Thomas, First Lord Wharton in 1547. At that time the village was a sizeable community as in 1560 Lord Wharton 'evicted' 69 tenants to construct his deer park to the north of the present village.

Ravenstonedale was an important settlement throughout the later centuries of the second millennium. It had a market every Tuesday, an annual fair and was a thriving production centre for knitted stockings exported to Kendal.



High Chapel Band of Hope c 1900

2.2 Layout and Setting

The village lies within a wooded valley surrounded by a dramatic landscape of open and windswept fells. The green and pleasant environment of the village

itself contrasts with the open fell landscape. The northern end of the village is fairly tightly enclosed by fells, with green fields, areas of woodland and stone walls, particularly along the streams or becks. At the southern end the landscape widens out into more open fells.



St Oswald's Church



Scandal Beck

The northern area of the village around Coldbeck and the church is possibly the oldest part. It has an organic and spacious layout in contrast to the more formal pattern of the rest of the village. The central area around the northern end of the main street is tightly-knit. This then widens out towards the south of the village where it opens out onto the village green, mirroring its landscape setting.



Main street looking north from High Chapel

Most of the buildings face the village street with crofts, strip fields and back lanes. This layout pattern is characteristic of medieval farming practices although it is not as distinct or as well preserved in Ravenstonedale as it is in some other Eden villages. The intersecting watercourses of Scandal Beck and Stone Gill and the significant route to the north end of the village, (now bypassed), have provided a focus for development well away from the present main body of the village. The area around the Parish Church is likely to be the oldest part of the village, which then was then developed to the south away from the deer park. The oldest surviving buildings are located along the back lane and the east side of the main street and at the north and south ends of the main street. This may suggest that the village previously featured a wide rectangular village green still found in other Eden villages and that the northern part of this has been built on.

2.3 Buildings

The present buildings date in the main from the seventeenth century onwards, predominantly eighteenth and nineteenth century but with earlier fabric. They are constructed almost exclusively of limestone under sandstone flag, graduated green slate and later blue slate roofs, usually with sandstone ridges.

Many of the present buildings have replaced or incorporated earlier buildings. Most of the earlier humbler buildings would have had thatched roofs and would probably have been cruck-framed with walls of timber and earth, clay or roughly piled stone. The increased peace and prosperity of the mid to late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries resulted in a major rebuilding in stone that developed and refined the local traditional form and style. A number of buildings of this period survive, including a number of probable cross passage houses such as Townhead House and Croft House. Some of the buildings along the west side of the main street have been rebuilt on earlier foundations which can still be seen.



Town Head Cottage (source: www.imagesofengland.co.uk)

The later introduction of formal architectural detailing in the new building and remodelling of the late eighteenth century through to the late nineteenth century respected the local traditional use of materials and detailing. This has now become an established part of the character of the area.

The buildings fall into two main categories in terms of form, both generally of two storeys. The first and earlier is a derivative of the “long-house” form with both house and farm building under a continuous roof, often with a cross passage. The second and later or remodelled form is a three bay house of largely symmetrical design with a central doorway flanked by a window on either side. In addition there are groups of smaller two storey cottages and former shops and the three storey Manor House.

Some older buildings will have been heightened and the roof pitch reduced to accommodate Westmorland Green slate, a thick slate laid in diminishing courses giving roofs a distinctive colour and texture. A small amount of sandstone slab roofing is also found. This again is a thick heavy material of large unit size allowing a rather shallower roof pitch of about 30°. Some stone roofs have been

replaced with slate, but still feature a sandstone flag eaves course. Some later roofs have Welsh or blue slate and some twentieth century buildings have concrete roof tiles.

Limestone is not readily worked and is most frequently used randomly with limited coursing and in fairly small pieces. Walls are therefore predominantly of lime-pointed random rubble, although with some coursed rubble and later walls of random coursed rubble. Many buildings are, or were formerly, covered with wetdash, self-coloured roughcast render or lime washed in white.

Window and door openings in the village are generally simple, often with slender stone cills and timber or stone lintels. They lack the dressed surrounds found elsewhere in the District. Dressed stone features and surrounds do appear on some of the older buildings such as Scar View Cottage, which has some windows with stone mullions or full stone surrounds. These are often made from more easily worked sandstone imported from neighbouring areas, red or buff coloured. The humbler and later buildings tend to lack these. Some Georgian buildings feature full surrounds and the later Victorian detailing tends toward thicker square cut stone heads and cills.



Victorian building - Coldbeck House

The window detailing in the village includes small, square or narrow, two or three light casements with stone or timber mullions with timber small-paned fixed or side hung casement windows. Frequently these openings have been adapted and the mullions removed to take horizontal (“Yorkshire lights”) or vertical sliding sash windows with twelve or sixteen small panes.

Four-paned or two paned sashes with horns are found on the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and remodelled buildings. There are also a number of fixed single opening panes mainly timber multi-paned windows. Photographs of now demolished buildings show this to have once been a common type. Many buildings have a mixture of both.



The Haven, Town Head – mid C19 (source: www.imagesofengland.co.uk)

Whatever their form, windows usually have a vertical emphasis, either in the shape of their openings or in the proportion of individual panes. White paint is commonly found as the final surface treatment for timber windows although other paint colours are not uncommon. With the Victorian detailing, sub-frames tend to be painted in a bright colour, with the window frames in white.

Older doors in the village such as at Scar View Cottage and Town Head Cottage are wide plank doors probably of oak. Narrower boarded doors and six and four panelled doors are also common. Some of these however have been lost to modern panelled and glazed doors.



Town Head Cottage (source: www.imagesofengland.co.uk)

In general gable walls tend to be blank and the proportion of window to wall is low, giving buildings a sturdy appearance. In addition, apart from occasional examples of more ornate Victorian design, the exteriors of buildings are treated in a simple manner with both the eaves and particularly verges of roofs set almost flush with the faces of the supporting walls. Guttering is generally of cast-iron and fixed directly to the wall face by hangers and brackets. Roofs tend to be unbroken and dormer windows are rare. Stone copings along verges and kneelers are also commonly found. Other later details such as overhanging eaves, bay, bow and oriel windows are also found, particularly on the more substantial properties such as The Chantry and, most notably, Elm Lodge.

Boundaries walls are almost exclusively of limestone rubble, often dry stone with rough angled coping stones or pieces of limestone pavement. Many properties, particularly along the northern end of the main street, front directly onto the road. Further south along the main street small front gardens with low stone walls with iron railings are common. Other properties are set within more extensive gardens and grounds with Elm Lodge being situated within an extensive parkland landscape.

The carriageways of roads and accesses are generally narrow, often with wide grass verges without kerbs. Although the majority of public roads are now finished in tarmac, many access lanes across the village greens and farmyards are still finished in hard-core or with hard-core runnels. Some areas of village green have been surrounded by concrete kerbs and these look rather unsightly.

2.4 Present Character and Appearance of the Village

A small number of later twentieth century buildings exist. Fortunately all of these developments in their siting at least are appropriate to the form of the village. Some also respect the architecture and character of the village, such as the terrace of houses along the east side of the main street. Others are less in keeping and a small number are distinctly out of character in their design and materials. However, these are few in number and their siting has helped assimilate them into the village landscape.



Kings Head Hotel (1627) (source: www.imagesofengland.co.uk)

The village still retains a vibrant feel lost to so many villages and it has two active public houses, church, chapels, school and a number of active farms. The buildings of the village are in general very attractive and possess considerable architectural and historic interest both individually and, more particularly, as a group. Whilst there are some buildings of particular individual merit including the Grade II listed Manor House, Scar View Cottage and Town Head Cottage, the buildings as a whole represent an attractive and interesting group with a very strong local identity giving the village its overall character and interest.



Scar View Cottage (source: www.imagesofengland.co.uk)

The main area of the village retains much of its character despite some inappropriate alterations to existing buildings. These alterations, which include domestic extensions, window and door alterations and barn conversions, have detracted a little from the character and appearance of the village. There is also small number of modern farm buildings in the village many of which are not attractive or in keeping with the vernacular style. Fortunately in most cases they are not visible highly from the central area.

Important to the attractiveness and rural character of the village are the mature trees, the areas of village green, the stone boundary walls and the simple, informal nature of the roads, farmyards and verges. Although the motor car and modern development has had an impact, the village has not suffered the cul-de-sac or estate forms of development or extensive kerbing of pavements and verges, the turning heads and urban style block paving of other villages.

2.5 Key Characteristics of Ravenstonedale

- Buildings front directly onto street particularly along northern end of main street. Elsewhere there are small front gardens enclosed by low limestone walls.
- Wide grass verges and pockets of green open spaces
- Limestone random rubble buildings
- Low proportion of window to wall
- Buildings are predominantly two storied
- Unbroken sandstone flag or Westmorland green slate roofs. Some remnant sandstone roofs survive as a single eaves course.
- Wetdash or roughcast render
- Simple window and door openings usually without dressed surrounds.
- Guttering fixed directly onto wall by hangers and brackets
- Informal nature of roads, farmyards and verges
- Limestone boundary walls

Appendix A National, Regional and Local Policies

1 National Planning Guidance

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Section 69 requires that local planning authorities shall from time to time determine which parts of their area are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and shall designate those areas as conservation areas. The Act therefore places a duty on the local planning authority to designate conservation areas in areas which they consider meet the criteria.

Section 72 of the Act places a duty on the local planning authority in the exercise of their planning functions, to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

Section 71 of the Act requires that from time to time, local planning authorities shall formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas.

Section 73 of the Act requires the local planning authority to publicise proposals which would in their opinion affect the character and appearance of a conservation area. Such proposals need not be within the conservation area and PPG 15 (Paragraph 4.14) further advises that in the Secretary of State's view, the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area should also be a material consideration when considering proposals which are outside the area, but would affect its setting, or views into or out of the area.

Planning Policy Guidance

PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment - September 1994

2 Regional Planning Guidance

Draft Submitted Regional Spatial Strategy North West

See documents at North West Regional Assembly website: www.nwra.gov.uk

Cumbria and Lake District Joint Structure Plan

See document at Cumbria County Council's structure plan website: www.planningcumbria.org

3 Local Planning Guidance

Eden Local Plan 1996 (saved policies)

- Policy BE3 - New Development in Conservation Areas New development within a conservation area should not adversely affect the character or appearance of the area. It must also respect the scale, form, orientation,

materials and architectural detailing of adjoining development; that traditional to the area concerned, and established street patterns and building lines. In order to exercise an appropriate level of control over development the Council will require the submission of fully detailed plans in support of applications for planning permission within conservation areas.

- Policy BE4 - Shop Fronts in Conservation Areas

Proposals to alter or replace shop fronts and property facades within conservation areas must wherever possible conserve original features and material, reflect traditional design features and be constructed in traditional materials.

- Policy BE5 - Advertisements in Conservation Areas

Within conservation areas, advertisements should not adversely affect the character or appearance of the area.

- Policy BE13 - Development Affecting Listed Buildings

Development proposals which would adversely affect the character or setting of a listed building or result in the loss of important features will not be permitted.

- Policy BE14 - Alteration of Listed Buildings

Minor alterations which are necessary to facilitate the appropriate change of use of listed buildings or to improve accessibility will be supported provided they are judged acceptable in relation to Policy BE13.

- Policy BE19 - Quality of Design

In considering development proposals the Council will have regard to the quality of the design submitted. It will be expected in all cases that this will be such as will maintain the quality of the landscape or built environment within which the proposal is located. Where development is proposed in juxtaposition to existing development which is traditional in character the Council will require designs to have particular regard to the scale, massing, character, architectural features and materials of that existing development. Regard must be had in all proposals not only to the design of buildings but also to the provision and proper layout of open spaces and landscaped areas.

- Policy BE21 - Light Pollution

Applications for development requiring or likely to require external lighting shall include details of lighting schemes. Such schemes will be assessed against the following criteria:

- i) that the lighting scheme proposed is the minimum to undertake the task;
- ii) that light spillage is minimised;

- iii) in edge of town or village locations, or in rural areas, that landscaping measures will be provided to screen the lighting installation from neighbouring countryside areas; and
- iv) that road safety will not be compromised as a result of dazzling or distraction.

- Policy BE23 - Display of Advertisements

Applications for consent to display advertisements will be permitted where the size of the sign and the materials to be used are appropriate to the location and will not have an adverse effect on either the visual amenity of the locality or on highway safety.

- Policy SH6 - Village Shops

Proposals for small retail outlets and post offices within existing settlements, but outside established shopping areas, will be permitted provided that:

- i) the proposal is of a design and scale suited to its location;
- ii) access and parking arrangements are satisfactory;
- iii) impact on the amenity of other occupiers in the locality is of an acceptable level; and
- iv) the proposal is acceptable in terms of its impact on the local built form, landscape, and conservation interests.

- Policy SH7 - Village Shops and Post Offices

Proposals which assist in the provision or retention of village shops or post offices will be supported.

- Policy PT8 - Access to Buildings

Through negotiation the Council will seek to ensure that all new development to which the general public have access makes provision for access by people with physical disabilities.

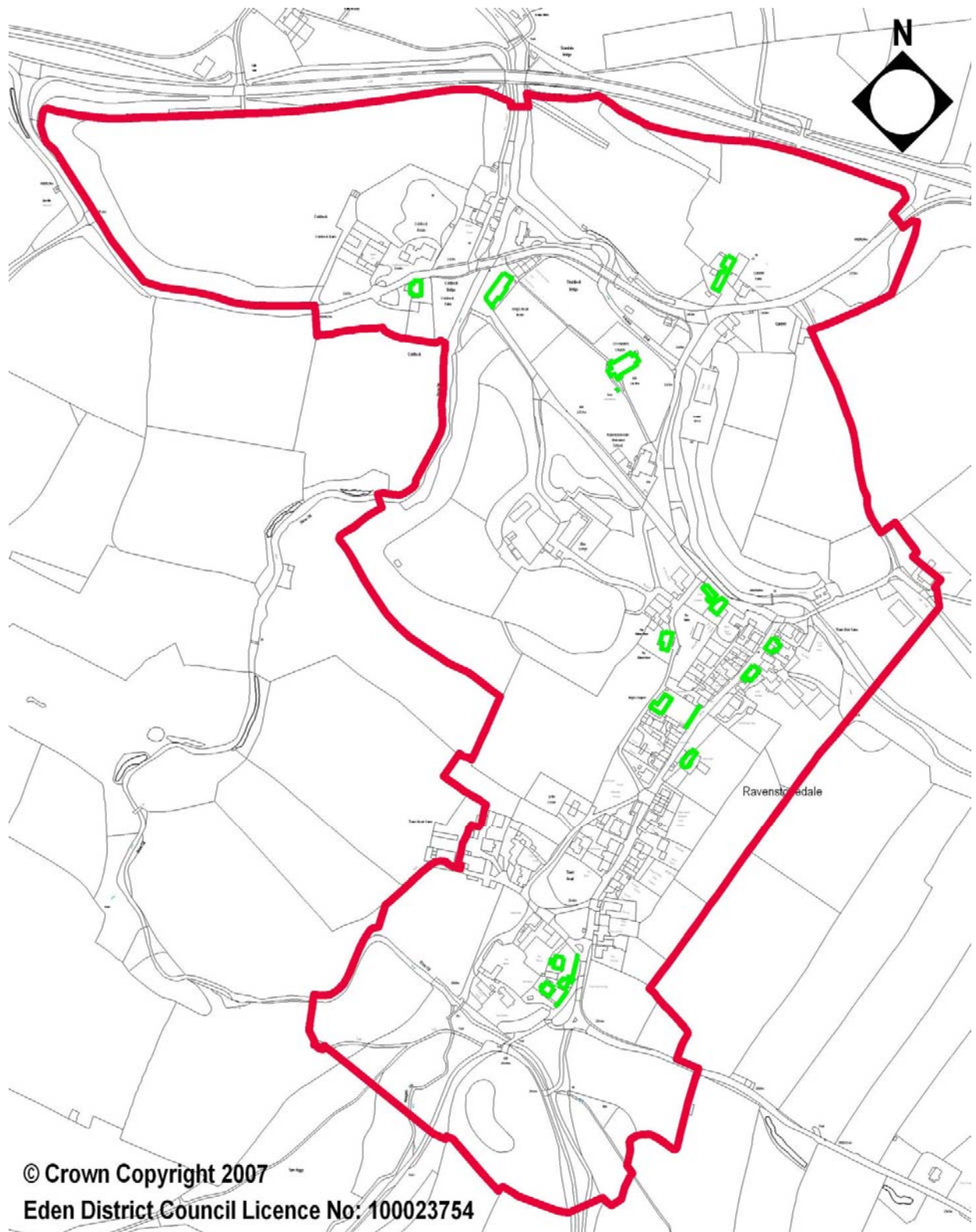
Relevant Supplementary Planning Documents

- Shopfront and Advertisement Design (2006)
- An Accessible and Inclusive Environment (2007)

Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Eden Design Summary (1999)

Plan 1 Listed Buildings within Ravenstonedale Conservation Area



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