

Pleasley Park and Vale  
Conservation Area

# appraisal and management plan

First adopted by Bolsover District Council January 2009

First adopted by Mansfield District Council March 2009

Draft review for consultation January 2016





**We speak your language**

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**Mówimy Twoim językiem**

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## **Preface**

- i) This appraisal and management plan has been prepared on the basis of the whole Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area and so takes into account the two separate but adjoining conservation areas that straddle Mansfield and Bolsover District and Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire County boundaries.
- ii) The document updates the adopted 2009 conservation area appraisal and management plan previously prepared by Plann.IT Limited Planning and conservation consultants on behalf of Bolsover District Council and Mansfield District Council.
- iii) The review was adopted by Mansfield District Council 26<sup>th</sup> July 2016.

# Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

## Contents

|  | <u>Page Number</u> |
|--|--------------------|
| Introduction   | 5                  |
| Map of the Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area                                      | 7                  |
| Part 1) Conservation Area Appraisal  | 8                  |
| Introduction   | 8                  |
| Summary of Character   | 8                  |
| Historical Development   | 10                 |
| Key Characteristic     Relationship between the Buildings<br>and the Natural Environment | 22                 |
| Character Area     The Coppice Way and the<br>Archaeological Way                         | 40                 |
| The Mill Complex   | 44                 |
| The Estate Village and Stuffynwood<br>Farm   | 58                 |
| Little Matlock and Littlewood  | 66                 |
| Pleasley Park  | 70                 |
| The former Tibshelf Pleasley<br>Railway Line   | 73                 |
| Features of Interest   | 75                 |
| Map A - Character Areas  |                    |
| Map B - Historic Development Phasing   |                    |
| Map C – Townscape  |                    |
| Part 2) Conservation Area Management Plan  | 81                 |
| Introduction   | 82                 |
| Protecting the Existing Historic Fabric  | 82                 |
| Legislation and Policy   | 82                 |
| Further Guidance on Development  | 86                 |
| Enforcement and Monitoring   | 87                 |
| Enhancement Schemes  | 88                 |
| Monitoring Indicators  | 90                 |



## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Pleasley Park and Vale is situated to the north west of Mansfield District and straddles the boundaries of Mansfield District in Nottinghamshire and Bolsover District in Derbyshire. A Conservation area was designated by both Bolsover District Council and Mansfield District Council in 1987 and 1992 respectively covering the relevant parts of Pleasley Park and Vale within each Councils area, together forming one contiguous Conservation Area.
- 1.2 The conservation area encompasses the Mill Complex and its associated Estate Village, the extensive wooded area to the north known as Pleasley Park, the continuing gorge and river course through Little Matlock and on to Littlewood, together with the trails along the Archaeological Way and the former Tibshelf Pleasley Railway Line; A truly exceptional landscape.
- 1.3 This document provides a detailed appraisal of those natural landscape and man- made features that provide Pleasley Park and Vale with its unique and distinctive character and interest. Its aims are: -
- To evaluate and record the historic landscape including its built environment in terms of its historical development, design, traditional building patterns, materials and features which contribute to and define the historic character of the area.
  - To provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about the future of the area through the development of a Management Plan.
  - To guide the siting and design of development, and the determination of planning applications for development.
  - To provide guidance to residents and owners in the maintenance repair and upkeep of their properties.

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

- 1.4 Conservation areas are defined under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('The Act') as 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. It is also a duty of a local Planning authority to review its conservation areas from time to time in order to ensure they continue to meet the requirements for designation.
- 1.5 Section 71 of The Act requires Councils to publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas and therefore this Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan has been prepared in accordance with this.
- 1.6 This document comes in two parts comprising:-  
Part 1: A Character Appraisal describing the historical development of The Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area and defining its special architectural and historic interest, including the built and natural environment within the area. It identifies those elements which make important contributions to the character and appearance and identifies threats that could

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

be detrimental to, and opportunities to enhance, the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Part 2: A Management Plan setting out a strategy for the preservation and enhancement of the area. This part includes policies and proposals derived from the contents of the Appraisal that seek to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### **The Role of Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans**

- 1.7 Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans help provide part of the evidence base for Local Plans and contribute towards a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment in both Mansfield and Bolsover District Council's areas.
- 1.8 In addition to this, Bolsover District Council and Mansfield District Council will adopt Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans that have been prepared with public participation as a material consideration so that they are taken into account when a determination is to be made under the planning Acts.

### **The Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Review**

- 1.9 A Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan for Pleasley Park and Vale was adopted by Mansfield and Bolsover District Council's in 2009 following a six week period of public consultation in September 2008 by Mansfield and Bolsover District Councils. However, it is the nature of places to change over time as legislation does and in view of this it is necessary to review the Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area to take account of any changes to its special character and to update the character Appraisal and Management Plan. The review of the document was identified to be undertaken after 5 years from adoption of the original or previous document and will supersede the current document. All plans included within this document are from the adopted 2009 version because they remain relevant.  
**There are no proposed changes to the Conservation Area boundary.**

[illegible]

# Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

## 2 Part 1 – Conservation Area Appraisal

### **Introduction**

- 2.1 Pleasley Park and Vale lies about 3 miles west of Mansfield, 3 miles south west of Shirebrook and about 4 miles east of junction 29 of the M1. The conservation area is, geographically, one area but it lies within two administrative counties and districts and it is focused on a stretch of the River Meden as it flows west to east through a limestone gorge about 1.5 miles in length. The slopes of the Vale are mostly wooded and on the north side are dominated by Pleasley Park, a former medieval hunting park.
- 2.2 The surrounding landscape is characterised by the undulating hills of the north Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire border and within this context Pleasley Vale, like the nearby Creswell Crags, appears as something of an anomaly; a strikingly distinct piece of countryside hidden within a more typical agricultural setting.
- 2.3 The Vale is a natural gorge and gradually becomes deeper and narrower at its middle section and it is here that the historic impact of human activity is at its most apparent with the construction of cotton mills and associated houses. West and east of this section their impact fades in favour of woodland, grassland and the river valley within which the gorge gradually folds back into the surrounding landscape.
- 2.4 The majority of the land is used for forestry, agriculture and leisure. The mills are an important industrial park comprising a mix of light industrial and office uses. East of the mills the two rows of houses, built as workers houses for the mills, still have a residential use. Despite the conservation area being situated in the open countryside, the buildings of the Mills Complex are in employment uses.
- 2.5 On the northern Bolsover District side, the conservation area is largely situated in the parish of Pleasley but certain areas sit within the Township of Shirebrook. On the southern Mansfield District side, the majority of the conservation area is situated in the parish of St. Edmunds (including St. Chads), with the western part being in the parish of St. Barnabas, Pleasley Hill.

### **Summary of Character**

- 2.6 Pleasley Park and Vale has a rich geological, industrial and agricultural history which has determined the appearance of the current landscape.
- 2.7 In terms of the built environment, the long involvement of the textile firm William Hollins and Co, later Viyella International, at Pleasley makes the Vale an important place within the national and international history of textiles and British Industry. As a result, it is the Mill complex and those buildings of the village that comprise the main elements in forming the character of the conservation area.



## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

- 2.8 In addition to this, there is the historical importance of Pleasley Park and the outlying farms. From the river to the woods and exposed limestone of the Vale slopes, nature is ever present within the conservation area and produces a range of impressions from the gentle to the dramatic. Whilst it would be a mistake to view the natural elements as untouched by human activity, as Pleasley Park is managed woodland, they do form a distinct contrast to the buildings within the Vale.
- 2.9 The contrast between the built environment and the natural environment is rarely discordant and nearly always complementary. The use of local stone for the majority of buildings gives a visual link to the surroundings and the scale and mass of development is never great enough for the landscape setting to lose its dominance.
- 2.10 As a result, the principal defining element in the character of the conservation area is the relationship between the buildings and the natural landscape.
- 2.11 In addition to this relationship, it is considered that the character and appearance of the Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area can be divided into the following six distinct character areas:
1. The Coppice and The Archaeological Way
  2. The Mill Complex
  3. The Estate Village and Stuffynwood Lane
  4. Little Matlock and Littlewood
  5. Pleasley Park
  6. The former Tibshelf Pleasley Railway Line
- 2.12 These identifiable historic areas share a sense of place but have their own character which reflects the historic development of the Park and Vale.

### 3 Historical Development

#### Pre-history up to the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD

- 3.1 The Pleasley Vale conservation area lies within a dissected plateau of Magnesian Limestone approximately 24km long and 7km wide on a north-south axis. Increased fluvial activity following the last ice age cut deep gorges into the limestone, sometimes forming caves and rock shelters and this gives the Vale its distinctive appearance. The geological similarity of Pleasley Vale to Creswell Crags, 3 miles north east of the Vale, strongly suggests that the Vale was occupied by humans from the earliest times. However the wealth of archaeological evidence found at Creswell has so far not been replicated at Pleasley, although this may be due to fewer assessments of the area. Some evidence does exist though. Animal bones from the Palaeolithic period (c.450,000 to 10,000BC), such as wolves, northern lynx and wild pig, were discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Yew Tree cave within the Vale. Extensive field walking exercises in the Meden Valley in the 1970s found many hundreds of flint artefacts spanning a period of several thousand years <sup>(1)</sup>. The area forms part of the Creswell Archaeological Way. A management report indicates that whilst much information may have been lost in the construction of the mills the archaeological potential of the area is still considerable.
- 3.2 For the Iron Age (c.700BC to 43AD) there is no archaeological evidence though it is reasonable to assume that the area with its particular and unusual topography was used throughout the period. Fissures and earthworks within Pleasley Park were once interpreted as a Roman army encampment associated with the remains of a Roman Villa just south of the conservation area that had been excavated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the antiquarian, Major Hayman Rooke. This theory has since been discounted and the earthworks are now thought to be either geological, a medieval house or the remains of quarrying, charcoal burning or coal mining <sup>(2)</sup>.
- 3.3 From the collapse of the Roman Empire (5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> centuries AD) to the settling of the area by Saxon and Scandinavians (7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries) there is again little evidence. The only archaeological evidence from this period is a Romano-British (c. 5/6<sup>th</sup> century AD) coin hoard found at Stuffynwood in 1770. However place names such as Pleasley (Plesa's wood/ clearing) and Radmanthwaite <sup>(3)</sup> (Radmund's settlement / farm) are Scandinavian in origin and show that the parish as it currently exists was being formed at least by the 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century.

#### The 11<sup>th</sup> century to the 18<sup>th</sup> century

- 3.4 Pleasley Vale is not mentioned in Domesday (1086), although a number of villages along the Shire boundary in this area are not mentioned. However, the section north of the River Meden was within the parish of Glapwell and the lord of this manor was named as Serlo, who later changed his name to De Pleasley.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

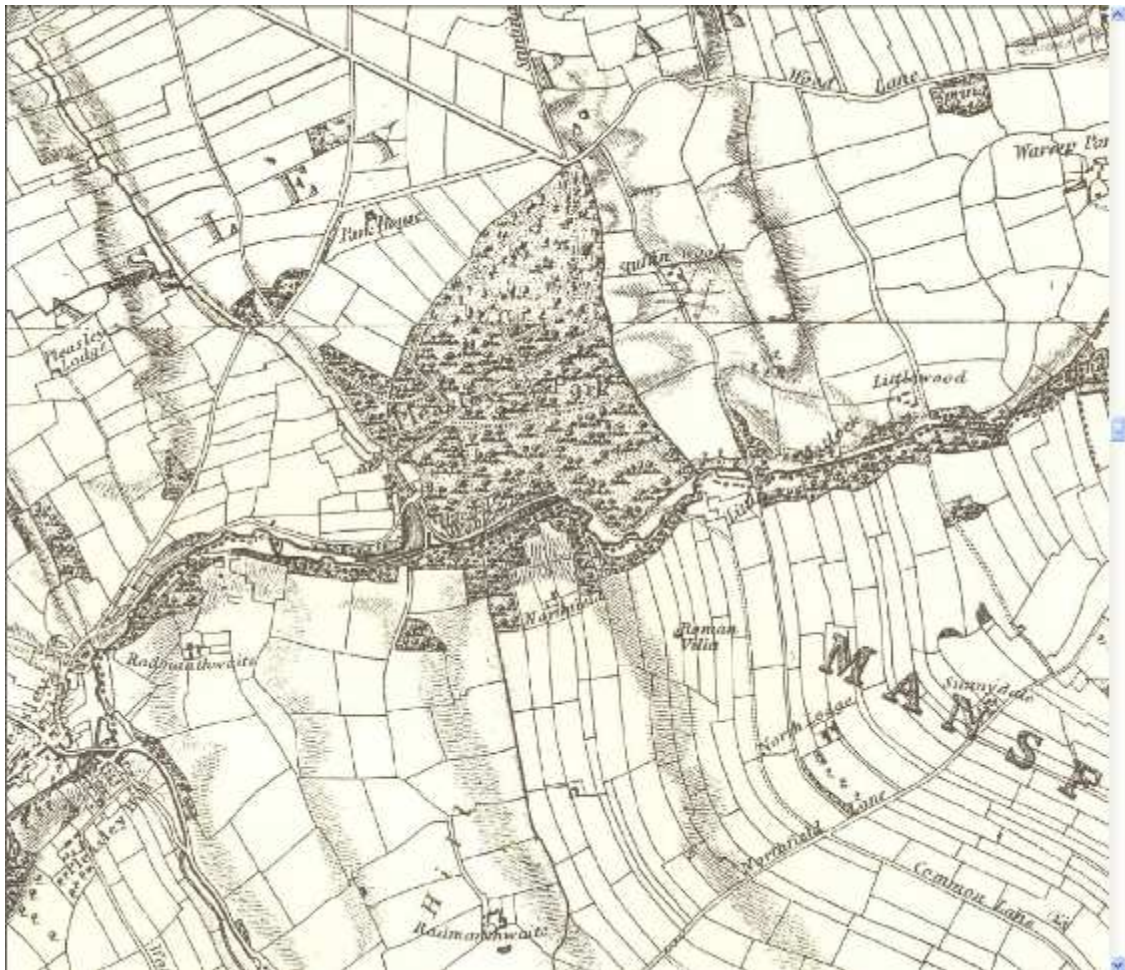
- 3.5 Pleasley Park is first mentioned in 1209 in an agreement between a descendent of Serlo, John of Aincourt and Robert de Lenington. It is mentioned again in documentary sources in 1281 when Edward I granted Thomas Bec, Bishop of St Davids, '4 bucks and 8 does out of Sherwood forest' to stock Pleasley Park and again in 1285 when a licence to crenellate (fortify) his existing house at Pleasley. Earthworks enclosing a large rectangular area are to be found within the south east section of the Park and these are identified with this house <sup>(4)</sup>.
- 3.6 During the 11<sup>th</sup> to the late 18<sup>th</sup> century it appears that whilst ownership of the manor changed repeatedly the patterns of land use remained fairly static. The use of Pleasley Park for hunting probably followed the national pattern and declined from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards in favour of woodland management and game shooting. The Vale would have been marginal land that would have been primarily used for woodland and grazing. A small-scale lime industry can be postulated from earth works and map evidence which show quarrying within Pleasley Park and lime kilns along the river valley floor at Little Matlock.
- 3.7 By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century a corn mill and two forges were established in the Vale. Nether and Upper forge run by George Sitwell are mentioned in 1767 <sup>(5)</sup>. The last mention of the local manor house is in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the Leake family left the house in a ruinous state. The location of the manor is unclear though the house was within the Park; the area around the former Stuffynwood Hall and Wren Hill farm can be suggested though the more typical location would be near to or within Pleasley Village, presumably filling the gap between the church and the village centre that is shown on 19<sup>th</sup> century maps.

### Pleasley Mills Late 18<sup>th</sup> to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century

- 3.8 In the early 1780s three well-established and notable Nottingham businessmen; Henry Hollins, Thomas Oldnow and John Cowpe formed a consortium with two Mansfield drapers, John Paulson and William Sleddon to produce cotton to supply the fast growing East Midland hosiery industry. Subsequently a lease on Pleasley Vale and Park was gained in 1782 from Henry Thornhill of Chesterfield to build water powered cotton mills.
- 3.9 The advantage of Pleasley Vale was that it offered an already channelled and managed water source, built for the existing corn mill and forges and was close to local markets and the Mansfield to Nottingham turnpike road.
- 3.10 The first mill, the Upper Mill, was completed in 1785 on the site of the corn mill and to a similar scale, around 60ft by 30ft on plan. A second mill, the Lower Mill, followed in 1792 and was considerably larger at four storeys high and 20 bays <sup>(6)</sup> across and built at a cost of £1,190. A terrace of ten workers houses were constructed east of the Lower Mill whilst a house for the manager John Cowpe was built in the same year. The Terrace was demolished in 1961 as it was located by the River Meden just below the top row of Mill Bank Cottages. The manager's house became Vale House which stood just north of Mill 1 and was demolished in 2008 after a number of years in a semi – derelict state.

# Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

- 3.11 The mill company became known by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as William Hollins and Co. It was the earliest producer of cotton in the East Midlands and also one of the most successful. The business acumen and resources of the founders allowed the company to reinvest and to weather the volatile financial storms that characterised the textile industry in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This gave a firm legacy for subsequent owners, of which the Hollins family was the main player but also included the Paget family who were responsible for introducing steam power into the hosiery trade in the 1830s and 1840s.



*Extract from Sanderson's map of 1835*

ISBN 0 902751 42 5 curtesy of Nottinghamshire County Council, Community Services, County Hall, West Bridgford, Nottingham NG2 7QP

## The present day mill buildings and the influence of William Hollins 1840s to 1890

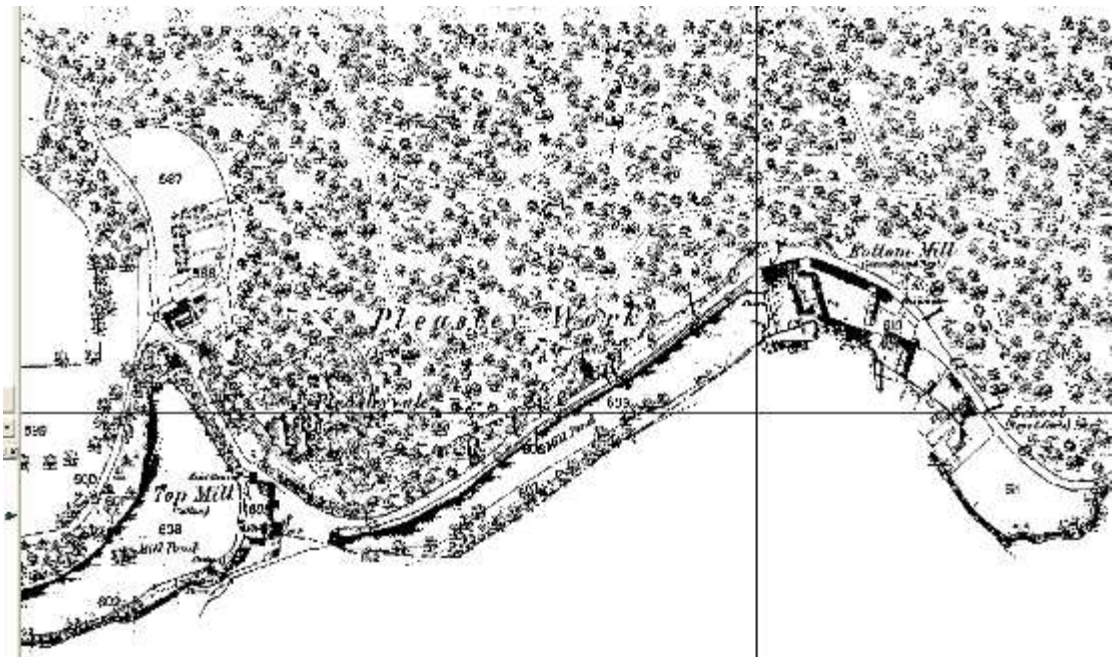
- 3.12 On the 25<sup>th</sup> December 1840, the Upper Mill was destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt by 1844. The Lower Mill burnt down a few years later, perhaps in 1844, and was subsequently rebuilt by 1847. Both these mills remain today, albeit with later additions, as Mill 1 and Mill 3 respectively. In the long term the fires were fortuitous as they allowed reinvestment in terms of the creation of larger



## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

mills of fire proof construction and with modern machinery. This allowed the mills to successfully compete in the developing national and international cotton trade.

- 3.13 The 1840s to the 1900s were one of consolidation for the company and the Pleasley site. The period was influenced by William Hollins (c.1820 to 1900), who took up the management of the firm in 1840 whilst in his 20s. He was the first member of the Hollins family to live and work in Pleasley Vale. His strong involvement with the site not only saw the early construction of the two larger mills but also the creation of a family home with the extension and remodelling of Vale House in the 1860s and the creation of a community with the building of further workers houses, lodges, a school, wash house, a cooperative society, mechanical institute and library, cricket club and company farm.
- 3.14 In addition a grease working department, engine house, baths and wool room were constructed in the lower mill between the 1850s and 1880s. Following the sinking of Pleasley Colliery in 1878, the Tibshelf to Pleasley (1883) railway line was constructed and ran along the southern ridge of the Vale to link in with the mill complex.



*Extract from the 1875-1879 Ordnance Survey*

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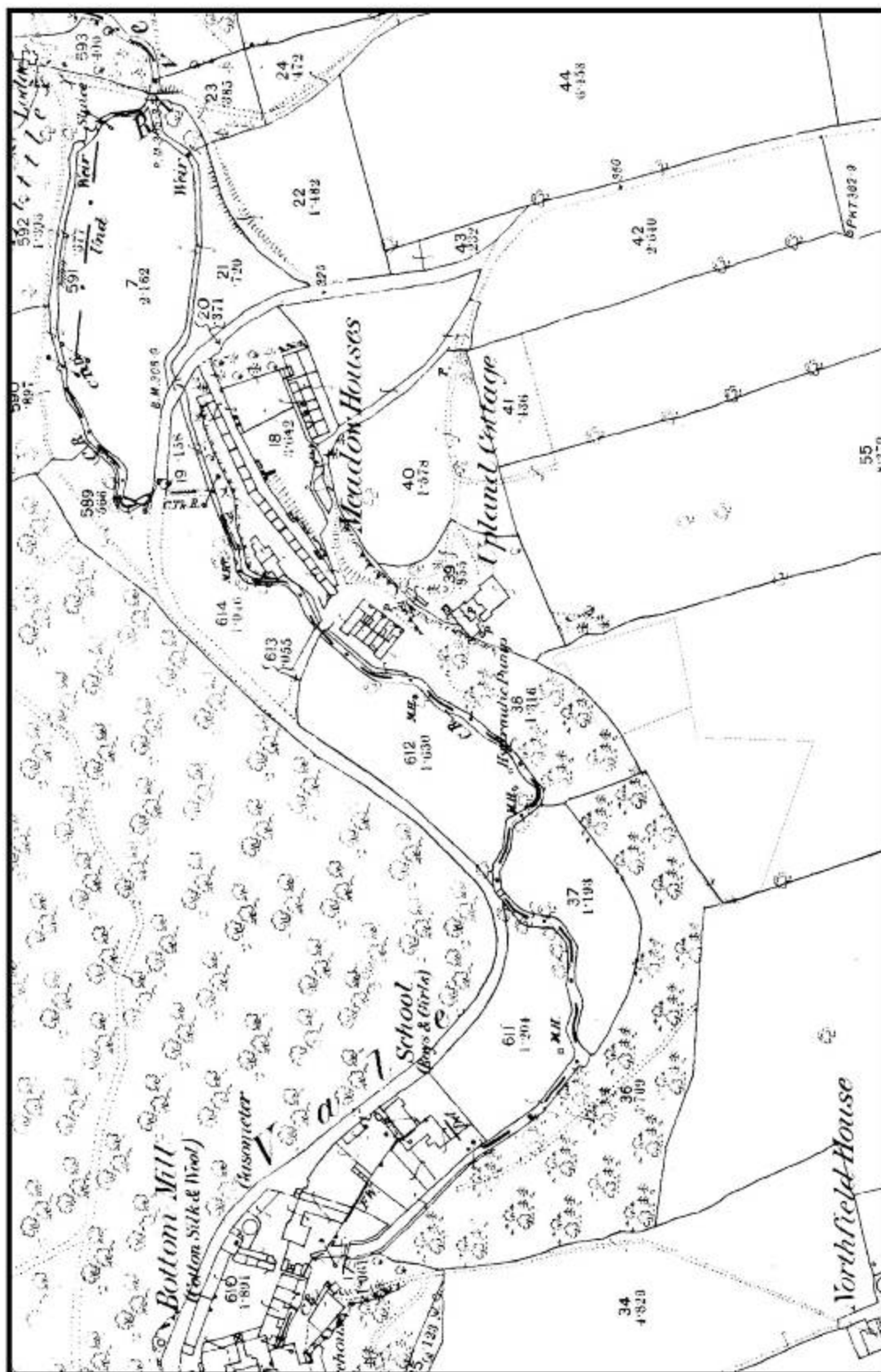
- 3.15 These developments formed two distinct elements to the character of Pleasley that are still apparent today. Whereas the original manager's house was built close to the mills, the later houses of 1854 followed those of 1792 and were constructed to the east, in an area that was agricultural in character and despite the loss of the original houses the area still appears like a model village in a subtle parkland setting.
- 3.16 The plan of 1875 below shows both upper and lower Meadow Houses (Top and Bottom Row), uplands, a fine Victorian country house belonging to the Hollins family who occupied the house for a time. A project to revive the former

Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and  
Management Plan

kitchen garden to uplands house has been implemented by local residents.  
The plan also shows the location of the now demolished row of some 16

terrace properties below top row adjacent to the river Meden together with  
other structures (possibly houses) even closer to the river (also demolished).

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Pleasley Vale 1875 – copyright Mansfield District Council

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# Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

100 hundred Years between



Houses at Pleasley Vale - Post Card picture. Dated Sept 13 1906.

Lower Meadow Houses – 1906- picture courtesy of Pleasley Vale Residents Association



Lower Meadow Houses - 2006



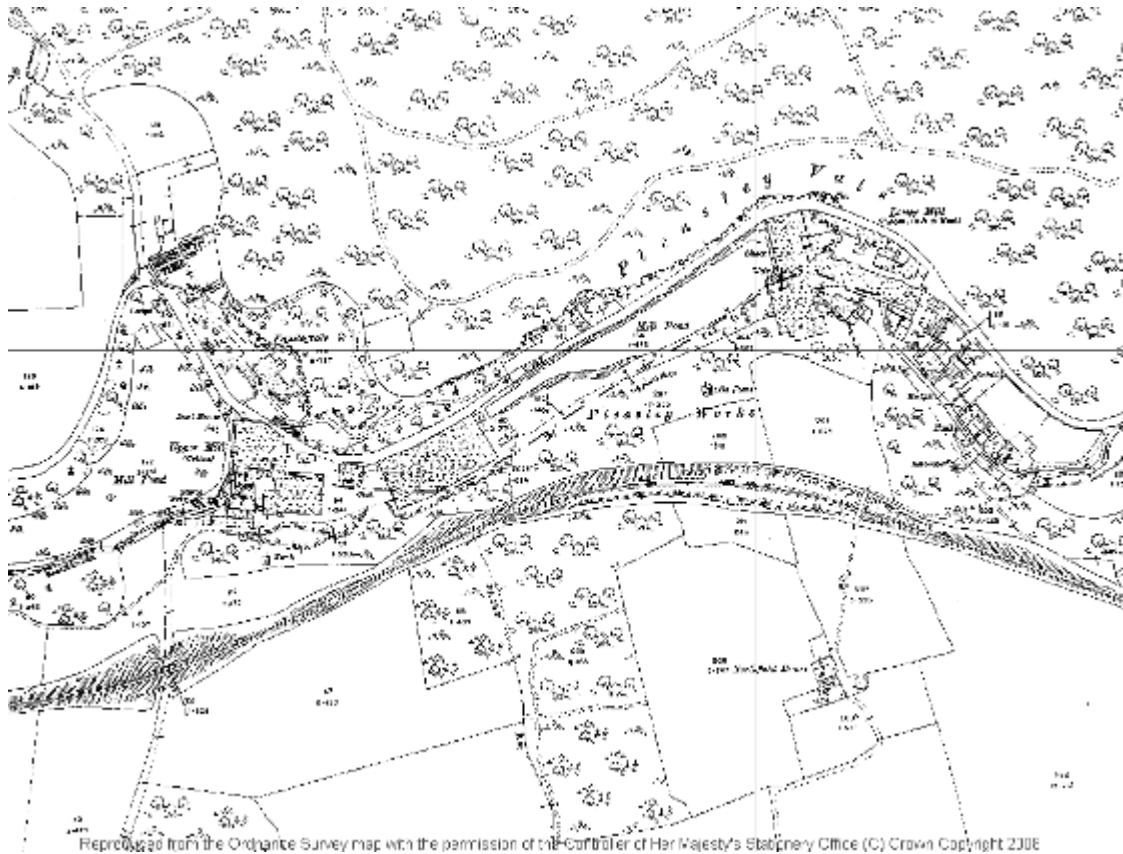
## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

- 3.17 In addition to Hollin's influence, another senior partner, Charles Paget built Stuffynwood Hall in the 1860s. The hall is now demolished but the remaining lodge and two cottages at its entrance indicate its former status. Mr Paget commissioned St Chad's Chapel and its vicarage in 1876. As a business Hollins and Co continued to develop and expand throughout the mid to late 19th century but in terms of major capital investment this is mostly represented through acquisitions and construction in different parts of the country, most notably Glasgow, Hucknall, Via Gella Mills near Matlock, Nottingham and a sales office in London.

### Viyella, 1890 to the present

- 3.18 By 1900, the mills at Pleasley had become one site in the portfolio of a company with a national and international presence. This growth was in part due to the strong financial legacy and business acumen of the firm but also due to the creation of one type of textile - Viyella; a soft textile made from a mix of merino wool and cotton. Its softness and its capacity to retain its shape when wet made it an extremely successful fabric for a variety of garments at the middle to high range of fashion. The name 'Viyella' is derived from the Via Gella Mill, near Matlock whose purchase in 1890 gave the company a secure command on the merino wool market.
- 3.19 Hollins and company had been experimenting with and spinning merino wool since the 1840s and were starting to diversify into the manufacture of cloth. The first experiments in Viyella were made in 1890 to 1891. The success of trial sales led Viyella being trademarked in 1894 whilst ready made garments (at first just night-wear and quickly expanding into a full range of garments) began to be made in Glasgow and Nottingham. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the success of Viyella was international with subsidiary companies and sales offices operating in America, Europe and across the British Empire.
- 3.20 Production of Viyella from yarn to garments was spread across the companies sites. By 1929 the pattern of productions was as follows: Pleasley (spinning), Retford (dyeing), Glasgow (weaving), Paisley (finishing and printing), Nottingham and Hucknall (making up) and Via Gella (waste) <sup>(7)</sup>.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

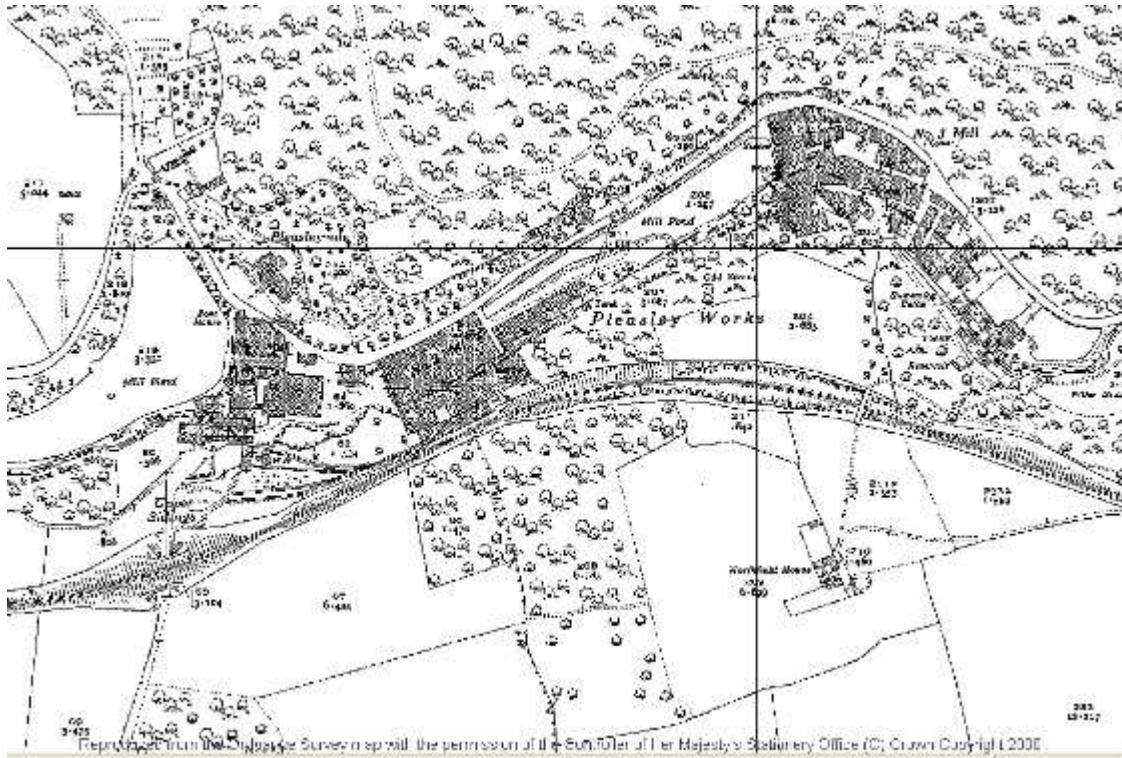


*Extract from the 1916 Ordnance Survey*

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- 3.21 The impact of this success at Pleasley involved the installation of new machinery through the early and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and the enlargement of the Upper Mill and a new combing shed just to the south in 1913.
- 3.22 Further extensions to the combing shed (Mill 2) followed in the form of long sheds following the line of the Meden (by 1938) and a two storey extension on top and a three storey extension to the side (by 1952) <sup>(8)</sup>.
- 3.23 In line with the British textile industry the economic fortunes of Hollins and Co fluctuated and experienced notable downturns during the First World War, the depression of the 1930s and the Second World War. The company became a private limited company in 1890 and then a public limited company at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, after which the influence of the Hollins family declined until the last member, Arthur Hollins left the firm in 1924. It remained strong enough to maintain its market presence and at the time of the company's renaming in 1961 as 'Viyella International' it was one of the four big textile groups in the United Kingdom owning 40 factories across the country.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



*Extract from the 1938 Ordnance Survey*

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- 3.24 Since the 1960s the company has merged with Coats and in line with most textile manufacturing, production was scaled back and moved abroad in the late 20<sup>th</sup> / early 21<sup>st</sup> century. With this the Pleasley site closed in 1987. Viyella still has a market presence in the UK through the Viyella Ladieswear and Menswear collection.
- 3.25 The influence on Pleasley Vale during the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present can be characterised by expansion and then quick decline. It is clear that as the company gained a more international focus and the old family connections declined so did the concept of Pleasley as a living community. During the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the construction of the war memorial by the company houses suggests a continuing community whilst company records from 1934 show 980 employees at Pleasley out of a total of 3,700 employed worldwide.
- 3.26 Though the combing shed was considerably extended in the 1950s, the conversion of Vale House to offices and the demolition of first terraced house in 1961 and the loss of the school, baths, mechanic institute, Stuffynwood Hall and Uplands all show that the Vale was losing its social focus. Uplands was demolished following subsidence.
- 3.27 Following the closure of the mills in 1987, the condition of the mill buildings and Vale House went into sharp decline until in 1992 they were bought under compulsory purchase powers by Bolsover District Council. Following economic investment through the Single Regeneration Budget, European and private sector funding the mill pond and mill buildings were restored and converted into light industrial and office use. In addition, leisure uses have grown to both

Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and  
Management Plan

the general benefit of the area and of children from the local communities. Vale house was demolished in 2010 to make way for small housing development.

## References

- (1) Sherwood Archaeological Society (2003), Report and survey of the features recorded by Major Hayman Rooke in the area known as Pleasley Park.
- (2) Same reference as 1.
- (3) 19<sup>th</sup> century maps identify Wren Hill Farm, just south-west of the conservation area, as being Radmanthwaite.
- (4). Derbyshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record, SMR Number 12020-MDR6321.
- (5) Creswell Crags Limestone Heritage Area Management Action Plan (2003), Section 5.4.11.1.
- (6) Evidence for the size of the lower mill comes from a contemporary painting of the mills destruction by fire in 1844.
- (7) S.Piggot William Hollins and Co. (1948), Hollins – A Study of Industry.
- (8) F.A.Wells David and Charles (1968), Hollins & Viyella.



## **4 Archaeology**

- 4.1 There are a number of archaeological sites in and adjoining the conservation area and a significant potential for further archaeological discoveries (see Features of Interest Map).
- 4.2 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the conservation area and the few field remains, such as the possible site of the medieval house of the Bishop of St David's Thomas Bec within Pleasley Park and the lime kilns within Little Matlock, make only a small visual impact. Such remains require further analysis to understand their purpose and consequently their significance to the character of the conservation area.
- 4.3 Beyond the current conservation area boundary within Mansfield district, the beneath ground remains of a Roman Villa lie to the south of the disused Tibshelf Pleasley railway line. This site was excavated in the C18th by Major Hayman Rooke and is now designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, recognised as a site of national importance and protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The site was considered for inclusion within the conservation area in 2008/9 as part of the public consultation at that time when the character appraisal was being prepared however there was strong opposition to this and given the existing protection for the site, the boundary was not extended to include it.

## 5 Relationship between the Buildings and the Natural Landscape

- 5.1 It is the dominance of the landscape setting which gives the site its distinctiveness. Leaving aside their particular history, if the buildings were removed from their setting they would be typical examples of their day, not without architectural merit but not remarkable either. It is their physical situation that makes them appear so distinctive.



Mill 2 within its landscape setting

- 5.2 Generally speaking, the built environment is contained to the central section of the conservation area and along the floor of the Vale. The natural environment underlies these areas as well as forming the slopes and edges of the area. There are exceptions to this in the form of outlying farms and lodges, such as Littlewood Farm and The Clusters as well as archaeological traces of human activity such as ditches and low walls to the lime kilns at Little Matlock and the small quarries within Pleasley Park. However such remains are relatively few and the basic pattern is one of a strip of human activity in the centre of the conservation area surrounded and contained within a strong natural setting.

### Key Element – Natural Environment

- 5.3 The natural environment is characterised by woodland; either dedicated plantations such as Pleasley Park or through a mix of managed woodland and natural seed growth such as the slopes of the Vale to the south of the mills. It

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

is clear from areas such as the Northfield Plantation that woodland management is something that has always occurred and that in recent years this has declined allowing a more ragged 'natural' appearance. The continuing

management of Pleasley Park by the Forestry Commission and of certain areas of the Vale through a past Countryside Stewardship Scheme are the exceptions to this rule.



Pleasley Park

- 5.4 Other than woodland, grassland and arable fields make a distinctive contribution especially on the eastern side of the conservation area. There are several points where the river floor of the Meden Valley widens out into a flat expanse of pasture that is either carefully managed (around the war memorial) or a mix of grass and scrub (Little Matlock). Cultivated fields and large fields of pasture generally border the conservation area and help to form the overall setting by way of a contrast to the Vale and a link to the general countryside of the wider area.

### Key element - Layout and Plan Form

- 5.5 In the context of the surrounding landscape Pleasley Vale, like Creswell Crags is an anomaly, a geological scar that suddenly punctuates a landscape of rolling hills. Within the wider landscape it is hidden; encountered suddenly and with surprise.
- 5.6 Through the limestone gorge runs the River Meden which is the primary defining element to movement in the conservation area. As a small river it is often overshadowed or partially hidden from view except for around the mills where it flows around the south side of the Upper mill pond. The river flows from west to east and from the western extent of the conservation area,



Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and  
Management Plan

through the mill areas and to the company housing it meanders, forming an elongated 'W' shape with hairpin corners dividing the conservation area into visually separate areas. From the estate village through Little Matlock and out to the eastern edge of the conservation area and beyond its course

straightens though again visual separation occurs with the Northfield Plantation separating the village from Little Matlock at the path to Stuffynwood Hall and Farm.

- 5.7 The Vale narrows and deepens at the centre where the mill buildings are located. The sense of enclosure produced by the slopes of the Vale significantly heightens the scale and setting of the mills. At the eastern section of the conservation area, the broadening of the Vale helps to provide a setting for the village that is more subtle and gentle and this in turn helps to define the separation between mill complex and village.



Broadening out of the Vale

- 5.8 The main route through the conservation area is the road that starts in the west as Outgang Lane, follows the River Meden through the mill complex before turning south towards Mansfield at the village, where it becomes Common Lane. The conservation area is also well-served by footpaths that follow the course of the Meden through Little Matlock, the disused railway line on the southern slope and throughout Pleasley Park. The variety and number of paths allows the conservation area to be explored and experienced from a number of ways and perspectives revealing the stark contrast in the developed valley bottom with the undeveloped slopes.
- 5.9 At the western extent of the conservation area the slopes to the north of the Meden are dominated by Pleasley Park: dense woodland that restricts views except for at its edges. At the eastern section the boundary stretches up into

Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan  
largely open countryside to include Little Wood, Stuffynwood Farm and the former lodges and site of Stuffynwood Hall.

- 5.10 The slopes of the southern side of the River Meden start gradually in the west through a small valley and quickly rise through the central part of the conservation area along the disused Tibshelf to Pleasley railway line until they fold into the surrounding landscape around Meden Lane. As with Pleasley Park the central section of the southern slopes are heavily wooded restricting views to the south whilst to the north views are variously contained by the continuation of the limestone gorge or open up to the surrounding countryside when the ground falls away. At Meden Lane the surrounding landscape takes over from the gorge providing a vantage point from which to view the village in its wide landscape setting.
- 5.11 The topography has shaped human activity in the Vale in such a way that the conservation area can be divided into a number of distinct sub areas:
1. The Coppice and The Archaeological Way
  2. The Mill Complex
  3. The Estate Village and Stuffynwood Lane
  4. Little Matlock and Littlewood
  5. Pleasley Park
  6. The former Tibshelf Pleasley Railway Line
- 5.12 Their layout and plan form are described in the next section of the appraisal under each of the Character Areas.

### Key Element - Buildings

#### Historic Buildings

- 5.13 The historic buildings in the conservation area can be divided into three types: The Mill buildings, the estate buildings and vernacular farm buildings. The first two categories are exclusively related to the history of Hollins and Co and form the vast majority of buildings within the conservation area. The vernacular farm buildings consist of two sites: the grade II listed Stuffynwood Farm and Littlewood Farm.
- 5.14 The mill buildings consist of three mills, two from the 1840s (Mills 1 & 3) and the former combing shed that dates from 1913 (Mill 2).
- 5.15 All mills are constructed in the same industrial style which combines a large basic mass with a strong vertical emphasis with a rhythm formed by the rows of windows. As a group the mill buildings form the most distinctive historic section of the conservation area.



# Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



Mill 1



Mill 2

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



Mill 3

- 5.16 The estate buildings date mostly from the 1840s to the 1860s and comprise a mix of individual houses, terraced houses and lodges and in addition the Church of St Chad and the war memorial.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



Lower Meadow Cottages



Top Meadow Cottages



## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



War Memorial

- 5.17 They are situated throughout the central section of the conservation area, concentrated east of Mill 3. Though built for different purposes there is a consistent architectural approach to their design and construction which give an impression of quality and unity. The dominant architectural style is subtle gothic revival. An exception to this was Vale House, which was a typical example of the Italianate villa style of the early to mid 19th century. The building was demolished in 2008, making way for residential development (Bolsover District Council Planning ref: 09/00119/FUL). The redevelopment consists of four dwellings (two pair of semi-detached) with associated garages. The houses echo the design of the former building but they do not copy the previous Italianate style.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



Vale House (Now demolished)



- 5.18 The farm houses are good examples of the local vernacular architecture and they represent the rural aspect to the conservation area and its links with the wider landscape.



## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



Littlewood farm

- 5.19 There are five grade II listed buildings within the conservation area:
- 5.20 Gardeners Lodge at the entrance to Pleasley Vale - Mid19th century

5.21



The Gardener's Lodge

5.22 Lodge at west entrance to Pleasley Vale (The Security Lodge) Mid 19th century



The Security Lodge



## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

### 5.23 Church of St Chad, 1881



Church of St Chad

### 5.24 Bridge over the Meden, Church Lane Mid 18th century



Bridge at Church Lane

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

### 5.25 Stuffynwood Farm



#### The contribution of unlisted buildings

- 5.26 A number of buildings in the Vale are not listed but are of significant local importance as non-designated heritage assets including the most prominent; the surviving historic mill buildings and top and lower Meadow Houses.
- 5.27 The Lodge to Stuffynwood Hall is comparable in style, quality and age to the other two lodges at the entrance to the Vale but is unlisted and a non-designated heritage asset. It is the case that all historic buildings within the area make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area notwithstanding their listed status.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



Lodge to Stuffynwood Hall

### Modern buildings

- 5.28 There are few modern buildings within the conservation area save for the small industrial park north west of the gardener's and security lodges which consist of mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial sheds and an office. Mill 2 was significantly extended to in the 50s in a style that follows the basic style of the 19<sup>th</sup> century mills though is markedly different in its use of concrete and triangular north-light windows. Attached to the rear of Mill 2 are a long row of plain sheds, dating from the 1930s and 1950s that follow the line of the Meden. The additions to Mill 2 do have some historical interest in terms of the development of the mill complex but like the industrial park the buildings do not enhance the conservation area architecturally and on balance they can be said to detract from its character.

### Local details

- 5.29 The main traditional building material within the conservation area is the local limestone with slate used on roofs. The stone is cut and coursed on most buildings with only the vernacular buildings showing the use of random stone. An exception to this is St Chads Church and its former vicarage which are constructed of a high quality brick.
- 5.30 Boundaries of stone and estate wrought iron railing are common throughout the conservation area. Dry stone walls are the most common form of boundary treatment and consist of random coursed and ashlar coursed walls. Within the mill area stone is used as a revetment to the slopes between the areas of limestone cliffs. Within the slopes and Pleasley Park low stone walls are used as field boundaries whilst within the village stone walls are replaced by estate



## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

railings which maintain the impression of a managed estate landscape. All surviving historic boundary treatments are significant and collectively they contribute significantly to the character of the conservation area.



Stone revetment



Estate Railings



Stone boundary walls

#### Loss, intrusion and alterations

- 5.31 The loss of buildings has been a feature of the history of the area; in respect of the mill complex, mills 1 and 3 were rebuilt following fires in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first terraced house was demolished in 1961 and Vale House in 2008. The school, baths, mechanic institute, Stuffynwood Hall were also demolished with the decline of the company and Uplands following subsidence. With the present day buildings complex buildings vacancy, albeit partial across the site, remains an issue. Alterations to the estate buildings are limited to the installation of some later windows and door styles in plastic and timber to the upper row of Meadow Cottages. Except for these changes the fabric of the estate buildings remains largely intact which makes a significant contribution towards the architectural quality of the conservation area overall. Alterations to the mill buildings have primarily related to sub partitioning into smaller spaces and the provisions for modern amenity.

#### **Key views and vistas**

- 5.32 The winding nature of the Vale and its heavily treed slopes means that views within the conservation area are often limited and closed off. Similarly the Vale and conservation area is cut off from outside views because it is a gorge within the landscape. Rather than this lessening the value of views and vistas to the character of the conservation area it makes them more intimate and dramatic, reinforcing the distinct character of each sub area.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

5.33 The key views and vistas are illustrated on the townscape plan.

### Views within the area

5.34 At the bottom of the Vale the main vistas are along the course of the Meden and road. These views are framed by the slopes and eventually terminated by buildings or woodland. Consequently a sequence of views is generated along the valley gorge from west to east:

1. Views from the Copse are constrained by woodland and channelled along the river until the chimney of Mill 1 becomes a focal point.
2. From the lodges views open up to include Mills 1 and 2 with the former Vale House site whilst the steepness and curves of the slope dominate the background. This combined with the height of the buildings gives a sense of drama. The view east is closed by Mill 2 whilst that west is closed by the curve of the road and the arboretum at the former Vale House site.
3. East of Mill 2 the view east is dominated by Mill 3 with its mill pond in the foreground. There is a slightly more open feel to the area and all visual elements draw the focus to Mill 3 which closes off the view east.
4. Beyond Mill 3 the Vale takes a sharp turn beyond which a very different, rural view opens up, that of the estate village and farmland. The Vale broadens out producing a more open aspect which complements the gentle character of the landscape and buildings.
5. Continuing along the Meden Lane the woodland closes off the area at the road to Stuffynwood Hall. Beyond this the view changes yet again to a more natural, less agricultural character. A sense of drama is reintroduced by the exposed limestone cliffs on the northern side of the bank.
6. Upon entry in to the Vale from Mansfield Woodhouse to the south along Common Lane there are important long views across the fields either side and towards Top Row (Meadow cottages) which stand proud and announce the estate village upon its approach.

### Panoramic views

5.35 Panoramic views would be expected back into the conservation area from the upper slopes of the Vale though they are largely absent due to the thickness of tree cover. Instead, views of the mill buildings from areas within Pleasley Park and the Meden Trail are limited to glimpsed views.

5.36 The best vantage point for panoramic views is where the Meden Trail meets Meden Lane and a view down into the village with the northern slopes rising above it is gained.

### Views out of the area

5.37 Views out from the conservation area can be gained from this vantage point as well as to the edges of Pleasley Park, the Meden Trail and Littlewood Farm.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

Such views place the conservation area in its wider visual context while the surrounding farmed landscape offers less dramatic views in comparison to the special beauty and interest of Pleasley Vale.

### **Archaeological Significance of the Landscape**

- 5.38 The valley contains several known and possible sites including eleven caves, six rock shelters and fissures. There are also substantial breccia deposits on rock faces near the mills, probably exposed when the rock faces were cut back. Two of the caves, Pleasley Vale Cave (at the rear of the Vale House site) and Yew Tree Cave have been excavated and produced Pleistocene and Holocene palaeontological faunas, but no archaeological remains. The presence of a Mesolithic flint scatter on the plateau above the valley demonstrates a human presence. The potential of archaeological material being discovered in caves is stated as being moderate to good.

### **Public Realm**

- 5.39 Road surfacing, lights, signs and street furniture are standard highway issue. The main impact is around the mills where the security barriers, the car parking, lighting and signs clutter and detract from though do not dominate the setting of the mills. Elsewhere road signs are few and whilst their design could be improved upon they are largely subsumed into their surroundings. Away from the roads, footpaths are either of gravel or grass / earth and overall the paths are well maintained and make little impact on the character of the conservation area.

### **THREAT 1**

Unmanaged on-street parking can detract from the relationship between the natural environment and the buildings, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### **OPPORTUNITY 1**

Improvements to the public realm to remove clutter and provide dedicated car parking could enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.



## Area 1: The Coppice and The Archaeological Way

- 5.40 Starting at the western edge of the conservation area, a path that forms part of the Creswell Archaeological Way leads into the area following a roughly parallel route to Outgang Lane.



Western entrance to the Archaeological Way

### Key Element – The Natural Environment

- 5.41 This is primarily an area of natural environment; a shallow river valley that gradually deepens as the gorge rises. However, it is considered that the water meadows are threatened by the colonisation of stinging nettle and this in turn is threatening the naturalness of the area.
- 5.42 Approaching the mills the Meden starts to become managed, at first straightened and then entering a series of sluices until it forms the first mill pond next to Mill 1.

### **THREAT 2**

The potential for damage to the river structures from flooding could be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area.



## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



*River Valley*

### **THREAT 3**

The colonisation of stinging nettles within the water meadows could be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 5.43 The gradual heightening of the banks produces an increasing sense of enclosure that continues into the main mill area. The curving nature of the Meden means that the mill complex is largely hidden until the two lodges are reached. The tall brick chimney of Mill 1 is apparent though and dominates both the approach by road and on the footpath.
- 5.44 This is an impressive structure and the only hint of the mill complex close by.
- 5.44 Just before the lodges at the entrance to Pleasley Vale are reached there is a small industrial park comprising a variety of offices and workshops from the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This area and the buildings within it make no contribution to the character of the conservation area though equally their marginal location and the dominance of Pleasley Park to the east results in their having little negative impact on its character.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



Mill chimney in the distance

### **OPPORTUNITY 2**

The potential for the sensitive redevelopment of the industrial park could enhance this entrance to the conservation area.



Industrial Park

### **The Natural Environment**

- 5.45 The appearance of the woodland in this area is of an irregular canopy of mature and over-mature trees, mostly Ash and a variable under-storey principally comprising Hawthorn, Hazel, Wychelm, Sallow, Sycamore and Bramble. There is a varied ground flora but aside from Dog's Mercury this is little in evidence out of season. There are 3 very large Beech trees in the Coppice, likely to have been part of a larger group planted for its visual impact. Despite its name the Coppice is high forest and its appearance of naturalness is most attractive.

#### **OPPORTUNITY 3**

The management of works to trees through management agreements would both preserve and potentially enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.



## Area 2: The Mill Complex

- 5.46 The entrance to the mill complex is made by two lodge buildings, the security office and the gardener's lodge. Why there should be two lodges is unclear though one could be for the Mills and the other for the Hollins's former residence, Vale House. Both lodges are grade II listed buildings and were built in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Both are built with the restrained gothic style of estate buildings within the conservation area.



Security lodge at the entrance to the mill complex

Key Element – Narrow corridor of development

- 5.47 Moving east a spatial pattern emerges that runs through the whole mill area. On the north side of the road are the steeply rising slopes of the Vale which are variously formed of exposed limestone cliffs or wooded banks within which space was found for two houses; the former Vale House (since demolished to make way for modern housing and Rock House.
- 5.48 South of the road are the Mills and the Meden, which at this point has its banks and sides straightened as it runs between the upper and lower Mill Ponds.
- 5.49 There are three main mills at Pleasley now called Mill 1, Mill 2 and Mill 3. Mills 1 & 3 correspond to the Upper and Lower Mills of the 1840s whilst Mill 2 was constructed as a combing shed in 1913. Spatially Mill 3 is separated from the first two by the topography which turns the Meden and the road around a sharp corner, effectively making two distinct visual areas.



## Mill 1

- 5.50 Once past the Lodges the Mill complex quickly emerges and dominates. The first, Mill 1 is the upper mill of 1844 built on the site of the first cotton mill to be built within Pleasley in 1785. The mill has been extensively enlarged. The original section faces the upper mill pond and road and is thirteen bays wide and three storeys high. It can still be deciphered by following the course of its original roof line which is delineated by a projecting band of stone supported by pairs of thin corbels.



Mill 1 and the mill pond

- 5.51 Other characteristic features of the original mill are a comparatively smaller size and rougher finish of the stone and the use of flat wedge lintels above the windows. Documentary sources say that there was once a belfry on the building but this has either been lost by the later extensions or a mistake in the description, as there is a possible a belfry still visible on Mill 3.
- 5.52 The extensions to the mill are of two main phases. The first probably dates to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and includes a fourth storey and a 12 bay 5 storey extension on its south side. The overall design is similar yet the window openings are larger and make more of an impact and the stone is more even in quality and size. The second extension is to the northern side and part of the rear and is of the same style as Mill 2 which strongly suggests a date of 1913. The original mill is somewhat overshadowed by this later development but can still be clearly seen and its design set the pattern for the extensions so a sense of cohesion is achieved.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

- 5.53 The west elevation is the most significant and legible. It faces the upper mill pond, a circular pond surrounded by a semi-circle of trees on its western edge. The combination of pond and mill produces a traditional and pleasant picture that has an intimacy that contrasts with the majority of the mill complex where the high slopes and exposed limestone cliffs create a dramatic effect.
- 5.54 The north roadside elevation and west elevations are a confused mass of original and later builds though curved loading bays of the original mill can still be clearly seen whilst the 1913 extension has its main elevation on the west where it forms a working yard with Mill 2 (See below).
- 5.55 The south elevations formed from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and 1913 builds presents a four storey façade close to the rising cliff face and this results in a close slightly claustrophobic feeling. Part of the cliff face here has been cut back and faced with cut stone and the remains of a tunnel or recess can be seen to the top of the cliff just below the former railway line. Clearly this is the remains of a loading structure or mechanism used to bring raw material to and the finished yarn out from the factory.

### **THREAT 4**

The continued occupancy of all three Mills is vital to the preservation of the mills and under-use could lead to a deterioration of these important buildings which would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 5.56 Just south west of the Mill and down from the mill pond is the mill-chimney. This is the only remaining chimney from the site. One other belonging to Mill 3 has been demolished. Typically for a mill chimney it is made of brick tapering up to a pronounced and moulded top and is by far the tallest structure in the area. Its height means that it is a landmark structure and the only building within the mill complex that can be seen away from the site.
- 5.57 North-west of the chimney is a wide tunnel through the cliff face. This is now separated off from a field by a high metal fence but once allowed access to and from Pleasley village, which would have been the home for many of the mills' workforce. The tunnel is a typically solid 19<sup>th</sup> century construction of stone with little architectural embellishment except for the use of rusticated stones forming the arch.



Mill Chimney

- 5.58 West of the mill chimney is a newly formed car park. Though of no value to the character of the conservation area it is well-sited in that it does not impact onto either the nearby mills or mill pond.

#### **OPPORTUNITY 4**

Improvements to the newly formed car park, such as landscaping, could enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

#### **The former Vale House**

- 5.59 Opposite Mill 1 and situated high above the road is the site of the former Vale House. Vale House had the appearance of a mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Italianate villa and this was consistent with the improvements that William Hollins was known to have made to the property in the 1860s. To what extent these improvements involved either alterations or rebuilding was unclear but the use of a classical rather than the gothic style, which is more typical of the non-mill buildings, suggests that the works modified an early structure, possibly the original manager's house of 1792.
- 5.60 The house was substantially demolished in 2008 due to it becoming dangerous, resulting in the loss of the most significant non-industrial building within the conservation area. As the home of various managers, most notably William Hollins, it represented the close working relationship between mill owners and their employees that existed at Pleasley from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>

Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and  
Management Plan

centuries, with its closeness to Mill 1 and its elevated position and elaborate gardens showing its top status within the hierarchy of the mill.



*The former Vale House*

- 5.61 The site has now been redeveloped for housing. The loss of Vale House has harmed the special architectural and historic interest of the conservation area. The records of Vale House should be kept as an historical reference and lodged with Bolsover District Council and the Derbyshire County Council Heritage Environment Record.
- 5.62 To the sides and rear of the former Vale House are the remains of its formal garden. The carriage ways that led to the property are now overgrown but their low walls can still be seen climbing the slope west and east of the house. To the west side of the house and reaching down to the two lodges are the remains of a small arboretum or at least a plantation of non native trees. Towards the rear of the house a zigzag path climbs up the slopes and leads to a 'wild' garden area in which limestone outcrops are used with trees and low shrubs to produce a 'romantic' garden.
- 5.63 At the back of the former Vale House site is situated Pleasley Vale Cave. This important archaeological site has yielded significant Pleistocene fauna and has in situ deposits at the back and needs to be protected as part of any development proposals.



Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and  
Management Plan

- 5.64 The romantic garden to the rear of the former Vale House site is bounded on the northern edge by Pleasley Park and a low stone wall divides the two. This wall had been repaired as part of a Countryside Stewardship Scheme but has since been broken in places. Despite this, there is an obvious entrance between the park and garden and located here are the remains of a small circular building built in large, random coursed stones. This is presumably the remains of a building for hunting dating from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century when the Park was used for game shooting.



Wall between the former Vale House gardens and Pleasley Park

**THREAT 6**

The poor condition of the trees and vegetation of the formal garden, the wild garden and the small arboretum at the former Vale House site and the general lack of management of the trees has resulted in this once important feature being detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

**Mill 2**

- 5.65 Directly east of Mill 1 across a tarmac yard is Mill 2. Historically the term Mill 2 is slightly confusing in that it was constructed as a combing shed and consequently ancillary in use to the two original mills. It was only when it was extended around 1952 that it became a mill. The original combing shed was constructed in 1913 and formed part of a considerable investment in the mills that resulted from the success of Viyella.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



Mill 2

- 5.66 The first part of the building can be clearly seen sitting below the 1950s extension. It is of two storeys with a single storey extension to the rear. The main elevation faces the yard and the 1913 extension to Mill 1. It is a plain construction of wide and tall windows within a stone framework. The ends are slightly pronounced with wider windows but overall the building presents a uniform appearance with a vertical emphasis which is typical of mill buildings within Pleasley. The single storey extension runs back parallel to the road and uses the same type of windows but has a raised parapet that hides and supports rows of triangular factory-windows.
- 5.67 The 1950s extension involved the construction of another two storeys on the combing shed and a three storey extension to the side. The additional two-storeys make some attempt at maintaining the vertical emphasis of windows and bays but the use of concrete, the plainness of the windows and the north-light windows on the top of the building means that the addition dominates. The side extension is even more different and introduces to the side a horizontal emphasis which accentuates that of the 1913 single storey element. Whilst the 1950s extensions have some historical interest as part of the development of the mills, in terms of architecture they fail to match the pattern and quality of the earlier mill buildings. Though they do not detract markedly from the character of the conservation area they do represent an area of the mill complex that could be re-worked and improved upon.
- 5.68 Mill 2 is situated at a slight curve in the course of the Vale and spatially this closes off views between the two original mills and creates two separate character areas within the mill complex. When moving beyond the side of Mill



## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

2 another industrial scene opens up, that of the west elevation of Mill 3 with its wide mill pond in the foreground. Whereas Mills 1 & 2 are closely related in visual and functional terms, Mill 3 appears as separate. It is approached by a straight section of the Meden that then runs under the mill. The slopes of the Vale also straighten out here and both elements combine to provide a strong visual frame to Mill 3 which cuts across the view with a mass of stone and windows. The result is both dramatic and beautiful; it is where the combination of the industrial and natural elements meet at their most harmonious within the conservation area.

- 5.69 At this point the Meden is heavily managed into a straight channel and then broadens out into the mill pond. Though an ever-present feature throughout the conservation area it is here where the river makes its greatest visual contribution to the character of the conservation area.
- 5.70 The only negative factor in this scene is the row of industrial sheds that run parallel to the Meden. These brick buildings date from the 1930s and 1950s and are plain basic structures that appear basic and brutal. Whilst they follow the course of the Meden and add to the visual framing of Mill 3 their basic character is discordant in this sensitive location.

### Rock House

- 5.71 Opposite these buildings is Rock House; a detached mid 19<sup>th</sup> century house built within a gothic style (The property has been subdivided in the past). Its most notable architectural feature is its angular corner bay with its roof of slate laid in a diamond pattern surmounted by an iron lantern.



Rock House

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

- 5.72 A fairly typical building of its type and age though well designed non-the-less and retaining its original appearance. Why it was built and who for is unclear though like the former Vale House its presence within the mill complex rather than the estate village suggests that it may have been built for another manager or sub manager possibly with responsibility for Mill 3.

### **Mill 3**

- 5.73 Mill 3 was constructed in 1847 and is by far the larger of the 1840s mills and the best in terms of historical survival. The west elevation facing the mill pond is 31 bays in width. Over the river the mill is of four storeys and then projects forward on the southern bank and moves up to five storeys and continues into the bank. Like Mill 1 there is little architectural detail except for slightly raised areas of stone work to the ends and the centre of the projection on the southern bank. The parapet of the building is simply articulated by two to four stone bands. The windows, modern replications, are of 9 panes with the lower three opening inwards. All windows are surmounted by wedge lintels similar to Mill 1.



Mill 3

- 5.74 In the same way as Mill 1, Mill 3's most legible and impressive elevation is the west elevation, that facing its mill pond. The north and east elevations of Mill 3 are more confused and show numerous additions, mostly from the late 19th century that have been added to the loading areas. Despite these additions the extent of the original mill can still be made out and at its northern end is a



Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and  
Management Plan

tower at the top of which is a stone fret-work arch that may indicate the location of a belfry. The later additions to Mill 3 are all subservient in scale to

the original structure and this maintains its dominance. This compares favourably with the other mills, whose original sections have been subsumed into later additions.

- 5.75 Many of the additions to Mill 3 are of historical importance as ancillary buildings to the mill. The northern range of outbuildings still creates a courtyard of loading bays and workshops. The outbuildings to the middle of mill are more modern in date and are of little to no importance. One outbuilding is detached from the mill and fronts the road. It is a one and half storey stone building, the rear of which has been rebuilt in brick, which possibly indicates that the building has been partially demolished. The purpose of the building is unclear though 19<sup>th</sup> century maps suggest that the mill school was in this area and the architecture of the building would tie in with that purpose though this remains to be confirmed.

**OPPORTUNITY 5**

The potential conversion of all three Mills to secure new appropriate and viable uses for the buildings could bring significant benefits to the conservation area. This could include the removal of inappropriate and unneeded existing modern extensions to improve the setting of the Mills.

- 5.76 Moving east from the mill the Meden is shifted south and becomes separated from the road by a large car park. The car park originally would have housed a number of ancillary buildings and it here that possibly the bath house, mechanical institute and other social buildings were placed. The car park and its associated lighting represent an urban intrusion and do not enhance the area but it is difficult to see where else parking provision could be satisfied in this locality.

**OPPORTUNITY 6**

Improvements to the car park, such as soft landscaping, could enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 5.77 Beyond the car park and marking the eastern extent of the mill complex is the former Greaseworks / dye house building. This two storey stone built block has been brought back into use by Bolsover District Council as an outdoor recreational activity centre using funding from The Big Lottery Fund, the European Regional Development Fund, the Coalfield Regeneration Trust and Bolsover District Council.
- 5.78 The Greaseworks is Bolsover Council's main operating base for the Pleasley outdoor activity centre and provides additional facilities such as changing facilities, storage, office accommodation and a multi purpose meeting / classroom / conference room with a coffee bar. In addition, the centre provides an educational base equipped with internet access for environmental awareness courses, working with schools on cross curricular subjects such as

Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan  
science, geography, English, history and exploring to obtain dedicated curriculum packs on the Vale.



Pleasley Outdoor Activity Centre

- 5.79 Bolsover District Council has undertaken hard landscape improvements to the car park area around the Greaseworks building but some soft landscaping could help soften its visual to help the area blend and harmonize with its natural surroundings.

#### **OPPORTUNITY 7**

The Greaseworks facility is now established and continues to facilitate a wider educational programme to improve the understanding of the architectural, historic, archaeological and natural interests of the area. This in turn provides a basis from which to enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area through improved management of the area, as well as linking to other objectives such as tackling health inequalities, unemployment, anti-social behaviour and social inclusion.

### **Key Element - The Natural Environment**

- 5.80 The entry to the Mill complex is characterised by an abrupt display of large conifers, mostly Austrian pine, set in a matrix of Yew trees, with occasional Beech and Sycamore. Other species include a Giant redwood, several Cedars of Lebanon, Scots pine and Holly. A younger generation of Lawson's cypress varieties continues the theme which is very characteristic of late Victorian and Edwardian gardens. The age of trees is often hard to assess but this Arboretum will have been planted from around 1860 as setting to the Vale House. Three Pines to the north of Outgang Lane are in a domestic garden and outside the conservation area.
- 5.81 These trees provide a mature high quality setting to the millpond which has the calculated appearance of a lake and to the mill owner's house. Trees on the former Vale House site are threatened by both neglect and unsympathetic development. However, it is expected that proposals for the redevelopment of the site will see the trees protected.
- 5.82 All three Mills are concealed to the south by woodland similar in appearance to that described in the Coppice, clothing steep valley slopes. Sycamore occupies much of the canopy in association with Ash, which is very characteristic. The dynamics of these 2 species, the native Ash, and Sycamore which is generally held to be exotic, remain to a degree obscure.



South of Mill 3 are the wooded valley slopes

### **OPPORTUNITY 8**

The management of works to trees through management agreements would both preserve and potentially enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 5.83 Amongst the woodland in the Mill Complex can be found notable ground flora, including Wood Anemone, Ramsons and Bellflower. This contributes to the attractiveness and importance of the area and is best seen in spring and may date back to the time when this area of the country was covered by woodland.
- 5.84 Outcrops of rock, and cliff faces are increasingly obscured by scrub vegetation, seeded into cracks and fissures in the rock. The extent to which this compromises stability is unclear.



Rock face obscured by scrub vegetation

### **THREAT 7**

The increasing colonisation of the outcrops of rock and cliff faces by scrub vegetation lessens the visual relationship between these geological features and the buildings located within their setting to the detriment of the character and appearance of the conservation area.



### **Area 3: The Estate Village and Stuffynwood Lane**

- 5.85 Moving west from the mill complex the Vale takes a hair-pin turn and almost immediately the industrial character changes to that of the rural and agricultural Estate Village and Stuffynwood lane.

#### **Key Element – Rural and Agricultural character**

- 5.86 The Vale begins to broaden out and a more expansive impression establishes itself with meadows running either side of the road, bounded by iron estate fencing with elaborate gates. It is the landscape which is dominant here: the meadows as they recede west towards Little Matlock, the rise of the land as it runs north up Meden Lane and out of the Vale, the wooden slopes of Pleasley Park on the northern slopes and of the Northfield Plantation in the eastern distance.



The Vale broadens out to the east and its rural character becomes evident

- 5.87 Punctuating this scenery are the remaining buildings of the estate village, though village is perhaps an inappropriate term to what are two short terraces (named Meadow Houses on 19<sup>th</sup> century maps), a church and a war memorial.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



*Church of St Chad*



*War Memorial*

- 5.88 Even though the first row of houses built in 1792 have been demolished this area never had the structure and scale that is normally associated with a village, even a planned 19<sup>th</sup> century one. The majority of local workforce would have come from Pleasley Village and the Mansfield and Shirebrook areas. What is represented here is perhaps housing for the upper level of the workforce. In a similar way to how a landlord of a country estate would build high quality 'cottages' for people such as foremen, blacksmiths and tradespeople whilst leaving the common labourer to their own devices it is probable that these houses were built for the lower levels of management and the upper sections of staff on the factory floor. In this respect the mill owner, William Hollins in this instance, could reward loyalty and service to his most important staff whilst forming a pleasant estate environment enlivened by a few buildings and not swamped by masses of workers terraces.



*Top Meadow Cottages*

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

5.89 The positive relationship with the residents continues to this day as the Pleasley Vale Residents Association undertakes a number of management tasks that seek to preserve the natural beauty of the Vale. Projects have included:

- The impressive Uplands garden project involving the authentic restoration of the kitchen garden to the now demolished Uplands House and its on- going maintenance and management for the benefit of the local community.
- Repairs to the culvert below Top Row
- The upkeep of War Memorial grass cutting, planting and general maintenance and the gardens surrounding the Church of St Chad;
- clear ups in the Vale where overgrown vegetation is cut back and hedges cut and maintained;
- the planting of Cowslips and keeping grass borders tidy and cut;
- the regular mowing of the Cricket Field.

5.90 The two remaining groups of houses, the Top and Lower Meadow Cottages, also called Meden Bank Cottages comprise of two terraces built in 1854 to a scale and quality typically associated with middle class housing of the period. Regularly coursed stone is used throughout with hipped roofs of natural slate. The design of each terrace is given definition and balance by the use of gables to the long elevations and the detailing is a varied use of gothic motifs such as drip moulds over windows and Tudor arches over doors. Both sets of cottages appear in harmony with their rural landscape setting and contribute significantly to its impression as an estate rather than just farmed landscape.



*Top Meadow Cottages*



*Lower Meadow Cottages*

5.91 The loss of architectural details from the Top and Lower Meadow Cottages through unsympathetic alterations carried out under residential permitted development rights has been a problem although the cottages retain most of their original features. An article 4 Direction under the Planning General Permitted Development Order 1995 (as amended) has been put in place on both Top and Bottom Row (Meadow cottages) removing permitted development rights so that alterations now require planning permission.



Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and  
Management Plan

- 5.92 The two terraces are placed above the Meden as the southern slope starts to rise and this gives the buildings increased prominence at a point where the road diverges from the Meden and moves north and out to Mansfield. Before the road moves north there is a branch road up to the houses and the junction is marked by a stone bridge over the Meden and a war memorial to the members of the Company that lost their lives in the First and Second World Wars. This is a simple attractive monument, well-maintained and bounded by painted iron railings. Its location at the small road junction but away from the housing gives it a degree of prominence acting as a way point through the area, this effect is probably intentional.



*War Memorial*

- 5.93 Behind the Lower Terrace and standing on the cliff above was once a large 19<sup>th</sup> century Villa called Uplands. The building was occupied until 1960 and was last occupied by the Royce family. The associated orchard had up to 80 old variety apple and pear trees and the authentic restoration of the Uplands kitchen garden has been undertaken by residents with the help of Nottinghamshire County Council Local Improvement Scheme funding.

**LOCAL INTEREST FACT**

It is reported that the old man of the Royce family was locally known as 'The Squire' and that he had two sons who were spitfire pilots in the Second World War who would fly low through the Vale on return from sorties in the Battle of Britain.

- 5.94 The northern turn of the road marks a transition point within the conservation area. It is where the road parts company with the Meden and the river itself starts to regain a natural course and shape as it continues east, the land either side becoming more varied and natural in appearance through the growth of scrub, trees and marshier ground. By contrast the road, Meden Lane at this point quickly leads to the open undulating countryside that characterises the wider area and can consequently be seen as one of the main entrance points to Pleasley Vale.



## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



*Landscape with fencing*

- 5.95 Fields are located on either side of the road. That on the eastern side used to be the company recreation ground and included a cricket ground. These have since been reclaimed by grassland and only a crude 20<sup>th</sup> century gate with the letters VSC (Viyella Sports Club) remain. Boundaries to the road are significant here and comprise of metal estate fencing to the lower section of the road and then dry stone walling.
- 5.96 At the top of the road where it meets the course of the former railway line are the remains of the large warehouse site that serviced the mills. At this warehouse, the company would store the famous Viyella cloth prior to being loaded onto trains in a small siding area just to the west of the water tower. The warehouse is now roofless and in use as a plant nursery. The buildings look like a walled garden at first glance but the stone water tower gives its original use away.



*Former Warehouse and Water Tower*

- 5.97 A single-track branch road, Church Lane leads east off from Common Lane to St Chads Church, its vicarage, the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century stone bridge over the Meden (listed grade II) and the lodge to Stuffynwood Hall.
- 5.98 St Chad's Church is a small hall church built of brick in an early English style that was commissioned by Joseph Paget of Stuffynwood Hall. The Mansfield Woodhouse Parish Magazine of September 1931 records, "St Chad's Stuffynwood was first opened in the Parish of Shirebrook on November 8th, 1876, and was moved into the Woodhouse Parish in the spring of 1881". Its pews were removed to its architectural and historic detriment with only one or two remaining.
- 5.99 This link to the Paget family is recorded in an extract from the Woodhouse Magazine, which expressed "the Vicar's regret at Mrs Paget's departure from Stuffynwood to Brighton, and thanking her for all she had done for the Church and Sunday School 'We happen to know that it was one of the bitterest of Mrs Paget's regrets in leaving Stuffynwood that she had to leave St Chads...' Such is the story of St Chads. It is a record of lonely but faithful witness to the reality of the life in grace".

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



*Church of St Chad*



*Lodge to Stuffynwood Hall*

- 5.100 The vicarage was constructed at the same time and is a typically large detached building that echoes the materials and style of the church.
- 5.101 The Lodge to Stuffynwood Hall is the most distinctive of the remaining lodge buildings. It dates from the 1860s the same time as the now demolished Stuffynwood Hall. Adjoining are a set of tall estate railings that mark the start of the tree lined avenue of Stuffynwood Lane, that once lead to Stuffynwood Hall. Stuffynwood Hall was a country mansion set in gardens built by Joseph Paget. It was demolished in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and only two semi-detached houses survive at the entrance to its gardens. Like the lodge these are constructed in a cottage gothic style and can be seen from the eastern edge of Pleasley Park where they are a small component in the panoramic views of the surrounding countryside.
- 5.102 Further up Stuffynwood Lane is Stuffynwood Farm, a grade II listed farmhouse with a collection of historic and modern farm buildings. The farmhouse dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century which makes it the earliest building within the conservation area. Its contribution to the character of the conservation area is one of historic interest and in views from the eastern edge of Pleasley Park where, like the remaining cottages of the Hall it appears as a component part of the wider farmed landscape.



*Stuffynwood Farm*

Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and  
Management Plan

- 5.103 From Stuffynwood Farm the lane continues northwest up to Wood Lane. At this junction the boundary of the conservation area stretches out to include 'The Clusters', two pairs of semi-detached properties dating from the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The eastern pair of houses is the former northern lodge to Stuffynwood Hall and is of similar style and age to the other lodges within the conservation area. Adjoining the Clusters is a bungalow built for the woodsmen to Pleasley Park. Its architectural style is unremarkable and it probably dates to the 1930s when the Park was re-stocked by the Forestry Commission.

**The Natural Environment**

- 5.104 Stuffynwood Hall appears characterised by broadleaved woodland along the main drive, with similar groups offset including species such as Beech, Common lime, Oak and Horse chestnut, with occasional conifers providing winter colour. One group is now prominent and still contains Larch. This is a typical range of species to be found in the grounds of nineteenth century Halls. The possibility of rare or notable trees cannot be ruled out, and with the destruction of Stuffynwood Hall itself the trees and their parkland setting take on a greater historical importance.
- 5.105 The estate village comprises relatively little built besides the church and various domestic dwellings. 3 mature Larch are notable, and relatively young, beside one terrace, while the surrounding fields are characterised by mature hedgerow or boundary trees, mostly Common lime, Beech, Oak and Horse Chestnut. A belt of conifers beside the Meden Trail are Corsican, rather than Austrian, pine. The former warehouse that is now a horticultural nursery has a line of Manchester poplars along its boundaries. These are large but crudely lopped. Much of the quality of the trees though is in the massive trunks.

**OPPORTUNITY 9**

The management of works to trees through management agreements would both preserve and potentially enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.



## Area 4: Little Matlock and Littlewood

- 5.106 Beyond the lodge two footpaths run east either side of the Meden. The natural pattern to the rivers course and the surrounding vegetation continues to develop and all traces of the estate managed landscape of the village disappear.

### Key Element – open Spaces and Rock Faces

- 5.107 The southern path runs through the Northwood Plantation; a piece of woodland that runs down the side of the Vale to the banks of the river. There are no structures within the woodland except for one boundary wall though there is evidence of planting for game cover and woodland management dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.



Northfield Plantation

- 5.108 At its eastern extent the path breaks out from the woodland and provides views across the bank and to Littlewood Lane and bridge. The road bridge is a simple stone bridge with a shallow arch. Though solidly constructed it shows signs of neglect to its parapet and the appearance of large drainage pipe at this point detracts from its setting.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



- 5.109 The southern path runs through a short area of woodland before entering a broad river valley enclosed on its northern side by the limestone out crop of the gorge which at this point forms a cliff face. This has resulted in the Littlewood Craggs becoming a well used climbing site, although permission of the owners is required. On the ridge line of the cliff are a number of notable small-leaved limes that show evidence of centuries of coppicing.
- 5.110 It is presumably the combination of cliff face and river that gave the name Little Matlock to the area. Towards the eastern extent of the path the cliff face folds into the hill side and a low revetment wall and two small ditches can be seen running parallel to the river. 19<sup>th</sup> century Ordnance Survey Maps reveal that these field remains probably date from lime-kilns which at the time of survey are described as disused. The distance away from the mills suggest that they are a separate industrial activity and that they may predate the appearance of the mills. Further investigation is required to see whether this feature is in fact related to lime making and to what date they may be.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



*Little Matlock*

- 5.111 The eastern boundary of the conservation area ends at this point on the line of the Robin Hood Railway line. The lane rises steeply north up the bank to Littlewood Farm, one of two traditional farmsteads within the conservation area. Littlewood Farm is a large farmstead comprising a long farmhouses forming one side of a farmyard that retains its threshing barn. All the farm buildings are converted and the farm house has been renewed. Whilst this has led to a loss of agricultural character, the conversion is well-designed and built and the complex has been given a new sense of life and purpose whilst retaining their value to the conservation area.



## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



Littlewood Farm

- 5.112 Little Matlock is defined by a limestone ridge with areas of precipitous rock lined at their summit with the rare native tree, Small leaved lime, mostly coppiced, and of great size and age. These are veteran trees and of particular value for that reason. They might fall apart, or re-coppicing might be trialed, but this is a very long-lived species whatever management is or is not undertaken. Woodland still predominates but scrub encroachment into pasture reflects an easing of grazing and may have an adverse effect on biodiversity by causing the loss of species-rich grassland. In the absence of sustained intervention an orderly succession to woodland is inevitable.

### **THREAT 9**

The loss of the small leaved lime trees on the limestone ridge would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### **OPPORTUNITY 10**

The management of works to trees management agreements would both preserve and potentially enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.



## Area 5: Pleasley Park

- 5.113 The majority of tree cover currently within Pleasley Park was planted between 1931 and 1944, after the previous woodland was felled and cleared during the First World War, as part of the war effort.



Pleasley Park

### Key Element - Woodland

- 5.114 The origins of the woodland that was felled and cleared during the First World War are unclear. A typical medieval park may have been woodland pasture rather than dense woodland and consequently the Park as woodland may be a more recent creation than is often thought. It is known that William Hollins used the woodland for game shooting and the presence of two forges in the area suggest that charcoal burning may have been carried out in the park. Evidence for quarrying exists in the north east corner though is slight in scale. Adjacent to this was Red House a detached building built in the late 1900s and subsequently demolished with all that remains of the site and garden are several rhododendron bushes and a boundary hedge. Any remains of medieval and earlier origins are not obvious and perhaps may start to emerge

with further study into the ditches and depressions that occur within its boundaries.

### **OPPORTUNITY 11**

A greater understanding of the archaeological interest of Pleasley Park would inform the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 5.115 The tree cover of the woodland consists mostly of Sycamore with the occasional patch of Pine. The flora of the forest floor consists mostly of plants associated with an alkali soil. An exception to this is sporadic outcrops on higher ground of flora associated with acid soils.
- 5.116 Within the park views are completely constrained only opening up along the paths that work through the wood in a grid-like pattern. Most of these paths seem to be associated with the 20<sup>th</sup> century plantation only at its western edge are paths that appear to be either associated with the small quarry and the former Vale House. Boundary evidence that might indicate the medieval extent of the park such as deer leaps appear to be hidden or absent. At the western and eastern edges views open up across the surrounding landscape. Most notable are the views west towards Stuffynwood Farm.



*View towards Stuffynwood Farm*

- 5.117 Although comprising the greater part of the conservation area Pleasley Park occupies relatively flat ground and is not prominent in the landscape. Its greatest impact is from beneath its southern edge above the gorge. Good

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

views are obtained across farmland to the west. The woodland is mainly broadleaved, most of that is Sycamore, and the current stock was planted between 1933 and 1944. Terrain and the similar age and spacing of the trees mean much of the woodland lacks the drama of, for example, the Coppice. The western edge is characterised by a more natural appearance, with abandoned coppice and self-sown standards. There is also a notable stand of Laburnum, around the Red House, which must be startling in early summer with its bright yellow flowers but is undeniably anomalous. Laburnum is a modest and unusual theme in several places; undoubtedly planted for amenity it has self-seeded locally on cliff faces and along the abandoned railway line.

- 5.118 The value of the Park to the conservation area is one of historical interest and continuity, archaeological potential and visual value, both within and without the Park. The recreational and forestry uses of the park maintain a pleasant environment and its historical value.

### **OPPORTUNITY 12**

The management of works to trees through management agreements would both preserve and potentially enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

### **THREAT 10**

The loss of woodland to urban forms of development would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

## **Area 6: The former Tibshelf Pleasley Railway Line**

- 5.119 The southern boundary of the conservation area runs along the disused Tibshelf Pleasley Railway Line which is now part of the Meden Way, a circular walk from Mansfield that runs round the majority of the conservation area.



The disused Tibshelf Pleasley Railway Line

- 5.120 All indication of the tracks along the Tibshelf Pleasley Railway Line have now gone just leaving the embankments which at the middle section cuts through the limestone, leaving exposed faces, and one railway bridge that connects the Vale to Northfield Farm.
- 5.121 The entrance to the trail from Common Lane allows good views into and out of the conservation area and is marked with a replica of the Nine Ladies Stone Circle on Stanton Moor. This feature was erected at the bicentenary of the death of Major Hayman Rooke, who in addition to discovering the Roman Villa site also was the first to describe the Nine Ladies Stone Circle. He is understood to have lived in Woodhouse at Woodhouse Place on the corner of Leeming Lane and Mansfield Road.
- 5.122 The path becomes increasingly enclosed by the embankment moving north-west along the trail, both sides of which are flanked by low dry stone walls. Views north into the conservation area start to become obscured by tree cover



## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

and approaching the mills glimpses of the factory complex start to appear through the cover. Views out of the conservation area are also constrained but are slightly more open and take in a panorama of cultivated fields and grass land. The central section of the Meden Trail was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest in the late 1980's.

### Key Element - The Natural Environment

- 5.123 The former Tibshelf Pleasley railway line forms the southern boundary of the conservation area. It is typical of abandoned railways in that following closure there has been a succession to woodland on operational banks and slopes. Unsurprisingly the range of tree species represented replicates those found in adjacent woodland, though with a greater percentage of pioneer species such as Birch. There are several notable Laburnums, coppice stools with multiple stems.

#### OPPORTUNITY 13

The management of works to trees through management agreements would both preserve and potentially enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 5.124 It is very noticeable that scrub woodland is engulfing adjacent grassland and this reflects changes in farming practice. Control of scrub is frequently cited as desirable conservation management.

#### THREAT 11

The encroachment of scrub woodland could lead to the loss of the grassland that is characteristic here which could be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

- 5.125 Glimpsed views of the Mill complex may with difficulty be obtained through the intervening trees.

#### OPPORTUNITY 14

The limited and focused felling of trees beside the Meden Trail to open up views to the Mills would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

## 6 Features of Interest

### Defined Elsewhere

#### Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Pleasley Vale Railway (Meden Trail Nature Reserve) (Grid Ref. SK 519 649)

#### Listed Buildings

Grade II, The Security Lodge (Ref. 8/140)

Grade II, The Gardeners Lodge (Ref. 8/141)

Grade II, The Church of St Chad (Ref. 1/19)

Grade II, Stuffynwood Farm (Ref. 8/154)

Grade II, Pleasley Bridge, Church Lane (Ref. 1261/11/10006 & Ref.1/20)

#### Regionally Important Geological Sites

Pleasley Vale (Grid Ref. SK 523 562)

#### Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation

Pleasley Park (Ref. BO 151)

Pleasley Vale (Ref. BO 175)

#### Entries on the Sites and Monuments Record

Pleasley Park (Ref. 12003)

Pleasley Vale Cave (Ref. 12014)

Forge (site of), Pleasley Vale Cave (Ref. 12015)

Earthworks, Pleasley Park (Ref. 12020)

Pleasley Vale Works and millponds (Ref. 12024)

Rock shelter, Stuffynwood (Ref. 12511)

Stuffynwood Rock shelter (Ref. 12512)

Little Matlock Dam (Ref. 12513)

Artefact scatters, Stuffynwood Hall (Ref. 12532)

Ice-house, Stuffynwood Hall (Ref. 12536)

Stuffynwood Farm (Ref. 12543)

#### Sites identified within the Creswell Crags Conservation Plan

Pleasley Cave 1 (Ref. PL1)

Pleasley Cave 2 (Ref. PL2)

Pleasley Cave 3 (Ref. PL3)

Yew Tree Cave (Ref. PL4)

Pleasley Cave 5 (Ref. PL5)

Pleasley Cave 6 (Ref. PL6)

Pleasley Cave 7 (Ref. PL7)

Stuffyn Wood Rock Shelter 1 (Ref. PL8)

Stuffyn Wood Rock Shelter 2 (Ref. PL9)

Pleasley Vale Cave (Ref. PL10)

#### Trees and Woodlands

Most trees in a conservation area are protected from immediate felling. However, no trees are currently covered by Tree Preservation Orders

# Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

## Defined in the Appraisal

### Landmark Buildings

The following buildings have been identified as landmark buildings:

The former Vale House  
Mill-chimney  
Mill 1  
Mill 2  
Mill 3  
Top Meadow Cottages  
Lower Meadow Cottages  
War Memorial  
The Church of St Chad  
Company railway train sheds  
Littlewood Farm  
Stuffynwood Farm

### Unlisted Buildings of Merit

The following buildings have also been identified as buildings of special local interest:

Rock House  
The Clusters  
Northern lodge to Stuffynwood Hall  
Southern lodge to Stuffynwood Hall  
The Greaseworks

### Views

The following views have been identified as important to the character and appearance of the conservation area:

- Views from the Copse are constrained by woodland and channelled along the river until the chimney of Mill 1 becomes a focal point.
- From the lodges views open up to include Mills 1 and 2 with the former Vale House site whilst the steepness and curves of the slope dominate the background. This combined with the height of the buildings gives a sense of drama. The view east is closed by Mill 2 whilst that west is closed by the curve of the road and the arboretum of the former Vale House.
- East of Mill 2 the view east is dominated by Mill 3 with its mill pond in the foreground. There is a slightly more open feel to the area and all visual elements draw the focus to Mill 3 which closes off the view east.
- Beyond Mill 3 the Vale takes a sharp turn beyond which a very different, rural view opens up, that of the estate village and farmland. The Vale broadens out producing a more open aspect which complements the gentle character of the landscape and buildings.
- Continuing along the Meden Lane the woodland closes off the area at the road to Stuffynwood Hall. Beyond this the view changes yet again to a more natural, less agricultural character. A sense of drama is reintroduced by the exposed limestone cliffs on the northern side of the bank.

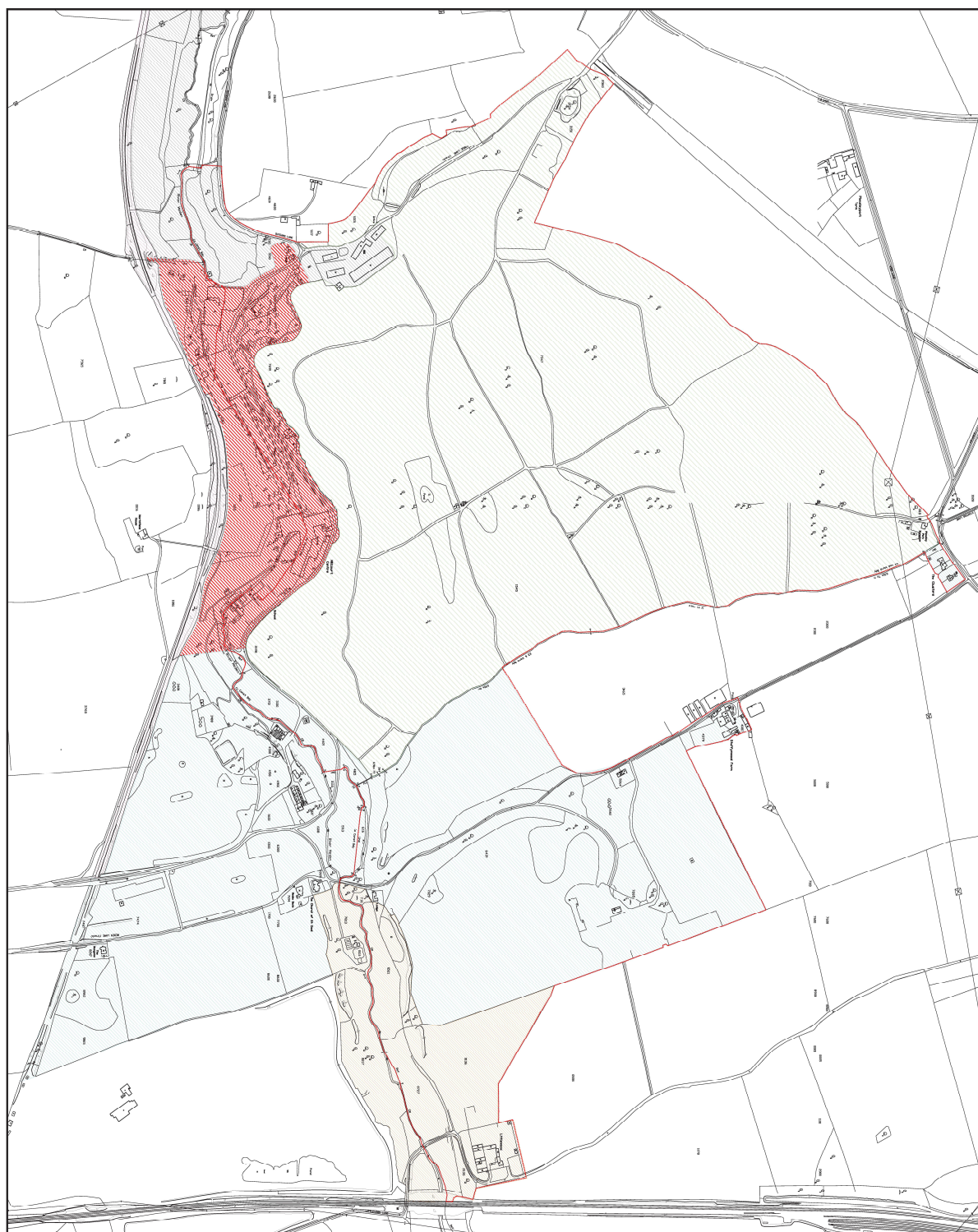
# Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

## **Note on features identified in the Appraisal**

The Unlisted Buildings of Merit form part of the list of undesignated heritage assets on the Historic Environment Records for the respective Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire County Council's and the local List for Mansfield and Bolsover District Councils where relevant.



# Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



## CHARACTER AREAS

- THE COPPICE & THE CRESWELL ARCHAEOLOGICAL WALK
- THE MILL COMPLEX
- THE ESTATE VILLAGE & STUFFYWOOD LANE
- LITTLE MATLOCK & LITTLEWOOD
- PLEASLEY PARK
- THE FORMER 'TRESHFELD' PLEASLEY RAILWAY LINE
- CONSERVATION AREA OUTLINE

**PROJECT**  
C/A Appraisal & Management Plan  
Pleasley Park & Vale  
Conservation Area  
The District of Bobover

### Character Arcs

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|--------|----------|
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| DOWN   | CHECKED  |
| 1007   |          |

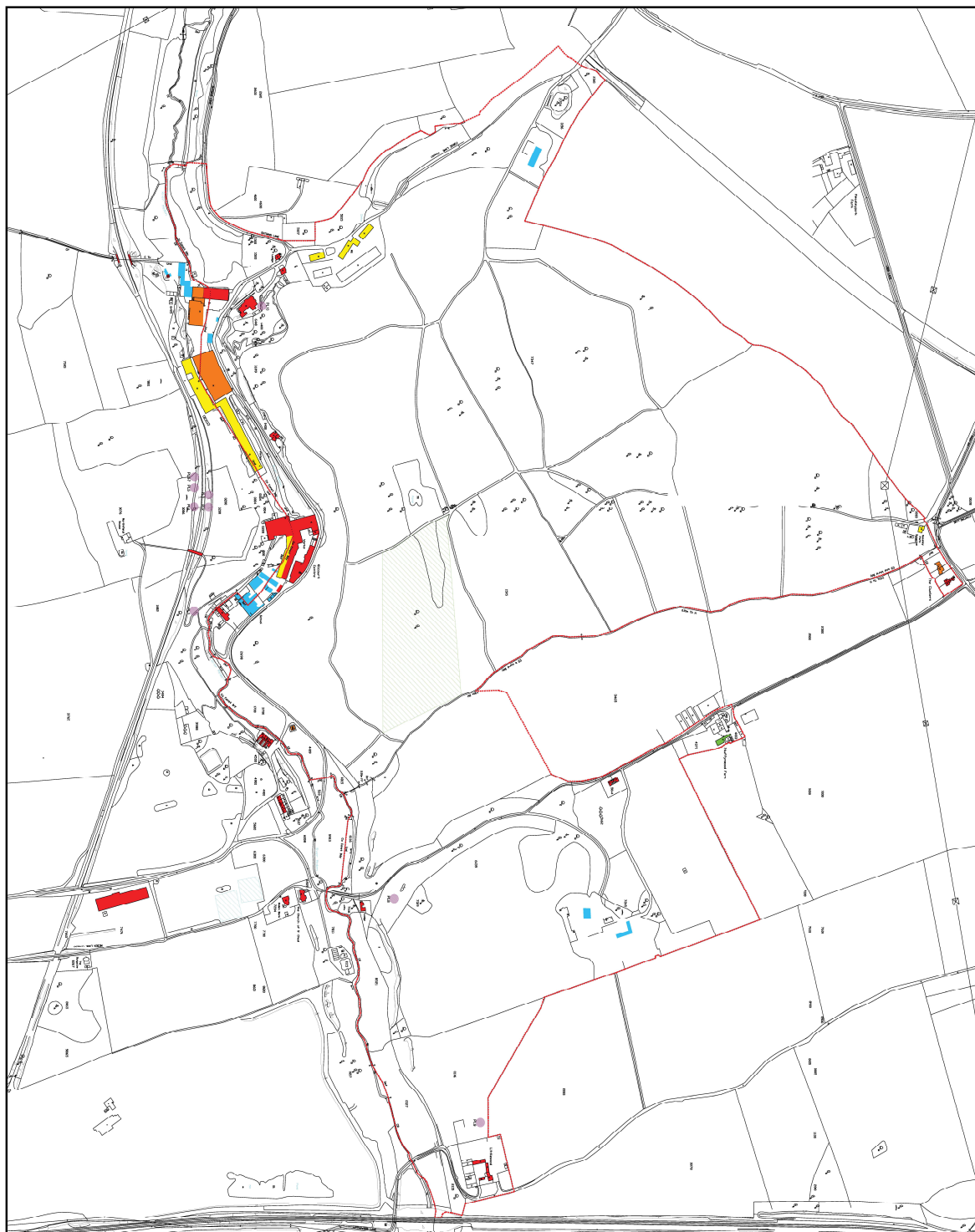
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# Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



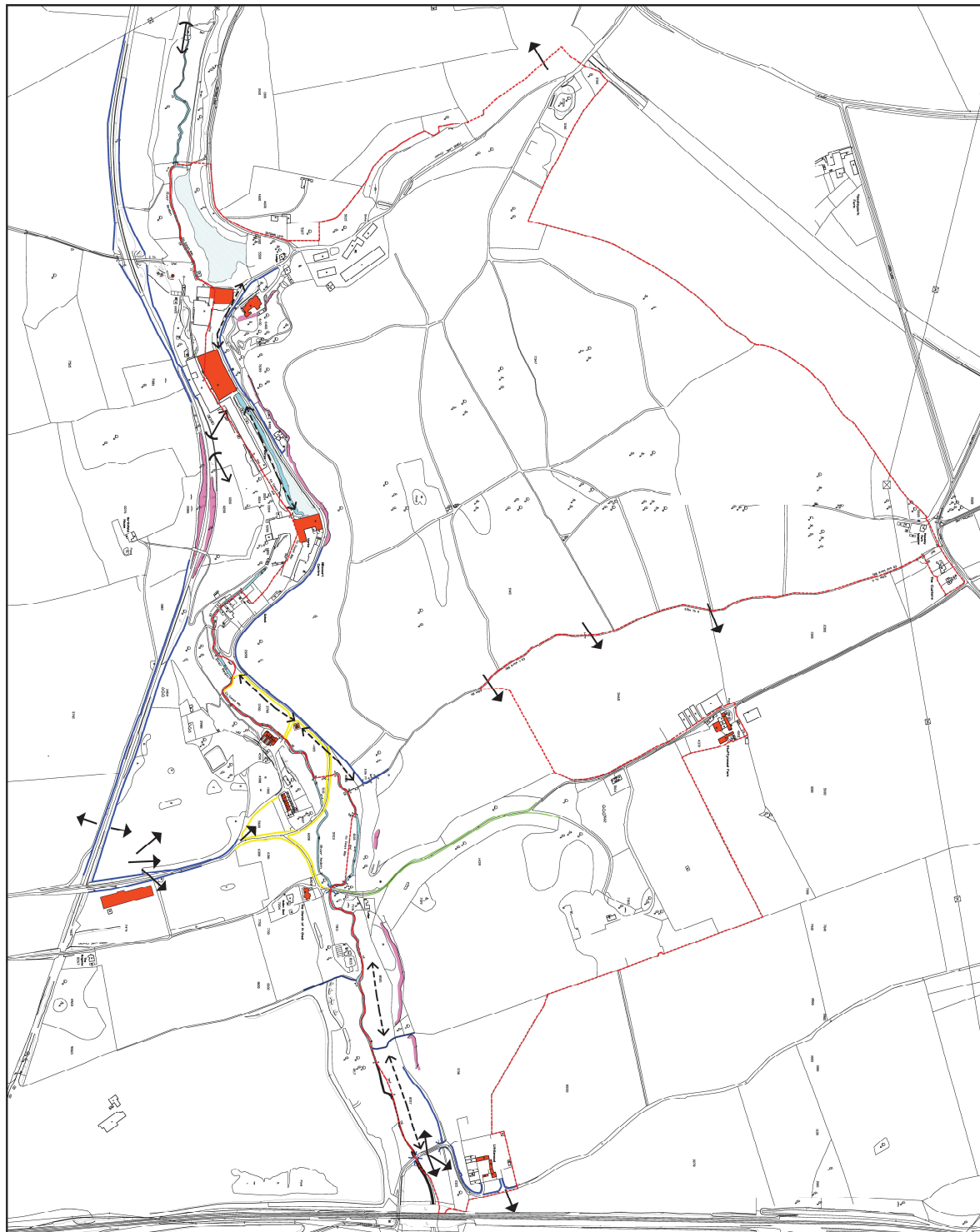
**PHASING PLAN**

- PRE-1800
- 1800-1850
- 1850-1900
- 1900-1950
- 1950-PRESENT
- DISAPPEARED BUILDINGS
- CONSERVATION AREA

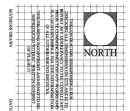


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# Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan



- TOWNSCAPE**
- THE MEEN
  - STONE WALLS
  - STONE BRIDGES
  - ESTATE BUILDINGS
  - TITLE LINED VEHICLE
  - LIMESTONE OUTCROP
  - LANDMARK BUILDINGS
  - CONSERVATION AREA OUTLINE
- VIEWS**
- STRONG DIRECT VIEW
  - SLIPPED VIEW
  - VIEW A
  - VIEW B



Pleasley Park & Vale  
 Conservation Area  
 The District of Belper  
 Derbyshire

0145/01  
 May 2008  
 ADN  
 12500  
 0145/01

Pleasit Ltd  
 0145/01



## **7. Part 2 – Conservation Area Management Plan**

### **Introduction**

- 7.1 This Management Plan seeks to develop the management proposals for the preservation and enhancement of the Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area that will fulfil Bolsover and Mansfield District Council's statutory duties under Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. This review proposes to update the document adopted in 2009. The policies contained in this management plan accord with 'Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas (English Heritage, 2006)' and 'Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2011)'.
- 7.2 The Management Plan sets out a strategy for addressing the threats to the character and appearance of the conservation area identified within the character appraisal, taking advantage of opportunities to reinforce the special interest of the area.
- 7.3 The management plan aims to ensure that:
- Relevant policy guidance is used to inform the assessment of development proposals;
  - All forms of development are carefully considered whether or not they are likely to be acceptable.
  - Planning legislation is utilised and effectively enforced and that change is monitored;
  - Buildings needing both urgent and non-urgent repairs are targeted and the required works take place;
  - Enhancement schemes are prepared for buildings, sites or areas of land as required and funding opportunities are explored as appropriate.
- 7.4 The Management Plan and conservation area appraisal will be monitored and updated every five years and actions implemented as resources permit.



## **8. Protecting the Existing Historic Fabric**

### **Introduction**

- 8.1 Given the special architectural or historic interest of the Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area as identified within the Appraisal and the desirability of preserving this interest, the first key function of the Management Plan is to protect the existing historic fabric. Therefore, this section sets out the tools that Bolsover District Council and Mansfield District Council have at their disposal that they will use to achieve this.

### **Legislation and Policy**

- 8.2 Development is controlled by the Town and Country Planning Acts and when a decision is to be made under the planning Acts, the decision must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 8.3 Where a decision (such as whether planning permission should be granted) relates to a site or building in the Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area, before reaching a decision special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
- 8.4 Given this legislative background, the policies within the Development Plan provide a key tool to protect the existing historic fabric. In addition, decisions will also be guided by the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) which sets out the government's approach to sustainable development. There is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

### The Development Plan

- 8.5 The Development Plan comprises –
- (a) On the northern Bolsover District side:
    - the saved Bolsover District Local Plan Policies
    - the emerging Bolsover Local Plan documents
  - On the southern Mansfield District side:
    - the saved Mansfield District Local Plan Policies
    - the emerging new Mansfield Local Plan
- 8.6 Until the Local Plans are updated, the saved policies relating to conservation areas provide the most relevant policy framework for development within the Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area.

### The Need for Planning Permission

- 8.7 The special architectural and historic interest of buildings within the conservation area can be eroded through loss of traditional features that make up their character and appearance. Consequently, it was considered

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

necessary to control a number of forms of development that can generally be carried out without the need to apply for planning permission. This additional control was achieved through the making of an Article 4 Direction under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 which removed relevant permitted development rights at Top and lower Meadow cottages in 2011 to control development within the curtilage of these dwelling houses.

- 8.8 The article 4 direction should be monitored for its effectiveness and continued suitability and therefore it will be an action within this management plan to ensure the article 4 direction is reviewed and continues to work in the public interest.

### **ACTION 1**

The Article 4 direction covering Top and Bottom Meadow Cottages is reviewed to ensure it continues to achieve its aims and to work in the public interest.

### Works to Trees

- 8.9 There are a substantial number of trees within the Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area and as a result both woodland and individual trees contribute greatly to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 8.10 Whilst there are no Tree Preservation Orders in the conservation area, trees in conservation areas that are not subject to these orders nonetheless enjoy, subject to certain exemptions, a generic protection conferred by Section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990). As a result, anyone proposing to cut down or prune a tree is required to give six weeks written notice to the local planning authority. This gives the authority the opportunity to make tree preservation orders in order to exert control over such work, or negotiate satisfactory alternatives.
- 8.11 The management of woodland will be monitored and agreements with land owners continued to be explored as this offers the most practical solution given the number of trees involved rather than dealing with ad hoc enquiries.
- 8.12 Therefore, it is proposed to explore opportunities for improved woodland and tree management. The Councils would welcome approaches from key landowners who wish to enter into management agreements and in time will seek to have these in place for all key sites.

### **ACTION 2**

Explore options to achieve more effective management of the works to trees and woodlands. Monitor the number of management agreements for works to trees entered in to with land owners.

Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and  
Management Plan

- 8.13 Previously the appraisal had identified an increasing colonisation of the outcrops of rock and cliff faces by scrub vegetation, lessening the visual relationship between these geological features and the buildings located within them which is detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It is considered that a programme of vegetation clearance for rock faces should remain as a target for investigation and if appropriate be implemented.

**ACTION 3**

Investigate and if appropriate implement a programme of vegetation clearance for rock faces and monitor progress in investigation and implementation of programme of work.

Biodiversity

- 8.14 As the natural environment is a key element to the character and appearance of the Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area, a greater emphasis must be placed on the biodiversity interest of the area.
- 8.15 In 2009 it was noted that scrub woodland appears to be encroaching upon open grassland habitats and that the water meadows are at risk of being colonised by stinging nettles and that these changes could be detrimental to the character and appearance of parts of the conservation area. In addition to this, the 2009 appraisal identified the potential biological value of the small leaved lime trees on the limestone ridge.
- 8.16 It is still recommended that an assessment of the value and extent of the open grassland habitats and of the small leaved lime trees on the limestone ridge should be made and a programme of work drawn up. This should include measures to prevent colonisation of stinging nettles in the water meadows.

**ACTION 4**

Resources permitting assess the value and extent of open grassland habitats and the small leaved lime trees and prepare a programme of work to address the situation and to prevent the colonisation of stinging nettles in the water meadows. Monitor progress in assessment and preparation of a programme of work.

Flooding

- 8.17 The appraisal identifies that flooding along the River Meden is a threat to the character and appearance of the conservation area, in particular within the Coppice and Archaeological Way character area.
- 8.18 Therefore it remains expedient to explore the possibility for management agreements with the appropriate land owners and authorities to reduce the threat of flooding.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

### **ACTION 5**

Explore options to achieve more effective management of the river course. Monitor progress in securing a management agreement in the Annual Monitoring Report.

### Archaeology

- 8.19 The appraisal identifies that greater understanding of the archaeological significance of Pleasley Park and Vale would aid preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 8.20 It is proposed to work with key stakeholders, such as the Creswell Heritage Trust, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire County Councils, to undertake a detailed archaeological survey of priority areas.

### **ACTION 6**

Undertake detailed archaeological surveys of priority areas to inform a greater understanding and protection of the special interest of the area.



Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and  
Management Plan  
**Further Guidance on Development in Conservation Areas**

- 8.21 The saved policies of Bolsover District Local Plan are supplemented by The Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Document published by Bolsover District Council in March 2006. These policies provide general guidance on development within conservation areas, work to historic agricultural buildings and archaeology. Bolsover Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan which is anticipated to be adopted by September 2018.
- 8.22 As most of the Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area is within the Open Countryside as defined by the Bolsover District Local Plan, the threat to the rural character of the area from normal urban development is considered to be low and limited to developments essential to the countryside.
- 8.23 In these exceptional cases, it is considered that sufficient guidance on development in conservation areas and on development affecting historic agricultural buildings is provided by the Historic Environment Supplementary Planning Guidance (Chapters 2 & 3 respectively) when taken together with the contents of the appraisal.
- 8.24 However, as the buildings of the Mills Complex are in employment uses, any change of use or redevelopment of the buildings to non-employment uses will need to be assessed against saved policy EMP 5 - Protection of Site and Buildings in Employment Uses.
- 8.25 The southern part of the conservation area is within Mansfield District where the saved policies of the Mansfield District Local Plan identify Pleasley Vale as being in the open countryside. Therefore, any proposals will be assessed against these policies but also in the light of the National Planning Policy Framework and the emerging New local Plan policies at the appropriate time.

### **Enforcement and Monitoring**

- 8.26 Effective enforcement is vital to make sure there is public confidence in the planning system and to ensure that unauthorised development does not unacceptably affect public amenity or the existing use of land or buildings.
- 8.27 Bolsover District Council has an approved Enforcement Policy that sets out how the Planning Department's Enforcement team operates and their procedures for working. Mansfield District Council also has its own protocols in relation to enforcement procedures to ensure high standards are met.
- 8.28 To supplement the Bolsover enforcement service, it is recommended that the physical environment of the conservation area and key sites adjacent to the conservation area are monitored by carrying out detailed surveys, including a dated photographic record, on a three-yearly basis so catching any unauthorised work before enforcement action can no longer be taken. Any previously unreported unauthorised development or work identified by the detailed survey would then be addressed in accordance with the Council's approved Enforcement Policy. In addition, Mansfield District Council will continue to monitor its own area with a view to protecting the historic environment of Pleasley Vale Conservation Area.
- 8.29 If the condition of land is adversely affecting the amenity of the area a notice under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 can be served. Such a notice can be used to secure improvements to the appearance of buildings, as well as the tidying up of unkempt land.

### **ACTION 7**

Carry out a detailed survey every three years, including a dated photographic record of the physical environment within the conservation area, noting any unauthorised changes and dealing with them in accordance with the Enforcement Policies of the respective Council's or any buildings in need of urgent or non-urgent repairs.

## 9 Enhancement Schemes

- 9.1 The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the need and opportunity for several enhancement schemes.

### Grant assistance

- 9.2 Through English Heritage's Conservation Area Partnership Scheme and Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme, Pleasley Park and Vale has benefited from investment in both buildings and the public realm. Nottinghamshire County Council Local Improvement Scheme has also helped support local residents in their revival of the Victorian kitchen garden at the site of the former Uplands House. The Mills are currently in more active use than when an appraisal was first undertaken in 2009 but their situation and the possibility of funding to maintain them should be monitored closely.
- 9.3 Funding streams will continue to be explored and where appropriate, bids for external funding should be submitted to take advantage of opportunities as they arise.

### **ACTION 8**

Explore opportunities for attracting further external public funding to enhance the conservation area. Monitor the situation with the Mills and identify suitable external funding streams as appropriate.

### Tourism and Public Access Strategy

- 9.4 The Park and Vale conservation area currently experiences a number of visitors, particularly those associated with the activity centre. While visitors are encouraged so is their respect for the special and unique environment of the Vale and the need to manage the conflict between visitor numbers and conservation.
- 9.5 It is recommended that a tourism and public access strategy for the Park and Vale is prepared utilising and informed by the architectural, historic, archaeological and natural interests of the area. The preparation of such a strategy should consider how this could support a ranger service that would have duties to inform the public about points of interest with regard to nature on the site, monitor public access and protect areas which are fragile or where animals or birds are in the process of nesting. The preparation of such a strategy should also consider proposals to improve interpretation across the Park and Vale as well as ensuring the private residential areas are not negatively affected.
- 9.6 The 2009 appraisal identified that improvements to the newly formed car park by Mill 1, such as landscaping, could enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

- 9.7 Since this time the car parks have been hard landscaped with a mixture of tarmac and crushed limestone, bounded by fencing to mark out specific areas for car parking and with lighting introduced. The car parks should continue to be monitored and improvements made to their appearance as and when the opportunity arises.
- 9.8 Not only do the car parks need to be carefully managed but the wider public realm within the Vale, including roads, fencing and signage all make a contribution and should be managed to respect their surroundings, avoiding clutter and taking account of the Vale's heritage. The potential for improvements should align with the tourism strategy providing areas for picnics and interpretation/information points at various locations throughout the Vale.

### **ACTION 9**

Prepare a joint Tourism and Public Access Strategy for the Park and Vale in partnership with key stakeholders, such as the Creswell Heritage Trust and Pleasley Vale Residents Association. Include an audit of the public realm current position to inform actions for the strategy.

### Interpretation and Development Plan

- 9.9 The Creswell Crags Limestone Heritage Area Management Action Plan identifies Pleasley Vale as a Pilot Action Area and identifies the need for an Interpretation and Development Plan that sets out the story of Pleasley Vale and a strategic approach to its presentation. This could be incorporated into an Education Pack. This plan would look at improving physical and visual access to the valley and continue the delivery of the specific management proposals set out in the Creswell Crags Limestone Heritage Area Management Action Plan. The plan should align with the Tourism and public access strategy for the conservation area.

### **ACTION 10**

Prepare an Interpretation and Development Plan in partnership with key stakeholders, such as the Creswell Heritage Trust and Derbyshire County Council.

- 9.10 Restoration and re-use of the former coach house

The former coach house is in a poor state of repair and redundant from its original purpose. The building is currently occupied on a short term let but there is potential for this building to be restored for a long term viable use, perhaps as an information centre as part of the Tourism and Access Strategy. The repair and restoration would require traditional craft skills to bring back its original appearance and would require external grant funding



## Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan

### Action 12

Explore the potential for the repair and re-use of the former coach house.

#### Improvements to views from the Meden Trail

- 9.11 At the time of the previous assessment in 2009 the appraisal identified that views of the Mill complex from the Meden Trail were difficult due to the density of trees along its route. Limited and focused felling of trees beside the Meden Trail to open up views to the Mills was identified as a way of enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area, provided areas of car parking were not inadvertently exposed.
- 9.12 It is recommended to re-assess this issue and investigate the potential for the limited and focused removal of trees along the route of the Meden Trail as part of the Tourism and public access strategy.

### ACTION 13

Re- assess the scope for the removal of trees and explore the potential for the limited and focused removal of trees along the Meden Trail to open up views to the Mills. Establish and monitor a programme of limited and focused tree removal.

## 10 Monitoring Indicators

- 10.1 In order to assess the impact of the protection of the special character and appearance of the Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area brought by designation and the preparation of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, it is considered necessary to develop a range of appropriate monitoring indicators that can be used to provide empirical analysis of the condition of the area.
- 10.2 The monitoring indicators set out below seek to follow those contained in the Historic England published State of the Historic Environment reports. These reports have been produced each year since 2002 and represent annual surveys of the state of England's and each region's historic environment.
- 10.3 The Resources to undertake monitoring have been limited. However it is important to retain the indicators which will be monitored through the Annual Monitoring Report and the monitoring of each will recommence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016. The first set of results and thus the evidence of change will be reported in the Annual Monitoring Report 2017.

Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and  
Management Plan

| Indicator                  | Ref. | Measurement  | Value | Change     |
|----------------------------|------|--|-------|------------|
| Designated Heritage Assets | A1   | Number of Listed Buildings   | 5     | First year |
|                            | A2   | Number of Landmark Buildings / Unlisted Buildings of Merit                             | 26    | First year |
|                            | A3   | Number of Regionally Important Geological Sites  | 1     | First year |
|                            | A4   | Number of sites of Importance for Nature Conservation                                  | 2     | First year |
|                            | A5   | Number of entries on the Sites and Monument Record (not covered by other designations) | 10    | First year |
|                            | A6   | Number of Tree Preservation Orders made covering trees within the conservation area    | 0     | First year |

| Indicator        | Ref. | Measurement   | Value | Change     |
|------------------|------|---|-------|------------|
| Heritage at Risk | B1   | Number of listed buildings or unlisted buildings of merit identified as needing urgent and non-urgent works | 0     | First year |
|                  | B2   | Number of monitoring surveys not carried out by stated key date   | 0     | First year |

Pleasley Park and Vale Conservation Area Character Appraisal and  
Management Plan

| Indicator           | Ref. | Measurement   | Value | Change     |
|---------------------|------|---|-------|------------|
| Managing Positively | C1   | Number of applications for planning permission determined where conservation area a statutory consideration | N/A   | First year |
|                     | C2   | Number of applications for planning permission affecting wildlife sites                                     | N/A   | First year |
|                     | C3   | Number of applications for listed building consent determined   | N/A   | First year |
|                     | C5   | Number of management agreements for work to trees in place  | N/A   | First year |

| Indicator                          | Ref. | Measurement   | Value | Change     |
|------------------------------------|------|---|-------|------------|
| Enhancing the Historic Environment | D1   | Number of buildings receiving grant assistance for repair or reinstatement of historic fabric | 0     | First year |
|                                    | D2   | Number of enhancement schemes with actions achieved by stated key dates                       | 0     | First year |
|                                    | D3   | Number of trees planted in the conservation area through the Free Tree Scheme                 | 0     | First year |