A scenic view of a rural valley with rolling green hills, a cluster of stone buildings, and a cow grazing in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the lower right portion of the image.

The Loxley Valley Design Statement

...from Sheffield to the Peak District National Park



The Loxley Valley has been hugely influenced by stone and water. The tough gritstone outcrops at places like Loxley Common, (left), provided people with a readily-available building material. The water in the fast-flowing River Loxley, (background image), provided a source of power for local industry. The gritstone has been crafted into buildings of great durability and great beauty. Here we show the distinctive farmhouse at Old Wheel Farm, (middle), and an old barn off Rowell Lane, which is now so overgrown with ivy it has almost become part of the landscape, (bottom). The other image is one of the many carved stone stoups (gateposts) in the valley.



What is this document about?

 This document is a “Village Design Statement”. Village Design Statements came into being in 1995. The Government paved the way for them, as a way of giving rural communities more of a say in local planning.

The idea is that communities can draw up their own Design Statement, setting out what is distinctive and unique about their locality, and how they would like to see it change and develop.

Until design statements came along, many people in rural areas felt they had little say over what development took place in their community. They often found themselves in “David against Goliath” battles with developers wanting to build in the countryside, who invariably held the upper hand through their greater knowledge of the planning system and greater financial clout.

Now around two hundred communities in England have achieved a greater voice by drawing up Village Design Statements.

The statements can include detailed guidelines for new buildings and other development in the locality. These guidelines can then be adopted by the local planning authority, which may require developers to refer to the guidelines when they apply for planning permission. If they are adopted in this way, the guidelines take on official status as “Supplementary Planning Guidance” (SPG).

This document includes such detailed guidelines for the Loxley Valley. Both Sheffield City Council and the Peak District National Park Authority have adopted some of our policies as SPG. This should be taken into account by people proposing development in the area. Applicants for planning permission may find their proposals are rejected if they fail to take SPG into account.

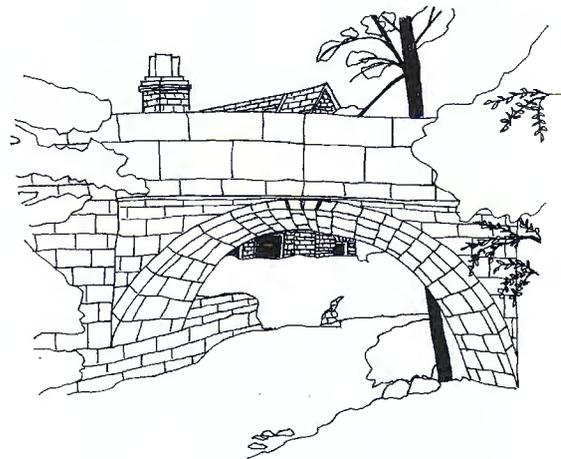
The guidelines for Sheffield are included as Appendix One to this document. They can also be purchased independently from the city council.

Guidelines for the Peak District are available from

the National Park Authority’s website at www.peakdistrict.org

This design statement was drawn up by the Loxley Valley Design Group, made up of local people who share a love of the area and a concern for its future. We hope our efforts will help to protect the distinctive character of the valley.

We believe the valley’s history and heritage should be respected and cherished. We also hope to have a positive impact on the community’s future, environmentally, socially and economically.



The River Loxley

Why have a design statement for the Loxley Valley?

Most of the two hundred previous Village Design Statements, (we’ll call them “VDS’s” from here onwards), were drawn up by people living in just one village, with a very strong local identity. But people living in the Loxley Valley see it as a whole, with several different settlements up and down it – a unified location defined by physical valley form. We therefore decided to create a VDS for the whole valley, not just an individual village.

Most of the valley has been protected from development for fifty years as part of the Green Belt around Sheffield. But recently there has been

what is this document about?

what is this document about?

pressure for development on a few key sites.

This is partly because old factories have closed, and their owners now want new buildings in their place, (see page 22). Changes in farming are also subtly affecting the landscape, (see page 19). These changes could threaten the distinctive local character.

In May 2000, Bradfield Parish Council called a public meeting to ask if local people were interested in drawing up a VDS for the valley. From that initiative, a group of volunteers came together. They began a process of consultation with local residents, and the result is the document you are reading now. (For a description of the Consultation Process, see Appendix Two).

Who is the Design Statement for?

We hope it will interest anyone concerned about the future of the valley. But it should be particularly useful to the following people:

- Planners – at both Sheffield City Council and the Peak District National Park Authority.
- Councillors, council officers, and any other people from public bodies taking strategic decisions about the future of the valley.
- Developers and owners of development sites.
- Farmers and landowners.
- Home owners.

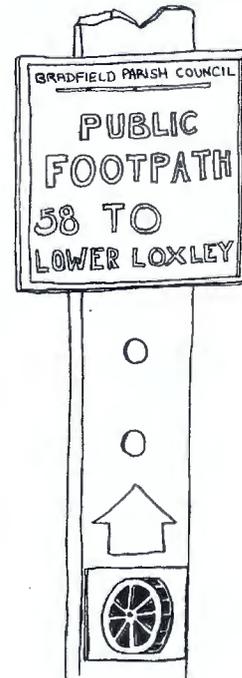
We hope the design statement will also prove useful to anyone else making decisions about the built environment in the valley. This will include decisions on:

- Buildings.
- Areas around and between buildings, such as gardens and public areas.
- Landscape design and environmental improvements.
- Identifying areas of potential value for nature conservation, and promoting nature conservation.

We encourage you to read the whole of this document, so you can understand how we arrived at the Supplementary Planning Guidance. The guidelines adopted by the City Council and the National Park Authority really need to be understood and appreciated in this wider context.

The document considers many important issues for the valley, (for example, the need for local transport to be planned and managed). This has resulted in many strategic recommendations, which we would like local policy-makers to address.

These recommendations are itemised on page five. They do not have the same official status as the SPG, but we think they are just as important. We hope they will stimulate further debate and action!



The Loxley Valley

Where is it?

For the purposes of this document, the Loxley Valley is the name given to an area on the northwest outskirts of Sheffield, starting at Malin Bridge and finishing at the head of the valley just beyond Bradfield, a rural village about a mile within the Peak District National Park.

The city changes rapidly to countryside on this side of Sheffield. Malin Bridge is only some three miles from the city centre, yet the Loxley Valley is distinctly rural.

Approximately eighty per-cent of the valley is in the civil parish of Bradfield. The Peak Park boundary, seemingly arbitrarily, divides the valley in half from north to south.

The valley runs in a roughly straight line and in a northwest to southeast direction. It is named after the River Loxley that runs through it before being joined by the River Rivelin at Malin Bridge and then flowing down towards the River Don, Sheffield's primary river.

The Loxley is one of seven rivers flowing into Sheffield and is classed as a "main river" by the Environment Agency.

The valley side is quite steep on the south side of the river, while sloping gently on the north. The valley contains a mixture of fields and woodland, and many footpaths. At the upper end of the valley, the river has been widened to contain four reservoirs, which contribute to Sheffield's water supplies.

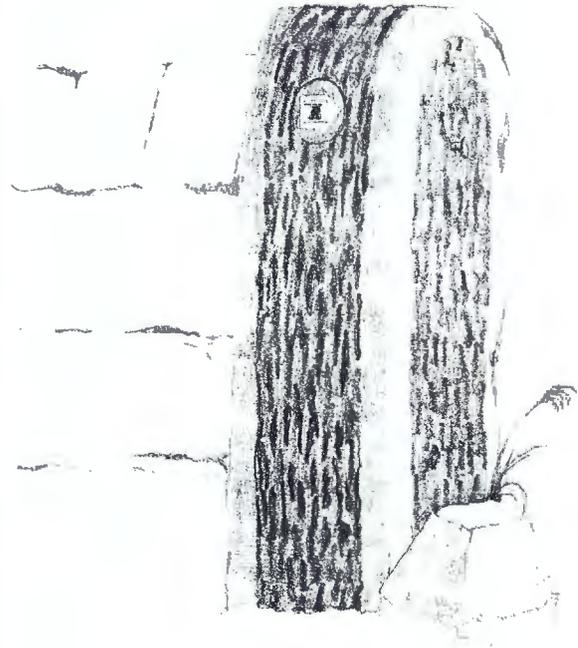
The valley forms a "green finger" of countryside reaching right into the densely populated urban fringe of the city. But although it is a rural place, the valley bottom has also contained factories providing work for generations of local people.

This industrial tradition dates back hundreds of years to the era of waterpower, before the industrial revolution.

Nearly all the industry has gone now. Some of the old sites form part of Sheffield's industrial heritage

and should be preserved for their historical value. Other, more modern, sites are becoming derelict and need clearing up.

Until very recently, the valley was characterised by industry and agriculture working side by side. But some farms are now struggling too. Their decline may pose further environmental challenges, as their owners seek new uses for their landholdings.



Traditional carved stone post or 'stoop'

Planning control in the valley

The valley straddles several administrative boundaries. This means Sheffield City Council, Bradfield Parish Council and the Peak District National Park Authority all have a say in local planning matters.

People also perceive a boundary between the semi-rural city suburbs, (Loxley and parts of Stannington), and the parts of the valley characterised by open countryside, (areas

surrounding Dungworth and Bradfield, smaller settlements, and the riverside). A development appropriate for one area may be totally inappropriate for another.

The Sheffield Unitary Development Plan designates a large part of the Valley as Green Belt. The Green Belt land is broken down into further categories:

- High Landscape Value.
- Natural History Interest (Sites of Scientific Interest within the Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy 1991).
- Special Character.
- Local Nature Reserves.
- Green Corridors.

The upper part of the valley, in the Peak District National Park, is subject to a document called the Peak Park Plan. This breaks the area down into the following categories:

- The Natural Zone.
- Local Plan Settlements.
- Conservation Areas.
- Tourism Zones.

Generally, the valley is biologically rich and diverse. We believe this local biodiversity should be preserved and enhanced.

What is distinctive about the Loxley Valley?

In some ways the Loxley is similar to other valleys west of Sheffield. But it also has distinctive and unique features. These include:

- Industrial archaeology – more of the heritage has survived than in other valleys, though it is under threat through neglect or vandalism.
- The main roads “don’t go anywhere” – the ‘B’ roads serving Loxley, Stannington and Dungworth are not through routes. They end at Bradfield, leaving just small minor roads in the upper part of the valley. This means the Loxley Valley is much quieter than its neighbour, the Rivelin.

- The contrast of gradients between the slopes on either side of the river. South of the river, the north-facing slopes are steep-sided. On the other side of the valley, the south-facing slopes are much more shallow.
- Geology. Measures of coal, shale, ganister and clay lie beneath the valley, and have affected its development. Ganister or fire clay is a rare mineral, suitable for the firebricks needed to line steel furnaces. Its presence in the valley led to mining and firebrick making.
- The history of the boundaries. Until 1974 the valley was in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Compared to Sheffield, the West Riding faced much less pressure to build new houses in the countryside as part of “slum-clearance” programmes. This helped protect the Loxley Valley from new building.
- The Sheffield Flood of 1864 has left its mark on the valley.
- There are no fewer than four reservoirs in this valley. Three of them supply Sheffield with drinking water.
- A rare species of newt lives in one of the reservoirs.
- The two species of native British oak, *Quercus petraea* and *Quercus robur*, both grow here. This is unusual – *petraea* usually grows in the North and West; and *robur* in the South and East. The Loxley Valley straddles the divide between the two different habitats. The oaks have also hybridised in some local woods.

The valley is also characterised by modest buildings that blend into the landscape in scale and tone. The agricultural landscape is mainly pastoral, with green fields and occasional trees and small woodlands along the brooks and river. Stone and water dominate the landscape, with the heavy wet soil criss-crossed by dry stone walls of local gritstone, plus numerous streams and springs.

The upper valley is protected by the special planning standards that apply to the Peak District National Park. In our consultations, many local people said they could not understand why the Peak Park stops at a seemingly arbitrary line drawn across the valley. They suggested extending the Park to cover more of the agricultural and green areas of the valley nearer to Sheffield. (Some people pointed out that farmers in the Peak Park can apply for more financial assistance, effectively giving them an economic advantage over their near neighbours in the Sheffield planning area).

Protecting the distinctive character of the valley – general guidelines

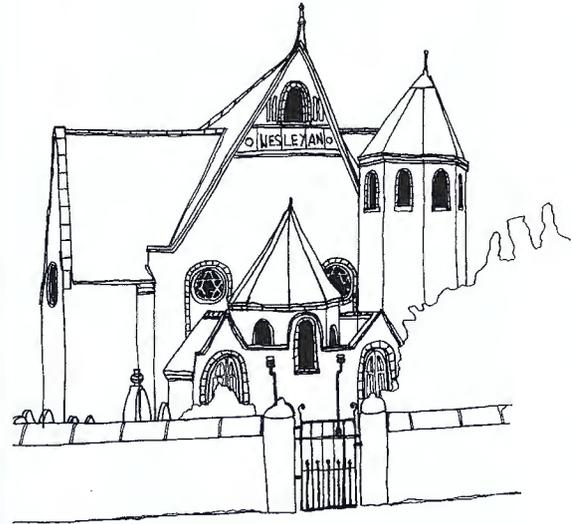
We will come to our detailed planning guidelines later on in the design statement. But at this point we also want to lay down some very important general guidelines and fundamental principles that should underpin the future of the valley. We believe the following points are critical to strategic planning and development in the valley:

- Any buildings or economic or leisure activities that interfere with the tranquil atmosphere of the valley should be refused.
- The authorities with a say in local planning should work together to protect and enhance the valley. Where possible, they should use environmental standards in the upper part of the valley, (controlled by the Peak Park Planning Board), as a yardstick.
- Drainage and road systems must not be disturbed without very careful consideration, and must be kept in good repair.
- If and when large-scale developments are proposed, the implications for sustainability should be taken into account. That is, social, environmental and economic issues should be considered as having equal value, and should be planned for in equal proportions.
- Whenever planning matters are under consideration in the rural lower part of the valley which is outside the Peak Park, the same design standards as required by the Peak Park in the upper part of the Valley should be considered important.
- Policy-makers should seriously consider setting up a strategic body for the whole valley, to take forward the issues we have identified in this document. It is not the role of the Loxley Valley Design Group to define the scope, composition and powers of such a body – this is a matter for wider public debate.

But we believe such a group could unite the many interests in the valley and could contribute significantly to environmental planning, management and protection.

- Delegated decisions by individual planning

officers will seldom be appropriate in the Loxley Valley. The area is so sensitive that all planning decisions are important. We believe they should always be referred to members of the appropriate committees at the City Council and the National Park Authority.



Knowle Top Chapel, Stannington

Design Issues in the valley

⊗ So far we have looked at the bigger picture, at the general character of the valley and its environment. Now we move to the task of defining that environment in detail. We will look in turn at the general landscape, at the human settlements within it, and then at the manmade features that give local character to the buildings within those settlements.

We will consider what makes our locality special, and how good design can keep it special if and when there is change.

We believe this is the first time the Loxley Valley has been described and defined in such detail. This reflects the knowledge and passion of the many people who took part in the local "workshops" we held during our consultations.



Dungworth

Landscape design

The landscape setting

 The landscape of the Loxley valley is special. We want to retain it, and if possible improve it. But we also support change if it does not impinge on the landscape, views or natural resources.

The landscape ranges widely. Undeveloped land includes pasture and arable fields, woodland, heath and moors. Water features include the river, streams, reservoirs and old industrial millponds.

The built environment ranges from small clusters of farm buildings to larger hamlets and villages, and the valley also contains old industrial buildings and redundant quarries and mine workings.

No one description could cover all this, so we have tried to divide the valley into recognisable "landscape zones".

Zone One. Malin Bridge to Rowell Lane – the Green Belt wedge between Loxley and Stannington

This is the gateway to the Valley, a "green finger", reaching from highly populated Hillsborough to the Peak District.

The "gateway" building is the Malin Bridge corn mill at the bottom of Stannington Road, just before the River Rivelin joins the Loxley.

The riverside here is wooded, though it was more open in the past. The trees are mainly sycamore, ash, alder and willow. They need regular and sensitive maintenance. There are also relics of ancient oak and beech woodland. Old industrial sites are scattered in the valley bottom. Some have become historical ruins; some are still in use. Some have recently become redundant and are at risk of becoming derelict.

There are many water features: weirs, mill ponds/dams, and goyts (man-made channels at the side of the river, taking water to and from the old water wheels). They are valuable for industrial heritage and for wildlife. Some are now seriously in need of repair and maintenance, and some of the dams are silting up.

Away from the wooded riverside, the slopes on the north side of the lower valley are characterised by open pasture.

Zone Two. Loxley Common

Loxley Common is a "Local Nature Reserve". It is a mix of heathland and birch woodland, with sandy gritstone outcrops, and signs of earlier quarrying. There is a network of footpaths with some bridleways. The common is well used for recreation.

Zone Three. The south facing slopes of the valley...

...between Loxley and Holdworth, have geometrical patterns of large fields, dating from measured government surveying for the Enclosures in the late eighteenth century. They are used for grazing and growing arable crops. There are also several commercial plant nurseries on this side of the valley.

The slope is mostly bare of trees. There are gritstone outcrops on the ridge at the top of the hill, with moorland vegetation. Loxley Independent Chapel, opposite Rowell Lane, is a fine eighteenth century building, now in private ownership and boarded up.

...between Holdworth and Bradfield, have much older, smaller irregular field patterns, with rough pasture; one farm is named in the Domesday Book. Clusters of trees line the field edges and the steep wooded slope of Bailey Hill.

Zone Four. The north facing slopes of the valley...

There are steep scarp slopes immediately above the river, vegetated with scrub and woodland. On the slope just to the west of Rowell Bridge is a stretch of ancient woodland known as Beacon Wood, (owned and managed by the Woodland Trust).

Above these scarps is a gently sloping “plateau”, carved by brooks and streams making their way to the Loxley through Dungworth, Hill Top, Loadbrook and Storrs. Field patterns follow land contours (some showing signs of medieval strip farming). The fields are mainly pasture, with some arable fodder crops, and locally-sold “Bradfield” potatoes.

There are some old mine shafts and quarries from the days when clay was dug for the brick factories. There are also small stretches of woodland, notably above “Hall Broom Pastures”, beyond Loadbrook.

Several significant streams flow into the River Loxley – Load/Storrs Brook, Sykehouse Brook and Ughill Brook. They are lined with trees. They and their banks are secluded and are rich in wildflowers and wildlife. They contribute significantly to the biodiversity of the area.

Zone Five. The river corridor – Little Matlock to Stacey Bank

(This sector overlaps slightly with Sector One). Former industrial sites dominate this stretch of the valley. They range in size and age from small, centuries-old mill buildings to large factories, which closed quite recently. Some of the old buildings have become ruins, some have been reused, and some – particularly the large factory buildings at the upper end – now stand derelict.

The older buildings were originally water-powered. The dams at their side are now used for fishing, and are rich in wildlife. Little Matlock was recently revived as a small-scale steel-rolling mill, with a link with English Heritage.

Zone Six. Reservoirs – Dam Flask up to Strines

The upper valley contains four major reservoirs – Dam Flask, Agden, Dale Dike and Strines. All are owned and managed by Yorkshire Water as part of the local water supply. The dam walls were built from local stone in the nineteenth century.

Mixed native and conifer plantations surround the three lower reservoirs; Strines edges onto the moors. Dam Flask is used by sailing and rowing clubs, and is also popular with anglers. Dam Flask, Agden and Dale Dike are all ringed by footpaths – all of these paths have been extended recently using European funding.

The path around Dam Flask was extended in 2001 using surfaces and gradients that provide access for disabled people. It has proved popular and seems to be drawing in many new visitors. This may create demand for more car parking and toilets, and extra customers for buses and pubs. If visitors continue to increase, there could eventually be enough demand for new businesses like shops and cafes.

Zone Seven. Ughill and surrounding hamlets to Bradfield

The upper end of the valley. This area is characterised by small fields and farms in valleys and on steep slopes where the gradient has not made building impossible. Higher up, the valley becomes increasingly quiet and isolated with the cultivated land eventually giving way to wild moors grazed by grouse and sheep.

General landscape issues in the valley

Views

People say they feel a sense of spaciousness in the Loxley Valley. They value the open views, both from their own houses and from favourite places when out walking the many lanes and footpaths that criss-cross the valley.

We believe these views should be preserved and protected from development. During our consultations, we were told by Sheffield planning officers that we would have to identify any views we wanted to protect. We have decided not to do this. We believe it is impossible to “cherry pick” just a few of the hundreds of views in any meaningful way. It is also undesirable – if we did define a “first class” category of views in this way, it could devalue other views and encourage developers and planners to regard them as disposable.

Rather, we encourage planners and policymakers to recognise how much people value views of the valley, and to scrutinise all planning applications to ensure views are not damaged.

The whole point is that “good” views are everywhere and every resident sees and values

particular views, depending on where they live, walk, pass – this in itself is a vital part of the local character and distinctiveness. The openness between houses and between settlements is a strong feature of living here.

This is particularly important in Loxley, which is threatened by infill development. If too much is allowed, the character of the whole settlement and the relationship between the houses and the spaces around them will be spoiled.

History

The valley has a rich historical legacy, including both agricultural and industrial archaeology. Signs of earlier land ownership can still be read on the field patterns. These vary from 11th century Domesday holdings, and the Duke of Norfolk's Manor, to the Enclosures, when land which was previously "common" and available to everyone for fodder, firewood etc., was divided up, measured and sold into private ownership.

Waterpower has helped shape the valley. For centuries, water was diverted from Storrs Brook and the River Loxley to run water wheels for mills, cutler-wheels and forges. Many of the small dams, millponds and goyts have survived, plus the remains of mill buildings in various states of repair.

Only one working mill survives, at Little Matlock. At the time of writing, the mill buildings and adjacent houses were being restored with support from English Heritage. Some of the other buildings in the valley have not fared so well.

The valley flooded in 1864, when the newly constructed Dale Dike reservoir above Low Bradfield burst. A huge wave of water engulfed the village, swept down the valley and into the River Don, devastating parts of Sheffield downstream.

Two hundred and forty people died and countless buildings were destroyed.

Industry in the Loxley Valley was later restored – ironically, the rebuilding after the flood gave the local forges and factories a new lease of life; it may help explain why industry in the valley lasted into the late twentieth century while it withered and died in the adjacent Rivelin Valley.

The Sheffield Flood, as it became known, remains one of Britain's worst peacetime disasters. Local children are taught about it in history lessons. A play

has been written about it, and local history books have chapters devoted to it.

Yet there is scarcely any physical acknowledgement of it in the valley. Flood memorabilia are dispersed elsewhere in Sheffield and beyond. We believe they should have a home in the valley, in a visitor centre or suchlike.

Transport and communications

The historic pattern of roads and lanes, shaped by steep gradients, physical features and land ownership, survives largely intact. Walkers and horse riders enjoy the ancient tracks, green lanes and the few bridleways. But some are now being gated and treated as private land, making access difficult or impossible.

Some of the eighteen-foot lanes measured out in the Enclosures of 1787 still exist as unmetalled tracks. Sometimes adjoining homeowners claim them as "waste" land and try to appropriate them. We believe they should respect them as an asset for communal enjoyment and for wildlife.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 affects most if not all of the valley. Its benefits are to improve and increase the amount of open access land, and to create more access across other areas.

The main roads also follow the old road pattern. But now pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders are at risk from speeding traffic, especially as the area has the deceptive appearance of quietness and safety.

People are most at risk in the rural areas as the footways beside roads are intermittent and irregularly maintained, so that a pedestrian is at times forced onto the road, or to cross the road at a dangerous bend. Old unrestricted-speed signs are displayed in completely inappropriate places, for example in the middle of small settlements like Storrs, just beside the park where children play and just beyond a right angle bend.

This uncertainty about pedestrian safety leads to increased traffic, particularly at school hours. If people do not feel safe on foot, they are more likely to use their cars for short, local journeys. This leads many parents to drive their children to school and back, as they worry about them walking on the roads.

Parking outside all schools in the valley, in some

cases on dangerous bends and near junctions, leads to increased danger to both traffic and pedestrians. If "Safe Routes" for walking to school were planned, they would offer a healthier and safer alternative.

Speeding is a problem on the built-up stretch of Loxley Road. We suggest the 30 and 40 mph speed limits should be reviewed, taking these points into account: i) where the limits should begin and end (ii) the quality of signage, and (iii) whether safety could be improved by traffic-calming.

Traffic in the valley is light and should remain so, because the road system could not cope with much more. There is a notorious "bottle-neck" at Malin Bridge, where cars from the whole of the Loxley and Rivelin Valleys, (containing one of the main roads to Manchester), converge on a narrow and congested one-way system. Commuters experience long delays, and this would get even worse were there to be any significant development in the Loxley Valley.

Other landscape issues

Effective **drainage** in this area is difficult because of frequent underlying clay and unusually heavy rainfall. The valley contains many old, delicate and unmapped land drainage systems. They are prone to damage when even small development or new usages are introduced. They are very important, because much of the area is not served by mains drainage.

There have been problems when these systems have been disturbed, including floods and icy roads. There have also been incidents where rainwater and sewage have escaped from drainage systems onto adjacent land. Poor maintenance makes the damage worse.

Land boundaries are usually marked by dry stone walls in local gritstone and, occasionally, hedges of native species. Many walls are falling into disrepair and others have been removed completely, sometimes because of changing farming practices. We believe the walls and the small, often irregular, fields they enclose are part of the distinctive Loxley Valley landscape.

Gateposts, also made of local stone, are historical markers. Their shape, markings and the way the gates were fastened indicate different dates and local craftsmanship. The gateposts are known locally as stoops.

Clusters of trees, especially on the weathered western side of houses and villages are a distinctive "signature" of the upper valley. Typically they are sycamore, oak or ash. Some are under threat as they age. When they go, the slopes can appear empty and featureless, as around Myers Lane and Hall Broom Pastures.

Replacement trees need to be planted now, so they can establish and grow. Preferably, they should be native seedlings grown at one of the local nurseries.

No trees in the exposed parts of the valley grow above twelve metres, most rather less. Non-native conifers, whether in big plantations or as windbreak hedges in private gardens, are dominantly visible all over the valley. They clash with the more subtle patterns of local deciduous trees with their seasonal variation. The heavy evergreen lines and canopies restrict what were previously open views, and people resent this.

Whilst sycamores are not recommended for planting near houses, they are hardy enough to survive on and near the ridges and are useful weather shields. We should respect them, and replace them with new sycamores when they get damaged or die.

Ecology is just as important as history and landscape. It is rich and varied, as we indicated earlier in the landscape character zones. And it can be seriously threatened by new development. It is especially vulnerable because it is so varied. Each type of habitat is small and – in the terms used by planners – it can be dismissed as "not large enough" to protect. It is important that conservation and maintenance measures in the valley are appropriate to the local ecology.

Floodlighting and security lighting can be intrusive and detract from the rural landscape if it is installed without enough thought. Lights can be seen from quite long distances along roads and across the valley. This intrusion seems out of proportion to the need for the lights. Satellite dishes can also be ugly and intrusive.

Landscape design – our guidelines

These are our detailed guidelines for safeguarding and enhancing the Loxley Valley landscape.

Sheffield City Council and the Peak District National Park Authority have both adopted some of our policies as supplementary planning guidance, which people should take into account when proposing development in the valley.

The planning guidance for Sheffield is to be found in Appendix One at the end of this document. Planning guidance for the Peak Park is available through the National Park Authority's planning office. They can be contacted on 01629 816200. Details are also available on the Park Authority's website at www.peakdistrict.org

Our guidelines for the landscape should be read alongside our guidelines for building on page 17, and our guidelines for farmers and landowners on page 21.

These are our guidelines for the landscape:

- a) **Development should not damage important views in and into the Loxley Valley.**
- b) **Individual mature trees or mature groups of trees that contribute to the character of the area and are under threat from development should be identified and protected by Tree Preservation Orders.**
- c) **New landscape work should, where possible and appropriate, use locally indigenous species, preferably from seed of local provenance, from local nurseries.**
- d) **Non-native conifers, such as Leyland Cypress, should not be planted as hedges. Alternatives for gardens, if a traditional mixed hedgerow is not wanted, could be deciduous beech, or hornbeam, buckthorn or hawthorn.**
- e) **New buildings should be constructed in matching gritstone or other compatible, matching, high quality materials where appropriate.**
- f) **Ground surfaces that are prominent from long-distance viewpoints in the valley should be in a material that blends with the surroundings.**
- g) **Dry stone walls or hedges should be used as appropriate wherever a boundary is needed.**
- h) **Field Boundaries, both dry stone walling and hedges, should be treated as a valuable part of the landscape and for wildlife.**
- i) **Development should avoid interfering with the delicate historic patterns of drainage, water supply and spring/stream flow.**
- j) **Floodlighting is usually inappropriate in the Green Belt. If appropriate, it should be carefully directed downwards onto specific areas that need to be illuminated, and shielded as far as possible so as to prevent light pollution.**
- k) **Development must not harm natural features of value. The design, siting and landscaping of development must respect and promote nature conservation. Development proposals should include measures to reduce any potentially harmful effects of the proposal on natural features of value. Developers should seek to integrate natural features into the landscape.**
- l) **Planning application submissions for the development of unimproved grassland and hay meadows must include an ecological survey of the development site.**
- m) **Development of unimproved grassland, ponds and hay meadows must not cause harm to valuable flora, fauna or wildlife habitats.**
- n) **Infill development should be discouraged in Loxley, especially where it would destroy archaeological, historical or landscape features, or is clearly detrimental to the setting of buildings, (particularly those that are listed).**
- o) **Ancient tracks and lanes should be recognised, preserved and maintained for public use.**
- p) **Bridleways should be maintained and**

enhanced. They should be inspected regularly. The practice of placing gates across previously open bridleways or green lanes should be discouraged, both by monitoring and by planning conditions and agreements.

q) New bridleways and circuits for off-road horse riding should be investigated and implemented.

r) Traffic calming measures should be introduced to make rural lanes safer for walkers, horse riders and cyclists. Traffic should be slowed at dangerous corners. Measures could include road narrowing, signage and "Quiet Lanes".

s) The traffic bottleneck at Malin Bridge requires action. A "park and ride" is needed, both for visitors to the valley and for people leaving it for work or shopping. It should coordinate with buses and trams.

t) Safe routes to walk to school should be planned, particularly around the primary school at Dungworth, and at all other schools in the valley.

u) There should be new footways beside roads where this would improve safety. Footways should be cleared regularly of leaves, brambles and weeds.



View from Acorn Hill

The design of the built environment

⊗ Settlements in the Loxley Valley range from small individual farmsteads to dense suburban housing. Mostly they are not "planned", in the modern sense. The layout of the buildings has evolved "organically", dictated by natural features like slopes and watercourses, and man-made features like roads and water wheels.

The way the buildings fit together and how they fit into the landscape helps give the valley its distinctive character. This is just as important as the design of the individual buildings. We have therefore produced design guidelines that go beyond individual structures to address the wider built environment.

Before we come to the guidelines, we will take a detailed look at the villages and buildings of the valley.

Villages in the valley

There are three main village groups: the "Bradfields", Loxley, and the area around Dungworth and Storrs. There are some smaller settlements in between and also in outlying parts of the valley – for example, Holdworth, Ughill, Loadbrook and Stacey Bank. Nearly all the valley settlements are built into or along slopes – only Low Bradfield is built beside the river, and the houses there are set on slightly higher ground to protect them from the historic threat of flooding.

Bradfield

The village of Bradfield lies about four and a half miles from the edge of the Sheffield conurbation. It is split into two levels – Low Bradfield and High Bradfield – which both have the character of individual villages. There are also many outlying small farms and dwellings that form part of the Bradfield "family".

Both High and Low Bradfield are "Conservation Areas" within the Peak District National Park. This means the Park's conservation officers do detailed "character analyses" which identify important open spaces, views, buildings and boundaries. This provides important information for decisions on new developments.

High Bradfield has its historic parish church, dating in part from the 12th century, and a pub. The little main street leading to the church has a very strong sense of local character. The spectacular view from the churchyard looks down over the whole valley towards the city and up towards the Bradfield moors. Close to the church are two large earthworks, known as Bailey Hill and Castle Hill. Bailey Hill is a motte and bailey structure, thought to date from around 1000AD. Gravestones in the churchyard date from the seventeenth century.



High Bradfield

Low Bradfield sits in the valley bottom about half-a-mile away and three hundred feet below its neighbour. It is immediately below Agden Reservoir, at the point where two small rivers, Dale Dike and Agden Dike, join to form the River Loxley. Low Bradfield is dominated by a large flat open green space. This accommodates the village cricket pitch, a bowling green, tennis courts, and the village hall. There is also space for people to sit and soak in the scenery, and for children to play. On summer weekends, Low Bradfield is a magnet for visitors on trips from the city.

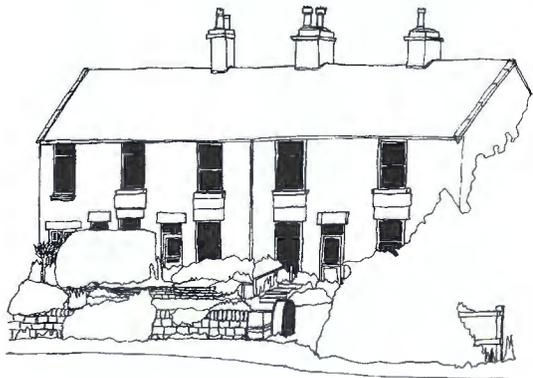
The buildings of Low Bradfield are clustered loosely around the green space. They have developed over centuries in a "higgledy-piggledy" fashion along old lane patterns. The Parish Council offices are in a distinguished old chapel building just across the road from the green space. Just along the road is the old blacksmiths forge, now used as a vehicle repair garage. The forge is close to the site of a twelfth century corn mill. A small development of "affordable rural housing" was built in the 1980s.

Bradfield lost its school when it was amalgamated with Dungworth a few years ago. Its Post Office and

shop has struggled to keep going, and the garage has stopped selling petrol because it could no longer turn a profit. People in the village are concerned about the gradual loss of these important community resources.

The village hall, the only community building, is heavily used, but in a very poor state of repair. Attempts over the years to raise money for a new one have not been successful. At the time of writing the building needed attention urgently. Sheffield City Council recently suggested closing the only public toilets, but changed their minds after a local outcry.

It should be noted that the village hall and the church play an invaluable part in the life not just of Bradfield but of the wider community in the valley.



Terraced houses in Loxley

Loxley

Loxley is about three miles down the valley from Bradfield, on the edge of the Sheffield built-up area. It was originally a stone-built village, made up of farm buildings and cottages where workers from the local mining and metals trades lived. These old buildings have now been partly absorbed into small suburban developments of the twentieth century.

About three thousand people live in Loxley, with a good mix of ages and of long-time residents and incomers. It has a primary school, post office, two pubs and a Methodist chapel, but no village hall or park. Some local groups use an old prefabricated "Horsa hut" in the school grounds, but it is dilapidated. The village urgently needs a proper community hall.

Previously the fine building of the Loxley Independent Chapel beyond Long Lane was in community use as a chapel and as a scout, cub and

beaver meeting venue. It is now in private hands but quite unused and uncared for.

Alternatively, the possibility of refurbishing (and extending) the pavilion on council-owned land opposite the bottom of Long Lane to become a village hall could be explored. Bradfield Parish Council has bought some land on Black Lane, which it plans to turn into a park.

Loxley sits on the side of the valley. There are no flat areas, so houses mostly sit above one another rising up the slope. Many of the houses have a treasured view across or along the valley. The settlement pattern is of houses strung out either side of Loxley Road, with others along lanes leading off it, up the hill at acute angles. There is no clear centre or meeting point.

Loxley has a rural feel, through retention of the green open spaces between buildings and the views into open countryside.

Dungworth and Storrs

The village of Dungworth sits on a hillside on the opposite side of the valley to Loxley. It is about two miles further out from the edge of the city. Its near neighbour is Storrs, a smaller scattered hamlet about half a mile closer to Sheffield. Their combined population is about five hundred and fifty. Community life revolves around the Royal Hotel, village hall, the Methodist chapel and the primary school. There are no longer shops or a Post Office.



Royal Hotel, Dungworth

They are agricultural places, based around half a dozen working farms. There is also a terrace of workers' cottages in Storrs, and two sets of council-built houses in Dungworth that were originally

provided for workers from the brick factory in the valley below. Many farms have amalgamated, and their redundant outbuildings and barns have been converted into houses. They are owned now largely by people commuting to Sheffield and beyond.

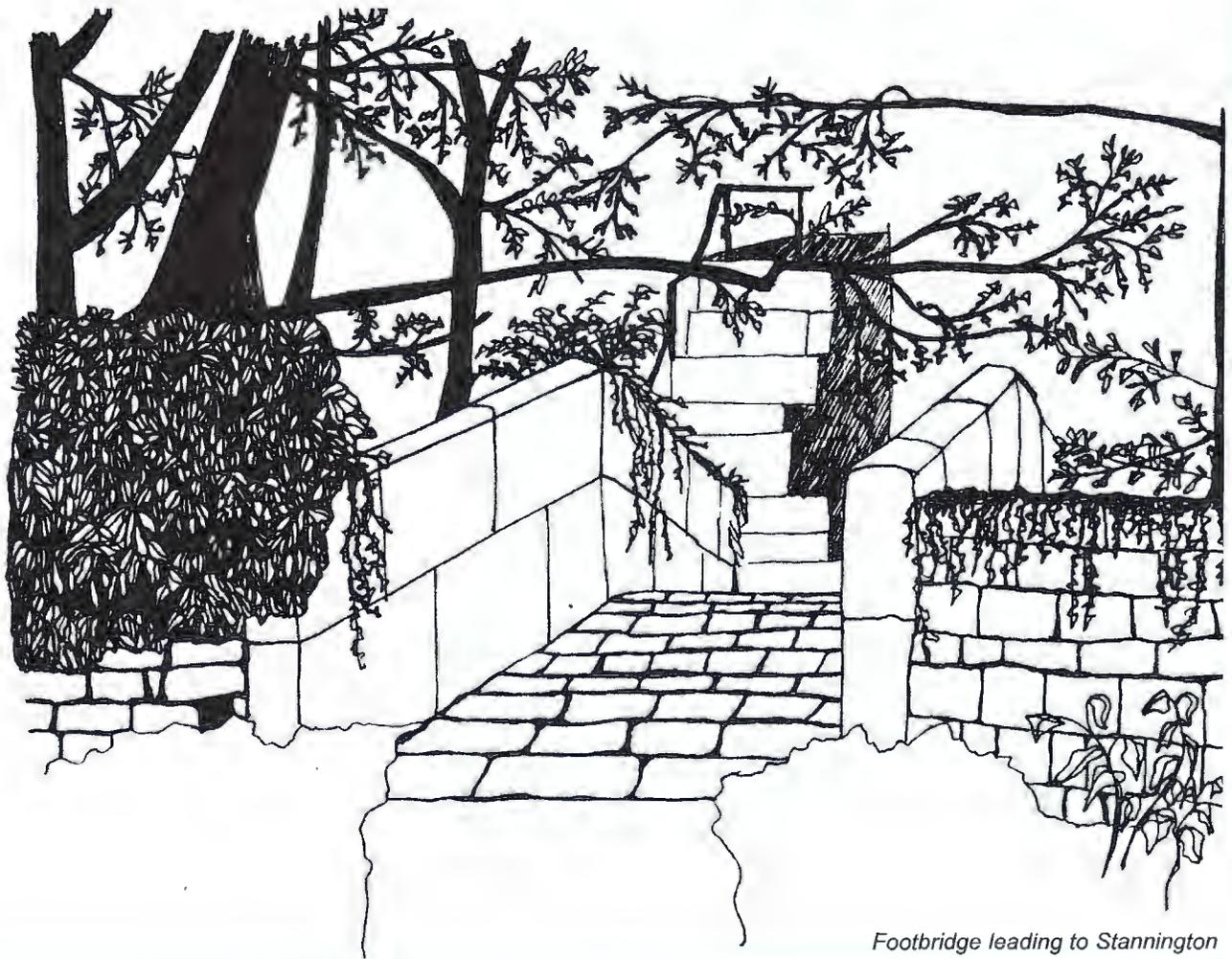
Age range is well mixed. Access to public services in the city for children and older people is limited, though local bus services have improved.

Stannington

Like Loxley, Stannington is in the built-up area at the city edge, though until the nineteen sixties it was very much a village outside Sheffield in the West Riding. It sits on the ridge between the Loxley and Rivelin Valleys.

Parts of Stannington village do overlook the Loxley Valley – notably the north side of the Acorn estate, Greaves Lane and High Matlock, the lower part of Wood Lane and the Marchwood estate. But only people on the northern fringes of Stannington would think of themselves as actually 'in' the valley.

Local people feel the Acorn estate is an example of how NOT to design housing for the Loxley Valley. It was built in the early nineteen eighties, despite opposition from many local people. They resent the way it dominates the top of the hill. The builders attempted to produce local character by using stone, and they copied traditional features from local barns and farm buildings. But Acorn Hill still gives the impression of a sprawling suburban estate, lacking local character and completely out of keeping with its surroundings. Its flaws are in layout and density, and in the lack of a vegetation strategy.



Footbridge leading to Stannington

building design

Schools

Most children of primary age attend Bradfield-Dungworth, Loxley, or the Nook Lane school in Stannington. Most secondary school pupils go to Bradfield School, which is in Worrall, just beyond the valley. There is no public transport from the valley to this school; pupils are taken by bus from collection points around the valley. After-school activities are limited to those whose parents can taxi them. Fetching sick children home or attending parents' evenings, without a car, requires a taxi.

The character of the buildings in the valley

In the Loxley Valley the distinctive character of the buildings derives less from the detail and more from their scale and shape, and from the way they fit together and sit in the surrounding landscape.

The buildings are in numerous styles, but do have things in common. Many use local and traditional materials. They are modest in size. Even in Loxley where other materials have been used, the houses have largely been kept to a similar scale and relation with the landscape, not imposed but with a sense of growth in response to human need.

Their architectural "style" comes from functional usage and locally available materials. Some buildings have combined agricultural, industrial and domestic functions – for example, in Dungworth, there are several houses with cutler's workshops attached. Many buildings have changed uses over their lifetime, from barn or workshop to dwelling, from forge to motor repair workshop, from chapel to offices or home, from pub to post office to flats, from farm workers' terrace to holiday cottage, and so on.

Buildings are mostly low, with two storeys, occasionally three. They were often built on split levels, to fit into the hillside. This is a feature found on a larger scale with settlements or factories, for example Dungworth village or the Dyson's refractory works at Stopes – they both nestle into the landscape, well below the tops of nearby hills or ridges.

More elaborate building was invested in chapels, churches, and "Halls", built by landowners or factory owners, but these are also modest in scale and decoration and fit in.

Some distinctive features of buildings in the Loxley Valley

- Many are built using gritstone from local quarries. This is a rugged abrasive sandstone, which over the years has become darkened by weathering. There are outcrops of this rock around the top of the valley, and these were often quarried commercially, for example on Loxley Common or at Stannington Roughs, (all of the quarries have now closed).
- Buildings have large stones at the bottom of their walls, grading to smaller stones at the top.
- Many buildings have a variety of window styles, usually of modest size. This is particularly so in Bradfield.
- Many still have stone roofs.
- The angle of roof pitch is noticeably shallow – a gentle 35° to 45°, (originally to allow for the extra weight of stone slates).
- Some buildings have been constructed out of local brick – especially those buildings associated with the local brickworks.
- Barns have round openings on the upper floor, and wide arched doorways.
- Many boundaries round buildings and on farms are marked by dry stone walls, again using local gritstone. The angle of the top stones denotes the side of ownership, sloping down towards the owner or person responsible for their maintenance.
- Gateposts, many with different kinds of markings relating to different periods and dates.
- Farmyards and some old workers' footpaths are paved in local stone setts
- There are some cruck barns dating from the thirteenth century, with frames constructed from pairs of whole oak trees, (examples can be found in Storrs, Dungworth & Bradfield).
- Many traditional farm clusters front their stone barn walls to the west – the side of the prevailing wind, which helps protect the weak points of window and door joins, (these being placed on the eastern face of the building, away from the wind and rain). There is often also a line of mature sycamores planted usually to the west, which helps temper the wind and sun, and moderate the microclimate. They are usually set well below the skyline.

Building design – our guidelines

These are our detailed guidelines for safeguarding and enhancing the built environment in the Loxley Valley. We do not envisage large-scale new development in the valley – indeed elsewhere in this document we argue against it. But we recognise that new buildings will be proposed from time to time, and therefore these guidelines suggest ways in which they could be incorporated in keeping with local character.

Sheffield City Council and the Peak District National Park Authority have both adopted some of our policies as supplementary planning guidance, which people should take into account when proposing development in the valley.

The planning guidance for Sheffield is to be found in Appendix One at the end of this document. Planning guidance for the Peak Park is available through the National Park Authority's planning office. They can be contacted on 01629 816200. Details are also available on the Park Authority's website at www.peakdistrict.org

Our guidelines for building should be read alongside our guidelines for the landscape on page 11, and our guidelines for farmers and landowners on page 21.

These are our guidelines for building:

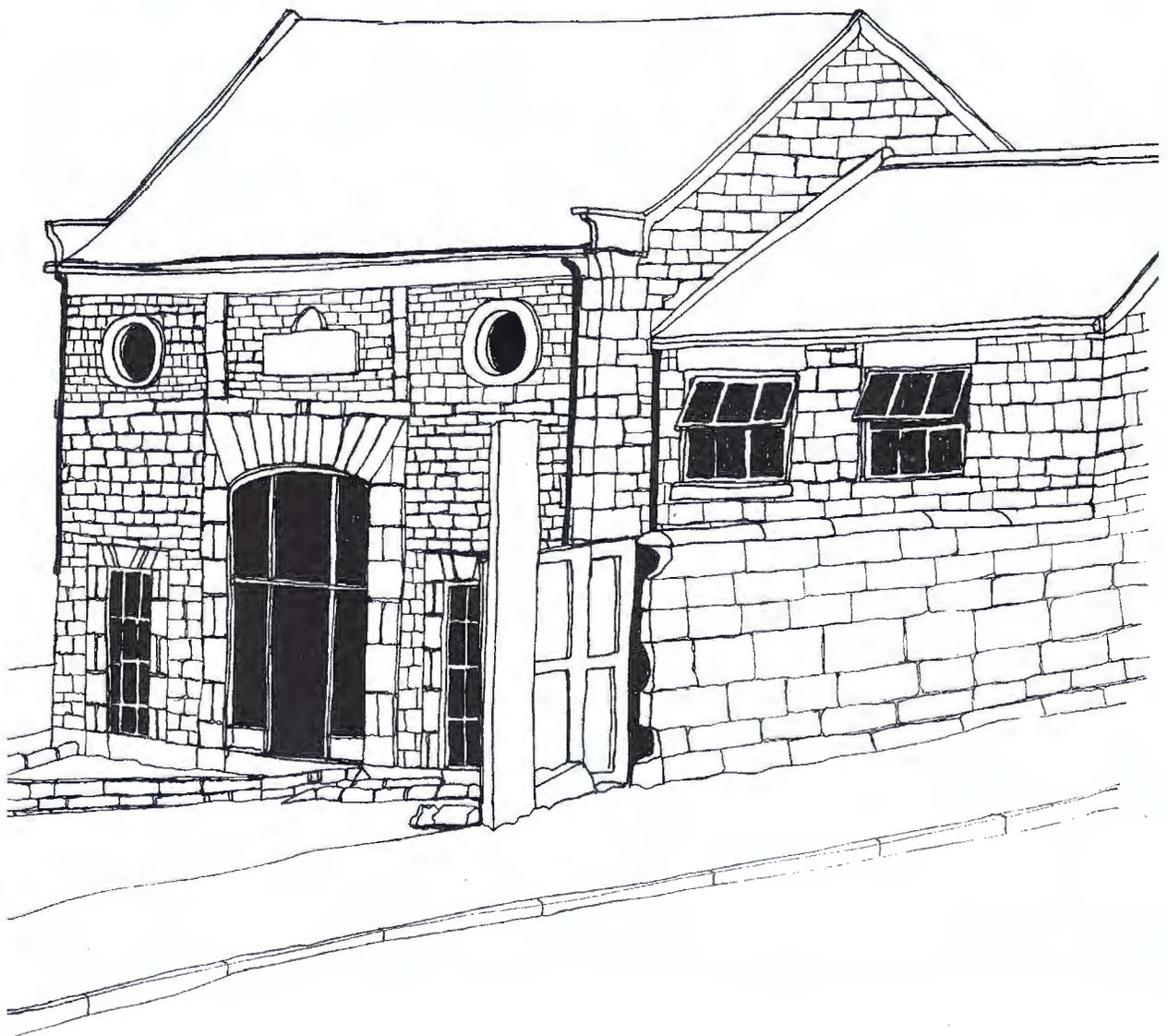
- a) New structures should harmonise in design and scale, and be of materials consistent with neighbouring buildings, to produce a sense of unity.
- b) Any new development, especially along Loxley Road, should reflect the consistency of the existing roofline except in exceptional circumstances where a varied roofline may be more appropriate.
- c) Normally, extensions and conversions should be no higher than existing and neighbouring buildings. Extensions to old rural buildings should be in scale with what is already there.
- d) Where "affordable" housing is proposed, small-scale "workers' terraces" such as existing ones at Rowell Bridge and Stone Row, Storrs, could serve as one model.
- e) Other models for grouped housing could include farm clusters such as at Hill Top, and the street at High Bradfield.
- f) New stone structures should be in graded stone, with larger stones at the bottom of walls and smaller ones at the top, where this would harmonise with adjacent architectural features.
- g) Barn conversions should encourage retention and enhancement of original features such as round openings on upper floors and wide arched doorways.
- h) Wildlife access, (e.g. for bats, swallows, house martins and barn owls), should be included where barns and outbuildings are renovated for domestic use. This could include the use of specially designed bricks that allow wildlife access for hibernating bats and nesting boxes for several species of birds to prevent harm to hibernating wildlife in such buildings. A construction start date must be agreed with the City Council in consultation with the City Ecologist.
- i) Windows and doors in building conversions and renovation projects should be of timber, in proportion to the style and size of the building. Stone lintels should be used where appropriate.
- j) Roofs should be of a material that blends with buildings in terms of colour, style and material, (for example, neither corrugated steel nor red clay tiles would be appropriate roofing materials on stone buildings). Traditional gritstone tiles/slates should be used where possible.
- k) In larger stone buildings and conversions, windows for new uses should respect the original style and features of buildings in the local area (for example old chapels or large farm houses).
- l) Conservatories should be compatible with local window and door styles, proportions and materials.
- m) New porches should respect the style of the original building.
- n) Satellite dishes should be located and designed so as to minimize visual impact by:
 - i) the use of brown mesh dishes of the smallest technically feasible size
 - ii) siting on side or rear elevations below roof level where technically feasible
 - iii) sharing dishes where possible.
- o) Courtyards and hard standings between

buildings should blend with the materials used in the buildings. Appropriate materials could include stone setts or slabs or similar, or slabs set within pebble surround.

- p) Security lighting should be kept to the minimum required to provide security for people, animals and property. It should be carefully directed downwards onto specific areas and shielded as far as possible to prevent light pollution contaminating neighbouring properties or the area generally. However, most security lighting does not require planning permission.
- q) Use of reconstituted stone or rendering may be inappropriate in sensitive locations, especially on the visible facade of buildings. Stone setts should be set in permeable sub layers to prevent run off.
- r) Pointing in stone buildings should be recessed,

to accentuate the stone rather than the mortar. Traditional lime mortars or mortars that are softer than the masonry must be used wherever possible to prevent damage to the stone.

- s) The angle of roof pitches should be in keeping with the local tradition, i.e. within the range of 35° to 45°.
- t) The use of barn owl and bat boxes is encouraged in new buildings, building conversions and renovation projects.
- u) The use of sustainable drainage systems is encouraged in the construction of new buildings wherever possible. This can include measures such as use of water from roofs; porous drives to allow the natural soak away of rainwater, to the more innovative collection and recycling of water for domestic use where economically feasible.



Converted barn, Loxley

Coping with change

 We have said a lot about the character of the valley and its buildings, and how the area might be protected and enhanced. But we realise the valley cannot be simply captured in time and preserved as it is now. If that were to happen, it would defy its history and traditions – the area has changed significantly through many generations of human activity and enterprise. But the change has largely been gradual and balanced. That must continue if the valley is to keep its identity.

People worry now about the potential scale and pace of change. This was said repeatedly during the consultations for this document.

Industry is going from the valley, leaving redundant factories behind. Farmers are struggling; some of them going to the wall – what will become of their land and buildings? Recreational use of the valley is growing and intensifying. And there is mounting pressure for up-market housing in the green belt as more people seek a rural lifestyle. If it were to succumb to all these pressures, the Loxley Valley as we know it could be destroyed.

We cannot expect the valley to be spared from the rigours of social and economic change, but we do believe change can be managed proactively and creatively. This is the theme of this final section of our document.

We will describe the main forces of change, and consider how they might be managed. We will look in turn at farming, industrial decline, and at recreation and tourism.

Farming in the valley

The valley is mainly an agricultural, pastoral landscape. For centuries, farmers have been its custodians. But many say they are now struggling; some freely admit they are in crisis. If they go under, or change radically the way they use their land, it

will have a major impact on the landscape for many years to come, for better or worse.

The present landscape is largely the way it is because of farming. If not maintained, it will return – as in parts of Rivelin and the west end of Little Matlock Wood – to light oak/birch woodland, heathland, or moorland. Some changes have already begun to erode some of the special features of the landscape. Field boundaries and biodiversity are being lost.

Field boundaries, in particular dry stone walls, are a distinctive local feature and need to be maintained. Some have been removed to enlarge fields or for other reasons; others have been allowed to fall down. Repairing them is expensive. Grants are available to part-fund this, but only on the basis of the whole farm. Fields rented from non-farming landowners are in the worst state of repair.

There are no legal protections for dry stone walls as there are for hedges. If ways are not found to protect and maintain these essential features of our local landscape, they will be lost, just like the industrial heritage along the river.

A drastic reduction in biodiversity has resulted from a tendency towards winter corn sowing, silaging and heavier use of fertilisers. This means wildflowers are cut before seeding, and birds and insects lose their food supplies at a critical time of their lifecycles. If pieces of "waste" land and edges of fields can be left untidied, this can help offset this damage and provide some habitats for wildlife.

There have been occasional examples of farmers using land inappropriately and without the required planning permission. The valley has also been subjected to some landfill and landspreading operations over a number of years that will impact on the natural landscape and river system.

Some farm buildings are now being so "smartened up" that they erode the character of the area. Many residential conversions command high prices and are beyond the reach of local people.

There has been a change in the pattern of land use in the valley in recent years associated with the decline in its use for farming. The trend has been towards conversion of farm buildings to dwellings that are sold with varying acreages of pasture attached. This has attracted horse owners to the area. This change from agriculture to "horsiculture" has potential for both benefit and harm in the valley.

On the benefit side, horse owners can contribute to the local economy by either purchasing winter forage from local farmers or paying them to harvest and store such forage from their own land. They

employ farriers. Construction and repair of their fences, dry stone walls and hedges also provides employment.

Careful maintenance of their pastures, hedges and walls can enhance not only the landscape but also biodiversity of flora and fauna. Horse owners are particularly motivated to remove the poisonous ragwort, which plagues this valley, from their land because it can kill horses, (and can harm sheep and cattle).

On the harm side, stables and field shelters may look unsightly and be placed obtrusively. Fields may be overstocked, which leads to poaching of the pasture, made worse by the heavy clay and poor drainage prevalent in the valley.

Ways forward?

We believe that farmers should not be left alone to deal with the problems affecting the land. They affect everybody in the valley. We suggest the following ideas might be worth pursuing:

- A partnership of local authorities, community groups and farmers should be set up to work together for a higher quality of visitor experience, and to develop a broader economic base.
- The valley is close to the city and attracts many day-trippers. Could farmers capitalise on this to find new markets for their produce?
- "Farmers' markets" might provide an outlet for locally-grown produce. Locally-produced organic food could attract premium prices.
- Could the national park's farm and countryside service extend advice and assistance to farmers beyond the Peak Park boundary to encourage environmentally-sensitive and economically-rewarding farming practices throughout the valley?



Farmhouse in Dungworth

Design guidelines for farmers and landowners

These are our detailed guidelines for farmers and landowners in the Loxley Valley.

Sheffield City Council and the Peak District National Park Authority have both adopted some of our policies as supplementary planning guidance, which people should take into account when proposing development in the valley.

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Our guidelines for farmers and landowners should be read alongside our guidelines for the landscape on page 11, and our guidelines for buildings on page 17.

These are our guidelines for farmers and landowners:

- a) Stone gateposts should be retained.
- b) To follow traditional patterns, new barns should be set below the skyline and within the curtilage of existing buildings. They should be of dark colour to blend with the landscape and screened with groups or clusters of trees and shrubs, native species, preferably from seed of local provenance, from local nurseries.
- c) Stables and other buildings for horses should be of timber or natural materials. Their finished colour should fit in with the landscape. Normally, they should be sited close to existing buildings, and should not become separate and isolated features.
- d) Manège construction may require works to the gradient of the land. Visually intrusive major earthworks to correct a slope should be avoided. However, minor earthworks could be obscured by a surrounding dry stonewall. Edging of the manège itself, for safety, should be of timber post and rail.

- e) Agricultural improvement work may involve the infilling of natural depressions in the landscape. Applications for such work should respect as far as possible the natural contours of the landscape, which give character and visual interest to the area.
- f) Wildlife access (e.g. for bats, swallows, house martins, barn owls) should be included in new and renovated outbuildings, buildings for the keeping of livestock, and barns. This could include the use of specially designed bricks that allow wildlife access for hibernating bats and nesting boxes for several species of birds, to prevent harm to hibernating wildlife in such buildings. A construction date must be agreed with the City Council in consultation with the City Ecologist.

Industry in the valley

There have been factories and workshops in the valley since before the Industrial Revolution. The fast-flowing rivers and streams powered small forges and mills along the valley from Bradfield to Malin Bridge. Some of these buildings fell into ruin. Others remain as homes for small enterprises, (Little Matlock Mill houses a small metal-processing business; Olive Mill a marquee company).

Along two stretches of the valley, the old water-powered sites gave way to sizeable factories, (known locally as the "Wisewood Forge" site and the "Hepworths" site). Both have now closed, leading to heated debate about what should happen next.

On the Wisewood site, the decision has now been taken. At the time of writing, it had been cleared and builders were erecting flats for elderly people on the footprint of the old forge buildings. But the planning process beforehand has left many locals angry and disillusioned.

When the factory closed, the site was cleared of modern buildings, but planners said historic stone buildings should be preserved. They were imposing, and formed a scenic backdrop to the large old mill pond at their side. They were valuable in terms of the developing recreational and environmental importance of the valley bottom.

Mysteriously, they "disappeared" while developers, planners and objectors got locked into a protracted row over the size of any redevelopment. This rumbled on for years, while the stone disappeared block by block, and the foundations of the modern buildings became derelict and decrepit. Eventually there was a compromise that allowed new building in place of the old ones. It also involves disturbance to the valley bottom on a scale that some locals find worrying.

Although the Wisewood site is on the edge of the Sheffield conurbation, it is also where the Green Belt starts. Its loss is regretted by some because it pulls the city further up the valley. The rest of the valley beyond remains overwhelmingly undeveloped and peaceful, but with one significant exception – the "Hepworths' site".

This lies two miles further up the valley, in the heart of the Green Belt, and just a stone's throw from the national park. There is great concern about what will happen to it.

The site lies between Rowell Bridge and Dam Flask, in the area we described earlier as Zone Five. It takes its colloquial name from its last active owners, Hepworth plc. They took over what had originally been three separate factories, operating side by side – two refractory plants and a factory making carbon blocks. Hepworth ran them as part of a much larger business, but scaled them down in successive "rationalisations" before finally closing them and selling the site.

The site is now semi-derelict. It is, in planning terms, a "non-conforming" industrial site within the Green Belt. In other words, it should not be where it is. The Loxley Valley bottom is now one of the most cherished parts of the Sheffield Green Belt – a natural gateway from the city to the Peak Park, hugely significant recreationally and environmentally. Yet by historical accident it has a festering industrial eyesore at its heart.

In 1997, the then owners applied to have the site removed from the Green Belt to facilitate its development. A planning inspector rejected this.

Both Hepworth plc and the site's new owners have said they want to clean it up. But they argue any solution has to be commercially viable. Although they have not yet applied for planning permission, they have tried to persuade local people and local groups (including ourselves) to support their ideas for redevelopment. These ideas have always involved a big housing estate, significantly larger than the combined settlements of Dungworth and Storrs. Local people and groups have condemned the idea.

There is now an impasse, and the site is deteriorating fast. It is being used for fly-tipping, dumping of scrap cars, off-road motorcycling and, reportedly, shooting – all potentially dangerous activities. General dereliction of the plant and buildings also brings its own dangers, with some pollutants – for example, asbestos – still left on site.

We fear a repetition of the Wisewood saga – the worse the dereliction becomes, the more people will see the site as dangerous and ugly, and the more they will see some kind of redevelopment as a good option, whatever is proposed.

There are widely differing views locally as to what should happen on the site, although there is an overwhelming majority against a large housing estate. These are just some of the options suggested during our consultation process:

- light industry, small scale housing or a mixture of both, within a regenerated landscape, or a quiet recreational solution ("Green End Use") *

- a business park
- a hotel and conference centre with holiday cottages

We believe the site demands a solution of outstanding environmental sensitivity. It needs imaginative, regenerative use. Some people locally believe that no one enterprise or organisation can deliver this. It is important enough that a consortium or partnership be formed, public/private, official/community, to find the resources to take this forward, while protecting the characteristics of this special place.

* *"Green End Use" means: soft end use i.e. BACK TO NATURE. "When a valley has provided a significant contribution to the wealth of Sheffield, one has to consider if the time is right for payback time instead of continually exploiting the valley and raping it of its natural resources."* (Comment from contributor)

Recreation and tourism in the valley

The Sheffield conurbation contains over half-a-million people. Sheffield is Britain's fourth largest city.

The Peak District National Park is one of the most visited areas in the world. There are up to 30 million visits to the Peak Park each year – only Mount Fuji National Park in Japan has more visits.

The Loxley Valley unites the two. It lies just outside the Sheffield built-up area, but entirely within the Sheffield administrative boundary. And the whole upper end of the valley is within the national park, forming one of its most dramatic and unspoilt corners.

If the valley can be kept free of damaging and destructive development, if we can maintain its charm and tranquillity, people will continue to come here in growing numbers in their leisure time. While the valley is losing jobs in agriculture and industry, it may find new ones in recreation and tourism. We believe sensitive development of leisure in the valley could be a key to the regeneration of the local economy.

But what form might it take, and how can we protect and enhance local distinctiveness and the valley's special assets?

Relatively small increases in recreation in the valley can have a significant effect. For example, there have been noticeably more visitors since the new footpath opened around Dam Flask. This can bring much-needed custom for local businesses. It could help the new Post Office/cafe at Bradfield to attract customers. It could help local bus services. And it could create opportunities for new business – possibilities might include cafes, cycle hire, holiday cottages, craft outlets and riding schools. There are questions to be answered as well, though. For example, where are the visitors going to park? Are there enough toilets in the valley to meet their needs?

We know that some people worry about the possible impact of all this. Those who took part in our consultation said they supported change and new activity, but they wanted it to be "low impact". They also wanted the community to be involved in planning the way ahead.

There is also some evidence that visitors do not want their presence to damage the valley. Runners in the 2000 Percy Pud, (a ten kilometre road race from Loxley to Bradfield and back), were asked what was the best thing about the Loxley Valley. Over half said "the scenery". Over a quarter answered "peace and quiet" and "open space".

We believe recreation and tourism could contribute a lot. But it must be "quiet tourism", and any new development must be thought through, and well-designed in keeping with the guidelines laid out in this document.

There are some important issues to be addressed:

- What form could "quiet tourism" take? Walking? Fishing? Horse riding? Cycling? Water activities? All of these? More?
- Could these various activities be promoted through dedicated routes and facilities? For example, circuits for horse riding, using upgraded bridleways and dedicated new ones. Or a series of graded walks linked to local bus services? Or perhaps dedicated cycle routes from the city to the Peak Park?
- How can we coordinate these different activities to avoid conflicts between them?
- How can we attract visitors to the valley without bringing in more traffic and damaging the environment? Does the answer lie in better public transport, linked to car parks away from the sensitive parts of the valley? Could designated Quiet Lanes help?

Coming up with a blueprint for all this goes beyond

coping with change

the scope of this document. But by pointing to the possibilities, we hope we might encourage others to develop ideas.

especially among the residents of the Marchwood Estate and the nearby Wood Lane area, and the utmost respect given to their views when considering such development.

Miscellaneous sites affected by change in the valley

The Kenyons site

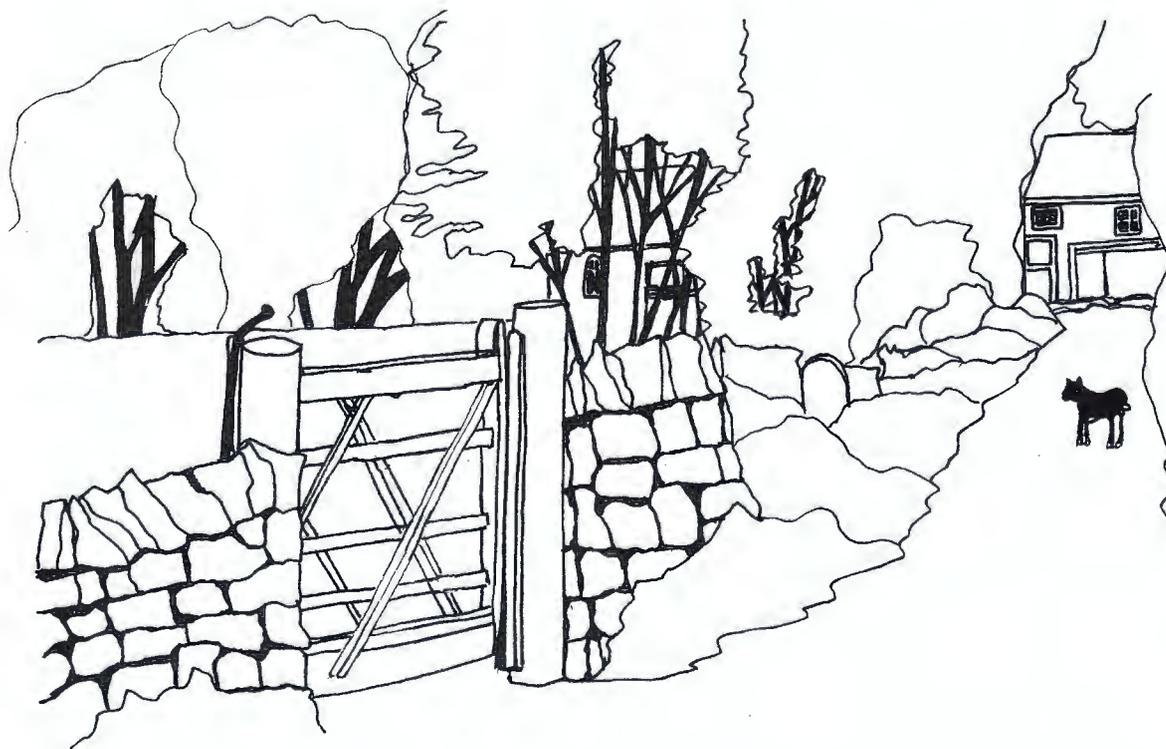
Loxley College

This site sits next to Loxley Road but below eye level on the slope towards the river. At present, its derelict buildings are an eyesore. It needs clearing up. Reuse of the site on a small scale might be possible, with regard for traffic access and visibility from Stannington and elsewhere in the valley.

The college site, with extensive playing fields, is in Green Belt, and occupies a large part of the eastern end of the valley between the built up areas of Loxley and Stannington. The education authorities are closing the college and selling the site. Once vacant this needs sensitive planning to maintain and enhance local character. Any proposed development of this large site should be widely publicised,

Loxley Valley Country Club

This is in a very prominent position, near Loxley Common, overlooking the whole valley. It has been derelict since a fire several years ago.



Footpath leading to Little Matlock

Summing up

 The Loxley Valley is much loved, both by residents and by numerous regular visitors from the city and beyond. In this document we have tried to describe the characteristics that make it special and important to those who took part in the consultation. Then we have tried to indicate how this special character could be kept and nurtured when changes are proposed and implemented. We hope to influence the planning process, and also householders and landowners and developers when they make changes on their own property.

We recognise that most of the valley is protected by Green Belt status, where opportunities for significant building development are slight. However, parts of Loxley and Stannington are under great pressure for development. As residents we all have the privilege of living here and also the responsibility of looking after it for visitors and for future generations – our children and beyond – and for the protection of the natural environment.

Following our consultation process, we have produced detailed design guidelines that we believe will be widely supported in the community. We have also highlighted some major issues in the valley that cannot be addressed by individual planning decisions.

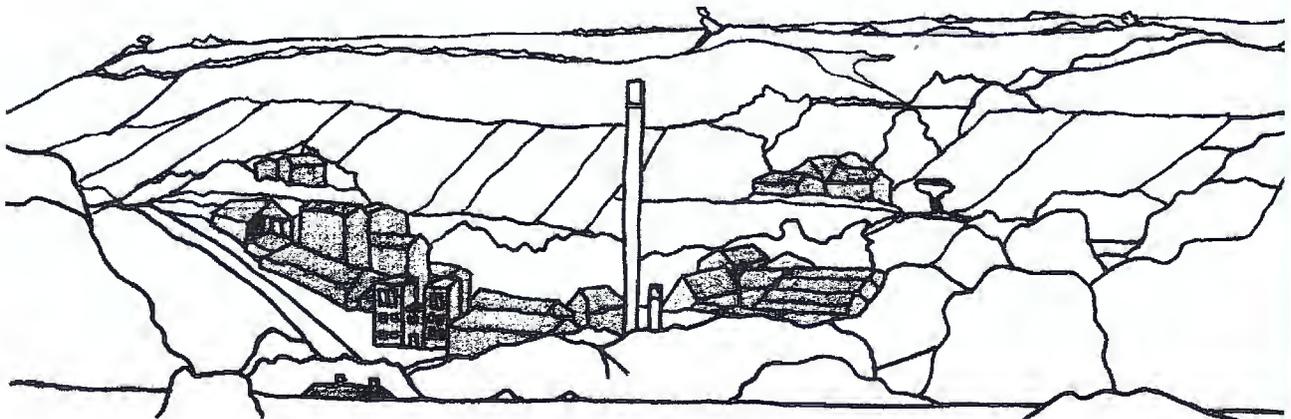
The changes to industry and farming have had a profound impact – comparable to the collapse of industry in other parts of South Yorkshire – and in a

sense the Loxley Valley now needs regeneration.

We believe there is a need for a strategic body for the whole valley to respond to these needs. Such a group could unite the many interests in the valley and could contribute significantly to environmental planning, management and protection.

Priorities for attention include:

- A review of the Peak District National Park boundary, with a view to including the distinctive countryside on the very edge of the Sheffield conurbation.
- Measures to help the farming community.
- A strategy for stimulating and managing "quiet" leisure and tourism.
- A strategy for preserving the industrial heritage sites in the valley bottom, including the many historic water features.
- A transport strategy, including steps to calm traffic near local schools, a review of local speed limits, and further improvements to public transport.
- Identifying and pursuing an appropriate use for the redundant Hepworths site. This should be consistent with the outstanding amenity value of the site, and its pivotal position at the heart of the Green Belt corridor linking Sheffield to the Peak District.
- Improving community facilities in the valley, particularly village halls for Bradfield and Loxley.



View of Dyson refractory works

Appendix One

Sheffield City Council supplementary planning guidance

Guidelines for the landscape

These guidelines are intended to supplement the following policies of the Sheffield Unitary Development Plan: SP1(c), SP1(d), BE2, BE5(f), BE6, BE10(a), BE10(f), BE15, BE17, GE2, GE4, GE11 and GE15.

- a) Development should not damage important views in and into the Loxley Valley. (BE2 and GE2)
- b) Individual mature trees or mature groups of trees that contribute to the character of the area and are under threat from development will be identified and protected by Tree Preservation Orders. (GE2 and GE15)
- c) New landscape work should, where possible and appropriate, use locally indigenous species, preferably from seed of local provenance. (BE6)
- d) Non-native conifers, such as Leyland Cypress, should not be planted as hedges. Alternatives for gardens, if a traditional mixed hedgerow is not wanted, could be deciduous beech, or hornbeam, buckthorn or hawthorn. (BE6)
- e) New buildings should be constructed in matching gritstone or other compatible, matching, high quality materials where appropriate. (BE15 and GE4)
- f) Ground surfaces that are prominent from long-distance viewpoints in the valley should be in a material that blends with the surroundings. (BE6, BE2 and GE2)
- g) Dry stone walls or hedges should be used as appropriate wherever a boundary is needed.
- h) Field boundaries, both dry stone walling and hedges, should be treated as a valuable part of the landscape and for wildlife. (BE4(f), BE17 and GE4)
- i) Development should avoid interfering with the delicate historic patterns of drainage, water supply and spring/stream flow. Applicants should seek advice from the Council's Drainage Services Section. River Loxley is designated as a Main River, hence no intrusive development would normally be acceptable within 10 metres of the banks. (GE17)
- j) Floodlighting is usually inappropriate in the Green Belt. If appropriate, it should be carefully directed downwards onto specific areas that need to be illuminated, and shielded as far as possible so as to prevent light pollution. (GE4, GE8 and BE5)
- k) Development must not harm natural features of value. The design, siting and landscaping of development must respect and promote nature conservation. Development proposals should include measures to reduce any potentially harmful effects of the proposal on natural features of value. Developers should seek to integrate natural features into the landscape. (GE11)
- l) Planning application submissions for the development of unimproved grassland and hay meadows must include an ecological survey of the development site. (GE11)
- m) Development of unimproved grassland, ponds and hay meadows must not cause harm to valuable flora, fauna or wildlife habitats. A construction start date must be agreed with the City Council in consultation with the City Ecologist. (GE11)

Guidelines for buildings

These guidelines are intended to supplement the following policies of the Sheffield UDP: BE1, BE5, BE8, GE3, GE4, GE5, GE6, GE9, GE22, H7

- a) New structures should harmonise in design and scale, and be of materials consistent with neighbouring buildings, to produce a sense of unity. (BE1, BE5(a), GE4)
- b) Any new development, especially along Loxley Road, should reflect the consistency of the existing roofline except in exceptional circumstances where a varied roofline may be more appropriate. (BE5(a))
- c) Normally, extensions and conversions should be no higher than existing and neighbouring buildings. Extensions to old rural buildings should be in scale with what is already there. (BE5(a))
- d) Where affordable housing is proposed, workers' terraces such as existing ones at Rowell Bridge and Stone Row, Storrs, could serve as one model. Other models of grouped housing could include farm clusters such as at Hill Top, and the street at High Bradfield.
- e) New houses, refurbished dwellings or conversions into dwellings must be built in accordance with mobility housing guidelines (Mobility Housing Policy Background Paper NO.13 and Mobility Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance)> The use of specific house types not originally designed with access in mind, might not comply with Unitary Development Plan policy. Conversion or alterations to houses should make the properties accessible to wheelchairs. (H7)
- f) New stone structures should be in graded stone, with larger stones at the bottom of walls and smaller ones at the top, where this would harmonise with adjacent architectural features. (GE3, GE5 and GE6)
- g) Barn conversions should encourage retention and enhancement of original features such as round openings on upper floors and wide arched doorways. (GE9)
- h) Wildlife access, (e.g. for bats, swallows, house martins and barn owls), should be included where barns and outbuildings are renovated for domestic use. This could include the use of specially designed bricks that allow wildlife access for hibernating bats and nesting boxes for several species of birds to prevent harm to hibernating wildlife in such buildings. A construction start date must be agreed with the City Council in consultation with the City Ecologist. (GE11)
- i) Windows and doors in building conversions and renovation projects should be of timber, in proportion to the style and size of the building. The design of doors should comply with Mobility Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance. Stone lintels should be used where appropriate. (GE9 and H7)
- j) Roofs should be of a material that blends with buildings in terms of colour, style and material, (for example, neither corrugated steel nor red clay tiles would be appropriate roofing materials on stone buildings). Traditional gritstone tiles/slates should be used where possible. (BE5(a))
- k) In larger stone buildings and conversions, windows for new uses should respect the original style and features of buildings in the local area (for example old chapels or large farm houses).
- l) Conservatories should be compatible with local window and door styles, proportions and materials. (BE5(c))
- m) New porches should respect the style of the original building. (BE5(a) and GE9)
- n) Satellite dishes should be located and designed so as to minimize visual impact by:
 - i) the use of brown mesh dishes of the smallest technically feasible size
 - ii) siting on side or rear elevations below roof level where technically feasible
 - iii) sharing dishes where possible. (BE5(a))
- o) Courtyards and hard standings between buildings should blend with the materials used in the buildings. Appropriate materials could include stone setts or slabs or similar, or slabs set within pebble surround. (BE5(a), BE10(a)). Aggregates such as gravel or limestone chippings, setts and other heavily riven materials are unsuitable for many disabled people, and should only be used around the perimeter of large areas or courtyards. (H7, BE10(a))
- p) Security lighting should be kept to the minimum required to provide security for people, animals and property. It should be carefully directed downwards onto specific areas and shielded as far as possible to prevent light pollution contaminating neighbouring properties or the

area generally. However, most security lighting does not require planning permission. (BE5(h))

- q) Use of reconstituted stone or rendering may be inappropriate in sensitive locations, especially on the visible facade of buildings. Stone setts should be set in permeable sub layers to prevent run off. (BE5(a))
- r) Pointing in stone buildings should be recessed, to accentuate the stone rather than the mortar. Traditional lime mortars or mortars that are less hard than the masonry must be used wherever possible to prevent damage to the stone.
- s) Where appropriate, the angle of roof pitches should be in keeping with the local tradition, i.e. within the range of 35° to 45°. (BE5(a))
- t) The use of barn owl and bat boxes is encouraged in new buildings, building conversions and renovation projects.
- u) The use of sustainable drainage systems is encouraged in the construction of new buildings wherever possible. This can include measures such as use of water from roofs; porous drives to allow the natural soak away of rainwater, to the more innovative collection and recycling of water for domestic use where economically feasible. (BE5(g))
- v) The use of gravel, limestone chippings or other aggregates as finishes for drives and paths is unsuitable for disabled people using wheelchairs or crutches on footpaths or driveways. The use of aggregates as finishes for footpaths and drives should be avoided except in perimeter areas or in small limited areas in order to allow the natural soak away of rainwater. (H7 and BE10(a))
- w) The vast majority of the area is not served by the public sewerage system and as a result, there are individual or joint facilities such as septic tanks. Many of the existing ones are badly maintained and create pollution. Particular consideration must therefore be given to the provision of appropriate foul sewage disposal. Sheffield City Council's Drainage Section should be consulted on detailed proposals that involve the provision of individual or joint facilities for foul sewage disposal. (GE22)

Guidelines for farmers and landowners

- a) Stone gateposts should be retained.
- b) To follow traditional patterns, new barns should be set below the skyline and within the curtilage of existing buildings. They should be of dark colour to blend with the landscape and screened with groups or clusters of trees and shrubs, native species, preferably from seed of local provenance, from local nurseries.
- c) Stables and other buildings for horses should be of timber or natural materials. Their finished colour should fit in with the landscape. Normally, they should be sited close to existing buildings, and should not become separate and isolated features.
- d) Manage construction may require works to the gradient of the land. Visually intrusive major earthworks to correct a slope should be avoided. However, minor earthworks could be obscured by a surrounding dry stonewall. Edging of the manege itself, for safety, should be of timber post and rail.
- e) Agricultural improvement work may involve the infilling of natural depressions in the landscape. Applications for such work should respect as far as possible the natural contours of the landscape, which give character and visual interest to the area. The improvement of unimproved hay meadows may be covered by the Environmental Improvement Assessment Regulations for the Use of Uncultivated Land or Semi Natural Areas for Intensive Agricultural Purposes (1st February 2002). Where development involves the improvement of unimproved hay meadows, the Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs must be consulted.
- f) Wildlife access (e.g. for bats, swallows, house martins, barn owls) should be included in new and renovated outbuildings, buildings for the keeping of livestock, and barns. This could include the use of specially designed bricks that allow wildlife access for hibernating bats and nesting boxes for several species of birds, to prevent harm to hibernating wildlife in such buildings. A construction date must be agreed with the City Council in consultation with the City Ecologist.

Appendix Two

The consultation process – stages

1. May 2000 – Meeting called by Bradfield Parish Council of representatives of local groups and communities, which set up the steering group.
2. Between June and December 2000:
 - Survey questionnaires on relevant subjects. One general to householders, and one to visitors to the Percy Pud Race event in December 2000
 - Three exhibitions at local summer shows, in Bradfield & Stannington (2000) and Dungworth (2000 & 2001)
 - Three full-day ‘Village Character Workshops’, in Dungworth, Bradfield and Loxley.
 - Provisional report on the consultation, drawing together local background and issues, circulated to local MP, City Councillors for the local area, Parish Councillors, planning officials, interested local groups and individuals.
3. At all stages, discussions and personal conversations in various settings, pubs, school playgrounds etc.
4. Meetings and discussions with officials of Sheffield City Council planning department and Peak Park Planning.
5. October 2002 – public consultation on the draft statement, with exhibition in Bradfield Parish Council offices, local libraries and village hall. This produced comments from individuals and organisations, which informed the next revision.
6. March 2003 – revised Design Statement with supplementary planning guidance, welcomed and accepted by Sheffield City Council North Area Panel.

7. April 2003 – SCC North West Area Planning Board referred document for extra citywide consultation of relevant organisations. Comments collected and considered by planning officers and discussed with Loxley Valley Design Group.
8. October 2003 – Revised document submitted to Sheffield City Council and the Peak District National Park Authority for consideration as Supplementary Planning Guidance within the Loxley Valley.

Over the three-year period, the Design Group worked in several subgroups covering different aspects of the valley; history, ecology, local planning context, landscape, building and settlement character. A further group worked on editing and illustration.

Questionnaires have been analysed, and comments from workshops and elsewhere collected, some of which appear in this document. Top concerns have been identified, and as a result of comments on the draft it is clear that many individuals and organisations within the valley and beyond feel that they have a stake in its future.

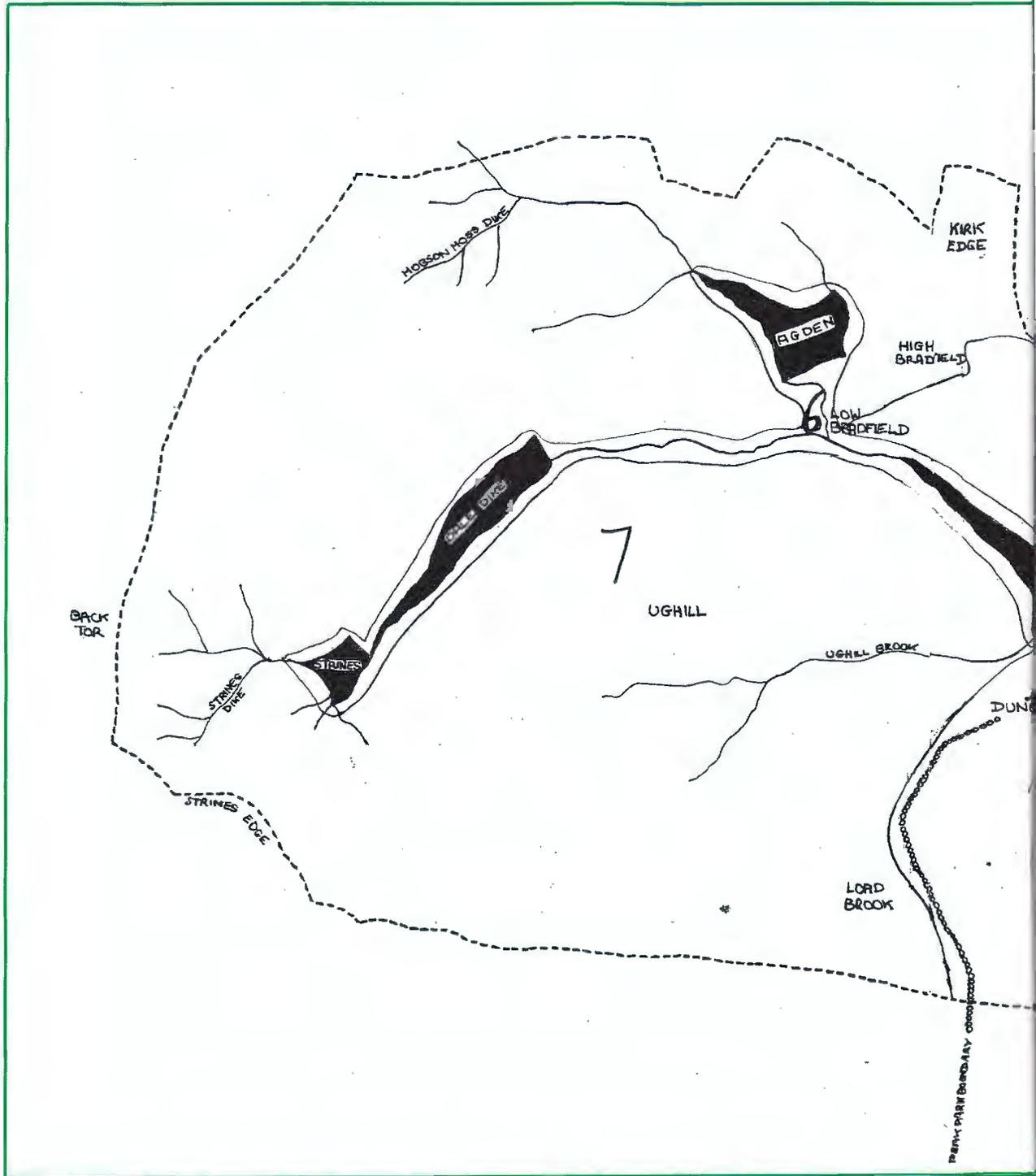
Some figures:

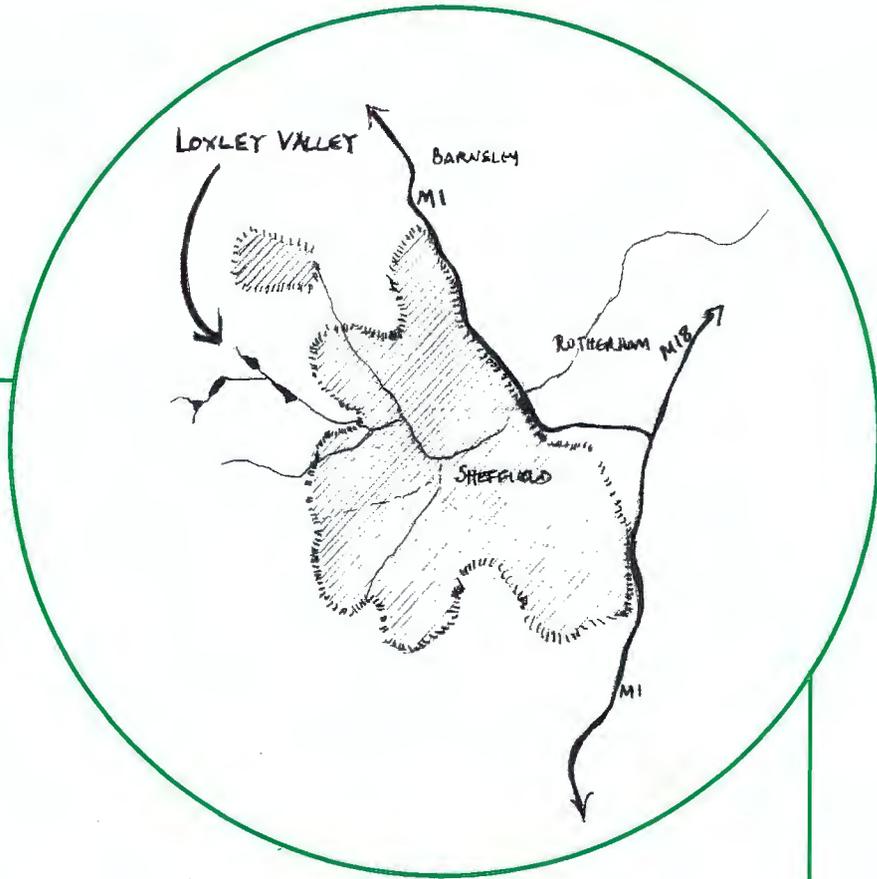
- Survey questionnaires to local residents: 86 returned
- Percy Pud questionnaires to visitors: 70 returned.
- Attended workshops: Dungworth, 21 + VDS team; Bradfield, 24 + VDS team; Loxley, 46 + VDS team.

Documentation of local consultations and further details can be seen at Bradfield Parish Council Offices.

Location maps

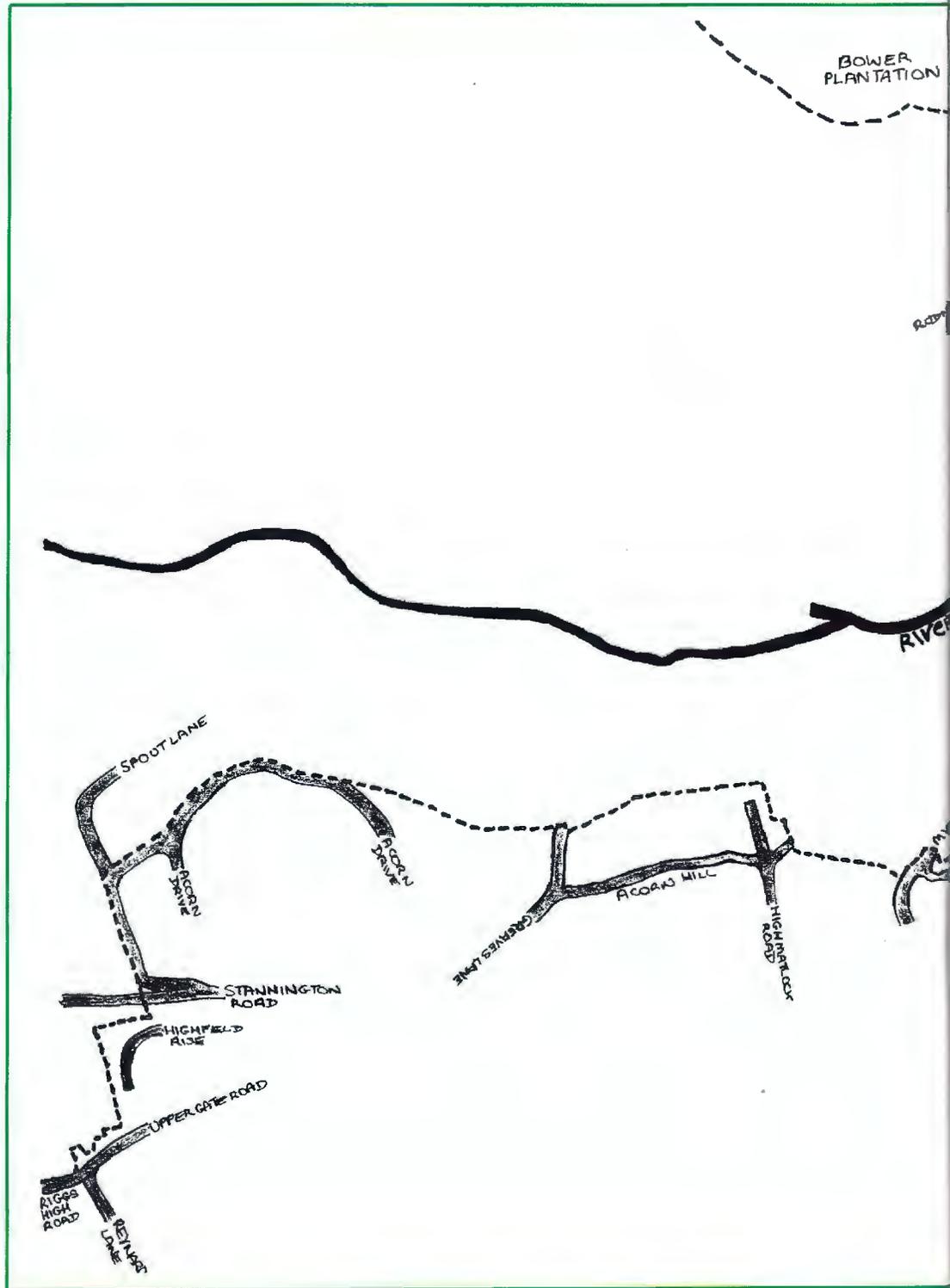
The Loxley Valley is situated to the north west of Sheffield - see small map to the right. The larger map, below, shows the location of the different landscape zones referred to in our section on Landscape Design, (found on pages 7 to 12). Overleaf, on pages 32 and 33, you will find a map of the eastern end of the valley. This shows which streets are in the part of the valley covered by the Design Statement, and therefore subject to Sheffield City Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance.

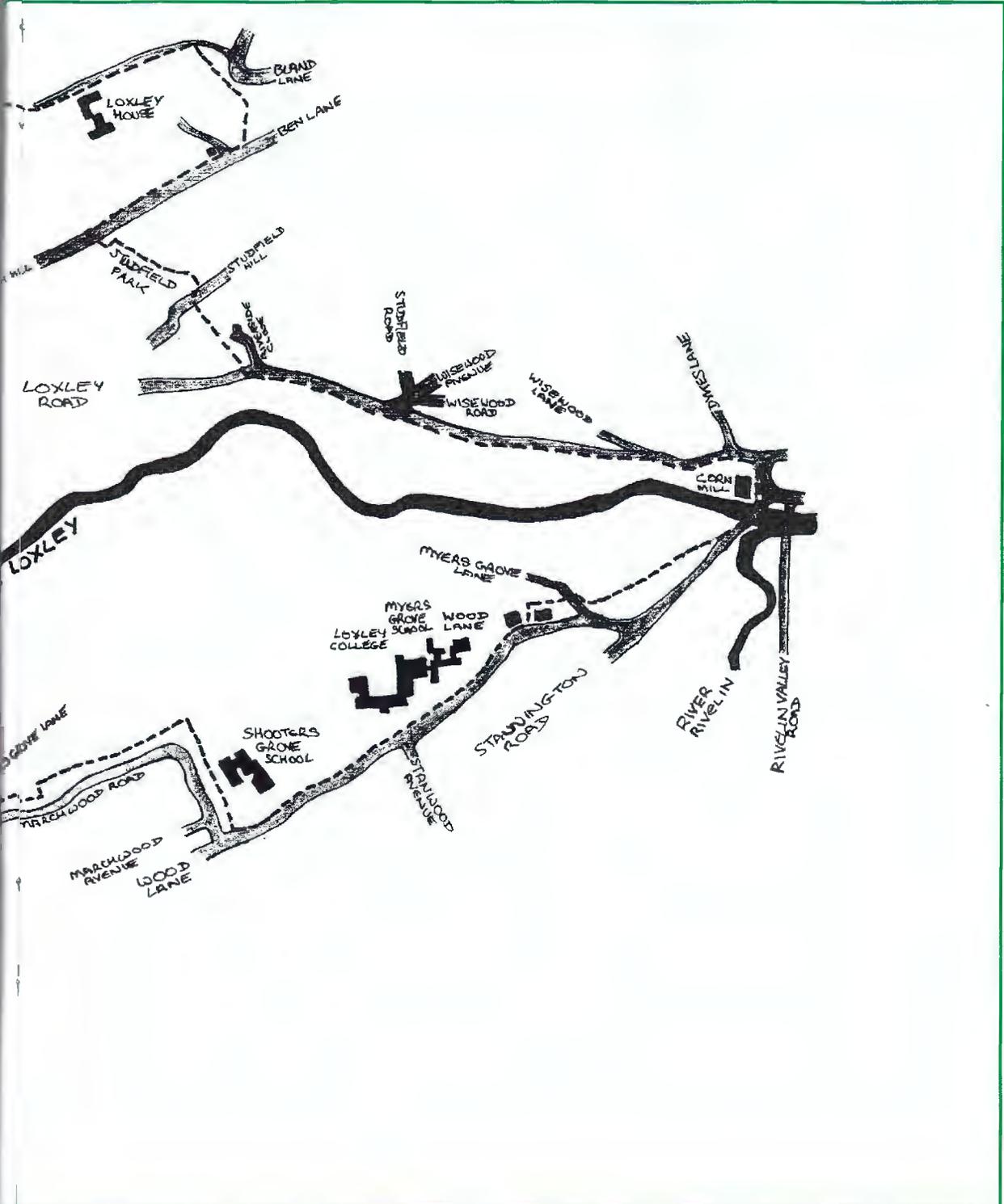




Map showing the areas covered by Sheffield Supplementary Planning Guidance

All streets between the River Loxley and the dotted line are subject to Sheffield City Council Supplementary Planning Guidance.





Acknowledgements



Consultation workshop in Dungworth Village Hall

This document has been prepared by Loxley Valley Design Group.

Contributions have been made by many people. Members of the group have included: David Barker, Keith Butterfield, Jean Cass, Evelyn Cauwood, Syd Cauwood, Sue Hall, Barry Hill, David Holmes, Hannah Isherwood, Jenny Laird, David Lambert, Carolyn Lee, Ruth Lockley, Malcolm Nunn, Tony Robinson, David Samworth, Jan Symington, the late Peter Warr, (with special thanks for the photographs which started us off), Albert Wilde, Maria Wilding.

The group has valued support from Bradfield Parish Council, Helen Jackson MP, Sheffield City Councillors Trevor Bagshaw and Arthur Dunworth, John Gittens of the Cheshire Landscape Trust, officers of the planning departments of Sheffield City Council and the Peak District National Park, and from David Fanaroff, local senior officer of the Countryside Agency.



The Loxley Valley has been hugely influenced by stone and water. The River Loxley has been harnessed in its upper reaches to provide drinking water for Sheffield. Lower down, the river was used to power the city's developing industries. Local gritstone was used to build weirs, goyts and dams to run water wheels. The wheel at Little Matlock, (right), is a magnificent surviving example, but badly in need of renovation. The weirs and dams are now places of great beauty, providing cherished green space for local people. The weir above Olive Dam, (middle), powered a rare double water wheel which survives but is sadly close to ruin. The other image is of Wisewood Dam.





The Loxley Valley Design Statement is a community document setting out ideas for the future of the Loxley Valley in Sheffield.

It has been written by the Loxley Valley Design Group.

The document was edited by Keith Butterfield, David Holmes, Ruth Lockley and Jan Symington.

Design and layout by David Holmes.

Line drawings by Hannah Isherwood.

Cover photograph of Storrs by David Hibberd.

Rear cover photograph of Little Matlock by David Holmes.

Printing by the Sheffield Womens Printing Co-op.

We have received financial support from Awards for All.

Our work has been supported by Bradfield Parish Council, Sheffield City Council, and the Peak District National Park Authority.

We are immensely grateful for all the help we have received in preparing this document. We hope it will help to preserve and enhance the character of the wonderful place in which we live.

