



RUDYARD CONSERVATION AREA Character Appraisal

July 2016



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CONTENTS

Introduction	
Consultation	
1. Location, Topography & Geology	2
2. Summary of Special Interest	3
3. Context	4
• Designations	4
• Origins, Development & Settlement Form Timeline	4
• Planning Policy Context	15
• Landscape Setting	15
• Footpaths	16
4. Architectural and Historic Quality and Building Materials	17
• Waterway Architecture	17
• Houses and Villas	18
• Churches and Chapels	22
• Chalets	23
• Boathouses	24
• The Jubilee Stone	26
• Architectural Details and Building Materials	27
5. Boundary	29
6. Spatial Analysis	31
• Key Views and Landmarks	31
• Open Spaces	33
• Description of Sub-Areas	33
7. General Condition of the Area	43
8. Negative Factors	44
9. Problems, Pressures and Capacity for Change	46
10. Key Recommendations	55
Further Advice and Information	57

FIGURES

Figure 1 – Rudyard Designations (North and South maps)

Figure 2 – Rudyard Phase Plan

Figure 3 – Rudyard Canal and River Trust Ownership Boundary

Figure 4 – Rudyard - Spatial Analysis (North and South maps)

Figure 5 – Rudyard Character Sub-Areas

HISTORIC MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate 1 – William Yates map of the County of Staffordshire 1775 (extract) – by permission Staffordshire Record Society

Plate 2 – Extract from the Quarter Sessions 1795 book of reference (Q/Rum/16 - with permission of Staffordshire Record Office)

Plate 3 – Extract from the Quarter Sessions 1796 map (Q/Rum/18 - with permission of Staffordshire Record Office)

Plate 4 – Map of 1811 surveyed by Brown (with permission of Staffordshire Record Office)

Plate 5 – extract from the 1816 map of the Manor of Horton (D(W)1909/E/9/1 - with permission of Staffordshire Record Office)

Plate 6 – first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1879 at 1:2500 scale

Plate 7 – Rudyard Vale in 1885 (P2003.1.27 (37/12709) - with permission of Staffordshire Museum Service

Plate 8 – The Dam, photographed ca. 1896 by William Sandeman (P2007.009.0001 (37/22691) with permission of Staffordshire Museum Service

Plate 9 - View of Rudyard in 1896 (P2003.1.29 (37/12713) with permission of Staffordshire Museum Service

Plate 10 - Mrs Heath's Tea Rooms in 1905 (P2003.1.6 (37/12372) with permission of Staffordshire Museum Service

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INTRODUCTION

Every local planning authority has a duty to assess from time to time if any of their areas (which are not conservation areas) contain special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance (section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990). They shall then, following a review and, depending upon the results, designate those areas as conservation areas. This assessment of Rudyard follows this legal process and duty.

The contents of this Conservation Area Appraisal are intended to be both a guide for owners and occupiers of buildings and land within the conservation area and a guide for the local planning authority. The contents are a material consideration when determining applications for development, dealing with appeals, or proposing works for the preservation or enhancement of the area.

This appraisal document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the proposed conservation area & also identifies opportunities for enhancement. It follows the model set out in Historic England guidance (Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals 2006) and 'Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' (2012).

The Staffordshire Moorlands (excluding the Peak District National Park) currently (2015) has 15 designated conservation areas.

Conservation area designation leads to an obligation that special attention should be paid to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

Consultation

This appraisal has been widely circulated and advertised with full public consultation, as set out in the Council's 'Statement of Community Involvement'. A copy of the appraisal is available to view on the Council website and a hard copy can be consulted at the Council offices in Leek.

The designation of a conservation area at Rudyard is part of the Churnet Valley Masterplan; Rudyard is at the northern end of the plan area.

Both Historic England and Government guidance recommends the involvement of residents and businesses within conservation areas. In addition, there are a large number of stakeholders at Rudyard: Staffordshire County Council owns the track-bed of the Churnet Valley line where it runs through Rudyard, the Canals and Rivers Trust own both the lake and areas of land at the dam and along the margins. The area within the boundary includes large areas of woodland and open space, owned by local farmers.

Rudyard Lake Trust is the co-ordinating body responsible for management of the different interests across the lake. Established on June 29th 1996, its main objectives are:

- To conserve for the public benefit the natural environment of Rudyard Lake and its surrounding area.
- To advance the education of the public in the said area.

The Board of Trustees represents the following organisations:

The Canals and Rivers Trust, Staffordshire County Council, The Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, Horton Parish Council, Rudyard Lake League of Friends, Lake Users Forum, Rudyard Lake Ltd.

I. LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY

I.1 Rudyard is located to the north-west of Leek just beyond the northern fringe of the Churnet Valley near the Staffordshire – Cheshire border; the River Churnet runs about 2 kilometres to the south-east of the damhead. Rudyard Reservoir is located at 160 metres above sea level, in a steep-sided valley on the alignment of a small tributary of the River Churnet, and the surrounding sides of the valley rise to over 250 metres AOD. The conservation area falls within the administrative boundary of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and the village has a population of approximately 363 (2001).

I.2 The conservation area incorporates at its heart the 3 kilometre-long reservoir, known as Rudyard Lake, sections of the associated canal feeders, the dam wall, spillway, and complex waterworks associated with the canal network. Beyond this, running along the eastern perimeter of the lake, is the track-bed of the North Staffordshire Railway; the track has been dismantled and it is now a popular recreational route, served by a car park at the old station site. To the south and west is a mainly wooded escarpment within which are the settled parts of the lake, which incorporate some well-established late Victorian houses in their mature gardens for the local wealthy entrepreneurs of Leek, later holiday chalets and a core of earlier pre-19th century cottages and farms from the former hamlets of Rudyard and Harper's Gate.

I.3 The conservation area boundary is illustrated on Figure 1.

I.4 The drift geology is mainly Alluvium and Till and the underlying solid geology is dominated by Roaches Grit to the rising land to the east and west, with a large outcrop of Chatsworth Grit to the west along Camrose Hill, rising westwards to Horton and Grindlestone Edge. To the south of the reservoir, where the land opens out, the geology is Morridge Formation mudstone and siltstone interwoven with bands of Till and Alluvium, which creates a distinctive rounded, undulating shape to the low-lying fields.

2. SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

2.1 There is no doubt that Rudyard is a rather special place, although relatively unknown to a wide audience. Initially developed as an early man-made reservoir for the canal network at the turn of the 19th century, its serendipitous natural beauty was exploited for tourism in several waves of development, during the 1850s and 60s and then during the early 20th century, and was at the height of its popularity during the Edwardian era. It has evolved according to the changing fashions and tastes of the leisure industry, responding quietly to these pressures. It is increasingly used for boating, rowing and more adventurous watersports. Overlooked and perhaps slightly forgotten during the second half of the 20th century, it has had a resurgence in popularity during the last 20 years, with the benefit of new publicly funded recreational buildings supporting leisure and tourism and many thousands of volunteer hours managed by the Rudyard Lake Trust. It is a robust environment in many respects but is now under pressure from gentrification; lack of appreciation of its wider social, historical and aesthetic character threatens some of its more ephemeral special qualities.

2.2 The distinctive, key characteristics of Rudyard can be summarised as follows:

- A place of natural beauty dominated by a man-made, early 19th century reservoir
- A largely Edwardian tourist resort with wide range of both land-based and water-based activities: walking, cycling, rowing, canoeing, sailing, angling and a miniature steam railway, attract a wide range of visitors each year
- An exposed and dramatic location, dominated by views from the dam, the lake itself and the A523; weather patterns on the lake can change rapidly and the valley can produce a significant fetch.
- Lush vegetation, with areas of ornamented landscape and a backdrop of dense mixed woodland connect spaces and frame the main views
- Pockets of visitor holiday accommodation to suit various budgets, developed piecemeal following late nineteenth century land auctions
- Widespread and historic public access - long interconnected public routes along the footpath network encircle the lake and run alongside the canal feeders; combined footpaths and cycleways run along the route of the former Churnet Valley railway line, with water-based access up and down the lake.
- Picturesque groupings of traditional and modern boathouses and chalets punctuate the lakeside
- A few large 19th century villas sit with extensive and mature landscaped grounds
- An intimate narrow network of rural lanes and scattered ribbon development line the approach routes, hidden from the wider area by the rolling agricultural setting

3. CONTEXT

Designations

3.1 Conservation Areas are protected under the 1990 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act. This primary legislation requires proposals that need planning permission to preserve or enhance special architectural or historic interest.

3.2 The boundary of the conservation area is illustrated on Figure 1. There are three listed buildings within the conservation area boundary: Cliffe Park Hall, Cliffe Park Lodge and Flanking Walls, and Harracles Mill.

Origins, Development and Settlement Form

3.3 The history of Rudyard has been discussed at length in many detailed published accounts (see Bibliography). Rather than repeat the detail of these very comprehensive publications, we have summarised the key phases in the development of Rudyard to help to describe how it evolved and why it looks the way it does today. The timeline overleaf is a handy reference tool for the development of the area.

3.4 Rudyard as we know it today is very different from the Rudyard recorded in Domesday (Rudierd – 1086), when it was one of the Leek townships; it was probably granted to Hugh 1 Earl of Chester by 1093. In the middle of the 12th century the Earls of Chester granted a number of small manors to the Verduns of Alton of which Rudyard was one. The crown granted a large section of an estate carved out of Rudyard to Dieulacres Abbey in 1232 and at this time Meerbrook may have formed the eastern extent of the Rudyard township.¹ The Rudyard family were established in the township by the thirteenth century, and retained the manor until it was sold to Thomas Parker, the Earl of Macclesfield, in 1723. The siting of Rudyard Hall, in a prime position on the southwestern slopes of Gun, suggests it may be the site of the former township hamlet. There are several farm complexes to the east of the lake which are clustered together in a close-knit form (Willgate and Rudyard House, formerly known as Green Tree Farm) but no positive indications that these were the site of the original hamlet.

3.5 The steep-sided valley lying between Horton to the west of Rudyard Lake and the village of Rudyard to the east was relatively unsettled, with the 'Dunsmore Brook' running through the middle. The brook separated Horton parish from Leek parish, of which Rudyard was a township.

3.6 The area had been historically heavily wooded although by the early 19th century it had become denuded. In the 15th century oak and ash on the hay (Horton) were felled illegally. In 1538 it was alleged that 300 trees had been felled without licence (Victoria County History). Opportunistic felling was a common pattern in an area where there were iron bloomeries with high demand for charcoal.

3.7 The name Whorrocks Bank, which is the previous name for Camrose Hill, and which included the bottom section of Harper's Gate, comes from the word 'hoar' (or grey) referring to oak trees, and was used as a place name in the later 13th century². 'Horewode' was probably the name of the wood at Whorrocks Bank recorded in 1387. A wood at Rea Cliffe was mentioned in the late 1530s³.

1 Cleverdon, F "Landscape with Buildings" - PhD Thesis, March 2002

2 N.R.A. list 216 (Roger of Horhoc); S.H.C. N.S. xi. 255 (John of Horchok)

3 S.H.C. N.S. x (1), 139

TIMELINE

DATE	LOCAL EVENTS
1795/96	first Bill to construct a canal from Endon to Leek, a 2½ mile feeder channel from the Vale of Rudyard to Leek and a Reservoir at Rudyard.
1797	Parliament approves the 1796/97 Bill
1801	Rudyard Vale is flooded to form the reservoir and the Leek Canal opens
1809	Act of Parliament to construct a feeder channel from Dane Bridge to the north end of the reservoir
c1818	Cliffe Park Hall is built by John Haworth
1823	Act grants powers to the Canal Company to deepen the Dane feeder and lower the weir at Dane Bridge paper mill
1849	Churnet Valley Railway opens
July 1850	Joseph Tunnicliffe (the Trent and Mersey Navigation Co. water bailiff) applies for a license to sell excisable liquors from his premises
22nd July 1850	Rudyard station opens
1851	Fanny Bostock owner of Cliffe Park Hall instigates legal proceedings in the High Court to prevent the North Staffordshire Railway from using the lake for recreational purposes and holding public events. An injunction prevents them from holding events on the lake itself.
1873	Land Auction
1873	Ballroom opens at Hotel Rudyard
1876	Roller skating is introduced to Hotel Rudyard
1880	Land Auction
1885	August - Auction of the Cliffe Park Estate (784 acres) – in 38 lots
1890	Land Auction
1897	Queen Victoria's Jubilee is marked by the erection of the Jubilee Stone
1904	the North Staffordshire Railway is given powers to raise the level of the Lake, to run boats and use the lake for recreational purposes and to develop a hotel and provide other facilities
1904	North Staffordshire Railway acquires Cliffe Park Hall and promotes Rudyard Lake Golf Club
1905	the Lake is re-stocked and a second station is built at the northern end of the Lake
1906	The 9-hole golf club is established
1908	The 18-hole golf club is established
1910	Auction
1919	Earl of Macclesfield's estate is sold
1926	The golf club closes
1956	Rudyard Lake Sailing Club is formed
2000 on	Development of visitor facilities, café and Activity Centre at the damhead

A house described in 1607 as 'at Whorrocks' and then occupied by Thomas Knight⁴ probably stood on the site of the later Poachers Tavern at the foot of Whorrocks Bank Road. The initials for Knight and his wife still survive in the datestone embedded in the side wall of the former Station Hotel.



1630 datestone embedded in the former Poacher's Tavern

3.8 Other houses at 'Whorrocks Bank' include Bank House, which is now the site of Red Wood located at the top of the bank overlooking Horton. The current farmhouse called Bank House was built between 1900 and 1925 and it was linked to the former farmstead and stone barn, which dates from the early-mid 19th century. The original 'Bank House', named in 1613 and where the Challenor family were living during the mid 19th century, was then rebuilt and re-named Red Wood.

3.9 In 1815 there was a quarry on the west side of Whorrocks Bank Road and another south of Stone House. Quarries on the east side of Whorrocks Bank Road by 1856 were still worked in 1884 but had been closed by the late 1890s⁵.

18th Century



Plate 1 - 1775 Map of Staffordshire by William Yates (reproduced by permission Staffordshire Record Society)

3.10 The oldest surviving parts of Rudyard survive as a hamlet of farms on the high ground to the east of Dunsmore Brook and split by an old footpath network to the east of the reservoir; it is visible on William Yates' 1775 map of Staffordshire as a nucleated cluster of buildings west of the A523. Some of these groups are quite dispersed but a close-knit core is grouped around Willgate and Rudyard House.

3.11 The earliest dateable part of the settlement is Rudyard Hall, which lies some distance away, to the east of the A523, beyond the conservation area boundary. The precise core of any settlement is not known and has been displaced over time, as Rudyard as we know it today is clustered around 'Harper's Gate' and 'Whorrocks Bank', where Rudyard Road, Dunwood Lane and Camrose Hill meet.

3.12 Land to the east of the brook was largely owned by the Earl of Macclesfield until it was eventually dispersed in 1919. Horton was, in contrast, occupied by a large number of freeholders, although the holder of the Manor

in 1816 was Edmund Antrobus who had bought the title of the manor in 1804 and still retained a sizeable ownership in the north of the parish. However, the land to the immediate west of the brook was owned by Henry Haworth of Hulme Walfield near Congleton, passing to his son John Haworth who was at Reacliffe in 1816⁶.

4 S.R.O., D. (W.) 1490/17, ct. of 23 Oct 1607

5 SRO Q/RDc 69, plan II, nos. 143, 181; D. 4069/6/2/1; Kelly's Dir. Staffs. (1884)

6 1816 Map and schedule of Horton Manor

3.13 Rudyard Village today was previously known as Harpers Gate. This was a mainly agricultural settlement with a few farms, with additional employment for trades such as a nailer, a blacksmith, and a miller. There were a scattering of houses by the eighteenth century at the bottom of the escarpment of Whorrocks Bank west of Rudyard Lake. Harpers Gate was known as a hamlet by the later eighteenth century.

3.14 Harracles Hall which lies to the south of Dunwood Lane lies in the parish of Longsdon but Harracles Mill lies within Horton parish and the brook forms the boundary. The name incorporates words meaning hoar (har) and land added to an estate (ecels). The name associates it firmly with Whorrocks Bank. The hall and estate had been owned by the Wedgwood family from the late 1400s and passed down by inheritance, until it was sold in 1791 to Thomas Mills, a Leek solicitor.

The Construction of Rudyard Reservoir – 1797-1847

3.15 As part of the development of their burgeoning canal network, the Trent and Mersey Canal Company were seeking a ready supply of water for the new Caldon Canal and the Trent and Mersey Canal. The plans for a holding reservoir to provide a source of water were first developed in the 1790s but had their origins in the 1766 Trent and Mersey Canal Bill, which permitted the company to supply the canal from “such Springs a shall be found within the distance of five hundred yards from any part of the canal and within the distance of five miles.....between the first lock in Cheshire and the first lock in Staffordshire and also to make such reservoirs as shall be necessary”. The route of the Caldon Canal was developed by Act of Parliament as part of the extended Trent and Mersey Canal network between Froghall and Etruria from 1776 in direct response to the need to provide links between sources of raw materials and areas of manufacturing.

Land Owners	Occupiers	Length
on the East side of the Brook that runs down the Hill		
23 land of Manchester	John Wood	31 - 0
64	J. Manning & W. Brant	14 - 00
68	John Wood	70 - 77
30 land of Barton	John Wood	11 -
on the West side of the Brook		
17 John Wood	John Wood	5 -
11 J. Wood	John Wood	15 -
14 John Wood	John Wood	4 - 50
20 John Wood	John Wood	16 -
24 J. Wood	John Wood	18 -
32 - Green Log	John Wood	36 - 41
33 John Wood	John Wood	7 - 34
35 John Wood	John Wood	39 - 39
25 land of Manchester		11 -

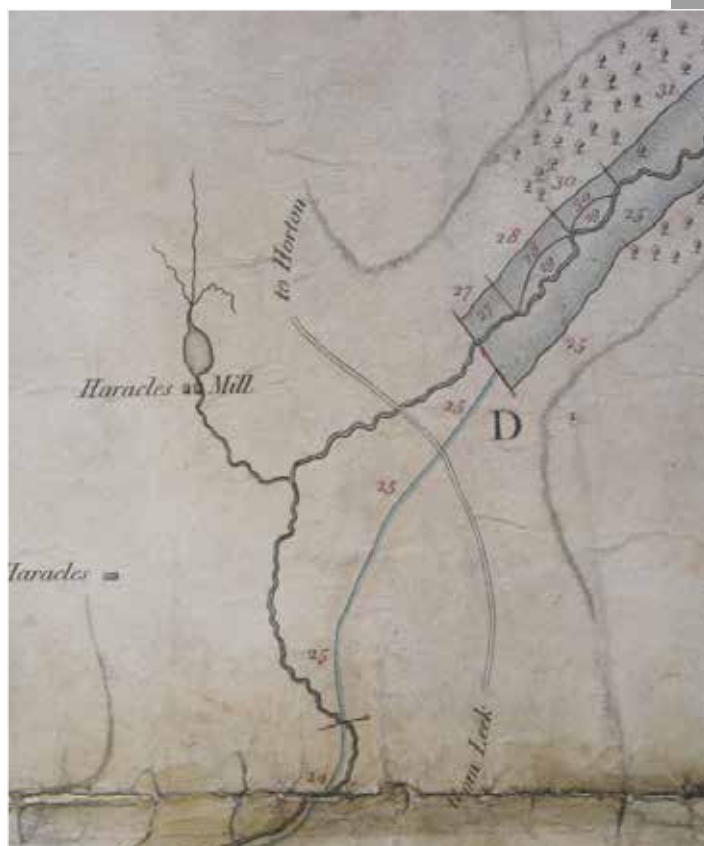


Plate 2 - Extract from the 1795 Quarter Sessions book of reference listing the landowners on either side of the new reservoir (Q/Rum/16)
 Plate 3 - detail of the 1796 map of the proposed reservoir from the Quarter Sessions (Q/Rum/18) (reproduced with permission of Staffordshire Record Office)

3.16 The intensification of commercial traffic using the Caldon Canal during the 1780s and 1790s, led to water shortages and problems in providing a reliable supply of water; at times the small reservoirs built to provide water sources were drawn out. Leek was located on a branch of the Caldon Canal being promoted by the Trent and Mersey Canal Company. Plans dating from as early as 1795 show the proposed reservoir leading to the canal network.

3.17 The extended Leek branch of the Caldon Canal; and the construction of Rudyard Reservoir and feeders commenced in 1797, with Hugh Henshall as resident engineer and John Rennie as consultant. The dam, designed by Rennie and constructed from 1797, was completed in 1800 by the contractors Thomas Peak and John Mansfield. The reservoir is two miles long and covers 163 hectares and was fed by the Dingle Brook and the Rad Brook (the latter being diverted south at Ryecroft Gate (in Rushton) specifically for this purpose. The branch canal to Leek was then completed with a 2½-mile long feeder channel connecting the two, and the new network opened in March 1801.

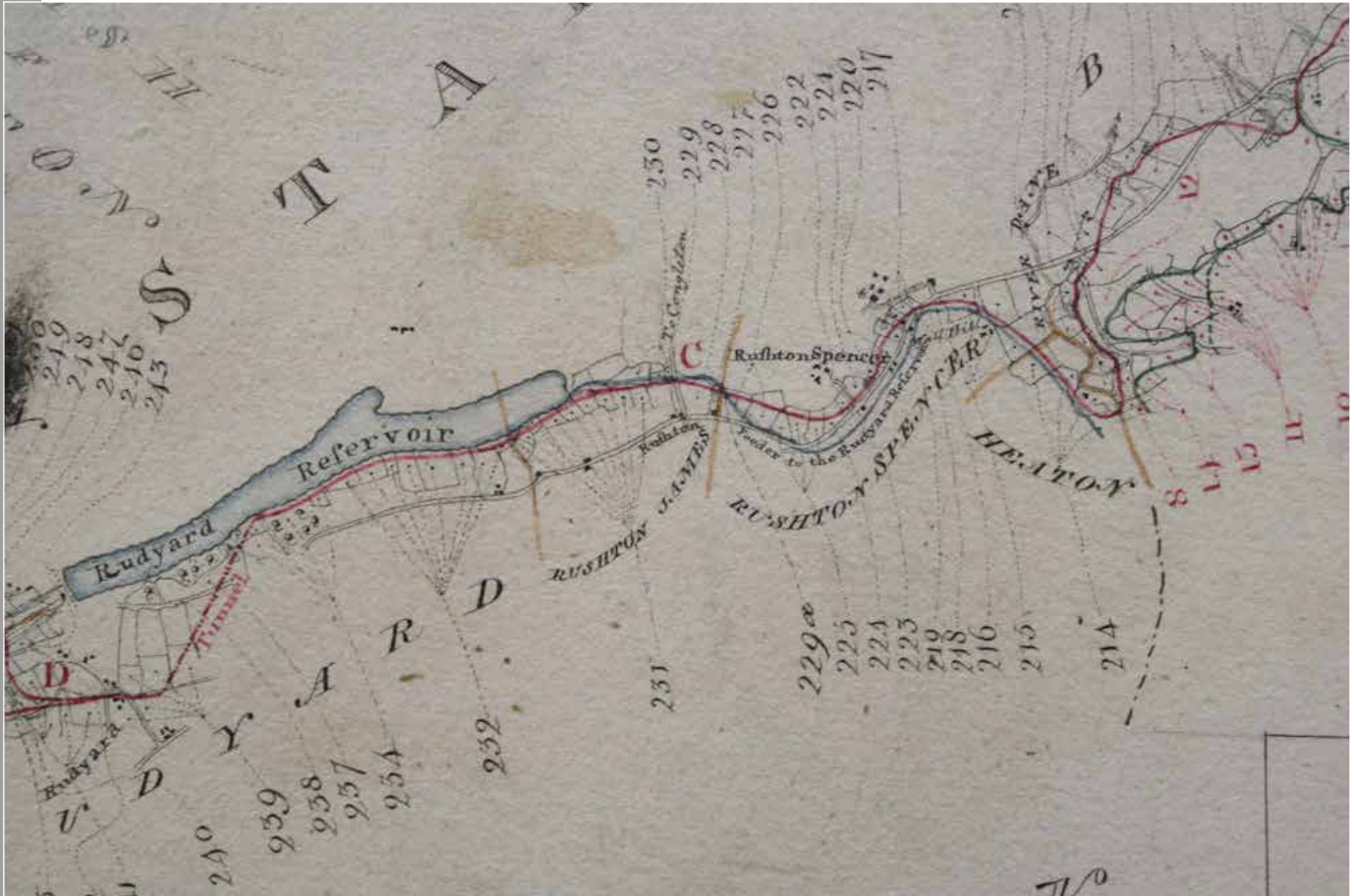


Plate 4 - Map of 1811 surveyed by Brown, showing the route of a proposed connecting canal to link the Caldon Canal with the Macclesfield Canal - reproduced by permission Staffordshire Record Office)

3.18 Demands on the canal network and the proposed opening of the Uttoxeter Canal (in 1811) were leading to ongoing water shortages and Rudyard Reservoir could not be filled to capacity from the small streams and tributaries which were initially established. It became clear that a further reliable supply to top up the reservoir would be needed and in 1809, under Act of Parliament, a new feeder and weir was authorised which took flood water from the River Dane, to top up the reservoir.

3.19 Again, increased demands on the network lead to a final phase of canal development, first planned in 1821 (alterations to the feeder with a new proposed top water line, changing capacity and levels to lower level at entrance into reservoir but heightening levels upstream and a new weir) and executed in 1823 with the deepening of the Dane feeder channel and the lowering of the weir by six inches to increase water take-off from the River Dane. The northern end of the reservoir therefore contains the original western tributary of the Dunsmore Brook, which meanders through the fields in a narrow clough to the north of Barns Lee Farm, and the later straight course of the feeder channel to the east, which emerges underneath Reacliffe Road carriage drive. Both still supply Rudyard Lake.

Development of the Cliffe Park Estate 1818-1830

3.20 Following the establishment of the reservoir, a local landowner, John Haworth, decided to build himself a large mansion in the fashionable Gothick style of the day and take advantage of the natural beauty of the reservoir environment. The Cliffe Park estate covered an area of 135 acres overlooking Rudyard Lake⁷.

3.21 The 1816 plan of Horton Manor (D(W) 1909/E/9/1) shows the site before the development of the 'estate' when Haworth was still occupying the farm known as Reacliffe House (now Reacliffe Farm).



Plate 5 - extract from the 1816 map of the Manor of Horton with "Reservoir House", built for the water bailiff and later subsumed into Hotel Rudyard, (D(W)1909/E/9/1 - reproduced by permission Staffordshire Record Office)

3.22 The precise date of construction of the house and the parkland is not known, but it was shortly after the date of the map, as it was recorded in 1818⁸. Around the house he laid out garden plantations (which included some specimen trees), a ha-ha and tree-lined avenues were created along the route of a new carriage drive. In conjunction with his new fashionable Gothick house he built a matching Gothick 'eye-catcher', a gate lodge, close to the carriage drive, known as Reacliffe Wood Cottage, which was once prominent from the eastern banks above the reservoir.

1831-1849

3.23 John Haworth lived at Cliffe Park until his death in 1831. John Haworth's first cousin Fanny Bostock was living at Barns Lea in 1841. She had borne him an illegitimate daughter who was placed in an orphanage⁹; she died unmarried in March 1875. Revd. James Bostock (Haworth's cousin and co-investor) was living at Cliffe Park in 1841 with his wife Harriet and their child, but by 1851 Fanny Bostock was living independently at Cliffe Park.

3.24 There may have been a chapel at Harper's Gate by 1841 when there is mention of Chapel House. "Swiss Cottage" situated on the hillside above Camrose Hall, is a conversion of the former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, opened in 1862, but possibly also the site of the earlier chapel.

3.25 The North Staffordshire Railway Act, enabling a railway line to be built alongside Rudyard reservoir, received Royal Assent in 1846.

The Development of Tourism 1849-1904

3.26 As early as 1835, local businessmen met in Hanley and Leek to discuss a Potteries branch railway which would connect markets more efficiently with London and Manchester via the Grand Junction Railway. There were various competing bids and schemes but the eventual scheme which was supported was developed in 1837 and linked Stoke with the major cities (The Manchester and

7 S.R.O., D. (W.) 1909/D/4/3

8 Letter addressed to Howarth at Cliffe Park and dated 1818 in possession of Mrs. C. Chester of Foxt in 2001

9 Jeuda, B. 'Rudyard Lake - The Bicentenary 1797-1997'

Birmingham Railway). Pressure for a further link through the Churnet Valley (the Extension Railway) came from local business interests and commercial pressure from industries along the valley. The line was to run from the termination of the M & BR at Macclesfield through Leek, past Uttoxeter and terminating at Derby, where it would meet the Midland Counties Railway. Although the Extension Railway did not get approved by parliament, it did lead to the promotion of the Manchester and Derby (Churnet Valley) Railway and plans were produced in 1840. In 1846 the North Staffordshire Railway was first established; the line which eventually ran from North Rode to Uttoxeter was opened on 13th July 1849.

3.27 In 1847 it was decided that the NSR should act as canal carrier and the North Staffordshire Railway and Canal Carrying Company was formed and the railway company took over the Caldon, Leek and Uttoxeter Canal Companies. In October 1847 work started on laying the track skirting the eastern side of the lake; the location of the station at the southern end of the lake in August 1850 took a few years to resolve following efforts by Fanny Bostock and local landowners to persuade the NSR to build a station and goods warehouse at the northern end of the lake. In the event, 12,000 acres of land near Harpers Gate was gifted to the NSR by local landowners, including the Earl of Macclesfield, to encourage the location of the station at the southern end of the lake, now the home of the miniature steam railway.

3.28 Its natural beauty and potential as a tourist attraction was exploited by the North Staffordshire Railway Co. who could see this as a lucrative source of income. Before long it became a weekend mecca for day trippers, with a constant stream of excursion trains from Manchester and the Potteries disgorging thousands attracted by the beautiful surroundings and the many activities laid on for their pleasure.

3.29 Following the opening of the Leek-Macclesfield railway line in 1849, the NSR reputedly had the wooded grounds to the west of the reservoir landscaped with walks and seats by William Nunns, a Leek gardener, and on Easter Monday 1851 the company organized a fête and regatta at what was by then called Rudyard Lake. Special trains brought between seven and eight thousand tourists from Manchester, Stockport, and Macclesfield as well as the Potteries and other Staffordshire towns. The festivities included boat races and trips on a steamer. Another regatta was held on Whit Monday, but



Plate 6 - first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1879

a third, planned for later in the summer, was stopped by an injunction secured by Fanny Bostock of Cliffe Park, who was alarmed by the number of tourists and their behaviour. The Lord Chief Justice in 1852 ruled that a railway company could not legally organize such an event but the company again advertised a fête for Whit Monday that year. It appears not to have been held, Miss Bostock having applied for another injunction. Her argument that the company was not entitled to use the reservoir for any other purpose than its original one of supplying water to the canal was supported by Queen's Bench in 1855.

3.30 Although the Queen's Bench decision put a stop to water-based events, the area around the dam and the walks remained popular with tourists throughout the rest of the century and there was considerable investment in commercial land-based ventures, tea-rooms and domestic housing during the last decades of the 19th century. One highlight that drew the crowds was in 1878 when Blondin, the famous tight-rope walker who had crossed Niagara Falls, crossed the lake 100 feet above the water, over three consecutive days.



Plate 7 - the tranquil and open Rudyard Vale in 1885, with the lake beyond (P2003.I.27 (37/12709 - by permission Staffordshire Museum Service)

3.31 After Fanny Bostock's death in 1875, the house passed back to the executors and in 1885 at auction the Revd. Edward Duncan Boothman (one of the executors and husband of Fanny Bostock's niece Georgina), bought a large part of the estate and he sold some plots off before selling the bulk on to the North Staffordshire Railway Company in 1903.

3.32 There were a number of land auctions during the late 19th century, which led to the development of private houses and boathouses within and beyond the former Cliffe Park Estate. The largest plots available at the land auctions intended for villas were, however, not very successful

commercially and were later split into smaller parcels, the result being relatively few detached villas.

3.33 These sales include:

- 1873 (August) Auction – Lake Road
- 1880 (September) Auction of small plots along Lake Road
- 1883 (July) Auction
- 1885 (August) Auction of the Cliffe Park Estate (784 acres) – in 38 lots
- 1890 (October) Auction of large plots along Lake Road
- 1893 (May) Auction
- 1911 (February) Auction
- 1927 Sale of the Fairview Estate, including 9 building plots along Camrose Hill & Reacliffe Rd

3.34 At the auction of the Cliffe Park estate, a number of local businessmen bought large plots along the lake frontage. Stephen Goodwin alone purchased 11 building and boathouse plots. During this period scattered leisure developments took place providing the middle classes with more remote retreats, including the Horton Lodge Boathouse (1891) and The Lady of the Lake (boathouse) 1893.

3.35 Rudyard Kipling's parents were some of the many tourists who thronged to Rudyard in 1863. His name, inspired by the place, has led to a legacy of place and house names associated with the author (Kipling), slightly confusing to visitors, as he probably never visited the place.

3.36 By 1854 Knight's house at Harpers Gate had been converted into the Railway Inn, named in association with the Churnet Valley Railway; by 1888 it was called the Railway Hotel and by 1900 the Station Hotel. The building has recently been converted to apartments and has been renamed Lakeland Lodge.



Plate 8 - The Dam, photographed ca. 1896 by William Sandeman (P2007.009.0001 (37/22691) by permission Staffordshire Museum Service)



Plate 9 - View of Rudyard above the Churnet Valley Railway in 1896, with little tree cover, by permission Staffordshire Museum Service - P2003.1.29 (37/12713)

3.37 Hotel Rudyard, which incorporates a house originally built for the reservoir keeper; was opened in time for the Easter Monday fête in 1851 by a Congleton innkeeper; Peter Ullivero. It was first known as Rudyard Lake Hotel; its present name was adopted c. 1886¹⁰. In about 1870 the hotel was taken over by Henry Platt, who enlarged it, notably with a ballroom in 1873. The grounds were improved with areas for archery and croquet, and a roller-skating rink was opened in 1876¹¹ on the north side of the building (now the car park). To attract more visitors Platt started a well-dressing festival in May 1871, the railway company laying on special trains from the Potteries and Macclesfield (the festival was still held in 1873).

3.38 Tearooms grew in popularity, initiated by a successful venture at Spite Hall, and were set up by a number of locals along Lake Road, as a supplementary source of income, along with lodging houses.

3.39 The exploitation of Rudyard Lake would expand the small hamlet at Harper's Gate which eventually led to the area's name being changed to Rudyard and is now known as Rudyard Village.



**Mrs. HEATH,
Spite Hall, Rudyard Vale.**

Large or small parties catered for. Apartments.
The finest Tea Gardens and Pavilion in Rudyard.
:: :: Motor and Rowing Boats for Hire. :: ::

Plate 10 - Mrs Heath's tea rooms 1905 (P2003.1.6. (37/12372) - by permission Staffordshire Museum Service

10 S.R.O., Q/RDc 69, plan II; Staffs. Advertiser, 26 Apr. 1851, p. 7; White, Dir. Staffs. (1851)

11 Clemesha's Penny Guide to Rudyard, 7 (copy in Leek Libr., Johnson scrapbk. 2 (ii), 2/2); P.O. Dir. Staffs. (1872); Staffs. Advertiser, 4 Jan. 1873, p. 1; Macclesfield Courier & Herald, 3 June 1876, p. 8.

1904-1920s Boom

3.40 The railway company acquired the Cliffe Park estate in 1903 and was empowered in 1904 to hire out motor launches and rowing boats on the lake¹². By 1905 a 9-hole golf course had been laid out, and a golf club was formed in 1906, using Cliffe Park as a clubhouse. The golf club was extended to an 18-hole course.

3.41 From 1904, a large number of chalets were constructed by the North Staffordshire Railway Company around the northern part of the lake.

3.42 The second station at the top of Rudyard Lake was built in 1905 and was designed by the North Staffordshire Railway (from 1904 onwards) to develop tourism around the lake and specifically to provide a stopping point for visitors using the newly developing golf club at Cliffe Park; golfers were met at the station by horse and trap. Initially known as Rudyard Lake, it changed name to Cliffe Park in 1926 (around the time that the golf club closed) and at the same time the name of the bottom station was changed to Rudyard Lake.

3.43 A 1910 land auction at Lake Road led to further 'infill' development.

1926 on

3.45 The golf club closed in 1926. Cliffe Park was advertised for sale with 38 acres in 1928 and the house was bought by the Youth Hostel Association in 1933. It remained as a hostel until 1969 when it was bought by Mr Brian Dalley (the owner until 2015).

3.46 In 1934 the parish boundaries were altered and Horton was amalgamated with Rudyard to form Horton civil parish.

3.47 Rudyard Lake Sailing Club was formed in 1956. It first used a lakeside bungalow as a clubhouse and from 1958 to 1963 the former lodge to Cliffe Park. A new clubhouse was built in 1963 and enlarged in 1978. In the 1960s the owner of Barns Lee Farm permitted sailing from his section of the shoreline (Cliffe Park Estate) for a launch fee (pers. com. A P March). The current clubhouse was built in 2000.

3.48 Following the closure of the Churnet Valley line in 1960, a narrow-gauge railway was established for 1½ miles along the track-bed.

3.49 The North Staffordshire Rowing Club moved to Rudyard (from Trentham) in 1989 and has a boathouse at the south end of the lake. The lake is owned by The Canals and Rivers Trust, and they appointed a ranger in 1988 and opened an information centre at the southern end of the lake in 1989.

3.50 Since 2000 The Rudyard Lake Trust has been able through both private and public funding to improve visitor facilities by building a new toilet block and changing rooms, to convert a 150-year-old boathouse (The Earl of Macclesfield's boathouse) into a Visitor Centre and to build a new Activity Centre which houses a café, boat stores and meeting rooms. This has been achieved through the support of many hardworking volunteers.

Bibliography

- Rudyard Lake – The Bicentenary 1797-1997*, Jeuda, B (pub. 1997)
Rudyard Reflections – A History and a Guide for Walkers, Jeuda, B (pub. 2001)
The Churnet Valley Railway, Jeuda, B. (pub. 1999),
Rudyard, Rushton & The Roaches Through Time, Neil Collingwood (pub. 2013)

¹² 4 Edw.VII, c. 44 (Local and Personal)

Planning Policy Context

3.51 National planning policy for the historic environment is all contained within one over-arching document, the **National Planning Policy Framework (2012)**. This embodies a holistic view of the historic environment and is designed to ensure that decisions are not made in isolation without first considering the significance of the particular aspects of the historic environment and then addressing economic, social and environmental sustainability issues. The NPPF should be read alongside the Planning Practice Guide 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' which gives more detailed advice on Conservation Area designation and management.

3.52 The main local policies covering conservation areas are found within the **Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (2014)**. The local planning policy context includes Policy DC2 on The Historic Environment, Policy DC3 on Landscape and Settlement, Policy DC1 Design Considerations and Policy C3 Green Infrastructure. Rudyard lies within the Green Belt.

3.53 Core Strategy, Policy SS7, identifies the Churnet Valley as a sustainable tourism area. Policies R1 and R2 form part of the adopted development plan and are consistent with the aims of the Framework, which seeks to support a prosperous rural economy. These policies are the primary tests applied to the residential use of rural buildings.

3.54 **The Churnet Valley Master Plan (2014)** is Supplementary Planning Guidance and is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. This will influence planning decisions and other initiatives and strategies affecting this area. The overarching principle is one of sustaining and enhancing the natural, built and historic environmental quality of the area, its settlements and its hinterland through managed change which provides for rural regeneration largely based on sustainable tourism. The Plan identifies the designation of the Rudyard Conservation Area as a key action in recognition of its special historic character which needs to be preserved and enhanced.

Landscape Setting

3.55 Rudyard is widely recognised for its breathtaking scenery, taking in views of the reservoir and its wooded backdrop. The Landscape Character Assessment of Staffordshire is very specific about the setting of Rudyard:

"Views are experienced of Rudyard Reservoir from the A523 east of the reservoir. A parking lay-by provides a key viewing opportunity. Views are also experienced from Horton, from other lanes within the landscape and from high ground on Public Rights of Way."

3.56 The immediate landscape around Rudyard has highly distinctive characteristics. It is a transitional landscape of rolling hills dissected by wooded valleys supporting pastoral farming with expansive views from the higher ground. Small woodland blocks are significant within the landscape. Woodland belts line the embankments towards the southern section of Rudyard reservoir and within Rudyard village. The highest terrain, with expansive views that take in the reservoir, in places reach over



380 metres AOD and there are glimpses from as far afield as The Morridge. However, there are few public viewpoints in the wider landscape where the reservoir can be seen from afar and this has contributed to its reputation as a place of scenic beauty and seclusion. The reservoir, which follows

a linear form within the valley, is perhaps at its most dramatic from the level of the lake, where the linear views are often framed by the steep-sided, wooded escarpments, which drop down to the water's edge.

3.57 Any proposals for further development or land use change along the shorelines and banks of Rudyard Reservoir which impact on the landscape character, visual, recreational, or ecological importance of this feature must take account of and not detract from the unique character of this landscape.

3.58 There are occasional views outwards from clearings in the higher woodland, reaching as far as The Morridge.

Footpaths

3.59 The area surrounding Rudyard is used by large numbers of visitors and residents and there is a well-established network of public footpaths which take in many of the areas of special interest. Much of the setting of Rudyard can be appreciated from this extensive footpath network, which include the following;

- The path along the canal feeder from the dam Footpath no. 69 (Horton), leading south beyond Rudyard Road to Footpath no. 70 (Horton)
- The Staffordshire Way (Footpath 31 – Horton) leading along Reacliffe Road and through the Cliffe Park Hall Estate, to the northern end of the reservoir and the canal feeder, linking to the Churnet Valley railway line
- Footpath 1 (Longsdon) leads past Harracles Mill, connecting with footpath 26 (Longsdon)
- Footpath 4 (Horton) leading through the wooded Whorrocks Bank past Bank House.
- Footpath 51 (Horton) leading from alongside "Wits End" through the woods and along the back of the John Munroe Independent Hospital site
- Footpath 67 (Horton) leading from the Visitor Centre along the shoreline to an old boathouse
- From Camrose Hill leading to Rudyard Vale Caravan Park past Horton Lodge is Footpath 55 (Horton)
- Footpath 56 (Horton) runs along Lake Road and continues to the west of Rudyard Vale Caravan Park
- Footpath 33 (Horton) which leads through the woods from the damhead to Willgate, from where there are expansive views back over Rudyard village to Whorrocks Bank
- Footpath along the line of the Churnet Valley Railway – a permissive footpath

Footpaths –

<https://apps2.staffordshire.gov.uk/WEB/OnTheMap/RuralAccess>

4. ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC QUALITY AND BUILDING MATERIALS

The three listed buildings located within the conservation area at Rudyard do not reflect the quality of a large number of buildings within the area; late Victorian and Edwardian buildings are listed sparingly and many buildings of distinctive quality from this period are unlisted. The architectural interest covers both the smaller domestic buildings, a few pre-dating the construction of the reservoir, but the majority built after 1850 for those working in Leek or earning a living from the tourist trade, and a number of larger, individual, architect-designed private houses. Architectural interest is also diverse encompassing the many engineered structures built in association with the development of the reservoir and railway; dam and spillway and large retaining walls and embankments, bridges and cuttings, canalised watercourses, and the quirky individual structures built for leisure purposes: boathouses, chalets, pontoons and slipways. All of these buildings are set within a wooded and lush setting where the architectural interest can sometimes seem to play second fiddle to the landscape.

Buildings and approximate dates of construction are illustrated on Figure 2, showing key phases of development: pre 1800 before the construction of the reservoir; post 1850 after the construction of the railway and post 1900 after the railway had successfully overcome the moratorium on development of the Cliffe Park estate. After 1930 buildings have been generally classed as modern, although this should not be taken to imply that there are no buildings of individual quality after 1930.

The omission of any building in the description should not be taken to mean that it does not have architectural or historic merit. All positive buildings are highlighted on the Spatial Analysis map – Figure 4.

Damhead and Associated Structures – Waterway Architecture

The dam was designed by John Rennie and is substantially as designed at the beginning of the 19th century. The coffin weir which runs parallel to the dam wall is considered to be an ingenious design, intended to control the rate that water flows down the canal. Like a giant bath tub, it holds back the water discharged out of the reservoir, and releases it slowly into the canal as it overflows. Pump houses are also prominent structures, built from rusticated ashlar.



Houses

Houses and Villas

The majority of houses and cottages in the conservation area were built following the construction of the reservoir. There are a few exceptions in outlying parts, but several of the cottages which at first seem quite old were, as map regression shows, built during the second half of the 19th century, suggesting that there was a definite consciousness about picturesque quality. Dumpling Cottage (1861 census) and Lilac Cottage and Red Cottage for example, were simple buildings, built from large blocks of local pink gritstone in the mid 19th century. Placed on the edge of the road, they are old-fashioned and traditional in form.

Villas

There are very few detached villas, which is surprising given the opportunity afforded by the many land auctions. There are just five large detached houses, which could be called true villas: Cliffe Park Hall, Horton Lodge, Fairview, Winshaw Knoll and Redwood. Redwood is very private and entirely hidden from public view by trees, but is reputedly one of the better preserved Edwardian villas. Cliffe Park Hall can be seen and appreciated from the public footpath which tracks through its grounds, whilst Horton Lodge and Fairview can be glimpsed from Camrose Hill.

Cliffe Park Hall & Cliffe Park Lodge

Designed and built for John Haworth Esq., Cliffe Park and its associated estate buildings were built from 1818, when a letter is recorded from John Haworth, and building work probably continued into the early 1820s.



In 1816 Haworth owned and occupied the building now known as Reacliffe Farm, which is illustrated on the 1816 map of the Manor of Horton, but then known as Reacliffe House. He owned both the house and the woods below it along the west side of Rudyard Vale, then known as Reacliffe Bank. There are no signs of any of the changes to the landscape, field patterns or infrastructure associated with Cliffe Park on the manor map dated 1816. Cliffe Park Hall and its lodge were built after this date and are very typical in design of the decade between 1815

and 1825, employing a style of late Georgian Gothick architecture found in buildings designed by eminent architects such as the Wytts (cf. Bretby Hall from 1812). Essentially they were Georgian in planning and internal proportion, with symmetrical elevations, but embellished with Gothick details, such as embattled parapets, quatrefoil pattern mouldings, embrasures and slits, hood moulds, the occasional pointed or ogee arch and narrow pilasters which terminate in chimneys disguised as ornate finials. The house has unusual miniature bartizan turrets on the outer corners, which seem to be simply ornamental. Both the house and the lodge were designed with a principal aspect to the east, overlooking the reservoir. They were designed by the same architect (unknown) with the intention of appearing to be a castellated mansion with its extraneous buildings, and perhaps some seemingly semi-ruinous ones, which have evolved over some time. The house has all of the





characteristic luxuries of a grand Georgian house, with an attached porte cochere, from where visitors would alight from their carriage.

What is particularly interesting and special about the buildings is that they were designed as part of a complete suite of structures and landscaped parkland, which was entirely inspired by the construction of the reservoir, and probably by ideals of the Picturesque movement.

Fairview (John Munroe Private Independent Hospital)

'Fairview' was built overlooking Rudyard Lake in 1879-1880 by John Munro, a wine and spirit dealer, originally from Tain in the Scottish Highlands; the name was given to the small, speculatively-built cottage also owned by Munro to the north of the house – Tain Cottage.

This rather large house stands in its own mature grounds to the north of Horton Lodge. It is now a private independent hospital but was designed as a single dwelling. Built in pink rock-faced gritstone, it is a masculine building with mullioned and transomed windows, steep-pitched roofs with Staffordshire blue clay tiles, bargeboards and substantial stone chimneys.

The building is served by a picturesque half-timbered gatelodge, of Arts and Crafts style, quite different from the main house, on Camrose Hill.

Horton Lodge

A large villa built in 1890 for Stephen Chesters-Thompson as his main residence, where he lived until 1893. Stephen Chesters-Thompson was a member of the Chesters brewing family of Manchester, a prominent Conservative politician in Manchester and acted as agent for Arthur Balfour. In 1894 Horton Lodge was bought by Mr W.A.M. Tellwright of Wolstanton, the owner of Sneyd Collieries. Between 1925 and 1948 it was the North Staffordshire Colliery Owners' Association Convalescent Home. It was then used by the Workers Educational Association for two years before being converted into a school for children with special needs.

As a result of decades of changing use, the building has been enveloped by a large number of extensions, although at its core is the villa of 1890, with symmetrical frontage overlooking the reservoir, of pink gritstone with moulded horizontal stone bands, and ornate central pedimented doorcase with reeded pilasters framed by two-storey bay windows. It is a typical late Victorian house of masculine form made more decorative with overhanging bargeboards and finials and an attached porte cochere, with castellated parapets.



The building is served by a picturesque gatelodge on Camrose Hill, a double-pile single-storey lodge with unusual battered chimney stacks and moulded coped gables terminated with miniature ball finials, all partially hidden by a leylandii hedge. There is an impressive gated entrance alongside, with the remains of very good, decorative wrought iron gates and ornate ashlar gateposts, and a setted entrance drive, a high quality entrance leading into the site.

Winshaw Knoll

Located off Lake Road, and along a cul-de-sac called The Drive is Winshaw Knoll. Land bought at the 1890 land auction resulted in this large house of ca. 1894/95 for local estate agent and valuer John Brealey. This villa is best seen from Rudyard Road and the footpath running along the canal feeder, which it overlooks. Inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement, the red clay roofs are prominent with half-hips and gables, some half-timbered. The building is largely rendered in roughcast, which is directly influenced by the Movement, rather than local building traditions. A number of leaded-light windows survive as does tile-hanging and a first floor timber verandah, with splat balustrade, well-preserved details with sympathetic additions.



Smaller Victorian Houses

Spite Hall and Rudyard Villa are smaller than the average villa, even though the names suggest otherwise – they are highly picturesque houses, with prominent steeply-pitched roofs standing overlooking Rudyard Vale.

The Villa (formerly known as Rudyard Villa) was built in 1860 for Matthew Gaunt, a local magistrate. It is an



attractive pink gritstone late Victorian dwelling, with chamfered mullioned windows and a striking, steeply-pitched roof of 60 degrees with alternating bands of plain and beaver-tailed Staffordshire blue clay tiles.



Spite Hall is also built in pink gritstone with a pitched roof and was allegedly named by locals because it “spited” the views from the adjacent Rudyard Villa (according to the Staffordshire Advertiser of 1865).

The Hall is actually a large cottage, adapted as a game keeper’s dwelling, located near to Horton Lodge on the west side of Rudyard Lake. When it was built c1865, the house was known as Keeper’s Cottage. The house was built by an unknown gentleman only a few yards from Rudyard Villa, reputedly with the apparent aim of destroying Matthew Gaunt’s view of the lake after a dispute because the magistrate felled a tree on the neighbour’s land which spoiled his view. Grotesque gargoyles pulling their tongues towards the Villa were used to decorate the exterior of ‘Spite Hall’, some of which are now in the garden’s rockery. The cottage was enlarged and used as a



tea-room between 1873 and about 1890, after which time it served for some years as a guest-house.

There are a number of modest but well-preserved houses within Rudyard, including:

Foxholes (above Rudyard Vale, built in 1856), part rendered, part stone house, with half-timbered gabled dormer and porch and an eclectic range of attached former farm buildings

Nab Wood, a modest gritstone detached house with canted ground floor bay windows and an ornate central doorcase,

Hallscroft, a ‘gingerbread’ house with steep gabled roofs, bargeboards and lattice leaded-light windows,

The Water Bailiff's House (**Reservoir House**) built in 1852 (pictured right), in pink gritstone, with steeply-pitched roofs, ashlar chimney stack and replacement scalloped bargeboards. Close to this house is:

Yew Tree Cottage, a pink gritstone building with former gable-end doorway onto Lake Road, also suggests a former non-domestic use, perhaps contemporary with the construction of the reservoir.

Rock House, a substantial pink gritstone house of the 1820s with stone-coped gables, ashlar chimney stacks and later bay windows, well-preserved.

Camrose Hall (pictured right - formerly known as Holly Bank), ca. 1891, built by Hugo Sleight as a semi-commercial venture to incorporate three shops at road level, which retain their large arched openings, with modern replacement windows. The building is designed in a neo-Jacobean style with chamfered mullioned and transomed windows, and a gabled dormer to the road frontage with a ball finial, and a very prominent chimney stack with six tall ashlar shafts set on the diagonal and castellated. It retains the original roof of alternating red and blue bands of fishscale clay tiles. The house is a tall three storeys and a prominent landmark building.

Primrose Cottage (formerly known as Swiss Cottage) was built on the site of the former Wesleyan Methodist chapel and has re-used the original lancet windows, partially filled in with a Tudor rose and the name Swiss Cottage carved into each arched panel above the window.

Willgate: **Rudyard House**, a substantial three-storey farmhouse in local gritstone of Georgian proportion and **Willgate House**, an early 19th century farmhouse, and its former farm, which incorporates much earlier 18th century farm buildings.

Dunwood Lane: dominated by picturesque cottages - **Bank House**, a stone-built picturesque C19 cottage with half-timbered gablets and ashlar chimney stacks, **Rock Cottage** and **Hawthorne Cottage**, stone-built picturesque C19 cottages with ashlar chimneys masonry gablets and bargeboards, one original pierced bargeboard to Rock Cottage

The terrace of three – **Jasmine Cottage**, **Rose Cottage** and **Harper's Gate Cottage**, C18, extended in the early C19 to form a row of traditional cottages

Sunnybank, late C18 origin with late C19 additions and half-timbered gables

Greenlands, a three-phase house with prominent two-storey bay frontage of 1897 with decorative deep overhanging bargeboards and matching gables with foliate cross finials to the smaller extension

Woodfields, very well-hidden from public view, with pink gritstone, with ashlar chimneys, pierced bargeboards and finials

The following buildings are also worthy of note:

Encased within **Rudyard Hotel** is the original Water Bailiff's house of c1810. It was extended from 1851 and subsumed within later additions to become a large complex. Although purpose-built from 1851 as a hotel / inn, the style of architecture is best described as that of a mid 19th century rambling villa, with large bracketed eaves and hipped slate roofs, two-storey stone bay windows, overhanging bargeboards and decorative eaves, an eclectic mix of periods and details.



The original footpath leading from the canal feeder to the Water Bailiff's house was evident as a striking feature in 1816 and was retained as part of the 19th century landscaping. The land to the south of Rudyard Hotel was later adapted as a series of sweeping lawns, with terraces providing areas for sitting out, the upper terrace now in use as car parking. The rooms on the south side of the hotel overlook these lawns and the outward views and views from the canal feeder are an important part of its setting.

Lakeland Lodge (formerly the Station Hotel & Poacher's Tavern), A building with early C17 origins, but little surviving from that phase except the 1610 datestone and a small area of masonry; the west-facing elevation of the earlier building was largely rebuilt during the second half of the C18 and is now surrounded by later additions. These demonstrate the extent that Rudyard increased in popularity and needed to expand to accommodate visitors. The later design of the Station Hotel incorporated the timber-frame effect of the railway station building in its gable end, now painted cream. It was bought by Chesters Brewery (Stephen Chesters-Thompson of Horton Lodge family concern) circa 1891, and extensions were carried out between 1892 and 1897.



Semi-detached cottages along Lake Road

Vine Cottage 1884 & **Rose Cottage** 1881 (pictured below): both designed with pink gritstone lower half, carved stone details and intricate half-timbered first floor

Fern Cottage 1 and 2: (ca. 1884), pink gritstone, designed with small gabled half dormers

Glenwood & Wynforde (pictured below right): a pair of roughcast houses with prominent jettied gables and canted two-storey bay windows, inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement

The Beeches & The Hollies, The Beeches & Elton: four houses built after 1890 as two pairs of semi-detached houses in an Arts and Crafts style, mainly brick, with roughcast render; bracketed eaves and bargeboards to prominent gable frontages, with small-paned casement windows.



Churches and Chapels

Rudyard Methodist Church

Built in 1912, the Methodist Church replaced the former Wesleyan Chapel on Camrose Hill. The building is simple in form, dominated by a very fine, traceried decorated window in dark pink gritstone, serving the main worship space, which contrasts with random rubble 'snecked' masonry. The gable is framed by corner buttresses, which are repeated on the main entrance, which is off-set with a parapet roof, stone segmental arch and prominent doors.



Chalets

The early 20th century development of Rudyard as a tourist destination provided opportunities for the development of temporary holiday homes. During the first decades of the twentieth century these holiday chalets were built largely in timber, with open verandahs.

The North Staffordshire Railway, with its new powers under the 1904 Act, established several refreshment chalets on the west side of the lake.

Early 19th century photos reveal that the timber-boarding of a number of these chalets and club buildings (golf club, tennis club, bowling green) was deliberately painted in alternate stripes (a dark colour and white), in a jazzy style, contributing to the jolly character of the place.

Distinct from the NSR chalets are two charming purpose-built chalets; **Foxgloves** (formerly The Hacienda) and **The Brackens**, to the west of Reacliffe Road are highly distinctive two-storey Swiss chalets, built in Arts and Crafts style, with timber-frame and verandahs. The black feather-edge boarding and steeply-pitched tiled roofs at Foxgloves contrasts with the white scalloped and pierced bargeboards, turned drop finials, and white-painted windows. At The Brackens, black and white are also used to great effect, with feather-edged black timber boarding and half-timbered gables, spike finials, white painted balcony and ground and first floor verandahs with scrolled brackets and white-painted windows.



Geelonga – a horizontally-boarded timber building, with an open verandah (now enclosed) which was built in 1906 as one of the buildings serving the original 9-hole golf course at Cliffe Park; it was floated down the lake to its current location in 1926, following the closure of the golf club, where it was re-erected as a permanent dwelling for the present occupier.

Close to this is the **Spite Hall Tearoom** (now an office), dating from c.1902



A number of old chalets have been given planning permission for replacement structures: St. Elmos Chalet, c1907, a replacement dwelling approved in 2002 & 2004; Hideaway, a replacement holiday home approved in 2007; Sandy Cove, a replacement 'dwelling' approved in 2003; a very substantial holiday home, Lake View, reconstruction of chalet approved in 2004; Lakeside House, a holiday chalet, formerly known as Stoney Bank, replacement approved in 2008 - a lower deck boathouse was approved but is in use as accommodation; Slipways, a replacement holiday chalet with integral small garage-style boat-house was approved in 2011; The

Sheiling, a replacement chalet was approved in 2003; Red Roofs, a traditional black-and-white chalet, formerly a chalet/boathouse before 1948 but a replacement permanent dwelling approved in 2010.

A few early holiday chalets survive, but some, such as Blakeley, are precarious and vulnerable.

Boathouses

From 1885, when the western shore of the Cliffe Park Estate of Fanny Bostock started to be sold off, a number of private boathouses were established along the shoreline. These have 'evolved' in various guises and have been enlarged on occasion or have had their boat storage removed. Under the original Cliffe Park Estate sale covenants the use of the shoreline buildings was restricted to boathouses, and this discouraged permanent homes from being established. The definition of 'boathouse' has been somewhat loosely interpreted and a number of extraneous structures have been added over the years, whilst the under-cover boat storage has often been sacrificed for accommodation. The true early Victorian boathouses have a characteristic wet mooring in common. Of most of the later chalet/ boathouses, boats have to be trailered or winched up a slipway.

This eclectic mix of buildings along the west shoreline contains two boat-houses which pre-date the 1885 auction, and on the eastern shoreline stands the landmark Earl of Macclesfield's boathouse of the 1860s. The earliest are generally of traditional stone-built form with steeply-pitched roofs, whilst others are an eclectic and random mix of materials and styles. Collectively, they have the ad-hoc charm of leisure resorts, but increasing aggrandisement is affecting the modest scale of many of the shoreline buildings.

The small domestic boathouses have been supplemented with more recent Boathouses such as the Yacht Club, Activity Centre, and Rudyard Sailability, all purpose-built to accommodate boats of various types.

The following boathouses are the best preserved true boathouses:

West Shore - clockwise from the Dam Head

- **The Visitor Centre** - the former Trent & Mersey Canal boathouse, which was originally built circa 1810, but which has been enlarged into a "picturesque" overhanging boathouse, with wet mooring; part shingle-clad jettied structure, with pitched and hipped roof of alternating bands of plain and fishscale blue clay tiles, single-gated wet mooring
- Rowing Club Boathouse (Activity Centre) – a modern building, with trailered access to the water
- Rudyard Sailability – a modern boathouse, with slipway and winched access
- **Boathouse** north of Rudyard Sailability – a gable-fronted boathouse, with gritstone walls, tiled roofs, large overhanging scalloped bargeboards and double-gated wet mooring



- **Boathouse** with moored boat 'Shoestring' – a charismatic long timber boarded and glazed superstructure on gritstone flank walls, with half-hipped roof, tiled roof with clay finials, scalloped overhanging bargeboards and double-gated wet mooring



- **Boathouse to La Cabane** – a simple gable-fronted boathouse, with gritstone walls, tiled roofs and modern replacement bargeboards and double-gated wet mooring



- **Lower Horton Lodge boathouse** - built 1891 by Stephen Chesters-Thompson, an ornate structure of carved gritstone, incorporating a moulded coped gable-frontage to the water and ornate chimney stack, tiled roofs, jettied balcony on decorative timber brackets and double-gated wet mooring. The balcony is set with ornate cast-iron baluster panels and there are matching cast iron panels to the double gates to the water. Carved datestone to the gable, with garlands and swags and central roundel with a stags head.

- **The Old Boathouse (Challinor's Boathouse)** – formerly the Rudyard Lake Sailing Club. A pair of saddle-backed lightweight corrugated roofs, in two stages, and timber boarded superstructure sit on a series of gritstone piers. The concrete jetties for the original slipway still remain as a reminder of the original purpose, but there is no longer any boat storage. This is a charming and eclectic structure which evokes many memories



- **Fortside**, Bill Burdis boathouse of the 1930s – gritstone flank walls and boat storage with raised slipway support a timber deck. The main building is a timber-frame superstructure chalet on a gritstone plinth

- **The Lady of the Lake**, designed c1905 by the Leek architect William Larnar Sugden – this is the greatest landmark on Rudyard Lake, made most dramatic by its location detached from the shore and the asymmetry of the southern elevation, and it is the most decorative boathouse, with rock-faced gritstone walls, hipped tiled roof with decorative bands of plain and fishscale tiles, and bands of blue and red tile-hanging to the upper flanks, oriel window with leaded-lights and ornamental moulded brick chimney



stack to the south, with a statue niche for a ships figurehead (replaced with a stone figure), dormer window to the north and jettied balcony facing the lake, with decorative timber balustrade and brackets, scalloped and pierced bargeboards, double-gated decorative iron gates and wet mooring. Despite its high quality, it was not listed in a recent survey, which reflects the fact that few 20th century buildings are listed, rather than any lack of architectural interest.

- **Boathouse Cottage** (The Bracken's boathouse, c1905) - although built as a boathouse, this has been in residential use since 1996 and has a Lawful Development Certificate for residential use dating from 2011. It is a simple timber-clad structure with pierced decorative bargeboards and gable-frontage facing the lake, tiled roof and gritstone supporting structure with boat access from a disused slipway.

- **Boathouse north of Boathouse Cottage (Foxgloves boathouse)** – an early 20th century boathouse, well-preserved green-painted timber structure with feather-edged boards and later cladding, decorative bargeboards and gable-frontage to the lake. Boat storage appears to be to the southern flank wall



- **Sandhurst** built in the 1950s – an unusual gritstone boathouse with hipped tiled roof and oriel window to the south. The slipway is intact with direct access to the water. The building may have had more original features which have been replaced over time, but it still makes a positive contribution to the waterfront

East Shore

The Earl of Macclesfield's Boathouse – the gable-fronted elevation to the water was restored to its original and distinctive stepped parapet form in recent years. The gritstone flank walls and tiled roof are simple and the first floor storage area is contained within a semi-circular arched recess. Open frontage wet mooring, with gates missing.



The Jubilee Stone



Distinct from buildings is the landmark Jubilee Stone, a large split block of quarried gritstone standing on a stepped-plinth, which has been reinvigorated over many years to commemorate national events, starting with the Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897, and continuing with the crowning of subsequent monarchs, the Boer War and the two World Wars. It is used by the Royal British Legion to commemorate Armistice Day. The stone stands at the corner of Camrose Hill and Lake Road. The rear elevation has a limestone carved panel, with just enough space to commemorate the crowning of one more monarch.

Architectural Details and Building Materials

Masonry – stone

The dominant building material is a dark pink gritstone and this was almost universally adopted for lower courses of masonry, many domestic buildings and boathouses, and chimney stacks, which is unusual and highly distinctive; many stacks are built in ashlar, with a carved stone oversailing cornice and cluster of engaged flues, contributing to the quality of the skyline.

Gritstone outcrops in the locality and a good dimension stone was quarried at Whorrocks Bank, although the quarries are no longer working.



Brick – A handful of buildings were constructed in brick during the early 20th century including Albury House, The Beeches and The Hollies. These tend to be predominantly mass produced, deep orange-red bricks uniform in colour, texture and appearance.

Timber

Timber is used mainly for decorative purpose, although it was the dominant building material for chalets and leisure buildings along the wooded fringes of the reservoir. The use of timber-frame as a decorative effect was extensive within Rudyard, often known as half-timbering. It can be seen on the gable-end of key buildings, but has been lost or boarded over in a number of instances. Timber bargeboards, with pierced decorative or scalloped edges and exposed rafter feet are common details.

Decoration

There is a sense of fun about many buildings; there are several instances of grotesque gargoyles, figures and heads carved into the masonry and hidden in discrete places. A large number of buildings have carved datestones, a mark of pride in the architectural contribution made to a place. Picturesque bargeboards survive in places, pierced or scalloped, many replaced with much plainer versions.



Roof materials

The area is dominated by the use of plain clay tiles, but this is not exclusive. Plain clay tiles require roof pitches of a minimum of 35 degrees and in general the traditional buildings have steeply-pitched roofs of 35 to 50 degrees, which is a distinctive characteristic. Whilst the older buildings were generally roofed with blue Staffordshire blue clay tiles, during the later years of the 19th century

and the 20th century machine-made red clay tiles were introduced and these were often used in combination with blue tiles to provide contrasting bands of coloured red and blue tiles; it is important that this variety and subtle differences in detail are preserved. Vertical tile-hanging as a means of cladding can also be found on a number of the 'Arts and Crafts' buildings.



Boundary Walls

A number of the more formal properties along Camrose Hill have evenly-coursed dressed stone boundary walls, with dressed stone copings. Elsewhere, the boundaries are dominated by vernacular drystone walling, on occasion displaced by modern panel fencing or parking bays.



Drystone boundary wall in local pink gritstone, with gateposts ('stoops') and pyramidal caps. Right - remnants of the early wrought-iron spike railings and cast iron posts found around the damhead. Below - formal carved ashlar gatepiers at the entrance gateway to Horton Lodge, with bespoke wrought-iron gates, a very expensive addition



5. BOUNDARY

Northern Boundary

The boundary follows the western edge of the carriage drive as it contours around the perimeter of the reservoir. It includes the raised section of the retaining wall at the northern perimeter of the reservoir and the carriage drive, which this wall supports, and loops around to include the small bridge and culvert from the streams which provided the first phase water supply to the reservoir; it then includes the bridge over the later Dane canal feeder of 1810 and the slightly later raised embankment and bridge of 1849 over the North Staffordshire Railway.

Exclusions

Whilst both the Dane feeder canal and the network of sluices and associated land drains, is of considerable historic and architectural interest, it has not been included within the conservation area simply because there is no natural 'cut-off' or point at which it changes character. It is of interest for the whole of its length, as far as the River Dane. Likewise, the alignment of the former Churnet Valley Railway (NSR) continues beyond the Reacliffe Road bridge and is followed by the Staffordshire Way. The Rudyard Conservation Area is related to an area of specific special character, which here has been taken to be the visual envelope of the valley. Reacliffe Road presents a well-defined physical boundary.

Western Boundary - from the northern edge of Rudyard Lake

The north-western boundary follows the historic parkland setting of Cliffe Park Hall which pre-dates the early 20th century golf course. The boundary reflects the area which was ornamented as part of the 19th century development of the house and its parkland, as this is its principal special interest, rather than the boundary of the farmed estate, which was much wider.

To the north of the hall, the boundary of the conservation area follows the staggered historic field boundaries, with mature hedgerow trees of oak, which define the extent of the ornamented parkland.

To the south-west of the hall, the boundary follows the wooded and deliberately ornamented backdrop to the buildings and walls which follow a similar contour line and includes the site of the former stables. It excludes the farmed fields which were part of the wider estate and the extended 18-hole golf course.

To the south of Cliffe Park Hall the boundary includes Reacliffe Wood, which was deliberately ornamented with mixed planting and glaucous-leaved shrubs to enhance the setting of the house and wider views. The conservation area excludes the open glades close to Reacliffe Farm, which were developed with chalets as part of a low-key early 20th century expansion of the interest in holiday homes by the North Staffordshire Railway. Chalets have been considerably altered from the largely timber-framed structures of the early 20th century and the character of the area has changed from one of quirky, temporary and lightweight structures which had their own charm, to one with a more permanent character. Whilst there are one or two exemplary chalet conversions / reconstructions, the majority of replacement structures are of brick, which is out-of-place in this context. For this reason, the character of these spaces has been irrevocably altered and there is no longer special architectural interest.

Within the former Cliffe Park estate, despite a change in ownership, the underlying form, character and structure of the 1820s planting and structures and later 19th century designed parkland is remarkably well-preserved, with mature trees edging the carriage drive, and clumps of trees, including a large cross-shaped shelter-belt plantation, one of two which were established in the outlying fields.

This form can be traced directly back to the 1879 Ordnance Survey map and individual specimen trees can be identified.

The wider estate was ornamented and the earlier woodland of Recliffe Wood was embellished with large quantities of lush planting, incorporating mixed woodland with rhododendron and pines. The boundary of the conservation area is contained to the steep, mixed woodland and crosses Recliffe Road where it links up with the ornamented woodland to the south. Much of this southern belt of woodland is intact. Areas have been excluded which were not part of the mixed woodland character embellished by either the Trent and Mersey Canal Company, or the 19th century landowners.

Eastern boundary

The boundary hugs the eastern line of the North Staffordshire Railway and incorporates the small quarries, embankments and revetments along its length and takes in areas of planted woodland, which are identifiable as mixed planting, probably dating from the establishment of the reservoir. This includes Hunthouse Wood and Back Wood.

Western Boundary

The conservation area follows Camrose Hill, excluding areas of paddock and agricultural land to the east of the road but incorporating the settled parts of the hillside and historic buildings and all areas of mixed woodland which forms an important backdrop to the settled areas and wider views of Rudyard.

Southern Boundary

The boundary incorporates the water meadows to the south of Rudyard Road and Dunwood Lane and the early developed parts around Harracles Mill and its watery setting, as well as Heron Marsh; the wetland landscape contains a series of diverted watercourses and man-made structures, dominated by the canal feeder and land drains which were constructed by the canal company to supply the canal network. Public access around these tranquil areas is extensive, with panoramic views across the open, pastoral landscape, contained by the railway embankment, which defines the extent of the conservation area boundary.

6. SPATIAL ANALYSIS

The description of each area should be read in conjunction with the Spatial Analysis Map - Figure 4.

Guide to Map

The Spatial Analysis Map is annotated with the following:

Panoramic Views - these views are limited to the best defining and most memorable views within Rudyard. They are generally broad and often panoramas, sometimes linking subjects in the middle distance and far horizon.

Landmarks – landmarks are structures that because of either size or design stand out from the crowd.

Positive Buildings – positive buildings are those that are of special architectural or historic interest, either as individual structures or as part of a collective group, and make a strong contribution to the character of the conservation area. The local authority is likely to strongly resist proposals for the demolition of any Positive Buildings.

Key Views and Landmarks

The geology and structure of the steep-sided valley creates a visual envelope, which contains many of the most dramatic views, combining both groups and isolated buildings with the dense tree canopy. These are at their most acute from the damhead but there are other important views from the lake itself and a number of open glades.



The old road network along Dunwood Lane contains a series of intimate, framed and short-range views, interrupted by occasional buildings along the edge of the road. The land falls away to the south and this provides a panoramic view for the cottages and small villas clustered and tiered above, within a wooded backdrop. The dramatic views of this landscape are at the most panoramic from the canal feeder, former railway line and public footpath network. Dramatic outward southerly views from Dunwood Lane look across to Harracles Mill and Harracles Hall (beyond the conservation area).



Above - panoramic view of Whorrocks Bank and Dunwood Lane from the canal feeder.
Below - southerly outward view from Dunwood Lane across the water meadows to Harracles Mill



From the lake, the views of the boathouses are some of the most picturesque and dramatic, particularly the wet moorings of the older structures, where the water laps underneath the steep-pitched, gable-fronted structures.



At Cliffe Park the “picturesque” landscape was deliberately manipulated to create manufactured views, to ensure that the Hall, the gate lodge, the Gothic arched entrance to the hall yard and other structures, all of which look north-east over the reservoir, were prominent landmarks within the wider parkland landscape.



Open Spaces

There are few formal, designed, open spaces, apart from the reservoir itself, the former golf course at Cliffe Park and the lawns and parkland beneath Cliffe Park Hall.

The dam head is an important and tranquil open space, which can change to a bustling node of activity at key events during the year.

The land to the immediate south of Rudyard Hotel, which was part of the former terraced garden, is part of the setting which the hotel was designed to overlook and is important as it defines views from the footpath alongside the feeder below.



The open pastoral landscape to the south of Rudyard Road and Dunwood Lane is an important open area of particular historic interest for the way that the watercourses were manipulated over several hundred years to serve industries - the corn mill and the canal network.

Description Of Sub-Areas

For the purpose of describing the area in this appraisal, Rudyard Conservation Area has been split into seven Character Areas;

(1) Cliffe Park Estate and Reacliffe Road

This area includes a large part of the former Cliffe Park Estate and Reacliffe Woods and the route of the private carriage drive known as Reacliffe Road.

(2) The Damhead and Lake

This area includes the buildings, chalets and boathouses facing Rudyard Lake, which are best appreciated from the water, as well as the pocket of public open space at the Damhead. It also includes a large part of the Churnet Valley Railway, which tracks the eastern edge of the reservoir and its backdrop of woods and small quarries which carve out a cutting.

(3) Villas and Rudyard Vale

This area includes the largest of the private villas at some of the highest points overlooking Rudyard Lake, their agricultural setting and the more open areas of gently contouring landscape at Rudyard Vale.

(4) Lake Road

This area includes Lake Road and the cul-de-sac known as The Drive

(5) Southern Area and low-lying water courses

This area includes both the route of the mill leats and site of the former millpond to Harracles Mill and the canal feeder where it leaves the Lake and the complex network of water courses and drains which were established by the Canal Company.

(6) Whorrocks Bank and Dunwood Lane

This includes the developed part of Whorrocks Bank, which is largely hidden from the main views by the tree canopy, and Dunwood Lane.

(7) Willgate

Willgate is a small hamlet of farms on the east bank above the reservoir from where there are good views of Rudyard.

The different Character Areas are shown on Figure 5 and the analysis of the main views, landmarks and important buildings are illustrated on Figure 4, the Spatial Analysis map.

The omission of any particular building, feature, view or space within this appraisal should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Character Area 1 - Cliffe Park Estate and Reacliffe Road

This area is dominated by the parkland landscape of the Cliffe Park Estate and Reacliffe Woods, which runs in a linear form to the west of Rudyard Lake and which was embellished by John Haworth and subsequent owners of the estate. The Cliffe Park estate was sold in 1928 with 38 acres, a substantial reduction from the original 135 acres identified in the previous record and the 784 acres sold in 1885. However, the main parkland landscape has not been subdivided and has matured without significant losses (see Issues - trees).

Both the Hall and its gatelodge overlook the reservoir, Rudyard Lake, and the layout of the park also reflects the dominant presence of the lake. A carriage drive loops around the lake, and was formalised close to the site of the present Sailing Club, with a pair of cast-iron gateposts and a gated entrance just in front of the gatelodge, known as Cliffe Cottage (Cliffe Wood Cottage – 1879, Reacliff Wood Cottage - 1861). Only one cast-iron gatepost survives from the formal gateway, partially buried in the foliage. Around this parkland landscape are a number of tree belts designed to soften and enrich the landscape. These have matured; the trees closest to the shoreline are more recent introductions. Some of these tree belts incorporate enhanced areas of native woodland, such as that at Reacliff Wood which contains a 'blanket' Tree Preservation Order (LR002), whilst other areas were deliberately planted as belts close to the reservoir and as a backdrop to the buildings, to create shelter and visual interest.



To the north of the reservoir the carriage drive to the Cliffe Park Estate forms a dominant linear structure, with battered stone revetment walls, both retaining the drive and forming the edge of the reservoir. The carriage drive is now the route of the Staffordshire Way (footpath no. 31 Horton) and is wide open in places and enclosed in others; single-sided lines of mature deciduous trees provide shade along eastern sections of the route. Approaching the parkland from the Rushton direction, a long line of mature oak and a former

old hedgerow line the eastern side of the drive and an ancient woodland indicator, dogs mercury, is prevalent. The margins of the lake have been encouraged to develop with willow and alder carr; as alluvial silt has created a rich flora and wetland environment – this part of the reservoir is now a dedicated nature reserve, with no public access but the carriage drive provides the best views of this area. The carriage drive contains deliberately planted groups of three beech trees and there are specimen purple beech on the periphery of the wooded carr; both indicating ornamented 19th century planting designed to add visual interest throughout the year.



Approaching the hall from the north, the carriage drive curves, unfenced, and splits to serve both Barns Lee Farm and Cliffe Park Hall. There are a number of prominent features in the landscape; a bunker from the 10th green of the Rudyard Lake Golf Course is a distinctive horseshoe-shaped earthwork in the parkland to the north of the drive and, to the south of the drive, a cross-



shaped shelter-belt plantation (now unfenced) which contains over 30 alder and 2 large Scots pine, all part of the early 19th century ornamented landscape, although the deciduous trees may be second or third generation. The original drive to Cliffe Park Hall diverts through an area of wooded plantation, which has a number of distinctive characteristics: a long avenue through the centre with a single-sided row of 19 limes (plus 1 toppled) and a sweet chestnut, which may pre-date the later trees, a periphery of majestic oaks, clusters of hawthorn and holly at the edges discouraging stock from grazing, and specimen beech and conifers, such as larch. There are two further single-sided rows of deciduous trees lining the carriage drive closer to and on either side of the hall, one a mixed row of sycamore, beech, lime and oak, and the other predominantly lime. The immediate garden setting of the house has large specimen sycamores below the retaining wall – a loosely defined 'ha-ha' because it does not

have a ditch, and several large Irish fastigate yew trees, probably originally clipped but now very overgrown, with an understorey of rhododendron. There is a large specimen Cedar of Lebanon which is in very poor condition (see Issues).

The lush planting of Reecliffe Woods, with mixed planting of old oaks and later larch and Scots pine, creates the "gingerbread" setting for the timber-framed Swiss chalets of Foxgloves and Brackens, both of which are highly distinctive houses.

Close to the waterfront there are a series of large beech trees, originally planted in an avenue, which

follow the boundary of Reacliffe Road and may have also been added to provide shade. A large copper beech in the grounds of Boathouse Cottage is another example of specimen planting which was designed to add interest and seasonal colour.

It is generally thought that the plantations along the western bank of the reservoir were established following the construction of the reservoir. However, the documentary evidence is that these woods were long established. Whilst rhododendron and the mixed planting of Scots pine and larch are distinctive 19th century additions, the intention of planting woodland along the margins of the lake may have been initially to protect the water quality and keep stock away.



The same high quality woodland continues to the south of Reacliffe Road, along the steep-sided contours and forms a dense canopy offering great privacy to both Fairview and Horton Lodge. A public footpath runs along the boundary between the woodland and the houses. The trees incorporate a prominent understory of rhododendron with a number of specimen trees, sweet chestnut, purple beech, and stands of larch and Scots pine mixed with native birch, rowan and some very mature oak.

Character Area 2 - The Damhead and Lake

Rudyard Lake runs for such a long length that there is no single point at which the whole of the reservoir can be seen, and this is part of its special interest, as it invites exploration. From the Damhead, the dramatic long views up the Lake take in only the narrowest portion of the water body and steepest margins before the reservoir continues in a gradual arc to the north-north-west and both the waterbody and landscape opens out.

The Damhead is a strong linear feature forming a generous gradual curve, with swept revetments and the original spillway at the eastern end was the original source for the canal network. This striking structure now generally operates in times of flood, and the later route of the canal feeder is served by the pair of rusticated ashlar pump houses along the dam wall. The complex watercourses and sluices which divert water downstream are described further in Area 5; they are interesting but largely hidden by self-set trees; the main exceptions are the sections of canal feeder below the pumphouses, one of which is served directly by a culvert. Here the water spills over from a wide stone trough, the 'coffin weir', into a narrow channel, which is the main canal feeder. Other sluices take off surplus water and divert them through a series of watercourses along the line of the original Dunsmore Brook.



The broad platform along the dam provides a vantage point for panoramic views of the lake and, looking in the other direction, a clear view of Hotel Rudyard,



which is framed by the trees and open meadows. Along this open space is the remains of a privet hedge, which was originally planted along the whole of the Damhead, separating the wide public walkway from a grassy open area (formerly containing structures); the topiary was once more ornate with a pair of arched clipped openings in the hedge framing views; only one of these survives and it now looks a little lost in isolation.

Along the perimeter of the lake, a number of boathouses sit on the banks; the older ones have wet moorings or are jettied out into the water; they all sit within a wooded setting, where trees crowd down to meet the foreshore. Many of these are serendipitously placed and discovered by chance as part of a lake excursion, which enhances the experience.



The most attractive boathouses are those which relate directly to the Lake, with wet moorings, large decorative gable-frontages facing the lake and where any accommodation is contained mainly within the roof / attic. Of these, the two largest and most prominent boathouses, which are major landmarks along the journey over the water, are The Lady of the Lake and Horton Lodge Boathouse. Other more unusual boathouses, such



as The Old Boathouse (formerly the Sailing Club), are also reference points for the journey along the Lake.

The eastern side of Rudyard Lake is dominated by the embankment and cutting of the North Staffordshire Railway; further north, where the land changes to a more open character, there are occasional tongues of land where clusters of holiday homes or boat and fishing paraphernalia are located close to the water's edge but these are mainly visible from the water.

The former railway forms a deep and wide cutting; it had a two-line (up and down) track bed and was served by two stations, one at Rudyard Road, known as Rudyard Station, which opened on 22nd July 1850, and one at the top of the lake, Rudyard Lake, a more low-key cluster, which opened on 1st May 1905 (re-named Cliffe Park in 1926) and was located to the immediate south of the road bridge over which runs Reacliffe Road. Neither station building nor associated signal boxes, stone goods shed and railway paraphernalia survives but there are two railway bridges erected in 1849.



When first established the railway was created in conjunction with some small scale quarrying and the creation of a cutting and raised embanked sections created a viewing platform from where passengers could see across the whole of the lake. Over time, trees have colonised the length of the railway and views across the lake have been eroded, so that from the track-bed there are only occasional glimpses. The railway forms a valuable wildlife corridor for the eastern side of the reservoir and recreational route, which from a distance across the water is visible as a linear deciduous tree canopy.

Character Area 3 – Villas and Rudyard Vale

To the east of Camrose Hill, where the ground begins to plateau, are the large houses of Horton Lodge and Fairview, which sit in extensive grounds, each emphasised at the road by a well-preserved gatelodge; that to Fairview is an Arts and Crafts inspired building, with half-timbered gables, whilst that to Horton Lodge is characterised by spiky gables, chimney stacks and finials. Further along the road is an attractive detached cottage, also with half-timbering, called Wits End. The land to the north of Fairview was still moorland by 1879, edged by woods to the east and the mature landscaped gardens of Fairview. A narrow lane descends the hill to Rudyard Vale and is framed by an avenue of lime trees with occasional distant views across the fields as far as The Morridge.



Below these houses lies Rudyard Vale, which was quite literally once a rural idyll, on a south-east facing slope, and the main open area of fields to the west of the lake; it has slowly over time become surrounded by trees and cluttered with ad-hoc mobile homes, caravans and static chalets, some now permanent dwellings. The muddle of structures and lack of well-defined space appears to have led to some tensions between the Hoseasons holiday lodge chalets and Rudyard Vale Caravan Park.



The sheltered position may have influenced the early construction of cottages along these slopes illustrated on the 1816 Horton Manor map, although there is little surviving physical evidence. Close to the lane are the two Gothic style houses known as The Villa and Spite Hall, each with a vantage point over the Vale. The Villa was originally named Rudyard Vale and gave its name to the little valley; built for Matthew Gaunt, a wealthy Leek solicitor, it was designed by William Sugden.¹³

There are still a few pockets of open space on the lower slopes, fragments of much larger pastoral fields, which provide opportunities for unfettered views. Scattered within the Vale are some interesting historic buildings, such as Geelonga, a remnant of the timber boarded buildings with wooden verandahs erected by the North Staffordshire Railway, and the former tearoom at Spite Hall. A public footpath skirts the caravan site and provides glimpses of small paddocks, an intimate rural environment.

Character Area 4 - Lake Road

The corner of the acute-angled junction of Lake Road and Camrose Hill is marked by two landmarks: the Jubilee Stone, a prominent block of quarried gritstone fashioned into a commemorative monument, and a tall spruce on the opposite side of the road; they form a natural gateway leading into Lake Road. As this lane follows the contours, it was one of the earliest areas to be settled and the 1841 census names several houses along "Red Street" (the previous name for Lake Road): Reservoir House, Heaton's Cottage, Keeper's Gate, and Bank House.

Scattered and piecemeal development of mainly suburban form characterises the majority of Lake Road, with properties generally being small in scale, semi-detached dwellings or small villas. Only Hotel Rudyard, in its generous grounds, breaks the mould. With the exception of Hotel Rudyard, there is now very little sense of the tourist industry along the lane, which was once characterised by tourist accommodation, tea rooms and cafes.



13 S.R.O., D. 3359/Gaunt, Sugden's elevations for house at Rudyard, 1859

Clusters of buildings are grouped together strung out along the lane, with little unified character but altogether forming an eclectic collection of architectural styles typifying the late 19th and early 20th century. A long stretch of semi-detached houses leading up to, and just beyond, the Methodist Church is of particular quality. Late 20th century development in general, with a few exceptions such as The Clock Tower, is unimaginative and makes no contribution to the character of the settlement. The development is generally spacious, with many properties enhanced by mature gardens, particularly on the rising land to the west; the clusters of development reflect the piecemeal process of historic development following land auctions. Small house plots were also developed such as the detached Pine Cottage (1892), Sylvian House (1893), and Albury House (1896).

A long sliver of land, set with glaucous-leaved shrubs, separates Lake Road from Camrose Hill, with little intervisibility. The wooded setting contributes to the self-contained character of Lake Road and this is particularly picturesque when seen from afar, particularly from Willgate, and may have contributed to the epithet "Little Switzerland."

Beyond Hotel Rudyard the lane narrows as it approaches the reservoir and a few cottages are huddled on the edge of the road creating a series of pinchpoints; from this northern section of the lane and along the network of public footpaths there are occasional tantalising glimpses of moored boats and the moving water on the reservoir.

The Drive is an unadopted road, with pale yellow brick gulleys, where development is largely hidden from the main views. Within this sheltered cul-de-sac are occasional individual, architect-designed dwellings set in spacious grounds.

Character Area 5 - Southern Area and low-lying water courses

The southern area is dominated by engineered structures that have been softened over time by naturalised trees and shrubs. The series of complex drainage channels and canalised canal feeder are contained within the low-lying parts of the watery landscape, with the large embankment to the railway line framing views to the east. From the railway embankment, the rolling hills and swales surrounding this area shape the views outwards.



Looking towards Dunwood Lane from the canal feeder, footpaths and the railway embankment, the views of Dunwood Lane are highly picturesque, with clusters of houses trailing along the lane and terraced along the prominent outcrop of Whorrocks Bank, dominated by a heavily-wooded green backdrop of trees and gardens descending the hill to the road; they are typical of the mixed woodland character of the banks above the reservoir, with an occasional purple beech

and conifer interspersed within the native woodland, indicating a landscape which was deliberately embellished here to create a lush setting.

The low-lying landscape is a largely open, tranquil and green pastoral one, delineated by native

hedgerows and the footpaths on the outer edges of the meadows. It contains water meadows and summer grazing and the Heron Marsh – a low-lying area with fish pools, all contained by the railway line and the canal feeder. Along the footpath network, which follows the canal feeder, are alder, oak and birch, most self-set, trailing along the margins.



Approaching the settlement, the canal feeder changes to a section of raised timber troughs and then a blue-brick lined channel incorporating sluices to control outflow. Round-arched, blue engineering brick channels are culverted under Rudyard Road. This western branch of the canal feeder is well-maintained, whilst the eastern limb has been allowed to slowly degrade and to become naturalised where it merges within the pasture between the railway embankment and farmland north of Rudyard Road. From the canal feeder there are glimpsed views of Hotel Rudyard and its lawned setting and this section of footpath along the feeder is more enclosed as it contains more lush planting, with holly and rhododendron in the gardens to the west, providing greater privacy.

Bridge No. 48 crosses Rudyard Road in a form which is typical of the railway with pink gritstone abutments and is a prominent, natural gateway into the conservation area. Beyond the bridge, a long track leads from Rudyard Road up an incline to the site of the present car park and former station buildings, where there are a cluster of paraphernalia associated with the miniature railway.



The track-bed of the former Churnet Valley Railway continues south from the station car park as a greenway in a tunnel-like vista with occasional glimpsed views across the undulating landscape towards Leek and Harracles Hall on the brow of the nearby hill; further along the track bed is an accommodation railway bridge with blue engineering brick abutments and riveted iron deck. The southern limit of the conservation area boundary terminates at the point where this bridge meets the outflow from the canal feeder, which discharges into the former Dunsmore Brook.

Character Area 6 - Whorrocks Bank and Dunwood Lane

The historic settlement of Harper's Gate contains a core of buildings located at the junction of Rudyard Road, Camrose Hill and Dunwood Lane. Focal points are the two public houses, designed to catch travellers: the ornate pedimented doorcase to the former Station Hotel (Lakeland Lodge) and Rock House (formerly an inn), one of a row of houses at the bottom of Camrose Hill, which along with Ivy Cottage and Camrose Hall form a picturesque assemblage of buildings of different heights and details.

The long climb from the Jubilee Stone at the bottom of Camrose Hill to Reacliffe Road follows the old road originally called Whorrocks Bank (re-named Camrose Hill), through old woodland which lines both sides of the road, providing seclusion for the larger houses, Redwood and Bank House.



Views over the lake are filtered by the large tree canopy of oak and beech and on both sides of the hill were small quarries, now overgrown, one the source of the Jubilee Stone. The former St. Gabriel's Church (built ca. 1905) once sat on the precipitous edge of this road, no doubt intended to exploit its dramatic picturesque location, but had to be dismantled by 1934, due to instability. A small platform survives.

Harracles Hall and Whorrocks Bank appear to be associated by name long before the separation of the township into distinct parishes. Standing at Dunwood Lane there is a strong visual relationship between the settlement along the southern slopes of Whorrocks Bank, looking south across the water meadow and the former millpond and leats to Harracles Mill and the land rising to Harracles Hall. Views are contained by the rolling landscape and the rushy water meadows. There are strong visual associations between the Hall, the corn mill, the settlement and the shared landscape setting of all of these elements.

Development along Dunwood Lane is largely restricted to the hillside, with few surviving early cottages lining the lane. 19th century cottages and villas are scattered along the lane and are on occasion perched above, up to 10 metres beyond, where there are slightly larger properties, tucked away and harder to reach and see from the road but enjoying south-facing views overlooking Harracles Mill and Harracles Hall. A largely continuous retaining wall and cottages along the edge of the lane channels views close to the junction with Camrose Hill and then winds along the lane, so that the settlement slowly unfolds. Dumpling Cottage is a particular focal point. The houses are nestled within the backdrop of trees which reach down to the road in places and the drystone boundary walls and retaining walls are also softened by trees and privet hedges.

A small landmark cluster of buildings at the access drive entrance to Harracles Mill is a picturesque group at the edge of the conservation area. The house known as "Greenlands", with its decorative bargeboards, once formed a more obvious focal point before the new road was constructed to remove the series of right angle bends in the 1960s. The original alignment of the curving road network, which is maintained as a bridleway, defines the edge of the conservation area. The alignment follows the former dam wall of the millpond, which was just beyond the conservation area boundary and which fed a long and wide embanked leat.

Character Area 7 - Willgate

Willgate is a small hamlet of farms, which have been broken up into a number of separate dwellings in recent decades. The core of the hamlet is two well-preserved historic farm complexes of Willgate House and Rudyard House (formerly Green Tree Farm). From the hamlet there are far-reaching views over Rudyard Village and the cluster sits on the sheltered side of the valley where it clearly links to the reservoir. Public footpaths leading from the Damhead link the site with the village.



7. GENERAL CONDITION OF THE AREA

Buildings

7.1 The majority of domestic buildings within the conservation area are in good condition and well-maintained. However, boathouses are often poorly maintained and a number are under threat from lack of maintenance (see Problems and Pressures). The Boathouse serving the boat 'Shoestring' is in poor condition. A fourth boathouse in this area has collapsed, although lower walls survive and it would be feasible to rebuild the structure. The Lady of the Lake boathouse is an unlisted building (assessed for listing by English Heritage) and it is in fair condition but there is a tree growing out of the chimney and some of the lower joints close to the waterline need attention; access for maintenance and decoration is problematic. As it is such a major landmark making an important contribution to the character of Rudyard, it should be considered as a priority for future grant assistance.

7.2 Chalets are vulnerable and a number are in poor condition; Blakeley is at a critical point and under threat from collapse, whilst several on the north-east side of the lake are semi-derelict.



Landscape

7.3 The wooded hillsides surrounding Rudyard have relatively little ongoing maintenance, rhododendron is rampant and in places trees which have fallen are not being removed, even across the public footpaths. All trees have a finite life and some softwood species were planted as a crop. In areas where there are blanket TPOs, owners are encouraged to discuss at an early stage the management and maintenance of trees with the District Council tree officer to provide for long-term maintenance and succession planting to preserve landscape quality.

8. NEGATIVE FACTORS

8.1 As part of the assessment of character, a number of negative factors have been identified; many are related to development pressures, which are addressed under section 9.

8.2 The conservation area designation has been put in place to safeguard against further harmful development, so far as this can be achieved by the need for planning permission. By highlighting these issues, we can identify priorities for future enhancement.

Garages

8.3 There are a number of large garages built from a variety of materials, which do not enhance the village.

8.4 Problems of narrow lanes and lack of on-street parking along Dunwood Lane have led to pressures for off-street parking and garages. Modern garages along Dunwood Lane dominate the foreground. Up-and-over doors, wide openings and flat-roofed structures and the loss of the frontages all damage the character of the settlement. The removal of large areas of topsoil and cutting out of ground to create new parking bays have recently created a large scars on the street frontage.



Loss of Boundary Walls

8.5 Boundary walls have on occasion been removed to create off-street car parking bays at both Reacliffe Road and Dunwood Lane. This is particularly unsightly along Dunwood Lane, where the ground is being excavated into the hillside, creating large scars.

Timber Fences

8.6 There has been a proliferation of tall, timber, panel fences along Reacliffe Road, hiding the lake from public view. They are alien to the character of Reacliffe Woods, the former Cliffe Park Estate and the lakeside (see section under Problems and Pressures).



Proliferation of Signs and Street Furniture

8.7 Around the Damhead and at Rudyard Vale Caravan Park, in particular, there are a proliferation of information signs which provide sometimes confused messages; some are redundant and in poor condition whilst others are duplicated. These would benefit from being rationalised. There are often multiple waste bins of different phases.



Loss of Building Details

8.8 Unlisted buildings, even in conservation areas, are vulnerable to loss of architectural details: windows, doors, chimney stacks, traditional guttering and roof materials. Within Rudyard in a few instances the original windows and gutters have been replaced in uPVC but there are some sympathetic replacements. In order to protect the surviving architectural details, it may be appropriate to protect this settlement with an Article 4 Direction, at some point in the future.

8.9 Dormer windows – Lower Horton Lodge boathouse has been altered with a number of flat-roofed dormer windows which are particularly intrusive and unsympathetic to the late Victorian Gothic form of the building.

9. PROBLEMS, PRESSURES AND CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

9.1 Development Pressure

Damhead

9.1.1 There is significant development pressure at the southern end of the reservoir, close to the damhead, where space is limited and there is commercial pressure for more storage facilities, which may not preserve the character of the lakeside. Parking is very limited and restricts the usable public area and tourist potential. There is a difficult balance to be struck in permitting and encouraging public access and preserving character.

Preserving Character – Chalets

9.1.2 The majority of chalets date from after 1904, when the NSR acquired the northern and western banks of the reservoir from the Cliffe Park Estate, although the timber 'tearoom' or 'kiosk' had been developed by them for leisure purposes in the southern part of the reservoir during the 19th century. The small scale of many of the chalets has created a traditional character all of its own, of leisure development along the fringes of the lake, both within the woodland environment and along the margins of the lake. Sadly, many of these chalets, which were designed to be short-lived structures, have been replaced with permanent and larger dwellings, in brick or stone, which has in itself created a permanent but haphazard character, with no cohesive design or character; this is changing the face of the landscape and the character of Rudyard. For example, the large scale of "The Hideaway", which replaced a timber chalet, compared with the holiday chalets to either side (Blakeley and the small boathouse) is particularly dominant, even though it may not be a large dwelling in its own right.



9.1.3 To add to this complexity, a few of the chalets and "boathouses" are in fact permanent homes and residences, whilst the majority are holiday homes.

9.1.4 Holiday chalets are particularly vulnerable from lack of maintenance and redevelopment. Since 2001 there have been a large number of applications approved for replacement holiday homes or chalets. Most of these have been of a design which is of a permanent form. These are:

- Chacara, Reacliffe Road - replacement dwelling approved 2003, constructed
- Shady Beech, Reacliffe Road (reconstructed prior to 2001)
- Stoney Bank (Lakeside), constructed
- The Hideaway - approved replacement holiday home 2007, with integral boathouse, N.B. constructed but boat-house not implemented and building raised above water line
- 39 Steps (Driftwood) – reconstructed prior to 2001
- Sandy Cove - replacement 'dwelling' approved 2003 – a very substantial holiday home constructed
- Red Roofs - traditional black-and-white chalet, formerly a chalet/boathouse before 1948 but p.p. approved for replacement permanent dwelling in 2010, not constructed
- Inglenook Boathouse - rebuilt
- Slipways - rebuilt
- St. Elmos Chalet, c1907 - replacement dwelling approved 2002 & 2004, reconstructed
- Lake View - reconstruction of chalet approved 2004

9.1.5 There has been a general resistance to the change of use of holiday homes to permanent residences in Rudyard to protect the Green Belt and the Landscape Character but the design of replacement structures has displaced the ephemeral character with that of permanent buildings. Applications for change of use of holiday homes to permanent residences have been consistently refused along the waterfront in recent decades, with few exceptions. Furthermore, the local planning authority has adopted a strong policy of not permitting new holiday chalets, on sustainability grounds, although some have been permitted under special circumstances where the location is sustainable and in the interests of the local rural economy. There is clearly a balance that needs to be struck to enable some development which preserves the traditional holiday character / environment.

9.1.6 The principal policy document for assessing applications affecting the change of use of holiday homes or the creation of holiday homes is the Staffordshire Moorlands Core Strategy (Policies R1 and R2). Policy R1 states that priority will be given to the re-use of rural buildings for commercial enterprise, including tourism uses. Although the policy does not refer specifically to holiday let accommodation, such accommodation is aimed at serving the needs of tourists and, hence, is directly linked to tourism and the rural economy.

9.1.7 Policy R2 subsequently states that the conversion of non-residential rural buildings for residential use will be permitted only where it can be demonstrated that commercial use is not viable or suitable. In such cases the policy requires a marketing exercise to be carried out by a suitably qualified professional or other evidence to demonstrate that commercial use is not viable.

9.1.8 Policies R1 and R2 now form part of the adopted development plan and are consistent with the aims of the Framework which seeks to support a prosperous rural economy.

9.1.9 The loss of holiday units which support tourism within the local area can have a detrimental impact on the rural economy.

9.1.10 A number of the surviving early 20th century chalets are abandoned or semi-derelict and are deteriorating rapidly, perhaps awaiting an opportunity for redevelopment. Victorian railway carriages which were historically part of the ephemeral character of Rudyard, have on occasion been removed (such as the recent removal of several derelict railway carriages to the Foxfield Railway – identifiable as 'The Nest' and 'The Glen' on the OS maps). Mobile structures have no protection under conservation area status. Surviving chalets along the shoreline of the lake are under threat from loss or replacement. Particularly vulnerable are 'Blakeley' and the timber chalet to the south of Hideaway.

9.1.11 Whilst a style of architecture has evolved along the shoreline to preserve the more ephemeral characteristics of chalets, using timber cladding and a range of modern and lightweight materials, within the woodland and further away from the shore along Reacliffe Road, Rudyard Vale and Stoney Dale there has been an acceptance of more permanent styles of building for replacements to chalets, dominated by brick, stone and overtly traditional building forms, which is generally inappropriate to the character of this part of Rudyard and this trend should be reversed. Red brick buildings are generally inappropriate to the character of the area, particularly along the shoreline (e.g. The Shieling and Red Roofs, a black-and-white timber-framed early 20th century chalet – boathouse building which has been given approval for reconstruction in red brick).

Preserving Character - Boathouses

9.1.12 Following the sale of the Cliffe Park Estate, a number of parcels of land were sold with restrictive covenants applied in 1886 to limit the construction of buildings adjoining the lake to Boathouses. The covenants expressly removed any entitlement to construct “Detached Dwellinghouses with out offices stables Coachhouses Greenhouses or Conservatories”. The spirit of this covenant was designed to ensure that only boats would be used along the shoreline. This limitation to a large extent preserved the character of the lake for a very long period until the NSR started to develop holiday chalets. However, the term ‘boathouse’ has been loosely interpreted at Rudyard and whilst there are a number of genuine boathouses, with shore access for boats and distinctive large doors or gates providing covered wet moorings, many of the boathouses are more akin to chalets and boathouse storage has been removed. A few chalets have been adapted to contain a boat-house.

9.1.13 The traditional character of boathouses and the lakeside is under threat from redevelopment and loss of this building type.

Boat Storage - Design

9.1.14 Boats need simple protective covers and boat storage in general requires simple storage buildings of larger dimensions than garages, on occasion requiring changing facilities. Many of the 20th century boat storage buildings have been of simple form and design and temporary, lightweight materials. The adoption of similar principles of design to development is appropriate, provided that these elements do not jar into the wider views across the lake. Where boathouses are set above the shoreline, boats may require a trailer, hoist or winch down to the lake. The use of green roofs and timber-cladding and the ephemeral character of boat storage should be encouraged, unless the quality of the building is of exceptional quality and design. The construction of red brick buildings and concrete panel structures should be discouraged.

Positive Buildings and Structures

9.1.15 There are still a number of Chalets and Boathouses which survive and which are shown as positive buildings / structures on the Spatial Analysis map, but these are not listed and are vulnerable to changes. These include but are not exclusively:

- Three Boathouses along shoreline south of Lower Horton Lodge
- Lovely View
- Lower Horton Lodge boathouse
- The Old Boathouse (Biltons), c1900
- Fortside
- Lady of the Lake
- Redroofs
- Boathouse Cottage and Boathouse to the north
- Blakeley (holiday chalet – original)
- Sandhurst

Design Guidance / Design Codes

9.1.16 Designation of conservation area status can do much to recognise the value of the ephemeral character of Rudyard but essential to maintaining the character will be the development of a set of design codes to preserve the essential characteristics and scale of chalets and boathouses, whilst enabling them to be thermally efficient and repaired and / or replaced with sympathetic materials and forms to preserve the character into the 21st century. It will be essential that the design code is discussed and agreed with the Canal and River Trust, who require “estate consent” and “third party engineers’ consent” for structures which affect land up to the high water mark. This would address the potential for maintaining or increasing the number of traditional boat-houses with wet moorings, historic slipways and pontoons.

9.1.17 The lake is a public waterway and as such the frontages could be the subject of an effective Article 4 Direction, to control permitted development rights. Certain works, such as private pontoons, landing stages and slipways require planning permission, even if there are boating rights enjoyed by the landowner fronting the lake. Part of the design code should be consideration of the removal of permitted development rights for domestic paraphernalia such as gazebos and odd ‘holiday’ features such as hot tubs, which are creeping into the views from the lake. In the future these should be agreed with the LPA.

9.2 Boundaries and Loss of Views

A. Reacliffe Road

9.2.1 Along the length of Reacliffe Road there has been significant loss of views of the lake from the public footpath. Although the lower, lakeside section of Reacliffe Road is a private road, it is a promoted public right of way (the Staffordshire Way – Horton parish footpath No. 31). The connection between the public and the views across the lake is a particularly important part of its historic character. Views enjoyed by the general public for many generations are being slowly lost by owners of the chalets and modern boathouses creating increasingly tall boundaries to their properties along the edge of the road; many of the fences and walls which have been erected are around 2 metres high.

9.2.2 The traditional form of enclosure to the road has been a low gritstone boundary wall, supplemented with lush planting and ornamented woodland. In one instance this has been heightened with mortared stonework, in other instances it has been heightened with a close-boarded fence. In many cases the original gritstone walls have been demolished to create a vehicle parking bay and the loss of enclosure is particularly damaging. Whilst it is understandable that private owners would not want people looking directly into their holiday homes, in many instances the height of the fences does more than this and prevents views over the roofs of the holiday homes and chalets to the lake and the far bank. Close-boarded fences and tall stone boundary walls, such as those found at Lakeside, Waters Edge and Driftwood, have completely blocked views of the lake. Tall railings enclosing The Hideaway are very prominent and particularly out of place to the character of the lane. The redevelopment of Sandy Nook has more generously permitted filtered views to the lake over the low stone walls and through metal gates even though they and the gateposts are slightly gentrified for the locality.



9.2.3 There are several good examples of very sensitive boundaries, which preserve the traditional character of Reacliffe Road. These include the boundary to Fortside, which retains the traditional stone boundary, lush planting and incorporates a traditional style of timber gate, and imparts a semi-

rural character. The retention of occasional glimpsed views of the lake has been achieved here without sacrificing privacy.

9.2.4 Firm design guidance will be needed to inform planning applications for boundaries to prevent further erosion of character and to preserve the public enjoyment of the lake environment.



9.2.5 Wherever possible, where it doesn't create damage to important trees, it will be better to create a parking bay on the hillside of the road, with stone retaining walls, retaining the bank at Reacliffe Wood. This has been done very successfully historically. The best examples of garages are timber-boarded, as these complement the ephemeral and wooded character of the lakeside leisure environment.

B. Churnet Valley Railway

9.2.6 The closure of the Churnet Valley Railway in 1960 and the changing management practices have led to the loss of the open character of the line along the eastern edge of the reservoir. Sections of the line still travel through cuttings, where the trees crowd over the former track-bed. But in other sections, which were more open historically, the trees have self-set along the margins of the lake and there are very limited outward views. The track-bed is often dark, gloomy and wet, with little opportunity for the public to see across the lake. This 'corridor' is very different from the historic character of the line. Along the eastern side of the railway there is a good invertebrate population, with various ponds and former quarries. Whilst the plant and fauna ecology and protection of important trees is an important consideration, it will be important to open up selective views of Rudyard Lake and remove pockets of self-set trees to enable the public to engage with the reservoir and reconnect some historic views, such as views to the Lady of the Lake and Cliffe Park gatelodge and Hall, and some of the boathouses, which are now largely limited to views from a boat and therefore a relatively small, intrepid and fortunate audience.

9.3 'Horsiculture'

9.3.1 'Horsiculture', or the use of fields by horses which were traditionally grazed by livestock, is affecting the plant ecology. On occasion it has much more dramatic impacts, with the loss of trees and field patterns. As a result of 'horsiculture' there is a threat to the landscape character.

9.3.2 A prominent larch plantation at the top of the hill (on the west side of Rudyard) has been partially felled and an old oak tree severely pollarded to create a small pony paddock and there is no sign of replacement planting. This kind of large-scale felling work lies within the TPO and requires a felling licence from the Forestry Commission (see Management of Trees). The larch, spruce and fir are often very tall, substantial and healthy specimens, many dating from the late 19th century with a large girth. This erosion of the strong, lush, ornamented character, particularly where it forms a prominent ridgeline in long distance views, is very damaging to landscape quality. Small larch plantations and Scots pine within the deciduous woodland are a particular characteristic of the Rudyard landscape supplemented by fir and spruce.



9.4 Fragmentation of Estates

9.4.1 The break up of the wider Cliffe Park Hall Estate, following the sale of the golf club, and the later changes in land ownership has affected land management. The main house has retained only a small part of the immediate garden and a right of way. The golf club imposed humps and bumps on the landscape in the form of bunkers and leveled areas for greens and tees, but in general the impact of the golf club has been far less intrusive over time and the impact has been reduced as the grassland has re-colonised the open parkland. Of greater impact, following the break up of the estate, is the loss of cohesive character, and the fragmentation of boundaries, particularly as a result of the sale of individual plots for holiday chalets (see boundaries above). Furthermore, trees and shrubs are not being managed for the wider benefit of the 'estate'.

9.4.2 Sycamores crowded in front of the hall are now so large that views of the hall are largely obscured in the summer months. Selective pruning (crown lifting) to permit views underneath the canopy and removal of self-set trees should be considered to preserve the characteristics of the parkland planting and healthy tree growth, whilst enabling filtered views of the hall, an important landmark designed to be seen at the centre of the landscape.

9.4.3 The gradual loss of trees in the cross-shaped plantation is approaching a critical point for its survival and pattern, as there has been no succession planting.

9.4.4 The Cliffe Park gatelodge (Cliffe Cottage) was one of a series of built structures, including the Hall, placed in a roughly north-south alignment, which were self-consciously designed to be seen as an 'eye-catcher' in views. The separation of the gatelodge at the Cliffe Park estate from the wider estate, the increase in tree canopy and the redevelopment of the Sailing Club have blocked views of the gatelodge from the lake, the east banks of Rudyard Lake and from the Rushton road (A523). The loss of this focal point in the view and the loss of outward view over the lake from the lodge have blighted its survival and could potentially lead to the long term loss of this important listed building and early part of the Rudyard landscape. Future redevelopment of the Sailing Club should take into account the need to preserve this building as part of the wider landscape and provide opportunities for outward views and viable uses which preserve its special interest.

9.4.5 There will be significant communal public benefit in conserving the fragmented site of the former Cliffe Park Estate through coordinated management and this is best served by a Conservation Management Plan; involvement of landowners and other stakeholders will be essential.

9.5 Trees

9.5.1 Rudyard has multiple and extensive Tree Preservation Orders. Many of these are contiguous with the conservation area boundary, which reflects the fact that the landscape and woodland has very high interest for its ornamentation, design and planting; in many places the woodland and landscape defines the character of the conservation area.

9.5.2 In addition to the Tree Preservation Orders, all trees in the Conservation Area are protected if they have a stem diameter of 75 millimetres measured at 1.5 metres from ground level. In general, it is an offence under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for anyone to undertake work to a tree in a conservation area, which includes felling, lopping or topping, without giving the Council six weeks written prior notice. The notice period is for the Council to decide if the tree(s) should be protected from proposed work by a TPO.

9.5.3 The western banks of Rudyard Lake are protected with a number of Tree Preservation Orders. These include LR002 (Reacliffe Woods and the woods behind Horton Lodge and the John Munroe Independent Hospital), which includes all of the woodland lining Reacliffe Road down to the

shoreline, but currently excludes large areas of the parkland landscape at Cliffe Park. The designation of a conservation area will provide a level of protection for trees within the parkland at Cliffe Park.

9.5.4 There are also TPOs covering a large swathe of woodland at Whorrocks Bank (TPO LR008-W3), above The Crescent and Lake Road and individual TPOs along Lake Road. A block of woodland from the dam drive leading from the Visitor Centre to Hotel Rudyard car park falls within a TPO LR008 – A1). On the corner of Lake Road is a tall spruce, which together with the tall buildings opposite of Camrose Hall jointly form a gateway into this part of the village. Although currently not the subject of a TPO, inclusion within the conservation area will provide a measure of protection for this tree.

9.5.5 Between Camrose Hill and Dunwood Lane is another 'blanket' TPO (LR008 – W4) which contains the wooded backdrop which forms the setting of buildings along Dunwood Lane, an important element of the landscape, embellished during the 19th century, which characterises many of the most picturesque views of Rudyard, particularly from the track-bed of the Churnet Valley Railway and from the footpath network (Footpaths 1 and 26 – Longsdon - and Footpath no 70 - Horton) and from the canal feeder.

9.5.6 The characteristics of the Rudyard landscape are very particular. Broad-leaved woodlands are supplemented with occasional specimen conifers and other specimen trees. This creates a lush seasonal foliage and interest during the winter. Beech were planted extensively along the edge of Reacliffe Road and these would have been planted for their form and spring colour and their ability to be shade tolerant, within a pre-existing wooded environment. The Churnet Valley Landscape Character Assessment (2011) recognises these particular characteristics and has the following policies:

- Both broadleaves and conifer species occur in this landscape however future plantations should follow best practice advice provided by the Forestry Commission and broadleaved edges to new plantations will link into existing vegetation. Planting design must respond to landform.
- Historic parkland landscapes often contain introduced decorative tree species that are inherent to the design of the parkland and to its setting. It may be appropriate to introduce some of these species into the area identified as the setting of the parkland. Consideration should be given to protecting, in particular, individual specimen and groups of trees that are significant historically or visually to this landscape or to local settlement.
- Any proposals for further development or land use change along the shorelines and banks of Rudyard Reservoir which impact on the landscape character, visual, recreational, or ecological importance of this feature must take account of and not detract from the unique character of this landscape.

9.5.7 Beyond urban areas the principal control over the management of woodland is through the issuing of a Felling Licences, first introduced under the Forestry Act 1967, which requires the landowner to consult with the Forestry Commission England on proposals to fell existing woodland, although there are significant exemptions for trees in private gardens, orchards and churchyards. Management requires a careful balance of different interests and priorities to promote biodiversity and recognise the visual qualities of the designed landscapes.

9.5.8 The northern part of the Cliffe Park Hall estate is now part of the wider managed farmland of Barns Lee Farm, and is split from the hall, so there is less incentive to protect the setting of the hall and think about long-term ecological or designed landscape management. However, here there are designed belts of trees and features such as the cross plantation, as well as the principal single-sided avenues lining the carriage drive, all of which require succession planning and planting in order to preserve these features.

9.5.9 Close to the main house and the principal approaches we find more exotic broadleaved

specimens, such as specimen sycamores and conifers with flowering and evergreen shrubs. Such planting forms both the setting for the building and routes and provides visual delight and natural beauty. Tall specimen conifers, Cedar of Lebanon and Irish fastigate yews, pinpoint the core when seen from a distance. As these conifers are often more limited in number, used for counterpoint and winter interest, and are attributed little ecological value, loss of conifers and lack of succession planting can have a dramatic effect on the landscape.

9.5.10 The old specimen Cedar of Lebanon on the front lawn of the hall has been badly damaged by the loss of limbs and requires some tree surgery. Succession planting with a new specimen tree should be considered.



9.5.11 Dead larch within the wooded plantations of the parkland, and in the woods to the south of Reacliffe Road and north of Horton Lodge, are not being replaced. In time, the loss of conifers will lead to erosion of the mixed woodland character. There are generally sufficient numbers of broadleaved trees to enable some natural regeneration, but this should be actively managed to preserve landscape quality.

9.5.12 Where trees are proposed for removal under either the TPO or conservation area legislation, replacement trees will normally be required of the same species to prolong landscape quality and variety.

9.6 Invasive Species and Ecology

9.6.1 **Rhododendron**, initially planted in pockets in the 19th century, or spread by seed from the Victorian gardens, has spread rapidly and changed the original designed intention, which was often to create a lush character at the margins of woodland, and is now rampant in parts of Reacliffe Wood and the woodland to the south of Reacliffe Road.

9.6.2 Rhododendron forms extensive dense thickets which cast a very deep shade, leading to loss of woodland ground flora, modifying the fauna and preventing tree regeneration. In addition to the effect of shade, it may produce biochemicals which can affect other plants, inhibiting the germination or seedling establishment of other species. However, not all of the rhododendron is the invasive purple Ponticum variety and there are some hybrids, pale pink in colour, along the western edge of Reacliffe Road.

9.6.3 Rhododendron ponticum is prolific within the woodland and it is a plant which is listed as an invasive species in the Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain. It is vulnerable to the disease *Phytophthora ramorum* and where this is known to exist FERA can give statutory notification to require complete removal by landowners.¹⁴



14 *Phytophthora ramorum* and *Phytophthora kernoviae* A Practical Guide for Established Parks & Gardens, Amenity Landscape and Woodland Areas (DEFRA)

9.6.4 *R. ponticum* was on occasion used as a rootstock for the less hardy cultivars. Most of the naturalised material in the British Isles shows signs of introgression with other rhododendron species, particularly *R. maximum* and *R. catawbiense*. However, *Rhododendron* hybrids currently sold through plant nurseries are controlled.

9.6.5 Wherever possible *R. ponticum* should be hard pruned and removed for the health of the woodland. In most situations these areas will be opened up to create glades where mixed planting will be the norm to encourage air to circulate and break evergreen cover.

9.6.6 It would take decades to remove all *Rhododendron ponticum* from the woodland. However, a programme of selective removal has been started which will pave the way for its removal over a longer period. It is important that consideration is given to the overall landscape character and replacement with evergreen cover such as the edge of parkland, shelter belts, where alternatives such as native holly could be used.

9.6.7 The programme of removal of the more invasive rhododendron *ponticum* may include removal of non-invasive cultivars and hybrid varieties through lack of appreciation of their contribution to landscape character. Where hybrid *Rhododendron* and cultivars were used in a garden setting, within the mature landscaped gardens of the larger houses, or on the edge of the carriage drives and rides, these should be identified, retained and managed.

9.6.8 Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed are further invasive species creating monoculture which need to be subjected to a regular cycle of clearance and control. Himalayan balsam has become established along Reacliffe Road, Dunwood Lane and the canal feeder over recent years and patches of Japanese knotweed are evident along Dunwood Lane and alongside the railway track.

9.6.9 Blue-Green Algae

The principal ecological problem to affect the reservoir over recent years has been the presence of blue-green algae blooms (cyanobacteria), which are naturally-occurring annual features. Where high levels of phosphorus exist, and other requirements for growth are met - for example, adequate light, mixing, flow and temperature - then the numbers of blue-green algae can increase. Increased periods of growth are called blooms, which can produce toxins; these toxins can kill wild animals, farm livestock and domestic pets. In humans, they can cause rashes after skin contact and illnesses if swallowed. Not all blue-green algae blooms and scums are toxic. For the avoidance of doubt, all incidents of blue-green algae blooms or scums should be reported to the Environment Agency, who are responsible for treating it.



10. RECOMMENDATIONS

I. Control and Continuity

Rudyard Lake Trust

The local planning authority is not represented on the Rudyard Lake Trust board of Trustees and this is probably historic, as the Trust was formed before the establishment of the Churnet Valley Masterplan. It would be advisable that the authority is represented as it is tasked with the management of the Churnet Valley and has the primary role on controlling development and ensuring that the character of the area is preserved, where there are planning controls.

Article 4 Direction

It is strongly recommended that in conjunction with the designation of the conservation area, permitted development rights be withdrawn for certain types of development in order to preserve the surviving character of Rudyard under an Article 4 Direction.

Many such works carried out by owners or occupiers are classified as “permitted development” under the provisions of the Town and County Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (“the GPDO”). This means that they can be carried out without the need for express planning permission, even in Conservation Areas. Permitted development rights currently exist for a large number of developments that, although ephemeral, can have a significant impact on the character of the area.

An Article 4 Direction enables the Council to require owners and/or occupiers of specific properties to apply for planning permission for certain alterations, where there is concern that the character of the conservation area is under threat.

The Article 4 (1) Direction would need to cover both residential properties, certain types of commercial properties, where there are certain rights which the planning authority would want to control (such as alteration to boundary walls), and certain types of leisure use/ storage use.

An Article 4 Direction does not prevent the development to which it applies, but instead requires that planning permission be first obtained from the Council for that development. English Heritage advises that Article 4 Directions can increase the public protection both of designated and non-designated heritage assets, and help the protection of the setting of all heritage assets. The NPPF states at paragraph 200 that “the use of Article 4 Directions to remove national permitted development rights should be limited to situations where this is necessary to protect local amenity or the wellbeing of the area...”

In particular, development fronting the waterway (Rudyard Lake) should be brought under the control of an Article 4 (1) Direction, to prevent the accretion of domestic development and the erosion of character within historic boathouses, which may be controlled under a different use class. An Article 4 (1) Direction should control the construction of slipways and pontoons and paraphernalia associated with boat and river use, subject to agreement with the Canals and Rivers Trust, and should seek to control or prevent inappropriate domestic clutter along the waterfront, including:



fences, railings, gazebos, pergolas, summerhouses, sunrooms and sheds, decks and verandahs, satellite dishes and solar panels, and lighting columns.

Development fronting Reacliffe Road, in the form of fences, boundary walls, garages and hardstandings should be also controlled to prevent further removal of views to and across the lake, and to ensure the retention of the historic character of traditional drystone boundary walls. Permitted development rights should be removed for the partial demolition of boundary walls and the erection of fences, irrespective of their height, both within plots and along the boundary. Hardstandings and engineering works should also require planning permission irrespective of their location. The purpose of bringing these alterations under planning control is to control development, not prevent development, and to ensure that there is no ambiguity and that there is a level playing field. All of the properties, irrespective of their age, will therefore be included within the Article 4 (1) Direction, wherever they front the waterway and Reacliffe Road.

Along Lake Road and Dunwood Lane, it is primarily the character of the traditional houses which the conservation area designation seeks to retain, a large number of which were designed as pairs of semi-detached houses, but alterations currently permitted to residential properties include changes to the size of door and window openings, and the removal of local roofing materials or designs of chimney stack and local wall finishes. The character of both Lake Road and Dunwood Lane is surprisingly well preserved and despite the removal of traditional timber windows, replacements in uPVC have generally respected the historic glazing patterns and proportions. It is important to preserve the remaining character of the area and those elements which make Rudyard special. These include: traditional building details, such as window apertures and bargeboards, traditional style windows (whether original or replacements), chimney stacks, traditional roofing materials and traditional boundaries to frontages. The creation of further hardstandings and partial demolition of boundary walls should also be brought under control along these frontages.

The removal of permitted development rights does not apply to all buildings in the Conservation Area, but primarily to those where the special architectural or historic interest is vulnerable. In practice, therefore, most of the mid-late 20th and 21st century buildings are not included in the Article 4 Direction, unless they have been designed in such a way as to replicate historic details. The main exception to this is the properties which front Rudyard Lake, where it is primarily the piecemeal development of domestic paraphernalia which should be brought under control.

The Article 4 (1) Direction should cover:

- The Rudyard Lake frontages – including boathouses, holiday chalets, dwellings, holiday homes, including the boundary frontages and gardens fronting Reacliffe Road
- Lake Road – alterations to traditional dwellings, boundaries and the creation of hardstandings: east side – The Old Post Office, Rose Cottage and Vine Cottage, 1 and 2 Fern Cottage /s, Glenwood and Wynforde, Albury House, Silvan House, Stone Cottage, Reservoir House, The Clock Tower; west side – Pine Cottage, Nab Wood, Hillrise, Underwood House, The Beeches, The Hollies 1 and 2, Elton, Lilac Cottage and Red Cottage, South View, Yewtree Cottage, Glenora Cottage.
- The Drive – Hallscroft, Orchard Cottage, Winshaw Knoll, White Barn
- Dunwood Lane – alterations to traditional dwellings, boundaries and the creation of hardstandings: north side - 1 Harpur's Gate Cottage, Rose Cottage, Jasmine Cottage, Bank House, Dumpling Cottage, Hawthorne Cottage, Rest Cottage, Rock Cottage, Woodfield, Woodside and The Woodlands; south side – Sunnybank, Greenlands, Mill Cottage,

- Camrose Hill – alterations to traditional dwellings, boundaries and the creation of hardstandings: Rock House, Ivy Cottage, Camrose Hall, Primrose Cottage / Swiss Cottage, Horton Lodge – gate lodge, John Munroe Hospital gate lodge, Wits End

Design Guidance and a set of **Design Codes** should be produced as a priority to provide public information on the appropriate types of development which would be supported by the Local Planning Authority. This should reflect the specific characteristics of Rudyard, which are unique and atypical of the wider Moorlands district.

2. Monitoring Change - Photographic Record

A street-by-street photographic survey has been undertaken as part of the appraisal. This will require regular updating to make it an effective tool. It will need to be widely distributed within the local authority to ensure that alterations are effectively monitored.

3. Recognition of Importance - Local Heritage Assets

The conservation area Spatial Analysis map and the description of Architectural Quality both show buildings that make a positive contribution to the conservation area. Many of these are traditional buildings, which retain a high proportion of traditional features. In addition to these, there are a number of buildings that are particularly distinctive on either historic or architectural grounds, or both, and merit inclusion on a Local Heritage List. Although identification in this list does not in its own right convey any additional control, the significance of buildings on a local register is recognized as part of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and the local planning authority would endeavour to retain and preserve the special character of all buildings that fall into this list.

The following buildings are recommended for inclusion within a non-exclusive Local Heritage List:

- The Lady of the Lake
- Horton Lodge Boathouse
- The Old Boathouse
- The Villa
- Spite Hall
- Trent and Mersey Canal Boathouse (Visitor Centre)
- Earl of Macclesfield's Boathouse
- Hotel Rudyard
- Reservoir House
- Rudyard Methodist Church
- The Jubilee Stone
- Lakeland Lodges (former Station Hotel)
- Winshaw Knoll

FURTHER ADVICE AND INFORMATION

For further advice and information please contact the Conservation Officer at Staffordshire Moorlands District Council & High Peak Borough Council:

Tel: 0345 6053013

Email: conservation@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk

National Organisations:

Historic England, East Midlands Region,
Windsor House, Cliftonville NORTHAMPTON NN1 5BE

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www.HistoricEngland.org.uk