

SABDEN CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL (proposed)



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SABDEN CONSERVATION AREA APPRASAL (PROPOSED)

Introduction

This designation report for the proposed Sabden Conservation Area follows a similar format for the appraisals of the existing conservation areas in Ribble Valley area which are being prepared simultaneously (2005). This document therefore contains a detailed assessment of the special architectural and historic interest of Sabden, including its location, setting and a description of its historical development.

The area's buildings and spaces are noted and described, and marked on the Townscape Appraisal map along with listed buildings, buildings of townscape merit, significant trees and spaces, and important views into and out of the conservation area. There is a presumption that all of these features should be "preserved or enhanced", as required by the legislation. A number of issues are identified and recommendations made.



Sabden from the north

Purpose of the appraisal

The Ribble Valley Local Plan 1998 contains a commitment to designating Sabden as a conservation area (para. 4.7.3 page 32). This appraisal seeks to record and analyse the various features which give the proposed Sabden Conservation Area its special architectural and historic interest. This appraisal builds upon national policy, as set out in PPG15, and local policy, as set out in the Local Plan 1998, and provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the proposed Sabden Conservation Area can be assessed.

Summary of special interest of the proposed Sabden Conservation Area

The special interest that justifies designation of the proposed Sabden Conservation Area derives from the following features:

- The village's industrial past and links with cotton weaving and printing;
- The rural setting of the village in lowland fringe farmland in a valley between Pendle Hill and White Hill;
- Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- The picturesque ensemble of St Nicholas's Church, Sunday School and former parsonage (Sabden House);
- The tranquil character of Heyhouses;
- The diversity of mill workers' terraced houses ranging from the late 18th to the late 19th centuries;
- The Baptist, Methodist, Anglican and Roman Catholic churches;
- Sabden Brook and its tributary, Badger Well Water;
- Prevalent use of local stone as a building material;
- Architectural and historic interest of the conservation area's buildings, including 2 listed buildings;
- Trees, particularly beside Sabden Brook and in the churchyard of St Nicholas's Church;
- Historical association with Richard Cobden (1804 -1865), a politician noted for his role in the repeal of the Corn Laws;
- Areas of historic stone floorscape;
- Views of Pendle Hill;
- Within Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



Padiham Road (west side)

The planning policy context

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as “*an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*”. It is the quality and interest of an *area*, rather than that of individual buildings, which is the prime consideration in identifying a conservation area.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas. Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This document should be read in conjunction with national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) – Planning and the Historic Environment. The layout and content follows guidance produced by English Heritage, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the English Historic Towns Forum.



Looking south up Watt Street to the former Union Mill

Local planning policy

Local planning policies for the preservation of scheduled monuments and conservation of historic parks and gardens, listed buildings and conservation areas are set out in the Ribble Valley Local Plan which was adopted in June 1998 (Policies ENV14, ENV15, ENV16, ENV17, ENV18, ENV19, ENV20, ENV21) and the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan 2001-2016 which was adopted on 31st March 2005 (Policies 20 and 21, supported by draft Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) entitled ‘Landscape and Heritage’).

Location and setting

Location and context

Sabden is located on a minor road about midway between Burnley and Clitheroe. The road follows the route of an ancient pass over Pendle Hill and descends steeply into the village from the Nick of Pendle to the north and Padiham Heights to the south. From both approaches there are panoramic views of the village at the bottom of the valley. In the centre of the village there is a crossroads from which Wesley Street leads uphill to St Nicholas's Church in the tiny district of Heyhouses while Whalley Road, a mid 19th century construction, follows the course of Sabden Brook along the valley.



Entrance to St Nicholas's Church

Landscape setting

Topography, geology, relationship to surroundings

Sabden lies in a steep-sided valley in lowland fringe farmland beside Sabden Brook. Sabden Brook flows in a south westerly direction to join the Calder and there is a generally south-westerly fall in the land from Heyhouses towards Whalley. Viewed from the Nick of Pendle against the backdrop of the western flank of White Hill, the village can be seen to lie between the tall spire of St Nicholas's Church, which projects above the canopy of a small wood, and the two tall chimneys of Union Mill and Victoria Mill which lie on Sabden's western outskirts.

The village lies in open countryside within the southern outlier of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which includes Pendle Hill, Barley Moor and Pendleton Moor. There is an abrupt boundary between the settlement and surrounding countryside and despite the urban character of Whalley Road and Padiham Road, frequent views of a rural landscape give the village semi-rural atmosphere, especially in Heyhouses.

Historic development and archaeology

Origins and historic development

Prior to the setting up of a cotton mill close to Sabden Brook at the end of the 18th century, Sabden (then known as Sabden Bridge) and Heyhouses were home to a small isolated and scattered agricultural community.

Heyhouses, as can be appreciated from a walk from St Nicholas's Church to Badger Wells Cottages, is the oldest part of Sabden comprising a few old stone dwellings beside a narrow sinuous lane. It was here that in 1463/4 one Richard Radcliffe flouted the laws of the time and "built a town upon a tenement". The hamlet of Heyhouses was extra-parochial.

Yates' Map of 1786 shows Sabden Bridge just south of Hey-houfes (sic). There are records referring to the repair of Sabden Bridge from the time of Queen Elizabeth I. In 1810 there were 11 houses recorded in Heyhouses. By the time of Greenwood's map of 1818 there are a few houses illustrated beside the road over Pendle Hill (presumably Step Row and Top Row) but it is not until 30 years later that the present form of Sabden becomes apparent, the most notable change being not only the arrival of print works, church and chapels but also a new road beside Sabden Brook linking Sabden along the valley bottom to Whalley. Previously the settlement could be approached only by means of a steep descent.



Baptist graveyard, Top Row

Handloom weavers lived in the area in the 18th century but in 1786 Thomas Robinson set up a water driven cotton mill in Sabden. The mill was not successful and was bought by a partnership that included James Bury and his two sons who set up a calico printing business. Much of the subsequent growth of Sabden can be attributed to the Bury family and the success of Bury's calico print works.

The original printworks was run on two sites, one on Stubbins Lane, called Little Moor Print Works on the 1845 O.S. map, which ran until 1888. The site is now occupied by St

Nicholas Avenue and Alston Close (outside the conservation area). The other site, known initially as Sabden Print Works, was located on Whalley Road. This closed in 1930.

Victoria Mill opened in 1847-8. Its heyday was in the 1890s when about 250 people were employed but the mill was badly affected by fires in 1892 and 1912. The mill closed in 1964 and is now used by various industries.

Cobden Mill, marked as Brook Mill on the 1880 O.S. map, began life as a weaving shed in 1852. In 1867 the building was taken over by The Cobden Memorial Mills Company. This too suffered a fire in 1887. The mill, after significant investment, was successful in the first half of the 20th century but closed in 1970. There is little that remains of the original premises and Cobden Mill, today the home of Contrast Upholstery, is not included within the conservation area.



Lower end of the footpath leading to the graveyard and Top Row from beside no 93 Clitheroe Road

As the population of Sabden grew, so too did the religious needs of the community. A Baptist Chapel opened on the hillside behind Step Row in 1797 and was extended in 1835. The old chapel was demolished c1910 but the graveyard and footpath from Step Row remains. In 1910 a new Baptist Chapel was opened beside Clitheroe Road. This chapel has been much altered and is now in residential use whilst the former Sunday School, set further back from Clitheroe Road, is used for worship.

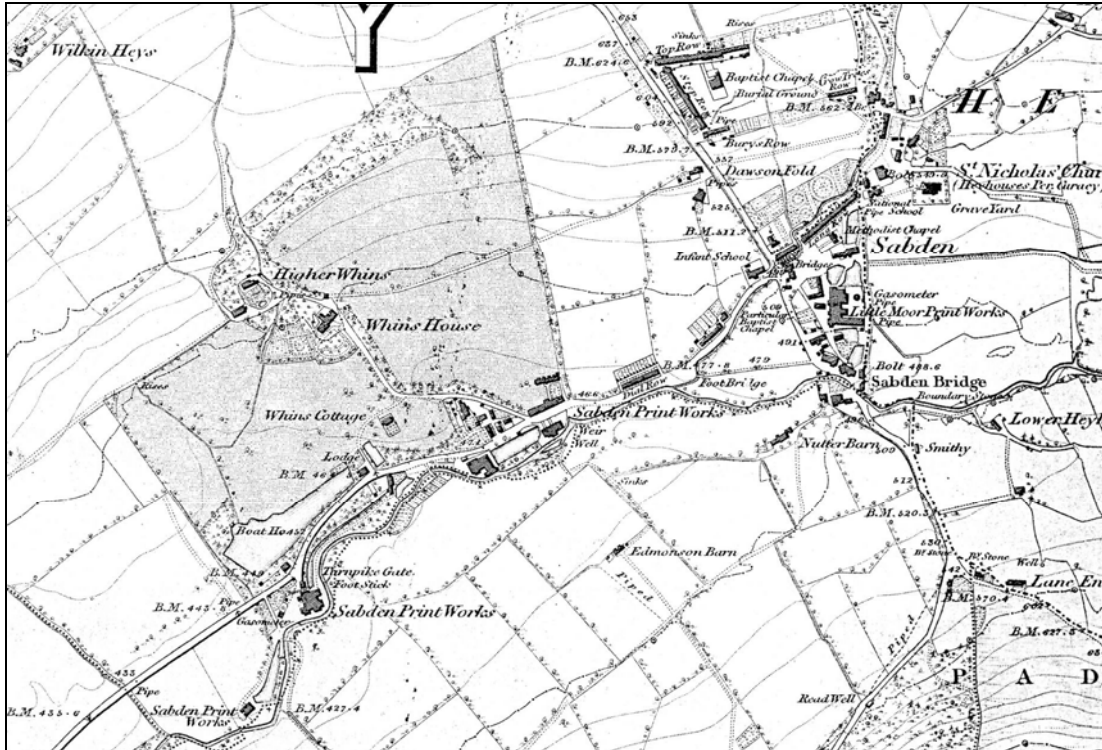
The first Methodist Chapel was built in 1835. Growth in the congregation called for a larger chapel and in 1879 a prestigious chapel was built on the south side of today's Wesley Street. The façade of the building with a 30 metre spire overlooked the crossroads in the centre of the village. The chapel was demolished in the 1960s but the former school is used for worship. St Nicholas Mews occupies the site of the former chapel's driveway which, prior to that, was the site of a four storey building known as the Counting House which provided bookkeeping services for the print works and cotton mills until its demolition in the early 20th century. Richard Cobden, the radical reformer (see below) reputedly made his first speech here in the 1830s.

The Anglican Church opened in 1841, funded by public subscription and a £1,000 donation from the Starkie family. The foundation stone for the first Roman Catholic church was laid in 1876 on a site in what was to become Pendle Street East.

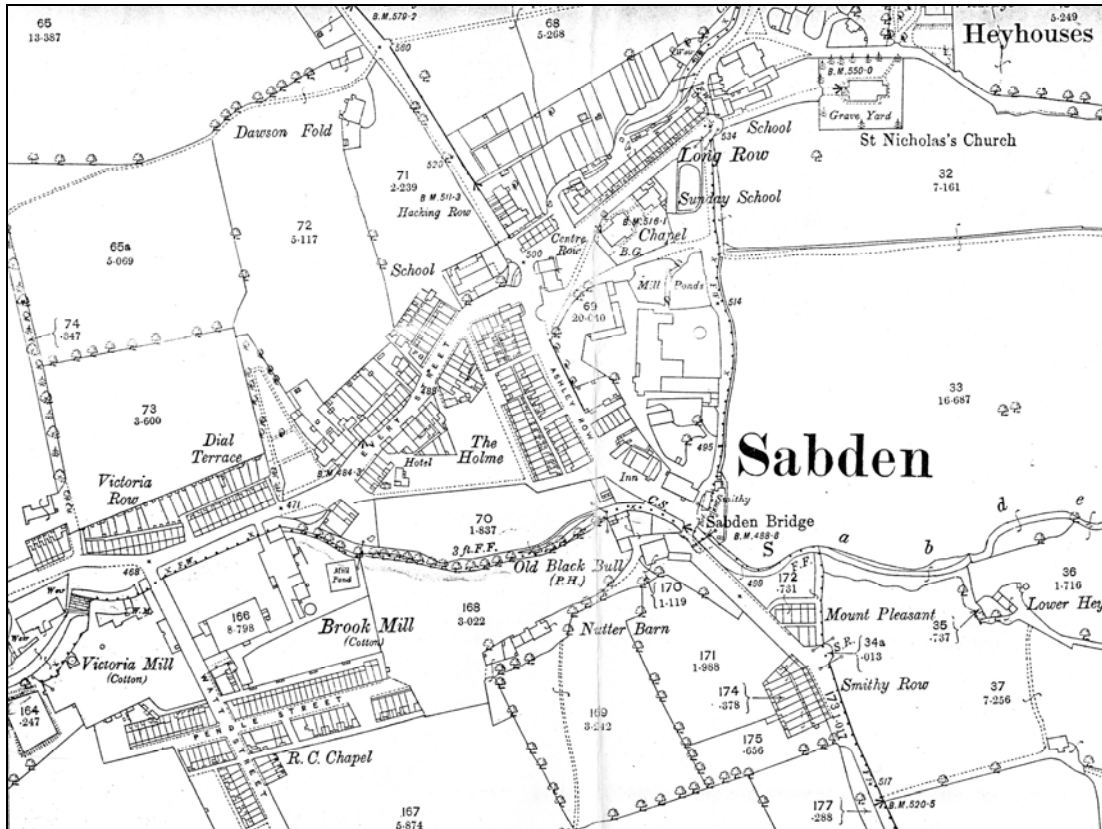
A new township called Sabden was formed in 1904 from Heyhouses and parts of Pendleton, Highham, Wiswell, Read, Northtown and Goldshaw Booth.

The village economy was for nearly 200 years dependent on the calico print works, cotton mills and weaving sheds. During the 20th century, these businesses have reduced their workforce and eventually closed. Some mill premises have found other uses, other mills have all but disappeared. In the last quarter of the 20th century, residents have had to seek work further afield - with a consequent diminution of shops and amenities.

An excellent photographic and written history of Sabden is 'Sabden Past and Present' by Audrey Barrett and David Eaves (Landy Publishing 2004) which has been a source of much of the information for this appraisal and contains many old photographs that illustrate the changes that the village has undergone during the past 150 years.



O.S. 1848



O.S. 1896

Spatial analysis

Key views and vistas

With the exception of St Nicholas' Church, there are no landmark buildings which stand out in the townscape in any formal vista or attractive view. There are many views out of the village to surrounding countryside, looking north between gaps in development along Whalley Road, for example, and ever-present views to the moorland ridge of Pendle Hill to the north and the wooded ridge of White Hill to the south. The townscape, dominated by rows and terraces of mill workers' houses, is undistinguished and low-key.



Trees beside the lane at The Whins

The character of spaces within the area

The conservation area is tightly knit with the exception of Heyhouses and The Whins, on the east and west periphery of the village respectively. These two small areas are more spacious in character than the core of the village and contain the conservation area's two large Victorian dwellings, Sabden House and Whins Lodge.

The principal public open space within the conservation area is The Holme, a grassy recreation ground with children's playground overlooked by Gardener's Row. To the south, beside the brook, is a football pitch.

There is another small streamside public park opposite nos 51 – 73 Whalley Road created from part of the site of Cobden Mill. A third very small public area, the Rose Gardens, lies beside the school at the junction of Clitheroe Road and Whalley Road. It is bounded by a low stone wall and contains public benches and a memorial to a Sabden nurse, Nurse Stephenson.

The terraces of Top Row, Step Row, Bury Row and Badger Wells Cottages stand on three corners of a rectangular open space that is important to the setting of the old terraced

cottages and contains the graveyard, bounded by an old stone wall, of the early Baptist Chapel (now demolished).

Step Row is set well back from Clitheroe Road. Nos 93 – 131 form a continuous (but not straight) terrace fronted by individual gardens. Between the gardens and the road is an open grassed area raised above the level of the road. This grassy roadside corridor provides a soft, 'green' northern approach to the village.



Stone-built cottages in Heyhouses

Definition of the special interest of the conservation area

Activities/uses

The conservation area is primarily residential. The mills that were once the main source of employment in the village have closed and businesses that occupy some of the former mill premises employ fewer people. As a result, there has been a reduction in the number of shops in the village. Today, there is a general store and vehicle workshop in Padiham Road and a shop and post office, a hairdresser and a sandwich bar in Whalley Road. There are active Anglican, Roman Catholic, Baptist and Methodist places of worship in the area, two schools, a health centre and two pubs. Two former mills, much altered, are home to local businesses: Marbills (and others) in the former Victoria Mill; Pendle Antiques Centre in Union Mill.

By day, the conservation area is relatively quiet. Traffic is relatively light but in the morning and evening rush hour, there is considerable traffic along Clitheroe Road and Padiham Road using the minor road through the village as a 'short-cut' between Clitheroe and the conurbation of Burnley and Nelson. There is a public car park and toilet beside The Holme.

Architectural and historic character

The conservation area is characterised by late 18th and 19th century terraced houses which were built as homes for Sabden's mill workers and form the area's most prevalent building

type. There are few instances of single dwellings on large plots, the most notable examples being Sabden House and Whins Cottage, both of which were the homes of mill owners.

The earliest terraces date from the late 18th century and include Top Row (where there used to be 31 houses and a pub called the Weavers' Arms), Step Row and Crow Trees Row (now called Badger Wells Cottages). These three terraces were built by Nicholas Grimshaw, a clerk at the Sabden Printworks, during the 1790s to house workers in Thomas Robinson's cotton mill which had been set up in 1786. The cottages, though now much altered by the addition of porches, larger window openings and loss of timber exterior joinery, are much smaller and less grand than, for instance, Mona Terrace (Pendle Street East) and Rydal Mount (Whalley Road) which were built 100 years later. Nevertheless they convey the size and form of late 18th century workers' cottages.

The terraced cottages of Whins Avenue were built c 1810 by the Bury family for workers employed in the Lower Printworks in Whalley Road. Victoria Row was built about 40 years later to house the workforce of Victoria Mill. Pendle Street East and West were developed after Victoria Bridge was opened in 1853. (The north side of Pendle Street East (Cobden Row) was demolished in the 1960s.)



Whins Lodge

The construction of Sabden's houses followed the fortunes of the village's mills: first Robinson's failed cotton mill of 1786, then early 19th century calico printworks and finally cotton mills (Victoria Mill, 1847; Cobden Mill, 1857) and weaving mill (Union Mill, 1856). Unfortunately, only Union Mill and, to a lesser extent Victoria Mill, remain in anything like their original condition and it is the mill workers' houses, as opposed to the mills, that give the conservation area its special historic character and appearance.

Although the terraced housing, mostly in short rows and blocks, is architecturally unremarkable and have lost their original uniformity through piecemeal extension, alteration and minor demolition, the buildings are representative of their period and type ranging from the low unadorned rubblestone cottages of Top Row to, a hundred years later, the solid-looking Mona Terrace with its canted bay windows and door openings tall enough to contain an overlight to light the front entrance hall. It is the range and diversity of

terraced housing in such a small settlement that is of interest. Two storeys is the norm but buildings such as the former Oddfellows Hall and nos 2 and 4 Whalley Road (corner of Padiham and Clitheroe Road) rise to a full three storeys. Terraces relate to the highway in different ways, as illustrated in Padiham Road where nos 13-27 (west side) open directly onto the road but nos 2-26 (east side) have small front gardens and iron gates between low stone gate piers.

Fire, demolition, alteration and re-use has reduced the impact of former mill buildings on local townscape. However, the two tall chimneys at Victoria Mill and Union Mill, together with the spire of St Nicholas' church, stand out in distant views, announcing the village's industrial past. Old photographs show that the Baptists and Methodists once worshipped in large prestigious buildings but these have been demolished.

In contrast to the uniformity of 19th century Sabden with its former mills, mill workers' houses and chapels, the area around Cockshotts Farm has a distinctly rural atmosphere arising from the sound of the brook, the green hedgerows beside the narrow lane, and the few vernacular farm buildings including Cockshotts Farm and nearby barn.

Locally quarried stone is the prevalent building material – there is a minimal use of brick. Some of the early stone cottages in Wesley Street, Step Row and elsewhere still retain stone slate roofs but after improvements in transport in the 19th century, slate became the typical roof material although even nos 131 and 133 Whalley Road (c 1870) have a stone slate roof. Stone slates are a feature of the area and should be preserved.



Badger Wells Cottages

Listed buildings

There are two listed buildings in the conservation area. St Nicholas's Church (grade II) and the former parsonage, now known as Sabden House (grade II). Both date from c1846 and are built with local sandstone. The church, in a Norman style, is a good example of watershot masonry, a local building method whereby each stone is tilted downwards to reduce rainwater penetration as the water will drip vertically from the top of each block. Sabden House is a well preserved detached mid 19th century villa with good interior

detailing. Church, Sunday School and former parsonage form a carefully designed ensemble in spacious well-tree'd grounds but the effect is diluted by the modern appearance of the new vicarage beside the church gates.

Key unlisted buildings - Buildings of Townscape Merit

Marked on the Townscape Appraisal map for the proposed Sabden Conservation Area are a number of *unlisted* buildings which have been judged as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. This follows advice provided in English Heritage guidance on conservation area character appraisals, and within Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15), both of which stress the importance of identifying and protecting such buildings.

The buildings are considered to be good examples of their type where original materials and details, and the basic, historic form of the building, has survived.

Cockshotts Farm was probably the home of the Grimshaw family, responsible for the building of the cottages in Step Row and Top Row. Though altered it may date from the 17th century.



Stone paving in Pendle Street West

Union Mill is the best preserved of Sabden's mills. It was set up in 1856 and then contained 208 looms powered by a single beam engine. Enlarged in 1904, weaving came to an end in 1964 and in 1987 the mill was restored as Pendle Antique Centre, now a popular attraction with a stock of antique furniture and bric-a-brac.

St Nicholas' church hall was once the purpose-built National School. In 1907 it was rebuilt as a Sunday School. It was built not long after Sabden British School (today's County Primary School) which opened in 1837. The 1896 datestone on the Primary School commemorates the time when the school was extended, having been taken under the care of Pendleton School Board in 1894.

Nos 1-7 Pendle Street East, on the corner of Watt Street, once served as a Roman Catholic church and school, opened in 1877. In 1937 a new church was built on Whalley Road and,

after continuing in use as a school, the building was eventually converted into a row of seven houses retaining much of its original external appearance including four tall windows that give a clue to its earlier uses.

Green spaces, trees and other natural elements

Sabden Brook and the small tributary running down the hillside in Heyhouses (Badger Well Water) are special features of the area being a wildlife corridor through the village and, historically, the reason for the location of the village's mills. The banks of Sabden Brook have a rural atmosphere beside the recreation ground and are well lined with trees.

Trees are also an important feature of the conservation area particularly those growing beside the brook, yews and limes in the churchyard of St Nicholas's Church, an oak and Corsican pine beside the Roman Catholic Church, a grove at the south end of the old Baptist graveyard and a line of trees west of the Watt Street/Whalley Road junction. These, and other significant trees or tree groups, are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map. Lack of a specific reference does not imply that a tree or group is not of value.



Original timber doors in Pendle Street East

Historical associations

The Sabden Conservation Area has close associations with Richard Cobden (1804 – 1865), a politician and entrepreneur who preached free trade and economic non-intervention by the government. In 1838 he became one of the seven founding members of the Anti-Corn-Law League in Manchester and he became an MP for Stockport in 1841. His parliamentary speeches were clear, quiet and persuasive; he was the only man ever to beat Peel in debate in parliament and in 1846 Peel acknowledged Cobden's role in the repeal of the Corn Laws.

Richard Cobden came to Sabden in 1828 when he and his business partners took over the calico printworks that had been set up by the Bury family. Cobden stayed with the firm in Sabden until 1839. He was instrumental in the construction of Dial Terrace (1837), where

Cobden's plan was to enable members of his workforce to own their own homes, and the Sabden British School (1837), now Sabden Primary School, one of the first primary schools to be independent of any church. Cobden's residence is recorded in the naming of Free Trade Terrace (1872), Cobden's Terrace (Padiham Road) and Cobden Mill (c 1867, now demolished).



Post Office, Whalley Road

Local details and features

There are a number of small local features that add to the area's distinct identity and form part of the special interest of the area:

- Parts of historic stone floorscape, for example, stone setts beside the post office and no. 26 Whalley Road, stone paving slabs in Pendle Street West (outside nos 13-31) and stone setts and kerbs at the Watt Street entrance to Victoria Mill. These surfaces should be protected and repaired as necessary, using traditional techniques and materials.
- Red GR VI post-box outside post office in Whalley Road; wall mounted VR post-box in Watt Street; K6 telephone kiosk in Whalley Road;
- The Rose Gardens and memorial to Nurse Stephenson who died in 1903;
- Low stone walls and stone gate pillars enclosing small gardens;
- The stone boundary wall, railings, gates and gate piers of the former Methodist Chapel (Wesley Street and St Nicholas Avenue);
- The boundary wall and gates to the Baptist graveyard and the footpath (part cobbled), wall and gates leading to the graveyard and Top Row from beside no 93 Clitheroe Road;

- Dated stone plaques on rows and terraces e.g. Free Trade Terrace (1872), Dial Terrace (1837), Mona Terrace (1893).

Issues

This section provides a summary of the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) identified during the appraisal process

Strengths: The most important *positive* features of the proposed Sabden Conservation Area are:

- Industrial history;
- Location in Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- Streamside village of former mill workers' cottages.



Dial Terrace (1837) associated with Richard Cobden

Weaknesses: The principal *negative* features of the proposed Sabden Conservation Area are:

- Loss of key buildings including the Counting House, Cobden Row (north side of Pendle Street East), Baptist Chapel and Methodist Chapel;
- Rush hour traffic along Padiham Road and Clitheroe Road;
- Late 20th century development insensitive to historic townscape e.g. new vicarage;
- High concrete kerbs alongside lane to Badger Wells Cottages which dispel the rural ambience of this area;
- Ruinous barn east of Cockshotts Farm and derelict building at east end of Top Row.

Opportunities within the proposed Sabden Conservation Area

- The footpath from Clitheroe Road to Top Row has vestiges of a cobbled surface and might with care be returned to its original appearance thereby re-creating the historic route to the Baptist graveyard;
- The village's industrial past and associations with Richard Cobden might be illustrated on an interpretive display board in the public car park or close to Pendle Antiques Centre (former Union Mill).



One of many small features of historic interest

Threats to the proposed Sabden Conservation Area

- Continuing loss of original architectural details and use of inappropriate modern materials or details. Many buildings in the conservation have been adversely affected by the use of inappropriate modern materials or details. Common faults include:
 - the replacement of original timber sash windows with uPVC or stained hardwood;
 - the loss of original panelled front doors and their replacement with stained hardwood, uPVC or aluminium doors;
 - use of garish timber stain on garden gates and garage cladding;
 - inappropriate pointing of stone work.
- Further loss of amenities and shops;
- Fast moving 'rush hour' traffic.

Recommendations

Proposed Sabden Conservation Area boundary

It is proposed that the village of Sabden be designated a conservation area. The proposed Sabden Conservation Area boundary is marked on the accompanying map. The boundary has been drawn to enclose the ancient hamlet of Heyhouses and a high proportion of the village's historic buildings beside Sabden Brook.



Cockshotts Farm, Heyhouses

Monitoring and review.

If approved, this appraisal document should be reviewed every five years in the light of the Local Development Framework and emerging government policy. A review should include the following:

- An evaluation of changes that have taken place in the conservation area, ideally by means of an updated photographic record;
- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, including opportunities for enhancement;
- A building condition survey;
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action;
- Publicity and advertising.

Bibliography

'Sabden, Past & Present, a Photographic History' by Audrey Barrett and David Eaves
'Sabden before 1600' by Laycock
'Heyhouses and the Neighbourhood' by Laycock
'The Birth of a Lancashire Village' by Clifford Moorhouse
'Sabden, The Forgotten Valley' by Clifford Moorhouse
Yates Map (1786); Read Hall Estate map 1896; O.S. 1845, 1880.

Sabden - List of photographs

- Photograph 1 Sabden from the north*
- Photograph 2 Padiham Road (west side)*
- Photograph 3 Looking south up Watt Street to the former Union Mill*
- Photograph 4 Entrance to St Nicholas's Church*
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Lower end of the footpath leading to the graveyard and Top Row from
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