

# Area of Special Local Character - Milner Field

## Introduction

This document provides additional information to that previously submitted by Bingley Town Council regarding Milner Field Estate. It represents Appendix B to the Neighbourhood Plan.

This additional information is based on Desk Research carried out by local historian Alan Cattell during July 2019 and a Field Survey (including photographs) carried out by Alan and Baildon local historians Mike and Tish Lawson also during July 2019.

## Advice

Advice to carry out a Field Survey was given by the Saltaire World Heritage Officer - Landscape, Design and Conservation and states " *The Milner Field document gives a good background and reasons why people are interested in and value the area but it could benefit from more of a physical assessment and description of what existed and how much of that remains, looking carefully at the extent and boundary of the significant site. It would be useful to assess views of the site from different vantage points/publicly accessible footpaths*".

*The information provided is a good start, but I think that it could be greatly enhanced by providing some maps to show clearly which features are important, positive and negative. Maps and photographs provide a good visual summary and explain exactly what you value and help to think clearly about how to encourage protection of that character and local distinctiveness.*

## Desk Research

The Desk Research is intended to focus on Landscape Character and to:

1. Set Milner Field Estate within the wider context of the Saltaire Landscape and World Heritage Site and also to make links to the wider landscape between Bingley and Saltaire.
2. Set Milner Field Estate in Context as regards the Bingley Enclosures 1861
3. Identify the key landscape elements of the Milner Field Estate

## Saltaire Landscape

Gray (1891:157) describes Saltaire prior to the Model Village being built in terms of being an area *in moor and field and forest* and after the town was built as a charming **diversity** of hill and dale, *waterside and moorland walks.... human achievement has given it an even wider fame as citizens from all parts are attracted to the model town which has become through the genius and philosophy of its noble author, a famous industrial shrine.*

The Bradford Area Core Development Strategy Development Plan identifies that there is a need to preserve those elements which contribute to the Saltaire World Heritage Site. The Saltaire

Environmental Study and Saltaire Area Assessment both identify the importance of key views and vistas into and out of the WHS.

As part of the WHS Buffer Zone, the Milner Field landscape is clearly visible from Saltaire Village and vice versa and is an integral part of the landscape of one of Yorkshire's most powerful heritage and tourist assets. As stated in the Conservation Area Proposal, Milner Field is of immense heritage and conservation value due to its strong connections to the WHS area through the Salt family.

Vistas from Milner Field Estate looking towards Saltaire



Vista from Saltaire looking towards the fields, pasture and woodland of Milner Field Estate



## Landscape between Bingley and Saltaire



The Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Document Volume 1: Airedale October 2008 identifies the **diversity of the Airedale landscape** and points to the following sites being of local interest relevant to this Appendix: **Bingley South Bog (an SSI) Trench Meadows (an SSI), Hirst Wood (SEGI) Leeds and Liverpool Canal (SEGI), Shipley Glen (SEGI) - Third Tier Others, Gilstead Moor Edge, Milner Field- Amenity, Prince of Wales Park**. Each of these is evidence of the scope and scale of the diversity/biodiversity of the landscape between Bingley and Saltaire, of which Milner Field is an integral part.

As such, they are all situated in close proximity to the Milner Field Estate, either at the top of the wooded incline or in the valley/ canal/river bottom. That proximity plus Milner Field's own key historical and landscape assets make the landscape between Bingley and Saltaire unique in its diversity.

### Bingley Enclosures

Amongst events which shaped the development of land and ownership in the Bingley area the Bingley and Gilstead Moor Enclosure Awards 1861 were significant. Romels Moor and Gilstead Moor were given such status. The Bingley Enclosures led directly to the development and opening of Prince of Wales Park in 1865.

The Gilstead Moor Enclosure included the area from Heights Farm and Eldwick Beck Bottom to the edge of **Milner Field** (Dodd 1950:6). Dodd (1958:126) also records that as a result of this enclosure Sheriff Lane and Gilstead Lane were among "occupation roads" to be repaired. It was along these roads that the earliest building took place and included Littlebeck Hall (1862) and the Glen Hotel (1865) built by the Preston brothers (John a landscape painter) and Ben (a dialect poet).

Little Beck ran through the grounds of Littlebeck Hall into the grounds of Milner Field and was dammed in 1869 by Marnock as part of his landscaping of the Estate, to provide the boating lake and trout hatchery for the newly built Milner Field.

# Milner Field Landscape

## Original Estate

**Map 1** shows the extent of the **original** Milner Field Estate which also included Stubbing House Farm. Records show that the original Milner Field House was built (or rebuilt) in 1603 and was owned successively by wealthy local landowners the Milners, Oldfields, and the Fells. Map 1 (which was the sale map for the estate 1866) also shows at the top of the map the land owned by John Preston and the Little Beck stream leading down to Milner Field.

## Sale of the Estate and Building of the New Milner Field and Estate

The Milner Field and Stubbing House Estates were advertised as being for sale in the Bradford Observer of 22nd November 1866 and Titus Salt Senior bought the land in 1869. Titus Junior immediately demolished the old Milner Field and Stubbing House Farm. He integrated the steps to the old Milner Field and the gateposts into the new Milner Field grounds and also retained the old 17th Century Garden House (also identified as the Dower House) into the Kitchen Gardens of the new house. This Garden House is Grade II listed.

Titus Salt Jr documented the old Milner Field House and landscape along with hand sketches and photographs of the house and landscape in a portfolio which the Salt family have since donated to the Shipley College Saltaire Archives. These can be viewed by pre booked request at the Archives.

## Change in the Landscape

An article in the Leeds Mercury of 2nd November 1869 comments about *the picturesque old hedges* being removed *and these quaint landmarks which rendered the district so rurally interesting* being replaced by stone walls which ran through the meadows and up the hillsides. This is a direct reference to the new Milner Field being built by Titus Salt Jr.

Also mentioned is a pathway to Gilstead which **formerly opened onto the moor** (referred to as "*an odious snicket*") being built between high walls. This is a direct reference to the adaptation of Sparable Lane as one of the natural boundaries to Milner Field Estate.

The field walls and boundary walls to the Estate still exist as do the Kitchen garden walls.

The full extent of the Estate shown in **Map 2** runs down from the former moor, through grassland, woodland incline, woodland, plantation, pasture, parkland and meadows to the River Aire and the Leeds and Liverpool Canal which run along the valley bottom.

This diverse landscape is essentially the reason that Titus Salt selected the area in which to build his Model Village and led to his son building a new Mansion, gardens, parkland and a new Model Home Farm and Lake. The fact that he employed Robert Marnock to design and landscape the estate to capture and improve upon this diversity is also significant.

## Marnock's Landscape

To date, there is no apparent study in any depth of the extent of or identification of specific areas of Marnock's influence on the landscaping of the estate. However, as part of this Desk Study, it is possible through comparison of **Maps 1 and 2** to identify those features of the Estate that did not exist on **Map 1**. For the purposes of this study these **are identified in yellow on Map 2**.



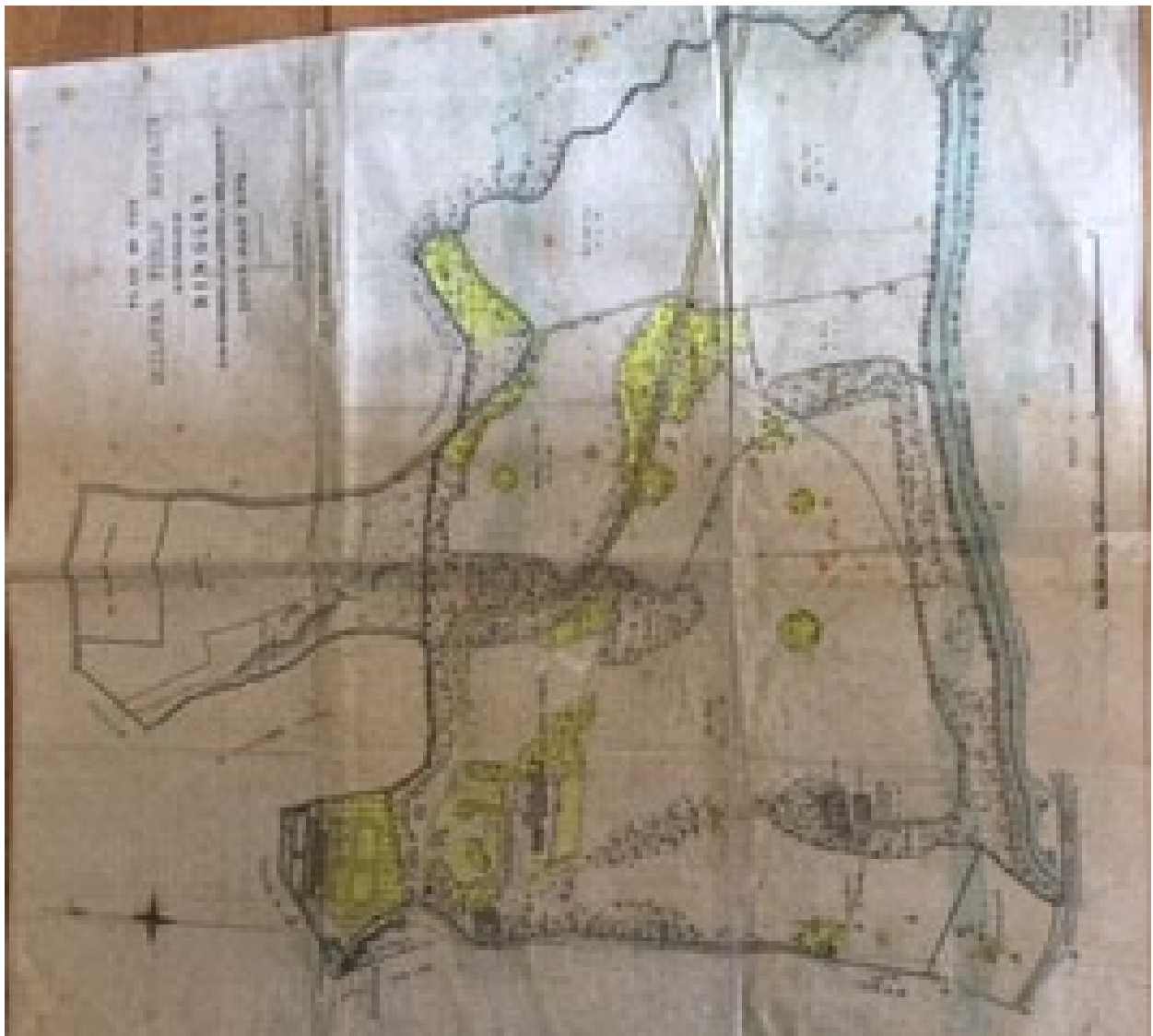


Copse of Trees designed into the landscape by Marnoch

Map 1



Map 2



This approach captures the changes between the Estate being advertised for sale (1866) and the changes to the landscape brought about by Titus Salt Jr (commencing 1869) which was the initial date that he commissioned Marnoch to start work. There is little doubt that Marnock had a key role in influencing these new changes plus also adding new tree planting regimes to compliment the Wooded Plantations already existing. Examples of the types/ species of trees planted can be identified through Tree Preservation Order (TPO) Number 591 (3/10/1986) and TPO (Land at Milner Field) Order 4608419 (registered 7/10/1990)

## Time Depth

In the period 1870 to 1930 the Salt family, then Sir James Roberts, followed by several Salts Mill Managing Directors worked at Saltaire and lived at Milner Field. The shape of the Estate and land remained much as it had when it had been originally designed and built. In the period **1930 to date** the landscape has essentially remained unchanged and within a time warp when much around it has changed.

Tudor -Natural England (2014:32) suggests that: *Land Ownership and Tenure can both contribute to landscape character, especially at the local scale. For example, large areas held and managed as one estate for several generations will often create a unified – sometimes designed - landscape with a **distinct identity** that differs from similar land held and managed by individuals as many smallholdings. An understanding of past and present patterns of ownership and tenure can help to explain contemporary landscape character.*

Time Depth is a key concept in relation to preserving the unique character of the Milner Field Estate as a Conservation Area/ Special Character Area.

Within their Guiding Principles for Historic Landscape Character- Historic England (2019) state:

*The present-day landscape is the main object, though characterisation of that will require understanding and representation of a place's history. Landscape in an intensively occupied, used and experienced place like Britain is more about history than geography: its most important characteristic is its time-depth; the appreciation that change and earlier landscapes exist in the present landscape.*

Time -depth as regards Milner Field as part of the Gilstead/Bingley landscape is essentially over a period of 400 plus years from 1603, during which the estate was owned initially by successive wealthy local families then purchased and adapted by the Salt family in 1869. The later demolition of the Milner Field Mansion and stables is also part of that time-depth.

Because of the "completeness" of the original Milner Field Estate in terms of both landscape and the footprint of some of the original buildings, the **Historic Landscape Character has been preserved despite the mansion and stables being demolished.**

## Lost Country Houses

Giles (2013:93) in a West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service report comments on the Lost Country Houses in West Yorkshire:

*West Yorkshire has some country houses of national importance but lost a large number during the twentieth century when death duties were held responsible for the inability of wealthy families to*



*afford the vast costs of maintenance..... The great age of demolition of country houses has passed, having taken a heavy toll in West Yorkshire.*

***The associated buildings around great houses are often under greater threat than the main house itself, for they are less well protected. Often architecturally less distinguished, they nevertheless form a vital part of the ensemble, providing important functions and sometimes demonstrating significant social developments.***

***A former narrow focus in country house studies on the house itself is beginning to be complemented by placing the house in the contexts of its landscape and of the estate of which it formed the central element. The chronological development of the estate can be studied through consideration of ancillary buildings and landscape features, such as banqueting houses, walled gardens, ice houses, the home farm and outlying farms, a landscaped park, and extensive service ranges including stable blocks etc***

***Lost country houses may have great potential for archaeological investigation. Some houses were lost without adequate records being made, and earthwork survey and below-ground investigation could recover the plan and something of the chronology of development on individual sites. Artefact evidence from the house site would also help to reconstruct the functions of different parts of the building.***

***The study of manufacturers' mansions is not as advanced as that of country houses.***

In considering the above comments, Milner Field Estate is of particular interest as it represents both the estate of wealthy landowners initially then latterly that of a manufacturing family. There is much artefact evidence to be found within the grounds of the estate and much still to be discovered.

Since 2011 Van den Daele and Beal (2011) and Cattell (2011, 2016 and 2017) have added new written and photographic knowledge and evidence to what has previously been known about the Estate and its buildings, landscape and physical artefacts.

The next section **Photographic /Physical Survey** (as recommended by the Saltaire Heritage Officer) is intended to present further evidence.

## **Photographic Survey/Physical Survey**

### **Artefact Evidence**

## **Milner Field - Built Fabric - What is Still There**

For the purposes of this Appendix some of the key items of built fabric are those identified by Ackroyd and Tiplady (2014) and others are added as a result of Desk Research and include:



The Lodge and Gateposts at the Primrose Lane Entrance to the Estate - Grade 11 Listed



The South Lodge and Gateposts



The Garden House at the Top of Primrose Lane - Grade II listed





Two Pairs of Houses at the top of Primrose Lane - Previously known when built as Milner Field Villas



Kitchen Garden /Walled Garden Vista



The Farm Lodge on Primrose Lane



The Farm House (and Farm Buildings comprising, Sheds, Byres, Shippons, Pigeon Loft and Dairy)

NB Further Photographs of the Model Farm Buildings are contained in Cattell (2017: 53-63)





Coach Road and Horse Chestnut Avenue



Ha Ha Wall in front of the demolished mansion





Field Walls



Heated Brick Wall



Boundary Wall - Primrose Lane

## Milner Field Built Fabric - What has been demolished but is still visible

In the final version of the Photographic Survey additional comment will be made regarding the demolished mansion and stables, the remains of which are still clearly visible. Further photographs will be taken during August 2019. These will include:

Mansion remains

Mosaic Floor

Orangery edging to mosaic floor

Arch to Courtyard remains

Steps to Old Milner Field and remains of gateposts

Remains of Stables and Coach House

The Lake/Trout Hatchery

### **Negatives and Positives**

#### **Buildings**

##### **Negative**

Some of the remaining whole buildings on the Estate have had structural changes to windows/doors/roofs/ interior features over the years which mean that they do not meet listing criteria.

##### **Positive**

The main structural walls of all three Lodges, the Farmhouse and the majority of Farm Buildings, the Garden House and Milner Field Villas are all built from the stone from when they were originally constructed. As the main ancillary buildings to the Estate they have been adapted over the years to meet changing domestic and farming needs. All are still lived in (some rented, some under private ownership) and the Farm remains a working dairy farm, the tenant managing the farmland, meadows and pasture as part of his tenancy. The Downs family have held this tenancy continuously since 1902.

##### **Negative**

The main house, coach house and stables were demolished gradually over a period from the 1930s until the mid 1950s. Some of the stone from these building was used to carry out repairs/alterations at the main mill site in Saltaire. A considerable amount of worked/carved stone and brick still lies scattered at the site of the main house/stables/coach house.

## **Positive**

The original footprint of these buildings in the form of either worked stone, or foundations is still visible through the undergrowth and has not been totally eradicated. At this stage recognisable artefacts such as the steps and gateposts to Old Milner Field, elements of the arch into the Milner Field courtyard, the foundations, the Conservatory mosaic floor, the edging to the mosaic in the orangery, the foundations and shape of Titus Salt Jr's workshop, the footings of the stables and coach house are visible. Further photographic recording/archaeology has the potential to reveal even more information about other remains of the main buildings.

The stone wall at the front of the Mansion (possibly a ha ha separating garden from fields/parkland) still exists. Many of the stone boundary walls to the estate still exist as do the stone walls to other parkland areas and field boundaries. These are particularly evident on the upper part of Primrose Lane and along Sparable Lane. Remains of built structures and walls also still exist in the Kitchen Garden and Walled Garden areas and in particular the heated wall is prominent.

## **Little Beck and the Lake/Trout Hatchery**

### **Negative**

Although shown on maps, the exact physical location of the Lake built to Marnock's landscape plan in 1869 has remained obscure and has been referred to as an entity but not specifically located on the ground. It has also been assumed that the lake had been infilled and the dam destroyed and lost.

### **Positive**

This Field Survey has located the stone and brick conduit entry of Little Beck into the Milner Field Estate and under the Coach Road. The further conduit of the Beck on the other side of the Coach Road has also been located, leading down to the previous site of the Lake. Although stone from the dam was pulled down and the lake emptied, that stone remains in the Beck where it was pulled down below the dam. A wrought iron sluice mechanism attached to rocks in the Beck has also been found in the same location.

The lake bottom has also been located and the area upstream of the dam shows evidence of stonework edging to the lake.

## **Present Status of the Milner Field Estate**

- **All land east of Primrose Lane and Gilstead Lane has Green Belt status.**
- **The woodland is afforded Bradford Wildlife Status, a local ecological designation.**
- **The majority of the former estate is protected by a Tree Preservation Order.**
- **The whole of the former estate east of Primrose Lane is designated as a locally significant historic park and garden. This has the status of an undesignated heritage asset which under the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material planning consideration. The provisions of adopted policy ENF 3 (F) of the Council's Core Planning Strategy are thus applicable.**
- **The whole of the Estate lies within the Buffer Zone for the Saltaire World Heritage Site.**

This Appendix further supports and requests that the estate within and considering its historic boundaries should be considered and designated as an **Area of Special Local Character**.

## **Bibliography**

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## **Photographs**

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