

# **APPRAISAL OF A PROPOSED CONSERVATION AREA FOR THE VILLAGE OF THORNTON CURTIS**

**North Lincolnshire Council**

**Draft no. 2 dated March 2002.**

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## **(PROPOSED) THORNTON CURTIS CONSERVATION AREA**

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## Maps

- Figure 1      Extract from 1907 Ordnance Survey map
- Figure 2      Map showing listed buildings, proposed Local Plan conservation area boundary, and boundary proposed by this appraisal.
- Figure 3      Townscape Analysis Map: showing Buildings of Townscape Merit; buildings which make a neutral or negative contribution to the character of the area; important views; important public open space; important trees or tree groups and sites which have a negative effect on the character of the area.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Thornton Curtis is a small rural agricultural village, located five miles south-east of Barton-upon-Humber. The Church of St Lawrence, dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, is the central focus of the village, occupying a prominent position on a raised embankment with a highly visible tower. The settlement contains a number of small 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages and farmsteads, a former school, a converted chapel and a public house. These properties are spaced along the Main Street, with trees and small fields between.

This appraisal will assess the special interest, both architectural and historical, of Thornton Curtis, in order to establish whether it warrants designation as a conservation area. The history of the area, and its present appearance and character, will be described and its problems analysed. A number of recommendations will also be put forward which will be considered by North Lincolnshire Council for implementation after full public consultation.

If Thornton Curtis is designated as a conservation area draft policies will eventually be adopted by North Lincolnshire Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance, and they will therefore be a material consideration when determining applications for development, defending appeals or proposing works for the preservation or enhancement of the area. This document will therefore be a useful source of information for owners, agents, applicants and members of the public who live and work in Thornton Curtis.

## **2 LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND**

The Council is required by Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, to continually review the conservation area designations within North Lincolnshire and where appropriate recommend designation of new areas. As part of this process the Council is proposing that Thornton Curtis is worthy of such a designation. The North Lincolnshire Local Plan contains a map showing an indicative conservation area boundary for Thornton Curtis. As a result of a more recent detailed survey, and the study of historic maps, particularly the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1907, this appraisal covers a wider area of village. The boundary therefore now includes some early 20<sup>th</sup> infill development but excludes the later development along Burnham Lane.

A conservation area is *an area of 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). The Council is obliged by section 71 of the same Act *to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area, which are conservation areas*, and this appraisal fulfills this statutory duty. In making decisions on future development within a conservation area, the Council must *pay attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area* (section 72 of the Act). This appraisal, and the later Supplementary Planning Guidance will help the Council make decisions on planning applications in Thornton Curtis.

Government policy is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.15 (PPG15 – Planning and the Historic Environment). On demolition, this states, *‘The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area.’* This appraisal identifies the buildings that make a positive contribution as Buildings of Townscape Merit on the Townscape Analysis map at Figure 3.

## **3 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING**

### **3.1 Location and Population**

Thornton Curtis is located on the B1077 between Barrow-upon-Humber in the north, and Wootton to the south. The population of the village is small, with only about 50 houses, all of which are occupied.

### **3.2 Landscape setting**

Thornton Curtis is located on the landscape character area known as the Lincolnshire Drift. This area is characterised by gently undulating topography and open intensively farmed arable land. From Thornton Curtis there are distant views in all directions across the open arable fields, with the mature woods surrounding nearby farmsteads and settlements, and hedges providing some visual interest and sense of

enclosure. In views southwards towards Wootton a line of tall transmission pylons dominate the skyline detracting from the appearance of the rural landscape.

### **3.3 Geology and building materials**

The geology of Lincolnshire provides a number of different stones and clays suitable for building stone and making bricks. The Lincolnshire Edge running through the centre of North Lincolnshire is composed of Inferior Oolite or Lincolnshire Limestone, which is variable in quality, but used in some areas for building stone. The western scarp of the Lincolnshire Edge is capped by ironstone, a rough rubble stone usually only suitable for lower class buildings such as cottages and boundary walls, although better quality ironstone is found and has been used for buildings such as St. John's Church in Scunthorpe.

Bricks started being made in Lincolnshire in the 14<sup>th</sup> century although they were too expensive for most of the inhabitants until the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Brigg and Barton grew to be the main brick making centres in the area. Therefore, prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, buildings tended to be either constructed of stone (for the better class buildings) or for the vernacular buildings, mud-and-stud was used. As a result, few buildings pre-dating the 18<sup>th</sup> century survive.

Thornton Curtis is located on the boundary between the chalk geology of the Lincolnshire Wolds and the drift geology to the east. Chalk is therefore occasionally used for buildings although its softness means that only the more vernacular buildings utilise this material. St. Lawrence Church displays a variety of local stones and is a unique example of this within the village. Most of the buildings in Thornton Curtis post-date the 18<sup>th</sup> century, so brick is the predominant building material, with orange clay pantile roofs.

## **4 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **4.1 History**

Most of the historical information about Thornton Curtis relates to the Augustinian Abbey situated about a mile and a half east of the village itself. The abbey was founded in 1139 by William Le Gros, and the remains (the medieval church, chapter house and celebrated gatehouse) are now a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The site is in the care of English Heritage and is open to the public.

The Domesday Book records the details of two landholdings at Thornton Curtis, and it is estimated that the population in 1086 was around 450 people. St. Lawrence's church is the earliest surviving building in the village, and contains fabric dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. No other early buildings remain, apart from The Laurels and Thornton Hall, which were built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The most important of these is Thornton Hall, which was built between 1695 and 1700 for Sir Rowland Wynne. This house, although part of the history of the village, is not included within the appraisal area due to its substantial physical separation from the village. It is also already protected by its listed status.

Apart from these three earlier buildings, the majority of the historic buildings found in Thornton Curtis date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These buildings are farmhouses and cottages built in response, no doubt, to the post-enclosure prosperity of the farming industry. In order to provide education for the children of the village, a school was built in 1873 under the patronage of John Ferraby of Wootton Hall.

Despite the longevity of the settlement, Thornton Curtis has remained a small rural community. The 20<sup>th</sup> century has seen the greatest period of expansion of the village to date, so that since 1900 the number of properties has almost doubled. However this has not had a major impact on the character of the area as the majority of the new buildings are located in Burnham Lane, and their construction did not involve the building of new roads or substantial encroachment into the surrounding countryside.

#### **4.2 Archaeology.**

The place-name of Thornton is of Old English origin and translates as 'the farmstead where thorn trees grow'. By the late Saxon period there was a sizable population and during the medieval period the village developed in the area lying to the east of the modern village, to the north of Station Road. Here, the remains of trackways, closes and house sites can be traced on aerial photographs. Pottery sherds dating from the Late Saxon period through to the 15<sup>th</sup> century were found when these sites were first ploughed in the 1960s. Similar material was also discovered on the west side of the village, south of Manor Farm where the medieval manor is thought to have stood, and there are extant earthworks around Northfield Farm.

In the medieval period the village lay on a west-east axis leading towards Thornton Abbey. In later centuries, following the dissolution of the monasteries in 1537, the village developed along the main north-south route of Main Street.

## **5 THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THORNTON CURTIS**

### **5.1 Plan Form**

Thornton Curtis is a linear development with buildings located along the Main Street, which forms the central spine of the settlement. This gently curving through route has a north-west to south orientation. At the northern end of the village, the properties are predominantly farms with barns clustered around each farmyard. To the south of the church the properties are more tightly packed. The street is bordered on either side by terraces of cottages, positioned on the back edge of the pavement, with gardens at the rear. Despite the general linearity of the settlement, Thornton Curtis has a defined centre at the crossroads where Burnham Lane from the west meets the Main Street and is joined by Church Walk to the east. The church and public house are situated at this road intersection making it also the architectural, religious and social focus.

At the northern end of the village, next to Home Farm, a road branches off the Main Street to Goxhill. In the south, Station Road, which contains the old school and a pair

of semi-detached houses, leads eastwards towards Thornton Hall and the Abbey beyond.

## **5.2 Activity/uses.**

Thornton Curtis is still a farming community with four farms within the village: Home Farm and Northfields Farm to the north, Church Farm in the centre, and Main Farm to the south. However, agriculture can no longer provide much local employment so the majority of the villagers commute to work in the surrounding towns. Some of the farm buildings at Northfields Farm and Church Farm have recently been converted into residential use.

Within the village there is also St. Lawrence's church and the Thornton Hunt Public House, but the late 19<sup>th</sup> century school and chapel buildings have been converted to houses. Although not within the proposed conservation area, there is a large steel supplier and welding works at the southern end of the village.

As a small rural village the general level of activity within Thornton Curtis is low, however the tranquillity and rural character is severely damaged by the numerous large lorries which pass along the Main Street throughout the day.

## **5.3 Open spaces, trees and vistas**

The spacious rural character of Thornton Curtis is created by the individual buildings, separated by trees, fields and gardens. The village is also inextricably part of its countryside setting, with an indistinct boundary between the edge of the settlement and the surrounding fields. The grounds of the Old Vicarage are classified in the Local Plan as "Important Public Open Space".

This character is most pronounced at the northern end of Thornton Curtis. By this entrance to the village, Home Farmhouse is totally hidden from view, with dense vegetation and mature trees around the buildings. This woodland screens the rest of the village at this point. On entering the village, Northfields Farm on the opposite side of the road is more visible, due to its roadside location. However, it has a large garden to the south, with a number of mature trees providing the residents with secluded private amenity space. These two properties are separated from the rest of the village by further farmland. The field on the west side of the road is mainly hidden from view by thick, tall, hedging which includes some leylandii. Beyond the low hedge on the east side of the road, there are expansive views over the large arable fields.

The small cottages, nos. 32 and 34 and 28 and 30, have large gardens to the side and rear. Church Farm and Applegarth are set within fields enclosed by timber fencing. Two large prominent trees flank the entrance to Applegarth, with smaller trees along the southern field boundary. On the opposite side of the road, the small piece of land between the two former vicarages contains some mature holly, conifers and beech trees. The newer vicarage, Summergales, is set well back from the road in a large garden, with a dense row of evergreens along the front boundary.

The churchyard contains the most impressive trees, with tall mature row marking the west and southern boundaries, and more randomly spaced yews to the north and east. The churchyard is the only area of public space within the village and is identified in the Local Plan as an Area of Amenity Importance. The only other open space is at the public house, which has a small play area within its garden for children.

In the southern section of the village the houses are more tightly packed, leaving less space for soft landscaping and trees. The houses have rear garden areas but the number of mature trees is more minimal and this area therefore has a more urban character. In views of the village from Station Road the buildings, except for the church tower, are predominately screened from view by mature woodland. It is noted that throughout the village there are a number of areas where leylandii or other fast growing conifers have been planted. These provide good screen cover, but have a form and character which is at odds with the rural character provided by more native species.

#### **5.4 Architectural style and building materials**

Thornton Curtis is composed of a collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century farmhouses, with their associated farm complexes; small two storey semi-detached and terrace cottages; and larger detached houses such as the 17<sup>th</sup> century Laurels and the early 19<sup>th</sup> Old Vicarage. There are a few public building, only the church and the public house, with both the former school and chapel now being in residential use. Apart from the church, the buildings are built in the local vernacular style with brick walls, timber windows, and clay pantile or slate roofs.

##### Northern Section (north of Burnham Lane)

Within Home Farm is a brick detached farmhouse, with a collection of farm buildings to the south. The farmhouse is so hidden behind trees that it has no impact on the appearance of the village. The low brick open carthouse, with circular brick supporting columns supporting a modern concrete pantile roof, is the only remaining 19<sup>th</sup> century building in the farm complex. The other buildings are large, modern, corrugated metal barns and circular metal silos. Northfields Farm, opposite, is a more intact 19<sup>th</sup> century farmstead. The farmhouse has a T- shaped plan with an entrance block facing the street, and a south facing cross- wing taking advantage of the sunny garden aspect. The house is attractively covered in creeper with timber double hung sliding sash windows, and the main entrance door is set within a simple, elegant, pilastered doorcase. The gable ends have distinctive tumbled brickwork, a local feature. The farmyard is set back from the road, behind a group of single storey low brick farm buildings of varying heights, with clay pantile roofs. There is a larger two storey barn next to the farmhouse which has been refurbished and converted to residential use. Recent changes include a new clay pantiled roof, the insertion of new windows, and the addition of a projecting two storey feature window in the southern gable. The rest of the farm buildings are hidden from view except for the roof of the taller, double height, barn to the rear.

Numbers 32 and 34 and 28 and 30 are two matching pairs of semi-detached late 19<sup>th</sup> /early 20<sup>th</sup> century cottages. These properties are set back about a metre from the pavement behind park railings and low hedge. The brick front elevations are pierced

with four casement window openings, and the entrance doors are located on the rear elevation. An indication of the more recent age of these properties is the use of natural slate roof covering. Abutting the side garden of no. 28 is the Old Vicarage located at right angles to the street. This has an L-shaped plan and in terms of detailing is very similar to Northfields Farmhouse, with similar sash windows. These are four-over-eight sashes on the upper floor, with taller eight-over-eight sashes below. The gables also have a tumbled brickwork detail. A regrettable alteration is the insertion of two uPVC windows into the conspicuous street gable.

At Church Farm is a collection of tumbled down cartsheds and outbuildings adjacent to the road, with the listed late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> threshing barn to the rear. The open sheds are probably 19<sup>th</sup> century and are built in part from brick with clay pantile roofs. However, they are in a poor state of repair, with a number of missing tiles, and vegetation has begun to take a hold of the various structures. The threshing barn itself has been converted to residential use, and the large timber doors have been replaced by glazing and the roof and walls repaired. The threshing barn is yet to be occupied and as yet retains its barn-like character, although the inevitable changes required for habitation, such as the provision of a new driveway, parking and a domestic garden, may erode that character. All of these buildings are set within a field, with a pond, enclosed by post-and-rail timber fence.

Early maps show a building abutting the Main Street, and this may have been the old farmhouse to Church Farm. This has since been demolished and replaced by a new house, called Applegarth, on the adjacent site. The 1907 map shows trees in the area now occupied by this new house and, as the name Applegarth suggests, it was probably an orchard. Applegarth is a large detached house, built from traditional local materials (brick with a clay pantile roof) apart from the uPVC windows.

The second vicarage, which is now called Summergales, is a detached house set in a large garden. It is a two storey brick house, built in Tudor Gothic style in 1855 to designs by Arthur Ashpitel. The windows have recently been replaced in uPVC, although fortunately they largely follow the form and method of opening of the timber originals.

Within Thornton Curtis, the important building is undoubtedly St Lawrence's Church, which is listed grade I, and which provides the architectural and visual centre of the village. The church has an elevated position, on a square raised embankment, with a stone capped brick retaining wall, and its main approach to the south door is via a timber lych gate onto Main Street. The church is an imposing Gothic building, with a combination of limestone, ironstone and chalk rubble for the wall construction and a slate roof. The highly visible square tower with its embattled parapet and crocketed pinnacles is a distinctive landmark of the village. The churchyard is full of a large number of graves with attractive stone headstones, including the lower section of a listed 14<sup>th</sup> century stone cross.

To the east of the church is The Laurels, the earliest domestic building in the village dating back to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, with some later alterations. The main house is a square brick building, with hipped slate roof, timber double hung sash windows, and painted stucco lintels. To the south is a lower extension with a pantiled roof and

combination of window designs. The house is set within spacious garden setting with the front elevation facing the churchyard.

The Thornton Hunt Public House has a central location opposite the church and at the junction of Burnham Lane and Main Street. Its white colourwashed elevations with black painted quoins and cills make the building even more conspicuous. It dates to the mid- to late-18<sup>th</sup> century, and is two storeys in height and three bays wide, with two-over-two double hung timber sash windows. The building sits on the back edge of pavement with the rear extension on the return elevation along Burnham Lane. The appearance of the rear extension suggests it was originally three cottages which have subsequently been incorporated into the public house premises.

#### Southern Section (south of Burnham Lane)

The building line set by the public house is continued on the southern side of Burnham Lane junction with the terraces on either side of the street located on the pavement edge. This gives this section of Main Street a more enclosed and formal urban character. In the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century on the east side, a section of the terrace adjacent to Church Walk was demolished and replaced by a row of three bungalows. These bungalows reflect none of the local vernacular style being lower in height than older adjacent properties, set back from the building line, and built from non-local materials. They are therefore excluded from the proposed conservation area.

Beyond are two terraces of small two storey brick 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages which do have the same building line, height, vernacular style and materials as other historic buildings in Thornton Curtis. These terraces form a definite visual group despite colourwashing or painting of some of the front elevations and differing window patterns. However, there have been some recent changes such as the addition of roughcast render, and replacement of timber windows with uPVC, which has eroded some of the coherence of the group and their architectural interest. In particular all the windows have been changed and the replacements lack the quality of detailed design and reflective quality of the glazing of the originals. Historic photographs show the terraces before such changes were made and in future alterations the original pattern and materials could be reinstated.

Towards the southern edge of the village the settlement has a more open nature with Main Street Farm on the west side of the road. This is a small farmstead with a modern rendered 19<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse located gable end to the street, with small rendered outbuilding enclosing the road boundary of the farmyard. The barns located to the rear are modern and are of little merit.

On the eastern side of the Main Street the tightly knit layout of properties continues to the junction with Station Road. No.6 and no. 8 are an semi-detached Edwardian pair of houses, of brick construction with stone lintels and slate roof. Unfortunately the front elevations have been marred by the insertion of stained timber leaded-light windows, and a timber porch which has no architectural relationship to the building. The conversion of the neighbouring chapel has resulted in some substantial alterations to the façade. The building has been given a modern textured finish render which is painted with black fake beams in an attempt to imitate black and white timberwork. The ground floor has been extended with the addition of a curved multi-

pane bay window with bull's-eye glass. The roof, stone kneeler and roof finial are the only indication that this is in fact an historic 19<sup>th</sup> century chapel. Better preserved is the 19<sup>th</sup> century barn adjacent, which has tumbled brick detailing to its gable which faces the street.

In the approach from Wootton the detached house at the junction of Main Street and Station Road has a prominent position, and it is therefore disappointing that this is not a building of greater architectural merit. Although dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, modern alterations to the front elevation, such as the enlargement of openings and insertion of uPVC windows and doors, have denuded the property of some of its architectural quality. The front boundary is a brick wall with concrete decorative infill panels which has a very urban appearance. This is at odds with the more rural boundaries in the remainder of the village.

Station Road consists of Thornton Villas and the Old School House now called Ferraby House. Thornton Villas is a semi-detached pair of Edwardian houses built, according to the date on the front elevation, in 1910. These houses have smooth faced red bricks front elevations, enlivened by decorative carved stone lintels, single pane double hung sash windows and moulded brick cornice. The insertion of new uPVC windows to one half of the pair has upset the symmetrical composition. Ferraby House has an equally judicious use of decorative detailing to the front elevation, however in a slightly earlier style having been constructed in 1873. The front elevation has a slightly projecting central bay surmounted by a large gable, the design of which is mirrored in the smaller dormers to either side. At lower level the house has been altered with the addition of a large glazed porch. The decorative elements include timber decorative bargeboards with finials and stone hood moulded lintels. A plaque in the gable is inscribed; '*School and House erected by John Ferraby of Wootton Hall in memory of his wife Abigail in 1873.*'

## **5.5 Listed Buildings and Buildings of Townscape Merit**

A small number of the properties in the village are included in the Department of Culture, Media and Sports List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The Church of St Lawrence is the most important building being included at grade I. The Laurels, Thornton Hunt Public House, the threshing barn at Church Farm, and a 14<sup>th</sup> century churchyard cross are grade II. These buildings are described in the text above, or a further brief description accompanying the listing can be obtained from North Lincolnshire Council. These buildings are not only important locally but they are also considered to be of national significance and there are policies in place to conserve these buildings for future generations.

This appraisal has identified a large number of Buildings of Townscape Merit all of which are marked on the Townscape Analysis Map. These are unlisted buildings which it is considered contribute positively to the character of Thornton Curtis, and include 19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular cottages, farmhouses and barns. These buildings are generally unaltered or, could with some restoration, be easily re-instated to their original appearance. Their age and architectural interest is considered to provide justification for them to be given special protection and if designated as a conservation area the Council will be able to resist their demolition unless the applicant can prove the building is beyond the point of economic repair.

Additionally, because these buildings are an important part of the character of the village, the Council will pay special attention to applications for alterations and extensions.

### **5.6 Other features of interest**

Between Home Farm and the village there is a cast iron water pump. The pump has recently been refurbished and given a decorative surround filled with stones and flowers.

### **5.7 Summary**

The most important characteristics of Thornton Curtis are:

- The linear layout with spacious building plots, backing onto fields
- The contribution to the character of the village by the many mature trees and tree groups
- The rural quality, with four farms situated within the settlement
- These surviving farm buildings have an important influence on the character of the village
- The mixture of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings, with few more modern buildings
- St. Lawrence's Church (grade I), the Thornton Hunt Public House (grade II) and The Laurels (17<sup>th</sup> century and also listed grade II) form the nucleus of the village
- Church tower an important local landmark
- Church built from limestone, ironstone and chalk
- Other buildings mainly brick, with pantiled or slate roofs

## **6 PROBLEMS AND PRESSURES**

### **6.1 General**

As Thornton Curtis is identified in the Local Plan as one of the Rural Hamlets and Villages in the Open Countryside it has some protection from new development and therefore its small intimate nature is already protected. However without conservation area designation, which controls demolition, the existing historic buildings could be lost or unsympathetically altered. It is also important to retain the rural character of the village, particularly the landscape created by the trees, hedges and verges. Loss of this mature planting, or inappropriate new planting, would have an adverse impact on the rural nature of the village.

### **6.2 Buildings which have a negative impact on conservation area**

Although built to serve the local agricultural industry, the barns and silos at Home Farm are not visually attractive buildings due to their bulk and their use of modern materials. Fortunately, their location close to trees and the choice of green cladding helps to mitigate some of their impact, especially when viewed from Station Road.

The steel business occupies a large corrugated steel shed which although not within the proposed conservation area does affect the setting of the village. The shed and associated Portacabins to the rear are located in a prominent location at the approach to Thornton Curtis, and because the building has a much greater height and bulk than other surrounding buildings, it has a dominating impact on the visual appearance of the area. As with the above buildings the colour has marginally helped to mitigate the harm, but it remains a visually intrusive element.

### **6.3 Sites which have a negative impact on Thornton Curtis**

There are two open areas in front of the industrial buildings at either side of the southern edge of Main Street, which are considered to have a negative visual impact on the area. The car park in front of the steel fabricators is an open area of tarmac occupied by parked cars and with a limited front boundary, providing a poor approach to the historic village. The area on the other side of the road is used for the storage of materials such as pallets, and for car parking. These uses combined with the rough, scrub-like vegetation, are visual intrusive.

### **6.4 Buildings at risk**

Generally properties within Thornton Curtis are occupied and well maintained. The buildings which are under threat are the small farm buildings which are no longer required for the modern farming industry. The small collection of cartsheds and outbuildings at Church Farm are in a perilous state, with missing tiles and brickwork which is extensively overgrown with ivy.

### **6.5 Alterations to existing historic buildings**

Changes to windows and doors of earlier houses in Thornton Curtis have had a cumulative negative impact on the appearance of the village. For example, all the windows in the cottages south of the church have been replaced with modern designs which lack the subtle detailing of the originals. On the west side of Main Street the new windows are uPVC double glazed units with the glazing bars sandwiched between the sheets of glass. The refractive quality of the double glazed panes, which appear almost mirror-like, and the loss of modelling provided by more traditional windows, has harmed the character and appearance of these properties.

The loss of original windows, doors, roofing materials, and the addition of small extensions such as front porches, could be controlled by the Council by serving an Article 4 Direction on the unlisted family dwelling houses in Thornton Curtis.

### **6.6 Traffic**

The large heavy lorries thundering through Thornton Curtis has an adverse impact on the character and tranquillity of the environment of the village.

### **6.7 Trees**

Many of the trees are reaching maturity and therefore will be vulnerable to natural decay. With the enlargement of fields some of the boundary trees which skirt the

village are also under threat. Where new planting has been undertaken it has often consisted of fast growing conifers, which although provide screening, detract from the overall rural appearance and character of the area.

## **6.8 Summary**

- Conservation area designation needed to control demolition and prevent unsympathetic alterations
- Loss of existing trees or tree groups
- Planting of fast-growing trees such as leylandii, which are not sympathetic to the rural character of the village
- Several buildings and sites have a negative impact: modern buildings at Home Farm; steel fabrication buildings and adjoining sites; and the industrial sites on either side of Main Street at its southern end
- Former farm buildings threatened by demolition or unsympathetic conversion
- Changes to unlisted historic buildings including uPVC windows and doors, and the use of modern roof materials
- Busy traffic along Main Street

## **7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 General**

This section contains a number of recommendations in order to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of Thornton Curtis in the future. These proposals will be subject to public comment prior to being formally adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Further recommendations may be added, or existing ones deleted, as part of the public consultation exercise.

### **7.2 Designate Thornton Curtis as a conservation area.**

Thornton Curtis is a small agricultural village dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. It contains many historic buildings including a 12<sup>th</sup> century church (listed grade I), two 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century properties, and a large number of 19<sup>th</sup> century farmsteads and cottages. The village as a whole has a spacious, rural wooded character created by sparsely spaced buildings, trees, fields and gardens.

Despite some minor alterations to the historic forms, Thornton Curtis is considered to be of special architectural and historic interest and should be designated as a conservation area.

### **7.3 Preservation, enhancement and re-instatement of architectural quality**

- Consider serving an Article 4 Direction, to control minor alterations such as the insertion of uPVC windows to the front elevations of unlisted family dwelling houses in Thornton Curtis
- Agree list of Buildings of Townscape Merit shown on map 3.

- Put forward the following buildings for consideration for listing:  
Northfields Farm  
Old Vicarage

#### **7.4 Environmental and street improvements**

- Maintain the existing surface treatment to roadway and pavement.
- Encourage residents to plant native tree and hedges in gardens and reinforce field hedges where thinning has occurred.
- Restrict the size of lorries using this route through Thornton Curtis. The major A15 north south route is located to the west of the village.
- Recommend the addition of more planting along the southern boundary of the steel fabricators to enhance the approach to the village.

**For further information on Thornton Curtis please contact Edward Rychlak in the Environment Team on 01724 297396, or write to:**

The Environment and Public Protection Department  
North Lincolnshire Council  
Church Square House  
PO Box 42  
Scunthorpe  
North Lincolnshire  
DN15 6XQ

**For information on the history and archaeology of the town contact:**

The Sites and Monuments Record  
North Lincolnshire Museum  
Oswald Road  
Scunthorpe  
North Lincolnshire  
DN15 7BD  
Telephone 01724 843533

**For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas, contact:**

English Heritage  
23 Savile Row  
London  
W1S 2ET  
General telephone enquiries: 020 7973 3000  
Customer Services: 020 7973 4916

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6 Fitzroy Square

London  
W1T 5DX  
Telephone: 020 7387 1720

**For “Care of Victorian Houses” leaflet, contact:**

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1 Priory Gardens  
Bedford Park  
London  
W4 1TT  
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37 Spital Square  
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E1 6DY  
Telephone: 020 7377 1644

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*Countryside Design Summary*  
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N Loughlin and K Miller

# **THORNTON CURTIS CONSERVATION AREA**

## **SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

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### **SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

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## SECTION 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### 1.1 Introduction

Thornton Curtis is a small rural agricultural village, located five miles south-east of Barton-upon-Humber. The church of St. Lawrence, dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, is the central focus of the village, occupying a prominent position on a raised embankment with a highly visible tower. The settlement contains a number of small 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages and farmsteads, a former school, a converted chapel and a public house. These properties are spaced along the Main Street, with trees and small fields between.

The Thornton Curtis Conservation Area was designated by North Lincolnshire Council on ..... A conservation area is *an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*. This is set out in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which also requires local authorities to publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of their conservation areas and to ensure that all development within such areas is assessed very carefully.

A conservation area appraisal for Thornton Curtis has already been written which takes into account the views of local residents and other interested parties. This document, which follows on from the appraisal and which has also been the subject of public consultation, has been adopted by North Lincolnshire Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance. It provides detailed guidance on the management of the Thornton Curtis Conservation Area and will be used by the Council when determining planning and listed building consent applications within, and on the boundaries of, the conservation area.

### 1.2 North Lincolnshire Local Plan

The North Lincolnshire Local Plan Revised and Deposit Draft was published in December 2000 and should be consulted in conjunction with this document. Within the Plan are detailed policies which seek (amongst others) the protection of listed buildings and the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas. These are included in the chapter on "The Historic Environment".

*Briefly, the following policies are relevant:*

Policy HE1 Conservation Areas.

This policy states that the Council will continue to protect areas of special quality and character by designating new conservation areas, and by reviewing existing conservation areas.

Policy HE2 Development in Conservation Areas.

This policy states that all new development within a conservation area, or which might affect the setting of it, should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area and its setting. Detailed guidance is also included on how this should be achieved.

**Policy HE3 Demolition in Conservation Areas.**

This policy provides the criteria by which applications for demolition will be considered.

**Policy HE5 Development affecting Listed Buildings.**

This policy describes how the Council will seek to secure the preservation, restoration and continued use of listed buildings.

**Policy HE6 Demolition of Listed Buildings**

This policy outlines how applications for the demolition of listed buildings will be assessed.

**Policy LC11 Areas of Amenity Importance**

This policy describes how the Council will seek to protect Areas of Amenity Importance.

**Policy R1 Protecting Playing Fields**

This policy gives the framework for the protection of land for use as playing fields.

**Archaeology.**

Further policies consider archaeology and include the requirements for archaeological evaluations for certain sites and buildings. These policies are consistent with central government advice in PPG16 which stresses the importance of understanding and recording sites and buildings prior to development.

**1.3 The development of Thornton Curtis.**

Most of the historical information about Thornton Curtis relates to Thornton Abbey, which is situated about a mile and a half east of the village itself. The Augustinian Abbey was founded in 1139 by William Le Gros, and is now a Scheduled Ancient Monument in the guardianship of English Heritage which is open to the public. Within the scheduled area are the remains of a medieval church, a chapter house and a celebrated gatehouse.

St. Lawrence Church is the earliest surviving building in the village containing fabric dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, confirming that there was a medieval settlement of this period at Thornton Curtis. Two 17<sup>th</sup> century houses remain, The Laurels and Thornton Hall. The latter was built between 1695 and 1700 for Sir Rowland Wynne. This listed house, although part of the history of the settlement, is not included within the conservation area as it lies some distance from the village.

The majority of the historic buildings found in Thornton Curtis date from the late-18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. These buildings are farmhouses and cottages built in response, no doubt, to the post-enclosure prosperity of the farming industry. In 1873 a school was built to provide education for the children of the village under the patronage of John Ferraby of Wootton Hall.

Despite the longevity of the settlement of Thornton Curtis it has remained a small rural community. The 20<sup>th</sup> century has been the greatest period of expansion of the village to date, and since 1900 the number of properties has almost doubled.

However, the majority of the new buildings are located in Burnham Lane off Main Street, and their construction did not involve the building of new roads or substantial encroachment into the surrounding countryside.

#### **1.4 The character of the Thornton Curtis Conservation Area**

Thornton Curtis is a small farming community dating back to at least the 12<sup>th</sup> century, set in rolling countryside and woodland. The village contains a number of important historic buildings including the grade I listed St. Lawrence's Church as well as 19<sup>th</sup> century farmsteads and cottages. The large gardens, fields and mature trees combine together to give the settlement a spacious rural quality.

## **SECTION 2 POLICIES**

### **2.1 General information**

The following sections contain a number of policies and guidance for preserving or enhancing the Thornton Curtis Conservation Area, including information about the control and improvement of listed buildings. Also included are sections on unlisted buildings which contribute positively to the character of the conservation area (Buildings of Townscape Merit); design guidance for new development; and guidance on the protection of important views and focal points within the conservation area. Further detailed information can be obtained from the various organisations listed at the end of this section, and from Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG 15) which sets out central government's policies in relation to listed buildings and conservation areas. Local policies are set out in the North Lincolnshire Plan Revised Deposit Draft dated December 2000 and references to the relevant sections of the plan will be given in brackets under each heading. Further guidance on planning in conservation areas can be obtained from the Environment Team at North Lincolnshire Council

### **2.2 Listed Buildings**

St. Lawrence's Church, The Laurels, the Thornton Hunt Public House, and the threshing barn at Church Farm are all included on the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The church is the most important building being grade I, while the others are grade II. All of the listed buildings in the village are identified on the map at the end of this document.

"Listing" covers both the interior and exterior of a listed building, and all structures within the curtilage which form part of the land and have done so since before 1 July 1948.

- *Listed Building Consent is needed for all alterations and extensions which affect the architectural or historic interest of a listed building*

Alterations to listed buildings which may need consent include relatively minor changes like inserting a new window; removing an internal wall, door or fireplace; adding a chimney or flue; removing panelling or fitted cupboards; and inserting a new bathroom where new drainage is required.

Like-for-like repairs usually do not require Listed Building Consent. Owners of such buildings should be encouraged to use traditional materials for roof repairs including lead for flashings and pantiles, clay tiles (or occasionally slate) for roofing repairs. Brick and stonework should be carefully repointed using traditional lime mortars with a brushed flush joint (not weatherstruck or ribbon joints) and cleaning should only be undertaken where its is structurally necessary (such as where build up of dirt or lichen is causing the bricks or stone to break down). Windows should be always repaired *in situ* rather than replaced wholesale. A good joiner can repair rotting timber windows by piecing in new sections and there are many companies who can upgrade timber windows to provide much improved sound and heat insulation. Doors should also be repaired whenever possible but where replacement is needed, the new door must match the original exactly.

- *Like-for-like repairs usually do not require Listed Building Consent although they must be carried out using traditional materials and detailing.*

The importance of the interior as well as the external appearance must be recognised when dealing with listed buildings. It is important that the original plan form and features are protected. Opening up previously separated rooms or moving staircases, removing chimneybreasts, fireplaces, original doors and decorative plasterwork are all changes which are unlikely to receive listed building consent.

- *The original plan form and historic interior features of listed buildings should be preserved.*

Similarly, extensions to listed buildings should be carefully designed to reflect the scale and detailing of the original building. Extensions should be to the side or rear (depending on the layout of the building) and should be lower than the original building and secondary in scale. Materials and details should match the original examples within the listed building, including windows and eaves and roof details. Applications for such changes should be accompanied by enough detailed information for the Council to assess the impact of the scheme on the character of the existing building, and usually, the Council will require existing and proposed plans, sections and elevations at 1:50 scale with larger scale drawings illustrating details such as new windows and doors.

- *Extensions to listed buildings should be secondary in scale to the original building and be carefully detailed. Applications for alterations and additions will need to be drawn-up to a 1:50 scale.*

Alterations which require Listed Building Consent are currently nil rated for VAT but repairs to listed buildings are assessed at the usual VAT rate of 17.5%. Owners should contact the Customs and Excise Office in \_\_\_\_\_ for further details and a leaflet.

### **2.3 Buildings of Townscape Merit and Demolition in Conservation Areas**

As part of the appraisal process a number of unlisted buildings in Thornton Curtis have been assessed as being *Buildings of Townscape Merit*. These include the 19<sup>th</sup>

century farmhouses and their associated farm complexes, the two 19<sup>th</sup> century vicarages and the rows of 19<sup>th</sup> century vernacular cottages. These buildings are considered to be of local importance and contribute *positively* to the character of the conservation area and their demolition or substantial alteration would harm the character or appearance of the area.

*Conservation Area Consent* is required for the full or substantial demolition of all unlisted buildings within the conservation area. In accordance with the Government Guidance in PPG15 there will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings which form a positive contribution to the conservation area. Demolition of such properties will be resisted unless it can be shown that the building is wholly beyond repair, incapable of beneficial use, or where its removal or replacement would enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. Additionally, because these buildings are an important part of the character of the conservation area, the Council will pay special attention to applications for alterations and extensions.

- *North Lincolnshire Council will resist applications to demolish all or a substantial part of any building identified within this appraisal as a “Building of Townscape Merit”. Additionally, alterations and extensions to these buildings will have to be particularly sensitively designed and take into account their historic and architectural interest.*

## **2.4 New Development**

Thornton Curtis is identified in the Local Plan under the heading Rural Hamlets and Villages in the Open Countryside. Policy H1 makes clear that new residential development in such areas is unlikely to be permitted unless it is to provide accommodation for agricultural and forestry workers. In the few cases where new development is permitted the proposals will also need to meet the requirements laid out in the policies on the Historic Environment (policies HE2, HE3 and HE4) Additionally, the same Plan includes Supplementary Planning Guidance which provides detailed advice on house extensions which are of use in relation to Thornton Curtis.

### **Design**

The principal aim of new development should be to retain the small scale and landscape nature of the village.

- *New development should therefore reflect the scale and materials and spacious setting of adjoining property. Any new building should be of the highest architectural quality and its form including its height, bulk, scale, materials, and relationship to the landscape should be match or reflect adjoining properties. This does not mean slavish imitation of the existing historic buildings, but good quality design that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of Thornton Curtis.*

## Materials

Materials for new development in Thornton Curtis will usually be chosen to match existing buildings in the area, so local red brown brick would be the most appropriate. Roofs should be covered in clay pantiles or natural slate. Windows should be made from timber and be traditionally detailed vertical sliding sashes or horizontally sliding sashes or casements. Top hung false sashes or plastic windows or not suitable. All timber should be painted not stained.

- *Traditional materials and details should be specified for new development in Thornton Curtis.*

## 2.5 Protection of Open Space and Views

St. Lawrence's churchyard is identified as an Area of Amenity Importance in the North Lincolnshire Local Plan and is already protected by policies LC 11.

- *The Council will protect areas identified as having amenity importance from development which will adversely affect their open character, visual amenity, wildlife value.*

This appraisal has identified important vistas and landmarks within Thornton Curtis and also views to and from the village the surrounding agricultural land. These have are shown on the townscape analysis map.

- *The Council will protect existing views in Thornton Curtis most notably views to the church tower and the surrounding countryside.*

Private gardens have a significant role to play in the character of this conservation area. In order to retain the rural nature and landscape setting of the buildings, gardens should be kept free of development.

- *There will be a presumption against development within gardens unless it can be demonstrated that there would be no significant detrimental effect on the amenity and quality of the local environment.*

## 2.6 Trees

The many trees and tree groups in Thornton Curtis play an important part in the character and appearance of the conservation area and designation gives the Council powers to control what happens to them.

- *If you wish to lop, top, uproot or fell a tree in the conservation area which is not already covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) you must give the Council 6 weeks written notice before carrying out the work; trees have legal protection equivalent to a TPO for that period, and the Council may make an Order if it is considered appropriate. Proposals to prune a tree should clarify what is envisaged and the extent of the work. The removal of dead wood with secateurs or handshears does not require consent.*

Trees which, whilst remaining healthy, have reached a stage in their development where the crown spread begins to get smaller, are now generally regarded as “veteran”. Such trees may not necessarily be particularly old, but the onset of old age has been brought about by the tree’s response to the surrounding environmental conditions (soil, air water and nutrient availability). They may therefore exhibit increasing die-back of branches, bark and trunk and may contain significant amounts of dead wood. Whilst the removal of dead wood will not generally require consent from the Council, the treatment in older trees requires careful consideration, and the Council can provide free advice. The Council is also currently producing Supplementary Planning Guidance on “Trees and development”, and is looking to a long term tree strategy which will involve new planting and additional Tree Preservation Orders.

- *The Council will seek to promote the dissemination and use of best practice techniques for the proper management of veteran trees.*

## **2.7 How residents can help.**

The character of the Thornton Curtis Conservation Area comes not only from the physical appearance of the town but also from the community who live and work in the area. The retention and enhancement of the character and appearance of Thornton Curtis can therefore only be achieved by the residents and the Council working together.

An owner is responsible for the continued maintenance of their property and garden, and regular repair with traditional materials can help to retain the quality of the townscape. Local residents and amenity groups can also help by recording the local history and features of the area, and by passing on information about good local builders and suppliers of traditional materials and skills.

If you are considering undertaking any repairs or alterations to your property or land, the best approach is always to contact the Environment Team at North Lincolnshire Council for free advice before starting work.

**For specific information about the Thornton Curtis Conservation Area, please contact:**

Edward Rychlak,  
Environment and Public Protection Department,  
North Lincolnshire Council,  
Church Square House,  
P O Box 42,  
Scunthorpe,  
North Lincolnshire DN15 6XQ  
(tel: 01726 297396)

**For further information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas, contact:**

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