

ALKBOROUGH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

North Lincolnshire Council

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1 Introduction

Alkborough is a small village in a strategic position overlooking the River Trent as it joins the Ouse to become the Humber. Once more accessible by river, its present reliance on roads makes it all the more remote. The village has Saxon origins that are evident in the Church of St John the Baptist. However, the surviving historic fabric mostly dates from the enclosures of the late 18th century when it was the estate village for the Goulton family of Walcot Hall.

The conservation area includes the planned core of the village immediately south of the church, an area of lower density building to the north, and the hamlet of Walcot set in parkland to the south. It also includes two nationally important ancient monuments, a turf maze, known as Julian's Bower, and an extensive medieval earthwork called Countess Close.

The modest buildings share a common use of limestone and red brick with pantiled roofs. A typical form is the single storey cottage with a window to either side of a central door, though several have since been raised or extended. Links with the countryside are ever present in the form of green verges in the streets, mature trees and farmyards contained within the fabric of the village.

This appraisal will assess the special interest, both architectural and historical, of Alkborough. The history of the village, and its present appearance and character will be described, its problems analysed, and a number of recommendations put forward which will be considered by North Lincolnshire Council for implementation after full public consultation.

Policies included within a separate document 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. Both documents will therefore be a useful source of information for owners, agents, applicants and members of the public who live or work in Alkborough.

2 Legislative background.

A conservation area for Alkborough was designated in 1970 by the former Glanford Borough Council. The boundary was tightly drawn to cover just the historic village centre from the church to Countess Close. In 1980 it was extended to include properties to the north of the church and southwards to include the neighbouring settlement of Walcot. There are only two minor proposals in this appraisal for further alteration of the conservation area boundary to take account of changes to the curtilage of Prospect Farm and to rationalise the line behind Holme Farm and Spring Gate Farm.

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 fulfils 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 should ensure that harmful change is not allowed, but some changes, normally not requiring planning permission (known as permitted development rights) can continue to erode the special interest of the conservation area. These rights, which apply to single family houses, can be controlled by the serving of an Article 4 Direction, enabling the Council to require a planning application for minor alterations such as replacement windows and doors. A Direction already exists for the area covered by the original designation and this appraisal includes a recommendation to extend this control to the whole of the existing conservation area.

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 4.

3 Location and landscape setting

3.1 Location and population

Alkborough is a small village, with a population of less than 600, situated some 7 miles north of Scunthorpe. It occupies a commanding position on the western escarpment overlooking the Trent Falls where the River Trent and the River Ouse combine to form the Humber. Once more accessible by river, it now shares a remoteness with other riverside settlements, such as Whitton and Winteringham to the east and Burton-upon-Stather to the south.

3.2 Landscape setting.

The area north of Scunthorpe, in the angle of the Trent and Humber, is characterised by two ridges running from north to south, each with a steep scarp to the west and a gentle dip slope to the east. Alkborough and Burton-upon-Stather are the main settlements on the western ridge. Between them, the scarp is a cliff-like drop of 60 metres to the River Trent. Northwest of Alkborough, there is a large triangular apron of low-lying farmland, known as The Flats, below the scarp at the junction of the Trent and the Humber. To the west, the fields are largely arable, divided by hedges and dry-stone walls. There are occasional woods, but trees tend to be concentrated in the settlements providing shelter and privacy.

The hilltop location provides spectacular views to the west across the Trent to the landscapes of Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire, although power stations are the most notable landmarks. Views to the east are of the next scarp before Winterton and Winteringham.

The whole of the scarp slope and the parkland of Walcot are designated in the North Lincolnshire Local Plan as an area of High Landscape Value and a substantial part of this is also a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation.

3.3 Geology and building materials.

The two escarpments are made of Oolitic limestone. This is often stained with iron salts, being close to the Frodingham ironstone, giving a rusty brown colour. The local limestone was generally used in varying qualities as squared rubble, rubblestone walling and for drystone walls. For prestigious work, on the church for example, materials were often imported.

This simple geology is complicated by overlays of glacial boulder clays and alluvial silts from the river estuaries, which provided the materials for brick and tile making. Bricks started to be made in Lincolnshire at the beginning of the 18th century and buildings before this time were either stone or timber, though little evidence of any timber building survives in the area. The stone tradition persisted, with the gradual introduction of brick dressings to strengthen openings and corners, until industrial production and improved transport made brick more universal from the mid-19th century onwards.

Water reed would have been the only material available for roofing until the 18th century when clay pantiles became available. Clay for roofs, either as plain tiles or pantiles, is now the established tradition although some buildings have blue slate, which became fashionable with the railway age after the 1840s.

4 History and development.

4.1 History

The village of Alkborough lies in a strategic position above the confluence of the Rivers Ouse and Trent, and a settlement has existed here since at least late Saxon times, as fabric in the base of the church tower attests. There was also a separate settlement at Walcot from the Middle Ages.

Two early surviving features of Alkborough – Countess Close and Julian’s Bower – have given rise to speculation about the origins of the village. In the 18th century, William Stukeley considered the earthworks of Countess Close to be a Roman entrenchment, although it is now considered to have been a fortified medieval steading. The turf maze, Julian’s Bower, has also been described as a ‘Roman labyrinth’ until more recent historical research has ascribed it to the early 13th century.

Alkborough developed an agricultural economy which, by the 17th century, had generated sufficient wealth to justify the building of Walcot Old Hall. Enclosure in the 1760s established the existing pattern of the village with several farms, such as College Farm, Holme Farm and Spring Gate Farm, fronting the main streets rather than being isolated on their holdings.

Enclosure also coincided with the building of Walcot Hall by Thomas Goulton who, with his successors, was a significant patron of the village. The Goultons provided an infants’ school, later succeeded by their gift of the existing village school of 1874. They also provided a Reading Room in 1882 and the land for the 1905 Burial Ground.

In addition to the Church of St John the Baptist, Alkborough also supported a Primitive Methodist Chapel, built in 1827, and a Wesleyan Chapel of 1840. This is despite the population reaching a peak of 468 in 1851, which was not significantly exceeded until the late 20th century.

Until the late 19th century, Alkborough was connected as much by water as it was by road, with regular steam packets to Goole, Hull and Gainsborough. Since then, increased isolation has meant that there has been little change. The modernisation and intensification of farming has led to the addition of more recent buildings to the existing farmyards and the demise of local services, such as the wheelwright, and newer housing has infilled gaps in the village streets. Local authority housing from the early 20th century has developed to the east of the village, while further housing later in the century has extended the village to the north.

4.2 Archaeology.

Countess Close and Julian’s Bower are afforded legal protection as scheduled ancient monuments. Pre-dating the Countess Close earthwork, finds from the adjacent field of a large quantity of pottery sherds dating from the 1st to 4th centuries

AD indicate that a Romano-British settlement occupied this area. In 1931, a pot containing a small hoard of Roman coins was dug up just to the south at Walcot Hall. We have evidence for several other settlements dating to the late Iron Age and Romano-British periods (100BC- 409AD) dotted along the high ground overlooking the Rivers Trent and Ouse.

Evidence for earlier prehistoric occupation was uncovered when a new drive from Walcot Hall was being constructed in 1920 and an Early Bronze Age (2350BC-1501BC) beaker vessel was found together with a boar's tusk and burnt bone. At Kell Well just outside the conservation area at Walcot, flint arrowheads and other implements of the Neolithic period (4000BC-2351BC) including a stone axehead have been picked up.

The earthworks of the deserted medieval village at Walcot are now mostly ploughed out and are only visible on aerial photographs; the site has produced limestone building rubble and quantities of medieval and post-medieval pottery. The foundations of a medieval building were discovered during the construction of the southern end of the driveway to the Hall. These could be the remains of the house occupied by the priest who lived close to Walcot Chapel and cemetery, which was built in 1147AD by the Abbot of Peterborough and maybe located somewhere nearby in the Park.

Physical evidence for the medieval settlement of Alkborough has come from the site at College Farm, adjacent to Countess Close. Here, building debris of limestone, tile, burnt stone and areas of clay floors were uncovered when a pasture close was ploughed up in the 1960s. The pottery finds demonstrate that these house sites were occupied from the 13th to 16th centuries. This may previously have been the site of a small cell of Benedictine monks founded in 1052AD by Spalding Priory. The monks were recalled to Spalding in 1220AD when the Priory buildings at Alkborough presumably fell into secular hands.

4.3 Historic landscapes/parks/gardens.

There are no formally registered parks or gardens in the area, however, the parkland landscape from Countess Close southwards is clearly a significant part of the 18th and 19th century development of the Goulton estate.

4.4 Effect of historical development on the plan form of Alkborough.

The almost circular shape of the churchyard suggests a pre-Christian site. From this focal point, Front Street develops a width of marketplace proportion although there is no suggestion of a market charter. Back Street, as the name implies, is of inferior dimension completing the rectangular plan, while Cross Street enables the centre of this shape to be used. This figure-of-eight plan was certainly established by the 18th century although how it served to connect the church and Countess Close in the Middle Ages is unclear. Historical property tended to be built fronting directly onto the street giving a direct relationship between street and building line, while later development differs in being set back within its plot.

There are several routes from the centre radiating coastally towards Whitton, the Trent Flats and Burton, and also eastwards to Winteringham and West Halton.

Walcot, by contrast, is a typical country estate with the old and new houses of the 17th and 18th centuries set in parkland with the home farm. Whether the medieval village of Walcot was deliberately destroyed in order to create the planned parkland setting, as was often the case, has yet to be confirmed.

5 Character and appearance.

5.1 General.

Alkborough retains a character formed by the consistent use of limestone, red brick and pantiles on buildings fronting softly informal streets with a background of mature trees and hedges.

The village can be divided into five elements: the churchyard and the property fronting it; the figure-of-eight plan; property to the north of the church; the ancient monuments of Julian's Bower and Countess Close; and Walcot. Each of these areas is described in detail in Section 6 below.

5.2 Relationship to setting.

There are constant reminders of the strategic scarp-top location in the dramatic views that open out, particularly to the west and north. The church tower dominates views across open countryside towards the village. It is notable that the tower is also the main landmark to be seen from below the scarp face. Most of the historical development, in Back Street for instance, is set back from the edge and, mercifully, little recent building has intruded upon this view.

It is also characteristic that the built form of the village is masked, in views from outside it, by trees and hedges. The distinctiveness of the village is, therefore, vulnerable to any development that extends beyond that envelope.

5.3 Activity and uses.

The primary land-use in Alkborough is residential and for modern purposes this must include a substantial element of outward commuting as there is little employment within the village other than farming which, of course survives with increasing mechanisation and decreasing manpower. The integration of active farmyards into the fabric of the village is an essential facet of its character.

Other uses include the school, the church, the village shop and the Coronation Club.

5.4 Open spaces, trees and vistas.

The relationship of the village and the countryside is heightened by the mature trees and hedges that tend to occur in back gardens, rather than on the streets. There are notable yew trees in the churchyard and deciduous species along the scarp edge and on the north side of Countess Close, providing a backdrop to properties in Back Street. Particularly uncharacteristic are the Leyland Cypresses that form dense over-high hedges around the Manor House.

To the south, trees play a major part in the parkland of Walcot providing shelterbelts around the immediate farmland and avenues to emphasise the entrances to Walcot Hall. This land together with Countess Close, Julian's Bower and the churchyard are the major open spaces. More vulnerable, perhaps, are the wide grass verges of Front Street, where the absence of kerbs allows an essential softness to survive, and the significant spaces between buildings where trees or more distant views can be glimpsed.

In the Local Plan, two areas are identified as Areas of Amenity Importance where development will only be permitted if it would not adversely affect the open character. They are Countess Bower and the churchyard, including the area immediately to the north and the grounds of Orchard House. In addition, the area around Prospect Farm and the southern half of the conservation area, from Countess Bower to Walcot, form part of the Lincoln Edge Area of High Landscape Value.

The farmyards included within the village also provide distinctive spaces that contribute strongly to the local character. They are particularly vulnerable to the threat of infill development.

5.5 Building materials and architectural styles.

The earlier houses date from the 18th century, although some may have older components. They tend to be single storey, fronting onto the road, with limestone walls and pantile roofs. The windows are vertically hung sliding sashes or the 'Yorkshire' horizontal sliding type. In several cases there is evidence of these houses being raised to two storeys in the later 18th and 19th centuries with brick arches to the lower window openings.

From the late 18th century, two-storey houses are the norm, some rendered to give a finish to poor quality stone. In the 19th century brick takes over from stone. Some of the brick, as at Prospect Farm and the Wesleyan Chapel, is a yellow-buff colour that tones with the limestone, but mostly it is red brick exploiting the contrast with the stone when used for quoins and arches.

Farm buildings have seen a similar evolution from stone to brick and, more recently to system buildings with sheet material cladding. The 20th century has seen similar departures from tradition in housing with a return to the bungalow form, but with a much deeper plan form necessitating larger roofspans. Modern details have

included box dormers with timber cladding and plastic-framed windows in a variety of uncharacteristic casement forms.

Higher status buildings have always been able to justify the use of imported materials in order to emphasise their difference or secure higher quality. Thus the church uses gritstone from Yorkshire and Walcot Old Hall uses red bricks that were not generally available for another hundred years.

The Old Hall is built in a 17th century style that is beginning to use classical devices, such as pediments, but emphasises its load-bearing solidity with heavy mullion and transom windows. By contrast, its successor a century later gains relative lightness from large sash windows with slender glazing bars.

5.6 Listed buildings.

It is the consistency of the older buildings, rather than their quality in a wider context, that is significant to the character of Alkborough. It is not surprising, therefore, that only a few buildings stand out sufficiently to be statutorily listed.

The most important listed building is the Church of St John the Baptist with its 11th century tower, medieval aisles and late Victorian restoration. It is grade I. The remnant of the churchyard cross, apparently worn down by the sharpening of blades, is grade II as are the other listed buildings in the village - the 18th century Providence Cottage and the Wesleyan Chapel of 1840. At Walcot, the Old Hall is grade II*, while the much altered Walcot Hall is grade II, as is the nearby Peel Cottage built for the estate in early 1800s.

Just outside the conservation area, off West Halton Lane, the four-storey tower of a former windmill is listed grade II. There are other buildings that would be listed but for alterations to windows and roof coverings, such as the 18th century Manor House and Southdale House in Cross Street.

5.7 Buildings of Townscape Merit.

This appraisal has identified a significant number of Buildings of Townscape Merit, which are noted on the Townscape Analysis Map at Figure 4. These are buildings which, although not listed, are considered to contribute positively to the character of the Alkborough Conservation Area. They date from the 18th and 19th centuries, although some have been added to since. Most of these buildings, however, are largely unaltered or, could with some restoration, be easily reinstated to their original appearance.

Their age and architectural interest is considered to provide sufficient justification for them to be given special protection and the Council will resist their demolition unless the applicant can prove that the building is beyond the point of economic repair. 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. Policies to help achieve their preservation and

enhancement are provided in the Supplementary Planning Guidance for Alkborough.

6 Area Analysis.

6.1 General.

This section examines the buildings and spaces within the conservation area in greater detail by considering it in five sub-areas. The aim is to identify the special character of the area that provides Alkborough with its particular “sense of place” and to summarize the details and features that matter. The five areas are The Churchyard, including Churchside and Church View, The figure-of-eight plan, Property to the north of the church, Julian’s Bower and Countess Close, and Walcot. A summary of the special characteristics is included at the end of each section.

6.2 The Churchyard, Churchside and Church View.

The Church of St John the Baptist occupies the highest point in the village, its churchyard elevated above street level and encircled by a stone retaining wall. Indeed, the roundness of the churchyard suggests a pre-Christian site.

The church was associated with Spalding Priory in 1052, so the early work in Yorkshire gritstone to the tower and nave is Saxo-Norman. Thereafter, further additions and alterations were made in the 12th, 14th, 15th and early 19th centuries. In 1887 the church was restored with the addition of a new chancel by John Oldrid Scott. Now, the stone building, with slate on the nave roof and tile on the slightly higher chancel, is the focal point of the village, while the four-stage tower is a prominent landmark in views from below the scarp and across farmland from the east and northeast.

Scott also added the timber south porch, the floor of which is inlaid with the pattern of the turf maze at Julian’s Bower. The yew-lined path to this entrance is reached by stone steps with a wrought-iron gate and an overthrow lantern. The churchyard also contains the shaft of a medieval cross, worn to the appearance of modern sculpture, apparently by the sharpening of swords. There is also a war memorial in the form of a Celtic cross, and a number of yew trees.

Churchside.

This short road on the west side of the churchyard leads to an area of rough grass to the north. Facing the church, at the north end, is a pair of late 19th century red brick houses. The left hand of these is called ‘Aquis’, a reference to the mistaken belief by the 18th century historian William Stukeley that Alkborough was a Roman settlement. In front, is a low boundary wall with terracotta copings.

Adjacent, to the south, is a pair of 1970s houses uncharacteristically set back from the road. South again is Mapleton House, perhaps 19th century but now with

modern render, concrete tiles, steel and timber casements and an untraditional panelled door.

Next is Becket House, a rubblestone building in two parts. First, a late 18th - or early 19th century single-storey house, typical of the area, with brick quoins, brick-arched windows either side of a plain plank door and a pantiled roof. Dormers were added later, as was the two-storey extension on which the gable end has been rebuilt with characteristic Lincolnshire tumbling brickwork.

Church View.

This short row of rubblestone houses faces the south side of the churchyard. Greyfriars is a typical single-storey cottage, like Becket House above, with a weathered concrete tile roof. The next house and Church View Cottage beyond are a similar slightly later pair, although the first has late Victorian dormers. Then Nos.1 and 2 are a mid-19th century pair rising to two full storeys with canted bays to the ground floor, stout six-panel doors and a pantiled roof. The two pairs are slightly set back behind a dry-stone boundary wall.

- The church is the most significant building in the village.
- The churchyard is raised and edged by a stone retaining wall.
- The cross, war memorial, entrance gate and trees are important.
- Greyfriars is a particularly good example of a typical late-18th century cottage.
- The earlier houses front directly onto the street.
- Mapleton House has lost significance by the use of modern materials and detailing.

6.3 The figure-of-eight plan.

The arrangement of a front street and a back street, so named, with Cross Lane dividing the area between them into two blocks, suggests a conscious plan for the layout of the historical heart of the village.

Front Street.

This forms the east side of the village, curving at the north end towards the church. On the north side, the end of Front Street is punctuated by a Victorian pair of houses appropriately called Church View and The Gables respectively. They are limestone rubble with a datestone of 1870. A steep tiled roof encloses a dormered first floor and there is an ornate chimney stack. The Gables retains the original triple casements, each divided horizontally into four panes, while Church View has modern single panes of plate glass.

Adjacent are two 1970s bungalows, one brick and one cream rendered, which nonetheless have drystone boundary walls. Behind them, indicating an earlier use of the site, is a 19th century brick and pantiled outhouse or stable. 'Rosalie' and 'The Cottage', a pair of two-storey houses, follow. The first is disfigured by rough render, modern windows and a plastic door. They are, however, important in closing northward views up Front Street as it curves to the church.

To the south is the substantial farmhouse of Holme Farm, rendered and banded with simple casement windows. Behind is a range of stone and brick farm buildings and to the side is a site once occupied by further houses.

On the south side of Front Street, as it emerges from Church View, is the only listed house in the village. Providence Cottage was a single-storey stone house, perhaps dated by the adjacent gateposts inscribed 'IFOY 1797', but it was raised to two storeys in 1829. The openings have stucco flat arches to a central panelled door with 16-pane Yorkshire sashes to either side and above.

The adjacent Easton is a bungalow of buff fletton brick with a concrete tile roof and plastic door. Then, Front Street Cottage is a 1½ and two-storey range where historical appearance has been submerged beneath harsh rendering and a variety of modern casements.

As Front Street turns south, Lynwood is an Edwardian pebbledash house, at right angles to the road, with four-paned sashes and a timber porch. The garden it fronts has a drystone boundary as far as Stony Ridge, a buff brick bungalow set back in its plot.

Beyond, on the corner with Cross Lane, is Pear Tree Cottage. This 18th century stone and pantile house has brick quoins and gables. In a later re-ordering, the central door has been replaced with a casement to match the style of the other windows. On the other corner, the Old Post Office is another 1½ and two-storey range much altered by rendering and modern windows, including bow windows recessed into the thickness of the walls and over-large inelegant dormers.

The next pair of houses has a 19th century brick front on a limestone rear. They were clearly built when bricks were expensive and, therefore, only for show. Unusually for a house, the economical English Garden Wall bond was used. The wider window in the left hand half may indicate a former shop.

The Wesleyan chapel of 1840 has a grey brick front divided into two bays by Ionic pilasters with a pedimented gable above. Symmetry is maintained by a dummy door to the left matching the working door to the right. These have later round-headed margin-light windows over. To the left, Chapel Court leads to a cul-de-sac of five 1960s houses in two bungalow terraces of brick with concrete tiles. In front of them, two 1970s bungalows face Front Street before its corner with Back Street.

On the east side of Front Street, Marern House was once a typical single-storey 18th century house until it was raised and rendered in the late 19th century and extended to form a butcher's shop. The Edwardian windows and shopfront survive as does the small abattoir to the left of the entrance gate. The adjacent house has similar 18th century origins but with the addition of a shop and modern dormers in a concrete tile roof.

Next, Ravendale is a mid-to-late 19th century red brick house with a panelled doorway at the centre and plate-glass sashes to either side and above. A similar arrangement exists in the slightly earlier house next door but the surface of the brickwork has been irretrievably eroded by abrasive blasting.

The former Victorian Methodist chapel uses yellow brick dressings to contrast with the three bays of redbrick pilasters enclosing arch-headed windows. It has a boldly dentilled gable front with finials to either side, but the ground floor has been insensitively altered to provide a garage door.

South of this is a pair of 19th century houses whose history has been lost under featureless render and modern doors and windows. Beyond are two early 20th century pebbledash houses with brick window surrounds and a typical diamond motif between the storeys.

Back Street.

Back Street forms the south and west sides of the plan. On the south side is College Farm, a large farmyard with the rubblestone and brick-quoined farmhouse at right angles to the road and several stone and pantiled farm buildings. There are more modern brick and steel buildings too, but the yard is contained behind drystone walling.

The wall follows the road as it curves and the mature trees of Countess Close form a backdrop to Walks End and Walks End Cottage. These are a pair of red brick and pantile houses going away from the road with tumbling brickwork to the gables, but modern timber and plastic casements instead of traditional sash windows. Beside them and forming an 'L' shape is Watersmeet, a single-storey brick house. Behind them there are two buff brick bungalows and adjacent, a more recent red brick bungalow with Julian's Bower behind it.

Here, there are glimpses of views over the Trent valley, while Walks End and Walks End Cottage provide a particularly important stop to southward views in Back Street. These are also punctuated by an imposing tree in the grounds of the Julian's Bower bungalow.

The west side of Back Street continues with an early 20th century rendered and pantiled house set well back from the road overlooking Julian's Bower. Then a recent house in imitation of reclaimed brick. As the road kinks opposite Cross Lane, a single-storey stone house with Edwardian detailing is the former library and next to it are two brick workshops. This was the premises of Frank Drinkall and Sons who were wheelwrights serving the agricultural community until the early 20th century. The site is fronted by a drystone wall and there is a 1920s timber chalet behind the workshops taking advantage of the view.

There are two further properties before Back Street becomes Churchside. The Vicarage is a 1970s buff brick house with large modern windows. High Meadows is more recent, a single storey with a large expanse of pantiled roof. Both are set back considerably from the road.

Opposite, the east side of Back Street starts with the two pairs of buff brick Sarah Gaunt bungalows. Then, there is the imposing bulk of the Coronation Club giving a solid emphasis to the south corner of Cross Lane. This early 19th century building is of brown brick with a hipped pantile roof and 16-pane sash windows. A more recent porch, supported on yellow brick piers, ties two panels of iron railings.

Hallgarth Cottage was originally a pair of limestone cottages with brick quoins and a hipped roof. It has a door at each end and two bays of narrow Yorkshire sashes. The adjacent plot has a range of late red brick farm buildings that are currently vacant. They were poorly converted to residential use with over-large windows detailed by low-grade fletton bricks. The adjoining house at right angles to the road is another example of a single-storey stone cottage raised to two storeys in the 19th century. Behind this is Wellsgate, a substantial hipped roof, stone and brick house.

Rivers Mead and Fanthorpe Farm are both set at right angles to the road. The former was a pair of 18th century single-storey cottages with a hipped pantile roof to which dormers were added. The limestone has been painted cream. The latter is an early 19th century stone building with a red brick front. It is in derelict condition, but is currently being rehabilitated with considerable rebuilding. Beyond is a small single-storey red brick cottage with ornate chimney stacks and Yorkshire sash windows with shutters.

After this, Back Street turns southeast. Here, the Tower House has a single bay of yellow brick, rising to three storeys in order to exploit the view. It was built in the late 18th century by a Captain Wilkinson in order to look out over the site where his ship foundered and his family drowned in 1770. It has two sash windows with iron window-guards above a finely detailed square bay, which has fluted pilasters supporting arched window heads and a bracketed cornice over. Three bungalows follow and then the limestone and pantiled Corner Farmhouse appropriately marks the junction with Front Street.

Cross Lane.

On the south side, the range of stone and brick outbuildings behind the Coronation Club leads to the much-altered Lapwings. Then, two 1970s buff brick houses, set back from the road, and the current Post Office in a coach house to the rear of the Old Post Office.

On the north side, Thornthwaite and Southdale are a large pair of limestone houses, dated 1788, with a pantiled roof and tumbled brick detailing to the verges of the gable end. With its imposing panelled doorcase, Southdale would be one of the best houses in the village but for the modern casement windows. Two modest double-fronted houses follow, rendered with shallow arched heads to the ground floor openings, and then another 18th century single-storey rubblestone cottage that has been raised with a rendered upper storey. Alterations include the blocking of the central door, modern arched window frames and a concrete tile roof. A gap to the right, before Pear Tree Cottage on Front Street, gives views of the church and also accommodates a mid-20th century buff brick house set back from the road.

- The contrast between Church View and The Gables shows the value of original fenestration.
- Rosalie and The Cottage are important in views from the south.
- Holme Farm is an example of a farmstead that has remained in the village rather than being re-established in the fields after the enclosures.

- Harsh renders and unsympathetic fenestration have taken away the historic character of properties such as Rosalie, Front Street Cottage and the Old Post Office.
- Walks End and Walks End Cottage provide an important stop to views in Back Street.
- Historically, houses were built to a building line at the back edge of the pavement. However, some were set at right angles to the street to allow for access onto the plot.
- Where buildings are set back from the street, the loss of continuity is often compensated in part by drystone boundary walls.
- The use of buff brick on some modern buildings, such as the Vicarage and the Sarah Gaunt bungalows has a neutralising effect but it does not fully mitigate the intrusive effect of non-traditional form and siting.

6.4 Property to the north of the church.

From the church, Whitton Road leads east and then turns northeast. On its south side, Spring Gate Farm has a white, rendered farmhouse, a barn and two other limestone farm buildings contained by a drystone boundary wall. This is very much a working farmyard and there are also several modern steel structures. Glenmore and Ardway are two bungalows, set back behind tall hedges, and then a 1970s house fronts the road before a small group of brick and pantile farm buildings.

On the north side, Orchard House is a large 1970s bungalow with long box dormers in its steeply pitched roof. It is set on an island site, to the right of which, a lane leads north to Prospect Farm. Facing this lane are a new stone and brick house, a 1980s house built of harsh orange brick, and The Bungalow, which has 19th century or earlier origins now faced with pebbledash and plastic joinery. On Whitton Road, The Cottage is one of two stone cottages the latter having retained its three-light casements although it has, unusually, been re-roofed in slate.

Turning the corner, there are two 1970s bungalows before the tall dense hedges of Leyland cypress, which surround the Manor House, become apparent. These trees are particularly uncharacteristic of the conservation area. There are two recent red brick and pantile houses before the drive to the Manor House, which is a substantial Georgian red brick house with modern windows and a concrete tile roof. To the north is the site of a demolished barn largely enclosed by further Leylandii lining a drive that leads west to Dove Hill, a 1960s 'modern' house set in verdant gardens. The lane then turns north down the edge of the scarp to the Flats.

On the east side of Whitton Road, there are two 1970s houses on the corner with Huteson Lane, a former route to the east. Behind them are four 1960s bungalows and beside them two more, then the village primary school. This stone and slate building was given to the village in 1874 by the Goulton family of Walcot. An additional school building was opened in 2000. Behind this addition is a small late 19th century, white painted cottage. Called Humber View, it is indicative of the long views obtained to the north and east over open farmland.

Three bungalows and two more recent houses extend the village northwards to the Old Vicarage, a substantial mid-Victorian red brick house with blue brick banding, a tiled roof and tall ornate chimney stacks. The modern bungalow beyond is not in the conservation area.

To the north of the church and Orchard House, is Prospect Farm, named for the commanding view it has over the scarp to the Trent Falls. A dignified three-bay façade of grey brick with 16-pane sashes suggests an early 19th century date, but this fronts a rubblestone building with domestic and agricultural ranges behind, which may be earlier. There is also an extensive range of red brick and pantile agricultural buildings and a corrugated iron Dutch barn. Currently derelict, Prospect Farm is in the course of repair.

The lane from Whitton Road to Prospect Farm turns west and descends the scarp giving access to the Flats. On its south side, there is a grassy area of open land immediately north of the church and a spring that issues from three arches in a low brick wall.

- Working farms within the fabric of the village, such as Spring Gate Farm, are characteristic of Alkborough.
- Space between buildings is more significant north of the church than in the denser figure-of-eight plan.
- Materials such as harsh orange brick and pebbledash do nothing to enhance the local character.
- While planting often softens the effect of buildings and provides enclosure, tall hedges of *Leylandii* are so aggressive as to detract from the character of the area.
- The spring opposite Prospect Farm is a special feature of the area.

6.5 Julian's Bower and Countess Close.

Julian's Bower and Countess Close are the two scheduled ancient monuments in the conservation area. The former is a turf maze, just over 12 metres in diameter, situated in a shallow depression on the edge of the scarp just off Back Lane. Once common across northern Europe only eleven turf mazes of medieval origin survive, of which eight occur in this country.

The name is taken from Julius, son of Aeneas, a major character in the Troy Saga with which mazes are traditionally associated. The first known reference to Julian's Bower was made in 1697 by local diarist Abraham de la Pryme who understandably assumed it to be Roman. The maze is now considered to be of medieval date and may have been cut by the monks of Spalding Priory before 1220AD.

Mazes such as this were used for ritual dances and children's games, and the sunken position provides ramped areas for spectators. The depression may equally be a product of re-cutting the pattern over time. It is known that Julian's Bower has been re-cut several times and the pattern in the floor of the church porch, laid in 1887, now serves as a reference.

The site is also a major viewpoint at the start of a hilltop walk to Burton-upon-Stather. A plaque on a stone plinth records the distant landmarks to the west.

Countess Close, to the south of Julian's Bower, is an earthwork comprising a series of ditches and ramparts around an almost square main enclosure, with a large annex or second enclosure on the south-western side. The Countess is thought to be a Saxon heiress, Lucy, Countess of Leicester, Lincoln and Chester. She was related by birth and marriage to the owners of Alkborough and Walcot at the time of the Domesday survey (1068).

The historian, William Stukeley, visiting in 1724 thought the site to be a Roman castle, and he drew a conceptual 'aerial' view, which shows entrances through the ramparts on the north and south sides. However, it is now accepted that the site is a fortified medieval manor house. Unfortunately, much damage was done to the site when parts were levelled in 1967. Now, the centre is a field and the edges are lined with mature trees providing an important backdrop to the southern side of the village.

- Julian's Bower is important as a viewpoint as well as a monument.
- The trees around Countess Close provide a significant background.

6.6 Walcot.

To the south of Countess Close, the conservation area is characterised by mature trees and parkland associated with Walcot Hall, which is in a small hamlet about half a mile separate from Alkborough village.

The house is set in a belt of trees between two areas of open farmland with trees along the scarp edge behind. It was built in the late 18th century for Thomas Goulton. The west front, comprising the first limb of the original 'H' plan, was demolished in 1964. The surviving east front is of brown brick under a slate roof. It has two bays of large sash windows either side of an early 19th century Doric porch with a tripartite sash above. The ends have contemporary canted bays on the return elevations. Behind Walcot Hall are pedimented stables and Peel Cottage, an early 19th century rubblestone estate cottage with sash windows and a hipped pantile roof.

On the Walcot Road, as it leads south from Alkborough, there is a small cemetery that was provided by the Goultons in 1906. Then, as the road zigzags past the Hall, Walcot Old Hall fronts onto a corner. This is a mid-17th century red brick house with a double-depth pantiled roof. It has a full height gabled porch with an ornate pedimented brick doorway and a three-light mullion and transom window above. To either side there are similar windows with pediments also to the ground floor. The other elevations have mullion and transom windows too, all with leaded lights. A brick boundary wall has an elegant wrought-iron gate.

Behind the Old Hall, there are several ranges of stone and brick barns and other agricultural buildings, including a long slate-roofed cart shed and a much-altered

brick farmhouse. To the south, Manor Farm is a late 19th century house and on Walcot Road there is a 1970s buff brick house.

Further south, beyond the immediate parkland of Walcot Hall, a small group of houses complete the conservation area. On the east side of the road, Sunnydene has 19th century origins subsumed by recent additions under an orange pantile roof. Opposite, Ivy Cottage is a single-storey rubblestone cottage much altered by a row of catslide dormers, a large rear extension, entrance arches and roadside planting in the manner of a garden.

Honeysuckle House is a 19th century stone and brick house with modern casement windows including bows to the ground floor. Then, Chapel House and Copper Beeches are extensive modern bungalows and finally, Stonecroft and The Ramblers are a pair of late 19th century estate cottages built of stone and brick with gable fronts forming an 'H' plan behind a scalloped concrete fence.

- Mature trees and open spaces dominate this area.
- Walcot Old Hall and Walcot Hall are two of the most important buildings in the whole area.
- The cemetery, though easily overlooked, is an important feature.
- Building alterations have not necessarily been improvements to the conservation area.
- Roadside verges emphasise the rural character except where they have been planted as gardens.

7 Problems and pressures.

7.1 General introduction.

The main threats to the character of Alkborough are the cumulative effect of uncontrolled alterations to historic property and the design of new development. Further issues are the maintenance of older buildings, particularly those not in residential use, and the management of tree surgery and replanting. These have been noted in the analysis above and their effect is recorded in this Section and on the plan at Appendix 4. Recommendations to counter the threats and enhance the distinctiveness of Alkborough follow in Section 8.

7.2 Buildings that have a negative impact on the conservation area.

On the Townscape Analysis Map (Figure 4), buildings or structures considered to have a negative impact on the conservation area have been identified. These are the buildings that use materials or detailing or are sited in a manner that is at odds with the prevailing character. Unfortunately, this means most of the development that has taken place since the 1950s.

Policies relating to these buildings are recommended in Section 8 below but briefly, if demolition and redevelopment were proposed, this would be welcomed by the Council subject to an appropriately designed scheme.

Additionally, other buildings that make a “neutral” contribution to the character of the conservation area have been identified and are also marked on the Townscape Analysis map. These are older buildings that have been altered or modern buildings whose design is considered to be reasonably in keeping with the surrounding area.

7.3 Buildings-at-risk.

In general, the buildings of Alkborough are well cared for. The most notable building-at-risk is Prospect Farm, but a scheme of repair and rehabilitation is in progress. The same is true of Fanthorpe Farm in Back Street. Buildings for which there is cause for concern include Hillcrest to the north of this, the Methodist Chapel on Front Street and the adjoining house, and a number of agricultural buildings such as those on Whitton Road.

Just outside the conservation area, the surviving fabric of the listed windmill on West Halton Lane is unprotected, having no roof, door or windows.

7.4 Sites that have a negative impact on the conservation area.

The Townscape Analysis Map (Figure 4) identifies sites that have a negative impact on the character of the conservation area. The only recorded site is that of the demolished barn immediately northwest of the Manor House. The enhancement of this site would be welcomed by the Council.

7.5 Alterations to historic buildings.

Within the conservation area, a number of both listed and unlisted properties have suffered from the loss of original detailing and materials, such as the insertion of modern windows, the loss of original clay pantiles to concrete, and the insertion of unsympathetic dormers. Some guidance to avoid such change, which is detrimental to the overall character of the conservation area, is included in the Supplementary Planning Guidance for Alkborough. Further advice can be obtained from the organisations listed in Section 9.

7.6 New development within the conservation area.

On the whole, developments over the last 50 years have not been kind to Alkborough. The functional evolution of farming, as seen in steel-framed structures and cylindrical silos, is entirely understandable, but housing developments have brought elements of the town and suburb to the village.

Contrary to the indicators that would come out of any analysis of the conservation area, newer houses have tended to be set back from the street within their plots instead of reinforcing the building line and thus the character. They have brought deeper plans necessitating larger spans and increasing expanses of roofing. They have also introduced non-traditional detailing and materials. Design guidance for any further development is included in the Supplementary Planning Guidance for Alkborough.

7.7 Street audit.

It is evident that street surfaces in Alkborough were never formalised with setts or paving and, in a sense, modern tarmac is a natural successor to the rammed earth and stone that would have preceded it. It is important, however, to note that the edges are also informal and any tendency to define grass verges with modern kerbs would not be an enhancement.

The verges are significant, particularly in Front Street where they are a positive element in the exceptional width between the buildings. As far as possible they should remain simple and green. Occasional punctuation with trees or daffodils is understandable, but any further planting of a permanent all-year-round nature would erode the rural character.

Street furniture is minimal, as it should be in a small village, with just the occasional seat. Telephone services are supplied by overhead wires and, while the effect is not oppressive and the wooden poles provide a mounting for unobtrusive streetlights, it is in the long-term interest of the conservation area for wires to be placed underground.

7.8 Summary.

- The repair and maintenance of older buildings should be encouraged.
- Guidance should be given on alterations avoiding the use of non-traditional materials and detailing.
- In general, buildings should follow the building line at the back of the pavement.
- New buildings should not be sited on the edge of the scarp slope intruding on views from the west.
- A limited palette of materials – limestone and brick with pantiles or slate – will maintain unity between new and old buildings.
- Maintain the softness of roadside verges by avoiding the introduction of kerbs.
- Avoid further planting of greens and verges.
- Avoid the introduction of uncharacteristic species, such as Leyland Cypresses.
- Gaps between buildings are important for glimpses of trees and views.
- Management of the ageing stock of mature trees is needed.
- There is limited need for specific programmes of enhancement of the conservation area beyond what can be provided in day-to-day planning practice.

8. Recommendations.

8.1 General.

This sections contains a number of recommendations which will be subject to public comment before parts of this appraisal are formally adopted by North Lincolnshire Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance. Further recommendations may be added, or existing ones deleted, as part of the public consultation exercise.

8.2 Buildings-at-risk survey.

Although only a few buildings in Alkborough were identified at 7.3 above as being in any way at risk, their condition should be monitored and action for their repair should be promoted within a policy across all the conservation areas in North Lincolnshire.

8.3 Trees.

The character of the conservation area is heavily dependent on a background of mature trees. Clearly, this is an ageing resource and a management programme would be advisable to ensure continuity through new planting to compensate for natural wastage.

8.4 Development control including Article 4 directions.

New development.

The scope for new development in Alkborough is very limited. Indeed, the opportunities are virtually restricted to the possible replacement of buildings that do not make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. Even then, the particular spatial characteristics, noted at 5.4 above and in the analysis, must be safeguarded.

The need has already been noted at 7.6 above for design guidance to address the problems of siting, detailing and choice of materials for new buildings. To an extent this will be provided in the Supplementary Planning Guidance for Alkborough to be published separately. In addition, however, there is a case for a more detailed guide to principles for design and development control across North Lincolnshire including, particularly, advice on the detailing of traditional door and window joinery.

Existing buildings.

The erosion of the conservation area's character through the use of non-traditional materials and detailing, such as concrete tiles and plastic windows, is a recurrent theme in the analysis of Section 6. Most of these changes are alterations to single dwellings, which are normally permitted development not requiring planning

permission. An Article 4.2 direction has the effect of bringing alterations to the front elevation (such as new windows, doors, painting previously unpainted surfaces, and alterations to roof materials and profiles) under planning control.

In Alkborough, an Article 4 direction already applies to the central part of the conservation area, corresponding to the original designation, although there is evidence that it is not necessarily having the desired effect. It is recommended that the Article 4 direction is extended to cover the whole of the conservation area and that the effectiveness of development control practice for such areas is reviewed.

8.5 Environmental and street improvements.

The need to maintain the informal character of the public areas, by avoiding kerbs and over-planting, has been mentioned above as has the very simple need to minimise the amount of street furniture in the village.

The long-term strategy of the Council is to seek the undergrounding of all overhead wires and the removal of telegraph poles in conservation areas. When this is achieved in Alkborough, there will be a need for a street lighting scheme using plain modern fittings mounted on simple columns or on buildings. It will be important for the scheme to observe a lower level of lighting, appropriate to the rural character, rather than an urban brightness.

8.6 Alkborough Conservation Area boundary review.

Following a careful survey of the existing conservation area and its immediate surroundings, two changes are recommended to the existing boundary:

i. Prospect Farm.

The current boundary cuts across the private garden in front of Prospect Farm. It is recommended that the boundary should follow the public footpath from the spring, at the west of prospect Farm, to the west corner of the garden to Dove View.

ii. Spring Gate Farm..

The current boundary follows an undefined line that actually goes through a building at the rear of the farmyard. It is also undefined at the rear of Holme Farm. It is recommended that, from Holme Farm, the boundary should turn east to include the Dutch barn and a property called Butts Hill and then northeast to join the existing boundary as it meets Huteson Lane.

These recommendations are shown on the Proposals Map at Figure 5.

9 Useful names and addresses.

For further information on the Alkborough Conservation Area, contact Edward Rycklak in the Environment Team on 01724 297396, or write to:

The Environment and Public Protection Department,
North Lincolnshire Council,
Church Square House,
P O Box 42,
Scunthorpe,
North Lincolnshire DN15 6XQ.

For further information on the history and archaeology of the village, contact:

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

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

English Heritage,
23 Savile Row,
London W1X 1AB.
General telephone inquiries: 020 7973 3000
Customer Services 020 7973 4916.

For detailed advice on repairing and restoring Georgian houses, contact:

The Georgian Group,
6 Fitzroy Square,
London W1P 6DY.
Telephone: 020 7377 1644

For “Care for Victorian Houses” leaflet, contact:

The Victorian Society,
1 Priory Gardens,
Bedford Park,
London W4 1TT
Telephone: 020 8994 1019

For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets, contact:

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB),
6 Fitzroy Square,

London W1P 6DY.
Tel: 020 7377 1644

10 Bibliography

- | | |
|--|---|
| <i>Alkborough Conservation Area
Hidden Lincolnshire</i> | Glanford Borough Council
Adrian Gray |
| <i>North Lincolnshire: A Pictorial History</i> | Kevin Leahy and David Williams |
| <i>Landscape Assessment and Guidelines</i> | Estell Warren Landscape Architects |
| <i>Countryside Design Summary</i> | Estell Warren Landscape Architects |
| <i>The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire</i> | N Pevsner and J Harris |
| <i>Julian's Bower: A Guide to the
Alkborough Turf Maze</i> | Ian Thompson |
| <i>A Survey of the Archaeological Sites in
Humberside 1979</i> | N Loughlin and K Miller |

ALKBOROUGH CONSERVATION AREA – PROPOSED PUBLICITY LEAFLET

North Lincolnshire Council

ALKBOROUGH CONSERVATION AREA – PROPOSED LEAFLET

Are you a local resident or someone who works in the area? If so, your views are needed!

This leaflet summarises a more detailed appraisal of the Alkborough Conservation Area, currently being considered by North Lincolnshire Council. As part of this appraisal process, the Council is drawing up a number of proposals for the conservation area to safeguard its character in future, which will have a direct effect on how development is controlled in Alkborough over the next five years.

What is a conservation area?

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 Buildings 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 them is assessed very carefully.

The Alkborough Conservation Area was designated by Glandford Borough Council in 1970 and then it was extended in 1980. It covers the historic planned core of the village immediately south of the church, an area of lower density building to the north, and the hamlet of Walcot set in parkland to the south. It also includes the two ancient monuments, Julian's Bower and Countess Close.

What is special about the Alkborough Conservation Area?

Alkborough retains a character formed by the consistent use of limestone, red brick and pantiles on buildings fronting softly informal streets with a background of mature trees and hedges.

The village is largely residential, but the integration of active farmyards is an essential facet of its character. The earlier houses dating from the 18th century tend to be single storey, fronting onto the road, with limestone walls and pantile roofs.

There are constant reminders of the scarp-top location in the dramatic views to the west and north. The church tower dominates views across open countryside towards the village and it is also characteristic that the built form of the village is masked, in views from outside it, by trees and hedges.

Historical development of Alkborough.

There is no known foundation for Alkborough, but it has been a settlement since at least Saxon times. There was also a separate settlement at Walcot from the Middle Ages. Despite a reported find of Roman pottery, there does not appear to have been any Roman occupation.

Alkborough developed an agricultural economy which, by the 17th century, had generated sufficient wealth to justify the building of Walcot Old Hall. Enclosure in

the 1760s established the existing pattern of the village with several farms fronting the main streets rather than being isolated on their holdings. Enclosure also coincided with the building of Walcot Hall by Thomas Goulton whose family provided the village school, a reading room and the Burial Ground. The population reached a peak of 468 in 1851, which was not significantly exceeded until the late 20th century.

Until the late 19th century, Alkborough was connected as much by water as it was by road, with regular steam packets to Goole, Hull and Gainsborough. Since then, increased isolation has meant that there has been little change other than newer housing infilling gaps in the village streets.

What is the Council proposing?

The appraisal has identified a number of issues for the Alkborough Conservation Area and the following proposals seek to address these with a variety of initiatives:

- *Amend the conservation area boundary to include land in front of Prospect Farm and to the rear of Spring Gate Farm.*
- *Carry out a Buildings-At-Risk survey to assess the condition of the village's stock of historic buildings and, where necessary, promote repair and reuse.*
- *Protect Buildings of Townscape Merit by identifying them and by formulating appropriate policies.*
- *Limit the scope for new development and encourage the use of traditional materials and detailing, particularly for windows, doors and roof materials.*
- *Draw up proposals for an Article 4.2 Direction, which would control alterations to the front elevations of unlisted family houses in the conservation area.*
- *Draw up a programme for the management and protection of trees.*
- *To put forward a proposal to carry-out minor street improvements including a scheme for undergrounding wires and revising street lighting.*
- *Publish Supplementary Planning Guidance on listed buildings, the design of new development, and the protection of trees and views within the conservation area.*

If you would like to comment on these proposals, the more detailed document can be seen at *(insert addresses)* between *(insert dates)* after which the Council will amend the Appraisal as necessary.

Meanwhile, if you have any queries about the Alkborough Conservation Area, 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

ALKBOROUGH CONSERVATION AREA

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

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SECTION 1 – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Introduction

Alkborough is a small village in a strategic position overlooking the River Trent as it joins the Ouse to become the Humber. Once more accessible by river, its present reliance on roads makes it all the more remote. The village has Saxon origins that are evident in the Church of St John the Baptist. However, the surviving historic fabric mostly dates from the enclosures of the late 18th century when it was the estate village for the Goulton family of Walcot Hall.

The modest buildings share a common use of limestone and red brick with pantiled roofs. A typical form is the single storey cottage with a window to either side of a central door, though several have since been raised or extended. Links with the countryside are ever present in the form of green verges in the streets, mature trees and farmyards contained within the fabric of the village.

A conservation area for Alkborough was designated in 1970 by Glanford Borough Council. The boundary was tightly drawn to cover just the historic village centre, but in 1980 it was extended to the north and south. Now, the conservation area includes the planned core of the village immediately south of the church, an area of lower density building to the north, and the hamlet of Walcot set in parkland to the south. It also includes two significant ancient monuments, a turf maze, known as Julian's Bower, and an extensive medieval earthwork called Countess Close.

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 Buildings 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 Alkborough has already been written, taking 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 Alkborough Conservation Area and will be used by the Council when determining planning and listed building consent applications within, and near, its boundaries.

1.2 North Lincolnshire Local Plan

The North Lincolnshire Local Plan Revised Deposit Draft was published in December 2000 and should be consulted in conjunction with this document.

Alkborough is defined in the Local Plan as a minimum growth settlement where the building of a single dwelling, or very small groups up to a maximum of three dwellings, is permitted in the main body of the settlement. A healthy rural economy

is promoted via the retention of the existing level of services. The Local Plan seeks the development of previously developed land and vacant buildings to take up the greenfield sites of the locality

Within the Plan are detailed policies, which seek (among other objectives) 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 HE4 Shopfronts, Canopies and Blinds in Conservation Areas.

This policy provides guidance on the control of shopfronts and advertising within conservation areas.

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 HE7 Advertisements and Listed Buildings.

This policy describes the standards that will be applied when considering applications for signs or advertisements on listed buildings.

Policy HE8 Ancient Monuments

This policy states that the Council will protect Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other nationally important monuments, and their settings, from adverse development.

Policy HE9 Archaeological Evaluation

This policy outlines the requirements for archaeological evaluations of certain sites and buildings. This policy is 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 Alkborough

The village of Alkborough lies in a strategic position above the confluence of the Rivers Ouse and Trent, and a settlement has existed here since at least late Saxon times, as fabric in the base of the church tower attests. There was also a separate settlement at Walcot from the Middle Ages.

Two early surviving features of Alkborough – Countess Close and Julian’s Bower – have given rise to speculation about the origins of the village. In the 18th century, William Stukeley considered the earthworks of Countess Close to be a Roman entrenchment, although it is now considered to have been a fortified medieval steading. The turf maze, Julian’s Bower, has also been described as a ‘Roman labyrinth’ until more recent historical research has ascribed it to the early 13th century.

Alkborough developed an agricultural economy which, by the 17th century, had generated sufficient wealth to justify the building of Walcot Old Hall. Enclosure in the 1760s established the existing pattern of the village with several farms, such as College Farm, Holme Farm and Spring Gate Farm, fronting the main streets rather than being isolated on their holdings.

Enclosure also coincided with the building of Walcot Hall by Thomas Goulton who, with his successors, was a significant patron of the village. The Goultons provided an infants’ school, later succeeded by their gift of the existing village school of 1874. They also provided a Reading Room in 1882 and the land for the 1905 Burial Ground.

In addition to the Church of St John the Baptist, Alkborough also supported a Primitive Methodist Chapel, built in 1827, and a Wesleyan Chapel of 1840. This is despite the population reaching a peak of 468 in 1851, which was not significantly exceeded until the late 20th century.

Until the late 19th century, Alkborough was connected as much by water as it was by road, with regular steam packets to Goole, Hull and Gainsborough. Since then, increased isolation has meant that there has been little change. The modernisation and intensification of farming has led to the addition of more recent buildings to the existing farmyards and the demise of local services, such as the wheelwright, and newer housing has infilled gaps in the village streets. Local authority housing from the early 20th century has developed to the east of the village, while further housing later in the century has extended the village to the north.

1.4 The character of the Alkborough Conservation Area

Alkborough retains a character formed by the consistent use of limestone, red brick and pantiles on buildings fronting softly informal streets with a background of mature trees and hedges.

The earlier houses date from the 18th century, although some may have older components. They tend to be single storey, fronting onto the road, with limestone walls and pantile roofs. The windows are vertically hung sliding sashes or the 'Yorkshire' horizontal sliding type. In several cases there is evidence of these houses being raised to two storeys in the later 18th and 19th centuries with brick arches to the lower window openings.

From the late 18th century, two-storey houses are the norm, some rendered to give a finish to poor quality stone. In the 19th century brick takes over from stone. Some of the brick, as at Prospect Farm and the Wesleyan Chapel, is a yellow-buff colour that tones with the limestone, but mostly it is red brick exploiting the contrast with the stone when used for quoins and arches.

The primary land-use in Alkborough is residential and for modern purposes this must include a substantial element of outward commuting as there is little employment within the village other than farming which, of course survives with increasing mechanisation and decreasing manpower. The integration of active farmyards into the fabric of the village is an essential facet of its character.

There are constant reminders of the strategic scarp-top location in the dramatic views that open out, particularly to the west and north. The church tower dominates views across open countryside towards the village. It is notable that the tower is also the main landmark to be seen from below the scarp face. It is also characteristic that the built form of the village is masked, in views from outside it, by trees and hedges. The distinctiveness of the village is, therefore, vulnerable to any development that extends beyond that envelope.

SECTION 2 – POLICIES

2.1 General information

The following sections contain a number of proposals for preserving or enhancing the Alkborough Conservation Area, including information about the control and improvement of buildings; design guidance for new development; and guidance on the protection of important views and focal points. Further detailed information can be obtained from the organisations and sources listed at the end of this section, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15), which sets out central government's policies in relation to listed buildings and conservation areas, and the staff of the Planning Section at North Lincolnshire Council.

2.2 Listed buildings

It is the consistency of the older buildings, rather than their quality in a wider context, that is significant to the character of Alkborough. It is not surprising, therefore, that only a few buildings stand out sufficiently to be statutorily listed.

The most important listed building is the Church of St John the Baptist with its 11th century tower, medieval aisles and late Victorian restoration. It is grade I. The remnant of the churchyard cross, apparently worn down by the sharpening of blades, is grade II as are the other listed buildings in the village - the 18th century Providence Cottage and the Wesleyan Chapel of 1840. At Walcot, the Old Hall is grade II*, while the much altered Walcot Hall is grade II, as is the nearby Peel Cottage built for the estate in early 1800s.

Just outside the conservation area, off West Halton Lane, the four-storey tower of a former windmill is listed grade II. There are other buildings that would be listed but for alterations to windows and roof coverings, such as the 18th century Manor House and Southdale House in Cross Street.

Policies relating to listed buildings can be found in the North Lincolnshire Local Plan Revised Deposit Draft dated December 2000 (Policies HE5, HE6 and HE7). Broadly, these seek to prevent the demolition of listed buildings or their unsympathetic alteration.

“Listing” covers both the interior and exterior of a listed building, and all structures within the curtilage which predate 1947. “Listed Building Consent” is needed to alter or extend a listed building, and sometimes, with extensions over a certain size, planning permission will be needed as well. Alterations to listed buildings which may need consent include relatively minor changes like inserting a new window; removing an internal wall or fireplace; adding a chimney or flue; removing paneling or fitted cupboards; and inserting a new bathroom where new drainage is required.

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

Like-for-like repairs usually do not require Listed Building Consent. Owners of such buildings are encouraged to use traditional materials for roof repairs including lead for flashings and pantiles (or occasionally slate) for roofing repairs. Brickwork and stonework should only be repointed when necessary, using traditional lime mortars with a brushed flush joint (not weather-struck). Cleaning of masonry is not necessary in Alkborough. Windows should always be repaired *in situ* rather than replaced wholesale. Traditional sash or casement windows can easily be upgraded to provide dramatic improvements in sound and heat insulation without either replacing the window or resorting to secondary double glazing, which sometimes has an impact on internal features such as shutters. Front 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 historic details must be recognised when dealing with listed buildings. The few listed buildings in Alkborough tend to have their original windows with moulded glazing bars and front doors which retain their planked or paneled design. Inside, they sometimes retain original features, such as skirtings, cornices, fireplaces and tiling. All such features should be preserved and protected from loss or damage.

- *It is important to retain internal features such as fireplaces when altering a listed building.*

When considering altering a listed building, it is important that the original plan form is protected. Opening-up previously separated rooms or removing chimney breasts and moving staircases are all changes which are unlikely to receive Listed Building Consent. Similarly, extensions to listed buildings should be carefully designed to reflect the scale and detailing of the original building. Extensions to the rear should be lower than the original building and secondary in scale. Material and details should match the original examples within the listed building, including windows and eaves and roof details. Applications for such changes should therefore provide enough detailed information for the Council to assess the impact of the scheme on the character of the existing building. Usually, the Council will require plans, sections and elevations at 1:50 scale with larger scale drawings illustrating details such as new windows and doors.

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

Alterations which require Listed Building Consent are currently zero 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 Scunthorpe (Tel:) for further details and a leaflet.

2.3 Buildings of Townscape Merit and demolition in conservation areas

Conservation Area Consent is required for the full or substantial demolition of buildings within the conservation area. In accordance with Government guidance in PPG15, there is a presumption in favour of retaining those buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

This appraisal has identified a large number of Buildings of Townscape Merit. These are buildings which, although not statutorily listed, are considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the Alkborough Conservation Area. Most of them date from the late 18th or early 19th century. The symmetrical single-storey stone cottage is a persistent building type, although several of these have subsequently evolved with the addition of an upper floor.

The assessment of townscape merit also includes a few late 19th century buildings, such as the pair of houses immediately north of the church and the village school, and just one recent building, the new school extension.

In general, the buildings retain their original appearance but for alterations, such as doors or windows, which could be restored relatively easily. Their age and architectural interest is considered to provide sufficient justification for the presumption in favour of retention to apply and the Council will resist their demolition unless the applicant can prove that the building is wholly beyond the point of economic repair and incapable of a beneficial use. 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 for conservation area consent 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 and the retention of all existing architectural features.*

Consent for the demolition of buildings identified as having a neutral or negative impact on the conservation area will not be forthcoming unless applications are accompanied by acceptable and detailed plans for any new development.

2.4 New development.

Policies for new development in conservation areas throughout North Lincolnshire are included in the Local Plan in the chapter on the Historic Environment (policies HE2, HE3 and HE4). Additionally, the same Plan includes Supplementary Planning Guidance, which provides detailed advice on house extensions. While this is general advice, it is nonetheless relevant to Alkborough.

The conservation area has a relatively dense historic core – the ‘figure-of-eight’ plan – and lower densities elsewhere. The space between buildings is an important part of the area’s historical character. This is particularly apparent in the existing and former farmyards. While these spaces have, in the past, provided opportunities for development, this has not generally reinforced that character. In future, when development opportunities do arise, the following criteria will apply to the new scheme:

Siting

Historically, most buildings in the village have been built at the front of the plots, giving a distinct building line at the edge of the pavement or set back slightly behind small front gardens. Where access was needed through to the rear of the plot, houses were often built at right angles to the road. These simple rules tend not to have been observed in the 20th century, when houses have generally been built in the centre of their plots. This has undermined the established character and lead to buildings intruding on significant views into the village from outside the conservation area.

- *New housing will be sited to conform with building lines at, or close to, the edge of the pavement*
- *New development will not be permitted where it will detract from the character of significant open spaces in the conservation area.*

Design

The principal aim of new development should be to assimilate into its surroundings rather than making a complete contrast. This is because the attractiveness of the village relies on the visual cohesiveness of the streetscape. It does not mean that new buildings have to be replicas of old ones, but rather that their forms should be determined by traditional building depths, spans and roof pitches. In this way, continuity can be maintained as history evolves.

A major problem with modern bungalows has been their considerable building depth. This requires large roof-spans, which in turn produce the uncharacteristic proportions of expansive roofs on relatively small buildings.

Further details of fenestration, eaves, verges or chimney stacks can also be borrowed from local examples to good advantage, for instance eaves detailing with exposed rafter feet rather than modern fascias and soffits.

- *The form of all new development should reflect the dimensions and rhythms of neighbouring property.*
- *Uncharacteristic detailing should be resisted.*
- *The addition of chimney stacks in some locations may be required, to ensure compatibility with adjoining properties.*

Materials.

Alkborough's traditional character relies strongly on a restricted palette of materials. Walls are either roughly coursed local limestone, sometimes with contrasting red brick for details such as quoins and arches, or wholly of red brick. Roofs are clay Lincolnshire pantiles or Welsh slate. Joinery is timber or iron. Departure from this norm, particularly the use of harsh bricks, renders and imitations, is a primary cause of discordance in the conservation area.

Modern, machine-made flat clay tiles will rarely be acceptable, neither will concrete tiles, artificial slate or plastic doors and windows. Windows should be traditionally detailed with vertically or horizontally sliding sashes, or casements fitted flush with their frames. Top-hung false "sashes" are not suitable. Front doors should be made from timber, planked or with recessed moulded panels. All timber should be painted not stained.

- *A limited range of traditional materials and details should be specified for new development in Alkborough.*

Uses.

The buildings of Alkborough are almost entirely in residential use but the Council accepts the case for alternative uses where they can be shown to meet definite local needs.

2.5 Protection of views and focal points

The Church of St John the Baptist is the primary landmark in the village. Standing on its elevated churchyard, it is seen from all the main approaches – Front Street, Back Street, Whitton Road – and from Prospect Farm to the north. The church is also prominent in views from outside the conservation area across open farmland to the north and east and from below the scarp on the flat lands to the west.

Most of the historical development, in Back Street is set back from the edge of the scarp allowing the church tower to dominate views towards the village from the Trent valley. Mercifully, little recent building has intruded upon this view and it is important that any further building is similarly set back.

Front Street is also a focal point, its wide greens giving a marketplace dimension. It is important that this openness is maintained without the obstruction of too much planting.

- *The Council will protect the existing views within Alkborough, principally of the church from the streets that radiate from it; views out of the conservation area, especially those from Julian's Bower and Prospect Farm; and landscape views towards the conservation area, particularly from below the scarp. The raised platform of the churchyard will continue to be the focal point of the village, but the significance of Front Street as a major open space is recognised also.*

2.6 Trees

Trees are very important to 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 or fell a tree in the conservation area that is not already covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), the Council must be given six weeks written notice. During that period trees have legal protection equivalent to a TPO 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 hand shears 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 may have 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 and their bark and trunks may

contain significant amounts of dead wood. Whilst the removal of dead wood will not generally require consent from the Council, the treatment of older trees does need careful consideration and the Council can provide free advice. The Council is also producing Supplementary Planning Guidance on 'Trees and Development' and is looking to a long-term tree strategy that 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 trees, particularly those regarded as 'veteran'.*

2.7 Environmental and street improvements

The Council is committed to retaining the simple rural character of the conservation area by keeping street furniture and planting to a minimum.

The long-term strategy of the Council is to seek the undergrounding of all overhead wires and the removal of telegraph poles in conservation areas. When this is achieved in Alkborough, there will be a need for a street lighting scheme using plain modern fittings mounted on simple columns or on buildings. It will be important for the scheme to observe a lower level of lighting, appropriate to the rural character, rather than an urban brightness.

- *The Council will seek the removal of overhead wires and will promote a sensitive scheme for street lighting.*

2.8 How residents can help.

The character of the Brigg 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 Brigg 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.

2.9 Useful names and addresses.

For specific information about the Alkborough 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 general information relating to listed buildings and conservation areas, contact:

English Heritage,
23 Savile Row,
London W1X 1AB.
General telephone inquiries: 020 7973 3000
Customer Services 020 7973 4916.

For detailed advice on repairing and restoring Georgian houses, contact:

The Georgian Group,
6 Fitzroy Square,
London W1P 6DY.
Telephone: 020 7377 1644

For “Care for Victorian Houses” leaflet, contact:

The Victorian Society,
1 Priory Gardens,
Bedford Park,
London W4 1TT
Telephone: 020 8994 1019

For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets, contact:

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB),
6 Fitzroy Square,
London W1P 6DY.
Tel: 020 7377 1644

2.10 Bibliography.

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| <i>Hidden Lincolnshire</i> | Adrian Gray |
| <i>North Lincolnshire: A Pictorial History</i> | Kevin Leahy and David Williams |
| <i>Landscape Assessment and Guidelines</i> | Estell Warren Landscape Architects |
| <i>Countryside Design Summary</i> | Estell Warren Landscape Architects |
| <i>The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire</i> | N Pevsner and J Harris |
| <i>Julian's Bower: A Guide to the</i> | |
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