

ALKBOROUGH CONSERVATION AREA

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

Contents

Section 1: Background Information

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 North Lincolnshire Local Plan
- 1.3 The development of Alkborough
- 1.4 The character of the Alkborough Conservation Area

Section 2: Policies

- 2.1 General information
- 2.2 Listed buildings
- 2.3 Buildings of townscape merit
- 2.4 New development
 - (i) Siting
 - (ii) Design
 - (iii) Materials
 - (iv) Uses
- 2.5 Protection of views and focal points
- 2.6 Trees
- 2.7 Environmental and street improvements
- 2.8 How residents can help
- 2.9 Useful names and addresses
- 2.10 Bibliography

Maps:

Figure 1 Map showing Conservation area boundary and listed buildings

Figure 2 Townscape Analysis map

Figure 3 Proposals map

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 Gleanford 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 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 led 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.

Alkborough Conservation Area

Hidden Lincolnshire

North Lincolnshire: A Pictorial History

Landscape Assessment and Guidelines

Countryside Design Summary

The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire

Julian’s Bower: A Guide to the

Alkborough Turf Maze

Glanford Borough Council

Adrian Gray

Kevin Leahy and David Williams

Estell Warren Landscape Architects

Estell Warren Landscape Architects

N Pevsner and J Harris

Ian Thompson