

EPWORTH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING  
GUIDANCE - ADOPTED AS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE BY NORTH  
LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL ON 22<sup>ND</sup> JANUARY 2004

**NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

**EPWORTH CONSERVATION AREA**

**APPRAISAL SUPPLEMENTARY**

**PLANNING GUIDANCE**

**ADOPTED DOCUMENT**

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## **EPWORTH CONSERVATION AREA**

### **SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE**

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## **SECTION 1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Epworth is a small historic market town, famous for being the home of the Wesley family, the founders of Methodism. The conservation area is divided into two, and currently covers the commercial, historic core of the town, centred on the medieval Market Place and High Street, and stretching eastwards along the High Street as far as the junction with Belton Road. A separate conservation area covers St. Andrew's Church and its immediate setting. The narrow streets are lined with small 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century two storey shops, public houses, banks, offices and houses, which gives Epworth an intimate urban character. Public buildings such as the Old Manor Court House, St Andrew's Church, Kilham Memorial Methodist Chapel and the Wesley Memorial Church are the key architectural and historic landmark buildings.

The former Boothferry Borough Council designated the Epworth conservation area in 1970. A conservation area is *an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*. This is set out in the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 that 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 Epworth has already been written which takes into account the views of local residents and other interested parties. This document, which follows on from the appraisal and which has also been the subject of public consultation, has been adopted by North Lincolnshire Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance. It provides detailed guidance on the management of the Epworth Conservation Area and will be used by the Council when determining planning and listed building consent applications within, and on the boundaries of, the conservation area.

### **1.2 North Lincolnshire Local Plan**

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

Epworth is defined as a medium growth settlement in the Local Plan. Development in such settlements should be computable with their scale, character, location, facilities and existing environmental quality. Medium growth settlements often provide an important service role for surrounding smaller towns and villages.

*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.

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**Policy HE2 Development in Conservation Areas.**

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

**Policy HE3 Demolition in Conservation Areas.**

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

**Policy HE5 Development affecting Listed Buildings.**

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

**Policy HE6 Demolition of Listed Buildings**

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

**Policy LC11 Areas of Amenity Importance**

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

**Archaeology.**

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

### **1.3 The development of Epworth**

Epworth is mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086. In the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries Lord Mowbray, the major local landowner, developed Epworth into a market town, and the town was granted its market charter in 1380. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the drainage of the Isle of Axholme had a major impact on the landscape, industry and communities of the area, including the building of over a hundred cottages in Epworth between 1590 and 1640. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Epworth expanded even further, and more permanent brick buildings replaced the old mud-and-stud buildings. This building programme continued into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, despite a decline in status of the market at Epworth in favour of bigger towns such as Doncaster.

Epworth is famous for being the birthplace of John and Charles Wesley, founders of Methodism, who were brought up in Epworth Vicarage. The Kilham Memorial Methodist Chapel and the Wesley Memorial Church, both situated on Epworth High Street, reflect the connections with Methodism. Today, Epworth has become a small, dormitory town for the larger settlements nearby, but still retains some of its service functions, its historic character and many listed buildings.

## **1.4 The character of the Epworth Conservation Area**

Epworth lies on slightly elevated ground, within the relatively flat landscape setting of the Isle of Axholme. At the heart of the conservation area is a triangle of streets created by Church Street, High Street and Market Place. The Market Place is located to the south east corner of the town, with Albion Hill rising to the southeast and Queens Street leading southwards. The High Street emanates from the West Side of the Market Place and runs westwards before bending northwestwards towards Sandtoft. Together, these streets create a closely-knit, urban form, with many historic buildings dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries lying along the street frontages. On the north side behind the High Street the ground rises up to a low ridge. This area contains narrow strip fields, probably remnants of medieval burgage plots. St Andrews Church is located on this elevated ground to the north, with Church Walk forming the connection with the Market Place.

The land surrounding the settlement and contiguous with the northern boundary of the conservation area about St Andrews Church is designated in the Local Plan as a Historic Landscape. The Isle of Axholme has been the subject of an intensive study of landscape character, which has identified significant areas of medieval open strip fields and turbaries, both of which are of considerable national importance. These attributes together with enclosed land and the overall settlement pattern of the area make it unique in the country. It is essential therefore, that future development is not allowed to adversely impact upon this valuable resource.

## **SECTION 2 POLICIES**

### **2.1 General information**

The following sections contain a number of policies and guidance for preserving or enhancing the Epworth Conservation Area. Included is information about the control and improvement of listed buildings, as well as unlisted buildings, which contribute positively to the character of the conservation area. Further sections deal with design guidance for new development, and the protection of important views and focal points within the conservation area. Included at the end of this section is a list of various organisations which publish additional guidance, including details of where to obtain another useful document, Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG 15), which sets out central government's policies in relation to listed buildings and conservation areas. Local policies are set out in the North Lincolnshire Plan Revised Deposit Draft dated December 2000 and references to the relevant sections of the plan will be given in brackets under each heading. Further guidance on planning in conservation areas can be obtained from the Environment Team at North Lincolnshire Council

## 2.2 Listed Buildings

There are a number of historic buildings in Epworth that are included in the Department of Culture, Media and Sport's List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The Church of St Andrew and The Old Rectory are the most important buildings being listed grade I, while all the other listed properties are grade II. Samuel Wesley's tombstone is listed mainly for historical associations and another gravestone to Thomas Cutforth is included. There is a concentration of listed buildings in the Market Place including the Manor Court House, the K6 telephone box and Market Cross in front, 27 Queen Street, The Red Lion Inn and 4/6 Market Place opposite, plus Nos. 4 – 6 Albion Hill. Nos. 24, 26, 46, 48, 50, 52, 66, 68, 70, 11 and 13 High Street are all grade II. The Kilham Memorial Methodist Chapel and School, the Wesleyan Memorial Chapel, with its associated School, Manse and Warden's House are also listed for their historical and architectural interest. All the listed buildings in the town are identified on the map at Figure 1.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The English Historic Towns Forum is producing an informative guide on the making of better planning applications for proposals affecting conservation areas and listed buildings which is copyright to that body until October 2003. Applicants will find this of assistance in making applications (The English Historic Towns Forum – ISBN 1 898261 51 2 – Tele 0117 9750459 – e-mail: ehtf@uwe.ac.uk).

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

Alterations which require Listed Building Consent are currently nil rated for VAT but repairs to listed buildings are assessed at the usual VAT rate of 17.5% and all but 5% of the VAT levied in repairs on listed places of worship can be reclaimed. Owners should contact the Customs and Excise Office (Tel: 0845 0109000 ) 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 the Government Guidance in PPG15 there will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

As part of this study those buildings, which make such a contribution but have not been included in the national statutory list of building of architectural or historic interest, have been identified and are shown on the maps as Buildings of Townscape Merit. *Included in this category are larger public buildings, such as the late-Victorian Temperance Hall, as well as more modest 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century shops and houses built in the local vernacular style.*

*These buildings are considered to be of local importance and contribute positively to the character of the conservation area and the demolition of these buildings will be resisted unless it can be shown that the building is wholly beyond repair, incapable of 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.*

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- *North Lincolnshire Council will resist applications to demolish all or a substantial part of any building identified within this appraisal as a "Building of Townscape Merit". Additionally, alterations and extensions to these buildings will have to be particularly sensitively designed and take into account their historic and architectural interest.*
- *All existing traditional architectural features will be retained on these buildings. Alterations will need to incorporate matching designs and materials appropriate to the age and character of the building.*

#### **2.4 Other buildings – Neutral buildings and negative buildings in their present form.**

Neutral buildings are older buildings, which have been altered or modern buildings the design of which is considered to be reasonably in keeping with the surrounding area.

Negative buildings in their present form are buildings the design of which conflicts with the traditional character of the conservation area.

Whilst these buildings do not contribute as much to the area character as buildings of townscape merit they can be renovated sympathetically incorporating traditional designs and materials appropriate to the conservation area.

- *Alterations to neutral buildings and negative buildings in their present form shall incorporate traditional materials and designs that are associated with the key buildings in the conservation area (listed buildings and buildings of townscape merit.)*
- Demolition of these buildings would only be considered replaced with a quality building that has been specifically designed to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area.



## **2.5 New Development in the Epworth Conservation Area.**

Policies for new development in conservation areas in the whole of 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 that provides detailed advice on house extensions.

### **Design**

The principal aim of new development should be to marry-in the new with the existing, rather than making the new building completely different. This is because the attractiveness of the town centre relies on the visual cohesiveness of the streetscape.

- *All new development should therefore reflect the scale and materials of adjoining property. The form of any new building, including its height, relationship to the street, and any rear extensions, should be sympathetic to the surrounding buildings. Because most new development will be within existing terraces or groups of buildings, rooflines, eaves heights and details, and shop fronts or front doors should match or reflect adjoining properties.*

### **Materials**

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

- *Traditional materials and details should be specified for new development in Epworth. The use of material other than timber is unacceptable for windows, doors and conservatories in conservation area.*

### **Shop fronts**

New shop fronts in Epworth should reflect the prevailing 19<sup>th</sup> century character of the existing shop fronts in the town. They should therefore have a sloping fascia, supported on pilasters or corbels, with a panelled stallriser beneath. If security shutters are required, they should be positioned inside the glass. All shop fronts should be painted not stained. Shop signs should be limited to a simple painted fascia, although a traditional hanging sign may be considered acceptable. If external lighting is required, it should be provided by individual shop lights, carefully positioned above the fascia. Internally illuminated letters or plastic fascia signs will not usually be accepted.

- *New shop fronts should be built in timber, traditionally detailed, and carefully illuminated.*

## 2.5 Protection of open spaces and views.

There are a number of important open spaces within Epworth, most notably St. Andrew's Churchyard and the areas either side of Church Walk, although only the churchyard is in the conservation area. These areas are identified as "Areas of Amenity Importance" and are already protected by policy LC 11 in the North Lincolnshire Local Plan.

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

Other areas, including the Market Place, and the gardens around the Wesleyan Methodist Church, are already protected by the conservation area designation and the proximity of listed buildings.

This appraisal has also identified important vistas and landmarks within Epworth and also views to and from the town to the surrounding agricultural land. These have are shown on the Townscape Analysis map (Figure 2).

- *The Council will protect existing views in Epworth most notably views to the church tower, Methodist Chapel Spire, Market Cross and to the surrounding countryside to the north.*

## 2.6 Trees

The trees in Epworth play an important part in the character and appearance of the conservation area and designation gives the Council added powers to control what happens to them.

- *If you wish to lop, top, uproot or fell a tree in the conservation area which is not already covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) you must give the Council 6 weeks written notice before carrying out the work; trees have legal protection equivalent to a TPO for that period, and the Council may make an Order if it is considered appropriate. Proposals to prune a tree should clarify what is envisaged and the extent of the work. The removal of dead wood with secateurs or 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 has been brought about by the tree's response to the surrounding environmental conditions (soil, air water and nutrient availability). They may therefore exhibit increasing die-back of branches, bark and trunk and may contain significant amounts of dead wood. Whilst the removal of dead wood will not generally require consent from the Council, the treatment in older trees requires careful consideration, and the Council can provide free advice. The Council is also currently producing Supplementary Planning Guidance on "Trees and development", and is looking to a long-term tree strategy 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 veteran trees.*

## **2.7 Street lighting and street furniture.**

- *Under-grounding overhead wires, and less obtrusive street signage, is also one of the Council's objectives.*

## **2.8 How residents can help.**

The character of the Epworth 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 Epworth can only be achieved through residents and the Council working together therefore.

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

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

For specific information about the Epworth 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: 01724 297396)

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**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 information on contemporary approaches to the management of conservation areas and historic towns in general, contact:**

English Historic Towns Forum  
P.O. Box 22  
Bristol BS16 1RZ  
Telephone: 0117 975 0459

**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

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<i>The Isle of Axholme: Historic Landscape</i>	
Characterisation Project	<i>Keith Miller</i>