

ALKBOROUGH CONSERVATION AREA SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE
ADOPTED BY NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL 29TH SEPTEMBER 2004

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL ALKBOROUGH CONSERVATION AREA

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE 2004

ADOPTED DOCUMENT

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REGENERATION.**

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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. Originally an important means of access to the settlement was by river. The development of modern highway networks and the consequent decline in river use means that the settlement, when accessed by that network can seem somewhat 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.

Glanford Borough designated a conservation area for Alkborough in 1970. The boundary was tightly drawn to cover just the historic village centre. In 1980 the area 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 together with 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 requires local authorities to publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and to assess all development proposals within such areas very carefully.

This document builds upon an appraisal of the character of the conservation area, which is published as a sister document, by providing detailed guidance on the management of the area. Both documents have been the subject of a consultation with local residents and other interested parties and have been amended as a result. North Lincolnshire Council has adopted both as Supplementary Planning Guidance to be used to inform and guide its decision making 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 was adopted in May 2003 and should be consulted in conjunction with this document. Within the Plan are detailed policies, which seek (amongst others) the protection of listed buildings and the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas.

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

The following policies are relevant:

Policy HE1 Conservation Areas.

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

Policy HE2 Development in Conservation Areas.

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

Policy HE3 Demolition in Conservation Areas.

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

Policy HE5 Development affecting Listed Buildings.

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

Policy HE6 Demolition of Listed Buildings

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

Policy LC11 Areas of Amenity Importance

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

Archaeology.

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

1.3 The development of Alkborough and Walcot.

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 that, 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 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 policies and guidance for preserving or enhancing the Conservation Area. Included is information about controls on listed building and about improving 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, which was adopted in May 2003. Further guidance on planning in conservation areas can be obtained from the Council's Planning and Regeneration Service.

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.

Polices relating to listed buildings can be found in the North Lincolnshire Local Plan Which was adopted in May 2003 (Polices 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 form part of the land and have done so since before 1 July 1948.

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

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

Like-for-like repairs usually do not require Listed Building Consent. Owners of such buildings should be encouraged to use traditional materials for roof repairs including lead for flashings and pantiles, clay tiles (or occasionally slate) for roofing repairs.

Brick and stonework should be carefully repointed using traditional lime mortars with a brushed flush joint (not weatherstruck or ribbon joints) and cleaning should only be undertaken where its is structurally necessary (such as where build up of dirt or lichen is causing the bricks or stone to break down).

Windows should be always repaired *in situ* rather than replaced wholesale. A good joiner can repair rotting timber windows by piecing in new sections and there are many companies who can upgrade timber windows to provide much improved sound and heat insulation. Doors should also be repaired whenever possible but where replacement is needed, the new door must match the original exactly.

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

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

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

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, set back where possible 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, which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area.

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This appraisal has identified a number of Buildings of Townscape Merit in the Conservation Area. These are unlisted buildings considered to contribute positively to the character of the 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.

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 map as Buildings of Townscape Merit. These buildings are therefore, generally unaltered or, could with some restoration, be easily restored to their original appearance. Their age and architectural interest is considered to provide sufficient justification for them to be given special protection.

These buildings are considered to be of local importance and contribute positively to the character of the conservation. The demolition of such buildings will erode and dilute the existing character of the Conservation Area and adversely affect its appearance. 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, special attention needs to be paid to applications to alter and extend these properties.

- *North Lincolnshire Council will resist applications to demolish all or a substantial part of any building identified 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.*
- *Every effort should be made to retain all existing traditional architectural features of these buildings the removal or loss of which will need to be fully justified within the context of any adverse impacts which this loss will have on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. 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 are buildings, which, *in their present form*, conflict with the traditional character of the Conservation Area as identified in the character appraisal document for it. 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 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 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, 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 chimneystacks 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 traditional building depths.*
- *The sitting of all new development should respect traditional relationships of building to the street frontage.*
- *The height of new building should be sympathetic to existing buildings and respect traditional, spans and roof pitches. .*
- *Uncharacteristic detailing should be resisted.*
- *The addition of chimneystacks 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.*
- *Traditional materials and details should be specified for new development. The use of material other than timber is unacceptable for windows, doors and conservatories in conservation areas.*

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.

2.6 Protection of open spaces and views.

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. 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.*

2.7 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, 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 Council will not normally require applications for the removal of dead wood with secateurs or handshears..*

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

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

2.8 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. It will also give very careful consideration to proposal to introduce modern kerb races as these can disrupt the character of existing verges.

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. 9 How residents can help.

The character of the Conservation Area comes not only from the physical appearance of the town but also from the community who live and work in the area. Retaining and enhancing that character can only be achieved through residents, the Council and other service providers 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 live in the Conservation Area and are considering undertaking any repairs or alterations to your property or land, the best approach is always to contact the Council for advice on whether any permissions or consents are required and, if they are, how best to obtain these.

Advice on such matters is part of the service paid for by local charge payers and is available by contacting the Council's Planning and Regeneration Service which is based at Church Square House in Scunthorpe. Tele: 01724 297420.

2.10 Useful names and addresses.

For specific information about the Conservation Area, please contact:

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

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

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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- North Lincolnshire: A Pictorial History* *North Lincolnshire Council*
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