



**EAST RIDING**

**OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL**

## **CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL**

# **WITHERNWICK**



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**2009**





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*DRAFT*

#### INTRODUCTION

##### The National Situation

The concept of Conservation Areas was established over 40 years ago in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act. This enables the importance of **areas** rather than individual buildings to be recognised.

The Town & Country Planning Act 1990 defines a Conservation Area as **“an area of special architectural or historical interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”**.

For the designation of Conservation Areas to be effective, it is important that rational and consistent judgements are made in determining their special qualities and local distinctiveness, as well as their value to the local community.

Such judgements should be based on a thorough understanding of the area in its wider context, reached through a detailed appraisal of its character.

The purpose behind Conservation Area designation is not to prevent any further change; rather it is to ensure that whatever change does occur is carefully managed. In the past 40 years, in England, local authorities have designated approximately 9500 Conservation Areas.

##### The Local Situation

The possibility of designating a Conservation Area in Withernwick was first considered (by Holderness Borough Council) in the late 1980's, but it was not until 2008 after an approach from a local resident that the suggestion was taken up again and put to Withernwick Parish Council, who agreed to give it their in-principle support.

This appraisal of the character and appearance of Withernwick is a result of that decision and has been undertaken in accordance with “Guidance on Conservation Areas” issued by English Heritage in August 2005 in order to meet the current requirements of national government for such designations.

The proposed Conservation Area in Withernwick has over 80 houses and other non-residential buildings. It would become one of 98 Conservation Areas in the East Riding (as at February 2009).

It should be noted that various sections of this document may make reference to features that are beyond the boundaries of the proposed Conservation Area, where these may have (or have had) an impact on it.



# THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA AT WITHERNWICK

This document identifies the special architectural and historic interest of the character and appearance of Withernwick. It indicates how this should be preserved and enhanced and will be useful to potential developers, residents and businesses and to the Council in the making of Development Control decisions and environmental improvements.

## DEFINITION OF WITHERNWICK'S SPECIAL INTEREST

*The special character and appearance of the Conservation Area in Withernwick is to be seen in the character of its Main Street. Here the houses are close together, small, and nearly all at back-of-pavement-edge, resulting in a hard-edged streetscape.*

*It is unusual in the way that there is a sharp turn and change of direction at the Falcon Inn. The north-south running section of the street does not have the breadth of the Main Street after its change of direction which results in it having a far more constricted feeling.*

*Towards the edges of Withernwick, it becomes far more rural with green features such as trees, hedges and grass verges providing an interesting contrast with the heart of the village.*

*It is also unusual to find the use of cobble so far inland, as its cartage from the coast would have acted as something of a constraint when/if alternative building materials were available closer to hand*

## a) Topography and its Relevance

Withernwick is located some 14km north-east of Hull and some 5km from the coast. Historically it formed part of the northern division of Holderness.

The flat nature of the surrounding area contributes to one of the village's features – which is the impact of the settlement in the landscape. Both when travelling from Whitedale or from Aldbrough, the houses on the slight eminence are seen above the surrounding carrs.

The proposed Conservation Area lies within the "Central Holderness Open Farmland" Character Area, as identified in the East Riding of Yorkshire Landscape Character Assessment (ERYC 2005). This identifies the area as being dominated by the influence of agricultural intensification within the River Hull floodplain. As is typical of much of Holderness, significant areas of woodland are scarce and those areas of semi-natural woodland that do exist in this landscape are generally small stands including ash, oak, hazel, hawthorn, elm, field maple and rowan. Isolated fragments of wet woodland also feature within this landscape and these are dominated by alder and willows species. The area of ancient woodland at Bail Wood, near Aldbrough, provides an insight into the type of woodland that would once have been far more widespread throughout this landscape area.

The hedgerows present in this landscape are typical of others found in Holderness being generally dominated by hawthorn with hazel, ash, blackthorn, elder, field maple and dogwood also present. This Character Area also contains isolated concentrations of unimproved neutral grassland, for example the land adjacent to parts of



Lambwath Stream, which is otherwise scarce in the wider Holderness landscape. Low-lying and seasonally flooded meadows can be found some of which are maintained by traditional management regimes, and these can host a range of species of botanical interest such as common meadow rue and a variety of sedges and rushes.

One feature of special landscape interest that runs through this landscape to the west of the village, is the former Hull to Hornsea railway which, like other disused lines, provides valuable wildlife habitat and acts as a green corridor linking areas of semi-natural habitat which would otherwise be fragmented and isolated. Much of this natural interest is derived from the ballast, which creates suitable conditions for species of interest including silver hairgrass, fern grass, thyme-leaved sandwort, biting stonecrop, strapwort, squirrel-tail fescue and sea mouse-ear. Meanwhile along the grassy banks of this former line are many plant species that would once have been common in this landscape but which have now all but disappeared from the surrounding farmland.

#### **b) The Natural Environment**

On the low-lying alluvial land to the south of the village is Lambwath Meadows which is a statutorily designated wildlife site that is important for its species-rich damp neutral grassland. There is also a number of local important sites such as Cowden Range which is noted for scrub interest, and the woodlands at Rise Park Estate and Moor Covert. Whilst these wildlife-rich areas are generally fragmented and isolated, large areas of agricultural land around Withernwick are currently under Environmental Stewardship Schemes which help to enhance the wider local landscape and biodiversity.

Enclosed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the fields around Withernwick have since lost many of their smaller, more ancient sub-divisions. However, strong historic hedge boundaries can still be seen in the locality. Indeed, a lot of the boundaries within the village are in the form of traditional native hedgerows, many of which have been successfully assimilated into domestic curtilages. These are an important visual amenity as well as being a valuable reservoir and transit route for wildlife. They contribute significantly to the rural landscape and are an integral part of the landscape structure of the village.

Within the Conservation Area itself, an important characteristic is the relationship between the built form and relatively large areas of enclosed open spaces. These are generally ancient enclosures and many are unimproved or semi-improved grassland used for grazing.



**The Rural Character of Church Lane**

In addition to public open spaces, which are referred to specifically under section (d) below, are those areas of natural interest that are private or enclosed. For example, many of the dwellings in the village have large gardens bounded by tall, wide stretches of natural hedgerow



and contain a significant level of tree cover. As these trees mature they have the potential to become dominant elements in the long term landscape structure of the village and wider countryside. Already, collectively, they contribute greatly to the wider character of the area and will significantly enhance the amenity and biodiversity of the locality over time.

Whilst trees are not abundant within the Conservation Area, they remain an important natural element. They relieve the general uniformity of the area and soften the appearance of the built form. As well as their contribution to visual appearance they can also filter noise and pollution.

Some areas of semi-natural grassland within the Conservation Area support seasonal ponds. Such ponds subject to their nutrient status, can often be of considerable wildlife interest.

Clearly, the special interest of the Conservation Area is not only derived from the quality of its buildings, but also the strong contribution of the natural environment to the rural setting of the village. All these features contribute to the rich cultural and natural heritage and help to enhance the Conservation Area by linking the heart of the village with those areas of wildlife interest outside it. Accordingly, they should be conserved or enhanced wherever possible.

### c) Tree Preservation Orders

As trees nearly always contribute positively to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area, they are protected from unnecessary felling or pruning. Therefore all significant works to trees in Conservation Areas need prior notification to be given to the Local Planning Authority.

If it is decided that the tree is worthy of protection, a Tree Preservation Order can be made.

### d) Open Spaces

Public open space within the village is limited, as its linear character does not lend itself to this feature.

However there are small compact areas of green open space scattered throughout the village. These include the wide grass verges which in the core area tend to be well maintained which to some extent reduces their wildlife interest.

The area around and behind the War Memorial with its pond (at the south end of Main Street) is important and makes a valuable contrast with the hard-edged nature of the rest of the built environment in Main Street.



**The War Memorial.**

Another key area is the Churchyard which, with its grassland, strong hedgerows and abundant tree cover forms an interesting and potentially valuable wildlife feature.



On the village perimeter, though, the cutting regimes are less intensive which increases their wildlife value.

#### e) **Boundary Treatment**

Within the core of the village, due to its building line being so often at back-of-pavement-edge, on many occasions there is no boundary treatment at all.

On other occasions brick walls apply, and closer to the perimeter of the proposed Conservation Area there are hedges – which create a more rural character (and can be of benefit to wild life).

#### f) **Origins and Evolution**

It seems that the name of Withernwick is of Anglo-Scandinavian origin and means “a dairy farm near a thorn tree”.

Historically land in the south, which is low lying, was occupied by old inclosures and used as grassland. Higher ground on either side of the village was open fields. Commonable lands were inclosed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century being confirmed in 1814.

Withernwick's written history goes back at least as far as Domesday.

The economic history of the village was (inevitably) based on agriculture. This has become more formalised over the centuries so that in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries there were around 15 farms in the Parish. By 1987 there were 21 holdings and whereas previously there had been one or two poultry farms and smallholdings, by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century they included over 9,000 pigs, 300 cattle and 100 sheep.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century there was an annual horse show and hiring fair each November.



View of the Falcon Inn from High Street

Of other trades, in the mid and late 19<sup>th</sup> century bricks and tiles of good quality were being made from the red clay near the Lambwath Stream. There was a garage in the village c.1925 (and another, at Whitedale, from the 1930's). There are references to mills in the village, first possibly a water mill and later a wind mill, probably west of the village, and in the 1890's a post mill to the east of the village south of the Aldbrough Road. More recently there has been the manufacture of furniture on Aldbrough Road.

Population figures for the village make interesting reading. The first figure known was for the Pole Tax in 1377 when there were 145 payers. By 1672 this was replaced by the Hearth Tax, which related to 56 houses. In 1743 there were 48 families and in 1764, 61 families. Population figures start in 1801 when there were 292 recorded in the village and this rose to 513 by 1851 after which it dropped back to 449 in 1881, 365 in 1891 and 312 by 1961. Thereafter the figure has grown to 435 in 1981, 440 in 1991 and 474 in 2001 (in 202 households).

#### g) **Archaeology**

Withernwick falls within the East Riding coastal zone, an area which had an extensive system of Roman Signal Stations along its coast.



Before that it is believed that the earliest activity in the area is likely to have been related to a pattern of seasonal hunting, fowling and fishing. It is only from the Bronze Age onwards that there begins to be evidence of distinct settlements on the better-drained higher areas.

The origins of most "modern" villages in this area stem from the middle and later Saxon period when a pattern of widely spaced but nucleated settlements began to appear. The Anglo-Scandinavian origins of the name "Withernwick" would suggest that this was the case here too.

Traces of several empty tofts, boundary earthworks and other features have been found near the south of the present village.

North of the village many tofts and other earthworks have been discovered around an east - west thoroughfare between the northern limit of the present village and North End, where the moated site referred to by Poulson in his 1840 book.

There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the Parish.

## **h) Layout and Disposition**

From Withernwick minor roads lead to Great Hatfield, Great Cowden, the main Holderness coast road near Aldbrough and to Rise and Ellerby in the west.

In the past Withernwick seems to have had a linear plan mainly running north to south. Its buildings formed three groups, with the Church and most of the houses on a small rise overlooking the Lambwath Valley, with the other main cluster of buildings some 5m to the north on another eminence at North End. A few more buildings, closer to the village centre, were at South End. There are suggestions that North End

may once have been the largest of the three and indeed in 1841 Poulson in his History of Holderness describes the village as being in two parts called North End and South End which he said had about 18 farmhouses and 50 cottages. He also mentions the 'extensive' brickyard.

The visual divorce between the two parts of the village has continued over the last century and a half, though more recent development has caused South End and the Church area to have become virtually joined.

Although the village is now most intensively built along its Main Street, there are significant side lanes particularly on the south and west.

One of these, Church Lane, deserves particular mention because of its difference of character from Main Street, to which it connects.

Once Main Street is left behind the Lane quickly asserts its more rural credentials, which is helped by its lack of concrete kerbs at its west end, and its retention of traditional timber farm gates.

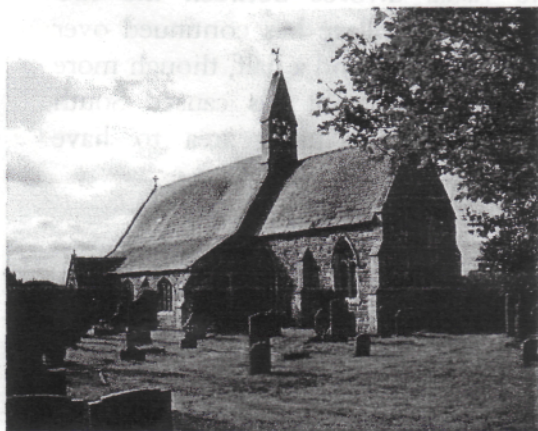
## **i) Buildings**

There was a Church by 1115 and the dedication to St. Alban was recorded in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. However in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the vicar lived in Great Hatfield and, for much of the time, he also served the Churches of Goxhill and Mappleton. It was not until after the rebuilding of the Church in the 1850's that there seems to have been a resident vicar in Withernwick.

The old Church was a small building with a somewhat stunted tower, a nave, south aisle and chancel, and is described in some detail by Poulson in 1841.



He also confirms that at North End there was a semi-circular moat which had enclosed the former family home of the Wytyks, though by his time the moat was dried up and a house had been erected on it many years previously. (It is also understood to be the only parish church in Yorkshire dedicated to St Alban).



**St Alban's Church.**

The oldest surviving houses include 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century cottages in Church Lane and the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Withernwick Hall, formerly known as North End House. Elm Tree House, formerly The Cottage, in West Lambwath Road was built soon after 1855. Other 19<sup>th</sup> century houses include farmhouses and terraced cottages.

Non-conformism came with the registering of a House in 1783 and in 1811 the Wesleyans built a Chapel in Main Street. This was twice enlarged, and re-built in 1914. They also built a Sunday School in Main Street in 1845.

Two years earlier the Primitive Methodists set up a Chapel in High Street, which was enlarged and had another schoolroom c.1880. The Primitive Methodist Chapel closed in 1920, was sold in 1923 and was demolished by 1998. By the mid 1990's services were still being held in the Methodist Church – formerly the Wesleyan Chapel – but the Sunday

School room was then mostly used as a village meeting place.



**The Sunday School Plaque on the Wesleyan Chapel.**

**It reads: Wesleyan Sabbath School for children of all denominations 1845**

Two or three public houses were mentioned in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, but by the early 19<sup>th</sup> century there was only one, The Gate, in High Street. It was succeeded by The Falcon in Main Street, which was trading by 1892.

There was a Lodge of the Ancient Order of Foresters, founded in 1839 and this had 160 members by 1895. It then became The Withernwick Foresters Society but re-joined the Order and continued until 1948. They built a Hall in Main Street in 1890 and 20 years later also owned half a dozen houses in the village. After 1948 The Hall was converted to a house, but the façade was copied and used for a craft shop next to it.

Other community organisations have included A Women's Institute, a Church Institute, a Conservative Association, a cricket club, a football club and a tennis club. There were also allotments beside the Beverley Road.

#### **i) Scale**

Residential properties are nearly always of two storeys within the proposed Conservation Area, community buildings being single storeyed.



## ii) Orientation

Like most East Riding villages, the great majority of Withernwick's dwellings face the roads in front of them.

There are one or two however which are side facing which adds to the character of the settlement.

## iii) Materials

Except for the Church, which is of coursed brick and cobble, the village is built almost entirely in brick.

## iv) Walls

Where the walls of the buildings are not finished in facing bricks – usually in the typical Holderness red-brown colour – they tend to be rendered (rather than being painted brick). In contrast to this, though, some – for instance the Wesleyan Chapel are in a red, smooth faced brick, which makes an interesting contrast. Traditionally rendering was often undertaken, not for aesthetic reasons, but as a form of repair to spalling brickwork where this has led to lateral porosity.

Most of the proposed Conservation Area's facades are of simple, unornamented design. A few, however, have brick dentils at eaves level.

There are some significant lengths of garden wall. These are not always in good repair, but they add to the hard landscaping character of the heart of the village.

There are also examples of round-topped openings – unusual in a settlement of this size.



The heart of the village, on Main Street

## v) Roofs

Clay pan-tiles are the predominant form of roofing materials, but with examples of welsh slate and more modern concrete tiles also in evidence. There is one house which has what appears to be the rare Westmoreland slate, which has a green (rather than purple) hue. A similar colour is to be seen on South Lodge Cottage on the Rise Road, and both buildings may once have been in the Bethell estate's ownership.

Most roofs are gabled with a central (parallel to the road) ridge. Eaves are plain, with little or no overhang beyond the minimum required to discharge into simple, usually half-round gutters.

## vi) Windows and Doors

The number of properties with traditional-styled doors and windows are relatively few compared with other similar sized villages. Many have been changed for plastic and/or top-hinged variants.

This is not to say that the use of uPVC is always inappropriate, but where used it is important to ensure that the style and detail of traditional patterns is replicated wherever possible if the character of the building is to be maintained.



One of the best examples of authentic looking replacement windows is to be seen at Molyneux Cottage. This also has the benefit of being at a focally important location which enhances its value to the built environment of the village.



Characterful door on the side of the Church

Withernwick is also not a village with dormer windows and this lack is also part of the village's character.

One feature that is noticeable is the number of dwellings which have front (canopied) porches. Mostly cantilevered with a tiled roof, this feature is probably due to the lack of curtilage which many of these buildings enjoy.

vii) Chimneys

The village's chimney pots are one of its often-overlooked character features.

They come in a variety of shapes, colours and sizes, ranging from the more usual medium sized terra cotta coloured cylindrical pots to square, round and octagonal cream-coloured ones.

The number of medium-height, cream ones is truly surprising and in this

respect can be compared with the village of Long Riston, less than five miles away, where this style also held sway. It may suggest that they all came from a common source of supply, as the Bethell family had holdings in both of them.

k) Historic Buildings

The Parish was last reviewed for listing purposes in 1987. Its listed buildings are:

- Church of St. Alban, Church Lane II
- Withernwick Hall, Gt Hatfield Rd II

Grade II listed Buildings are classified as being of **special architectural or historic interest**, and are normally confined to buildings built before 1840, after which time building became much more prolific.

(Although the Church would fall within the proposed Conservation Area, the Hall would not.)

l) Focal Point Buildings

These buildings are particularly important because of the additional visual significance they have due to their location. Planning applications which relate to them will therefore be considered against the criterion that their design and detailing should reflect the importance of their location.

m) Unlisted Buildings of Interest

The principles of selection used by English Heritage for recommendations for the listing of buildings seek to ensure that most buildings from 1700 – 1840 are listed. After this latter date there was a significant increase in the number of buildings erected nationally and therefore a significant decrease in the number of listings, these being limited to the best examples of particular building types.



Pevsner's Architectural Guide to Yorkshire: York and the East Riding, gives a somewhat frank but unflattering comment on the village when he says "among the architecturally unremarkable buildings which line the main street is a collection of minor 19<sup>th</sup> century public buildings which illustrate well the independent spirit of this small community." He highlights the (Wesleyan) Methodist Church (1809, rebuilt 1914, the former Wesleyan Sabbath School (1845), the former Primitive Methodist Chapel (1843), the Foresters' Hall (built 1890 but more recently rebuilt).



The Foresters Hall.

Also mentioned are The Old Vicarage (1860) by James Mallinson of Halifax who had been involved in the rebuilding of the church some five years earlier, and Elm Tree House of c.1850 and both these properties are significant (though unlisted) contributors to the proposed Conservation Area.

One should also not forget the positive contribution which can be made by ancillary items. In Withernwick's case these include the K6 Red Telephone

Box from the 1930's, the George VI Letter box, and garden items such as the Dove Cote with decorative weather vane at Foresters Hall on Main Street.

#### n) Literary Associations

The village is not without some literary associations, having provided the setting for at least one novel by the Doncaster-born writer, Edward Charles Booth (1872 – 1954).

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## POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE WITHERNWICK CONSERVATION AREA

The East Riding of Yorkshire Council will use its powers to protect the special character of the proposed Withernwick Conservation Area.

Where the removal of trees within the Conservation Area is approved, the Council will endeavour to ensure that the Area's long-term character and appearance is not thereby damaged, and that, unless there are accepted reasons to the contrary, replacement planting is agreed and undertaken.

#### New Developments

The Council will give special regard to development proposals which may affect the Area and its setting, to ensure that it is thereby preserved or enhanced.

#### Recommended Materials

With repair works where it is necessary to introduce new materials because those being replaced are no longer practical to re-use, materials should nearly always be the same as those which are removed.



In respect of materials for extensions and outbuildings, these should usually reflect those of the 'parent' building.

For new build, materials that reflect the established character of the Conservation Area should be used. This would probably mean the use of a dark red brick, timber windows and doors, and pantiles or slates for the roof.

Where it proves impossible to match an existing brick, it is worth remembering that the second best option is usually to find a brick (of same size) which is darker in colour than those being matched, since it is the use of lighter non-matching bricks which normally looks more discordant.

## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

This appraisal is the subject of consultation with Withernwick Parish Council and affected residents. The comments received in the course of this consultation process will be taken into account prior to the adoption of the document as Council policy.

## **PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

The principle legislation covering Conservation Areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which provides the framework for designation, review and appraisal of Conservation Areas.

There are also provisions within the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

Government policy and Guidance is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) "Planning and the Historic Environment" dated September 1994 and this document is available at: [www.communities.gov.uk/planning](http://www.communities.gov.uk/planning)

The planning policy affecting Conservation Areas within the East Riding is set at the regional, sub-regional and local level. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for Yorkshire and the Humber (published May 2008) deals with the historic environment in Policy ENV9.

This is developed at the sub-regional level by the Joint Structure Plan (JSP) for Kingston upon Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire (adopted June 2005) in Policy ENV6.

At a local level policies relevant to the Withernwick Conservation Area are currently contained in the Holderness District Wide Local Plan (adopted April 1999), Policies EN24 – EN26.

Other policies in this Plan can also affect the Conservation Area, including those dealing with new residential and commercial development, listed buildings and archaeology.

The JSP will be incorporated into the Local Development Framework (LDF), which will also supersede the current Local Plan in due course. This appraisal will be used as a background document in support of the relevant LDF Development Plan Document and as a material planning consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications.

## **LOCAL GENERIC GUIDANCE**

Holderness District Wide Local Plan, Policies EN24 – EN26.

Leaflet, "What are Conservation Areas?" by East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Customer Services, County Hall, Beverley, HU17 9BA



## USEFUL INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

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This appraisal has been undertaken with  
information provided by specialist  
officers of the Council, and the Victoria  
County History for the East Riding.

It has been written in accordance with  
"Guidance on Conservation Areas"  
issued by English Heritage in August  
2005.

Residents consulted on this appraisal are  
those whose addresses appear on the  
Unedited Register of Electors for 2009.

The photographs used in this document  
were taken in late 2008.

For information about other East  
Riding Conservation Area appraisals,  
please search under Environment and  
Planning - Conservation Area Appraisals  
on the Council's web page where, under  
Environment and Planning, and  
following the links to Conservation -  
Conservation Area Appraisals, those  
Areas with up-to-date appraisals, (those  
completed within the last 5 years) can be  
found.

**Date: 11th June 2009**  
(Consultation Draft)