

# CAISTOR CONSERVATION AREA

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Part I of the Civic Amenities Act 1967, charged local planning authorities with the responsibility for designating as Conservation Areas those parts of their area which were of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it was desirable to preserve or enhance. The emphasis on conservation was re-iterated in the Town and Country Amenities Act 1974. This Act amended Section 277 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 and included the following: - "It shall be the duty of a local planning authority to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether any parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas; and, if they so determine, they shall designate those parts accordingly".
- 1.2 In 1970, Lindsey County Council designated an area within Caistor as a Conservation Area under the Civic Amenities Act 1967, following the publication of a County Conservation Policy Statement which set out policies and actions for such areas, in July 1968. These original policies and actions are included in Part 5 of this document,
- 1.3 This Conservation Area boundary was drawn tightly around the town centre and the parish church and includes the majority of the towns 56 listed buildings. In numerical terms, the number of listed buildings makes Caistor the most important Conservation Area in West Lindsey,
- 1.4 In accordance with the policies and actions for conservation set out in the original document, an Article 4 direction under the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1963 was made relating to the painting of the exterior of buildings on specified frontages, in the original Conservation Area. These frontages are shown on the Conservation Area designation map at the end of this report. The approval of the District Council is required before painting of the frontages of any of these buildings is undertaken,
- 1.5 It is considered that there are parts of the town adjoining the original Conservation Area which are worthy of inclusion because of their contribution to the character of Caistor, and accordingly these additional areas are now included in the revised Caistor Conservation Area, and the revised boundary is shown on the Designation Map.
- 1.6 The original Conservation Area boundary was drawn taking into consideration mainly the number and location of listed buildings in and around the town centre, and included 47 of them\* More recently, following the Town and Country Amenities Act 1974, the emphasis has been placed on the buildings in their setting, rather than the buildings themselves, and it is felt that this setting should include a wider area,
- 1.7 One of the aims of Conservation Area designation is the enhancement of that area, and it is felt that this aim has not been realised in Caistor. The town centre still has the problems and visual drawbacks it had in 1970 when the Conservation Area was first designated.
- 1.8 The Town and Country Amenities Act 1974 further states that:- "It shall be the duty of a local planning authority to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation. Such proposals would involve the District Council in financial assistance and in view of the present economies in public spending, it is considered that a scheme of enhancement can only proceed in a more favourable financial climate.

## 2 THE TOWN

- 2.1 Caistor, a town of some 2,000 inhabitants, nestles in the lower parts of the western slope of the Lincolnshire Wolds. It occupies a commanding position overlooking the Ancholme Valley and possibly for this reason, together with its abundant supply of spring water, the Roman Army's Ninth Legion established a Camp here during the latter part of the first century AD.
- 2.2 The town is linked to Grimsby, some twelve miles to the east, and Lincoln, about twenty-five miles to the south-west, by the main road A46 which by-passes the town. Approaching the town along this road from the east one is unaware of Caistor's presence until first sight of the

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town is obtained.

- 2.3 The main street pattern of the town is focussed on a series of squares. Market Place, Cornhill, Butter Market and Horse Market, the names of which suggest earlier agricultural prosperity in and around the town, for no active agricultural markets exist today. The buildings surrounding these squares were built following a great fire in the town in 1681, and from gaps in the facades the narrow, often tortuous streets of the compact old settlement lead out.
- 2.4 The buildings lining the pavements of these streets are largely humble in character and are typical of the red brick and pantiled terraced cottages which may be found in any North Lincolnshire market town. Many have been colour washed in pastel shades, punctuated here and there by buildings painted in garish colours. From the older parts of the town new development has spread in a westerly and south- westerly direction into the edge of the Ancholme Valley, and as far south as the by-pass.

## 3 THE CONSERVATION AREA

- 3.1 The revised Conservation Area has been drawn to include most of the older parts of the town, from North Street and North Kelsey Road in the north to Nettleton Road and South Dale in the south, and from Mill Lane in the east to Cromwell View in the west. The area is particularly rich in buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Most of them are included in the statutory list of such buildings compiled under Section 54 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 and are concentrated in and around the Market Place.
- 3.2 From the by-pass South Street gives access to the Conservation Area. Mill Lane has on both sides a variety of yards and outbuildings all red brick with slate or pantile roofs of differing levels and differing building lines, set on either side of a curving, undulating street. There is a group of three fine beech trees to the north of the slaughterhouse and an important group of trees within a garden on the east side of the road. These being important both to the town' s hillside setting and to the street scene.
- 3.3 Buildings of note are the stonemasons work- shop, with examples of his handiwork displayed along the wall, and an ivy covered brick and pantile cottage with sash windows, at the north of the childrens playing field; this having a fine walnut tree in the garden. At the north end of the street is an unusual red brick castellated tower adjoining the road. Access to the spiral staircase inside it being by a tunnel under the road from the garden of 2 Grimsby Road, on the opposite side of Mill Lane.
- 3.4 The length of South Street within the Conservation Area is narrow and undulating and is closely built up to the back of the pavement, giving a strong feeling of containment. It opens out in two places, Cornhill and Butter Market.
- 3.5 Cornhill is an intimate enclosed space, the scale of which is reminiscent of a bygone pedestrian age. An important component of the square, the former George Hotel on the north side, is in a dilapidated condition but otherwise the buildings on the east and west sides of this square, and the majority of those on the south side are of good appearance and have been tastefully maintained. Narrow pedestrian passageways connect Cornhill with the Market Place to the west.
- 3.6 Butter Market is a small square enclosed on three sides but opened by the courthouse car park on its western side. The view froa the courthouse into the Market place is framed by the buildings at the neck of the narrow opening from Butter Market,
- 3.7 Market Place is a relatively large enclosed square surrounded by two and three storey buildings. The sense of enclosure achieved is further emphasised with views from the Market Place being effectively contained by the subtle alignment of the streets leading out of the square. Many of the buildings are in need of attention, and indeed most of the western facade of Market Place would benefit from a sympathetic "facelift". Of the more imposing buildings, Caistor House, built in 1682 of classical influence with colour- washed stucco walls and hipped roof in Welsh slates is the most dominant. Some parts of the eastern facade of Market Place have been carefully modernised, and the renovation of shop fronts has been carried out with some restraint

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and success. Both the northern and southern sides have not been so fortunate in their modernisation, and much of the old charm and character has been lost through the installation of large plate glass windows with accompanying advertisement clutter. Elsewhere in the square, the introduction of bows and bays provides a pleasant relief to the otherwise formal pattern of the facades. At ground level the square is used as a car park during weekdays and on Saturdays a small market is held.

- 3.8 There is no change in surface materials over the entire square and the tarmac is broken only by the white line parking bay markings and the unfortunate alien central feature of the square - the public lavatories.
- 3.9 Across Market Place from Cornhill, Plough Hill, a wide road, leads out and continues in a south-westerly direction to Horse Market. Whilst the bold grouping of dwellings in Plough Hill emphasises the steepness of the slope upon which they are built and is the dominant feature in the local scene, the old White Guest House is first to draw attention. It is tastefully, if strongly decorated in white colour-wash on stucco with detailed features such as quoins and lintels picked-out in black. The terraced pantiled cottages opposite, together with the old Council Offices form an "L" shaped group standing proudly at the back of a steep grassed bank, giving total enclosure to this part of the street. Beyond this group, the street opens out dramatically into what seems, by comparison, the spacious Horse Market,
- 3.10 Horse Market itself is in a local hollow and here recent re-development has taken place in the form of three storey flats. The buildings, Plowrise and Fountain Court, are built immediately at the back of the pavement and the materials used are sympathetic to those found in the older buildings in the vicinity. The older buildings consist of well-maintained terraced red brick pantiled cottages the effect of which is spoiled only by the corner shop which is embellished with unnecessary coloured electric light bulbs and exaggerated fascia board. Horse Market is effectively contained at the southern end by a steep grass bank on which there are newly planted trees and under which is situated the curious old arched tunnel constructed in 1869 which housed the town's original horse-drawn fire engine.
- 3.11 From Plough Hill and Horse Market the view along Fountain Street is terminated by the untidy corner of an area of waste ground. This unused land is to be developed by the District Council for old people's bungalows and on the completion of this development the view should be much improved.
- 3.12 The area here includes the group of cottages to the south of the church. Although the roof at the centre of this block has been restored with concrete tiles, pantiles remain on either side and red brick is the building material. Some windows have been modernised. However, the cottages form part of an attractive hillside group, backed by a variety of mature trees and the parish church, when viewed from Nettleton Road.
- 3.13 On the south side of Fountain Street two rows of low two-storey brick and pantiled terraced buildings line the pavement, some of which are in need of urgent repair. The north side is more openly developed and buildings are not arranged in any orderly fashion. However, the sharp rise in ground levels, the high retaining walls and over-hanging trees emphasises the strong feeling of identity and enclosure.
- 3.14 Two groups of cottages front onto the north side of Nettleton Road, numbers 22 to 26 have pantiles and are rendered, painted white and cream, and mostly retain their sash windows. Numbers 2 to 16 are similar except they are red brick. Their relationships to the changes in road level are interesting.
- 3.15 To the east of number 22 is a very unusual outbuilding. It has a gable end to the road with double garage doors and is mainly red brick and has a pantile roof. However, its west wall is timber and glass. There is an exposed open staircase to the first floor, which is cantilevered out.
- 3.16 The Caistor Primary School is a pleasant eighteenth century building on the south side of Nettleton Road, and is one of the features which closes the view southwards down Horse Market.
- 3.17 Cromwell View and the southern half of Church Street is a narrow, steep, sunken road with

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three right angled corners. On either side within private gardens and notably within the vicarage grounds are many fine trees which not only enhance the area but are part of the town's appearance from the west, when the impression is one of red brick buildings set amongst many trees on the hillside. The buildings are a mixture of red brick and white painted brick, with pantiles or welsh slate roofs,

- 3.18 Church Street itself is narrow and its sharp bends contrast with the open character of the grouping of surrounding buildings. The Church, school. Chapel and detached houses standing back from the road form a pleasing peaceful composition around the raised green of the Churchyard.
- 3.19 Church Street is linked to Fountain Street by a walled pedestrian walk called Church Folly which runs alongside St Peter and St Paul's churchyard. Part of the southern wall of the churchyard incorporates a length of the Roman Camp wall which is now scheduled as an Ancient Monument. Much of the interest in this part of the Conservation Area can be found in the detailing of the different types of iron railings, brick and stone walls, and brick, tile, concrete and stone wall cappings present. The Church dates from Saxon times and is built of local limestone and Welsh slate. Similar limestone has been used in the construction of the Old Grammar School (1631), and this tone has mellowed with age to reveal traces of oxidised iron-stone developing a subtle red/orange colour.
- 3.20 Church Street, Bank Lane and Chapel Street at their junction are of differing widths and, this combined with fine examples of red brick town housing lining the pavements creates an attractive open area linked to the churchyard open area by a short length of Church Street. There are two buildings of note on Chapel Street, the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel and Schoolroom of 1867 and the former police station of 1855 now converted into a private dwelling, both these being of red brick with slate roofs.
- 3.21 The attractiveness of High Street results mainly from the subtle bends in the road and the steady drop in level from east to west. Along the street in either direction the views open and close progressively, and the inter-play of roof lines emphasises the change in direction and level. Buildings line the street more or less continuously. They are mainly constructed in red brick and pantiles with occasional colour-washed walls punctuating the facade. At either end of the street can be found fine examples of eighteenth and early nineteenth century dwellings; for example, Tower House, an impressive blue colour-washed house set at an angle to the road, occupies a commanding position at the eastern end of High Street, while at the western end Holly House, another large town house constructed in red brick and pantiles, stands immediately at the back of the pavement, with its main door some five steps above pavement level.
- 3.22 On the south side of North Kelsey Road between High Street and the Grammar School entrance is an attractive range of buildings at the back of the footpath. They are a mixture of dwellings and storage buildings. The effect is of a group of buildings stepping down the hill with a variation of building lines and roof heights, linked at the south end by outbuildings and walls. They are a mixture of red brick, and white and green painted rendered buildings, some having walls which lean out of the vertical.
- 3.23 North Street is fronted by terraces and pairs of nineteenth century two storey cottages stepping down the hillside. They are mostly red brick with pantile roofs, others are rendered or painted white, and most retain their sash windows. There are unsightly gaps in the frontage notably on the south side of the street, but a sense of enclosure is created by the presence along most of its length of a red brick wall of varying height. Towards the western end of the street is a very attractive buttressed red brick garden wall of great height. Opposite this are two blocks of Council bungalows of modern design, set well back from the road. They do not have anything in common with the other housing, being one storey and constructed of a bright red brick with red delta tiles, Their effect on the street scene is lessened by their siting a long way back from the road edge, out of sight from much of the street, Views to the west are closed by a group of three pleasant cottages situated on a slight curve in the road, beyond which there is a bowling green and modern houses and bungalows. There are some fine examples of individual trees in the eastern half of the street.

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- 3.24 There is one modern bungalow on the south side but it is hidden from view along the street by the presence of the brick walls referred to and by old outbuildings at the roadside.
- 3.25 It is estimated that about half the dwellings in the North Street area require some structural repairs.

## 4 POLICIES AND ACTIONS FOR CONSERVATION

- 4.1 Within the Conservation Area, the following policies and actions will be pursued:-
- i Any application for planning permission for development that, in the opinion of the planning authority, is likely to affect the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, or affect the setting of a listed building will be advertised for public comment.
  - ii The District Council may refuse to consider outline applications. Detailed applications may be required indicating the siting, design and materials of construction of any proposed building.
  - iii Applications for new uses or changes of use will be granted permission only if it is considered that the proposed use will not detract from the appearance and character of the Conservation Area.
  - iv The design and materials to be used in new buildings or in extension to existing ones must in form, colour and texture be in harmony with the traditional buildings in the Conservation Area.
  - v At the appropriate time, the District Council, in consultation with the Caistor Town Council and owners of property within the Conservation Area, will seek to improve the appearance of the locality through an enhancement scheme.
  - vi It should be noted that, in addition to the provisions made for controlling the demolition and alteration of "listed" buildings, under the Town and Country Amenities Act 1974, the demolition of any "unlisted" building within a Conservation Area also requires the prior consent of the District Council.
  - vii If, in the opinion of the District Council, the proposed alteration of an "unlisted" building is likely to detract from its appearance or from the appearance of the area, the Council will consider making a Building Preservation Notice, which then applies the same control to the building as if it were "listed".
  - viii If, in the opinion of the District Council, a "listed" building is not being properly preserved, the Council will consider serving a repairs notice, requiring the owner to carry any necessary repairs within a stated period.
  - ix Within the limits of such funds as may be afforded from time to time by the District Council consideration will be given to the making of grants under the Local Authorities (Historic Buildings) Act 1962, towards any excess costs incurred by the owners in the maintenance and repair of listed buildings arising from the use of special materials or methods to preserve their character and appearance,
  - x It should also be noted that the Town and Country Amenities Act 1974 makes provision for the protection of trees in Conservation Areas which are not covered by Tree Preservation Orders, by requiring that anyone intending to cut down, top, lop, uproot, damage or destroy any such trees shall give the District Council six weeks notice of their intention to do so,
  - xi The District Planning Authority will seek the confirmation of the Secretary of State to the making of a direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1973 in respect of the Conservation Area requiring planning permission to be obtained for development falling within the following classes in Part 1 of Schedule 1 of the Order.

### Class I - Development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse

- 1 The enlargement improvement or other alteration of a dwellinghouse so long as:

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- a. the cubic content of the original dwellinghouse (as ascertained by external measurement) is not exceeded by more than 50 cubic metres or one-tenth whichever is the greater, subject to a maximum of 115 cubic metres;
- b. the height of the building as so enlarged altered or improved does not exceed the height of the highest part of the roof of the original dwellinghouse;
- c. no part of the building as so enlarged altered or improved projects beyond the forwardmost part of any wall of the original dwellinghouse which fronts on a highway. Provided that the erection of a garage, stable, loosebox or coach-house within the curtilage of the dwellinghouse shall be treated as the enlargement of the dwellinghouse for all purposes of this permission including the calculation of cubic contents.

2 The erection or construction of a porch outside any external door of a dwellinghouse so long as:

- a. the floor area does not exceed 2 square metres;
- b. no part of the structure is more than 3 metres above the level of the ground;
- c. no part of the structure is less than 2 metres from any boundary of the curtilage which fronts on a highway.

3 The erection, construction or placing, and the maintenance, improvement or other alteration, within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse, of any building or enclosure (other than a dwelling, garage, stable, loosebox or coach- house) required for a purpose incidental to the enjoyment of the dwelling- house, as such including the keeping of poultry, bees, pet animals, birds or other livestock for the domestic needs or personal enjoyment of the occupants of the dwellinghouse, so long as;—

- a. no part of such building or enclosure projects beyond the forwardmost part of any wall of the original dwellinghouse which fronts on a highway;
- b. the height does not exceed, in the case of a building with a ridged roof, 4 metres, or in any other case, 3 metres;
- c. the area of ground covered by buildings within the curtilage (other than the original dwelling- house) does not thereby exceed one half of the total area of the curtilage excluding the ground area of the original dwellinghouse.

## Class II - Sundry minor operations

1. The erection or construction of gates, fences, walls or other means of enclosure not exceeding 1 metre in height where abutting on a highway used by vehicular traffic or 2 metres in height in any other case, and the maintenance, improvement or other alteration of any gates, fences, walls or other means of enclosure; so long as such improvement or alteration does not increase the height above the height appropriate for a new means of enclosure. NB The existing Article 4 Direction relating to the painting of buildings on specified street frontages would remain.

xii Although the District Planning Authority has considerable powers of control in conservation areas, the success of such areas depends to a large extent on the willingness of the general public, particularly those living within conservation areas, to participate with the planning authority in furthering the aims of conservation. In this respect the planning authority will always be willing to offer help or advice to any member of the public on any matters concerning conservation.