



# Belton Conservation Area

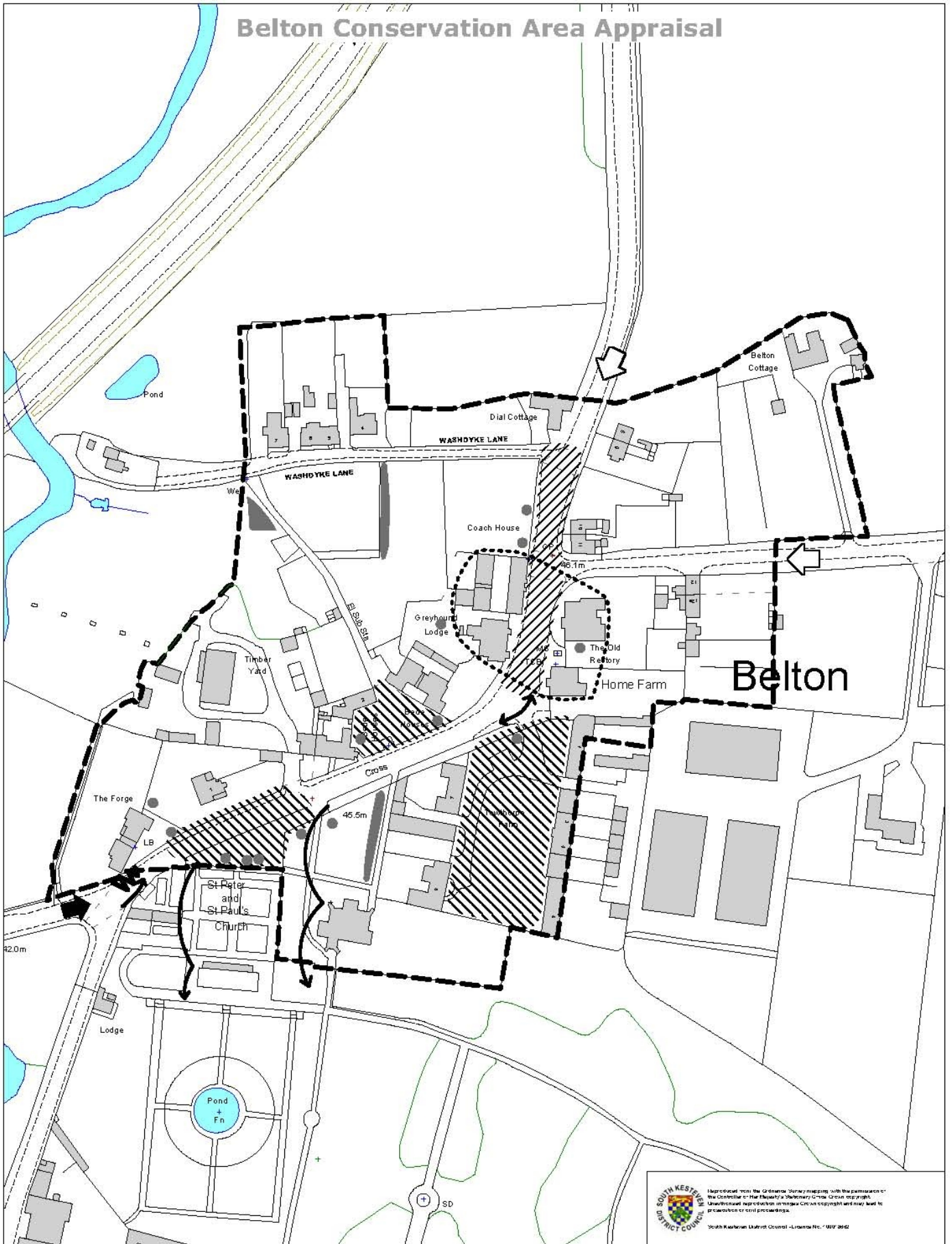
Designated March 1985  
Appraisal & Amendment January 2009


*"Listening Learning Delivering"*

South Kesteven District Council

STAMFORD • GRANTHAM • BOURNE • THE DEEPINGS

# Belton Conservation Area Appraisal




 Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited by law. South Kesteven District Council - Licence No. 1007 9542

## Map Key

	Conservation Area Boundary		Road Dominated Linear Space		Gateway Entrance Feature		Visual Links to Belton House
	Dominant Building Group		Open Approach		Deflected View		Prominent Trees/Tree Groups
	Open Space Feature		Enclosed Approach				

# BELTON CONSERVATION AREA

“One of the handsomest villages in the county” (Whites Lincolnshire, 1856)

“A paramount example of benevolent estate activity. The whole very complete and visually satisfactory.” (Pevsner, Buildings of England: Lincolnshire, 1989)

## Location and context

The village of Belton is located some 5 miles to the north of Grantham, immediately to the north of Belton House and its extensive grounds, owned by the National Trust.

There has been a settlement at Belton since the Domesday period, and the church still retains foundations from Norman times, with further evidence of work from circa 1200. A Jacobean manor house occupied the site of the present Orangery to Belton House in the early 17th Century, the only survivals of which are the gate piers in the north garden wall, dated 1609.

The present Belton House dates from 1685-1688, and was the residence of the Brownlow family for the next 300 years. The village was part of the Brownlow estate, and the 18th Century saw the erection of the rectory at the corner of Barkstone Heath Lane and a coaching inn opposite, perhaps pointing to a flourishing community here during this period. Little now remains of the pigeoncote in the estate yard, also erected about this time.

The current form of the village is largely derived from the early to mid-19th Century, when Jeffrey Wyatt and Anthony Salvin were commissioned to design a model village for the 2nd Lord Brownlow. As well as cottages for estate workers, almshouses, a school, a forge, and an inn were built, with a village cross and pump obelisk prominently located along the street frontage. The Home Farm was rebuilt and a sawmill erected in the estate yard, reinforcing the relationship between the village and Belton House.

With the exception of the former Agent's house (1896, now 1 Main Street), very little in the way of built development has occurred since, and the absence of such development over the past 100 years or so has been an important factor in maintaining the original character of the village. This applies not only within the conservation area, but also along the various approaches, where the immediate proximity of the open countryside emphasises the completeness of the historic settlement. The major change is the inevitable loss of the traditional mix of uses in the settlement as a result of the sale of many of the buildings, and their subsequent adaption solely for residential use. It nevertheless remains a relatively unspoiled example of a largely planned model village associated with a country estate, the quality of which is clearly worthy of conservation.

## Spatial Character

The conservation area is located around the wide Main Road through the village, but the juxtaposition of the buildings does not give the impression of a linear form. The approach from the west is tightly enclosed on the southern side by the boundary wall to Belton House, with a contrasting open landscape on the northern side. The approach from the north is more open, allowing a more gradual appreciation of the quality of the village. The eastern approach, whilst largely open, is abruptly enclosed by the Coach House opposite, and roadside buildings and walling at the road junction.

From the entrance to Belton House at the western end, the smithy to the north and higher curved wall to the south form a gateway feature to the street beyond with the wall deflecting the view into the village from this approach. Beyond this point is a landscape-dominated space, loosely enclosed by the agent's house and former school on the northern side, and more positively by the high garden wall to Belton House and adjacent wall to the churchyard to the south. The road frontage here is bordered on both sides by substantial hedges complemented by a large number of trees of different sizes and varieties.

The village church is not a prominent feature in the street scene at this point, being set back from the southern frontage, and largely obscured by the boundary walls, and nearby trees and bushes. The location of the church serves to reinforce the historic link between the village and Belton House, the owners of which were largely responsible for its current form, and the employment of its residents. Glimpses of the Orangery and roof to the main house are further reminders of this association.

The historic focus of the conservation area lies at a distinct northward curve in the road, featuring the former Greyhound Inn and stables abutting the western roadside, and The Old Rectory and Home Farmhouse on the eastern side. This is reinforced by the presence of the milestone obelisk and former roadside village pump, and latterly the red telephone box, also a listed building. Beyond the road junction, 2 pairs of cottages informally continue the built form on the eastern side of the widening road, with the northern aspect being enclosed by the modest yet elaborate gable to Dial Cottage. The stone wall abutting the western side of Main Road and extending westwards along Washdyke Lane provides a link between the core of the village and a small cluster of cottages on the northern side of the lane, beyond which a footpath provides an alternative route southwards, linking back to the Main Road to form a circuit.

A smaller but equally distinct group of buildings comprising the Bede Houses and former school is found immediately to the south west. These buildings, mostly single storey or with attics, are more modest in scale, and enclose a well-defined green space, with the village cross at the centre on the road frontage.

The former granary and stable to Home Farmhouse, a symmetrical brick structure which has been converted to residential use, dominates a further large, mostly grassed open space to the south of Home Farmhouse. A range of smaller stone buildings adjacent and opposite, and stone walling at the north and south sides complete the enclosure.

Due to the dispersed nature of the buildings, and varied sizes and shapes of the intervening spaces, the planting and landscaping elements are varied, depending largely on the choices of individual owners and occupiers. There are nevertheless a number of mature and prominent trees, which, either individually or in small groups or rows, complement the layout of the village, contributing to its character.

## Quality and character of buildings

The close association between the village and the Belton Estate is clearly evident in both the quality and character of the buildings, and the original uses they reflect. The majority are of coursed stone construction, with slate roofs, with one or two examples of well-designed brick

cottages and non-domestic buildings. The buildings were for the most part individually designed, with many sharing the characteristics of stone-coped gables, ashlar quoins, chimneys and dressings, and distinctive ball and spear finials, at both the eaves and roof apex. Stone mullioned windows are prominent features of many buildings, regardless of their scale.

With the exception of the single-storey almshouses, all other domestic buildings are of 2 storeys, but varying in scale between the smaller estate cottages and the larger rectory, farmhouse and former Greyhound Inn. Large dormers are a distinctive characteristic of many of the smaller cottages, normally crossing the eaves and in many cases possessing unique decorative architectural features, shapes and copings, clearly designed to be seen and admired.

By way of contrast, the range of farm buildings south of home farm is simple and functional, being of brick construction with arched full-depth openings on the ground floor, and small square openings above.

The former timber yard is still actively used as the estate yard by the National Trust, current owners of Belton House and a number of the cottages in the village. The buildings in this area are for the most part simple, practical and varied in design, but are not readily visible from the road. Of particular interest in this area are the remains of the former dovecote, and the former sawmill building, both of which are grade 2 listed.

The dovecote has been neglected for many years, and has lost its roof and 2 external walls. The remaining structure is currently supported by scaffolding, and whilst full restoration may not be a viable option, it is likely to deteriorate further unless attended to. The sawmill still retains most of the outer walls, although only some 25% of the roof structure still remains. Again, in the absence of positive action to prevent it, further deterioration is inevitable and the building is in danger of being lost.

### **Management-Opportunities and constraints**

- \* No further independent built development should take place, either within the conservation area or abutting its boundaries.
- \* Alterations to existing buildings should only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the character of the building would not be harmed, and the historic character and appearance of the village preserved or enhanced.
- \* Telecommunication equipment for individual properties should be located as inconspicuously as possible, and should not be readily visible from public roads, areas or spaces.
- \* The growth of hedges, trees and bushes should be controlled with a view to ensuring that the visibility of the buildings is not unduly compromised.
- \* Proposals for the short, medium and long-term retention of the sawmill and dovecote in the estate yard should be formulated and implemented as soon as possible

## **CONSERVATION AREAS**

Current legislation imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any “areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”.

[Planning (Listed buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990]

The main effects of such designation are:

- \* Alterations to dwellings

Planning permission is required for certain types of development in conservation areas which elsewhere would be classified as “permitted development.” Most commonly, these include external cladding, the insertion of dormer windows into roof slopes, and the erection of satellite dishes on walls, roofs or chimneys fronting a highway.

The size of house extensions which may be carried out without planning permission is also more restricted for semi-detached and detached properties, although there is no change in respect of terraced dwellings.

Curtilage structures exceeding 10 cubic metres in volume are treated as extensions to the house

- \* Demolition

“Conservation Area Consent” is required for the demolition of any building larger than 115 cubic metres, or any part of such a building. It is also required for the demolition of walls, gates, fences or railings more than 2 metres high, or where abutting a road footpath or public open space, 1 metre high.

- \* Trees

The Council must be given 6 weeks notice of proposals to lop or fell trees with a diameter exceeding 75 millimetres. This is increased to 100 millimetres if the work is required to help the growth of other trees.

- \* New development

Development proposals affecting the character or appearance of the conservation area must be advertised in the local press, and a site notice displayed. Any representations received must be taken into account when a decision is made.

In considering development proposals, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character of the area.