



# Westborough Conservation Area

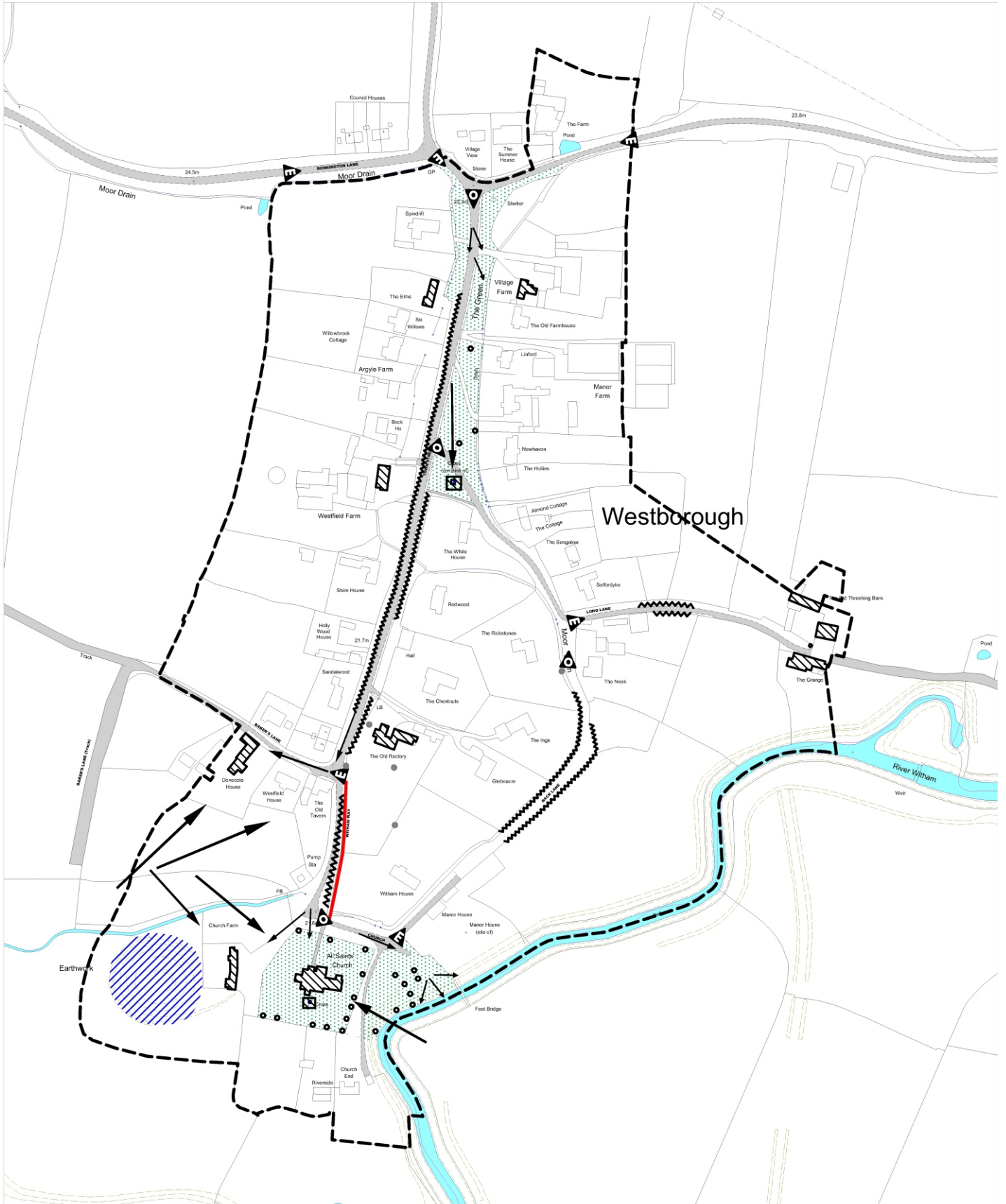
Designated November 1972  
Appraisal & Amendment May 2009

South Kesteven District Council












STAMFORD • GRANTHAM • BOURNE • THE DEEPINGS



# Westborough Conservation Area



## Map Key

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  Listed Building                       |  Open Approach              |  Important View              |
|  Conservation Area                     |  Enclosed Approach          |  Important Enclosing Feature |
|  Important Tree (approximate location) |  Scheduled Ancient Monument |  Deflected View              |
|  Tree with Preservation Order          |  |  Important Green Space       |



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. South Kesteven District Council - Licence No. 100018662

# Character Appraisal

## Location and Context

The small village of Westborough is located 1 mile east of Long Bennington and 8 miles north west of Grantham on the north bank of the River Witham. The village lies within a broad river valley in the Trent and Belvoir Vale and the landscape is characterised by gently undulating arable or mixed farmland with trimmed hawthorn hedges. The village is built upon slightly rising land which slopes gently down towards the River Witham.

The village was originally established as a Roman settlement; however the Bronze Age barrow to the west of Church Farm indicates that the area was populated in the pre-historic period. The barrow is a designated scheduled ancient monument and is highly significant as there are only 60 known examples in the country, the majority of which are located in Wessex. A small Saxon farming community had been established on the site of the present village by the time of the Norman Conquest in 1086. The Domesday Book records that it consisted of 120 acres of meadow and a church with a priest.

The general rectangular plan form of the village and the large number of farmsteads with farmyards and associated outbuildings located in the centre of the village indicates that it evolved as a cluster of buildings around a central green, the remains of which can be seen on the east side of Town Street. Historically, farmers herded their livestock into the green overnight as a form of communal protection against thieves and predators. Back Lanes are another common feature of this type of village; the lane evolved from the link-up of old cart and drove roads which lead from the ancient common fields and pastures to the outbuildings of the farmsteads.

The existence of six farms within a village the size of Westborough may be attributed to the 18th century parliamentary enclosures. The village's common lands were enclosed in 1771, which brought to an end the traditional open field method of farming and divided the land amongst private owners. The expense of the enclosures, incurred by heavy legal costs and the necessity of planting hedges around allotted land, meant that many small farmers continued to live in the village rather than build new farmhouses in the centre of their newly acquired land. A system of drainage channels was constructed throughout the village to improve agricultural productivity. The channels remain a prominent feature of the landscape and can be seen along Town Street, Long Lane, Back Lane and Church Lane.

The population of the village peaked in the 19th century and a Public Elementary School to accommodate 50 children was built in the early 1800s, however it had closed by 1896 and children were educated in the neighbouring village of Dry Doddington. The village also had a Catholic chapel served from Grantham and a small Primitive Methodist chapel, which was built in 1850, both have since vanished. Today Westborough is a peaceful residential village with agriculture as the main economic activity.

## Planning Policy Context

Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as “an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It is the quality and interest of an area, rather than that of individual buildings, which is the prime consideration in identifying a conservation area.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area that are designated as conservation areas. Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This document should be read in conjunction with national planning policy guidance, particularly Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG 15) – Planning and the Historic Environment.

## Conservation Area Boundary

The Conservation Area encompasses the whole village with the exception of the four council houses on Bennington Lane and the two modern houses on Ease Lane to the west of The Farm.

## Spatial Character and Townscape Quality

The village is enclosed to the south by the River Witham; therefore the Conservation Area can only be accessed from the north along Bennington Lane, Ease Lane and Doddington Lane. The narrow rural lanes are enclosed on either side by hedgerows and grass verges, with glimpses of open farmland beyond. The approach routes converge onto Town Street which is the only access road for vehicles into the village. The street has an open character and is dominated by open green spaces, which forms a striking contrast with the enclosed character of the approach routes.

The character of the Conservation Area is derived from the relatively linear plan form of the village and the spatial relationship between the open green spaces and the buildings. The plan form has been altered by the construction of three modern houses on land to the rear of The Old Rectory, The Chestnuts and Redwood on the east side of Town Street. Although contrary to the established plan form of the village, the buildings are located in an unobtrusive position and are not visible from Town Street and can only be glimpsed between the hedgerow which encloses the west side of Back Lane.

The remains of the historic village green, known as The Green, is a large open green space which extends along the eastern side of Town Street from the junction with Ease Lane to the footway which adjoins the boundary hedge of The White House. The Green is central to the open character of the Conservation Area and forms the nucleus of the northern half of the village as the buildings front onto it in a linear formation. The Green is bisected by Long Lane and the driveways leading to The Old Farmhouse, Linford and Manor Farm which has divided it into five large, irregularly shaped grassed areas which become broader beyond Manor Farm to the junction with Long Lane. It provides an attractive setting for the modest buildings on the east side of Town Street and its appearance is complemented by an attractive mix of mature trees which frame the views along Town Street and Long Lane. The stepped limestone base of the former medieval village cross, situated adjacent to Long Lane, provides a focal point for the village and contributes to the visual interest of The Green.

The buildings on the west side of Town Street are set back from the road within modest gardens enclosed by hedges which are separated from the roadside by a large grass verge. The northern section of the street as far as the junction with Long Lane, has a higher density of development and the buildings occupy modest plots; to the south of the junction the density is lower and the buildings on the east side occupy larger plots which contributes to the open character of Town Street. The road is aligned in a slightly westerly direction which deflects views along the hedges and mature trees that partially screen the buildings from the road and contribute to the visual interest along the street. The open farmland beyond the village can be glimpsed between the buildings on the west side and looking southwards along the street there is an attractive view of The Old Tavern. Town Street terminates in a wide triangular junction with Bakers Lane and Witham Way and beyond this point the character of the Conservation Area becomes more enclosed.

Bakers Lane is a narrow lane which extends westwards from the junction with Town Street. The Old Tavern and Dovecote House abut the south side of the lane with narrow grass verges separating the buildings from the roadside. Westfield House and Whispers are modern buildings which are set back from the roadside on the south and north sides, but the enclosed character of the lane is maintained by the boundary walls and hedges to the buildings. Beyond Dovecote House, the lane becomes a green bridleway which curves sharply to the south and crosses open farmland before joining the footbridge at the south end of Witham Way. Although the bridleway is not included within the Conservation Area, there are attractive views across the fields towards Dovecote House, The Old Rectory and the tower of All Saints Church.

Witham Way continues southwards from the junction with Town Street. The high brick boundary wall to The Old Rectory runs along the length of the east side and is an important enclosing feature of this part of the Conservation Area. The road curves gently to the west which deflects views along the wall and visual interest is created by the mature trees in the garden. The narrow footway adjacent to the boundary wall is separated from the roadside by a grass verge which widens out to a small triangular open space at the junction with Church Lane. The west side is enclosed by the boundary hedge to The Old Tavern

which is separated from the roadside by a narrow grass verge. A more open character emerges at the southern end of the road which terminates in a wide junction with Church Lane with attractive views of All Saints Church and Church Farm.

Church Lane has an open character as it has a low density of development and the narrow lane is flanked on either side by broad grass verges. All Saints Church and Church Farm on the south side and Witham House on the north are set back from the roadside which contributes to the open character. Witham House occupies a large plot and is enclosed by a high brick boundary wall which, together with the mature planting in the garden, partially screens it from view. To the east of the church, a driveway leads to Church End and Riverside which are unobtrusively located to the south of the church and are screened from view by mature trees. Beyond the driveway, the lane terminates at a large open green space on the north bank of the River Witham which is complemented by an attractive mix of trees and views across the open farmland beyond the river to St Peter's Church in the neighbouring village of Foston.

All Saints Church is located centrally within the churchyard which is enclosed by a stone boundary wall capped with curved stone copings, with mature trees planted along its perimeter. The churchyard is level with the top of the boundary wall which elevates the church above street level and reinforces its high status within the village. There are attractive views from the west side of the churchyard of Church Farm and of the open farmland beyond the village. The church is not a dominant feature within the Conservation Area as it is built upon low lying land at the bottom of a gentle slope on the southern edge of the village. It can only be viewed within the Conservation Area from Church Lane as the mature trees in the gardens of The Old Rectory and those planted around the periphery of the churchyard obscure it from view. Outside of the boundary, it can be viewed from Bakers Lane bridleway and there are attractive views of the church tower from the footpath on the south bank of the River Witham.

Back Lane is a broad green lane which provides a pedestrian connection between Church Lane and Long Lane. Glimpses of open farmland to the east and of Witham House to the west can be seen between the hedgerows which enclose both sides of the lane. Beyond the boundary with Witham House, the character becomes more enclosed as the lane narrows and curves to the west which reduces visibility along its length and the trimmed hedgerows are supplanted by tall mature trees and dense vegetation. As the junction with Long Lane is approached a more open character emerges as the lane becomes wider and is flanked by the cultivated boundary hedges to Westborough on the west side and The Nook to the east.

Long Lane extends in a south eastern direction from Town Street and provides vehicular access to The Grange which is located on the eastern edge of the village. To the north the narrow lane has an open character as it bisects The Green and the buildings on the east side beyond The Cottage are set back from the roadside which is flanked by broad grass verges. From the junction with Town Street, the lane curves gently to the east as far as the junction with Back Lane which deflects views along the boundary hedges and trees. Beyond the junction with Back Lane, the character becomes more enclosed as the lane bends sharply to the east before curving gently southwards which deflects views along the hedgerows and overgrown narrow verges which flank either side of the lane.

### **Quality and Character of Buildings**

There are ten listed buildings within the Conservation Area, the most notable include All Saints Church (Grade I) which dates from the 11th-17th centuries; The Old Rectory (Grade II\*) which dates from the 16th century with 17th and early 18th century additions; and Dovecote House (Grade II) which is a 17th century timber framed aisled hall with 18th-20th century additions.

The traditional buildings are mainly located on the west side of the village and date from the 17th-19th centuries. The buildings have a general uniformity of character as they are domestic in scale, consisting of two storeys and are constructed of red brick with clay pantile roofs which is an important characteristic of the Conservation Area. All Saints Church is significant as it is the only building in the village which is constructed from limestone.

The 20th century buildings are mainly concentrated on the east side of the village, they generally comprise of two storey dwellings interspersed with bungalows and are constructed of brick with clay or concrete pantiles. Although these buildings do not reflect the vernacular traditions of the village, they do not dominate the traditional buildings in terms of scale and have a neutral impact upon the overall character of the Conservation Area.

## Management Opportunities and Constraints

- \* The low density of development is a key characteristic of the Conservation Area, therefore new dwellings should not be erected unless a substantial overriding need can be established and the location, scale, materials and design of the building do not detract from the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
- \* The churchyard boundary wall is in a poor state of repair, particularly the eastern section which has suffered a partial collapse and has been replaced by an inappropriate wood post and wire fence capped with barbed wire. If the opportunity arose, the wall should be rebuilt and repaired where necessary in a matching stone.
- \* Individual trees and open green spaces highlighted on the map are an essential element of the Conservation Area and should be retained.

Please note that no appraisal can ever be completely comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

## Effects of designation

The effects of designation include the following;

1. Subject to certain exemptions, the prior approval of the Local Planning Authority is required for the demolition of buildings within the conservation area.
2. Subject to certain exemptions, six weeks prior notice must be given to the Council of any proposals to top, lop, fell or uproot any trees within the conservation area. The wilful damage or destruction of such trees may also result in an offence having been committed.
3. Certain forms of development, which, by virtue of the provisions of the Town and County Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 could otherwise have been undertaken without planning permission, cannot be undertaken without formal approval from the Local Planning Authority.
4. Applications for planning permission for development which would affect the character or appearance of the conservation area will be advertised.
5. In considering proposals for development within the conservation area, the Local Planning Authority will have regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance.



For further help and advice please contact:

Planning Policy, Council Offices, St Peter's Hill, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG31 6PZ.

Telephone: (01476) 406080 E-mail: [planningpolicy@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@southkesteven.gov.uk)

### **Alternative formats and languages**

South Kesteven has a rich and diverse culture – a community made up of people from different cultures, with differing backgrounds, beliefs or experiences. This diversity is one of the things that make South Kesteven such a great place to live and work.

To ensure all residents of South Kesteven have access to our information material, our information is available in a range of different languages and formats, including large print, Braille, audio tape/CD and computer disc.

To request a document in a specific language or format, you can ring us on: 01476 40 61 27, or email: [communications@southkesteven.gov.uk](mailto:communications@southkesteven.gov.uk)

