EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

BESWICK

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INTRODUCTION

The Conservation Area at Beswick was designated by the East Riding of Yorkshire Council in 2001.

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 defines a Conservation Area as **"an area of special architectural or historic 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.

This resurvey has been undertaken in accordance with Guidelines on Conservation Area Appraisals, issued by English Heritage in August 2005 in order to meet the current requirement of national government that Conservation Areas should be resurveyed every five years.

DEFINITION OF BESWICK'S SPECIAL INTEREST

Beswick is a small and largely estate-owned village, with an unusual plan-form based around its single-street. It has a peaceful non-intensive rural quality and a perceivable proximity to open countryside. As such it is rare within commuter-distance from Hull.

The jewel in its crown is a fine 16th century Grade II Listed Building in a fine setting.*

THE CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE CONSERVATION AREA AT BESWICK

a) TOPOGRAPHY AND ITS RELEVANCE

The Beswick Conservation Area lies within the 'Lund Sloping Farmland' Landscape Character Area, as identified in the East Riding of Yorkshire Landscape Character Assessment (ERYC, 2005).

The Landscape Character Assessment identifies this area of farmland between Beverley and Driffield as being slightly raised and gently undulating, with fields that are generally medium in size and rectilinear in shape, but arranged in an irregular pattern overall.

The Landscape Character Assessment also indicates that whilst this area continues to be dominated by intensive agriculture, there are examples of previously widespread wetland habitats, such as Bryan Mills Field SSSI which is an important area of spring-fed tall fen which would have been a far more abundant feature of this landscape historically. The hedgerow network throughout this area remains an important aspect of the landscape, and hedges are dominated by hawthorn, with hazel, ash, blackthorn, elder, field maple and dogwood.

Beswick is located at the bottom of the last clearly perceivable slope of the Wolds where it meets the plain of Holderness. The land rises above the village to the west, but then falls again into a slight depression before rising to the bulk of the Wolds beyond Lund. The land continues to fall away gently to the east. Beswick is therefore on the east-facing slope of a slight hump in the land. In this position it is visibly raised up in the landscape as seen from the north, south and east but is almost completely in visible from the west.

This elevated characteristic means that what happens **in the village** can become visible from outside it. Any changes or developments in the village need to be conscious of this dimension.

b) DISPOSITION AND DEVELOPMENT

The primary characteristic of Beswick is its plan-form and the appearance which stems from it. The Hall and its assembly of farm buildings occupy virtually the whole of the west side of the village street. It is true that there are some half dozen other dwellings, but these do not detract from the Hall's dominance of the west side. It has a very significant and visually important brick wall which constitutes getting on for half of the village's Main Street frontage.

The counterbalancing half, on the east side, is the "ordinary" village housing, with the Church and the Churchyard in the middle, opposite the entrance to the Hall – making it a minor set-piece.

Entrance to Beswick Hall seen from St. Margaret's Churchyard

Beswick's single street form provides another strong characteristic of the settlement.

c) RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF OPEN SPACES

Grass verges are a feature of the two ends of the village, and are very noticeable. They are not kerbed, which adds to the rural effect. With most villages, the soft landscaping of grass verges and hedges occurs on the outskirts where the village and countryside meet. They are elements of the open landscape running into the village and thus help to contribute to the rural quality of the place. Where the village becomes "tighter", usually in the centre, walls and footpaths and kerbs

take over from hedges and verges. Beswick follows this pattern

d) THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Situated on the eastern edge of the Yorkshire Wolds and set back from the A164, Beswick has a variety of natural historical features of note. Of the 33ha. (80 acres) of Beswick and its pastoral environs, one quarter is actual village, hall and farm, the remainder being grazed permanent pasture. This grassland provides a glimpse or snapshot of how the majority of the Yorkshire Wolds was once farmed.

Several roads lead into and out of Beswick, all of which are flanked by tall stock-proof Hawthorn hedgerows. The hedgerow system well into the village, providing a strong network of wildlife corridors linking the rustic gardens with the wider countryside. There is a fairly extensive verge network within Beswick, which holds rare species of chalk-loving wild flowers.

The orchard-like rear gardens to the east of Main Street are reputed to have given Beswick the title of "Plum Capital of the Wolds". The farm buildings, Hall outbuildings, and the other older buildings along Main Street provide eave and roof habitats for birds and bats.

An unusual wildlife reservoir with Beswick is the various disused chalk pits. These unfarmable sites have, over time, naturalised. Self-grown Sycamore and Ash fringe their sides and wild flowers grow within these man-made habitats.

The Old Smithy at Beswick Hall

The mature gardens of Beswick Hall provide a man-made wildlife habitat emulating glades of a light woodland. The graveyard of St. Margaret's Church is surrounded by Yew and Holly trees, giving habitat to various garden birds such as Thrush and Blackbirds.

The cumulative effect of the above is to make Beswick a nature conservation haven within an intensively arable Wolds landscape.

e) TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

There are no Tree Preservation Orders within the Conservation Area.

(There is only one Tree Preservation Order within the Parish, created in 1993, and covering an area of trees just north of the school along the A164.)

f) BOUNDARIES

Hedging is the most common boundary, with brick second. Over 90% of all frontages are of these. There is evidence of there having been iron railings in the past, though these were possibly removed during the Second World War.

g) ARCHAEOLOGY

Beswick lies in a landscape which has been extensively exploited by man for the best part of the last 10,000 years. The earliest activity is likely to relate to a pattern of seasonal hunting, fowling and fishing by hunter-gatherer communities, but from the Bronze Age onwards there is increasing evidence for a pattern of dispersed settlements being founded on better drained areas within and adjoining the wetlands.

Amongst the earliest material from Beswick are two Neolithic stone axes, which were possibly used in clearing woodland; this is part of a wider pattern of axe-finds from this part of the valley. Of similar date is a long sickle-shaped flint dagger from Kilnwick (just to the north-west). Middle Bronze Age activity in the area includes the construction of a major wooden track-way at Wilfholme, dated to around 1600 BC. Other Bronze Age activity is represented by finds of a Bronze spearhead from Wilfholme, and a winged axe from the western part of the Parish.

In the later Iron Age and the Romano-British periods a pattern of small farms, associated with small early field systems and ditched track-ways and enclosures, can be identified within the area. One such complex is visible as crop-marks on aerial photographs of the area immediately to the north of Hall Garth, on the west side of the village; another rectangular enclosure can be seen just to the west of Beswick Hall. Similar evidence of later Iron Age farmsteads being established at regular intervals in the wetlands can be seen throughout this stretch of the Hull Valley, and many of these settlements continued to be occupied for much of the Roman period.

Evidence for Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian settlement and land use is provided mainly by place-names. The dairy farms on the better-drained land are shown by the settlements with *-wic* suffixes (e.g. Beswick and Kilnwick) and may date to the Anglian period.

Although Beswick is listed in medieval documents as a single *vill* (or unit of taxation), it appears to have comprised two separate settlements - High and Low Beswick - which possibly perpetuated the two main pre-Conquest holdings. High Beswick occupied the site of the surviving village, whereas Low Beswick, with its mill, appears to have occupied much the same site as the present-day Beswick Mill.

In the post-medieval period, chalk p[its have been excavated at each end of the village, but in every case these can be seen to cut through, and therefore be later than, the pattern of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation. Similarly, a large pond, to the east of Hall Garth View, can be seen to be a post-medieval addition.

The village still formed part of the Parish of Kilnwick in the mid 19th century, and, as such, did not then have a Parish Church; rather, it was then a dependent Chapelry and the medieval Chapel which stood on the same site as the present Church, was described in 1856 as being 'a very plain building, consisting of a thatched nave and tiled chancel, with a bell turret in which is one bell; there is no burial ground'. The present Church, which replaced this building, was erected in 1871.

Copse of trees to the south of the village

h) HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND ASSOCIATIONS

The name of the village appears to mean "the dwelling/village/(dairy) farmstead of a man called Bosi or Bessi. The personal name is Scandinavian, the "-wic" ending being Old English.

There is no authoritative history of the village. The Scandinavian element in its name and its single street linear plan-form suggest Scandinavian influence, if not origin. It is reasonable to suppose that it existed in the Middle Ages. The early date of Beswick Hall, (late 16th century), and a chalice and paten in the Church with a date of c.1500 suggest a village here and perhaps a larger settlement than exists today, if it were compatible with the Hall.

Currently there are some 30 dwellings in the village, a size which has remained similar to what it has been for the last two to three hundred years.

Although it had been an estate village previously, Beswick was bought by the Hotham family in 1838, after which there were a number of alterations and demolitions to the village buildings.

Fire caused the destruction of the earlier Church, its replacement dating from 1871.

Former primitive Methodist Chapel 1888

Also built around this time are a pair of cottages south of the Church dated 1878, a stable at the rear of Beswick Hall dated 1868 and the Methodist Chapel dated 1888.

From old maps it can be seen that before the restructuring of the village in the second half of the 19th century there was more of a core north of the present village.

In the 20th century there has been less demolition in the centre, but there has been more demolition to the north and south of the village, causing the loss of the majority of the remaining 19th century cottages. These have been replaced with Council housing and privately owned properties.

Little Beswick was clearly more built up than it is now.

In the 20th century, changes in farming practices have led to noticeably larger and different agricultural buildings being added to the farmsteads.

(The village was by-passed in the early 1970's.)

i) BUILDING STYLE, AGE AND MATERIALS

The village's buildings can be split into two main groups: historic and modern.
Within the historic group, Beswick Hall stands out as very historic and important. There are few secular buildings in the East Riding which go back as far as the 16th century. There are three single-storey cottages, The Old Post Office, Pear Tree Cottage and Moodsmoon which are of significance, and numerous farm buildings, particularly around the Hall.

Outbuildings play a large part in the overall scene. The majority of them are connected with the farmsteads, but the ones behind Nos. 33 – 39 contribute particularly to the historic, rural and enclosed quality associated with the village's heritage.

The modern housing comprises Council housing and new detached properties at the south end of Main Street. Unfortunately these do not reflect the scale and character of the earlier village housing.

That having been said, it must be acknowledged that in the main, properties erected from 2000 onwards have been successful in the choice of materials used, and in reflecting some of the character features of the village.

j) BUILDINGS OF ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

Listed Buildings (including their grades):

Beswick Hall, Main Street (II*)

Unlisted Buildings of architectural interest:

It says much of the general quality of Beswick's architecture, that it is difficult to highlight particular buildings, with so many contributing positively to a greater or lesser extent.

Of special note, though, would be:

The Primitive Methodist Chapel
Pear Tree Cottage
Moodsmoon
Lime Tree Cottage

Though it should be remembered that several other buildings are referred to in the course of this appraisal for specific features which they display.

k) MISCELLANEOUS FEATURES

There are the remains of two former village pumps; one clearly visible at the side of the entrance to Laurel House Farm, the other being opposite the Council Houses at Little Beswick.

There is a K6 (1930's) Telephone Box, an old type East Riding white painted finger-post at the road junction at the southern end of Main Street, a mileage distance, stone mounting-block (outside the Conservation Area), and a running fox weather vane on a gable of the frontage barn at Laurel House Farm, which it has been suggested may have been salvaged from the former Fox and Hounds Public House, demolished in the 19th century.

Also of decorative significance are the spiral brick chimneystacks of Nos. 33 and 35 Main Street. These prominent stacks are a feature of the

northern half of the village and its skyline whether viewed from within, or outside the village.

Wooden gates are a feature of the village. Of these, over half are of the vertical wooden slat design. This is enough to warrant it being highlighted as a feature of the village.

THREATS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Beswick appears always to have been a farming settlement. It still is, and appears not to be under any apparent threat as long as that activity continues. Approximately 50% of the land in the village is immediately connected to the farmsteads. So, the potential for considerable change is there should this change.

The previous Conservation Area Appraisal identified seven locations at the north end of the village – on the east side of Main Street, which it is considered could benefit from tree planting. This remains the case.

It is noticeable that the individually owned properties assert their individuality whereas the estate properties assert their coherence. This is particularly noticeable in the effects of Permitted Development which have led to numerous alteration to windows and doors.

Thus the village's historic character, as contributed through its windows and doors, is largely a reflection of its estate nature.

If the present character of the village is to be preserved, such features need to be retained.

View looking northwards along Main Street

POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE BESWICK CONSERVATION AREA

l) LANDSCAPE

The elevated location of Beswick on the east-facing slope of a rise in the landscape is important to perception, with distant views being afforded throughout a large arc to the east.

It is important that planning decisions about potential developments take this into account if this part of Beswick's special character is to be preserved.

m) STREETSCAPE

Beswick's special character when viewed from within the village has been highlighted as stemming from the great divide between the type of historic development on Main Street's west side compared with the "more ordinary" properties to the east.

If the Conservation Area's character is to be preserved, future developments must respect this.

The careful choice and use of traditional materials will be required to ensure that this balance is retained and where schemes of a more contrastive nature are proposed, it will be necessary to justify how they will "preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area".

Pear Tree Cottage on Main Street

n) BUILDINGS WHICH CREATE A FOCAL POINT

The linear nature of the village is such that there are very few buildings which create a focal point. The few that do, include:

The Old Post House (No.20)
Laurel House Farm
Council Houses at Little Beswick

o) THE SCALE OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Only the Hall is more than two-storeyed, and any proposal for a building which sought to threaten its supremacy would be strongly resisted. The great majority of the rest of the Conservation Area's dwellings are two-storeyed, and proposals for development would be expected to match this scale and massing.

There are some single storey dwellings, and similar proposals would not be ruled out provided that they adequately reflected their character – particularly in form and roof pitch.

p) RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

In spite of the different ages of the buildings, there is an overall coherence within the village as a whole because of the predominance of red-brown brickwork and natural orange/red plain (flat) clay tiles and pan-tiles. Though there are other traditional building materials, this predominant coherence is visually significant. It is also a somewhat rare feature, for the character of the locality as a whole is the variety of the materials used rather than the predominance of one or two, especially closer to Hull and its influence on "suburban" character.

This unity is another reflection of Beswick's rural and estate-village nature.

BOUNDARY CHANGES

The character of Beswick is derived from its coherence as a rural settlement with a strong estate influence and the majority of its land use being for agriculture.

When the Conservation Area's boundaries were originally set in 2001, they were drawn with the intention of including as many as possible of the village's features of importance within a mapped area which had geographic cohesion.

When the current review was begun, it had provisionally been thought that there would be no need to vary the boundaries of the Conservation Area. But, looking again at the village after five years, it was considered that there would be value in adding the two main approaches (north and south) from the A164, because of this land's importance to the setting of the Conservation Area.

This brought in a small number of properties (eight) at the north end of Main Street – which were collectively considered not of significantly less interest than others already included in the Area - and the recent planting on the northern and southern approaches to the village. This has given protection to the small copse of trees on the eastern side of the southern approach. In recent years these trees have put on growth giving them a greater impact on the setting of the village than when the Conservation Area was originally designated in 2001.

These particular proposals were put to the Dalton Estate, being the major landowner concerned, who expressed the opinion that the addition of the fields to the east of the village is neither appropriate nor necessary.

St Margaret's Church and Church House

This view, however, failed to take into account that by their inclusion - even if no development is currently being considered - the Area would then become one of "acknowledged importance," a value which can then be acknowledged for years to come.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This Appraisal was the subject of public consultation with the Beswick Parish Council and members of the public. The comments received through this consultation process were taken into account prior to the adoption of the document by the Council
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PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The principal legislation covering Conservation Areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which provides the framework for designation, review and appraisal of Conservation Areas. There are also provisions within the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Government policy and guidance is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) "Planning and the Historic Environment".

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 (Adopted December 2004) deals with the historic environment in Policy N2. This is developed at a 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 Beswick Conservation Area are contained currently in the Beverley Borough Local Plan (BBLP) (adopted June 1996), Policies E21 through to E34. 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 RSS will be reviewed soon and the JSP will be incorporated into the Local Development Framework, which will supersede the current Local Plans in due course.

LOCAL GENERIC GUIDANCE

Beverley Borough Wide Local Plan, Policies E21 – 34.

Leaflet, "What is a Conservation Area?" published by East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Customer Services, County Hall, Beverley, HU17 9BA.

USEFUL INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

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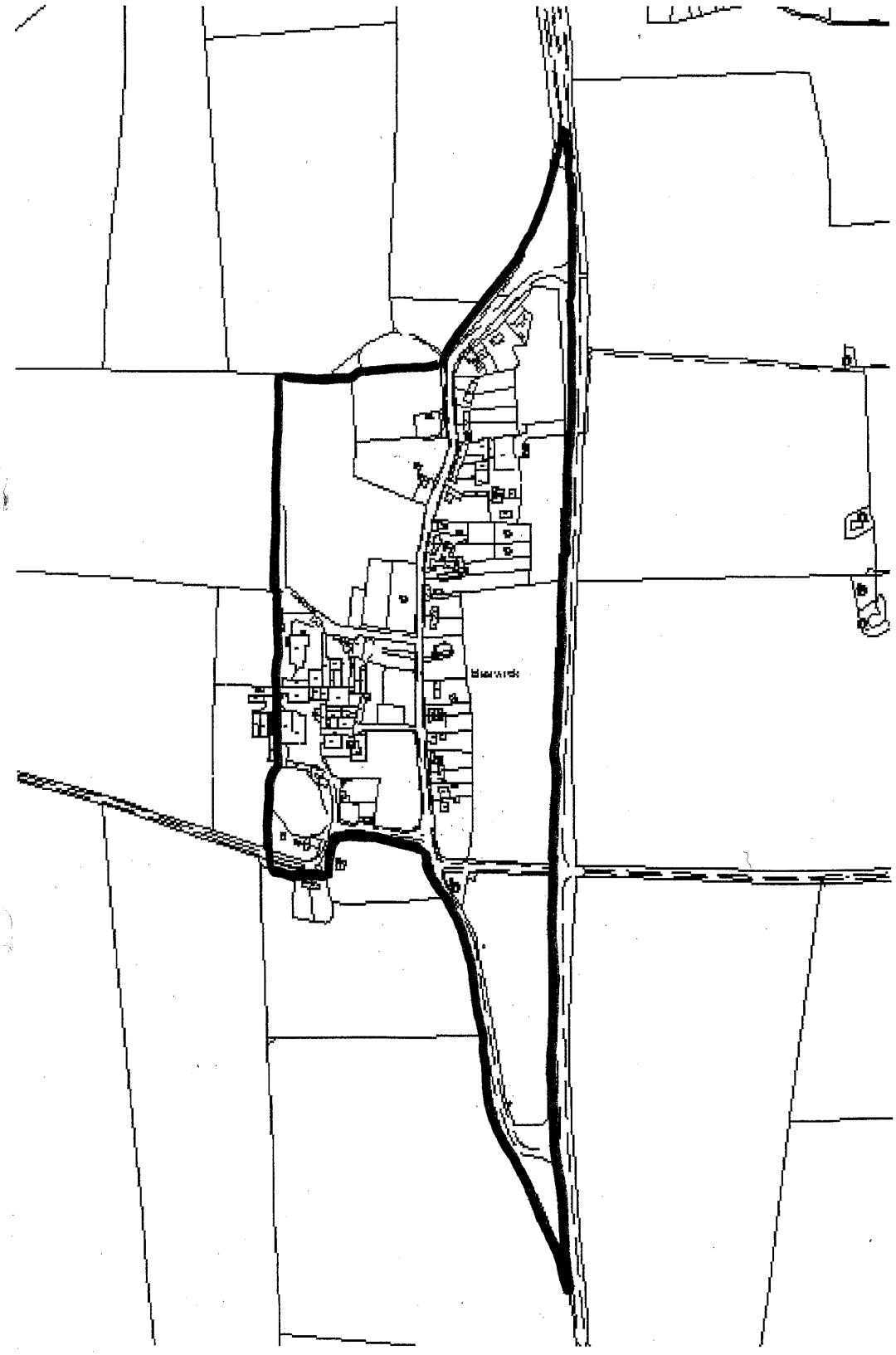
The extension of the Beswick Conservation Area and this document, (which was written in November 2006,) was approved by the East Riding of Yorkshire Council on 4th April 2007.



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