EAST RIDING
OF YORKSHIRE COUNCIL

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

SPROATLEY

Sproatley War Memorial (Grade II Listed)

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MAY 2006

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INTRODUCTION

The designation of Conservation Areas at Sproatley originally came about following concern expressed locally about proposed development. This resulted in an appraisal being undertaken and proposals drafted. These were supported by the Parish Council and the Holderness Conservation Advisory Committee. The recommendation was then approved by Holderness Borough Council, with the result that the Sproatley Conservation Areas came into being in December 1987.

In 1991, the Conservation Areas were resurveyed, resulting in the extension of the southern Area to take in properties and their settings as far as Boggle Lane in order to protect the approach to the village along the B1240 from Preston.

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 and 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 2006 re-survey has been undertaken in accordance with Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, issued in August 2005 by English Heritage, in order to meet the aim of National Government that Conservation Areas should be re-surveyed every five years.

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DEFINITION OF SPROATLEY'S SPECIAL INTEREST

The special character and appearance of the Conservation Area at Sproatley lies in the retention of its historic buildings (in two areas) to the north and south. These contrast with the modern developments in the middle and to the north-west, and contain all the traditional elements of village life, Church, School, public houses, landed properties and terraced dwellings.

a) TOPOGRAPHY AND ITS RELEVANCE

Poulson, in his "History of Holderness" (1841) advises, "The village is pleasantly situated on an eminence, and is immediately contiguous to the park of Sir Clifford Constable, and is the resort of many whom business or pleasure take to Burton Constable".

One hundred and fifty years later, the general tenor of description still holds good.

The Sproatley 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 Landscape Character Area is made up of the area that surrounds the two parkland Character Areas of Rise and Burton Constable and includes other villages such as Leven, Routh, Long Riston, Great Hatfield, Withernwick, Skirlaugh, Ellerby, West Newton, Sproatley and Humbleton. The Landscape Character Assessment describes this landscape as

being one that is dominated by the influence of agricultural intensification within the River Hull floodplain and that, as is typical of much of Holderness, significant areas of woodland are scarce. Those areas of semi-natural woodland that are present in this landscape are dominated by ash, oak, hazel, hawthorn, elm, field maple and rowan. Fragments of wet woodland are also features of the landscape and these are dominated by alder and willows species. The fragment of ancient woodland at Bail Wood, near Aldbrough, provides an indication of the type of woodland that would have been more widespread in this landscape area historically. The hedgerows in this landscape area are typical of Holderness and are dominated by hawthorn with hazel, ash, blackthorn, elder, field maple and dogwood also present.

To the north of the Sproatley Conservation Area is the 'Burton Constable Farmland and Parkland' Character Area. The Landscape Character Assessment describes how this Character Area is in the middle of open arable farmland and coupled with Rise Parkland, adds diversity and distinctiveness to the otherwise typical Holderness landscape type. The landscape here is predominantly agricultural with a mix of intensively managed arable crops and grassland. As is typical of much of Holderness, woodland cover is limited and the small blocks of semi-natural woodland that are present are dominated by tree species such as ash, field maple and rowan. Fragments of wet woodland area also present and are dominated by alder and willow species. The Hall's gardens are on the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks and Gardens and the parkland represents a very important historic landscape. The Landscape Character Assessment describes how Burton Constable village is now deserted and the remaining estate parkland, designed by Capability Brown, replaced earlier formal gardens and a medieval deer park. Work began in 1772 and involved the creation of a lake and informal planting whilst buildings were moved so they were in context with Brown's landscape.

Established on clay soil and sub-soil its development in this location may well have come about because of the natural drainage which the slight rise in the landscape afforded.

Situated some 7 miles east-north-east of Hull and 4 miles from Hedon it has of late become a popular residential village for those who work in Hull but who wish to live in a rural environment.

B) DISPOSITION AND DEVELOPMENT

The map of Holderness included in Poulson's book is indicative of the changes of disposition and development which have affected Sproatley in the past two centuries. The map, by Tuke, which dates from the late 18th century shows properties as being almost exclusively to the east of the present B1240 (Preston - Sproatley) road and after this has joined the B1239 in the village, only The Constable Arms and a building on the north west corner of the junction of the road to Marton are shown on the opposite side of the road.

Although showing a greater total number of properties, this pattern is repeated by Bryant's Map of 1829. This tends to confirm the importance of the higher ground in historic development decisions.

In the second half of the last century, recent developments (which lie outside the Conservation Areas) have filled areas between Church Lane and Tradesman's Row, Westlands Road and Mill Road/Hull Road, making a tremendous impact on the village as it was previously.

However, with the exception of Chichester Bungalows and sundry infill sites, the immediate surroundings of most pre-1900 buildings in the Conservation Areas remain largely undeveloped.

The population information provided by Poulson in his History of Holderness published in 1840, gives an important insight. Within the "Township" there were 81 inhabited and 4 uninhabited properties,

housing 81 families, of which 48 were chiefly involved in agriculture with a further 26 in trades, manufactures and handicrafts, making a population of 366 people in all. (By comparison in 1891 the population had dropped to 325, but current figures for the Parish indicate a population of 1,470 and 574 houses, confirming the volume of growth in recent years).

b) RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF OPEN SPACES

There are three separate areas of open space which deserve particular mention.

First, and perhaps of most importance in that it represents the heart of the village, is the open space in front of the Constable Arms with its mature chestnut tree and the more recent extension of that area towards the junction of Westlands Road and Ash Close. Although the planting of (what is hoped will become) specimen trees in the grassed area will take years to create an impact, this open space and its appearance will articulate the village in time to come.

The second-most significant space is that between the Endowed School and Boggle Lane - arable agricultural land still retaining several traditional hedges and hedgerow trees.

Finally there is a small but significant open space opposite Chichester Bungalows. Like the area in the centre of the village, it will become an increasingly important amenity area in future years.

D) THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

On entering Sproatley's southern Conservation Area from Bilton a small woodland which surrounds Rise Farm provides an important natural visual amenity to be enjoyed by passers-by and residents alike. The woodland mainly consists of mature Sycamore apart from a few pockets of Ash and regenerating Elm. It also provides important screening to the early 21st century development of this area for housing.

Sproatley War Memorial (Grade II Listed)

Along either side of Balk Lane leading into Church Lane there is a line of mature Horse Chestnuts which in the summer months creates a beautifully shaded leafy lane.

Within the grounds of St. Swithin's Church there are many visually important mature trees which include Beech, Oak, Horse Chestnut and Yew. Even during the depths of winter the church yard provides a tranquil setting as the snowdrops start to appear under the large mature trees.

Situated in Sproatley's central Conservation Area in front of the Constable Arms on a small grassy knoll a magnificent mature Horse Chestnut dominates the central village scene. Another significant feature of the central Conservation Area is a large area of grass which has recently been landscaped providing an important visual amenity.

On the northern edge of the central Conservation Area a mixed woodland of Oak, Beech and Larch provides the old and the young residents of Sproatley with relaxing and peaceful surroundings to walk or play.

E) TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

In 1987 there were no Tree Preservation Orders within the Sproatley Conservation Area, but since three Tree Preservation Orders have been confirmed:-

Tree Preservation (Sproatley No. 3) Order 1990 - Relating to trees at Scott House;

Tree Preservation (Sproatley No. 5) Order 2000 - Relating to trees at The Rise;

Tree Preservation (Sproatley No. 7) Order 2000 - Relating to trees at Rise Farm/The Rise.

Notwithstanding this, owners are still required to give six weeks' notice to the Borough Council of their intentions to prune or to remove any tree in the Conservation Area.

F) ARCHAEOLOGY

Recorded in Domesday Book in 1086 AD as Sprotele, land here was held by Drogo de Brevere, belonging to the manors of Burstwick and Withernsea. The place-name is Old English in derivation and refers to a 'clearing where shoots are springing up'.

Prehistoric activity in the area is attested by the discovery in 1852 of a hoard of bronze axes. Evidence for medieval settlement is to be found to the south and east of the Conservation Areas, with fields preserving the remains of ridge and furrow, the distinctive characteristic of medieval fields which once formed part of the open field system. Within the Conservation areas, this is to be found to the north of Primrose Nurseries.

Bulmer's 1891 directory mentions a 5ft diameter boulder stone adjoining the churchyard, the origin of which was unknown, and goes on to comment that no similar rock formation was to be found within many miles of Sproatley.

It is recorded that when the original church was replaced in 1820, the earlier remains included two tombstones of supposed Norman date. A medieval cross-base and cross fragment, of probable 15th century date survive in the churchyard. The "old village" is believed to be to the south east of the church.

Further details of these sites are held in the Sites and Monuments Record which is held by The Humber Archaeology Partnership.

G) HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND ASSOCIATIONS

In medieval times, the Lordship of the Manor having passed to Simon de Ver(e), Lord d' Arcy purchased it and then sold it to Edward I. Edward III granted Wm de la Pole the manor and the village for ten years, before, in the sixteenth year of Charles II's reign, it passed via the Earl of Westmoreland (following the conviction on charges of high treason of Edward, Duke of Buckingham), to John Constable, Viscount Dunbar.

A further twenty-one Lordships of the Manor relating to Holderness were granted to John Constable by the same document.

There appears to have been at least three churches on the site of St. Swithin's. There was a church at the time of the Conquest but this had fallen into disrepair and was taken down in around 1815. Its replacement was completed by 1820, but was re-built in 1885, the architects being Smith and Broderick, of Hull.

A Wesleyan chapel was founded in 1804 and this was restored in 1904. It is still in use today.

Sproatley's Endowed School dates from 1868.

A Police Station (today used as a private house) was opened in 1849, and in 1891 consisted of one superintendent, one inspector, two sergeants and ten constables

The Mill at Sproatley, now demolished, was run by Mr. Rank and his family. How, (if at all), they were related to the millers who became Rank, Hovis, MacDougall, is unclear.

Former Police Station (Grade II Listed)

H) BUILDING STYLE, AGE AND MATERIALS

The 15th century cross-base aside, of the remaining Sproatley architecture nothing pre-dates the 18th century. Too far inland (?) for cobble, and perhaps too close to Burton Constable Hall, the oldest properties are of red-brown brick, mostly beneath clay pan-tile roofs, though some Victorian examples of slate (which followed the railways), can be found.

The older properties are all quite plain in design, several being of 1½ storeys with dormers, usually sledge type, peeping from steep roofs.

Traditional windows were vertical sliding-sash or Yorkshire sliding sash - doors batten type.

Over the years several properties have been rendered and/or painted, which has added to the impact of, amongst others, both public houses.

Sproatley has not been a village to overlook the value of sheet steel, not least at the Memorial Village Hall - a unique and not unattractive building, which was refurbished in 2000.

An analysis of the 46 oldest dwelling houses in the Conservation Area confirms that nearly two-thirds are two storey, the rest being either single storey or single storey with dormers. (This figure is "loaded" by the inclusion of Chichester Bungalows, which also increases the proportion of slate-roofed properties, for which they account for more than half).

The red-brown brick, typical of many buildings in Middle and South Holderness, is to be found as the finish in more than 90% of the same, the remainder having painted brickwork, or occasionally painted render.
Roofs, as has been mentioned, are mainly clay pan-tile (nearly 60%), with slate accounting for one-third - concrete tiles having replaced the remainder.

It is with windows and doors that one usually finds that most alterations have been made and in this, Sproatley is fairly typical. With both features more than one-third have suffered from what might be described as unsympathetic householder alterations.

I) BUILDINGS OF PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE

Listed Buildings (Within The Conservation Areas)

Police Station 1849 (II)
Constable Arms Public House - late 18th century (II)
House opposite Constable Arms - mid 18th century (II)
Scott's House - late 18th century (II)
The Rise - late 18th century (II)
St. Swithin's Church - 1814-20, rebuilt 1886 (II)
Cross-base and Cross Fragment - probably 15th century (II)
War Memorial circa. 1920 (II)

Listed (outside the Conservation Area)

Lodge Farmhouse - late 18th century (II)

Unlisted Buildings of Architectural Significance

The former School House, Church Lane
Methodist Church
Mill House, Park Road
No. 3 Russell Row, Park Road
Rachel Cottage (off Preston Road)
The Red House (off Preston Road)
Memorial to the Great War
Memorial Village Hall
Pair of Cottages in Boggle Lane
Scarcroft Cottage, Boggle Lane

J) ASPECTS CONSIDERED INAPPROPRIATE TO THE CONSERVATION AREA

Sproatley's Conservation Areas have been fortunate in avoiding many of the problems which have befallen other Areas, and apart from the incidence of house-holder "improvements" where doors and windows more suitable to a suburban environment have replaced their original rural counterparts, there are few problems specific to Sproatley.

Some temporary classrooms remain at the school, in spite of the recent extensions, and these detract from the character and appearance of the other school buildings. At the Blue Bell, the bulbous blue blinds which had spoilt its appearance in the 1990's, have now been removed.

Sproatley has several examples of street furniture - litter-bins, railings etc, and it is important to remember how shabby and unattractive they can become unless regularly maintained.

POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE SPROATLEY CONSERVATION AREA

1) LANDSCAPE AND STREETSCAPE

The special character and appearance of the Conservation Areas at Sproatley is to be found in the retention of almost all of the key elements of a traditional village format.

Although some elements (such as the former School, Rectory and Police Station) have had to find new uses which have satisfactorily accommodated their architectural interest, they are, (with the exception of the mill,) nearly all still there. Individually considered, it is fair to say that Sproatley's older buildings are as much of interest for their type as for their style. There are, however, several exceptional examples of cottages, some of which, sadly, are in need of repair.

Poulson, 150 years ago, seems to have concluded that there was little spectacular about Sproatley's architecture as the chapter on the village illustrates only one building - The Rectory - and even that is used not so much in its own right, but as a background for the initial letter to the chapter.

Sproatley's Conservation Area designation has much to do with protection of the village's heritage in an environment which has seen considerable development, which might otherwise have had a more all-pervading effect on the older parts of the village than is presently the case.

2) BUILDINGS WHICH CREATE A FOCAL POINT

The serpentine nature of the roads through the village and its several intersections ensures that there are a number of buildings which create a focal point within the Conservation Areas. These include:-

The former Police Station
Tradesman's Row Cottages
The Butcher's House
The (former) Cottage Fisheries
The Constable Arms
The Methodist Church
Scott's House
Blue Bell Public House
Memorial Village Hall and War Memorial
Rachel Cottage
The War Memorial

These buildings are highlighted because of the increased visual important they enjoy, 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.

Constable Arms (Grade II Listed)

3) THE SCALE OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The analysis of the forty-six oldest residential properties within the Conservation Area reveals that nearly two thirds are of two storeys, and that, of the remainder, the oldest dwellings are 1½ storeys with dormers - usually of the sledge-type.

The heights of the properties to the eaves - are usually low, but with quite steep un-hipped gables, affording sufficient pitch to accommodate sledge dormers.

Where roofs are less steeply pitched, several are of slate. They often exhibit the traditional long and narrow floor plan typical to old Holderness Village properties.

Applications will be expected to respect these parameters.

4) RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

Within the Conservation Areas, it is important that newly introduced materials should reflect as far as possible, the traditional building materials which are already in evidence.

Roofing materials should therefore usually be traditional clay pan-tiles, although welsh slate may be appropriate, depending on location.

Gutters should either be formed in timber or cast-iron, with cast-iron down-pipes and, where appropriate, shoes.

The careful selection of an appropriate brick style and colour will play an important role, the mechanically precise finish and outline to several modern bricks making them, even when appropriately coloured, unlikely to be supported. The contrast between traditional buildings with bricks of yellowish hue, and those of a deeper richer red colour is a characteristic worthy of promotion.

Windows should be of timber - either with sliding sashes or traditional side-hung casements. PVCu will be unlikely to be approved. After installation windows should be painted rather than stained.

Depending on the style of the properties, doors, (which should always be of softwood timber), should be either braced and vertical boarded (on cottages), or four or six panelled on the main doors of more imposing houses. These later styles do make themselves adaptable for the introduction of glazed panels above the mid-rail, but glazing should not be included below this level.

The Council will seek to encourage the retention and repair of existing traditional features where they exist, and where they do not, to encourage the use of the traditional materials and styles described above.

5) RECOMMENDED FEATURES

In addition to the materials described in the section above, the retention (in existing developments) and introduction of (in new developments) brick chimney-stacks with pots of around 75cm high represent a

significant contribution in the skyline on domestic properties.

The inclusion of 'tumbled' brickwork on brick gables is a feature appropriate to the area.

Colour is a significant contribution to any streetscape. Although the number of properties rendered or colour-washed is not great, their harmony of colour in relation to surrounding buildings is particularly important.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This Appraisal has been the subject of public consultation with the Sproatley Parish Council and members of the public. The comments made through this consultation process have been taken into account prior to the adoption of the document

THE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The principal 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 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 Sproatley Conservation Area are contained currently in the Holderness District Wide Local Plan (HDWLP) (adopted April 1999), Policies Env24 through to Env26. Other policies in this Plan can also affect the Conservation Area, including those dealing with new residential and commercial development, Listed Buildings and archaeology. Sproatley also has a Village Design Statement (VDS) which has been prepared to guide development decisions in the village.

The RSS will be reviewed soon and the JSP will be incorporated into the Local Development Framework, which this will supersede the current Local Plans in due course.

LOCAL GENERIC GUIDANCE

Holderness Borough Wide Local Plan policy Env 24 - Env 26.

Leaflet by East Riding of Yorkshire Council "What are Conservation Areas?"

www.eastriding.gov.uk/planning/index..html

USEFUL INFORMATION AND CONTACT DETAILS

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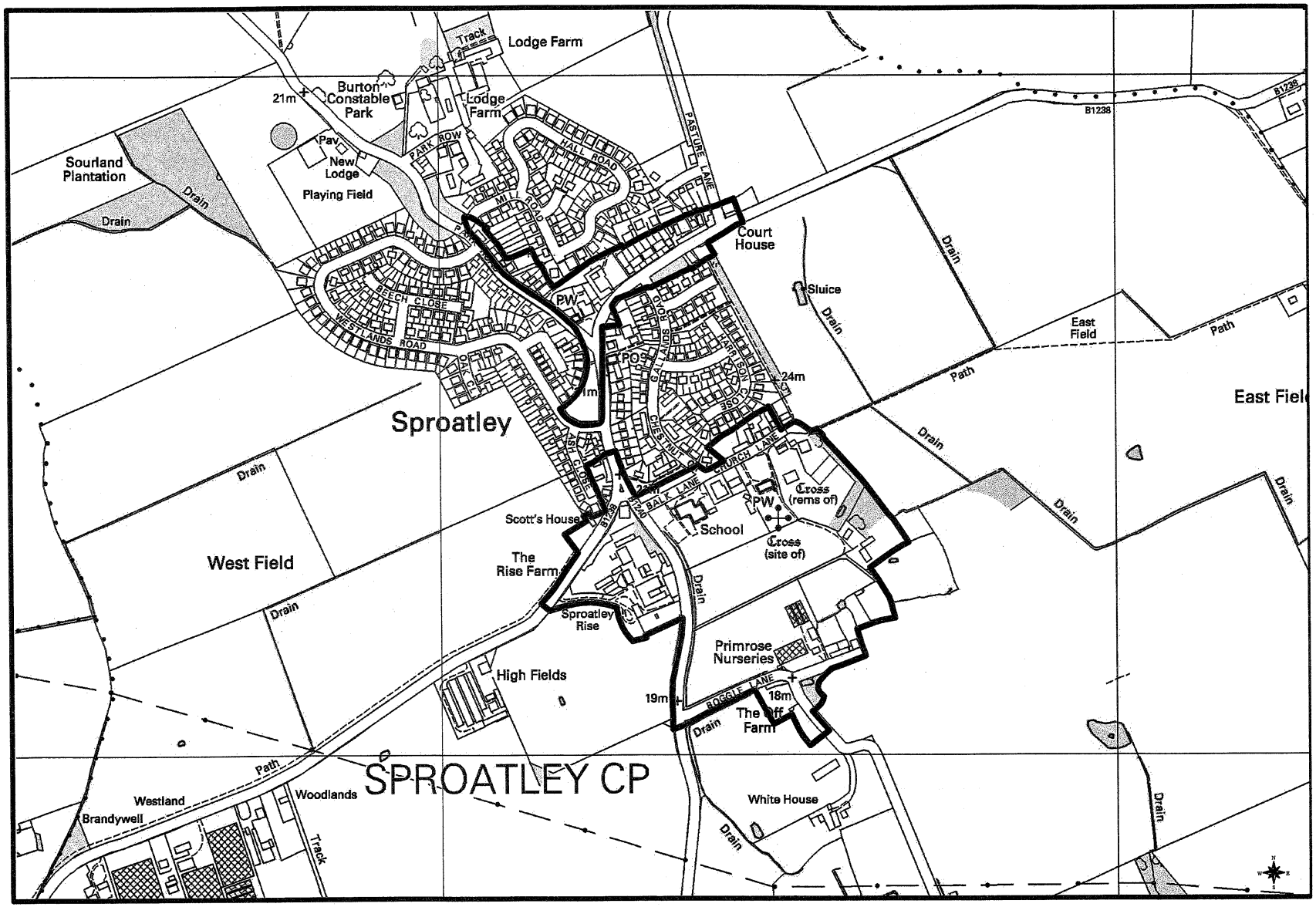

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