



Loftus

Conservation Area Appraisal

2011



Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990

this is Redcar & Cleveland

Loftus Conservation Area Appraisal 2011

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As part of its continuing duties under the Planning Acts, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council^{1&2} has prepared appraisals for 15 of its 17 conservation areas³. (Staithes and Hutton Lowcross Conservation Areas fall within the planning jurisdiction of the North York Moors National Park Authority.)

The Designation of Loftus Conservation Area

1.2 Loftus Conservation Area was designated by Langbaugh Borough Council and Cleveland County Council on 15th January 1976⁴. It was tightly drawn to include the historic cores of the twin settlements of Loftus and South Loftus, together with the best surviving parts of the mid-to-late Victorian residential development that took place to the west. The reasons for designation and its purpose were set down in the designation report⁵.

Other Protective Designations within the Conservation Area

1.3 There are two Tree Preservation Orders protecting trees within the conservation area, as follows:-

1. Four groups of trees on the south side of Town Farm at the north end of Springhead Terrace.
2. The area of woodland on the south side of Loftus Beck alongside Dam Street and including part of the grounds of Linden House.
3. The group of trees on land to the rear of nos. 7 to 10 East Crescent.
4. The woodland on land to the rear of Arlington Street and East Crescent.
5. The single mature tree at the north-east end of St Hilda's Place.

1.4 The revised statutory list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest for Loftus was published on 27th February 1987⁶. A schedule of the 31 listed buildings located within the conservation area is given in Appendix 2 at the end of this report.

1.5 There are no scheduled monuments in the conservation area.

Article 4 Directions

1.6 Article 4 Directions were approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment on 8th September 1978. The directions withdraw certain permitted development rights for domestic, commercial and agricultural properties throughout the conservation area in order to prevent further erosion of the special character of historic buildings and the erection of inappropriate forms of enclosure.

Planning Policies affecting Loftus Conservation Area

1.7 The Redcar & Cleveland Local Development Framework (LDF) contains several policies relating to the conservation area. They are set out in Appendix 3.

Conservation Area Appraisal

1.8 A conservation area appraisal is the first step in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the designated area. This appraisal provides a clear and sound understanding of Loftus Conservation Area by recording, evaluating and presenting all of the key elements that together make up its special interest and character while considering its relative importance in the Borough-wide context.

1.9 **After public consultation, this appraisal and its recommendations including changes to the boundary of the conservation area, was approved by Redcar and Cleveland**

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Borough Council on 22nd January 2009. This appraisal has been revisited to ensure it remains relevant and up to date. The present conservation area boundary is shown on the plan in Appendix 1.

- 1.10 While the appraisal covers the topics referred to in PPG 15 and in guidance issued by English Heritage² it is not intended to be comprehensive and the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.
- 1.11 The next step of the process is the formulation of conservation area management proposals to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about the conservation area's future.

2. HISTORIC ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

- 2.1 A brief review of the historic development of Loftus is important in order to understand how it has evolved to its present form and acquired the distinctive elements that make up its special character.
- 2.2 Loftus is unusual in comprising two settlements within the same parish or township. They are Loftus and South Loftus and both were founded as typical 2-row settlements in the 11th century after the destruction of the previous, well-established, Anglo Scandinavian or earlier settlement⁷.
- 2.3 Each settlement consisted of a corridor of two rows of properties facing towards each other across a common open space which in Loftus appears to have been wide enough to have been a green. The buildings in each row formed a continuous, relatively straight frontage with living quarters facing the green. Long gardens or burgage strips extended from the rear of each property to a common rear boundary skirted by a back lane.
- 2.4 This layout can still be traced in Loftus, the larger of the two settlements. The green is now the High Street or market place, straddling the road to Whitby. Behind the two rows of properties historic burgage plots can still be identified extending to the old back lanes, now called Dam Street and Cleveland Street.
- 2.5 It is more difficult to trace the old layout in South Loftus since the few buildings that survive do not adhere to its medieval form. However, it can be assumed that the rows straddled the existing street linking South Town Lane and Water Lane and which may even have extended west towards Middle Gill.
- 2.6 The economies of both Loftus and South Loftus were based on farming. However from the outset Loftus became the administrative centre for the parish, being the place where the church and wind and water mills were situated and its location at the convergence of routes on the main road between Whitby and Guisborough. It consequently developed as a trading and commercial centre for a wide rural hinterland.
- 2.7 In the 17th century the prosperity of the neighbourhood was enhanced by the manufacture of alum from rock quarried from the cliffs along the coastline nearby. Sustained for nearly 200 years this industry led to the establishment of a market and annual fair in Loftus.
- 2.8 While Loftus continued to grow its southern counterpart had withered almost to its present size by 1840, remaining to this day a tiny hamlet separated from the town by the deep valley of Loftus Beck and the railway.
- 2.9 In the middle of the 19th century the expansion of the railway into East Cleveland enabled the large-scale mining of ironstone and manufacture of iron and steel at nearby Skinningrove. Between 1861 and 1871 the population of Loftus doubled and the village 'mushroomed', quickly becoming a town, and much more urban in character. Expansion extended the settlement's linear form to the east and west along the A174.
- 2.10 A product of the town's rapid expansion was the creation of a second commercial hub centred on Zetland Road, acting as a 'counter-magnet' to businesses in the traditional market place.
- 2.11 Although the town's historic core was gradually redeveloped, its medieval layout was preserved by new buildings that have generally kept to the footprints of their predecessors. The prosperous Victorian period also resulted in the development of landmark buildings such as the Town Hall, the Golden Lion, Council House and several churches and banks as well as terraced rows of typical East Cleveland cottages.

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- 2.12 In the 20th century prosperity waned as ironstone mines became exhausted and the iron and steel industry became centred on Teesside. Economic decline brought high levels of unemployment with attendant social, environmental and economic impacts, the closure of businesses in the town, and a lack of investment in its fabric. Despite these factors and their consequently impact upon the town's appearance and sense of well-being, today Loftus still retains much of its historic form, fabric and market town qualities along with its attractive setting enhanced by trees.
- 2.13 Both Loftus and South Loftus are potentially rich in archaeological remains, particularly the latter where much of the village was abandoned as Loftus grew. There may have been a moated site at South Loftus, but the only evidence for this is a rectangular outline on a 1770s sketch of the area.⁷

3. CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Physical Setting and Topography

- 3.1 Much of the character and visual quality of Loftus can be attributed to its physical setting amid rolling hill country incised by numerous small streams or becks, creating a series of deep, narrow, wooded ravines or gills.
- 3.2 Approached from the south, east and west, Loftus is seen to occupy an elevated, south-facing site, from which its Anglo-Scandinavian name is doubtless derived⁸. To the south of the town, the ground falls steeply away into the deep wooded ravine of the Loftus and Whitecliff Becks, beyond which lies the much smaller hamlet of South Loftus.
- 3.3 The variation in physical relief contributes to the visual character of the town in two ways. First, the continual changes in ground level add considerable visual interest and elements of surprise to the built up fabric of the town, creating a succession of varying street scenes. Second, the wooded valleys provide an attractive landscape setting to the town and where streetscapes and roofscapes are frequently viewed against an attractive backdrop of trees. Within the town a strong sense of the closeness of the countryside is engendered by views out to surrounding hillsides and trees that soften the skyline.
- 3.4 The changes in level within the conservation area have given rise to distinctive 'split level' streets where one side is high than the other, supported by a bank or retaining wall. Examples are to be seen in High Street, Zetland Road, Station Road and Dam Street.
- 3.5 The area's natural, physical and geological features have also influenced the character of the built environment, historically providing building timber, yellow/brown/grey sandstones and clay suitable for making the orange/red bricks and pantiles, all so characteristic of the

area. In the 19th century the development of the railways brought an end to dependence on indigenous materials and gave access to an eclectic range of building materials from diverse and distant sources, including roofing slates from Cumbria and North Wales.

Layout

- 3.6 Loftus is a linear settlement, having developed along the A174 Whitby Road which follows a slightly serpentine course over undulating terrain.
- 3.7 The historic core of Loftus is centred on the High Street and particularly on the widest part of it known as the market place, the highest point on the main road. Despite the gradual renewal of buildings over hundreds of years, the medieval two-row settlement and former green are still discernible. Buildings stand hard against the pavement edge, except at the east and west ends of the High Street where front gardens have encroached onto the green. A few properties still retain their original rear burgage plots or gardens, important physical links to the medieval settlement layout.
- 3.8 Beyond the historic core lateral development has taken place along roads, streets and lanes leading off the A174. In these areas Victorian and Edwardian domestic terraces predominate, perpetuating the traditional rows of the historic core. Occasionally the built-up frontages are broken by an individual or group of buildings set back behind front gardens.
- 3.9 North of Zetland Road, around Coronation Park, the layout becomes much more open and suburban in character with detached dwellings in private gardens.
- 3.10 South Loftus is now little more than a cluster of buildings and boundary walls comprising two farmsteads and two rows of cottages, one of them set at 90° to the street, possibly along the only

surviving burgage strip. Its historic two-row layout is otherwise almost indiscernible.

Variety of Land Uses

- 3.11 The character of Loftus is enhanced by the diverse range of land uses including residential, shopping, recreational, ecclesiastical, administrative and small scale industrial uses. Collectively they add interest and vitality to the town centre, enhancing its ambience and sustainability.
- 3.12 The 'bipolar' town centre with its two nodes of shopping and business activity in the market place and on Zetland Road is a particular characteristic of Loftus adding further interest to its townscape.

Building form and character

- 3.13 The buildings of the conservation area, their form, materials and style, their relationship to the spaces between them and the ways in which those spaces are used, contribute greatly to its character. History has given a rich and broad variety of building style and materials to the historic core of Loftus particularly those buildings considered to be of architectural and historic merit.
- 3.14 The historic cores are centred on the market place area of Loftus High Street and on the cluster of farmhouses and cottages now forming the hamlet of South Loftus. The older buildings in both of these areas are cottage-like in character with few architectural refinements. They are a valuable part of the heritage, being part of the locally distinctive, vernacular building tradition that was developed over hundreds of years. The best are protected by being listed as buildings of special architectural or historic interest.
- 3.15 Cottages are of two and less frequently three stories with pitched roofs and varied eaves and ridge lines, further articulated by chimney stacks with rows of clay pots. The earliest dwellings may date back three or more centuries, their true age concealed behind later alterations and additions. The occasional, 'tell-tale,' steeply-pitched roof may be indicative of the past use of thatch or ling, of which no examples survive.
- 3.16 The earliest form of window opening tends to be of 'landscape' format or square, whereas windows of 'portrait' format are usually found in later buildings, thus dictating the proportions of building frontages. Doorways in the older cottages are often diminutive, reflecting the lesser stature of our ancestors.
- 3.17 This plain, honest East Cleveland, vernacular building style contrasts markedly with the later Victorian and Edwardian terraced rows of artisans' dwellings. Although of similar form and scale to their earlier counterparts, they are architecturally more 'regimented' in layout, form and style. They also possess varying degrees of architectural pretension, reflecting the characteristics of Victorian Domestic and Arts and Crafts styles that include the use of standard Classical details. These include decorative embellishments to doors, windows, string courses and eaves details.
- 3.18 Windows are predominantly of 'portrait' format, including the single and 2-storey bay windows that may be canted or square/rectangular in plan. Most other windows have segmental (slightly curved) heads or flat lintels, sometimes carved. Chimney stacks and gabled dormers add interest to the roofscapes that are further enhanced by the varied heights of buildings.
- 3.19 The Victorian and Edwardian periods gave Loftus most of its key historic buildings. They include:-
- Town Hall
 - Golden Lion Hotel
 - Station Hotel

- Arlington Hotel
- The Council House
- Oddfellows Hall
- Linden House (former Rectory) several churches and banks.

These together with a few buildings of earlier foundation such as St Leonard's Church, give Loftus its unique identity. They are key architectural focal points in the townscape and those with prominent locations are local landmarks.

3.20 The 20th century introduced completely different dwelling types, detached and semi-detached, two storey houses and single-storey bungalows, standing in their own front and rear garden spaces.

Walls

3.21 A crucial key component of the special character and appearance of the conservation area is the prolific presence of traditional stone boundary walls and retaining walls. Appearing as an almost continuous thread running through all parts of the area they help to unify and knit the area together.

Building Materials

3.22 The earliest buildings are constructed from locally quarried sandstone blocks in hues of orange, brown, grey and yellow tones. Stone blocks have a diversity of surface dressing, the most common being a herringbone or chevron pattern. Sandstone was used for both high status buildings as well as humble cottages, with lesser buildings constructed using quarry rubble. The best examples have now weathered to a mature patina.

3.23 The only pre-Victorian brick building is Pear Tree Cottage on the High Street.

3.24 The oldest roofs have very steep pitches and would have been covered in reed thatch or ling. Clay pantiles were introduced in the 17th century

followed by plain clay tiles and grey/blue/black Welsh slate in the middle of the 19th century. They are the predominant traditional roofing materials in the conservation area.

3.25 In more recent times man-made slates and tiles have been used, but these lack the enduring subtleties of patina and colour to be found in their more natural counterparts, tending to weather down to a grey concrete colour.

3.26 Brick in a broad range of red, orange and brown hues as well as creamy white 'Pease' bricks, became the staple building material in the Victorian period and throughout the 20th century. This versatile material was used in a variety of ways, creating bonding and polychrome patterns with moulded bricks and stonework used to create architectural details.

3.27 Despite the proliferation of brick in the 19th century, stone continued to be used for higher status buildings, such as those listed in paragraph 3.19 above.

3.28 Rendered and painted finishes in Loftus tend not to be historically authentic. They were generally used on much later buildings or were applied to older ones to conceal inappropriate alterations and 'improvements'.

Windows

3.29 No examples have been found of windows earlier than the 17th century. From the late 1600s wooden windows of two principal types were used as follows:-

- The 'Yorkshire' horizontally-sliding sash window
- The vertically-sliding sash window.
- Squared, canted, square and 'V'-plan bay windows of wood or stone with vertically-sliding sashes.

3.30 'Yorkshire' sashes were the cheaper alternative to vertically-sliding sashes. They are found in humbler cottages and

farm houses and in the backs of buildings. Frontages of 'higher status' buildings had vertically-sliding sashes. Both types became the traditional form of window and were used for over 200 years. Evolving through a variety of forms and patterns, the earliest have multiple panes with glazing bars, giving way to large, Victorian, single-paned sashes.

- 3.31 Window openings generally have stone sills and either stone lintels, frequently keyed, or else flat, curved, or arched heads of stone or brick.

Doors

- 3.32 The doors were made from broad, vertical, timber boards. Those in larger and later buildings tend to be of four or more square or rectangular-shaped panels, sometimes with the upper panels glazed. Doorways usually match the windows by having similar lintels or arches of stone or brick, though they are frequently concealed behind later wooden doorcases.

- 3.33 Boundary features include:-

- Brick or stone walls and gatepiers, generally matching the building facing materials and having stone copings of various shapes and carved and shaped pier caps, many now painted.
- Timber fences.
- Ornamental ironwork.
- Hedges, frequently behind walls and fences and of various species.

During the two world wars characteristic wrought iron railings were removed from the boundary walls of Victorian and Edwardian properties. Some have been reinstated using steel and timber of a lesser quality than the originals.

- 3.34 The terraces and rows of properties throughout the conservation area are served by a network of back lanes. These are lined with an untidy but

characteristic assortment of high boundary walls, garages, sheds, the gable ends of rear wings and extensions. These areas, though not conventionally attractive, have their own dishevelled but distinctive character.

Shop Fronts

- 3.35 The earliest surviving historic shop fronts of late 19th and early 20th century vintage are on the south side of Zetland Road (e.g. No 22) though some are less easily identified owing to enlarged fascia signs.

- 3.36 A few modern shopfronts together with their signage are in keeping with their historic settings (e.g. Stonehouse Bakers, 81 High Street), but most do a disservice to their host buildings and to the area, being of poor design, inappropriate materials and occasionally garish colours.

- 3.37 Advertisements, signs and notice boards make significant positive as well as negative contributions to the appearance of the area. The small number of surviving historic fascias, signboards and projecting signs serve as exemplars.

- 3.38 Many buildings have lost authentic, characteristic features, particularly roofing materials, windows, doors and shop fronts, the latter two usually being replaced by UPVC components. Later unsympathetic alterations and additions, such as altered and enlarged window openings, poorly designed extensions and over-large dormer windows, not only detract from the character of individual buildings but also spoil the look of the entire area.

Gardens, Landscape and Open Space

- 3.39 Front gardens and the tiny 'areas' in front of Victorian buildings, are traditionally enclosed by stone or brick walls and ornamental ironwork. Well maintained and mature gardens, particularly those with trees, make a

significant contribution to the attractive appearance of the area. The earliest properties have long rear gardens, whereas those of later vintage have small, enclosed rear yards. Both make their own contributions to the character of the area.

3.40 A crucial component of the character of Loftus is its setting in a landscape of wooded valleys. Of particular importance to the conservation area is the woodland clothing the steep bank alongside Dam Street and Water Lane and the individual specimens and groups of trees within the built-up area. They make a positive contribution to the townscape, softening the appearance of the urban fabric, acting as visual breaks and screens and making open spaces more attractive.

3.41 The most important groups of trees in the built-up area include the following:-

- Behind Arlington Street.
- East of Boulby Drive.
- Linden House grounds.
- Frontage to Town Farm.
- The Churchyard.
- Hall Grounds & Loftus Hall.
- Around the Library & 8 High Street. Coronation Park area.
- The backdrop to Loftus Mill.
- South Loftus.

3.42 In addition to the garden spaces and areas of woodland referred to above there are key areas of open space within the conservation area. They include Coronation Park, the Churchyard and the playing field and allotment gardens off Cleveland Street. These are enclosed by attractive stone boundary walls and mixed mature hedgerows.

The Highway

3.43 For the most part road surfaces, footpaths and other hard surfaced areas have tarmacadam or concrete finishes which are serviceable, but contribute little to the character of the conservation area, especially where they are in need of repair.

3.44 However, in the market place traditional Yorkstone paving and stone cobbles were reinstated under a major environmental improvement scheme carried out in the 1990s, enhancing the special character and appearance of this important area and setting a standard for future works.

3.45 There are a few 'original' examples of attractive, traditional surfacing materials including whinstone, scoria and brick setts as follows:-

- Several lanes and alleyways leading off the main road, e.g. the lane leading to Co-operative Terrace.
- Roadside drainage gulleys along the High Street.
- The stream channel in Dam Street.
- Many back lanes, private yards and drives.

Street Furniture

3.46 The existing, Victorian style, dark-green, street lighting columns and lanterns and other street furniture on the High Street, including cast iron bollards, were installed by the environmental improvement scheme referred to above. This has set a standard to be aimed for elsewhere throughout the conservation area where street furniture and traffic signs (including markings on the carriageways) are generally lacking in design and aesthetic appeal and consequently detracts from the area's special character.

3.47 The apparatus of statutory undertakers' pole-mounted service wires and steel

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distribution cabinets are also visually intrusive. However, some timber telegraph poles with their 'umbrellas' of wires are less intrusive where their appearance is softened by trees.

Identity Areas

- 3.48 Loftus conservation area possesses a townscape of several parts each having its own distinctive character. This is the result of the settlement's topography, historic development and expansion. The undulating terrain, the deep valley of Loftus Beck, the curvature of some of the roads and the siting of a number of key, visually important buildings, trees and groups of trees, together contrive to create a series of individual areas, each with its own identity. The character of these areas varies one to another.

The Main A174 Corridor

- 3.49 Loftus market place is located on the crest of a hill, from which the High Street (A174) falls away steeply to both the east and west. This variation in ground level, allied to the serpentine course of the road and its varying width formed by building frontages, adds considerable visual interest and elements of surprise. A succession of changing street scenes is thus created, from East Crescent in the east to Westfield Terrace in the west.
- 3.50 The broad, level Market Place is defined by the buildings surrounding it. They comprise attractive, opposing rows of wide and narrow-fronted, two and three storey cottages, houses, shops and business premises of mixed age. Here and there frontages erratically step forward and back and have rising and falling eaves and ridge-lines punctuated by chimney stacks with clay pots. Their appearance is enhanced by the polychrome effect of a mixture of stone, brick, tile and slate building materials and the occasional render.

- 3.51 The key townscape buildings in this area are:-

- The Town Hall
- The Golden Lion
- Barclays Bank
- The Council House
- The former Nat West Bank
- The Presbytery

- 3.52 To the east, the High Street narrows slightly before descending the hill. Here the narrowing is visually reinforced by the landscaped bank, War Memorial and stone retaining wall on its north side. The bank rises steeply up to High Side, a row of cottages reached by a separate, parallel lane, effectively creating a 'split-level' High Street. On the south side small, well planted front gardens enclosed by walls and fences, encroach into wider part of the highway. The High Street's 'split level' adds an extra, distinctive dynamic to streetscene.

- 3.53 In the dip, just across Loftus Beck the row of stone and pantile cottages called St Hilda's Place, is set at 45° to the main building line. The row together with the splendid mature tree alongside the road form a visual 'pinch point' and foil to the view beyond. They also accentuate the strong sense of enclosure afforded by the rising ground behind the buildings on either side of the street and serve as a visual gateway into Arlington Street. The scene is enhanced by the cottage gardens, informal grassed open space and stream leading into Dam Street.

- 3.54 At Arlington Street the conservation area boundary extends east to include both wooded banks forming visual closure to the historic core, together with the older cottages on East Crescent.

- 3.55 The key townscape buildings in this area are:-

- The War Memorial
- The Arlington Hotel
- St Hilda's Place

3.56 To the west of the market place, beyond the Gothic Town Hall, are 2-storey, stone-built properties of the C18 and C19, largely in residential use. Many are set back behind attractive well-kept gardens enhanced by mature woodland trees, their enclosing stone walls, encroach into the former market space, narrowing the carriageway and strengthening the sense of enclosure that is further enhanced by 3-storey shops and the tall tower of the Gothic Town Hall. The sense of enclosure is perpetuated by Hall Lodge and Jessemine Cottage with their garden walls, standing at 90° to the road.

3.57 Descending the hill, further to the west, the road appears to narrow as buildings meet the pavement edge. This gives emphasis to the 'corridor' effect of two and three-storey brick-built shop premises and the raked stone retaining wall that elevates the pavement in front of Zetland Terrace and the 'pocket park' on the site of the old 'Stonemason's Yard'.

3.58 At West Road, buildings on the north side step back creating a sense of openness at the crossroads. Here the Edwardian, red engineering brick Church with its corner tower, spire and outdoor preaching pulpit, acts as a strong visual stop at the edge of the conservation area. A mixture of different brick types abound here, from rustic hand made bricks to smooth red engineering bricks and creamy white 'Pease' brick.

3.59 Key townscape buildings in this area are:-

- Oddfellows Hall
- The former Congregational Church
- Jessemine Cottage

Areas Away From the Main Road

3.60 Narrow streets, lanes and alleyways lead off the main road to secluded areas that are more suburban or rural in character, in contrast to the bustling market place and High Street.

3.61 The church and churchyard of St Leonard, enclosed by Church Row, Stable House and the tall backs of buildings on the High Street, is one such enclave whose attractiveness is enhanced by mature trees and hedges and the strong sense of enclosure. From this area, Loftus Hall's massive, stone-faced kitchen-garden boundary wall follows the winding, Water Lane down the steep valley side to meet Loftus Beck at Dam Street. The grade II listed wall is a significant townscape feature, enhancing the sense of enclosure and intimacy in this secluded area, where the pedestrian has precedence.

3.62 Key characteristics of Dam Street include the stream flowing down a scoria (ironworks slag) block channel at the edge of the narrow road; and the steep wooded valley side. The trees help soften and enhance the appearance of the few stone and brick buildings, including the former Poor House, lining the opposite side of the street. There are a number of underused and neglected buildings and untidy 'backlands of High Street' properties that descend the valley side to the street.

3.63 From Heugh Bridge, Water Lane with a fast-flowing stream along its eastern edge, follows a serpentine route ascending the steep bank and under the railway bridge to reach South Loftus. The road is flanked by attractive stone walls, mature hedges and trees creating a strong sense of enclosure that opens suddenly into the tiny hamlet.

3.64 South Loftus is altogether different from its northern namesake, its form and

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setting being much more rural character, with most of the buildings and boundary walls constructed from local sandstone.

- 3.65 The hamlet offers prospects of the roofscape of Loftus above which the Town Hall and St Leonard's Church stand out as important landmarks and focal points.
- 3.66 At Station Road, a strong sense of enclosure is achieved by terraces of two-storey, stone cottages, complemented by brick and stone three storey properties on the opposite side of the road, where narrow stairways climb up between the buildings and the high stone retaining walls. At the bend in the road close to the valley bottom, stands the solid, stone-built, 3-storey, Station Hotel, terminating the view and marking the boundary of the conservation area.
- 3.67 North of Zetland Road, the area of open space and the peripheral trees of Coronation Park are very important in the townscape, as are the houses in their spacious, well laid out gardens that surround it. Some, notably Kenilworth, Westfield, and the former school building, are of architectural and historic merit.
- 3.68 Other important and characterful enclaves include the following areas:-
- The area around Liverton Road and Loftus Mill.
 - Hall Grounds.
 - North Road, Cleveland Street and John Street.
 - South Loftus
 - East Crescent
 - Springhead Terrace and Town Farm
 - The area around Westfield Terrace, Coronation Park and Duncan Close.
 - Co-operative Terrace.

- The lane past the Old Forge at 13 High Street.

Summary of character

- 3.69 The rich tapestry of historically authentic and visually harmonious building materials blending with diverse architectural details of various periods and styles has created a townscape in Loftus with a particularly attractive aesthetic. The settlement's physical location, together with its historic associations with mining industry and agriculture, positively contribute to its special character as an attractive hill town with a market-town atmosphere.

4. OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

4.1 This section summarizes the negative elements in the conservation area and suggests possible remedial actions and opportunities for improvement.

4.2 The Civic Trust-led regeneration initiative of the 1990's sought to reverse the fortunes of the town by capitalising on its remaining built and natural elements of quality. This was done through a series of schemes as follows:-

- Restoration of the Council House and other historic buildings.
- Comprehensive improvements to the market place area of the High Street including hard landscaping and new street furniture.
- Redevelopment of the Regal Cinema site and the land behind for housing.
- Conversion of the visually prominent Oddfellows Hall to flats.

Regeneration of the Co-op buildings and refurbishment of the Town Hall followed along with other improvements and the town has a new 'self confidence' that has had 'spin-off' benefits for the character of the conservation area.

4.3 Past achievements have been significant, but there is still much to be done to build on the successes by tackling remaining long-standing issues and to seize fresh opportunities as they arise.

Changes to the historic built infrastructure

4.4 Many properties throughout the conservation area have lost authentic architectural detail. Particular losses are windows and doors, many replaced in UPVC, detracting from their appearance and the special character of the area.

4.5 The erosion of authentic historic features of buildings, the addition of

unsympathetic extensions, and the introduction of modern man-made building materials lacking the enduring qualities of their traditional counterparts, are all particularly damaging. They detract from the historic integrity of the individual buildings collectively undermining the special character and appearance of the area. Much of this change has taken place despite having Article 4 Directions.

4.6 Such directions withdraw certain permitted development rights so that planning permission is required for relatively minor building alterations including the replacement of windows, doors and minor extensions. Although these additional controls cannot be used to re-reinstate lost features, it is possible to ensure future changes are more in keeping with the special character of the buildings themselves as well as the conservation area.

4.7 The design of a number new residential developments in the conservation area sit uneasily with their older neighbours. Much greater attention needs to be given to the siting, form, proportions, architecture and selection of materials for all new buildings to ensure they respect the special character of the area.

Neglect and disuse of buildings and land

4.8 Neglected and disused buildings and land are still to be found in the Dam Street area and among the commercial properties on Zetland Road. The redundant church buildings on the corner of West Road and Westfield Terrace and on Arlington Street are quickly becoming eyesores. The two 'pocket parks' are in need of attention. That on the site of Oliver's Buildings on High Row, is frequently vandalized and lacks a sense of community ownership, whereas the one on the site of the Stonemason's Yard could be improved by landscaping to soften the

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appearance of the gable ends of adjoining buildings.

- 4.9 There is clearly a need to identify and embrace realistic opportunities to revitalize such properties while respecting the historic layout and enhancing the special character and appearance of the conservation area. Such works could be addressed in the context of a Conservation Area Management Plan.

Frontages

- 4.10 Although very few front garden spaces and their enclosing walls have been sacrificed to the creation of car parking spaces the risk of such loss is ever imminent. Existing Article 4 Directions should be used in the context of a Conservation Area Management Plan.

Building Archaeology

- 4.11 It is possible that analysis of the older buildings in the two historic cores may reveal structural elements from earlier periods than their external appearance might suggest. It is therefore very important to pursue the measures provided under the Planning Acts and other legislation and advice, to investigate, record and conserve the authentic historic external and internal fabric of buildings.

Highway Infrastructure & Street Furniture

- 4.12 Outside the market place area, the highway generally tends to be cluttered with a plethora of utilitarian street furniture and traffic signs together with statutory undertakers' aesthetically unsympathetic, pole-mounted service wires and distribution cabinets. Many of the latter are particular eyesores, owing to their large size and ill considered and inconvenient locations, creating a sense of visual clutter and a hindrance to the maintenance and repair of buildings.
- 4.13 All poorly designed street furniture, particularly where clustered together,

detracts from the otherwise attractive townscape qualities of the conservation area.

- 4.14 The opportunity presents itself for special highway standards in conservation areas and closer and more effective working relationships with service providers. Such arrangements should aim to achieve improvements in the streetscape and to extend to other parts of the conservation area the high standards already achieved in the market place area.
- 4.15 There are dilapidated iron railings in front of St Hilda's Terrace and unsightly utilitarian pedestrian barriers on Dam Street. Stone retaining walls throughout the conservation area are in need of repair.
- 4.16 While car parking detracts from the character and attractiveness of the conservation area it nonetheless contributes to its vitality and activity, an essential component of a thriving market town.
- 4.17 The 'informal' car park behind Loftus Youth Centre has a 'down-at-heel' appearance that would be improved by sensitive re-surfacing, soft landscaping and better definition.

Open spaces

- 4.18 The appearance of the standard, galvanised, security fence along the north, south and east boundaries of Coronation Park, jars with its otherwise attractive setting and contrasts badly with the attractive brick wall and Victorian style railings that front the park on its west side.

Trees

- 4.19 While some mature trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders, others are not. In view of the major contribution trees and woodland make to the special character and setting of the conservation area, it is important to

have a consistent level of protection. It would therefore be appropriate in the context of a Conservation Area Management Plan, to undertake a survey of trees in the conservation area in order to determine priorities for putting such orders in place and to identify opportunities to reinforce and extend the existing tree cover.

5. CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

- 5.1 The present conservation area boundary is for the most part coherent, cohesive and consistent with both the historic cores of Loftus and South Loftus and the better parts of the later development, with only a few oversights.
- 5.2 The appraisal recommended several areas to be included in the conservation area, as follows:-
- The attractive area of open space with its group of trees alongside the Loftus Beck, to the rear of the Station Hotel, providing an attractive setting for the domestic terraces on the opposite side of Liverton Road.
 - Nos. 17 to 41 (odds) Micklow Lane - a row of detached and semi-detached houses, mostly of late 19th and early 20th century vintage, together with the much older cottage at No 39 and the grassed field and group of trees lying behind No 17 and between Springhead Terrace and the stream. The dwellings, set in large mature gardens truly reflect their period of construction and though having suffered some alterations to their character still make a significant contribution to the character of the area.

The conservation area boundary has now been extended to include these two areas.

- 5.3 A number of new dwellings erected close to the conservation area boundary are not in keeping with the special character of the conservation area, e.g. Nos. 9-11 Micklow Lane and Grace Peaks on Duncan Place. While it could be argued that their exclusion from the conservation area would be justified, the consequent changes to the conservation area boundary would make it unnecessarily complex.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 This appraisal summarises the special characteristics and qualities that justify the designation of part of Loftus as a conservation area. It considered whether any changes to the conservation area boundary were needed and identifies opportunities to address certain negative aspects that undermine the special quality of the area. A number of the more complex problems require further work to develop practical solutions and these should be addressed in the context of a Conservation Area Management Plan.

6.2 Many of the conservation area's defining characteristics still survive. Its architectural, historic and environmental qualities are rooted in its physical setting and historical development from the medieval period and particularly its expansion after 1850, much of which is still evident in the built environment today.

6.3 Loftus Conservation Area embraces the cores of the two historic settlements along with the Victorian extension to the west. These areas have their own distinctive architectural, historic and environmental character, and they successfully conjoin to form a richer, coherent whole. The reasons for its designation as a conservation area are just as valid today as they were in 1976, perhaps more so, and the continued protection of its elements is therefore considered key to the future survival of its special character.

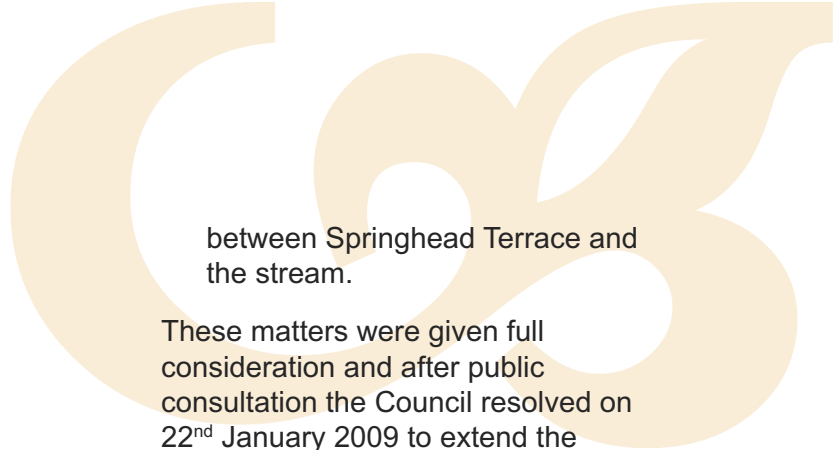
6.4 The survey of the conservation area undertaken in connection with this appraisal revealed a number of buildings and areas of architectural and historic interest, omitted from its boundary as follows:-

- The area of open space to the rear of the Station Hotel and on the south-west side of Liverton Road.
- Nos. 17 to 41 (odds) Micklow Lane and the grassed field and group of trees lying behind No 17 and

between Springhead Terrace and the stream.

These matters were given full consideration and after public consultation the Council resolved on 22nd January 2009 to extend the conservation area boundary to include the above areas.

6.5 The plan in Appendix 1 shows the approved, amended conservation area boundary.



REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. Sections 69 and 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
2. Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 15: "Planning and the Historic Environment," 1994; & English Heritage:
 - "Development in the Historic Environment," June 1995.
 - "Conservation Area Practice," October 1995.
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 - "Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals," English Heritage, August 2005.
3. Staithes and Hutton Lowcross Conservation Areas fall within the planning jurisdiction of the North York Moors National Park Authority.
4. Notice published in The London Gazette, p. 928, 20th January 1976.
5. Cleveland County Council, "Loftus Conservation Area," (designation report) October 1975, Report No 54.
6. "The 25th List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest for the District of Langbaugh (Cleveland)" (Parish of Loftus), Department of the Environment, 27 February 1987.
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- Redcar & Cleveland Local Development Framework: Core Strategy DPD adopted July 2007 Policy CS5: Spatial Strategy for East Cleveland and the Villages (p.31).
- Redcar & Cleveland Local Development Framework: Development Policies DPD adopted July 2007 Policies DP9: Conservation Areas, DP10: Listed Buildings & DP11: Archaeological sites and Monuments.

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APPENDIX 1: Plan of Loftus Conservation Area

NB Plan is available as a more detailed separate download at:
<http://www.redcarcleveland.gov.uk/conservationareas>



APPENDIX 2: Listed Buildings

Schedule of Listed Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest in Loftus Conservation Area

From the "25th List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest for the District of Langbaugh (Cleveland)" (Parish of Loftus), Department of the Environment, 27 February 1987.

Boulby Drive, Linden House, Grade II

East Crescent, No 1, Grade II

East Crescent, Nos. 2 & 3, Grade II

East Crescent, Old Beck Cottage, No 9, Grade II

Gaskel Lane, Loftus Mill, mill house & mill race, Grade II

Gaskel Lane, Mill sluice in garden of 5 Gaskel Lane, Grade II

Hall Grounds, Blanchland, Nos. 12 & 14, Grade II

High Street, The Old Zetland School, Grade II

High Street, boundary/retaining wall, railings & gate piers to The Old Zetland School, Grade II

High Street, No 19, Grade II

High Street, boundary wall, gatepiers, gate & railings south of 19 High Street, Grade II

High Street, No 21, Grade II

High Street, No 28 (former Nat West Bank), Grade II

High Street, Angel Inn, No 31, Grade II

High Street, Nos. 32, 33 & 34, Grade II

High Street, Pear Tree Cottage, No 35, Grade II

High Street, Nos. 36 & 37, Grade II

High Street, No 38, area retaining wall, gate piers & angle piers, Grade II

High Street, Presbytery, No 39, Grade II

High St, 1-4 Abrams Buildings, Grade II

High St, Drinking Fountain, Trough, War Memorial, steps & railings, Grade II

High Street, The White Horse, No 73, Grade II

High Street, Barclays Bank, 74, Grade II

High Street, Golden Lion Hotel, Grade II

High Street, Town Hall, Grade II

High Street, Church of St Leonard, Grade II

High Street, Stable House, Grade II

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High Street, Jessemine Cottage, Grade II

St Hilda's Place, Nos. 2 to 7, Grade II

St Hilda's Place, No 8, Grade II

Water Lane, Kingdom Hall, Grade II

Water Lane, boundary wall between Kingdom Hall & Dam St, Grade II

The total number of listed buildings is 32

APPENDIX 3: Planning Policies

Local Development Framework (LDF) Policies affecting Loftus Conservation Area

1. The Redcar & Cleveland Local Development Framework, which includes policies in the adopted Core Strategy and Development Policies Development Plan Documents (DPDs), sets out several policies relating to this conservation area. Those current at the time of writing are as follows; for an up to date list of extant policies, please visit the Council's website, www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/ldf.
2. Policy CS25 of the Core Strategy indicates that development proposals will be expected to contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment of the Borough, and that the character of the built and historic environment will be protected, preserved or enhanced.
3. The spatial strategy for East Cleveland and the Villages (Core Strategy policy CS6) indicates that the Council and its partners will safeguard and enhance the district centre of Loftus, and the settlement's buildings, sites and areas of heritage and cultural importance.
4. With the exception of land at South Loftus and a small parcel of land to the east of Spring Head Terrace, the entire conservation area is located within the 'Limits to Development'. Policy DP1 of the Development Policies DPD sets out the limited types of development that will be permitted outside the development limits, and indicates that within the limits, development will generally be acceptable, subject to other development plan policies and designations. The limits to development are indicated on the LDF Proposals Map.
5. The conservation area encompasses the core of Loftus District Centre, which is indicated by the town/district/local centre notation on the LDF Proposals Map. Policy CS18 focuses town centre uses (retail, leisure, social, education, arts, cultural, office, residential and commercial) within this area, and seeks to maintain and where appropriate, enhance the vitality and viability of the centre, including the appearance and environmental quality of the centre and promoting the reuse of vacant buildings.
6. General criteria around site selection, sustainable design and the matters that the Council may seek developer contributions for, are set out policies DP2, DP3 and DP4 of the Development Policies DPD. Policies DP9, DP10 and DP11 set out development control criteria for conservation areas, listed buildings and archaeological sites and monuments respectively.

NB

The planning policies referred to above are current at the time of writing; for an up to date list of extant policies, please visit the Council's website, www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/ldf or contact: 01287 612356.

This document is available in alternative formats and in different languages on request. If you need support or assistance to help you read and/or understand this document, please contact the Council on 01642 774774.

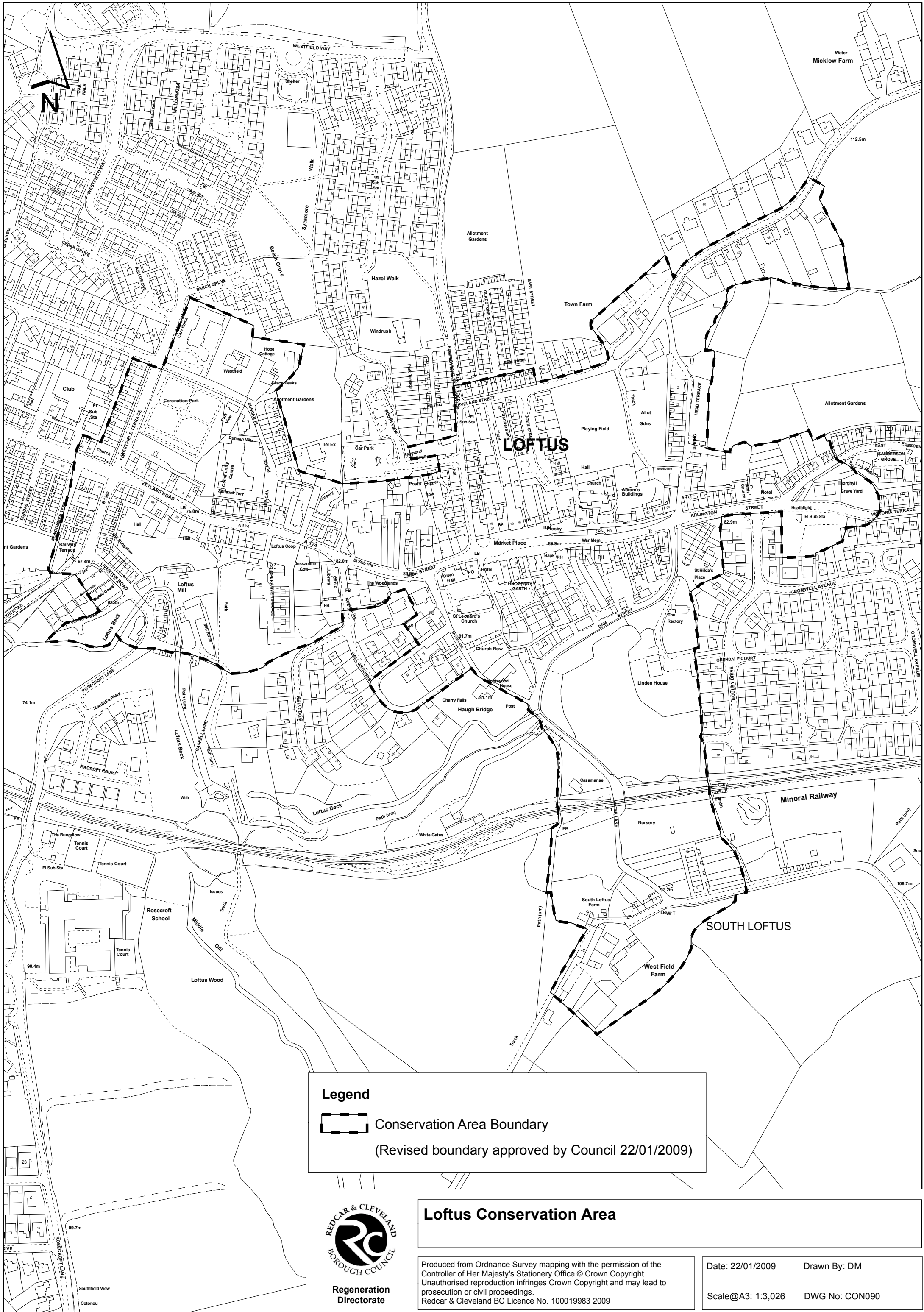


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Legend

 Conservation Area Boundary
 (Revised boundary approved by Council 22/01/2009)



Regeneration Directorate

Loftus Conservation Area

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Date: 22/01/2009 Drawn By: DM
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