
STAITHES CONSERVATION APPRAISAL

January 2001

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNP) has commissioned a Conservation Area Appraisal as part of a Townscape heritage initiative – 'The Spirit of Staithes'.
- 1.2 It has been compiled following site surveys, research, assessments of questionnaire returns and has had due regard to historic documentation relating to Staithes and the surrounding area. It has been produced in consultation with English Heritage and the NYMNP.
- 1.3 Survey work was undertaken in January 2001 at the following times:-
 - Wednesday 17 January (late afternoon/early evening/night time)
 - Thursday 18 January (early morning through to late afternoon).
 - Saturday 27 January (early morning through to late afternoon).
- 1.4 This report is primarily concerned with the area designated as the Conservation Area (as defined in 1972) although reference will be made to surrounding areas and the boundary of the Conservation Area at various sections of the report.
- 1.5 Staithes lies within the North York Moors National Park and the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Heritage Coast.
- 1.6 The settlement of Staithes can be divided into two main areas – the lower older fishing village and the upper more recent area, which was developed in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The Conservation Area includes most of the lower older village.
- 1.7 We have approached our appraisal as a practical, succinct and factual account of the Conservation Area. Not every building, space or relationship has therefore be commented upon, but we have attempted in our approach to the survey work to identify issues or raise awareness of certain matters that may require particular attention either through detailed studies or policy provision.
- 1.8 In any form of survey work, judgements have to be made and there may be different views as to the basis of such judgements. We have had due regard to comments made by local residents in the return of survey questionnaires and also the 'Planning for Real' document, produced by the Staithes and Cowbar Residents Association (1999).
- 1.9 It is hoped that the views expressed in the report are considered to be well balanced and have been compiled in the spirit of providing an independent appraisal of the Staithes Conservation Area.

2. Planning Context

- 2.1 The town lies within the North Yorkshire Moors and, as such, is subject to the policies of the adopted North York Moors Local Plan.
- 2.2 The North Yorkshire Moors was designated a National Park in 1952 and is administered by a Committee of the North Yorkshire County Council. The Committee's statutory duties include:-
 - the preservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the National Park;
 - promotion of its enjoyment by the public; and
 - have regard to the social and economic well being of the local communities within the National Park.
- 2.3 The Proposals Map shows two policy allocations for Staithes, which relate to the conservation of the landscape.
- 2.4 The coastal area, including Cowbar Nab, Hartle Lane and Penny Nab, is allocated as a Conservation Area Coastal Habitat.
- 2.5 The inland area generally covering the old village of Staithes is allocated as Conservation Area Woodland Habitat.
- 2.6 The Plan's Village Inset Map for Staithes allocates the area of the old village of Staithes and Cowbar Nab as a Conservation Area and as such Building Conservation and Design policies of the Plan therefore apply (Policies BC2 – BC5).
- 2.7 Relevant extracts of the Plan have been appended to this document.
- 2.8 In development control terms, the Council has dealt with twenty-eight planning or listed building applications within the Conservation Area over the last five years. These applications have been for small-scale changes and alterations.

3. The Character of the Conservation Area

- 3.1 The Staithes Conservation Area was designated in 1972.
- 3.2 It covers an approximate area of 15.0 ha (37.06 acres) and includes some three hundred and nineteen buildings within the main historic core of the Conservation Area. In total there are some 350 buildings including Cowbar Cottages.
- 3.3 Within the Conservation Area there are approximately eighty-one listed buildings representing some 25% of the building stock. Eighty-one buildings are classified as Grade II and 1 (Kirkhill House) Grade II*
- 3.4 Staithes is shaped dramatically by the surrounding coastal topography.
- 3.5 Staithes means 'landing place' and the bay probably afforded early access to the nearby cliff top settlements of Seaton and Hinderwell.
- 3.6 The surrounding cliffs and headlands have restricted settlement growth. Development is therefore generally located on the lower slopes between Staithes Beck and Gun Gutter between the heads of these two valleys.
- 3.7 When these topographical factors are taken into account, the built form of the Conservation Area occupies an area of 4.4 ha (10.87 acres). This provides a density figure of 72.5 units per hectare (29 units per acre).
- 3.8 Although north-facing most of the settlement does not face the sea but nestles in the shelter of Cowbar Nab. The sheer shale cliffs rise to form a dramatic backdrop to those properties that lie on the north side of the Beck. The shale cliffs show signs of weathering and erosion caused by the combined forces of sea, wind and nesting gulls.
- 3.9 The settlement generally is grouped around small yards, narrow streets and passageways. The topography results in a settlement that lies at differing levels having an irregular layout pattern.
- 3.10 From upper vantage points the irregular arrangement of roof lines provide an interesting roofscape of immense townscape value with tightly packed roofs of red pantiles and grey slate. When viewed from lower areas the buildings climb up the slopes of the valleys almost on top of each other.
- 3.11 The settlement pattern has considerable overall townscape value without having a focus on any particular architectural building or buildings.
- 3.12 Most of the settlement is eighteenth century and nineteenth century. Many buildings are in the form of cottages built of stone and these characterise the lower part of the village, having the closest relationship to the sea and Beck. These properties were generally built as individual dwellings.

- 3.13 Later buildings on the upper parts of the High Street and valley slopes are generally of brick construction, often in terraces or groupings of buildings. These properties represent a phase of the Staithes development linked to its mining past and the advent of the railway.
- 3.14 Overall, however, Staithes can be described as a well-preserved fishing village retaining much of its eighteenth century and nineteenth century character.
- 3.15 The settlement only has two streets (High Street and Church Street) both of which are narrow and not suitable for general vehicular use.
- 3.16 The remainder of the village is accessed by a series of lanes and passageways and alleyways, which create a sense of enclosure.
- 3.17 One feature of the settlement is that by virtue of the fact of the tightly packed nature of the properties, many lack any form of gardens or formal amenity space associated with the properties. A number of dwellings have small rear yards that often back directly onto other properties adding to the high density.
- 3.18 There is also a lack of any obvious vegetation, trees, hedges, and landscaping and open areas. This is in part due to its coastal location as well as the nature of the built form of the settlement.
- 3.19 The environmental quality of the townscape when viewed overall is generally good, but there are a number of buildings and spaces in need of attention.
- 3.20 The Conservation Area has a considerable amount of local interest and historical association. Staithes has an historical link with Captain James Cook, who worked in the village prior to his career at sea as an explorer and navigator.
- 3.21 The growth of the settlement was however based around fishing and its role as a port. An old tradition was that families named their houses after their boats and many properties still exhibit unusual sounding house names, testament to the importance of the village's seafaring past.
- 3.22 Another tradition was that the houses were painted in the same colours as the family boat. There are a few examples in Staithes where this custom is maintained although many properties exhibit newer decorating styles and influences. It is also the link with fishing that gave rise to the custom of women wearing the 'Staithes Bonnet' to protect their hair from fish scales as they carried baskets of fish on their heads.
- 3.23 Staithes also benefited in the early nineteenth century from the rich mineral reserves that were mined in the locality. The advent of the railway brought further growth and prosperity to the town. The remnants of the stone rampart to the great railway viaduct that crossed Staithes Beck is still visible today.
- 3.24 Towards the end of the nineteenth century Staithes was the base for a group of impressionist painters, the 'Staithes Group' who lived and worked in Staithes. The settlement therefore has a rich and varied history, which add to the flavour and character of the Conservation Area.

- 3.25 The character of the area is generally peaceful. Descending Bank Bottom into the heart of the Conservation Area, where vehicular traffic is discouraged by virtue of the narrow streets and lack of car parking and manoeuvring areas, one is transported into the past.
- 3.26 There is a stillness and tranquillity which are as much a part of the Conservation Area's character as the buildings and landscape. At various locations the sound of the sea and gulls reinforce its strong relationship to the sea. The rushing of the Beck provides another key feature of the Conservation Area as do the coal burning fires of residential properties that provide an evocative atmosphere.
- 3.27 Staithes Beck forms the border between Scarborough Borough Council in North Yorkshire and Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council. Cowbar Lane and Northside nestle directly beneath the coastal cliff on a narrow shelf with room for only one row of houses and the road between the houses and the Beck.
- 3.28 The Cleveland Way National Trail, running from Helmsley to Filey, runs down Cowbar Lane and across the footbridge into High Street and then on to Church Street before leaving Staithes and heading towards Port Mulgrave. The footpath brings many ramblers through the village.
- 3.29 Staithes today has a number of problems. Many are rooted in the socio-economic base of its population. Changes in the fortunes of its past industries provided a legacy of high unemployment. Its economic base today relies on tourism but it lacks the profile of many of its coastal neighbours, Scarborough, Whitby and Robin Hoods Bay despite its history and attractive setting. This may in part be due to its remoter location.
- 3.30 The link with tourism whilst having a positive impact in bringing a much needed boost to the economy is, however, also having a negative effect. Many properties are now bracketed as holiday homes or holiday let cottages, which lie dormant and empty out of season waiting for the influx of summer visitors. It is estimated that some 62% of properties in Staithes are not a primary residence.
- 3.31 The lack of buoyancy in the economy of Staithes is reflected through a whole series of issues. Many are beyond the reach of the work involved in the Conservation Appraisal others are less so. The disposable income of residents to improve and maintain properties, the age and ability of residents to undertake repairs, access to information and improvements to environmental aspects of the Conservation Area are all important to the future well being of the Conservation Area.
- 3.32 At the time of our survey (January 2001) activity levels were generally low.

4. Location and Population

- 4.1 Staithes is located on the north-eastern edge of the North Yorkshire Moors National Park and is part of the North Yorkshire and Cleveland Heritage Coast.
- 4.2 The village lies approximately ten miles from Whitby and eight miles from Saltburn-by-the-Sea. Lofthouse is approximately four miles away whilst Helmsley, the location of the North York Moors National Park Authority offices is located approximately twenty-four miles to the south-west.
- 4.3 The village lies on the A174 Whitby to Middlesborough Road. The Conservation Area is accessed from the A174, via Staithes Lane.
- 1 The village is split onto two distinct parts. The newer part of the village lies directly adjacent to the A174 and focused around the Staithes Lane area.
- 4.5 The area to which this report relates is the older part of the village which lies on the coast and is defined by the Conservation Area Boundary.
- 4.6 The miners cottages located on Cowbar are within the study area. Whilst there is no direct road link the Cowbar is linked to the Old village by a footbridge across the Beck. Cowbar Lane provides access to the Lifeboat house and dwellings on the North Side from the A174.
- 4.7 Staithes lies within the parish of Hinderwell. The total population for the parish is 2,300 of which Staithes contains 1,219. The majority of the balance is located within Port Mulgrave. These figures are based on the mid year estimates for 1999 available at Scarborough Borough Council.
- 4.8 Due to the way in which census data is broken down geographically it is not possible to gain exact census data for the study area. However we have assessed the data available for the smallest geographical area, enumeration districts, FQ04 which includes the majority of the study site although Cowbar Cottages are excluded.
- 4.9 Some key indicators for the village are set out below for comparison with the averages for England and Wales:-

	FQ04 (%)	England & Wales (%)
Male Unemployed/on Government Scheme	17.5	12.4
Female: Unemployed/on Government Scheme	13.6	7.8
Households with no central heating	38.0	18.5
Households sharing/lacking bath/shower and/or inside WC.	6.7	2.1
Households with no car	38.7	32.4

Housing type: Terraced dwellings	63.5	29.8
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- 4.10 The data shown above provides a number of indicators for this report. Some of the findings set out below raise no surprises, such as the high percentage of terraced houses.
- 4.11 Other statistics such as car ownership levels and unemployment levels are not so obvious to the observer but none the less are important indicators which must be considered when assessing the environmental quality of the village with a view to defining future priorities.

5. Origins of Settlement

- 5.1 Available research undertaken by local residents, as well as that produced by the North York Moors National Park Authority, suggests that Staithes could be built on the remains of a 12th-15th century fortified site.
- 5.2 However, due to the complexity of undertaking such research, this report has not sought to unravel the early history of the settlement but to provide a summary of the town's history from the 1600s onwards to set the context for the consideration of the merits of the Conservation Area. For ease of reference the history has been broken down into a series of sub sections each summarising a significant period in the history of Staithes:-

Alum Mining

- 5.3 From the latter part of the 1600's until the latter part of the 1800s alum mining brought employment to the village of Staithes. The Boulby Works began in 1680 and operated for one hundred and seventy years.
- 5.4 Alum was used in the textile industry, tanning industry and paper industries of the time and brought considerable prosperity to the village.
- 5.5 Whilst the miners were not well paid many were provided with a house and granted grazing rights for cattle and the use of land for the production of hay.
- 5.6 The alum industry also required boats to production materials to the quarries and to remove the alum. Most the boats involved were of a flat-bottomed construction to enable landings on the beach.
- 5.7 By the mid to late 1800s the industry was in decline due to the availability of cheaper materials and changes in the processes involved.

Staithes Port

- 5.8 From the late 1700s until the late 1800s, Staithes was a thriving port town. Many boat owners lived within the village operating both merchant ships, undertaking both deep sea and coasting trade, and fishing boats.
- 5.9 Employment was also provided by the boat builders, sail makers; hook makers and fish curers and fish merchants.
- 5.10 However, with the advent of steam and iron and increased trawling by Scottish boats caused oversupply and a collapse in stocks. The impact of this upon fish prices caused the industry in Staithes to decline in the late 1800s.

Jet Mining

- 5.11 From the mid to late 1800s, jet mining was evident in the village. It was not a large scale industrial activity but nonetheless a number of Staithes' residents made a living from mining the material for jewellery manufacturing.
- 5.12 However, much of this informal source of employment ceased in the late 1800s when Queen Victoria stopped wearing jet jewellery following her period of mourning for Prince Albert's death.

Ironstone Mining

- 5.13 Between 1850 and the mid-1900s, Staithes maintained an income from ironstone mining which was extracted at the village and sent to Cleveland for processing. The ironstone industry also prompted the development of tramway and transport systems for transporting the raw materials. The Grinkle railway ran from 1875 until 1916 serving the mines and running on to Port Mulgrave where it would be exported from the harbour. By the late 1800s the ironstone was beginning to be exhausted and this coincided with the decline in fishing due to the unsuitability of the port.

The Railway

- 5.14 The mining industry in Staithes brought with it the development of a railway in the late 1800s linking it with Teesside. The remains of the viaduct crossing the Beck although the line was closed in 1958.
- 5.15 It appears to have had a substantial impact upon Staithes. The advent of the railway corresponded with a decline in commercial activity in the town but also opened up the village to a wider catchment and most notably attracted artists, which became known as the Staithes Group an important British impressionist group.

Commercial Activity

- 5.16 The village's mineral wealth and its growth as a port brought commercial activity.
- 5.17 In 1851 two shoemakers, tailors and dressmakers, five grocers, three bakers and two butchers operated from the town and in 1864 there were fifty-three businesses which were largely dependent on outside custom.
- 5.18 In 1861 a total of ninety people were listed as working in shops and businesses in Staithes. Employers included blacksmiths, boat builder, cooper, joiner, wheelwright and cartwright.
- 5.19 However, the arrival of the railway prompted the decline of the village as a commercial centre and traders gradually shut down due to the increased mobility of the population. As a commercial centre, the village has never recovered from this decline.

6. Uses/Activity

Past

- 6.1 In the past, the land uses prevalent in the village have been defined by the type of industry that is providing employment and wealth to the town. As such, at different times in its history the village has provided varying facilities such as the 'fish field' and boat building yards during the peak of Staithes success as a port to the railway station and remains of the viaduct in the late 1800s.
- 6.2 The industries located in and around Staithes were also integral in the village's growth as a residential settlement. Cottages and houses were built by the industrialists, those made wealthy by grasping the economic opportunities of the time and by the workers themselves. The Cowbar Cottages are a prominent example of the growth of the village being fuelled by the industry it supported.
- 6.3 All of the industries, to varying degrees, have shaped the physical development of Staithes and its land use patterns.

Present

- 6.4 In terms of the core land uses within the village of Staithes little has changed in recent times. The decline in industry had had a marked effect as the buildings which supported the mining and fishing industries have all but disappeared.
- 6.5 However, the core of the village, the residential settlement, has remained. The last period of significant land use change is most likely to have been as a result of the arrival of the train which eroded the village's importance as a trading centre. This period saw the closure of many traders and service providers and the spaces which they once occupied are now likely to be occupied by residential dwellings.
- 6.6 Of course some commercial activity remains in the town, the butcher, various public houses and post office for example, still operate year round but the overriding use of the town is that of residential.
- 6.7 The residential use of the village has changed over time. Once occupied by those employed in the village, the dwellings are now likely to be occupied by second home owners or let only in the summer months to holiday makers.
- 6.8 As a consequence of the ad hoc growth of the village, which has arisen due to constraints placed upon available development land, a complex pattern of development has been created.
- 6.9 The developed aspects of this pattern have previously been highlighted but there are also a number of areas that provide a focal point for the village.

- 6.10 The bridge across the Beck, the area in front of Bank House, the jetty and Cod and Lobster and Seaton Garth are vital to the village's function and character and as important as its built form.
- 6.11 The areas provide informal recreational facilities for residents to meet.

Future

- 6.12 That the village of Staithes will ever be returned to its former industrial glory is unlikely. However, although there are threats posed to the village's future by shifting land use patterns there are also opportunities.
- 6.13 The trend towards holiday home rental and second home ownership is unlikely to be reversed in the short term and is likely to continue unabated for some time.
- 6.14 However, through modern technologies and working practices it may be possible to secure greater employment opportunities and a more mobile population embracing communication innovation to enable working from any location may benefit the village as a whole.
- 6.15 Increasingly, people are spending less time in the office and more time working remotely from home, a trend set to continue.

7. Archaeology

- 7.1 This record has not sought to research the complex archaeological background to the report site.
- 7.2 We are aware that there is a substantial body of anecdotal evidence relating to the early evolution of Staithes, but there has been insufficient research undertaken to substantiate such claims.
- 7.3 We have accessed the Scheduled Monuments Record and confirm that there are no significant listings for the village.
- 7.4

8. Setting of Conversation Area – Relationship to Landscape Open Countryside

- 8.1 The setting of Staithes Conservation Area is dramatic. Set within a bay the town is moulded by its dramatic topography. Sea, land and buildings unite to form an inseparable whole.
- 8.2 The old town of the Conservation Area is largely hidden from view when approaching from the newer area of Staithes or coastal approaches.
- 8.3 It is best perhaps to start with a description to the approach to the Conservation Area in terms of the relationship between the old town of Staithes, which lies wholly within the Conservation Area, and the newer town of Staithes, which is divorced from the old town.
- Leaving the A174 main coast road, access to Staithes is gained via Staithes Lane through the newer part of the town.
- 8.5 This area is excluded from the Conservation Area. There is a large surface car park where visitors and a number of residents of the old town park due to the limited accessibility and parking facilities.
- 8.6 The car park is large and accessible but lies in a prominent location on the exposed plateau of the cliff top. It provides panoramic views of the surrounding area but not of the old town and the Conservation Area as this is hidden from view.
- 8.7 There are views west of the potash works, open farmland and a number of farms. To the north is a children's play area which at the time of our survey also included a number of traditional fishing boats (brightly coloured cobbles) on the periphery of the play area. These provided the first reference points to Staithes past and its close relationship with the sea.
- 8.8 Beyond the play area former barracks buildings have been converted to an education/recreational activity and resource centre ('trig point 49'). To the south east on the periphery of the car park is an access to a small trading estate. Public toilets and the former railway station building are visible.
- 8.9 To the south is a bank single concrete garages, the Captain Cook pub/hotel (under refurbishment) and a well kept war memorial.
- 8.10 In general terms however the car park is exposed, has no sense of enclosure, lacks any landscaping or peripheral vegetation and could benefit from environmental improvements.
- 8.11 The car park has no relationship to the historic part of Staithes.
- 8.12 The Tourist Information board could add much more to interest visitors and include more useful information.
- 8.13 Access from the car park to the start of the Conservation Area is characterised by a range of residential properties of varying styles ranging from late nineteenth century to mid twentieth century which lie either side of the approach road. Distant views are afforded of Cowbar Nab with a weather/communication aerial on top.

- 8.14 There is no single point at which the Conservation Area boundary becomes evident. The start of the Conservation Area is arbitrary and generally commences after a parking area to Beach May. At this point views are afforded into, and of, the Conservation Area.
- 8.15 Descending the steep narrow road into the town attractive stone sets provide pavement detail where there is a steep cliff bank on the right which emphasises views to the left over the stone wall with wooden rails.
- 8.16 Views are afforded over the stone wall down to Staithes Beck below. Uprturned fishing boats, derelict sheds, pigeon coups and allotment garden give an 'unkempt', if not traditional, introduction to the area.
- 8.17 The boundary of the Conservation Area excludes, at this point, a row of modern proprieties (with Georgian type features). The boundary then diverts to the north east running parallel to a public footpath 'The Old Stubble' which affords access to Mount Pleasant and the old town.
- 8.18 Two large properties, Staithes House and a large unnamed house, lie either side of the boundary. Both properties are prominent from a distance and sit very proudly on the skyline. The Conservation Area boundary then skirts south following the top of the Gun Gutter Valley past the Trig 49 centre and running to the top of the valley head of Lanning Garth.
- 8.19 To the west from the access road into the Conservation Area, the boundary arbitrarily crosses Staithes Beck then rises up the valley side adjacent to a public footpath which rises from stepping stones across the Beck.
- 8.20 The boundary then skirts around the perimeter of Cowbar Cottages. These properties are very prominent siting on the top of the valley side totally exposed. A residential property 'The Bungalow' has been improved and extended but is generally not in keeping with surrounding development. The addition of a large conservatory overlooking the valley of Staithes Beck detracts from the first impression of the general character of buildings in this locality.
- 8.21 The boundary then follows the northern edge of Cowbar Nab returning around the headland, which is very prominent and a dramatic backdrop to Staithes. This landscape area is very much a part of Staithes, and adds to its character and setting.
- 8.22 The Conservation Area then crosses the Beck at sea level to join the mainland at the slipway. It then follows the harbour wall around Seaton Garth continuing eastwards past built development to follow the foot of the cliffs as far as Penny Nab and Stairs Heap. The boundary then returns along the top of the cliffs, following Leech Bank around the top of the cliffs above Seaton Garth.
- 8.23 The boundary then diverts south and follows the valley sides of Gun Gutter terminating further south at Devils Breaches and Lanning Garth.
- 8.24 The topography of the area clearly sets the context for the old part of Staithes and the Conservation Area boundary, although arbitrary in places, has a close relationship to the landscape setting.

9. The Architectural Quality and Historic Quality of Buildings

- 9.1 Today, the buildings within the Conservation Area that make up the old part of Staithes are predominantly of eighteenth century and nineteenth century construction. The buildings are mainly of stone or brick often painted or rendered. Roofs are characteristically clay pantile (rustic red in colour) or slate (grey).
- 9.2 Many of the buildings exhibit particular architectural features and detailing such as vertical sliding sash windows or the Yorkshire horizontal sash. Doors are of a variety of styles and design but characteristically panelled or boarded. Some 1930s' doors exhibit stained glass or glazed panels in the doors or in fanlights above.
- 9.3 The street pattern and relationship of the buildings to spaces has altered very little contributing to Staithes well preserved look. The detailing of many of the buildings has changed over time. The lack of available space to extend properties or redevelop sites has benefited the preservation of Staithes but has also contributed to marked changes in the character of buildings within the Conservation Area. Changes have largely arisen from:-
- The replacement of worn out parts
 - The creation of additional space in the roof voids
- 9.4 This has resulted in:-
- Inappropriate scale dormer windows
 - Velux windows in roof areas
 - Replacement window casements
 - Replacement doors
 - Loss of cast iron rainwater goods and replacement by plastic (usually grey).
- 9.5 Many buildings require no more than a fresh coat of paint and general maintenance to restore them to their former appearance.
- 9.6 The overall condition of buildings is generally good. Some 88% of buildings are in a good to fair condition with only 10% considered to be in a poor state of repair. Only 2% of buildings would be classified as in a very bad condition. The Building Condition Survey of all three hundred and nineteen properties provides details.
- 9.7 Many of the poorest quality buildings are outbuildings, former stores/warehouses or garages. These have been neglected over time and although not part of the residential stock of buildings their appearance in the street scene has a negative impact.

9.8 The greatest percentage of buildings in the Conservation Area are residential properties (87%). Many commercial properties that once lined the High Street have all but disappeared and today only 6% of properties can be classified as being in commercial use (shop, Post Office, pub/hotel or office).

9.9 2% of properties are in religious or charity use and the remainder (5%) are outbuildings, warehouse or utility use.

9.10 For the purposes of our appraisal we have divided the Conservation Area into eleven zones. These zones are not to be considered as divisions within the Conservation Area but provide a structure for the consideration of the Area's value. It is very much the whole of the Conservation Area that provides its unique townscape value.

9.11 The zones have been designed purely as areas within which to review the relationship of buildings and architectural features for the purposes of reporting.

9.12 The 11 areas are:-

- Area 1 – Bank Bottom / High Street to Bells Bank
- Area 2 – High Street (Elliot's Yard to Bank House)
- Area 3 – High Street (from Marlborough House to Cod and Lobster Public House)
- Area 4 – Scaton Garth / Beach
- Area 5 – Church Street
- Area 6 – Gun Gutter
- Area 7 – Barrass/High Barrass/Mount Pleasant
- Area 8 – Passageways/courtyards north of High Street
- Area 9 – West of High Street/Beckside
- Area 10 – North Side/Cowbar Lane
- Area 11 – Cowbar Cottages

9.13 Detailed description and analysis of these areas is provided at *Appendix 1*.

9.14 In summary, the greatest percentage of listed buildings in the Staithes Conservation Area is to be found lining the High Street (accounting for almost 50% of the listed building stock of properties).

9.15 The condition and character of the Listed Building stock is generally good. In terms of the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Assessment there have been no listed buildings identified that fall in the categories of 'extreme risk' or 'grave risk'.

9.16 There are however a number of buildings (approx. 5% of the listed building stock) which are 'at risk'. These are:-

- Bethel Chapel (ID no. 6)
- Property left of Alma Cottage (Id no.41)
- Primitive School Rooms (Id no.75)
- Rear of Jennysteel Cottage (Id no 305)

9.17 16% of the listed building stock should however be monitored. Appendix F of the main Building Survey Report identifies on a map base those listed buildings "at risk" and those to be "monitored".

10. Contributions Made by Key Unlisted Buildings

- 10.1 One of the principal factors that set the Staithes Conservation Area apart is that there are no individual buildings, which set a context for the Conservation Area.
- 10.2 Indeed the character of the Conservation Area results from its range of well preserved eighteenth century and nineteenth century buildings.
- 10.3 The very fact that so little redevelopment has occurred means the integral look and feel of Staithes has an overall uniformity. Unlike many other Conservation Areas newer developments have not punctuated the introduced in to the street scene.
- 10.4 The contribution of non-listed buildings is therefore paramount. It is these buildings which together with the listed buildings provide an extremely high townscape value.
- 10.5 Overall, Staithes does not suffer from patchiness in terms of the overall quality of townscape but there are areas on a localised basis where improvements can be made. The report considered three areas:-
- Individual Buildings
 - Groups of buildings
 - Spaces
- 10.6 The unlisted buildings, together with their relationship to the street scene, the listed buildings, passageways and courtyards add immensely to Staithes.
- 10.7 It would be true to say that with few exceptions one can not immediately pinpoint listed buildings from the unlisted buildings in the overall street scene. This gives Staithes its overall appeal and character.
- 10.8 Given the protection that is afforded to buildings with listed status it is therefore very much the case that the unlisted buildings which are more susceptible to change. If not managed, such change could result in damage to the fabric of the Conservation Area. The contribution of the unlisted buildings within the townscape requires added protection.
- 10.9 As the overall character of the Conservation Area is so uniform there may be merit in establishing an Article 4 Direction Order. This will remove permitted development rights and allow prior consideration to be given to alterations and proposals, which can be assessed against the fabric or relationship of properties.
- 10.10 The replacement of windows, doors together with proposals for alterations to properties with regard to extensions, additions of dormer windows or roof lights etc would all be assessed.
- 10.11 Any such scheme should be supported with clear information to residents on details and materials that are acceptable together with those that are not. Of utmost importance will be the assistance and accessibility to grant aid to help fund required improvements to the standard set by the Conservation Area.

10.12 Unlike listed buildings, some 32% of unlisted buildings have been identified which directly have a negative impact on the historic character or urban grain of Staithes. These largely result from the addition of inappropriately scaled features e.g. dormer windows, or the condition of properties following alteration/conversion.

10.13 Particular unlisted buildings, which detract from the character of the Conservation Area, are identified at Appendix M and N of the main Building Survey Report.

10.14 There are however a number of key groupings of unlisted buildings which are referenced at Appendix I. These relate to

- i. Focal points i.e. those buildings, which lie at specific intersections in the street scene.
- ii. Group value i.e. where a combination of buildings together adds weight to the character of a particular locality.

11. Character and Relationship of Spaces and Greenspaces

- 11.1 The character and relationship of spaces is essentially what gives Staithes its high townscape value.
- 11.2 The collection of tightly packed buildings with alleyways, steps, slopes, pathways and courtyards provide a highly attractive combination of spaces all in scale and relationship to each other.
- 11.3 Overall, there are very few open spaces within the town but there are many enclosed spaces ranging from the enclosed areas of the High Street to the narrow passageways providing access to enclosed courtyards.
- 11.4 There is little differentiation between the public and private areas within Staithes. Many alleyways and courtyards are accessible but one does feel like one is encroaching upon people's private space. There are only three or four examples where gates/barriers have been erected to prevent access.
- 11.5 Buildings and hard finished surfaces dominate the overall character. There are few soft or green areas within the town.
- 11.6 There are very few trees, gardens or hedges, which give a characteristic urban feel yet because of the scale and relationship these together to provide a totally acceptable form of development.
- 11.7 The more open areas of Staithes are defined and described in Appendix 2.

12. Extent of Negative Factors

12.1 The extent of negative factors has been commented on at various sections of the report, together with plans. We have considered the extent of negative factors under three headings:-

- General Issues
- Buildings
- Spaces

General

12.2 These are factors which affect the character of the Conservation Area but are not directly influenced by buildings or spaces. Their collective impact can create poor quality environments. A gradual programme of works may be required. Photographic records are reproduced at Appendix G and at Table 11 of the main Building Survey Report. These deal with:-

- Signage
- Estate Agents Boards
- Lighting
- Wirescape

Buildings

12.3 These are referenced at Appendix 1. It also includes a range of non residential buildings e.g. the public toilets at Seaton Garth, the telephone box and air monitoring unit on the High Street. We also include a number of outbuildings and former garage/warehouse buildings in the Beckside area and North of High Street together with a range of public buildings e.g. Chapels etc..

Spaces

12.4 The spaces in the Conservation Area are of critical importance to the look feel and character of the Conservation Area. There is a varying standard of streetscapes which affect a number of spaces, especially in the courtyards and passageways.

- Varying quality of streetscapes
- High Street Corner
- Slipway
- Mount Pleasant

- Royal George Yard
- Top end of Gun Gutter
- Gun Gutter Street Scene

13. Neutral Areas

- 13.1 As part of the Conservation Area Appraisal, we have considered the merit of neutral areas. These are areas which neither enhance nor detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation but where there might be potential for enhancement.
- 13.2 Generally these have been identified as the areas 'off pitch' from the main areas of activity or groupings of buildings. They are located on the upper slopes of Staithes. A series of steps and pathways of varying condition access the areas. The area is also characterised by the fact that they have very few listed buildings
- 13.3 The areas identified are:-
- Darlington Terrace
 - Broomhill
 - Mount Pleasant
 - Browns Terrace

14. Conclusions

- 14.1 The character of the Staithes Conservation Area is gained from its well-preserved range of eighteenth century and nineteenth century buildings.
- 14.2 The value of the Conservation Area is very much *area* based
- 14.3 The setting of the Conservation Area has a very close relationship with its coastal topography – there is a very strong link between the natural environment and built environment.
- 14.4 Listed Buildings are not immediately apparent within the overall townscape. This lends support to the fact that so much of Staithes is well preserved, with little redevelopment having taken place.
- 14.5 The overall result is a Conservation Area with a very high townscape value.
- 14.6 The limited opportunities for redevelopment or expansion have assisted the preservation of the built form of the settlement but this has also created pressure for change – replacement of worn out parts of buildings, desire to create more living space i.e. utilisation of roof space.
- 14.7 The unlisted buildings, which make up 74% of the building stock, require added protection. It is this range of buildings, which contribute significantly to the overall character of the Conservation Area and high townscape value.
- 14.8 Various environmental works are required to improve elements of the Conservation Area and its overall appeal.
- 14.9 Staithes still has a very active community although under threat from the number of second homes / holiday let accommodation. A careful balance has to be found between conservation and the needs of its local residents.

15. Recommendations

- 15.1 The recommendations suggested are varied. Some will be easier to action and implement than others. Some may have immediate effects; others may involve a schemes of works over a period of time before effects are seen. Much will depend on the ability of the residents of Staithes to support and assist works within the Conservation Area as well as access to all-important sources of funding for specific works.
- 15.2 Some of the recommendations may not be achievable but in working towards them they will hopefully assist with an improvement in the overall quality of the character of the Conservation Area.

General

- 15.3 Balance the needs of local residents with measures for enhanced conservation.
- 15.4 Improve tourism profile of Staithes and develop a tourism strategy.
- Introduce better visitor information
 - Town Trail for Staithes
- 15.5 Improve car parking area –
- Environmental works
 - Differentiate between residents /visitor car parking
 - Improve visitor information at car park

Conservation Area - General

- 15.6 Introduce Article 4 Direction Order
- 15.7 Draw up information to assist residents on impact of Article 4 Direction Order
- 15.8 Provide clear guidelines on what constitutes good or poor practice to
- 15.9 Information to assist with access to grant aid.

Conservation Area – Buildings

- 15.10 Architectural design competition for Cobble Cottage/Beckside Cottage (former Co –op buildings) High Street
- 15.11 Removal of Public Toilets at Seaton Garth
- 15.12 Identify and encourage key use generators for vacant buildings e.g. Bethel Chapel / Primitive Schoolroom – art gallery, local craft workshops, community facility
- 15.13 Remove glass public telephone box and replace with appropriate telephone box.

15.14 Minimise impact of air monitoring unit in street scene.

Conservation Area – Environmental

15.15 Streetscape Works (cross reference to Building Survey Report)

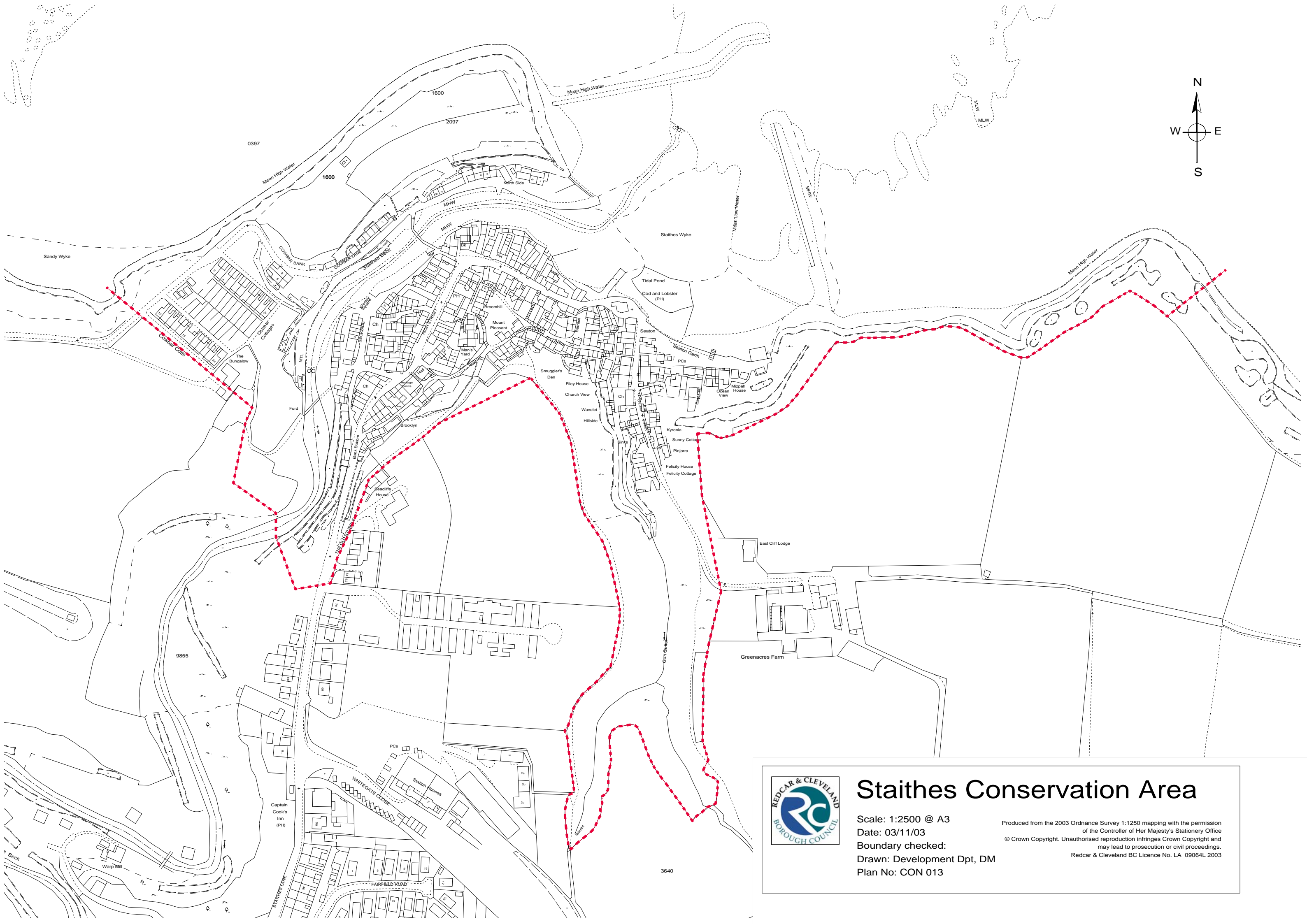
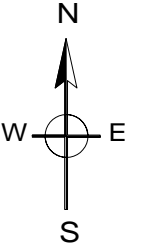
15.16 Improve the quality of open spaces.

15.17 Gun Gutter environmental street scene enhancement

15.18 Beckside – co-ordinated environmental improvements

15.19 Seaton Garth improve slipway, surfaces and railings to harbour front

15.20 High Street – relay sections of cobbles.



Staithes Conservation Area

Scale: 1:2500 @ A3
Date: 03/11/03
Boundary checked:
Drawn: Development Dpt, DM
Plan No: CON 013

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