



# this is Loftus Conservation Area Appraisal 2023





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# 1. Introduction

1.1 The Council has a duty to designate conservation areas under the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990<sup>1</sup>. The Act also imposes a duty to review these areas from time to time and to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of the borough that are designated as conservation areas through sections 69 and 71 of the Act. The Loftus Conservation Area Appraisal has been undertaken as part of fulfilling this duty.

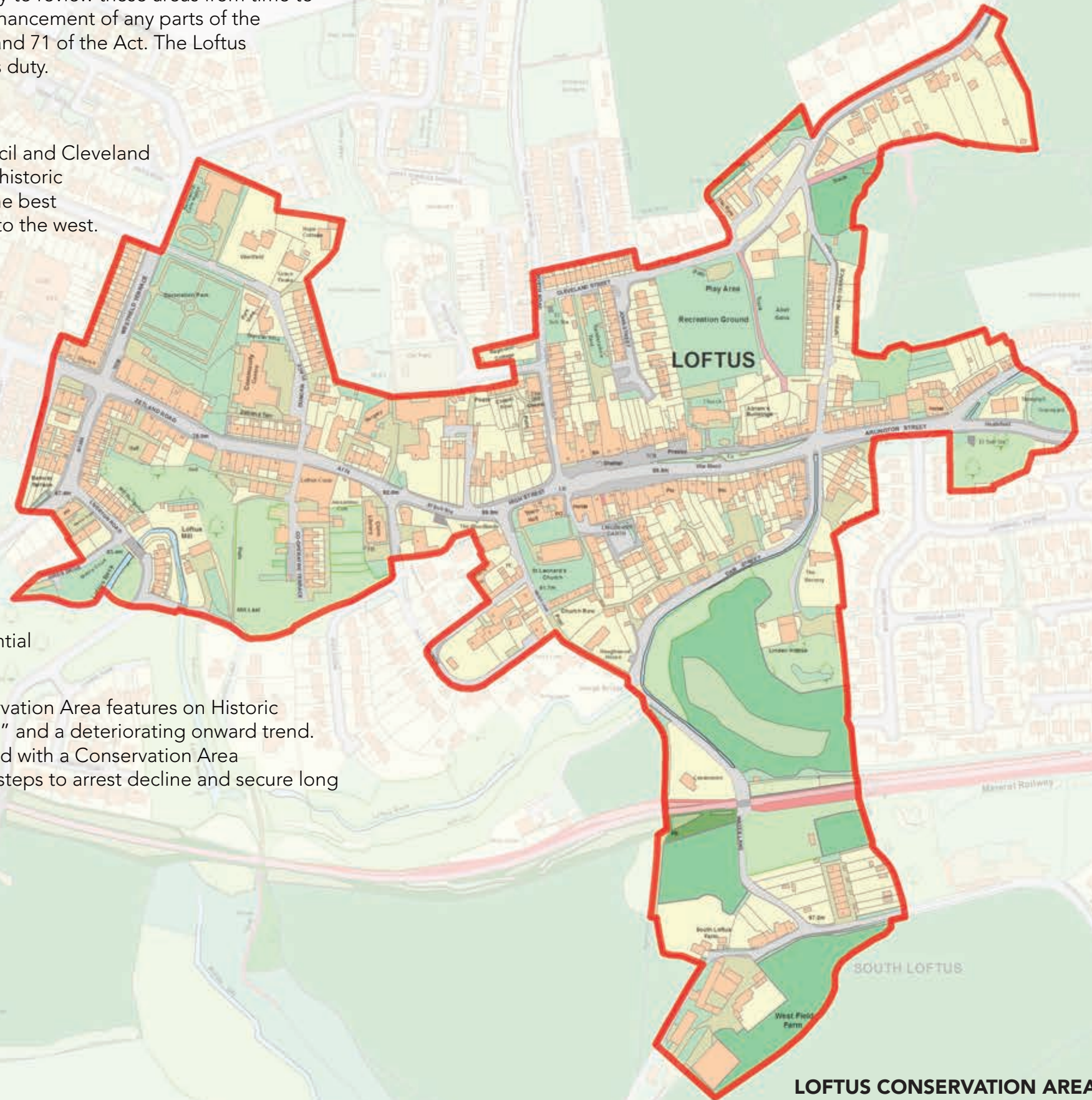
## The Designation of Loftus Conservation Area

1.2 Loftus Conservation Area was designated by Langbaugh Borough Council and Cleveland County Council on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1976<sup>2</sup>. 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 development that took place to the west. The reasons for designation and its purpose were set down in the designation report<sup>3</sup>.

1.3 The boundary was subsequently extended in 2009 to encompass some further parts of Loftus, as follows:

- The area of open space with its group of trees alongside Loftus Beck, which provides an attractive setting for the terraces of Liverton Road and the modern row of housing to the west of the beck.
- Late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century housing on Micklow Lane together with the much older cottage at 39 Micklow Lane and the field and stand of trees lying south of Micklow Lane and east of Springhead Terrace. The period dwellings on Micklow Lane, set in large mature gardens, reflect their period of construction and though having suffered from some damaging alterations, still make a contribution to the character of the area with the potential to make an even greater contribution in the future.

1.4 Due to decline and erosion of character since designation, Loftus Conservation Area features on Historic England's *Heritage at Risk Register* with its condition noted as "very bad" and a deteriorating onward trend. In order to counter that issue Loftus Conservation Area has been provided with a Conservation Area Management Plan which accompanies this document. The plan outlines steps to arrest decline and secure long term improvement of the conservation area.



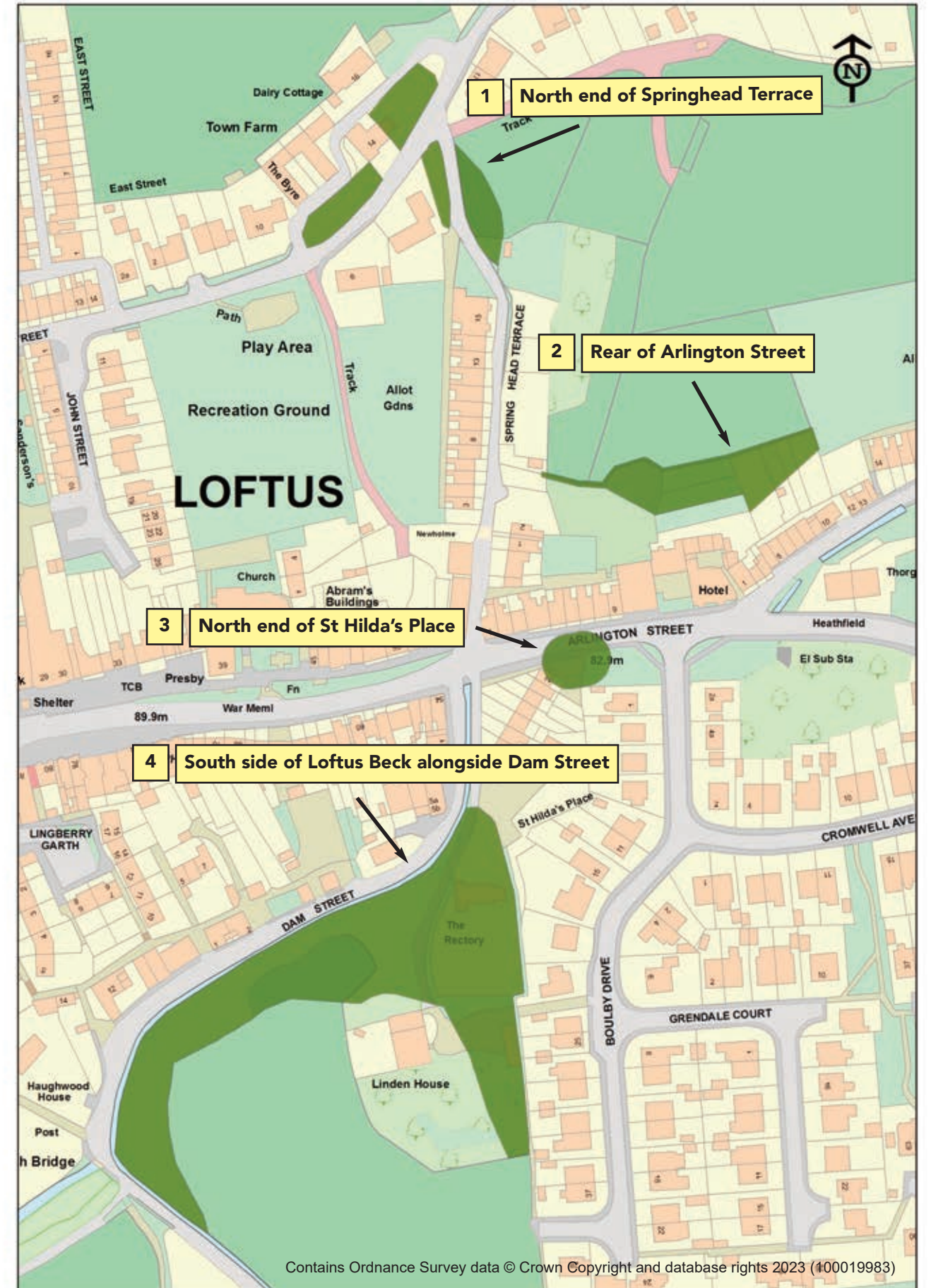
## Tree Preservation Orders

1.5 There are four 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 woodland on land to the rear of Arlington Street and East Crescent.
4. The single mature tree at the north-east end of St Hilda's Place.



North of Springhead Terrace



TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

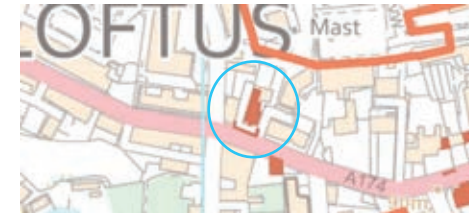
**Listed Buildings**

- 1.6 There are 31 listed buildings within the conservation area, shown on the following pages. More details are available at [historicengland.org.uk/listing/the\\_list/](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the_list/) with the map search being a useful feature.
- 1.7 There are no scheduled monuments in the conservation area.



**LOCATION OF LISTED BUILDINGS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA**

Linden House  
Grade II - 1139674



The Old Zetland School  
Grade II - 1329591



Boundary/Retaining Wall,  
Railings and Gatepiers to Front  
Yard of The Old Zetland School.  
Grade II - 1136477



Tea Shoppe  
Grade II - 1139701



Boundary Wall, Gatepiers, Gate  
and Railings to south of NO. 19  
Grade II - 1312758



21, High Street  
Grade II - 1329616



Former National Westminster  
Bank  
Grade II - 1246850



The Angel Inn  
Grade II - 1139665



32, 33 and 34, High Street  
Grade II - 1329617



Pear Tree Cottage  
Grade II - 1139666



36 and 37, High Street  
Grade II - 1139668



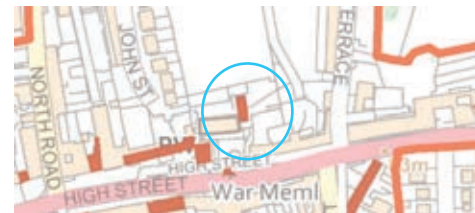
Number 38, Area Retaining Wall,  
Gatepiers and Angle Piers.  
Grade II - 1139669



The Presbytery  
Grade II - 1139670



Drinking Fountain, Trough, War  
Memorial, Steps and Railings,  
South-east of NO. 39  
Grade II - 1139667



Abrams Buildings  
Grade II - 1329618



1, East Crescent  
Grade II - 1139697



2 and 3, East Crescent  
Grade II - 1329589



Old Beck Cottage  
Grade II - 1136422



2-7, St Hilda's Place  
Grade II - 1312644





8, St Hilda's Place  
Grade II - 1139681



White Horse Public House  
Grade II - 1139671



Barclays Bank  
Grade II  
1136539



Golden Lion Hotel  
Grade II - 1139672



Town Hall  
Grade II - 1136562



Church of St Leonard  
Grade II - 1139673



Kingdom Hall  
Grade II - 1139648



Boundary Wall between  
Kingdom Hall and Dam Street  
Grade II - 1139649



Stable House  
Grade II - 1136573



Blanchland  
Grade II - 1139700



Jessemine Cottage  
Grade II - 1139674



Loftus Mill and Millhouse with  
Mill Race adjoining.  
Grade II - 1139698

Mill Sluice in garden of number 5  
Grade II - 1136437  
(Located just outside of Conservation Area)

## Planning Policies affecting Loftus Conservation Area

- 1.8 The adopted 2018 Redcar & Cleveland Local Plan contains two policies directly relating to the conservation area:

Policy HE1 of the Local Plan 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;

Policy HE2 takes the same approach to listed buildings or other non-designated heritage assets.

### Article 4 Directions

- 1.9 Much of the conservation area is covered by Article 4 Directions, which were approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1978. The directions withdraw certain permitted development rights for domestic, commercial and agricultural properties throughout the conservation area, the intention of these restrictions being to protect its special character.
- 1.10 Regrettably, since that designation it is apparent that the imposed restrictions have frequently been breached resulting in a subsequent loss of character. The extent to which this has occurred is assessed and quantified in the accompanying Conservation Area Management Plan.



ARTICLE IV DIRECTIONS

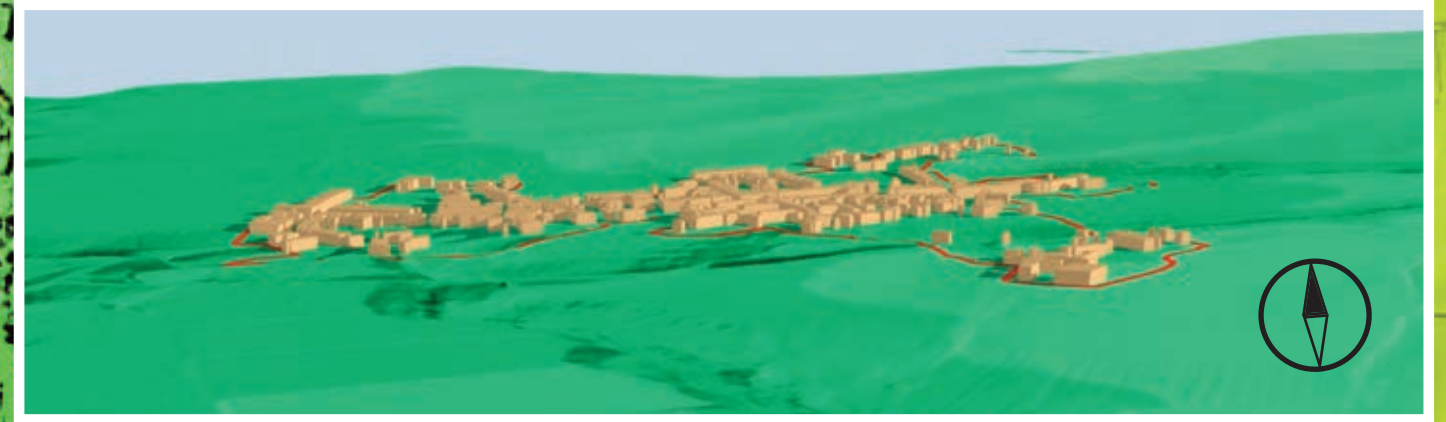
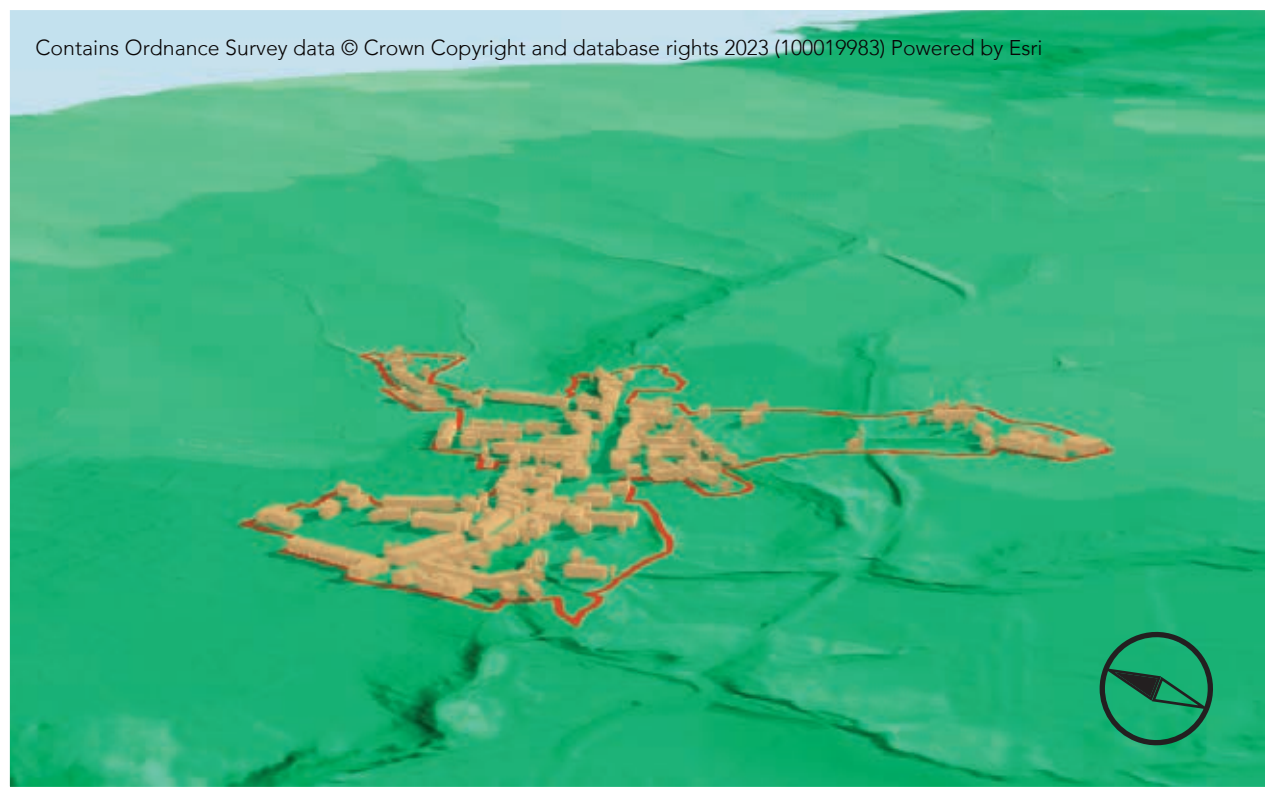
## Conservation Area Appraisal - Aims

- 1.11 A conservation area appraisal is the first step in a dynamic process, the aim of which is to preserve or 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 the key elements that together make up its special interest and character while considering its relative importance in the Borough-wide context.
- 1.12 To encourage active use of this document, be that by building owners or occupiers wishing to carry out alterations or maintenance, civic groups wishing to improve their local area or any others with an interest in the historic town or surroundings of Loftus, this appraisal has been presented in a clear graphical format so that it is accessible and engaging.
- 1.13 In outlining the architectural styles found throughout the conservation area, some descriptive terminology of architectural styles has been used. It is not however necessary to be familiar with these terms or with architectural history to use this document as the features are illustrated throughout. What is important is that those who are planning work on buildings within the conservation area are informed by this appraisal and take care to identify the elements that make a building and thus the conservation area special.
- 1.14 Based on the background information provided by this appraisal, along with the negative features also identified, it is hoped that those designing schemes or arranging maintenance will take the time to ensure their proposals do not inadvertently harm the historic character of Loftus. Simply taking the time to appreciate the different elements of a building will be sufficient to generate an understanding of what is important, be that materials the property is built from, the style of the windows and doors, decorative features, walls and fences and more details that all contribute to the townscape.
- 1.15 While the appraisal covers the topics referred to in the National Planning Policy Framework<sup>4</sup> and guidance issued by Historic England<sup>5</sup> 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.
- 1.16 Loftus Conservation Area Management Plan accompanies this document, which outlines conservation proposals to provide a basis for making sustainable decisions about the future of the conservation area.



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## 2. Physical Setting and Topography

- 2.1 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 derived<sup>6</sup>. To the south of the town, the ground falls steeply away into the deep wooded ravine of Loftus Beck, along which can be found historic Loftus Mill, and Whitecliff Beck. To the south of the market place runs a small stream now covered by the railway but on whose southern valley side lies the much smaller hamlet of South Loftus.
- 2.2 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. This variation in topography results in considerable visual interest and elements of surprise to the built fabric of the town, creating a succession of varying street scenes. The wooded valleys provide an attractive landscape setting to the town, where streetscapes and roofscapes are frequently viewed against a backdrop of trees and surrounding hillsides, softening the skyline and engendering a sense of proximity to the countryside.



Screenshot from LiDARFinder <https://lidarfinder.com>  
Map data © Google.  
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- 2.3 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 the High Street, Zetland Terrace, Station Road and Dam Street.
- 2.4 The area's natural, physical and geological features have influenced the character of the built environment. This is especially noticeable in the common use of sandstone from which many buildings and walls are constructed, so characteristic of the area. In the 19<sup>th</sup> 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 and varieties of brick.



### 3. Historic Origins and Development

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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 11<sup>th</sup> century after the destruction of the previous Anglo Scandinavian or earlier settlement<sup>7</sup>.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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.



3.6 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 due to 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.

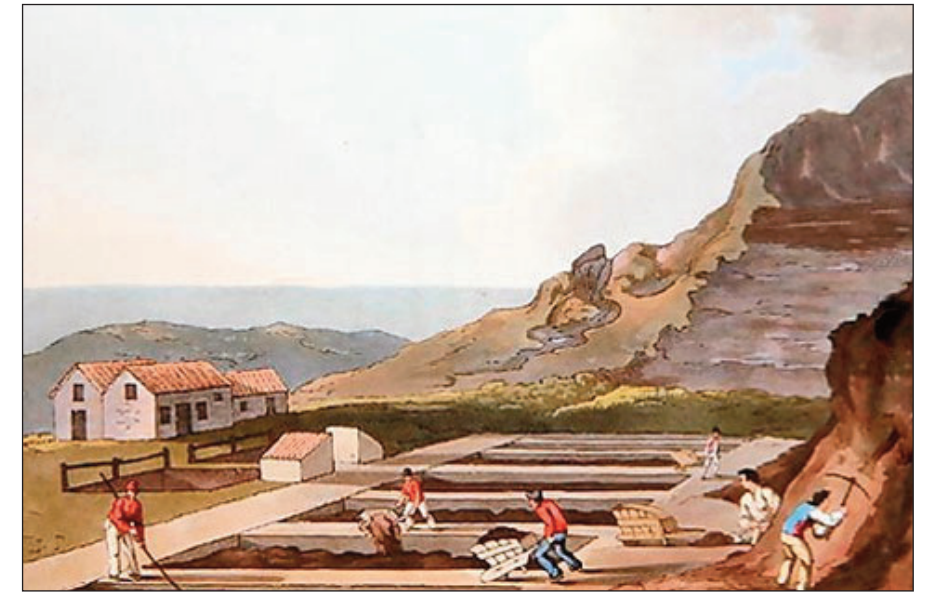


Image from *The costume of Yorkshire*, George Walker, 1814

3.7 In the 17<sup>th</sup> 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.



Chris Twigg, with permission

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- 3.8 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.
- 3.9 In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 3.10 Expansion extended the settlement's linear form to the east and west along the A174. 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.
- 3.11 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 vernacular cottages.
- 3.12 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 consequent 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.
- 3.13 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<sup>7</sup>.





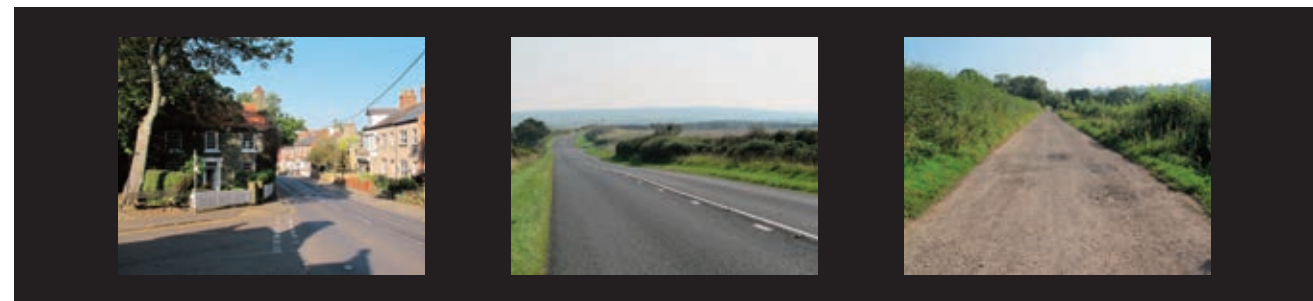
## Views and Vistas

- 3.14 Many important views and vistas are due to the organic growth of the town rather than the result of intentional design. Apart from the obvious visual statements made by buildings such as Loftus Town Hall, views and vistas of Loftus generally consist of numerous charming scenes rather than soaring set-pieces.
- 3.15 Views into and from the historic market place are obvious important aspects, with the dominant larger Victorian buildings lending some architectural grandeur. Views to the east and west looking out from the market place are indicative of the rural roots of the settlement, with country style cottages punctuating the scene.
- 3.16 The later part of Loftus, focusing on the Victorian commercial centre, consists of more organised vistas contributing architectural scale and rhythm. Subsequently that part of the conservation area has more obvious key views, such as that focused on the cross roads of Zetland Road and Station Road.
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3.18 Photomontage of Jessamine Cottage created to show how the outskirts of Loftus including the former windmill may have appeared before the 19<sup>th</sup> century development of Zetland Road.

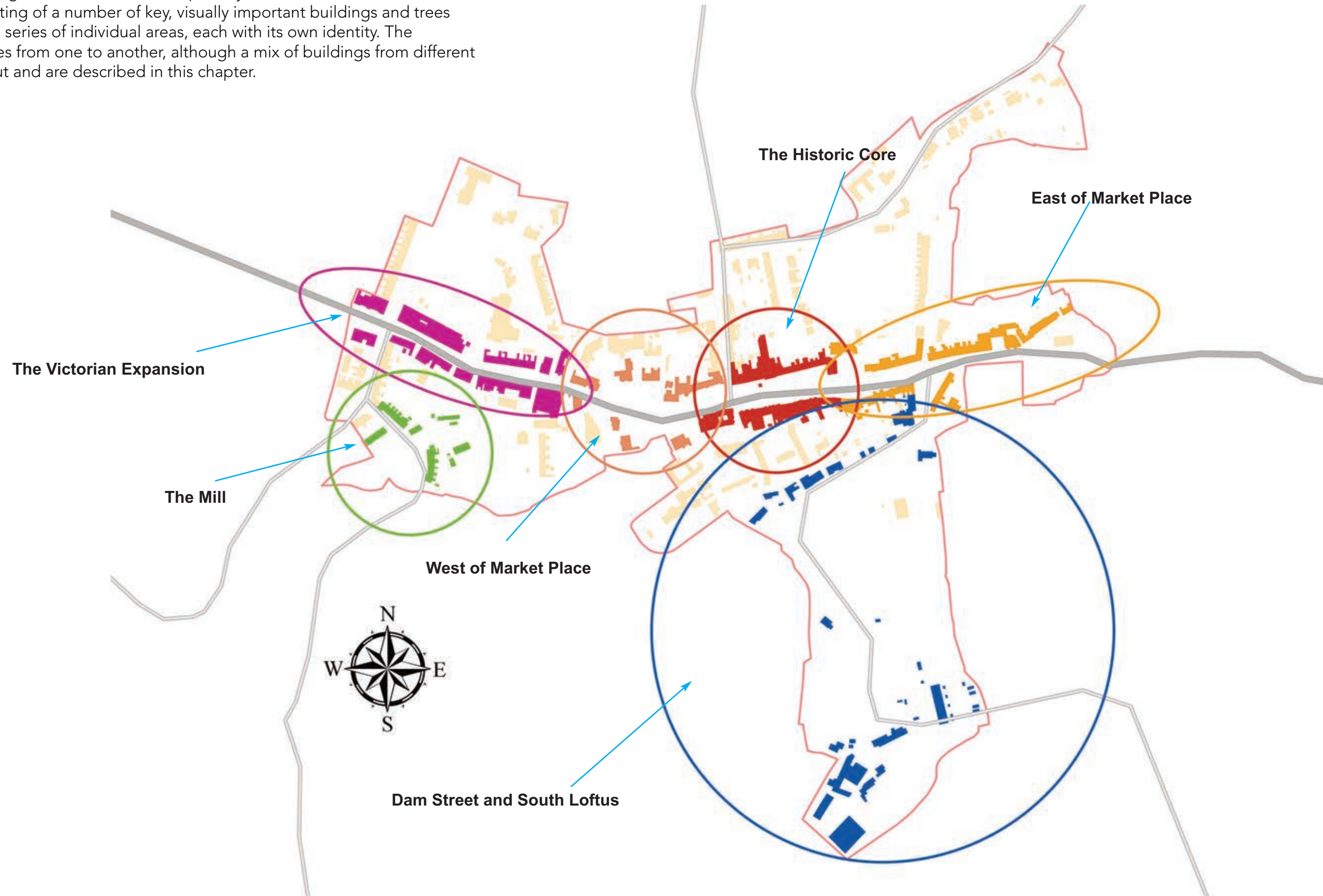


Photographs used to produce the image - Jessamine Cottage, Loftus High Street; near Ellerby and the Toll Road, Egton Bridge.

## 4. Character Appraisal

### Identity Areas

- 4.1 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 such as the deep valley of Loftus Beck, the curvature of some of the roads and the siting of a number of key, visually important buildings and trees together contrive to create a series of individual areas, each with its own identity. The character of these areas varies from one to another, although a mix of buildings from different periods are found throughout and are described in this chapter.



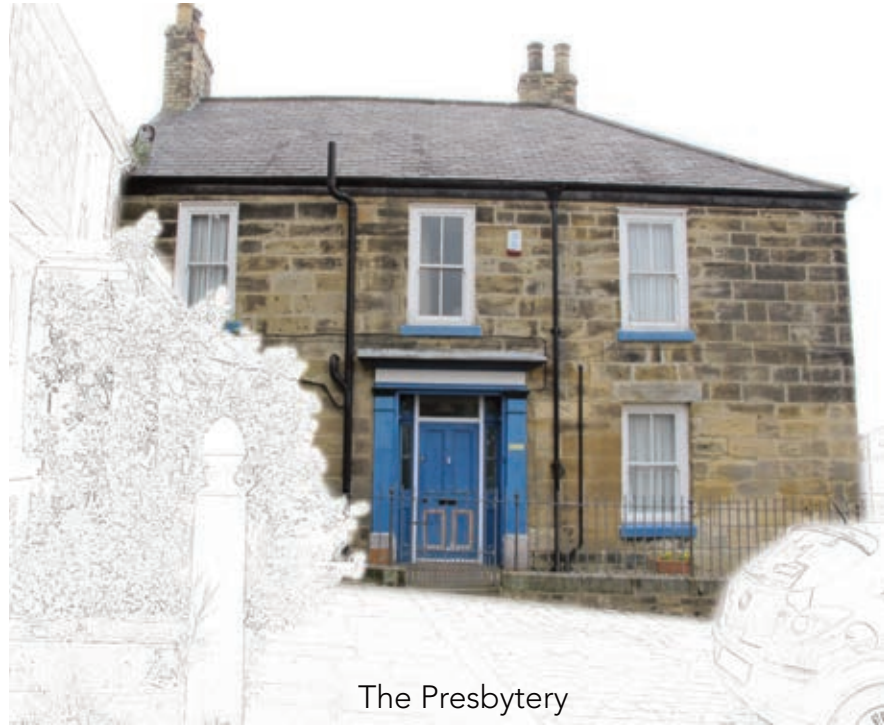
## The Historic Core

- 4.2 The historic core of Loftus is centred around the market place, which is located on the crest of a hill from which the High Street (A174) falls away steeply to both the east and west. Whilst the building line reflects its early origins, there is significant variety in building size and footprint.
- 4.3 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 visual effect of locally quarried sandstone, brick, tile and slate building materials and the occasional render.



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The key townscape buildings in this area are:



The Presbytery



Former Natwest Bank



The former Barclays Bank



The Council House



The Town Hall



The Golden Lion

4.4 To the west of the market place are 2-storey, stone-built properties of the 18th and 19th century. Some are set back behind attractive well-kept gardens and mature woodland trees. Their enclosing forward stone walls act to narrow the carriageway resulting in a sense of enclosure engendered by 3-storey shops and the tall tower of the Gothic Town Hall.





4.5 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 front gardens, enclosed by walls and fences, encroach into the wider part of the highway. The High Street's 'split level' adds an extra, distinctive dynamic to the street scene.

4.6 In the dip, just across Loftus Beck the row of stone and pantile cottages named St Hilda's Place is set at 45° to the main building line. The row together with the 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.

4.7 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. The key townscape buildings in this area are:

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

4.8 The lesser streets and lanes host a number of important viewpoints which form the character of the town. Whilst not necessarily including any elements of obvious particular architectural or scenic note, they nevertheless combine different elements of the townscape all making a contribution to the historic core of the conservation area. However, due to that un-imposed traditional nature, these views are particularly sensitive to change.





A lost key building on the edge of the Conservation Area. Newton Memorial Chapel was built in 1876 and was demolished after being hit by a Luftwaffe bomb in 1941. The graveyard remains behind the house that now occupies the plot.



### Areas Away from the Main Road

4.9 Narrow streets, lanes and alleyways lead off the main road to secluded areas that are more rural or have a village like character, or on occasion genteelly suburban in character, in contrast to the bustling market place and High Street. These include the following areas:



**Dam Street**

- 4.10 Dam Street is another distinctive area hidden from the High Street. Key characteristics include the stream flowing down a scoria block (made from ironworks slag) channel at the edge of the narrow road and the steep wooded valley side. The trees lend a setting to the stone and brick buildings lining Dam Street, including the former Poor House. There are a number of underused and neglected buildings and untidy “backlands” of High Street properties that descend the valley side to the street, with potential for improvement.
- 4.11 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.
- 4.12 South Loftus is altogether different from its northern namesake, its form and setting being much more rural in character, with most of the buildings and boundary walls constructed from local sandstone. The hamlet once offered prospects of the roofscape of Loftus above which the Town Hall and St Leonard’s Church stand out as important landmarks and focal points, though this is now much obscured by tree growth.



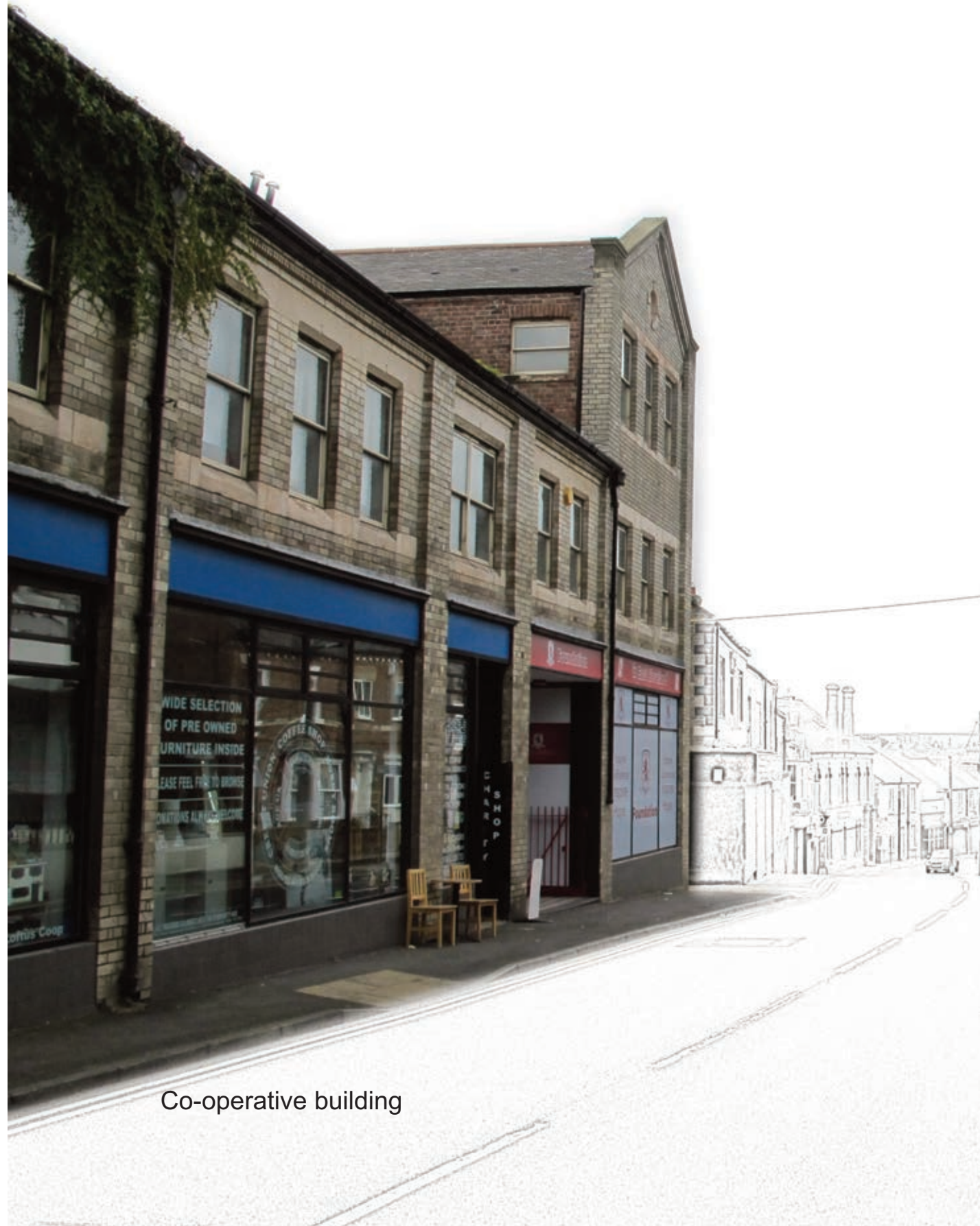


## The Victorian Expansion

- 4.13 The western end of Loftus is characterised by the later second commercial centre of regimented terraces of shops with accommodation above. Nearby are residential terraces dating from the Victorian and Edwardian periods with the higher status developments near Coronation Park imparting a more suburban feel.
- 4.14 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 acts as a strong visual stop at the edge of the conservation area. Facing materials tend to be smooth red engineering brick and creamy white "Pease" brick, though there are earlier buildings of sandstone.
- 4.15 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. Nearby are residential terraces dating from the Victorian and Edwardian periods with the higher status developments near Coronation Park imparting a more suburban feel.



Key townscape buildings in this area are:



Co-operative building



The old Zetland School



Oddfellows Hall

The former Congregational Church



## Areas Away From the Main Road

- 4.16 At the bend in the road close to the valley bottom stands the solid, stonebuilt, 3-storey, Station Hotel, terminating the view and marking the boundary of the conservation area. Historically the Station Hotel was the first building those alighting from trains at the nearby former railway station would come across.
- 4.17 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. Westfield Terrace and Duncan Close are also characterful surroundings. Nearby can be seen former rural outliers of pre-industrial Loftus, with one possibly linked to the former windmill.





## The Water Mill

- 4.18 The area around Liverton Road drops down into the valley with the meandering Loftus Beck, the location of Loftus water mill. This area forms an enclave with a rural ambience which has seen some recent residential development set to the west of Loftus Beck creating a "village green" foreground to the secluded mill.
- 4.19 Beyond a largely well preserved curved Victorian terrace on the east side of Loftus Beck, Liverton Road meets Gaskell Lane. Forming the boundary of the conservation area, this wooded lane with a bridge crossing another meander of Loftus Beck has a strong rural atmosphere illustrating the pre-industrial past of the town.
- 4.20 Just beyond the conservation area the surrounding woodland with its hidden features are a valuable hinterland possibly worthy of inclusion should the conservation area boundary be revised.



## Walls

- 4.21 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.
- 4.22 The terraces and rows of properties throughout the conservation area are served by a network of back lanes. These are lined with an eclectic and 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 sometimes dishevelled but distinctive character.



### Summary of character

- 4.23 The rich tapestry of historically authentic and visually harmonious building materials blending with diverse architecture of various periods and styles has created a townscape with a particularly attractive aesthetic. The settlement's physical location, together with its historic associations with mining and agriculture, all contribute to its special character and market-town atmosphere.
- 4.24 The historic core of Loftus is centred on the High Street with 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.
- 4.25 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. Occasionally the built-up frontages are broken by an individual or group of buildings set back behind front gardens. North of Zetland Road, around Coronation Park, the layout becomes much more open and suburban in character with detached dwellings in private gardens.
- 4.26 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 but it still contributes positively to hinterland character.

### Variety of Land Uses

- 4.27 The character of Loftus is enhanced by the diverse range of land uses including residential, shopping, recreational, ecclesiastical, administrative and small scale industrial uses. The split 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. Collectively these elements add interest and vitality to the town.



Historic 2 row core



Regimented terraces of western expansion

## Building form and character

- 4.28 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 Loftus Conservation Area, including not only those buildings considered to be of architectural merit but also the multitude of historic background buildings which should not be overlooked.

### Vernacular Buildings

- 4.29 In order to differentiate between different styles, buildings within the conservation area have been divided into generally earlier and simpler pre-Victorian types, known as vernacular buildings, with the character of later architect designed buildings described separately. Use of the term vernacular in this context, which essentially means "home-grown," relates to buildings constructed from locally sourced materials in a manner following local tradition. In East Cleveland, in common with North Yorkshire generally, that means relatively simple buildings constructed from sandstone, although Pear Cottage on the High Street is unique in being the only pre-Victorian brick building in Loftus Conservation Area.



- 4.30 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 preserved are protected by being listed as buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

### Enclosure

- 4.31 Some vernacular buildings have no front curtilage with a building line adjoining the highway, though many have retained long rear plots usually enclosed with timber fences, likely replacing earlier hedgerows. Others are set back from the highway and have substantial forward plots, with boundary treatments including brick or stone walls and gatepiers. These generally match the building facing materials, having stone copings of various shapes and carved pier caps, many now painted. Historic boundaries also include ornamental ironwork and hedges of various species.

## Architectural elements of Vernacular buildings



Cottages are of two and less frequently three storeys with pitched roofs and varied eaves and ridge lines, punctuated 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, of which no examples survive.

Doorways in older cottages are often diminutive, reflecting the lesser stature of our ancestors. Doorways usually match the window openings by having similar lintels.



Window openings generally have stone sills and stone lintels.



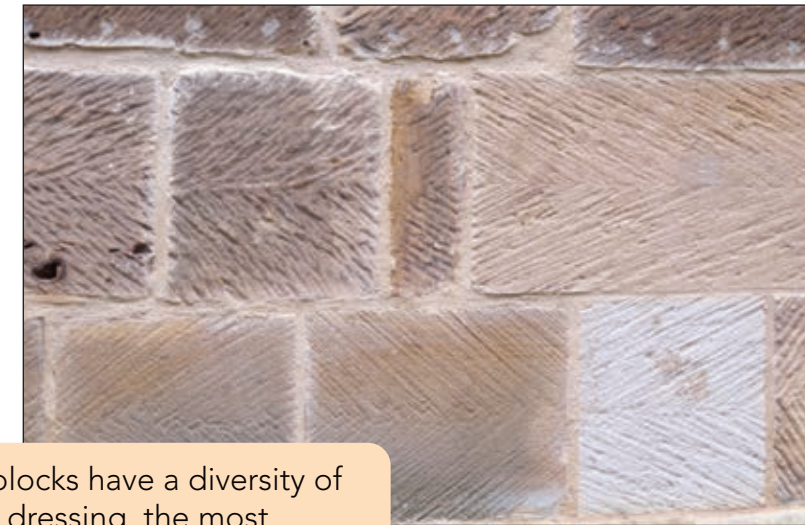
The earliest form of window openings tend to be of 'landscape' format or square, whereas windows of 'portrait' format are usually found in later buildings, thus dictating the proportions of building frontages. Landscape or square openings traditionally filled with horizontal sliding, or 'Yorkshire' sash windows or now rare "composite sash" are found in humbler buildings and rear elevations. Other windows are vertical sliding sash and have evolved through a variety of forms, the earliest style having multiple panes, giving way to larger Victorian style panes.



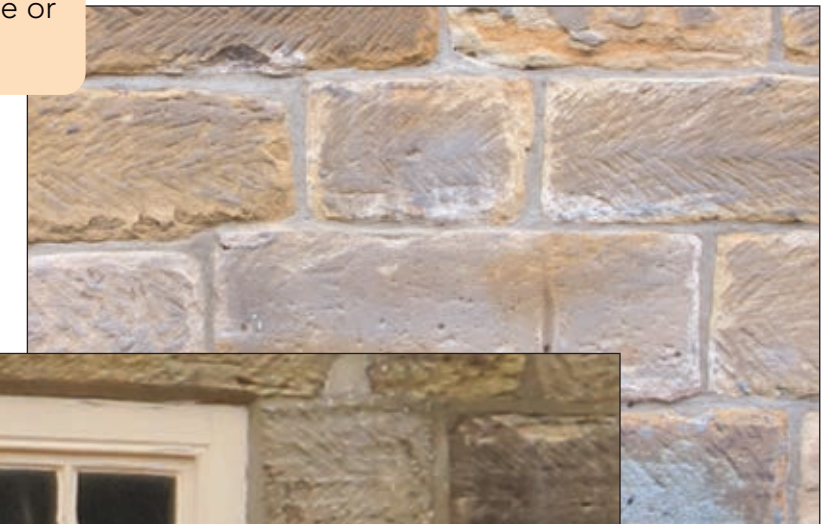
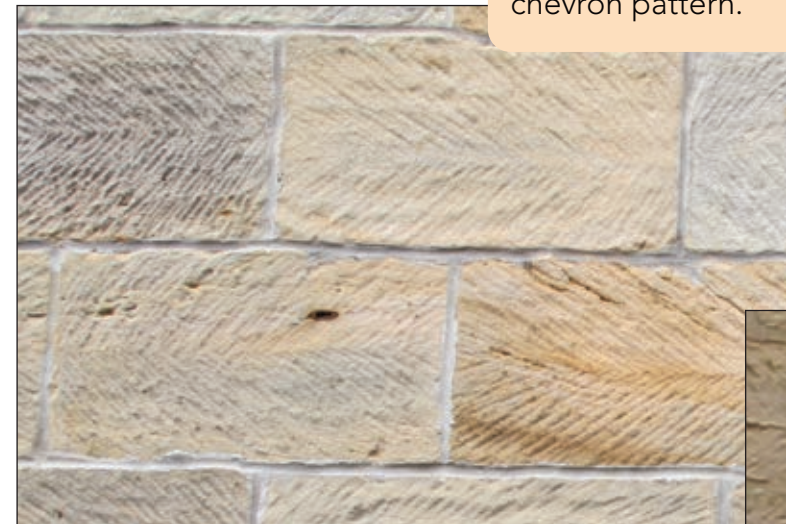
## Building Materials of Vernacular buildings



Locally quarried sandstone blocks in hues of orange, brown, grey and yellow, now generally weathered to a mature patina, are typical facing materials. Sandstone was used for both high status buildings as well as humble cottages, with lesser buildings constructed using quarry rubble.



Stone blocks have a diversity of surface dressing, the most common being a herringbone or chevron pattern.



Clay pantiles were introduced in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and are the predominant roofing materials on vernacular buildings in the conservation area.



### Negatives

Timber sliding sash windows have occasionally been replaced with uPVC casements which have overly bulky frames and lack traditional proportions.

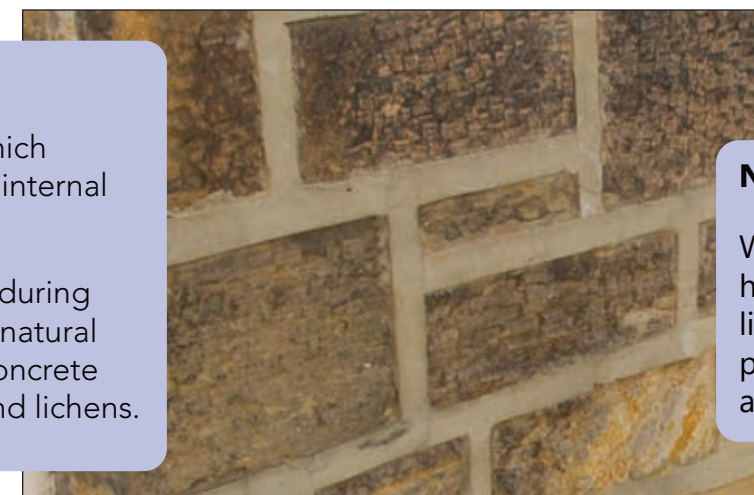


Windows and doors are timber, historically of pitch pine. Doors were traditionally made of broad vertical timber boards.

### Negatives

Unsightly protruding cement "ribbon" pointing, which causes significant harm to the stone and promotes internal damp.

Use of man-made slates and tiles which lack the enduring subtleties of patina and colour to be found in their natural counterparts, tending to weather down to a grey concrete colour and sometimes attracting growth of moss and lichens.



### Negatives

Whilst in many cases bare stone will have been protected by a limewash or lime render, other cement render or painted finishes are not authentic and are likely to result in internal damp.

## Victorian & Edwardian Buildings

- 4.32 The plain, honest Yorkshire vernacular building style contrasts markedly with the later Victorian and Edwardian terraced rows of artisans' dwellings and larger civic and commercial buildings.
- 4.33 Although generally of similar scale to their earlier counterparts, they are architecturally more 'regimented' in layout, form and style with clearly recognisable repetition of features.

### Enclosure

- 4.34 Front gardens and the tiny 'areas' in front of Victorian buildings are traditionally enclosed by stone or brick walls and ornamental ironwork. Most have small rear yards enclosed by high brick walls.



## Architectural Elements of Victorian and Edwardian Buildings

Later buildings possess varying degrees of architectural pretension, reflecting the characteristics of Victorian late classical design and some examples of Gothic architectural influence such as arched windows. Other details include the use of decorative embellishments to doors, windows, string courses and eaves details.



Windows are predominantly of 'portrait' format, including the generally flat topped single and 2-storey bay windows that may be canted or square/rectangular in plan, frequently with ornate cornices and wide mullions. Some vertical sliding sash windows are still present, with each individual sash containing one or two panes of glass.



Chimney stacks and gabled dormers add interest and provide a sense of continuity to the terraced roofscapes.



Doors in later buildings tend to be of four or more square or rectangular-shaped panels, sometimes with the upper panels glazed. Doorways may have ornate carved doorcases, usually in timber but occasionally stone in larger buildings.





## Building Materials



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. It was used in a variety of ways, creating bonding and multi-coloured patterns with moulded bricks and stonework used to create architectural details.



### Negatives

Cement render or paint is often seen, which entirely obscures facing materials.



### Negatives

Finely fenestrated sliding sash windows have frequently been replaced with uPVC casements, which have overly bulky frames and lack the proportion of the originals. Bay windows have frequently been modified, with strong timber mullions replaced with insubstantial extruded polyvinyl strips, detracting from their appearance and the special character of the area.

Masonry also used for quoin detailing and bay windows on some buildings.



Despite the proliferation of brick in the 19th century, stone continued to be used for higher status buildings. However, dressing is usually different to the stonework seen on earlier buildings, with smooth faced fine ashlar present rather than traditional herringbone dressing.



Roofs of Victorian and Edwardian buildings are generally covered with grey/blue/black Welsh or Cumberland slate.

### Negatives

In some cases natural slate has been replaced with man-made slates and tiles which 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 and promoting growth of vegetation.

## Shop Fronts and Advertisements

- 4.35 Some surviving historic shop fronts of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century vintage are found on the south side of Zetland Road, generally obscured and easily missed due to enlarged fascia signs and later additions such as roller shutters, some of which are regrettably permanently pulled down. On the northern side the fruit shop has retained its historic timberwork.
- 4.36 A few modern shopfronts together with their signage are in keeping with their historic settings, such as Stonehouse Bakers at 81 High Street, those on the ground floor of the Council House and the former Post Office. Most however do a disservice to their host buildings and to the area, being of poor design, inappropriate materials and occasionally garish colours.
- 4.37 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 with complementary signboards, serve as exemplars. There are however many examples of inappropriate signage and uncoordinated advertising schemes which detract from character.

### Negatives

Historic shopfront detailing removed, or replaced with plain modern boards.

Inappropriate non-traditional advertising.

Roller shutters screening shopfronts.



## Landscape and Open Space

4.38 A crucial component 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 generally 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. However, in some cases woodland management may be appropriate.



4.39 In addition there are key areas of open space within the conservation area. These include Coronation Park, the Churchyard and the playing field and allotments of Micklow Lane. The latter two are enclosed by attractive stone boundary walls and mixed mature hedgerows.



## The Highway

- 4.40 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.
- 4.41 In the market place traditional Yorkstone paving and stone cobbles were reinstated under a 1990's environmental improvement scheme, with the intention of enhancing the character of this important area. However, whilst the aesthetics of the materials used are preferable to tarmac, the lack of a shared surface means that the market place is still a location that is swiftly driven through, failing to effectively fill its role as the town's focal point.
- 4.42 There are a few 'original' examples of attractive, traditional surfacing materials including whinstone, scoria and brick sets:
- Roadside drainage gulleys along the High Street.
  - Several lanes and alleyways leading off the main road, e.g. the lane leading to Co-operative Terrace.
  - Many back lanes, private yards and drives.
  - The stream channel in Dam Street.



## Street Furniture

- 4.43 The two centres of Loftus are notable by different approaches to street furniture, with a generally conservation led scheme characterising the Market Place and High Street and less sympathetic infrastructure towards the west of the conservation area centred around Zetland Road.

### Market Place

- 4.44 The existing, Victorian style, dark-green street lighting columns, lanterns and other street furniture on the High Street, including cast iron bollards and benches, were installed by the 1990's scheme referred to earlier. 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 detract from the area's special character.
- 4.45 Elsewhere on the High Street some street furniture is awkwardly placed. Bus shelters partially obscure the front elevation of the GII listed Golden Lion and GII listed former bank premises on the opposite side of the Market Place, detracting from their architectural merit.
- 4.46 On occasion mobile refuse containers have been left on the pavement on a permanent basis, ostensibly from reluctance to use integral bin stores on buildings converted to residential accommodation. The problem is especially noticeable on collection day when refuse bags are commonly also piled up.
- 4.47 Some examples of historic signage can still be found on nearby side streets, which appear in need of maintenance if they are to be preserved. Historic pillar boxes also add to character and provide colourful punctuation to the street scene.



## Zetland Road

- 4.48 The apparatus of statutory undertakers' pole-mounted service wires and steel distribution cabinets are visually intrusive and lend a temporary feel to the infrastructure. Electricity arrived in Loftus in 1906 and whilst the current poles and cables are from a much later date, it is anticipated that they will be removed and the cables buried in the future.
- 4.49 Relatively modern street lighting is the norm throughout the Zetland Road area and environs, contrasting with the sympathetic types used in the market place. However, unlike more contemporary street light designs, types in this area are entirely utilitarian and devoid of any aesthetic considerations. As many of these are attached directly to the utility poles mentioned there should be opportunity for a cooperative approach resulting in a significant improvement.
- 4.50 Other street furniture such as bollards and litter bins are modern utilitarian types, which appear to have been chosen without consideration of the conservation area designation. Characterful street furniture items found around the market place but missing from the Zetland Road area are benches and bollards, ostensibly due to the restricted narrow pavements. A traditional post box recessed into a stone wall does however provide some historic colour.
- 4.51 Characterful street furniture items found around the market place but missing from the Zetland Road area are benches and bollards, ostensibly due to the restricted narrow pavements. A traditional post box recessed into a stone wall does however provide some historic colour.



## 5. Conclusions

- 5.1 This appraisal summarises the special characteristics and qualities that justify the designation of part of Loftus as a conservation area. 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 in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, much of which is still evident in the built environment today.
- 5.2 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 due to the passage of time and increased appreciation of Victorian and Edwardian heritage, and the continued protection of its elements is therefore considered key to the survival of its special character.
- 5.3 Whilst it is considered that the boundary of the conservation area is largely appropriate and encompasses the areas that from the historic character of the town, there may be scope to extend the boundary to include significant built heritage within adjoining woodland. It is also regrettably apparent that there are serious issues diluting character. These problems require further work to develop practical solutions which should be addressed in the context of a Conservation Area Management Plan.

### References

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**Redcar & Cleveland**

Resources and Growth  
Redcar & Cleveland House  
Kirkleatham Street  
Redcar  
Yorkshire  
TS10 1RT

**01642 774774**

**[www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk](http://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk)**