

BEESTON REGIS CONSERVATION AREA: (Designated 28/2/75)
FORM AND CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

- 1.0** Beeston Regis Conservation Area is located at the eastern approaches to Sheringham, set on the narrow strip of flat land that occurs between the dramatic high ground of Beeston Bump, to the north, and the wooded rising ground known as Cromer Ridge to the south. The boundary is clearly defined by the railway line to the north, the coast road to the south and a lane that runs between these two to the east. Over to the west the Conservation Area ends where it abuts the built-up outskirts of Sheringham.
- 1.1** The Conservation Area has been designated because of its unspoilt historic landscape which forms the setting of Beeston Regis Priory and which probably formed its encircling medieval boundary. The remains of the Priory are now ruins which occupy a central position in the Conservation Area, with Beeston Regis Common to the west, balanced by a similar area of agricultural land to the east.
- 1.2** Apart from the Abbey ruins and its associated historic group, the only buildings included in the Conservation Area are of 19th century origin. The principal group occurs as a backdrop to the north-west corner of the Common. They are all two-storey buildings facing the Common, some single, some semi-detached and some short terraces. Materials are mainly colour-washed rendering and cobbles with brickwork. Tile are predominantly red clay but with some smut and concrete. All have short front gardens, only 2.5 metres or so in depth but front boundaries are defined in a variety of ways, some having good quality cobbled walls with other frontages in concrete blocks, palisade fencing and even chainlink fencing. Other than these houses and the Priory group, the only remaining buildings in the Conservation Area are a charming lodge building with a pyramidal slate roof standing alone on the Common, and a 19th Century Rectory with a knapped-flint gable, and a slate roof which is located on the lane on the eastern boundary.
- 1.3** The Common itself is an area of rather tussocky grassland used for grazing and communal recreation. The undulating contours of this area suggest that some archaeological evidence perhaps relating to the Priory may lay hidden. A substantial transverse hedge crosses the Common just to the west of the Abbey group screening the agricultural land to the east.
- 1.4** The group of buildings alongside the Scheduled Ancient Monument and Grade I Listed Priory ruins, comprise the Grade II Abbey Farmhouse which has recently been restored on the site of the old Convent building. To the north and east of these lie two large ponds, the remains of the Priory fishponds. The attendant farm buildings, some of which straggle southwards towards the coast road where they have been restored, include about 50 metres of cobbled wall fronting the road. Behind this wall is an area of dense planting which when combined with the trees around the Abbey site almost completely screens the whole group from the road.
- 1.5** Towards the end of the lane which runs along the eastern boundary which has high ancient hedgerows, the Conservation Area also embraces a secluded area of allotments with their traditional ramshackle sheds and improvised enclosures, completing the picture.

(Approved by Development and Conservation Committee 5/11/98)