

**WORSTEAD CONSERVATION AREA:**  
**FORM AND CHARACTER DESCRIPTION**

**(Designated 1/6/73)**

- 1.0** The historic weaving village of Worstead lies towards the western boundary of the southern part of North Norfolk, approximately 2 1/2 miles south of North Walsham and 4 miles west of Stalham. It is set in relatively flat and open countryside which allows extensive views out of the village from all but its northern edge. The centre of Worstead is however tightly enclosed with buildings that are often unusually large for a village setting. The settlement is in a classical radial form with five roads leading off the central square, or Church Plain as it is called.
- 1.1** The Conservation Area boundary takes in virtually all of the built-up village with the exception of a short ribbon of houses along Station Road on the western edge and part of Carter Close to the west of the village centre - development that has taken place since the designation of the Conservation Area. The boundary therefore embraces Woodview, an extensive estate development of the 1950s (?) on the southern edge of the village and St Andrews Close, a late 1970s estate designed for the Conservation Area on the eastern edge.
- 1.2** Church Plain is the hub of the village and virtually all the buildings of special merit in Worstead are here. The feeling of enclosure makes an immediate impact and is enhanced by the absence of footpaths and only the narrowest of front gardens to the houses on the east side. On the north side two large 16th century listed houses, The Manor House and Geoffrey the Dyer House stand at the convergence of School Road from the north and Dilham Road from the east. Three substantial properties make up the eastern side of the Plain - Norwich House Stores colourwashed in white has recently reverted to entirely domestic use and is listed Grade II, The Thatched House, a five bay 18th century house with dormers, also Grade II, and St Andrews Cottage, also white painted, which conceals a medieval undercroft listed Grade II\*. On the west side of the Plain is the Church itself. The Church is a massive medieval building in stone and flint, and its east end dominates the Plain; its tower is one of the tallest in the District. Fronting the Plain on the west side is the shoulder high brick and flint churchyard wall which also defines the frontage to Station Road. The southern side of the Plain lacks the scale and massing of the other sides but the central Old Post Office building, recently restored, tapers to a narrow front and offers intriguing views into Front Street and Back Street on either side. Facing Church Plain on the western side of Front Street is Church Cottage, a picturesque 18th century listed building in brick, flint and thatch.
- 1.3** Back Street and Front Street loop round an island of buildings and yards and then unite to become the main road leading south from the village. Back Street is narrow and without footpaths and consequently has a strong feeling of enclosure. It is made up of several attractive small scale houses and a Post Office and shop most of which are colourwashed. Front Street on the other hand is more spacious and gives way almost immediately to the extensive gravelled forecourt to the New Inn, a handsome Georgian House listed Grade II. With its one time stable block and the thatched Church Cottage on the north side of the yard and the Church tower rising imposingly in the background, the inn completes a splendid group. South of the New Inn a group of three cottages is set behind modest front gardens. Two are Victorian but the southernmost was built in the 1970s, in style and scale, however, it relates admirably to its neighbours. Next to this group is Carter Close comprising a short access to a sympathetically designed sheltered housing scheme by the District Council. Although single storey, the grouping and materials of these buildings establish a good

relationship with older buildings. On the southern corner of the entrance to the Close is The Laurels, a Georgian style house in buff bricks and grey slates standing next to a derelict farmyard. This occupies the corner as Front Street swings round and narrows before joining the main road heading south out of the village. Included in the farmyard is a fine barn which presents a heavily buttressed front to the main road. Immediately opposite the barn is Swann's Yard, a short cul-de-sac on rising ground having on its southern side some pleasing 19th century dwellings namely Olland Cottages and Benefield House. At the entrance to the yard on the northern side is a quite recently built 1 1/2 storey cottage in vernacular style and on the southern side of the entrance a Victorian terrace in red brick is set hard up to the edge of the main road. Beyond this, on either side of the main road is a post-war estate development made up entirely of semi-detached houses. These are now in a mature setting which includes frontages of high privet hedges.

- 1.4** Turning to the remaining roads radiating from Church Plain, the most built-up of these is the Dilham Road leading east. As it leaves the Plain this road has good enclosure with historic buildings and brick and flint walls built hard up to its edge. However after a short distance this gives way to a derelict farmyard and open countryside on the north side. On the south side the road frontage continues to be built up with Honing Row, a flint faced terrace, followed by a series of Victorian houses, some colourwashed and some in red brick, but all with tarred plinths and some with tarred gables. These buildings are all hard up to the edge of the highway with accesses between and yards at the rear. Further along the Dilham Road is the entrance to an estate built in the late 1970s which extends back towards the centre of the village. Houses are in quite good vernacular style in red brickwork and red and black pantiles. A substantial wall at the entrance succeeds in screening the rear of some properties, however the poorly detailed copings detract from its appearance and all in all the entrance to the estate with its clearly defined vision splays and frontal footpath appears alien in this rural setting.
- 1.5** Leading west from Church Plain is Station Road but only a short length of it is within the Conservation Area. On the south side is the Churchyard which extends to Ruin Road, a narrow lane that doubles back into the village centre. Here the Conservation Area ends but not before it has taken in a bus shelter in timber and pantiles and the village sign which stand on the western corner. Opposite the Churchyard is a listed wall that runs from the Manor House along Station Road to its junction with Vicarage Road and thence along Vicarage Road for approximately 50 metres. The wall is in red brickwork with pilasters, plinth and half round coping except at its eastern end where, for a short length, it is in cobbles with a crenellated tile coping. The Conservation Area then extends beyond Vicarage Road to take in Church View, a pleasant cottage, partly in thatch but with modern windows.
- 1.6** The road that leads north from Church Plain is built up for only a short distance by the barns and outbuildings to Manor Farm on the western side and by the walls and derelict buildings to another farmyard to the east.
- 1.7** Except for one very large Sycamore in the Churchyard, Worstead has few trees of any real significance, however many minor trees and shrubs make an essential contribution to its rural character.

**1.8** Materials found in Worstead are mainly red brick and flintwork, however many buildings are colourwashed mainly in white. Red clay pantiles predominate but thatch and grey slates are also in evidence.

(Approved by Development and Conservation Committee 22/5/97)