

# PART 1

## CHARACTER APPRAISAL

### 1. SUMMARY

#### *1.1 Key Characteristics*

The key characteristics of the Happisburgh Conservation Area are:

- Set on high ground in attractive surrounding countryside
- Close to the cliffs and encroaching sea
- Sharp division between village and countryside
- Prominent mediaeval church and lighthouse, both are landmarks when approaching the village
- Good range of historic buildings, including “Arts & Crafts” houses
- Widespread use of red brick and flint cobbles for houses and boundary walls giving unified character
- Large number of mature trees in house grounds.
- Small commercial centre comprising one shop and one hotel/public house
- Modern housing concentrated to the south and west of the village

#### *Key issues*

- Need to develop flexible strategy to adapt to cliff erosion
- Need to review the Conservation Area boundary
- Permitted development resulting in the loss of architectural detail.
- Permitted but detrimental alterations and extensions.
- Need to improve the quality of design for new developments.
- Need to adopt a list of Buildings of Local Interest.

### 2. INTRODUCTION

#### *2.1 The Happisburgh Conservation Area*

Happisburgh Conservation Area was adopted on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1974. The Conservation Area includes the concentration of older houses and church that formed the original centre of the village, together with houses on both sides of The Street to the south. In 1989 the Area was extended to include the open land to the north-east of the village.

As part of a national government-led reappraisal of Conservation Areas, the following report was commissioned in December 2010. The survey was carried out during early February 2011.

#### *2.2 The purpose of a Conservation Area appraisal*

Conservation Areas are designated under the provision of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. A conservation area is defined as ‘an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’.

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these Conservation Areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development within a Conservation Area, special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

In response to these statutory requirements, this appraisal document defines and records the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. The appraisals conform to English Heritage guidance as set out in *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* (February 2006) and *Guidance on the management of conservation areas* (February 2006). Additional government guidance regarding the management of historic buildings and conservation areas is set out within *Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG 15). Government advice on archaeology is set out in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology* (PPG16).

This document therefore seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the Conservation Area and identify the issues which threaten its special qualities of (part 1: Character Appraisal).

- Provide guidelines to prevent erosion of character and achieve enhancement (part 2: Management Proposals).

### 2.3 The planning policy context

This appraisal provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the East Runton Conservation Area can be assessed. It should be read in conjunction with the wider development plan policy framework produced by North Norfolk District Council. The framework is set out in a number of documents:

- North Norfolk Local Development Framework
- North Norfolk Design Guide, 1998 (currently under revision)
- Emerging LDF policies: Site Specific Proposals Preferred Options Report, September 2006
- Draft North Norfolk Landscape Character Assessment, 2005
- PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment
- PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning
- Heritage White Paper, March 2007. 'Heritage Protection for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'.
- **Other Happisburgh Documents**

## 3. LOCATION AND SETTING



Fig 1: Happisburgh seen from the east. View from the lighthouse.

### 3.1 Location and context

Happisburgh is a small village set close to the cliffs in the eastern part of North Norfolk. It is set on a raised area of ground, surrounded by farmland on the west, south and east sides, and separated by open ground from the cliffs to the north. North-west along the coast are the settlements of Walcott and Ostend, to the south-east is Cart Gap. Happisburgh is linked to other settlements along the coast by the B1159 road, which runs through the village. The nearest large town is North Walsham, about 8 kilometres (7 miles) to the west. There are bus services connecting Happisburgh with Mundesley, Stalham, North Walsham and Norwich.

The coastal location provides an attractive setting for the village, but it is also a threat, as the area has long been subject to high levels of erosion. At low tide, the beach is a fine expanse of sand, and a safe place to swim. The beach is less attractive immediately below the village, where there is rock armour, rubble and the remains of various attempts to hold back the erosion of the cliffs. At present, access to the beach is by steps from the Manor caravan park, or informal sandy paths down the cliffs just to the east of the village.

The countryside around the village has farms and agricultural buildings scattered amongst it; there are pleasant cliff top paths running to the east and west.

The large parish church is on the north side of the village, with the main concentration of old houses around a crossroads just to the south. There is a post office/general store in the centre and a fish shop outside the Conservation Area on North Walsham Road. Hill House Hotel, is also a pub and restaurant. In common with much of North Norfolk, apart from agriculture and tourism, there are no significant industries.

The picturesque nature of the village and the surrounding countryside attracts visitors and those wishing to live permanently in the area. Tourist accommodation is provided by the Hill House Hotel and several guest houses; there is also a large cliff-top caravan park.

### 3.2 General character and plan form

Late 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century maps show Happisburgh as a small concentration of houses set around a crossroads, with the parish church and churchyard to the north. Apart from the church, the most significant buildings in the centre were Hill House and the Vicarage, which was set in its own grounds. From the crossroads, development was linear, with houses running south down the west side of The Street. The village incorporates several farms and agricultural buildings, others are a short distance away, in the countryside around the village. During the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries, there were other isolated buildings connected by road to the village, including a coastguard station, lifeboat station and two lighthouses.



Fig 2: 1906 Ordnance Survey map.

Over the years, several of the roads leading to the cliff top have diminished in importance; one road running immediately to the south of Hill House is now no more than a brief track leading to the caravan park. A good deal of Beach Road has been lost, together with most of the inter-war chalets along it.

Fig 3: detail of post-war map showing chalets on Beach Road.

Up to the post-war period, the development of Happisburgh was slow. There was a gradual accumulation of houses, particularly along The Street, together with the present village school. A lone terrace of houses on Beach Road is thought to have been a speculative venture encouraged by the possible arrival of the railways; in the event, the road remained largely undeveloped until the post war years. The most significant changes in the centre were the building of the village school, followed by St Mary's/Happisburgh Manor in 1900.



During the inter-war period, holiday homes were built along the north end of Beach Road and the adjoining Doggett's Lane; those nearest to the cliff have been lost to erosion.

The post-war era saw a number of houses built to the south of the centre, following the line of Whimpwell Street, with a new estate being between Whimpwell Street and Lighthouse Lane. There were also new houses along Beach Road, and some infilling of the spaces left between the older houses in the centre.

### 3.3 Landscape setting

Happisburgh is part of North Norfolk's 'coastal plain', a low-lying largely arable area fringed on the south side by the Broads. Those approaching the village along the coast road from the east or west travel through an agricultural landscape with what was described in 1804 as the 'the finest soil, perhaps, in the county: a rich, deep mellow, friable loam on a clay loam bottom, some on brick-earth and sand; all good'. The landscape typically has large fields with few hedges, without any significant areas of woodland; the main concentration of trees is within the village. Punctuating the fields are traditional agricultural buildings and farmhouses, which can also be found along the approach roads.

There is a primarily glacial geology, where marine deposits are overlaid by glacial tills, separated by stratified silt, clay and sand. The glacial tills are in turn covered by a mix of sands and clays. White's 1845 trade directory notes Happisburgh

has an “under stratum of sand and gravel, which is continually washed by the agitation of the tides and storms, that it is calculated the church will be engulfed in the ocean before the close of the ensuing (19<sup>th</sup>) century, the sea having encroached upwards of 170 yards during the last 60 years”. While this was a pessimistic view, houses and roads have been lost to erosion, so that Beach Road now ends abruptly at the cliff top. Offshore are the Haisboro’ Sands, an area of shallow water where in places the depth is as little as 1 foot. The Sands are considered one of the most treacherous places for shipping along the English coast.



Fig 4: Countryside around Happisburgh

Happisburgh churchyard and the cliff paths are good vantage points to appreciate the village’s surroundings, while during the summer months those ascending the church tower or lighthouse are provided with fine panoramic views.

## 4. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT & ARCHAEOLOGY

### 4.1 *The origins and historic development of the area.*

Recent archaeological work at Haisburgh has revealed the earliest evidence of human occupation in northern Europe, from the Lower Palaeolithic period. Artefacts including flint tools found during excavations on the beach are considered to be close to one million years old.

There is also evidence of occupation of the area from the Neolithic period onwards, and the Saxons and Romans are represented in the archaeological record. Prior to the Norman invasion, the area had a Viking overlord, Edric the Dane. The village was entered in the Norman Domesday book as ‘Hapesburc’, an Old English word meaning ‘the stronghold of Hape’. At one time the village had been separated from the sea by the parish of Whimpwell, but by 1183 all that remained of this parish was one field.

The town’s church dates mainly from the 14<sup>th</sup> century; its size and the high quality of work suggest that Happisburgh was a wealthy community at this time. Norfolk merchants and farmers prospered in the Mediaeval period, as the lands were fertile, and there was a thriving textile industry. Most of the inhabitants of the village would doubtless have earned their livings primarily from fishing and agriculture.

During the later 18<sup>th</sup> century, an attempt was made to establish Happisburgh as a ‘watering place’ for the gentry. A newspaper advertisement from 1789 mentions a bathing machine for use and “convenient accommodations”. Happisburgh was one of a number of Norfolk’s coastal towns and villages that tried to promote themselves in this way. While there are records of a few notable visitors to the village, such as the poet Cowper and Dr. Johnson who dined at Hill House, the village failed to attract visitors in any numbers.

The Happisburgh coast has long been regarded as dangerous, and many boats have been lost here over the years. As the sea was one of the main ways to move goods around the country, there was an economic incentive to try and deal with the situation. This led to the building of two lighthouses at Happisburgh in 1781, the ‘high’ and the ‘low’. Only the high survives today, as the low was withdrawn from service and demolished in 1883. The same concern for shipping led to the establishment of a lifeboat station in 1866.

This part of the Norfolk coast saw an increase of population throughout the nineteenth century, although trade directories from the mid-Victorian period imply that for Happisburgh this was a period of little change; there is even a slight fall in the population, from 631 in 1845 to 586 in 1868. The population was, however, sufficient for a National School for boys and girls to be built in 1861.

Fig 5: Signal box in grounds of Hill House

Although Kelly’s Trade Directory for 1892 announces that Happisburgh is served by the Eastern & Midlands Railway, the railways never reached the village. Nevertheless, in anticipation, a signal box was built in the



grounds of Hill House, and a short terrace of houses along Beach Road are thought to have been speculative ventures encouraged by the prospect of the railway's arrival.

In 1900, a prestigious large house, St Mary's, (also known as Happisburgh Manor), was built for Albemarle Cator. Designed by architect Detmar Blow in a distinctive vernacular revival style, St Mary's reflects the traditional brick and cobble houses of the surrounding area. Several other houses were built in the village in the same style. Despite these fashionable additions, the village remained small, and unlike other settlements along the coast, there were no large new hotels for holidaymakers. The select band of visitors Happisburgh attracted often stayed in the local houses.

The First World War saw troops billeted in the village. Trenches were dug along the cliff top in case of invasion, but the only action the village saw was when a zeppelin dropped a bomb at the nearby Walcott Hall.

During the inter-war period, a select group once again frequented the village: artists Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Bern Nicholson and Ivor Hitchens stayed at Happisburgh in 1930-1. A number of families built chalets along the cliff top for use as holiday homes; usually in timber rather than in brick.

At the beginning of the Second World War, the beach was mined and pill boxes and barbed wire lined the cliffs, while gun emplacements and a radar station were located at the edge of the village. Happisburgh had the misfortune of being on the route German bombers took when attacking Norwich, so that in 1940 and 1941 bombs were dropped in and around the village. Several people were killed, houses and the church damaged and parts of the St Mary's, the old Rectory and the lifeboat station were destroyed.

The area suffered badly during the disastrous floods of 1953. As a result, new sea defences were built between 1958-9, which have been repaired and added to over the years. These defences have slowed the rate of erosion, although at the same time a large semicircular bay has formed, cutting into land to the east of the village.



*Fig 6: recent erosion to the east of the village.*

Today the village remains a popular tourist destination. Hill House Hotel still plies its trade, and there are several guest houses together with a cliff-top caravan site. Trinity House closed the Happisburgh Lighthouse in 1988, but it continues to function, run by 'The Friends of Happisburgh Lighthouse'. It remains one of the attractions of the village, with open days during the summer season.

#### *4.2 The archaeological significance and potential of the area.*

Archaeological sites and finds from the Happisburgh area provide good evidence of human occupation from an early date. The earliest site is from the Lower Palaeolithic Period on Happisburgh beach, and a number of flint tools have been found here. Artefacts have also been found from the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age, and it is thought that ring ditches identified to the south of the village may be the remains of Bronze Age barrows.

From the Iron Age, pottery has been found near to Happisburgh Lighthouse, and some of the large number of crop marks identified around Happisburgh may date from this time.

The Romans are represented in the area by a number of finds including a 3<sup>rd</sup> century coin, pottery and a brooch. Cropmarks to the south of the village may be the remains of a Roman structure.

Middle and Late Saxon pottery has been found at several sites, and two ditches to the south, on the line of the parish boundary, could be Saxon. It is thought that there may also be the remains of Saxon buildings in the area.

The most significant reminder of Mediaeval Happisburgh is St Mary's Church, dating primarily from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, although the tower may include material from the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. Fragments of Mediaeval stonework have been found in the village, including two pieces of what may have been a cross, near to a house dating in part from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, "The Monastery".

There are a number of older houses in the village; these are covered in a later section on architecture. Interesting buildings from the 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries include the village school, parish hall and St Mary's. Other evidence of activity from the Victorian period includes the remains of a 19<sup>th</sup> century breakwater on the beach and two former brickworks outside the centre.



*Fig 7: one of a number of pillboxes around Happisburgh.*

The Second World War has left a legacy of fortifications including pillboxes; one is sited on the beach. Other significant features from this time include emplacements for coastal batteries and a radar station that played a crucial role in the Battle of Britain.

### *4.3 The Conservation Area and the relationship with its setting*

The Conservation Area covers the old centre of the village. On the east side is a large caravan park. The Area provides much of the historic identity for the village, and serves as a social, spiritual and to a limited extent, a commercial centre. It is the focus for village events, with the church, parish hall and village school, and for more informal gatherings there is Hill House Hotel, which also serves as a public house and restaurant. Part of the caravan park is included in the Conservation Area; this is an important source of revenue for the village during the summer months, helping support the local amenities.

The houses along the village streets are often no more than 'ribbon development' consisting of single rows of houses along the sides of the roads. The gardens back onto the surrounding agricultural land, so that there is a clear and immediate separation between village and countryside. While few village people work in agriculture today, there is still an appreciation of the rural setting of Happisburgh.

The relationship with the coast is more complex. The seaside location provides a sense of identity for the village and the beach is a strong part of its appeal for holidaymakers, but coastal erosion threatens the long-term future of Happisburgh. The loss of the slope leading to the sea, the Town Gap, means that access to the beach is increasingly difficult, and the steep cliffs are a physical barrier between the village and beach.

## **5. SPATIAL ANALYSIS**

### *5.1 Character and interrelationship of spaces within the area*

Within the village, the most significant open space is the churchyard. The first Ordnance Survey maps show this composed of two parts; the graveyard has probably been enlarged to include a neighbouring field. The churchyard provides an excellent setting for the impressive and large parish church. As a burial place, it provides a sense of continuity with the past and a place to mark significant events in village life, such as the war memorial to the dead lost in two world wars and those lost to the sea. Set on the highest ground in the village, the churchyard is also a place to

appreciate the picturesque setting of Happisburgh. The church is partly hidden from the centre by houses, but is ever-present thanks to the tower which is a focal point throughout the village and beyond.

Fields east of Hill House Hotel form Manor Caravan Park. The main area with permanently sited caravans is outside the Conservation Area, but the field to the south-east is included. This field is used in the summer months for temporary caravans and camping, and has the former lifeboat station at its eastern edge. An old road leading to the beach has been reduced to a path across the field. While this is a private caravan park, it is also on an informal route leading to the only set of steps down the cliff to the beach, and the RNLI shop nearby. This is a not an entirely satisfactory arrangement, as the route is not clearly marked, and the visitor is left with the feeling that they are intruding onto a private site. The site itself is unremarkable, but it does provide a good vantage point to get an attractive view of St Mary's

A low ridge and hedge separates the caravan park from a field to the south. This is agricultural land, bordered on the east and south sides by hedges and small areas of woodland which separate it from Beach Road. A footpath cuts diagonally across the field, and is an excellent vantage point to appreciate St. Mary's, set on slightly raised and wooded ground to the west.



*Fig 8: St Mary's from the caravan park*

The grounds of St Mary's are also a significant space, as the setting for the remarkable house and its outbuildings. These are, however, private grounds, so that their main contribution to the village as a whole is the trees and bushes which border the area.

## 5.2 Key views and vistas



*Fig 9: Panorama of surrounding countryside, looking west from churchyard.*

Happisburgh church is situated on the highest point in the village. The churchyard provides picturesque panoramic views of the village and surrounding countryside, particularly to the west. There are no other comparable viewpoints within the village. During open days in the summer months, impressive views can be had from the church tower and the Happisburgh lighthouse.

The north end of Beach Road forms a vantage point to see the curved bay to the east of the village, and the cliffs extending round to Cart Gap. When the tide is out, the large expanse of sand is particularly attractive. Taking the coast path running east, there are good views of the lighthouse, and a panoramic view of the village.

A good view can be had from the raised ground in front of Hill House Hotel. Looking west back down the access road towards The Street, there is a good view of the countryside around the village, together with a large water tower on the horizon; an unusual but not unwelcome feature.

The approach roads to Happisburgh are attractive, and include a number of historic buildings. However, they do not offer particularly remarkable views, save for the prominent church tower and lighthouse along with the large number of trees in the centre. The best view along an approach road is from the west, along Church Street (see Fig 10).



Fig 10: Approach to Happisburgh along Church Street.

## 6. CHARACTER ANALYSIS

### 6.1 Activity, prevailing or former uses within the area

Before the twentieth century, most villagers would have earned their livings from agriculture or fishing; mid-Victorian trade directories list 10-11 farmers in the area. Today, agriculture employs only small number of people and once-agricultural buildings have become private houses. The presence of a farm, Tithe Farm, amongst the older houses at the heart of the village shows how central farming once was to the life of Happisburgh.

19<sup>th</sup> century trade directories show a limited range of occupations such as one might expect in a small village; these included a wheelwright, saddler, 2 joiners, a tailor and 3 shoemakers. The trade directories do not list fishermen, although an 1868 directory mentions "boats principally employed in the herring fishery". The sea would have provided other occupations; it is recorded that some of the fishermen organised themselves into a company of 'beachmen' engaged in salvage. Apart from goods washed up on shore from wrecked ships, this form of scavenging would also have provided wood; visitors to the coast at this time record that houses could have outbuildings or extensions made entirely from driftwood. For others, the sea would have provided an opportunity for smuggling, when products such as tea and spirits were highly taxed. It is recorded from elsewhere on the Norfolk coast that fishermen sometimes used their boats to ferry contraband ashore from larger ships out at sea. This would explain the coastguard station, as the coastguards' main duty at this time was to try and prevent smuggling. A coastguard station is shown on the edge of the cliffs on the first Ordnance Survey map of 1886; by 1906, it had been moved to four houses on Beach Road. With the establishment of a lifeboat station in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, local fishermen, or those who knew the sea, would have served as the lifeboat crew.

Other than by sea, the only way to travel to and from Happisburgh is by road. In the nineteenth century, Happisburgh was not large enough to merit being on a stagecoach route, so that villagers would have walked, travelled by horse/horse and cart, or perhaps being taken by taken by a local 'carrier' who would also have transported goods. A blacksmith's shop is marked on the west side of The Street, at the junction with Beach Road, on early Ordnance Survey maps.

As the amenities in the village grew, new skills would have been required. The first school, created around 1760 would have required a schoolmaster, the lighthouses built in 1781 would have required keepers, and coast guards were stationed in the area.

Fig 11: Former Coastguards' cottages on Beach Road.

The church, parish hall and village school will have been a focus for village social life, witnessing events and celebrations, roles they continue to fill today. Perhaps the most change has been to the commercial life of the village. Up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the village would have relied on local shops and craftsmen for many of its day-to-day needs, although pedlars and hawkers might have visited the village. Essentials would have been provided by the village shops, one of which was also a



beerhouse, where it is likely beer would also have been brewed. The villagers' diet would have been mainly fish and local produce, while the miller and baker would have provided bread, one of the staples of poorer people's diets. Happisburgh once had butchers and greengrocer's shops, and for the more affluent, premises offered services such as bicycle and car

repairs. In the later 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, as transport has improved and car ownership has become commonplace, there is a tendency for people to shop at larger centres such as Stalham and Norwich. As a result, there are now few shops in the village.

Today, the limited employment offered by the village is connected with tourism. The summer months see an influx of visitors to the caravan park, Hill House offers accommodation, and food and drink, while houses in and around the village have rooms to let. There is little trace of the summer visitors from the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries; they often stayed in private houses. Only a few holiday chalets from the inter-war period remain along Beach Road, most having been lost to the sea.

## 6.2 Character Areas, the qualities of the buildings and their contribution to the area

### CHARACTER AREA 1: Small to medium sized houses along the main streets of the village.

For the most part the houses are regularly spaced; this area includes two former farms and the village school. Rather than subdivide the description of The Street, the houses on the east side, which fall into Character Area 2, have been included here.

*Church Street (from the junction with The Street to the churchyard entrance)*

*Fig 12: Church Street looking from junction with The Street/North Walsham Road.*

Church Street initially runs north away from the centre, rising up towards the entrance to the churchyard. Entering the street from the south, the church at the north end fills the view. When it reaches the church wall, the street turns east and continues along the side of the churchyard. Church Street has a worn tarmac surface without pavements. There are narrow grassy banks with some cultivated plants on both sides; a number of the adjacent gardens have trees which shade the road. The street has a variety of traditionally-designed houses; most are linked by low brick and cobble boundary walls. Apart from the first two houses at the south end, all the buildings are of weathered red brick and flint cobbles, which give the street a harmonious and architecturally coherent character.



On the **west side**, at the south end is Heather Cottage, a plain modern red brick building with a gable end of flint cobbles and rendered extensions. A sign offers self-catering accommodation. The wall around the small front garden appears older than the house, probably 19<sup>th</sup> century, with modern half-round brick capping partly covered by ivy.

*Fig 13: Danegate*

To the north, Danegate is a fine, perhaps 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century, house. Its red brick front projects slightly beyond the brick and flint end gables, suggesting it may be a later addition. The sash windows have multiple panes and cut and rubbed gauged brick arches; the timber doorcase has a simple hood. The roof is of slate; if this house has been



reworked, the slates may have replaced pantiles. A severe-looking white-painted garage is attached to the north side.

A pair of semidetached late Victorian houses follow, Albion Cottage and Church Cottage. They have brick and cobble gable ends. Unusually for the period, all the brickwork is in stretcher bond. Both houses have their entrances at the side. Albion Cottage has its original timber sashes, Church Cottage has less appropriate top-opening uPVC casements.

On the **south-east corner** there is a low grass and earth bank with a colourful village sign. Nearby is the back of Camberley Cottage, a single storey house with white painted render and modern extensions on the north and south sides. The render of the southern extension has curious diagonal trowel marks. The front of Camberley Cottage is on the entrance road to Hill House Hotel; a much altered older house, it has white painted brick with a near-central doorway and uPVC windows. The weathered pantiled roof lacks chimneys.

To the north, on Church Street, a low brick and cobble wall runs along most of the east side; just behind is a row of mature trees. At the south end, the wall is partly covered by dense growth of brambles and holly. To the rear is the red brick and cobble 'Manor Bungalow'. This primarily inter-war building incorporates the lower walls of earlier thatched cottages, destroyed by fire in 1929, so there is a mix of old and new flint and brickwork. The roof is pantiled with a single chimney at the south end.

An old brick and cobble wall separates the lawn of Manor Bungalow from the driveway of the two-storey brick and cobble 'Lodge Cottage'. Although it has a general mid 20<sup>th</sup> century appearance, with uPVC windows, the Lodge incorporates several old outbuildings which once belonged to the Vicarage. Its pantiled roof has a prominent upturn.

#### *Continuation of Church Street (after the turning to the west)*

The Street gradually slopes down to the west, clearly defined by brick and cobble walls on either side. Behind the high churchyard wall, trees lean towards the street. At the base of the wall is a verge of earth, wild plants and grass.

*Fig 14: Church Street, after the turning to the west.*



On the south-east corner is the end gable of Church Cottage; its brick and cobble garden wall curves round to follow the new alignment of Church Street. The side walls of a pair of old outbuildings in brick and cobbles face directly onto the street; they have undergone some alteration, with modern windows.

Following the outbuildings a gravel drive leads to a group of brick and cobble buildings set around a gravel courtyard. All have replacement timber windows. The house next to the street has its back to the road; a contemporary-design timber conservatory appears to cover most, if not the whole of the front.

*Fig 15: Prospect House*

Next door Prospect House is a large and attractive mid-19<sup>th</sup> century house with red brickwork and 'constructional polychrome' white brick decoration. The four-pane sash windows have cut and rubbed brick arches. Modern brickwork and a simplified brick arch show that the central doorway has been altered. The roof is of slate; the chimneys continue the 'polychrome' decorated brickwork. The mature front garden with trees has a brick and cobble garden wall with brick pillars and stone ball finials.



The brick and cobble wall which unifies the street ends after the garden of Prospect House; the wall turns through 90° and

runs south. To the west is 'Rosalida', a modern brick and cobble house set well back from the road. It has no boundary wall, just a raised bank.

On the south side of the street, the Conservation Area ends. To the west are the late 20<sup>th</sup> century houses and bungalows of Blacksmith's Lane. To the north, the Conservation Area continues so that it includes the whole of the churchyard and two houses immediately to the west.

*Fig 16: Church Street., Looking back to the village from the limit of the Conservation Area.*



After the junction with Blacksmith's Lane, the street narrows, with trees on both sides. At this point, the churchyard wall on the north side is in poor condition; there is an opening in the wall at the north-west corner, and a path leading up to the church. Immediately west of the churchyard wall a muddy track leads north to a field. On the west side is a modern bungalow, 'Burlawn', set close to the street. It has been built in the large grounds of an Arts & Crafts house, 'Thatchers', which can be glimpsed to the north, partly concealed by a hedge and an unruly collection of saplings. While little of 'Thatchers' can be seen, it is evidently influenced by Blow's Arts & Crafts work on St Marys, with a distinctive thatched roof.

After the neat front garden of Burlawn a wide gravel drive leads up to 'Thatchers', with a well-designed timber gate, marking the westernmost limit of the Conservation Area .

### *North Walsham Road*

*Fig 17: North Walsham Road, looking west.*

This runs west from the Street, downhill out of the village. From the centre it provides a limited view of the surrounding countryside. Initially there are pavements on both sides of the road with concrete kerbs. Only the first houses on the north side are included in the Conservation Area; the inter-war and modern houses to the west are excluded. On the south side, the Conservation Area finishes after Tithe Barn Farm, excluding the rear entrance and car park for the village school.



At the corner on the **south side** is the late Victorian red brick Northdenes House; it resembles Albion and Church Cottages in Church Street, but has Flemish bond brickwork. There is a modern front door and windows in uPVC.

Adjoining Northdenes House is the picturesque Old Tithe Cottage, a single storey brick and cobble house with pantiled roof, probably 18<sup>th</sup> - early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The doorway is centrally placed; the large windows, now replaced in uPVC, have gauged brick arches. The flintwork is roughly coursed.

*Fig 18. Old Tithe Cottage*



After a passageway is 'Tithe Barn Farm'; the farm buildings have been converted so that the group now has a strong residential character. The brick and cobble walls of a former thatched barn and its single storey pantiled extension flank the road. The side wall of the barn has a stark-looking black

framed window at the east end; nearby are the traces of old blocked slit windows and rectangular openings. Behind the barn is a central gravel-surfaced courtyard, with a number of modern low brick and cobble walls. A long single storey brick and cobble block, 'The Stables' borders the courtyard on the west side. Its walls have a mix of old and new flintwork; there are brown uPVC casement windows and doors in the east and west-facing elevations. The gable facing the road has a single large window with weatherboards above. The bright red pantiled roof includes a few older dark glazed pantiles.

*Fig 19. Tithe Barn Farm*

A fence and path bordered by a hedge runs down the west side of The Stables, leading to the rear of the village school; this marks the end of the Conservation Area. Beyond is the wide entranceway to the school and its playing field together with a grass car park. The school can be seen to the south-east, along with the backs of the houses along The Street. The road winds to the west out of Happisburgh; initially there are some inter war and modern houses on the north side; to the south the fields are enclosed by hedges and low windswept trees.



On the **north side** at the corner with Church Lane, 'Pear Tree Cottage' is a modern brick and cobble-faced bungalow with a pantiled roof and dormers. Adjoining it to the west is 'The Georgian House'. Despite its name, this is a modern red brick house with a regular grouping of sash windows around a central part-glazed door. The roof is pantiled and the west end gable is of brick and cobbles. The front garden has a modern brick and cobble wall. The Conservation Area ends after The Georgian House. Set just outside are a pair of semidetached inter-war houses with rendered cream-painted fronts. At the time of the survey, the first house, 'Kustom House', had a converted 'custom car' bearing an advertisement for 'Hellbent Kustom Cars' on the front lawn.

### *The Street*

The Street is the main thoroughfare through the village. From the junction with North Walsham Road, it slopes gradually down to the south, initially curving to the west, so that there is a limited view along the road. There is a tarmac path with concrete kerbs on the west side; to the east is a raised grass verge. The east side has a near-continuous brick and cobble wall, interrupted by the entrance buildings of St Mary's. The houses on the west side are from a variety of periods, linked by low brick and cobble garden walls. The houses are well spaced, often allowing glimpses of the fields just beyond the village. Gravel drives are common, together with small front gardens or less appealing areas of hard standing with provision for car parking.

At the north end of The Street on the **west side** is the end gable of North Denes, bearing a bus timetable and the village notice board. What appears to be a modern single storey building with dormers attached to the rear of North Denes started life as a small brick and cobble outbuilding; its outline is preserved within the south-facing end gable.



*Fig. 20. The Street, looking south from the junction with North Walsham Road*

To the south is a modern red brick bungalow, 'Dingle Dell'. The pantiles on the roof are rather bright, doubtless they will tone down over time. The brick and cobble garden wall appears older than the house, with half-round capping.

The nearby Gothic-revival Church of England school of 1861 is an eye-catching well-designed building. It uses white and black-glazed brick and stone dressings to decorate its front, on its north elevation is an unusual but now-disused stone clock face. The detailing of the roof is equally accomplished, with rows of rectangular and polygon-shaped slates. The chimneys have multiple stacks. The brick and cobble boundary wall in front of the school is relatively recent, replacing an earlier wall just to the east which was probably removed when paths were introduced. A nice touch is that a sycamore

tree in the playground has been retained; the wall curves round it, adding visual interest. To the south the tarmac playground allows a good view of a large modern extension behind. This very successfully reflects the gothic character of the original school; the only feature which detracts from the otherwise excellent design is the utilitarian-looking railings on the access ramps.

*Fig 21. Looking north from the school towards the church.*

The school wall finishes by a cream-painted building along the side of the school playground. It is so much altered that any attempt at dating is difficult. Facing the street the house is of brick; the rear is of brick and cobbles. The village shop and post office is in the northern half, although the shop front is just a single small window alongside a part-glazed house door. The window and the upper part of the door are almost filled by advertisements, so that it is difficult to see inside. Just to the south there is a blocked shop window with a brick relieving arch, now filled by painted brickwork and two good quality white-painted sash windows.



The south-facing side elevation has a mixture of windows; casements and sashes in timber or uPVC. The central section has a brick and cobble porch with a batten-construction door and a leaded top light. The roof is of pantiles throughout, with one chimney stack set towards the rear. On the south side of the house is a gravel courtyard and a modern garage. A single storey brick and cobble outbuilding faces the courtyard, with modern windows and French doors, partly screened from view by a fence and trellis.

The driveways of this house and the next, 'The Wishing Well' are side-by-side, with curving brick and cobble walls. The Wishing Well is a large modern irregularly-shaped brick and cobble-faced house set well back from the road behind a brickweave forecourt. Obscuring part of the front is a large garage block, also in brick and cobbles. An elaborate sign by the front wall advertises the house for self-catering holidays.

An unusual piece of freestanding flint wall separates the garden of The Wishing Well from 'The Beehive', a modern brick and cobble bungalow with half-dormers. Like its neighbour to the north, the bungalow has a brightly coloured pantiled roof. A wide gravel drive runs up the south side, allowing a good view of the fields beyond the village.

*Fig 22. Farthings*

To the south, The Farthings started life as 3 brick and cobble houses, perhaps early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Now a single house, the front doors have been replaced by windows. The cobbles on the front have been carefully selected by size; the windows are brown stained timber casements. The well-patinated pantiled roof has a slight upturn with a modern single chimney at the south end. At the north end is an all-brick extension; to the south end a high brick and cobble wall hides an outbuilding. In front of Farthings is a narrow lawn and a brick and cobble garden wall.



*Fig 23. The Pyghtle*

The gravel driveway of Farthings merges with 'The Pyghtle', a substantial ivy-clad Arts & Crafts house, which shows the influence of 'St Mary's' opposite. The front elevation is of brick and flint; the end gables are of red brick. The front has simple casement



windows of white-painted timber arranged around a central brick and cobble porch. The thatched roof incorporates a central dormer. At each end of the hipped roof are large multiple chimney stacks in red brick. The south gable end is entirely in red brick set in Flemish bond, with no detail other than a satellite dish. On the south side is a high brick garden wall with a round-headed opening to the rear garden.

The boundary wall and a brick and cobble outbuilding of the Pyghtle form the north side of a gravel courtyard. At the rear of the courtyard Manor Cottage faces the road. While it has a number of modern features, including uPVC windows and door, an external porch and a white-painted roughcast render, it has earlier origins. The pantiled roof is hipped at the south end.

Whimpwell Cottage, next to the road, shares the gravel courtyard. It was originally two adjoining houses, the first with its gable end to the road, the second at 90° to it. The front is of brick throughout, in stretcher bond; there is a small area of brick and cobbles on the north-facing elevation. The brick has been partly obscured by a heavy covering of white paint. The windows are simple timber casements; at the south end is a batten-construction door with a pitched-roof hood on timber brackets. On the south side is a modern flat-roofed garage. Whimpwell Cottage has a low brick boundary wall, where isolated sections of half-round bricks have been used to create a simple parapet, some of which is now lost.

To the south the cream-painted houses 'The Crib' and 'Orchard Cottage' are slightly further back from the road. Some walls have a roughcast render; the north wall of The Crib is of stretcher bond brickwork. The roofs are of pantiles. There is an unusual narrow external chimney stack on the north end gable. The Crib has original sash windows and two inter-war doors with multiple lights. There is a former shop front, now filled by top-opening casements; above this is a simple fascia which extends to the south over a door.

*Fig 24. looking north along The Street. Orchard Cottage and The Crib at left.*

Adjoining The Crib is the roughcast-rendered end gable of Orchard Cottage. Its gable end is without windows; on the ground floor there is a former garage and a small outbuilding. At this point the low brick and cobble boundary wall changes to all-brick construction. The front of Orchard Cottage can be seen over the garden fence to the south; the house has top-opening uPVC casements, and a uPVC conservatory on the ground floor. In the garden are a number of mature trees. The garden marks the beginning of Whimpwell Street.



The **east side** of The Street begins at the north end after the turning to the Hill House Hotel. A high brick and cobble wall curves round from the entranceway to Hill House. Behind mature trees a pair of fine brick and cobble houses are set at an angle to the road, 'Thrums' (to the north) and 'The Monastery'. The houses are substantial and distinctive, with a variety of later windows and areas of later work in red brick. Their present appearance is similar to that of Arts and Crafts houses such as St Mary's, but there is earlier work visible.

*Fig 25. The east side of the Street has far more greenery and trees than the west side. The grounds of the old Rectory.*

The old Rectory follows, with a profusion of mature trees in its grounds. There are two wide entrances in its high brick and cobble boundary wall. Wide gravel driveways up to the house are bordered by mature trees, some of which have been pollarded. The entrance at the south end has white brick pillars with pyramidal caps and a wrought iron gate. Behind the heavily wooded grounds can be seen the Rectory; a formal mid Victorian house, rendered and cream-painted with a dark glazed pantiled



roof. There are regularly spaced four-light sash windows, a doorway with a raised brick surround and a pair of paneled doors and a rectangular top light. At the south side is a polygonal corner bay at the south side; there is a later extension to the north.

After the southern entranceway to the Vicarage, the boundary wall briefly changes from random to coursed cobbles. Following the Vicarage, and with a backdrop of mature trees to the south is 'The Slater Memorial Church Room', better known today as 'St Mary's Church Room'. The main hall is of red brick with white 'polychrome' brick decoration. Round headed windows flank the central brick porch with a circular window above. To the north there is a later single storey extension with its gable end to the road. Around the hall is a raised gravel courtyard. A concrete path runs down the south side with crude 'scaffolding' style railings. The hall has a good boundary wall in brick and cobbles with modern railings fitted to an old cast iron cap, together with a wrought iron gate. On the south side is the rear wall of a former stables belonging to St Mary's, of red brick in English garden wall bond.

*Fig 26. The church room and the gatehouses of St Mary's form a strong group on the east side.*



The entranceway to St Mary's has Arts & Crafts influenced brick and cobble houses with heavy thatch on either side. Little can be seen of the former single-storey stables to the north, partly hidden by high brick and cobble walls. To the south, the gatehouse, sometimes referred to as "St Anne's" is two storeys. The main part of the house has its gable end directly facing the road; the red brick gable of a small wing on the north side faces the entrance. Groups of casement windows front the road, with areas of tiles and rubbed brick concealing the lintels.

A high brick and cobble garden wall runs south of the entrance, interrupted by a single pillar and a recent doorway; most of this wall appears recent. It ends after the gable end of St John's; another large Arts and Crafts house, once again in brick and cobbles with a thatched roof. The detailing is similar to the gatehouses described earlier; the windows of the end gable and the south-facing front have been replaced in uPVC. Offset to one side on the south elevation is a high brick and cobble porch with thatched roof and a prominent gable with kneelers. The garden of St Johns has a modern low brick and cobble wall topped by a hedge. A grass and earth driveway leads to a modern garage and parking area. After the driveway, the low wall continues in front of a small brick and cobble outbuilding and a vigorous hedge.

On the corner with Beach Road, behind an area of rough ground and trees is a small meadow, part of the grounds of St Mary's. At the junction, a patch of grass serves as a rudimentary traffic island, with a metal sign pointing towards the 'beach' accompanied by a wooden tub for plants.

### *Whimpwell Street*

Whimpwell Street is the southern continuation of The Street, after the junction with Beach Road. The part of the street that is within the Conservation Area includes a mixture of post-war houses and bungalows along with older brick and cobble properties. It is less enclosed than The Street; the houses are generally set further back from the road, and it lacks the almost-continuous brick and cobble walls. The telephone wires which run along the side of the road become more visible here than they were in the centre.



*Fig 27. Pond on the east side of Whimpwell St., The Oaks in the background*

On the **west side**, the street starts with the garden of Orchard Cottage, then four modern red brick bungalows set well back from the road; those at the south end are partly hidden by hedges. To the south is a particularly attractive feature,

'The Oaks', a row of trees along a wide grass bank which screen the path from the road. The path is also partly enclosed by a hedge on the west side; openings through it allow a view of the countryside.

The Oaks are followed to the south by two fields, parts of which are in the Conservation Area (described in Character Area 3). After a wide access road to the fields are a series of farm buildings, now converted to residential use. The buildings are screened from the nearby fields by Leylandii hedges and a simple timber fence. They are arranged around a subdivided gravel courtyard, and include a garage and a freestanding car port. To the west there are single storey outbuildings in brick and cobbles.

*Fig 28: Former farm buildings at the south end of Whimpwell Street*

'Terra Kunda', on the north side is an old brick and cobble barn; the pantiled roof has velux roof lights and modern chimney flues. Modern vertically-elongated windows have been introduced. Immediately to the south is 'Apple Barn'. Lower than 'Terra-Kunda', little is visible, save for the pantiled roof and tops of the walls. Bordering the road is an old brick and flint wall, with a crude course of bricks laid end-to-end as a capping and then 'Little Barn'. The 'Little Barn' is the most interesting of the group; the side wall is in brick and cobbles, the end gable of red brick in Flemish bond. The side wall has well weathered brick buttresses and more recent rounded buttresses built entirely of flint. In the centre is a blocked doorway which projects forward. Modern windows with rough brick segmental arches have been introduced; there is new brickwork at the top of the gable. The roof is of modern pantiles, with metal flues.



The yard to the south has low brick and cobble walls, and is the southernmost point of the Conservation Area. Just beyond is a pair of mid-late Victorian semidetached houses; their appearance is too much altered to justify being included in the Conservation Area. The road continues to the south, passing a variety of modern and older houses, including a distinctive imitation half-timbered building in the distance.

On the **east side** of Whimpwell Street is a group of buildings centred around a yard, 'The Forge'. Brick and cobble outbuildings, formerly the smithy, run down the sides of Beach Road and Whimpwell Street. The outbuilding running down Whimpwell Street has a corrugated asbestos(?) roof and old patched windows, partly boarded up. The side of the outbuilding along Beach Road has a boarded-up opening which serves as a notice board for village events. The main house facing the yard has modern windows and brickwork, which disguise its historic character.

*Fig 29: The Forge*



The Conservation Area also includes a pair of connected post-war houses at the corner of Lighthouse Lane; it is not clear why, as these are no more remarkable than the other post-war houses along this road.

The garden of the Forge is to the south, with a modern brick and cobble garden wall with blue-clay capping and an unusual plinth of brick and cobbles. The rear of the house is of more historic interest than the front, with a regular arrangement of windows around a central doorway. The windows have been replaced in uPVC.

After the garden, three modern bungalows are set well back from the road. In front is a wide grass verge; hedges and the occasional conifer screen the bungalows from the road. A narrow pond runs along the side of the road; at its south end the garden of a modern red brick house connects with it. Here the natural appearance of the pond is lost, with timberwork reinforcing the bank, a gravel area with a seat and an imitation 'wishing well'.

Fig 30. Pebbles.

The final house in the Conservation Area is the much-altered and enlarged red brick 'Pebbles', which for a time served as a pub. The end gables show that the roof pitch has been raised. The front is a later addition, with shallow brick pilasters and uPVC replacement windows with rectangular drip-moulds. The pantiled roof has a distinct upturn. There is one small older chimney and a more recent chimney next to the south gable end, with polygonal multiple polygonal chimney stacks. The eaves line is interrupted at the south end by a rectangular raised area with two diamond-shaped recesses. At the north end is an extension with a stepped-parapet and a modern single-storey extension with a bitumen-based roof.



Down the side, a grass, gravel and earth driveway connects with a grass-covered courtyard at the rear. The first floor at the back of the house is completely rendered, again with uPVC windows. The yard is enclosed by an old brick and cobble wall on the south side, a fence to the north, and a hedge to the east.

After Pebbles, the east side of the road continues with a line of modern red brick bungalows.

## CHARACTER AREA 2: Buildings set in large grounds, to the north and east of the centre.

This includes the church and churchyard, and a group of houses with large grounds on the east side of Happisburgh. The group includes the houses centred around Hill House Hotel, the north side of the Street from Thrums to St. Johns, and St Mary's and its outbuildings. They are bordered by The Street to the west and part of Beach Road to the south; to the east the area merges with the fields which form part of Character Area 3.

The houses along the east side of the Street were described in Character Area 1.

### *Churchyard of St Mary the Virgin*

Fig 31: Church and churchyard from the west.

The churchyard is the highest point in the village, at the end of a ridge of high ground that includes Hill House Inn and St Mary's. The churchyard slopes down quite steeply to the west and more gradually to the south. The churchyard is enclosed by a brick and cobble wall. Church Street borders it on the south side. The churchyard is separated from the cliff edge to the north by a wide field and a caravan park. The main entrance is on the south side; there are smaller entrances at the south-east and south-west corners. The church is offset towards the north-east corner of the churchyard, an imposing structure of flint cobbles with heavily patinated limestone dressings. Most of the flint is roughly coursed, a feature which is most clearly seen on the tower. There are areas of knapped and flushwork flint, particularly at the base of the chancel and tower, while some of the mortar has flint galleting. Within the buttresses in the north side some early repair work has been carried out with red brick.



On the south side, the entrance has good wrought iron gates and post-war(?) brick pillars. Close by is a notice board and a fine cast iron lamp post with a fluted column with the text '1920 GR V'. A golden gravel path leads up to the church porch, with distinctive black-painted wrought iron railings on the east side. Nearby, small trees benefit from the shelter from the sea winds that the church provides.

Around the church the grass is carefully mown; a dirt path runs around the base of the tower. At the west end of the churchyard there is a nature conservation area with longer grass and undergrowth. A pathway of well-cut grass runs down the south side to the entrance at the south-west corner. The north-east corner of the churchyard is overgrown, with self-seeded saplings and undergrowth. Some building rubble has been dumped in this area.

There is an interesting variety of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century headstones around the church; a few graves have 19<sup>th</sup> century ironwork. On the north side is a recent memorial tablet to the crew of a ship of Nelson's navy lost off Happisborough, HMS Invincible. The more recent gravestones are on the north side of the church, including memorials in dark polished granite. Around the churchyard there are a number of timber benches.

On the landward, or south side, is the brick and cobble Lodge Cottage, which incorporates an earlier dark-coloured cobble wall in its north elevation. Lodge Cottage and a timber fence to the east briefly interrupt the churchyard wall. Along Church Street the base of the churchyard wall has lower layers of coursed cobbles and random/uncoursed cobbles above with moulded brick capping. On the north side of the churchyard the wall is in poor condition; the top courses of flint are often missing, and some areas of have collapsed. Most of the wall appears to be mid-late Victorian; the section on the east side appears more recent, with red brick set 'end on' to bind the inner and outer layers of cobbles together.

From the churchyard there is a limited view of the sea to the north. The house immediately to the east of the churchyard is largely hidden by the churchyard wall, save for its pantiled roofs. Running parallel with the south boundary wall are the houses of Church Street, dominated by the red brick Victorian 'Prospect House'. To the south-west there is a small estate of post-war bungalows and houses around Blacksmith's Lane, while to the west is 'Thatcher's', a large Arts and Crafts house, partly hidden by the surrounding vegetation. The large low-lying fields that are the backdrop to the village are bordered by hedgerows and low trees. It is a landscape formed primarily by agriculture, with occasional farm buildings. On the skyline to the north-west can be seen the tall radio masts of the Bacton gasworks, and nearer at hand, the remains of a gun emplacement from the last war, silhouetted on the clifftop.

### *Hill House Hotel and access road*

*Fig 32: entrance road to Hill House from The Street*

A narrow earth and gravel road leads from the junction of The Street and North Walsham Road slightly uphill to the yard in front of the Hill House Hotel. On the south side is a high brick and cobble garden wall and gate to 'Thrums' and 'The Monastery'. New window openings and repair work give them a late Victorian 'Arts & Crafts' air, but there is early work, such as the knapped flint to be seen at the rear. The garden wall reduces in height as it nears the Hill House yard, and has a wide grass verge in front, with small shrubs.



The road opens out to become an earth and gravel forecourt which serves as a car park for residents and the customers of Hill House. To the west side, the brick garden wall of Manor Cottage has recessed panels, as though designed to receive flint facings which were never inserted.

Looking back down the access road, there is a good view across The Street to the fields surrounding the village, including a water tower, a distinctive feature on the skyline.

Hill House Hotel is the focus of interest on the east side of the yard. Its century centre section is cream-painted brick, with tripartite sash windows with segmental arches on the ground floor and a central door with top light. The half-dormer windows have been enlarged during the 20<sup>th</sup> century; they have modern top-opening casement windows. There is a rough concrete apron in front with 'barbecue' style tables and chairs.

Fig 33. Hill House with the adjoining Cliff Top House to the right



The pitched roof has a gabled end to the north and a hipped end to the south, with plain barge boards and rudimentary chimney stacks at either end. On the north side is a single storey building with a modern casement windows and doors, along with a passageway through to outbuildings and the rear

garden; the opening has batten-construction doors. While the 18<sup>th</sup> century front of Hill House is of brick, the earlier end gables are of brick and cobbles. At the rear is the pub garden, with a lawn bordered by trees and a variety of tables and chairs. Between the house and garden an old signal box has been converted to accommodation; it has rendered walls, with imitation half timberwork on the first floor.

At the north end of the forecourt there are two paths; one to Lodge Cottage, bordered by a garden fence and leylandii hedge, the other leading to a side entrance to the churchyard. In the centre are two painted signs for Hill House.

Just to the north of Hill House a gravel drive leads to 'Manor House'. This is initially hidden from view by tall hedges and a black-stained shiplap fence. Seen from the churchyard it appears to be a much extended red brick single storey building, with a mix of older and more recent work. There are polygonal-section chimneys and a black glazed pantiled roof. The fence of Manor House curves round to border the grass-surface path to the church.

The three-storey Cliff Top House is attached to the east side of Hill House. Originally part of the inn, it is now a separate house. There are rows of windows on each floor, now uPVC replacements, save for the openings nearest to Hill House, which are bricked up. The central window on the top floor has been repositioned. The front bears an interesting ceramic sign 'G & E Weatherall'. On the ground floor is a uPVC porch with a triple Roman tile roof. The curious boundary wall is of breeze blocks with a balustrade which includes moulded cement lions as pillar finials.

### *Track to Manor Caravan Park*

A track runs down the east side of Clifftop House, leading to Manor Caravan Park. There are wide grass banks on both sides; the north bank has some weather-beaten bushes. To the north is the cream painted boundary wall of Hill House, on the south side is the weathered brick garden wall of the Rectory. After Clifftop House's wall with concrete lions, is a rendered wall with half-round capping, This is interrupted by a modern garage, its pink painted metal door facing the track. At the east end is the rear entrance to Hill House, with a mesh-covered gate. The rendered wall has faded blue lettering, 'BEER GARDEN', partly covered by ivy.

Half way down on the south side, the brick and cobble wall finishes by the gravel drive to the Rectory. Entering, immediately to the east of the drive is a modern red brick rectory. Beyond a brick wall and high timber fence to the east of this are brick and cobble outbuildings, perhaps once a stables, and an unusual structure, partly covered by weatherboards, and partly half-timbered; probably all are mid-late Victorian. The back of the cream-painted Rectory to the east has a modern garage and conservatory at the rear.

Before the track reaches the entrance to Manor Caravan Park, there are shrubs on either side, and a lawn to the south, part of the grounds of St Mary's. The gravel track finishes at the entrance to the caravan park, where it divides to become a series of paths.

### *St Mary's and its grounds*

*As the grounds are private, it was not possible to view them in detail.*

A tarmac drive runs from The Street up to the front of St Mary's, the centre section of which can be seen from the road, framed by the surrounding trees. Initially there are brick and cobble gatehouses with thatched roofs, continuing the neo-vernacular style of St Mary's. The former stables on the north side is the smaller of the two, a single storey high, partly

hidden by a high brick and cobble wall. It has gateposts capped by pyramidions and ball finials of rubbed brick, and a pair of timber gates leading into a yard. The southern building is two storeys; with its back to the drive it has an L-shaped groundplan with a wing on the east side. While the main part of the building has brick and cobble walls, the end gable facing the drive is in brick throughout. The house gives the impression that it was built in two stages, with the east wing as a later addition. The drive then runs between several rows of mature trees on raised banks, beyond which can be seen lawns. When the drive reaches St Mary's, it opens out, forming a simple parking area. Although it is not apparent from the ground, the house is enclosed by walls forming an oval shape. To the north of the house, most of the grounds are wooded; there are more scattered trees to the south, where gardens and lawns are interrupted by the occasional hedge.

*Fig 34. Driveway up to St Mary's.*

As St Mary's is an "X"-plan house, the front is sheltered by two angled gables, with a three-storey porch at the centre. The walls are of flint cobbles with brick dressings, although there is a dominant buff colouring, due to the heavy covering of mortar. The roof is thatched; the centre section extends down to the first floor, enclosing the first floor windows. All chimney stacks are of red brick and flint, with heavy oversailing top courses of red brick. The windows are lattice-work leaded casements; groups of elongated windows flank the entrance porch, the windows in the side wings are set in groups of 2 or 4. There are thatched dormers within each gable. The north-facing elevation is similar to the front, save for the lack of an entrance, and there is more complex brick decoration within the porch gable, while the north and south-facing elevations are narrower, with groups of dormers around near-central chimney stacks. Extending around the north side of the house is a semicircular thatched single-storey wing. St Mary's has an oval surrounding wall. The lettering on the gables ends, emphasising the piety of the Cator family reads "Ave Maria Stella Maris" (Hail Mary, star of the sea). The building has a strong and dramatic presence, emphasised by the area of higher ground, which allows it to be clearly visible at a distance from the north and east.



*Fig 35: St Mary's and its grounds, seen from the lighthouse.*



### **Character Area 3: Open fields.**

This Character Area falls into two halves. To the south of the centre, parts of two fields along Whimpwell Street are included in the Conservation Area. The larger area is to the east, comprising a field which has temporary caravan sites as part of Manor Caravan Park, and some adjoining agricultural land to the south.

#### *Caravan park and field by Beach Road.*

Along the south and part of the east sides is Beach Road, which angles to the east just before it reaches the cliff edge. To the west are the grounds of St Mary's. To the north-west there is the main caravan park with permanent caravans.

The field to the south has a border of trees, bushes and undergrowth separating it from Beach Road. A footpath leads diagonally across the field to the caravan park, and a raised grass track goes along the east side of the field and the boundary of St Mary's.

Before Beach Road reaches the cliff edge, it angles to the east. A narrow track continues up to the edge, just beyond some temporary metal safety barriers. Here there is a view of the sandy cliffs and the remains of sea defences, including rock armour and corrugated metal revetments. There is also the remains of a concrete ramp down to the beach. Just outside the Conservation Area on the cliff top there is an unappealing fenced-off area of rough ground with metal containers a caravan and what appeared to be the remains of one or more cars. To the south is a muddy area used as a car park, which at the time of the survey, included a lorry and flatbed trailer with a derelict(?) car.

*Fig 36. North end of Beach Road.*

To the west of Beach Road, at the north-east corner of the adjoining field is a similarly unattractive area. It is surfaced with building rubble gravel and earth; a timber fence stops visitors venturing too near to the cliff edge. Here is the former lifeboat station (now an RNLI shop) and a separate coastguard station. Both are unremarkable utilitarian post-war single storey buildings in red brick with pantiled roofs and concrete aprons in front. The old lifeboat station has blue painted metal garage-style doors. Along the side of the RNLI shop there are narrow windows below the eaves, glazed doors and advertisements. A gravel path and square-section concrete bollards and a metal gate separate this area from the grass field to the north. There are two rudimentary memorial benches with concrete supports and wooden slat seats.



*Fig 37. RNLI shop, coastguard station and scruffy forecourt.*

The grass field to the north serves as a temporary site for caravans and tents. Apart from rougher areas at the edge of the field, the grass is well mown. The field is separated from the agricultural land to the south by a raised bank topped by a low and heavily trimmed hedge. Against the side of the bank are green plastic posts with electricity and water outlets. There is a ragged unprotected cliff edge to the north. At the north-east corner a metal stairway gives access to the beach. The sea and the remains of breakwaters are visible here.



There is no clear division between the empty field and the field to the north with permanent caravans, save for a small area of rough ground near the cliff top. An informal path runs part of the way down to the cliff stairway from the lane beside Cliff Top House. The field serves as an informal recreation area out of the holiday season, frequented by dog walkers.

Looking inland from both fields, there is a fine view of St Mary's, with its brick and cobble boundary wall flanked by trees to the west and a high timber fence.

### *Fields on Whimpwell Street*

These fields are to the east of The Oaks. Only the initial part of each field is included in the Conservation Area, presumably in order to create a regular outline on the map. On the west side of the fields is a ditch; there are saplings and undergrowth to the west. A ditch, an attendant hedge and a footpath runs between the two fields, east-west. A simple plank bridge leads from Whimpwell Street to the footpath. This is an exposed area, where near-level fields are bordered by hedges, with a view of the gardens of the modern houses to the north and converted farm buildings to the south. In the distance can be seen the houses along North Walsham Road.

### 6.3 Key unlisted buildings

The following buildings are considered to be of local architectural/historical interest. They are recommended as the basis for a Local List. While this does not provide the same protection from inappropriate alteration or demolition as national listing, Local Lists are still a material consideration on the planning process.

Buildings have been listed here primarily because they retain much of their historic appearance or important features. A number of historic agricultural buildings in the village have not been included as it is considered that their character has been significantly altered during the conversion to residential use.

Dates provided here are, for the most part, approximate. Descriptions are incomplete, based upon what could be seen from the road. Those buildings marked with an asterisk are considered possible candidates for national listing.

**\*Danegate, Church Street.** Fine, probably 18<sup>th</sup> century house, which started life as a brick and cobble farmhouse. The red brick construction front with 16-light sash windows and a timber doorcase may be a later addition, together with the slate roof. Brickwork in Flemish bond. Windows have cut and rubbed brick arches; one ground floor window has a modern brick sill. Timber doorcase with 6-panel door, top panels replaced by lights. Modern chimneys. Rear extension in brick and cobbles.

**\*Thatcher's, Church Street.** Substantial Arts & Crafts influenced house showing the influence of Detmar Blow's St Mary's. Brick and cobble construction with thatched roof. Windows appear to be groups of sashes with brick dressings. First floor oriel bay on east elevation. Plain chimney stack of red brick with oversailing top course. Little other detail could be seen.

**Old Tithe Cottage, North Walsham Road.** Single storey cottage with brick and cobble walls, pantiled roof with dormers, possibly 18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Walls of coursed cobbles. Blocked doorway towards east end, suggesting this was originally two houses. The near-central door is of batten construction. Four window openings with brick dressings incorporating simple cut and rubbed brick arches. Pantiled roof has single brick chimney stack with modern pots.

#### **Barn and attached outbuilding at Tithe Barn Farm, North Walsham Road.**

Barn with single storey outbuilding attached on the east side. Probably 18<sup>th</sup> century. Flint cobble walls with brick dressings. At first floor level former slit windows are filled with flints; on the ground and first floors rectangular windows have been blocked with brick. There is a modern ground floor window and recent brickwork at the east end. The east and west end gables are of brick and cobbles with timber cladding in the eaves; the western gable has a large modern window in a new opening on the ground floor. The appearance of the cobbles in the gable ends suggests the walls have been partly rebuilt. Thatched roof. The single storey outbuilding shows evidence of rebuilding/alteration, and may incorporate a flint wall at its base. It has a pantiled roof with velux windows.

**Church of England School, The Street.** Dated 1861. Gothic Revival using red brick with white brick and dark-glazed brick decoration and stone detailing. Possible built in two phases; the main body to the north and a later classroom extension in similar style to the south. Window openings with pointed, segmental and flat arches; some modern replacement windows. Roofs are of slate. The north-facing section of roof includes polygonal slates. A modern extension reflects the gothic character well, and also deserves to be considered as a significant building in the village.

*Fig 38: Church of England School*



**\*The Pyghtle, The Street.** Late Victorian/Edwardian Arts & Crafts house showing the influence of St Mary's. Red brick with flint facings(?). Symmetrical front with groups of side-opening casement windows. Single storey porch, perhaps a later addition, with a round-headed opening. Hipped thatched roof with central dormer; dormer also has thatched roof. Multiple brick chimney stacks at north and south ends with modern pots, similar chimney stack to rear.

**\*Former Rectory, The Street.** 1859. Large brick construction house, two storeys with rendered walls. The front has a regular arrangement of 4-light sash windows around a central doorway. The doorway has a simple raised brick surround with hood and raised keyblock. There are paired panelled doors with a rectangular spoked light above. At the north side is a

later extension; it has a first floor sash window with segmental arch, and a blocked window opening on the ground floor. Black glazed pantiled roof with red brick chimney stacks and a variety of pots. There are outbuildings at the rear, some in brick and cobbles. Also, an old red brick wall on the north side of the grounds.

**\*St John's, The Street.** Late Victorian/Edwardian Arts & Crafts house showing the influence of St Mary's. Red brick and flint. Substantial two-storey house. Casement windows now replaced in uPVC. High thatched porch on south side. Projecting end gables with kneelers and imitation "tumbling in". Thatched roof. Chimney stacks initially of brick and flint changing to red brick nearer the top, with a variety of pots.



Fig 39. St John's

**Pebbles, Whimpwell Street.** Red brick house two-storeys high, 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Original outline of house preserved in end gables, with sections of "tumbling in" brick. The roof pitch has been changed to a shallower angle and a two-storey extension added at the front. The front elevation has modern replacement windows, the openings have flat brick drip moulds. Raised sections at north and south ends of front. Later extensions. Pantiled roof; chimney stacks at gable ends have paired polygonal chimneys without chimney pots. Part of rear elevation rendered.

## 6.4 Public Realm

The main roads in Happisburgh are of tarmac. The road surfaces are worn, with relatively unobtrusive road markings, save for the school crossings, where there is an excessive concentration of painted warnings and zig-zag lines. The west side of the Street, the beginning of North Walsham Road and Whimpwell Street have pavements with tarmac surfaces and concrete kerbs. Where there are no kerbs, grass verges help give a pleasant 'rural' feel to the village. The most picturesque verge is a raised bank on the east side of The Street which includes cultivated and wild plants. Elsewhere, such as on Church Street, the verges are narrow, sometimes including cultivated flowers. The only disadvantage is that parts of some verges have been run over so often by cars, such as on Church Street, that they have been reduced to mud.

Less formal areas, such as the yard in front of Hill House Hotel and the track leading to Manor Caravan Park have more unkempt surfaces, a mixture of gravel, dirt and stones. The area in front of the RNLI shop and coastguard station has a particularly scruffy surface, where builders' rubble is mixed with gravel and earth.

The only traffic island in the village is a small patch of grass at the junction of Beach Road and The Street/Whimpwell Street. At the time of the visit, this had a forlorn-looking tub, empty of plants, and a nondescript road sign pointing to the beach.

With the exception of the painted wooden village sign, signage in the streets is unremarkable. Street names are recent, in moulded plastic or metal.

There is a small number of public seats. In the churchyard there are some well-positioned and attractive timber benches; less attractive benches with concrete supports and timber slats are found by the RNLI station, together with concrete bollards and a metal barrier; they form an unappealing group.



Fig 40. Bench by RNLI shop.

In the centre of the village, the narrow telegraph poles and wires are hardly noticed, often difficult to see against the surrounding trees. It is only in the more open areas, such as along Whimpwell Street, that they are really noticeable.

The best features of the public realm in Happisburgh are along Whimpwell Street. 'The Oaks', where trees and hedges enclose the path make a very attractive feature, as does the pond on the opposite side of the road, just to the south.

## 6.5 Local details, styles and building materials.

Happisburgh's church, dating primarily from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries is a tour-de-force example of the Mediaeval church builder's art, using knapped, flushwork and unworked flint cobbles with limestone dressings and quoins. Flint was a common building material in the village, although unworked flints tend to be used for early houses.

The oldest documented house in the village is The Monastery, in The Street. Parts of this house date from the early 16<sup>th</sup> century; it has been altered in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. At the rear can be seen areas of knapped flint. A good deal of brick has been set 'end on' into the flintwork, to bind the inner and outer parts of the wall together.

*Fig 41. Part of the side wall of Thrums. Note that while the corner bricks, or 'quoins' appear relatively recent, there is a variety of earlier, smaller brick placed 'end on' into the flintwork. This may be brick from earlier buildings which has been re-used.*



Most of the brick and cobble houses and agricultural buildings in the village fall within a 'vernacular' tradition where flint cobbles are used together with locally-made red brick, and roofs are of red clay pantiles, which in some cases may have replaced thatch. Brick is used for the corners of houses, or 'quoins', for the dressings around windows and doors and sometimes also in the top of the gable end. Brick is also used below the eaves, stepped out, sometimes with a simple 'dentil' pattern. It is difficult to date such buildings; techniques did not change a great deal over the years, and houses have often been altered or added to over time. It has been suggested that flint cobbles were not laid in courses for house walls until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a practice which continues up to the mid-late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This offers one possible clue as to house dates; another is the size of the brick.. When looking at buildings such as Tithe Cottage and Thrums, early examples can be found which are slightly different in dimensions to later 19<sup>th</sup> century brick.

### Early brick

Tithe Cottage: L:237 H:57 W:111  
Pebbles: L:224 H:54 W:111

### Victorian brick

Prospect House: L: 229 H:65 W:105  
School: L: 235 H:66 W:102

This may help identify early buildings; what it does not give is a clear date. Ms. Trett has stated there were two brickworks in the area (pers. comm.), and it may be that one works was producing brick of smaller dimensions than the other. Along the coast, in towns such as Cromer, brick sizes seem to have been standardized around 1800; there is no size difference between late Georgian and Victorian brick.

*Fig 42. Sash window with gauged brick arch above, Danegate, Church Street.*

Early houses probably had simple side-opening casement windows made by a local carpenter, together with a batten-construction or possibly a panelled door. At some point, the sash window was introduced; perhaps initially in one of the outlying farmhouses. By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century it was commonplace, as seen on the old Rectory and Prospect House. Once introduced on fashionable houses, sashes will have been adopted for smaller houses, often replacing casements. In some cases, sashes were used on the fronts of houses, but the simpler and cheaper casements were used at the sides and rear.



Pantiles for roofs appear to have been common by the 18<sup>th</sup> century, at which time there was also a fashion for dark glazed pantiles. Pantiles required a shallower roof pitch than thatch, so the introduction of the new roofing material might result in raising of the eaves to produce a shallower slope, such as on 'Pebbles' on Whimpwell Street. Slate was the material of choice for fashionable houses during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but where it was not available, or expensive, pantiles continued to be

used. To help secure the bricks or tiles on the tops of the gable ends, areas of brick might be set at an angle, termed 'tumbling in'. It was a practice that Detmar Blow used for his houses when he revisited traditional building practices at St Mary's, although here the tumbling in brickwork is purely ornamental. By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, slate was in use for roofs, such as at Prospect House and the school.

The simplest type of window and door arch is the rough brick arch of unaltered bricks in headers or stretchers. For a more stylish arch, good quality bricks might be cut and rubbed to create a gauged brick arch. Probably introduced to Norfolk in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the practice persisted in Norfolk for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Tithe Barn Cottage on the North Walsham Road has simple gauged brick arches, possibly of early 19<sup>th</sup> century date. Stone lintels were used in the later Victorian period, as at Albion Cottage and Church Cottage; although there may still be rough brick arches set behind them.

*Fig 43. 'Pebbles', on Whimpwell Street shows how a roof slope has been altered, perhaps when thatch was replaced by pantiles, also areas of "tumbling in" brickwork.*



Perhaps the first houses in the village to be architect-designed, or at least to have used commercially available pattern books were the Rectory and Prospect House. For vernacular houses, the shape reflected the function of the building, and windows would be put where they were needed. With "polite", or architect designed houses, the house tended to reflect classical influence, with a symmetrically arranged front and a regular arrangement of sash windows. The fine brick front of Danegate may be a later addition to what was a brick and cobble farmhouse, and reflects 18<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup> century house design. It has a central door with timber doorcase and hood, and regularly spaced sash windows.

The old Rectory, with its rendered walls appears a conservative design, looking back to early 19<sup>th</sup> century classically influenced houses, which may explain the use of paired narrow front doors, a regular Georgian/Regency feature.

The school is undoubtedly architect designed. Its use of different coloured materials, particularly red, black-glazed and white brick, shows the "constructional polychrome" of the Gothic Revival architects, which can be seen in a more subdued fashion on Prospect House and the church hall. The white brick may have been produced locally; while the most common brick in the region is the "Norfolk Red", several brickworks along the coast were also producing a white, or cream-coloured brick. The Gothic Revival designers were willing to introduce asymmetry to their designs, which was considered to add 'picturesque' appeal, as well as reflecting the different functions of the rooms.

*Fig 44. Red, white and black-glazed brick used on the school.*

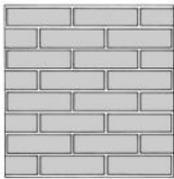
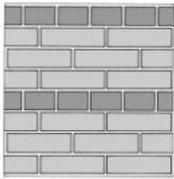
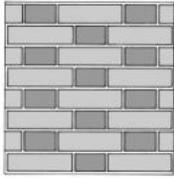


*Fig 45. St Mary's.*

Gothic revival buildings such as schools and rectories were the first stage in a process which led to the late Victorian "vernacular revival". At this time, architects began to move away from what was seen as the 'fussy' or over-ornamented architecture of the mid-Victorian period, towards a simpler approach based around traditional buildings, which culminated in the Arts & Crafts movement. Leading figures of the movement such as Phillip Webb, Edward Prior and Detmar Blow were keen to make sure their new houses reflected the surrounding traditional architecture and local materials, even to the extent of reintroducing thatched roofs. Their designs were reinterpretations of traditional work, recognisably late 19<sup>th</sup> century, rather than pastiches of historical buildings. Blow's work at St Mary's is considered one of the outstanding buildings of the period. It is termed a 'butterfly



house, with an “X” shaped groundplan. The type has in the past been credited to Edward Prior, but English Heritage now credits Blow with inventing the design, a shape which Blow commented was inspired by a butterfly card sent to him by his friend Ernest Gimson.



Blow either worked again in Happisburgh, to produce houses such as The Pightle, St John’s and Thatcher’s, or inspired others to work in the same style. These were substantial houses, but for most working people, smaller houses were called for. Northdenes House, Albion House and Church Cottage are typical late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century artisan’s houses, with all brick fronts and a regular grouping of sash windows. They were probably designed by a local builder, perhaps using a commercially-available plan. Primarily in red brick, they have also have small areas of flint cobbles and stone lintels.

The buildings from the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century show a range of brick bonds. Flemish bond is common, and there is also occasional use of Stretcher bond, which did not become commonplace until the cavity-walled houses of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. English garden wall bond is used for the rear wall of the stables at the entrance to St Mary’s.

Fig 46. Brick bonds. Top: Flemish bond; centre: English garden wall bond, lower: Stretcher bond

By the inter-war period, it was common for houses to have a mild Arts & Crafts influence, such as on the east side of the North Walsham Road, although these houses fall outside the Conservation Area.

## 6.6 The contribution made by greenery and green spaces and ecology and biodiversity value.

The village is surrounded on three sides by open countryside, and to the north by the cliffs, beach and sea. All have a high amenity and good biodiversity value.

Fig 47. Cliff path at Happisborough during the early summer, with a variety of plant life.

Happisburgh is a popular tourist destination, due to the pleasant appearance of the village and its attractive surroundings. The beach is difficult to reach, save by steps from the caravan park or temporary paths down the cliff to the east; nevertheless, when the tide is out there is a fine sandy beach which is popular with holidaymakers and local people. The beach and the countryside are popular with walkers, particularly the coastal path on the east and west sides of the village, where fine views of the village and surrounding countryside are to be had.



The countryside around Happisburgh is on the margin of the Broads Environmentally Sensitive Area, an internationally important habitat. While studies of the local fauna and flora have understandably concentrated on the Broads, wildlife from this area will undoubtedly also make use of the surrounding countryside such as at Happisburgh. The importance of the Happisburgh region is underlined by an online record of birds in the area, set up by local birdwatcher James Appleton (Happisburghparishblogspot.com). His impressive diary includes amongst other species, pink-foot geese, grey partridges, lapwings, marsh harriers, waxwings, snow buntings, yellowhammers, redwings, widgeon, teal and snipe. At one point, he records a flock of no less than 20 skylarks.

While the fields surrounding Happisburgh are devoted to agriculture, English Nature notes that this type of environment can still support wildlife such as badgers, bats, barn owls, the abovementioned skylarks and yellowhammers. The margins of fields growing cereal crops are important to birds such as the grey partridge.

Although subject to erosion, which limits their usefulness to most species, the more stable areas of the cliff face provide an environment where sand martins can nest. On the cliff top, there are strips of grassland surrounding the coastal path; these

are a haven for grassland butterflies, moths and wild flowers. During the summer months of 2010, skylarks were very active in this area.

Within the village, the most important habitat is the churchyard. Churchyards often support a good variety of grasses, typical of the traditional English country meadow, an environment which has been all but lost to modern agriculture. This is encouraged by careful management of the churchyard and the creation of 'conservation zones' as at Happisburgh, where the grass is left to grow long and not cut when plants flower and seed. Churchyards are a refuge for rare species, including lichens, which attach themselves to the weathered stonework.

The fields which are included in the Conservation Area are managed either for the production of crops or in the case of Manor Caravan Park, to create a convenient 'lawn-like' environment for holidaymakers. This fails to encourage wildlife and plants, save at the margins of the fields, where the grass is left untouched, and in small areas of unmanaged woodland at the edges of the fields.

Gardens also have a role to play, harbouring insects such as bumble bees which have diminished in the countryside due to the use of pesticides and agricultural sprays, and other wildlife – it has been noted that goldfinches are now more common in gardens than in the countryside around Norfolk. As village gardens are often situated next to farmland, there will be movement of wildlife between the gardens and surrounding countryside. The village has a remarkably high number of mature trees in private gardens, which form a good habitat for a range of birds and for insect life.

### *6.7 The extent of loss, intrusion or damage, negative factors.*

Happisburgh is situated to the east of North Norfolk, well away from the most popular part of the coast, which stretches from the Burnhams and Wells to Cromer and Mundesley. This area is well served by the 'Coasthopper' bus, which is well-used by tourists. There are no through buses running directly from the main tourist area to Happisburgh, only a limited service where visitors have to change buses at Mundesley or North Walsham. The lack of a bus service similar to the coasthopper means that Happisburgh is often overlooked by the summer visitor. Tourism is necessary for the village, particularly if it is to support its amenities, the local shops and public house. Set against this, there is limited through vehicle traffic, which adds considerably to the attractiveness of Happisburgh.

The village has a high number of interesting historic buildings; for the most part, these are private houses. It is unfortunate that some have replaced their windows and sometimes also their doors with uPVC; an environmentally-damaging material which looks out of character in older properties. There are other changes which have weakened the character of village houses, such as the introduction of poorly-designed porches, the occasional satellite dish and new doors, but the loss of original windows is by far the most significant.

The threat of coastal erosion is a major factor at Happisburgh. In the longer term, this will threaten the existence of the village; in the short term it may encourage negative perceptions of Happisburgh, discouraging possible visitors and reducing interest in maintaining the appearance of the village.

### *6.8 General condition*

With the exception of replacement features on houses, as outlined in section 6.7, and the north end of Beach Road, the condition of the houses and much of the built and natural environment within the Conservation Area is good. The main feature in need of repair is the north side of the churchyard wall.

### *6.9 Problems and pressures and capacity for change*

As a part of the attractive North Norfolk coast, Happisburgh attracts new people to live in the village, sometimes to retire. This creates a demand for new and affordable houses if local people are to stay in the area. The development of new houses in the village must be sensitively handled, balancing the costs of intruding into the surrounding countryside with the possible weakening of the generally open character of the village.

If Happisburgh is to maintain its attractive character, more care should be taken with the design of new houses, which have generally failed to reflect the traditional character of the village. All too often flint cobbles are introduced to what are

otherwise uninspired “stock” designs, to create a veneer of ‘local distinctiveness’. As Detmar Blow’s work on St Mary’s shows, traditional materials can be used as part of a new and imaginative design that respects and enhances its surroundings.

*Fig 48. Failed sea defences on the beach.*

Areas of the cliff top, both within and just outside the Conservation Area, fail to reflect the attractive and positive character of the village. This is particularly true of the north end of Beach Road, where there is a scruffy car park, with an unsightly area of storage containers, a caravan and old cars nearby. Just to the west, the coastguard station and RNLI shop are disappointing buildings, set in an area of rough ground with poor street furniture. The remains of failed sea defences on the beach reinforce the negative character of this area.



## **8. Recommendations/Conclusion**

### *8.1 Suggested boundary changes.*

Several buildings and areas of ground appear to have been included within the Conservation Area merely to create a neat outline. There seems no other reason to include some unremarkable modern bungalows on both sides of Whimpwell Street and small parts of two fields on the west side. These are recommended for removal, together with another modern bungalow to the east of The Forge, on Beach Road.

### *8.2 Summary of issues/SWOT analysis*

#### *Strengths*

- Attractive and peaceful built environment, both built and natural.
- Outstanding range of historic buildings including parish church, St Mary’s, the lighthouse and Hill House.
- Good surrounding countryside and beach.
- Good approaches to the village from the east and west.
- Strong community interest in the village and its environment.
- Positive publicity generated by archaeological work on Happisburgh beach and recent heritage initiatives including ‘Pathfinder’ project.

#### *Weaknesses*

- Limited bus transport from along the coast to the west.
- Modern housing failing to reflect historic character of the village.
- Alterations to historic buildings weakening their character.
- Difficulty in reaching the beach
- Unsightly remains of old sea defences and poor features on cliff top around north end of Beach Road

#### *Opportunities*

- Publicising the attractive character of the village.
- Encouraging better public transport.
- Better publicity for the natural environment around the village, including the archeological importance of the area.
- Create Local List of important buildings.
- Improvement of cliff top areas, particularly around Beach Road, and improvement of the appearance of the beach
- Creation of new access to beach
- Adoption of Article 4(2) Directions to protect the historic character of the area.

### *Threats*

- Coastal erosion, and the threat to local property.
- Negative publicity, loss of confidence and neglect of the built environment as a reaction to the threat of erosion.
- Need for new houses resulting in inappropriate “infill” development in centre or encroaching into countryside
- Increased traffic reducing the quality of the village centre
- Further inappropriate alteration to buildings or gardens in village resulting in further erosion of character

## **PART 2 MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS**

### *1. Introduction*

The first part of this document identified the qualities of the Happisburgh Conservation Area that make it special and distinctive. The following Management Proposals include recommendations for improvement and change.

### *2. Issues and recommendations*

#### *2.1 Review of the Conservation Area boundary*

The proposed changes have been described in Section 8.1 of the Appraisal and shown on an accompanying map.

#### *2.2 Alterations to unlisted buildings and Article 4(2) directions*

Alterations to unlisted buildings have been outlined in Sections 6.7 and 6.8 of the character appraisal.

The main problem is the removal of features, and their inappropriate replacement, particularly with uPVC windows and doors on older properties. To a lesser extent, this includes alterations to chimney stacks and the introduction of satellite dishes and new porches/conservatories.

Where houses are not in multiple occupation or commercial use, such alterations can usually be carried out without planning permission. Development of this kind is called “permitted development” and falls into various classes, listed in the Town and Country Planning (GPO) Order, 1995.

Powers exist for the Council, known as Article 4(2) Directions, to withdraw some of these permitted rights in the interest of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Article 4(2) Directions are recommended to cover the protection of boundary walls, the retention of chimney stacks and chimney pots and to ensure the discreet installation of satellite dishes on side or rear elevations. Article 4 Directions can be applied to individual houses and groups of properties in order to protect their appearance. Where older houses retain their windows and doors, Article 4(2) Directions should also be considered for use.

In general, uPVC windows have a short lifespan, so it may be worth promoting the advantages of timber frames for the time when owners have to replace their existing windows. This should also stress the environmental problems with uPVC, in particular the toxic chemicals released into the environment during production and disposal, the high energy costs of manufacture and the likelihood that they will become a landfill problem, as uPVC windows are a difficult product to recycle.

#### *2.3 Buildings of local interest*

A list of locally important buildings has been given in the first part of this document, section 6.3, and they are shown on an accompanying map. It is recommended that this list forms the basis of a Local List for Happisburgh. In section 6.3 buildings marked with an asterisk are considered likely candidates for national listing. Information on how to list a building can be obtained from the Conservation & Design Dept, NNDC.

## *2.4 Development pressures and quality of new developments*

The District council's Local Development Framework classifies Happisburgh, as a Coastal Service Village. Small areas for development have been proposed on the south and west sides of the village. Any new development must be sensitively handled, balancing the costs of intruding into the surrounding countryside with the possible weakening of the generally open character of the village. Consideration should also be given to protecting the views from the centre of the village, including more subtle views, such as between the houses along the west side of The Street.

Most of the new houses are "stock" designs which fail to reflect the character of the village. Greater care should be taken with the design of new houses, relating them better to their surrounding environment, both in terms of their physical appearance and their spacing.

The recently revised Design Guide produced by the District Council contains information and advice on these issues.

## *2.5 Buildings at risk*

There are no buildings considered to be at risk within the Conservation Area.

## *2.6 Tree Management*

Anyone proposing to cut down, top or lop a tree in a Conservation Area is required to give six weeks notice to the local planning authority (subject to a range of exceptions including small trees or dead, dying or dangerous trees).

## *2.7 Public Realm and green spaces*

The District Council will work with other agencies, residents and land owners to ensure public open spaces continue to be maintained and enhanced. It is proposed that a regime be established to make sure that street surfaces are properly cleaned, and the street furniture is kept in good order.

The public realm is described in more detail in Section 6.4 in the first part of this report.

## *3 Monitoring and review*

As recommended by English Heritage, this document should be reviewed every five years from the date of adoption. It will need to be assessed in the light of the emerging Local Development Framework and changing national government policy. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the Conservation Area including a full photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action
- An assessment of the recommendations of this document and whether they have been acted upon, and how successful this has been.
- The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed, requiring further actions or enhancements
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and itemising necessary action
- Publicity and advertising

It is possible that this review could be carried out by the local community under the guidance of a heritage consultant or NNDC. This would enable the local community to become more involved with the process and raise awareness of other issues, in particular the problems associated with enforcement.

The success of this document will be dependent on its adoption by local residents, regular monitoring and an effective enforcement strategy to ensure that recommendations can be achieved.

## *4. HELM as a resource*

Further extensive guidance on the local management of the historic environment can be found on the online resource Historic Environment Local Management at [www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk).

## *5 Useful information, appendices & contact details*

Barringer, J.C. (introduction), Faden's Map of Norfolk (Larks Press, Dereham, 1989)

Barringer, J.C. (introduction), Bryant's Map of Norfolk in 1826, (Larks Press, Dereham, 1998)

English Heritage/CABE: Buildings in Context, New development in Historic Areas, (EH/CABE 2001)

English Heritage: Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals (EH, 2006)

English Heritage: Guidance on the management of Conservation Areas (EH, 2006)

English Heritage/Department of the Environment: List of buildings of special architectural or historic interest (various dates)

Halcrow Ltd. Happisburgh to Winterton Sea Defences Stage 3B Works. Environmental Statement (Environmental Agency, undated).

North Norfolk District Council: Happisburgh Coastal Village Workshop: Feedback report. (NNDC 2007)

North Norfolk District Council: Local Development Framework (Core Strategy) (NNDC 2009)

North Norfolk District Council: Design Guide/ Local Development Framework, supplementary planning document (NNDC, 2009)

North Norfolk District Council: North Norfolk site Specific Proposals/ Local Development Framework. Appropriate Assessment. (NNDC, 2009)

North Norfolk District Council: Landscape Character Assessment/Local Development Framework, supplementary planning document (NNDC, 2009)

Pestell, R. : Happisburgh: The story of a coastal parish (reprinted from Norfolk Fair) (Rounce & Wortley, undated)

Trett, M. Happisburgh: The village as it used to be (Catseye Press, undated)

Wade-Martins, P. (ed) An Historical Atlas of Norfolk (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Norfolk Museums Service 1998)

Wallingford, H.R. Ltd. Ostend to Cart Gap Coastal Strategy Study. Executive Summary (H.R. Wallingford Ltd, 2001)

### **Websites:**

[Englishnature.org](http://Englishnature.org)

[Helm.org.uk](http://Helm.org.uk)

[Naturalengland.gov.uk](http://Naturalengland.gov.uk)

[Norfolkbiodiversity.org](http://Norfolkbiodiversity.org)

[Norfolkcoast.co.uk](http://Norfolkcoast.co.uk)

[Norfolk museums.norfolk.gov.uk](http://Norfolk museums.norfolk.gov.uk)

[Northnorfolk.org.uk](http://Northnorfolk.org.uk)

[Norfolkwildlifetrust.co.uk](http://Norfolkwildlifetrust.co.uk)

Norfolk Heritage Explorer/ Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, (notes by D. Robertson, 2006)

British Museum website:

Environment Agency (Coastlines: a newsletter for the Anglian region, Spring 2000)

Happisburgh Village Website: based on information by M. Trett.

[Happisburghparishbirding.com](http://Happisburghparishbirding.com)

**Trade Directories:**

White's, 1845, Harrod & Co, 1868, Kelly's, 1992

**Thanks to the following for information:**

Clive and Sue Stockton, Mary Trett, Jim Whiteside, Rob Young (NNDC)

***Appendix 1: Listed buildings***

All listed at Grade II except for St Mary's Church at Grade I, and St Mary's (Happisburgh Manor) at Grade II\*.

**Within the Conservation Area**

TG33 SE 5/34 St Mary's Parish Church

TG 33 SE 5/35 The Hill House

TG 33 SE 5/45 The Monastery, Whimpwell St.

TG 33 SE 5/46 Thrums, Whimpwell St.

TG33 SE 5/47 St Mary's (Happisburgh Manor) also two summer houses, Whimpwell St.

TG33 SE 5/48 Encircling wall to St Mary's, Whimpwell St.

TG 33 SE 5/49 St Anne's (including outhouse) Whimpwell St.

TG33 SE 5/50 Stable block to north of St Marys drive, Whimpwell St.

TG32 NE 7/52 Holly Farm, Whimpwell St.

**Outside Conservation Area**

TG33 SE 5/33 Baldwin's Farm House

TG32 NE 7/36 Manor Farmhouse

TG32 NE 7/37 Barn n.e. of Manor Farmhouse

TG32 7/38 Barn e. of Manor Farmhouse

TG33 SE Happisburgh Lighthouse and Lighthouse Cottages

TG32 NE 7/41 Lower Farmhouse, Mill Rd.

TG33 SE 5/42 Church Farmhouse, North Walsham Rd.

TG33 SE 5/43 White's Farmhouse, North Walsham Rd.

TG33 SE 5/44 Barn, White's Farm, North Walsham Rd.