

PART 1

CHARACTER APPRAISAL

1. SUMMARY

1.1 Key Characteristics

The key characteristics of the Overstrand Conservation Area are:

- The settlement follows the line of the cliff, and falls into three distinct bands: beach & cliff face; village; countryside south of the coast road.
- The cliffs create a physical and visual separation between the village and the beach.
- Green and rural feel to most roads, particularly the Cromer and Mundesley Roads
- Most houses are between the present coast road and the cliff top.
- Limited commercial activity, with a small group of shops and a pub on the High Street.
- Most minor roads and lanes lead north to the seafront.
- Concentrations of specific types of housing; small brick and cobble houses from the fishing village and short terraces of modestly sized Victorian/Edwardian houses and commercial buildings.
- More dispersed late Victorian and Edwardian villas, most in an Arts & Crafts style, usually with rendered walls and plain tiled roofs, set in substantial gardens.
- The Pleasaunce and its grounds as a focal point near the clifftop.
- Ivy Farm holiday centre on east side
- Later infill housing including inter-war houses and small estates of later 20th century houses/bungalows.

Key issues

- Need to review the Conservation Area boundary
- Pressures of modern development eg. traffic, infill housing
- 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 Overstrand Conservation Area

Overstrand was designated a Conservation Area in 1978. It includes the historic centre of the village and the later Victorian and Edwardian villas. On the north side the beach is included in the Conservation Area, and to the south of the coast road, it includes agricultural land and woodland.

As part of a national government-led reappraisal of Conservation Areas, the following report was commissioned in July 2009. The survey was carried out during July-September 2009.

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 their special qualities of the conservation area (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 Holt 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 21st Century'.

3. LOCATION AND SETTING

3.1 Location and context

Overstrand is a village set close to the cliff, facing north-east. It is surrounded by agricultural land, with some woodland on the south side. Most of the village is located between the cliff edge and the main coast road. There is a small number of houses and a garden centre to the south of the coast road.



Fig 1: View of the Overstrand from the Lighthouse Hills.

The village amenities include two shops, a post office, garage, pub and café. The 2001 Census recorded 1,101 inhabitants. There are no industries apart from tourism.

The railway line has closed, but there are regular buses connecting Overstrand with the towns of Cromer and North Walsham, as well as villages along the coast as far as Mundesley.

The initial village was a small village earning a living mainly from agriculture and fishing. In the 1880s the area became a very select watering place, with substantial holiday villas built by the gentry. In recent years it has become a more conventional seaside holiday destination.

The Conservation Area includes most of the older houses, but excludes some inter-war and more recent housing developments. The foreshore is included, as is some of the woodland to the south.

The coast is particularly subject to erosion at this point (see later comments).

3.2a General character

The character of Overstrand is complex, as it combines several distinct styles of housing, each with different spatial arrangements. These tend to be grouped in discrete areas, and their original appearance has often been interrupted, or weakened, by later infill housing.

The traditional character of Overstrand is given by small-scale houses built using local brick and flint with pantiled roofs. Up to the 1880s, these were the main houses in the village, scattered along The Londs, with a smaller group at the junction of High Street and Cromer Road. The Londs preserves much of its early character, but is largely concealed by later development, save to the occasional pedestrian. The other roads from the early village, High Street and Paul's Lane, have a more diverse built character with housing from the late 19th century onwards.

The houses built towards the end of the 19th century established "polite" architectural styles in the village, and some new roads were laid out at this time. Along Harbord Road and parts of the High Street, Cliff Road and Paul's Lane, the houses are modest in size, of red brick throughout, set close together and often arranged in terraces. These have a typically

urban, late Victorian feel. In contrast, there are large often imaginatively-designed villas from the same period which introduce a greater variety of materials including imitation half timberwork and render. The villas are usually in gardens which include mature trees, and help create the open and green character of the village. They tend to be set apart from the concentrations of smaller Victorian/Edwardian houses.

Later housing, mainly from the inter-war periods and the end of the 20th century has filled vacant plots between the villas, and in some cases, what were once spacious gardens. New estates can also be found on the east and west sides of the village. While there are some mildly attractive later houses, particularly from the inter-war period, they do not have sufficient visual impact to give a definite character, other than a general “suburban” feel. They tend to have large gardens, which reinforces the open and semi-rural appearance of the village, particularly along the Cromer and Mundesley Roads.

3.2b Plan form

Overstrand's oldest roads are the High Street, The Londs, Paul's Lane and part of the Cromer Road between the Church and the turning into the High Street. The 1885 Ordnance Survey map shows that at this time most of the houses were along The Londs, with a smaller group at what is now the junction of Cromer Road and the High Street. There are a few isolated larger houses, in particular Overstrand Hall and Ivy House.

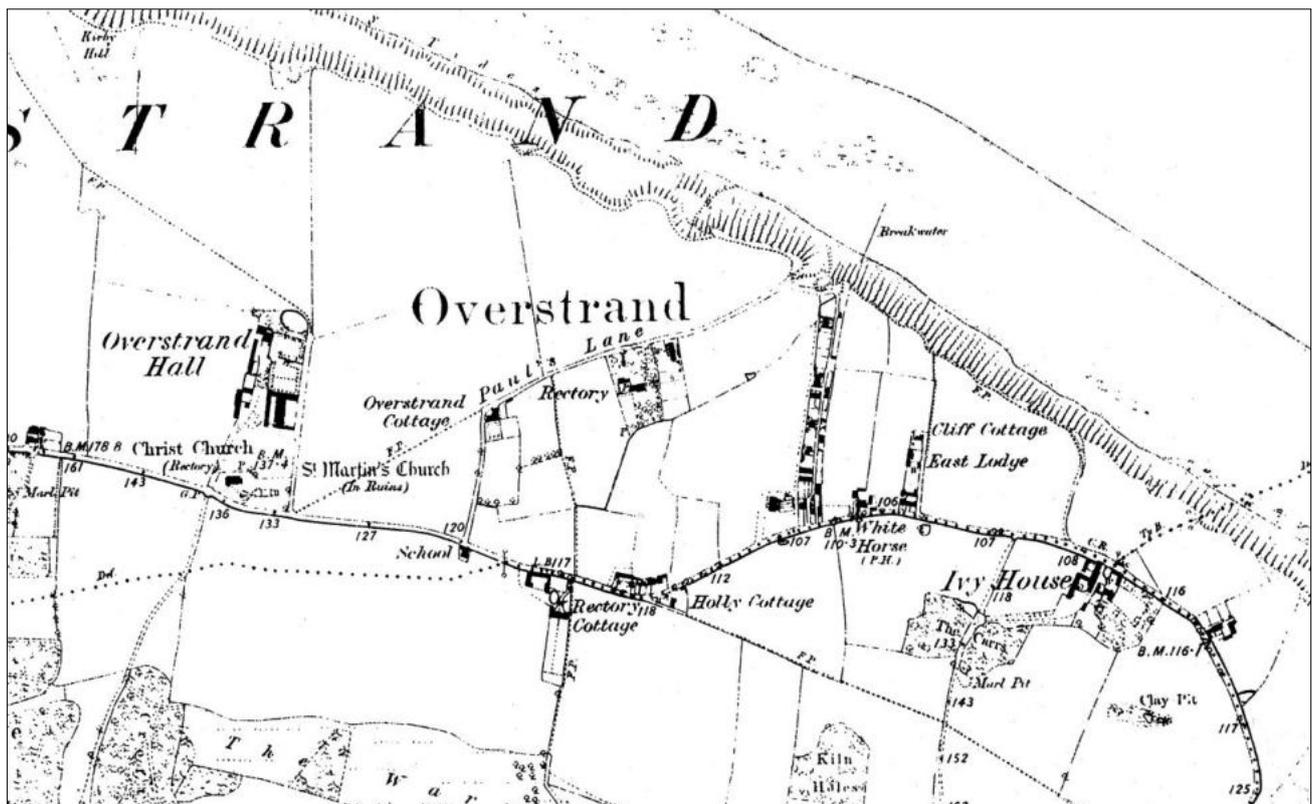


Fig 2: Detail of the 1885 Ordnance Survey map of Overstrand.

The village's growth was initially linear, with houses following the courses of the main roads; the linear pattern has continued when new roads have been established; in the 1880s, houses were built along the new thoroughfares of Harbord Road and Cliff Road, while in the twentieth century new housing has been set the north side of the Mundesley Road.

There have been some breaks with the linear pattern of growth, however. Following Lord Suffield's land sales at the end of the nineteenth century, large villas were built on what had been fields, filling the open land between the roads. The villas were linked to the main thoroughfares by short side roads, such as Carr Lane. During the later twentieth century, small estates proved to be a more effective way of using land along the side of roads, and a number have been built, particularly along the Cromer and Mundesley Roads.

3.3 Landscape setting

Overstrand is situated at the edge of the cliffs. The village ends abruptly, as part of the settlement has been lost to the sea. To the west is the Cromer Golf Course, with the steep-sided Lighthouse Hills; to the east is agricultural land with fields, which has a more subtle incline. Inland beyond the coast road, there are fields and woodland along the Cromer Ridge, beyond which is the village of Northrepps.

The soils and exposed cliff faces at Overstrand are glacial deposits which include glacial tills, sand and laminated clays, although the cliffs are generally described as being of “boulder clay”. These deposits are typical for settlements along the “Cromer Ridge”, a terminal moraine which runs near parallel with the coast at this point. The glacial deposits overlay sands and gravels which are believed to be pre-Pleistocene in origin. Below these there is a bed of flints and grey shelly sand, which in turn covers a chalk layer, the “Upper Chalk”; some of this material is exposed as part of the sandy beach. Overstrand’s beach is sandy, sloping down gradually towards the sea, and divided by timber and granite breakwaters.



Fig 3: Looking east across the beach towards Overstrand.

4. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT & ARCHAEOLOGY

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

While there are stone tools from the paeolithic and mesolithic periods found in the Overstrand area, there is no record of finds from the New Bronze Age through to the Roman period, suggesting occupation was not continuous. A Saxon coin from circa 517 AD may show the site was settled by the 6th century. The village is mentioned in the Little Domesday survey as having 240 acres of arable land, a 1 acre meadow, woodland and an ox-mill, but there is no mention of a church.

There have been several suggestions as to the origin of the village name. Some historians have considered it has a Danish origin, although a more recent theory is that it has old English or Germanic roots, perhaps starting out as “Othestranda”, which might mean “the strand next to the wide/broad strand” (eg. Sidestrand), or perhaps just “Above the strand”, a strand being the area of shore exposed at low tide. The situation is further confused, however, by 16th-18th century references to “Oxstrand”.

The first Overstrand church was recorded in the reign of Edward 1st, (1272-1307) and dedicated to St Martin. It was lost to the sea in the late 14th century. Much of the early village may have shared the same fate, a victim of the ever-present coastal erosion. A replacement church was built and in use by 1432. By the 18th century the church was in disrepair, and by 1845 it was virtually a ruin. A new church, Christ Church, was built nearby, consecrated in 1867. In 1914, the new church was considered too small for the congregation, and the older church of St Martin was restored and reopened. Christ church was demolished in 1951.

White’s 1836 Directory of Norfolk mentions “a small hamlet and fishing station called Beck Hoy” nearby on the beach; its name is given in a later Directory as Beck Hyth (also written as Hythe). Little is known about Beck Hythe; it appears to have had only a small number of buildings. It has been suggested that when at some unspecified date Beck Hythe was lost to the sea, its fishing community moved to Overstrand.

The 1836 Directory describes Overstrand as “a small parish of scattered houses”, and this description fits the settlement shown on the first Ordnance Survey map of 1885 equally well. It seems that for much of its life, Overstrand has been a small village, with its inhabitants earning a living from fishing, agriculture, and to a lesser extent, sea trade. The local landowner, Lord Suffield, made an attempt to develop the area with a harbour in the 1820s, but to no avail. In 1836 there were only 178 inhabitants, by 1871 this had grown to just 266.

The visitors prized the relative remoteness and picturesque nature of the area, which was sufficiently removed from the bustle of nearby Cromer so that minor royals could visit unrecognized. When Lord Suffield sold off more land in 1902, he intended that the new plots should only be for large, high-status villas.

There were unsettling signs of development, however, particularly the large Overstrand Hotel built on the cliff top in 1899, and the opening of the Overstrand railway station in 1906. Despite this, the village continued to attract the fashionable set up until the First World War. After the war, a number of the villas were sold, and new houses, such as along the south side of the Cromer Road, are modest in size. Nevertheless, Kelly's Trade Directory of the 1930s was still able to repeat the comment it had made for Overstrand in 1900, that it was "much frequented in the summer as a seaside resort and bathing place".

After the Second World War, the village suffered a series of misfortunes. The Overstrand Hotel, which had already been threatened by erosion, was gutted by a fire in 1947. The north end of the High Street, where the Hotel had been, was lost to the sea, together with several houses. This was followed by the closure of the railway station in 1953.

By the later 1960s-1970s, families who might have swelled visitor numbers were attracted abroad by the promise of guaranteed sunshine and cheap air flights. Some of the large villas became care homes. There was also an influx of people from outside the area (quite likely those who had originally enjoyed holidays here) to buy or build houses. Nevertheless, its attractive centre, sandy beaches and countryside have ensured that Overstrand remains a pleasant seaside destination.

4.2 The archaeological significance and potential of the area.

Early evidence of settlement in the area of Overstrand is meagre. Paleolithic and Neolithic tools have been found, but there are no later finds until the Saxon period, which is represented by a single coin. The evidence of Mediaeval occupation is more substantial. St Martin's Church dates in part from the early 15th century.

The oldest houses are probably late 17th or early 18th century, and agricultural complexes such as Ivy Farm probably have an even longer history. When changes or extensions are planned to buildings such as this, it would be useful to have a specialist present to record evidence of earlier buildings.

Archaeology also encompasses the remains of the last two world wars, and although most defences have been filled in or removed, there are records of weapons pits, slit trenches and gun emplacements along this part of the coast, and at least one pillbox survives.

4.3 The Conservation Area and the relationship with its setting

The countryside and beach enclosing Overstrand are attractive, and a recreational resource much appreciated by local people and visitors. While the centre of the village is charming, it is the natural surroundings of the village which make this a holiday destination.

Overstrand beach is popular with holidaymakers, and on sunny days, families fill the sands. The usual way to get to and from the beach is by narrow paths down the cliffs from the centre of the village. The tall cliffs are both a visual as well as a physical division between the village and the beach. Little can be seen of the village from the beach, and the sea is not visible from most of the village. It is only when approaching the cliff edge that one becomes aware of the sea and the sound of the surf.

The cliffs to the east of Overstrand are a noted beauty spot, "Lighthouse Hills", and there is a much used path to Cromer past the golf links. To the west, most of the cliff path has been lost. The raised ground either side of Overstrand is, like the sea, visible from the cliff top but not from much of the village.

There is a quick transition from the fields and hedgerows surrounding Overstrand to the suburban-style houses on the coast road. The clearest meeting point between settlement and countryside is at the east end of Mundesley Road, where houses and agricultural land face one another across the tarmac surface.



Fig 5: The approach to Overstrand along the coast road, seen from the west.

5. SPATIAL ANALYSIS

5.1 Character and interrelationship of spaces within the area

The main open space for the community in Overstrand is the Sports Ground, at the beginning of the High Street. This started out as Lord Battersea's private cricket ground, but was acquired as a recreation ground for the village in 1936. It is a well maintained green area, enclosed by walls and hedges, with a bowls green at one corner, and a fine pavilion which serves refreshments. This is the venue for social events, including a car boot sale on Thursdays during the summer months.



Fig 6: Car boot day at the Sports Ground

There are few other public spaces within Overstrand, and no other focus for the community, such as a village green.

On the cliff top where Paul's Lane, The Londs and Cliff Road meet is an open area with a car park, children's play area and a recycling facility, along with a flag pole, bench seats, and a plaque marking the millennium. Maps show that historically, this is the main point where there was access to the beach, making it important for fishermen and local merchants. Such people would have made their homes nearby, along The Londs. It is appropriate that even today, part of the space on the cliff top is used to store fishing boats and gear, and crabs and lobsters are offered for sale here. Following the development of the village at the end of the nineteenth century, holidaymakers have become an important source of revenue for the village. Holidaymakers as well as fishermen now make use of the paths to the beach, and a cliff-top café caters for them.

A village sign would normally be expected on a village green; this is on small triangular space at the junction of Cromer Road, Mundesley Road and the High Street, where visitors are more likely to notice it.

The only other public space is the churchyard at the edge of the settlement at the east end of Cromer Road. In addition to serving the spiritual needs of the village, it is also a pleasant place to sit, landscaped with a good variety of trees and plants. A part of the churchyard has been set aside as a conservation area, to encourage wildlife.

Within the Conservation Area, the other open spaces are private, attached to private houses and hotels such as The Pleasaunce, Overstrand Hall and Sea Marge, or as part of the Ivy Farm holiday park. Their main contribution to the village is a visual one. The trees surrounding Overstrand Hall and Ivy Farm holiday park make a strong positive contribution, and the grounds of The Pleasaunce are a pleasant sight from the cliff top.

5.2 Key views and vistas

As a cliff top village, there are excellent views out to sea, and looking along the cliffs to east and west.

Once within the village, there are few clear views of the surrounding countryside. The best views are from the edge of the village, either looking along the coast road, or from the cliff edge. For a better panorama one has to go south of the Cromer or Mundesley Roads, along the tracks that lead towards Northrepps. Initially the view is of the fields next to the road and trees on the top of the Cromer Ridge to the south. The best views are from the brow of the Ridge, looking inland towards Northrepps, and back towards the village and coast.

Fig 7: Looking east along Mundesley Road.

The view from the beginning of the Mundesley Road, from either the east or west sides, can be regarded as key. With its trees on both sides, it establishes Overstrand's rural character, creating an immediate positive impression on the visitor. The view along the near-straight Londs is also



significant, a quiet lane with a pleasing group of traditional houses, overlooked by the unusual clock tower of The Pleasaunce.

6. CHARACTER ANALYSIS

6.1 Activity, prevailing or former uses within the area

The main traditional activities in Overstrand were fishing and agriculture. As stated earlier, most of the fishing community probably lived in brick and cobble houses along The Londs. There is little trace of this activity in the architecture, with the exception of the large wooden outbuilding beside no 19/Cliff Nook. This is used by a local fisherman to process his catch, and he also sells crabs and lobsters here. 18th and early 19th century visitors to the coast made reference to timber buildings built along the coast; often made of timbers from shipwrecks. While this building is probably more substantial than these early buildings, it continues the tradition. There is also a former brick and cobble smokehouse at the rear of no 10 the High Street; smoking was one of the main ways of preserving part of the fishing catch, and the practice still continues at Cromer, Cley and Yarmouth.



Fig 8: Timber outbuilding at the north end of the Londs.

The main evidence of the fishing industry in Overstrand today is the crab boats, tractors and fishing gear stored at the top of the cliff; boats and tractors can occasionally be found parked on the wide path to the beach and the promenade.

Overstrand would also have had a small number of merchants who engaged in sea trade; the sea was the most convenient way of transporting goods around the coast before the coming of the railways. While no buildings are known to have been merchant's houses, the Overstrand graveyard contains the grave of Jeremiah Cross, who is mentioned in records of the Victorian period as being a coal merchant (his coal yard was at Cromer) and a farmer.

The most substantial reminders of farming at Overstrand are the farmhouses and agricultural buildings of Ivy Farm on the High Street, and Flint House on what is now Mundesley Road. The former farms have a variety of well built structures, and Ivy Farm has several large barns, all of which attest to their prosperity. There is still farmland around Overstrand today, to the south of the coast road.

Up to the end of the nineteenth century, Overstrand was a small village, and there would have been few shops. The Ordnance Survey map of 1885 marks out only the White Horse public house in the High Street. By 1905 there is a post office in the High Street, and a few shops nearby, which have now been converted to private houses. The shops reflect the growth of the village, and the trade that summer visitors might bring.

The activity which has left a significant trace in the village is the holiday trade. While visitors might initially have stayed in local people's houses, there was also a demand for more comfortable accommodation. This was partly met by the Overstrand Hotel, now lost to the sea. Some of the gentry, such as Lord and Lady Battersea, acquired or built holiday villas for their own use, as "summer residences". As the wealthy began to go abroad for their holidays, villas were converted for the holiday trade, such as the villa Beckhythe, now the Overstrand Court Hotel. Others became convalescent homes, benefiting from a belief in the therapeutic effects of sea air. The latest manifestation of the holiday trade is the Ivy Farm Holiday Park, with its chalets, caravans and space for tents.

Some of the wealthy visitors during the first half of the 20th century would have had motor cars, and there are a number of inter-war garages or "motor homes" attached to the houses. A garage and petrol station was also established in the inter-war period, at the corner of Cromer Road and the High Street. Many visitors would, however, have arrived by train, after the station was opened in 1906. Little now remains of the railways; the lane leading up to the station from Cromer Road has a timber gate and some paving which may have been part of the station approach. More substantial reminders are two disused railway bridges to the south of the coast road, and the station building which now forms part of Station Farm.

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

The character areas have been identified according to their present appearance, rather than their historical development (See Map 1). They are:

- 1) Buildings set well apart within their own grounds/gardens. This covers late Victorian/Edwardian villas, inter-war “suburban” housing and recent estates and bungalows.
- 2) Primarily close-knit housing, including terraces. This includes the early housing on The Londs, commercial buildings along the High Street, and late Victorian terraces on Harbord Road and Paul’s Lane.
- 3) Public/semi-public open spaces within the village. The churchyard, sports field and open area on the cliff top are grouped here, along with The Pleasaunce and Overstrand Hall due to their extensive grounds.
- 4) Countryside around the village. The seafront and the countryside to the south of the coast road.

Some roads fall into Character areas 1 and 2. Rather than divide up the descriptions of the roads, character areas 1 and 2 have been described together.

Character Areas 1 and 2

Buildings set well apart within their own grounds/gardens/ Primarily close-knit housing, including terraces.

Cromer Road

(Character Areas 1 & 2).

As it enters Overstrand village, the B1159 coast road becomes the Cromer Road. The road runs on a near-straight course just to the south of the village centre. This is a pleasant, rural approach to Overstrand, with grass verges and trees on both sides and houses with well-stocked front gardens. There is a tarmac-surfaced footpath on the north side.

At the west end only a small area to the north of the road is in the Conservation Area. This encloses Overstrand Hall and its grounds then the church and churchyard; these are described in detail as part of Character Area 3. Areas of inter-war and modern housing on both sides of the road are excluded. At the eastern end of Cromer Road, both sides are included in the Conservation Area. The irregular shape of the Conservation Area at this point presumably reflects an attempt to connect the excellent Hall and church with other notable buildings to the east, such as the Belfry School, and Corner House/Danum House at the north end of Paul’s Lane. As a result, the Conservation Area contains a number of houses which would not normally be considered for inclusion.



Fig 9: Overstrand church.

At the west end of the road, mature trees and hedges screen the grounds of Overstrand Hall from view. A footpath runs along the western boundary of the Hall, then across the golf links. Two brick pillars flank the entrance to the Hall, beyond which is a tree-shaded tarmac lane. This is currently the home of the Kingswood education centre, and during the day the sounds of children can clearly be heard. Facing the Hall on the south side is a utilitarian brick bus shelter, positioned by the junction with Northrepps Road, and a modern graveyard –both are outside the Conservation Area.

Overstrand Hall has a high brick and cobble wall running along the side of the road, notable for its use of narrow “neo-vernacular” brick. This meets the less showy but equally attractive low brick and cobble wall of the churchyard. The churchyard has a dense backdrop of mature trees, and contains a variety of bushes and trees, which reinforce the rural feel of the area.

After the church, the housing on both sides of the road is outside the Conservation Area. On the north side, most are single storey bungalows, on the south side there are two-storey houses with gabled roofs. Most houses have large front gardens.

Fig 10: Belfry School

The Conservation Area starts again where Paul's Lane meets Cromer Road. Facing this on the south side is the Belfry School; the oldest part dates from 1830, and projects out towards the road. It is of white brick with fine flint pebble facings and a wooden portico with fluted columns. The building shows signs of neglect; the portico pillars have signs of rot at the base, and there is a buddleia growing out of the top of the wall. Attached at the rear, slightly incongruously placed but still attractive, is a Victorian red brick building in typical "board school" style. The school has now relocated to new buildings just to the east, where there is a tarmac playground with wooden picket fence. A wide road winds round to the new single storey school building. It is bordered by gravel with sub-tropical plants, giving an unexpected "Mediterranean" ambience.



To the east of Paul's Lane, there are modern houses on the north side, some screened from the road by trees. Curtis's Garage which follows has a patched tarmac and gravel courtyard on the west side, where cars are displayed for sale. The garage buildings have an appealing unpretentious character, with some inter-war elements. There is a large workshop at right angles to the road, with a sign board above. In working hours the sliding doors are open, and staff can be seen at work. Old brick and cobble outbuildings are attached on the east and north sides.

Fig 11: Curtis's garage.

After the garage are some of the village's oldest buildings, shown on the Overstrand tithe map of 1843. At the west end, nos. 8-6 have fronts with white brick dressings, faced with flint galleting. The rendered fronts of nos 4 and 2 hide their early date; the main clues are the glazed black pantiles and the timber doorcase on no 2. This group ends the north side of Cromer Road; the group of red brick houses which follows marks the start of the High Street.



On the south side of Cromer Road, there is a mix of Victorian, inter-war and modern houses. The more recent houses tend to be set back from the road, largely hidden by hedges and the dense foliage in their gardens. Amongst these, the Old Stables stands out, a vernacular red brick and flint cobble complex with pantiled roofs, now converted to housing with new windows and doors. Two Victorian villas, nos 11 and 9, flank an unmade-up road which runs south away from Cromer Road. This once led up to the railway station. No 9, "The Pightle" to the east is particularly noteworthy, with a plain-tiled mansard roof, a rendered gable facing the road and good timberwork.

Mundesley Road (Character Area 1)

To the east of the junction with the High Street, there is a traffic island, then the coast road continues as Mundesley Road. The original coast road followed the line of the High Street; Mundesley Road was established in the early 20th century. Mundesley Road has far more trees and greenery than Cromer Road; trees, for the most part sycamores, have been planted at regular intervals along the verges. While there are grass verges on both sides, there is only one footpath on the north side. The Mundesley Road, like Cromer Road to the west, serves as a very attractive and rural approach to the village.

At the corner where High Street meets Mundesley Road is a triangular area of grass bordered by flower beds, with the village sign and benches. A tarmac path separates the grass verge from the main road. The first building is "Crossways", a group of

single-storey alms houses from the inter-war years, set amongst lawns and well back from the road. The houses have facing panels of brick cobbles framed by red brick.

An inter-war house with a more distinctive “Arts and Crafts” character starts the Mundesley Road on the south side. No 4 is a fine villa with rendered walls and windows with leaded lights. The boundary wall is of similar date, and has rendered scalloped sections between brick pillars.

After no 4 the pavement ends, replaced by a wide grass verge with regularly spaced trees. Behind the verge there are more trees and an unkempt hedge. This pattern of greenery continues along most of the south side, interrupted only by a garden centre and a bungalow. Mid-way along the road, occasional gaps in the dense hedgerow and trees allow a view of the agricultural land behind.

Fig 12: South side of Mundesley Road with the garden centre.



The main concentration of houses is on the north side of Mundesley Road. Most are post war, set in well-maintained gardens. A repeating border of hedges and verges lines the north side of the road, broken by the entrance road to “The Glade”, a small estate of new houses.

By the corner with **Carr Lane**, the new houses of Beckhyth Gardens are built on part of the grounds of Beckhyth Manor, a prominent Edwardian villa which can be just be seen through the trees. A low brick wall in front of Beckhyth Gardens may originally have been part of the Manor’s boundary wall. To the east, there is higher brick wall around what now remains of the Manor gardens. On the opposite side of Carr Lane is Carrwood House, a large three-storey Victorian house set back behind a tall well-trimmed hedge. At this point the path runs to the north of the grass verge, so that it now separates the path from the road.



After Carr Lane, woodland on the north side conceals the Ivy Farm caravan park from view. Here, the branches of trees on the north and south sides meet, enclosing the road for a brief stretch.

Fig 13: Mundesley Road, looking west from the junction with Carr Lane.

The woodland is followed by modern bungalows; only three at the junction with **Coast Road** are included in the Conservation Area, perhaps because they occupy part of the grounds of a large Edwardian villa, Grange Gorman, just to the north.

Fig 14: The Settlements, from the east.

It is only when reaching the junction with **Coast Road** that the architecture along the Mundesley Road can be regarded as significant. Starting with the north side, there is a low brick and cobble wall on the east corner of Coast Road, which connects with a handsome 18th century farm house, Flint House. Its front has painted brick quoins and window surrounds with fine flint galleting. Next door, set well back behind trees is the red brick Mill House, where the writer Clement Scott, the writer and creator of “Poppyland” fame, once stayed. The Conservation Area closes on the north



side with Monk's Barn, part of an agricultural complex in brick and flint cobbles, which has been converted to residential use.

On the west side, "The Settlements" is a very good group of Edwardian Arts & Crafts houses, originally designed as ancillary buildings for Sea Marge. While they are partly hidden by hedges, a good view can be obtained of the houses from the east. The main group is positioned around two sides of a small gravel courtyard, with a separate building, "Seamarge Cottage" facing them. All make use of a deliberate asymmetry for picturesque effect, and use a similar range of materials; roughcast rendered walls, areas of hanging tiles and attractively weathered plain tiled roofs.. A footpath down the side of "The Settlements" ends the Conservation Area on the south side.

Paul's Lane

(Character Areas 1 & 2)

Much of the development along Paul's Lane is recent, from the later 20th and beginning of the 21st century, and of limited historical or architectural interest. Initially, only the houses on the east side of the lane are included in the Conservation Area. These may have been included in order to create a clear link between the Church and Overstrand Hall on Cromer Road with two Edwardian villas at the corner of Paul's Lane where it turns north-east.



Fig 15: Bungalows at the south end of Paul's Lane.

The two villas on the corner, Corner House, no 20, and the adjoining Danum House, no 22, are in the Arts and Crafts style typical of Overstrand's villas, with some half timberwork and rendered walls. A single storey brick and cobble outbuilding with a flat roof wraps around the lower parts of both houses. After the corner, the new houses on the north side of the Lane are excluded from the Conservation Area.

Danum House is the first of several attractive historic buildings on the south side. Nos 24, The Stables, and 26 follow; these villas were once the outbuildings of "The Grange". Both are in the Arts & Crafts style common at Overstrand, with roughcast rendered walls. There is also an excellent "vernacular revival" boundary wall, with a rough render and courses of red clay tiles. From the north, a charming cupola incorporating a clock can be seen on the roof of The Stables.



Fig 16: Danum House

Following the rendered boundary wall of no 26, a tarmac pavement begins, with concrete kerbs. Behind an earth bank and trees is "The Gables", an imposing house with three forward-facing gables; two are rendered, the third gable at the eastern end has some half timberwork.

The Lane to the north of the villas is heavily shaded by mature trees on both sides. On the south side is a footpath to Cromer Road, with a basic-looking barrier made from scaffolding poles. It is followed by the modern houses of Arden Close. Similar in character to those at the north end of Paul's Lane, the buildings are set in well maintained gardens, but are not of sufficient interest to merit Conservation Area status. One house "White Gables" (no 6), has a modest Arts & Crafts character.

To the north of Arden Close is The Old Rectory. There is a pleasantly patinated high brick wall around the Rectory grounds. The former rectory can be seen through the entrance, set back within its garden. It is a large plain Victorian building in red brick, with a symmetrical arrangement of sash windows. A gravel path leads up to it past mature trees.

The Old Rectory is adjacent to the junction with Harbord Road, which is followed by a terrace of late Victorian houses, nos 38-48. These red brick houses have roughcast rendered first floors and flat roofed half dormers. In style, the terrace is similar to those found in Harbord Road.

The characteristic all-flint garden wall of The Pleasance begins after the terrace, and the Conservation Area expands to include the car park on the west side of the Lane (this is described in Character Area 3). There are trees on both sides of the road; those on the east side are within the gardens of The Pleasance. A small building, the "Reading Room" is built into the Pleasance wall. This two storey building has some fine brickwork; unfortunately the utilitarian-looking doors of an electricity sub station are set beside it. The trees on the west side screen a children's play area, and at the time of the visit, the noises of children playing could be heard, mixed with the sound of the sea which is now visible at the end of the road. Paul's Lane then follows the course of The Pleasance wall, and curves round to the east.

Carr Lane

(Character Area 1)

Carr Lane was developed at the end of the nineteenth century, branching off from the old coast road, now the High Street. While it started out as a cul-de-sac to serve the new villas, the lane was eventually extended along the line of a footpath to connect with the Mundesley Road. Initially there were only a small number of villas here, and the east side was occupied by Ivy Farm. During the later 20th century, two bungalows were built at the centre of the road on the west side.

There is a grass verge on the west side, and a tarmac path with a concrete kerb to the east.



Fig 17: Entrance to Carr Lane from Mundesley Road

On the west side where Carr Lane joins Mundesley Road is Beckhythe Manor, a large villa with red brick and render walls and some half timberwork. Its grounds are enclosed by a plain high brick wall which continues round from Mundesley Road; it has a fine pair of ornate timber gates. The boundary wall of the Manor is a dominant feature in the lane; its north end is hidden by the vegetation in the gardens of two modern bungalows, nos 6 and 4.

Carrwood House, a three-storey Edwardian villa is on the opposite side. With its red brick walls and gabled dormers, it looks back to the Victorian era, rather than following the end of century Arts and Crafts style. Much of the house is hidden behind a tall hedge and trees, whose branches almost touch those in the Manor grounds –as a result this part of the lane is usually in shadow. Trees continue down the east side of the lane; this is the woodlands of "The Carr" which screen Ivy Farm Holiday Park.

The north part of the lane is more open, with hedges on both sides. Behind the hedges and low walls is The Close, a large villa complex on the west corner with the High Street. It can be seen along much of the lane, due to its height and white-painted walls.

Coast Road

(Character Area 1)

Coast Road runs from Mundesley Road to Clifton Way. Only the south end of the road is within the Conservation Area.

On the west corner with Mundesley Road is a modern bungalow, for the most part hidden by a tall hedge and trees. To the north is Grange Gorman, a large Edwardian house which has been converted to flats. The grounds are used for off-road parking. To the rear, behind a tall fence is a second large house with red brick and render walls; it is probably of inter-war date. A hedge separates Grange Gorman from a modern bungalow to the south, which is at the edge of the Conservation Area.

Facing Grange Gorman on the east side, and the main focus of interest, are the outbuildings of Flint House Farm, now converted for residential use. Archway Cottage at the north end is of particular interest; an old red brick building set at 90° to the road. The Conservation Area ends after Archway Cottage.

High Street

(Character Areas 1& 2)

The High Street follows the original route of the coast road, sweeping round in a gradual curve. The eastern end of the street has been lost to erosion.

The south side has a relatively uniform character; houses are set within generous gardens, ranging from large Edwardian villas to small inter-war and modern bungalows. They combine with the wide road to give a suburban feel to the street. Set at the corner of the road amongst open lawns is the single storey “Crossways”, flint and brick almshouses from the inter-war years. They are followed by a group of “Arts & Crafts” villas at nos. 35-31, which have a common character thanks to their use of render and half timberwork. They range in date from the Edwardian period to the late 20th century.

Fig 18: Typical Edwardian villa at the beginning of the High Street.



From the outset, the north side of the street is more complex than the south, changing its character several times. At the junction with Cromer Road there is a group of closely set houses. The majority are late Victorian; all but one have front gardens with low brick or brick and cobble walls. They abut the village's Sports Ground. Along its boundary is a low sloping flint plinth and a well-trimmed hedge. The entrance to the ground has two rendered pillars with courses of red tiles and “acorn” finials, and a fine pair of tall wrought iron gates. A thatched pavilion can just be glimpsed over the hedge (the sports ground is described as part of Character Area 3).

After the Sports Ground, the road forks; to the west is **Harbord Road**. A three storey house at the junction is the first of the substantial red brick houses which form the commercial centre of the village. The first two shops have been converted to residential use, with new sash windows and doors. The Post Office which follows is still in use, and enlivened by an ironwork portico and railings. The shop front is set back behind a tiled forecourt, and there is a George V pillar box to one side. The Post Office is very much the hub of the local community; advertisements for local events and services crowd its windows.



Fig 19: Former commercial buildings at the junction with Harbord Road.

The Londs begins on the east side of the Post Office, running north. After this the buildings are smaller in scale, with a more varied appearance. The Conservative Club begins the group, attractively faced in flint cobbles with red brick window surrounds. A smaller two storey house follows. Its front and west elevations are rendered in cement, but the east elevation shows it is old, of brick and flint cobbles. Next door, no 38 is a large orange-painted house with brick and rendered walls. The village store abuts no 38. An important amenity, it has a rather incongruous inter-war character; flat roofed, with cream-painted brickwork.

Facing this group on the south side of the High Street is a series of bungalows, both inter-war and modern. Between the bungalows, lanes lead up to Overstrand Lodge and the Overstrand Court Hotel. Both are Edwardian villas, hidden from the main road.

Fig 20: The White Horse.

Cliff Road separates the village store from a substantial largely Victorian pub, the White Horse. This has cheerful and rather irreverent "Old English" timberwork on the first floor, and red brickwork at street level. On the east side there are brick and cobble buildings, probably part of the original inn. The following houses continue the vernacular character. A modern house in brick and flint is followed by a picturesque terrace, nos. 30-24, with fine flint pebble facings and white brick dressings.



The High Street becomes increasingly rural in character as one approaches the east end. The road narrows, the footpath finishes, and the street is flanked by hedges and trees on both sides. The view to the east is dominated by the splendid Sea Marge hotel. First its tall chimneys are visible along the street, then moving closer the half timbered top floor and eccentric roofscape come into view.



Fig 21: Looking towards the east end of the High Street, an increasingly rural character.

Smaller villas face Sea Marge on the south side of the road and follow it on the east side. The villas to the south have rendered walls, imparting a similar neo-vernacular character. Beckhythe Cottage is of particular interest, as it has not followed the usual fashion of painting the render white; its buff-coloured walls give it a pleasing and subtle aspect. The two villas on the north side make greater use of red brick; both have been altered and extended over the years. Meadow Cottage has a distinctive polygonal turreted bay; it is now a care home.

After the junction with Carr Lane, Ivy Farm and its holiday park take up the south side of the road. First a hedge screens the main field from view, then there are some modern single storey brick and cobble chalets. Finally the substantial brick and cobble farm buildings mark the east end of the Street. (Ivy Farm is described in detail in Character Area 3). Facing the farm on the north side is a narrow, probably Victorian cottage which sits awkwardly with a “contemporary” house attached to it. A lawn with a sculpture garden separates these houses from two inter-war bungalows at the end of the street.

The road officially ends with a row of concrete bollards. Beyond this the tarmac surface continues for a short way, largely overgrown, until it reaches the edge of the cliff.

Path to cliffs beside Sea Marge

A tarmac lane runs down the west side of the boundary wall of Sea Marge. When it nears the cliff, a path runs along the cliff top to the east, then turns inland and reconnects with the High Street opposite Ivy Farm.

Initially on the west side of the lane, the terrace facing the High Street has an interesting group of single storey brick and outbuildings. Behind this are two pairs of modern garages. The second pair has a television repair shop on the north side.

At the end of the lane are two cottages, both said to be 18th century in date. East Lodge has a fine red brick front and painted brick and cobble end gable. The central doorway is covered by a curious enclosed porch. Cliff Lane Cottage has well crafted brick and cobble walls; it is at the end of a gravel drive and partly hidden by vegetation. To the west there is a view of a modern bungalow and houses in Cliff Road.

The weathered red brick boundary wall of Sea Marge runs down the east side of the lane. Curiously it changes from Flemish bond to English bond half way along. Where the wall ends the cliff path begins. It is enclosed on both sides by bushes and small trees; through small gaps in the vegetation can be seen the cliff face and sea. To the south of the path is the grounds of Sea Marge. The back of the hotel, while less showy than the front, is still very attractive. There is an extensive lawn with hedges enclosing flower beds at the centre. A walled area to the west is largely overgrown, with an old half timbered summerhouse in the south west corner.

Harbord Road

(Character Areas 1 & 2)

Harbord Road was developed at the end of the 1880s by Lord Suffield. At its south end the road runs along two sides of the Sports Field, once Lord Battersea’s private cricket ground. It then follows the western boundary wall around The Pleasaunce gardens.

Where Harbord Road joins the High Street, the fence, hedge and trees which border the Sports Ground form a continuous screen on the east and then the south sides. There is more variety on the opposite side. After the prominent commercial building at the junction, there is an empty plot, followed by two adjoining terraces of late Victorian houses, nos 4-10 and 12-18. These mix red brick and render to create a recognisably “urban” style. Bay and dormer windows add interest to their fronts. All have small front gardens with low boundary walls in brick or brick and cobbles.



Fig 22: Terrace at the south end of Harbord Road.

The main part of Harbord Road then angles to the west along the boundary of the Sports Field, although it also continues on its original alignment for a short distance, leading up to the rear entrance of The Pleasaunce. The entrance has an ornate brick wall, pillars with large ball finials and well crafted wrought iron gates. There is an abundance of trees in the garden behind.

After the angle, or first turning of a “dog-leg”, the fence and greenery surrounding the recreation ground continue. At the beginning of what is now the north side of the road, there is a good Arts & Crafts style timber gate to no 24, “Threeways”; although the house is not visible from the road. Two bungalows follow; the second, “Library Cottage” appears to have started out as a “rustic” addition to The Pleasaunce gardens. It has half timbered walls with brick nogging, and a thatched roof.

After Library Cottage, the road angles again. The tall flint boundary wall around The Pleasaunce gardens is almost unbroken down the east side of the road. There is a brief gap for the entrance to “The Rectory”. This can just be seen between large trees within the grounds, it appears to be a modern red brick house. Another entrance through the wall, to no 26, has attractive wooden gates. No house can be seen, just the lush vegetation which once formed part of the renowned Pleasaunce gardens. The north end of the Pleasaunce wall has been extended in recent years; the new part has vertical divisions of brick which were not present on the original wall.

Fig 23: The centre of Harbord Road, looking north.

There are two modern buildings on the west side, followed by a flint wall in similar style to the Pleasaunce wall to the east. The wall ends at no 15, a quirky and amusing Edwardian house. Although the main body of the house is relatively conventional, a half timbered single storey extension fronts the street with two projecting wings. The front has a projecting oriel bow and an angled corner light with good coloured glass.



At the north end of the street, the terraced housing creates a more homogenous character. The terrace at 17-33 is similar to the late Victorian terrace described earlier. Once again it is in a recognisably urban style; red brick with areas of render and bay windows to create visual interest. The terrace has a variety of low garden walls; the wall of 19 is particularly worthy of note, with well-crafted designs in flint. Another short terrace follows and ends the street on the west side. The first three houses, 35, 37 & 39 are particularly attractive with brick and cobble walls and pantiled roofs. Projecting out towards the street are some old single storey wash houses which help create a visually pleasing and irregular layout, typical of vernacular buildings. There is another terrace on the east side, facing Paul’s Lane. Its rendered end gable and rear wings and gardens extend down the side of Harbord Road.

The Londs

The Londs is one of the oldest thoroughfares in the village. This is probably where most of those who earned their living from fishing and the sea trade once lived. It is a straight tarmac lane running north-south, from the old coast road, now the High Street, down to the cliff top. It is a very quiet spot; the main sound during the survey was not traffic, but the calling of wood pigeons. There are few cars, despite an old cast iron notice at the south end which advises this is an “entrance for vehicular traffic”! Most of the houses are small, with red brick and grey cobble walls and red pantiled roofs, providing the lane with a limited but harmonious colour scheme. Looking north along the Londs, there is a restricted view of the sea between the walls which border the lane.

Fig 24: The Londs, looking back to the High Street.

At its south end, the Londs starts, almost unnoticed, overshadowed by large Victorian buildings on both sides, the Post office and the Conservative Club. The rear of the Conservative Club has irregular but engaging aspect, and includes a single storey seafood shop. This



forms a good introduction to the character of the Londs.

The first houses on both sides are of brick and cobbles. On the west side, partly hidden behind a high brick and cobble wall, is an early terrace, 3-7, set at 90° to the lane. Nos 6-8 opposite are probably mid-late Victorian, but pick up the vernacular style well. An inter-war house with an all-brick front has been added onto the north end of no 8; its red brick has weathered attractively and is partly covered by ivy. The contrast between the later brick house and its brick and cobble neighbours increases the visual interest of the group. A garden divides this terrace from the houses at 10-14, a more recognisably Victorian design, with a curious mix of materials; mottled "Fletton" bricks are used with large uncoursed flint cobbles, while the first floors are of roughcast render.

A flint wall with flint capping runs down much of the west side of the lane, typical of the walls around most of The Pleasaunce. It is a strong feature along The Londs, and helps give a common character to the street. It helps unusual features, such as the inter-war prefabricated parish hall, to blend in better with the traditional architecture.

Fig 25: looking north along The Londs, with The Pleasaunce clock tower in the background.

Some of the older brick and cobble houses are built in pairs, with a small front garden. This arrangement can be seen at 9-11 and 13-15. Between these pairs of houses is The Haven. Like Pear Tree Cottage/Chartwell on the east side, it appears that a traditional cottage has been extended in a neo-vernacular style. On the Haven this appears limited to an angled corner bay window with "rustic" timber cladding and fretted barge boards. At Pear Tree Cottage, in addition to a new bay and barge boards, the walls facing the lane have a roughcast render, with blank window recesses on the first floor bearing modelled designs of potted plants. The designer's intention was doubtless to mirror the unplanned "evolution" of the surrounding vernacular houses, by using a mix of materials and an irregular layout.



At the centre of the lane on the west side are outbuildings of the Pleasaunce. Most have rendered and white painted walls with "Crittall" metal windows, there is also some brick and cobble work. An imposing clock tower emerges from the irregular roofscape. To the north, mature trees lean over the Pleasaunce wall; there are a variety of species, including chestnut and sycamore. A post war house has been built within the grounds at the north end.

On the east side of the Londs, brick and cobble houses continue. They vary in date, probably 18th to 20th century; most have a history of alterations and extensions. After these houses are the rear gardens of houses on Cliff Road, behind a flint boundary wall. The east side of The Londs ends where it meets the open area on the clifftop, and the garages of "Clifftop Holidays" accommodation.

The western half of the Londs extends further than the east, and forms the west side of an open area on the cliff top. The last two houses on the west side are of brick and cobbles, no 19 and "Cliff Nook". They have been added to over the years, and have an unpretentious and appealing character. Just to the north is a fine timber storage building. This is assumed to have been built to serve the fishing industry, and very appropriately it is still in use by a local fisherman, who advertises "fresh boiled crabs and lobsters". There is a picturesque array of fishing gear alongside, enclosed by a modern fence.

Cliff Road
(Character Areas 1 and 2).



Fig 26: Cliff Road, looking north from the High Street.

Cliff Road was established in the late 19th century, connecting what was then the coast road (now the High Street) with the clifftop. The road is straight, and runs almost exactly north-south, allowing a limited view of the sea. The oldest buildings are late Victorian and Edwardian; there are also inter war houses and post-war “infill” housing. While the building styles are diverse, most houses are of similar scale, set back from the road behind front gardens with low boundary walls. There are pavements on both sides of the road; the east side has blue clay kerbs; the kerb on the opposite side is of concrete.

The southern end starts with distinctive buildings on both sides. To the west is the side of the inter-war village stores. A concrete-surfaced yard to the rear has an interesting timber storage building in one corner. Next to the yard is Lutyen’s idiosyncratic Methodist Church, with some very fine brickwork around the entrance. Its unusual clerestory with “Diocletian” style windows is visible from much of the street.

Facing all this is the White Horse pub on the east corner. The setting of this largely Victorian building has been reworked to fit in with its new role as a family-oriented catering establishment. There is an enclosed lawn at the rear. At the time of the survey, the 19th century diamond-cut blue clay pavers on the forecourt were being replaced by ceramic blocks.

A new development, White Horse Gardens, is adjacent to the pub garden. This is a group of two storey houses with a few bungalows at the rear, all irregularly grouped around a gravel road. There has been a conscious and generally successful attempt to adapt vernacular features for these buildings and to arrange the houses to resemble a farm complex. The buildings sport flint cobble facings, timber porches, coped gables and brick and cobble boundary walls. At present they appear rather brightly-coloured, but will doubtless weather down and fit in better with their more traditional neighbours over time. In an attempt to hasten the process, the roofs have pantiles with artificial staining or “weathering”.

At the centre of the road there are bungalows and houses on both sides with a modern character. The modern houses continue down most of Thurst Road, a cul-de-sac on the east side. At the end of Thurst Road there is a pair of Victorian houses on the north side with very distinctive buff coloured terracotta decoration.

There are a number of Victorian buildings at the north end of Cliff Road. At the corner with Thurst Road is a terrace of four houses, two of which retain their original slate roofs. Two houses nearer the cliff top are probably Victorian, but have a less distinct character due to numerous additions and alterations.

Fig 27: 16-18 Cliff Road, semi-detached "moderne" houses.

Amongst the houses on the west side is a red brick hall of 1949, now converted to holiday accommodation. The inter-war semidetached houses at 16-18 are of interest, with curved sided bay windows in "moderne" style and a green glazed "Hollywood" pantiled roof. The brick boundary wall with a scalloped top is also a nice period piece.



The final, probably Victorian, house on the west side is now a holiday cottage for rent. To the rear are outbuildings converted into holiday chalets. A poster on the red brick extension of the café next door advertises "Cliff Top Holidays". The Cliff Top café on the corner is a popular local amenity, and there are "barbecue" style tables and benches at the side for customers.

Character Area 3

Public/semi-public open spaces within the village

Cliff top area between Paul's Lane and Cliff Road.

This consists of the Paul's Lane car park and a grass area used for storing fishermen's boats and gear to the east. The eastern part is a working area used by local fishermen, and visitors tend to appreciate the picturesque nature of the industry, particularly while they eat and drink at the nearby Cliff Top Café. To the north, the sea fills the view, and the sound of the surf can clearly be heard.

Paul's Lane Car Park

This is a triangular area at the edge of the cliff, to the west of Paul's Lane. The surface is rough grass and gravel. It is separated from the road by a low wooden fence, and bordered on the west and south sides by trees and bushes. Originally there was a low timber fence along the cliff edge, but this has fallen over the cliff. Now a simpler fence combined with dense undergrowth stops people venturing too near the edge. On the west side, a cliff-top path runs to the golf links, Lighthouse Hills and eventually, Cromer.

A well-equipped children's play area has been established at the south end of the car park, with a wooden fence around it. In front of this is an area of hard standing with a row of metal recycling containers, then a modern brick and cobble-faced toilet. The only other features of interest are a flag pole in the north-west corner and an ice-cream van which plies its trade here in the summer months. A slightly raised area of grass with three bench seats adjoins the car park by the cliff edge. The seats in this area have been moved at least once in recent years to avoid being lost to the sea. Now they face a protective fence and vegetation, which allows sitters little more than a view of the horizon.

Central Area (Fishermen's Area & Cliff Top Café)

As Paul's Lane follows the line of the Pleasaunce wall round to the east, there is a good view of the Pleasaunce itself, with a large lawn and trees in front. The grounds contributes to the open and exposed feel of the area.

Paul's Lane connects with the end of The Londs; it then curves round to the south to become Cliff Road. On its north side is an area of grass and a tarmac path at the edge of the cliff and two paths which zigzag down the cliff. Most of the grass is

given over to fishing boats, tractors and fishing gear, an unplanned but characterful group. An erratically-spaced line of bollards separates the grass from the road. The cliff top path originally continued to the east, but most of it has been lost through cliff falls. All that remains is a short grass track with a bench, and an overgrown area at the east end.



Fig 28: Cliff top area with stored boats and fishermen's gear.

On the south side of the road is the Cliff Top Café, a single storey rendered and white painted building with a red pantiled roof. On its west side is a holiday cottage with a flat roofed front extension and porch, and gravel forecourt for car parking. The café may be architecturally unremarkable, but it is a popular visitor attraction, and holidaymakers can usually be seen on the fenced-off area in front, enjoying snacks and meals.

The church and churchyard

The churchyard is a rectangular space at the western edge of the settlement, adjoining the grounds of Overstrand Hall on the Cromer Road. A low brick and cobble boundary wall with moulded brick capping runs around three sides of the churchyard, and there are attractive timber and metal gates. On the east side of the churchyard the wall is replaced by vegetation. The trees and bushes on the west and north sides hide the Hall from view.

Fig 29: Church and churchyard form the west.



The church and churchyard have a simple and very attractive character, which is enhanced by the well-placed vegetation and gravestones. There are a variety of shrubs and mature trees throughout the churchyard, including holly and sweet chestnut. By one of the main entrances is a simple war memorial on a stepped plinth.

Most of the churchyard is given over to grass, which is well-trimmed, save for a nature conservation area immediately to the west of the tower, with longer grass. The gravestones appear to be in their original positions. Some are particularly ornate, presumably the graves of the gentry. On the east side of the church are graves of the Buxtons, members of the family of the noted campaigner against slavery, Thomas Fowell Buxton.

The paths leading to the church are of concrete, with gravel borders and a cobbled retaining wall where the path is set just below ground level.

The church itself has a chequered history, having been abandoned, then rebuilt in the Edwardian era. The square tower is of coarse knapped flint with stone quoins. The main body of the church is of roughly coursed flint cobbles, which are partly obscured by mortar. The porch is of relatively recent construction, presumably Edwardian, using flushwork flint and stone. The tracery in the main windows of the church appears to be of similar date. The main roof is of a thick green slate, but there

may be a lead roof on the north aisle. Although it was not visible, its parapet has barbed wire on, presumably to deter would-be metal thieves.

Ivy Farm

Ivy Farm is at the east end of the High Street, on the south side. It is a remarkable group of 18th/19th century brick and cobble agricultural buildings, including a fine farmhouse. The buildings are now converted to residential use, and part of the Ivy Farm holiday park.

Fig 30: Ivy Farm seen from the east end of the High Street.



The farmhouse is on the south side of a small courtyard; on the other three sides are agricultural buildings. The main yard is surfaced in gravel, and has a car parking areas and other facilities such as a calor gas storage pen. All the buildings have red brick and cobble walls; most have pantiled roofs. Most if not all windows and doors are modern, brown stained and varnished.

The farmhouse stands out when entering the yard from the High Street. It has large window openings with modern mullion and transom framed windows. There is a brick and cobble entrance porch with a pointed arch and modern doors. On the west side of the house is a modern single storey timber building, connected with a farm building which runs down the side of the lane leading to the main camping area. This has a steeply-pitched roof; the west wall has a slight batter, and is rendered. The north-facing gable which faces the courtyard has modern windows, and appears much altered; there are “tumbled in” bricks at the base of the gable.

On the east side of the courtyard is a barn, positioned so that its end gable faces the High Street. There is a modern window set high in the gable. This barn has been converted to residential use, and there are a number of modern windows and doors.

A lower building attached to the barn occupies most of the north side of the courtyard. The elevation which faces the Street is undetailed; on the south side windows and doors have been introduced; this is the reception area for the centre.

On the west side of the courtyard is what seems to be another barn. Here, there are modern round-headed windows and a door. The barn has a west wing which runs along the side of the High Street. There are signs of alteration at the west end, and some modern single storey brick and cobble holiday chalets “Brambles” have been added on. These have similar brown-stained windows to the rest of the development, both flat and round headed. In front of the chalets is a gravel off-road parking area.

Going down a gravel track at the southwest corner of the yard, the visitor passes between two old agricultural buildings. The track then opens out into a large field. At the edge of the field there are single storey brick and cobble chalets. Most are modern, but one or two may be conversions of old outbuildings.

Fig 31: The only part of the camp site which is in the Conservation Area.



The grass field is divided up by gravel paths; the northern part, (the only part within the Conservation Area) is separated from the main area by a hedge. This has a paddling pool, a brick barbecue area and picnic tables. This part of the field has been set aside for the use of tents.

An area of woodland, "The Carr" which separates the park from Carr Lane is also included in the Conservation Area.

The Sports Ground

The Sports Ground is located at the south end of the High Street, bordered on its east and north sides by Harbord Road. This was originally the private cricket field of Lord Battersea, and was purchased by the village in 1935. Its simple character, little more than a grass field, means it is a very adaptable and flexible space. It serves as a communal area for village functions, with car boot sales in the summer months, and occasional events such as the recent "Rockstock" music festival.

Fig 32: The Sports Ground, seen from beside the Pavilion.



The well-crafted entrance gates to the ground, with large acorn finials and wrought iron gates were presumably installed by Lord Battersea.

He also had "The Guest House" built, a large red brick villa on the east side of the Sports Ground, to accommodate visitors and staff. Today this is private housing, largely hidden behind trees and a later pavilion.

The Sports Ground is a large grass field; completely enclosed by trees and hedges, except at the south-west corner, where there is a pavilion and the main entrance. The attractive pavilion has timber cladding, with panels of flint facing at the front and a thatched roof.

In the north-east corner is a bowls green surrounded by a high wire fence. There is a low green-painted timber building on the north side. There are benches along the east side of the field, in front of the pavilion, and by the bowls green.

Overstrand Hall

The Hall is located at the western edge of the settlement, hidden behind a dense screen of trees to the north of the Cromer Road. While there are records of earlier halls on this site, the main building dates from 1899, designed by Edwin Lutyens for Lord Hillingdon. The Hall is now run by the Kingswood Group, offering courses and activities for young people.

The main entrance to the hall is along a tarmac lane from Cromer Road, with dense vegetation and trees on all sides. Before the main grounds is a high mesh fence and security gates. The lane then runs up the west side of the hall, and turns east behind it.

The Lutyens-designed building is at the south end of the complex; it has a strong "neo vernacular" character. The walls are of flint with a buff-coloured mortar, and red brick dressings around the windows and doors, and for the quoins of the walls and the numerous two-storey bay windows. The original windows have brick mullions and transoms with leaded lights. At the centre of the southern elevation the first floor is jettied out and half timbered. On the north side there is what appears to be a later wing which varies in height between one and two storeys. The new wing uses the same materials as the main house, but has bands of "Crittall" Style metal windows on each floor. The rear of the new wing uses mottled "Fletton" bricks.

The reception area of the centre is on the west side, to the south of a large lawn bordered on two sides by the later wing.



Fig 33: Overstrand Hall, from the south.

North of the hall, in the north-west corner of the grounds, there is a house with brick and cobble walls and Critall windows, then two modern red brick bungalows and a variety of small outbuildings.

The main grounds are to the east of the hall. Lawns are on the east and south sides, with a small ornamental garden. The hall is surrounded by woodland, mostly on the east side, which is bisected by grass footpaths. The woodland has a natural and unplanned appearance; there is no attempt to create any sort of formal landscape. The lawns and the woodland contain activity areas for children, including an archery range.

The Pleasaunce

The Pleasaunce is located on the seafront, between Harbord Road and Cliff Road. It was originally the home of Lord and Lady Battersea, and surrounded by extensive grounds in addition to the main garden, some of which have been developed for housing. As outlined in the initial history, (section 4.1), the Pleasaunce and its grounds were important factors in the shaping of Overstrand at the end of the nineteenth century. Today, the Pleasaunce is a Christian holiday home.



Fig 34: The Pleasaunce seen across the lawns on the north side.

Most of the grounds are surrounded by an all-flint wall with flint capping –notable for the absence of brick. Lengths of this wall can be found along Paul's Lane and The Londs.

The Pleasaunce is located on a raised terrace to the south of a lawn and trees. The main access road runs south from Paul's Lane on the clifftop, passes the house on the east side, then continues to connect with Harbord Road.

The main house was designed by Edwin Lutyens around two earlier Victorian houses. It is an extraordinary assymetrical creation, with walls of red brick, hanging tiles and casement and sash windows. Part of the building on the south side has rendered walls, where there is also a rather out of place flat roofed dining room from the inter-war era. The outbuildings on the east side, which include the clock tower, are rendered, and introduce "Moorish" elements including archways.

To the west of the house there are formal rose gardens and a covered walk, where the plain tiled roof is held aloft by canted-sided supports. The original garden was laid out by the well-known designer Gertrude Jekyll, together with Lutyens. Further to the west and south the vegetation is less managed, with more trees and undergrowth.

Character Area 4

Countryside around the village.

Seafront

The Conservation Area covers part of the foreshore, or the sand exposed at low tide and the cliffs behind, together with the sea walls and a rudimentary promenade. The boundaries of the Conservation Area on the seafront are formed by extending the line of the rear of the cliff top car park on the west side, and to the east, the point where the High Street ends.

Approaching Overstrand from the beach, the cliffs are a dramatic setting for the village. At their foot is slumped cliff material, a sign of the ever-present coastal erosion.

Fig 35: Looking east along the promenade.



In an attempt to slow the erosion, there are a series of sea defences constructed on the beach. Wooden groynes or breakwaters are set at 90° to the cliff. Behind these are angled timber palisades, which follow the line of the cliffs in serpentine fashion until they reach the concrete sea walls. The groynes have considerable visual appeal, and several have zigzag centre sections which add to their interest.

On the west side, the palisade ends just before it meets the concrete sea wall, and a vertical timber and metal barrier containing concrete rubble. Over the rubble a concrete path has recently been laid, angling up to the top of the sea wall and the simple promenade behind. At the edge of the promenade are simple scaffolding-style railings, and below it a series of concrete steps leads down to the sea.

The beach is an inviting space, much of it is of smooth sand, broken by occasional bands of small stones, although strong tides can markedly change its appearance.

Fig 36: The beach is popular with holidaymakers.

The cliff face projects out at Overstrand, so there are limited views along the seafront. Until one passes the half-way mark on the promenade, there are no views of the cliffs towards Mundesley, or if walking west, the cliffs and pier of Cromer.

A low concrete cliff retaining wall is to the rear of the promenade. Where the wall is particularly vulnerable,



concrete and granite blocks have been packed above and behind it, and there are some tiers of gabions to the east, (gabions are wire cages filled with flints). Most of the cliff face is covered in long grass; there is more variety of vegetation near to the cliff top. Two paths zigzag up the cliff. To the west, is a steep concrete surfaced path. It has concrete posts and metal railings, nearer the base it has scaffolding poles. Further east there is a wider tarmac-surfaced path up the cliff, with a shallower, more pedestrian-friendly incline. The width of the second path and its more gradual incline allows it to be used by fishermen getting their boats up and down the cliff. Near to the second path are rectangular bays in the cliff wall, presumably to allow for tractors and boats to be parked. At the time of the survey, several boats were parked nearby, and fishing gear was laid out on the cliffs behind.

Two concrete ramps lead down from the promenade to the beach, allowing fishermen and holidaymakers access to the sea.

Much of the promenade on the east side is little more than a plain expanse of concrete, with scaffolding railings on one side and the cliffs and cliff wall on the other. There are two sets of steps down to the beach; plain structures with concrete steps and scaffolding pole railings. At low tide, a concrete apron is exposed at the foot of the sea wall, and serves as a seating area for holidaymakers. The robust character of the area reflects the exposed setting. The sea wall and promenade are often battered by the sea, and Overstrand lacks any beach which might absorb the energy of a high tide.

At the east end of the promenade, the cliff is stepped back, so that there is an area of flat ground behind the cliff wall. A few temporary beach huts have been located here. Together with a bench at the west end and a pair of portakabin toilets, they are the only amenities available for holidaymakers. The end of the promenade and sea wall is abrupt; both turn inland at a sharp angle. Just to the east, the cliff has been landscaped to cover a drainage scheme, and there is a tarmac road up the cliff. The cliffs at this point have a shallow incline, and this seems to have encouraged a good variety of wild plants. The Conservation Area ends at this point.

Countryside to the south of the Mundesley and Cromer Roads

Access to the countryside to the south of the Cromer and Mundesley Roads is by one of two footpaths.

Lane/footpath to Northrepps from Cromer Road.

Mid-way along the Cromer Road there is a lane and footpath signposted to Northrepps. It once led to the railway station, and there are still traces of the former railway along the route.

Fig 37: lane leading to former railway station

The lane starts as a worn gravel track between nos 9 and 13 Cromer Road. It has grass verges on both sides; the verge on the east side has blue clay kerbs. There is a timber fence and gate part of the way across, probably from the time of the railway, but now in poor condition.



There are occasional houses and gardens with hedges and fences on both sides. Rectory Cottage on the west side is said to be 18th century in date. It is difficult to gauge the date from the front and side, which are rendered with modern windows. There is more sign of its age at the rear, which is of red brick with cut and rubbed brick arches above the windows.

At the end of the lane there is a narrow path of coarse gravel; a short diagonal line of granite blocks cuts across in front of it. Immediately to the east is a modern bungalow, Mole End, and to the west is Station Farm. The farm and its farmland falls outside the Conservation Area; it has a number of old outbuildings with corrugated iron roofs, interspersed with trees.

The track initially angles upwards, with a mixture of hedges, brambles and trees on both sides. The land slopes down on both sides of the track; within the Conservation Area on the east side is a wooded area of coniferous and deciduous trees. The

track soon levels out, and the gravel surface becomes one of dirt, with a line of grass down the centre. To the west, in part of Station Farm, can be seen the old station, with an unusual tunnel which once connected the platforms.

Fig 38: Allotments. The trees in the background follow the line of the old railway track.

At the end of the lane there are allotments on the east side. These have a picturesque mix of sheds, fences and hedges, together with food crops and flowers. A grass lane runs down the south side of the allotments, while the main footpath rises up the Cromer Ridge to the south. The footpath winds through woodland, often below ground level; at times it is little more than a gully with flints at the base. Near to the top of the ridge, the path is enclosed by bushes and low trees, and any spaces are filled by bracken. Reaching the crest of the ridge, the countryside opens out, with a panoramic view of gently undulating fields and hedges to the south.



Lane/footpath opposite Carr Lane

The lane has a surface of gravel and rubble. There are fields with hedgerows on both sides, and woodlands following the line of the Cromer Ridge fill the view to the south. A short distance from the Mundesley Road, the lane is enclosed by trees and hedges, which allow a very limited view either side. The lane subsequently rises up so that it is higher than the surrounding fields and briefly turns to the east. After returning to its southward course it crosses a disused railway bridge of Staffordshire blue clay brick. The bridge openings have been blocked with earth, and saplings planted on either side.



Fig 39: Lane leading south from Mundesley Road.

After the bridge, the lane is surrounded by fields, punctuated by rough uncultivated and overgrown areas. The top of the ridge is exposed, but gives a fine view of the fields to the north and the sea beyond, and the Cromer lighthouse. To the south are the roofs and church tower of Northrepps village. A less rural element is introduced by a fenced-off radio station and outbuildings near to the lane, and an RAF radar station on the skyline to the east.