

PART 1

CHARACTER APPRAISAL

1. SUMMARY

1.1 Key Characteristics

The key characteristics of the East Runton Conservation Area are:

- The settlement developed around two main axes. The first follows the line of the A149 coast road; the second is at 90° to this, running inland along Green Lane by Lower Common and Top Common.
- Attractive built environment with good surrounding countryside, particularly to the south and west, a part of the Cromer Ridge.
- The only access to the beach is by a narrow road and a gap through the cliffs. The sea is not visible from most of the settlement.
- To the south of the coast road, housing is well grouped around two greens; Top Common and Lower Common.
- Much of the housing along the A149 Coast Road is late Victorian and of similar scale. The early brick and cobble houses, particularly around Lower Common, show more variation in size and design.
- The two commons are separated by a pair of railway bridges, which are a strong focal point.
- Since the Second World War, caravan sites have been established around the village. These are clearly visible when entering the village on the coast road.
- There is limited commercial activity, with shops, pubs and a restaurant on the A149 coast road.

Key issues

- Need to review the Conservation Area boundary
- Pressures of modern development eg. traffic, housing around the margins of the settlement.
- 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.
- Need to improve the management of the Top and Lower Commons

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The East Runton Conservation Area

The centre of East Runton was designated a Conservation Area on 17th January 1975. It includes the High Street, Top and Lower Commons and Green Lane. The initial houses along the adjoining roads are also included.

As part of a national government-led reappraisal of Conservation Areas, the following report was commissioned. The survey was carried out from February to May 2010.

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 21st Century'.

3. LOCATION AND SETTING

3.1 *Location and context*



1. *East Runton seen from Ingleborough Hill.*

East Runton is a small village set a short distance inland on the coast road, on the north side of a glacial formation, the Cromer Ridge. It is half a mile from the town of Cromer and a similar distance from the village of West Runton. Most inhabitants once earned their living from fishing or agriculture, but the village economy is now primarily dependent on tourism, particularly caravan sites.

There is a small range of shops including a butcher, a general store and a newsagents. Catering more for the visitor are an army surplus/all weather clothing shop, a caravan supply shop and a Greek restaurant. There are two pubs and a club with a bar; the White Horse pub and a café attached to the newsagent's also offer meals. The tourist industry has helped support a wider range of shops and more public houses than might normally be expected in such a small village.

At the west end of the village is a Methodist Chapel; on Lower Common the old village school has been converted into a church. Near to this is a post-war village hall which serves as a community centre.

There is no railway station, but regular buses connect East Runton with Cromer and Sheringham, and run inland as far as Norwich.

The Conservation Area includes most of the older houses together with the main open spaces, Top Common and Lower Common, but excludes the majority of inter-war and more recent housing developments. Beach Road and the foreshore fall outside the Conservation Area.

3.2a General character

The present character of East Runton reflects the three main phases of its existence. First are the brick and cobble houses of the older village. While some have doubtless been lost to development, others survive, probably because the Victorians, like their present owners, appreciated their “picturesque” qualities. Before the late Victorian period, the main sources of employment were agriculture and fishing, pursuits which would probably have provided a small income for most villagers. As a consequence, most houses built before the 1870s tend to be modest in size, without large grounds. While a number have doubtless been cleared away for later development, simple brick and cobble houses remain around Lower Common and the junction of Green Lane and the High Street. There are also a few larger houses from the 18th to early 19th century in the village.



Fig 2: By the junction of high Street and Green Lane, , brick and cobble houses of the older village meet the larger late Victorian buildings.

The High Street was the main focus of the second phase, a late Victorian and Edwardian “gentrification” with large red brick town houses and purpose built shops. These tend to be taller than the early buildings, of two or three storeys. They create an urban character along the coast road; similar houses can be found on Top and Lower Commons.

The third phase, and the main change to the village since the Second World War, has been introduction of caravan sites. The first were set along the edge of the cliff; recent sites have been more discreetly placed inland. This phase of East Runton’s existence has had surprisingly little adverse effect on the attractive character of the centre of the village.

The latter part of the twentieth century has also seen an increase in those from outside the area coming to live, sometimes to retire, helping fuel the need for new houses. Infill housing was built between the Top and Lower Commons, and more recently to the east and south of Green Lane.

The village’s two commons are a legacy from the early village. These open grassy areas provide a pleasant setting for the houses built around them. Both commons have small ponds, an attractive focal point. There are allotments just to the east of Lower Common. The two commons are separated by a pair of railway viaducts and some 20th century housing, which interrupts the open character of the area.

Most trees are concentrated on the east side of Top Common, by Incleborough House, and around the railway viaducts. with a few more on the nearby allotments. They also flank the lanes leading away from Top Common towards Incleborough Hill and Brick Lane.

3.2b Plan form

As land to the north of the present village and some houses have been lost to the sea over the centuries, evidence of the plan and early growth of East Runton may be lost.

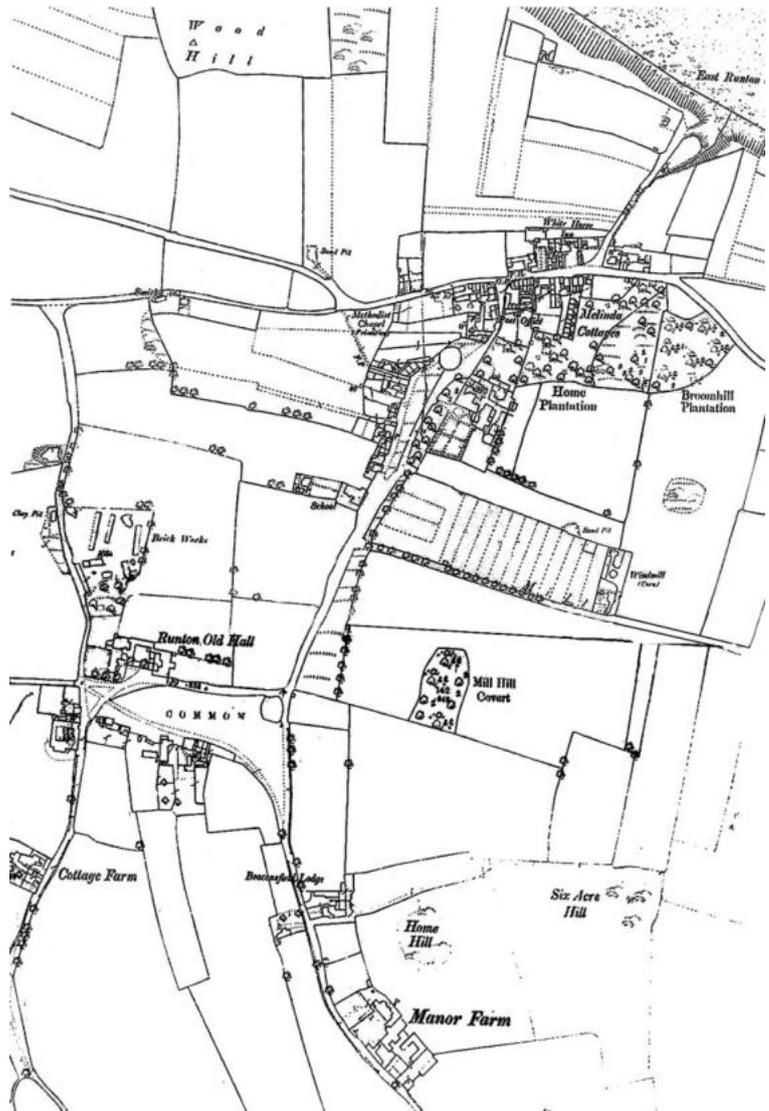
With the sea and the threat of erosion to the north, most buildings from the last two centuries have been set well back from the cliff top. The Ordnance Survey map for 1887 shows only small concentrations of houses around the junction of Green Lane and the coast road, including along the west side of Lower Common and scattered houses around Top

Fig 3: Part of the 1887 Ordnance Survey map of East Runton, showing the village just before the arrival of the railways.

Common. By the end of the nineteenth century, new houses were built to the east and west along the coast road, and added around the commons. Gradually both commons assumed a more domestic character.

The building of the railway and the two viaducts between the Lower and Top Commons are a physical break between the north and south halves of the village.

In the late Victorian period, infill housing broke the primarily linear pattern of development. Late Victorian houses could be set further back from the coast road, sometimes behind existing properties or following what had once been narrow paths. This infill continued during the later 20th century, with the Council housing of Buxton Close between the two commons, and more recently with developments such as Inceborough Close. Early to mid 20th century houses were built on the outskirts of the village on Green Lane extending out towards the Holt Road and Felbrigg, a process which has continued with the building of some late 20th century detached houses here, and to a lesser extent, with new houses along Mill Lane.



3.3 Landscape setting

East Runton is set in a shallow depression on the north side of a glacial formation, the Cromer Ridge. It projects to the south between two high points, Inceborough Hill and Roundabout Hill. The glacial deposition which created the Ridge has resulted in a varied geology, with a mix of till (silty clays), sands and gravels, supporting a variety of plant life. Inceborough Hill to the west of the village is partly covered by bracken and saplings, which have grown up following the cessation of grazing. Around the Hill there are small fields bordered by hedgerows and weather-worn oak trees; on the south side are small recently-introduced plantations. There are several large inland caravan sites which are largely screened from view by vegetation and higher ground.

Fig 4: East Runton beach looking towards Cromer.

To the north of the village are the clifftops, beach and sea. The sea has played a central role in the village's history, but despite this, the only way to reach it is along Beach Road and the Gap. The beach is a mixture of fine sand and stones, mainly flint cobbles. At low tide a



large area of wet sand is exposed with rock pools. The proportion of sand and stones on the shore and the location of the rock pools varies; a strong tide or storm can change the appearance of the beach overnight. The cliff face is mainly of mud and sand, with limited vegetation. The cliff-top fields on both sides of the village are filled by caravan and camping sites.

The village has been physically divided by the railway line which runs between Cromer and Sheringham. At East Runton the railway line and the A149 coast road follow a near-parallel course. They are bordered by grass fields which extend up to the cliff edge, and on the west side, the West Runton golf course. Immediately to the south of Lower Common, the railway divided, with a line running south towards North Walsham and Norwich. The line which used the southern railway viaduct has been closed, but its embankment still serves as a clear demarcation point between the village and countryside beyond. The surviving line acts as a similar boundary, curving round the raised ground of Roundabout Hill and Stone Hill.

The countryside around East Runton is of high quality, and an asset which can easily be reached and enjoyed by taking one of the numerous footpaths which lead out from the village. The raised ground helps to maintain the picturesque quality of the area by concealing modern intrusions such as caravan sites and developments on the outskirts of Cromer, such as a water treatment plant.

Fig 5: Footpath to Inleborough Hill and the Roman Camp, from Top Common.



4. HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT & ARCHAEOLOGY

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

Archaeological finds from the Paleolithic through to the Mediaeval periods are evidence of the long occupation of the area. For much of their existence, East and West Runton were seen as interconnected, and 19th century trade directories and the census returns combine data for both villages under the heading of Runton. The name Runton derives from the Old English “Runi’s (or Runa’s) Enclosure”. The villages were referred to as Rugutune and Runetune in Domesday survey, and there are variant spellings up to the nineteenth century.

Settlers were probably attracted to the area by good farmland, and at East Runton by a gap through the cliffs giving access to the beach for fishing and sea trade. Villagers had grazing rights over lands surrounding the villages, and records from the 14th century onwards show a preoccupation with disputes over the lands grazed by sheep, but give little information about the appearance of the Runtons. Exceptions are some 15th century accounts which refer to land being lost through erosion, and buildings built close to the cliff (now lost), and mention a village chapel. In his “East & West Runton”, G.F. Leake suggested that there were about 100 houses in the Runtons during the 15th century.

The early settlement was probably centred around the junction with Green Lane and the coast road, as it is today. The first census of 1801 shows that the population had dwindled since the Mediaeval period, with just 50 houses and 312 inhabitants. White’s 1836 trade directory gives a succinct description of the village; “East Runton is a fishing village, nearly a mile east of the (West Runton) church, on a small green, sheltered by a fine amphitheatre of hills, with a narrow opening to the beach, where there are four large and ten small fishing boats, and in the village is a curing house.” It also lists a pub, two shops and a blacksmith. White’s description would still fit the village shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1887.

Mid Victorian records show that most people worked in agriculture at West Runton, while at East Runton there was a mix of fishing and agriculture. While this might have provided a few farmers and merchants with good incomes, the chances are that most agricultural labourers and fishermen would have been poor. A few trades sprang up to serve the fishing and agricultural communities, such as a blacksmith, wheelwright, net menders and a miller (originally there were two mills in East Runton). Along what is now Brick Lane there was a brickworks, an industry frequently associated with farming, as it allowed the landowner to get an income from fields at seasons when there was no crop to harvest.

There was no Enclosure Act covering the Runtons, and the open landscape of the first half of the nineteenth century may not have altered much since the middle ages. There was some loss of common lands when Thomas Fowell Buxton purchased a 475-acre estate in the East Runton in 1840-1, and fenced in some land, planting it with trees.

The Buxtons became benefactors to the village, with Edward North Buxton building a school room on the Lower Common in 1852 (one source gives 1858). The mid-Victorian period saw only slow growth in the village. A Primitive Methodist church was founded in 1845, and the White Horse Inn was opened around 1851. A Reading Room, also financed by the Buxton family, was opened in 1877. The census of 1881 recorded 506 inhabitants in both Runtons, with 118 dwellings.

The railways arrived in the neighbouring town of Cromer in 1877, and a new line connected it with Sheringham and West Runton in 1887. It was now easy for the inhabitants of London and the Midlands to get to the Norfolk coast, and those who wanted a more rural idyll than Cromer could offer stayed further afield, in villages such as the Runtons. Four years after the arrival of the railways, the two villages had 141 houses and a population of 601. By 1901 this had increased to 199 houses and 840 inhabitants.

Fig 6: An old postcard of Lower Common produced by one of the railway companies.



By the beginning of the 20th century, the main road through the village had an urban character, and East Runton acquired a sewage system in 1909. The holiday industry which had promised so much to the coast suffered a setback with the First World War. Between the wars, the Norfolk coast regained something of its former popularity, although the fashionable set now tended to travel abroad for holidays. A few camping sites grew up along the coast, which developed into the caravan sites of today.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the centre of the village retains many of the charms which drew the Victorian visitor, and East Runton remains a popular tourist destination.

4.2 The archaeological significance and potential of the area.

Finds from the Palaeolithic through to the Iron Age in the area of East and West Runton attest to the early settlement of the area. To the south-east of the village, a possible long barrow was located on an aerial survey, and what may be the remains of Iron Age field system near to Roundabout Hill. .

There is no Mediaeval church at East Runton, but there are finds from this time, and the remains of a pottery-making workshop in the area of the former brickfields.

Some of the village houses contain parts of older buildings, these are noted in the following Character Area descriptions, and the section on local architecture.

Fig 7: The end gable of Cobbold House, facing Lower Common preserves the outline of an earlier building.

In recent years, archaeologists have included the relics from the two world wars in their surveys. While there was a variety of defences, now there is little trace of them. A pillbox which once stood near the edge of the cliffs has ended up on the beach, and there is little to be seen of a command post and tunnels which were sited on Inleborough Hill.

The long occupation of the area means that there is still the likelihood that a variety of artefacts and features from the past will be found. While these are more likely to be found in the relatively undisturbed agricultural land around the village, any excavation work within the village or alterations to older



houses should be monitored for what they may reveal about the village's past.

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

The Conservation Area has the sea to the north, and attractive countryside inland.

While the sea was once a major source of employment, the number of fishermen in the village has dwindled, and at time of writing (2010), most of Runton's fishing boats have relocated to Cromer, where it is easier to launch from the beach. The sea is now primarily a recreational resource. It has long drawn people to holiday in this part of Norfolk, first to take the waters for health, and later to take the sea air and to swim. This developed into the "bucket and spade" seaside family holiday which reached its zenith in the 1950s and 1960s, when sandy beaches such as at East Runton were extremely popular. Despite its importance to the village, there is limited access to the beach and sea; only one road leads to the Gap, a slope through the cliffs. Elsewhere, the cliffs are an inaccessible barrier between the village and the beach.

Just as fishing has declined, so has the importance of agriculture to the village. While much of the surrounding land is still agricultural, it offers limited employment, and today the countryside is also important as a place to walk and enjoy the high-quality environment.

As Runton exists close to the sea and countryside, anyone taking a short walk along one of the secondary roads and numerous paths that lead out from the village soon enters an attractive landscape.

The main impact of recreational use on the countryside has been the use of fields for caravan and camping sites, primarily at the margins of the settlement.

5. SPATIAL ANALYSIS

5.1 *Character and interrelationship of spaces within the area*

Lower Common

The main open spaces in the village are Lower Common and Top Common. These are to the south of the coast road, connected by Green Lane but separated by a pair of railway viaducts and some 20th century housing. Lower Common is the smaller of the two, an elongated area of grass enclosed by houses on two sides. Green Lane runs down the east side.

Most of the houses around the Common have a common vernacular brick and cobble construction, with occasional late Victorian and later 20th century houses. A track runs down the west side of the common, and serves as a parking area for the adjoining houses. The common is too small for a specific recreational role; its sole features are a circular pond with brick edging and a village sign mounted on a cobbled plinth which also serves as a seat.

Fig 8: Lower Common, looking north from the viaducts.

Mill Lane allotments are adjacent to the common at its south end, and this helps maintain an open, rural feel. The allotments are at the corner of Green Lane and Mill Lane, surrounded by an attractive mid-height cobbled wall. Access is from Mill Lane where there are several gated openings. Just over half the allotments are in use, and there is a picturesque mix of sheds, shrubs and a few mature trees.



Top Common

Maps from the end of the 19th and early 20th century show Top Common as little developed, with just a few houses around the edge. Top Common is set at 90° to Green Lane and has more feeling of enclosure, bordered by tarmac and houses on all four sides. The space is roughly triangular, with narrow roads leading away from it to the north and south.

There is a variety of houses here, ranging from 18th-early 19th century vernacular to post war council housing. Most have a similar modest scale, the only exception being the Old Hall Farm, set back behind trees at the north-west corner.

Top Common is considerably larger than Lower Common, and functions better as a village green. At the north-east corner is a pond bordered by reeds and small trees, with a resident flock of geese and a few ducks. In the centre of the common is a children's play area.

An area of grass by the railway viaducts to the east of Green Lane was presumably once part of Top Common; it has saplings and a border of trees which also run along the side of a viaduct and help screen a recent estate of houses from view.

While it falls outside the Conservation Area, the seafront is an important open space. The only access to the beach is along Beach Road, which runs north to connect with the Gap, a water-cut channel through the cliffs. This is the only point where village and seafront physically meet. Elsewhere, the village is separated from the seafront by cliffs and by caravan sites on the cliff top. There are limited public facilities by the Gap. On the east side is as an unmetalled cliff top car park with a toilet block, to the west is a small area of grass with an inter-war shelter with a pitched roof. The Gangway is a tarmac and concrete-surfaced slope to the beach with grass covered banks either side. At the foot of the cliffs on the east side is a raised concrete sea wall which serves as a rudimentary viewing point, with a few benches. Around the sea wall and base of the cliffs is a small area of granite rock armour, but apart from this, the beach is natural and unmanaged. Timber breakwaters only start near to West Runton and Cromer.

5.2 Key views and vistas

The most important key views for East Runton are where the A149 enters the village and becomes the High Street. At both ends of the village the view rapidly changes from caravan sites to a street lined with brick and cobble houses. On the west side there is a brick and cobble house with a gothic-revival chapel opposite, while at the east end, Constantia Cottage Restaurant and its outbuildings are a strong feature.



Fig 9(left): Entrance to the High Street from the east.



Fig 10(right) Entrance to the High Street from the west.

There is a more rural approach to the village along a winding country lane from the direction of Felbrigg. While the initial houses are not particularly distinctive, largely late 20th century, the views of Top Common and Lower Common which follow create a very positive impression.

Top Common is one of the few points in the Conservation Area where the surrounding countryside can be glimpsed, a succession of trees and fields on the skyline. The sea is hardly visible from the centre of the village at all.

The best vantage points are outside the Conservation Area; Incleborough Hill in particular offers fine panoramic views in all directions, including the sea in the distance.

6. CHARACTER ANALYSIS

6.1 Activity, prevailing or former uses within the area

Agriculture and fishing were once the main sources of work in the village. The trace left by farming is easiest to detect; there are several large farmhouses and farm buildings. The best example, Manor Farm, is outside the Conservation Area. There is also an old forge on Thain's Lane, with terracotta panels depicting the tools of the blacksmith's trade. Few other houses are as forthcoming about the occupations of former owners.

On Lower Common, a small group of houses and outbuildings set around a small yard includes a former smokehouse. While it could have been used for both meat and fish, it seems likely a fisherman and/or fish merchant lived here. The small yard is reminiscent of the larger courtyard developments once inhabited by fishermen at nearby Sheringham and Cromer. There is another possible smokehouse at the edge of the village to the west, by the entrance to Gold Park caravan site. Other houses were doubtless occupied by fishermen, but evidence for this rests largely on local knowledge;

today there is little to distinguish a brick and cobble cottage once occupied by a fisherman from one occupied by a farm worker.

Fig 11: Former smokehouse on Lower Common

The brick making industry is known to go back to at least the eighteenth century in the village, and there are traces of an earlier pottery industry on the same site. The brick works is now a caravan site, and all that remains is the red and white bricks and pantiles used for the older village houses.

There is more evidence for other preoccupations of village life. There are two pubs and a former school, which is now a church at the south end of Lower Common.

Norfolk had a strong tradition of non-conformist worship, and the former Primitive Methodist Chapel is a good example of a late Victorian village chapel; it started life as a smaller building in the mid-Victorian era. The 1927 Ordnance Survey map marks "St Andrew's Chantry" to the east of Top Common, which has now gone.

There are a number of shops, although it is not clear if any of the present shops predate the arrival of the railways. The newsagents, once also the post office, is late Victorian, as is the butcher's, while shops to the east of the newsagent's are from the later 20th century.

A small motor garage once at the west end of the village has gone without trace; an entry in an inter-war trade directory mentions a "motor jobmaster" who might have been based here.

The houses which line each end of the High Street and the north end of Lower Common are surprisingly large for a village, and most probably started out as boarding houses. The gold-lettered house names in the lights above their doors would have helped visitors to find them. A few of the larger village houses still offer holiday accommodation.



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

Three character areas have been identified.

(1) Built-up areas with a primarily urban character. This covers the High Street, the north end of Green Lane and the new estate of Inceborough Close.

(2) Open areas. Any houses are on the periphery of the green area. This covers Lower Common and Top Common and the Mill Lane allotments.

(3) Railway viaducts between Lower Common and Top Common. Man-made structures, these include embankments with dense vegetation.

Character Area 1

High Street

At the east end of the village, the coast road curves round an overgrown area to the south, then slopes down to become the High Street. There is a rapid transition between the open countryside and the High Street, which is enclosed by tall Victorian houses. The High Street has a shallow "S" shaped curve at either end, while its centre is nearly straight. The High Street is joined on the north side by Beach Road, which falls outside the Conservation Area. To the south of the High Street is Green Lane (described separately), which leads inland towards Felbrigg.

As this is the main coast road, traffic is fairly constant, and it can be busy during the holiday season. There are pavements on both sides with concrete kerbs. On the north side, the houses and garden walls at the centre of the street project out, and the pavement narrows at this point.

Presumably in an effort to slow traffic, and to help mark out parking spaces in front of the shops, a wedge-shaped area of pavement projects out on the south side, fitted with reflecting bollards. This creates a brief "pinch point".

The High Street has a remarkably large number of street lights. While they may be required by highway regulations, as this the main coast road, they jar badly with their surroundings, and are obtrusive due to their excessive height.

High Street, South side

At the beginning of the High Street on the south side is a series of late Victorian red brick houses, 2-3 storeys high with canted bay windows. They have a variety of details with a "gothic revival" character. The houses are separated by driveways or lanes, some leading to terraces set back from the road.

The initial pair of houses have small front gardens with low brick and cobble walls. Victoria House, which bears the date 1870, has a front combining red brick dressings and knapped flint facings. Its plainer red brick neighbour has been enlarged in recent years, with an external brick porch. Both houses have wide driveways and garages.

The two houses which follow are linked by a flat roofed single storey shop, the "East Runton Shopper"; the shop front occupies what were once small yards. The shop front is of recent date, with large plate glass windows and a wide brightly coloured fascia board. Above the shop the first house is in red brick and knapped flint, with a pair of canted bay windows; a third floor has a timber balcony. The adjoining house with the west side of the shop is one of a semidetached pair. Each house of the pair had two storey bay windows and hipped dormers; one ground floor bay has been removed to make way for the shop front. The ground floor bay on "Ravenstone" has been reinstated following the removal of a shop; the painted stone/concrete pillars of the bay and the modern window are clumsy replacements.

Fig 12: The East Runton Shopper

Abutting Ravenstone are two houses with crowstepped gables. The first has an empty flat-roofed shop "Curl up and dye", which projects out over the forecourt. "Alexandra House" next door may also once have had a shop, as there is a console and entablature above the ground floor. This may have been removed some time ago, as the brickwork on the ground floor is quite weathered, and there is a good timber sash window. The forecourt has a modern low brick wall with capped pillars. Both houses have first floor oriel bays.



A gravel passage runs up the side of Alexandra House to a yard with a mid-late Victorian terrace, "Melinda Cottages". This red brick terrace is set at 90° to the road; the end gable can be seen from the High Street. The terrace is simply detailed with rough brick arches above the windows. The houses face west; their rear wings on the east side have been supplemented by a variety of modern extensions. On the west side as you enter the yard is an older brick and cobble house, also called "Melinda Cottage". The 19th century owner of this house is said to have constructed the nearby terrace as a speculative venture, to provide an income for his family.



Fig 13: Melinda Cottages

A house with a newsagent's shop flanks the passage on the west side. It is of the same design as Alexandra house, but the brickwork is painted white. There is an attractive double-fronted shop with a recessed lobby, probably late 19th century; the shop window on the east side has been replaced at some point and mouldings lost. This house has been combined with an adjacent narrow building, also painted white, and the shop extended into it. This is now a tearoom with a plain modern front. Above the tearoom, the facade has the unusual combination of flint galleting and half-timberwork; it is regrettable that such an unusual treatment has been obscured by paint.

A terrace of brick and cobble houses follows, set at 90° to the road, with a gravel yard in front. The end gable facing the street is rendered in cement. On the east side of the yard, there is an interesting range of old outbuildings; Melinda Cottage can be seen to the rear.

After the terrace the houses front directly onto the pavement. The first, "Flint House", is actually a pair of houses faced with flint galleting, rendered and painted brick quoins and door/window surrounds. Areas of the galleting are missing on ground floor, exposing the underlying brick and flint cobbles.

A gravel drive down the west side of Flint House leads to a red brick terrace, "Orchard Cottages". A dirt path to the rear, or east elevation, allows a good view of the attractive brick and flint cobblework at the back of Flint House, and the weathered cobble walls of the terrace just to the west. Most of Orchard Cottages have new extensions at the rear, obscuring the original character. The fronts are distinguished by wide tiled canopies over the paired entrances, with openwork wooden supports. They give a stylish "Arts & Crafts" feel to what is otherwise a conventional red brick terrace. The houses have small front gardens with a variety of boundary treatments.



Fig 14: Orchard Cottages

Returning to the street, a plain terrace of four brick and cobble houses follows. The end house, "Elder Cottage", is larger than its neighbours, and the only one with coursed cobbles. It is probably the oldest of the group, and may have once been a pair, as one front window evidently started out as a doorway. At the west end of the terrace there is a red brick extension, then a garden bordered by a brick and cobble garden wall which curves round and runs down the side of Green Lane.

Fig 15: Terrace including Elder Cottage

After Green Lane is a brick and cobble house with a rendered end gable facing the street. The gable is painted a light violet and has modern replacement windows. Visible at the rear of the house there is an interesting array of pantile-roofed outbuildings and extensions.



A timber garage separates the house from a terrace of single storey cottages set back from the road. The first cottage at the east end, "The Nook", preserves much of its original appearance. It has a single window opening fitted with a modern casement, and an enclosed external timber porch. It is possible that all the cottages were once this small, and that the remainder have been combined to create a larger homes. Apart from the Nook, the cottages have a variety of replacement windows and extensions, and cottage at the east end has been rendered. A low brick and cobble wall runs round from Green Lane to enclose terrace, although there is an obtrusive gap created where part has been removed to allow for off-road parking.

Fig 16: Single storey cottages on south side.



A bungalow follows, set in a spacious garden with a patinated brick garden wall. It is probably inter-war, but blends in well thanks to its weathered brick and cobble walls. Behind can be seen the back of a late Victorian house on Lower Common.

A pair of semidetached houses continues the street, then a freestanding house. All are late Victorian, of red brick with knapped flint facings and most likely built as boarding houses. The semidetached pair combine flint with ornamental brick door surrounds, and hanging tiles divide the ground and first floors of the bay windows. The single house has ornamental brickwork and carved stone (or moulded artificial stone) lintels.

The two houses next door are set back from the road in a gravel yard. Both may be old, but their present character is modern, with crisply rendered fronts and new windows and doors. There was once a shop at the front of the yard; this has been reworked so that it is little more than a bleak looking roughcast-rendered box when viewed from the street. Next door, and ending the High Street, is the Methodist Chapel, a strong gothic revival structure where the red brick is decorated and detailed with moulded sections of white brick.



Fig 17: reworked shop at west end of High Street

Just outside the Conservation Area are fenced-off allotments, with a variety of timber sheds and stored trailers. Running down the west side of these is Thain's Lane.

High Street, North Side

Approaching East Runton from Cromer, the first house is a pleasant Arts & Crafts style bungalow, largely hidden from view by a high timber fence, set just outside the Conservation Area. It also escapes notice due to the prominence of the brick and cobble complex of the nearby Constantia Restaurant. This has developed from a single brick and cobble house and adjoining outbuildings and stables. In recent years these have been developed to provide a large restaurant and accommodation for the Constantia family, each new addition having brick and cobble facings. A high boundary wall runs along the side of the pavement as one enters the village, so that only the pantiled roofs of the former stables can be seen. The restaurant follows, a symmetrical house with an external brick porch, in a small garden with a fountain and restaurant signs. The garden is enclosed by a low brick and cobble wall with moulded brick capping, which turns the corner into Beach Road.

The east side of the Beach Road junction has become a collecting point for street furniture. By a litter bin and bench seat there is a telegraph pole with a "spider's web" of telephone cables, extending in all directions. Nearer the corner is a tall aluminium post, presumably a disused street light, whose sole function seems to be to hold a sign indicating the direction of the beach.

Fig 18: Constantia Cottage and entrance to Beach Road.



"Bernie's" is on the opposite corner, a two storey house largely hidden by single storey extensions; all have a typical mid-20th century character. The extensions started out offering bingo and amusements, they are now a social club. Most are in red brick, but the extension nearest the road has flint cobble facings. At the west end is a fish and chip shop. In front of Bernie's is a raised paved forecourt on several levels, with steps leading up to it. There are several barbecue-style tables here for patrons of the club and some dated-looking lamps.

Down the west side of the forecourt is a modern single storey flat-roofed shop in brick and cobbles, selling caravan accessories.

Next to the shop is the White Horse pub, at the rear of a tarmac car park. The main building probably dates from the 18th or early 19th century to judge from its glazed pantile roof, but the present front is largely inter-war. With its coloured glass windows it has a period charm. There is a single storey rendered extension to one side, now a dining area, and an unusual raised area with a pergola for those who wish to eat or drink outside.



Fig 19: The White Horse

A group of older houses follows. While they are much extended and altered, they probably date from the older fishing village. The first house is narrow, with a former shop in the ground floor, and a canted timber bay above; -more vernacular than architect-designed in appearance. A narrow passage leads up to some brick and cobble cottages, including "Smith's Cottage". This is one of the older houses of the village, shown on the Tithe Map of the early 1840s.

Returning to the road, there are two adjoining houses. The larger of the two must once have had a shop in the ground floor; it has been replaced by a Georgian style shallow bow window, a new house door and casement windows. There are three window openings on the first floor, the central one has been blocked. The asymmetry of the front suggests it may have started out as two separate houses. "Silvergate Cottage", on the west side, is also of brick and cobbles. It has three modern windows facing the street; the narrower ground floor window must once have been a door.

After this is a Victorian brick and cobble villa at no 30. Set well back from the road behind a long front garden it breaks the traditional pattern of the street, but its well stocked garden is a pleasant addition to the street. The garden wall is of brick and cobbles with trefoil-shaped blue clay capping. The wall continues in front of the neighbouring shop, "The Kit Bag". The main shop is a low, probably single storey house, as shown by the end gable. In recent years, the double-fronted shop has been extended forwards into the concrete forecourt; it now has two large and well-detailed bay windows.



Fig 20: The "Kit Bag"

The Fishing Boat next door has been a pub for at least 170 years. On the east side is a large symmetrically-fronted brick and cobble house, with a later red brick porch. A lower house to the west, also in brick and cobbles, has been integrated into the pub; its top floor windows have been bricked up. A passage down the east side leads to the pub garden at the rear, which has a raised lawn.

Fig 21: Late Victorian terrace with replacement bay windows.

A terrace of six red brick three-storey houses follows. They have a late Victorian character; the doors and windows have stone lintels and there are ornamental brick string courses and a cornice. The first floor oriel bay windows are a prominent feature; regrettably, all been altered with a variety of uPVC windows, and only one still has panelling at the base.



The houses have small front gardens which probably once had low brick walls with railings. Four of the boundary walls have been removed to allow for off-road parking. The house at the west end has an attractive double-fronted butcher's shop, still with its roller blind in place.

A lane down the side of the butcher's shop leads to a variety of outbuildings. On the opposite side of the lane is a plain modern red brick house detailed in white brick. The brick and cobble boundary wall is older than the house, surmounted by a tall hedge.

A modern red brick wall running along the side of the path marks the gardens of "Victoria Terrace", a row of houses set at right angles to the road. All are in red brick with decoration in white brick. The houses face east, with round headed doorways opening onto good sized front gardens. At the rear, the houses have single storey rear wings; one has been replaced by an extension with a flat roof.

Fig 22: Victoria Terrace

After a lane leading to the rear of the terrace is a severe, modern-looking garage. It re-uses an older building which was once part of the village's motor garage.

A row of four houses then ends the High Street and the Conservation Area. At the centre is a pair of semidetached houses, each a mirror image of the other, with well coursed cobbles. Attached on the east side is a slightly lower red brick modern house, while to the west there is a small brick and cobble house where red brick has been set end on into the coursed cobbles. The last house, "Shoemaker's Cottage" has a number of interesting vernacular survivals; there are small casement windows rather than sash windows, and an outhouse projecting out towards the street, with a tall clay chimney.



Beyond the houses are allotments, then the Gold Park caravan site.

Green Lane from the High Street to Top Common.

Green Lane starts at the junction with the High Street. After passing between a variety of brick and cobble houses, the road opens out to become the east side of Lower Common. The southern part of Green Lane is described separately, as a part of Lower and Top Common. There is a narrow pavement on the east side, with blue clay kerbs, the only example of an older road surface to survive in the village.

On the east corner is a small open area enclosed by a low brick and cobble wall and a well trimmed hedge. This has two village notice boards. Just to the south is the old Reading Room, now the offices of Runton Parish Council, which fronts directly onto the street. The front is in uncoursed flint pebbles, with some good brick detailing around the windows and door, including cut and rubbed brick arches and moulded brick drip sills. It is attached to the rear of two semidetached houses set at 90° to the road, their fronts facing the garden on the south side. The houses are well maintained, with a traditional design of window. The doorways have porches with trellis-work. The well-stocked garden is bordered by a short length of fence, then a low brick and cobble wall. This curves round the east side of Green Lane, passing in front of "Corner Cottage", a modern brick and cobble house. Corner Cottage is partly hidden from view by a high shiplap timber fence and mature trees. The Cottage is at the corner with Broomhill, a private road which falls outside the Conservation Area.



Fig 23, Old Reading Room at the corner of Green Lane

The west side of Green Lane is a similar mix of brick and cobble houses, most with small front gardens. "Eva Cottage", on the corner with the High Street, has a late Victorian character, with uncoursed flint walls and moulded brick drip sills above the windows. It has a shallow projecting gable offset to one side. The garden has a variety of shrubs and small trees behind a low brick and cobble wall, and a cottage style garden gate. A gravel drive down the south side leads to recent single storey rear extensions.

"Norfolk Cottage" which follows to the south is said to be one of the oldest houses in the village. A low lying single storey house, it has prominent dormers. The coursed cobble front has evidence of alterations over the years; it looks as though the walls have been raised in height, perhaps when the angle of the roof was altered, and some early brick is used in the front. The narrow front garden is enclosed by a low brick and cobble boundary wall.

Fig 24: Green Lane, looking north to the High Street



Next, the Laurels is set well back from the road, largely concealed behind a variety of shrubs which rise above a low brick and cobble wall. The house deserves to be seen better; a tasteful symmetrical facade, faced with galleting and rendered brick quoins; the roof is of dark glazed pantiles.

A picturesque passageway with a grass and brick surface separates The Laurels from the rear of "The Old House" which faces Top Common. A low brick and cobble wall wraps around the side of this house.

Incleborough Close

At the beginning of this cul-de-sac development are some traditional brick and cobble agricultural buildings, probably once part of a farm belonging to "Incleborough House". The gravel-surfaced access road runs east from Green Lane, between a late Victorian villa on the north side and an older brick and cobble house to the south, "Ingleboro Cottage".

Entering the Close, the first houses facing the viewer to the east are "Flint Barn", a converted barn and outbuildings, all with brick and cobble walls. There have been major alterations to the front in order to make it suitable for residential use; are new casement windows, dormer windows and pantiled hoods over the house doors. The large original side opening is filled with new dark-stained timber doors. The end gable retains more of its original appearance in brick and flint.

Fig 25: Entrance to Incleborough Close with Flint Barn.



Ingleboro House to the south is the first house in a short terrace; much of the house is in red brick, (some of it modern work), although there are also areas of brick and cobbles. The houses have modern first floor sash windows; there is evidence of earlier openings which have been bricked up. There is a high brick and cobble wall at the rear of the terrace, incongruously interrupted by the insertion of a modern garage.

The gravel road doglegs to the south, between small slightly raised areas of planting with shrubs and ceramic borders. The road also branches to the south, leading to "Stable Cottage". This is a much-altered traditional building; the top window in the end gable has been blocked, and there are new ground floor windows; at the rear there are what appear to be new dormers. Attached on the south side is a modern extension with rendered walls; it relates poorly to the older brick and cobble structure. Beyond the stable-style timber gates and gravel drive the old brick and cobble wall of Incleborough House curves round to the east.

To the south of the converted agricultural buildings is a more open area with modern housing, most in red brick. A number of modern brick and cobble walls reflect the traditional character of the older buildings. In the centre of the development are hedges and several small trees.

Character Area 2

Lower Common and Top Common are set to the south of the coast road, linked by Green Lane but separated by a pair of railway viaducts. Green Lane initially curves round to the west after leaving the coast road, so that from this direction Lower Common is at first hidden from view. The Common then opens out on the west side of the lane.

Lower Common



Fig 26: General view of Lower Common from the south

This is the smaller of the two commons; a narrow strip of grass picturesquely bordered by houses on the north and west sides, with Green Lane down the east side. The main interest of Lower Common is created by a fine group of brick and cobble vernacular houses on the west side. A dirt track cuts across the common, allowing vehicles to reach the houses. A grass bank and trees on the east side continue the green character of the area, although they are separated from the main part of the common by Green Lane. To the south on the west side is Shepherd's Close, a modern housing development, followed by a former school, now converted to a church, and a post-war village hall. The common is too small for a specific recreational role; its features are limited to a circular pond with brick edging and a village sign mounted on a cobbled plinth. Low concrete bollards prevent cars from encroaching onto the grass. There are a number of paths round the perimeter, and in wet weather the grass, particularly at the south end, becomes trampled and muddy.

At the east end on the north side is the "Old House", a traditional two-storey brick and cobble house with a near-symmetrical front, possibly early-mid 19th century. A brick and cobble wall runs west from this, stepping down to give a good view of further brick and cobble houses behind. There is also a glimpse of the caravans on higher ground near the cliff top. A house porch and garden gate are integrated into the garden wall, which ends when it meets a modern red brick garage. Next, the "House on the Green" is a substantial late Victorian guest house set well back from the road. Its decorative front mixes knapped flint facings with red brick and stone dressings. The two openings in its brick and cobble boundary wall have been enlarged for vehicle access, and there are new red brick pillars.

To the west, rather out of character, is a late 20th century cream-coloured brick bungalow with a low brick and cobble boundary wall. A green-painted corrugated iron garage separates the bungalow the vernacular houses along the west side of the common.

The houses on the west side are irregularly grouped. Some are in short terraces, others are set around paved courtyards. Except where stated, all have red brick and cobble walls.

The first four houses at the north end are terraced, two storeys high. The first house, "Pond Cottage" is larger than the rest. All are of brick and cobbles, save for "The Anchorage" which has a weathered red brick front. The terrace has a variety of additions and replacement features including external porches.



Fig 27: Lower Common, north side

A narrow path runs to the west after the terrace. It leads to the allotments at the west end of the village, passing a short terrace of three late Victorian red brick houses, “Ada”, “Sunnyside” & “Melrose”. Another path cuts across the first, just to the south of the cottages. It gives access to the back gardens of the houses facing the Common. Some of the allotments adjoining the path have been converted into back gardens.

The next house facing the Common, “Cutty Sark” has end and rear walls of weathered brick and flint cobbles. It is on the north side of a small courtyard, enclosed on three sides by houses which include a former smokehouse. Today the houses have a domestic appearance, with garden furniture and pot plants, but their original workmanlike character is still evident.

A large modern garage conceals parts of two houses to the rear from view, “Edgar Cottage” and “Cutler’s Cottage”, both attractive houses in brick and flint. After the garage is a terrace of three houses; the end houses have recent side extensions. Adjoining this is a pair of much-extended brick and cobble houses. The first house, Rose Cottage, has an off road parking area and a brick and cobble boundary wall, the following pair have a low wooden picket fence.

To the south of this terrace, a narrow winding lane leads west, passing what appears to be an early 20th century red brick house “Sunnyholme” and its outbuilding, “cosi-cot”. Further west, just outside the Conservation Area, are small fields and a fisherman’s storage area, before bracken and undergrowth closes the lane.

The rear wall of “Cobbold Cottage” runs along the side of the lane. The end gable facing the Common is of particular interest, preserving the outline of an earlier and smaller gable. There are areas of chequer pattern created by flint cobbles alternating with red bricks set end-on into the wall. Cobbold Cottage is attached to “Claremont” and “Datchet”, semidetached houses set at the rear of a small yard. On the south side of the yard is a single storey house, “Green Cottage”.

Fig 28: Part of the west side of the Common, with Cobbold Cottage



This group is followed by a short terrace of single storey houses, “Apple Cottage” and “Bower Cottage”, probably originally four in number, but now combined to create two. An additional single storey house at the south end is built onto the rear wall of “Fig Tree Cottage”, a two-storey brick and cobble house facing south. Fig Tree Cottage’s near-symmetrical front is almost hidden by an unruly hedge and a large fig tree at the corner of Shepherd’s Close.

Shepherd's Close is a later 20th century cul-de-sac development. Only the initial houses are in the Conservation Area; on the north side the first two houses have brick and cobble facings, reflecting the style of the adjacent Fig Tree Cottage. Further east are bungalows and houses in a less-traditional orange-buff coloured brick. There are trees at the end of the close, and a low grassy mound is visible in the distance.

The grass at the south end of the common gives way to dirt, as it is regularly crossed by cars. Here there is the Church of St Andrew, an old school now converted to a church. The main part of the former school is in knapped flint with limestone dressings. In front of this is a small schoolroom in red brick and cobbles; this has a number of Victorian and more recent extensions. These have been sympathetically carried out, and the irregular outline of the church has a very pleasing character, with a curved chancel adding visual interest. The front yard has metal railings, which continue down a narrow worn tarmac lane leading to a Victorian house, presumably the old schoolmaster's house. This has a vaguely gothic appearance, with walls of brick and flint.

The Village Hall on the opposite side of the lane is a low red brick building, of unremarkable mid-20th century character. It is set back behind a gravel forecourt and concrete paths. There is a low wooden fence in front, and a grass bank used as an informal parking area.



Fig 29: Lower Common seen from the viaduct to the south.

On the east side of Lower Common, at the north end is a road serving a post-war estate, Broomhill, followed by a post-war brick and cobble bungalow. To the south is a large late Victorian/Edwardian detached house with a half-timbered gable and bay window. The bungalow and house are enclosed by a low cobble wall with brick coping, which curves round at the south end to run up the side of the access road leading to a recent development, Incleborough Close (described as part of Character Area 1).

On the south side of Incleborough Close is Ingleboro Cottage, a brick and cobble house with an all-brick front. This appears to have started life as a small detached house, but is now connected to the rear of the more imposing Incleborough House, effectively forming a long rear wing. The view of this group from the road is obscured by a high brick and cobble wall, and by trees on the wide grass verge. To the casual observer, this appears to be a relatively straightforward brick and cobble group, although the crowstepped gable facing the road, together with three blocked windows with prominent architraves within the gable of Incleborough House show it is of early date. A lane curves round behind the trees and verge, an informal parking area. It is only by taking this lane and looking through the gateway in the boundary wall that the front of Incleborough House can be seen, an impressive white brick Georgian facade, symmetrically arranged with an aedicular doorcase and large sash windows. There is a modern timber conservatory on the east side, to the east of the front lawn. Signs around the gateway indicate this is now a well-recommended hotel.

At the south end of the track it curves to the east, leading to "Jackdaws", a modern red brick house concealed behind the high boundary wall and "Jaycynian", a recent brick and cobble bungalow set back from the road. Running down the side

of the garden of Jaycnian, a narrow private road leads up to houses at the back of Inleborough Close, and follows the edge of the allotments to the south.

Mill Lane Allotments.

These allotments are at the corner of Green Lane and Mill Lane, surrounded by an attractive mid-height cobble wall. Access is from Mill Lane where there are several gated openings. Just over half the allotments are currently in use, and there is a picturesque mix of sheds, gardening equipment, small trees and grassy areas, characteristic of allotments.

There is a raised grass verge in front of the flint boundary wall, with a bench to appreciate the view. The allotment wall is of coursed flint cobbles throughout, carefully selected by size. There is no brick, either as quoins or capping. Behind the wall are a few mature trees and creepers which have begun to cover the wall.



Fig 30: Mill Lane allotments

Top Common

Approach from the north

Immediately to the south of the railway viaducts is an open area of grass on the east side of Green Lane. This is bordered on its north side by the overgrown slopes of the viaduct; the vegetation continues on the east side, together with several mature trees. The vegetation partly screens the modern houses of "The Paddock" from view. A row of small trees has been planted at the edge of the common next to Green Lane; during May these were covered in pink and white blossom, adding greatly to the appeal of the area. Another picturesque touch is a small flock of geese which use the south end of the grass as a resting place.

Fig 31: Open area of grass to the south of the viaducts.

On the opposite side of the Lane is "Sparrow's Park", a modern cream-coloured brick bungalow, then the post-war council housing of Buxton Close. Four of the semidetached council houses (at least some of which are now in private ownership) which front Top Common are included in the Conservation Area. While the Buxton Close development is well designed, it would not normally be considered of sufficient interest to merit including in the Conservation Area. In addition, the original harmonious relationship created by the uniform design of the houses has been reduced by extensions and the removal of a boundary fence from one property.



Three of the semidetached houses face south, towards a small area of grass, isolated from the main part of Top Common by a tarmac road and a short length of hedge and flint wall. There is a George VI brick pillar box at the east end.

Top Common: main area

The main part of Top Common is a roughly triangular, mainly of grass, running east-west. It is bordered by Green Lane on the east side, and narrow tarmac roads on the north and south sides. Buxton Close is on the north side, and a lane leads past this to the site of a former brickworks, now Brick Lane. At the south-west corner is the tree-lined Banville Lane. There are two modern cul-de-sac developments on the west side of Green Lane, The Paddocks and The Springles.

Particularly during the Spring and summer months, there is a strong sense of enclosure, with raised ground and mature trees on the horizon on all sides. The main view out of the common is north through the viaducts, to where a small area of Lower Common can be seen.



Fig 32: Top Common seen from the west, on Incleborough Hill

Top Common is large enough to serve as a village green, and to fill several roles. There are wildlife areas and a children's play area with swings, a climbing frame and a roundabout. A few small trees are scattered across the Common; most are concentrated at the west end. A drainage ditch runs down the north side, with a wooden footbridge across it.

In the north-east corner of the Common is a pond, inhabited by ducks and geese, with dense vegetation and trees on the south side. To the south of the pond, the grass is distinctly uneven, and at times, waterlogged. This has encouraged wild plants, including a variety of grasses. During a visit in May, there was an excellent display of flowering Marsh Marigolds, or Kingcups. The soft earth in this part unfortunately also shows deep tracks from cars which have run across the edge of the grass.

Fig 33: Top Common, looking north along Green Lane back to the viaducts.



The most significant historic buildings are at the west end of the Common. Set behind a gravel parking area is Old Hall Farm, a substantial house reworked by a Late Victorian/Edwardian architect, believed to have been M. H. Baillie Scott. This brick and cobble house shows the architect's skill in adapting and introducing traditional architectural features to create a picturesque composition. The outbuildings to the east are simpler, but also attractive, and include stables and a single storey building alongside the road, in residential use. Behind this single storey outbuilding is a two storey barn(?) with its gable end-on to the road; there are two infilled slit windows in the top of the gable and an east-facing central wing. Little else can be seen due to the trees and other vegetation which screen the area from view.

The northern boundary of Old Hall Farm has a dense mix of bushes and trees, which run up the lane along the side of Buxton Close.

Mature trees lean over the southern boundary wall just to the west of the house, shading a footpath leading to Inceborough Hill and West Runton. Where the footpath begins is a small triangular area, mainly of grass; part of this has been left uncut, presumably to encourage wild plants.

By the footpath is another former agricultural complex, Congham Farm. The former farmhouse is of brick and cobbles, with its end gable facing the Common. The front faces a well-laid out formal garden on the north side, with a low brick and cobble wall. At the rear is a modern brick and cobble extension, partly hidden by a high brick and cobble wall, then a modern garage.

To the south is Banville Barn, at the beginning of Banville Lane. This brick and cobble barn has been much altered during conversion to a dwelling. It has a gravel-surfaced yard on the south side, enclosed by a brick and cobble wall and wrought iron gates. At the rear of the yard is a single storey timber outbuilding attached to the barn, possibly a modern addition.

At the south-west corner of Top Common is "The Pightle", a single storey brick and cobble cottage which appears much altered and extended. It has a garage and walled garden/yard to the east. A small area of grass in front of the cottage has been fenced off; during the survey several villagers pointed this out, as they felt a part of the Common had been unfairly taken as part of a private garden. Shrubs and ornamental grasses have been planted here.

The south side of the common is a good mix of houses of different periods. At the west end is a late Victorian red brick terrace, "Elm Cottages". The terrace is set back from the road with a dirt track leading up to it. The cottages have small front gardens with brick and cobble walls. The end gables of the terrace have panels of random coursed cobbles.

A garage separates Elm Cottages from Shepherd's Cottage. This is a much extended brick and cobble house. The front has a symmetrical arrangement of sash windows, the top pair being half dormers; there is a modern glazed porch over the central entrance; the brick quoins are rendered and painted. There are extensions on the south and west sides, which are entirely in character; the sort of historic accretions one expects with a vernacular building. On the east side is a large garden, with an old flint wall separating it from "Lilac Cottage" and its garden, to the east. Lilac Cottage is two storeys, of red brick. While much of the house, including a single storey extension on the west side, appears modern, older areas of brick are visible on the west side. Much of Lilac Cottage is hidden by a tall hedge at the end of one of the gardens of "Pear Tree Cottages".



Fig 34: Top Common, the south side as seen from Green Lane

1-2 Pear Tree Cottages are a pleasant pair of semidetached, probably mid Victorian brick and cobble houses. With their small sash windows and adjacent doors, they are mirror images of one another, save for the openwork porch on no 1. No 3 Pear Tree Cottage is a separate modern house to the east. It is larger than its neighbours, with a brick porch. The traditional shape of this house, together with the use of brick and cobbles make this house blend in perfectly with its older neighbours.

“Brampton Cottage” and “Oak Cottage” to the east are an attractive pair of semidetached houses with forward facing end wings with shaped gables. Each wing has a rectangular single-storey bay window. These houses have traditional elements, but most of the detailing is 20th century in character, suggesting a recent construction date. Oak Cottage has replacement windows and a modern entrance porch. A mixture of hedges and timber fences screen them from the road.

The south side of the Common and the Conservation Area closes with a pair of understated and tasteful semidetached houses. Almost without doubt interwar, they are of red brick throughout, with an asymmetrical arrangement of windows. Two of the houses have ground floor bow windows, which are probably not original. The front gardens have a mix of hedges and timber fences.

The east side of the Common has a diverse character. Facing the Common at the south end is The Springles, a modern cul-de-sac development which falls outside the Conservation Area. Just south of this is “Meadowsett”, an inter-war detached house with rendered and white-painted walls. There is a modern red brick porch and garage on the ground floor. A flint wall and hedge screens the gravel front yard.

On the north side of The Springles is a modern brick and cobble house, “West View”. This stands out, in part due to the expanse and bright colour of its pantiled roof. Apart from a short stretch of brick wall at the corner with The Springles, the boundary wall is of flint throughout, of a type found regularly in the village.

The wall continues to the north; here there is a modern red brick bungalow, “Hillview”. A new bungalow is being built behind it, and the flint wall has been crudely enlarged, presumably to allow access for builder’s vehicles.

The flint cobble wall ends at the entrance road to The Paddock. To the north is “Oakhurst”, a freestanding villa within a spacious garden. The building has an Edwardian, even interwar character; ground floor bay windows and porches on the west and south sides have plain tiled roofs. The first floor has a roughcast render, and there is a diamond-shaped terracotta panel between the first floor casement windows. The brick and flint boundary wall is modern, and incorporates a low fence at the top.

Character Area 3

Railway viaducts

Two substantial railway viaducts separate Lower and Top Commons, and are a strong focal point. They have three spans, and Green Lane passes between the central arch. The first viaduct was constructed around 1887, carrying trains from Cromer to Sheringham and beyond; the second was built around 1906. They run roughly east-west, set at a slight angle to one another. Raised earth embankments lead up to the viaducts, they are overgrown with timber fences at the base.

The viaducts are primarily of blue clay engineering brick, very similar in design to one another, but with subtle variations of detail. There are areas of stonework on the southern viaduct, and white brick on the northern viaduct. Only the northern viaduct is still in use, and trains can be seen passing across it at roughly hourly intervals during the day. There is some graffiti on the arches, particularly on the disused viaduct to the south.

Fig 35: The viaducts, looming north from the beginning of Top Common

In the space between the two viaducts, there is an electricity sub-station on the west side, surrounded by a green metal fence and briars, while on the east side is a lane leading to the “wildflowers” caravan site; caravans and mobile homes can be seen at the end of the lane.



Both viaducts are impressive pieces of engineering, as are the raised embankments leading up to them. The embankments have attracted a good deal of vegetation. On the slope facing Lower Common, there are bushes, small shrubs and a few self-seeded saplings, including sycamores. are overgrown, with bushes and self-seeded saplings, often sycamores. In the sheltered space between the two viaducts there are more trees, both saplings and more mature specimens, most are deciduous, with their trunks covered in ivy. To the south, there are groups of conifers, and the dense undergrowth continues from the embankment along the side of a grassy area to the east of Green Lane.

6.3 Key unlisted buildings

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

A small number of buildings may be nationally listable; these have been marked with an asterisk.

In most cases, dates given are provided just as a general guide. Only in a few cases has it been possible to find a precise date.

***Methodist Chapel, High Street** Formerly East Runton Primitive Methodist church, founded in 1845 with a reading room of 1877. Gothic Revival style.

The main building has a rectangular groundplan. The walls are of red brick with white brick decoration. A central entrance porch at the front is flanked by single storey bays with canted sides. All window and door surrounds are in white ornamental brick. The south side of the building has windows with white brick mouldings alternating with pilasters of white brick. All windows are metal-framed. The roof is of slate with decorated ridge tiles. At the rear is a brick and flint extension with a roof of triple Roman tiles.

Low brick and cobble boundary wall with moulded brick capping.



Fig 36: Methodist chapel, High St.

Fishing Boat Public House A Boat Inn is recorded during the early 19th century. It is not clear if this started out as the "Three Horseshoes" mentioned in the early 18th century.

The present building appears mid-late Victorian. The walls are of coursed flint cobbles with red brick quoins and architraves. The main building has a central entrance, with a later red brick porch. Either side are large "pub" windows with coloured glass. These are modern uPVC replacements. On the first floor are three windows, originally sashes, now with uPVC casements. A red clay pantiled roof has a chimney stack at each gable end. At the west end is a smaller building which has been incorporated into the pub, also of brick and cobbles with a pantiled roof. This has large ground floor windows with coloured glass, similar to those in the main building. The first floor windows have been bricked up.

White Horse Public House A date of 1851 has been suggested for this pub. It may well be earlier, and started out as a private house. Reworked in the inter-war period.

The main house is two storeys, with two sash windows on the first floor and a set of French windows (the latter doubtless replacing a sash window). There is an inter-war extension on the ground floor on the south and east sides, now the bar room. This has the main entrance with a flat hood above, and a segmental arch of red clay tiles. There are large timber mullion and transom windows either side with leaded lattice-work lights and some coloured glass. The lower part of the extension is of red brick, the remainder and the first floor of the original building is roughcast rendered and painted white. Black glazed pantiled roof with two chimney stacks.

There is a single storey extension on the east side, perhaps once an outbuilding, has been incorporated into the pub. This has a pair of timber doors with leaded lights and small casement windows.

On the west side is a brick and cobble wall with a timber pergola added to it.

Reading Room, Green Lane Mid Victorian. Originally men's reading room with billiard room. Now offices to East Runton Parish Council.

Single storey building with a pitched roof, connected attached to a similar building at the rear. Street front is of uncoursed flint cobbles, carefully selected by size and red brick quoins/architraves. Modern door, pair of sash windows. The door and windows have flat moulded brick drip mouldings and cut and rubbed brick arches. The rear building has a single storey brick and cobble bay window with a castellated parapet, little else is visible. The roofs are of unglazed darkgrey pantiles.

***Norfolk Cottage, Green Lane** 17th-18th century(?) with 19th and 20th century additions.

Norfolk Cottage is said to be one of the oldest houses in the village.

A single storey brick and cobble house with prominent dormers. The windows and door on the front elevation are modern replacements; they have unusual narrow brick surrounds, including early brick. There is a small metal window at the south end of the front. The front shows evidence of considerable alteration over the years; the cobbles are coursed; brick is set end on onto the wall. Below the eaves it appears the walls have been extended in height; perhaps this house was

originally thatched, and the angle of the roof was altered when pantiles were introduced. The cobbles in the south end gable also include brick set into the flint. The north end gable appears relatively recent, with cobbles of a more uniform pattern. There is a brick dentil design below the eaves, and at the base of the roof the gable has brick kneelers. The dormer windows have monopitch roofs and modern windows. The roof is of black glazed pantiles.



Fig 37: Norfolk Cottage, Green Lane

***The Laurels, Green Lane** 18th-early 19th century.

A freestanding house with later Victorian extension(s) at the rear.

The front has a central doorway and four symmetrically arranged 16-pane sash windows. Six-panel door, with top panels replaced with lights. Faced with flint galleting, rendered and buff-painted brick quoins and architraves. The sides are of coursed flint cobbles and red brick. A projecting chimney breast on the south side has probably been rebuilt –could this once have been an external chimney breast?

Crowstepped eaves with ornamental brick capping. Black glazed pantiles. Two chimney stacks at north and south gable ends, paired square section brick stacks. White brick chimney pots with decorated tops.

Cutty Sark/The Old Smokehouse, Lower Common Part of a group of brick and cobble buildings set around a small courtyard.

Cutty Sark is on the north side; a single storey house with attic rooms and dormers. The walls are of coursed flint cobbles and brick. The front faces the yard; it appears to be two dwellings; both have plain-tiled roofed porches with timber supports. The windows have timber side-opening casements.

An end gable faces the Common. It is unusual in that it has uncoursed cobbles at the base, and coursed cobbles within the top of the gable. Brickwork is “tumbled in” at the base of the roof. There are pitched roof dormers on the north and south sides, and at least one chimney in the east gable end, a modern rebuild. The roof is of red clay pantiles.

The Old Smokehouse is less easily seen. The main building is two storeys, with a variety of irregularly placed casement windows. There are modern doors at the east and west ends. A first floor opening with what seems to be the remains of a timber hoist is fitted with a modern door. The walls are of both coursed and uncoursed cobbles, and there is a pantiled roof. On the east side is a single storey building (perhaps the original wash-house) of brick and cobbles. It has been partly rebuilt, and has good casement windows. Both parts have red clay pantiled roofs.

***Cobbold Cottage, Lower Common** 18th-early 19th century, with later additions.

One of a group of three brick and cobble houses set around a small courtyard. Cobbold Cottage is on the north side of the yard, the largest and most architecturally interesting of the three houses. The house faces south. It is of brick and coursed cobbles, and now appears to be a pair of houses, with near-central doorways sharing an openwork porch. All windows are side opening casements. The gable facing the Common is of particular interest, as it incorporates the outline of a lower smaller gable end. Within the gable, bricks are set end-on between the cobbles. There are two chimney stacks of red brick with modern chimney pots. At the west end of Cobbold Cottage is a lower extension connecting it with Claremount & Datchet. This has a door, casement windows and a tall brick chimney stack. It may be a separate house. All roofs are of red clay pantiles.

Apple Cottage & Bower Cottage, Lower Common Early 19th century?

Short terrace of single-storey brick and cobble houses. Originally four houses, now converted to two.

The end house on the north side, now half of Apple Cottage, is larger than the rest, and projects forward.

All walls of coursed cobbles. Each house front originally with a single window and door. Pantiled roofs with brick chimney stacks. Bower Cottage has two pitched-roof dormers, Apple Cottage has one.

All windows and doors are modern replacements, most of uPVC.

St Andrew's Church, Lower Common The first schoolroom was 1858, and the building was extended in Gothic Revival style in 1881-2. Now converted to a church, and extended.

The small red brick and cobble building near to the Common is presumed to be the original schoolroom of 1858. This has later large windows, and later extensions at the north and south ends. The roof is of pantiles except for the recent extension at the north end which has plain tiles.

The 1881-2 school building has a T-shaped groundplan. The walls are of knapped flints with galleting set between, and stone quoins. The windows have gothic pointed arches. The roof has a steep pitch with some salt-glazed brown pantiles, the remainder being of red clay. There is a mounting for a bell at the west end of the roof ridge.

Fig 38: St Andrew's Church, former school, on Lower Common



***Railway Viaducts, Green Lane, between Lower Common and Top Common c. 1887 & 1906.**

Two substantial railway viaducts with three spans, very similar in appearance but with variations in detail. Green Lane runs through the central opening, the side openings connect with the side embankments. Blue clay engineering bricks throughout, except for small areas of stonework at the bases of the arches on the southern viaduct, and white brick on the arches of the bridge to the north. Some repairs with red brick.

Only the northern viaduct is still in use, and this has metal railings on the parapet.

6.4 Public Realm

The main coast road, the A149 passes through the centre of the village. As a consequence of this, and the high volume of traffic during the summer months, the High Street has acquired the street furniture associated with a main road, and also pavements. Elsewhere, street furniture is limited. There are only occasional pavements along Beach Road and the beginning of Green Lane and some more recent developments such as Buxton Close. As a consequence, most of the following comments relate to the High Street.

On both sides of the High Street are tarmac pavements with concrete kerbs. The pavement narrows at the centre, where house gardens on the north side project out. In an attempt to create a safe crossing area, opposite the bus stop and "Bernie's", the pavement on the south side has a rectangular extension with four plastic bollards with reflectors, and a dropped kerb with tactile surfaces. There are parking bays on either side, which outside the "East Runton Shopper" change to diagonal painted lines indicating that no parking is permitted.

Fig 39: Pedestrian crossing area on south side of High Street



The pavements have gravel rolled into the tarmac surfaces, and there are frequent dropped kerbs to allow vehicles to enter and leave the adjoining houses. There are no features of interest on the pavements, save a brief length at the beginning of Green Lane on the east side, where there are blue clay kerbs, and a water main inspection cover surrounded by red granite setts.

Fig 40: Blue clay kerbs at the north end of Green Lane

The High Street has street lights with tall utilitarian-looking unpainted metal poles. While these may be necessary to comply with Highways regulations, they are too high their setting, and detract from the picturesque buildings. Road signs have accumulated at the north and south ends of the High Street, and at the turnings into Beach Road and Green Lane. They are unattractive, but unavoidable. Most disappointing is the village signs as one enters the High Street. Sited below a 20mph sign, the village name is no more than a small and bland road sign.

Street furniture is grouped at the junction of High Street and Beach Road. On the east side is a tall metal pillar, presumably once a street light, but now just an oversized support for a few road signs. A telegraph pole with innumerable phone lines and a rather dated-looking litter bin and seat are nearby.



A number of businesses have signs which front the road, or even spill out onto the pavement. Some businesses have up to three signs facing the road.

Most lanes around the village are of gravel, or even just dirt. At Top Common, dirt tracks run across the grass, and become particularly unsightly in winter. There are problems at both Top and Lower Common with cars running over the grass, and Lower Common is bordered with a series of low concrete bollards to try and prevent this.

Fig 41: Muddy track across Lower Common.

Both Top and Lower Common have some oddly-placed signage. While Lower Common has a cheerful village sign, it also has a battered and unnecessary road sign nearby. At Top Common, there are road signs and a sign informing drivers that children are playing here. All are doubtless needed, but they are badly sited on the edge of the common. Top Common also has at least one eccentrically-angled litter bin facing the road.



There are a small number of good quality timber benches in the village.

While they may fall outside the public realm, the numerous brick and cobble walls which border the village streets deserve a mention. They add much to the village's character, and help unify groups of houses.

6.5 Local details, styles and building materials

Vernacular architecture

A brickworks is recorded in East Runton from the Eighteenth century, and it continued until 1949. A sale advertisement of 1836 states the works had "...a very superior description of Earth for the manufacture of White as well as Red bricks, and tiles...". Despite the availability of brick in the area, flint cobbles remained a primary building material until at least the second half of the 19th century. This may reflect the high cost of brick production, as well as a brick tax which was imposed between 1784-1850. Brick was generally reserved for the corners of the building, or quoins, window and door surrounds, and a few courses below the eaves –all areas where a straight edge was required.

The earliest small houses to survive in East Runton are of locally-made brick and flint cobbles with pantiled roofs. Most have a roof set at "Common Pitch" with a roof slope of 37.5°, which suggests they were designed from the outset to have pantiled roofs, as thatch requires a steeper angle. It is likely, however, that some older houses, such as Norfolk Cottage on Green Lane, have had their roofs altered to a lower pitch. These houses vary between one and two storeys in height, sometimes with dormers in the roof space. The single storey houses are an interesting survival; although documented at other settlements, such as Cromer, most have been lost to later development.

It is difficult to date such houses, as so much depends on the practices of local builders. They may have been conservative, clinging to older building techniques, or influenced by the appearance more fashionable houses being erected in the area. It is therefore difficult to generalise, relating the evidence from one settlement to a wider area.

Fig 42: Uncoursed flint on the gable end of Inleborough House, late 17th century. The extension with coursed cobbles to the left is later.



The end gable of Inleborough House, dated 1687, has uncoursed flint, but the majority of old houses in East Runton have coursed cobbles, carefully selected by size. A few may date from the eighteenth century, and the practice seems to continue up to the early-mid nineteenth century. Good examples are Norfolk Cottage on Green Lane, and Cobbold Cottage on Lower Common. In some cases, coursed cobbles are used on the front and any side elevation which can be seen from the street, but cobbles are uncoursed on the less easily seen rear elevation.

One feature which may help to identify older buildings is the use of red brick set end-on into the cobble walls to help bind the inner and outer layers together. It is a practice which seems to disappear on later Victorian brick and cobble houses in East Runton. In a few cases, such as Norfolk Cottage, brick size may offer a clue to an early date; early brick tends to be lower in height than 19th century and modern brick. However, this may also be old brick that has been re-used as part of a new building or structure, as may be the case with the wall on the west side of the Fishing Boat pub.

Fig 43: Detail of the wall of Norfolk Cottage, showing old brickwork and bricks set end-on into the cobbled wall.



Most mid-late Victorian houses, with better-formed bricks, tend to have larger uncoursed flint cobbles, such as the former Reading Room on Green Lane. Here, the end gables are in large uncoursed flints. A distinction can still be made between the side and front elevations; while the flint on the front elevation is also uncoursed, the cobbles have been carefully selected to be of a similar size.

Most early brick and cobble houses probably had small side opening casement windows, and a number still survive. Later vernacular houses, perhaps from the second half of the 19th century, have sash windows, which would have been introduced with the more formal “polite” architecture.

18th-mid 19th century “polite” architecture

Alongside the vernacular architecture were built houses which show the influence of “polite” or architect-designed styles.

The best example is Inleborough House. While this dates originally from 1687, it acquired a formal classical façade in the later 18th century. The white brick front, the symmetrical layout of windows and the central doorway in a timber doorcase all show the influence of the classical style. There are also cut and rubbed brick arches above the windows, something that does not become widespread in Norfolk until the later 19th century. The house is not totally divorced from traditional buildings, however. The roof is still of pantiles, although these have a black glaze, marking them out as a “cut above” plain red clay tiles.



Fig 44: Late 18th century front of Inleborough House

“The Laurels” on Green Lane also has a symmetrical front with sash windows, and here the local building material, flint, has been struck to produce flakes which have been laboriously set into mortar on the front elevation, a technique known as “galleting”. The use of flint to create a “sophisticated” effect can be seen again on the school house of 1881-2, where the flint has been struck, or knapped, to create a flat face, with flint galleting in the surrounding mortar. The decorative use of flint is seen again on the late Victorian houses in the village.

Late Victorian

East Runton experienced a brief “building boom” towards the end of the 19th century. This was due to its proximity to the increasingly fashionable resort of Cromer, and probably to a lesser extent, the opening of the line between Cromer and Sheringham in 1887, as there was no station at East Runton. Now, brick became the building material of choice, and flint was increasingly relegated to a decorative role. For the more fashionable houses, roofs could be of slate or plain tiles; most slate roofs have now been replaced by tiles.

Larger houses

A great variety of building materials was available to the late nineteenth century builder to help decorate or ornament a house. Brick could have moulded decoration, termed by one local brickworks "ornamental or moulded brick", and there was a harder ceramic material known as terracotta. Lintels could be in stone and "imitation stone", usually a form of cement. It was now possible to build a standard design of house but give it a "classical", or "gothic revival" or "Italianate" character, or perhaps one of the more eclectic styles, such as "Queen Anne Revival". Nevertheless, in Runton the larger houses seem to have a definite gothic revival character. This is particularly evident along the High Street.

Fig 45: Victoria House, with gothic revival features

The fashion for large red brick houses evidently started well before the arrival of the railways, as Victoria house bears the date 1870 within the gable. The façade has decoration in red brick and knapped flint. It is unusual to find such sophisticated decoration from the 1870s; knapped flint is not used in similar fashion on houses at nearby Cromer and Sheringham until the mid 1880s-90s. The designer was most likely influenced by the Gothic Revival, where different materials could be combined on house fronts, exploiting a variety of textures and colours. The side elevation has uncoursed flint cobbles; it is not clear if this is a facing material, or the wall is of brick and cobble construction throughout. It demonstrates a practice also noted on the vernacular houses; putting the best workmanship and materials at the front, and the less expensive materials at the sides –even if, as here, the side wall can easily be seen. The window and door openings have cut and rubbed gauged brick arches.



Nearby houses are shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1887, and although slightly later, have similar gothic revival characteristics. The semidetached houses which now form the "East Runton Shopper" have knapped flint and red brick fronts. It seems likely they are by the same designer as Victoria House, although on the later houses the end gables are of red brick throughout. What appear to be two oriel bays may actually be conventional bays which lost their ground floors when the shop front was inserted. One first floor bay is of timber, the other is of red brick with a stone lintel. While the architects of the gothic revival appreciated this sort of asymmetry, it is also possible this variety of materials is the result of later alterations. There are rough brick arches above the second floor windows; in a cream-coloured brick to contrast with the red brick dressings. Contrasting brick colours was a common feature of houses with gothic revival influence, termed "constructional polychrome". Below the eaves are courses of ornamental brick with moulded patterns.

Also shown on the 1887 map are three large houses with crowstep gables further along the High Street; Alexandra House, the newsagent's shop, and the smaller house attached on the west side. The crowstepped gables have recesses with pointed recessed arches, again showing the influence of the gothic style. The exact style of the neighbouring house, which now houses the tearooms, is open to question, although it may also show a loose approach to the gothic style. It has the unusual combination of imitation half-timberwork, using narrow strips of wood, with an infill of flint galleting.

The houses have both oriel and bay windows; if the oriels are not later additions, it shows that the general pattern for the late Victorian buildings along the High Street had been established before 1887.

Fig 46: "Beulah", at the west end of th High Street , shows the variety of materials available to decorate a house front: ornamental brick and stone are combined with knapped flint.

At the west end of the High Street, Beulah and the semidetached pair of Shirley House and Charlbury also have brick and knapped cobble fronts. They are slightly later than those to the east, having been built between 1887 and 1906. The same builder may have been at work here, but he now had access to a wider range of materials. The windows and doors are decorated with ornamental brick or stone, while



beneath the eaves are courses of ornamental brick, rather than ordinary brick set at an angle, as on some of the earlier houses. Beulah and Charlbury have hanging tiles between their ground and first floor bay windows, including round-tipped “fish scale” effect tiles. While the starting point may have been gothic revival, the end product is harder to categorise.

The pair of houses which fill the space between the East Runton Shopper and the group with crowstepped gables are more clearly from a later phase of house building. Here, the classical door surrounds with brick pilasters are most likely derived from “Queen Anne Revival” models. Once again, the string courses and eaves make good use of ornamental brick with moulded designs.

White brick is more widely used at this time. Although the local brickworks was capable of producing white brick, the late 18th century white brick front of Inleborough House is a rare early example. As part of the High Victorian “Gothic revival”, white brick could be used as a contrasting decoration against the red brick, a practice known as “Constructional polychrome”. It can be seen to good effect on the Methodist Church.

Houses on Lower and Top Common introduce other late Victorian decorative elements, imitation half timberwork within the gable, and areas of roughcast render.

Old Hall Farm on Top Common is a tour-de-force composition of 1909-10 which stands apart from the rest of the village’s architecture, and appears to have had no influence upon it. Although built in the early 17th century, its appearance is probably due to noted Edwardian architect Baillie Scott, who introduced a variety of vernacular features to increase its picturesque character.

Artisans’ Houses

The smaller houses from the late Victorian period show a move away from the brick and cobble vernacular. Melinda Cottages, to the rear of the newsagent’s, is shown on the 1887 Ordnance Survey map. This simple terrace of red brick houses is typical of the small scale architecture produced by local builders, where red brick has replaced brick and flint as the material of choice. Ordinary brick is used for a simple eaves decoration, and there are rough brick arches above the windows and doors. It may have been built using a commercially produced plan, or “pattern book”. Slightly later, from 1887-1906 is Orchard Cottages, also set back from the High Street. The general design is similar to that of Melinda Cottages, with simple rough brick arches over the window and door openings, but interest is created by the use of half-dormers and a low sweeping canopy over the paired entrances, created by extending the front slope of the roof.



Fig 47: Orchard Cottages. The “triple Roman” roof tiles are probably modern replacements.

Also built between 1887-1906 is Victoria Terrace, on the north side of the High Street. The 8 houses are in red brick with white brick detailing in “constructional polychrome” style, and have dark grey pantiled roofs. They are a tasteful but rather conservative design, closely resembling several terraces built in Cromer in the early 1880s for the Cromer Hall Estate. As Cromer Hall was also a landowner in East Runton, it seems likely that they were responsible for this terrace.

Inter War and Post War

There is little inter-war or modern architecture of note. An inter-war bungalow on the south side of the High Street uses brick and cobbles in an attractive manner, possibly a remnant of the Arts & Crafts movement’s interest in vernacular building. There is an attractive pair of semidetached red brick houses at the south-east corner of Top Common. They are understated and tasteful designs, a rarity in the inter-war period, when all manner of “rustic” features were adopted.

Fig 48: Inter-war houses on Top Common

Immediate post war buildings up to the 1960s-70s tend to use red brick throughout, though often in a shade which fails to



match the traditional “Norfolk Red”, while more recent houses and bungalows have taken up brick and cobble facings once again. The most successful of these “neo-vernacular” houses is undoubtedly 3 Pear Tree Cottages on Top Common, where the overall design of the house reflects those of its older neighbours; it is not just a modern design which has acquired brick and cobbles in an attempt to give it a veneer of “local distinctiveness”.

Fig 49: 3 Pear Tree cottages, Top common. A modern house whose design respects the vernacular tradition.



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

East Runton is surrounded on the east, west and south sides by countryside, both agricultural land and areas managed for public recreation and wildlife, such as Incleborough Hill. There are also small areas of woodland. The surrounding land undoubtedly has a high ecological value, and endangered species such as adders are to be found here. The proximity of village gardens to the countryside means that wildlife such as insects and birds can benefit from both. In some cases, species such as bees may find gardens of greater benefit than farmland, due to the limited plant species on agricultural land, and the use of pesticides.

Fig 50: countryside around Incleborough Hill



While it does not connect directly with the Conservation Area, the sea and cliffs to the north have their own distinct ecology, and while this area is not considered as important as nearby West Runton, the soft cliffs and beach support wildlife, while the rock pools on the beach are home to a variety of small marine creatures.

Within the Conservation Area, Lower Common is a relatively small grassy space, and probably has little ecological or biodiversity value, save perhaps for its pond, which seems little managed. Its main role is visual, as an open green space and a setting for the attractive vernacular houses to the west.

Top Common, by contrast, has an evident ecological importance with clumps of wetland plants at the east end and a pond inhabited by ducks and geese. There are also areas which have been left in a near-wild state, such as the reeds and shrubs around the pond, and a small un-mown area at the west end, near to the footpath to Incleborough Hill. This is a large enough space for there to be a children’s play area without affecting the wildlife nearby. Like Lower Common, this also serves as a pleasant setting for the variety of houses which surround this green space.

Fig 51: Wetland plants to the south of Top Common pond

The Railway viaducts which separate the two commons have overgrown embankments, where there are mature trees and saplings, a mixture of coniferous and deciduous species, and areas covered by brambles. While one railway embankment is still in use, the other has been abandoned and is very



overgrown. Particularly for birds, small mammals and insects this is a doubtless a little-disturbed haven, and the disused railway line serves as a wildlife corridor across the village.

Fig 52: plants have colonised the disused railway line and viaduct

To the north of the viaducts is the only group of allotments within the Conservation Area. While this serves a practical and recreational role as a place to grow food plants and flowers, it also has areas of unmanaged land and trees, together with unused plots, which will harbour wildlife. The allotments form an untidy but picturesque ensemble at the southern edge of Lower Common.



Private gardens are the other main source of open space in East Runton. There are few gardens facing the High Street, but the houses further inland, such as along Top and Lower Common, tend to have well-stocked gardens which include hedges and trees. These considerably enhance the appearance of the village.

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

The main negative factor affecting the village is undoubtedly the amount of traffic which passes through the village along the coast road. Not only does this mean noise and fast-moving traffic, it also invites metal signage and highways-style street lights. The street lights are particularly out of character with the High Street, out of scale and with metal-coloured posts.

Vehicle traffic is also responsible for the tyre tracks cutting into the edges of the grass verges on Lower and Top Common and parking on unregulated open areas, such as in front of the Village Hall. While the need for parking areas is inevitable in a car-dependent society, ways can be found to reduce their impact on the village's attractive historic environment.

A number of historic buildings in the village have had features replaced, particularly windows and doors. Replacements are often in the visually unsympathetic uPVC, where the sharp edges of the machine-made mouldings jar badly with the weather-worn walls of the older houses. In some cases additions, particularly external porches, have been made which relate badly to the houses. There are also a small number of satellite dishes which would be better placed on a side or rear elevation, so they are less visible.

A few boundary walls have been lost, usually to create off-road parking areas. This destroys the traditional pattern of the street, and where the houses are in a terrace, the coherence of the group can be lost. The village has many attractive brick and cobble walls, efforts should be made to preserve and restore them. If this kind of change continues, the result will be a less-attractive village, with some houses appearing scruffy and little-cared for. This sort of change is always an important issue in historic areas; in a village which needs to appear attractive for holidaymakers (the main source of income in the village) it should be of even greater concern.

Shop fronts and signage can have a positive impact on the village, such as the Victorian front on the former Post Office, and the butcher's shop, but all too often, the village's shops have resorted to increasingly large, and luridly coloured fascia boards. The shop front and fascia of the "East Runton Shopper" are particularly obtrusive.

A number of new houses have been built in the village. Some are excellent, such as 3 Pear Tree Cottage, others are unremarkable designs which make little attempt to respect their surroundings. It should not be enough to introduce a modern house and add a few panels of brick and cobbles; more thought needs to go into the siting and design of new houses.

New housing, such as to the south of Top Common, along Green Lane, has extended into the surrounding countryside. The danger is that East Runton will acquire what are basically "suburban" developments, so that there is no longer a clear division between village and countryside.

6.8 General condition

Overall, the condition of houses in the village is good, and they are well maintained. There are, however, some unfortunate exceptions. In particular, the new bay window which recently replaced a shop front on “Ravenstone” on the south side of the High Street is poorly designed; the pillars should have been red brick, as shown by the original first floor of the bay; instead concrete pillars have been crudely inserted. There is also the poor state of the galleting on the front of Flint House in the High Street, a Grade II listed house. Where the village’s houses often fall short is in the preservation of original features, as outlined in Section 6.7

In the longer term, the state of the disused railway viaduct between the two commons may become an issue. It already appears neglected, and there has been some graffiti on the pillars. While it may be difficult to maintain, it is an impressive piece of construction, and the pair of viaducts are a memorable focal point in the village.

The main road surfaces are in fair condition, but there is a very damaged area of tarmac at the north side of Top Common, in front of the houses of Buxton Close.

Recommendations/Conclusion

See also part 2, Management Proposals.

8.1 Suggested boundary changes

- It is recommended that the boundary of the conservation area be extended to include the whole of the Mill Lane allotments. This is a very attractive area, linked to Lower Common. At present only about a third of the allotments are included in the Conservation Area, which makes little sense.

The following houses/groups of houses are recommended for removal from the Conservation Area, on the grounds that they have insufficient architectural or historic interest to merit retention:

- The houses of Buxton Close facing Green Lane and Top Common. While this development is well designed, the houses do not have sufficient architectural or historic importance to merit inclusion. A case might be made for their retention as they border the Conservation Area, but changes have been made to this group, eg. extensions, window/door replacements and the removal of a boundary fence, which have reduced their visual interest.
- At present the Conservation Area boundary passes through the centre of modern houses at the beginning of Broomhill, Shepherd’s Close and The Springles. This makes little sense, it is proposed they are removed from the Area.
- “Meadowsett” an inter-war house to the south of The Springles.
- The eastern part of the Broomhill estate. While the houses at the beginning of this development have merit as they have adapted existing agricultural buildings, the housing to the east, together with the arrangement of the estate, fails to reflect the historic appearance of the Conservation Area.

8.2 Summary of issues/SWOT analysis

Strengths

- Attractive and historic built environment with distinctive local character created by older brick and cobble houses.
- Good surrounding countryside, including beach and sea, easily reached from the village.
- Well defined open spaces to the south, eg. Lower Common and Top Common.
- Low level of traffic along Green Lane to the south of the High Street.
- Variety of shops catering for both the local and the summer visitor, including two pubs, a restaurant and a social club.
- Regular buses connect the village with Cromer and Sheringham, and run inland as far as Norwich. This includes the Coastliner bus, which is popular with tourists.
- Caravan sites provide a strong tourist base, without seriously encroaching on the historic centre.
- Strong community interest in the history of the village.

Weaknesses

- High volume of vehicle traffic, as main coast road passes through the centre of the village
- Limited facilities on the beach

- No railway station
- Caravan sites at entranceways to village on east and west sides.
- Inappropriate change and alteration to historic buildings, reducing their appeal.
- Modern housing can fail to reflect distinctive local character.
- Cars parked in unregulated areas, particularly green spaces on Top and Lower Commons.

Opportunities

- Raise profile of the village's historic architecture as a way of helping to preserve it, perhaps with the help of the local history society. This could include leaflets about the village.
- Improvement of shopfronts.
- Improve the management of the Commons, looking at issues such as the state of the Lower Common Pond and the range of wild plants on Top Common.
- Enhancement of public realm, more benches, better litter bins and improved signage, particularly the village signs at the entrances to the High Street.
- Encourage retention of brick and cobble boundary walls, encourage the building of new brick and cobble walls.

Threats

- Threat of coastal erosion in the longer term. In the shorter term this may affect the suitability of the beach for visitors.
- Growth of the village reducing its appeal, and the close relationship with the surrounding countryside.
- Loss of attractive buildings through inappropriate alteration or removal of features, including boundary walls.
- Poor quality development, including inappropriate new house designs and shop fronts.
- Deterioration of two Commons caused by lack of management, and damage by vehicles.

Part 2: Management Proposals

1. Introduction

The first part of this document identified the qualities of the East Runton 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. It is proposed that a number of recent houses in the Conservation Area are excluded. One extension is put forward, to include the whole of the Mill Lane allotments.

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. These fall into two main areas.

2. Removal of features, particularly boundary walls.

3. Inappropriate replacement features, such as uPVC windows and doors on older properties. To a lesser extent, this includes 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.

This is recommended for the north and south sides of the High Street, the north and east sides of Lower Common and the south and east sides of Top Common.

A high proportion of houses in the village have replacement windows and doors, so that it is late in the day to try and tackle this issue. However, if it is thought appropriate, Article 4 Directions could be applied to individual houses on order to protect their appearance.

The following houses have a majority of traditional pattern windows/door on their front elevations, this does not include nationally-listed properties:

Alexandra House, High St.

Elder Cottage, High St

White Horse Public House, High St

Old Reading Room, Green Lane

Ingleboro Cottage, Green Lane/Lower Common

Little Cote, Green Lane/Lower Common

Cutty Sark/Old Smokehouse, Lower Common

House on the Green, Lower Common

Shepherd Cottage, Top Common

Pear Tree Cottages, nos. 1 & 2, Top Common

Pear Tree Cottage, no 3, Top Common.

Brampton Cottage, Top Common (although this is one of a pair, and the adjoining house has replacement windows).

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 East Runton. While this would not provide the level of protection that national listing gives, it would be a consideration when these buildings are involved in planning issues.

A review of buildings in East Runton suitable for national listing is overdue, and if English Heritage is not to carry this out, the project might be carried out by a community group or individuals. In section 6.3 buildings and structures marked with an asterisk are considered likely candidates for 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 East Runton as part of the countryside, where the main developments that are permitted will be either affordable housing, development to support the rural economy or which will provide renewable energy. As a consequence, it is unlikely that in the short term there will be any large scale development of housing in the surrounding countryside.

Some of the new housing from the later 20th and early 21st century in the village reflects the village's character well, such as 3 Pear Tree Cottages, other houses are less successful. All too often, "stock" designs of modern house are built and areas of flint cobble facing added, and a pantiled roof, as a half-hearted way of fitting in with the older houses.

Where new houses are built as a group, consideration should be given to the way the houses relate to each other and to the road. Along Green Lane, a small estate has been built in the countryside where a number of vernacular features are incorporated, such as flint cobble facing and dentil-pattern brickwork below the eaves. However, the effect is much reduced by the large open off-road car parking areas in front of the houses.



Fig 53: Recent estate on Green Lane, to the south of Top Common.

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.

The A149 coast road passes through the centre of the village, and the street furniture along the High Street reflects this. In particular, the lights are too high for their setting, there are a remarkably large number, and their plain metal poles are utilitarian and unattractive. While the various "highways" additions to the High Street may be unavoidable, it may be possible to improve some other items of street furniture, eg. litter bins and benches.

The signs bearing road names can be curiously placed such as on the edge of Lower Common, and the village signs at the entrance to the High Street have as little visual appeal as the speed restriction sign placed above them. There is room for improvement here.

Fig 54: An uninspired village sign

The areas which impact most on the appearance of the High Street in particular are the adjoining boundary walls and yards. East Runton has two main types of boundary wall, a low brick and cobble wall with moulded brick capping, and a higher wall composed entirely of flint pebbles. Both are attractive features in the street, and they should be retained wherever possible. Attempts should also be made to introduce these as part of new developments, or to replace poor boundary treatments.



The raised forecourt outside “Bernie,s” and the fish and chip shop in the High Street is a paved area with a curious mix of levels, a row of dated-looking lamps in front, and a variety of signs. There is a low brick and cobble wall around it, but little else of note. Coupled with the unremarkable flat-roofed shop to the west and the mid-20th century façade of Bernie’s, this is a poor piece of streetscape. This area needs a complete redesign, and in the longer term, would be improved by the replacement of the shop.

Fig 55: The two main types of traditional boundary wall in East Runton, using brick and cobbles or just cobbles.

Most of the road surfaces are in reasonable condition, with the exception of the tarmac surface in front of the houses of Buxton Close which face Top Common, which needs maintenance.



The areas which would benefit most from improvement are Lower Common and Top Common.

The commons came into existence well before the advent of the motor car, and in recent years cars have had an adverse effect on the grass. While it is entirely reasonable that residents should wish to park next to their houses, several parts of the Lower Common have become unofficial parking spots. These are the opening to Ingleborough Close, the wide grass verge by the Mill Lane Allotments, and the space in front of the village hall. Not only do the parked cars detract from the rural setting, frequent car use in these areas converts the grass to a rutted, muddy surface. Without resorting to large numbers of new signs, ways need to be found to manage such irregular car parking.

Car tyres have also created ruts across the grass on the east side of Top Common. There has been some attempt to control the encroachment of cars with a series of low concrete bollards on Lower Common, and perhaps something similar, but less visually obtrusive could be done on Top Common.

The paths, the lane running across Lower Common and beside the houses on the west side are unsurfaced, and in the winter become muddy. Without detracting from the rural charm of the area, it might be possible to introduce more resilient surfaces.

The western half of the pond on Lower Common is enclosed by blue clay brickwork, but the eastern part has a ragged edge with rough vegetation. The pond is not a formal feature, nor does it have an unmanaged natural appearance. While the pond on Top Common attracts wildlife, which adds interest, this pond can appear neglected. Improved planting around the edges of the pond, including flowering plants, and the extension of the blue clay brick edging to the west would make this a more attractive area. Perhaps the pond itself could support water lilies.

The pond on Top Common appears well managed for wildlife. To the south the ground can be waterlogged, and supports wetland plants including, during May, flowering march marigolds, or kingcups. However, one resident commented that most of the common is taken over during the summer by uninteresting weeds, such as Dock plants. A survey of the area should be carried out to establish what plants the area currently supports, and whether it would be possible to increase the range of wild plants and wild flowers on the common by careful planting.

Both Top and Lower Common have some oddly-placed signage; they are placed on the edge of the common, and can be found amongst trees in blossom. As mentioned above, there is even a road sign at the edge of Lower Common. Such signs should be clearly visible, but not impact as strongly on such beauty spots, and relocation should be considered.

5 Useful information, appendices & contact details

Davies, N. Pottery Kilns at East Runton, Norfolk. (Norfolk & Norwich Archaeological Society Transactions vol XXVII, 1941)

Leake, G.F. East and West Runton: two villages, one parish. (Poppyland publishing, Cromer, 2006)

Pevsner, N & B. Wilson. The Buildings of Norfolk 1: Norwich & North East 2nd edition. (Yale 1997)

Sunley, T. Runton (Notes on Runton parish for Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, 2007)

Trade Directories, including White's & Kelly's, 1830-1890

English Heritage: Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals, 2006

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

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

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

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

North Norfolk District Council: Design Guide, supplementary planning document, 2009

Websites:

Helm.org.uk

Naturalengland.gov.uk

Norfolkbiodiversity.org

Norfolkcoast.co.uk

Norfolk museums.norfolk.gov.uk

Northnorfolk.org.uk

Norfolkwildlifetrust.co.uk

Appendix 1: Listed buildings

a) within the Conservation Area

- Flint House, High Street (includes attached wall)
- Incleborough House, Lower Common
- Wall south of Incleborough House
- Old Hall, Top Common

b) outside the Conservation Area

- Manor Farmhouse, Top Common
- Mill, Mill Lane