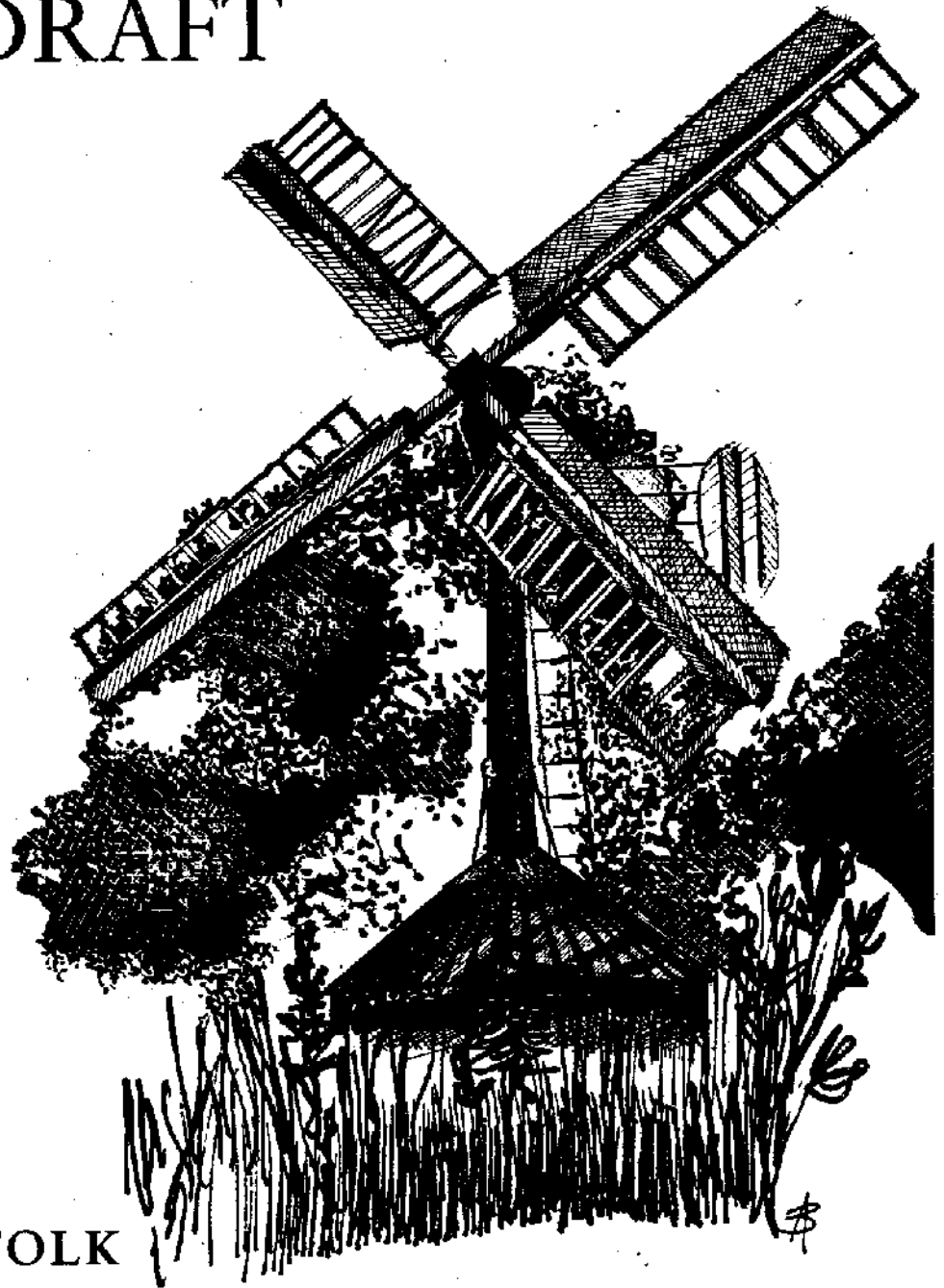


# Starston Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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Planning Department

February 2000

## **STARSTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Starston's character is that of an ancient small settlement attractively set at a crossroads and bridge over a stream in a wooded landscape with surrounding valley slopes. Trees and hedgerows play an important role in forming the character of the conservation area. So do listed buildings, of which Starston has a high number in relation to its size. The history of the village as the centre of an estate is its most important characteristic, despite the Victorian hall which formed its focus no longer existing. Today the village is a retirement and commuter settlement but is a place of tranquillity and beauty which deserves its conservation area status.
- 1.2 Under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Local Planning Authority is required to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest whose character or appearance it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate them as Conservation Areas.
- 1.3 The 1990 Act also requires local authorities to prepare policy statements for Conservation Areas. These are to be more explicit and detailed than would be possible as part of a local plan, and seek to identify the components which gives the Conservation Areas their special character.
- 1.4 While the Council has prepared this appraisal, it cannot successfully deal with all the issues without the support of the Parish Council and other groups and individuals. With the co-operation of all involved, the appraisals could have a positive effect on the appearance of the areas.

### **2. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

- 2.1 Starston is referred to in Domesday book as Sterestuna, which may be a reference to the rearing of steers or cattle. The parish had three manors, all evident today; Starston Hall, Starston Place and Beck Hall. Houses on the sites of the latter two are recorded from the thirteenth century.
- 2.2 Starston church is dedicated to St Margaret and has evidence of Norman work in its south aisle. Its extensive enlargement and remodelling in the nineteenth century testifies to the importance of the village at the time.

- 2.3 Starston formed its own guild of tradesmen and craftsmen in the sixteenth century, the date from which the earliest domestic structures in the village survive. It was not until the nineteenth century, as elsewhere in Norfolk, that the village grew to outnumber in population its mediaeval size. The village school, first built in 1839 had to be extended in 1877 to accommodate above 100 children. This was the same decade in which the church was enlarged.
- 2.4 In 1856 the Waveney railway line was built with a station just south of the village giving access to Norwich, and this helped transform Starston's commerce and demography. In 1877 the census showed a population of 545.
- 2.5 The social history of the village during the first sixty years of the last century is well recorded in the booklet, "My Village of Starston" written and published in 1969 by Roy Riches, a native and lifelong resident. The changes he describes are those of the final transformation of a rural way of life based in the village to one of dependence on the towns and distant employment.
- 2.6 The railway closed finally in 1966, having lost its passenger traffic earlier. The gate Inn with its famous walnut tree and sign closed in the 'sixties as did the village school. The parish was combined at the same time with others, losing its own rector. Most significantly the population declined so that by the time of the publication of the predecessor to this statement in 1983 it stood at 324. It had recovered slightly to 332 in 1991.
- 2.7 The most notable change since that time has been the conversion of former village buildings into individual houses, a process which can be traced back to the nineteenth century with the conversion of the village poorhouse to cottage dwellings in 1836.

### 3. CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

#### 3.1 Landscape Setting

The setting of Starston is that of a shallow valley with shelved sides orientated east - west and situated in the otherwise open clay plateau. The valley sides at Starston are well wooded and planting schemes, particularly in the nineteenth century, have augmented the natural beauty of the location. The beck too has been managed and treated as an important landscape feature with sluices controlling its level as it passes under the bridge and through the water meadows at the heart of the village.

Characteristic of the area are the hedges and trees which line all the narrow roads and lanes in the conservation area. Although some hedges have been lost, for instance below the former railway station, trees and hedges have also been planted, as described elsewhere in this document. The views in the village are thus contained and enclosed, but occasional gaps allow surprise views into pasture land or across the watermeadows.

The pattern of the lanes, roads and footpaths is laid over the succession of terraces which line the valley sides and so provide a series of levels from which to look down and into the village.

As has been mentioned a considerable part of the landscape has been modelled by the owners of the larger properties in the village. Starston Place, with its dominant position, Grove Hill House and, in the valley bottom, The Old Rectory each have their own considerable landscaped gardens. These are visible from the rest of the village and combine visually together. With their lawns, shrubs and specimen trees which give way to open pasture with parkland planting they constitute a major element in the composition of the village landscape.

Each of these landscaped gardens has trees which are past their prime and will need to be replaced if the character of the conservation area is to be conserved. This has recently been done at the Old Rectory but still requires attention at the other locations despite some replanting.

### 3.2 Conservation Area Boundary

The Starston conservation area boundary can be followed from a point to the north of Starston Place on the Alburgh road. Here it encloses the hilltop farmhouse and sets east of it before turning south to enclose the paddock adjacent to the road. It then encloses the quadrangle of the model farm buildings and turns east, skirting the northern hedgerow of the farm lane to the north of the former parkland of Starston Place. Upon reaching the corner lodge it crosses Low Road and follows the footpath line across the watermeadow to the Beck. Here it crosses the water at the footbridge before crossing the Harleston Road and setting back south of it towards the Rectory. Reaching the woodland belt to the east of the Rectory it turns south and follows the eastern edge of the belt with one slight offset before reaching the line of the former railway. It crosses this and continues south to the lane where it turns west and runs south of the field hedgerow. At the lane junction with the Needham Road it encloses the small triangular green and then turns north along the western edge of the Needham Road. Here it reaches the former Station House where it turns west and encloses the former line, now a public footpath. At the first field boundary it runs north behind Beck Hall to reach the hinterland of the beck itself. It offsets here to

enclose the windpump south of the Pulham Road. At that road it turns north west for a few yards before crossing it, turning east and skirting the garden boundaries of the houses to its north. It continues east until it reaches the woodland belt opposite St Margaret's church and it then encloses this woodland as it runs north to complete its circuit on the Alburgh road.

### 3.3 Form and Character

The form of the conservation area is that of a crossing type of settlement, with the four arms of the roads intersecting at the bridge, which still forms the nexus of the village. Each of these four roads converging on the bridge is short enough for that to be seen from the edge of the settlement. This gives the village a compact sense of visual coherence, where the groups of buildings and the spaces between them and trees and hedges are all immediately appreciated. This lack of surprise, however is mitigated by the shape of the land described in the landscape section above. The distinct valley with the Beck at its foot is visible from the roads approaching, which wind gently to reveal more of the scene as the village is entered.

The character of the conservation area is also affected by the history of the village, where until the second world war Starston Place existed to give it meaning as a classic example of a Victorian estate village. The Place was demolished after the war and its replacement is no substitute for what must have been the focus of the settlement, both socially and architecturally. Today the evidence of this vanished coherent community remains all around in the buildings. But their functions have gone, replaced by a homogenised group of houses where once was school, public house and model farm.

### 3.4 Buildings

A fuller description is given in Appendix 1.

In such a modest Conservation Area, there is a rich variety of historic buildings. The major buildings of the Church of St. Margaret, Beck Hall, and the Old Rectory contrast with the small traditional cottages along The Street.

Adding to this blend are the more unusual survivals of the flint and brick model farm at Starston Place, the water pump, and the charming lychgate set within an enclosed, unspoilt and wooden valley and landscape of great beauty, the combined effect is stunning; a village of great historic and architectural interest

### 3.5 Traditional Building Materials

**Roofs and chimneys:** While many of the buildings may have been originally thatched, only one survives in the Conservation Areas, the 19<sup>th</sup> century lodge on Church Hill. As one might expect, there are examples of traditional red and a high proportion of black glazed clay pantiles, but surprisingly a high number of slate roofs as well covering the Station House, the model farm buildings, part of the Old Rectory and the chancel of the Church are the main examples. Lead also covers the nave roof of the Church. Red plain tiles can be found on Hillside and the Lychgate.

Chimneys are relatively plain, mostly in red brick, with the taller double shafts to Home Farm Lodge and The Lodge being an exception. They are nonetheless important to the character of the buildings and the scene as a whole.

**Walls:** Most of the walls to the cottage are red brick or rendered timber frame. An unusual version can be seen at Hillside where the render has been impregnated by coloured glass to give an elegant effect. The church and the model farm buildings are in flint with weatherboarding introduced on the latter. Decorative orange boards are a particular feature of some buildings. For example, Beck Hall, Old Rectory and Home Farm Lodge, while brick parapets give a crisp finish to several cottages along The Street. Patterned brickwork can be enjoyed at Streamlet Cottage.

There are several good examples of flint and brick boundary walls especially along The Street, many retaining traditional copings. Rendered cottages conceal either timber frames, offer of high quality, for example The Old Rectory, or clay lump, for example Pheasantry Cottage.

### 3.6 Ground Surface Materials

The major ground surface material in the conservation area is grass, either mown or grazed. Tarmac, as in most other conservation areas, has changed the appearance of the place more than any other material change, as old photos show.

Roads are either lined with grass verges or banks or tarmacadam pavements. Station Hill is particularly attractive thanks to the trees that have been planted along the west side.

At the northern edge of the area the early nineteenth century group of model farm buildings associated with Starston Place has a central roadway, from which the courtyards of the stock sheds and their gables are visible, constructed in flint cobbles. The main street has been resurfaced slightly raised brick islands near the bridge is an attempt to reduce traffic speed.

The most visually successful accessways and driveways are in gravel which helps retain the rural character of the area.

### 3.7 Street Furniture

The most noticeable items of street furniture in the conservation area are the poles carrying the utilities' wires, both electricity and telephone. These are ugly and obtrusive and do not enhance the character of the conservation area.

Road signs within the conservation area are of traditional form

From this point at the eastern extremity the village sign marks its edge on the northern side of the road.

At the centre of the village the signage is of mixed quality. A fine traditional cast iron standard with corona top carries modern low maintenance finger posts with black lettering. Next to this practical design with high quality of materials and detail is a standard stop sign in pressed sheet metal clipped to a metal tube with a cycle way addition below it. At the foot of this the Railway Hill street sign is in metal sheet with a pair of thin galvanised sections for legs.

To the north east of the bridge and close to it a zigzag low paling fence of the same design as that previously described encloses the major village sign. To emphasise the importance of this symbol the fence is white painted and wraps around the sign. The latter is of painted wood carved in low relief with a simple post standing on a circular brick base, it is dated 1980.

Starston Place gate and adjacent rails are fine examples of early Victorian wrought oak work, very well preserved with Tudor detail to the gateposts and rail tops. The gate itself is subdivided into square sections each further subdivided into curvilinear Gothic segments.

At the entrance to the churchyard a similar oak gate is set between stone gateposts.

Standing at the foot of Church Hill at the bridge and looking back uphill to the church a second sign post is visible at the foot of the hill by the churchyard wall. The fingerposts are treated as in the previous example and the post is flanked by a memorial seat. Two modern traffic signs also accompany these well designed pieces of street furniture.

The windpump is now the feature chosen for the village sign as part of the excellent traffic calming scheme. This forms the entrance to the village from the Pulhams' direction.

Opposite the former 'pub is the red cast iron postbox standing on its own black iron pedestal. This is an attractive traditional feature.

Below the thorn hedge at the top of the bank which fronts the Croft is a row of modern red and black highway posts with reflectors.

The road at this western point is enclosed as a corridor between the northern bank and the hedge to the south. A row of large and wire festooned poles carries utility cables and detracts from the quality of the scene. A row of nicely cut oak posts with slightly decorated finials lines the grass verge to this part of the road and defines the property boundary.

The village red telephone kiosk on the Street stands next to the red brick cottages and is partly concealed from view. It is listed and is a type K6, designed in 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. This is an important element of townscape.

### 3.8 Trees and Hedges

Trees and hedges play an important role in the conservation area and these are shown on the accompanying map.

The photographic record of the village shows that while trees have been lost in particular in the Street, these could readily be replaced by individual house owners. The replanting of the famous walnut tree at the former 'pub would be a case in point despite the fact that it must have been removed to enable cars to move more quickly through the village.

This description of Starston starts at the small triangular green on the Needham Road. Here the village can be seen to the north, set at the foot of the valley. To the east of the road is the woodland belt screening Grovehill House while the road is edged to the west by traditional a hedgerow with open fields beyond.

Railway Hill; from the road here is a long view past the white paling fence of the Station house along the former railway line, now a straight footpath between avenue trees. From here the road winds attractively north downhill to the village with a grassed bank with several trees on its west side.

As the village core is approached from Railway Hill behind and above the two houses on the east of the road the overarching forms of the plane trees at the Rectory can be seen.

At the other side of the road this group is faced by the treed frontage of Beck Hall and its dependent farm buildings. The Hall has three large mature trees which stand sentinel in front of it. These are two limes and a chestnut respectively, the latter set next to the farmyard entrance.



The trees which form the setting of the Rectory are very important elements in the conservation area. First of these are the three huge plane trees which stand within the former stable yard to the west of the building. These are of very large stature and dwarf their surroundings, giving an impression of great age and continuity of settlement to this part of the village. They appear to be specimens of the Oriental Plane, *Platanus orientalis*, first introduced to this country at the beginning of the seventeenth century from the eastern Mediterranean. The second of these groups is the eastern tree belt, a Victorian mixed tree planting bordering the Rector's small park.

The latest of the Rectory tree plantings is recent, of native species and forms an extension of the eastern belt into the parkland to its west. The Rectory wall continues east along the Halesworth road to enclose the park.

The roadway to the south of the bridge surrounds a small triangle of green with a single lime tree.

From this easterly point too the village sign marks the village edge on the northern side of the road where it stands against the low thorn hedge bordering the water meadow. From here the village centre is largely hidden among the trees.

The mature woodland adjacent to the beck at the bridge is here fenced from the footpath.

Low Road curves away from the bridge to its north east. Here a row of sizeable yews marks the foot of the sloping churchyard. This is demarcated from the lower parkland of Starston Place by a row of fine mature pines.

Yet further along Low road the tall hedgerow to the north has several mature oaks which form part of the parkland.

In front of Hillcrest is an evergreen hedge which screens it from the turn in the Alburgh road. A single large partly pollarded oak stands at the small paling gate.

The cottage opposite the model farm buildings retains the structure of its early nineteenth century garden with mature yew, ilex and other trees. A simple white painted paling fence and low gate protect it from the highway. To either side traditional thorn hedges edge the road.

Starston Place lane leads to the lodge on Redenhall road, now named Low Road. It passes the open parkland with its oaks and specimen trees, this is associated with the former Starston Place.

Returning to Church Hill the paddock between the model farm and the house at the top of the hill is hedged with traditional thorn hedging. The flint walls of the stockyard and model farm buildings are separated from the road by a low hedge.

Further downhill towards the church of St Margaret the grounds of the former Starston Place are screened by dense mature planting, the survivors of the Victorian landscape gardens around the house. Here are mature beech, Wellingtonia, yews and multi stemmed ilex. On the right hand side of the road one or two ancient trees are surrounded by later self sown trees and shrubs including sycamore seedlings forming the western part of the garden to Home Farm Lodge. The woodland here is thorn hedged at the road's edge.

Through Starston Place gate the present house can be glimpsed behind the noble bole of the Wellingtonia through its adjacent planting.

To the left the churchyard, now somewhat neglected in this quarter extends to the yew tree screen surrounding the Starston Place park.

South of the church the yard is much overgrown with the "Victorian Gardenesque" planting and treatment of the space still vestigial with lime, yew and beech trees. The ground slopes away more steeply south of the church to reveal a later extension to the churchyard which extends from nineteenth into twentieth century use as the slope is traversed. There is evidence of recent tree planting in the churchyard including a glaucous cedar.

Several large trees are visible above and behind this lower part of the churchyard wall. They are limes and beech which, together with the mature trees within the churchyard, almost completely screen the church tower.

To the south side of the Street is one conspicuous modern dwelling with an attempted tree screen whose crowded nature only serves to draw attention to its incongruity. The well clipped evergreen hedge to the road is a suburban feature in this otherwise rural scene.

Beech View and the Beeches have a large well maintained beech tree which stands in the front garden above the road bank. This is topped by a thorn hedge with a pair of painted gates of traditional form.

The Croft has a good mature horse chestnut which stands in the garden next to the five barred gate. A thorn hedge tops the bank which fronts the Street.

The pavement opposite the former 'pub reduces in width and then runs east behind and below the road edge hedgeline to the crossroads.

Fourways has a good beech hedge which runs downhill from the house to the street. In the front garden a small tree creates a focus for the two frontages of this house and its neighbour.

Opposite Blacksmith's Cottage there is a sizeable beech wood at the crossroads standing close to the beck, between it and the Street, screening Beck Hall and the bridge from view.

### 3.9 Walls and Fences

There are good examples of brick and flint walls but in the traditional manner with clay brick copings. The nearby built section of flint wall near the cottage has continued with this tradition. Metal railings survive at the Jubilee Hall and in the grounds of Starston Place. Timber paling fences, painted and in natural colour are also present.

Boundary walls are a particular feature of the Conservation Area along The Street and along the north garden of the Old Rectory for example.

## 4. POLICIES

- 4.1 There are a range of policies which affect Starston and its Conservation Area originating from both national and local sources. The DoE publication Planning Policy Guidance No. 15, Planning and Historic Environment, published in September 1994, provides a full statement of Government policies in respect of historic buildings and Conservation Areas. South Norfolk Council endorses the contents of PPG 15 and decisions made will reflect its various provisions.
- 4.2 The Rural Area Local Plan (RALP), adopted in February 1996, seeks to guide future growth in the district up to 2001. The Plan's policies are within the strategic framework set by the Norfolk Structure Plan which was adopted in 1999. The South Norfolk Local Plan, published in April 1998 has now passed through the local inquiry process.
- 4.3 RALP sets out certain Strategic Principles and promotes policies designed to:
  - protect the historic character of the towns and villages, its buildings and open spaces;
  - improve the quality of design for new developments, alterations and extensions;
  - encourage the continued maintenance of historic buildings;
  - promote works which preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area.

4.4 To support these policies, the Council has begun the preparation of a series of design guidelines to provide further advice and details. A list is attached in Appendix 3, and includes, for example, open space standards, shop fronts and advertisements, design and layout of individual dwellings and small groups.

4.5 At a local level, there are no further policies specific to Starston.

## 5. DEVELOPMENTS

The major development in the village has been the traffic calming scheme. This has largely benefitted the appearance of the conservation area as well as mediating the further erosion of it by traffic. Some of the signage is however of inferior construction and design.

Below "Oakdene" on Railway Hill is a recent single storey dwelling with black pantiled roof and red brick walls set back from the road behind an old wall. This has been sympathetically altered to make vehicle access and the mature trees adjacent have been carefully conserved. The house has dark stained timber window and door frames.

A newer red brick two storey house with double garage stands opposite this on the west side of the road. It has a large double garage set forward of it. Both of these are largely screened from view.

To the south side of the Street is one conspicuous modern dwelling with an attempted tree screen whose crowded nature only serves to draw attention to its incongruity. The well clipped evergreen hedge to the road is a suburban feature in this otherwise rural scene.

To the east of the Alburgh road a large early nineteenth century group of model farm buildings associated with Starston place is partly listed.

## 6. PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The poles and wires of the utility companies are the chief disfigurement in the conservation area

The undergrounding of the obtrusive poles and wires throughout the conservation area remains the chief enhancement priority for the local authority.

Some of the traffic calming signage is of inferior construction and design.

Many of the mature trees in the conservation area are close to their time for replacement and in some cases have already succumbed. The replanting of many of the specimen trees and of blocks of woodland is now urgent.

On Low Road the lower of the two sluices which control the water levels of the Beck stands as evidence of the long lasting landscape improvements made in the village in the Victorian era. The banks of the beck and the mechanism of the sluices are neglected now and could benefit from works of maintenance and management.

## 7. PROPOSALS

The above analysis of the Conservation Area must be seen in the context of the policies and guidance formed both at national and local level. In the near future, the Council will put forward proposals for enhancement for all the Conservation Areas in the District, and list them into a priority order. As resources permit, these proposals will be publicised and discussed locally before any work commences.

## APPENDIX 1 Townscape and Buildings

The visible townscape of the conservation area is that of an ancient settlement with a majority of older traditional buildings. These are set within an enclosed, unspoilt and wooded, undulating landscape of great beauty.

This description of the townscape of Starston starts at the small triangular green on the Needham Road. Here the village can be seen to the north, set at the foot of the valley. To the east of the road is the woodland belt screening Grovehill House while the road is edged to the west by traditional a hedgerow with open fields beyond. Below this stands the former Station House which forms a "gateway" to the village on the Needham Road. This is an isolated red brick Victorian building with slate roof of low pitch and with white brick dressings. Its style could be described as "railway Italianate" and its classical details, round headed window arches and bracketed dormers are a characteristic of all the station buildings along this stretch of the former railway line. From the road there is a long view past the white paling fence of the house, of the former railway line, now a straight footpath between avenue trees. From here the road winds attractively downhill to the village with a grassed bank with several trees on its west side below the open field.

The first house of the village is a modern single storey dwelling set above the road to its west. "Magnolia" is screened from the view by a mature beech hedge and from the road by planted bank and trees. Below this "Oakdene" is a black pantiled former estate cottage, again screened from the road by bank and trees. Opposite this a recent single storey dwelling with black pantiled roof and red brick walls is set back from the road behind an old wall. This has been sympathetically altered to make vehicle access and the mature trees adjacent have been carefully conserved. The house has dark stained timber window and door frames. A newer red brick two storey house with double garage stands opposite this on the west side of the road. It has a large double garage set forward of it. Both of these are largely screened from view. On the east side of the road the old wall, constructed in flint with red brick piers incorporated, runs north downhill, enclosing an orchard. The wall has an ogee brick coping. This wall runs into the lower outhouse of the next dwelling on the east of the road. This house is white rendered with low pitched tiled roofs, a single brick stack and fretted barge boards. It stands hard on the road's edge and has diamond pane windows. Next on this side of the road is another dwelling built hard upon the verge, but this time in flint and red brick. Here the roof is of red pantiles laid to a low pitch. The flint of the walls is trimmed with flush red brickwork and the bargeboards are plain. Low monopitch outbuildings, hard on the building line, link these two dwellings into a single structure which encloses the space as the village core is approached. Behind and above these two houses the overarching forms of the plane trees at the Rectory can be seen.

At the other side of the road this group is faced by the treed frontage of Beck Hall and its dependent farm buildings. The Hall has two large mature trees which stand sentinel in front of it. These are three limes and a chestnut respectively, the latter set next to the farmyard entrance. This in turn is flanked by a low flint wall with the now familiar ogee brick coping. Beck Hall itself is a listed seventeenth century timber framed house with steeply pitched black glazed pantiled roofs. It has ochre rendered walls and a gabled cross wing to the south. Its setting is attractive with a level lawned front garden with gravelled drive. To its north a meadow extends west beside the beck out of the village. The Hall is a key architectural element in the composition of the townscape at this nexus of the village, the crossroads and bridge.

\* At Beck Hall the centre of the village becomes visible with the roads to Harleston, the Pulhams and Alburgh joining at the bridge. To the east the Harleston Road curves away past the Rectory. This stands to the south of the road behind a red brick garden wall of medium height. The listed house itself is a nineteenth century remodelling of a seventeenth century two storeyed timber framed structure. It now presents white rendered walls below steeply pitched roofs of black pantiles with shaped and pierced bargeboards. The house has lower additions which form an attractive overall composition. Standing alone on this side of the road the Rectory forms an important part of the composition of the village and conservation area core. The trees which form the setting of the Rectory are very important elements in the conservation area. First of these are the three huge plane trees which stand within the former stable yard to the west of the building. These are of very large stature and dwarf their surroundings, giving an impression of great age and continuity of settlement to this part of the village. They appear to be specimens of the Oriental Plane, *Platanus orientalis*, first introduced to this country at the beginning of the seventeenth century from the eastern Mediterranean. The second of these groups is the eastern tree belt, a Victorian mixed tree planting bordering the Rector's small park. The latest of the Rectory tree plantings is recent, of native species and forms an extension of the eastern belt into the parkland to its west. The Rectory wall continues east along the Harleston road to enclose the park.

Standing at the bridge and looking south up the Needham road Starston Jubilee Hall stands at its foot, forming an end stop to the row of buildings built hard upon the street. This is a modest single storey brick building with two modern windows to the north and a plain black pantiled roof with wavy barge boards. It has a good traditional painted sign at its centre and is bordered by a metal paling with a thin hedge behind.

The roadway to the south of the bridge surrounds a small triangle of green with a single lime tree. The pavement running past the Rectory is of standard black rolled bitumen with a grass border behind it against the slightly sinuous and mossy red brick wall. The visual edge of the conservation area is reached at the termination of this wall, which when looking back to the centre of the village frames the scene. From this point too the village sign marks the village edge on the northern side of the road where it stands against the low thorn hedge bordering the water meadow. From here the village centre is largely hidden among the trees.

At the centre of the village the pavement to the west of the bridge is recent and of the same rolled black bitumen with concrete kerb. The signage at this point is of mixed quality. A fine traditional cast iron standard with corona top carries modern low maintenance finger posts with black lettering. Next to this practical design with high quality of materials and detail is a standard stop sign in pressed sheet metal clipped to a metal tube with a cycle way addition below it. At the foot of this the Railway Hill street sign is in metal sheet with a pair of thin galvanised sections for legs. The woodland adjacent to the beck is here fenced from the footpath with a simple timber paling fence. This has close set palings on two stout rails and is left a natural colour.

The bridge itself forms the focus for the village and conservation area. It consists of four curved white brick abutments with stone caps, one of which is at present (1/2000) missing. Between these two white painted modern metal rails protect the roadway. On the western side of the bridge where the roadway narrows the footpath is marked out on it by the use of brickweave pavements. To the north east of the bridge and close to it a zigzag low paling fence of the same design as that previously described encloses the major village sign. To emphasise the importance of this symbol the fence is white painted and wraps around the sign. The latter is of painted wood carved in low relief with a simple post standing on a circular brick base, it is dated 1980.

What is now named Low Road under NCC's new road naming curves away from the bridge to its north east. Here a row of sizeable yews marks the foot of the sloping churchyard. This is demarcated from the lower parkland of Starston Place by a row of fine mature pines.

Further along Low Road the lower of the two sluices which control the water levels of the Beck stands as evidence of the long lasting landscape improvements made in the village in the Victorian era. The banks of the beck and the mechanism of the sluices are neglected now and could benefit from works of maintenance and management. Yet further along Low road the tall hedgerow to the north has several mature oaks which form part of the parkland.

At the junction with the lane which leads northwest uphill to the model farm buildings is a pretty listed early nineteenth century lodge, thatched and set within mature woodland. This stuccoed lodge dates from around 1840. Its thatched roof with gabled ends has shaped barge boards and pendants. The lodge is of a single storey with a projecting gabled wing at its centre, forming a T-shaped plan. The composition is completed with a gabled porch with thatched roof also with shaped barge boards and pendant. One window bay is arranged on each side of the two wings, both with driphoods on brackets. The cottage has a large central red brick chimney stack with three square shafts. It looks across the water meadow to Brook Cottage, remodelled in the Victorian era and now recently conspicuously added to. A footpath across the meadow has recently been provided with a timber style and fingerpost of traditional design.



The northern part of the conservation area relates to the Alburgh Road. At the edge of this part of the area stands a two storey house of three bays with low pitched black pantiled roof and cream washed rendered walls. This is Hillcrest and it has twin tall redbrick chimney stacks which make it a landmark as you leave the village. In front of the house is an evergreen hedge which screens it from the turn in the road. A single large partly pollarded oak stands at the small paling gate. A section of larch lap fencing behind the gate closes the garden off and appears incongruous.

To the east of the road a large early nineteenth century group of model farm buildings associated with Starston place is partly listed. From the road the finely coursed flint and brick wall of the group is the dominant feature, with the horizontal black timber boarded walls of the stock sheds above. The original slate roofs have been replaced in some parts by felt. Along their central roadway from the highway the courtyards of the stock sheds and their gables are visible, constructed in finely coursed flint walling with red brick quoins.

Opposite the model farm buildings stands a listed lodge whose form also suggests the early nineteenth century style of Loudon associated with those buildings. It is cruciform in plan, of a single storey. The lowpitched roofs are of black glazed pantiles and have deep eaves and oversailing gable shaped bargeboards. The walls are of finely coursed flints with white brick dressings. A pair of clasped twin chimneys complete the symmetrical composition. The cottage retains the structure of its early nineteenth century garden with mature yew, ilex and other trees. A simple white painted paling fence and low gate protect it from the highway. To either side traditional thorn hedges edge the road.

The lane leading between the model farm buildings and the site of the former Starston Place Starston Workshops is of interest. The listed implement shed and adjacent cottage on this Starston Place lane are both part of the model farm buildings. Pheasantry cottage further along to the east on this lane, is listed grade II. The lane leads to the lodge on Redenhall road, now named Low Road. It passes the open parkland with its oaks and specimen trees, this is associated with the former Starston Place.

Returning to Church Hill the paddock between the model farm and the house at the top of the hill is hedged with traditional thorn hedging. The flint walls of the stockyard and model farm buildings are separated from the road by a low hedge.

Further downhill towards the church of St Margaret the grounds of the former Starston Place are screened by dense mature planting, the survivors of the Victorian landscape gardens around the house. Here are mature beech, Wellingtonia, yews, multi stemmed ilex and the overgrown remains of an early nineteenth century metal fence. The road here is grass edged. On the right hand side of the road one or two ancient trees are surrounded by later self sown trees and shrubs including sycamore seedlings forming the western part of the garden to Home Farm Lodge. The woodland here is thorn hedged at the road's edge.

On the left the church tower now comes into view with before it the gravelled access to the churchyard running level as the road proper falls away below the churchyard wall. Also on the left and set close to the churchyard gate is the concealed entrance to the former Starston Place. The gate and adjacent rails are fine examples of early Victorian wrought oak work, very well preserved with Tudor detail to the gateposts and rail tops. The gate itself is subdivided into square sections each further subdivided into curvilinear Gothic segments. Through it the present house can be glimpsed behind the noble bole of the Wellingtonia through its adjacent planting. The road is edged here too with grass verges.

At the entrance to the churchyard a similar oak gate is set between stone gateposts, with beyond it the church tower. To the left the churchyard, now somewhat neglected in this quarter extends to the yew tree screen surrounding the Starston Place park. To the right and supporting the churchyard is the churchyard wall, built in flint and brick with an attractive brick coping of ogee form. The graveyard is pleasantly unrestored and simply mown with no apparent removal of gravestones. Here the stones are nineteenth century. The church itself is of the Decorated period, much restored in the nineteenth century. South of the church the yard is much overgrown with the Victorian Gardenesque planting and treatment of the space still vestigial with lime, yew and beech trees. Here the monuments are of the eighteenth century and earlier, some of them fine works of art but all overgrown and neglected. The ground slopes away more steeply south of the church to reveal a later extension to the churchyard which extends from nineteenth into twentieth century use as the slope is traversed. At the juncture between the centuries stands a prominent Celtic cross, the village's monument to Queen Victoria's jubilee. The surface carving of this is of high quality and the cross merits listed status. It is still visible across the valley. There is evidence of recent tree planting in the churchyard including a glaucous cedar and one fine modern slate gravestone.

From the south porch of the church a gravelled path leads to the listed Victorian lytch gate set diagonally in the churchyard wall above the crossroads. The lytch gate is an excellent example of Victorian oak framed ecclesiastical craftsmanship with encaustic chequerboard tiled pavement and wrought iron details. Its base is of ashlar and flint.

The churchyard wall is bordered below the lytch gate with a grass verge as higher up Church Hill. Opposite this stands Hillside, a listed seventeenth century timber framed house now roughcast and with a steep tiled roof.

Standing at the foot of the hill at the bridge and looking back uphill to the church a second sign post is visible at the foot of the hill by the churchyard wall. The fingerposts are treated as in the previous example and the post is flanked by a memorial seat. Two modern traffic signs also accompany these well designed pieces of street furniture. Several large trees are visible above and behind this lower part of the churchyard wall. They are limes and beech which, together with the mature trees within the churchyard, almost completely screen the church tower.

At the extreme western edge of the village and in the meadow below the road stands the listed windpump dating from the 1860's. This was the pump for water supply to Starston Place. A small circular red brick round house with a tarred roof supporting an iron post is surmounted by four single shutter spring sails with leading boards, and twin rudder, driving a reciprocating pump through a crank on the windshaft.

The windpump is now the feature chosen for the village sign as part of the excellent traffic calming scheme. This forms the entrance to the village from the Pulhams' direction. From here the Street winds into the village centre with cottages and buildings well spaced out on the northern, left hand side of the road. The view east here shows the crowstepped gables of the former village school on the left, with above it the top of the church tower in the trees on the hill in the distance.

To the south side of the road is one conspicuous modern dwelling with an attempted tree screen whose crowded nature only serves to draw attention to its incongruity. The well clipped evergreen hedge to the road is a suburban feature in this otherwise rural scene. The meadows to the east and west of this are used for pony paddocks.

The first building on the north of the road is a pair of red brick Victorian cottages, Beech View and the Beeches, with fretted barge boards and central stack. They have cruciform windows with hooded drip moulds and the eastern of the two conserves its original window frames with small panes. The roofs are slated and a large well maintained beech tree stands in the front garden above the road bank. This is topped by a thorn hedge with a pair of painted gates of traditional form.

Next on the north side of the road is a single Victorian cottage, the Croft, with black pantiled roof and fretted barge boards. There is a central red brick chimney stack and attractive blue brick diaper pattern in the brickwork. This may be the former poorhouse remodelled as cottages which Riches mentions. A good mature horse chestnut stands in the garden next to the five barred gate. Below the thorn hedge at the top of the bank which fronts the Croft is a row of modern red and black highway posts with reflectors. The road at this point is enclosed as a corridor between this bank and the hedge to the south. A row of large and wire festooned poles carries utility cables and detracts from the quality of the scene. A row of nicely cut oak posts with slightly decorated finials lines the grass verge to this part of the road and defines the property boundary.

The former village school, now a dwelling, presents two offset crowstepped gables one with a small round window, to the street and a red brick attached stack. The flank walls show that the building originally had flint coursed walling. It stands above the street with a retaining wall, itself now rendered. At the top of this is a loose chestnut paling and wire fence.

The next building on what has now become the Street is the former village 'pub, the Gate. This is now a dwelling but retains its characteristic trim. It is red pantiled with a low pitched roof and gable end stacks. Three upper casements of three and two lights are matched below by three sash windows, one Victorian and two retaining their smaller twelve panes. One of these windows is offset to provide for the projecting single storey porch. A low extension to the west is now an attached garage. The whole is colour washed in a proper ochre with tarred base and black painted bargeboards and rainwater goods. With white painted windows the whole effect is very smart.

Opposite is the red cast iron postbox standing on its own black iron pedestal. This is an attractive traditional feature which, together with the former 'pub across the road is let down by the unsightly post, wire and single rail fence to the paddock on the south side of the Street. This backs a pavement which has several apparently unnecessary posts standing on or beside it. This pavement reduces in width and then runs east behind and below the road edge hedgeline to the crossroads. This section of footpath is much silted at the time of writing (1/2000) by earth from the roadside bank which appears to have been burrowed by rabbits, or worse by rats.

Standing to the east of the former 'pub and set back from the road above its pretty front garden stands an early nineteenth century white rendered cottage. This has a low pitched black pantiled roof and tall twin red brick gable stacks. A low black pantiled outshut to the west is of one storey on a brick plinth. The windows are typical early nineteenth century triple light casements. The well planted garden of this house is retained by a coursed flint wall with red brick quoins and the characteristic ogee coping used in Starston. A traditional paling gate gives access to the road.

The next dwelling on this side of the Street is a listed early nineteenth century pair of semi-detached red brick cottages, now one house. This is set forward of the line of the previous cottage and with the former 'pub gable partly encloses its frontage and conceals it. This larger house has a black glazed pantile roof with gabled ends. There is a brick dentil eaves. The house is of two storeys and two windows frontage. These have early nineteenth century three light casements with glazing bars. On the ground floor there are a pair of segmental headed doorways with boarded doors. An internal brick chimney stack is built in at each end of the house. Despite the addition of a large wing at the rear of this house the impression of two attractive redbrick estate cottages has been retained. The front garden is grassed and retained as next door, by the flint and brick wall to the street.

This listed cottage is the neighbour of another previous pair which stand to its east. These are now a single dwelling of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. It is built closer to the Street than its neighbour in red brick, and was formerly designed as a pair of semi-detached cottages. It has a black glazed pantile roof with coped gable end and wide eaves. The house is of two storeys with a two window frontage. These have eighteenth or early nineteenth century three light casements with glazing bars below flat rubbed brick arches. There is now a central porch and boarded door, possibly replacing two previous doorways. Two brick chimney stacks stand behind the ridge. The front garden is demarcated from the cottages to the west by a swan neck profiled round coped red brick wall. The frontage continues the flint and brick street retaining wall with a pair of small white painted gates.

The village red telephone kiosk which stands next to the red brick cottages and is partly concealed from view is listed and is a type K6, designed in 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. This is an important element of townscape.

Next door to the east Fourways is an early nineteenth century listed house with a blue washed plastered exterior. It has a black glazed pantile roof with gabled ends. The building is of two storeys with three window bays. Each of these has three light casements with glazing bars. A central doorway has a moulded architrave with simple hood and fielded panel door. There is an external brick chimney stack at the west end of the house.

Joined to Fourways and sharing the frontage railing, Blacksmiths Cottage stands slightly offset to the road and though unlisted is of considerable townscape value. It is of similar construction to Fourways, with rendered walls and low pitched black pantiled roof. White painted and with black trim the modern additions to this have been well integrated. A good beech hedge runs downhill from the house to the street. The broad garage approach spoils this otherwise attractive frontage. Along the street front this house shares a Victorian hooped top railing with cast iron posts with its neighbour. In the front garden a small tree creates a focus for the two frontages.

Opposite Blacksmith's Cottage at the edge of the beech wood at the crossroads stands an attractive timber boarded and red pantiled traditional workshop, close to the beck.

## APPENDIX 2 i)

### LISTED BUILDINGS WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREA

BUILDING	LISTING GRADE
Church of St. Margaret	I
Lychgate to Church	II
Pheasantry Cottage, Starston Place	II
Home Farm Cottage, Church Hill	II
Implement shed with adjoining granary loft and adjoining cottage, Starston Place	II
Wind pump	II and scheduled ancient monument
Hillside, The Street	II
Fourways, The Street	II
Telephone Kiosk, The Street	II
Streamlet Farmhouse	II
The Rectory	II
Cottage, The Street	II
The Lodge, Redenhall Road	II
Beck Hall, Railway Hill	II

UNLISTED BUILDINGS OF TOWNSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE

Grove Hill Cottages, Burns Lane  
Grove Hill House, Railway Hill  
Station House, Railway Hill  
Oakdene, Railway Hill  
Range of buildings and wall, Railway Hill  
east side of Railway Hill

Outbuildings to Beck Hall, Railway Hill  
and flint boundary wall

Jubilee Hall  
north wall to Old Rectory

Bridge over River

Churchyard wall to St. Margarets, Church Hill  
Memorial Cross  
Entrance gates to Starston Place  
Surviving walls to Starston Place, water pump  
Outbuildings to Starston Place  
Hillcrest  
Blacksmith Cottage, The Street  
Red Cottage  
The Gate  
Old School House  
Beck View  
The Beeches and Beech View