



# DARSHAM CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

**July 2012**



On 1 April 2019, East Suffolk Council was created by parliamentary order, covering the former districts of Suffolk Coastal District Council and Waveney District Council. [The Local Government \(Boundary Changes\) Regulations 2018](#) (part 7) state that any plans, schemes, statements or strategies prepared by the predecessor council should be treated as if it had been prepared and, if so required, published by the successor council - therefore this document continues to apply to East Suffolk Council until such time that a new document is published.

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**Public consultation:** this took place between 16/1/12 and 13/4/12 and included writing to all residents of the village to request views; writing to the Parish Council and providing printed copies; placing the draft on the Council's website; including a request for views via the Council's public magazine 'Coastline'; issuing a press release; making available printed copies at SCDC's planning reception; providing posters for display around the village; and inviting responses from Suffolk County Archaeology and Suffolk Preservation Society. A total of 7 responses were received which led to 9 additions, amendments and alterations to the draft appraisal, summary map and management plan prior to adoption in July 2012.

## INTRODUCTION

The conservation area in Darsham was originally designated in 1989 and confirmed by redesignation by Suffolk Coastal District Council in 1991.

The Council has a duty to review its conservation area designations from time to time, and this appraisal examines Darsham under a number of different headings as set out in English Heritage's 'Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' (2011).

As such this is a straightforward appraisal of Darsham's built environment in conservation terms and is followed by a gazetteer describing the village in more detail.

The intent of this document is as a demonstration of 'quality of place', sufficient to inform those considering changes in the area. The photographs and maps are thus intended to contribute as much as the text itself.

As the English Heritage guidelines point out, the appraisal is to be read as a general overview, rather than as a comprehensive listing, and the omission of any particular building, feature or space does not imply that it is of no interest in conservation terms.



**Village Sign**



**View from West**

## **1 CONSERVATION AREAS: Planning Policy Context**

There are currently thirty four Conservation Areas in the Suffolk Coastal District.

The identification and protection of the historic environment is an important function of the planning system and is done through the designation of Conservation Areas in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Conservation Areas are defined as ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’. These areas make an important contribution to the quality of life of local communities and visitors by safeguarding their physical historical features which sustain the sense of local distinctiveness and which are an important aspect of the character and appearance of our towns, villages and countryside.

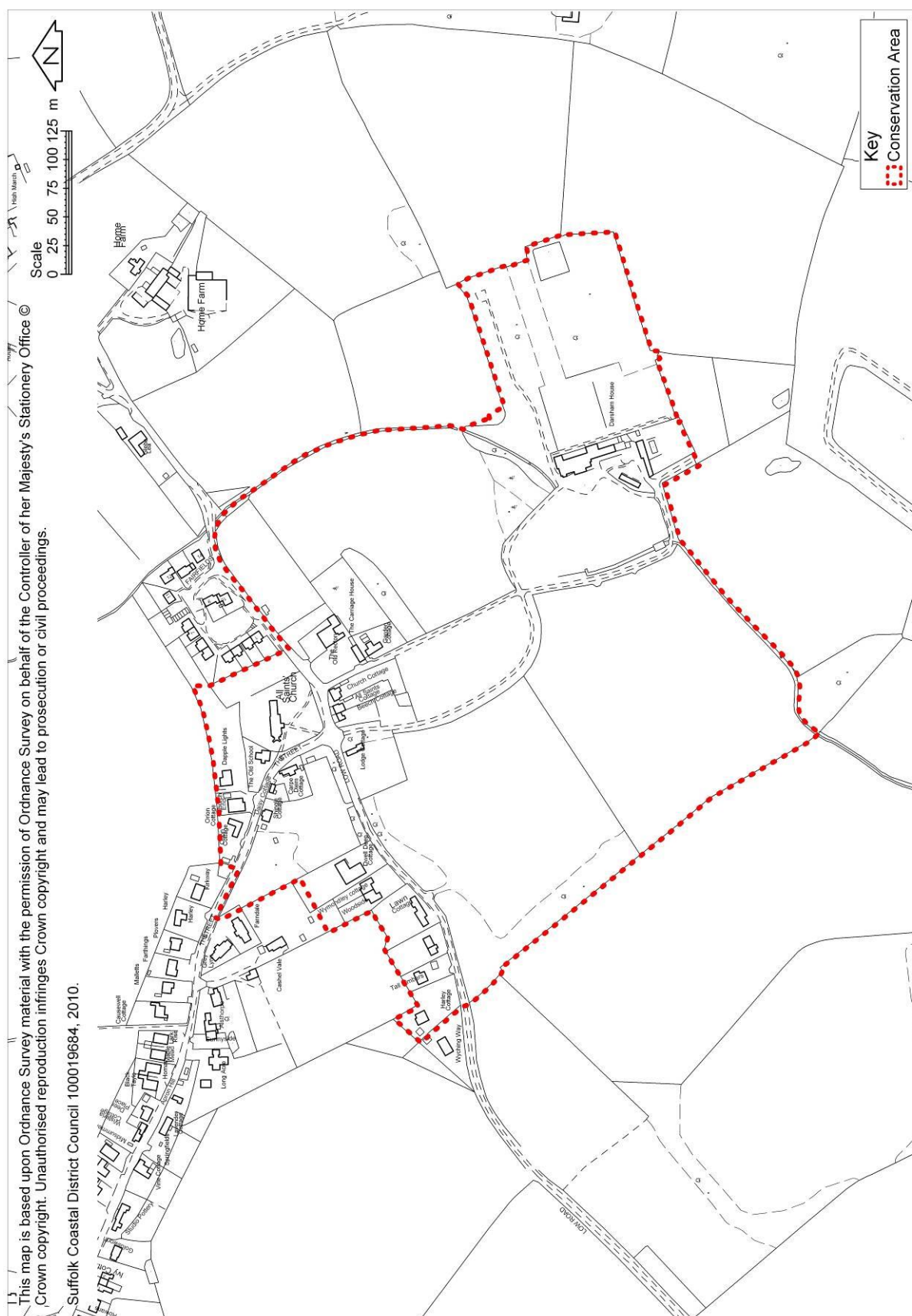
As part of this commitment there is a need to ensure there are the means available to identify what is special in the historic environment and to define through the development plan system their capacity for change. Such changes can act to help to address environmental quality in addition to achieving the aims of planning for sustainable development.

National planning advice on the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other heritage are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012). At the District and local level, the Local Development Framework (LDF) recognises that development within conservation areas will need to accord with the requirements of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. The Core Strategy of the LDF contains an objective ‘to maintain and enhance the quality of the distinctive natural and built environment’. The Core Strategy also provides general advice supporting the retention and enhancement of Conservation Areas whilst minimising any significant adverse impact upon them. Conservation areas are also included under general development control policies, particularly those in relation to design where one of the key criteria requires that all new development must have regard to the character of the area and its setting.

This Conservation Area Appraisal provides details and identifies particular features which contribute to and justify its status. The purpose of this conservation area appraisal includes:

- a definition of the special character of the conservation area through its special qualities: layout, uses, architecture, setting, open spaces, topography and archaeology
- an analysis of the area’s history, development and current status
- a guide to managing future change.





**Darsham Conservation Area** (North to the left)

## 2 GENERAL CHARACTER SUMMARY

The designation of a Conservation Area at Darsham is in recognition of the high environmental quality of this part of the village. Hidden away in the eastern corner of the parish, its character and appearance is very different from the western end through which runs the busy A12 and railway station.

The overall character of the Conservation Area is that of an enclave of traditional buildings dotted around narrow green lanes forming a highly attractive historic core. Occupying the large spaces which exist between the buildings is an abundance of mature hedgerows and trees which create a strong arboreal and verdant setting.

The Conservation Area is centred upon All Saints Church and the grounds of Darsham House. The sheer size, position and splendour of the parish church mean that it dominates the area, its tall tower visible above the trees and the quality of this building, alongside Darsham House, forms an effective contrast with the humble character of surrounding dwellings.



**Darsham: Aerial View 2007**

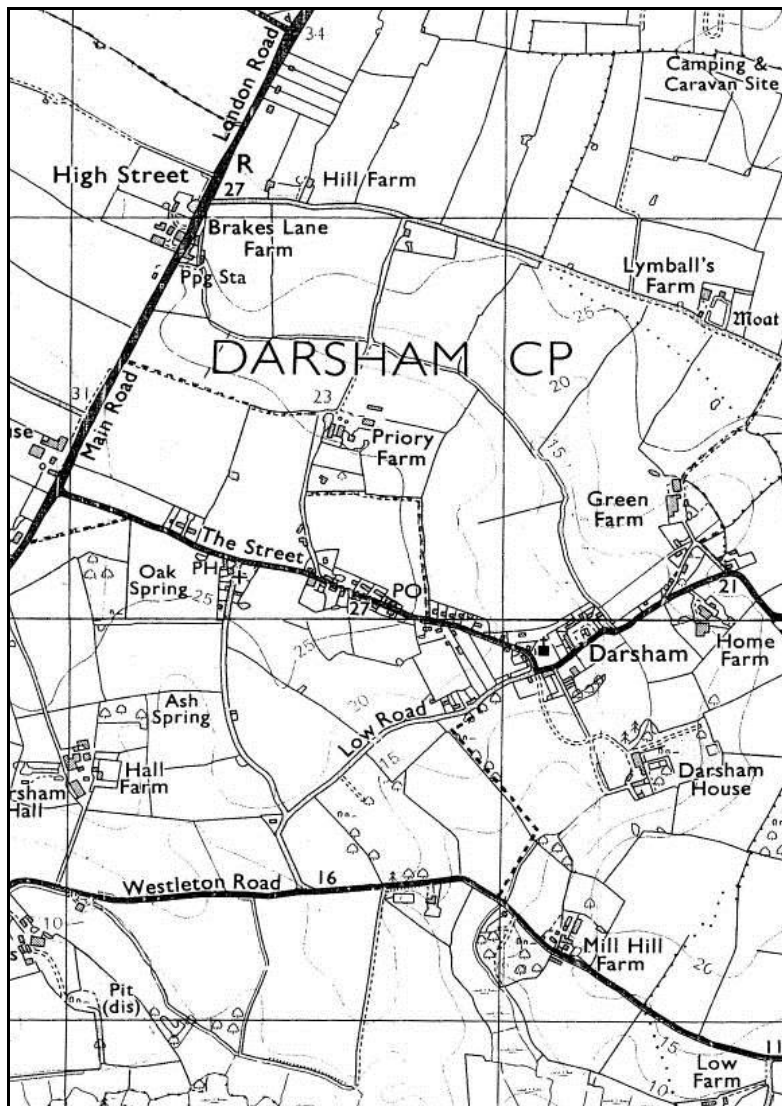
### 3 TOPOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Darsham is a village in east Suffolk adjoining the main A12 trunk road, about five miles north of Saxmundham and five miles south of Halesworth. During the 18<sup>th</sup> Century the A12 was the Ipswich to South Town (Great Yarmouth) Turnpike Trust's road.

From 1859 travellers could also join the railway network at Darsham Station, on the East Suffolk line from Ipswich to Lowestoft. Off the main A12, the village lies stretched out along a minor road, which runs on eastwards through the village of Westleton and ultimately to the coast at Dunwich.

The bulk of the village lies either side of The Street, mostly one plot deep, about a mile north of and parallel to the Minsmere River, which runs on eastwards four miles to the sea south of Dunwich. Darsham House lies at a lower level in relation to the adjoining village.

Just off the coastal 'Sandlings' strip, the village is sited inside the eastern edge of the 'High Suffolk' claylands, where the heavy soils are best suited for arable farming. The underlying geology is essentially crag deposits, sands and gravels laid down during the Pliocene period over the chalk, which underlies all of Suffolk at depth.



Extract from Ordnance Survey Map



## 4 ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

The Suffolk Historic Environment Record lists twenty or so sites of archaeological interest for the parish of Darsham.

The earliest of these are various Neolithic finds, including a chipped axehead and a flint chisel. From the Roman period there is evidence for a significant villa site with tessellated [or mosaic] floors and under-floor heating under the Fairfield's Estate and further scatters of Roman artefacts elsewhere. There are also small groups of finds from the Saxon period.

More recent entries of Medieval date include the church, two moated sites, a hall and deer park along with Sillett's Wood, an 'undated' area of ancient woodland.

Post Medieval interest is provided by two windmill sites and there are some undated linear cropmarks.

The parish was listed three times in the Domesday survey of 1086, with holdings by the King and two of his stalwarts: Roger Bigot and Robert Malet, although these latter appeared to be in dispute about part of their holdings. The King's holding included 30 acres of land formerly held by Alwin the priest, a church with six acres and one acre of meadow.

The principal historical occupation for residents of Darsham has been agriculture and early 19<sup>th</sup> century records confirm that by far most were employed on the land, with a smaller proportion in supporting trades including blacksmiths, millers and hurdle makers. The opening of a station on the Ipswich to Lowestoft railway line encouraged development at the western end of the village and associated new employment including a machine shop and coal merchants. The station area still acts as the focus for trade and activity in the village.

From a peak in population of 513 in 1831 present numbers are around 291.

Suffolk Historic Environment Record is now available online at

[www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/CHR](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/CHR)



All Saints Church Tower

In direthā ten ansketillū pbr̄. i. car t̄r̄ que fuit vii . libis hominibz  
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In DARSHAM Ansketel the priest held 1 carucate of land which belonged to 7 free men. Of these 7 men, 1 was Toli's man.

Then 2 smallholders, now 11.

Then ½ plough in lordship, now 1 plough; always 2 men's ploughs. Leofric Cobbe, over whom Aethelward, the King's reeve, had half the patronage; Thorkell, over whom Aethelward also had half the patronage; Alnoth, the man of Norman the Sheriff; Brunman Beard, half Norman's man and half Brunner's; Wulfic the deacon, the man of Godwin son of Algar; Osmund, the man of Edric of Laxfield; 16 acres and 1 virgate, which Aelfeva, a free woman, held before 1066. Over her, Norman had patronage. 24 acres less 1 virgate, which Blackman held before 1066. Blackman also was the man of Edric of Laxfield.

William Malet was in possession on the day of his death. Ansketel, Roger Bigot's chaplain, held the whole of this.

Value 25s.

Of this land, R(ober) Malet claims back 6 acres which one of his men gave with his daughter, whom 1 man of Roger Bigot's married after 1066.

Alnoth held 24 acres in the manor of Kelsale.

Value 5s. They are (part) of the same assessment.

The King and the Earl (have) the jurisdiction.

Extract from Domesday Survey



## **5 QUALITY OF BUILDINGS**

At the eastern end of The Street the grade I listed Church of All Saints has a plaintile roof and is built of flint and rubble with stone dressings, the south wall rendered.

The north and south doorways are both Norman in date, but much worn and remodelled. It also has a single early 13<sup>th</sup> Century lancet window on the north side of the chancel and according to Pevsner 'all irregular Perp windows' on the south side.

Nearby where The Street joins Low Road, a cluster of cottages are all grade II listed, mostly timber-framed and rendered with variously thatched or pantiled roofs.

Tucked away to the south down a long curved drive is a building of outstanding quality, the Grade II\* listed Darsham House. Of late 17<sup>th</sup> Century date, extended in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, the original house was in red brick with a black glazed pantile roof and Dutch gables. It has a Georgian rear range in a darker blue brick with red brick dressings and a slate roof.

The majority of buildings within the conservation area are unlisted. This status does not diminish their value nor their important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and their character-defining features should be retained. Those that make a positive contribution to the conservation area are identified on the Summary of Character Features Map on page 26. Loss of a building that makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area will be treated as substantial harm to the designated heritage asset.



**Detail of Darsham House front**



**Porch at All Saints Church**





**Red Brick and Slate**



**Red Brick Dutch Gable**



**Render and Pantile**



**Painted Brick and Slate**



## 6 TRADITIONAL BUILDING MATERIALS

The variety of Suffolk's vernacular materials is well represented within the village, both on the listed and unlisted buildings. This variety is a characteristic of the conservation area and should be respected in any new work or changes to existing buildings.

With the latter, the majority of traditional buildings are in brick rather than timber-frame, and the roofs are pantile or slate.

The Old Rectory is in the local soft 'Suffolk Red' brick with a slate roof, whilst the Old School was similar, but the brickwork is now painted over. Lawn Cottage along Low Road is also unlisted, but has a pantile roof with red brick walls, the end gable executed in Dutch style reminiscent of Darsham House.

Shingle Cottage has a hipped pantile roof, the walls either of brick or timber-framed, now hidden beneath textured rendered panelling, that is not quite pargetting.

A fine example of Suffolk White bricks can be found in Harley Cottage on Low Road, where it is used in conjunction with an early 19<sup>th</sup> Century low pitched slate roof, a typical combination. The same bricks also appear decoratively used as chimneys at Lodge Cottage above a thatched roof.

There is also a fine variety of traditional window types including 9-pane 'Suffolk' windows; multi-paned sliding sash windows; multi-paned casement windows; and dormer windows.



**Render and Pantile**



**Render, Thatch and White Brick**



## **7 CHARACTER OF SPACES**

The majority of Darsham's historic settlement lies in a tight cluster around the Church adjoining the parkland estate of Darsham House. Beyond here to the north-west development along The Street follows a typical linear Suffolk village pattern mostly one plot deep, but the difference here is that it is mostly recent and not of sufficient quality to include in the conservation area.

Darsham House itself, along with a few outbuildings, is the sole occupier of a large area of parkland to the south-east. Although somewhat degraded in quality this large open space forms an important setting to the House with remnants of a former designed parkland setting to its front visible and more formal gardens to its rear. It is a principal open space within the conservation area.

To the right the road leads to Westleton, passing Fairfields, a small modern development on its northern side that is excluded from the conservation area. To the left is Low Road that leads to Yoxford, with on its north side a number of dwellings facing the tree belt screening the Darsham House estate to the south.

The focal point of the settlement is very much the Churchyard opposite the gates to Darsham House, adjoining the road junction, with all three of the roads leading to it meandering gently with promised views around the bends leading one on. The churchyard is a principal open space within the village, criss-crossed by footpaths and bounded by mature trees, above which the tower rises.



**Darsham House Parkland**



**Low Road looking west**

## **8 TREES AND GREEN SPACES**

One of the key elements of the Conservation Area is its hedges, trees and green spaces. Treed and planted spaces enhance the buildings and spaces around the village and provide an important setting for key buildings such as the Church and Darsham House.

Within a conservation area all trees over a certain size are afforded some protection. Notice to fell or prune trees has to be submitted to the local planning authority for consideration. Specific trees, groups or woodlands throughout the conservation areas may sometimes be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) by virtue of the fact that there has been a previous request or proposal to remove the tree or develop a site. Protected trees may have particular amenity, historic and ecological value.

The mature trees around both the churchyard and the adjoining cluster of cottages define this historic area of Darsham as distinct from the adjoining areas of modern development. More modern areas of the village are less treed.

Thick belts of trees screen the estate of Darsham House along its northern boundary and an avenue of more recently planted smaller Plane trees line the curved driveway into the house.

The west lawn fronting the house has a number of specimen trees including Cedars, Limes and Turkey Oak spaced well apart, whilst the enclosed grounds behind the house to the north and east contain dense cover. Some tree species such as Beech and Holly are also used for hedging around the grounds.

The extent of tree cover and the importance of their contribution as groups to the character of the Conservation Area is of great importance and should be taken into account in future proposals for their management and schemes of replanting. At the same time those with tree

ownership responsibilities should exercise their proper management with respect to impact on neighbours, for example.



**The Street Looking East**



**Low Road Looking East**



## **9 COUNTRYSIDE SETTING**

Along The Street and Low Road the countryside is rarely further than a plot depth away, whilst for the cluster of buildings south of the Church the setting to the rear is the parkland around Darsham House.

Access to this countryside can be gained by definitive footpath 1 leading northwards off The Street about halfway along, directly into the fields behind the houses there.

To the south footpath 10 skirts the western edge of the grounds of Darsham House, leading on through the fields to the road from Yoxford and Westleton that passes about half a mile south of Darsham.

Home Farm, now once again part of the Darsham House, and The Wilderness woodland both form a very important setting to the Conservation Area. These augment the rural character of farmed fields and woodland that is the established pattern of the village's rural context. This pattern of land use needs to be retained from encroachment to preserve the setting to the village's Conservation Area.



**Footpath 10 off Low Road**



**View onto Low Road**



## 10 FORMER USES

Darsham's origins are as an agricultural settlement adjoining a landed estate on the north bank of Minsmere River. Early 17<sup>th</sup> Century records have 7 yeomen and 5 husbandmen resident, whilst later in that century there were 5 yeomen, a carpenter and only 1 husbandman.

The Suffolk woollen cloth industry was also represented at that time with a weaver and a tailor in the village. By 1844, trade directories list 14 farmers, 2 blacksmiths, a wheelwright, a corn miller and a hurdle maker amongst the residents. Around the same time nearly 90 people were employed in local agriculture.

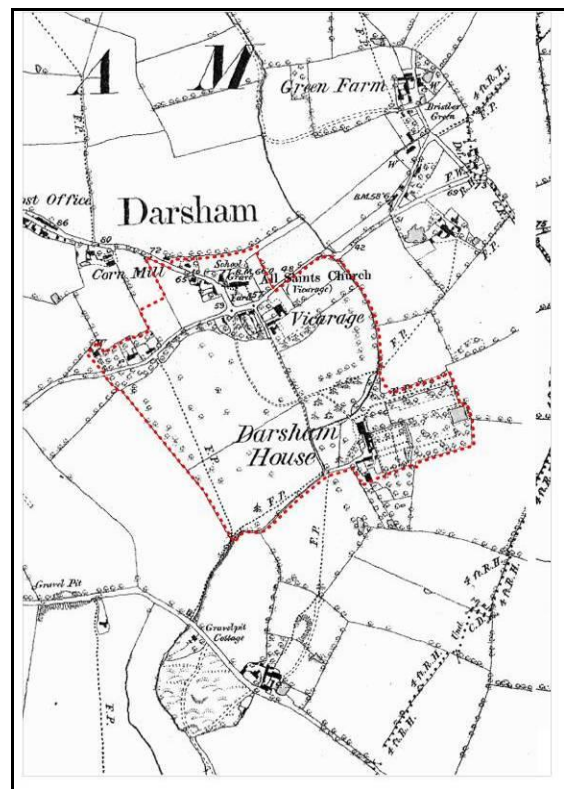
The tithe apportionment of 1843 included fields with names such as 'Claypit Field' and 'First Mill Field'. There was also a 'Turnpike Piece', which was not associated with the main road other than being next to it. Another revealing 19<sup>th</sup> century name is 'Gravelpit Farm'.

A 'Mill and Yard' is also mentioned; the post mill just north of The Street, was demolished in 1937, the roundhouse now used as a store. Another post mill was moved to this site from a position south of Darsham House adjoining the Yoxford to Westleton road.

Today Darsham enjoys a village pub and a village hall. Adjacent the railway station is a café and close-by is a well-used service station. The later nucleus of Darsham built up around road and rail links today provides levels of activity and employment that are unusually high within such a small village.



**Darsham House**



**19<sup>th</sup> Century Map**

## **11 PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS**

Darsham House, the principal dwelling within the Conservation Area, is currently benefiting from an extensive programme of building, garden and parkland restoration either underway or planned. Such work will provide, on completion, substantial enhancement to the Conservation Area given the importance as a setting to the listed building of the surrounding open space.

Like many rural villages overhead cables and poles intrude on what should ideally be an absence of such paraphernalia in the rural scene. Similarly it is important that Highways works, including signage, kerbing, lining and surfacing takes full account of the rural character of the Conservation Area and avoids excessive use and urbanising materials.

Suffolk Coastal District Council's Parish Tree Scheme is available to Parish Councils who wish to carry out sensitive planting schemes to enhance spaces within the Conservation Area.



**Overhead Wiring**

**12 STREET-BY-STREET  
APPRAISAL**



## 12.1 The Street

Entry into the village from the north-west is well enclosed by banks, hedges and trees, especially on the south side where the large grounds of **Shingle Cottage** form an important open space in this part of the village.



The low scale of **Orion Cottage** and the Old School House and the gently curving road allow glimpses of the Church tower above the trees, providing an important view of a charming and characteristic village scene.



**The Old School House** is a very attractive late Victorian single storey Victorian building with a slate roof. Formerly the village school it is now a dwelling and pleasingly retains most of its original character and appearance. Opposite are **Shingle Cottage**, **Daisy Cottage** and **Carpe Diem Cottage** which very effectively frame and narrow down the approach to the Church. Tall trees and hedgerows dominate the street scene hardly appearing to leave room for the buildings.



**Carpe Diem Cottage** occupies a prominent site close to the road. Dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century it was once two cottages. Timber-framed and rendered with a pantiled roof, it has an interesting vernacular form with a gable and a small pitched roof extension on one end, but on the other, it has a hipped roof which continues down over a lean-to. It is highly prominent within the village streetscene and makes a very good contribution to the Conservation Area.



## 12.2 All Saints Church and surrounding

The parish **Church of All Saints** has a magnificent rural setting, the quality of which complements perfectly the quality of the Church building itself. The churchyard is bounded by an attractive curving soft grass verge and hedge through which grow some outstanding Lime trees. The form of the Churchyard has defined the form of the village at its historic centre, including adjacent routes, and this historic layout is essential to preserve unaltered.





Beyond the Church there comes into view another group of traditional buildings – **Church, All Saints and Beech Cottages**. Facing the Church these attractive vernacular buildings frame the entrance to Darsham House, with its imposing brick gate piers and metal gates, and form a very important group. Set back from the road each of these cottages has attractive and varied boundaries to their frontages: hedges and picket fences, which contribute to the rural character of the village.



**Church Cottages** with its rendered walls and especially its reed thatched roof makes a major contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. Likewise, **All Saints** and **Beech Cottages** with their small scale, their hipped pantiled roof, large central chimney stack and traditional fenestration complete a group which appear as they have remained unchanged for centuries.



An attractive lane leads down beside Church Cottage towards the grounds of Darsham House. It is partly bounded by a substantial and attractive traditional brick wall, which it is important to retain for its contribution to the Conservation Area's character.



Along this lane, behind the Old Rectory the **Carriage House** and **Garden Cottage** form an attractive group, the former in red brick, and the latter painted render, both with pantile roofs.







To the east, **The Old Rectory** is set back from the road amidst mature landscaped grounds. It is screened by an area of greenery which substantially enhances the setting of the adjacent vernacular buildings and the streetscene generally. Although unlisted the Old Rectory is substantially well preserved and its architectural quality and scale reflect the importance of its original purpose. It makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



### 12.3 Low Road

Like The Street entrance to the Conservation Area, the Low Road approach from the south-east is marked by the beginning of a well treed enclosure.



To the south the northern boundary of the parkland to Darsham House is marked by a woodland belt which runs along the road as far as **Lodge Cottage**, with its thatched roof and white brick decorative chimneys, and the main entrance to the estate. This parkland belt is, therefore, important to retain and manage for its contribution to the Conservation Area.



On the other side of the road the trees shrubs and hedges, especially the mature trees in the front gardens of Wyching Way (just outside the conservation area) and then further along **Woodside**, **Wymondley Cottage** and **Dwell Deep** make an important contribution to the area's richly verdant appearance.







**Harley Cottage** is an attractive slate roofed Victorian property with Suffolk White brick walls, traditional sash windows and projecting porch. Although unlisted its character and appearance is well preserved and, therefore, makes a valuable contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



Next-door to Harley Cottage the modern proportions of **Tall Timbers** provide some stylistic variety within the conservation area but its quality fails to reflect that of its context and its contribution is, therefore, minimal.



Further along to the east **Rose Cottage** is again of a traditional form with its gabled dormers set within a clay pantile roof and white painted brick walls.



**Lawn Cottage**, formerly two properties now converted to one and extended, forms a pleasant terrace next to a bend in the road. Its red brick walls, Dutch gable, clay pantiled roofs with traditional barge boards, and their small paned white painted windows combine with their simple form to create an attractive building that makes a very good contribution to the Conservation Area. It is also provides a key view down Low Road.







Beyond these **Woodside** and **Wymondley Cottage** form a semi-detached pair set well back from the road. These properties interpret some features of traditional forms and materials in a modern way that make a reasonable attempt to relate to the village.



Next along **Dwell Deep Cottage** is again uncompromisingly modern, with its oversized gable facing the road in white painted render. Its contribution to the conservation area is minimal. From here up to the junction with The Street the tree belt resumes on both sides, the north side forming the rear boundary of properties on the Street. The trees here significantly reinforce the impression of a verdant village setting, which must be kept.

#### 12.4 Darsham House

Darsham House itself is concealed from public view by its mature landscaped grounds. The main entrance to the estate is opposite the church between Beech Cottage and Lodge Cottage and is a prominent feature within the centre of the village.



**Darsham House** itself dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. It has been altered and substantially extended over several phases. The original house has a red brick front and a glazed pantiled roof set behind a parapet. The elegant facade with Dutch gables has fine sash windows and there is a 19<sup>th</sup> Century porch.



The extensive grounds and parkland make a major contribution to the character and appearance of the area by virtue of their extent, appearance, mature tree specimens (where they survive) and evidence of a former managed layout. They also form a very important setting to the listed building.



To the rear there is a landscaped garden in need of some attention with a vista eastwards up the hill.



Nearby the house there are a number of outbuildings that also make their contribution as a characteristic service range to the principal dwelling.

### **13 CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The overall character of this part of Darsham remains one of an unspoilt enclave of traditional buildings set amongst a mature landscape. There has been very little 20<sup>th</sup> Century development and small scale incremental change over the years had been minimal. As such the area continues to retain the special characteristics which strongly justify its Conservation Area designation.

These special characteristics include, amongst other things, the number and quality of its traditional buildings, the relatively unique shape, form and layout of the settlement itself and the attractive relationship which exists between the older buildings, the spaces between and around them, and the wider landscape. Important natural features such as trees, tree groups and hedgerows also make a major contribution. It is vitally important therefore, that these special characteristics are retained and reinforced.

There are however other characteristics which only serve to undermine the traditional qualities of the Conservation Area. These can include intrusive overhead wires and their supporting poles, large modern street lights, standard concrete kerbs and large prominently sited highway signs. Heavy traffic can also have a major impact upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, as can inappropriate car parking, causing the erosion of grass verges. Physical measures to control parking including signage, lining and bollards must be very carefully considered to minimise their impact on the quality and importance of open spaces and streetscenes within the conservation area and alternatives should always be considered preferable.

Inappropriate new developments and the cumulative effect of incremental change are a constant threat to the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area. Detrimental change can take many forms, from infill with poorly designed new houses to modern replacement windows and doors in older buildings.

Other undesirable changes can include inappropriate alterations and extensions which do not respect the scale, form and detailing of existing buildings, the use of modern materials and details in the area, insensitive highway works and signage, unsympathetic advertising and the construction of intrusive walls, balustrades, fences, driveways, garages and other structures.

The use of concrete tiles, artificial slates, plastic and aluminium windows and doors, cement render and modern bricks should all be avoided. So too should the use of brown stain on timber joinery, windows and doors as it invariably appears as a discordant feature, particularly where the traditional use of white paint provides a unifying element in the street scene.

In order to protect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, wherever possible the District Council will seek to prevent such inappropriate developments from taking place. To this end the Council is publishing design guidance and other advisory material and, as opportunities arise, will assist with implementing specific projects aimed at positively enhancing the area.



### **13.1 Alterations to existing buildings**

The particular character of Darsham, with its strong prevailing historic appearance, renders it particularly sensitive to the cumulative loss or alteration of key features that contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Such features include windows, doors, front boundaries, chimneys, and roof coverings. Whereas some conservation areas can benefit from the enhancement of their mixed character, others will be slowly degraded over time through the exercise of permitted development rights.

It is proposed, therefore, that a survey be undertaken to identify the extent of existing harmful change and that an Article 4(2) Direction be considered for making in the conservation area which will require householders to seek planning permission when changing any of the following features:

- Front windows
- Front doors
- Chimneys
- Roof coverings
- Removal of front boundary walls and railings

An Article 4(2) Direction removes the permitted development rights of householders within a conservation area to undertake works to their houses without planning permission. Such a Direction is only justifiable where erosion of the conservation area's character through the cumulative effect of unsympathetic works is happening and may not be relevant in every conservation area. The purpose of a Direction would be to encourage retention and repair of original features or their sympathetic replacement or reinstatement, where necessary.

An application for such a planning permission is currently free. The purpose of this proposal would be to encourage retention and repair of original such features or their sympathetic replacement or reinstatement, where necessary. Residents of the conservation area will be sought their views on the proposal for an Article 4(2) Direction before proceeding with it.

### **13.2 Design of new development**

In a conservation area such as Darsham the prevailing historic character can make it a challenge to consider what is appropriate for the design of new development and can include high quality modern design. Pastiche or historicist re-creation can be acceptable but is not always achieved well, particularly where existing buildings abound in decorative features. Certain characteristics can be used as inspiration without resorting to copying – perhaps a high degree of modelling (three-dimensional effect), the use of projecting bays, or a bold scale or character. Such an interpretation can ensure that new design is both creative and contextual. New development should always respect the grain of the conservation area, including preservation of building lines, relationship to gardens, streets, parking and farmland, scale, density and uses.

Proper account should also always be taken of the impact that new development adjacent a conservation area can have on its setting. Although a conservation area boundary represents a demarcation enclosing a special area of historic interest, changes immediately outside of it can still have a significant impact on character and appearance. The setting of the conservation area, therefore, has an intrinsic value that must be acknowledged in any proposals for change to it.

### **13.3 Conservation area boundary**

On completion in 2012/2013 of appraisals for all 34 of the District's conservation area a review will be commenced of their boundaries as a separate exercise. There is no timetable as yet proposed. Full public consultation will be undertaken on any suggested revisions to the position of the boundary that may be proposed as part of the future review. Suggestions for inclusion within the conservation area that were made during the public consultation process on the adoption of this appraisal are: Coronation Square; and the Fairfields estate. A suggestion for exclusion was the site of Shingle Cottage.

### **13.4 Demolition**

Darsham has a finite quantity of historic buildings which are integral to the character of the conservation area. Their loss, through unwarranted demolition or neglect, would erode the special status and distinctive character of Darsham and undermine the conservation area. English Heritage in its draft guidance on 'Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' (March 2011), which takes full account of PPS5, provides a checklist to determine if a particular element within a conservation area makes a positive contribution, provided that its historic form and values have not been eroded (p15). Planning Policy Statement 5 describes at Policy HE9 the tests that are applied to the loss of a heritage asset that makes a positive contribution to a conservation area.

### **13.5 Enhancement opportunities**

Opportunities to enhance the conservation area have been identified by the appraisal including signage and overhead wires. Where possible the Council will work, through its enforcement role and in conjunction with utilities framework providers to promote the visual improvement of the conservation area. The Council will also work to ensure that in terms of the highway, footpaths and open spaces, the distinctive character of Darsham is maintained and protected.

### **13.6 Landscape and Trees**

The positive management and design of the landscape of the conservation area is a key consideration in planning related work. Inappropriate planting (design and species) can detract from the character of the settlement. Using plants which are found naturally within the locality and taking guidance available from the Suffolk landscape character assessment website ([www.suffolklandscape.gov.uk](http://www.suffolklandscape.gov.uk)) and Suffolk Coastal District Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance can be useful tools.

The key consideration regarding trees is to ensure that the spaces they need to grow and thrive are preserved and enhanced.

Suitable replacement planting to ensure longevity and succession in the treescape of the settlement will be encouraged in addition to the positive management of existing trees. Where space for larger trees is not available character can be achieved through other species, climbers and distinctive shrubs.

New boundary treatments to property can also provide enhancement to the conservation area and here the use of materials which in character with the settlement should be considered. Walls, fences, railings and hedges (whether native or ornamental) can be carefully chosen to reflect local styles and respond/create a sense of local distinctiveness.



### **13.7    Contacts**

Further advice, information and support can be provided by officers of Suffolk Coastal District Council:

#### **Conservation and Design Service**

Tel. 01394 444616    [conservation@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk)

#### **Landscape Officer**

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## 14 REFERENCES & FURTHER INFORMATION

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For further information regarding Conservation Areas and Listed buildings please visit the Councils web site [www.suffolkcoastal.co.uk](http://www.suffolkcoastal.co.uk) or contact the Design + Conservation Team, Planning Services, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Melton Hill, WOODBRIDGE, Suffolk, IP12 1AU Tel: (01394) 383789 or email: [conservation@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk).



