



LEISTON CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

December 2014



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 9th June and 12th September 2014 and included:

All building owners/occupiers within the conservation area, were written to advising them of the consultation and providing a web-link to the appraisals and offering to send printed copies on request; the Ward Members were written to; the Town Council was written to with several printed copies of the draft appraisal provided and a web-link for downloading; the draft appraisal was placed on the District Council's website for downloading; a press release was issued; posters were supplied to the Town Council for display on noticeboards; printed copies were available for inspection during office opening hours at the Council's planning helpdesk; printed copies were furnished member of the public on request; monthly adverts were placed in the East Anglian Daily Times promoting the consultation and providing contact details; the consultation was promoted in the Leiston Observer; invitations for responses were sent, alongside printed copies, to Suffolk Preservation Society; Suffolk Preservation Society Coastal Branch; Suffolk County Archaeology.

A total of 3 responses were received which led to 2 additions and a deletion to the draft appraisal and conservation area management plan prior to adoption in December 2014.

INTRODUCTION

The Conservation Area in Leiston was originally designated by Suffolk Coastal District Council in 1979, extended in 1989 and re-designated in 1991.

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

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

This document is neither prescriptive nor overly descriptive, but more 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 a particular building, feature or space does not imply that it is of no interest in conservation terms.



Town Sign



Works House and Main Street from the east

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 assets of the historic environment is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (Chapter 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of March 2012.

At the District and local level, the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan 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 Local Plan 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

2 GENERAL CHARACTER SUMMARY

The Leiston Conservation Area is a small area in the centre of Leiston; it contains the majority of the most concentrated area of buildings of architectural and historic interest in the town. The Conservation Area is centred on Main Street and includes the surviving buildings of the old Garrett's Town Works site on the south side, Old Post Office Square, and some of the workers' cottages to the north, the very top of High Street to the east and the buildings and spaces surrounding the crossroads to the west.

Leiston is very much a nineteenth century manufacturing town, its history and development being linked very closely to one engineering company. In the 230 years since it was first established, Garretts of Leiston has exerted a strong influence over the prosperity and fortunes of the town and surrounding area. Many of the important buildings included in the Conservation Area were built and owned by the company.

The buildings to the south of Main Street are the surviving remnants of the Garrett's Town Works site. In 1982 a number were converted to residential use and the Long Shop is now a museum. Colonial House, part of Garrett's later site, is included in the Conservation Area to the north-west. The overall character of the Leiston Conservation Area is the sum of a mixture of quite different buildings and types of spaces as described below.



Leiston: Aerial View 2001

3 TOPOGRAPHICAL SETTING

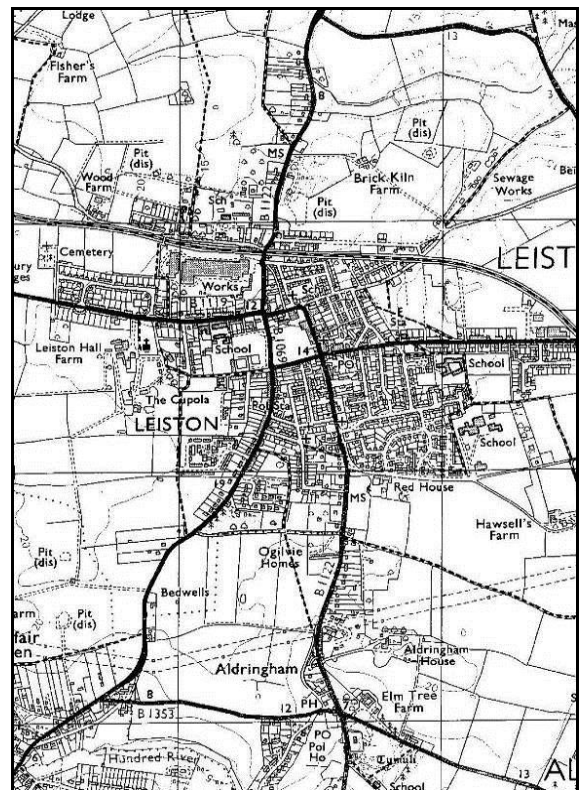
Leiston is a small town in the east of Suffolk, situated about two miles inland from the coast at Sizewell. It sits on a spur of slightly higher land between two eastwardly flowing rivers: the Hundred River to the south and the Minsmere River to the north.

The town's main street was formerly a turnpike road, one of three roads controlled by the Aldeburgh Turnpike Trust (1792), connecting that coastal town to the main road from London to Great Yarmouth (now the A12). In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, most of Leiston's trade was conducted via Slaughden Quay at Aldeburgh, coastal shipping being faster, safer, and more convenient than road transportation by horse and cart.

Later the town was also served by a branch of the Ipswich to Lowestoft railway line, formerly the East Suffolk Railway which first opened in 1859. The branch line ran from the station at Saxmundham, through Leiston, where a privately owned spur led into Garrett's Works. The branch line carried onwards to Thorpeness and Aldeburgh. Today it remains as a 'goods only' line servicing the nuclear power station at Sizewell.

Suffolk Punch Horses originally hauled the wagons on the railway spur into Garrett's Works; they were eventually replaced in 1929 by steam engines, the last of which 'Sirapite' is preserved in the Long Shop Museum. The restoration of this stretch of line is now (2014) in progress.

The whole locality here is within Suffolk's coastal 'Sandlings' strip. 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 Historic Environment Record for Leiston-cum-Sizewell lists more than two hundred sites of potential archaeological interest. These range from the sites where a Mesolithic mace head and a Neolithic chipped axe were found, to Second World War coastal defences.

The Domesday survey of 1086 lists Leiston under the holdings of Robert Malet. The town was granted a market and fair in 1312. Of medieval origin are the church of St Margaret and its graveyard, plus the two sites of Leiston Abbey, both Scheduled Monuments (not in the Conservation Area).

The earliest surviving structure within the Conservation Area itself is the rear wing of the Works House on Main Street, which is believed to be of sixteenth or seventeenth century origin. Parts of Barclays Bank appear to date from the mid eighteenth century, but the building may have earlier origins. The White Horse Hotel nearby on the corner of Station Road was built to serve the turnpike in the mid to late 18th Century.

A forge belonging to William Cracey existed at Leiston before Richard Garrett came to the town in 1778; this must have stood in the approximate location of the old Town Works at the corner of Main Street and High Street. Richard Garrett purchased its freehold in 1783. Given that the Town Works site has been used intensively for industrial purposes for more than two hundred years its archaeological potential is likely to be significant.

A small foundry is believed to have been set up on what is now Dinsdale Road in the 1820s. Whilst this has long been demolished its former site could also reveal substantial archaeological remains.

The immediate post-Napoleonic War years appear to have been a time of great expansion for Garretts; the Works House and much of the works itself were rebuilt in a fashionable neo-classical style and a number of workers' cottages built.



Garrett memorial, St Margaret's churchyard

Garretts business is described as a 'general ironworks and agricultural implement manufactory' on billheads of the 1830s. By this time the company was already well regarded as manufacturers of agricultural machinery; Richard Garrett becoming a prominent member of the Royal Agricultural Society on its foundation in 1837. At the time of the 1842 tithe survey Richard Garrett already owned fourteen houses in what is now Dinsdale Road.



Works House, Main Street

The Leiston site was one of a series of business ventures of the industrious Garrett family: Snape Maltings, two London breweries and property development in Aldeburgh being amongst their other financial interests.

As the Garretts' business expanded cottages adjoining the Town Works were purchased and demolished, destroying a significant part of the original settlement. A number of the earliest cottages built by the Garretts themselves were also demolished to create room for expansion.

In 1862 Richard Garrett funded the building of a new Workers' Institute in Main Street and later Frank Garrett provided a small public park. In the 1880s the Garrett family began a major programme of constructing dwellings for their workers, which was later continued by the Company itself. Many of these distinguished houses survive, and together they form an important part of the town's character. A number have, however, been unsympathetically altered in recent years.

Just before World War One the decision was taken to move the bulk of the company's manufacturing operations to a new site on Station Road, which is also partly within the Conservation Area. In 1913, just as the new works were nearing completion, a serious fire destroyed part of the old factory complex. At the outbreak of war the newly completed Station Road site was used first as a barracks for the Suffolk Regiment and then from 1915 for the manufacture of shell cases.

In 1919 the ailing Richard Garret and Son Limited merged with thirteen other companies to form Agricultural and General Engineers Limited (A.G.E). The Garrett family's direct ownership of nearby Snape Maltings had also ended the previous year.

The Leiston Works' product range expanded to include trolley buses and electric refuse vehicles. The Company's fortunes remained mixed, however; the Leiston works narrowly escaping closure in the 1930s. In 1932 it became part of

Beyer Peacock and Co Limited, who were in turn taken over in 1976 by a Jeddah based company.



Doorway of No.7A High Street

Some rebuilding work was undertaken at the Town Works site in the interwar years, and just before World War Two a new canteen and Apprentice Training School were planned; although these were not finally built until c.1967-69.

The closure of Garretts in 1980 was a major blow to the economy of Leiston. Much of the Town Works site was demolished for housing, but the core of the old factory was retained and imaginatively converted into a Museum and houses. The Long Shop Museum is now a popular visitor attraction. The Station Road Works has also been redeveloped to successfully attract new industry to the town.

5 QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

On Waterloo Avenue on the approach to the Conservation Area is the Church of St Margaret; its west tower is 15th century but most of the church was rebuilt in 1854 to the designs of E. B. Lamb. Its high grading at II* is due to Lamb's originality of design and his importance as a Victorian church architect.

The Long Shop was built in 1852-1853 following Garrett's success at the Great Exhibition. It was one of the first British attempts at a flow line assembly workshop for the manufacture of portable steam engines. A highly important remnant of industrial archaeology, it is listed at Grade II*. It now forms the centrepiece of the museum based at Garrett's former premises. Other remnants of the Garrett's Works are listed at Grade II, either individually like the Works House, 1850s water tower, and the former workshops (now Nos. 2&3 High Green), or as curtilage structures.

The White Horse Hotel and Greyshott House on Station Road and the Friends Meeting House on Waterloo Avenue are also individually listed at Grade II.

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 (page 33). Loss of a building that makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area will be treated as substantial harm to the designated heritage asset.



The Long Shop



Former outbuilding No.4 Valley Road



Red brick and plaintile



White brick and slate



Cobbles, brick and pantiles



Flint, brick and pantiles

6 TRADITIONAL BUILDING MATERIALS

Leiston is predominantly a red brick town built of locally sourced soft Suffolk Reds. Within the Conservation Area these were used on many buildings including the Council Offices, the imposing three storey White Horse Hotel, and with Suffolk white brick dressings on the Friends Meeting House opposite.

Suffolk white brick appears less frequently, most notably on the former Works House (Nos. 14-16 Main Street) which has a timber framed core. White brick was also used on the Library opposite and with red brick dressings at the west end of Main Street on the former Works Institute, now a doctor's surgery.

Red bricks are also used as dressings on the terrace of flint cobble built cottages off Dinsdale Road and now painted over on a similar range of rough flint to the rear of No. 5 High Street.

Some of the shops at the northern end of High Street have a render finish as do Nos. 2 and 3 High Green - part of the industrial site.

Roof coverings include most of the typical Suffolk varieties: plaintiles, pantiles, both natural red and black glazed, and slate.



Friends Meeting House



Red and white brick

7 CHARACTER OF SPACES

The Conservation Area is a small part of Leiston as a whole, and essentially comprises the area around two junctions negotiated by the old main road as it passed through the town.

Approaching from the south the first to be encountered is the T-junction at the north end of High Street. From here Valley Road heads eastwards out of the Conservation Area, whilst the road through becomes Main Street around the tree filled corner of High Green, heading westwards for a short distance until the second junction is met. This is a staggered crossroads with Park Hill to the south, Waterloo Avenue continuing to the west and Station Road heading northwards, all three coming out of the Conservation Area after various short distances.

The short length of Main Street between these two junctions thus forms the core of the Conservation Area, fairly squeezed between buildings at its western end, especially where the White Horse Hotel occupies the north-eastern plot adjoining the crossroads.

At its eastern end Main Street opens out a little as the buildings on the northern side are set back somewhat creating a small urban square in front of the Library, Council Offices and a bank. This space has an attractive low-key civic quality befitting the town's character and its key features, including trees, paving, seating, street furniture, memorials and some parking, are all worthy of retention, as they each contribute to interest and activity.

Between these buildings Dinsdale Road leads off northwards, whilst opposite on the southern side there is a group, mostly listed, of former buildings associated with the ironworks, now part of the museum complex. High Green, the area adjoining the eastern junction with High Street, however remains free of buildings providing an important and much enjoyed small green oasis of grass and trees in this otherwise built up area.



Old Post Office Square from the west



High Green

8 TREES AND GREEN SPACES

Although it adjoins the High Street and formerly served as an area of heavy engineering, the Conservation Area in Leiston is now remarkably well endowed with trees.

High Green, on the corner of High Street and Main Street, serves as a small public park with a grassed area and trees such as ash, sycamore and horse chestnut. To the north the area in front of the Library and Council Offices is more formally paved but has three small lime trees carefully set amongst a seating area away from the car parking.

Further west two larger areas of trees sit west of the crossroads, either side of Waterloo Road. One group to the south surrounds the grounds of the Friends Meeting House with Holm oaks, whilst to the north the other fills some of the frontage of Colonial House.

Other trees within the Conservation Area are less apparent, but two main groups exist, one behind The Engineers Arms north of Main Street, and a more significant group further east behind the bank and Nos. 1 to 4 Valley Road. These all provide an important green backdrop to the frontage buildings along Main Street.

Leiston does have a number of Tree Preservation Orders, for the most part around the fringes of the town: there are none in the conservation area.



Lime trees on Main Street



Holm oaks on Waterloo Avenue

9 COUNTRYSIDE SETTING

The immediate setting of the Conservation Area is primarily an urban one. The town itself, however, is set within a fairly flat landscape and is outside the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty that follows the coastal heathland strip. South-east of Leiston the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths AONB is perhaps at its narrowest point and only a mile wide, between the larger areas to the south of the Alde estuary and further north around Minsmere and Dunwich Heath.

This pinch point is perhaps accentuated by the presence of an inaccessible area on the coast around the Sizewell nuclear power stations (A and B) complex. This may well be expanded should the building of Sizewell C be permitted in the near future.

Leiston's immediate surroundings are mostly agricultural land, although that is not generally apparent when actually in the town.

This countryside is generally accessible by road from the town centre. North-south footpath links exist both immediately to the east (footpaths 6, 5, 4 and 8) and the west (footpaths 18, 17, 16 and 14) of the town centre. These circumnavigate the town like a pair of brackets, but do not connect up.

Radial footpaths exist to the north and south: footpath 10 heads northwards off Abbey road, whilst to the south footpaths 11 and 2 head southwards from Haylings Road, linking across to Aldeburgh Road.



View towards Sizewell



Start of Footpath 10

10 FORMER USES

Late 17th Century records indicate the presence in Leiston of a fairly modest farming community with 10 yeomen and a husbandman, a labourer and a tailor amongst the residents.

The town was too far east for the woollen industry that made much of west Suffolk wealthy, and only just came within the area of the north Suffolk linen industry based on the Waveney valley. The Tithe apportionment of 1840 has entries of 'Hempland' and 'Wretting Pit' indicative of this fibre growing industry.

The town grew significantly during the late 18th and 19th centuries with the coming of the ironworks, becoming a local service centre with a variety of shops. Directories for 1844 confirm this with many entries relating to the iron founders and various shopkeepers, but there was still an underlying agricultural basis to the economy with mention of 20 farmers, 3 blacksmiths, a cooper, 2 corn millers and 2 wheelwrights. Fishing also remained a major source of employment.

Only a tiny proportion of the Conservation Area's buildings retain their original uses. The closure of the Garrett's Works in 1980 has resulted in the sensitive conversion of a number of its former buildings to other purposes, bringing new homes, employment, and visitors to the town. The former Works Institute is now a doctors' surgery, and the vicarage a bank.

There have been few demolitions of significant buildings within the Conservation Area in recent decades: the loss of the former school on Waterloo Avenue and workshops at the corner of Main Street occurred around the time of the Conservation Area's designation. The piecemeal conversion of the classical terraced dwellings at Nos. 5-7 High Street to commercial premises has been far less successful, although they remain an asset to the Conservation Area.



Former Head Office



Former Works Institute

11 PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

Leiston is of considerable architectural and historic interest as a 19th century industrial community. However unsympathetic alterations to many of the town's later 19th century dwellings have eroded their significance considerably. Protecting those former Garrett dwellings which survive in a comparatively unaltered state will do much to preserve the town's historic character. Around the edges of the Conservation Area (but not presently within it) are a number of historic public, commercial, and religious buildings which make a major positive contribution to the conservation area setting.

What remains as the core of the Conservation Area is the former works based around the Long Shop, for which vigilance will be needed to prevent further erosion. Very few of the buildings within the area are listed, and so they are vulnerable to incremental changes that harm the character of the Conservation Area including replacement windows.

Some of the recent development that has been built within the Conservation Area has failed to give due regard to its neighbours in terms of both materials used, and general massing and layout.

There are instances of excessive overhead wiring around the town that should be undergrounded as and when funds become available. Surfacing materials can then be upgraded at such a time without fear of later digging up.

More modern enhancement works to create Post Office Square appear to have been successful, now they have been weathered into the overall scene (see right).



Landscaping works in Old Post Office Square



uPVC windows

**12 STREET BY STREET
APPRAISAL**

12.1 High Green

Starting at the junction with High Street, High Green is a very pleasant area of historic townscape, which is barely recognisable as the run-down redundant industrial site of a few decades ago. It is a fine example of how the careful conversion and repair of older buildings, combined with the enhancement of the spaces between and around them, can create a major new focal point, helping to upgrade the quality of the environment of the area as a whole.



Open space at High Green

At the junction of High Street and Main Street, on the inside of the bend in the road, High Green is an informal green with mature trees, shrubs, brick walls and metal railings. It has a grassed open area enclosed by buildings in High Street on one side, and by the buildings of the former Garrett's Works in Main Street on the other. The open space is an attractive and prominent feature in the centre of the town.



Nos. 4-8 High Green

The homes created as part of this scheme at **Nos. 4-8 High Green** were constructed in the late 19th century as workshops with drawing offices above on the first floor. Of red brick, they have a slate covered shallow-pitched roof and retain their original plate-glass sash windows.



Nos. 2 & 3 High Green

The Grade II listed **Nos. 2 & 3 High Green** were originally a restrained classical workshop building which was constructed for Garrett's works c1820. It was later used for offices (at one time it was called the Head Office Building) and externally altered and embellished. The first floor appears to have been a later extension as it is not shown on an engraving of the works of 1828. It is timber framed with cast iron brackets. Windows are attractive, small-paned, sliding sashes to the first floor, top hung casements to the ground floor.

On the north end there are two bay windows and most of the door and window lintels are cast iron. The roof is slated with a louvred slate and lead-clad clock tower, a major focal point for the whole scheme. This clock turret must however, be a later 19th century addition, as it is not shown on mid-nineteenth century engravings of the works. A single-storey range of brick and flint is attached to the east.

12.2 Main Street – South Side

The remainder of the south side of Main Street is taken up by the historic core of the former Garrett's works.



Works House and Nos. 2 & 3 High Green

The Works House (Nos. 14 & 16 Main Street & No.1 High Green) is a substantial classical pair of dwellings which primarily dates from the early 1820s. The principal range is of Suffolk white brick. At its rear however, is a much earlier range that retains 16th or 17th century fabric. The property was rebuilt for the Garretts who lived here until the mid 19th century. It was again partly reoccupied by members of the Garrett family during World War One.

It is designed with the ground floor as a plinth, with brick pilasters from the first floor terminating above a parapet with semi-circular four-faced finial blocks. Behind the parapet is a hipped slate roof. The house has large, attractive, timber sliding sash windows and a grand entrance with double doors in a recess under an entablature, supported by three Doric columns flanked by pilasters.

To the rear is a double-pitch roofed extension with pantiles and a pair of brick parapet gables. Along with the probably slightly later single-storey wing to the east and the high brick boundary walls, the whole original composition is an exuberant piece of early nineteenth century classical architecture.



Works House showing the earlier range to the rear

Adjacent to The Works House is **The Long Shop Museum** created within the historic core of Garrett's former works in 1984. The attractive entrance gates, walls and railings open into a courtyard area. A single-storey building with a hipped pan tile roof guards the entrance.

Beyond this are a group of simple, industrial brick buildings which surround The Long Shop itself. These include a c.1850 Grade II listed red brick **Water Tower** which has been converted to form part of the Museum.

The Loggia is a rendered 1930's building originally designed as a garage for Garrett's senior managers.



The Long Shop

The Long Shop was built c.1852-53 for the manufacture of portable steam engines. It is a remarkable survival of an early production line engineering shop and its

national significance is reflected in its Grade II* listing. It is constructed out of red brick with white brick dressings. Parapet gables each end of a pantiled roof have interesting arches and curved headed windows with iron glazing bars. There are three louvred ventilators at ridge level and a timber bell-turret at the eastern end, together with a clock in the gable parapet. The building was restored between 1980 and 1986.

To the west of the Museum frontage building the high brick boundary wall has a lower section, with railings affording views into an interesting courtyard containing trees and outdoor exhibits.



Former Worker's Institute, Main Street elevation

Beyond the Museum to the west is the former Worker's Institute built in 1862 by Richard Garrett, which has recently been converted and extended to form a **Doctors' Surgery and Clinic**. It once had a symmetrical façade but this was extended shortly after its original construction, when a now partly demolished range which terminated in a similarly detailed tool shop building was constructed to the west. The building remains impressive despite its present asymmetrical appearance and is an important local landmark.

The 1862 building and the later wing are faced in gault brick and are in a robust classical style. One bay (formerly at the building's centre) projects slightly to form a pedimented bay. The façade is embellished with a red brick plinth and dressings. Most of the original sash windows have been retained. It originally contained a reading

room, library and mess room. The mess room was large enough to be used as a public hall and also as a drill hall for the 4th Territorial Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment.



Return elevation of the former Workers Institute and the White Horse Hotel.

The car parking areas and brick retaining walls which wrap around the side and rear of this site detract from the area. It is unfortunate that the western end of Main Street close to a key junction has such a prominent and extensive parking space. The demolition of the impressive 1860s tool shop building which once occupied the site was a major loss to the town.

12.3 High Street and Valley Road



Nos. 3-7 High Street

Opposite High Green at the top of the High Street, a small group of shop premises are included within the Conservation Area. **Nos. 3-7 High Street**, is an attractive mid 19th century classical terrace with a shallow-pitched hipped slate roof. It was probably originally built as dwellings. Some retain original features, including sash windows and doorcases, whilst others have been unsatisfactorily altered.



Nos. 9-11 High Street

Nos. 9-11 are a symmetrical c.1910 slate roofed range of shops. Nos. 9&10 retain an attractive early 20th century green glazed tile shop front. The original window joinery has sadly all now been replaced. Behind No.11 is a much earlier outbuilding, which is also now retail premises.



No.4 Valley Road

Around the corner in Valley Road on the south side is a very interesting and attractive flint outbuilding to the rear of No.5 High Street, **No.4 Valley Road** with a pantiled roof and an adjoining high red brick wall. These both form an important element in the townscape in this locality.



Valley Road, looking east

Sizewell Power Station terminates the view looking east on Valley Road.

Nos. 6-8 (even) Valley Road is a pair of detached brick built late 20th century dwellings with pan tiled roofs.



Nos. 1-4 Valley Road

The red brick building, **Veldor House, Nos. 1-4 Valley Road**, on the north side of the junction of High Street and Valley Road, is particularly attractive with shopfronts on two elevations, bay and sash windows and a shallow-pitched hipped slate roof. It has a large garden at the rear with some important mature trees. The building complements the character of the local townscape well and is worthy of retention as a building that makes a positive contribution. The shopfronts should certainly be retained.

12.4 Dinsdale Road



Former barn to the rear of Barclays Bank from Dinsdale Road

Part of Dinsdale Road which runs north from Old Post Office Square is included in the Conservation Area. Once known as Foundry Lane, it marks the site of the long demolished earliest foundry in the town.

The red brick boundary wall to the garden behind Barclays Bank is an important townscape feature, as is the small brick barn (**No. 17 Dinsdale Road**) which is attached to the wall at its northern end. This was used as a Church of England Mission Hall from the late 19th century when the house (which is now Barclays Bank) was the local vicarage. It ceased to be a chapel c.1960.



Grounds of Barclays Bank from Dinsdale Road

The open space on the other side of the wall accommodates some fine trees and combines with the garden to the east to

form an important open space in the middle of the town, which should be preserved.

The back of the Town Hall, the adjacent toilet block and walls and outbuildings incorporate quite a number of attractive features, although some inappropriate incremental change has taking place.



Former Garrett employees' housing on Dinsdale Road

Further up Dinsdale Road are three pairs of semi-detached houses, (**Nos. 11-16 Dinsdale Road**). These former Garrett's employees' cottages date from the 1880s or 1890s and were possibly designed by Frederick Peck, a London architect who married into the Garrett family; they are an important reminder of the extent of the company's influence in the town.

Similar cottages can be found throughout this part of Leiston; they were built in red brick with white brick decorative detailing and had slate roofs. Windows were white painted timber sliding sashes. Unfortunately, owner/occupiers are now changing their original design by undertaking insensitive alteration work, such as installing replacement windows, building extensions and changing the roof covering.



Nos. 6-10 Dinsdale Road

The Conservation Area boundary also incorporates an attractive terrace of flint-faced cottages with clay pantiled roofs (**Nos. 6-10 Dinsdale Road**). Built at right angles to the road, with a parapet gable at the back edge of the pavement, this terrace may possibly be some of the earliest surviving Garrett housing. Some modern windows undermine the character of the terrace but, thankfully, the flintwork with red brick dressings, clay pantiled roof and chimneystacks still survive.

12.5 Main Street – North Side (including Old Post Office Square)



Barclays Bank, Main Street

Adjacent to this, set back behind a forecourt with railings and brick piers is the premises occupied by Barclays Bank, **No. 19 Main Street**. This substantial 18th century house was once occupied by the Garrett family, and later became a vicarage. It was altered c1890 and converted to a bank c1923.

Its once extensive grounds were largely developed by the Garretts between 1891 and 1904 for employees' housing. A number of fine trees, however, survive in the remaining former gardens and are prominent and important features in this part of the town. At the rear of the bank are also two former outbuildings which contribute positively to the Conservation Area. The larger of these is discussed separately under Dinsdale Road.

This handsome red brick building, with its plaintiled hipped roofs and bay windows, visually forms part of an outstanding group that includes the Council Offices and Library, which all front onto Old Post Office Square. Together these make a very good contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the centre of the town and must be carefully protected.



The Town Hall and Barclays Bank

The garden which once graced the centre of this square was replaced in the mid 20th century by a car park. Fortunately both Barclays Bank and the Town Hall retain many of their original features, and their appearance is enhanced by the recent improvements to the Square's surface finishes. Three mature lime trees, a red 'K6' telephone box and an adjacent pillar box are important elements in this part of the street scene.

A number of small but historically interesting war memorials are also preserved here, including that to the men of the United States Air Force Eighth Fighter Command 357th Fighter Group, based at Leiston Airfield, who died between 1944 and 1945.



The Council Offices

The late 19th century **Council Offices**, (No.17 Main Street) is a civic building which positively contributes to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. With its clay plain tile roof, large chimneystacks, small gables, white painted small-paned timber windows and mellow red brickwork, it retains virtually all the key elements of the original design.



The Library, No.15 Main Street

The attached mid-19th century **Library** building similarly retains many of its original features: Suffolk white brick; black pan tile roof; sash windows with hood moulds. Its chimneystack has sadly been removed, which detracts from the building's good contribution to the conservation area. Its reinstatement would be an enhancement.



The Works railway line

Adjoining the library is the remaining section of the former **Garrett's Works Railway** which, until 1968, ran from the branch line to the centre of the Town Works site on the southern side of Main Street. Part of this railway is presently (2014) being restored by a charitable trust.

Adjoining the line is the site of a demolished c.1800 brick cottage which is presently used for car parking.

There are views and glimpses of a parcel of land to the rear of the Engineers Arms, which has trees and shrubs growing in it, currently forming an attractive green area.



Engineers Arms

The Engineers Arms (No. 7 Main Street) is a public house which originally opened in 1882 and was remodelled c.1900. It still retains much of its historic window and door joinery. The pub's red brick elevations are embellished with rubbed brick detailing and above is a roof of black glazed pantiles with overhanging eaves. To the left is a later single storey addition. The return elevation of the pub to Post Office Square

is rendered to disguise scarring left by the remains of a demolished building. The building's pub use is essential to retain for the vitality of the town centre and conservation area character.



Main Street façade of the White Horse dining hall

Next to the Engineers Arms, is a handsome small later 19th century Italianate building with gault brick pilasters and a crenellated parapet which adds considerable interest to the streetscape. It still retains its original plate-glass sash windows and panelled doors. This impressive façade disguises a simple small structure with a steeply pitched slate roof.

12.6 Station Road and Waterloo Park



White Horse Hotel

The Grade II listed **White Horse Hotel** is a major landmark building on the corner of Main Street and Station Road. The building is of mid to late 18th century date, but was heightened and re-fenestrated in the early 19th century and is now of three storeys with a slate roof. The principal

frontage faces Station Road and has four windows across the front with flush sashes, glazing bars, brick arches and brackets below the cills. There is a pedimented doorway, flanked by pilasters, with a fanlight fitted with coloured glass. The eaves are finished with an attractive wooden bracketed cornice.



The White Horse Hotel, Main Street

The Main Street façade has a restrained classical two-storey later-19th century wing. The ground floor has an interesting late Victorian glazed frontage with fascia, cornice and pilasters. Linked by a brick boundary wall there is an attractive little single-storey outbuilding in red brick with white brick dressings. It has arches over the doors and windows, a castellated parapet and a lean-to roof behind.



Former Stable at the White Horse Hotel

The car park for the White Horse in Station Road has poor surface finishes. Set back from the street frontage behind the car park the building is a good and relatively unaltered example of an early 19th century

stable and loose box of red brick with a clay pantiled hipped roof and contributes positively to the streetscene.

To the north of the White Horse Hotel is an early 20th century rendered house, **No. 2 Station Road**, which has a rather prominent rendered flank wall with red brick quoins. It was built within the former gardens of Greyshott House.



Greyshott House, No.4 Station Road

No.4 Greyshott House is a Grade II listed gault brick classical villa with a symmetrical façade, hipped slate roof, and prominent overhanging eaves. It retains its sixteen-light sash windows and radial fanlight. It has a later 19th century former shop attached in a later single storey crenellated wing, the shop front retaining its late-19th century fascia.



Nos. 5-6 Station Road

Beyond are a semi-detached pair of late 19th century gault brick villas with slate roofs, **Nos.5&6 Station Road**. They pre-date the publication of the 1882 Ordnance Survey map. No.6 retains its original features and detailing, including timber

sash windows and a fine wooden hooded porch on console brackets. Unfortunately No.5 has had its facing brickwork rendered over, and its windows unsympathetically replaced. Between No.4 & No.5 is a particularly attractive swept boundary wall of flint pebbles with terracotta capping pieces. The pair makes a positive contribution to the conservation area, even in their altered condition.



Colonial House, Station Road

Opposite, the western side of Station Road has a very different character to the eastern side. Located on high ground overlooking Station Road is the imposing classical **Colonial House** built c.1967-69 to house the Apprentice Training School and Canteen of Richard Garrett Engineering Limited. It was partly paid for by a substantial grant from the Industrial Training Board and is a remarkably sensitive design for its date.



The Colonial House extension of c.1976 and later apartment buildings.

The building was sympathetically extended to the south c.1976-1978 to house Garrett's offices. This building represents the final

phase in the development of Garrett's Station Works which had been begun c.1913 and was completed only shortly before the company's final demise. It has since been refurbished to provide individual commercial office suites. Prior to the building of Station Works this site was used by the company to demonstrate their products to customers.



Nos. 1-21 Waterloo Park from Colonial House

Colonial House is well set back from both Station Road and Waterloo Avenue and the grassed, well-treed, open area in front now contains a new block more or less in keeping with the original (**Nos.1-21 Waterloo Park**).

12.7 Waterloo Avenue



The Constitutional Club

Adjacent to Colonial House is the attractively designed and detailed **Constitutional Club**. The Club is an architecturally distinguished free vernacular revival building of 1909 which retains much of its original detailing, including its window

joinery and stained glass. Its elevations are embellished with stone dressings and half timbering to the apex of the gables. Above is a steeply pitched plain tile roof. The road frontage has a large brick arch with glazing below and an entrance porch parapeted with octagonal corners and domed finials. Such an attractive, well-detailed building merits its prominent location overlooking the adjacent open space and is an outstanding local landmark worthy of retention in its present form and use. The Constitutional Club was founded in 1908.



Friends Meeting House

The Grade II listed **Friends Meeting House** is one of the most important buildings in Leiston. It sits amongst its grounds with mature trees and hedges and has a small grassed burial ground to the rear. Relatively few Quaker burial grounds of this kind now survive intact, and even fewer retain such a notable collection of headstones.

The original chapel of c1713 was rebuilt in 1860 to the designs of William Ribbans of Ipswich. It has robust classical façades of red brick with quoins and window surrounds in gault brick. It has a hipped slated roof and tall, elegant, sash windows with thin glazing bars. The central bay on the front elevation is set forward slightly, with a triangular pediment above the overhanging eaves. The single-storey porch is in white brick with pilasters and has a stone entablature with a flat roof.



Old School Close

Next to the Meeting House to the west is **Old School Close**. Although within the Conservation Area, this new development - due to its detailing and materials used, including stained windows and concrete tiles - does little to preserve or enhance the area. One mid 19th century cottage **No.10 Old School Close** appears to survive within this development and it is possibly the school master's house originally built in 1847 for the school which once occupied the site.



Park gates and walls

Opposite the Constitutional Club are an impressive set of mid 20th century iron gates, which together with the adjoining low brick wall and railings, form the entrance to the park.

13 CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Leiston is, in many ways, very different to the more traditional towns in Suffolk. Like Ipswich, the architectural and historical character of the town is, to a greater extent, derived from the changes and the development which took place in the Victorian era. The focal point of this Victorian development remains the surviving buildings on the Garrett's Old Town Works site.

The contribution that this site makes to the area, along with the other buildings and spaces in the vicinity, is of great significance. Because of the improvements that took place in the 1980's, and despite some intensive 20th Century development and small-scale incremental change, the area clearly retains the characteristics which justify its Conservation Area designation.

These special characteristics include, amongst other things, the quality of the Victorian and the other traditional buildings, the interesting shape, form and layout of the area, and the contribution made by important landscape features, such as private gardens, open grassed areas, trees, shrubs, walls and railings.

There are, on the other hand, other characteristics which only serve to undermine the attractive qualities of the Conservation Area. Generally, the area suffers from a combination of poor street furniture and surface treatments. Intrusive overhead wires and their support poles exist throughout the area and the fairly heavy traffic in this part of the town also, undoubtedly, has an adverse effect.

Compounding the problem is that some of the buildings have been inappropriately altered and the general quality of new development that has taken place has been of a relatively poor standard.

Inappropriate new developments and the cumulative effect of incremental change are a constant threat to the special architectural and historical 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 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 non-traditional walls, 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 particularly discordant feature.

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

The High Green scheme, undertaken by the District Council in the early 1980s, is a clear example of the high standard of improvements that can be achieved.

13.1 Alterations to existing buildings

The particular character of Leiston, 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 Leiston 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 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. A suggestion for consideration arising from the public consultation was the inclusion of the (currently named) Old Valley Sixth Form Centre on Waterloo Avenue.

13.4 Demolition

Leiston 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 Leiston and undermine the conservation area. The National Planning Policy Framework at paragraph 138 states that "*loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area....should be treated as substantial harm under paragraph 133 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 134, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole*". A brief checklist of characteristics which make a positive contribution can be found in English Heritage's *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (2011, under revision).

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 Leiston 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 (<http://www.suffolklandscape.org.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:

Design & Conservation Service

Tel. 01394 444616 conservation@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Arboricultural & Landscape Manager

Tel. 01394 444241 Nicholas.Newton@eastsuffolk.gov.uk

Further information regarding the Suffolk Historic Environment Record can be found at <http://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk> or by contacting 01284 741237 or emailing archaeology.her@suffolk.gov.uk

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 or contact the Design + Conservation Team, Planning Services, Suffolk Coastal District Council, Melton Hill, WOODBRIDGE, Suffolk, IP12 1AU Tel: (01394) 383789 or email: conservation@eastsuffolk.gov.uk.

