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 5/11/09 and 28/2/10 and included 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; and inviting responses from Suffolk County Archaeology, the Suffolk Preservation Society, the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Unit and the Twentieth Century Society. A total of 13 responses were received which led to 8 additions, amendments and alterations to the draft appraisal, summary map and management plan prior to adoption in June 2010.
INTRODUCTION

The conservation area in Thorpeness was originally designated by Suffolk Coastal District Council in 1976 and confirmed by redesignation in 1991.

The Council has a duty to review its conservation area designations from time to time, and this appraisal examines Thorpeness under a number of different headings as set out in English Heritage's ‘Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals’ (2006).

As such this is a straightforward appraisal of Thorpeness’ built environment in conservation terms and is followed by a street-by-street appraisal describing the village in more 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.

The appraisal is to be read as a general overview, rather than as a comprehensive description, and the omission of any particular building, feature or space does not imply that it is of no interest in conservation terms.
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 are set out in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment; and PPS 5: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (both March 2010). At the regional level, the East of England Plan (May 2008) includes Policy ENV6 ‘the historic environment’. This policy encourages local planning authorities, in their plans, to ‘identify, protect, conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the historic environment of the region’.

At the District and local level, the approved draft (as at June 2010) of 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.

The Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in which Thorpeness is situated, includes an aim in its 2008-2013 Management Plan that the AONB will have a built environment that reflects local character and is a of a scale and form appropriate to the AONB.

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
- a description of the area’s history, development and current status
- a guide to managing future change
Thorpeness Conservation Area (North to the left)
2 BACKGROUND AND LOCATION

Thorpeness lies on the coast about two miles north of Aldeburgh, south of Sizewell. Travelling north from Aldeburgh, the coast road is quite straight with grass, shingle and the sea on one side and the wide expanse of Aldeburgh Marshes on the other. Across this flat landscape Thorpeness comes into view, Westbar, the Windmill, the House in the Clouds all form part of an eye-catching vista with the looming backdrop of Sizewell Nuclear Power Station.

Once into the village it is clear that there is something different about Thorpeness; the half-timbered, rendered and weather-boarded buildings are very different from those in Aldeburgh and elsewhere in the area. With the large expanse of the Meare and its adjoining Boathouse facing the large expanse of water, a unique atmosphere pervades that cannot be experienced anywhere else.

The water meadows and the marshes (and thus the Meare) to the south and west of the village were created from the Hundred River which flows east from Knodishall and the various springs in the area. To the north the land rises slightly, with firmer, sandy soil supporting gorse, heather, birch and oak.

It is here wedged between the low flat land to the south and west, and the coast to the east, that Thorpeness Holiday Village was developed.

3 HISTORY

Thorpeness is a planned seaside resort village created in the early 20th Century on a site containing nothing but a few 19th Century fishermen's cottages. In 1903 the land formed part of an estate which was inherited by Glencairn Stuart Ogilvie.

In November 1910 the small boggy landlocked mere, which was fed by the Hundred River, flooded creating a large area of shallow standing water. This inspired Ogilvie to block the river permanently and construct sluices to contain a 64-acre lake, now known as the Meare. Work on this progressed through the winter of 1912-13.

At the same time Ogilvie conceived the notion of building a holiday resort adjoining both the new lake and the sea. The intention was to provide houses for self-catering family holidays controlled by leases usually of not less than one month’s duration. A company was formed called ‘Seaside Bungalows Ltd’, which was in turn renamed ‘Thorpeness Ltd’.

Advertising emphasised the similarity between the attractions of the Meare and the adventures of J M Barrie’s fictional characters. About one hundred houses of varying sizes were constructed with a country club, a public house, a boathouse and a church to serve them. The golf club was built in 1939. In addition buildings were provided for the use of the estate and of the estate staff, notably the almshouses and the workmen's club.

All services were provided by the estate and the facilities were on a lavish scale. By 1914 the new village was formally opened, aimed at attracting the more wealthy, those who would require over five bedrooms in each house along with facilities for their domestic staff.
The First World War interrupted building, but work continued in the 1920’s. At the end of that decade some of the houses had to be sold off leasehold because of financial constraints upon the estate. However, the final phase of work recommenced from the mid 1930’s until 1939. Very little was added following the Second World War, but after 1972 the estate began to break up, and individual houses came into the ownership of private individuals.

4 THE PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE OF THORPENESS

Ogilvie employed two architects for his resort village. The resident architect, responsible for the scheme as a whole and the foremost of the buildings, was Frederick Forbes Glennie; the other was William Gilmour Wilson.

The overall planning and layout of Thorpeness village was intended by Glennie and his client to recreate the ‘Romantic and Picturesque’, popular during much of the 19th Century. Ogilvie’s vision was apparently influenced by Ebenezer Howard’s Garden Cities of Tomorrow and his radical ideas on town planning and healthy living. The idea was that the village would appear as though it was not actually ‘planned’ at all. The majority of houses were therefore originally laid our very informally, set amongst the natural landscape, heather and scrub.

There were three principal streets of housing: Lakeside Avenue, The Uplands and The Whinlands, which continued south as The Haven, all set fairly close to The Meare. Westgate, off The Whinlands, is the most ‘urban’ of all the streets, and is also the most eccentric in its mixture of architecture.

Towards the sea and to the north and west the idea of roads with houses fronting onto them is allowed to break down altogether with buildings tending to appear as though they have been scattered around the area.

Individual building styles clearly emphasise the ‘Romantic Picturesque’, especially the larger, more important or prominent buildings. The architecture is very much a recreation of the English (if not specifically Suffolk) vernacular but in many instances it has been very freely interpreted.

Not only are traditional domestic styles recreated in brick, render and timber with steeply pitched roofs incorporating gables, bays, turrets and dormers, but there are also references to medieval military architecture; for example Westbar, which looks like a fortified gate house. Buildings can also be other than they seem, the House in the Clouds originally being a Water Tower. Construction materials can also be in disguise: what appears to be half-timbered house are actually constructed of concrete. Such character reflects the whimsical artifice upon which Thorpeness was built.

The diverse range of building styles became greater as the development progressed; Headlands is a modern looking tallish block of three-storey houses built in 1937 right on the sea front, the Golf Club of 1939 is, in certain respects, similarly ‘modern’. From the 1950’s onwards land was also sold to private developers and so some later buildings are not part of the original ‘planned village’.

In promoting the holiday village it was emphasised that no two houses were exactly the same. Whilst diversity was the inevitable consequence of the adoption of so many building styles, like most other traditional towns and villages in the area, there remains a definite visual unity about the development.
An extremely difficult balance to achieve through a conscious planned process, what has been created at Thorpeness is an outstanding example of what is possible. This should inspire contemporary developers and their architects wishing to add to it in their turn.

5 THE IMPORTANCE OF THORPENESS AS A PLANNED HOLIDAY VILLAGE

Thorpeness is in fact the earlier of only two complete planned resort villages in Britain built before the advent of holiday camps such as Butlin's. The other was Portmeirion in north-west Wales, much the better known of the two. Thorpeness was mainly built between 1912 and 1938; Portmeirion was started over ten years later. At Thorpeness it is interesting that the chalet concept, later typified at Butlin’s, was introduced as early as 1919 in the twelve bungalows known as The Uplands.

The national significance of Thorpeness seems until recently to have been somewhat overlooked. Although the village was designated as a Conservation Area in 1976, it was only in the mid-1990s that some of the original holiday buildings were listed. The early 19th Century postmill, moved to the site in the 1920’s to further enhance the mixture of building styles was listed in 1951. At Portmeirion, the majority of the buildings were listed in 1971.

6 THORPENESS AND PORTMEIRION

Thorpeness and Portmeirion are very similar in concept, except in the latter the style of the buildings is almost universally that of an Italian fishing village. At Portmeirion, various buildings have been re-erected from elsewhere (e.g. the Colonnade from Bath, 1957) and much use was made of salvaged fragments. The site was acquired in 1925 by architect Clough Williams-Ellis and the existing house of 1862 converted to a hotel. The two main building periods for the celebrated village which grew up around this core were 1926 - 39 and 1954 - 73.

There are self-evident similarities between Thorpeness and Portmeirion. Firstly, Williams-Ellis was determined to construct a village on a new site as an advance on the picturesque exemplified by Glennie and Wilson at Thorpeness: for a more fantastical effect the Italian vernacular was chosen.

Secondly, the idea of a resort village was established from the beginning, with houses let out to the more wealthy middle class for seaside recreation on a self-catering basis, just as at Thorpeness a decade earlier.

Thirdly, the planning of the development as a whole, like Thorpeness, was deliberately 'random'.

In these qualities the two resorts are unique for their time. Williams-Ellis declared that his choice of architectural style was intended to revitalise popularism in architecture and in this he was influenced by the attention received in the press by the construction of Thorpeness.

Given the site of Portmeirion, closely hedged with cliffs and sea, rather more spectacular vistas were possible, but it is not the case that the individual buildings are in themselves architecturally superior to those at Thorpeness, where flat land extends behind the sea shore. The architects of Thorpeness can claim primacy for being the first in Britain to establish a resort village.
Thorpeness: aerial view 2007
7 TOPOGRAPHICAL SETTING

With a lost church and scatter of fisherman’s cottages, the original hamlet of Thorpe, part of the parish of Aldringham cum Thorpe, was reincarnated as Thorpeness early in the twentieth century. Pevsner says it "is something extremely rare, a planned seaside resort".

A temporary flooding of the Hundred River was the inspiration for the creation in 1912 of The Meare, a 60 acre lake of limited depth, around two sides of which development was subsequently planned.

Situated on the east coast of Suffolk two miles north of Aldeburgh and a similar distance south-east of Leiston, part of the plan was for Thorpeness to have its own railway station. The Aldeburgh branch line of the 1859 East Suffolk Railway now terminates at Leiston, serving nearby Sizewell nuclear power station. Connections by road essentially follow the same routes, a minor coast road going south to Aldeburgh and an inland road, the B1353, north-westwards to Leiston via Aldringham.

The geology hereabouts is that of the Suffolk ‘sandlings’ coastal strip, crag deposits of sand and gravel laid down during the Pliocene period over chalk at greater depth. The soils are deep well drained and sandy, forming heathland where well grazed.
Thirty three sites of archaeological interest appear in the Suffolk Historic Environment Record for the parish of Aldringham cum Thorpe (as at June 2010), of which about a third are in the locality of Thorpeness itself.

The earliest of these are Neolithic flaked flint axes, one from Thorpeness, the other from Aldringham. About half a dozen sites comprise undated tumuli or round barrows, all on the higher ground in inland Aldringham, and probably of Bronze Age origin. Five of these are Scheduled Monuments.

There appears to have been a lull in Roman and Saxon times, but the Medieval period has left the site of the former chapel-of-ease in Thorpeness and the mother church at Aldringham.

Thorpe itself was not listed in the Domesday survey of 1086, although it is believed that one of Leiston’s three Domesday churches was sited there.

Post Medieval interest is provided by the site of a bridge and two windmill sites, one the original site of the post mill in Aldringham, the other its new location in Thorpeness.

Suffolk Historic Environment Record is now available online at www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/CHR

Former St Mary’s Church

Extract from Domesday Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Leiston held Leiston</th>
<th>1 manor, 12 carucates of land.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Always 25 villis, 27 smallholders. Then 8 there, now 7.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Then 11 ploughs in leodshe, now 7; then 6 men’s ploughs, now 6.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>When 14 slaves for 200 pigs, now 220 always 1 mill. Meadows 3 acres, 4 coverts, 3 carrières, 2 pannes, 112 sheep, 7 hens. 1 [plough]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 carrières with 100 acres of free land before 1066.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value £11 (in H. 1128) now the same.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value £16 ½s. 12d. (in H. 1189), now the same.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value £12 1s. 6d. (in H. 1189), now the same.</td>
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<td>Value £2 1s. 3d. (in H. 1189), now the same.</td>
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<td>Value £2 1s. 3d. (in H. 1189), now the same.</td>
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<td>Value £2 1s. 3d. (in H. 1189), now the same.</td>
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9 QUALITY OF BUILDINGS

The listed buildings in the parish of Aldringham cum Thorpe are all grade II, the majority of them prior to 1995 being in Aldringham. In Thorpeness up until that time only the early 19th Century postmill was listed, however in 1995 a further eleven buildings there were added to the list.

These additions included a number of the Thorpeness Estate's houses, the Church of St Mary and the iconic 'House-in-the-Clouds'.

The Church was non-denominational, built in 1937 of rendered concrete and brick in a Neo-Norman style. After some time as a redundant church on the Buildings at Risk register, it has been converted to residential units.

Other distinctive buildings that contribute to the character of the conservation area include the Almshouses; the Headlands; the tea rooms at The Meare; the Thorpeness Golf Club; and the Thorpeness Country Club.

Distinctive features where they survive include the use of metal Crittall windows, from the original period of construction of Thorpeness; and contemporaneous concrete boundary walls of pierced and decorative design, which should be retained where extant.

The substantial 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, particularly those associated with the Ogilvie era, and their character defining features should be retained.
The Whinlands

The Benthills leading to Church Road

Westgate

Old barn, Old Homes Road

The Meare and tea rooms
With the majority of the settlement having been built in the early 20th Century, the use of traditional materials has largely been for effect rather than as historic development. Much use is made of Tudor style half-timbering, more in the western English mode of box-framing and not reminiscent of the Suffolk vernacular of close studding.

This does however retain ‘Arts & Crafts’ charm and is well supplemented by both black and white weather-boarding and Roman single roll pantiles. Traditional render finishes also appear within the framing and on a larger scale in the seven houses comprising the terrace known as Headlands, now unfortunately suffering from the unsubtle colour schemes of multiple ownership.

The local soft ‘Suffolk Red’ brick is used as brick noggin in some of the ‘timber-framed’ buildings and as the main material for the Westbar water tower. The House in the Clouds is tilehung on its top two floors, the infill to the supporting structure black weather-boarded.

The genuine survivals of old Thorpe have to be sought out. There are three properties not in the house style, but rather rendered brick with slate roofs, at South Cottages. At the north end a single storey thatched barn seems to have survived at the end of Old Homes Road. Nearby there is a good example of a surviving Victorian cottage in small flints with ‘Suffolk White’ brick dressings and a clay pantile roof, one of a terrace of four still with its original sash windows.
Thorpeness is composed of a series of axes and vistas, all loosely based on the original arrangement of tracks and field boundaries and incorporating formal and informal layouts within its arrangement of spaces.

The central gateway of the listed almshouses block sets up a vista with The Whinlands to the south and Pilgrims Way to the north through the gateway. The Whinlands itself, with The Haven to the south-east and Old Homes Road to the north-east, form a large crescent, following the line of roads and tracks clearly discernible on the Tithe map of 1839.

Outside of this crescent, the most notable addition is Lakeside Avenue, heading off eastwards along the northern bank of The Meare, with the Golf Clubhouse closing the vista at the end of the axis. North of here off a parallel lane are to be found the House in the Clouds, visible from Lakeside Avenue, along with The Windmill that was originally used to pump water up to the water tank there.

Within the crescent shape, a more formal planning exercise has been undertaken. Westgate, leading off The Whinlands east towards the beach, is aligned on West Bar water tower with its central gateway feature, beyond which The Sanctuary runs north to south connecting either end of the crescent shape. Between here and the parallel beach is a significant open space: a more informal area containing the lawns and tennis courts of the Country Club, St Mary’s Church and the curved terrace of Headlands.

Other significant open spaces include Thorpeness Common and the green in front of the tea rooms at The Meare. The beach forms an important open setting to the conservation area.
12 TREES AND GREEN SPACES

One of the key elements of the Conservation area is its trees and green spaces. Treed and planted spaces usually enhance the buildings and spaces around the village and provide an appropriate setting for the conservation area.

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,

In Thorpeness there are several trees afforded TPO status which are considered to be of significance, however there are also many other trees which contribute to the character of the area.

The conservation area is not particularly rich in tree cover, largely the result of its proximity to the sea. The largest area of trees is to be found to the west of The Whinlands, on Thorpeness Common that stretches across to the House in the Clouds. Here can be found opportunist Sycamore and planted Red Oak along with the more usual heathland species of Birch, Scots Pine and Rowan.

Three small areas nearer the beach have trees with preservation orders. On the Whinlands TPO no.3 covered originally a Wheatley Elm, now replaced with a Rowan, just south of the Church TPO no.34 covers a single Sycamore, whilst to the north side of Old Homes Road TPO no.68 covers an area of Scots Pine and Holm Oak.

The Meare provides the main green space in the settlement, with its 60 acres of open water, islands and marshy edges, which are firmed up into a more formal area of grass adjoining the Boathouse and Tea Rooms. More natural planting particularly of willow, alder and poplar is evident around The Meare, and also Lakeside Avenue.

There are some notable pines scattered throughout the village including those within the grounds of The Dolphin PH adjacent the public car park.

Other than this the main natural feature is the one Thorpeness was built to enjoy, the shingle beach and North Sea beyond that provide a very firm edge.
13 THE IMPORTANCE OF OPEN SPACE AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES

As much as the individual buildings, it is the quality and character of the open spaces and landscape features, such as trees, hedges, walls, roads, footpaths, garden buildings etc, which make Thorpeness such an attractive village.

Throughout Thorpeness buildings tend to appear to be set within a natural landscape of coastal heathland with its indigenous shrubs and trees. This was a fundamental part of the original concept for the planned village and the impact of private gardens and individual curtilages was to be kept to a minimum.

The unique combination of natural and man-made elements create an air of unreality which remains remarkably strong even though the original planned holiday village was never completed and what was created has been affected by a significant amount of change during recent years.

The Meare, the undeveloped sea front, Thorpeness Common, the grounds of the Country Club combined with smaller areas of open space to help make Thorpeness what it is.

Unmade up roads and footpaths, buildings located amongst areas of grass where it is not clear where one curtilage finishes and the next begins are all very important elements. A key feature of the village is the wealth of public footpaths traversing the common areas and running between buildings. Trellis fencing, walls and gateways made out concrete block (normally a material which is considered detrimental to the character of a Conservation Area), are some of the smaller details which help to establish the overall character and appearance of the Conservation Area and which are, therefore, of great importance to retain and maintain.
The entire area of Thorpeness forms part of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths ‘Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’.

A myriad of short paths provide access from the settlement to the beach, space left between the plots enabling the holidaymaker easy access. These are an important feature and worthy of preservation. Travel on foot along the beach is easier to the north where footpaths nos.31 and 33 run in parallel either side of the sea wall. To the south it is still walkable, but only officially along the road that leads on to Aldeburgh.

Access inland to the west is easiest from The Whinlands across Thorpeness Common using footpaths nos.34, 35 or 36, leading to footpaths nos. 38 and 39 around the north-west end of The Meare. Here these form the conservation area boundary, as does the former railway line they meet beyond, much of which is now also footpath.

Along with the marine environment of the beach and the wetlands of The Meare and The Fens further inland, there are also areas of heathland, both wooded as on Thorpeness Common and more open on the adjoining Golf Course, and farmland further afield, all easily accessible.
FORMER USES

The tithe map apportionment of 1840 gives a good indication of the range of traditional industries in the parish at that time. Inland at Aldringham we find the more usual entries of ‘Mill and Yard’, ‘Brick Kiln’ and ‘Blacksmith’s Shop’, whilst Thorpe as its relatively smaller coastal neighbour has only a few cottages and most notably a ‘Preventive House’, headquarters of the local Customs and Excise men.

This last was somewhere near the present road called Coastguard, overlooking the beach, and was adjoined by fields such as ‘Station Piece’, shown as occupied by ‘Government’. Presumably smuggling was a problem for the authorities in this area.

Earlier records for the combined parish in the 17th Century do include mention of Fishermen, who would have been based at Thorpe rather than Aldringham.

With the coming of the new use as a ‘resort’, the majority of what we now see was built for the purpose. The windmill is older, but was brought to Thorpeness in 1923 from Aldringham to fill the ‘House-in-the Clouds’ water tank, a task no longer required.

Today’s uses in Thorpeness relate primarily to catering for visitors as part of the tourism industry, although more houses are now privately owned and used as second homes. The origins of Thorpeness as a holiday village are still reflected in the seasonal occupation of some dwellings and the contrast in character between busy summer months, with added visitors, and the quietude of winter. Such usage is integral to the character of Thorpeness.
PROPOSED ENHANCEMENTS

To a large extent Thorpeness still retains the character created for it as a planned holiday village.

With the demise of the overseeing company and establishment of freeholds, more recent additions and infill are now less controlled than they were. Conservation Area status does go some way to remedy this, but there remains a very real danger of the erosion of the village’s ‘quality of place’ by modern intrusions.

Already, there are some areas where infill has unfortunately had a detrimental effect, and further additions to the village should be very carefully considered.

Whilst not especially the ‘Suffolk Vernacular’, the materials and forms used in the development are still very recognisable as ‘Thorpeness’, and should not be diluted by the importing of further variety.

There is a degree of untidiness about Thorpeness with unmade roads and an informal character, but the natural temptation to tidy up should be resisted. However certain elements of modern paraphernalia, such as the tangles of overhead wiring or the multitude of unofficial signs, should perhaps be tackled.

Other original features that contribute to the impression of a planned settlement with a degree of architectural coherence and which are at risk of loss include original windows and doors, where they survive, and front boundaries, including those, unusually, in concrete block and picket fences which make an attractive and important contribution. Positive treatments for planting and boundary features should sit comfortably with the natural character of the conservation area.

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.

Replacement windows:
The Headlands

Overhead Wiring

Original front boundary wall
17.1 The Meare, Boathouse etc.

The whole of The Meare as far west as the disused railway track is included in the Conservation Area. It is unusual for such a large expanse of water in the area not to be tidal, so in that respect there is a hint to the unknowing that this is a man-made feature.

The Meare is a three feet deep boating lake and has islands with trees and shrubs and various man-made features for children’s adventures, including a miniature castle, mountain, cannon and a concrete crocodile lurking in the undergrowth. The islands had names taken from the books of J M Barrie, reflecting the whimsical character of this feature and, to some extent, the surrounding village.

As a principal feature of the conservation area the retention of the Meare and its maintenance as a recreational and environmental feature is essential.

Between The Meare and the road is a pleasant grassed area with a reed filled pond, pollarded trees and the village sign. Picket gates and fences with hedges mark the boundary to The Meare. The Boathouse is a very pleasant building, with a pitch-roofed clock tower, clay tiled gables and hips, black weather-boarded walls and white windows and other joinery.

It was one of the first buildings to be finished in 1911, and as well as hiring boats, it was designed for use as a café. With its grass and the gravelled driveway setting, along with the similarly weather-boarded buildings alongside, this is a very attractive focal point for the village and forms, in effect, a local landmark.

Unfortunately increased commercial activity, advertising, signs and displays, plus the wear and tear that the driveways and grassed areas are suffering, are beginning to make the area look untidy.
To the south there are two characteristic houses with steeply pitched roofs and low eaves. These were planned to be part of fourteen dwellings to be called ‘The Netherlands’, which were never completed. An ornamental arch to the rear of the first property was designed as an entrance to this part of the village. The arch is a rather whimsical white painted concrete structure with a semi-circular archway and a small plaintiled hipped roof on timber brackets.

Across the road to the east are some rendered two-storey buildings with half timbering, the one facing The Meare with a first floor balcony is now used as a shop and restaurant. This was the original estate office built in 1925, then called Barn Hall.

The commercial and retail uses make an important contribution to the character of the area in terms of their location near the Meare and in servicing local and visitor needs.

17.2 The Haven

Remembrance Road, coming into the village from Aldeburgh, curves around the east end of The Meare towards the north-east to become The Haven. A row of twelve houses fronting onto this road and The Meare opposite were built around 1914.

They have a chalet bungalow character but are in fact very carefully detailed. Fenestration with small paned windows and the use of traditional materials make them particularly attractive and very different to later 1950’s or 1960’s designs which adopted a similar form.

Built at a level above that of the road, grassed front gardens are bounded by simple trellis and wooden gates, a very attractive unifying element in the street scene. These buildings are vulnerable to incremental change that would erode their special contribution to the area.
Lakeside Avenue runs east-west along the north side of The Meare from The Haven up to the Golf Club House at the end. The first house on the north side is The Ness. Built in 1919, it appears as a taller building than those in The Haven, with much more of a vertical emphasis to its hipped dormers and forms a striking and important local landmark in a prominent location.

Adjacent to The Ness and forming a marked contrast are four houses called The Bays built between 1911 and 1914. More overtly ‘Thorpeness’ they have half timbered elevations, black and red pantiled hipped roofs and large chimney stacks built on the diagonal, all reputedly different in some way from one another. They make an important contribution by being characteristic of the area in terms of their modelled form, colour scheme and materials.

The first house on the south side is Rudder Grange, one of the first to be completed in 1911. Built in concrete block, rendered and painted white, with applied black half timbering it was the fore-runner in terms of architectural style and appearance of many of the buildings in the village, and significant for that reason alone. Features that were later used elsewhere within the village include: sweeping plaintiled roofs with hips and gables, coming down sometimes to a very low level; white painted casement windows with mullions and transomes support well proportioned panes of glass; dormer windows which break the eaves line with a flat roof. There are also tall chimney stacks, one of which is built on the diagonal.

Further along Lakeside Avenue, the houses were built at different times from 1911 right up to the present day. During the 1920’s land began to be sold for building and a variety of houses were then built, mostly maintaining the characteristic Thorpeness style established at Rudder Grange.
Just beyond halfway there is a small roundabout where a gap between properties is grassed over and leads down to The Meare. There was to have been a Piazza and Quay here but this remained only an idea on paper.

In the opposite direction a footpath leads back up the hill to the Windmill and House in the Clouds.

Providing a focal point at the end of the road is the Golf Club House, with the golf course beyond, to the north. An eccentric building, built in 1939, it has white-washed concrete walls and plaintiled roofs. The plan comprises a rectangular single-storey block with four square two-storey corner pavilions. The entrance in the centre of the front elevation has a castellated parapet.

The remains of the avenue of pollarded Lombardy poplars are still a distinctive feature. Replacement tree planting needs to be carefully considered where trees have to be removed.

The four corner pavilions have hipped roofs developing into high pyramid roofs with flat tops on each of which stand four giant golf tees. Built on land sloping towards The Meare, the building is elevated on a raised terrace with a brick balustrade. The building is a local landmark by virtue of its scale and use, and its distinctive appearance makes it stand out in relation to the Thorpeness 'vernacular'.

To the north, the Golf Club House has a two storey extension. The main grass lawns surrounding the Club House quickly give way to the gorse, scrub and bushes which characterise much of this part of the Suffolk Coast. This heathland landscape is particularly attractive although car parking in the area does intrude and heavy usage by vehicles and pedestrians was causing erosion, now dealt with by a new tarmac road to the car park.
Looking east from the Golf Club, the House in the Clouds, the Windmill and away in the distance the top of Westbar all rise above the tree line, forming a picturesque and intriguing view.

Close to the mill is Mill House (above right), with its attractive plaintiled roof, brickwork, render and half timbered walls. Part of the original development, this retains some of its original character.

The Windmill is an early 19th Century post mill, moved to its present site from Aldringham in 1923. It was converted from a corn mill to pump water up to the storage tank at the top of the House in the Clouds and restored to working order in 1977. It has a square pantiled base, a white weather-boarded body, four sails and a fantail. The mill is Grade II listed.

The two-storey top portion has a pantiled pitched roof and originally contained a water tank. It oversails on all sides and is supported on arched corner braces. There are canted bay windows set in front of the stacks. The House in the Clouds has a simple grassed setting and is located slightly apart from the development in The Uplands adjacent he heathland of Thorpeness Common and the surrounding countryside. Long skyline views of the House visible on approach to Thorpeness emphasise its iconic importance.
17.4 The Uplands etc.

Thorpeness Common runs from The House in the Clouds east to the Whinlands. Its southern edge is marked by a track beyond which there is a row of 16 single-storey weather-boarded chalets called The Uplands. These were built after the First World War between 1919 and 1920. Originally planned as larger, detached houses, the war affected the fortunes of the estate and these comparatively basic and unprepossessing structures were hastily erected to provide additional accommodation.

These simple single-storey structures are an important feature not only from an historical point of view (appearing as a forerunner of the sort of accommodation provided at the mass market holiday camps built years later) but they also contribute to the essential character and appearance of the Conservation Area. They should therefore be properly protected from demolition and inappropriate alterations and extensions.

17.5 Thorpeness Common

The part of Thorpeness Common included in the Conservation Area is significant, not only as a potentially attractive open space in itself, but also because it provides an appropriate setting for the buildings surrounding it, contributing to the overall character of the village by appearing as part of the surrounding landscape coming right into the built up area.

Views of this part of the Common from a distance, along roads and between buildings are particularly important. The Common could benefit from proper management which would undoubtedly enhance its contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
Off Stoney Lane, on the north side of the Common behind the Workmen's Club, a small group of dwellings predates the development of the holiday village. Probably 19th Century, Alexander House is a rendered property with clay pantiled roof, upstand parapets to the gables and sash windows at first floor. Some modern windows with top-hung fanlights have been inserted on the ground floor but overall its traditional character is still very much intact.

Monte Notte is a small timber-clad bungalow with a sheet metal roof. A mature hedge and some impressive pine trees are located in front of these properties.

Adjacent Monte Notte, Stone Cottage is located fairly close to the access track and the common. Built in flint pebbles with red brick dressings and a shallow pitched slate covered roof it sits behind an attractive flint boundary wall.

As well as some modern features being added to the house, a large double garage with a panelled door appears rather at odds with the traditional, rural character of the area.
17.6 The Whinlands

To the east of the Common, across the road are a row of ten houses built between 1911 and 1914. These are fairly substantial houses, some very similar to Rudder Grange in appearance with white render, black half timbering, simple casement windows and clay tiled roofs. Others are weather-boarded, painted black and sometimes white. Two have accommodation at a second floor level in the roof. Fortunately most retain virtually all of their original details and finishes, and hence their essential character and appearance, a number of them now being listed. By virtue of their terracing effect, location adjacent the principal through road, and architectural qualities of form, modelling, materials, appearance and colour, The Whinlands make a very important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

17.7 Westgate

Westgate runs between The Whinlands and The Sanctuary. Built during 1928 and 1929 Westgate consists of two rows of three linked houses (each completely different) facing each other, with the large-scaled building of Westbar itself spanning the far end and terminating the vista. Starting on the northern side, no.1 is a large two-storey house with attic accommodation built in the Tudor style, finished in stone, brick (including brick nogging), timber framing and render. Its plaintiled roof incorporates a single catslide dormer at the front. The windows have diamond leaded lights and there is a large stepped chimney on the east gable. The principal entrance is at first floor level reached via an exposed timber ladder staircase with decorative wooden balusters and an open gallery under a lean-to roof supported on three turned timber posts.
No.2 is slightly less exuberant with a steeply pitched clay tiled roof with three flat-roofed dormers, a rendered first floor and stone, some of the ground floor which rises to the left hand side to form a pointed arched doorway.

No.3 is rendered and colour-washed concrete with timber framing and a plaintiled roof.

This building group is a very irregular composition of one and two storeys. The left hand end has a jettied first floor with a pitched roof over, with to the right two different sized gables. These three elements are separated by single-storey links.

The middle, smaller gable is jettied on arched braces. The larger gable to the right has a tall mullioned and transomed window which has diamond leaded lights as do the others.

On the opposite side, adjacent to Westbar, No.4 is a long low building with single storey wings with timber framing and brick nogging and a pantiled roof. A two-storey gabled section is rendered with half timbering to the jettied first floor. The gable roof has a split overhang to the front facade which currently shelters a statue of Virgin Mary.

No.5 in the middle was actually designed by the architect Frederick Forbes Glennie for his own occupation. Rendered and colour-washed brick and concrete with a black glazed pantiled roof, it is a surprisingly simple building which could be described as being in the ‘Garden Suburb’ style. One storey with attic, three hipped dormers light the upper floor and the windows are metal casements.
No.6, Turret House, is a rendered two-storey house with double pitch gabled roofs covered in plaintiles. At the north-west corner is a projecting polygonal turret at first floor level with a moulded base, the details of which, originally before the porch was erected, continued across the front facade.

Nos.1 to 3 are listed and it has been confirmed by English Heritage that had Nos.4 to 6 remained in an unaltered condition it is almost certain that they too would have been recommended for listing, for they are part of a very good group and have value in themselves. The view was that the plastic windows in No 6 (Turret House) in particular, provided one of the main reasons why it was not recommended.

The group effect of the houses forming Westbar and the tower building is of great value in contributing to the distinctive character of the conservation area: the rising ground, the picturesque, varied and eccentric cottages, and the vista terminated by the grossly over-scaled Westbar make up a strange and effective townscape composition quite unlike anything that would be seen in any other village setting. Preservation of this group effect from changes to boundaries, materials, doors, windows and the spaces between and in front of buildings is very important.

17.8 Westbar

Westbar is a massive structure, a high tower built in concrete and faced with brick, stone, timber framing and plaster. Like the House in The Clouds it disguises a water tank at the top. It is a symmetrical composition comprising a six storey gate house tower flanked each side by dwellings of three storeys with dormer attics. Medieval in overall style, the building is a distinctive and odd mix of the ecclesiastical, the military and the domestic. It forms a very important landmark in the conservation area.

The tower has a shallow arch at second floor level with suspended timber-framed accommodation below leaving a square headed single storey opening below. Brick buttresses on each corner have pointed arched walkways at ground floor level and terminate in raised brick parapets. Between these, at the top of the tower are stone castellated parapets.

The elevational treatment of the top two storeys of the tower has ecclesiastical references with high arched lowered openings which look like belfry windows. The middle two storeys are in brick with pairs of three light stone mullioned windows. The three storied flats on either side have brick ground floors with render and timber framing to the upper floors, simple mullioned windows and gabled plaintiled roofs. To the Westgate elevation there are tall studio lights in flat topped dormers, abutting each side of the tower.
One of the principal buildings in the resort village, Westbar, because of its size can be seen from considerable distances, both from within the village and beyond. Views and glimpses of it from the surrounding roads and from other buildings add considerably to the character and appearance of the area and these views should be acknowledged and protected.

17.9 The Sanctuary

Through the arch in Westbar from Westgate there are tantalising views of an open space beyond. To the east of Westbar is The Sanctuary, an unmade up road which links through from the Boathouse and The Haven, up to Old Homes Road in the north. Beyond, to the east are the grounds of the Country Club, an open grassed area with trees, shrubs, ponds, tennis courts and at one time a swimming pool, this space is an attractive and important part of the Conservation Area character and should be preserved from future development.

There are low concrete walls and steps and grassy banks to accommodate changes in level, a pair of conical thatched roofed kiosks opposite Westbar, a small thatched roofed weather-boarded hut close to the northern boundary, a parapeted concrete entrance gateway to the south and, very close to the centre of the space, so that it can be viewed from various vantage points, a dovecote supported on a single timber post with a circular plaintiled roof.

Along the eastern boundary is the Country Club itself, the front of which faces the sea. Built in 1913 and extended in 1930, the Country Club forms the centre-piece of a long line of buildings providing an attractive backdrop and a sense of enclosure to the landscaped central space. Timber-framed with weather-boarded and white rendered walls, the Country Club building has a pantiled roof incorporating various gables and different ridge heights. Along with the first floor terrace, steps, balustrades and a variety of small paned windows and doors of different sizes the building has a complex form which adds to its character.
17.10 The Juvenilia

To the south is a long narrow range of two storeys with three pitched roofed second storey pavilions, one at each end and one in the middle. Called the Juvenilia, it has white panels with black timber framing. To the north, on the higher ground, linked by an attractive little pantile roofed walkway, is a simple single-storey building. Perched on top of a grassy bank, it has a clay pantiled roof, weather-boarded walls and white painted casement windows. Architecturally, the three buildings combine to create a particularly striking group that make a very good contribution to the conservation area.

Facing onto the open space to the north is a rendered house, with single-storey wings either side of a projecting two-storey gable. The simplicity and small scale of this house forms an interesting contrast with the scale of Westbar and its thatched roof provides a visual link with the other small, thatched roof garden structures in the grounds of the Country Club.

Similarly small scale is the row of traditional cottages which form the southern boundary. South Beach Cottages are essentially, single-storey, their rendered rear walls and clay pantiled roof back onto a narrow footpath. Along with Alnmouth and Garden Cottage, they form an attractive little group although their essential character could easily be undermined by inappropriate alterations and extensions. Alnmouth was probably the last dwelling to be erected in the village of Thorpe, as was, in around 1880. Adjoining this group on the western side, there has been some recent development fronting onto the southern end of The Sanctuary.

The centre piece of The Sanctuary frontage is obviously Westbar which is complemented by two adjoining houses. Jordans, with rendered walls and asymmetrical gable and Brambletye a rendered and half timbered property with second floor windows partly accommodated within flat topped dormers in the roof.
Unfortunately, some modern development has been constructed along The Sanctuary which has done little to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The exception is ‘Micawbers’, adjacent to Jordans, the form and design being wholly appropriate to the sensitivity of its context.

17.11 Workmen's Club and Almshouses

Travelling back down Westgate, turning northwards along Whinlands and beyond the edge of Thorpeness Common, the axial vista is terminated by the central tower with its arched drive-through of the Ogilvie Almshouses. This vista is a key designed feature of Thorpeness’ layout. To the left, on the corner of the Common, stands the Workmen’s Club. Neither of these buildings was part of the holiday accommodation but was built for the staff of the Ogilvie Estate.

The Workmen’s Club was built in 1925 and is a large imposing structure consisting of a long, wide pitched roof element of three storeys with a narrower projecting bay towards the southern end. This projecting bay has an asymmetrical roof. The roof of the building is covered in clay pantiles and incorporates a pair of chimney stacks. The walls are white render and there is decorative timber framing. Mullioned and transomed windows with latticed leaded lights vary in size from quite small openings to an extremely large window in the north gable. The building is in the Thorpeness ‘vernacular’ and is locally distinctive in terms of its scale and use and, therefore, makes a good contribution to the conservation area.

There is an entrance porch below the window on the north elevation and various lean-to additions at the rear. Surrounding the building are raised lawns and shrubs set behind a concrete block raised retaining wall.
Behind the Workmen's Club, the Conservation Area boundary includes Old Thorpe House which is a pleasant little rendered single-storey cottage with attic accommodation under its pantiled roof. It has a traditional lean-to extension to one side.

The Almshouses were built in 1926 as residences for Estate staff. The design is symmetrical around a central brick tower which has a hipped roof with leaded finials behind brick and stone parapets. There are two tall windows to the first floor with stone surroundings, mullions and transoms.

The ground floor has a central pointed archway with a square headed pedestrian passageway either side. The two-storey wings have plain tiled roofs with projecting gabled end pavilions.

There is a smaller projecting gabled bay in the middle of each wing. The wings are faced with black half timbering with brick nogging or render above a plinth of exposed concrete blocks. There are large decorative chimney stacks and the windows have wooden mullions with leaded glazing. There is an attractive brick boundary wall with pairs of piers marking the entrance.

The overall effect of the Almshouses is a curious mix of the formal and the picturesque; the contrasting use of materials, scale and function (as at Westbar). Whilst clearly derived from vernacular building forms, styles and materials, these are combined and juxtaposed in an unexpected manner. It is the effect of this that makes the Almshouses distinctive as a local landmark, and also characteristic of Thorpeness.

East of the Almshouses there is an attractive two-storey house, probably contemporary with its larger neighbour as it shares many similar features although one significant difference is the tile hanging to the first floor (more Sussex than Suffolk).

In front of the Almshouses at the junction of The Whinlands, Leiston Road and Old Homes Road is a triangular green, beyond which on the eastern side is an open space
with trees and grass which forms part of the curtilage of the Dolphin Inn. Both are very important as open spaces within the conservation area and should be maintained and preserved as such.

17.12 The Dolphin Inn

The Dolphin Inn was rebuilt in 1999 after a fire and fortunately maintains a good juxtaposition with the Almshouses and Workmen’s Club. Its positioning creates an adequate sense of enclosure on the corner whilst retaining the character of the open space which provides such an attractive setting for the surrounding buildings, the uses of which also make an important contribution to character.

Behind the Dolphin, to the east is the shop, built in 1913. It has large windows with thin transoms and mullions supporting small panes of glass. Its pitched roof has a flat topped dormer; the style is not dissimilar to some of the other houses that were built in the village at the same time.

17.13 Old Homes Road and Beacon Hill Lane

East of the shop there was a row of weather-boarded buildings which, like the single storey houses in The Uplands were built not long after the First World War (1919) and appropriately called Peace Place. These were demolished in the 1980’s and replaced by some rather undistinguished two storey houses that make, at best a neutral contribution only.
The extension of the building closest to the road over the footpath reflects a similar projection on the earlier houses. The appearance of the space between these houses, the shop and the Dolphin could be improved.

Further east is a large thatched barn which forms the focal point of a group of traditional farm buildings.

The character of Old Homes Road is different to much of the 'planned' village. This area was known as Thorpe and consisted before 1910 of scattered dwellings, the Dolphin Inn (much altered and extended over the years) and a group of agricultural buildings. Many of the buildings on the north side of Old Homes Road are from that period and form a distinctive group within the conservation area.

These include long single-storey ranges in brick and weatherboarding with clay pantiled roofs, barns (one converted to a dwelling) and some traditional cottages. There are some particularly attractive brick and flint walls in the area. As remnants of the original hamlet of Thorpe these agricultural buildings should be maintained and preserved for their contribution to the conservation area.

East of the Almshouses is an attractive wooded open space with a pond, some evergreen Holm Oaks and a missing boundary hedge.

In Beacon Hill Lane, 1 and 2 Beacon Hill Cottages is a pleasant 1½ storey brick faced building with traditional gabled dormers, steeply pitched pantiled roof and brick parapet gables.
Similarly opposite, a two-storey brick cottage with rendered gables retains much of its traditional character although some modern windows have been installed.

On the south side of Old Homes Road and around the northern end of The Sanctuary there has been a significant amount of new development that has taken place over recent years. Although some attempt has been made to reflect a vernacular style in the form of the buildings, they clearly lack the quality and richness of detail and use of traditional materials (clay tile etc.) that were used on the older buildings in the area.

Even after undergoing some change and modernisation the older buildings still often retain their essential character. Beach Farm Cottages and the flint pebble fronted terrace of houses, with good original sash windows, opposite are good examples and make a good contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

17.14 The Headlands and St Mary’s Church

At the eastern end of Old Homes Road the space opens out to form quite a large green with gravel driveways running around and through it. Dominating the space to the east and overlooking the sea beyond is The Headlands, another local landmark.

The Headlands is a curved three-storey terrace of seven large houses. Built in 1937 it was the last major building to be completed for the original holiday village. It has an urban character, similar to large city tenement blocks and marks a considerable change in architectural style, more austere than the earlier buildings but characteristic once again, of juxtaposing scale and form in an unexpected way.
Modern, rather than a reinterpretation of past styles, the walls are mostly rendered and painted perhaps with too many colours, with some areas of facing brick. There is a shallow pitched roof incorporating gables and some areas of flat roof along with numerous chimneys. The elevation facing the sea has recessed balconies with concrete parapets. The fenestration throughout was designed with metal casement windows, many of which have been replaced and some with an unsympathetic design or materials.

Beyond the Church to the south lies Coastguard Cottages, a terrace of houses which predate the planned village and exhibit many of the features which were incorporated in the later designs.

This is also the case with some of the other older houses in the area and explains why, until modern houses were built, the village had exhibited a greater degree of visual unity.

Opposite The Headlands to the south is St Mary’s Church, built in 1937 of rendered concrete and brick with stone dressings. Described as ‘Neo-Norman’ in style, the church is a tall relatively plain structure with a square squat tower with buttresses. It has a copper roof and the tower has a plaintiled pyramidal roof behind a parapet, topped with a weathervane incorporating a sailing ship. Now converted to residential use St Mary’s is a very interesting building which is listed Grade II.

17.15 Coastguards etc.

Opposite Coastguards Cottage and overlooking the sea is Seamark. A large rendered house with sweeping hipped pantiled roofs, it was part of the planned village, as was Drake House which backs onto Coastguard Cottages to the south.

Drake House contrasts markedly with the buildings surrounding it. Built in 1927 it is mostly single-storey with flat roofs and rendered walls. At that time it must have been considered very modern and perhaps somewhat at odds with what else was being built in the village. The house has had many of its original windows changed.
to plastic which has eroded its architectural interest.

South of the Coastguards there is a sharp bend in the road as it travels southwards, to the east of which is an area of undeveloped land beyond which is the beach and the sea. Evident here are the original concrete boundary walls that are a striking and key feature of the conservation area and which should always be preserved.

On the west side of the road overlooking the sea is the entrance to the Country Club. Like its frontage to The Sanctuary, the Club buildings which overlook the sea form a particularly attractive and important group.

Despite its apparent complexity, the layout is relatively simple with a two storey central block with gabled projections at either end. Between the gables is a covered terrace reached by two flights of timber stairs. Beyond the central block are two lower wings which connect to two further wings turned at right angles with gables facing the sea.

These latter wings, forming a courtyard in front of the entrance to the Club, are quite large, having an additional floor in the roof space served by gable windows and flat roofed dormers. The whole complex has timber casement windows with narrow glazing bars. The facing materials are white painted concrete and weatherboarding with roofs of clay pantiles.

17.16 The Benthills and the Dunes

South of the Country Club are a group of six semi-detached houses called The Benthills, built in 1913 and undoubtedly popular because of their sea front location.

They are black weather-boarded with clay pantiled roofs and variously plastic or white painted casement windows. The various projections, lean-to roofs, dormer and bay windows, balconies, staircases, add variety and interest to these particularly attractive, well designed houses.

On the corner as the road turns away from the sea towards the Meare on the north side is The Dunes and Sea View, which
make appropriate neighbours for The Benthills, incorporating many similar features except the weatherboarding is replaced by white render and black timber framing. Built in 1914, The Dunes was used for some years as a Guest House.

The Benthills and the Dunes by virtue of the highly modelled appearance and characteristic styling make an outstanding group contribution to the conservation area.
18 Conservation Area Management Plan

The overall character of Thorpeness remains primarily that of a unique planned early 20th Century holiday village which still retains much of its original form and appearance. Despite some intrusive later development and small-scale incremental change having taken place, the village continues to retain many of the special characteristics which justify its Conservation Area designation.

These special characteristics include, amongst other things, the unique genesis of the settlement as a planned holiday village; the quality of its buildings; the distinctive shape, form and layout of the settlement itself; and the attractive relationship which exists between the buildings, the spaces between and around them, and the wider landscape. It is vitally important therefore, that these special characteristics are retained and reinforced.

There are, however, other features which undermine the special 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 development 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 original Ogilvie-era 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 ill-considered 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 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, the District Council publishes design guidance and other advisory material and, as opportunities arise, will assist with implementing specific projects aimed at positively enhancing the area.

18.1 Alterations to existing buildings

The particular character of Thorpeness, with its strong underlying homogeneity of design intent 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, whose character is varied, can benefit from the enhancement of their mixed character, others, including Thorpeness, 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.

18.2 Colour palette

Again as a result of the unique character of Thorpeness and the distinctive design ethos that underlies its layout and buildings it could be argued that a singular feature of the village is its restricted colour palette. Part of the effect of the Thorpeness vernacular is achieved by colour contrast between elements such as walls, roofs, external framing and windows and doors and in a reduced colour palette of black, white and red. It is not clear if this was an original intention of the design.

It is proposed that a colour code be proposed for Thorpeness based on an analysis of historical drawings, the original architects’ intentions, and extant building colours. Such a code would need to be supported locally and could be implemented on a voluntary basis or through the withdrawal of permitted development rights (granted under Class C of Part 2 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995).

18.3 Design of new development

In a conservation area such as Thorpeness the fact that one of its chief and distinctive characteristics is that the large majority of buildings represent a deliberate and singular design ethos can make it difficult to consider what is appropriate for the design of new development. 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. Nonetheless, there is a very strong argument at Thorpeness that the design of new development within the conservation area should strictly reflect its original design ethos to ensure that the area’s strength of character is maintained and not diluted.

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.

18.4 Conservation area boundary

On completion in 2010/2011 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. Public comments made to date include a suggestion that the conservation area boundary is expanded to incorporate the entire village.

18.5 Demolition

Thorpeness has a finite quantity of original Ogilvie-era or Ogilvie-inspired buildings which are integral to the character of Thorpeness. Their loss, through unwarranted demolition, would erode the special status and distinctive character of Thorpeness and undermine the conservation area. Conservation area guidance issued by the Government (PPG15) provides that a proposal to demolish an unlisted building that is judged to make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area will be considered against the same set of tests that apply to a proposal to demolish a listed building. Appendix 2 of the English Heritage publication ‘Guidance on conservation area appraisals’ sets out the characteristics to be identified in judging whether an unlisted building makes a positive contribution.

18.6 New development

Thorpeness can be clearly differentiated in architectural-historical terms between the Ogilvie-era layout and associated buildings and those that do not form part of the original layout and are of later (as opposed to earlier) date. These later areas are represented by the northern and southern fringes to the village, which are mostly linear in form and diverse in architectural character and quality. New development and redevelopment is taking place in these later areas and an outstanding question remains whether these areas should be treated separately in terms of their character, or integrated into the Thorpeness conservation area.

The village remained in private ownership from its foundation until the 1970s and development was strictly controlled. However, since then many freeholds have been sold off and the control of new development has reverted to the usual statutory planning controls.

18.7 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.org.uk) and Suffolk Coastal District Council Supplementary Planning Guidance’s 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. Landscape management plans for Thorpeness Common and The Meare would be a welcome initiative.

18.8 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 Suffolk Coast and Heaths Unit is proposing major undergrounding within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Council will also work to ensure that in terms of the highway, footpaths and open spaces, the distinctive informal character of Thorpeness is maintained and protected.

18.9 Coastal protection

The historical value of Thorpeness and its importance as a conservation area and repository of several listed buildings signifies its status as a settlement worthy of preservation. The beach and coastline form an important setting to the conservation area and these should be managed so as to maintain, in a sustainable manner, Thorpeness.

18.10 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

**Landscape Officer**

Tel. 01394 444420  communityandeconomicservices@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk

**Arboricultural Officer**

Tel. 01394 444241  communityandeconomicservices@suffolkcoastal.gov.uk
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For further information regarding Conservation Areas and Listed buildings please contact the Design and Conservation Team www.suffolkcoastal.co.uk
Summary of Character Features - Thorpeness Conservation Area

Key

- Conservation Area Boundary
- Listed Buildings
- Important Open Space
- Important Views
- Historic Environment Record Site
- Definitive Footpath
- Eastern Boundary of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty