Marfleet Village

Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Hull City Council

Adopted March 2005
1. **Summary**

1.1 The purpose of this character appraisal is to define and record what makes Marfleet Village an "area of special architectural or historic interest". This is important for providing a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for local plan policies and development control decisions, as well as for formulation of proposals for the preservation or appearance of the area. The clear definition of the special interest, and therefore of what it is important to retain, also helps to reduce uncertainty for those considering investment or development in the area.

2. **Introduction**

2.2 Marfleet, once an independent parish and village within the East Riding of Yorkshire, is now predominantly an industrial area of east Hull. Despite absorption into the City of Hull, the old Holderness village of Marfleet retains a surprisingly rural character around the parish church of St. Giles’ and a variety of overlapping references or ‘touchstones’ to previous lives, events and land usage that gives the appraisal area its local distinctiveness and special sense of place. ‘Touchstones’ to the past are therefore an essential ingredient in maintaining the character of the appraisal area and, as a consequence, future development and change within the Marfleet Village Conservation Area should be sympathetic and use the past to enrich schemes.

3. **Background**

3.1 Marfleet is a former agricultural village now locked in an industrial suburb of east Hull, just to the north of the King George Dock and Hedon Road. It is located within the Marfleet ward and was designated by Hull City Council as a Conservation Area in July 1994. In July 2004 the Conservation Area boundary was extended to include the southern end of Marfleet Lane and land to the east and west of St. Giles’ church.

3.2 In area, Marfleet Village covers about 6.32 hectares (15.61 acres). It lies within a designated area of archaeological interest (Fig.13.1, Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 13: Archaeology) and contains 2 Listed Buildings and several other buildings and features of interest.

4. **Topography**

4.1 The Conservation Area occupies a flat low-lying site about 2.5 miles (4 km) east of the River Hull. The ground on which it sits is former wetland and is on average 2.1-2.4m above sea level (Ordnance Datum Newlyn).

5. **Archaeology**

5.1 The Conservation Area covers part of the medieval settlement and field system of Marfleet. As well as finds of medieval pottery in the vicinity, there is also evidence for earlier occupation in the form of finds of Romano-British pottery and a Roman coin hoard. It is likely therefore, that any ground works in this area will encounter archaeological deposits of the Romano-British, medieval and later periods.
6. History & Development

6.1 The first written references to Marfleet appear in the Domesday Book (1086) which was compiled for King William I (1066-87). The name of the village, however, is Anglo-Saxon in origin and means ‘Pool Stream’. Recent finds of Romano-British material within the vicinity also include pottery sherds of rusticated ware, which is normally taken to indicate early contact with Roman civilisation.

6.2 Marfleet was one of the smallest settlements in Holderness and from an early date it was doubtless grouped on the west and south-west sides of the church, where it lay in the 18th century. Chiefly made up of scattered farmhouses, Marfleet seems originally to have been linked mainly by footpaths to neighbouring villages. A ‘west gate’ existed as early as 1397, however, and there was a street of that name in 1706. By 1786 Marfleet Lane ran from the village to the Holderness Road. By 1830 Back Lane (now Marfleet Avenue) and Greatfield Lane ran to the south-west and south-east from Marfleet Lane. In 1833 all three lanes were linked in the south by the new Hull-Hedon turnpike road, which ran along the Humber bank.

6.3 The topography of the village seems to have changed little until the second half of the 18th century. The manor-house, the site of which is not known, was rebuilt shortly before 1784, and in 1793 the medieval church, too, was demolished and rebuilt. The appearance of the village was not changed again until the mid to late 19th century, when a railway station (opened 1854), two schools (one of which survives) and two nonconformist chapels (both now demolished) were built there. The 18th century church was also demolished and, again, rebuilt in 1883-4.
6.4 In 1882 Marfleet became part of the Borough of Hull and over the next 100 years agriculture was gradually replaced by industry and housing. Although the village was predominantly an agricultural settlement, little is known of the agricultural organisation of Marfleet before the 18th century. In the 17th century, however, there were three open fields, Great Field to the east, Humber Field to the west, and Church or Ox Field probably to the north-east. In 1688 a New Croft is mentioned, and in 1706 there was another field, Inglish or Longlands, in the north-west of the parish. Meadows and pastures with grazing rights for sheep, cattle, and horses included Bydales, the location of which is uncertain, New Forth and Ingland to the south-east, and the Common in the centre of the village. Five Acre Close, mentioned in 1688, and at least four named garths in the village were among the old enclosures.

6.5 By the mid-18th century the medieval open field system of farming was considered out-of-date and between 1760 and 1797 many private Enclosure Acts were passed through Parliament to divide large open fields into smaller enclosed (hedged) units and to decommunalise ownership. The enclosure of the open fields and pastures in Marfleet, together with reclaimed land beyond the Humber bank, was enabled by an Act of Parliament made and passed in 1763 and by an Enclosure Award of 1764.

6.6 Much, but not all, of Marfleet’s agricultural character has been lost over the last century. In 1910 there were still six out of nine farms; the site of another had only a short time before been occupied by a paint-works. The houses and ancillary buildings of four of these farms remained in the 1950s. Two were occupied for other purposes soon after, and one of these was demolished in 1960-1. Of the existing farm-houses the oldest is The Grange, now a private residence, much of which dates from the late 18th century. East View, now a sports pavilion and Homeleigh Farm, now a private residence, are 19th century buildings. The stables and carriage sheds at Homeleigh Farm also survive and these have been lovingly restored for use by small businesses and to a lesser extent, as stabling. Up until the 1990s, remnants of Marfleet’s medieval farming heritage also survived in a field to the north-east of St. Giles’ church. This contained several undulating cultivation strips, known as ridge and furrow, which were communally owned and farmed. Regrettably, all the strips were erased when the field became a caravan storage site.

6.7 Also now erased is Marfleet’s most famous feature – the ‘Walls of Troy’. This was a turf labyrinth of probable medieval origin, formerly situated a short distance from the old Humber Bank, that survived up until the mid-19th century. The labyrinth was a rare 12 sided ‘Chartres’ type, of about 12 metres (40’) diameter, and consisted of a single convoluted pathway of 12 circuits (cut into the turf and leading to its centre) and thirteen turf ‘walls’. The labyrinth was not like a maze in which people where meant to lose their way but was for ritual walking, running games and processions.

6.8 Once a fairly common village feature, ancient turf labyrinths, or ‘turf mazes’ as they are popularly known, are now rare with only 8 historic examples surviving in England. The two nearest surviving examples are ‘Julian’s Bower’ at Alkborough (North Lincolnshire) and ‘City of Troy’ or ‘Troy Town’ at Bransby (North Yorkshire). The 6 other surviving examples can be found at Wing (Rutland), Hilton (Cambridgeshire), Somerton (Oxfordshire), Saffron Walden (Essex), Winchester and Breamore (Hampshire).
7. **General Character**

7.1 Despite being locked in a predominantly industrial suburb of Hull, the former agricultural settlement of Marfleet retains a surprisingly rural air and village character. Elements which contribute to this air and character include a distinctive group of generously spaced village buildings around a 'virtual village green', sinuous lanes with and without pavements, green verges, old gas lamp columns, lots of trees (including a fine avenue along Marfleet Lane), hedgerows with and without ditches, remnants of pasture and a well landscaped cemetery.

8. **General Perambulation**

8.1 Commencing at the junction of Marfleet Lane and Hedon Road, the Conservation Area runs along Marfleet Lane as far as Church Lane. Marfleet Lane is a sinuous old country lane with a fine avenue of trees planted in a generous grass verge.

8.2 On the west side of Marfleet Lane, just before the junction with Church Lane, the Conservation Area takes in Marfleet Primary School, one of Hull’s few remaining Victorian Board Schools. On the east side, it takes in a roughly square area of land bounded by Church Lane to the north and east and an extensive factory complex to the south. Negative features within this area of land include a small hard surfaced company car park and some hard landscaping and tanks along its southern edge. Positive features include the old Church Institute building and a substantial area of rough grass (old pasture) that has the appearance of a village green. The land and the former Church Institute feel detached from the village, however, due to the 10ft high diaper wire fence around its perimeter. Across the ‘green’ are good views of the village centre and church.

8.3 On turning right into Church Lane from Marfleet Lane the industrial and residential suburb of Marfleet is left behind. Church Lane has a very rural feel and look. Lack of footpaths and the presence of generous grass verges contribute to this, as do the old gas lamp columns and the near continuous hedgerow and ditch that runs alongside the north and east side of the lane. On the south and west sides of the lane the ditch has been infilled and replaced with a 10ft high green diaper wire fence. The impact of the fence is softened, however, by its green colouration, beds of nettles at its base, the odd young tree against it and hanging curtains of bind weed.

8.4 At this juncture, as the lane gently curves southwards, the Conservation Area expands to take in the only two occupied residences (The Grange and The Vicarage), as well as the church hall and one derelict and unoccupied residence (Brickyard Cottage). At the end of Church Lane, the road opens out into a triangular area before terminating opposite the gates of the Hebrew cemetery. Although three concrete bollards effectively mark the end of the lane, the road does continue on as a narrow public footpath. The footpath, which leads to Elba Street, is bounded on its north side by the Hebrew burial ground and a former agricultural field, all of which form part of the southern, eastern and northern boundary of the Conservation Area. The area is currently marred, however, by extensive runs of high metal palisade fencing snaking all around the area. That at the west end of the Hebrew cemetery is softened, though, by a coating of green paint.
8.5 Back at the triangular area in front of the parish church, one can obtain a good distant view of the school. This area is surrounded by generous grass verges and assorted boundary treatments. To the north are allotment gardens with a shabby fence composed of odd bits of wood and wire mesh. A private muddy lane (‘Brickyard Lane’), with a good natural hedgerow on its north side, also leads off to the northeast. To the south is part of the attractively landscaped Hebrew cemetery. Taking centre stage, however, is the grade II listed church of St. Giles with its listed churchyard wall. Fine mature trees within the churchyard, including ubiquitous species such as Holly and Yew, complete the backdrop and centre piece of the Conservation Area.
9. **Listed Buildings**

**Grade II**

9.1 **Church of St. Giles, Church Lane** – Small parish church of rock-faced stone with ashlar dressings and slate roof. Built 1883-4 in the Early English Gothic Revival style. Designed by J. T. Webster of Hedon. It consists of a nave, a west portal with a bellcote above, a chancel and a vestry.

9.2 Previously on the site there was a medieval church, first mentioned in c.1217. This was replaced in 1793 by a small brick building, with a distinctive cupola over the west gable, designed by George Pycock of Hull. ‘Pycock’s’ church was in bad repair in 1865, and, although ‘decent’, was ‘owing to the internal arrangements unfitted for the congregation’.

9.3 Though ‘Pycock’s’ church was completely demolished to make way for its successor, some Georgian and Victorian furnishings were salvaged for reuse. These include the octagonal font, dated 1864, the bell, dated 1793 and a fine series of early to mid-19th century wall-tablets, some of the best in Hull. The latter display a mixture of the usual Neoclassical decoration and details. Those to Jemima Dennis †1831, William Dennis †1836, Charles Wells †1846, and John Dennis †1854 are signed by John Earle junior of Hull. Those to Thomas Barmby †1825 and Mary Barmby †1866 are by Matthew Skelton of York.

9.4 New furnishings introduced in recent years include the litany-desk carved by Ernest Pickering in 1924. Also by Pickering are the 1921 reredos, a memorial to those killed in WWI, and the sanctuary panelling, erected in memory of Rosamond Brittan in 1930. The lectern, given in memory of Ada Rogers in 1947, and the choir stalls of 1947 and pulpit of 1953 were all carved by Clifford Longley to designs of W. Garner. The east window, dated 1905, is by C. E. Kemp.

9.5 Outside, under Kemp’s east window, can be found the foundation stone for Webster’s church of 1883-4. The stone was laid by Colonel Gerard Smith (later Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Gerard Smith) on 24th June 1883. Gerald Smith was born in London and at 18 joined the Scots Fusiliers as an ensign. He saw active service in Canada but the rest of his military career was somewhat uneventful. He retired from the army in 1874 to join the family bank in Hull, Samuel Smith, Bros & Co., established by his grandfather in 1784. A successful business and political career followed. He was a director of the Hull Dock Company and was later the first chairman of the Hull Barnsley & West Riding Junction Railway & Dock Co., cutting the first sod of the future Alexandra Dock in 1881. From 1883 he became MP for High Wycombe. He was also a Groom-in-Waiting to Queen Victoria and in 1895 was knighted and appointed the first non-professional Governor of Western Australia. Sir Gerard relinquished the post of Governor in
1900 and returned to England to become director of several companies and of the San Paulo Railway Co. of Brazil. He died in London in 1920.

9.6 **Churchyard wall and gate at church of St. Giles, Church Lane** – Crenellated wall of coarse squared stone, partly rendered, with ashlar dressings and short lengths of iron railing between coped merlons. Gothic style wooden gates set off-centre between octagonal stone piers with conical caps. Date stone of 1859, set in one merlon, is probably from the old reading room (former ?National School) demolished in 1953.
10. **Unlisted Buildings of Positive Townscape Value**

10.1 **K6 Telephone Kiosk, Marfleet Lane** – 1930s design classic by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, first produced in 1936, in traditional local (cream) livery.

10.2 **Marfleet Primary School, Marfleet Lane** – 1892 with later alterations and additions. Red brick with ashlar dressings and slate roof. Multi-paned sash windows including a tall elegant round headed sash in east elevation. One of 37 schools built by the rate-aided Hull School Board, constituted under the 1870 Education Act, of which only 8 remain in use as schools. They are considered to be among Hull’s best Victorian buildings. Marfleet is unusual among the Hull Board Schools in being single storey, reflecting its semi-rural location. During its short life (1870-1902) the architect to the School Board was William Botterill (1820-1903). In 1881 Botterill took on a partner, John Bilson (1856-1943), and from this date Bilson effectively became the School Board architect, although Botterill continued to sign the drawings. Before Bilson was taken on, the style of the Hull Board Schools was Gothic Revival. Afterwards the style changed and Gothic was abandoned and Renaissance, Baroque and Neo-Classical, or versions of them, took its place. The style of the Marfleet Board School is William & Mary, the same style as the side elevations of the Brunswick Avenue Higher Grade Board School of 1891 (now Brunswick House). In 2004, a striking new extension was added. This received a prestigious commendation in the 2004 RIBA White Rose Awards for Design Excellence.

10.3 **The Grange, Church Lane** - Former farm and now a private residence. 18th century house with a near complete range of outbuildings around a rear courtyard. Red brick with slate roof to front and pantiles to rear. The former east range (now largely demolished) terminated in a dovecote (still extant but derelict). The Grange, which suffered bomb damage in an air raid during the Second World War (1939-45), was still an active farm up until the 1970s. Oldest and last remaining complex of farm buildings within the Conservation Area.

10.4 **Former Church Institute, Church Lane** – Built in 1914 on land given by St. John’s College, Cambridge. Red brick with slate roof and multi-paned windows. Previously used as a village hall and by the village school before been sold in the late 20th century. Retains attractive painted name on north ‘transept’.

10.5 **The Vicarage, Church Lane** – Built in 1908 to a design by Brodrick, Lowther and Walker. Red brick with ‘Rosemary’ tiles. Attractive features include multi-paned over single paned sash windows and distinctive chimney stacks. Replaced an earlier parsonage situated closer to the church. First vicarage mentioned in 1650. Now a Church of England house-for-service.

10.6 **Brickyard Cottage & Outbuildings, Church Lane** – Built pre-1853 and later named after the old brick works formerly situated in the field to the east. Although at the time of writing the buildings stand forlorn and derelict, all have important townscape value and the potential to add positively to the character of the village.

11. **Unlisted Buildings of Neutral Townscape Value**

11.1 **St. Giles’ Church Hall, Church Lane** – Plain single storey wooden hut erected in the late 20th century.

11.2 **Hebrew Prayer Hall, Church Lane** – Non-descript single storey brick building built 1972-3. Foundation stone laid in 1972 by the family of the late Maurice Marks, a devoted member of the Hull Old Hebrew Congregation.
10.1 K6 Telephone Kiosk

10.2 Marfleet Primary School

10.3 The Grange

10.4 Former Church Institute

10.5 The Vicarage

10.6 Brickyard Cottage

11.1 St. Giles’ Church Hall

11.2 Hebrew Prayer Hall
12. **Features of Positive Landscape Interest**

12.1 **St. Giles’ Churchyard, Church Lane** – Rectilinear churchyard with assorted boundary treatments. Good collection of 18th & 19th headstones. Extended in 1953 to take in the site of the demolished reading room.

12.2 **Land north of Humbrol Ltd, Marfleet Lane/Church Lane** – former agricultural land, now part of the Humbrol factory complex, which has the look and appearance of a village green. The ‘green’ not only strengthens the link between the village school and village centre, but also helps preserve the original open nature of the village and important views from within and without it.

12.3 **Hebrew Burial Ground, Church Lane** – The burial ground, at its western end, encompasses the site and former gardens of Crosby House or Hall. The building was erected in 1889 by a Miss Crosby and was used for public meetings, entertainments etc. The house and gardens, along with some land to the east, were purchased in c.1930 by the Hull Old Hebrew Congregation. The land to the east became their burial ground and it is now packed with closely regimented headstones, many bearing the Star of David and inscriptions in Hebrew, in north/south rows. Dividing the burial ground with the old Crosby House gardens is a high privet hedge with low cast iron railings at its base. A small central gap in the latter, guarded by two Victorian gate piers, affords access to both halves of the cemetery.

12.4 When Crosby House was purchased by the Hull Old Hebrew Congregation, part of it was used as a prayer room and the remainder was sub-divided into four cottages. The cottages were demolished in 1958 and the old prayer room in 1972. In 1972-3 the old prayer room was replaced by the present non-descript brick prayer hall. On its north side is a remnant of the old ‘prayer room’ wall which now forms part of the southern boundary of St. Giles’ churchyard.

12.5 Surrounding the entire Hebrew burial ground is a metal palisade fence which for much of its course is uncoated. At its western end, however, either side of the main cemetery entrance gates, it is painted green - and is all the better for it. The main cemetery gates are now plain and non-descript and replace a very distinctive pair of gates, featuring the Star of David, that were still extant in the 1990s. A plaque adjacent to the old gates formerly read “These gates were erected in loving memory of their dear parents Sophie & David Myer Rosen by their children Lionel and Calman Rosen and Nettie Solomon in 1965 (5725)”. It is not known what happened to the gates and plaque.

12.6 **Land east of St. Giles’ Church** – This is a remnant of the medieval open field system, enclosed under an Act of 1763, that once surrounded Marfleet. Former features of the field, now lost or infilled, include a small pond and part of a large early 20th century clay extraction pit, the latter serving an adjacent small brick works run by the Leonards – former owners of ‘The Grange’. Up to July 2004 (the date of its incorporation within the Conservation Area), the field was undeveloped and retained a significant rural character. Following designation, however, Planning Permission (granted in September 2003) was implemented and the field was stripped of vegetation, as a precursor to development, and surrounded with 10ft high metal palisade fencing.
12.1 St. Giles’ Churchyard

12.2 Land north of Humbrol Ltd

12.3 Hebrew Burial Ground

12.3 Hebrew headstones

12.3 Victorian gate piers

12.5 Modern cemetery gates

12.5 Old ‘Star of David’ gates

12.6 Land east of St. Giles’ Church before development
13. **Historic Street Furniture**

13.1 Where it survives, historic street furniture can add charm, character, richness and variety to the street scene. Unfortunately, such furniture is now rare within the appraisal area which makes the retention of the few surviving examples, such as the 7 gas lamp columns along Church Lane, all the more important. All the columns, however, with their distinctive cross bars (lamplighters ladder rests) and decoration, including fleurons, acanthus leafs and Hull’s armorial ensign, are without their original lanterns.

![Gas Lamp Column Detail](Image)

14. **Greenery**

14.1 Trees, shrubs and hedgerows constitute an important asset within the appraisal area by adding movement, colour, contrast and seasonal interest. They also have important wildlife value, introduce a distinct quality of light and sound into the environment and help the area retain a strong rural character. The retention and maintenance of trees, shrubs and hedgerows within the conservation area is therefore highly desirable, as is the sensitive planting of new native species.

14.2 Managed and unmanaged grassed areas also constitute an important asset within the area. They not only create a soft and green oasis within a predominantly industrial suburb, they add considerably to Marfleet’s rural air and village character. For this reason the whole of the centre of the Conservation Area is designated in the Hull Local Plan (adopted May 2000) as Urban Greenspace (site no.321). Because of its wildlife value, site no.321 is also classified as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI).
15. **Future Development**

15.1 The appraisal area provides limited scope for future development. Where scope does exist, however, it should act as a stimulus to imaginative high quality design, and seen as an opportunity to enhance and enrich the conservation area. The design of new buildings, however, intended to stand alongside historic buildings or within historic areas, needs very careful consideration. Normal planning and design considerations of scale, density, building heights, massing, landscape, layout, rhythm and proportion apply but much more attention is needed to materials, details and relationship to public realm*. Although there are a range of approaches to designing buildings for the historic environment, only three are considered appropriate for Marfleet given its small traditional building stock and fragile rural character:

- **Pastiche** – an approach that exactly replicates previous built forms and styles using authentic materials and detailing. It requires considerable skill to be successful and is often used on extensions to important buildings eg The old General Post Office, Alfred Gelder Street (Old Town Conservation Area) or to replicate buildings beyond repair eg 109 Park Avenue (Avenues & Pearson Park Conservation Area);

- **Traditional** – an approach that follows the local vernacular and uses traditional materials, forms, features and detailing eg Priest Gate (Sutton Village Conservation Area); and

- **Subtle** – an approach that uses historic references and traditional materials with a modern twist as in the River Hull frontage to the Streetlife Museum (Old Town Conservation Area).

15.2 Whatever the approach it is important that new buildings are well designed, use traditional and high quality materials and include references (or ‘touchstones’) to the past**. References to the past are particularly important in maintaining a sense of place, community and belonging. They can be created in a variety of ways, for example, from archaeological remains which can provide cues for the layout and design of new developments. Sense of place can also be created or reinforced by using traditional materials and detailing that respond to the local vernacular. Street names, signs, landscaping, on-site interpretation, maintenance of ancient boundaries – all of these can be used to keep memories and associations alive, stress the individuality of a development and foster local distinctiveness.
16. **Design Statements**

16.1 All applications for new development should be accompanied by a design statement that includes an urban design analysis* of the site and its immediate environs and information on the history of the site. The statement should clearly express the design principles adopted and illustrate materials in plan and elevation. Photographs may suffice for simple sites but highly visible or particularly sensitive sites will require perspective views in addition (drawn at eye level from publicly accessible viewpoints).


17. **Advertisements & Signs**

17.1 As a general rule, advertisements and signs should be kept to a minimum and shiny or reflective materials should not be used. Internally lit fascia boxes and projecting box signs should also be avoided. Traditional painted signs are, however, encouraged.

18. **Preservation & Enhancement Schemes**

18.1 The City Council will encourage appropriate proposals that will preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of the Marfleet Village Conservation Area. This will include consideration of additional policies and participation in grant aided schemes when available to encourage the preservation of traditional features and materials and to repair and convert vacant buildings which are either listed or of historic townscape value.
Facts & Figures

- Conservation Area designated by Hull City Council on 28th July, 1994
- Conservation Area boundary amended by Hull City Council on 15th July, 2004 to include the southern end of Marfleet Lane and land to the east and west of St. Giles’ church
- Conservation Area Character Appraisal adopted by the Planning Committee 15th March, 2005
- Hectare/acreage of Conservation Area = 6.32 ha/15.61 acres
- Number of Listed Buildings within Conservation Area = 2
- Number of designated Areas of Archaeological Interest = 1
- Number of designated Urban Greenspaces/SNCI = 1
- Ward = Marfleet
- Area Committee = Park