

LESBURY PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Appendix A: Non-designated Heritage Assets in the Plan Area

Lesbury and how it sits within the North Northumberland Coastal Plain

The coastal plain links Newcastle and more southern parts of Northumberland with Scotland as both the A1 and East Coast Main Line run through its length.

The coast is of national and international nature conservation importance for its geology, coastal sand dune complexes, maritime cliffs and slopes, offshore islands and intertidal habitats (including mudflats, coastal salt marsh and eelgrass beds) which support internationally significant populations of birds and grey seals, nationally important invertebrate assemblages and scarce plants. The Parish of Lesbury sits close to the length of coastline which is therefore covered by Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Alnmouth Estuary, Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and RAMSAR designations. Twenty-five miles North along the A1, Lindisfarne and the Farne Islands are also designated as National Nature Reserves (NNRs).

The sweeping sandy beaches, dunes and rocky headlands continue north into Scotland and south into the South East Northumberland Coastal Plain. The designated areas of the Northumbria Coast Special Protection Area (SPA) and RAMSAR site and North Northumberland Heritage Coast extend south into the South East Northumberland Coastal Plain. The history, geology, habitats and sheer beauty of the area make it a very important tourist and research destination.

Three major rivers, the Tweed, Aln and Coquet, meander across the North Northumberland Coastal Plain to the sea; the Aln drains from Alnham in the Cheviot Fringe NCA, past Alnwick in the Northumberland Sandstone Hills NCA to the sea (through Lesbury) at Alnmouth.

Many of the large holdings with arable and grazing in the coastal plain also have in-by and moorland grazing in the hills. The inland farmed landscape is generally open and gently undulating. Fertile soils support broad expanses of intensively managed arable farmland dominated by cereal cropping, with some grazing for beef cattle and sheep.

Woodland cover is generally sparse with larger areas of broadleaved woodland confined to river valleys and the estate woodlands around Howick, but shelterbelts and woodland blocks adjacent to farmsteads and settlements are important local features in the open landscape.

More locally, visitors are able to enjoy several important historic landmarks –

Mills

There were three water-driven mills on the river Aln within Lesbury Parish boundary. Lesbury Mill was situated by the old bridge. It was a centre for corn grinding over six hundred years until the 1920s. A large fire in 1964 preceded its final demolition.

Today the reduced section of the east wall that runs between the old and new bridges stands as a poignant reminder of our heritage.

The first record of Bilton Flint Mill was in 1786. It was owned by James King & Company, St. Anthony's Pottery, Tyneside. It is marked as a flint mill on Greenwood's map of Northumberland in 1828 but some time afterwards became a corn mill. A gutted two storey building remains behind the mill. Constructed in rough, light coloured sandstone, it has well-dressed stone at all the main openings.

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The Church of St. Mary



A mass of factual data exists relating to the church building. It is the oldest existing structure in the Parish. The present building may well have been preceded by a Saxon church but the earliest written evidence (1147) relates to the Norman period when Eustace Fitzjohn, Baron of Alnwick, gave it to the abbot of the newly created Alnwick Abbey.

Various structural alterations/repairs have occurred between that date and the present, most notably hood moulding to the window on the east elevation (14th century) and major repairs in 1847 to the nave (south wall) which can be seen from the road.

Repairing parts of the structure has been an ongoing theme for St Mary's over the centuries. The building is made from local materials and there is visual evidence of minor weathering.

The Glebe (The old vicarage)

This is now a private residence and was built in the second half of the nineteenth century, but 18th century fabric exists at the rear. A re-set door-head from the previous vicarage is recorded as bearing an inscription dated 1765. The present vicarage is a modern house situated behind the Church.

Church Cottages

These are now semi-detached, residential properties, standing opposite The Glebe, on a bend in the road, facing west. Formerly the Poor House and School, church records include accounts relating to domestic details from 1776 to 1824.

The School House

This property is now rented accommodation and still owned by Northumberland Estates.

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Lesbury Village Hall



The Hall was previously the Village School, founded by the Percy Family in 1857. The school, which was Church of England endowed, closed in 1971. It continues in use as a Village Hall and is important as a centre for the community. The Hall is used by the community almost every day for substantial periods of time. There are several very popular activities including film club, choir, archery, dance and fitness activities. In 2018, a significant update has been made to the Hall with a new heating system, improved toilets, better insulation and an opening up of the roof structure. It is a vibrant hub in the centre of the village where people from Lesbury and several neighbouring parishes come together to enjoy a wide range of entertaining cultural events.

The Coach Inn



The Coach Inn started life as the first blacksmith's shop in the village and then became a pub which was closed because of 'rowdy behaviour'. It then became a farmhouse, before becoming the pub and restaurant that now graces the village.

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The Eighteen Arch Viaduct



Today this carries the main East Coast railway line but was built for the York, Newcastle and Berwick Railway by Robert Stephenson in 1848/9 and is a highly visible and significant part of the local heritage.

Bilton Banks Colliery Manager`s House

Two rows of houses were demolished decades ago but the main residence remains and is privately occupied. This house is on the periphery of our Parish boundary but just within it. Old photographs exist of the mining village and nearby colliery buildings.

Reading Room

Currently private accommodation, the Reading Room was once a centre for information within the Parish. It housed a collection of 500 volumes.

Lesbury House

The present house was built circa 1800, as a Dower house incorporating an earlier (18thC) rear wing. Lesbury House is currently in private ownership.

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The Square



Buildings in The Square once provided accommodation for the grooms and other staff who worked at Lesbury House, and for mill workers.

Water Pant



This structure stands on the side of an access road next to Lealand Gardens. It probably dates from the introduction of a water pipeline into Lesbury by the fourth Duke of Northumberland in 1860.

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Lesbury Old Bridge and river crossings



The Old Bridge is a Scheduled Ancient Monument thought to be of 15th century origin, altered in the 19th century. The main feature is two arches with steeply-canted cutwaters in between making it a rare bridge of national importance. While the new bridge that replaced the ancient one in 2004 is a great improvement from the point of view of traffic safety, its appearance has proved controversial.



The present metal footbridge linking Steppey Lane to Lesbury Village once carried pedestrians over the A1 road at Stannington and replaced a smaller metal structure. Steps leading up to and down from the bridge make it inaccessible for several groups in the community, limiting its usefulness.

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The site of stepping stones exists at what was once a Steppey Lane ford, a few metres downstream from the (able walkers) pedestrian footbridge.

In recent times, the stones at Greenrigg have been restored and the ford is still used by farm vehicles and walkers.